

but how we deal with it that affects the quality of our relationships.”

Do we settle disagreements between us in a constructive way? Communication is one crucial ingredient to a happy marriage. It is the vital link to every aspect of a relationship. It is the key to true intimacy. It is not just about speaking and listening, but sharing feelings and understanding each other. Are you able to share? Do you feel understood?

When we hurt one another, we need to be able to talk about it and resolve the hurt, and forgive. This requires good communication skills. We do not have the innate ability to communicate well or handle conflict with grace and positive resolution, but we can learn these skills. How can you learn these skills? Read a book or take a class, and make sure to practice what you've learned!

Make Friendship the Foundation of Your Relationship!

Do you have fun together? Friendships are built on shared experiences. Shared activities lead to shared confidences and shared memories. Have you found interests that you both enjoy? Do you derive pleasure from doing things together? Marriage does not involve sharing every interest, but shared interest will be important to keep your friendship growing.

Discuss Your Expectation for Marriage and Each Other

Unrealistic and unmet expectations often lead to resentment in relationships. Talk about household chores, division of labor, childrearing duties, financial matters, etc. Be clear that divorce is not a first option.

Make Your Marriage TOP Priority

Be committed! Make your marriage a top priority. Establish “date night” early in your marriage– it doesn't have to be expensive, just time scheduled for you and your partner to be together. This is a secret of happily married couples!

Attend Pre-Marital Education

Classes Preparing for your marriage is like having Marriage Insurance! Participating in a Pre-Marital Education Class and utilizing a Relationship Inventory can help you detect any issues that have the potential to hinder your marriage. 89% of married couples who took an inventory and attended pre-marital classes found it to be helpful.

This period of engagement, with all the busyness of organizing a wedding, can feel like your entering a whirlwind of planning and activity. Marriage preparation classes can help you slow down and focus on your marriage and each other, to build strong foundations for the future.

The Wyoming Healthy Marriage Initiative has a list of local providers, both community and faith based, that administer Pre-Marital Inventories and we offer a wide range of classes and resources on Pre-Marital Education as well as Marriage Enrichment classes once you are married. The Wyoming Healthy Marriage Initiative is here to help! Contact us to find classes, resources, articles, and tips to help you prepare for a lifelong marriage.



To Learn More
or
to Register for a Class
Visit us on the web at
www.WYOFAMS.org
or call
1-866-WYO-FAMS

WYOMING
HEALTHY MARRIAGE
INITIATIVE
~For Ever After~

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Planning for Your Marriage



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This is an exciting, and stressful, time in your life.

There are many things that a bride and groom need to think about before their wedding day... the cake, the dress, the ceremony, the honeymoon. It's also extremely important to your future to spend time planning for your marriage...Here are some important things to consider:

Know Why you're Getting Married

Is it for commitment and love or loneliness, escape or impatience? Take stock of your personal priorities to assure that you are marrying for the right reasons and that your relationship gets the attention it deserves.

Spend Quality Time Together

Marriage must be based on more than infatuation. Infatuation maybe the first step of love, but it isn't love initially. Infatuation wears off, and a deeper love on many levels must emerge to form a lasting lifelong marriage.

Have you seen each other through a variety of situations? Have you seen each other while sick with the flu, working in the yard or around the house, or have you only seen each other with washed hair, dressed up, and ready to go out?



Do you know the whole person? Have you known each other when times were difficult? How do you

each respond when ill or under stress or in a crisis? Try to see each other in as many situations as possible: alone, with friends, with family, at work. Only sufficient time together will reveal the real person.

Be Prepared to go from "Me" to

"We"

Marriage is a partnership, its about two individual people, who have been leading individual lives, coming together to share a life. Does the thought of doing so fill you with excitement or uncertainty?



Marriage means being ready to share your whole life with another person....Am I ready to share my time? Am I ready to share my money? My closet space? Could you honestly say, *"Whatever is mine will become ours?"* You may wish to investigate these issues as you prepare to wed. In marriage, there is very little that remains yours alone.

Bring Out the Best in Your Partner (and Yourself)

If the relationship is healthy, you should feel more alive when you are together. The experience of a strong marriage is in living a life that is renewed by one another's love. For some couples, the sheer effort involved in keeping the relationship going drains them and causes them to feel trapped. They may have been going out with their partner for some time and are afraid of hurting them by breaking off the relationship. But it is better to break up sooner rather than later if the relationship has no long term future.

Our closest friends or family are often the people who recognize most accurately the effect the relationship has on us. If we bring out the best in one another, other people want to be around us. Does being together make each of us more, rather than less, of a person? Or do we play games, pressure or try to manipulate each other? Giving to your partner unconditionally will help bring out the best in them, and as they give to you, the cycle will strengthen your relationship.

Examine your Common Values and Respect Your Partner

There are different aspects that attract people to each other. Respect, however, goes deeper than mere attraction. Do I respect this person's character? We discover someone's character by seeing the way they relate to others: how they treat people, their family, their peers, those from a different background, culture, or race. Do they show compassion, courage, perseverance, patience, consistency, and other qualities we value? Do I respect their judgment? The decisions they make? Are we compatible in our core beliefs and values? It might be unwise to marry someone with strongly opposing views. For example, do we agree on matters of faith, ethical issues, education, children, financial plans?

Appreciate Your Partner's Strengths and Accept their Faults

None of us is perfect. We all have our weaknesses, quirks, and bad habits. Ask yourself "What annoys me about this person?" You need to be sure that you could live together and love each other even if none of these things were to change. You must not get married hoping to change this or that about your partner. If you do, you will likely be disappointed. Don't focus only on the negative, remember to show gratitude for their strengths as well! Marriage is a partnership where both partners bring their strengths and weaknesses to the table, it can be a great thing to have different strengths.

Learn to Deal with Conflict

All marriages will have conflicts at one time or another. Conflicting ideas and negative feelings are an inevitable part of any close relationship. In the well-known book *Empowering Couples*, author David Olson says, "its not the absence of conflict