



FREE GUIDE • FOR ENGAGED COUPLES

Before the vows. *Build what lasts.*

The six conversations to have before the wedding, and what structured preparation adds. Drawn from the premarital counselling our therapists offer engaged couples every week.

PREPARED BY

Graceway Wellness • Burlington, Ontario

FIND US AT

gracewaywellness.com

01

START HERE

Preparation *beats repair.*

Most couples reach for help when something is already strained. Engaged couples get to do it the other way around.

The wedding will get months of planning. The seating chart alone may get a full weekend. The marriage itself often gets less, not because couples don't care, but because nobody hands you an agenda for it. You know how to plan a ceremony. Planning a life together is quieter work, and easier to put off.

Premarital preparation is that quieter work, done on purpose. It isn't about hunting for problems or proving you're ready. It's about having the important conversations while they're still easy to have, before a mortgage, a newborn, or a hard season raises the stakes. Couples who prepare get to practise, on calm ground, the habits many couples only learn under strain.

IN THIS GUIDE

Three conversations to have before the wedding: money and roles, faith and intimacy, conflict and dreams.

What structured preparation adds, and how PREPARE/ENRICH works at Graceway Wellness.

A first look at Rooted, our upcoming group premarital course.

None of these conversations needs to be finished in one sitting. Pour the coffee, take one topic at a time, and let the questions do the work.

02

CONVERSATIONS TO HAVE · FIRST PAIR

Money, family, *and who does what.*

Money fights are rarely about math. They're about what money means: safety to one of you, freedom to the other.

You each grew up in a household with its own money rules, most of them unspoken. Maybe his family never discussed finances at the table. Maybe hers tracked every dollar out loud. Those habits come with you into marriage whether you name them or not, so name them now.

TALK ABOUT THIS

"Are you a spender or a saver, and what was money like in the house you grew up in?"

"What are we each bringing in savings and debt, and how do we feel about joint accounts?"

"What does generous giving look like to us, and where does it sit in the budget?"

The same is true for roles. Who cooks, who handles the car, who calls the landlord, whose career bends when the two collide. Most of us quietly assume our marriage will run the way our parents' did, or exactly the opposite. Both are assumptions, and assumptions make poor agreements.

TALK ABOUT THIS

"What did your parents' marriage teach you about being a husband or a wife?"

"Where will we spend Christmas this year, and who tells the parents?"

"When your family and I disagree, where do you stand?"

03

CONVERSATIONS TO HAVE · SECOND PAIR

Faith, intimacy, *and* *being known.*

The two conversations couples skip most are the two that shape a marriage most deeply: what you believe, and how you love.

If faith matters to one or both of you, talk about what it will look like shared. Church on Sundays, prayer at home, how you'd raise children, what you do when one of you is in a season of doubt. Two people can both say "faith is important to me" and mean very different things by it. That difference is far easier to explore over engagement coffee than in year three.

TALK ABOUT THIS

"What do we each actually believe, and how closely do those beliefs line up?"

"What spiritual rhythms do we want as a couple: church, prayer, anything else?"

"How do we want to raise our children when it comes to faith?"

Then there's intimacy. Most engaged couples have expectations about sex and affection. Far fewer have said them out loud. A husband and wife can love each other deeply and still be working from different scripts about closeness, and an awkward conversation now is kinder than a quiet resentment later.

TALK ABOUT THIS

"How does each of us most naturally give and receive affection?"

"What are our hopes and expectations around sex, honestly?"

"What makes this topic hard to bring up, and what would make it easier?"

04

CONVERSATIONS TO HAVE · THIRD PAIR

How you'll fight, *and where you're headed.*

Every couple argues. What matters isn't whether you fight, it's how you fight, and what happens after.

You each learned a conflict style long before you met. Maybe he comes from a family of door-slammers and she comes from a family where nobody raised a voice and nothing got resolved. Neither style is wrong. But the mix of the two is yours to figure out, and it's much easier to talk about your pattern before you're inside it.

- i. **Name your default.** When you're upset, do you move toward the conversation or away from it? Say which one you are, out loud.
- ii. **Name your family's pattern.** How was conflict handled in the house you grew up in, and what did you promise yourself you'd do differently?
- iii. **Agree on repair.** What does a real apology look like to each of you? What helps you actually let something go?

Our Couples Communication Guide covers the in-the-moment tools for hard conversations. This guide is about the conversations that come first: the dreams. Where you'll live, what work looks like, whether children are a hope and when, what season comes before which.

TALK ABOUT THIS

"What do we want year five to look like: home, work, children, the pace of our life?"

"Which dream comes first, and what is each of us willing to wait for?"

05

WHAT STRUCTURED PREPARATION ADDS

A clearer map of *your relationship.*

Conversations at your own kitchen table will take you far. A structured assessment shows you the things you didn't know to ask about.

At Graceway Wellness, premarital counselling is built around PREPARE/ENRICH, a research-based premarital assessment used with a trained facilitator. You each complete an online questionnaire on your own, and your answers become a personalized couple report: a picture of how the two of you actually relate around communication, finances, family expectations, intimacy, and more.

From there, you work through the report together in guided sessions. The facilitator helps you see your strengths as a couple, the areas with room to grow, and the places where your answers quietly differ. Most couples complete four to six sessions, in person in Burlington or virtually across Ontario. For couples who want it, Christian faith can be woven through the process at your invitation: prayer, Scripture, and what it means to build a marriage as a covenant before God.

WORTH UNDERLINING

PREPARE/ENRICH is not a test you can fail, and the report does not tell you whether to get married. It shows the two of you where you align and where you differ, so the conversations in this guide have somewhere concrete to start.

06

SOMETHING NEW

Rooted: preparing *in good company.*

Some couples want one-on-one sessions. Others want to prepare alongside other engaged couples, learning the same things in the same room.

That second path is why we're building Rooted. There's something steadying about sitting with other couples who are weeks from their own weddings, asking the same questions you are. You realize the awkward conversations aren't a sign something is wrong. They're simply part of preparing well.

Rooted

COMING SOON

WHAT IT IS

A group premarital course from Graceway Wellness, run in cohorts of engaged couples.

WHERE IT STANDS

Currently being prepared for launch. Cohort dates haven't been announced yet.

HOW TO HEAR FIRST

When you requested this guide on our website and shared your wedding date, you joined the enrollment list. You'll get an email when a cohort opens.

Until then, everything else in this guide is open to you now: the conversations on the previous pages, and one-on-one premarital counselling with our team.

YOUR NEXT STEP

The first conversation *costs nothing.*

The conversations in this guide will take you a long way on their own. If you'd like company for them, the next step is a free 15-minute consultation. Answer a few questions, get matched with the therapist who fits your situation, and pick a time that works. Ask about PREPARE/ENRICH, or about joining Rooted when a cohort opens. No obligation, no pressure, and nothing to pay.

Get matched & book your free consultation

gracewaywellness.com/book/free-consultation · about 90 seconds

Learn more about premarital counselling

gracewaywellness.com/services/couples/premarital

Prefer to reach out directly?

hello@gracewaywellness.com · (289) 204-4439

In-person in Burlington · Virtual across Ontario