



Overview:

"Before You Say I Do" by H. Norman Wright is a comprehensive guide designed for couples who are considering marriage or are engaged. The book serves as a pre-marital counseling workbook that explores various fundamental aspects of a relationship that should be addressed before making the commitment to marry. The main goal of the book is to ensure that couples are fully prepared for marriage, understand each other better, and have laid a strong foundation for a successful and fulfilling union. Here's a detailed overview of the book's content, structure, and key takeaways.

Structure and Content

The book is structured into chapters that each cover a significant area of marital life. These include communication, conflict resolution, love, finances, sex, family relationships, and roles within marriage. Each chapter includes questions for discussion, practical advice, and activities designed to prompt deeper understanding and interaction between partners.

1. Communication

Wright stresses the importance of effective communication as the cornerstone of a healthy marriage. The chapter offers strategies to enhance listening skills and express thoughts and feelings clearly. Exercises focus on understanding each other's communication styles and learning how to negotiate and resolve conflicts without damaging the relationship.

2. Conflict Resolution

This section helps couples anticipate and manage conflicts. Wright explains different conflict styles and helps couples understand which styles they and their partners tend to use. The exercises included are aimed at helping couples develop fair fighting rules to resolve disagreements without resentment or anger.

3. Understanding Love

Wright explores the different types of love—emotional, physical, and commitment—and discusses the changes in the perception of love as the relationship matures. This chapter is crucial for couples to reflect on their definitions of love and ensure they are aligned in their expectations and expressions of affection.

4. Financial Management



Finances can be one of the most contentious areas in a marriage. Wright encourages couples to discuss their financial situations openly—debts, savings, spending habits, and financial goals. The activities include creating a budget together and discussing financial roles within the marriage.

5. Sexual Intimacy

Sexual compatibility and expectations are addressed in this sensitive but crucial chapter. Wright guides couples through discussions about their expectations, beliefs, and values regarding sex, emphasizing the importance of a healthy sexual relationship that respects both partners' comfort levels and desires.

6. Family Relationships

This chapter deals with the relationships each partner has with their in-laws and other family members. Wright suggests discussions on boundaries, handling holidays, and dealing with any potential issues that may arise from extended family dynamics.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Understanding and agreeing on the roles each partner will assume in marriage is essential. This section helps couples discuss and define their expectations about roles concerning chores, career commitments, child-rearing, and more.

Key Takeaways

- **Preparation is Key:** Wright emphasizes that thorough preparation can prevent many common issues in marriage. He encourages open and honest discussions about several critical topics.
- **Building a Strong Foundation:** By focusing on building a strong relationship foundation, Wright suggests that couples can enhance their ability to deal with whatever life throws their way.
- **Customized Approaches:** The book acknowledges that each couple is unique and must find what works best for them, offering flexibility in how to use the information and exercises provided.
- **Continual Growth:** Wright points out that marriage is a journey of continual growth and adaptation. The discussions that start with this book should continue throughout the marriage to maintain and strengthen the relationship.



Conclusion

"Before You Say I Do" by H. Norman Wright is an invaluable resource for couples planning to marry. By addressing key areas of married life before they become issues, couples can lay a healthier foundation for their future together. Wright's book is both a preventive measure against common marital problems and a tool to enhance relationship satisfaction. Whether read alone or used in a pre-marital counseling setting, the insights and exercises provided in "Before You Say I Do" are essential for anyone serious about entering marriage with confidence and knowledge.



Blog Post Title: "Before You Say 'I Do': Unveiling the Conversations That Matter"

Welcome to our blog where we dive deep into pivotal discussions that can shape the future of your relationship. Today, we're exploring the seminal guide "Before You Say I Do" by H. Norman Wright, which lays out crucial questions and areas of discussion for couples contemplating marriage. Whether you're newly engaged or thinking about taking that step, this book—and our exploration of it—will help you and your partner build a strong foundation for a fulfilling marriage.

Understanding Each Other's Communication Styles

Communication is more than just talking. It's about connecting, understanding, and navigating through your partner's thoughts and emotions without losing sight of your own. Wright emphasizes the importance of not only talking but listening—truly listening. **Key Question to Discuss: "How do we handle misunderstandings and what can we improve in our current communication style?"**

The Role of Conflict in Your Relationship

It might seem counterintuitive, but conflict isn't always a bad thing. In fact, how you handle disagreements can strengthen your relationship. Wright suggests methods for fair and productive arguments. Discuss each other's conflict resolution styles and come up with "rules" for arguments that foster respect and understanding. **Key Question to Discuss: "What are our triggers and how can we address these healthily?"**

Aligning Financial Goals and Responsibilities

Money matters are often cited as a common cause of marital stress. Wright advises couples to have open discussions about finances, including debt, savings, and budgeting. **Practical Exercise: Create a joint budget based on your shared financial goals and individual responsibilities.**

Intimacy and Physical Connection

Sexual compatibility and expectations need to be addressed openly before marriage. Wright encourages couples to discuss their views on sex, intimacy, and any concerns they may have. **Key Question to Discuss: "What are our expectations about intimacy and how do we address changes in our physical relationship?"**



