



At times when there is only break-ups talk, Florence Kaslow holds something that today could be considered almost an antitheism: long-term marriages and, moreover, satisfied.

A subject that this American psychologist dominates not only professionally, but also personally: she has been happily married for 50 years.

Dr. Kaslow is founder of the International Family Therapy Association, current president of the International Academy of Family Psychology and the American Board of Family Psychology. In 1991, the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy awarded her for her contribution in family therapy.

She has been in Chile on two occasions, 1992 and 2001, when she came to dictate the first courses on mediation for families in conflict, to the Department of Psychiatry, Campus Oriente of the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Chile.

Research on the keys to lasting marriages, which began in the United States, was a fruit that matured after attending multiple international conventions of experts in couples and family therapy, belonging to different universities.

Her work was so novel that it inspired specialists from Germany, Israel, Sweden, the Netherlands, South Africa and Chile to make similar ones, all during the last five years. "Those of us who worked in this area realized that our efforts had been focused for a long time on conflictive and dysfunctional situations in conjugal and family relationships and that it was time to focus on the healthy aspects, that is, to discover what the factors were that influenced the marriage satisfaction and its

maintenance through the years, both in the tranquility and in the conflict stages ".

Of the observable results in these studies that included nearly a thousand couples, it is striking how similar the answers are, despite different cultures and religions. Therefore, the psychologist considers, "it is so important to transmit them, especially to young people, so that they learn that marital coexistence requires effort, sacrifice and clear contracts that allow them to have a life of satisfaction and with tools to face crises without fear. , leaving them strengthened. "

Factors that unite

Studies with long-term marriages, formed 25 or more years ago, were conducted in the seven countries, based on interviews. Respondents were shown a list of more than forty reasons to stay united and asked to choose the most important ones.

1.- The institution is a contract for all life: it is the conception that about marriage have the almost one thousand couples studied.

2 .- Responsibility for the couple and children in common, whether biological or adopted. They feel that they are part of the common project and must take care of them, educate them and love them all their lives.

3.- To profess the same creed or to have similar conceptions of the world. Having a protective and guiding force that consolidates marriage means a great land won.

4.- Get along well with the family of origin of the spouse. This, however, being very clear that these are two different family groups and that the husband or wife can not be postponed by the parents or in-laws.

5.- Getting along with the friends of the couple and their social circle strengthens and enriches the marital coexistence.

6.- Ability to solve the crises that occur in married life, caused by the changes that occur in the personal, in the couple and in the family is another of the challenges they learn to overcome long-term marriages.

That implies deep and periodic dialogues, revision of the great guidelines of the union, capacity to understand the other, often having to yield or compromise.

"What these couples know is that well-resolved crises emerge strengthened, benefiting the entire family." The investigation has another part: the ingredients that conjugal life must have in order to be satisfactory. Among those who pointed out the couples under study, we highlight eight. It is important to note that five of the seven countries where the study was conducted put "mutual trust" first, and only the United States and Chile placed "love" at the top of the list.

7. Trust, according to Florence Kaslow, means "to have faith in the other, to know that he will always be honest, loyal, faithful, someone with whom to walk together for life".

8. Respect: is the recognition of the presence of the spouse as such, accepting it as it is: "I live with you being different".

9. Love and ability to express it. The marriages interviewed recognize that this feeling varies in different periods. First, he is blind (love-passion), then there is a deeper one, related to the common project (like having children) and in which the affections must be hierarchized. For example, it is natural that the mother dedicates more time to the children than to the husband, when they are small, and he has to understand it. "What you see in these couples is that they always give themselves the opportunity of reunion in which they relive their passion."

10. Communication between the spouses, being open to fruitful dialogue around their emotions, thoughts, challenges, plans and issues in conflict, is a fundamental element according to the interviewees.

11. A good ability to solve their problems is another marital tool, "knowing how to listen to the partner and incorporating it into the solutions".

12. Sharing the same conception of the world, values and interests, is considered an important point for good relations.

13. The concern for each other, their needs, feelings and happiness, is a central element for happily married.

14. Make space and time to be and have fun together. The couples surveyed indicate that it helps them to compensate for family responsibilities, which are often stressful and heavy. Put a drop of humor to the relationship, although it seems a light ingredient, gives the marriage flavor. These fourteen factors, which allow achieving harmonious coexistence and maintained over time, are not part of a recipe nor are they theory. It is the experience they learned, spontaneously or at the cost of trips, falls and relapses, almost a thousand real life couples. It can be useful to many.