

Relationship Matters: The case for committed relationships
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Love is an even number. In love relationships, two is a stable number. If it becomes three, it creates a triangle, whose sharp corners poke and hurt. When A loves B and B loves A, intimacy thrives. When A loves B and B loves C, pain is generated and even danger may lurk.

Children fair better with two parents. **The Future of Children journal published by the Brookings Institute and Princeton University's Woodrow Wilson School reported in 2005 their review of marriage research. They stated: "Children from two-parent families are better off emotionally, socially and economically."**

Stepfamilies appear to be better balanced with four parents rather than with three.

We are a paired society. We support unions between lovers, and research documents that married people are healthier and live longer than single individuals. A recent study published in the Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health supports earlier findings that married people live longer than their widowed, divorced, separated or never-married counterparts.

We are biologically programmed to mate. Noah brought to the ark, two by two to assure the survival of the species. Physiologically, researchers reported at the 6th International Congress of Neuroendocrinology, June 20, 2006, that oxytocin, a hormone released by the pituitary gland, also called the "love hormone," produces euphoric and intoxicated-like experiences — making falling in love a treat.

Psychologically, the union between two loving mates attempts to re-create the feeling of being unconditionally loved, supported and cared for as experienced in infancy. The validation received in being selected, loved and promised to be cherished for life emotionally upholds partners. It enables individuals to feel balanced and stable in their lives.

Conversely, an unrequited love is a deeply disturbing experience. It fails to affirm the person's desirability and lovability and evokes feelings of abandonment and fears about being socially unwanted.

The introduction of a third party also produces similar insecurities, panic and pain. Being unfavorably compared to a rival may evoke deep feelings of injustice and helplessness. Even a temporary interest of a partner in a third party becomes a gnawing threat.

Being in a steady, safe and secure relationship provides a solid basis for personal growth, accomplishments, contribution to others and self-actualization. People in healthy relationships are happier than those in unhappy unions or uncoupled people.

According to a Cox News Service report of March 4, the marriage rate in Britain has decreased by 10 percent in 2005 to the lowest level in more than a century. Marriage rates seem to be declining in other European countries as well. Though this report cites the loss of economic incentives for marriage as a primary cause, it also mentions a rise in civil union options for all couples as a contributing factor.

It appears that though marriages are fewer, couples continue to pair up while opting for other bonding contracts.

Whether governments are economically supportive of marriage or not, people will continue to search for the creation of a bonded union with a loved partner. It makes sense to be in a good relationship for emotional and physical health and survival.

- Mating is a preprogrammed physiological behavior — dictated by the survival of the species.
- Evolutionally, people in families and clans survived better than those who were alone.
- The proclivity to falling in love is orchestrated by hormonal changes that produce positive emotions of euphoria and happiness.
- Culturally, Western societies are geared to support and encourage couples and are organized to cater to pairs.
- Psychologically, humans benefit greatly by being paired. They are happier and more successful when they have the consistent mutual support of a trusted partner.
- Medically, paired individuals are healthier and live longer than single people.
- Statistically, children in intact families fare better than children of divorce or of single parents.
- Though many women today do not marry and opt for single parenthood, these options are often not their first choices. Being in a committed, lifelong relationship is therefore a good choice.
- Creating a happy union, though sometimes challenging, is an excellent choice — well worth the energy and efforts involved.

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