DATES and DATING

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beauty is wholeness

When the ads in your favorite magazines promise that "you, too, can be alluring, dainty, glamorous, witty, well-read, well-groomed, a sparkling conversationalist, a winner of friends and an influencer of people," you may have some mild doubts. Yet you will probably buy the product, borrow the book, or trust in Santa for that special perfume.

This doesn't mean you're gullible. It is more likely to mean that you have aspirations and ambitions. Nothing could be better—if these aspirations have realistic foundations and if you are willing to use work, effort and judgment to achieve them.

Girls and young women growing up today are in the rare position of being able to gain many of the things that women have always wanted—without being handicapped by some of the rigid standards that dominated public taste and opinion in other centuries.

"You, too, can be beautiful," is a reality for all of us because we need not be bound by the old chains of beauty norms. The classic beauty of antiquity is rarely seen today. Those molded features are more likely to be found in museums—in marble or on canvas—than in a tearoom, laughing from the screen or holding us spellbound on the stage. The bodily symmetry of a sculptured Diana is fine, if you have it. If you haven't, cheer up! Plenty of women, considered truly beautiful in the twentieth
century, could bear more than a touch of remodeling. We have standards, but the standards are different. The demands are somewhat heavier—but more readily met.

Our age expects much of its women. It is wise in one thing: the knowledge that beauty comes from within. A girl today, classically styled or not, is expected to have charm, poise, intelligence, vivacity, health and interests; and, particularly, warmth and sympathy toward others. She is expected to carry herself well, dress suitably, be fresh, bright and alert.

Think for a minute and you will realize that you'll have to bring to that achievement many qualities and many habits of eating, exercise, sleeping and sane living.

To put it briefly, if you want to be beautiful, you've got to be healthy. And if you want to be healthy, you've got to have more than physical health. You need mental and emotional health, and spiritual health as well. Any one of these assets without the others, leaves a serious deficit.

There's an Old English greeting, "Hal beo thu," which time has changed to our modern-day "Hello." It meant, "Be thou whole." In those three words lies the very quality we are talking about: wholeness—the real health of body, mind and spirit.

**Fashions in Health**

It is odd that anything so necessary as health should undergo changes of style. And yet, there's no doubt about it; health has been made to wear a new look from time to time.

During pioneering days in this country there wasn't much time for styles. The job of clearing a wilderness and getting food and shelter was everyone's first concern. Health was more valuable than wealth. Every ounce of strength meant the difference between good crops and starvation.

By the time cities had grown up, however, and Great-grandmother had been born into a more comfortable and secure world, demands upon women had lessened. Great-grandmother had time on her hands for reading novels and following style trends. She found that fragility, a dainty appetite, ability to swoon and have a wonderfully mysterious but popular malady known as "the vapors" all provided more chic than eating three good meals and exercising outdoors.

When Great-grandmother had her children, though, her dietary habits during pregnancy probably did her offspring little good. Her aversion to such coarse activities as exercise and walking had much to do with her difficulties in bearing children.

The lack of good hygiene that marked the mode of most of the nineteenth century not only kept women from enjoying the best in physical health, but also retarded or destroyed the mental and emotional health of many. There were, undoubtedly, just as many bright, alert women in those days as there are today, but education was a very different matter then than now. Few people realized that more solid education and more interests, hobbies and productive activities would have reduced the number of fainting spells, "vapors," and periods of tears and hysteria.

Great-grandmother may have found the fashion of delicacy and the frequent use of smelling salts amusing for a time, but she began to realize that there was a larger and better world for women. A few of those great-grandmothers made possible the saner, healthier lives we can lead today.

Even now, of course, there is an occasional momentary glamour attached to the slightly starved look. When Katharine Hepburn shudders at the sight of a hearty breakfast and settles for a cigarette and a cup of black coffee, we might think it would be fun to look and sound sophisticatedly austere. Yet, you and I know that the screen star who looks distastefully at oatmeal in the movies probably started the day with a five-course breakfast! She simply couldn't do her job if she didn't, for she is engaged in one of the most exhausting occupations in the world.
Only One Life—but a Long One

The fashion for you and for all of us in this era is good health. Our lives demand it, and the things we want out of life—careers, homes and the families we expect to have, the full, rich satisfaction of varied interests and varied pursuits—all call for plenty of physical stamina, mental and emotional balance, hearts and spirits that are as healthy as our bodies.

Medical science has made enormous strides since the beginning of this century and has added something new to our lives. Most of the real plagues have been brought under control and so, today, more people die of illnesses that could be checked by sane, healthy living than from communicable diseases.

You have a much greater life expectancy than even your own mother and father. With reasonable and fairly simple care of your health, you should be able to live a long time and enjoy every minute.

The rules for good health are not complex, and—short of the unusual or the accidental—good physical health can be continuous and uninterrupted. It is well to remember that many of our minor ailments can be quickly corrected. In general, our bodies need only the amount of care and attention we would give to any good piece of machinery.

It is the minor ailments that put a stop to many of the things we want to do. Colds, menstrual cramps and headaches cause most of the absences from school and business. They may bring a certain amount of sympathy from relatives and friends for a time, but they can certainly short-circuit careers, recreation and the pleasures of marriage and a home.

