

Questions to ask before you get married.

Love is an important aspect of a marriage, but it can't resolve everything on its own. There are several things you need to discuss before you commit to sharing your life with your partner.

What Are Your Expectations of a Spouse?

Many people have opinions about the qualities that they want in a partner. Talking about these expectations before you say "I do" can help ease the tension of living with someone new. Some of the things on your list are likely practical, such as the division of household labor. Others may have to do with the way you relate to one another. While there are many different ways to give and receive love, most people have a preferred **love language**:

1. Acts of service
2. Words of encouragement
3. Thoughtful gifts
4. Quality time
5. Physical touch

Knowing your partner's preferred love language before you get married can help strengthen your bond and express appreciation to him or her effectively. It can circumvent misunderstandings and help prevent hurt feelings.

How Do You Envision Your Network of Family and Social Support?

When you are dating, you may operate in a social bubble that prioritizes time spent together so that you can get to know each other better. As your partnership grows and becomes more permanent, however, make sure you discuss the roles other people play in your lives. For example, you may envision a gathering of friends every week and have no problem with people stopping by unannounced. Your introverted partner may want more boundaries around your shared home life, though. Work through these things before you move in together.

This concept also applies to each of your families. Set boundaries early and communicate them clearly. Once you decide how you are going to interact as a couple with your families, stick to that agreement. It may be difficult, particularly if it involves big changes, but your loved ones will adjust eventually. For some people, having a large family is one of the main reasons they want to get married. Others may not want to be parents at all. It's preferable to come to an agreement before you get married than to find out later that you have different visions for the future of your family.

How Do You Manage Finances?

Money is one of the **main topics of arguments** among married people. One person may be great at saving, while the other wants to keep money free to donate to worthy causes. Talking about it before the wedding gives each of you a chance to list your priorities. Then you can come up with a budget that takes both of your needs and desires into account.

Another option is keeping your finances separate. Many couples maintain separate checking accounts even after they tie the knot. This option can help alleviate tension, especially if your spending habits are polar opposites.

What Religion Do You Follow?

If you and your partner have **different religions**, you have probably already discussed how your differing beliefs impact your relationship. Even if you share the same basic religion, however, you may find that you practice in different ways. This is important to discuss before you get married. You each need to know where you stand and what rituals are vital to your faith. It's an especially pertinent discussion if you want religious elements to be part of the wedding ceremony. Open and honest conversations about the differences and similarities in what you believe can help you understand each other better.

Your future with your partner is likely to hold enough surprises that you never could have predicted. Talking through some of the basics of how to make your relationship work before you get married is a smart idea.