

Cohabitation: remnant of sexual revolution

By Julie Bird

Social, turmoil is generally not considered an earmark of the 70s. However, the changes in sexual values that began more than 10 years ago ruin that generalization. The passage of time has noted the phenomenon of cohabitation where couples choose to live together without benefit of marriage, a practice which upsets traditional social norms.

For most people living together, is an accepted situation until it involves someone close. Then it becomes a different matter.

People who live together enter the arrangement for many of the same reasons people marry, according to a counselor at The Counseling Center, 1133 H St.

"Those reasons would include physical attraction, the need to give and receive a higher degree of emotional fulfillment, social pressure and economic pressure," Lotus Nicholas said. "The main difference is permanency. Few people enter this type of liaison with the idea that it will go on forever."

The couples often feel they are not ready for a long-term commitment, Nicholas said, and many want to see if they can live with each other on a daily basis.

But living together without the commitment of marriage is not a test of compatibility, according to the Rev. Mel Luetchens, campus minister at Wesley House.

NICHOLAS AGREED, saying she didn't think living together was the best basis for a marriage.

"They forgot the rules are quite different," she said. "You can stand a lot of things from a lover you wouldn't take from a husband or wife."

She said one couple came to her after a year of marriage, confused about why their marriage was not successful. They had lived together for seven years and had three children, but after they married they found the situation quite different.

Family members, especially parents, are affected profoundly when their children decide to live together, Nicholas said.

"Parents are not as secure as authoritative figures as their parents were," Nicholas said. "Children now realize they are individual people with more choices available. Parents aren't sure about laying out the 'thou shalt's' and the 'thou shalt not's.'"

Luetchens said that spirit of individuality makes people feel they are not responsible to anyone, including parents.

ONE REASON many parents are upset when their children decide to cohabit is the public assumption that the couple is sexually intimate.

"A parent would probably be more upset if their child were living with someone than if he were just sleeping with them," Nicholas said. "The parents and the child face society. The child is not only making a choice for himself, but also for his parents."

Many people credit the so-called "sexual revolution" of the 60s for the increase in cohabitation. However, Luetchens prefers sex educator Sol Gordon's idea that the 60s may have actually been an "anti-sex revolution."

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"He (Gordon) defies one to find a school system that has a good sex education program all through the grades. Instead, most sex education comes from the media, which deals with violence such as rape. It makes me wonder whether we had a sex revolution or an exploitation revolution," Luetchens said.

"More people talk about sex and are public about it, but I'm not sure that helps," he continued. "By thinking we understand sexuality, we may fool ourselves into thinking we're better and more honest people."

The problem now is in equating physical desire with love, Luetchens said.

THE 60S gift to society was not revolution, but general disenchantment with things that had previously been assumed, Luetchens said.

"The war in Vietnam wasn't very well-defined between good and bad," he said. "On the whole we were questioning whether we were right. There was political scandal and the demoralization of some values in areas held in high esteem before then."

"This demoralization began to erode

into personal values, and people questioned those too. People began personal experimentation, to see if the old values could be proven," he said.

But today's parents weren't the ones to experiment, so for the most part they still hold values of the generation before them. Therefore, many parents feel they have failed in rearing their child, Nicholas said.

"Parents are shocked because this is not the pattern in which they were reared. They just married, wisely or unwisely," she said.

PARENTS MIGHT fear that the child may be emotionally hurt in a living relationship because there is no guarantee of permanence.

Some also foresee children and marriage forced by pregnancy, Nicholas said.

A person who wants to help his parents accept his lifestyle should give them some evidence of his capability to make choices and bear the results, Nicholas advised.

"If you feel you have the basis for a relationship and can pull your weight, say, 'Mother, let me make my own mistakes,'" she said.

Living together is not a phenomenon unique to young people. Some divorced and widowed parents, unsure about remarriage, choose cohabitation. The mother of one UNL sophomore lives with her boyfriend while her children are at home.

"I don't like it all that much, but I guess it's her choice," the student said. "I figure she's old enough to make her own decisions."

10-year dealer recounts decade of traffic

By Cindy Coglianese

Dale does drugs.

He has been doing drugs now for 12 years—ever since he was an 18-year-old senior in Omaha.

Marijuana was his first drug experience. He tried it one day after school in the car of an older friend. He says it took him awhile before he felt high and it has become a way of life ever since.

Dale, now 30, went into business for himself. At 20 he started making transactions with small amounts of marijuana between his friends and a supplier.

"Dope was a little bit different then than it is now," Dale said. "It wasn't commercial stuff at all. And no one really cared if it was Colombian or Hawaiian or what, just as long as it was good."

"Prices sometimes were more than they are today, sometimes less. You had to be real careful when I first started selling dope. Sometimes you got bags that were half marijuana, half pencil shavings or oregano."

Hippies . . .

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Ladely said he often called himself a hippie and was called one during that time. He said the label had negative connotations when used by people other than himself.

Ladely said being a hippie, a title he called "coined by the press," does not necessarily mean being a societal dropout.

"I thought that was kind of a stupid idea," he said. "How do you drop out of society?"

Ladely said he used drugs for merely recreational purposes, and that he did not receive any revelations from them. He did say, however, that he thinks drugs allow you to "free yourself from the day-to-day responsibilities and take an objective look at your life."

