

**In-Sight Publishing**  
**Ask A Genius 151 – Cohabitation and Marriage**  
**Scott Douglas Jacobsen & Rick Rosner**  
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[Beginning of recorded material]

**Scott Douglas Jacobsen: That makes me think. That makes me think. It is an astute point. There has been data that has come in on more recent relationships. Live-ins? What do they call them?**

**Rick Rosner:** Cohabiting?

**SDJ: Yea. Cohabiting, that's the one. So people that get straight married. They stay together longer and have more durable partnerships because they don't get divorced as often as those that cohabit and then get married. I don't know the reason why, but apparently that's a thing.**

**RR:** It could be a bunch of different reasons. It could be that people who cohabit fall into relationships more easily. You can divide people into two populations with regard to relationships. Hot people who find it easy to hook up, and less socially able people who find it harder to hook up and tend to hold on more. They want to hold onto the existing relationship more.

My family has that kind of divide between the easy hooker-uppers and the harder-hooker-uppers. So some people find it easy to hook up, and boom! They can break up with someone if things go badly.

**SDJ: It could be social consequences too.**

**RR:** Yea, people may be more religious or more traditional. There's too many variables in there to pin it down. I would think that—the way marriage and romance was presented via media through – well, up until now – most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. There's the soulmate and happily ever after. I would think that there is a lot of disappointment in relationships when it turned out not to be that, when you have a divorce rate of the last 80 years of 50%.

**SDJ: That's a misleading number, just intuitively. People who divorce more skew that number. It's actually probably lower. People who have repeat divorces up that number.**

**RR:** It's still a good rule of thumb. That half of all marriages end in divorce.

**SDJ: Yea, it is probably more like 40% because if somebody divorces 4 times or 3 times, or 2 times.**

**RR:** But they still had a bunch of marriages that ended in divorces. You're trying to differentiate people and marriages. What you're saying is that there might be a lot of long-term marriages and

people who have a shitload of marriages average is of divorces up. Still, overall, a good rule of thumb is 50%, and if you want to adjust for more modern numbers, it is probably 45%. You can look for more subtle trends, but half of all marriages end in divorce.

That high rate among the things that cause it might be high expectations cause by entertainment, where people expect to find their soulmate and to find relatively friction-free long-term relationships. And if the rate is dropping, one factor might be or two related factors might be the access of information via the internet about how things really are and about how entertainment reflects a lot of less romantic models of relationships.

Which show that many relationships are troubled and most relationships aren't free of having to work on them, you always had a dark undercurrent of presentation of relationships in books and movies and such, but those weren't mainstream entertainment. It is like *Revolutionary Road* by Richard Yeats, maybe, in the 50s that presents a sad disintegrating marriage. Most people went to Rock Hudson, Dorris Day comedies.

**SDJ: I feel like the romantic delusions are fed to women more and social pressure is a big reason for men becoming married, which are two different things.**

**RR:** There's the idea of romance porn for women. Guys have porn porn and then women have romance porn, which used to be harlequin novels.

**SDJ: Yea, it's love that doesn't end badly.**

**RR:** The plot of a harlequin novel is a woman has a series of brief satisfying dates or just friendly relationships with just wimpy men and then she meets a manly man. He meets all of the stereotypes. He's rugged, strong, but he's really mean to her. It's a little bit like you took *Pride and Prejudice* and dumbed it down to the ultimate degree. The guy is an asshole, but they somehow are overcome by their mutual attraction.

But then he's even meaner. The woman doesn't know what to do. At the end of the book, she finds out that he's really a nice guy, who loves her deeply, and was only mean because he hated the loss of control that he felt around her because he was attracted to her.

**SDJ: [Laughing].**

**RR:** At that point, he morphs from being the complete asshole he's been the whole book into being a loving man who want to settle and marry and have kids, almost immediately.

**SDJ: [Laughing] So it's also saving him from himself.**

**RR:** That's just the template. In the 70s, you could've gone out and bought 200 of these novels that have the same plot, except in one he works on an oil rig, and on another he's a sheriff, and another he's a cop. Only the settings and the occupations change.

[End of recorded material]

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