

Getting Your Marriage Off to a Great Start

What makes a marriage really work? Is there any way to guarantee that love can last forever? It has been said that those who fail to plan, plan to fail. Although many people are in love with the idea of marriage, many couples fail to prepare for inevitable bumps in the road ahead, and are not ready to handle the tough times. Before you take a walk down the aisle, consider making some wise choices that will help ensure a successful marriage.

Premarital Education

Education provides an opportunity for couples to identify potential areas of conflict and to discuss those areas before saying "I do." Experts say that some premarital inventories can predict with 80 percent accuracy which couples have the potential for divorce. These inventories can give couples an idea of what issues to work on in their relationship, therefore avoiding the divorce pitfall. Couples who receive education before marriage can resolve some important issues before they get out of hand and are more likely to seek help down the road. Some of the most hotly debated issues among couples are finances, in-laws, sex, employment, expectations and children.

Learn how to resolve conflict and communicate effectively.

Marital experts say that how couples manage conflict is a strong predictor of marital success or failure. Some danger signs include withdrawing or leaving during an argument, attacking the other person's character instead of focusing on the problem, and escalation. People who listen to each other and can talk as friends can learn a great deal about their partner and what they think is important. Resolving problems together is a win/win situation that encourages intimacy in the relationship.

Learn what your partner expects from marriage.

Knowing what your intended expects from you, and vice versa, can prepare you for the years ahead. Unrealistic and unmet expectations often lead to resentment in relationships, while knowing what to expect and how to meet the needs of your partner can be the glue that holds your marriage together.

Be committed to the permanence of marriage.

Commitment, as well as love, is a choice. Couples who believe that divorce is not an option going into a marriage are less likely to take steps toward ending their relationship. In addition, older, more experienced couples can provide much wisdom and support through the years. Sometimes, mentor couples can give insight on handling difficulties constructively within the marital relationship.

Marriage is not a 50/50 relationship, as we often hear. It requires 100 percent from both partners. If you want to make your marriage last longer than the wedding flowers, it must be a top priority in the lives of both individuals.