But Ladely said he attributed his soul-searching to "an open and curious mind," not hallucinogenic drugs.

Although he is a member of the so-called "Woodstock Generation," Ladely said he only attended one rock festival during the 60s.

HE SAID it was a "terrible experience" because of a bad sound system, a motorcycle gang doubling as security personnel, rampant drugs, no available free food except watermelon and oatmeal and exorbitant prices for hot dogs and cigarettes.

The motorcycle gang was involved in a shooting during the concert, he said, adding that he and his friends remained there for only one day.

Ladely said his mental attitude did not change with the advent of the 70s and won't with the 80s. He said he thinks the majority of the hippie movement was "a lot of hype."

"They were just different kinds of conformists."

DALE IS still selling the dope today, and he says, in abundance. But Dale has expanded his business to include cocaine, amyl nitrate and any type of barbiturate a customer needs.

His phone number is not listed in the phone book and the information operator will tell you that "the party has requested an unpublished number." His business operates strictly by word of mouth.

Dale said he has never sought counseling and does not consider himself to be a drug addict. He said he only takes drugs which he considers recreational and he said he will not take hallucinogenic drugs.

"The drugs I take are no different than people who go and put four martinis in their system."

Yet unlike some drinkers, Dale uses speed to get up in the morning and marijuana to go to sleep at night.

"COCAINE IS big in Omaha, especially with the people who can easily afford it. That includes some of my lawyer friends," Dale said.

Dale noted that another change occurring in the drug

world is the frequency of synthetic drugs. He said much of the cocaine that he sells is synthetic and is sometimes packed with speed instead of cocaine.

"What am I suppose to do, you know? Let the buyer beware. If someone unloaded synthetic coke on me, I'll sell it for pure coke. What am I going to do, call the Better Business Bureau?"

Dale has cleaned his stash out for now. He said he has heard that the grand jury will be convening in Omaha and he does not wish to be a part of their proceedings. But for good friends, they can call him and give him a number code indicating how much of a particular drug they want.

Dale doesn't mind talking about the course of his life the past twelve years, as long as his real name isn't used. He is an edgy, nervous 30-year-old man. His face is dull but his eyes are quick and bright. Years of heavy drugs have taken their toll. At 6-foot-2, Dale weighs 140 pounds. His skeleton juts out under his skin. He says it is difficult to gain weight — he never feels like eating.

THE 12 YEARS that he has been taking drugs and the 10 and he has been dealing drugs have brought about sharp changes since the time he smoked his first joint.

"Just imagine 10 years ago, walking into a big shopping center and seeing paraphernalia stores with bongos, pipes, coke spoons, the whole bit. It just didn't happen. Now, that is a respected business. They have a store at Westroads in Omaha, and I saw one in Lincoln at Gateway," Dale said, his hands waving in the air with emphasis.

"It used to be a 'hippie' activity. You had to be an honest-to-goodness burn-out or junkie to even know how to get your hands on drugs. Now, football players and 13-year-olds make up a large part of my clientele."

"And I also remember how secret we used to be. Like if we went to a party and got loaded, we'd have to sneak off to somebody's car or walk around the block or something."

Dale says that contrasts with smoking marijuana in bars, which he claims can be done in a few bars in Omaha.

"THEY (the bar owners) don't really give a damn. As long as you don't cause any trouble, they pretend they don't smell the smoke."

Dale feels that society is accepting drugs and he said he looks forward to the day when marijuana is legalized in every state. He says acceptance of some outlawed drugs is inevitable.

"It was kind of funny what was going on. A kid would come home loaded and his mom would be screaming at him and telling him how drugs can mess your mind up and then she'd pop a Valium to cope with the situation. Fine example, huh?"

Dale said the double standard concerning drugs has been realized and that could be the reason why there seems to be more of a tolerance to drugs today than when he was in high school.

"I don't think I'll always be doing drugs. It's fun, good recreation and I'm still young. Maybe when I have a family I will quit and everything."

Lincoln Gazette editor Ron Kurtenbach, who said he called himself an "anarchal hippie," said he thinks he has become more realistic in the decade since the youth movement.

He said his main concern in the movement was political, and that he was not involved in drugs.

Admitting that people find this surprising, Kurtenbach said he never experimented with hallucinogenic drugs.

"I dropped citric acid instead of LSD," he said, but added that he tried marijuana once, and it "enhanced my basic experience." The self-professed puritan also said he has never been drunk.

KURTENBACH, who said Ladely has retained his long hair, said he thinks the issue of hair was not a focal point in the youth movement, but that he would resent it if someone told him he must get a haircut.

Rather than dropping out of society, he said, he resented the dominant values found in the United States, naming multi-national corporations the villains.

He said he still is actively fighting what these corporations stand for by offering alternatives. Kurtenbach was involved in organizing both the Open Harvest cooperative food store and public radio station KZUM. His newspaper, the Lincoln Gazette, is considered by many to be the underground press.

Kurtenbach said he thinks the hippie of yesterday and today need to set models for organization. Too often, he said, they think they can solve their problems by escaping into a world of their own.

Kurtenbach said he is unsure what shape political activism will take in the 80s, but thinks a move towards socialism is a possibility.