

9 myths that can wreck your marriage

Marriage is tough enough without high expectations and false hopes.

And the fastest way to wreck a relationship is to put too much pressure on your partner.

"We all have an ideal mate, the person of our dreams," says Dr. Raquel Gomez-Jones, a marriage counselor who conducted a study of breakups.

"There's nothing wrong with that. The problems start when we expect the

person we marry to behave like our dream mate — and to solve all our problems for us."

Here are the nine most common myths that are sure to wreck a marriage:

1. Marriage makes a person complete.

"The belief that marriage fulfills you as a human being is the most common and most dangerous of the myths," says Dr. Gomez-Jones.

"The moment we feel the least bit depressed, we

blame our partner. Or we expect the other person to solve all our problems.

"We must accept the fact that marriage isn't a solution to our problems. We have to solve those ourselves."

2. If your partner truly loves you, he or she will change.

"We think changing another person is easy," says Dr. Gomez-Jones. "We don't realize it's actually very hard — and sometimes impossible.

"We don't want to accept the other person at face value.

"This leads to conflicts, confrontations and disillusionment. Eventually, such a relationship is doomed."

3. You can't love someone without romantic evenings and candlelight dinners.

"Love and romance depend very much on a person's mental state," says Dr. Gomez-Jones.

"When we first fall in love, the emotions are based more on fantasy than reality.

"We don't see the other person's faults. So everything is like a pleasant dream.

"Once married, we come face to face with the truth. But that doesn't mean the romance is over.

"It only shows itself in more lasting ways: fidelity, honesty, companionship."

4. If two people love each other, they have an intuitive understanding.

"This is true in the beginning," says Dr. Gomez-Jones, "when two people meet and feel attracted to each other.

"But the truth is that lasting relationships are built more on conversation and exchange of information than on intuition.

"Relying only on intuition to get a point across can lead to fatal misunderstandings.

"The cardinal rule is to talk — freely and without restraint."

5. The ideal marriage is one in which the partners



A person who's in love will always express it openly and in words: myth or fact?

share the same goals and dreams.

"This is impossible," says Dr. Gomez-Jones. "Every individual is unique, with different goals and ambitions.

"Marriage should be an agreement between two adults to determine how to pursue different goals for a happy life together.

"In fact, couples who've learned to argue constructively are the ones who last the longest."

6. A person in love will express it openly and in words.

"This isn't necessarily true," says Dr. Gomez-Jones.

"There are many people who express their love without words — and use gestures or actions instead.

"At the same time, honesty and forthrightness are

necessary for a marriage to work.

"So, even if a person is shy about expressing love directly, some other way must be found to do it."

7. If a person doesn't feel fulfilled as a human being, the fault must lie with the relationship.

"Just as one's happiness doesn't depend on another person," says Dr. Gomez-Jones, "neither does one's unhappiness.

"Marriage doesn't mean you're no longer responsible for your own feelings.

"It's true you may feel stifled by your partner in some way or other.

"But that only means you have to do something about it — and not just lay the blame elsewhere."

8. Good marriages are evenly balanced at all times — otherwise they're

failures.

"This would be true in a perfect world," says Dr. Gomez-Jones. "Unfortunately, we all have faults that make this impossible.

"If we look for a perfectly balanced marriage all the time, we're looking for trouble."

9. If you have to struggle to improve your marriage, that means you've failed.

"This is a combination of all the other myths," says Dr. Gomez-Jones.

"Like anything else in life, success in marriage comes only through struggle and hard work.

"If you believe in living happily ever after, you'd better be prepared to work at it. Otherwise, you might end up in your dream world — by yourself."