

be good at

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Be good at...

marriage



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Foreword

Happiness in marriage is a popular item of conversation these days. Even books are written on the subject. So few talk about goodness in marriage. The happy wife is a very desirable person, but it is the good priest or the good doctor that most of us admire. We are more impressed by priestly or professional talents, wisely used in the service of others, than by the gaiety of the men involved. Perhaps, therefore, it is about time we ceased looking upon marriage as a continuing romantic fog and remember that it is a sacred and serious work requiring proficiency and application. Successful marriage no more comes naturally than the priesthood. Couples must prepare for it and keep working at it, perhaps more in marriage than elsewhere because two different sexes are involved, with all of the possibilities of failure which this situation contains.

The good family has three things — love, discipline, and God's grace. Love pushes you on to do what otherwise you would find repugnant. Our parents had little romance in their lives but lots of love. They developed a keen sense of duty. "Why are you doing it?" might have been the question. "It's my job," always was their answer. They probably liked what they were doing too, but their likes and dislikes were not important, and they developed a real competence that should make present-day psychologists very humble. Of course, they — like so many couples today — did not work alone. They talked and acted as if God was in the next room or, more often, right beside them. When the old body got tired and

things looked a little black, they often asked and got a good lift from the angels. This is why they are remembered so fondly by their children and certainly by God.

In this day when romance substitutes for love, convenience is more desirable than sacrifice, and the third partner in marriage is too often locked out, it is consoling to see married couples struggling earnestly to maintain the goodness of marriage and working even for greater domestic spirituality than their parents ever enjoyed. **"Be Good At Marriage"** is just another evidence of that striving. The Kanes, the Cissells, the Mainos, the Strubbes have expended countless hours of their married lives trying to enrich the family life of others. In turn God has blessed them. The particular value of these four chapters is their down-to-earth wisdom and Christian simplicity. May they be read and reread, discussed and acted upon, because it is only in *doing good* that *thinking good* finds its value.

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October, 1961

LEARNING TO LIVE

TOGETHER *by Charles and Rita Strubbe*

You're in love! You can't live without each other. But there is a gray little worm of doubt gnawing at the back of your minds: Can you live with each other? You'd climb the well-known highest mountain for her, but she can't cook like Mother.

You'd cater to his every whim, but you'll bet he leaves his clothes strewn around on the bedroom floor. Love conquers all, but can it survive the daily wear of petty annoyances and differences? In other words, can you adjust yourself to married life?

The adjustments in marriage! "I've heard so much about adjustments in marriage," wrote a young lady at a recent marriage study day, "that I'm worried about them. Are they really that hard?" The questions are endless, and with variety. How can I face adjustments to marriage? Which one is the most difficult? How long does it take to get "adjusted"? Who makes the more adjustments, husband or wife?

The questions always possess a common denominator: an attitude on the part of the questioners ranging from apprehension to actual dread.

For, as most people realize, it is this failure to adjust, each to the other, which underlies the ultimate failure of many a marriage begun with high hopes, tender feelings and lofty goals. And for each marriage which fails spectacularly, there are many more in which the flame of love sputters and wanes, where mediocrity and a kind of armed truce replace the warmth of new love.

No young person in love wants to accept this as the probable future to his marriage. Hence his great concern over the importance of adjustment in keeping his married love strong and beautiful.



WHAT DOES ADJUSTMENT MEAN?

What is meant by the term "adjustment"? It is so simple a process that we do it all our lives. A person adjusts when he adapts himself to a situation, conforms to a pattern, rearranges his habits to suit new surroundings. Some of these adjustments are voluntary; others are forced upon us. If we decide that we prefer a warm climate to blizzard winters, we move to southern California. We must make many changes — type of home, clothing, diet, neighbors, work — but we adapt ourselves to these new situations willingly, because we have achieved our goal, a sunny environment.

Anyone who inherits a million dollars has many adjustments to make in his mode of living. But they are mostly joyous, and he is eager and impatient to begin this new life. This should be the basic attitude toward the whole question of adjustment in marriage: We welcome each change in us, bringing our marriage closer to its ideal and its image — the union of Christ and His Church. Marriage is a way of life freely chosen; for the rest of our lives, we will live in an association so complete and so intimate that it holds for most of us the fullest measure of happiness in this life.

The essential adjustment to be made in marriage is simple. When we marry, we cease at that moment to be two separate individuals, with personal dreams and aspirations. We two become one in body, mind and heart. This is a new unity, a new family, with common goals and goods; what is good for one is good for the other. Indeed, this is easy to say, but it profoundly affects our whole personality, all of our thoughts and actions.

VIRTUES THAT MAKE IT EASIER

Since such an adjustment, from being two individuals to becoming one unity, cannot take place in a matter of moments nor even of months, certain virtues are particularly helpful to the husband and wife. Not that adjustments and the need for

virtue are exclusively marital characteristics. In every human relationship there must be a harmonious give-and-take between individuals; each must adapt to the other. The same characteristics which make a good child, a good parent, a good employee, a good employer or a good neighbor will make him or her a good husband or wife. But so intimate and all-pervasive is the marital adjustment that some qualities are uniquely helpful in a prospective spouse.

There is a story illustrative of the patience that both husband and wife must bring to their marriage. A newly wed husband, charily biting into his bride's first attempt at baking, remarked, "You sure don't make bread like my mother." To which she retorted, "And you don't make dough like my father."

As a matter of fact, they should have considered that this was a new way of life for each. The bride needs time to become a proficient housekeeper, especially in these days when she probably works for at least a while after marriage. The husband usually needs time until he can provide for them both in the manner that her father, more secure financially, supported her. The groom's mother is more experienced than his bride at the job of running a house; the bride's father makes more money than her new husband.

What is called for is a genuine patience, a willingness to bear each other's shortcomings, to help each other in family tasks for the mutual good. Patience will be needed all your married life, surely, but especially at the outset. For patience holds the tongue and controls the anger while each is learning his role in the new union of marriage.

A companion virtue for the successful marriage is that of unselfishness. There is in every marriage just so much time to be spent, so much money, so much effort. Whose interests will be pursued? If she likes ballet and he likes bowling, on which shall the entertainment budget be spent? Whose folks are invited for dinner next Sunday? Who helps with the other's chores after a particularly hard day at the office, or a day when the baby is especially fretful? Certainly in any good

marriage both mates must be frequently ready to help the other, to work together, to laugh together, to relax and rejoice together. Each must be eager to serve the other's wants and desires, to be there for the other to lean on, to offer encouragement and comfort.

The sort of generosity which a good marriage has comes instinctively from both husband and wife. Genuine love, transcending human wants and needs, makes it the most natural thing in the world for each to think first of the other in every situation. Remember O. Henry's short story "The Gift of the Magi." Briefly, a poor couple, newly married and in love, faced a penniless Christmas. He pawned his one good possession, a gold watch, to buy her a beautiful comb. She sold her luxuriant hair to buy him a handsome watch fob. Without the magic of love, the story would have been a masterpiece of irony. With it, each succeeded in giving the other a priceless, precious gift — the devotion of a selfless marriage.



