

THE PROBLEMS OF INDIVIDUALS WHILE IN COLLEGE AND FIVE YEARS LATER,  
" AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO MARITAL AND PERSONAL HAPPINESS

by

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## Chapter I

## INTRODUCTION

Interest in the adjustment of man and woman in their relationships with each other is as old as nature itself. Marital problems have attracted the attention of poets, novelists, law-makers, religious leaders, and social and scientific thinkers for centuries, yet little has been done in helping young people to analyze and overcome their difficulties. Part of this has been due to the lack of opportunity for investigation, for in the past preservation of the institution of marriage, regardless of personal costs, was society's only acceptable reaction to the relationship. Today our chief concern centers around persons and their adjustments to marriage, not marriage itself, and it is this shift of emphasis, characteristic of a more complex society, that opened the way of studying the relationship between pre-marital factors and marital success and happiness.

Review of Literature

Hart and Shields<sup>1</sup> in 1926 made one of the first attempts to study factors associated with marital success. This study of age in relation to marital success used divorce as the criterion of failure. They found that marriages of men under 24 and of women under 19 years included a higher proportion of unhappy unions than marriages of older

<sup>1</sup>Hart, Hornell and Shields, Wilmer, "Happiness in Relation to Age at Marriage", Journal of Social Hygiene, 12, 1926. pp. 403-407.

couples, and that 29 years for the bridegroom and 24 years for the bride were optimum ages for marriage<sup>2</sup>.

In 1929, Davis<sup>3</sup> by means of a questionnaire, made a study of factors in the sex life of 2,200 college women. She used as her criterion for success the reported happiness or unhappiness of the marriage. She found such premarital factors as education, health, sex instruction, and the absence of premarital sex experience significantly associated with happiness after marriage<sup>4</sup>.

In the same year, Hamilton<sup>5</sup>, found a positive correlation between marital satisfaction and the husband's report that his wife was physically like his mother, had brothers, was a virgin at marriage, and had the same degree of education as he<sup>6</sup>.

Thurrow<sup>7</sup>, in 1934, in a study of the families of two hundred college students, reported that the successful family was found to be characterized by little tension in the home, much family affection, much

<sup>2</sup>Hart's findings apply to couples in Philadelphia from 1905-22 and to cases of unhappy marriages appearing in the Domestic Relations Court in June 1924. The group is of low socio-economic status.

<sup>3</sup>Davis, Katherine B., Factors in the Sex-Life of Twenty-Two Hundred Women. New York, Harper and Brothers, 1927.

<sup>4</sup>This is the most extensive of the referred to studies in both number and geographical distribution.

<sup>5</sup>Hamilton, Gilbert V., A Research in Marriage. New York, A. and C. Boni 1929.

<sup>6</sup>Hamilton's findings apply to an urban group in New York with relatively high income.

<sup>7</sup>Thurrow, Mildred T., A Study of Selected Factors in Family Life As Described in Autobiographies, Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, Memoir 171, Ithaca, New York, 1934.

entertaining of friends and relatives, high school education or more for parents, much consensus of parents on discipline, little dominance of the father, much family counselling, little to medium discipline, medium supervision of children's activities by both parents, and much confidence of children in parents.<sup>8</sup>

Kirkpatrick<sup>9</sup>, in 1937 reported on a study of factors in marital adjustment. He found, in the case of women, a marked tendency for great intimacy with parents to be unfavorable to marital adjustment, and in the case of men, an excess or deficiency of friendship with the opposite sex to be unfavorable.

Popenoe<sup>10</sup>, in 1937 found a positive correlation between the happiness of young couples and the happiness of their parents' marriages.

In 1938, Terman<sup>11</sup> and his associates of Stanford University, reported a positive association between responses of a "neurotic" order to personality tests and low ratings on marital happiness indices. He found little or no correlation between marital happiness and such background factors as family income, occupation, the absence or presence of children, religious training, birth order, or differences in age and

<sup>8</sup> Thurow's findings apply to different socio-economic levels, and are restricted to biologically and socially complete families of the white race.

<sup>9</sup> Kirkpatrick, Clifford, "Factors in Marital Adjustment", The American Journal of Sociology 43, 1937, pp. 270-283.

<sup>10</sup> Popenoe, Paul, "Marital Happiness in Two Generations", Mental Hygiene 21, 1937, pp. 218-223.

<sup>11</sup> Terman, Lewis, M., Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness, New York McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1938.

schooling of spouse. On the other hand, he did find such background circumstances as the following predictive of marital success: superior happiness of parents, childhood happiness, strong attachment to and lack of conflict with parents, a home discipline that was firm but not harsh, mild punishment, parental frankness about sex, and a premarital attitude toward sex that was free from disgust.

A similar study was conducted by Burgess and Cottrell<sup>12</sup> in 1939. The findings of this study indicated a positive correlation between marital happiness and approval of marriage by parents, similarity of family background, church attendance, certain occupations of husband, outside friendships, ages between 22 and 20 years at the time of marriage, and a religious marriage ceremony. Such factors as health, income savings, and the wife's employment before marriage showed only moderate correlation with adjustment.<sup>13</sup>

Additional weight was given to the conclusion of Terman that personality factors are causes rather than effects of the type or degree of marital adjustment by Burgess and Wallin<sup>14</sup>. In this research evidence on engaged couples was followed up by further observation on the same couples after three years of marriage. The same association was

<sup>12</sup>Burgess, Ernest and Cottrell, Leonard, Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage. New York, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1939.

<sup>13</sup>The studies of Kirkpatrick, Terman, and Burgess and Cottrell were concerned with urban couples of the middle class, largely high school and college graduates with white collar jobs.

<sup>14</sup>For discussion of study see Burgess, Ernest, W., and Locke, Harvey J. The Family, American Book Company, 1945, pp. 337-338.



found to exist between personality and marital scores. This conclusion was substantiated by a similar study by Winch<sup>15</sup> of the University of Chicago.

Although these various studies have used different indexes of marital success, different background items for study, and represent a wide diversity in geographical distribution and in the socio-economic status of the samples, the findings seem to indicate that personality factors affect adjustment in courtship and marriage. Individuals who respond favorably on personality tests are more apt to be happy in marriage than those who respond poorly. The personal and cultural factors appear to outweigh the factors which are often marital complaints, such as income and sex, in making for or against adequate adjustment.

As valuable as this available research may be, it must be borne in mind that on the whole, the subjects studied were married for some time before the studies were made. The question may be raised as to what extent the subjects would have given the same personality picture if the data on them had been collected before marriage. If individuals could be studied before marriage and at a later date, the persistence of personality factors as well as their association with marital stability might be established. When this association between personality factors and marital success is established much progress will have been made in predicting the outcome of marriages before they take place. Furthermore, when the effect of personality traits upon adjustment is understood, predictions relative to marital success may be made by studying the individuals.

<sup>15</sup>Winch, Robert, "Personality Characteristics of Engaged and Married Couples," The American Journal of Sociology, 46: 1941, pp. 686-697.

### Purpose of the Study

The present study was undertaken for the purpose of exploring the extent to which personality patterns or factors persist in college trained people, and the association between specific personality traits and individual happiness.

