

# Things I Wish I'd Known Before We Got Married

by Gary D. Chapman (written Sep 2010)

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## HIGHLIGHTS FROM THIS BOOK *(and what to discuss before marriage)*

1. Feelings of being "in love" cannot sustain a marriage, since the average life-span of these feelings is about two years. What sustains a marriage is spouses learning to communicate love in the forms that are most received by their partner. *(Discuss each other's love language.)*
2. We will often develop uncanny similarities to our parents, including their drinking habits, communication patterns, energy levels, and appearance. *(Discuss what you like and don't like about how your parents do things.)*
3. Resolving marital disagreements without arguing. Truly listening to the other spouse in order to give an adequate summary of his or her perspective. Agreeing to disagree. Learning to compromise. *(Learn how to do "active/reflective listening.")*
4. The importance of spouses making effective apologies for wrongdoing. Learning to speak your spouse's language of apology is more effective than just saying you are sorry. The five different ways of apologizing are 1) expressing regret, 2) accepting responsibility, 3) making restitution, 4) genuinely expressing the desire to change your behavior, and 5) requesting forgiveness. *(Discuss how you most appreciate receiving an apology.)*
5. Forgiveness is one's decision to offer grace instead of demanding justice. *(Discuss what forgiveness might look like on an ongoing basis.)*
6. How spouses can agree on doing which household chores. *(Discuss how you imagine dividing household chores.)*
7. How spouses can most effectively manage their money, and what common major mistakes to avoid, such as purchasing a home they cannot afford, going out to eat too often, buying new cars, and buying too much alcohol. How to live on 80% of your income, give 10% to charity, and save 10%. How couples can agree not to buy something over a certain amount without consulting the other. *(Discuss these financial points and your ability to do them.)*
8. Resolving common sexual difficulties. Overcoming the myth that husband and wife must reach climax together. A husband should spend sufficient time caressing his wife. A husband participating in household chores will often increase desire in his wife for him. Spouses should only engage in sexual acts they are both comfortable with. *(Read Laura's book From Honeymoon to Happily Ever After to learn and discuss everything needed on this important dimension of marriage.)*
9. How spouses can develop good relationships with their in-laws, by learning to listen empathetically to them, speaking their particular love language to them, and alternating holidays with them. *(Discuss how often you imagine interacting with each of your families and what you like and don't like about each other's families.)*
10. Spiritual compatibility in marriage has more to do with what each spouse believes in the way God speaks to them and what He has said. *(Discuss how you see religion and spirituality being a part of your lives.)*
11. How spouses can live with a partner who has very different habits, including Morning person vs. Night person, Optimist vs. Pessimist, Neat vs. Messy, Talker vs. Non-talker, Passive vs. Aggressive, Logical thinkers vs. Intuitive person, and Organizer vs. Spontaneous person. *(Review and discuss this section and where you see some differences in habits.)*
12. Having a balanced dating relationship by attending to these areas of growth: Intellectual, Emotional, Social, Spiritual, and Physical. *(Discuss how you will keep your courtship in balance in these areas and not let the physical dimension dominate.)*

