

Wedding Wars- Navigating Premarital Disagreements

By Leah Travis, Associate Marriage & Family Therapist



Part 1 “The Happy Couple”

Girls who dream about getting married usually think of exciting moments filled with joy and anticipation. However, the actual process of planning is quite often stressful, and wrought with tension. Some brides may find that the first and most serious arguments between themselves and their future husbands stem from disagreements about the wedding.

So, are frequent or intense arguments an indication that your marriage is doomed from the start? Probably not. Many couples are more emotionally invested in the decisions that they make surrounding their marriage than any they have yet made together. So, it makes sense that you will each work harder for your own selection than, for example,

when choosing where to go on Saturday night.

Premarital disagreements are common, and a great opportunity to learn how to negotiate with each other. This is a skill that will come in handy as you begin your married life, making decisions about where to live, having children, and other life transitions.

Part 2 “The Parents”

Navigating decisions with your beloved may be challenging, but working through negotiations with your parents or future in-laws is often even more complex, especially if they are helping to finance the wedding. Some parents may consider this an opportunity to plan their own wedding again, to impress their friends, or they may have strong ideas about what a wedding “should” be. Having opinionated parents does not mean that you must bend to their every whim, but be careful not to burn the bridges you’re still building.

Here are some points to keep in mind: *It helps to be on the same page with your fiancé before you approach a*

disagreeing parent. Once you two have agreed, support each other. Also, you need to explain it to your parents, he explains it to his.

Prioritize. If you sense opposition on a detail you don’t consider vital, it may be worth it to let it slide. Giving in here or there could grant you goodwill in future disagreements, and may leave you with some unexpected fond memories.

Parents who are funding the wedding have the right to refuse to pay for things. Their decision to help is a *gift*. Talk to them about what is important to you, and why, but if the primary financier of the wedding is not willing to pay for something, be prepared to find another way to pay for it. Most parents want to provide everything you dream up, but may have trouble admitting they don’t have the resources.

Realize that this transition may feel like a loss for parents, and they are probably still learning to think of you as an adult. Find ways to remind them that while your relationship is changing, it isn’t ending.

Tips on Navigating the “Battle Zone”

- Don’t assume. If your future spouse disagrees with you, he or she is probably not *trying* to make you angry. First listen to what they have to say, and then ask questions.
- Do clarify your requests.
- Learn how to share your wishes *without* attacking your partner. Saying; “I’ve always dreamed of _____.” It’s really important to me.” is a lot more effective than; “Your idea is stupid.”
- Work out a system for managing “gridlock.”
- If you have trouble finding a compromise, keep talking. Remember that your wedding is symbolic of your union, and should reflect the two of you together, not one or the other alone. If you are willing to give in on one thing, perhaps your fiancé will defer to your preference somewhere else.

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Our Mission
New Leaf Resources promotes healthy relationships and personal growth through counseling, education, and consultation from a Christian perspective.

Barnabas Offers Estate Planning

Estate Planning is not only for the wealthy; it is for everyone. It is simply the process of deciding where your assets should be distributed after your death. The plan is implemented through a Will and/or a Revocable Living Trust.

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Barnabas Foundation exists to help individuals exercise good Christian stewardship through thoughtful Estate and Gift Planning. A representative from Barnabas Foundation will be happy to visit with you about your Estate Plan and provide information on specific concerns or questions you may have. For more information call 708-895-7310.

What's Cooking?

Have a favorite family recipe that you'd love to share? A popular potluck casserole that's always requested? New Leaf Resources is compiling a collection of tasty treats and delicious dishes in a Cookbook that we will be selling in time for Christmas! All funds raised from the sale of the book will benefit the Marty Doot Client Assistance Fund.

To submit your recipe, go to www.typensave.com. Log in using "newleafrecipes," type your name as contributor and use password "d63w7." Type and save your submission or you can email it to terri@newleafresources.org. If you prefer to mail it, send it to 2325—177th Street, Lansing, IL 60438. The deadline is Fri. Sept. 17. Watch for more details on how to order your copy!

Recommended Reading Resources



As our name indicates, we strive to provide helpful resources on a variety of topics. This month, we kick-off a new feature, "Recommended Reading Resources," with reviews from therapists and friends of New Leaf.

The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work
by Dr. John Gottman

"Many couples think of counseling or "self-help" books as resources for people who are struggling. While true, there are a number of resources that are designed to actually help prevent problems before they happen, rather than waiting to deal with them after they crop up. Gottman's book is one such gem, and a book I highly recommend for couples at any stage of their relationship."

- Associate Therapist
Leah Travis

Under the Influence
by James R. Milam & Katherine Ketcham

"I first read this work in 1977 as a monograph titled, The Emerging Comprehensive Concepts of the Disease of Alcoholism, and it was my first experience, as a recovering alcoholic, with a work that covered the disease as a disease and not a moral failing. It explains in easily understood language the physiological as well as the psychological effects of the disease on the body, mind, brain and spirit.