This unity of spirit reflects the unity of Christ and His Church, the unselfish love Christ has for His members. As He loved them, He devoted His life to their good. And the members of Christ's Mystical Body are united in purpose, the life of Christ. In like fashion, a married couple consistently wish the other's good — physical, material, mental, spiritual. In Christian marriage there is no room for selfishness, but only wanting everything good for your spouse, flesh of your flesh, one in Christ.

PROBLEMS COMMON TO ALL MARRIAGES

So far we haven't talked about the actual adjustments of marriage, but about the approach one needs to them and the qualities a spouse needs. The next obvious question is: What are those problems common to all marriages which require a conforming of oneself to something different, an adjustment?

Certainly the first major adjustment, uppermost in every newlywed's mind, is the physical union in marriage. To moral, chaste young people, this represents the greatest change in their personal relationship. Most of them await it with eagerness, as they should; but many, particularly women, have their anticipation tinged with fear and confused by stories, notions and false attitudes which they have absorbed from previous generations. Along with this comes the natural excitement, the weariness of the prenuptial preparations, the strangeness of being transformed, in a moment, from a single to a married person. How achieve a successful relationship in spite of these hurdles? So goes the earnest plea.

First of all, it is extremely difficult to convince those about to be married how natural and comfortable they will feel from the moment of their marriage vows. But it is true; so much of the imagined tension and constraint disappear from then on. The sacramental grace is already at work.

Nevertheless, ignorance of the role of sex in God's plan, its personal significance to those in love, is a natural enemy to true physical enjoyment and happy sexual adjustment. Each must understand that while the sex act has as its primary purpose the procreation of the race, it also has profound meaning to husband and wife.

It must be, to them, the outward sign of a deeper inward mental and spiritual unity; it must come to be a means of strengthening that oneness of soul which every marriage seeks. Each must learn that love-making is an active, outward giving of self, to express ineffable joy at the height of love, to give encouragement when problems weigh heavy, to solace in sorrow. In every mood, in every circumstance, the physical

union reflects a hand-in-hand, soul-to-soul oneness, a means of discovering the beauty of marriage, of carrying its crosses.

Knowledge like this dispels fears and hesitancy, making both husband and wife eager to share this magnificent expression of love. But the knowledge must become actual experience, a living part of the marriage. For this we need patience and unselfishness to a high degree. Learning to express one's love takes time and familiarity with the wishes of one's partner. Patience — while each slowly learns to speak in this new language, involving his entire being! Thoughtfulness — while each seeks the pleasure of the other and finds his joy in that of his companion.

Love-making is an art, the technique of which cannot be learned from a book; for it is as personal and unique as each marriage itself. With tender patience and unselfish love, it becomes the skill of the husband and wife, and its meaning becomes enriched by the years and experiences they share.

A genuine love, often and generously expressed, leads to a wonderful companionship in a marriage. But this, in turn, requires another adjustment for husband and wife. The companionship of good marriage has a mutual exclusiveness about it which cannot be shared with others. Newlyweds are often overwhelmed with their enjoyment of each other's personality at every level—the first months of marriage have a unique quality of discovery, a new language. This is good; the first year, before too many domestic problems accumulate, can seem the closest to heaven that man will reach before death.

However, this coin of companionship has another side: We are social beings, too, with a responsibility toward community, parish, employment, family. Yet at times a young husband or wife resents any intrusion upon the other's time, whether the intruder be job or next-door neighbor. This jealousy is regarded by the immature as a sign of the depth of their love; it is instead a warning signal of insecurity and a first step to friction.

This is an area in which adjustment is sorely needed. Newlyweds must realize that they married whole persons who have

relationships with others involving duties and interests. These cannot be highhandedly excluded from a new life. Instead, the partners adapt, each to the other, respecting individual talents and activities. As much as possible must be shared in marriage; the interests of one should at least vicariously be part of the other's fabric of living.

BASEBALL OR BALLET?

She makes the effort to understand baseball or golf, to appreciate her husband's score. He familiarizes himself with her favorite concert music or ballet. She learns a little about his work and becomes an intelligent listener; he takes pride in her latest recipe. Life for both of them grows richer through this sharing. And perhaps most important of all, each will see that the other has access to moments of privacy and solitude to meditate or to dream.

Still another adjustment necessary in every marriage is to what is universally known as "the in-law problem." Truly a man leaves his father and mother and cleaves to a wife, and the two become one flesh; but in some aspects it seems that the spouse is acquiring not only a mate but a second family. And with a second family, he or she is at least doubling family problems. Conflicts of backgrounds and interests multiply.

In America, especially, there are frequent instances of marriages between individuals of different national origins. Each family may have customs it regards as important — almost sacrosanct. Even where there is no nationality difference, this hurdle may arise. A newly wed couple has to make many adjustments, from culinary tastes to important holidays. Shall we have standing rib roast or wheat germ and yogurt for dinner? Shall we celebrate Christmas with your folks or mine? Questions like those seem unimportant weighed in the balance of love, but many a couple have come to tears and recriminations over such problems rooted in different family backgrounds.

The important thing is to realize that with marriage vows

we become a new family. As a new family, we must begin to establish our own customs, our own feasts to be celebrated in the privacy of our own home. In-laws — of both families — must be given due recognition and respect; but the primary loyalty of husband and wife now belongs to each other, not to his parents or her parents.

One of the most virulent examples of the sick marriage is that of "Mama's boy." Fairly common, his attitude can be summed up in the saccharine and nauseating words, "I can get another wife, but I'll have only one mother."



These words reveal, first of all, an obsessively possessive mother, who probably doted on her offspring to the neglect of her own husband. And they show us a husband who does not understand the importance and grandeur of marital love and has never cut the silver cord of his mother's smothering devotion. Somewhat rarer, there is "Daddy's girl," who makes an equally poor mate. Many a marriage has foundered on these shoals; the son or daughter who has not outgrown this attitude is a poor marriage bet.

One of the adjustments that normally mature couples should be able to take in their stride is to put each other first, their parents second. And when they have their own family, their own children second, their parents third. For it is true that the bond of husband and wife is stronger and closer than any other human relationship. For this we have the word of Christ Himself.

MIXED MARRIAGE: A GREATER ADJUSTMENT

One of the most difficult, and more unfortunate, adjustments is that which must be made in a mixed marriage. For many grave reasons, both spiritual and psychological, the Church is opposed to such unions. But when, in spite of all cautions, such a marriage occurs, the religious difference will cause many situations demanding tact, understanding and adaptability.

First, each spouse must always respect the belief and religious customs of the other. The Catholic party, further, must be deeply aware of the fact that his partner, without the aid of regular reception of the sacraments, may have a more difficult time in the practice of virtue, in living up to the ideals of a holy Christian marriage. So it is the Catholic who must pray the harder, who must make the more generous effort to live unselfishly and devotedly.

To achieve true marital union in such a case, there is the need for a tremendous psychological adjustment. Since there can be no absolute spiritual union in such a home, a deep, basic loneliness must be accepted as part of such a marriage, more so if the Catholic partner takes his religion seriously. Extra emphasis will have to be placed on emotional and mental harmony, although this can never completely fill the gap.

