

Love, Soccer and Rock 'n' Roll - Marriage and Divorce

Thomas Schuhmann
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It was a staggering moment for many of his fans when Germany's funniest entertainer, Thomas Gottschalk (his name means "God's fool"), 68, announced in March his divorce from his wife, Thea, after 42 years of marriage.

The couple seemed to be living proof that century-old values of fidelity within a marriage bond could stand rock solid in the treacherous waters of show business, an example for many of his peers.

Yet, what seemed everlasting on the outside had finally given in on the inside, and "Tommy" had already provided for a successor to his ex-wife. A life of rock and pop, and he is a connoisseur, did not keep his love life from petering out. It made me wonder, on that particular day, what one could do to avoid that.

"Are you alright?" Mr. V. the Siemens technician asked me, while I was the security guard at the reception desk, after he ordered that I should call up Ulli, as the other house technicians were occupied. He didn't say "how are you," but played a fast ball like a soccer dribbler and passed it to me.

After a while I said, "I struggle along." After Ulli and Mr. V. did their job, they chatted in the backroom of the gate. I thought the time was right to interrupt them. "A question to the experts. Why wasn't there a sabotage alarm in the marriage of Thomas Gottschalk? If there had been a fault message, the marriage could have been rescued."



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"If the interest is no longer there", Mr. V. replied, "the interest in each other, then probably they grew apart. Her living in Malibu, him in Germany."

"It used to be called love, or fidelity," I said. "Now it's called interest." Ulli giggled and kept his arms crossed. I had equalized, and the match was now tied 1-1.

"I'm married for the third time." Mr. V. continued, "Two marriages are already behind me."

"What a pity," I said.

"The first one lasted five years," he said mercilessly. "I confronted my ex-wife with the choice, either your mother or me. She wanted to stay in her mother's house, lacking in independence, but she couldn't cope with the baby, and I bore the consequences."

"Bad-ass," I said. "Others would have surely tried to find a compromise."

"My second marriage lasted 25 years." Mr. V. didn't let anybody steal the ball from him.

"It expired, as my second wife didn't want to give up her business which was deep in the red."

"A knight in shining armor would have backed her up: 'Darling, here are 5,000 euros. Later I can give you 10,000,'" I said.

"She was unwise, had become pigheaded. I had even paid off her debts. She promised to give me my money back, but I haven't seen it until this day."

"These inhabitants of Munich are hard as nails," I said. "We Franconians would have begun a pilgrimage in order to bring down heavenly assistance. If everything goes wrong, we still could go on a pilgrimage to Rome. But giving up? No way."

"That's probably connected to my youth," Mr. V. said. "I worked on my own from an early age."

"Imagine your wife ends up in a wheelchair. Would you put her on the top of a hill and give her a push?"

"She had no physical problems."

"Maybe she had psychological problems," I said. "When do you give a depressed person the mercy shot?"

Our discussion picked up speed and Mr. V. proved to be a fast dribbler with a tough finish like Messi or Ronaldo, while my favorite player has always been Andrea Pirlo, *l'architetto*, who used to play with Milan. I was interested in long-term strategies, as I've been married to my wife for 30 years and want it to last forever.

Later that day, my boss called me on the phone, an Easterner from Dresden with a Bavarian mother. Mr. G. had been a blue beret in Yugoslavia and has the self-confidence of a Mack truck.

"What was that?" he said, hearing a notification ping on my phone.

As a diplomatic, high-caliber manager, he gave me an example of a high-standard notification the way he does it, a master of his trade, an officer and a gentleman, set in stone. We talked about Tommy and Thea.



The Gottschalks in earlier and happier times

"It all depends on how a husband and wife deal with one another," he said, "and if there is still togetherness left over. I ask her, 'How is your feeling? Do you still feel something?' Many older couples have become dumb stones who are no longer interested in the needs of their partner. Two big erratic blocks sit in the restaurant and the only person they talk to is the waiter."

