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About the meaning of interpersonal ties. From the marital tie to the familial one

O znaczeniu więzi międzyludzkich. Od więzi małżeńskiej do więzi rodzicielskiej

Streszczenie

Umiejętność dobierania się w pary ma ogromne znaczenie dla całego późniejszego życia dwojga ludzi, a odczuwane przez partnerów związku zadowolenie i szczęście gwarantują jego trwałość. Silna i trwała więź małżeńska jest niezastąpionym fundamentem więzi rodzinnej. W prezentowanym artykule analizuję ewolucję bliskiej relacji interpersonalnej między partnerami (od partnerstwa – przez małżeństwo – po rodzinę) oraz wskazuję na wagę licznych czynników, tj. miłość, bliskość, podobieństwo partnerów, atrakcyjność fizyczna, wzajemne lubienie się i uzupełnianie się oraz kompetencje, jakie partnerzy ci posiadają w konstytuowaniu się wzajemnej więzi – podstawy budującej przyszłą rodzinę. Więź małżeńska jest podstawą i szczególnym rodzajem więzi rodzinnej. Proces kształtowania się więzi rozpoczyna się z chwilą tworzenia rodziny. Oboje małżonkowie wnoszą do związku takie czynniki więzi, jak: wzajemną miłość, cechy charakteru, system wartości oraz warunki materialne. Wspólne życie prowadzi do wypracowania kolejnych elementów składających się na więź, do których możemy zaliczyć wzajemną wyrozumiałość, tolerancję, zaufanie, wspólne cele, zainteresowania, posiadanie dzieci. Dzięki istnieniu poczucia więzi w rodzinie jednostka może zaspokajać wszelkie potrzeby, od biologicznych począwszy, przez społeczne do psychicznych, dążąc do osiągania określonych wartości.

Słowa kluczowe: więź małżeńska, więź rodzinna, miłość, rodzina.

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Abstract

The ability of creating couples is greatly important for the whole future life of two people, and the satisfaction and happiness felt by the partners in a relationship guarantees its durability. In the present article, I analyze the evolution of the close interpersonal relations between the two sides (of the partnership – through marriage – and after in the family). The marital bond is the basis and a special kind of a family bond. The bond formation process begins at the moment of creating the family. Both spouses bring to the relationship factors such as: mutual love, character traits, a system of values and material conditions. Living together leads to the development of further elements of the bond which can include: mutual understanding, tolerance, trust, shared goals, interests, and having children. Thanks to the existence of a sense of family ties, an individual is able to meet all their needs, ranging from biological, social to the psychological ones, and reaching to achieve the specified values.

Keywords: marital tie, familial tie, love, family.

> "It's the family that decides where we come from,
> Where the beginning of our social existence is,
> We're not people out of nowhere, without roots in any culture
> Places where we, our parents and our grandparents were born,
> Determine our own point on the map of this spacious world."
>
> (H. Izdebska, *Więź rodzinna* (*Eng. Family Tie*))

Introduction

Twenty-four centuries ago, Aristotle argued that people – men and women – are naturally created to live together as couples. This combination of beings of the opposite sex, who cannot exist without each other, creates a home, therefore a family.

The ability to form a couple is greatly important for the whole future life of two people, and the satisfaction and happiness felt by the partners in a relationship guarantee its durability. Virginia Satir indicates that each couple consists of three parts: two individual units (you and I), and the relationship that exists between them (us). "We" occurs when partners establish contact with each other. That is the moment from when they experience the joys, pleasures, and sometimes difficulties of being together, of making decisions together and functioning as a part of a larger system. "If the relationship between the partners is right, each of parts has enough space for itself, and each of them is equally important"[1]. In such situations we do not deal with the so-called objectification, limitation, or appropriation of a partner. I think that the author wanted to draw attention to the crucial issue of being together in a subjective way; to the possibility of creating an optimal relationship between a man and a woman, in which respect for the autonomy, independence and uniqueness of the other person is the

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[1] V. Satir, *Terapia rodziny*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2000, p. 297.

basis for a successful relationship. A similar message, in my opinion, is that of the philosophy of dialogue – suggested by Martin Buber. His well-known statement: you are you and I am I, if we meet it is great – captures the essence of relationships between people, where there is no compulsion and no danger of losing one's freedom, where "each of the two perceives the other one in that way and therefore in the same way he or she communicates; one does not consider and treat the other as an object, but as a partner in a life event"[2].