This thesis proposes to study:

1. The problems of men and women while in college, as seen by themselves, and to compare their felt needs relative to marriage with the presence of these needs five years later.
2. The personality traits of men and women at two periods of their lives - while in college and five years later - as measured by the Bernreuter Personality Inventory.
3. The relationship between the problems of individuals, as recognized by themselves and as revealed by standardized personality tests, and happiness in marriage or personal life.

### Methods and Procedures

The subjects for this study were eighty young men and women who attended the Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 1940-41.<sup>16</sup> Of this group, nineteen were males and sixty-one were females. All of these students were enrolled in the Family Relationships and Marriage Class

<sup>16</sup> There were 92 students in the class in 1940-41. Of this group 80 returned the questionnaires and Bernreuters in 1947. The investigator was unable to locate the addresses of five of the students. Three of them were deceased. It is unknown whether or not the remaining four received schedules sent them since the VPI Alumni Office was doubtful of their addresses. The students were scattered far and wide. In fact one questionnaire was returned from Japan.

and were either juniors or seniors in college when the first data were collected. As part of their class work each student checked a personal adjustment inventory which recorded the degree present of a variety of factors relating to each of the following: (1) personal adjustment, (2) relations with associates, (3) health, (4) home and family, (5) courtship and marriage, (6) religion, and (7) economics. The last page of the schedule was a summary sheet dealing with needs relative to marriage.

The schedule was so designed that the existence of the problem could be recorded as being present (1) seldom, if ever, (2) occasionally, or (3) frequently.

The schedule was explained carefully to the students before the data were recorded and the subjects were instructed to answer as conscientiously as possible. The students were assured that their identity would be protected at all times.

In addition each student was scored on the Bernreuter Personality Inventory and these scores were compared with his own analysis.

Five years later the summary sheet of the original problem analysis schedule and a Bernreuter Personality Inventory were sent to these former students who had then become homemakers, business, and professional workers. They were asked to study and check these schedules as they had done previously. In order to protect the identity of the students and to facilitate the matching of data all schedules were sent out under numbers which corresponded to numbers on the original problem schedules and Bernreuter Inventories.

The data on the original problem schedules and Bernreuters were compared with that of five years later to ascertain the persistence of problems in the personality of these students and their association with happiness in marriage or personal life.

## Chapter II

## THE PROBLEMS OF STUDENTS WHILE IN COLLEGE

Of the ninety-eight factors listed in the original inventory<sup>17</sup>, two-thirds of the students checked at least half of these as problems of moderate or major concern. Not one individual considered himself free of personal adjustment problems.

## Personal Adjustment

The problem most frequently checked was difficulty in making decisions. This was a recognized problem with three-fourths of the men and two-thirds of the women. Of the students, 59 percent considered themselves poor conversationalists and worried over past happenings. Sensitiveness, nervousness, and lack of self-confidence constituted serious problems for over half of the group, which seems to indicate a feeling of strain in their college lives. Almost half of them felt that they were unable to interpret other people's motives and that their own motives were often misunderstood. (Table 1, p. 10 .)

On the whole, the adjustment problems of the men and women while in college were similar. Shyness and attempting too much seemed to be felt more keenly by the men, while loneliness was more of a problem for the women. The greatest difference in the records of the men and women was relative to fear of not being pretty or well-dressed. This was a frequent problem for over 50 percent of the women, but only

<sup>17</sup>Tate, Mildred T., Personal Adjustment Analysis, mimeographed material, Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Home Economics Department. (See Table 1, p. 10 .)

Table 1

The Percentage of Students Who Felt Each of the Following Items  
to be Problems in Their College Lives

Problem	Percent		
	Men	Women	Total
<b>I. Personal Adjustment Problems:</b>			
Shyness	42	33	35
Fear of being too aggressive	58	43	46
Sensitiveness	63	56	58
Nervousness	52	57	56
Difficulty in making decisions	73	62	65
Lack of self-confidence	53	57	56
Attempts more than can do	63	38	45
Feels socially inadequate	47	34	38
Unable to interpret other people's motives	37	49	46
Feel your motives are misunderstood	26	56	48
Feel you are unattractive to men	42	43	43
Feel you are unattractive to women	53	36	40
Loneliness	26	43	39
Feel failure easily	47	43	31
Not being pretty or well dressed	16	51	43
Not a good conversationalist	53	61	59
Worry over past happenings	63	57	59
Wanting to escape from home	0	16	13
Experiences humiliating situations	21	23	22
Finding something interesting to do	58	43	46
Personal selfishness	26	34	32
Not being able to do the thing you wish most to do	42	48	46

Problem	Percent		
	Men	Women	Total
Not being satisfied with yourself - wish you were different	42	49	47
Fear of not meeting the expectations of fiance' intellectually	26	33	31

## II. Relations With Associates

Jealous of associates	16	21	20
Lack of intimate friends	32	10	15
Few friends with interests (of the same sex)	26	33	31
similar to your own (of opposite sex)	32	44	41
Quarrel with associates	32	11	16
Too few social contacts	53	30	35
Standards differing from those of associates	58	33	39
Not being accepted by group of your choice	26	20	21
Prefer older associates	53	49	50
Prefer younger associates	53	33	38
Feel inferior in social contacts	47	34	38
Too easily influenced by group	79	41	50
Opportunities to meet members of opposite sex	68	67	68
Understanding members of the opposite sex	89	77	80
Not being well liked by men	32	38	36
Not being well liked by women	47	33	36
Fear of being unwelcome	58	34	40
Fear of being made fun of	21	20	20

## III. Health

Serious illness	0	1.6	1.3
Poor physical condition	16	11	13

Problem	Percent		
	Men	Women	Total
Fatigues easily	21	41	36
Feeling of strain or nervous tension	42	62	58
Illness of member of family	21	30	28
Physical defect	16	23	21
Fear of hereditary disease	5	2	3
Fear of nervous breakdown	21	11	14
Fear of becoming ill	11	8	9
Fear of death	11	2	4

## IV. Home and Family

Not being understood by parents	11	33	28
Not able to get along with one or both parents	5	7	6
Lack of freedom in making personal choices and decisions	11	10	10
Jealous of brother or sister	0	3	2
Feel brother or sister was parents' favorite	0	5	4
Resent discipline in the home	16	10	11
Not free to invite friends into the home	11	16	15
Inadequate space in house to meet family needs	11	20	18
Incompatability of parents	16	13	14
Certain personality traits of parents	53	46	48
Answering demands of family or relatives	37	39	38
Anti-social behavior on part of family member	11	20	18

## V. Courtship and Marriage

Feel unattractive to mate or members of the opposite sex	26	34	33
To maintain relationship with members of the opposite sex above a sex interest	68	52	56



Problem	Percent		
	Men	Women	Total
Being attracted to individuals not attracted to you	26	33	31
Establishing a true companionship with members of the opposite sex	74	70	71
Flitting from one person to another	58	33	39
Fear of falling in love	37	20	24
Fear of love not being reciprocated	68	33	41
Lack of knowledge of sex and its functioning	26	25	25
Lack of privacy when with dates	32	31	31
Inability to "get on well" with dates	21	15	16
Conflict between community or home standards and own	11	33	28
Lack of money to meet obligations of courtship	63	10	23
Family not accepting or welcoming the person of your choice	21	20	20
Ridicule or teasing by family members	16	21	20
Not understanding why date or fiance' acts as he or she does	37	61	55
Fear of not being able to establish satisfactory sex relationships in marriage	16	33	29
Fear of not holding mate's love	21	31	26
Fear of having children	0	11	9
Fear of insufficient money income for family needs	58	20	29
Fear of divorce	0	18	14
Fear of becoming bored with marriage	26	21	23
Fear of in-law difficulties	21	15	16
Fear of being "tied down" by marriage	11	21	19
Lack of opportunity to marry	32	34	34

