

# Our Top Dozen Do's & Don'ts for Facebooking Couples

By K. Jason and Kelli Krafsky



## What Every Facebooking Couple Should DO to Protect Their Marriage!

**Create boundaries to protect yourself, your spouse and your marriage.** Spend some time talking about what's in bounds and out of bounds, and as a couple, agree on what boundaries you'll set as a couple. A little bit of agreement on what is and is not acceptable can save a lot of pain and disagreement later.



### **Set your relationship status to Married and keep it that way.**

Facebook's version of the wedding band, your Relationship Status makes all the difference in how people interact with you. If you do happen to go through some marital troubles, don't change to "it's complicated" because you'll only make things even more complicated...in a bad way.

**Update each other on your FB Friends and Friend Requests.** Friends range from past childhood pals and classmates to current connections from

work, church and elsewhere. Many of your FB Friends have a story attached to them. Don't assume your spouse knows how you know them; spend time sharing their story with your mate.

**Share your username and password with one another.** Transparency is crucial to ensure trust in a committed relationship. Exchanging login information provides accountability and emotional security for both of you

**Make your spouse the topic of your Status Updates at least once a week.** Using Facebook to affirm and build up your spouse creates a deeper bond between the two of you, and a higher fence around the two of you. (Just be careful not to overdo and become an annoying couple.)

**Be prepared to talk offline about online issues.** What happens on Facebook doesn't stay on Facebook. Facebook can and will trigger issues and conversations between you and your spouse: a poorly worded joke, an awkward comment by a FB Friend, or an unexpected chat session. Deal with hurt feelings or concerns in the privacy of your own home. If handling conflict is difficult for you and your spouse, attend a Marriage Education class to acquire a shared set of communication/conflict resolution skills.



## What Every Facebooking Couple Should NOT DO to Protect Their Marriage!

(DON'T) **Write cutting remarks or negative statements about your spouse.** Even though Facebook asks, *“What’s on your mind,”* it doesn’t mean everyone really wants to know the answer to that question. If in doubt, think about how your comments will be read by others (think about your mother-in-law, your boss, your pastor) before pushing the Share/Comment button.

(DON'T) **Friend exes, old flames, past flings, former crushes or anyone you’ve been intimate with in the past.** What starts as an innocent, *“I wonder whatever happened to so-and-so”* can lead to *“I never meant for this to happen.”* Friending exes’ invites an unnecessary threat into your married life that can cause any or all of the following: anxiety and insecurity for your spouse, friction and isolation in your marriage, and unrealistic and senseless ideas in your head. If staying FB Friends is a bad idea for a broken up (dating) couple, then it’s a really, really bad idea for married couples.



(DON'T) **Lose track of how much time you spend on Facebook.**

Everyone needs a little down time to unwind each day. Facebook can be a

great way to wind down (e.g. connect with FB Friends, play games, find Groups and Fan Pages, etc). On average, users spend 12-15 minutes a day on Facebook. That seems like a healthy dose of daily Facebook intake. If time on the online social community infringes on your real-time marriage relationship, make changes to reprioritize your time. Set a timer for 15 minutes and then log off Facebook and turn off the computer.

**(DON'T) Report that you or your spouse is out of town.** This is more security than anything else. Say your husband is on a business trip and you post an update that he is out of town. What you think is a harmless Status Update is an announcement to the bad guys that your home, possessions and family are vulnerable and a prime target for bad things to happen. Do you really know all of your FB Friends? How about their Friends? A FB Friend's comment to your Status Update can unknowingly broadcast your "my husband is gone" news to a bunch of people you really don't know.

**(DON'T) Have private Chat sessions with people of the opposite sex.** Chats are a private, real time message exchange between two people. Once a person logs off, Chat sessions are erased forever. Emotional affairs have three main ingredients: secrecy, chemistry and intimacy. Chatting provides a perfect environment for the three ingredients to mix together and create a situation that supposedly "just happened". Avoid the drama and turn off the Chat feature altogether.

**(DON'T) Let Facebook be a distraction during your time with your mate.** Not only can writing a Status Update steal time from your couple

time, but reading someone's bad news can steal your mind from your special time together. Make date nights, special moments, and times of intimacy Facebook-free. No laptops, no computers, no smart phones when it is time for you and your spouse.

.....