Partnership and Love

The creation of closer interpersonal relationships between men and women is affected (apart from a subjective perception of a partner) by other factors, such as: proximity, similarity of partners, physical attractiveness, mutual liking, and complementarities or competences that the partners have[3]. When the relationships between both partners get deeper, a feeling of love is "born" between them.

Love has a central place in human life. However, does the liquid concept of modernity somehow devalue the meaning of love nowadays? Has the name: "love" lost its former importance and meaning? Do not we use it too hastily and too often, therefore making its sense empty? Apparently, "the presence of love transforms us when we experience it and absorbs our longing, when it is absent"[4]. As anthropologists assume love is experienced in all cultures and each language has a word for its determination. "It is an integral part of the human experience, accessible to every person"[5]. The most well-known concept, designed to give a scientific tone to this feeling, is the "Three-component concept of love" by Robert Sternberg, according to which the phenomenon of love consists of three components: intimacy, passion and commitment. Intimacy is expressed by means of attachment and interdependence between the partners. Passion, on the other hand, is determined by strong emotions, both positive such as joy, desire or tenderness, and negative, manifested in pain, jealousy and longing. Commitment – also called in this concept "an attachment" means the decisions and actions made to transform a relationship of love into a lasting relationship and to allow it to continue, even in spite of the obstacles[6]. Love is the force that binds two people who want to create something that will allow them to go

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[2] M. Buber, *Między osobą a osobą*, [in:] J. Steward (ed.), *Mosty zamiast murów*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2007, p. 596.

[3] Compare: D. Dwyer, *Bliskie relacje interpersonalne*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2005.

[4] D.M. Buss, *Ewolucja pożądania. Strategie doboru seksualnego ludzi*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 1996, p. 10.

[5] Ibidem, p. 10.

[6] B. Wojciszke, *Człowiek wśród ludzi. Zarys psychologii społecznej*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2002, pp. 8–16.

through life together and to face any adversity. According to Erich Fromm there is no thing called "love." In fact, there is only an act of love. Love is a creative activity. It assumes care, knowledge, response, affirmation and joy. Fromm believes that "love is the only way in the act of fusion to find out the answer to my question. In the act of love, in the act of giving oneself, in the act of transpiring each other, I find myself, I discover myself, I find both of us, I find a human being"[7]. A similar statement on the subject of love was described by Zygmunt Bauman who argues that "love finds its meaning not in the desire of things that are not finished, complete and finite, but in the desire to participate in becoming and creating these things. Love is something of transcendence; it is just the name of the creative impulse, which is why it is risky because, like with any other act of creation, we can never be sure where it will lead us"[8].

Love is, above all, an attitude towards the other person; "it is a form of relationship with others, the most important theme of human life that determines the happiness of oneself. It is an attitude that respects the dignity of another person, and recognizes one's equality"[9].

Love and marriage

The feeling of love between a man and a woman often leads to the decision to get married. Love and marriage are connected to each other in every human society. "According to the ideal, marriage is the end of romance, but it is also the beginning of a more serious undertaking, and this truth is expressed in all societies, in their laws and regulations relating to marriage"[10].

