

Marriage Calls for Facing Up to Reality

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The state of mind which accompanies the period of engagement and the early months of marriage can be compared with a "trip" with one of the well known and currently popular drugs. Its similarity is striking. Each — marriage and the drug — is rather easily obtained. Each seems to create an ethereal world, a departure from reality. And, although there are many other similarities, there are a few very important areas in which they are dissimilar.

One is legal; the other may or may not be. One is for life; and the other, it would be hoped, is merely one of a number of passing experiences in growing up. One might be habit forming; it is to be hoped that the other will be! In marriage, withdrawal should not involve unpleasant memories or a rude awakening.

Happy is the day when a girl is able to confide to her friends that she is engaged. From that day forward and perhaps from a point in time several months earlier, she walks on air and becomes detached from reality — she is ecstatic. Her fiancé is not anxious to discuss his feelings but a decided departure from the norm is evident.

Any separation is merely tolerated and every hour of every day is regarded as another step in the direction of the altar. They are completely devoted

to one another. Each seems perfect in the other's eyes.

Local authorities with their requirement of obedience to the written law attempt to make clear their civil obligations; the minister, priest or rabbi with his conference and instruction attempts to impress upon them their obligation to God, Family, Community and one another. These counsels often fall on deaf ears as the couple is only interested in clearing away the obstacles which to them, at the time, seem overly ritualistic and time consuming.

Getting married is simple. Although one must deal with civil and church authorities, the process is easy and relatively speedy. The civil authorities who issue the marriage license are basically concerned only with current marital status and the results of a simplified physical examination with emphasis on communicable diseases. The cost is cheap, the service perfunctory and sterile.

Once the license is issued, the perspective couple has the choice of a civil ceremony or that performed by a minister, priest or rabbi who has been so ordained to act and is permitted to do so by the law. Given the time, place, circumstances, education and family custom, the choice is a relatively easy one. As has often been portrayed in a popular comic strip, the services may vary widely depending upon the participants. And so, there's nothing to it so far.

How happy they are and how happy they continue to be — until the withdrawal! Reality begins to appear shortly after the ceremony — or even during it. One wonders why mother has been crying.

With luck the couple enjoys a wedding trip but soon after celebrating friends and family are left behind, they suddenly grasp the immense meaning of the long anticipated ceremony. They are partners for life, responsible to, and for, one another. Other contacts with reality comes with signing the motel register, seeking the first apartment or home. Still none of these things really interferes with the joyful state of mind in which the young couple finds themselves.

When does a personal realization of the dictionary definition of marriage emerge — when do we finally withdraw from the rarefied atmosphere of engagement and early marriage and recognize the reality of the new state in life? Probably not even during the first year!

But slowly and surely, dissimilar interests in friends, living habits, schedules, likes and dislikes surface. The constant attention of courtship loses its priority and you share your new partner with an employer, friends, family and the community.

Suddenly, for the first time in months, you are alone. Adjustment to your new independence is an important key in

making a marriage work. The protective, even benevolent, atmosphere provided by parents is replaced by one of give and take, share and sacrifice.

