

LOVE

The You

The Me

The Us

Dr. Robert O'Connor

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR.

Dr. O'Connor is a retired professor and licensed family counselor from California. He has not only had extensive experience in family counseling but he has also taught courses in: marriage and family, healthful living and related educational fields. He has authored more than 40 books, half college textbooks, dealing with the various aspects of physical and psychological health.

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PREFACE

There is nothing more important for most of us than to be in a loving, nurturing relationship. Survey after survey shows that a strong relationship is the most important factor in most peoples' minds. Today, with our varying vocational and recreational interests, our smaller families—that are often many miles removed from where we live, and the all too common break-ups of relationships we once thought were solid—we need strong human bonds to secure what most psychologists feel is our most basic human need—LOVE.

It is not only the changing of society that erects hurdles in our path to happiness, it is the crunch of time pressures from our often self-inflicted busy schedules that impinge on our most basic psychological need.

Perhaps if we understand a bit more in detail of the forces that move within us and the forces that our environment bombards us with, we may be able to sort the wheat from the chaff and create a life that is truly satisfying—a life that takes seriously our need to develop and live a LIFE of LOVE.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Planning for “Happily ever after.”

She asked him how to find the railroad station. His answer was “If I were you, I wouldn’t start

But in life we must start from where we are. And often our direction is much less clear than our aim to get to the railroad station. In our lives we must be clear about who we are and where we are going--otherwise we won't know it when we get there!

The Danish philosopher Soren Kierkegaard observed that we evaluate our lives looking backward but we must live going forward. Hopefully we can profit from our own experiences and the experiences of others—but most of us seem to trust to hope and luck rather than the experience of the past in planning our marriages. Once we understand the probabilities from the past, we must start with the I, you, and the us in the now. It is the “now” that gives us the starting point for our future. When we lay the foundation for our relationship we don't know just how high and wide the relationship will be. But it can't be any higher and wider than its foundation.

Let's not kid ourselves, the reason that any of us live together is for what it does for us--or at least what we think it will do for us. But while the “me” is the starting point, it is not the ending point in a good relationship. A good relationship will make us happier and will strengthen our ties to that “significant other” making the “we” more and more important. A good relationship does not mean that you lose the “me.” In fact, the “me” should become stronger and more complete. We therefore have to be conscious of the three parts of any relationship--the me, the you, and the us.

The statistics relating to divorce are scary. With about half of first marriages, 60% of second marriages and 70% of third marriages ending in divorce we are faced with some sobering negative facts. The chance of either living in an unsatisfying union or ending that relationship in a divorce is well over 50%. On the other hand, the potential for happiness in a well thought out union is better today than it has ever been IF the two people are mature and handle their relationship sensibly. So while the chance of failure looms large in our marital futures, our hopes for the ecstasy of a harmonious and blissful relationship can usually be fulfilled if we will but understand the dynamics of the equalitarian marriage which is generally the ideal in today's Western world.

Since 95% of Americans say that marriage and family are very important to them it is imperative that we understand how to work together in the rapidly changing institution which has been the foundation of our civilization. Its importance today is even more greatly amplified than at any time in the past because the extended family of the past (grandparents, parents, aunts, uncles, cousins, along with a number of siblings) is generally giving way to the nuclear family of today—living away from other family members and possibly without children. Psychologically most of us need a close intimate partner more than anytime before in history. We seem to recognize this but too often we are not sure of how to participate in an intimate partnership.

Be Ready to Change for the Better.

Alvin Toffler, in his book *Future Shock*, said that not only are things changing--but they are changing at an ever faster rate. This idea can certainly be seen not only in how those of us in the

Western world see ourselves but also in what we expect. We have a world of exciting occupations to choose from. We have travel opportunities never dreamed of by our parents. We have unlimited avenues for further education. These are some of the realities which can help to make us better people and which can make our relationships more stimulating and satisfying.

On the other hand, as we leave the farms and small towns for the big cities, as our extended families become smaller, and as we feel the frustrations of being more alone in our technological world--we often experience greater psychological needs that did our parents. Our forebears often lived in emotionally secure settings with large numbers of siblings and friends to nourish their souls. This setting, said psychologist Erich Fromm, gave those people a feeling of being loved. But our near social isolation today, according to Fromm, makes us feel alone—and being alone is a major cause of unhappiness and mental illness.

Today's adults have often chosen the excitement of modern city life rather than the serenity of the past. Nevertheless, just as in bygone days, our emotional needs must still be met--and we usually expect that our marriage will fill that void. However, today a deeply satisfying relationship in a marriage is more difficult to achieve than it was in the past, because we expect so much more from that age old institution.

But a deeply satisfying and growth nurturing relationship is not only possible, it is probable--if we approach it with intelligence. Relationships today have far more potential because we have knowledge of how relationships work and we have more recreational time to enjoy our friendship. This is the reason for intelligently planning for that relationship, rather than hoping that the brothers Grimm will write our storybook ending.

Planning is the key.

When you are developing a long term relationship you shouldn't go in blind--yet most people do. While couples generally know what kind of movies they like, their favorite foods, and some general life goals-- there is much more to developing a mature permanent relationship. This holds true just as much for people who decide to live together without the benefit of marriage as it does for those taking the more serious step in matrimony. Whether homosexual or heterosexual, young or old, previously married or not--there are goals to achieve, issues to negotiate, and compromises to make.

We have expectations in many areas of the relationship. Intimacy, friendship, sexual fulfillment, economic needs, the possibility of parenthood, and the self actualization of education, career and travel. Many of our expectations are clear to us. Some are muddled. And some are not yet known at all because we have not thought about them or we can't think about them because they are deep inside our unconscious minds.

We are obviously not robots. We are thinking, feeling, human, beings. We are continuously

changing. Our relationships are changing. And our world is changing. The bonds of traditional culture are rapidly being loosened. So we must prepare to fly with the freedom now possible.

You may remember Abraham Lincoln's favorite story. An ancient emperor of China asked his wise men to tell him something which would always be true. One said "Our country will always be the greatest in the world." The emperor could not be certain of the veracity of that hope. Another said "The sun will always rise in the east." But the emperor was not certain that this would be eternally true. A third said "And this too shall pass away." "That," said the fascinated emperor, "must always be true."

We all know that our world is changing--far faster than any time in history. We may be able to adjust to computers and the Internet, to interplanetary exploration and to heart transplants, but we often can't see that these rapid changes are affecting our relationships.

Finding our Way in the Relationship Maze.

"Let's fly to Tahiti."

"I need a vacation house. I feel too cooped up here all the time"

"Our son is addicted to crack cocaine."

Both desires and problems which were unthinkable fifty years ago now are often commonplace. As science affects our lives, intelligent changes are often made. For example, the science of nutrition is doubling its knowledge every three years. Are you still eating the way you did when you were growing up, or are you reducing animal fats, eating more fish and pasta, and supplementing your diet with antioxidants? Science is showing us better ways to live. Whether it is our nutrition, our careers, or our relationships--science often gives us a better way to choose.

The changes in our world are affecting our relationships sometimes for the worse, but often for the better. We are having fewer children. We are seeking more fulfilling careers. We are increasing and satisfying our material desires. And often we are returning to a spiritual life which had been abandoned by the "me" generation of the 60's and 70's.

Our rapidly changing ideas of relationships demands a continual rethinking of our goals, needs, and values. This requires more fundamental communication on relationship issues to keep our intimacy growing and our partnerships moving positively. Today, more than ever before, knowledge exists to allow us to increase the positive aspects of our marriages and to reduce or eliminate the negatives. Theorists in psychology and in marriage counseling are giving us specific ways to make our relationships more dynamic and fulfilling. Are you ready to use them?

There are several critical areas in making a relationship work better.

1. We must be mature individuals--not self centered, insecure, emotional skeletons.
2. We must understand who we are and what we must have as well as what we are willing

to give up in order to have an ideal partnership.

