

Expect 'normal transitions' in marriage



Psychologist Paul Tournier said, "I've been married six times — all to the same woman."

Tournier explained that he never got divorced, but rather his marriage transitioned from one stage to another.

All healthy marriages experience change and transition. That's what keeps them alive and growing. Some of the stages of growth are predictable, others are not.

Following is an "Overview of the Stages of Marriage."

For simplicity, we've divided marriage into the chronological time frames of:

- Newly married (0-5 years).
- Middle years (6-25 years), which usually coincides with the active parenting stage.
- Later years (26+ years), also known as the "empty nest" years.

Not all marriages fit neatly into these categories. Those in second marriages may find

times shortened; however, certain developmental tasks generally take place during each stage.

Another way of looking at transitions in marriage is through cycles of growth. Most relationships move through cycles that include:

- Romance.
- Disillusionment.
- Mature love.

In this framework, the stages emerge more

quickly, with disillusionment often coming soon after the honeymoon. Mature love evolves, hopefully, after several years of marriage.

In "The 7 Stages of Marriage," Sari Harrar and Rita DeMaria identify the stages as:

- Passion.
- Realization.
- Rebellion.
- Cooperation.
- Reunion.
- Explosion.
- Completion.

However you describe it, the essential point is that a marriage is a process. It evolves. It helps to know what to expect at the various stages. Otherwise, normal transitions may be misinterpreted as loss of love or reasons to divorce.

— Reprinted from www.foryourmarriage.org, an initiative of the U.S. Catholic bishops



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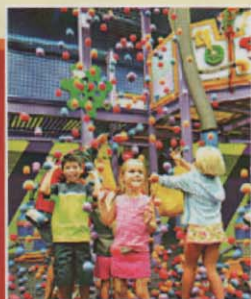
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