

# David Cassidy

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"More and more I started to get away by myself to places outside of the city, where God's natural beauty was all around me and I could think in the peace and quiet."

There's a depth to David that goes far beyond the smile that charms grandmothers, wins over mothers—and creates complete havoc among young girls. You get the feeling that he knows what life is all about.

"I don't know if I do or not," David says, smiling. "I like to think I do. I think I was faced with a lot of problems, a lot of situations which maybe not everybody else has had."

He doesn't talk about those "problems," but we can guess the loss and bewilderment of a little six-year-old boy when his beloved parents separated.

There were other problems in David's life, too. He became disenchanted with school, ditched a few classes and began associating with a crowd that was leading him astray of his goals. Then, almost as if God wanted to slow him down in order for him to take stock of himself, David contracted mononucleosis and was bedridden for three months.

"All of a sudden, I had a flash look at the pattern my life was taking. I saw myself going down and down . . . I had the feeling that I was going to stay a 'nothing' unless I woke up fast and took stock of myself . . .

"I had the growing feeling that I could discover much more about God in my life if I started trying to find out about Him on my own."

David likes to go away by himself . . . to his "private" place by the sea, "where God's natural beauty is all around me and I can think in the peace and quiet. . . ."

It was here that David watched the waves and experienced that curiously revealing answer to his own questions.

He noticed first the pattern of the waves, and it particularly stirred his thinking. "This seemed to tell me that God had planned the world so carefully. . . . Then I noticed that when the sunlight hit the waves in a certain way, I could look right into the center of them. Then suddenly, to my surprise, I discovered a wave that had a whole school of little fish in it!" As he watched, some of the tiny fish drifted along with the water's current, but not all.

"Others, I noticed, were struggling bravely, fighting the current to get back to the sea," David marveled. "It was almost as if they had made up their minds about a goal for themselves and were pushing toward it. . . ." Yet the drifters were washed ashore.

It was a graphic answer to one of the important questions in David's mind: Does God give each of us the freedom of choice? He'd been taught that each of us was placed

here for a reason, that man had no freedom of choice. Now it became clear he'd found a different answer:

"God doesn't necessarily have a specific purpose for each individual person, like my Sunday school lessons had taught me. God gave order and purpose to the world—but to people, He gave freedom."

Freedom to choose what you want to do with your life is important to David. "For example," said David, "I've chosen to be an entertainer. I could have decided to become a doctor. I believe if I had I would have put just as much work into that as I have into acting."

"I had the freedom to make that choice, and now that I have, the rest of my life will be influenced by that decision."

David says he doesn't go to church any more "because I find that most churches try to limit my thinking about God in my life to exactly this or exactly that. I think too many rules and regulations that some churches have tend to limit one's relationship with God."

"Instead of going to God in church, once a week on Sunday, I'd rather see him every day—when I look up into the stars at night—or see the beauty of green trees as I drive."

"It's like I have a tie-in, you know? It's like I have a hot line up there." An individual one, a personal one, and just for David Cassidy. —BY SANDY BECHEZ

# Shirley Jones

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to work with stepson David Cassidy, whose daddy captured her heart so long ago, and who, incidentally, is as much a 'positive thinker' as Shirley herself!

"David and I—as people—are a great deal alike," she says. "We think alike in many areas, and I guess that's why we get along so well. David was always an 'old soul' even as a little boy," Shirley adds thoughtfully. "I met David when he was seven or eight and he was a shy little boy, but very bright. He was *aware* of grownups. I think most *only* children are. He enjoyed being with grownups."

Shirley, while she is not a Christian Scientist, is inclined to feel there is a direct relation to her own personal beliefs. "Thinking positive is important," she says. "I, basically, think nothing is ever going to happen to me." In the case of illness, with which she seldom is troubled, Shirley's first thought is automatic: "I'm going to get better!" she says, "and usually I am."

Of course, physical well-being is a marvelous bonus. But it's easy to see that emotional benefits are just as important and rewarding. "Some people take what you'd call 'disappointment'—a disaster in their life, whatever it may be—as a terrible problem. It gets them down." But her attitude is far different. There's always a sunshiney side to difficulties that arise. A hopeful slant. "I think everything happens for the best."

Have her children inherited that trait? "Hopefully," she says.

"I think you should introduce children to some kind of organized religion and then let

them make their own choice later on," says Shirley. Their three boys, she admits, "don't particularly like Sunday school or church—particularly at this age—so I don't force them. I try to instill in them that there is a God somewhere, whether He's up in the sky or whether there's a heaven or there's a hell or any of that. I think that there is a God—that it's within each of us. This is my feeling, and what I'd like them to believe."

"Basically, it is not any one organized religion now. Jack is not a churchgoer at all. But we feel the same way about it, and he was always very pleased that I would take the children. I taught Sunday school for a while too." Even though Jack no longer accepts Catholicism, does not attend a church, he and Shirley want their boys to have a foundation on which to base their individual faiths in later life. Their own concepts have changed since childhood, though their faith in God has not.

"As a child, I felt that I had to go to church every Sunday or I wasn't a good Christian. Then, I really believed in heaven and hell—the whole thing. I don't any more. I know there's a God somewhere, but I don't think there's heaven or hell."

"Methodism is a very strong religion," she said seriously, "a very tough one to live by—probably more so than any other, if it's really lived by, I mean. To be a good Christian (according to those lights) you have to go to church every Sunday and every Sunday night—and every Wednesday, prayer meeting. You can't go to dances on Sunday, or the movies. It's much like the Mennonites or the Mormons."

It's not surprising that a conscientious, reverent girl like Shirley Jones took a long, hard look at some of the precepts she'd learned as a toddler before coming to her own conclusions.

She would never have found herself in Hollywood, had she agreed with all of those 'old-time Methodist' tenets. With all of Hollywood's reputation for wickedness, Shirley didn't find it so: "Not at all. It's no more wicked than any other major city in the United States! There's evil everywhere, and if you want to find it, you can find it anywhere. If you don't want it, leave it alone."

Church will always be God's house to Shirley, and she visits Him often—though not *every* Sunday. "I think the discipline of going to church every Sunday is good for people—and listening to a sermon is good, if you can get something out of it. I think that depends on who's preaching, really."

Nothing has ever managed to shake Shirley's faith, to make her wonder if there is a God. "I've never had enough happen to me to do that," she says firmly.

You can hear the optimism in her voice—feel the warmth in her words—almost bask in the radiance of her smile. It's as promising as a rainbow and brightest when sunshine catches raindrops in mid-air.

Into each life some rain must fall. . . . Even Shirley's?

"But I hope it'll be in small doses" she says in that perky, cheery voice.

No reliable weatherman would predict rain in the face of all that sunshine!

—BY BETSY ALLEN 77