

Happily Married Checklist

1

Warmth Outweighs Negativity

Core habit: Maintain a 5:1 ratio of positive to negative interactions.

Micro-practice: Each day, give your partner at least three specific appreciations (“I liked how you...”).

Self-check: Did warmth lead the way this week, or did criticism take the mic?

2

Repair Early, Repair Often

Core habit: Start conflict softly and make repair attempts quickly.

Micro-practice: When tension rises, say: “Can we start over? I want to get this right.”

Self-check: When fights happen, do you aim to win or to repair?

3

Turn Toward the Small Moments

Core habit: Notice and respond to bids for connection.

Micro-practice: When your partner shares something small (“look at this”), pause what you’re doing and engage for 10 seconds.

Self-check: Did I turn toward or tune out this week?

4

Make Each Other Feel Seen

Core habit: Communicate empathy and curiosity.

Micro-practice: Ask one open question daily — “What’s been on your mind most today?” — and listen without fixing.

Self-check: Does my partner feel understood or managed?

5

Build a Secure Base

Core habit: Create emotional safety through consistency and dependability.

Micro-practice: Follow through on one small promise every day.

Self-check: Would my partner say I’m emotionally predictable or confusing?

6

Break the Demand-Withdraw Cycle

Core habit: Avoid chasing or shutting down; stay in the conversation.

Micro-practice: When you feel flooded, say, “I need a 10-minute break, not an exit.”

Self-check: Did I stay engaged, or did I disappear when it got hard?

7

Strengthen the “We” Story

Core habit: Use “we” language; share goals and meaning.

Micro-practice: Once a week, talk about something bigger than logistics — “What kind of life are we building?”

Self-check: Are we living as partners or roommates?

8

Practice Satisfying Sacrifice

Core habit: Choose love-based giving, not resentment-based compliance.

Micro-practice: Do one act of service freely—without score-keeping.

Self-check: Do I give from fullness or from fear of rejection?

9

Face Stress as a Team

Core habit: Handle external stress together, not against each other.

Micro-practice: When one is stressed, the other says, “We’ll figure it out together.”

Self-check: Do we fight the stress—or each other?

10

Cultivate Gratitude

Core habit: Express appreciation frequently and specifically.

Micro-practice: End the day with, “Something I appreciated about you today was...”

Self-check: Have I said “thank you” more than “why didn’t you”?

11

Keep Fairness in the Invisible Work

Core habit: Ensure chores and mental load feel fair.

Micro-practice: Once a week, ask, “Is there anything you feel alone in carrying right now?”

Self-check: Does my partner feel like a teammate or an employee?

12

Keep Intimacy Playful

Core habit: Maintain sexual and physical connection with openness.

Micro-practice: Initiate non-sexual touch daily; schedule one intentional sexual or affectionate moment weekly.

Self-check: Have we touched without pressure this week?

13

Believe in Growth

Core habit: See love as something cultivated, not discovered.

Micro-practice: When disappointed, replace “Maybe we’re not meant to be” with “What can we learn here?”

Self-check: Do I treat this relationship like a garden or a lottery ticket?

14

Regulate, Don’t Project

Core habit: Manage your own emotions instead of offloading them.

Micro-practice: Before responding, breathe and name what you’re feeling in one word.

Self-check: Did I self-soothe before speaking?

Optional wrap-up exercise

Each Sunday, rate yourselves (1–5) on each category, total the score, and choose one micro-habit to emphasize in the coming week. Goal: consistency, not perfection.