Problem	Percent		
	Men	Women	Total
Unable to marry due to home and family responsibilities	26	20	22
VI. Religious Problems			
Finding outlets to satisfy personal interest in religion	47	38	40
Meeting expectations of community in religious matters	47	61	58
Divergence from family religious views	37	23	27
Disagreements with fiance' over religious views or practices	21	13	15
Changing religious views or practices	26	30	16
VII. Economics			
Insufficient money for self	90	51	60
Insecurity of position	53	31	36
Getting a satisfactory position	79	52	59
Insufficient income for marriage	80	44	53
Not prepared for the position of your choice	37	48	45

15 percent of the men. A possible explanation for this may lie in the fact that most of the men were in military uniforms while in college and the dress problem was solved for them from the day they arrived until graduation. Although the men were not as concerned about "dress" as the women, more of them felt inadequate socially.

The other interesting observation concerns "wanting to escape from home". Although one-sixth of the women expressed this desire, none of the men felt it as a problem for them. The investigator is inclined to think that women are no more adventurous than men, if as much so, but that social mores and perhaps parental and, or, college discipline tend to restrict the freedom and self-judgment of young women more than young men, making some of the women dissatisfied.

#### Relations with Associates

Although relations with associates appeared less frequently a problem than factors associated with personal adjustment, the students did not feel socially adequate. Of the men 89 percent, and of the women 77 percent, averaging 80 percent for the group, were having some difficulty in understanding members of the opposite sex, while over two-thirds of the group were lacking in intimate friends of the opposite sex and felt that opportunities to meet members of the opposite sex was a problem with them. That these students felt they were too easily influenced by the group, and that many preferred either older or younger associates, further indicates feelings of social inadequacy. Relations with associates was a problem of major concern with many of the students.

## Health

Health definitely was not a serious concern of the group. The only health problems recorded by at least half of the group was that of showing nervous tension, while fatiguing easily was a problem for about one-third. Both factors were greater problems for women than for men. Sixteen percent of the men and 11 percent of the women stated that poor physical condition was somewhat of a problem for them; however, illness of family members concerned 28 percent of the group. It is interesting to note in table 1 that fear of illness was more often a problem for the men than women.

## Home and Family

The problems which students had in their homes were associated with parents and not with brothers and sisters. About half of them were dissatisfied with certain personality traits of their parents, over one-third had difficulty in answering the demands of their parents or relatives, and over one-fourth felt that they were often misunderstood by their parents. These were more of a problem for the girls than the boys. On interpreting these findings it must be kept in mind that these students had been away from home from three to four years when the study was made. It is perceivable that parental-child conflicts would have been more pronounced if the data had been collected during their high school or before college careers.

## Courtship and Marriage

Although only one-third of the students admitted feeling unattractive to members of the opposite sex, almost three-fourths of them were having trouble establishing a true companionship with members of

the opposite sex. This problem took several forms. Over two-thirds of the men and one-half of the women were having difficulty maintaining relationships with members of the opposite sex above a sex interest. Fear of their love not being reciprocated was a problem for two-thirds of the men, while almost two-thirds of the women felt that one of their problems was understanding why their dates or fiancées acted as they did.

Concerning marriage, the fear of insufficient money was not such a problem for the whole group but was keenly felt by over half of the men. As will be noted in table 1, many of the students expressed several problems in relation to courtship and marriage.

#### Religion

Meeting the expectation of the community in religious matters was a problem with over half of these young people, and finding outlets to satisfy their own interests was of concern to 40 percent of them. The men were slightly more concerned with personal religious outlets than the women, while the women were more often worried about what others thought relative to their religion. Perhaps this should be expected since the men were somewhat more sensitive and had more difficulty in making decisions, while the women were more inclined to worry over their appearance.

#### Economics

Economic problems "loomed high" in the lives of these students. Practically 90 percent of the men and over 50 percent of the women felt that they had insufficient money for themselves. Although these students were graduating from college at a time when jobs were plentiful, many

were concerned about getting a satisfactory job. This attitude may result from the depression of the thirties through which these students passed during early adolescence. It should be noted that even in a technical school over one-third of the men and almost one-half of the women felt that they were not prepared for the position of their choice.

Although the students had difficulty in all areas tested, understanding members of the opposite sex was the most keenly felt of all problems listed in the analysis. This was shown by 80 percent of the students. The second most outstanding problem (felt by 71 percent of the group) was that of establishing a true companionship with members of the opposite sex.

What effect will the recognition of these problems have upon the students' adequacy in marriage or later adjustments generally?

Since the studies of Burgess and Cottrell<sup>18</sup>, as well as those of Terman<sup>19</sup>, show definite association between socialization of the person after marriage and adequate adjustment in marriage, the relationship between feelings of inadequacy before marriage and later marital adjustment becomes of increasing significance.

<sup>18</sup>Burgess, Ernest and Cottrell, Leonard, Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage, New York, Prentice Hall, Inc., 1939.

<sup>19</sup>Terman, Lewis M., Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness, New York McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1938.

### Chapter III

#### STUDENTS' CONCEPTS OF MARITAL NEEDS WHILE IN COLLEGE -- COMPARED WITH THE PRESENCE OF THE NEEDS FIVE YEARS LATER

To what extent are college students cognizant of their needs relative to marriage? Will these recognized needs change over a period of time? Of what predictive value for marital adjustment are the problems of college students?

In order to throw some light upon these questions a list of twenty needs relative to marriage, evaluated by the students while in college, was sent to the same students five years later, when they had married and, or, become established in the business or professional field of their choice.

The extent to which these twenty adjustment factors in marriage were considered to be moderately or much needed by the students while in college, as well as five years later, is shown in table 2.

#### The Most Outstanding Needs

While in college (1942) their greatest needs were:

1. Information on family economics and family spending.
2. Help in overcoming personality difficulties.
3. To develop ability to see other's motives.
4. Help in developing a pattern for one's life.
5. Basis for establishing a real partnership in marriage.

