

Kind Treatment of Wives



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God instructs men to be nice to their wives and to treat them well to the best of their ability:

“...And live with them in kindness...” (Quran 4:19)

The Messenger of God said, The most perfect of believers in belief is the best of them in character. The best of you are those who are the best to their women.’^[1] The Prophet of Mercy tells us that a husband’s treatment of his wife reflects a Muslim’s good character, which in turn is a reflection of the man’s faith. How can a Muslim husband be good to his wife? He should smile, not hurt her emotionally, remove anything that will harm her, treat her gently, and be patient with her.

Being nice includes good communication. A husband should be willing to open up, and be willing to listen to his wife. Many times a husband wants to air his frustrations (like work). He should not forget to ask her about what annoys her (like when children would not do their homework). A husband should not talk about important things with her when he or his wife is angry, tired, or hungry. Communication, compromise, and consideration are the cornerstone of marriage.

Being nice includes encouraging one's wife. The most meaningful admiration comes from a sincere heart that notices what really matters — what the wife really values. So a husband should ask himself what she feels most insecure about and discover what she values. That is the wife's sweet spot of praise. The more the husband compliments it, the more the wife will admire it, the more on target this healthy habit will be. Kind words are like, "I like the way you think," "You look beautiful in those clothes," and "I love hearing your voice on the phone."

Human beings are imperfect. The Messenger of God said, "A believing man should not hate a believing woman. If he dislikes something in her character, he should be pleased with some other trait of hers."^[2] A man should not hate his wife because if he dislikes something in her, he will find something he likes about her if he gives it a chance. One way to be aware of what he likes in his wife is for the husband to make a list of a half dozen things he appreciates about her. Marriage experts recommend that one be as specific as possible and focus on character traits — just as the Prophet of Islam recommended, not just what she does for the husband. For example, a husband may appreciate the way she arranges his clean laundry, but the underlying character trait may be that she is thoughtful. The husband should consider admirable traits such as being compassionate, generous, kind, devout, creative, elegant, honest, affectionate, energetic, gentle, optimistic, committed, faithful, confident, cheerful, and so on. A husband should give himself some time to construct this list, and review it in times of conflict when he is most likely to feel averse towards his wife. It will help him be more aware of his wife's good attributes and far more likely to compliment them.

A companion asked the Prophet of God what is the right of a wife over her husband? He said, "That you feed her when you eat and clothe her when you clothe yourself and do not strike her face. Do not malign her and do not keep apart from her, except in the house."^[3]

Conflict in marriage is virtually inevitable and it leads to lot of anger. Although anger is one of the most difficult emotions to manage, the first step toward controlling it can be learning how to forgive those who hurt us. In case of conflict, a husband should not stop talking to his wife and emotionally hurt her, but he *may* stop sleeping in the same bed *if* it will improve the situation. Under no circumstance, even when he is angry or somehow feels justified, is a husband allowed to malign her by using hurtful words or cause her any injury.

Footnotes:

[1] *Al-Tirmidhi*

[2] *Saheeh Muslim.*

[3] *Abu Daud.*