



Marriage Rules[©]

“THE THREE R’S”

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I have long believed that “the three R’s” – reading, (w)riting and (a)rithmetic – which we supposedly learned in the schools, were never really enough to get along in life.

One ‘R’ seemed to be missing – relationships!

Let’s face it, we simply are not trained to effectively negotiate our relationships.

By and large, what we do learn is usually achieved through various experiences with others.

Such experiences are frequently the result of trial and error, of fumbling around in the dark.

Often, we come to develop certain convictions on the basis of very limited data.

A cynic might even argue that our belief systems become shape and fixed by one-trial learning, that is, by a single event.

This may, especially, be true in terms of how we view the best way of getting our needs met for love, understanding and challenge from others.

I have heard people say that they desire close relationships but “fear being rejected.”

When inquiring into the history of their fear, I often find that one, or more, important relationship(s) did not work out.

There may, indeed, have been a “rejection” or, more generally, some trauma or other emotional distress associated with the relationship.

Consequently, from that point on, an inappropriate, generalization occurs which result in the ‘traumatized’ person fearing getting too close to another.

He or she might get hurt or rejected or ‘burned.’

Thus, intimacy – which in my opinion is perhaps the most crucial task (and joy) in life – fails to occur.

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Our relationships are hollow. Our physical, intellectual and emotional needs are only minimally met.

Now there is another perspective, which may really help to point the way out of marginally gratifying relationships.

The psychological fact-of-the-matter is that nothing lasts forever.

What we have, own, possess or achieve is really only a temporary loan, or gift, in the broader sense of our existence.

What this means practically is that the people we care about may not be around when we need or want them to be.

They may not be available. They may move to another location.

They may develop different interests from our own.

They may change their feelings toward us.

They may die.

The risk involved is to become vulnerable enough to allow yourself to accept the experience of the agony, along with the ecstasy, of all of your relationships.

What this means, simply, is to make the most of what you’ve got without running scared.

To paint the picture in different words, it is my contention that the reason we so often fail to develop intimate relationships is not because we fear rejection, but rather because we fear intimacy and the potential loss of it!

We delude ourselves in believing that our running scared protects us from getting burned.

In reality, it prevents us from being loved, understood and challenged.

And in reality, it prevents us from ever achieving and experiencing true intimacy!

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