Marital Satisfaction & Family Life Cycle
Happiness Rises & Falls over the Life Span of a Marriage

Ref. Lefrancois (1999): *The Lifespan*, Fig. 14.9, p. 423
Happiness/Satisfaction is Not Static

- **Satisfaction is** –
  - High in the early years
  - Lowest when the children are in their teen years
  - Rises again when the children are out on their own.

- **Happiest Marriages are those where** –
  - Each partner feels he/she has equal say in decisions.
  - Is free to initiate sex (or decline)
  - There is a solid balance / a shared power.
  - Each partner retains his/her identity; while
  - There is a strong identity as being a couple
  - There is a strong commitment plus a willingness to work at making the marriage secure.

A Marriage Is -

• The joining of two lives into one where there are common goals and shared interests as well as a sense of togetherness – of being of one mind, of one purpose.

• The death of selfishness leading to the birth of selflessness: that unique quality of unselfish concern for the welfare of others; acting with less concern for one’s self.

• The creation of an entity called the “Us” or the “We”, yet retaining the positive qualities of personality, character and interests of each individual spouse.

H=Husband
W=Wife
A Family Is -

• The introduction & inclusion of Children into the “Us”

• Technically defined as “A group of two or more persons related by birth, marriage, or adoption and residing together in a household.”

• A secure, safe base from which to venture out to learn and explore the broader world and society within which the Child must eventually function independently.
A Marriage & A Family must learn to balance many competing outside forces with its own internal needs -
To Be Successful at this the Family Must Function As a TEAM