

ON MARRIAGE

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Men on the Right spend a great deal of time improving ourselves. We improve our diet through changing the foods we eat; we improve our strength through weight training; we improve our minds through reading forbidden books. Too often, though, we neglect the most important dimension of our society—ensuring a healthy, productive relationship between men and women. Instead, we mutate and abandon our natural purposes and drives, adopting new unnatural modes and orders dictated to both men and women by those who would destroy our society. Unlike with many of the other problems we face, however, we can largely fix this problem by our own efforts.

I am not here to offer dating advice. I am too remote from that world to speak competently of it, although I hear it is a hellspace. Rather, our focus today is marriage. What does a good marriage look like, and what actions can a man take to make and keep his marriage sound, and beneficial to him and to those around him? Lest you think that I am just another “influencer,” peddling impossible or irrelevant schemes to the gullible, promising happiness if you sign on with a renewing monthly payment, I will offer my bona fides. I have been married for twenty-one years, to a woman born in Australia. Together we have five children. Our partnership has been extremely successful, not only in raising those children, none of whom are criminals and all of whom seem happy, but in starting two successful businesses.

In almost everything I do in the public sphere, my wife is active behind the scenes—sometimes directly, in review of and comment on particularly important pieces I write, and sometimes indirectly, in their formation through our many daily conversations. Today is special, however, because in a few sections, those italicized, she will speak in her own voice. You will be the better, and more informed, for hearing from her. *We talk about everything. We joke that we are the same person. We have been called a “self-contained unit,” and have surprised people with our “hive mind.” Everything is harmonized before it leaves our home. We also present a united front to our children. Even though there is no daylight between us, they work hard to find cracks—which is why we say, channeling our former lawyer selves, “no forum shopping.” Joking aside, we are not, in fact, the same person. We are masculine*

and feminine. We recognize the need for each of us to have time with our friends in male-only and female-only spaces.

Nothing I say here is truly new; it has only been forgotten or distorted. More so than for many of the problems we face, a return is possible, rather than only the creation of something new, informed by the wisdom of the past. True, under modern conditions, how men and women interact, in some cases, must be adjusted to our new technological realities. And, most importantly, it is no use to pretend we can take advantage of key social structures and behaviors to help us, when those structures and behaviors no longer exist, and are often not even remembered, or if remembered, are remembered falsely. They may be rebuilt, they should be rebuilt, but today, we have to deal with the world as it is.

It might be objected that no marriage is perfect, though I will say mine comes close. But the point is to aim towards perfection; that should be the goal of every endeavor of every man. This may seem a tall order, especially in this age of propaganda designed to convince you that a good marriage is impossible, and you should settle for hookups or a polycule. Fortunately, men on the Right are better positioned than most. They are usually firmly based in reality, and that makes it easier to implement reality. Moreover, the improvements that men on the Right set themselves—self-sufficiency; bodily strength; discipline; and many similar—often directly contribute to the success of marriage.

With that in mind, let's discuss nine major principles around which a man today should revolve his marriage. I note that the arc of a marriage starts long before the marriage, so to some degree these principles apply before marriage, during what used to be called courtship. Therefore, even if you are fifteen years old and far from finding your future wife, you will benefit from pondering and acting on what we say here.

The first principle is that a good marriage is a true partnership—but one in which each spouse participates unequally in nearly every aspect of the couple's joint life. The man and woman each has, both by nature and by choice, his or her own sphere. Some of those spheres are obvious. Most broadly, the man defends the family, the woman nurtures it, whether that is a just-married couple or a family with ten children. Each sphere is first dictated by the nature of each sex, and within that frame, by the personality of the man and woman involved.