Five years later (1947) their greatest needs were:

1. To develop ability to see other's motives.

Table 2

The Extent to Which Twenty Adjustment Factors in Marriage Were Felt  
to be Much or Moderate Problems by Students While in College  
and Five Years Later

Problems	Year	Men		Women		Total		Coefficient	Probability
		Much	Moderate	Much	Moderate	Much	Moderate		
1. Information on family economics and spending	1942	36.8	52.6	18.0	39.3	22.5	55.0	.25	< .01
	1947	15.8	41.2	8.2	32.8	10.0	35.0		
2. To develop the ability to see other's motives	1942	15.8	63.2	13.1	50.8	13.7	53.7	.05	> .80
	1947	15.8	47.4	13.1	49.2	13.7	48.7		
3. Help in overcoming personality difficulties	1942	26.3	63.2	21.3	50.8	22.5	53.7	.42	< .01
	1947	5.3	52.6	4.9	42.6	5.0	45.0		
4. Help in developing a pattern for your life	1942	21.1	47.4	17.0	52.5	17.5	51.2	.28	< .01
	1947	10.5	36.8	8.2	27.9	8.7	30.0		
5. Additional money or satisfactory position	1942	31.6	63.2	34.4	47.5	33.7	51.2	.45	< .01
	1947	10.5	26.3	8.2	24.6	8.7	23.7		
6. Help in understanding other people's motives	1942	21.1	52.6	19.7	49.2	20.0	50.0	.18	> .05
	1947	10.5	31.6	9.8	47.5	10.0	43.7		
7. To develop more constructive attitude toward fiance or mate	1942	15.8	47.4	9.8	50.8	11.2	50.0	.25	< .01
	1947	0.0	57.9	3.3	29.5	2.5	35.0		
8. Techniques for developing more cooperation with fiance or family members	1942	26.3	47.4	8.2	51.8	12.5	50.0	.34	< .01
	1947	0.0	36.8	0.0	29.5	0.0	31.2		
9. To learn how a real partnership in marriage can be achieved	1942	36.8	42.1	18.0	52.5	22.5	50.0	.42	< .01
	1947	15.8	21.1	3.3	26.2	6.2	25.0		
10. Insight into what constitutes benevolence relative to different situations	1942	36.8	42.1	13.1	50.8	18.7	48.7	.29	< .01
	1947	5.3	36.8	1.6	49.2	2.5	46.2		
11. Need for more mental stimulation	1942	21.1	31.6	6.6	54.1	10.0	48.7	.06	< .80
	1947	10.5	10.5	13.1	47.5	12.5	38.7		
12. Help to adjust to destructive, uncontrollable factors in the family	1942	5.3	52.6	21.3	44.3	17.5	46.2	.06	< .80
	1947	10.5	21.1	9.8	36.1	10.0	32.5		
13. Help in understanding yourself	1942	15.8	36.8	13.1	45.9	13.7	43.7	.23	< .02
	1947	0.0	31.6	9.8	24.6	7.5	26.2		
14. To develop a more adequate philosophy toward marriage and family life	1942	15.8	52.6	6.6	44.3	8.7	45.0	.27	< .01
	1947	5.3	26.3	1.6	23.0	2.5	23.7		
15. To develop more objectivity toward personal and family happenings	1942	26.3	31.6	17.0	47.5	18.7	43.7	.19	< .05
	1947	10.5	36.8	6.6	39.3	7.5	38.7		
16. To be helped to see how you function in your family	1942	10.5	57.9	9.8	37.7	10.0	42.5	.42	< .01
	1947	0.0	36.8	4.9	17.0	3.7	21.2		
17. Help in facing reality	1942	26.3	26.3	9.8	34.4	13.7	32.5	.21	< .05
	1947	0.0	15.8	4.9	31.2	3.7	27.5		
18. Information on sex and help in establishing satisfactory sex relations	1942	21.1	42.1	4.9	29.5	8.7	32.5	.17	> .05
	1947	0.0	26.3	4.9	18.0	3.7	20.0		
19. Ways for emotional release	1942	21.1	52.6	14.8	24.6	16.2	31.2	.18	> .05
	1947	0.0	47.4	6.6	32.8	5.0	36.2		
20. Techniques for handling in-laws	1942	31.6	26.3	14.8	29.5	18.7	28.7	.32	< .01
	1947	5.3	21.1	3.3	13.1	3.7	15.0		

Highest possible "C" value for above correlations is .707

< equals "less than"

> equals "greater than"

"p" is significant if equal to or less than .05



2. Insight into what constitutes benevolence.
3. Help in overcoming personality difficulties.

### Shift in Needs

It will be noted in table 2 that relative to each and all needs with both men and women, there is a definite shift from "much" to "moderate" in the extent to which the problems were felt five years after college as compared to college days.<sup>20</sup>

#### <sup>20</sup>Coefficient of contingency:

The extent to which the needs relative to marriage shifted over the five year period was measured by the coefficient of contingency, (C).

Contingency Table Set up to Show the Steps Involved in Calculating the Coefficient of Contingency Between the Need for Help in Overcoming Personality Difficulties in 1942 and the Need for Such Help in 1947.

Year		The Degree of Need for Help			Total
		Much	Moderate	Little	
1942	(obs)	18.00	43.00	19.000	80
	(m)	11.50	31.50	37.00	
	(d)	6.50	11.50	18.00	
	(r)	42.25	132.25	324.00	
	(rd)	3.67	4.20	8.76	
1947	(obs)	5.00	20.00	55.00	80
	(m)	11.50	31.50	37.00	
	(d)	6.50	11.50	18.00	
	(r)	42.25	132.25	324.00	
	(rd)	3.67	4.20	8.76	
Total		23.00	63.00	74.00	160

(obs)observed value, (m) frequency expected, (d) deviation-the difference between observed and expected values, (r) deviation squared, and (rd) is d divided by m.

In the table it will be noted that there are 160 cases of need for help during the two years. Reading down the first column, for example, one finds that of a total of 23 instances of "much" need for help, in 1942 there were 18 instances of need, and in 1947 there were 5. In the first row, one finds that of 80 instances of need in 1942, there were 18 cases of "much", 43 of "moderate", and 19 cases of "little" need for help. The second and third columns and the second row are set up in a similar way.

As one would expect, some of the needs shifted more than others. Those factors in which there was a very significant shift<sup>21</sup> in the degree to which the factor was a problem over the five year period were: (1) additional money or satisfactory position, (2) help in overcoming personality difficulties, (3) to learn how to function

#### Contingency Coefficient (continued)

After the observed values are inserted in the table, the first step in the calculation of "C" is to find the number of instances of need for help in any given cell, in the absence of any actual association between the degree of need for help in 1942 and 1947. For example, the actual number of instances of much need for help in 1942, from the sample of 160 instances, was 18. If there was no correlation between the need for help in 1942 and in 1947, one should expect to find  $\frac{80 \times 23}{160}$  or 11.5 instances of much need for help in 1942, by the operation of chance alone. Again the actual number of instances of "moderate" need for help in 1942 was 43. In the absence of any real association, chance alone would account for  $\frac{80 \times 63}{160}$  or 31.5 such cases in the sample of 160 instances. In like manner the frequency expected (m) may be found for each cell by multiplying together the totals of the row and column in which the cell lies and dividing the product by n, the total number of instances.

When the expected values (m) have been calculated for each cell, the next step is to find the algebraic difference (d) between the actual values (obs) and the expected values (m). Each particular difference (d) is then squared (d) and the squared divided by the particular independent value (d divided by m). These quotients are called the relative difference (rd), and the coefficient of contingency (c), is

$$C = \sqrt{\frac{\text{sum of relative difference}}{\text{total number of items} + \text{sum of relative differences}}}$$

<sup>21</sup>The probability factor (P) indicates whether or not the coefficient of contingency is significant. In other words, it indicates whether or not the association between the variable may be due to chance. For example, a "P" value equal to .10 means that in ten out of one hundred cases the association could be due to chance alone. If "P" is equal to or smaller than ( $\leq$ ) 0.05 the coefficient of contingency is considered significant. This means that there would be less than five chances in one hundred that the indicated association could be due to chance.

in your family, (4) to learn how a real partnership in marriage can be achieved, (5) techniques for handling in-laws and for developing more cooperation with fiance or family members, and (6) to develop a more adequate philosophy toward marriage and family life.

