

Self-Awareness, Pre-Marriage Issues & Marital Conflict in Islam

An Islamic Perspective on Building
Strong Marriages

Self-Awareness in Islam

- Self-awareness means **being in touch with one's thoughts, feelings and actions**being consciously aware of one's own existence
- Self-awareness (muraqabah) is recognizing your inner self and actions before Allah.
- The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ said: 'The intelligent one is he who subdues his soul and works for what is after death.' (Tirmidhi)
- Knowing oneself helps in fulfilling responsibilities as a spouse with ihsan (excellence).

Why self awareness

- **Capitalizing on Strengths**
 - › By understanding Your unique abilities, you can focus your energy on areas where you excel.
- **Navigating Challenges Effectively**
 - › When individuals clearly understand their **emotions, motivations, and values**, they are better equipped to handle difficult situations with composure and resilience.

- **Improved decision-making skills**
 - When people know their values, beliefs, and goals, they are better equipped to make choices that align with their authentic selves.
- **Fostering resilience and adaptability**
 - When people know themselves well, they are better prepared to handle setbacks and bounce back from adversity.

- **Enhancing Relationships through Self-Awareness**

- enables them to **build healthier** and more **meaningful relationships**.
- By understanding their own emotions, they can enhance communication and empathy with others.
- Practising self-reflection promotes better conflict resolution within relationships.

- **Developing Problem-Solving Skills through Self-Reflection**
 - They can identify patterns of behaviour that may hinder their progress and explore alternative approaches.
 - It encourages critical thinking and adaptability, enabling individuals to approach future challenges confidently.

- **Leading to Successful Outcomes**
 - The ability to think critically and creatively allows them to explore multiple solutions before settling on the most effective one.
- **Identifying Passions, Interests, and Talents**
 - This allows them to pursue activities that align with their interests, leading to greater fulfilment.
- **Building Confidence through Recognizing Strengths**
 - When young people understand their unique abilities and talents, it boosts their confidence levels significantly. They become aware of what sets them apart and can leverage these strengths to achieve their goals.

23 Self-Awareness Questions to Ask

Self-awareness questions on values and life goals

- What does your ideal “you” look like?
- What kinds of dreams and goals do you have?
- Why are these dreams or goals important?
- What is keeping you from these dreams or goals?
- Rank 5-10 of the most important things in your life in your career, family, relationships and love, money, etc.
- Now think about the proportion of time you dedicate to each of these things.
- What would you recommend to your children to do or not to do?

Self-awareness questions on personality

- Describe yourself in three words.
- Ask yourself if your personality has changed since childhood.
- Is your personality like either of your parents?
- What qualities do you most admire in yourself?
- What is your biggest weakness?
- What is your biggest strength?
- What things scare you?
- Do you make decisions logically or intuitively?
- How would you complete the question: “What if?”.

Self-awareness questions on relationships

- Describe your ideal intimate relationship.
- How satisfied are you in your current relationship?
- Who would you call if you only had a few minutes to live? What would you say?
- Who have you loved the most?
- Of all the relationships you have had, describe the best moment.
- Describe a devastating moment in terms of relationships.
- Ask yourself if you treat yourself better than others?

Benefits of Self-Awareness in Marriage

- - Understand your rights and duties in marriage
- - Be mindful of emotional responses and improve communication
- - Recognize and correct harmful behaviors (ghadab - anger, pride)
- - Follow the Prophet's ﷺ example in patience, gentleness, and forgiveness

Quranic Guidance for Choosing a Spouse

- Allah says: '...the righteous women are devoutly obedient, and guard in the husband's absence what Allah would have them guard...' (Quran 4:34)
- The Prophet ﷺ said: 'A woman is married for four things... Marry the one who is religious.' (Bukhari & Muslim)



Pre marriage preparation.

