



# Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts: Seven Questions to Ask Before---and After---You Marry

By Les Parrott, Leslie Parrott

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## Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts: Seven Questions to Ask Before---and After---You Marry By Les Parrott, Leslie Parrott

Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts, created by relationship experts Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott, is a comprehensive marriage program designed specifically for today's couples by a couple. And now, in this updated edition, the Parrotts' award-winning approach has been expanded to incorporate ten more years of feedback, research, and professional experience. This is more than a book—it's practically a self-guided premarital counseling course, and it is used by counselors and churches across the country and, now in ten languages, worldwide. Questions at the end of every chapter help you explore each topic personally. Companion men's and women's workbooks\* full of self-tests and exercises help you apply what you learn and enjoy intimate discussions along the way. There is even a seven-session DVD kit (with a bonus session for people entering a second marriage) available that you can use on your own or with other couples in a group or a class that want to grow together. In this dynamic DVD you'll not only hear entertaining and insightful teaching from the Parrotts, but you'll also meet other real-life couples who provide amazing candor and perspective. Relationship experts Les and Leslie Parrott show you the secrets to building a marriage that lasts.

- Uncover the most important misbeliefs of marriage
- Learn how to communicate with instant understanding
- Discover the secret to reducing and resolving conflict
- Master the skills of money management
- Get your sex life off to a great start
- Understand the three essential ingredients to lasting love
- Discover the importance of becoming "soul mates" ... and more.

Make your marriage everything it is meant to be. Save your marriage—before (and after) it starts.

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### Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts (SYMBIS) is the first comprehensive marriage preparation program specifically designed for today's couples. It's also the first program for couples developed by a couple. And Les and Leslie Parrott are no ordinary couple. As marriage counselors and teachers, they're on the cutting edge of marriage research and education. Each year they teach a blockbuster relationships course to hundreds of college students. They see the struggles and dreams of couples up close. And they reveal the flaws and foibles of their own relationship in order to show how challenging -- and rewarding -- marriage can be. The Parrotts show young couples the skills they need to make the transition from "single" to "married" smooth and enjoyable. Designed for couples and small groups, the SYMBIS curriculum includes the following: - Two videos with eight half-hour sessions by the Parrotts - Separate men's and women's workbooks full of exercises and self-tests to help couples apply what they learn - A leader's guide that shows small-group leaders how to successfully conduct the SYMBIS program - A hardcover copy of the book, *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts* - A copy of the *Marriage Mentor Manual*, a guide to helping young couples establish mentoring relationships with experienced couples after the wedding Based on up-to-date information from two marriage authorities, the *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts* curriculum offers today's couples a complete marriage prep program for a lifetime together. Start with it today, while your love is fresh -- and save your marriage before it starts.

8 sessions; 2 videos

About the Author

A psychologist and a marriage and family therapist, Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott are founders of the Center for Relationship Development at Seattle Pacific University. Their bestselling books include *Love Talk*, *Crazy Good Sex*, *The Complete Guide to Marriage Mentoring*, and the award-winning *Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts*. Their work has been featured in *The New York Times* and *USA Today*, and they have appeared on CNN, O'Reilly Factor, Good Morning America, Today Show, The View, and Oprah. They live with their two sons in Seattle. Visit [LesandLeslie.com](http://LesandLeslie.com).

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Before You Begin We never had premarital counseling, but we spent the first year of our married life in therapy. Once a week, we met with a counselor who helped us iron out the wrinkles we never even saw before getting married. Not that we were in serious trouble. But we had this naive idea that after our wedding our life would fall naturally into place, and a marriage preparation course or counseling never entered our minds. We had dated for six years before our nine-month engagement, and we had a lot in common (even our first names). We simply thought we would tie the proverbial knot, set up house, and as the fairy tales say, 'live happily ever after.' But we didn't. The first years of marriage were difficult right from the start. Literally. In the limousine ride away from the church, as both of us waved good-bye to our family and friends through the back window, I (Leslie) began to cry. 'What's wrong?' Les asked. I kept crying and didn't answer. 'Are you happy or sad?' Les put his arm around my shoulders and waited for a reply. When I didn't answer, he asked again, 'What's going on inside you?' 'I don't know,' I whimpered. 'I don't know.' Les gave me a squeeze with his arm. I knew I was hurting him, but I didn't know what to say or why I was feeling so sad. Except for the clanging of the tin cans behind us, the ride to the airport that afternoon, June 30, 1984,