By nature, I do not mean only biological imperatives, but the virtues that are honed versions of the biological imperatives. For men, the positive virtues include physical bravery ranging towards aggression; self-reliance; protection at any cost of his family, friends, and others deserving of protection; the handling and use of physical things; the creation of order; tight control of emotion; provision for his family; and bold, quick action. For women, the positive virtues include nurture; kindness; grace; empathy for people and creatures; the creation and formation of life; counsel before action; cooperation; and passing wisdom down through the generations. Together, in different measure for different people, these virtues of a man and woman combined form a whole.

For men, however, these formed virtues, while in part instinctual, often have a greater learned, volitional component than do women's virtues, where the actions following from the instinct can be eroded, but are more instinctual. Once this necessary formation of men was inculcated by the broader society. A man's mother and father, his extended family, his schoolmates and schoolteachers, and everyone else whose opinion he valued demanded specific behavior from a man. But except perhaps among the Amish, a man is no longer molded in this way, and so must be largely himself responsible for ordering and training himself to fulfil his role in the marriage partnership. His wife should, and he should encourage his wife to, and with luck she will automatically, also encourage a man rising to these expectations.

But whatever the sphere, and whatever matter is to be decided upon or administered, you should expect overlap in responsibility with your spouse, and always support the other entirely. That does not mean that disagreement should not occur, although the presumption should be that the spouse whose sphere is at issue should make decisions. Disagreement should be handled gently. I am notoriously sensitive to criticism (by people I love; I don't care what people on the internet say). Thus, it is a running joke when I do something in a way that my wife thinks, usually correctly, should have been done differently, that when she says it should have been done differently, she is not criticizing, she is "encouraging me to do better." *But whether there is perfect agreement or substantial disagreement, be kind to each other. Say "Please" and "Thank you" often. It's easy to divide up the world and let your other half take care of things,*

but everyone likes to be acknowledged for his efforts. Saying thank you for clean sheets and the trash taken out may seem small, but it adds up to an atmosphere of mutual respect and regard.

A second, related, principle is that each spouse must commit fully to his or her roles. Men: *Protect, care, support and love your wife. You should be proud to be able to have your wife stay home and be with your children. You should do everything you can to make this possible. You should show what it means to be a gentleman to your children. Open doors, carry heavy things, offer to do the dirty jobs and help her when she's flagging. One of the sexiest things Charles ever did was arrive from work one summer evening while I was talking to a tradesman in the driveway with a baby on my hip and a toddler underfoot. He barely broke his stride, kissed me hello, plucked the baby from my arms and took the kids inside so I could finish the conversation without distraction. He showed he loved me, he respected my household authority, he supported me and he showed our children how to be kind. Of course, anytime my husband shows that he is capable and competent, from punching out numbers on the calculator to installing new lights in the house I'm very appreciative. A handy, manly husband is very sexy indeed.*

Women: *Be feminine, embrace motherhood, make your home beautiful and welcoming. Delight in these things. You should approach being a mother and a wife like it's your job—because it is. The world tells us that children are a burden, that we should complain a lot and drink even more. I'm not opposed to a lovely glass of wine, but don't put alcohol in your water bottle. Being a mother is not a sacrifice. You don't have to give up your brain or your education because you have children. You will be stretched and tested in ways you cannot imagine as a parent, and it will be worth it. There are days when I'm harried and beat down dealing with the moods, hormones and learning moments of five children. The joy when a teenager offers to make tea after a spat, or a toddler wraps you in a hug with Eskimo kisses after a meltdown at the store, is beyond compare.*

A third principle is that the man should not subordinate himself in the marriage. This challenge arises because our rulers demand a man deem himself inferior, in order to atone for supposed masculine toxicity and the imaginary patriarchy and its imaginary crimes. In his nature, however, a man bristles at subordination, which is why subordination degrades his meaning as a man, and as a husband. Along these lines, when we were first married, I often heard variations on the admonition "happy wife, happy life." This is terrible advice. On the contrary, a man does not owe his wife happiness; most of all, he owes her loyalty

at any cost, that he will always do objective right by her. A man has no obligation to strive endlessly to make his wife happy (a goal anyway impossible for anyone, for himself or others, if one aims directly at it). If she makes his life miserable by her fancies and demands for “happiness” when he does his duty, what the relationship needs is repair, rather than more effort to please by the husband.