It is interesting to note that most needs proved to be far less of a problem for both men and women as adults than the students thought they would be.

The need for additional income or a satisfactory position was a major problem with 33 percent of the subject while in college, but was a problem with only 9 percent of them five years later. No doubt War conditions affected this shift to some extent. Upon declaration of War most of these young men became officers of the United States Army with excellent salaries. Jobs were plentiful on the home front with good wages for women. When the second data were taken many

#### Contingency Coefficient (continued)

The figure representing the contingency is always between 0 and 1. The more nearly the figure approaches 1, the closer the association, and the more nearly it approaches 0, the less the association. In other words, a .9 coefficient of contingency would reveal that there is a definite relationship between the two or more variables, while .01 would show that their movement is more or less independent of each other.

The contingency coefficient has one disadvantage which cannot be overlooked. The coefficient calculated from different classifications of data are not comparable unless a large number of classes have been used. For example, if certain data be classified in a 6 x 6 fold form the coefficient will be greater than for a 2 x 3 or a 3 x 3 fold classification. Since 2 x 3 and 3 x 3 tables are used in this study the greatest possible value for C is either .707 (for 3 x 2 table) or .816 (for 3 x 3 table) instead of 1.0. This is an explanation for the fact that even though many of the contingency coefficients are small the majority of them are significant. See Yule, G. N., An Introduction to the Theory of Statistics. Charles Griffin and Company, London, 1924, p. 66.

of the men and husbands of the wives in the study had just left the Army and were either in college on G. I. allowances or employed in fairly lucrative positions. They probably had better incomes than they ever had before. This may have helped account for fewer economic problems during marriage or adulthood than had been expected.

Although much has been heard and read about the disrupting effects of War on personality and marital adjustment, there is little evidence that it is true for this group of young people. Of course the first scores were taken in the school year 1940-1941, when the nation was preparing for war, although not actually in it, and it may be that the instability of the pre-war period actually outweighed the disrupting effects of War itself. In addition, it is likely that these students were a selected group, since they chose to study marriage preparation. That they were more stable than the general run of college students can not be proven; however, their scores on the Bernreuter Personality Inventory<sup>22</sup> were better than the average score for college students.

The difference in the shift of problems among young men and women is interesting, if not great. Although information on sex and help in establishing satisfactory sex relations was less of a problem for the students after college, than they had expected it to be while in college, the need for help in this area decreased less for women than for men. It may be that a large percentage of the problems relative to sex before marriage were really fears resulting from inadequate sex

<sup>22</sup>Bernreuter, Robert G., The Personality Inventory, Stanford University Press, Stanford University, California, 1935.

instruction during childhood and adolescence, and that after marriage these fears were overcome without difficulty.

In only one instance was a factor more of a problem five years after college than while in college, and that was the need for more mental stimulation on the part of the women. This shift was not sufficiently great to be statistically significant with either the married or unmarried women; however, it was approaching significance with the married group. The coefficient of contingency between need for more mental stimulation in 1942 and 1947 for the unmarried women was .03 with a p value of .8. The association for the married group was .26, with a p value of  $> .05$ . One may ask why the men feel less need for mental stimulation after leaving college, while the women need more. Evidently the young men have found their world more challenging and stimulating than the young women, especially the homemakers. It must be kept in mind that homemaking involves much routine, such as meal preparation, cleaning, and baby care, and unless the homemaker can afford occasional help she may have limited opportunities for outside contacts.

It is evident that these young people considered themselves to have fewer problems five years after college than during college. While speculating as to the possible forces which directed the shift in marriage problems from greater to fewer and more moderate ones, the background which these students had for marriage in the Family Relationships and Marriage class in college cannot be overlooked. It may be hoped that there was a definite carry-over of much information and many

techniques, as well as increased understanding and tolerance on the part of all enrolled in the class. To validate this assumption it would be interesting to collect the same type of data from students who never had had the marriage courses and compare the shift of needs in the two groups.

## Chapter IV

## THE PERSONALITY TRAITS OF MEN AND WOMEN WHILE IN COLLEGE AND FIVE YEARS LATER AS MEASURED BY THE BERNREUTER PERSONALITY INVENTORY

In order to secure further data concerning the personality adjustments of these students a standard test, the Bernreuter Personality Inventory<sup>23</sup>, was checked by each subject while in college and five years later.

The Nature of the Bernreuter Test

The Bernreuter test uses six different factors to measure the personality of an individual, namely: (1) neurotic tendency (B1-N), (2) self-sufficiency (B2-5), (3) introversion-extroversion (B3-I), (4) dominance-submission (B4-D), (5) self-confidence (F1-C), and (6) sociability (F2-5). Bernreuter interprets the scores in the following way:

"B1-N. A measure of neurotic tendency. Persons scoring high on this scale tend to be emotionally unstable. Those scoring above 98 percentile would probably benefit from psychiatric or medical advice. Those scoring low tend to be very well balanced emotionally.

"B2-5. A measure of self-sufficiency. Persons scoring high on this scale prefer to be alone, rarely ask for sympathy or encourage-

<sup>23</sup>Because of the limited amount of time that subjects could be expected to give, it was necessary to select a test which would yield the largest number of dependable measures for the least expenditure of time. This test measures six different aspects of personality in an average testing time of twenty minutes. Other advantages of this particular inventory are that the nature of the traits being measured is not readily detectable and the scales appear to possess high reliability.

ment, and tend to ignore the advice of others. Those scoring low dislike solitude and often seek advice and encouragement.

"B3-I. A measure of introversion-extroversion. Persons scoring high on this scale tend to be introverted; that is, they are imaginative and tend to live within themselves. Scores above 98 percentile bear the same significance as do similar scores on the B1-N scale. Those scoring low are extroverted; that is, they rarely worry, seldom suffer emotional upsets, and rarely substitute day dreaming for action.

"B4-D. A measure of dominance-submission. Persons scoring high on this scale tend to dominate others in face to face situations. Those scoring low tend to be submissive.

"F1-C. A measure of confidence in oneself. Persons scoring high on this scale tend to be hamperingly self-confident and to have feelings of inferiority. Those scoring above the 98 percentile would probably benefit from psychiatric or medical advice. Those scoring low tend to be wholesomely self-confident and to be very well adjusted to their environment.

"F2-S. A measure of sociability. Persons scoring high on this scale tend to be non-social, solitary, or independent. Those scoring low tend to be sociable and gregarious.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Bernreuter, Robert G., Manual for the Personality Inventory, Stanford University Press, Stanford University, California, 1935, p. 1.



### Shift in Personality Traits

If the Bernreuter Personality Inventory is a true measure of adjustment, these students were better adjusted than the general run of college students. Also, the subjects showed better adjustment five years after college than they did as students, judging by the fact that their neurotic score (B1-N), decreased significantly as they grew older (see table 3).

