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The Couples Connection

What's Cooking?

Written By Sarah Lee LMFT—Program Director



There is a Nickelback song that I truly love called, “if today was your last day.” This is such a great song because it really captures how precious each moment of life is. Despite this truth, I find myself getting caught up in the business of things that are immediate. Usually, when I have spent too much time running around focusing on tasks that have to get done; something happens. The “something” could be that I find out, my grandma got sick, my best friend has cancer or my uncle was in a car accident. When I find out what has happened to the loved ones around me, I am jolted back into reality. How do I get so off track and forget the things that are most important to me?

Some times it is important to take time and reflect. What is really important to me? What type of person do I want to be? What types of relationships do I want to have? At the end of my life, what do I want to be remembered by? It is really important to inventory your life periodically and make sure that you are on track—that you are reaching your potential. It is important to *not* get into “autopilot” mode. It is so easy to get derailed from what’s important because life is busy, stressful and never seems to let up. Reflection must be deliberate and it takes time, but it is worth it.

Reflection is the first step to living intentionally and having intentional relationships. Once you know what is important through your reflection, the second step is creating a game plan to reaching your new goals. If you want to spend more time with your children, you need to work out when and how. These action oriented steps will be mean sacrifice. Something *less* important must be given *less* time. New priorities will be charted and a new path will be revealed.

At Healthy Marriages, we know that a new path is on the horizon. Recently, we were funded again for our fourth year—which we are so excited. Our Federal funding will hopefully provide resources through our fifth year too, but the sixth year will be coming soon. We are currently working on creating a sustainability plan for our program well into the future. Just like our couples, we want the capacity to endure. We want to be around for years to come helping couples become intentional about their relationships. We have also forged new relationships by creating an Advisory Board to help and steer our program into the future.

We are truly excited about what the future holds. We want to take our program to new heights. We want to focus on strengthening couples and empowering families, and we don’t want to lose sight of what’s important. For our team, it is not about the quantity of the couples we serve, but about the quality of the lives of the couples we serve. We want to change the world; one couple at a time, one family at a time and one community at a time. We are so grateful for the Wise Couples, who have joined us in our quest. Will you please continue to support our mission? Join with us and leave a legacy of things that don’t ever go away. Invest in the relationships of people, who love us and deserve our best. Lead an intentional life, because you never know, “if today was your last day.”

Thanks to everyone who attended the relationship retreat with Dr. Pat Love! See what people had to say...

“I learned how to love my wife better!”

“The speaker was fantastic, the information was valuable.”

“Content was simple and powerful. Very well organized.”

“Dynamic!”

HEALTHY MARRIAGES

888-892-4250

www.HealthyMarriagesNM.org

If you wish to be taken off the mailing list, please contact Silvia Pacheco @ 888-892-4250

Newsletter compiled by Petulia Vandever and Hillary Bravo

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Wise Couple Corner

October in Albuquerque is known for the International Balloon Fiesta. People from different parts of the world come to our city to either watch balloons fly or to team up and ride in one. It is an incredible view to see the skies full of multicolored balloons: a fabulous collage. Most of us know that the basis of how a balloon works is that warmer air rises in cooler air. This is because hot air is lighter than cool air as it has less mass per unit. But something we might not know is that a hot air balloon is made out of three main parts: The envelope (the actual balloon) which is the fabric that holds the hot air; the burner, which is the unit which propels the heat up inside the envelope; and the basket, where the passengers and the pilot stand.

Thinking about this image, I see some similarities between a relationship and the parts of a hot air balloon. First in our list is the envelope, it means the fabric that makes the balloon suitable to fly. Not all fabrics are fit to hold the hot air and to elevate the balloon; it has to be the accurate combination of materials. In a couple, the fabric of the relationship is crucial. It is the right blend of interests that allow the couple to create a fabric that holds together throughout the years and flies through the winds of life. A relationship made out of authentic and truthful fabric will always impact the fabric of our society. Secondly, the burner. Without this unit, the balloon will stay inert on the ground. In a relationship, I compare the burner with the passionate commitment that keeps it alive; it is the fervent longing that embark us together in the journey of life. It is the burning desire that keeps us moving through the years. Thirdly, the basket where the passengers and the pilot stand. This could simile the dwelling place, made with our love and commitment; the place we call home. The basket mirrors the quarters that provide safety, stability and comfort to the members of our household. Therefore, we are flying in a great balloon through our lives.

