

Sequence of Success

Marriage and Cohabitation Commitment Experiment

In previous days we have mentioned the term cohabitation. But what is cohabitation, and why do people think it is like marriage? Cohabitation is where unmarried couples decide to live together in a long-term relationship without marrying. While this cohabitation relationship may resemble marriage, it's not just a marriage certificate that marks the differences between marriage and cohabitation. Relationships that start with cohabitation are less likely to get married. Further, if a couple did cohabit before getting married, they are more likely to end up divorced than those who did not live together before marriage.

So why the differences between marriage and cohabitation if cohabitation is supposed to prepare couples for marriage? The answer is cohabitation doesn't prepare for marriage. Cohabitation is a preparation for divorce.

Let's use an example to demonstrate.

Marriage and Cohabitation Commitment Experiment

Required Materials:

- 2 clear glasses or cups (approximately 12 ounces)
- 1 dry erase marker
- water to fill each glass
- $\frac{1}{8}$ cup or 2 tablespoons of sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup oil (olive, vegetable, or other)
- 2 spoons for stirring
- Labels for each cup marriage and cohabitation, or you can use a dry erase or overhead projector marker directly on the cup.

Sequence of Success

Marriage and Cohabitation Commitment Experiment

Instructions:

1. Label one cup marriage and label the other cup cohabitation by using the dry erase marker to write the labels. (The dry erase marker will wipe clean off the cup).
2. Fill each cup with water until it is mostly full. Save some room for adding either the sugar or oil and stirring without spills.
3. Put the oil in the marriage cup and put the sugar in the cohabitation cup.
4. Tell the child(ren) that the sugar and oil both represent commitment.
5. Stir the marriage cup with oil and stir the cohabitation cup with the sugar.
6. Stir and observe how the oil did not dissolve but the sugar did.

Stop and Discuss

- What differences did you observe between the marriage and the cohabitation glasses?
- What happened to the sugar in the cohabitation cup after you stirred it? (it dissolved)
- Did the oil in the marriage glass dissolve? (No.)



In this experiment we mirrored what happens to commitment in cohabiting and marriage relationships. Cohabitation dissolves the commitment of a relationship. Marriage shows a high level of commitment in relationships. If you want your relationship to have a high level of commitment, then marriage is the solution.