

GET TO KNOW YOUR FUTURE MATE

During engagement you will be treated differently than when you were just dating. Your families will show the greatest change. You may get called uncle or aunt by your intended partner's nieces and nephews. Your in-laws may start calling you son or daughter. You are now an established couple and you may see each other in a very different light. At the same time there is usually a lot of hustle and bustle with wedding preparations and everyone is giving you opinions and advice. It is typical for the couple to feel somewhat confused, as if they are in some kind of a dream world; but, it is also a time when clear thinking and serious discussions should take place. Engagement is used as a time to plan your wedding; but more importantly, it is meant to be a time to see your intended spouse as a spouse and discover if you really want the marriage to take place or not. ENGAGEMENT IS MATE SELECTION INSURANCE. No relationship has a guarantee and a little insurance never hurts. Use the engagement period to make certain that this is the person you want to marry. Engagement should be a time when you EVALUATE your relationship.

The following is a list of items that you should examine during engagement. At this point, you may know how your intended spouse feels about many things; but, you will not know everything about that person. Engagement is the time to discuss many things and come to some agreement on most topics. It is not critical that you agree on everything, but some of the items are better negotiated during engagement than after the marriage has taken place.

POINTS FOR DISCUSSION WITH A FUTURE MATE:

- I. ECONOMIC MATTERS—Future financial plans and problems
 - a. Budget
 - b. Savings
 - c. Who will manage the money
 - d. Buy or rent a home
 - e. Wife's employment
 - f. Occupational plans for the breadwinner
 - g. Future education or training
 - h. Attitudes concerning the use of money
 - i. Emergency fund
 - j. Insurance

II. RECREATION

- a. Importance of recreation: consider joint/individual activities
- b. Cost of recreation in relation to budget
- c. Entertaining friends
- d. Recreation with relatives

III. RELIGION

- a. Individual religious backgrounds

- b. Current religious philosophies and commitments
 - 1. Attendance at church
 - 2. Basic religious ideas
 - 3. Prayer
 - 4. Type of wedding ceremony
 - 5. Who will perform the wedding ceremony
 - 6. Family planning
 - 7. Affiliation of children

IV. CHILDREN

- a. Number of children
- b. Methods of discipline (childhood, middle, and teen years)
- c. Teaching responsibility
- d. Rights and responsibilities of parents
- e. Rights and responsibilities of children
- f. Allowances and money management
- g. Education of children

V. AFFECTION

- A. Attitudes in family
- B. Behavior in public
- C. Behavior in presence of children or relatives
- D. Verbal expression of love
- E. Emotional needs
- F. Building and maintaining security and trust in the relationship

VI. IN-LAWS

- A. Interaction with in-laws—how much and when
- B. Proximity of home to in-laws
- C. Financial independence
- D. Emotional independence
- E. Names for in-laws
- F. Degree of in-law participation in marriage
- G. Sharing holidays and traditions
- H. Child tending

VIII. COMMUNICATION

- A. Fighting fair; handling arguments
- B. Compromising
- C. Importance of making time for communicating

IX. HANDLING CONFLICTS

- A. Causes of conflict
 - 1. Insecurity
 - 2. Lack of respect
 - 3. Differences
 - 4. Interference of others
 - 5. Patterns of behaviors
 - 6. Others

B. Ways of handling conflict

1. Giving in
2. Fleeing
3. Avoiding
4. Fighting (display of anger)
5. Forgetting
6. Putting off
7. Compromising
8. Tears
9. Threats
10. Guilt
11. Others

C. Dealing with feelings resulting from conflict

1. Challenged
2. Unloved
3. Insecure
4. Misunderstood
5. Unhappy
6. Respected
7. Cared for

D. Importance of forgiveness

E. Checklist of agreement/disagreement