1. Beliefs and Values

Religious or spiritual beliefs

Cultural traditions and practices

Views on gender roles and family responsibilities

2. Communication and Conflict Resolution

How you handle disagreements

Emotional expression and listening habits

Openness and honesty in discussing difficult topics

3. Financial Matters

Income, debt, and financial goals

Spending habits and budgeting

Whether to combine finances or keep them separate

4. Family and Children

Whether or not to have children, and how many

Parenting styles and discipline approaches

Expectations about in-laws and extended family roles

5. Career and Life Goals

Career ambitions and future plans

Willingness to relocate for work

Balancing work and family responsibilities

6. Living Arrangements

Where to live (city, country, with/near family, etc.)

Housing expectations (renting, buying, etc.)

Daily lifestyle compatibility (cleanliness, routines, etc.)

7. Health and Personal History

Physical and mental health history

Family medical background

History of trauma or abuse, if relevant

8. Legal and Social Obligations

Views on marriage contracts (e.g., prenuptial agreements)

Understanding each other's rights and responsibilities

Plans for citizenship, visas, or legal status if relevant

Pre-Marriage Issues (Islamic View)

- - Choosing a spouse for superficial reasons rather than deen (faith)
- - Lack of readiness for marital responsibilities
- - Not performing proper istikhara (prayer for guidance)
- - Family pressure vs personal conviction
- - Ignorance of the rights and duties in Nikah
- - Unrealistic expectations from media or culture

Causes of Marital Conflict

- **Unmet Expectations**
- Unrealistic hopes about love, roles, or lifestyle
- Silent assumptions that were never discussed
- **Lack of Appreciation or Affection**
- Feeling taken for granted or emotionally neglected
- **Time Management**
- Not spending enough quality time together
- Prioritizing work, friends, or hobbies over the relationship
- **Power and Control Issues**
- One partner dominating decisions or behavior
- Imbalance of responsibilities at home

Poor Boundaries

Interference from in-laws or friends

Lack of privacy or space

Addiction or Bad Habits

Substance abuse, gambling, or even digital addiction

Chronic laziness, irresponsibility, or anger

Dishonesty or Lack of Transparency

Withholding feelings, finances, or actions

Small lies that erode trust over time

Sexual Incompatibility

Mismatched libido or unresolved sexual trauma

Lack of effort or communication in intimacy

Changes Over Time

One or both partners evolving (values, goals, personality)

Midlife crises or loss of shared direction

Marital Conflict (Islamic Insight)

- Poor understanding of Islamic roles (Qawwamah of man, obedience of wife)
- Financial disputes (not following the concept of Qana'ah – contentment)
- Communication failures and lack of sabr (patience)
- Involvement of third parties (gheebah/backbiting family issues)
- Neglecting the Sunnah of resolving disputes privately and kindly

Islamic Conflict Resolution Tips

- - Make dua and seek Allah's help in mending relationships
- - Use kind speech: 'And speak to people good [words]' (Quran 2:83)
- - Apply the Prophet's ﷺ method: silence when angry, discussion when calm
- - Seek mediation from wise, just family members (Quran 4:35)

1. Understanding Personal Beliefs and Values

- Self-awareness helps individuals know **what they believe, why they believe it**, and **how strongly** those beliefs impact their decisions.
- This clarity makes it easier to communicate values to a partner and recognize compatibility.

2. Identifying Emotional Triggers

- Knowing what upsets or frustrates you (e.g., being ignored, feeling controlled) enables better **conflict management**.
- It also helps you pause, reflect, and respond instead of reacting impulsively.

3. Clarifying Expectations

- Many marital issues stem from **unspoken or unrealistic expectations**.
- Self-aware individuals can name their expectations and distinguish between **needs vs. wants** in a relationship.

- **4. Improving Communication**

- Self-awareness leads to **emotional intelligence** — understanding your emotions and expressing them clearly.
- It also builds **empathetic listening**, which is key to resolving conflict.

- **5. Recognizing Strengths and Weaknesses**

- A self-aware partner knows their **limitations** (e.g., patience, money habits, communication style).
- This honesty reduces blame and increases collaboration with a spouse.

- **6. Taking Responsibility**

- Self-aware individuals don't always blame others. They reflect: "What's my role in this problem?"
- This accountability is critical to resolving marital issues peacefully.

