The Joy Of Family

So what's special about a family? The joys of family life are just so obvious to me that I cannot understand why others can't see it. It's all to do with loving, nurturing, enjoying, helping, trusting, always being there. The greatest joys of my life are when my family did things together; the family holidays, bowling, tennis, etc.

When you start your family you share the anticipation of the happy event. You take hundreds of photographs of the baby; then the toddler, then the child, and the family albums become a great joy. If you are blessed with multiple children then the same ritual joys are repeated with the added pleasure of seeing the siblings interacting together.

The children become teenagers and you have all sorts of ups and downs but the family gives you the strength for the 'downs' and together you enjoy the 'ups'. Then maybe one day the children have children and you become grandma and grandpa and you share the joy all over again.

You have all of the memories and all of the photographs and the videos and they are forever being browsed or viewed. As you get older the extended family is everything; and grandma and grandpa are still devoted to each other.

I will never again experience the joy of sharing family outings. I will never enjoy my grandchildren together with my wife. When Fiona left the family home she took all sorts of material possessions with her but left all of the photographs of Tim and Ellie. I really do not understand why the one thing that was the most important in my life meant so little to Fiona. Why would anyone destroy the joy of family? I can start a new business; I can make more money, but my family is irreplaceable.

When I was young, monogamy was the way of things, or so it seemed. Maybe because so many wives lost so many husbands during the war, those that still had a husband hung onto him and counted themselves lucky. These days the picture is so very different. In the UK approximately 45% of marriages end in divorce and in the US, this figure is a staggering 55%.

I wonder how many of the 55% of couples that do stay married in the UK have both been faithful to their partners. Of course there are no statistics for possible clandestine relationships but from what I can see extra-marital relationships seem to be becoming more and more the norm in the modern world. Monogamy now seems to be almost laughed at. In some eyes if you remain faithful to your partner then you are seen as rather weird.

The bizarre laws we have on divorce do not help the situation. In some countries adultery is seen as a grievous sin and can attract severe punishment. In the UK the law does not punish adultery, in fact it seems to encourage and reward it.

Government after government have held up a flag for family values and the importance of the family in society. However we have these bizarre laws that seem to encourage, mostly women, to seek divorce for financial gain. Is it right that a man should work hard all of his life. He then marries a girl that he loves. After a handful of years she commits adultery. The law then says that she is entitled to a reasonable chunk, maybe one half of the assets that he has worked so hard for.

Do people in the modern world marry with a view to supporting and loving each other for the rest of their lives? I am really not sure that they do. The indications are that marriage is looked on as a well-meaning gesture between two people but the gesture does not carry with it the absolute commitment of caring and devotion that is critical to the sustainability of the marriage.

The world is now so full of temptations that pull people's minds this way and that making it hard for anyone to accept their lot, to accept that what they have in life is good and worth having. Never before has the green grass on the other side looked so tempting. People find it very hard to accept responsibility and commitment, seeing it in a negative way as a prison, instead of revelling in the joy of what they have.

Adultery is such a heinous crime but it is oh so easy to perform and it destroys so many lives. Many on the wrong end of adultery want to end their life and some do.

One of the things that I learnt about myself when I was quite young was that I was the monogamous type. When I love and commit to someone it is total. The girl gets in my blood and my bones, she becomes the foundation of my life, she is the centre of all I do, my life is devoted to making her happy and making her dreams come true. When someone fills that role in your life and then that someone betrays you and commits adultery it is life and soul destroying. It is the ultimate punishment for loving someone so completely.

Because there is so much of it about we tend to underestimate the mental damage caused by adultery. Apart from the mental damage caused to the partner on the wrong end of the adultery, there is also damage, possibly greater damage, caused to any unlucky and confused children that happen to get caught up in such a nightmare.

Family, if you are lucky enough to have one, is everything.