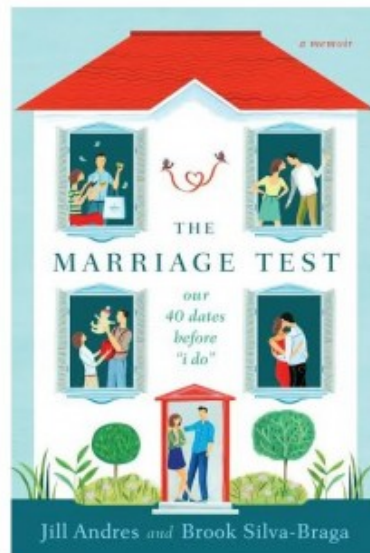


Dating Advice: Authors of 'The Marriage Test' Reveal How To Confirm Compatibility Before Vows



[By Mary DeMaio](#)

Perhaps one of the most important decisions you can make is deciding who that special someone should be waiting at the end of the aisle. In the new self-help book by Jill Andres and Brook Silva-Braga, the couple shares their best [dating advice](#) on the issues that can strengthen or terminate a relationship and love prior to their union. Their book, *The Marriage Test: Our 40 Dates Before 'I Do,'* is designed to test the depth and durability of the relationship to see if their love can survive real life scenarios through 40 simulating challenges.

This book is sure to give you a few interesting date ideas! In this exclusive author interview, the duo talks about their dating advice to confirm compatibility before proclaiming any VOWS.

Relationship Authors Open Up On Best Dating Advice Before Saying 'I Do'

To start, we are so excited for your new book! Can you give us some background on what made you decide to open up about your dating experiences?

Jill: After dating for several years, we reached a point that a lot of couples face: You really love each other, but it's hard to know if you should get married when the things that cause problems – sharing finances, raising a family – you don't typically face when you're dating. So we came up with activities to test ourselves and our relationship before making that big decision. We learned so much going through this test that we thought other couples could benefit from hearing our story!

Related Link: [Relationship Advice: Authors of 'The Marriage Boot Camp' Reveal How to Build A Rock Solid Relationship and Love](#)

What made you choose forty dating challenges, not more or less? And how did you decide what obstacles you should do together?

Brook: It could have been more or less but 40 gave us a chance to try lots of different things in a lot of different categories. We started by thinking of ways to simulate some of the problems married people face—*Oh we could swap credit cards*—and then when we started telling people about the idea

they all had their own suggestions for dates to try.

In what ways do these dating challenges prove that you are compatible with someone? Can you explain which one is the most beneficial in strengthening a relationship?

Jill: More than anything, they show your willingness to work through hard things because the activities are designed to cause tension. We cut our budget in half for a month and it really stressed our relationship more than we thought it would. But it also helped prove that we could get past that tension and still want to be together.

Related Link: [Four Dates and a Wedding](#)

I'm sure you have some interesting stories from trying out all of these dates! Can you each describe a funny or unusual situation that you found yourself in on these dates?

Brook: We did a date where we went out with each other's exes and both those afternoons were memorable. First, we went out with Jill's ex-boyfriend and he spent the whole lunch talking about how he'd never met anyone as good as Jill—I was afraid he might try to take her back. Then, we went out with my ex-girlfriend and she spent an hour and a half explaining why her husband is better than me. I was glad when that date was over.

Jill: We spent a week trying to simulate having a newborn and not letting ourselves sleep for more than three hours at a time. Then we'd have to finish a chore like doing laundry or cleaning our bathroom. By the end of the week I was a walking zombie, barely able to get through the day. It wasn't so funny at the time but it's funny to think back on.

After going on these 40 dates, we have to ask...How do you both feel these marriage tests prepared you for your own marriage?

Brook: I really think they prepared us well. They forced us to discuss some awkward stuff that otherwise we would have

avoided as long as we could. Instead, by the time we got married, we had worked through lots of hard stuff—like what religion we'd raise our kids and how we would change our last names—it made our first year of marriage pretty worry-free.

Our visitors are always looking for advice on how to make the most of their personal lives. So what advice would you give to couples who are struggling to keep the spark alive in their relationship?

Jill: In a word: communication—do more of it. As for the sexual spark, we did a couple fun activities people can try. For a week we dared ourselves to have a different kind of sex every day—it was a good way to get out of old bedroom habits. We also did a date called “Sex Seen,” where we agreed to recreate every love scene we saw in TV and the movies.

On the other hand, what message do you have for readers who are struggling to break up with their partner, even though they know it's the right thing to do?

Jill: Be brave. Ending up with someone who isn't the right fit isn't good for either partner. It's better for both of you to break up sooner rather than later and start moving on. Plus, imagine how painful it would feel to your partner if they found out you'd been considering breaking up with them for a while.

What is the most important message readers should walk away with after reading this book?

Brook: It's hard to be honest with yourself and your partner about the shortcomings in a relationship. Especially for a couple who are serious enough to be considering marriage. Your lives are so intertwined that the possibility of breaking up is really scary. But our love advice is that we think it's much better to honestly confront those things now than pushing them off or wishing them away.

Lastly, do you have any other upcoming projects or anything else you'd like to share with our readers?

Jill: We're inviting other couples to try some of the dates and tell us how it goes—their stories are being published on our blog. You can go to themarriagetestbook.com/quiz to get some date suggestions.

The Marriage Test: Our 40 Dates Before 'I Do' *is available now on [Amazon](#). For more on Jill Andres and Brook Silva-Braga visit The Marriage Test [website](#) and check out Jill's Twitter at <https://twitter.com/jillyjill7>.*