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Is a Long-term Romantic Relationship Preferable?

Opinions on long term relationships vary because of multiple situations such as how old you are, your personal characteristics, and the culture you were raised in. However, I believe that despite all of these varying characteristics, at the end of the day, long-term relationships are preferable. First, I will explain what exactly consists of a long-term relationship, then I will explain the positive effects a long-term relationship has, then I will explain the negatives of a long-term relationship, then I will explain the positives and negatives of a short-term fling, and finally I will explain why a long-term romantic relationship is preferable.

C.S. Lewis defines a long-term romantic relationship as the combination of sexual desire and friendship (Lewis, 1960). Lewis uses the word *Eros* to convey the idea of deep love, marriage itself. The word *Eros* is a Greek term that when translated into English means *Love*. In a long-term romantic relationship, love is the end game; the goal. C.S. Lewis, later, comes back and says that if you are in a relationship and you cannot say that you would rather be hurting together than happy a part, then that is not love (Lewis, 1960). In a long-term romantic relationship, love is not something you attain and then no longer have to work at. Lewis uses the analogy of love being a garden; it needs to be tended to, watered, and have the weeds picked. Just like in love, both sides have to give and put effort into keeping that love (Lewis, 1960).

Looking into the positive effects of a long-term romantic relationship in my own life, I would look to my parents. They have been married for 25 years, and while it definitely has not always been easy, they have always been each other’s best friends and deepest confidant. Being able to have each other through those tough time has made them stronger people and a stronger whole. When two people join together in a long-term romantic relationship, they are able to lean on each other and take advantage of each other’s strengths. Aristotle says that a friend is another you who supplies what your own cannot supply (Aristotle, 2020). Another aspect to long-term romantic relationships is the friendship. The things a lifetime friendship provides is irreplaceable. When most friends part ways, they lose the activity of their friendship, however, a couple in a long-term relationship do not lose those activities.

While there are many positives to a long-term romantic relationship, there are also negatives. These would include the requirement of a deeper connection, getting your heart broken, and causing you to do things you would not have thought you would do. Another negative would be some people being in a place in their life when they are not prepared to commit to something so serious. Long-term romantic relationships are hard for some people because they require them to let someone in and truly understand who they really are. This is different than friendships because with friends you don’t spend all your time with them, while with a significant other, you would. The person you thought was your significant other could also break your heart. On the flip side, in The Seducer’s Diary, The Seducer would make these women fall in love with them and then leave them as soon as he slept with them. From the women’s perspective, they were deeply in love with him, but he was deceiving them to get what he wanted (Kierkegaard, 2013). Being in love causes you to do crazy things for it. In the Black Mirror episode, “Be Right Back,” Martha’s husband Ash dies in a car accident. She then goes on to allow a computer program to impersonate Ash so she can still communicate with ‘him.’ She even goes to the extent of buying a life-sized advanced robot that looks, sounds, and almost acts exactly like him. In the end, it ended up making her sadder because he was not like Ash in the ways that mattered. Her love her for husband drove her to spend an obscene amount of money on something that was quite frankly very creepy (Netflix, 2013). The final major negative of long-term relationships would be that at a younger age, many people are not ready for a full-on life-long relationship and therefor participate in short-term flings. At a younger age, many people do not have the knowledge or experience to commit to something so serious.

A short-term fling is when two individuals are simply together for the sexual desire aspect of a relationship. It is typically very short lived and consists of a shallow emotional connection. The positives of this type of relationship is that it requires no deep connection for those who are unable to open up. It also allows people to gather experience for the serious relationships in their future. The negatives of a short-term fling would include never being satisfied by the flings you take on, acquiring a bad reputation of yourself, and possible sexual disease and unplanned pregnancies. On top of that, if you live most of your life with no regard for finding someone to settle down with, then by the time you decide you want that kind of love, it is too late. This causes tremendous regret and grief. A good example of someone who lives by short-term flings would be The Seducer from Soren Kierkegaard’s “The Seducer’s Diary.” The Seducer is a man who lives his life simply to achieve pleasure and has no regard for other human beings’ feelings. He uses women up like tissues; a single use and then discards them. It is clear in his story that this type of lifestyle is less than ideal. He never deeply connects to women and never builds that friendship, he is getting the sexual desire aspect, but is harming the women’s feelings each time, and has to possibility of contracting a sexually transmitted disease because of the number of women he goes through. He also acquires a reputation, hence being called The Seducer and not by his name (Kierkegaard, 2013).

A long-term relationship is preferable to a short-term relationship because there are things a long-term relationship can give you that a short-term one cannot. Soren Kierkegaard says that “he who cannot reveal himself cannot love, and he who cannot love is the most unhappy man of all,” (Kierkegaard, 1987, pg. 100). If love is something that is attained through long-term romantic relationships, then if you never have a long-term romantic relationship and never experience that love, then would that not consider you the “most unhappy man of all?” Many people say they will eventually want to settle down into a long-term romantic relationship, however frequently by the time they are ready, they are forced to settle for something that does not fulfil them. In order to prevent this kind of catastrophe, be prepared for a long-term romantic relationship. And once you find someone you love, hang on to them and never let go.

Resources

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