



The Pre -Marital Toilet Test

We enter marriage with hopes, aspirations and faith. When marital discord strikes we are overcome with disillusionment. A year into the marriage, the notion of “tell death do us part”, smacks us in the face like a glass of cold water.

Not only do we enter into marriage with hopes, aspirations and faith, but we also enter with mutual expectations. Most of those expectations however go undiscussed and hence untested. So couples make huge assumptions of each other based upon a fantasized life they foresee for themselves after marriage. The problem is, when expectations do not meet reality, persons can be left feeling angry, bitter and disappointed.

There are so many facets of life to discuss prior to marriage, that one hardly knows where to begin. The most common points of discussion however include family planning and finances. After that are matters concerning relationships to extended family member and then friends. Arguments over how to spend holiday time shows up as seasonal celebrations come like clockwork. Hopefully couples do discuss these matters forthrightly between themselves prior to marriage so as to avoid conflict and consternation afterwards.

However, and while those issues are of utmost importance, it can be the matters of day-to-day living that can cause the greatest irritation and unravel the best of relationships. Some of these day-to-day issues are seemingly minor and others smack of gender role issues and others of power and control issues.

Rarely discussed is who cooks, who cleans, who gardens, who launders and who writes the cheques.

Remembering a radio phone-in conversation, the woman caller felt certain her spouse-to-be would share in cleaning the toilets. She thought this because her fiancé had lived on his own for a number of years and always maintained a clean washroom. The following call from another woman set the first woman straight. She thought similarly but was much surprised when upon marriage, the husband pronounced cleaning the toilet was her job! Yes he did it when on his own. That was a necessity as there was no one else to do so. Upon marriage, he felt the job fell to his wife!

We take so much for granted entering marriage.

The key is to look and assess our assumptions before marriage to thus reduce the risk of conflict and breakdown thereafter.

Neither partner owns the rights to false expectations. Both persons are likely to have several. So prior to marriage, sit down with your intended and dare to take the toilet test.

Ask your intended, “Who do you think will clean the toilet.

Gary Direnfeld, MSW, RSW
(905) 628-4847
gary@yoursocialworker.com
www.yoursocialworker.com

Gary Direnfeld is a social worker. Courts in Ontario, Canada, consider him an expert on child development, parent-child relations, marital and family therapy, custody and access recommendations, social work and an expert for the purpose of giving a critique on a Section 112 (social work) report. Call him for your next conference and for expert opinion on family matters. Services include counselling, mediation, assessment, assessment critiques and workshops.