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THE QUEST FOR HAPPINESS

I WILL NOT TRY TO REWRITE A THESIS ABOUT HAPPINESS; I WILL JUST SHARE MY EXPERIENCE AND THOUGHTS ABOUT SOME TOPICS THAT ARE SOMETIMES ADDRESSED AT MY PRACTICE.

The hope of finding true love, getting married and having a family is universal. Almost every culture and civilization has considered marriage to be one of the pillars of social stability, individual and community happiness.

Individually speaking, there are two individuals that love each other, long to share the same life and start a family. They want to share every aspect of their lives with their soul mate, have tenderness, support and guaranteed sex. Generation after generation, people fail to realize that their parents went through difficult times, sometimes unbearable, and want to reproduce the image of ideal family they have. In the best case scenario, those parents who have suffered throughout their marriage for ages hope that life will be better for their children. Otherwise, parents just want their children to move out so that they will not have to feed them any more.

Socially speaking, it is in the community interest that individuals live together to have a peaceful life and achieve development. Firstly, this may be due to economic reasons: Family favors wealth creation. Second, there may be reasons of civil peace and balance: If relationships are developed within a legal framework, men and women

cannot exchange each other (theoretically speaking) at will, preventing conflict with high economic impact: When we are fighting, we do not work. Thirdly, there may be public health reasons: With steady relationships, sexually transmitted diseases are less likely to spread like a plague. Finally, there may be religious reasons: To prevent people from living in sin.

These schemes were discontinued at the end of the twentieth century. These days, couples start dating and split up so easily that marriage is not even justified. In other words, people keep on liking the idea of getting married; however, they are often conscious that it may not be for good.

Living together can be considered the paradox in a relationship, for it may lead to divorce or separation. I repeat that I am considering general ideas in this book, for I know perfectly well that there are exceptions. However, the evolution of the past few decades has provided us with extraordinary material to analyze many aspects of our lives.

When a couple lives apart and only shares some moments, it is like living for hours or days in a loving and happy bubble. Their working lives are left aside; they only share the best of themselves. They feel a burning desire. They have missed each other for a while. Each individual wants to project the best image. Every time they meet is like a having party.

HAPPINESS, LOVE & COUPLES

When they begin to learn more about each other, the desire to live together gradually appears. If they decide to take the step to live together, they discover new things about each other, things not related to desire or love but to the most practical aspects of their daily lives. One is too fast and the other too slow. One loves watching



the news at the same time everyday, the other thinks it is a silly thing to do. One takes a one-hour-shower, the other only takes a five-minute-shower. One is stingy, the other throws the money away. One does the washing-up perfectly, the other leaves froth and soap. These details start to gradually affect the couple's life until they both begin to think: "How can he live that way? I believe it is impossible, foolish or ridiculous".

Those details mark the beginning of the deterioration of the relationship, but the end comes quickly when lovers begin to say: "You shouldn't do this that way; I don't like

it that you are always following me, and so on." Daily life commingles with feelings and the result is usually negative. Love dies little by little.

I always advise my friends not to forget the reasons why they have loved their partners. I further suggest them to try to imagine what would happen if they were to meet their couples again today: wouldn't they love them again? Focus on the essential. You cannot expect your loved one to have all the qualities that made you fall in love with him/her and yet try to gradually change him/her to become more like yourself.