

Five Great TV Couples

To celebrate Valentine's Day (a little early) we decided to shine the spotlight on a few of our favorite TV couples. However, we wanted our list to be a little different than a "best of." It would be easy to write about some of the most well-known and loved couples in television history. Couples like the Huxtables from *The Cosby Show*. Or Ricky and Lucy from *I love Lucy*. Instead of that, we chose to focus on a few lesser known examples of good, strong, admirable TV marriages. We hope you enjoy our list and we hope you will add your two cents in the comment section below.



Wash and Zoe – Firefly

I'm not sure that there has ever been a TV couple so opposite that still completely adored each other. Zoe, the ultra-fit gun-toting, silent warrior woman and Wash a jovial, fun-loving, happy-go-lucky pilot. And yet their marriage is perfection nearly all of the time. If you have watched the show *Firefly* at all, you will know the very real passionate love that existed between the two. While they are fully committed to the crew—and Zoe is more loyal to the captain than anyone—it is still all about their marriage to them.

Through all the intense activity they manage to maintain their little cocoon of eternal love and bliss. Their relationship didn't start out that way, though. Not surprisingly, Wash's manner rubbed Zoe the wrong way when they first meet in "Out of Gas." During that encounter, she quickly determined she didn't like him. How things changed. Most reading this have also seen *Serenity*, the *Firefly* movie that is a sequel to its epic one-season run. However, some readers may have inexplicably opted out. If that is the case, I will not spoil the specifics about how their life of bliss is finally torn about. But their love goes on and lives forever in our hearts through repeated viewings of the show. – Ben Plunkett



Eric and Tami Taylor – Friday Night Lights

Perhaps the best thing I can say about Eric and Tami Taylor is that they feel real. *Friday Night Lights* excelled at many things: It told poignant stories. It thrilled audiences. It created believable and fully realized characters. Yet the thing that brought many of us back was the Taylors. Coach Eric Taylor, a Texas high school football coach, poured his life into his team, his players, and his family. He was continuously required to make sacrifices with his time and energy. The great thing about it all was that he made those sacrifices *with* his wife Tami. They talked. They argued. They

fought. But through it all, they loved each other. They compromised for each other. They took turns putting the other first so they could reach for their dreams. They did this all with genuine affection for one another, displaying love and respect all along the way. The Taylors built a family that reached well beyond the walls of their homes. They acted as parents to every player that came through the Dillon Panther program. This is all accomplished without grandiose plot lines or over-the-top dramatic conflicts. It is grounded and real. If that is not a beautiful and relatable picture of marriage, I don't know what is. – Phill Lytle



Uncle Phil and Aunt Viv – The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air

The Fresh Prince of Bel Air was a fascinating show when it aired and has only become more so since it ended. Will Smith is the loud but lovable, the cocky but contentious star. How this show completely altered his career by vaulting him into acting, without any formal training, is a true American success story. But for his real life named role to work, his aunt and uncle had to be good people. They had to have a strong marriage. Because they took him in, adding his troubled and working-class background to their upper-class family. And I loved watching them make sacrifices to accommodate Will, yet become crucial de facto parents who stood their ground to

raise him right, which is no doubt difficult when you're talking about a teenager. Their best scenes as a couple were during more serious episodes, as when Will and Carlton get unfairly arrested and they have to go to the police station to defend them. Uncle Phil and Aunt Viv were incredible in those moments and could bring the laughter, tears and applause at the same time. A switch in actress halfway through the series for Aunt Viv changed her demeanor some but it didn't detract from this model marriage. – Gowdy Cannon



Hal and Lois – Malcolm in the Middle

The show is a bit preposterous. It is a loud, rough-around-the-edges sitcom following the lives of Malcolm, a boy genius, and his dysfunctional yet loving family. Lois is the overbearing, never wrong, say whatever is on her mind mother. Hal is the peculiar, probably crazy father. Their relationship doesn't always make sense. He is clueless at times, though rarely does the show fall into the overdone cliché of the "dumb dad." Lois is portrayed as possessing almost omniscient-like powers though the show doesn't hide from her flaws. Lois is the glue that holds the family together. She is the problem solver – the one that fixes things when the boys or Hal completely screw up. Hal's best character trait is that he loves Lois completely. He is devoted to her in ways that

sometimes wanders into the uncomfortable. Yet that is one of the main reasons I am so drawn to it. It is rare that a husband is presented in such a love-struck manner – especially in a couple that has been together as long as Hal and Lois have when we first meet them. They are not perfect by any means, but their love is a passionate partnership and we could find much worse examples than them in popular culture. – Phill Lytle



Adam and Kristina Braverman – Parenthood

This show is such that my wife and I talked about the characters all the time as though they were real people. The title of the show tells you its main focus but for the Braverman clan, the ups and downs of marriage could not be separated out from child rearing. And one marriage rises above the rest for how exemplary it is, that of Adam and Kristina. Teenage rebellion, Aspergers, cancer, political campaigns, new babies...it didn't matter what you threw at them, they would use it to make their relationship stronger.

By no means were they perfect and I appreciate when TV has raw moments of conflict that do not get handled well at first because just as in real life, it makes reconciliation a beautiful thing. For Adam and Kirstina, this was exceptional

TV. I could list dozens of my favorite moments of theirs but I'll limit it to two. One is at the end of Season 4 when Kristina is cancer free and they go to Hawaii, just the two of them with no kids. And the very last scene of the whole season is them running into the ocean together. So touching. It really was never just about parenthood. And second, when they discover that Hank, a more or less independently functioning adult, may have Aspergers just like Max, their conversation about it is crazy funny. They go back and forth with Adam being completely upbeat about the possibility of Max being similar one day and Kristina being skeptical because Hank definitely has issues. At one point they have this exchange:

A: He has a daughter!

K: But she doesn't like him.

A: But she's real!

To know Adam and his facial expression and voice inflection is to love that counter-response. I miss the Bravermans. – Gowdy Cannon