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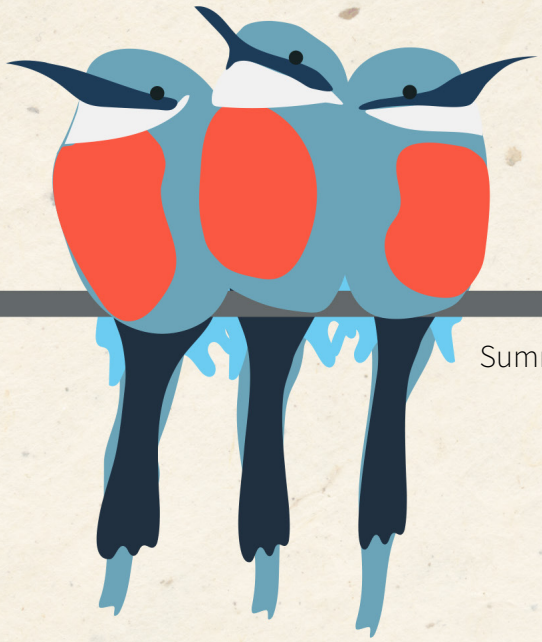
Family Connections

BYU School of Family Life Alumni Magazine

A Tribute to Julie Haupt

Cohabitation: Safety Net or Stability Threat?

Millennial Marriage



Summer 2021

From the Director

Alan J. Hawkins
Director
School of Family Life

I came to the School of Family Life in 1990. From where I stand now, 30+ years later, the School has never been more effective in achieving its mission to help strengthen families. "The Family: A Proclamation to the World," which was issued in 1995 and adopted as the School's charter document in 1998, has been a guiding force in our progress.

Currently, we have more than 900 SFL majors and more than 600 SFL minors. That is more students than at any other time over the past 30+ years. And that doesn't even count the non-majors/minors who just take one of our many service courses, such as Child Development, Interior Design, Family Processes, Family Finances, Marriage Preparation, Healthy Marital Sexuality, and others. More students are being prepared for their personal family lives and for lives of service to families than ever before. Our alumni – approaching 20,000 now – are a unique force for good in their communities and congregations.

And I am confident that the quality and rigor of that instruction has grown substantially, as well. Two courses that we began teaching over the past decade have been important additions to our stellar curriculum. First, we started teaching a course in cross-cultural family diversity and human development in which students – in small sections – explore the increasing diversity of family life and deal directly with some of the most challenging issues we face in contemporary society, all bathed in the light of the restored gospel of Jesus Christ. Second, a few years ago, we began teaching an advanced writing course to help our students become competent academic writers and more influential writers to the general public. Hundreds of students now have published their public scholarship in a wide variety of outlets, some of them very prestigious. They have discovered that they have a voice for good, grounded in research and enlightened by faith.

Despite the pandemic, 2020 was the most productive year ever in the School in terms of both academic and public scholarship. And most of this scholarship included student co-authors, so we are aligned with BYU's student-centered research mission. Financially, we have fared well, too, with many generous donors and strong university support that enables this quantity and quality of scholarship. We are richly blessed. I think we can all be proud of our association with the School of Family Life.

And I can't help but think that we will only get stronger to help meet the tremendous challenges to strong family life that God's children will face all across the globe over the next few decades, guided by the principles and practices articulated in "The Family: A Proclamation to the World."

Alan J. Hawkins
Director, School of Family Life

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A Tribute to Juile Haupt

By Dr. Larry Nelson
Professor, School of Family Life

Outside, the weather in Zurich, Switzerland, gave every indication of fall turning to winter. The days grew shorter. A hint of frost covered the morning ground, and the dropping evening temperatures brought the welcome warmth of an attic apartment fireplace at the end of the day. These were all reminders that my two-year, Latter-day Saint mission was coming to a close. The respite from making important educational or career decisions was also coming to an end. In fact, I could already feel them encroaching on me as I sat at my desk in our mission apartment flipping through the pages of BYU's Winter Semester course catalog that my parents had mailed to me.

Photo by Baptiste Gousset on Unsplash

I needed to reply to my parents with a list of classes to take. I scoured the catalog's pages in vain to find a subject that appealed to me. I wanted to teach someday but I had no clue what my major should be, let alone what career I should pursue to fulfill my desire to teach. As I turned page after page, nothing stood out to me, so I finally just picked a handful of classes that filled general education requirements. To this day, I cannot remember why I chose to take a class on children's development, as I had no idea what it was. I also cannot recall if I chose the specific section of the course to take or if my parents picked it for me. Regardless, I state without hyperbole that the providential nature of that choice altered the course of my life.

Long before the days of ratemyprofessor.com, neither my parents nor I knew anything about the options for instructors. It turned out that I would be taking the course from a woman who had just recently completed her master's degree – Julie Harris (later Haupt). As I started the course, I soon realized that my teacher was special. Julie had such energy in the classroom. She had such passion for the material and a love for her students. I had never had an educational experience quite like it. I still remember the class with vivid clarity, including the

exact class period when Julie taught about parenting styles. It was that day I said to myself: "This is what I want to study and teach! I want to do this!"

In short: Julie's teaching changed my life.
It led me to switch my major and pursue the educational path (getting a masters and Ph.D.) that led to where I am today, which is teaching the exact human development class that transformed my life. Today, I work every day to provide students the same type of experience that Julie provided me. She is the gold standard against which I compare not just other teaching, but my own. She gave me something that I had never had in my education, which was a passion, direction, and goal. We sometimes casually toss around the phrase "life changing." But, when it comes to Julie's class, it was true. I entered the first day of the semester confused – a recently returned missionary staring at the future with uncertainty and trepidation. But, because of her, I finished that class with a new major, an educational focus, and a career ambition.

> "In short: Julie's teaching changed my life.

Many teachers and mentors have blessed my life in ways that are sacred, and I will forever honor them and the incredible role they played in who I am as a professor and a person. But Julie will forever hold a special place because her teaching started my educational and career journey.

A few years ago, I was blessed to be given a university teaching award. Although I was honored to receive the award, the greatest honor was sharing the stage with the person who started all of this for me: Julie was being presented the Adjunct Faculty Excellence Award (this was before Julie became a beloved full-time faculty member in the School of Family Life). To receive an award for teaching alongside the teacher who changed the direction of my life forever was one of the most special moments of my career. I wanted to jump up and down and declare that I was there that day because of her gift as a teacher. It was a powerful reminder to me that none of us achieve anything on our own and I, especially, owe eternal gratitude to Julie and all of the teachers and mentors in my life for what they have done for me.

Julie and I would often speak of the tenderness of that moment for us on that stage. We were in a room full of thousands that day but, in a divine gift, it became a moment shared by just the two of us – a teacher and a student. On that day, I was grateful to see Julie honored for the role that she had played in the lives of so many students. On this day, and forever, I honor her for the role that she played in changing the trajectory of this student's life.

Julia Dawn Harris Haupt

July 4, 1961 – January 12, 2021

Our dear teacher and colleague passed away suddenly from undiagnosed hypertensive cardiovascular disease on January 12, 2021. She was an adjunct faculty member for 30 years before being hired as a full-time teaching faculty in 2018 to develop and direct the SFL Integrative Writing Program.

By Sammi Trujillo

The Impact of a Program and a Professor

It was time to register for Fall 2018 classes. I was mother to a toddler and a newborn, had been an undergraduate for nearly eight years already, and still had three semesters left before getting my bachelor's degree. In my state of academic fatigue, I had no desire to take another writing class, but the brand new SFL 315 writing course would knock out two requirements in one go. With a heavy finger, I added the class to my course schedule, and I prayed that God would get me through another semester without breaking down. Little did I know that the class I dreaded most that semester would be one of the greatest blessings God has ever given to me, a key to my personal, spiritual, and career development.

