

Psychologists Find 3 Areas Vital To Marriage

WASHINGTON -- The happy individual with a good marriage has been able to find that partner who complements his personality in three distinctive ways.

One neurotic partner eventually leads the other into neurosis.

The couples studied had been married for periods ranging from 2 to 20 years. "When we broke down marriages by age, we found neurosis in marriage was not contagious," says Dr. Cohen.

Results are so far preliminary; much material on flexibility in thinking, dogmatism, values and other dimensions has yet to be analyzed.

Marriage stability rests on a complex interaction between the traits of husband and wife, says Dr. Cohen. "It's going to be very difficult to predict for the individual."

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A group of Denver, Colo., psychologists has isolated three areas where man and wife should complement each other, if the marriage is going to be stable. They found the three after analyzing scores of marriage combinations in a study of 100 couples, half of whom were in marital counseling.

But they still can't say yes or no to a proposed mate—the information isn't complete enough.

It is most important that a man and wife complement each other on giving and receiving help—more important, for instance, than complementing each other on aggression and passivity.

IF ONE PARTNER likes to take care of someone, the other should like to be taken care of, says Dr. Irwin H. Cohen, psychologist with the Veterans Administration Hospital in Denver. Two helpers are likely to frustrate each other, while two receivers will leave each dissatisfied.

Two other dimensions that turned out to be critical to happy marriage were solability and sexuality.

It does not seem to matter, says Dr. Cohen whether the couple is relatively unsocial or disinterested in sex, so long as both partners feel the same way. Here the man and wife are complementary if they are alike.

Other traits often blamed for unhappy marriages, such as the need to dominate, to criticize, to have order or adventure, were either less critical to the husband-wife blend, or unimportant, according to this study.

The Denver study drew half its couples from marriage counselors, primarily at VA mental hygiene clinics around the country. The other half were found through churches and were selected for their own self-admitted satisfaction in marriage.

"WE WERE ABLE to find a very real and strong difference between those in counseling and those maintaining stable marriages," says Dr. Cohen.

The difference hinged on five needs—including the critical three—that were complementary in stable couples and a source of conflict in those seeking help. Two less important but still significant dimensions dealt with aggression and independence.

It is somewhat important that an aggressive partner who likes to criticize be paired with one who needs to take blame, says Dr. Cohen. For the fifth dimension, independence, husband and wife should be similar.

PUTTING the five together, Dr. Cohen and his colleagues, Drs. Jack Dwerin and Lawrence S. Rogers of the VA hospital and Dr. Milton Lipetz of the University of Colorado, have constructed a marital index that should distinguish stable from unstable marriages with some success.

The index, however, could not be used to predict stability for individual marriages at this point.

The Denver work also overturned a common belief that

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Brian Dates, 22512 Floral, Farmington, chairman of Wayne State University's Student Centennial Committee, is also chairman of the midway committee for WSU's Fun Festival to be held May 25-26 at Bob-Lo Island.

A member of Tau Kappa Epsilon, Dates worked on committees for the 1966 festival, has been chairman of WSU Week and a staff member for Wayne's Fresh Camp.

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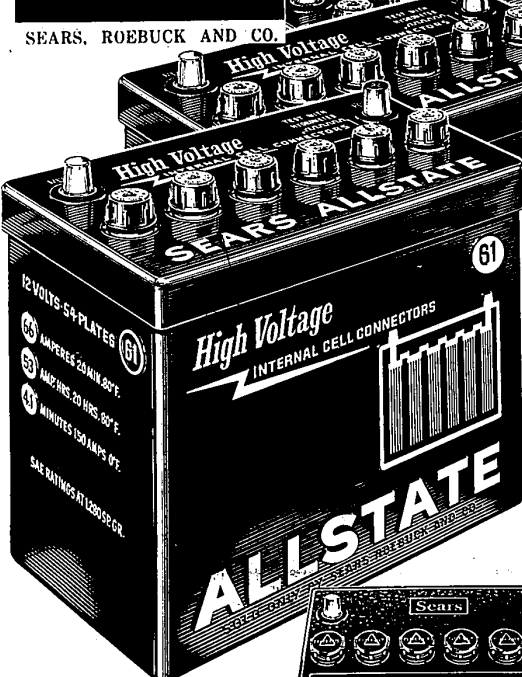
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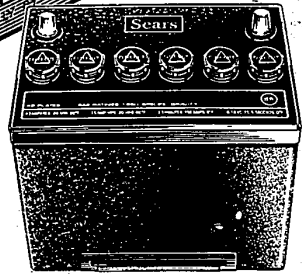
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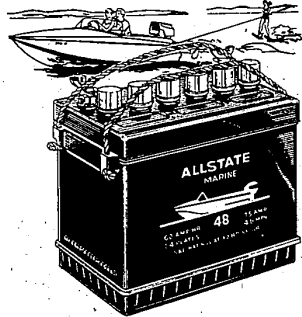


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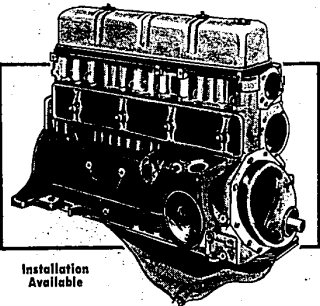
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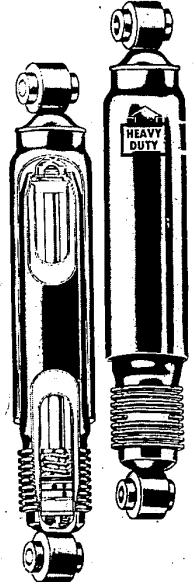
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