Each partner brings to the relationship a system of values, beliefs and habits from their own, sometimes very different families. Such a legacy of their own families has a significant impact on their relationship. They also bring their masculinity and femininity. From all of these they try to work out a common relation, a common bond, and to create a new "home". Partners love (marriage) is a mutual commitment to people and an act of entrusting their – lonely until now- lives in all its existential dimensions to another person. It differs from other kinds of love (parental or fraternal) by an action, full of hope and commitment, directed towards a common future[11]. It is no wonder that we often talk about

[7] E. Fromm, *O sztuce miłości*, Dom Wydawniczy „Rebis", Poznań 2006, p. 41.

[8] Z. Bauman, *Razem osobno*, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków 2003, pp. 16–17.

[9] M. Ryś, *O miłości, małżeństwie i rodzinie*, Wydawnictwo „Adam", Warszawa 1998, p. 204.

[10] B. Malinowski, *Małżeństwo, pokrewieństwo*, [in:] G. Godlewski, L. Kolankiewicz, A. Mencwel, P. Rodak (ed.), *Antropologia kultury. Zagadnienia i wybór tekstów*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2005, p. 303.

[11] See: E. Rydz, *Refleksje wokół psychologii i etyki miłości*, [in:] H. Liberska, M. Matuszewska (ed.), *Małżeństwo: męskość, kobiecość, miłość, konflikt*, Wydawnictwo Fundacji Humaniora, Poznań 2001.

marital love as a meeting of "two different worlds", "two different personalities, two unique personalities who decide to spend the future together"[12]. Creating a community of marriage is a long, dynamic process of physical, emotional and spiritual unification of a man and a woman.

Many people forget that love is also hard, systematic work on oneself, a good interpersonal-communication school and a lesson about reaching a compromise. Bogdan Suchodolski reminds us about such notion of love by claiming that:

> "[...] the love of two people – especially when it is recognized by the institutional framework of a family – is both a difficult and happy school of living together. Its base, but at the same time its result is what we used to call peace of heart. It includes many things, but above all the durability of feelings and the ability to empathize with the inner life of another person. Thanks to those features it builds a solid bridge of agreements and synergisms. It silences the anxieties and fears, leads to the time of peace. Selfishness and egotism are dealt with in a lively and direct community. The myth of narcissism, understood as focusing on one's mirror reflection, loses its impact. Ties of loneliness are broken"[13].

The marital love should be characterized by a real feeling that Erich Fromm[14] describes as "a mature love." It is an effective focus on matters of life and the development of a loved person, the responsibility for meeting his/her needs resulting from the care and concern. Such a love is expressed by respect and acceptance for the unique individuality of the object of love and a good knowledge of oneself and one's partner. A mature love speaks out by saying: "I need you because I love you." The latter two definitions of love are most appealing to me. In fact they show the whole notion, the essence of what, in my opinion, we are trying to capture in the concept of love which is beautiful, but sometimes used too often by people. These two definitions of love also indicate that love, expressed and realized, "healthy" in its essence leads to the creation of a "healthy" relationship in which we deal with an intimate contact between two adults who are both self-conscious and mature to love and give love to other people. The words of Albert M. Geelman can become an excellent exemplification of the above characteristics of the "healthy relationship." Geelman claims that a healthy relationship should:

> "[...] rely on spontaneous contact. That contact and the experience of intimacy should result in joy and happiness. Both sides proportionally feel their mutual responsibility. They express and feel respect for each other the way they are at the moment. So they do not expect changing themselves in order to feel the closeness and love. At any time of their relationship they can rely on the fact

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[12] M. Ziemska, *Rodzina a osobowość*, Wiedza Powszechna, Warszawa 1977, p. 53.

[13] B. Suchodolski, *Kształt życia*, Wydawnictwo „Nasza Księgarnia", Warszawa 1982, pp. 195–196.

[14] E. Fromm, *O sztuce miłości...*, op. cit.

that they will be close to each other in spite of what happens in them and around them. They can show their weaknesses and strengths. None of them will be led to distance one's intention or to submit oneself to the other"[15].

