

ISSUE 40

Are They True?

Sometimes we take things for granted even though the opposite is true. Two common examples of this counter-intuitive phenomenon: (1) The idea of sailing west to get to the East. This was Christopher Columbus' insight in 1492; however, instead of finding a short cut to Asia, he "discovered" a new continent. (2) On an icy road, turning in the direction of the skid. Strangely enough, trying to correct the skid by turning in the opposite direction, in an effort to straighten the car, actually makes the situation worse.

Discuss if you think these statements are true or false.

- (1) The rich are happier than the poor.
- (2) Childless couples are lonely.
- (3) Men smoke and drink more than women.
- (4) Well-educated people are happier than those with less schooling.
- (5) People think their own love affairs are real, while those of others are just examples of lust.
- (6) Many people still marry for money.
- (7) Men are smarter than women.



Sample Answers

(A) It may be true that an average man drinks more than an average woman, but this is mainly due to the average difference in size. Most men outweigh most women by a *considerable* amount, so they are able to consume larger quantities of liquid. However, *along the same lines*, one should realize that if a woman consumes one bottle of beer, it represents a larger percentage of her body weight than if a man consumes one. So, if the woman drinks as much as the man does, she actually drinks more than he does in relative terms.

(B) We like to think that marrying for money is a *quaint* habit that does not exist in a modern society. Wrong! Marriage increases the combined earning capacity of both partners while cutting in half their major expenses such as rent or a *mortgage*. So single people are at a serious financial disadvantage.

Speak Your Mind

1. Do you think money can do everything?
2. Do children make us laugh or increase our worry?
3. Do you believe it when someone says he or she is just a “*social drinker*”?
4. What do you think about people who want to marry for money instead of love?
5. Do you think love affairs should be criticized?

Speak Your Mind

Speak Your Mind Helpers

1. Do you think money can do everything?

(A)

It's quite simple, really: the more resources we *command*, the more control we have over any situation. *Mind you*, money is only one of many kinds of resources. Others include knowledge, expertise, useful contacts, health, and personal qualities such as courage and perseverance. But the nice thing about money is that its use is flexible: if we are unhealthy, we can use it to buy good medical care; if we lack the necessary technical knowledge ourselves, we can hire experts to use their skills on our behalf.

(B)

People who have a lot of money *fool* themselves into thinking it can do anything. But it cannot buy genuine love, friendship, loyalty, or respect. And it cannot *substitute* for good health. Many rich people are alone and in poor physical condition, and their bank accounts are of little comfort to them.

2. Do children make us laugh or increase our worry?

(A)

Having children changes our lives forever. We will never again be able to satisfy our own *whims* and desires as easily as before. Instead, we have to *moderate* our own selfishness in the realization that we have a serious responsibility to take care of our kids. The worries just keep multiplying, along with their accompanying health concerns and financial needs. And they continue long after the kids "grow up" and are "able to take care of themselves". In fact, they never end.

(B)

I can't deny it: There have been the occasional cuts and *scrapes*, the broken bones and broken hearts, the sleepless nights and painful days that all parents experience on behalf of their kids. But, over all, I can't complain. Raising my two daughters has been the most meaningful and most enjoyable part of my entire life. The laughter far outweighs the tears.

- **command** : control (sth) - **mind you** : definitely

- **fool** : trick (sb) by making them believe (sth) that is not true

- **substitute** : take the place of another - **whim** : sudden idea, thought, or wish to do (sth) for no good reason

- **moderate** : make (sth) less extreme - **scrape** : short fight or argument

3. Do you believe it when someone says he or she is just a “social drinker”?

(A)

I guess a social drinker is someone who drinks at parties and with other friends, rather than drinking alone. If so, almost everyone who drinks alcohol is a social drinker. This is what people do on weekends and late at night. But it does not mean that he or she is a socially responsible drinker. My guess is that group drinking is even worse for one's health than drinking alone, because the quantities are likely to be greater.

(B)

I never believe anything a drinker tells me. People drink to escape reality rather than face it. Perhaps they suffer great heartache or loneliness, or maybe they are *introverted* and boring. They want to forget about some problem or pretend to be someone else. So drinking lowers their *inhibitions* and gives them an excuse for bad behavior. Why should I believe what they tell me?

4. What do you think about people who want to marry for money instead of love?

(A)

Who knows why we love someone? If I married a man who was rich, handsome, successful, and famous, could anyone know that the reason I married him was because I loved him? Could his obvious *assets* be the only reasons I married him or not? What I'm *fairly* sure is that we hope to find a lifelong companion and weigh a number of factors before making a final decision. These factors include physical and social compatibility as well as a determination of how well that person can meet our physical, psychological, and economic needs. We may not choose wisely or fully understand the criteria, but we make the best choice we can.

(B)

No one should marry for love alone. The unfortunate thing about love is that it usually has a short *shelf life*, but marriage is a long-term association. People can fall out of love as easily as they fall in, but it is much harder to get unmarried than it is to *tie the knot* in the first place.

Speak Your Mind

Speak Your Mind Helpers

5. Do you think love affairs should be criticized?

F : Does your friend's wife know about his affairs?

M : I guess she must know; they're pretty obvious. But that doesn't mean you should feel an *obligation* to tell her.

F : I wasn't planning to say anything. But don't you think someone should tell her?

M : If she does know, she's obviously *come to grips* with the situation and has decided not to end her marriage. If she doesn't know, what's wrong with her being happy?

F : It's just not right for her to continue in *blissful ignorance* of the true state of affairs. I know I'd want to be told if it was my husband who was *fooling around*!

M : Are you sure? Like they say, "What you don't know can't hurt you." If you were happily married to someone, how would you be better off if you found out that your husband wasn't faithful?

F : The truth is always better than a lie. If I knew about my husband's *infidelity*, I could take corrective action. If he was ready to *break off* all his extramarital activity and devote his emotional commitment to me alone, I think we could save our marriage. But if he didn't love me, we would *break up* sooner or later anyway.

→ **obligation** : duty → **come to grips with (sth)** : deal with a problem or situation

→ **blissful ignorance** : fortunate unawareness of (sth) unpleasant → **fool around** : engage casually in sexual activity

→ **infidelity** : unfaithfulness to one's husband or wife, esp. by having sexual relations with another person

→ **break off** : end a relationship → **break up** : end a marriage or romantic relationship

M : Don't you think it is possible for a man, or a woman for that matter, to love his or her spouse, deeply and sincerely, and do everything in his or her power to take care of that person and make her or him happy, and yet also to feel a need for other kinds of emotional relationships too? Isn't it possible to love more than one person at a time?

F : Not as far as I'm concerned!

