

LAURA HOW

COUNSELLING & GUIDANCE



REASONABLE MARRIAGE NEEDS

Reasonable marital needs, to choose from, add to, edit, & make your own.

THE MARRIAGE NEEDS LIST

A marriage is a living thing, and living things have needs — conditions they can't stay healthy without.

This is not 'his needs' or 'her needs' but the marriage's needs. Each one is an answer to the question a savvy person would ask before ever saying "I do": what will be non-negotiable in this marriage?

Sit down together, choose what's true for yours, add what's missing, and create one list, with no names attached.

HOW TO USE IT

- Sit down together and ask each other: "What do you most need from me to feel loved, safe and connected in this marriage?"
- Write every answer on ONE list with no names attached. It doesn't matter whose is whose. The marriage needs them all, and no single item matters more than another.
- Go through each item and notice how you feel about giving in that area. The one's you feel are most difficult are where your work is.
- Where you recoil, ask: is the barrier inside me, or between us? If it's in you, that's yours to look at, with their patience. If it's between you, then that's an honest conversation, not a standoff.
- And remember: a no is the start of a long conversation, never the end of a short one.

KEEP IT REASONABLE

Needs must be achievable inside an ordinary, busy life. Sex twice a day because you didn't get enough cuddles as a child isn't reasonable. A reliable, satisfying sex life is. The same goes for constant validation, unattainable standards, or shifting goalposts.

This list is not a scorecard. Nobody's keeping count. You're both custodians of the same thing. And keep desires off it. The fantasies, the favours, the just-for-me's. Those are gifts, and a different conversation. This list is the foundations only.

Feel free to add your own. There are no rules beyond, reasonable, achievable and agreed.

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THE FOUNDATIONS

Honesty — To be told the truth — even the uncomfortable kind.

Trust & commitment — To be sure of each other. Reliability, fidelity, no exit talk.

Emotional safety — To be safe being fully yourself.

Respect — To be spoken to with respect — and spoken about with respect.

Loyalty — To be on the same team in public — and to know what's private stays private.

CONNECTION

Emotional connection — To be truly known. Real conversation about your inner lives.

Listening — To be heard all the way to the end. Not fixed, not rushed, not waited out.

Presence & undivided time — To be given real attention, without screens.

Kindness — To be treated gently as the default. Warm words, small courtesies.

Appreciation — To be seen. Contributions noticed and said out loud.

PHYSICAL INTIMACY

A living sexual connection — To be lovers, not room-mates. Willing, warm, recurring.

Feeling wanted — To be wanted. Chosen, reached for, flirted with.

Everyday affection — To be touched warmly. The kiss hello, the hand on the back.

THE PARTNERSHIP

Teamwork — To be a team with the load. The practical life carried together, with goodwill.

Money in the open — To be financial partners. Money handled together, honestly.

Pulling in the same direction — To be building the same life. A shared vision.

Repair — To be able to fall out and mend.

Grace — To be forgiven properly.

THE LIFE IN IT

Friendship & fun — To be friends who laugh. Play, silliness, shared enjoyment.

Romance that doesn't retire — To be courted. Dates, effort, being chosen visibly.

Showing up — To be caught on the hard days — and celebrated on the good ones.

Backing each other's growth — To be believed in. To be taken seriously and supported.

Room to breathe — To be a whole person. Time apart, friendships and interests of your own.

When two people tend to their marriage like this, meeting each other's needs stops feeling like servicing a debt — and starts feeling like serving a purpose.