

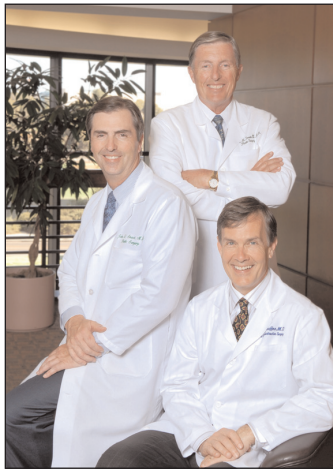
Plastic surgery team announce unique philanthropic commitment to community

A prominent plastic surgery medical group headquartered in La Jolla have announced a commitment to invest a percentage of every medical procedure performed to charitable initiatives. The physicians in the practice are comprised of the Chief of Plastic Surgery at Scripps Memorial Hospital, John D. Smoot, MD, FACS, Wendell M. Smoot III, MD, FACS, recipient of San Diego County Medical Society's, San Diego's Physicians of Exceptional Excellence Award for five consecutive years from 2004 to 2008 for Top Doctor in the field of Plastic Surgery voted on by his peers, and Richard A.K. Chaffoo, MD, FACS, FICS, president-elect San Diego Plastic Surgery Society.

The fully accredited surgery center for the practice has two operating rooms, a recovery unit and a qualified nursing and support staff of 17 members. Their facility is located in the Ximed building on the

campus of Scripps Memorial Hospital, with a private back entrance for complete privacy and exclusivity. Further information regarding the practice can be located at www.smootchaffoo.com or by calling 858-587-9850. (Right)

Dr. John Smoot, Wendell Smoot (standing) and Richard Chaffoo.



Legacy established for beloved piano teacher Barbara Schneiderman

Barbara Schneiderman gave piano lessons in the Suzuki method at her home in Del Mar since the early 1970s. She passed away from pancreatic cancer in June and immediately the parents of her students wanted to do something to memorialize her and her devotion to teaching. "We wanted to do something that would have longevity," said Denise Stillinger, parent of two sons who each took lessons from Schneiderman for 10 years.

"Many parents are having a hard time replacing Barbara, she was more than a piano teacher, she was a life coach," said Stillinger. She taught her students about important values like integrity, self-confidence and being a good person. In fact, Stillinger thought of Barbara as a third parent to her sons who are now 18 and 20. Schneiderman's grown daughter, Tanya, has been teaching side by side with Barbara for the past decade and will continue in her footsteps.

A private memorial concert was held Aug. 9 in Del Mar with family and former students honoring Barbara's life and performing musical pieces in her honor.

The Barbara Schneiderman Memorial Fund for Piano Enrichment was sparked by "Suzuki moms" as they call themselves, Denise Stillinger and Aileen Fricks. "There are plenty of people who understand her spirit the way we do," Stillinger said of the desire to honor Barbara.

The first scholarship will be awarded in spring 2009, giving preference to North County San Diego piano students studying the Suzuki method.

"We hope to inspire students and help those who really have a love for playing piano and the desire to improve themselves," said Stillinger. "She (Barbara) found the unique talent in each of her students and helped to make them a better person. We want to continue to inspire them the way she has inspired them."

To make a tax-deductible contribution to the Barbara Schneiderman Memorial Fund, make checks payable to: Coastal Community Foundation, PO Box 230415, Encinitas, CA 92023 or contact Sharon Omahen at (760) 942-9245.

Dr. He Said, Dr. She Said

Is marriage really necessary?



M'Lissa Trent, Ph.D. (Dr. She) and Hanalei Vierra, Ph.D. (Dr. He)

Dear Dr. He Said, Dr. She Said:

I am really contemplating whether I truly want to get married or not. I have been engaged for a year, and I am dreading the actual marriage. Please trust that it is not about my fiancé. I just really can not grasp the whole concept of marriage and what its true value is. Yes, I do come from a divorced family and yes, I know that has affected me, but I also look around and see so many of my friends who are already divorced (I am 34) and how ugly that process was for them—especially the ones with children. I see people divorcing for so many reasons: money, sex (or lack thereof), growing apart, and I just don't see how there can be any guarantees. I question whether or not the whole institution

of marriage is a well thought out idea in the first place. I am looking for some reasons to move forward and actually get married. I don't see why I just can't live with my fiancé and have a very satisfying life—even if we do have children together—without making it legal, so if it doesn't work out it won't be so messy untying everything.

