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EC2009 Love- Courtship- Engagement

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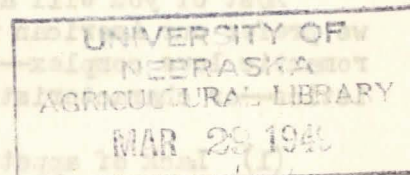
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LOVE - COURTSHIP - ENGAGEMENT

Prepared by

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What is a successful marriage?

If you will take the time to examine the things which you desire from life, most of you will find among the things most important, the achieving of a successful marriage. "Successful marriage" may be defined differently and yet there may be some basic points that all may be able to agree upon--such things as security (affectional), trust, permanence, a sharing of many experiences, and a satisfaction with life and marriage that does not fade but rather is increased by the passing years.

On the other hand, cold reality should cause you to face the facts--approximately one marriage in three will end in divorce, even at present rates, and divorce rates are apparently still on the increase. Many marriages that do not end in divorce certainly fall short of our definition of successful.

One of the questions that should be bothering you is what can you do to help yourself achieve a successful marriage--it is a great undertaking and you very greatly want to succeed in this great and important experience.

First of all, there is no quick and easy formula that will guarantee a successful marriage--human beings are far too complex for that.

Two of America's finest young authorities, Duvall and Hill declare in their book When You Marry "The basic and major cause of divorce is marriage, and we are not being flippant! The divorce rate is closely linked with the number of ill-advised and poorly mated pairs who pass through the engagement period without discussing their incompatability."

Using their approach as a starting point, let's see if we can find some ways of helping you to achieve a successful marriage; one which is permanent, which gives lasting or increasing satisfaction, and which carries with it a sense of security.

What about this thing called love?

Recently a young Chinese girl, a graduate student, presented a paper in a class. She described and discussed various Chinese courtship and marriage customs, among which was the point that the young couple did not have the opportunity to become acquainted before marriage. Oftimes they have only seen each other a few times. It was her conviction that love comes after marriage--it is not expected before, and she feels that it is just as common in Chinese marriages as it is in

American ones. One of the basic reasons for this condition she feels, is the careful consideration of the adaptability of the couple to each other by the parents who arrange the marriage, and the conviction on the part of the young couple that they will learn to love each other.

Most of you will agree that the Chinese system may be all right for them, but we prefer our American ways. However, Americans have been accused of having a romantic love complex--what is romantic love? Here are a few of its characteristics--or characteristics that are attributed to it.

(1) Lack of appetite. (2) A sense of well-being and buoyancy. (3) Racing pulse, heart beat accelerated, hard to breathe. (4) Much day-dreaming and feeling of superior strength. (5) Thrills after fear and uncertainty. (6) Must be fed constantly, but fed by the imagination, rather than reality. (7) Belief in only one true love, mated in the heavens above. (8) Very intense emotional reaction from love-making.

What about your love feelings--are they of this type? If your love is of this type does it indicate that you have a love that is lasting, and that it is reason for marriage?

The answer that the experts give is definitely, "No". What it probably does indicate is that you are idealizing the other person; you haven't been able to see that person as an actual human being. You are attributing certain qualities that that person does not possess--it indicates that you need to know more about each other. It may strongly indicate that your attraction emphasizes, (1) sexual attraction, (2) personal beauty, (3) emotional response. It might be added that a terrific emotional response should not be confused with love. People differ in respect to sex appeal and don't forget that kissing and love-making are an art. As one fellow put it, "I've received a terrific bang from kissing and wooing with at least a dozen girls. In love with them--no--they just knew the art."

Is there another type of love--the kind that lasts, and even increases as the years pass by? Apparently so and for want of a better name it is called--conjugal love--because it is the type that so many happily married couples possess. What are its characteristics?

1. It starts as a girl and boy check first to see if they are friends, before becoming lovers.
2. It involves companionship, mutual interests, and the sharing of common tasks.
3. Security, certainty of the other, and sense of permanency.
4. Highly developed tenderness feelings, which are well-mixed and integrated with physical love feelings.
5. Is a dynamic growing sentiment which becomes more satisfying as the couple come to know each other as real persons.
6. May grow from romantic love as blinders are removed and the couple discover common interests and goals.
7. Thrives on the routine calm of the home, and is frequently a product of a happy marriage.

What are the purposes of courtship?

If courtships could be designed by marriage experts they would begin with companionship first--with rich romantic experiences afterward. First establish the facts of congeniality, common interests and compatability--later there will be plenty of time for romance, and love-making.

All too frequently it works the other way--courtship begins with emphasis on love-making and physical response. The couple become emotionally involved, hence it becomes difficult, to say the least, to endeavor to determine congeniality, common interests, and compatibility. Too frequently aroused sex drives distort ones sense of values and judgment. As an old farmer put it, "Young folks should be as careful about selecting a mate as most of us are about selecting a team of horses".

Hence one of the real functions of courtship is getting to know each other as real persons--and rather than cover up your weak points, it should be up to you to make sure your courtship partner becomes aware of them.

Somewhere along the way you should analyze your effect upon each other. Are you really good for your courtship partner and is he really good for you? Do you tend to bring out the best in each other?

Can you face your problems and differences squarely and work them through together, or are there certain areas you have to avoid? Can you work through your disagreements successfully?

What are the reactions of your friends and parents to the person you hope to marry? For most of you the family in which you were raised is the most dominant force in determining your personality. Oftimes your families values and attitudes are much more a part of you than you realize. Along with this is the need for examining the genetic makeup of each--it will be very important when your children arrive. If any doubt consult a good doctor or biologist.

What about religious differences and differences in the important values in life? Apparently the solution does not lie in ignoring such differences. Your chances of reaching a satisfactory solution are greatly increased if you meet the problem frankly before marriage.

Are engagements necessary?

When the couple becomes engaged, much of the pressure of the courtship is off, and particularly if competition was involved. You can see each other a little more realistically and clearly.

Engagement is not an unbreakable bond--at least 1/3 are broken and should be viewed in that light. "The proper time for divorce is during the engagement."

Work out solutions to differences and plan for marriage realistically. Get in the habit of sharing and working things through.

Final determination that you approve of your partner as he is--not as you think you might change him to be.