

The main facts about in-law tensions are as follows:

1. Treat your in-laws with the same consideration and respect that you give to friends who are not in-laws.
2. When in-laws take an interest in your life and give advice, do just as you would if any friend gave advice: if it is good, follow it; if it is not good, accept it graciously and then ignore it.
3. Remember that many times when the in-laws appear to be too concerned with your affairs, they are not trying to interfere in your life but are sincerely interested in your welfare.
4. Look for the good points in your in-laws.
5. When you visit your in-laws, make the visits reasonably short.
6. When visiting in-laws, be as thoughtful, courteous, and helpful as you are when you are visiting other friends.
7. Accept your in-laws as they are; remember that they would probably like to make changes in you, too.
8. Mothers-in-law have been close to their children before marriage; give them time to find new interests in life.
9. Go into marriage with a positive attitude toward your in-laws—you believe it is a good family to marry into and you intend to enjoy your new family.
10. Give advice to your in-laws only if they ask for it; even then, use self-restraint.
11. Discuss the faults of your spouse only with him, not with your family.
12. Do not quote your family or hold them up as models to your spouse.
13. Remember that it takes at least two people to create an in-law problem. No one person is ever entirely to blame.

For a married couple to handle relationships with parents and in-laws on a positive basis, they need to:²²

1. Be mindful of the fact that family ties are normal, necessary, and important and that a brusque rejection of them can only bring unhappiness to all;
2. Make the process of separating themselves gradual rather than abrupt;
3. Accept the spouse's concern for his parental family;
4. Accept the fact that parents cannot automatically stop being interested in, and concerned about, their children just because the latter get married, and that parental help can sometimes be a wonderful thing to have;
5. Present a united front to any attempt by parents or in-laws to interfere; firmness is more effective than hostility.

1. The person who causes most of these conflicts is unfortunately the mother-in-law. One study found that she initiated as much trouble as all the other in-laws put together.
 2. Victims of in-law interference are nearly always the daughters-in-law. Often the mother-in-law is jealous of her daughter-in-law for dividing the affection of her son and tries to win back the central position in his life by alienating him from his wife.
 3. Competition and conflict between these two women reaches its most violent form when they have to live together in the same house.
 4. Rearing of the children is frequently another area in which the mother-in-law interferes.
 5. A mother-in-law who acts in these ways can be very troublesome. But she deserves your pity more than your hostility. What this person really needs is the love of those around her, but since she seems unable to get it she tries instead to gain her ends by manipulation and intrigue. Unfortunately she usually does not realize that she is completely defeating her own purpose.
- Principles to follow with in-laws:
1. No in-law interference can damage a sound marriage. In-laws cannot drive a wedge between husband and wife who stand firm together.
 2. The policy to adopt is to make it clear that you want to be friendly and you want to work for harmony between the generations, but you will not tolerate unwarranted interference in your marriage. This must be made clear with no compromise.
 3. A confrontation or discussion should be followed up by sincere and genuine attempts to be friendly and conciliatory. You can behave lovingly towards them even if you don't feel loving, and the action tends to promote the feeling. It will help and encourage your spouse if you make a real effort in this direction. Experience shows that this policy can, in time, achieve a surprising degree of success.
 4. If you and your in-laws really have very little in common, short visits from time to time are best.
 5. Remember family ties cannot be broken, and they last throughout a lifetime. Even if your relationships with your in-laws are not as they should be right now, a time may come when you may need their help or they may need yours.