3. We must understand that our partner is not exactly the same as we are in terms of needs, values and the ability to communicate--and that our partner's desires should be on an equal footing with our own. Being able to accept these differences in points of view and habits is now being found to be a major factor in marital success.

4. We must understand the methods of effective communication and understanding--and that men and women don't always have the same views of what communication is all about.

5. We must understand that our relationships are a series of negotiations and contracts.

6. The relationship must be of primary importance. A purely selfish person cannot be a part of an effective partnership. This is what we call commitment.

7. We should not begin a long term relationship with major issues unresolved.

Each of these critical areas will be examined in detail to assist you in understanding our modern relationship workings--and potentials. There has never been as much need for effective relationships as there is today. And there has never been as much potential for fantastically fulfilling relationships as we have in our middle class Western World. Let's take advantage of our opportunities.

Just Getting Married Is Not the Answer.

In the United States a large number of people just want to be married. Marriage is a status symbol. At least somebody wants me! Because of that we generally go into marriage blind. If merely being married is more important than having an ideal relationship then we get what we deserve. Just check the divorce courts to see how many of the people who got married did not have a relationship.

The United States has the highest marriage rate of any industrialized society. Not all countries have the same attitude towards marriage. The "romantic" French and the "sensual" Italians marry at only half of the U.S. rate. And Scandinavians are much more likely to live together without the marriage ceremony. In Norway only 50% of couples under 35 who live together are officially married. But by age 50 only about 5% are unmarried.

While in agricultural countries such as India, marriage is an economic asset, in the more developed countries it is not essential for our economic survival. In Scandinavia, for example, marriage is not economically required. Most men and most women have jobs, whether they are single or married. Living together, unmarried in a truly equalitarian relationship, is much more common. Marriage is a much more solemn commitment, usually made when parenthood is planned, or imminent or after the relationship has evolved into a deeply satisfying bond.

Also, in the Scandinavian countries equality of the sexes is more of a fact of life than it is in other countries where the ideal of gender equality is talked about but seldom acted on. Just count the number of women in the British, Italian, American or French national legislative bodies then count those in the similar bodies in Norway or Sweden. In Scandinavia you are more likely to find 40 to 50%

If We're Equal----We Can Be Honest.

A recent best selling book on “the rules” of catching a man emphasized the “politics” of seducing--of being pursued. It was a Machiavellian method of seduction. Such advice as “don't talk to a man first' or “don't talk on the phone for more than 15 minutes before finding an excuse for cutting off the conversation” or “put off sleeping with him as long as possible” might even work as the authors have suggested.

But men interviewed believed that many of these instructions were “turn offs” to them. And what if this “liberated” woman finally “catches” a man? Does she continue to be coy and tempting for the next fifty years or does she take the advice in this book and look for an equalitarian marriage. If she has used one set of rules to get to the altar then attempts to change them and develop an equalitarian marriage after the ceremony, there may well be problems. It is, after all, a dishonest approach in attempting to build a relationship.

When men and women are seen as truly equal there is not the need for women to get married for status. They can get married when they are certain of a lifetime commitment. In the countries where women are seldom treated as equals, as is often true in the United States, the status of “being married” is often primary. Additionally when men and women are not seen as equal by their societies there is much less of a chance of an equalitarian marriage. When a man and a woman enter into a relationship as unequals their ability to make decisions and compromises is often weighted unequally. So the compromises made, that is the contracts within the relationship, are often not made by truly equal partners.

YOUR LIFE IS A SERIES OF CONTRACTS

“For better or worse, for richer or poorer, in sickness or health, 'til death do us part.”

--That's a contract. It is a verbal contract which could be just as valid as a written one. That's why you have witnesses to it at your marriage ceremony. However lawyers doubt the legality of the terms of this traditional contract because they are so vague and their terms last until death. So if that marriage contract were ever tested in court it would probably be tossed out as unenforceable. A binding contract must be more specific--and it must be fair.

In legal terms, contracts can be “expressed” or “implied.” An expressed contract could be written, as when buying a house, or can be verbal, as the traditional verbal contract in a marriage ceremony with the required two witnesses. Another type of verbal contract could be a promise between the two people to act in a certain way. But this isn't necessarily “legal” if other people were not there to hear the promise being made.

The “implied” contract is symbolized by our actions. When a couple has had sex every day for two years before the marriage ceremony there is an implied contract to continue that level of sexual

activity. If one of the partners reduces the level of activity, there is a breach of the implied contract.

Of course the implied contract can be verbally amended. “I have a headache” may allow for a break in the sexual activity until the headache is over. But sometimes that “headache” occurs over and over again just when the other partner wants to play sex games—and frustration and anger result .

Another implied contractual term might be that the partners had dinner at a restaurant every week prior to getting married. It might continue into the marriage or it might be changed. The dinner every week contract might be amended because the couple decides to save for a house or to have the money necessary to have a child. They would therefore reduce the frequency of their restaurant outings.

We all operate under a number of contracts. At work we may be protected by a collective bargaining contract between our union and our employer. When driving your car you operate under a contract with the state. If you violate the contract you may pay a fine or spend time in jail. When you borrow to buy a house you promise to pay the money back to the bank or the bank can repossess the house.

It would seem that, in a relationship as intimate and long term as a marriage is expected to be, the couple would insist on a written contract which would cover many of the situations which we are quite sure will occur. But the romantic ideas which accompany a marriage usually make each person believe that life will just get better and better because they have participated in a marriage ceremony. Based on our knowledge, this is a highly fanciful idea.

If you are married now, you have a contract. It may be lodged in Albany, in Austin, or in Sacramento but it's there in the laws of your state. It tells what reasons can be used to end your marriage, the financial consequences of a break up, and it will indicate what the state considers to be the most important considerations in determining child custody.

One misunderstanding about the marriage contract is that while the couple is usually looking for a deep friendship, and usually a sexual, relationship, the government usually sees the marriage almost totally in terms of a financial agreement. The contract terms expressed at the wedding ceremony—that we will love and cherish each other forever, doesn't mention what the relationship means in terms of money and property. Perhaps to be more honest we should add a sentence or two after “until death do us part” and add the financial terms of the contract. So in a community property state the financial terms might be “and half of all you earn once you are married belongs to your spouse.”

With the exception of lawyers and judges, most of us don't have a clue as to what is really included in the unspoken and unwritten terms of our contracts. This book is an attempt to remedy that gross oversight.

Every Relationship is a Contract.

Not only every marriage, but every relationship, is a contract. Friends can break up long term relationships. One of my clients was stunned when his best friend of nearly 60 years broke up their friendship after my client's divorce. Although the friend was not particularly close to my client's ex-

wife, he sided with her on the divorce and decided to end the friendship.

We enter every relationship with expectations as to what we will give and what we will get. Often we change our expectations. If the other person in the relationship does not change, the friendship may be weakened or broken. For example, if I am a teenager moving into a new area and am accepted by a group of people who use alcohol or other drugs, I will use the drugs if I want these people to be my friends. If later on I find that the drugs were a negative influence on me, perhaps I have gone to jail or have failed my classes, I can either ask others in the group to give up their drug use or I can leave the group.

Even parenthood is somewhat of a contract. In some cases children can “divorce” their parents when the parents don’t fulfill what is expected of them. You may remember a few years ago that Gregory Kingsley, a 12 year old in Florida, divorced his natural parents because they had mistreated him and abandoned him. Other states have allowed older children, usually 14 to 16, to get a legal separation from their parents and become “emancipated minors.”

It goes without saying that adults living together should have clear understandings about their expectations and their responsibilities in any “live in” situation whether married or unmarried, heterosexual or homosexual. In adult relationships there is nearly always a financial assumption on which the relationship is based. There is also a friendship foundation. Quite often these come into conflict. That is why every live-in relationship should have a written contract. It is quite common for both married and unmarried couples to argue about things at their break up which they had thought to be settled by verbal agreements, or unsaid understandings, earlier in the relationship.

