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Kids

Teach, Empower and Enjoy Your Children.

Building Healthy Relationships to Prevent Divorce Creating Healthy Expectations for Marriage

OPTION 1 – UNDERSTANDING EXPECTATIONS

It is important to watch the expectations we set in our relationships. The National Survey on Marriage in America found that unrealistic expectations contributed to 45% divorces in those that took the survey.



So, what are realistic expectations? Realistic expectations are things you can meet. You can discuss them and find solutions for how to meet these expectations. Here are examples of realistic expectations:

- Sharing responsibilities in the home
- Using Kind words
- Showing respect to one another
- Saying “I love you”
- Trusting Each other
- Being Honest with one another
- Honoring each other’s dreams

While this is a short list, remember realistic expectations can be around other areas like finances, work, family, religion, and others. The point is that you identify solutions to meet the expectations in these areas.

Unrealistic expectations may be those things we do not say out loud that we expect our partner to just know. One way to relieve these unrealistic expectations is to communicate them to our partner and figure out a way to move forward together. However, other expectations may truly be unrealistic and unhealthy. Let’s take a look at some these:

- Your Spouse is responsible for your happiness
- Your spouse will complete you
- They will never change
- All your time should be spent together
- Your way is the right way

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Your relationship can be a blessing to both of you and flourish when you effectively manage your unrealistic expectations through communication and finding solutions.

Take a look at some of these examples of expectations and determine if they are realistic or unrealistic. *Click on the yellow box to begin.*

REALISTIC OR UNREALISTIC EXPECTATIONS?

References: <https://firstthings.org/the-difference-between-realistic-and-unrealistic-expectations-in-marriage/>



OPTION 2 – MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

In our lives, we have realistic expectations, or expectations others must know and meet – there will be food to eat, clothes to wear, activities, and parents to watch over us.

However, sometimes our expectations can be unrealistic, meaning others don't know what we expect or even if what we expect is possible. It could be like expecting your favorite meal everyday or wanting to go on amazing vacations every weekend. Unmet expectations can make us upset; so, we need to be aware of the expectations we have for ourselves, and others.

Here is a guide to having realistic expectations:

- Have you told the other person your expectations? Make sure the other person knows your expectations. If another person does not know your expectation, they cannot meet it.

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- Can your expectation be met? If you expected someone to do something or provide something to you, would it even be possible for them? For example, if you expect your dad to take time from work to be with you on your birthday, you first need to know if that is something he could realistically do?
- Can you talk about your expectations? Realistic expectations can be discussed and both people can agree on them. In order for an expectation to be realistic, you need to communicate them. In the example above, let's say it is possible for your dad to take off work for your birthday, but have you communicated this expectation to him?

Keep in mind that even if it is a realistic expectation, you may need to compromise with the other person to accomplish the expectation.

To avoid unrealistic expectations, communication is important. Talk about your expectations with others. Also, be sure to think through what you expect and if it is reasonable to ask for it.

Let's look at some situations to determine whether an expectation is realistic or unrealistic. *Click on the yellow box below.*

**REALISTIC OR
UNREALISTIC
EXPECTATIONS?**

