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# Relationship Danger Signs

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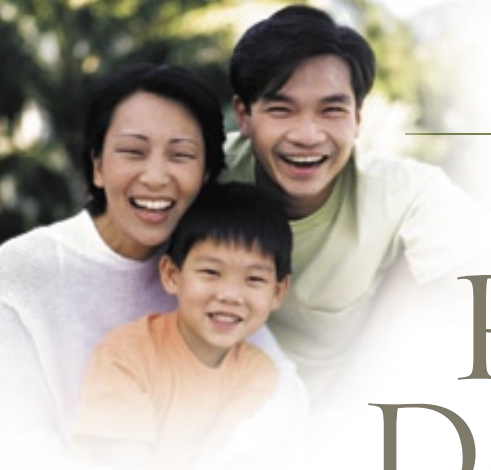
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# Relationship DANGER SIGNS

BY SUSAN E. MURRAY

According to the National Marriage Project\*, some 60 percent of young adults in their 20s agree that one of their biggest concerns about getting married is that it will end in divorce, and 52 percent of young adults say they see so few good or happy marriages around them that they question marriage as a way of life.



What a sad commentary on the framework God gave us, a gift that for most provides a foundation for building a fulfilled and meaningful life in adulthood.

While maturity and a healthy outlook are foundational to a good relationship, in their attempts to “find happiness,” many overlook danger signs in their relationships. I invite you to consider these danger signs in a relationship. Although not the “definitive list,” many who are in the throws of a difficult relationship after marriage, have told me some of these were issues before marriage. They wished they had paid more attention and been more realistic about these issues in the development of their relationship before marriage.

- ▶ Frequent arguments, especially over seemingly trivial issues
- ▶ Avoiding sensitive subject areas because of fear the discussion will lead to arguments or hurt feelings
- ▶ Physical, emotional, or sexual abuse
- ▶ Lack of spiritual harmony and shared values
- ▶ Partner/self constantly giving in to what the other wants
- ▶ Signs of serious emotional disturbances such as extreme fears, unexplainable physical aches and pains, the inability to demonstrate affection, extreme jealousy, suspiciousness, or continuous feelings of depression

- ▶ Financial irresponsibility or inability to secure and hold a job
- ▶ Compulsive/addictive behaviors (such as eating disorders, drug/alcohol abuse, workaholism, etc.)
- ▶ Partner/self too perfectionistic, little unity, sarcastic
- ▶ Diminished areas of common interest, shared leisure activities, hobbies, etc.
- ▶ Partner/self unable to accept constructive criticism, finding it difficult to apologize when wrong
- ▶ Partner/self having increasing difficulty expressing feelings
- ▶ Having a general lack of inner peace about the relationship, nagging or disturbing feelings that something is not right, seeing signs that arouse suspicion and mistrust

When these danger signs are present in a relationship, it does not necessarily mean the end of the relationship. What is important is to recognize these signs for what they are, face them, determine to do one’s best to be a responsible, committed partner, at the same time striving to follow God’s will, which can involve counseling and possible medical treatment.

Susan Murray is a licensed marriage and family therapist. She and her husband, Don, co-founded *Adventist Engaged Encounter* which was attended by more than 1,500 engaged and newly married couples.

\*National Marriage Project at <http://marriage.rutgers.edu/>