

A Dozen Reasons Premarital Education is a Must-Do Before the “I Do’s”

by K. Jason Krafsky

If you are engaged, your relationship is at a unique stage of development. More than likely, you and your mate are really happy, very excited about your future, and feel like you are “more in love than any other couple who has been where we’re at.”

In an attempt to not totally burst your bubble, on behalf of the hundreds of millions of couples who have ever been married -- we all felt that same optimism when we were engaged. Then we got married, and real life hit our relationships: work, bills, laundry, kids, school activities, etc. Most of us survived. Too many did not.

In the whirlwind of wedding planning, premarital education offers couples a safe place to slow down and think about their upcoming marriage. Premarital education can ensure your relationship not only survives the transition from engagement to marriage, but also prepares you to overcome the obstacles and challenges that lead some marriages into relationship ruts. If you are hesitant, apprehensive, or not interested in taking part in premarital education before your wedding day, read on.

Here are a dozen reasons why you and your mate should prepare for your marriage.

Divorce-Proof Your Marriage: Couples who had premarital preparation rate their marriages stronger, and are less likely to divorce than those who didn’t have premarital education. This isn’t a matter of opinion. Some really smart people put a study together, asked a bunch of people some questions, made this discovery, and shared the results with the world. (*Find links to these informative studies at www.FullMarriageExperience.com.*)

Make Sure You (and Your Mate) are Marrying the Right Person: You are about to sign a legally binding contract, graft your family trees, and make a public, lifelong vow before your family, friends; and for those with a religious faith, enter a covenant with the Creator of the Universe. Do you really, really know this person you want to marry? Premarital education can help you and your mate focus on the right questions, primary issues, and essential discussions to help the two of you determine if you are marrying the right people.

Set Your Marriage Up for Success: Have you ever read the “secrets of success” from couples married for fifty years? Newspapers often quote their words of wisdom: “we don’t go to bed angry,” “we try to laugh a lot,” “we just take it one day at a time.” While snappy and simple, these principles take a lot of work and determination. Couples who go through premarital education can learn these principles for success (and more) and put them into practice on the first day of matrimony.

This Investment Pays Huge Dividends: Want sound financial advice? Invest money into savings as early as you can, as much as you can, as often as you can and leave it alone for many, many years. This gives your money the most amount of time to build interest, and build interest on the interest. Want sound marriage advice? Invest time and energy into your relationship as early as you can, as much as you can, and as often as you can. But different from financial investments, couples can regularly reap the rewards of investing in their relationship, day-in and day-out. Premarital education will help you make a huge initial investment in your relationship.

Learn from Others Who Have Been Where You Are Headed: People rarely go into things blind. In fact, most people don’t attend a movie, go to a restaurant, read a book, or apply for a job without talking to someone, or viewing a website for more info. Marriage is one of those topics where

a couple can greatly benefit from what others have to say. Regardless of what kind of premarital education you take part in, you can learn from real married couples who are trekking the marriage journey, and are willing to share their insights, experiences, and more. Not only does this help you and your mate learn what to do, it also helps you learn from other's mistakes what not to do.

Turn Your Fears or Concerns into Non-Issues: It is natural to have some anxieties about marriage. Will we divorce? Will we be happy? Will my spouse cheat? Will I be a good spouse? Premarital education provides couples the necessary time to learn, discover, and discuss specific matters; and can turn the most anxious of fiancées into confident spouses. While there's no "foolproof test" couples can take to ensure marital bliss, couples that spend time working through issues before the wedding, can leave their fears and concerns in the dust as they walk down the aisle.

You Can Get It Any Way You Like It: Premarital education comes in all shapes (small groups, class settings, and weekend retreats) and sizes (traditional "couple counseling" setting, couple-to-couple mentoring, small groups of six to eight people, or classes with ten or more in attendance). While it is commonly offered through churches, premarital education is also available through a growing number of counseling centers, non-profit organizations, and community marriage initiatives. Big or small, formal or informal, personal or public, faith-based or secular – you can find a setting, format and size that meet your interest and comfort level. (*Find a Before "I Do" Premarital Provider at www.FullMarriageExperience.com.*)

Diffuse Any Ticking Time Bombs that Could Threaten Your Relationship: Everyone hauls some form of baggage into their relationship. Marriage is the room where the luggage gets unpacked. Some of the contents are quirky, some are annoying, and some can be explosive and do real harm to the relationship. Premarital preparation can provide the opportunity to screen the baggage, identify the threats (past family pain, unresolved anger issues, recent hurts), address and resolve them, and therefore diffuse any ticking time bombs that can and will threaten your marriage relationship.

Put Your Family Legacy on the Right Track: Every marriage is a family legacy in the making. Your children, their children, and their children's children will be impacted by your marriage relationship. Will your legacy provide your descendants a model of a healthy marriage, or something else? Couples who participate in premarital education are more likely to have a healthy, lifelong marriage, and therefore place their family legacy on the right track.

If Necessary, It's Easier to End Things on this Side of the "I Do": Once a couple announces their engagement, the skids are greased all the way to the wedding chapel. Peer pressure, family expectations, and the numerous non-refundable deposits on wedding-related props skew any possibility of objectively thinking about your relationship. That's where premarital education comes in. You meet with people who care about your relationship enough to help you and your mate discuss matters, learn skills, and acquire insights to make your marriage a success. In some cases, they can also expose blind spots or uncover relationship issues that help you and your mate make one of the best decisions of your lives, "I don't".

We Need Your Marriage to Succeed: Your marriage matters to a lot more people than you might think. Of course, your family and friends have a vested interest in your marriage. But so do the people in your neighborhood, your community, your county, your state, and your country. In recent years, two of the most powerful figures on the planet (the Pope and the President of the United States) have spoken about the importance of marriage to our society. If marriage is the building block of a civilized society, then your marriage relationship is crucial to keep your nation and society strong.

If You're Not Going to Spend Time on Your Relationship Now, then When?: The earlier a couple is intentional by spending time and energy investing in their relationship, the better their chances of having the happy, fulfilling, and successful marriage they've always dreamed about. Premarital education can be the springboard for a lifetime of intentional activities that enhance your relationship. Some couples buck at the idea of premarital preparation. Their excuses range from being too busy, too cool, too smart, or too mature to participate in it. But, if you're not willing to spend the time on your relationship when things are going great, what makes you think you (or your mate) will spend the time when things aren't going so well?

With just two little words, you will make the biggest decision of your life. Why wouldn't you want what premarital education can give you, before "I do?"

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