

Summary of the radical idea of marrying for love

[Life](#), [Love](#)



Summary of “ The Radical Idea of Marrying for Love” In the essay “ The Radical Idea of Marrying for Love”, Stephanie Coontz surveys the history of marriage throughout the world, revealing its historical purposes and the philosophies surrounding it. Coontz gives examples of how once people married for utility, necessity, and social advantages. She explains how over time and through the changing ideas about love and the sexes that people now marry for love, companionship, and personal happiness. Before modern time the idea of marrying for love was discouraged.

Men and women participated in arranged marriages or married for reasons of practicality rather than affection. Some considered marital love a hindrance to more valued relationships between family and god; whereas in modern time it is expected that you put your spouse before any other family member or obligation. Although some cultures believed that love would develop after marriage, it was not a requirement for a successful marriage as it is today; the measurement of a successful marriage then was financial prosperity and healthy children.

Historically in some instances love was meant only for a mistress or concubine, not a wife or husband. In some parts of the world there is no marital exclusivity that we see in modern Europe and America. In these places, men and women take multiple wives or husbands, or even extra marital sexual partners without the jealousy that would surely arise in modern relationships. In these places multiple partners are acceptable because they benefit the family in providing for children and in sharing responsibility.

Coontz attributes the shift in marital expectations from marrying for practicality to marrying for love, to the social enlightenments, political revisions, and financial changes that occurred from the 17th century forward. She states that, “ basing marriage on love and companionship represented a break with thousands of years of tradition”. These breaks in tradition lead to many new fears about the future of marriage, the family, and how its new structure would affect society. Ultimately these changes would “ pose a serious threat to the stability of the new system of marriage. ”