It seems that some of the most important factors for maintaining stability and happiness in a marriage can be found in mere motives leading people to get married. Seeking the motives that drive people towards such a decision I will use the presentation of research by Mirosława Nowak-Dziemianowicz[16]. The author, based on the motivation theory, takes into account both external motives related to the influence of social environment, the pressure of social and professional groups, family as well as internal motives – instrumental and autotelic. The results of her research showed that among external factors influencing the decision to get married the most distinct ones are the family and the interference of parents. Parents are especially likely to manifest their will concerning the stabilization of their child. Another external motive of marriage expressed by the people studied was fear. The fear of loneliness, fear of rejection by the environment, fear of being labeled as a "lifelong single". Another motive was the desire to become independent from their parents and family home. Such marriages, the ones under the influence of external motives, include those which arose because of a forthcoming birth. According to Nowak-Dziemianowicz the second group of motives that lead people to get married are the internal motives. Instrumental internal reasons include the feelings such as the need to stay in good company, the need for security which can be addressed by a sensitive and caring partner, the need to be recognized and just to feel well. However, among the internal autotelic needs, the basic ones are still the need to feel love, to create a marital and family community. I believe that in order to maintain stability and cohesiveness of the marriage, the deciding motives when making decisions about getting married should be the internal ones, especially those based on love and respect for the other person. In my opinion those motives are the most durable basics with the possible foundations for creating a common future. On the other hand, relationships merely based on fear of social ostracism or loneliness seem to be doubtfully durable. Marital happiness can never be built with a partner chosen under the pressure of time or chosen by the belief that "no matter who – as long as someone is." We should not forget that a person can feel lonely even in a family one has created, for example when the notion of being together and being with another person takes the form of being only "next to each other".

Marriage is a journey in which the majority of adults take part. A journey resulting from mutual love and a desire to be together. No wonder that marriage

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[15] A.M. Geelman, *Życie w związku partnerskim po trudnym dzieciństwie*, Wydawnictwo Komlogo, Gliwice 2012, p. 95.

[16] Compare: M. Nowak-Dziemianowicz, *Małżeństwo wobec rozwodu*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, Wrocław 1994.

is a subject of interest to many researchers: pedagogues, psychologists, sociologists, as well as lawyers and ethnologists. I think that such an interest is due to the role that society ascribes to that legally sanctioned bond of two people, and its multi-dimensionality and multiplicity of forms, especially emphasized in modern times. It seems to me that today we expect much more from the notion of marriage than the previous generations did, but we also respect it less, therefore we less care about it. The most popular definitions of marriage regard it as a bond between a man and a woman, a bond recognized by law, religion or by mere custom. In these types of definitions the legal aspect of marriage is mostly underlined. For that type of definition we should include an idea by Zbigniew Tyszka according to whom the marriage is "legal and relatively permanent bond between a man and a woman created to allow cohabitation and cooperation for the good of the family, so mainly for bringing up children, and for mutual and emotional support"[17]. I believe the social changes from recent years make that type of definition, like the one below, insufficient because they do not even take into account, the already existing, gay marriages.

Many researchers consider the nature of marriage as a community one, signifying the unity between two, previously separate, individuals: a man and a woman/a husband and a wife, as well as the unity of the purposes for which the marriage actually took place. In a marriage understood in such way the emphasis is put on the unity of actions, plans and tasks thus creating a strategy for a common life and on intimacy experiences and community feelings. The community of marriage is expressed in fusion of chosen freely goals, as well as in a sense of inner necessity, the power of love over the legal aspects, satisfaction and pleasure derived from a common life, in the sense of pleasure in experiencing of being with someone near and in the fulfilling of the need to be needed by someone[18].

Marriage is sometimes also considered from an institutional perspective, where the emphasis is put on the functions and tasks which the spouses are to fulfill for each other, for their children and for the global society and local circles[19]. On the marriage understood in this way there are imposed certain rights and obligations allowing the society to achieve goals relating to procreation and socialization of its members, as well as identification of kinship relations within the family group.