--“We should split everything equally.”--- “But most of it was bought with my money.”

--“I bought the BMW with my money”--- “But both of our names are on the title.”

--“I want to keep the condo.”--- “But I found it and put up the down payment.”

One unwed couple has spent over \$40,000 in lawyer fees and court costs settling these questions which could have been settled prior to and during the relationship without any costs at all. Some celebrities have spent hundreds of thousands of dollars in settling the financial arguments which result at their break up. And of course divorce costs for married couples have occasionally topped the hundred thousand dollar level in legal costs--even though their “contract” is written in the laws of their state.

The point is that if there is any possibility that financial concerns may enter into your relationship at any time in the future, there should be a written understanding and agreement. But far more than finances, there are other areas within your intimate contract which must be clarified. What you really want-- and are willing to give, how you will talk to each other, as well as the day to day issues of in-laws, sex, spending money, and child raising are all part of the contract which will develop as your friendship matures. All of these concerns, and more, will probably enter your alliance. How you handle them will determine whether your relationship weakens or strengthens.

And, of course, our contracts change as our lives change.

THEN: They lived the fraternitv-sororitv life on camnus. They had future nlns of iob and

children. They attended campus sporting events together.

NOW: He is unhappy with his job. She is working while having the major responsibility for the teenage children. He watches football on TV all weekend long, if he is not playing golf with his buddies. She plays tennis and bridge with her friends. She can't stand TV sports. Their alcoholic teenager is a constant problem.

Appearance can also be a part of a couple's relationship contract. He played college football at 6 feet 2 weighing 180 pounds. His Adonis like body was capped with wavy black hair. Now he weighs 275 pounds. His waist has increased from 32 to 44 inches and he is bald and wrinkled. She was 5 feet 6 and measured 36-22-34 and the homecoming queen. Now she is 180 pounds 40-42-44, gray and wrinkled. If looks were part of the reason you got together then the looks change, is it time for a divorce? Do you trade in your 40 year old mate and take two twenty year olds?

Yes, You Can Make Your Relationship Better.

It has been said that marriage is like eating a mushroom--you never know until it's too late. In actuality, because the relationship contract is not written in stone, it can be continually amended, as long as the parties to the contract agree to the changes. This is what marriage counseling is all about. Too bad it usually isn't resorted to until the problems are large and the contract needs massive changes.

It would make so much more sense to discuss important issues and agree, or agree to disagree, before "tying the knot." It is appalling how few people really discuss and plan for their futures. According to the professional journal Family Relations (Jan. 1996, 45:1, p 80) only 30% of married couples have even 1 or 2 hours of formal preparation for their marriage. That is not near enough!

Hopefully in understanding this book you will be aided with some "do it yourself" methods to develop and to change your relationship contract if it needs to be amended. Solve the little problems as they occur then you won't need massive surgery to save a nearly dead relationship. If we are to live intelligently we must be concerned with the future--because that's where we're going to spend the rest of our lives.

A few hundred years ago the English writer Samuel Johnson mused that the reason people remarry is "the triumph of hope over experience." We do much more hoping and romantic dreaming than we do analyzing and planning. That's not so difficult to understand when we are courting. The enjoyment of "kissing the face and hugging the body" during courtship is certainly less challenging and more fun than looking at the realities of a relationship. But intelligent people will understand that if there is a future for the relationship -- it must be planned for.

In relationships such as marriage, the contract provisions are generally not so clearly spelled out. Some people have developed written contracts before marriage--a pre-nuptial agreement. In the past these have generally been used entirely to settle questions on the financial side of the relationship.

-- "My kids get my money and your kids get yours."

"If we get a divorce you get \$10,000 a year for every year we were married but none of the

other money earned will be community property.”

Without such pre-arrangements your marriage is subject to the contract which your state government has determined to be the law for your state. And the various state governments take quite different approaches to what is fair in settling the financial aspects relating to ending a marriage. Quite possibly your state does not agree with you on what is fair!

CONTRACTS FOR MARRIAGE OR RELATIONSHIPS ARE NOT NEW.

In Babylonian times, nearly 4000 years ago, contracts were used to set the value of a bride. 500 years ago Queen Elizabeth of England had her wedding plans collapse after a disagreement with her betrothed. He wanted to be crowned King of England right after the wedding. These historical situations dealt with both money and power. These are still the major factors--but not the only factors in the stresses and discussions of living together.

When I recently told Berit As, perhaps Norway's most prominent social psychologist, that I was writing a book on marriage contracting she was amazed. When she was married 46 years ago she and her husband worked out a marriage contract. But then the Scandinavians have always been ahead of the rest of the world in the area of gender equality.

WHO NEEDS A WELL THOUGHT OUT AGREEMENT?

Everyone getting into a partnership should have a clear understanding of what is expected and what is to be given. If you are in a long term relationship you probably need to clarify the terms of your bonding. The more permanent the partnership is expected to be, the more the discussion is critical. If you just met someone and want to go to a movie together you don't need their opinions on child raising or the status of their finances. But if you are getting married, especially a second time and have children, you had better do some serious thinking and talking. If both of you are in competitive careers where late nights at the office or extensive traveling are a part of your lives, you had better talk about it. The realities are that every marriage and live in relationship is both a business and a friendship partnership. Agreements are understood. But do you both understand what is supposed to be understood?

A major problem in marriage is that the couple don't understand what their contracts are. They may have decided that they don't want any children and that they will pursue their own careers. (A verbal contract.) But perhaps he expects his wife to make dinner for him whenever he comes home, just like his mother did. (This is an expectation, but not a contract, because she had not agreed.) She may expect him to take her out for dinner weekly because he had done that when they were dating and engaged. (This is an implied contract assuming that what has gone on before will continue.)

Many misunderstandings occur because what one person expected to happen after the marriage has stopped happening or never did happen once the marriage took place. The couple may have discussed their future education and careers, whether or when they would like children, and where they

how their incomes will be handled (separate or joint bank accounts), or when they would be able to see their individual friends without the spouse accompanying.

It goes without saying that a “live-in” partnership or a marriage is a bit more complicated than buying a car. The potentials and the problems go far beyond just choosing a model and a color!

A former client signed a post-nuptial agreement a few years into the marriage. She agreed that she would get \$5,000 for each year that she had been married up to five years. After five years she would be entitled to the full community property laws of the state and share 50% of the profits which her husband’s multi-million dollar bakery brought in. She signed. He divorced her four months before the five year period had elapsed. She had changed her religion. Part of the implied contract of their marriage was that she would stay in the same religion in which he was an active member. That aspect of “the contract” had never been discussed--but it ended the marriage and left her with few financial resources.

Two lawyers of my acquaintance were quite afraid of the consequences of a divorce. Being realists who handled both contract problems and divorces in their law practices, they decided to make a very specific contract.

--He would do the shopping and cooking on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and she would do the dishes. On Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays the roles would be reversed. On Saturdays they would dine out.

--On the first weekend of their marriage he would clean the kitchen and bathroom. She would clean the living room and bedroom. These jobs would alternate each week.

--They would take three weeks of vacation. He would choose the first. She would choose the second. If they couldn’t agree on a third week they would take separate vacations during the third week.

Friends said that it wouldn’t work, but before long they were helping each other with the shopping, cooking and dish washing. They helped each other with the cleaning. And they had no vacation problems. By laying out the ground rules for the relationship relating what each expected there were fewer surprises.

Another set of lawyers in Berkeley, California have lived together, without being married, for over 20 years. They also have a written agreement on their rights and obligations throughout the relationship.

Several years ago two female legislators, on the national level, attempted to get a law passed which would require couples contemplating marriage in their state to address the problems which we know will come up and draw up a marriage contract. Problems to be discussed could include:

- Who does what housework,
- Who does the shopping and cooking,
- If and when should we have children.

