

# All~in~One Marriage Prep

75 Experts Share Tips & Wisdom to Help You  
Get Ready Now

SUSANNE M. ALEXANDER

Relationship & Marriage Coach

# Table of Contents

Introduction .....	13
Welcome to This Marriage Preparation Journey! ~ Susanne M. Alexander	
Foreword .....	17
The Value of Relationship and Marriage Education ~ Julie M. Baumgardner	
Chapter 1: Preparing As a Couple .....	22
You Have Chosen—Now Prepare! ~ Greg Hunt and Priscilla Hunt How to	
Recognize Your Soulmate ~ Kathryn Elliott, Ph.D.,	
and James Elliott, Ph.D.	
Prepared Marriages Are a Better Option ~ Krsnanandini Devi Dasi	
and Tariq Saleem Ziyad	
Marriage Preparation Essentials ~ Linda Bloom and Charlie Bloom	
Making Marriage Work Together ~ Yolanda “Yanni” Brown	
Having a Healthy Couple Relationship ~ Ana Morante	
The Value of Mentor Couples ~ Robert A. Ruhnke, D.Min.	
Marriage Advice for Premarital Couples ~ Matthew Turvey, Psy.D.	
Exercises to Help You Prepare for Marriage ~ Sue Atkins	
Preparing Teens for Marriage ~ Ana Morante	
Chapter 2: Pacing and Timing Togetherness .....	47
Pace It ~ Emily Luschin	
The Law of Relationship Order ~ Krsnanandini Devi Dasi	
and Tariq Saleem Ziyad	
Marrying Young ~ Mark Gungor	
Later-Life Love ~ Greg Hunt with Priscilla Hunt	
Marrying Successfully Later in Life ~ Mark Gungor	
Chapter 3: Preparing As Individuals .....	66
Creating an Intimate, Loving Relationship ~ Margaret Paul, Ph.D.	
The Value of Self-Responsibility ~ Molly Barrow, Ph.D.	
Do You Have a Tail? ~ John Buri, Ph.D.	
Are We Mature Enough for Marriage? ~ Paul Coleman, Psy.D.	
The Buffalo Wing Principle ~ Amy Spencer	
How to Marry a Winner ~ Krsnanandini Devi Dasi	
Preventing the Past from Derailing Your Future Marriage ~	
Beverly Rodgers, Ph.D., and Tom Rodgers, Ph.D.	
Chapter 4: Adjusting Expectations .....	92
The Art of Asking Questions ~ Susanne M. Alexander,	
Stanis Marusak Beck, and Michael J. Beck, Ph.D.	
Before You Walk Down the Aisle ~ Julie M. Baumgardner	
Are Relationships Hard Work? ~ Don Ferguson, Ph.D.	
Expectations vs. Intentions ~ Greg Hunt and Priscilla Hunt	
Chapter 5: Deepening Friendship .....	102
Compatibility and Friendship ~ John Van Epp, Ph.D.	
The Key to a Successful Courtship and Marriage? Ask a Dolphin! ~	
Paul Coleman, Psy.D.	
What Is a Friend? ~ Susanne M. Alexander	
Friendship—The Foundation Stone for Marriage ~ Lidy Seysener	

Have Friends of Your Marriage ~ Nisa Muhammad	
Chapter 6: Knowing One Another .....	112
Honest Dating and Courting ~ Mark Gungor	
How Do I Look? ~ Molly Barrow, Ph.D.	
Character and Marriage ~ Linda Bloom and Charlie Bloom	
Choosing a Partner Who Is Right for You ~ Margaret Paul, Ph.D.	
Know Each Other’s Character Before Marrying ~ Susanne M. Alexander	
Bejeweled: Gemstones to Consider Before the Rock Goes on the Finger ~ Barbara Jenkins Spires	
Dating Can Help You Prepare for Your Future ~ Claudia Arp and David Arp	
Follow Your Heart Without Losing Your Mind ~ John Van Epp, Ph.D.	
How Well Do You Get Along with Others? ~ Susanne M. Alexander	
Character in Action ~ Jim Hughes	
Chapter 7: Appreciating Diversity .....	148
Exploring the Spiritual Side of Marriage ~ Fiona McDonald	
Marriage Readiness in the Jewish Tradition ~ Susan Heitler, Ph.D.	
Two Shall Become One ~ Nisa Muhammad	
Marriage Rituals in the Jewish Tradition ~ Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer	
Finding Your Good Thing and Being the Good Thing ~ Clarence Walker, Ph.D. and Ja’Ola Walker, D.D.	
The Adventure of Being a Cross-Cultural Couple ~ Dugan Romano	
Exploring Culture, Ethnicity, and Race ~ Susanne M. Alexander	
Creating Unity Through Your Courtship and Marriage ~ Raymond Switzer	
Intercultural Maturity ~ Grete Shelling	
Strengthening Latino Relationships and Marriages ~ Ana Morante	
A Challenge to Be More Responsible ~ Nisa Muhammad and Jamil Muhammad	
Chapter 8: Understanding Sex .....	182
Using the Power of Your Infatuation for Good ~ Dave Carder	
Choosing to Wait for Sex Until Marriage ~ Mark Gungor	
Start Your Marriage with Passion and Skills ~ Anne Bercht	
What’s the Big Deal About Sex, Anyway? ~ Susanne M. Alexander	
The Challenges of Sexual Addiction on Relationships ~ Mark Laaser, Ph.D.	
Chapter 9: Concerning Cohabiting .....	205
Cohabitation Mergers ~ John Curtis, Ph.D.	
Cohabitation: Good Idea, or a Marriage Killer? ~ Mike McManus	
Cohabitation and Commitment ~ Susanne M. Alexander	
Take Time to Take Space! ~ Robert Buchicchio	
Chapter 10: Growing In Love .....	223
Setting a Foundation of Loving for Your Future Marriage ~ Gary Chapman, Ph.D.	
Beneath the Masquerades of Love ~ John Buri, Ph.D.	
Assessing Your Relationship Capacity ~ Molly Barrow, Ph.D.	
The Journey of Love and Marriage: Know the Stages and Set Your Priorities ~ Rita DeMaria, Ph.D.	
Real Love Defined ~ Sheryl Paul	
Create Lasting Love by Experiencing Your Experience ~ David Steele	
Chapter 11: Communicating Effectively .....	246
The Nice-to-Nasty Ratio ~ John Buri, Ph.D.	