The blessings began with the introduction of an assignment to write a public scholarship article on any topic of our choice with the possibility of publishing that articles in a variety of outlets. I chose to research and write about my personal struggle with Postpartum OCD after the birth of my oldest child. With the support of my mentors, Julie Haupt and Alan Hawkins, I was able to publish my article in the Institute for Family Studies blog (https://ifstudies.org/blog), a publishing forum that I assumed was inaccessible to undergraduate students. This process led to great personal healing in many ways. Not only did I gain healing from my mental illness, it was also the first time I realized that I could make big dreams come true, and the responses I received (and continue to receive) from that first article have taught me that my experiences and my words matter.

> "Our spirits simply connected.

That assignment lit a fire in me that could not be extinguished. I published two more articles before the semester ended, and I began to envision a career for myself. The following summer, I was invited to participate in a Public Scholar Internship where I was honored to work with Dr. Hal Boyd, Dr. Jenet Erickson, and Dr. Jeff Dew. The internship helped me to hone my research and writing skills, publish co-authored articles, and begin building a career network. I also wrote and published several articles for Dr. Jeremy Yorgason, director of the Gerontology Program, and I continued to publish articles independently outside of work and school. After graduation, Julie Haupt hired me as the Publishing Assistant for the SFL Integrated Writing Program. In this capacity, I helped nearly two hundred students publish their articles in less than a year. At the suggestion of one of my internship mentors, I also explored the field of grant writing, an area in which I have successfully assisted in winning over two million dollars in grant money as a contractor for nonprofits focusing on family issues. I have recently launched my own

grant writing company, and I am pleased to provide paid internships to BYU students currently in the SFL Integrated Writing Program.

Above all else that I have been blessed with in my journey so far, I will forever be grateful for the mentors that I have had, both in the writing program and in the greater School of Family Life. Alan Hawkins, Loren Marks, Chelom Leavitt, Hal Boyd, Jeff Dew, and Jeremy Yorgason all expressed a sincere interest in my path and my future and each helped shape who I am today. However, one of my mentors has influenced me in ways I don't have the space to truly describe. I want to share, even in a small degree, the impact that Julie Haupt has had in my life.

On the last day of SFL 315 that fateful fall semester, I was blessed to hear Julie Haupt's testimony of her own journey. She described to the class a dream she had of mothering six children and living in a stylish but simple home with a big green yard and a white picket fence. One day as she pictured this future that she so desired, a voice came to her saying, "This dream is a good dream, but it is not yours to have. If you take this path to care for six children in the home, you will not be able to care for the hundreds of students that need you outside your home." I sat at my desk in tears, barely holding back the sobs in my chest. I was one of those hundreds, and her dream – and her answer – were mine as well.

Although I had gained great respect for her as my professor, our friendship quickly grew stronger after her closing testimony to the class. I began to visit her office regularly. We talked about motherhood, careers, publishing articles, and our shared faith. When I was hired as her assistant, we dreamt about the growth of the writing program, and marveled at the miracles that only we could really see. There is no doubt in my heart or mind that the writing program was and is inspired and guided by God and that it is performing a great work among the students and making meaningful contributions to our society. Many of my weekly meetings with Julie went twice as long as intended because our spirits simply connected, and we were guided in conversation in a way I cannot describe. I miss those conversations.

The week before her passing, I felt prompted to tell Julie about my plans to start my own grant writing business and that I would need to quit my BYU job to pursue that path. I cried as I told her, and cried even more when she, without the slightest hesitation, expressed her full support and excitement for me. She told me that she had known that I was growing beyond the role I was currently serving in, and she couldn't wait to see me develop further.

Her death five days later broke my heart and it has taken me a long time to heal from that grief (at least as much as is possible in six months' time). However, I feel incredibly blessed for the prompting I had before her unexpected death to tell her of my plans to quit working at BYU and move forward in my career. I believe that God knew how much Julie meant to me, how much I valued her advice, her opinions, and her support, and that if I waited any longer to tell her, I would regret it. That's the way things were with Julie from the moment I signed up for her class all the way until her passing. Her involvement in my life had divine timing.

Were it not for the School of Family Life, SFL 315, Julie Haupt, and my incredible professor mentors, I have no idea where I would be today. My identity as a mother, a wife, an individual, and a career woman have been significantly and permanently changed because of my experiences and my relationships here.

The first six pages of this section highlight four solo-authored public scholarship contributions from SFL students who revised many times to get them ready for publication. The next two pages feature three excerpts by SFL students and faculty. Students often say these are life-changing collaborations for them. And the next two pages highlight three SFL faculty public scholarship articles. We are proud of what students and faculty are accomplishing. And if the 200-word excerpts pique your curiosity, google them or click on the QR code for further reading.

Wheatley Report: Religion in the Home

By Lyndi Jenkins

In October 2020, BYU's Wheatley Institution released compelling findings from a multinational study they conducted on the impact of religious observance for individuals and couples.

Although many prior studies have investigated differences between secular and religious individuals on a number of personal and relational outcomes, this study provided new insight by differentiating between respondents with varying religious "dosages." This distinction allowed researchers to analyze and compare outcomes across different levels of religious involvement, finding that even when controlling for income and other key demographics, men and women who worship at home experience significant individual and relational benefits compared to other groups. . . .

Scan for full article

For example, the analysis suggests that "home worshippers" are significantly more likely to report greater life meaning, happiness, and a sense of God's love in their lives, as well as strengthened marital outcomes like enhanced emotional closeness, sexual satisfaction, and overall relationship quality. These findings are especially intriguing and relevant to consider in the context of the current global pandemic, which has necessitated the temporary closure of many houses of worship throughout the world and spurred a shift to at-home religious practices for many people of faith. . . .

Lyndi Jenkins

Lyndi recently graduated with her degree in Human Development. During her senior year, she served on the School of Family Life Editorial Board and there discovered a love for public scholarship. She hopes to continue to find ways to make family-centered research and relationship-saving principles more accessible to the public through her writing.

Soul Mates: Found or Chosen?

By Ashley Brooksby

Ashley Brooksby

has a passion for helping families and couples connect. She is graduating this year and will be working with the Provo School District to help with student behavior modifications and teach parenting classes. She loves listening to podcasts, eating chocolate, and hanging out with her husband.

With soul-mate culture saturating our world today, it's no surprise that so many young adults are waiting for a romantic kindred spirit to appear in their lives.

Waiting for "the one" to magically appear absolves young adults of making arduous and difficult choices, delays marriage and commitment, and even fosters marital instability after the wedding.

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Couples who intentionally chose each other without the notion of being soul mates were found to "believe and behave in ways consistent with an ethic of unconditional love and marital permanency," and they were "more likely to be happy in their marriages and more likely to avoid divorce."

Couples must learn how to intentionally choose to love each other and then put in the effort to stay together rather than expect the universe to do it for them.

Now that my husband and I are married, I can confidently say that he is "the one." He isn't "the one" because the universe put us together; he is "the one" because I chose him and continue to choose him every day.

Marital Satisfaction After Children. Is it Possible?

By Alyssa Sabey

Alyssa Sabey

is a BYU SFL graduate from the class of 2020. She is currently completing her master's degree in Family and Community Services from the University of Missouri, and is loving being a wife and mother. Alyssa hopes to continue her work with family life education, with a special emphasis in working with couples and families who have limited access to marriage and parenting resources.

I was thrilled at the prospect of becoming a mother. However, as time passed, I was bombarded with information detailing an inevitable decline in marital satisfaction with the birth of a child and became increasingly worried. . . .
One of the first things that I learned is that while a decline in marital satisfaction is considered normal after children are born, it is certainly not an inevitable fate that all couples must suffer. . . .
Couples who consistently show awareness, empathy, and concern for one another in everyday life . . . will typically experience maintained or increased marital satisfaction even with a newborn baby. . . .

