

What This Divorcee Knows About a Lasting, Fulfilling Marriage



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Getting married is a very exciting time and a moment most women dream of for a long time. I know this because I was a dreamer and enjoyed being married for 20 years. Although my marriage didn't survive the test of time, I certainly gained some wisdom about what not to do. The best wedding gift I can offer you is hindsight from my own experience and the experience of the women I counsel through divorce.

I believe in marriage and in the covenant shared between two people who commit to share a life together. Sometimes, we learn more from failing than we do from succeeding, and creating a life with someone is no different. Hindsight, the gift of looking back at what was and what went wrong, has given me 20/20 vision on what makes a marriage

work and stand the test of time.

6 Tips for a Lasting, Fulfilling Marriage

1. Become Fluent in the Love Language You and Your Partner Speak

Make sure your plan for your marriage together is as important as the planning of your wedding day. I have been to a lot of beautiful weddings and heard of wonderful honeymoons. Churches and venues are reserved a year or so in advance, but I am not sure if the same time and effort are put into loving your spouse and nurturing each other after the big day. We all need to be loved differently, so make sure you are showing your love in a way your partner can receive it and that you are being loved in a way that fulfills you. If you need to hold hands, make sure your hand is being held. If your spouse needs to have dinner together every night, then have dinner together every night. Ask your partner what makes him/her feel loved. Ask yourself how you feel loved and let your partner know.

2. Retain the YOU in WE

If you are both professionals, make sure you retain your professional identity whether you choose to keep working or not. Even if you decide to stay at home and raise children, stay informed and engaged in your profession. You may never return to work, but, if you do, you'll be much more likely to find work you love. If you do not have a career, stay current and involved with something other

than the household duties. This will provide you and your spouse with conversational topics beyond the household and kids.

3. Share Your Financial Goals and Expectations

Money, and how it's spent, often leads to conflicts in marriages, and yet it's a topic rarely discussed prior to marriage. If you are clear about your goals and expectations for the future, this won't be a problem. Create a budget and financial plan before you even get married. This gives both of you a chance to discuss your concerns and avoid potential and avoidable money arguments. You can find budget templates online, which will help you map out your joint goals and expectations. Be proactive about your finances, and you'll avoid one of the greatest causes for divorce.

4. Comingling Beyond the Bedroom – What You Both Need to Know

As long as inheritance monies are not comingled, they are considered non-marital assets. Discuss with your spouse how you plan to handle inheritances and other separate money accounts. Maybe you'll both decide to share it all, or maybe you'll decide to keep some finances separate. Either way, it's better to be open now rather than hurt later.

5. Don't Leave All Money Matters to Your Spouse

I've met many people who are married who never get involved with finances. They don't pay the bills, ask about retirement, look at credit

card statements, inquire about investments, or check their bank accounts. If your spouse handles all the finances, that's great! Just stay involved and informed by looking at statements, knowing your credit score, meeting with financial advisors with your spouse, and reviewing important documents before signing anything.

6. Before Signing Joint Tax Returns – Do This First

Maybe you stay at home and your husband works. You'll be asked to sign tax returns if you file jointly. Be present with your spouse during accountant meetings. Show interest in your financial well-being so you have the full picture. This is especially important if your spouse owns his own company. Remember, financial concerns are one of the biggest reasons for divorce, so be sure you are involved in all

financial matters. Ask questions if you need to and don't be ashamed if you have to ask multiple times. CPAs and Financial Advisors work for both of you!

Before my wedding years ago, someone said to me, "Something will go wrong on your wedding day. Maybe the cake won't be as tasty as you expected or maybe the band will show up late. Enjoy the day anyway because none of those little things will matter." Something will go wrong in your marriage, but if you love each other, communicate and show gratitude and appreciation for one another, you will have a long-lasting, happy marriage.

The best part is: you can learn from those of us who have been married and divorced...and who have recognized why they failed. I believe in marriage, and my wish for you is a happy, healthy, and lasting love.

If you're thinking about divorce, we want you to know one thing.

U
will be ok.

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MOVING FORWARD WITH CONFIDENCE