

LUCKY

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Successful husband, Jeffrey Hunter, discusses a successful wife, mother and career woman, Barbara Rush. A story we heartily recommend to altar-bound and young married people

BY LILLIAN and BOB PRICHARD



Family photo of a lucky threesome—Barbara Rush, little Chris and Jeffrey Hunter. They're happy with good reason

Jeff Hunter and Barbara Rush came to several conclusions three years ago. One was that they loved each other so much their marriage was bound to be a success. One other was that they both wished to continue their screen careers.

Under average circumstances, either conclusion would have been a sound one.

But a combination of both? Many a woman would have considered it impossible. For Barbara Rush, it turned out to be simply a matter of planning.

To say the Hunters have a great marriage would be an understatement. It's ideal. Both Jeff and Barbara had hoped it would be, but, like other couples who have to live together to learn about each other, they had to make the test.

How does Barbara manage to be wife, mother and career woman and do all three well? Jeff leaned back and smiled. "Now that *is* a question! I think one of the reasons is because we talked about our future sensibly and fully before we were married, rather than waiting till afterward."

Talking out their problems has been a habit with Jeff and Barbara since they first met. Barbara was a starlet at Paramount when Jeff was given his first screen test. Therefore she could give him a valuable understanding of a medium in which they both make their livelihood.

Prior to taking that fateful step on December 1, 1950, at Boulder City, Nev., they had discussed the feasibility of a woman combining career with marriage.

Jeff thought that he and Barbara were mature enough to manage it. "We agreed that career and marriage could work provided the former did not overshadow the latter. I believe there are few things a couple can't accomplish provided both are willing to work."

Jeff and Barbara's marriage represents

a victory for wisdom. Unlike many persons, they have a deep understanding of examples provided by others who have lived the good life. Their faith in these examples is based on analysis rather than blindness. Both Jeff and Barbara have examined theories dealing with marriage and have chosen those which are applicable to themselves.

Jeff and Barbara are not "stuffy." Their life is a happy balance of love, understanding and practical living based on their own personal program.

"A man and wife must help each other if their marriage is to succeed," Jeff said. "Barbara and I have learned tolerance and unselfishness and we are aware of the rich reward it can bring. We discuss our work and our pictures, not on a competitive basis, but in a way that is helpful to both of us."

Their planning for the birth of their child, Chris, was almost letter-perfect. The doctor's announcement came at a time when Barbara had an important role in Prince of Pirates. She could have dropped her career temporarily but there are several reasons why she didn't.

"Our doctor said the work would keep Barbara active and would be good for her, provided she didn't overdo it," Jeff explained. "Besides, Barbara is not a person to leave a picture unfinished. Like a good trouper, she stayed on until the picture was completed."

At the conclusion of Prince of Pirates Barbara was faced with a problem. Jeff

was assigned to a lead role in *Sailor of the King* but he would have to go to England and Malta for the filming.

Without a moment's hesitation she advised Jeff to accept the role. "It was a marvelous opportunity and one that might not come my way again for a long time. I accepted," Jeff remembered.

Barbara made it a point not to mention that Jeff's trip to Europe for the picture might mean that he would be aboard a destroyer in the Mediterranean when the baby was born.

Jeff didn't mention it either. "But I thought about it," Jeff said. "I could only hope the baby would arrive before I left."



Barbara and Jeff work in movies, get to previews—*Island in the Sky* this night—because they have no sitter problem

It almost turned out to be a futile hope. The time approached for Jeff to be on his way, with Barbara still not ready for the hospital. It was then that Barbara's courage and wisdom came to the fore.

"She reasoned that during wartime, many women had babies while their husbands were away; so why should she be considered different? It made sense but the idea of not being at her side when the baby was born, was hard to take."

Just as Jeff's anxiety was reaching the hectic point, he was granted an extra week before reporting to England. Four days prior to his departure, Chris was born.

To this day, Jeff stoutly maintains that without Barbara's many assurances, he probably wouldn't have made it.

Barbara had several factors on her side at the outset. She had realized she would have to plan ahead efficiently if she were to maintain the balance between her career and marriage. She enlisted the aid of her mother who lived at Santa Monica.

"I leased an apartment for Mother Rush a few days before I left," Jeff said. "It was a wonderful feeling to know she would look after Barbara and Chris."

Shortly after the birth of Chris, Barbara followed another of her pre-conceived plans. She adopted her own "slim down" project and set about losing the extra weight she had gained. It was not an easy job but she stuck to it resolutely. The fact that she won a plum role in *Magnificent Obsession*, indicates

the project was a success.

"Her figure is better now than it was before," Jeff exclaimed proudly.

Barbara's schedule is a hard one but she never complains. Rather, she seems to thrive on it. She is off to the studio by 7 a.m. One of her co-workers recently remarked, "Barbara has an agile mind. I know of no one I would rather work with."

When the sun goes down, Barbara blithely heads home, forgetting everything except Jeff and Chris. Once at home she relieves Mother Rush of all household and baby chores, and plunges in with a vengeance.

This leads to Jeff's puzzlement. "I'm firmly convinced she has a hidden reservoir of energy she taps at night," Jeff said.

The greatest pleasure Jeff and Barbara get when they return home from the studio is the greeting they get from Chris. "It's a mixture of gurgles, squeals and his own kind of talk, but we know he's glad to see us." It goes without saying that they think their boy is pretty smart for his age.

Mother Rush has jokingly remarked that Chris looks upon her only as the symbol of food. No one takes the remark seriously. Chris is devoted to Mother Rush but there is little doubt that he is aware which of the two women is his mother.

Jeff admits he got quite a jolt when he walked into the apartment following his

stay abroad. The household was humming with domestic activity and Chris was demanding and getting the attention of both Barbara and Mother Rush.

"I felt neglected," Jeff admitted with a laugh, "then it dawned on me. Before, there had been only Barbara and myself to consider. Now, there were three of us."

Once the feeling of neglect passed, Jeff pitched in to do his share of the work. He formerly prided himself on being "the best dishwasher in the house."

"Now you can call me the best bottle warmer," Jeff grinned.

Jeff and Barbara are getting new plans ready for action—plans for their future. Although the happiest part of their married life has been spent in their West Los Angeles apartment, both have a desire for the security of a home.

Jeff already feels the urge to acquaint his son with the wonders of nature. As a boy, Jeff had many pleasurable outdoor experiences with his father. He wishes to pass them on to Chris. He remembers the thrill of fishing in Wisconsin lakes with his dad, whether they caught anything or not.

"I also recall the first time I kicked a football or socked a baseball into outer field," Jeff said. "These are the things that make a boy's youth treasurable. I have my own storehouse of childhood memories and I want Chris to have his, too."

Jeff believes the best way to let a child

develop properly is to guide but never push him.

"When I was a kid I did a lot of things. I became interested in radio, acting and intensely interested in sports. It is possible that Chris will follow my bent; I don't know. He'll be permitted to judge for himself."

When time and finances permit, Jeff plans a trailer trip to the many beautiful National Parks scattered throughout the West—for just Barbara, Chris and himself.

"It would be marvelous to see the sights and enjoy the same things thousands of Americans enjoy each summer."

It is here that Jeff and Barbara show signs of veering away from a planned line. "On this trip we would follow no fixed itinerary. We would fish, hike or sleep, depending on how we feel. Man, what a life!"

There is a deep-seated motive in this sort of jaunt, however, that comes out when you press Jeff. "It will give Chris and me a chance to become real outdoor pals."

There you have it; plans and all. There is little else the Hunters ask of life. "Most of all we want health and strength that will be necessary to make our plans come true."

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