

Expectations

When you enter into any kind of relationship, a new job, or a marriage you are coming in with expectations of what things are going to be like. We all know what married life is all about because we have experienced it first hand from our parents and our friends parents. We see it on TV, in the movies and read about it in the papers, books and magazines

We all expect our marriage to work, to be happy, and to never end in divorce. Most of our expectations come from our own home and background, but have each of you shared any of your background and family with your partner? Have you ever told your partner anything specific about your families as to help them to better understand you? If you could change one thing about your family of origin as you were growing up, what would it be? What one thing from your parents marriage would you like to see in your marriage? What one thing from your parents marriage that you do not want to see in yours?

As you all sit here today you are so much in love with the person you are going to marry that you could never think of that person ever doing anything that would make you get upset with them.

Maybe, just maybe, there may be one or two of you sitting here today that dislike a particular thing that your partner does, but you know that once you are married, once you make those vows and walk down that aisle, you know that they are going to change now that you are married because they love you.

Well, I am sitting here today to tell you “THAT AIN’T GOING TO HAPPEN.” What you see is what you get.

I am going to pass out a handout - MARRIAGE EXPECTATION - On the top of the form I would ask you to jot down 10 expectations you will have of you partner when you marry. Do not write anything in the columns on the right.

Now please look at the bottom and jot down 5 expectations you think that your partner will be asking of you.

Just put those in your folders when you get done, you will have time to share them later.

MARRIAGE EXPECTATIONS

Every person enters the marriage relationship with certain expectations. These expectations come from many sources such as parents, values, society, books, our own ideas, etc. It is very important to take the time to find out what these expectations are, which can be achieved, which are realistic, and how to handle them when things do not go according to plans. The word *expectation* carries with it the attitude of hope. Hope has been defined as "the anticipation of something good." Hope is necessary as it motivates us and often keeps us going.

Write ten expectations you will have of your partner when you are married. These can be simple or elaborate. For example, a husband might expect his wife to be at the door when he arrives home, always to be at home and never work, and to have sex with him whenever he wants it. A wife might expect her husband to go to her parents' house with her whenever she goes, to be the spiritual leader in the home, and to spend Saturdays at home and not out hunting. List your expectations now, but do not discuss them with your partner yet. You will be using the columns on the right later.

	C	S	N
1. _____			
2. _____			
3. _____			
4. _____			
5. _____			
6. _____			
7. _____			
8. _____			
9. _____			
10. _____			

You have just listed ten expectations you will have of your partner when you marry. Now list five expectations that you feel your partner will have of you in marriage.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

Now let's go back to your ten expectations of your partner. Take your list and share it with your partner. Take your partner's list and read it. As you read each one of your partner's expectations of you, place a check mark under the appropriate column. **C** stands for "cinch." You feel that the expectation you have just read is going to be a cinch to fulfill. **S** stands for "sweat." It will take some hard work and sweat but it can be done. **N** stands for "no way." You feel that the expectation is impossible. When the two of you have completed your evaluation of the expectations, give them back and then spend some time discussing them with each other.

Working with couples that are getting married we are always hearing, “I knew he would change once we got married.” or “I don’t know why she keeps spending money, she knows we don’t have any extra.” For some strange reason we want to marry this person that we are in love with, but as soon as the ceremony is over, one of the first things we want to do is to make changes. Why? Why would you want to marry someone that you have to change?

One of the reasons for all the marriage preparation that takes place before your wedding is to surface these things that may be causing problems in your relationship right now, so that they won’t be a major problem later on after the wedding.

Another expectation couples have is fidelity. They expect that they will be faithful to each other. After all, infidelity is out of the question in a Christian marriage. Fidelity, however, concerns not only sexual faithfulness, but other areas of faithfulness as well. For example, some spouses are unfaithful to their mate through their work. The center of attention, which belongs to their spouses, is given to their job. Some spouses are unfaithful to their mate through their mothers, fishing trips, golf, cars, church work, housekeeping, children, etc.. You see, by putting any other person, possession, or activity (with the exception of your relationship with Jesus Christ) before your spouse, you could be unfaithful to the marriage relationship. What we need in marriage is creative fidelity. This means being sensitive to the needs of each other, supporting your partner, and being with them emotionally and physically.

Couples also expect their marriage to progress smoothly onward and upward without and major upheavals or adjustments. In all relationships there are generally three different stages that couples go through.

Enchantment

On cloud 9
 Perfect
 Just right
 Forever
 Infatuated
 Idolize
 Numb
 Fascinated
 Charmed
 Captivated
 Ecstasy
 Thrilled
 Preoccupied
 We've arrived

Disenchantment

Upset
 Terrible
 Absolutely wrong
 I quit
 Hurt
 Put down
 Splintered
 Irritated
 Wretched
 Burdened
 Uncomfortable
 Bitter
 Trapped
 Well never make it

Maturity

Feet on the ground
 I need you
 How do you see it?
 Let's work it out
 I'll help you
 Encourage
 Whole
 Refreshed
 Thankful
 Free
 Comfortable
 Friendly
 Growing
 Together, we can make it

It has been suggested that all couples go through these three stages. What about you? Perhaps in your own relationship you have experienced some of the disenchantment stage already.

