**THINK BEFORE YOU DATE!**

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ALLING in love is a most delightful experience, especially during the teen years. In fact, it is about the only kind of falling that we ever enjoy. But at such time we are not always too responsible for our actions. That is why it is so important to think before you date. Many young people think they are in love with someone when, in reality they are in love with life.

Every young girl is naturally romantic. This is one of the loveliest things about the female personality. In spite of all life’s problems, most young women persist in seeing things not as they are, but as they would like them to be. That is why they are always moving the furniture around or buying new hats or demonstrating all the other female characteristics.

But being romantic also has its dangers. Our emotions are not always dependable. They are far stronger than our intellect. They can make everything seem so attractive to a girl that in the end she loses all sense of proportion. If there is one person who should always keep her feet on the ground, it is the young woman who thinks that she is in love. She has so much to lose if she takes the wrong turn. Nature has wisely arranged things so that the girl matures at an earlier age. This gives her several more years to think things over. Believe me, she needs that extra time.

Young women need to be very particular in their choice of associates. It is far better to have few friends, rather than to have many acquaintances of the wrong type. An enormous responsibility rests on every teen-age girl, for she carries within herself the possibilities of another home and family. What kind of home will it be? What kind of person will she choose to be her life partner? These are the questions that every young girl should seriously ask herself.

The three most important events in life are these: birth, marriage, and death. We have no control over the first and often very little over the third. The only event over which we have any real control is marriage. And what a mess so many seem to make of it!

Before you go out on a date, you would be wise to think about it for a while. Don’t blind yourself to the fact that going out on a date is not a simple matter. There are always certain implications in it and perhaps some risk. Most people have the idea that a girl can easily control her feelings and that she can keep her emotions under control. This may be true, but it is only partly right. There comes a time in everyone’s experience when nature takes over, and the girl seems unable to hold herself in check. These are things young women cannot afford to over look.

Nature has gone to considerable trouble to develop certain glands within the female body that make her highly attractive to the male. She should not be too surprised to discover that, under certain circumstances, these drives and urges within may sometimes get completely out of control. Even the wisest woman can become utterly foolish if she allows herself to be completely carried away by her emotional drives. Anyone who does this is running an enormous risk, not only to herself but to others as well.

To meet this problem, society has built up an elaborate code of ethics that the wise young woman will be willing to accept. These safeguards may seem a bit out of date but in this age. But there is a good reason why sensible young people prefer to abide by these standards of conduct. The wise man has said,” A good name is rather to be chosen than great riches.”One night of loose living may ruin a person’s reputation for life. There is a very valid reason why these standards of conduct have been accepted for centuries.

**WHAT ABOUT KISSING**

Take the question of kissing. This is never an entirely innocent pastime. It is not the question of germs that we need to consider. Passionate kissing is intended by nature to break down one’s reserve. It opens the way to deeper experiences long before the young couple are ready to take the step. Promiscuous petting is risky at any age. It is particularly dangerous to a young woman. It is not so much the young man that she needs to fear, but rather that at some unguarded moment she may lose control of herself. Some may think this never occurs. Doctors know better. Every day they see before their eyes the evidence of romances that should never have happened. Often they have to deliver the babies and find foster homes for their care. These are things that young people should ponder well.

**Don’t Marry This Person**

There are certain kinds of individuals that a wise young person will avoid becoming involved with. They are not suitable as life partners. Here are some of the obvious types of individuals that one should avoid:

1. **A changeable person.** These are unable to make up their own minds. They are likely to prove unfaithful in the years to come. Their instability arises from some deep neurosis.
2. **A selfish person,** one who is domineering and must always have his own way. Such people are not well balanced. They do not settle down to married life very well.
3. **A dishonest person.** Even in the smallest things one should always be strictly on the level. There is nothing but trouble with a person who is basically dishonest.
4. **A jealous person.** These are in love with themselves . They are always insecure and unhappy. Don’t marry this kind of person.
5. **A sexy person** is a bad risk at any time. Beware of anyone who is always paying great attention to the other sex. Such people cannot be trusted. They are not stable individuals. Usually they are suffering from some type of neurosis. Such a person is not likely to make a success of marriage or of anything else.

Young people need to remember that marriage never changes a person’s character. Too many girls have married alcoholics in the hope of reforming them. The experience of millions of unhappy people proves the uselessness of this kind of marriage. Marriage never reforms anyone. It often deepens a person’s problems and makes life miserable for all concerned.

If you are planning to get married, be sure it is a sensible partnership. Both of you need to be mature. You need to have common interests and similar goals in life. No marriage can be successful if one is pulling in one direction and the other in another. Such a situation is exceedingly difficult for the children. It is wiser if you both have the same religious principles and ideals. You should be equally intelligent and willing to adjust to each other’s needs and desires.