Health for the Doing

Doctors, books, health education in schools, in the YWCA, and the work done by public health departments and by recreational leaders have given to almost everyone in the country a large fund of knowledge about health and how to preserve it.

But do you really use that knowledge in your everyday life? How about sleep? Do you get your full quota—not just some nights, but every night in a well-ventilated room, on a good stiff mattress? Or do you wait for weekends to catch up on sleep, your best physical restorer? Is the well-balanced diet a theory or a consistent practice? Many problems of complexion, of fatigue, of otherwise unexplainable headaches, even of posture, are closely linked to eating and sleeping habits.

Fresh air, sunshine, outdoor exercise—everyone knows how much they have to do with resistance to colds and infections, with posture and the springy step of vitality, with the kind of circulation that keeps the body in trim and plays so active a part in creating the appearance as well as the fact of health. But is exercise something you reserve for summer vacations? Are fresh air and sunshine only incidental to a quick run for the bus or subway in the morning? Do you spend holidays trying to make a few weeks do the work of a year?

Probably no group in the world hears so often as do American girls the reasons for periodic physical checkups, the desirability of annual chest X-rays, dental service and sight conservation measures. More important than just hearing about them is the fact that, in the main, they are things we can do with relatively small inconvenience and little or sometimes, no expense. The preservation of health—the prevention of illness—is just what is meant by being healthy.

This thing called “feeling well” can be deceptive at times, though. You may “feel well” because you are working under pressure or excitement. Nevertheless, your health may be suffering from excessive activity brought on by this very business of “feeling well.”

You don’t need to become preoccupied with your health. You don’t need to be a faddist. But if you want to get all the satisfactions to be found in a rich and full school experience, in your job, in your recreation and domestic life, do the simple things which will give you the maximum assurance of physical well-being.
"Be Thou Whole"

The kindly "Hal beo thu" which you still employ as "hello" has lost none of its meaning with time—merely its way of being said. Human beings are not just mobile chemical plants. The whole human being is a body, a mind, and a soul.

If you want to be beautiful, if you want the finest kind of life for yourself, the job is only one-third done when you have made the best of your physical health and appearance. When people talk about developing the mind it sounds pretty formidable. The picture it evokes is a caricature of a studious hack, loaded down with books, peering nearsightedly from behind poorly-fitted eyeglasses and dressed in last year's styles.

And yet it is through our minds that many of life's richest pleasures are gained—through minds connected to our senses. Stop thinking for a moment of the long hours in the classroom, of homework, of some of the dullest books all of us have been compelled to read. Think of the delight some musical compositions give us, some paintings, plays and operas.

The healthy mind is one that welcomes new learning, that is curious and wants to know answers, that welcomes acquaintance with beauty in music, art, books, the theater or in nature. Rules for a healthy mind are not so simply stated as those for a healthy body. And sometimes girls are so afraid they will be thought bookish, or just plain grinds, that they deprive themselves of much that gives life real meaning by "letting their minds take care of themselves," except for what is forced upon them in the classroom.

A healthy mind is an open mind. It is open to new knowledge and ideas. It is open to other minds. It is not, however, just a receiving set. A healthy mind weighs and evaluates new material.

A healthy mind is flexible. One of the things which happen to our ideas is that they sometimes become so completely ours that we make no allowance for the other person and his ideas. You don't have to accept every new idea that comes along but you'd better be sure there isn't a rigid little guardian standing at the gate protecting your property and, worse yet, protecting your prejudices.

If you want good mental health, you'll do well to remember that the intelligence is a living organism; it grows on nourishment, and in the light. Don't be afraid to let it grow.

The woman of the twentieth century is the heir to the learning of all the ages. Better still, she has a chance to get at that learning. Great-grandmother had a mind, too, and a fine one. But she was badly thwarted when she wanted to do anything with it. She would have changed places with you—and felt she was, at last, living fully and richly in an environment that may seem commonplace to you.

It is just as impossible to separate mental and emotional health as it is to separate both from physical health. We are total personalities, whole human beings, and these distinctions are at best only easy classifications for discussion purposes. A healthy intellect and healthy emotions are interdependent. And an emotionally healthy person is, essentially, a person who is growing or grown-up.

You spent a fairly long period, when you were a baby, being just that—a baby; helpless, the center of love and attention, the most important being in the world to at least two persons, dependent upon them for food, physical care and protection. You didn't have to think about anything for yourself.

Growing up, becoming emotionally mature and healthy, means that you have to think and plan for yourself. It means that you must make independent judgments and that you will have to meet the consequences courageously when those judgments are faulty. It is painful sometimes, but there are rich satisfactions in learning to direct your own life, just as there are in learning to drive a car or sail a boat. You become the captain of your soul and, if it costs effort, it is worth it! Better than always clinging to the guiding hand of others, for you know, of course, that the dependent person isn't only dependent on his
parents—anyone else will do just as well to make the decisions and do the thinking!

In the days when you were the center of a small world, you were not expected to think very much about other people or their convenience, or their feelings. Furthermore, you were often able to get just what you wanted with two or three lusty squalls, and that success set up a few habits which are hard to break.

