

BUILDING MY Eternal Marriage

By Rosana Pontes Barbosa Neves

When I was a teenager, I developed faith that marriage could be a wonderful and eternal experience. It was difficult for me to always believe, however, because the examples of marriage I had growing up were not strong ones, and I kept a fear of marriage in my heart. But I determined that failure and unhappiness didn't have to be the rule and that Heavenly Father would help me know how to have a happy marriage.

When I was 26 years old, I married Sidnei in the São Paulo Brazil Temple. While we were still dating, we tried to prepare ourselves spiritually and emotionally for the most significant event of our lives. We decided what type of marriage we wanted, we established goals together, and we shared our thoughts—our testimonies of the gospel, our wishes and worries, and our dreams. We also read together the counsel of the prophets on marriage. We did everything we could to prepare, wishing to provide happiness and security to each other and our future children. We asked the Lord to give us wisdom to live a happy life.



Now we have been married for 18 years. During these years, we have continued to learn from the precepts of the gospel, the counsel of our leaders, and, of course, the Spirit. Some of the things we have done to have a strong, happy marriage are:

1. Pray together every day. When we pray at night, we thank Heavenly Father for our marriage, for the love we have for each other, and we ask that our feelings will be strengthened and that we can become strong individually in the face of the



MARRIAGE IN HEAVENLY FATHER'S PLAN

As a husband and wife are each drawn to the Lord (see 3 Nephi 27:14), as they learn to serve and cherish one another, as they share life experiences and grow together and become one, and as they are blessed through the uniting of their distinctive natures, they begin

to realize the fulfillment that our Heavenly Father desires for His children. Ultimate happiness, which is the very object of the Father's plan, is received through the making and honoring of eternal marriage covenants."

Elder David A. Bednar of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "Marriage Is Essential to His Eternal Plan," *Liahona and Ensign*, June 2006, 86.



other, and when we're with others, we speak positively about each other.

4. Defend the institution of marriage. Whenever we have a chance—and especially if we are around people who are criticizing the institution of marriage—we stand up for families and what we believe in.
5. Talk a lot and listen. We stop what we are doing to really listen when the other person is talking.
6. Treat each other with love and consideration. We do not insult, accuse, or criticize each other.
7. Continue to seek help and counsel about marriage from the scriptures and the words of modern prophets. We do not know everything. We are imperfect and prone to forgetting and making mistakes. We prefer not to wait for problems to afflict us, but instead we work to build a strong marriage before a situation can hurt us.

These things have been instrumental in strengthening the relationship between my husband and me. I know that if we share our lives and our feelings with Heavenly Father and seek counsel from Him, the Holy Ghost will inspire us and we will be able to become an eternal family, overcoming all difficult times. We also know that Heavenly Father will help us as we seek to know and do His will. ■

designs of the adversary, who works to destroy families.

2. Ask for forgiveness. We work to never allow pride to keep us from asking for forgiveness or admitting we are wrong. Love and unity are more important than who is right or who is wrong.
3. Never speak evil of each other. It is obvious that neither of us is perfect, but we don't say bad things about each

SUCCESSFUL MARRIAGES

Successful marriages and families are established and maintained on principles of faith, prayer, repentance, forgiveness, respect, love, compassion, work, and wholesome recreational activities."

"The Family: A Proclamation to the World," *Liahona and Ensign*, Nov. 2010, 129.

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY LAUREN FOCHECITO