

If A Little Voice In Your Head Says These 6 Things, DON'T Say 'I Do'

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If any of these are familiar, your marriage is destined to fail before it even begins.

It was six weeks before the wedding and the blinds were drawn in my therapist's office. Late-day light bathed the carpet and the quiet room in a soft, yellow glow.

I had just spoken out loud for the first time about all my fears toward my soon-to-be [husband](#), my supposed Mr. Right, and the therapist's objective response toward the [marriage](#) helped me see that perhaps my intended was deeply depressed, had no career direction, and might not be as emotionally available as I'd hoped.

My therapist's voice was quiet as he asked, "What are you going to do about it?"

I remember standing up, though I don't know why, and declaring in a wobbly voice, "I don't want to be the person who cancels the wedding."

And that was it. 29-years old (and desperate to get married) with 350 people planning to

sweep into town at the end of summer, I wanted to go through with it. Never mind the little (make that loud) voice in my head nudging me to stop, step back, and rethink the whole thing.

"I'll help him," I said to the therapist. "We'll work through it. Marriage is work. We'll be fine."

Except we weren't.

My first marriage lasted eight years and produced three children, along with countless screaming matches, two calls to the police during the height of pretty awful fights, and several thick candles thrown down the stairs in anger. And the saddest thing is: I could have avoided it all if I'd opened my eyes to the signs.

People who get divorced almost always say they knew they shouldn't go through with their wedding before they ever said, "I do." Hindsight is perfect, of course, so the question becomes: *If you know it's a bad match, why do it?*

Would it have helped for someone (a friend, my parents) to point out how ill-matched we really were? Or, would I have simply felt embarrassed and like a failure if I'd thrown in the towel, returned the gifts, and apologized for all the non-refundable deposits?

Based on [my experience of marrying the wrong person](#), here are six surefire signs that you definitely shouldn't say "I do."

1. You think your partner looks disheveled more times than not.

How a person feels about herself has a lot to do with the face she presents to the world. Does she slump about town in mismatched shorts and t-shirts with unbuttoned flannel un-tucked over the ensemble?

Or is she put-together, sharp-looking, and carrying her head high? Say yes to the latter and question the former, because behind a disheveled appearance lies a disheveled soul.

2. You notice his employment track record is less than stellar.

Reviewing a person's whole relationship and work history is paramount for relationship success. Forget the myth of movie-love; real-life lasting [romance](#) needs eyes-open evaluation.

Be honest with yourself: *Can he hold a job? Has he had successful, long relationships in the past?* If the answer to one, or both, of these questions is no, you might want to take a step back.

We didn't date long enough for me to realize that my ex had spent seven years finishing college and was employed in his first full-time job at the age of 29. That job lasted a mere few months, and because we lived in different cities I didn't realize the decision to leave was not his.

3. You're not sexually compatible — or you're waiting to find out.

Don't leave [sex](#) for the wedding night. If you haven't done it already, make sure you give it a try before saying your vows.

Chemistry in the bedroom has a lot to do with how well you communicate and the underlying

current between you on any given day. If the energy isn't there, it's probably not going to be once kids, bills, and other life challenges deposit themselves between you.

If you can't orgasm with your intended, ask yourself what that's about and if it's fixable or if you're signing on to a life of misread cues and ill-timed mishaps.

4. You haven't taken a good, hard look at yourself in the mirror.

When I married my first husband, I was insecure. I spent my whole life up to that point chasing guys instead of chasing my own dreams and I wasn't comfortable in my own skin.

I wanted to get married and have babies so I turned [to a more religious lifestyle](#) where marriage was the goal, in the hope of snaring a man to spend my life with. I got him — and along with him, a rocky relationship that has us forever tied to each other because of our kids.

If I had been more confident, I might have walked away when the pre-wedding rockiness presented itself. Or I might have waited for my Mr. Right and let my ex find his Ms. Right.

Instead, we cobbled together a marriage based on our lack of rightness with ourselves. That's no recipe for success. If you are not happy with yourself — and happy alone — don't marry anyone because you certainly won't be happy with them.

5. You feel like your relationship is rushed.

My ex and I dated long-distance for three months before getting engaged. Five months later, we married. We lived in the same geographical location for less than two months before we walked down a very crowded and raucous aisle.

Think we should've dated longer before we got married? *You betcha.* If we had lived in the same place for longer, we would have noticed nuances about one another that might have enlightened the discussion about "til death do us part."

The excitement of a new romance didn't have time to evolve into the comfort of a relationship between people who know one another well. And suddenly, we were husband and [wife](#). Truth be told, it felt like we were playing a part in a play rather than living real life.

Give your relationship time if you want it to stand the test of time.

6. Your engagement or marriage feels like someone else's choice.

My ex and I wanted to be married. On paper, we were perfectly matched: He was a musician, an out-of-the-box profession for the Orthodox Jewish world we both inhabited at the time. He wore purple suits and fedoras. I was a writer who didn't grow up religious; I preferred hippy skirts and alt-rock, and I've never been a follow-the-crowd kind of gal. Eclectic meets exotic.

While I was flirting with a religious lifestyle, it scared me to think about marrying a clone in a black suit, white shirt and black hat. I still wanted someone unique and my ex fit the bill. But on paper is very different than in real life.

On our first date, I wore a form-fitting long skirt with a turtleneck sweater (it was winter in Michigan) and my ex thought I was super-religious. We dated the illusion of one another until gravity propelled us to the natural next step.

Three months into dating, his parents came to town to meet me. His sister and her family of eight drove in, too. His mother planned an engagement party for the end of the weekend, even though we weren't engaged.

That Saturday night, my parents joined the mix for an awkward dinner of deli meats, Jewish rye, and pickles, over which my mother said, "So, are you guys engaged or what?"

We left the house and my ex drove me to proposal place #1, which was no longer in business. He found proposal place #2, sang a beautiful song and got down on one knee. *Did we get engaged because we wanted to — or because everyone around us pushed us in that direction?*

Marriage is no small feat.

My parents have been married for 46 years and I marvel at everyone who can stick it out through thick and thin, through annoying and aggravated. It's a delicate balance that can only happen between two people who firmly believe in lifelong commitment and who like each other enough to make it last through all the challenges.

We've been divorced for seven years now and most of the time we get along fine enough. There are those turbulent times, though, where we vie for control and face-off.

The other day, during a particularly cantankerous situation, my sister said, "You never liked him anyway. Whatever he does now is going to bug you."

I never liked the man I married and had three children with? Wow. I'd never thought of it like that but perhaps she was right. In some ways, I liked him very much ... enough to marry him and hope for the best.

But if I'm truthful with myself, maybe I was marrying the "idea" of marriage and my ex, my kind, talented, good hearted ex, showed up at the right time.

A bad marriage makes you see everything unappealing about one another; a good marriage shines the light on the quality characteristics.

Both exist in equal measure in every relationship.

Moral of the story: Marry the person who looks more good to you than bad, whose flaws you can live with, and be honest with yourself about the whole picture.