



*Living together
is becoming
more
acceptable, but
not always the
best thing
before getting
married.*

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If we live together, why bother getting married?

According to a 2001 survey, 37 percent of unmarried dating couples in Oklahoma are living together. Some of these couples plan to get married. Others don't plan to get married but would rather live together instead.

The couples who move in together and do not want to get married may not be ready to make a bigger commitment, may want to avoid the chance of a divorce, or may not believe in marriage.

Research shows that people who are less religious, have experienced divorce, grew up without a father in their home, or experienced their parent's unhappy marriage are more likely to choose to live together instead of getting married.

Couples who choose to live together may think it is the same as being married. Thirty-six percent of Oklahomans believe that living together has all the benefits of marriage. There are some big differences between couples who live together and those who get married. For example:

- Couples that live together are less committed to each other as partners
- Couples that live together are not as happy in their relationship
- Couples that live together are less likely to be faithful to their boyfriend/girlfriend
- Couples that live together are more likely to break up than married couples
- Couples that live together have poorer relationships with their parents

Does this mean that the act of walking down the aisle makes these relationships better? For some, yes. But not for everyone. Some people who live together do it because they are not ready for marriage. It is very important for people to think about their choices. Choosing to live together instead of getting married may mean a lower quality relationship and less commitment.

If you are a committed couple and would like to get married someday, but are afraid of divorce or other problems, consider taking premarital courses to learn how to strengthen your bonds.



To learn more about healthy relationships and marriages, go to www.okmarriage.org