

If you believe that your partner will not be able to handle your past if you tell them, is it that you should not tell them or you should not marry them?

Of course we've underscored earlier that there are aspects of your past life that may be too remote to affect your marriage, your partner and the future. But any issues around sexual history, health history, criminal history, emotional history and history of previous abuse of whatever sort are among aspects of life that surely will affect your marriage one way or the other.

If you consider any of these histories so sensitive that you think your new suitor or "suitee" would run away if you disclose, what should be the approach?

First, I like to say that discussions around such deeply personal issues like this ought to be with someone who has shown a clear intention for marriage. And some show this intention from the very first day of meeting you or coming into your life. And some may not show it two years after.

The degree of seriousness of the issue could influence how early you may need to make important disclosures so that if the other party can't take it, they can go on time without wasting your time.

If you already have a child for instance or HIV positive or there is a contagious disease you're managing or you are infertile as a man or have no womb as a woman, such will need to be disclosed early enough if you're not attempting to deceive even your own self.

Other issues that may not be as serious as some of the above could come out in the course of your fellowship together through the span of the relationship. Of course, some questions may be asked directly by your partner at different stages. If they are partners who are obviously intended to marry you, honest answers are desirable.

While I understand that people have different levels of maturity and principles governing what they can take and what they can't, under no circumstance would I endorse the idea of hiding important matters which ought to be disclosed just to keep a man or woman in a

relationship with you.

If they can't handle it, they are probably not your husband or wife. Rather than keep them by means of deception, dishonesty or willful withholding of important information, why not let them go if they can't accept where you're coming from or your present reality? There are a thousand and one other people who will consider you the best thing to have happened to the world after Jesus Christ despite your past.

While commenting on trying to save a marriage by keeping infidelity a secret, in a July 12, 2012 article posted on PsychologyToday.com, Dr. Mark White said the following though in the context of marital infidelity but still relevant to premarital dark pasts:

“Don't keep your affair a secret just to save the relationship — that isn't fair to your partner, and only serves to preserve a relationship with cracks that will inevitably spread. You owe it to your partner to let him or her make that decision with all the information you can provide. You don't want the relationship to end, but neither do you want your partner to stay with you out of ignorance, mistakenly believing that you've been loyal. The fact is, you haven't — and your partner deserves to know that so he or she can decide whether to give you another chance.”

To those who say, s/he won't be able handle the truth if I tell him or her or s/he doesn't want to know, Dr. Greg Smalley has this response for you:

“You have no right to decide what your spouse can or cannot handle or would or wouldn't want to know. Only your spouse has the right to decide if he or she is going to stay in the marriage — you have no way of knowing what will be done with your confession.”

But despite the fact that you don't know what will be done with your confession, your own duty is to lay it bare. If you keep it a secret, you will spend a lot of energy from that point covering your track and the things you've done to hide your secret: the lies, the misinformation, the sleepless nights, the deleted messages, the hidden phone numbers, the worry, the fear that something may happen that will expose you and so on.

And you see, a lie is more costly to maintain because you need to remember the last lie before telling the new one in order to maintain consistency and credibility. Maintaining truth and honesty is always cheaper and easier. Requires no rehearsal or premeditation.

What about those bumps from the past that open up long term buried scandals? You won't have to be afraid of them if you founded your relationship on total openness and honesty.

If after sharing your past, they can't handle it, let them go. If they can't handle it now, they won't be able to handle it if revealed in the future.

I pray for you grace and courage to obey the truth. Amen.

Your brother,
Peniela Eniayo Akintujoye.

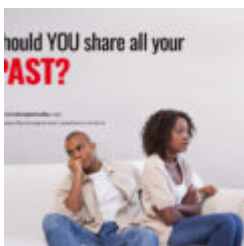
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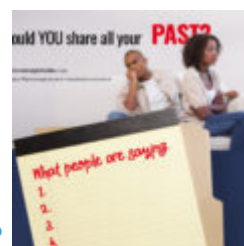
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