

Reading 2

1. Marriage is a much-researched topic, and the way married couples communicate has been the subject of many studies. These days, research into marriage often involves hours of recordings, followed by a thorough analysis of data with the help of modern software applications.

2. One such study analyzed five years' worth of data, obtained from 750 participating couples. At the start of the study, participants who felt they were in a harmonious relationship reported having happy marriages. In other words, low level of conflict corresponded to a higher degree of happiness. At the end of the five-year period, however, many of these couples have separated and had started divorce proceedings. The outcome of this study suggests that keeping the peace rather than talking about problems and working through them can have harmful effects on a relationship.

3. In a more recent, larger scale study, people were observed over a fifteen-year period. The researchers recorded the timings of marriages, divorces and remarriages and discovered patterns that helped them to estimate how likely divorce was. If participants admitted the possibility of divorce to themselves during the first year of the study, the probability of it actually happening was ten times greater than for the couples who had not thought about it at all. Clearly, once the idea of the divorce is in somebody's mind, they are more likely to act on it.

4. Yet another piece of research confirms, what the men and women feel at the beginning of their marriage makes a difference to its eventual outcome. Those who feel disappointed, perhaps because marriage itself is different from their expectations, or because their lifestyle is not what they had imagined, are more likely to divorce.

5. Having said that, relationships are complex and their development is the result of many different influences. The end of a marriage is unlikely to be brought about by one particular factor, and is more probably the result of a combination of small incidents that add up over the time. It is also worth bearing in mind that in most countries it is the minority of marriages that fail. No one can truthfully claim that their marriage is happy or perfect all the time, but the fact remains that most married people stay together for life. The secret of happy marriage, it seems lies where most people have always thought it does: in the effort made on a daily basis by both partners to treat each other with consideration and courtesy, and to cheerfully accept each other's faults as well as their good qualities.

Choose the correct heading for sections 1—5 from the list of headings below. Write the correct letter.

- A. The science of marriage.
- B. The importance of honest communication.
- C. The power of negative thoughts.
- D. The likelihood of marrying again.
- E. Our parents' marriage influences our own marriage.
- F. The benefits of avoiding arguments.
- G. The real predictor for a lasting marriage.
- H. The consequences of early dissatisfaction.