



The  
Importance  
of  
Premarital  
Counseling

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## What Are the Benefits of Premarital Counseling?

There are many benefits of premarital counseling, in fact I believe premarital counseling can diminish need for couples counseling later in your marriage. Some of the benefits you will receive is learning healthy, respectful communication skills, gaining a deeper insight and understanding of yourself, your partner and what it means to be a new entity called a 'relationship'. Also many wedding officiants, pastors and churches actually require that couples go through premarital counseling sessions before the big day.

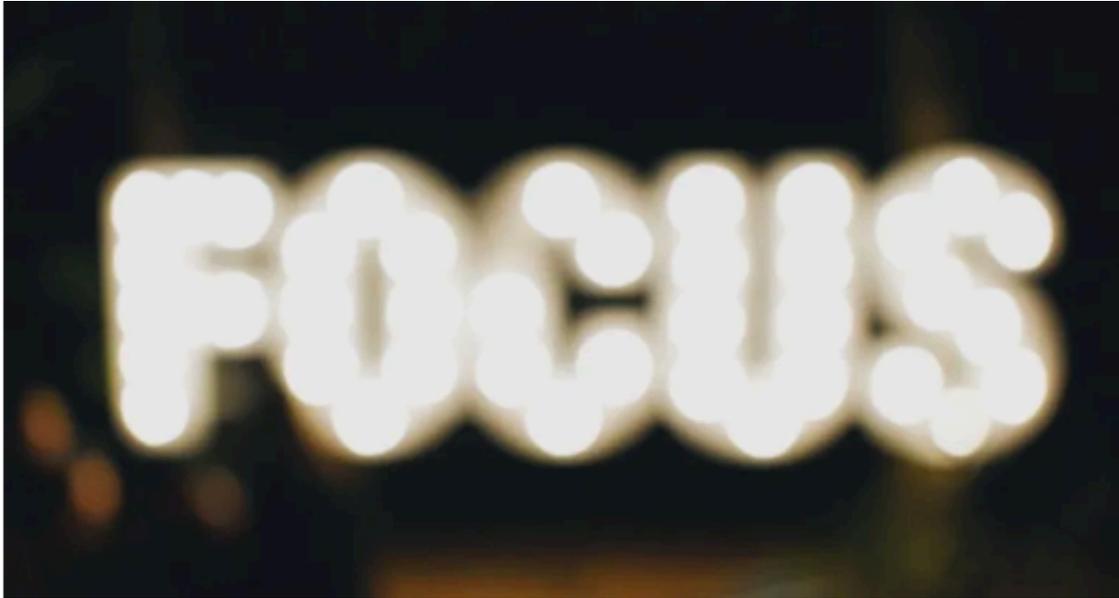
Premarital counseling can help you focus on and understand your beliefs, ideals, and dreams of what a great relationship looks like to you and what it looks like to your partner. Too often, we make assumptions and assume that what we think, or believe about what a relationship should look like, is what our partner believes also. You want to learn how to create common goals and an agreed upon vision for your future. So if you're going to attend premarital counseling, here are a few things to consider that might help you get the most out of your time and effort.



## **It Should Not be a Piece of Cake**

Unlike a very beautiful, expensive and hopefully delicious wedding cake, if premarital counseling is effective, attending shouldn't be a piece of cake to enjoy. Premarital counseling should also bring up tough issues and questions that you may have never considered. Not just bring up tough questions and issues, but also, it should provide you the insights, understanding, skills and resources to help you work through them.

That is the main goal of premarital counseling. You will consider questions like: What happens when the infatuation wears off? What happens when there are interpersonal conflicts, or even familial ones? What does your partner need in order to get ready to have a loving, respectful conversation instead of a heated argument?



## Pay Attention

It's one thing to schedule something on your calendar, even to actually pay for the premarital counseling sessions, but it is another thing all together to focus and genuinely pay attention as well. No information can help you if you do not hear it, or make yourself available to listen carefully to the questions and recommendations.

Even if you show up physically (or even virtually) for your premarital counseling sessions, be careful not to tune out, or sleep walk through the process. Like anything else, if you're going to do it, put your HEARt into it. Don't just sit through it and nod your head. Seriously, do all you can to be there fully, in the present moment.

Engage in the conversation, come with questions that you have on your heart. Write them down. Consider them carefully. It's YOUR time, and truly there is no better time to learn all you can about yourself and your partner. It will pay great dividends in the future.



## Allow Your Counseling to Deepen Your Connection

Premarital counseling often offers you a great opportunity to learn more about yourself as well as your partner. We, at the relationship couple's resort will have you take the **Primary Colors Relationship Personality assessments** that help you understand how each of you perceives the world, as well as, best expresses and receives love and affection.