In the literature we can find the recognition of marriage as a kind of social relationship, a system, a state or an agreement based on a contract. As a result the marriage is defined as an interpersonal relationship; one based on the voluntary choice of a partner and accompanied by an emotional motivation. A marriage that is obliged to meet with individual needs.

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[17] Z. Tyszka, *Socjologia rodziny*, Wydawnictwo PWN, Warszawa 1979, p. 77.

[18] F. Adamski, *Socjologia małżeństwa i rodziny*, Wydawnictwo PWN, Warszawa 1982.

[19] A. Kotlarska-Michalska, *Małżeństwo jako związek, wspólnota, instytucja, podsystem i rodzaj stosunku społecznego*, „Roczniki Socjologii Rodziny" 1988, vol. X, № 1.

The review of the definitions of a marriage, based on the academic literature, shows the multitude of opportunities for recognition and understanding of marriage as a bond, a community, an institution or a type of social relationship. Marriage itself is, in my opinion, a private matter between two people, a man and a woman (and now also the people of the same sex) who decide to live together, thus creating a community of thoughts and feelings, following together towards happiness and their own fulfillment, "creating a new and real quality of 'WE' also known as "a community marriage"[20]. I also believe that the meanings people attribute to their marriages depends mainly on their subjective experiences, on their own understanding of everything that constitutes the broadly defined marital life.

There are no marriages that would be perfect in every respect. However, I think that we can analyze relationships by placing them on the scale of a sense of satisfaction with the marriage. On the continuum, the extreme positions would be determined by marriages described as happy and unhappy ones. The space in the middle would be taken by relationships basically seen as average or ordinary ones. Happy couples treat each other's flaws or weaknesses with understanding, whereas they admire all the advantages and accept the most intimate feelings, both positive and negative, and the differences and similarities in their behavior. Partners in this kind of marriage are better prepared to survive those temporary conflicts when negative emotional states towards the partner start to be manifested. As a consequence, they are more at ease; they do not force themselves to hide some negative feelings. Each partner has a large space for their development, so they can give each other a lot and, as a result, their relationship becomes richer[21]. Such couples are similarly described by Dolores Curran who interchangeably uses the names: "healthy couple" and "healthy marriage." However, in her considerations the author emphasizes the skills of each marriage for coping with stress. According to her the "healthy couples" are those which cope with stress in the right way. Those couples believe that stress is a normal part of a marriage and a family life. They can share their feelings and talk to each other. They develop skills associated with conflict resolution and coping with difficulties. They use the support of other couples and the social environment and they have the ability to adapt themselves[22]. Both ideas of characteristics of happy marriages emphasize the aspect of a constructive communication and conflict resolution skills, recognizing those features to be extremely important in the process of creating a healthy and lasting relationship.

Unhappy marriages are, as it turns out, the exact opposite of those created by the happy couples. They are characterized by constant struggle and conflict. Part-

[20] J. Szymczak, *Definicje rodziny*, „Studia nad Rodziną" 2002, № 2, p. 159.

[21] R. Skynner, J. Cleese, *Żyć w rodzinie i przetrwać*, Jacek Santorski & Co., Warszawa 2013, p. 64.

[22] D. Curran, *Relacje małżeńskie*, [in:] J. Steward (ed.), *Mosty zamiast murów*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN, Warszawa 2007, p. 428.

ners refuse to admit to each other that they have some faults or weaknesses; they are very sensitive to even the slightest criticism from the spouse. In such a marriage there is almost no sensitivity, it is a constant conflict. Intolerance and the inability to compromise trigger a vicious circle of increasing hatred and bitterness between partners. Such marriages can be considered as toxic ones. Spouses who function in them are likely to hurt each other and make each other suffer[23].

