

5 Marriage Myths Busted

How do you know what to expect of married life?

By Nelandra Anselmo, MS, MFT

Your ideas about marriage may have been formed as early as childhood, as you grew up watching your parents, or maybe something a little less reality-based like growing up watching romantic comedies. Whether your expectations are inspired by childhood fairy tales or grown-up drama, there may be some things you've yet to discover (or discuss) with your partner. Take a look at these 5 marriage myths and the realities behind them:

“Love is all we need for a successful marriage”

Well, it's a start. But the reality is there are couples who are madly in love with one another, but who can't seem to maintain a healthy relationship. Your love for one another will get you to the altar, and may inspire you to create a life and family together. However, love alone may not ensure that you will be able to navigate important and potentially difficult tasks of marriage, such as resolving conflict or communicating effectively. Love is often described as a feeling, but once you view your love for your partner as a skill - one you can continue to develop and use along with other tools - can you realize its true power. You must be willing to DO a good job of loving each other, not just BE in love.

“Once we are married, everything will be better”

The wonder of wedded bliss can be magical. However, there are some things that will not magically disappear just because you become husband and wife (especially if there were issues in your relationship prior to becoming married). In fact, they will most likely remain exactly the same, unless you actively work to improve them. For example, learning to live with bad habits and personality differences are common challenges many newlyweds face. Some problem-causing quirks can change with a little work; others will not change at all. Depending upon the weight of the issue, this

need not be a concern. Simply decide which things you are willing to work to improve and which you are willing to accept in exchange for the other countless benefits of married life!

“He should know what I want/need without me having to tell him”

Here's a secret to getting exactly what you want: tell your husband what that is. If he hasn't given you what you want, chances are, it isn't because he doesn't love or care about you, it's because he doesn't know. And, since chances are your husband is not psychic, expecting him to be in tune with every intricacy of your thought process and your desires is, well, unrealistic. Go ahead and give him a break; fill him in. The good news? You'll be giving yourself a break as well.

“If we love each other, we shouldn't argue or fight”

Conflict in a relationship is never pleasurable, but learning to argue amicably and fight fair can be one of the most rewarding things you can do in your marriage. Resolving problems together is an important skill to develop, and can increase your sense of closeness to one another. The truth is couples who never argue can experience as many disappointments, difficulties and misunderstandings as those who bicker constantly. Saying nothing can actually be more harmful over the course of your marriage than airing things out from time to time, even if the process seems a little uncomfortable.

“Our relationship will stay exactly the way it is for the rest of our marriage”

Each of you will change, and your relationship will change. This is natural, and doesn't have to be a bad thing. Just remember that the things which attracted you to your partner initially may not be as relevant or meaningful to you in ten years. Were you in love with his ambition? - the fact that he was finishing



college and looking forward to a bright future? Fast forward a few years and that “bright future” is now probably his everyday routine, and possibly not as exciting. Other things like physical attributes and interests may also change over time. Couples that stay happy together are those who continue to find new things to love about each other. Look for opportunities to continually learn new things about your partner. You may be pleasantly surprised! *

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