Do not insist on having your own way or on telling your spouse “the way it’s going to be.” Ladies, this does not make you a girl-boss, strong or fierce. It makes you a harridan. Do not use tears or emotional manipulation to get your way either. It’s lazy and disrespectful. Men should not be impatient and should take the time to listen. If you want your partnership to work, you need to communicate and recognize that you have different sensibilities. Let the masculine and feminine complement and temper each other rather than clash.

A fourth principle is that the relationship between husband and wife is the most important one in the home. This means, most of all, that you should avoid “focus on children,” in general, and especially at the cost of focusing on each other. A good marriage, and a bad marriage, greatly affect children, to a degree not always obvious, but this is organic, not something that needs extra focus. *Our relationship is the best gift we can give our children. Not only are we modeling what a great relationship looks like, we are giving them security. Our relationship, no matter where we are in the world or what we are doing, gives them a sense of home and orients them to beauty and goodness. In our marriage we begin to get a taste of what it is to love as God commands us to and to imagine how God sees and loves us. Every night we have “Sacred Mummy and Daddy Time.” Children are not invited. By making our relationship a priority, we see each other fully and we can grow as a couple and help each other grow as individuals.*

The spousal relationship, and the family relationship, however, is not static. You should be prepared to grow together and as a family. As the saying goes, the one constant in life is change. You may end up exactly where you expected to in life—but the path to that point may not be as expected. How you react to the changes in terrain will impact your relationship. A little grace goes a long way.

A fifth principle is that a man should ignore the vast majority of advice from the internet (other than this outstanding piece, of course). He should start by ignoring Andrew Tate (about whom another whole article could be written, and maybe I will), but in general, he can get more good advice from reading old literature than watching YouTube.

For example, as a result of following bad advice from annoying influencers, men today often think they are demonstrating masculinity by stating rigid “rules” for their roles within a marriage, to which they demand their wife adhere. It is crucial to remember that spheres are porous, and there is nothing worse, in married life as elsewhere, than hanging your hat on “That’s not my job.” The reality that child care is primarily the responsibility of the woman, for example, does not mean the man is degraded by assisting with care. Pernicious influencers of the Tate sort, in general, try to recast vices as virtues—for after all, the vices are attractive, which is why they are always a problem. In short, you should question any advice you come across that plays to the vanity of men, especially if you are asked to pay for the advice.

The sixth principle is that the expectations of society should be presumed false and harmful. For example, a married couple should strive mightily to have the wife not work outside the home, even before children, and definitely after children. Women are lied to, and have been for decades, that what matters is a woman’s self-actualization in the public world, contributing to GDP and being able to buy designer bags, rather than marriage and children being her self-actualization.

We were not immune to this mind virus when we first fell in love. Both of us were on the partner track at giant Chicago law firms, and we assumed, really without much discussion, that the future involved partnership for both of us, and a big house with nannies for children. We just lived as if my wife would keep working—not because we wanted the money, because we always assumed I, money-obsessed, would make plenty, but because working was what smart and capable women do, isn’t it? My wife was constantly propagandized she should not want children, and even believed it, though that changed when she met me. She quit working outside the house before we had children, and never looked back. It worked out for us; if you don’t make a different, deliberate choice, it may not work out for you.

Thus, rather than following the herd, be intentional about your family. Marry young, if at all feasible. Plan for children, plan for their education, plan as much as possible where you will live and what your life will look like. This kind of planning involves giving things up to make it possible to have the family life you want. If you want to provide your children a classical Christian education, if you want to live liturgically, then necessarily you have to give up a consumerist lifestyle.

Creating a family and a home is the most important thing you will ever do. Make sure everything you do is in support of that. Go to church and find people who will support your marriage.

