# SOCIOLOGY OF THE FAMILY

by
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SMASHWORDS EDITION

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# Chapter 01-Introduction: Changes and Definitions

Welcome to this Sociology of the Family Free Online textbook. I am the author and have worked for over a year writing this textbook so that students can have a free alternative to the expensive textbooks currently being sold in campus bookstores. I have taught Sociology of The Family for over 20 years and have a Ph.D. in Family Studies from Brigham Young University (Class of 1991). I have taught thousands of students how to understand the family using sociology as a framework for gaining insight and expertise in their study of the family. Most of my students did not continue on in the field of family studies. A few are professors in their own right and others are therapist practicing in their communities.

My bias toward the family is to provide you with information that is scientifically sound and practically useful. It is not enough for me to simply spread facts. I want to tell students what works, what doesn't work, and how to tell the difference in finding real solutions to their own life troubles. Call it bias or just common sense, if you read this book you'll find more answers than questions. My first full-time gig as a professor of sociology was in a community college where administrators demanded that we provide a service to our students that was worth the money they paid us for teaching. I have continued on in this professional commitment since then. Having said that, enjoy the textbook.

In all societies, the family is the premier institution for all of the following: socialization of children, adult intimate relationships, life-long economic support and cooperation, and continuity of relationships along the life-course. Sociologists are leaders among scientists who study the family. They have functioned in a core assessment role for describing, explaining, and predicting family-based social patterns for the United States and other countries of the world. Sociologists have allowed us to understand the larger social and personal level trends in families.

## Family Structures

The family structures that were very common a century ago are not nearly as common today. In the US around the year 1900 most families had 3 generations living in one home (e.g., children, parents, and uncle/aunt/grandparent) and most did manual labor. Today, very few families live with multiple generations. Most modern families fall into one of two types: nuclear, or blended. The Nuclear Family is a family group consisting of mother & father and their children. This is the family type that is mostly preferred. One variation of this type is the single-parent family, which can be created by unwed

motherhood, divorce, or death of a spouse. The second most common form is the Blended Family, which is the family created by remarriage including step-siblings and parents. Finally, all of the family relations you have past your nuclear or blended family we call Extended Family, which are one's relatives beyond nuclear and blended family levels (i.e. cousins, aunts & uncles, grand and great grandparents).

The US Census Bureau conducts annual surveys of the US population and publishes them as the Current Population Surveys. Table 1 represents the US family Types as of October 1, 2008. You will notice that marrieds comprise the largest proportion of family types in 2008. Single never marrieds are the second largest type and include another 6.8 million cohabiters of opposite sex and an unknown number of same sex cohabiters. Next is divorced, widowed, then separated (see Table UC1. Opposite Sex Unmarried Couples by Labor Force Status of Both Partners: 2008 retrieved 30 March 2009 from http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2008.html).

| Table 1. US Family Types, 2008 | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Types | Numbers | Percentages |
| Married | 123,671,000 | 52% |
| Widowed | 14,314,000 | 6% |
| Divorced | 23,346,000 | 10% |
| Separated | 5,183,000 | 2% |
| Never Married-Single | 71,479,000 | 30% |
| Total Families 15 and over | 237,993,000 | 100% |

Taken from Internet on 30 March 2009 from Table A1. Marital Status of People 15 Years and Over, by Age, Sex, Personal Earnings, Race, and Hispanic Origin/1, 2008
http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2008.html

Look at Figure 1 below to see the US trend of actual numbers in millions of family types. It shows that the single largest type of family in the US has always been marrieds then never marrieds. The divorced overtook widowed category in the 1970s and has been higher ever since. Why are the trends upward? Simply put, these are numbers and not rates nor percentages. The population has grown and therefore the population size has been steadily increasing.
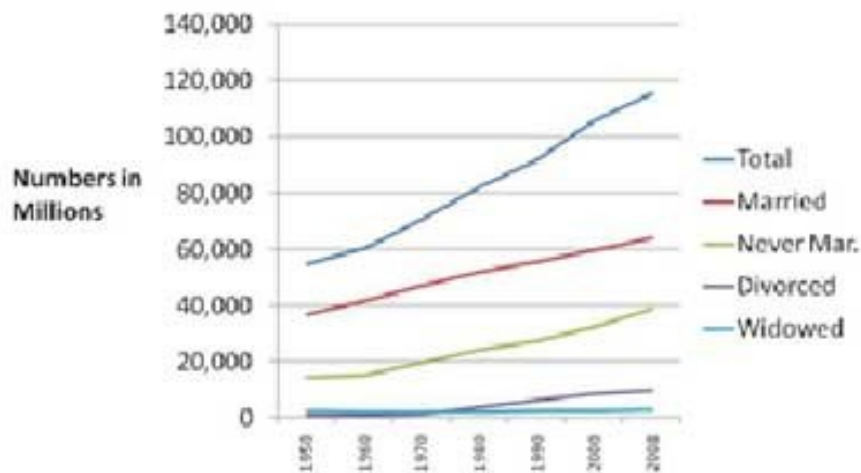
What are the functions of families? In studying the family, Functional Theorists (See Chapter 3) have identified some common and nearly universal family functions. That means almost all families in all countries around the world have at least some of these functions in common. Table 2 shows many of the global functions of the family.

**Table 2. Global Functions of the Family**

1. Economic support-food, clothing, shelter, etc.
2. Emotional support-intimacy, companionship, belonging, etc.
3. Socialization of child-raising children, parenting
4. Control of sexuality-defines and controls when and with whom (e.g, marriage)
5. Control of reproduction- the types of relationships where children should/could be born
6. Ascribed status-contexts of race, SES, religion, kinship, etc.

## Economic Support

By far, economic support is the most common function of today's families. When your parents let you raid their pantry, wash clothes in their laundry, or replenish your checking account, that's economic support. For another young adult, say in New Guinea, if she captures a wild animal and cooks it on an open fire, that's also economic support in a different cultural context. I've always been amazed at how far family economic cooperation extends. Some families cooperate in business-like relationships. In Quebec, Montreal there is an established pattern of Italian immigrants who help family and friends emigrate from Italy to Canada. They subsidize each other's travel costs, help each other find employment once in Canada, and even privately fund some mortgages for one another. Each participant is expected to support others in the same manner. To partake in this form of economic cooperation is to assume a very business-like relationship.

## Emotional Support

Emotional relationships are also very common, but you must understand there is a tremendous amount of cultural diversity in how intimacy is experienced in various families around the world. Intimacy is the social, emotional, spiritual, intellectual, and physical trust that is mutually shared between family members. Family members share confidences, advice, trust, secrets, and ongoing mutual concern. Many family scientists

believe that intimacy in family relationships functions as a strong buffer to the ongoing stresses experienced by family members outside of the home.

## Socialization

Socialization of children is covered in more detail in a Chapter Four. For now, keep in mind that children are born with the potential to be raised as humans. They will realize this potential if older family members or friends take the time to protect and nurture them into their cultural and societal roles. Today the family is the core of primary socialization. But many other societal institutions contribute to the process including schools, religion, workplace, and media.

## Sexuality and Reproduction Control

The family has traditionally asserted control of sexuality and reproduction. A few centuries ago the father and mother even selected the spouses for many of their children (they still do in many countries). Today, U.S. parents want their adult children to select their own spouses. Older family members tend to encourage pregnancy and childbirth only in marriage or a long-term relationship. Unwed mothers are mothers who are not legally married at the time of the child's birth. Being unwed brings up concerns of economic, emotional, social, and other forms of support for the mother that may or may not be present from the father. Many fathers reject their fatherly obligations in the case of unwed mothers.

When an unwed mother delivers the baby, it is often the older female family members who end up providing the functions of support for that child rather than the birth father. Table 3 shows the unwed mother births for the US in 2000 and 2006. Most of the 4,266,000 live US births in 2006 were to married mothers. But about 1/10 of teen mothers and 38 percent of all mothers were unwed (retrieved 30 March 2009 from http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/09s0077.pdf). This trend of increasing unwed birth rates suggests that more and more families have less control by sanctioning childbirth within marriage. On the other side of the coin, many of these unwed mothers marry the child's fathers and many of those marriages eventually end in divorce.

| Table 3. Percentage of All Births that were to Unwed Teens and Mothers of All Ages Years 2000 and 2006 | | |
|---|---|---|
| Year | Births to Unwed Teens | Births to All Unwed Mothers |
| 2000 | 11.8% | 33.2 |
| 2006 | 10.4% | 35.8% |

Taken from Statistical Abstracts of the US on 30 March 2009 from Table 87. Births to Teenage Mothers and Unmarried Women and Births With Low Birth Weight-States and Island Areas: 2000 to 2006 http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/09s0087.pdf

Taken from Statistical Abstracts of the US on 30 March 2009 from Table 87. Births to Teenage Mothers and Unmarried Women and Births With Low Birth Weight-States and Island Areas: 2000 to 2006 http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/09s0087.pdf

## Ascribed Status

Finally, ascribed status is there at birth. With your friends, have you noticed that one or two tend to be informally in charge of the details? You might be the one who calls everyone and makes reservations or buys the tickets for the others. If so, you would have

the informal role of "organizer." Status is a socially defined position, or what you do in a role. There are three types of status considerations: Ascribed Status is present at birth (race, sex, or class), Achieved Status is attained through one's choices and efforts (college student, movie star, teacher, or athlete), and Master Status is a status which stands out above our other statuses and which distracts others from seeing who we really are.

You were born into your racial, cultural-ethnic, religious and economic statuses. That shaped to some degree the way you grew up and were socialized. By far in our modern societies, achieved status (which comes as a result of your own efforts) is more important than ascribed (which you're born with) for most members of society. Although the degree of achievement you attain often depends heavily on the level of support families give to you.

Another consideration about groups and our roles in them is the fact that one single role can place a rather heavy burden on you (e.g., student). Role strain is the burden one feels within any given role. And when one role comes into direct conflict with another or other roles you might experience role conflict. Role conflict is the conflict and burdens one feels when the expectations of one role compete with the expectations of another role.
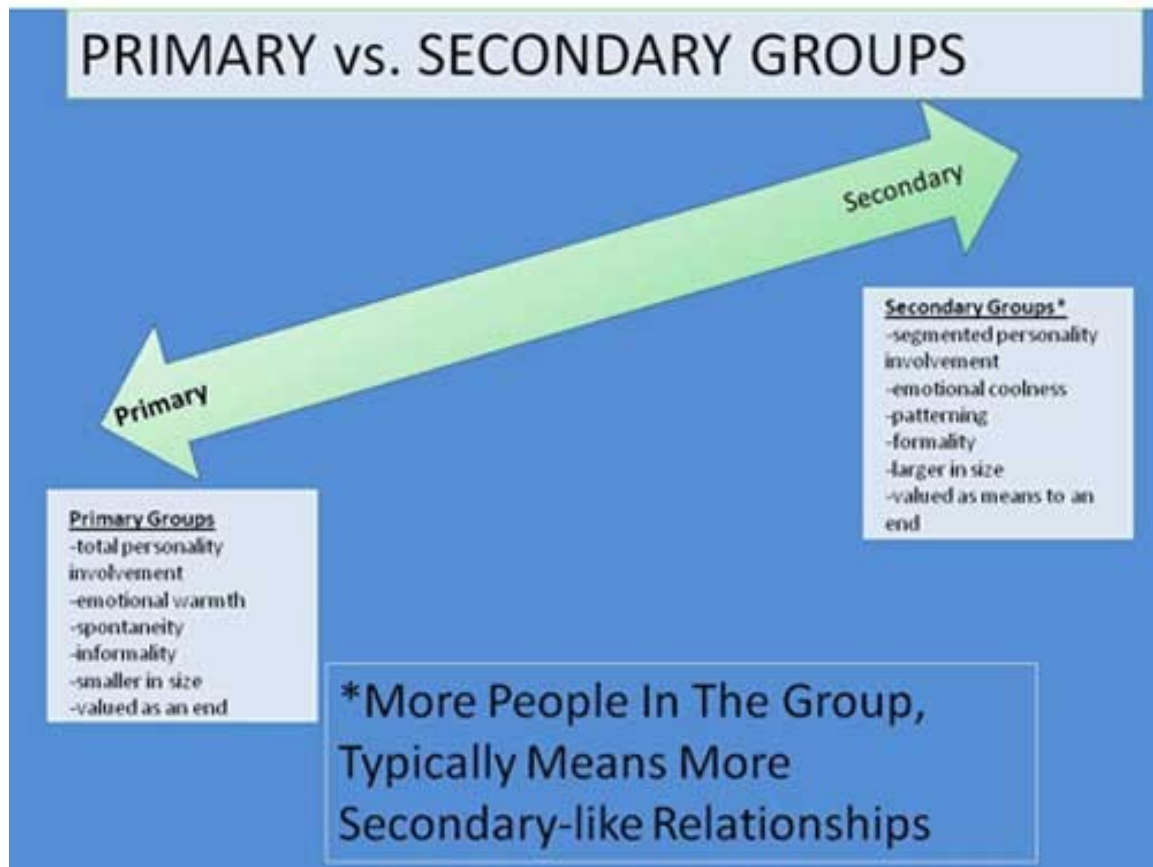
## Groups

The first and most important unit of measure in sociology is the group, which is a set of two or more people who share common identity, interact regularly, and have shared expectations (roles), and function in their mutually agreed upon roles. Most people use the word "group" differently from the sociological use. They say group even if the cluster of people they are referring to don't even know each other (like 6 people standing at the same bus stop). Sociologists use "aggregate," which is a number of people in the same place at the same time. So, people in the same movie theater, people at the same bus stop, and even people at a university football game are considered aggregates rather than groups. Sociologists also discuss categories. A category is a number of people who share common characteristics. Brown-eyed people, people who wear hats, and people who vote independent are categories-they don't necessarily share the same space, nor do they have shared expectations. In this text we mostly discuss trends and patterns in family groups and in large categories of family types.

Family groups are crucial to society and are what most of you will form in your own adult lives. Groups come in varying sizes: dyads, which are groups of two people and triads, which are groups of three people. The number of people in a group plays an important structural role in the nature of the group's functioning. Dyads are the simplest groups because 2 people have only 1 relationship between them. Triads have three relationships. A group of 4 has 6 relationships, 5 has 10, 6 has 15, 7 has 21, and one of my students from Brazil has 10 brothers and sisters and she counts 91 relationships just in her immediate family (not counting the brothers and sisters in law). When triads form it looks much like a triangle and these typically take much more energy than dyads. A newly married couple experience great freedoms and opportunities to nurture their marital relationship. A triad forms when their first child is born. Then they experience a tremendous incursion upon their marital relationship from the child and the care demanded by the child. As Bill Cosby said in his book Fatherhood, "Children by their very nature are designed to ruin your marriage" (1987, Doubleday Publisher, NY).

As sociologists further study the nature of the group's relationships they realize that there are two broad types of groups: primary groups, which tend to be smaller, less formal, and more intimate (families and friends), and secondary groups, which tend to be larger, more formal, and much less personal (you and your doctor, mechanic, or accountant). Look at the diagram below in Figure 2. Typically with your primary groups, say with your family, you can be much more spontaneous and informal. On Friday night you can hang out wherever you want, change your plans as you want, and experience fun as much as you want. Contrast that to the relationship with your doctor. You have to call to get an appointment, wait if the doctor is behind, address him or her as "Doctor," then once the diagnoses and co-pay are made you leave and have to make another formal appointment if you need another visit. Your Introduction to Sociology class is most likely large and secondary. Your family and friends tend to be few in numbers and primary in nature.

Figure 2. A Comparison of Primary versus Secondary Groups

## PRIMARY vs. SECONDARY GROUPS

Secondary

Primary

Secondary Groups*
-segmented personality involvement
-emotional coolness
-patterning
-formality
-larger in size
-valued as means to an end

Primary Groups
-total personality involvement
-emotional warmth
-spontaneity
-informality
-smaller in size
-valued as an end

*More People In The Group, Typically Means More Secondary-like Relationships

**Family Systems Theory**

One core definition that will help you in studying the family is that of Family Systems. Family Systems Theory claims that the family is understood best by conceptualizing it as a complex, dynamic, and changing collection of parts, subsystems and family members. Much like a mechanic would interface with the computer system of a broken down car to diagnose which systems are broken (transmission, electric, fuel, etc.) and repair it, a therapist or researcher would interact with family members to diagnose how and where

the systems of the family are in need of repair or intervention. Family Systems Theory comes under the Functional Theory umbrella and shares the functional approach of considering the dysfunctions and functions of complex groups and organizations.

## Sociological Imagination

The average person lives too narrow a life to get a clear and concise understanding of today's complex social world. Our daily lives are spent among friends and family, at work and at play, and watching TV and surfing the Internet. There is no way one person can grasp the big picture from their relatively isolated lives. There's just not enough time or capacity to be exposed to the complexities of a society of 310 million people. There are thousands of communities, millions of interpersonal interaction, billions of Internet information sources, and countless trends that transpire without many of us even knowing they exist. What can we do to make sense of it all?

Psychology gave us the understanding of self-esteem, economics gave us the understanding of supply and demand, and physics gave us the Einstein theory of E=MC2. When I learned of the sociological imagination by Mills, I realized that it gives us a framework for understanding our social world that far surpasses any common sense notion we might derive from our limited social experiences. C. Wright Mills (1916-1962), a contemporary sociologist, suggested that when we study the family we can gain valuable insight by approaching it at two core societal levels. He stated, "neither the life of an individual nor the history of a society can be understood without understanding both" (Mills, C. W. 1959. The Sociological Imagination page ii; Oxford U. Press). Mills identified "Troubles" (challenges on the personal level) and "Issues" (challenges on the larger social level) as key principles for wrapping our minds around many of the hidden social processes that transpire in an almost invisible manner in today's societies. Look at Figure 3 below to see a diagram of the Sociological Imagination and its two levels (personal and larger social).

Personal Troubles are private problems experienced within the character of the individual and the range of their immediate relation to others. Mills identified the fact that we function in our personal lives as actors and actresses who make choices about our friends, family, groups, work, school, and other issues within our control. We have a degree of influence in the outcome of matters within the personal level. A college student who parties 4 nights out of 7, who rarely attends class, and who never does his homework has a personal trouble that interferes with his odds of success in college. But, when 50 percent of all college students in the country never graduate we call it a larger social issue.

Larger Social Issues lie beyond one's personal control and the range of one's inner life. These pertain to society's organization and processes. To better understand larger social issues, let us define social facts. Social facts are social processes rooted in society rather than in the individual. Émile Durkheim (1858-1917, France) studied the "science of social facts" in an effort to identify social correlations and ultimately social laws designed to make sense of how modern societies worked given that they became increasingly diverse and complex (see Émile Durkheim, The Rules of the Sociological Method, (Edited by Steven Lukes; translated by W.D. Halls). New York: Free Press, 1982, pp. 50-59).
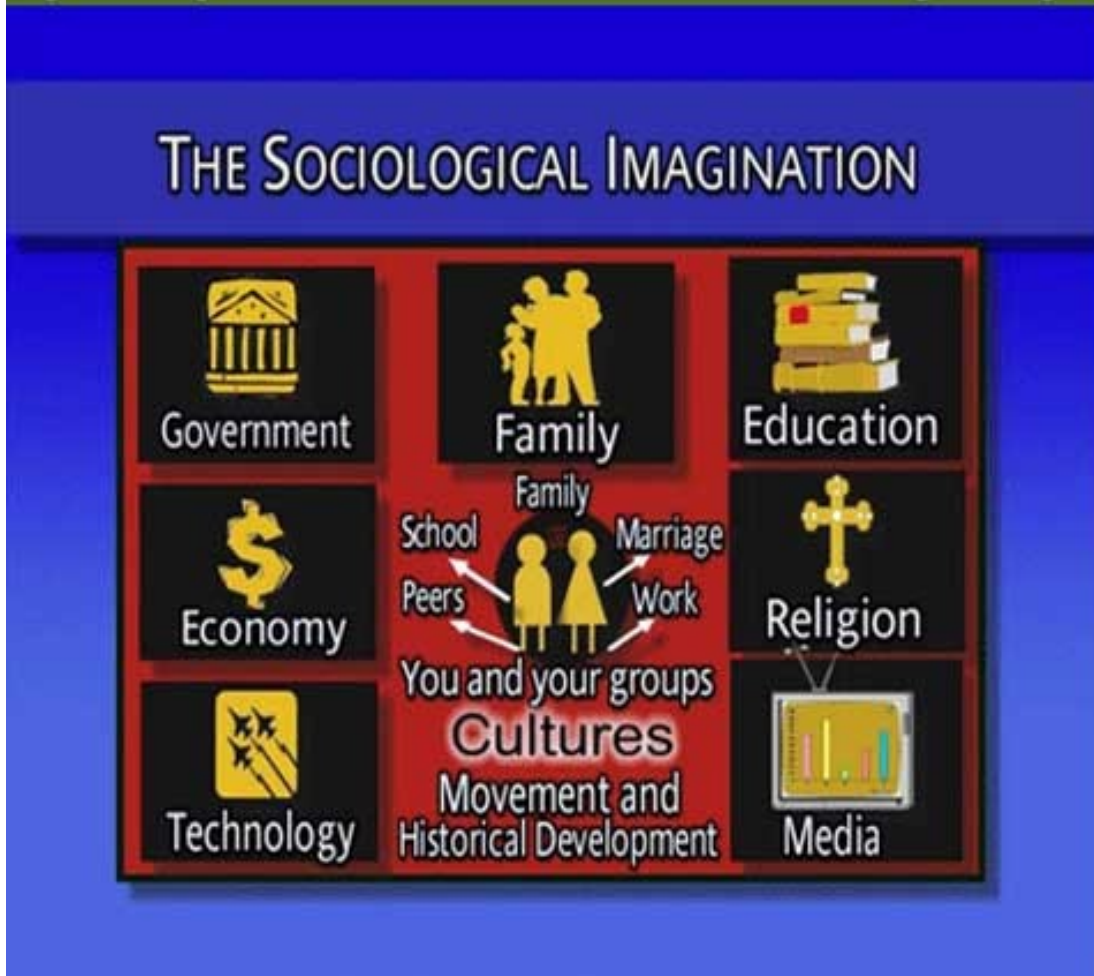
The national cost of a gallon of gas, the War in the Middle east, the repressed economy, the trend of having too few females in the 18-24 year old singles market, and the ever-increasing demand for plastic surgery are just a few of the social facts at play today. Social facts are typically outside of the control of average people. They occur in the complexities of modern society and impact us, but we rarely find a way to significantly impact them back. This is because, as Mills taught, we live much of our lives on the personal level and much of society happens at the larger social level. Without a knowledge of the larger social and personal levels of social experience, we live in what Mills called a false social conscious, which is an ignorance of social facts and the larger social picture.

A larger social issue is illustrated in the fact that nationwide, students come to college as freshmen ill-prepared to understand the rigors of college life. They haven't often been challenged enough in high school to make the necessary adjustments required to succeed as college students. Nationwide, the average teenager text messages, surfs the Net, plays video or online games, hangs out at the mall, watches TV and movies, spends hours each day with friends, and works at least part-time. Where and when would he or she get experience focusing attention on college studies and the rigors of self-discipline required to transition into college credits, a quarter or a semester, study, papers, projects, field trips, group work, or test taking.

In a survey conducted each year by the US Census Bureau, findings suggest that in 2006 the US has about 84 percent who've graduated high school ( http:// www.factfinder.uscensus.gov; see table R1501 at http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GRTTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-_box_head_nbr=R1501&-ds_name=ACS_2006_EST_G00_&-format=US-30). They also found that only 27 percent had a bachelors degree ( http:// www.factfinder.uscensus.gov; see table R1502 at http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GRTTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-_box_head_nbr=R1502&-ds_name=ACS_2006_EST_G00_&-redoLog=false&-format=US-30&-mt_name=ACS_2006_EST_G00_R1501_US30). Given the numbers of freshman students enrolling in college, the percentage with a bachelors degree should be closer to 50 percent.

The majority of college first year students drop out, because nationwide we have a deficit in the preparation and readiness of Freshmen attending college and a real disconnect in their ability to connect to college in such a way that they feel they belong to it. In fact college dropouts are an example of both a larger social issue and a personal trouble. Thousands of studies and millions of dollars have been spent on how to increase a freshman student's odds of success in college (graduating with a 4-year degree). There are millions and millions of dollars in grant monies awarded each year to help retain college students. Interestingly, almost all of the grants are targeted in such a way that a specific college can create a specific program to help each individual student stay in college and graduate.

THE SOCIOLOGICAL IMAGINATION

Government

Family

Education

Economy

Family
School    Marriage
Peers    Work
You and your groups
Cultures
Movement and
Historical Development

Religion

Technology

Media

The real power of the sociological imagination is found in how you and I learn to distinguish between the personal and social levels in our own lives. Once we do that we can make personal choices that serve us the best, given the larger social forces that we face. In 1991, I graduated with my Ph.D. and found myself in very competitive job market for University professor/researcher positions. With hundreds of my own job applications out there, I kept finishing second or third and was losing out to 10 year veteran professors who applied for entry level jobs. I looked carefully at the job market, my deep interest in teaching, the struggling economy, and my sense of urgency in obtaining a salary and benefits. I came to the decision to switch my job search focus from university research to college teaching positions. Again the competition was intense. On my 301st job application (that's not an exaggeration) I was interviewed and beat out 47 other candidates for my current position. In this case, knowing and seeing the larger social troubles that impacted my success or failure in finding a position was helpful. Because of the Sociological Imagination, I understood the larger social job market and was able to best situate myself within it to solve my personal trouble.

There are larger social trends that will be identified in the 16 chapters that follow this one. Some of them can teach you lessons to use in your own choices. Others simply provide a broad understanding of the context of the family in our complicated society.

This free online textbook comes with 93 self-assessments designed to enlighten YOU about YOUR personal family circumstances. They are not therapy, and they are not diagnostic. They are simply insightful and designed to help you understand better your personal family circumstances.

In this textbook you will find larger social evidences of many current United States family trends. Figure 4 shows these trends and where they will be discussed in this textbook. These changes were initiated in the Industrial Revolution where husbands were called upon to leave the cottage and venture into the factory as breadwinners. Women became homemakers and many eventually ended up in the labor force as well. The trend of having fewer children and having fewer of them die in or immediately after birth is directly related to medical technology and the value of having smaller families in our current service-based economy. The trend of lowering our standards of what exactly a "clean house" means is an adjustment that arguably needed to be made, because the post-World War II marketing campaigns convinced women that a spotless house was a good woman. Today, good women have varying levels of a clean house.

**Figure 4. Diagram of the United States' Larger Social Family Trends and Patterns in Recent Decades**

| Lower | Higher |
|---|---|
| Number of children per woman (Ch. 10) | Percent ever divorced (Ch. 12) |
| Infant mortality (Ch.15) | Complexity of remarried families (Ch. 3&13) |
| Standard of a "clean house" (Ch. 11) | Percent of elderly families (Ch. 14) |
| | Average life expectancies (Ch. 14) |
| | Quality of adoption process for children and families (Ch. 15) |
| | Benefits from being married compared to other statuses (Ch. 9) |
| | Number of cohabiters (Ch. 9) |
| | Percent of women in labor force (Ch.4) |
| | Bankruptcies (Ch. 11) |
| **High Yet Declining** | Intimate violence by spouse or partner (Ch. 16) |
| Divorce Rates (Ch. 12) | Cost of living and percent of income going to taxes (Ch. 11) |
| Abuse and neglect rates (Ch. 16) | Political efforts for and numbers of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgendered persons (Ch. 15) |
| STDs (except Chlamydia) (Ch. 16) | Percent of births to unwed mothers (Ch. 10) |
| Percent of families in poverty (Ch. 11) | Median age at marriage (Ch. 9) |
| K-12 education completion rates (Ch. 11) | Numbers of professional mediators and therapists to aid in individual and family issues (Ch. 12) |
| Number of abortions (Ch.9) | Premarital sexual activity (Ch. 7) |
| | Widowhood (Ch. 14) |
| | Satisfaction and hope for family (Ch. 17) |
| | Percent of US families that are Hispanic (Ch. 15) |
| | Estimated cost to raise a child in US (Ch. 10) |
| | Importance of family to modern society and its members (Ch. 1-17) |

Of concern to many are the continuing high rates of divorce. I fully intend to present you with knowledge about what is happening and what you can do to prevent divorce and enhance the quality and satisfaction of your marriage. These other relatively high, yet declining rates will be discussed in further detail, also providing you with information about what you can do and what works. The higher categories include many trends. Some may comfort you while others may threaten or concern you. I urge you to study them, to listen to your professor, and to ask questions about the things in the study of the family that become important to you.

Simply studying something does not imply that you agree with it or support it for yourself or others any more than studying diseases in your basic health class means you have to go out and get one or support others in getting one. One of the many benefits of being a college student is that it expands and broadens your opinions. I found in my 8 years of college and university that my opinions became more entrenched and I was able to better understand my values and defend my own views. By keeping my mind open and

my willingness to learn new things, I graduated a better person than when I started. I challenge you to keep your mind open. Trust that learning doesn't mean changing for the worse.

As mentioned above, the Industrial revolution changed societies and their families in an unprecedented way, such that Sociology as a discipline emerged as an answer to many of the new-found societal challenges. Societies had change in unprecedented ways and had formed a new collective of social complexities that the world had never witnessed before. Western Europe was transformed by the industrial revolution. culture . The Industrial Revolution transformed society at every level. Look at Table 4 below to see pre and post-Industrial Revolution social patterns and how different they were.

| Table 4. Pre-Industrial and Post-Industrial Revolution Social Patterns | |
| --- | --- |
| **Pre-Industrial Revolution** | **Post-Industrial Revolution** |
| Farm/ Cottage | Factories |
| Family Work | Breadwinners /Homemakers |
| Small Towns | Large Cities |
| Large Families | Small Families |
| Homogamous Towns | Heterogamous Cities |
| Lower Standards of Living | Higher Standards of Living |
| People Died Younger | People Die Older |

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Prior to the Industrial Revolution, families lived on smaller farms and every able member of the family did work to support and sustain the family economy. Towns were small and very similar (homogamy) and families were large (more children=more workers). There was a lower standard of living and because of poor sanitation people died earlier. After the Industrial Revolution, farm work was replaced by factory work. Men left their homes and became breadwinners earning money to buy many of the goods that used to be made by hand at home (or bartered for by trading one's own homemade goods with another's). Women became the supervisors of home work. Much was still done by families to develop their own home goods while many women and children also went to the factories to work. Cities became larger and more diverse (heterogamy). Families became smaller (less farm work required fewer children). Eventually, standards of living increased and death rates declined.

It is important to note the value of women's work before and after the Industrial Revolution. Hard work was the norm and still is today for most women. Homemaking included much unpaid work. For example, my 93 year old Granny is an example of this. She worked hard her entire life both in a cotton factory and at home raising her children, grand-children, and at times great grand-children. When I was a boy, she taught me how to make lye soap by saving the fat from animals they ate. She'd take a metal bucket and poked holes in the bottom of it. Then she burned twigs and small branches until a pile of ashes built up in the bottom of the bucket. After that she filtered water from the well through the ashes and collected the lye water runoff in a can. She heated the animal fat and mixed it in the lye water from the can. When it cooled, it was cut up and used as lye soap. They'd also take that lye water runoff and soak dried white corn in it. The corn kernel shells would become loose and slip off after being soaked. They'd rinse this and

use it for hominy. Or grind it up and make grits from it. We'll talk more about women and work in Chapter 4.

These pre and post-industrial changes impacted all of Western civilization because the Industrial Revolution hit all of these countries about the same way, Western Europe, United States, Canada, and later Japan and Australia. The Industrial Revolution brought some rather severe social conditions which included deplorable city living conditions, crowding, crime, extensive poverty, inadequate water and sewage, early death, frequent accidents, extreme pressures on families, and high illness rates. Today, sociology continues to rise to the call of finding solutions and answers to complex social problems, especially in the family.

## Family Research

The American Sociological Association is the largest professional sociology organization in the world. There is a section of ASA members that focuses its studies specifically on the family. Here is an expert of their mission statement:

"Many of society's most pressing problems -- teenage childbearing, juvenile delinquency, substance abuse, domestic violence, child and elder abuse, divorce -- are related to or rooted in the family. The Section on Family was founded to provide a home for sociologists who are interested in exploring these issues in greater depth (retrieved 18 May, 2010 from http://www.asanet.org/sections/family.cfm)."

Many family sociologists also belong to the National Council on Family Relations (www.ncfr.org). Their mission statement reads as follows:

"The National Council on Family Relations (NCFR) provides an educational forum for family researchers, educators, and practitioners to share in the development and dissemination of knowledge about families and family relationships, establishes professional standards, and works to promote family well-being (retrieved 18 May, 2010 from http://ncfr.org/about/mission.asp)."

There are other family-related research organizations in the world, but these two rank among the largest and most prestigious organizations in the field of family studies. As with all of sociology and other social sciences, science and scientific rigor is paramount. It is not enough to simply study the family from our narrow personal points of view. We have to reach into the larger social picture and see the hidden social processes that teach us how to inform marriage and family therapy, provide useful and accurate data to governmental and policy-making figures, and provide reliable advice that will help the most people in the most efficient way.

This becomes a scientific endeavor then to study and examine the family with rules of scientific engagement and analysis. For those earning a Ph.D. in a family-related field, science is learned and executed with rigor. If the results of a study are made public and presented for critical review by other family scientists then scientific rigor is even stronger and more credibility can be afforded to those findings. For example, studies have shown that the leading factor of divorce is not any of the following: sex problems, failures to communicate, money mismanagement, nor even in-law troubles. What is the leading cause of divorce? Would you believe it is marrying too young? Specifically, if you marry at 17, 18, or 19 you are far more likely to divorce than if you wait to marry in

your 20s. This was discovered and confirmed over decades of studying who divorced and which factors contributed more to divorce than others (See Chapter 12). The cool thing about knowing the risks of marrying as a teen is that you can choose to wait until you are older, more established in your sense of self, and more experienced in knowing your own likes and dislikes.

## Family Culture

Another key point in studying the family is to understand that all families share some cultural traits in common, but all also have their own family culture uniqueness. Culture is the shared values, norms, symbols, language, objects, and way of life that is passed on from one generation to the next. Culture is what we learn from our parents, family, friends, peers, and schools. It is shared, not biologically determined. In other words, you are only born with drives, not culture. Most families in a society have similar family cultural traits. But, when you do marry you will learn that the success of your marriage is often based on how well you and your spouse merge your unique family cultures into a new version of a culture that is your own.

Yet, even though family cultures tend to be universal and desirable, we often judge other cultures as being "good, bad, or evil," with our own culture typically being judged good. We have to consider our perspective when studying families from different cultures. Are we ethnocentric or cultural relativist?

Ethnocentrism is the tendency to judge others based on our own experiences. In this perspective, our culture is right, while cultures which differ from our own are wrong. I once visited a beautiful Catholic cathedral, Cathédrale St. Jean in Lyon, France. I fell in love with this beautiful and historic monument to the religious devotion of generations of builders. I learned that it took about 300 years to build, that England's King Henry the VIII married his Italian bride there, and that the a few families had 9 generations of builders working on it. I left with a deep sense of appreciation it all. On the bus back to our hotel, we met some American tourists who were angry about their vacation in France. The gentleman said, "these people will eat anything that crawls under the front porch, they never bathe, they dress funny, and they can't speak one *#&@ word of English!"

Another more valuable and helpful perspective about differing cultures is the perspective called Cultural Relativism, the tendency to look for the cultural context in which differences in cultures occur. If you've eaten a meal with your friend's family you have probably noticed a difference in subtle things like the food that is served and how it is prepared. You may have noticed that that family communicates in different ways from your own. You might also notice that their values of fun and relaxation also vary from your own. To dismiss your friend's family as being wrong because they aren't exactly like yours is being closed-minded. Cultural relativists like all the ice-cream flavors, if you will. They respect and appreciate cultural differences even if only from the spectators' point of view. They tend to be teachable, child-like, and open-minded. They tend to enjoy or learn to enjoy the many varieties of the human experience.

An ethnocentric thinks on the level of carrot soup, peel carrots, add water, and boil. The cultural relativist tends to think on the level of a complex stew, peel and prepare carrots, potatoes, onions, mushrooms, broth, tofu, and 10 secret herbs and spices and simmer for 2 hours. The diversity of the human experience is what makes it rich and flavorful.

## Socialization

From the first moments of life, children begin a process of socialization wherein parents, family, and friends transmit the culture of the mainstream society and the family to the newborn. They assist in the child's development of his or her own social construction of reality, which is what people define as real because of their background assumptions and life experiences with others. An average US child's social construction of reality includes knowledge that he or she belongs, can depend on others to meet their needs, and has privileges and obligations that accompany membership in their family and community. In a typical set of social circumstances, children grow up through predictable life stages: infancy, preschool, K-12 school years, young adulthood, adulthood, middle adulthood, and finally later-life adulthood. Most will leave home as young adults, find a spouse or life partner in their mid-to late 20s and work in a job for pay. To expect that of the average US Child is normal.

Also when discussing the average US child, it's safe to say that the most important socialization takes place early in life and in identifiable levels. Primary socialization typically begins at birth and moves forward until the beginning of the school years. Primary socialization includes all the ways the newborn is molded into a social being capable of interacting in and meeting the expectations of society. Most primary socialization is facilitated by the family, friends, day care, and to a certain degree various forms of media. Children watch about 3 hours per day of TV (by the time the average child attends kindergarten he has watched about 5,000 hours of TV). They also play video games, surf the Internet, play with friends, and read.

Around age 4-5 pre-school and kindergarten are presented as expectations for the children. Once they begin their schooling, they begin a different level of socialization. Secondary Socialization occurs in later childhood and adolescence when children go to school and come under the influence of non-family members. This level runs concurrently with primary socialization. Children realize at school that they are judged for their performance now and are no longer accepted unconditionally. In fact, to obtain approval from teachers and school employees, a tremendous amount of conformity is required-this is in contrast to having been accepted at home for being "mommy's little man or woman."

As students children have to learn to belong and cooperate in large groups. They learn a new culture that extends beyond their narrow family culture and that has complexities and challenges that require effort on their part. This creates stressors for the children. By the time of graduation from high school the average US child has attended 15,000 hours of school away from home. They've also probably watched 15,000 hours of TV, and spent 5-10,000 playing (video games, friends, Internet, text messaging, etc.).

Friends, classmates, and peers become increasingly important in the lives of children in their secondary educational stage of socialization. Most 0-5 year-olds yearn for affection and approval from their parents and family members. By the time of pre-teen years, the desire for family diminishes and the yearning now becomes for friends and peers. Parents often lament the loss of influence over their children once the teen years arrive. Studies show that parents preserve at least some of their influence over their children by influencing their children's peers. Parents who host parties, excursions, and get-togethers

find that their relationship with their children's friends keeps them better connected to their children. They learn that they can persuade their children at times through the peers.

The K-12 schooling years are brutal in terms of peer pressures. Often, people live much of their adult lives under the labels they were given in high school. Then it happens. You've probably already done this-graduation! Many new high school graduates face the strikingly harsh realities of adulthood shortly after graduation. Anomie often follows and it takes months and years at times for young adults to discover new regulating norms which ground them back into expectable routines of life.

The third level of socialization includes college, work, marriage/significant relationships, and a variety of adult roles and adventures. Adult socialization occurs as we assume adult roles such as wife/husband/employee/etc. We adapt to new roles which meet our needs and wants throughout the adult life course. Freshmen in college, new recruits in the military, volunteers for Peace Corps and Vista, employees, missionaries, travelers, and others find themselves following the same game plan that lead to their success during their primary and secondary socialization years-find out what's expected and strive to reach those expectations.

## Opportunity

In the US and throughout the world there are rich and poor families. Where you belong has a great deal to do with who you were born to or adopted by. Where you end up in your economic standing has a great deal to do with how you act, given your own set of life chances. As identified by Max Weber, life chances are access to basic opportunities and resources in the marketplace. There are differences among family systems in which people live and have opportunities. This brings up a very important concept from Max Weber. Not all of us have the same life chances as others. For example, one of my best friends in high school came from a wealthy family. Her father was a neurosurgeon and they had many resources that myself and others like me didn't have (she and I were friends because we dated for a short while). When I went to college, I was the first ever on either my mother or father's side to go to college. I had no financial aid, no family support, and such bad high school grades that I had no scholarship funding. My friend on the other hand had a new car, new Apple computer, all expenses paid apartment and living costs. She and I had very different life chances from one another. Nevertheless I was able to earn my PhD. I worked numerous part-time jobs and eventually got my GPA high enough to earn a scholarship, and later graduate assistantship. I also had to take out thousands in student loans. But, even I had far greater life chances than most people in the world today. So did you. We have K-12 education, access to college, and the possibility of a career of our choosing. In many less developed countries low to no formal education is common fare.

Life chances can also be applied to the quality of your own marriage and family. If you came from a highly shaming family culture, then you are more likely to develop an addiction. If you came from a family where the parents divorced, then you are more likely to divorce. If you were born to a single mother you are more likely to become a single mother or father. These are known correlates but not causes. In other words you may be slightly disadvantaged because of the difficult family circumstances you were born in, but you are by no means doomed.

Understanding life chances simply raises your awareness by demonstrating trends from the larger social picture that might well apply to you in your personal level. For example, I have about 21 known correlates to divorce (see Workbook assignment to discover your own). My wife and I have been married now for 25 years. We knew we would have an uphill battle in some regards. But we faced our life chance issues together (still do) and try specifically to avoid some of the same mistakes our parents made.

**Demography**

Finally, the US family in our day has an important underpinning that influences the family in the larger social and personal levels. Demography is the scientific study of population growth and change. Everything in society influences demography and demography conversely influences everything in society. After World War II, the United States began to recover from the long-term negative effects of the war. Families had been separated, relatives had died or were injured, and women who had gone to the factories then returned home at war's end. The year 1946 reflected the impact of that upheaval in its very atypical demographic statistics. Starting in 1946 people married younger, had more children per woman, divorced then remarried again, and kept having one child after another. From 1946 to 1956 the birth rate rose and peaked, then began to decline again. By 1964 the national high birth rate was finally back to the level it was at before 1946. All those millions of children born from 1946-1964 were called the Baby Boom Generation (there are about 78 million of them alive today). Why was there such a change in family-related rates? The millions of deaths caused by the war, the long-term separation of family members from one another, and the deep shifts toward conservative values all contributed. The Baby Boom had landed. And after the Baby Boom Generation was in place, it conversely affected personal and larger social levels of society in every conceivable way.

The Baby Boomers are most likely your parents (Born 1946-1964). For a few of you they may be your grandparents. Their societal influence on the family changed the US forever. The earliest cohort of Baby Boomers (1946-51) has the world record for highest divorce rates. Collectively baby Boomers are still divorcing more than their parents ever divorced. They had their own children and many of you belong to Generations X or Y (X born 1965-1984 and Y born 1985-present). There are many of you because there were many Baby Boomers. The demographic processes of this country include these baby Boomers, their legacy, and their offspring. To understand the US family, you must understand the Baby Boomers and the underlying demographic forces in our day.

The core of demographic studies has three component concerns: births, deaths, and migration. All of demography can be reduced to this very simple formula:

(Births-Deaths) +/- ((In-Migration)-(Out Migration))=Population Change.

This part of the formula, (Births-Deaths) is called Natural increase, which is all births minus all the deaths in a given population over a given time period. The other part of the formula, ((In-Migration)-(Out Migration)) is called Net Migration, which is all the in-migration minus all the out-migration in a given population over a given time period. In all the chapters that follow this one, the issues pertaining to the family are heavily influenced by demography's social force in the United States. This formula is not just a measure of larger social trends, it is also an indirect factor that impacts those social

trends.

The Industrial revolution set into motion a surge of births and a lowering of deaths. After a century of this type of growth, billions of people lived on the earth. Eventually as the Industrial Revolution became the era of the computer chip, birth rates declined and death rates continued to increase. In Western civilizations this explains why migration is so important. Because fewer births mean less workers for the economy and more need for immigrants.

## Chapter 02 - Studying Marriage and Families

### Scientific Sociology

One of the most remarkable traits that August Comte mandated for Sociology was a core of scientific rigor.  He proposed the concept of Positivism, the scientific-based sociological research that uses scientific tools such as survey, sampling, objective measurement, and cultural and historical analysis to study and understand society.  Although the current definition of positivism expands far beyond Comte's original vision, Sociological scientific methodology is used through government and industry researchers and across higher education and the private sector.  Comte was originally interested in why societies remain the same (social Statics) and why societies change (social dynamics).  Most sociological research today falls within these broad categories.  Sociologists strive for Objectivity, which is the ability to study and observe without distortion or bias, especially personal bias.  Bias-free research is an ideal that, if not present will open the door to extreme misinterpretation of research findings.

Sociological science is both different and similar to other scientific principles.  It differs from Chemistry, Biology, and Physics in that sociology does not manipulate the physical environment using established natural science theories and principles.  It's similar to Chemistry, Biology, and Physics in that statistical principles guide the discovery and confirmation of data findings.  Yet, Sociology has no universally social laws that resemble gravity, E=MC2, or the speed of light.  This is because Chemistry, Biology, and Physics have the luxury of studying phenomenon which are acted upon by laws of nature.  Sociologist study people, groups, communities, and societies which are comprised of agents, people who use their agency to make choices based on their varied motivations (Google Anthony Giddens-human agency, January 18, 1938 British Sociologist).

### Sociologist Perform Survey Research

Sociologists study people, who chose, decide, succeed, fail, harm others, harm themselves, and behave in rational and irrational ways.  I've often explained to my students that if I took an ounce of gasoline and placed a burning match upon it, the gas would have to burn.  The gas has no choice just as the flame has no choice.  But, if someone placed a burning match on your arm, or the arm of your classmate, you or they might respond in any number of ways.  Most would find the experience to be painful.  Some might enjoy it, others might retaliate with violence, and yet others might feel an emotional bond to the one who burned them. Sociologist must focus on the subjective definitions and perceptions that people place in their choices and motivations.  In fact, sociologists account for human subjectivity very well in their research studies.  The most common form of Sociological research of the family is survey research.

Surveys are research instruments designed to obtain information from individuals who belong to a larger group, organization, or society. The information gathered is used to describe, explain, and at times predict attitudes, behaviors, aspirations, and intended behaviors. Types of surveys include political polls, opinion surveys, national Census, paper, verbal interview, online, and audience voting- call in (American Idol votes), and polls. The National Study of Families and Households, the General Social Surveys, and other large-scale surveys that address family issues are common.

Polls are typically surveys which collect opinions (such as who one might vote for in an election, how one feels about the outcome of a controversial issue, or how one evaluates a public official or organization. The Census Bureau (http://www.census.gov/) by the Constitutional mandate must count its entire population every 10 years (Such as the 2010 US Census). Population is the entire membership of a country, organization, group, or category of people to be surveyed (e.g., US population=305,000,000). A sample is only some portion of the population but not all of it (e.g., a US Census Bureau's American Community Survey of 35,000 US Citizens See http://www.census.gov/acs/www/). Surveys can ask a certain category of people on a one-time basis; a Cross-Sectional Survey is a survey given once to a group of people. Surveys can also ask the same people to fill out a survey over an extended number of years, a Longitudinal Survey is a survey given to the same people more than once and typically over a set of years or decades.

| Table 1. Hypothetical University Student Body Population ABC University with 10,000 students | |
|---|---|
| Females= 5,000/50% | Males=5,000/50% |
| African American=1,000/10% | African American=1,000/10% |
| Hispanic=1,000/10% | Hispanic=1,000/10% |
| Asian=1,000/10% | Asian=1,000/10% |
| Caucasian=1,000/10% | Caucasian=1,000/10% |
| Other Races=1,000/10% | Other Races=1,000/10% |

Look above at the box in table 1 and we'll use this hypothetical ABC university student body population to better understand sampling. One of the most important issues when doing survey research is to ensure a good scientific sample. Random Sample is a portion of the population that is drawn in such a way that every member of the population has an equal chance of being selected for the survey (e.g., ABC University Registrar's office uses their computer software to randomly select 1 out of every 10 students for a survey about student opinions in favor of or against getting a football team). Representative Sample is a sample drawn from the population, the composition of which very much resembles that of the population. Typically this is obtained via a stratified random sample.

Stratified Random Sample is a portion of the population that is drawn in such a way that every member of the population and important sub-categories of the population have an equal chance of being selected for the survey, yielding a sample that is demographically similar to population (e.g., using the demographic table above, ABCU would sample 1 out of 10 students or 1,000. They would also want half of those students to be female and half male. They would also want to select for the racial groups. The easiest strategy to

do this would be for the Registrar to program the computer to select only the female student's files.  Then they would have the computer select only the African American files and select 1 out of 10 students until they have 100 selected.  They would repeat this for all other racial groups and then do the same for the males.  Ideally, every student would respond to the request to take the survey and they would have a 1,000 student sample that was _ female and _ male; with all 5 racial groups represented equally (see Table 2 below for example).  This is both ideal and hypothetical, but it's typical of the goal sample takers have of a stratified random and representative sample and the closer they get to this ideal the better the sample).

| Table 2. The Hypothetical ABCU Sample Composition of 10,000 Students  (this never happens in the real world) | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Total Student Body Numbers/Proportions** | **Sample Student Body Numbers** | **Sample Student Body Proportions** | **Percentage Comparison of Population and Sample Proportions** |
| Females 5,000/50% | 500 | 50% | 100% representative |
| Males 5,000/50% | 500 | 50% | 100% representative |
| African American=2,000/20% | 100 Females/100 Males | 10% Females/ 10% Males | 100% representative |
| Hispanic=2,000/20% | 100 Females/100 Males | 10% Females/ 10% Males | 100% representative |
| Asian=2,000/20% | 100 Females/100 Males | 10% Females/ 10% Males | 100% representative |
| Caucasian=2,000/20% | 100 Females/100 Males | 10% Females/ 10% Males | 100% representative |
| Other Races=2,000/20% | 100 Females/100 Males | 10% Females/ 10% Males | 100% representative |

A Convenience Sample is a portion of the population that is NOT scientifically drawn, but is collected because they are easy to access (e.g., a group of ABCU students waiting at a bus stop; a group of ABCU students who respond to a radio talk show web poll; or a group of ABCU students who have children and bring them to the campus daycare).  Convenience samples yield weak results.  Or as one of my Mentors, Dr. Tim Heaton, BYU, once said, "If you start the presentation of your research results with we didn't really do good science, but here's what we found…then few will stick around or care about what you found."

It is also important to consider a few other scientific principles when conducting survey research.  You need an adequate number of respondents. Sample Size is the number of respondents who are designated to take the survey (30 minimum in order to establish statistical confidence in the findings).  You also have to obtain a relatively high Response Rate, the percentage of the original sample who successfully completed the survey.  For example, at ABC university, if we set out to survey 1,000 out of the student body of 10,000 students, but only got 200 to take the survey, then our response rate risk being too low.  One would say that  200/1,000=20 percent response rate.  While 750/1,000=75 percent response rate.  A sample of only 200 would likely not yield enough diversity in responses to get a broad understanding of the entire student body's reaction to the football team issue.

With a high enough response rate and a good scientific sample, one could feel comfortable comparing the sample's results to what the entire student body population might have said, had they all been surveyed. Generalizability means that the results from the sample can be assumed to apply to the population with confidence (as though the population itself had been studied). Also important is the quality of the survey itself as a scientific instrument. Valid Survey Questions are questions that are accurate and measure what they claim they'll measure (e.g., If the football survey asked, "Every campus needs a football team" versus "This campus would benefit from a football team." The first lacks validity because it isn't really getting the answer needed for the study, it's seeking an opinion about campuses and football teams in general). Reliable Survey Questions are survey questions that are relatively free from bias errors which might taint the findings. In other words, reliable survey questions are consistent.

## Components of Good Surveys

There are 2 types of survey questions. Open Survey Questions are questions designed to get respondents to answer in their own words (e.g., "what might be the benefits of having a football team?"_____ or "what might be a negative consequence of having a football team?"_____).

Closed Survey Questions are questions designed to get respondents to choose from a list of responses you provide to them (e.g., About how many college football games have you ever attended? __1 __2 __3 __4 __5 __6 __7 __8 __9 __10+). Likert Scale Questions are the most common response scale used in surveys and questionnaires. These questions are statements which respondents are asked to agree or disagree with (e.g., Our campus would be deeply hurt by a football team). The respondents choose from the scale below for their answer:

1. Strongly disagree 2. Disagree 3. Neither agree nor disagree 4. Agree 5. Strongly agree

Demographic Questions are questions which provide the basic categorical information about your respondent including age, sex, race, education level, marital status, birth date, birth place, income, etc. In order to run statistical analysis on survey results, one must enter the data into Excel, Statistical Packages for the Social Science (SPSS), or Statistical Analysis Software (SAS) in order to run analysis. Most statistics are run on numbers. By converting responses into numbers, most results can be analyzed. For example on the Disagree…Agree scale above one would use the number 1 in lieu of Strongly Disagree. Words can be analyzed using content analysis software. Content Analysis is the counting and tabulating of words, sentences, and themes from written, audio, video, and other forms of communication. The goal of content analysis is to find common themes among the words. For example if an open ended question such as this were asked, "what might be a negative consequence of having a football team?" then the results would be carefully read with tabulations of common responses. When we asked this question to our university students in a random sample, the worry about the high expenses required to fund the team and program was one of the most common negative consequence reported.

There are a few specific types of data that can be analyzed using statistical measures. Nominal Data are data which have no standard numerical values. This is often referred to as categorical data (e.g., what is your favorite type of pet? __Reptile __Canine __Feline

__Bird __Other).  There is no numerical value associated with reptile that makes it more or less valuable than a canine or other type pet. Other examples include favorite color, street addresses, town you grew up in, or ice cream flavor.  Ordinal Data are rank ordered data which has standard numerical values.  This is often referred to as numerical data.  (e.g., How many movies have you seen in the last two weeks? __0 __1 __2 __3 __4 __5).  Ordinal data has the assumption that seeing 2 movies took twice as much effort than seeing just 1 movie and seeing4 movies was twice the effort of seeing just 2.  The values are equally weighted.  The same could be said about how many A's you earned last semester, how much you get paid per hour at work, or how many cars your family drives…they are numerical values that can be compared and contrasted.  Ratio Data=data that is shown in comparison to other data.  For example, the Sex Ratio=the number of males per 100 females in a society.  The sex ratio in the US is reported as follows on 5 February, 2009: Alaska 107/100; US Total  97.1/100; Rhode Island  93.6/100 (these were 2006 estimates from  http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GRTTable?_bm=y&-_box_head_nbr=R0102&-ds_name=ACS_2005_EST_G00_&-_lang=en&-format=US-30 Ratios provide uses comparative information and we can see that in 2006 Alaska had more males than females, 7 extra per 100 females.  Rhode Island had nearly 7 fewer males per 100 females.

All of the examples above of football team related questions are considered variables.  Variables are survey questions that measure some characteristic of the population (e.g., if married students were more financially strapped than single students, one might find that they were more or less supportive of a football team based on their perception of how adding a football team might hinder or support their personal needs.  Marital status as a consideration when comparing the findings of the survey becomes a variable in its own right).  Two types of variables are measured: dependent and independent variables.  Dependent Variables are survey variables that change in response to the influence of independent variables.  The dependent variable would be desire or opposition for a football team.  Independent Variables are survey variables that when manipulated will stimulate a change upon the dependent variables (e.g., by considering married, widowed, divorced, separated, cohabiting, and never married students, one might find differing support/opposition to an ABCU football team).

When basic statistics are performed on data, we often call theme measures of central tendency (Mean, Median, or Mode).  Consider this list of numbers which represents the number of movies 9 separate ABCU students had seen in the last 2 weeks:

0

1

1

1

3

4

4

5

Mean is the arithmetic score of all the numbers divided by the total number of students (e.g., 27÷9=3). Median is the exact mid-point value in the ranked list of scores (e.g., 0, 1, 1, &1 fall below and 4, 4, 5, & 8 fall above the number 3 thus 3 is the median). Mode is the number which occurs the most in a list of numbers (e.g.,1 occurs the most, so the mode is 1). Extreme value is an especially low or high number in the series (e.g., 8 movies in 2 weeks takes an inordinate amount of time for an average student. Notice that if you removed the 9th student's score and averaged only the remaining scores the mean=2.375. Extreme values can throw the mean way off. If you'd like to learn more about survey research, then take a research methods class. Chances are you will enjoy taking on the role of statistical detective. Here is an overview of simple questions to see if you are building a good survey.

1. What do you want to accomplish in this survey?

2. Who will your survey serve?

3. Who is the target audience for the survey?

4. How will the survey be designed?

5. How will you obtain a sample for the survey?

6. How will the survey be administered?

7. How big should your response rate be to give your results credibility?

8. How will the data be analyzed?

9. How will the results be presented?

10. Are humans or animals going to be at risk of harm in the survey?

Components of a good survey include clear purpose for taking the survey, clear understanding of desired outcomes of survey, good research supporting development and design of survey, appropriate sampling technique when collecting survey, reliability and validity in survey and its question and design, and clear and accurate presentation of survey findings that are appropriate for the type of survey used.

**Can You Figure Out What Might Be Wrong With These Survey Questions?**

1. Have you ever attended a college football or basketball game? __Yes __No

2. Are you in favor of spending all ABCU's money on an expensive football program? __Yes __No

3. Are you not opposed to supporting a football program? __Yes __No

4. I think the ABCU's administration pays too much attention to community service.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Don't know 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

5. It would be fiducially incompetent to initiate the cost-to-benefit ratio projections for a football team.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Don't know 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

1. Double barreled question…it asks two questions in one and you can't clearly answer.

2. Biased question…uses emotionally laden language which might change the response.

3. Double negative…creates confusion.

4. Irrelevant question for the survey about student interest in a football team.

5. Too many technical words that the average person would not understand…creates confusion.

## Better Versions of the Same Questions

1. Have you ever attended a college football  game? __Yes __No

2. Have you ever attended a college basketball game ? __Yes __No

3. Are you in favor of ABCU spending student fees on a football program?  __Yes __No

4. Are you in favor of a football program? __Yes __No

5. I think the ABCU's administration should hold forums with students about the issue of a future football program.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Don't know 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

6. I am concerned about a new football program being too expensive.

1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Don't know 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

## Which Responses Categories Are Useful For Which Survey Question?  It Depends on the Question!

1. 1 ___Yes 0___No

2. 4 Excellent 3 Good 2 Fair 1 Poor

3. 5 Very Likely  4 Somewhat Likely 3 No Preference  2 Unlikely 1 Very Unlikely

4. 0 Never 1 Seldom 2 Often 3 Regularly

5. 1 Strongly Disagree 2 Disagree 3 Don't know 4 Agree 5 Strongly Agree

6. 1 Strongly Disapprove2 Disapprove 3 Don't know 4 Approve 5 Strongly Approve

7. 3 Better 2 About the Same 1 Worse

## When doing sociological research it helps if you understand the SMART Paradigm

**S**amples

**M**ethods

**A**ttitude of skepticism

**R**esearcher bias

**T**horough understanding of literature

Samples have to be random and representative.  If not the results are fairly worthless. One of my graduate school professors explained that if you start a sentence with, "we

didn't really do good scientific sampling, but here's what we found." Most people won't care about your findings after they know your science was weak. I compare it to this hypothetical incident. Your car is broken down late at night in a dangerous part of town. A passerby stops to help and says, "I don't know how to fix cars, but I'll go ask those people hanging out at the bus stop. He returns 10 minutes later and explains that 3 of the people there once had their cars break down and every time it was their spark plugs. So I'd recommend you change your spark plugs." Believe me, I know this is a cheesy example, but it conveys the point. Asking three people at a bus stop is a convenience sample of people (not even mechanics). True, it does look and feel like a survey, but it is a terrible sample.

I watch this all the time on TV news stories where a few people on the street give their opinions; Internet polls where people who visit certain Websites give their opinions; and radio talk shows where votes are counted among those who are selected to comment on the air are treated as though they somehow represent all people everywhere. Smart people always check the sample for representativeness and random selection.

Methods typically include experiments, participant observations, non-participant observations, surveys, and secondary analysis.

Experiments are studies in which researchers can observe phenomena while holding other variables constant or controlling them.

In experiments, Experimental group gets the treatment and the Control group does not get the treatment. Even though Sociologists rarely perform experimental surveys, it is important to understand the rigors required to execute this type of research. In this example let's assume that researchers are testing the affect of a drug called XYZ. Among Herpes sufferers, XYZ may help to completely repel an outbreak. But, how can you discern if it was the medicine or simply that patient improvement came because they were in the study? We'd need some form of control/controls. In the diagram below you can see how scientists might administer an experimental study. If they took 300 patients and randomly assign them to Group A, which was an inert gum-only control, Group B which was the gum and sugar control (yes, sometimes 2 control groups are needed), or Group B which is the experimental XYZ laced gum.

Figure 1. Experimental Research Design

Let's assume that the patients chewed their respective chewing gums for 11 months then the medical results were gathered. Look at the next diagram below to see a set of hypothetical results. Group A was the control-gum only group and they showed a 5 percent improvement. Group B was the control-gum and sugar group and they showed 7 percent improvement. Group C was the experimental/treatment group and they showed a whopping 27 percent improvement. Now one study like this does not an FDA approved drug make. But, the results are promising. Interestingly, this is a pharmaceutical, medical study…not a sociology study. Almost all experiments are very tightly controlled and many transpire in laboratories or under professional clinical supervision. Sociologists rarely study in laboratories. Scientists who do perform experiments can make causal conclusions. In order to establish cause there must be 3 criteria that are met, a correlation, time ordering (one preceded the other); and no spurious correlations. In the case of education and crime these 3 are not met. Causation means that a change in one variable leads to or cause a change in another variable, (e.g. XYZ chewing gum causes less Herpes outbreaks).

Figure 2. Example of a Drug-Related Experimental Research Design
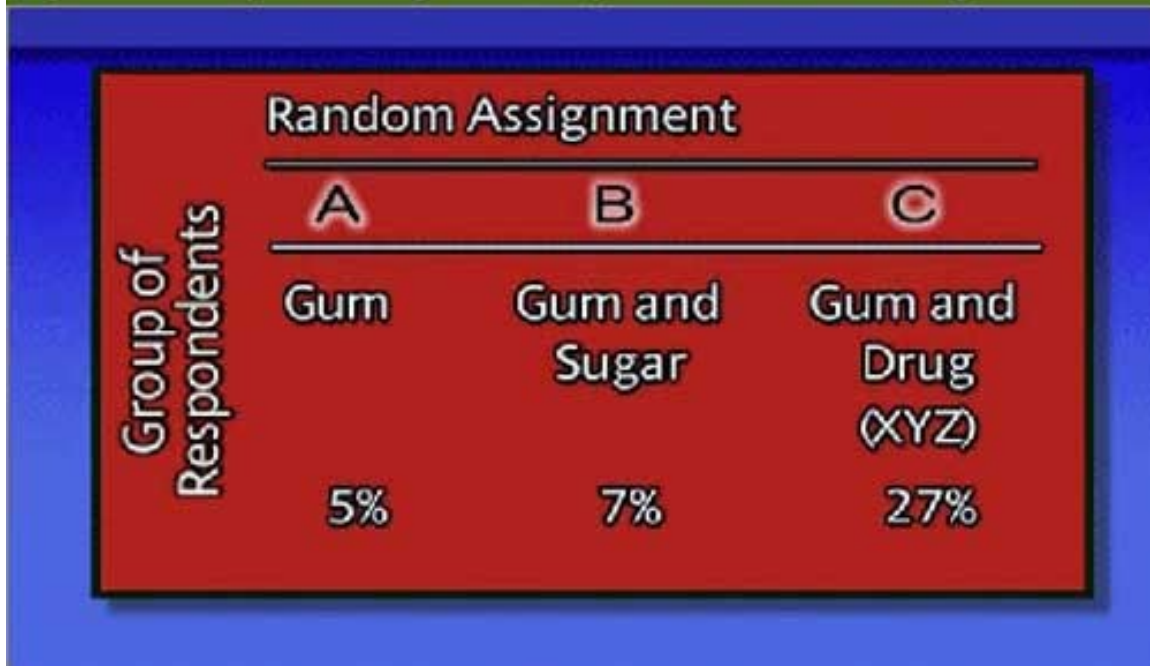
Sociologists do perform studies that allow for correlation research conclusions. There are three types of correlations. Direct correlation which means that the variables change in the same direction (e.g., the more education you have the more money you make). Inverse correlation which means that the variables change in opposite directions (e.g., the more education you have the less criminal activity you get caught doing). Spurious correlation which is an apparent relationship between two variables which indicates their relationship to a third variable and not to each other (e.g., the more education you have, the higher your family's standard of living, and the lower your likelihood of participating in criminal activities). In other words there are other correlated factors that influence criminal behavior that simultaneously are at play.

Sometimes sociologists perform Field Experiments are studies which utilize experimental design but are initiated in everyday settings and non-laboratory environments. For example, a sociologist might manipulate the levels of lighting to study how factory work performance is impacted (Google Hawthorn Effect). A few other methods are sometimes used by Sociologists. Participant Observation is a research method where the researcher participates in activities and more or less assumes membership in the group she studies. Content Analysis occurs when the researcher systematically and quantitatively describes the contents of some form of media. Secondary Analysis is the analysis of data that have already been gathered by others. Family Research studies tend to be survey studies, clinical observations, participant observations, secondary analysis of existing data, or qualitative interviews of family members.

One of the largest social surveys taken in the United States has been the General Social Surveys collected almost every year since 1972. It has provided 27 national samples with over 50,000 survey takers and thousands of variables as of 2008 (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/General_Social_Survey retrieved 5 February, 2010). These large volumes of data and variables allow researchers to study the family at a scale that

most could never attain if left to fund and collect the data for themselves.  I published an article recently about the financial plight of elderly widowed women in the US.  The married women had much higher financial resources than the unmarried women.  In general women had fewer resources than the men (see Hammond et al. 2008, Resource Variations and Marital Status among Later-Life Elderly, JACS Vol2 #1, pages 47-60).  By the way, my four co-authors on that article were Senior Students in our department here at UVU.

In Great Britain, the Family Resource Survey began in 1992 and has provided much needed insight into the needs and functioning of these families (Search http://www.natcen.ac.uk/  for family research studies online).  In China, a US team of researchers performed a survey research study called the National Health and Nutrition Survey (retrieved 5 Feb., 2009 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/China_Health_and_Nutrition_Survey).  Numerous family and health data were collected for study.  In Iraq, a medical family survey was conducted by the World Health Organization and Iraqi officials wherein over 9,000 households were surveyed (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iraq_Family_Health_Survey).  The focus here was on the ravages that the ongoing war had taken on families and social networks.

Clinical observation studies typically take place in counseling, medical, residential treatment settings, or community centers.  Perhaps two of the most prominent clinical researchers of the family have been Doctors Judith Wallerstein and John Gottman.  Doctor Wallerstein studied children of divorce over the course of 25 years and has made a thorough study of the impacts that divorce has had on these children and their adult marriages and life experiences  (see research-based books: The Good Marriage (1995 HM); Second Chances: 1996 HM); Surviving the Breakup (1996 HC); and The Unexpected Legacy of Divorce (2000H)).

Dr. John Gottman studied couples in depth by videotaping them in clinically controlled apartments "love labs" where he observed their daily interaction patterns and carefully analyzed the footage of their interaction patterns.  His research lead to the "Four Horsemen of Divorce" and the classification of 4 aspects of deeply troubled marriages: Defensiveness, Stonewalling, Criticism, and Contempt (see research-based books: The Relationship Cure (2002 TRP); Why Marriages Succeed or Fail (1995 FP); Seven Principles (2007 TRP); and Ten Lessons to Transform Your Marriage (2007 TRP).

Participant observations are much less common than surveys and clinical studies.  They basically are studies where the researcher lives in, belongs to, or participates in the very social familial experience that is being studied.  I read of one researcher who sat on a chair in the home of parents of newly adopted children with disabilities make their adjustments of the new family member into the family system.  This and similar studies tend to take many hours and yield lots of information about a very narrow and specific research question.

The National Survey of Families and Households was collected in the early 1990s where 13,000+ families were interviewed in depth for survey information (Search Web for "Bumpass and Sweet NSFH").  This massive data set now exist in electronic form and can be analyzed by anyone seeking to look at specific research questions that pertain to many different aspects of the family experience in the US at that time.  When a

researcher analyzes existing data it is called Secondary Analysis.  This would apply to a research examining any of the above mentioned surveys, the US Census, or even the Population Reference Bureau's world data available free at www.prb.org.

Finally, family members can be interviewed through in-depth qualitative interviews designed to capture the nuances of their experiences.  This is what Dr. Judith Wallerstein did when she wrote the book, The Good Marriage (1995).  She carefully interviewed 50 happily married couples that were considered by those around them to have a really good marriage.  Her work was published in an era of family research that was flooded with studies about divorce and family dysfunction.  The Good Marriage began, in my estimation, a turn of events that made it more acceptable to study the positive functioning and side of family experiences in the US.

Just for fun I've added an interesting survey my students and I developed to study dating patterns here at UVU in 2006. Some of my students were interested in why we are drawn to those we date and which factors lead us toward staying together or breaking up.
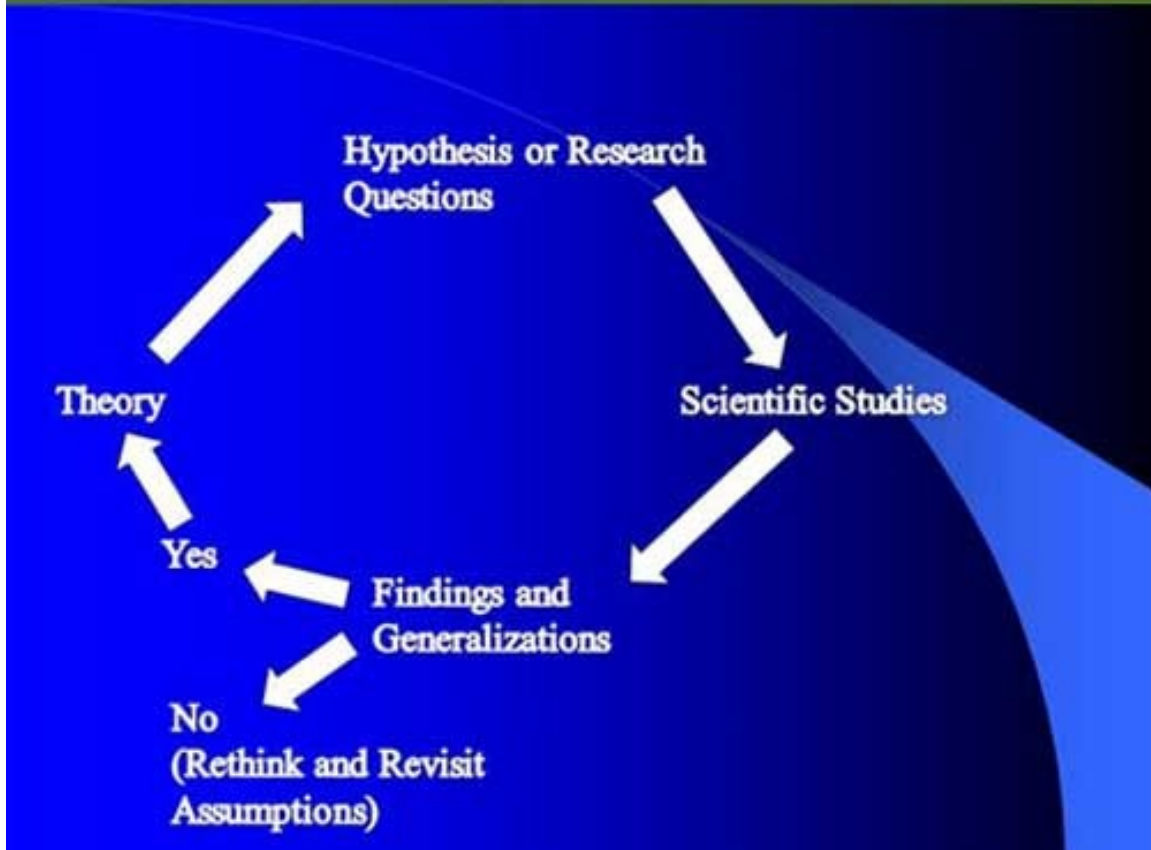
## Chapter 03-Theories & the Family

### Making Sense of Abstract Theories

Sociological theories are the core and underlying strength of the discipline.  They guide researchers in their studies.  They also guide practitioners in their intervention strategies.  And they will provide you with a basic understanding of how to see the larger social picture in your own personal life.  Theory is a set of interrelated concepts used to describe, explain, and predict how society and its parts are related to each other.  The metaphor I've used for many years to illustrate the usefulness of a theory is what I call the "goggles metaphor."  Goggles are a set of inter-related parts that help us see things more clearly.  Goggles work because the best scientific components work together to magnify, enlarge, clarify, and expand to our view the thing we are studying.

Theories are sets of inter-related concepts and ideas that have been scientifically tested and combined to magnify, enlarge, clarify, and expand our understanding of people, their behaviors, and their societies.  Without theories, science would be a futile exercise in statistics.  In the diagram below you can see the process by which a theory leads sociologist to perform a certain type of study with certain types of questions that can test the assumptions of the theory.  Once the study is administered the findings and generalizations can be considered to see if they support the theory.  If they do, similar studies will be performed to repeat and fine-tune the process.  If the findings and generalizations do not support the theory, the sociologist rethinks and revisits the assumptions they made.

## Figure 1. The Theory Research Cycle

Hypothesis or Research Questions

Theory

Scientific Studies

Yes

Findings and Generalizations

No
(Rethink and Revisit Assumptions)

Here's a real-life scientific example. In the 1960's two researchers named Cumming and Henry studied the processes of aging. They devised a theory on aging that had assumptions built into it. These were simply put, that all elderly people realize the inevitability of death and begin to systematically disengage from their previous youthful roles while at the same time society prepares to disengage from them (see Maddox et al. 1987 The Encyclopedia of Aging, Springer Pub. NY) for much more detail. Cumming and Henry tested their theory on a large number of elderly persons. Findings and generalization consistently yielded a "no" in terms of support for this theory. For all intents and purposes this theory was abandoned and is only used in references such as these (for a more scientifically supported theory on aging Google "Activity Theory and/or Continuity Theory"). Theories have to be supported by research and they also provide a framework for how specific research should be conducted.

By the way theories can be used to study society-millions of people in a state, country, or even at the world level. When theories are used at this level they are referred to as Macro Theories, theories which best fit the study of massive numbers of people (typically Conflict and Functional theories). When theories are used to study small groups or individuals, say a couple, family, or team, they are referred to as being Micro Theories, theories which best fit the study of small groups and their members (typically Symbolic Interactionism or Social Exchange theories). In many cases, any of the four main theories can be applied at either the macro or micro levels.

There are really two distinct types of theories. First, Grand Theory is a theory which

deals with the universal aspects of social processes or problems and is based on abstract ideas and concepts rather than on case specific evidence.  These include Conflict, Functionalism, Symbolic Interactionism, and Social Exchange Theories; second, Middle-Range Theory is a theory derived from specific scientific findings and focuses on the interrelation of two or more concepts applied to a very specific social process or problem. Robert K. Merton (1910-2003) was a functional theory-based sociologist who taught the value of using smaller more specifically precise theories in trying to explain smaller and more specific social phenomena.  These theories include Continuity, Activity, Differential Association, and Labeling theories.  (see American Sociology Association, Theory http://www.asatheory.org/).

Let's consider the 4 grand theories one at a time.  The Conflict Theory is a macro theory. Macro theory is a sociological theory designed to study the larger social, global, and societal level of sociological phenomena.  This theory was founded by a German philosopher, economist, sociologist, and revolutionary (1818-1883).  Marx was a witness to oppression perpetrated by society's elite members against the masses of poor.  He had very little patience for the capitalistic ideals that undergirded these powerful acts of inhumane exploitation of the average person. To him struggle was innate to all human societies.  Later another German named Max Weber (1864-1920; pronounced "Veybur") further developed this sociological theory and refined it to a more moderate position. Weber studied capitalism further but argued against Marx's outright rejection of it.

## Conflict Theory

Conflict theory is especially useful in understanding war, wealth and poverty, the haves and the have nots, revolutions, political strife, exploitation, divorce, ghettos, discrimination and prejudice, domestic violence, rape, child abuse, slavery, and more conflict-related social phenomena.  Conflict theory claims that society is in a state of perpetual conflict and competition for limited resources.  Marx and Weber, were they alive today, would likely use Conflict Theory to study the unprecedented bailouts by the US government which have proven to be a rich-to-rich wealth transfer.

Conflict Theory assumes that those who have perpetually try to increase their wealth at the expense and suffering of those who have not.  It is a power struggle which is most often won by wealthy elite and lost by the common person of common means.  Power is the ability to get what one wants even in the presence of opposition.  Authority is the institutionalized legitimate power. By far the bourgeoisie, wealthy elite (royalty, political, and corporate leaders), have the most power.  Bourgeoisie are the "Goliaths" in society who often bully their wishes into outcomes.  The Proletariat are the common working class, lower class, and poor members of society.  According to Marx (see diagram below) the Bourgeoisie and Proletariat cannot both have it their way and in order to offset the wealth and power of the Bourgeoisie the proletariat often rise up and revolt against their oppressors (The French, Bolshevik, United States, Mexican, and other revolutions are examples).

Figure 2. The Core Issues in the Conflict Theory

In fact Marx and Weber realized long ago that society does have different classes and a similar pattern of relatively few rich persons in comparison to the majority who are poor- the rich call the shots. Look below at the photographic montage of homes in one US neighborhood which were run down, poor, trashy, and worth very little. They were on the West side of this gully and frustrated many who lived on the East side who were forced to drive through these "slums" to reach their own mansions.

Figure 3. Photo Montage of Haves and Have Nots in a US Neighborhood

These Two Neighborhoods Were Connected by One Bridge Over A Gully

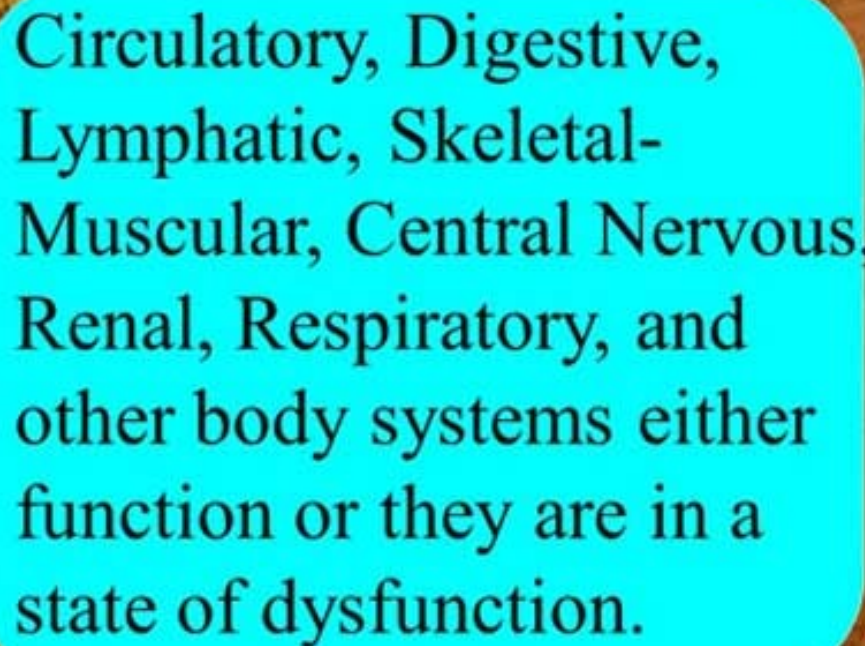Yet, They Might As Well Have Been on Separate Planets Given The Class Differences...

The Conflict Theory has been repeatedly tested against scientifically derived data and it repeatedly proves to have a wide application among many different levels of sociological study. That is not to say that all sociological phenomena are conflict-based. But, most Conflict theorist would argue that more often than not Conflict assumptions do apply. Feminist theory is a theoretical perspective that is couched primarily in Conflict Theory assumptions.

## Functionalism or Structural Functionalism Theory

The next grand theory is called Functionalism or Structural Functionalism. Functionalist theory claims that society is in a state of balance and kept that way through the function of society's component parts. This theory has underpinnings in biological and ecological concepts (see diagram below). Society can be studied the same way the human body can be studied-by analyzing what specific systems are working or not working, diagnosing problems, and devising solutions to restore balance. Socialization, religious involvement, friendship, health care, economic recovery, peace, justice and injustice, population growth or decline, community, romantic relationships, marriage and divorce, and normal and abnormal family experiences are just a few of the evidences of functional processes in our society.

## Figure 4. The Core Issues in the Functional Theory

Circulatory, Digestive, Lymphatic, Skeletal-Muscular, Central Nervous, Renal, Respiratory, and other body systems either function or they are in a state of dysfunction.

Sure, Functionalists would agree with Conflict Theorists that things break down in society and that unfair treatment of others is common. These break downs are called Dysfunctions, breakdowns or disruptions in society and its parts, which threaten social stability. Enron's collapse, the ruination of 14,000 employees' retirement funds, the loss of millions in shareholder investments, and the serious doubt it left in the mind of US investors about the Stock Market's credibility and reliability which lasted for nearly a decade are examples of dysfunctions in the economic sector of the economy. But, Functionalists also look at two types of functions, manifest and latent functions. Manifest functions is are the apparent and intended functions of institutions in society. Latent functions are the less apparent, unintended, and often unrecognized functions in social institutions and processes.

Back to Enron, the government's manifest function includes regulation of investment rules and laws in the Stock market to ensure credibility and reliability. After the Enron collapse, every company offering stocks for trade underwent a government supervised audit of its accounting processes in order to restore the public trust. For the most part balance was restored in the Stock Market (to a certain degree at least). There are still many imbalances in the investment, mortgage, and banking sectors which have to be readjusted; but, that's the point society does readjust and eventually recover some degree of function.

Does the government also provide latent or accidental functions to society? Yes. Take

for example the US military bases.  Of all the currently open US military bases, all are economic boons for the local communities surrounding them.  All provide jobs, taxes, tourism, retail, and government contract monies that would otherwise go somewhere else.  When the discussion about closing military bases comes up in Washington DC, Senators and members of Congress go to work trying to keep their community's bases open.

As you can already tell, Functionalism is more positive and optimistic that Conflict Theory (the basis for much criticism by many Conflict Theorists).  Functionalists realize that just like the body, societies get "sick" or dysfunction.  By studying society's parts and processes, Functionalists can better understand how society remains stable or adjust to destabilizing forces when unwanted change is threatened.  According to this theory most societies find that healthy balance and maintain it (unless they don't and collapse as many have in the history of the world.  Equilibrium  is the state of balance maintained by social processes that help society adjust and compensate for forces that might tilt it onto a path of destruction.

Getting back to the Conflict Example of the gully separating extremely wealthy and poor neighborhoods, look at this Habitat for Humanity picture below.  I took this close to my own home, because it represents what Functional Theorists claim happens-component parts of society respond to dysfunctions in ways that help to resolve problems.  In this house the foundation was dug, poured, and dried within a week.  From the foundation to this point was three working days.  This house is now finished and lived in, thanks mostly to the Habitat non-profit process and the work of many volunteers.  From the Functionalism perspective, optimism is appropriate and fits the empirical data gathered in society.

Figure 5. Photo of a Recently Finished Habitat for Humanity Home

## Symbolic Interactionism Theory

Interactionism comes in two theoretical forms, Symbolic Interaction and Social Exchange. By far, my favorite sociological theory is Symbolic Interactionism. Symbolic Interaction claims that society is composed of ever present interactions among individuals who share symbols and their meanings. This is a very useful theory for understanding other people; improving communications; learning and teaching skills in cross-cultural relations; and generally speaking, "not doing harm to your roommates" as many of my students often say after understanding this theory. Values, communication, which hunting, crisis management, fear from crime, fads, love and all that comes with it, "evil and sin," what's hot and what's not, alien abduction beliefs, "who I am," litigation, mate selection, arbitration, dating joys and woes, and both personal national meanings and definitions (September 1, 2001-WTC) can all be better understood using Symbolic Interactionism.

Once you realize that individuals are by their social natures very symbolic with one another, then you begin to understand how to persuade your friends and family, how to understand others' points of view, and how to resolve misunderstandings. This theory magnifies the concepts of meanings. Think about these three words, LOVE, LUST, and LARD. Each letter is a symbol. When combined in specific order, each word can be defined. Because we memorize words and their meanings we know that there is a striking difference between LOVE and LUST. We also know that LARD has nothing to do with either of these two terms (for most people at least). Contrast these word pairs,

hate versus hope, help versus hurt, advise versus abuse, and connect versus corrupt. These words, like many others, carry immense meaning and when juxtaposed sound like the beginning of philosophical ideas.

Symbolic Interactionism makes it possible for you to be a college student. It makes it so you understand your professors' expectations and know how to step up to them. Our daily interactions are filled with symbols and an ongoing process of interactions with other people based on the meanings of these symbols. "How's it going?" Ever had anyone you've greeted actually answer that question? Most of us never have. It's a greeting, not a question, in the US culture.

If you want to surprise someone, answer them next time they say How's it going? If they have a sense of humor, they might get a kick out of it. If not, you may have to explain yourself. Symbolic Interactionism Theory explores the way we communicate and helps us to understand how we grow up with our self-concept (see socialization chapter). It helps you to know what the expectations of your roles are and if you perceive yourself as doing a good job or not in meeting those expectations.

There are many other Symbolic Interactionism concepts out there to study, let's just talk about one more-The Thomas Theorem or Definition of the Situation. Thomas Theorem is often called the "definition of the situation" which is basically if people perceive or define something as being real then it is real in its consequences. I give a few examples from the media, a woman was diagnosed as HIV positive. She made her funeral plans, made sure her children would be cared for then prepared to die. Two-years later she was retested. It turned out her first test results were a false positive, yet she acted as though she had AIDS and was certainly going to die soon from it.

In a hypothetical case, a famous athlete (you pick the sport) defines himself as invincible and too famous to be held legally accountable for his criminal behavior. He is subsequently found guilty. A politician (you pick the party and level of governance) believes that his/her constituents will tolerate anything. When he/she doesn't get reelected no one is surprised. The point is that when we define our situation as being real, we act as though it is real (regardless of the objective facts in the matter).