But it is not difficult to notice that in our society, many couples are not enjoying this experience; they do not want to engage in a relationship that requires too much effort from a partner. Then, love and commitment usually appear as a relative matter and most of the time a person is more interested in weaving his or her own fabric than to combine one that comes from two dedicated people.

No one will go on board on a journey without knowing the essentials to survive or even to succeed. Training is required; it is critical. As a Wise Couple, many of us have years of flying-through-life experience and feel comfortable cruising through winds of our existence. But there are many couples who do not have the necessary skills to do it. It is time for us to share with others the knowledge we possess. It is time for us to offer our expertise to those who are struggling in their journey. It is time to help other couples create the fabric that will sustain their relationship for years to come. It is time to make the difference; after all, it is October in Albuquerque, a time to fly away with our partner. Let me know if you want to fly along with Healthy Marriages.



Meet Our Advisory Board!

Healthy Marriages has expanded from the Healthy Marriages Collaborative Partners to create the Healthy Marriages Advisory Board to provide advice, encouragement and support of our program. The Advisory Board is a self-perpetuating group of community leaders selected on the basis of their interest, expertise, resources, and relationships to guide program development, and to provide support and sustainability to Healthy Marriages.



WE ASKED THEM...

Why are you passionate about healthy marriages?

Do you have any hidden talents?

Please see the insert to read on about our Advisory Board

Tips for Two

Our grant is looking at how we can sustain the momentum and the longevity of the work begun by the Healthy Marriages' team. Bruce and I celebrated our 50th wedding anniversary on September 12, 2009. We began reminiscing about our lives together, and how we have been able to sustain our relationship for 50 years. During the first ten years of our marriage we recalled separation due to military assignment, major moves to different parts of the US, a miscarriage, surgery that prevented us from having a child of our own, adoption of our son, death of MaryAnn's Mother, and her Dad coming to live with us. The story goes on for the next 40 years. Both joys and sorrows continued with family deaths and marriages, major decisions about careers and college education, the marriage of our son and the birth of our grandchildren.



What sustained us and nourished us during the good and trying times? We had no structured marriage preparation. **Believing** in long term commitment is paramount. What do the words, "I promise to be true to you in sickness and in health... I will love you and honor you all the days of my life" really mean? We are aware however, that societal values have changed – the market-based, technology-driven world of today is counter to long-term commitments.

Commitment means that even on the most frustrating days we remember that there is a spiritual element which we both believe in that provides a basis for sustainability in our relationship. Commitment is the awareness that even on the days we may not feel loving, we are capable of setting aside our narcissistic selfishness and can make the decision to love each other. Bruce and I have always searched for ways to work on our relationship, through workshops, spiritual direction, and spending quality time together to share our dreams, fears, hopes, and fundamental differences in personalities and values. Commitment is taking the time to work on problems, to face the challenges of our differences, and to know that even when we disagree we can still love one another. When we get caught up in the consumer, market-driven world, we lose sight of what commitment means and have to be reminded through involvement in educational and spiritual activities that deal with relationship skills, and spirituality of marriage.

We also realized that resiliency has been a major factor in sustaining our relationship. **Resiliency** in marriage means being able to cope with adversity. It means being able to bounce back, in the face of trauma, tragedy, and stress, such as loss of a job, family and relationship problems, serious health problems, even when challenges and circumstances are beyond our expectation or control.. Good communication is essential to emotional resilience.

Intimacy follows. Intimacy broken down is "into-me-see." Intimacy develops over time when we can trust our spouse and share who we are. Now to know who we are means that we must spend time in self-reflection to know our fears, concerns, likes and dislikes, our needs, and our values.

Forgiveness comes with intimacy and resiliency. Often we first have to forgive ourselves, before we can forgive others. Forgiveness does not mean forgetting, and forgiveness does not guarantee reconciliation. Forgiveness involves choice. However, refusing to forgive and choosing to hang on to anger, resentment, and maintaining a vindictive mind-set creates bitterness and allows the other person to maintain control and power over you.

