

# What Makes a Successful Marriage

Contributed by admin  
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Here are some personal thoughts on what helps create a successful marriage. They are not meant to replace the commitment and dedication that are instrumental in providing the foundations for a successful marriage but merely a simple guide.

If all the world's a stage, and all the men and women merely players, our attitude toward that part of the drama which is marriage will be one thing. Our first and main concern will be entertainment and fun. Our objective will be to get that satisfaction commonly known as pleasure. Marriage will be one of these pleasure scenes. We shall certainly not put too much into this. In stage scenery, appearance is sufficient. We need not have a house in which people can live, but only what looks like part of a house. Even this need not be well constructed, since it is so soon to be discarded. We and those who play opposite us need not spend the time and effort required to become what we represent. We need only to appear convincing. No wonder we often soon tire of the same old routine, and seek to change the cast and the bill!

But if life has basic meaning and purpose; if its essence is creative achievement, marriage will be quite different. Fun there will still be. But our first task will be to build a home in which we can actually live, and which will last through the years. To build successfully will require adequate preparation, serious application and sustained effort. Such a task is not to be accomplished in a few months, or even in a few years. Not even a lifetime will suffice.

We shall select our partners with utmost care, for their ability and desire to contribute to, and share in the common enterprise. Some people will discover that, despite their best efforts, they have chosen wrongly, and will have to start all over again from scratch. Yet such a decision will be too serious to be made without the most exacting investigation by competent specialists.

To marry is to enter upon a building program. The job of each couple who marry is to construct a permanent home for themselves in which they can best raise their children. A good marriage, like a good house, must have more than attractive features and glamour. It must be constructed of good materials. It must be constructed soundly enough to be able to weather the winters and storms of adversity and disappointment as well as the summer days of pleasure. Building any sound structure means work. Often you must expect inconveniences and difficulties; unsolved problems and bits of adjustment not yet made part of the structure. There will be backaches and heartaches.

A good marriage should be livable. Our fathers were often satisfied with a marriage stalwart enough to stand up during the years. We of today demand more. We want our marriages to do more than to shelter and to protect. They should be so designed as to provide ample opportunity for rich and satisfying living. If marriages are to meet this demand, they must be carefully planned. Such planning requires not only intelligence, but technical knowledge. We shall wish to consult, at least through their books, our matrimonial architects.

What do we get for all this? Lots of fun, because building is fun; among the most satisfying of all activities. We get a house of relationships in which to live. It would be easier and cheaper to find some cave of selfishness to occupy. It would be quicker and less expensive to begin with, to throw up some shack of temporary sex relationships. But such expedients could not provide us with a home. And so we will continue to demand habitations of relationships fit for civilized people, because only so can we be most truly human.

As we continue to build through the years, more and more worthwhile developments result. The love with which we started grows richer, and deeper, less explosive, but warmer, steadier, and more delightful. The relationships grow more comfortable. A lessening of tensions makes it possible for us to give more attention to, and enjoy more fully the task of living. Those who build, rather than merely appropriate, testify that their marriages grow more delightful, and in some ways, even more glamorous with the years.

As marriages deepen, so they also reach upward. Much has been said about the importance of religion to success in marriage. Too much cannot be said about the contributions of a rich and developing marriage to religion. In our love within the family we touch the Divine. Through a successful marriage the everlasting purposes of a timeless Eternity emerge as a focal point in time. More and more the tasks of marriage become worship. Its relationships become sacraments. As we continue to build, there emerges something more than a human habitation. Increasingly we find in our marriage a Temple for our souls' fulfillment in which God has come also to dwell; a house not made with hands, Eternal in the Heavens.

Our discussion closes with quotations from a wedding ceremony designed to incorporate the deeper and more meaningful social and religious purposes and ideals of marriage:

We rightly approach a wedding ceremony with reverence, and with awe. For marriage has welled up out of the depths of personal and social need. In it the fundamental impulses of the individual and the race; biological, personal and social, come to an overt focus. The ceremony itself is the public avowal of a new relationship; the most basic that can exist among men. . . .

It is meet and proper that so awe-inspiring an occasion, when Eternity emerges as a visible point in the present, should be celebrated with dignity and solemnity. All races, tribes and cultures, from the most primitive to the most advanced, have made of this step ... an expression through ceremony and rite of profound social concern.

... For a wedding is more than the joining of two persons to each other. It is the closing of a link in the endless chain of human relationships; a link which binds the present to the past, and out of which the future can most advantageously emerge.

The wedding is properly a religious ceremony. For in marriage, basic forces which determine human destiny find their richest and most creative expression. The noblest sentiments and highest ideals of the human soul stand by in expectant concern for their future. The God who sustains all which is, ultimately presides&hellip;.

Marriage is an oasis of refreshment and renewal in an often arid world; a point of stability amid the bewildering and often alarming changes of a rapidly shifting social scene. Your marriage will mean that each of you will have at least one person whom you can know and respond to as a whole personality. In all the welter of mass humanity and whirling shifts of friendships, you can find a stability. . . .

For you there will always be one relationship in which you can be as you really are, without risk of rejection. Marriage means, in part, the weaving of a rope of relationships upon which each of you can put the full weight of your own worst, without fear that it will break.

You will find a new security and richness in love . . . married love is above and beyond all other forms of human love. In it alone are intermingled the depth, intimacy and permanence essential for your greatest satisfaction and growth.

The wedding means a recognition and acceptance of new social obligations. To marry is to enter into partnership in a building enterprise&hellip;..To marry ... is to create a basic unit of society. And in so doing you find your own greatest fulfillment.

The vows which you are about to take pledge you to fidelity, one to the other. This does not mean fidelity to taboos, or even to a person. The man and the woman who

live together secure in each other's love are being faithful to far more than to each other&hellip;They are being faithful to the basic foundations of the social structure in which all are formed and nourished. They are being faithful to the provisions which society makes for the protection and development of the deepest needs of persons. When you marry you do far more than to take unto yourself a spouse. You take a piece of the social future into your hands.