Cheryl

Dr. She

Dear Cheryl:

I think you raise some great questions and I am glad you are contemplating what marriage means to you because ultimately this is what is important. We have all been influenced by the historical concept of marriage and our collective unconscious myths of "knights in shining armor" and "happily ever after!" However, an important question to ask is this: "How is marriage relevant and valuable for me in my life and what do I — along with my fiancé — want marriage to look, feel, walk, and talk like?"

Connection, feeling loved (and loving), and trusting that we can count on someone other than ourselves (and knowing we are trusted) are basic human needs. Marriage can provide a consistent place to meet these needs. The legal commitment of marriage may help people "psychologically" feel more secure; however, it is inevitably the behavior of follow-through and accountability that create a sense of trust and security in partnership.

If you feel the depth of commitment to your fiancé does not need a little external influence (the legalization of marriage) to help you through the rough times, then perhaps marriage isn't necessary for you. However, none of us can ever anticipate how we will change in a marriage, or how our needs and projections of our partners will change. It is that unknown factor that throws people off, makes them feel like they didn't get what they signed up for, and leads to bailing out of a relationship before taking the time to redesign the relationship to meet current needs. Marriage can be a benefit in that the legal commitment may lend itself to the idea of working through conflict and thinking like a "we" and encourage couples to think twice about separating. Unfortunately, a great majority of people have difficulty with the work that a relationship requires, legal or not, and that is where your emotional commitment needs to be prevail.

One last point before we move on to Dr. He... it would be a great service to your relationship to take a deep look at the possible fears you may have about commitment in general given that you do come from a divorced family. Best of luck!

Dr. He

Hello Cheryl,

It certainly makes sense to me that there would be parts of the institution of marriage that you would question or be confused about. With the divorce rate so high these days, marriage is definitely not one of the sure bets in American culture. Despite the fact that there are absolutely no guarantees that any marriage will last forever, I am going to focus on one particular sentence you wrote in your letter as a way of making a case for marriage. At the end of your letter you wonder out loud why you can't simply live with your fiancé and "have a very satisfying life...without making it legal." The whole idea of having a very satisfying life with your fiancé—while a lofty and understandable goal to have for any relationship—does not really portray the actual effort required to create that very satisfying life. As I'm sure your divorced friends can attest, saying "I do" at the altar is not necessarily the same as saying, "I know how to make this a very satisfying relationship with my new spouse." Creating a satisfying relationship is a challenging experience that requires effort and a willingness to stay open to learning new things about oneself and about one's partner over the course of time. As we have said many times before in this column, it is about learning the work of a relationship.

Our experience in working with so many couples over the last 13 years is that one of the (many) things that being married does for a couple who is looking to make their relationship better, is that it takes walking out the door off the table as a possible "solution" to a problem—at least temporarily. And many times—not all the time, but many times—that temporary "truce" from walking away is what a couple needs time-wise to figure out a way to turn things around. Having the legal marriage document with your signature on it staring you in the face really does make you think twice about ending the relationship in a cavalier or careless way, and that is still no guarantee. Even though the high divorce rate in America might suggest otherwise, we have worked with many couples who admitted that they would have quit trying long ago to save their relationship if they had not been married. While this may not be the guarantee you are looking for, Cheryl, divorce is a part of the risk associated with being in love and trying to make a marriage work. But if you and your partner have the will and desire to create that satisfying life you want, you really won't need one.

Hanalei Vierra, Ph.D. (Dr. He) and M'Lissa Trent, Ph.D. (Dr. She) are a married couple who have worked together for over 13 years coaching troubled relationships to clearer communication, deeper intimacy, and healthier partnership.

See their Web site at www.sandiegotherapists.com/conjoint.html Please email any questions to: DrHanalei@aol.com. For more information on Relationship Skills for Men, go to www.HowToKeepHer.com on the web.

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