Scan for full article

Couples that actively seek spiritual or religious growth . . . often find deeper meaning and satisfaction in their new roles as parents and experience an increase in love and joy in their marriage. . . .

. . . [C]ouples [who] strive to find greater purpose outside of themselves in their role as parents . . . are rewarded with deepened love for each other and for their baby. . . .

We can view parenthood not as an end to our blissful days as a couple but as the start of a new adventure filled with more meaning and joy than we could possibly imagine.

Do You Really Need Premarital Education?

By Sammi Trujillo

In March of 2018, Utah passed a law that gave engaged couples a discount on their wedding license if they participate in at least six hours of premarital education. (Nine other states have passed similar laws.[1]) The law was passed in hopes that greater participation in premarital education would "help newlywed couples get off to a stronger start and reduce the risk of divorce in the early, high-risk years of marriage."[2] As long as the course meets a few straightforward requirements, couples can participate in premarital education from either a secular or religious source.

As a professor in the School of Family Life, Dr. Alan Hawkins recognized the lack of premarital education courses that combine research and doctrine, which might appeal to Latter-day Saint engaged couples who wish to take advantage of the marriage license discount in Utah, or simply those who wish to strengthen the foundation of their marriage. I was happy to join Dr. Hawkins' team along with other BYU School of Family Life students and alumni, marriage and family therapists, and family life educators to develop a premarital program beginning in 2019.

At the beginning of the project, each team member conducted interviews and surveys to find out what "big issues" are facing Latter-day Saint newlyweds today, and to determine the level of interest in a premarital education course designed specifically for Latter-day Saint engaged couples. What we found surprised us.

On the one hand, most people we interviewed expressed a great need for Latter-day Saint couples to know more before they get married, especially in regards to healthy communication, sexual intimacy, finances, conflict resolution, expectations, and more. A large number of interviewees said that their parents provided little to no preparation for their marriage outside of setting an example, and that most of what they had learned – either at home, church, or school – lacked practical relationship skills or set unrealistic expectations.

After hearing these answers, one might think that the desire for better access to premarital education would be high. However, one survey of recently married individuals in Utah indicated that a majority who did not participate in premarital education didn't think that they needed it. There seems to be a contradiction between the interviews we conducted and this survey. After contemplating this head-scratching question for some time, I have come up with five possible reasons why Latter-day Saint couples feel they

1 FL, GA, MD, MN, OK, SC, TN, TX, WV.

2 Hawkins, A. (2018). How Utah is promoting premarital education. Retrieved from https://ifstudies.org/blog/how-utah-is-promoting-premarital-education.

don't need to participate in good premarital education.

1. They don't really know what premarital education is.

Many of our interviews started with the question: "What are your thoughts on premarital education?" And it was surprisingly common to hear a response such as, "What is that? Is that sex education?" or "Is that like the temple prep class given by the Church?" Some participants even thought that formal premarital education must only mean couple counseling. While all of these thoughts might fit under some part of premarital education in a broad sense, a really good premarital education course usually teaches several couples at once in a classroom-like setting and strives to give skills and resources in the same "big issue" areas that Latter-day Saint members say are so important today. Premarital education courses are designed to help couples start having important discussions about how they were raised, their expectations about issues such as sexual intimacy or finances, understanding each other's personalities and emotional needs, etc., before big issues actually arise. Since most of these conversations may seem like difficult topics, good premarital education courses also teach positive communication skills for couples to use to prevent destructive arguments and hurt feelings. All couples can benefit from good premarital education when they understand what it is.

Premarital education courses are designed to help couples start having important discussions . . . before big issues actually arise.

2. They got it in Sunday School.

Eternal marriage is a regular topic of discussion in Church meetings, and even more so in singles wards. Young single adults and newly engaged couples are bombarded with messages about the importance of chastity, the blessings of a righteous marriage, the need to love, support, and forgive their spouses, and the central focus of the family in the Plan of Salvation. After listening to these messages time and time again, Latter-day Saint engaged couples may feel that they have everything they need to build a strong, happy marriage. In addition, some might believe that marrying in the temple automatically protects their marriage. And others may just be tired of hearing about it and tune out. While the principles learned in Church settings and temple sealings are incredibly important and cannot be replaced by formal premarital education, there is an added benefit to learning research-based skills and principles that align with Church doctrine and often help couples apply gospel principles more effectively within their marriage. In reference to physical and mental health, Elder Holland said, "If you had appendicitis, God would expect you to seek a priesthood blessing *and* get the best medical care available. So too with emotional disorders. Our Father in Heaven expects us to use *all* of the marvelous gifts He has provided in this glorious dispensation."[3] Good premarital education is a marvelous resource to help newlywed couples care for the

3 Holland, Jeffrey, R. (2013). *Like a broken vessel*. October General Conference, 2013. Retrieved from https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/study/general-conference/2013/10/like-a-broken-vessel?lang=eng

health of their marriage. All couples can benefit from good premarital education when they recognize how it complements, not repeats, what they have learned in Sunday School.

3. They don't have time.

A good premarital education course is anywhere from 6-24 hours long, either spread across several weeks and months, or taught in 1-4 long days. Simply put, premarital education is a time commitment. Since the average Latter-day Saint engagement seems to be about 3 months long, it just doesn't seem reasonable for many engaged couples to invest that much time in yet *another* activity amidst all the wedding planning, working, schooling, fun and romantic dating, or anything else that contributes to their busy schedules. However, when we consider that it takes anywhere from 48-144 hours to plan the wedding day itself (based on a 2-3-month engagement and ranging from very modest to an average American wedding), complaining about 6-24 hours of time invested the quality of a marriage, which we hope lasts much longer than just one day, seems completely illogical. Weddings are important symbols, but eternal marriages are made out of deeper things than dresses, cakes, and fancy halls. Strong relationships require significant time investment. All couples can benefit from good premarital education when they prioritize preparation for marriage, and not just for their wedding.

Photo by Wedding Dreamz on Unsplash

4. They are already in the Honeymoon Phase.

Contrary to its name, the commonly termed "Honeymoon Phase" begins before marriage and the actual honeymoon trip. During the Honeymoon Phase, couples seem to be "madly in love" with each other and feel like nothing can tear them down. However, according to the Gottman Institute, a world-renowned relationship research organization, this "easy, involuntary" phase is marked by "near obsessive infatuation, strong sexual attraction, and an often overwhelming desire for reciprocation."[4] Not only that, but the Honeymoon Phase can last as long as two years after the beginning of a relationship. In other words, the feelings couples have for each other during this phase are hardly representative of how they will feel for each other when the Honeymoon Phase ends and real issues arise in their marriage.

4 Brittle, Z. (2015). Share fondness and admiration. *The Gottman Institute.* Retrieved from https://www.gottman.com/blog/share-fondness-and-admiration/

Many Latter-day Saint couples meet and marry long before the Honeymoon Phase typically ends. It could be helpful for them to understand that being "madly in love" right now is not enough to prevent heated arguments and marital stress that result from issues that will surely come up later. All couples can benefit from good premarital education when they choose to actively deepen their commitment and improve their relationship skills, rather than relying on romantic feelings of love.

5. They don't want to open that can of worms.

As a result of the Honeymoon Phase, Latter-day Saint engaged individuals may simultaneously feel like royalty in their fiancé's eyes, while at the same time they are absolutely terrified that if their fiancé knew about some faults, weaknesses, or experiences, then the relationship would surely end before the marriage begins. Some might say, "Why interrupt a good thing now when we can figure those things out as they come up?" That thought process can be just as dangerous for a relationship as a construction company proceeding to build a house without addressing possible safety concerns for that property. Just like in construction, addressing important issues before starting to build a marriage can strengthen the foundation of the relationship and increase the likelihood that the relationship will last. Yes, there are times when addressing safety concerns will result in the decision not to move forward, but that is not necessarily a bad thing. Marriage researcher Scott Stanley found between 10%-15% of couples who participate in premarital education decide not to move forward with the marriage, likely saving some people from making a regrettable mistake.[5] For the couples who do get married after premarital education, however, braving some of those tough conversations *before* getting married helps them start their marriage with higher levels of trust, commitment, forgiveness, and security than they would otherwise have. All couples can benefit from good premarital education when they accept that vulnerability creates strength, not weakness.

