

The Very Best of Marriages

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Recently I ran across a little poem which I'm sharing with you. It was written by Amanda Bradley, about whom, sadly, I know nothing except she certainly understands what make for good marriages.

*The very best of marriages
Are made by the best of friends,
Who face together, hand in hand,
The good and bad life sends.
They aren't afraid to share
The deepest feelings of the heart,
And respect each other's needs
To spend some time apart.*

*They support each other faithfully
When troubles come their way,
They don't blame in haste or anger,
But who love in what they say.
They make marriage like true friendship
Full of deeds that show they care,
And they find a world of happiness
In all the love they share.*

I've sometimes told couples that the strongest marriages are those between two people who don't **need** each other. What I mean by that is that *neediness* in a relationship can be smothering and create a climate of manipulation and control. Neediness is the result of two people who don't feel very complete in themselves trying to find completeness in someone else.

Strong marriage are those in which two people can *rely* on each other in times of

need, but who are essentially able to function with a sense of independence and appropriate interdependence. Amanda's poem says this same thing in a much more elegant way. Notice she suggests that couples need time apart to remain healthy. Needy people have a lot of trouble with that. Another poet, Kahail Gabran, put it this way, "Let there be spaces in your togetherness."

I also very much like her point that "the very best of marriages" are friendships in the beginning and throughout their history. Friends tend to have the ability to flex and forgive much more than some other kinds of intimates. Friends tend to be very accepting and tolerant of their friends' frailties, whereas, needy couples seem to find it very difficult to forgive and forget. The disappointment of the other person not being everything needed or hoped for is somehow too much for them.

If you think you may be too needy or that your marriage may not be one of "friends," there are some things you can do.

- Examine yourself and understand the role you play in the relationship
- Look for ways to grow personally, perhaps through reading or counseling
- Let go, little by little, of your need to control and to find security in another
- Ask God to help you in finding your sense of self worth as adequate. After all, Jesus thought you were worth dying for.

These are not easy things to do, but they can be very rewarding.