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How Do the Forces of Society Interfere with the Individual Desire to Achieve Happiness in Relationships?

THE DIMENSIONS OF COMPANIONSHIP

*An Assessment of Modern Emotional and
Material Needs in Relation to Marriage*

by Paul Dennis Sporer

Even with the strongest motivation to make the ideal of love a reality, men and women have always had the greatest difficulty in bringing such desire to fulfillment in a world that does not understand deep feeling, dominated as it is by the tenets of materialism. Consequently, intimate companionship, as a unique, mutually reinforcing partnership that develops within a particular social and economic context, must be carefully considered from various perspectives. Indeed, even in the happiest marriage, the couple do not live on an island, but are affected by the events that unfold around them. The expression of “love” is more than simply two people occupying the same residence, for they must deal with mundane issues, such as income and employment, as well as bills and expenses. Western society has offered guidance in the form of viable patterns of living, a succession of accomplishments, that can lead to contentment, but finding these “pathways” in the modern age can be elusive.

In *The Dimensions of Companionship*, Paul Dennis Sporer examines the realities of marriage in the contemporary world, where the individual attempts to reconcile complex emotional desires with numerous material demands. Through exacting and innovative use of statistics and records, Sporer undertakes an unprecedented wide-ranging analysis of how economic and social factors affect the individual’s interpretation of intimate relationships, by studying the interactions between living arrangements, education, mass communication, and the desire for privacy. Using these methods, this work attempts to address the issue of whether the modern preoccupations with self-sufficiency and social advancement are compatible with married life.

Sporer investigates the problems that can arise when the various forces of society interfere with the individual’s endeavor to plan his life in a way that takes into account the strengths and limitations of his own personality. Many men and women claim that they have “freely” selected their life path, especially in the domain of relationships. This independent attitude has resulted in an alteration in the timeline of meaningful events, and the attainment of important roles, such as graduate, career person, spouse, and parent, now occurs in a different sequence than in the past, leading to difficulties in obtaining both occupation and relationship satisfaction. The common view is that modern people are strong enough to tolerate emotional denial, but evidence indicates

that the opposite is true, and people will take whatever steps necessary to obtain the happiness that they lack. Research shows that a seemingly “irrational” desire to inaugurate an intimate relationship is often the result of background issues, such as a lack of privacy, a large family, or the loss of a parent, particularly a father who acted as a mentor; the relationship is sought that will provide the emotional and mental support that was lacking at home.

Various factors, therefore, can lead to delaying or denying the experience of beneficial companionship. The men and women of our time undoubtedly utilize much of their intellectual and emotional energy for the purpose of increasing their income and career status. Sporer concludes that, despite this materialistic emphasis, the ultimate goal for all individuals is to develop and maintain a companionate relationship that delivers respect and consideration, in congruence with the requirements of a modern industrial social environment. However, the influences that can bring about failure in marriage are more powerful than ever, and ironically, this is happening in a period when marriage is the only truly stable intimate relationship. *The Dimensions of Companionship* puts forward the idea that any intelligent and resourceful man or woman can bring their ideal of love into reality, by understanding the way in which the material demands of life integrate with individual motivations.

Paul Dennis Sporer is the author of several books, including *Liberating Love*, *The Concept of Family*, and *Equal but Different*; he is also editor of more than 30 culturally and historically significant books, including *Painting Explained*, by Thomas Gullick; *Is Secession Treason?*, by Albert Bledsoe; *The Heart of Aryavarta*, by Lawrence Dundas; *The French at Home*, by Albert Rhodes; *From Slave Cabin to Pulpit*, by Peter Randolph; *Views of Old Europe*, by Bayard Taylor; *Gentle Measures*, by Jacob Abbott; *Finding a Way Out*, by Robert Moton; *Tupelo*, by John Hill Aughey; *An Incident of Travel*, Arthur Jerome Eddy; *End of an Era*, by John Sergeant Wise; *The Missionary*, by Samuel Mazzuchelli.

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