Family Dynamics and External Relationships

Your relationship with your in-laws and your expectations about family life play a significant role in your marital happiness. Wright guides couples to set boundaries and discuss how to handle family gatherings, traditions, and potential conflicts. **Key Question to Discuss: "How will we handle holidays and family disagreements?"**

Personal and Shared Goals

Where do you both see yourselves in five, ten, or twenty years? Discussing personal and shared goals can help ensure you grow together and not apart. Wright suggests aligning your goals with your partner's and finding common ground where your paths overlap. **Practical Exercise: Write down your personal and shared goals and discuss how to support each other in achieving them.**

Final Thoughts

"Before You Say I Do" offers more than just advice; it provides a roadmap for deep and meaningful conversations that can set the stage for a strong and lasting marriage. By taking the time to explore these topics thoroughly, you and your partner can gain deeper understanding and readiness for the beautiful journey of marriage.

Reflection: After each discussion, take a moment to reflect on what you've learned about your partner and yourself. Are there areas where you need more understanding or compromise?

Remember, preparation is not just about avoiding pitfalls; it's about paving the way for mutual growth and happiness. Engage with your partner in these conversations earnestly, and keep the lines of communication open as you move forward together.



Handout

Inspired by "Before You Say I Do" by H. Norman Wright

Introduction: This handout is designed to guide you and your partner through essential discussions on your journey towards marriage. Each section includes key topics from H. Norman Wright's book, reflection questions, and activities to deepen your understanding and strengthen your relationship.

1. Communication: Building the Foundation

- **Objective:** Enhance your listening and speaking skills to improve understanding and empathy.
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - What do we do well in our communication, and where can we improve?
 - How can we ensure we are both feeling heard and understood during disagreements?
- **Activity:** Spend 10 minutes discussing a topic, then summarize each other's points to ensure clarity and understanding.

2. Conflict Resolution: Navigating the Challenges

- **Objective:** Develop healthy ways to handle disagreements and maintain respect.
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - What are our individual approaches to conflict, and how can these be harmonized?
 - Can we establish "rules for fighting fair" that both of us agree to follow?
- **Activity:** Role-play a past disagreement and try to resolve it using newly established rules.

3. Financial Unity: Planning Your Economic Future

- **Objective:** Align your financial goals and responsibilities to prevent conflicts.
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - What are our individual financial goals, and how do they fit together?
 - How will we handle daily financial decisions and long-term planning?
- **Activity:** Create a joint budget or a financial plan addressing savings, debts, and investments.



4. Intimacy and Affection: Deepening Your Connection

- **Objective:** Understand and respect each other's needs for physical and emotional intimacy.
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - How do we both define intimacy, and what are our expectations?
 - What can we do to maintain and deepen our physical connection?
- **Activity:** Plan a regular "date night" that includes time for emotional and physical connection.

5. Family and In-Laws: Balancing External Relationships

- **Objective:** Manage relationships with family and in-laws while setting healthy boundaries.
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - How will we handle holidays, family obligations, and expectations?
 - What boundaries do we need to set with our families to protect our relationship?
- **Activity:** Write down your top three boundaries and discuss how to communicate them respectfully to family.

6. Personal and Shared Goals: Growing Together

- **Objective:** Align your personal aspirations and shared visions for the future.
- **Discussion Questions:**
 - What are our major personal and shared goals for the next 5, 10, and 20 years?
 - How can we support each other in achieving these goals?
- **Activity:** Create a vision board or goal list that represents both your personal and joint aspirations.

Conclusion:

Use this handout as a starting point for ongoing discussions and as a tool to revisit as you grow together in your relationship. Remember, the journey to marriage is a shared adventure that requires love, respect, and continual commitment.

Tip: Schedule regular check-ins to revisit these topics and track your progress in building a strong, loving partnership.



Couples Assessment: "Are You Ready to Say I Do?"

Inspired by "Before You Say I Do" by H. Norman Wright

This assessment is divided into key areas that are crucial for understanding and strengthening your relationship. Please answer the questions honestly and discuss your answers together to foster open communication and deeper understanding.

Instructions: Each partner should fill out the assessment separately. Answer each statement with:

- 1 (Strongly Disagree)
- 2 (Disagree)
- 3 (Neutral)
- 4 (Agree)
- 5 (Strongly Agree)

After completing the assessment, compare your answers and use the scoring key to evaluate your readiness in each area.

Section 1: Communication

- We can discuss our problems without raising our voices.
- We effectively communicate our needs and feelings to one another.
- We feel understood by each other when discussing issues.

Section 2: Conflict Resolution

- We resolve conflicts fairly and respectfully.
- We can discuss our differences without the fear of damaging our relationship.
- After an argument, we feel the issues have been resolved.

Section 3: Financial Management

- We have discussed our financial histories in detail.
- We agree on a budget and financial planning.
- We share similar goals about spending and saving money.

