

# **TO MARRY OR NOT TO MARRY? THAT IS THE QUESTION.**

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## **SIGNS OF EXCESSIVE UN-WED ANXIETY**

### **Marriage Preoccupation**

Matrimony radar is on high seeking marriage related data. The fix includes magazines, TV, Movies, tabloids. This topic rents tons of mind space. Marriage related dreams serve as back-up even when we sleep and dream.

### **Self –Stigmatization**

“Should” statements abound. Self-judgment, self-deprecation and other forms of punishment may not be apparent to others. As anger is misdirected inward, labeling oneself as defective and inadequate gets the headline space.

### **Reassurance Seeking**

Since self-reassurance has its limitations, friends, family, coworkers and even strangers can all be trained to confirm that everything will be OK. Online forums, email and texting, support the habit 24/7. It's never enough.

### **Waiting or Dating Zone**

Are you in an extended pre-marital relationship or serial dating forever? Either way extended waiting for marital “I do’s” can cause high anxiety and poor judgment, especially when you need it most.

### **Careers Gone Wild**

Some become workaholics to avoid making life decisions about relationships, marriage and children. The energy for passion, romance and commitment can be easily re-purposed for career. These days both men and women seek alpha status in the workplace.

### **Dating Phobia**

At best, dating is painful. Combined with memories of past dating related injuries, a phobia reaction can easily develop. Dating phobia can be reinforced vicariously from hearing of other’s dating experiences.

**Excessive Worry:** The dreaded doubts about getting marriage or not getting married rent a lot of mind space. “When will I find the perfect person?” “Is there something wrong with me?” “Will I always be alone? Do I really want to be married? Episodes of intrusive, racing thoughts like these are common.

### **Emotional Swings**

Anxiety, depression, anger, irritability can occur separately or show up as a gang of bullies. Isolation can become a way of dealing with “bad hair days”.

### **Health**

Frequently, diet and exercise are taken to obsession or non-existent. Increased use of alcohol and recreational drugs. Lack of sleep and other psychosomatic symptoms helps keep the cycle going. There is a reason why people keep asking if you’re OK?

## **TIPS TO MANAGE UNDUE UN-WED ANXIETY**

### **Embrace Change**

“If you always do what you’ve always done, you’ll always get what you’ve always gotten, change is the key.” If not now, when?

### **Try Some Of These Tips:**

#### **Accept Yourself**

If you believe it’s OK not to be married, for now or ever, so shall others (except for your mother). Be assertive not defensive. Find your voice and let the world know. Eleanor Roosevelt once said, “No one can make you feel inferior, without your consent.”

#### **Life Planning, Anyone?**

We spend more time planning a vacation than planning our life. The adage “if you don’t know where you’re going you’ll end up someplace else”, is true. Research personal vision statements and see how it’s done. The first step is to define the core values and beliefs that drive you in life. Tattoo the results to your eye-lids and figure out what you need to achieve your vision. Easy! After you’re done with life-planning, take a vacation. You’ll deserve it.

### **Don't Believe What You Think**

The person you believe more than anyone else is you. When people are anxious their thinking often becomes exaggerated and distorted. Basic cognitive behavioral techniques (CBT) can help identify and change faulty thinking habits. You can learn to change your thinking style. Hello grey!

### **Accept Invitations**

Say yes when asked as a rule. Surviving a couple's event solo can build self-confidence. Invite others in your home. Try a non-dating alternative to meet people with similar interests @ [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com). Go to the next High School reunion with attitude.

### **Surrender**

Letting go to get control is a foreign concept to many. Letting life unfold takes patience, perseverance and courage. Practice on the small stuff. In the end you have no choice but to accept or endure uncertainty.

### **Get a Life**

Stop filling up the bucket list with all things to do before you die. Don't wait for your soul mate. Begin to empty the buckets now. Many people do things while they are single that they may never after marriage. Time waits for no man or woman. People are attracted to others who have a passion for living and learning.

### **Date Responsibly**

Slow dating vs. speed dating. Give yourself time to get to know someone. Continue to date based on shared values, interest and then romantic chemistry. "Know when to say "when" it's not working. Date more if you're looking. One date a month is very different than one date a year in terms of probability theory.

### **Have Fun**

There is a reason evolution has included fun, as part of the package. Laugh, sing and dance whenever possible. It changes your body chemistry to the feeling good mode. It's hard to be terrified when you're laughing.

### **Have Fear**

Let the fearful thoughts of marriage or non-marriage speak to you. Don't fight as the fear will follow. Feel the fear until it passes. It always will. Do something scary every day and prove to your body and mind you can do it. "I must do the things I think I cannot do". Again Eleanor Roosevelt on fear.

### **Go Strong**

Make exercise and strength training part of your life style for your physical health and longevity. For mental health strength, take a mind-body class in improvisation, toastmasters or a dance class @ Arthur Murray's!

### **Journal**

Document your progress, setbacks and take away learning. Reread current entries it in a year. How are you doing? Be your own case manager. Nobody can or will do this for you.

### **Keep a Schedule**

But don't over schedule to avoid feeling and distract from dealing with difficult life decisions. This is something you can control.

### **Decaf / Declutter Your Life**

Within each of us there are ancient strategies to relax that can happen automatically, if we let it. Slow down your body your mind will follow. Practice talking and walking at half your usual pace. Find an anxiety reduction program that works and work it. One size does not fit all. While you're at it de-clutter your environments as well as your mind of unwanted, un-needed stuff and people. It's not as difficult as you may imagine.

### **Seek Professional Help**

If anxiety symptoms become increasing worse and begin to interfere with life functioning more days than not, seek out help from a licensed mental health professional. For some the combination of therapy and medication may be a necessary treatment strategy.

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