Between those two extremes there is a type of a marriage called simply an average relationship. This is the type of a marriage which is relatively stable and happy. These are arrangements that are quite safe for both partners – relationships which are mainly based on the routine. These kinds of marriages can be divided into two most common forms: "a doll's house" and "a henpecked husband." The first one is characterized by the fact that partners fulfill stereotypical roles – male and female ones. He is supposed to be a strong and mature husband and father, as she is to be a fragile, helpless and weak woman. In the second type the woman plays the role of the one who is strong, adult and responsible for herself and her husband, and the man, being the weak one, does not take that responsibility. Those partners are not identical, but complete each other and therefore are attractive for themselves. Both forms of marriages are characterized by the relative stability because partners receive in those relationships a support that in some way satisfies them both[24].

The above idea of marriage classification is strongly simplified. I think that between these extremes there are many different types of marital relationships. It also features many types of marital personalities that in a significant way affect the shape and dynamics of each relationship, thus making it a unique, one of a kind.

Modern marriage is based on the idea of bringing together two people in love (as opposed to a pre-industrial marriage, understood as the bond with economic transactional undertones). It is made possible by the bond between the two spouses. That emotional bond constitutes a fundamental base of the relationship. The quality of marital love depends primarily on partners' personal maturity, their ability to overcome their weaknesses and having sensitivity to others. Such love is sensitive to the needs of the partner. It includes acceptance, mutual recognition, understanding, assistance in the development and implementation of efforts and understanding. It expresses itself in giving and speaks the language of altruism. This form of love is the foundation of the integral involvement of the whole person in the marital bond[25]. The marital bond finds its basis in the recognition and acceptance the partner as a psychophysical being, along with his or her advantages and disadvantages. It expresses itself in the recognition of another person as a companion of our lives with whom we share all the joys and

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[23] R. Skynner, J. Cleese, *Żyć w rodzinie...*, op. cit., p. 64.
[24] See: A. Pietrzyk, *Różne typy małżeństw*, „Problemy Rodziny" 1995, № 5.
[25] M. Ryś, *Psychologia małżeństwa. Zarys problematyki*, Wydawnictwo ATK, Warszawa 1993.

sorrows. It relates to the awareness of the existence of the other person who will help in times of trouble, give some advice and support[26].

A relationship that exists between partners may have different intensity and inherent dynamics. It takes many years to build a strong marital bond. It leads to the internal cohesion of the spouses which affects the sense of achievement and satisfaction with marriage, thereby determining the degree of its durability. The factors which are important for the stability of marriage, which contribute in building a strong bond between the partners include mainly the mutual fidelity of the spouses and the trust and respect towards the partner's beliefs and opinions. The notion of possessing and appreciation has also a significant impact on the relationship's durability. Mutual relations should be based on understanding and tolerance for the common interest and the thought of having children. It seems that other important factors are: the complicity in fulfilling duties, both family and housing ones, and the level of satisfaction with the sex life[27]. The success in marriage is also determined by the mature personalities of the partners, their ability to adapt to their marriage and resulting from this the tasks and responsibilities, and the internal integration of the relationship, without permanent conflicts and tensions in the life of marriage and family[28]. I assume that the sense of satisfaction with marriage is the result of a long and hard work of both partners from the moment of getting married and during the whole life of the marriage and family.

Lack of those factors in the relationship can lead to the breakdown of the marriage. The most frequently cited causes leading to breaking ties between spouses are usually the exact opposites of factors that ensure the durability of marriage. Those are: the lack of love in a marriage or a cohabitation, mutual boredom, infidelity, incompatibility, alcohol abuse, aggression and violence against family members, inability or unwillingness to have children, unsatisfactory sex life, dissatisfaction with the division of household and family responsibilities, and misunderstanding arising from difficult material or housing conditions[29]. Among the reasons that could lead to the failure of the marriage there are also factors related to the personality of the couple and their maturity for marriage, their motives for marriage, as well as their expectations of marriage and a partner[30]. Meeting the expectations of the partner enables the feeling of satisfaction and also provides favorable conditions for the marital relationship. Its absence causes the opposite, leading to frustration and sometimes even a broken

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[26] Z. Tyszka, *Socjologia rodziny...*, op. cit.

