For a couple who are of different faiths, how should they decide what religion to raise their children in?

Dorothy Horton, PsyD, answers your questions in her latest Ask Doctor Dee column.

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Q: For a couple who are of different faiths, how should they decide what religion to raise their children in?

A: Unfortunately, for many couples who aren't of the same faith, choosing the religion in which to raise their children can be one of the most difficult and stressful decisions of shared parenthood. Therefore, it is very important that couples make this choice together without allowing other family members to interfere.

For a more harmonious relationship, a couple needs to approach the subject with sensitivity, open-mindedness and, most of all, with a deep respect for each other and each partner's faith. Each person should take time to carefully listen and understand the beliefs, desires and concerns of the other.

In addition, each partner must be honest about the specifics related to the issue on which they can and cannot compromise. At that point, they might want to consider soliciting advice from trusted religious representatives on each side. What's more, the couple must be prepared to make a decision about how to raise their children regardless of what partner's religion is chosen.

A couple must also ask many tough questions. For example, is the issue a deal breaker, or do they sincerely believe they can negotiate this life- changing choice without damaging their relationship?

The answers a couple finds may not solve every aspect of the dilemma, but, at least, facing the issue head-on will start a dialogue that's key to their future happiness as a family.

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