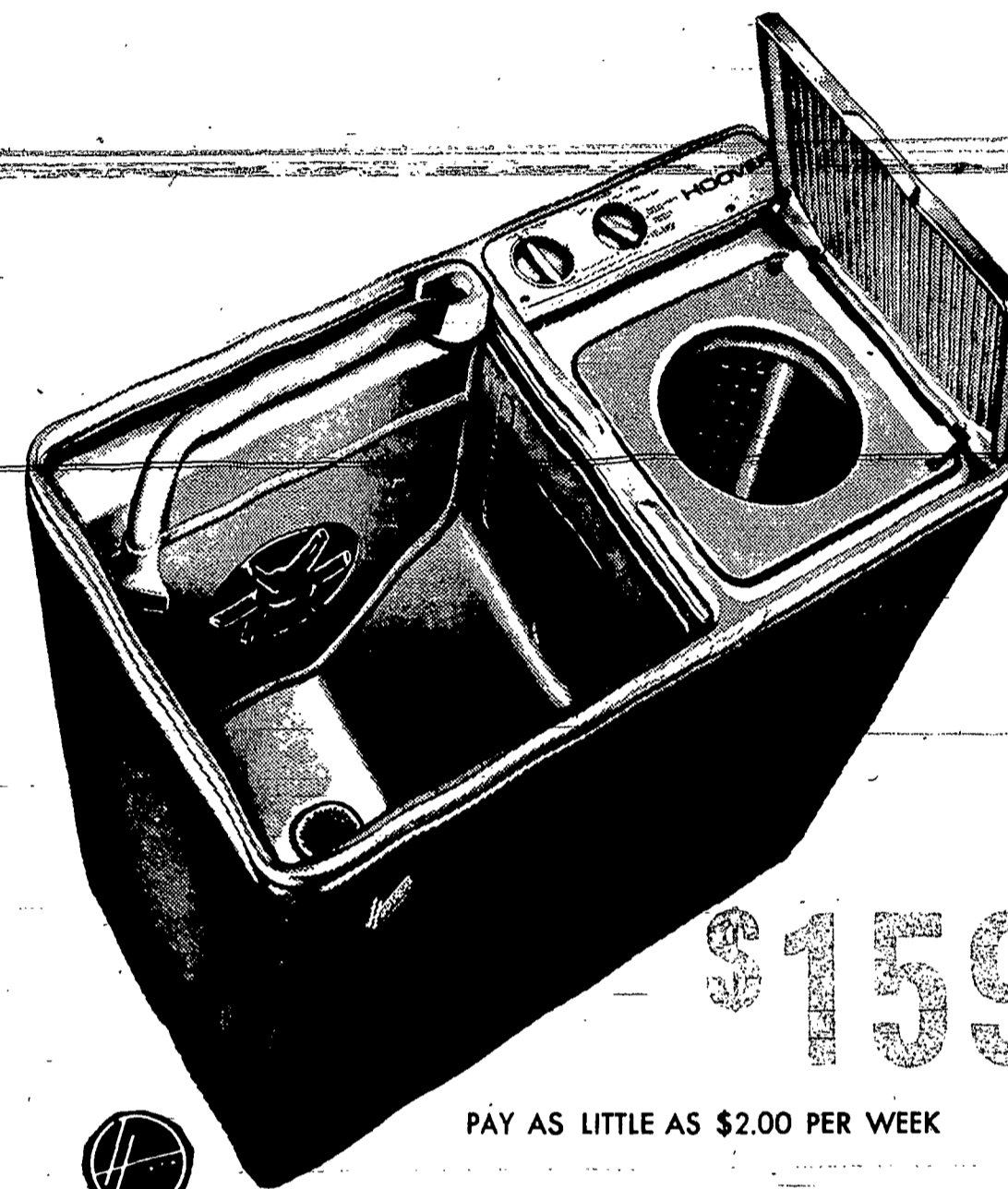
Withdrawal must be considered, therefore, in a positive way. It is the nature of any "trip" to be temporary — and back to reality each couple comes eventually. Various crises hasten this development. And a development it is since we all grow by recognizing a problem, confronting and solving it.

Problems Come

And there are a multitude of problems. The first is often financial. Reduction of income at the onset of pregnancy can pose a serious threat to an established way of life. Medical problems such as those which can arise during pregnancy might be another area where new difficulties arise.

Some of these problems are never solved but in working toward solutions, each individually grows and the newlyweds begin to solidify into a firm family unit, the basis of our society. Eventually joy akin to that found in courtship and early marriage is again experienced in the total sharing of one's life and in the arrival of children.

Ultimately there is a new type of withdrawal. Removing themselves from the distractions and problems of their daily routines, they discover the tremendous love and respect which they have for one another — and thank God for it!