A problem much more universal in our generation is that of the working wife. Regardless of the fact that many authorities decry the trend, realism requires recognition of the fact that, wisely or not, over 90 per cent of new wives work, at least until the first baby arrives. Space does not permit a detailed analysis of all the conflicts involved, but some attention can be directed at some areas of stress.

The first and most obvious point is that the newlyweds are both assuming two tasks at once. They may be accustomed to working, but not to simultaneously working and trying to learn their respective roles in the establishment of a home and family. It is an immediate problem: A few days for the wedding trip, then back to work and home to dinner. Not to a

dinner all prepared by mother, a home in order, an evening of relaxation, either, although some newlyweds obviously just postpone the problem by boarding with one set of parents.

Both mates must be willing to help in the unaccustomed roles of shopper, cook, house-cleaner, dishwasher. True, these are the major responsibilities of the wife, and it is ideal when she can devote full time and all her skill to them. But if her help is needed by the husband in his task of supporting a home, then his must be given just as thoughtfully to her. Neither can expect to come home from his job and relax; the second job, for both of them, is the making of the home.

GREAT ACHES FROM LITTLE RUBS

So far in the question of adjustment we have discussed major problems, easily defined and with definite effects. But for one person to adjust fully to another, to conform to another's ways and habits, calls for daily adaptation to his temperament. Less than earth-shaking questions are involved here — matters of neatness or tardiness, for instance. But these, by their constant presence, can produce great friction.

It becomes an almost unbearable strain for the neat and orderly housewife to live with a husband whose habits are woefully slipshod and his work disorganized to the point of chaos. For a husband it is equally a cross to be always on time, only to be kept waiting by a wife seemingly incapable of measuring time. Little things — yes, they can be amusing for a time. But unless they are recognized as faults, and unless each partner honestly strives to conform to the other's better standards, unhappiness and bickering may shortly result.

There are many attitudes which may demand a compromise, an adjustment, on the part of the husband and wife. So many questions, such as place and type of recreation, of vacations, the "night out," how to spend available income, where to live — to each of these each partner brings strong preferences and convictions. Yet, for harmonious living, these opinions must be tempered by the wishes of the other, or there will be no true joy.



There is the whole paradoxical nature of adjustment: We give in, we adapt to suit our partner, we relinquish what we once thought was imperative for our own pleasure — and we find that we are happier now in the happiness of the one we love.

One more essential adjustment must be made by every husband and wife. They learn to live new roles in the home. No longer merely members of families, the husband becomes the head of one and the wife its heart. Any real adaptation to marriage as Christ and human nature intended it to be involves this bringing of things into proper position, giving each family member his primary role and responsibility.

The young husband must grow in the image of Christ, exercising an authority tempered always with love. The young wife reflects the role of the Church, Christ's Bride, bringing devotion and service, and always love. Each helps the other in this transformation and sanctifies the other, so that their marriage can mirror the divine union of Christ and the Church.

Ultimately, that is the reason for all adjustment in marriage. We are not interested in a mere surface harmony, in a comfortable, complacent life in which two people have managed to fit each other's personalities. The Christian in love wants marriage to make him one with his spouse — and through this union, to lead him to Christ.

All changes in himself, all lessons to be learned, he assumes eagerly, for through this purification and growth comes happiness, enduring and tremendous love — and mutual holiness.

Do's and Don't's For A Happy Marriage

- 1—*In your morning prayers each day, renew your promise to God to love, honor and cherish the helpmate He has given you.*
- 2—*Never speak to him or her in anger; do not answer angry words in kind.*
- 3—*Respect the other's personal likes and dislikes, preferences and tastes.*
- 4—*Place your husband or wife before in-laws and all others.*
- 5—*If alcohol presents a danger to either, let both abstain from it.*
- 6—*Agree together on a family budget and observe it.*
- 7—*Avoid all petty nagging, selfishness and jealousy.*
- 8—*Give frequent signs of your love through thoughtful actions, gestures and words.*
- 9—*Make every effort to share your spouse's interests and hobbies; invite him or her to share yours.*
- 10—*Love the children God sends you as His gift to you and as your gift to each other.*
- 11—*Pray together each day, knowing that the family that prays together stays together.*

A Recommended Reading List

- Caffarel, H.: *Marriage is Holy* (Fides) \$3.75
- Hildebrand, Dietrich von: *Marriage* (Longmans) \$2.25
- Leclercq, Jacques: *Marriage, a Great Sacrament* (Macmillan) \$1.95
- Newland, Mary Reed: *We and Our Children* (Kenedy) \$3.50
- Perkins, Mary (Mrs. Ryan): *Beginning at Home* (Liturgical Press) \$.90
- Sheen, Fulton J.: *Three to Get Married* (Appleton-Crofts) \$3.50
- Carre: *Companions for Eternity* (Fides) \$.65
- Firkel, Eva: *Woman in the Modern World* (Fides) \$3.50
- Geissler, Eugene S.: *Father of the Family* (Fides) \$1.25
- Plus, Raoul: *Christ in the Home* (Pustet) \$4.25
- Caffarel, H.: *Love and Grace in Marriage* (Fides) \$3.25
- Oraison, Marc: *Love or Constraint?* (Kenedy) \$3.75
- Suenens, Leon-Joseph: *Love and Control* (Newman) \$3.75
- Weyergans, Franz: *The Long Adventure* (Regnery) \$3.50

FINANCES AND HOW

TO BUDGET *by Robert and Helen Cissell*

To give our students in family economics a good idea of the extent to which family life is a business today, we have them work out a monthly budget for a couple. Besides facts and figures, this problem sometimes reveals unusual attitudes. One young man turned in his budget with a monthly allowance of \$10 for candy. He explained that he had done his homework with the help of his girl friend; every time he put in a carton of cigarettes for himself, she, a nonsmoker, insisted on a box of candy for herself. Modern couples run into enough troubles trying to keep up with the neighbors, without competing with each other.

Pages 20-21 have a list of the principal items for which most families spend money. Any couple considering marriage will benefit from filling in this list with estimates for their particular case. It is true that on many items you can make only a guess at this time. Even so, an evening or two facing the economic realities of marriage can be interesting and profitable — and probably a bit sobering. If your folks have been meeting most of your needs up to now, this will look like a long list. The sooner you learn that marriage involves a lot of money matters, the better will be your chances of avoiding the financial troubles that wreck many marriages.

We suggest that you aim higher than just avoiding fighting over money, although there are many couples who would be satisfied if they could get that far. If you tackle the business side of marriage properly, you can make economics a bond that will strengthen your union. Thus, good money management can mean more than making ends meet or having nice things.

BEFORE YOU PLAN YOUR BUDGET

Before you work out your "Budget for a Family of Two," do two things: First read this chapter for practical suggestions based on our own experience and ideas gained from teaching family economics to many young people. Then talk to your parents and young married couples to get ideas from them as to what it costs for various budget items in your locality.

If you are still not convinced that family life is big business moneywise, consider just one fact — if your average income is \$5,000 a year (not an unusual amount today) you will have made and spent \$125,000 by the time your silver anniversary comes around. Such a sum would be budgeted with care even by a large corporation. Careful planning and wise buying are much more important where not only solvency but family happiness depends on how the money is managed.

