

# Friends Don't Let Friends Marry the Wrong Person

In recent weeks, royal media coverage has focused on the birth of baby Archie Harrison, son of Prince Harry and Meghan, Duchess of Sussex. That means the British tabloids are taking a short break from their other favorite topic: the alleged feud between Prince Harry and his older brother Prince William.

If the tabloids are to be believed, the feud began when William expressed doubts about Harry's engagement to Meghan. Harry responded very badly, and the brothers' relationship has never been the same.

I don't know the two princes personally, so I can't tell you whether that story is true or whether it's just a silly tabloid rumor. But if there is even a kernel of truth to it, then William was very brave. In my experience, many people are far too scared to tell a close friend or relative they are marrying the wrong person.

For example, years ago one of my housemates told me she was going to serve as bridesmaid at the wedding of one of her best friends. When I asked her if she liked the groom, she amazed me by going off on a rant. She believed he was a bad person. Her friend came from a wealthy family and my housemate believed he was only marrying her for her money.

I asked, "Have you told your friend about your concerns?" She paused a few seconds and then started sputtering something about how it was her friend's right to decide who she would marry. My housemate didn't feel it was her place to interfere, etc.

This conversation took place seven years ago. I wonder if my housemate's friend and the allegedly gold-digging groom are

divorced by now.

Have you been invited to a wedding that you wish wasn't happening? Do you believe the bride and groom are likely to get divorced? You need to say something.

Divorce is a devastating event. If you let a loved one wander into that without warning, you're not respecting their autonomy. Rather, you're being selfish and cowardly.

Our society has accepted the maxim that "friends don't let friends drive drunk." Drunk driving can cause physical injury or even death to yourself and others, criminal charges, financial loss. In the same way, "friends don't let friends marry the wrong person." The damage inflicted by divorce is different but on a similar order of magnitude as drunk driving.

However, it is easy to understand why people keep their doubts to themselves. The close friend or relative is probably deliriously happy to be getting married. How could you ever rain on their parade? They may already be a fair way along with their wedding planning.

Moreover, they might react very badly when you tell them about your concerns. If they go ahead with the wedding, they might cut you out of their lives.

The risks are high, but it is worth it. If you have concluded you need to speak out, here are a few tips.

## **1. Mentally rehearse what you want to say**

You are likely to be extremely nervous. This might be one of the most difficult conversations you will ever have. Thus, it's important to prepare carefully what you wish to communicate. Otherwise, you can easily get derailed.

## 2. Be as specific as possible

Don't cast any sort of vague aspersion on your loved one's fiancée (e.g., "he's not good enough for you"). Talk about the specific incidents that caused you to develop your doubts. Did you witness the fiancée behaving in an unkind manner? Have the bride and groom expressed differing views about important topics like whether or not to have children?

## 3. Rally the troops

More likely than not, some of your family members or friends share your doubts about the wedding. Talk to them and get them on board. Maybe they can join you in the conversation. You should definitely use them as a reference.

Even if you follow these tips, there's no guarantee the conversation will go well. There is a real chance you will end up paying a terrible price. The alleged case of William and Harry illustrates this painfully. For daring to speak out, William may have lost a close bond with his only sibling. However, the alternative is to do nothing while someone you love makes a devastating mistake.

Friends don't let friends marry the wrong person.

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