

alizing that you have to do something with *yourself*, that a little bit of the right kind of selfishness makes you brighter, more loving and more stimulating.

Because of Eddie, I grew up. I act like an adult and I am an adult. I don't have to play the ingenue any more, because I've worked hard and made a place for myself on stage. I have found something that I can do well and I keep making it better. I don't actually have to work more than 12 weeks a year to handle our life, financially. But you know what? I've found that I *love* performing; I *really* love it. I didn't know this before, but I know it now.

I'm perfectly willing to marry again. The man I will marry will have to understand the part of me that is creative and enjoys being on stage. He'll have to live with that. I'm not saying he won't come first, because I want to love a man so that he will come first.

I need someone very strong, because I've become quite strong. I'll have to give up some things. I won't be able to work as much. I won't have this lovely freedom. Yet, right now, I'm not ready to give up anything. I'm living again. I've grown up. It just took a great deal of time.

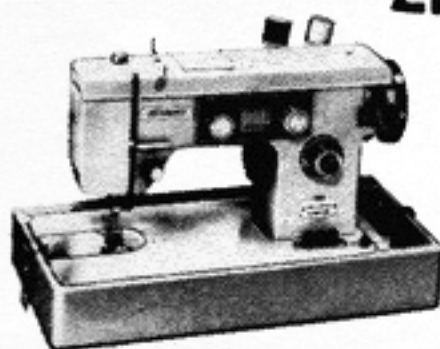
**Shirley Jones:** I was devastated. It's amazing! As strong as you think you are, when it comes to the man you love, you are not.

Jack and I had talked over our problems. We weren't even angry. Maybe we both felt that a separation would be a good jolt for us. Maybe we felt it would be a pickup for us. We've never doubted that we love each other. It was always a question of whether people as different as we are can live with that love.

This was, of course, just a year ago at Thanksgiving and it was a dumb thing, it lasted a day-and-a-half. Then, Jack called. I had friends at the house, but he said he wasn't going to call back later. He told me to go upstairs and talk right away. "This is stupid," he said. "When I put one foot into this hotel room I realized what idiots we were. I don't know what we're trying to prove. It's all my fault, and I'm willing to try if you're willing. . . ." And I just burst into tears and said, "Oh, yes . . . yes!"

Jack came home that night, but that was a mistake. We did need time to test ourselves and our relationship; you can't do that in 36 hours. There are problems in every marriage. It's the most difficult relationship in the world and you have to meet and solve the problems. We have had the problem of work separations. They can get rocky. People in love need each other. We have children, too, and children need their parents. That's why I was ecstatic when "The Partridge Family" came along and I, at least, could be grounded. But even that posed problems with the long hours. We didn't solve anything in 36 hours, which is why we eventually spent six months apart. Then, I had to face things squarely and see what I could do. There would be no point in just staying at home waiting for Jack to

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