



Over the years a couple can expect to face many issues, both big and small. Some, such as financial, career, and parenting decisions, can be handled by honestly discussing them with each other or with friends who can provide wise advice. Others, such as infidelity or addictions, need the counsel of professionals and a tremendous amount of commitment to change. Still others, such as illness, may have to be endured patiently with the support of family and friends.

We all want to live happily ever after. Inevitably, though, we all experience bumps along the marriage road.

Some bumps come from within the marriage. We may start to think our love wasn't real, or that we've fallen out of love. We may even want to give up. Most couples go through a disillusionment phase. Preventive maintenance can minimize the damage. This means taking time to nurture the relationship, and perhaps attending an enrichment program or two.

Then there are the bumps that come from outside the marriage. For some couples, that means dealing with the heartbreak of miscarriage. A growing number of couples face the challenge of caring for aging parents.

Whether the difficulties arise from inside or outside marriage, many couples can benefit from counseling. Find out when to seek counseling, how to find a counselor, and what to expect from the process.

Domestic violence is the one deal breaker. It is never part of the normal ups and downs of marriage. Safety for the victim and children must be the top priority.