The male legislators refused the idea saying that it would “take all of the romance out of marriage.” What those men didn’t seem to see was that women have traditionally done the housework.

even if they have full-time jobs. Men have been content to take out the garbage, wash the car, and make some repairs around the house. This unequal sharing of household and parenting duties grates on most women who hold full-time jobs. And the men wonder why. After all, housework is women's work. (Even in equalitarian Norway, working women do twice the amount of work in the home as the men.) Some wives don't seem to understand that their Saturday cleaning and shopping chores are not really as difficult as her husband's Saturday job-- of walking around the golf course and hoisting a few beers afterwards at the 19th hole, or the stress and strain he endures having to watch TV sports for most of the weekend.

Only a few people have so far designed specific pre-nuptial contracts which look at many of the realities which face a relationship. Rex and Theresa LeGalley of Albuquerque, New Mexico developed a pre-marital contract a few years ago. Rex, twice married, and Theresa divorced once, realized the importance of having an understanding before going into the marriage. In their 16 page contract, which has been filed with the court, are such agreements as:

- We will have healthy sex three to five times a week;
- Nothing will be left on the floor overnight;
- We will buy only Chevron unleaded fuel for the cars;
- When the fuel gauge shows "half full" the driver will fill up the tank.
- Theresa will be responsible for the inside of the house; and,
- Rex for repairs and for outside cleaning including the garage and the cars.

The fact that it's easier to get a marriage license than a driver's license is probably the reason that we have more divorces than deaths in traffic accidents. Since the government doesn't seem very concerned about us understanding the dynamics of our marriages, perhaps we need to take it upon ourselves to understand and control as many of the elements of our marriage contract as possible.

The fact is that pre-nuptial agreements are becoming more prevalent--especially in situations in which a family business is involved or in second marriages where children are involved. These financial situations are obvious. But, as this book will examine, marriage contracting is happening and it makes much more sense if the agreements are in writing. Whether in writing or not, they should be discussed. But writing them down gives you a record to which to refer. It makes logical sense. The problem is that we are generally not logical. Sadly, most of us human beings are dreamers--not realists.

So let's take a look at some of the major and minor problems of relationships and see what can be done about them. We will look a little deeper into the implied contracts which often develop and how they can be more effectively understood and agreed to. We must be able to clearly see the potentials and the problems and to find agreement on at least some of them so that our relationships can

Unless you have been through a marriage or two you may not realize that things may change after the wedding ceremony. It is not uncommon for newlyweds to continue to “date” for a year or so, but eventually some hard decisions will have to be made. It is impossible to go through a 30 to 50 year marriage without having a few problems come up. “Should we have another child?” “Should I take a better job a thousand miles away from our friends and family?” “How do we get our drug dependent daughter into treatment?” These are not uncommon problems faced in a marriage--but they are not the kinds of situations you are likely to encounter, or discuss, while dating.

But there are deeper needs and drives and there may be unspoken values which will become a major part of your relationship. We need to look at these also. The foundations of our relationship are well below the conscious levels of our thinking. They are there and they are often controlling our behavior. To understand the dynamics of a relationship these also must be explored.

After you have looked at yourself and your partner, after you have observed each other and discussed some important issues, you are ready for agreements, compromises, and contracts. You can verbally agree or write down your agreements. Writing it is better. If you want it to be legally binding in your state you should have a lawyer who is a specialist in the area examine it. The main idea is that you look at important questions which are or will probably affect your relationship and seek equitable solutions. That is the message of this missive.

Many people are afraid that the honest exploring of issues will break up the relationship. If that is the stuff from which the relationship is made, it doesn't have much hope anyway. A marriage relationship, if it is to be effective, must be able to face the issues and to fairly work out compromises. Such communication and negotiation is a major ingredient of real intimacy and trust.

Fairy tale endings may happen in Gothic novels and in Disney's films but we live in the real world. It is therefore better to look forward to a relationship which has been based on understanding, intelligence and faith than to have to look back in the future with sorrow. Sorrow in the way the marriage has evolved or sorrow in the fact of the divorce. Show your concern before the marriage, learn to communicate on the tough issues as well as the exciting goals, then the future has a much better chance of being rosy because it was intelligently planned for.

Marriage is a partnership for living. You must therefore look at all of the issues involved in “living” in order to have the best chance for success. People ignore the realities or make poor decisions by not discussing the real issues because they are overconfident in their hope of marital success. Or possibly their short term goal of “being married” is more important to them than the long term goal of developing the abilities to handle real communication of the issues as they arise. Intelligent people will choose the more difficult but more rewarding approach.

Whether you are already happily married, are married and having some problems, or are going into a marriage, you must understand the basics of such an intimate relationship. You must understand that the relationship is a dynamic entity. Every success or failure of one of the people in that relationship changes the relationship--for better or worse. Each year of marriage changes it--for better

or worse. Each child affects it --for better or worse. Every career move, every educational achievement, and every recreational hour changes it --for better or worse. By understanding the dynamics of our relationships we can better develop them into sources of joy and love.

What are the Areas Which Generally Need Understanding and Possibly Negotiation?

We are most likely to need common understandings in these areas:

--Our personalities, our needs and wants which are specific to us need to be accepted by our partner.

--We must be able to love in an unselfish way, helping our partner to be the best that he or she can be.

--We need a common understanding as to what our particular marriage should entail. No two marriages are the same.

--Most modern marriages should be based on a relationship of equals.

--We must be able to share both positive and negative feelings with healthy and effective communication.

--We must be able to solve the problems which confront us--either by ourselves or with the help of others who are trained in the area of solving marital problems.

--The financial area is a major concern in most marriages, how we will spend or save the available money is a critical area for understanding and action.

--Which leisure time activities will we share?

--What is a satisfactory sexual relationship for each of us?

--How do family and friends fit into our lives and our relationship?

--Will religion play a part in our lives, and if so how important will it be?

--If we choose to have children how will we raise them?

Each of these will be discussed in the following chapters. You can then take what you want and discuss the areas of common concern in developing your understandings for your relationship. There is no question that a strong, dynamic and happy relationship can occur. But it doesn't just happen.

'Happily ever after' really does take more than just kissing a sleeping princess--or a frog.

If We Don't Do It, Will the Government Require Us to Develop Contractual Agreements?

With the great increase in the divorce rates since the 1950's and the accompanying result of children living with only one parent, often in poverty, the government will eventually step in and require people to seriously think about what their marriages mean. Marriage will be a bit more difficult to enter, but the chances of divorce for that marriage will be greatly reduced. At the same time the issues of divorce will be largely answered at the time of the marriage. When the financial issues are

addressed before the marriage there will be less need for the fights in the divorce courts. When the determination is made to have or to not have children, that issue will become less of an issue as the time for parenthood approaches.

When the issues that we know are important are discussed and agreed to before the marriage, many of the issues which have continually been found to cause break ups will be brought to the surface. Some states already require those under the allowable marriage age to have some counseling. That requirement could certainly be extended to all adults. We already have to obtain drivers licenses, dog licenses, and permits to build a fence around our yard. Each of these is probably a bit less important than having prospective lifetime mates be aware of the realities of their lifetime commitment.

Prior to the time that the government forces us to think through the issues of marriage or other “live in” relationships, we should have the maturity to do it ourselves. Now let’s take a look at some of the critical issues involved in any close relationship.

CLARIFY YOUR RIGHTS, EXPECTATIONS AND OBLIGATIONS

There is no question that people should clarify their understandings about many of the areas that will become, or may become, issues in the relationship. It just makes good logical sense. So don’t be scared away by the possibility of losing someone with whom you cannot agree on major questions. It’s far better to avoid the marriage than to go through a divorce.

