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FORWARD TO THE PAST.

Through the looking glass of prehistory, I'll venture a few hypotheses about the future of women, men and love.

Foremost, today some 84% of American men and women are projected to marry by age 40. This will persist. To bond is human. This drive most likely evolved more than four million years ago. Email and computers won't stamp it out. Moreover, as women continue to pile into the paid labor force, the double income family will become the norm. But this isn't new either. For millions of years, women in hunting-gathering societies commuted to work to gather fruits and vegetables, returning to camp with much of the evening meal. We will also see more divorce. Today, almost 50% of American men and women are projected to divorce. However, in hunting-gathering societies men and women regularly have two or three marriages. Across prehistory, *serial* pairing was probably the norm—as it is becoming once again.

In fact, we are shedding some 10,000 years of agrarian traditions and returning to our prehistoric roots. Our farming forebears were obliged to marry someone with the “right” kin, social and religious connections. Arranged marriages were the norm. And the credo was honor thy husband 'til death do us part. Instead, today most men and women in post-industrial

societies marry (and divorce) for love. In 36 other societies, men and women also rank love, or mutual attraction, as the first criterion for choosing a spouse—as they most likely did a million years ago. This will continue, too.

Many believe that Internet dating is irrevocably changing relationships. I don't agree. Today, 33% of singles met their last first date through the Internet; 37% of relationships start on line; and 20% of marriages begin through these airwaves. But Internet dating services aren't *dating* services; they are *introducing* services. During your first coffee or cocktail with a potential partner, your ancient brain springs into action and you court by its prehistoric rules—just as our forebears did long ago.

I do an annual study, entitled *Singles in America*, with the Internet dating site, Match.com. We don't poll the Match membership; instead, each survey is a representative sample of Americans. And the responses of these 20,000+ men and women have given me more hints about the future. Foremost, 74% of Singles would make a long-term commitment to someone of a different ethnic background; and 70% would commit to someone of a different faith. Racism and religious prejudice are decreasing in America. Most Singles also approve of same-sex marriage, as well as having children out of wedlock. But Singles *don't* approve of commuter marriages, sexually open relationships, or partners sleeping in separate homes. Singles have come to regard a deep, transparent and romantic connection to a committed partner as the core of social life.

We are becoming cautious, however. Indeed, 67% of American cohabiting couples are scared of divorce. So Singles are ushering into vogue extended *pre-commitment* stages of courtship. With “hooking-up,” Friends with Benefits, and “living together,” they are getting to know a partner long before they tie the knot. Where marriage used to be the beginning of a

partnership, it's becoming the finale. More will opt for alternatives to legal matrimony too, such as "civil partnerships" in England; "civil unions" in the United States; "de facto" mateships in Australia; and the PACS in France.

We will probably see more happy partnerships, however—because everywhere that both spouses bring home money, bad marriages can end. In fact, in 2012, I surveyed 1,095 married American men and women with Match.com: 81% would *remarry* the person to whom they are currently wed. With the decline of infant mortality and myriad new medical breakthroughs, many will also enjoy a long, healthy middle age—more time to find and keep true love. New rules—and new taboos—will emerge, of course. For example, 60% of singles now believe it's rude to "text" while on a date.

I'm an optimist. I believe we will come to embrace the growing data that women are just as sexual as men; that men are just as romantic as women; that gays and lesbians are just as eager to attach; that older folks are just as randy and romantic as the young; that even animals love. Moreover, although today some 27% of American households have only one occupant, and even more people live alone in Japan, France, Germany, Sweden and other countries, I join those who believe we are becoming "hyper-connected." Today Americans send, on average, 15,000 emails every year; Facebook members have, on average, over 300 "friends;" and we relentlessly yammer and tap on our cell phones. We are "tuning in"—constantly.

Over 4.4 million years ago our ancestors adopted a *dual* human reproductive strategy: *serial* pair-bonding and clandestine adultery. So the single greatest 21st century issue in relationships is likely to be how each of us handles these conflicting appetites. Yet around the world people still pine for love, live for love, kill for love and die for love. These neural pathways lives deep in the human brain. They will not change--even a million years from now.

Any prediction of the future should take into account this unquenchable, adaptable and primordial human drive to love.

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