Essential for successful money management is the realization that it is a job for a couple working together. This means that both should be fully informed. If there is any engaged girl reading this who does not know what her fiancé is making, this will give her good reason to find out without seeming nosy. How can she be expected to take over much of the financial management of a new firm if she does not know what she will have to work with?

While both husband and wife should be completely informed on money matters, there will be a division of labor when it comes to carrying out details. Large purchases — home, car, furnishings, appliances — should be a joint decision after careful consideration of family needs and resources and shopping for good buys. Routine purchases may well become the primary responsibility of the one best qualified to handle them. In many families this will mean that the wife will buy most of the groceries and children's clothing while the husband is responsible for such items as car maintenance and insurance. Regardless of the final division of responsibility, it should be one that is mutually agreeable. Also, each should know enough about the other's specialty to take over when necessary.

PLANNING A BUDGET _____

Monthly Income

Salary
Other income
Total income

Monthly Expenses

Food used at home
Meals out
*Rent or mortgage payments and insurance
on home*
Property taxes
Repairs and upkeep on home
Fuel and utilities
Furnishings and insurance on furnishings ...
Household supplies
Husband's clothing
Wife's clothing
Laundry and cleaning
Medical and dental care and health insurance.

<i>Medicines and drugs</i>	-----
<i>Automobile</i>	-----
<i>Carfare</i>	-----
<i>Church and charity</i>	-----
<i>Gifts</i>	-----
<i>Dues</i>	-----
<i>Recreation and reading material</i>	-----
<i>Tobacco, beverages, and candy</i>	-----
<i>Personal care</i>	-----
<i>Life insurance</i>	-----
<i>Social Security</i>	-----
<i>Income tax</i>	-----
<i>Miscellaneous</i>	-----
<i>Other classes of expenses for your family</i> <i>such as: hobbies, school, etc.</i>	-----
-----	-----
-----	-----
<i>Total expenses</i>	-----
<i>Savings</i>	-----

Good buying techniques, which are important in family money management, can be acquired by study and experience. Even more important than techniques are right attitudes. You should start your family life with these and hold fast to them in spite of the pressure of advertising, the neighbor's conspicuous consumption and your own wants.

The best basis we have found for forming a set of right attitudes goes back to St. Thomas Aquinas. Before you dismiss this 13th-century theologian as knowing nothing about the money problems of a modern family, take a look at his logical division of material goods.

WHAT COMES FIRST, SECOND, THIRD?

First there are the absolute necessities — such things as the basic food, clothing and shelter required to live decently as a human being. These come first in your budget, and a couple should not marry until the man's income is adequate to provide these for two. Let no one kid you — it does cost more for two.

Next come the conditioned necessities — things needed for people to carry out the duties of their state in life according to the time and place in which they live. This is what makes the St. Thomas approach to budgeting so modern. It relates your spending plan to the needs of your vocation in 1961. Examples of conditioned necessities for a family today are some household appliances, books for school and a car for business purposes. Again, a couple is not economically ready for marriage unless there is a reasonable chance that they will be able to afford the conditioned necessities for family life on the man's income.

Finally come the luxuries — things not needed for either decent living as a human being or maintaining a wholesome family life.

Applying the St. Thomas budget is simple — in theory, at least. You make most of your purchases on a priority basis that follows the above order. In practice you will find that

will power and common sense are necessary to make the theory work. If a couple feel that a color television is an absolute necessity or that a boat has priority over necessary home appliances, they should not expect to have an economically satisfactory family life.

A young couple should start simply. They should not start housekeeping with all the things it has taken their parents 25 years to accumulate. Combine simplicity with the St. Thomas order, and you have a sound foundation on which to build the business side of your marriage. You will have no trouble deciding that a balanced budget with its peace and security is a lot more desirable than an expensive car or exclusive neighborhood with resulting high interest charges and living continually on the brink of financial disaster.

Successful businesses have accounting systems that enable the management to know how the firm is doing. The same is true of a well-run family. Here, however, the records can be simple and an exact balance, while nice, is not absolutely necessary. For family records you can use a printed budget book. We prefer a spiral-bound notebook. Across the top of a double page you put in column headings for the common classes of expenditures in your family. After you fill in the monthly estimates in the table in this article, you will have a good idea of column headings that will serve as a starting point for your family. Down the side of the page you list the days of the month. That is all there is to it except remembering to enter things. In such a book you can keep records for several years for easy reference.

Simple records will be of great value to you in many ways. When tax time comes, you will have a record of everything that can be claimed as deductions. Should the Internal Revenue people call you in to discuss your income tax report, your records may make this a less unpleasant experience. If expenses get out of line with income, records will help you find leaks that can be plugged to get the family back on a balanced budget.

Budgeting is much more than record-keeping. It is also

planning ahead by using past records as a guide to future expenses. Anticipate large fixed expenses such as insurance premiums, and then prorate them on a monthly basis. Your objective should be to have enough cash on hand to meet such expenses without having to resort to costly credit. After you get an estimate of your average monthly expenses, divide the annual income on which you can depend by 12. Should expenses exceed income, check your work sheet for possible economies. If your budget does not balance on paper, do not expect it to work out somehow in practice.

THE TRUE COST OF CREDIT

Over the long run, one of the best ways to save money is to operate the family finances on a cash basis in so far as possible. Doing this may seem odd in times when being in debt is the accepted way of life. But odd or not it is good business and will result in your family not only being more secure and happy but also able to afford more things than the family that is continually in debt. If more people knew the true cost of credit, there would be a lot less living on time. The "Source of Credit" table given below will give you an idea of the true cost of using credit.

SOURCE OF CREDIT	COMMON RATES
Insurance policies	4 - 6%
Credit unions	9 - 12%
Commercial banks	12 - 18%
Automobile finance companies	12 - 24%
Licensed small-loan companies	24 - 42%
Installment sellers	12 - 25% and up!
Loan sharks	120 - 1200% and up!

When we teach family economics, we have the students go out and get the credit terms for something in which they are

interested. Then they figure out the true rate. In one case a boy said that he was ahead of us on this assignment. He had just purchased something on time and would not have to go shopping. So we made life even simpler for him by taking his data and working out the problem as an example. When the true rate came out to over 90 per cent he wished that the assignment had come a little earlier.

Thus, while the rates in this chart are typical, individual cases can be much higher. If you are thinking of buying a necessity on time, we suggest that you check the rate very carefully. You will find great differences in interest charges, and you might as well get the least expensive.

Better yet, pay cash or use a charge account on which there is no carrying charge if paid within a certain time. Not only will you save a lot on interest but the buyer with cash can sometimes get a substantial discount. The professional buyers for business look for these ways to save. Your family will benefit from the same sound practices.



