

AVALON

PRE-MARRIAGE COURSE WORKBOOK FOR BRIDES



THE AVALON MR & MRS QUIZ

Write out the answer to each question.

Who is your partner's favourite relative?

What stresses are they facing right now?

What is the one thing they would most like to achieve in life?

What is their biggest fear or disaster scenario?

What, do you imagine, will be their favourite time of day for lovemaking?

What is their favourite way to spend an evening on their own?

What personal improvements do they want to make in their life?

What was one of their best childhood experiences?

Who is their greatest source of support besides you?

What are the other important events coming up in their life besides the wedding?

Swop over your booklets and correct your partner's answers. Then give your partner two points for each correct answer but subtract one point for incorrect or half-correct answers. Total the scores and swop back. Twenty is the maximum score and anything over ten is great!

GREAT EXPECTATIONS...

We all have great expectations before we get married. This exercise has been designed to reveal these expectations to you and your partner. Please discuss these questions together.

How would you describe your partner? Give both positive and negative descriptions.

How do you think they would describe you?

Define what love is in your own words.

Define what you think commitment is.

Name five reasons why you are getting married besides saying "because we love each other".

COUPLES' ISSUES

What special skills or gifts do you bring to this marriage?

What would you describe as your weaknesses?

Are you hoping that marriage will change your partner?

What is the one thing that your partner does that annoys you the most?

How do you rate your partner out of ten on the following common tasks of relationship, where 10 is the highest score and 0 is the lowest?

1. Solving problems in the relationship 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
2. Providing support and understanding 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
3. Rearing children, now or how you think they will do in the future 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
4. Managing money 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
5. Taking equal share of household responsibilities 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
6. Interacting with people outside the relationship 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
7. Meeting your emotional needs 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Who has the final say in making big decisions?

Do you feel supported enough by your partner?

Do you find it easy to have your partner's undivided attention?

Do you feel that you are coming second to something or someone else in your partner's life?

Who mostly decides to have a date? Or to be romantic?

Is there enough romance in your relationship?

Do you plan for quality time where you really talk as opposed to just having the TV on?

Do you do things for your partner that you know they like?

THE MARRIAGE CONTRACT

What is it that you are contracting to exactly, i.e. what is it you are agreeing to once you are married? Please discuss these questions together.

How many nights in together do you want/need?

Is it ok for your partner to go out on the town with a friend of the opposite sex?

How much of the housework and childcare chores are you prepared to do?

Who will do the cooking? How many nights will you cook?

Who will give up their career if necessary for children, if you haven't already done so?

How many nights out, weekends or weeks away from each other would you like?

Who will manage the money and budget for running the home? If one person retains their income and the other minds any children, who will decide how much spending money the stay-at-home parent should be entitled to, besides house-keeping money?

After marriage, how often do you imagine wanting sex with your partner each week?

After marriage, how often do you imagine wanting non-sexual affection such as cuddles, hugs, snogs, massages, baths together etc?

How many children do you actually want or are you happy with the number of children you have?

CONFLICT WORKSHEET

Please discuss these questions together.

List the subjects that you and your partner most often argue about:

Which, in order of importance are the arguments that you would most like to see a permanent resolution to?

Why do you think this hasn't happened yet?

Have you ever caused a row over housework or something else, when really the problem was something deeper that you couldn't admit to?

Who is the person in the relationship most likely to storm away during an argument?

Who is the person that is most likely to bring up a past argument to illustrate how right they are in the current argument?

Who gets sarcastic most often when they are angry?

Who shouts or bangs doors most often?

Who is the person most likely to cry as a result of arguing?

Who is most likely to shut down in the middle of the argument and stop feeling anything, not even anger?

Who apologises most often?

Which of the two of you is most likely to get defensive and deny responsibility for whatever caused the argument in the first place?

Do you think it is ok to go to bed angry with one another?

Where do you think you have learned to argue in the way that you do?

How do you resolve conflict with your family?

How do you resolve conflict with your friends?

Why do you think there is a difference if there is one, between how you resolve conflict with your partner and these other groups?

Do you ever feel like physically touching your partner when they are angry? Which type of touching would they want from you, if any?

Do you think it is ok to push or shove one another during a row?

IN-LAWS AND OUTLAWS

Please discuss the following questions together.

Is your relationship with your parents as good as you want it to be? If not, why not?

Do you think that your parents have any anxieties about your upcoming wedding?

