

Relationship Agreements – What do you think?

I think Sheldon Cooper on the Big Bang Theory is on to something. He coined two amazing phrases that we all laugh at but probably silently agree with: The “Relationship Agreement” and the “Room Mate Agreement.” Yeah, he gets a little carried away with these documents – 300 pages, really? – but if you really think about both they could be useful in avoiding a lot of bad relationships and even bad marriages. You could also do something like this and call it a “Prenuptial Agreement” for those more serious relationships. Now, now, now, don’t get all crazy – let’s take a look at this for a minute.



First, ask yourself, have you ever had a bad relationship? That led to an ugly break up? For instance, you met her at work and she dresses nice and conservative like you and seems to be organized, but then you move in together and find out she’s a slob with weird mold growing in the fridge! Or you realize after a few months of dating this gorgeous guy who rides a Harley, that now you’re paying his way all the time because he can’t seem to hold down a job and he’s always broke? Or, worse, have you ever been engaged to someone and when you start talking about which church to get married in, you realize you have some pretty big differences regarding the religion in which you’re going to raise the kids. Wait, huh, what kids??



I’m sure you have your own stories, so you get the idea. And I’m just thinking that a lot of this aggravation could be avoided with a relationship agreement.

Yeah I know a lot of people do a lot of talking when they first meet...hours and hours on the phone or over coffee at Starbucks. But generally that talk is all about what’s going on right now: The weather, volunteer work, your favorite movies, music and wine, philosophy of eastern cultures, food, walks on the beach, sunsets, parties and sex. And the sex is great! The best they ever had! And they discover they share all the same feelings about all these things, it’s amazing! And did I mention that the sex is great and they can’t keep their hands off each other? Well they must be “soul mates!” Yay! How wonderful!

Really? Are you kidding me? But *you know* this happens all the time! Look at People magazine!



The problem is that after the “soul mate” proclamation, no one takes the time to realize that none of those things really makes a helluva a lot of difference when it comes to sharing a bathroom. Thus, wanting to shoot themselves because they realize that not only does their soul mate have a bad aim, he never puts the damn seat down! OMG!

So, I suggest an informal agreement, or at least a very serious discussion, between the two of you so you get all of your little habits, pet peeves and expectations out on the table, right up front. Ignoring these things doesn't make them go away like my mom used to say, “Ignore them, they'll eventually go away.” Yeah, NO! These issues never do...they just piss you off more and more over time.

Now I'm not saying you have to go into every single little detail of your day minute-by-minute, nor do you have to have this document notarized and signed in blood. I'm just saying make a list of some common things that will come up when you are living under the same roof with your “soul mate,” or any mate for that matter.

So here's my list of suggested topics. Feel free to add, delete or rearrange to suit you and your new honey's situation.

- Money (Number one cause of divorce in America!)
- Credit scores
- Children (Number two cause of divorce in America!)
- Pets
- Health, eating and exercise expectations/habits, or lack thereof

And here're some other less critical topics to consider in your new “relationship agreement.” Less critical, but not any less important.

- Where do you want to live? (City, State, house or apartment)
- What kind of bed should you have?
- What do everyone's work, school and sleep schedules look like? (now and for the rest of your lives)
- What do everyone's shower and bathroom habits look like?
- What will the guidelines be regarding visitors?
- How will housework be split up?
- How are you going to handle grocery shopping?
- What do everyone's kitchen habits look like? (food, cooking, cleaning)

These are just a few topics you should discuss with your latest soul mate or potential spouse, but it's enough to get you going in the right direction, don't you think?



So now what do you think about the wisdom of Sheldon's Relationship Agreement? Remember, if you decide to get married, you really are entering into a legally binding, financial agreement. So you might as well go into it with all the information you can to make it a happy and long lasting relationship. The more you talk to each other about the things that you'll face in your day to day lives, the happier you'll be because you'll avoid ugly surprises.

And I encourage you to write these things down...call it a "Prenup," call it a "Relationship



Agreement," call it whatever the hell you want. But this kind of document will help to jog your memory when you need it, and might even help you to get through the tough times that every relationship faces.

I'd love to hear what you think: email me at janetmnast@yahoo.com, or leave a comment on my site, www.janetmnast.com

Sincerely,

Janet M. Nast