There are many reasons Latter-day Saint couples could use to convince themselves that they don't need good premarital education. But no amount of justification can change the fact that every good, strong, and healthy marriage requires a lifetime of commitment, trust, effort, personal change, desire to understand the other person, and positive communication. Each of those traits takes years of practice before they begin to feel like a natural part of the relationship. Premarital education is a wise and safe way for engaged couples to start practicing right now *before* the inevitable struggles come.

Sammi Trujillo

5 Stanley, S. (2001). Making a case for premarital education. *Family Relations. 50*(3), 272-280.

Cohabitation: Safety Net or Stability Threat?

By Mariah Sanders, Julie Haupt, Jeff Dew, and Timothy Smith

Many have come to view cohabitation as a safety net for marriage relationships under the belief that it affords couples the security of testing things out without the pressure of binding commitments.

However, research has consistently shown that the cords of the cohabitation "safety net" do not hold up under pressure. In fact, studies have demonstrated that cohabitation prior to marriage actually puts couples at greater risk for divorce.

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An analysis of the ever-married participants in the iFidelity data found that cohabitation may increase the likelihood of marital infidelity. Those who had cohabited two or more times in their life before marriage were 15 percentage points more likely to have been either emotionally, sexually, or electronically unfaithful to their spouse than those who did not cohabit. There was no statistical difference between those who had never cohabited and those who had cohabited only once.

Research has consistently shown that the cords of the cohabitation "safety net" do not hold up under pressure. In fact, studies have demonstrated that cohabitation prior to marriage actually puts couples at greater risk for divorce.

There are plenty of ways to be intentional in preparations for a life together. . . . Taking simple steps of preparation can communicate commitment to one's partner, thus providing greater stability and resistance to obstacles couples may face along their journey. When couples feel the time is right, they can take the step toward marriage without cohabiting first.

Guest opinion: Hollywood needs a better 'Marriage Story'

Hal Boyd and Isadora Ferreira De Melo

Director Noah Baumbach's "Marriage Story" raises questions about how popular depictions of romance and marriage (or its demise) influence the scripts of our own intimate relationships.

To what extent are we, to paraphrase Oscar Wilde, imitating art?

Findings from a study out of the University of Rochester suggest that couples who watched movies together featuring relationships, had discussions about the positive and negative factors of those relationships, and then applied those discussions to their own relationships were observed to have just as positive of outcomes as couples who participated in marital education interventions.

On the one hand, there are overly romanticized narratives that fail to represent the realistic complexities of marriage, but, on the other hand, there are narratives that depict marriage as archaic, oppressive, or, in the case of "Marriage Story," brimming with pain.

Couples who watched movies . . . featuring relationships [and] had discussions . . . were observed to have just as positive of outcomes as couples who participated in marital education interventions.

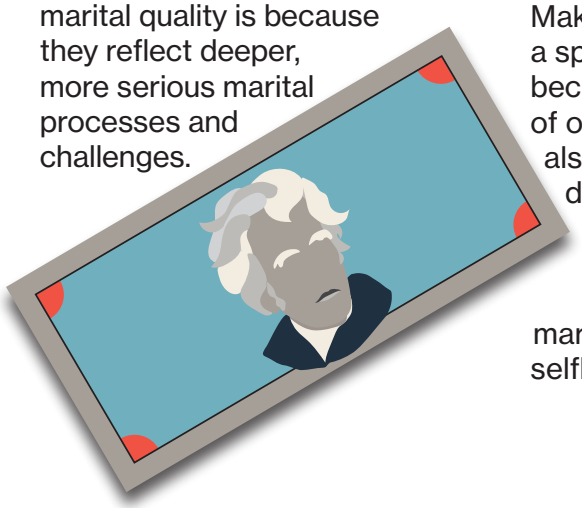
If we can view – and depict – marriage as something that is simultaneously beneficial and attainable, our desire and ability to flourish in important relationships is likely to grow.

Scan for full article

Guest opinion: Don't believe what you hear — money isn't the leading cause of divorce

By Jenet Erickson, Sammi Trujillo, and Jeff Dew

We've all seen the headline: "Money is the leading cause of divorce." In fact, it isn't money itself, but disagreement about it that makes financial conflict the strongest predictor of divorce. One reason financial issues appear to be so important to marital quality is because they reflect deeper, more serious marital processes and challenges.



Being open with a spouse about spending can feel deeply personal. If conflict ensues, we may think we are arguing about money when we are actually grappling with deeper concerns like trust or autonomy.

Making financial decisions with a spouse can also be difficult because it exposes aspects of our character . . . and can also reveal inequality in the decision-making power of spouses. Such inequalities may expose gaps in the development that strong marriages depend upon – trust, selflessness, respect, openness.

In fact, it isn't money itself, but disagreement about it that makes financial conflict the strongest predictor of divorce.

Even given these challenges, studies show that couples who choose to pool their money experience greater marital quality, including greater satisfaction, feelings of intimacy, and satisfaction with conflict resolution. Money gives married couples the opportunity to work on developing those essential qualities of transparency, selflessness, trust, respect, patience, and honesty every single day.

Scan for full article

Why Shame a Mother For Wanting to Be a Mother?

By Jenet Erikson

Anne-Marie Slaughter . . . is most famous for having touched off a national conversation when she wrote in *The Atlantic* of her decision to leave a prominent position because she knew her son needed more of her time.

Slaughter describes, "Across the board, we give caregivers the shaft, dismissing stay-at-home parents at dinner parties, barely paying nannies a living wage and punishing those who take career breaks to focus on family with a challenging on-ramp back to the professional world. . . . When people say, 'I'm home with my kids,' I say, 'You're doing really important work,' and I mean it," she says.

I love being back teaching and working with students. But there is no doubt I feel differently about my professional work now than I did before having children.

[A]s hard as mothering is for me sometimes, now that I have experienced it, I could not bear to live without it. When I live it, even as I fail at it, I know I am part of the great story of maternal influence described by Jean Elshtain, "the self-sacrificing, loving virtuous power that has bound together the human family." Nothing could matter more.

When people say, 'I'm home with my kids,' I say, 'You're doing really important work,' and I mean it."

Our Porn Problem Has A Christian Solution

By Hal Boyd

Christians feel a heightened sense of guilt when they view porn. A consequence of high moral standards is the attendant disquietude that comes when living at odds with them.

On the one hand, strong moral prohibitions against pornography seem to curb consumption (notably, the highly religious are also less likely to commit adultery); but, on the other hand, when believers do view pornography — when they fall short of their ideals — they feel greater guilt. As one 20th-century religious leader observed: "No man can compare himself with his ideals and be proud or haughty."

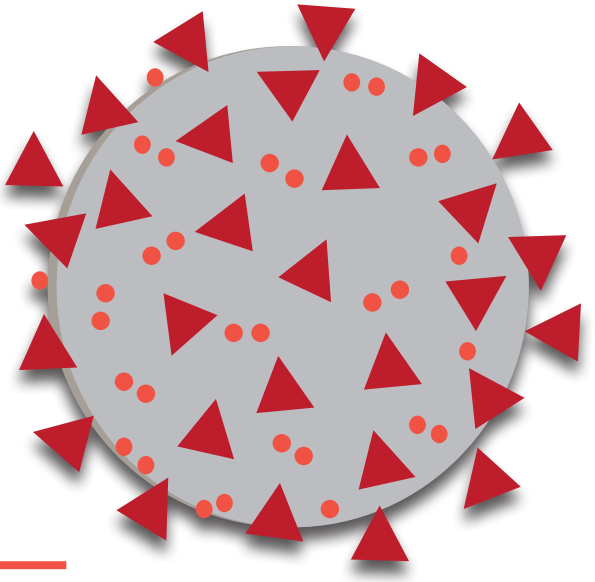
But, in the face of such pain, some are tempted to simply blame the ideal. Indeed, in our efforts to ease suffering of all kinds, including the anxieties that come with living at odds with high moral standards, society is occasionally tempted to diminish moral virtue.