Whose family are you currently more comfortable spending time with? Why is this?

Are there any members of your family that your partner does not like spending time with?

Do you ever wish that your own family were more like your partners' and if so, in what ways?

If one of your parents is in need of care, will your partner agree to care for them in your home?

Do you find yourself feeling resentful of the closeness that your partner feels towards their family?

Were any of your family members or relatives affected by any mental health issues?

Have any negative experiences with a parent impacted on how you relate to your partner?

How have these experiences affected you?

Are there any unresolved issues with your family that are affecting you now?

How do you think they are affecting you? Do you have support or help to deal with these issues?

Would you have considered your parent's relationship to have been satisfactory to both parents?

What was your parent's style of resolving conflict?

Who said sorry most often?

Who was the most dependent of the two?

Who did most of the housework?

Who managed the money?

Who took most responsibility for the children?

How did they spend their leisure time, by themselves or as a couple?

Who initiated touch or affection in the relationship?

Were your parents closer to or distant from any one particular child?

Where did you come in the family?

What behaviours did you see in your parents that you would not like to see in your partner?

SEX AFTER MARRIAGE

Some couples have difficulty discussing their sexual needs and desires. This section of the workbook is designed to encourage couples to begin those conversations. Please discuss these questions together and be as honest as you can be.

When was the last time you both discussed your sexual needs and preferences?

Is there a difference in what you both like sexually?

Can you tell your partner that their technique is not working without them taking offense?

Who initiates sex most often?

How do you imagine marriage will affect your sexual lives together? Will it be positive or negative?

Do you think that sex can become boring after marriage? What would you do to change this?

Do you think that pornography is good for your relationship?

If you have had any children or do so in the future, how do you think this will affect the way that you perceive your own or your partner's body?

If one of you is not in form for love-making, how does this get dealt with?

Are you certain that your love-making technique is always what your partner wants at that time?

Have you ever withheld affection or sex to punish your partner?

MONEY MATTERS

Write down your answers to the following and then swop over your workbooks.

Do you know approximately how much your partner earns?

What percentage do they spend every month?

What percentage, if anything, do they save?

How would they spend a windfall of 25,000 euro?

Do you trust your partner to make sound financial decisions?

Are you worried about your partner's level of debt?

What does your partner think about your attitude to money?

What was their worst ever financial decision?

If your partner wanted to take out a loan, would they have to discuss this with you first?

Does your partner spend money on anything that you disapprove of?

If one of you suffers financial difficulties how would this be managed between you?

When was the last time you dicussed household budgets and your financial future?

MACGYVER vs LOST

Imagine that you are on your honeymoon when your cruise-ship sinks in the Caribbean. When you wake up you are on a desert island in the middle of nowhere. You are the only survivors. One of you is injured. There may be a chance that other people know of your plight but you can't be sure.

There is a storm approaching fast. You know you have to survive but also you have to make sure you will be spotted by any potential rescue parties. There is a bunch of stuff on the beach that came ashore from the boat. However you can only pick ten items because you can't carry anymore than that.

YOUR MISSION

Write down which of the ten items you most want to bring with you. Then rank them in order of importance where 1 is the most important item and 10 is the least important.

Here is the list:

1. Two changes of clothing
2. AM-FM and shortwave radio receiver
3. Ten gallons of water
4. Pots and pans
5. Matches
6. Shovel
7. Backpack
8. Toilet paper
9. Two tents
10. Two sleeping bags
11. Knife
12. Small life raft with a sail
13. Sun-block lotion
14. Cook-stove and lantern
15. Long rope
16. Two walkie-talkie sender-receiver units
17. Freeze-dried food for seven days
18. One change of clothing
19. One fifth of whiskey
20. Flares
21. Compass
22. Regional aerial maps
23. Gun with six bullets
24. Fifty packets of condoms
25. First-aid kit with penicillin
26. Oxygen tanks

Share your list with your partner.

Now come up with a joint list that you both agree on. Both of you need to be influential in discussing the problem and working out what items to bring. When you are finished this, answer the following questions:

How effective do you think you were at influencing your spouse?

How effective was your spouse at influencing you?

Did either of you try to dominate the other, or were you competitive with each other?

Did you sulk or withdraw?

Did your partner sulk or withdraw?

Did you have fun?

Did you work well as a team?

How much irritability did you feel?

How much irritability did your partner feel?

Did you both feel included in the decision-making process?

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