



## Creating and Maintaining Balance in Your Marriage

BY KATHLEEN BILLINGS

As a family, one of our favorite summer activities is swimming in our pool. Having an inground pool within a few steps of our backdoor has been a sweet blessing. We splash, play, relax, and bond. My husband, Troy, works hard to maintain the pool and preserve the appropriate chemical balance, often referring to it as one big chemistry experiment! Now and then, the chemical balance is lost due to external factors such as a large amount of rain in a short time.

For the first time in 13 years, we have had an issue with nitrates eating our chlorine. It is so serious that after numerous attempts and way too much money spent on chemicals, we must now empty all 23,000 gallons of water and refill it with fresh water to fix the problem.

As I was lamenting our pool situation today, I thought about it in relation to marriage. I reflected on how sometimes outside influences seep into marriages and cause them to get completely off balance. Other times, our own marital neglect shifts the "chemical balance." Maintaining a healthy, holy marriage requires diligence and a daily investment of time.

The first step to creating and maintaining balance in your marriage is ensuring that you have your priorities correctly ordered: God first, marriage second, children third, and work fourth. Rearranging the order causes imbalance, which leads to disorder and then eventually to chaos.

Work is at the service of your family, while children find security in parents who have a strong marriage. A solid prayer life and a deep relationship with God are the foundations of a loving, stable marriage. As God is the source of the grace necessary to live the sacrament of

marriage, maintaining this order is vital to the health of both your marriage and family life.

Life circumstances might require a temporary shift in your focus, but not a rearranging of your priorities.



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