

Sex and Marriage: 6 Statistics That Might Surprise You

Maureen McGrath is a sex educator, author, registered nurse, and self-described “sexpert.”

In 2016, McGrath, who has a clinical sex practice, gave a TED Talk on the topic of sex and marriage that has been watched by nearly 10 million people.

The clip is a bit strange. McGrath’s delivery feels, at times, a bit like a standup comedy routine. Some of her observations on sex are a bit childish; others are facile.

That said, McGrath does sprinkle into her lecture a lot of information that is interesting—things people may have wondered about sex but never thought to ask. (Example: At what age do people stop having sex? It’s a question I’ve often wondered.)

Some of McGrath’s conclusions are questionable, in my opinion, but she does offer some interesting statistics on sex and marriage. Here are six:

1. During the first decade of marriage, couples have sex a little bit more than once per week—58 times annually—on average.
2. Roughly 20 percent of married couples fall into the “sexless marriage” category, defined as having sex less than 10 times per year.
3. Ten percent of people check their cell phones during sex; 35 percent immediately after completion.
4. About 50 percent of married men say they are dissatisfied

with their sex lives. (About 75 percent of men say they are satisfied in their marriage, however.)

5. Fifty percent of men say they would not have married their partner if their marriage did not involve sex.

6. A majority of couples don't have sex on their wedding night.

There are some interesting things to consider here, and I think it's important to be able to be honest and reflective about the realities of sexual desire and sexual trends. But in some ways McGrath's presentation left me with more questions than answers.

Does our culture emphasize sex too much or not enough? Is sex today really "shrouded in shame," as McGrath claims? Is sex actually "the barometer of the state of affairs in a marriage," and if so is that a good thing?

Questions aside, I think McGrath does conclude her talk with some wise advice.

"Deal with your marital issues. Go to sleep in the same bed,

at the same time,” she says. And more importantly: “You must establish guidelines that govern those moments when you are struck by someone’s attractiveness outside of your marriage.”

McGrath’s final point is important. Beauty and desire are powerful forces, and we live in a time which teaches that passions and desires are not to be restrained.

“The world says: ‘You have needs – satisfy them,’” the Elder Zosima points out in Dostoevsky’s masterpiece *The Brothers Karamazov*. “And they believe this is freedom.”

Dostoyevsky’s point is clear: The sensualist life eventually becomes enslavement. There is truth in this idea, I think, but it’s an ethic we rarely hear in the 21st century.

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