Deinstitutionalizing marriage

- Women’s movement had significant impact in redefining marriage.
  - Focus on more equality in relationships and roles
- Focus on personal choices affected divorce rate
  - Caused significant increase
- More choices of living alone or cohabitation
- Rise in single parents
  - Less stigma attached to having children before marriage.
  - “Shotgun” marriage a thing of the past.
  - Recent studies indicated that parents are less embarrassed with children outside of marriage.
  - However, this can be affected by culture.

The Changing Landscape of Marriage

- Throughout history: Marriage was often based on practical concerns.
  - Arranged by families with the focus not on love
  - Marriage affected by shorter life expectancies
  - Marriage possibly only lasting one or two decades (20 years).
- Mid twentieth century (1950s): Marriage in twenties with the expectation of maintaining the relationship for a half-century.
  - Often based on traditional gender roles as the norm (see photo)
- Late twentieth century: Marriage is significantly redefined.
  - Marriage was deinstitutionalized – transformed from the standard adult institution to more of a focus on personal choices.

Scanning the Global Marriage Scene: Incredible Variability

- The Middle East: Male-dominated marriage
  - Marriage is the expectation for women.
  - Women do not have equal status to men, however, women seek higher education more than men.
  - Once married, traditional gender roles are more rigidly enforced. Women can be required by husband to stay at home.
  - Divorce is difficult but possible. Men have more rights to determine ending a marriage.
- Scandinavian countries: Marriage doesn’t matter
  - 50 percent of people cohabitate.
  - Children outside of marriage is the norm. One-half of all infants are born to single mothers.
  - Marriage is just one option among a number of equally acceptable choices.
The United States: Dreaming of Marriage for Life

- Despite high divorce rates, young people still want to marry.
  - 8 out of 10 report want to marry, same as past research.
- Although the desire may be marriage, more consideration is given to certain fundamentals:
  - Personal goals
  - Sense of identity established
  - Financial stability
- High non-marriage rates among low-income adults is partly due to economic barriers: “I need to get it together financially before it’s right to wed.”
- Staying in a marriage for a lifetime has been elevated to a badge of achievement.

Ups and Downs of the Marital Pathway

- Marriage begins with high expectations, after which disenchantment sets in.
- Happiness is at its peak during the honeymoon.
- Satisfaction rapidly slopes downward, and then tends to decline more slowly or level out around year 4.
  - If a couple can get past the first 4 years, they have passed the main divorce danger zone.

The u-shaped curve of marital satisfaction

- Marriage affected by work and children.
- First child reaching puberty causes more stress to relationship as parents deal with child’s emotional instability.
- Positive change occurs with empty nest:
  - Happiness increases when children leave.
  - Many empty-nest couples reconnect when they are suddenly “just the two of us” together again.
  - Elderly couples fight less as they focus on the end of life and precious moments together.

Sternberg’s Triangular Theory

- Adult love relationships broken into three components:
  - 1. Passion (sexual arousal)
  - 2. Intimacy (feelings of closeness)
  - 3. Commitment (marriage or exclusive, lifelong cohabitating relationships)
- Romantic love – combines passion and intimacy
- Commitment alone results in an ‘empty marriage.’
- Companionate marriage – best-friend relationship that long-married couples find
- Consummate love (ideal state) – combines passion, intimacy, and commitment
  - For life is an ideal, but over time marital passion and even intimacy tend to wane.
Keeping Passion and Intimacy Alive

- 1 out of every 10 couples manage to stay passionate for decades.
- Realize that keeping passion and intimacy takes work.
- Regularly engage in exciting activities that both partners enjoy.

Commitment as the key to relationship success

- Being dedicated to the partner’s “inner growth”
- Sanctifying one’s desires for partner’s joy
- Don’t see sacrifice as a negative
- Forgiveness is key.
- Sacrificing must be reciprocal.

Couple Communications and Happiness

- Happy couples...
  - Engage in a higher ratio of positive to negative comments.
  - Caring, loving comments must outweigh critical.
  - Don’t get personal when they disagree.
  - Unhappy couples personalize their conflicts, often using put-downs and sarcasm.
  - Are sensitive to their partner’s need for “space.”
  - Interactions that begin with attempted discussions of concern, leading to disgust, then contempt.

Staying together happily for life

- Be aware that passion and intimacy naturally wane.
  - Share exciting activities with your mate.
  - Avoid getting personal during fights.
  - Be positive after negative.
  - Be sensitive to partner’s need for space.
  - Be devoted to partner’s development.
  - Be predisposed to forgive.

- A Final Caution
  - Forgiveness is unwarranted if the person is being violated by domestic violence. Partners need to know that sacrifice will be reciprocal.
Facts about Divorce

- Most weigh the costs vs. the benefits.
  - Finances are typically a concern. (Can I support my family financially?)
  - How will the divorce affect the children?
- Separation can cause overload of changes (e.g., need to move, better paying job, legal hassles, telling loved ones).
- Communication problems tend to be the most cited cause of divorce.
- While other problems can exist, an extra-marital affair may push couples toward divorce.

Can divorce be positive?

- Can produce emotional growth due to “making” it on their own
- It can be a relief for some who were unhappy.
- Negative can be disengagement of fathers through lack of contact or not paying child support
- Stepparents can face challenges with discipline or lack of connection to stepchildren.

The Changing Context of Parenthood

- More possibilities to enjoy this pivotal life role for a huge variety of non-traditional families
- The freedom to choose not to be parents
- Decline in fertility rates has affected the choice to be parents.
- There is no evidence that people who choose not to have children are narcissistic or unhappy.
- Parenthood is not NECESSARY to live a full life.