Symbolic Interactionism is very powerful in helping people to understand each other. Newlyweds, roommates, life-long friends, young adult children and their parents, and teammates can all utilize the principles to "walk a mile in the other's shoes;" "see the world through their glasses;" and/or simply "get it." One of the major realization that comes with Symbolic Interactionism is that you begin to understand the other people in your life and come to know that they are neither right nor wrong, just of a different point of view. They just define social symbols with varying meanings.

To understand the other person's symbols and meanings, is to approach common ground. Listen to this statement by Rosa Parks (1913-2005), "All I was doing was trying to get home from work." In 1955 when she refused to give up her seat on the bus to a White person, it proved to be a spark for the Civil Rights Movement that involved the leadership of Martin Luther King Jr. and many other notable leaders. It was Rosa Park's simple and honest statement that made her act of defiance so meaningful. The lion share of the nation was collectively tired and sick of the mistreatment of Blacks. Many Whites joined the protests while others quietly sympathized. After all that was written in the history

books about it, a simple yet symbolic gesture by Rosa Parks symbolically started the healing process for the United States.

## Social Exchange Theory

The remaining theory and second interactionist theory is Social Exchange. Social Exchange claims that society is composed of ever present interactions among individuals who attempt to maximize rewards while minimizing costs. Assumptions in this theory are similar to Conflict theory assumptions yet have their interactistic underpinnings. Basically, human beings are rational creatures, capable of making sound choices once the pros and cons of the choice are understood. This theory uses a formula to measure the choice making processes.

(REWARDS-COSTS)=OUTCOMES

or

("What I get out of it"-"What I lose by doing it")="My decision"

We look at the options available to us and weigh as best we can how to maximize our rewards and minimize our losses. Sometimes we get it right and other times we make a bad choice. One of the powerful aspects of this theory is the concept of Equity. Equity is a sense that the interactions are fair to us and fair to others involved by the consequences of our choices. For example, why is it that women who work 40 hours a week and have a husband who works 40 hours per week do not perform the same number of weekly hours of housework and childcare? Scientists have surveyed many couples to find the answer. Most often, it boils down to a sense of fairness or equity. Because she defines it as her role to do housework and childcare, while he doesn't; because they tend to fight when she does try to get him to perform housework, and because she may think he's incompetent, they live with an inequitable arrangement as though it were equitable (don't get me started on the evidence that supports men sharing the actual roles of housekeepers and childcare providers-see Joseph Pleck, "Working Wives/ Working Husbands" Sage Pub, CA).

Each of us tries constantly to weigh pros and cons and to maximize the outcomes of our choices. I often provide a rhetorical challenge to my students when I ask them to go down to the cafeteria, pick the least attractive person they can find, take them on a date where they drive and they pay for everything, then give the person a 7 second kiss at the end of the date. "Why would we do that?" they typically ask. "That's my point," I typically reply, having increased a bit of their understanding of the Social Exchange Theory.

Any of the four theories can be used to study any individual and collective behaviors. But, some do work better than others because their assumptions more precisely match the issue of interest. Divorce might be studied from the Conflict Theory to understand how things become adversarial and how and why contested divorces sometimes become violent. Divorce might be studied from the Functionalism Theory to understand how divorce is a means to resolving untenable social circumstance-it is a gesture designed to restore balance and equilibrium. Divorce might be studied using the Symbolic Interactionism Theory to identify how people define their roles before, during, and after the divorce and how they reestablish new roles as unmarried adults. Divorce might also

be studied using the Social Exchange Theory to understand the processes and choices that lead to the final divorce decision, distribution of assets, child custody decrees and the final legal change of status (see Levinger and Moles, "Divorce and Separation: Context, Causes, and Consequences" 1979, Basic Books).

I've enclosed a simple summary sheet of the four basic theories used most by sociologists.  It serves well as a reference guide, but can't really replace your efforts to study sociological theories in more detail.  On the next page I've enclosed a self-assessment that may help you to assess your leanings towards these four main theories and two others that are often used by sociologists. On the self-assessment don't be surprised if you find that all four theories fit your world-view.  Keep in mind they have been extensively studied for a very long time.
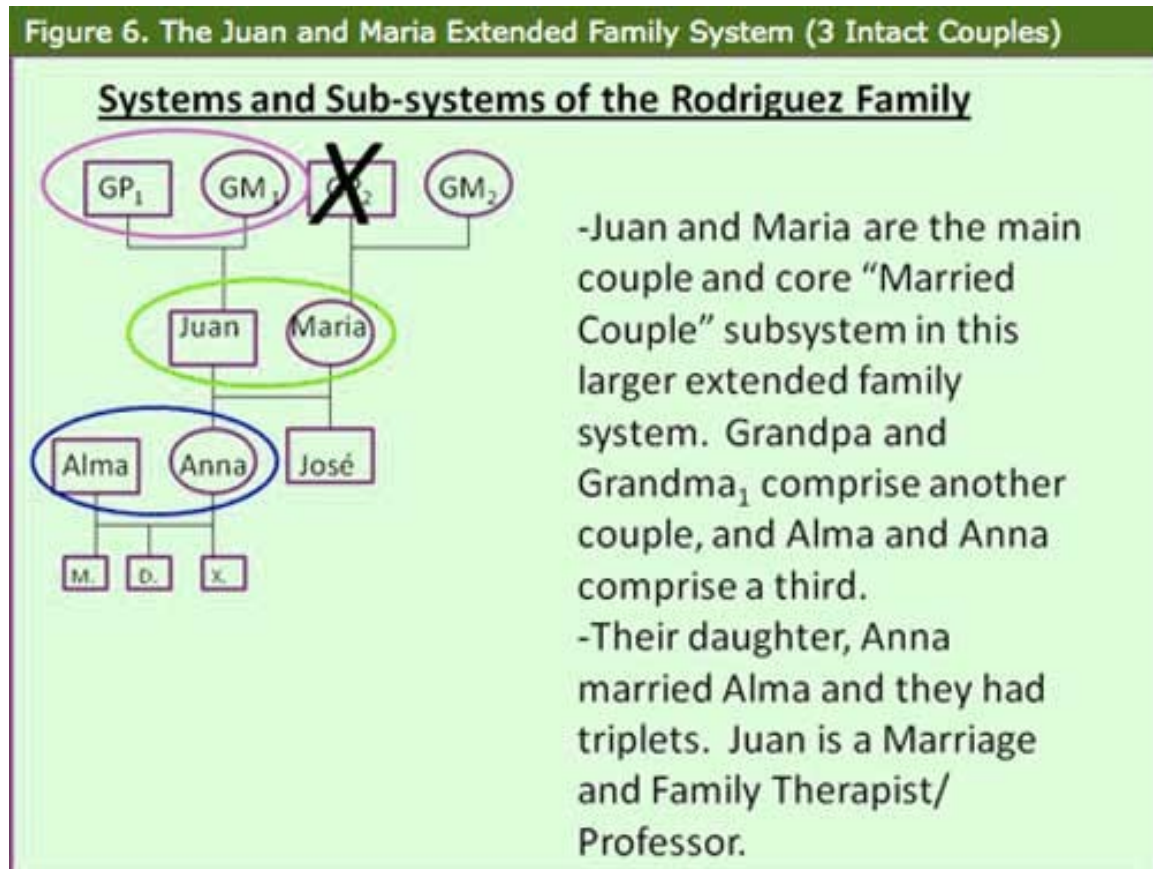
## Family Systems Theory

When understanding the family, the Family System Theory has proven to be very powerful.  Family Systems Theory claims that the family is understood best by conceptualizing it as a complex, dynamic, and changing collection of parts, subsystems and family members.  Much like a mechanic would interface with the computer system of a broken down car to diagnose which systems are broken (transmission, electric, fuel, etc.) and repair it; a therapist or researcher would interact with family members to diagnose how and where the systems of the family are in need of repair or intervention.  To fully understand what is meant by systems and subsystems look at Figure 6 below.  Family Systems Theory comes under the Functional Theory umbrella and shares the functional approach of considering the dysfunctions and functions of  complex groups and organizations.

Figure 6 shows the extended family system which centers around a middle-aged couple named Juan and Maria Rodriguez.  Juan is a tenured university professor who lives with his parents, his wife's widowed mother, his two children Anna and José, Anna's husband Alma and the 3-month old triplets Anna just delivered C-section.  Notice that Maria's father passed away, so he has an X over his place in this diagram.  Because Juan is financially established he can support the large extended family.  This represents a 4-generation complex family system.  There are three couples living within this home, Juan and Maria, Grandpa and Grandma, and Alma and Anna. But, there are various levels of strain felt by each couple.

Today multi-generational family systems are becoming more common, but are typically three generations where the married adult child and his or her spouse and children move back home.  Juan and Maria raised their two children Anna and José with tremendous support from grandparents.  Maria's mother was a college graduate and has been a big help to José who is a sophomore in junior college and a basketball team member.  Juan's mother and father are the oldest family members and are becoming more and more dependent. Juan's mother requires some daily care from Maria.

In fact, Maria has the most individual strain of any family member in this family system. Juan and Maria have each felt a strain on their marriage because of the strains that come from each subsystem and family member who depends upon them. Think about it-they both have in-laws in the house; they both contribute to the care needs of the elderly family members; and they both try to support their son's basketball games and

tournaments.  But, most of all, there are three brand new babies in the house.



Figure 6. The Juan and Maria Extended Family System (3 Intact Couples)

**Systems and Sub-systems of the Rodriguez Family**

-Juan and Maria are the main couple and core "Married Couple" subsystem in this larger extended family system. Grandpa and Grandma$_1$ comprise another couple, and Alma and Anna comprise a third.
-Their daughter, Anna married Alma and they had triplets.  Juan is a Marriage and Family Therapist/ Professor.
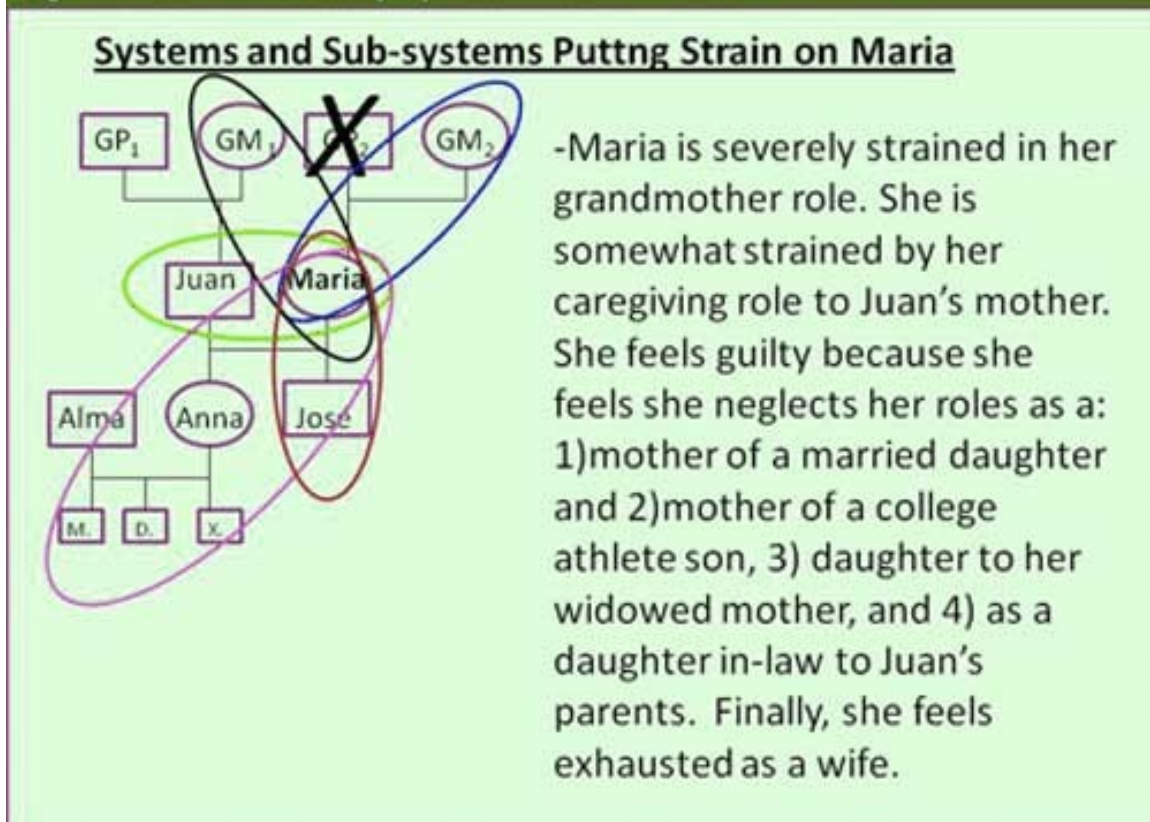
Those new babies have strained the entire family system, but extreme strain lands on Maria because Alma is a second year medical student and spends long hours in class and training. Anna is extremely overwhelmed by bottle-feedings, diapers, and other hands-on baby care demands.  So, Maria is supporting both her daughter and three grandsons, but it's overwhelming.  Look at Figure 7 Below.

Maria is the Matriarch of this family system.  She simultaneously belongs to the following subsystems, Daughter-Mother, Daughter-in-law-Father & Mother-in-law, Spousal, Mother-Son, Mother-Daughter, Mother-in-law-Son-in-law, and Grandmother-grandchildren.  Normally a large number of subsystems in one's life does not imply strain or stress.  But, Juan and Maria have very demanding circumstances with Maria providing caregiving to Juan's Mother, caregiving to her post-childbirth daughter, Anna, and to the newborn triplets. Maria consults with Juan during a diner date.  Juan holds a family meeting on Sunday evening.  In it Juan's father volunteers to help Anna with the feeding and holding of the triplets.  Juan arranges for elder-care nursing for his mother.

Figure 7. Extended Family System Strain on Maria

Systems and Sub-systems Puttng Strain on Maria

-Maria is severely strained in her grandmother role. She is somewhat strained by her caregiving role to Juan's mother. She feels guilty because she feels she neglects her roles as a: 1)mother of a married daughter and 2)mother of a college athlete son, 3) daughter to her widowed mother, and 4) as a daughter in-law to Juan's parents. Finally, she feels exhausted as a wife.

Anna decides to hire a team of teenaged young women to work hourly as her assistants. Maria's mother feels that she can help with meal preparation. Interestingly, Maria insists that she continue to contribute as a grandmother and on the weekend with Juan's mother (perhaps she felt the need to fulfill her role expectations and preserve some self-dignity). All agree and move forward. Juan, as do many Marriage and Family Therapists, already knows that a by looking at the family as a complex system with inter-locking and interdependent subsystems, solutions can be found among the members of the system and subsystems.

This brings up the issue of boundaries. "Boundaries" is a concept used in human relationships and family systems which are basically defined as distinct: emotional, psychological, or physical separateness between individuals, roles, and subsystems in the family. Boundaries are crucial to healthy family functioning. In my many years of teaching Family Systems theory I have found that the "My House, My Boundaries" (developed by Ron J. Hammond, 1998) metaphor is very useful in understanding why and how healthy and unhealthy boundaries impact the family systems as strong as they do (See Figure 8 below).

Figure 8. My House My Boundaries Metaphor



MY HOUSE MY BOUNDARIES--METAPHOR
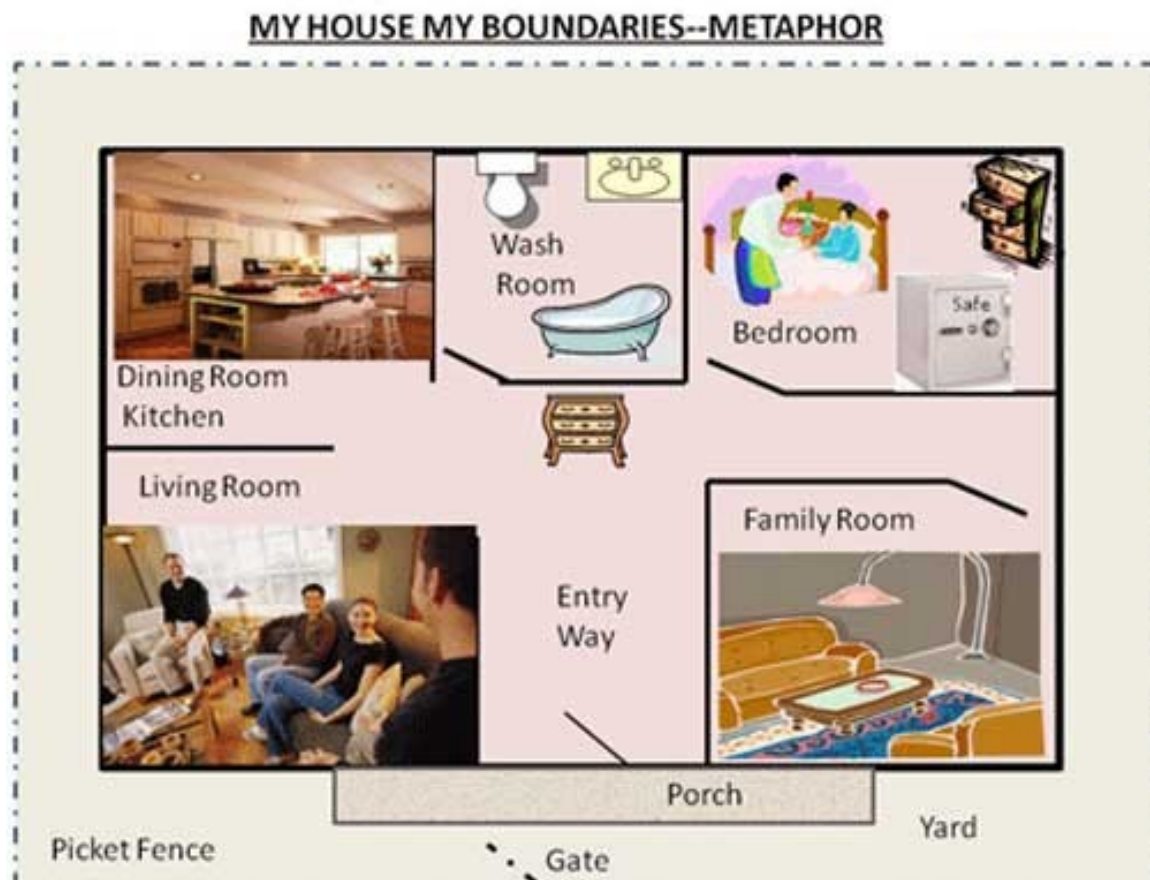
## My House, My Boundaries

Social scientists have known for years that boundary maintenance is important for healthy relationships. From the Family Systems perspective we learn that family subsystems need to be maintained properly so that the overall family system functions properly. It is also important that interpersonal boundaries be maintained. But how exactly does one maintain them in our families which tend to be diverse and complex? One answer is to use the house paradigm of personal boundaries. Think of yourself as having a personal house which exists in the suburbs of your many relationships. We put locks and latches on our real house doors and windows to keep intruders out. This paradigm will teach you how to put relationship locks and latches on our personal house so that only those you choose to invite into your house will be allowed in and at a level of interaction that you are comfortable with.

Each of us has the responsibility of taking charge of our own house. That means we choose which people we invite in, when they are invited in, and which level of closeness in our house we allow them to share with us. We also have the responsibility of ensuring that we don't violate others' house boundaries. Look at the floor plan included here. Think of it in terms of varying levels of intimate or personal interaction with others. The gate is the most superficial level of interaction; whereas the bedroom is the deepest level.

Let's consider each part of the house and its level of intimacy.  The Gate is where we typically interact with strangers.  We say hello, hi, how's it going'? We often don't really want to have the person respond.  These are simply polite greetings we use with people we don't know.

The Porch & Entry Way is for people you are getting to know better, say another student you sit next to in class.  You might begin to share personal information about your name, where you are from, or your major.  At these levels you rarely share extremely personal information.  That is reserved for people you have known for a long time and already trust.

Let's say that after a few weeks of school, you form a study group including the classmate you previously introduced yourself to.  After a few tests and projects, you find that everyone in the study group has been sharing personal information.  This might include information about your family, career aspirations, struggles with your parents, and the like.  You are now interacting at the Living Room level in your house.  You share information but are still guarded about the more vulnerable things about yourself.

In the Kitchen you share more personal information.  This you might do with someone you are going steady with, dating, or feel very close to.  In this level of interacting, you have deeply established trust and can share your fears, concerns, weaknesses, and hopes with someone in conversation.  In the kitchen, confidences are kept.  Each knows and respects this fact.  The kitchen is often the deepest level of intimacy outside of marriage, cohabitation, or long-term commitments.  The Bedroom represents the level of intimacy that spouses and partners experience.  Here a person expresses intimacy at the most intimate level. You can think of the bedroom as representing a haven where physical and emotional intimacy can flourish.  In the bedroom we are seen by our partner in our naked form.  This implies that we are our true naked self here.  In other words, our spouse or partner accepts us and interacts with us knowing our less apparent flaws.  But even for couples, boundaries must be maintained.  Each of us has a Safe.

Our safe represents the most intimate, vulnerable, and personal part of who we are.  We rarely open it, even for our spouse or partner.  When we do open it we must train our significant other to treat its contents with the utmost in respect and dignity.  This takes practice, time, and lots of forgiveness for couples to achieve.  Only we know the combination to our safe and we choose when to open and close it.  You will notice that the bedroom can be attached to another bedroom.  You and your spouse or partner each have your own house and each interact in each other's bedroom simultaneously.

Often newlyweds have the challenge of removing extended family members from the bedroom level (especially parents).

We have heard horror stories of parents interfering with their married children's relationship by giving unsolicited financial, sexual, and/or contraceptive advice; setting up financial deals which keep the children indebted to them; and over involving their married  children in their family so that their children  have to struggle to establish their own marriage traditions and customs.  Couples sometimes have to be extremely diligent in removing the parents or other offenders from their bedroom issues.  If this is the case for you keep in mind that in the long run, it will be worth it.  Relationships tend to be healthier and people tend to be happier when boundaries are maintained.  The other two

rooms represent unique concepts in this paradigm.

The Washroom represents a place where you can clean up the messes people sometimes bring into your house. For example, sometimes parents get too personal with their newly married children and can be offensive at times. After you and your spouse or partner remove them to the level of interacting you are comfortable with, you can symbolically wash their muddy footprints out of your rug, forgive, and get on with things. The Family Room represents the level of interacting that is appropriate to the family but not necessarily to others outside of the family system. Family jokes, stories, traditions, and other appropriate interactions occur in this room.

When family boundaries are violated there tends to be two forms of violation. Home invasion where the individual inserts themselves into the your intimate life uninvited (e.g., "how much money do you make?; why do you keep making the same mothering mistakes over and over?; or what types of sexual maneuvers do you practice?"). Then there is the Abduction, where the individual kidnaps you into his or her personal intimacies against your will (e.g., Let me tell you what my partner and I did in bed last night…; my husband is such a loser when it comes to making money. Just last week he got passed over for a promotion…; or my mom gives her pain meds to any of us children who ask."). Neither the home invasion nor abduction is healthy when unwanted or invited.

As was mentioned before, you are responsible for maintaining the level of interaction in your house. You should interact at levels that you define as comfortable and appropriate for you. Many in our society are conditioned not to respect boundaries and most who don't are not even aware of why it is such an unhealthy practice. There are numerous methods you can use to either remove an intruder from rooms in your house or to remove yourself if you are invited into someone else's house at a level you are not comfortable with.

First, you might distract the other person by changing the subject or talking to another person in the room. Make sure NOT to give approval to those who violate boundaries, since many are hungry for constant affirmations and will continue to violate boundaries if it rewards them this way. Second, you might educate the person about boundaries and the level of intimacy he or she is interacting on and why you are uncomfortable with it. Third, you might also consider harshly confronting the other person (the sooner the better in most relationships) or if your previous efforts appear to have brought little change in the relationship. Fourth, and most extremely, you may need to sever destructive relationships where boundary violations threaten the unity and cohesiveness of the family system (e.g., a person seeking extramarital intimacy).

You are the very best judge of specifically how to maintain your personal boundaries. Keep in mind that this paradigm is based on the belief that personal boundary maintenance is really about interacting with others based on your true feelings, needs, and wants. It is not about controlling others. It is about self-control and to a large degree honesty with our self. We have included a worksheet to assist you in thinking through those strategies you might employ for specific people. We have given you an example of a generic floor plan of the house (you would do best to draw your own). In the Workbook there is a self-study questionnaire, worksheet, disposition toward theories, and

a boundary maintenance questionnaire to help you personalize these principles.

## Chapter 04-Gender and Socialization

### What Is The Difference Between Sex and Gender?

By far, sex and gender has been one of the most socially significant social factors in the history of the world and the United States. Sex is one's biological classification as male or female and is set into motion at the moment the sperm fertilizes the egg. Sex can be precisely defined at the genetic level with XX being female and XY being male. Believe it or not, there are very few sex differences based on biological factors. Does this surprise you? Many of my students say "but what about that whole opposite sex argument?" Truth is, biologically there is no opposite sex. Look at table 1 below to see sex differences. For the sake of argument, ignore the reproductive differences and you basically see taller, stronger, and faster males. The real difference is the reproductive body parts, their function, and corresponding hormones. The average US woman has about 2 children in her lifetime. She also experiences a monthly period. Other than that and a few more related issues listed in Table 1, reproductive roles are a minor difference in the overall daily lives women, yet so very much importance has been placed on these differences throughout history.

| Table 1. Known Biological Sex Differences | |
|---|---|
| **Females** | **Males** |
| REPRODUCTIVE | |
| Vagina | Penis |
| Uterus | Testicles |
| Ovaries | Scrotum |
| Breast development | Breast dormant |
| Cyclical hormones | |
| **OTHER** | |
| Shorter | Taller |
| Less aggression-Testosterone | More aggression-Testosterone |
| Runs a bit slower | Runs a bit faster |
| Less upper body strength | More upper body strength |
| Live years longer-(7 years in developed countries) | Live shorter lives- (3 years shorter worldwide) |

See www.prb.org World Population Data Sheet 2008

We have much more in common than differences. In table 2 you see a vast list of similarities common to both men and women. Every major system of the human body functions in very similar ways to the point that health guidelines, disease prevention and maintenance, and even organ transplants are very similar and guided under a large umbrella of shared guidelines. True, there are medical specialists in treating men and women, but again the similarities outweigh the differences. Today you probably ate breakfast, took a shower, walked in the sunlight, sweated, slept, used the bathroom, was exposed to germs and pathogens, grew more hair and finger nails, exerted your muscles to the point that they became stronger, and felt and managed stress. So did every man and woman you know and in very similar ways.

**Table 2.  Known Biological Sex Similarities**
1. Digestive System
2. Respiratory System
3. Circulatory System
4. Lymphatic System
5. Urinary System
6. Musculoskeletal System
7. Nervous System
8. Endocrine System
9. Sensory System-5
10. Immune System
11. Urinary System
12. Integumentary System- Skin, Hair, and Nails
13. Excretory System

Answer this question, which sex has Estrogen, Follicle Stimulating Hormone, Luteinizing Hormone, Prolactin, mammary glands, nipples, and even Human Chorionic Gonadotropin (at times)?  Yes, you probably guessed correctly.  Both males and females have all these hormones, plus many others, including testosterone.

Not only are males and females very similar, but science has shown that we truly are more female than male in biological terms.  So, why the big debate of the battle of the sexes?  Perhaps it's because of the impact of Gender is the cultural definition of what it means to be a man or a woman.  Gender is cultural-based and varies in a thousand subtle ways across the many diverse cultures of the world.  Gender has been shaped by political, religious, philosophical, language, tradition and other cultural forces for many years.  To this day, in most countries of the world women are still oppressed and denied access to opportunities more than men and boys.  This can be seen through  many diverse historical documents.

When reading these documents, the most common theme of how women were historically oppressed in the world's societies is the omission of women as being legally, biologically, economically, and even spiritually on par with men.  The second most common theme is the assumption that women were somehow broken versions of men (Google Aristotle's The Generation of Animals, Sigmund Freud's Penis Envy, or John Grey's Mars and Venus work).

Biology has disproven the belief that women are broken versions of men.  In fact, the 23rd chromosome looks like XX in females and XY in males and the Y looks more like an X with a missing leg  than a Y.  Ironically, science has shown that males are broken or variant versions of females and the more X traits males have the better their health and longevity.

### Debunking Myths About Women

In Table 1 you saw how females carry the lion share of the biological reproduction of the human race.  Since history assumed that women were impaired because of their reproductive roles (men were not), societies have defined much of these reproductive traits as hindrances to activities.  I found an old home health guide at an antique store in

Ohio.  I bought it and was fascinated that in 1898 the country's best physicians had very inaccurate information and knowledge about the human body and how it worked (See, if you can find one, The Book of Health A Practical Family Physician, 1898, by Robert W. Patton).  Interestingly, pregnancy was considered "normal" within most circumstances while menstruation was seen as at type of disease process that had to be treated (back then most physicians were men and still are today). On pages 892-909 it refers to menstrual problems as being "unnatural" and normal only if "painless" and thus the patient should be treated rather than the "disease."  Indeed from a male scientific perspective in 1898, females and their natural reproductive cycles were problematic.

But, to the author, females were more fragile and vulnerable and should be treated more carefully than males especially during puberty.  Patton states, "The fact is that the girl has a much greater physical and a more intense mental development to accomplish than the boy…"  As for public education, he states that "The boy can do it; the girl can-sometimes…"  He attributes most of the female sexual and reproductive problems to public school which is a byproduct of "women's rights, so called."

He'd probably be stunned to see modern medicine's discoveries today.  In our day, women are not defined as being inferior in comparison to men.  But, in 1898, a physician (source of authority and scientific knowledge) had no reservations about stating the cultural norm in print, that women were considered broken in contrast to men.

Gender Socialization is the shaping of individual behavior and perceptions in such a way that the individual conforms to the socially prescribed expectations for males and females.  One has to wonder what might have been different if all women were born into societies that valued their uniqueness and similarities in comparison to men.  How much further might civilizations have progressed?  It is wisdom to avoid the exclusion of any category of people-based on biological or other traits-from full participation in the development of knowledge and progress in society.  In the history of the world, such wisdom has been ignored far too often.

## Gender Roles as a Social Force

One can better understand the historical oppression of women by considering three social factors throughout the world's history, religion, tradition, and labor-based economic supply and demand.  In almost all of the world's major religions (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, and many others) very clear distinctions have been made about Gender Roles  are socialized expectations of what is normal, desirable, acceptable, and conforming for males and females in specific jobs or positions in groups and organizations over the life course.  These gender roles have very specific meanings for the daily lives and activities of males and females who live under the religious cultures in nations throughout history and even in our day.  The Book of Leviticus in the Judeao-Christian Old Testament has many biological rituals based specifically on Women's' hygiene.  A close friend of mine performed her Master's thesis in Ancient Near East Studies on the reproductive hygiene rituals described in the book of Leviticus (see Is God a Respecter of Persons?: Another Look at the Purity Laws in Leviticus / Anne M. Adams, 2000 in  BYU Library Holdings).  In brief, she found no modern-day scientific support for these religious rituals on female's health nor on their reproduction.  Her conclusion was that these were religious codes of conduct, not biologically-based scientifically

beneficial codes.

Many ancient writings in religions refer to the flaws of females, their reproductive disadvantages, their temperament, and the rules that should govern them in the religious community.  Please don't get me wrong, if it sounds like I'm bashing religious beliefs, I'm not.  In fact many current religious doctrines have transformed as society's values of gender equality have emerged.  I am also a fan of religious worship and participation in whatsoever religion a person chooses to follow.  My point is that throughout history, religions were a dominant social force in many nations and the religious doctrines, like the cultural values, often placed women in a subjugated role to men and a number of different levels.

The second social force is tradition.  Traditions can be and have been very harsh toward women.  Look at Table 3 below which shows a scale of the outcomes of oppression toward women that have and currently do exist somewhere in the world. I have always found it remarkable that even though the average woman out lives the average man by 3 years worldwide and 7 years in developed countries, there are still a few countries where cultural and social oppression literally translates into shorter life expectancies for women.

### Table 3. Outcomes of the 10 Worse Forms of Oppression of Women-Worst to Least

10-Death from cultural and social oppression[1] (Various Countries)
9-Sexual and other forms of slavery (Western Africa and Thailand)
8-Maternal deaths (Sub-Sahara Africa and developing nations)
7-Female Genital Mutilation (Mid- Africa about 120 million victims)
6-Rape and sexual abuse (South Africa and United States are worst countries)
5-Wage disparity (worldwide)
4-No/low education for females (various degrees in most countries of the world)
3-Denial of access to jobs and careers (many developing nations)
2-Mandatory covering of females' bodies head to toe (Traditional countries, Muslim)
1-Public demeaning of women (still practiced, public and private)

[1] www.prb.org  World Population Data Sheet2008; pages 7-15. http://www.prb.org/pdf08/08WPDS_Eng.pdf (Niger, Zambia, Botswana and Namibia have lower death rates for women while Kenya, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, and Micronesia have a tie between men and women's life expectancy-this even though in developing nations the average woman outlives the average man by 3 years)

1 www.prb.org  World Population Data Sheet2008; pages 7-15. http://www.prb.org/pdf08/08WPDS_Eng.pdf  (Niger, Zambia, Botswana and Namibia have lower death rates for women while Kenya, Zimbabwe, Afghanistan, and Micronesia have a tie between men and women's life expectancy-this even though in developing nations the average woman outlives the average man by 3 years)

Some cultural traditions are so harsh that females are biologically trumped by males-this by withholding nutrition, abandoning wife and daughters, abuse, neglect, violence, refugee status,, diseases, and complications of childbirth unsupported by the government. If you study this online looking at the Population Reference Bureau's many links and reports, you will find a worldwide concerted effort to persuade government, religious, and cultural leaders to shift their focus and efforts to nurture and protect women/females (www.PRB.org see also United Nations www.un.org ). Progress has already been made to some degree, but much change is still warranted because life, health and well-being are at stake for billions of women worldwide.

One of the most repugnant traditions in our world has been and is the sales of children/women into sexual and other forms of slavery. Countless civilizations that are still influential in our modern thought and tradition have sold girls and women the same way one might sell a horse or cow.  It's estimated by a variety of organizations and sources that about 1 million women are currently forced into the sex slavery industry (boys are also sold and bought into slavery).  India, Western Africa, and Thailand are some of the most notorious regions for this atrocity Google amnesty International, Sexual Slavery, PRB.org, United Nations, and search Wikipedia.org).  Governments fail at 2 levels in the sexual slavery trade. First, they allow it to occur as in the case of Thailand where it's a major draw of male tourists; and Second, they fail to police sexual slavery which is often criminal and/or organized crime in nature.  The consequences to these girls and women are harsh at every level of human existence and is often connected to the spread of HIV and other communicable diseases.

Although pregnancy is not a disease it carries with it many health risks when governments fail to provide resources to expecting mothers before, during, and after delivery of their baby.  Maternal Death is the death of a pregnant woman resulting from pregnancy, delivery, or recovery complications.  Maternal deaths number in the hundreds of thousands and are estimated by the United Nations to be around _ million per year worldwide (See www.UN.org ).  Typically very little medical attention is required to prevent infection, mediate complications, and assist in complications to mothers.  To answer this problem one must approach it at the larger social level with government, health care systems, economy, family, and other institutional efforts.  The Population Reference Bureau puts a woman's risk of dying from maternal causes at 1 in 92 worldwide with it being as low as 1 in 6,000 in developed countries and as high as 1 in 22 for the least developed regions of the world (See www.prb.org World Population Data Sheet 2008).  The PRB reports "little improvement in maternal Mortality in developing countries (see page 3 of the Data Sheet).

Female Genital Mutilation is the traditional cutting, circumcision, and removal of most or all external genitalia of women for the end result of closing off some or part of the vagina until such time that the woman is married and cut open.  In some traditions, there are religious underpinnings.  In others, there are customs and rituals that have been passed down.  In no way does the main body of any world religion condone or mandate this practice-many countries where this takes place are predominantly Muslim-yet local traditions have corrupted the purer form of the religion and its beliefs and female genital mutilation predates Islam (see Obermeyer, C.M. March 1999, Female Genital Surgeries: The Known and the Unknowable. Medical Anthropology Quaterly13, pages 79-106;p retrieved 5 December from http://www.anthrosource.net/doi/abs/10.1525/maq.1999.13.1.79 ).  An analogy can be drawn from the Taliban which was extreme in comparison to most Muslims worldwide and which literally practiced homicide toward its females to enforce conformity.  It should also be explained that there are no medical therapeutic benefits from female genital mutilation.  Quite the contrary, there are many adverse medical consequence that result from it from ranging from pain, difficulty in childbirth, illness, and even death.

Many human rights groups, the United Nations, scientists, advocates, the United States, the World Health Organization, and other organizations have made aggressive efforts to

influence the cessation of this practice worldwide.  But, progress has come very slowly.  Part of the problem is that women often perform the ritual and carry on the tradition as it was perpetrated upon them.  In other words, many cases have women preparing the next generation for it and at times performing it on them.

As was mentioned in the chapter on rape and sexual assault, Rape is not the same as sex.  Rape is violence, motivated by men with power, anger, selfish, and sadistic issues.  Rape is dangerous and destructive and more likely to happen in the United States than in most other countries of the world.  There are 195 countries in the world today.  The US typically is among the worst 5 percent in terms of rape (Yes, that means 95% of the world's countries are safer for women than the US).  Consecutive studies performed by the United Nations Surveys on crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems confirm that South Africa is the most dangerous, crime-ridden nation on the planet in all crimes including rape (see http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/United-Nations-Surveys-on-Crime-Trends-and-the-Operations-of-Criminal-Justice-Systems.html).

The world's histories with very few exceptions have recorded the pattern of sexually abusing boys, girls, and women.  Slavery, conquest of war, kidnapping, assault, and other circumstances are the context of these violent practices.  Online there is a Website at www.rainn.org which is a tremendous resources for knowledge and information especially about rape, assault, incest and issues relating to the United States.  The United Nations reported that, "Women aged 15-44 are more at risk from rape and domestic violence than from cancer, motor accidents, war and malaria, according to World Bank data (Retrieved 5 December, 2008 from http://www.un.org/women/endviolence/docs/VAW.pdf, UNite To End Violence Against Women, Feb. 2008).  The UN calls for a criminal Justice System response and for increased prioritization and awareness.  Anything might help since almost every country of the world is struggling to prevent sexual violence and rape against its females.

## Opportunities

Wage disparities between males and females is both traditional and labor-based economic supply and demand.  Statistics show past and current discrepancies in lower pay for women.  Diane White made a 1997 presentation to the United Nations General Assembly stated that "Today the wage disparity gap cost American women $250,000 over the course of their lives" (Retrieved 5 December from http://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/statements/Diane%20White.pdf.  Indeed evidence supports her claim that women are paid less in comparison to men and their cumulated losses add up to staggering figures.  The US Census Bureau reported in 2008 that US women earn 77 cents for every US man's $1 (See: American Community Survey .  They also reported that in some places (Washington DC) and in certain fields (Computers and mathematical) women earn as much as 98 cents per a man's $1.  At the worldwide level "As employees, women are still seeking equal pay with men.  Closing the gap between women's and men's pay continues to be a major challenge in most parts of the world" (retrieved 5 Dec., 2008 from the UNstats.org from The World's Women 2005: Progress and Statistics http://unstats.un.org/unsd/demographic/products/indwm/ww2005_pub/English/WW2005_chpt_4_Work_BW.pdf; page 54).

The report also discussed the fact that about 60 countries have begun to keep statistics on informal (unpaid) work by women. Needless to say even though measuring paid and unpaid work of women is not as accurate as needed for world considerations, "Women contribute to development not only through remunerated work but also through a great deal of unremunerated work" (page 47).

Why the lower wages for women? The traditional definition of the reproductive roles of women as being "broken, diseased, or flawed" is part of the answer of wage disparity. The idea that reproductive roles interfere with the continuity of the workplace and the idea that women cannot be depended on plays heavily into the maltreatment of women. The argument can be made that traditional and economic factors have lead to the existing patterns of paying women less for their same education, experience, and efforts compared to men.

Efforts to provide formal education to females worldwide have escalated over the last few decades. The 2002 Kids Count International Data Sheet estimated rates as low as 11 percent of females in primary school in Somalia (retrieved 8 December , 2008 from http://www.prb.org/pdf/childrenwallchartfinal.pdf. A 1993 World Bank report made it very clear that females throughout the world were being neglected in receiving their formal educations when compared to males (see Subbarro, K. and Raney, L. 1993, "Social Gains from Female Education: A Cross-National Study". World Bank Discussion Papers 194; retried from Eric ED 363542 on 8 December, 2008). In 1998 another example is found in efforts specific to Africa via the Forum of African Women Educationalists which focuses on governmental policies and practices for female education across the continent (retrieved 8 Dec 2008 from http://www.un.org/ecosocdev/ geninfo/afrec/subjindx/114sped3.htm ). Literally hundreds of studies have since focused on other regions around and below the equator where education levels for females are much lower.

In 1999 it was reported by UNICEF that 1 billion people would never learn to read as children with 130 million school aged children (73 million girls) without access to basic education (retrieved, 8 Dec 2008 from http://www.unicef.org/sowc99/ ). Another UNICEF 2008 report clearly identifies the importance of educating girls who grow up to be mothers because of the tremendous odds that those educated mothers will ensure that their children are also formally educated ( see http://www.unicef.org/sowc08/docs/sowc08.pdf). In its statistical tables it shows that Somalia is now up to 22 percent for boys and girls in primary schools, yet in most countries females are still less likely to be educated ( see http://www.unicef.org/sowc08/docs/sowc08_table_1.pdf). The main point from UNICEF and many other formal reports is that higher formal education for females is associated with life, health, protection from crime and sexual exploitation, and countless other benefits, especially to females in the poorer regions of the world.

In the United States most females and males attend some form of formal education. After high school, many go to college. Even though the US numbers of 18-24 year old men are higher than women (www.USCensus.gov ) women are more likely to attend college based on percentages, 57% are Women (retrieved 8 December 2008 from http://www.usatoday.com/news/education/2005-10-19-male-college-cover_x.htm ).

A projection from the National Center for Education Statistics projects a continuing trend up and through the year 2016 where about 58 percent of US college students will be female (retrieved 8 December, 2008 from "Projections of Education Statistics to 2016" http://nces.ed.gov/programs/projections/projections2016/sec2c.asp ). By 2016 about 60 percent of graduated students will be females (see http://nces.ed.gov/programs/projections/projections2016/sec4b.asp). These numbers reflect a strong and concerted push toward equality of opportunity for females in formal education that does date back over a century. The challenge is to avoid defining progress for US females in public and private education as having been made at the expense of males. That's much too simplistic.

They also reflect a change in the culture of breadwinning and the adult roles of males. Males and/or females who don't pursue a college degree will make less money than those who did. To make sense of this trend, many males have been identified as having a prolonged adolescence (even into their 30's), video game playing mentality, and a "live with your parents indefinitely" strategy until their shot at the labor force has passed them by. Others have pointed out the higher rates of learning disabilities in K-12, the relatively low percentage of K-5 teachers who are males, and the higher rate of male dropouts. Still others blame attention deficit and hyperactivity as part of the problem. Here is a truism about education in the US:

Higher education=higher pay=higher social prestige=higher income=higher quality of life.

Many countries of the world have neutralized the traditional, religious, and labor-force based biases against women and have moved to a merit-based system. Even in the US, there have been "men's wages, then women and children's wages (1/10th to 12/3rd of a man's). In a sense, any hard working, talented person can pursue and obtain a high-end job, including women. Communism broke some of these barriers early on in the 20th century, but the relatively low wages afforded those pursuing these careers somewhat offset the advances women could have made. In the US progress has come more slowly. Physicians are some of the brightest and best paid specialists in the world. Salaries tend to begin in the $100,000 range and can easily reach $500,000 depending on the specialty (see http://www.allied-physicians.com/salary_surveys/physician-salaries.htm ). Prior to 1970 most physicians were white and male, but things are slowly changing.

See Table 4 for trends between 1970 and 2006.

| Table 4. The Percentage of Physicians who are Male and Female[1] | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Year | %Male | %Female |
| 1970 | 92.4% | 7.6% |
| 1980 | 88.4% | 11.6% |
| 1990 | 83.1% | 16.9% |
| 2000 | 76.3% | 24.0% |
| 2002 | 74.8% | 25.2% |
| 2003 | 74.2% | 25.8% |
| 2006 | 72.2% | 27.8% |

[1] Retrieved from the American Medical Association 8 December, 2008 from "Table 1- Physicians By Gender (Excludes Students)" http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/12912.html]

Retrieved from the American Medical Association 8 December, 2008 from "Table 1-Physicians By Gender (Excludes Students)" http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/category/12912.html]

The upward trend shows a concerted effort to provide equal opportunity for females and males. Engineers have also seen a concerted effort to facilitate females into the profession. The Society of Women Engineers is a non-profit organization which helps support and recognize women as engineers (see http://societyofwomenengineers.swe.org/index.php ). Look at Figure 1 below.

Computer-based careers are seeing striking gains in some areas for women who will be hired competitively based on merit. The same cannot be said for doctoral level employment in the more prestigious fields. In Figure 2 you can see 2005 estimates from the US National Science Foundation.

Figure 1. Women in High Tech Jobs

## Computer occupations for all workers are projected to have some of the steepest gains between 2000 and 2010
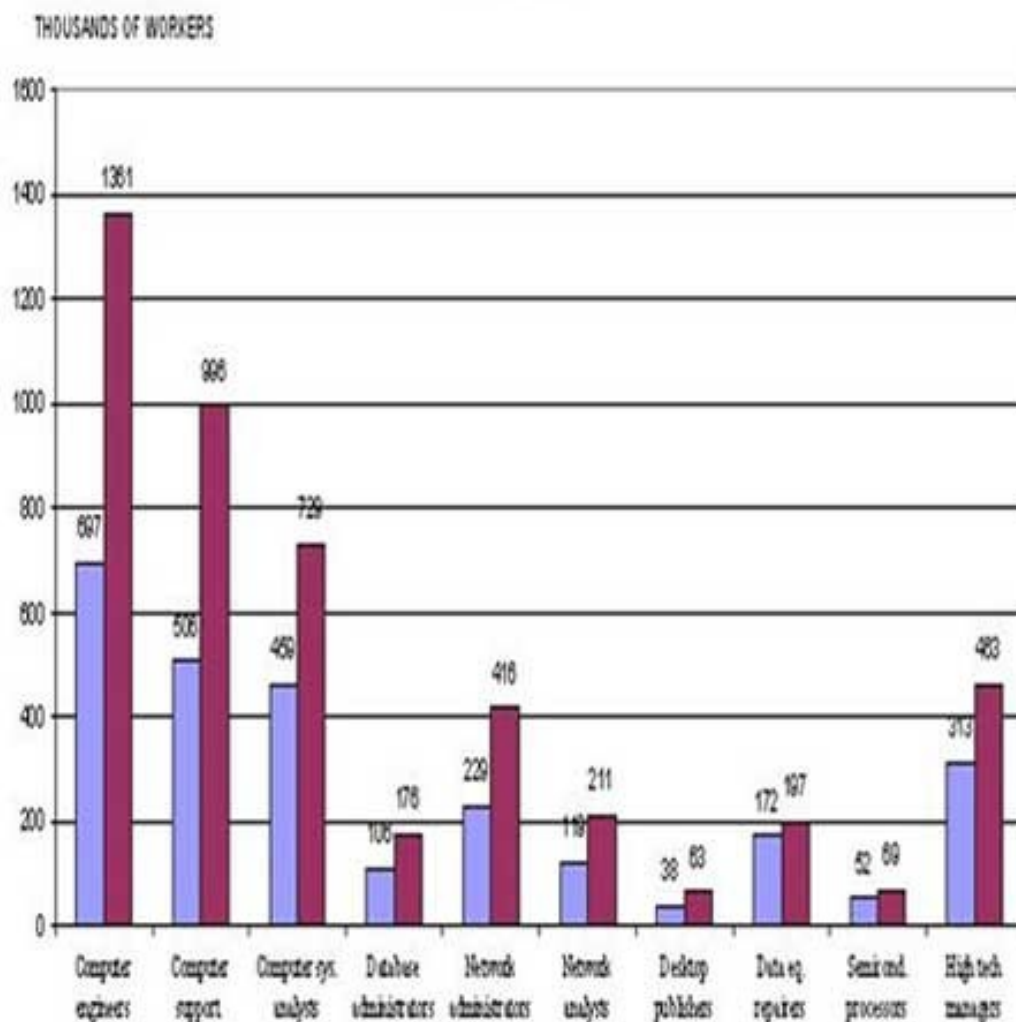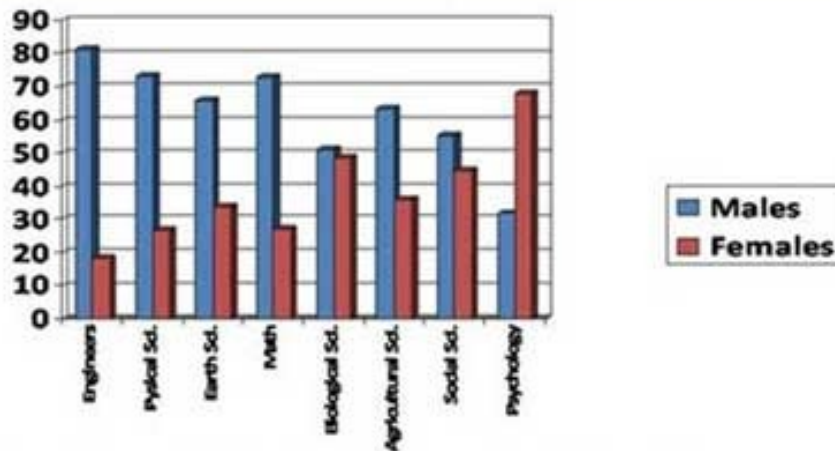
THOUSANDS OF WORKERS

The first 6 fields are the highest paying fields to work in while social and psychological sciences are among the least paying. Women clearly dominate Psychology and nearly tie in social sciences and biology. True, at the doctoral level pay is higher than at the masters and bachelors levels, but the difference in engineering and psychology is remarkable at every level of education (see http://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_nat.htm#b00-0000 ).

The mandatory covering of females' bodies head to toe has been opposed by some and applauded by others. Christians, Hindus, and many other religious groups have the practice of covering or veiling in their histories. Yet, over the last 30 years, as fundamentalist Muslim nations and cultures have returned to their much more traditional way of life, Hijab, the Arabic word that means to cover or veil, has become more common. Often Hijab means modest and private in the day to day interpretations of the practice. For some countries it is a personal choice, while for others it becomes a crime not to comply. The former Taliban, punished such a crime with death (they also punished formal school of females and the use of makeup by death).

Many women's rights groups have brought public attention to this trend, not so much because the mandated covering of females is that oppressive, but because the veiling and covering is symbolic of the religious, traditional, and labor-forced patterns of oppression that have caused so many problems for women and continue to do so today.

I interviewed a retired OBGYN nurse who served as a training nurse for a mission in Saudi Arabia on a volunteer basis. She taught other local nurses from her 30 years of experience. Each and every day she was guarded by machine gun toting security forces everywhere she went. She was asked to cover and veil and did so. I asked her how she felt about that, given that her US culture was so relaxed on this issue.

"I wanted to teach those women and knew that they would benefit from my experience. I just had to do what I was told by the authorities," she said.

"What would have happened if you had tried to leave the compound without your veil?"

I asked.

"I suspect, I would have been arrested and shot."  She chuckles.  "Not shot, perhaps, but If I did not comply, my training efforts would have been stopped and I would have been sent home."

"So, you complied because of your desire to train the nurses?"

"That and the mothers and babies."  She answered.

(Interview with HB, 12 June, 2005)

The public demeaning of women has been acceptable throughout various cultures because publically demeaning members of society who are privately devalued and/or considered flawed fits the reality of most day-to-day interactions.  Misogyny is the physical or verbal abuse and mistreatment of women.  Verbal misogyny is unacceptable in public in most Western Nations today.  With the ever present technology found in cell phones, video cameras, and security devices a person's private and public misogynistic language could easily be recorded and posted for millions to see on any number of Websites.

Perhaps, this fear of being found out as a woman-hater is not the ideal motivation for creating cultural values of respect and even admiration of women and men.  As was mentioned above, most of the world historical leaders assumed that women were not as valuable as men and it has been a few decades since changes have begun.  Yet, an even more sinister assumption has and does persist today, that women were the totality of their reproductive role, or Sex=Gender (Biology=Culture).  If this were true then women would ultimately just be breeders of the species, rather than valued human beings they are throughout the world today.

An early pioneer and one of my personal heroines is an anthropologist named, Margaret Mead (1901-1978).  Dr. Mead earned her Ph.D. under the direction of some of the best anthropologists of her day.  But, she was a woman in a mostly male-dominated academic field.  In my own readings of her works-her works are regularly quoted in many different disciplines today-I  marvel that she successfully challenged the sexist and misogynistic notions established in academics at the time.

## Bold Research on Gender

Mead's work entitled, Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies (1935) became a major seminal work in the women's liberation movement and thereby in the redefinition of women in many Western Societies.  Her observations of gender in three tribes, Arapesh, Mundugamor, and Tchambuli created a national discussion which lead many to reconsider the established Sex=Gender assumption.  In these tribes she found the following:

Arapesh-both men and women displayed what we typically call feminine traits: sensitivity, cooperation, and low levels of aggression.

Mundugamor-both men and women were insensitive, uncooperative, and very aggressive.  These were typical masculine traits at the time.

Tchambuli-women were aggressive, rational and capable and were also socially

dominant. Men were passive assuming artistic and leisure roles.

Why then, Mead argued, if our reproductive roles determined our cultural and social opportunities were the gender definitions varied and unique among less civilized peoples? Were we not less civilized ourselves at one point in history and have we not progressed on a similar path the tribal people take? Could it be that tradition (culture) was the stronger social force rather than biology? Mead's work and her public influence helped to establish the belief that biology is only a part of the Sex and Gender question (albeit an important part). Mead established that Sex≠Gender. But, even with the harshest criticism launched against her works, her critics supported and even inadvertently reinforced the idea that biology shapes but cultures are more salient in how women and men are treated by those with power.

Misogyny is easier to perpetrate if one assumes the weakness, biological frailty, and perhaps even diminished capacity that women were claimed to have had. I personally witnessed the rise and fall of some who tried to persist in the traditional definition of women. Andrew Clay Silverstein (1957-present) was a nationally successful comedian who also played in a movie and TV show (although he recently appeared on Celebrity Apprentice). His career ended abruptly because of his harsh sexist themes which were being performed in an age of clarity and understanding about gender values. Mr. Clay failed to recognize the social change which surrounded him. We often overlook the change and the continuing problems ourselves. It is advantageous to you and I not to make the same mistake in our own career paths.

Professional and volunteer organizations have made concerted efforts to raise awareness of the English language and its demeaning language toward females. English as a derivative of German has many linguistic biases against women, non-whites, poor, and non-royalty. Raising awareness and discussing the assumptions within English or any other language has been part of the social transformation toward cultural and biological fairness and equality. If we understand how the words we use influence the culture we live in and how the value of that culture influence the way we treat one another, then we begin to see the importance of language on the quality of life.

The quality of life for women is of importance at many different levels in the world. As you've read through this chapter, you've probably noticed that much is yet to be accomplished worldwide. The United States has seen much progress. But, other nations continually rank the "world's best nation for women". Many European countries far outrank the US for quality of Women's lives. In Fact, in 2008 the US ranked number 27th (retrieved 9 December, 2008 from http://www.nation.com.pk/pakistan-news-newspaper-daily-english-online/Entertainment/23-Nov-2008/European-countries-top-places-for-women-to-live/1 ).

The Global Gender Gap Index was developed to measure the quality of life for women between countries. It measures the gap between males and females in objective statistics that focus on equality. There are four pillars in the index which include economic participation and opportunity, educational attainment, political empowerment, and health and survival using 14 indicators from each countries national statistics. From 1998-2006, there was a reported net improvement for all countries (page 27).

When one considers the day-to-day lives of women in these national statistics, and

perhaps more importantly in their personal lives, the concept of what women do as their contribution to the function of society becomes important. Instrumental Tasks are goal directed activities which link the family to the surrounding society, geared toward obtaining resources. This includes economic work, breadwinning, and other resource-based efforts. Expressive Tasks pertain to the creation and maintenance of a set of positive, supportive, emotional relationships within the family unit. This includes relationships, nurturing, and social connections needed in the family and society. Today, women do both and typically do them well.

Prior to the Industrial revolution both males and females combined their local economic efforts in homemaking. Most of these efforts were cottage industry-type where families used their children's' labor to make products they needed from soap, thread, fabric, butter, and many other products. When the factory model of production emerged in Western Civilizations, the breadwinner and homemaker became more distinct. The breadwinner is a parent or spouse who earns wages outside of the home and uses them to support the family. The homemaker is typically a women who occupies her life with mothering, housekeeping, and being a wife while depending heavily on the breadwinner.

## What About Men?

In the past two decades a social movement referred to as The Men's Movement has emerged. The Men's Movement is a broad effort across societies and the world to improve the quality of life and family-related rights of men. Since the Industrial revolution, men have been emotionally exiled from their families and close relationships. They have become the human piece of the factory machinery (or computer technology in our day) that forced them to disconnect from their most intimate relationships and to become money-acquisition units rather than emotionally powerful pillars of their families.

Many in this line of thought attribute higher suicide rates, death rates, accident rates, substance abuse problems, and other challenges in the lives of modern men directly to the broad social process of post-industrial breadwinning. Not only did the Industrial revolution's changes hurt men, but the current masculine role is viewed by many as being oppressive to men, women, and children. Today a man is more likely to kill or be killed, to abuse, and to oppress others. Table 5 lists some of the issues of concern for those in the Men's Movement.

| Table 5. Concerns in the Men's Movement |
| --- |
| 1. Life and health challenges |
| 2. Emotional isolation |
| 3. Sexual research and rights |
| 4. Post-divorce/separation father's rights |
| 5. False sex of physical abuse allegations |
| 6. Early education challenges for boys |
| 7. Declining college attendance |
| 8. Protection from domestic abuse |
| 9. Man-hating or bashing |
| 10. Lack of support for fatherhood |
| 11. Paternal rights and abortion |
| 12. Affirmative action-sex and race |

The list of concerns displays the quality of life issues mixed in with specific legal and civil rights concerns. Men's Movement sympathizers would most likely promote or support equality of rights for men and women. They are aware of the Male Supremacy Model, where males erroneously believe that men are superior in all aspects of life and that should excel in everything they do. They also concerns themselves with the Sexual Objectification of Women, where men learn to view women as objects of sexual consumption rather than as a whole person. Male Bashing is the verbal abuse and use of pejorative and derogatory language about men.

These and other concerns are not being aggressively supported throughout the world as are the women's rights and suffrage efforts discussed above. Most of the Men's Movement efforts are in Western Societies, India, and a handful of others.

Figure 3 below shows the transition in family gender roles over the course of the Industrial Revolution through to Post World War II. Families in Pre-Industrial Europe and the US were subsistence-based, meaning they spent much of their daily lives working to prepare food and other goods on a year-round basis. Men, women, children, and other family and friends succeeded because they all contributed to the collective good of the family economy.



Figure 3. The Western Family Pre- Post, and Post-WWII, especially for the United States

**Pre-Industrial Revolution**

Cottage industries: Husband and Wife co-workers in subsistence and provision for family. Father, mother, and Children worked with other family and friends to get by.

**Post-Industrial Revolution**

Pre WWII, Breadwinners and Homemakers with children as consumption units.

Post WWII, Women became breadwinners and remained homemakers. Men remain breadwinners, yet not homemakers. Children still consumption units.

The Industrial Revolution created the roles of breadwinners and homemakers. After the Industrial revolution was in full swing, women continued their subsistence work and remained homemakers while men continued in their breadwinning roles. After World War II, there was a social structural change where women began assuming the breadwinner role and became more and more common among the ranks of paid employees, especially beginning in 1960s-1980s. They had managed to remain

homemakers, but men had not moved into the homemaking role to the same degree that women had moved into the breadwinning role. This creates a strong level of burden and expectation for US women who find themselves continuing to work outside the home for pay and inside the home for their informal domestic roles.

You will read later about intimacy and how it works between people. For now, suffice it to say that men often find a closer bond to their wife, children and other family members when they engage in domestic homemaking roles. Mundane family work is the activity that facilitates ongoing attachments and bonds among those who participate in it together.

Many couples today already share homemaking roles, just out of practical and functional need. They often find the co-homemaking/breadwinning role to be defined in a few typical styles. First, is the Tourist Husband style. The Tourist Husband is a visitor to the homemaking role who contributes the occasional assistance to his wife as a courtesy-much like a tourist might offer occasional assistance to their host. He often believes himself to be very generous since it is hers and not his role. Second, is the Assistant Homemaker where the husband looks to his wife for direction and for instruction on how to "help" her out in her homemaking role. Like one of the children, housework and homemaking task are the mother/wife's job and he helps if called upon.

Finally, there is the Co-homemaker husband who never "helps" his wife with homemaking task, but assumes that she and he equally share their breadwinning and homemaking responsibilities. The Co-homemaker husband is most likely to bond with his children, understand the daily joys and sorrows of all his individual family members, and feel a strong connection to his home and family (something Men's Movement advocates lament having lost).

Housework is one area of life that allows men to return to the intimacy and close familial influences they once enjoyed prior to the Industrial Revolution. Housework is mundane and repetitive. Yet, studies have shown that when men do housework with their children an emotional bonding process takes place and they create positive working memories together. I once heard it explained by a friend of mine who is a Clinical Psychologists. He suggested "turn off the TV, shut down the computer, unplug the games, take all phones of the hook. Then just try one hour of housework. Something magical will happen between parents and children as the boredom of housework begins to settle in-they begin to talk about things." This is often true. Parents are much more interesting to children when all their friends and electronic distractions are removed. Children will open up while working with parents. And parents who avoid the urge to preach or make a speech, and who just talk to their children the way they might to their friends will find this very rewarding.

Listen carefully. I've said for 22 years that "men and children should never help their wife or mother with housework." I truly mean this. If nearly 2/3rds of women work for pay, and if she has an average of 2 children, and if men truly respect and support their wife they will assume the responsibility as co-homemakers and not leave the burden solely upon her. They can't "help" her if it is their work too! It baffles me how husbands and wives even talk about work. She might ask, "I'm going out tonight can you babysit the children?" I say, "How can a man babysit his own children?" He doesn't. He just serves as a father to them while his wife is away.

With housework, it is his and his children's house too. Children and fathers who do housework together with their mothers find less stress for her and more closeness between family members. For women who come from traditional homes it is tempting to take on the role of housework police. She has in her mind what needs to be done and how it should appear once finished. To truly incorporate all members of the family in the housework, she often has to accept a clean house that may not exactly fit her ideals. Figure 7 shows a continuum of housework standards.

On the far left little to no housework gets done. The home is not clean nor is it attractive. Confusion is common in unclean households. No one has control over cleaning. On the far right the woman (wife, Mother, or Partner) does all the work and can keep the home precisely as she wants it to be. She may have to use coercion to get other family members to comply. One of my fellow professors is quoted as having said, "Do you want it clean or do you want us happy?"

Even if women in the sole home cleaning role find themselves capable of resisting the urge to manipulate other family members to join her in her ideal cleaning efforts, she keeps all the control and essentially becomes the ruler of house cleaning. Her children may grow up expecting to be cleaned up after by a woman. They may also feel emotionally disconnected from her. She can present a clean and attractive home but does not have the benefits of the bond that comes with all family members doing their part.

Today, the average US woman works for money outside the home. She has children or grandchildren and a male spouse or partner. If she chooses to share control and to accept a moderate level of hygiene and appearance, she can facilitate a group effort that includes all family members in the house cleaning work. This teaches children to learn how to work and work well with others. This also facilitates time spent together away from the distractions of technology where all members take responsibility for the home's care and maintenance. There is great potential for family unity and close bonds. The matriarch of the home often leads the family on this matter.

## Chapter 05-Love and Intimacy

Love and intimacy go hand in hand. Love is the physical, emotional, sexual, intellectual, or social affection one person holds for another. A thesaurus lists related concepts to love which include adore, desire, prefer, possess, care for, serve, and even worship as similar concepts. Intimacy, on the other hand, is a close relationship where mutual acceptance, nurturance, and trust are shared at some level. In order to understand love in human relationships you must first understand how the self either enhances or inhibits your capacity to love.

You self developed under the watchful eyes of your caregiver or parents. When you were a newborn you were totally dependent upon the adults in your life to take care of your needs and raise you in a safe environment. You had to be fed and clothed, bathed and held, and loved and appreciated. While your caregivers provided for those basic needs in your life, you attached to them and they attached to you. An attachment is an emotional and social bind that forms between one person and another. Humans are considered highly motivated to form attachments through their lives.

Attachments are crucial to human existence and are essentially the emotional context of

those relationships we all have in life.  As an infant you learned to trust those who cared for you.  You learned that they return once they are out of view and that they can be depended upon.  Eventually your brain allows you to love the person you are attached to and to care for them whether or not they are giving care to you.  You learn then that your attachments facilitate your needs and wants being met.  How you attached as an infant and young child shape (at least in theory) how you will likely attach as an adult.  If you had strong attachments in childhood then forming adult relationships should be easier for you.  If you had weak or interrupted attachments in childhood then forming adult relationships-especially loving ones will be more difficult for you.

As adults, one of the very first symptoms that you are falling in love is that you begin to feel better about yourself when you are with the other person.  One of my students commented in class, "That's true for my boyfriend and me.  We started off just hanging out with mutual friends.  Then we were talking a lot on the phone.  But, both us felt that feeling of wanting to be together more often and feeling good, you know safe together."

It can be argued that you can only be in love as much as your self will allow you to be.  Why?  Because intimacy develops along with love and intimacy requires that you have the ability to be your true self with the other person.  Figure 1 shows what I call the "Zone of Vulnerability," or the birthplace of intimacy.  The photos of the young man and woman in this figure represent you and your other and how you traverse the dangers of getting to know someone while you enter and reside in the zone of vulnerability.  The guy and gal in this figure as total strangers to one another enjoy a certain safety that comes by keeping safely away from relationships, away from personal conversations, and away from any risks of being hurt (or hurt again).

She or he can go to classes, work, social events, even on dates and never leave her or his private comfort zone.  It doesn't take much to mask the fact that you are hiding safely away from risks even when outwardly you appear to be very confident and socially skilled (watch the Movie "Hitch, 2005 with Will Smith, Eva Mendes, and Kevin James).  But, if and when intimacy and love enters the equation, you have to leave your safety zone.  Typically when two strangers meet they self-disclose.  Self-disclosure is the process or revealing the true nature of oneself to another person. Once you or the other person open up and share something vulnerable (see the blue arrow in the diagram) you enter an emotional mine field of sorts.  You become at risk.  Your fears and pains from past relationships, your feelings of being emotionally vulnerable or naked, and especially your fears of being exposed as a flawed individual all sift the process of you letting the other person sneak a peek into the nature of your true self.

This sifting process is shaped by countless interactions with others that preceded this moment in time.  The sifting through past experience can make it very risky for some.  But, once you self-disclose the potential for intimacy and love can be realized. There is a greater chance of intimacy developing when the other person self-discloses back to you, or reciprocates your efforts to connect.  For example, let's say that the guy and gal in this figure had their pictures taken so that they could submit them to the university cheer squad tryouts.  On the day of tryouts they meet one another for the first time and make casual conversation in the registration line.

Figure 1. The Zone of Vulnerability-The Birthplace of Intimacy
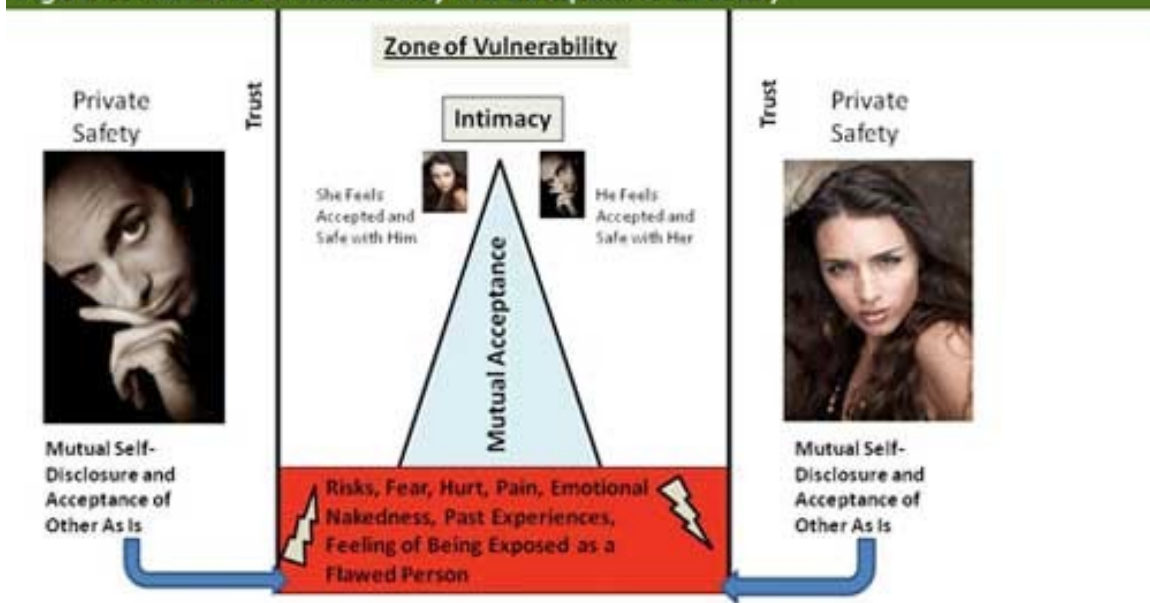
During tryouts they are assigned to team up to perform a series of lifts. Circumstances have brought them together, but intimacy is typically more deliberate. He might ask, "Where did you cheer in high school?"

She might tell him the school name and place then ask, "What about you?" At this level of questioning, just talking is mildly risky, but they are only talking at a level called Shop Talk, which is safe conversation about superficial things (places, time, weather, etc.). If she came back with a question of her own such as, "What do you think the chances are we make the team?" she has begun a conversation about opinions and feelings.

He might reply, "I think we have as good a chance as the others. I hope we both make it. Hey, uh, you sound like your really need this to happen."

"Yeah, I need the scholarship and I'm majoring in dance so it will help me keep in shape." What about you?"

"Oh, I'm majoring in pre-law. The scholarship would be great, too. Hey, would you like to go get a juice or something…"

In this example, their shop talk quickly transformed into the mutual sharing of personal information. This is essential for intimacy to have a chance to form. Perhaps, if they feel safe enough over time and with a number of interactions they can become very close and trusting of one another as friends or lovers. Nice that it works that way sometimes, but truth be known we more often miss than hit when forming intimate relationships. Consider what might have happened if the conversation went like this: He might ask, "Where did you cheer in high school?" She might tell him the school name and place. Then continue packing her things making no more comments. "My name is Jeff. What's yours?" He might ask, extending his hand to shake. "Melisa. Good luck with the tryouts." As she walks away not shaking his hand nor making eye contact. Because mutual involvement did not occur, intimacy stopped before it every really had a chance.

Remember, once self-disclosure take place the risk factor comes into play. If self-

disclosure is mutually reciprocated then intimacy may begin.  If it is not reciprocated then intimacy typically will not develop.  We are built to experience love.  Psychologists and Biologists will tell you that best friends or not chemicals either reinforce feelings of love or inhibit them.  Our attractions are connected to our testosterone, oxytocin, luteinizing, estrogens, serotonin, dopamine, epinephrine, norepinephrine, and other chemicals and hormones levels in our bodies.  Sociologists will tell you that the need for social relationships, especially attachments, drive much of our daily social interactions with others.  Theologians will tell you that love is divine and is part of our eternal natures.

Psychologists have taken a variety of approaches in the study of love.  John Lee is perhaps the most quoted researcher on love with his six love types.  Lee assumed that we all shared 6 core components of love and that our current loving relationship can be assessed and measured.  Lee also claimed that there are qualities of love types-some more long-lasting and supportive of relationships and some pathological and defective which inhibit relationships (see Lee, John, A (1988) ALove Styles@ in The Psychology of Love; Sternberg, R. & Barnes, M eds. New Haven CT: Yale U. Press).  Lee's love types are widely used to help people understand their love styles.  Lee claimed that six types of love comprised our loving experiences.  Eros is the love of sensuality, sex, taste, touch, sight, hearing, and smell. Eros love is often what we feel when turned on.  Eros love is neither good nor bad.  It is simply part of the overall love composite we experience with another person.

Storgé love is the love of your best friend in a normal casual context of life. Storgé is calm and peaceful, surprising to some who might have simply hung out together at one point but suddenly discovered that their friendship deepened and became more important than other friendships.  "We started needing to be together, talking on the phone for hours, and missing each other when apart," are common descriptions of Storgé love.  Many believe that most young couples marry with Storgé relationship in the US today.

Pragma love is the love of details and qualities in the other person. Pragma lovers are satisfied and attracted by the other because of their characteristics (e.g., athleticism, intelligence, wealth, etc.).  Pragma lovers feel love at a rational level-thinking to a certain degree about the good deal they are getting in the relationship.

Agapé love is the love that is selfless, other-focused, and seeks to serve others rather than receive from others. Lee referred to a Christian love when originally wrote the chapter cited above.  Since then this type of love can be identified across cultures and religions. Lee identified to defective love types that come from a damaged sense of self: Ludis and Mania.

Ludis is an immature love that is more of a tease than a legitimate loving relationship. Ludic lovers trick their mates into believing that they are sincerely in love, while all the while grooming 1, 2, or even 3 other lovers at the same time.  Ludic lovers artificially stroke their sense of self-worth by laying a cruel game on their lovers who end up feeling used and betrayed.  Mania is an insecure love that is a mixture of conflict and artificially romantic Eros expressions.  Manic lovers are horrified of being abandoned and simultaneously terrified by the vulnerabilities they feel when intimate with their lover. Thus their daily routines are typically make out…argue…sweet talk…slap fight…make out…verbal yell fest…make love…stop talking…sweet talk…break up…make out…

Another psychologists named Abraham Maslow addressed love in terms of how our needs are met by the other person.  His basic premise is that we pair of with those whose love style fills an unmet childhood need.  In other words, Maslow said that if our childhood needs were not met in the basics of survival, safety, food, shelter, love, belonging, and even self-esteem then we look for an adult companion that can fill those needs for us.  It's like an empty cup from our childhood that our adult partner fills for us.  Maslow also said that when all those basic needs are met in childhood then we are attracted to an adult partner who compliments our full development into our psychological potential (Google Maslow's pyramid of Hierarchy of Needs, Being and Deficiency love).  If in your childhood your survival, safety, food, shelter, love, belonging, and even self-esteem needs were unmet then you will be attracted to a Deficiency Lover.  A Deficiency Lover is a lover who provides the basic level of needs for their partner while having their needs reciprocally met in a similar way.  A Being Lover meets you aesthetic, intellectual and full actualization or human capacity needs while you reciprocally meet their in a similar way.

Robert Sternberg  was the Geometry of Love psychologists who triangulated love using intimacy, passion, and commitment on the 3 corners of the triangle and by measuring the intensity of each and how intense it was for the couple.  To Sternberg it was important to consider how each partner's triangle matched the other partner's.  He said that a couple with all three types of love, balanced and in sufficient magnitude would have a rare yet rewarding  type of love that encompassed much of what couple seek for in a loving relationship (Google Robert Sternberg, Triangular Theory of Love, Consummate Love).  Sternberg's Consummate Love was a love type that had equal measures of passion, intimacy, and commitment that is satisfactory to both lovers.

A popular psychologist named Gary Chapman spoke of the culture of our love and addressed love the same way you or I met address how you'd prepare travel to or live in another country.  You wouldn't just up and go to Mexico without first familiarizing yourself with the language customs and traditions.  In the same line of reasoning, you would be wise when you fall in love to study the other person's culture of expressing love and then study your own.  Chapman spoke of how we express verbal love, love in physical touch, love through service, love by spending quality time together, love by receiving gifts given to us by those who love us (See Gary Chapman The Five Love Languages,  How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate).

In a less-modern and scientific approach to love, philosophers and writers have addressed love and its origins over the millennia of years.  The ancient Greeks spoke of a few types of love that we define similarly in our society today.  Eros is the love of the body, touch, senses, and sexual pleasuring.  Eros proves in our culture to be a significant part of a long-term relationship.  Eros in combination with other love types can be very satisfying to those in intimate relationships.  Agape love is a pure love felt at the soul level where one person loves another at a profound level. Agape love may be what we feel for others when we hear about their tragedies, when we hear about their accomplishments, or when we hear about positive normal life events.  John Lee drew upon these love types for his work in the US 1970s.

Philia is often referred to as brotherly love (e.g., Philadelphia=city of brotherly love) or love without passion. It addresses the component of love between family members where

needs are mutually met by members of the family.  Plato's definition of love (often called Platonic Love) included a nonsexual relationship, that could include deep levels of trust and intimacy and could be found among many types of relationships (couples, families, friends, even strangers, for more information, Google Greek love types, Platonic Love, and/or philosophy of love).  Plato gave a test for true love when he claimed that true love will endure over space and time, or when two people are not together for a while.

In modern day applications of love, various components have been found as the ingredients of love: commitment, passion, friendship, trust, loyalty, affections, intimacy, acceptance, caring, concern, care, selflessness, infatuation, and romance. There is a love type identified that many people are aware of called Unconditional Love.  Unconditional love is the sincere love that does not vary regardless of the actions of the person who is loved. Unconditional love is so deep and profound that it lets us forgive and still love.  Some of this love type is found in almost all relationships.  You often hear it expressed in greater measure among parents of children whose misbehaviors embarrass or make them ashamed.  The love types and patterns discussed below are taken form many sources, but fit neatly into the Lee, Maslow, Sternberg, or Chapman paradigms.  I urge you to study their original works if you are interested in understanding how love is measured and studies.

Romantic love is based on continual courtship and physical intimacy. Romantic lovers continue to date long after they marry or move in together.  They often express the strong sexual attraction to the other that was there from the beginning.  Romantic lovers are idealistic about their relationship and often feel that it was destined to be.  They often define mundane activities such as grocery shopping or commuting into work as escapades of two lovers.

What happens when very young people feel love for the first time?  What is puppy love or infatuation?  Infatuation is a temporary state of love where the other person is overly idealized and seen in narrow and extremely positive terms. An infatuated person my think obsessively about the other, may feel a strong emotional response when they are together, may see their entire world as revolving around the other, may see them being together for the rest of their lives, may find one or two qualities of the other as being near perfect, or may be seen by others as having a crush on the other person.  Regardless of the details infatuations rarely last very long.  This love develops quickly much like a firework launches quickly into the night sky, puts on an emotional light show, then burns out quickly.  Many define puppy love or infatuation as an immature love experienced by those who are younger and perhaps a bit gullible.

Committed love is a love that is loyal and devoted. Two lovers may share committed love with or without physical affection, romance, friendship, trust, loyalty, acceptance, caring, concern, care, selflessness, and or infatuation. Committed lovers have a long-term history with one another and typically combine caregiving, concern for one another's well-being, and spending much time thinking of the other.  Committed lovers are there when needed by the other person.

Altruism is a selfless type of love that serves others while not serving the one who is altruistic. True altruism is hard to find according to some.  Many find similarities in the Greek Agapé and altruism.  The world's major religions each have a version of altruism

in their doctrines.  Mothers who tend the sick child throughout the night, fathers who work 3-4 decades in the harsh market place to provide for the family, and even fire fighters who sacrifice their safety to save the lives of others are all considered to be altruistic in their actions.  Because so much of what we do in our relationships is considered in the larger overall equation of the fairness in a relationship, selfless acts can be seen as acts which either build a reservoir of goodwill which will later be repaid or creating a debt of sorts in which the other person owes you some selfless service in return.

One elderly woman told me that when she was younger you never could have convinced her that the flu could help build her loving relationship to her husband.  She said when she was in her 50s she caught a really bad version of the flu and was nearly hospitalized during the worst part of it.  She said one night her husband spent the entire night taking care of her needs.  "He stood in front of me while I was on the toilette and held me up, even though I was vomiting.  He did this so that I could hold on to what little dignity I had left.  After each episode he carefully bathed me and helped me get some sleep.  When I finally recovered I realized that my love for him grew dramatically during this illness, because he took care of me and never asked for so much as a thank you for having done it."  Her husband expressed that his love grew even more than hers during this illness.

Sexual or Passionate lovers are focused on the intensely sensual pleasures that are found with the senses of taste, smell, touch, feel, hear, and sight. Sexual lovers lust one another and feel closest when together and being physical.  Sexual lovers can be together for 5 minutes, 5 days, five weeks or five years, but sexual love, by itself typically is short-lived.  There is closeness during sex and activities leading up to sex, but not much thereafter.  Sexual love when combined with other love types can be very beneficial to the couple.  Sexual love is almost always the love type experienced by those having an extra-marital affair.

Friendship love includes intimacy and trust among close friends. In our day, most long-burning or enduring love types form among people who were first close friends.  Friendship lovers tend to enjoy each other's company, conversation, and daily interactions.  They consider one another to be "go to" friends when advice is needed or when problems need to be talked about together.  Not all friendship lovers become a couple.  Many are just close or best friends. Yet, many who spend the rest of their lives together will start out their relationship as friends.

Criteria or realistic love is the love feelings you have when your list of a potential mate's personal traits is met in the other person. Women often desire their man to be taller.  Men and women often desire to find a partner with homogamous traits (e.g., same religion, political leanings, hobbies, etc.).  I personally had a friend who always said he would marry a red head.  He did.  I have another friend who said he'd never marry a thin woman and he didn't.  Each of us has an ideal for a partner and we tend to get some of those characteristics with people we become intimate with and eventually marry.

Obsessive love is an unhealthy love type where conflict and dramatic extremes in the relationship are both the goal and the theme of the couple's love. Obsessive lovers live for storms and find peace while they rage.  They are often violent or overly aggressive at

different levels. A few couples bring complimentary traits to the relationship which light the other's fire of madness if you will. In other words, she may be angry and violent with him, but not with some other guys. He may feel simultaneously drawn to her and repulsed, but not with other gals. Their personality chemistry contributes to the insanity and lack of peace. Please note, these couples most likely need professional counseling and would probably be better off if they broke up immediately and never saw one another again. At the same time, why would they seek help or leave the person whose entanglements bring them such an occupation with drama and conflict that they are freed from their boredom and entertained at the same time.

Finally there is deceptive love. Deceptive love is formed when one or both partners either consciously or unconsciously mislead the other in an effort to dishonestly establish trust and intimacy. This love type follows a "catch and release" or a "black widow/widower" mode. In the catch and release mode one partner lures the other in by pretending to experience all the romance and trappings of falling in love when in reality he or she is tricking the other person. The trickery is done in a never-ending pursuit of many relationships all of which are initially established and most of which are ultimately never maintained. In other words, he is more interested in falling in love and catching more fish (lovers) than in staying in love and maintaining a long-term relationship. The catch and release love may not be aware of the unhealthy nature of his or her antics.

In the black widow/widower mode there is calculated and precise deception designed to lure the other into a relationship for ulterior motives. The deceiver tricks the other in order to gain access to wealth, property, or even power. The victim in this relationship often discovers too late that he or she was taken advantage of and that he or she has been deceived. The catch and release lover sometimes deceives him or herself, whereas the black widow/widower lover is fully aware of their deception and their ultimate goals.

Among all these love types lies an underlying truth mentioned before-loving is a risky business where hurt feelings and pain are far too common and wounds and scars from past relationships haunt some long after they form a permanent relationship. Part of that haunting past for lovers is unrequited love. Unrequited love is the result of one person deeply wanting and intimate relationship with another who simply is not interested and does not reciprocate. Unrequited love is common among younger lovers who misread verbal and nonverbal cues and who often have yet to learn about their own love needs and wants.

Understanding love is crucial in the United States because the majority of our population needs to fall in love before they marry. In other words, love precedes marriage. Outside of the US, in India, China, Africa and other regions of the world, love is hoped for after a couple marries, but not considered as a prerequisite to marriage. In the US we fall in love then marry and conversely fall out of love then divorce. I would argue that falling into love is truly about falling into the Zone of Vulnerability and a safe sense of self in that intimacy. Falling out of love is truly about lost trust, lost safety, and lost self once the relationship has reached a point of trouble.

For very young couples falling into love and finding that safe place for both selves is easy and is often based on fantasy rather than reason and logic. Teens often have mutually self-serving motivations that make their love feel so real and powerful at the time. Look

at Figure 2 below.  For many teens who form intimate relationships, the girls are seeking social status and maturity by having a complex relationship with a boy and by demonstrating to her girlfriends her social capabilities.  Typically, teen girls seek after love, closeness, intimacy, and the status of being a girlfriend, steady, or even engaged.  That works conveniently for boys who are seeking physical affection and social status.  Take a hypothetical example of Dave who is on the basketball team in high school.  He notices that Shiree has been hanging out with his buddies and has asked them details about his availability.  His buddies reveal Shiree's interest in him and they eventually sit next to one another at lunch.  Eventually Dave and Shiree are "a thing" and they date exclusively.  Dave pressures Shiree for more sexual expression together.  Shiree is not very interested because she really wants the love and all the relationship benefits that come with it.

Dave becomes more and more interested in sex and soon learns that if he makes gestures toward Shiree and their devotion to one another, then Shiree allows physical things to go further and further.  After the prom, flowers, Dave letting Shiree wear his varsity jacket, and a promise ring and guarantee, Shiree and Dave become sexually active.  Shiree shows up at Dave's house unannounced and tells Dave's father that she is going to be his daughter-in-law.  Dave's father invites her in and brings Dave downstairs for a visit.  Shiree reveals to them that she is pregnant and that Dave and promised/guaranteed her if they got pregnant then they would get married.  Dave, upon hearing the news of the pregnancy blurts out, "you are putting that baby up for adoption, I'm too young to be a father!"

Dave was wrong on both claims.  Shiree kept the baby, he was the father, and she dumped Dave on the spot.  It's been 17 years now that Dave has made monthly child support payments.  Shiree married and started a family with another man.  Of course this is a true story with names changed to protect identities.  But, it is also a very typical story where the girl saw all the trappings of what she thought love was.  The guy saw opportunities for pleasure and social status and each experiences a predictable teen love relationship.  This pattern helps to explain in part why teens engage in sex at an early age and why teen pregnancy sometimes occurs from that sex.  This pattern in Figure 2 has not been found to apply to adults and has not been found to apply to all teen romances.  Adults tend to report more sexual and relational satisfaction when intimacy and friendship are part of the overall relationship.