EARN MORE BY NOT WORKING

Now, before you are married, is the time to start building up a cash reserve. If you can't do it now when expenses are low and perhaps you are both working, how are you going to make it later when expenses are up and you are operating on one pay check? If you get the impression from this that we favor the wife's working at home, you are right. Not only is there plenty for her to do there, if she does a topnotch job of money management she may in the long run contribute more to the family's real income than if she took a routine factory or office job. By real income we mean the many goods and services which a family needs. Many of these can be purchased with cash income or be provided by the mother at home. A job may mean so many more expenses for food, clothing, taxes, transportation and other job-connected outlays that the goods purchased by the mother's net cash income are less in value than the real income that would result from her doing a better job at home.

Besides being handy when you go shopping for furnishings and appliances, your cash reserve will be a tremendous help when you are in the market for a home. Here is a legitimate use of credit for families. But the interest costs of a long-term home loan are almost unbelievable. For example, a \$10,000 loan, not at all uncommon today, if it is made at six per cent and paid off over 20 years will have total interest charges of \$7,194. A 30-year loan at the same rate will result in interest of \$11,584.

If these figures shock you, good. Let's hope they shock you enough to get you to avoid unnecessary expenses now in favor of saving for a down payment on a home that will substantially reduce these interest charges.

Another way to reduce the cost of home owning is to shop for credit. If you were to get the above loan at five per cent, the interest charge for a 20-year loan would be \$5,839, and for a 30-year loan, \$9,329. Still a lot of interest, but for the

20-year loan a saving of \$1,355 over the six per cent value and for the 30-year loan a savings of \$2,255. A day or two of shopping for credit is time well spent if it results in savings like these.

Speaking of saving, we would like to put in a good word for little savings. Since a nickel or a dime buys so little these days, young people wonder why bother with such small savings. This comes up particularly when we talk about food. Food will probably be the biggest single item in your budget. But there will still be no chances for spectacular savings as is the case when you get a major appliance at a good price or use a large down payment to save hundreds of dollars in interest on your home loan. You save on food in terms of a nickel here, a dime there by taking advantage of specials, buying in quantity, using leftovers and so on. Suppose you save only a nickel a meal per person by managing well. This comes to over \$100 a year for just two people. With a wife working outside the home this works in reverse with apparently small additional costs for prepared dinners resulting in large annual increases in food expenses.

Now with these general principles to guide you and all the specific information you can get from friends and relatives, plan your monthly budget. On some things you can make only a rough estimate now. On other items, such as taxes and insurance premiums, you can come quite close to the final monthly figure. In any case you will be well started on a really businesslike management of your affairs. You will have a good idea whether the standard of living you expect to maintain is reasonable for the income you will have. If not, there is time to do something before you are hopelessly over your head in debt. Go back over your figures until you have found workable ways to bring expenses into line with income.

Your family happiness is not going to depend on how much you make but on whether your net balance month after month is plus or minus. It is possible to be happy on a moderate income and miserable on a large one.

THE IMPORTANCE OF COMMUNICATION *by John and Anne Kane*

After 25 years of married life the average husband and wife must have whispered, spoken, perhaps even shouted millions of words at each other. But some of this, and sometimes a great deal of this, may have been talking *at* instead of *with* each other. Just how much of it was actual communication the spouses themselves can gauge by the number of misunderstandings, quarrels or serious disagreements that have resulted from their inability to communicate. Communication is a complex, complicated and sometimes confusing process. Even between spouses deeply in love and long united in marriage, complete mutual understanding is not always achieved.

At the risk of a cliché, communication is a two-way street. The first speaker's words provide a stimulus for the listener, and his or her response becomes a stimulus for the original speaker. Technically, this is called social interaction and is by no means limited to words. It actually means that one notices what is said or done and responds to what is said and done. But the way a person responds may not be the exclusive result of what the other person said or did. Each one of us attempts to interpret stimuli, and the way we respond depends on the meaning we extract from them.

Just so this doesn't sound too esoteric, let's take a simple

example of a husband-and-wife conversation. John makes a simple statement, "Mary, please pass the salt." Of course, Mary knows that her husband wants the salt, but Mary also wants to know why he wants it. And as she passes it she may say, "What's the matter? Didn't I season the food well enough?" John simply replies that he would like more salt, and Mary launches into a discussion of why one shouldn't use more salt. A full-blown family argument could follow from John's simple request.

If such a situation as described here actually occurred, it could probably be explained by the emotional set of Mary at that moment. Communication involves not merely thinking, facial expressions and a tone of voice, but also the emotional state of the speaker. The interpretation we place upon another's words or acts is colored by our own emotional feeling at that time.

In one psychological experiment subjects under hypnosis were put into happy, critical and anxious moods. After being brought out of the trance they were shown pictures of social situations and asked to explain what they saw. Those in the happy mood made such remarks as "It looks like fun," or "the people are having a good time." Those who were in a critical mood stated that the situation was pretty horrible, while those in whom an anxiety mood had been created tended to say "Something bad may happen," or, "You never know when tragedy will occur."

Without benefit of any psychological experimentation every husband and wife know that when one spouse returns in the evening, tired, discouraged or frustrated, his reaction even to the most pleasant greeting is apt to be something less than pleasant. He needs time to allow his original mood to disappear and a better one to replace it. The same is true, of course, of the wife who after a trying day responds to a husband's happy greeting with something less than enthusiasm. In other words, moods get in the way of communication; unless both parties appreciate this fact, misunderstanding results.

WHAT ARE THE BARRIERS?

But words themselves are very important in facilitating or inhibiting communication. Stuart Chase, author of *The Tyranny of Words*, has pointed out that there are two kinds of words. One is a word which has a specific, objective meaning, and the other is a weasel word which really has only a vague or relative meaning but is emotionally loaded. Just how many weasel words may be involved in the conversation of any couple depends upon them and their experiences. However, certain kinds of words are likely to be emotionally laden in most families. Among these, oddly enough, would be the word "love" as well as "money, cheap, expensive, cruel, nasty, pleasant" and "unpleasant." In Clarence Day's play, *Life With Father*, whenever an argument occurred the wife always ended up by telling her husband he didn't love her. He, of course, felt he did; but the problem was that the word "love" had a somewhat different meaning in the context of each person's notion of it.

Since so many family disagreements center about financial aspects, it is scarcely surprising that what the wife considers cheap the husband may consider expensive, and vice versa. The pleasant experience of a ballet for the wife may be a trying experience for the husband. Fortunately, the meaning of these words is not completely divorced from reality, and in most cases spouses will come near to an agreement upon them. On other occasions they will be talking at the same time of two very different things so far as the meanings to them are concerned.

It is not difficult to understand how the same word can have two different and sometimes almost opposite meanings to a husband and wife. First, there is the barrier of sex. Even today, with the wholesale emphasis upon "togetherness," there is a man's world and there is a woman's world. During

most of his working days, a husband is associated with his occupational colleagues, male or female. They think and talk about many matters which he does not share with his wife, if for no other reason than to avoid shop talk. Even when a husband does attempt to explain in detail to his wife some of the occurrences at work, he discovers it is likely to be a long, painstaking effort, rarely accompanied by entire success. This is not a matter of his wife's intelligence or interest, but rather the fact that her day-by-day experiences are quite different from his.

Women have a similar experience when they attempt to detail for a husband the happenings of the neighborhood that afternoon. He may consider it trivia, or he may be completely uninterested. But in either case he is likely to irritate his wife by mumbling yes or no, or by shaking his head positively or negatively. Without considerable effort, he finds it difficult to perceive situations the way she does.

