

# What Do You Expect? Marriage Questionnaire

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Everyone has expectations in their marriage. When those expectations (wants/goals/values) are openly verbalized, spouses can better understand and care for each other. When expectations are unspoken, unknown, or hidden—trouble is just waiting to happen. These kinds of expectations are a ticking time bomb in a marriage, eventually leading to resentment, heartache and sometimes divorce.

When *both* spouses expect to have dinner together each night, they make it happen as much as possible and enjoy their time together. When one spouse expects dinner each night and the other spouse expects to travel six months of the year, resentment can build both ways. The list of expectations is both endless and unique for every couple. What are yours? How well do you know what you want and value for your life and marriage? How well do you know your spouse's expectations? How realistic or unrealistic are your expectations? Do you expect her to stay forever 21? Do you expect him to never watch football? Do you expect each other to speak respectfully and control your anger with each other? Your expectations can lead to a more loving marriage or to a resentful marriage.

This questionnaire helps you to know your own expectations, wants and values in your marriage. It will also help you to better understand your spouse's expectations. Fill out your answers separately, and then share your answers with each other. Your goal is to simply understand and listen to each other. Be as honest and practical as possible in your answers. After you write your answers, judge for yourself if they are reasonable expectations or unrealistic. Circle the three expectations that are most important to you. Circle three which may need to be modified or even let go. Write an R next to your expectations that you believe are Reasonable. Write a U next to those which could be Unreasonable. Write down your partner's answers in column B in order to understand and compare with yours. Then discuss how to make practical adjustments to meet each other's expectations for each topic.

My Answers

My Partner's Answers

In my marriage, I expect/want/value:

1

2

In our communication with each other, I expect/want/value:

1

2

In our times of disagreement with each other, I expect:

1

2

Expectations/Wants/Values

In our sex life, I expect/want

- 1.
- 2.

In our physical health, I expect:

- 1.
- 2.

In our social lives, I expect:

- 1.
- 2.

In our spiritual lives, I expect:

- 1.
- 2.

In our house-cleaning, I expect:

- 1.
- 2.

In our spending and saving, I expect:

- 1.
- 2.

In where we decide to live and locate, I expect:

- 1.
- 2.

In our relationships with in-laws, I expect:

- 1.
- 2.

In our fidelity to each other, I expect:

- 1.
- 2.

When we say goodbye each day and greet each other, I expect

- 1.
- 2.

When we go to bed at night, I expect:

- 1.
- 2.

In our future, I expect:

- 1.
- 2.

Two other expectations that I have in my life and marriage:

- 1.
- 2.

What I expect from myself to contribute to my spouse's happiness:

- 1.
- 2.

### Conclusion

Circle at least three expectations that you and your spouse agree about. Discuss ways to continue and strengthen those agreements.

Circle three expectations that you don't agree about. Discuss one or two practical ways that you and your spouse can better understand or support each other in these areas.

Most couples will not perfectly match each other in their expectations because every person is different. But if you discuss what you want (and it is realistic) and you try to practically support your spouse's expectations (and they are realistic), then resentments can be minimized and your love and care can grow.

Richard Rupp, M.Div., MFT      see Rick's other worksheets on [www.pasadenamarriagecounseling.com](http://www.pasadenamarriagecounseling.com)