

Relationship – Marriage life

Warning:

These questions listed tend to invoke negative emotions like anger, frustrations, shame, and even some form of competition. It is important to recognise these feelings and not be trapped by the feelings. The words and questions may not hurt you but the feelings that are raised may cause you to not think rationally and as a result, react negatively or even badly.

When is the right time to give the in-laws a grandchild?

This is a topic that is encouraged to be discussed by the couple right when they are planning or have just been married. Afterward, the decision is conveyed to both sets of parents who would be primed to let the other relatives know if this is a sensitive topic or not. This is critical as this topic – though rather personal – is still viewed as a family topic in the Asian context. If prior warning is not given to the relatives, they would take it upon themselves to be the catalyst to push the couple to have a child.

If the couple has decided not to have a child, it is encouraged for them to be upfront about it with the rest of the family. The more you try and hide, the more it would invoke unwanted prying questions about it.

If the couple has been trying and have not been successful, communicating to their parents who would disseminate that the topic is a sensitive one is essential. For these couples, they need support from others and not to be criticised.

In a nutshell, the key is good communication on the part of the couple and not trying to hide the matter to their family members.

Is it alright for women to not stay home to look after their children?

We are in a transitional era where women are making a stand for themselves in society rather than only in the kitchen or the home. Yet because of this confusion, often the older generation is not able to comprehend the sense of achievement that women feel as they have never felt it themselves. Instead, they had obtained their sense of achievement from making the best dishes and making sure their children have the best care and are comfortable.

For the working mothers, be proud of what you do and do see it from the older generation's perspective. You do not necessarily have to say anything to them but if you are confident of your own standing and there is nothing detrimental about you working and your children are not neglected, then you do not have worry at all.

They will feel your confidence and would not question you further as they know it is pointless as you are happy where you are. If you waver and start trying to compare notes with them, or try to rationalise with them why going to work is better, they would perceive you as being incompetent not only at home but also lack of confidence in your work.

What should a mother do if another mother told her that her child received a good grade and asked about her own child?

This comparison highlights the insecurity or the pride of the other mother. Although it would invoke a sense of basic competition, it is encouraged for the mother to realise that this lady would like you reassure her of the achievement of her child.

Instead of answering directly what grades your child got, the mother can compliment her. Let her know “wow, your daughter is in the top three!! That really is not easy!!!” then steer the conversation on how she manages to obtain those grades. Generally, once you change the focus on the other person and get them to talk, they would do the talking and you just have to do the listening.

How is a person going to take care of their parents when they get older?

The question of “how are you going to look after your parents when they are older?” tend to be asked by some relatives. Instead of pondering over what is the correct answer, here are some things you can do.

As a person moves into a different life cycle they start to worry about different things. If the relative is the same generation as your parents, you can try and ask this question back and highlight your own concern about this topic. Some would answer you about what their children do for them.

You can also ask them how they would like to be look after when they are older and they may just go into a long discussion about it. For those that have been not been treated nicely by their children, do be gentle with them and steer the conversation away from the sensitive topic by saying that you would discuss with your siblings/parents etc. You can change the topic afterward.

In conclusion, marriage life is stressful but meaningful all the same. However, if you feel that you are not able to handle it, please do seek professional help. At The Therapy Room, a team of psychologists – led by Geraldine Tan, the principal psychologist – conduct parenting programmes and workshops. For more information, please [click](#) here for the upcoming parenting programs. In addition, the team of psychologists is also experienced in conducting therapeutic interventions and working with married men and

women. Should you have any concerns or inquiries, please feel free to click [here](#) to contact us and find out more.