If you would get the form that you filled out earlier, exchange papers with each other and read the 10 expectations your partner is expecting from you. As you read each expectation, rate it by placing a check mark in one of the three columns on the right. If you feel that the expectation you have just read is no problem for you to do, make a mark in column "C" - that means it is going to be a cinch to do. If the expectation is not going to be easy to do but you feel that you could do it with some work, place a mark in column "S" - which means you can do it but it will take some sweat. If the expectation you have just read is impossible, or unfair for your partner to ask of you, place a mark in column "N" - which stand for not way can I do that. When you have finished, give them back to each other and spend the rest of the time discussing them. Its better to know up front what will be easy for you to change if asked, and what will be impossible for you to change.

Change will happen in a marriage. It may not always be what you want, but it will happen.

Marriage Expectations

Each marriage is unique and also subject to change because of many factors. In addition to outside factors such as job, change of location, birth and death of family members, there are three fundamental inner drives that must constantly be balanced in our marriages:

- 1) the need for self-identity and the value of personal fulfillment;
- 2) the need for a special, unique relationship with a person of the opposite sex;
- 3) the desire to share myself and give help to others, especially my own offspring.

You can begin today to work out your expectations in marriage and achieve a balance of these drives by means of the following exercises. Examine these statements and first make your own selection and then indicate what you think would be the response of your partner (a, b, c, etc..)

Afterwards, exchange your papers with each other and note two things:

- 1) How similar or dissimilar were your personal responses to the statement?
 - 2) How accurate or inaccurate were your evaluations of your partner's responses?
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- 1) How often do I expect to spend time alone with my friends independently of my spouse?
 - a) less than once a month
 - b) once a month
 - c) twice a month
 - d) about once a week
 - e) more than once a week

How do I think my partner will answer this question? _____

- 2) I expect to visit my parents or be visited by them
 - a) almost every day
 - b) two or three times a week
 - c) once a week
 - d) every two weeks
 - e) once a month
 - f) once or twice a year

How do I think my partner will answer this question? _____

- 3) I expect to be able to take alcoholic beverages
 - a) more than two drinks a day
 - b) one or two drinks a day
 - c) two or three times a week
 - d) once a week or less

How do I think my partner will answer this question? _____

- 4) How often do I think we should have sexual relations in our marriage?
- a) about five or more times a week
 - b) about two or three times a week
 - c) about once a week
 - d) about once or twice a month
 - e) whenever one of us feels like it
 - f) only when both of us feel like it

How do I think my partner will answer this question? _____

- 5) Who do I think should take care of the budget and paying the bills?
- a) wife always
 - b) wife more than husband
 - c) husband and wife equally
 - d) husband more than wife
 - e) husband always

How do I think my partner will answer this question? _____

- 6) I think that partners in our marriage should work outside the home
- a) both full time and each having separate bank accounts
 - b) both full time with each contributing to the support of the family
 - c) one partner full time and one partner part time
 - d) with your wife working outside home only rarely and if necessary
 - e) your wife should not work outside home at all

How do I think my partner will answer this question? _____

- 7) I expect that our marriage will have children
- a) none at all
 - b) one child
 - c) two children
 - d) three children
 - e) four children
 - f) as many as God provides
 - g) I would also consider adopting children

How do I think my partner will answer this question? _____

- 8) I think that household duties, cleaning, cooking, dishes, etc., should be done by
- a) the husband and wife on a shared or equal basis
 - b) whichever partner is not employed outside the home
 - c) husband/wife most of the time
 - d) husband/wife all the time

How do I think my partner will answer this question? _____

FOR ROMAN CATHOLIC COUPLES:

I think that religion in our life should be

- a) daily prayer together and Sunday Mass and the Sacraments
- b) Sunday Mass regularly together and Communion
- c) Sunday Mass most of the time
- d) Mass and the sacraments whenever we feel like it
- e) each one do as he/she pleases in matters of religion

How do I think my partner will answer this question? _____

FOR INTERDENOMINATIONAL COUPLES:

I think that religion in our life should be”

- a) we both go to church together
- b) we both go together, first to my partner’s church, then to mine, each Sunday
- c) we both go to my partner’s church
- d) we take turns - - one Sunday to my church, the next Sunday to my partner’s church
- e) each of us goes to his or her own church every Sunday
- f) each of us goes his or her own way (attending or not) in matters of religion.

How do I think my partner will answer this question? _____