

Ten Deal-Breaker Questions ...to Discuss Before Marriage

by Bob & Sheri Stritof

Sometimes love just isn't enough to keep a couple together. So often a person will share an issue in their marriage that is an obvious deal breaker. When asked if the issue was discussed prior to getting married, the answer is often "no." Don't make that mistake. Compromise is usually not a great option if the two of you disagree on these key deal breaking issues.

If you are already married, talk about these issues now! If you aren't yet married and you don't know your future spouse's thoughts on these issues, postpone your wedding to figure them out!



Deal Breaker Questions

- #1 -- Children
- #2 -- Money
- #3 -- Sex
- #4 -- In-laws
- #5 -- Household Responsibilities
- #6 -- Time
- #7 -- Addictions
- #8 -- Abuse
- #9 -- Fidelity
- #10 -- Long-lasting Marriage

1. Do you want to have children?

It is a huge red flag in your relationship if you and your future spouse cannot agree on whether to have children or not. Thinking that you can deal with this issue later in your marriage is a mistake. Making a decision to have a baby when one parent doesn't want to have children is not fair to the child or to your marriage.

2. Can we talk about money?

The mechanics of how the two of you handle your finances really isn't the issue. Many couples in successful marriages have separate checking accounts and many couples in successful marriages have one account. The issue is whether or not the two of you can calmly and practically talk about money. If how your money is spent, or saved, or not spent was an issue before you got married, it will be an even bigger issue after your wedding. Make the decision to talk about your finances now. If your future spouse doesn't want to talk about money, or doesn't think talking about money is important, hold off on a wedding until this issue is resolved.

3. Can we talk about sex?

While it is difficult to predict the future when it comes to an individual's sexual libido, it is imperative that the two of you can talk about sexual issues. Really, if the two of you were already having sexual issues, you shouldn't have gotten married until those issues were settled. Differences in sexual frequency, desire, preferences, fantasies, masturbation, pornography, expectations, etc. will tear the two of you apart. If you and your partner are unable to talk about the issues, or

if your spouse doesn't see any real problem, or doesn't want to talk about sex with you, see a marriage counselor.

4. How much time will we spend with our in-laws?

They may be wonderful people who love you both, but your in-laws should not be allowed to interfere in your marriage relationship. If either one of you will not or cannot set boundaries with your own parents when it comes to visits, phone calls, finances, children, etc., the problem with your in-laws will only worsen.

5. Who will do the household chores?

If your spouse's answer to that question is "No" or "Why should I?" or "Isn't that your job?", you have a problem. Here are several options.

- You can hire someone to do the chores that neither of you wants to do.
- You can accept that you will be doing 90%+ of the chores around the house.
- You can discuss the importance of sharing the household chores together.

If none of these options work out, you may want to call off the wedding if you're not already married. If you are married, seek professional counseling for your relationship. This is another one of those issues that won't suddenly get better after you sign the marriage license.

6. How do you want to spend our days off?

Your spouse's answer to this question will reveal several things.

- How your future spouse likes to spend free time.
- The value your future spouse places on having fun with you.
- Whether or not you will come first before work.

Balancing work and fun and family time and personal time is not easy, but is essential. Without talking about the time aspect of your life together, you may find yourself grumbling because your spouse is spending what you consider to be too much time with old friends and extended family, or on hobbies, sports, the computer, etc. Living a balanced life together will create the time you both need, individually and together, for vacations, quiet time, creative time, and fun time.

7. What about addictions?

The answer to this question, or to questions about smoking cigarettes or using drugs or harmful watching of porn or drinking too much alcohol, will reveal whether or not your spouse or future spouse has a potential or current addiction problem which could end up not only threatening your marriage and spouse's health but could also put you in legal and financial jeopardy.

8. Have you ever hit someone?

If your spouse has anger management issues, or tries to control who you see and what you do, or is causing you to walk on egg shells, don't wait to get help. These are signs of a potentially abusive personality. Don't think you can "save" him or her. You can't. This is a problem that needs professional counseling.

9. Do you think it is important to be faithful to one another?

Open marriage and swinging may be a choice for some married couples, but most want and prefer a monogamous relationship. If your spouse or future spouse and you have differing opinions on what cheating is or isn't, make sure this issue is discussed.

10. What do you think we'll be doing in thirty or forty years?

If your spouse or fiancé can't answer this or won't answer this question, then the two of you need to talk about your expectations for a long-lasting marriage. Why marry someone who doesn't think your marriage will last?