

# I don't

## College wedding vows empty without time, patience



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### Marriage.

It's an expression of love, a promise of commitment and a bond that brings two people together for a lifetime.

And it shouldn't occur in college.

Granted, it's a bold statement to make, especially since a good deal of my friends are either married or engaged. Throw in the fact that I write for a newspaper which puts out an annual "wedding issue" and you'd think I'm committing black-and-white suicide.

Now, I can't attack marriage during college without making one important exemption. When pregnancy becomes an issue, marriage is a far greater consideration. A child's life and future has entered the picture and to say this doesn't alter my view would be just plain cold.

For couples in college with no children, I believe marriage is a mistake.

Why is far from an easy explanation.

### To love or not to love

One of the strongest arguments for an early marriage is that the man and woman involved are "deep in love" and that everything "feels right." But do most college couples who rush into marriage know what love is?

I'm going to swallow some ink here and try to make a point. Love is a word. To say you are in love is initially difficult, but easier to repeat once it has been said. It becomes easier and easier to say you're in love until you believe nothing but love is possible. It's then that marriage seems to be a perfect complement to your love.

But are you in love? Do you know everything about the guy or girl you're with? Do you share their dreams, overlook their faults and

imagine yourself spending a lifetime with them without even a second thought? Maybe you are in love or maybe you aren't. Time is the only true test.

### Time goes by so slowly

I always find it hard to accept that two people who have known each other for less than six months are ready to tie the knot and spend the next 50 years together.

With an uncertain financial future, academics to concentrate on and perhaps a lack of knowledge and understanding of your significant other, marriage becomes a question mark with dark letters forming the next sentence of life.

If you are truly in love and are willing to spend a lifetime together, what is one to four years of waiting? Is there anything in that small span of time that the two of you can't handle as an unmarried couple? Or a better question: If there IS anything you can't handle, don't you think it would be better to discover it before making the commitment of a lifetime?

Go ahead and get engaged but wait until the end of college to get married. Make a commitment to one another. But don't make a permanent promise until you are sure in your heart and mind that this is the person you want to be with until death.

### Is sex involved?

Henry Miller once said: "Sex is one of the nine reasons for reincarnation. The other eight are unimportant." Therefore, no discussion on college marriages would be complete without mentioning sex. For some couples that get married, sex is a way of life. For others, it is not a part of their relationship.

Sometimes guilt (whether for religious or other reasons) pushes a sexually active couple to get married. Once married, the couple feel that sex is "permitted" and guilt is thrown down the drain. Yet, building a marriage on sex is like trying to place anvil on a Coke can. The can will be crushed without support, just as a marriage will crumble without other foundations.

In the case of non-sexu-

ally active couples, sex can become an incentive for marriage.

It might sound harsh, but some college marriages have occurred simply because of sex. Then, when a sexual relationship begins, the marriage often ends. Why? Maybe because sex was too abrupt of a change. Or maybe because it wasn't what both people involved thought it would be.

### The divorce factor

Every 13 seconds, someone in the United States gets divorced. That means that by the time you've picked up this paper and read this far into my column, at least five or six couples have ended a life that was meant to be spent together.

Let's be honest. Many college marriages end with college divorces. And you might be saying, "But isn't it better to end a marriage than stay together and be miserable?"

Yes. But the point is not to get married in the first place if you aren't ready.

Divorce shouldn't be looked at as a "way out" — a kind of safety net in which a rash marriage can be dissolved.



MATT HANEY/DN

# Book burning

## Students cheated out of knowledge by community fear



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The flesh of a naked man flashes across the screen, hazed over by the static created as an English teacher fast forwards through the scene. What movies are being viewed by freshmen in the public school system? "Romeo and Juliet," the Zeffirelli version, of course.

Students in many classrooms have never watched this scene. In these classrooms, the voices of such revolutionaries as Maya Angelou, John Steinbeck, J.D. Salinger, Mark Twain and William Shakespeare are not heard. The words of these literary greats are deleted from libraries and classrooms because parents, school board members and community leaders fear the influence those words might have on our youth.

The rape of young Maya in "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings" has catapulted the novel to the top of the most banned books of 1995-96. Protecting students from the horror encountered by this young child also excludes them from the learning and growing process that ensues. With the willful silencing of her voice, the young heroine broadcasts her personal power.

The anger-filled speeches of Holden Caulfield are also censored material. The reason: The language used by Caulfield has been deemed unacceptable in many high schools. The reality is that students are surrounded by such language everyday, on television, at schools and often in their homes.

At the end of Salinger's "A Catcher in the Rye," the reader becomes so immune to the words that one barely hears them anymore.

The banning of books and plays from the public schools is not a

recent phenomenon. Ever since the publication of the written word, some people have tried to suppress it. The rationales vary among different groups, but the underlying motive is ignorance. People tend to fear what they do not know. They fear their children may be exposed to what they do not understand.

Historically, three major reasons for banning material from public schools have existed: race, sex and violence.

The use of racial slang in works such as "Huckleberry Finn" more often results in its removal from assigned reading lists than in having useful and educational discussions about student reactions to the novel. The denial of this work prevents students from understanding the struggles that many people, especially minorities, faced in the days of Mark Twain. The language presented forces a reader to confront what prejudices existed in that period of

American history.

"Forever" by Judy Blume has been lifted from shelves after being characterized as a sexual how-to book for young people. The assumption is that the only exposure that students will have to sex will come from a book in the school library. This pretense allows communities to make a scapegoat out of literature and forget about the influences of television, advertising and peer groups.

The inhumanity characterized in "Slaughterhouse Five" has made it a perennial favorite of the top banned books list. The amazing literary techniques exhibited in Vonnegut's tale are discarded in place of softer, less truthful texts that will not expose our students to the thought-provoking realities exposed by Vonnegut.

In the admirable attempt to shelter children from the harsh realities they will face while growing into adulthood, society has in turn left

that 30 of you would be divorced by the time it landed? Think about it.

Marriage is a promise to be with someone for the rest of your life — a promise that must be true "in sickness and in health, for richer, for poorer, until death do you part." But many college marriages are sick before they reach death.

It's only with patience, consideration and true love that such heartaches can be avoided.

A long life is open before each of us. A life that includes someone special in whose hands our own future lies. If he or she can respect that this future is further ahead, then perhaps a beautiful marriage will be in the works. But if it's now or never, ask why it's now.

Otherwise it could become never.