

## 6 TYPES OF RITUALS TO MAINTAIN IN YOUR MARRIAGE

### PART ONE

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Is that quick goodbye kiss before you part ways in the morning really critical to the success of your marriage?

It might seem small and inconsequential, but in the context of relationship rituals, it can be quite meaningful. Much research has shown that rituals have an overwhelmingly positive effect on marriage. They create and nurture connection, shared meaning, and a sense of stability in your bond. They act as constant relational touch points that help you stay tethered to each other and your unique identity as a couple – during your busy lives.

Chances are, you already have many rituals in your marriage that formed naturally. While you might not have put much thought into creating them, a bit of intention and awareness doesn't hurt when it comes to sustaining them over time. Here are 6 types of rituals to maintain (or create) in your marriage:

#### 1. The goodbye/reunion ritual

Yes, that goodbye kiss is important! Whether it's that and "I love you's" as you see each other off in the morning or a 10-second bear hug when you reunite after a long day, this type of ritual bookends your time apart with some **feel-good** endorphins. It promotes a sense of connection as you separate for the day, and re-establishes that bond as you reunite, starting your evening off on the right foot.

#### 2. The celebration ritual

Birthdays, anniversaries, life milestones, job promotions, beating the odds – there will be many opportunities for celebration over the course of your marriage. Making that same special meal or treat, booking that favorite restaurant, filling the house with balloons, or putting on that song that kicks off a kitchen dance party – there's no **right or wrong**. Whatever form they take, creating and carrying out rituals to mark celebrations becomes a constant thread that marks some of your happiest moments. Once established, they can signify the specialness of an event, help you recall happy memories, and even become part of a family tradition that gets passed on through the years.

#### 3. The holiday ritual

One of the complex yet rewarding parts of coming together as a married couple is figuring out what your holidays will look like. You both probably grew up with different traditions and ways of celebrating. Combining those – or creating new rituals altogether – is a great way to embrace your own identity as a couple. Sure, you might adopt some of the traditions of one or both of your families, but don't be afraid to try new things or add your own unique spin to them. If you have children, this is also important in establishing a sense of family identity as well.

*Next week – the fourth and fifth suggestions to improve your marriage!*