

“I want my mate to be my best friend”

A recent bachelorette on the TV program of the same name wanted her husband to be her “best friend.” It took her two seasons to finally find the husband /“best friend” she was looking for.

My wife and I watched the program. I often looked over at her and asked myself, “is my wife my best friend?” She often looked back and answered “heck no.”

We concluded that we are not best friends. We concluded that the best friend concept was some “romantic cultural tripe” and in fact we are husband and wife and that far transcends friendship.

I believe it is important to identify the “romantic cultural tripe” that comes our way because it is ruining many good relationships.

Let us begin with “There is only one person in the world for me, my soul mate.” “I will find that person magically, the stars will guide me.”

Well think about it. First you do not have the whole world to select from. By the time you divide the people you actually know by 48%/52%; then rule out those who are not attractive to you physically, intellectually, or are the right age, have the right religion, race, beliefs (for you) you have dwindled down to about 8% which leaves only a handful of genuine possibilities.

So quite practically we end up picking one and making it work. Yes, making it work. Falling in love is another piece of tripe.

Falling in love has more to do with Elizabethan Romanticism (remember Romeo and Juliet) and brain chemicals going crazy more than anything else. So if we follow tripe reasoning we can conclude that I will recognize my life mate (the one whom I have to trust with everything), when I am at my intellectual worst. The only thing we find in the stars is the stars.

Often in this altered state of reasoning we decide to marry potential. How often has the gal said, “He has a lot of potential?” What is really being said is...“he is a loser and I am too stupid to recognize it.” Never marry potential, rather marry someone who already has at least some success.

I do believe that God can influence and direct us but He is usually very practical and not very romantic. So are our real friends and grown up family members. Bring everyone, even a counselor, into the decision of mate selection far before the wedding.

Another piece of tripe is; “love should come easy, be easy, and not require any work. Love should be without problems.” My counseling room is full because of such tripe. There is Romeo and Juliet again. Remember, when things got tough for them they committed suicide. When things get tough for us we run away, get angry, sulk, divorce. So...we erroneously conclude that if I have to work at my marriage I must not be in love. Wrong, wrong, wrong.

Forrest Gump said, “stupid is as stupid does.”

Here is a really big stupid. I am having problems with my marriage so I need time out to think things through. I am going to move out of the house, or out of the bed room, or something else equally stupid.

The fact is that when we are all stressed out we do not have the capacity to think things through by ourselves. We need others to help us. What happens mostly in this self indulgent act of revenge is an attempt to punish the other. While we are out of the house all we really manage to do is create a list of offenses and get ourselves into more trouble, like dating someone else while still married.

The best thing for people to do in conflict is to lock themselves in a closet without food, water, or a bathroom. They would figure things out really fast. Beer is not necessary and could make you even stupider.

So I look at my wife and am very glad that we are more than friends. We chose each other wisely. We were successful prior to marriage and have continued to grow through the years. Our conflicts are few and quickly resolved. We trust each other. There is no one I would rather be with. Actually, be it told, she gets more exciting every year. Thank you God for the keeper.