**Figure 2. Adolescent Intimacy-Sex and Love Matrix**

|  | Play At | Really Want |
|---|---|---|
| Boys | Love | Sex |
| Girls | Sex | Love |

Love is also a function of our choices and the decisions we make while measuring the "rewards-costs" formula in our lives. Regardless of the love type you experience, you will find some types of the relationship to be rewarding while others appear to be expensive. Understanding how needs and love interact is essential to the study of love. In any relationship we keep a mental balance sheet where the rewards and costs are measured in an overall evaluation of the worth of that relationship to us. Being in love means that each partner receives safe nurturing acceptance of their sense of self, even if the relationship hits a few bumps in the road.

In the overall evaluation of the relationship, the loss of that safe and nurturing relationship where the self is threatened signals a very high cost to the individual who must weigh that cost against the rewards and potential outcomes. Again, when people fall out of love they are essentially falling out of the Zone of Vulnerability and the safety for self that was once enjoyed there by both partners. This is why many short-term relationships end abruptly and why many long-term ones continue on even when things look and feel really bad between lovers. Figure 3 shows the characteristics of short and long-term relationships.

Short-term relationships tend to have a relatively brief period of time between acquaintance and the onset of sexual relations. Many short-term relationships have fantasy elements in that one or both partners views the nature of the relationship in unrealistic terms and inflates its good qualities to better match the fantasy. Short-term relationships tend to have more drama, conflict, and infidelity or absence of loyalty, especially when apart. Short-term relationships have not developed to the degree that exclusiveness is expected or offered. The intensity of the relationship comes with obsession over how the couple appears to others and often a compulsion to keep up appearances even though you know the relationship is not going to lead to anything over time.

There is also an overemphasis on physical and sexual expressions which often sooth anxious hearts rather than work out problems that need to be addressed. It could be argued that newly formed relationships suffer from sexual "medication" where relational problem solving would be better suited. Finally, there is a deep need for the other partner to measure up to something he or she is not.
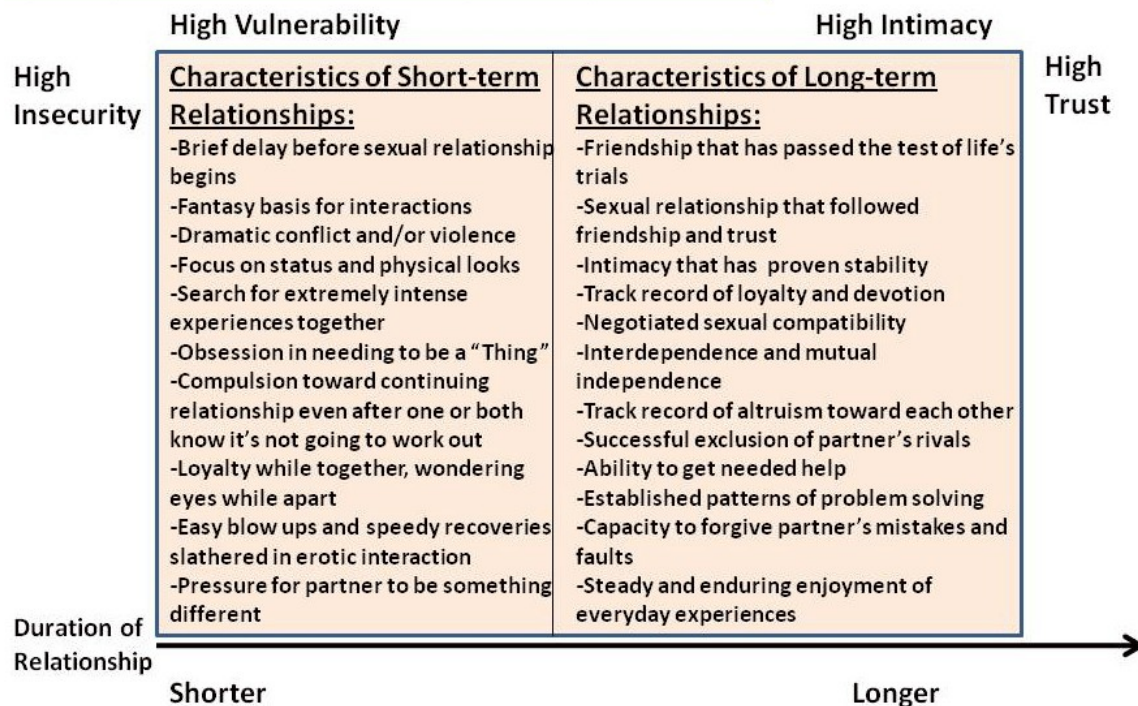
Long-term relationships may have begun with some of the exact same traits that short-term ones have.  But, somewhere along the way both are able to transition out of the newness and superficialities of the relationship into the long-term maintenance of the rapport.  Friendships are proven over time, trial, and everyday mundane exposure to one another.  Sexual relationship was an adjunct to the overall relationship, not the focus and occupation of it.  Intimacy has deepened because it has been tested and sustained by loyalty, devotion, and exclusive fidelity to one another.  Forgiveness is possible and often provided because each knows that both are human and prone to make mistakes-how might one partner demand perfection of the other when he or she cannot offer perfection in return?

In both the early and continuing eras of the relationship each excludes potential rivals and chooses to remain faithful to the other.  Both need each other on a daily basis (interdependence) and both provide the other their space, time alone, and individuality (mutual independence).  There is also an element of altruism and nurturance of the other (even when it's not reciprocated all the time).  Couples can also procure help in medical, emotional, relational, and familial areas of need. Since sexual intercourse is common and part of everyday life it requires negotiation and mutual agreement in the relationship.

On this website there are a few love assessments for you to take if you want to learn more about how you love.  These are not diagnostic tools, simply tools for personal insight and self-awareness.  Take the "Speaking and Hearing Your Love Types" assessment and once you are finished have your partner take it using the partner version.  Make sure and not discuss your findings until BOTH OF YOU HAVE FINISHED THE ASSESSMENT.  Then, if you wish, take the "Ideal versus practical Love Styles" assessment to see how you are grounded in your love.

Figure 3. Comparison of Characteristics of Short-term and Long-term Relationships

**High Vulnerability**  **High Intimacy**

**High Insecurity**  **High Trust**

| Characteristics of Short-term Relationships: | Characteristics of Long-term Relationships: |
|---|---|
| -Brief delay before sexual relationship begins | -Friendship that has passed the test of life's trials |
| -Fantasy basis for interactions | -Sexual relationship that followed friendship and trust |
| -Dramatic conflict and/or violence | -Intimacy that has proven stability |
| -Focus on status and physical looks | -Track record of loyalty and devotion |
| -Search for extremely intense experiences together | -Negotiated sexual compatibility |
| -Obsession in needing to be a "Thing" | -Interdependence and mutual independence |
| -Compulsion toward continuing relationship even after one or both know it's not going to work out | -Track record of altruism toward each other |
| -Loyalty while together, wondering eyes while apart | -Successful exclusion of partner's rivals |
| -Easy blow ups and speedy recoveries slathered in erotic interaction | -Ability to get needed help |
| -Pressure for partner to be something different | -Established patterns of problem solving |
| | -Capacity to forgive partner's mistakes and faults |
| | -Steady and enduring enjoyment of everyday experiences |

Duration of Relationship

Shorter  Longer

## Chapter 06-Communication and Connections

"You did."

"No, I didn't."

"Yes, you did."

"No, if you remember it was you."

"Hmmmm..., you may be right."

"I told you so!"

"No, you didn't."

"Yes, I did…"

So often arguments focus on who was right, which facts were involved, and ultimately who is to blame. These types of arguments are annoying both to have and to overhear if someone else is arguing and you are close by. Perhaps, one of the best (or worst) examples of this type of argument is found on www.Youtube.com search "Argument Clinic" and watch the Monty Python skit to see for yourself. I call these non-directional arguments, because the underlying issue is not being dealt with in the argument itself. Non-directional arguments happen for many reasons, but rarely help the couple in a supportive manner. Arguing is a quandary for many people, because they believe that arguing is a weakness, sign of trouble, or even a sin (yes, some do believe this). Marriage and family researchers have established for years that it is not the argument that is the problem. It is how the argument transpires that matters.

Directional arguments have a goal or a purpose and usually approach the issue that led to the argument in the first place. It isn't always obvious how to argue in such a way that it accomplishes something useful for the couple. Markman et al (2001) have established a training program for how to help couples "fight for their marriages" (see Fighting for Your Marriage: Positive Steps for Preventing Divorce and Preserving a Lasting Love: ISBN0-7879-5744-5). Likewise, John Gottmann (2002) published a relationship book that focuses on strategies for healthy arguments (among other strategies) (see The Relationship Cure: A 5 Step Guide to Strengthening Your Marriage, Family, and Friendships: ISBN: 0-609-80953-9).

The core of a healthy argument is to get to the root of the problem in such a way that both parties can be content with the outcomes. Easier said than done? Learning to argue is not rocket science. The principles that work for most people will likely work for you too. Look at Figure 1 below. Ever heard the phrase, "beat around the bush?" In this diagram, the bush is the argument. The real source of the argument comes from the root core of the problem. So often when we argue about who was right, facts, or who is to blame we waist time beating around the bush rather than getting to the real issue.

The root cause is often less obvious because we don't always know exactly what is bugging us. We simply get frustrated or concerned and start talking. If emotions and pride set in, the argument becomes non-directional and burdensome. There is a real simple paradigm on how to argue that I have developed over the years. It derives from literature on communication and problem solving. Look at Figure 2 below.

Figure 1. Getting to the Core of the Problem: The Roots

## The Core of the Problem is Found in the Roots

Emotions

Reactions

Obvious

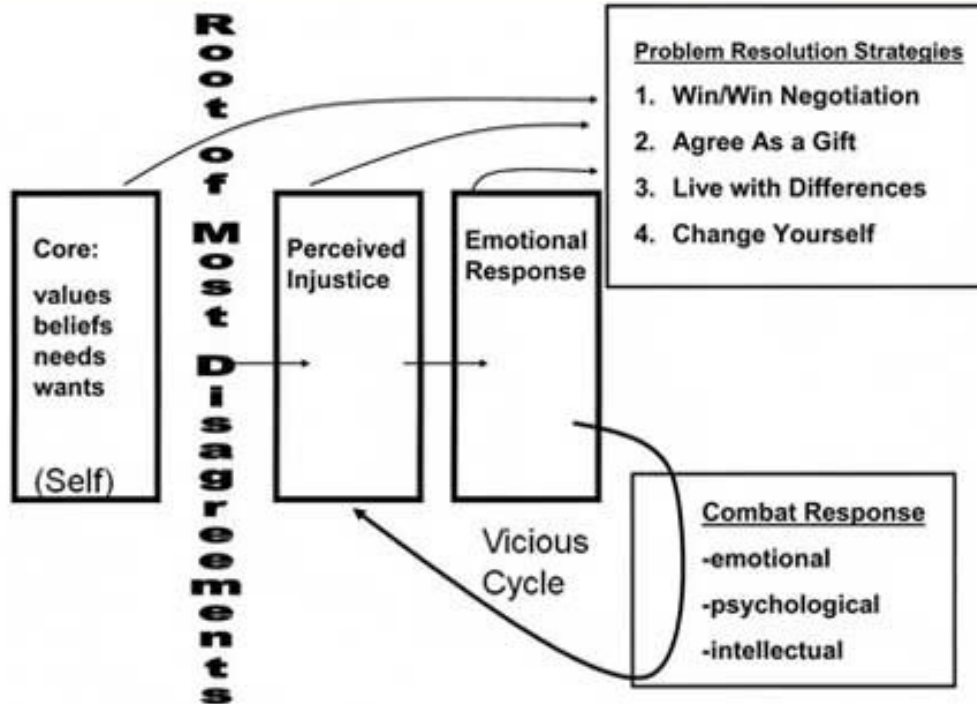Less Obvious

Core Issue

Communicate About These
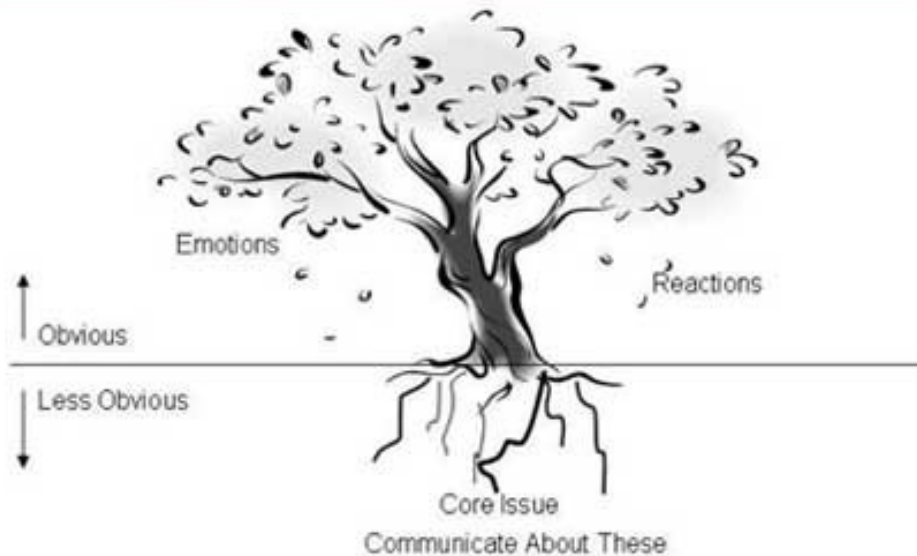
The diagram in Figure 2 shows the same principle found in Figure 1, except the roots are where the core of the issues are found. In a sense the model in Figure 2 is like the Model in Figure 1 turned onto its right side. In Figure 2 the core of the problem lies on the left side of the "Root of Most Disagreements" and these core issues are common for most people. Our values are what we define as important, desirable, and of merit. Our beliefs are what we define as real and accept as truths in our lives. Our values, beliefs, needs, and wants are typically where most core issues originate and where most are resolved.

This is a case study from a young couple I knew. I'll use it to walk you through each step of the model. A young couple married and were saving to eventually make a down payment on a home. She worked in the loan department of a bank and he worked construction. One Friday afternoon she came home from work. The bank had just passed their audits and she was especially tired and stressed. She opened the back door to their apartment, carrying a box of paperwork in her arms. Not knowing her husband had taken off his muddy work boots, she nearly tripped and fell to the floor. She sat her box down on the washing machine and looked down only to find that her best work shoes had mud on them and were now scratched.

She slipped them off thinking she would have to come back later and clean them up. On the way to the bedroom she tipped over a half-eaten bowl of sweet cereal that dampened her sock and messed up the carpet. She made it to the bedroom and dropped the box on the floor. She took off her socks and put them on the bathroom sink. She then noticed her husband's muddy pants draped over the toilette. She suddenly realized that within less than one minute, she now has to clean his muddy boots, her muddy shoes, her sticky socks, the wet carpet, and the toilette. Just then her husband returned in the front door from their mailbox. "Honey, I'm home."

## Figure 2. How to Have a Healthy Argument: the Win-Win Model



**Root of Most Disagreements**

Core:

values
beliefs
needs
wants

(Self)

Perceived Injustice

Emotional Response

**Problem Resolution Strategies**

1. Win/Win Negotiation
2. Agree As a Gift
3. Live with Differences
4. Change Yourself

Vicious Cycle

**Combat Response**

-emotional

-psychological

-intellectual

Her husband had arrived 30 minutes earlier excited about a pay raise he'd received that day.  He had showered, started eating a bowl of cereal, and darted out to get the mail.  When he walked in the front door she slammed the bedroom door and locked it.

"Honey, are you in there?" he asked, knocking on the door.

"Leave me alone!" she yelled through the door while crying.

"Honey, what's the matter?  Are you okay?"

"I'm fine!"

"Did I do something wrong?"

"No, I did when I married a pig!"

"A pig?"

"Yes, you live like a pig!"

"Well, well whose mother is always meddling in our marriage?"

"What?"  She gasped.  "Then whose uncle is in prison for life!"

"That's it."  He stomps out of the apartment and drives of.

This was a non-directional, beating around the bush, and hurtful argument.  You can see what happened to them using the diagram in Figure 2.  Somewhere between the muddy boots and the toilette, she felt a perceived injustice.  She felt like her husband did not respect her need to keep a clean apartment.  Her emotional response was anger.  It happens to us all, but in this case it wasn't controlled very well and she took the low-road

in this diagram which is the combat response.

When she slammed the door and called him a pig, she was attacking him, emotionally, psychologically, and/or intellectually. By doing this she inadvertently gave him a perceived injustice. He also has values and most likely felt that his need to be respected by his wife was not met. He perceived an injustice of maltreatment, felt hurt, then also took the low road and retaliated with an attack on her mother. Had this argument continued, the vicious cycle of beating around the bush or perpetually providing each partner with a perceived injustice emotional response and combat opportunity may have continued for much longer. Notice that the core issues were never dealt with in their communication. Never in this exchange did either of them get to the needs and wants, values and beliefs involved here.

Let me give you some background information. She came from a home where her mother was an immaculate homemaker, stay-at-home mother, and artist. She and her mother prided themselves on the cleanliness and order of their homes. She married a young man whose mother cleaned up after him. He could count on one hand the number of times he cleaned his room while growing up. They chose each other! On top of that she was stressed and tired and he was jubilant from the good week at work and pay raise. Let me just say, neither of these spouses is to blame. Arguments happen to everyone and unhealthy ones will be the pattern unless they do something about it. They both had to modify their behaviors so that they could get to the core issues and support one another. To do that, they'd have to take the high road.
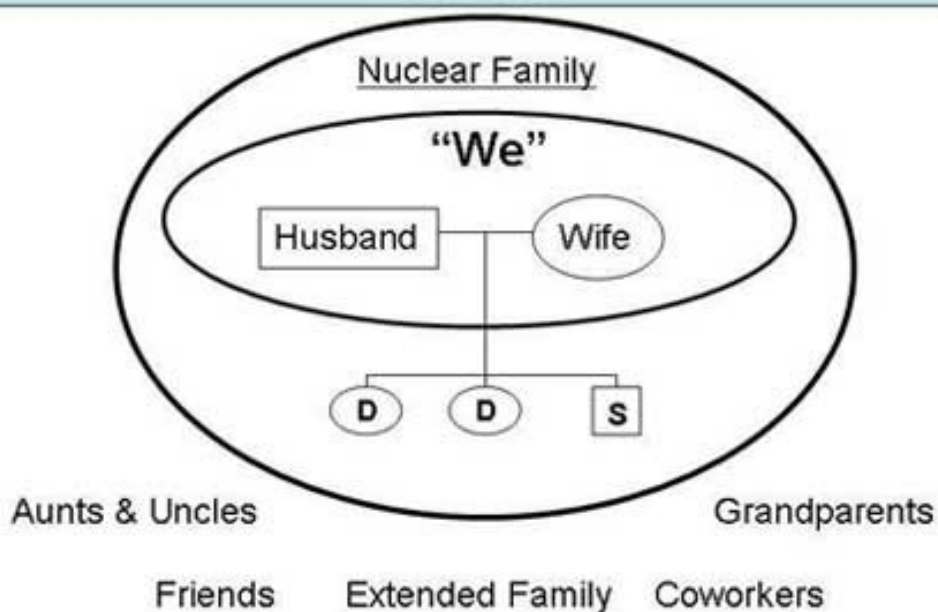
The high road in this model offers Problem Resolution Strategies which have been around the counseling and communications literature for many years. They've been researched and discussed in numerous self-help and consulting books over the last two decades. But, they do work well and offer techniques which facilitate a healthy argument and outcome. The first strategy is to negotiate a win-win solution. Every couple can find a way to work out an argument or disagreement so that the other person feels like they came out with their needs addressed and met as well. Think about it, if you always win then your partner always looses. That would make her or him a loser and who wants to be married to a loser. Figure 3 shows the diagram of how a couple forms an entity I call the "We."

A couple is simply a pair of people who identify themselves in terms of belonging together, trusting one another, and having a unique relationship, separate from all others. A "We" is close to the same thing, yet it focuses on the relationship as an entity in itself. A "We" as shown in this diagram is a married couple but can include cohabiters, or other intimate non-married couple arrangements. This is a relationship that is not intimately connected to any other relationships at the level as profoundly as they are connected to one another. A "We" is much like a vehicle (relationship) that two people purchased together. Both have to put in maintenance. Both have to care for it and treat it in such a way that it runs for a long time. Sometimes, spouses or partners attack the other in such a way that the other is harmed or damaged in their trust. A "We" is the social and emotional boundary a couple establishes when they decide to become a couple. This boundary includes only the husband and wife. It purposefully excludes the children, extended family, co-workers, and friends.

When a spouse is made to feel like the loser, then it's like getting upset and pulling hoses lose on the engine or stabbing a tire with a screwdriver. How long can a car (relationship) last if one inflicts damage in this way? The key is to remember that together you have formed a social bond that can only be as strong as its weakest part. Many non-directional arguments weaken one or both partners and can lead to an eventual abandonment of the relationship. One simply can't continue to make his or her partner the loser in arguments. At every level of trust and closeness this undermines the emotional connection and bond.

**Figure 3. How the Couple Forms a "We"**

## The Formation of A Couple or the "We"

Nuclear Family

"We"

Husband — Wife

D  D  S

Aunts & Uncles                              Grandparents

Friends      Extended Family   Coworkers

Knowing a strategy to create a win-win makes it much more likely to happen. Think about what you might need if you were the couple in the story above. What might she desire? Perhaps she'd like for him not to make messes for her. What might he desire? Perhaps he'd like for her to refrain from calling him farm animal names. So, later, after both have cooled down they may decide to talk about what happened and forgive one another. Then, they might try to answer this key question, each taking a turn to listen to the other, "What was really at the core of your concern?"

"Well, I've talked to you for nearly two years about how hard it is for me to feel love for you when I pick up after you and clean up your messes," She might say.

"Well, I've heard you and your family members call people names when they are not present, and I need for you to refrain from calling me names like that," He might say.

Then they can answer this healthy, pro-couple, and mutually nurturing question, "What can we agree upon to help us meet each other's needs better so we can avoid arguments like this in the future?" What might be your suggestion to them in answer to that

question?  Before you answer let me teach you a principle of human behavior change and modification.  That is, it is very difficult for humans to change their natures.  It is much easier for humans to change one very specific unwanted behavior.

Knowing that, you could urge them to consider working together as a team with a reward at the end of a designated period of time.  They might agree that she will not call him any farm animal names for 90 days.  He in turn will make sure that his muddy boots are not in her path for 90 days.  If they both live up to their end of the bargain, they might reward themselves with a weekend away together.  This would not only be a win-win, but it would be realistically attainable for a young couple.  It also avoids damaging the "We" while supporting it in the long run because it deals with their root core issues.

Now, some of you may feel frustrated that she didn't negotiate a completely mess-free home.  I'd argue that it's much easier to change when the individual himself is motivated to make the change, not his spouse.  It's also a fact that we choose who we marry or pair off with and they are who they are.  In most relationships it's unfair to say to a spouse or partner that "I love you just the way you are, so let's get married."  Then later turn around and say.  "I loved you the way I thought you were, but could you please change that to what I now think I want you to be?" Here are two relevant jokes:

  1. How many therapists does it take to change a light bulb?  Only one, but the bulb has to really, really want to be changed.

  2. What do we have in common with concrete?  The older we get the more mixed up and set in our ways we become.

Truth be told, if we don't want to change we won't.  It also gets more difficult to change the older we get.  Most of us don't want to change ourselves, especially in dramatic ways.  If for whatever reason you decide to change a behavior, keep in mind these three levels of recognizing where you may be on the path to change.  Let's say you wanted to stop getting angry while driving your car on the freeway.  So, you set a goal to go one month without using profanities while driving.  Sure enough after a long day and busy afternoon rush hour you slip up and let the words fly.  This is the first level of personal behavior change, when you catch yourself after the fact.  In other words, you did it again and realized it too late.

But, you don't give up on your goal.  Next week after a long day and in the middle of a jam up of stopped traffic you start with the profanities but catch yourself mid-sentence and control your language.  The second level of change is catching yourself in the middle of the act of the behavior you are trying to change.  The third level is when you finally recognize which triggers set off this pattern of profanity for you.  You realize that you curse more after stressful days at work and during traffic jams that slow your speed while traveling to the day care to pick up your child.

At the third level you can prepare how you will manage the stressors and thus prevent another slip up.  Perhaps you might put the radio on to easy listening, decide that being late back home is acceptable even if it costs a few more dollars for day care, and/or put in a self-help tape to listen to during the delay.  Either way, we can change our own behaviors if we are persistent and patient.  But, rarely can we change the behaviors of others.

The second option under Figure 2, Problem Resolution Strategies number 2 is to Agree as a Gift. This is to be done only on very unique circumstances. Agreeing as a gift is risky because to do this means that you are willing to give in on something of importance at your root level. I saw this once in a couple who were building their own home. They were exhausted and burned out. One day during a normal morning start to the day. He mentioned that in the day's schedule he wanted to go down to the brick yard and pick out the brick. He'd assumed that brick would be the best way to go. She brought up the point that she had already mentioned using stone instead of brick to him months before and had already picked out three types she really liked. To shorten this long story, they ended up in a heated argument, he moved into a hotel for two weeks, and all construction stopped.

After two weeks had passed, he called and asked her out to lunch. During lunch he expressed his sorrow for assuming that she would just go with him on the brick idea. He then offered her this olive leaf, "Let's go down together and I'll support whatever stone you think is best for the outside of our new home." She was surprised and asked him why he'd give in like that. "You spend more time at home with the children. You grew up in a home faced with stone, and to me, I just was trying to be efficient about getting this home built and it really didn't matter for me as much as it does for you."

They both then talked about how tired and worn out they had become and how dangerous building a home can be to a marital relationship. In this case, he offered to agree as a gift. It wasn't a negotiation for future authority to decide on a home trait. It was an unattached gift. I urge my students to do this rarely so that one avoids becoming the martyr in the relationship. Martyrs always give in and find themselves unhappy with the direction of the relationship. The "We" is strong because of many negotiations which ensure that both parties can have their core issues addressed while meeting the needs of the other.

Problem Resolution Strategy 3 is to simply learn to live with differences in a relationship. Most couples do have irreconcilable differences in their marriage or relationship. Most couples realize that each is an individual and each has uniqueness that they bring to the "We" which make it what it is in terms of richness and viability. I often have students who express concern to me about this strategy. They hold the belief that their partner should change because their happiness may depend upon it. Many studies suggest that individuals are as happy as they chose to be, regardless of the changing that does or does not transpire in their relationship. Happiness is a conscious choice and exists when the individual persists in feeling happy even in difficult circumstances (See Man's Search for Meaning, Viktor E. Frankl various editions).

Finally, Problem Resolution Strategy 4 is to simply change yourself. If you came from a home where a clean home reflected upon your self-worth, where a clean home meant a happy home, and where a clean home meant that you and your mother were close, and then you married a guy who never did housework, why should he have to change? He might over the years learn to share the housework responsibilities. But, in the reality of things it might be easier to redefine the meaning of a clean home to yourself than to ask another individual to be something else in an attempt to accommodate your current tastes.

This model in Figure 2 is a useful way of understanding where arguments come from and how they might be best managed in such a way that the "We" is ultimately nurtured

because the root issues are addressed by one another.  One last suggestion in having a healthy argument, remember that no all issues are created equally.  I use a blood metaphor to illustrate this to my students (I know it's kind of gross, but bare with me).

Some arguments originate from a disease level in one of the partner's personalities.  I call these the Leukemia's of arguments.  They stem from an underlying medical condition that requires professional intervention. Any of the following personality disorders might lead a couple to professional counseling: borderline, narcissistic, histrionic, or 7 others are very difficult to live with and can undermine the "We" if not treated professionally (Search Personality disorders on the Internet for more information and criteria).  Just like Leukemia, if professional help is not sought after, the relationship will suffer and might die.

Then there are the day-to-day arguments that are very common during the first 3 years.  I call these the blood cell arguments because we make and lose millions of blood cells over the course of a year.  How to squeeze the tooth paste tube, how to cook an omelet, and how to drive to a destination are common issues of these arguments, especially among newlyweds.  These arguments can be useful in the sense that they give the couple practice in having healthy arguments.

Practice is important especially if the couple has massive bleeding arguments.  These can threaten the very life of the relationship if unchecked.  These occur when the very core values, beliefs, needs, and wants of a spouse are at stake.  For example, the belief that marital sexuality should be exclusive to the couple is a deeply held belief that most couples respect.  But when an extramarital affair does occur, the "We" has been damaged and it takes a tremendous amount of concerted effort to repair trust.

I have a few more thoughts about arguments to help bring things all together.  First, have arguments when you need to do so.  Focus on the issues at hand and how to create a win-win outcome.  Second, don't let others into the boundaries of your "We."  An argument should be just between each partner, not the aunt, uncle, parents, children, friends, etc.  Third, let the professionals give you some training on how to argue in healthier ways.  There is no need to reinvent the wheel when thousands of studies have been published on relationships.  Self-help books and seminars can be very useful.  And fourth, treat your relationship the same way you'd treat a nice car.  Care for it, perform preventative maintenance, and avoid the tendency to ignore it, neglect it, or damage it.

Family Scientists have borrowed from the physics literature a concept called entropy which is roughly defined as the principle that matter tends to decay and reduce toward its simplest parts.  For example, a new car if parked in a field and ignored would eventually decay and rot.  A planted garden if left unmaintained would be overrun with weeds, pests, and yield low if any crop.  Marital Entropy is the principle that if a marriage does not receive preventative maintenance and upgrades it will move towards decay and break down.

Couples soon realize that marriage is not constant bliss and that it often requires much work, experience more stability and strength when they nurture their marriage.  They treat their marriage like a nice car and become committed to preventing breakdowns rather than waiting to repair them.  These couples read and study experts like: Gottman, Cherlin, Markman, Popenoe, and others who have focused their research on how to care

for the marriage, acknowledging the propensity relationships have to decay if unattended.

There are some basic principles that apply to communication with others which can be of use to you. It is very important to know what you feel and say what you mean to say. It sounds simple but people are not always connected to their inner issues. Our issues lie deep within us. Often we just see the tip of them, like we might only see the tip of an ice berg. Some of us are strangers to them while others are very aware of what the issue is. When an argument arises, you might ask yourself these self-awareness questions: how it happened, what lead up to it, and what was at stake for you? This helps many to get to their underlying issue.

Not only is it difficult for some of us to know what our issues are, but many of us have had relationships end painfully or with hurt feelings on both sides. These past hurts may inhibit open communication in current relationships. Figure 4 shows some of the painful arrows that threaten to cause harm to trust in our current relationships. Some of us grow up feeling shamed and worthless. This sometimes makes us feel extremely sensitive to how others evaluate us and can make it very difficult for us to want to open up and show others what we believe are flaws.

All of us have vulnerabilities in our lives. We tend to cover them up and hide them for fear of them being exposed. Interestingly, when we find that when we get to know someone we really care about and they accept our vulnerabilities, it is a sign of love that often supports a decision to pair off together. There are some of us who don't ever want to experience conflict. Conflict avoidant people tend to work extra hard to avoid conflict with others and often sacrifice the needed attention to issues that is required for a relationship to last. I met a 72 year old man who had been married to a conflict avoidant wife for 25 years. "She never complained. She always did whatever I wanted. I couldn't get her opinion on a matter much less an argument over something." She eventually left him, stating she was unhappy.

Each of us have painful experiences that are difficult to deal with. Sometimes we suppress them and bury them in the back of our mind. Sometimes we deny they even transpired. Sometimes we take these issues from our past and lay them onto our current relationships or project them onto our current partner. In all three of these cases, the root core issue is difficult to access, yet still plays an important part of our daily interactions. Fear is very destructive to relationships. Fear is like a loud speaker of an emotion that can drown out reason and other emotions that pertain to our relationships. It is easy to respond to and often hard to understand.

An older friend of mine once said, "Don't take counsel from your fears." He was correct. Fear is like a super hot pepper. Our other emotions are like thoughts and are more subtle like a grape. It is very difficult to taste a grape while simultaneously chewing on a hot pepper. Fears come from past hurts and pains. Rarely do they guide us in rationally effective ways. It's estimated that 90 percent of what we fear never happens. If the 10 percent does occur most of us can turn to others for support and get through it. Fear can shut open communication completely off. Manage your fears or they will manage you.

Figure 4. Inhibitions to Open Communications and Trusts

Shame & Guilt
about Feelings

Gender Roles

Vulnerabilities

Inadequacy

Open
Communication

Conflict
Avoidant

Fear

Suppression
Denial
Projection

We all know that there is someone better than us out there in most aspects of what we offer our partners.  Feeling inadequate is normal.  It is often the case that spouses can unite together to help one or both deal with their inadequacies.  In this way a weakness can become a communication strength that allows the couple to untie against the frailties they each bring to the relationship.

There are gender differences in how we communicate.  Sometimes these filter our current communication efforts to the point that healthy communication is avoided in the name of doing what most women or men would do in the situation.  I'm a huge fan of self-help books.  But, I warn students to be very careful about those claiming to know what "all men" or "all women" are like.  Figure 5 shows a comparison of a sociologist's and a psychologist's take on gender differences in communications.

When I go over this figure with my students in class they typically say that they know someone like that or they themselves communicate like that.  I quickly point out to them that they may have a trait that fits them the way Gray or Tannen says it would regardless of their being male or female.  Gray puts our genetic biological traits which stem from XX or XY at the core of why we talk and converse the way we do.  He claims that we are built from the molecule up to be a predictable type of communicator.  Many in his field criticize his conclusions and especially his claim that men and women may be a difference species from one another.

## Figure 5. Comparison of Two Gender Communication Self-Help Paradigms.

Two Major Perspectives on Gender Communication
Differences: John Gray vs. Deborah Tannen

| John Gray (2004) *Men Are from Mars, Women Are from Venus* "It's about your genetic biological composition". | Deborah Tannen (2001) *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* "It's about how you are socialized" |
|---|---|
| Men are: | Men are: |
| • One side brain users who hunt<br>• Strong emotional people who solve problems alone (in caves) | • Raised to compete and be independent<br>• Status seekers who protect themselves from being put down |
| Women are: | Women are: |
| • Two side brain users who nurture<br>• Feeling people who solve problems with others (in groups) | • Raised to connect to others while minimizing differences<br>• Seek consensus while avoiding appearance of being superior |

The Author's ultimate value of self-help gender communications books: "They expand your understanding enough to see that your spouse or friend may simply be different from you and not wrong, mean of uncooperative.

Tannen talks about how we are socialized or raised by those around us. To her it's about what we learn to expect from ourselves in the role of males or females that shapes how we communicate. The research she presents allows us to see how men are raised aware of their place in society. They are constantly aware that someone around them is bigger, stronger, faster, richer, etc. They know their place and work hard not to have someone of higher status put them down. Tannen claims that this approach to relationships-avoiding being put down and being very aware of status issues-is why many men refrain from opening up in conversation. Opening up puts them at risk of being put down.

To Tannen women are raised in the context of relationships. They spend much of their lives reinforcing and strengthening relationships with friends and family. They are aware that informal rules guide their relationships and they put a great deal of effort into how to maintain good relationships so that they don't find themselves socially isolated from others. This is why women tend to maintain more relationships than men and why men and women struggle to connect. Women approach the conversation with an effort to connect and maintain the relationship while men approach it trying to gain status or not be put at risks.

Notice the Author's note (that's me) at the bottom of Figure 5. To me, the real value of any gender self-help communication book is not that it identifies what all women or all men will say-that never happens because there is no generalized pattern of communication that all men or women fit into. So, I urge everyone to read and enrich their understanding of how relationships work and how to communicate better. But, I also offer this advice: The Author's ultimate value of self-help gender communications books expand your understanding enough to see that your spouse or friend may simply be

different from you and not wrong, mean, or uncooperative. They can't give you all the answers to all your troubles or cures.

When two people communicate they share a certain degree of power during the conversation. The Conflict Theory tells us that power is more often than not distributed unevenly. When we carry on conversations we sometimes find ourselves having more or less power in the conversation. The Principle of Least Interest simply states that the partner who is least interested has the most power. In other words if you really want the relationship to work more than the other person, you have less power. If the other person wants the relationship to work more than you do, then you have more power. When relationships form, power changes hands from time to time depending on the nuances of the day-to-day interactions of the couple. Typically, women assume more responsibility for relationship maintenance in heterosexual couple's interactions.

Another crucial part of communication is the ability to communicate at the non-verbal level. Non-verbal and verbal communication are essential for truly understanding one another. Non-verbal communication includes touch, gestures, facial expression, eye contact, distance, and overall body positioning. Touch is an essential part of the human experience. For the most part, women are very clear on which types of touch they give and receive. Women have cultural permission to be more affectionate with one another in the US. Men typically refrain from touching other men in heterosexual contexts (except in sports). Men touch women more than other men. Interestingly, comparing male to female newborns, most males enjoy their mothers' physical closeness while the females enjoy the social interactions. Men have difficulties in distinguishing the varieties of touch and its intended purpose.

Gestures vary between cultures. You've heard the phrase "talking with your hands." This is common in various parts of the US among hearing individuals. Hands are moved in conjunction with words to emphasize and illustrate the point being shared. Deaf persons also communicate with a common form of non-verbal language called American Sign Language. Many parents teach ASL to their smaller children because toddlers can learn signs long before they can verbally articulate words. Gestures reinforce verbal messages and can be very useful in understanding a person's intended message.

Eye contact is an extremely important aspect of communication. Making eye contact is difficult for some because the eyes truly do tell on the state of one's emotions. I teach my students a trick to test another person to see if he or she is really making eye contact. It goes like this, while talking to them change your facial expression dramatically mid-sentence then change it back again. If the other person's expression changes or they talk about it to you, then they were probably sharing interactive eye contact. If not then they may be faking eye contact. The most common form of faking eye contact is the eye brow or forehead stare. Men are especially guilty of this because they are trying to communicate and as Tannen pointed out also trying not to be vulnerable. Eye contact can be learned and with the right person it may even be easier for men and women who often avoid making eye contact.

The average person in main stream US society needs about 30-36 inches of space between him or her and another person. Strangers keep this distance where possible. Intimates close the gap to the point where they are very close side-by-side, touching at

the hip, legs, etc.  When people argue they often increase the distance.  When people are being formally introduced to another they often maintain it.  We not only want about 3 feet distance between us and others, we also want people to stay about that far away from our desk, doors, and even vehicles.  This is in part why elevators are so uncomfortable, they don't give us our 3 feet of space.  Closing that distance with a stranger can be viewed as an act of aggression.

Finally, body positioning can be very insightful to a person's disposition.  You've probably already heard about the body positions that close other people out, there is the folding of the arms across the chest, the crossing of one's legs, and the turning oneself around offering the back rather than the front to another person.  I often show photographs to my students to see how well they can pick up on non-verbals.  Look at Figure 6 to see a photo montage of pictures taken over the last 10 years.  Look at these aspects of non-verbal communication as you consider what is happening in each photo, touch, gestures, facial expression, eye contact, distance, and overall body positioning.

In Photo 1, you can see 4 persons.  Any guesses as to what's going on?  You can certainly observe their friendship with their body spacing (very close), touch, facial expressions, and body positioning.  These are 4 students that presented a paper in Ypsilanti, Michigan at the annual conference of the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociologists.  This was taken right after their presentation ended.  You can see their closeness, relief, and friendship developed here.  Photo 2 is a married couple in Nepal.  They were traveling to a small village to bring medical nursing care to some locals.  She's the nurse and he's her husband.  Their distance in the photo indicates cultural differences between Nepal and the US.

Photo 3 is Kat, another student of mine who went to a conference in Florida to present a paper.  Her husband surprised her with a birthday present of an hour in a tank with live dolphins.  No need to guess how she feels toward this one.  Photo 4 is a picture of a professor and his two students during our semi-annual poster symposium at UVU.  Notice the facial expressions and body positioning-appropriate between a professor and his students.

Figure 6. Photo Montage of Non-Verbal Communications

Photo 5 was taken by a student of mine who leads tri-annual expeditions of our UVU students down to an orphanage in Mexico. He takes them on a 3 day blitz of travel and service. In this picture the orphans gather closely around him and climb on him for fatherly affection and interaction. Even though he visits only 3 times a year they've come to see him as a parental figure. Photo 6 was taken in a studio. How does he feel toward her? He's looking at her, she's not looking back. Any guess who might have the most power in this relationship?

Photo 7 was taken during a volunteering experience my students and I took to help serve 400 meals in 90 minutes in the local soup kitchen. Almost all of the volunteers there were strangers who took their lunch break to do something good for someone else. Can you guess the general mood of the volunteers from this photo? Something about doing for others brings a sense of peace and happiness. Finally, Photo 8 contains a picture of three of our six children. The oldest is in the blue shirt and saying goodbye to his sister and brother who were leaving for an extended service mission February, 2009. In all of these photos, non-verbal analysis would give you an idea, but not the entirety of the context of what is going on. Learning to use and understand non-verbal messages and communication enhances most relationships.

In fact therapists use verbals and non-verbals to assess both mood and affect. Mood is one's state of emotional being and is typically detected by the words and patterns of speaking a person uses. Affect is one's emotion or current feeling and is judged by a person's non-verbal messages. Moods and affects don't always coincide such as the case

when one of my students came in and informed me that she had been sexually assaulted. I asked her to sit down for a few minutes and focused her attention on how she was doing at the moment. I walked with her over to the campus counseling center and she visited with a crisis therapist.

For weeks she came by for a few updates and eventually I noticed that her facial expression had changed. There was something incongruent about her mood and affect when she visited with me. You see, without knowing it she smiled every time she visited me, even though running mascara down an extremely distraught facial expression she smiled when she told me of the assault. She smiled as she updated me about her recovery. Her smiling while she revealed this terrible assault to me was incongruent between mood and affect.

I asked her to sit with me for a few minutes one day then said, "You may not have known it but every time you told me these tragic things that had happened, you smiled. You're not smiling today. What changed?" She told me that her therapist eventually brought up the smiling issue. She had learned something about herself. From the beginning, she had wanted to tell me about what had happened, but simultaneously wanted me not to worry about her. Her forced smile was an effort to manage my emotions and still let me in on her tragic experience. That revelation about her answered my question of why she struggled so diligently to smile in the face of horrific circumstances.

## Chapter 07-Sexual Scripts

Just a note to begin this chapter, perhaps more than any other topic, sexuality is controversial. Even though it underlies many advertisement themes, is shown independent of any emotional or physical consequences in many TV and big screen productions, and is commonly participated in outside of marriage, we are raised not to talk about it much. Many of us are even taught that religions are very strict on how sex is exclusively for married people, yet very few of us had the luxury of having our own parents teach us about it.

For some religious believers, it brings family shame to have sex outside of marriage. For others, the fear of God's retribution shapes their very thinking about what sex is and how we should participate in it. I am strikingly aware of this and deeply committed to being as objective as I can. Rest assured, my goal is not to get you or anyone you know into a risky situation at any level. I am admittedly conservative and biased, but this chapter is not about me. It is about you!

My goal in teaching you in this chapter is two-fold: first, I want you to understand your own sexuality, body, and experiences; second, I want you to do what most US parents don't do-I want you to teach your own children about sex and to do so with an understanding of the critical information they need to know so that they can learn about their own sexuality, body, and experiences. It would be arrogant and ill-advised for a professor to tell students their sexual values, so I won't. It would be ill-advised for a parent to avoid telling his or her children about sexuality. So, please do so if and when you have children in their formative years at home.

A script is what actors read or study and what guides their behavior in a certain role. A

script is a blueprint for what we "should do" in our roles. Sexual Scripts are blueprints and guidelines for what we define as our role in sexual expression, sexual orientation, sexual behaviors, sexual desires, and the sexual component of our self-definition. All of us are sexual beings, yet none of us is exactly identical to another in our sexual definitions and script expectations.  Having said that, keep in mind that we are not just born with sexual scripts in place.  They are learned.  Sexual socialization is the process by which we learn how, when, where, with whom, why, and with which motivations we are sexual beings.

We are all born with drives which are biological needs that demand our attention and behavioral responses to them.  The most powerful drives are circulation, breathing, voiding our urine and other waste, eating, drinking, sleeping, and sexual involvement.  Sexual drives are biological urges to participate in sexual activity in certain sexual roles.

Sexual scripts, once learned, will shape how that drive is answered.  Sexuality is learned via culture and socialization.  There are as many unique sexual scripts as there are people, yet some of these scripts have common themes and can be viewed as a collective pattern or trend in the larger social level.

Many of us learn our sexual scripts in a passive way.  In other words, we don't learn from experience, but from a synthesis of concepts, images, ideals, and sometimes misconceptions.  For example, the commonly held belief that men and women are two different creatures, perhaps from different planets was a very successful fad in recent years that led an entire generation to believe that men might be from "Mars" while women might be from "Venus" (John Grey, various self help books).

Today more and more in the US have less religious values and more diverse experiences with sexuality.  So much of the younger generation's focus on sex is about the orgasm.  An Orgasm is the sexual climax that accompanies sexual intercourse and includes muscle tightening in the genital area, electrical sensations radiating from the genitals, and a surge of a variety of pleasure-producing hormones throughout the body. Many cultures have records of sexual expression and some even have records of sexual pleasure maximization (see Karma Sutra).

Some traditional sexual scripts that have been studied and have found to include a number of problematic assumptions including: the man must be in charge, the woman must not enjoy (or let on that she enjoys) the sexual experience, the man is a performer whose skills are proven effective upon arrival of his partner's orgasm, men are sexual while women are not, women can't talk about it and turn to men for sexual interests and direction, and finally sex always leads to intercourse and a female orgasm (her orgasm being proof of his sexual capacity).  Numerous studies have shown that most of these traditional scripts are not: realistic, healthy, conducive to open communication, nor negotiation of sexual needs and desires for couples.  In sum, these traditional notions can be an undermining influence in a couple's intimacy. More contemporary scripts include these simple ideas that:

1. both partners need to learn to take ownership of the couple's sexual experiences

2. both partners need to learn to communicate openly and honestly about their feelings

3. both partners need to learn to  meet one another's: desires, needs, and wishes while

making sure that their own needs are being met

Many people think of male versus female reproductive and sexual body parts in terms of opposites.  In sexual matters, men and women are very much alike from a physiological and biological point of view. We are even alike in our fetal development with our genitals developing from identical tissues, regardless of being male or female.  Have you ever wondered why a pregnant woman can't get an accurate ultrasound until the second month to determine the fetus's sex being male or female?  In part, technicians want to give the fetus enough time to develop genitals that coincide with the particular sex of the baby.  More importantly, the fetus has identical genitals until about the 5-6th week.  That means it would require a DNA test to distinguish which sex the fetus is up until that point.

Sexually, males and females start with identical genital buds that eventually form the male or female reproductive organs. Figure 1 briefly discusses the development of male and female sexual parts from very similar genital pelvic tissues.  Please note that sexual development is a natural yet extremely complex process that yields a mostly predictable outcome among newborns.  That means most females are born with nearly identical sexual parts.  Likewise most  males are born with nearly identical parts.

| Figure 1.  Similar Sexual Development in the Male and Female Fetus | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Fetus | Newborn Male | Newborn Female |
| Glans Area | Glans Penis | Clitoral Glans* |
| Urethral Fold | Urethral Meatus | Urethral Meatus |
| Urethral Groove &Lateral Buttress | Shaft of Penis | Labia Minora and Majora |
| Anal Tubercal | Anus and sphincter | Anus and sphincter |

*Not all fetal sexual development occurs uniformly. Though not discussed here in great detail, there are 5 common sexual development variations that occur: Turner's Syndrome, Klinefelter's Syndrome, Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, Fetally Androgenized Females, and DHT-deficient males.

Not all fetal sexual development occurs uniformly. Though not discussed here in great detail, there are 5 common sexual development variations that occur: Turner's Syndrome, Klinefelter's Syndrome, Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, Fetally Androgenized Females, and DHT-deficient males.

Figure 2 shows an artist's depiction of the tissues that biologists would use to identify the developing genitals of males and females.  I have to express thanks to my Senior Research Student, Sam Jones who volunteered to draw these for this free online book.

Figure 2. How Male and Female Reproductive Parts Generate from the Identical Fetal Tissues
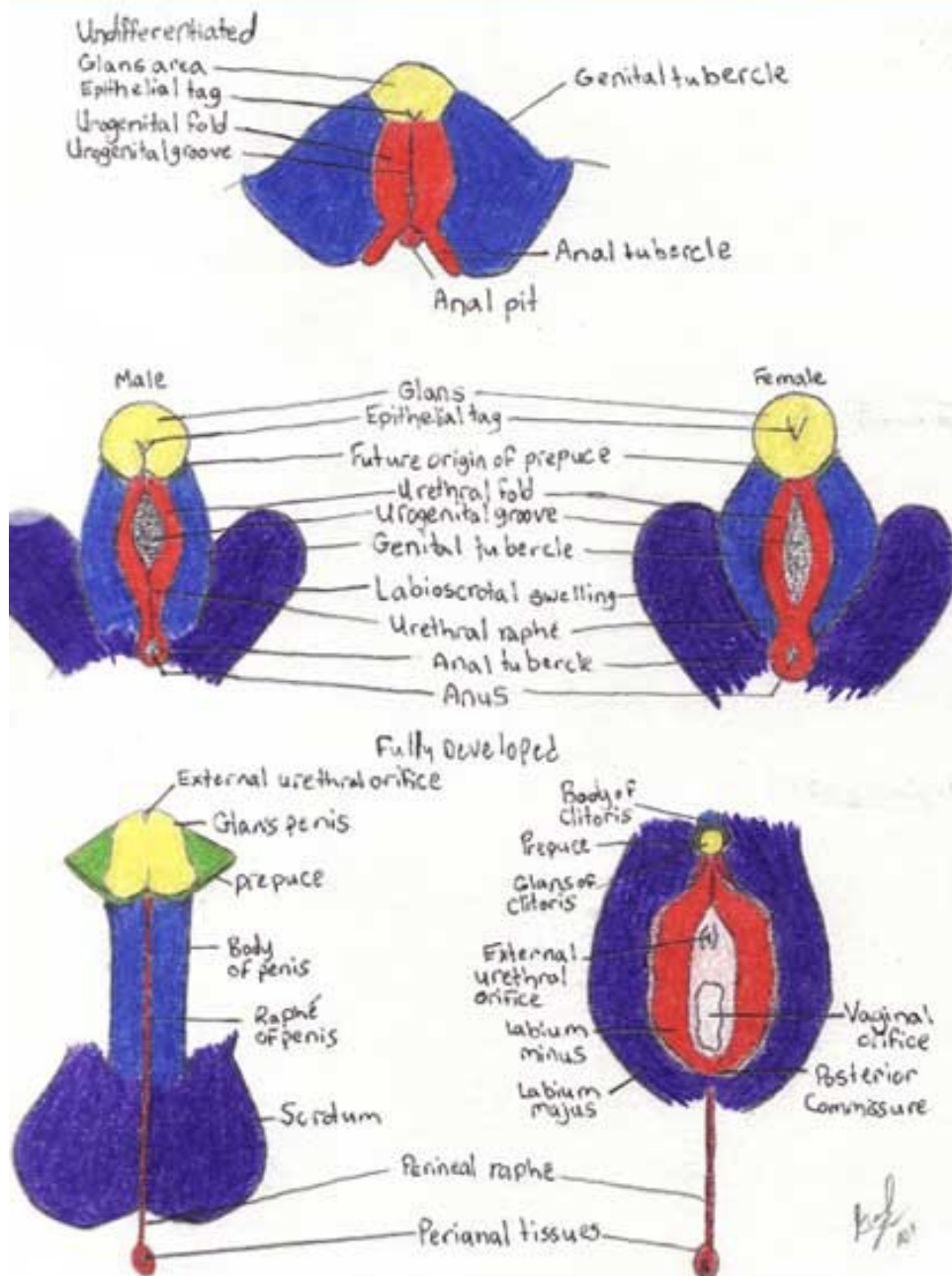
With an XY male genetic configuration, the glans area will develop into the penis. The urethral fold will form the urethral meatus or opening in the penis. The urethral groove and lateral buttress will fold onto itself and fuse into the shaft of the penis with the urethra connecting the bladder to the urethral meatus or opening of the penis. The anal tubercle will form into the anus and external sphincter. The male glands: prostate, cowper's, and seminal vesicles develop in another process as do the testicles which develop inside the abdomen then drop into the scrotum.

For the XX female genetic configuration, the glans becomes the clitoral glans, the urethral fold becomes the urethral meatus, the urethral groove and lateral buttress become the labia minora and majora (labia means lips), and the anal tubercle becomes the anus and external sphincter. The vagina, cervix, ovaries, and uterus form from other tissues. Interestingly, ovaries develop inside the abdomen.  These basic fetal tissues differentiate because of the X or Y.  In adult sexual partners these sexual parts function in very similar ways even though their placement and structure differ.

There are some variations when the actual physical sexual development does not follow expected patterns.  Hermaphrodism is found among those variations and is reported in two forms: first, True Hermaphrodism is an extremely rare condition wherein both reproductive organs of both males and females are in one person's body and functioning to some degree or another (this includes, penis, testicles, prostate gland, vagina, uterus, and ovaries), second, Psuedohermaphrosim (false or near hermaphrodism) is a rare condition wherein some of both reproductive organs for males or females are present in one person's body, but neither male nor female organs are completely present and/or fully functioning.

As is mentioned in Figure 2, not all fetal sexual development occurs uniformly.  Though not discussed here in great detail there are 5 common sexual development variations reported among newborns: Turner 's syndrome, Klinefelter's Syndrome, Androgen Insensitivity Syndrome, Fetally Androgenized Females, and DHT-deficient Males. Simply search the Internet for these images and explanations.  In most cases of fetal development, sexual development is predictable and follows the above mentioned pattern of originating from nearly identical tissues

Sexuality is important to us because it represents an activity that is a rite of passage into adulthood, because it is very pleasurable, and because it reinforces our roles and aspirations as males and females.  Yet, sexuality is truly a passive part of our daily lives. What does that mean, "passive part of our daily lives?"  Samuel and Cynthia Janus published The Janus Report on Sexual Behavior in 1993 (Wiley and Sons ISBN 0-471-52540-5).  They studied a scientific sample of 2,765 men and women and reported some general trends in US sexual practices and patterns.  They found that age-based estimates indicate a great deal of similarity in sexual frequency between age groups with 2-3 sexual encounters per week.

Sex is a minor (yet important) part of our daily time allocation.  People with a sexual partner available have sex about 3 times per week, taking about 25 minutes per experience (I am fully aware that some people have more sex than others and that circumstances impact more or less frequency and or duration.  Yet, we can make estimates that illustrate the point).  That means about 75 minutes per week or 3,900 minutes per year.  Divide 3,900/ 60 minutes and it equals about 65 hours per year having sex.  At first glance that sounds like a great deal of time allocation.

But, keep in mind that in comparison, most of us spend most of our lives doing nonsexual things.  Consider these estimates: if the average person sleeps about 8 hours in a 24 hour period, works 8.5 hours, eats 1.5 hours, commutes .5 hours, watches TV for 3 hours, and about 3.5 for miscellaneous activities, then compared to routine non-sexual activities, sexual intercourse comprises a relatively small portion of our time.  Table 1 shows some

estimated daily and yearly hours spent in various activities. Sexual intercourse doesn't happen 4 days out of the 7-day week and only happens for a brief interaction during the other 3 days of the week.

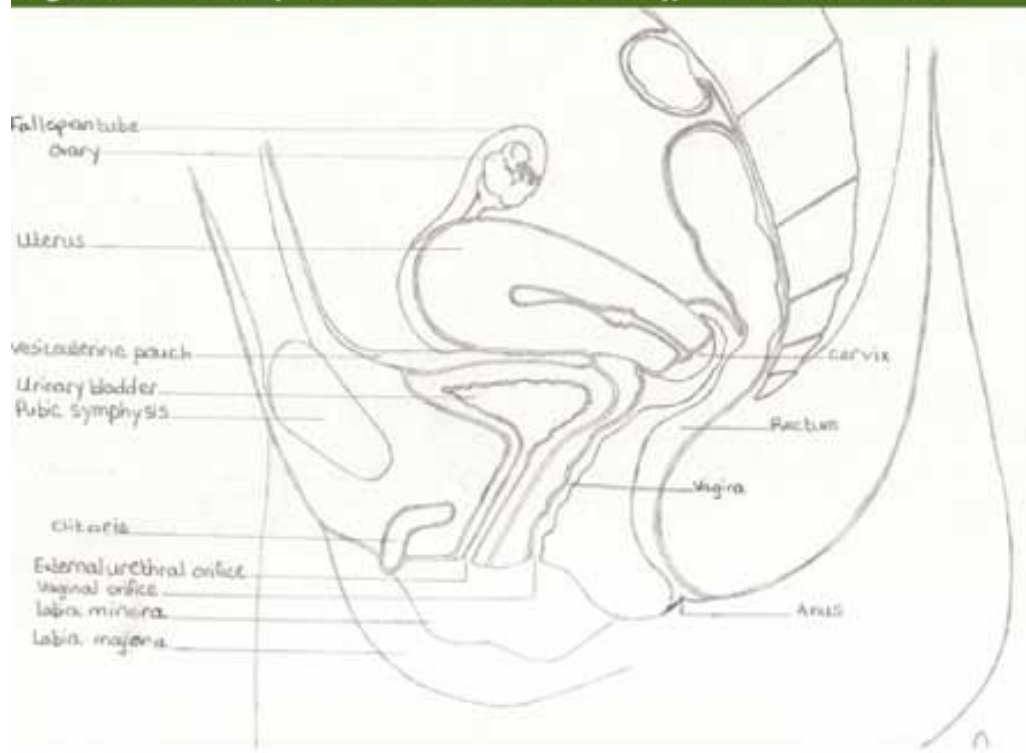| Table 1. Daily and Yearly Hours Spent in Various Activities for An Average Person | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Activities** | **Daily Hours=25** | **Yearly Hours=8,760** |
| Sleep | 8.0 | 2,920.0 |
| Work | 8.5 | 3,102.5 |
| Television viewing | 3.0 | 1,095.0 |
| Eating | 1.5 | 547.5 |
| Commuting | 0.5 | 182.5 |
| Miscellaneous | 2.32 | 846.8 |
| Sexual Intercourse | 0.18 hours (About 11 minutes per day average) | 65.0 |

Relatively speaking sexual intercourse is a passive part of the average person's life accounting for only 65 yearly hours of involvement per year. Many people refrain from regular sexual intercourse until their twenties and are less likely to participate in it if they are not married than are married people. These estimations don't take into account those with no sexual partner and those who abstain from sexual intercourse. The average would be much lower if those categories of people were averaged into the equation.

To understand our own bodies and also understand enough about sexuality to teach our children, we must understand the basics of female and male anatomy. Figure 3 shows an artist's depiction of a cross section of female reproductive and sexual anatomy. The clitoris is extremely sensitive and is protected by the clitoral hood (not shown here). It sits above the vagina. In females, urine exits the body at the external urethral orifice (also called meatus). The vaginal orifice simply means the opening to the vagina itself. The labia are in two places, closer to the vaginal orifice (labia minora) and further away from the vaginal orifice (labia majora).

The urinary bladder sits behind the pubic bone and during urination travels an inch or two out of the body via the external urethral orifice. In the back and top of the vagina sits the cervix. The cervix is simply the window into the uterus. It is round, muscular and thick and has a small opening in it. The cervix is the bottom portion of the uterus (the uterus is where a fetus or baby would grow and develop during pregnancy).

Figure 3. Female Reproductive and Sexual Anatomy, Cross-sectional View

Fallopian tube
ovary

uterus

vesicouterine pouch
Urinary bladder
Pubic symphysis

clitoris

External urethral orifice
Vaginal orifice
labia minora
labia majora

cervix

Rectum

Vagina

Anus

The uterus leans forward toward the pubic bone. Inside the uterus on the left and the right sides are 2 small openings where the fallopian tube connects the ovaries to the uterus. There are two ovaries that have thousands of eggs in them at birth. A woman may release as many as 450 eggs during her reproductive years. After an egg is released from the ovary (ovulation), the fallopian tube carries the egg from the ovary down to the uterus. When pregnancy occurs it is often because sperm met the egg in the fallopian tube and fertilized it. Later, if the fertilized egg travels down the fallopian tube and implants into the uterus, then conception has taken place.

The vagina is approximately 3 inches long and is made of tissues that are epithelial and mucosal. This means that when blood flow increases to the pelvis the vagina produces a lubricant in the form of moisture. The vagina is not hollow in the sense that a tube is round and hollow. The vagina is relatively flat and has potential space not constantly open space. The vagina has a band of pelvic floor muscles that surround it. One set of muscles is called the puboccocceygeus muscle (PC muscle) which is located approximately 1 inch inside the vagina and which also plays a role in sexual pleasure for both partners.

To truly understand how these parts function during sexual intercourse, we need to consider a research-based paradigm developed by Masters and Johnson years ago which they called the sexual response cycle (see Master, W. & Johnson, V. 1966, Human Sexual Response; Boston: Little Brown). The Sexual Response Cycle is a model that explains how most people experience three phases when they engage in sexual intercourse: excitement, plateau, and then orgasm.

Masters and Johnson are quick to point out that each individual has a unique and varied sexual response so much so that no two sexual encounters would be expected to be perfectly identical between the same people.  Nevertheless, these three phases are very common among most people.  You may want to search the Internet for Kaplan's model and Master's and Johnson's four-phase model.

As sexual intercourse begins here is what happens to both males and females as they pass through these three phases: Excitement Phase is when blood flow to pelvis bringing more lymphatic fluid and plasma to the region.  Because of hormonal and psychological stimuli there is generally swelling in the sexual parts.  While this is happening, the Plateau Stage begins which is when more hormones are released, moisture increases, heart rate increases, intensity of sensory perception increases (touch, smell, sight, hearing, and taste).  In the Orgasm Phase an electrical build up of energy is released that is associated with a rhythmic contraction of: the pelvic floor muscles, the urinary and anal sphincters, and of various glands for males.  This is called an orgasm.  After the orgasm finishes, resolution eventually allows the sexual parts to return to pre-excitement conditions.  These are almost identical in every way between males and females, except that there are differing sexual parts for each.

Thus, a sexual response in a typical female would typically follow a pattern similar to this one.  In the excitement phase, blood and lymphatic fluids increase swelling inside the vagina.  Hormones are secreted which lead to a mild uterine contractions which raise the uterus away from the pubic bone. The labia swell and the clitoris becomes hard.  The vaginal tissues secrete moisture and the vagina itself lengthens and expands slightly inward.

The plateau phase begins as excitement continues.  This causes the labia to become fully swollen, the clitoris to recede under the clitoral hood, and the uterus to become fully elevated (the hormone is called Oxytocin). The vagina is fully lengthened into the body and just before orgasm lubrication ceases.  During orgasm, the pelvis of the female experiences a series of contractions which occur every 8/10ths of second and can number anywhere from 1-20 or more in the sequence.  The contractions include anal and urinary sphincter contractions, the smooth muscles in the inward portion of the vagina contraction, the puboccocceygeus muscle contraction, the uterine contractions which cause the uterus and cervix to dip down into the vagina, and general muscles contractions in the body.

Also, an electrical sensation surges from the clitoris radiating throughout the body and stimulates the pleasure centers of the brain and a release of the hormone called Oxytocin.  When the orgasm ends the body eventually returns to its pre-excitement state.  In general, females have more capacity to experience more contractions over a longer period of time than do males.  Females have been found to have much more capacity for sexual intercourse than males.  This means females can have more sexual intercourse, more often, and with more orgasms than can the average male.

The male anatomy is presented in Figure 4 below.  The male has a penis which is comprised of 3 spongy-like tissue columns that engorges with blood during excitement.  A cross-section of the penis shows two outer columns and one column on the underneath side.  The average male penis is just that-average.  About 4-6 inches reported by Masters

and Johnson (Same reference as above).  Some are smaller.  Some are larger.  Since the vagina is 3 inches in length and has very sensitive regions near the outside of the vagina and not so sensitive regions deeper inside, the average male can satisfy the average female in heterosexual intercourse.  Urine passes from the urinary bladder and exits at the external urethral orifice at the tip of the penis.  The penis is attached inside the body to the pubic bone.

There are two testicles inside a pouch called the scrotum.  One testicle sits higher than the other.  On the back of the testicle is a storage compartment where mature sperm end up before ejaculation.  This is called the epididymis.  There is a muscle called the dartos muscle (not shown) which elevates and lowers the testicle based on temperature and sexual pleasure.  Sperm grow best at about 91 degrees Fahrenheit and most males are at about 98 degrees, so the dartos will raise and lower the testicles if in colder or warmer temperatures.

The testicles produce about 125-250,000,000 sperm every 3-4 days.  More importantly, the testicles produce the sex-drive hormone called Testosterone.  In males and females, higher levels of testosterone typically mean a higher sex drive (another similarity).  The vas deferens will eventually carry the sperm from the epididymis out of the body during the orgasm.  The prostate gland swells during excitement and fills with prostatic fluid.  The seminal vesicle located above the prostate gland also swells and produces a fluid filled with natural sugars.

For males, in the excitement phase, blood and lymphatic fluids increase swelling inside the prostate, seminal vesicle, testicle, scrotum, and the penis.  Hormones are secreted which lead to a higher volume of blood flowing into the spongy tissue columns of the penis than flow out. The penis erects this way (sometimes the penis will leak fluid and/or sperm before the orgasm).  The scrotum and dartos muscle draw both testicles up toward the pubic bone pressing the epididymis upward.  As stimulation continues the swelling and fluid production continues to increase.

Figure 4. Male Reproductive and Sexual Anatomy, Cross-sectional View

Bladder
Vas deferens
Ejaculatory duct
Prostate
Seminal vesicle
Rectum
Penis
Urethra
Epididymis
Scrotum
testis
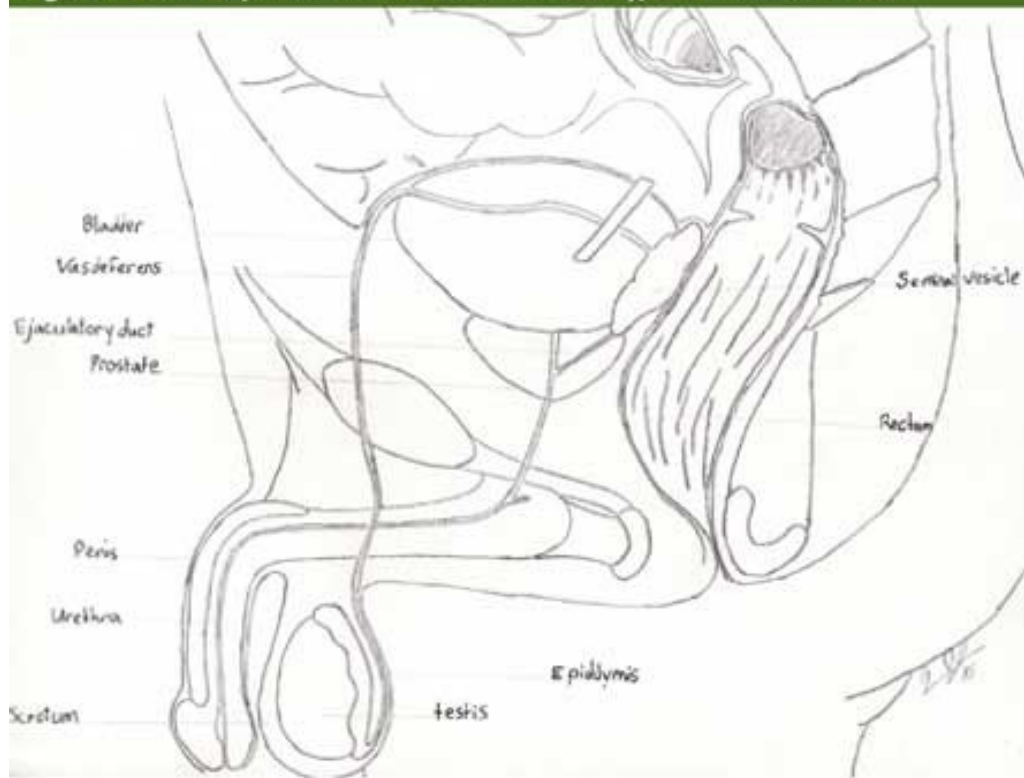
The plateau continues until just before the orgasm. When orgasm begins for males the penis is most erect. Males reach a point of no return in their orgasms (females do not). The ejaculation of sperm and fluids will continue in males, regardless of continued or interrupted stimulation. Females would experience an interruption of the orgasm when stimulation is interrupted. For males, the orgasm also includes a series of contractions which occur every 8/10ths of second and can number anywhere from 1-10. Most males will have 5-6.

The contraction includes anal and urinary sphincter contractions, prostate and seminal vesicle contractions, dartos and scrotum contractions, pelvic floor muscle contractions, penile contractions, and a rhythmic sequence of these in such a way that the ejaculate is expelled from the body out through the penis. The sperm are released from the epididymis and travel through the vas deferens up and around the bladder then through the ejaculatory duct (where it picks up prostate and seminal fluids) and finally out of the penis. An electrical sensation surges from the prostate gland throughout the body and stimulates the pleasure centers of the brain and a release of the hormone called Oxytocin. For males and females Oxytocin brings a feeling of emotional connection.
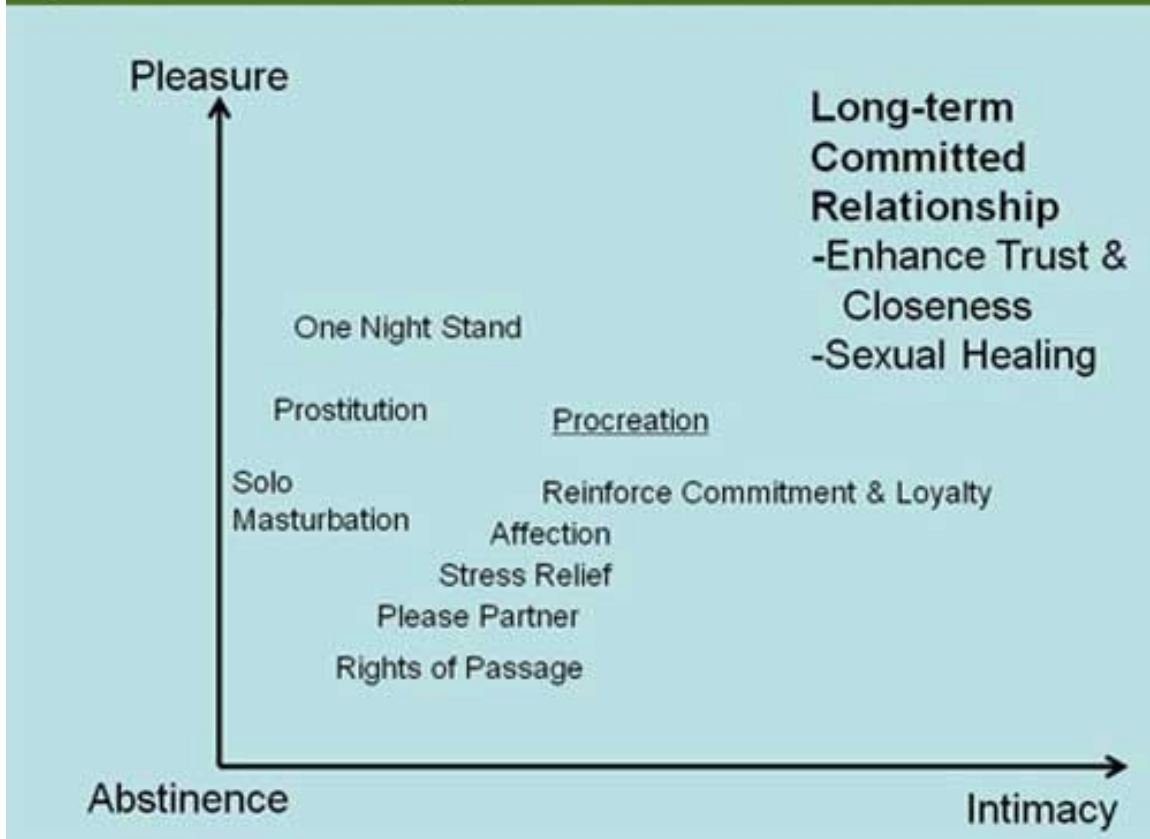
After an orgasm, males may continue to experience an erection, but will have to wait a while for the central nervous system to reset before they can ejaculate or orgasm again. Most males wait less time when younger and more time when older. For males an ejaculation during orgasm would be expected. But, sometimes ejaculations happen with or without orgasms and orgasms may happen without ejaculations.

Even though the physiological component of sexuality is common between males and females, the male and female sex drives are NOT identical. Studies consistently show that sexual desire for women is more sensitive to the context (meaningful or intimate connection) and the social and cultural environment (quality of relationships, stresses of the day, etc.). Generally speaking most men seek more sex than most women throughout most of the life span. Also, most men are more easily aroused by visual stimulation than are most women.

The Janus Report reported that 65 percent of men have an orgasm every time during love making while females reported a much lower 15 percent every time. About 46 percent of women report "often" having an orgasm during love making compared to only 28 percent of men (Page 86, Table 3.28). These sex drive differences also emerged in self-reported masturbation frequencies. About 55 percent of men and 38 percent of women masturbate on a daily-monthly basis (Page 77, Table 3.21). Another study indicates that solo masturbation is a practice commonly found among married people (see Laumann and Janus).

Numerous studies show that men and women enjoy sex most in a meaningful relationship, typically a long-term committed one. These studies indicate that the pleasure is more meaningful and enjoyable in long-term committed relationships. Figure 5 shows a pleasure and intimacy continuum for both sexes. Those who abstain from all sexual activity are in the lower left corner with no intimacy and no pleasure. Those who solo masturbate (by themselves) derive pleasure without intimacy. Those who purchase prostitution services derive pleasure, yet have very little intimacy. Finally, those who have one-time sexual encounters in a "one-night stand also derive pleasure with little intimacy over time.

**Figure 5. Pleasure and Intimacy Continuum for Both Males and Females**

Pleasure

One Night Stand

Prostitution

Procreation

Solo Masturbation

Reinforce Commitment & Loyalty

Affection

Stress Relief

Please Partner

Rights of Passage

Long-term Committed Relationship
-Enhance Trust & Closeness
-Sexual Healing

Abstinence

Intimacy

For married or cohabiting couples, sexual intercourse includes both pleasure and intimacy. Newlyweds have their honeymoon night and sex becomes a rite of passage that marks the beginning of their full emersion into the marital relationship. In time husbands and wives have sex for many of the other reasons listed in Figure 5. Sometimes one spouse has sex to meet the needs or wants of their partners. At other times sex is a healthy and fun stress relief. Sometimes sex is a convenient way to be affectionate as a giver and a receiver. In relationships, sexual intercourse has many functions including reinforcing commitment and loyalty with one another. To give and receive is pleasurable and bonding during sexual intercourse.

Some couples seeking parenthood will have sex to pleasure themselves while getting pregnant. Many report enhancements of intimacy with less focus on pleasure at moments such as these. Others get distracted because sex becomes goal-oriented rather than simply expressive while trying to make a baby. For long-term relationships that have endured challenges such as hardship, betrayals, offenses, anger, arguments and ultimately forgiveness, sexual intercourse takes on a profoundness of its own. Those who have short-term relationships miss out on the intimacy payoff that sex provides to those in long-term relationships. Sex becomes a unique way of enhancing trust and closeness while sometimes providing sexual healing to wounded egos and feelings.

Extramarital affairs are intimate relationships with a person other than one's spouse that may be sexual or nonsexual. Most US extramarital affairs are sexual and non-consented to by one's spouse. In spite of a variety of estimates on how many married people were

ever unfaithful to their spouse, all scientific studies have found that men were more likely than women to have an extramarital affair and that most men and women do NOT ever have an affair.

Marital infidelity has been and continues to be disapproved of by the general public. Many in the US who disapprove of affairs, simultaneously understand the frailties of the human experience and sympathize to some degree with those who make this "mistake." Such was found to be true with politicians, movie and TV stars, and sports celebrities (you can pick any one from the online list available on the Internet when you search "celebrity affairs"). Affairs don't always lead to marital or relational dissolution. But, in most cases it is better if the offending spouse or partner confesses the infidelity rather than simply gets caught.
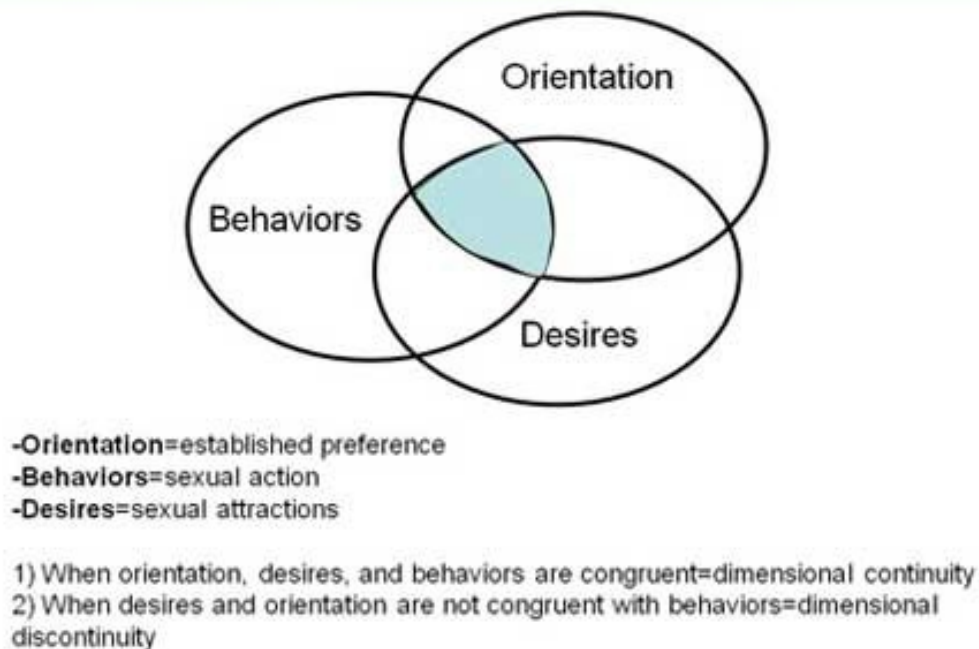
Human beings are socialized into their adult roles and learn their sexual identities along with their gender roles, work roles, and family roles. Sexual Orientation is the sexual preference one has for their partner: male, female, both, or neither. There are a few common sexual orientations that can be seen at the societal and personal level. Heterosexuality is the sexual attraction between a male and a female. Homosexuality is a sexual attraction between a male to another male or a female to another female. Bisexuality is a sexual attraction to both male and female sexual partners.

There is a difference in these three dimensions of sexuality: sexual orientation, sexual desire, and sexual behaviors. Sexual desire is the attractions we have for sexual partners and experience that exist independent of our behaviors. Sexual behaviors are our actual sexual actions and interactions. It is important to note that orientations, desires, and behaviors are not always the same thing. They do overlap at times. For example, a heterosexual male may have had a homosexual experience in the past, or not. He may at times desire males and females regardless of his actual sexual activities. A lesbian female may have had a short-term heterosexual relationship, yet define herself as a lesbian.

When considering the congruence of these three concepts it is helpful to use visual aids. Figure 6 below shows how sexual orientation, desires, and behaviors are at times: congruent, meaning they correspond directly with each other, or incongruent, meaning they do NOT correspond together with each other. These three dimensions of our sexuality are surprisingly incongruent among adults in the US society.

Figure 6 Sexual Orientation, Desires, and Behaviors: A Venn Diagram



-**Orientation**=established preference
-**Behaviors**=sexual action
-**Desires**=sexual attractions

1) When orientation, desires, and behaviors are congruent=dimensional continuity
2) When desires and orientation are not congruent with behaviors=dimensional discontinuity

When orientation, desires, and behaviors are congruent that implies dimensional continuity, meaning there is congruency between the three sexual dimensions of: orientation, desire, and behaviors. This is very common and much of the US population has dimensional continuity. Yet, when desires and orientation are not congruent with behaviors it implies dimensional discontinuity.

The proportion of the US society that is homosexual varies because of the difficulty in defining how to measure it.  If researchers ask people their sexual behaviors then the proportion of the population having sex with a same-sex partner is lower than the proportion having ever had sex with a same-sex partner.  One researcher, Tom Smith, 2003 reported that:

"However, a series of recent national studies (Table 8A) indicate that only about 2-3% of sexually active men and 1-2% of sexually active women are currently engaging in same gender sex (Page 7)" and that "Studies of male and female homosexuality both in the United States and Europe regularly find a higher proportion of males are gay than the share of females who are lesbian (page 8)."  (see American Sexual Behavior: Trends, Socio-Demographic Differences, and Risk Behavior; National Opinion Research Center University of Chicago; GSS Topical Report No. 25; Updated April, 2003)

In another interesting report Joseph Fried studied the General Social Survey (GSS) for specific periods of time and found that using various years of the General Social Surveys found that among US men, 6.6% of Democrats and 2.1% of Republicans had sex with another man in the last 12 months (see Fried, Joseph, *Democrats and Republicans - Rhetoric and Reality* (New York: Algora Publishing, 2008, 10. Figure7).

Edward O. Laumann et al wrote the largest sociological study of US sexuality ever published.  (1994, The Social Organization of Sexuality U. of Chicago Press ISBN  0-226-46957-3). In this book he wrote about the prevalence of self-identified sexual

orientations.  Laumann and the other researchers surveyed about 3,400 respondents.  By far, most members of US society are heterosexual.  Laumann avoided the use of the words, "heterosexual or homosexual."  Their data was collected by asking about behaviors or how many male or female partners a respondent had sex with in the past (page 292:note 9).  They found that 7.1 percent of males and 3.8 percent of females had ever had sex with a partner of the same sex (page 294).

Laumann also reported that over 96 percent of males and 98 percent of females identified themselves as heterosexual.  Only 2 percent of males and 0.9 percent of females identified themselves as homosexual, while 0.8 percent of males and  0.5 percent of females reported bisexuality (page 311 Table 8.3B).  The Janus Report also reported their findings on sexual behaviors and sexual orientation.  Their sample reported 22 percent of men and 17 percent of women said yes to the question, "Have you had a homosexual experience (page 69 Table 3.14)."

Janus also reported that 91 percent of men and 95 percent of women claimed to be heterosexual, 4 percent of men and 2 percent of women claimed to be homosexual, and 5 percent of men and 3 percent of women claimed to be bisexual (Page 70, Table 3.16).  Heterosexuality is by far the most common identification in studies where respondents are asked to identify their sexual orientation.

Yet, heterosexuals may have had a variety of sexual experiences in a variety of context and still consider themselves to be heterosexual in spite of dimensional discontinuity or continuity.  Generally speaking Janus and Laumann found that the US is a very sexual nation.  They reported that very few men and women reported never having had vaginal sexual intercourse (less than 5 percent).  They reported that men typically have sex sooner than women and that most had sex by age 20.  Janus specifically reported that only 9 percent of men and 17 percent of women had NO sexual experience before marriage (page 87, Table 3.29).

Sexual orientation, desires, and behaviors have become extremely politicized.  The largest sexual political action committee is the Human Rights Campaign which emerged in the 1980s as a "Gay Community" rights organization.  LGBT and LGBTQ have replaced Gay Community as the collective acronym.  LGBT stands for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgendered and occasionally Queer is added by some interests groups.  The Human Rights Campaign http://www.hrc.org/ has become the central political action organization for LGBTQ interest groups.  On this Website, under "Issues" it lists: Aging, Coming Out, Hate Crimes, Health, Immigration, Marriage & Relationship Recognition, Military, Parenting, People of Color, Religion & Faith, Transgender, Workplace, and Youth & Campus Activism.

The "marriage and relationship recognition" became an emotionally charged political issue during the California Proposition 8 referendum and constitutional amendment that Passed November 2008.  Because it passed the California Section 7.5 of the Declaration of Rights to the State Constitution now reads, "Only marriage between a man and a woman is valid or recognized in California."  This set a strong national precedence against rights to same sex couples to have legally recognized marriage en par with heterosexual married couples.  Estimates are that over $80 million was spent on this proposition alone on both the for and against efforts (see Wiki

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Prop_8 ).

The Prop 8 initiative originated from another political action committee called ProtectMarriage.com (http://www.protectmarriage.com/ ). Under the "About Us" link it self-describes as a "…broad-based coalition of California families, community leaders, religious leaders, pro-family organizations and individuals…to restore the definition of marriage as between a man and a woman."

Interestingly most in the US would never oppose an individual's choice or orientation when it comes to sexuality. This and other conservative interest groups like it have formed to advocate for conservative legislation and policies in the US and Abroad. None, on either side of sexual rights, assumes that this oppositional battle for rights, laws, and policies has ended. Many see the stakes as being higher than ever in the current sexual politics scene.

There are a few informative Websites that can provide more answers to your sexuality questions: www.siecus.org Sexuality Information and Education Council of the United States has various reports and educational programs

http://www.noah-health.org/ New York Online Access to Health in English and Español

http://www.kinseyinstitute.org/ Kinsey Institute in Sex, gender, and Reproduction

http://www.womenshealth.gov/ US Dept. of Health and Human Services site for women's health

http://www.malehealthcenter.com/ Site for men's health

http://www.plannedparenthood.org/ variety of health questions and issues addressed

http://medlineplus.gov/ vast array of sex and other related health articles

Just one more note: Sexual violence does not belong in a sexuality chapter of a textbook like this. It more appropriately belongs in a social problems, Intro to Sociology, Gender, or social deviance book. There is a free chapter on the issues of rape at http://freebooks.uvu.edu

Introduction to Sociology Chapter 20 Rape and Sexual Assault and/or go to www.rainn.org

## Chapter 08-Dating and Mate Selection

Sixty years ago if you were of marrying age, you'd most likely select someone based on how your parents felt about it, how healthy the person appeared to be, how good/moral their character appeared to be, and how stable their economic resources appeared to be. Today we search for soul mates. Look around you in the classroom. How many potential mates are sitting there? In other words, how many single females or males are there in the same classroom? Now of those, how many would you be attracted to as a date and how many can you tell just by watching them that you'd probably never date? These are the types of questions and answers we consider when we study dating and mate selection.

