

## A Divorce Lawyer's Tips for Marriage

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1. Love each other as you are. Men marry women hoping they will not change. Women marry men expecting them to change. The awful reality is that men do not change and women do. If you think you can make him into a perfect husband, do not marry him because you cannot. If you think she is perfect, just hope that her changes are not negative.
2. Maintain separate bank accounts, even if one of you makes all of the deposits into both accounts. Invariably one spouse keeps a better checkbook than the other. Joint checking accounts are frequently a source of friction that creates problems in other areas.
3. Should an eight-year-old child be allowed to ride a bicycle in the street? The answer is not important but it is important that you agree on the answer. Other issues need to be discussed before marriage such as religion, politics, finances, and any other potential source of disagreement.
4. Children are wonderful and can be a source of comfort and joy but they can also be a source of heartache and stress. Children change the dynamics of a marriage. Once the children arrive, the couple who gave each other their undivided love and attention finds themselves in a position of sharing that love and attention. At this point, some marriages become stronger but others fail.
5. The husband should be older than the wife. Women are more mature than men. Women who marry younger men are looking for a "project" or a child. My experience in forty years of divorce practice is that an older woman marrying a younger man is a key to failure, whether the difference is measured in years or days.
6. Do not get married on Valentine's Day. I do not know why but Valentine's Day produces more than its share of failed marriages. This is true even when one considers how many more people get married on Valentine's Day. Likewise, do not get married anywhere in the State of Nevada. Gatlinburg and Myrtle Beach do not have a high success rate either.
7. Do not marry a hunter. I once had a husband tell me "I do not understand her. Every year at the beginning of deer season she becomes impossible to live with." Hunting is the only legal hobby or activity that seems to cause a problem in marriage. I have never had a spouse complain about golf, poker, or other recreational activities but complaints about hunters are frequent. Maybe it is because hunters are loners who are not dependent upon other people.
8. Husbands should share household chores and help with the children. This is true whether both spouses work or if only one spouse works. Husbands who

expect to be waited on “hand and foot” will soon be entering a second, third, or fourth marriage looking for the wife who will do that.

9. Most separations start about two years before the actual separation when the wife tells her husband “We need to talk” and he ignores it. Husbands never seem to realize their marriage is in trouble until it is too late. If the wife says, “We need to talk,” the husband should either start talking or start packing.
10. Spend less than you earn. Financial problems have caused or exacerbated many divorces. It is rare that a couple going through divorce does not have massive credit card debt.
11. If you do not like your in-laws to be, do not marry their son or daughter. If you want to know what a wife will be like thirty years from now, look at her mother. If you want to know what a husband will be like thirty years from now, look at his father.
12. Jealousy is the single worst emotion in a marriage. Jealous spouses are the underlying cause of many divorces. Even where the parties do not divorce, jealousy makes the marriage miserable. Jealousy is a lack of trust and a marriage cannot make it without trust.
13. Every marriage has arguments and disagreement. Do not hesitate to argue but have rules. No bringing up past problems. No discussions of a problem that neither spouse can resolve, such as an in-law’s hygiene nor lack of it. Never make a statement that can never be retracted such as “You are awful in bed.” An honest discussion does not mean there has to be a winner or a loser.
14. Sex is important. Couples who have a good sexual relationship are less likely to divorce. Even if they divorce, it is likely to be less bitter than the divorce of a sexually incompatible couple. Never say no to sex unless you are still in the restaurant or the children are in the room. It is surprising how frequently both parties to a divorce complain that the other never engaged in sex.
15. One reason I think my own marriage works so well is that we do not exchange Christmas presents, birthday presents, Valentines, or anniversary presents. That does not mean that we do not give each other gifts; we do it when the mood strikes or when we find the perfect gift, but never on special occasions. I doubt that many couples will ever agree on this policy but it avoids much stress.
16. Never hesitate to say “I love you.” Actions speak louder than words but sometimes the words help to corroborate the actions.
17. Always have joint and mutual goals. Many couples finally buy their dream house, only to separate within the year because that was their only common goal. Always have goals that on which you are working together.