

Love the One You're With - Staying Married Through the Hard Times

by Jean MacKenzie

You often hear of people staying in unhappy marriages for the sake of their children. Well, recent research suggests that it is not just children who benefit from sticking it out through the tough times.

Yes, sometimes divorce is necessary but will getting out of a bad marriage necessarily make a person happier? Not according to one team of family experts. Researchers identified a large group of couples who reported being unhappily married. Five years later those who divorced reported being no happier than those who had stayed married. That is, divorce did not appear to lessen symptoms of depression or raise self-esteem.

If you are considering divorce you may feel like divorce will eliminate a whole host of stresses from your life. However, it is important to consider the potential problems divorce can create. It is often felt that divorce will spare children the anxieties involved in having parents in a conflictual relationship but studies have shown that adult children of divorce are twice as likely to experience serious social, emotional, or psychological dysfunction. Marriages involving adults who come from divorced families are twice as likely to end in divorce compared to those of people raised in intact families. Also, children from single parent families and step-families are more likely to drop out of school, leave home early, have poorer health, and end up in lower paying jobs. That is not to say that these risk factors cannot be counteracted but they are important to examine.

The effects on children are just one area to consider. Divorce will hit you in your bank account as well resulting in your assets being even less than if they were strictly cut in half. You also miss out on other benefits of being married which include a longer life, better health, greater satisfaction and increased success.

So, if divorce isn't the solution than what is? Interestingly the researchers in the previously mentioned study found that two-third of those who had reported being unhappily married claimed that their marriages were happy five years later. There were three main reasons given by couples for why they were able to survive. The most common story was that partners had simply outlasted their problems, as the stress eased their happiness grew. Other couples made a decision to actively work on solving their problems either on their own or with the help of friends and professionals. Finally, many had decided they were going to pursue individual happiness despite their marriage, and in the end the marriage benefited from their self improvement.

You could look to someone else for fulfillment but another interesting fact is that second marriages have a higher failure rate than first unions. It seems that in the end your greatest chance for happiness lies in loving the one you're with, sticking it out through the hard times in the hope that overcoming your trials will help you to develop a love that will be enviable to other couples.

Whenever I complain to her about my troubles my mother always says, "This too shall pass." It is a good point to keep in mind. Sometimes when we are in the midst of our hardships they can seem like they will last forever but one thing that is inevitable in life is change. Divorce is a painful reality but maybe you can learn from those that have gone before. Perhaps you could hold out for a love that has been refined in the fires of your suffering, a love with someone who knows you better than any other person, a love you will come to cherish and embrace as you weather the storms of life together.

About Jean

Jean is a marriage and couples counsellor whose approach in working with couples involves the development of techniques for solving current problems and achieving unending growth in relationships. Jean strives to assist couples of various backgrounds in learning to solve their own challenges because a couple that knows how to problem solve can keep their love—and their marriage—alive forever.

Jean also offers Catholic counselling to couples wishing to incorporate the Catholic faith into the counselling process, helping couples to develop a relationship pleasing to each other and God. Jean has a Master of Arts in Counselling from the Franciscan University of Steubenville and has trained in marriage and family therapy.

So, if you think that your relationship could use a little help-- or even a lot of help,--give Jean a call today and take that important first step in turning your marriage into a “happily ever after” story.

Where do you start?

Look no further.

1. **Go to www.jeanmackenzie.com and sign up for my free newsletter “Happily Ever After: A Guide to Healthy Relationships,” filled with helpful tips on how to nurture your relationship.** You will also receive the free report, “**10 Tips for Resolving Anger in Your Relationship.**”
2. **Call today for a free, no obligation, 20 minute phone consultation.** We will discuss your problems and together decide how I might be able to help you. I look forward to hearing from you.

Jean sees clients in her office in Fredericton, NB and offers telephone and online counselling. She can be reached at:

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