Figure 1. Potential Mate Collage

See Anyone You Find To Be Attractive?

In the United States there are millions of people between the ages of 18-24 (18-24 is considered prime dating and mate selection ages). The US Statistical Abstracts estimates that 9.5 percent of the US population or about 15,675,000 males and 15,037,000 females are in this age group (retrieved 3 November 2009 from http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/09s0010.pdf). Those numbers should be very similar in 2010 when the Census is collected. Does that mean that you could have 15 million potential mates out there somewhere? Yes, potential yet no in realistic terms. You see, it would take more time than any mortal has in their life to ever interact with that many people. Besides dating and mate selection is not about volume it's about quality and intimacy in the relationship. To help you better understand this let's learn a few key principles that apply to the realistic processes we use to date and mate select.

When we see people we filter them as either being in or out of our pool of eligibles. Filtering is the process of identifying those we interact with as either being in or out of our pool of people we might consider to be a date or mate. There are many filters we use. One is physical appearance. We might include some because of tattoos and piercing or exclude some for the exact same physical traits. We might include some because they know someone we know or exclude the same people because they are total strangers. Figure 1 shows the basic date and mate selection principles that play into our filtering processes (This inverted pyramid metaphorically represents a filter that a liquid might be poured through to refine it; e.g., coffee filter).

That couple in the bottom right-hand corner is my wife and I on a field trip to the Association for Applied and Clinical Sociology in Ypsilanti, Michigan. She and I travel without our children at least twice per year and we have been attending professional conferences together for more than a decade. We met in college in 1985. I was the maintenance man for all of the Women's dorms and she lived in the dorms (I met many female friends through my work). We dated, became engaged and married in the same year. We worked together for 7 years to put me through my Associates, Bachelor's, Masters, Doctorate, then Post-doctoral fellowship. My wife now has her Bachelor's degree and is shopping for her Masters. Higher education is a theme that emerged within our life experiences and has spilled over into our children's' lives now with 3 in college at this time. All of the principles discussed in this chapter applied to how my wife and I met, became friends, and chose to marry. They will likely apply to you and yours.



Figure 2. Types of Filters Used to Eliminate or Include Potential Dates and Mates
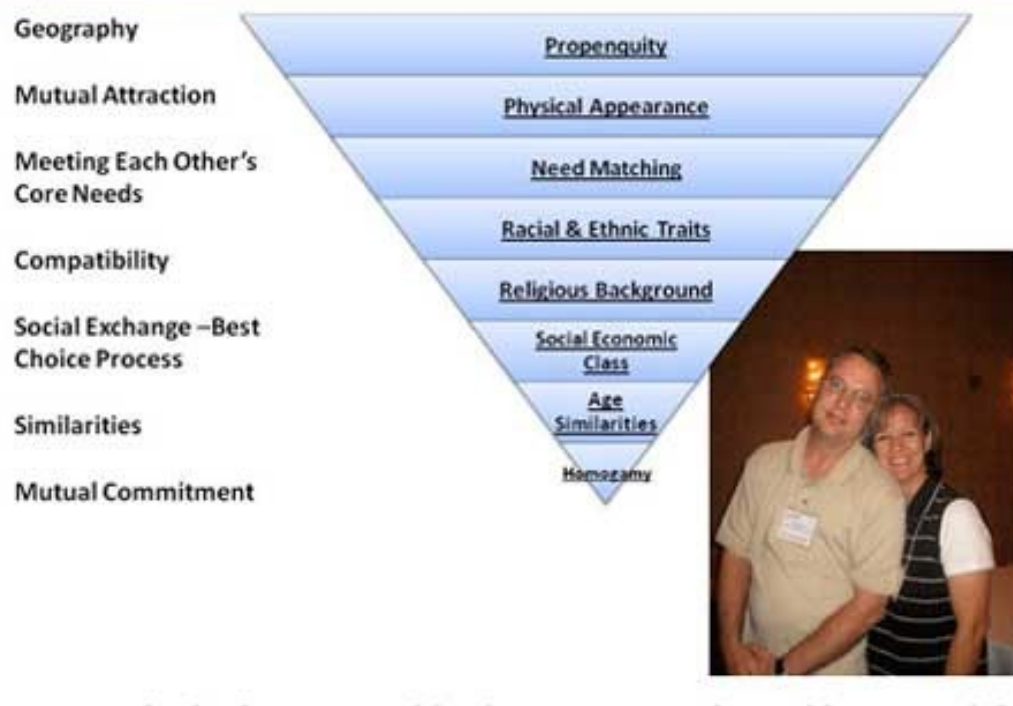
Propinquity is the geographic closeness experienced by potential dates and mates. It's the proximity you might experience by living in the same dorms or apartment buildings, going to the same university or college, working in the same place of employment, or belonging to the same religious group. Proximity means that you both breathe the same air in the same place at about the same time. Proximity is crucial because the more you see one another or interact directly or indirectly with one another, the more likely you see each other as mates. I often ask my students how they met and when they tell their stories I help them to identify the geography that was involved in the process.

Physical appearance is subjective and is defined differently for each individual. Truly, what one person finds as attractive is not what others find to be attractive. There are a few biological, psychological, and social-emotional aspects of appearance that tend to make an individual more attractive to more people. These include slightly above average desirable traits and symmetry in facial features.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (www.CDC.gov) the average man in the United States is 5 foot 10 inches tall and weighs about 177 pounds. The average woman is about 5 foot 4 inches tall and weighs about 144 pounds. Did you just compare yourself? Most of us tend to compare ourselves to averages or to others we know. That's how we come to define our personal level of attractiveness. This is important to understand that we subjectively judge ourselves as being more or less attractive, because we often limit our dating pool of eligibles to those we think are in our same category of beauty.

If you are 6 foot tall as a man or 5 foot 8 as a woman, then you are slightly above average in height. For men, if they have manly facial features (strong chin and jaw and somewhat prominent brow), slight upper body musculature, and a slim waist then they'd have more universally desirable traits. For women, larger eyes, softer facial features and chin, fuller lips, and an hour-glass figure facilitate more universally desirable traits.

So, here is the million dollar question, "what if I don't have these universally desirable traits? Am I excluded from the date and mate selection market? No. There is a principle that I have found to be the most powerful predictor of how we make our dating and mating selection choices--homogamy. Homogamy is the tendency for dates, mates, and spouses to pair off with someone of similar attraction, background, interests, and needs. This is typically true for most couples. They find and pair off with persons of similarity more than difference. Have you ever heard the colloquial phrase, "opposites attract?" To some degree they do, but typically they don't form committed long-term relationships together.

One of my students challenged this notion in the case of her own relationship. She said, "My husband and I are so different. He like Mexican food, I like Italian. He likes rap and I like classical music. He likes water skiing and I like camping and hiking…" I interrupted her and said, "So you both like ethnic food, music, and outdoors. Do you vote on similar issues? Do you have similar family backgrounds? Do you both come from a similar economic class?" She answered yes to all three questions.

Now, don't misunderstand me. Couples are not identical, just similar. And we tend to find patterns that indicate that homogamy in a relationship can be indirectly supportive of a long-term relationship quality because it facilitates less disagreements and disconnections of routines in the daily life of a couple. I believe that we filter homogamously and even to the point that we do tend to marry someone like our parents. Here's why, people from similar economic class, ethnicity, religion, political persuasion, and lifestyles tend to hang out with others like themselves. Our mates resemble our parents more because we resemble our parents and we tend to look for others like ourselves.

Heterogamy is the dating or pairing of individuals with differences in traits. All of us pair off with heterogamous and homogamous individuals with emphasis more on the latter than the former. Over time, after commitments are made, couples often develop more homogamy. Some develop similar mannerisms, finish each other's sentences, dress alike, develop mutually common hobbies and interests, and parent together.

One of the most influential psychologists in the 1950-1960s was Abraham Maslow and his famous Pyramid of the Hierarchy of Needs (Google "A Theory of Human

Motivation", 1943, Psychological Review 50(4) (1943):370-96).  Maslow's pyramid has been taught in high schools and colleges for decades.  Most of my students tell me they've seen the pyramid or studied Maslow in more than once in previous class.  Maslow sheds light on how and why we pick the person we pick when choosing a date or mate by focusing on how they meet our needs as a date, mate, or spouse.  Persons from dysfunctional  homes where children were not nurtured nor supported through childhood would likely be attracted to someone who provides that unfulfilled nurturing need they still have.  Persons from homes where they were nurtured, supported, and sustained in their individual growth and development would likely be attracted to someone who promises growth and support in intellectual, aesthetic, or self-actualization (becoming fully who our individual potential allows us to become) areas of life.

It may sound selfish at first glance but we really do date and mate on the basis of what we get out of it (or how our needs are met).

The Social Exchange Theory and its rational choice formula clarify the selection process even further.

Maximize Rewards-Minimize Costs=Date or Mate Choice.

When we interact with potential dates and mates we run a mental balance sheet in our heads.  She might think, "he's tall, confident, funny, and friends with my friends."  As she talks a bit more she might say, "But, he chews smokeless tobacco, only wants to party, and just flirted with another young women while we were still talking."  The entire time we interact with potential dates and mates we evaluate them on their appearance, disposition, goals and aspirations, and other traits.  This while simultaneously remembering how we rate and evaluate ourselves.  Rarely do we seek out the best looking person at the party unless we define ourselves as an even match for him or her.  More often we rank and rate ourselves compared to others and as we size up and evaluate potentials we define the overall exchange rationally or in an economic context where we try to maximize our rewards while minimizing our losses.

The overall evaluation of the deal also depends to a great extent on how well we feel matched on racial and ethnic traits, religious background, social economic class, and age similarities.  Truly the complexity of the date and mate selection process includes many obvious and some more subtle processes that you can understand for yourself.  If you are single you can apply them to the date and mate selection processes you currently  pursue.

Bernard Murstein wrote articles in the early 1970s where he tested his Stimulus-Value-Role Theory of marital choice.  (See "Physical Attractiveness and Marital Choice" Journal of Personality and Social Psychology. Vol 22(1), Apr 1972, 8-12 or "Who Will Marry Whom? Theories and Research in Marital Choice: New York; Springer, 1976 392 pages).  To Murstein the exchange is mutual and dependent upon the subjective attractions and the subjective assets and liabilities each individual brings to the relationship. The Stimulus is the trait (usually physical) that draws your attention to the person. After time is spent together dating or hanging out, Values are compared for compatibility and evaluation of maximization of rewards while minimization of costs is calculated. If after time and relational compatibility supports it, the pair may choose to take Roles which typically include exclusive dating, cohabitation, engagement, or marriage. Figure 2 shows how the Stimulus-Values-Role theory might overlap with a

couple's development of intimacy over increased time and increased interaction.



Figure 3. Depiction of Stimulus-Value-Role Theory with Intimacy and Over Time & Interaction
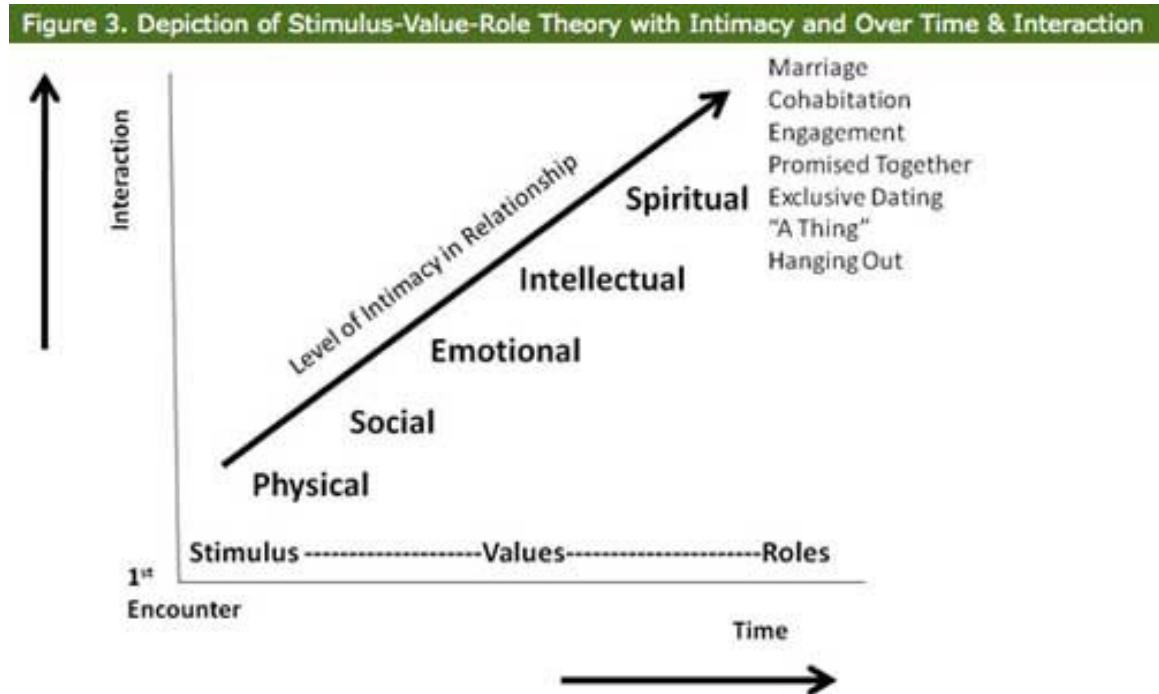
How do strangers transition from not even knowing one another to eventually cohabiting or marrying together?  From the very first encounter, two strangers begin a process that either excludes one another as potential dates or mates or includes them and begins the process of establishing intimacy.  Intimacy is the mutual feeling of acceptance, trust, and connection to another person, even with the understanding of personal faults of the individual. In other words, intimacy is the ability to become close to one another, to accept one another as is, and eventually to feel accepted by the other.  Intimacy is not sexual intercourse, although sexual intercourse may be one of many expressions of intimacy.  When two strangers meet they have a stimulus that alerts one or both to take notice of the other.

I read a book by Judith Wallerstein (see: 1995 The Good Marriage) where one woman was on a date with a guy and overheard another man laughing like Santa Clause might laugh.  She asked her date to introduce her and that began the relationship which would become her  decades-long marriage to the Santa Clause laughing guy.  I've had people tell me personally that in their relationship, there was a subtle connection that just felt safe, like a reunion with a long lost friend when they first met one another.  I've had many indicate that they thought the other was so very hot and good looking, "and I couldn't wait to get burned" one female student said.

In the stimulus stage some motivation at the physical, social, emotional, intellectual or spiritual level sparks interests and the interaction begins.  Over time and with increased interaction, two people may make that journey of values comparisons and contrasts which inevitably includes or excludes the other.  The more time and interaction that is accompanied by increased trust and acceptance of one's self and the other, the more the intimacy and probability of a long-term relationship.

Even though Figure 2 shows that a smooth line of increasing intimacy can occur, it does not always occur so smoothly nor so predictably. As the couple reaches a place where a bond has developed they establish patterns of commitment and loyalty which initiates the roles listed in Figure 2. The list of roles is listed in increasing order of level of commitment yet does not indicate any kind of predictable stages the couple would be expected to pursue. In other words, some couples may take the relationship only as far as exclusive dating, which is the mutual agreement to exclude others from dating either individual in the relationship. Another couple may eventually cohabit or marry.

It should be mentioned that what you'd look for in a date is often different from what you might look for in a spouse. Dates are temporary adventures where good looks, fun personality, entertainment capacity, and even your social status by being seen in public with him or her are considered important. Dates are short-term and can be singular events or a few events. Many college students who have dated more than once develop "A Thing" or a relationship noticed by the individuals and their friends as either beginning or having at least started, but not quite having a defined destination. These couples eventually hold a DTR. A DTR is a moment where the two individuals Define The Relationship openly to determine if both want to include each other in a specific goal-directed destination (e.g., exclusive dating) or if it's better for everyone if the relationship ends.

Ever had one of these? Many describe them as awkward. I think awkward is an understatement. A DTR is extremely risky in terms of how much of one 's self has to be involved and in terms of how vulnerable it makes each other feel. In the TV series The Office, Jim and Pam experience a number of DTRs that early on in the relationship ended with either or both of them wanting more closeness and commitment, but neither of them being capable of making it happen. The Office is fiction, but the relationships clearly reflect some of the human experience in an accurate way.

Notice that Jim and Pam were from the same part of the country, had very many social and cultural traits in common, and both met in a setting where they could see each other on a regular basis and have the opportunity to go through the SVR process. Homogamy, propinquity, need matching, compatibility, and eventually commitment all applied in their story together. The cultural similarities of a couple cannot be emphasized enough in this discussion.

Many of those living in the United States share common mainstream cultural traits, regardless of ancestral heritage or ethnic background, date and mate selection occurs for nearly all members of society. Figure 3 shows a list of cultural and ethnic background traits that influence how the inclusion and exclusion decisions are made, depending on how similar or different each individual defines themselves to be in relation to the other. Many who teach relationship skills in cross-cultural or trans-racial relationships focus on the similarity principle.

**Table 1. Cultural and Ethnic Background Traits**

- Language
- Religion
- Traditions & Holidays
- Lifestyles and self-identification
- Workplace skills
- Educational aspirations and achievements
- Age similarity
- Physical appearance (skin color, facial features, body shape and size)
- Food preferences
- Political leanings
- Economic similarities
- Common shared experiences (e.g., military background)
- Family cultural similarities and compatibilities
- Physical attractiveness similarities
- Hobbies and interest similarities
- Life goals similarities
- Others...

The Similarity Principle states that the more similar two people perceive themselves to be, the more likely their relationship will continue and succeed. Notice the word "perceive," because actual similarities are not as critical as an individual's belief that there are common characteristics.  Also, certain individuals value one background trait over others.  They may be more willing to overlook or ignore differences in traits which are not as similar.

In the Movie, "My Big Fat Greek Wedding" (my wife and I saw this one three times together in theaters) the Greek-American woman who was the main character meets a strikingly handsome professional man from a different ethnic background.  Much of the difficulty she had in including him as a mate was her perception that her cultural and family background was unattractive and could not be desirable to potential mates.  He was deeply attracted to her family because it filled his need for family connection, tradition, and support.  He changed his religion, learned the Greek culture, and adopted her family as his surrogate family.
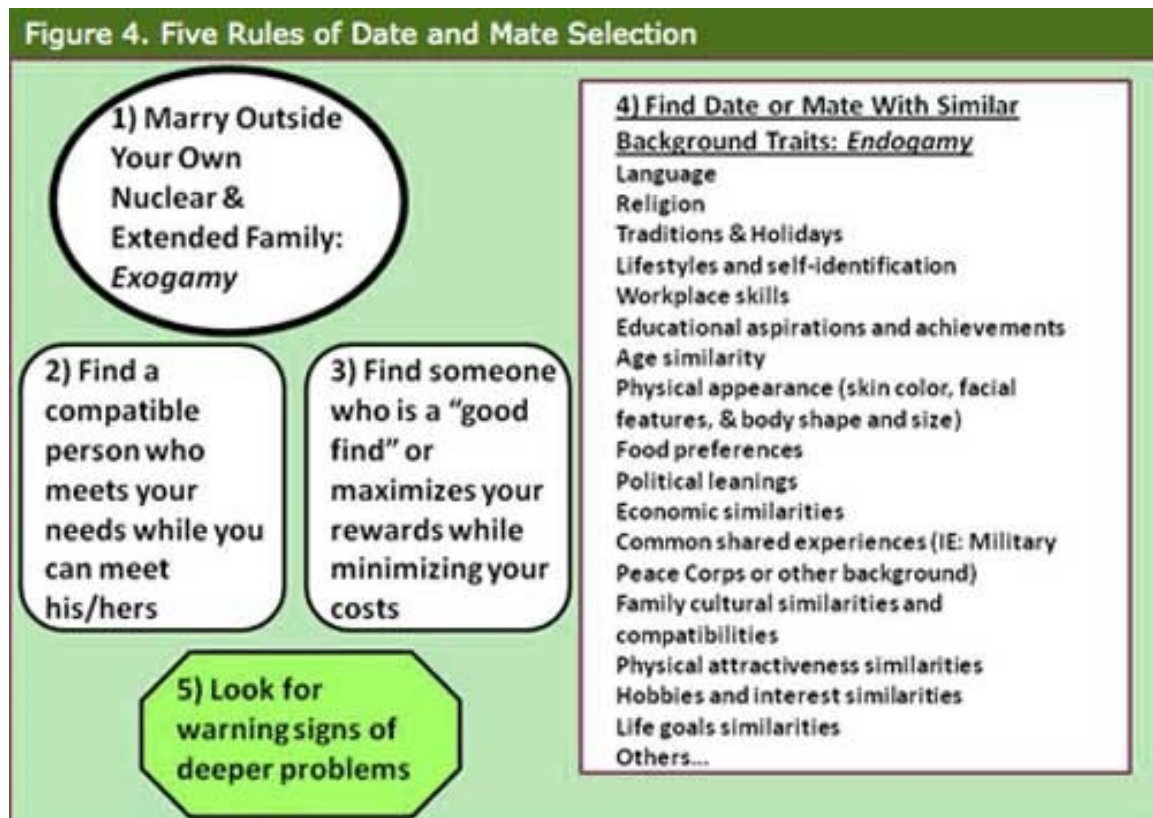
In real life, most don't make such profound concessions when choosing a mate.  The relationship is less likely to develop if there are few or no common traits and more likely if there are more common traits, especially in the areas of commonality that the individuals define as being very important.

Dating often turns into exclusive or boyfriend-girlfriend type relationships.  These relationships are crucial in the lives of young adults because they allow each other to gain experience in the daily routines of intimate relationships.  They don't always develop into a long-term relationship, but practicing in healthy relationships is far more valuable than the grieving from breaking up.  There are a few key guidelines if you need to break up.  These make sense but also have a tremendous amount of literature and science to back them up.

First, before you break up, do a maximize rewards and minimize cost-pros and cons

evaluation so you can make sure that breaking up is the best choice you can make. Second, break up clearly so there is no ambiguity about where the relationship might be headed.  Third, avoid hanging out together after the break up.  I know you see this in TV shows and I know you have friends who probably still hang out after the break up.  But don't.  It's the drama that fills soap operas, 911 calls,  and evening dramatic shows on TV. And remember that a woman is more likely to be physically attacked by her intimate partner than by any other person (even strangers).

There are some rules that can be summarized about how we include dates or mates in our pool of eligibles.  Figure 4 shows that rule #1 is Exogamy. Exogamy is the tendency to pair off with or marry someone outside of your own familial groups.



Figure 4. Five Rules of Date and Mate Selection

1) Marry Outside Your Own Nuclear & Extended Family: *Exogamy*

2) Find a compatible person who meets your needs while you can meet his/hers

3) Find someone who is a "good find" or maximizes your rewards while minimizing your costs

4) Find Date or Mate With Similar Background Traits: *Endogamy*
Language
Religion
Traditions & Holidays
Lifestyles and self-identification
Workplace skills
Educational aspirations and achievements
Age similarity
Physical appearance (skin color, facial features, & body shape and size)
Food preferences
Political leanings
Economic similarities
Common shared experiences (IE: Military Peace Corps or other background)
Family cultural similarities and compatibilities
Physical attractiveness similarities
Hobbies and interest similarities
Life goals similarities
Others...

5) Look for warning signs of deeper problems

Most people follow this rule with little or no formal instruction. Rule #2 is to find a compatible person who can have their needs be met by you and your needs be met by him or her.  Rule #3 is to select someone who is a good find, great deal, or maximized reward, minimized costs formula.  You are deserving of a date or mate who will reinforce your value as an individual and who will be pleasing to you.

Rule #4 is to maximize homogamy and look for commonalities that will smooth out the daily adjustments of the relationship.  I doubt you'd ever find a perfect match on all of these traits, but make sure you find a good match of complimentary personality traits and background characteristics.

Rule #5 is very important.  You must learn to discern trouble and danger in a date or mate.  Intimate violence is the worst and most deadly violence especially for women. Their dates, mates, spouses, and life partners are more likely to cause them violent harm

than will any other category of relationship in their lives. Figure 5 provides some criteria to identify as red flags, warning signs, or danger signs.

| Figure 5. Risky, Dangerous, and Otherwise Unhealthy Traits in Potential Dates and Mates | |
|---|---|
| Is critical to you about things you cannot change (your physical traits, personality, or quirks) | Shaming |
| Is physically violent toward others (family, friends, or strangers) | Angry |
| Flies into a rage when frustrated (very impatient or can't handle when things don't go his or her way) | Violent |
| Stands you up for appointments without excusing him or herself | Disrespectful |
| Makes everything about him or herself almost all of the time | Intolerant |
| Can't tolerate your honest opinion (you have to walk on rice paper) | Blaming |
| Flirts with others in your presence | Unregulated (not self-controlled) |
| Blames everyone but self ("never my fault") | Victim |
| Is extremely needy and demands that you take care of those needs | Needy |
| Tries to take physical liberties with you regardless of your protests or concerns | Bully |
| Minimizes rudeness and inconsideration with humor (often says "just kidding") | Mean |
| Shows little or no remorse when wrongs you or another | Inconsiderate |
| Steals your things or your money | Selfish |
| Tries to isolate you from friends, family, and others | Domineering |
| Schedules your activities and routines without consulting you | Controlling |
| Fails to respect your decision to say no | Unkind |
| Overdoes the substances (drinks, smokes, pills, etc.) | Dishonest, Irresponsible |

The risky and dangerous traits you might see in a potential date or mate can be early warning signals to raise red flags. In fairness, the presence of any one of these may just indicate a bad day. Some potential dates and mates are predatorial. That means they search for types of people they can manipulate and control and try to pair off with them. The presence of a few of these could raise your suspicions enough to become a savvy shopper, discriminating consumer, or even a detective of danger signs. Remember, that when dating and selecting a mate overcautious discernment is justified.

Most people never experience the extreme dangers of dating. For most it's more of an emotional risk than a safety risk. Many chose to marry and do so more often in the warmer months of the year than in the other months. When relationships form and engagements are made and agreed upon, an entire social experience is initiated where new social roles and networks begin to unfold. Engaged people announce their plans to family and friends and by so doing initiate a few processes within the social community of each fiancé.

Announcements of the engagement begin the process of exclusion of others. All other potential suitors and dates are excluded from the pool of eligibles while exclusive monogamy begins in almost every aspect of the couple's lives. She often wears a ring

that ranges from $2-10,000 US dollars.  That ring deters most because it symbolizes her agreement to marry her fiancé.  The couple often formalizes their wedding plans in newspaper, mailed out invitations to the reception, and/or online announcements. In-laws are people you become related to by virtue of marrying into your fiancé's family network. I often joke with my students that you get in-laws and out-laws when you marry.  Not all in-laws will get along with the couple as well as might be wished.

The creation of extended kin ties is crucial to a successful engagement.  To some degree in-laws are expected to at least be compatible with the new family member (fiancé) and if possible in another degree to establish close relational bonds.  Engagement also signifies to the couple the ultimate direction of their courtship.  Marriage and the merging of social networks, belongings, monies, physical intimacy, rights, children, and many other things becomes the focus.  Unfortunately many couples focus heavily on the reception and that becomes a great source of stress which they must adapt to or be destroyed by if they're not careful to learn to face stressors in a united manner.  Engagement provides the couple with opportunities to practice being married, in many different aspects of the relationship.

Most engagements end in marriage.  But, some end in a breaking up event where the marriage is cancelled.  Sometimes couples realize that they were not as compatible as they originally thought themselves to be.  Sometimes, they are geographically separated by various circumstances and find that their commitment did not withstand the test of time and space.  Other times in-laws and extended family incompatibilities work against the marriage.  And finally sometimes, people just fall out of love or lose interest.

For those who are searching for a spouse the market is an uneven playing field.  The United States has what social scientist call a "marriage Squeeze."  A Marriage Squeeze is a demographic imbalance in the number of males to females among those considered to be of marrying ages. There is also a phenomenon called the Marriage Gradient.  The Marriage Gradient is the tendency for women to marry a man slightly older and slightly taller while men tend to marry a woman slightly more attractive.

Based on US Census numbers presented above there are about 15,675,000 males and 15,037,000 females ages 18-24.  That boils down to 638,000 extra males in the marriage market 18-24.  Since women tend to want to marry a man slightly older the marriage market is squeezed because there are too few females for all the available males.  In fact, this leads some men to marry women 6 years or older, women who already have children, and women 4-6 years younger.

China and India have tremendous problems with their marriage squeeze issues.  Because of sex-selection abortion, cultural preferences for males, female infanticide, and cultural definitions as "females being a burden" rather than a source of joy and rejoicing they are missing tens of millions of females in these populations.  For example in 2001 India had 35 million extra men nationwide (retrieved 5 November, 2009 from http://www.prb.org/ Articles/2001/2001CensusResultsMixedforIndiasWomenandGirls.aspx).  In 2003 China was reported to also have about 35 million extra men (retrieved 5 November, 2009 from http://www.prb.org/Reports/2003/ShortageofGirlsinChina.aspx ).

As you've read throughout this chapter you have learned a great deal bout how we (perhaps even You) include or exclude people into or away from your pool of eligibles. In the latter part, I may have over emphasized the "Buyer beware" approach that I wanted

you to have as you move through the data and mate selection market.

Fear not. Enjoy dating and mate selection. It is a wonderful time of your life that can be the best and simultaneously the worst of times. It may help for you to understand a bit more about yourself so that you can develop a strategy in being proactive and focused in your date and/or mate selection experiences.

## Chapter 09-Marriage and Other Long-Term relationships

As was mentioned in Chapter 6, a couple is simply a pair of people who identify themselves in terms of belonging together, trusting one another, and having a unique relationship, separate from all others. A "We" is close to the same thing, yet it focuses on the relationship as an entity in itself. A "We" as shown in Figure 1 is a married couple but can also include cohabiters, or other intimate non-married couple arrangements. This is a relationship that is not intimately connected to any other relationships at the same profound level as they are connected to one another.



Figure 1. The "We" as it Relates to a Married Couple
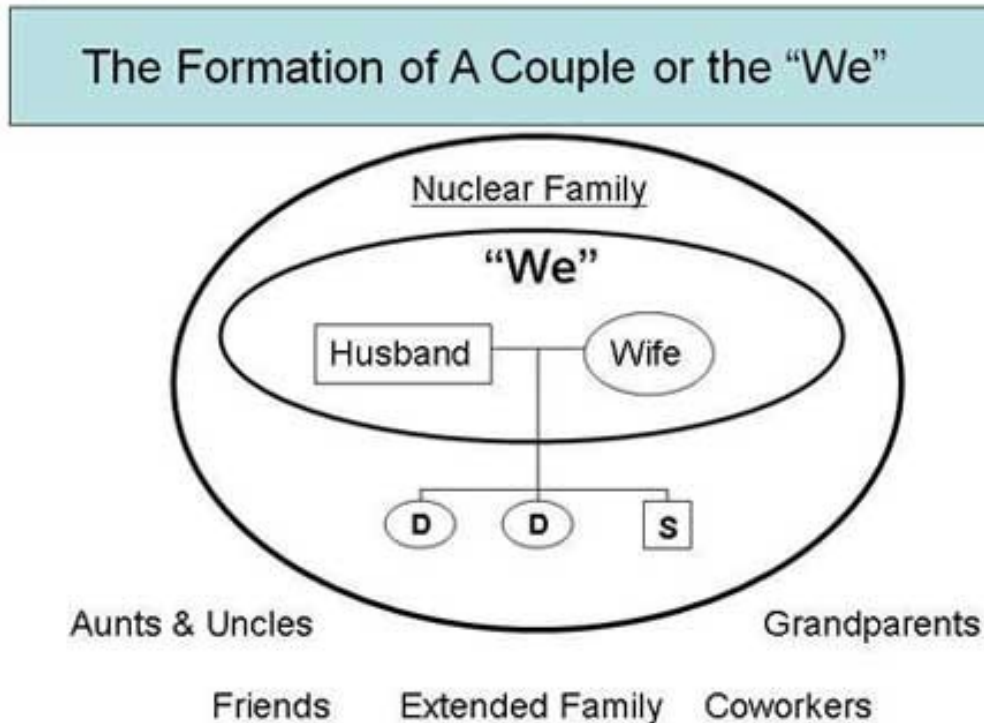
Here is a metaphor, a "We" is much like a vehicle (relationship) that two people purchased together. Both have to put in maintenance. Both have to care for it and treat it in such a way that it runs for a long time. Sometimes, spouses or partners attack the other in such a way that the other is harmed or damaged in their trust. A "We" is the social and emotional boundary a couple establishes when they decide to become a couple. This boundary includes only the husband and wife. It purposefully excludes the children, extended family, co-workers, and friends. Most couples who establish a strong marital bond have successfully distinguished themselves as a "We" and partially disengaged from the existing relationships of child, grandchild, best friends, etc. That is not to say that you cut your parents, relatives, and other friends off. You just have to establish a

new exclusive intimacy that only includes you and your spouse (See Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee (1995) The Good Marriage ISBN 0-446-67248-3; Warner Pub.)

This also means making certain things into spouse-only issues which are the decisions, advice, and discussion that are held exclusively between partners and intentionally NOT between other family and friends. This might include types of birth control, how to run a budget, sexual techniques and practices, who might be at fault in an argument, etc. If a couple marries in their late 20's then they have a life-long history of intimate help-seeking and advice-giving relationships with others. These may continue as long as the help-seeking behavior doesn't violate the intimate agreements of confidentiality for each spouse or partner. I must emphasize how crucial it is to form the "We" so that married couples avoid the damaging intrusions of family and friends into their new marriage.

Marriage is a legal union between a man and a woman as recognized by most of the United States. Internationally and in certain US political regions, a man and another man or a woman and another woman can be legally recognized as a married couple. What are typical marriage structures? The US and world-wide culturally preferred marriage type today is monogamy. Monogamy is the marriage form permitting only one spouse at a time. Almost all in the US have married monogamously since the original colonies in the 1600s. Monogamy implies a 1:1 relationship and is typically desired both by married couples and by opposite and same-sex cohabiters.

Cohabitation is the heterosexual, bisexual, and homosexual moving in together of two partners without going through the formalities of legal marriage. Although similar in form and function, cohabitating couples live differently in many significant day-to-day aspects when compared to married couples. Also, many cohabiting couples eventually choose to marry, but their risk of divorce is higher than among couples that never cohabited. Cohabitation will be discussed more below, but it has been increasingly popular over the last 30 years.

Multiple spouses at the same time has been preferred in the past by Muslims, Africans, and Mormons (they ceased polygamy in 1890. Any current Mormons who try to marry polygamously are excommunicated) and Mormon-splinter groups (many are still polygamous today). Polygamy is a marriage form permitting more than one spouse at the same time. Polygyny is marriage form permitting more than one wife at the same time and is the most common form of polygamy in the world's history. Polygyny is still common and legal in many African, Middle-Eastern, Muslim, and Indian nations. It was a deep part of China's history and prior to World War II it was common for a Chinese man to have multiple wives and many children.

I have a former student who is 34 and was raised in a group that broke away from the Mormon congregation in the 1890's and formed its own polygamy-based religion. She came to guest lecture to my class and described her 45 siblings, 32 daughters and sons-in-law, 180 grandchildren, 32 great grandchildren, and typical meals at home of 40-53 family members per meal three times per day. Figure 2 shows her rough-sketched family genogram (she asked me to conceal identifiable aspects of her family so that they may be spared any ridiculing comments or embarrassment).

Her father biologically fathered about 46 children. He married his 16 year-old first wife in 1948 and had 16 children with her. Eleven years later he married his 21 year-old

second wife and had 13 children with her.  Eight years later he married an 18 year-old third wife and fathered 10 children with her.  He then was asked to marry a 36 year-old divorcee who had 6 children from another marriage and they had one child together.  He then married a 26 year-old and her 45 year-old sister who were widowed from the same husband.  They together brought in 3 children from other marriages.  He had 6 more children with his sixth wife.  About 9 children are unrelated but consider him to be a fatherly figure.  Interestingly, only 3 of all these children chose to marry polygamously.  When I asked my student why, she simply replied, "It's just too much work these days and it's not worth it to them."

Her most peculiar adjustment at our university was learning to date guys her age.  In her culture, 20 something's typically looked to marry 30-50 something's (I know it seems gross to us, but it is their cultural way).  She felt that guys her age were like annoying brothers.  She also has two brothers who have multiple girlfriends on and off-again, but have no marriage relationships.  She also said that the wives in her family called each other sister wives and the first wife had the most authority.  She felt that it was a cool thing to have 6 mothers although she made it clear that 2 were not very affectionate.  Her group is not the same group that the convicted former leader Warren Jeffs led.  She knew of him but they were governed by different leaders.



Figure 2. The Polygamist Family Genogram of Ron's Student
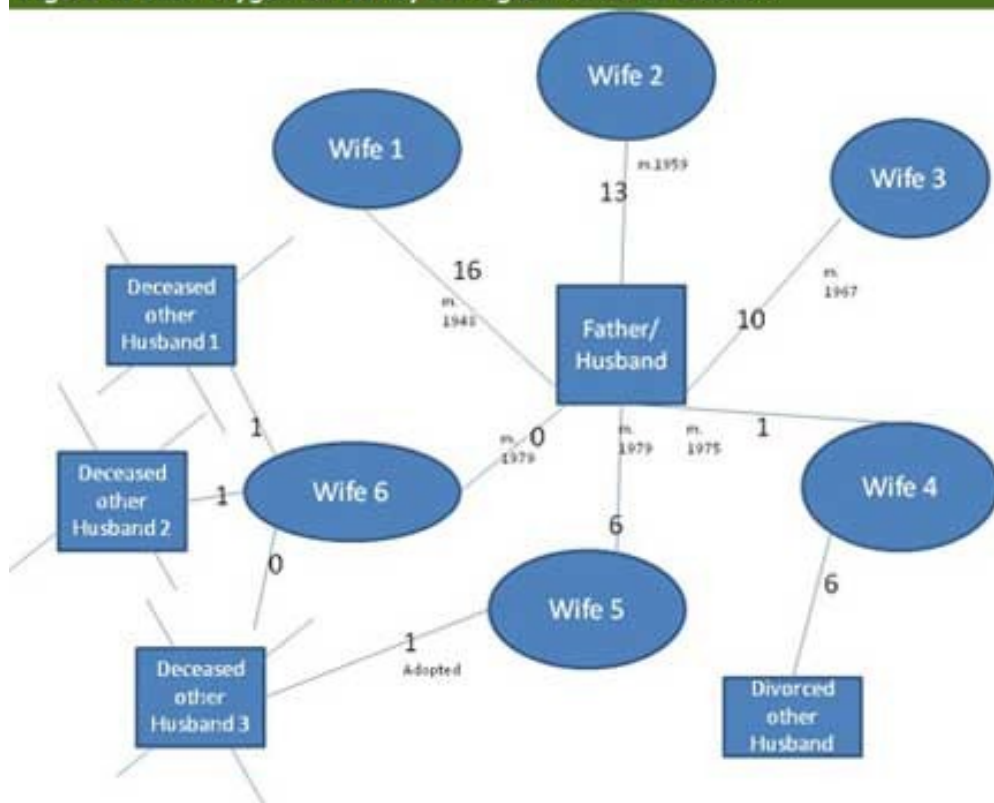
Polyandry  is a marriage form permitting more than one husband at the same time. This is historically and currently rare and if or when it was practiced, it often included the marriage of one wife to a set of brothers with all having sexual access to the wife.  Polyandry was found among some Pacific Island cultures and among the pre-Taliban

Afghanis.

What if a person marries, divorces, marries, divorces, etc.?  Serial Monogamy or Serial Polygamy is the process of establishing intimate marriage or cohabiting relationships that eventually dissolve and are followed by another intimate marriage or cohabiting relationship, that eventually dissolve, etc. in a series.  So, polygamists have simultaneous multiple spouses while serial monogamists or serial polygamists have multiple spouses in a sequence of relationships.  Millions of US adults will experience serial marriages and divorces.  It often amazes me how much we love marriage in the United States.  Many marry then divorce, yet still want to be married again.  Many others who suffered through their parents' unhealthy marriages and divorces also want to marry, knowing firsthand how risky that might be.

Traditional roles of men and women influence how the power and marriage work out in society.  Typically and throughout history families have been Patriarchal families where males have more power and authority than females and where rights and inheritances typically pass from fathers to sons.  It should be mentioned that many family power structures still lean heavily toward male power.

Matriarchal families are where females have more power and authority than males and rights and inheritances pass from mothers to daughter and sons. In Matriarchal families, the mother is not only the social and emotional force of the family, but is also the economic force.  More and more in the US families are leaning toward Egalitarian families which are families with power and authority more fairly distributed between husband and wife.

States have power when it comes to allowing marriage.  The power held by states to legalize the economic, social, spiritual, emotional, or physical union or disunion of a man and a woman is not only traditional, but also enduring in US history.  Centuries and millennia ago, fathers, clan or kinship leaders, religious leaders, and community members had the rights to marry which are now claimed by the state or nation.  True, states don't get involved in the spiritual or physical union, they just license it or legalize it the same way they license drivers or certify the legal sale of property.  Almost every year, there are about  2 legally sanctioned state marriages in the US for every 1 legally sanctioned state divorce decree.

In Figure 3 below you can see just how many legal marriages were granted per divorce for the years 1960-2005.  These numbers are presented as a ratio (number of marriages/number of divorces per year).  Between 1960 and 1970, there were almost 4 marriages per divorce, indicating nearly 4 marriages per 1 divorce nationwide (fewer divorces).  As the rate of divorce increased in the 1970s-1980s we see that there were about 2 marriages per 1 divorce.  Notice that since the late 1990s the ratio is increasing again because divorce continues to trickle downward.

For decades, newscasters and educators have warned that 1 in 2 marriages "end in divorce."  Sounds frightening, doesn't it?  Is it true?  Not really, since divorce never reached the actual 50 percent mark.  Based on surveys of exactly how many people have ever been divorced in their lifetimes, most will tell you it is closer to 43 percent in the US's worst divorce rates ever (1980s).  (see US Census for tables at http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/marr-div/2004detailed_tables.html).

Figure 3. United States Ratio of Marriages per Divorces 1960-2005*
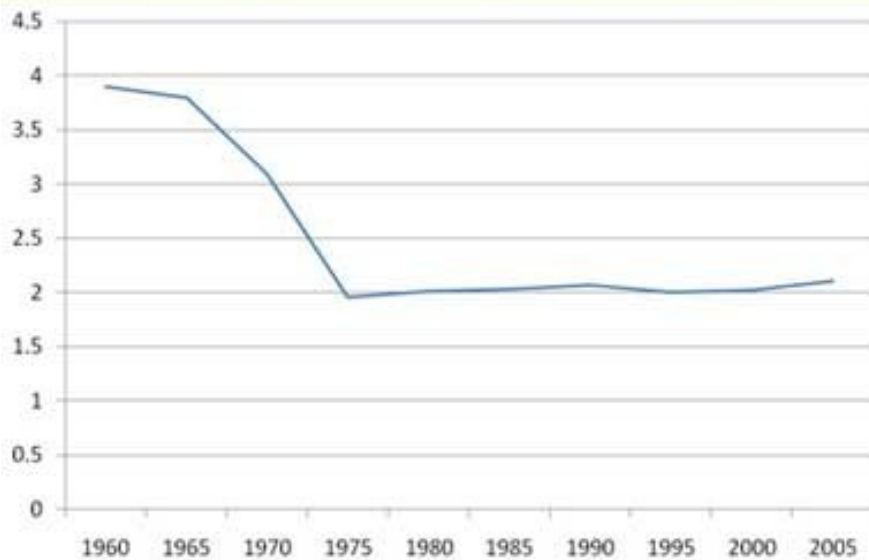
*Taken from Statistical Abstracts of the United States on 27 March 2009 from http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2008/2008edition.html; Table 77, Section 2.

The US Census Bureau conducts annual surveys of the US population and publishes them as the Current Population Surveys. Table 1 represents the US family Types as of October 1, 2008. You will notice that marrieds comprise the largest proportion of family types in 2008. Single never marrieds are the second largest type and include another 6.8 million cohabiters of opposite sex and an unknown number of same sex cohabiters. Next is divorced, widowed, then separated.

| Table 1. US Family Types, 2008 | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Types** | **Numbers** | **Percentages** |
| Married | 123,671,000 | 52% |
| Widowed | 14,314,000 | 6% |
| Divorced | 23,346,000 | 10% |
| Separated | 5,183,000 | 2% |
| Never Married-Single | 71,479,000 | 30% |
| Total Families 15 and over | 237,993,000 | 100% |

Taken from the Internet on 30 March 2009 from Table A1. Marital Status of People 15 Years and Over, by Age, Sex, Personal Earnings, Race, and Hispanic Origin/1, 2008 http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam /cps2008.html and see Table UC1. Opposite Sex Unmarried Couples by Labor Force Status of Both Partners: 2008 retrieved 30 March 2009 from http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/hh-fam/cps2008.html

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fam/cps2008.html

Look at Figure 4 below to see the US graphical trend of actual numbers in millions of family types. It shows that the single largest type of family in the US has always been marrieds then never marrieds. The divorced category overtook the widowed category in the 1970s and has been higher ever since. Why are the trends upward? Simple, these are numbers and not rates nor percentages. The population has grown and therefore the population size has been steadily increasing.

Robert and Jeanette Lauer are a husband-wife team who have not only studied the family but have written a college textbook called Marriage and Family: The Quest for Intimacy (2009, Cengage). They studied commitment and endurance of married couples. They identified 29 factors among couples who had been together for 15 years or more. They found that both husbands and wives reported as their number 1 and 2 factors that "My spouse is my best friend and I like my spouse as a person" (see 'Til Death Do Us Part: How Couples Stay Together 1986 by Robert Lauer and also Google Lauer and Lauer and Kerr various years). The Lauers also studied the levels of commitment couples had to their marriage. The couples reported that they were in fact committed to and supportive of not only their own marriage, but marriage as an institution.

Irreconcilable differences are common to marriage and the basic strategy to deal with them is to negotiate as much as is possible, accept the irresolvable differences, and finally live happily with them. Keeping a positive outlook on your marriage is essential. As was mentioned above, as long as a couple is married they are technically at risk of divorce. But, not all divorce risks are created equally. Newly married couples 1-10 years have a great deal of adjustment to work through, especially during the first 36 months. They have new boundaries and relationships to establish. They have to get to know one another and negotiate agreements about the who, what, why, and how of their day-to-day lives together. The longer they stay together, the lower their risks of divorce. Most US marriages last a long time (see discussion below).

According to the National Conference of State Legislatures, two young people may marry at 18 without parental consent in 49 states (see http://www.ncsl.org/ ). In Mississippi they'd have to be at least 21 years old to marry without their parent's permission. Individuals who marry in their teens (even 17, 18, & 19) have much higher rates of marital dissolution. Some argue that this might be because the individual continues to change up until about age 25-26 when they are fully psychologically mature. Try to remember who you thought was attractive your senior year in high school. Would you still find them attractive today? Some who marry in their teens actually outgrow one another, including their loss of attraction that stems from their changed tastes. Couples who married as teenagers must unite as they take into account their ongoing maturation and change in tastes. When marital data is collected by the US Census Bureau, it often shows that those marrying in their teen years have the highest rates of having ever been divorced.

As is mentioned above, most unwed mothers end up marrying the biological father of their baby. These marriages often end in divorce more than marriages for non-pregnant newlyweds. The existence of children at the time of the wedding is often associated with higher divorce rates.

Family Scientists have borrowed from the physics literature a concept called entropy which is roughly defined as the principle that matter tends to decay and reduce, toward its simplest parts. For example, a new car if parked in a field and ignored, would eventually decay and rot. A planted garden, if left unmaintained, would be overrun with weeds, pests, and yield low if any crop.

Marital Entropy is the principle that if a marriage does not receive preventative maintenance and upgrades it will move towards decay and break down. Couples who take ownership of their marriage and who realize that marriage is not a state of constant bliss (nothing really is) and that it often requires much work, will experience more stability and strength when they nurture their marriage. They treat their marriage like a nice car and become committed to preventing breakdowns rather than waiting to repair them. These couples read and study experts like Gottman, Cherlin, Popenoe, and others who have focused their research on how to care for the marriage, acknowledging the propensity relationships have to decay if unattended.

Many individuals struggle to completely surrender their single status. They mentally remain on the marriage market in case "someone better than their current spouse comes along." Norval Glenn in 1991 argued that many individuals see marriage as a temporary state while they keep an eye open for someone better. "More honest vows would often be "as long as we both shall love" or "as long as no one better comes along (page 268)." Glenn gets at the core of the cultural values associated with risks of divorcing. (See "The Recent Trend in Marital Success in the United States" by Norval D. Glenn Journal of Marriage and the Family, Vol. 53, No. 2 (May, 1991), pp. 261-270)

In Figure 5 you can see the median duration of marriage for people 15 and older by sex and age. This data is exclusively for those who ended up divorcing. Even those who do divorce can expect a median (exact middle value in a list) of about 8 years for both men and women. The average couple could expect to stay married quite a long time.



Figure 4. United States 1950-2000 Numbers of Family Types (in Millions)*
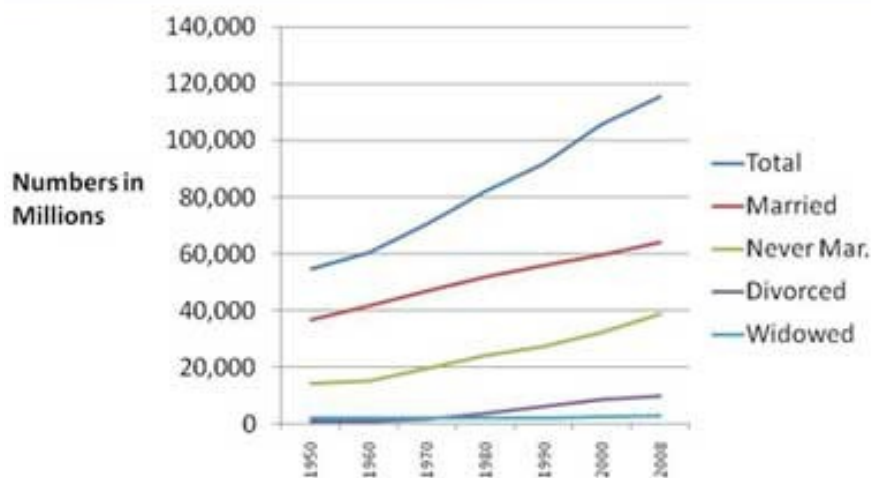
*Taken from United States Census Bureau on 30 March 2009 from Table MS-1. Marital Status of the Population 15 Years Old and Over, by Sex and Race: 1950 to Present http://www.census.gov/

A positive outlook for your marriage as a rewarding and enjoyable relationship is a realistic outlook.  Some couples worry about being labeled naïve if they express the joys and rewards their marriage brings to their lives.  Be hopeful and positive on the quality and duration of your marriage, because the odds are still in your favor.  You've probably seen commercials where online matchmaking Websites strut their success in matching people to one another.  There have been a few criticisms of online marital enhancement services, but millions have used them.  Along, with DVD's, talk CDs, self-help books, and seminars there are many outlets for marital enhancement available to couples who seek them.  Very few know that there is now a Website that offers support to marrieds who want to be proactive and preventative in their relationship http://marriage.eharmony.com/.

Doing your homework cannot be emphasized enough in the mate selection process.  The old adage, "an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" truly does apply to mate selection.  Taking your time, understanding yourself, waiting until you are 20 something or older, and finding a good friend in your spouse can make all the difference in the marital experience you have.  Keep in mind that very few people marry someone they meet as strangers (even though I did).  Most of us end up marrying someone they find through their social networks such as work, campus, dorms, frats and sororities, friends of friends, and other relationship-based connections.  If you are female there are an abundance of males because the country currently has a Marriage Squeeze which  is a shortage of males or females in the marriage market.  There are 10-14 extra US men for every 100 women in the prime marriage years.  This has been the case since the 1980s (Google US Marriage Squeeze).



Figure 5.  United States Median Duration of Marriages for Divorced People 15 Years and Over by Sex, Race, and Hispanic Origin: 2004
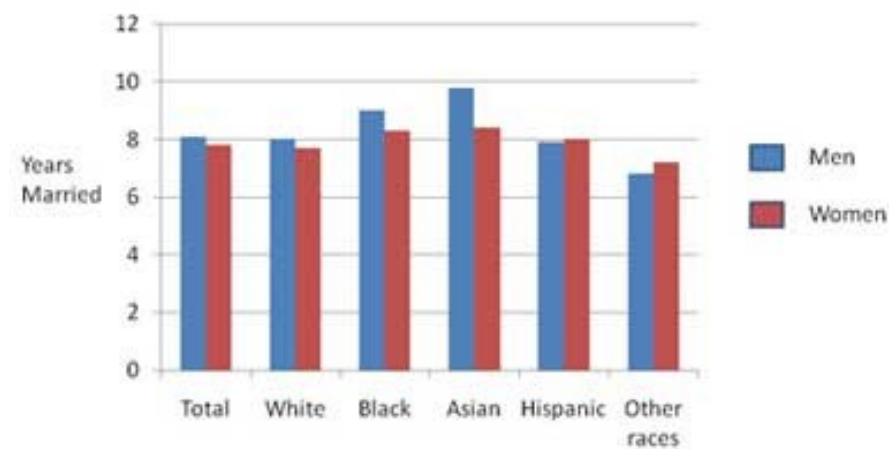
There also continues to be a trend of delaying first marriage until later in life.  In 2005, the US median age at marriage was about 27 years for men (Washington DC was 29.9 years and Utah was 24.6) and 25.5 for women (Washington DC was 29.8 years and 22.1 for Utah).  (Taken from the Internet on 2 April, 2009 from R1204. Median Age at First Marriage for Men: 2005  and R1205. Median Age at First Marriage for Women: 2005) http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GRTTable?_bm=y&-_box_head_nbr=R1204&-ds_name=ACS_2005_EST_G00_&-_lang=en&-format=US-30 and http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/GRTTable?_bm=y&-geo_id=01000US&-

_box_head_nbr=R1205&-ds_name=ACS_2005_EST_G00_&-_lang=en&-
redoLog=false&-mt_name=ACS_2005_EST_G00_R1204_US30&-format=US-30 ).

Marriage is very popular among US adults, in part because it does offer many rewards
that unmarried people don't enjoy.  A sociologist named Linda Waite co-wrote a book
with Maggie Gallagher called The Case For Marriage: Why Married People Are Happier,
Healthier, and Better Off Financially (2001, Doubleday).  As its title implies, this book
summarizes basic trends that have been found among married people for decades.
Marriage has become socially controversial in part because of the intense political efforts
to legalize marriage for same-sex couples.  Regardless of your moral position on the issue
of same-sex marriage, you can see the political quest for it as an indicator of just how
rewarding it is to be legally a "married couple."

There are numerous studies and books on the benefits of marriage to married individuals.
Table 2 lists 10 categories of these known benefits for you to consider.

**Table 2. Ten Benefits of Being Married in Contrast to Being Single**

1. Better physical and emotional health
2. More wealth and income
3. Positive social status
4. More and safer sex
5. Life-long continuity of intimate relationships
6. Safer circumstances for children
7. Longer life expectancy
8. Lower odds of being crime victims
9. Enhanced legal and insurance rights and benefits (tax, medical, and inheritance)
10. Higher self-reported happiness

Keep in mind as you think about this, that a toxic marriage has never been universally
shown to be better than being unmarried or never married.  It would be unwise to marry
carelessly.  It would also be unwise to think that once you marry you are at the end of
your problems.  A newlywed once told her mother that "now that I'm married, I'm at the
end of all my problems."  Her mother wisely replied, "which end, Dear?"  Marriage
requires preventative, proactive, consistent, and timely maintenance to be rewarding and
satisfying.  The bottom line is that the burden of your marital quality falls to you and your
spouse.

Cohabitation has been studied extensively for the last 3 decades, especially in contrast
between cohabiting and married couples.  Clear findings consistently show that
cohabiting and marriage are two different creatures.  Those who cohabit have less clarity
on the intention and direction of the relationship than do marrieds.  Also, people who
cohabit then later marry are more likely to divorce than those who never cohabited.  In
2010 the US Center for Disease Control reported that cohabitation is very common in our
day:

"Among both men and women aged 15-44 who had ever cohabited and/or married, the
largest proportion cohabited before their first marriage. Approximately 28% of men and
women cohabited before their first marriage, whereas 23% of women and 18% of men
married without ever cohabiting. About 15% of men and women had only cohabited
(without ever marrying), and less than 7% of men and women first cohabited after their

first marriages ended (Tables 13 and 14)(page 10)." Retrieved 18 March 2010 from Marriage and Cohabitation in the United States: A Statistical Portrait Based on Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_23/sr23_028.pdf

This report also stated that some of the cohabitation relationships dissolved while others transitioned to marriage. Less educated cohabiters cohabited longer while college-graduated cohabiters transitioned to marriage more.

There are a number of different ways of measuring cohabitation. The US Census Bureau reported about 6,209,000 US Unmarried-Partner households in 2007. Since a household in this case contains at least 2 persons we can derive 6,209,000 x 2= 12,418,000 unmarried adults sharing households. These data were extrapolated from the American Community Survey, and the types of Unmarried-Partner Households are identified in Figure 6 below.



Figure 6. Number of Unmarried-Partner Households in the United States, 2007*
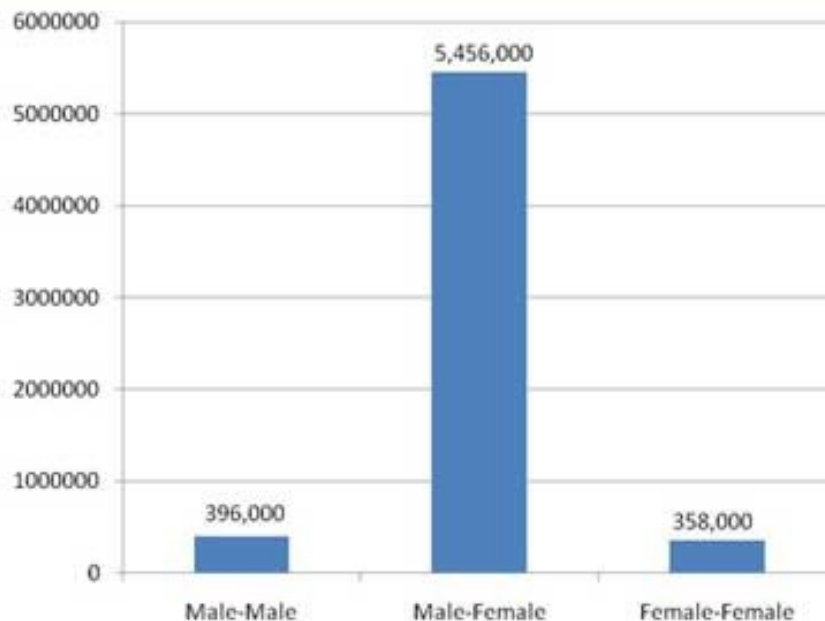
*Retrieved 17 March, 2010 from http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2010/tables/10s0063.pdf Table 63. Unmarried-Partner Households by Region and Sex of Partners: 2007

Although this survey did not identify sexual orientation, many find these to be good indicators of heterosexual partner pairs (about 5.456 million) and Homosexual partners (about 754,000). Keep in mind that there are millions of gays, lesbians, and heterosexuals who do not have a partner living in the same household. David Popenoe reported on attitudes about cohabitation and said that most teenagers report that living together before marrying is a good idea and that 50 percent of US women ages 19-44 had cohabited at some point in their lives. He also compared US couples to couples in other Western nations and found that in the US about 7.6 percent of all couples cohabited, much lower than most other countries in Western Europe (Popenoe, D. (2009)

Cohabitation, Marriage, and Child Wellbeing: A Cross-National Perspective, Social Sci. and Public Policy, Vol 46:429-436).

Generally speaking cohabiting relationships are much more unstable than married ones (Popenoe (2009) and (Williams, K. et al 2008, For Better or For Worse? The Consequences of Marriage and Cohabitation for Single Mothers, Social Forces, Vol. 86, No 4, June page1481-1511). Popenoe (2009) is very clear about his argument that cohabiting is not as healthy in terms of the well-being of children as marriage has proven to be. He also identifies the trend of unmarried pregnancies that come with cohabitation trends.

Not all cohabitation experiences are the same. There are people who cohabit more than once. Serial cohabiters are persons who have a series of cohabiting relationships over the course of time. These persons tend to be poorer and less educated in the US. When or if these persons ever marry, their divorce risks are over 2 times higher than those who never cohabited in a series (see Lichter, D.T. and Qian, Z. 2008, Nov. Vol 70 4, pages 861-878; J. of Marriage and Family).

A recent study with new analysis on US cohabitation and marriage was published online by the National Center for Health Statistics using Wave 6 data (retrieved 23 March 2010 at http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_23/sr23_028.pdf ). They surveyed 15-44 year old singles in 2002 and assessed their relationship patterns. They found that only 9 percent were currently cohabiting and that less than 30 percent were likely to still be cohabiting after 5 years together (compared to 78% of marrieds still together after 5 years). Part of this is because many of the cohabiters eventually married while some ended the relationship. In fact among first-time cohabiters, 65 percent eventually married. This report also stated that 28 percent had cohabited before their first marriage.

Based on data presented in this report, you can see in Figure 7 patterns of marriage and cohabitation among those who were in either of these relationships (does not include singles). You quickly begin to see patterns of higher marriage and lower cohabitation across the age categories. The older people were married much more than the younger ones. You can also see that cohabitation was more common among 20-29 year-olds. This again confirms the belief among younger people in the US that cohabitation is normal or expected.

**Figure 7. Percentage of Women 15-44 who were in a Union: Married or Cohabiting by Specific Age Categories.**
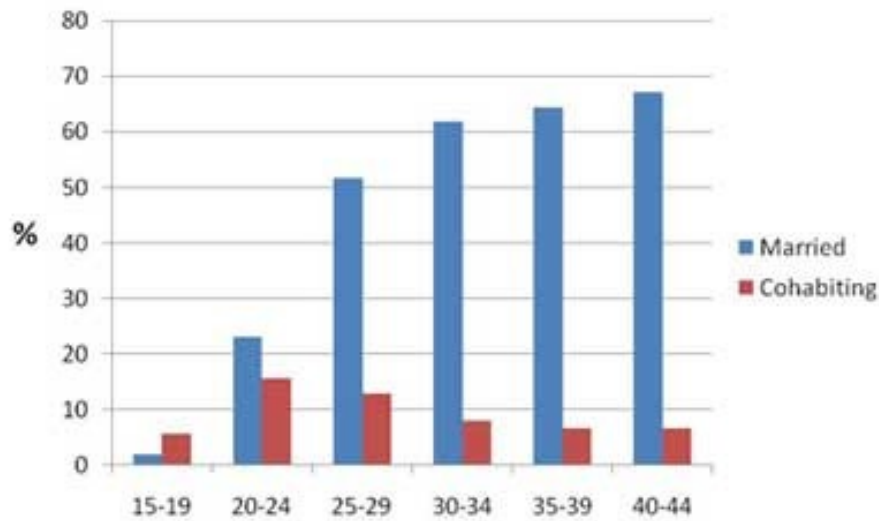


**Figure 8. Percentage of Men 15-44 who were in a Union: Married or Cohabiting by Specific Age Categories.**
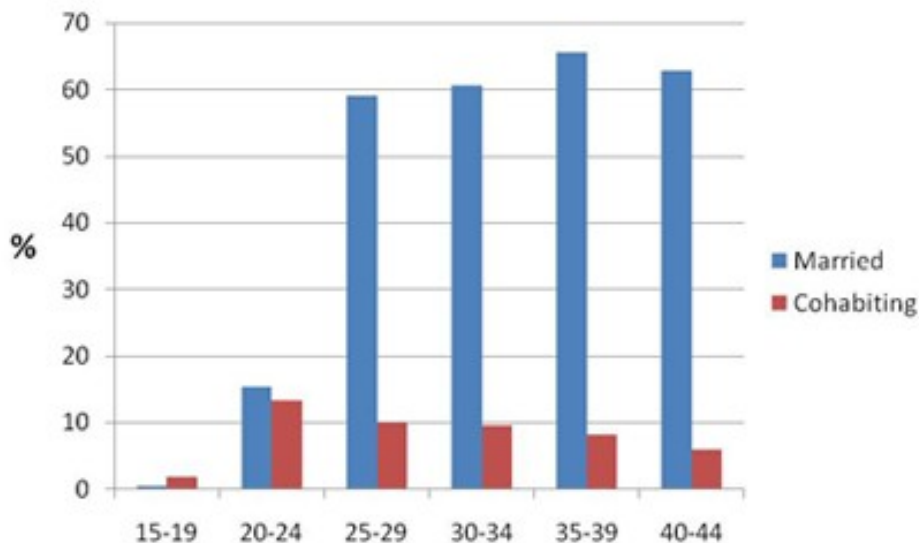


Those cohabiters who get pregnant often have two choices. marry or break up. Breaking up is often more common than marrying (Lichter & Qian, 2008 page 863). Another recent study reported on lower commitment levels among cohabiting couples, and that the less religious were more likely to cohabit than marry (Stanley, S. M. et al, 2004 J. of Family Issues, Vol. 25, No. 4 496-519, "Maybe I Do Interpersonal Commitment and Premarital or Nonmarital Cohabitation"). Lichter and Qian (2008) reported that cohabiting couple's intention to marry plays into their relationship outcome. In other words, if they move in together thinking they will marry someday it may lead to a longer relationship as long as both have the same intention and neither changes their mind.

Finally, there are known benefits to being married in a long-term relationship rather than

being single, divorced, cohabiting, or other.  Table 3 shows a quote taken from the cohabitation and marriage study referenced above called Marriage and Cohabitation in the United States: A Statistical Portrait Based on Cycle 6 (2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth."  Better mental and physical health with better medical insurance coverage proves to be a crucial quality of life factor for marrieds.  As far as children are concerned, having better care and better adult outcomes among married people's children is also a crucial factor for parents and children.

## Table 3.  Health* Benefits Known to be an Advantage Among Married Persons in the US

1. Generally better mental and physical health outcomes compared with unmarried persons (9).
2. Longer lives (10)
3. Higher rates of health insurance coverage (11)
4. Lover prevalence of cardiovascular disease (12) than unmarried persons
5. Better health and well-being of children
6. Children born to unmarried mothers are at greater risk for poverty, teen childbearing, poor school achievement, and marital disruption in adulthood than children born to married mothers (6,7,13-16)

*Direct quote from Marriage and Cohabtitation in the United States: A Statistical Portrait Based on Cycle 6(2002) of the National Survey of Family Growth Retrieved 23 March 2010 www.cdc.gov. page 12

There are also known financial benefits when comparing married to not-marrieds.  More wealth accumulation, higher assets, and higher monthly income are consistent among marrieds.  Figure 9 shows the 2007 annual earnings of marrieds compared to Single Men and Single Women income levels.  The first thing you notice is that marrieds have consistently higher annual incomes.  In 2007 specifically, marrieds had $28,231 more income than Single Men and $42,293 more than Single Women.  The difference is even more pronounced if dual income married annual incomes are compared (e.g., in 2007 dual income couples had $86,435 which is $42,077 higher than Single Men and $56,139 more than Single Women).

## Figure 9.  Annual Income from 1990-2007 in 2007 Constant Dollars Comparing Marrieds to Single Men and Single Women
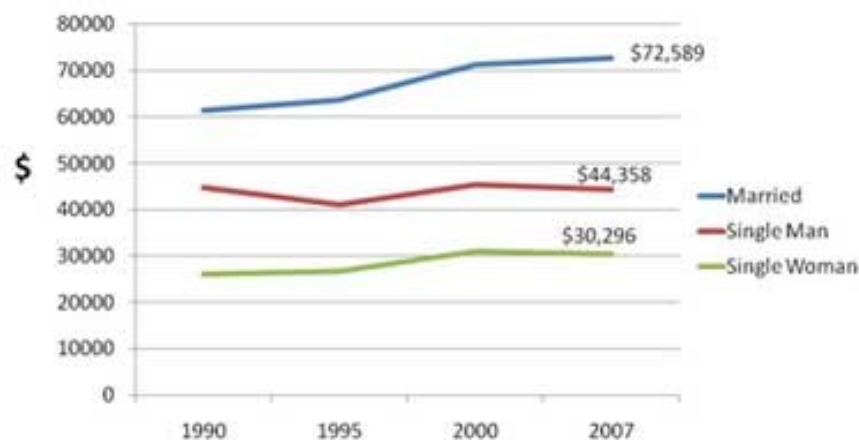


Retrieved 23 March 2010 www.census.gov

Table 4 summarizes the known benefits to marrieds over non-marrieds that have been

established through numerous studies over the last 3 decades. Married people are safer and less prone to get into trouble than others. There is a buffering effect that accompanies having a life-long devoted spouse who helps deflect stress and hardships on a daily basis. Thus some of the health benefits of longer life, less suicide, more stable health coverage, and less illness and addiction. Also, marrieds have more social support, more continuity in long-term relationships, and especially more closeness for men in intimate family relationships. Husbands are less likely to abuse and be violent toward their wives than are boyfriends and partners. Married people have clear life-long goals and tend to buy homes, invest, and plan for retirement more than others. The government and military recognize spouses and reward them with tax breaks, benefits, and other sources of coverage and support more than others. In later life, many elderly report that their family relationships are very supportive and important to them. Studies show that the elderly enjoy their human investment in their children and grandchildren that yields emotional and social rewards throughout their golden years.

| Table 4. Known Benefits Enjoyed by Married Couples in Comparison to Non-Married Persons |
| --- |
| 1. Less likely to become victims of crime |
| 2. Less likely to commit crimes |
| 3. Less addiction |
| 4. Fewer accidents (especially among men) |
| 5. Less suicide |
| 6. Better stress management because spouse is a buffer to life's stresses |
| 7. More social and emotional support (less loneliness) |
| 8. More intimate connections to family members |
| 9. Long-tern continuity in family relationships of children, in-laws, grandchildren, etc. |
| 10. Lower risk of domestic violence for women |
| 11. Longer life expectancies |
| 12. More and better self-rated sex |
| 13. More emotional and financial security (for both spouses) |
| 14. Less uncertainty about direction of life and goals |
| 15. More cost effective to live in married versus single circumstances |
| 16. Tax deductions |
| 17. More military benefits |
| 18. More accumulated belongings and investments |
| 19. More medical benefits |
| 20. More legal rights |

## Chapter 10-Parenting

### Functions of Parents

"No matter what happens in this life or the next, I will always be his mother."

I heard this from a 56 year old mother who lost her son to a drunk driving-related accident. She is absolutely right that once a person becomes a parent they are forever a parent. Parenting is the process of nurturing, caring for, socializing, and preparing one's children for their eventual adult roles. Parenting is a universal family experience that spans across the history of the human family and across every culture in the world.

Newborns are not born human-at least not in the social or emotional sense of being human. They have to learn all the nuances of proper behavior, how to meet expectations,

and everything else needed to become a member of society.  A newborn in the presence of others, interacting with family and friends typically acquires their needed socialization by the time they reach young adulthood (not all children are raised…this travesty is documented at http://www.feralchildren.com/en/index.php).

Parents serve many functions that play a crucial role in the society's endurance and success at many levels.  Parents function as caregivers to the children in their families and thereby provide the next generation of adults. They protect, feed, and provide personal care for their children from birth through adulthood.

Parents function as agents of socialization for their children.  Socialization is the process by which people learn characteristics of their group's norms, values, attitudes, and behaviors. From the first moments of life, children begin a process of socialization wherein parents, family, and friends establish an infant's Social Construction of Reality which is what people define as real because of their background assumptions and life experiences with others. An average US child's social construction of reality includes knowledge that he or she belongs, can depend on others to meet their needs, and has privileges and obligations that accompany membership in their family and community.

For the average US child, it's safe to say that the most important socialization takes place early in life. Primary socialization typically begins at birth and moves forward until the beginning of the school years.  Primary socialization includes all the ways the newborn is molded into a social being capable of interacting in and meeting the expectations of society. Most primary socialization is facilitated by the family, friends, day care, and to a certain degree various forms of media.

Parents function as teachers from birth to grave.  They teach hygiene skills, manners, exercise, work, entertainment, sleep, eating patterns, study skills, dating, marriage, parenting skills, etc.  Parents teach their children at every age and mentor them through example and actions into successful roles of their own.

Parents function as the guardians of their children's lives.  Twenty-four hours per day, seven days per week, 365 days a year until the child is independent, a parent protects, advises, manages and supports their child.  They select schools, medical care, teams, daycare, and a myriad of other services for their children.  The law considers the parents to be simultaneously accountable for the nature of their parenting efforts and legally entitled to rights and privileges that support and protect them.  Parents are not at liberty to treat their children beyond the bounds of state and local laws.  But, within those laws they have tremendous freedoms to parent according to their conscience and values.

Parents function as mediators between their children and the community at large.  They act as the adult decision maker in many matters for their children.  They also act in defense of their children if misbehaviors are an issue in the community, schools, and other organizations.  They act in the role of advocacy to ensure the best opportunities for their child.

Over the last few decades, nearly 4 million live births were recorded in the United States per year.  About 40 percent of those are first births to a mother.  Most babies are born to younger mothers.  About 60 percent of all births in the US are to mothers ages 15-29. (Retrieved 9 March 2010 from

One of the more recent trends in the US over the last 3 decades has been the increasing proportion of births to unmarried women which is about 40 percent of all US births. Nearly two out of three of those unmarried births are to White mothers. (retrieved 9 March, 2010 from http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2010/tables/10s0085.pdf Table 85 Births to unmarried Women by Race, Hispanic Origin, and Age of Mother: 1990 to 2006).

The average US woman will have an estimated 2.123 births in her lifetime (retrieved 9 March 2010 from http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2010/tables/10s0083.pdf Table 83 Total Fertility Rate by Race and Hispanic Origin: 1980 2007). This is derived from a rate. The Total Fertility Rate is the average number of births per woman in a given population. A U.S. woman will have, on the average, enough children to replace the mother and father who created them.

The US has over 40 million children ages 0-19. Figure 1 shows the age groups with numbers in each group. The preschool ages of 0-5 have 10,258,000 children with slightly more boys than girls (about 105 boys per 100 girls are born every year). The 5-9 year olds only have 9,806,000 children which represent kindergarten through 4th grades. The 10-14 age group, pre to early teens, has 9,792,000. And finally the 15-19 age group has 10,487,000 children in it. These numbers reflect birth trends that transpired years before. Birth rates were lower in the 1980s than they are today.



Figure 1. Numbers* of U.S. Children in Various Age Groups 2008

Numbers of Children in 1,000s
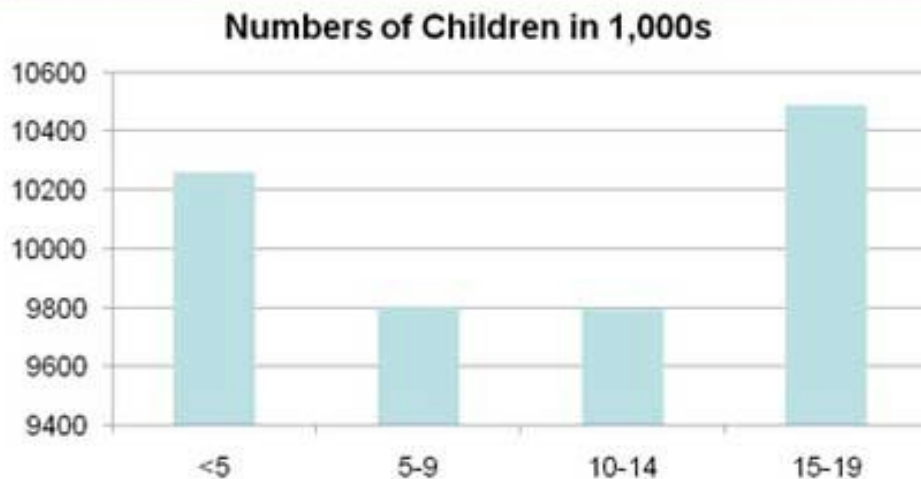
Retrieved 9 March 2010www.census.gov

Most women and men in the U.S. become parents at some point in their adult lives. This might included being a parent to a birth child, adopted child, step child, or unrelated child that the adults raise like their own. All parents more or less perform the functions listed above. All who care for children parent according to their parenting paradigm. Parenting paradigms are conceptual patterns or ideas that provide the basis of parents' strategy in

the parenting role. These paradigms can be habitual based on how the parent was parented (or not parented) as a child. They can also be formal, being derived from self-help books or formal education. These paradigms also tend to come from how parents define their roles, what they are trying to accomplish in the long-run, and how effectively they perform their parenting role.

## Childhood Dependence

The goal of parents from a developmental perspective is ideally to raise independent, capable, and self-directed adults who can succeed in their own familial and non-familial roles in society. Generally speaking, a child's independence is very low until adolescence. Teens exert their independence in a process called individuation. Individuation is the process of separating oneself, one's identity, and one's dependence on others, especially on parents. Children begin separating from parents in their second year and gradual efforts at independence are visible as children master certain self-care processes during childhood. Table 1 shows the levels of dependence and a child's own ability to nurture others over certain stages of the life course.

| Table 1. Children's Dependence and Their Ability to Nurture Others Over Certain Life Course Stages | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Stage** | **Dependence or Independence Levels** | **Ability to Nurture Others** |
| Newborn | None | None |
| 1-5 | Very Low | Very Little |
| 6-12 | Functional | Low |
| 13-18 | Moderate | Moderate |
| 19-24 | Increasingly higher | Increasingly higher |
| Parenthood | High but needs support | High but needs support |

Parenting between birth and age 18 requires a solid understanding of how a child develops and matures through childhood and into their young adult roles. Psychologists have studied child development for years. Jean Piaget (pronounced peeahjay), Sigmund Freud, Eric Erickson, John B. Watson, George Herbert Mead, Charles Cooley (the latter are sociologists), and others have developed theories that guide crucial research on children and how they develop. Since we can't cover them in detail, let's discuss a few core ideas that can guide parents and their efforts.

Newborns to 5 year olds have little to no independence. In other words, left alone in the wilderness, most could not survive. In a home with an adult caregiver, most 0-5 year olds can learn to take care of some of their own needs. They desire independence but do not yet have the thinking, muscle movement, or growth in place for it. Most have little to offer in terms of real nurturing, yet many develop nurturance in their play activities.

The children in the 6-12 year old group are growing physically and developing emotionally and intellectually. They become functional in their independence and if called upon can assist parents and others with various tasks. They develop the ability to provide the caregiving of younger children, but lack the reasoning skills required to nurture to any degree resembling the adult level of nurturing.

In the 13-18 year old group abstract reasoning skills begin and children grow into complex reasoning, synthesis of related ideas, and emotional complexity. For most teens,

they could survive if no longer under the care of an adult caregiver, but it would be difficult.  They can nurture others to some degree.  Generally speaking, due to hormonal fluctuations their emotional nature is volatile and extreme in terms of highs and lows.

Reading some of the details of these 3 age categories, you begin to see that the same parenting strategies would not work very well for each of the groups of ages discussed above.  On top of that individual children vary even within the same family on which parenting approach is most effective.

Once children attain the age of young adulthood, leave home, and/or completely individuate they enter a role of being independent while perpetually dependent to some degree.  Young adults in this generation continue to depend heavily on their parents for advice, resources, money, food, and other forms of support.  Their independence would most accurately be described as increasingly higher as they prepare for their own adult roles.  Their ability to nurture emotionally and in other ways is increasingly higher as well.

Once children become parents on their own they enter the roles of mother and father and join the ranks of tens of billions of parents who've lived before them and fundamentally attempted to do about the same things for their children.  Young parents often see their own parents as a tremendous resource of experience and knowledge.  Studies show that young parents adjust better when they have access to support from friends and family.  Simply put, they benefit a great deal from having a listening ear and someone to share words of parental wisdom.  These adults are independent and can nurture, especially with support.

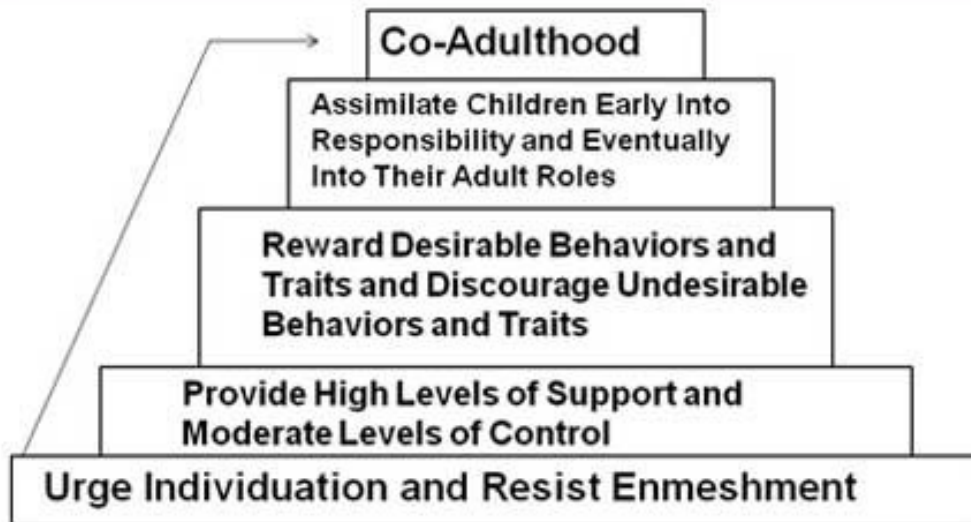## Finding the Balance Between Control and Freedom

With all of this variety and diversity of development and growth, how can parents plan for and properly perform their parenting roles?  The answer is to find a handful of parenting paradigms and approaches that will work with children.  There are a few core approaches that originate from the classical and contemporary parenting scientists.  Figure 2 shows one useful model that I developed from many research studies and from a number of parenting paradigms and which can lead to an ideal outcome of having raised children who are independent co-adults (defined below).

Many families have a tradition of just surviving the traumas, addictions, heartaches, and tragedies that preceded them in their upbringing.  The base of this model presents the two strategies of: first, urging individuation and second, avoiding enmeshment with your children.  Individuation is the process by which children become their own persons and learn to identify themselves as distinct individuals with unique tastes, desires, talents, and values. Individuated children can distinguish between the consequences of their own behaviors and consequences of others.

An individuated child develops his or her own taste in music, food, politics, etc.  This child sees their family as one among many social groups they belong to (albeit one of the more significant ones).  An example might include although ashamed of a drug-addicted brother, an individuated child fully realizes that the brother has made his own choices and must live with them and that brother's behavior may be embarrassing at times, but does not reflect the nature of the rest of the family members.  Individuated children have also

developed enough independence to strike out on their own and assume their own adult roles.

Figure 2. An Ideal Parenting Approach for the First 20 Years of Life

**Co-Adulthood**

**Assimilate Children Early Into Responsibility and Eventually Into Their Adult Roles**

**Reward Desirable Behaviors and Traits and Discourage Undesirable Behaviors and Traits**

**Provide High Levels of Support and Moderate Levels of Control**

**Urge Individuation and Resist Enmeshment**

It is very wise to avoid relationship patterns of enmeshment. Enmeshment between parents and children occurs when they weave their identities so tightly around one another that it renders them both incapable functioning independently. Many parents create this pattern in their relationship when they assume that their child is an extension of themselves, not much unlike the "Mini Me" in the movie, Gold Finger. Enmeshed parent-child relationships often have very weak boundaries and unhealthy interdependence that lingers into adulthood. Think of spaghetti noodles over-boiled to the point that they form one large gooey mass of paste. They would be considered enmeshed or entangled with one another.

An example of this came to my attention when one of my students complained that her parents had maxed out her credit cards for a vacation cruise. She couldn't apply for a student loan after that because of her credit score. Another student's mother insisted on having her way in his marriage including which birth control, class scheduling, and even how his wife should breast feed the "proper" way.
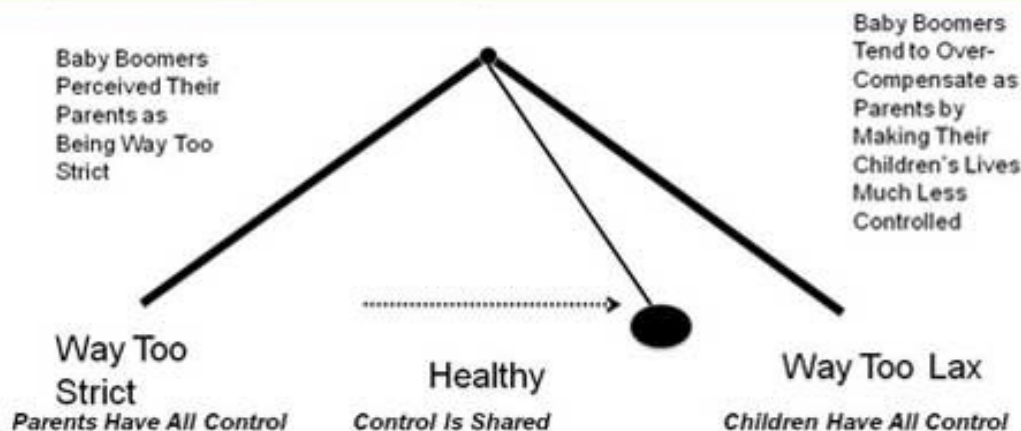
Parents who allow their children to make most of their own choices give their children opportunities for growth and development which contribute to high individuation and low enmeshment. Examples might include "Which t-shirt do you want do where for school today? What would you like to drink with your dinner? Or, let's sit down together and set some guidelines for how to be safe on a date." Children of all ages respond well to parental attempts to promote independence, individuation, and self-sufficiency. They may not understand it while young, but parents who allow the individuality of their children to develop and who avoid seeing and treating their children as simply extensions of themselves, empower their children to move out on their own and accept adult roles.

Many studies have focused on how much support and how much control children should be given by their parents. Generally speaking, parents with high levels of support for children and their interests will find the most favorable outcomes. If parents want their

children to grow up healthy, accomplish individual goals, become a contributing member of society and avoid delinquency, then supporting those children in as many ways as possible is a good idea.

But support alone is not enough. Children need guidance and control. They need their parents to set healthy limits and enforce consequences when these limits are exceeded. They need parents involved in their lives enough to be very specific about limitations and rules. They need parents to be in charge. There is a generational effect that relates to this support and control approach. Figure 3 shows the trends that transpired for Baby Boomers and their children.



