

telephone. To say nothing of the bitter court battles over custody, child support, alimony, who gets the house and car and, if one does still love the other, the pain of the still-loving one having to face the rejection of the other, seeing him or her on the arm of another lover or even worse being lovingly caressed by the new love!

Take the time to write a list of the qualities you want your future spouse to possess. Include health, appearance, character, mannerisms, and any other item that you feel is important. After all, you can make the list in a few minutes or a few days at most, but the person you select will cause you a lifetime of delight or deep grief and disaster. The time you spend analyzing your choice will be well spent. I realize that all too often, “love is blind,” but I also realize that “blind love” is usually based on nothing more than a sparkle in an eye, a dimple on a cheek a pleasant voice, a quick quip at a party or a “sexy” body!

Now analyze each characteristic on your list and evaluate it. Is it realistic? If my future mate qualified in all other ways, would this be important enough to cause a problem? Or would I overlook this flaw in an otherwise perfect prospective mate? If I overlook it now, may I be likely to change my mind and be sorry later?

Learn to communicate! Talk things over together. When you have said your vows it will neither mean that you each can read the other’s mind nor that the other loses the right to participate in the decision making process in matters affecting the family unit. Furthermore, failure to tell each other your inner feelings is both cheating yourself and your spouse of a caring response and an enlarged viewpoint. How can you share your heartaches and your goals if you don’t talk about it? How can they know if something they are doing irritates you? You may become one flesh, but you will still have separate minds which can only come into agreement if you talk to each other. No matter how strong the feeling of love, it must be nurtured by verbal expressions of love, each telling the other how much you love and care for the other.

Interracial marriages fall into the same area of consideration as the matter of health, family and the future children's well-being. The children pay when their parents make mistakes. Please consider them. Think of your own feelings about mistakes your parents made and for which you paid a price, whether in health, environmental disadvantage, or interracial slurs thrown your way.

Balance – opposites together works when overall goals and

CHAPTER THREE

FINDING THAT RIGHT MATE!

IT IS often said that opposites attract, and that is true. But what lasts and lasts with magnets all too often becomes a point of serious friction in a marriage relationship. Rarely will a person with a racehorse lifestyle be happy for long while married to someone with a more plodding and slow lifestyle. Please don't misunderstand this. It is great to come home from a hectic day at the office and find home to be a place of peace, quiet and tranquility, but if he always wants to go to the football game and she always wants to go to the opera, they have problems right off the bat! When he wants to go racing his hotrod or flying in his airplane or waterskiing or anything else that she either cannot or wills not to join him in the enjoyment of, they are already starting to go their separate ways, no matter how they like each other's smile or how close the sexual harmony. Rarely do a racehorse and a mule or ox make a good team for the long haul. It may be neat to date the High School football star while you are a bookworm or a homebody, but I could fill a library with the stories I personally know of in which such a pairing of opposites who have married resulted in real marital disaster in a very short time.

There are a great many things to consider when choosing the person you will vow before God to spend the rest of your entire life with.

What is the health of your prospective mate? What hereditary traits toward anemia, cancer, diabetes, heart disease, sickle cell anemia and the like are to be found in your prospective mate's family history? Are you willing to subject your future children and grandchildren to the probability that they may inherit genes that could cause them to have such a health problem? Are you willing to care for this person you now plan to marry if he or she should contract alzheimers or go blind from complications of diabetes? How about if that gorgeous bathing beauty becomes a 400 pound behemoth due to an inherited thyroid problem despite all efforts to stay slim and trim?

Are his or her parents obnoxious loudmouths? Always drunk or engaged in a lifestyle of which you strongly disapprove? While your prospective mate may be completely opposite and may dislike their parents’ lifestyle as much as you do, how strong are the family ties? The old saying, “Blood runs thicker than water,” may find your in-laws destitute and moving into your home “until

we can get on our feet,” which may turn out to be for several years, or until you and your spouse have a bitter fight and then throw the bums out. And what about the influence they may have on your children and the way you are trying to raise them? Many are the horror tales of incest and sodomy rape by aunts, uncles and cousins or their live-in lovers. And many are the fights between husbands and wives and even between parents and children still living at home over the need to evict unruly relatives or to turn those involved in actual criminal behavior over to the police.

What about children? Does he want a half-dozen while she only wants one or at most two, or vice versa? What method of birth control does each believe in? How upset will the mate be if an unplanned pregnancy occurs? Will either mate consider ending the life of the unborn baby before birth (abortion)¹ if the pregnancy is un-planned, the doctor predicts a serious birth defect, the family cannot afford another child, at least “not right now.” That can be a very emotional and heated issue, with one insisting that, “You are not going to murder my baby!” While the other insists that it is alright or “the only thing we can do right now.”

