

The vows you make in the marriage service acknowledge that life has its ups and downs. It's important to recognise that difficult times will come along, but that it's also possible to be prepared in order to cope.



We can't know everything that life brings, but we can anticipate some common events that can cause stress in a marriage. Talking about them now will help you decide together how you can find a way through if ever that time comes.

## **For better or worse**

Family relationships can bring some of the greatest joys but also some of the greatest anxieties into a marriage. New family relationships, bringing a family together, the arrival of your own children – or discovering that having children is not going to be as simple as you expected – are some of the things that can cause tensions. Many long-term married couples say that staying together involved listening, patience and humour. How will you deal with these tensions if they arise?

## **In sickness and health**

Changes in your own health and also of those around you can be a source of great anxiety in any relationship. What happens if one of your parents or other extended family needs a lot of support? What are your attitudes to mental health problems or to disability? Have you ever talked about these issues? Stories of couples who cope through illness are often moving. Thinking through some of the coping strategies now, with a clear head, may help you both one day.

## **For richer or poorer**

Financial worries are one of the biggest pressures on any marriage. Thinking through attitudes to money is really important, even if becoming unexpectedly wealthy is on the cards! For example what would you do with a windfall – it's rare to win the lottery but not so rare to gain an inheritance. What about saving for the future? How do you want to combine your finances? Most couples have both partners working –how would success (or failure) at work make a difference?

## **Time apart**

Some couples flourish with lots of shared interests, others value keeping up separate friendships through sport or interests. How much time together is just right for you? And sometimes work or lifestyle mean you might have to spend long periods of time apart, such as if one of you works shifts, or is employed in the military. What might that mean for you and how will you maintain your relationship whilst you're apart?

## **Forgiving, giving thanks and carrying on**

If you're just starting out in a marriage, it is unthinkable that your partner could ever cause you pain. But in a lifetime, circumstances can change and we can be let down, sometimes very painfully. Forgiveness is one of the most difficult aspects of moving on from being hurt, or perhaps from the guilt of hurting someone else. Sometimes, coping with a marriage crisis needs the support of professional marriage guidance counsellors like Relate. What would you do? Forgiveness, being thankful for all that you have in life and having a determination to carry on is central to relationships that survive. Some couples even decide to renew their vows after a period of difficulty in their marriage. [Read more about renewing your wedding vows here.](#)

## Till death us do part

Talking about death is still something of a taboo in this country, yet it comes to us all. Talking about it can help us face the realities and help us cope a little better when we experience bereavement. Who could you turn to for support if your spouse died? Have you made a will? How would you support your spouse if they were devastated by the death of someone very close to them?

## Here for you

Your church is always here for you, not just for your wedding day but for all of your married life, through good times and tough times. Your church can offer a confidential listening ear, prayer and friendship at any time you need it. It is also there for the celebrations in life, like having children christened. On your wedding day, you invited God to be part of it all, and he will be, directly and through your church family, wherever you find that to be. To connect with your local church, or find a church in particular area, use the search box below.



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## Thinking about marriage



## The good times



The special times



Renewing your vows





Preparing for marriage

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