

Choosing a Marriage Partner



Marriage can be a wonderful faithful lifelong partnership

Yes indeed! - two out of three first marriages go the distance, but one out of three do not. A higher proportion of second marriages fail. So it is most important to make the right choice.

If several of the points to consider below give you cause for concern, you need to think twice before taking the plunge. It is always wise to think through major life decisions. Few could be more crucial than marriage. Often wise choice is blurred by the heady feelings of romance, or by jumping the gun with sex.

What to look for in a potential marriage friend

If you are in a friendship and marriage is on the horizon, it would be worth your while stopping to think through what makes a good marriage. Here are a few tips on what to look for and what to avoid in a potential marriage friend.

Points to consider:

- Ask yourself, is my friend attentive to my needs? Also, ask yourself, am I as concerned for my friend as I am for myself?
- Is my friend truthful? Have I heard my friend lie/exaggerate to other friends? (the chances are they'll do the same to you).
- Does my friend eye-up members of the opposite sex, or are his/her eyes for me only? (Ask yourself if this really matters to you – and be worried if it does not!)
- Are you comfortable with each other – can you really relax in each other's company? Can you be your real self in front of your friend or are you always trying to be someone else (more exciting, witty etc)?
- Are you comfortable with your friend being him/herself? If there are characteristics in your friend that you don't like, ask yourself whether it's important enough to prevent you from marrying him/her – don't expect to change him/her after marriage.

- Can you accept that nobody is perfect? Are your standards for your friend too high for them to live up to? Try not to be too idealistic.
- Do they expect too much from you? Do you struggle to live up to your friend's standards?
- How well do you get on with your potential in-laws? Think about the future of family ties, before you get too involved.
- Is your friend sensible with money? Do you feel you ought to keep a separate account because you don't trust their spending habits?
- Watch how your friend interacts with other people's kids. Will he/she make a good father/mother? Are they kind, caring and gentle?
- Remember those famous words: "Marry in haste and repent at leisure".

Practical Help

Help is at hand if you want to prepare well for marriage.

Marriage preparation courses are available through some churches. Whether or not you are a churchgoer they would be pleased to help you prepare: by thinking about the vital areas of married life before you marry. Try a local church, or see www.relationshipcentral.org/marriage-preparation-course and you will reach the course compiled by Holy Trinity Church, Brompton, London, which is used throughout the world. Click Find a Course and put in your country and postcode to find where that course is run near you.

As an alternative Marriage Resource warmly encourages couples at least to use a pre-marriage questionnaire called PREPARE at an early stage in their engagement. Doing a questionnaire separately and later looking at the results with a trained person or couple near you helps you to get to know each other much better. See the website: www.prepare-enrich.co.uk Many marriage preparation courses include this or a similar questionnaire.

See also the "Living Together Successfully" page on this website.

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