The way people interpret things that are said to them depend upon what psychologists call their reference group. We all have a membership group — that is, a group to which we obviously belong, such as the family, the church or the club. Usually, but not always, these are also our reference groups. However, it is entirely possible to be considered a member of one group but to use a different group as one's reference group. Out of necessity husbands and wives do not share with each other membership in all the groups to which they belong.

The activities of the sewing circle, the League of Women Voters or an afternoon bridge club are not entirely incomprehensible to a husband; but they are almost so. To a wife, her husband's professional or business group, club or other exclusively masculine associations do represent something of a puzzle. In other words, it takes quite a bit of effort for husbands and wives to communicate adequately when each is taking experiences and interests from a membership group and/or a reference group to which the other does not belong.

LEARNING EACH OTHER'S LANGUAGE



Despite the love and romance that usually characterize the early months or years of marriage, the two newlyweds may have come from quite different backgrounds. They may not have known each other during most of their lives. A man from the lower middle class and a girl from the upper middle class have quite different systems of values, and only months of patient effort at communication will result in understanding. This might be called the social-class barrier in communication, and when it exists some strange quarrels may result.

Helen came from an upper middle-class family with a good income. Tom came from a lower middle-class family with a low income. Helen returned jubilantly from a shopping trip one day to announce that she had bought four sheets for \$24. Her husband was horrified at the expense. She rejoiced over what she considered a bargain. Within their own frames of reference, each, of course, was right. Unfortunately, their frames of reference were different, and a minor quarrel ensued.

Every husband and wife will immediately recognize and admit another trying barrier to communication: children. As his wife is preparing dinner, a husband may take the opportunity of passing on some important news with which each is greatly concerned. In the midst of this serious conversation, a child rushes into the home, eager to greet Daddy, and launches into a long monologue about daily activities. No

sooner is the interrupted conversation resumed than another child comes in crying. He fell and hurt himself. First aid is administered; the child is soothed and the conversation renewed. Then comes a telephone call from the older daughter who is 10 blocks away, has no transportation and wants Daddy to pick her up at once. Even the most articulate spouses with exceptional abilities to communicate cannot break through this kind of barrier.

For this reason, while it is difficult, it is best to delay serious conversations until the children are in bed or at least settled down to their evening study.

But with all the problems of communication that do exist between a husband and wife, it must also be admitted that with time and experience they can learn to communicate well. For instance, within almost every family there is what might be called the family vocabulary. These may be expressions of endearment, special phrases used with young children regarding excretion, or just long-standing family jokes based on mutual experience. One family had a student from a university boarding with them. No matter what was served him at dinner he inevitably made a sandwich out of it, sometimes piling meat, potatoes and vegetables within two slices of bread. To this day any large sandwich is known in this family as a "Riley," the name of the graduate student.

Such experiences facilitate communication and in a sense are practically copyrighted by the family which uses them.

A husband-wife communication, although at times difficult for the many reasons pointed out here, is by no means impossible. But it does require positive effort and particularly patience. Some conversations are merely small talk and present no problem. Others consist in passing on routine information or asking ordinary questions.

But there are others which are quite serious and involve rather weighty family decisions. The danger of misunderstanding is greatest in this last area. Therefore, it is wise for a husband or wife to assess the situation as well as possible before embarking upon such a conversation.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT TIME TO SPEAK

Bad news, it is said, travels fast. Sometimes it does in the family because the moment a husband or wife see each other toward the end of the day, while dinner is in preparation and the children are still playing, the bad news is broken by one or the other. This is probably the worst possible moment to convey such news. Short of an immediate emergency due to the news, it could be postponed until after dinner, then discussed quietly and as unemotionally as possible in the latter part of the evening. Furthermore, some of these situations do not look nearly so bad after a pleasant dinner as they do on an empty stomach. Rather obviously, the best time to relay disconcerting information is not when a husband or wife is clearly upset.

One tired, lonely, traveling-salesman husband called his wife long distance. She was probably as lonely and tired as he, but the first news she passed on in a semihysterical vein was, "Today, the whole back of the house was on fire!" Momentarily stunned and feeling helpless, hundreds of miles away, he anxiously inquired if any of the family had been injured. Reassured about this he began to press for more details. Ultimately he learned that "the whole back of the house" really meant some leaves a hundred yards behind his home; they had become ignited when the trash was being burned. As one might imagine, the telephone conversation did not end on a pleasant note.

When husbands and wives do discuss serious matters with each other, each should be certain as possible to be clear, concise and definitely certain that the other understands. This may take a bit of time and a bit of doing, but it is certainly essential. Some irritation may well result when one or the other feels he or she is not getting the message across. But at all costs emotion should be ruled out of the conversation. At

least, husbands and wives should observe with each other the same kind of courtesy that both would extend to strangers. Sometimes they don't.

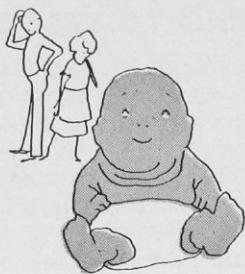
LEARNING TO KEEP SILENT

Finally, there are certain topics that are best left un-discussed because they cannot be resolved. If a wife doesn't like her mother-in-law's hairdo, it is futile to complain to her husband about it. Relationships between a mother and son inevitably have emotional overtones; and any criticism of his mother, even if justified, is rarely appreciated and more rarely accepted.

Sometimes a husband's friends are positively disliked by his wife. The mere mention of one of their names changes the whole tone of the conversation and renders communication impossible. The wise husband will delete these names from his conversation. The wife, if the situation exists on her side, will do the same.

Over the years each spouse must learn to pick up the cues which indicate a particular subject, a particular phrase or a particular mood will make communication impossible. Sometimes these words may be very ordinary ones, but they hold an extraordinary connotation for one of the parties. In one case a husband constantly irritated his wife when he remarked that he "had to put the slop out." To her, "slop" meant something other than garbage, and for a long time he was puzzled and hurt by his wife's momentary flare of anger when he used the word.

Getting along well in marriage is so important that these sensitive areas in communication must be recognized, appreciated and handled skillfully. Time, effort, good will and a few sensible ground rules will facilitate communication and inhibit misunderstanding. There can be no true love in marriage without mutual understanding, and mutual understanding is obviously impossible without adequate communication.



YOUR FIRST CHILD *by Linus and Mary Maino*

All parents live the experience of their first child only once in a lifetime. When "baby makes three," will their life together be a "blue heaven" or just plain blue?

They were two in one flesh; they are now three in one love. The flighty bride is a calm mother, the nervous bridegroom is now a strong father. At any rate, that is how it should be.

On the other hand, the first baby can cause his parents to regress: His mother becomes a little girl, her child a new and wonderful doll, a plaything and a toy; his father becomes a big, jealous boy who also returns to the things of a child, his games, his male companions.

"Nothing in my life ever prepared me for this first baby," a young mother wailed. She was troubled by the greatest upheaval of her life. She had walked into marriage in a rosy glow of romance, unknowing and unthinking. She had no idea of the real joy the first baby can bring nor of the pain and hurt every young mother must accept.

