



CONSCIOUS TRANSITIONS

Five Secret Steps to Begin
Your Marriage with the
Best Chance for Success

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Some of the biggest fears among engaged women and men are: “Will my marriage last? What if I fall out of love? What if he cheats on me? What if we get bored of each other and I find someone else more exciting? What if we fight like my parents did? What if we divorce?”

These are normal and healthy fears that any thoughtful person would have on the precipice of making a lifelong commitment. The problem isn't the fears; the problem is how our culture encourages you to respond to the fears. In this free report I'm going to show you the five steps to handling these fears, which will then create the optimal environment in which to begin your marriage.

Most people in the wedding world are under the illusion that the best way to prepare for marriage is to plan a “perfect” wedding. Even if you don't consciously buy into this statement, there's probably some part of you that thinks that a perfect wedding equals a perfect marriage. Every image you've seen from the time you were a little girl transmits the message that if you create a beautiful wedding with just the right cake, flowers, table arrangements, and, most importantly, the perfect dress,

you will feel blissful on your wedding day and massively in love with your new husband or wife.

But if you've found your way to my site, it's probably because you're struggling with engagement anxiety and have little or no desire to even think about planning your wedding! That's okay. In fact, people who have engagement anxiety are better prepared for marriage than those who sail through the planning without a hitch. Why? Because your anxiety will force you to examine your beliefs about love and marriage. And when you discover your beliefs and expectations, you'll be walking into your marriage with your eyes wide open instead of under the fantasy of "happily ever after" that swallows most brides.

So what are the five most important steps to take (that most people ignore) during your engagement that will lay a healthy foundation on which to begin your marriage?

1. Be Honest About Your Fears, Doubts, and Uncertainty.

In a culture that tells you that if you're feeling anything less than pure joy during your engagement there's something wrong with you or your relationship, this step can be very difficult to take. Let's say you're sitting in your pastor's office and he's talking about the commitment of marriage. You've been excited about

getting married but all of sudden you feel a pang of panic rise up in your belly. You think, “What does this mean? Why am I scared? If I was with the right guy, I would only feel excited. What’s wrong with me?” Nothing is wrong with you. Why wouldn’t you feel scared about the biggest commitment you’ve ever made? But because you’ve been encouraged to believe that “doubt means don’t” you sweep the feelings under the rug and try to pretend that nothing’s wrong.

What is the cost of ignoring these feelings? What happens when you manage to distract from that niggling feeling of doubt by throwing yourself into the planning? I’ll tell you what happens: when the wedding is over and there are no more distractions, you will fall into post-wedding depression, question your decision to marry, and open yourself to the possibility of misinterpreting these feelings as proof that you’ve made a mistake.

The engagement is the time to address these feelings. It’s a training-ground for marriage, a time to put yourself and your relationship under a microscope and ask yourself the important questions regarding your decision to marry. In other words, the *real work* of the engagement has nothing to do with finding the right cake and flowers and everything to do with attending to your inner world.

2. Talk To Your Fiancé About How You're Feeling

One of the most effective ways to distance yourself from your fiancé is to try to hide your doubts and act like nothing is bothering you. You may believe that if you share how you're really feeling, he'll react poorly or feel rejected. On the contrary, when you find the courage to tell the truth about the fact that you're scared, you'll feel like a thousand pounds have been lifted off of your shoulder.

The vast majority of my clients' fiancés respond with support and reassurance to their brides' admission of fears and doubts. Men, in general, seem to understand that the fears are temporary and normal and that they will pass with time. They've also had their own fears, which they most likely addressed before they proposed. If your fiancé is going to be your best friend and greatest support throughout your life as a married couple, it's wise to deepen this relationship of trust and intimacy now. Again, your engagement is the training ground for your marriage, so you might as well find out now if your partner can handle hearing about your anxiety.

In my [Conscious Weddings Course](#), every happily married woman with whom I spoke for the MP3 interviews talked about

the fact that their engagement anxiety was actually a doorway not only for growth within themselves but also for growth in their relationship. Through daring to be honest, they each found their way to greater intimacy with their husband-to-be, which then reaffirmed their deepest knowing that they were, indeed, with a good man and a good match.

3. Journal Every Day

When I ask my clients if they journal, they usually say something like, “A little bit” or “I used to journal but I haven’t in a while.” If that’s the case for you, it’s time to start journaling *every single day*. Journaling is one of the most effective and comforting tools you can use throughout this (and every) transition. It’s free, accessible any time, confidential, and, when used correctly, can help release the fears and guide you on your way to a joyous wedding and a healthy marriage. As Alanis Morissette said in our interview last August 2010:

“Every morning I had the luxury of carving out two hours to be alone and I would just sob. I would read [The Conscious Bride](#) or [The Conscious Bride’s Wedding Planner](#), sometimes I would talk to friends, but mostly I did a lot of journaling. I was looking at all of my thoughts about what a wife and marriage is.”