was quiet. As we waited for 14 Before You Begin our flight in a smoke-filled terminal at O'Hare Airport, both of us felt hazy about what we had just been through. Were we really married? It didn't feel like it. We were newlyweds, but we felt more like refugees. After boarding the plane, we fell into our seats, exhausted. So much time and energy had led up to that wedding ceremony. And it had gone as planned. But now what? Both of us sat on the plane, emotionally spent, quietly pondering the meaning of marriage. What was it all about, this marriage? Why didn't I feel any different? Who was this person I married, really? For Better or Worse? Let's be honest. The 'till death do us part' statement of the marriage vow rings increasingly ironic. In the 1930s, one out of seven marriages ended in divorce. In the 1960s, it was one out of four. Of the 2.4 million couples who will get married this year in the United States, it is predicted that at least 43 percent will not survive. For too many couples, marriage has become 'till divorce do us part.'<sup>1</sup> Every couple marrying today is at risk. More than two-hundred thousand new marriages each year end prior to the couple's second anniversary. After they toss the bouquet and return the tuxedos, couples often assume they're headed for marital bliss. But a study of those who recently tied the knot revealed that 49 percent reported having serious marital problems. Half were already having doubts about whether their marriages would last.<sup>2</sup> The truth is, most engaged couples prepare more for their wedding than they do for their marriage. The \$50-billion-a-year wedding industry can testify to that fact. According to experts, the average two-hundred guest wedding today costs twenty-two thousand dollars. <sup>3</sup> More than one million copies of bridal magazines are sold each month, focusing mainly on wedding ceremonies, honeymoons, and home furnishings --- but not on marriage itself. Before You Begin <sup>15</sup> Looking back, it seems silly that Les and I did so much to prepare for our wedding and so little to prepare for our marriage. But the truth is that less than a fifth of all marriages in America are preceded by some kind of formal marriage preparation.<sup>4</sup> One wonders what would be the effect if the same amount of time, energy, and money spent on the ceremony was invested in the marriage. Planning the perfect wedding too often takes precedence over planning a successful marriage. And lack of planning is the ultimate saboteur of marriage. The wedding-bell blues are common after the excitement of an elaborate wedding celebration. 'The emotional high of ordering engraved invitations, selecting music for the ceremony, and choosing a china pattern took my attention off the big picture,' a young bride told us. 'The ceremony was more tangible and less of a gamble than the marriage. I put my energy into the wedding and hoped for the best.' For too long the trend has been to fall in love, marry, and hope for the best. This book offers a different approach. How to Predict a Happy Marriage Over the last three decades, marriage specialists have researched the ingredients of a happy marriage. As a result, we know more about building a successful marriage today than ever before. For example, happily married couples will have: \* healthy expectations of marriage \* a realistic concept of love \* a positive attitude and outlook toward life \* the ability to communicate their feelings \* an understanding and acceptance of their gender differences \* the ability to make decisions and settle arguments \* a common spiritual foundation and goal In short, the indicators of a healthy marriage form the basis of the seven questions we pose in this book.<sup>5</sup> Every couple should be aware of these issues before (and after) they marry. Taking the time to understand these issues is like investing in an insurance policy against divorce. Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts (SYMBIS) is based on the fact that marriage doesn't have to be a gamble. As a psychologist (Les) and a marriage and family therapist (Leslie) who counsel hundreds of married couples, we have learned that living happily ever after is less a mystery than it is the mastery of certain skills. Although married life will always have its difficulties, mastering these life skills will steadily and dramatically improve your relationship. Many couples wrongly blame in-laws, money, and sex for breakups and marital dissatisfaction. However, the hot points in marriage usually result from poor communication, gender issues, and lack of spiritual health, to name a few. This book cuts to the heart of every marital conflict. Whether single and dating, in a committed relationship, contemplating marriage, or already ensconced in one, this book will help you learn the skills you'll need for a lasting and happy life together --- before unhappiness sets in. Getting the Most from SYMBIS We wrote the first edition of this book ten years ago, and since that time it has been used by hundreds of thousands of couples who want the very best for their marriage. That's why we've updated and expanded it with the latest and greatest information on lifelong love. In addition to shoring up any lag in research findings, we've added

new material on sex as well as money. Over the years we've heard from many couples who have wanted more information and exercises on these topics. We've also added an online premarital assessment that can be found at [www.RealRelationships.com](http://www.RealRelationships.com).

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Tony Paulson:**

Reading a reserve tends to be new life style on this era globalization. With studying you can get a lot of information which will give you benefit in your life. Along with book everyone in this world can easily share their idea. Publications can also inspire a lot of people. Many author can inspire their very own reader with their story or even their experience. Not only situation that share in the textbooks. But also they write about the data about something that you need instance. How to get the good score toefl, or how to teach your young ones, there are many kinds of book that exist now. The authors in this world always try to improve their ability in writing, they also doing some exploration before they write for their book. One of them is this Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts: Seven Questions to Ask Before---and After---You Marry.

#### **Tracie Berry:**

Are you kind of stressful person, only have 10 or perhaps 15 minute in your moment to upgrading your mind proficiency or thinking skill even analytical thinking? Then you are experiencing problem with the book as compared to can satisfy your short period of time to read it because all of this time you only find book that need more time to be study. Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts: Seven Questions to Ask Before---and After---You Marry can be your answer given it can be read by you actually who have those short extra time problems.

#### **Larry Boggs:**

Reading a book for being new life style in this 12 months; every people loves to examine a book. When you read a book you can get a great deal of benefit. When you read books, you can improve your knowledge, since book has a lot of information upon it. The information that you will get depend on what kinds of book that you have read. In order to get information about your research, you can read education books, but if you want to entertain yourself read a fiction books, such us novel, comics, as well as soon. The Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts: Seven Questions to Ask Before---and After---You Marry provide you with a new experience in looking at a book.

#### **John Pierre:**

This Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts: Seven Questions to Ask Before---and After---You Marry is fresh way for you who has attention to look for some information as it relief your hunger of knowledge. Getting deeper you upon it getting knowledge more you know otherwise you who still having bit of digest in reading this Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts: Seven Questions to Ask Before---and After---You Marry can be the light food to suit your needs because the information inside this book is easy to get by anyone.

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