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Putting Fear Aside, She Made the Phone Call

A former client recently shared how her experience at New Leaf Resources has given her help, hope and healing.

"I was scared. My life seemed to be falling apart all around me. That's when my friend suggested I visit New Leaf. Now I was really terrified! Picking up the

phone to make an appointment seemed so hard - having to admit that I didn't have my life all together.

But I'm so glad that I did! The staff at New Leaf truly cared about me & offered solid, Christian guidance. By far the best decision I could have made! Even though life's situations are still chal-

lenging, I'm in a totally different place now & am so encouraged by the difference I see in myself! What a blessing New Leaf has been - GOD TRULY PROVIDES!

I look back now & wonder, why was I so afraid to call in the first place?"

- a former client



What's "New" at New Leaf Resources

We are excited to welcome two new therapists to the ministry. **Kathryn Huls**, a Clinical and School Psychologist will be working part-time in the Crown Point office. Kathryn specializes in therapy for children, adolescents and their families with a particular interest in the areas of chronic illness, trauma and grief/loss.

Currently, she is employed as the School Psychologist for the Crown Point Community School Corporation and she and her husband Jack are members of Bethel Church in Crown Point. In her spare time, Kathryn enjoys boating and cheering on her three sons at swim meets, band concerts and basketball and soccer games.

Also joining the staff in Crown Point is Licensed Social Worker **June Messana**. She will also be working part-time and specializes in parenting concerns, divorced and blended families, couples therapy and women's

issues. June enjoys bike riding, hiking, baking and spending time with her children, grandkids and dogs.

In our Lansing office, Associate Therapist **Leah Travis** has been named Office Manager. During her graduate work, Leah completed her internship at New Leaf and she has worked part-time in the office. She is now working towards clinical licensure in Marriage and Family Therapy.

Leah's training brings a systems perspective to her work with clients, meaning she considers not only the individual's difficulties but also the way those challenges affect their lives. When not working, Leah enjoys spending time with her husband and pets, reading and designing weddings.

We also welcome **Yolanda Starks** as a new receptionist in the Lansing office. Working part-time, she will be responsible for billing and general office duties.

Yolanda lives in West Pullman and has two adult children and a newborn granddaughter. She enjoys bowling and playing cards.

We wish well therapists **Latrice Oglesby** and **Debi Dalla Costa** who are leaving New Leaf to pursue new career interests.

Clinical Psychologist **Angie Valente**, who is a member of the Indiana District One & Two Mental Health Teams has been invited to attend training at the Center for Domestic Preparedness (CDP) in Anniston, Alabama. The CDP provides specialized training to emergency responders including radiation contamination, pandemic influenza and healthcare emergency management.

Norm LeClercq, Marriage & Family Therapist, has begun the two-year process of pursuing a new credential as an "Approved Supervisor" with the AAMFT (American Association of Marriage & Family Therapists).

"I was scared. My life seemed to be falling apart. That's when my friend suggested I visit New Leaf."

- a former client

Recommended Reading Resources

(Continued from page 2)

The monograph was expanded into this book and first published in 1983. It is still relevant today and can benefit those who are new to recovery. And it will also offer hope and understanding to the families and friends who are left confused and baffled by the behavior of the active alcoholic."

- **Dick L., a recovering alcoholic.**

Save a tree

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NLR “Wish List”

Sometimes, a need arises in our organization which was not included in the annual budget. Listed below are a variety of items which would be of great benefit to the ministry:

- Small toys, stuffed animals, games (like a “Happy Meal” giveaway or dollar store item). Used by child therapists for behavior reinforcement. *New items only, please.*
- Postage stamps for special mailings.
- Instrumental music CD’s.
- TV Cart.
- Volunteers for upcoming mailings, landscape maintenance and minor building repairs.

Save the Date - 2011 Banquet

Be sure to pencil in the date *Thursday, May 5, 2011*, on your calendar for the New Leaf Resources’ Annual Celebration Banquet.

Once again it will be held at The Center for Visual & Performing Arts, in Munster, Indiana. More details will be announced in the next newsletter.

Special Thanks to...

- **Phil Mulder, of Lagestee-Mulder, Inc.** for volunteering his time and expertise as general contractor for the roof repairs.
- The staff at **Great Lakes Bank** in Lansing for volunteering to help with our Banquet & Newsletter mailings.

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hope. help. healing.

New Leaf Resources is...

A **professional mental health agency** which provides counseling services to individuals, families, couples, children, churches, schools and businesses.

A **ministry** which brings the best possible care to those we serve, striving to reflect God’s grace and love to all who seek help.

A **community resource** offering educational services, prevention programs, training, support and coaching.