However, it's essential to learn how to journal effectively. When most people journal they write in a stream of consciousness manner and end up flooding themselves with the unwanted feelings. If you write about fears and doubts without any tools for managing them, you'll wind up flooding yourself with more fears and doubts. In [The Conscious Weddings Course](#), I devote an entire lesson to teaching you highly effective tools for managing fear and anxiety, including a comprehensive video on effective journaling. At the core of effective journaling is learning how to access a voice of truth or rational wisdom even when you're drowning in fear-based thoughts.

4. Replace the Lies with Accurate Information

99% of the information you receive about your engagement, love, and marriage is a lie. Yes, a lie! And you've been hearing these lies from the time you were a young child old enough to absorb information. Here's a list of the most common lies:

- You'll know you've met "the one" when you feel giddy and head over heels in love
- If you're not feeling head over heels in love during your engagement, than you're with the wrong guy

- Love is never boring
- You should never doubt once you get engaged
- Doubt means don't
- Love is a feeling
- If your gut is telling you to get out, then you should listen.

Your gut is always right

- Love shouldn't feel scary
- From the moment you get engaged through your honeymoon you should be happier than you've ever been in your life
- It's not okay to feel anxious during your engagement, wedding, or first year of marriage

Are any of these lies wreaking havoc in your mind? If so, it's time to replace them with the truth. But where do you find the truth in a culture predicated on a romantic fantasy? You find it in real life marriages, in books, and articles. Read every article on my website and watch every video.

And then there's the Course. One of the most powerful benefits of the [Conscious Weddings Course](#) is that every lesson is teeming with accurate information about love, marriage, and relationship anxiety.

The “conscious marrieds” on the password-protected Course forum also provide daily balms of truth, like BabyofSix who recently wrote:

Hi ladies...

I had a thought reading a thread on here. So many words are used on this site (and on the old site) that play a big part in your perspective. How do I know this? I used (well, if I'm honest, use) them. To anyone who has more to add, please feel free to add to the list. Below are some words/phrases I've worked on eliminating from my vocabulary, especially when it relates to my relationship:

- should
- ought to
- always
- never
- settled/settle/settling
- passionate (although it has a place in a romantic relationship, I found it to be a dangerous word for me)
- "what if" (yeah, still working on this one)
- " _____'s relationship _____" (the ever dreaded

comparing)

- guilt/guilty (you feel how you feel, regardless of anything else... feel it, period)

Those are just some that I can think of off the top of my head. Remember, you have much more control over your thoughts than you might think. You can change how you think, which in turn will change how you feel.

5. Find Support

If you're struggling with engagement anxiety or having doubts of any kind, you're probably feeling alone right now. As I've said, there's a strong taboo in our culture against discussing anything less than pure joy when it comes to getting married, which is why one of the first statements out of a new client's mouth is, "What's wrong with me? I feel so guilty and so alone."

In order to pave the way for marriage success, you need to find people with whom you can share your deepest fears and doubts about getting married. But where to find those people when even your mother might say, "Well, maybe you shouldn't get married if you're having these feelings"? And it pains me to say that the majority of therapists are still under the illusion that

“doubt means don’t” and simply don’t understand that, unless there are serious red-flag issues in the relationship (and I discuss those in depth in the Course), engagement anxiety is normal and healthy.

I encourage you to search high and low for that one friend, special aunt, or online support network where you can let it all hang out. Spilling the beans to your fiancé is wonderful, but there’s nothing like finding a friend who can say, “I get it. I feel that way, too. You’re completely normal.” And that’s exactly what people find on the Course password-protected forum: a safe, easily accessible way to find support, comfort, and real guidance from people who are experiencing exactly what you’re going through, as well as those who are long past the anxious stage and have been happily married for years.

So there you have it: the five steps to begin your marriage with the best chance for success. You won’t learn these steps in any book about planning your wedding or from most planners. And yet when one in four marriages end in divorce, don’t you owe it to yourself and your partner to do everything you can to give yourself the best chance for success? Begin these steps today and you’ll be legions ahead of most people on the verge of marriage.

Further Resources:

If your relationship anxiety started around the wedding transition and is connected to the proposal, wedding day, or first year of marriage, I recommend starting with [The Conscious Weddings Course](#).

If you have a history of anxiety and intrusive thoughts and your relationship anxiety is separate from the wedding transition, I recommend the [Break Free From Relationship Anxiety Course](#).