THERE'LL BE SOME CHANGES MADE

A first baby means many things, but the greatest of these is "change," in more than the obvious sense of the word. The child's mother and father must accept change not only in their routine but also in themselves.

This child, as small and insignificant as he may seem, is a great challenge. He challenges his parents' love for him and each other. He challenges their unselfishness. He challenges their maturity. From the first signs of pregnancy his mother and father must face reality: They are now no longer two; they are three. They must love and please not only two, but three.

And this love that they have for each other now must serve the demands of one with whom it is impossible to reason — frightening to cope with and most difficult to keep quiet.

We can be thankful for God's wisdom, for the fact that He gave mothers and fathers so many months to prepare for their child's entry into this world by learning to understand why this infant is being entrusted to their care.

From the point of view of health, there has probably never been a better or safer time to have a first baby. Disease prevention, nutrition, rules of care and well-being for the body are available to almost everyone. Grandmothers, aunts and friends, boys at the office and girls in the bridge clubs are all ready to discuss how to prepare for and take care of a baby. Courses in schools, health centers and hospitals are telling young marrieds what to do until they find the right page in the baby manuals. In the area of physical care, there is no lack of opportunity to discover the needs and wants of new babies.

It seems somewhat more difficult for young husbands and wives to prepare themselves emotionally or psychologically.

A first-time prospective father usually experiences very little change in his habits of living and thinking. He may

worry a bit about a raise in salary, the need for a bigger house or where he will send his son to college. (He knows it will be a son.) He assumes that his way of life will go on much as before—a morning departure and evening return, relieved by an evening of business or bowling, or an afternoon of golf with the boys from the office.

There will be no great interruption in routine except for the few hours he may have to take off for driving his wife to the hospital or buying the cigars. He may know about babies' colic which keeps his friends up nights, but he quite confidently knows it will not happen to his child—if it does he can always tell his wife what to do.

HIS WIFE SEEMS DIFFERENT

Then after a few weeks, perhaps halfway through the pregnancy, a fear or uneasiness comes into his consciousness. His wife seems different. He feels he does not know or cannot share the secret joy that sometimes shows in the bloom of her. He notes an increasing clumsiness of movement, and sometimes circles under her eyes. He cannot quite get through to her or anticipate her strange moods. Outwardly his life goes on, but a "change" is beginning to be felt. His approaching fatherhood is now being "experienced."

When asked about what it means to have a first baby, a young father is often reluctant to say. He is not quite sure of its meaning and is still under the spell of its mystery. The things that matter most are often too big for words, but if they can be expressed they may reveal the depths of his feelings about fatherhood.

A group of young couples taking a prenatal course for parents were asked what the coming child meant to them. One of the fathers said this: "For the first time, I am putting something back into life. I have spent more than 25

years 'taking' from everybody and every situation. In giving this child to the world, I see it as a little bit of 'paying back.' " In speaking this way before the rest of the group, he brought more forcefully to the minds of all that a baby is not just marked "his and hers," but is an expression of love's giving back to God and to the world.

It is the wife who faces a larger share of the difference in living, thinking and feeling that a first baby will make. From the very depths of her being she begins to discover the meaning of "woman with child." Where previously her time, attention and work had been regulated by her own needs or that of her husband, she now finds she is more than living, for there is someone living within her.

Even though a woman works outside the home during part of her first pregnancy, at this time she will find herself with more leisure, or time on which there is no demand, than at any time in the future. She may think she is busy and try to fill the days with preparation of all sorts, but the change that the baby will make does not always make itself felt. The first baby and subsequent ones will place her in a different role with more exacting human demands on her time.

Many years in the future, when the children have grown and departed, she will not experience this being "just herself"; for she will have grown into community or family responsibility as someone's wife, mother, grandmother or widow. She must face the reality that a part of her commitment to life and to love is to abandon her old self and its habits so that she may take on with gladness the fulfillment of her womanhood.

Getting used to this apparent "loss of self" is one of the most difficult things many young women face in the first pregnancy. Their formal education has prepared them for a job or career in the world, with the freedom and sense of achievement that this often brings. In spite of studying about marriage, listening to lectures, and giving intellectual and spiritual acceptance to the priority of children, young mothers are not prepared to cope with the personal upheaval that takes place in their thinking and feeling.



THE GROWING PAINS OF PREGNANCY

It is a continuous contradiction, a mixture of achievement and loss, anticipation and concern, joy with reluctance, that suddenly seems to overwhelm and at times frighten them. It need not make them ashamed or inadequate — it is part of the growing pains of pregnancy.

The complexity of values established by our culture and the inability of many young people to know which they should

accept only confuse many newlyweds, for they are unsure of their own standard of values. A young woman has been conditioned to value physical attractiveness and be aware that men are conditioned in the same way. This "desirability" seems to be in direct proportion to the smallness of her waistline and her statistical measurements.

The demands of pregnancy must temporarily upset the measurements. She is subjected to all types of comment from friends and relatives. "It's so nice to have a baby when you're young," or "Don't you think you should have waited until you had a chance to know each other better?" All the time she listens to those for and those against she finds she feels tired, squeamish and irritable when she thought she was supposed to feel wonderful, joyful and thrilled beyond expression.

On the days when she finally does begin to feel like tearing the world apart, or painting the top shelves of the cupboard, she will find someone who will tell her that is how babies are born prematurely, poisoned by paint fumes or just ruined any old way. Until she establishes her own values and faces the reality of the contradictions in thinking and feeling, she will be a victim of the last person to whom she has listened.

A young mother of five, recalling her experience with the first baby, said that for the first time in her life she had to face the fact that she was a very selfish person.

"I was a kindergarten teacher, and I hated having to give up my job with the children. [Taking care of her own seemed less desirable than teaching those of others.] I was frightened to death when I thought I would never be able to leave the house after the baby came. I hated thinking I could not do what I wanted to do when I wanted to do it. [The fact that she was obligated by her teacher's hours never bothered her.] Because Jim and I had to live far away from our families, I was sure we could never find anyone who would properly care for the baby — even for a few hours. Though I was used to spending all day with other people's children, I dreaded the thought of being alone with my own. I was sure that all the education I had was wasted."

Another young mother, three children removed from her first baby, said that during her first pregnancy she felt lonely and "left out."

"I should have been very happy," she said. "My husband and I were very much in love, we both had excellent health and no financial worries. It was just this terrible feeling of being removed from the rest of the world — a confused sort of feeling of being a creature 'set apart,' outside of everything yet with an ever-present one — the child who remained with you even as you slept."

One of her friends, a girl who had received postgraduate work in the nursing profession and who had worked with hundreds of mothers having their babies, added this comment.

"Somehow, my own experience of having a first baby was not at all what I expected. I knew I could care for it. I had been educated to appreciate the spiritual values of life and the prospect of giving a saint to heaven as well as a child to the world. Yet it seemed it wasn't 'me' any more. I began to doubt my capabilities for motherhood, and I worried about the loss of my husband's love. I was sure that he would eye with pleasure every slender and graceful woman that passed by."

