

Self-Care and Clarity of Mind...a weekly column by Princess Lakshman (Sister Iqra)



Welcome to my weekly column on **Self-Care and Clarity of Mind**. If you're taking time out to read this, pat yourself on the back because you have shown commitment to taking care of your mind and body.

Today, In Shaa ALLAH, we will explore the topic: **Get Marriage-Ready**

Congratulations! You're getting married! The venue is booked, wedding outfits are curated, guest-list looks on point, the caterers have been instructed about dietary requirements, the limo is hired and the cousins have been warned to not post wedding pics online until the professionally airbrushed photographs have been formally released to the bride and groom.

You've met people who are preparing for their big day. Rarely do you meet people who are preparing for their marriage, a lifelong commitment to another human.

People meet or get introduced to each other. In most cases, what follows next is the exchanging of a barrage of texts and DMs to try to get to know each other before they decide they want to be married. The focus is on the momentary joy of being in love or having that attraction. People forget to ask the tough questions that later begin to frequently emerge in the marriage and the one thing that keeps recurring in the mind is "I wish I had known this or that about him/her before I got married."

In my previous marriage, I was that person who focussed on the physical and material readiness of the wedding day ceremony and pre-wedding henna celebrations and hair and makeup and the perfect outfit. Not once did I pause to question if I was spiritually, mentally and emotionally prepared for the days that would follow the few hours of glitterati of the wedding day.

I learned the hard way. But you don't have to. The following strategies may help you and your future spouse become aware of the different facets of your commitment to each other in marriage. These strategies are for you both to do together in a halal and safe manner.

1. Meet with a professional counsellor, coach or a spiritual guide, to openly discuss the expectations you both have from each other in the four common areas in your life: Love, Relationships, Career and Money.
2. Spend time with a mentor couple who has a solid marriage and can share their wisdom with you both.
3. Have regular one-on-one, face to face meetings in a public place where the two of you can sit down and discuss these relevant topics:
 - Values - if your values are similar, you feel valued in the relationship.
 - Beliefs - if your beliefs are similar, there is less conflict.
 - Self-confidence - if there is a healthy level of self-confidence, there is no competition, rather everything becomes a collaboration.
 - Mental health - talk about anxiety and how you manage it.
 - Physical health - talk about exercise and how you can plan on incorporating that in your marriage.
 - Emotional health - talk about how you feel about the way anger, suspicion and jealousy need to be displayed in your marriage. There is a healthy way of expressing these emotions that is constructive rather than destructive.
 - Spiritual health - talk about your Creator and share your inner-most thoughts about spirituality and how you practise this daily to be close to your Creator
 - Trauma - being transparent about trauma means that you will feel safe in the marriage and not feel anxious every time there may be a trigger. Your future partner will be able to understand why you may be acting out and support you through healing from trauma. It's okay if you don't wish to share specific details but at least tell your future partner if "something bad happened in childhood".

Falling in love with the person you are marrying is beautiful. Remember though that love is a verb and needs to be demonstrated through ways where you value each other, believe in each other, are collaborative in your daily life, enjoy optimal mental, physical, emotional and spiritual health and respect each other's trauma triggers and help with each other's healing.

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