But healthy emotional growth is marked by healthy social attitudes—by give-and-take, resiliency and the ability to work for what you want rather than crying for it to be dropped, like those childhood toys, into your cradle.

Growing up signifies, too, that you have learned to live comfortably within the framework of authority and discipline. It doesn't mean for a moment that groveling or Uriah Heep-ism is required. It means that you, yourself, have learned to exercise control over your own impulses.

To grab what you wanted at age two was only natural in a self-centered little world. A temper tantrum, when you were refused what you had grabbed for, was equally understandable. How could you have known that you might injure yourself or others with the pretty carving knife?

But emotional maturing means that we learn to hold back impulses, to control instincts—not repressing them, but biding our time for the best moment and place and circumstance. And we learn too, since some expressions of our instincts may have to be deferred for a fairly long time, for our own sake and for others, that there are ways of substituting other satisfactions for the ones we may want most immediately.

Are you wondering how all this fairly difficult process enters into the matter of your total health and total beauty? Well, today it just isn't enough to be good-looking or even pretty. It isn't enough to have a well-polished intellect. Poise and charm are demanded of This Year's Model, along with consideration for others, a sense of humor, patience, tolerance and real emotional maturity. The pouting, petulant spoiled darling is passeé.

Beyond, and yet related to health of mind and body, is health of soul or spirit. Human beings, since the dawn of time, have shown that they could never feel their lives complete when they limited their interests to their own affairs, or even when they extended their interests to their fellow men. Men and women, through the ages, have felt a larger need and responsibility than that, and have looked to God as both their source and their destiny. Rules for spiritual health and development are more easily set forth by the theologian than by the layman. But if you would grow spiritually you can do no better than follow the long tradition of mankind; live with awareness of God as your Creator and live with awareness of eternity.

You can be beautiful in the fullest sense of the term. Real beauty is a unity of body, mind and soul. Be glad you live in a generation which, for all its faults, accepts this profound truth and bases its standards of beauty on a group of values, not on just the single asset of a well-modeled face and figure.
fun—
and more—

No matter how different we are as individuals, there are some things all of us desire. We want to be liked and accepted, to have friends and companionship. We want recognition and a sense of achievement in work or study and in social life. We want a measure of personal security—real emotional security that comes from within. And, whether we have thought about it yet or not, we want ultimately the satisfactions of marriage and family life.

All these things don't merely drop into our laps. We might not value them much if they did. But curiously enough, to gain some of the things which we most want from life, we don't really have to work very hard—we merely have to play!

Play is an important part of life. In recreation—especially recreation in which we grow in experience and capacity for developing as people—will be found the way to achieve some of the things for which all human beings yearn.

Other Times—Other Notions

In ancient civilizations, recreation was reserved largely for the upper classes. Sometimes it was simply a way of keeping the rich from being bored—making few demands upon the individual beyond his attendance at the drama, circus or pageant. Sometimes it was no more than a degrading and interminable feasting, producing fatigue and the physical and moral lethargy which follow overeating and drinking.

More recently, our Puritan forefathers looked upon recreation only as a reward for virtue. At other periods in history, recreation has been tolerated as a necessary evil; human beings required some rest and relaxation in order that they might again take up their serious burdens with renewed spirit. And both ideas about the place of recreation had some validity.

Today we know, in addition, that the personal enrichment which comes from real recreation is essential to the growth and rounding out of personality.

Modern education reflects this knowledge in shorter classroom, laboratory and library hours. Educators realize that there is more to education—the education of the whole person for a full life—than is to be found inside books.

We are just beginning to realize what the forty-hour work week means in the way of time to live, learn and grow. Allowing for fifty-six hours of sleep, we still have seventy-two hours in every week for our own use and planning.

All work and no play makes anyone a dull girl. All play of one kind makes her dull, too. So, first choose the things you want to do. Make sure they are worth the time you plan to spend on them—then go ahead, solo or in company, as the occasion or the activity dictates. Just give to all recreation, whether alone or with other people, this simple little test:

1. Will it be fun?
2. Does it offer me a chance to learn something?
3. Will it make me a livelier, richer, more interesting person?
4. Will it make me healthier—physically, mentally, spiritually?

If the answer is "yes" to question 1 and, in addition, "yes" to any one of the others, then it is recreation in the best sense, the sense of helping you to get some of those things from life which everyone wants and needs. Remember, it should be fun,
not just a dreary form of self-improvement. It should be fun and pleasure with plus values!

Free Enterprise

Are you lost if you are alone? Or do you sometimes “solo” in your leisure hours? Many solo recreational activities help to give a sense of personal security. They prove our own ability to be comfortable with ourselves.

No one need ever be bored who knows the joys of a fireplace, a book and a cup of tea; who has learned to listen to music with understanding and enjoyment, to sit quietly before a fine painting or to carry a camera on a stroll in the woods or city park.

There is a whole world of stimulating experiences to explore, and your equipment need be no more elaborate than interest in seeing and learning new things, plus your own initiative and capacity for free enterprise.

