

The First Year Of Living Together

Contributed by Alex Daniels
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By Alex Daniels

The decision to make a home with your partner is a crucial step in the advancement of your relationship. Where once living together before a couple got married was rare, and a lot of the time even considered taboo, today it is quite common for a couple to live together for a while, sometimes without ever getting married. Most couples who live together are still considered to be common law spouses in the eyes of the law, however uncomfortable that may make either partner in the relationship!

Whether you are moving in with a boyfriend or girlfriend, or if you are entering into your first year of marriage, the first 365 day or so that you are living together will have a few common themes. These are challenges and benefits that all couples face in their "honeymoon phase". Let's take a look at some of the things you can expect.

Household Arrangements

* Don't have expectations of each other when it comes to cleaning. Odds are that you both will think that your partner will be doing certain chores. Get this out of the way right way; make a list and consult each other on its creation. Some people loathe certain chores (like cleaning the bathroom or washing the dishes), so there is a lot of room for trades while you hash out who is responsible for what.

* We all tend to expect that our houses will be set up the same way our parents set theirs up. This can lead to some strange misunderstandings as each partner continually reaches for the mixers or utensils from the wrong drawer. Again, compromise is the key. It won't take long until your old habits are broken and new ones are formed.

Sleeping Arrangements

* If you value your sleep, be prepared for nights spent with someone else! No more faking it when you wake up in the morning; within the first month, your true morning personalities will show. There are two pretty distinct personalities when it comes to sleep- the early bird and the night owl. You'll have to be prepared for the possibility that you might be opposites in this regard. Be flexible and give each other some space!

* You might also come to realize that your partner is a restless sleeper; people who walk and talk in their sleep can't be talked to like someone who is awake. Talk calmly and try to convince your partner that he/she is only dreaming. This can be annoying (and sometimes really amusing) for the partner who gets woken up. Again, be patient.

* You might realize that it is you who are restless in your sleep. Stealing all the covers, tossing and turning, and being a bed hog are all common complaints. Try to tell yourself to lie still as you fall asleep (and consider purchasing a sleep-right mattress!)

Emotional Space

* Living together will mean that you do not spend a lot of time apart. While this is really the point, the fact is that two people who are around each other all the time will need some time apart. Be easy on each other and make sure to give each other some alone time when it is needed.

What do you mean you hate football???

* Every couple ends up having to negotiate television time in their first year. It might seem ultra important to watch that football game, but if you have already seen three sports events that week and Dr. Phil is having a prime time special, it is time to hand over the remote. For extra points and to avoid a future argument, watch the show with her. (Dr. Phil played football, just think that as you watch.)

Living together is a great decision that will mean a lot more quality time spent. It can also lead to some stressful situations, so being a little bit prepared beforehand can do a lot to make sure that your relationship keeps on improving.

About the Author: Alex is consults for an online gift shop offering groomsmen "gifts for him" as well as other unique wedding favors. Alex is recently married.