Help!
I Would Like to Get Married, but I’m Afraid that I’ll End Up in a Bad Relationship!

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IN TODAY’S SOCIETY, MARRIAGE IS SEEN AS LARGELY UNFULFILLING, WITH MOST RELATIONSHIPS UNSATISFYING, OR EVEN MISERABLE.
Figure 17. PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS WHO AGREED OR MOSTLY AGREED THAT MOST PEOPLE WILL HAVE FULLER AND HAPPIER LIVES IF THEY CHOOSE LEGAL MARRIAGE RATHER THAN STAYING SINGLE OR JUST LIVING WITH SOMEONE, BY PERIOD, UNITED STATES
MARRIAGE IS GETTING A BAD RAP IN TODAY’S WORLD
To offset and neutralize the evil teachings in the media and on the cameras and in the show and on the street, we must teach marriage, proper marriage, eternal marriage.

Grand Principle #1

Most Marriages are Healthy and Happy
Fact #1
Marriage has Many Benefits
Married People Live Longer

- Non-married women have 50% higher mortality rates than married women.
- Non-married men have a 25% higher mortality rate than married men.
- Being non-married is a greater mortality risk factor for men than having heart disease.
- Being non-married is a greater mortality risk factor for women than having cancer.
Married people are healthier

- Married women are 30% more likely to report their health as very good or excellent than same-age single women.
- Married men are 40% more likely to report their health as very good or excellent than same-age single men.
- Married men and women are less likely than singles to have chronic illness or disability.
Married people live healthier lifestyles, especially men

- Married people drink less alcohol and smoke less.
  - Single men drink twice as much as married men.
- Wives encourage their husbands to eat more nutritious food and to have good sleep habits.
- Wives encourage husbands to visit the doctor and comply with doctors’ directives.
- Married women also have fewer risky behaviors, but the difference isn’t as large as for men.
Married People Have Better Mental Health

- Married people are less likely than single adults to suffer from depression or anxiety.
Percentage of 24-29 year-olds reporting that they are highly depressed

- Single: 29% Male, 35% Female
- Cohabiting: 27% Male, 35% Female
- Married: 20% Male, 26% Female
Married People are Better Off Financially

- “Marriage is a wealth-generating institution.”

- Individuals who never legally marry have less wealth.

- Married men make 10-20% more money than single men, even when they have similar jobs—they are more productive at work.

- Married adults save more of their earnings than non-married adults.

- Married people accumulate more financial assets (wealth) than single adults.
  - Never married have 75% fewer assets
  - Cohabiting couples have 58% fewer assets
Personal Income of 33-35 year-old Men

- Married in 20's
- Never Married

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Educational Level</th>
<th>Married in 20's</th>
<th>Never Married</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&lt; HS</td>
<td>28,000</td>
<td>21,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>HS/SC</td>
<td>43,000</td>
<td>33,000</td>
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<tr>
<td>Col Grad</td>
<td>79,000</td>
<td>64,000</td>
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</table>
Fact #2
Married People Are Happier Than Nonmarried People
Percentage of 24-28 year-olds reporting that they are highly satisfied with their lives

- Single: Male 35%, Female 33%
- Cohabitating: Male 35%, Female 29%
- Married: Male 52%, Female 47%
Fact #3
Most Marriages are Happy
Some marriages do bend, and some will break, but we must not, because of this, lose faith in marriage nor become afraid of it. Broken marriages are not typical.

Remember that trouble attracts attention! We travel the highway with thousands of cars moving in either direction without paying much attention to any of them. But should an accident occur, we notice immediately. If it happens again, we get the false impression that no one can go safely down the road. One accident may make the front page, while a hundred million cars that safely pass are not regarded as worth mentioning.

Writers think that a happy, stable marriage does not have the dramatic appeal, the conflict worth featuring in a book or a play or a film. Therefore, we constantly hear about the ruined ones and we lose our perspective.

Boyd K. Packer, April 1981 General Conference
Marital Happiness among LDS Midlife Couples

- On a scale of 1 (low) to 10 (high), how would you rate the degree of happiness in your relationship?
  - 77.6% of wives reported at least an 8
    - 88.1% reported at least a 7
  - 76.6% of husbands reported at least an 8
    - 90.5% reported at least a 7
Fact #4

The Reported High Divorce Rates are Misleading
The national probability of a couple getting divorced over their life span is about 45%.

However, this is the OVERALL divorce rate. The probability of getting divorced varies considerably by risk factors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FACTORS</th>
<th>PERCENT DECREASE IN RISK OF DIVORCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Annual income over $50,000 (vs. under $25,000)</td>
<td>-30</td>
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<td>Having a baby seven months or more after marriage (vs. before marriage)</td>
<td>-24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marrying over 25 years of age (vs. under 18)</td>
<td>-24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Family of origin intact (vs. divorced parents)</td>
<td>-14</td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious affiliation (vs. none)</td>
<td>-14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College (vs. high school dropout)</td>
<td>-25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Grand Principle #2

Choose Wisely
The Key to Having a Healthy Dating Relationship (and Marriage!) Is Friendship!
Friendship is... a vital and wonderful part of courtship and marriage. A relationship between a man and a woman that begins with friendship and then ripens into romance and eventually marriage will usually become an enduring, eternal friendship. Nothing is more inspiring in today’s world of easily dissolved marriages than to observe a husband and wife quietly appreciating and enjoying each other’s friendship year in and year out as they experience together the blessings and trials of mortality.