This definite trend is very encouraging especially since these students had just experienced World War II.<sup>25</sup>

Relative to the score on self-sufficiency (B2-S), while in college, one-fourth of the students fell into the low range, indicating more or less dependence on others. Five years later they scored slightly more self-sufficient; however, this shift was not great enough to be mathematically significant.

From the distribution of introversion-extroversion scores (B3-I), as shown in table 3, it appears that students were definitely becoming more extroverted after college. On the other hand they became

<sup>25</sup> It is not known whether the shift toward greater stability is unusual or characteristic of college trained people. These young folks were more stable than the average set up by Bernreuter for men and women generally. However, in a study by Foster, Robert G., and Wilson, Pauline P., Women After College, Columbia University Press, N. Y., 1942, p. 9, the Bernreuter personality ratings showed 91 percent of the women studied to have better than average emotional balance. According to the Bernreuter scale, 96 percent of the subjects of this study scored normal or better, while slightly less than 4 percent scored sufficiently high to indicate maladjustment.

Table 3

The Shift in Personality Traits of College Students  
Over a Period of Five Years,  
as Measured by the Bernreuter Personality Inventory

Trait	Range of scores	Percent of subjects		"C"	"p"
		In college - 5 yrs. later			
B1-N	Stable (0 - 19)	30.0	55.0	.28	<.01
	Normal (20 - 79)	52.5	41.2		
	Neurotic (80 above)	17.5	3.7		
B2-S	Dependant (0 - 19)	25.0	22.5	.02	>.70
	Average (20 - 79)	58.7	58.7		
	Self-sufficient (80 above)	16.2	18.7		
B3-I	Extroverted (0 - 19)	31.3	52.5	.20	>.02
	Average (20 - 79)	56.3	40.0		
	Introverted (80 above)	12.5	7.5		
B4-D	Submissive (0 - 19)	15.0	5.0	.29	<.01
	Average (20 - 79)	60.0	43.8		
	Dominant (80 above)	25.0	51.8		
F1-C	Self-confident (0 - 19)	25.0	46.3	.25	>.01
	Average (20 - 79)	55.0	43.8		
	Self-conscious (80 above)	20.0	10.0		
F2-S	Sociable (0 - 19)	25.0	38.8	.16	>.10
	Average (20 - 79)	60.0	50.0		
	Non-sociable (80 above)	15.0	11.3		

"C" equals Contingency coefficient

"p" equals Probability

< equals "less than"

> equals "greater than"

somewhat more dominant. Knowing that neither extreme dominance nor extreme submissiveness, is indicative of the best adjustment, one may not have expected a shift toward either. There are several possible explanations for this. These persons may have felt more dominant after college because of the type of personalities with which they were dealing. Perhaps they are no longer competing with persons on their own level as they were in college, and with less competition, more dominance may be expected.

On the other hand, studies on integration and dominance<sup>26</sup> indicate that dominant behavior in one person brings out dominant behavior in others associating with that person, and that integrativeness, in turn, brings out integrative behavior. It may be that these young people are experiencing more dominance in the adult world than they experienced in college, which tends to bring out dominance in them.

Another possible explanation is that this shift may express a feeling of adequacy instead of dominance. It has already been established that students' needs, especially those concerning marriage, personal adjustment, and economics proved to be much less of a problem after college than they had anticipated. Thus it may be that some of the measures of dominance represent a step from dependence to independence,

<sup>26</sup>Reed, Mary Frances, A Consecutive Study of the School Room Behavior of Children in Relation to the Teachers' Dominative and Socially Integrative Contacts. Ph.D. Thesis, 1941, University of Illinois, Library, Urbana, Illinois. Arrington, Ruth Evelyn, Interrelations in the Behavior of Young Children. Ph.D. Thesis, New York City, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1932.

and that the trend indicates better adjustment rather than poorer.<sup>27</sup>

These findings indicate that the two most outstanding shifts in personality traits from college to five years after college are toward less neuroticism and more dominance, with significant shifts also toward extroversion and more self-confidence.

The Relationship Between Marital Needs as Seen  
by the Students and Neurotic (BI-N) Scores

As will be recalled from chapter III, the needs of students while in college centered around economics, personality difficulties, and relationships with members of the opposite sex. Five years later personality problems were less pronounced than while in college, but they had not decreased as much as some of the other problems.

These data show a significant association between the scores on the Bernreuter test and the numerical ratings for individual needs as analyzed by the students themselves<sup>28</sup>. The association between neurotic (BI-N) scores and marital needs, as recorded by the students, was .46.

<sup>27</sup>The findings of Foster and Wilson in their study of Women after College showed a majority of these persons to be extroverted and dominant in their dealings with others. p. 9.

<sup>28</sup>From the list of needs each student checked the column that more nearly expressed the extent to which each item listed was a problem for him or her — seldom, if ever, occasionally, and frequently. A numerical value of 2 was given to each need checked in the column, seldom, a value of 4 to each need checked occasionally, and a value of 6 to each one checked frequently. The summation of the values of all problems in the inventory was the student's numerical rating for the marital needs.

A probability value of less than .01 indicates that the contingency coefficient of .46 between neurotic scores and needs is highly significant. The persons scoring high (indicating neuroticism) on the Bernreuter considered themselves to have more needs relative to marriage than the persons scoring low (indicating stability). No doubt these tests are measuring similar factors. For example: the student answering "yes" (indicating neuroticism) to such questions on the Bernreuter as: Does it make you uncomfortable to be "different"? and Do you often feel just miserable? were those same students who felt need of help in overcoming personality difficulties such as shyness and lack of self-confidence. Those answering "no" to the Bernreuter questions (indicating stability) stated only slight need for such help.

Although we recognize that there are many neurotic individuals who perhaps never feel their need for help, it is encouraging to find that the persons cooperating with this study who scored maladjusted also scored high relative to needs. If the importance of this fact were demonstrated and adequately trained personnel were provided, schools could do much in helping young people overcome many of their personal problems and in minimizing their needs relative to marriage before marriage takes place.

This finding is of equal importance when thinking in terms of the individual. Of those scoring sufficiently high to indicate neuroticism and the need for medical attention, each scored himself high relative to needs. Since the success of psychiatric treatment is largely dependent upon the consciousness of one's problems and upon one's eagerness for help, future possibilities in the field of mental hygiene may far exceed present-day comprehension.

## Chapter V

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN HAPPINESS AND THE  
PROBLEMS OF INDIVIDUALS

The belief that happiness is indispensable to both marital and personal success is deeply rooted in the philosophy of all American people.<sup>29</sup> The right to be happy and the obligation to make each other happy are implied in the marriage contract, and no doubt, persons entering into marriage not only hope for happiness, but they expect it. These same hopes and expectations characterize new business and professional adventure as well as marriage.

Since happiness is perhaps the most common criterion for judging the success or failure in marriage or personal life, one aim of this study was to determine its association, if any, with other indices of success, such as the personality adjustment scores, as measured by the Bernreuter Inventory, and the individuals own estimate of needs relative to marriage.

The investigator realizes that happiness cannot be measured as can distance; however, degrees of happiness are very real.<sup>30</sup>

Each of the eighty persons included in this study was asked to check the extent to which he, or she, was happy in marriage or personal life. The happiness reports of these young people were as follows:

<sup>29</sup>Forty-six of the subjects of this study are married. Thirty are unmarried. The status of four is unknown, since they failed to check this on the returned inventory.