Figure 3. The Baby Boomer Parenting Pendulum

Baby Boomers Perceived Their Parents as Being Way Too Strict

Baby Boomers Tend to Over-Compensate as Parents by Making Their Children's Lives Much Less Controlled

Way Too Strict
Parents Have All Control

Healthy
Control Is Shared

Way Too Lax
Children Have All Control

Baby Boomers were born in the years 1946-1964. Their parents were of the old school "spare the rod, spoil the child" or "you live in my house, you live by my rules" paradigm. These parents were very strict and rigid about parental authority reigning supreme. Parents of Baby Boomers took and had nearly all the control. Funny, isn't it that the Hippie rebellion came from this generation of over-controlling parents. Children typically rebel when there is something to rebel against, especially against a strict display of authority. It's much easier to rebel against rigid parents than democratic ones. When a moderate measure of authority is presented to them they often have minimal needs to rebel.

The middle of the continuum is the healthy zone where control is shared between the authority figure (parents) and the developing members of the family (children). Healthy parents seek for and apply children's input. Vacation plans, home remodeling, even cars and colors of cars are often decided upon in family meetings or gatherings. Healthy parents tend to have enough confidence in themselves to yield some of the control to children, but not all of it.

This brings us back to the Baby Boomers. They collectively held strong beliefs against repeating the harshness placed upon them by their parents. Many made the mistake of under-controlling their children. They let their children self-discover their own path in life. Many Baby Boomer as parents themselves, felt remorse when their children made serious mistakes in life. Some of these mistakes might have been avoided by an increase in control. You see, children with too lax of parents often act out just to test their parents' interest in and devotion to them. Many in-patient treatment facilities are filled with the

children of under-controlling Baby Boomer parents.

Children raised in homes with highly supportive and moderately controlling parents grow up and become contributing adult members of their own families and communities. Our freedom to choose must never be taken or limited by threats and coercion. By the same token, parents make a huge mistake by parenting with a "hands-off" attitude toward their children. The research on parenting styles indicates that parents must be the authority figures in the home, they must take a stand, and they also must allow their children to negotiate their own will amidst all of the worldly distractions and choices they are faced with everyday.

Figure 4 shows another issue related to high support and moderate control-caring for the next generation. Many parents grew up under circumstances limited by emotional, financial, or social un-met needs. Where abuse and addiction were involved they too often grew up as caregivers rather than dependent children. When this happens, the children grow into adulthood with childhood deficiencies (see Abraham Maslow's Pyramid of Hierarchy of Needs).

Thus as adults these individuals enter the ranks of parenthood looking to have their childhood needs be met by their children. This can create a parenting legacy where the children, grandchildren, and even great grandchildren are nurturers and caregivers to their parents, grandparents, and even great grandparents (Look at the red arrows in Figure 4). Even if a parent was not raised in a highly supportive and moderately controlling home and even if he or she has unmet childhood needs, the essential task at hand is to provide for and nurture their own children and grandchildren (see blue arrows in Figure5).

The challenge is to break the chain of counter-caregiving. Parents who seek professional counseling often learn that unmet childhood needs are like water, long-passed under the bridge, which cannot ever truly be recaptured. However, their approach to filling their children's needs and supporting and controlling in a healthy manner can actually provide some healing for the parent and ultimately reverse the unhealthy pattern or tradition.

The metaphor used by one of my graduate school professors was simply "Water flows downhill. No matter the upbringing a parent had when he or she was a child, the task at hand is to fill the cup [needs] of the next generation. Make sure and do whatever it takes to break this cycle of trying to extract water [caregiving] from younger family members who themselves are too young and inexperienced to become caregivers" (Boyd Rollins, Ph.D., Advanced Parenting research Lecture Notes, BYU 1990). It's a simple metaphor, but effective enough.

Figure 4. The Healthy Way To Nurture Down the Generational Lines: Fill the Cups of Your Children and Their Children

## Behaviorism and the Cognitive Model

The next level in the model presented above in Figure 2 is called Behaviorism. Behaviorism is a theory of learning that simply states that children will repeat behaviors that they perceive to bring a desired reward while ceasing behaviors that they perceive bring punishments. All of us (children, too) tend to maximize our rewards while minimizing our punishments. The Behaviorism approach to parenting is a powerful paradigm when it comes to raising smaller children. Reasoning skills don't develop enough in preschoolers. You understand the dangers of busy streets and traffic risks. But, when you tell a small child not to play near one, they typically cannot process all the nuances of the dangers that might occur.

A 4-year old will learn better from a parent who makes him come in for 10 minutes of time out if he forgets and goes near the street again. He may say that his ball rolled into the street and he simply retrieved it. Ten minutes to a small child may feel like hours to an adult. This is a strong punishment to a child who wants to play. Now, it can be argued that an angry swat on the behind is also going to be perceived as a punishment. This is true. But, numerous studies consistently indicate that non-spanking approaches to disciplining a child can be very effective. A 2008 ABC News poll found that about 65 percent of Americans approve of parents spanking children, but only 26 percent approve of spanking in the schools (retrieved 11 March 2010 from http://abcnews.go.com/sections/us/dailynews/spanking_poll021108.html).

Many parents are very aware that the state authorities will hold them accountable if they do not protect their children from danger. They also know that Psychologists and others frown upon spanking. Thus spanking has gone underground for many parents. It takes place behind closed doors. This is a big change from the 1960s and 1970s when I grew up in Georgia. Back then you could be whipped by a belt, a small limb of a tree (switch), and wooden paddle, or other convenient object at home, at school, at church, or on the

bus.  It was perceived to be "for my own good."  Go figure.  Yes, I was a Baby Boomer.

I know of a spanking received by my student.  Her stepmother swatted her with a wooden spoon and it was perceived as being highly out of line by her father.  Thus it was the only spanking she ever received.  When she eventually married, she was determined not to spank so she bought a book that offered alternatives to spankings.  Her husband came in one day from a long day of work and found her in tears.  She had two toddlers who were misbehaving and she had spanked them each with a simple swat on their diaper.  Her husband reassured her by saying that it was fine and he thought that she did what any mother might do in her place.  She agreed, but explained that she was probably the only mother in the world who had administered the swat using the paper back book she was reading on alternatives to spanking.  True story.

Spankings are common and are often used when parental frustration leads the parent to lash out.  Behaviorism is for many parents a guiding strategy that focuses the parent's attention on effective parental intervention efforts that work well and often work quickly.  The key in using this approach is to know your child well enough to know what he or she defines as a reward or a punishment.  Some children are sensitive to parental criticism and will respond well to a disappointed look or tone of voice.

Other children respond better to giving or withdrawing privileges (Xbox, Cell phone, TV, or play time with friends).  Once you get an idea of where your child stands on rewards and punishments, then you can selectively use them as a reward or punishment approach.  I remember my daughter's kindergarten teacher, Mrs. Peterson.  She told us during the first parent-teacher conference we had with her that "1 Tootsie Pop as a reward is more effective than 100 spankings or scoldings."  She was correct and effective with her students.  Your children will probably have rewards and punishments that vary from child to child.  Table 2 shows some of these to illustrate the point, although it would be impossible to list the rewards or punishments of every child in the world.

The Behaviorism formula is relatively simple once you've identified your particular child's rewards and punishments.  If you want a child to learn a new habit or improve on a skill, motivate them with a reward.  For example, if she puts her own dirty laundry away for a week, you'll let her pick out her next outfit at the store (then really let her pick it out no matter what you think about it).  You can also add unexpected rewards.  For example, you notice that your son is playing well with his little sister and you come in and praise them both with a treat for playing well together.  This rewards desirable behaviors in unexpected ways and can be a powerful reinforcer for desired behaviors.

You can also withhold rewards when misbehavior occurs.  For example, a child who gets an hour of video game time after his chores and homework are finished might lose his hour on a day where he forgot to do his homework.  Likewise, a grounding may be applied for other behaviors and consequences.  One of my personal favorites as the father of six was to purposefully give a long grounding.  After a few days, I'd offer the child a negotiated early release for improving the behavior or activity at hand.

The core of the most effective rewarding and punishing system is to connect the reward or punishment to the natural consequence of the behavior.  In other words, when a teen stays out past their curfew, grounding them from their friends is the natural consequence.  It helps to logically reinforce the behavior to the outcome.  If you want a child to behave

in a public setting, reward the child while they are behaving.  Many well-meaning parents wait until the child is frustrated and misbehaving then break out the treats.  When they do this, they are rewarding misbehavior with treats.

| Table 2.  Examples of Rewards and Punishments for Children | |
| --- | --- |
| **Possible Rewards** | **Possible Punishments** |
| Verbal approval | Verbal disapproval |
| Verbal praise | Verbal reprimands |
| Sweets | Time out (in chair, bedroom, corner) |
| Playtime, friend time | Groundings (friends, toys, driving, etc.) |
| Special time with parents | Chores |
| Access to toys | No access to toys |
| Money/allowance | Suspend allowance, Small monetary fines |
| Permission | Denial of opportunities |
| Driving, Outings with friends | Withdrawal of privileges |

One of the findings about Behaviorism is that it works best for younger children and should be complimented with a logical or thinking-based approached called the Cognitive model as the children get older.  The Cognitive model of parenting is an approach that applies reason and clarification to the child in a persuasive effort to get them to understand why they should behave a certain way. After age 7, children develop more and more reasoning skills.  Children younger than that will try to understand, but benefit more from short statements and behavioral rewards and punishments.  Teenagers and young adults have developed abstract reasoning skills.  They can think and reason complex matters and therefore can carry on conversation and present their case while understanding their parents' case.

The cognitive model is a relief for many parents who complain that Behaviorism feels too much like a bribe or extortion, because the parents are using that paradigm to get desired results.  My answer to this concern is that when someone bribes or extorts another, they are typically doing it for selfish reasons.  When parents use rewards and punishments with smaller children the desired outcome is typically supportive of the child and the child's development and growth.  It's not a bribe to help someone be a better or more mature person.

Finally, remember that children (and adults) tend to do what rewards them while avoiding what punishes them.  If they typically speed to work without getting caught they continue to speed.  If they did get caught and accumulated points against their license, say with the threat of loosing it if they got one more ticket, then slowing down to avoid the punishment becomes more appealing.  We tend to avoid repeating behaviors that punish us in undesirable ways.

Would that any parenting paradigm worked for every child in every case, but it doesn't.  Behaviorism and cognitive approaches fail with some children, especially when their emotions override their reason and their judgment.  Teenagers have very emotional decision-making processes that often require tremendous patience from parents.  Even

when a child's behaviors and thinking are irrational and based more on emotional approaches, these paradigms still work better than none at all or better than simply spanking or grounding.

The next step in the model shown in Figure 2 is to assimilate children early into responsibility and eventually into their adult roles. Parents often don't want to let their children suffer. But, they eventually learn that a child's failures are not a bad thing. It can be a powerful learning experience for a child to fail when trying out for a team, a play, or a job. Their mistakes inform their ability to learn and improve according to their strengths and weaknesses. There are a few parenting types that support children learning from their own efforts and a few others that are more interference in that processes.

## Types of Parenting

Rescue Parents are constantly interfering with their children's activities. They continuously help with homework (or do it for the child), seek special favors for their children from teachers and/or coaches, rush in before the child can fail to extract the child from the risk of failing, or make sure the child never has to face any consequences for his or her actions. Rescue parents undermine their child's self-worth by removing their child from any risk of failure in the pursuit of successes. This makes the child feel incapable of doing things on their own. Rescue parents raise children who are dependent, non-individuated, and often enmeshed.

Dominating Parents over control and coerce their children. They typically demand compliance and are harsh and overly strict in their punishments. They continuously force their children to dress and act as the parent's desire. They force their children's choices of friends, hobbies, and interests. They also use humiliation and shame to make the child comply. These dominating parents make the children prisoners of their control and dependent upon the parent or someone who eventually replaces the parent (such as a dominating spouse).

Mentoring Parents tend to negotiate and share control with their children. They typically let the small things be decided by the child (clothing, class schedules, and hobbies). They also tend to set guidelines and negotiate with their children on how to proceed on various important matters (minimum age to date, when and what type of cell phone to acquire, and when to get a driver's license). They often give the child choices. For example, a parent might say, "I can't afford to get you a car of your own, but if you don't mind too much driving the old family van, I'll share the insurance expenses with you." Or for a younger child, the parent might say, "you can wear your t-shirt or tank top, but you can't go shirtless to the park because the sun might harm your skin."

Figure 5 shows a photomontage of parents and children. As you look at the photos of parents and their children, think about how they represent the myriad opportunities for children to take on and accept responsibilities. Parents find that even early in the pre-school years, children can take on small chores and tasks around the house. If doing chores is defined as positive and rewarding, children can learn to work side by side with their parents in house and yard work. Such skills are invaluable in our day. Employers struggle to find teens and young adults who have experience working and fulfilling assigned tasks adequately.

Generally speaking, when parents and children work together on mundane tasks, there is a much higher likelihood of establishing a bond and an emotional connection than if family members are just watching TV or playing on the computer. Much research has shown that, with most women being in the labor force, men and children have more opportunities than ever before to perform house and yard work. Doing work together as parents and children can be a very bonding and growing experience for both.

I often ask my students this question, "How many of you were asked to do more than kitchen work or house cleaning by your parents when your were growing up?" Over the last 20 years most of my students have cleaned their room and done kitchen work as their main work experiences. Every once and a while a child from a farm background wows the other students with the types of difficult and complex work they did from about age 5 on (this is in part why farming is so dangerous to children). Many of my students work part-time to put themselves through college. Those that already established good working relationships and the ability to follow through have a better work experience.


Figure 5. Photo Montage of Parents and Children

Parents trying to raise their children to be responsible co-adults may need to know what being a co-adult child means. Co-adulthood is the status children attain when they are independent, capable of fulfilling responsibilities and roles, and confident in their own identities as emerging adults. The opposite of co-adulthood is simply adult dependent children, many of whom are enmeshed with their parents and other family members.

A co-adult is independent. But that does not imply that she or he is no longer in need of

support and guidance.  Just the opposite is true.  Many studies of college-aged young adults show a continuing reliance on their parents clear until their mid to late twenties.  Psychologists will tell you that their studies suggest that the US young adult has a fully mature brain around the mid to late twenties.

One thing needs to be said about parenting.  Parents are not the only ones who socialize another family member.  Studies have shown that children socialize parents as well.  I joke with my wife about how she and I debated as newlyweds about someday saving up and buying a pickup truck or a Ford Mustang.  When we found out that we were expecting our first child, we caught ourselves one day in a Dodge sales lot looking at the newly invented minivans (early 1980s).  Wow!  You could have tipped us over with a feather when we both realized how our tastes had change based on the expectation of a child.

Parents go through dramatic changes in anticipation of, and accommodation to a newborn.  Newborns come with 24-7, 365 constant needs.  Sure, parents buy the bottles, diapers, toys, etc.  But, the baby sets the standards for how they like to be fed and when.  The baby sets the sleep patterns (especially in the first 6 months).  The baby conditions the parents to hold them, play with them, and interact with them on their own terms.

Sure parents socialize the baby at the same time.  But, the baby, with very little conscious efforts sets the rules of much of the caregiving game because he or she cries when unhappy or needs are unmet and smiles and giggles when things turn out as they want them to be.  Thus the parents are rewarded by giggles and smiles while being punished by crying and tears.  It becomes easy to acknowledge that parents who want to provide the best care for their children are indeed socialized by each child to meet that child's needs in a certain way.

When the child socializes the parent it is not planned at first.  It is just their way of surviving.  When the parent socializes the child much of the parent's own upbringing, own understandings about what a parent is "supposed to do", and what the experts are saying comes into play.  This is why it is so important for parents to carefully consider how they socialize the child's sense of self-worth.

## Self-worth v. Shame

Self-worth is the feeling of acceptance a child has about his or her own strengths and weaknesses, desirable and undesirable traits, and value as an individual. To sociologists, self-esteem or the high or low appraisal is not as important today as it was thought to have been 20 years ago. I have urged my students for over 2 decades to teach their children to value themselves and acknowledge the simple truth that no one is perfect, no one is good at everything, and that each child has the opportunity to discover their own uniqueness.  There is innate value in being unique and an individual.  Parents are in a prime position to teach their children to see a balance in how they value themselves.

One of the most demeaning messages sent to children from their parents is a message of shame.  Shame is a feeling of being worthless, bad, broken, or flawed at an irreparable level. I once gave a seminar to students on shame.  I walked in with a fresh bottle of never-opened apple juice and asked them if anyone would drink this if I gave it to them.  Most raised their hands to indicate they would.  I then defined shame and asked them to

check the bottom of their shoes for dirt, twigs, or small stones. I then opened the apple juice bottle and dumped all that debris from their shoes into the bottle. "Who would drink this now?" I asked. For some reason none of them would.

I then poured the apple juice into a glass and left all the debris in then bottom of the bottle with half the juice. Still no one would drink it. "Why?" I asked. "Because the juice is ruined and the very thought of knowing what was in it makes it worthless." One student responded. "Exactly!" I explained. "Some parents raise their children to believe that they are as worthless and ruined as was the apple juice and that nothing could be done to fix them." My point is many parents today raise their own children in the same shame-based manner that their parents used on them. Shaming children will never yield the positive outcomes parents want in their children.

Shame is at the core of every single addiction be it alcohol or drugs, TV or gambling, eating or shopping. Addiction is a natural expectation for people who define themselves as permanently broken or flawed. Recovery programs focus specifically on how to help the addicts accept themselves in a broken state (like most non-shamed people already do).

Shame is not the same as guilt. Guilt is a feeling of remorse for doing something wrong or not having done what one should have done. Guilt may be healthy. Shame rarely is. That generation which raised the Baby Boomers used shame the same way they used a belt. It was an emotional tool devised to control and sometimes break the will of a child so that he or she would conform to the parent's will. Many of those Baby Boomers use shame today on their children and grandchildren. Shaming a child teaches them to accept their permanently broken status and give up hope on finding the joy of their own uniqueness's and talents.

Parents don't have to use shame, even if their parents did it to them. Parents are the significant others of their children. Significant others are those other people whose evaluation of the individual are important and regularly considered during interactions. Parents are in a prime position to teach healthy self-worth or toxic shame and worthlessness. Especially for their pre-school children, parents teach their children how to see value in themselves and to see balance in how they find out what they are good at in life.

Parents avoiding shame, teach their children how to learn from failures and mistakes. They teach them how to be patient and work hard at their goals. When the outcome goes in an undesirable way these parents console their child and reinforce that child's uniqueness and value as an individual. These parents teach their children not to draw hasty conclusions too early in life. When the children have tried and tested their talents and limits enough and launch out on their own, they can take not only a positive evaluation of themselves into their adult roles, but also a process of balancing their strengths and weaknesses in the big picture of their lives.

The process leading up to a healthy self-worth is easy to grasp. I've taught my students for decades to think of how they get feedback from others and watch others to get an idea of their expectations in a given role as though they were a weight lifter. Look at Figure 6 to see a metaphor on how we measure our self-worth by weighing our ideal expectations against our real or actual performance. The key to understanding self-concept is to understand that balanced self-concept works the same way as balanced weights. Ever try

to lift a weight sets with 30 pounds on one side and only 20 pounds on the other? Please Don't!

The same can be said of those who try to balance too high of an "Ideal" expectation in a role, because they're most likely to perform less than expected in their "Actual" performance in this role.  Again, balance between "Ideal" and "Actual" is crucial.  In this example, imagine that you are looking at the self-concept formed by a young female college graduate.  She has been accepted into a prestigious corporate internship role and has actually been labeled the "Intern."

Figure 6. How Our Self-Worth Is Weighed in Ideal and Actual terms

## New College Graduate—Corporate Intern

Ideals      Role      Actual

Shoulds & Oughts      Successes & Failures

If this young professional woman was raised to be fair to herself and others in seeing the balance of her worth in terms of reasonable "Shoulds and oughts" she will be more

accurate in learning from her successes and failures rather than simply chalking them up as more evidence of her core worthlessness (rocks in the apple juice). The goal is to help children learn to set reasonable goals and see one's efforts as objectively as possible.

As parents your definition of self-worth will shine on your children in direct and indirect ways. They will see how you keep the balance or don't. Make a concerted effort to value your children. Express that value to them often (some suggest that you should express it daily). Make a concerted effort to console them in their grief when they feel they might have let themselves or others down. Then teach them how to see their worth in terms of being good at some things (like most) and not so good at others (like most).

## Chapter 11-Family Resources & Economics

Since earliest human record, the family has been a group of persons committed to meeting one another's economic needs. This is a vital function of the modern family in our day. As newborns enter the family, they are fed and clothed, protected and nurtured into childhood, adolescence, and adulthood. When they leave home they continue to receive economic support, even into the college experience.

How many times per month do your parents help you out financially? You'd be surprised to know that many students do receive financial help from family even after they marry, graduate college, and enter the workplace. In my own family I had 2 occasions where my parents helped me financially during my college experience. Other than that, I was completely on my own. It makes me happy that today's students have parental support.

In a study performed by College Parents of America in 2007, of 1,727 parents it was reported that "college students' finances were of "extreme or great concern to nearly half the parents." Other findings reported by parents indicated that cell phones were the preferred method of communication (College Parents of America, S. A. (2010). Finances Top Survey List of Current College Parent Concerns. retrieved 4 January, 2010 from http://www.collegeparents.org/cpa/resource-current-campus-survey_ccp.html , 1-3). The report stated that:

"What are all those cell phone conversations about? As noted above, student finances are of paramount concern to those respondents among you who are current college parents, with that and health and safety issues topping a list of choices that also included academics, campus or community involvement opportunities, career planning and personal relationships (page 1)."

So, parents not only continue to provide economic support, they are a social and emotional support to their college-aged children. Many have noted that among college students today, "adulthood" may not be the best word to describe them. They continue to be dependent upon their parents at some level into their late 20's. Perhaps "young adulthood" or in some cases "extended adolescence" is more accurately descriptive. As I mentioned, I am happy to know that parents support their children through the college years. You see, in the US colleges and universities are the gateways to financial security and opportunity; the higher the education the higher the income.

That's why it is so very important that children get to attend school and graduate with their high school diploma. In 2008 over half the US population had some college experience with 38 percent graduating at some level (retrieved 1 April, 2010 from http://

www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2010/tables/10s0226.pdf  Table 226 Ed. Attainment...:2008).  In 2007 the income levels by education showed a clear pattern of more money earned by those who have more education in college and university (retrieved 1 April, 2010 from http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2010/tables/10s0227.pdf Table 227 Mean Earnings by Highest Degree: 2007).  About 45 percent of our population never gets to go to college or university and some even drop out of high school.  This is a dual-edged issue.  On one side of the sword poor people get less quality of K-12 education than middle class and rich people; so, they have financial hardships that prevents their access to the gateway to financial security.  On the other side, their lower financial and educational status undermines healthy and self-promoting life styles.  Poorer people are more likely to be victimized by crime, commit crime, go hungry, cohabit and/or divorce, be abused, etc.  Of most concern to me are the children who are raised in poorer families.

## Children and Poverty

Childhood in our day does not require children to contribute much back to the family economy for most families.  In our society with all the privileges and economic affluence there are still members of families, communities, and racial categories who go without, go hungry, and haven't the slightest notion of ever going to college. Today, many children grow up in poverty, even in the United States.  A recent study pointed out the current trends in childhood rates of poverty (see "Child Poverty Rates Increased As Recession Began" Retrieved 30 November 2009 from http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=18557).  Using US Census data this study indicated that in 2008 19 percent of persons below the poverty level were children.  New Hampshire had 8.6 percent below poverty while Arizona had 26.2 percent.

In the US, children ages 0-17 comprised 73 million or 25 percent of the population, yet 41 percent live in poverty or near poverty (see Basic Facts About Low-income Children, by Wight, VR and Chau, M. Nov 2009; retrieved 31 March, 2010 from http://www.nccp.org/publications/pub_892.html ).  Children of color have a higher likelihood of living in poverty.  Wight and Chau also reported that 27 percent of White children; 61 percent of Black children; 31 percent of Asian children; 57 percent of American Indian children; and 62 percent of Hispanic children all live in poverty.  Poverty in the US is layered across racial categories.  What is poverty in the US?

The US has an official definition of being poor or in poverty.  Poverty Line is the official measure of those whose incomes are less than three times a lower cost food budget. This definition has been the US's official poverty definition since the 1930s with only a few adjustments.  Near Poverty is when one earns up to 25% above the poverty line.  We would say that a person near poverty has more income than someone in poverty, but not more than 25 percent more.  In Table 1 below you can see the US Health and Human Services 2009 poverty guidelines with estimates of near poverty levels.  Most who qualify as living below poverty also qualify for state and federal welfare which typically include health care benefits, food assistance, housing and utility assistance, and some cash aid.

Those near poverty may or may not qualify depending upon current state and federal regulations.  Absolute Poverty is the level of poverty where individuals and families

cannot sustain food, shelter, warmth, and safety needs. Those below poverty are already in a bind.  For example, the average home where I live in Utah cost way more than the average poor family could ever afford.
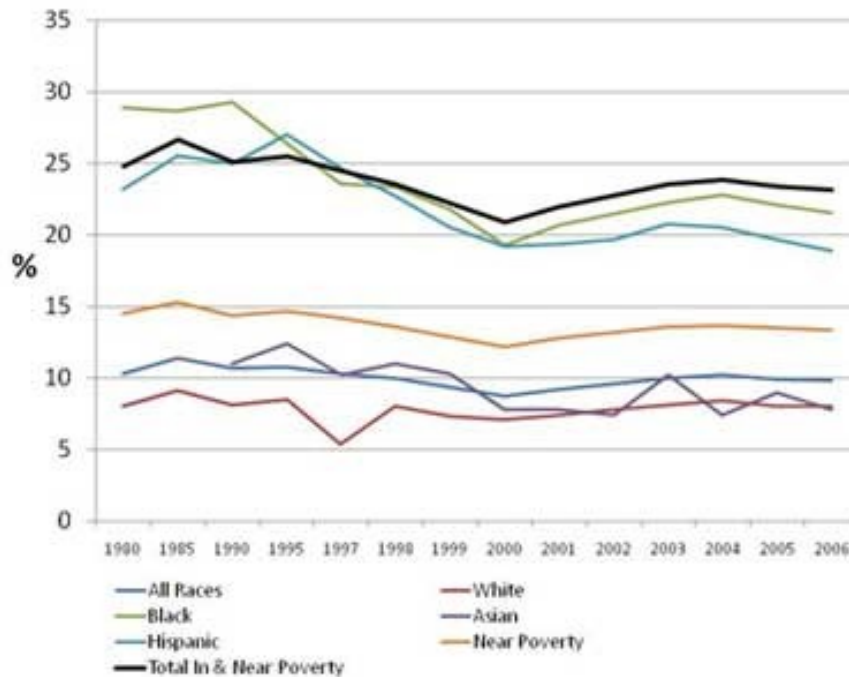
| Table 1. US Poverty Guidelines 2009 With Near Poverty Estimates | | |
|---|---|---|
| Number of People in Family | Poverty Line | Near Poverty Estimates (<125% of Poverty Line) |
| 1 | $10,830 | $13,536 |
| 2 | $14,570 | $18,211 |
| 3 | $18,310 | $22,886 |
| 4 | $22,050 | $27,561 |
| 5 | $25,790 | $32,236 |
| 6 | $29,530 | $36,911 |
| 7 | $33,270 | $41,586 |
| 8 | $37,010 | $46,261 |

Retrieved 22 April 2009 The 2009 HHS Poverty Guidelines from http://aspe.hhs.gov/POVERTY/09poverty.shtml

US Census data indicate that people have various levels of poverty by racial grouping.  In Figure 1 you can see the poverty and near poverty rates for various racial groups in the Unites States from 1980 to 2006.  The thick black line represents the sum of the percent in poverty and below 125 percent of the poverty line (near poverty) for each year.  The ranges suggest about 25 percent or just below 1 in 4 being in or near poverty for the US.  Whites (the redline) have the lowest rate of persons in poverty but make up the largest numbers of persons in poverty because Whites represent about 75 percent of the US population. Asians are slightly higher than Whites.

The blue line represents the percent in poverty for all races.  It's much lower than the high rates of poverty for Blacks and Hispanics because Whites are such a larger portions of the population that it pulls the overall average downward for all races.  The near poverty line is tan.  Hispanic is second worse and Black is the worse for percent in poverty.  We see that the layers in the strata have racial factors for both poverty and near poverty levels.

Another measure of economic well-being is health care coverage.  The US Census Bureau reported that in 2007 about 15.3 percent or over 45 million in the US had no health care coverage (retrieved 22 April, 2009 from http://www.census.gov/prod/2008pubs/p60-235.pdf ).  Health care coverage is another major economic resource.  Again White and Asian categories are in the higher strata on this resource.  They have the lowest uninsured rates.  Blacks are closer to Asians than are Hispanics.  Hispanics have the highest level of uninsurance by racial group and it's over twice as high as for Whites.  Since nearly 60 percent of insurance is provided by employers, it makes sense that young adults 18-34 year olds would have less insurance, because they are still getting their formal educations and establishing their careers.

| Table 2. US Percent of Uninsured by Selected Characteristics 2007 | |
|---|---|
| **Category** | **% Uninsured** |
| **Race** | |
| White | 14.3% |
| Black | 19.5% |
| Asian | 16.8% |
| Hispanic | 32.1% |
| **Age** | |
| < 6 years old | 10.5% |
| 6-11 years old | 10.3% |
| 12-17 years old | 12.0% |
| <18 years old | 19.0% |
| 18-24 years old | 28.1% |
| 25-34 years old | 25.7% |
| 35-44 years old | 18.3% |
| 45-64 years old | 14.0% |
| 65+ years old | 1.9% |
| **Income Level of Family** | |
| <$25,000 per year income | 24.5% |
| $25-49,999 per year income | 21.1% |
| $50-74,999 per year income | 14.5% |
| $75,000+ per year income | 7.8% |
| **Parents' Work Status** | |
| Worked Full-time | 17.0% |
| Worked Part-time | 23.4% |
| Did Not Work | 25.4% |

Retrieved 22 April, 2009 from Table 6. People Without Health Insurance Coverage by Selected Characteristics: 2006 and 2007& Figure 8. Uninsured Children by Poverty Status, Age, and Race and Hispanic Origin: 2007 from http://www.census.gov/prod/2008pubs/p60-235.pdf

What about the nearly 11 percent of children without insurance or the nearly 18 percent of children in poverty without it?  This is difficult to justify in today's modern society.  Every wealthy country that the US compares itself to (Western Europe, Australia, Japan, etc.) offers health insurance as a right to all, not just a privilege to the wealthier people in the higher strata.  The less income one has per year the higher the uninsurance rates.  About 1 in 4 who worked part-time or did not work at all have no insurance, while only 17 percent of full-time workers went without.  The 2010 Federal Health Care Reform legislation established the first federal attempt to make health care coverage a right rather than a privilege.

Figure 2 shows stratification by marital status between married and single households.  The data is presented in constant 2006 US dollars which simply means they are adjusted for cost of living changes for each year.  The first thing you see is that dual-earner marrieds (both husband and wife work in labor force) by far had the highest income levels between 1990 and 2006. Sole-earner married (husband only in labor force) comes in next followed closely by single males.  Single females reported the lowest income.  In

sum, the females with the highest income are married.  The male with a co-breadwinner wife has the highest combined income of all.



Figure 2.  A Comparison of the US Personal Income by Marital Status (includes dual versus sole breadwinner homes) in Constant 2006 US Dollars
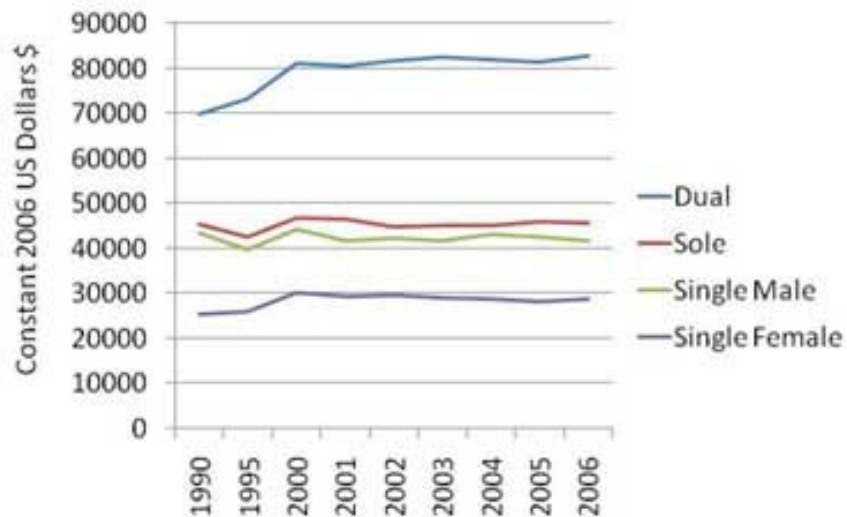
Retrieved 21 April 2009 from www.census.gov Table 677. Median Income of Families by Type of Family in Current and Constant (2006) Dollars: 1990 to 2006

Figure 3 shows the stratification in our US society by educational levels.  Keep in mind that the higher the education, the higher the annual income in 2007.  This is typically true every year.  The income levels are again higher for Whites and Asians followed by Blacks and Hispanics.  But, the layers are clearly visible by education level.  That's what is so cool about studying stratification.  Official data begins to tell you the story about how the layers look in a society.

Figure 3. A Comparison of the US Personal Income of Full-Time Workers by Education Level 2007
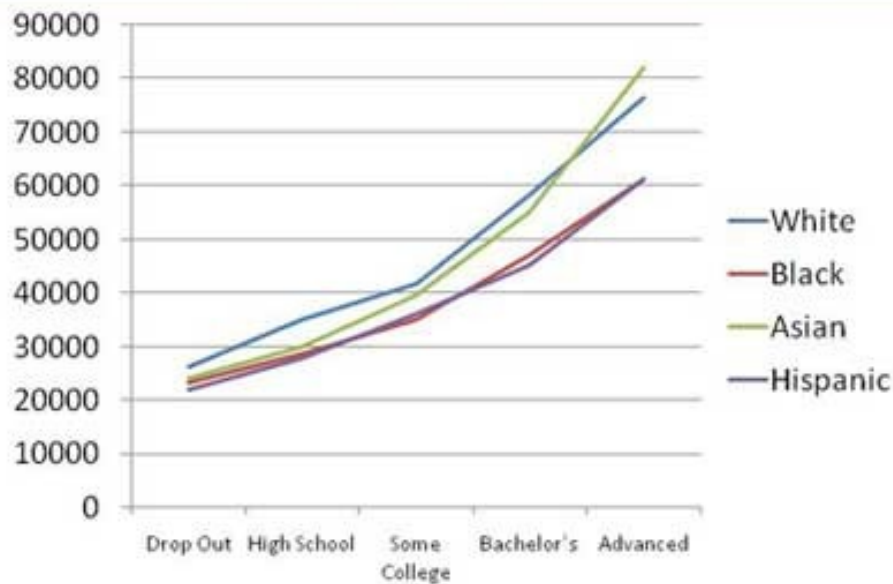
Retrieved 21 April 2009 from "Educational Attainment in the United States: 2007" from http://www.census.gov/prod/2009pubs/p20-560.pdf

Not all economic disadvantage results from our choices. In the US, non-Whites, non-Asians, and non-males are more likely to be found in the lower layers. Figure 4 portrays what the layering of society might look like if the US population were divided into 3 groups, the top 10 percent wealthy, the next 20 percent wealthy, and the remaining 70 percent of middle and lower classes.

The top 10 percent of our country owns the lion share of all the wealth available to be owned in the US. They own as much as 100 times the average US person's wealth. For a relative few, they make more in a year than most of us make in a lifetime. Theirs is the life of high levels of property, power, and prestige. Among the next 20 percent Upper-class, they hold the high ranking jobs, run for elected office, and run the major corporations in CEO-level positions. These types of jobs: pay more; require more education; require more abstract thought; and allow for more self-directed, autonomy in their daily activities. The blue or largest category includes the remainder of us. We fall in some layer between upper middle class, middle class, working class, labor class, and/or poor.

Figure 4. Portrayal of United States' Economic Layering

## Purchasing a Home

For those who can in our current economic conditions, buying a home is the major investment for most US families. Even when interest rates are low, the cost of a home is extremely expensive. If you got a $100,000 home at 8 percent interest for 30 years, then you would pay $100,000 for the home and another $164,154 in mortgage interest. That totals $264,154 for a $100,000 home. If the home does not appreciate in value, this is a terrible investment.

There are strategies that can be used to minimize the overall cost of purchasing a home. You can save money and put a large down payment on the home. This will lower the initial cost of the amount financed. You can make an extra 1/12th of a house payment toward the principle of the loan every month. By the end of the year, you would have made a 13th payment all to lower the overall balance of the loan (principle). Another strategy is to make a 15 year payment instead of a 30 year payment. In the loan above, that would mean making a monthly payment of $955.65 instead of $733.76. How might that benefit you? First, you'd pay off the loan in 15 not 30 years; and second, you'd save $91,626 in mortgage interest. You can ask your lender to give you the 10, 15, 20, and 30 year loan payment schedule when you close on the loan.

One of the major US financial problems has been the financing of established worth of the home into a second mortgage or home equity loan. Home equity is the value in the home that is higher than the amount still owned on the home loan. My neighbor lives in a $275,000 home and only owes $50,000. He refuses to get a loan against the value, because he wants to own his home outright. Some finance experts recommend doing the opposite, loan against your home and use the loan to invest and make wealth in the stock market. If you are a finance expert that would likely work out. If not, that may be too risky to the family's economy. Debt can be very difficult to a family economy.

## Debt and Spending

It is estimated that if a family has a credit card, their average credit card balances totaled $16,007. This is important because the US has become a nation with liberal debt and debt incurring policies (retrieved 1 April, 2010 from http://www.creditcards.com/credit-card-news/credit-card-industry-facts-personal-debt-statistics-1276.php#footnote1 Credit card statistics, industry facts, debt statistics By Ben Woolsey and Matt Schulz). Woolsey and Schulz also reported that there were over _ billion credit cards in circulation in the US contributing to a total consumer debt of $2.46 trillion! Eight percent of US college students are reported to have credit with an average amount owed of $2,200. They are also estimated to have accrued $20,000 in student loan debt.

In fact, the US Federal Government is in debt and paid 8 percent of its 2.983 trillion expenditures to pay net interest on the national deficit in 2008. That's $238,640,000 in interest (retrieved 1 April, 2010 from http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/i1040.pdf 2009 1040 Instruction Booklet page 100). The US spent $459,000,000 more than it brought in from tax revenues (15% overspend). This pattern of running a deficit worries many who understand that deficit spending cannot be sustained in families or in nations. Part of the problem is the concept a friend of mine calls "funny money." He describes funny money as money that isn't printed and handled and therefore misunderstood.

Many of us buy things with credit or debit cards that give us cash back or other rewards. It is also very common to have our paychecks electronically deposited in our banks or credit unions. Our bills are then electronically paid online or with automatic withdrawals. This is extremely convenient, yet it makes it so that we rarely touch "real money." To illustrate this I took a fresh one dollar bill and slowly began to tear it into small pieces in front of my class. They cringed, asked me to stop, and joked about turning me in to federal authorities. I held up the shredded bill and asked, "Why does this bother you so much?"

"You are wasting a dollar that can't ever be reused.  It's a total loss," they complained.  Then I hold up my credit card and ask, "Why can we spend $30-60 dollars on a credit card and not even flinch, yet get bent out of shape over a one dollar bill?"  I already know the answer.  The dollar bill is tangible and touchable.  The credit card works on small numbers which show up as blips on electronic screens or numbers on paper receipts.  It's funny money to many of us.  We are heavily marketed to go into debt.  My wife and I used to keep a tally of all the credit card limits we were pre-approved for that came via mail solicitations-over $100,000 in a 10 day period during the year 2007.  The debt was there for the taking without one caution to me the consumer.  Very few of the companies that loan money ever warn consumers about the problems of getting into too much debt.  Why would they if you make good money you can have what you want immediately and pay it back over the next 5-10 years with massive interest payments? Their ideal customer would run up a large balance of debt and make a minimum payment each month, thereby bringing in the most profits to the company.  The wise consumer uses debt to his or her advantage.

Credit cards are not necessarily a bad thing.  They facilitate travel and small transactions for the family.  But, credit card balances or unpaid debt can be very burdensome to a budget.  I have researched and taught family financial matters for years.  I suggest three unique rules that I like to call the "Rules of Three" when it comes to family finances.  First Rule, save three months of worth of income and keep it in the bank. That means save enough to meet all your fixed debts (rent, mortgage, car, medical, insurance, etc.) so that you can keep your family afloat if you suffer a job loss or crisis.

Second Rule, have only one credit card with no bonus or rewards program. Keep a zero balance on it.  Set your credit limit to what it might cost to pay three weeks worth of bills (including your rent, mortgage, and car payments).  I'm not suggesting that you never pay your bills with a credit card.  I'm suggesting that if you use your card for transactions or travel and have a lower limit on it, you can more readily control your spending.  Don't ever use your credit card for long-term debt.  It should be a tool for short-term financial matters.

Third Rule, whenever there is a consumer item you really want (TV, Cell Phone, Handheld, etc.) wait three full days before you buy it. I've had students disagree with me on this saying that some things go on sale and you will miss a good buy if you wait.  My point is that if you haven't planned for it, saved for it, and budgeted for it, then a three day cooling off period may help you prevent unwanted and unneeded debt.  Keep in mind that if we are marketed to with an approach of "hurry, sale ends soon," then most likely the marketing has triggered the use of our rational and emotional decision-making processes (limbic part of brain) and we might rush out and buy feeling like we are actually being responsible purchasing agents; even if we never really needed or wanted what the sale is selling.

Save for a consumer item for at least three weeks, three months, or  three years.  If you want or need a new kitchen appliance, save for three weeks and buy one within your budget. If you want a new computer or TV, save for three months and buy one within your budget.  If you want a new car, save for three years and buy one within your budget.  In preparation for buying a car, some find that it works to save as much as a car payment might be, but put the payment into your own savings account.  At the end of three years,

go buy a car you can afford.  By the way here is another three idea-buy a last-year's model new car in the third quarter of the year (especially August) and you typically will save thousands.  Budget and plan using these "rules of three" principles.  Do you budget?

**Budgeting**

Most couples don't have a monthly budget.  It makes it very difficult to manage a family's finances without one so I strongly suggest you find one.  There are numerous free budgets online.  I found 10 really easy formats of budgeting in one internet search for "free monthly budgets."  The two main things about a monthly budget is to be able to know how much money you currently have in your funds and where you are spending it.  If you haven't budgeted yet and want to start, ask your parents for help.  Show them this practice budget and ask them what they recommend from their own experience.  There is no "right" way to budget.  It's just better to budget than to not.

To develop a budget, make a list of all your fixed expenses which are monthly expenses that are set and do not depend upon your consumer choices. These typically include: rent, mortgage payments, car payments, and insurance payments to name a few.  Now make a list of other things you spend your money on that relate to household matters.  These fall under the definition of a variable expense which are expenses that can change from month-to-month  based on needs and wants and which are not fixed expenses. These typically include: food, gasoline and car maintenance, dining out, pay-per-view, cold drinks, groceries, clothing, etc.  If you want to budget, the next few tables will help you with the basics.  Table 3 is simply the tracking sheet you can use to find out where you are spending your money.

In Table 3 you will need to record every purchase or expenditure you make.  I know it sounds tedious but you really need to track your spending in order to estimate a budget for how to spend in the future.  Make sure and note what types of fun you spend money on.  If you go to a movie once per week that would be four visits per month and might require its own budget.  If you golf, attend sporting events, or dance you may find the spending is enough to justify a budget allocation in advance.  After you've tracked your expenses go to Table 4 and put them into the next month's budget.

Table 4 has hypothetical numbers placed in it to demonstrate how the budget works.  It budgets $1,091 dollars per month.  I am sure this is high for some and low for others, but bear with me and the point will emerge in the end.  In the second month, you actually deduct what you spent from each of these categories.  You don't have to exceed your total monthly income of monies (that's where savings comes in).  I've put in some hypothetical expenditures in Table 4 so you can visualize what I mean by writing down your expenses.

Notice that three of these budget categories broke even.  They are also the three fixed expenses.  Notice also that three others had left-over monies.  The "Fun" category was overspent by $40.00 which could be filled with leftovers from the other categories.  When a category is overspent you should decide if it requires more allocation (for example make Fun have $90.00 per month) or control spending to keep it under the limit.  After all the left-over's are calculated, add them into savings or some other category.  This hypothetical month had $128.00 left over and it could be rolled into the next month in case unexpected expenses show up.

Table 5 shows you another hypothetical budget with an increase in "Fun" that was taken from the food budget. Fundamentally, a budget tracks where you spend your money, how much you currently have, and how to strategize savings for future plans. The wise college student learns to budget sooner than later so that as family size increases so do their skills in budgeting. Microsoft has a number of free templates for family budgeting available at http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/templates/TC101885141033.aspx?
CategoryID=CT101172321033&ofcresset=1&AxInstalled=1&c=0

### Table 3. Preparing for Your Budget by Tracking Your Spending

Month _____ All Incoming Monies_____

| Rent/ Mortgage | Car Payment/Bus Pass | Insurance Payments | Cell Phone | Food Utilities Fun Savings |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |

### Table 4. Your First Month's Budget:

Month _____ All Incoming Monies$_____

| Rent/ Mortgage | Car Payment/Bus Pass | Insurance Payments | Cell Phone | Food | Utilities | Fun | Savings |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| $250.00 | $125.00 | $76.00 | $75.00 | $275.00 | $190.00 | $50.00 | $50.00 |
| -$250 | -$125.00 | -$76.00 | -$49.50 | -$10.00 | -$142.00 | -$15.00 |  |
|  |  |  |  | -$25.00 |  | -$25.00 |  |
|  |  |  |  | -$17.00 |  | -$17.00 |  |
|  |  |  |  | -$38.00 |  | -$18.00 |  |
|  |  |  |  | -$14.00 |  | -$10.00 |  |
|  |  |  |  | -$12.00 |  | -$5.00 |  |
|  |  |  |  | -$45.00 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | -$15.00 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | -$20.00 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | -$9.00 |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  | -$25.00 |  |  |  |
| Monthly spending= -$250.00 | Monthly spending= -$125.00 | Monthly spending= -$76.00 | Monthly spending= -$49.50 | Monthly spending= -$230.00 | Monthly spending= -$142.00 | Monthly spending= -$90.00 |  |
| Leftover= $.00 | Leftover= $.00 | Leftover= $.00 | Leftover= $25.50 | Leftover= $45.00 | Leftover= $48.00 | Leftover= -$40.00 | Leftover= $50.00 |

| Table 5. Your First Month's Budget: Month _____ | | | | All Incoming Monies$_____ | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Month _____ | | All Incoming Monies$_____ | | | | | |
| Rent/ Mortgage | Car Payment/Bus Pass | Insurance Payments | Cell Phone | Food | Utilities | Fun | Savings |
| $250.00 | $125.00 | $76.00 | $75.00 | $275.00 | $190.00 | $50.00 | $50.00 |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| | | | | | | | |
| Monthly spending= | Monthly spending= | Monthly spending= | Monthly spending= | Monthly spending= | Monthly spending= | Monthly spending= | |
| Leftover= | Leftover= | Leftover= | Leftover= | Leftover= | Leftover= | Leftover= | Leftover= |

The "hedonistic treadmill" emerged as a concept in recent self-help books of financial matters. Hedonism is the pursuit of pleasure as the main goal of one's life with pleasure being the core value of daily life. Many in the US have fallen into the trap of seeing pleasure as the best goal and a purchase as the best way to acquire that pleasure. Thus, they get on a treadmill of purchasing which cannot provide long-lasting pleasure in most cases and requires new and more varied purchases to renew that short-term pleasure over and over. The hedonistic treadmill would not be a major problem if one were very wealthy. But, for average middle class person, the marketing pressures to buy, the patterns of seeing a purchase as a path to 'happiness," and the availability of easy to obtain credit make it very difficult to get off the treadmill. This pattern can be very destructive financially and can undermine the family system as a whole. Figure 5 shows a list of financial best practices that can be very useful to follow for stability and security in the family.

**Figure 5. Strategies and Rules for Sound Family Financial Practices**

1. Beware of materialism (avoid the hedonistic treadmill).
2. Use debt wisely (carefully controlled credit card use and secured loans for cars or mortgages).
3. Guard your credit score (FICO).
4. Have a 5, 10, 15, and 20 year financial plan.
5. Don't buy in a hurry (Rules of 3).
6. Save for emergencies (3 months).
7. Don't play the "extra money" game (money is real, plastic, checks, cash, or electronic).
8. Save, invest, and purchase (buy low and sell high-401k).
9. Become well versed in your guilt, shame, fear issues about money (most resemble issues about sex, love, punishment, and food).
10. Put your investments in hard to reach places (CD's, funds, bonds, etc.).
11. Never fall for the something for nothing con game (something always costs something).
12. Get expert help when uncertain (investor, banker, etc.).
13. Treat your money with dignity and respect and it will respond in kind.

It surprises some people to hear that debt can be a good thing. It can be if debt is used wisely. Credit cards are a necessity for most and can be useful in building a strong credit score. To control credit card use is simple: spend with it very conservatively, pay your balance off every month, never spend up to your limit, and make sure others can't use your card. How well you use and manage your credit card now will influence how well you qualify for car and home loans later in your life.

Secured loans are loans that have some form of collateral so that the risk to the lender is minimized. Car loans and mortgages are examples of this type of loan. If the borrower can't pay the loan, then the car or home can be legally sold to make up for some of the lost loan value. Unsecured loans have no collateral associated with them and typically are given based on individual credit scores. These would include signature loans or personal loans and are much more risky to the lender.

Just a quick note on mortgages; some of my students have felt that the mortgage industry is doomed and that they have lost their chance to buy a home and have it work out for them in the long run. Even in today's volatile markets, homeowners have economic advantages that renters do not have. Mortgage interest can be deducted from taxes. Having a mortgage and paying your monthly payments on time is an effective way to build your credit score. Finally, in most states and communities, homeowners have more rights and privileges than renters.

## Planning Financially for the Future

Guarding your credit score is crucial for your family's financial security. In the 1950's two researchers began a scoring system designed to provide a standardized credit score for everyone in the US. The FICO Score is the most common credit scoring system in the world and is named after Bill Fair and Earl Isaac-Fair Isaac Corporation score or FICO. Your credit score is comprised of your payment history, how your credit capacity compares to your usage (not too many unpaid balances), how long you've had credit, which types of credit you've had, and finally how many times your credit was checked (retrieved 2 April, 2010 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Credit_score_(United_States)#FICO_score_and_others ).

You must become a manager of your credit score. The online www.about.com article, the "Top Five Money Mistakes College Students Make" has very useful information in it (retrieved 2 April, 2010 from http://financialplan.about.com/od/students/a/college-student-money-mistakes.htm). Overdoing credit card debt, ignoring or ruining your credit score, not budgeting, and misusing student loan money are listed. Many other Internet-based articles point to the same mistakes and how easy they are to make for uneducated students who are offered numerous pre-approved credit cards as freshmen. There are many studies that demonstrate that misusing credit negatively impacts college students' overall lives and experiences (see for example, Xiao, J. S. (2007). Academic Success and Well-Being of College Students: Behaviors Matter. Take Charge of America Institute Report, November , 1-23). I recently studied this among our own students at Utah Valley University and found that less debt was associated with students being overall more satisfied with their lives (not yet published).

Every family needs a 5, 10, 15, and 20 year financial plan. For the most part such a plan focuses on long-term goals while giving you guidelines to follow in the short-term. Answer these simple questions, "What do we need/want to pay for in 5, 10, 15, and 20 years and how do we need to prepare now to accomplish those dreams?" Buying a home, owning a home, planning for retirement, putting kids through college, life insurance coverage, starting a business, traveling the world, being debt free, and other goals might emerge in the planning process. Once you have these goals typed out for the next 2 decades you can couch most of your budgeting, saving, and spending activities into them. Remember that the "Rules of Three" suggest not buying in a hurry and that makes even more sense when you think about the nature of each purchase as it fits into the long-term plan.

It is not easy to save in the US. Most people don't save. In fact many spend more than they earn and have a balance on their credit cards each month. Saving for three months may make the difference between staying afloat and going under if you lose a job, get sick, or have an unexpected crisis that cost too much money for a regular monthly income. Start small with $5-10 per week. Put the money in a savings account that is hard to get to. In other words, consider putting your savings in a credit union or bank separate from the one that you keep your checking account money in so that you have to go out of the way to get to your savings. If you save $10 per week for a year you have $520.00 saved in just one year. In five years you would have saved $2,600.00. No matter what, don't take out your savings unless it is truly an emergency. Keep it there, let it build up and take it out when nothing else can be done to pay an expense. Use your monthly budget to estimate how much a 3-month savings would need to be.

There is no such thing as "extra money." I had a student tell me that she and her husband got some extra money back from an end of year bonus at work. I asked what they planned on doing with it and she replied, "we're still deciding. It will be something fun!" I mused over her response. I was teaching a senior-level family finance class and had seen her monthly budget. She had 2 bills that they made installment payments on that she could pay off with her unexpected windfall. But, and here is the main point, she and her husband felt stressed and under pressure and this money represented a gift of relief that in her own words, "we work very hard and we deserve to do something fun with this."

All money is real money, even credit card money.  There is no such thing as extra money because with a 20 year plan, a monthly budget, and clear-cut goals any money (expected or unexpected) can be applied to a long-term goal or budget category where it can be applied.  In fact, had this student and her husband planned for it, it could be applied to a fun category in the budget or split in half with some going to debt reduction and the rest to fun.  They actually bought a high-end flat-screen TV, but could not afford cable or satellite to watch on it.  All money should be allocated and spent in the larger framework of the family finances.

There have been a number of studies on the "millionaire next door" phenomena that is common to the US.  There are hundreds of thousands of average Americans who were very frugal with their money and invested it in such a way that they gradually became millionaires.  The Dow Jones company reported that after the economic collapses of the 2008-9 recession, there were still over 6 million US millionaires (retrieved 5 April, 2009 from http://www.wealth-bulletin.com/rich-life/content/1053598720/ Millionaire Level Plummets by Baum, S. 11 March 2009).

If you are middle class, you can increase your family's net worth by following a few basic principles.  First invest low and sell high.  Second, consider real estate investments as a renter-landlord or owner-finance agent.  Third, become a full-on, unabashed cheapskate.  Don't ever pay full price for anything.  Don't ever sell below the market value.  Fourth, don't ever try to do the expert stuff by yourself.  It is very easy to  get an advisor, read a book, attend a seminar, or get professionals on your team.  Many of my students take an elective finance class from the lower division offerings in the Business Department.  I've had one join the ranks of the US millionaires and he makes about $60,000.00 per year.  To him, his family finance and investment hobby has opened numerous opportunities for his family and given them the freedom to do things they'd like to do.  Some of us sabotage such successful efforts as these.  Why?

## Undermining Financial Stability

Entitlement is a feeling of wanting something for nothing, of being justified in having one's wants met, and/or a feeling of being excluded from the same rules that bind most of the member of society. You may benefit from knowing that the concept of "sense of entitlement" is often associated with addictive behaviors and unhealthy relationship patterns. Entitled people have difficulty discerning the difference between "what I want" and "what I need" when it comes to money.  A flat screen TV is owed to them if they want it, because they are special and there needs should be met regardless of the finances involved to acquire them.  Entitled people feel that it is their right to have what they want.  Many of us have feelings of entitlement in some areas of our lives.  But, when or if our pursuit of the things we want interferes with our financial security, moral and ethical propriety, or social responsibilities, this entitlement can become pathological.

In the US, many people feel entitled when it comes to consumer goods.  They feel obligated to buy things that truly fall under the category of wants rather than needs.  Many, who lack enough resources will overspend in the process of acquiring things they sometimes feel buyer's remorse over (remember the treadmill?).  It is a painful lesson to learn when debt suddenly becomes overbearing.  One of my friends used to say, "never finance a pizza."  He meant that pizzas, movie rentals, new clothes, and other small ticket

items add up way too fast and it is unwise to make many small purchases that land you with a pile of debt. Not having the family financial guidelines as listed in this chapter, leaves one with no guidance, little direction, and a vulnerability to financial insecurity in a very aggressive market-place-based society that ours has come to be.

Why is it that some human behaviors make so very little sense to a reasonable person? Why do people spend themselves into a financial hole. Why do they get sexually transmitted diseases or unwanted pregnancies that encumber their lives for decades? Why do people persist in getting into hurtful relationships? Why are so many of us unhealthy because of our eating patterns? The answer is simple-we are human beings with choice and intelligence but emotions play a significant role in how we think and feel our way through the many decisions we make each day. A few emotions are very caustic to our sense of self-value: shame is a feeling of being flawed at our very cores; guilt is a feeling of remorse for having done wrong in our actions or inactions; and fear is a feeling of anxiety or apprehension over uncertainties in our lives.

Shame, guilt, and fear underlie many unhealthy financial decisions in our lives. I once witnessed a power struggle between a mother and son in a small-town grocery store. The mother refused to buy her son a certain brand of cold cereal. He insisted and parked his shoes right in front of her shopping cart. Emotions elevated, tempers flared, and eventually the mother slapped him across the face. I was proud of her for holding the line on her decision, but disappointed that it came to violence. As I continued to act uninterested, the son cried, the mother bought the box of cereal and I wished in the end I had chosen another store to shop in that day. Her guilt and perhaps shame lead to an unhealthy yielding to her son's feelings of entitlement.

Many of us who suffer guilt, shame, and fear medicate these feelings when we buy. We are not thinking rationally as much as feeling irrationally. Some people even become addicted to spending and are called "Shopaholics" because their spending habits interfere with their normal daily activities. When spending is obsessive or out of control it is often because of suffering from caustic feelings and not responding to them in appropriate ways. I've had my finance students answer these four questions when it comes to understanding their own unhealthy spending habits: "Does more money make you feel better about yourself, more loved by others, or happier? Can you find the chains binding you to your shame and self issues and severe them? Do you deserve success? Is spending like perfume that hides a guilt or shame odor?" Notice these are not budgeting and planning questions. They are based on understanding our feelings.

Figure 6 shows some of the emotionally driven unhealthy financial motivations that sometimes plague us. A metaphor that I've used with my students involves being thirsty but drinking from the wrong cup to quench that thirst. Many people eat when they are really thirsty. Others drink soda pop when they crave water. Some drink alcohol when they would probably benefit more from a sports drink with electrolytes. In the US we are notorious for drinking from the wrong cup. We keep ourselves so busy and distracted that we struggle to identify what is truly going on and how best to solve it.

Figure 6. Common Emotional Issues that Underlie Poor Financial Behaviors
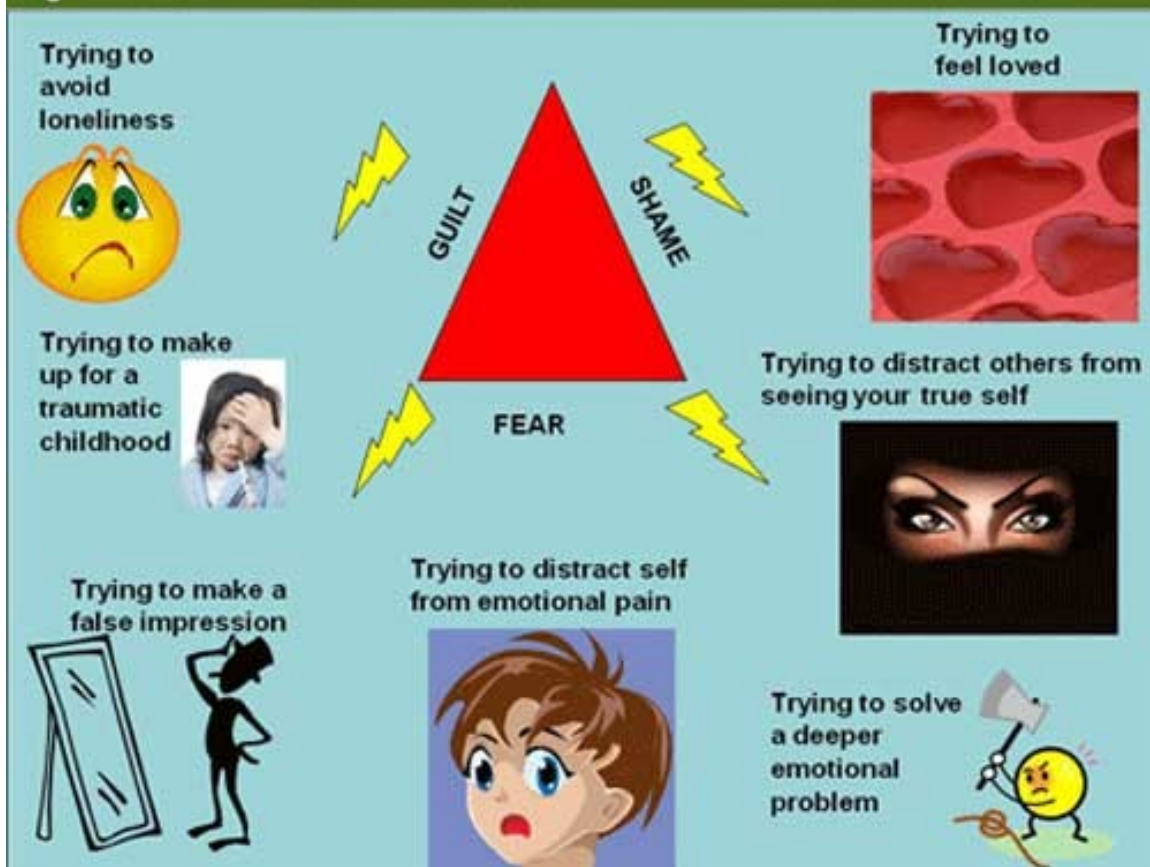
When we misspend or manage our finances poorly or in destructive ways we often have legitimate needs but are trying to meet them in the wrong way. Some people shop when they feel lonely. They might also spend money for cruises or fun, but soon find that being with other people is not always the cure for loneliness and that happiness is a choice only they can make for themselves. Others spend to make up to themselves (or their own children) for neglectful, abusive, and traumatic childhood circumstances. Money in this case is used both to medicate the problem (with a cure that doesn't work) and to reinforce their shameful feelings of worthlessness. So if they misspend and mismanage their money, they simultaneously create problems that prove what they've felt all along-they are not worthy of happiness or success.

There are those who put a tremendous amount of energy into looking good, appearing to be wealthy or privileged, or being more sophisticated than they truly are. One of my buddies who kept bankrupting finally realized his emotionally-based pattern of financial self-destruction. He said, "I have a millionaire's taste and a janitor's income. I'm tired of suffering to prove something to others when I'm not that something." The medicating phenomenon in money mismanagement is similar in many way to the medicating phenomenon in drug and alcohol abuse. People who hurt try to distract themselves from it by getting a short-term high from their money or spending. They go to Vegas, buy something new, take friends and family out for diner, and other activities that keep them from feeling whatever pain that hurts them.

I worked for hours one day trying to untangle a knot in my tow strap that I had used to tow a friends car down the mountain. My friend watched me patiently and when I finally asked him for his pocket knife because I was just ready to cut the knot out and shorten the strap, he asked, "can I show you a trick?" He pushed the knot in onto itself and with the material in this strap it created slack enough to untie the knot. Because I did not understand what he knew, I was willing to cut the knot. People do this with money at times, especially when they are irrational in their thinking and entangled in an emotional issue. Trying to instantly solve a deeper emotional problem is not sustainable in the long-run.

People with deep feelings of shame and worthlessness will often go out of their way to distract others from that part of their being. They dress, act, and live extremely unusual lives and hope that others will notice the more superficial aspects of their natures and not see the perceived flaws. "look at me, but don't notice me" is a common theme among those who take on a persona (punk, emo, goody-two-shoes, etc.) that is more of a distraction than anything else. I see this commonly among celebrities who get caught doing outrageous things. I sometimes see it in my students who are so very fragile, yet outwardly look extremely capable.

Trying to feel loved and needing to feel loved is by far one of the strongest human needs we have. I watched a set of grandparents in my neighborhood who recently file for bankruptcy. They mortgaged the equity in their home, spent their savings, and used all those funds trying to facilitate "great memories" with their children. Amusement parks all across the US had better revenues thanks in part to their efforts. When the party ended they found themselves broke and still alone. Their children and grandchildren had very busy lives and could not give Grandma and Grandpa the time.

Today's elderly have a reputation for being conservative in their spending and in saving. Yet, more and more elderly are mismanaging their money. USA Today online reported that "From 1991 to 2007, the rate of personal bankruptcy filings among those ages 65 or older jumped by 150%, according to AARP, which will release the new research from the Consumer Bankruptcy Project. The most startling rise occurred among those ages 75 to 84, whose rate soared 433%" ("Bankruptcy Rising Among Seniors" retrieved 5 April, 2010 from http://www.usatoday.com/money/perfi/retirement/2008-06-16-bankruptcy-seniors_N.htm ). Reasons for this trend include medical bills, wanting things they can't afford, maintaining a higher status, being taken advantage of by predatory lenders, and inflation that makes the spending power of their retirements less powerful. I once saw a bumper sticker that read, "I'm spending my grandchildren's inheritance." For some elderly this is literally the case. If shame guilt and/or fear are interfering with your money management there are self-help books and therapists who can help you work through it. Taking control of your money and how you manage it is best done now than later. Point number 10 back in Figure 5 repeats the theme of making your savings investments and other financial assets hard to reach. I have a millionaire friend who has a bank in Illinois. He never lived there, but he set up a savings account that can only be used over the course of three days. In other words, he can get money out of it through a complicated and safe withdrawal process that he put into place on purpose. This keeps him from spontaneous purchases and spending. Besides, there are very clever con men and women in the US who will take your money from you with smile on their faces and

without remorse.

The most common theme of their ploy is the quick cash, something-for-nothing, rare opportunity approach that makes you feel pressure to act now or you might miss the payoff.  By far the most notable US con man was Bernie Madoff (Born 1938 in Queens, NY).  He was one of the most notorious con men, having conned millions form the country's elite class who invested with him in order to get a huge and quick payoff on their money.  Confidence scams tend to exploit our greed, vanity, and ignorance as they promise quick profits, low risks, and certain outcomes. Confidence scams are as old as time and rarely ever produce the desired outcome for the investor.  They are fundamentally unsecured loans with huge risks and will cost millions of dollars this year to naïve investors.  There never has nor never will be a "something for nothing miracle investment."

The last two points in Figure 5 are very simple.  First, unless you are that genius who can invest and plan and predict stock markets, then hire a genius.  Let the experts with high ratings (bonded) and a track record of proven success and references do what you cannot do for yourself.  It cost money, but typically pays more money in the end.  That financial expert will help you assess your 5, 10, 15, and 20 year goals and how best to achieve them.  Finally, treat your money with dignity and respect and it will respond in kind.  Don't put your money in a humiliating role of debt, earning interests that works against you.  Put your money in a dignified interest-earning place where you can buy low and sell high and show profit in the end.  There are many self-help books on managing your money.  I'd recommend that you get some and read them.

One final thought about money and spending it in a marriage or couple relationship; there is often a debate between spouses and partners about what is a need and what is just a want.  Many define a need as something as important that demands their attention.  A want to most is superfluous and not required.  The trick of being united in your budget and spending choices is to working together, communicate about needs and wants, and to yield to one another's wants at times, even if to you it only feels like a need.  Unfortunately there is no universal standard of a true need versus a true want.  It depends on each individual family member.

You might use these questions in distinguishing needs from wants: "Do we value owning things over doing things?  Do we value doing things over owning things?  Given our long-term goals do we value investing in things more than owning or doing things? and/or finally, Do we value supporting people over all the rest?"  Taking the time to discuss and evaluate your points of view, then negotiate together on them as a healthy financial resources management strategy.

## Chapter 12 Divorce and Separation

in the United States, Marriage is the legal union of a man and a woman. Outside of the US, most societies define marriage between a man and a woman or between a man and women (see polygamy among Mormon splinter groups, Muslim cultures, and tribal cultures throughout the world).

Same-sex Marriage is the legal union of two people of the same sex. Since 2001 when the Netherlands granted same-sex marriage rights to its citizens, about 6 other Western

nations have granted same-sex marriage rights.  Many countries refuse to give same-sex marriage rights to its citizens.  Notice that in modern societies, the state government claims the authority to grant marriage rights.  This has not always been true for Western societies.  A few centuries ago, tribal or clan leaders, a father, or elderly members of small groups could grant marriages.

To legally marry in the United States today, one simply goes to the local county or state office and applies for a state marriage license.  The state also claims authority in granting divorce rights to couples.  Divorce is the legal dissolution of a previously granted marriage. To understand marriage and divorce trends in the US you should think in 3's. Every year states grant marriages and divorces in a ratio that adds up to 3.  In other words, about 2 marriages are granted by the state for every 1 divorce, even though in 2008 there were over 2.1 million marriages and about 1 million divorces  (retrieved 17 September, 2009 from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57_19.htm Table A2. Provisional Vital Statistics for the US, Dec 2008; National vital Statistics Report Vol 57, Number 19). Thus, the ratio of 3 breaks down to 2:1 marriages: divorces.

Most marriages still endure and the odds are that divorce won't happen to most marriages. It is a myth that 1 in 2 marriages eventually ends in divorce.  There are a few myths about US divorce trends that will be dispelled in this chapter.  You might have heard the myth of the "Seven-year itch" where divorce happens prior to or shortly after the 7th year.

Current government estimates indicate that about 75 percent of couples make their ten-year anniversary in their first marriage(see US Census Bureau, 2004 Detailed Tables-Number, Timing and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 2004; Table 2 Percent Reaching Stated Anniversary, By Marriage Cohort and Sex, and Sex for first and Second Marriages, Retrieved 9 Sept 2009 from www.census.gov).  The myths are false, but divorce does happen more in our day than it did 50 years ago and more people today are currently divorced than were currently divorced 50 years ago.

## Effect of Baby Boomers on the Divorce Rate

We'll discuss these trends in divorce rates below, but first we must define cohort.  A Cohort is a group of people who have some demographic characteristic, typically associated with their birth year or group of birth years. The Baby Boom is a cohort of those born between 1946 and 1964 and represented a never before nor never after repeated high period of birth rates that yielded about 70 million living Baby Boomers today (i.e., 1946-1964).

There are few different rates for measuring divorce.  The most common divorce rate used by the US Census Bureau is the number of divorces/ 1,000 population.  Another divorce rate is the number of divorces/1,000 married women.

Look at Figure 1 below to see the United States marriage and divorce rates/1,000 population from 1900 to 2006.  Notice that divorce rates have always been much lower than marriage rates in the US.  Also notice that marriage and divorce rates moved in very similar directions over the last century.  A slight rise is visible for both after WWI and WWII ended (1919 and 1946).  A slight decline is visible during the Depression (1930s) and turbulent 1960s.  Most importantly notice that both marriage and divorce rates have been declining in the 1990s and 2000s.  Younger people today wait to marry until their

late twenties (Delayed Marriage) while other family forms such as single parenting, cohabiting, and three-generational families have increased in the US.

Figure 1 also shows the trends in ratio of divorces to marriages for the US. In 1900 there was 1 divorce per 13 marriages that year or 1:13, in 1930 1:6, in 1950 1:4, in 1970 1:3, 1980 1:2, 1990 1:2, and 2006 1:2. Today, that means that every year there are to state-sanctioned legal marriages with only 1 state-sanctioned legal dissolution of a marriage. One plus two equals three. For the last 12 months ending in December 2008 there was a marriage rate of 7.1 marriages for every 1,000 population and a divorce rate of 3.5 divorces for every 1,000 population. As mentioned above, that translates to over 2.1 million marriages and about 1 million divorces in 2008.



Figure 1. United States Marriage and Divorce Rates per 1,000 Population 1900-2006
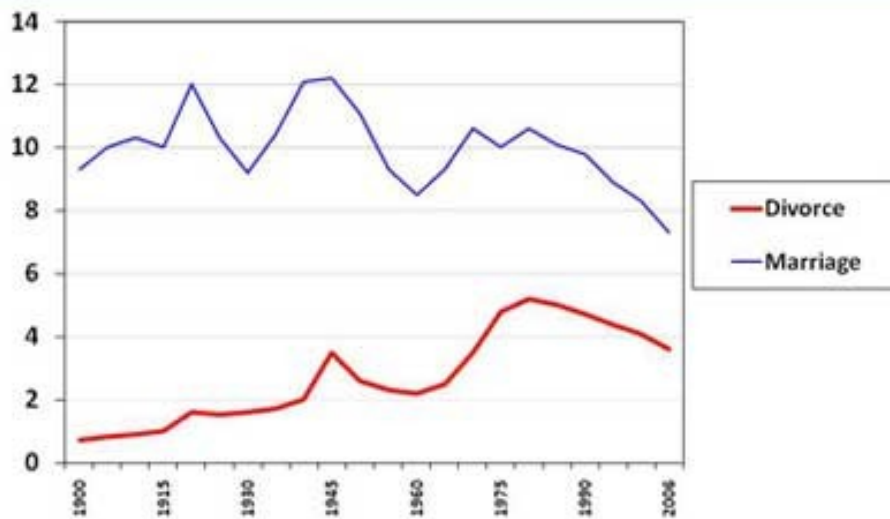
Retrieved from www.census.gov. 9 September 2009. Various Tables and Editions of Statistical Abstracts

Every year only 1 in 3 legal status changes is a marriage ending in a divorce. And 2 legal status changes end in marriage. It is a common stated myth that 1 in 2 marriages ends in divorce. That myth is not true according to the ratios we just considered nor the divorces per 1,000 population over the last 100 years in the US. Only 10 percent of the population is currently divorced and of all the adults many have never experienced divorce. The oldest US age category considered by the US Census Bureau had the highest stats with 40 percent of men and women ages 50 and over who'd ever had a divorce (Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces: 2001, Feb. 2005 P70-97 retrieved 11 September, 2009 from http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/p70-97.pdf).

The National center for Health Statistics reported May 24 2001 that 43 percent of current marriages break up within the first 15 years of marriage (see http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/01news/firstmarr.htm). That was in 2001 and not today. It was the highest official scientifically-based divorce risks estimate given which was a full 7 percentage points shy of the 50/50 figure carelessly thrown around in the media and classrooms.

Figure 2 shows a more detail description of US divorce rates since 1940 and some of the

factors that contributed to them.  As you already noticed in Figure 1, divorce rates were relatively low prior to 1940.  But, in the 1940s WWII was ongoing and divorce rates moved upward with a one-year spike in 1946.  As a reminder, keep in mind that 1946 was the United States' most unusual year for family-related rates.  Divorce rates, marriage rates, birth rates and remarriage rates surged during this year while couples married at their lowest median age in US history.  Remember that the Baby Boom began in 1946.



Figure 2. United States Divorce Rates per 1,000 Population 1900-2006
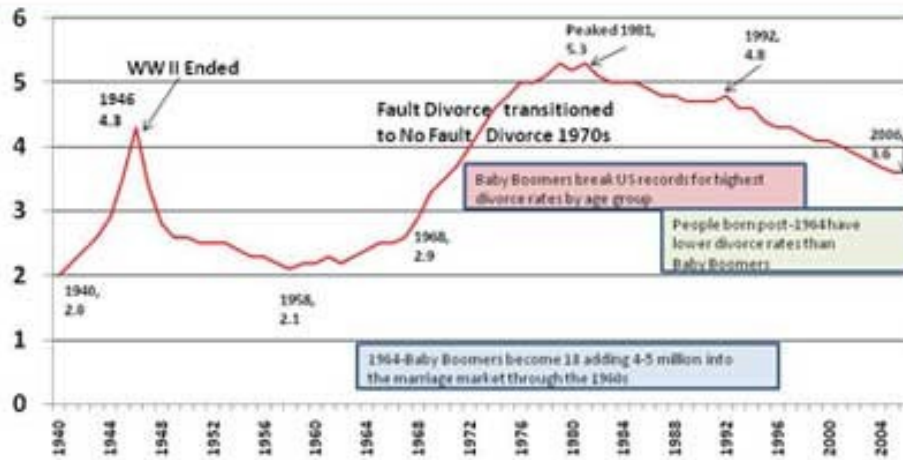
Retrieved from www.census.gov. 9 September 2009. Various Tables and Editions of Statistical Abstracts

After 1946 divorce rates fell to steady low levels and remained there until the 1960 when they slowly began to rise.  The Baby Boomers directly and indirectly influenced the rise of divorce rates.  In 1964 the first among the Baby Boomers became 18 and entered the US's 18-24 prime marriage market years.  For the next 2 decades Baby Boomers added about 4 million men and women to the marriage market each year.  Thus, Baby Boomers raised the numbers of married people and thereby the numbers at risk of divorcing.

Directly, Baby Boomers contributed to the divorce rate.  Baby Boomers and those immediately preceding them (born 1936-1945) have very high rates of divorce.  Table 1 shows that the experience of ever having divorced is not directly related to age.  In other words the oldest members of society have NOT divorced the most.  In fact it is the Baby Boomers and Pre-Baby Boomers who divorced the most followed by the oldest and then the younger cohorts.  The up arrow symbol in Table 1 signifies the highest rate ever divorce which is found among women and men of the cohort 50-59 years (these are Baby Boomers born 1946-1955).  The highest currently divorced is also found among the women and men of the 50-59 cohort.  The Baby Boomers 1946-1955 still hold the highest divorce rates by any cohort in US history.  Their unprecedented high divorce rates raised the overall divorce rates for the entire nation and contributed in part to the myth of half of all marriages ending in divorce.

| Ages | 15-19 | 20-24 | 25-29 | 30-34 | 35-39 | 40-49 Boomers | 50-59 Boomers | 60-69 Pre-Boomers | 70+ | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Males Ever Div. | 0.1% | 0.8% | 5.1% | 13.1% | 20.7% | 30.3% | 37.5%↑ | 34.1% | 20.6% | 20.7% |
| Males Currently Div. | 0.1% | 0.7% | 3.2% | 6.6% | 10.9% | 14.7% | 16.2%↑ | 13.0% | 6.2% | 9.3% |
| Females Ever Div. | 0.2% | 2.5% | 7.0% | 17.1% | 25.6% | 33.9% | 40.7%↑ | 32.3% | 17.8% | 22.9% |
| Females Currently Div. | 0.1% | 1.7% | 4.1% | 9.1% | 11.7% | 16.4% | 19.4%↑ | 15.0% | 7.2% | 10.9% |

Table 1. Percent Ever Divorced *and Percent Currently Divorced in 2004 by Age Groups US: Boomers Ages 40-59 in 2004 (Highest Values Represented by ↑)

*Data retrieved 16 September, 2009 from www.Census.gov Number Timing and Duration of Marriages and Divorce 2004 released in 2007: Table 3. Marital History for People 15 Years and Over by Age and Sex: 2004

When scientists and government researchers predict the risks you might have of divorce they use the experiences of currently married people who have and have not divorced- therein lies part of the complication of deriving an "odds or risks of divorce" that we can have confidence in enough to offer advice to the soon-to-be-married. The US has had its worst divorcing cohort ever and some of them will likely divorce again before their death. The trend among younger marrieds is to remain married longer and divorce less… but, what if they collectively have an increase in their marital dissolution experiences? What if all of the sudden, millions and millions of currently married couples flock to the courthouse to file for divorce?

## Odds of Divorce

First, that scenario isn't likely to happen because today's married couples tend to remain married. Second, and this is more important, the national risk of divorce is different from your personal risk of divorce in one crucial factor-you have very little influence in the national rates and a great deal of influence in your on marriage quality and outcome. You and your spouse have much control over your marital experience, how you enhance it, how you protect it from medical, economic, and other stressors that can undermine it, and finally how you maintain it.

Family scientists refer to Marital Entropy as the principle based on the belief that if a marriage does not receive preventative maintenance and upgrades it will move towards decay and break down. Hearing an evening news report on national divorce trends has much less impact on your marriage than a preventative weekend away together to recharge your romance and commitment which is a marital maintenance strategy designed to combat marital entropy. A proactive and assertive approach to your marital quality is far more influential than most other factors leading to divorce.

It is true that the longer a couple is married the lower their odds of divorce. Figure 3 shows a visual depiction of how the odds of divorce decline over time. The first 3 years of marriage require many adjustments for newlyweds. Of especial mention is the process of transitioning into a cohesive couple relationship with negotiated financial, sexual,

social, emotional, intellectual, physical, and spiritual rules of engagement. Most couples have many of these negotiations in place by years 7-10. Anyone can divorce at any time in a marriage. Since longevity is often associated with the arrival of children, accumulation of wealth, establishment of acceptable social status (being married is still highly regarded as a status), and the buffering of many of life's daily stressors; the average couple finds it difficult and too costly to divorce, even though some features of the marriage are less than desirable (See Levinger's Model below).



Figure 3. Estimated Odds of Marriage Lasting Based on Number of Years Married
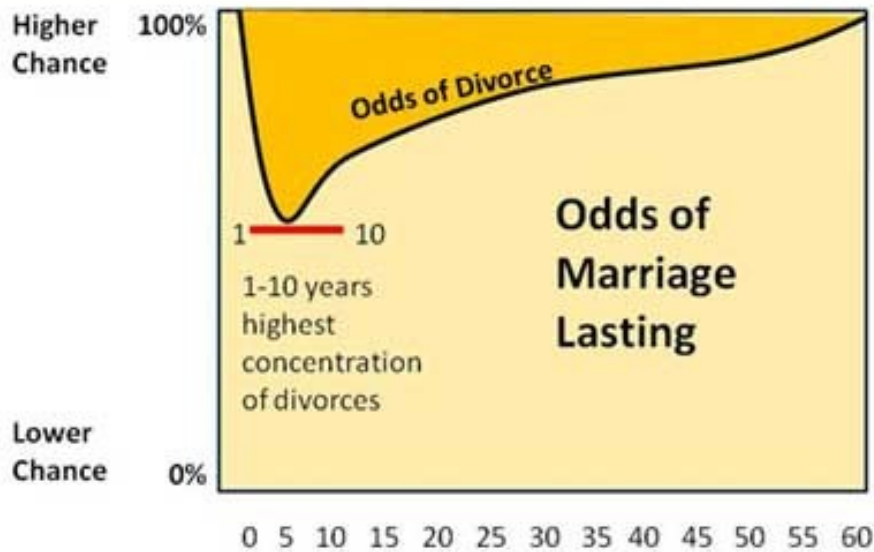
Estimated odds from data and tables. Retrieved from www.census.gov. 15 September 2009. Various Tables and Editions of Statistical Abstracts

Using Social Exchange theory as a basis for understanding why couples stay married or divorce, you begin to see that spouses consider their cost-to-benefits, rewards-punishments, and/or pros-cons in their decisions. Remember that, Social Exchange Theory claims that society is composed of ever present interactions among individuals who attempt to maximize rewards while minimizing costs. Assumptions in this theory are similar to Conflict theory assumptions yet have their interactistic underpinnings. Basically, human beings are rational creatures, capable of making sound choices when the pros and cons of the choice are understood. This theory uses a formula to measure the choice making processes: (REWARDS-COSTS)=OUTCOMES or (What I get out of it-What I lose by doing it)=My decision. In 1979 Levinger and Moles published a chapter in a scholarly anthology wherein they discussed the rational choices made by spouses who were considering divorcing or remaining married. It's been referred to as "Levinger's Model." Levinger's Model looks like this in the formula: Attractions-Barriers)+/- Alternative Attractions= My decision to stay married or divorce. Look at Table 2 below to see an example of how Levinger's Model clarifies the choices people might make and their perceived rewards and costs.

**Table 2. Levinger's Model of Rational Choice in Divorce**

| (Attractions – Magnets=rewards that stem from being married | Barriers) +/- Walls=punishments or losses you'd face if you divorced. You'd have to climb over these walls if you divorced. | Alternative Attractions Lures Away From Your Marriage=Something attractive that you could obtain if you were unmarried. |
|---|---|---|
| Positive social status | Loss of positive status and new negative status-stigma of being "divorced" | Liberated status with freedom to explore relationships with others |
| Wealth Accumulation | Division of wealth (at least by half) | Opportunity to be disentangled with family costs |
| Co-parenting | Co-parenting with ex-spouse, never truly free from this role | Share custody alleviating some degree of burden of parenting |
| Sex | Much less availability and predictability of sexual partner | Possibility of new sexual partner |
| Health Support and Stress Buffer | Loss of health support and additional stress from divorce process | Different types of stressors and relief from pre-divorce stresses |

| **Stay Married Formula** ↑Attractions | ↑Barriers | ↓Lures |
|---|---|---|
| **Divorce Formula** ↓Attractions | ↓Barriers | ↑Lures |

Levinger, G. and Moles, O.C. "Divorce and Separation: Context, Causes, and Consequences" 1979, Basic Books

In Table 2 you see that Levinger's Attractions are simply the magnets or rewards that stem from being married. These are the payoffs or rewards that come from being married and include positive social status, wealth accumulation, co-parenting, sexual intercourse, and the health support and stress buffer that marriage typically brings to each spouse. Levinger's Barriers are simply the costs or punishments that might be incurred if a married person chose to divorce. These might include losing all the attractions and magnets, changing to a negative status, suffering a division of wealth, co-parenting at a distance and without same-household convenience, experiencing a change/decline in sexual frequency and predictability, and losing the health and stress buffer that married couples enjoy (even unhappily married couples experience some measure of this buffer).

Levinger's Alternative Attractions are basically lures or something appealing that a now-married spouse might find rewarding if they go ahead and divorce. These might include liberation and the freedom that comes from being single (albeit divorced) and newly available on the market, a financial disentanglement from ex-spouse and at times child care (especially common view held among men who often share custody but pay less in the end for their children), alleviation of parenting when children are with other parent, freedom from unwanted sexual demands and/or possibility of new sexual partner or partners, abandonment of overbearing stressors from marriage.

I personally have been studying the family for more than 20 years and have seen trends in divorce that reflect the collective society according to Levinger's model.  I've also seen the cases of my personal friends where in one case the mother of four left the marriage and let her Ex have full custody, full parental responsibility, and full homemaking under stressful psychological and emotional duress for the children.  In her case, the lure of online Dungeons and Dragons gamer with evening real-world roles and escapades offered her an appealing alternative to her perceived mundane mothering routines.

