

Discussing Expectations

Everybody enters marriage with expectations. These expectations are hidden rules that form our reality of how a marriage should function. These expectations are usually unconscious (hidden) rules that we expect our partner to comply with.

If our partner breaks these hidden rules then we feel disappointed and unloved. Conversely, we feel especially loved and validated when our partner does specific behaviors that resonate with our expectations

Unconscious role expectations have been hard-wired in us based on our upbringing (family of origin primarily), the media, friends, books we read, the church, etc.

Since our partner is not a mind-reader, they must be made aware of what these unconscious expectations are. This awareness is most effectively accomplished through effective communication.

Your hope of having a successful marriage is determined by your ability to discuss and navigate these expectations effectively.

Communicating expectations, cont'd

Expectation is living in anticipation that some things will happen.

Every spouse enters marriage with expectations.
What do you do if those expectations are not fulfilled?

Unmet expectations lead to frustrations, and disappointments.
People become upset, angry, and start resenting their spouse.

If people, however, learn how to communicate their expectations,
they would lower their frustrations in the marriage

How did you develop your expectations for marriage?
From your upbringing; (Yes, your family of origin), your friends, the media,
the books you read and other interests.

Here are a few questions to discuss with your partner to understand their mindset and to communicate expectations for marriage.

What does the word love mean to you?
How do you want your spouse to express their affection for you?

What is your definition of happiness?

Spirituality and worship.

Discuss your core beliefs and values? Are any of these values and beliefs negotiable?

What happens if one of us changes our spiritual beliefs?

Fun and recreation?

What is fun for you? What recreational interests do you have?

How do you expect your partner to respond with regards to these interests?
To participate or share in your interests or to disengage? Will disengagement create a problem?

How about posting on social media? How much of your family life or interest will you display publicly?

Household expectations

How will you divide up the household duties?

What role do you play in the marriage?

What is your spouse's role in marriage?

Relational expectations

How can I show you that I love you?

What is something I do now, or could do in the future that would make you not trust me?

Is a great career more important than our marriage and family?

What kind of rules do you want to establish for our marriage?

Retirement

What will retirement look like for you?

Where do you want to live and what will you do?

(Will your partner want the same thing?)

Money

Are you comfortable putting all our money together and sharing an account?

Are you okay with having both our names on all holdings, investments and bank accounts?

Are you okay with staying in debt or do you want to live debt free?

Who will be the minister of finance in your home?

In-laws.

What influence, if any, do you believe our families should have on our marriage?

or How involved will your family be in our lives?

Will you approve financial assistance for my relatives?

Will you assist or support them when needed?

Conflict resolution.

Let us talk about your conflict resolution skills:

How open will you be in discussing your disagreements and disappointments?

How will you react or respond when hurt by your partner?

Will you become explosive or withdraw in silence? Will you stonewall or discuss the issues?

How did your family resolve conflict when you were growing up?

Was that a good method or not?

What would you change about the way they resolve conflicts to apply to our marriage?

Communication

Are you capable of honestly expressing your feelings without attacking your partner's character?

Are you able to listen without interrupting whenever your partner is talking?

Do you become impatient easily when asked to repeat or clarify your thoughts?

Do you yell or swear or engage in vulgarity when communicating?

Do you habitually engage in any of these destructive patterns of behavior?

Criticism, stonewalling, defensiveness, and contempt. (See Divorce prevention).

What does it mean to have honest conversation?

Listen.

Do you have good listening skills?

How important is listening to what your partner has to say?

Will you listen to reply, with an agenda or to learn and understand?

Parenting.

What parenting skills will you implement in our family? Laissez faire, authoritarian or authoritative?

Will you be the indulgent parent, the authoritarian or one who combines firmness with gentleness?

Time with the family.

How important is allotting quality time to spend with family.

What plans will you put in place to balance work time and family time?

Will your career be more important than family?

Commitment.

The wedding vows states: "Forsaking all others, keep yourself only unto her/him, as long as you both shall live"

What does this mean for you? How can you convince me that you will be able to embrace this principle?

How do you define emotional and physical infidelity?

Should we end the relationship if you fail here?

Divorce prevention.

These are considered the 4 major predictors of divorce: Criticism, stonewalling, defensiveness, and contempt.

What do you know about these?

How often do you exhibit these practices?

How do you rate your ability to avoid these destructive habits?

Marriage maintenance

Will you go to marriage counseling if I ask you to?

Career

Do you expect to be a career woman, or you intend to stay home with the kids?

Sex

See the module about sex below.

Mastering the science of Human Sexuality

There is a video discussing each of these important components of sex:

- **How would you respond if I told you that sex is very uncomfortable, even painful for me?**
- **Please share your understanding of the real purpose of sex.**
- **Considering that men and women are wired differently, what do you know about my perspective of sex?**

- **Or. Why do women view sex differently than men?**
- **Is sex more about your enjoyment or the other person's satisfaction. Explain why?**
- **It is said that the man is a gas stove and the woman a hot plate. What does that mean?**

- **Is sex only physical for you? Is it also psychological? Explain**
- **What would you do to initiate a resolution of sexual rejection in the bedroom?**
- **If your partner is too tired or stressed to perform sexually, how would you respond?**

- **Is sex important to you? How would you attempt to enhance your sex life?**
- **Do you think we should openly and candidly discuss our sex life?**
- **If your partner told you they are not ready or in the mood, how would you respond?**

- **If I were ever to lose interest in sex, would you dissolve the relationship? Would you divorce me?**
- **Which is more important to you? Sex or non-sexual affection?**
- **How many children do you want to have?**

- **Sex is not profane. It is sacred. What does this mean to you?**
- **What is your view of sexual betrayal (Infidelity)?**
- **Why do you think you are capable of being loyal to one partner for life?**

- **What are your moral boundaries with regards to sex?**
- **Will you respect my moral boundaries?**

- (Other questions about sex)
- **What are the minimum and maximum number of times you want to have sex in a week?**
- **What gets you in the mood to make love?**
- **What turns you off?**
- **Where do you crave to be touched before, during and after sex?**

For more information visit: lloydallen.org