

What's wrong in marrying?

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



On reading Catherine Newman essay “ I Do. Not. : Why I Won’t Marry? ,” the first point that arises in the mind is the amount of power and choice that women enjoy today. One cannot simply imagine this kind of freedom of thought or expression from a woman say, a hundred years back. Those were the times when most women didn’t even have the liberty to analyze or acknowledge their needs and desires. While the freedom that women enjoy today is a welcome change, Newman’s essay is wrought with a number of misconceptions and apprehensions.

It appears that she hasn’t gotten over the fear of slavery that people experienced centuries ago, especially the one brought by the institution of marriage. The invisible bond that keeps together any relationship is trust. It may a bond between a child and its mother or father, between friends, between a student and a teacher, between two life partners, or between husband and wife. In today’s world a man and a woman have every freedom to choose their life partners.

And, they can also choose on how they wish to live—whether they want to formalize their relationship by marrying or simply carry on until they are sure of each other. Prudent people will use their wisdom in weighing the pros and cons of any relationship that they may get into. Newman’s objection to marriage is the way in which a bride is “ given away” by her father to her husband in the altar. She argues that the number of gifts that the father bestows on the daughter and the heavy money that he spends on the wedding make the bride look like a “ commodity” that is being transferred from one to another for a sum.

By this argument she overlooks the love and care that the father has for the daughter, and the last thing that will be in the father's mind at the altar will be the welfare of his daughter and her new family and definitely not the money that he is spending on the occasion. There are many marriages that take place in a very simple manner and there are many that take place in a pompous manner. It all depends on the spending capacity of the families concerned and that doesn't have any relation to the bondage and goodwill that goes with the ceremony.

Newman mocks at the ritual where the bride blows the candle from her father by telling that the bride blows away her "naughty old independent self." This straw man argument totally misrepresents the bride's position and it is a negative way of looking at things. It would have been healthier if she had looked at the ritual from the point of view of the bride lighting up one for her husband and had said that it portrays that beginning of a new life. This only goes to strengthen Newman's misconceptions of marriage.

Another lame argument that Newman puts forth against marriage is by projecting the gay people. She argues that married people fail to acknowledge gay people and even humiliate them. This is a gross generalization and her fear of marriage is further proved when she asks the readers to assume marriage as a "fragile and gasping little injured bird" in trying to promote the cause of the gay community. She acknowledges that she had had gay relationship in the past until she found her partner, Michael.

Her thoughts are baseless when she argues that she will be doing injustice to her gay friends "if I put on a beaded cream bodice and vowed myself away

in front of all our gay friends. " She assumes that they will be " gossiping wickedly" against her and even goes to justify that " what they're snubbing should certainly be a viable option. " Newman states out loud and clear that she doesn't believe in monogamy. The argument that closely follows this statement is purely sensual in nature. She argues if " climbing onto the same exact person for fifty years" will maximize our " brief fling on the earth. She argues for variety and says that " it seemed cruel and unusual that one should have to give up so much in order to commit to a man. " She agrees that she and her partner do not practice monogamy and doesn't seem to have any regrets about it. This doesn't justify her stand against marriage nor are her arguments sound enough to rationalize polygamy. Some fears that Newman expresses towards marriage are the fear of losing her individual identity and the life-long commitment that wedlock demands. She conveys that neither she nor her partner ever felt the need to get married.

She argues that strongly held beliefs on marriage and commitment can be aloof " from the world where people actually feel things... The best life partner is exactly the sort of person who doesn't crave possession. " She claims that marriage brings with it the baggage of possession of one's wife or husband! This argument is feeble in today's world. People are quite independent to do what they want, and what keeps a family together is not " possession" but simple caring, and love and take. Newman seems to enjoy the fact that she gets to choose and be chosen to continue her relationship with her partner every day.

She says that when a couple is not married and when they remain partners, they have to constantly keep choosing each other. She seems to take pleasure in the choice that she and her partner make every day to keep the relationship going. This way they feel more wanted and the “unmarried space” helps them to move forward and keeps them going she says. Dr. Neil Clark Warren in *The Cohabitation Epidemic* sums up this attitude beautifully well: “The fundamental agreement upon which live-in relationships are based is conditional commitment. This attitude says, “I’ll stick with you as long as things go well.

But if we run into problems, all bets are off.” Relationships that begin with a quasi-commitment carry the same mind-set into marriage. When things become trying, as inevitably they will from time to time, the spouses say goodbye.” Newman says that they are quite devoted to each other, and with the birth of her child the bond between them has only grown stronger. She feels that there cannot be anything more “permanent soul binding than the sharing of the child.” She proudly confesses that her partner has taken on to his duties as a father like a fish to water.

But somehow, the fear of getting married seems to linger on and she continues arguing against marriage. Newman’s fears are purely psychological in nature and they do not have any solid reason behind them. In putting forth pseudo intellectual arguments she does not offer clarity of thought. Her thoughts are distorted views coming from an immature person with some kind of a psychological fear for commitment. It is natural that a person who seems to have a fear psychosis towards marriage objects to it.

Wedding or live-in relationship—it all depends upon the individuals. As Nancy L. Van Pelt and Fleming H.

Revell put it, “ Whatever happiness is achieved results from personal effort, knowledge, love, and commitment. ” No magic happens with marriages in making individuals better. There are men and women who walk out of marriages even after having children. So, Newman’s argument that kids are “ permanent soul binding” is void. However, with marriage, the commitment becomes legal and the people involved in the break up are legally bound to fulfill certain obligations to each other. So even while the break up is painful, there is still a legal protection offered. In a live-in relationship, this protection doesn’t exist.