

## TAPESCRIPT

William: OK...erm... I'm going to be presenting an article to you called Partnerships which is...erm... adapted from a book about households and families and social trends from 2005 by Cook and Martin. It's come from a website...erm...the statistics government website. So...erm it's very interesting it covers a very broad range of points, it talks about a recent decrease in marriage but says that there is...erm marriage is still incredibly popular in this country with over fifty per cent of the population being in marriage in 2003...erm there was a peak in marriage in 1972 - the baby boomer generation - it rose to 480,000 and even though it's declined since then...erm it's still is the... a very strong institution in this country. Sadly...um the divorce rate has also been increasing...erm mostly between 1958 and '69 it doubled and then it doubled again between '69 and '72 ...erm its peak was in 1993...180,000...erm but remarriage is also...erm very popular reaching a peak of 141,000 in 1988. So, with the increasing divorce rate there is also an increase in remarriage. Other interesting facts... the age at which people are getting married has increased... erm that's not just limited to this country but it's a trend across the European Union... erm also the traditional idea of the man being older than the woman in marriage is also changing there's been a great increase in the number of older women to men... that ratio, there's been an increase in households where people are just living together; that's more than doubled between 1986 and 2003. Sadly, there's a large number of children who are affected by divorce...erm and many of them are very young, one fifth of children affected by divorce in 2003 were under 5 years old and nearly two thirds were aged 10 or under... erm and it concludes the article by saying, however, that step families...erm are still mostly... erm made up of the natural mother and the stepfather so women are still retaining custody. So, I suppose I'd like to start with a general question... out of those trends... erm for:... increasing divorce, higher age when people are getting married... erm an increase in remarriages, increase in couples cohabiting ...erm the effect of divorce on children... Which of these trends do people think are negative and which do they think are positive?... And is there anything we can do about the negative ones?

Debra: Ooh, that's an interesting question, isn't it? Because I mean marriage can be positive or negative, depending who is getting married. I mean the one that you said obviously about children being affected by divorce possibly living with step families or living alone that that could possibly be a negative couldn't it?

Cieran: Yeah that's exactly what I was going to say erm...however... however I would add that keeping a marriage together for the sake of the children is possibly not necessarily a good thing either if a marriage is a disaster then possibly the effect it's going to have on children may be even more negative than eh the separation of the parents

William: I agree, because...erm children growing up in a household where the parents are fighting and rowing all the time its got to have a worse effect than just a clean break hasn't it? As far as I'm concerned mmm

Debra: OK then erm well the other sort of positive thing really would be the remarriage don't you think that that people are erm they still believe in the institution of marriage because they do it again and again

William: I'm sorry but I really must take issue with you there. If they really believed in the institution of marriage... marriage is supposed to be for life, isn't it?

Debra: But, they believe in secure legal partnerships then...

William: Well yes, but but I do think that people shouldn't make promises they don't keep and marriage... if you are swearing to be together forever, then I think people maybe are taking these vows too lightly these days, don't you?

Debra: Oh, right...

Cieran: When you say marriage should be forever you're talking about single monogamous marriage you're not talking about are you talking about Christian marriages? I don't understand what you mean by it

William: I suppose because of my cultural background I'm talking about erm marriages which were based around Christian ideals in western culture but whether you do it at a registry office or a church you're still promising to be together forever and love each other forever now if very high numbers of these marriages are ending in divorce well the way I see it is erm people are breaking promises and so maybe they're not taking them seriously enough in the first place

Debra: Oh, I don't think so ...no I don't think so... going back to what Cieran said earlier it can be better to get a divorce you can't stay together and keep your promise if you're in an abusive or erm unhappy marriage

William: But then shouldn't those couple have just cohabited rather than marrying in the first place

Cieran: This is true but I'm not sure you've considered the fact once somebody has made a decision however impetuous the decision was they shouldn't necessarily have to live with that decision for life

William: Oh, I couldn't agree more with you there... I agree with that... it's the at the beginning I think people are not taking the commitment they're making seriously enough it would seem to me

Debra: They don't have statistics about... erm people who have lived together before marriage because I've read statistics before that people who've lived together for longer than five years who get married are more likely to get divorced than people who've never lived together

William: Oh, I find that very surprising actually it's the opposite you'd expect from... from ..

Debra: No it's the optimum time I wish I knew where I'd seen this the optimum time is like two or three years of living together and longer than that...

William: Is the ideal before marriage?

Debra: Yeah, longer than that can cause its own problems so...

Cieran: Just to interrupt you here to build on what you were saying the I think perhaps erm I don't I mean there aren't the statistics to support this here but also the process of getting married adds an awful lot of undue stress on the relationship and I'd be interested to find out how many people do get divorced shortly after getting married

Debra: I'm not really with you...

Ciaran: What I mean to say is that when you're planning the marriage the the strain of the budget the organisation all of the pressures that you take on aside from your work and family commitments has a.... places an awful lot of stress and strain on your relationship and can possibly.... I think the whole process of organising the wedding can possibly irreversibly damage your relationship and I'd be interested to find out how many people divorce shortly after or how many people's relationship disintegrate because of the effect of that...