Friendship in a marriage is so important. It blows away the chaff and takes the kernel, rejoices in the uniqueness of the other, listens patiently, gives generously, forgives freely. Friendship will motivate one to cross the room one day and say, “I’m sorry; I didn’t mean that.” It will not pretend perfection nor demand it. It will not insist that both respond exactly the same in every thought and feeling, but it will bring to the union honesty, integrity. There will be repentance and forgiveness in every marriage—every good marriage—and respect and trust.

Marion D. Hanks, “Eternal Marriage,” Ensign, Nov. 1984, 35
Friendship

In a strong, enduring friendship, friends

- like to spend time together
- like to talk to each other
- are loyal to each other
- care about each other’s happiness
- trust each other
- are dependable
- have fun together
- accept each other’s weaknesses
- admire each other
- know each other well
- do not expect perfection from each other
- value the friendship enough to apologize and forgive
It is essential that you become well acquainted with the person whom you plan to marry, that you can make certain that you are looking down the same pathway, with the same objectives in mind. It is ever so significant that you do this.

Courtship is a time for two people to get acquainted. It is a time to get to know someone, his or her interests, habits, and perspective on life and the gospel. It is a time to share ambitions and dreams, hopes and fears. It is a time to test someone’s commitment to gospel living.

The quality of your friendship will tell you a lot about your partner and the advisability of getting married.
Research shows that the strongest predictor of the quality of your marriage is the quality of your relationship/friendship BEFORE marriage.
In a dating and courtship relationship, I would not have you spend five minutes with someone who belittles you, who is constantly critical of you, who is cruel at your expense and may even call it humor.

Grand Principle #3

Nurture Your Relationship
Love is like a flower, and like the body, it needs constant feeding. The mortal body would soon be emaciated and die if there were not frequent feedings. The tender flower would wither and die without food and water. And so love, also, cannot be expected to last forever unless it is continually fed with portions of love, the manifestation of esteem and admiration, the expression of gratitude, and the consideration of unselfishness.
If one is forever seeking the interests, comforts, and happiness of the other, the love found in courtship and cemented in marriage will grow into mighty proportions. Many couples permit their marriages to become stale and their love to grow cold like old bread or worn-out jokes or cold gravy. Certainly the foods most vital for love are consideration, kindness, thoughtfulness, concern, expressions of affection, embraces of appreciation, admiration, pride, companionship, confidence, faith, partnership, equality, and interdependence. (Spencer W. Kimball, “John and Mary, Beginning Life Together,” New Era, June 1975, 7–8)
Grand Principle #4

Repair Your Relationship as Needed
I recall listening at length to a couple who sat across the desk from me. There was bitterness between them. I know that at one time their love was deep and true. But each had developed a habit of speaking of the faults of the other. Unwilling to forgive the kind of mistakes we all make, and unwilling to forget them and live above them with forbearance, they had carped at one another until the love they once knew had been smothered....
I am satisfied that had there been even a small measure of repentance and forgiveness, they would still be together, enjoying the companionship that had so richly blessed their earlier years.

Gordon B. Hinckley, June 1991 Ensign, page 4)
I have learned that happy marriages rely on the gift of repentance. It is an essential element in every good marital relationship. Spouses who regularly conduct honest self-examination and promptly take needed steps to repent and improve experience a healing balm in their marriages. Repentance helps restore and maintain harmony and peace...
Humility is the essence of repentance. Humility is selfless, not selfish. It doesn’t demand its own way or speak with moral superiority. Instead, humility answers softly and listens kindly for understanding, not vindication. Humility recognizes that no one can change someone else, but with faith, effort, and the help of God, we can undergo our own mighty change of heart.

Elder L. Whitney Clayton, April 2013 General Conference
To develop a solid marriage, we must be able to admit we are sorry for mistakes we make. When conflicts in marriage arise, we should be swift to apologize and ask for forgiveness, even though we may not be totally at fault. True love is developed by those who are willing to readily admit personal mistakes and offenses.

Joe J. Christensen, *One Step at a Time*, page 39, Deseret Book
A happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers.

Robert Quillen
If we really want to love, we must learn how to forgive.

Mother Theresa
Forgiveness should go hand in hand with love. In our families, as well as with our friends, there can be hurt feelings and disagreements. Again, it doesn’t really matter how small the issue was. It cannot and should not be left to canker, to fester, and ultimately to destroy. Blame keeps wounds open. Only forgiveness heals.

Thomas S. Monson April 2014 General Conference
Forgiveness is the very reason God sent His Son, so let us rejoice in His offering to heal us all. The Savior’s Atonement is not just for those who need to repent; it is also for those who need to forgive. If you are having trouble forgiving another person or even yourself, ask God to help you.

Kevin R. Duncan (April 2016 General Conference)
Those who go to the marriage altar with love in their hearts, we might say to them in truth, if they will be true to the covenants that they take in the temple, fifty years after their marriage they can say to each other: “We must have not known what true love was when we were married, because we think so much more of each other today!” And so it will be if they will follow the counsel of their leaders and obey the holy, sacred instructions given in the temple ceremony; they will grow more perfectly in love even to a fullness of love in the presence of the Lord Himself.

Harold B. Lee, *Teachings of the Presidents of the Church: Harold B. Lee*
Let me assure you that the vast majority of marriages between faithful members of the Church are happy and successful. For those not yet married, you should move forward with faith and confidence toward the ultimate goal of marriage and family.... I assure you that the joy, love, and fulfillment experienced in loving, righteous families produce the greatest possible happiness we can achieve.

Quentin L. Cook, “The True Path to Happiness”, June 2011 Ensign