

# Expectations:

Belief that something will or should happen.



We all have expectations. We bring them into marriage based on family and cultural experiences and our past experiences in relationships. Some expectations are good, right, and even required for a healthy marriage. Many expectations can damage the marriage relationship. Much of the frustration and anger couples experience come from unmet expectations and unrealistic expectations can ruin the marriage relationship.

We rightfully expect our spouse to remain faithful, to not purposefully injure or hurt us (physically or emotionally), and to seek the best for our marriage relationship. Expectations cause problems in marriage when we expect our spouse to act or think like us, like the same things, *never* sin or do anything wrong, or to handle situations the way *we* think they should be handled. Often, we expect our spouse should be just like us! We usually appreciate our differences *when* those differences don't clash with our expectations.

The reality is that husbands and wives are very different. Even after more than 41 years of marriage, more than half our lives together, my wife and I still see many things very differently. Our expectations; our individual beliefs that certain things should happen, clash and cause conflict in our marriage. Men and women *are* different! Personalities *are* different! Values and beliefs stemming from our culture, experiences, and family of origin *are* different. When our differences clash with our expectations, we must work together—to *collaborate* to resolve the conflict in healthy ways. Allowing expectations to fester and trouble us will undermine and even destroy a marriage. We must openly and honestly discuss our expectations seeking to diminish unhealthy expectations, while developing and holding to healthy expectations.

Examine your expectations and honestly evaluate whether they are healthy, realistic expectations or expectations that will tend to damage your marriage relationship. Ask your spouse to do the same and then sit down and discuss your expectations, using the experience to strengthen your marriage and grow together.

**Helpful Resources:** *Fortified Marriages Resource page:* [www.fortifiedmarriages.com](http://www.fortifiedmarriages.com)

**Articles to check out:**

*Redefining expectations within your marriage* by Todd Foley - [www.focusonthefamily.ca](http://www.focusonthefamily.ca)

*Unrealistic Expectations In Marriage* by Dennis Rainey - [www.cru.org](http://www.cru.org)

*What does the Bible say about expectations?* [www.gotquestions.org/Bible-expectations.html](http://www.gotquestions.org/Bible-expectations.html)