But on the positive side, clarifying the issues now makes for far better understanding later. It is not only that divorce can be avoided, but that a better relationship will result from the high level of communication required in discussing the important issues of a relationship. Such discussions are not only courageous, but intelligent. Just ask “Dear Abby!”

CHAPTER 2

WHO ARE YOU?

Drives, Needs and Values--Our Basic Motivations

Before thinking about being in a relationship you should first be somebody. Are you financially independent? Are you in a career which is satisfying? Have you completed, or nearly completed the education you will need to get the kind of job you want? It is essential to be somebody first, then think about sharing your life with another person.

All serious thinkers, philosophers, scientists, theologians, and other intelligent people start by asking questions. As an intelligent person you must ask and answer essential questions about yourself-- your goals, your needs, your personality, and your values. Thinking intelligently about ourselves is difficult because our emotions and rationalizations often get in the way of sound evaluation and logic. However it must be done if you are to understand yourself and your relationships.

Before you think of making a contract with somebody else, you really must know who you are, what you want and what you are willing to give. It goes without saying that you want certain things from your relationship. But who are you? And are you who you think you are? There are a number of needs and values which propel us as we move through our lives. As we understand ourselves and succeed in our lives we are more likely to become honestly mature. AND UNLESS YOU ARE MATURE YOU CANNOT MAKE AN HONEST COMMITMENT OR A LEGITIMATE CONTRACT. Insecure immature people marry for security, not for the right reasons-- of developing a committed and satisfying relationship.

We must realize that we are responsible for our own lives. It is common for people to blame others when things don't go the way they want. Such blaming often takes the form of rationalizations. A rationalization is a reason which we believe but which is actually not true. Often, but not always, they are used as excuses for our failings.

--Well if you hadn't invited me to that party I would have been able to study for the test that I failed.

--If you didn't make such big dinners I wouldn't be so fat.

--If the government would only increase my welfare payments I wouldn't be so poor.

If you know that what you are saying is not true, that is a lie. If you don't know that what you are saying is untrue, it is a rationalization. If we are to be mature people we must look at our true selves and take responsibility for the direction in which we are going and the changes necessary if we are to alter our course in life. This means seeing the truth and avoiding the rationalizations.

Let's start with looking at our mental health and the necessary requirements for being a mature adult. The evidence of modern research into marriage makes it clear that we must understand our own needs and desires. If we can get an accurate picture of ourselves we have a much better chance of determining what we really want out of life---and whether that includes a mate. And if so, what type of mate.

SELF ESTEEM

Self identity means "who do you think you are?" Self efficacy means that you are an effective person--that you can learn, think, and make effective choices and decisions. Self respect indicates that you think that you are OK and that you deserve the success, friendship, and relationships which you have enjoyed. And self esteem means that you like yourself because you have the identity, efficacy and respect which you have learned and earned.

Probably no one has their self esteem completely in tact. We all have some doubts about ourselves. Just look at the recent confessions of Fergie, the Duchess of York, and Diana, the Princess of Wales, relative to their own insecurities and problems with self esteem. You'd think that when you marry a prince your troubles are over. We can have no doubt that bonny Prince Charlie has his own problems with self esteem, as does brother Willy. Maybe the Queen Mother has no problems with self esteem, but with her record of motherhood she ought tell

People with legitimate self esteem seek valuable goals in their lives. They want to communicate, to be understood and to understand. And they are capable of loving in an unselfish way.

People with low self esteem are insecure. They are afraid of challenge and change. And they are not able to communicate effectively because of their fears. Of course they can't love unselfishly because their own insecurities make them self centered and unable to honestly reach out to another. They want others for what the others do for them. And often they want to control the other person so enhance their feeling of self worth.

You should have a clear and accurate idea of your assets and liabilities. People with inferiority complexes don't think they are as good as they are. People with superiority complexes think they are better than they are. Do you have an accurate picture of yourself? Here are some areas of personality which you should consider in getting a clear picture of who you are. One of the major aspects of our personalities is where we are in the power-love-meaning triangle. We can all find ourselves at some point in the controlling-the helping-or the creating experience triangle.

Power (Control)

Love (helping)

Meaning (Creating experiences)

We should understand where we are now but we must also understand that as we stumble through our lives most of us will move, often significantly, in a different direction relative to our primary motivation. As you change it is going to affect your relationship contract—your understanding of who you are and what you need, as well as what you can give.

THE BASICS OF OUR PERSONALITIES

Research indicates that perhaps as much as half of our personality is genetically derived. But obviously many of our traits are learned and can be unlearned. Here are a few aspects of personality which we have observed. They can be held to either a great or a minimal degree. But take a look at yourself and your future spouse to see where you fit—where you are alike and where you are different. What probable joys and problems might result from your similarities and your differences?

We might look at the major approaches to life as:(1) being power and success driven, (2) having a need to be loving and helping others, or (3) having a need to find new meanings in life. These traits will probably never be found to be 100% in any one person. Most of us major in one and minor in the others.

THE DOERS ----THE POWER PEOPLE

Power people have a great need to achieve in some area. This can be either mentally healthy or unhealthy. The person who wants to rise to a leadership position in business or politics probably has a

healthy power drive. One who uses sarcasm, who races his car from the stoplight, or who is physically violent definitely has an unhealthy power drive.

The power people are either self confident or appear to be self confident as a cover for their inferiority feelings. Aggressiveness is often a tendency in this group. Those who do not have a real feeling of self esteem may be very guarded and wary of the potential power of others. It is nearly a certainty that much of the forces that motivate your life will be in this area. It is the most common motivator in the Western world.

Typically men exhibit this drive. In fact a test on one's manhood is often how well he succeeds in the areas of work, sport or sex. Men typically need to be in control of themselves not only in the social and economic areas but in their control of their mental make up. This idea of control, while useful in some areas, is counterproductive in the negotiation mode of a relationship where finding equitable solutions, not winning, is the objective. Happily, today many men are finding their loving sides and realizing that a productive and satisfying relationship is generally more important than getting another promotion at work or winning another game of tennis.

But power is not only a man's domain. It is also found in abundant amounts in the psyches of women. While in that past just having a man choose her was a big boost to her power drive, today most women, especially those in the higher social classes, want to succeed in the same ways that men have traditionally done—power, sports, and sex. As this metamorphosis has occurred women have become more overt in their drives for control.

THE FEELERS—THE LOVING PEOPLE

Caretaking is needed in our increasingly hostile world. A truly caring person is indeed a pleasure to be around. The caution is that the person may be caretaking because of inferiority feelings and may be doing these “good things” for approval. So it may really be a way of handling one's power drive.

On the other hand, a person who has honestly been loved when growing up may have a great capacity for giving. Many of the foremost psychologists believe that this caretaking ability is a fundamental for good mental health.

The more intelligent men and women are recognizing the importance of nurturing this softer side of their minds. Both partners must recognize that the caretaking aspect of our beings is needed if we are to have truly successful relationships. (We will explain much more about this in Chapter 5 on Love.)

THE EXPERIENCERS—THE MEANING PEOPLE

Meaning seeking people want new experiences. It can be the adventure of a trip across the country or a visit to the local museum. There is a sense of adventure in either creating or experiencing more of the world. These are the people who travel to distant lands or who climb Mount Everest, those who continually seek excitement. But this drive is also found in the quiet philosopher, the poet or the

artist whose adventure begins in the mind.

A problem for those busy exploring the world is that they might be reckless—and that is a negative! So while an adventurer may be able to have a truly interesting life, recklessness will often invite trouble.

Those who seek adventure in their minds may be introverted and unsociable. They may be so involved in their preoccupations of thinking and creating that letting other people into their world may be an unwelcomed intrusion into their privacy.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN TO A RELATIONSHIP?

