

Newlywed 911: Protecting Young Marriages



By Malia Karlinsky, GalTime Love/Sex Editor

Sad news about one of Hollywood's hottest couples—Russell Brand has filed for divorce from wife Katy Perry. The news about the break-up does not come as a complete surprise. Celebrity gossip columnists have been buzzing about a rift between pop music princess Katy Perry and her actor/comedian hubby Russell Brand. Married for just 14 months, the often lovey-dovey pair reportedly spent this past Christmas miles apart (two-thousand miles to be exact). Photos showed Perry splashing around on a Hawaiian beach (without her wedding ring), while Brand was also snapped on a beach— in Cornwall, England— sans Perry.

What broke this celeb couple up? We may never know for sure, but Us Weekly recently reported that Brand's lack of respect for Perry's parents' Christian beliefs as the cause of some tension.

If that's the case— the problems of this glamorous newlywed couple are quite common.

Jeanine and Mark Earnhart, spouses who co-authored a book titled *Marriage Works*, cite the in-laws as one of the biggest issues that cause problems in new marriages. According to the Earnharts, there are some very predictable problems that plague the newly married.

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Top 5 Issues Newlyweds Face

1. In-law issues
2. Finances
3. Sex
4. Time spent with friends (without the spouse)
5. Household chores.

Jeanine Earnhart suggest communication as way to get over these newlywed "speed bumps" on the road to a happy marriage. "It may seem like a simple answer, but it works for every one of these problems," she explains. "If a couple gets their communication skills down right from the start, they can talk about anything and solve most problems."

Tina B. Tessina, PhD, (aka "Dr. Romance") a psychotherapist and author of *Money, Sex and Kids: Stop Fighting about the Three Things That Can Ruin Your Marriage*, suggests putting some work into the relationship before *putting a ring on it*.

Tessina shares that there are several questions every couple should consider **before** moving in together or making joint financial commitments.

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7 Questions Every Couple Should Talk About

1. What is your definition of commitment? If you don't know what your relationship means to the both of you, you risk repeating past mistakes, getting stuck in uncomfortable roles, or fighting about what a healthy relationship is.

2. Have you discussed finances? Different financial habits (one likes to save, the other spends more, or doesn't keep track) can become a source of argument.

3. What about household responsibilities? If you're not yet living together, take a tour of each other's homes. Drastically different decorating styles, neatness, and organization levels can become sources of argument, and so can housekeeping and chores.

4. How close are you to family or friends? If one of you has a lot of family or friends, and the other does not, find out what those relationships mean. Where will you spend holidays? If there are family members who have problems, such as addiction or mental illness, how much will that impact your relationship?

5. How do you handle anger and other emotions? We all get upset from time to time. If you are usually good at diffusing each other's anger, and being supportive through times of grief or pain, your emotional bond will deepen as time goes on.

6. How do you show love to each other? Sharing what actions and words mean love to you may be surprising. Even if it's a struggle, discussing how you give and receive love will improve your relationship.

7. How well did you discuss these very questions? Asking yourselves these questions are excellent tests of your ability

to define and work out problems. Constructive discussion that leads to a mutually satisfactory solution means you know how to solve problems in your relationship. If not, get counseling before going further.

So how can bickering newlyweds resolve their issues– and create a stronger relationship? Tessina suggests some simple steps.

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Simple Steps to Create a Successful Marriage

- **Talk frequently and honestly to each other:** Discuss everything from your frustrations to your appreciation of each other.
- **Strive to work together to solve anything that comes up:** Don't get stuck on who's right or wrong, focus on solving the problem.
- **Keep your connection going:** Connect through communication, sex, affection, understanding and concern for each other.
- **Have a sense of humor, give the benefit of the doubt, care about each other.**

Our hearts go out to Katy and Russell.