

# **RELATIONSHIP CONTRACT**

*(Long Term - Version Five November 2014)*

The purpose of this contract is to provide an alternative for couples who want to make a commitment to each other that is more than the choice of living together and not as final as marriage with an 'Until death do us part' promise. Two key ingredients of this agreement are the semi-annual question and answer session and the choice of a specific time frame for partners to agree to be together. You can enter into this agreement as a test prior to a marriage decision, or choose this alternative to commit to a partner for a specific time frame. Couples that are already married are encouraged to use this agreement's key ingredients to further develop their relationship.

This agreement is a tool to communicate, as well as a symbol of your commitment. Our society has evolved to provide laws to govern certain aspects of marriage, and until recently, history has pretty much ignored governing rules for those who choose a personal commitment and live together without being married. This contract is in no way intended to provide a means to commit to each other while also providing an easy way out. This contract is intended to be, and should be thought of as serious and comparable to marriage, including an exclusive sexual relationship and a promise not to be intimate with another. The difference is that the church or state does not recognize this commitment. There are no enforceable laws involved that are not already in place for couples who have decided to live together without getting married. For unmarried couples, any and all common law procedures already in place would govern. Couples that are already living together are encouraged to read our materials and decide if they wish to increase their level of commitment, and sign our proposed agreement.

Financial affairs are recognized as an integral part of any relationship. We suggest each person document all assets and liabilities they bring into the relationship. Full financial disclosure. After the agreement reaches full term, and not renewed in any way, we recommend each person leave with exactly what they came with, and split 50–50 any assets/liabilities gained or lost during the term of the relationship. If the agreement is terminated early, financial settlements should occur as they would if the agreement reached full term. The world is full of attorneys that would be more than happy to increase their income by constructing a legally binding agreement to settle your financial affairs if you wish. For everyday finances, we recommend each person have their own bank account and a joint account should be set up and contributed to each month by both partners for household expenses and entertainment.

Things change with time and relationships. The semi-annual Q & A process is intended to help you decide if the agreement should be broken, and a bad relationship be discontinued. Only you can decide that. This program will help you decide. One false notion, or emotion, is that it's best to stay in a 'dead' relationship because for whatever reason, you are afraid, or you don't feel you would be able to find another partner. Your 'reasons' are most likely untrue. That is absolutely not a valid reason for staying in a relationship. Someone else will surely see the good in you and want you for what you are, as long as you are honest.

A time frame needs to be chosen for the life of the contract. We feel an arrangement of this type is serious and should not be considered for anything less than a full year. We suggest up to five years or even more if you want. This is your personal choice. You may decide on any number you wish. By choosing a time frame, you will always be aware of the ending date. This will help your relationship in itself by increasing your peace of mind if you want the relationship to end, because it would, automatically, when you reach the ending date. Knowing when it is due to end can motivate you to impress your partner and behave similarly to a courtship period. You always have the choice to renew your commitment to another term. You have the option to choose marriage as well.

You have the option to keep this agreement personal, or conduct some type of ceremony, big or small. An event as complex and extravagant as a wedding may not be appropriate for this commitment, but you may choose to create a ceremony that includes some traditions similar to a wedding. Flowers, pictures, dresses, celebration with close friends is certainly acceptable. It will help confirm your commitment to each other. As in marriage, rings can be given to each other and encouraged as a visible symbol of your commitment. To avoid confusion with the institution of marriage, we suggest you wear your rings on the pinky finger on your left hand. Following is the list of examples of questions to ask each other twice a year. One time should be on your anniversary. After first re-reading the description, intention, and instructions, you will be ready to participate in the question and answer session which is the lifeblood of your commitment agreement.

Here are some examples of questions. They must be asked and answered honestly, and in private. You are encouraged to add any additional questions based on your concerns, intentions, and expectations. If you have any questions, or are unclear on any subject during your discussion, or are unsure of anything whatsoever, ask your partner. You are also welcome to send us an email. Never assume anything. When in doubt, always ask and discuss.

1. What things do I do that you like me to do?
2. What things do I do that you don't like me to do?
3. What do I do or don't do sexually that you would like to change?
4. Have you ever felt taken for granted? Why?
5. How is money affecting and influencing our relationship?
6. What do you envision after the contract expires?

The signatures on this agreement are not in any way, shape, or form legally binding including church or government authority. The signatures only represent our sincere intentions to commit ourselves to this personal relationship.

Date Our Contract begins \_\_\_\_\_ Date Our Contract will end \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

We encourage communication and a positive attitude to reinforce your commitment. Negative responses must be brought up when they exist, to give each other a chance to change and keep them from increasing in intensity until it's too late. The subject of whether or not you intend to renew the contract for another term is an example of a question you could add.

We encourage you to tell us what your additional questions are. Click on the suggestion box to submit ideas you feel strongly about. In the end, this program has been created solely for the purpose of making your life better. We would like to share your suggestions with others.

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