

ENGAGEMENT CASE STUDY

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Becky and Joe had been dating for 4 1/2 years. They were both in their senior year of college when they got married. Everyone thought they were the perfect couple. He was a big football star, but had suffered enough injuries that he knew he wanted another career. She had been a cheerleader all through high school. They had both been obsessed with taking care of their bodies. Perhaps that is what brought them together; they both spent so much time in the gym. Their marriage had been relatively trouble free for three years and everyone marveled at how well they had taken care of themselves. They both looked as good, if not better, than in their college days. However, one problem had surfaced. Joe wanted children. They both had stable jobs and he was ready to start a family. Becky had been putting off having a baby for over a year now and Joe could not understand why. One night they got into a heated discussion about having children. Becky expressed her feelings. She told Joe that she really did not want to bear a child. She felt adoption was a more reasonable way of getting a child. Her rationale was that they both had spent many years refining their bodies. Why should she be expected to suddenly give up her body to have a baby? She had seen birth films when she was in college and she did not want to go through that process. Joe was devastated. What would happen now?

1. Would it have helped if Joe had known this about Becky before they were married?
2. How could this problem have been identified then?
3. What could have been done before marriage about the problem?

While Joe probably assumed that Becky wanted children and was willing to give birth to them, only half of his assumption was true.

Never assume that you know how your partner feels about ideas and important issues. These are differences of opinion that could cause a great deal of stress later in the marriage.