Going out on a date is often the first step toward marriage. Is this person with whom you are going likely to be the one whom you would naturally choose for a life partner? When you are married, you have to take the bitter with the sweet. You are married “for better or for worse.” Once you have stepped in there is no easy way out. You had better weigh the matter carefully. It is well to take your parents into your counsel. I f they do not approve, there may be good reason. They probably know you better than you know yourself. Often some good friend of the family is in a position to advice you. But beware of someone who is a matchmaker. Such a person may be doing this “for the fun of it.” You may be the victim. Do not trust anyone of this type.

**FOOLISH IDEAS ABOUT MARRIAGE**

It is surprising how many foolish ideas there are about marriage. Many of them are concocted by well-meaning but wholly unrealistic people, particularly those who write sentimental love stories. Most of these ideas are figments of the imagination. Anyone can fall for them if he has not been informed. Here are a few of these completely erroneous ideas.

“These two were just made for each other.” This is nonsense. It may look good in a story, but it is purely imaginary. People have to grow together. They have to learn each other’s ways before they can live happily together. If they have common interests and a common background, they are more likely to make a success of their marriage. But even then there are plenty of failures.

Adam and Eve were the only one who were “made for each other.” They had plenty of trouble in their family! Let us look at another of these fallacies.

“This was love at first sight.” There is no such thing. Love does not spring up like a weed. True love grows slowly. It takes time. People may be attracted to each other, but this is not real love. It may only be infatuation. Do not mistake this for genuine love. Let us look at another piece of modern fiction.

“This will be a perfect marriage.” Don’t you believe it. There are no perfect marriages. Nor are there any “ideal couples.” Some people seem to have fewer problems to meet simply because they are less selfish and less demanding of their partners. But every home has its problems. None are perfect. It is foolish to blind yourself to these difficulties, thinking that things will be different in your case. Human experience reveals that you will have to go through the same problems that most other people face.

**SHOULD YOU ELOPE?**

What about running away and getting married? Is this advisable? Much depends upon the circumstances surrounding you. In most cases it is decidedly foolish to run off and get married elsewhere. What are you running away from? Perhaps if you took a little more time, you might see things in a clearer light. Even though after waiting you may be still of the same opinion, your family may have had opportunity to change their minds and agree with you. In any case waiting a little will not hurt you. Don’t be in a hurry.

**CHOOSING A MATE**

Choosing a mate is one of the most important things that you will ever do in your life. It is well to ask yourself a few questions.

1. Are your backgrounds similar? If not, you had better seriously reconsider. Your chances of happiness will be slim indeed.
2. Are you both on friendly terms with your own parents? How well do you know the other person’s parents? Have you met them in their own home and see how they live? This might reveal how you will be expected to live.
3. Did your parents and the other person’s parents make a success of their marriages? This is an important question. It is always a little more difficult for a person who comes from a broken home to make a success of marriage. It can be done, but it takes much patience and wisdom. I f you are both from broken homes, you will understand each other’s problems more easily, but it may be even more difficult. These are factors that you should not overlook.
4. Are you really proud of this person whom you are now thinking of marrying? Or are you a little ashamed, especially when in company of your friends? Such marriages are not likely to last.
5. Is this person a jealous individual? If so, beware. Such a person can be jealous of his own children. He can make life miserable for everyone.
6. Do you both hold the same religious faith? If not, you are asking for trouble. One may change his religion just prior to marriage, but this does not change his character. Millions of unhappy people will agree that religious differences run far deeper than they had suspected. Who will train and control the children? This is something you had better ask yourselves now.
7. Are you both emotionally mature? Or has one of you made a failure of one marriage and now wants to rush into another? Remember that spoiled babies make very poor husbands and wives. If you must marry, select someone who is mature and well balanced on whom you can rely.

True happiness can come only from within. It is not the result of external things. People who are well adjusted can do much to help each other. They will be willing to sacrifice for the good of the home. They are unselfish and willing to go more than half way to bring happiness to each other. They will not make unreasonable demands.

People who are poorly adjusted often irritate each other. They seem unable to bring themselves to help other people, especially those within their own family social circle. They are continually thinking of themselves and their own wants and needs. Such people often end up with a broken home. Or they become addicted to alcohol and habit-forming drugs.

People who are maladjusted should first seek the professional help of a well trained psychiatrist before they contemplate marriage. Most of them can be helped, but usually not by getting married. This only compounds their problems and makes them very difficult to live with. They find it hard to get along even with themselves. They are much ,ore prone to develop various psychosomatic diseases in later life, such as high blood pressure, chronic digestive disorders, migraine headaches, and many other complaints.

Before you go out on that date, think carefully of the possible consequences. Is this the kind of person with whom you wish to spend the rest of your life with? If not, then use good judgment and avoid the risk. But if you are happy and well matched and if you are both well adjusted and willing to do more than your share, then go ahead with your plans for the future.

Nothing is more satisfying than a happy marriage. On the other hand, nothing is more frustrating than living in unhappy home. To make a happy marriage it takes two people who are as nearly alike as possible, and who see eye to eye in all the important things. As a young person the choice is yours, for happiness or otherwise. It all depends on you. So, whatever else you do, THINK BEFORE YOU DATE!