Most of your recreational life will probably be spent with other people, but there are lots of ways to have fun by yourself. Don’t be afraid of being alone. In a world where the spirit of competition has invaded so many aspects of life, some girls feel that, unless they are surrounded by a crowd of admiring friends at all times, they will seem to have no friends—they will be thought unpopular, failures.

The self-confidence you develop in solo activities works two ways. You are freed of the absolute need for other people. In turn, you will feel more self-reliant when you choose group activities.

On the other hand, the girl who is inseparable from her camera, or whose only recreation is solitary walks, is losing a chance to get the most out of her leisure time.

Toss That Volley Ball

There’s no dodging the fact that some well-intentioned teachers have given group activities a sad reputation. Basketball or water polo, volleyball or hockey are often so heavily planned as part of curriculum that they seem humdrum and dreary. The fact that they have been sandwiched between geometry and European history and have lost some spontaneity in the process, does not make them any less valuable, however, as part of a planned and well-rounded life.

Group games are a good road to healthy living. They give you poise, well-toned muscles, grace and bodily discipline. They offer opportunities to learn certain things about yourself and about adjusting to other people that will carry over into every aspect of your life.

If only more people in more lands had learned, really learned, to play in groups, there might be greater hope of human beings’ learning to live together in peace and harmony! If all men knew how to live by the rules and abide by the decisions of the referee...... If people knew how to use competition healthily, but never forgot the importance of each competitor...... If men and women could meet losses without feeling defeat and despair, and could simply pick up and go on, trying fairly and honestly for a new chance at success...... If they could use their successes constructively and with humility......

These are big If’s, and we can’t alter all the people in all the world—not all at once, anyway. But each one of us can learn some of the best of the things that men live by (or could live by), right in the gym at school, or in the Y.

Recreation, enjoyed alone, can make your recreation with others richer and more stimulating. Recreation in group activities can make all your relationships—those in school, on the job, at home and in smaller, more intimate social groups—warmer, more friendly and more rewarding for you and others.

Two’s Company—and Three and Four

Like all other old sayings, “Two’s company, and three’s a crowd” has plenty of validity—especially when the two are a
boy and girl on a date. Later we shall discuss dating in more detail. But what about recreation in small groups with several girls together, or two, three or four couples? In these days of crowded living quarters, entertainment at home may be difficult, but, if it can be managed, there is no place like home for seeing your friends and having a good time. Your home is your setting; it is a backdrop against which your friends should have a chance to see you. It is the place where you’ve grown up, where your parents have made an investment of themselves for your and their happiness, and to which you have probably added, from time to time, a touch of color and decoration, a bit of your own imagination and personality.

Let your friends meet your parents. They are a very important part of your life and a very real part of your own identity. If your parents are wise, and if they have interests of their own, they will not want to spend too long with you and your guests. Because much of our security and poise is dependent on our own homes and families, your own future as a homemaker is being built right now out of your current home experiences.

Entertaining at home is a good preparation for the future pleasure you will have in acting as hostess for your husband; or, if you do not marry, in the home that you may make by yourself. Besides, your friends will appreciate both the intimacy and the personal effort made for their entertainment. The buffet supper you prepare, the cake you bake and serve with coffee or cokes, the formal or informal planning, all indicate your own affection and respect for your friends and will be returned likewise in affection and respect for you.

Theater parties, beach suppers, hikes, winter sports are more zestful and gay if there are several persons to share the fun. It may be a group of girls or a group of couples, but the pleasure will be heightened by the easy give-and-take, the cooperation and friendliness that are part of these forms of play. There are few experiences in life that bring us into warmer, closer human companionship than preparing and eating an outdoor supper and sitting around the fire afterward, singing, exchanging ideas, discussing ambitions and plans for the future.

Even if you have a special boy friend, make him part of these small group activities—some of the time, at least. It is the only way to discover how well you both fit into the company of other people, to see each other against the backdrop of home and friends. One of the most important things in marriage is the ability to meet new people, to get quickly into the flow of fresh ideas and unfamiliar situations, to live a pleasant and satisfying social life. Recreation is something of a proving ground, right now, for you and your boy friend, and for the marriage you may be planning.

More than that, it is always a good idea to know many young men before arriving at a final decision in regard to one. This is not to suggest that you be frivolous or fickle. But the choice of a person with whom you plan to live all the years of your life in contentment and happiness is a serious one. You will need to know more than one or two young men before arriving at so lasting a decision.

Getting about in small groups of boys and girls or of young men and women provides opportunities for meeting other people and gives you a chance to make a real choice. It means, too, that you will be seen in a variety of settings, meeting a variety of situations and handling yourself and your problems with whatever skill you have learned. Most recreation tests your personality and provides opportunities for growth and personal development. Intimate groups, whether in your home or on picnics and at the beach, are especially challenging tests of human adaptability.

Fun That Is More than Fun

There is another form of recreation which might be called "serious fun." This is fun, too, or it wouldn’t be recreation. But it is even more carefully directed—by you, of course—toward
building that interesting, well-rounded personality everyone wants.