Section 4: Intimacy and Sexuality

- We are comfortable discussing our sexual needs and desires.
- We are satisfied with the affection and intimacy in our relationship.
- Our ideas about the role of sex in our marriage are aligned.



Section 5: Family and In-Laws

- We agree on the way to handle our relationships with in-laws.
- We have similar views on the role of family in our lives.
- We have discussed how to handle family gatherings and holidays.

Section 6: Roles and Expectations

- 16 We have clear agreements about the roles we will each assume in our marriage.
- 17 We share expectations about managing household responsibilities.
- 18 We agree on the importance of balancing career and home life.

Scoring Key:

Total your score for each section:

- 3-9 points: Low Compatibility - This area needs significant attention and discussion.
- 10-12 points: Moderate Compatibility - There are some differences, but with discussion and compromise, these can be resolved.
- 13-15 points: High Compatibility - You are mostly aligned in this area, though occasional discussions may still be beneficial.

Overall Score:

- 18-54 points: Consider engaging in premarital counseling to address numerous significant areas.
- 55-90 points: You are on your way, but be sure to address moderate compatibility areas.
- 91-108 points: You have a strong foundation for marriage. Continue to nurture and discuss your relationship openly.

Conclusion:

This assessment helps pinpoint strengths and areas for improvement in your relationship. Use your results as a guide for discussions, and consider seeking further resources or counseling if you find areas of concern. Remember, open communication and mutual understanding are keys to a successful and fulfilling marriage.



7-Day Couples Challenge: Preparing to Say "I Do"

Day 1: Communication Cleanup

- **Activity:** Spend the evening discussing how you currently communicate. Each partner should express what they feel works well and what needs improvement without interruption.
- **Reflection:** Share how it feels to be heard by your partner and any new insights gained about each other's communication style.

Day 2: Conflict Compass

- **Activity:** Role-play a past conflict with the aim to resolve it using new strategies such as active listening and validating each other's feelings.
- **Reflection:** Discuss what felt different about this approach compared to how you might have handled conflicts before.

Day 3: Financial Focus

- **Activity:** Create a joint budget or financial plan together. Discuss your short-term and long-term financial goals, debts, savings, and spending habits.
- **Reflection:** Reflect on how aligning your financial goals makes you feel about your future together.

Day 4: Intimacy Inquiry

- **Activity:** Plan a romantic evening that includes time for both emotional and physical connection. Discuss your needs and desires in terms of intimacy and affection.
- **Reflection:** Share how being open about your intimacy needs can enhance your relationship.

Day 5: Family Foundations

- **Activity:** Discuss each other's families and the role they play in your lives. Plan how to handle upcoming holidays or events with family.



- **Reflection:** Reflect on how setting boundaries with family can strengthen your partnership.

Day 6: Role Reversal

- **Activity:** Discuss and write down your expected roles in your marriage. Include household responsibilities, career expectations, and parenting roles (if applicable).
- **Reflection:** Discuss how having clear roles might ease transitions and reduce stress.

Day 7: Love Letter Day

- 19 **Activity:** Write a love letter to each other, expressing what you appreciate and admire in your partner, and your hopes for your future together.
- 20 **Reflection:** Share how you felt while writing and reading these letters.

Conclusion of the Challenge

- **Final Activity:** Have a closing session where you discuss the overall experience of the past week. Reflect on what activities were most enlightening or challenging, and how this challenge has prepared you better for marriage.
- **Moving Forward:** Set goals or plans to address any areas that still need improvement, and consider setting up regular check-ins or repeat challenges to keep your relationship strong.

This 7-day challenge is designed to not only help couples learn more about each other but also to build skills that will serve their relationship for years to come. Through these focused activities, couples can enhance their readiness for marriage and ensure they are stepping into this commitment with a solid foundation.



CoupleStrong "Before You Say I Do" Bundle

The **CoupleStrong "Before You Say I Do" Bundle** offers a curated selection of resources based on the timeless principles from "Before You Say I Do" by H. Norman Wright. This bundle is designed to support engaged couples by providing comprehensive tools to explore and strengthen their relationship before marriage.

Bundle Includes:

- **Overview of "Before You Say I Do":** A concise summary that encapsulates the essential teachings and insights from H. Norman Wright's book, guiding couples through the foundational aspects of building a lasting relationship.
- **Blog Series Based on the Book:** Engaging blog posts that delve into the book's key themes, offering deeper insights and practical advice to encourage meaningful conversations and personal reflections.
- **Couples Handout:** An interactive handout drawn from the book's content, featuring insightful discussion questions and activities designed to deepen understanding and connection between partners.
- **Couples Assessment:** A comprehensive assessment tool derived from the book's major points, allowing couples to gauge their relationship's strengths and areas for growth as they prepare for marriage.
- **7-Day Couples Challenge:** A dynamic series of daily challenges inspired by the book, aimed at enhancing communication, resolving conflicts, aligning financial goals, and fostering intimacy, all crucial for a successful marriage.

This bundle equips couples with essential tools and knowledge, making the **CoupleStrong "Before You Say I Do" Bundle** an indispensable resource for anyone preparing to embark on the journey of marriage.