Mate Selection

Theories on how we chose a mate!
Marriage: A Decision That Affects . . .

- Where you live
- If you have children & what they are like
- Your occupation
- Your financial situation
- Your happiness
Theory of Propinquity

Simply stated, this theory says we marry people we know.

If you know only people from your high school, you will marry someone from high school.

If you know only people where you work, your church, your college, etc., that is who you will marry.
Exchange Theory

Everyone evaluates his/her own worth and then goes to barter to see what he/she can find.

- “I am this good looking, this smart, and have this type of job. You are not as good; or better; or about the same, it is a fair trade.”

Many exchanges are trades.

- Looks for Looks—Couples that look alike
- Money for Money—Same type of Financial Situation

Some exchanges may be for different qualities.

- A guy with lots of money but who is not very handsome may be able to exchange that money for a beautiful girl.
Complimentary Needs Theory

Mate Selection

You find someone who compliments your needs

A dominate person may find a submissive person

A quite person would select an outgoing person

A nurturing person may find someone who likes to be mothered, etc.

Couples really should not be opposites but compliments

If he is life of the party, she should enjoy being part of a group, just not the center of attention.
Throughout life, we meet many people—we will marry the person we are dating when the time is right.

You may have dated several people you could have married had the time been right.

Society tries to convince us when the time is right:

- We finish college or a career is established
- After returning from military or other service
Time and Place Theory

United States
- 24.5 males & 22.5 females
- Utah
  - 22 males 20 females

75% of people who marry will live within five miles of each other.
Filter Theory

People filter through qualities that they want

Specific height, religion, education, etc.

People continue to put on filters until they look around and see very few people

There's NOBODY decent around here."
**Biological Filters**

- **Sex**
  - Male or Female—filters out 50% of the population

- **Age**
  - In 6 of 7 marriages the groom is the same age or older
  - 2 out of 3 marriages the age difference is less than 5 years

- **Physical characteristics**
  - Similar body proportions such as height & weight
  - Males tend to place a greater emphasis on this than females
Social Filter

Social Class
• Most people marry within their own class or income level. When lines are crossed, it is usually the male who has married down.

Race
• 99% of us marry within our own race.

Religion
• Most people marry within their own religion.
  • Level of religious activity

Level of Education
• Usually have similar Education levels
Psychological Filters

People often marry a person similar to their opposite sex parent

Similar Personality Traits

- Amount of personal space each needs
- Type of love language
- Sense of Humor
- Interests and hobbies (be sure it is the person you are in love with, not just the activity)
- Role compatibility
- Achievement Orientation