<sup>30</sup>Burgess, Ernest and Cottrell, Leonard, Predicting Success or Failure in Marriage, Prentice Hall, Inc., N. Y. 1939, pp. 38-39, found husbands and wives to report almost identical happiness ratings, even though neither knew the opinion of the other.

very happy	57.5 percent
moderately happy	32.5 percent
unhappy	10.0 percent

These percentages are in keeping with the findings of other studies.<sup>31</sup>

These data indicate no significant association between the individual's rating of their happiness and the recognition of personal needs, nor between happiness ratings and personal adjustment, as measured by the Bernreuter<sup>32</sup>. The contingency coefficients between happiness ratings and neuroticism was .23, with a P value of .30.<sup>33</sup> (See table 4, p. 36). The coefficient between happiness and the

<sup>31</sup>Lang, Richard O., A Study of the Degree of Happiness or Unhappiness in Marriage as Rated by Acquaintances of the Married Couples, unpublished M. A. Thesis, University of Chicago, 1932, gave the following distribution for those married from 1 to 6 years: very happy - 44.4 percent, moderately happy - 24.1 percent, and unhappy - 15 percent.

Davis, Katherine B., Factors in the Sex Life of 2200 Women, Harper Brothers, New York, 1929, used only two categories and found 88.4 percent to be happy and 11.6 percent unhappy.

Terman, Lewis and his associates. Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness, McGraw Hill Book Co., New York, 1938, found the following distribution in a California group-studied sample: very happy - 66.3 percent, moderately happy - 29.2 percent, and unhappy - 4.6 percent.

<sup>32</sup>This finding is somewhat contrary to the results of Terman's study of the psychological factors in marital happiness, who states that neuroticism is significantly associated with the degree of happiness in marriage; however, the verbalized report of the degree of happiness of the individuals of the Terman study constituted only one of the nine items contributing to the total happiness score. The additional eight items were: 1. outside interests engaged in, 2. the extent of agreement or disagreement on various items, such as friends, religion, etc., 3. the results of disagreements, 4. regrets of marriage, 5. would you re-marry the same person? 6. contemplation of separation and divorce, 7. if marriage is unhappy, the length of time this has been true, 8. a checking of those of 55 items which have influenced the degree of happiness in marriage.

<sup>33</sup>The correlation between reports of happiness and other personality traits, as measured by the Bernreuter, is shown in table 4, p. 36.

Table 4

The Association Between Individuals' Reports of Happiness  
and Six Personality Traits,  
as Measured by the Bernreuter Personality Inventory

Trait	Contingency coefficient	Probability
B1-N Neuroticism	.23	> .3
B2-S Self-sufficiency	.22	> .3
B3-I Introversiion-extroversion	.22	> .3
B4-D Dominance	.21	> .5
F1-C Self-confidence	.26	> .1
F2-S Sociability	.20	> .3

> equals "greater than"



individual's recognition of needs relative to marriage was .19, with a P value of  $> .50$ . When the group was divided into married and unmarried, there was little difference in the degree of association found to be present.

How can the lack of association between personality adjustment and happiness in marriage or personal life be explained?

In the first place, one may question the extent to which verbalized degrees of happiness or unhappiness are a good criterion for judging success. The statistical findings of this study tend to indicate that individuals with neurotic scores are more apt to report themselves as being happy than unhappy. Of those scoring above the 80th percentile (indicating maladjustment) on the neurotic scale, BI-N, all of them reported themselves to be "very happy" in marriage or personal life and all were married. On the other hand, of those who scored very stable on the Bernreuter, only 57 percent rated themselves as "very happy". Of these, 76 percent were married. This may mean that the poorly adjusted person cannot be sufficiently objective to evaluate his emotional status, or else he does not have the courage to admit his unhappiness. Perhaps, since the neurotic person probably is poorly adjusted in most social relationships, he may be happier in marriage than in his other relationships, and thus honestly scores himself as "very happy".

Another factor that must be kept in mind is that some of these young people have been married only a short time, and may not as yet have felt the full weight of their poorly adjusted traits upon their

marital relationships.<sup>34</sup>

These data pose three pertinent questions: It may be that personality factors, as measured by personality tests, do not affect marital or personal happiness to the extent assumed by Terman, or that happiness ratings of individuals are not reliable indices of marital or personal adjustment, or that data on marriage and professional careers of a short duration do not accurately reflect the individuals satisfaction with his life.

If the subjects of this study represent a cross section of college students, the following conclusions may be ventured: The poorly adjusted person is more apt to report himself as "very happy" in marriage or personal life than the well adjusted one. Even though personal needs decrease in intensity from youth to adulthood, the problems experienced during youth persist. In other words, if shyness was a major problem during college it will remain one of the greater problems in adulthood, but not so pronounced. The most poorly adjusted student during college, in all probability, may be found among the most poorly adjusted adults of his group. There is however, one encouraging finding here. The more poorly adjusted students recognized the fact that they had need for help. Since students already feel the need for aid, colleges could do much in

<sup>34</sup>Terman, Lewis, M., Psychological Factors Affecting Marital Happiness, found that responses on the personality tests, commonly regarded as indicative of neurotic tendency, are much more frequently given by unhappy persons than happy persons. It must be kept in mind that Terman used several indices of happiness, the individuals verbalization of his happiness being only one of them.

helping them with their adjustment problems relative to marriage or personal life if adequately trained college personnel were provided for this work.

## Chapter VI

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

An examination of the literature on Family Relationships and Marriage reveals many different factors affecting happiness or unhappiness in marriage and personal life, many of which are deeply rooted in the personality of the individual. Realizing that personality traits of an individual affect ones behavior, even during infancy, and that these traits become more pronounced as the individual grows older, the effect of ones awareness of these traits and their relationship to happiness in adult life becomes of increasing interest and importance.

This study has resulted from three concerns:

1. What are the outstanding problems of college youth?
2. Do the problems of individuals change in magnitude and type as one goes from college to adult life?
3. Is there any association between the needs or problems of individuals and the extent to which they are happy in marriage or personal life?

Eighty junior and senior students of the Virginia Polytechnic Institute in 1941-42, who were enrolled in the Marriage and Family Relationships class, furnished the data for this study. In this class the students recorded the degree of presence in their lives of a number of problems relating to their personal adjustment. In addition each student was scored on a standardized personality test - The Bernreuter Personality Inventory. Five years later these former students again checked the

Bernreuter Inventory and a summary sheet of the original problem analysis.

When considering the findings of this study one must keep in mind that he is dealing with a selected group. In the first place, all students were beyond the sophomore year in college and all had chosen to seek more adequate training for marriage.<sup>35</sup>

With this brief resume of the source of data and the selectivity of the group in mind, the analysis of these data shows the outstanding problems of these students, while in college, to center in three areas: those dealing with personal adjustment, those dealing with relationships with members of the opposite sex, and those dealing with income problems.

On the whole, the problems of men and women, while in college, were similar; however, shyness seemed to be felt more keenly by the men while loneliness was more of a problem for the women. The most extreme difference in the adjustment problems of men and women was fear of not being pretty or well dressed. This was a frequent problem for over 50 percent of the women as compared to only 15 percent of the men. The one problem of greatest concern to the group, as a whole, was understanding members of the opposite sex. This was felt to be a problem with 80 percent of the group.

