

Are you sure you want to do this?

Questions every couple should ask before they decide to marry

Love has come to be the foundation on which we build marriages, but it presents a problem in that we casually rely on it as the answer to all the difficulties to be encountered in marriage.

One of the reasons love has proved to be less durable in experience than in anticipation is that we have believed there is nothing to be learned about it. Most engaged persons are romantically

Now that you're sure, should you get married outside?

outdoors.

For Harriet Santos, pastor of the Shavertown United Methodist Church in the Back Mountain, wedding ceremonies have become adventures.

Pastor Santos has performed many ceremonies in non-traditional settings and she says she has acquired a reputation for being THE local member of the clergy who is willing to marry couples

in love and tend to avoid basic questions and decisions. "Nothing else matters because we are in love" is a frequently encountered point of view. In spite of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary, questions and concerns should be worked out or answered so that the "wedding bells" will ring smoothly, getting the couple off to a good start.

- Common questions for engaged persons
1. Can you talk to each other on a factual warm level and be realistic about conditions of concern?
 2. Can you empathize and sympathize at a deep emotional level?
 3. Can you communicate appropriate feelings and ideas?
 4. Do you understand and respect

you get married outside?

them."

According to the pastor, the couples whom she marries choose those places that hold some special former significance that they care to experience again during the marriage ceremony.

All the weddings I have done are truly serious, romantic things. They are not a show-off type of ceremony. Many couples write their own vows and the ceremonies become very meaningful to those being married." Pastor Santos said.

5. Have you worked out the appropriate masculine and feminine roles for each other?
6. Do you have a process that you have tried for making decisions?
7. Do you give and receive an appropriate amount and kind of affection to each other?

See QUESTIONS, page 4



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Who gives this bride?

For centuries, brides have been walked down the aisle and "given away" by their fathers, a tradition dating back to a time when a father could, and often did, give his daughter in marriage to anyone he pleased, usually to cement family alliances or gain social status.

However, today, more and more brides are breaking that tradition and having both parents accompany them down the aisle, a concept those of the Jewish faith came up with long ago.

At traditional Jewish weddings, both the bride and the groom are accompanied by their respective parents.

Having both parents accompany the bride down the aisle, and/or having both parents answer "we do" when the clergyman asks the traditional "who gives this bride?" is a nice way for the bride to acknowledge and thank both her parents for the guidance and love they provided her with over the years.

Great gifts ideas for the bridal party

In the past, the gifts given to members of the bridal party by the bride and groom have usually been small gifts of ornamentation: necklaces, bracelets, cufflinks, the clasps, moneyclips, etc.

Today, these items, especially those given to the men, are often obsolete or easily lost. How many men have french cuff shirts for cuff links?

People often tend to think of gifts as simply tangible items, things that can be held. However, since it is usually your close friends and family members taking part in the wedding with you, you may want to put a little more thought into coming up with a gift they will always treasure, whether it is tangible or merely memorable.

Couples looking for more innovative ideas should consider the following:

- FOR THE BRIDES' ATTENDANTS**
1. Silver (or brass if silver is out of your price range) 5x7 photo frames for which you later provide a color photo of yourself and that particular attendant. Even if the photo doesn't end up in it, the

frame will probably be around a long time, and the recipient will always remember where she got it.

2. Treat your attendants to a facial or makeover the day before the ceremony. Another option is a trip to a nail salon for professionally applied artificial nails. These gifts may not be "lasting" physically, but such adventures usually prove to be filled with laughs, so your friends will have lasting memories. Also, you get the added bonus of having a more pampered, relaxed and attractive group of attendants for your wedding ceremony.

3. On a far more practical level, if there is a special accessory you have been eyeing for your attendants - wrist or opera-length gloves, \$10 nylon ties that have tiny bows up the back - but are hesitant to ask them to purchase (they've already paid for the dress and the matching shoes and the hat or hair-combs), give it to them as a gift. You get those little extras that give your attendants a more finished look, and they get a glamour item they have probably fantasized about buying but couldn't justify the expense for something they might use only once.

4. Brides looking for total uniformity in her attendants should consider giving them all matching earrings to be worn for the ceremony.

FOR THE GROOM'S MEN

Some of these ideas would work for the bride's attendants in certain situations as well.

1. A box or three pack of personalized golf balls (those wishing to foot the extra expense could probably find a specialty manufacturer willing to put the bride and groom's names and the date of the wedding on the balls).
2. A personalized or hand thrown coffee mug.
3. An crystal or pewter stein engraved with the attendant's name or initials.
4. Tickets to a sporting event or concert. Like the trip to the salon mentioned above, this would provide memories that cannot be misplaced or lost.

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