There is no hard and fast rule about being similar or different. A marriage between a power driven success oriented person and a loving caring person may work out just fine. The monetary success of the one may take care of the financial security needs of the caring person. Meanwhile, the caring person can handle the ego needs of the power driven person. On the other hand two power people might fare very well together. Their success and interests may make them highly respectful of each other and outstanding dinner companions. As long as they leave their needs for dominance at the office—there may be no problems. But if one tries to dominate the other at home—PROBLEMS!

Two loving caring people should do quite well together. They might not gather too many possessions from the generally low paying jobs for lovers, such as nursing or elementary school teaching, but their psychological treasures and their families should more than make up for their lack of furs and Ferraris.

The problem with the drive for power is the need for control. In a marriage this can mean trying to control the finances or any and all other aspects of the relationship. Often the power driven people who have not achieved in other areas must exert their control over their children or their mates. It is not uncommon that whatever the mate says is contradicted almost before it is out of the mouth. This is a very common kind of control--and one which can often be eliminated through good communication.

POWER VERSUS LOVE

The noted psychologist Alfred Adler had a theory that we are all seeking power in life in order to overcome our inferiority complexes. He believed that early in our lives we developed these complexes because we really were inferior! As a baby, when you can't talk, can't walk, and can't feed yourself, you don't have much going for you. You are inferior. We then spend the rest of our lives trying to overcome our inferiority complexes by achieving power in one or more areas of our lives.

The feeling of insecurity, usually unconscious, drives many people into marriage. The “need” to have someone can lead to marrying alcoholics, spouse beaters, or other insecure people. In order to be able to have a sound and meaningful relationship a person must be mature. (In Chapter 7 we will discuss this in greater detail.)

As a therapist I have noted that, in almost every case, personal problems and marriage problems

you laugh when a comedian slips on a banana peel? Because you didn't-- so you are better than him. Why do we read those scandal sheet tabloids? Because we are better than the public figures mentioned who are going on their sixth divorce or who have been caught in unseemly situations.

Later on, in another chapter, we will discuss a very important level of our relationship contract—the psychological contract. This idea of inferiority and the need to control (satisfying our power drive) will be more fully discussed. It is a well known theory among marriage counselors but is almost unheard of in the general public.

So—how are you going to fulfill your need for power? Is it bossing around your wife—or hitting her? Is it being in total control of the children? Is it telling your husband how to drive, where to turn, and pointing out all of his mistakes? Is it achieving success at your work, at the tennis club, or as the social secretary of your charity group?

It is essential to understand that you have a drive for power, for control, for success—and how you expect to handle that urge now. You must also realize that your focus for control may change. For a young woman it may be first either to succeed in a profession or to get married—or both. A young man probably has the same ideas. But his drive has been traditionally focused on success in his field while a woman's has traditionally been on marriage and family concerns. These two traditional goals are changing somewhat as the gender barriers to women in business have been lowered and as more men have found the importance of the joys of a successful marriage.

There is another deep psychological need which most of us have, that is the need to love and be loved. That will also be examined fully in a later chapter. (I can't give you everything now or the book would only be two chapters long!) But when we talk about love in this book we will not be writing about the warm feeling in your underwear but rather the deeper more universally accepted notion that loving is being able to honestly care for another person and the willingness to help that person be the best that he or she can be.

Love is an unselfish ability which is quite counter to the generally selfish need for power and control. And it is a need that more and more people are coming to understand as being essential in their lives—especially since so many of us have moved from the extended family of the relatives and friends of our early lives to the nuclear family (mom, dad, and the kids), which is so common in the big city. Because of our moving far from home to complete our education or to find a better job, our immediate family often becomes, for many of us, our only family. So the caring which we could once find from a large number of friends and relatives is now often found only in our small nuclear family.

The rapid changing of our society often takes away our traditional role expectations. In the “olden days” a man was expected to be successful enough in his job to make the money that the family needed. If he was lucky enough to have a job that he honestly enjoyed and had a large degree of success in that occupation—he was indeed a lucky fellow. His wife, on the other hand, was to be content with making him happy, keeping the house, and raising the six children. His life was in the “power and control zone” while hers was in the “love and caring area.”

For a number of years those gender boundaries have been crossed so that today we have most married women working—many in high paying challenging jobs. Similarly some men have moved into the traditionally female areas of nursing, elementary school teaching, and housekeeping/child raising.

One of the problems which we commonly see in marriage counseling is the 40 to 50 year old woman who has lived in the traditional pattern of wife-mother, perhaps also working outside the home, now being without anyone to control as her children become more independent or leave home. She may have had the ability to “love” and care for her family when she was younger but as she “grew up” she needed to express her drive for success in another area. The children, long the object of her need to control, are no longer around. How can she handle that drive for power? She can go back to school and work towards a profession or she can pick up on the profession she once had. And at home who is there to pick on? Only her husband! Tell him to control his weight or he might have a heart attack. Complain about his watching too much TV. Tell him how to drive. The loving caring woman of the earlier marriage has changed. Her psychological need to control must be met.

Let’s make it clear that there is nothing wrong in having a drive for power and success. There is nothing wrong with wanting to be president, with wanting to start your own business, or with wanting to win at tennis. There is something wrong when we step on people to become president, when we are not honest with our clients in our business, or when winning at tennis becomes a major factor in our suburban lives. And it becomes a major problem when we are physically violent—especially towards our mates and our children.

Having an honest feeling of self esteem translates into several positive attributes. Because we feel good about ourselves we don’t need to “put down” others in order to make ourselves feel good. It is the truly inferior people who need to be sarcastic, to order others around, or to be physically violent towards others.

Because we are content with ourselves we can become “lovers,” people who can help others to be the best that they can be. A person who has not effectively worked out of the inferiority complex which started in childhood will continue to be self centered. While this person may do good things for others in order to become acknowledged, these things are not done with the genuine motive of love, but these actions appear to be loving.

A couple of the good things that happen when women become more independent, especially when they are young, is that they don’t need a man for financial security. Having an interesting job which pays well greatly increases a woman’s self esteem. As this happens she is able to choose men whom she really likes—because she is choosing out of strength, not weakness. This then translates into more enjoyable sex because, with a higher self esteem and a man she honestly likes and is on an equal footing with, she can be more free in her sexual expression.

With an honest feeling of self esteem it is easy for you to back off of a position or a plan which

that your inferiority complex is in control and you are exercising your power in order to show that you are not inferior. But you don't fool many people with that attitude—and it is impossible to have an open and honest relationship.

The consequences of low self esteem are often that we go too far in either being aggressive or in withdrawing from the world. It has already been mentioned that spousal and child beating is one aspect of this violence but so is gang violence and abusive verbal behavior.

It is actually more likely that a person will withdraw from reality when there are great feelings of inferiority. Drug and alcohol dependence are common forms of such withdrawing. In using substances which act on the brain, the person is trying to forget the real world through alcohol, marijuana, heroin or other downer drugs which reduce physical or psychic pain. Others try to escape by taking a drug which gives great pleasure—instant orgasm. Cocaine, in its many forms, or other upper drugs, such as methamphetamine, give intense “highs” which make up for the unsatisfying lives which these people are living and for the depressive feeling which results from their low self esteem.

While honestly feeling good about yourself is a fundamental of good mental health, there are other important considerations which are of a more intellectual bent. We all hold values in many areas of our lives. These are generally quite clear to us. However we often don't evaluate just exactly what our values are, how deeply we hold them, and how they may fit into another person's value system. These are essential qualities of ourselves and others and must be considered when choosing a mate. And when there are significant differences in values there are likely to be problems so they must be addressed in our discussions with our potential partner .

UNDERSTANDING YOUR VALUES

A large part of our make ups and the forces which motivate us is found in the things which we value. We are motivated to achieve our values just as we are motivated to handle our psychological drives such as power, love and meaning. Evaluating our value systems is much easier than understanding our drive for power or our need to love and be loved.

Economic Values. When we're young, and know everything, most of us are liberals. “Tax the rich. Take care of the homeless. Stop charging me college tuition.” When we are older and earning more money many people change and want to keep more of what they have earned. They are no longer the “have nots” of their earlier days.