These women expressing their feelings were not monsters of selfishness, vanity or incapability. They simply reflected an aspect of the reality of having a first baby. They were normal, intelligent and honest, finding for the first time the strange and somewhat frightening contradictions that are a part of love and its human product.

Other young women who maybe have not thought about it or are perhaps less honest about admitting it might gloss over these feelings or pretend they do not exist. It is true such emotions are not universal, but they are frequent enough. And because of the conditioning of the past they are felt by many mothers-to-be. The fact of their presence is neither shameful nor extraordinary. The question is not always why or how these feelings got there, but what is each woman going to do about facing them.

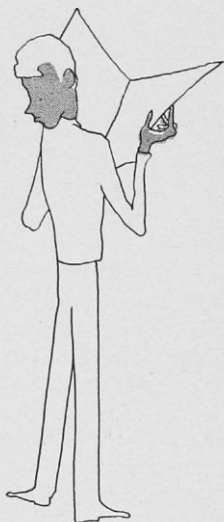
HOW HUSBANDS FEEL

Husbands do not always discuss their feelings during the time of pregnancy, but when they do they frequently reveal the contradictions that they experience. "I never really knew Jane until our first baby came," explained a man who had been married three years. "She used to be so gay, but when she was carrying the baby I would come home at night and find her crying over nothing. She told me it was just because she was tired, and I guess it was for she slept most of the first three months. I thought she was glad about the baby, and I couldn't understand why she should cry."

Jane had thought her husband was not happy about the baby. He never seemed to want to discuss her plans for it, but seemed content just to say, "Let's wait until it gets here." She found it even more disturbing that after the baby came her husband would do very little for the child, and it was not until the infant gave way to a youngster who could talk and play that the father seemed to take any care for the child. He then found it very disconcerting that the child preferred the mother to him at all times.

A doctor, whose career had been in obstetrics, said that he could never understand why his wife thought it was such a unique achievement to have that "first baby." She had wanted and asked that he spend more time with her and less on his after-hours pleasures. He thought when the baby came she would be so busy she would no longer mind his always being at the service of others. He found later that a wife who tries to take up all her time caring for a baby is neither a good wife nor a good mother. No matter how important he thought he was to other expectant mothers, he was most important of all to the mother of his child; keeping it that way was as much his job as hers.

Many couples find it difficult to express their feelings to each other without being afraid the spouse will think they are complaining. The first baby is truly a new experience; and, because they are not yet used to thinking of themselves in the



role of parent, even a minor comment can become a major issue of misunderstanding. Where there is a good love relationship, it can be strengthened by this sharing of the deeper thoughts and feelings. It is very important to the emotional health of the future child that the mother and father do not deceive themselves nor each other about their true reactions to this experience.

FEARS THAT MUST BE FACED

There may be many fears associated with a first pregnancy that are new to both prospective parents. One is the fear of loss of love and attention, another the economic threat of living on one pay check — or perhaps the ever-present one of giving life in the face of threatened universal chaos.

As for the emotional one of loss of love, it can only be suggested that a baby never "causes" the loss of love and attention the husband or wife may experience. It is used as an excuse for the deficiency in the quality of love that could not embrace others in its sphere, even its own human product.

In many instances the economic fears do not involve the necessities of life but a rearranging of expenditures. Again it comes down to one's set of values: Is human life more important than houses, cars, television sets or world travel? If a couple can afford to marry, then they can afford that first baby! The beginning years of life are not the most expensive ones.

The threat of universal chaos has been with the world since the Garden of Eden. In the days of the early Christians they must have been concerned about the "advisability" of having a baby because of the pagan persecutions. In the Middle Ages couples no doubt experienced the same threat from plagues and feudal systems. Our own ancestors could have been very worried about the challenge to life provided by the hardships of war and pioneering. In the present day the threat of the atom is as real to us as their risks were to them.

To live a fully human life in any age takes courage. The child can take us not only to this age, but takes our love incarnate into eternity whenever it may come for him.

Perhaps the greatest fear suffered by all young couples is the very humiliating one of facing up to their own inadequacies in parenthood. No matter how accomplished a man or woman may be in work, art or society, the feelings of incompetence

and unworthiness before this mystery of new life is one from which he cannot entirely escape. Any small excuse can sometimes be used to deny the responsibility, yet in the very rationalization fears are proven.

THE MOST COMMON FEAR

The most common fear is loss of love of the partner expressed in this way: "We need more time to get used to each other." Some blame economics — the need of larger living quarters or maybe just a job promotion. These are demonstrations of the biggest fear of all, the fear of self; it will not or cannot measure up to the demands that are made of it in the switch from "just husband" to husband and father, from "just wife" to wife and mother. Postponing the event will not eliminate the fear; it can only make it grow larger.

A very real concern of young marrieds is related to the conduct and termination of labor. Millions of words have been written and spoken on the "best" way to have a baby. There is much divergence between the ways of old and the so-called modern methods. There are militant apostles of all types of obstetrical procedures. There are also the ones who speak in nostalgic tones of the "good old days" when babies came in the fields or the back room and hardly ever interrupted Mother's daily routine, let alone Father's!

We wonder how these advocates are so sure of the cause and effect relationships from which they make their judgments. When Mother had baby on her lunch hour, there were no lurking research people under the shade of the same old tree to interpret her reactions and measure her pain. This also seemed to have occurred before the feminists had persuaded woman she had a right to express her opinion outside the bedroom or kitchen. Today's young couple would be wise to leave the "old days" to history, tradition or romantic dreams. They should take time out to evaluate themselves, their expectations and their potentialities for now and the immediate future.

In spite of the efforts of those who might wish it otherwise,

obstetrics is still a branch of the art and science of medicine. With the discoveries made in the field of antiseptics, antibiotics and anesthesia, the risk of the life of mother and child has been greatly diminished. If she permits herself to take advantage of this type of progress, there are far fewer occasions when she will be asked to put her life at stake as she had to in the past. Her child has also a far greater chance of survival.

Adequate preparation for the "first baby" means that the couple know themselves as man, woman, husband, wife. It means learning a few basic facts of prenatal care, re-evaluating one's value system and learning to look deep into the meaning of life and love. It means putting aside the "ought-to's" of thinking and feeling, and asking the all-important "Do I?" and "Why?" It means that couples put aside the great concern about what is going to happen to them and to their lives, and start thinking about the needs of the child — the needs that go beyond vitamins, calories, comfort and fresh air.

WHAT THE FIRST BABY ASKS

What does a first baby ask of his parents? He asks first the acceptance of a wholehearted love. He asks that there be joy whether he is a boy or a girl, and whether his coming has been easy or difficult. He asks that he or she be permitted to be a person and not just a toy who will live the wish-wants of the mother or father.

He asks that he be permitted to be less than perfect — that you will love him whether his body is whole or his mind is deficient. He asks that you share with him the gifts that you give to each other — your attention and your laughter, your strength and your tears. He asks to be a very important part of your world, yet he needs and wants to be able to discover his own.

Perhaps what he needs and wants most of all is to be "gift." When he is come, he says to each parent, "Let me be your gift to God and to your spouse."



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