

# To love and to cherish

## Relationships fulfill a basic human need



**GREGG MADSEN is a senior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.**

Even though I had driven the gravel road hundreds of times before, I had never driven it in such a nervous state of mind.

In the passenger seat of my car was Jodie, her hand in mine as I drove toward a spot I'd picked out weeks ago for this occasion. Hidden in the back seat was a diamond ring, and I was ready to offer it to the woman I love.

Under a moonlit summer sky, I struggled to speak four words I will never say again in my life:

"Will you marry me?"

She said yes.

My life will never be the same, and I couldn't be happier.

The relationship Jodie and I have has been a blessing from the day we first met. From day one I have been captivated by her personality, her strength and her beauty. We have disagreed on many things. But through it all, Jodie and I have grown closer together. I have learned from our time together. In some strange way, I feel whole when we are together. I know that she has filled a void in my life that no one had ever come close to filling.

I have learned that our relationship is a gift. Through our almost three years of dating, I've been thankful countless times to just be in her presence. I am honored that she feels the same way about me.

But in reality, all relationships are a gift. It doesn't matter if you are talking about a romantic relationship or a simple friendship, our relationships are in our lives to fulfill a basic need: love.

We all need to be loved. We all need to have someone to whom we can give our love.

Relationships allow this need to be met. We were created with the

need for community in our hearts and so we seek relationships. Without someone to fill that slot in our lives, we cannot feel the joy we were meant to feel.

Feeling that joy depends on what we put into our relationships. Inevitably, we have to ask ourselves some hard questions about the people we spend time with.

How important are our friendships?

Are they more important than schoolwork?

Are they more important than work?

Are they more important than ourselves?

When we give halfheartedly to a relationship in our lives, the relationship automatically suffers. But if we give wholeheartedly, we have already been rewarded. Superficial interest in someone else's life holds back the true excitement of relationships. It is only when two people truly learn to care for each other that the secret of relationships is unlocked.

Life was not meant to be spent alone, which is not to say everyone must get married. Marriage is just one form of relationship, like friendship.

Getting married won't automatically fill our need for a relationship, neither will simply having friends. But when our relationships get the amount of attention they truly need, then we can see how valuable they really are.

The beauty of relationships is that they are the only thing that can leave us truly happy in life. Relationships of all shapes and sizes can fill our need, and nothing else can.

No amount of money, no job, no degree and no material possession can make us feel necessary and allow us to give

love back. That vital need in our lives is reserved exclusively for person-to-person relationships.

Whether it's father and son, mother and daughter, two close friends or a husband and wife, relationships allow us to feel that our life is actually worthwhile.

Think about it. What is the first thing we want to do when something happens in our lives? We want to tell someone.

Why?

Because we want to be reassured that someone out there

really cares about us. What would life be without someone to share our greatest accomplishments and hardest failures with? What would life be like without the ability to help and encourage someone else?

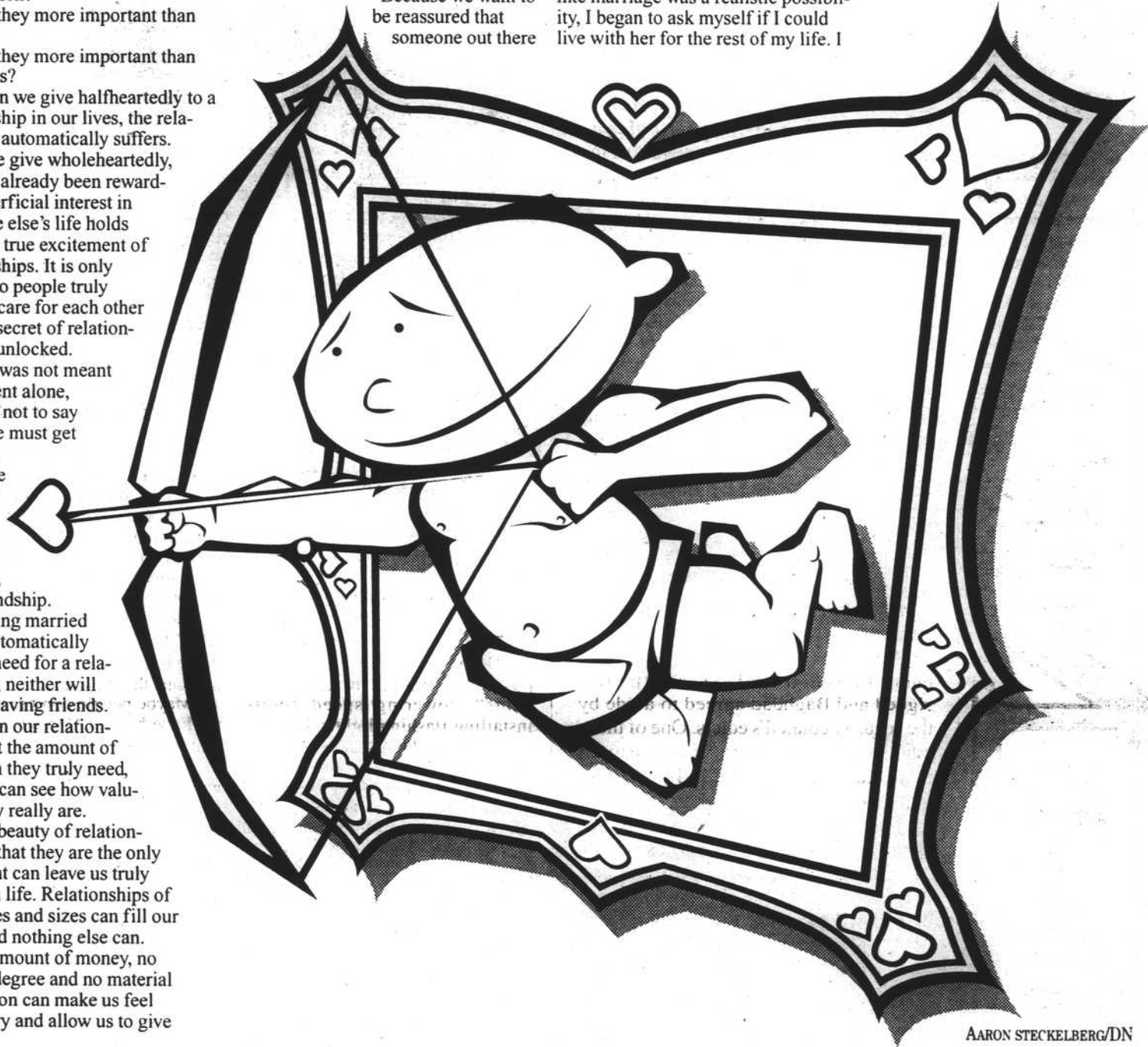
With money, our lives are wealthy. With a great job, our lives are prestigious. With relationships, our lives are complete. Without them, we are empty.

