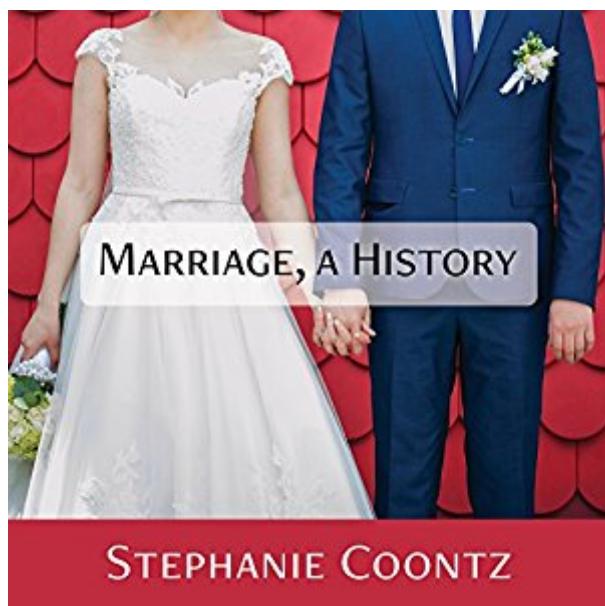


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# Marriage, A History: How Love Conquered Marriage



## Synopsis

Just when the clamor over "traditional" marriage couldn't get any louder, along comes this groundbreaking book to ask, "What tradition?" In *Marriage, a History*, historian and marriage expert Stephanie Coontz takes listeners from the marital intrigues of ancient Babylon to the torments of Victorian lovers to demonstrate how recent the idea of marrying for love is - and how absurd it would have seemed to most of our ancestors. It was when marriage moved into the emotional sphere in the 19th century, she argues, that it suffered as an institution just as it began to thrive as a personal relationship. This enlightening and hugely entertaining book brings intelligence, perspective, and wit to today's marital debate.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Bought because this was referenced often in my Gender and Poverty class. I love her easy writing style that doesn't dance around with academic flourished language. Easy to follow by 'layman' society and an interesting time capsule to how things really were back in the day. I would also recommend her other books and a book with the title *The Good Ole Days, They Were TERRIBLE!!!*

While one might expect this book to cover topics like the evolution of the concepts of love, romanticism, sexuality, and yes, the economics of marriages (and especially arranged marriages), in the end it is really a book about human culture and history. It seems no other structure has been as central to our societies' organization, functioning and evolution as marriage and its relationship

with family bonds, economic interactions, alliances and wars, and politics. It is clearly revealed how marriage has historically been about much more than two people, and that reducing the focus on love, partnership and companionship doesn't diminish its significance in the least -- on the contrary: pretending to treat it primarily as a romantic relationship is ignoring its greater role as one of the most powerful instruments in our history for mediating conflicts, establishing alliances, and in stabilizing tensions that could have been catastrophic otherwise. The history lessons presented by this book provide powerful perspectives that will forever change how you think about human relationships and reveal, on one hand, the complexity and intricacy of this vast network of interests and interactions, but on the other hand also the simplicity of core human drives that motivate pretty much all human activity. A fascinating read!

This is an informative book on the history of marriage. At last written by someone who went to the trouble to find the factual content and write about it from an inside point of view. When you find the gems of truth about marriage it all makes sense. Who on earth started that tradition? Where did it come from, and why it was implemented? Really interesting read. Marriage is the one puzzling event we have in life that still does not make sense to us. Read this book it will explain it very clearly. Then we might change our view and adopt a more truthful idea of why a man and a woman want to get married.

Borrowed this from the library but loved it so much I had to buy my own copy. Given the debate on gay marriage, I was looking to learn more about marriage in American culture and history. Found this treasure, which goes way back centuries and covers marriage traditions and attitudes from around the world. Absolutely informative and eye-opening. Highly recommended.

Speaking as a 51-year-old man who has been happily married for 28 years and raising two sons, Ms. Coontz's trip through the evolution of marriage was very helpful, reassuring and illuminating. Almost from the onset of our marriage back in 1983, friends told us we had an "unconventional" relationship. When in reality, we were just a little ahead of the curve. Our relationship is based on trust, mutual respect and a commitment to working through the inevitable problems that will arise from living with another person. Unlike authors of countless, silly marriage advice books, Ms. Coontz is a historian who did the homework in researching the evolution of marriage. The Ozzie-and-Harriet template that many people view as how "traditional" marriages were through most of history before the radical 1960s shot everything to hell is simply pure bunk. The author is to be

commended for explaining how marriage is an ever-evolving institution since its early inception and will continue to do so well after you and I are worm food. In over 30 years, I've read a boatload of material about different historical periods and Ms. Coontz's assessment rings true. This well-written, entertaining work helped put this peculiar institution into proper perspective. It was very therapeutic. Whatever stage of life you are in, do yourself a favor and read Ms. Coontz's book.

Fascinating read; a lot of interesting facts and information about marriages around the world.

Needs to be updated in a new edition, some terminology is outdated and in one of the closing chapters she argues how unlikely gay marriage is to pass!

Excellent Scholarship w/ over 100 pages of footnotes and references. Easy, extensive read. While worth learning the historical meaning of 'Traditional Marriage'. WW II changed everything.

Enjoy...jdm

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