[27] I. Kowalska, *Historia rozwoju rodziny i jej uwarunkowania*, [in:] E. Hołoń (ed.), *Rodzina: jej funkcje przystosowawcze i ochronne*, Centrum Upowszechniania Nauki PAN, Warszawa 1995.

[28] F. Adamski, *Socjologia małżeństwa...*, op. cit.

[29] Compare: I. Kowalska, *Historia rozwoju...*, op. cit.

[30] H. Liberska, *Realizacja zadań rozwojowych dorosłości a rozwój indywidualny*, [in:] B. Harwas--Napierała (ed.), *Rodzina a rozwój człowieka dorosłego*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań 2003.

life. As indicated by Dolores Curran[31] there is already a tool to measure the couple's different expectations towards the whole relationship and dissatisfaction with it. Dissemination of such a tool would help couples determine their expectations before the wedding and thus prevent any subsequent disappointments. In consequence such a tool seems to be a more and more urgent necessity, because, as research shows, couples rarely talk before marriage about what they want, what they expect from the relationship and the partner, what they do not like in the partner and what annoys them with a partner. Hiding behind masks, stifling their dissatisfaction, thinking that "maybe he/she will guess by himself/herself," from the very beginning they form in their relationship a space of taboo, a notion of an inauthenticity of a coexistence with another person. Expressing their expectations loudly, in an open and honest dialogue is, in my opinion, the key to creating a lasting bond of marriage.

Unfortunately, absolutely happy and perfect marriages are nowhere to be found. Every marriage has its deficiencies. Concluding, a happy marriage can be considered as the one which is dominated by positive experiences and where marital relations are characterized by a sense of community, emotional ties, support and meeting the needs and feelings of closeness and intimacy[32]. Those are that kind of marriages in which the mutual expectations of the spouses are complementary, where none of them fake, when "in being together" there is no compulsion, where the other person does not become a source of threat, and where both spouses feel like the creators of their own fate[33].

Family life

The family is the natural consequence of the marriage of two people, who from the moment of conception of a child, become parents – a mother and a father. The marital bond is the basis and a special kind of a family bond[34]. In the family group there is a whole set of forces attracting its members to each other and binding them together. The bond formation process begins at the moment of creating the family. Both spouses bring to the relationship factors such as: mutual love, character traits, a system of values and material conditions. Living together leads to the development of further elements of the bond which can include: mutual understanding, tolerance, trust, shared goals, interests, and having children[35].

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[31] D. Curran, *Relacje małżeńskie...*, op. cit.

[32] H. Liberska, M. Matuszewska, *Wybrane psychologiczno-społeczne mechanizmy funkcjonowania małżeństwa*, [in:] H. Liberska, M. Matuszewska (ed.), *Małżeństwo: męskość...*, op. cit.

[33] Compare: M. Nowak-Dziemianowicz, *Małżeństwo wobec rozwodu...*, op. cit.

[34] J. Brągiel, *Więzi społeczne w rodzinie*, [in:] S. Kawula, J. Brągiel, A.W. Janke (ed.), *Pedagogika rodziny*, Wydawnictwo Adam Marszałek, Toruń 2002.

[35] A. Minkiewicz, *Więź rodzinna i czynniki, które ją kształtują*, „Problemy Rodziny" 1993, № 5.

A familial bond is usually defined as the "tangle of relationships between family members, based on certain emotional and rational basics resulting from the marriage and a genetic or genealogical awareness"[36]. According to Maria Ryś:

> "[...] family ties come from the identification of the members of this community that is the family with its own beliefs, goals and actions. Proper ties demonstrate the family integration [...], and family members are related to each other with their interaction"[37].

