

Are You Ready?

Marriage seems simple and straight forward, however, when asked how do you know if you're ready for marriage, things get a bit more complicated. In the United States, we have treated marriage to be of high importance. This is a goal most everyone wants to complete in life. So how do we know if we're ready? How do we know who to marry? In the United States, there are legal restrictions in place that govern when, and who we can marry. These restrictions are fairly open for the most part, the biggest restrictions set in place are those of age and type of people.

Although some parameters vary by state, such as age limit, and relatives, there are a couple of restrictions that are universal throughout all 50 states. Marriage is not allowed between immediate family members (parents, children, siblings), grandparents, grandchildren, uncles, nieces, aunts and nephews (Strong & Cohen, 2017, p. 286). The other being that no one can have more than one spouse. Besides those two, independent states set their own marital restrictions. Most states require couples to be at least 18 years old to marry without parental consent (Strong & Cohen, 2017, p. 287). Another factor can include how close down the blood line relatives can marry. Same-sex marriages used to vary by state but became legal everywhere after supreme court cases.

These restrictions place a baseline for the standards and morals we can build upon in determining who, and when we marry. The most popular way of choosing a life mate is homogamy. Homogamy is the process of choosing a mate whose characteristics are similar to ours. Even though this is one of the more popular way of choosing a mate, it doesn't guarantee that two people will fall in love this way. There are other ways theorized that we choose our partners.

The complementary needs theory states that people select spouses whose needs are different from their own (Strong & Cohen, 2017, p. 297). There is also the role or value theory which plays mostly into homogamy in the fact that we choose spouses that think as we do. Another is the parental image theory that suggests we choose partners that resemble our opposite-sex parent. There's also the stimulus-value-role theory which states that during a magical moment, chemistry in ourselves spark couples to be together.

I believe there's a lot more to think about and take into account before you propose. These things include: commitment, finances, and supportiveness to name a few. Before you marry someone, you need to find out if both parties are willing to commit to each other for the rest of your lives. You also want to make sure that your both financially able to marry each other; and I'm not talking about wedding expenses, finances are one of the biggest factors and can become a huge issue further down the road. You also want to make sure both will be supportive in each other's goals. Everyone has their life goals and no one is going to give those up very easily. Everyone is different but everything discussed should provide a basic understanding on how to recognize and how to know when and who to marry.

References:

Strong, B, & Cohen, T. F. (2017). *The marriage and family experience: Intimate relationships in a changing society* (13th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.