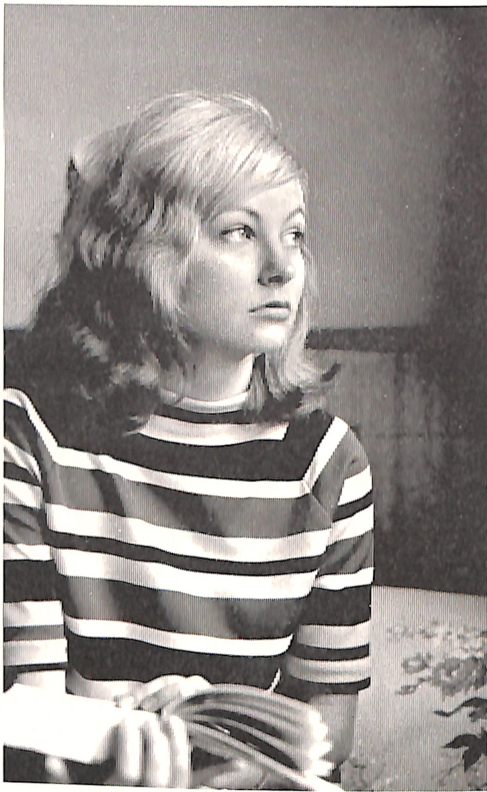


Marriage: What Your Mother Never Told You

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A successful marriage is not an accident. It is the result of hard work. It takes two people really trying to make a marriage succeed.

The trying should begin before the "I do's," not after. Preparation involves two related questions: "Am I ready for marriage?" and "How do I prepare for marriage?"

These questions have to be answered in regard to yourself, the person you plan to marry, the present, and the future.

Look at Yourself

There are those who think that age is the key for determining readiness for marriage. Age, however, indicates very little. Some people are ready for marriage at an early age, others are not ready when they are thirty, and some never are. Incidentally, a person who marries while still a teenager is more than twice as likely to be divorced than one who marries when he is twenty or above. However, the real issue is not one's age but one's maturity. No one is completely mature, but successful marriages require some maturity. Many marriages fail because of immaturity.

Some signs of maturity are:

1. Accepting responsibility and then acting responsibly.
2. Learning to make independent, objective decisions.
3. Living with the consequences of those decisions, refusing to pass the buck or to blame circumstances.
4. Giving as well as receiving.
5. Thinking of the needs of others.
6. Respecting the opinions of others and listening to them although you may not agree with them.
7. Waiting for what you want, learning to postpone immediate gratification of needs and desires if greater good can be gained by waiting.
8. Learning not to take yourself too seriously.
9. Asking for and accepting help and advice from others when you need to, such as ministers, doctors, marriage counselors.

Evaluating your maturity is never easy. But the best thing you can do for yourself and your future mate is to evaluate your own maturity.

Marriage will not eliminate your hangups. It usually just makes them worse. If you are a reasonably mature person, you may be ready for marriage. If not, you owe it to yourself and to the other person to wait until you are.

Look at the Person You Want to Marry

What do you see when you look carefully at this person? Unfortunately, many allow love to strike them blind. They refuse to see the real person or accept what they know to be true about this person.

Such pretending is a weak foundation on which to try to build a relationship. In marriage, pretense usually ends and reality has to be faced.

Serious faults in the other person are often overlooked during courtship. The idea is "After we are married, then I'll straighten him/her out." It just doesn't work that way. Any reform is usually very slow and generally minor after marriage. Basic human nature remains about the same after marriage as it was before. What is he or she really like? There is no way ever completely to know a person, but there are several ways of gaining insight into what is in his head and heart.

The best method is a direct one. Ask him about himself. All of us like to talk about ourselves. Ask questions about the other person.

Conversation is a big part of serious dating. Make the most of it.

Handing a person a questionnaire on the first date is a little too obvious. Ask questions in a casual and natural way. For example, after



seeing a movie involving children, talk about children. Obviously, this can be done with any subject from politics and peace to religion and relatives.

