



Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts: Seven Questions to Ask Before and After You Marry

Les Parrott III

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More than a million couples can't be wrong! And with this updated edition of their award-winning book, Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott help you launch lifelong love like never before.

This is more than a book—it's an experience, especially when you use the his/her workbooks filled with more than 40 fun exercises. Get ready for deeper intimacy with the best friend you'll ever have.

Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts, in more than 15 languages, is the most widely used marriage prep tool in the world.

Uncover the misbeliefs of marriage Learn to communicate with instant understanding Discover the secret to resolving conflict Master the skills of money management Get your sex life off to a great start A compelling video, featuring real-life couples, is available, and with this updated edition Les and Leslie unveil the game-changing SYMBIS Assessment (see www.SYMBISassessment.com). Now you can discover how to leverage your personalities for a love that last a lifetime.

Make your marriage everything it is meant to be. Save your marriage—before (and after) it starts.

Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts: Seven Questions to Ask Before and After You Marry Details

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Bill says

Ah, mandatory marriage reading! I wasn't especially thrilled with the title of the book, so I didn't come to this with the most open of minds. There were helpful parts in the Parrotts examination of marriage and its obstacles, but in the end I felt it was too driven by the culture for a book from a Christian perspective. Statistics that say that partners who pray together have better sex lives seem like a bizarre encouragement to walk together on the spiritual journey. I'm also not a big fan of defining gender as concretely as this book and others do, although I do not dismiss its importance. The final chapter of the book gives some intriguing thoughts on the concept of forgiveness - I wish we could have started the book with this!

Shantelle says

Great book! Short, easy to read, and full of helpful advice. I recommend!

Favorite Quotes

Intimacy has a "best friend" or "soul mate" quality about it.

Commitment says, "I love you because you are you, not because of what you do or how I feel."

"Okay. So I am willing to admit that my romance with a perfect partner is an illusion. However, I am still fascinated with the mystery of who you are, and I am willing to pursue romance with you and journey together toward a more mature love."

Passion can only survive and thrive if the couple continues to "date" even after they marry.

"When a man makes a promise, Meg, he puts himself into his own hands, like water. And if he opens his fingers to let it out, he need not hope to find himself again." As human beings, we create and define ourselves through commitments, and those commitments become an integral part of our identity. When we contradict our commitments, we lose ourselves and suffer an identity crisis. ... so much so that to break it is to break who you are.

You have decided to embrace your partner in spite of bad breath, blemishes, quirky behaviors, and weird inclinations. That is the stuff of personal warmth - overlooking a blemish for the sake of the beauty behind it.

When your partner feels sure that she can never be condemned by you for who she is, that no judgement can hurt her, God's grace has seeped into the fabric of your relationship - stopping the subtle and unhealthy marital pattern of your partner continually casting about for your approval.

Men have a tough time realizing that offering a listening ear is all a woman needs at times - or a comforting hug, a loving statement like "You are hurting, aren't you?" or "You are under a lot of pressure, aren't you?" Listening to your wife talk without offering quick solutions is the only way to meet her need to be known.

Conflict is natural in intimate relationships. Once this is understood, conflict no longer represents a crisis but an opportunity for growth.

Happy couples may disagree vehemently, but they don't shut their partners out.

Marriage, when it is healthy, has a mystical way of revealing God; a way of bringing a smiling peace to our restless hearts.

But if in your sojourn together you tend the soul - through worship, service, and prayer - you will make it through the storms of marriage unscathed.

Rebekka Steg says

Full of disproven theories on relationships and gender roles, stereotypical advice - the only good advice in the book is based on the research by John Gottmann, and for that I suggest you read his book *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work*. Furthermore the book is full of Christian religiosity, I would've skipped it had I known - oh, and it's one big sales pitch to buy more of their products.

