

DAVID CASSIDY

(Continued from page 21)

He doesn't intend to propose marriage when he knows he can't.

Earlier this year, before he became twenty-one in April, David dared to express only what he'd confided to close friends.

"For me," he said firmly, "there will be no marriage till I know the girl intimately. First of all, a good part of marriage is sex, so sexual compatibility is important. I don't want to get involved in marriage without knowing what such a relationship would be like. I would like to live with a girl for six months or so to see if we were compatible."

He added, awarely, "People change as you live with them for a period of time. You find out a lot of things about them that you didn't know before you lived together."

Today, away from "The Partridge Family," he remains determinedly honest as a young adult.

Before his series shot him to fame last year, David lived a block and a half from me. He is as unassuming and sincere today as he was then.

When he welcomed me to the beautiful home he moved into this year, his smile was contagious. This house, high in the Hollywood hills, is a subtle combination of modern Spanish decor and California comfort. Reached only by narrow streets winding upward for miles, it's hidden from passers-by so overly aggressive fans won't ring his doorbell day and night as they did last year when his residence for the first year of the series was an almost empty small house in Laurel Canyon.

Girls he invited over then discovered that he was stubbornly resisting his opportunity to be a phony. Although his high school years were spent in his mother's charming house—when she resumed her stage work in the East, she leased it to Juliet Mills—and his dad, Jack Cassidy, and stepmother, Shirley Jones, own a mansion, David chose to start saving some money instead of splurging.

So that chapter was Spartan. Everyone sat on the floor in the living-room that had no chairs. Orange crates served as night stands and bookcases in David's bare bedroom. He and Sam Hyman the aspiring film editor who's been his best friend since their high school days, shared that place and the rambling, luxuriously furnished house they rent now.

David's eyes danced when I commented on it being a lot better than the preceding pad. We looked out the large windows of the living-room with a huge brick fireplace in the middle at the tempting swimming pool on the front lawn. Far below, thousands of rooftops stretched twenty miles to the Pacific Ocean. He confessed he still longs to head for the beach on a weekend day off. But now he has to go to a distant one to escape being mobbed.

"I never imagined I'd be this lucky so soon," he admitted to me when we sat down to discuss his personal progress. Suddenly he was entirely serious. As idealistic as ever, he also enjoys being

practical. "I never forget I'd better be!" he pointed out.

Every girl who dates or merely talks to David finds him astonishingly down-to-earth about his responsibilities. I've been impressed by the politeness with which he invariably clothes his consideration. He won't brush anybody off. David respects another person's rights as a human being as much as he does his own.

Most guys swear they're madly in love in their teens to wangle what they want from reluctant girls. David didn't have to lie. Discerning dolls were quite willing to be caressed by him before he abruptly became a teenage idol.

"I guess I've never really been in love," he's repeated with rare truthfulness. Obviously, he hasn't been if he can say that.

So don't be fooled by reports of his dates with Judy Strangis or any other Hollywood cuties. David instinctively knows there must be a difference between a crush and an overwhelming devotion.

It was perfectly plain to him that he couldn't leap into love crazily. To build an acting career, he has to concentrate on its demands first. Yet, of course, along with his immediate sensitivity to the feelings of others, David has a strong sensual drive. He's made himself command it, not be its victim.

Undoubtedly, the main reason he won't gamble on what might be love is his fear of the effects a divorce could bring. His parents separated when he was a small boy. That was a painful experience for them and to him.

David's mother was an ecstatic teenage bride. A brunette beauty eager for an illustrious career on the stage, Evelyn Ward had begun on Broadway as a dancer in a chorus. When she went into her second show there, she met Jack Cassidy on their first night backstage for it. She was told to teach him to dance. He was so handsome and charming she whispered to a friend, "I'm going to marry him!" When she soon did, they both blithely fancied they'd be blissful forever after. After the ceremony in Manhattan's Little Church Around the Corner, they were deliriously content for a while in the modest apartment they decorated on 25th Street.

Then reality ravished their dreams.

Jobs in show business were as scarce then as they are now. Their money evaporated. The only work Jack could get as a performer was as a singer on a cruise ship. He was at sea when David was born. David's parents struggled to hold onto happiness, and couldn't. Their acting offers pulled them apart. More significantly, becoming a husband and father when he was so young was too much for Jack Cassidy.

An affectionate, only child, David missed his dad terribly as he saw less and less of him. The divorce was a condition that had to be accepted. David doesn't want to inflict the same hurt on the girl he'll marry, their children, or the man he's becoming.

When he was eight, David was introduced to Shirley Jones by his father and was able to acknowledge she might be terrific. When he was ten, his mother and he moved from his grandparents' home in New Jersey to

Los Angeles, so she could act in TV and he could visit Jack and Shirley oftener.

David loves his parents, Shirley, and the three little boys his father sired in his second marriage. He was very fond of the film director who was his stepfather for a third of his teens, but he lost the companionship with his mother's second divorce.

Certainly David does not blame his elders for their disappointments in love. He realizes that would be unforgivably presumptuous. He's long since recognized that a child cannot comprehend many of its parents' problems. With remarkable perception as a teenager, David could admire the fine traits he could see in others. This habit distinguishes him in still another manner now.

"I'm glad I had to count on unexpected upsets in my teens," he said quietly. "I didn't, though, until I was forced to. They taught me, those circumstances, that I should be prepared to follow through on whatever I tackle. If we don't delude ourselves about what we want, a dead end can wind up only a detour.

"I know how uptight kids are when they aren't happy! I hated high school until the summer I was seventeen. I'd been bored, and I just drifted when I was frustrated. Then I finally made up my mind to try what I'd always hoped to do." When he vowed to succeed in show business if he possibly could, he had a new drive as a senior. When he graduated he went 3,000 miles away to study in classes for musical comedy in New York, after a preliminary plunge into work with a theatre group in Los Angeles and summer stock in the East. He never believed the achievements of his father, his stepmother, or his own mom in the theatre or Hollywood meant that he should click. David found an everyday job in Manhattan to pay for that additional training that led to his Broadway musical while he was eighteen.

He had to survive the blow when it folded after a brief run.

"I remember how much I wanted to vote when I was eighteen," he says of that period. "I wanted to be counted because I needed to lash out at someone. Except for my folks and a few friends, nobody wanted me to voice my opinions." No one, least of all David, could foresee that in just another year he'd be signed for the series that made his opinions fascinating to TV viewers.

"The potential roles were here in TV, so I was back here before my nineteenth birthday." By then, he knew how vital a smart agent is and the one who sent him on interviews for roles gave him confidence. His TV acting began at Universal with an interesting part in "Ironside." The intensely professional way in which Raymond Burr functions made a deep impression. From it, he went into a role in a segment of "The Survivors." What he could observe of Lana Turner gave him further insight into how glamor is maintained at a studio.

"I was cast as a good kid who was taken to a party and drugged in an 'Adam-12,'" he reminisced.

David ate in the glittering studio cafe at noons, but he was too unknown to be stared at. No one gaped at him when he lived near me. David doesn't have the