A large number of the radical-liberal demonstrators and hippies of the 60's have become business leaders, lawyers, doctors, stock investors and politicians. Some have continued in their liberal bent, others have become much more economically conservative. “Reduce the taxes.” “Reduce Medi-Care.” “Send the illegals home.”

In the Western world we seem to be thinking more and more about making money and less and less about enjoying life. Much happiness is overlooked because it doesn't cost anything. So when we look at our economic values we will want to balance them against other values which may be more

important to us. Everything takes time. Making money takes time. Playing tennis takes time. Raising children who are loved takes time. Where do you want to put your time?

Our economic views are one type of value which we may share with our partner in our early marriage days. But they can certainly change as we age. But there are many other areas of value: religion, recreation, social consciousness, the family style we desire, personal independence needed, etc. We should know where we are at the beginning of the relationship but we must understand that these ideas may change as we age.

Another aspect of economics is that sometimes one person, usually the man, wants to control the purse strings. This is one way that an excessive power drive can be found in the financial area. Most people today say that they want an equalitarian marriage with a 50/50 sharing plan. If this is true there needs to be some real discussion on the monetary aspects of marriage. The most commonly mentioned problems in marriage have to do with money. One partner may want a bigger house. One may spend a lot on clothes shopping. One may use too much money on alcohol or gambling.

Having children will also financially impact a couple. Among the possible financial problems are that the wife stops working so that she can spend time with the children. There goes one salary! You may need a bigger house or apartment so that the baby can have its own room. Up goes the rent! There may be doctor's bills which were unexpected. And of course there is the increased cost of food and clothing. Perhaps the money spent earlier in the marriage for dining out, recreation, and vacations is now unavailable. That puts another stress on the couple. These are not problems for those who are financially well off—but most of us are not quite so financially fixed.

Even when you have plenty of money, one person may become upset by the spending habits of the spouse. Excess spending by their wives were factors in two divorces of friends of mine.

Recreational interests. A lawyer of my acquaintance discovered tennis when he was about 50. He left the office nearly every day at 2 and played tennis until dark. His wife joined him. They became tennis “junkies.” It gave their lives new meaning—one dimensional though it might have been.

Recreation is important to re-create our non-working selves. Whether it is making pottery, painting, attending concerts, or reading; or playing golf, fishing, hiking, or traveling—recreation should re-energize us either by fulfilling our continuing interests or by giving us new interests.

The recreational pastimes of our youth, going to the beach, playing team sports, or doing other group activities will generally give way to family recreation when children arrive. As we age and the children go their own ways our interests may change to the more intellectual pursuits of enjoying the arts, reading, or creating in our own choice of the artistic realm—painting, writing, or continuing our education. If we are inclined toward the more physically active pursuits, jogging, cycling, skiing, golf and tennis may be our choices. However there is almost always a change in our recreational choices as we age. This also changes our understandings for our relationships.

Religious values. Our religious beliefs often change as we age. We may start our relationships as irreligious infidels then become “born again” as we get older. The opposite also can happen. In terms

of the contract it isn't important as long as we change together. When one person changes, a revision in the relationship contract will be needed. Can the spouse accept change or will it totally disrupt his or her life?

A number of years ago I had some interesting neighbors. They had been born Jewish but had become atheists. By the time I met them they were ardent practitioners of the Eastern meditative faiths of Hinduism and Buddhism. Since they changed together there were no changes needed in their relationship contract.

A religious commitment can be very shallow, "Well, it's Easter so maybe I'll go to a sunrise service," or very committed-- where it is the major concern in one's life. It is the deep religious belief area which can cause problems if the couple don't see eye to eye on the belief. There is nothing more basic than a deep religious concern for those who hold such values.

For some people the religious commitment is essential. Conservative religions often insist on it—as do marriage-minded adherents to the faith. Conservative Catholics, orthodox Jews, "born again" Christians, devout Muslims, as well as Hindus are all likely to hold deep seated religious values which are so fundamental in their lives that a marriage with an outsider is unthinkable.

But since people often change their religious beliefs as they grow older, it is not unwise to concern yourself with such an eventuality in your pre-marital discussions.

OTHER ASPECTS OF YOUR PERSONALITY

Some traits may work in combination with the previously mentioned personality types.

Conscientiousness can be found in any of the above traits. If a person is deeply concerned with accomplishing something, that pursuit is likely to be conscientious. Whether

it be in founding a business, caring for one's children, or painting a picture—the truly goal directed person will be conscientious. We need to be aware that many people talk a good fight. They speak of great goals, but have no persistence. They are not conscientious in pursuing their lofty aims. This is not a good trait. Remember that a person is not what he says --but what he does.

Self centeredness is a great potential danger. The media keep pushing us that way, so do many "me" oriented psychologists. Advertisers keep "us" in the spotlight. Smell good, wear the "in" jeans, get rid of your fat and exercise for a "hard body." Drive an expensive car and drive it to the "right" places. Think of yourself. Others will think more highly of you if they like your outside. It goes without saying that our insides are what really count but the pressure is on us to show the world our flawless exterior. Is it possible that real beauty is more than skin deep?

The "Me Generation" of the 60's and 70's charged us to look out for ourselves. Marry for what you can get--money, security, status, friendship. And of course if you divorce, get what you can--forget fairness.

The ability to relax is important for most people. While we question the "workaholics," it is possible that many people really enjoy their jobs so much that it is their recreation. Researchers, artists,

athletes and politicians may all enjoy their jobs so much that they don't want a typical week or two of vacation. Club Med isn't a "turn on" for them. On the other hand we have those who only want to play. In looking at what you want in your relationship give this area considerable thought

SHOULD YOU MARRY?

One of the first things to consider is that not everyone has to be married. In the United States you have the most marrying population in the world. For many it is the major goal of their lives. This is unrealistic. If you are a meaning driven artist or philosopher, or you want to travel the world sleeping in Buddhist temples or mingling with the natives in the bush--you may well be unhappy when your energies are slowed by a spouse. Similarly if you want to spend all of your time creating art, moving up the corporate ladder, or being a missionary in far off lands, perhaps a spouse will get in your way.

The second consideration is that, based on where you are in life now, you will want a person whose personality is compatible with yours. Compatibility can be either similarities which harmonize with your personality or differences which help to complete your personality.

The third is that both you and your potential mate must have the ability to grow and change--and when necessary, modify the understandings you had at the beginning of the relationship. In other words, you must be willing and able to change your marriage contract.

As Yogi Berra, former manager for the New York Yankees, has advised us, "If you don't know where you're going you will wind up somewhere else."

AS WE GROW OLDER, OFTEN THE CONTRACT HAS TO CHANGE!

What about hubby? Do you think he is a robot locked forever into his need for success? Not at all. He generally realizes what he has been missing with the family. The job had its benefits but it was not totally satisfying. He sees that he has practically missed his kids growing up and he needs to recapture a relationship which is as exciting as that which he and his wife had in their earlier days.

It is very common for people in their 40's to 50's to move to the other side of the "power-love" continuum—from power to love or from love to power. Recognizing that this is a common, although not universal, transition for middle aged people, we often find that the unwritten and unexpressed contract of our marriages has to be discussed and renegotiated.

Psychologists, and generally observant people, know that our lives go through rather expected transitions or stages. (1) While these changes are expected, they are not universal and the timing isn't exact. We can't say that "If you're a Scorpio you will have to find a satisfying occupation within six months of the time your last child left the house." We'll play with this idea later in the next chapter because it applies to both partners changing as they move through their lives.

The point is that few, if any, people go through their lives without changing their drives, their needs, their values, or their personalities. Those that haven't changed either started out perfect or are very boring. Growth and change are facts of life for most of us. Consequently, if we are in a

relationship, the relationship contract will have to change. Sometimes that is easy. Sometimes it is difficult.

