



How Should You Define Commitment?

It would seem today that people struggle more and more with making commitments and keeping them. Both divorce and separation rates, as well as co-habitation rates, are higher than ever. The traditional phrase “till death do us part” is treated with less regard than in past generations.

Let’s take a look at how commitment has been defined in the past and how it is defined today.

Cambridge Dictionary:

Commitment - When you are willing to give your time and energy to something that you believe in, or a promise or firm decision to do something.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary:

Commitment – An agreement or pledge to do something in the future.

Urban Dictionary:

Commitment - Transforms the promise into reality. It is the words that speak boldly of your intentions. And the actions which speak louder than the words....It is the daily triumph of integrity over skepticism. When I say I love you, I mean that I’m committed to working to love you even when it’s hard.

Take-Away:

When most people hear the word commitment, they think of marriage. For others, that may not be the case.

There are people who see themselves as being in a committed relationship even though they live together and are not married or talking about marriage. It works for some and, often times, they spend many years together.

Couples should invest time in learning more about what research says about the success or lack of success of non-traditional relationships. For example, there is one study that showed partners who live together more than two years frequently do not marry. Couples are also encouraged to understand the importance of having a physically, emotionally, and mentally healthy relationship.

In the end, couples are free to define the terms of their commitment anyway they like. However, if they are to have a successful relationship, they must BOTH know and agree on how commitment will be defined in the relationship and what to expect from each other. Ideally, this requires that each partner expresses love for the other and a desire for what is best for the relationship.