These findings indicate that the problems of individuals do not change in type from college days to adult life, although they do change in intensity. For example, the degree of presence of most of

<sup>35</sup>It is not known to what extent the attitudes and problems of the students are representative of college upperclassmen. Rockwood, Lemn D. and Ford, Mary E. Youth, Marriage and Parenthood, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., N. Y., 1945, p. 203, found that the attitudes of the college marriage class group were fairly representative of those of the entire student body. No doubt in many respects, students who elect to prepare for marriage are a selected group.

the problems studied shifted from "much" to "moderate" and from "moderate" to "little" in intensity as students went from college to adult life. The most significant shifts, for both men and women, were toward less economic problems, less personality difficulties, and toward a more constructive attitude toward family members and a more adequate philosophy toward marriage and family relationships. The differences in the shift of problems among men and women were not great enough to be significant, yet they are interesting. Although there was some decrease in the percentage of students, as a whole, feeling a need for finding ways for emotional release, help in facing reality, information on sex, and insight into what constitutes benevolence relative to different situations, the percentage of women feeling the need decreased to a much smaller extent than that of the men. Relative to help in adjusting to destructive, uncontrollable factors in the family, men seemed to continue having more difficulty than women. More mental stimulation became an increased need for women after college, yet this shift was not great enough to be statistically significant.

The personality traits which were revealed through the students' own problem analysis were in keeping with the results of the Bernreuter Personality Inventory, so undoubtedly, students who have had training for marriage are fairly aware of their problems.

Although these college students were better adjusted than the average, they improved significantly over the period of five years in their ability to adjust to new situations. As judged by Bernreuter neurotic (BI-N) scores, 87.5 percent of the subjects of this study scored

normal or better, while in college, and 17.5 percent scored neurotic. Five years after college, 96 percent of the subjects scored normal or better, while slightly less than 4 percent scored sufficiently high to indicate maladjustment.

Equally significant as the shift toward less neuroticism was the shift toward more dominance during the five year interval. This shift may have expressed a feeling of adequacy rather than dominance since many of the students' needs proved to be much less of a problem in adult life than had been expected. Although the shift toward less neuroticism and more dominance were the outstanding trends in personality adjustment over the period of five years, there were also significant shifts toward extroversion and more self-confidence.

No significant association was found to exist between personality factors, such as neurotic tendencies, dominance, and sociability, as measured by the Bernreuter Personality Inventory, and happiness in marriage or personal life. Likewise, no significant association was found to exist between the felt needs of college students relative to marriage and later happiness in marriage or personal life. Since no association was found to exist between happiness and the above factors, one may question the validity of using verbalized reports of happiness as a criterion for judging success in marriage or personal life. It may be that poorly adjusted persons cannot be sufficiently objective to evaluate their emotional status. Then again, the cultural expectation of happiness may cause an unconscious "generosity" in the rating. All of these marriages were of less than six years duration. In many instances, due to the war, the

actual time which these young couples have been together has been much less than the length of their marriage, which may mean that many are still living in the honeymoon stage, and have not felt the true impact of the personal attitudes, and customary ways of behavior of their mates.

Although no association was found to exist between happiness ratings and problems of individuals while in college and five years later, it is encouraging to note that the individuals' problems decreased as they grew older. Just how much of this improved adjustment was due to help received from the course, Marriage and Family Relationships, and how much should be accredited to "growing older" is not known; however, many students, when returning the records in 1947, expressed their gratitude in having had the course and stated how much it had meant to them in their adjustment.

In this study, as in many others, the most significant contribution may not lie in any one finding, or even in the total of findings, but in the degree to which the study suggests a new field for further study.



## Chapter VII

### RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the present study, when viewed in the perspective of other studies, suggest further research which needs to be undertaken.

Perhaps, first in importance is the need for a better index of measuring success in marriage or personal life than any used to date. Although the results of several studies of the past few years have indicated an association between personality adjustment and marital success, it must be kept in mind that, with each study, a different criterion for measuring success was used.

Terman, in order to avoid using the individual's happiness rating as a criterion of success, computed a happiness score on the basis of nine factors, which he arbitrarily chose on the basis that they were factors "most likely" to be associated with success. These factors were: (1) Outside interests engaged in, (2) The extent of agreement or disagreement on various items, such as friends, religion, etc., (3) Results of disagreements, (4) Regrets of marriage, (5) Would you re-marry the same person?, (6) Contemplation of separation and divorce, (7) If the marriage is unhappy - the length of time this may be true, (8) Checking of items influencing the degree of happiness in marriage, and (9) Verbalized reports of the degree of happiness.<sup>36</sup>

One may question if a subject would be any more objective in rating himself on nine items than he would be rating himself on one.

<sup>36</sup>Terman, Lewis M., Psychological Factors in Marital Happiness, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1938.

Burgess and Cottrell used the couples' estimate of happiness as a guide in the construction of an index of marriage adjustment. To validate these responses, outsiders acquainted with the married couple, were asked to rate the happiness of the marriage. A high degree of correlation was found between the two ratings. Burgess and Cottrell then made a marriage prediction scale based on those factors which showed a high degree of association with the individual's estimate of happiness.

The results of the present investigation show no association between reports of happiness and the student's adjustment scores, as determined by their own estimate of needs, or the Bernreuter. When the group was divided into "married" and "unmarried", the association between neurotic (BI-N) scores and happiness ratings for the married group approached significance. The "P" value was less than .10, but greater than .05. However, it must be kept in mind that those in this study who were rated as neurotic by the Bernreuter, all scored themselves as "very happy", and all were married.

In view of these findings, one may question the validity of verbalized degrees of happiness as a criterion for measuring success in marriage or personal life. If verbalized degrees of happiness are not reliable indices, happy marriages cannot be described by studying factors associated with the criterion. Perhaps the degree of adjustment of the children in the home would be a more adequate measure of the success of the marital relationship.

Of vital significance to further research in marriage and family relationships is the problem of devising a more satisfactory criterion of

both marital and personal success. Until we have a better measure of success, the importance of specific factors in the marital and personal relationships cannot be established.

Another problem for future study is the persistence of problems from youth to adulthood. This study indicates that, for a selected group of college students, the type of problems did not change as they went from college to adulthood, but the intensity of the problem decreased. Is this true of all groups? At what age are these problems sufficiently stereotyped to be recognized and persist? If the relationship between individual's problems and successful living could be established, and if the ages at which these problems are recognizable was understood, early predictions could be made relative to the success of individuals, and perhaps much help could be given to improve personalities.

Another question is: Will the problem present five years after college be more or less pronounced ten years after college? A follow-up study on the group included in this research five years hence should throw much light on the persistence of problems and personality needs.

Such studies as these, of persons both periodically before and after marriage, entails more time and funds than do the limited studies of the past, but the results should be correspondingly more valuable.

When either collecting or interpreting data, it must be kept in mind that ideas and philosophy of living are undergoing perpetual change. With every generation, new causes of marital and personal happiness become operative, and some of the earlier causes may lose their effects.

With procedures based on an awareness of these changes, more integrative studies of the above nature should pave the way toward a better understanding of the general and specific effects of the problems of youth on happiness in marriage and other adult relationships.

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