Further suggestion

- □ **Mufti Menk (Ismail ibn Musa Menk)**
- **Topics:** Marriage preparation, compatibility, emotional readiness, Islamic spouse selection.
- **Style:** Practical, relatable, and widely accessible.
- **Watch on:** YouTube ("Mufti Menk premarital advice")
- □ **Ustadh Nouman Ali Khan**
- **Topics:** Emotional intelligence, communication in relationships, Qur'anic foundations for marriage.
- **Style:** Deep Qur'anic reflections with modern relevance.
- **Watch on:** Bayyinah TV, YouTube
- □ **Dr. Haifaa Younis**
- **Topics:** Women's roles, expectations in marriage, spiritual readiness.
- **Style:** Faith-driven and focused on women's development.
- **Watch on:** Jannah Institute, YouTube
- □ **Shaykh Omar Suleiman**
- **Topics:** Pre-marital counseling, marriage as a form of worship, emotional and spiritual compatibility.
- **Style:** Thoughtful, youth-friendly, and grounded in Hadith/Qur'an.
- **Watch on:** Yaqeen Institute, YouTube
- □ **Yasmin Mogahed**
- **Topics:** Emotional healing, identity before marriage, dependency issues, self-worth.
- **Style:** Emotionally deep, focused on internal work before relationships.
- **Read:** *Love & Happiness, Reclaim Your Heart*

- **Qadhi, Y. (2020).** *The Fiqh of Love: Marriage in Islam* [Video lecture]. Available on YouTube.
 - Covers Islamic guidelines on spouse selection, nikah, and marital responsibilities.
- **Qadhi, Y. (2019).** *How to Choose the Right Spouse in Islam* [Khutbah]. East Plano Islamic Center.
 - Emphasizes religious compatibility, emotional maturity, and realistic expectations.
- **Qadhi, Y. (2018).** *The Sunnah Way of Getting Married* [Public Lecture]. Available on YouTube.
 - Explains courtship, wali role, and maintaining modesty before marriage.
- **Qadhi, Y. (2021).** *10 Mistakes Muslims Make Before Marriage* [Podcast/Video].
 - Discusses common pre-marriage mistakes like lack of communication, unrealistic standards, and ignoring red flags.
- **Qadhi, Y. (2022).** *Love and Marriage in Islam: Between Culture and Religion* [Lecture].
 - Explores how cultural practices can contradict or overshadow Islamic teachings in marriage.
- **Qadhi, Y. (2023).** *What Makes a Marriage Work in Islam?* [Khutbah].
 - Provides insights on communication, forgiveness, and emotional intelligence in marital life.

Summary

- ✓ Islam promotes deep self-awareness (taqwa, muraqabah) before and during marriage
- ✓ Choosing a spouse with faith and understanding roles is essential
- ✓ Conflicts can be resolved with Islamic principles of patience, mercy, and communication

A Few Rules for a Happy Muslim Marriage

@ISLAM'S WORLD

- 1 Tell each other you love each other.
- 2 Never both be angry at the same time.
- 3 If you have to criticise, do it lovingly.
- 4 Never bring up old mistakes.
- 5 Never go to sleep with an argument unsettled.
- 6 Neglect the whole *dunya* rather than each other.
- 7 Pray together at least once a day.
- 8 Remember that behind every successful spouse is an exhausted partner.
- 9 Remember it takes two to quarrel.
- 10 When you have done something wrong, admit it.
- 11 At least once a day, say something kind or complimentary to your partner.
- 12 Do not go to bed more than ten minutes after your partner.
- 13 Listen when your partner is speaking.
- 14 Remember that your spouse is more important than the television/match/video etc.
- 15 Notice when your partner is wearing something new, or has a new hairdo.
- 16 Remember anniversaries.
- 17 Thank your partner for their gift, or effort on your behalf.
- 18 Last one up, make the bed.
- 19 Notice when your spouse looks tired, and do something about it.
- 20 Never run your partner down, or criticise them in public.