

# The Rhetoric of Chiasmus #8

## Relationships

*Personal interactions and communications are arguably the most difficult of all human activities - most difficult in the sense of attaining understanding, unequivocally and immediately, between two parties. Here are just some of my observations about the state of humanity's personal affairs....*

### MARRIAGE

Being twice married with seven kids, I think I've learnt a few things about the institution - the good/the bad, the upsides/downsides and so on. As a young man, I wish, though, I'd had early advice something like this: **When you're playing the field, be quick about fielding the play!** That's a tactic I never did learn well, if at all; I was always somewhat at a loss about how to operate, so to speak.

My years growing up in a typical dysfunctional family gave me some inklings about marriage while observing my parents' interactions. Over twenty years in my first, however, I did finally come to this realization: **Marriage can be either a hell of a ride or a ride to hell.** Hence, from a deeply personal perspective, my first turn with marriage fits the above second condition. Thankfully, my second marriage is still the opposite of the first, in many positive ways.

It is said, and it is instilled since childhood, that honesty is always the best policy. Apart from certain situations peculiar to each of us, my education in life has actually showed the opposite: very few people like to be told the truth about many things. That said, though, after fifty years of observation and contemplation, I have come to the conclusion that **the secret of success in marriage is this: in marriage, there *is* no success in secrets.**

Having survived a divorce, I guess I could say I've gone the whole nine yards. What amazes me is that many people go through the marriage-divorce cycle numerous times. Idly thinking about that one day, a pithy statement about it sprung to mind, thus: **Marriage rings the changes in our lives; divorce merely changes the rings.** A touch cynical, I guess, but what goes around, comes around....

### FAMILY & FRIENDS

Do we need family *and* friends in equal measure? I can't answer that, absolutely. But I do believe **I shouldn't waste my time with people who only have time to waste.** One must be cautious, however, in rushing to judgment: it's all *too* easy to offend with actions or words. So, for the best relationships, I think **common courtesy demands that courtesy is more than common ...** don't you agree?

And, if you are offended, it's obviously stressful and counter-productive to remain silent. Yet, so many people are afraid of confrontation with another, perhaps confusing that with

conflict. When properly considered, however, it should be clear that **confrontation of problems will help to ensure there *are* no problems with confrontations.** Having said that, I must add a further caution: **Control your anger or it controls you!**

I grew up with seven siblings, with myself more or less at the midpoint. At the two schools I attended, I had a similar number of friends. Like other youth, I spent more time with the latter and discussed the usual topics with them, but rarely with any family member. As the years passed, I dimly realized there was a major difference in the way family and friends treated me. Forty years later, the irony crystallized with this assessment: **Often, family knows you the least and judges you the most, while friends know you the most and judge you the least.**

## LOVE

It's problematic to make any categorical claims about love, which is, I think, one of the most misused and abused words in the language; there are just *too* many types and levels of 'love'. So here, I have a few words about the love between adult men and women.

It is said men don't understand women. I *could* also claim the reverse, I suppose. But, there's no doubt men lack certain social niceties that seem to come easily to women - remembering anniversaries and birthdays being right near the top. Or, for example, not paying enough attention to his partner. Annoying aspects for women in two ways: **first, by his absence when he's present and second, by his presents when he's absent.**

We need each other in obvious ways, to be sure. However, **while man needs woman ... woman kneads man more.** But, when does needing become irritating needling? Get too much of that - either way - over years and the rot can set in. Sometimes to the point of eroding trust between a pair. Obviously, **I can trust someone without loving, but can I love without trusting?**

I'm not at all sure love can be *that* blind between a man and a woman. A lack of trust, carried to the extreme, will eventually result in **a lover's indifference; which *will* make all the difference in love.** Indifference, after all, is the true opposite of love, not hate. People get confused about that, including me when I hear of **some people who love to hate each other, while others just hate to love each other.** Is that how love *can* work, sometimes? Beats me....

Anyway, the older you get, the less you have to worry about it all. **Leave it to the young who simply have love in mind; at my age, you simply love to *have* a mind.**