I'm thankful for Jodie. When we were first dating and I began to feel like marriage was a realistic possibility, I began to ask myself if I could live with her for the rest of my life. I

could never answer that question with a definite yes or no.

But later when I asked myself that question, my mind gradually started to ask not if I could or couldn't live with her, but whether or not I could live without her. While I was driving down that gravel road with her this summer, the answer to that question was clearly etched in my mind:

I could not live without her.



# Keiko killings

## Mammals held in captivity can never return to the wild



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Tale has it that Flipper looked his weary trainer in the eye, batted away the outstretched hand that once fed him, gulped a dolphin-size maximum lung capacity of air, and slowly drifted to the bottom of his tank, from which he would never return alive.

Apparently, Flipper was one smart fishy.

He knew that he could never return to his original swimming grounds.

Not only had he forgotten what it was like to live in the wild, we humans made it impossible for him to float freely again.

Unless, of course, we would have wished for him to dart among the waves with a hook and line firmly entrenched in his side.

You see, the primary reason Flipper's caretakers failed to set him free was because of the cruelties that awaited him in the supposedly natural world: the so-called blood baths used to keep the booming "Flipper" population at bay.

A similar fate could await the likes of Shamu and Keiko (the star of "Free Willy"), the 10-ton Tessies who have been known to spit gal-

lons of water and steal the show at Sea World.

This phenomenon sits rather precariously, considering that we believe dolphins and whales are such a rare and beautiful commodity. However, nations like Japan and China are aiming to stifle the exploding marine mammal population.

Back in the '80s, China and Japan decided the sea lion, dolphin and whale set had been crowding their coastlines. The only option, the Chinese believed, was to hack out the less attractive ones - that is, the ones with rashes, barnacles and other skin diseases.

The method? Shooting, harpooning and strangling. The motive? Money, of course.

As news of the blood baths washed into the United States, marine observatories and conservatories like Sea World determined to fork out cash in return for a chosen few.

But eventually, other U.S. marine biologists colluded and banned Sea World's intervention in the blood baths, with the hope that, perhaps, when they no longer paid

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up, the systematic killings would let up.

We're still not paying.

And Keiko's still not playing.

Thanks to his captive environment, he'll never be the same. (If you've ever seen "Free Willy," you'll know that the pull of gravity on his fin becomes so strong from being so close to shore that it will never stand on its own again.) Besides, he can never frolic with his family off the coast of Ireland because this would endanger both him and his family. Plus, now he's just too damn friendly.

And furthermore, China and Japan still aren't straying from their population-crushing blood-bath policy.

Or from their practice of marking these mammals as makeshift

missile targets.

We have reason to believe that China has taken to firing away at the whales for the sake of its military - thus turning the eye that once haunted Ahab into multiple bull's eyes that now haunt, and hunt, these innocent and intelligent mammals.

In fact, many believe the Taiwanese elections used whale killings as the impetus behind their agenda.

But what are we to do?

Sea World can no longer purchase sea mammals from the blood baths. Whale and dolphin adoption still lends cash to the perpetrators' cause.

All the while, our government sits idly by.

And another Keiko dies.