You will learn to see yourself and your partner through different colored lenses, who you have a tendency to be in different life and emotional contexts and how to best improve your stress management skills. Look at it as an excellent opportunity to lay a strong foundation for your marriage. With a strong foundation, marriages have a much better chance of lasting a lifetime.



## Practice Makes You a Better Partner

You will never be a 'perfect' partner, no one can achieve perfection simply because perfection doesn't exist, but BETTER? Yes, you should always to be a better partner. Put everything you learn into practice. You will have opportunities to trip over disagreements in your everyday lives, it just happens. All couples trip and stumble, but it is knowing how to get up and handle the situations in loving and nurturing ways that matters most. Remember, it is never the falling down that makes or breaks your relationship. It is always the attitude and strategies you have put into place that allow the getting up to make you stronger.

We will teach you active listening skills to help you communicate difficult feelings. Seriously, not many people know how to listen so that their partner really feels heard. We will teach you that feelings, while they are great sources of information and important, they are not facts, so you must not treat them as such.



## What are Your Love Languages and Their Dialects?

We will not only learn about love languages, but delve deeper into the differing dialects of each language as well. Spending time together for example doesn't mean the same thing to all people. Togetherness for some means *focused attention*, like spending a lovely evening staring into one another's eyes, while for others, it can mean your partner enjoys being together as long as you are in the same *vicinity*, like you are each in your own chairs sharing a movie on television.

The love language of gifts is another example. Some people value different kinds of contributions, or gifts. Some prefer gifts that cost a lot of money, while others value gifts that are personal, took time to make and come from the heart. Different people think about gifts and contributions made in a relationship differently. You will be given the tools necessary to begin your relationship with real workable knowledge to guide you. You will not understand your partner's love languages, but their preferred dialects too.



## Let What You Learn Guide Your Future Choices

Big decisions about your future together often come up in sessions. These can include saving for retirement, having children, and how many, public or private schools, and what each other's expectations are for something as complicated as the division of household chores and earnings. Yep, real life! Might not be so simple. Imagine that? It's crucial to explore these topics before you've walked down the aisle.

Again, as you work through these real life issues, listen with your heart. Listen carefully to your partner, but also carefully listen to your own intuition. If things come up about your partner's expectations that surprise you or make you uncomfortable, don't be afraid to discuss them. Better to clear up misconceptions about family life expectations, what love is supposed to look like and retirement security sooner rather than later! Every mole hill you address now, is one less mountain you must attempt to climb later.



## What Do You Value?

What are your shared values? We build our lives on our values whether we are aware of it or not. We base our thoughts, beliefs and actions on our values. If you create a values list that is specific to your beliefs about your future family, it will hold you steady in tumultuous times. It is so worth taking the time to create a couple's and then family values list.

You can also create a motto or mission statement based upon what you agree are your family's shared values that you can easily refer to in stressful times. Creating a values list upon which your future family will stand before you get married can be one of the greatest gifts you ever give to one another.

Remember, you can always add to your values list, or adjust it as it is relevant and important to your relationship.



## Building a Strong Relationship Follow-Up

After you've finished your premarital counseling, work together to identify what meant the most to you from your sessions. Talk about what stood out for you, what you learned and what you realized.

When you leave your premarital counseling you will be given your first wedding present. You will receive a follow-up 26-week relationship course that will help you remember, strengthen and solidify what you have learned in your premarital counseling and so much more. The Online course is called the *ABC's of Great Relationships* created by Relationship Help At Home is designed to only take five to ten minutes a day. But in those five to ten minutes you will be reminded everyday of the thoughts, behaviors and actions that strengthen and nurture relationships.

As important as it is to be reminded of what strengthens relationships you will also be reminded of the thoughts, behaviors and actions that have proven to destroy relationships and how to avoid them.

## About the Author:



**Dawn Billings** is a personality and relationship expert who developed all of the [RelationshipHelp.com](#) relationship programs. Dawn is the Executive Director of the [Relationship Help Resort](#) in the beautiful Arizona desert, where one of her most popular and powerful programs is the two-day private couples intensives to help people heal themselves and their relationships. Dawn is also creator of the [Relationship Help at Home](#) online programs for people who are looking for relationship answers but don't have the budget for a luxury retreat intensive.

**Dawn Billings Consultations** is a training and consulting company specializing in advanced personality training, as well as, entitlement and communication problems plaguing our society. Dawn is a highly sought after speaker and trainer. She is the architect of the highly acclaimed relationship personality tests, [PrimaryColorsPersonality](#) licensed and used widely by relationship and leadership experts around the nation.

With a career spanning 45 plus years Dawn has worked with individuals, couples and organizations to diminish interpersonal conflict, strengthen team development and promote understanding, and engagement. While honing her skills in applying scientific rigor, and deepen her understanding of optimal human functioning – she completed a Masters in Clinical Psychology, while her doctorate work was in Personality and Organizational Psychology. But Dawn is most proud of her two wonderful and gifted sons that light up her world.

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