

**HOW TO BE HAPPY  
...THOUGH MARRIED**

**JOHN J. SYNON**

However true it may be, it is pure brag when a man says he is happy, though married. Certainly it is not a sign of wisdom; some things are better kept to one's self.

Yet, here I sit, with the patina of 21 years of happiness encrusting me, knowing better, yet, preparing to tell all.

And I shall. Here is the last line first: To insure happiness, though married, be eternally vigilant for the one-up ploy.

That is all there is to it.

In my own case, I got off on the right foot the day we set up housekeeping. There was a window shade to be hung and I managed to screw in the brackets some six inches below the window top. I have never again been asked to hang a shade. Moreover, that inspired moment set the stage for all these intervening years. No sockets to fix; no boards to be sawn; no typewriter ribbons to unnerve a person; no nothing, none of that "handyman" business.

"He just doesn't have the knack — I'd rather do it myself than see him fumble around", my bride said; that first anniversary, while explaining the set of carpenter tools I had presented her. And I stood there, as I have stood ever since, head hung, admitting to my incompetence.

That was no mean victory — making the little doll feel needed — and has done much over these two decades to insure my happiness, though married.

A second element of the technique — the first being mechanical helplessness — might be termed, standing clear. It calls for a closed mind, a certain obdurateness.

Let me explain: You have no connubial right to interfere in the kitchen, you know. That is elementary, or it should be. To the best of my belief — and I am quite certain of this — I have not laid a hand on a dish rag or towel since I have been married. I am that thoughtful. By standing clear, you see, I preclude any chance of breakage or of misplacing things and thus insure against future misunderstandings.

Take that as a cardinal rule, then, stay out of the kitchen particularly after meals.

Such are samples of the objective technique of being happy,

though married. But they are not the essence of the art. I take a great deal more pride, let it be known, in my mastery of the subjective, the subjective being much more meaningful to the life of Riley.

To that end, I recommend wife watching. Let me illustrate, again:

I am a coffee drinker, an eight-cups-a-day swiller. So, it is significant when I tell you I get those eight cups without ever having to arise from my chair.

To manage that not-inconsiderable feat a person must have an understanding of his wife's psychology and of logistics — that's why I recommend wife watching — and a strategy of one's own geared to her characteristics. In my case, I managed through a simple yet devastatingly-effective maneuver; I placed my easy chair just outside the kitchen door. That's all; anchored it there.

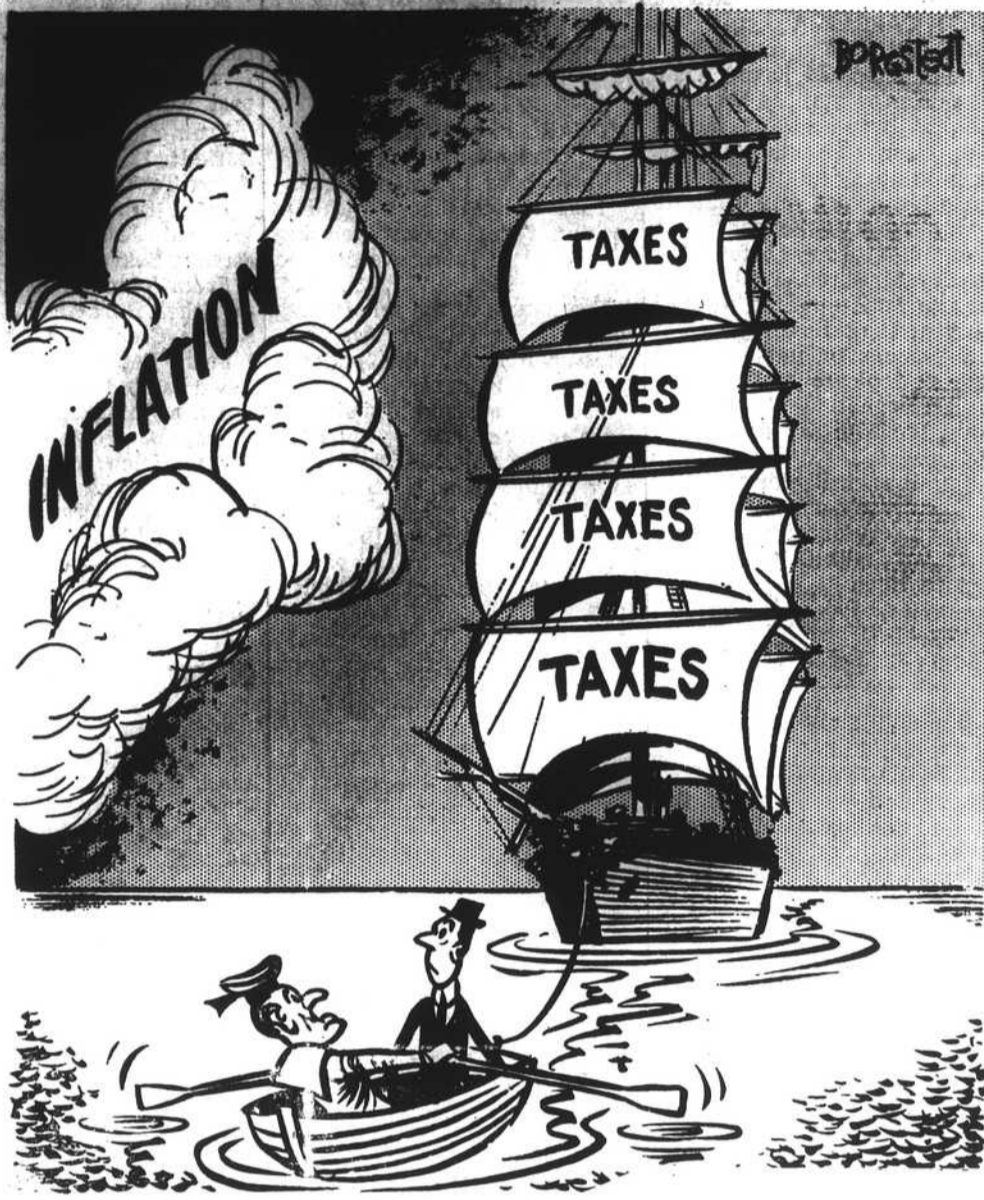
But saying "that's all" to that coup is like saying "that's all" to the discovery of America.

You see, my keen observation had convinced me there is no housewife alive — and you should have observed this, yourself — who can stay out of the kitchen for more than 30 minutes at a time. They are always coming and going. (You know what is a game path, don't you?) As the lady glides into range, just raise your cup, as another might his rifle — not too early and not too late, timing is a gossamer thing — and with your most mellifluous voice, say: "Please, baby — while you are up".

Voila! If what you see in that little act is nothing more than appears on the surface, I'm wasting my time seeking happiness, though married, for you. There is much more involved.

Did you ever hear the phrase,

'Well, she hasn't capsized yet!'



stress point? That's what is involved in all of this, the lady's stress point. You must learn her limit of endurance and stay just this side of it. You see, if I were doltish enough to ask for coffee and — and anything, all in a breath, most likely I would get that soul crusher, do-it-yourself, as I did once or twice, in the early days. No sir; I save the and until the lady is committed, has cup in hand. That's when I add the and — and popover, and cheese, and whatever else it is I have in mind. (My record is a plate lunch).

Such fine nuances get the job

done thoroughly, insure my happiness, though married.

And that, as I say, is all there

is to it.

Let me know how you make out.



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