

# Bachelor speaks out Revelry hides wedlock woes

By Jim Hanna  
Senior Reporter



Jim Hanna

Wake up. Why are you reading this Daily Nebraskan supplement about weddings? Do you actually like the institution of marriage?

Oh sure, the surrounding pages are filled with stories celebrating this most ancient of human rituals. Maybe you even buy into the pro-marriage propaganda that has been stabbed into your brain since birth.

Well, please allow cynicism to shine its smiling face into these proceedings. Let me give you a few reasons why you shouldn't get married.

That's right, amidst all of the showers and parties and receptions and pretty dresses and giddy grooms and proud parents and cute little ring-bearers and receiving lines and cake-cuttings and free cigars and dollar dances with joyful brides, there is plenty of room for despair.

And because I'm in a particularly foul mood, I'm going to dredge up this despair just so we don't get too caught up in pro-wedding euphoria.

Why be a marriage-basher? I must admit that I like going to weddings, and I even expect to be married someday. So why be so untoward toward matrimony?

For one thing, it's important to hear opposing viewpoints, especially when making a decision that will inevitably affect the rest of your life. In addition, I think I've been in too good a mood lately, and I need to be especially vile so that I don't start enjoying life too much.

Plus, it's easier to be negative. So, I'm going to rant, rip and rage. I will be gloomy, sour, bleak and miserable. I may resort to lies, exaggerations and character assassination. I might even use exclamation points. Anything to get my unsavory point across.

Here's why you shouldn't get married:

**1. You'll probably get divorced. I know, I know.** This won't happen to you. You belong in the 50 percent of couples that will avoid the

anguish of annulment. You'll manage to work out any differences that may arise between you and your mate and maintain a blissful union forever and ever.

Yeah, right.  
I know those figures lie. In reality, at least 98.7 percent of all marriages end in divorce. The remaining 1.3 are miserable. You'll probably be lucky if your spouse doesn't kill you before you can get a divorce.

**2. You'll have to change the way you squeeze the toothpaste tube.** This is a bigger deal than you might think. Chances are you'll marry a person who dispenses toothpaste differently than you and you'll end up in big nasty brawls every morning. Similar disputes will erupt over other issues such as whether the toilet paper should roll out and over or in and under, what the message on your answering machine will be and what the color scheme in the kitchen will be. Your self-image will plummet as you find yourself engaged in petty battles over lifted toilet seats and whose turn it is to empty the cat box.

**3. Your mate's personal habits will drive you to self-immolation.** You tell yourself that your mate's habit of biting his/her fork and sliding his/her teeth across the tines will become more tolerable as your marriage ages. Mais au contraire, the tinny grind of bone on steel eventually will have you beating your head against a good old oak board. What's that you say? You can learn to live with your spouse's finger drumming? I doubt it. By the second year of marriage, you'll be praying for a blender accident that will lop off the offending dig-

its.

**4. You will lose your identity.** Argue all you will, I still insist that loss of identity goes hand in hand with marriage. In fact, this identity loss is almost celebrated. Marriage is basically an institution whereby you forsake your own spirit for a new unified spirit with your mate. This is highly distressing. Maybe by the time I'm 30, I won't mind giving up a bit of my own individuality for the sake of marriage, but for now, I like me all by myself. Sadly, it seems women run an even greater risk of identity loss as many change their names at the altar. Yikes. Call me selfish, but I can fully celebrate my union with another human without the symbolism of a name change.

**5. You'll have to go to family reunions.** Before marriage, attendance at family reunions on either side is optional. Once you marry, however, participation becomes mandatory. And as if your own family reunions aren't boring enough, you have to go to your spouse's reunions, where you know even fewer people. It's bad enough listening to your own fat, drunk Uncle Roy blasting the commies once a year; who needs an entirely unrelated Uncle Roy belching at the dinner table?

**6. You won't have any fun any more.** Does anybody really know a happily married couple?

**7. You'll have to listen to snotty single people rip the institution of marriage.** Actually, I'm guessing single people are really just jealous. They feel empty and hollow without the satisfaction a life-long commitment can bring. Singles wander aimlessly through life without focus and, in their frustration, they lash out at those who have found happiness in the sacred bonds of wedlock. We singles are probably just bitter, covetous and wish we were married.  
Naaah!

Hanna is a senior theater arts major, a Daily Nebraskan senior reporter and columnist.

# Research finds premarital cohabitation no guarantee to couples' marital bliss

By Connie L. Sheehan  
Senior Editor

Cohabitation in the United States increased 63 percent from 1980 to 1988, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

With about 2.6 million cohabiting households across the nation, living together before marriage might seem the path to follow for a long and happy relationship.

Not necessarily so, according to University of Nebraska-Lincoln sociology professors Alan Booth and David Johnson.

Research from 1988, printed in the "Journal of Family Issues," found that couples who cohabit before marriage are just as likely, if not more so, to experience problems in their relationships.

"Sometimes there are expectations that certain things will come to pass when the marriage occurs," Booth said.

The couple may disagree about having children while cohabiting, but after marriage that disagreement might take on a different perspective, Booth said.

After the marriage, the husband or wife might assume that the other partner should change his or her mind. When things remain the same, problems occur, he said.

Other studies have shown that after an initial high, marital satisfaction declines over the years. Booth and Johnson's study proposed that perhaps because of premarital cohabitation, these effects might be "accelerated" because of the couple's quasi-marital existence before the actual wedding.

Another problem cohabitants may encounter is parental pressure against their unconventional living arrangements. Guilty feelings and pressures about such an arrangement can spill over into the marital relationship.

The cohabitation relationship itself may not always be the cause of later problems, according to the study. The problems could come because those who enter such relationships rather than marriage might be poor marriage candidates.

Such partners might have personality problems, problems with drugs or alcohol or difficulty handling money

or staying employed.

Those interviewed said the probability that they would get a divorce or separation was 9 percent for those who had cohabited and 5 percent for those who did not. Actual statistics show that the percentage for all couples is closer to 50 percent.

Booth said younger people and divorced people are more inclined to cohabit before marriage.

The number of cohabiting households has increased sufficiently that laws in states such as California and New York are being changed to protect partners' rights, Booth said. Some of the issues include property rights and insurance availability for cohabiting partners rather than spouses.

"But that's not Middle America yet," Booth said.

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