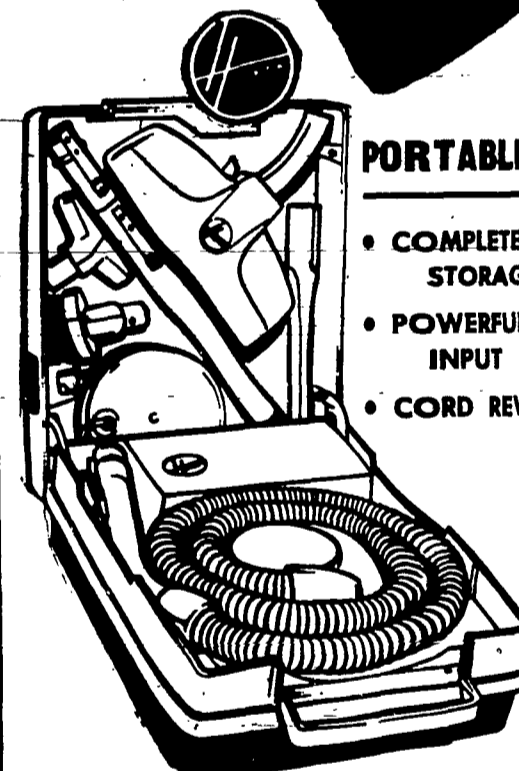
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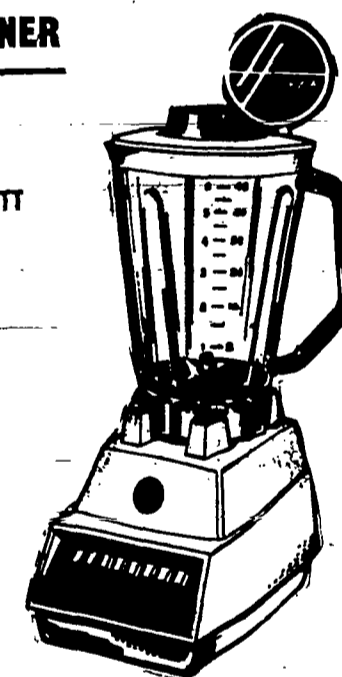
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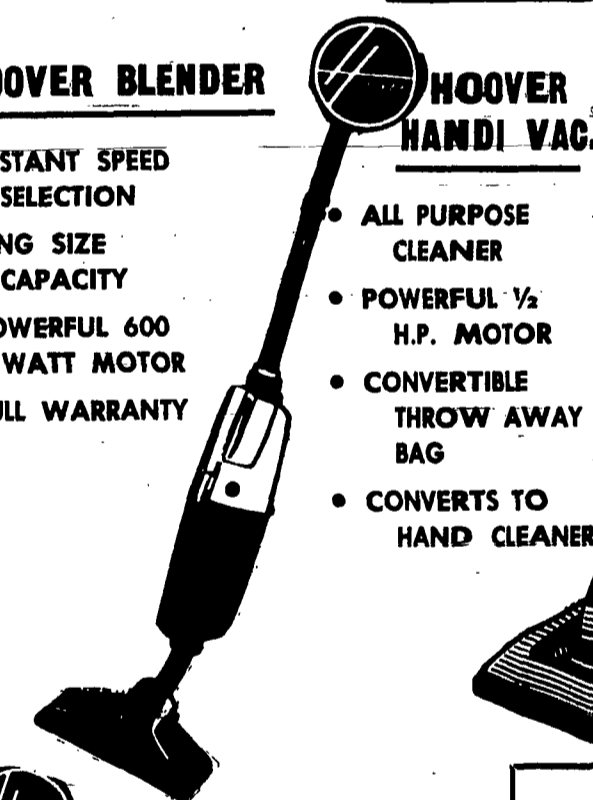
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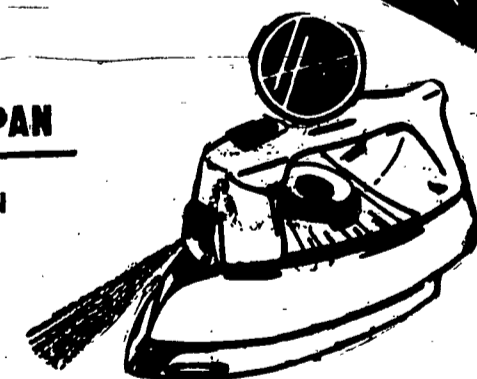
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