

Premarital Counseling Questions

Read the article first. This worksheet accompanies [Premarital counseling questions | life long commitment questionnaire | questions for a long & happy relationship](#) at ThoughtsFromATherapist.com, the questionnaire it rebuilds. Search “premarital counseling questions” on the site to find it.

Many of us sign up for a lifelong commitment without ever discussing its terms. These questions make the agreement explicit: what the relationship is for, what each of us weighs heavily, how much we carry for each other, and how we will handle money, labor, sex, conflict and the years ahead. It works for any two people who want a lasting relationship, married or not. A few words per space is enough. Some questions are hard, and a therapist can help us take up anything that needs more than the two of us.

HOW WE ANSWER What matters most	Answers only need to carry what is important. When asked about similarities, we name the few that matter most to the relationship, not every shared liking for potato chips. We answer on our own first, then read our answers to each other, facing each other rather than a therapist.
STOP, START, CONTINUE Three directions	Several sections ask what needs to stop, start, and continue for the relationship to go well. We answer whichever of the three feels most important and skip the rest when they repeat.
HOW MUCH ATTENTION 0 to 10, by area	At the end each of us marks how much attention each area needs. Zero means settled or irrelevant. Ten means it must be attended to for me to feel confident. There is no total, and a high number is a place to talk, not a warning.
WEIGHTING What we each weigh heavily	Much of what gets discovered late as betrayal is a difference in weighting that was never spoken. Saying early what we each weigh heavily is the purpose of these pages, and it can reveal that we are closer than we feared, or that something needs real work.
PACING When to pause	There is no need to finish in one sitting. If a question opens more than the two of us can hold, we mark it, keep going with the rest, and bring the marked question to a therapist.

A WORKED EXAMPLE

WHAT HELPS MY PARTNER FEEL IMPORTANT	Predictability and structure. She grew up in a good deal of chaos and feels safe through a plan thought through in advance.
WHAT IT ASKS OF ME	Making sure the hotel is booked, though left to myself I'm happy to find one when I land. It looks like logistics. It is actually attachment.
WHERE WE WEIGH DIFFERENTLY	Hiking. One of us loves it, and the other is largely indifferent.
WHERE WE CAN MEET	I may not love putting on the boots and climbing the mountain, and I can love serving the vitality of what we share.
RESPONSIBILITY	Some. Not all of each other's happiness, and not in a way that erases agency. But some.

Shared values do not eliminate difficult choices. They provide a framework through which those choices can be understood. Without a shared compass, every major decision risks becoming a debate about first principles.

What this relationship is for

Each of us answers on our own copy, then we read our answers to each other, facing each other. A few words per space is enough.

PURPOSE

Why commit?

Why do I want to make a lifelong commitment to you? What is such a commitment for, in my view: attachment, romance, being seen, a practical partnership, family, shared meaning, play, adventure, growth?

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

Who we are

The similarities that matter most to me, and the ways we are most different.

MOST IMPORTANT SIMILARITIES

SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES

WEIGHTING

What I weigh heavily

What do I weigh heavily that you might not? Where might my pleasure or convenience be paid for by you, or yours by me?

RESPONSIBILITY

For each other's well-being

Responsibility for a partner's happiness is neither none nor all. How much do I expect to carry for you, and how much do I hope you carry for me?

- ☐ Mostly my own
☐ A great deal

- ☐ Some, negotiated

PATHWAYS TO IMPORTANCE

What helps me feel important

Check the two or three that matter most to me. Then, on the lines below, name the ones I believe matter most to you.

- ☐ Sexual desire
☐ Felt safety
☐ Being seen as myself
☐ Shared aptitude
☐ Acts of service
☐ Appreciation
☐ Participation in my world
☐ Shared wonder

- ☐ Sensuality and affection
☐ Emotional attunement
☐ Intellectual engagement
☐ Shared experience
☐ Predictability and structure
☐ Protection and loyalty
☐ Shared meaning and values
☐ Playfulness

The shape of a shared life

Each of us answers on our own copy, then we read our answers to each other, facing each other. A few words per space is enough.

MONEY

Finances

Joint or separate accounts, who pays the bills, debt each of us brings, big purchases that mainly benefit one of us, how much either of us can spend without talking first.

LABOR AND ROLES

Work, care, and decisions

How will we divide household work, care and planning? Partnerships rarely split tasks down the middle; they distribute by capacity, preference and skill. Who decides on where to live, vacations, schooling, investments?

SEX OVER TIME

Sexuality

Sexuality goes through many changes in a long relationship. What do I expect about frequency, and how will we handle times when our desire is different?

CHILDREN

Whether, and how

Do I want children, and how many? How do I intend to parent, and what do I expect from you as a parent?

PLAY AND MEANING

Leisure, community, spirituality

What do I hope for in play and recreation, adventure, community involvement, religion or spirituality?

HABITS

What changes, what grows

Habits I would like to see change in either of us, and habits I would like us to build (date nights, exercise, saving, seeing friends).

LIMITS AND FEARS

What would end it, what I fear

What would be impermissible for me, and what support would we seek if it happened? What fears do I carry about this relationship or relationships in general?

History, conflict, and the years ahead

Each of us answers on our own copy, then we read our answers to each other, facing each other. A few words per space is enough.

HISTORY

What you need to know

What about my past do you need to understand to understand me? Is anything unresolved, or something I have not been able to talk about? What setting would help?

TRIGGERS

What spikes me

Which cues do I react to more than others do (being corrected, feeling ignored, yelling, sarcasm, lateness)?
What do I tend to think and do next, and what helps me return to baseline?

CONFLICT AND REPAIR

How we fight and come back

How do I handle conflict, and how well do we repair afterward? What would I want us to do when one of us is making a choice that could harm our health, our family or us?

STOP

START

CONTINUE

DREAMS

What I hope for

The dreams, wishes and goals I have for my life with you, and the support I need from you to reach them.

HOW MUCH ATTENTION DOES EACH AREA NEED?

0 = settled. 10 = must be attended to for me to feel confident. No total.

What this relationship is for

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

Weighting and responsibility

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

Feeling important

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

Money

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

Labor, roles, and decisions

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

Sex over time

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

Children

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

History and triggers

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

Conflict and repair

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩

Dreams

① ② ③ ④ ⑤ ⑥ ⑦ ⑧ ⑨ ⑩