The solution is not to abolish moral standards, but rather to embrace the kind of moral systems that balance justice and mercy; sin and salvation. There's no question that guilt presents a daunting problem for believers of all creeds. But, at least for Christians, it's important to note that it's this very dilemma that Jesus Christ himself died solving.

The solution is not to abolish moral standards, but rather to embrace the kind of moral systems that balance justice and mercy; sin and salvation.

Turning the Corona-Crisis into a Corona-Crucible

By Sarah M. Coyne



I'm suddenly homeschooling five children and trying to do my job from home, as my husband goes to work. Additionally, my three-year-old snapped my laptop in two, shattering much of my ability to do my job effectively.

I am in crisis. Our family is in crisis. So is my country. And so is the entire world.

I am in crisis. Our family is in crisis. So is my country. And so is the entire world. Crisis mode is stressful, anxiety-provoking, and so sad.

We also go through crucibles, trials that change the nature of the material inside us. Crucibles have the capacity to shape our character and development in profound ways impossible to achieve under ordinary circumstances. Although most of us would not choose to live through a crucible, it need not shut us down as a crisis does, but instead can allow for significant growth.

Ultimately, a crisis might turn into a crucible through the meaning and context we give it.

To make meaning out of this crisis, view it as situational, let it build family identity, realize it can help individual growth, and be patient with yourself.

[Becoming] intensely refined by the stress we experience . . . will unify us as families, nations, and a worldwide community in ways we never believed possible.

Flirting online and relationship troubles go hand-in-hand, even if no one finds out, new research shows

By W. Bradford Wilcox, Jeffrey P. Dew, and Betsy VanDenBerghe

In our report "iFidelity: The State of Our Unions 2019," we find that cohabiting, Generation X, and millennial men and women are less likely to rate sexting, secret emotional relationships, and following old boyfriends/girlfriends online as morally problematic.

The good news from the iFidelity Survey is the clear majority of married [individuals] embrace an ethic of restraint online, steering clear of crossing romantic and sexual boundaries on smartphones, computers, and tablets that might land them in dangerous relationship territory.

Fence crossing, from sexting to following old flames online, is associated with lower quality relationships.

[W]e find that men and women who erect "iFences" online that prevent them from engaging emotionally or sexually with attractive alternatives are markedly more likely to enjoy stronger and more satisfying relationships. Fence crossing, from sexting to following old flames online, is associated with lower quality relationships. . . . Men and women who do breach emotional, romantic or sexual boundaries online are significantly less likely to be happy, less likely to think their relationship will last, and less committed to one another.

For those who wish to have strong and satisfying relationships, it looks as though the ability to forsake all others not just in real life but also online is critical. In other words, good iFences make for good relationships.

The School of Family Life

By the Numbers

111

UP 10%

101

111 Peer-reviewed scholarly publications in 2020

92 Students as co-authors on scholarly publications

92

UP 21%

76

Average number of 1st author publications per faculty member

1.38 UP 21% 1.67

3.36

Average number of unique publications per faculty member

3.36

UP 7%

3.13

2021 Winter Enrollment

2021 5451

UP 5%

2020 5172

132 Sections Total

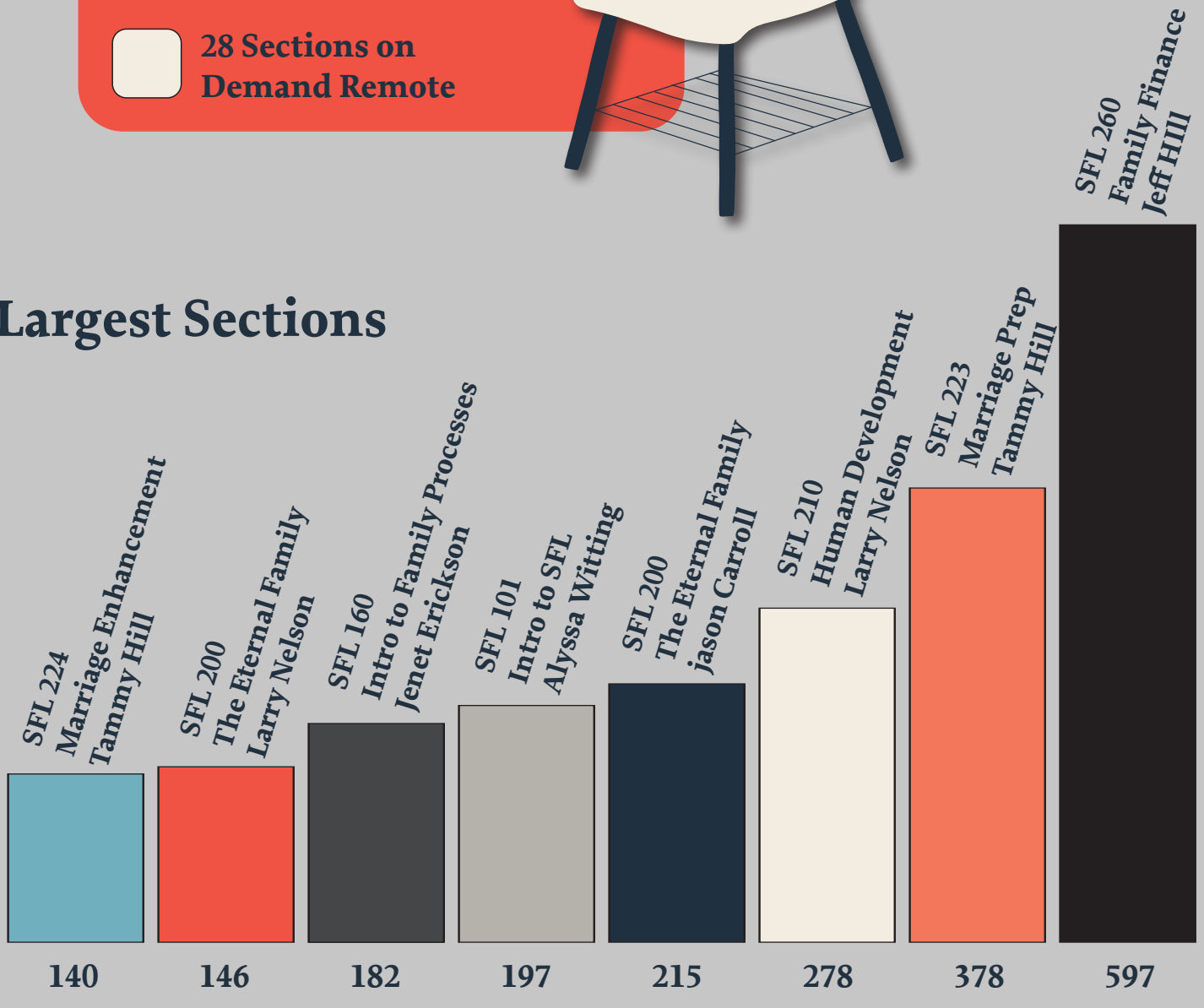
48 Sections in Classrooms

30 Sections Blended

26 Sections Live Remote

28 Sections on Demand Remote

Largest Sections



SFL 376: Healthy Sexuality in Marriage

By Charice West

Photo by Toa Heftiba on Unsplash

Sexuality is a topic that makes many people uncomfortable. Uncomfortable perhaps because they feel like they don't understand it or because they don't know how to approach it. SFL 376, "Healthy Sexuality in Marriage," is a class in the School of Family Life that has helped hundreds of students to overcome their discomfort and to understand healthy sexuality.