There's a world of good times and stimulation in attending sculpture and painting classes, in belonging to a book or music club, a camera or hobby club. Here you may find some of your regular circle of friends or meet new ones. There should be no grim determination behind these activities—you don’t want to be a “culture vulture.” But creative outlets are necessary to most human beings, and there is personal satisfaction in learning new things in the leisurely atmosphere of these “take your time about it” group activities. Don’t force yourself. Try them out, see whether you like them, whether they meet a need, whether they are fun.

Check them against that little test list on recreation and make your own decision. That’s the wonderful thing about modern ideas of recreation—they provide every individual with plenty of free choice. And it is free and responsible choice that makes us function at our best.

So much that you want from life is yours for the effort of thinking and planning. There will be a large number of specific things—a house of your own, a fur coat, a fine job—for which you may have to put in long years of work. But the fundamental things—friends, affection, acceptance as a person, emotional security, a happy life and a home with the man you choose for a husband—can be gained by living the full, growing life that is part work, part rest, part study and intellectual pursuits and, to a large extent, productive recreation. Think about it. Are you really getting the things you want from life? Don’t just wish—work for them and play for them!

“Every lassie has her laddie” ... or will have. Perhaps not every lassie, because each generation has a certain number of girls who for one reason or another do not marry. But the vast majority of girls and women today will someday be wives and mothers; each one hopes that her marriage will be happy and successful.

Hope, however, is not enough. In school it takes more than hope to get you from grade to grade and to gain the scholastic standing and honors you want. In business or professional life, plenty of thought and investment of self are essential to successful achievement.

Marriage is a normal goal, but, like all other really worthwhile goals, it demands planning, thought and preparation. Planning for marriage and a happy life as wife and mother is a far pleasanther effort than most.

The several years which lie between our first dates and marriage itself can be called dating years. You meet boys, go out with them, learn to know them—and to know more about yourself in the process. A good time is had by all and, if dating years are used with judgment and good sense, with a healthy spirit of camaraderie and recreation, the goal of happy marriage will be coming closer.
Do You Sometimes Wonder?

The numerous printed pages devoted to the failure of modern marriage, laid end to end, would probably encircle the globe with enough left over to make a nice big bow! The theater, movies and radio make millions on the problems besetting the course of true love or in unreal and romanticized versions of love and marriage. How much they have actually affected the point of view of young people is an open question.

Two fairly common attitudes, however, have grown out of this misleading propaganda. They are well summarized by a young friend: "Oh, Jack and I are going to get married, all right! We know it's a gamble, but we'll take our chances. Anyway, marriage today isn't what it used to be. You don't have to stay married."

That's a far cry from the dewy-eyed bride of other generations, and it would be silly to expect the girl of today to be less "realistic" than all her training has taught her to be.

But it is not true realism to regard marriage as a gamble. Marriage, through the centuries, has withstood more shocks than any other human organization. Furthermore, marriage is not a temporary relationship, to be quickly terminated if it doesn't prove a success, straight off. And no matter how often a girl may say that marriage is only a game of chance, divorce is actually the last thing she thinks about when she marries.

When people talk about marriage as a gamble, they are simply unsure of themselves. When they talk glibly about divorce, before marriage, they are even more unsure. They feel there's no better way to meet failure than to prepare themselves and the world for that eventuality.

Can Marriage Be a Success?

Can marriage be a success? The answer in one word is, "Yes." Divorce, with rare exceptions, comes when one or both partners have not truly prepared for marriage.

The use to which you put your dating years, the judgment you exercise about the boys you meet, the careful weighing of factors essential to success in marriage are the terms of your insurance policy for a successful and lasting one—plus the most important factor of all, your own emotional development and determination to make marriage the happiest way of life for yourself and your husband-to-be.

You live in neither a time nor a country where marriages are planned for you. Marriage in America is a matter of free choice between two persons. Although that is a commonplace fact to you, it is tremendously important. It gives you full responsibility for your own choice. It also gives you the full satisfaction of being able to make that choice.

Relax!

From your first date until the day you stand at the altar, you are a free agent, aided, if you are wise, by the help and advice of parents or experienced counselors.

Don't feel that you'll never have dates if you find the going a bit slow at first. A good many girls fear that they must be lacking in the things that spell popularity if they don't have a bevy of swains and an overloaded engagement book by the time they are finishing high school.

It is perfectly true that you have to do a good many things to make yourself attractive, to make people know you and want to include you in dates. Good times with other girls and boys aren't going to come without your own help. On the other hand, don't be overanxious.

You'll get your dates—boys are looking for pleasant, attractive girl companions just as eagerly as girls are hoping to find interesting, good male company. Anxiety is sure to reveal itself and is alarming to boys.

If you are friendly; if you genuinely like other people and enjoy being with them; if you are a thoughtful, considerate person; if you dress becomingly and with taste; if you have ideas and plenty of interests; if you go to places where dates are to be
found, such as club, school and church social events—you will meet boys and dating opportunities.

Don't Spoil Your Dates

A lot of fun is taken out of dating by things that can be easily avoided. Don't tell one boy how many other boys you know or how many other dates you've been having. If you're a popular girl, this won't be news, anyway.