I received an advanced reader's copy from Netgalley in exchange for an honest review

Simone K says

I'm glad I read this book before I got engaged/married. As they walk you through the questions you should ask and why, I was enlightened about my own current relationship. It's amazing that the things I felt most self-conscious about, they found were differences between the genders, not necessarily a warning sign. What a relief!

I recommend everyone reads this book.

Karen says

While I admit books about marriage are not my normal reading material(I've been happily married for 52 years), I happened to see this title cited in an article,and it peaked my interest. I found it insightful, refreshing, and a good quick read. It was interesting see the authors' ability to distill many of the challenges encountered by any marriage into short practical chapters. I purchased my book used, and therefore do not have the accompanying workbook. I think anyone contemplating marriage, or those already married will find useful information between the covers of this small book. Chapters on facing the myths of marriage with honesty, developing the habit of happiness, "Can You Say What You Mean and Understand What you Hear," fighting a good fight, and becoming true soul mates were especially helpful.

Since I have not read many recently published books on this topic, I cannot evaluate the Parrotts' book on a scale of one to ten by comparison. However, I did appreciate their book, and gained reenforcement for my own lessons learned and personal observations collected over a lifetime. It would have been helpful to have read it before I said "I do," but somehow we managed to stay the course, ever growing in love and devotion.

I would readily recommend "Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts."

Jill says

Actually not that bad. It even had interesting parts in it. "As strange as it may sound, there is a strong link in marriage between prayer and sex. For one thing, frequency of prayer is a more powerful predictor of marital satisfaction than frequency of sexual intimacy. But get this: Married couples who pray together are 90% more likely to report higher satisfaction with their sex life than couples who do not pray together." Interesting enough, but my favorite bit was, "That doesn't sound quite right, does it? After all, married churchgoers are painted by the media as prudes who think sex is dirty. Well, let the media say what they want, but prayerful couples know better." How's that for a gripping piece of random trivia?

Anchit says

I read about 30% of the book and then decided that information was hardly seeping inside me. Plus I felt I'm not clear on what exactly are the questions either (even though they are the topic headings).

In between I felt that there were some theoretical things like "start your relationship with a boost of passion in order to sustain it through the later years of your relationship". To illustrate this there is an example of an airplane that takes off uses 80% of its fuel during the take-off and the rest is to cruise through the journey. I don't really get it. How do I put in that much of passion?

Then there is the suggestion to determine which is your love style currently. Either increase your commitment, passion or ... (there is one more factor which I'm forgetting). So these 3 things should be in balance. You can assess which one is more or less and then try to increase/decrease them so that they are in balance.

There are other parts of the book which are good where the author gives examples / case studies to illustrate his point. But I still felt like I'm missing the point somehow.

Sharon says

This book was like looking fondly over old homework from when you were little; nothing you didn't expect to be there, but little bits that make you smile again.

For me, one of those little bits was the style of using stories from people that the authors had met with. It drove points home more quickly (sometimes, even before the point was made. Again, it wasn't anything vastly novel). It was actually the stories that got my attention first (I was browsing the book as part of a project I had been working on).

The other little bit was that it was short.

Samuel says

Every couple considering getting married or recently married should check out this book. Maybe a bit cheesy in places, especially if you're not into getting outside help. However, gave us such a head start on issues and

areas we wouldn't have even known to address before we got married. Thumbs up.

Lisa Driskill says

We LOVED this book!!! Helped us in many ways. Would (and do) recommend it to any couple planning on getting married.

Olivia says

Overall, the Parrotts' book was well-written and with relevant questions. The issues addressed were undoubtedly important. Sadly, I felt like the book only focused on the negative, and gave very little example (real-life) as to how you can positively live out your marriage (as opposed to the hundreds of ways to ruin it). Also, as someone who likes psychology, I found little backing for the book in that sense...little backing for why people might do what they do. But I understand that the book was meant to cover just those 7 questions (good questions too) and to be simple.

It was ok...meh. Alright.