Formerly, the only class at BYU that mentioned sexuality was in the department of public health, where they discussed how to teach sex education. While sex education is important, it is also crucial for young adults to understand topics such as sexual wholeness, marital commitment, sexual response cycles, sexual differences, norms, rules, and sexuality across the lifespan, to name just a few of the topics discussed in SFL 376. This class curriculum is based on research, clinical experience, and teachings from the Church of Jesus Christ.

This class curriculum is based on research, clinical experience, and teachings from the Church of Jesus Christ.

In a world that is continually changing, morally it is hard to know what to believe when it comes to sex, especially because sex is often a taboo subject. The School of Family Life is helping remove cultural misconceptions about sex and introduce the pure doctrines of healthy sexuality in a safe setting where students can feel comfortable. One student who took the new course commented, "Prior to the class I did not like talking about sex because it was either taken too lightly, or it was linked to shame or guilt. This class has filled in this gap in talking about sexuality. It is like I found what I was looking for."

The instruction strives to encompass the emotional and spiritual aspects of sexuality right alongside the physical aspects. Dr. Chelom Leavitt, one of the professors who teaches the class, says, "Although as a culture we haven't done this well, blending the gospel and our sexuality is a natural fit. Sexuality is a God-given part of who we are. Real intimacy includes emotional, intellectual, spiritual, relational, and physical intimacy. When we approach sex within marriage from a healthy perspective, we are able to share everything with our spouse – our hopes, dreams, sorrow, triumphs, as well as our body. "

By expanding paradigms and encouraging a gospel perspective this class is an important opportunity for young students to learn what healthy sexuality entails.

Recent Faculty Scholarship

A kiss is not just a kiss: kissing frequency, sexual quality, attachment, and sexual and relationship satisfaction

By Dean M. Busby, Veronica Hanna-Walker, & Chelom E. Leavitt

Scan for full article

Kissing can be thought of as a relationship maintenance behavior and/or as part of the sexual repertoire. Using data from 1,605 participants in committed relationships for at least two years, we analyzed how kissing frequency was associated with specific aspects of the two most recent sexual experiences, attachment, and global sexual and relationship satisfaction using a structural equation model.

How Do Parents Teach Their Children About Work? A Qualitative Exploration of Household Chores, Employment, and Entrepreneurial Experiences

By Christoffer L. Loderup, Joshua E. Timmons, Elisabeth R. Kimball, E. Jeffery Hill, Loren E. Marks, & Ashley B. LeBaron

Scan for full article

This qualitative study examines the question, "How do parents teach their children about work?" The sample included 90 emerging adult "children" (between 18 and 30 years old), 17 parents, and eight grandparents. It spanned two generations in eleven families, and three generations in five families..

Does time spent using social media impact mental health?: An eight-year longitudinal study

By Sarah M.Coyne, Adam A. Rogers, Jessica D. Zurcher, Laura Stockdale, & McCall Booth

Scan for full article

Many studies have found a link between time spent using social media and mental health issues, such as depression and anxiety. However, the existing research is plagued by cross-sectional research and lacks analytic techniques examining individual change over time.

How Parents Balance Desire for Religious Continuity with Honoring Children's Religious Agency

By Betsy Hughes Barrow, David C. Dollahite, & Loren D. Marks

Scan for full article

This study considers relational meanings and processes associated with parents' desire to pass on their religious faith to their children while also honoring their children's personal religious choices.

How Do Parents Teach "No Means No"? An Exploration of How Sexual Consent Beliefs Are Socialized During Adolescence

By Laura M. Padilla-Walker, Ryan McLean, Benjamin Ogles, & Brittany Pollard

Scan for full article

Research on sexual consent has increased in recent years, but we know almost nothing about how beliefs about consent are socialized during adolescence, which likely has important implications for behaviors related to obtaining sexual consent.

By Alan J. Hawkins and
Kathryn Pond Sargent

Anxiously Engaged:

Premarital Education for Latter-day Saint Couples

Kate and Jack (not their real names) seem like your "typical" engaged Latter-day Saint couple: they are both going to school and working, they are busy planning their wedding and celebration, and they are obviously smitten with each other. However, when I (Kathryn) have a chance to chat with the two of them, Kate is charmingly open about her fears related to marriage. She discloses that not only are her parents divorced, but so are two of her siblings. She is worried that she is bringing some kind of "family divorce curse" to their marriage. Jack, on the other hand, tries to calm her and says he is certain they are going to be "fine."

Fast forward a few weeks when I chatted with Jack and Kate after they had completed *Anxiously Engaged* – a premarital program specifically designed for engaged Latter-day Saint couples. Kate seemed more confident and said, "I feel like I can do this; WE can do this. We have tools now that will allow us to be more intentional in our marriage. We aren't just crossing our fingers and hoping we 'got a good marriage'; we feel like we can 'make a good marriage.'" Jack, on the other hand, said, "I think I feel the weight of our decision to marry a lot more than I did before. I honestly thought we were ready. But now I realize that bringing two different people together to try to become one is going to take more effort than I was thinking."

> **I feel like I can do this; WE can do this. We have tools now that will allow us to be more intentional in our marriage. We aren't just crossing our fingers and hoping we 'got a good marriage.'**

In response to a perceived need to provide more premarital education options for members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we have been developing Anxiously Engaged, a short educational program designed to help engaged Latter-day Saint couples increase their understanding of the marriage commitment they are making and strengthen the foundation of their relationship. We have been piloting the program over the past year and are training current students in the curriculum and encouraging them to offer the program wherever they reside after graduation. In addition, we hope to offer online training to SFL alumni later this year.

What Is *Anxiously Engaged*?

Anxiously Engaged contains five lessons designed to be given in three two-hour sessions, for a total of six program hours. The program has religious content as well as research-based, secular

content that we believe aligns well with religious principles. The curriculum is designed with Latter-day Saint couples specifically in mind, but other religious couples also may enjoy and benefit from the program.

The *Anxiously Engaged* curriculum is primarily designed for couples who are marrying for the first time. In the United States, however, nearly half of all marriages are comprised of at least one spouse who was previously married. While *Anxiously Engaged* contains many elements and principles that apply to both first marriages and remarriages, remarriages often involve unique and complex issues not faced in first marriages. Therefore, we are currently working on adapting the *Anxiously Engaged* curriculum for remarrying Latter-day Saint couples (*Anxiously Engaged, Again*) and hope to have a pilot version ready by the end of 2021.

While we think it is optimal to deliver the *Anxiously Engaged* lessons in person, in a small group setting, we think remote, online delivery can be effective, too, and may make it possible to reach more couples. In fact, research is showing that online delivery of relationship education programs reaches more people and can be just as effective.[1]

There are two primary themes in *Anxiously Engaged*. A strong theme that weaves itself throughout the curriculum is that couples need to be less casual and more intentional about their preparation for marriage and their ongoing efforts to maintain a healthy, vibrant relationship. To use a phrase by the prominent marriage researcher Scott Stanley, couples need to *decide, not slide*.[2] A second important theme is becoming one (and becoming more like our Heavenly Parents). "They twain shall be one flesh" (Moses 3:24) is how Adam succinctly articulated the purpose of marriage in scripture. And certainly, the Lord's commandment to "be one; and if ye are not one ye are not mine" (D&C 38:27) applies to spouses, not just general Church members. The curriculum helps couples explore the meaning of this important principle in greater depth and develop skills to intentionally facilitate this life-long process of becoming one.

Couples need to be less casual and more intentional about their preparation for marriage and their ongoing efforts to maintain a healthy, vibrant relationship.