Don't create jealousy nor be jealous. Your value as a person is real. Remember that. It won't be any greater because you manage to get a boy into a state of possessiveness. Until you have reached the point where you and the boy are really ready to consider marriage, there is no sense in depriving yourself of dates with other boys. Nor is it fair to expect a boy to devote all his dating time to you alone. You will find possessiveness or jealousy pretty tedious. You enjoy feeling free; give your boy friends the same feeling of freedom. Avoid making excessive demands on a boy's time, money and attentiveness. Boys want to go out with other boys. They want to be at liberty to follow other interests, just as you want to be able to go to the movies or a bridge game with your girl friends.

Be yourself! If you don't like the self you are, there are plenty of opportunities for you to learn how to change and develop. And you will be wise to make your improvements real. Meanwhile, don't play a part. It's too hard to sustain; besides, it's not honest. The only way people can know and trust us is by learning about us through what we do and say. What we do and say, though, ought to be natural and true. Pretenses only blur the picture.

About money—remember that a boy's allowance or earnings are usually restricted. You are no less a person because a boy can't take you to night clubs or expensive places of entertainment. There are plenty of things to do within the budget. The big, expensive evenings should be occasional, very special events, just as they are for most people all through life.

Stereotyped attitudes about attentiveness have caused much unhappiness for girls. Perhaps a boy simply can't afford to send you an orchid for the dance. If he likes you enough to take you, don't spoil his and your evening together by sulking about the missing orchid. Or, taking you home after a party may cause him an extra hour's bus ride afterward. If you can get home in the company of other friends, be generous enough to suggest it. Then don't feel that your escort is "letting you down" if he exercises the option.

Most of your first dates—and many of your later ones, too, if you're smart—will be with other couples. This is important. You will learn a lot about yourself and a lot more about your boy friends from observing how comfortably you and they get along with a variety of people.

A young girl told me recently that most of her dates had been evenings of dancing. She felt that the dance floor was a fine place for pleasure and exercise but that it was no place to learn to know her boy friends. She was right.

Group dates offer the chance for good talk. Remember, you are really learning how to know boys, developing the best in your critical faculties. What people like to talk about, how they participate in conversations, whether they monopolize or give and take freely, will tell you a good deal about them. You will have a chance to exchange ideas about music, books, the state of the world today, what you both want out of life, what your ideas and ambitions are for the future.

See your boy friends against the background of your own home and parents. You'll get a better perspective on them, and they'll appreciate being made part of your present home and family life.

Insure Your Marriage

These dating years can insure your marriage. Now is your chance to think about what differences in tastes, interests, religion or ideals would mean in a lifelong relationship. True,
you aren’t planning to marry every boy you go out with. But you can weigh what it might be like to be married to any one of them. It is an exercise in perception and reflection you won’t regret.

How well can you adapt yourself to differences? If your boy friend likes jive and you love Mozart, is there room for compromise, or does the effort make you definitely uncomfortable? Or, suppose you feel that this is one great world in which all must live in a spirit of mutual aid and brotherhood. If your boy friend is a fixed isolationist, what difference will that make? If you have been spared learning the ugliness of intolerance and your boy friend has racial or religious prejudices, are you ever going to be thoroughly comfortable together?

There are many areas of compromise and adjustment between persons. But there are convictions so deep and important that compromise spells the sacrifice of fundamental principle. In learning to know and understand yourself and the boys you date, think very carefully about what can be met with graceful adaptation and what would actually mar your happiness in the future.

Dating should be fun; and the best way to guarantee that it will be, is to make it an expression of your interests and those of your boy friends. Do lots of things on your dates. Get in plenty of activities—skating, dancing, picnics, swimming parties, the theater.

There is real importance in doing things on dates. Let’s be very frank. Many girls are made uncomfortable by boys who want to spend dating time in love-making. Petting often starts for lack of something better to do.

We shall discuss this question further when we talk about courtship and marriage. But there are one or two things about petting to be said right now. Girls sometimes fear that they will be considered poor sports, or that they will lose opportunities for dates, if they are reluctant to include “necking” on their dating programs. This feeling comes from the same lack of security which causes girls to feel they are social failures if they don’t have a heavy schedule of dates. It isn’t necessary, you know, to gain the approval of boys and the assurance of further dates by “buying” them with the coin of integrity and self-respect. A sense of humor, wide and diversified interests, and a healthy liking for members of the opposite sex will bring attention and dates. You don’t need to “buy” them.

On the other hand, this does not rule out simple, friendly gestures of affection. A goodnight kiss, if you know your boy friend and want to kiss him, is a perfectly spontaneous and pleasant thing. But don’t feel compelled to “pay” for every date. There’s no law that says you must kiss your escort at parting!

There is a place for love-making in our lives, and it is a mighty important one. But for this, as for everything else, there is a suitable time and place.

Having plenty of plans for activities on dates, having them often with other couples, spending your dating time in learning as much as possible about your partners and about yourself, will obviate much of the pressure of petting. Petting or necking will solve nothing—not even genuine questions about sex. It will probably create anxiety and feelings of insecurity in you. It may make you wonder whether you are really placing upon yourself the value that you desire as a person.

