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Commitment: Where Did It Go?

By **Jonathan Baldwin**

What is Marriage?

It has become apparent that the root cause of a lack of commitment comes from misperceptions and miscommunication. One of the primary culprits is our modern view of marriage. Marriage itself is defined as a "union between two people". The modern ceremony we call "marriage", is in fact just that: a marriage ceremony, not marriage itself. Whether or not two people hold hands down an aisle and have a government piece of paper is not what makes two people married. In fact, it doesn't change anything about the two people, except for what they have mentally decided to change for themselves.

So at what point are you married?

This varies, but the usual consensus is when you have intercourse you "join flesh" in a "union" and become one. The ceremony is merely representative of the "union" you are about to partake, for all of society to see so society can enforce the union.

You mean to tell me, I'm married?

There is no doubting when to people have sexual relations they have joined flesh. When they break-up it is as painful as ripping flesh, hence the creative analogy. What differs about modern society is they place all the value in a piece of paper from the government and a lavish ceremony.

Backlash of casual "marriage"

Since casual sex is almost expected of any new couple, so is commitment. In order to protect themselves in such a dangerous environment where diseases and the pain of breakup after the "union"

Commitment: Where Did It Go?

are common, daters have taken to instant–commitment. Most daters expect an exclusive relationship from the moment of dating. Yet, one cannot build commitment upon a non–existent relationship, so many only pretend to be committed. This makes the real commitment down the road lose all its meaning.

Marriage is the point at which daters originally became "exclusive"

Ironically, in an environment where sex before marriage is taboo, dating itself was not exclusive. You dated the one you liked the most, but it was not uncommon to court many separate loves. This may have caused jealousy, but it was considered normal. Marriage was the final point at which couples would decide to commit, and an engagement period was the test of that commitment.

Jonathan Baldwin runs a dating website,

<http://www.matchmaking–service.net>

. You can find a copy of

the commitment article at

<http://www.matchmaking–service.net/commitment/>

Being Committed

By Liz Sumner, Life Coach

Being Committed by Liz Sumner, Life Coach

A number of years ago at my first personal growth seminar, the wise group leader asked if I had problems with commitment. I clearly remember my thought processes. "Commitment? I'm not sure I understand what that means. Oh well, it's probably not important."

That was a pivotal realization for me. I subsequently learned what commitment means and how it shows up for me. Maybe this is on my mind now because I'm coming up on a significant wedding anniversary— my first. That aspect of my life is working well. What about the parts that aren't?

I recently had to cancel two workshops because not enough people had signed up. Certainly the beautiful weather and/or frightening world circumstances may have been factors. But I wonder how much of the lack of interest was generated by me. For both events I had created a design that was about 80% complete and I stopped there. I had the main ideas worked out but didn't finish the final agenda or produce the handouts. Was this prescience or a self–fulfilling prophesy? Are people not committing to me because I'm not committing to them? Which is the cause and which is the effect?

Commitment: Where Did It Go?

In retrospect I think I was waiting for the enthusiasm of others to carry me over that last hurdle. I wanted to see some registrations before I fully committed. It was a bargain, not a gift. Why? Holding back certainly didn't protect me from disappointment. And we'll never know whether the effort would have been wasted. What would it have cost me to disconnect the giving from the receiving? I don't tell my husband, "I will love you if you love me back."

At that same personal growth seminar mentioned above I heard a useful explanation of the different levels of commitment:

Level One – I hear you.

Level Two – I'll think about it.

Level Three – I'll do it (unless something comes up).

Level Four – I'll do it unless, god forbid, I'm hit by a bus.

Level Five – I'll drag myself there bloodied and broken if I have to.

I like this distinction. Not every circumstance deserves a high level of commitment— it would be exhausting. But I want to choose based on what I'm willing to give not on what I want from others.

Maybe it's not a matter of disconnecting the two sides of the bargain, but providing both halves yourself— the giving and the receiving. I have this image of a seesaw. The more commitment you have on one side the more trust you need to put on the other— trust that your needs will be met somehow or other. At all levels the seesaw is balanced, but the heavier the commitment and trust, the wilder the ride.

Life Coach Liz Sumner is fully committed to your clarity and empowerment. For a complimentary

30-minute coaching call to help you take action email easumner@monad.net, call 603-876-3956 or visit www.WonderfulCoach.com.

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