

The Marriage Life Jacket

What comes to mind when you hear someone planning to get married? Petals of soft shades, a room filled with the perfect ambiance, debonair groomsmen and elegant bridesmaids, all the details that couples spend time and money on as they anticipate in tying the knot.

What is rarely, if ever discussed is their money personality, individual goals in life, styles for raising children, family values and a host of other tough topics. Having stars in your eyes when you find that special someone often means a time when life is exciting, filled with firsts and moments to treasure. It is at this perfect moment of being in love that couples treat each other fairly, are kind, and understanding, so the ideal time to discuss the serious life choices respectfully.

Romance is the exciting emotional peaks that build passion but not necessarily the trust needed to construct a long term relationship that will outlast the statistics. Depending upon where you live in the country, there is a greater than 35% chance of marriage failing. The wedded bliss that began with such high hopes too often ends in bitter battles and ultimately divorce. No one wants to simply test the waters, however that is exactly how the majority of couples join their lives together.

When wedding planning starts, it is most beneficial to seek out professionals who can assist in the creation of a collaborative marriage agreement. When the party is over no one wants to be left with shattered dreams, battle scars, and big legal bills.

Collaborative professionals come from three main disciplines, family counselors, financial professionals known as Chartered Financial Divorce Specialists (CFDS) and lawyers, who have all been collaboratively trained. The team is composed of these professionals, plus the bride and groom who work together to tailor an agreement that suits their unique needs and objectives as a couple.

The process starts with the Collaborative Family Coach who will have conversations asking such questions as what each individual envisions with regard to having children, caring for parents or education goals to ensure all key concerns are discussed with plans for resolution.

Next the Chartered Financial Divorce Specialist uses questions, tools and a working plan for the financial experience that would include goals set out by the couple. Every plan is customized to match each person's personality for managing money today as they merge together, plus creating a plan of uncoupling should they decide to separate in future years.

The final piece is where it all comes together with the lawyers creating a legal document that incorporates the choices made, taking care of the legal aspects to stand up as a valuable and viable document. It does not have to be an agreement for life since it could be arranged for a specific number of years, 5, 10, etc., that is revisited when a major life change happens such as having a child. It is key for each person has their own lawyer to ensure the document allowed for independent advice. Put some wedding money to use for protecting the future.