

Marriage and its vicissitudes

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Marriage is the most complex of
human relationships
CG Jung

Why do people marry?

- Cultural dimensions of marriage
- Traditional marriages vs. Westernized marriages
- What does one look for in a spouse?
- Life partner, companion, friend, confident, caregiver, child, someone to look after, ? etc.

Qualities of a “good marriage”

- Gottman and Levensohn’s marriage laboratory
- Study of thousands of couples
- Physiological and behavioral measurements of interactions
- Stress hormones, blood pressure, galvanic skin response, etc.

Positive ingredients

- Validation
- Empathy
- Supportive behavior
- Effort and time to make the marriage happy

Gottman

- Mathematics of marriage
- Relationship cure

Successful marriages. J.S Wallerstein

- Study of long lasting, satisfying marriages. 50 couples
- Enduring love and intimacy
- Friendship, compassion, encouragement, sense of being understood and appreciated. Being seen as unique and irreplaceable

Study

- Both members of couple think marriage is happy
- Have been married over the “danger point”, i.e. 9 years
- Interviews at home
- Each member lengthy interview separately

Study

- One can tell very little about a marriage from the outside, i.e. appearances
- “tell me what is good about your marriage”
- “what is disappointing about your marriage”
- Study of :conflict, sex, extramarital relationships, household routines, work experience, friends, extended family, crises, and the children.
- fantasies, roads not taken, and wishes that remained unfulfilled
- Advice to other couples

Study

- Many admitted that at times they wanted out. Some confessed that on occasion they felt they had made a mistake. But each person felt strongly that on balance their marriage had a goodness of fit in needs, wishes, and expectations.

Happy marriages

- Not care free: good and bad times
- Partners get depressed, fight, lose jobs, struggle with the demands of the workplace and the crises of infants and teenagers, and confront sexual problems. They cry and yell and get frustrated. They come from sad, abusive, neglectful backgrounds as well as from more stable families; all marriages are haunted by ghosts from the past.

Happy marriages

- redefinitions :
- expand to accommodate children
- close ranks when the children leave home
- metamorphose at retirement
- they feel, and say with conviction, that the marriage will last

Types of “good marriages” (Wallerstein)

- ROMANTIC marriage; Tasks
- Separating from the family of origin
- Building togetherness and creating autonomy
- Becoming parents

Good marriage

- RESCUE marriage
- Additional tasks
- Task, coping with crises
- Making a safe place for conflict

Good marriage

- COMPANIONATE marriage
- Exploring love and intimacy
- Task. Sharing laughter and keeping interests alive

Good marriage

- TRADITIONAL marriage
- Task. Providing emotional nurturance
- Infidelity in fantasy and reality

Qualities of a negative marriage

- Magical ratio of 5 to 1.
- Positive to negative actions
- Positive: kind gestures, supportive comments, help, assistance, interest, empathy, etc.
- Negative. Criticism, sarcasm, negative remarks, insensitivity

“seven principles” of marriage. gottman

- 1. Enhance one’s “love map”
- Place in one’s brain with information about one’s partner
- Knowing one’s partner, his/her dreams, his/her hopes, and interests

Seven principles

- 2. Nurture your fondness and admiration
- Lay out a positive view of your partner
- Respecting and appreciating differences

Seven principles

- 3. Turn toward each other instead of apart from each other
- Acknowledge your partner's small moments in life
- Maintain the connection in the relationship

Seven principles

- 4. Let your partner influence you
- Maintain your identity in the relationship
- At same time, yield to your partner and give in
- If done reciprocally, mutual respect

Seven principles

- 5 . Solve your solvable problems
- Compromise on issues that can be resolved:
- Soften your start up
- Learn to make and receive repair attempts
- Soothe yourself and each other
- Compromise
- Be tolerant of each other's faults

Seven principles

- 6. Overcome Gridlock
- Big issues, cannot be resolved, need deep understanding of the other person
- At least reach position that allows the other person to empathize
- Even if compromise cannot be reached

Seven principles

- 7. Create shared meaning
- Create a shared value system
- That connects the two partners
- Through traditions and rituals
- Shared roles
- Shared symbols

Marriage laboratory

- Measurement of
- Facial expressions
- Galvanic skin conductance
- Heart rate (e.g. flooding)
- Time to listen to each other again

Four “negative ingredients”

- Criticism
- Defensiveness
- Contempt
- “Stonewalling”

History of marriage

- When did couple meet?
- How long did they “date”
- How did he first years go?
- When did conflict start appearing?
- What were the reasons?