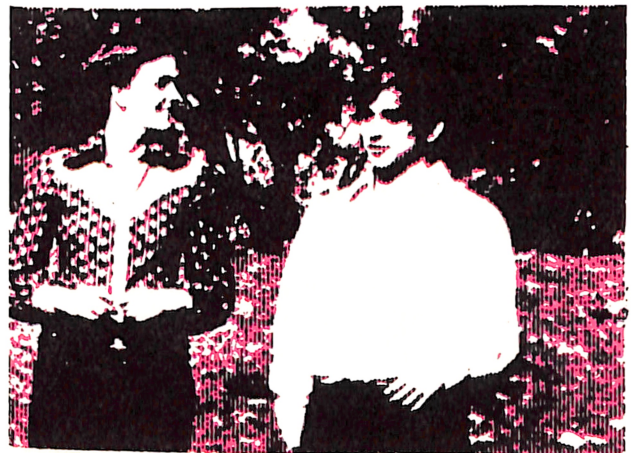
Openness has a way of bringing out honesty in others. As you share your own ideas, dreams, hopes, fears, goals, values, frustrations, it will help the other person to be free to do the same. He has a right to understand the real you.

Notice how he acts in the presence of others. It is easy to be courteous for a couple of hours on a date. But is he consistently courteous to others? Respectful? Thoughtful? Understanding? Dependable? Sensitive? If not, it is usually just a matter of time until he starts treating you the same way he does others.

While observing how she treats others, also listen to what others say about her. Gossip can be vicious and should be rejected. Sometimes the judgment of others should be respected. Girls who live with her in **her flat** may know a lot more about her than you do. Parents may have insights of great value that should be taken seriously.

Seek to know all you can about your prospective mate. It is better to do this before rather than after the wedding ceremony.

You are in love and want to get married. Can you answer if someone asks you, "What are her dreams?" "What are her interests?" "Does she do things quickly or slowly?" "Is she efficient or sloppy?" "What sort of family



background does she have?" "How important is religion to her?" "Is she honest?" "Does she trust you?"

If you do not have good answers to these kinds of questions, then you do not know the other person. Don't marry a stranger. If you know her well and still want to marry her, great! Set the date.

Look at the Present

For many people the main motivation for marriage is sex. Their minds are filled with visions of beds. The truth is that almost anyone can find a place to sleep. But there are other important considerations.

If you married now, would your bed be in an apartment, a house of your own, or in the bedroom located next to your parents?

Where are you in your education? Would one or both of you have to quit **university if you** married?

How would you support yourselves? How much income must you have? How much do you earn?

How would your marriage affect your parents? What do other family members think?

Are most of your friends marrying? Is it the thing for your crowd?

Are you bored? Are you jealous of the attention others are getting when they marry?

Are you lonely? In other words, are your present circumstances so bad that you are considering marriage as a way out?

Is physical attraction the most important thing in your relationship?

It is important to be sure that your present circumstances do not push you into an unwise marriage or prevent you from a good one.

Look at the Future

Taking the long look is hardly ever popular. We are much more inclined to live for today. Decisions made today will significantly affect your life tomorrow. What seems like a bargain today may be a bad deal tomorrow. While you may be content to live without much money now, how about the rest of your life? You may enjoy dropping out of church for a short time. But what about when you have children and feel the need for their religious training? One of the most important things a Christian young person can do is to establish long-range goals and choose a mate with these goals in mind.

In preparing for marriage, remember these seven ideas.

1. The most important thing you can bring to marriage is a mature you. Look realistically at your hangups and try to get rid of them.

Engage in activities which will help you grow and mature physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

2. Recognize that marriage alone will solve few of your problems.

3. Accept or reject the other person as is rather than plan a reform after the wedding.

4. Understand that you are marrying a family as well as one person.
5. Be honest about your motives for wanting to marry.
6. Admit that two people should not marry simply because they are in love. It takes a lot more than love to hold a marriage together. Such things as character, faith, trust, respect, and compatibility are essential along with love.
7. Understand that the more things you have in common with the other person, the better your chances are for a successful marriage. Wide differences in racial, social, cultural, educational, economic, and religious backgrounds may be overcome; but it is extremely difficult to do so.

God began marriage when He made Adam and Eve for each other. He is just as interested in your marriage as He was in that one.

THIS IS ANOTHER

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