We use the metaphor of an arch, where two pillars lean in, meeting at the apex, which forms a structure that is much stronger than a right-angle post and lentil (cross-beam) structure. We discuss how communication and sexual intimacy foster a greater sense of "we-ness." We talk about how to strengthen commitment. We don't shy away from difficult topics: we broach the topic of abuse and even have couples work together on their "philosophy of divorce," considering when it is justified. The last lesson focuses on nurturing the marital relationship across time – how to counteract "marital entropy." And couples explore how they can reach out and help make a stronger community of marriages.

To help couples apply these important principles to their individual relationships, class time is structured around meaningful "couple conversations." For example, a principle is presented, the class discusses it as a group, and then couples are given time to

1 https://ifstudies.org/blog/what-did-the-pandemic-teach-us-about-online-relationship-education-and-therapy

2 See: http://slidingvsdeciding.blogspot.com/.

discuss the questions to help them apply the principle to their specific relationship. Approximately one-third of class time is devoted to these important couple conversations. Couples are given "homework" exercises to deepen their learning between sessions.

Anxiously Engaged covers only some of the "essentials" and there is more content that could be covered. But we think that asking couples to commit to more than six hours of lesson time runs the risk of having too many pass on participation. Within the core six-hour curriculum, however, we let participant couples know that we have developed several supplemental lessons and resources that are available on our website: http://AnxiouslyEngaged.byu.edu (for use either before or after the wedding).

We developed *Anxiously Engaged* to meet an important need. Who is "*we*?" Alan Hawkins is a professor of family life at Brigham Young University and a nationally recognized scholar on relationship education. Kathryn Pond Sargent has a master's degree from BYU in Family Sciences, is an SFL adjunct faculty member, and has taught marriage preparation Institute classes in her home stake for many years. Tamara Gilliland also helped develop the course; she has a master's degree from BYU and has been a passionate proponent of family life education for more than two decades.

What Is the Need?

Why is *Anxiously Engaged* even needed? In short, we believe not enough Latter-day Saint couples are preparing effectively for marriage. "If ye are prepared, ye shall not fear," we learn in modern scripture (D&C 38:30). (Confession time: neither of us can brag about how effective our preparation was!) While couples invest hours and hours in planning a fast-approaching wedding that is over in a day, they let slip crucial preparation for a marriage that they hope will last for time and all eternity.

Our research on Utah couples, many of whom belong to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, suggests that only 40% do any kind of premarital education or counseling (and we suspect that much of it may be quite informal and not very effective). Even more puzzling to us is the fact that, among the 60% of Utah couples who did no premarital education or counseling, only about 20% wish they had done so. Too many couples fail to grasp the importance and value of effective marriage preparation. Many are not even aware that such preparation opportunities exist.

Research indicates that a large majority of engaged couples who want some kind of formal marriage preparation go to their faith community to get it.[3] Some faiths require that couples marrying in the church participate in their official premarital education program. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints does not have such a requirement, although Latter-day Saint Institutes of Religion do have a curriculum on this subject that they teach from time to time. And some stakes and wards offer curricula that they have developed locally (especially Young Single Adult stakes and wards).

Anxiously Engaged is not an official marriage preparation curriculum approved by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Yet, we are taught

3 Schramm, D. G., Marshall, J. P., Harris, V. W., & George, A. (2003). Marriage in Utah: 2003 baseline statewide survey on marriage and divorce. Salt Lake City: UT Department of Workforce Services.

in the Doctrine & Covenants to be engaged in good causes of our own free will: "V*erily I say, men [and women] should be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness; For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as men [and women] do good they shall in nowise lose their reward*." (D&C 58:27-28, emphasis added) In addition, Elder M. Russell Ballard has reiterated that the unofficial efforts of experts in various topics should be valued by Church members.[4] We think this program can provide a valuable service for engaged Latter-day Saint couples.

Getting Involved

But how can we provide this program to the many couples who would benefit from it? That is where SFL alumni are key. You have been given a tremendous education in marriage and family relationships. After graduation, you scattered to thousands of locations across North America and the world. You are actively engaged with Church congregations and members. We invite you to be a proactive resource wherever you go to offer *Anxiously Engaged* to Latter-day Saint couples. How you do this is up to you. For instance, you could let your local church leaders know what you can do and invite them to encourage engaged couples to participate.

Photo by Nathan Dumlao on Unsplash

4 M. Russell Ballard, "The Opportunities and Responsibilities of CES Teachers in the 21st Century," address to CES religious educators, Salt Lake City, 26 February 2016, https://www.churchofjesuschrist.org/broadcasts/article/evening-with-a-general-authority/2016/02/the-opportunities-and-responsibilities-of-ces-teachers-in-the-21st-century?lang=eng&_r=1

Or you could recruit couples through other channels, such as social media. Frankly, as you start providing this valuable service, word will spread, and your reputation will draw interested couples to you. However you do it, be an agent anxiously engaged in a good cause; build a marriage ministry where you provide a needed service.

Before offering the program, we ask that you participate in a free, online instructor training program. We hope to start offering these half-day training sessions by the end of 2021. If you are interested in offering *Anxiously Engaged* where you live, please drop Dr. Hawkins a note (hawkinsa@byu.edu). Once you have been officially trained, you are authorized to use this curriculum in whatever ways you feel are best. We ask, however, that you provide it as a service and only charge to cover the cost of expenses, such as copying materials and refreshments. We plan to regularly update the curriculum based on the most recent research and inspired words of Church leaders. We will contact trained facilitators when there have been significant updates to the curriculum, and we will post the new materials on the website where they can be downloaded for free.

Impact

When couples prepare effectively, they will be less anxious about what lies ahead. One thing we know about young people today is that (compared to previous generations) they are more anxious, generally, and they are more worried about being able to develop a healthy, happy marriage, specifically.[5] Effective preparation will significantly decrease their anxiety about married life and increase their chances of forming a healthier, happier and stable marriage. It will also help them avoid some of the disappointing and discouraging potholes and pitfalls of early married life and reduce their chances of divorce.[6] Finally, anxiousness does not connote uneasiness or distress; it can also mean eagerness. So, on a more positive note, we hope *Anxiously Engaged* will give couples greater confidence so that they will be more eager, more optimistic, and more excited about the divine path of marriage that they have begun to walk. We hope SFL alumni will want to become involved in helping more Latter-day Saint couples effectively prepare for marriage.

5 Willoughby, B. J., & James, S. L. (2017). The marriage paradox. New York: Oxford.

6 Clyde, T. L., & Hawkins, A. J. (2019). Revising premarital interventions for the next generation. Journal of Marital and Family Therapy, 46, 149-166.

Alan J. Hawkins

Kathryn Pond Sargent

Tamara Gilliland

Phto by David Mark from Pixabay

Millennial Marriage

Review by Emma Todd

Forget *almost* everything you thought you knew about marriage.

The Millennial Marriage by BYU Professor Brian Willoughby compares today's marrying millennials to seminal research from the 20th century – and there are important changes.

One of the largest differences between millennial marriages and the older-generation is a new focus on personal gain, personal happiness, and personal growth within marriage. Dr. Willoughby calls these novel millennial marriages, "me-marriages."

At a first glance, this new focus might seem like a negative advancement, but these me-marriages aren't all bad. Dr. Willoughby's research suggests that these types of marriage might be working well – at least initially. While the marriages are generally more focused on personal gain, married millennials also exhibit additional strong focus on altruism and making their partner happy.

How are me-marriages faring?

So is there any research that suggests that married millennials are better off than non-married millennials? When it comes to frequency and satisfaction in sex, there's not a lot of difference – but married millennials have significantly higher relationship satisfaction than their cohabiting counterparts.

