

Marriage Prep Vs. Wedding Prep

Leah Meredith

05/28/2024



Marriage Prep vs. Wedding Prep

Picture this: you just accepted a great job in beautiful San Francisco. You find a quaint place on AirBnB for you and your sweetie to rent for a month or two while you get settled there. You throw your meager belongings from your Boston apartment into the car and you're off. Exciting!

Wait a minute! Do you even know the route you will take and where you will stop for the night along the way? Will you max out your credit card buying food and lodging before you even get to San Francisco? Did you remember to bring music and snacks for the long trip ahead? For that matter, is your 2008 Civic even up the 3,000 mile road trip? When was the last time you took it in for a tune up and new tires? Romantic destinations are great, but if you spend all your time and energy thinking only of the destination and not about all the other things needed for a successful trip, chances are you'll end up disappointed.

You see where I'm going with this analogy? You just bought that gorgeous wedding ring, so now it's time to plan the greatest wedding ever, right? Hold on! Weddings are great, but they are just an event. Don't you want to put even more time and energy into planning for a successful marriage?

That's what premarital education is for. Now, a lot of people think: "What's the big deal? I've been in a relationship with my partner for a few years now, we got our groove going, we know how to take care of our relationship." Sure, you're in love and you know each other

pretty well. But you're taking a big step. It's time to take your game to the next level.

And first, let's set the record straight on one thing. Maybe you've been living together for a while, and you see that as your *real-life* marriage prep. No doubt you are learning a lot about each other – money habits, personal hygiene, domestic skills, etc. But the research is pretty clear that living together before marriage is not great preparation for marriage. While those who live together before marriage have a [lower divorce rate](#) in the first year of their marriage, they struggle more in their relationship over time and are even more likely to get a [divorce](#) down the road. Apparently, the things you are learning by living together are not the things that will help your marriage succeed long term. So, *everyone* can [benefit](#) from formal premarital education, not just those who don't live together first.

But most don't invest. In a large survey of American newlywed couples, only 11% said that they had participated in formal premarital education.¹ Apparently, engaged couples spend more time getting ready for their wedding than getting ready for their marriage. Wedding planning easily overwhelms you. The wedding venue, dress, ring, catering, flowers, guest list, tuxedo rental . . . these things take up a lot of premarital bandwidth. What if you prioritized your focus during the engagement period on building a stronger relationship with your partner and improving your relationship skills?

Good research says that premarital education improves [relationship skills](#) and reduces the long-term [risk of divorce](#). And you don't have to have grown up surrounded by a white picket fence to get the benefits. We know that a lot of people worry about getting married because of what they saw in their parents' marriage. [Research](#) shows that couples with a tricky family past often mirror those behaviors in their own relationships. However, here's the silver lining in that cloud. The same study showed that if you had a really hard upbringing, this kind of marriage preparation will be doubly helpful for you.

Check out this blog to learn more about what premarital education is and resources to help you better prepare for your marriage.

Related Content:

[RELATE ASSESSMENT](#)