I've also seen the case of a father of three who left the marriage and forfeited any responsibility, refusing to pay court ordered child support and refusing to spend time with his children (The state garnished his wages).  In his case he had a series of girlfriends, a new truck, and a no-rent bedroom in his mother's home.  This while his ex-wife was forced onto welfare and has not left poverty these last 14 years since the divorce.  The lure for this man was a second childhood of pleasures and self-interests.  Generally speaking there are some that find high school reunions, online match making, and the singles social scene to be an appealing lure.  Others are more interested in alleviating undesirable and at times even hostile marital living conditions.

Look at the last two rows in Table 2.  They show how you can use a formula to understand the propensity a couple has to divorcing or staying married.  In the Stay Married formula, the Attractions and Barriers are high while the lures or low.  Translated into Social Exchange thinking-there are many reward in the marriage with many barriers that would prove more punishing if a spouse wanted to divorce.  At the same time there are few lures that might draw a spouse away from their marriage.

The divorce formula is also revealing.  Attractions are low, barriers are low, and lures are high.  In other words-there are few rewards from being married, low barriers or low perceived punishments from divorcing, with high lures to draw a spouse away from the marriage.  One would expect satisfied couples to have the stay married formula while dissatisfied couples would have the divorce formula.  By the way, the formula is only descriptive (it tells the state of the union) and not predictive (it cannot tell you what the couple might do).  Some with the divorce formula in place remain married for years.  A few with the stay married formula become dissatisfied and begin focusing on lures.

One Social Exchange principle that clarifies the rational processes experienced by couples is called the concept of equity.  Equity is a sense that the interactions are fair to us and fair to others involved by the consequences of our choices. For example, why is it that women who work 40 hours a week and have a husband who works 40 hours per week do not perform the same number of weekly hours of housework and childcare?  Scientists have surveyed many couples to find the answer.  Most often, it boils down to a sense of fairness or equity.  Because she defines it as her role to do housework and childcare, while he doesn't, because they tend to fight when she does try to get him to perform housework, and because she may think he's incompetent, they live with an inequitable arrangement as though it were equitable (don't get me started on the evidence that supports men sharing the actual roles of housekeepers and childcare providers-see Joseph Pleck, "Working Wives/ Working Husbands" Sage Pub, CA).

Figure 4 shows a list of more and less commonly used divorce rates.  We have already discussed the Crude Divorce rate, Refined Divorce Rate, Proportion Divorced, and

Percent Ever Divorced.  The adult Divorce rate is much less commonly used because in the United States, most who marry are already 18 and older.  The ratio approach to measuring divorce and marriage can be expressed as actual numbers (in 2008 there were over 2.1 million marriages and about 1 million divorces in the US) or as  a ratio of 1 divorce/2 marriages in the US in 2006.

**Figure 4. Annual Divorce Rates Used By Statisticians for Given Population (e.g., the United States)**

*More Commonly Used*

1. Crude Divorce Rate: # of divorces per 1,000 population
2. Refined Divorce Rate: # of divorces per 1,000 married women
3. Proportion Divorced: % of population currently divorced
4. Percent Ever Divorced: answer to a survey question about marital history

*Less Commonly Used*

1. Adult Divorce Rate: # of divorcees per 1,000 adults (18 years and older)
2. Divorce Ration: # of divorces per # of marriages in a given year

## What Predicts Divorce in the US?

Years and years of research on divorce yielded a few common themes of what puts a couple at more or less risk of divorce.  Before we discuss those factors let me point out an uncomfortable truth-all of us are at risk of dying as long as we are alive, likewise, all of us are at risk of divorcing as long as we are married.  But, the presence of divorce risks does not imply the outcome of divorce.  There is a geography factor of US divorce. Divorce rates tend to be lower in the North East and Higher in the West.  Nevada typically has the highest of all state divorce rates, but is often excluded from comparison because of the "Vegas marriage" or "Vegas Divorce" effect.  Figure 5 shows the Higher divorce rate in Arkansas, US average, and Lower divorce rate in Pennsylvania.

**Figure 5. United States Divorce Rates per 1,000 Population 1990-2006**
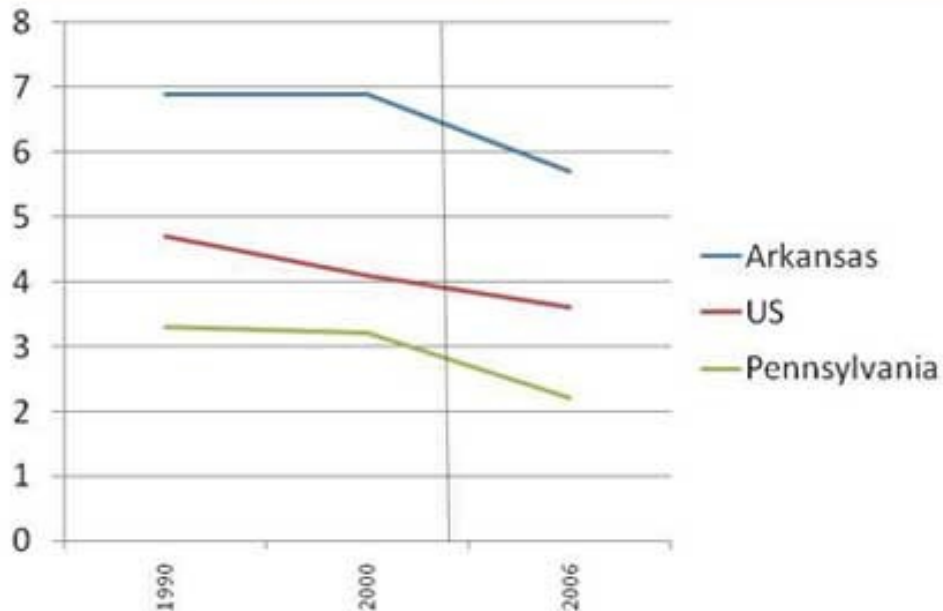
Simply enduring the difficult times of marriage is associated with remaining married. Look at Figure 5 below. Most of the factors that contribute to divorce lie to a great extent within the realm of influence and choice had by the individual. For example, waiting until at least your 20th birthday to marry lowers divorce risks tremendously. In fact the best ages to marry are 25-29 (interestingly, the US median age at marriage for men and women falls within this age group). Being 15, 16, 17, 18, or 19 years old at your first marriage is extremely risky. Why?

**Figure 6. Factors Associated With Divorce and/or Long-term High Quality Marriage**

High

Marital Quality

**Marital Duration More Likely If:**
- Spouses older than 25 when married
- Couple prioritizes marital maintenance/enhancement
- Couples mutually faithful
- Couples create a strong marital relationship supported by ,but not overrun by extended family and friends
- Couples keep their marriage relationship a top priority even though parenting relationship is so demanding
- Couples grow together during life course changes that tend to drive spouses apart

**Divorce More Likely If:**
- Either spouse was a teenager when married
- Wife was pregnant before marriage
- Either Spouse ever cohabited before marriage

Low

Brief        *Marital Duration*        Enduring

Basically the explanation falls under these types of issues, they are disadvantaged economically, socially, and emotionally, their circumstances have accompanying hardships that would not be present had they waited to age 25 (for example, had they graduated college first and prepared themselves for the labor force and for the emotional complexity of marriage), many scientific studies indicate that there is a refining process of social and intellectual capacities that is not reached until around age 26, and young marriers exchange their prime years of self-discovery (adventure) for marriage. Another major individual choice-related factor is marrying because of an unplanned pregnancy. Most babies born in the US are born to a married couple. But, today about 40 percent are born to single mothers of all ages. Even though many of these single mothers marry the baby's father, numerous studies have indicated that they have a higher likelihood of their marriage ending in divorce.

Many individuals struggle to completely surrender their single status. They mentally remain on the marriage market in case "someone better than their current spouse comes along." Norval Glenn in 1991 argued that many individuals see marriage as a temporary state while they keep an eye open for someone better, "More honest vows would often be "as long as we both shall love" or "as long as no one better comes along (page 268)." Glenn gets at the core of the cultural values associated with risks of divorcing. (See "The Recent Trend in Marital Success in the United States" by Norval D. Glenn Journal of Marriage and the Family, Vol. 53, No. 2 (May, 1991), pp. 261-270)

Robert and Jeanette Lauer are a husband-wife team who have not only studied the family but have written a college textbook called Marriage and Family: The Quest for Intimacy (2009, Cengage). They studied commitment and endurance of married couples. They identified 29 factors among couples who had been together for 15 years or more. They found that both husbands and wives reported as their number 1 and 2 factors that "My spouse is my best friend and I like my spouse as a person" (see 'Til Death Do Us Part:

How Couples Stay Together 1986 by Robert Lauer and also Google Lauer and Lauer and Kerr various years).  The Lauers also studied the levels of commitment couples had to their marriage.  The couples reported that they were in fact committed to and supportive of not only their own marriage but marriage as an institution.  Irreconcilable differences are common to marriage and the basic strategy to deal with them is to negotiate as much as is possible, accept the irresolvable differences, and finally live happily with them.

Keeping a positive outlook on your marriage is essential.  As was mentioned above, as long as a couple is married they are technically at risk of divorce.  But, not all divorce risks are created equally.  Newly married couples 1-10 years have a great deal of adjustment to work through, especially during the first 36 months.  They have new boundaries and relationships to establish.  They have to get to know one another and negotiate agreements about the who, what, why, and how of their day-to-day lives together.  The longer they stay together the lower their risks of divorce.

Family Scientists have borrowed from the physics literature a concept called entropy which is roughly defined as the principle that matter tends to decay and reduction, toward its simplest parts.  For example, a new car if parked in a field and ignored would eventually decay and rot.  A planted garden if left unmaintained would be overrun with weeds, pests, and yield low if any crop.  Couples who take ownership of their marriage and who realize that marriage is not bliss and that it often requires much work, experience more stability and strength when they nurture their marriage.  They treat their marriage like a nice car and become committed to preventing breakdowns rather than waiting to repair them.  These couples read and study experts like Gottman, Cherlin, Popenoe, and others who have focused their research on how to care for the marriage, acknowledging the propensity relationships have to decay if unattended.

A positive outlook for your marriage as a rewarding and enjoyable relationship is a realistic outlook.  Some couples worry about being labeled naïve if they express the joys and rewards their marriage brings to their lives.  Be hopeful and positive on the quality and duration of your marriage, because the odds are still in your favor.  You've probably seen commercials where online matchmaking Websites strut their success in matching people to one another.  There have been a few criticisms of online marital enhancement services, but millions have used them.  Along, with DVD's, talk CDs, self-help books, and seminars there are many outlets for marital enhancement available to couples who seek them.  Very few know that there is now a Website that offers support to marrieds who want to be proactive and preventative in their relationship http://marriage.eharmony.com/.

“Doomed, soaring divorce rates, spousal violence, husbands killing wives, decline of marriage,” and other gloomy headlines are very common on electronic, TV, and print news stories.  The media functions to disseminate information and its primary goal is to make money by selling advertising.  The media never has claimed to be random or scientific in their stories.  They don't really try to represent the entire society with every story.  In fact, media is more accurately described as biased by the extremes, based on the nature of stories that are presented to us the viewers.

Many media critics have made the argument for years that the news and other media use fear as a theme for most stories, so that we will consume them.  As you observed above,

most in the US choose marriage and most who are divorced will eventually marry again. True, marriage is not bliss, but it is a preferred lifestyle by most US adults. From the Social Exchange perspective, assuming that people maximize their rewards while minimizing their losses, marriage is widely defined as desirable and rewarding. There are strategies individuals can use to minimize the risks of divorce (personal level actions). Table 3 below lists 10 of these actions.

**Table 3. Ten Actions Individuals Can Take to Minimize the Odds of Divorce**

1. Wait until at least your 20s to marry. Avoid marrying as a teenager.
2. Don't marry out of duty to a child. Avoid marrying just because she got pregnant. Pregnancy is not a mate-selection process we discussed in the pairing off chapter.
3. Become proactive by maintaining your marriage with preventative efforts designed to avoid breakdowns. Find books, seminars, and a therapist to help you both work out the tough issues.
4. Never cohabit if you think you might marry.
5. Once married, leave the marriage market-avoid keeping an eye open for a better spouse.
6. Remain committed to your marriage-Most couples have irreconcilable differences and most learn to live comfortably together in spite of them.
7. Keep a positive outlook> Avoid losing hope in your first 36 months-those who get past the 3-year mark often see improvements in quality of marital relationship and the first 36 months have the most intense adjustments in them.
8. Take the media with a grain of salt. Avoid accepting evidences that your marriage is doomed-this means being careful not to let accurate or inaccurate statistics convince you that all is lost, especially before you even marry.
9. Do your homework when selecting a mate. Take your time and realize that marrying in your late 20s is common now and carefully identify someone who is homogamous to you, especially about wanting to be married.
10. Focus on the positive benefits found to be associated with being married in society while learning to overlook some of the downsides.

Finally, decades of studies have indicated that have a history of cohabitation, ever having cohabited, contributes to higher likelihood of divorce. Cohabitation has been studied extensively for the last 2 decades, especially in contrast between cohabiting and married couple. Clear findings consistently show that cohabiting and marriage are two different creatures (see studies by Lawrence Ganong and Marilyn Coleman). Those who cohabit tend to establish patterns of relationships that later inhibit marital duration. In other words people who cohabit then later marry are much more likely to divorce than those who never cohabited.

As mentioned before, cohabitation is more common in the US today than ever before. Cohabiters are considered to be unique from those who marry in a variety of ways, yet the similarities between married and cohabiting spouses suggests that their lifestyles overlap. In both life styles, relationships are formed and often ended. Cohabiters have more than twice the risks of their relationship ending than do marrieds (See 2008, Andrew J. Cherlin, "Multiple Partnerships and Children's Wellbeing." Austrian Institute of Family Studies, No 89 Page 33-36).

Cherlin also discussed the uniqueness of cohabiting versus married couples. In sum, cohabiters often feel financially ill-equipped to marry, have lower expectations of relationship satisfaction than do marrieds, and often expect a shorter relational duration than marrieds. Cherlin's main thesis of this article is the stability for children when adult intimate relationships end.

Cherlin's concern is well grounded in the statistics of divorce. Figure 7 shows that millions of US children have experienced their parents divorces since 1960 with nearly 1 million children of divorce each year.



Figure 7. United States Estimates of Numbers of Children Involved in Parents' Divorce and Number of Divorces 1960-2006
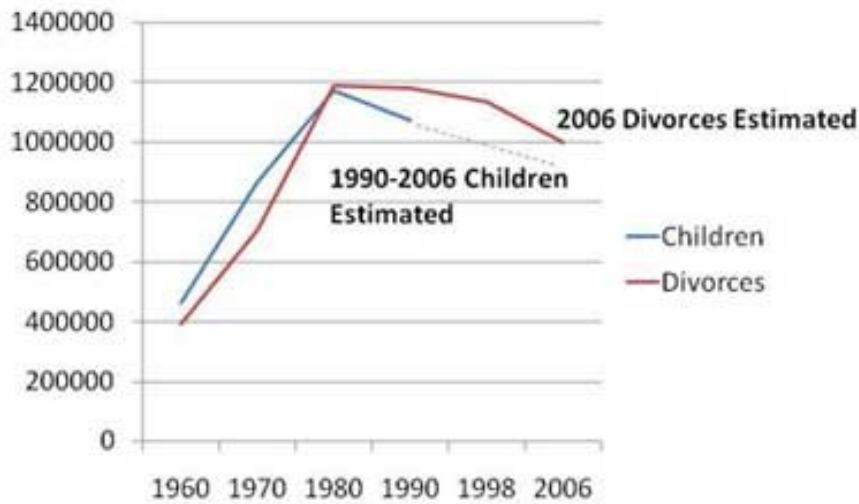
## Effect on Children

Let's think for a minute about what is best for children in terms of their parents remaining married or divorcing. Every home should provide a safe, loving and nurturing environment where basic needs are met and where children are nurtured into the greatness of their potential. Sounds ideal, huh? But, that's not the real-world experience of most children. Familial stresses and hardships are the norm. Being a child of divorced parents does not imply that you are in some way worse off than children whose parents remain married, yet facilitated a harsh and destructive home environment for their children.

Divorce is a blessing/positive life change for many children and their parents. In fact some children of divorce are very happily married in their own adult relationships because of their sensitive searching for a safe and compatible partner and because they don't want their children to suffer as they themselves did. At the same time, having a parent who divorced probably increases the odds of divorce for most children. Judith Wallerstein has followed a clinical sample of children of divorce for nearly 4 decades. Her conclusions match those of other researchers-children whose parents divorce are impacted throughout their lives by it in a variety of ways. The same could be said of children whose parents remained married and raised them in a caustic home environment.

Whenever a couple divorces (or separates for cohabiters) children experience changes in the stability of their lives at many levels. Many of these children have been through divorce more than once. When their parent's divorce children assume blame for it and believe that they should try to get their parents back together (Like Walt Disney's Parent Trap Movie). In reality the children typically don't influence their parents choices to

divorce directly and children are certainly part of the equation, but rarely the sole cause of divorce. On top of that divorce brings change which is stressful by its very nature. Children worry about being abandoned. They have had their core attachment to their parents violated. They become disillusioned with authority as they try to balance "they way things ought to be with the way things actually are." They become aware of ex-spouse tensions and realize that they themselves are the subject of some of these tensions.

It is better for children to be forewarned of the coming divorce. As they discuss their concerns with you listen and reassure. Make it clear to children that they are not the cause of divorce, that both parents still love them and will always be their parent. Tell and show them that they will be taken care of as best a parent can. Show them that even though divorce is difficult you can work together to get through it. Show them that you and the absent parent will learn to get along and they will too. It's tempting, but ensure that they don't have to serve as messenger or go between or in any other way assume the burdens associated with the dissolved marriage. Table 4 presents some core guidelines for divorcing parents.

**Table 4. Core Guidelines for Divorcing Parents**

1. Respect each other, get along, and come to terms with the nuances of co-parenting (both parents and their new partners will be at the kindergarten play).
2. Set up and maintain predictable routines, especially following mandates in the divorce settlement decree.
3. Take mediation and adhere to mediation guidelines.
4. Get professional help for children where needed.
5. Ensure the constant safety and well being of your children.
6. Follow a mutually agreed upon divorce decree.
7. Help children remember the good times that happened before the divorce.
8. Expect children to act out in unexpected ways and work with ex-spouse on being consistent and agreeing on how to discipline consistently.Encourage children to have a strong relationship with both parents.
9. Get your own professional help and guard against your children becoming caregivers to you.

## Chapter 13 Remarriage and Step-Families

In December, 2008 there were just over 2 million marriages and 1 million divorces in the US (retrieved 29 April, 2010 from Births, Marriages, Divorces, and Deaths: Provisional Data for 2008 http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/nvsr/nvsr57/nvsr57_19.pdf). There are many society-wide trends that undergird these marriage and divorce statistic. First, there is an 86 percent probability for women and 81 percent for men that they will marry by age 40 (retrieved 29 April, 2010 "Marriage and Cohabitation in the United States:… Cycle 6 of the National Survey of Family Growth," published in 2002 reported key findings about marriage trends in the US from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db19.htm#marital ); Second, about 48.8 percent of women and 50 percent of men had cohabited to some degree in the past (retrieved 29 April, 2010 from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_23/sr23_028.pdf); Third, only about 27 percent of women and 33 percent of men married have never cohabited or been married before-this means they married for the first time with no cohabitation history (retrieved 29 April, 2010 from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/series/sr_23/sr23_028.pdf); Fourth, nearly 40 percent (38.5%) of all US births are to unwed mothers (retrieved 29 April, 2010 from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/unmarry.htm); Fifth, there is a pattern

of marrying, divorcing, and remarrying and even divorcing a second time (retrieved 29 April, 2010 from First Marriage Dissolution, Divorce, and Remarriage: United States Matthew D. Bramlett, Ph.D., and William D. Mosher, Ph.D., Division of Vital Statistics No. 323, May 31, 2001 http://www.cdc.go/nchs/data/ad/ad323.pdf); and Sixth, a 2001 study found that 70 percent of currently married couples had the husband and wife both being in their first marriage-this means 30 percent were in a second, third, or greater marriage (retrieved 29 April, 2010 from Survey of Income and Program participation Wave 2 as reported at  http://www.census.gov/prod/2005pubs/p70-97.pdf).

Thus, most people in the US will marry, some for the first time, some who've been married or cohabiting, and some who've parented a baby out of wedlock.  Many of those married persons will divorce at a future date.  Many of those divorced persons will remarry (half to three-fourths).  Some of those remarried persons will divorce (a second divorce).  Some of those second divorced persons will remarry, etc.  The US is drawn to marriage, yet does not always get it right the first time. I've taught my students for decades this simple statistically-based principle, "your current marriage has the best odds of NOT ending in divorce and becoming a source of joy and strength for you."  Those odds of success are highest in the first marriage, second highest in the second marriage, and so on.

## Complexities of Stepfamilies

Remarriage is the legal union of a man and woman that follows the dissolution of a previous marriage for one or both spouses.  Stepfamilies are formed when children from another marriage or relationship are brought into a family through a new marriage.  Stepfamilies can form in any of the following ways, a wife or husband was married before, a wife or husband cohabited before, a wife or husband was a single parent before and a child from that previous relationship becomes a step-son or step-daughter.  Step-children can be of any age.  When a former emotionally or legally significant relationship existed for a current spouse it creates a bi-nuclear family, or a family with two core adult relationships formed around the original adults who are no longer together (see Figure 1).

Figure 1 shows the relationship between Husband 1 (H1) and Wife 1 (W1) who were married for 3 years then divorced.  They had a daughter together, Marie.  Husband 1 then met Wife 2 (W2) who was a widow.  They married.  This made Wife 2 a step-mother to Marie then Husband 1 and Wife 2 had twins-a son (Sam) and daughter (Lisa) together.  Husband 1 and Wife 2 now have a bi-nuclear family with a nucleus from the second marriage and one from Husband 1 and Wife 1's first marriage. They form a stepfamily subsystem that includes Wife's 1 & 2 and Husband's 1 & 2 (even though Husband 2 is deceased, his position as Wife 2's first husband is part of the complexity of the stepfamily 1 subsystem.

Wife 1 and her daughter Marie had a single parent subsystem for nearly a decade.  The complexity of this system included Marie visiting her dad and step-mom and receiving child support payments from Husband 1.  For the most part this relationship was functional and not very negative.  When Marie turned 10, Wife 1 remarried to a divorced man, Husband 3.  Husband 3's former wife (W3) left him and wanted neither custody nor alimony.  Wife 1 and Husband 3 formed stepfamily subsystem 2 which included Marie and Husband 1 to the extent that visitation and child support were concerned.  Husband 3

and Wife 1 struggled financially for the first 3 years of their marriage, because of the loss of assets that came from Husband 1 and Wife 3's divorce.

Within one year of their marriage, Wife 1 and Husband 3 developed deeply rooted financial issues with the ex-husband. Husband 3 was angry at Husband 1 and it placed emotional strain on Wife 1 and Husband 3's relationship. Husband 1 refused to pay child support because he was certain that the money he gave for Marie was being spent on Mike, Jeff, and Bill. Husband 1 demanded receipts from Wife 1 and Husband 3. Of course this was not court ordered and was extremely impractical. It gave Husband 1 too much influence in Wife 1 and Husband 3's marriage. Then Husband 1's parents wanted to see Marie and Husband 3 refused them as retaliation for the financial mess. Law suits were threatened. Things only got worse after that. Welcome to the world of the bi-nuclear family complexity. Stepfamilies are perhaps the most complicated family systems in existence.

In February 2008, a report of the living arrangements of children in the US was given by the Census Bureau (retrieved 3 May, 2010 from Living Arrangements of Children: 2004 taken from the SIPP survey http://www.census.gov/prod/2008pubs/p70-114.pdf). The highlights of the report read:

"In 2004, 73.2 million children under age 18 lived in American households. The majority of these children (70 percent) lived with two parents. Most (87 percent) of the children who lived with two parents lived with their biological mother and father. Twenty-six percent of all children (19.3 million) lived with one parent. The majority (88 percent) of these children lived with their mother."

Based on these survey results, 5.5 million children (7.6%) were living with at least 1 step-parent in 2005. The same figure was only 6.9 percent in 1996 and 7.0 percent in 2001. By racial category the 2004 data broke down to 8 percent of White children, 6 percent of Black, 2.5 percent of Asian, and 7 percent of Hispanic (Table 1. Children by Presence and Type of Parent(s) and Race and Hispanic Origin: 2004). The same report showed that fathers were twice as likely to live with a step-child as was a mother (Table 3).

Figure 1. Diagram of Stepfamilies and Other Family Subsystems
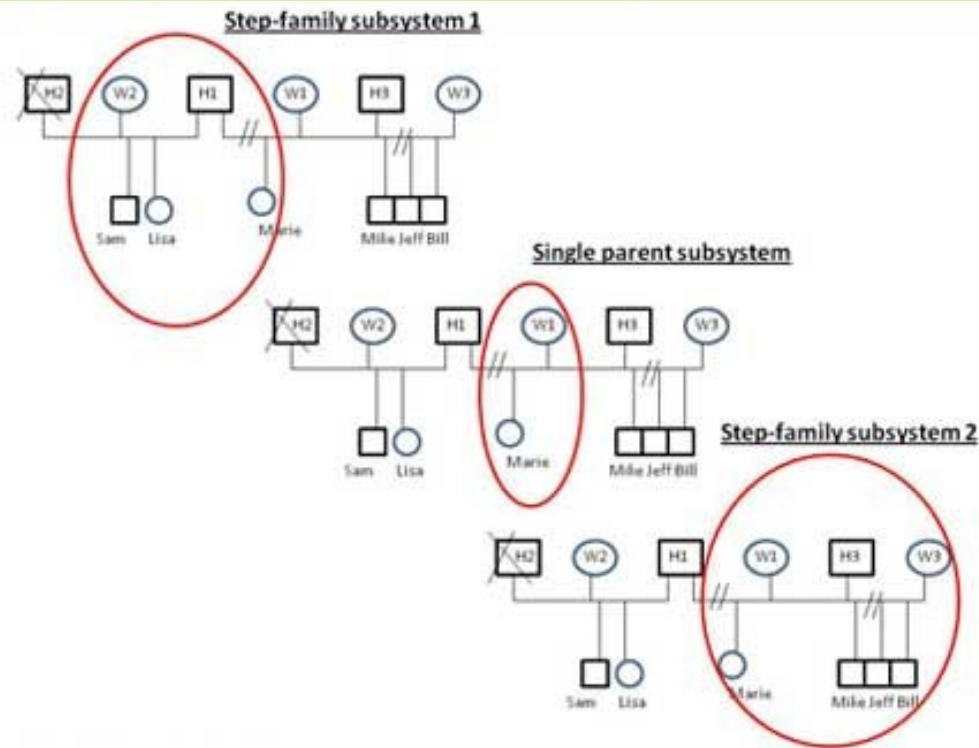
When relationships have crossed more than one social arrangement over time (Such as more than one marriage, cohabitation, or common-law arrangement), the social and emotional complexity of the family systems increases as does the need for stronger boundary maintenance. Figure 2 shows a diagram of the types of relationships and the demands of complexity and boundaries associated with them. A married couple with children have relatively low levels of social and emotional complexity in contrast to all the other categories presented here. Good boundaries are healthy in families. The phrase, "good fences make great neighbors" testifies to the need and benefit from healthy boundaries. In the nuclear family, good boundaries are like good fences to protect the immediate family and to keep out all others as deemed appropriate.

In a nuclear family there must be healthy sexual boundaries (only between the spouse or partners), healthy parenting boundaries (the parents care for, nurture, and provide structure to the dependent children), healthy financial boundaries (the parents raise the children teaching them to work and become more independent over time), healthy emotional boundaries (family member respect the privacy of the parents and children and protect all from intrusions of other family and friends), healthy social boundaries (friends and family have their place which is not as intimate as the closeness experienced by immediate family members), healthy physical boundaries (immediate family members have their own rooms, bathroom access, locks on doors and windows, and private space), and healthy safety boundaries (where the family is guarded by the older immediate family members from outside threats and harm).

Figure 2. Diagram of Stepfamilies and Other Family Subsystems with Comparisons for Social and Emotional Complexity and Need for Stronger Boundaries
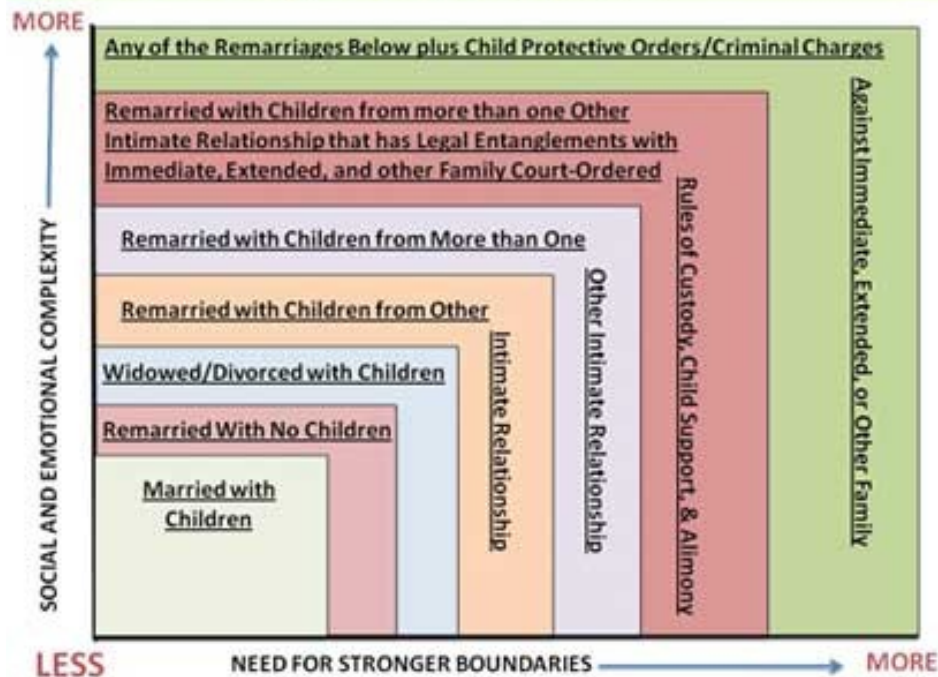
Remarried couples (regardless of prior marriage or cohabitation) who have no children also have much less complexity because the ex-spouse or partners can be out of sight and mind. They have no visitation disputes, child support, nor holiday complexities that come with remarried couples who do have children. While there may be alimony issues these are not as intricately connected since there is no co-parental vagueness that comes with joint custody or non-custodial conditions.

Widowed and divorced persons find that there are more boundary issues, especially if they become dependent on others for financial and social/emotional support. With dependence come vague boundaries. When children are involved for the single parent, other adult family and non-family members often step in to provide support and nurturance. This typically is not of concern when an intact couple heads the family and works together to maintain healthy boundaries. In some ways, adults stepping in to help children often step in to help the single parents in various ways.

Remarried couples with children from other relationships are more complex in comparison. The ex-spouse gets co-parental influence that can easily spill into the marriage boundary if not properly guarded. Remember the ex's who were disputing in Figure 1 above because the father didn't want his child support to go to her new step-children? This is a common problem for the remarried couple. They share their money in a combined family fund. Her earnings and his earnings go into the same pot of money as does child support. Partitioning out the ex's child support in such a way that the step-siblings are separated as belonging to "them and not us" can be very divisive.

Remarried schedules have to be broad and flexible. When a birthday comes up, the remarried couple may celebrate it then the ex-spouse and their family may celebrate it. Things do not always work out as planned, so both parties have to bend and flex as

needed.  Remarried couples with children from more than one intimate relationship experience all of the above plus added complexity and boundary demands.  If Bill and Sue have a 14 year-old from Sue's first marriage, a 10 year-old from her second marriage, and  a 4 year-old from their marriage, plus a 17 year old from his cohabitation, and a 14 year old from his first marriage, then the complexities and need for stronger boundaries is even more intense.

With a remarried couple who have children from more than one other relationship that has legal entanglements with immediate, extended, and other family court-ordered rules of custody, visitation, and alimony, then things become scrutinizable.  For example, if the court orders visitation every other weekend then records and details have to be kept showing the best faith effort of both parties to comply-it is after all, a court ordered process with legal ramification to all involved.  In a perfect world people would always abide by the orders of the court.  They would always make financial payments on time and visitations would always go as prescribed.  Perfection is not reasonable in terms of expectations.

If you take any of the marriages below and add to that the issue of criminal charges or child protective orders, then the complexity and need for stronger boundaries can become extreme.  Children have to be protected from criminals and once protective orders are issued, non-complying family members can be charged with crimes themselves.  Under such extreme circumstances, visitation can be ordered under supervision such as a neutral third party supervisor.  The stakes become intense because of the power the state has to hold the family accountable.

Figure 3 shows the family day-to-day activities and patterns experienced by a typical nuclear family.  Nuclear families typically have complete control through the parents over the day-to-day patterns and activities.  Parents, in cooperation with their children, set up meal times, vacations, and all the other arrangements and plans mentioned in the diagram.  They rarely have input from other family members that would diffuse the control or cause a disruption in these activities and patterns.  It is a very simple form of family in terms of planning and day-to-day family events.

Figure 3. Diagram of Typical Day-to-Day Life, Activities, and Patterns Experienced by a Typical US Nuclear Family
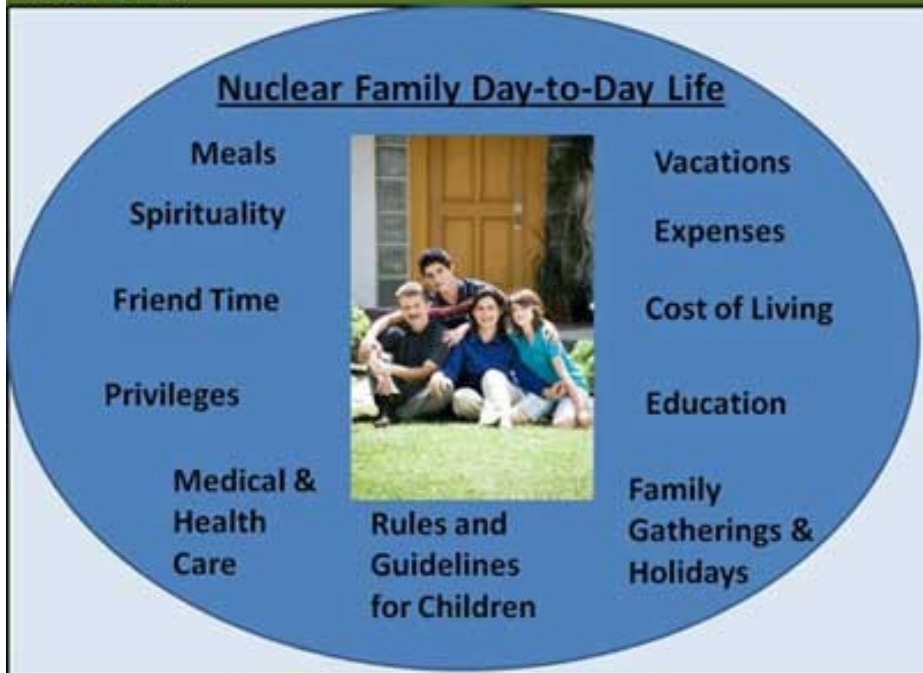
Now, imagine the worst case scenario mentioned in Figure 2 where there was a remarried family with criminal and or legal issues pertaining to family members. The complexity of the day-to-day goings on would increase dramatically because the control is diffused between sets of parents (step-and their biological parent spouses). In other words, day-to-day interactions get fuzzy in every area because parental authority is spread over two sets of parents.

Figure 4 shows how complex the day-to-day activities of the family can become. The red arrows represent areas of day-to-day interaction that may be interfered with or confused by having two sets of parents in authority. For example, when step-father and biological mother allow the child to get a cell phone when she is only 11, but the step-mother and biological father feel that she is still too young and not mature enough to handle the responsibilities that come with having a cell phone. The more the parental authority is diffused, the less the parental continuity the child will have. If parents who have divorced and remarried other spouses don't concur, then the child may suffer by not receiving the healthy limitations needed for their circumstances. The red arrows show how the court-ordered criminal or legal issues can interfere. Imagine also that a court has ordered protection or visitation rules that must be supervised and must be documented for children to visit a parent. Each ruling that may interfere has the potential to throw any family out of its "groove" or day-to-day routines.

Figure 4. Diagram of Typical Day-to-Day Life, Activities, and Patterns Experienced by a Remarried US Family where Criminal and/or Legal Issues are in Involved

As many of you already know, the bonds of affection become strained in all types of families. It is very difficult in remarried families where unhealed hurts and boundary complexities persist. A model emerged in the late 1970s which identified family functioning on two intersecting dimensions, first, family cohesion is the degree to which family members have emotionally bonded to one another, the second is family adaptability, which is the degree to which a family can adjust to changes in family member's roles and relationships (See Olson, D. H. (1976). Bridging research theory and application: The triple threat in science. In D. H. Olson (8d..), Treating Relationships. Lake Mills, IA: Graphic and Olson, D. H. (1986). Circumplex model VII: Validation studies and FACES III. Family Process2, 5, 337-351.). The quality of communication comes into play for each family because communication either facilitates or inhibits cohesion and adaptability. The Circumflex Model is by far one of the most powerful family models ever developed for diagnosing, studying, and treating modern families. I could have placed the model anywhere in this textbook. I chose to place it here because of the extreme complexities that come with remarried and stepfamily processes. Healthy families tend to be average in regards to cohesion, adaptability, and quality communication. Olson defined a number of extremes that occur in families and there are a number of intervention strategies that therapists utilize to mediate these extremes during family therapy.

In Olson's model, families could be either disengaged or enmeshed. Disengaged means the family is too chaotic (very loose rules and weak patterns of associating, or there is little family leadership) or rigid (Very strict and structured patterns of associating, or there is too strict leadership). The family could also be too enmeshed. Enmeshed means the family members are overly entangled or over involved in the personal affairs of one another to the point that the changes experienced by one family member are experienced by other if not all family members. Enmeshment is an indication of weak interpersonal

boundaries.  Enmeshed people lean on others for their own identity-meaning their sense of self is based on being a sister, brother, parent, or friend rather than an individual.  When we lean too heavily on family and friends for our own identity we often let their actions or behaviors determine our own.  They make decisions we follow because it feels like the right thing to do.  We simply have a difficult time saying no because we depend too much on the decisions of others in lieu of our own decision making processes.

Remarried families find themselves making very difficult adjustments that transpire uniquely in the remarried or stepfamily circumstances.  The merging of previous family systems into a new system does NOT occur with the ease TV viewers found among the characters playing in the Brady Bunch Series.  So, what might be the goals of a remarried couple as they form stepfamilies?  Most likely the same goals shared by any first married couple, meet the needs of the spouses, children, and pets, have a secure home which functions as a safe haven from the stresses and trials of the outside world, enjoy life together with people closest to you, acquire and own assets that will ensure financial stability over the long-term, and raising dependent children into their adult roles in a successful manner, to mention a few.

## Strategies for Stepfamilies

What then, are strategies that are known to work in these stepfamilies?  One core strategy is to recognize and deal with the events that brought all the stepfamily members together the way they did.  Step-children and remarried parents likely have some grief that lingers from the divorce or death of another spouse or parent.  Too many stepfamilies are emotionally battle-worn in a way that makes them want to disregard this grief and get the new families moving forward.  Of course this is ill-advised.  There are numerous studies, self-help books, and even Websites designed to help the remarried couple deal with the grief and transitions (see http://www.stepfamily.org/ or http://www.stepfamilies.info/ or http://www.stepfamily.net/  or http://www.thestepfamilylife.com/).

Eventually addressing grief, loss, and heartache is the best approach.  Feeling grief for a loss does not undermine the current family system.  In fact, if it's within the current stepfamily that the healing takes place, it can often strengthen the newly formed family as the sense of cohesion grows.  I knew of a stepmother who married her second husband after the death of his first wife.  She went from being the mother of her 4 small children to the mother of 10 (he had six ages 7 to 19).  All her best efforts to bond to the children failed.  They resented her, they criticized her to other friends and family, and they were angry at her even though she just entered their lives.

"One day, the light switch came on."  She explained to me.  "They were mad at God or nature or something because their mother died slowly from cancer. It wasn't about me or what I did or said."  She went to relatives of these six children and gathered all the photos, stories, and memorabilia they had.  One day, on the anniversary of their mother's passing she presented each of them with a photo album/memory book from their mother.  "It was a turning point in our relationships.  I finally got out of the execution chair with them and became a friend.  We could relate honestly together from that point on.

Her husband told me that it was more than just these six children who were still grieving.  "I had to move across town and buy another home and furniture because people complained so much about 'that woman who's sleeping in my late wife's bed and cooking

in her kitchen." To truly understand this family's experience you need to know it was a very small town during the 1970s. This husband never told his new wife or the children why he moved them. He was a mediator between the stepfamily and the small community they lived in.

Many stepmothers over expect what they can do for their new stepchildren and family. They try and try not to be the "evil stepmother." Listen, some of the best/worst villains in stories are stepmothers, Cinderella, Hansel and Gretelx, Snow White, and others. Stepmothers are notorious for not treating the stepchildren with the same affection and loyalty as they do their own children. Some argue that stepmothers are doomed by virtue of the stereotypes and family disadvantages. The antidote for this is for new stepmothers to enter their role with a few strategies: first, be realistic in your hopes and dreams. It is not uncommon for stepchildren to grow to love their stepmothers, but typically not as much as they love their own biological mother. So, perhaps expecting to have a good friendship where love may emerge after years of working at the relationship is a better approach.

Second, go slow. Resist the temptation to want to hurry thing up and get them resolved so that they will be taken care of and out of the way. Healing, developing cohesion, and building flexibility and adaptation takes time if it is to become permanent.

Third, set short-term goals that are more easily attained. For example, you might set a goal to go on at least one family outing per month over the next two years as opposed to wanting to hold a family reunion were strong bonds are expected as though you'd all be close family members forever.

Fourth, learn and know your own limits as a wife and mother/stepmother. The Superman and Superwoman mythology makes for great movies and comic book stories, but they are not real. Your limitations can be used as a healthy boundary for what you are capable and willing to do as a mother and stepmother. For example, you may find that you can't help all the children with their homework (especially if there are many of them). Sometimes older children can be convinced to help the younger ones. Again, this has the potential to establish support patterns that reach across family and stepfamily systems.

Fifth, treat all the children with the same healthy standard of care. Children need to feel safe and protected. They want to feel loved and sometimes it is enough to let them know that you are sincerely interested in their well-being. Love may follow your care giving efforts in due time. All children want to have a confidant, someone to share their worries with, or a source of unconditional acceptance. Let children give input and search for consensus in matters of choice such as which restaurant to dine at or which vacation spot to visit. Finally, children need and though they may not know it, want boundaries. Show them you care by setting healthy limits, rules, and restrictions that both spouses agree upon and can uphold together.

It is important for stepparents to avoid getting caught up in the structure of their family. In other words, it is not the fact that you are a combination of his, hers, theirs, or whatever. It's much more important to focus on how the family systems functions, ensuring that the criteria mentioned above are in place and working well. It also means that when adjustments are needed that the system allows for adaptation and accommodation. If the family is functional, adaptable, and increasingly cohesive then it

has a solid base of resistance to acute and normative stressors.

One lesson learned by public educators that can be applied to stepfamilies is transparency.  When assigning chores, make the process coming to those assignments clear to all.  This means they'd better be fair to all.  When it comes to discipline do the same and make sure the discipline is fair and predictable.  When or if biased processes are discovered, correct them openly for all children to see.

William J. Doherty published a book on family rituals in 1999 (Quill Publishing, ISBN 0-380-73205-x).  In it he framed family rituals as "intentional" efforts designed to build and connect the family members into a more cohesive group.  He urged the smaller daily rituals that slowly but surely reinforce the strengthening cohesion.  In the formative months and years of the stepfamily, rituals play an important role in building family cohesion.  This is why it is important to travel together, eat out, celebrate birthdays and holidays, and spend time exploring activities and events that work well for most of the family.  For some, family reunions become a hit and are continued for as long as they continue to be desirable.  Over time, if certain family members miss a reunion or decide to no longer attend, then it's totally acceptable to hold them for those who desire to be a part of the tradition.  No family should expect one-hundred percent participation at all family gatherings.

It is common to have unresolved issues from past marriages and family systems which inhibit current efforts to maintain stepfamily cohesion.  In this case, if an adult son or daughter and their family disaffiliate, it is wise to continue gathering.  It is a myth that a stepfamily (or any family) can only be as happy as the least happy member.  The weakest link in the family chain should not set the tone for the entire family system's bond and friendship.  Make such matters the focus of family discussion while together.  Allow members to express their honest feelings.  Make sure and share your own in return.  There is a really good chance that some will like most gatherings while a few may dislike them.

Bobby McFerrin sang a song that can also provide a theme for stepfamily formation "Don't Worry, Be Happy" (1988).  At times, stepparents feel compelled to work out the finest degree of family troubles in stepfamilies and may become overly occupied in this regard.  Perhaps, they sense the vulnerability the stepfamily faces from the complexity involved.  Most family members enjoy rewarding and positive interactions.  Be careful to keep the "happy" in the process of building the family system.

Couples who unite in both verbal and written forms of expression often find themselves leading the family in a more united manner.  Consider starting each New Year with a family plan.  Include in it 5 goals for the family that can be met by December 31st.  Also include one word that might be the buzzword for these goals.  For example, in a family that enjoys meals and food, they might set goals to eat 5 dinners out of 7 together each week, eat out once per month, have a sharing time during the meal where a family member shares a best or worst for the day, have friends over for dinner at least once per month, and finally, eat out at a very unusual restaurant while on the family vacation.  The buzzword might simply be, "dinner, chow time, or table."  It would be a word that is central to the goals of the family.

**Sexual Boundaries**

One other adjustment needs to be mentioned.  Stepfamilies need strong boundaries.  One of my students confided in me that she married a man who had  17 and 19 year-old boys.  She had 18 and 19 year-old girls.  One day they returned from work to find the boys waiting outside the bathroom, hoping to get a glimpse of one of the girls as she walked from the bathroom across the hall into her bedroom.  Upon investigation, they discovered that there were simultaneous crushes between the stepbrothers and stepsisters.  For a few weeks, efforts to establish boundaries and diffuse infatuation failed to help things.  They made a decision to give anyone over 18 two weeks to find another place and move out.  Harsh though this may appear, it worked.  The oldest three moved into college housing and the 17 year-old stayed at home until he turned 18 and then moved out like the others.

A few years after that, another student told me that his brother ended up marrying his stepsister.  The brother had been in the military and when his father remarried he did not even know the stepsister.  After he got out and came home for a visit, the relationship formed and eventually ended in marriage.  This is extreme, yet very common to find stepfamilies with ambiguous boundaries, unclear roles, and awkward interactions that may cause complications if unaddressed.

When the stepsiblings are young, sexual exploration or interactions may occur.  It is both negligent and criminal to ignore these or fail to intervene.  When a child has been sexually molested, he or she may be reactive.  Sexual reactivity is a propensity among children to act in sexual ways as a result of having been sexually abused. They learn sexual ways from the abuse yet may or may not know that these sexual ways are inappropriate.  Many sexually abused children will act out with children younger than themselves.  Some may act out regardless of age difference or even role differences, meaning they may act out with adults or other children.  Stepfamilies must intervene and do whatever is required to mediate sexual reactivity.

Local clinics and mental health providers may prove to be a valuable resource.  If a crime is unreported, it may well need to be.  This is the problem inherent to family sexual abuses-secrets.  Stepfamilies must have clear sexual boundaries, especially since the biological factor or blood relative factor is not present, meaning the common resistance to sexual activity among blood-related family members is not there among nonblood-related stepsiblings.  Focus on privacy, modesty, dignity and respect for self and others.  Have very candid private and family discussions that bring secrets into the open and take the mystery out of sex.

Stepfamilies can be, and typically are, happy families.  But, rarely does that happiness arrive without concerted efforts to make it a happy family.  Strength comes in the persistent struggle against the forces of complexity, ambiguity, and missing family history.  Even though couples give an amazing effort to create a functional stepfamily system, many stepchildren leave home with unresolved issues with either the parent or stepparent.  If this happens to you, then so what?  In the long-term it is the husband and wife who will spend their entire lives together, not the parents and children.  If children are younger than 18 and living with a parent and step-parent, then do your best to meet their needs.  Invite them to take joint responsibility for their happiness and the family's cohesion.  Facilitate entertainment, positive memories, and rituals.  If at the end of the day, your 18 year-old child or stepchild leaves home with issues of having been raised in a stepfamily, then accept your best effort, be happy as a couple, and move forward with

your lives together.

## Getting back into the Dating Market

Some couples do divorce then remarry each other, but this is rare. Remarriage after divorce is much more likely to occur if the divorcees are in their 20s. The odds of remarriage decline in the 30s, 40s, 50s, etc. Remarriage typically occurs sooner for the man than the woman. When a newly divorced woman or man finds themselves on the market, they often feel inept. Many express concern in lacking the courting skills required to meet someone new or initiate new relationships. For the most part, they are right. They, like most married people mentally leave the marriage-courting market and avail themselves to the business of being married and parents. Their sudden reentry into the dating scene is typically unexpected and intimidating. Men tend to move more quickly into the dating arena, seeking for social and emotional connection from their new-found friends. Women are typically more socially and emotionally connected while married. So, after the divorce they tend to have more friends and more ongoing family relationships.

Years ago, I studied elderly divorced men and women and contrasted their current state in terms of financial and social-emotional well being. By far, men were better off financially and women were better off in social and emotional areas of their lives (see Hammond and Muller, 1992, "The Later-life divorce, another look." J. of Divorce and Remarriage, 17. _ 135-50; and Hammond et al, 2008 "Resource variations and marital status among later-life elderly," J. of Applied and Clinical Sociology, Vol 2, No 1, Spring 47-60). This tends to be true in most cases for young and old alike. Men rarely get custody of the children after divorce. If his ex-wife is awarded an average child support and alimony, he still experiences an increase in his standard of living after divorce and he has the freedom from child rearing (not very healthy for the children).

For example, let's say he earned $48,000 per year and had three children. That would mean that $48,000 divided by 5 family members equals a pre-divorce standard of living of $9,600 per family member. Let's say she was awarded a hefty $12,000 per year in child support and alimony. Because she now has the children their standard of living drops to $3,000 per year per family member. His post-divorce standard of living skyrockets to $36,000 for himself. If he does the honorable thing and pays his financial obligations, then his ex-wife qualifies for welfare and he can live with relative financial freedom. That pattern, even though the details vary, is extremely common among today's divorcees-she has the children and poverty and he has the freedom and finances.

This in part explains why he is more likely to start dating sooner than her, and eventually why he remarries sooner than her. When formerly married individuals enter the dating and marriage market they experience similar fears and anxieties that never married daters feel. But, there is a significant difference in what they bring to the marriage market place. Each has a history of a long-term sexual, social, emotional, and co-existing relationship. Add to that the issues that contributed to the marital breakup, and you are looking at a complex dating experience with divorcees experiencing the date while carrying a vast store of positive and negative memories and experiences into the date. One might expect that remarriage courtships would take longer than never married courtships from first date to marriage. The opposite has been found to be true. Most

remarries court for less time before they remarried.  It is believed that they are more aware of themselves, of how intimate relationships work, and of what they need at the moment than never marrieds.  It's even more complicated than that.

When someone is on the marriage market they do look for homogamous mates (persons of similar tastes and backgrounds).  They also look for those they are compatible with and for those who survive the filtering process (elimination of undesirables from the marriage pool).  But, remarriers filter with a specific and unique filter in comparison to never marrieds.  They look for someone who is not the same person they just divorced.  They especially try to find someone who they perceive will do for them what their ex could not or would not do.  Like all persons on the marriage market, remarriers look to maximize their rewards while minimizing their losses or costs (Social Exchange Theory).  Figure 5 shows a diagram of some of these rewards and costs which remarriers would typically consider while on the market.  Notice on the top of the diagram that men tend to have more rewards when they come to the marriage market than do women.  Add to that the absence of children and you can see, in part, why men remarry sooner than women.



Figure 5. The Rewards and Costs Considered by Men and Women in the Remarriage Marketplace

MEN                                                                    WOMEN

**Rewards**                    **Costs**

Financial Security
Sex and Intimacy
Relief of Loneliness
Currently Available
Distraction from Pain, Friendship, Love,          Children Younger than 18, Unhealthy,
Support as a Co-parent to the Children,           Pays Alimony or Child Support, Is Not Yet
No Children or Grown Children,                    Recovered from Emotional Scars, Has
Receives Alimony or Child Support,               Hostile or Negative Relationship with Ex,
Physical Attractiveness, Complimentary           Is Poor or Uneducated, Is Desperate,
Needs, Educated, Homeowner, Fun,                 Has Heavy Caregiving Burden, Overly
    Healthy                                      Needy
    The "Right" Age
    High Social Status
    "Void" Filler

From the Social Exchange Theory's formula (Maximize Rewards while Minimizing Costs)

The "rewards" lists some of the desirable traits sought out by men and women alike.  Some of these are emphasized more by potential mates than others.  Financial security is a major draw for potential mates.  Adequacy, comfort, and luxury are examples of desirable levels of financial security.  For decades Sociologists have taught the principle of relative deprivation.  Relative deprivation is the perception of advantage or disadvantage that comes from our own personal experiences in comparison to others.  This means, we compare our current circumstances to the circumstances of others based on our past experiences.  When divorced with three children, a single mother may find a potential mate attractive if he can simply relieve some of her financial burden.  If divorced with three children and middle class, a single mother may find a potential mate attractive if he can maintain the middle class status.  Finally a wealthy divorcee may seek

someone to provide luxury.

In understanding expectations on finances or any other desirable trait in a remarriage partner, it is crucial to consider the issue of "perceived advantage or disadvantage." Not only do remarrieds (us to by the way) consider their current rewards in contrast to past experiences, but they do so subjectively. In other words, emotions play into the formula, which modify the maximize rewards and minimize costs decision-making process. Also, some may ignore money altogether if they feel a stronger need for companionship or trustworthiness. Married couples have sex about three times per week. After divorce it drops dramatically for both ex-spouses. Sex and the intimacy that often comes with it motivate both men and women to seek out another mate. Loneliness is a big issue for divorcees. Men quickly find dating partners and are capable of attaining intimacy through dating. Women have the company of children and other family and friends that were in place before the divorce. But, those relationships may not fulfill the social and emotional needs that can be found in a spouse or intimate partner.

Simple as it may sound, if a desirable partner is available, then he or she is more appealing. Someone not in a deep relationship or engaged is immediately available for interaction and potential relationship building. Many seek another partner to distract them from their divorce pain and grief. There is nothing innately wrong about this. Healthy dating and associations can be part of the healing process. But, marrying too soon, during the still-in-recovery state of mind can be detrimental, because once the injured partner heals, they may discover that they were not a good match after all. Divorce risks are higher in 2nd, 3rd, and 4th marriages than they are in first marriages. You've probably heard about "rebound relationships or marriages." Marrying on the rebound is considered to be premature and unwise.

Friendship and love are essential needs all people have. Adjusting to the absences of friendship and love, even if your children are with you, is a difficult task for many. Adults often needs adult friendship and love. For single mothers with custody (and the few single fathers who have custody), seeking out a co-parent who can live in the home with the family is a major reward. The single parent wants the children to have two parents influencing them and will often seek a mother or a father for the kids. For younger and older singles, children are an issue. Some younger divorcees don't want to marry a single parent while others do. Typically, the presence of children in the divorced woman's care will lower the odds of her remarriage.

I know of a 50 year old widow who dated my 48 year-old divorced buddy. They had so much in common professionally and personally, but she was done raising children and his youngest was in elementary school. They are still friends, but chose to not pursue the relationship further, even though he was interested in doing so. Children over the age of 18 are not as strong a deterrent as are the younger ones. The stepfather or stepmother only commits to be a consultant to an adult stepchild rather than a day-to-day caregiver. If a single mother receives alimony or child support, the financial burden that might come with the remarriage are perceived as being lighter. Often a man must balance the financial costs as well as the social and emotional costs associated with marrying a single mother.

Physical attractiveness is important too many who remarry. It may weigh into the

formula for some more than others. Divorced men, like never married men, consider physical attractiveness when choosing another mate. It is weighed, though in comparison to the other attributes which are important, given their past marital problems and issues. When we marry it helps to have complimentary needs. In other words, if she needs to be cared for and he needs to take care of someone, their needs complement one another. I personally know single men who need to raise children and their motives are healthy. They like being the "big brother-type" and truly enjoy most children. Obviously, a single mother looking for a co-parent would have complimentary needs with this person. Not all needs are complimentary and no one can fulfill all of their spouse's needs all the time. This is true in all relationships. In remarriages, the spouses use the concept of equity in assessing their rewards. Equity is the overall sense of getting a good deal (or a bad one) when considering all the perceived rewards and costs of a relationship.

To an outsider, a couple may appear to be experiencing an imbalance in give and take. Fortunately, a relationship only has to feel fair to the individual spouses. A remarried woman, who wanted her ex to spend more time with the children, may find it more valuable when her current husband does so and may weigh that as being more important than other contributions. Equity is subjective and changes as new needs arise or new circumstances emerge that families have to accommodate. Being educated, especially college educated means more income and more desirable traits in a potential mate. College graduates have developed a sense of delayed gratification, have less traditional (and more diverse) family role expectations, and have many other resources to bring to the relationship in comparison to high school graduates. Owning a home as opposed to renting an apartment is an important reward.

A home provides privacy, income benefits, and a clear boundary which can all serve to aid the development of the remarriage and new family system. Finding a healthy mate is also subjectively defined. In the later years, elderly women almost always have to consider the current and near future health of a potential mate. A few of my friends who remarried after retirement experienced caregiving burdens. One experienced a decade before he became needy and dependent. Another cared for her disabled husband for 16 years before he died. An elderly man, friend to my father, cared for his disabled wife for 12 years before she died. Younger people consider health as well, but not with the same intensity as older daters who have to take into account future caregiving issues. The "right age" for a person to find a new mate is the one that works best for him or her, given their current needs. Sometimes twenty-something mothers will marry thirty-something fathers for stability and continuity. Other times a younger spouse may be more appealing for a variety of reasons. Some seek out the wealthy, famous, popular, or well-known as a new mate and these desires drive their filters. Finally, some simply have a void where the lost marriage or intimate relationship once resided. They may seek to find someone quickly if they perceive that the presence of a spouse or partner will fill that void.

When considering costs, keep in mind that women typically leave a marriage with more costs or losses which on the singles scene inhibit her finding a new mate with the same ease as do divorced men. She often has custody. Younger children cost money, need supervision and nurturing, and tire their mother such that she has less energy to be a companion and friend. There is no difference in divorced men and women in terms of

health issues.  But, divorce is considered to be an extreme stressor (Search Holmes and Rahe, Stress Scale).  Divorced persons most likely suffer health declines from the stresses that came with the divorce.  But some may have long-term or chronic health issues that, when considered in the overall formula, are costs and not rewards.

Single mothers often report high levels of stress, fatigue, and having people around, but still feeling lonely.  Over time this may lead to health issues.  If a single mother (or father) must pay court-ordered payments each month, then this is a financial cost or loss.  Men are much more likely to be ordered to pay child support or alimony.  To a potential wife this goes in the loss category.  Many divorcees carry unresolved issues for years at the emotional, psychological, spiritual, and even intellectual levels.  When the divorce has not settled in at all of these levels, they often have unresolved issues and may have some emotional scars (Search Paul Bohannon's levels of divorce).  I once advised my student to quit talking about the jerk her ex-husband proved to be.  She couldn't understand why new men didn't want to spend time with her when she mostly talked about being a victim and her ex.

Ex-boyfriends, husbands, and partners can be very dangerous to their ex and her new husband.  Recently, an ex-boyfriend tried to gun down his ex-girlfriend and her new boyfriend.  The new boyfriend was a police officer and defended himself to the death of the ex-boyfriend.  Some couples are not so lucky to escape harm.  In less severe cases, annoying phone calls, arguments, mean or threatening letters, property damage and even threats of harm are launched from ex-spouses to new wives or husbands.  In most cases, these are not criminal in nature and have to be tolerated or mediated through official channels.  In these cases, children are sometimes used as battering rams against the ex.  They are mistreated, misinformed, or neglected in an attempt to seek vengeance.  Entering a new relationship were entanglements from the ex are not present is more rewarding.  Poor and uneducated men and women offer less financial and intellectual input to a new marriage.  This may not matter to some, but single mothers often place this as a high priority.  If a potential mate has many children, cares for a dependent family member or friend, or has a severely ill child she or he may appear to be very unappealing.

Caregiving is common, but is rarely desired by potential mates.  Most caregiving is given by women (although I cared for my cancer-ridden father before he died).  Few would willingly take on a caregiving role out of altruistic intentions.  Some may take it on if other rewards appeared to compensate creating an overall sense of equity.  A desperate or overly needy person enters the relationship with a disadvantage in terms of leverage for negotiating with another spouse.  Being needy or desperate my increase the odds of ending up with an insensitive or abusive partner or spouse.

Another issue common to finding a mate is the one of propinquity (sharing geographic closeness and meeting in the same geographic area).  The Internet has change the issue of propinquity by allowing people to interact electronically through social and dating sites that help in the filtering process.  These sites can eliminate unwanted dates and yield a more desirable pool of potential mates (at least that's what they promise).  I know 5 couples that met for the first time on a dating Website.  Each took considerable time in-person to compare values and assess the rewards and costs of each relationship.  I know of 3 others that ended after the in-person interaction took place.

One 2009 ranking reported that Match.com and eHarmony had 20 million subscribers; Yahoo Personals had 9 million, and chemistry.com and Perfectmatch.com each had 4 million (Retrieved 13 May, 2010 from http://www.consumer-rankings.com/Dating/?c=4&e=r&ch=1&ad=3773827780&sc=search&kw=online%20dating&ag=1339548640&cr=14362201 gclid=COGJlt_dz6ECFQxZbAodxkyMKQ). In fact, online dating is projected to increase between 2007-2012 with revenues topping $1.9 billion by 2012 (Retrieved 13 May, 2010 from http://dating.about.com/od/datingresearch/qt/datinggrowth.htm).

Sautter et al (2010) reported that internet dating is more common among computer-savvy and already socially networked daters (The Social Demography of Internet Dating in the United States.Citation Only Available By: Sautter, Jessica M.; Tippett, Rebecca M.; Morgan, S. Philip. Social Science Quarterly (Blackwell Publishing Limited), Jun2010, Vol. 91 Issue 2, p554-575, 22p; DOI: 10.1111/j.1540-6237.2010.00707.x). Chih-Chien et al (2010) also reported three categories of online daters based on their motivations. First were the adventurers who thrive in the anonymity provided by the Internet which shields them from elimination through traditional social norms. Adventurers seek communication, curiosity, and even emotional support as they seek to meet new people.

Escapers to a virtual world were the second category. Escapers find the real world too harsh and relax in the relatively anxiety-free cyber world. Third and finally were the Romantics who sincerely seek for love, friendship, and sex. Sex is not the major motivation, but is a common motivation for some Internet daters (CYBER RELATIONSHIP MOTIVES: SCALE DEVELOPMENT AND VALIDATION. By: CHIH-CHIEN WANG; YA-TING CHANG. Social Behavior & Personality: An International Journal, 2010, Vol. 38 Issue 3, p289-300, 12p).

## Chapter 14 Aging and Families

The United States of America is inhabited by many diverse people, including distinguishable generations of society's members based on age. Gerontology is the scientific study of the processes and phenomena of aging and growing old. Depending on the definition of being elderly, the government typically sets 65 to be the elderly years, the American Association of Retired Persons finds 55 to be the eligible age of membership, and many elderly define their 70's or 80's as the time they begin to feel elderly. Gerontology is multi-disciplinary with medical and biological scientists, social scientists, and even financial and economic scientists all studying the processes of aging from their disciplines point of view.

Social gerontology is the sociological subfield of gerontology which focuses on the nonphysical and social aspects of aging. Sociology focuses on the broad understanding of the elderly experience, their health, their emotional and social wellness, and their quality of life just to mention a few. How many elderly live in the US in 2008? Family Gerontology is the subfield that focuses on the family experiences of elderly persons.

| Table 1. Numbers and Percent of United States Population Aged 65 and Over 2008 | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| ≤ 14 years of Age | 15-64 Years old | US Elderly | United States Total |
| 61,146,753 (20.1%) | 203,987,724 (67.1%) | 38,690,169 (12.7%) | 303,824,646 (100%) |

Estimates retrieved 17 June 2008 from https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/print/us.html

The future growth of the US elderly population is immense in comparison to previous Census tabulations and growth rates. In Figure 1 below you see tremendous growth in the United States where the elderly now comprise only 1 in 8 members of US society, but will eventually in 2050 comprise 1 in 5. In Figure 2 below you can see that the oldest old--85 years and older is also growing rapidly. This means that in general more people are living longer. In fact there are more Centenarians than ever before. A centenarian is a living person who has had his or her 100 birthday. US Census counts indicated about 37,000 centenarians in 1990 and about 50,000 in 2000 (See Kestenbaum and Reneé, 2006 Retrieved from the Internet 19 July, 2008 from http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa4030/is_200607/ai_n17183322).

In many societies the elderly are revered (especially Asian societies). Filial piety is the value, respect, and reverence of one's elderly which is often accompanied by caregiving and support of the elderly. Grandparents and even great-grandparents are valued and included in the home of the mother, father, and their children. These families are enriched by 3 and sometimes 4 generations of family members supporting the socialization of the younger members of the family. In Western countries, the elderly and their extended family are considered co-equals and mutually independent until circumstances necessitate assistance from children and other family members.



Figure 1. Estimated Percentage of US Population that will be Elderly and Non-Elderly, 2000-2050
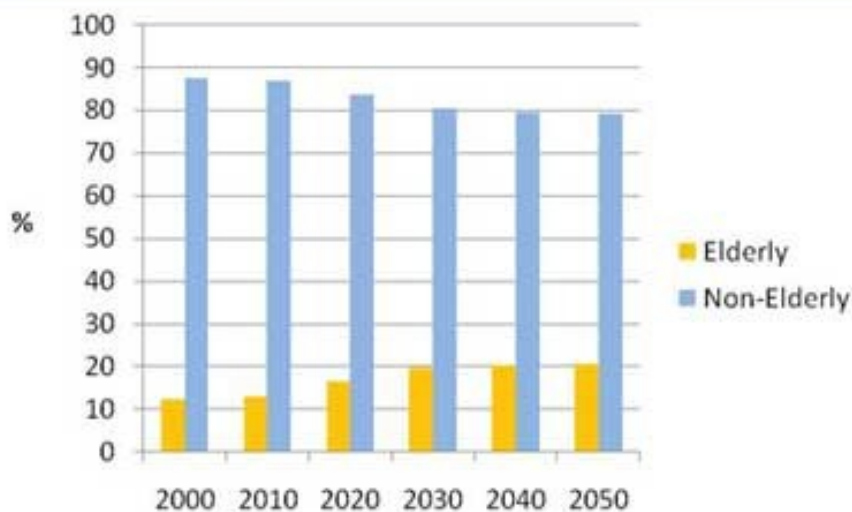
Estimates retrieved 18 June 2008 from http://www.census.gov/ipc/www/usinterimproj/natprojtab02a.pdf Table 2a. Projected Population of the United States, by Age and Sex, 2000 to 2050

**Figure 2. Estimated Percentage of US Population that will be 65-84 and 85+, 2000-2050**
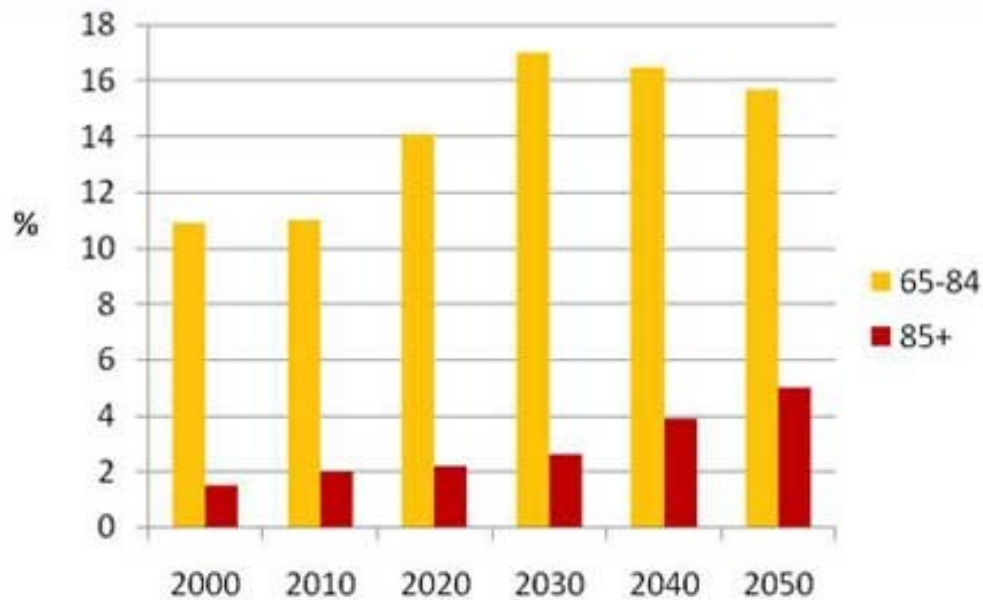


### Understanding the Generations of Life

Life course is an ideal sequence of events and positions the average person is expected to experience as he/she matures and moves through life. Dependence and independence levels change over the life course.  In Figure 3 below, you can see that from birth to teen years, that children's' levels of dependence are relatively high and our levels of independence are relatively low.  Newborns have little ability to nurture others, but as they are socialized and grow into their later-teen roles things change.  By young adulthood, independence is a prime value which leads many to move out on their own and gain their own experiences (like most of you did).

Young adult's ability to nurture is moderate, but often dormant since most pursue avenues of preparation for their adult lives rather than immediately beginning their own families. Married and cohabiting couples are much more independent and capable of nurturing and remain so throughout the grand-parenting years.  As the life course progresses into later life, the oldest elderly begin to lose their independence as their health declines to the point that their resources lag behind the daily demands placed upon them.  This is because all of us experience senescence.  Senescence is the social, emotional, biological, intellectual, and spiritual processes associated with aging (http://www.senescence.info/).

**Figure 3. Diagram of Dependence and Independence Over the Life Course.**

| Stage | Dependence or Independence Levels | Own Ability to Nurture |
|---|---|---|
| Birth to pre-school | Totally Dependent | Low↓ |
| Pre-school | Mostly Dependent | Low↓ |
| School to pre-teen | Somewhat Dependent | Low↓ |
| Teen to young adult | Increasingly Independent | Moderate→ |
| Young adult | Moderately Independent | Moderate→ |
| Young Married | Mostly Independent | Somewhat High↑ |
| Young Parents | Almost Independent | High↑ |
| Parents | Independent | High↑ |
| Grandparents | Extremely Independent | High↑ |
| Great-Grandparents | Somewhat Independent | Moderate→ |

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For many in our modern societies, aging is feared, vilified, and surgically and cosmetically repaired. We do not like being "off our game" and senescence is viewed as a weakness. Yet, many elderly find their lives very satisfying. And they tend to report higher levels of self-esteem than do younger members of society. Because we tend to value youth, youthful appearance, and youthful-centered entertainment, biases appear in the US. There are in the United States many who hold deeply held biases and prejudices against the elderly. Ageism is the prejudice and discrimination against a person based on his/her chronological age.

Ageism is a unique form of bias. One may be prejudiced against another racial group, cultural or ethnic group, or religious group while never being at risk of becoming a member of that group. Ironically, ageist people are aging right now and will be until the day they die-they are essentially biased against their own future status.

For those who seek understanding of the elderly, there are three social theories that might help to understand the elderly and their later-life experiences. These are listed in order of their professional value by Gerontologists who study aging-related psychosocial issues.

Continuity theory claims that older adults maintain patterns in their later years which they had in their younger years. The elderly adapt to the many changes which accompany aging using a variety of effective personal strategies they developed earlier in their life. For example, those who participated in outdoor activities in their younger years tend to continue to do so as older adults-although they tend to accommodate their health and fitness limitations as they deem appropriate.

Activity theory claims that the elderly benefit from high levels of activities, especially meaningful activities that help to replace lost life roles after retirement. The key to success in later-life is staying active and by doing so resist the social pressures that limit an older person's world. (Google Robert Havighurst and Aging).

Disengagement theory claims that as elderly people realize the inevitability of death and begin to systematically disengage from their previous youthful roles, society simultaneously prepares the pre-elderly and elderly to disengage from their roles. This was the first formal aging theory that fell short of credibility because the scientific data did not support its assumptions. There is quite a bit of support for Continuity and

Activity Theories (see The Encyclopedia of Aging online at http://www.medrounds.org/encyclopedia-of-aging/2005/12/index.html).

To really understand the elderly today, you have to understand the larger social changes that have transpired over the last century. Around 1900, US elderly held a more cherished place in the hearts of younger family members. Most homes were intergenerational with grandparents, parents, and children all living in the same home and more often with kin on the wife's side being the social connection around which 3 generations would live (see Dorian Apple Sweetser, 1984 "Love and Work: Intergenerational Household Composition in the U. S. in 1900" Journal of Marriage and the Family, Vol. 46, No. 2 (May, 1984), pp. 289-293 retrieved on 18 June 2008 from http://www.jstor.org/stable/352460?seq=1).

In 2000, the US Census Bureau reported that there were 105.5 million households in the country (report C2KBR/01-8retrieved on 18 June 2008 from http://www.census.gov/prod/2001pubs/c2kbr01-8.pdf). Table 2 reports that 3.7 percent or nearly 4 million households are multigenerational. This probably feels normal-not having older relatives live in your home. The point is that in years past elderly family members were considered a valuable asset with their wisdom and support of their children and grandchildren.

## Theorizing Later Life

Modernization Theory claims that industrialization and modernization have lowered the power and influence which the elderly once had which has lead to much exclusion of elderly from community roles. Even though this theory is not as well established and is somewhat controversial, it has made a place in science for understanding how large-scale social forces have impacted the individual and collective lives of the elderly. In our modern societies, the economy has grown to a state that has created new levels of prosperity for most, the new technologies have outpaced the ability of the elderly to understand and use them, and the elderly are living much longer and are not essential to the economic survival of the family as was the case for millennia. Modernization can help us to understand why the elderly have become stigmatized and devalued over the last century.

Who make up the generations of our day? Look at Figure 4 below to see birth rates and generation labels for the United States. First notice the red and blue lines. The red represents the Crude Birth Rate, the numbers of births per 1,000 population in a given year. The Blue line represents the General Fertility Rate, the numbers of live births per 1,000 women aged 15-44. Both CBR and GBRs show a pattern of birth rates that were relatively high when the World-At-War Generation was born. Birth rates declined with the Great Depression until 1946 (the commencement of the Baby Boom). The Baby Boom represented a surge in birth rates that endured from 1946-1964 and declined to pre-Boom rates in 1965. Generation X or "Gen X" represents the children of the Baby Boomers which spilled into Generation Y or the "Millennials" which by most accounts are still being born.

Figure 4. United States General Fertility Rates, Crude Birth Rates from 1909-2005 with Generation Markers for Baby Boomers, and Generations X, and Y

The World-At-War Generation is slowly disappearing from the US population landscape. On the 8th of June, 2008, the last living Veteran of World War I was honored by the White House and Congress. Frank W. Buckles fought in WWI and was held prisoner in Manila during World War II (see CNN, retrieved on 19 June, 2008 from http://www.cnn.com/2008/US/03/07/war.veteran/). Also the US Veterans Bureau reported that there were 2,911,900 WWII veterans as of 30 September 2007 with about 900 WWII veterans passing away each day. They also reported that 39.1 percent of all US veterans were aged 65 and older (See data sheet retrieved 19 June 2008 from http://www1.va.gov/vetdata/docs/4X6_spring08_sharepoint.pdf).

The majority of the elderly today are women. If you consider the elderly as being divided into three life stages you can discern just how the elderly are comprised comparing males to females. The Young-old are 65-74 years, the Middle-old are 75-84 years, and the Old-old are 85+ years. In 2005 there were more females in all three ages, 65-74, 75-84, and 85+. This is because women, in most countries of the world, have a higher life expectancy than men. Life expectancy is the average numbers of years a person born today may expect to live.

The US Life expectancy today is about 80 for females and 75 for males (worldwide it 70 for females and 66 for males, see www.prb.org, 2007 Population Data Sheet , retrieved 19 June 2008). Life expectancies have increased dramatically over the last 50 years in the Western nations of Canada, United States, Australia, Japan, and Western Europe. Overall men and women can expect to live longer than they did in the 1940s-1990s.



Figure 5. Numbers of US Elderly Population Ages 65-74, 75-84, and 85+
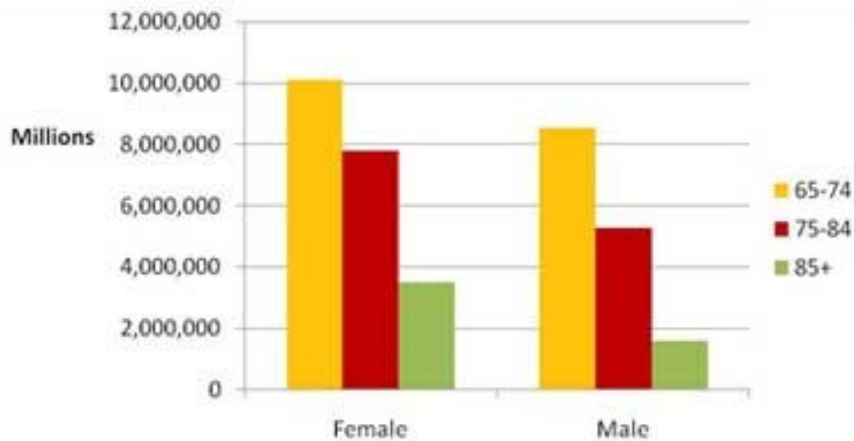
Data retrieved 19 June 2008 from Table 1. Resident population, by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: United States, selected years 1950-2005 from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/hus07.pdf#001

Data retrieved 19 June 2008 from Table 1. Resident population, by age, sex, race, and Hispanic origin: United States, selected years 1950-2005 from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/hus07.pdf#001

The sex ratio in the quote above which was 44 for persons 58 to 89 would be interpreted as 44 males per 100 females. From www.census.gov I found this quote about US elderly males and females:

"Perhaps no feature of the oldest old is as striking as their sex ratio (the number of males per 100 females), which was 39 in 1994 (982,000 males and 2.5 million females). The sex ratio in the United States was 44 for persons 85 to 89 years old, and only 26 for persons 95 to 99 years old. In comparison, the sex ratio was 82 for persons 65 to 69 years old. (retrieved 19 June 2008 from http://www.census.gov/population/www/pop-profile/elderpop.html). "

The Baby Boomers represent 78.2 million US citizens as of 1 July 2005 (see http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/006105.html). This large cohort of society's member is moving on mass into the ranks of the elderly. A cohort is a group of people who share a statistical or demographic trait such as those born between 1946-1964. Nearly 8,000 Baby Boomers turned 60 each day in 2006. The US Census estimates that 57.8 million baby Boomers will be around in 2030 after they've all retired. One issue for gerontologist is the financial strain the Baby Boomers will place on the rest of society once they are retired. Most speculate that baby Boomers will not receive the same from the Social Security Administration benefits their parents and grandparents enjoyed.

The children of the Baby Boomers were called the Generation X children or the "Baby Bust" because they were born in post-Boom low fertility rate years. They were different from their parents. They grew up with the computer age and came to computer technology much like an immigrant comes to a new country. This cohort grew up in an economic state of greater posterity than did previous generations. Generation Y or Millennials are also called the "Internet Generation or Screenagers" because they grew up with TV, video games, cell phones, PDAs, and movie screens. Each generation is culturally distinct compared to the previous ones even though much still remains in common. There is a good chance that children of Generation Y parents will be better skilled than their parents with a technology that has not yet been invented. Such has been the case comparing the last three generations.

In Tables 2 &3 below you see the increasing life expectancies in the US. The elderly of the future will be expected to live longer than any elderly in the history of the United States and world. Being born in the US affords the average member of society a longer life. In Table 3 below you can see that North American children are born with the higher life expectancies than other children around the world. By far, being born in Japan and Hong Kong would provide the absolute highest life expectancy at birth at 82 years for the total.

| Table 2. United States Life Expectancies | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| Year | Total | Male | Female |
| 1970 | 70.8 | 67.1 | 74.7 |
| 1980 | 73.7 | 70.0 | 77.4 |
| 1990 | 75.4 | 71.8 | 78.8 |
| 2000 | 77.0 | 74.3 | 79.7 |
| 2010* | 78.5 | 75.6 | 81.4 |
| 2015* | 79.2 | 76.2 | 82.2 |

*projected estimates (Retrieved 19 June 2008 Table 98: Expectations of Life at Birth, 1970-2004, and Projections, 2010 and 2015; http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/tables/08s0098.pdf).

| Table 3. 2007 World and Regional Life Expectancies | | | |
|------|------|------|------|
| Region | Total | Male | Female |
| World | 68 | 66 | 70 |
| Africa | 53 | 52 | 54 |
| N. America | 78 | 70 | 81 |
| L. America | 73 | 70 | 76 |
| Asia | 68 | 67 | 70 |
| Europe | 75 | 71 | 79 |
| Oceania | 75 | 73 | 78 |

(www.prb.org, 2007 Population Data Sheet , retrieved 19 June 2008)

In fact all regions of the world are growing older. The developing countries are aging the fastest. Consider this screen capture and color map taken from the Population Reference Bureau World Population data Sheet 2007, Page 6.

## Figure 6. Population Aging Is Occurring Worldwide
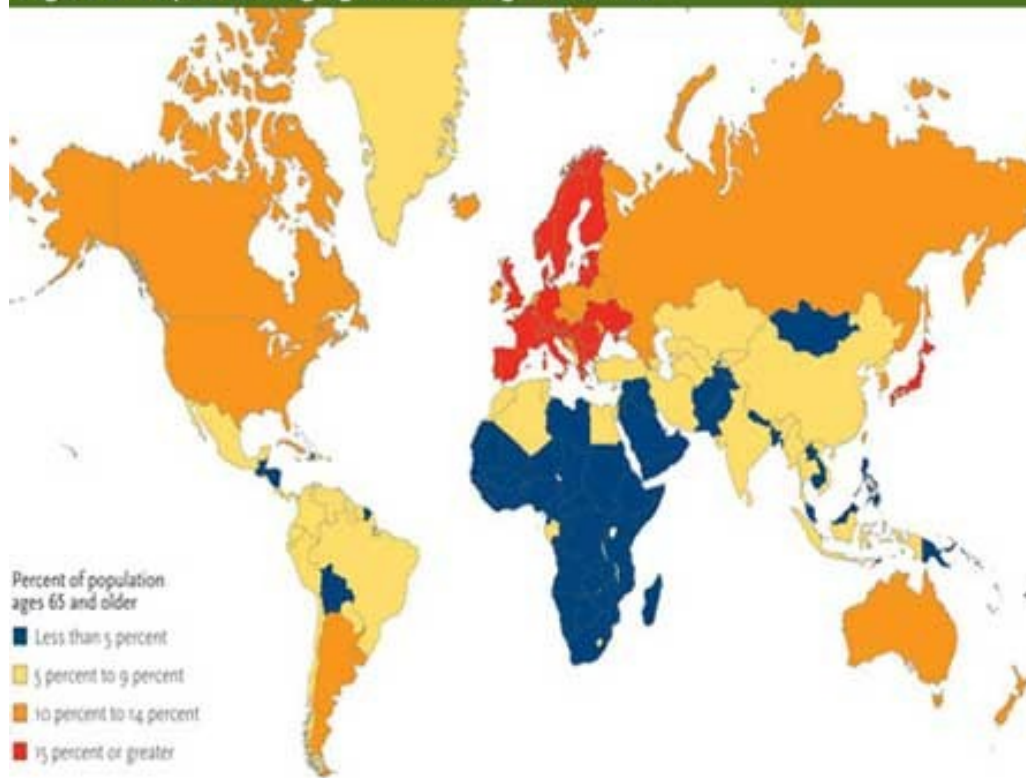


**Percent of population ages 65 and older**

- Less than 5 percent
- 5 percent to 9 percent
- 10 percent to 14 percent
- 15 percent or greater

(Retrieved 19 June 2008 from WWW.PRB.org Population Data Sheet 2007: Sources: C. Haub, 2007 World Population Data Sheet, and United Nations Population Division).

Over the past half-century, both the worldwide drop in fertility and concurrent rise in life expectancy have led to the gradual aging of the world's population. Look at Table 4 below.  Since 1950, the share of persons ages 65 and older has risen from 5 percent to 7 percent worldwide. As the map shows, Europe and Japan have led the way, with North America, Australia, and New Zealand close behind. However, older persons are now more than 5 percent of the inhabitants in many developing countries and by 2050 are expected to be 19 percent of Latin America's population and 18 percent of Asia's.

## Table 4. Worldwide Percent of Persons Ages 65 and Older

|  | 2007 | 2025 | 2050 |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| World | 7 | 10 | 16 |
| Industrialized Countries | 16 | 21 | 26 |
| Developing Countries | 6 | 9 | 15 |
| Europe | 16 | 21 | 28 |
| North America | 12 | 18 | 21 |
| Oceania | 10 | 15 | 19 |
| Latin Am. & Caribbean | 6 | 10 | 19 |
| Asia | 6 | 10 | 18 |
| Africa | 3 | 4 | 7 |

(Retrieved 19 June 2008 from WWW.PRB.org Population Data Sheet 2007: Sources: C. Haub, 2007 World Population Data Sheet, and United Nations Population Division).

## Challenges of Being Elderly and Single

As mentioned elderly women outlive elderly men.  Widowhood occurs when one's spouse dies.  Widows are surviving wives and widowers are surviving husbands. As a young college student you probably don't worry about ever being a widow or widower. Justifiably, you shouldn't have to based on statistical probabilities.  In fact, you are more likely to lose a spouse via death than via divorce.  Do some math with me.  If you are female and marry a guy 2 years older, and he typically dies 5-6 years before you, then you will be a widow at some time in your life and may live 6-8 years as such.  One sub-discipline of gerontology is thanatology.  Thanatology is the scientific study of death and dying. Thanatology informs those who provide support and counsel to the dying.

