

MO SUMMER DIRECTIVE 1990

PART I: CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

Some introductory words.....

In 1984, as some of you will recall, we sent you a directive on Family, Friends and Relations. This directive touches on some of the same questions but focuses specifically on close adult relationships.

You may feel that this is a subject which is too intimate to write about (one Observer said of the last directive that race and class should not be discussed in polite society and declined to reply). If you do feel uncomfortable about answering, please tell us. I do want to stress, however, that your replies remain anonymous. In any case it is always up to you how much you wish to say. You can if you wish confine your reply to your opinions rather than your experiences, but as we have often said before, it is personal experience and insight which have a way of bringing your directive replies to life. The franker you can be, the more valuable your contribution. This is what makes our project unique.

I haven't called this directive 'marriage' because I want to include people in all kinds of situations - single, engaged, married, separated, divorced, cohabiting, widowed, gay or straight, celibate or sexually active. The English language isn't always helpful so please assume that whatever your situation or your age, you are included!

As always, please don't tackle this as a questionnaire. The questions should be seen as prompts to get you going. Write as freely as you wish and include other issues where you feel they are important. I am especially interested in changes over time - either in your own outlook or in society at large - so older people, please bear this mind. Remember to include aspects of your own experience where relevant. On the other hand, even if something is entirely beyond your own immediate experience, don't feel that this disqualifies you from giving us your thoughts.

Please read the whole directive through before starting to reply.

Autobiographical: please begin by telling us very briefly about your own situation - past and present.

Love: what does the word mean to you? What about 'falling in love'? Have you had this experience? Are there different kinds of love? What would be your ideal romantic situation?

If you are single, would you describe yourself as happily single or involuntarily single? How far do you think marriage or a marriage-type relationship would meet your needs? Single people, especially older single people, tend to be stereotyped as spinsters and bachelors. Do you feel this affects you? How does being single (or divorced/widowed) affect your relationships with other people?

If you are married or in a very close relationship with one other person, how do you feel it affects your other relationships? Are several close relationships compatible? Are there rewards to be experienced from friendships which are not available in marriage?

Please turn over

Marriage: What makes for a 'good' marriage? Are your views on marriage linked to your religious beliefs? What do you think about engagements? Why do you think people get married? What about arranged marriage? Do you think gay people should be able to go through a marriage ceremony?

Living together: how do you feel about couples who live together without being married? If this is your situation, what word do you use to describe your partner? Have you consciously chosen not to get married?

Can you write something on the following words? Please relate what you write to your own experience if that is appropriate:

Divorce	Adultery
Separation	Faithfulness
Jealousy	Sex Education
Re-marriage	Computer dating/lonely hearts ads

How important is sex in your life? Do you think that male and female sexuality are fundamentally different? Do you expect sexual activity/enjoyment to decrease as you get older? Many people are celibate or have had times in their lives when they have been celibate. What would you say are the benefits and drawbacks of celibacy in your experience?

Has the spread of the A.I.D.S. virus affected your behaviour or your views on sexual matters? If so, how?

Over the past fifty years, there have been significant advances in contraceptive methods. Do you feel you have benefitted personally? Do you have any views on the recent change in the Abortion Act? What are your views on the availability of contraceptive advice to teenagers?

Guidance to young people: imagine what advice you would give if (a) a young person confided to you that he/she was gay and (b) a young unmarried woman in her teens confided in you that she was pregnant.

Do you feel that your views on all or any of these questions are different from those of your parents? Or from your children's?

If you had been preparing this directive, would you have done it differently? What have I left out?

PART TWO: YOUR VIEWS...

We'd like to hear your views on the directives. Obviously if you've only just joined the Project you can't comment on past themes but you can let us know the sorts of things you'd like to write about.

Which themes have you enjoyed most and least? (Please note here when you joined us). What themes would you like us to cover in the future? Do you prefer writing about your own experience (clothes, thrift, shopping, food, health, holidays) or do you enjoy discussing wider issues (general elections, disasters, the EC, the Falklands War*)? Do you enjoy the one-day diaries?

Would you prefer to have a choice of subjects in each directive? Could you manage more than three directives a year?

[Dir. 32 21.5.90]

*(Themes of past Directives)