A seventh principle (and my wife insisted I include this section), is that you should both make sex a priority, and talk about sex. When you have sex regularly—and by regularly, I mean at least a couple of times a week—you are much closer. Intimacy makes you kinder and gentler with each other. You are much more likely to laugh, tease, and overlook or forgive the small accidents and trivialities that arise in domestic life if you've just had an orgasm.

Women tend not to make sex a priority. It's easy to say "not tonight" after a day of children clamoring for your attention and crawling all over you. If you have a job outside the house in addition to your domestic one, then sex gets pushed even further down the list. You must choose to say yes. The benefits are so worth getting to sleep a little later. You'll sleep better! You'll be closer to your husband. Your husband will be happy, and you'll be the reason why. And if you say yes way more than you say no, then you'll get really good at it together. After twenty years of marriage our sex life is way better than when we were newlyweds, and it keeps getting better. This is because we talk about sex a lot. We talk about sex before, during and after. Sex begets sex, and sex talk does too. If your relationship is not the most important one in the house and if you are not having a lot of sex, then things can easily go the wrong way.

I add that men should absolutely avoid pornography, which is destructive of both a marriage and a man's psyche. I don't need to go into detail; you know I am correct.

An eighth principle is that a good marriage is not a right. It is not something to which you are entitled. I do not mean this in the false sense you often hear, variations on the phrase "Marriage is hard" and "You have to work on your marriage every day," meaning you have to absorb frustrations and disappointments. No doubt every marriage has those, but if you think marriage is hard, you are not doing it right. A well-formed marriage is not hard, but it requires both spouses to enter the marriage with the correct frame of mind. You need to work hard to make yourself a desirable husband. If you are fat and won't leave your house, or if you prefer video games to breadwinning, or if you smoke weed more than once every ten years, it will harm your marriage, and your ability to get married. Similarly for any other behavior showing lack of discipline and lack of character, at any phase from courtship

to “death do us part.” Don’t be a loser. (And, to be sure, you have every right to insist the same of your wife, in the ways relevant to women.)

A ninth principle is that stigma should be broadly applied, by a couple’s friends and acquaintances, to anyone who misbehaves in a marriage. We moderns are lectured endlessly that stigma is bad, but why? As with stereotypes, the vast majority of which are nearly 100% true, stigma usually exists when it deserves to exist. We have just been enculturated differently by decades of propaganda, which has successfully released everyone from all bonds not continuously chosen, telling us we cannot criticize others (except for the worst sin of all, intolerance, defined as any view on any topic that challenges the Left). On the contrary, we should not only criticize others, but ensure they suffer harsh penalties for socially unacceptable behavior.

And, finally, some advice specifically for women, either directly, as something to be passed on to the women in your life, or something to discuss with a future possible wife:

Don’t marry a beta. A lot of marital problems can be avoided if you marry a man who is secure in his masculinity and is sure of what he believes. At the rehearsal dinner for our wedding, I thanked my future mother-in-law because my husband has the greatest sense of right and wrong of any man I ever met. This strong moral compass and understanding of self is one of the rocks on which our marriage is built. A man who approaches the world in a tenuous or hesitant manner will not prove a good husband.

Don’t complain about your husband. It’s fashionable for women to complain about how hopeless their husbands are, how stupid and incapable. This is a sure way to breed contempt. Women initiate the majority of divorces and often cite the fact that their husbands don’t “help” enough around the house or fail to step up. Maybe those men are tired of being criticized, maybe they can never do anything right, maybe they’re emasculated, and they’ve given up because there’s no respect. Maybe those men are tired of you caring more about what another man (your boss) thinks. Noticing all the things your husband does for you and your family is not only good and courteous, it also creates an environment of mutual admiration and support. Instead of complaining, make the extra effort to praise him to your girlfriends and family.

Now, join hands, go, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.