How we define death, both our own and the death of others is very much influenced by the cultural definition of death we incorporated into our own values while growing up.  Most of us a related to someone who died in the last 24 months.  It's very common for college students about your age to have lost a great aunt/uncle, great grandparent, and even a grand parent.  It's not so common for you to have lost you own parent or sibling.  Grief is the feeling of loss we experience after a death, disappointment, or tragedy. When you experience grief you are said to be in bereavement.  Bereavement is the circumstances and conditions that accompany grief.

Dr. Elisabeth Kübler-Ross published her work as the stages of grief.  These include, denial= "All is fine or it didn't happen," anger="why me?," or, "I hate God for this," bargaining="I'll be a better person if you (God) will just let him live," depression="all is lost or why try?," and acceptance="we'll be okay," or, "we can get through this together" (see "On Death and Dying," 1973; Routledge Press).  I've noticed that we all grieve when things disappoint us, when someone dies, or even when we break up with someone.  I've seen my seniors grieve to a certain degree when they did not get into graduate school their first try.  We all grieve and we all grieve in our own way.  Studies show that most people experience denial, anger, bargaining, depression, or acceptance, but  there exists some disagreement on the part about cycling through Kübler-Ross' stages in any order.

The study of aging would not be complete without focusing on family relationships and roles.  Of the over 40,000,000 (millions) of elderly in the US, about 6 million still work for pay.  About 7 million were taking adult education courses.  About 21 million were married and about 13 million were widowed.  Only 1, 400,000 lived in nursing homes.  About 32 million owned their homes. In the 65 plus age group there are only 73 men per 100 women (Data retrieved from US Census on 9 February, 2010 from http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/013384.html). These trends lead to some important family related issues that need to be discussed here.

Just how the future of elderly family relationships will be in coming decades is very difficult to predict.  Many elderly live single (regardless of any wishes to the contrary).  The US Census Bureau reported that among 65+ ages there were 3,500,000 elderly single men with no spouse or partner and 10,400,000 elderly women with no spouse or partner (retrieved 10 Feb. 2010 from http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/age/older_2008.html Table 14. Households by Type and Age of Householder 55 Years and Over: 2008). The sex

imbalance among elderly single men and women is obvious. Although many single marrieds might enjoy an intimate relationship with a partner or spouse, the rewards and costs are different between men and women in these age ranges. It is true that their combined retirement incomes and living expenses might be increased together and therefore appealing to both.

But, elderly women are faced with a biological truth that makes the possibility of another long-term intimate relationship less appealing-that is that men die much sooner than women. To marry a 65 year old man is to take on the caregiver role which in 5-10 years will place the women in a stressful, very demanding, and perhaps overwhelming role.

Many widows have already been through something like this with their deceased husbands. Many divorcees and never marrieds have found their life patterns to be very established and difficult if not impossible to change. Thus, many elderly remain single and have friendships and intimacies without the long-term commitments that come with cohabiting or marrying again.

What do the trends for elderly unmarried in later life suggest to us? Quite simply more divorced and separated elderly are predicted. Figure 7 below shows the actual trends in increasing divorced elderly from 1963-2003. There are higher proportions of divorced and separated elderly now than in the past. This trend is not the same for widowhood. In other words there is only a slight increase in widowhood compared to a dramatic increase in being divorced or separated.

Another trend which is documented in Figure 8 below is the increasing numbers of those in the pre-elderly stages of life (ages 30-64). There are increased rates of divorcing and remaining divorced. The Baby Boomers were born between 1946-1964. They turn 65 between 2011-2029. This cohort in the US has the highest documented divorce rates of any age-related cohort ever studied in the United States (See Kreider, R.M., "Number, Timing, and Duration of Marriages and Divorces." Figures 1a & 1b: Percent of Men and Women Ever Divorced, Among Those Ever Married by Selected Ages, for Selected Birth Cohorts:2001. U.S. Bureau of the Census, Current Population Reports: P70-97 (Washington D.C.).

The numbers of elderly will nearly double by the time all the Baby Boomers reach 65 years in 2030. This leads to the conclusion that when the Baby Boomers reach age 65 ( beginning in the year 2011), the prevalence of divorced elderly will rise to an even higher level because of the sheer volume of divorced Baby Boomers who will also, for whatever reason, remain divorced into their later years.

Figure 7. Percent of US Who Are Elderly Divorced (Age 65 & Over) by Females and Males, 1963-2003 US Census Reports.
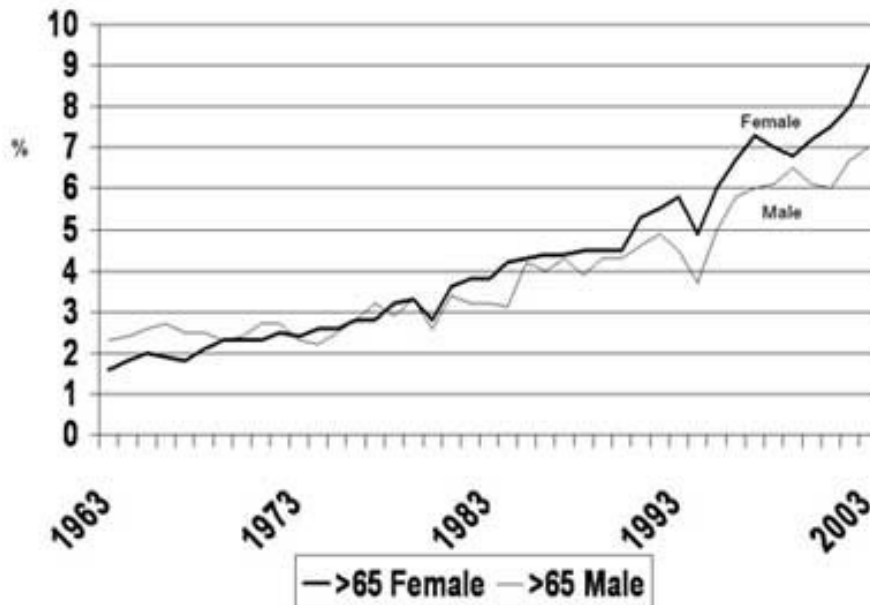


Figure 8. Percent of US Elderly Pre-Elderly Who Are Divorced (Age 30-64) by Females and Males, 1963-2003 US Census Reports.
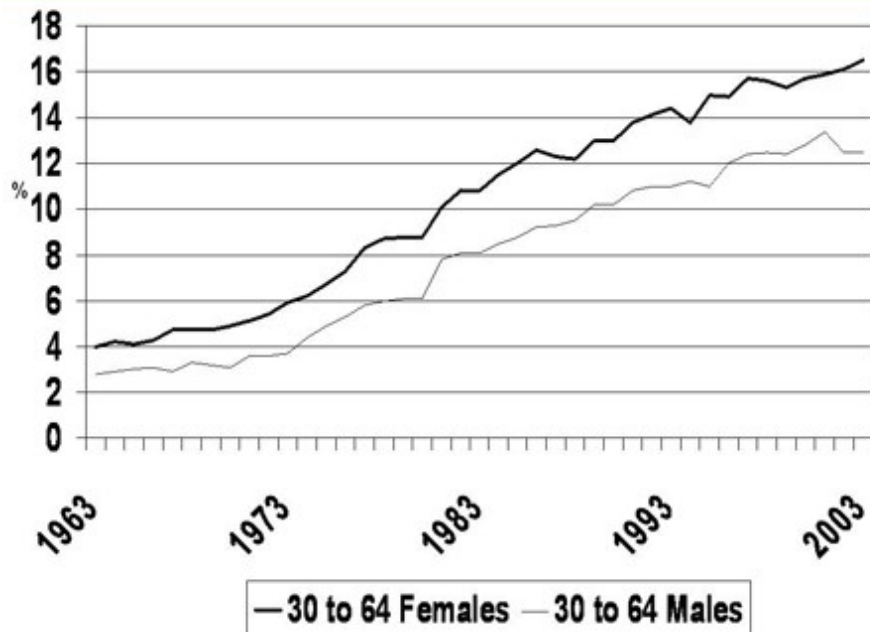
Not all retirement years are created equally. Figure 9 shows the income comparisons of married versus divorced elderly males and females from 1994-2004. Notice that the highest median income levels were for married males. Divorced males had the next highest levels and divorced females (represented by the orange line) came in third. Married females came in last, in part because this generation of elderly had a relatively high rate of traditional homemakers who have fewer Social Security retirement benefits than their husbands.

Figure 10 shows some of the quality of life differences found in the National Longitudinal Surveys-Mature Women data set (Yes, this is an example of secondary analysis research). Elderly divorced and widowed women were more likely to still be in the labor force than married ones. Married women had the lowest levels of reported unhappiness and rarely enjoying life. Feeling sad was similar among all categories.



Figure 9. Median Income Levels for All Races of United States Elderly (Age 65 & Over) Male & Female Married Compared to Male & Female Divorced 1994-2003 US Census
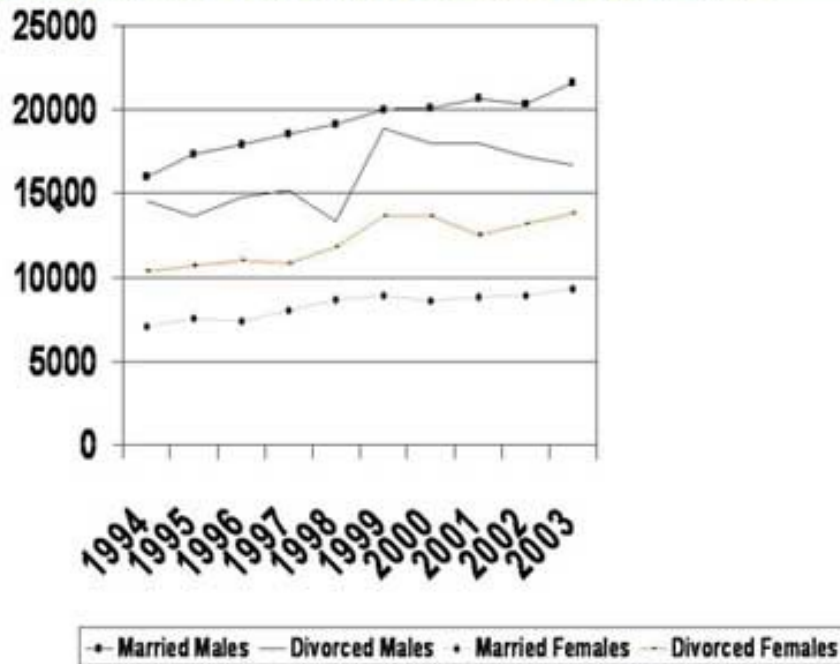
Figure 10. Quality of Life Measures for Elderly Women. Comparing Marital Status from National Longitudinal Surveys-Mature Women 2003
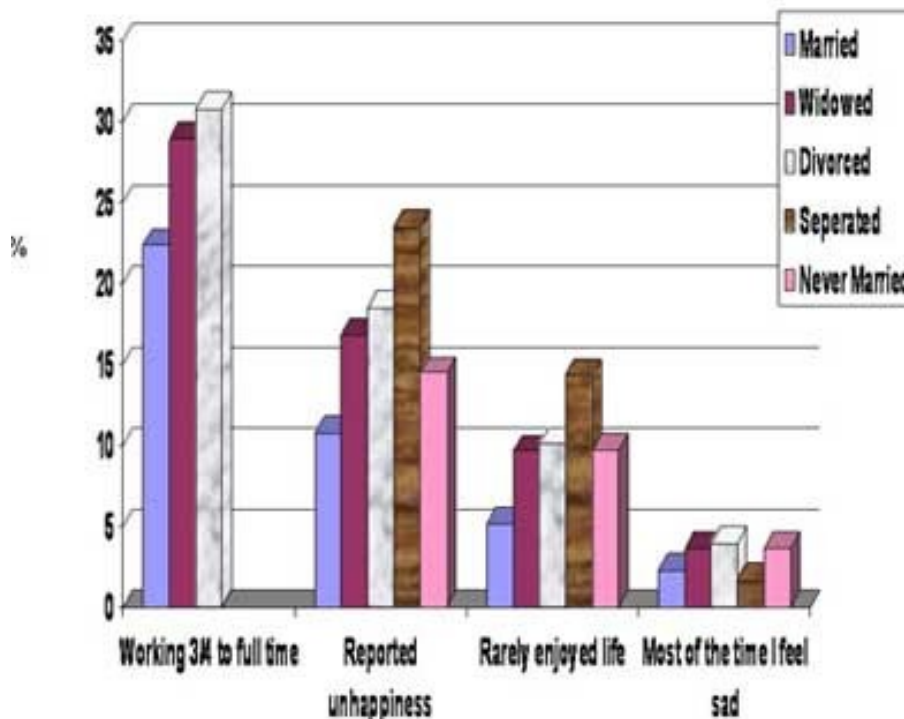
## Roles of Grandparents

The role of grandparent is a socially acceptable one in the US. It is admired by others, bragged about by grandparents, and more often than not appreciated by grandchildren. Grandparents are given social approval by peers and society in general for being in that role. Grandparents also can be as actively or inactively involved as they desire. There are varying types of grandparental involvement and I've developed a few types just for comparison purposes here. Most US grandparents live in another household from their grandchildren. But, economic uncertainties and demographic changes with lower birth rates may contribute to the US returning to 3 or 4 generational households (see Pew Research Center: Social and demographic Trends Monday Feb. 11, 2008 "US Pop. Projections: 2005-2050 by Passel and Cohn).

The "Disneyland Grandparents" entertain and distract their grandchildren from the mundane aspects of their daily lives at home. These grandparents provide a certain entertainment option that is missing for their not-yet established parents. Grandchildren come to have high expectations of indulgence when spending time with these grandparents.

The "Assistant Parent" grandparent is the one who takes the grandchildren to school functions, practices, and doctors appointments or waits for their grandchildren to come to their house after school and before the parents return home from work. Because the parents are typically both employed, these grandparents sometimes become an integral part of their grandchild's daily life and have an ongoing supportive role in the

grandchild's busy schedule.  Many young dual-employed couples could not afford the cost of formal daycare and many grandparents feel rewarded by the meaningful contribution they make in this role.

The "Parental Substitute" grandparent is the one who lives in the home with the grandchild (or the grandchild lives in their grandparent's home).  This is an older family member who is, drawing  retirement, depends heavily on Medicare for their medical expenses, and is typically in declining health.  These grandparents have a great deal of stress that often reminds them of the original parental stresses they faced when they were raising their own children.  The Parental Substitute grandparents often express fatigue and feeling overburdened.

Raising grandchildren is not what most grandparents anticipated to happen in their later lives. Grandparents in the US often have direct daily interaction with their grandchildren. The US Census Bureau estimates over 6 million grandparents do have their grandchildren living in their home (retrieved 9 Feb., 2010 from http://www.census.gov/Press-Release/www/releases/archives/facts_for_features_special_editions/012095.html).  This type of grandparent is common when unwed teen mothers keep their babies, when an adult child is divorced or widowed, or when a child or son/daughter-in-law becomes disabled.

Finally there is the "Distant Relative" grandparent.  These grandparents visit at times and live at a geographic or emotional distance from their grandchildren. They typically can't or will not have a close relationship with the grandchildren.  Telephones and the Internet allow these Grandparents to consult with the parents and be intermittently involved in the lives of their children and grandchildren. But, many grandchildren experiencing this type of grand parenting often report a disconnect to these grandparents.

Grandparents can have a positive and nurturing impact on their grandchildren or they can have a shameful and negative one.  Some grandparents work diligently to reinforce the value of each individual grandchild, often trying not to repeat the same mistakes they made when raising their own children.  These grandparents find ways to show and express their love, support, and valuation of the grandchild.

Other grandparents repeat the shameful patterns of parenting that they mistakenly used in their own parenting efforts.  They label the grandchild and shame them as a form of control and discipline.  When asked this question, "If you had to use a negative or positive symbol to portray how your Grandma or Grandpa view you, which would it be and why?", grandchildren will indicate to some degree the nature of their relationship to their grandparents and how they perceive a low esteem that these grandparents have for them.

Elder Abuse is a significant problem in modern US families.  Just to give you a short mention of it in this chapter for you to contemplate some of the facts, while Chapter 16 will cover family violence and tragedies in more detail.  Elder Abuse is the mistreatment of, violence against, and otherwise harmful manipulation of elderly persons. Marlene Lee (2009) reported that elderly abuse is too common (Retrieved 10 Feb, 2010 from http://www.prb.org/Articles/2009/familyandhealth.aspx). She reported that fewer than 10 percent of US elderly are abused in any way and that verbal abuse was the most common form.  She also reported that non-family persons accounted for more than half of all

elderly abuse.  When a family member was verbally abused it was more likely to be a spouse.  Financial and physical abuse was more likely to be toward a child.

## Chapter 15 Politics, Government, and Issues

**Child Labor**

The United States has passed many laws at the city, state, and national level which have impacted the US family.  From its earliest inception, settlers came with strong traditions and beliefs about what the family and its member "should" be like.  Various laws were enacted, numerous traditions were set into place, and even though the system has common themes, there has never been complete consensus on what these laws and traditions "should" be for all of the population.  Arguably, there can never be total consensus.  But, over time the majority have won the policy and legal battles-a pattern which persist today. This chapter will discuss childhood, education, marital, and other issues where the family interacts with the state and other institutions in society.

Children were not always protected and nurtured in the US.  At times they were kicked out by their parents being orphaned in a society that was hesitant to take in orphans.  At other times they were beaten without any repercussion to the family or friends who mistreated them physically, sexually, and emotionally. In a truly unexpected historical process, it was the tender-hearted animal protection advocates who ended up facilitating the protection of children.  An 1874 Case where Mary Ellen Wilson was being beaten by her adoptive parents, yet was rescued by the head of the New York Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals proved to be a turning point in US history as far as protection of children is concerned (retrieved 13 April 2010 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_children%27s_rights_in_the_United_States).

Soon after this event the first society for the protection of children was formed in 1875.  After that various labor and interest groups began promoting and advocating for better treatment of children.  Eventually, in 1877 the American [Humane Society] Association formed as a coalition of animal and child protection groups (see http://www.americanhumane.org/.  A psychologist named John Dewy (1859-1952) was also known as a national child protection and education advocate.  He is attributed with making tremendous strides in behalf of children.  He was also the 1899 President of the American Psychological Assoc. (see http://www.apa.org/about/governance/president/past-presidents.aspx.

During the Industrial Revolution, workers of all ages were employed in the jobs that kept the economy going.  Women and children were employed for lower wages than men, and children were quite often placed in harsh and sometimes dangerous jobs.  Over the last century formal efforts were made to protect children from exploitation in the workplace.  The US Department of Labor posts the children protection guidelines for those 18 and younger who are employed in the non-agricultural sector of the economy (see http://www.dol.gov/compliance/guide/childlbr.htm Retrieved 13 April, 2010).  As you read from these provisions, you will notice that the issue of schooling is factored in:

"Minors age 16 and 17 may perform any job not declared hazardous by the Secretary, and are not subject to restrictions on hours Minors age 14 and 15 may work outside school hours in various nonmanufacturing, non-mining, nonhazardous jobs listed by the

Secretary in regulations published at 29 CFR Part 570 under the following conditions: no more than three hours on a school day, 18 hours in a school week, eight hours on a non-school day, or 40 hours in a non-school week. In addition, they may not begin work before 7 a.m. or work after 7 p.m., except from June 1 through Labor Day, when evening hours are extended until 9 p.m. The permissible work for 14 and 15 year olds is limited to those jobs in the retail, food service, and gasoline service establishments specifically listed in the Secretary's regulations. Those enrolled in an approved Work Experience and Career Exploration Program (WECEP) may work up to 23 hours in school weeks and three hours on school days (including during school hours) These are taken from Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 (FLSA), as amended (PDF)

By federal mandate children are no longer exploited and put into danger. If that were to happen, the penalties to the business and corporation become punitive. Some form of schooling is also required. Today, many teenaged children are employed part-time. Some work with their parents, others babysit or do odd jobs, and still others are employed in the community. Teens have been participating in the labor force by the millions. Figure 1 shows their proportion of labor force participation with estimated numbers. In 1980 8.8 percent of the labor force was comprised of teens (1990 was 6.2%; 2000 was 5.8%; and 2008 was 4.4%). The child labor laws protect all of these teens except the 19 year-olds who are protected under the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (see www.osha.gov).



Figure 1. The Proportion of United State's Labor Force comprised of 16-19; 20-64; and 65+ Year-olds from 1980-2008
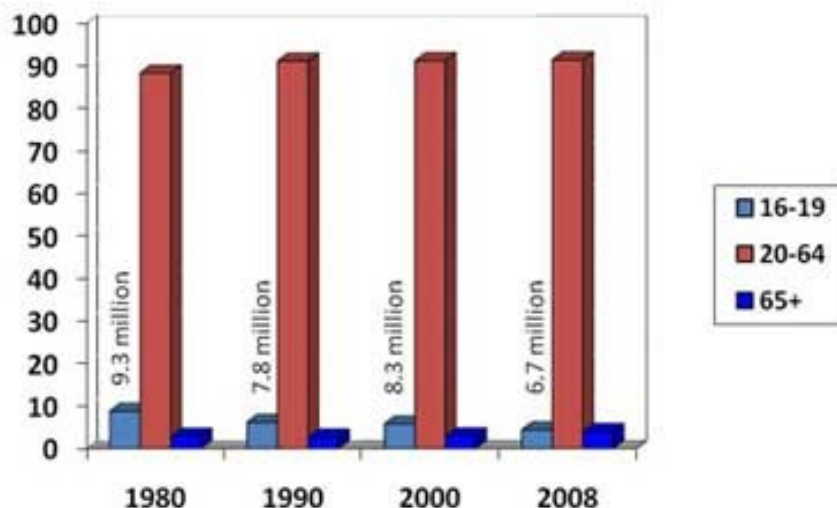
Why teens go to work in our society is interesting, some teens work to help out their families, others want to save for college expenses. Still others want to make a specific purchase (see http://www.pbs.org/newshour/extra/features/jan-june04/jobs_6-21.pdf retrieved 15 April, 2010 teen workers face dismal summer job outlook June 21, 2004). Regardless of the motivation, early work experience benefits teens by helping them to get into college, building their resumes, and developing personal character and a strong work ethic. At a teen hiring website there is an article that documents the declining jobs available for teens in the US. (http://www.teens4hire.org/articles/joboutlook.asp). Their studies indicate that in 2010 about 80 percent of US teens want to work, but the jobs will

not be there for all of them.  Still, this generation of teens is work-minded and likely to gain some work experience at some level before age 20 and most likely work while attending school.

## Education

Childhood education has been compulsory in the US for more than a century, with the first mandatory education laws emerging in the North Eastern states.  In the US today most children have to be educated between ages 5-18, depending upon state laws.  The K-12, Kindergarten through 12th grade model is the most common model of education in the US.  Students can attend parochial schools, private schools, public schools, and/or home schools.  Public schools are funded by the state (through taxation) and regulated by Boards of Education.  Parochial schools are typically controlled and funded through either private or religious organizations.  Home Schooling is the process of educating children in the home using family, friends, and consultants as educators.

There has been a steady growth in the resistance among parents to send their children to public schools.  Safety, religious concerns, quality of education, content of education, and other concerns relating specifically to the child have fueled this growth.  Teachers unions and the National Education Association oppose home schooling in the US, yet homeschooling is increasingly being adopted in the US and other Western nations as a common practice.  (see Lips, Dan, Feinberg, Evan (2008-04-03). "Homeschooling: A Growing Option in American Education". Heritage Foundation. http://www.heritage.org/Research/education/bg2122.cfm. Retrieved 2008-08-15).

Studies of homeschooling versus other forms of schooling have shown trends in competence and, at times, excellence when comparing homeschooled to public schooled student achievement (see http://www.hslda.org/docs/nche/000010/200410250.asp. Homeschooled children have recently won state and national Spelling and Geography Bees which has served as an affirmation to many homeschoolers about their efforts in behalf of their children.  Many online homeschooling support websites have emerged to provide support and directions to parents who want to homeschool their children (see www.K12.com , www.keystoneschoolonline.com , www.CalvertSchool.org , www.homeedmag.com/ , www.homeschoolcentral.com/ ,or  www.hslda.org/.

Most US children are educated in public schools.  In 2008 there were 8.7 million nursery and kindergarteners, 32.3 million elementary, 16.7 million High school, and 18.6 million college students in the US (retrieved 15 April, 2010 from http://www.census.gov/population/www/socdemo/school/cps2008.html.  Education plays a key role in the economic quality of life for children when they become adults. Here's the fact, pure and simple-more education means more money and opportunity in the United States.  Typically, the higher your education the higher your: economic status, power, prestige, and levels of property.  Socio-Economic Status (SES) is a combination of one's education, occupation, and income and has been found to be highly correlated with a better quality of life for those in society who have higher SES scores. There is more job stability (less unemployment and more pay) for those with higher educations.

A recently published E-article articulated the many benefits of college graduation (see "Education Pays: The Benefits of Higher Education for Individuals and Society" by Sandy Baum and Jennifer Ma; in Trends in Higher Education Series 2007 Taken form

Internet on 23 March 2009 from

Baum and Ma also pointed out that the higher your education the better your medical insurance, health, lifestyle for family and next generation, contribution to society, and more. Education, especially earning degrees, is a doorway to many life-long payoffs to college graduates. You need education because we live in a credentialed society. Credentialed Societies are societies which use diplomas or degrees to determine who is eligible for a job. The key in the US is to graduate every chance you get. Certificate is 1-year past high school, Associates is 2-years degree, Bachelor's is 4-year degree, Masters is another 2-year degree past Bachelor's, and Doctorate is another 4-6 years past Bachelor's degree.

Look at Figure 2 below to see the relationship between higher education levels and the "American dream" or "Ideal" lifestyle. Education is the great equalizer and allows the tradition of college attendance and graduation to be introduced into any individual's personal and family life experience if they so desire and can muster the personal work and commitment along with the resources needed to attend then graduate. Tens of millions in the US have zero, nada, or no medical or health care coverage. Most of them have lower education levels and little to no college education. The extremely poor and disabled may have limited government coverage, but most poor and near poor have no medical insurance.



Figure 2. How People Get the Best US Jobs

For the most part, working class and middle class people have some level of medical insurance. Interested in a job or career with yearly salary and not hourly pay? Interested in medical benefits and year-end bonuses with paid time off and vacations? Then you need at least a Bachelor's, Master's or Doctoral degree, or you may be from the top 10-25 percent of our economic strata that are born into privilege. They get the educational levels, social networking, marriage market, and overall better life chances that only money can buy, including exclusive education, prep-school, admittance into competitive programs, and Ivy League launch pads.

Table 1 also shows the levels of income typically associated with these degrees. The difference between high school dropouts and graduates is about $8,100/year more for graduates or, on a 35-year career in the labor force, at least $283,500 more money earned by graduates. What would a 4-year Bachelor's degree add per year? $19,400 per year for Bachelor's grads compared to high school grads or $679,000 in 35 years of career work. A 4-year degree is financially well worth it.

| Table 1. Degrees and Median Incomes Associated with Them | |
| --- | --- |
| **Degrees** | **Median Yearly Incomes** |
| Drop out | $23,400 |
| High School | $31,500 |
| Vocational Certificate | $37,100 |
| Associates | $40,000 |
| Bachelor's | $50,900 |
| Masters | $61,300 |
| Doctorate (Ph.D.; Ed.D. ; JD,; or MD) | $79,400 |
| Specialization or Post-doctoral education | $100,000+ |

Extracted from Baum and May (2007) Figure 1.1 Median Earnings and Tax Payments of Full-time Year-Round Workers Ages 25 and Older by education Level, 2005

When students ask me how I feel about taking out student loans, I explain the following to them:

If you choose to go to college and forfeit full-time wages to become a full-time student you will lose about $126,000 of wages while in college. Plus, it might cost you another $25,000 in student loans or expenses. So you could conclude that it cost you about $151,000 to earn a 4-year degree. Subtract that $151,000 from the extra $697,000 and you end up a $546,000 net increase in career earnings, even accounting for missed wages and student loan expenses. So, going to college pays, but how does dropping out of high school affect individuals and society?

The worst possible scenario in terms of work and lifestyle is to drop out of high school, and millions drop out each year in the US. Table 2 shows the dropout rates by racial classification for the US. By far, Asians Americans dropout the least at only 18.7 percent, followed closely by Whites at 22.4 percent. Hispanics, African Americans and Native Americans each have over 40 percent dropout rates-all that income lost, all that lifestyle forfeit, and all those other benefits of higher education missed.

| Table 2. Dropout rates by Racial Classification in The United States 2007 | |
| --- | --- |
| **Racial Classification** | **Percent Dropping Out of High School** |
| Native American | 49.4% |
| African American | 44.7% |
| Hispanic | 42.2% |
| White | 22.4% |
| Asian American | 18.7% |

Extracted from Jason Amos, (August 2008) Dropouts, Diplomas, and Dollars: US High Schools and the Nation's Economy taken from Internet on 24 March 2009 from http://www.all4ed.org/files/Econ2008.pdf All4edu funded by Bill and Malinda gates Foundation.

Jason Amos (2008) in his study of US dropouts also stated that:

"Individuals who fail to earn a high school diploma are at a great disadvantage, and not only when it comes to finding good-paying jobs. They are also generally less healthy and die earlier, are more likely to become parents when very young, are more at risk of tangling with the criminal justice system, and are more likely to need social welfare assistance. Even more tragic, their children are more likely to become high school dropouts themselves, as are their children's children, and so on, in a possibly endless cycle of poverty (page 7)."

Truly this is an accurate statement. The US has some of the best educational opportunities for average children to acquire a good public education. But, it lacks cultural motivations that translate across racial and ethnic lines in such a way that education becomes valued and pursued by average children as a way of opening doors and improving life chances for themselves and their families. It is a paradox in the context of Weber's life chances, because so many life chances are readily available to average people, yet, they are refused or ignored by millions.

Amos (2008) also pointed out that high school dropouts from the Class of 2008 will lose $318,000,000,000 in lost lifetime earnings. They will be more likely to be arrested and use welfare for another combined cost of $25,000,000,000 to local and state agencies (page 8). The billions of lost earnings and judicial and welfare costs translate to a lower collective standard of living that could be corrected and improved upon if dropouts would graduate or even go back to earn their high school equivalency diploma, GED.

Figure 3 shows US dropout rates by race for 1972 and 1980-2006. Overall, the dropout rate has been slightly declining for years, but remains disproportionately high for non-Whites. This confirms data listed above and shows that it has been an ongoing problem, especially where non-White schools and districts have been historically underfunded at the basic level of need.

Figure 3. Percentage of United States High School Dropouts by Race for 1972, 1980-2006
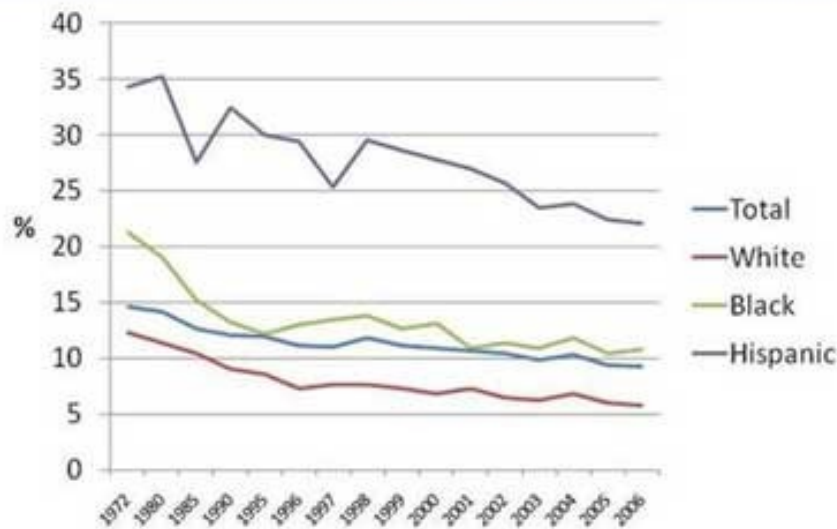
## Marriage and Divorce Issues

Marriage is a legal union between a man and a woman. Although some US states are allowing for same-sex marriages, those are the exceptions rather than the national norm, for the moment. Current US marriage laws date back to traditions and practices from Europe, especially from the United Kingdom. Generally speaking, in European and early US history, marriage was a legal issue of property ownership-the man had legal rights to his wife that fell clearly under the legal property right laws. Sad as it sounds, hundreds of years ago, a wife was a man's property. Historically a woman and man were married by the authority of a clan, tribe, religion, or family member.

European governments asserted rights over legal marriages starting in about the 1700s. One law in Scotland was designed to stop secret marriages (see "An Act for the Better Preventing of Clandestine Marriage"). More and more governments demanded the right to declare a marriage as being legal. After the laws and traditions were in place, spouses were found to have certain rights and obligations toward one another. Children born to the same parents have consanguineous relationships with their parents and siblings, these are often referred to as blood-ties or genetic ties in modern-day terms.

Upon marriage couples form matrimonial relationships with one another. These are called affinal relationships which form through the marriage of a bride and groom and socially bind the extended family members into in-law type relationships. Also, long before genetics were discovered, exogamy rules applied which mandated that adults marry outside of one's family of origin and/or close range of cousins. For non-family members, endogamy rules apply which suggest the need for a marriage of people of similar categorical backgrounds and walks of life. Table 3 shows a list of these rights.

| Table 3. Modern-day Marital Rights and Obligations to Spouse in The United States |
| --- |
| 1. To act as protector, nurturer, and supporter of one's spouse, even in difficult times. |
| 2. To accept one's spouse's trial and calamities as your own while also accepting his or her gains or windfalls as your own |
| 3. To provide sexual pleasure and services to one another |
| 4. To declare (in almost all cases) exclusive sexual access and sexual fidelity to one's own spouse and none other |
| 5. To claim rights to property and legal protection under the state recognized marriage |
| 6. To provide unpaid service to one another in support of the couple's overall economic well-being |
| 7. To co-own debts and obligations |
| 8. To own and claim rights to property, inheritances, and assets |
| 9. To serve as co-parents in the capacity of legal guardians of the children |
| 10. To have social and religious claim in extended family relationships |
| 11. To act, if needed, in each other's behalf legally and in informal ways |

These rights and obligations may be obvious once you read them. But, they provide clear boundaries that facilitate the smooth functioning of families in the larger context of society. Family laws and rights undergird the regulation and governance of private property, the upbringing of children, and the interaction of the state with individual families.

## Death of a Spouse

What happens when a spouse dies? The man who loses his wife to death is called a widower while the woman who loses her husband to death is called a widow. Property rights almost always default to the surviving spouse upon the death of a husband or wife. Prenuptial agreements are contractual pre-arrangements agreed to prior to the marriage which identify the distribution of wealth if a divorce or death transpires. These agreements, if made according to law, trump traditional survivor and inheritance practices.

Wealthy couples who remarry, famous couples, and wealthier people who have more wealth at stake tend to make pre-nuptial agreements prior to marriage more than do average couples. One critic of pre-nuptial agreements told me that "a pre-nup is nothing more than an agreement to end the marriage before it ever really starts." I disagree. With great fortunes at stake, many children protect their inheritances from potentially greedy spouses by forcing or encouraging pre-nuptial agreements.

Inheritance patterns use to follow a patriarchal pattern of father to son. This was during the early colonies which eventually formed the United States and also thereafter for decades. Remember, back then a wife was protected as the man's property. The widow was also felt to be protected by her oldest son. In modern law, the widow or widower now receives all assets and debt obligations of the deceased spouse. In a few societies, inheritances are passed from mothers to daughters to granddaughters, these are called matrilineal inheritance patterns. Patrilineal inheritances are passed from grandfathers to fathers to sons.

Legal wills are documents prepared by individuals and filed with the state in which the person lives and which dictates how inheritances and assets are to be distributed after the death of the individual. When there is no will (this is called dying intestate) and few

assets, declaring the distribution of assets may not matter.  Where a will is in place and is verified as being valid by the state (this is called probating the will) all creditors and debtors are notified and after a lengthy court and legal process, the will is executed.  This probation of the will can be very expensive.  An executor (male) or executrix (female) legally ensures that the will is followed.  A living trust is a legal action that puts a person's assets into an Internal Revenue Service-classification that shelters assets from taxes and protects the person's allocation of assets from the public eye.  Again, wills and living trusts are more often utilized by wealthy and/or famous persons who have more property at stake.

## Divorce Laws

What happens when marriages end in divorce?  This is much more complicated than simple wills and trusts.  Most couples have no pre-nuptial agreement, so assets and debts must be divided.  Most couples have children, and if they are under age 18 when the divorce is filed for, then child custody terms have to be settled.  During a divorce, child custody or child guardianship is the legal right an adult (most often a parent) has to act in behalf of a minor (less than 18 year old) child. During marriage, either parent can act in the child's behalf. After divorce, legal arrangements have to be articulate stating how the child or children will live since their parents are no longer married.

One of the most common settlements of child custody after divorce is joint custody.  Joint custody is an award of custody to both parents wherein the child is considered to live physically at both addresses (the mother's and the father's). The judge agrees to and signs divorce papers stating how the child support will be paid, how the children will visit the other parent over the course of the year, and how adjustments to the visitations arrangements are to be agreed upon and made.  Child support is a legal agreement on how much money a parent must pay for the care of a child after divorce. Child support is most often associated with sole custody arrangements, but may be present under joint custody as well.

Sole custody is an award agreed to and signed by a judge where one parent is considered the custodial parent and where visitation with the non-custodial parent is scheduled over the course of the year. The phrase, "sole physical custody" is often used to describe sole custody, because the custodial parent spends the majority of the child's life with them and ensures that the non-present parent gets scheduled visitation with the child.  A non-custodial parent is the visiting parent in this type of custody arrangement.

Often the non-custodial parent agrees to pay maintenance support to their ex-spouse in the form of alimony.  Alimony is financial support to an ex-spouse. Alimony may be short or long-term rehabilitative to support an ex-spouse getting up on their feet as independent bread winners, and/or compensatory reimbursing an ex-spouse for support and investments made over the course of the marriage.  The court considers the duration of the marriage, the spouses' ages, the income of both parties, health of both parties, and if a party is female or male (alimony is more often awarded to females).

Child support payments most often are made directly to the state and dispersed according to court orders.  When child support payments are not made, the non-custodial parent is considered delinquent and is often referred to as a "deadbeat parent."  I personally dislike this label and find that an absence of payments of child support does not always a

deadbeat make. There are disabled, challenged, and at times unemployed (or underemployed) parents who may desire to fulfill their financial obligations to the child, but simply can't. When child support and/or alimony are not paid, ex-spouses often appeal to state recovery services agencies that have legal power to garnish wages and attach assets and tax returns so that divorce-decreed support is collected. As mentioned in Chapter 12, no-fault divorce completely changed the nature of the divorce process and settlement in the United States.

For most of US history, fault had to be proven in order for a divorce to be granted. I've often taught my students that prior to 1969 you had to prove that "your spouse was a louse to get them out of the house." Today, no-fault divorce is the common practice. In no-fault divorce, couples can dissolve a happy marriage, a functional marriage, even a convenient and congenial marriage with no regard to who is at fault for the marriage ending in divorce. California was the first to pass a no-fault divorce law which went into effect in 1970 (see the California Family Law Act of 1969). Almost all the other states except New York followed suit (most passed similar laws by 1983). Interestingly, other countries did not follow the no-fault example set by the United States.

No-fault divorce eliminated the need for the expenses of developing a court case and having an adversarial battle with the ex-spouse. It allowed couples to declare "irreconcilable differences" and simply move on with their lives, without each other. I personally know a 90 year old man whose wife filed for divorce after a 7-year attempt at their first marriage (during the 1950's). He told me that the judge would not grant her a divorce, but was willing to grant him one. It turned out that she refused to consummate their marriage (have sexual relations with him), but had sex with other men. In his words, "the judge said I deserved a divorce, but she didn't. So, I agreed to end the marriage."

An annulment is a legal decree that the marriage is void-as though the marriage never happened. Annulments are decrees as though there never was a marriage. Annulments are not just handed out easily. They are often filed for very early in the marriage. They often take into considerations unexpected extremes such as failure to share the marriage bed; illegal activities and/or fraud, infidelity, and even insanity.

I personally know another man who discovered that his new wife had been unfaithful to him the day after they returned from their honeymoon. She had sex with her ex-husband. When the man made this discovery after their 15th anniversary he confronted his wife. She filed for divorce and the marriage was ended in six months. Had the early affair been discovered immediately, he may have been able to apply for an annulment. In very rare cases kidnapping can be grounds for an annulment. This might be if it was later discovered that one of the spouses was forced to marry in the first place (I realize how bizarre some of these extremes sound).

Divorce has been found in most societies and cultures of the world throughout most of the recorded history of humans. The society and state in which the divorce occurs greatly influences the reconciliation of assets and liabilities during the divorce process. For those with modest assets and liabilities, things can be worked out with going to court. For middle-class persons collaborative or mediated divorces are more and more common. If there are children, mediation is required before divorces will be decreed. Many couples

choose to work out their divorce terms with professional help, but without attorneys-this is where professional mediation helps.

Collaborative divorces use attorneys for all the behind the scenes work and then file the results with the State courts. For mediated divorce, mediators who may or may not be attorneys work to find a mutually agreeable solution for both spouses. For those with more, things often end up litigated before a judge. Wikipedia reported that when Robert Murdoch divorced his wife it is estimated that they spent 1.7 billion US dollars on the divorce (retrieved 19 April 2010 from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_most_expensive_divorces.

Community Property (also called marital property) is property acquired and obtained during the marriage, which neither person owned before the marriage. This includes all monies earned by either spouse during the marriage plus the assets they purchased with those monies. It may also include retirements and annuities earned during the marriage, but not yet paid out. Separate Property was owned before the marriage, inherited during the marriage, or acquired after the separation. States vary on how the rules of consideration for division are considered in community property.

Most state laws mention "equitable division" when it comes to property division in divorces. But, property rarely gets divided exactly equally. According to one Web Site, "Only in Arizona, California, Idaho, Louisiana, New Mexico, Nevada, Texas, Washington and Wisconsin will division begin at 50-50 if the marriage ends in divorce" (retrieved 19 April, 2010 from http://www.equalityinmarriage.org/wdget.html). Numerous sites offer free advice for those studying or considering divorce (see http://www.eglin.af.mil/legal/diadvi.htm). You might also be interested in the Cornell web page which has an accurate summary of all 50 State's divorce codes (see http://topics.law.cornell.edu/wex/table_divorce).

As of the writing of this chapter, Massachusetts had legalized same-sex marriages. This opened a new era of issues in divorce. In a 2008 Washington Post article the issues of same-sex divorce were discussed (retrieved 19 April, 2010 from "Same-Sex Divorce Challenges the Legal System Most States Lack Law, Precedent To Settle Issues" by Lizner, D. http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/01/01/AR2008010101734.html). This article not only addresses the uniqueness of same-sex divorce issues, but also focuses on the fact that the IRS tax laws rarely address deductions and other issues which are in place for heterosexual couples. Legislatures may be waiting to see what happens, ignoring the issue, or trying to find a working consensus so that IRS tax law can be written. Essentially, same-sex marriages are so rare and unique that few laws are in place to resolve the legal equity issues. Most same-sex couples are cohabiters and their relationship breakups fall under the common-law marriage laws.

## Cohabitation

Cohabitation is very common in the US with tens of millions of cohabiters. Heterosexual and same-sex couples cohabit and when their relationships end, they typically refer to common-law marriage laws if their state actually has these laws. Most states have done away with "common-law" laws. Common-law marriages are cohabiting relationships which have no state license and typically have no marriage ceremony.

So, what is the difference between Common-law marriages and simple cohabitation relationships?  States vary, but where common-law is available these core issues are used in making distinctions. First, did the couple present themselves as spouses; second, are they of the same age required in the jurisdiction they live in to even be married; third, did they spend significant time together as a couple; fourth did they share bank accounts; and fifth, are they legally marriageable (not still married to another)?  The National Conference of State Legislatures reported that

"Currently, only 9 states (Alabama, Colorado, Kansas, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Iowa, Montana, Oklahoma, and Texas) and the District of Columbia recognize common-law marriages contracted within their borders. In addition, five states have "grandfathered" common law marriage (Georgia, Idaho, Ohio, Oklahoma and Pennsylvania) allowing those established before a certain date to be recognized. New Hampshire recognizes common law marriage only for purposes of probate, and Utah recognizes common law marriages only if they have been validated by a court or administrative order" (retrieved 17 April, 2010 from http://www.ncsl.org/default.aspx?tabid=4265).

I'd add that Utah and Washington D.C. now recognize common-law.  Common-law has few of the tax breaks that the IRS allows for married couples, but has similar division of property where states recognize them.  If children were born to the cohabiting couple and raised together, some states require a legal dissolution of the relationship to handle these post-relationship issues.

## Adoption

Another important issue relating to legal issues of the family in the broader social context is adoption.  Adoption is the formal process of making a child not born in a family, legally part of the family, having the same rights as a birth child is afforded. Adoptions are very common in the US and the world.  In every adoption there is a birth mother, birth father, adopting parent or parents, and the government that will formalize the adoption process.  In the US, one study suggested that 1.1 percent of women and 2.3 percent of men ages 18-44 have ever adopted a child.  Another 1.6 percent of the population ages 18-44 want to adopt a child (retrieved 19 April, 2010 from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/fastats/adoption.htm , Fedstats).  A 2009 Federal report commented on the characteristics of people who adopt who tend to be married, older, male, and have had various infertility issues (retrieved 19 April, 2010 from http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/databriefs/db12.pdf.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of White, total, and Black women who relinquished their child to adoption during the first month of life, starting pre-1973 and going up through 2002.  Fewer and fewer women relinquish their newborns to adoption.  In fact this same report suggested only 1 percent did as of 2002.  Part of the reason is the availability of both abortion and contraception to the average unwed mother.  The US passed the 2000 Adoption Awareness Act which trained pregnancy and health counselors on how to present adoption as an option to women with unintended pregnancies (see https://www.adoptioncouncil.org/infant-adoption/infant-adoption-training-initiative.html.

**Figure 4. Percentage of Children Born to Never-married Women Who Were Relinquished to Adoption During Their First Month of Life: Pre-1973-2002.**
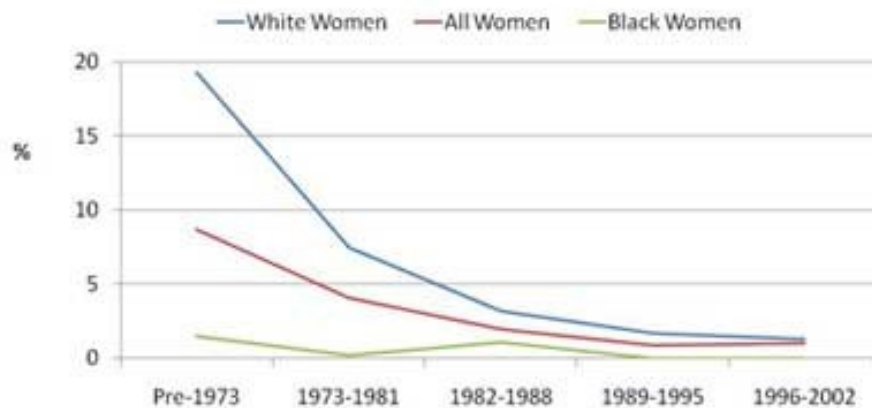
Adoptions are common both within and beyond the US. The Hague Convention on the Protection of Children and Co-operation in Respect of Inter-Country Adoption was passed in 1993. The US signed on in 1994. As of this writing, 80 nations had signed on with this convention. Basically, participating nations ensure that the safeguards for children are in place for the best interest of the child, the children are legally adoptable, proper effort is given to the child's country of origin (laws and customs), and that all legal requirements are met by the country of origin and the country the child is being adopted into at the time of the adoption (see http://adoption.state.gov/hague/overview.html). When adoptions take place, great efforts are made to protect the confidentiality of children and parents, so statistics are often difficult to come by.

In spite of this a few statistics are known. According to http://www.adoptioninstitute.org/ FactOverview/international.html there were over 250,000 children adopted to the US between 1971 and 2001 (retrieved 19 April, 2010 Factsheets on Adoption). There were 2 girls for every boy adopted and 80 percent were ages 4 and under. Asia provided almost 60 percent of the adopted children, followed by Europe, Mexico, and South America. Without exception, lawyers are needed to assist parents through the very difficult and tedious processes of conforming to the Hague Convention while adopting internationally. The US State Department, Office of Children's Issues recently reported that over 50,000 children have been legally and successfully adopted from Russia (retrieved 19 April, 2010 from http://adoption.state.gov/news/russia.html). Russia was recently in the news because a set of US parents sent their troubled Russian child back home after his issues surpassed their willingness or capacity to meet his needs.

The United States has an organization that assists families, states, and government entities with adoption issues. It is called the National Council on Adoption at https://www.adoptioncouncil.org/. Even birth parents can go here for support. Biological fathers and mothers have to relinquish their rights to the child. This does not always take place if the father is out of the picture and does not know about the child, or if the father cannot be located. Many adoption advocates argue in behalf of consideration of father's rights.

Parental rights are the legal rights and obligations afforded to the birth or adopted parents. If a child is born, these legal rights are in place. If a parent adopts a child, then it

is the court that grants him or her, their parental rights. These rights include obligations to care for and be responsible for the child. They also typically include custody of the child, visitation of the child, ability to represent the child and speak for the child in medical, legal, and social matters, the responsibility to raise the child, the obligation to keep the child safe and to ensure that the child is educated, and unfortunately the obligation to be liable for any destructive acts the child may commit.

A parent or parents may voluntarily yield their parental rights to an adopting parent through the courts. In some cases the state has legal authority to take the rights of a parent under certain adverse circumstances. The parental rights have been supported up to the US Supreme Court in numerous rulings. Grandparent's rights have been established thus far as being limited to the right to request visitation and not much else. Parental rights trump grandparent rights. But, in extreme circumstances the best interest of the child is considered and courts may grant grandparents certain privileges if the court is trying to keep children off the welfare rolls (e.g., when the mother is in prison or jail).

Emancipation of a minor is the legal process of a child being freed from control of his or her parents which simultaneously frees the parents of obligations to the child. Emancipation of children is possible in most countries of the world, yet rare. A minor is a person younger than 18 in the US and can theoretically apply for emancipation if so desired. The minor would petition the court with legal assistance for emancipation and depending on the laws of that state would have to prove a case and the capacity to support him or herself (of course with an attorney's help which may even be paid for by the state).

Open adoption is when information about the parents is shared between birth parents and adopting parents. Closed adoption is when no information is shared between parents and confidentiality is enforced. Adoption is a different process than most other endeavors which family members undertake. Adoption requires a fortitude that is not needed even when homes are purchased, marriages are entered into, and wills are probated. Adoption has a "cloud of uncertainty" that hangs over it. When parents want to adopt they have to pay money for legal support, initiate a relationship with the birth parent (if the adoption is open), decide if they actually want to adopt the child, and then endure through the uncertainty of the adoption process that may take years.

Don't get discouraged about adoption. Thousands of parents adopt each year. Just realize that adoption includes the adopting parents, birth parents, grandparents (at times), courts, and multiple jurisdictions. My friends have one son they are the birth parents to and three adopted children. They went to Lithuania to adopt their 2nd child. He had been abused and neglected so it took them 4 years to even be able to hug him. They adopted their 3rd child from California. They adopted their 4th child from Alabama. The children are all teens now and the oldest child married last year. Sounds cut and dry doesn't it?

Here is the rest of the story. Over the years they tried to adopt three children from a mother who was institutionalized for mental illness. They had those children for 6 months before the mother backed out. "Total emotional devastation" was how they described being torn from these children. Years later they called us and announced that they had 2 newborn twins that were extremely high risk health and medical-wise. They

paid the mother, followed through with the legal process and the mother backed out three days before her grace period ended.  She kept their money and placed the twins into the state foster system until she was released from prison.

My other friend, who adopted, took a year to get all the financial, legal, social, and physical issues resolved.  Her adoption was finalized and she has been the mother of this wonderful young man for 10 years now.  She told me that adoption is not the same as birth because there is always a small question mark floating above the whole thing.  "That question mark is really big during the adoption process.  Once it's all legal, my son's birth mother could show up at any time into his life.  She could sue, she could kidnap him, or she could decide she needs to be his friend.  I know these are not very likely, but we adoptive parents live with this when birth parents never have to."

Paternity is the establishment of one man as the biological father of a child.  How can you know who the father of a child might be?  I had a student in 1991 that narrowed down the potential father of her child to 3 college students that she had sex with in the course of a week.  Thousands of years ago, it would have been nearly impossible to establish which provided the sperm that fertilized the egg.  Today we have DNA tests. If the man and woman are married, then paternity is assumed to be assigned to the husband.  If there is an out-of-marriage pregnancy, paternity can be established to within 99.9 percent accuracy with a DNA test involving only a painless swab inside the mouth.  If the father is not the sperm donor, then the likelihood may range from zero (not the father) to a few percentage points.  If the tested person is a close relative of the father (brother, father, or uncle) that can also be established.

A biological explanation of the test was available on 20 April, 2010 at http://bioforensics.com/conference/Paternity/.  When paternity and maternity are in place, legal guardianship is granted.  A Legal Guardian is the steward or person authorized to act in behalf of the child in all manners. Guardianship is clear in cases of birth and adoption.  But, what happens in cases of criminal behavior, abuse, neglect, and other nefarious circumstances where the child is at risk of harm?  State legal practice allows courts to appoint a guardian in place of the legal parents when needed.  When this happens, legal guardianship may be granted for a period of time for the child.

A Guardian ad litem is an adult appointed to represent the interest of the child during divorces, abuse, neglect, or other hardships where the child's interests need to be protected independent of the parents.  When a court appoints an ad litem for a child it is called a Court Ordered Special Advocate (CASA). In 1977, a Judge named David W. Soukup initiated CASA and it was later adopted, boasting 68,000 CASA women and men in the US (retrieved 22 April, 2010 from http://www.in.gov/judiciary/galcasa/about.html.  One of my students served as a CASA, advocating for children in a bitter, other-accusing, and generally nasty divorce.  She truly felt a need to protect the minor child and was given authority and legal backing to do so.  In the end, the child's parents divorced, but their efforts to use this little girl as a pawn in their cruel game of divorce chess was greatly limited.

## Chapter 16 Violence and Tragedies

**Family Functions and Dysfunctions**

Families are functional at some levels and simultaneously dysfunctional at others. No two families are exactly alike and very few families experience blissful ideal family experiences. Think about it, how could a family be ideal when its members are mortals? It can't. Even in the history and myths of ancient civilizations, families had dysfunctions. For example, Father Abraham's polygamous family had two sons, Ishmael (first-born) and Isaac (second-born). Ishmael and Isaac could not live together because their family broke up as a result of their mothers not getting along (their descendants still hold traditional enmity over these issues). Royal histories are filled with sibling rivalry, incestuous relationships, and violence.

The Roman lore of its founding history includes the fight between two adult brothers over what would eventually become Rome, wherein the twin boys were nearly drowned by their uncle (search Romulus and Remus to be surprised at who these twin's step-mother proved to be). Ancient Greek mythology is also full of family feuding and fighting and discord (search Prometheus, Hercules, Oedipus, and Narcissus). And these characters were assumed to be gods! Again, all modern families have functions and dysfunctions.

Family functions are the tasks and goals that support and sustain the family. Dysfunctions are failures in the family to accomplish these tasks and goals. Functions are intended. Dysfunctions are typically unintended. For example, family members do not intend to establish poor communication patterns, invisible sexual boundaries (incest), or economic hardships. The basic family functions which are intended include: economic cooperation, control of sexuality, socializing children, identity and social status, and social and emotional need fulfillment.

Figures 1 and 2 show diagrams of how family functions and dysfunctions can be compared to an equalizer on a stereo system. In Figure 1 this family meets the needs of communication, boundaries that are in place and maintained, economic cooperation, nurturance through relationships, raising the child/children, and offering love and support to other family members. Some families meet family members needs better than others. These are often referred to as being high resource families. There are other families that meet some needs well and other needs poorly.

Figure 2 shows a family that meets most needs poorly. These are called low resource families. This family fails to meet the needs of communication, boundaries that are in place and maintained, economic cooperation, nurturance through relationships, raising the child/children, and offering love and support to other family members. This looks like a hopeless situation, but with voluntary efforts at seeking help or even involuntary efforts (state intervention), more resources could be attained and the family may improve its functionality.

Figure 1. How Families are Functional or Dysfunctional in Meeting Specific Needs: High Resource Family
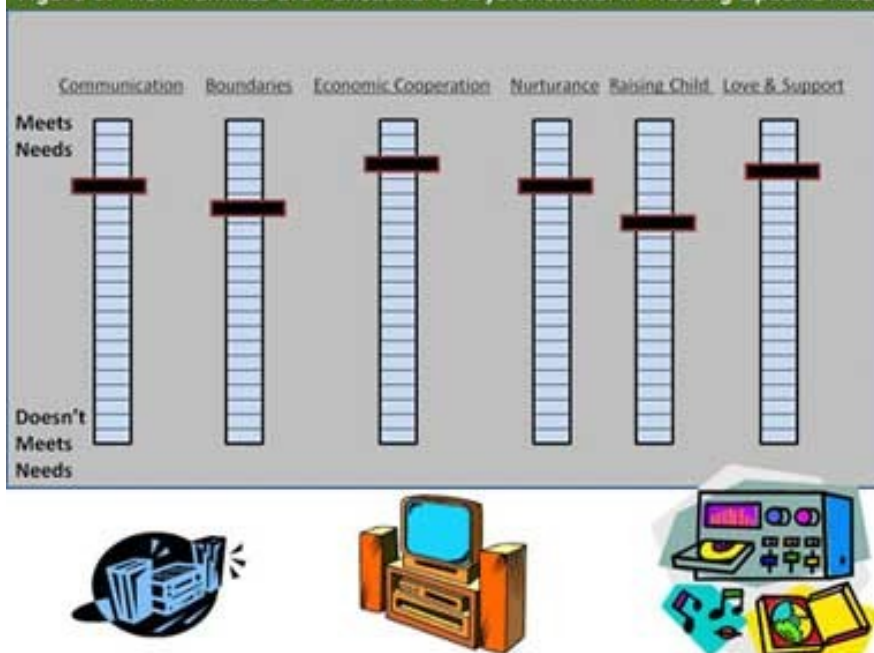


Figure 2. How Families are Functional or Dysfunctional in Meeting Specific Needs: Low Resource Family
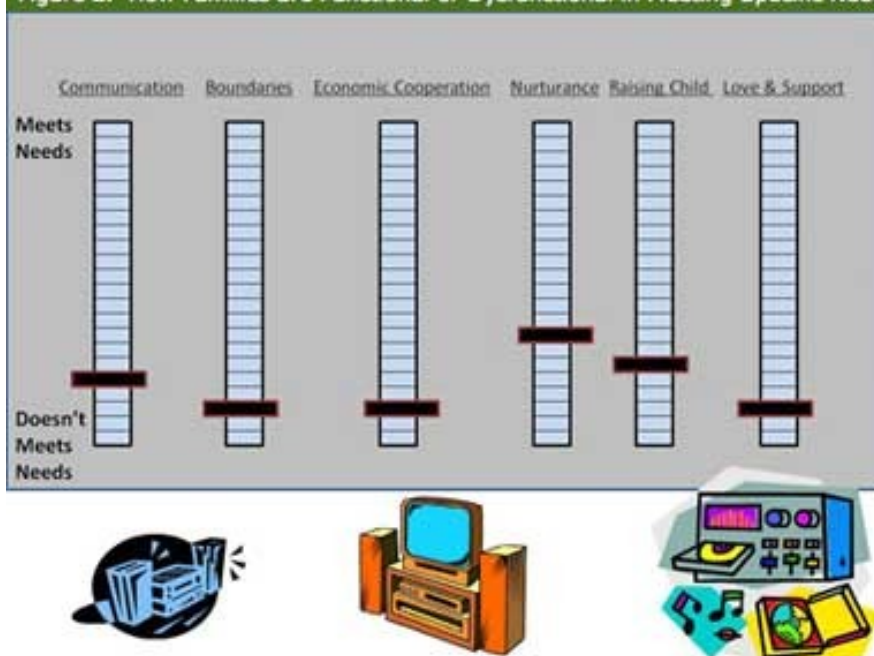
Family dysfunctions can be handed down from generation to generation, with few family members aware that something is wrong in the family system. I know of a 62 year old man who shared with me in private that he was the first in a long line of family members who did NOT sexually abuse other family members. "I broke the chain of abuse," he declared. His father would not acknowledge the abuse, much less talk to him about his having broken the chain.

## Violence and Abuse

Family Abuse is the physical, sexual, or emotional maltreatment or harm of another family member. It is unethical, immoral, and illegal. If you were like me, and you grew up in an abusive home, please accept the fact that it was not your fault. Abuse is perpetrated by powerful people on less powerful people. Young children should be protected by older family members from predators and non-family members who could cause harm. If you were not protected, or worse, if you were preyed upon by someone who was supposed to protect you, then it is their fault not yours!

You may have heard that there is a chain of abuse passed from parent to child to grandchild. That may be true, but not if you don't want it to be in your case. Some estimates place it at 1 in 3 sexually abused children grow up to be abusers. Many abuse survivors are meticulous about marrying non-abusers and about over-protecting their children from potential abusers. Based on my professional and private research in the area of surviving abuse, I'd urge you to seek professional help and support for dealing with your childhood traumas. There are numerous free resources including: http://www.ascasupport.org/; http://www.sexualabusesurvivors.com/; and http://www.providentliving.org/ses/emotionalhealth/0,12283,2112-1,00.html. Again, it is not your fault. But, healing is your responsibility. It is not enough to simply ignore or deny the abuse. That would be like trying to heal from a 2-inch wood sliver that is lodged in your leg by simply ignoring it.

Sexual abuse is a particularly sinister form of abuse. The American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry reported that 80,000 cases of child sexual abuse are reported each year in the US with many more cases unreported (retrieved 23 April, 2010 from Child Sexual Abuse, "Facts for Families," No. 9 (5/08) http://www.aacap.org/galleries/FactsForFamilies/09_child_sexual_abuse.pdf). They list possible symptoms:

"Sexually abused children may also develop the following: unusual interest in or avoidance of all things of a sexual nature, sleep problems or nightmares, depression or withdrawal from friends or family, seductiveness, statements that their bodies are dirty or damaged, or fear that there is something wrong with them in the genital area, refusal to go to school, delinquency/conduct problems, secretiveness, aspects of sexual molestation in drawings, games, fantasies, unusual aggressiveness, or suicidal behavior"

Nowhere in this document (or any professional document based on treating survivors) does it blame the victim. Yet, it does urge adult and child survivors of abuse and their family members to seek out professional help and support.

One way to approach child abuse awareness and prevention as a parent or grandparent is to teach your child a simple rule about their safety. Many of the available programs on child sexual abuse prevention use the "No Touch" style of this rule. I teach my students to teach their children this simple rule-no one should touch you where your shirt and shorts cover your body! That is your "no touch zone." Don't let anyone touch your chest, tummy, hips, buttocks, between the legs, or thighs. If anyone does, then scream "stop!" And tell your mom or dad, teacher, or other trusted adult. There is a useful PDF file on preventing sexual abuse provided by the Centers for Disease Control at http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pub/PreventingChildAbuse.html

Now you also have to teach them the difference in a family hug and unwanted

inappropriate touch.  But, teach it!  That's where most parents fail in this regard.  They don't want to talk about it (especially if their own wounds are unhealed) and they rarely bring it up.  Of special concern to me as the father of 5 sons is the increasing trend of adult female to teen male sexual abuse trends.  The news regularly broadcast stories of teachers, teacher's aids, coaches, and mothers of the teen's friends who are seducing and raping teen boys.  Most states do not prosecute these abuse cases as they would a male adult to female minor case (often called forcible or statutory rape).  Both boys and girls should be protected from sexual misconduct by adults with the threat of felony charges for the adult perpetrator.

Recent US data indicates that there were 3,200,000 alleged cases of child abuse in neglect in 2007 (retrieved 23 April, 2010 from http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/CM-DataSheet-a.pdf).  After investigation, about 794,000 were classified as victims.  It was reported that 59 percent were neglected, 4 percent suffered emotional abuse, 8 percent suffered sexual abuse, and 11 percent suffered physical abuse.  They also reported that girls were slightly more abused than boys (52% to 48%) and that women abused slightly more than men (56% to 42% with some cases the sex of the perpetrator was unknown).

Figure 3 shows child abuse data from 2000-2007 for males, females and total. Again female children were slightly more likely to be abused than males.  I find it comforting that the number of substantiated cases declined between 2006-7, but this drop still represents hundreds of thousands of cases.  The actual number of cases may be 2 or 3 times that high, since many cases go unreported.  Figure 4 shows the specific types of abuse that have occurred. These too are declining yet consistent in their relationship to one another.

Other national studies of child abuse report similar findings (see U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Children Youth and Families. Child Maltreatment 2007 [Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 2009] available at: http://www.childwelfare.gov.2.Finkelhor, Ormrod, H, Turner, H, Hamby, S. The Victimization of Children and Youth: A Comprehensive National Survey. Child Maltreatment 2005; 10:5-25.3.Theodore, AD, Chang, JJ, Runyan, DK, Hunter, WM, Bangdewala, SI, Agans,R. Epidemiologic Features of the Physical and Sexual Maltreatment of Children in the Carolinas. Pediatrics 2005; 115: e330-e337).

The US now has a national Child Abuse and Neglect Data System (NCANDS) which is designed to gather more accurate data on child maltreatment.  Restricted usage files of state case-level data are available for researchers from the National Data Archive on Child Abuse and Neglect at www.ndacan.cornell.edu In addition, aggregated counts of key indicators by State are available for 1990-2007. The Child Maltreatment reports are available on the Internet at http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/stats_research/index.htm#can" (retrieved 23 April,2010 from http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/cb/pubs/cm07/cm07.pdf).

Figure 3. Numbers of US Child Abuse Cases Substantiated between 2000-2007
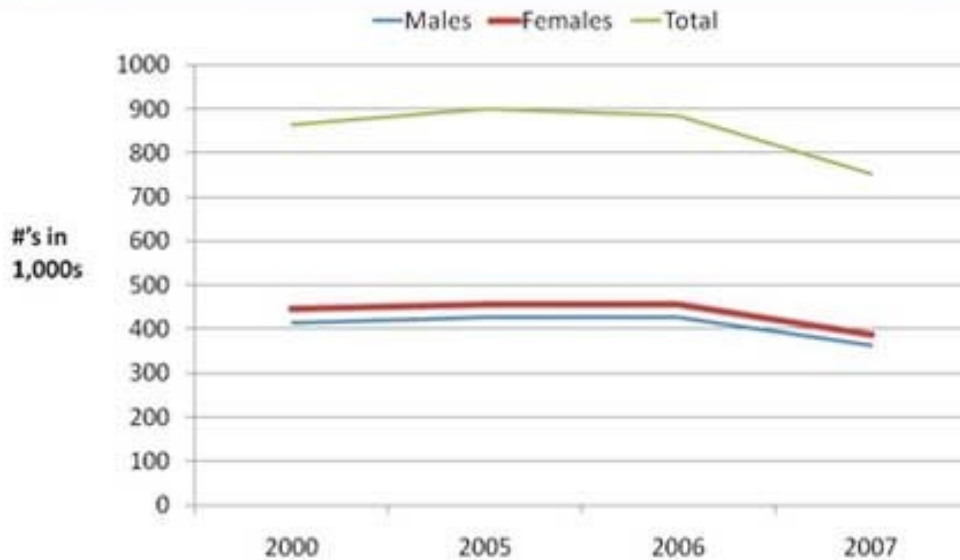
Figure 4. Numbers of US Child Abuse Cases Substantiated between 2000-2007
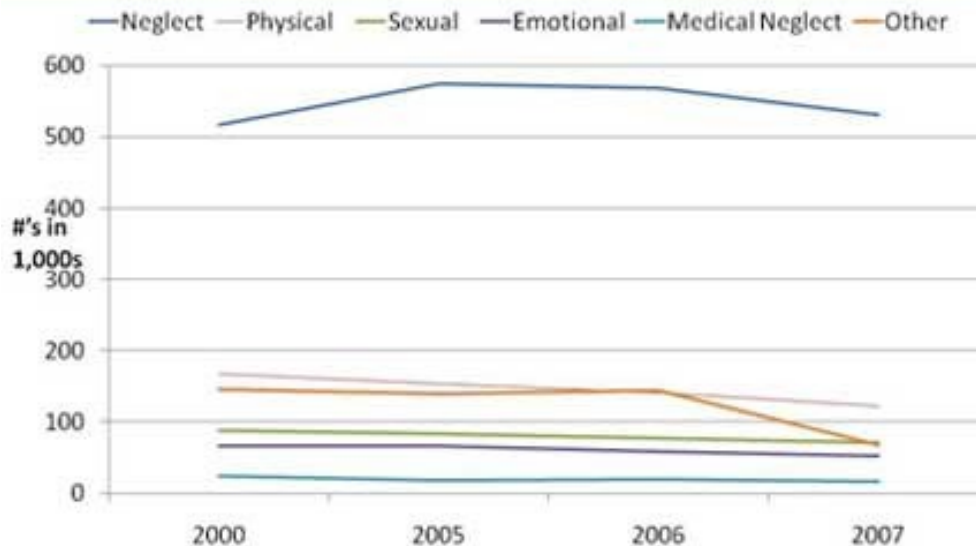
Figure 5 shows the numbers of child abuse victims by their ages. The 18+ category was less than 1,000 cases per year, but it still occurs. Even children who are old enough to vote get abused sometimes. The highest numbers of abuse cases were found among the 2-5 year olds with rates getting lower and lower for the older children. One website reported that 12 percent of high school girls and 3 percent of boys had been sexually abused (retrieved 23 April, 2010 from http://www.rainn.org/get-

information/statistics/sexual-assault-victims).



Figure 5. Numbers of US Child Abuse Cases Substantiated between 2000-2007

—0-1 years  —2-5 years  —6-9 years  —10-13 years  —14-17 years  —18+ years
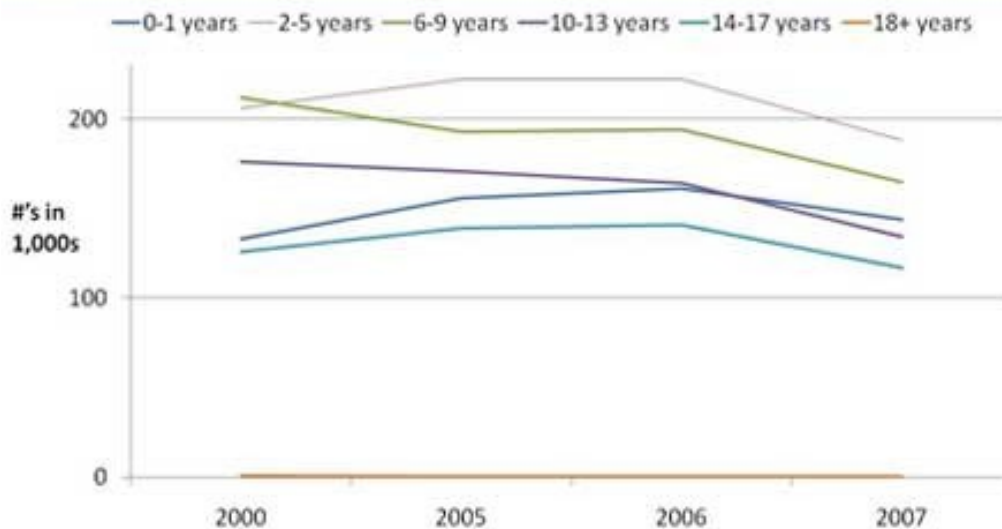
Over half of the reports of child maltreatment came from professionals (57%). This report stated that in 2007 about 1,760 children died, mostly from neglect. The World Health Organization published the "World Report on Violence and Health. In 2000 it was estimated that 57,000 children died from maltreatment worldwide (retrieved 23 April, 2010 from http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/violence/global campaign/en/chap3.pdf).

In families, abuse may also be perpetrated by adults against adults. When violence occurs between adult spouses and partners, it is often called intimate partner violence or IPV. The CDC provides a useful definition: "In the context of this document, intimate partner violence (IPV) is defined as actual or threatened physical, sexual, psychological, emotional, or stalking abuse by an intimate partner. An intimate partner can be a current or former spouse or non-marital partner, such as a boyfriend, girlfriend, or dating partner…" (retrieved 23 April, 2010 from http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/dvp/IPV/IPVandSV-Screening.pdf). The guidelines in this PDF file focus on frequency of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse which includes a body map to document physical damage. Questions include: have you ever been (or recently): hit, slapped, kicked, or otherwise physically hurt by someone close to you (partner, spouse, close friend) or has anyone forced you to have sexual activities?

Other assessments ask these questions: are you in danger now, is the perpetrator here with you now, do you have a safe place to go to after the treatment, do you feel in danger, are any children in danger, are drugs and/or weapons involved, and how serious have the threats been?

The US Bureau of Justice Statistics reports crime for each year. In 2007 there were 186,560 crimes perpetrated by spouses and 79,860 perpetrated by ex-spouses. (Retrieved

23 April, 2010 from Criminal Victimization in the United States, 2007 Statistical Tables http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/cvus07.pdf).  These included 153,790 assaults by spouses and another 63,650 assaults by ex-spouses.  These also included 20,670 rapes and sexual assaults by spouses and another 6,200 by ex-spouses.  Quite disheartening was the report that almost 60% of victims did NOT report their crime to police (this is a victimization survey, not just police data). The BJS estimates for 2008 yielded these statistics:

  * About 22% of murders in 2002 were family murders.

  * Of the nearly 500,000 men and women in state prisons for a violent crime in 1997, 15% were there for a violent crime against a family member.

  * Intimate partners were responsible for 3% of all violence against males and 23% of all violence against females in 2008.

  * Family violence accounted for 11% of all reported and unreported violence between 1998 and 2002.

(retrieved 23 April, 2010 from http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/index.cfm?ty=tp&tid=94).

In another BJS report for the year 2008, it showed how many cases of violence were perpetrated on males and females and who did the violence (see Figure 6).  Females were over 5 times more likely to be attacked by their intimate partner than were males (504,980 female being attacks to 88,120 males being attacked).  They were also about twice as likely to be attacked by a relative as males.  Males were more likely to be attacked by a friend or acquaintance.  The Rape Abuse and Incest National Network reported that 3 percent of men had been victims of attempted rape or rape in their lifetimes and about 1 in every 10 rape victims is male (retrieved 23 April, 2010 from http://www.rainn.org/get-information/statistics/sexual-assault-victims).  For a comprehensive overview of rape and the related issues of blame see http://freebooks.uvu.edu Chapter 20.

Figure 6. Numbers of Violent Crimes Against Males and Females for 2008

Males attacked by Friend/Acquaintance = 1,114,410 times

Females attacked by Friend/Acquaintance = 855,740 times
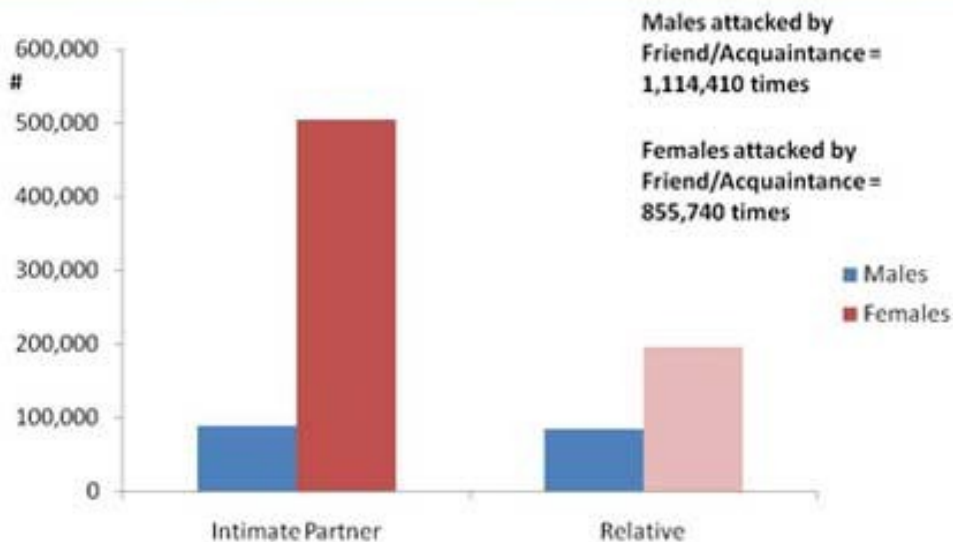
Figure 7 presents family maltreatment on a continuum of violence and control. The red bar represents behaviors considered to be abusive. In families, normal disagreements occur. These are typically not at the degree of violence or control that authorities would become involved. Most parents spank their children. This is a two-edged sword. A spanking can be a simple swat. Used rarely and with low levels of violence and control, this would not concern authorities. The other edge of the sword is that some parents use spanking at high levels of violence and control.

In the name of spanking they, may emotionally, physically and sexually (really rare) abuse their kids. I have a friend who went to a family reunion and was slapped 5 times by an angry sister during the reunion. She was 54 during this event (let me just say something. When I reference my friends, these are true stories. I try to disguise some of the details, but they are real people. To date I have taught more than 13,000 students in university or college. These stories are real). All abuse is emotional or has emotional underpinnings because in families we are emotionally connected to each other and because we all filter experience through our emotions.

I am biased about sexual abuse. Fondling, touching, and sexual intercourse are all violence to me, especially when an adult is perpetrating a child. Even verbal sexual comments are inappropriate. To me, children are to be protected and nurtured, not exploited. The laws of all 50 states concur with this opinion. But, much goes undetected from authorities. There are homes where boys and girls, teens, and even young adults are violated sexually at some level.

In one extreme case in our state, a girl was beaten so severely that she died. Her parents even beat her in her pelvic area and threw her through a sheetrock wall (www.ksl.com). Hundreds of similar stories were available, yet hers is in the hands of the criminal justice system and out of the public eye (as are so many cases like it). Except that both parents

are in prison, to the public, it is forgotten.  Physical abuse includes punches, shoves, bullying, etc.  It is extremely common and can lead to murder.



Figure 7. Family Maltreatment Considering Degree of Violence and Conflict

The sexual assault, stalking, and homicide categories of maltreatment are typically considered to be between adults and other adults, but parents do injure children to the point of death.  Current spouses, ex-spouses (partners or lovers), and relatives sexually assault, stalk, and/or kill other family members.  The first suspect in the murder case of a woman is by default her intimate partner.  Once he is ruled out, the police focus on other theories of the crime.

Family violence is common and mostly perpetrated by males on others, but males are also victims of family violence.  Even though violent crime have been declining since 1994, males are far more likely to be victimized than females (except in sexual violence).  In less common circumstances women perpetrate violence on men (see Carney M, Buttell F, Dutton D (2007). "Women who perpetrate intimate partner violence: A review of the literature with recommendations for treatment". Aggression and Violent Behavior 12 (1): 108-15).  There are networks of shelters for men abused by women and/or other men.  The easiest way for a man to get help is to call 911.  There are online resources that can provide information (search shelters for me or go to http://dahmw.org/ for more information).

Spousal and/or intimate partner abuse is extremely concerning to those who try to intervene in family violence. One study using a sample of 16,000 adults in the US, reported that 25 percent of women and 7.5 percent of men had been assaulted by their spouse, cohabiting partner, or date, this data yields estimates of over 2 million intimate partner assaults per year in the US. (Retrieved 23 April, 2010 from Patricia Tjaden & Nancy Thoennes, U.S. Dep't of Just., NCJ 181867, Extent, Nature, and Consequences of

Intimate Partner Violence, at iii (2000), available at http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum/181867.htm).  Scientists at the CDC estimate that there were over $8 billion in medical costs for spousal violence in 1995 and 8 million lost work days (Retrieved 23 April, 2010 from Intimate Partner Violence: Consequences http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/intimatepartnerviolence/consequences.html).

Intimate partner violence use to be called domestic violence.  It can be physical, emotional, sexual, threats of violence, or stalking.  Stalking is when someone harasses or threatens another repeatedly, even knowing their pursuit is unwanted. Various studies indicate that intimate partner violence is more common among the poor, unemployed, younger parents, and substance abusing partners in society (retrieved 23 April, 2010 from http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/topics/crime/intimate-partner-violence/causes.htm).  The best strategies for intervening include: arrest of the perpetrator, protection orders from courts, prosecution of perpetrators, and batterer intervention programs (retrieved 23 April, 2010 from http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/topics/crime/intimate-partner-violence/intervention.htm).  Unfortunately, the victim often refuses to follow through on pressing charges.

It is very important to understand how violence and abuse transpire in intimate relationships.  A 2006 study was published which identified the nature of control and violence between the 2 people involved.  The researcher, Michael P. Johnson, reported that four categories emerged:

"Intimate terrorism is where the individual is violent and controlling, the partner is not. In violent resistance, the individual is violent but not controlling, the partner is the violent and controlling one. In situational couple violence, although the individual is violent, neither the individual nor the partner is violent and controlling. In mutual violent control, the individual and the partner are violent and controlling" (retrieved 26 April, 2010 from http://vaw.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/12/11/1003; Violence Against Women, Vol. 12, No. 11, 1003-1018 (2006):Conflict and Control).

In the 1970s, new models emerged which helped professionals understand and intervene in abuse.  These models focused on the cyclical nature of abuse (see Walker, Lenore E. (1979) The Battered Woman. New York: Harper and Row).  That means abusers typically cycle in and out of violence with their intimate partners.  For example, after the relationship becomes established abusers go through a stage of tension and frustration build up.  These times are filled with perceived offenses by the perpetrator who begins to define himself as being victimized.  Eventually the perpetrator attacks and releases this pent up anger and hostility.  Shortly thereafter he feels remorse and reconciles himself to his family member (victim).

Sometimes there is a phase of calm that last until the perpetrator recycles back into the tension and frustration build up stage again, repeating the violent cycle over and over (see Mills, Linda G. Violent Partners: A Breakthrough Plan for Ending the Cycle of Abuse (2008) for more details on how to break the cycle as a victim).  Why women and some men stay with their abuser is difficult to explain, but is a major component of successful efforts to intervene.  Some have learned that this is part of an intimate relationship-to suffer and forgive.  Others stay because they see no economic possibilities if they did leave.  Others stay to minimize the relationship break up and the impact the harm of that

breakup may cause to their children.  Communities have responded to this ongoing problem in multiple ways and at multiple levels.  Coordinated efforts have been designed to get police, medical personnel, courts, family, and other social agencies working in the same direction for the best outcomes (reduced abuse).  The most common model used today to intervene in domestic violence is called the Duluth Model.

The Duluth Model came in the 1980s from Duluth, Minnesota where an experiment was attempted that united 11 community agencies to reduce violence against women (see http://www.theduluthmodel.org/history.php).  This model claims that it is the community that controls abusers (not the spouse), that there are differing types of abuse and each must be responded to in appropriate ways, that socio-economic and historical factors of persons involved must be considered, and that intervention must include perpetrators and victims (Retrieved 23 April, 2010 from The Duluth Model home page at http://www.theduluthmodel.org/duluthmodelonpublic.php).

Critics of the Duluth model point out the absence of counseling and therapeutic efforts.  Other critics argue that it is the court and legal avenues that ultimately protect the victims.  Intervention Models often include Duluth and cognitive behavioral therapy plus community intervention strategies.  One study found that when considering the most common intervention models, there was really no strong indication that one might be better than the other (Retrieved 23 April, 2010 from http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/topics/ crime/violence-against-women/workshops/batterer-intervention.htm#bips).  The Duluth Model and its many variations, when combined with other strategies, are the best way to manage and intervene in family violence cases.  One emerging effort designed to encourage abused people to leave the relationship is called the Hope Card Project (see http://www.hopecardproject.com/faq.html).  This will help people across municipal jurisdictions to transition away from abusers and into abuse free circumstances.

There is also a concern about the large numbers of elderly abused by younger family members. Family elder abuse is the maltreatment of older family members in emotional, sexual, physical, financial, neglect, and other ways, especially where trust was expected and violated (see http://helpguide.org/mental/elder_abuse_physical_emotional_sexual_neglect.htm). Cooper et al. (2008) estimated that 1 in 4 elderly persons may be at risk for abuse in Western Nations (see Cooper C, Selwood A, Livingston G (March 2008). "The prevalence of elder abuse and neglect: a systematic review". Age Ageing 37 (2): 151-60. doi:10.1093/ageing/afm194. PMID 18349012. http://ageing.oxfordjournals.org/cgi/pmidlookup?view=long&pmid=18349012.).

The American Association of Retired Persons estimates that $2.6 billion dollars is lost each year from younger persons abusing the finances of the elderly (retrieved 27 April, 2010 from http://bulletin.aarp.org/yourworld/law/articles/how_can_we_protect_against_elder_abuse _during_a_down_economy_.html).  The National Center on Elder Abuse reports that Care facilities also work diligently to prevent sexual, emotional, physical, and other forms of abuse by employees and family members.  This Center estimates about 2 million elderly who've been abused, even though it admits that there is no uniform system in place to track the abuses (retrieved 27 April, 2010 from http://www.ncea.aoa.gov/ncearoot/Main_Site/pdf/publication/FinalStatistics050331.pdf).

## Marital Stressors

There are other family tragedies that families must deal with over the life course of the family. The life course of the family can be defined in relation to their time together, children, ages, and work experiences. Young families tend to be between ages 20- 30s, they have young children, are establishing their careers and buying assets, and have less than a decade together. These families have many stressors that accompany the process of establishing their family. Normative stressors are expected life events and processes that bring stress by virtue of their nature. Normative stressors get heavy for young families. Having a baby, getting a new job, and buying a home are all normative stressors.

