

editorial opinion



Learning to be independent

A friend reports that shortly after she was widowed, her doctor advised her to try to remarry within the year.

"If you wait too long," he warned, "you won't do it."

"It's too soon," she answered. "Give me time to get myself together."

Smiling with understanding, he cautioned that once she was used to independence, she would find it difficult to return to a partnership arrangement.

Now, several years of independence later, she understands what he meant.

BY NATURE independent, admittedly lonely at times, still she savors the pleasure of setting her own pace (her children are grown) and wonders if she could ever return to the old patterns.

It depends, of course, on attitudes, the way we lived while married and level of dependence. Many of those widowed or divorced remain single by choice—although married friends seldom say that story.

Men once or twice divorced and still making alimony or child support payments are forced by financial restrictions to stay single. More than a few turn their singleness into a career.

They attend the singles organizations and use them as a launching pad for a busy, active social life. Far from being all bad, they are to be commended for finding an answer to their needs.

Most are pleasant, cosmopolitan and perfectly willing to admit that marriage is, at best, a remote possibility.

Women who make it through the first few years, like my friend, begin to relish the independence, particularly if they are well-fixed financially or have interesting jobs.

They travel, take evening courses, acquire a circle of friends who are far different from their former couples' groups, have an occasional affair and indulge their tastes in interests and possessions.

Most are quick to explain that, as alluring as marriage may sound in odd moments, they won't marry for the sake of having a man in the house.

THESE ARE the women who in former married years ran the home, planned the social activities for the family, came up with the menus for entertaining, did the chauffeuring and made some contribution of time and service to the community.

Unfortunately, their male counterparts not earning a living were deprived of this preparation for singleness and may flounder when it comes to building a social life.

The single man who can plan a party, put out a tasty buffet, organize an evening of bridge or skating on his own and develop new friendships is rare.

Most formerly married men will eventually re-marry for companionship and the convenience of having someone organize the home. Women are more prone to reorganize for financial reasons.

Certainly the more independent singles become, the less likely they are to remarry for the wrong reasons. Those who have passed dependence bring special qualities of resilience and resourcefulness that are definite pluses if, and when, they finally take the big step back into marriage.



A stay at Coral Stables

What did you do over your Christmas vacation?

I went to Florida and did I get a beautiful color—purple. I'm thinking of changing the song, "Moon Over Miami," to "Clouds, Rain and Chilling Breezes over Miami."

Actually, we stayed in Hollywood where the chamber of commerce and the weathermen are obviously in a conspiracy to lure tourist trade to the "sunny" climates. They kept promising a warming trend but didn't mention it's expected in April.

From the window of our apartment, we could see the weather report flashing on the bank. It must have been stuck at 71 degrees because I swear it was more like 47 degrees in the plentiful shade. But the climate wasn't our only problem.

Have you ever taken a mystery bus ride? We took one from the airport to the apartment we had rented to live. We became slightly skeptical when the driver dropped everyone else off at plush hotels and we were the only ones left.

OUR SUSPICIONS mounted when we told the driver the name of our apartment and he never heard of it. We showed him a picture of Gulf Plaza Apartments and he said it was taken 50 years ago.

He finally pulled up in front of what looked like the fallen House of Usher. "What a dump, take us to the Gulf Plaza," I demanded.

"What you see, lady, is what you get," the bus driver smirked as he tossed our luggage on the ground, shook his head and took off, leaving us at the end of nowhere with not a soul in sight.

Finally, a 10-year-old kid, who works as bellboy, manager, maid, janitor and gardener, took us and our luggage up on an elevator that would have made the greatest disaster movie ever produced.

We soon discovered Gulf Plaza was the only apartment in the entire state of Florida that had vacancies during Christmas week. "No room at the inn," we kept reading in the newspapers. Even the press never heard of Gulf Plaza.

IT WASN'T all that bad, but there were a few minor inconveniences. The pool, which was built directly in the shade, would accommodate two

little three-year-olds as long as neither one knew how to swim.

We had no telephone in our room and we figured it was because the owners of Gulf Plaza didn't want their guests to call and try to find other accommodations. On top of that we had to pay a week in advance because they couldn't afford to lose us.

The apartment also lacked a lobby but there were two pay phones in the breezeway where you shuddered so from the wind, you couldn't talk anyway. No telephone directories were provided and the information operator didn't understand our requests for phone numbers because we couldn't stop our teeth from chattering.

