

## Q & A

### with author Carl Weisman

**1. Why did you write *Serious Doubts*?**

I was a 47 year old bachelor when I met the first woman I ever considered marrying. While we were dating I met a friend of hers—a divorced mother of one. I asked her why she got divorced and she said, “I ignored my inner voice. I knew it would end in divorce.” That scared me because I thought, “That could be me.” I looked for information on the subject of inevitable divorce and couldn’t find any, so I decided to research the subject.

**2. What is the most important thing you hope the reader will learn from your book?**

I hope they will learn to make a good and rational marriage decision. So few people actually spend any time analyzing their decision. And what is clear from the research is that there are many internal and external forces that conspire to get them to make bad marriage choices.

**3. How common is it to find people who knew their marriage would end in divorce before they married?**

According to a study carried out by market research firm OnePoll.com, 15% of engaged couples planning to get married have misgivings about their upcoming nuptials. In another study, results indicate that 3 out of every 10 divorced *women* admit they already knew their marriage was a mistake by the time they walked down the aisle. That equates to about 300,000 marriages per year.

**4. What is the one thing all people have in common who go through with a marriage of serious doubts?**

They all ignore their inner voice. That is what separates them from others who divorce; they *know* it isn’t going to last beforehand. What is fascinating are all the strategies they use to ignore their inner voice. Those strategies range from telling themselves they can make it work to believing there is no stigma to divorce.

**5. What is the number one reason given by people as to why they go through with a marriage they know won't last?**

Low self esteem. Almost 50% of men and 70% of women indicated that low self esteem played some roll in why they went through with their marriage. These people believed their partner was the best they could do, and if they didn't marry them, they could spend the rest of their lives alone.

**6. What is the most surprising thing you discovered in your research?**

How marriage is looked at as the cure for so many personal problems. Whether it is low self esteem, loneliness, financial problems or even a desire to escape the parents, marriage is often times seen as the only way to address these issues. When all said and done, all you do is exchange one set of problems for another, only now you have legal bills.

**7. What advice do you have for people facing a marriage of serious doubts?**

Call a time out. Marriage is not a race. If they are the right person for you today, they will be the right person a year from now or five years from now. And if they are the wrong person, then rushing into the wrong marriage is like rushing into divorce. But time is of the essence. The closer it gets to the wedding, the harder it is to call time out.

**8. Why do people get married when just dating is a viable alternative?**

Four out of five men and women admitted that one of the reasons they got married is because it seemed like the next logical step. In our society, people in a relationship feel compelled to keep moving forward, when in some cases it is a mistake. Some people who make a perfectly good couple as boyfriend and girlfriend should never be married.

**9. What is the most interesting reason someone would go through with a doomed marriage?**

Embarrassment. In our society today, there is far more stigma attached to abandoning someone at the alter than there is to getting divorced. So, as people get close to the wedding day, and money has already been committed to the affair, they would rather go through with the wedding and get a divorce shortly thereafter, than have to deal with the embarrassment of calling of the wedding at the last minute.

**10. What is the difference between getting cold feet and having serious doubts prior to marriage?**

Cold feet is fear of the unknown. People experience cold feet because they do not know their partner well enough and cannot imagine what it will be like to be married to them. Serious doubts is just the opposite: it is fear of the known. People experiencing serious doubts don't fear their partner because they don't know them well enough. They fear their partner because they do.

**11. What results from the survey of over 1,000 people intrigued you the most?**

The fact that 79% of respondents are women. That could be because women feel more compelled to take a survey about a past relationship. But it could be something more. Still today, when it comes to proposing, men do most of the asking. Theoretically, a man does not ask a woman to marry him unless he has thought it through. At the moment he asks, the woman may not want to marry him, but may feel compelled to say yes for any number of reasons.

**12. What is Sudden Marriage Syndrome?**

It is a term I coined to explain an impulsive and inexplicable marriage. Several of the people I interviewed experienced this. One minute they were not even thinking about marriage and the next minute they're married. They all explained it the same way: the wedding took on a life of its own and they were powerless to stop it.

**13. How has writing *Serious Doubts* changed you?**

I got married, for the first time, during the writing of the book. What the research revealed to me were all the different causes of serious doubts before a marriage, and I knew that I didn't have any. I knew I was making a good and rational marriage decision.

**14. How would you change marriage if you could?**

I would make it more difficult to get married. I like the idea where to get married you have to put up a large sum of money...maybe \$10,000. For most people, that would take some time, which would help them get to know each other better. The money would be put in an interest-bearing account which the couple would get back if they were still married, in say, ten years. Otherwise they would forfeit the money.