KEEPING YOUR IDENTITY AND PURSUING YOUR OWN GOALS

Because we are more complicated people today and our relationships reflect that diversity, we cannot expect that both partners will always want to do the same things at the same time. The realities are that one may want to ski while the other hang glides or that one wants to study history while the other studies literature. No problem. Having and pursuing different interests can strengthen the bonds of the relationship as long as both people are secure in themselves.

We can understand how the American ideal of “togetherness” began. Two hundred years ago on the farm both the husband and the wife worked all day, six or seven days a week, then settled down with the family at night.

As we moved into this century the husband might spend a few nights out with the “boys” but could expect that mama would be home when he returned. She didn’t go out without him. Into the 50’s and 60’s we had the happy “Ozzie and Harriet” and the “Brady Bunch” which showed us the “togetherness” way. “The Cosby Family” of the 80’s took us a few steps further. The lawyer mother and doctor father were still very much family oriented. (Let’s hope so with all those kids!!)

As we have moved along the evolutionary path from farm and family we realize that many people do not want children, at least early in the marriage--and if they choose parenthood they are more likely to opt for only one or two kids. It is in those childless years that the independent growth of each of us as individuals keeps us exciting. When her law practice is booming and his engineering job is challenging we’re going to have two people with a lot to talk about. There is more to our common world than who is sleeping with whom on the afternoon “soap.”

Because of the increase in the two career marriages and the myriad of recreational possibilities open to us--we can expect a great divergence in interests. As an example, at this moment my wife is taking a riding lesson while I am typing away on my computer. Tomorrow I will be coaching football (my special hobby) while she prepares a speech for a conference in Lisbon. We are two people with quite different backgrounds--she from Norway and me from California. We have a common interest in sport. But we have quite different interests and qualifications in other areas. She is probably the leading authority in the world in the area of women and sport--from a psycho-social perspective. I am quite interested in her quest for true equality in that area. Meanwhile she understands my passion for educating young people through sport, travel and history.

Does that mean that we live lives that are quite separate? No! We both love to ski and do so often, sometimes right from our apartment in Oslo. We both enjoy traveling and tennis. I tolerate her interest in golf and play occasionally. While I share her interest in good eating, I’m a klutz in the kitchen--but I do a mean dishwashing act. Since my retirement I not only fix the cars but clean the house. Her professorship takes long hours each day, so does my writing. But when we’re together--

dynamite!!

The point is that you really should plan for doing things that you like to do--career, recreation, visiting friends, reading or going to school. You should not be handcuffed to your mate. You should think now about what your desires are for your own growth and discuss these with your mate or your intended mate. Even when children are involved, you should have a life of your own. This doesn't mean that you always do what you want. It means that you take responsibility for yourself-- and your relationships. If you have decided to have children, they are a prime responsibility--especially when they are very young. But they are not a prison. You need to take some time for yourself, alone--and with your mate, alone. You have to keep yourself sane and your relationship solid. Your kids will be the better for it.

SELF EVALUATION (to be set into the text at the appropriate place (near page 1 or 2)

To get an idea of where you are in the Power-Love-Meaning triangle here is a way to get an idea of what motivates you

Make a list of the times in your life in which you have experienced a great feeling of joy.

Now try to find the motivation which was satisfied when you experienced that great joy. Perhaps you listed a Hawaiian sunset. The joy from that experience would be the satisfaction of the meaning drive.

Maybe you listed the time that you got your driver's license or your first car. That would obviously be a satisfaction of the power drive. (Don't say that it was "love" because you loved your new car. Love, remember, in our definition is giving and making another person better or happier.)

Did you list getting a special job or getting an "A" in a difficult class in school? That would be a power drive satisfaction.

Did you list "helping a child" or "helping a friend with a problem?" If so it could be the satisfaction of a love motivation, your joy came from giving, or it could be a power drive satisfaction because you were in control and were successful. (Being your own psychologist isn't so easy is it?)

Did you list seeing the Eiffel Tower in Paris? Well you may "love" Paris but this isn't a love drive satisfaction. It might be a meaning need satisfaction because it is a very special sight and you are

responsible for taking the trip.

There are some other factors which might have given you a great joy but don't fall into the power, love, or meaning areas. Perhaps you listed an orgasm or the feeling you got using cocaine. These both are felt in the same area of your brain--the medial forebrain bundle. If Sigmund Freud were here he would say that this is exactly what he was talking about in satisfying our drive for sexual pleasure. But experience shows us that if we spend our whole lives stimulating our medial forebrain bundles with orgasms, cocaine, and methamphetamines our lives will not be truly joyful or satisfying.

Another source of joy can be experienced when you have reduced a stressful experience. My brother in law was the head of the military police in Shanghai after World War 2. After his tour of duty was over he was sent by a crowded ship on the six week trip to San Francisco. When he got off the boat he knelt and kissed the ground because he was so happy to be home. That's stress reduction. No more six weeks of seasickness. No more foul smelling Shanghai streets. I finally get to taste mom's cooking again. No more stress!

Another type of stress reduction can occur:

-- when you walk out of a courtroom after having been a defendant or a witness;

--when you walk out after finishing your last final exam in college; or,

--when your last guest has left your party after overstaying his welcome.

As good as stress reduction may feel, we don't want to spend our lives merely reducing stress--eliminating the negatives. Life should be positive. We should be looking for what the psychologist Abraham Maslow called "peak experiences" times when we are "surprised by joy." Our longer lasting joys occur, not in orgasms (as good as they always are), but in building a business, helping our spouse and child to grow, painting a picture or reading a poem. So where are you in this puzzle of passion called life?

SELF TEST on similarities and differences in our backgrounds.

- I was born (in the Northeast, the South, the Midwest, the Rocky Mountain area, the Southwest, the Northwestern states, on a Pacific island, in Europe, in the Middle East, In Africa, in the Orient, in Australia, in another area)
- I was raised until I was at least ten years old in (see above list)
- From age 10 to 20 I lived in (see above list)
- I have lived the last 10 years in (a big city, a small city [under 300,000], a large town [100,000 to 300,000] people, a smaller town, in a rural area
- I have lived the last 10 years in (a big city, a small city [under 300,000], a large town [100,000 to 300,000] people, a smaller town, in a rural area
- My religion is:
- My parents are (recent immigrants, first generation, later generation)
- The highest income my family earned per year was

- The highest grade I have completed in school was
- I expect to finish how many years of schooling
- My father's highest grade level finished
- My mother's highest grade level finished
- The number of children in my family was:
- I was the (first, second, third, etc) child bor
- My parents' marriage was (happy, unhappy
- My parents are now (still married, separated, divorced, separated by the death of one of my parents)
- How many divorces have there been among my grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles, cousins, brothers and sisters)
- Who raised me primarily (family, other)
- I believe that my upbringing was (happy, sad)
- When I was young the three activities I liked best were: (sports, camping, reading, being alone, being with others, religious activities, being with other people, arts and crafts, music and dance)
- Up to the time I was 12 I had (no friends, few friends, many friends)
- In high school I had (no friends, few friends, many friends)
- When I was a teenage my communication with my parents was (very good, fair, poor, almost non-existent)

SELF TEST on how I feel mentally and socially.

- My physical health is (perfect, pretty good, not too good right now, always poor)
- My mental outlook is (very happy, not too happy, fairly insecure and unsure, quite sad)
- Over the next several years I feel that (things will get much better,
- somewhat better, stay about the same, be a little worse, be much worse)
- I prefer (being alone, being with just one person, being at a party, being surrounded by many people most of the time)
- My career (is secondary to having a secure family relationship, is secondary to my having children, is of primary importance to me) aving children (is out of the question for me, might be a possibility if I feel that I can become a good parent, is absolutely essential in my life).
- Being married now is (not all that important, very important, only important because I am in love.)

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