

More happiness for couples who wait

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A new study from Brigham Young University has found that couples who delay sex until marriage report more happiness and stability than couples who have sex before they tie the knot. According to the researchers, delaying sex helps couples to focus on building other parts of their relationship, such as developing communication.

However, some naysayers suggest that these findings might be biased due to the origin of the study (Brigham Young is a private university operated by the Church of Latter Day Saints). Lead researcher Dean Busby denies this criticism, stating that the findings were across the board and were not dependent on whether or not the couples in the study were religious.

Regardless of your own religious or moral beliefs on premarital sex, the decision of when to be intimate always is a hot-button issue for couples. Whether you are debating sex on the first date or sex before your wedding night, intimacy has the power to change the landscape of your relationship, and not always for the better.

If you want to safeguard your relationship against the potential pitfalls of intimacy, consider the following:

Make sure you are both on the same page. People often confuse sexual intimacy with emotional intimacy. They go into a sexual situation looking for affection, validation, support, and connection, and sometimes all they find is sex.

Of course, if sex is all you are looking for, then by all means, enjoy yourself (with protection!). But if you are seeking a relationship and a lasting connection, be aware that speeding up sexual intimacy isn't the way to get there. In fact, having sex too soon can put an end to an otherwise budding relationship.

Sex is an exciting, pleasurable part of being a couple, but it also can take away the mystery and thrill of the chase, especially if you jump in too soon.

To make sure this doesn't happen, spend some time getting to know your partner on a deeper level and discuss what you are both seeking from the relationship. Make sure you also discuss sexual health issues, along with STD testing and protection.

Sex often is used as a "Band-Aid" in relationships, and instead of hashing things out or fixing what's broken, couples often opt to move right into makeup sex. This can be problematic as these issues don't go away simply because they are ignored. Instead, they can take on a life of their own and become unmanageable over time. So work on conflict resolution outside of the bedroom first.

Make sure that you have common interests and goals before you hit the bedroom. Discuss whether you are interested in commitment, whether you have similar core values and beliefs, and whether or not you want a future together.

Keep the mystery alive. Continue building strong friendships, working toward your career goals, and spending time on your own interests. By doing so, you can ensure that you will remain the confident, engaging, interesting person that your partner fell in love with!