

## **Counseling for Engaged Couples**

Joseph Malinak

Marriage is more than a long term relationship. And counseling for engaged couples is one of the places you first learn that. As long as you take responsibility for the effectiveness of the counseling, you may never find yourself ending this long term relationship called marriage. You can make pre-marital counseling more than something you check off your to do list, turning it into a rite of passage that helps you enter your new adult world of being married. And if this is your second or third time around the wedding vows, you can use pre-marital counseling to make this one last a lifetime!

In this day and age where so many couples have been together for years prior to the wedding day, here are some reasons to take counseling for engaged couples as seriously as you would if you had already been married for years and were going through a significant life change. People do not only seek out counselors with the words, "I need help with my relationship!" Some seek out counseling when a new baby comes along, when a significant family member is sick or dies, and when a new job is about to completely redefine the family. Whether the counseling comes free from a religious authority or is paid for, we seek assistance from those who have experience with life changes when we find ourselves there.

Getting married is a huge life change, no matter how long you have known and loved each other! So grab this opportunity to take responsibility for your relationship as the adults you are and turn it into a rite of passage that prepares you for crossing the threshold of marriage.

Marriage changes people and it changes relationships. Some of it is pragmatic; such as, you are now someone's son-in-law or daughter-in-law. Whatever they thought of you before, you are now family. Marriage has changed your status in the family and only death or divorce can change it. Your in-laws attitude cannot change your status!

There is also something mystical about marriage that creates an energetic change between the two of you. Some of that has to do with expectations that accompany marriage. When he was your boyfriend and then fiancé, he loved how you dressed! Now, suddenly, he's making requests for a little more modesty from you. And you find yourself resenting any single girlfriend who wants to borrow your husband's handyman skills around her house. This legal, spiritual bond is a living thing that permeates your lives and grows for the rest of your lives.

So when you accept counseling as an engaged couple in preparation for marriage with an open mind and heart and the willingness to learn something about yourselves from it, you take a stand that your intention to marry means something very significant. You are taking yourselves seriously as individuals and as a couple and it adds to the foundation of your "couple-hood."

In premarital counseling they will ask you to explore your thoughts and feelings about finances, how many children you want to have, how your relationships with your future in-laws are, etc. Each of those topics requires more attention than we can give here. In the meantime, let's finish this article with some helpful hints about how to keep that honeymoon glow alive between you as the years go by.

There are many ways to say, "I love you." For instance, giving thought to how he or she would like it done and taking action to make it so every once in awhile says, "I love you," pretty loudly! For instance, if she likes a clean kitchen, you just don't care, and usually this is no big deal because she cleans up after herself as she cooks; those rare times you take over the kitchen, clean up after yourself. It's an awesome way to show her you love her.

If he likes an early bed time and you're a night owl, instead of establishing a habit of going to bed hours apart, get ready for bed and climb into it at the same time anyway. You can read as he sleeps or get up after he's fallen asleep. Showing him you love him by respecting his desire is brilliant!

Little things go a long way in a marriage and there are millions of little ways to say, "I love you." With the internet at your fingertips there are really no excuses. Did you know there are sites that will create a message in a bottle as a unique way to send a love greeting? In fact, there are a number of sites solely dedicated to creating love greetings! If you want to tuck a love note in her briefcase or in his suitcase and have run out of clever things to say, you can visit one of these sites and they will help you say it in a way that truly impresses!

Whenever you are on a beach, write I love you in the sand. If as a couple you don't have "your song," it is never too late to find it. Whenever you watch a movie whose love theme mirrors your own, acknowledge it with a squeeze of the hand or an arm over the shoulder.

Opportunities to say, "I love you," cross your path each and every day. With little effort you can learn to spot them and take action.

Counseling for engaged couples may not sound exciting. But it is just the beginning of the two of you taking yourselves as a couple and your love seriously. You are worth the effort.

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There is a secret to relationship success that is direct, simple, and effective. We and others have used it to transform marriages that felt burdensome and hurtful into marriages filled with love and satisfaction.

You can discover this secret for yourself in the e-workbook called *Creating the Love You Want: Five Unique Steps to Improve Your Marriage*. Go to

<http://www.CreateTheLoveYouWant.com> and order your copy right now. With it, you can begin making a difference for yourself tonight!