That bond covers the specific types of family relationships and attitudes of family members, both to themselves and to the values and goals of the family. We can point at the dynamic nature of family ties, subjected to continuous transformation with each family having its specific relationship, full of family's own kind of intimacy, depending on the phase of the development cycle of the family and the circumstances of its life. Relations between family members can be based on a bilateral or a multilateral will to be together (bilateral relationship) or on the will expressed by only one person (single-sided bond)[38].

Thanks to the existence of a sense of family ties an individual is able to meet all their needs, ranging from biological, social to the psychological ones, and reaching to achieve the specified values. The condition for the formation of bonds is the coexistence of factors defined as subjective and objective factors. An awareness of communication with family members and a sense of belonging to a family group, manifesting itself in the realm of thoughts, desires, feelings and actions, is a subjective basis of family ties. Objective scope is defined by the external forces resulting from legal, moral, social and religious factors[39]. Therefore, we might consider that other important factors for the formation of family ties will be the motives leading a person to get married (either instrumental or autotelic) about which I wrote earlier, and factors affecting the stability of the marital community itself. These are the components of family and marital life, among with which we can mention the level of maturity of both partners to the marriage, the degree of responsibility for the shape of the family, and parents/children relations which influence the coherence and development of the family. Moreover, what is important in building family ties is the communication within the family. Healthy and open communication allows for the free flow of information and emotions among the family members, provides an opportunity to more frequent and qualitatively valuable contacts, thus strengthening the family bond.

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[36] S. Kowalski according to: U. Sokal, *Więzi uczuciowe dorosłych dzieci z rodzicami w rodzinach rozwiedzionych*, Wydawnictwo EUH-E, Elbląg 2005, p. 21.

[37] M. Ryś, *Wpływ dzieciństwa na życie dorosłe*, [in:] T. Rzepecki (ed.), *Studium Rodziny*, Wydawnictwo ATK, Warszawa 1999, p. 148.

[38] See U. Sokal, *Więzi uczuciowe...*, op. cit.

[39] U. Sokal, *Czynniki wpływające na kształtowanie się więzi w rodzinie*, [in:] Z. Tyszka (ed.), *Współczesne rodziny polskie – ich stan i kierunki przemian*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Adama Mickiewicza, Poznań 2001.

According to many researchers of the family life that type of a strong and lasting bond can be formed only in complete families[40]. Unfortunately, there are increasingly occurring disorders, weakening or even breaking family ties nowadays. That is especially frequent in problematic families with a high degree of conflict and in those in which the parents are separated or divorced. In such families individuals are not allowed to develop their opportunities, especially children. Their needs are not properly met; there is a coldness and indifference in mutual relations, and often a feeling of loneliness. Unfortunately, today we often deal with such situations where even in the so-called "full" families the task of creating strong, durable, loving and supportive emotional ties is a highly difficult task that requires a lot of dedication and communication skills of all the family members. I also think that the way people connect with each other depends to a large extent on the genuine value which we ascribe to another person and to the relationship in which we are with him or her.

Conclusion

The family is the first place that supports the development of a personality. In the family the main structure of the personality of each individual is created, e.g. knowledge about oneself and the world around, and attitudes towards oneself, others, as well as to various situations and events. Personality development in the family includes all its members through the processes of interaction, mutual cooperation and common problem solving. It is the family that gives its members a sense of support and security, help and solidarity, both material and mental. A family tie, perceived in that way, is an incredible family strength, expressing itself in the unity of its members. A family, functioning in a proper way, "feeds" on the tolerance, acceptance, love and mutual respect of its members. It is a source of security, joy and happiness, care, attention and support, warmth flowing from the depths of the hearts of the people involved in a common goal. However, it requires a great dedication and an effort in the common creation of the hearth.

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[40] Ibidem.

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