

## **Ghita Therapy - Premarital Counselling Checklist**

*“Marital research has shown a 40% lower rate of divorce in couples who have participated in premarital counseling and a strong marriage positively affects a person’s level of happiness, physical health, and emotional well-being.”*

### **1. Children related questions**

At this point in the relationship, you likely already know the “will we or won’t we” with regards to raising a family. But digging a bit deeper into the topic can be a beneficial exercise since it can reveal areas you might want to work through.

Premarital counselling questions regarding children might include:

- How many children do we want to have, and what’s our ideal timeline?
- Do we want to hire a nanny? Or will our children go to daycare? Or will one of us stay home?
- If yes to staying home, how long before we return to work?
- Will our children attend public or private schools? How important is this to each of us, and why?
- How will we discipline them? Will we be a united front?
- What will we do if our parenting styles or values conflict?

### **2. Spiritual Life**

- What does spirituality mean to each of you?
- What kind of participation do you expect in each other (spiritual community or church)?
- Will your children be expected to attend any regular services or religious education?
- Will the children go through certain rituals such as baptism, christening etc.
- Will we celebrate religious holidays? If so, to what extent? What will those holidays look like?

### **3. Money related questions**

For many, marriage marks the point at which income and finances are expected to be a shared responsibility.

- How much will each of us expect to contribute to the household?
- Will there be a monthly budget? How will we set it and stick to it?
- Do we want to combine our finances completely or keep some accounts separate?
- How much of our income will we spend on our personal hobbies or interests?
- How much of how income will each of us envision saving?
- How much debt do we have individually? How do we pay this off? (Debt that has incurred before the marriage eg: University loans or credit card debt.)
- What will we do if we have an emergency expense or an unexpected loss of income?
- How much do we plan to spend on shared interests, like holidays?
- What is the importance of earning money to each of us?
- How much is expected from each of us in terms of earning money for the family?
- Who will complete the taxes?
- Do we agree to have full financial disclosure about our personal financial situation at all times?
- How will strong disagreements about spending money be resolved?
- What amount of available money does each of you need to have to feel comfortable?
- Will there be a savings plan for the first house?

- When do we hope to begin saving for retirement? (Super etc.)

#### **4. Work and career questions**

One person's long hours is another person's normal. Make sure you and your partner are on the same page about career expectations.

- How much will each of us work?
- Do we expect or want to make any significant career changes in the future?
- How will we balance careers and childcare if we have children?
- How can we support each other in our career goals?
- How much sacrifice is each of us willing to endure for the other person's career goals and the pursuit of success?
- How many hours per week does each person expect the other will be away from home (or working at home) in order to pursue career goals?

#### **5. Sex-related questions**

It's a tricky topic, but crucial to be honest about. After all, who better to discuss sex with than your partner?

- How important is sex to each of us?
- What are the minimum and maximum amount of times you want to have sex in a week?
- How will we handle any problems in the bedroom down the line?
- How is our current sex life going? Does either of us have any unmet sexual desires?
- Are we monogamous? What will we do if either of us is interested in changing our relationship model in the future?
- What other forms of intimacy and romance are important to us, aside from sex?
- How do you want your spouse to express their affection for you? (In public also)
- What gets you in the mood to make love?
- What turns you off?
- Is anything taboo in your mind? (Porn, fetishes etc.)

#### **6. Social life questions**

Every relationship needs a healthy balance between friends, family, and each other – what does yours look like?

- How much socialising is important to each of us? How much time do we want to spend with each of our friends and colleagues?
- How important is maintaining friendships outside the marriage to each of us and to what extent should our attention and shared resources be devoted to these (e.g. weekend bachelor and bachelorette parties, weddings, showers, etc.)?
- How close are we to our immediate and extended family members?
- How much time will each of us expect to spend with our families (alone and with one another)? (Normally and during holidays?)

## **7. Travel and holiday-related questions**

How do we envision spending our weekends? Where do we want to spend them?

- How will time off, and holidays, be spent?
- How much of our vacation time will be devoted to visiting family versus traveling together as a couple or family?

## **8. Moving and settling related questions**

Whether you both want to move or put down roots where you are, it's great to touch base now.

- Where do we want to settle down? Will we want to live in the city or in the suburbs?
- Will this change as we get older?

## **9. Conflict resolution and decision making questions**

- How do we resolve conflicts?
- What communication style works well for us, and where do we struggle?
- How can we effectively express difficult emotions like anger and disappointment?
- How will we make major life decisions together?
- Where can we turn for support if we disagree about a big decision in the future?
- Are we willing to own our part in the conflict?

## **10. Household chores**

- How do we divide up household duties?
- Do we have any particular challenges around sharing a household?
- Do we have different ideas about cleanliness standards?

## **11. Cultural background questions**

- What are our plans for combining our different backgrounds, whether racial, ethnic, cultural, socioeconomic, or otherwise?
- Do we expect any conflicts related to our different backgrounds?
- How might we plan to resolve those potential conflicts?

## **12. Hope and Dreams (Life Long Goals)**

- What are we each passionate about? What makes us get out of bed each day? And is this separate from our work?
- What do we want to achieve with our lives?
- What is our shared vision of the future?
- Do we want to give something back to our community?

## **13. Deal Breakers and Extramarital Affairs**

- Do you want to establish from the beginning that affairs are not an option?

- Do you agree that emotional affairs / online chatting is equal to sexual infidelity?
- Will you talk to your partner about someone that you feel drawn to as a colleague or erotically since this can build the bond between you and your partner rather than the outside person?
- Will you commit to never talking to a person of the opposite sex (except a therapist) about your relationship with your partner since this builds a bond outside of your relationship?
- How do we feel about checking each other's phones?

#### **14. Family Values**

- Do we have different values or moral standards?
- How can we handle any conflicts when our individual values differ?

#### **15. Love Languages (5 Love languages: Words, Quality Time, Acts of Service, Physical Touch, Gifts)**

- Do we know our top love languages?
- Are we aware of how our partner wants to be loved?

#### **15. Marriage Roles (Husband and wife + gender role expectations)**

- What are our gender expectations from each other in marriage roles?
- What gender/ marriage roles did our parents have?

#### **16. What are the things that trigger me that I want my partner to protect at all times?**

- What are our personal weaknesses and insecurities?
- Do we know about each other's triggers?

#### **17. What have been the biggest problems in our relationship to date?**

List: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **18. Emotional Support**

- Do we know that the other person has our back and loves us 100%
- Do we know how to be honest about our feelings and that it is safe to show them?

*Pre-marital Counselling excerpt from [www.ghitaandersen.com](http://www.ghitaandersen.com)*