Fertility (Family Size) in the Developed World

- The problem: Fertility rates are WELL below the population replacement level in many developed world nations (see the next slide). Why?
  - People are waiting longer to get married.
  - Economic concerns - The fertility issue is especially acute in developed world countries with poor economies (e.g., Russia).
- Because of this, there is anxiety about the aging of the population
- Government efforts to encourage more births – For example, Italy offers “baby bonuses” to couples who conceive.
Notice the differences from nation to nation

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Fertility rate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>United States</td>
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Fertility rates in selected developed countries (2008)

The Transition to Parenthood

- Longitudinal studies of couples’ relationships show:
  - Parenthood makes couples less intimate and happy – feel more like “fellow workers.”
  - Parenthood tends to produce more traditional (and conflict-ridden) marital roles.
    - Resulting in possible marital equity issues if both spouses work full time
    - Marital equity – fairness in the “work” of a couple’s life together
  - Great variability in how couples cope with being parents
    - Most do get slightly less happy, but for others satisfaction improves.
  - Having a good prior relationship is key to adjusting well.
  - One caution: People should not consider having a baby to improve their marriage.

Exploring Motherhood

- Moms with young children report the lowest day-to-day levels of happiness (compared to childless and empty-nest women).
- One in two mothers report having trouble controlling temper.
  - Behaviors as simple as a child’s whining might provoke anger reaction.
- Quality of attachment to the child predicts how mothers react to their children.
  - Temperamentally difficult children provoke strong negative reactions.

Expectations of Motherhood

- Single moms deal with intense pressures from poverty, working full time, and wanting to feel “blissful” about motherhood.
- Researchers have found that today’s mothers actually spend more time with their children compared to previous generations.
- In fact, the research indicates mothers spend twice as much time engaging in child cognitively-stimulating activities as their mothers spent with them. (See next slide.)
- With all the responsibilities, what gets the least amount of attention is the marriage.
How fathers act

- Fathers typically spend more time with sons than daughters.
- Fathers are the vigorous play guys—and especially love to engage in rough-and-tumble play with their sons.
- However, dads still typically do less.
  - Even when dads do just as much, moms still often have primary responsibility for the children.
- Although dads are really pitching in to do hands-on child care, their involvement is still skewed toward play activities.

Variations in Father’s Involvement

- There is incredible variability in how specific fathers negotiate this job, from “never touch a diaper,” to househusbands who assume primary caregiving responsibilities, to men who take sole care of the kids.
- A man’s involvement can be based on several factors:
  1. Traditional views of women’s roles (highly religious)
  2. Increased workload of the woman (caveat is when male is unemployed or working less hours, husband/partner may be less willing to assume traditional female roles)
  3. Woman’s attitude — either positive or negative toward the male’s involvement; for example, woman being too critical of man’s performance of parenting responsibilities

Exploring Fatherhood

- New nurturer father – a new social concept to describe fathers who actively engage in child care as well as continue the “breadwinner” role.
  - The new masculine ideal
- All of these roles can lead to contradictory demands.
Work: the changing landscape

- Four shifts in the U.S. career landscape
  1. More career (and job) changes – traditional stable care is not the norm. People move from job to job or change directions, which is referred to as boundary-less careers.
  2. More job insecurity (and unemployment) – outsourcing, globalization, and cutbacks have caused problems for the U.S. workers.
  3. Longer working hours – the idea that American workers’ work ethic has suffered is false. Both women and men are putting more hours in per week at their jobs than their parents or grandparents.
  4. Why are we working longer?
    1. Cut-throat economy, competitive pressures
    2. Technology, which can offer flexibility – for example, telecommuting can be beneficial to some.
    ✓ One problem – more flexibility has resulted increased work hours due to being “on” 24/7.

Women, Men, and Work

- More women access education than men. Women outnumber men on college campuses by almost 10%.
- Men’s jobs are more susceptible to economic downturns than women’s. Construction jobs vs. nursing
- Other issues related to women’s views of career:
  - Women have more erratic, less continuous “careers.” They are more prone to move in and out of the workforce due to care-giving responsibilities.
  - Wives may see their work roles as secondary to a spouse. Women are found in stereotypically female careers such as day-care worker or secretary. (Also, they are less likely to advance to higher managerial rungs.)
  - The work world is separated into women’s and men’s jobs. Occupational segregation – classifying jobs as male or female

Exploring Career Success and Happiness

- Studies indicate that high self-esteem as a teenager translates into higher earning power in the future.
- Education also improves economic success when people feel good about themselves.
- Support from others after college and/or in adulthood can also lead to success.

How do you find career happiness?

1) Find a career that matches your personality
2) Find an optimal workplace
Matching career to your personality

- According to John Holland (1997), the closer we get to our ideal personality–career fit, the more satisfied and successful we will be at our jobs.
- Holland developed a career inventory to identify a three-letter code based on six personality types. (See next slide for table).

Find an optimal workplace

- U.S. workers agree on what constitutes an ideal job situation:
  1. Autonomy and/or decisions-making abilities
  2. Caring colleagues
  3. Organizations that are sensitive to worker needs
- Ideally, we are looking for:
  - Intrinsic career rewards – work that is fulfilling
  - Extrinsic career rewards – external reinforcements like prestige and salary; less important, but still desired
- Forces that impair intrinsic satisfaction:
  - Role overload – having too much to do at work
  - Role conflict – described as being torn between job demands and the demands of our other roles, such as family
  - Family–work conflict – being pulled between demands of a job and family

Finding a career that fits your personality

- According to John Holland (1997), the closer we get to our ideal personality–career fit, the more satisfied and successful we will be at our jobs.
- Holland developed a career inventory to identify a three-letter code based on six personality types. (See next slide for table).

Being Unemployed

- New concerns:
  - Keeping a job or finding a job if unemployed/laid off
  - Viewing the unemployed as “failures” or “lacking personal responsibility”