

The Marriage SCENE You Must Move Beyond

Today's Western culture is often less than helpful or friendly to long-term Christian marriage. Few believers would dispute that, and you would probably agree that marriage is more like a marathon than a sprint. Yet so many marriages dissolve into misery, or even end. Understanding the SCENE in your marriage provides some fascinating perspective.

This idea comes from Dr Tim Elmore, president and founder of Growing Leaders and world-renowned expert on Gen Y and Gen Z. He describes the 21st-century reality young people are facing using the word SCENE as an acrostic:

- S – speed
- C – convenient
- E – entertainment
- N – nurture
- E – entitlement

Those same ideas apply strongly to marriage, and that's what I want to explore today.

What's the SCENE in your marriage?

S – Speed

Whether spoken or unspoken, the unconscious expectation many people have is that saying "I do" will make a marriage. Add a little prayer to the wedding day and perhaps the honeymoon, and voila, you have a marriage!

That expectation is understandable in a culture of speed. After all, we have fast food, high-speed internet and any information available at the push of a button. Instant gratification is expected.

And the corollary belief is that *if speed is good, slow is bad*.

But marriage doesn't work that way. While a wedding happens in a day, a marriage grows over a lifetime. It's truly impossible for communication, understanding, trust, and intimacy to happen in a moment.

A wedding is like an acorn. A marriage is more like an oak tree—stronger, more beautiful and more useful as the decades progress.

C – Convenient

Today's world is ever more convenient; banking, shopping, eating, online church services and a whole lot more. "There's an app for that." Of course some of these conveniences come with side effects. But the expectation and experience in our world is for ever more convenience.

And the corollary is that *if convenient is good, hard is bad*.

Ask anyone who has been married more than a few weeks (or perhaps a few hours!) and they will tell you that marriage is hard. Ask a senior citizen who has had a long and healthy marriage if it was easy. Not!

A wedding might be like seeing a mountain peak from an airplane window. But a healthy marriage is more like climbing that mountain with your own legs and standing on the summit. Nothing quite compares with the exhilaration of actually doing it.

E – Entertainment

Our culture is saturated with entertainment. If you have a TV, a computer screen or a smartphone, you can find any variety of entertainment you wish 24/7. And if you don't like what's on one screen, you probably have a couple other screens you can switch to.

And the corollary is that *if entertainment is good, boring is bad.*

Entertainment is a great killer of creativity. Good research shows that boredom is the fertile soil of innovation. One must be intentional to approach boredom that way. Especially in marriage expecting the fluff of always feeling stimulated sabotages the security of commitment.

A wedding is rather like sitting in the audience for a movie, perhaps a very good movie. A healthy marriage is more like the satisfaction and soul-filling nourishment of a weekend at the beach doing nothing but being together. “Boring” is often where relationship grows deepest.

N – Nurture

It’s normal today to expect protection from everything. Vehicle airbags, insurance for everything imaginable, multi-page legal protection documents for anything as “simple” as a cellphone—while exploitation is wrong, such an environment gives people no understanding that life itself is not guaranteed.

And the corollary is that *if nurture is good, risk is bad.*

Anything worth anything comes with risks. Trying to avoid risk at all costs is futile. When it comes to marriage, you will marry a sinner. (There are no other humans available!) Choosing a spouse thoughtfully and prayerfully is wise, but something as valuable as marriage comes with no guarantees.

A wedding might be like getting a very nice bonus as an employee. A marriage is more like striking out as an entrepreneur; you know it will require everything in you to make it, but the potential rewards are more than worth it.

E – Entitlement

All the above factors foster a sense of entitlement. Everybody

owes me: my parents, my school, the government, my doctor, my church, even God owes me something. And if something in my life isn't going well, it's somebody else's fault. Who can I blame?

How sad!

The corollary is that *if entitlement is good, labor is bad.*

A good marriage doesn't just happen. The universe doesn't owe you happiness, or ease or that all your needs will be met. Your spouse doesn't owe you a good life. Any reasonably healthy marriage only develops because both partners worry more about their spouse's needs than their own. They each give 100% without keeping score.

A wedding could be likened to a cubic zirconia—shiny and bright while new. A healthy marriage is more like a diamond, developed over time and under pressure.

May you move beyond the 21st-century SCENE in your marriage to a relationship that is truly priceless. {eoa}

Dr. Carol Peters-Tanksley is both a board-certified OB-GYN physician and an ordained doctor of ministry. As an author and speaker, she loves helping people discover the **Fully Alive** kind of life Jesus came to bring us. Visit her website at .

This article originally appeared at .

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