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Host Mary Tsui: For many of us, marriage is one of the biggest decisions we make in our lives, and choosing the right person is a topic of many books and online forums. But today we're not talking about choosing the right person. We're talking about making a relationship work with the person we've chosen. We'll be talking about this important topic with Martin Carey, author of *Marriage Works*. I'm so happy to have you with us today Martin!

Guest Martin Carey: Good to be here, Mary.

Host: I'd like to begin by asking you about some research that you cite in your book. You give some conclusions based on interviews with several hundred couples. Can you tell us a bit about that?

Guest: Yes, the research you're referring to was conducted by Dr. John Gottman, who interviewed almost 700 couples. His main conclusion is that good marriages are based on deep friendship.

Host: Deep friendship? Well that sounds reasonable, but what exactly does that mean?

Guest: Good question. It means that the couple has mutual respect for one another, and they know each other well. They know the other person's likes, dislikes, and how they think and behave. When couples have respect for one another, and they've gotten to know one another really well, they tend to be able to deal with difficult situations better.

Host: Oh, really. What are some examples of that?

Guest: Well, for one, couples in a healthy relationship argue quite differently from couples who don't have that sort of respect for one another. Couples that respect one another can have very intense arguments, but they're less verbally aggressive, and they interpret what the other person says less negatively than couples that don't understand each other well. They also make attempts to repair the situation in a more light-hearted way, you know, like by making funny faces, or mentioning private jokes. In other words, they know the other person well, so they know how to relieve the tension—they know how to help the other person relax a bit.

Host: I see. So because of that respect for the other person, they're motivated to maintain a good relationship, even when they're arguing.

Guest: That's right, but of course, it's more than that. They also know what they like about their partner, and they let their partner know that by praising the person, being there for their partner when times get tough, and being willing to compromise when they have a different idea about something.

Host: Very interesting. Well, let's take a break right now. We'll be back in a moment with more from Martin Carey.

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Speaker: Although marrying someone who we love seems natural to many people, it's actually a rather new idea in the Western hemisphere. Up until about 300 years ago, many Europeans had a very different reason for marrying. Business! Traditionally, people in Europe lived in the same building where their business was located. And in these circumstances, marriages were often like business partnerships between a husband and wife. And you might be interested to know that this practice still exists in some parts of the world. However, as businesses gradually separated from the home, this economic reason for marriage, which was really a kind of external motivation, weakened. And it was replaced by internal motivations for marriage, such as personal feelings, desires, and personal preferences. OK, now let's take a look . . .

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Professor David Reed: E01 So my first question to you today is "How would you define marriage?" Well, many people might say something like, "It's a union of two or more people who are legally recognized by the government," or "It's a couple that lives together and has and raises children." Sound good?" Both of these ideas are true in many, but not all, cultures. Actually, most anthropologists, including myself, agree that there is no single definition that adequately describes all of the types of marriages found throughout the world. But whatever the definition, some form of marriage is found in every society, and I'd say that marriage serves an extremely important function in society. **(COACHING TIP 1)** So let's first look at some of the benefits of marriage to society. **E02** Now a universal benefit of marriage is that it creates relationships or alliances among families. Now, some anthropologists believe that this is the main reason why marriage developed in human society. This idea is summed up in what is known as the alliance theory, which simply says that marriage increases social cooperation through the relations that develop between people and their in-laws. And this kind of human network is, in turn, good for society as a whole. **(COACHING TIP 2)** **E03** A second benefit of marriage concerns children. Compared with animals, humans take an extremely long time to mature, from infancy until adulthood when they

become independent. Because of this, children need parents to care for them for the first few years of their lives. And marriage increases the likelihood that a child will be properly cared for and that the child will receive the support and protection of both parents over a long period of time. Obviously, this is quite important to the survival and development of a society. **E04** Now children also play a role in the third, and final, benefit we'll discuss. You see, in most cultures, marriage establishes the legitimacy and rights of a child because it establishes who the child's father is. Now, this is known as "the legitimacy argument," (**COACHING TIP 3**) which says that in order for a child to be recognized and respected by the community, the child must be linked to a father who is legitimately married to the child's mother. This is particularly true in most modern societies, where there is a strong pressure for couples to get married if the woman becomes pregnant. However, I might add that this kind of pressure is lessening in some Western countries. All right, so I hope that we agree that marriage benefits society in many ways. **E05** Next I'd like to consider who marries whom and why. Any guesses? Well, statistics clearly show that most people marry someone similar to themselves in terms of race, level of education, social class, and interests. This social phenomenon is called homogamy. For instance, more than 90 percent of Americans marry someone from their own racial group, and about 75 percent marry someone from their same social class. **E06** Now, why is the phenomenon of homogamy so prevalent? Well, there's a very logical reason: People tend to marry people they've met in their daily lives, and most people tend to live near and socialize with people from their own racial group, their own social class, and with similar levels of education. I suspect that the many married couples you know confirms that homogamy is the norm. However, recent research suggests that this trend (**COACHING TIP 4**) in marriage is changing and that marriages will look different in the future. **E07** To talk about the future of marriage, I'd like to focus on some figures from the US, although these ideas certainly apply to countries throughout the world. The strongest major trend that we'll see in marriages of the future is a gradual decline in racial homogamy. In 1980, 1.3 percent of marriages in the US were interracial. By 2002 the number had risen to 3 percent, and by 2005 the number of interracial marriages had risen to 7.5 percent. So as you can see, this trend is accelerating rapidly and we have many reasons to believe that the number of interracial marriages in the US will continue to increase for some time to come. **E08** One reason is a rise in racial tolerance. A recent poll showed that 86 percent of blacks, 79 percent of Hispanics, and 66 percent of whites would accept their children or their grandchildren marrying someone of a different race. Another reason anthropologists believe interracial marriages will become more common is related to anticipated increases in the

Hispanic and Asian populations in the US. These two groups account for many of the interracial marriages that we now see—so as these populations grow, we can assume so will interracial marriages. **E09** Now I hope you'll agree that this trend is a very welcome one—remember that one universal characteristic of marriage is that it creates alliances, and what better way to bring down racial and nationalistic barriers than through interracial and international marriages?

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Yhinny: It's funny—when I think of my parents and their married friends, they're all so similar. Just like the lecturer said. But people our age? It seems like I see a lot of diversity in the couples now.

May: Uh-huh.

Michael: So in other words, in your parents' generation you see a lot of homogamy, but not in ours?

Yhinny: Yeah. I mean, I'm from a pretty conservative family, so my parents and people like them probably didn't want to challenge the norm, you know?

Michael: Yeah, well, I mean I grew up in New York City, and so there are a lot of mixed marriages there.

May: Like racially mixed?

Michael: Right. Yeah, OK, good point. So, maybe in the other ways, like education and class, those couples are still homogenous.

Qiang: You know what I find fascinating is that in many cultures, marriage seems to be less and less important every day. I mean, I know a lot of couples that are living together. But they're not even married.

May: Actually, where I'm from, that's totally unacceptable.

Yhinny: Really?

May: Yeah, people frown upon it and no one talks about it openly.

Michael: Well, I think, even here, generally, couples are expected to get married. I mean especially if they're planning on having children.

Yhinny: Wow, I'd love to be a sociologist a hundred years from now and see what marriages look like then.

Qiang: Huh.

May: Oh boy.

Yhinny: I think big changes are ahead!

Michael: I think you're right.

Qiang: You don't have to wait that long.