"I'm disappointed in Gottschalk," I said.

"Nothing lasts forever," he replied.

"East Germans do not seem to be at ease with the concept of eternity," I said, "the famous socialist realism." I had kicked the ball into his half and aimed for the goal.

"I have always given everything for my women," he said, "but at one point you feel only taken advantage of. You talk to her, you say, 'Honey, I've noticed you just want to be pampered,' but she still doesn't change, always the same old loop. That's when I call it quits."

"And why did Tommy get divorced?" I asked.

"You don't know what was going on between them," he said. "Maybe she pumped four bottles of red wine into her system. Anyway, marriage is a daily battle."

The greatest influences on us might not be from holy scriptures or literature, but from our colleagues and everyday collaborators from all walks of life and from TV, radio and newspapers. These voices worm themselves into our subconsciousness. Being manipulated is the way of the world and a lonely human being is the darling of the economy, because he or she will spend more money to compensate for their loss.

Why is it so hard to stay together for many contemporaries? I'm sure a lot of men started out thinking in a gentlemanly fashion: "My wife might be a midget or a hunchback, but she is mine; I cover her handicap. Vice versa, I might be dealing with depression for a lifetime, or be bordering insanity, but she covers my handicap. If a third person comes in, it would destroy our equilibrium." Many German men, according to novelist Martin Walser, need to be reassured by their wives every day and keep asking them, "You do like me, don't you?"

Taking a deeper look at the teachings of the Unification Movement is necessary as most rock musicians or actors are poor examples in regards to marriage life, although they influence us via TV on a daily basis.

These stars are incredibly good looking and live it up as if there were no tomorrow. Their lifestyles seem to be envied and emulated, as those who live a faithful marriage don't stand in the limelight. Unfortunately, they don't realize when they are off track.

God, however, looks at the heart:

"But the Lord said to Samuel, 'Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart.'" (1 Samuel 16:7)

As the fallen nature of the archangel is still alive within us, we might love to whip the cream and mirror

ourselves in the eyes of others like Gottschalk. However, only our unity with God, True Parents and Jesus helps us separate ourselves from evil influence. Looks can be deceiving and feelings can change dramatically. The reality in which we are living might have been only imaginary, quicksand, without any substantial foundation, unconnected to ultimate reality. As it was God's will to give me this wife and as God is the absolute reality, my will is parallel to His.

Christ died on the cross and was not able to marry. If I'm able to value my wife as my messiah who is the only one to open my prison door from the outside, I will fight each bad influence that tries to stand in front of Christ or True Parents and block me off. Father said, "Away from the circle of the holy spirit you can never attain unification."

Rock 'n' roll usually idolizes women and the sexual revolution, and many musicians are afraid to face the reality harboring a shallow heart. I believe that behind every temptation is God waiting for us to spiritually grow.

We have to break through. In Father's words:

"What is true love? It does not refer to the selfish love that slithers around the secular world. It is not the counterfeit love that gives one moment and abandons the next. It is not self-indulgent, profligate love driven by fleshly desires. Such false love assails and violates the conscience driving nails into the original mind. Having nothing to do with that, true love is the source of peace and spiritual order. Its nature is to honor and preserve the tranquility of all people."

There is an old Roman proverb, "The world wants to be cheated." For thousands of years humankind has experienced the falsehood of the fallen world; it became legendary, it's what you basically expect from everybody.

My wife connects me with the Marriage of the Lamb. As True Mother is the personified, substantial Holy Spirit living on earth, Father gave Unificationist men the grace of having a wife who stands also in this position. This is how we can break the spell from the fallen realm, the malicious spirits, and live in the reality of God. My wife loves me more than I'll ever know.

Thomas Schuhmann joined the German Unification Church in 1976 and served as a full-time missionary. Later he studied English and German language and literature and joined CARP. He lives in Freising, Bavaria, and is blessed with a fantastic wife who he insists is a much better person than he is.