Many married couples experience a noticeable decline in marital satisfaction which accompanies the birth of their first child. Judith Wallerstein is quoted as having said, "Each couple must embrace the daunting roles of parents and absorb the impact of her majesty the baby's dramatic entrance while protecting the couples' own privacy" (see The Good Marriage By Wallerstein, J. S. & Blakeslee, S. 1995, Houghton Mifflin: NY). Many researchers have established a decline in marital satisfaction after the birth of a child, especially the first child. The better the couple are as friends, the less the impact the first child has on their marriage. To transition to the role of parents, it was found that couples who work closely and in a mutually supportive manner make the best adjustments (retrieved 26 April, 2010 from http://www.apa.org/monitor/jan01/parenthood.aspx).

When we bought our first home, we purchased it through friends who were eager to sell and move. They lowered the price for us. Because we got along so well, things went easier for all of us. But, it was by far the most stressful experience of our married lives. We spent 2 weeks arranging our finances, getting all the legal paper work in order, helping them by keeping appointments with inspectors and closing agents, and beginning to pack our belongings. We simultaneously put our mobile home on the market. The day of the closing, minute details threatened the paperwork so much so that we truly reached the point of believing it through. We eventually signed and succeeded in buying the house. The next day, our home sold and the process of appointments and inspections began from the seller's point of view-then came the move. Our friends moved out. We helped them clean. Then we moved in. We got all of our belongings into the house by about 11:30 at night. The first night in our house we slept on the floor, exhausted to the core of our souls. Buying this house was a huge boon to us. But, even though it was a normal thing for a US family to do, it was very stressful.

Middle families tend to be in their 30-50s, their children are teens or young adults, they are in mid-career, and financially established with a home and cars. Middle families launch children into college, military, and jobs while maintaining steady earnings. They typically have retirement investments and are paying off mortgages and other loans. As they age into their 50s they find that some of their married children return home for a short season because of marital or financial hardships. Parents begin to witness the death of their own parents and siblings and are made much more aware of their pending move into the ranks of the elderly. These families have fewer normative stressors than the younger families.

Elderly families have more freedoms from childrearing than the younger families have.

They are 60 plus and are often grandparents, have their homes paid off, and are looking forward to retirement.  Their grandchildren graduate college and become parents in their own right.  They have experienced the passing of their grandparents, parents, aunts and uncles, and siblings.  They also have begun to face the sober realities of their biological health declines.  These families have far fewer normative stressors than  younger families.

Acute stressors are typically unexpected, sudden, and demand tremendous resources to cope with them. Bankruptcies, illnesses, crime victimization, loss, and natural hazards are just a few of the acute stressors that could impact a family.  Wallerstein and Blakesly (1995) also reported that happily married couples had "confronted and mastered the inevitable crises of life, maintaining the strength of the bond in the face of adversity." Stuff happens and some of it is truly acute and stressful.

In the 1970s, two psychiatrists named Thomas Holmes and Richard Rahe developed a scale that measured life stressor that could have impacted an individual or his or her family over the last 3 years (see Holmes, T.H. and Rahe, R.H.: The social readjustments rating scales, Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 11:213-218, 1967, also see another approach from Brown, G.W. and Harris, T.O.: Social origins of depression: A study of psychiatric disorder in women. London: Tavistock, 1978).  For families in the young family stage, getting married, having a baby, buying a home, or having a parent die ranked as the most stressful events.  For middle and older families, having your spouse die, divorce or separating, moving, and being married were among the most stressful events.  In this paradigm one of these events can be coped with fairly well if the family members can gather enough resources to meet the challenge.  Two or more acute stressors can pile up into your normative stressors and overwhelm you to the point of illness.  This happened to me recently.  My father died of cancer, we nearly lost an investment that would have financially ruined us, our married son and his wife moved back home with us then had a baby (they both lost their jobs), I had a car wreck, and I was promoted to Assistant Department Chair.  This is on top of all the normal life events we have as parents of three teenagers and employees.  As Homes and Rahe predicted, I had surgery.

My life is not that bad compared to our friends.  Our best friends from junior college suffered an accident in 1991 when one of their 18 month old twins ran underneath a truck and was instantly killed.  This tragic loss impacted them, us, friends, and family. To this day, this has proven to be the most intense stressor they have faced.  They survived the loss, but if you were to ask them, it still exists as a tender part of their feelings.  How families respond to stresses make a huge difference in their quality of life. Researchers have established that stress can strengthen you or destroy you, depending on how you cope with stressors as individuals or families.

When a series of normal and less significant stressors accumulate it can have the same effect as a major acute stressor.  If both happen together, stress can pile up.  Stressor pile up occurs when stressful events accumulate in such a manner that resolution has not happened with existing stressors before new stressors are added. Stressor pile up can be detrimental if adequate resources are not obtained to meet the demands of the stressors (search Hill and McCubbin's ABCX Models).

This generation of families does not share the same conservative financial tendencies as did the generation of our grandparents.  In the US, many desire to have what they desire now, even if debt has to be incurred to get it.  Now-time gratification (also called present time) is the individual perspective that seeks immediate satisfaction of their needs, wants, and desires.  Delayed gratification is the individual perspective that has patience, the ability to invest time and efforts now in hopes of a payoff down the road. Delayed gratification is very common among college students who are willing to put in 4-6 years for the promise of a life-long career of better earnings and life experiences.

Bankruptcy often occurs among those who are now-time oriented and fail to wisely manage their resources.  A bankruptcy is a federally authorized procedure that allows families (businesses too) to be relieved from liability from its debts and to arrange partial repayments through court ordered relief strategies. The American Bankruptcy Institute keeps track of bankruptcies in the US and report hundreds of thousands of bankruptcies each year (http://www.abiworld.org/AM//Template.cfm?Section=Home).  The majority of those are non-business consumer bankruptcies.  Chapter 7 (quickest and easiest for business and individuals) and Chapter 13 ( has a built-in repayment plan) are the two most common forms in the US. Bankruptcy does not allow persons to walk away without repercussion.

The 2005 Bankruptcy Abuse Prevention and Consumer Protection Act mandates partial repayments and an 8 year waiting period before refilling (see "Hearing before the Senate Judiciary Committee on Bankruptcy Reform", 109th Cong. February 10, 2005. Retrieved 27 April, 2010).  Consumer misspending and mismanagement of funds contribute to a great deal of bankruptcies, but medical bills are often reported as being the cause for half of all bankruptcies in the US (see http://www.theatlantic.com/business/archive/2009/02/what-causes-personal-bankruptcy/4683/).

Medical expenses cost billions to US consumers and can easily bankrupt under-insured and non-insured people.  One of these medical concerns includes problematic childbirths.  Over 4 million babies are born in the US each year and only 1 percent were born away from a hospital in 2006 (retrieved 27 April, 2010 from http://www.hhs.gov/news/healthbeat/2010/03/20100329a.html).  In 2005 it is estimated that $32 billion was spent on childbirth expenses in the US ( retrieved 27 April 2010 from Big Money: Cost of 10 Most Expensive health conditions Near $500 billion http://www.ahrq.gov/news/nn/nn012308.htm).

**Pregnancy and Delivery**

A normal pregnancy takes 9 months or 38 weeks after conception.  Most babies are born without complications, but it would be considered extremely risky to try childbirth without professional help.  Figure 8 shows the death rates for Infants (birth-1 year olds), Neonates (<28 days old), and Postnates (28 days-11 month olds).  All rates have been declining since 1983, but the odds are still very high that something could go wrong.

Figure 8. Numbers of Deaths of Infants, Neonates, and Postnates per 1,000 US Live Births, 1983-2005
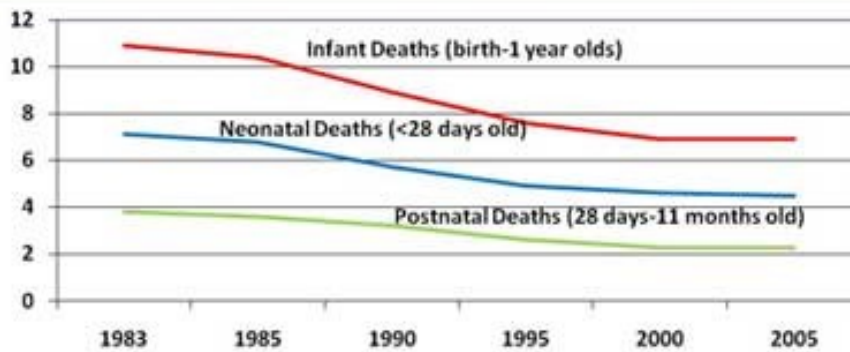
After the 37th week childbirth can happen at any time.  There are three distinct stages of childbirth.  In the first stage, the cervix in the lowest portion of the uterus (see Chapter 7) begins to dilate and efface.  Dilation is the opening of the cervix which stretches the membranes in such a way that effacement or the thinning of the cervix occurs. For the most part, because of contractions of the uterus and muscles surrounding the cervix, the cervix stretches and opens to an undetectable level before the newborn delivers.  In the second stage, the baby is pushed down and out, hopefully with its nose facing toward the mother's buttocks and in the head first position.  The top back (crown) of the baby's head typically presents first and this is called crowning when it can be seen in the opening of the birth canal.  The shoulders deliver first one then the other by lifting then lowering them in such a way as to get one shoulder past the tail bone and the other past the pubic bone.  The baby completely exits the mother's body after the shoulders deliver.  Once delivered, the baby takes a first breath.

In the third stage, the placenta delivers.  If the baby delivers foot or hand first, buttock first, or in any other presentation different from head down and face down toward buttocks, the odds of complications and death increase.  The mother also is at risk of complications and death.  Some mothers die due to bleeding complications from childbirth (although very rare).  The CDC reported that in 2005 12.4 women per 100,000 who gave birth died (retrieved 27 April, 2010 from Health, United States 2009; Table 39 http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/hus09.pdf).  Caesarian sections (C-sections), or the surgical removal of the fetus form the mother through her abdomen, are common when complications are detected.  They are much more intensive in terms of healing for the mother, yet far less risky to mother and baby (see http://www.marchofdimes.com/pnhec/240_1031.asp for more details on C-sections).

During pregnancy a woman will either deliver the baby alive, deliver a baby that died in the womb (still birth), abort the fetus, or miscarry. About 1 in 5 US pregnancies ended in abortion in 2005, or 1.2 million abortions (retrieved 27 April, 2010 from Table 101 Abortions-Number and Rate by State of Occurrence, 2000 and 2005, and Residence, 2005 http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2010/tables/10s0101.pdf). Miscarriage (also called spontaneous abortion) is the involuntary ending of the pregnancy by the mother's body, typically considered a default process when or if something is abnormal about the fetus or pregnancy. A woman cannot will her pregnancy into miscarriage, nor can she stop a miscarriage simply by changing her attitude.

Table 1 shows the top causes of death for 2006 for the US.  The older a person is the

closer their age-specific risks of dying match the top 10 cause in Table 1. Please note that smoking/tobacco use is associated with the top 4 causes of disease. The known strategies that can be used to minimize your risk of dying from these diseases are as follows: no tobacco (ever), moderate use of alcohol (or none), regular exercise, healthy diet, sleeping 7-9 hours, manage stress, and plan to be healthy so that the end of your life is less troubled with chronic disorders.

The cause of death most associated with college-aged students (15-34) is as follows: accidents, suicide/murder, cancer, heart disease, and AIDS (HIV). AIDS stands for Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome. In the US, AIDS is transmitted mostly from males to males via unsafe sex, but is increasingly transmitted heterosexually between males and females (retrieved 27 April, 2010 from http://hivinsite.ucsf.edu/InSite?page=kb-01-03#S1.5X). World-wide most cases are found in Africa and by far the most common form of transmission is heterosexual unprotected sex and mother-to-child via pregnancy and breastfeeding. Worldwide, AIDS was diagnosed in 33.4 million people in 2008 and about 1,000 children get AIDS each day from their mothers (retrieved from World Health Organization 27 April, 2010 from http://www.who.int/hiv/en/). About 2 million die from AIDS each year, especially in Africa and Asia where most cases are found.

**Table 1. Top Causes of Death in the United States: 2006**

1. Heart Disease at 631,636
2. Cancer at 559,888
3. Cerebrovascular diseases at 137,119
4. Chronic Lower Lung Diseases 124,583
5. Accidents 121,599
6. Diabetes Mellitus (adult onset) 72,449
7. Alzheimer's Disease 72,432
8. Flu/Pneumonia 56,326
9. Kidney Problems 45,344
10. Septicemia (infection of body) 34,234

Retrieved 27 April, 2010 from Table 117. Deaths and Death Rates by Leading Causes of Death and Age: 2006 http://www.census.gov/compendia/statab/2010/tables/10s0117.pdf

Other Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs, now referred to as STIs or sexually transmitted infections) are common among young people. Figure 9 shows the rates of three of the US's most common STDs. In the US, Chlamydia is increasingly occurring and is also the most common STD followed by Gonorrhea then Syphilis (retrieved 27 April, 2010 from http://www.avert.org/stdstatisticusa.htm). Chlamydia is bacteriological and can be cured with antibiotics if detected. The problem is Chlamydia is often asymptomatic (no or very few symptoms). Young women can be permanently damaged in their reproductive system if this disease is untreated.

Gonorrhea and Syphilis can also be treated successfully with antibiotic if treated sooner than later. But, a few resistant strains have been identified which can't be cured with antibiotics at this date. The truly difficult STDs are the viral ones: Hepatitis, Herpes, Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) and AIDS. Once contracted, they remain with the patient for life and are sometimes transmitted to partners and children. Some success has been found in treating symptoms and managing pain, but so far there is no cure. Human

Papilloma Virus is also associated with cancers and AIDS because they are often transmitted simultaneously or because people who get one are often having lots of unprotected sex and easily contract another.



Figure 9. Numbers of US STD Cases per 100,000 Population: 2004-2008
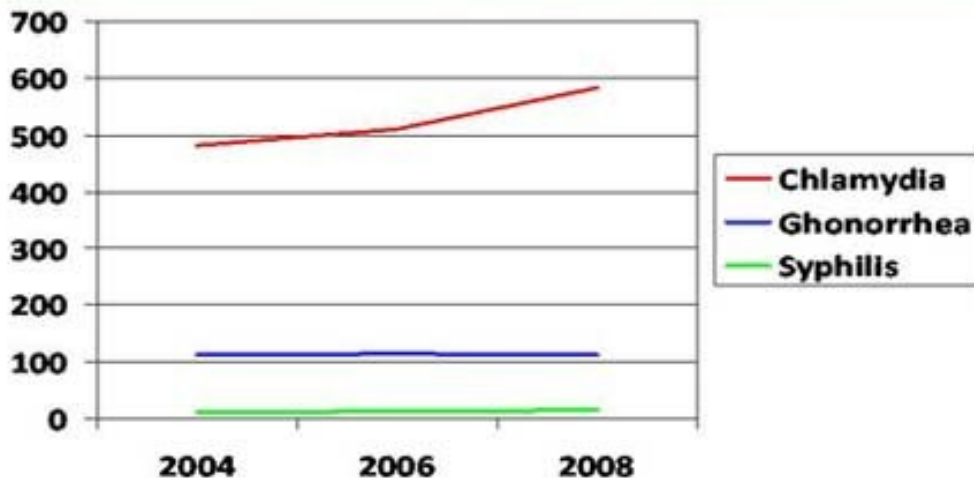
## Chapter 17 Family Strengths and the Future

The good news for fans of family relationships is that the family is here to stay. The family is by far the most enduring and central institution in society and has been throughout all human history. The family, in all its varieties and forms, is extremely salient to the United States as political, economic, religious, educational, and societal institutions that demands consideration by all members of society in the larger social and personal levels of family experience. Family homogeneity is a thing of the past. Family diversity is the theme of the future. The formation, maintenance, and perpetuation of the family will, I predict, continue as it has for thousands of years. It will adapt itself to changing technologies and economies. It will adapt itself to religious and political influences. And it will adapt itself to scientific discovery. Most importantly, and I repeat myself, it will persist as long as humans persist.

World surveys of human values continue to document the selection of family issues as the most important value to people worldwide (see http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/library/index.html). Billions continue on with traditions of tribal, monogamous, polygamous, matriarchal, and patriarchal family forms. Lesbian and gay couples continue to carve their niche into the mainstream of the various societies in which they live. Poor families, average families, and wealthy families continue to perform the core family functions and create another generation of adult children who will likely do the same by socially reproducing the next generation of fathers and mothers, husbands and wives.

The General Social Surveys are a national survey of US persons have been conducted from 1972 to present (see www.norc.org, General Social Surveys). When asked if a girl's or boy's chances for a happy family life were better than yours, about the same, or worse than yours, thousands of respondents reported that 19 percent for girls and 17 percent for boys said better, 45 percent and 48 percent said about the same, and 36 and 35 percent

said worse (retrieved 13 may, 2010 from http://www.norc.org/GSS+Website/Browse+GSS+Variables/Subject+Index/).  Most see continuity and hope for the family of the future.  In this complex society, over 1/3 responding with worry is understandable, especially for those who feel their preferred family form is threatened.

In the US families are a source of satisfaction.  When asked another question about how much satisfaction they get from their family life, 43 percent said a very great deal, 34 percent said a great deal, and 11 percent said quite a bit (retrieved 13 May, 2010 from http://www.norc.org/GSS+Website/Browse+GSS+Variables/Subject+Index/).  That was with 24,070 respondents combine in the summary.  When asked in general how satisfied they were with their family 90 percent indicated satisfaction at some level (24% Completely Sat., 42% Very Sat., and 24% Fairly Sat., retrieved 13 May, 2010 from http://www.norc.org/GSS+Website/Browse+GSS+Variables/Subject+Index/).  In the US, most are hopeful and most find family to be a satisfying aspect of their lives.

You, like many others will chose a lifestyle that includes a family in one form or another.  If so, what can be done to strengthen the family in your own home?  Figure 1 lists research-based efforts you and your family members can put forth to strengthen your family in coming years.  Let's discuss these points in detail.  Ever wonder why grandma or Mom keeps asking you to attend the family picnic or reunion?  What might they know that you don't know?  Even though it feels annoying at times, when you do attend, why are you glad you did?  Perhaps your Mom and Grandma know that family rituals, traditions, and holidays are the way to build a connection between generations, to create new memories, and to keep family traditions alive.

**Figure 1.  Strategies and Efforts That Strengthen a Family**
1. Fostering rituals, traditions, and holidays together
2. Spirituality (formal and informal)
3. Keeping Family History
4. Quality Family Time (lots of it)
5. Staying connected (resist family entropy)
6. Strengthen the couple bond (resist marital entropy "The Escalator")

Nuclear and extended families have in the past, and should in the future celebrate together.  Scientists have found that reunions and celebrations tend to promote cohesion and adaptability in family systems while offering mutual support between nuclear and extended family members.  Rituals are very important to the family.  These can be as simple as eating three meals a day together, holding weekly movie parties, buying fresh doughnuts on Saturday morning or reading to small children at bedtime.  Rituals when practiced come to be expected.  The ritual of taking Driver's education and obtaining a driver's license is a common experience.  For many family members it marks a rite of passage or an event that signifies the transition of a person from one stage in life to another (e.g., non-driver to driver).

### Religion and Spirituality

When a new driver emerges among the teen children, a new taxi driver emerges as well.  Siblings can transport family members around town and provide the entire family with

much needed support.  A first date, high school or college graduation, and even marriage are also rituals that serve as rites of passage.  There are rituals that take place outside of the family institution which are also important.  Religious rituals are found among the world's major religions.  Religion is a unified system of beliefs, rituals, and practices that typically involve a broader community of believers who share common definitions of the sacred and the profane. Religions provide meaning to us about what is sacred and what is profane.  Sacred is the supernatural, divine, awe inspiring, and spiritually significant aspects of our existence.  Profane is that which is part of the regular everyday life experience. These definitions originated from Durkheim's studies of religion (see 1947 The Elementary Forms of Religious Life, Glencoe Press reprint of 1912).  For you religion might be a personal definition of how you feel about your place in the universe. It may also reflect how you understand categories of people who share a common system of beliefs that differ from your own (Jews, Muslims, Christians, etc.).
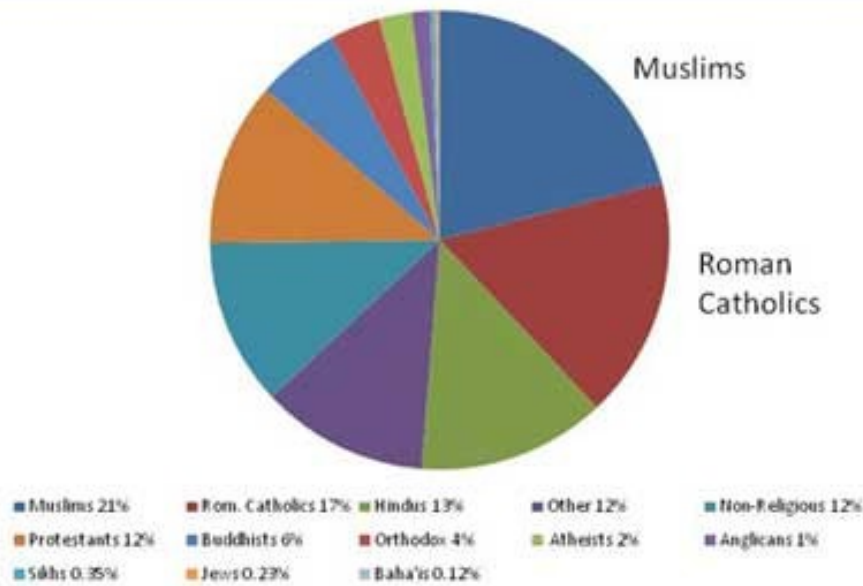
For sociologists religion is studied in two typical approaches first, a cultural approach that evaluates the religious aspects of the culture shared by followers of a certain religion, and second, the theoretical approach to religion including its symbols, functions, exchange-based interactions, and power issues.  Religion has always been an important issue at both levels of society personal and larger social.  Figure 2 shows a pie chart of the CIA's 2007 estimate of the world's composition of religious followers.  By far, Muslims collectively comprise the largest single religious belief system in the world in 2007.  Over the last century birthrates among Muslims have remained high.  By sheer numbers alone, a high birthrate among an estimated 1,300,000,000 people makes birth become a significant factor in the Muslim world growth rate.  A less common factor is that in many Muslim nations polygamy continues to be the norm with 1-4 wives being acceptable. Next is the Roman Catholic Church which has strong membership in Western Europe, Latin America, the United States and other Countries and regions.  Hindus which are primarily located in India come in a close third.  Jews which are daily discussed in the news because of international issues pertaining to Israel are ranked 12th most common in the world.

Figure 3 shows the CIA estimated US religions for 2007. The collective category of US Protestants is the largest collection of religious belief systems.  These include Baptists, Lutherans, Anglicans, and various non-Catholic and non-Orthodox Christian denominations.  Second in percentage is the Roman Catholic Church.  In contrast to the Protestant classification which is comprised of many diverse denominations, the Roman Catholic Christian Church is comprised of only one denomination headquartered in Rome, Italy.

The Roman Catholic population in the US has grown for two primary reasons, first, Roman Catholics continue to have higher birthrates than others (yet about the same for Mormons and Catholics), and second, many of our US immigrants since the 1980s come from Mexico and bring their Catholicism with them to the US.  Also from the CIA data is the fact that about 12 percent were unaffiliated, 4 percent reported none, and 3 percent chose not to specify their religion.  After that Mormons were next with nearly 2 percent. Mormons have a very high birthrate and a strong force of proselytizing missionaries throughout the US and the World.
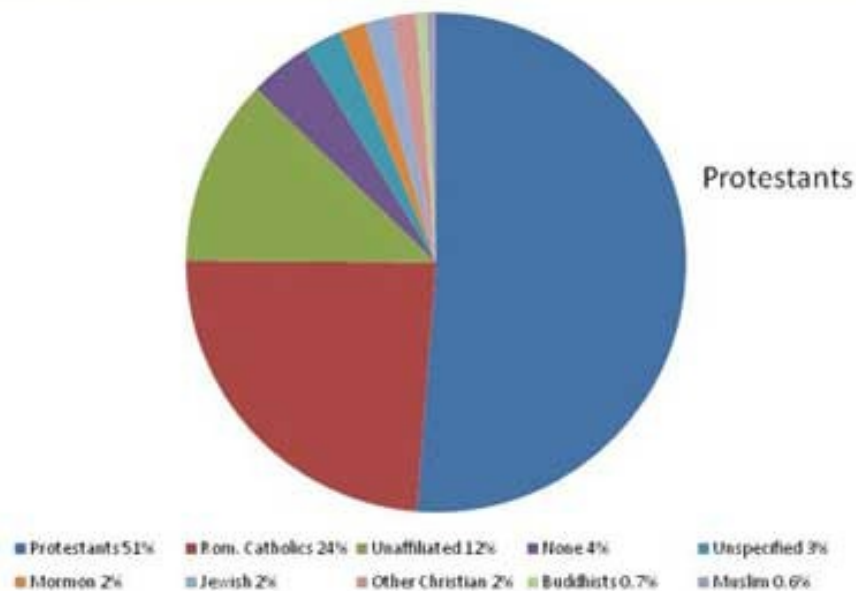
Figure 2. 2007 Estimation of Percentage of World Religions: Ranked in Descending Order Clockwise

Muslims

Roman Catholics

- Muslims 21%
- Rom. Catholics 17%
- Hindus 13%
- Other 12%
- Non-Religious 12%
- Protestants 12%
- Buddhists 6%
- Orthodox 4%
- Atheists 2%
- Anglicans 1%
- Sikhs 0.35%
- Jews 0.23%
- Baha'is 0.12%

Retrieved 22 May 2008. www.cia.gov



Figure 3. 2007 Estimation of Percentage of United States Religions: Ranked in Descending Order Clockwise

Protestants

- Protestants 51%
- Rom. Catholics 24%
- Unaffiliated 12%
- None 4%
- Unspecified 3%
- Mormon 2%
- Jewish 2%
- Other Christian 2%
- Buddhists 0.7%
- Muslim 0.6%

Retrieved 27 May 2007. www.cia.gov

In fact, religion does shape the attitudes and values of individuals. Gallup polling corporation collected US religiosity data during 2008. Religiosity is the measurable importance of religion to a person's life. Religiosity can be measured by considering how active someone feels in their religion, how often someone attends formal services, how much money they donate, how often they privately worship in their home, and other

factors.

Gallup in January 28, 2009 reported that after interviewing 350,000 US individuals, there were some collective religiosity patterns which emerged. The top 10 most religious states were all in the South Eastern US. The bottom 10 least religious states were North Eastern (7), North Western (2), and Nevada in the West. They also reported that 65 percent of people in the US said "Yes religion is an important part of their daily life" (taken form Internet 26 March 2009 from http://www.gallup.com/poll/114022/State-States-Importance-Religion.aspx).

The history of religions in the world and the US cannot be overstated in terms of the influence that formal religions exert of family systems. There are numerous religious rituals that include circumcision, blessing a newborn, baptism, rites of passage into womanhood or manhood, ancestral ceremonies, religious holiday observances, marriage, a solo quest of self-discovery, new years, festivals and commemorations of religious founders and gods, public reading of scripture or other forms of worship, and many other practices. Statistically, the most celebrated world holiday is Christmas then Ramadan. Christmas is the celebration of Jesus Christ's birth (About 2+ billion). Ramadan is the holy month of fasting and worship adhered to my Muslims worldwide (About 1.4 billion). Jews celebrate Pesach or the Feast of the Passover (About 100+ million). Hindus celebrate Hana Matsuri or the birth of Gautama the Buddha (About 700+ million).

There are many more religious holidays, but suffice it to say that religiously-based family rituals are often a source of strength to families which use them for tradition and family cohesion. Many families also have spiritual rituals independent of formal religion. There are family fasts, family prayers in behalf of others, family offerings made in hopes of receiving blessings, and family outings designed to get family members in touch with nature and the forces of peace and creation.

**Family History**

One tradition utilized by many families is that of oral histories. My family, when together for a reunion, will tell stories as a form of entertainment and bonding (Jeff Foxworthy started out in his family doing the same thing). I have many stories about my parents when they were children and about my own childhood and young adult experiences. What surprised me was how interested my own children were in them. As a young father, I was certain my children would roll their eyes if ever I shared one. One day, my wife asked me a question about growing up in Georgia. I shared a few humorous stories. She enjoyed them (one of the reasons I married her is that she thinks I'm funny as a comedian). I never dreamed my children would, but I have been a hit with my own children who repeat my stories to their friends at times. I want to share one story with you to illustrate this point.

Just before cancer took my grandfather, Frank, I found myself in his backyard helping him with his chores. He was showing me his hybrid corn that had 16 rows of kernels on extremely large cobs. We shucked the corn as the sun set behind us and the cool evening breeze blew in. Grandpa knew I loved to fish so he asked me if I'd ever heard about the world record catfish he caught when he was a young man. When I told him I hadn't heard about that one, he sent my Granny into the house get the photo album while he

began to tell me his story.

"When I was 17 I heard tell of the monster catfish that swam the bayous of Louisiana. My two buddies and me went down there to see if there was any truth to the tales. We drove for nearly a day, with three hours of it being on the dirt roads between swamps, with snakes and alligators in every ditch. When we got to the bait and tackle store it was the end of the road, we rented a flat bottom wooden boat with deep sea fishing rigs mounted to it. At about midnight, we started out into the bayou. The store owner had told us the way back into the deep waters of the swamp. We spent most of that night swattin' mosquito's and shewin' bats. Not one bite all night long. Just as dawn broke a thud vibrated through the entire boat that woke up my buddies. My pole bent over so far I thought it'd break for sure. We pulled up anchor and reeled in the other two lines. We'd caught a fish! That monster drug our boat all over the swamp, scratchin' us into thorn bushes and trying to break the line around tree stumps. Five hours passed before we got that catfish alongside the boat. I wore him out, but he made me pay for it. I still got scars in my hands from the blisters. I could never have done it alone. It was the three of us working together like a team that beat him. Well, anyway, he was too big to pull into the boat so we shot him in the head until he quit flippin' around so much. We took the anchor chain from the boat and run it through his gills, makkin' sure he didn't somehow fall off our boat and disappear into the swamp. We wanted to show everybody what we'd caught. At six that night we rowed back up to that bait and tackle shop and they'd been waitin' for us to see if they needed to go call the Sherriff for a rescue. They all pitched in and we finally got that catfish up on a tow line and hoisted him up on a deep sea fish scale. He was a new world record fish."

Of course at this point I asked, "How much did it weigh, Grandpa?" He grinned and said, "I ain't sure anymore with my memory bein' bad and all. But, he was so big that the picture they took of him came in at a weight of 32 pounds." I do hope you enjoyed that tale. "'Twasn't true" my Grandpa would say after everyone stopped laughing. My Granny was in on this too. She would go into the house to pretend to get a picture of it to help with building the suspense. Two weeks after we shucked, boiled, and ate that corn on the cob, Grandpa passed. This story was my last experience with him and it seemed to be just what he and I needed to say our goodbyes to one another. As of this writing my Granny is still alive. She was 96 in 2010, legally blind and mostly deaf, but clear in her mind and thinking as anyone my age.

She has challenged me to outlive her someday and I'm planning on doing it. My Granny was a factory mill, working with her hands, laborer who toiled for decades in a mill that no longer exists. She was a World War I widow. One of my favorite stories she ever told was about how her grandfather hid a family of "Black folk" who were former slaves in his own wagon and drove a team of horse clear up into Tennessee where sympathetic people would help them escape the KKK. My Granny was the matriarch of the family and the glue that held three generations of family together during wars, divorces, premature deaths, and lost jobs, and many other challenges. She has lived long enough to experience what in her words is "the hardest thing life has to offer," the death of all but one of her children. Her stories are the stories I tell.

Telling stories has become a lost art in some families. Professionals tell stories and there are even story telling festivals around the US if you'd like to go. But, for your family,

you would be the best story teller because your children and grandchildren would feel connected to the characters since they were part of their own ancestral heritage.  By the way, if you are one of the last survivors of the generation the story is told about, who will know if you embellished a bit for entertainment purposes?  I get away with that all the time.

All of us have an ancestral heritage.  Family history is the process of documenting and cataloging one's own ancestral heritage. Millions of family members worldwide have begun personal family histories to pass down to their children and grandchildren.  It is easy to start.  You simply write down your birth date and place and your parents' names, birthdates, and places.  Then, right down your mother's parent's birthdates and death dates if they apply.  Ask your parents to provide you with names, dates, and places of your grandparents.  Got any photographs or newspaper clippings?  It tells a better story and means a bit more if you can visualize your ancestors and what they looked like.

Years ago, I read that Spike Lee and Oprah Winfrey had a DNA test performed to discover their genealogical heritage at the biological level.  I saved my money and went to the same Website and ordered a DNA test of my own (See http://www.ancestrybydna.com/).  All it took was a cheek swap (no needles) that I mailed back into the company.  Within six weeks I discovered the geographic origin of my particular ancestral line.  Most of my genes came from the people who lived in the British Isles (British, Scottish, and Irish).  About 20 percent came from the Middle East and about 12 percent came from South East Asia.  I was very surprised to know about the Middle East and the Asia connection (this test is 95 percent accurate and can be submitted as legal evidence if needed).

I had heard from my parents that I was one-thirty-second Cherokee Indian which was a source of great pride for me.  But, my results indicated that in fact there were no Native American genetic markers in my DNA.  My son was 7 at the time of my test.  He nearly cried when he discovered he was not even a part American Indian.  The next day, he came back from school excited because when he told his teacher he was part Asian, she informed him that China was part of Asia.  He loved China and knowing that he might be related to the Chinese helped him to feel cool again. Parents who share stories with their children help them to form their developing identities.

On the Internet, genealogy and family history searches account for the second most common Internet search topics today (retrieved 18 May 2010 from http://www.google.com/trends).  Family history buffs can trace their ancestors back to the 1500s before records become sparse.  After the 1500s, only European royalty have such records.  There are a number of family history Websites to help you get started if you decided to do so (http://www.ancestry.com/ for one of the largest and most comprehensive sites).  Many who study and write down their family history share it with their children and grandchildren, creating bonds of unity that span the generations.  If you have absolutely no family records or photos, start a shoe box for your own family with newspaper clippings, photos, and dates and places.  Who knows, someday this might bond your own descendants to you?

## Quality Family Time

Another key strategy is spending quality time together as a family.  Work, school,

friends, recreation, and entertainment exact a tremendous toll on family cohesion and adaptability because it distracts them from taking time to simply be together. Family members need time together, not just doing electronic stuff, but being bored, doing chores, cleaning, or even cooking together. When we get bored we get talkative and start opening up to one another. We then get an idea of what's going on in each other's life and become aware of the details that make us who we are. We know each other's hopes and fears, concerns, and aspirations. Watching TV together is time spent together. Sometimes, that works perfectly for certain family members. Other times, conversation and interaction is needed to reinforce loyalties and affirmations of one another.

As mentioned before, doing mundane household task is a practical way to create a socially interactive moment. During the 1980s and 90s, as more and more women entered college and the labor force, a great deal of literature focused on which was best, quality or quantity time in the family. In other words, was it better to have truly meaningful and briefer time or was it better to have average meaning and more time? The answer was simple, yes to both. Husbands and wives, partners, parents and children all need time together and in today's busy lifestyles in will not happen unless you are purposeful about it. It simply takes time to experience family relationships.

All of the rituals, traditions, holidays, and spiritual approaches mentioned above are valuable because of the intimate bond that persists between family members. Work diligently to nurture and reestablish that bond throughout your life. The concept of marital entropy was presented in an earlier chapter wherein couples have to work diligently against the forces of decay and chaos that wear down their marital bond. Here, I want to mention that family system entropy is the process of decay within a nuclear family system that is facilitated by the diverse roles and demands placed on family members as they travel their life courses together. Children are very close to their parents before their teen years. It is essential to connect with children and establish a strong bond before they hit age 13.

Around the time of puberty, rational thinking processes mature, self-consciousness increases, and the importance of peer-acceptance increases. All this happens while teens prefer their friends over their family, especially over their parents. That is not to say that teens hate their parents, typically the opposite is true, they need their parents, but crave peer-acceptance and interaction. After your children hit this point in their maturation, it is crucial to become friends with their friends, to know their friends' names, feed them (I know), and host them in your home. Accepting your teen's friends increases your bond to your teens.

Of course you wouldn't accept a destructive friend who might influence your child in self-destructive ways. Most teens are not like that anyway. Here's a suggestion that my wife and I did that may help you. Just before your children turn 12, take them on a special parent-child trip. It doesn't matter where, but it works great if it's a place they'd really like to visit. Get sitters for the other children and make this a special getaway, where your child gets a special time where they bond and make memories with their parents. In our family, it became a big deal with each child looking forward to their turn.

We went to Alaska to pan gold, San Diego to Sea World, Washington DC to the National Mall, San Jose to watch whales out in the bay, Seattle to see the city and drive to Mount

St. Helens, and Jacksonville to attend sporting events and spend time on the beach. Yes, we have six children (5 boys and 1 girl). As a parent I truly enjoyed this quality time and it established patterns of being close to each child that pay great dividends now that the youngest three are all teenagers. Throughout the life course it requires efforts on every family member's part to renew and nurture the bond of connectedness.

Make sure and control your technology and don't let it control you. Remember that technology demands attention. While you use it, your attention is distracted from people. Experts have even found that driving while talking on the cell phone impairs your judgment because you are distracted mentally from the details of driving. The same is true for being distracted by TV, video games, texting, GPS, Blue Tooth, MP3 & IPod, and the computer. It is safe to assume that all our electronic gadgets are a distraction to us and they have the potential to undermine our relationships if not managed. Some families declare a techno-free day where all the electronic gadgets are turned off for 24 hours and family together time is shared.

## Resist Family Entropy

By far and with few exceptions, the marital bond is the core of a nuclear family system. Married couples are decidedly better off than singles in a number of key quality of life areas. Table 1 shows the benefits to marrieds (same as in Chapter 9). Couples may not be aware of how much their quality of life is enhanced by being married. Awareness in this case hopefully will bring a strong commitment to resist marital entropy (couples have to work diligently against the forces of decay and chaos that wear down their marital bond). Family system functions much better when the married heads of the family have strength and unity in their marriage.

| Table 1. Ten Benefits of Being Married in Contrast to Being Single |
| --- |
| 1. Better physical and emotional health |
| 2. More wealth and income |
| 3. Positive social status |
| 4. More and safer sex |
| 5. Life-long continuity of intimate relationships |
| 6. Safer circumstances for children |
| 7. Longer life expectancy |
| 8. Lower odds of being crime victims |
| 9. Enhanced legal and insurance rights and benefits (tax, medical, and inheritance) |
| 10. Higher self-reported happiness |

Figure 4 shows the metaphor of "the escalator" as it relates to marriage. I will discuss the remainder of the efforts that strengthen the family as I focus specifically on how to strengthen the marriage. The forces that work against marriage in our complicated daily lives are like an escalator that is always descending. As a couple we walk upward, united against these forces. At the top of the escalator is marital strength. At the bottom is marital chaos and decay. If we don't purposefully work to improve our marriage and to resist the downward and decaying forces that work against it being resilient, adaptable, strong, and pleasurable, then we may find ourselves sadly disappointed at our marriage's final destination. When couples decide to end a marriage, they could if so desired, chose to get back on the escalator and try to rescue their relationship (search Divorce Busters on

Internet).  But, it is the small daily supportive and preventative efforts that work better, long before things have fallen apart for the couple.  A marriage is never truly lost if each spouse is sincerely making a go at staying together and improving things.  The best literature on marital permanence and quality indicates that it must be intentional, concerted, and purposeful.

Look to the right side of Figure 4 and notice the stressors that come with being parents, employed, and related to extended family.  Couples in their 40-50s face tremendous burdens from these areas.  They have teens and young adults, expenses and startup cost for their children, and their own middle lives.  The burdens are very heavy during this stage of parenting, even though things  may lighten in a matter of months once children start leaving home and forming their own families.  If couples were prudent with their finances and refused to spend the equity in their homes and cars, they could easily find themselves relatively free to do many things they'd like to do.

But many couples spend a bit more than they make and sometimes pin themselves down with debts that came with a more luxurious lifestyle than the couple could afford.  We work hard for our money, but work has become more and more stressful.  During recent recession-based efforts to reduce expenses, many companies fired or laid of employees and never replaced them.  They simply shifted the fired person's duties to others who were still working.  Thus, more work is expected with the same or less pay.

If a couple does not strategize diligently against it, the numerous demands on their time and energies can land them in a long-term fatigued state.  Once exhausted, they find it very difficult to nurture their marriage, because they are running on an individual deficit.  Add to this the fact that in the middle years, health declines settle in on the husband and wife.  These declines could be met in a united effort and adjusted to the same way, so that they strengthen rather than undermine the relationship.

Extended family may be a blessing or a curse.  Or, most of the extended family may be a blessing while a relatively small portion of the family may be the curse.  I know an elderly couple with a daughter in prison.  They are in their 80s and are raising their grandchild, more like the grandchild's parents than her grandparents.  I also know of a friend my age whose father is disabled and mother suffers dementia.  He and his wife are moving closer to his parent's home to assume the role as caregivers, even though they still have children at home.  Some of these extended family matters can be ignored or refused as far as an added burden.  Others make the couple seriously consider their values and eventually lead to more responsibility for one or both spouses (typically the wife).

Figure 4. The Efforts Couples Can Make to Resist Entropy and the Forces that Bring Decay to Their Marriage

**Efforts that Help Couples Resist the Decay of Their Marriage**
-Weekly Dating
-Continued Courting
-Daily Couple Time
-Protection of the Sex Life
-Romance Gestures
-Forgiveness of Spouse
-United and Written Goals
-Management of Stress
-Spouse Rescue Efforts
-Have Fun With and Without Children/Others
-Adapt and Eliminate
-Keep Would be Intruders Out
-Regular Getaways
-Protected Time When Disagreeing
-Seek Professional Help When Needed
-Avoid Losing Intimacy while Pursuing Long-term Goals

Marital Strength

Marital Decay and Chaos

**Factors Contributing to Decay & Chaos of the Marriage**
-Parenting Stress
-Work Stress & Demands for more Productivity with Less or the Same Pay
-Financial Burdens
-Health Declines
-Long-Term Fatigue
-Extended Family Issues
-Electronic Distractions
-In-Law and/or Extended Family Problems
-Parallel Lives
-Over-complicated Schedules
-Other Distractions
-Life's Crisis
-Grudge Holding
 -Extraneous Activities
 -3rd Party Distractions
 -Entitlement Values

Electronic distractions can be avoided if that is the couple's desire. If family members are not careful these can interfere with resolving critical issues or renewing bonds. Some couples who have issues about their sexual relationship may use TV or other electronic distractions as a tool in the effort to avoid dealing with those issues. I remember when Johnny Carson did the Late Show, a psychologist studied how couples who stayed up late to watch him felt too tired for sex by the end of the show. The article claimed that Johnny was interfering with married couple's sex lives. Outside the bedroom, video games, online entertainment, movies, Texting, and other electronic distractions can keep us apart by demanding our undivided attention.

For husbands and wives, the concept of parallel lives may be a crucial factor to understand. You see, when newlyweds marry and go through college they set a goal to get a good job, have children and raise them, buy a house, and get a retirement going. For many couples this takes place as planned. But for some, they get lost once the plans are in motion. He is the main breadwinner and is absorbed in his work. She works for pay as well and is the mother, focusing her energies in those two arenas of life. Yeah, they sleep in the same bed, but begin to live lives that are heading in the same direction, but are on different tracks-his work versus her work and home life. They travel parallel lives in the same direction and for the same long-term goals. If not careful, they begin to grow apart and feel like strangers-like they were driving on the West and East frontage roads that parallel the freeway. Strange as it may appear, some couple set out on a life long journey to reach a destination, yet fail to remain a team and sometimes deciding not to continue on together or even to the original destination.

Marriages and families can be neglected and we don't even realize it. Have you ever walked into your garage and found that years of careless storage and unfinished projects had piled up to create an unmanageable mess? I have. Our modern family lives are often

like a cluttered garage.  Sometimes when we get into the motion of daily life activities and goals we fail to realize that we as a family are overscheduled and are putting money, time, and effort into things that may not be worth it.  Sometimes, it is wise to sit down and assess what all the family is doing and if it really is in sync with the goals and aspirations of individuals and the family as a whole.  One of the criticisms of the generation of children born after 1984 is that they have to many diverse experience and opportunities (e.g., karate, soccer, Glee Club, Little League Coaching, etc.).

This has yielded an entire generation of young adults who are fairly talented at most things while being the master of few or no things.  Some of our family member's activities are pursued with little thought to the family down-time needs and the marital renewal needs.  Much of this clutter could be cancelled, allowing those valuable family resources to be allocated to a slower-paced yet more connected nuclear family.  It is easier than one might think to reduce the complexity of our family schedules to a more reasonable level.  Distractions that may or may not contribute to the long-term goals of individuals and the family as a whole can be eliminated, or reduced with thoughtful planning.  I know of a family that bought a new truck, boat and trailer because sometimes the family ended up camping and boating together.  Eventually the father and mother decided that with the maintenance, licensing, payments, and storage, that it was easier in the long-term to rent the boat for a day or two than to own it.  They decluttered their yard and their lives and saved money.

Family life is prone to crises because we deeply care about our family and what hurts one family m ember may be felt by all family members.  Each of us has faced crises and will again.  A crisis can unite a family if they have the capacity to adapt and remain cohesive.  So many families struggle to do that because their lives are weighed down by superfluous activities.  As mentioned in previous chapters, the family has to rally resources and garner support when a crisis happens.  For some, the crisis will force them to simplify their family demands in order to make it.  For others, the crisis may render the family system fragile and easily damaged by other life stressors.

Grudge holding can be very destructive to relationships.  Truly forgiving another family member or friend relieves the victim who was wronged from the burden of being a victim.  I heard a man talk about his younger brother who fell asleep at the wheel and the car rolling off the road and killing his father.  It took nearly a decade for all the family to forgive and forget when truly this was a case of misjudgment and carelessness rather than a criminal act.  The impact the grudge holding had on the brother is still haunting him to this day.  Sometimes, even when mean intention was part of the offense, growth will only come after the grudge is let go.  When a grudge is held, the perpetrator is still the perpetrator and the victim is in the victim role. Many survivors find freedom in releasing the offender from the role of being the offender by forgiving him or her and by choosing to move on with life.

Ultimately the family that sits down together and annually creates a goal that is written and posted for everyone to see on a regular basis has the direction needed to eliminate unnecessary burdens on the family.  For example, the family that sets a goal to spend every other weekend in an activity that will allow them to spend time together, building bonds that endure, may decide to forgo the season tickets to a professional team in exchange for more quality down-time together.  Conversely, the family who anticipates

the departure of a high school senior to college may purchase the season tickets if it meets the family goal of experiencing the joy of supporting the team one last season together. Extraneous activities can be kept or dismissed. Careful planning can keep them from continuing without notice or consideration for their impact on the family system.

Third party distractions occur when unexpected intruders crash the family routines. It could be as simple as a telemarketer or survey taker calling during meal time. It can be a friend of one of the family members who regularly drops by to "hang out." It can be family, coworkers, other associates who might do just as well at your house or somewhere else. It is acceptable to set boundaries for limiting interrupters so that they don't undermine the efforts at meeting family member's needs of the family. There are those who interrupt who feel entitled to do so and could care less of the impact their presence may have on the family. Again, it is acceptable to set clear boundaries, even if it takes a stronger effort to do so.

In the US and other societies, there are persons who feel that if they want something they have the right to get it regardless of the impact it may have on family members. At the extreme, abusers are this way. For most, the issue of entitlement is less sinister than abuse. A family member may want to make purchases he or she cannot afford and thereby strap the family with debt. A person may want to portray a status that is pretended more than real and may sacrifice family stability to do so. For example, the country club member who can't pay the bills because he or she is living on the salary of a doctor when they have only the income of a school teacher. Family members as individual consumers are nurtured in their entitlement by eager marketers who lure them into financially unsustainable circumstances. Entitlement values continuously land family members into trouble, because accountability eventually catches up in one form or another.

Now let's look at the positive efforts a couple can do to resist the decay of their marriage (Left side of Figure 4). Couples should date regularly. Plan dates together and sacrifice less important activities so that there is ample time to go out and enjoy each other as friends. Some suggest a weekly date while for others a bi-weekly or monthly date is more meaningful. I urge any of my students with children to at least get an overnighter date in once every 3-4 months. Getting away to be a couple can be extremely rejuvenating. Courtship does not have to end after the wedding. True when you were single you courted with the eventual goal to "catch someone" and settle down. Courting for marrieds is more of a "keeping someone" and enjoy life effort that makes the journey together more meaningful. A self-help book such as the 5 Love Languages (Gary Chapman) can be valuable tools in helping you know how best to speak the language of love as you try to most efficiently continue a courtship with your spouse.

Daily couple time is crucial. It is acceptable to go to bed even while others are awake in the house. Once there, pillow talk, next-day planning, and do-nothing time can be very supportive of the relationship. This is one effort you can use to protect and nurture your sex life. With all the forces of entropy and stress bearing down on the couple, it is easy to put sex and the renewal that accompanies it to the side. Many have documented the value of protecting that time and expression together, even as though it is sacred time. Whatever distracts fatigues, annoys, or interferes with needed sexual expression should be evaluated and managed so that needs and wants can be met and bonds can be

reestablished. Part of this is the ongoing romance of one another. Couples who are committed to sex and romance find ways to show and speak their love far away from the marriage bed and beyond the sexual interactions they enjoy.

One might do the tasks of the other during the week in order to express love and support. Another might bring home a flower or treat. Still another might cancel plans to just spend time together when needed. Romance burns as bright and hot as we want it to burn. It can be kindled and renewed and for some couples can lead to healing from deep issues and wounds. Sexual intimacy is simultaneously healing and bonding spiritually, socially, emotionally, and physically. Family and work stressor can minimize or eliminate this marital benefit if left unchecked.

It may perhaps be the best advice one could ever give to newlyweds-learn how to forgive and forget This ties directly back to refusing to continue as a victim and move on with life). Every spouse has their mortal flaws. Every spouse will suffer to one degree or another because of the inconsideration and/or misbehavior of the other. Forgiveness makes it possible to work through these issues together, learn from them, and move on with renewed cohesion. Forgiveness is an act of grace wherein the offender is held harmless by the offended spouse in matters of the offense. Forgiveness is not pretending that an offense never occurred. Forgiveness works best after the offense is considered and resolved to the satisfaction of both spouses.

Tracking is not forgiveness. There are some who claim to forgive, yet keep a mental record of current and past offenses. Tracking the offenses of a spouse means that you document and remember the offensive behavior and others like it and regularly bring past "forgiven" issues back up as though they just occurred and were never dealt with. Tracking can build an entire "case" against a spouse so that he or she feels overwhelmed and hopeless about working through the problem. To hold the grudge or refuse to let the memory of an offense fade is to interfere with recovery efforts in the marriage.

One who is offended may chose to remain a victim and by so doing create a long-term perpetrator out of the other spouse. Victims can assume some of the blame or none of it at all. In other words he can say, like one of my students said in a class, "My wife cheated on me with my brother. I had nothing to do with it." When confronted by another student about some of the comments he made about women being untrustworthy, he also confessed that he and his wife and brother were using Heroine at the time and were addicts. "But, my wife left me and is now married to my brother." He argued.

"You can't grow if you can't learn from your own mistakes," added a single mother of three. She explained, "My ex-husband beat me down every day in one form or another. I finally got up the courage to leave him and the police had to keep him from killing me. After I was finally divorced and safe, I learned in therapy that I'm not responsible for his violence. But I had to acknowledge the fact that I chose him as my spouse and I chose to stay with him for a long time after his violence became known to me. Once I owned up to that much, I could change how and who I chose for an intimate relationship."

"Wow!" I sat listening to her as she instructed him. I felt amazed for her wisdom at such an early age in life. She told him to quit being a victim, forgive, and move on. She is correct in saying that he has to decide what if anything he can do to avoid repeating such a scenario in the future.

As I've mentioned in other chapters, I am a huge fan of written goals, of taking good ideas and turning them into tangible expectations. "A goal unwritten is just a good idea." One of my very successful college buddies told me when I asked him how he came to make so many millions of dollars in his twenties. When he and his wife sat a goal they put it on the fridge and in the bathrooms and the entire family worked together to attain them.

Seeking consensus and finding common goals is a unity-building activity that yields direction to the family as a whole and to the individual family members. For example, a family may consult together and set a goal to save their money by cutting back on the extras. Once enough money is saved they would then take a high canopy rainforest tour in Costa Rica. To remind everyone of the goal and to inform them of the progress, they might put a sheet of paper on the fridge that keeps an ongoing record of their money saved and the remaining funds needed. Such a goal and effort would create a wonderful and uniting family outing even as the family escaped some of the stresses of everyday life.

Stress is very common in US families today. Stress has a deadly physiological influence on individuals and families. The economic standards we set for our lifestyles require tremendous sacrifice and effort to attain. Parents and spouses have to exert leadership in minimizing unnecessary stressors and in coping with unavoidable ones. Stress can render the flexibility and adaptability of a family into dysfunctional levels. Many families eliminate the nonessentials. Others ensure that the family gets renewal time at the individual and family systems levels. Like a goal, a family can discuss stress, family values, and stress management strategies. These too, can be written and displayed to remind family members about strategies.

Once stress levels are too high, conflict and tension levels go up. This often leads to hurt feelings and heartache. John Gottman (2004) wrote of accepting bids. To Gottman a bid is an effort and repair or reinforcing the spousal relationship that is extended in good will from one spouse to another. Accepting a spouse's bid is highly associated with strong marriages (See John Gottman http://www.gottman.com/ and "The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work," Three Rivers Press, NY).

Judith Wallerstein also wrote about the ability strong married couple has to support and nurture one another and to manage the daily wear and tear on the marriage and family ("Thee Good Marriage" 1995, Warner Books, with Sandra Blakeslee). Rescuing one another is one of the duties and benefits that come with marriage. Today the husband may help her get through difficult times. In a few years she may reciprocate and support him. The key is to take the time, sacrifice the needed resources, and be your spouse's number one support, especially when the chips are down. This, when done consistently is part of the explanation about the 10 marital benefits mentioned above in Table 1.

Wallerstein (1995) also talked about using humor and having fun with and without your children. When a couple discovers one another, they establish a relationship filled with fun, romance, and togetherness. Once married and pursuing their goals, married life bears down so heavily at times that it becomes easy to forget those early attractions that made courting and marrying so much fun. Fun can be free or it can cost millions. Make sure and enjoy the bounty that is available to all of us in this country, our states, and the

community in which we reside. When fun gets pushed out of our lives adapt your family to cope with the demands and eliminate the disposable demands.

There are persons who are alone, bored, and intrusive who would intrude into your marital time. Work at keeping them at bay and managing the intrusive influence they have. My wife and I once took a Thanksgiving Holiday 5 minutes down the road, where we stayed in a hotel with the children. We ate out, swam in the pool, stayed up to the late hours watching cartoons, and toured fun places in town. Our children remember this as one of their favorite holidays ever. We came home to 63 phone messages and over 100 emails from people who just wanted to touch base. Interestingly, some of them were angry because they didn't know where we were. Once we told them their anger subsided. My wife and I also have pattern of escaping together. She and I attend professional conferences together. We escape to another county or state. We even get away if we really need to disagree and want to be uninterrupted.

When couples disagree they should remove distractions such as electronics and newspapers, isolate themselves so that they can finish a though or a sentence and think more clearly. It may take concerted efforts, but persist even if it takes one or more consultations together to get the issue resolved. I will always remember my six little children standing with noses pressed against the sliding glass door while my wife and I sat in the car out in a rain storm. We had tried to talk in our bedroom, but the interruptions were incessant form children and telephones. We talked for nearly an hour until we felt good about our strategy. The issue was one of the most important we ever discussed together. The children were so happy when we returned into the home. For parents with preschool and elementary aged children an early bedtime is advisable so that the couple can have a daily time to talk and relax together.

Why not seek help when you need it? Studies have shown that some people will never go see a dentist, doctor, or therapist. They are treatment-avoidant and refuse to seek these professional services. Couples often seek professional help after things have gotten to a critical point in the relationship. Although many couples can work out most of their issues together, it is advisable to learn to recognize early those issues that might be a deep threat to the stability of the relationship. If the issue is persistent and keeps coming up, if the issue deals with one or both spouse's commitment to the relationship, if the issue has to do with the core role of husband or wife or the core agreements on what each should be or do in those roles, and/or if the issue is very important to one spouse and feels that professional help may be needed then professional assistance should be considered. It is not a failure to seek professional medical, dental, therapeutic, accounting, mechanical, or other services. A student of mine was in a divorce and was ordered to go through pre-divorce mediation because of the children. He told me that during mediation with his ex they learned valuable communication skills and decided to postpone the divorce. He told me that the state should order mediation or counseling when things can be fixed not once the divorce starts. Of course states would not order such a thing, but spouses can voluntarily seek the help.

I have taught in higher education for over 20 years now. I can name 5 colleagues who worked until their retirement and once retired died within 3-18 months. It became a joke among us here at UVU that somebody needed to change that pattern-to retire and live another 30 years. We work so long to secure our later years with the necessities we

desire.  What a waist to die so soon after reaching that point.  In marriages, similar things happen, but in a slightly different way.  The young couple sets valiant long-term goals so that they can raise children, establish assets, and eventually retire together.  But, many couples forget that marriage requires constant attention and upkeep.  In the pursuit of these goals they grow apart, lose intimacy, and get lost in child-rearing.  After the last child launches into their own adult roles, some couples find themselves waking up to a person they barely know or get along with.

I also know of 4 elderly couples who divorced after retirement.  In each case, one of the spouses told me that they just grew apart over the years.  To them it was as though they started a journey, progressed well together, and lost interests in one another along the way. The husband and wife relationship are the engine that drives the married family system forward.  Nurturing, protecting, and enhancing the maintenance of the marriage benefits the couple and the family.

Finally, families can be the most fun, most meaningful, and most rewarding social groups we belong to in our lives. Many elderly rate their family relationships as being among the most satisfying aspects of their golden years. The family experience can be valued or endured, cherished or loathed, essential or distracting.  Regardless of the circumstances we face in life, our efforts to build and enjoy the family as individuals, couples, and other family members will most likely be rewarding to us throughout our entire lives. If neglected, just the opposite could prove to be true.  As a final thought, I wrote this book as a service to my UVU students at UVU and other students everywhere.  It has decades of teaching experience and mountains of research built into each chapter.  My goal is to inform, not modify values.  I hope that if this text was too liberal for your taste or too conservative that it was still of use to you.  I find joy in being a life-long student of families and how to make them work better.  I hope you found a bit of that joy for yourself.

## Chapter 18-Rape and Sexual Assault

**Rape is not the same as sex**

Rape is violence, motivated by men with power, anger, selfish, and sadistic issues.  Rape is dangerous and destructive and more likely to happen in the United States than in most other countries of the world.  There are 195 countries in the world today.  The US typically is among the worst in terms of rape (yes, that means that most of the world's countries are safer for women than the US).  Consecutive studies performed by the United Nations Surveys on crime Trends and the Operations of Criminal Justice Systems confirm that South Africa is the most dangerous, crime-ridden nation on the planet in all crimes including rape (see http://www.unodc.org/unodc/en/data-and-analysis/United-Nations-Surveys-on-Crime-Trends-and-the-Operations-of-Criminal-Justice-Systems.html).

The FBI typically keeps statistics on violent crimes committed and reported to local police (unreported crimes cannot be counted in the FBI Uniform Crime Reports).  It summarizes all the local and state crimes into reports made available on various government Websites.  From these data, the Bureau of Justice Statistics provides specific rape rates per 100,000 for the years 1960 to 2006 (See Figure 1 below).  Alaska is by far the most dangerous state as far as rape rates are concerned.

Figure 1: Reported Rapes per 100,000 Population in United States, Alaska (Worst State Rate), and West Virginia (Safest State Rate), Years 1960-2006
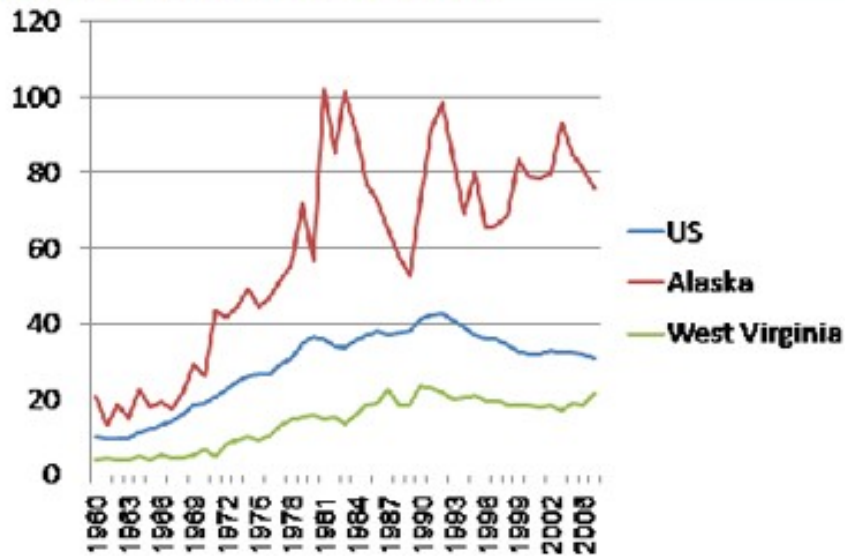
Retrieved on 13 June, 2008 From http://bjsdata.ojp.usdoj.gov/dataonline/Search/Crime/State/StatebyState.cfm

West Virginia is an example of one of the safest states. The United states in general (being in the worst 5 percent of all the world's countries) has seen a slight decline in rape rates since the early 1990s, but the danger and risks to the average woman is unacceptably too high. It is estimated that 1 in 6 US women will be sexually assaulted in their lifetimes and college-aged women are 4 times more likely to be sexually assaulted than other US women (see http://www.rainn.org/statistics ). The Rape Abuse & Incest National Network, an online Web page and the largest US's anti-sexual assault organization provides tremendous insight into rape. They also provide support for those impacted by rape (1-800-656-HOPE and an online hotline at http://www.rainn.org ). Their definition of rape and sexual assault is so concise that the US Office on Violence against Women quotes them:

Sexual assault can be defined as any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient of the unwanted sexual activity. Falling under the definition of sexual assault is sexual activity such as forced sexual intercourse, sodomy, child molestation, incest, fondling, and attempted rape. Some more specific examples of sexual assault include:

 * Unwanted vaginal, anal, or oral penetration with any object

 * Forcing an individual to perform or receive oral sex

 * Forcing an individual to masturbate, or to masturbate someone else

 * Forcing an individual to look at sexually explicit material pose for sexually explicit pictures

 * Touching, fondling, kissing, and any other unwanted sexual contact with an individual's body

 * Exposure and/or flashing of sexual body parts

In general, state law assumes that a person does not consent to sexual activity if he or she is forced, threatened, unconscious, drugged, a minor, developmentally disabled, chronically mentally ill, or believe they are undergoing a medical procedure.

Perpetrators of sexual assault can be strangers, friends, acquaintances, or family members. Often, perpetrators commit sexual assault by way of violence, threats, coercion, manipulation, pressure, or tricks. In extreme cases, sexual assault may involve the use of force which may include, but is not limited to:

  * Physical violence

  * Use or display of a weapon

  * Immobilization of victim

More often, however, sexual assault involves psychological coercion and taking advantage of an individual who is incapacitated or under duress and, therefore, is incapable of making a decision on his or her own.

## The Personal and Larger Social Levels of Rape's Impact on Society

In this discussion we will use C. Wright Mills' Sociological Imagination and study rape from both the personal and larger sociological levels. Because of the way I context it here, this section may sound much like an advice column with specific suggestions and strategies for you to consider. Trust me that, many research-based principles guided this discussion and you can place a high degree of confidence in this argument.

## The Personal Level: Whose Fault Is It?

The fault lies squarely on the rapist and his personal choices. Rape, by the definition given above is not consensual. Many throughout the history of the world have defined rape as a form of sex. Look at this statement carefully:

Rape ≠ Sex.

Rape has no consent. Sex has mutual Consent. Typically, force or threats are used to coerce compliance. I often have students ask me, "what if she agrees at night, then changes her mind in the morning and says she was raped?" My response is that in this case mutual consent occurred and a lie was told afterward. I then ask the student why he or she asked this hypothetical question (I assume they have a hard time believing the victim's claim). Often they've heard that "almost" all rape allegations are false. The truth is that about 1 in 10 rape allegations prove to be unfounded (see FBI report, 1996 at http://www.fbi.gov/ucr/Cius_97/96CRIME/96crime2.pdf).

The significant question here is why aren't rapes reported more often? The Bureau of Justice Statistics does a survey of crime victimization in the US. In it, respondents are asked to report if they had been the victims of various crimes. If they were, then they are asked more detailed questions about the crime. With rape, they often find that most rape victims do not report them to the police. These results are reported for 2003 in Table 1 below:

| Table 1: Percentage of Violent Crimes that Were Reported to the Police by Victims | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| | Percent Reported To Police, 2006 | Percent Reported To Police, 2004 | Percent Reported To Police, 2002 |
| Robbery | 56.9% | 35.8% | 71.2% |
| Aggravated assault | 59.2% | 64.2% | 56.6% |
| Simple assault | 44.3% | 44.9% | 42.7% |
| Rape/sexual assault | 41.4% | 35.8% | 53.7% |

Retrieved on 13 June 2008 from http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cv06.pdf and http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cv02.pdf and http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/pub/pdf/cv04.pdf

So, what might you say if you hear from someone that they were raped?  At the personal level, with your friends and families who might or ever have been raped, there is one crucial question you must ask, "How are you doing now?"  Whatever it takes, avoid the common mistake of asking, "What were you doing when this happened?"  For many of us, we feel that our own safety is threatened when we ourselves know the victim and we often ask "what happened?" in an attempt to protect ourselves in the future.  The point is to ask how a rape survivor is doing now, because it keeps them in the now.  Their answer to how they are doing might provide insight into how you might be of support of them.  The question of what happened puts them emotionally back in the time and place of the attack and reopens the wound again.

## The Oil and Water Paradigm

I've taught a paradigm for years to my students which has helped them to distinguish the 2 core issues in the case of rape: first, we live in a dangerous world which requires women to be vigilant in defending and protecting themselves, and second, it is never the victim's fault.  I call this the "Oil and Water Paradigm."  In Figures 2, 3, and 4 below, you see two exclusive and unmixable sides of the same issue.  Here's the metaphor in a nutshell-no matter how hard you try, the fundamental structure of oil and water make them impossible to ever mix.  Think of your bottle of Italian salad dressing.  You shake it vigorously and have to quickly pour it on your salad before it separates again.  Oil repels water.  In this paradigm, I use oil and water as metaphors for understanding these ideas that should not be mixed (because they really don't mix).

In Figure 2, you see the self-defense component of the dangerous society we live in today.  Women have to protect themselves from attacks.  True, most men would never attack a woman.  But, women can't discern which men are safe and which are not, simply because rapists are very predatory and deceptive.  Don't get me wrong women are quite capable of living under these dangerous circumstances, but morally shouldn't have to.  I heard a friend of mine say, "It's just sad that one-half of the population (women) has to live in fear of the other half (men), because some of the other half might attack them."  In the US, about 3 out of 4 rape victims knew their assailant before the attack.

Figure 2. The Oil Side of The Oil and Water Paradigm

Women spend time, money, resources, and emotional energy being vigilant against a potential attack. The burden of protection falls mostly on them and their close friends and family. My students carry their keys so they can use them as weapons, carry pepper mace, take Karate, travel only with friends at night, and some even have a safety plan for their apartment. But, you have to know, there is no single preventative measure that can universally prevent rape. I interviewed a former FBI profiler, Greg Cooper. When I interviewed him he indicated that the FBI puts all the blame for the rape on the perpetrator, not the victim.

"Often times rape victims blame themselves, trying to figure out what exactly they did to cause the attack. From a law enforcement point of view, victims have no responsibility. There is nothing that the FBI can tell a woman to wear, to do, or to say that will decrease her likelihood of being attacked. The perpetrator bears all the blame and it's him that we focus on. (From documentary called "Oil and Water: The Truth About Rape" by Hammond available at Insight Media at http://www.insight-media.com/IMHome.asp).

Women know from their childhood that certain men can be dangerous and that they have to become diligent in protection themselves. In Figure 3 you see the clear and simple truth that rape is never a victim's fault (remember that sex has consent rape does not). There is not one case, ever where a rape victim is at fault. I've heard many argue with me on that point. They say, "what if she dressed in sexy clothes, went into the bar looking for some action, invited him up to her place, agreed to go on the date…" This type of thinking seeks to shake the oil and water together by erasing that line that separates them (oil and water don't mix, no matter how hard you shake the Italian dressing, it eventually

separates back into oil and water).  If we ask them to explain the details, then carelessly say something like, "why'd you go on a date with him anyway?" then we've just blamed the victim.

Figure 4 shows both the ideas in the same diagram.  It's like the woman standing on the sidewalk and a man drives up on the sidewalk and runs her over.  And an eye witness rushes to her aid and says, "Why were you standing on that sidewalk when you knew a truck could run you over?  Were you trying to get attacked?"
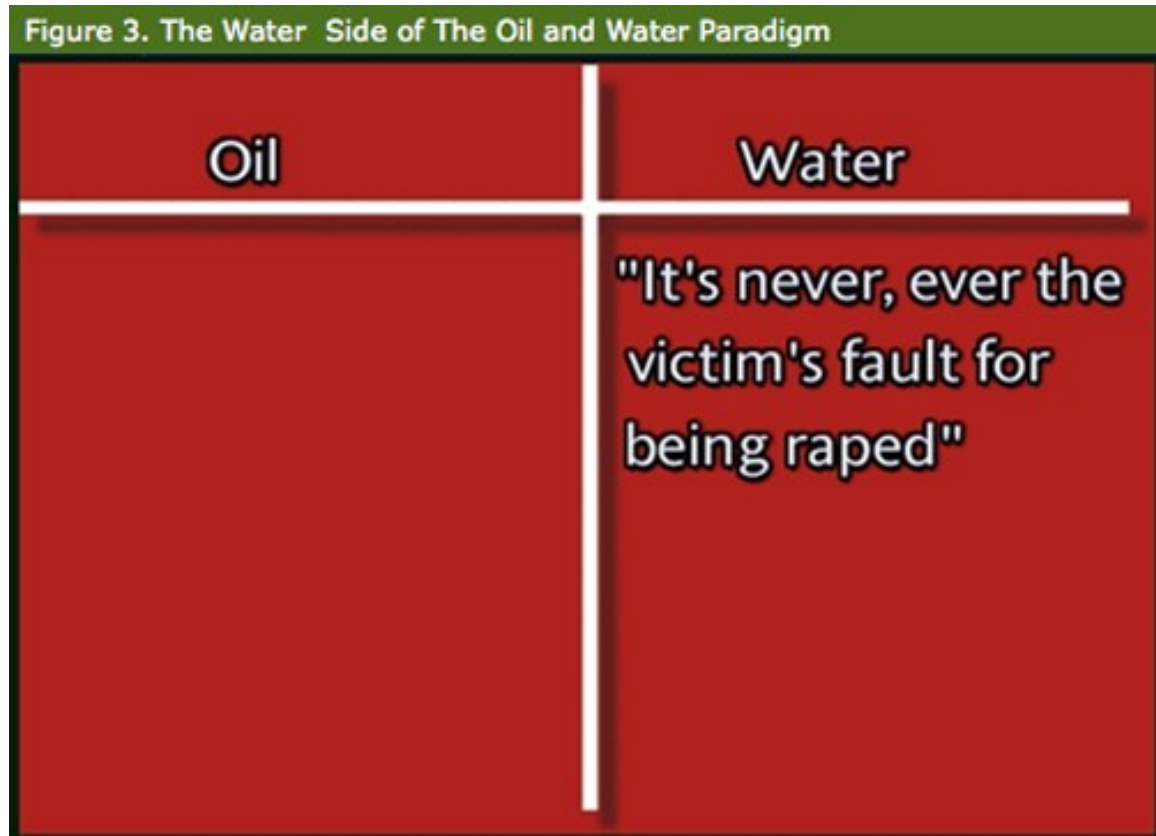


Figure 3. The Water Side of The Oil and Water Paradigm

Oil

Water

"It's never, ever the victim's fault for being raped"

Figure 4. The Complete Oil and Water Paradigm

| Oil | Water |
| --- | --- |
| "Self Defense"<br>- Karate<br>- Weapons<br>- Security Measures<br>- Being Alone<br>- Substances<br>- Believe can say "NO" | "It's never, ever the victim's fault for being raped." |

Think about what a rape victim has been through: bruises, cuts, gun & stab wounds, STDs, and pregnancies, internal injuries, chronic pain, persistent headaches, facial pain, sleep disorders, depression, PTSD, attachment problems, trust challenges, and flashbacks, anxiety, panic attacks, difficulty turning to closest support system (family, Friends, others). On www.rainn.org one rape survivor compared her attack to the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks on the U.S. She explained that just like we often refer to the pre 9-11 era of this country, she refers to the pre-rape era of her life. "The party was over, my life utterly and permanently altered. In an instant I fell from grace, moving through feelings of invincibility to vulnerability."

Not only do rapists hurt their victims, they often blame them verbally before they leave. This makes recovery even more difficult since most rape victims already blame themselves (see Ullman et al 2007 about the construct of self-blame and a model for assisting survivors in their recovery at http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=4&hid=12&sid=fc79a530-e9be-4ea8-b7fe-2d8685c8e3fc%40sessionmgr2 and in Murnen, et al. 1989 a study of college student established that most victims blamed themselves at http://web.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdf?vid=3&hid=106&sid=ff3c3bae-508b-4591-92ea-da2718858e21%40sessionmgr108 ).

Yes, it is true that most victims erase the line and blame themselves. "I should have…" is the most common lamentation. Hind sight gets confounded by grief and recovery. Yet, the last thing a rape victim needs is for you or anyone else in their support network to add to that grief by adding your intentional or unintentional blame. Keep oil and water apart. Defense attorneys often blame victims in the courtroom, media reports often imply or convey to blame to victims, and since rape victim's family and friends grieve too, they

often blame self and the victims.  You wouldn't slap a mugging victim for walking down the street alone.  They've already been through enough.  But, sometimes we believe that only good things happen to good people (Google  "Just World Syndrome" for more insight to this myth).  Violence happens to both morally good and bad people.  It always has.

## Helping Survivors To Avoid Blaming Themselves

Consider the comments made by two rape victims I personally interviewed (their names have been changed to protect their privacy).  Nella had been raped in Colorado five years prior to our interview.  The rapist trapped her and assaulted her over the course of three hours.  Nella escaped and ran to get help from a friend.  They called the police.  The police put out an APB on the assailant's car and arrested him within the hour while he casually shopped for groceries in the local supermarket.

Nella told me that during the trial her attacker and his attorney turned the entire attack back against her.

"I sat stunned on the witness stand," Nella explained.  "Trying to figure out why I had to defend myself when I was the one who was so brutally attacked."  "I feel peace right now, but I live in constant fear that when he gets out, he'll somehow find me.  Any way, he threatened my life while he attacked me, saying if I went to police he'd find me and kill me."  Nella explained through tear filled eyes.  "I went to police anyway."

Nella, like many other rape victims was emotionally victimized again during the trial.  Nella's attacker was sent to prison and is already out on parole.

Jana's assailant was a coworker.  He asked her out to dinner and attacked her in a secluded area near the restaurant.  Afterwards, he showed no remorse, no guilt, not even an acknowledgment that he'd just done something terrible to her.
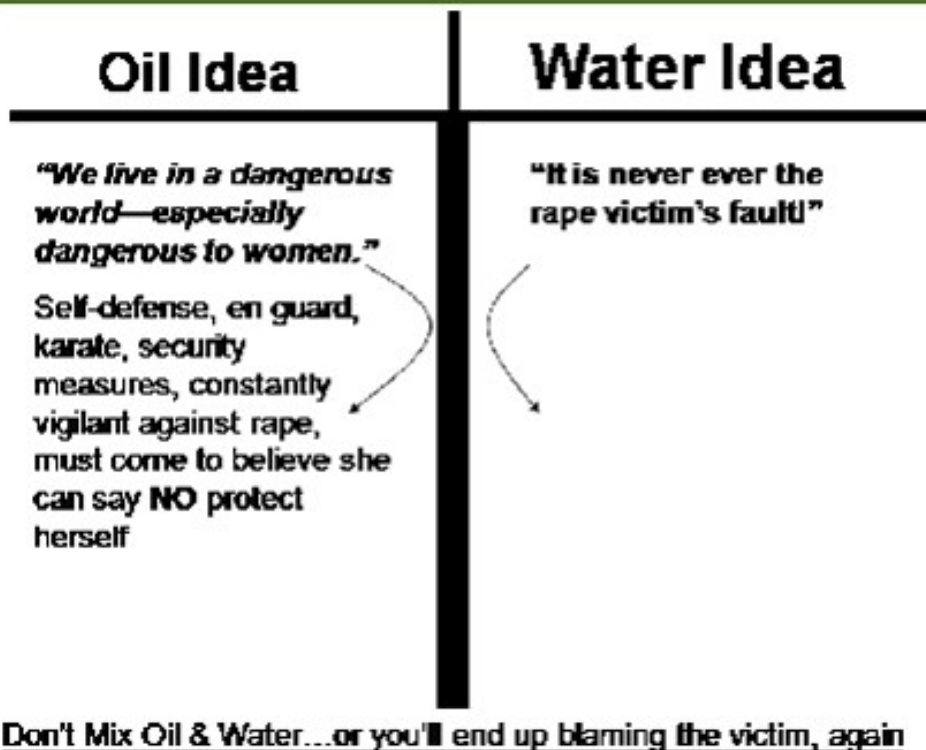
"He was such a nice man to me until we were alone."  Jana reported.  "Then his countenance change.  I saw evil in his eyes, but couldn't get away because he had planned the entire thing in advance."  Jana shook her head as she gently held the locket hanging on the chain around her neck.  "This is a picture of my son."  She opened the locket.  "He was the only good thing that came from the whole experience."

Jana reported the rape to police.  The rapist served time in jail and was under suspicion for other rapes in the area but nothing ever came of that.  The rapist is out of prison now.  Jana moved and tries to move on with her life, much like the countless other survivors throughout the state and country are forced to do.

In summary, on the personal level you can be a great asset to a survivor of rape.  You might find yourself someday on a jury where other jurors blame her for not protecting herself.  Look at Figure 5 and explain to them why the perpetrator is at fault.

Figure 5. Don't Mix the Oil and Water

**Oil Idea**

*"We live in a dangerous world—especially dangerous to women."*

Self-defense, en guard, karate, security measures, constantly vigilant against rape, must come to believe she can say **NO** protect herself

**Water Idea**

*"It is never ever the rape victim's fault!"*

Don't Mix Oil & Water...or you'll end up blaming the victim, again

## Larger Social Explanations

At the larger social level rape can be understood through scientific studies, analysis of crime data, and interviews with rapists. We can understand trends about rapists and why they do what they do. We can also understand national social facts that can indicate how best to handle the problem from every level of social intervention. What are some of the possible explanations for high rape rates in the United States? A few trends emerge from my studies:

  * An increase in rape prevention programs and rape crisis centers so that unlike in the past where a rape victim had a very difficult time in reporting rape, we now have a structure in place where victims can go for assistance. This may indicate that rape happened more in the past, but was reported less because of the absence of a legitimate place to go report it and get help.

  * An increase in substance use among perpetrators and victims which is highly correlated with decreased inhibitions by men who might not otherwise act violently toward women.

  * 1960s, 1970's, and 1980's shift from abstinence to sexual promiscuity where men are more likely to feel entitled to whatever sexual desire they have. This may have also coincided with male value shifts in expectations of self, women, and sexual predation (see Figure 6 below).

Figure 6. Value Shift Among Males (Especially Among Rapists) Over the Last 35 Years

Many men in our day have abdicated the protector, nurturer, and community-minded

roles common among men in the past. Rapists have specifically become scam artists where the confidence scam of establishing trust among women then violating that trust has become all too common. Many rapists report feeling victimized when they are arrested and held accountable (over 6 out of 10 US rapist are not held accountable in terms of prison or guilty verdicts). Let me restate this crucial fact, rapists are the core of the problem (See Figure 7).

## Changed Values Among Men

**Figure 7. Rapist Are the Core of the Problem**

Thesis: Rapists are less than human...sub-human individuals.

1. Rapists act in anti-social violent ways toward other society members both within and beyond their own tribes.
2. Rapists ignore life-long consequences to victims in search of their own self-gratification.
3. Rapists have the equivalent of a Ph.D. in self-denial about their violent acts and denial of harm to their victims.
4. Rapists are dangerous to themselves and others, behaving as social and personal equilibrium disruptors.
5. Rapists are self-indulged, narcissistic quality of life destroyers.
6. Rapists are scam artists, deceivers, and thugs.

As mentioned before, I interviewed Greg M. Cooper, a former FBI profiler. To the FBI, rape is not about sex. It is about power, domination, anger, and the ability to control and destroy another person's life. A rapist expresses his need power, domination, and anger in a sexual way. I must say this confuses many students. They ask, "How can rape not be sexual if the vagina and penis and other sexual parts of the body are involved?" My answer follows the statement made by a Nun who was teaching a group of survivors. I can't remember her name, but her point makes clear sense.

"A man can use his hand with a number of different motivations. He could caress the hair of his loved one, massage a back, or simply hold another-motivated by love and concern. He could also strangle, beat, and otherwise inflict pain upon another. It's not that the hand is a body part exclusively designed for nurturance or violence-it's the motivation behind how the hand is used that makes the hand what it is."

The same can be said about our body's sexual parts. In a mutually consenting relationship between people of legal age of consent, sexual parts of the body can be used out of a motivation of intimacy. For rapists the sexual parts are used out of power, domination, anger, and control.

Greg Cooper utilized a model with 4 types rapists based on their risk of harm to the victim and their level of confidence in their violence. A power-reassurance rapist is the most common type of rapist, he uses little to no violence, has a very weak sense of self and of lacking "manliness," and rape is his outlet of power, domination, anger, and control (see Figure 8). This rapist is inadequate in general and rapes in a futile attempt to feel adequate. The power-assertive rapist has a very low self-concept, he attempts to reassure himself on his manhood, and uses very little force or violence. His deep-seated shame drives him to offend often and not feel long-term satisfaction from the assaults.

Figure 8. Four Types of Rapists
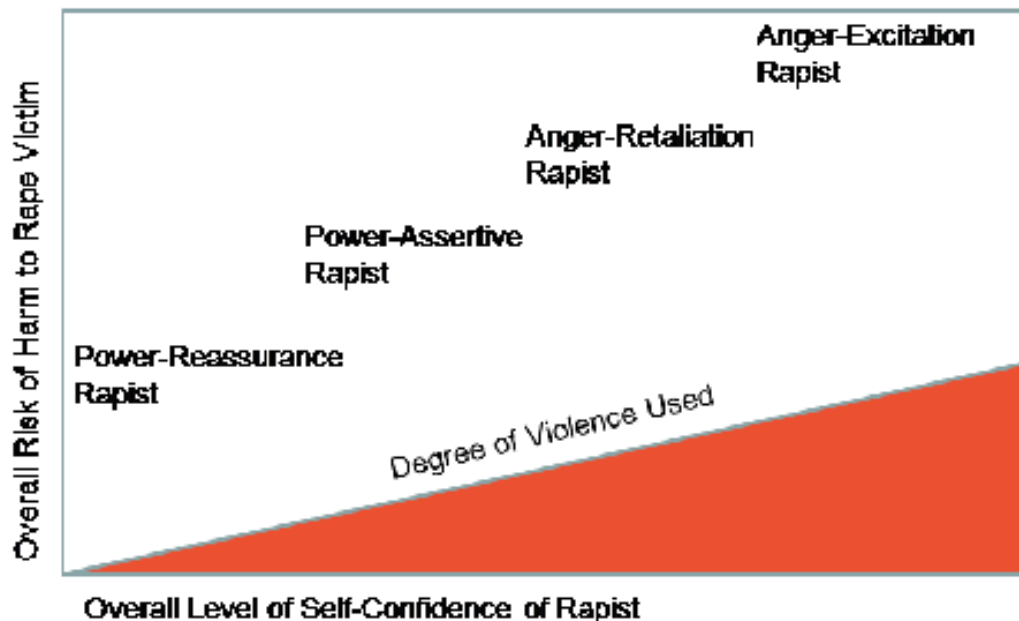
The next two types of rapists are more dangerous. They tend to have a better self-image and will use violence. The Anger-Retaliatory Rapist has plenty of self-confidence (perhaps to the point of too much), he tends to demean, degrade, humiliate, and punish his victim for things she did not do (for example his bad day at work might be taken out on her), and he tends to be brutal, blitzing his victims so that they offer little resistance. This rapist is making the victim pay for things gone badly in his own life.

The Anger-Excitation Rapist is the least common type, yet the most evil: he will torture, kidnap, and even kill his victim out of pleasure-seeking at the cost of another's pain, he is sadistic and predatory, and he uses his intelligence to plot and prey upon unsuspecting victims. Greg Cooper also referred to him as "evil" and "the dark side of humanity."

How can a man ascribe to such low values toward another individual? I borrow my answer from a Ugandan born man who lived in South Africa for a decade. David Ssjeinja said, in our interview about the enormously high rape rates in South Africa, that:

"Real men don't rape. Raping is really against the character of a good man and all that is necessary for good behavior in a civilized world."

Perhaps this will be the legacy of the first decade of the new millennium, where social reform programs focus on efforts to transform values of men toward a more respectful view of women. Such an organization can be found today online, http://www.mencanstoprape.org/ . Men Can Stop Rape is an organization that allies male youths to women in preventing rape and other acts of violence toward women. One hopes that some of society's potential rapists get exposure to such a program, experience a shift in values toward respecting women, and ultimately lower the incidence of rape in Utah and The United States.

## Useful Internet Resources About Rape and Rape Prevention

www.fbi.gov/ucr/cius_02/html/web/offreported/02-nforciblerape04.html

www.Rainn.org

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/welcome.html

www.search.utah.gov/retina/public/suggest.do?title=Prevalence%2C+Incidence
%2C+and+Consequences+of+Violen...&id=&links=%5BRAPE%5D&reference=http
%3A%2%2Fhealth.utah.gov%2Fvipp%2Fpdf%2Fviolenceagainstwomensurvey.pdf

www.mencanstoprape.com

www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij/pubs-sum/172837.htm

www.cdc.gov/ncipc/factsheets/ipvfacts.htm