Don’t try to pretend. Be what you really are. PLEASE believe me when I say that you are courting marital DISASTER when you deceive your prospective mate about the real YOU! If you are really conceited, stingy and selfish, don’t try to fool that person you now think you want to spend the rest of your life with. You may play the modest, generous and caring lover now, but when the real you shows up a few days, weeks or months after the wedding vows are taken, the shock to your new spouse may well mark the end of trust and your marriage will be on the rocks before it has had a chance to ever get anchored.

Watch your attitudes. Your attitudes may seem hidden and secret to you but often your children and spouse will sense your real inner feelings.

Why do so many people court and then marry someone they know has habits or a lifestyle they despise and think they can reform them? I have seen so many cases in which the one spouse has been raised in Sunday School and church, has always been shielded from the drug and drinking scene and ends up marrying a drug addict or a drunkard.

¹ See discussion of abortion in Dating and Premarital Petting Chapter 4, on pages 24-25.

Things you should take into consideration before entering into a serious courtship are:

- Get to know the character of this dream boy or girl, the likes and dislikes, the living habit patterns, food preferences and strong dislikes, religious and moral standing, health, racial and ethnic background, and anything else that may apply to what you are expecting or hoping for in the person you may spend a lifetime with.
- If you discover anything you dislike about this person, be open and truthful and discuss the matter. Please believe me when I say it is better to lose someone you have dated a few times than someone by whom you have had children and jointly owned homes and cars and spent years of your life. It matters not if it is something tiny and unavoidable such as a crooked toe that “bugs” you every time you see it, or a big scar on the face, if it bothers you a little bit now, there is a strong chance it may bother you much more in the future and may be the beginning of “straying eyes” that eventually lead to straying morals. If you discuss it and it bothers you less, maybe it will not ever become a negative factor in your lifetime together, but if the other person shows a bad attitude about it, it may be a warning of trouble. If you visit the home of the person you are seeing and find that while you are neat as a pin, he or she throws dirty clothes in the corner or if you are the sloppy one and you find the other person's neatness and insistence on everything being “just so” makes you uncomfortable or has other living habits you strongly dislike, it is a warning flag. Either resolve it at the point you discover it or at least begin working on the problem. If you don’t, it WILL be back to haunt you.

“Beauty is only skin deep,” and “pretty is as pretty does,” are really true statements in many ways, but ten years from now, will the fine character of your spouse be sufficient to offset that “face that only a mother could love” seated across from you at the breakfast table? Based on what you have seen of your future spouse’s relatives, does it seem likely that you may be ashamed to admit to others that that bony or fat or ugly or mean-natured person is your husband or wife ten or twenty years down the road? An honest evaluation of these factors may prevent you from the immediate pleasure of a honeymoon with the one you now “love,” but it may also prevent the heartbreak of seeing your children crying and spending sleepless nights because their beloved mommy and daddy no longer live together and fight and argue and call each other ugly names whenever they meet or talk on the

purposes are one. If one spouse is feisty and the other is mild-mannered, the mild-mannered one may serve as a balance to the quick temper, the immediate demand for ideological rights of the feisty one, as long as they both work at keeping the points of contention focused outside of the marriage. If each always defends the other.

Loving someone means caring not only about that person, but also caring about what that person cares about. If your loved one loves baseball and you hate it, you are going to have to learn to love baseball. If your loved one loves the opera and you go “ugh” at it, you must learn to love opera. Both sides, of course must be considerate of each other.

Don't say, “I love you,” unless you really care more for the one to whom you say it than you care about yourself! Frankly, you are a liar if you say, “I love you,” but don't fully mean it.

Be realistic. It is fine to say that a person seeking a mate should concentrate on character, habits, personality, spirituality and other such admirable and fine qualities and to glibly say that appearance is unimportant and “beauty is only skin deep.” Please don't misunderstand, or to read something into what I am about to say that is not said. But reality faces the fact that some people of either gender are turned off cold by certain things and if you find something about your new spouse repulsive, your marriage is already off to a rocky start! By all means look for the desired qualities of character first, but before you say the “I do's,” especially if either or both of you have been married before, you really should at least consider whether something about your new spouse could prove to be repulsive to you. I know far too many cases in which fine moral posturing prevented a couple from discovering that one or the other or both still carried memories of a previous spouse which the new spouse was unable to overcome and they sooner or later had a problem with infidelity on one or the other or both sides. By all means, try to communicate and make sure a ghost of the past isn't there to haunt you.

But always remember that, “it is never right to do wrong even to have the opportunity to do something right,” and “there is an all seeing eye watching you!” P.S. He knows the real reason why you are doing or saying whatever and no matter how you rationalize, if your motives are wrong, expect your sin to find you out!

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