

Love and the family

Grassroot News, N.W.—The sustaining force for all types of love is the family. For a race of people the family can mean the difference between survival and extinction. In Portland, the Adair family exemplifies the qualities which make a family strong. Genia is a librarian at Jefferson High School and Donny works in Employment at Emanuel Hospital. They met in 1969 on a college campus. Genia recalls their introduction. "Donny was a summer counselor and I was a student. He was friendly and open, and was one of the few men who were not trying to run a game or a line on me."

Mr. Adair says that his line finally worked. "Like most young men I was attracted to her physical beauty. She was very independent, intelligent and we had good conversation. Genia is an attractive person and the fact that student-counselor relationships were taboo might have increased my desire."

The desire was mutual and their relationship began. Donny Adair adds, "Like most modern couples we lived together for five years. Shortly afterward we were married and ran into some difficulties. We broke up for two years and now we have been back together for four years. We were not immune to problems facing couples in today's society."

Genia Adair describes the love in their relationship as secure. "The basis of our relationship, whether we were together or apart, is that we communicated. There has always been a lot of feedback and trust. I know where Donny is coming from and I feel safe."

Donny Adair defines his love for Genia as exciting. Also, "Trust is the most important element in our marriage. I don't mean trust in the traditional way of her going out on me. If she did I know that she'd be back. I'm a very confident person and I know I provide a lot of love and security. Things that any wom-

an would desire. I have no paranoia about losing our relationship. It's that fear that breaks couples up because you have that kind of mistrust."

At one period in their relationship the Adairs were not together. Donny Adair explains, "On a short-term basis it was great. I wouldn't change or do anything differently. At that time we needed that break. I was on the radio four nights a week and had another 8-to-5 job. I had plenty money and drove a new car."

"Over the long-run you get tired and you want to have meaningful conversation with the same person on a regular basis. The nights you didn't have a date can be extra lonely. I was raised by grandparents and mother, so I had a good strong family background. This made me a family man."

Genia had a different reaction to their separation. "It was lonely and peaceful. You see, I'm a loner and being by myself didn't bother me. I did miss having someone to talk to who knew where I was coming from. I went back to California. I think most single women who are out there having fun but still looking for someone."

Donny talks about their relationship as it relates to the children. "My three girls (Tina, 12, Krona, 10 and Alycia, 5) all have different mothers. And Genia has always been able to accept my children without question and treats them as her own. That's a real strong point in keeping the relationship together. I know women who can't do that. You have to be man or woman enough to accept other relationships that have happened."

Genia Adair says, "When I had my first child it caused a problem. I was just a baby and it was like my new playtoy. We were still going to school and having financial problems and I kinda shut Donny out."

Has economics ever affected their relationship? "Money problems can



Genia and Donny Adair and their family.

affect your love life. Communication is very important when that topic comes up."

Genia says, "We've gone through the period of paying for our past mistakes. Getting a divorce cost a lot of money. I know that there are times when we don't have lots of money but that's just a goal that we work towards."

What advice could they give to couples? Donny advises, "Know the person you are with. Give them some feedback on a regular basis. It's very hard to put traditional roles and labels on today's woman. You have to be open to the fact that

things can happen.

"The main thing is to keep your family together. I want to tell these young Black men to get your kids and put them in your home. You got to take care of your children. Try to see them every day."

Genia Adair adds, "Black women ought to think about Black men realistically. When you look for a mate you can't look for a Black man to be like some white man on T.V. If a brother has a job and is a good person and he treats you right then accept him for what he is and love him."

The financial considerations of love

Grassroot News, N.W.—It has been referred to as shacking up, common law marriage or a domestic partnership. By any of these terms the arrangement of man and woman living together without the benefit of a marriage license is as much a part of love relationships as traditional marriage.

A young man and woman meet. They began to see each other and are interested in making a relationship grow. They each give up their apartments and move in together. A common law or living-with-a-person kind of arrangement begins.

She's 66. He's 69. They've known each other for years. He is ready to move to Salem and wants to get married. She finds out that her social security would be reduced if she wants to remarry. She moves to Salem and they set up a household together, drawing two separate S.S.I. checks.

These are the people who live together for an infinite number of reasons. Domestic relations attorney Elizabeth Welch says that domestic partnerships aren't all milk and honey. "If people live together long enough and acquire items, when they decide not to be together any longer they have to decide how to divide their belongings. I have represented suits. The Supreme Court decided that the courts have authority to divide assets in a domestic partnership. They are very interesting. One Portland judge told me that, 'These are worse than divorces.' The judge is right. They seem to be more bitter. People thought that the were avoiding the difficulties of property settlements by not getting married. In fact it just makes it more difficult because the rules are harder to apply."

What legal redress would there be if you were living with someone and they moved out with some of your belongings? "You could sue the individual on the basis that he stole your property. If you went to court to defend yourself on the basis that you felt you deserved the belongings, this is when the problems pop up. What can be done is to have a contract drawn up stating what is mine, is mine. And what belongs to you is yours. Now whether those agreements hold up in court remains to be seen."

If you were living with someone who was abusive, could you have that individual arrested? "There is a

statute in Oregon called the Family Abuse Prevention Act. It is not restricted to people who are married. What we see in domestic partnership is that when someone moves out the other person is unhappy and harasses the other party. When this occurs you can get a restraining order."

Is living together really the best way to go? "That's not a legal question. It's a personal question. I'm not sure I can answer that. It gets down to what do you tell your children. That you shouldn't live with someone unless you are married or you shouldn't have sex until you are married? Most of us have lived in the world long enough to know that sex is not what marriage or long-term relationships are all about."

When there are offspring from living with someone, what happens to the children when the parents move apart? "The mother would have to go through the D.A. for child support. What happens most of the time is that the father wants to have rights to the children. The answer is that he has to hire an attorney. Visitation goes fine until one or the other has a new partner. Then all hell breaks loose."

It's the season to fill out tax forms. Should you file separately or jointly? "Our tax system still favor:



ELIZABETH WELCH
(Photo by Richard J. Brown)

DIMENSIONS OF LOVE

The dimensions of love cannot be measured
It's too big, too deep, and too wide
It's an un-explainable feeling
That originates from deep down inside.

It's a rare and unique commodity
That can neither be bought nor sold
It is "warmth," and it's "caring for others"—
It's far more precious than silver and gold.

Love can cover a great multitude of sins
And it can even exalt a nation
But, somehow, now, in this day and time,
It seems to come in such "small rations".

Love is much like a large endless river,
From which small, swift tributaries flow
In the forms of kindness and thoughtfulness,
Leaving effects, wherever they may go.

Love, like birth, can give meaning to "life"
As it nourished and cultivates so,
Like a budding rose, in the spring-time
It's beauty, now, bursts forth, all aglow.

by Mary Jean Berry

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