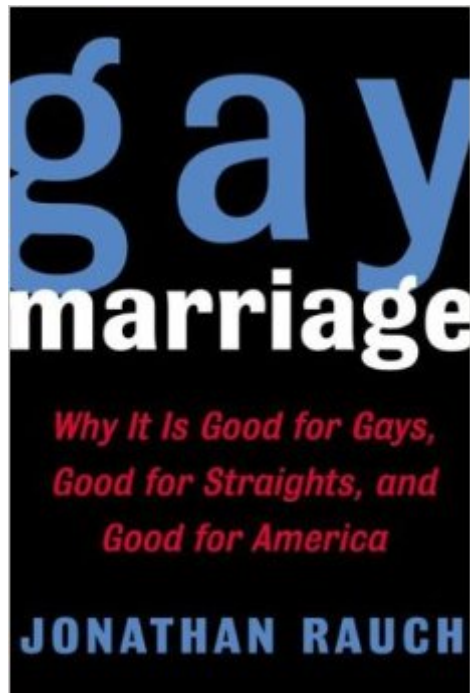


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# Gay Marriage: Why It Is Good For Gays, Good For Straights, And Good For America



## Synopsis

A leading Washington journalist argues that gay marriage is the best way to preserve and protect society's most essential institution. Two people meet and fall in love. They get married, they become upstanding members of their community, they care for each other when one falls ill, they grow old together. What's wrong with this picture? Nothing, says Jonathan Rauch, and that's the point. If the two people are of the same sex, why should this chain of events be any less desirable? Marriage is more than a bond between individuals; it also links them to the community at large. Excluding some people from the prospect of marriage not only is harmful to them, but is also corrosive of the institution itself. The controversy over gay marriage has reached a critical point in American political life as liberals and conservatives have begun to mobilize around this issue, pro and con. But no one has come forward with a compelling, comprehensive, and readable case for gay marriage-until now. Jonathan Rauch, one of our most original and incisive social commentators, has written a clear and honest manifesto explaining why gay marriage is important-even crucial-to the health of marriage in America today. Rauch grounds his argument in commonsense, mainstream values and confronting the social conservatives on their own turf. Gay marriage, he shows, is a "win-win-win" for strengthening the bonds that tie us together and for remaining true to our national heritage of fairness and humaneness toward all.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Suddenly, there seems to be an avalanche of books about the gay-marriage issue appearing in America's bookstores. There is little doubt now that the controversy over granting legal marriages to

gay persons is snowballing and has become the hot topic of the times. Jonathan Rauch's book is another contribution to the debate and, to his credit, he does provide a slightly different slant on the issue from what I've read in other books. Rauch, a correspondent for The Atlantic Monthly, columnist for National Journal, and a writer-in-residence at the Brookings Institution, tends to de-emphasize the all-too-common "equal rights" argument and suggests, instead, that gay marriage would be good for American society because it would increase respect for the institution of marriage itself. To be clear about this, he doesn't dismiss the matter of equal rights but says "I wouldn't support same-sex marriage as a matter of equal rights if I thought it would wreck opposite-sex marriage." One of the very basic questions regarding the question of marriage is, What is marriage for? He spends an entire chapter discussing this question, which sets the stage for his argument that gay marriage would be good, not only for gays, but for straights and for marriage in general. So, what is marriage for? Well, whatever else it is, he says, "it is a commitment to be there." I interpret him to mean that in this special relationship called "marriage," both parties to the compact promise to help and comfort one another when times are tough, in sickness and in health, etc., etc., which is, of course, a common understanding of what is, in fact, involved in a marriage -- at least ideally. He uses the term "prime-caregiver" and maintains that this is an essential condition of the marriage relationship.

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