Married millennials (compared to non-married millennials) are also more likely to report higher personal income, have more insurance (such as health and homeowners), and be contributing to a retirement fund. Me-marriages were also associated with better individual health, but this may be due to a selection effect – where healthier people may be the ones getting married in the first place. However, millennials may be overall unhealthier compared to previous generations.

Unique challenges and circumstances me-marriages face

While married millennials have some unique benefits compared to non-married millennials, they also face new challenges.

A common issue is negotiating marriage and their education or career. Especially with more women in the workforce, millennials have to decide if they will both make career sacrifices or if they'll completely prioritize one over the other. In past generations, it would be common to see the husband being the one working, but millennials are now making this decision based on preference – regardless of gender.

What about when kids enter the picture for these me-marriages? It's no secret that many studies have found that relationship satisfaction takes a dip when spouses become parents, and millennial data shows mostly the same. The key difference between married millennials and generations past is that even though there's a decrease in marital satisfaction, they're still happier than if they never got married.

Though seemingly contradictory, millennials who viewed marriage as a means for personal happiness and gain still intertwined parenthood and marriage; creating a stable environment for their children was a large priority. This priority often came even before the marital relationship.

Roles in and out of the home now have little to do with gender, and there's even less of a division of labor pattern.

> **"Millennials appear to long for role-less marriages where tasks, inside and outside of the home, are not really assigned to anyone."**

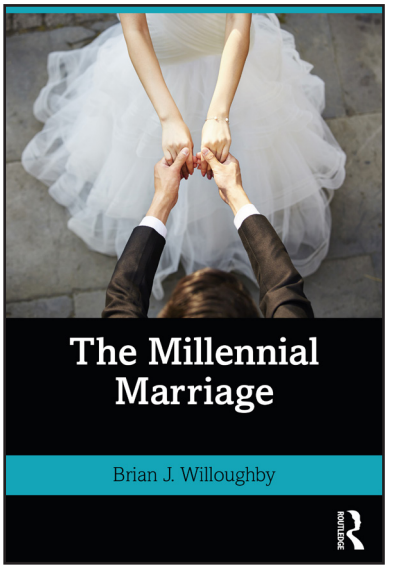
Instead, because of the added focus on healthy communication, they distribute roles and tasks as they go, as needs change.

When it comes to religion, millennials are uniquely adapting religion for their personal goals and needs – and many aren't wanting to be a part of organized religion at all.

As for the large minority of millennial couples who were still "traditionally religious" (still participating in organized religion), their beliefs were central to virtually all of their marital processes, from mate selection to marriage as their number one priority.

Dr. Willoughby also takes the time to acknowledge that the findings in this book will definitely not apply to every millennial marriage – especially same-sex and interracial marriage. The previously mentioned focus on communication also may help buffer against the traditional risks of these diverse couples.

While there are still many aspects of millennial marriages that are unknown and unseen, there are a couple of things that will probably help these relationships last and thrive. Married millennials need to set clear expectations for themselves as well as look to positive examples of marriage from generations past. Millennial "me-marriages" are navigating uncharted territories, and it will be very interesting to see where these unmarked paths will lead.



After a several-year hiatus, Jocelyn Wikle re-launched the SFL 489 Family Policy class in Fall 2020. A primary goal of the course is to teach students to effectively bring about positive policy change for children and families. All students in the course had positive experiences in policy engagements. Students indicated that the course was highly meaningful and enlarged their abilities.

Describe the process of SFL 489: what do students do throughout the semester?

The course starts with a unit on policy engagement theory. This background provides students with tools for policy advocacy as well as introduces them to the policy process. Students then are introduced to policy evaluation. The class then addresses policy topics important to children and families. With this foundation, students work on a policy topic that they are interested in. Students research a topic about children or families and formulate a specific policy recommendation. The class culminates with students engaging in policy advocacy as they share their policy recommendations with policy influencers.

Most classroom experiences regarding policy work and family deal more with learning about laws and their impacts, but you have students who actually engage in the process of shaping laws. What inspired you to take this approach?

As I came to this course with a blank slate and thought about how to provide my students with experiential learning opportunities, I knew students would internalize policy engagement by doing policy work themselves. The course therefore used a traditional approach as a foundation and augmented

&

concepts through having students do scaffolded policy engagement work that is meaningful to them.

You've had some students gain traction in the state legislature. Is this something you expected when you embarked on teaching this class?

Often policy work takes time and money, and in the space of one semester, students had neither. Instead, students spent considerable time preparing high-quality engagement materials demonstrating that their policy recommendations were backed by sound research. While initially I was surprised that students' policy recommendations gained attention from state lawmakers, it gave me confidence that policymakers listen and respond when people follow best practices in policy engagement and make family policy recommendations that are backed by sound research.

What are you hoping students learn from this process?

First, I hope students leave the class with practical skills and experience, so their voices can be amplified in a variety of life settings going forward. Second, I hope the course ignites a passion in students for building communities that support child development and healthy families.

New Faculty Hires

Andrea Kinghorn-Busby

Dr. Busby studies inequality in children's home, school, and neighborhood contexts. Specifically, she researches how violence impacts children, how children and families experience poverty in suburban communities, and how parents socialize their children about economic inequality. Dr. Busby holds a PhD in Human Development and Social Policy and MS in Statistics from Northwestern University. She received her BS in Family Life from BYU. Before graduate school, she worked as a teacher through Teach for America and served a Spanish-speaking mission in Seattle. She has two kiddos with her husband, Ethan, who is a political scientist at BYU.

Ashley Fraser

Dr. Ashley Jimenez Fraser is an aspiring LDS researcher, teacher, wife, and mother of four. Ashley originally hails from Everett, WA, and loves to laugh, hike, read, eat good food, and love people. Ashley's research revolves around positive youth development, including the socialization and expression of hope, empathy, and service. Additionally, Ashley seeks to understand interlocking roles of parents, media, school, and child temperament in the development of prejudice and discrimination, and conversely, anti-racism. Ashley will continue to research and teach about positive and moral child development, within a framework of faith and discipleship, in BYU's School of Family Life.

Ashley LeBaron-Black

Ashley is so excited and grateful to be joining the SFL faculty. She received a PhD in Family Studies and Human Development from the University of Arizona. She's grateful for the opportunity to do (through research, teaching, and mentoring) she's passionate about: helping families strengthen their relationships and improve their wellbeing. Her research focus is family finance, including financial socialization and couple finance. She recently married a wonderful man named Tom. She enjoys jogging, playing tennis and pickleball, reading a good book on a sunny beach, playing a few instruments, studying art history, and cooking/baking with Tom.

Daniel Frost

Daniel (Danny) Frost is excited to join the School of Family Life as the Director of the Integrative Writing Program. Prior to this appointment, Danny received a PhD in Politics at Princeton University and taught Political Science at BYU and Clemson University. He has taught writing to university students in many capacities and is particularly enthusiastic about SFL's public scholarship emphasis. Danny's writing interests include marriage, family, sexual morality, personal identity, and moral reasoning, among others. He enjoys hiking, biking, and gardening with his wife and two children.

An Inspired Meeting Leads to Inspiring Learning

KAYLIN IS GRADUATING with a degree in human development. She is a writer, a researcher, a returned missionary, a wife, a new mom, a pickleball player, and an advocate for families. "At BYU, I learned to identify truth, to see true principles in application and connect them to gospel principles," Kaylin says. "I want to help build strong families in our society for the rest of my life."

A few years ago, while riding the train to Provo, Kaylin had a chance meeting with Professor Julie Haupt. Prompted by the Spirit, Haupt struck up a conversation with Kaylin. Months later, Haupt became an important mentor to Kaylin, who published three articles with Haupt's support. Kaylin was a TA for Haupt and went on to be on the School of Family Life editorial board and one of its editors in chief. This is inspiring learning.

To provide support for students like Kaylin in the School of Family Life, go to **give.byu.edu/sfl**.

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"Seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith."
D&C 88:118