Dating years are among the best years of our lives. Fill them with fun and rich experience. Make them part of a real and rewarding preparation for marriage—your insurance for a happy future.
courtship —
preparation for
marriage

It is safe to say that no vocation in the world is embraced with more trust in luck and intuition, with less training and preparation, than marriage. No one questions the years of study, disciplined thinking and special qualities of personality that are professional "musts" for teachers, social workers, nurses, secretaries or librarians. But practically everyone seems to think that if Joe loves Alice, they may as well go ahead and get married. Time and love, it is supposed, will substitute for training for the vocation of marriage. Yet marriage is one of the most demanding and skilled jobs on earth.

This is frequently pretty hard on Joe and Alice; more frequently, harder still on Joe, Jr., and his brothers and sisters.

Parents, the clergy and other community leaders have a genuine obligation and responsibility in providing all young couples with soundly planned and developed courses of study in marriage and its meaning. Marriage should no more be left to chance than the manufacture of refrigerators or the building of houses. Young people can bring about the development of such vocational preparation, if they recognize and express their need for this practical help with only half the vigor they put behind getting other things they want.

Let's Look at the Record

Naturally, aside from formal courses in psychology, homemaking and household management, child care, family health and community living, there are other avenues of preparation for marriage, some of which we have discussed in the previous chapters. No amount of technical training will substitute for the work you put into making yourself a person who is physically, emotionally and spiritually whole. You will not learn from books or in study groups many of the things which can be gained only through working and playing with other people, the wise use of your dating years, observing and weighing the factors that appear to influence the happiness or unhappiness of the marriages you see about you.

Your dating years really count in preparation for marriage. Use them as a testing ground for evaluating yourself and the boys you date. You will then acquire the nicely balanced judgment which is one of the things you will certainly need for the most effective use of any course in marriage preparation. That kind of judgment is indispensable in choosing as husband the man with whom you will have the best chance of living harmoniously, joyfully and in genuine partnership for all your years to come.

What are some of the things we learn in dating years? How can they be used toward successful courtship and marriage?

For a beginning, you've probably discovered that it takes two to have fun on a date. Planning must be done on a partnership basis; neither you nor your boy friend can be domineering and inflexible. Each must weigh and respect the other’s interests and desires.

It is pretty obvious that in the permanent partnership of marriage this experience of give-and-take, of graceful, ready respect for the wishes of another will serve you well. In choosing a husband, you'll want to know whether you are both able to
compromise. If you or your boy friend are unyielding or stubborn about a simple question like "Whom shall we invite to go dancing with us tonight?" what will happen when it comes to making the choice of modern versus traditional furniture for your home?

You have also learned, in your dating years, that there are situations which do not readily lend themselves to easygoing compromise. For instance, completely opposed views on world affairs, on questions of racial or religious minorities, on ethical and moral principles are never adjusted readily and sometimes cannot be reconciled.

When your courtship days come, you will be glad you have known a fair number of boys, had a chance to learn which differences can be easily settled by a little flexibility and which cannot be reconciled, short of violence to your conscience or your whole philosophy of life.

**Courtship—a Look to the Future**

Dating has doubtless taught you the fundamental importance of community of tastes and interests. You don’t need complete similarity of tastes but, as you look toward marriage, you will be wise to weigh whether a lifetime with a sports fan would be much fun if all your interests lie in books, music and the arts. Here again, of course, it is always possible to merge interests; but the old saying, "Don’t marry a man to convert him," applies as much to his tastes as to his habits.

Has dating brought you some painful experiences? Can these be turned to advantage in courtship and marriage?

The girl who is mentally and emotionally whole will view with caution her disappointments arising from personal relationships. Before she utters that critical word, "I didn’t think Ellen could be so petty," or that wail, "So Bruce [or Harry or Tom] is that kind," she will question her own judgment. Was her mental picture of a “best girl friend,” or “how a boy friend

should act” based on real people with all their possible failings, and contradictory facets, or on an ideal existing only in her own pretty head? Perhaps, like the mythical character who stretched or chopped his victims to fit one bed, she has been guilty of mentally distorting friends in order to fit her mold of preconceived ideas.

*The wise girl will refuse herself the luxury of disillusionments and earn thereby the satisfactions of enduring relations, built upon realities.* For she will know that genuine understanding of people, cultivated in her dating and courtship days, will be her greatest asset later. As a mature woman, she will hear her friends complain that the excitement of marriage soon wears off or that the world is in a hopeless mess. Others may nag that “men ought to be unfailingly courteous and unselfish,” or that husbands “should be the breadwinner and good provider.” But she will reap the benefits of a greater wisdom: the knowledge that no two individuals are alike, that any relationship approached essentially with love and consideration is a developing one, and that nothing is more stimulating and demanding of her special abilities than the world of human beings.

Perhaps you have learned something about the changeability of human affections. Nearly everyone has been rushed by a boy, only to be dismayed later by his change of heart. That hurts. But it can serve, as can most painful experiences, to give you some wisdom and a saving pinch of caution during courtship. Don’t indulge yourself in suspicion and jealousy every time your fiancé looks at another girl, admires her hairdo or asks her to dance at a party. Use your experience instead to insure your future happiness, by not moving headlong into marriage without a long enough courtship to provide reasonable assurance that both of you really want marriage and want it for life.

