

YOU DO?

It's Marriage Week and experts feel pre-marital counselling could stem the rate of divorce

GUESS what? There's a week running up to Valentine's Day, called Marriage Week. That may bring on smile, but there's a pressing need to focus on the institution in this age of crumbling relationships, when divorce rates are increasing by the day.

A senior advocate at the family courts says, "The number of divorce cases has increased: in the 1980s, there was no family court. Of the 40 cases daily, 1-2 were divorce cases. Now there are three family courts, (another two are sanctioned). The three courts have 70-80 cases daily. And most end in divorce."

Says advocate Revathi Rohira, "Some years ago, I would see 2-3 divorce cases a month. Now I have 3-4 cases daily." Many divorces are between youngsters

28-34 years old, say experts. Fifty per cent of the cases are of those from the IT industry.

The reasons? Both work, have no time for each other; both are financially well off, there's no dependency, but mainly there's no compatibility. Also, there's no communication.

Says Rohira, "Some marriages are just a week old, a month old. Couples have no time to sit and talk to each other face to face. There's no togetherness." Counsellors cite that in addition, there

could be other reasons that could be traced

back to childhood. In one case of a software engineer couple, the husband was extremely demanding. He would even hurt the wife by pulling her by her long hair. Finally, the wife got it caught short. But it all boiled down to the fact that he'd been brought up by a very strict father. His emotional needs hadn't been met. Worse, the wife had a loud voice, and that reminded him of his father. Hence the aggression. With counselling, she learnt to tone down her pitch, and he realised where he was going wrong.



you share a common life purpose? Do I feel safe expressing my feelings and thoughts with this person? Is there anything I'm hoping to change about this person? Who is earning more? Are your cultural tastes similar? Has this person had a happy childhood? Is he / she self-centred? How does he treat parents? Does he have gratitude and appreciation? How does he / she treat people he / she doesn't have to be nice to such as waiters, drivers?

In another case, a woman complained her husband was so possessive he would not let her talk to her cousins even. It turned out that his father had had many illicit relationships with women and he'd been humiliated by the father's behaviour. His highly insecure childhood made him aggressive.

In a third case, the girl (highly qualified) had run away and married the man. They had discussed her continuing to work after marriage. But he changed his mind after marriage and insisted she stay at home. The girl felt betrayed.

While the majority of sufferers are women, counsellor Meera Ravi says that one way of preventing divorce is through pre-marital counselling. She adds that most girls overlook their partner's weaknesses thinking they can 'change' him with their love. "But that's a big mistake. Don't imagine things will change after marriage. Get into the marriage with your eyes open." Communication too is very important — a relationship that's broken down in communication has unresolved conflict. And anything can trigger off the suppressed anger, say counsellors.

Meera Ravi gives clients a list of questions to work through: what are the quali-

PRE-MARITAL CHECK-LIST

- Things you must look into: ethical standards; looks; IQ and EQ; addictions—smoking, alcohol, etc; income level; living in a joint family; behaviour towards the opposite sex; difference in values; closeness to parents and siblings.

- Questions you must ask: Do

you are looking for in a partner, how good is your self-esteem level, do you love yourself, how assertive are you, what are your priorities in life, what are your expectations of a marriage? Her advice? Marry for the right reason.

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