J.E. Jr. says

When Marcie and I got married, this was the book (along with the corresponding workbooks) that our pastor used for pre-marital counseling. Ever since I started doing pre-marital counseling, it's the book that I've used, as well. I am finishing up another round of pre-marital counseling this week, and thus I've re-read to book again.

The Parrotts (husband and wife writing team) work through several vital questions that, I can say with some experience, are indeed important questions for setting a marriage on a healthy course. The chapters addressing each question are full of very practical illustrations and examples, and also are chock-full of advice and direction on how to handle the particular matters at hand in a healthy way. The book itself has a useful set of discussion questions at the end of each chapter, and then there are also breaks throughout the chapters pointing the reader to complete a correlated exercise in the workbook. In all, the material is very practical and straightforward to use.

On top of that, there is a leader's guide and a DVD available, so it could easily be adapted for small group use, and obviously I've found it works well in the context of pre-marital counseling also. All in all, I commend Les and Leslie Parrott for writing and assembling a strong battery of materials for helping marriages get off to the best start possible.

Most of the examples and illustrations in the book are personal ones from the writers' own experiences, which is fine and even brings a sense of vulnerability to the book. Frequently, though, the way these are presented — or at times other parts of the material — is a little corny, and were it not for the disarming nature of their writing style might feel even condescending. Also, while it seems clear from a handful of markers that the writers are Christians, it also seems clear that their editors wanted to produce a set of materials that would sell on a broader market; consequently, there are a lot of missed opportunities when it comes to presenting solid, biblical truths that correspond to the points they are making.

Indeed, the books' persistent erring on the side of the practical and universal keeps me from simply loving it/them as my pre-marital counseling curriculum. It seems like every other time I do pre-marital counseling, I look around for something better, but I haven't found it yet. I would love to assign TWO books, including this one and one of several others (each of which tackles the more deeply spiritual and theological side of this topic well, but miss the more practical aspects that the Parrotts do so well); alas, it usually feels like asking too much to request that an engaged couple do even one.

I do like these books for what they are; my rating is, in part, a reflection of my frustration about pre-marital counseling materials in general.

Astrid Rod says

I actually listened to their audio version & it has helped me to better understand my husband. This book is fantastic, & I'm going to re-listened the audio version with my husband! Thank you so much for this fabulous book.

Ana says

very good insights,
easy to read, sometimes not so necessary info but good for quick advices
recommended for people who want to get married, are married or want to learn how to have a healthy relationship.
Plus: I love the description of love in 3 pillars and the quotes along the book, same as examples and exercises

Denae Christine says

My pastor recommended this to my fiance and me to read before our wedding. We dutifully skimmed the chapters and read the questions to each other.

We liked that the book had specific advice. It didn't just say, "Be nice to each other." It gives communication strategies, questions to ask each other when we're frustrated, a conflict intensity scale, and gender thought differences to work through.

We didn't like most of the stories chosen. Or, that is to say, the stories of young couples were great at showing off how immature and short-sighted people can be. Yet, both my fiance and I kept responding with, "They just need to get over themselves." These stories were good to show us how grown up the two of us are (well, we *are* in our upper twenties) and made us appreciate each other for that. At the same time, it made this book feel like it was aimed at 20-year-olds. Which is fine, just not completely relevant to us.

The last chapter was our least favorite. It was where the authors tried to pull in Christianity but seemed to tack it on as a new strategy. "Seek meaning in your marriage together by being spiritual and going to church together." Um, excuse me? That is NOT what Christianity is about! It's not about attaining some level of spirituality or always going to church. It's about seeking and serving the Lord. The community portion is secondary. "Being spiritual" isn't even a part of this. We both felt like the authors were trying to not offend non-believers but then failed to make the point they really should have made. Something like,

Your marriage isn't about you and your spouse and having fun times; it's about seeking and serving the Lord to glorify Him with your marriage.

God created marriage, and it's a symbol of His love for the Church and the Church's honor for God. How can two Christian authors miss the main point? Yes, we did a lot of skimming, but we still looked at every page.