Or, maybe you have met boys in your dating years whose lack of self-confidence made them think of every girl as a pos-
sible conquest. Perhaps feelings of inadequacy made them try to create self-esteem by arousing strong emotional responses. Physical attraction is of the utmost importance in marriage, and it would be a sorry courtship that lacked warm, affectionate, emotional tone. Many courtships have terminated abruptly, however, because physical attraction assumed an importance disproportionate to the vitally important matters of character and interests, of planning for a home and for the future.

Don't Postpone Until Tomorrow What Should Be Decided Today

Courtship, as preparation for marriage, offers new adventures and considerations. Though the experiences of dating years can be heavily drawn upon, there will be special factors you and your fiancé will want to weigh in order to insure the best for both of you in the years ahead.

Volumes have been written on the subject of courtship. And no one can estimate the number of speeches about it. Be chary of books or talks which are weighted with generalities or that deal heavily in “rules.” Too much emphasis, though, cannot be placed on the highly individual nature of selecting a life partner.

There is a whole story of human experience, for instance, behind the generally accepted belief that wide disparities in age are likely to lead to complications. Yet there are successful marriages in which the woman is several years older than the man or in which the man may be fifteen or twenty years older than his wife. Rules cannot be laid down about disparities in age; but one needs to take a long look into the future before discarding the experience of thousands of other couples. During courtship you and your fiancé may need to face squarely just what marked age differences will mean in ten or twenty years.

Since marriage is necessarily so completely a choice of each other by two individuals, all decisions must be made on the basis of the two personalities involved but with an eye to some matters that may need extra thought. Differences in religion so often create incompatible or unsympathetic domestic situations that, generally speaking, marriages have a better chance of success if there is unity of religious background. Think about it if there are differences in religious background. Seek advice and counsel, separately and together, from priest or pastor.

Because courtship is a time of happy anticipation, young people are prone to put off facing these questions. They often feel that “love will conquer all,” that they will “start worrying after marriage.” But if courtship is to be a true part of marriage preparation, take a little time out to ponder about what it would mean to you, for example, to have your children brought up in a faith other than your own; what it would mean for you and your husband to go to different churches on Sunday. Or to be compelled always to guard your conversation on the sensitive matter of religious beliefs.

Good, lasting, happy marriages have been achieved despite religious differences, but there is bound to be some strain and tension that could be avoided by thinking things out beforehand.

Much has been said on other situations that frequently prove difficult or impossible of comfortable solution. What about marriage to a widower with grown or growing children, to one in poor health or with serious physical handicaps, to one of lesser or different educational and social background? Or to one whose financial situation is very different from the bride’s? All these factors are, in terms of long human experience, potential threats to happy marriage. None, however, is necessarily incapable of solution by two adult, thoughtful human beings. Better not settle for “Well, we’ll take our chances.” Look at all the facts. Be honest in discussing them with each other. Seek advice and help from competent professional social workers who are specialists in marriage and personal guidance.
Then make mutual plans for solving any difficulties that may arise in marriage. If the plans don't always work, remember professional help can and should be sought again.

Some Words to the Wise

Some very practical and realistic questions need to be asked and answered about courtship itself.

How about long courtships? Whirlwind courtships? As in all matters of individual human relations, there are no pat answers. In general, eight months to a year seems a good length of time in which to learn to know each other, to become acquainted with each other's families, to plan for a home, a budget and so on. Long courtships frequently create emotional strain, lessen the sense of anticipation and even give rise to boredom which might be avoided by the normal day-to-day life and experience together in marriage.

Another question—sometimes expressed—which is liable to complicate courtship, is the matter of love-making and, indeed, of premarital sex experience.

Let's look at this with honesty and candor. Petting, necking—these are actually preparatory love-making steps leading to the complete physical and emotional union of two persons. They are not complete acts in themselves. They can terminate only in tension and frustration, in physical outlet lacking truly satisfying emotional tone, or in the final, physical union of complete sexual intercourse.

In marriage, love-making is surrounded by all the things everyone wants—social approval, responsibility, ethical sanction, freedom from fear and anxiety, freedom from the necessity for guilty, uneasy secretiveness. These conditions cannot be reproduced outside of marriage. In consequence, the potentially deep emotional satisfactions of the sexual relationship are missing. Whether even physical satisfaction can be assured under conditions which lack the essentials of responsible love and free-

dom from anxiety, is doubtful. The experiences of many girls who have discussed this question with professional advisers would seem to indicate that sexual relations outside of marriage are not a solution, but only the beginning of problems.

Courtship can be so packed with plans, with discussions of the future, with happily shared recreation and all the fun of pre-nuptial shopping, parties and preparations; with learning some of the specific arts and crafts of building a real home for yourself and your husband—that you can make this period one of the fullest, richest and happiest of your life.

All that you have been, all that you have learned and all that you have put into making yourself a whole person are part of your preparation for marriage. Courtship is another and final step in that preparation. Before you and your husband stretches a vista of good years of work, fun, mutual love and respect, and stable, happy family life.

Those years are yours and his if you are both determined on just one thing: to invest in your marriage continual effort, intelligence, sympathetic understanding, honesty and mutual devotion.