

If you're in a long-term relationship where you desire a long and happy future together, then marriage is likely your best choice. Experts tell us marriage is the most rewarding investment you can make in your families' present and future success.

The Investment of Marriage

When you spend, you get something right away—instant gratification. But when you invest, you delay the reward for a larger and more lasting return on your expenditure. Both are important, but one is vital to building success. Romantic relationships are similar. There are things necessary for the moment but offer few lasting benefits. There are things you and your partner can do to invest in your relationship. Things that give you hope and expectation that the pay-off will lead to a secure marriage and stable family.

Choosing Not to Marry

Choosing to live together or separately while having a sexual relationship is not recommended. The experts say that is a gamble and investment is a big reason why.

Choosing not to marry is just a means of short-term gratification, lacking investment. What do you have to invest in order to make marriage work? [Work on character traits.](#)

What it Takes to Make Marriage Work?

There are character traits you can work on now and build together to make marriage successful. And when you do, you each become better people and will have a stronger relationship. This is the investment.

- Build Character - A person of character is faithful, honest, honorable, and true.
- Be Responsible - This means following through, doing your part, showing up, and being there for your partner.
- Be Committed - Being committed means being willing to stick it out, even when it's hard and you don't want to. [Truly LOVING is a choice that isn't dependent on feelings.](#)
- Make Sacrifices - You will each need to give up things for each other. If you're doing something that is causing pain or hardship to your partner, you will have to give it up.
- Be Dependable - Can people count on you? Do you show up when you promise to be there? Do you stay when leaving is easier? Do you consistently give your time, attention, and care to the people you care about? If so, then you are dependable.
- Be Faithful - Faithfulness means keeping the love, emotions, and sex (and this includes touching romantically, kissing romantically, fondling, oral, and intercourse) in the marriage exclusive to your partner.

Communication

What doesn't communication mean:

- [Getting the last word in](#)
- [Doing all the talking](#)
- [Arguing to win](#)
- [Giving dirty looks](#)
- [Not listening](#)

What does communication mean:

- Sharing how something made you feel
- Affirming your partner's feelings
- Working respectfully through a problem or a hurt
- Looking each other in the eyes
- And sometimes agreeing to disagree but move on
- Apologizing and asking forgiveness

The Benefits of Marriage

Here are some of the benefits that married couples say they enjoy more:

Overall greater confidence that their partner will stay with them long-term

- The security to make long-term life plans for the entire family
- Belief that their partner will be faithful to them
- Belief that their partner will be honest and truthful with them
- Financial benefits ranging from taxes, health insurance, investments, budgeting, cutting expenses, and saving money
- Sharing household chores and responsibilities
- Parenting is easier
- Children feel more safe and secure
- Best, most fulfilling, and safest sex life
- Improved educational and career opportunities

Resources:

1. Stanley, Scott, PHD, Is "Marriage Irrelevant?" Sliding vs Deciding: Scott Stanley's Blog, February 20, 2012, <http://slidingvsdeciding.blogspot.com/2012/02/is-marriage-overrated-and-irrelevant.html>
2. Wilcox, W. Bradford; Dew, Jeffrey; ElHage, Alysse, "Cohabitation Doesn't Compare: Marriage, Cohabitation, and Relationship Quality," IFS Institute for Family Studies, 2019, <https://ifstudies.org/blog/cohabitation-doesnt-compare-marriage-cohabitation-and-relationship-quality>