

Discussions Every Couple Should Have Before Saying “I do”

No one can be a perfect mate and no one can choose a perfect mate. But it is tremendously important to be aware of as many of our areas of compatibility and incompatibility before marriage. Discussing these topics before you

1. Personality Adjustment - Some people are well-adjusted, while others are not. Most serious marriage problems arise because one or both partners have some long-standing problematic personality characteristics. If, through discussion, you identify some personality traits that may be problematic, you may consider: slowing down the relationship, spending a lot of time working through the potential conflicts, seeking professional help, or terminating the relationship. But just remember: Marriage won't solve your problems and denial of those problems won't make them go away.

2. Life Goals - Goals affect every area of our lives. They involve having kids, our education, our careers, where we live, spiritual interests and on it goes. The better aligned a couple is on future goals, the more likely they are to run a straight course in their marriage.

3. Intellectual and Cultural Interests - Couples with different interests can enjoy and strengthen each other. But common interests help build togetherness. We need to share in our recreational, vocational, and spiritual lives.

4. Education - The impact of education on marriage goes far beyond jobs and finances. Couples that share a desire to learn and grow can challenge and enrich each other.

5. Vocation - There are endless ways that your career will affect your marriage. And what about two career marriages? Have you talked about the implications of a two-career marriage on your free time, your time together, your children, your roles at work and at home, and your level of family stress and pressure?

6. Family Involvement - Before marriage, be sure you get a reading on how you understand each other's families. Some prospective brides and grooms have faced neither the realities of family involvement before marriage nor the impact their childhood family experiences will have on their own marriage.

7. Friends - What our friends enjoy, we often tend to enjoy. What interests our friends tend to be what interests us. What our friends don't care for is most likely what we don't care for. And so on. Otherwise, why would we be spending time with them? Don't expect you or your potential mate's friends to change radically after you've said your vows.

8. Spiritual Interests - Our spirituality can shape our entire worldview. It influences the way choose to invest our time. It impacts our resilience in times of crises, the friends we choose, our work, and our leisure time.