Another slight problem was that we couldn't rent a car. The woman at the Gulf Plaza also owns the Hollywood Hills Motel, which is six blocks away. She told us to mention the name of the motel if we wanted to rent a car because "Gulf Plaza" won't ring a bell with Drive-Away Auto Service. I told her "Gulf Plaza" didn't ring a bell with me either, but she failed to see the humor.

DESPITE the fact that we mentioned Holiday Hills, or maybe because of it, we couldn't get a car. We were told, however, buses ran frequently on Hollywood Boulevard to take us to the beach or wherever we wanted to go. "Frequently" turned into one hour and buses stopped running at 8 p.m.

We never left our apartment on Christmas because not one bus was in operation. To cheer us up we read a poem in the paper appropriately titled "Merry Christmas, Sunny Florida." The temperature was a high 53 degrees and the non-existent sun was buried deep in the existent dark clouds.

According to the poem, propaganda if I ever heard it: Santa Claus was well on his way in a red Thunderbird instead of a sleigh. Obviously he didn't mention the Hollywood Hills Motel when he rented his car. The poem said Santa was dressed in Bermuda shorts and taken from the land whatever he needs. The earth is not his brother but his enemy, and when he has conquered it he moves on. He leaves his father's graves and his children's birthright is forgotten.

Today, it's "limited drilling," and after the echoes of the protesters have died down or been drowned out in the noise of "Progress," the hungry conspirators of consumption can then perpetrate the next rage of the quiet Pigeon River Country State Forest. Where do we stop? What quality of life shall we insist on?

from our reader

Oil drilling protested

Editor:

The recent "endorsement" by certain members of the local Mackinac Chapter of the Sierra Club for oil drilling in the Pigeon River Country State Forest was a blatant display of misplaced loyalty. As a member of the Sierra Club, this "endorsement" does not represent my feelings nor, I would suspect, of many other members. Such a discrediting and important position should have required a representative vote of the entire membership.

To quote John Strohm, editor of National Wildlife (parenthesis mine):

"This is Progress? How do you compare a superhighway (or an oil rig) with a deer path, a rabbit trail or a winding country road?"

"It's easy to stir men's passions with revolutions against tyrants. The crusade for a better quality of life (other than materialism) is more subtle."

"Once we lose intimate touch with nature we become vulnerable to

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IT'S ONLY AN ANIMAL

Dying in a steel-jaw, leghold trap. An animal that feels pain much like we do. Imagine having your fingers crushed in a car door. Nobody opens the door for 24 hours. That's what happens in a steel-jaw trap. Less than half the states have laws requiring trappers to even check traps every 24 hours. No one has cared much. It's only an animal.

Every winter millions of fox, lynx, raccoons, minks, otters, muskrats, beavers, badgers, bobcats, skunks, and other animals suffer in these primitive traps. Why? Because humans think fur coats are "glamorous and chic." There is nothing glamorous about being clamped in a trap for hours or even days, exposed to the weather, without food or water, in pain and fear, waiting for the trapper and death. Some even chew or wring off their toes or paws to escape. But then, they're only animals.

This trap hasn't changed much since the days early fur traders and mountain men used it to nearly wipe out the beaver in this country. That was well over 100 years ago. Today trapping is a sport... a hobby... a recreation. Few people trap for survival. The reasons have changed but the trap has not. The pain and suffering it has inflicted on wild animals over the years is impossible to comprehend. Still, little has been done about more humane traps. Again, the victims are only animals.

It is time to change, time to stop making excuses for this needless suffering. It is time to outlaw the steel-jaw trap.

It is the only decent thing to do—for the animals. Please help.

Mail Immediately To: Belton P. Mouras, President
The Animal Protection Institute of America
P.O. Box 22505, Dept. Z
5694 South Land Park Drive
Sacramento, California 95822

Enough is enough! Tell me more about what I can do to bring an end to the use of steel-jaw traps in the U.S. My tax-deductible contribution of \$_____ is enclosed to continue your public awareness campaign and stop this abuse of wild animals.

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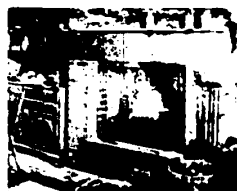
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