

Relationship Advice: What To Know Before You Say 'I Do'



By Nicole Noonan

Asking the right questions and identifying what issues are deal breakers for you before getting married is important for everyone, whether or not you live a life in the spotlight. Addressing possible issues enables you to work through potential differences or, in the worst-case scenario, have the ability to walk away should you reach an impasse. If there are serious warning signs before you head down the aisle, marriage is not going to fix them! Here are some important tips:

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Know the Financial History

Marriage is a huge step in anyone's life, and it is important you prepare yourself not only emotionally, but financially as well. Love doesn't pay the rent or mortgage. When you marry someone, their credit history soon become yours too. Ask your significant other, "what is our ultimate financial goal regarding annual income? By what means and through what efforts can we achieve this?"

Know the Family

When you marry someone, you also marry that person's family. Kris Humphries married not just Kim Kardashian, but the whole Karadashian/Jenner clan. Your future spouse comes as a family package, so it's important for each of you to know what you are getting into. Ask yourself, "what place does your partner's family play in our family life? How often do we visit or socialize together?"

Know the Friends

The phrase "you are whom you hang out with," is one to consider. Get to know your partner's friends before you head down the aisle. Also, introduce your own friends. Often our friends can see things about our relationships that we cannot. Socialite Sale Johnson Rashad did not like Ahmad Rashad becoming friendly with Tiger Woods. Now they are divorcing.

Know Plans for Religion and Children

According to reports, SNL's Fred Armisen broke up with Mad Men's Elizabeth Moss because her religion was more important to her than their marriage. Elizabeth is a devoted Scientologist. Others, such as Jennifer Lopez & Marc Anthony, and Tom Cruise, Nicole Kidman and Katie Holmes also were rumored to have parted ways because of religion. It is important to discuss what religion, if any, you will embrace as a family. One or both partners might suddenly feel strongly about raising their children a certain way.

Know Each Other's Goals

Are you both comfortable with the other's level of ambition? It is important that partners considering marriage understand what each believes is a success. You should be comfortable and supportive of your spouse's success as much as your own. A marriage may start with both partners at the same "level," but one partner then has greater success than another. This could lead to envy and resentment. In the case of Chris Judd and JLo, he was a choreographer when they married and she a dancer. What a difference a year makes it cost JLo \$14 million.

Identify Roles

Talk about the roles you envision for your marriage. Will one stay at home with the children or will both parties work? Do you see yourself in an "I Love Lucy" role where wife stays home and husband is the breadwinner? Perhaps there is a balance, like in Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt's relationship, where they take turns doing movies so one is always with the children. You and your significant other need to be on the same page.

Most Importantly Know WHO you are Marrying

Take the time to really learn about your significant other. Regardless of what your friends and family may be pressuring you to do, or what your biological clock says, you do not need to be rushed into a marriage. It should be seen as the biggest commitment of your life. Though not everyone has the same view of marriage, Renee Zellweger and Kenny Chesney met in January 2005, married in May 2005 and had the marriage annulled that September, citing "fraud." Other examples of rushing to the altar include Dennis Rodman and his bride Carmen Electra, and the lengthy marriage of Britney Spears and her childhood friend, Jason Alexander, married for just 55 hours.

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