Strengthening Your Couple Communication Skills ~ Susan Heitler, Ph.D.	
Communicating About What Doesn't Work and What Does ~ Susanne M. Alexander	
Learn How to Disagree As If the Windows Were Open ~ Carol Ummel Lindquist, Ph.D.	
Does One of Us Have a Problem with Anger? ~ Michael J. Beck, Ph.D.	
Consultative Couple Decision Making ~ Susanne M. Alexander	
<b>Chapter 12: Building Relationship Strengths .....</b>	<b>276</b>
Wedded Bliss Can Be Yours ~ Nisa Muhammad	
The Values and Rituals of Authentic Relationships: What the Relationship Enhancement Model Teaches Us About Marriage ~ Robert F. Scuka, Ph.D.	
Creating a Goodwill Partnership ~ Susan Page	
Meeting Your Relationship Needs ~ Susanne M. Alexander	
Identifying and Addressing Unmet Childhood Needs ~ Paul Coleman, Psy.D.	
Soulmate Skills for a Blissful Marriage ~ Kathryn Elliott, Ph.D., and James Elliott, Ph.D.	
The Skill of Connecting ~ Ana Morante	
Essential Tools for Keeping Your Relationship in Good Repair ~ Stanis Beck	
Mentoring a Couple Toward Praying Together ~ Bill and Cynthia Sarles	
<b>Chapter 13: Creating a Partnership .....</b>	<b>306</b>
Let's Face It: Men & Women Communicate Differently ~ Noelle C. Nelson, Ph.D.	
In Pursuit of a Mate ~ Raymond Switzer	
Creating a Flexible Team Marriage ~ Patty Howell, Ed.M.	
Gender Equality in Marriage ~ Susanne M. Alexander	
Six Keys to an Outrageously Happy Marriage ~ Joel Davisson and Kathy Davisson	
Do You Respect One Another? ~ Scott Haltzman, M.D.	
<b>Chapter 14: Interacting with Family .....</b>	<b>327</b>
Your Relationship with Your Parents ~ Molly Barrow, Ph.D.	
Check Out the Family ~ John Van Epp, Ph.D.	
"If Our Parents Divorced, Can Our Marriage Succeed?": Striving for Unity in an Era of High Family Fragmentation ~ Elizabeth Marquardt	
Unity Supports Family Happiness ~ Susanne M. Alexander	
<b>Chapter 15: Forming a Stepfamily .....</b>	<b>337</b>
Coping with Stepfamily Stress and Creating a Thriving Stepfamily ~ Nancy Landrum	
The Stepfamily Journey: Not for Wimps ~ Elizabeth Einstein	
Parenting Challenges in Stepfamilies ~ Nancy Landrum	
A Stepfamily Success Story ~ Nancy Landrum	
Preparing for Stepfamily Life ~ Ana Morante	
<b>Chapter 16: Becoming Parents and Rearing Children .....</b>	<b>355</b>
Why Now Is the Best Time to Talk About Parenting ~ Rodney Grubbs and Karen Grubbs	
Should We Have Children? ~ Sue Atkins	
Find and Discuss Your Hidden Parenting Beliefs ~ Sandra Dye	
<b>Chapter 17: Handling Money .....</b>	<b>365</b>
Managing Your Money ~ Jim Hughes	

Love, Honor, and Pay for Stuff (or Why I Wanted to Marry an Investment Banker) ~ Kerri Pomarolli	
Ten Tips for Talking to Your Honey About Money ~ Syble Solomon	
With Money, What’s Really Going On? ~ Syble Solomon	
<b>Chapter 18: Responding to Difficulties .....</b>	<b>379</b>
Prepare for “Mile Eighteen” in Your Future Marriage ~ Amy Spencer	
Can You Handle Difficulties Together? ~ Susanne M. Alexander	
Is Alcohol a Possible Problem in Our Relationship? ~ Michael J. Beck, Ph.D.	
Relationship Recovery—Path to the Promised Land ~ Kat Knecht and Curtis Knecht	
Violence in Relationships ~ Ana Morante	
<b>Chapter 19: Planning for Marriage .....</b>	<b>402</b>
Creating a Vision for Your Marriage ~ John Curtis, Ph.D.	
Creating Your Marriage Commitments ~ Susanne M. Alexander	
Premarital Assessment: The Importance of Taking an Inventory ~ Peter J. Larson, Ph.D.	
Focused Case Study: PREPARE-ENRICH’s Development of Premarital Assessments ~ Peter J. Larson, Ph.D.	
<b>Chapter 20: Planning the Wedding .....</b>	<b>416</b>
Handling the Feelings About Transitioning to Marriage ~ Sheryl Paul	
Creating Your Own Wedding Vows ~ Linda Bloom and Charlie Bloom	
Ensuring Wedding Night Bliss ~ James E. Sheridan	
A Prayer for Us ~ Raphaella Vaisseau	
Blessed Joining ~ Susanne M. Alexander	
<b>A Note in Closing .....</b>	<b>428</b>
<b>Acknowledgements .....</b>	<b>429</b>