

Communication strengthens commitment

Trust an important ingredient in marriage

By KELLI KELLOGG

No argument professes that love must be the basis for marriage. But when the wedding vows are spoken, perhaps trust and respect should immediately follow "love, honor and cherish."

The Rev. Jim Wallasky of Trinity United Methodist Church in Lincoln said he believes trust and respect are vital to a good marriage.

"If you can't trust, and in that trust be open to

share with your spouse," Wallasky said, "then you'll go into your marriage with reservations."

Trust also can lead to a commitment that will help a couple survive various marital breakdowns, said Rabbi Ian Jacknis, of Tifereth Israel Synagogue in Lincoln.

"You have to have the commitment that will keep this marriage going," he said. "When problems come up, you can't just say 'I give up.' That's the difference between living together and marriage: commitment."

But living together does have its merits, said the Rev. Charles Stephen of Lincoln's Unitarian Church. Stephen said it often helps a couple decide if marriage is right for them.

"Certainly there's no foolproof way for them to know if they're ready to be married," Stephen said. "But that experience of day-to-day living may help."

To keep the commitment strong, communication also is necessary. Stephen said he tells couples during the wedding ceremony that those who love them can't tell who they are unless they tell them.

Jacknis concurred. "Sometimes the tendency is not to communicate. That's easy to do," he said. "It's harder to communicate than not to communicate."

For couples who suffer marital breakdowns, counseling services are available. Wallasky said his church offers counseling assistance.

While his synagogue offers no official counseling services, Jacknis said he always is willing to assist.

If counseling does not help to reconcile the differences in the relationship, divorce is an alternative. None of the three said he had any strong objections to the practice.

"I have nothing against divorce," Stephen said, "but the fact that it's available means it's used sometimes when it may not need be. People turn to that instead of dealing with the problem."

That may be true, Jacknis said. "But people just aren't willing to throw away their marriage. The whole beauty of it is the highs and lows."

Willingness to admit a mistake in marriage is acceptable to Wallasky.

"Even the success rate of a second marriage I would consider a good turn," he said. "I'd rather see people admit they goofed the first time."

Problems that can lead to a divorce are numerous, Stephen said. Sometimes, expectations are just too high.

"Some people expect marriage to make them immensely happy all the time," he said. "When it doesn't, they think there is something wrong."

Role-playing and inflexibility also are causes for a breakup, Jacknis said.

"People just don't assume a woman will want to take care of the house," he said. "While that's a good value, sometimes we have a tendency to put down a woman who wants to stay in the house. That's not good, either."

Given all the problems, inevitable to any marriage, the three said they see a bright future for marriage in America.

"Despite dire predictions of marriage failures, the future is pretty good," Stephen said. "People are always looking for someone to be close to."

Couples probably will take marriage more seriously in the future, Wallasky said.

"The past 20 years as a society we've been experimenting with what marriage really means," he said. "People are willing to settle down and find more seriously what marriage is to them."

Jacknis said he also believes the future is bright for couples who really want to work at marriage. According to a traditional Jewish belief, a person is made whole when he or she gets married.

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Bridal shower a time for gift of friendship

By DEB PEDERSON

One of America's favorite wedding traditions — the bridal shower — originated in Holland. Once there was a young miller who gave generously to the poor but had few possessions of his own, according to the book *Shower Parties* by Helen Emily Webster. The miller and a young girl fell in love but the girl's father didn't approve of the match because the miller wasn't rich. The father refused to give his daughter her dowry.

But the people of the village loved the couple and wanted them to marry. A new dowry was made: Each villager contributed a treasured possession of his own until all the goods a bride needed were collected. The girl was "showered" with the dowry and even her father was won over. From then on it has been the custom for friends to give the bride gifts.

Friends, family are shower hosts

Showers also can be given for the bridegroom or for the couple together.

Hosts of a shower can be friends or members of the family, said Elaine Young, bridal registrar at Miller & Paine.

"The maid of honor usually hosts one. Three showers is the average number given for a bride."

The guest list can include anyone interested in the bride and the marriage.

"The bride makes the guest list," Young said. "She should invite the attendants to all the showers but inform them one gift from them is sufficient."

If more than one shower are given for the bride, the guest list should be varied.

Invitations should be sent early, preferably more than two weeks in advance. The invitations may be formal cards or a telephone call. Some notification of acceptance or decline is needed so a count can be taken for planning, Young said.

Themes help organize

Themes, which can help organize the party, are limited only by the imagination, Webster said. They may be gift oriented, such as items for the kitchen, closet or bathroom, linen, paper, wooden articles, knickknacks, crystal or tableware.

Ethnic themes like Chinese, Mexican or Hawaiian provide a change of pace, and holidays, rainbows or the bride's

favorite song or movie can lend atmosphere.

Gifts often are chosen with a theme in mind. The guests should check with the hostess on the gift to avoid duplication.

Shower decorations should be kept simple. Flowers, crepe paper and candles can add a lot. The refreshment table should be attractive and reflect the theme.

The format usually is a combination of games, food and the opening of gifts.

Games add touch of fun

Games can relate to the theme or to the wedding and should be of a spontaneous nature. Usually only a few games are needed, Webster said.

The menu should fit the theme and the time of day. It is best to use foods that are simple and generally well-liked. Provide tables or lap trays for the guests to use.

Gifts usually are opened during the latter part of the party. For an added touch, the hostess can tell guests what type or colors of wrapping would coordinate with the theme. At less formal showers, guests can put gifts in paper bags and, with the money that would have been spent on gift wrapping, include a can or box of food for the couple's pantry.

Bridal registrars helpful

Bridal registrars can help the guests and the bride. Anyone can register the bride's preferences but usually she does so herself. The registrar records the items in the store the bride would like to receive, along with patterns and colors, Young said.

"A bride may register for a stainless tableware set," Young said. "The guests can then buy pieces of the set for the gift. We keep track to see when the set is completed."

The term "open stock" sometimes confuses customers.

"Open stock means one can buy by the piece instead of the whole set at once," Young said. "It doesn't mean quantities are unlimited, especially with china and crystal."

Crystal and china are expensive and are used for wedding gifts more often than bridal showers, she said.

Registering is free and carries no obligation.

Some Lincoln bridal registries are Miller & Paine, Brandeis, Colonial Shoppe, the Crystal House and Baker True Value Hardware.

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