

Relationship Rehab Show

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Cultural and Personal Causes of the High Divorce Rate

DISCLAIMER: I want to be sure I am not going to be misunderstood. I am NOT saying that all couples should stay together no matter what is happening. In my twenty-seven years of marriage coaching there have been a handful of cases where I've recommended divorce. These included marriages where physical or extreme emotional abuse was being suffered, a spouse was unwilling to address an addiction that negatively impacted the family, or in one case, the spouse had a personality disorder that prevented him from having any consideration for his partner or children. That being said, the rest of this document is my interpretation of historical events and my personal and professional experience.

MARRIAGE THROUGHOUT HISTORY

Although I believe God intended marriage to be a blessing for both the man and the woman, marriage was often used to cement alliances, preserve wealth, and produce heirs. Most cultures were patriarchal. Women were used as bartering pieces with little regard for their feelings. It was a rare union that was created from love, although there have been famous love stories that stand out through the ages. The concepts of being "in love" or finding your "soulmate" certainly existed, but were perhaps more of an ideal than a reality. Some fortunate marriages developed mutual respect and even love. (Think Albert and Queen Victoria.)

With the exception of the wealthy or the powerful, divorce was difficult to obtain. (Think Henry VIII of England's two marriages annulled by the Church of England and two wives conveniently beheaded.)

Evidence was needed to prove adultery or other circumstances dire enough to convince a judge that a divorce could be legally granted.

This resulted in the reality that marriage was for life...no matter what. Consequently, most marriages lasted until one partner died. Other alternatives were the physical abandonment of the marriage by one spouse, the decision to live separately, or to endure an unhappy union. There's no doubt that many men and women felt stuck in marriages that were unhappy for them, and very unpleasant places for their children.

THE TWENTIETH CENTURY: A TIME OF QUESTIONING AND REFORM IN MANY AREAS

The 1960's was a time of upheaval and questioning. Along with many other institutions being challenged and rebelled against, researchers began studying marriage. For example, Drs. Bernard and Louise Guerney of the University of Pennsylvania began observing and recording couples' interactions, noticing communications that reduced conflict and communications that increased conflict. They, and other researchers like John Gottman, began asking, "Can the methods that reduce conflict and produce marital harmony be taught to those who are using methods of communication that escalate arguments?" The result of Guerney's research was a groundbreaking program called Relationship Enhancement that, for the first time, taught couples skills that elevate their communication and conflict management methods so they were much happier with their marriage. The same research outcomes and resulting training programs were being developed in other labs across the country.

About the same time, California led the nation with the first no-fault divorce law, making getting out of an unhappy marriage a much easier option than it had ever been in the past. Soon other states followed. The no-fault divorce laws got lots of publicity while the research outcomes teaching couples skills that would enable them to be happy with each other and happy to stay married got almost no recognition at all.

The no-fault divorce law introduced a cultural sea change without any idea of how it would impact millions of lives.

Yes, those laws make leaving an abusive marriage much easier than ever before. But the results are also a drastic increase in the number of women and children who need state assistance to survive, the unexpected loss of confidence in the institute of marriage itself, the emotional impact on children who are unable to cope well with the absence of (mostly) the father, the damage to one's self-esteem after going through a divorce, the frequency of more divorces after remarriages without any change in skills, and the generational impact of divorce that leave adults and children feeling skeptical about the possibility of ever enjoying a stable, loving marriage. These results have been experienced now for nearly three generations making the negative, skeptical attitude toward marriage the cultural norm for many.

At about the same time, the sexual revolution was introduced making it not only acceptable to enjoy sex before marriage, but almost a rite of passage to becoming an adult. Postponing marriage until education is complete or a career well established sometimes includes the experience of multiple sexual partners. That sexual history combined with the lack of functional communication skills, makes the adjustments of marriage even more difficult.

TODAY: HOPE!

Most of the clients who come to me for help are either considering divorce or are very unhappy. I am their last-ditch effort to see if they can make it work. I can assure you from both my personal experience and my years of training in several of the top communication curricula that a great marriage is possible *if great skills are learned and practiced*. I have seen hundreds of couples transform the quality of their happiness with each other and their marriage by learning a few simple skills and diligently using them until these skills become their new normal.

Luke Skywalker in the Star Wars movie didn't know how to become a Jedi pilot, but was called to be "The Chosen One" to fight the evil Galactic Empire and restore the Republic. The Jedi were protectors and peacemakers of the Republic. But he was inexperienced and unsure of himself. He needed a guide to teach him how and believe that he could do it! Enter Obi Wan Kenobi. Luke's villain was personified by Darth Vader. The twin Villains in your saga are Ignorance and Resistance to Change. Like Luke, you, too, are being called to restore the love and joy in your kingdom. When it comes to relationship skills that are capable of upleveling your satisfaction with your marriage and helping you achieve the happiness you long for, I have a plan.

THE PLAN: The antidote to Ignorance is in my book, [How to Stay Married & Love It!](#) (order it!) and my online streaming program, [Millionaire Marriage Club](#) (join today!) The inspiration that can motivate you to overcome your Resistance is in my own story of love restored plus the video testimonies of couples you can watch at www.RelationshipRehabShow.com

Now it's up to you. If you neglect to take action, your marriage will continue to produce suffering for you, your partner and your children. If YOU don't answer the call to be a Hero, who will?

I'm cheering for you!

Nancy Landrum

www.RelationshipRehabCoach.com