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PROMISES

(continued from page 6)

private practice in consulting psychology, sees the lack of self-esteem as the biggest problem in floundering marriages. Conversely, he said that respect for the partner's integrity is a prime factor in marital success.

The psychologists also emphasize the importance of positive feedback from sources independent of the spouse. This is particularly significant for the woman.

A man usually finds much ego gratification and emotional support in his work. Most wives have traditionally worked at home, managing children and family affairs.

Without minimizing the rewards of child-raising, the need for constant involvement evaporates after a relatively short span of years. She can easily become too dependent upon her husband to confirm her sense of self-worth thereafter.

This dependence—conscious or not—is a common source of unhappiness in many middle-aged marriages. Even the well-educated women of 45 or 50 has little opportunity in today's job market.

And job or not, the tradition of their upbringing continues to bind them to a role.

Drs. Lyness and Ambinder agree that the women's movement has caused a great deal of unhappiness and frustration to surface in both men and women.

They liken it to the civil rights movement—painful, but positive. The doctors foresee more women finishing school, a growing acceptance of working wives, higher respect for female achievement, and as a consequence, later marriages.

Later marriages and mutual career fulfillment probably mean a more mature selection of partners. The end result of this cause and effect cycle should be happier, longer marriages. "We expect to see less marriage counseling 10 to 20 years from now," said Dr. Ambinder.

But that is projection. What about present marriages? What will make them longer and stronger? Neither religion, nor psychology, nor experience can establish a single formula.

Yet all of these seem to blend in their view of love as a dynamic force between individuals which will grow and strengthen as the individuals grow within. And growth is continuous work. No matter where you are in the marriage cycle, there is no relaxation of the effort.

—JO ANN HOFFMAN

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Six**