

Beat: Lifestyle

IS TRADITIONAL MARRIAGE ON ITS WAY OUT ?

SOCIETY CHANGING VIEWS ON MONOGAMY

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USPA NEWS - Is marriage becoming obsolete ? Statistics suggest it's not faring well. In 1960, 72 % of Americans were married; that fell to 51% in 2011. What's more, popular media and some research estimates suggest that nearly half of people in long-term relationships 'get some on the side.'...

Is marriage becoming obsolete ? Statistics suggest it's not faring well. In 1960, 72 % of Americans were married; that fell to 51% in 2011. What's more, popular media and some research estimates suggest that nearly half of people in long-term relationships 'get some on the side.'

Finally, to put the icing on the (any kind but wedding) cake, Gallup reports that the percentage of people who think 'polygamy' is not morally objectionable increased from 7 to 16 % between 2001 and 2015.

Yet Mark Michaels and Patricia Johnson say monogamous marriage is not dying""it's just that it won't remain the cultural default.

'The growing acceptance of 'alternative' ways of relating (polyamorous, swinging, open, friends with benefits) means we'll be able to explore them with less guilt and shame,' says Johnson, who along with her spouse, Michaels, wrote Designer Relationships: A Guide to Happy Monogamy, Positive Polyamory, and Optimistic Open Relationships.

Here's why the "one-size-fits-all" paradigm of marriage is on its way out ;

REASON 1: As society changes, so does the 'ideal' relationship.

Almost everything about the way we live now would be unrecognizable to our ancestors of just 150 years ago""so of course relationship needs have changed. From this perspective, it makes perfect sense that mandatory monogamy would fall out of favor. (Besides, monogamy has been the "rule" for only a relatively short time in human history.

REASON 2: Religious attitudes are changing.

Since religious adherence is declining, it seems likely that tolerance of polyamory will continue to grow. 'Of course, many polyamorous people identify as being religious or spiritual, and some religious groups, like the Unitarian Church, are open to polyamory,' says Johnson. 'So it's not a hard-and-fast rule that religion and insistence on monogamous marriage go hand-in-hand, but overall, there is a connection.'

REASON 3: Women's roles have changed dramatically.

As women have gained greater autonomy over their bodies, careers, and money, they've become less reliant on men and less inclined to follow patriarchal rules. 'Increasingly, they don't need to 'choose' traditional marriage, and many aren't,' says Michaels. 'It might be argued that this freedom of choice has allowed women to consider what they truly want from their sex lives""and not necessarily what puts food on the table.'

REASON 4: Changes in law and medicine have changed society.

In 1965, the Supreme Court recognized a right to sexual privacy. This ruling has had a transformational impact on our culture, laying the foundation for the elimination of sodomy laws and ultimately leading to marriage equality. Also during the 1960s, most states liberalized their divorce laws and the birth control pill was approved for contraceptive use.

'These changes in law and medicine accelerated an already-existing trend toward greater freedom for women and fueled the sexual revolution,' comments Johnson. 'The changes we are experiencing today continue to become even more egalitarian and inclusive.'

REASON 5: The Internet has helped people connect with other 'non-traditional' types. Thanks to the Internet, whole communities exist that honor a variety of non-monogamous relationship structures""polyamory, swinging, kink, and other possibilities that don't match the conventional model. Finding people with whom to explore this variety of sexual and romantic options can now be done with ease, something that was hard to imagine just 25 years ago.

None of these reasons should worry the happily, monogamously married or those who want that kind of marriage. Having access to a rainbow of ice cream flavors certainly hasn't made vanilla go away.

Source : Mark A. Michaels and Patricia Johnson

Designer Relationships: A Guide to Happy Monogamy, Positive Polyamory, and Optimistic Open Relationships (Cleis Press, September 2015).

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