In our relationship, commitment, resiliency, intimacy, and forgiveness, could not develop without prayer and a strong spiritual connection. Although we are very independent people, and have maintained our separate identities, we also became a "we" as our individual lives melded to become "one." Developing a spirituality of marriage means reflecting on our individual faith journeys. Our shared spiritual relationship has been the major foundation for our source of care for each other, for our mutual protection, our comfort and for that commitment that sustains us in the good times and the bad times. We have a history of love, of hurts, of sadness, of traumatic events, of joy, of happiness, of learning that we have changed. We know the depths of what it means to say, "I will love you and honor you all the days of my life..." We can look back and be certain that it has been our spiritual life, our tenacity, our perseverance, the opportunities and the ability to work on our relationship in the good times and in the down times that have sustained us over these many years.

Why are you passionate about healthy marriages?Do you have any hidden talents?



Mary Bunch, Partner, Crosscut Communications

My husband and I have been mentoring couples for 7 years - we hope that we have touched the couples in a way that makes them realize that a great marriage is possible for everyone who is willing to put a little effort into it. Everyone deserves to find the "Love of their Life," and hopefully we can make an impact on getting these relationships off to a great start!

Love to cook! Desserts are my favorite, but I just love being in my kitchen and filling the house with wonderful smells and tasting all the wonderful food!



Don Davis, Retired Teacher & Mental Health Counselor. JoAnn Davis, Retired Paper-Shuffler for Social Security, Wife, Mother, Grandmother, Writer

JoAnn: As the survivor of an abusive marriage, I believe that marriage can be and SHOULD be a beneficial and nurturing relationship for all parties concerned. Furthermore it should provide the kind of environment that produces healthy, happy, and productive kids and grandkids.

Don: I have seen in the classrooms where I taught and in the homes of my clients the disasters that are caused for children when parents "fail" at marriage. The best students generally come from homes where there are two caring adults who love each other and love the children in that home.

JoAnn: I love to write and I love to speak Spanish, but I'm not exactly reticent about either of those things. I am also a UCLA fan of long standing, but I don't think that has much, if anything, to do with Healthy Marriages. Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and I were in the same graduating class!

Don: I love to teach folks who want to learn, and I enjoy conducting groups. I am good with basic audio visual equipment. I know something about electrical wiring. I am very organized. I am highly spiritual (Christian) but am not aligned with any particular church at this time. I love the outdoors and nature.



Dr. David Denedy Frank, Psychologist, Executive Director, Pastoral Counseling Center

Marriage is a personal, civil and religious institution that, if solid, safe and secure . . . provides stability, consistency, nurturance and healthy development for the couple, any children, family, friends, neighborhoods, churches and society. It is hard to overstate the importance of healthy marriages and to understate the destructiveness of unhealthy ones. I believe most religions call us to healthy, long-term relationships; the challenge is how to make that work in today's complicated world. *See photo for hidden talent.



John Goodwin, President, Goodwin Browning & Luna Securities

Healthy marriages will make the world a much better place to live, for all of us.

I can juggle tennis balls.



Dr. Paul Hopkins, Executive Director, Samaritan Counseling Center

I've had a wonderful wife for 44 years who has been a great joy to me. Besides that, I grew up in a family where my parents were divorced and I know how painful that can be.

I like to write. I am currently writing a book on Pastoral Leadership.



Tanya Miller, LMFT SAP, Quality Assurance Director, A New Awakening, Inc.

Not only am I a Marriage and Family Therapist, but I am fascinated by the dynamics of couples and healthy relationship functioning. Healthy Marriages provides a much needed psycho-educational service to our community and families and I am so grateful to be able to participate in the process of helping couples and families toward happiness and wellness.

I am a certified personal fitness trainer and I also teach cycling classes.



Teresa Reinhard, Community Readiness Consultant, Airman & Family Readiness Center, Kirtland Air Force Base

Healthy marriages ensure a stable, safe, and nurturing world community.

Scuba Diver, avid reader, and world traveler!



Joseph Rodriguez, Aviation Facility Director, Albuquerque Sunport. Roseanne Rodriguez, Homemaker & Volunteer

We've been married for 39 years and have been very active in the church as far as married couples and have prepared at least 20 couples for marriage. We pass on our experience, the good and bad to those couples, in hopes that they will benefit from it and Healthy Marriages is an extension of what we do already.

Certified financial management and Roseanne is an artist, very creative on the computer.



Ingrid Roosild, Financial Advisor

Education, education, education! Educating couples on how to maintain healthy marriages is a wonderful asset to our community-- it touches us all in so many ways!

I play the flute... not really a hidden talent, but one few know about me!

upcoming events



Couple Events

The FALL SERIES 2009 is back by popular demand! This summer, we featured our SUMMER SERIES 2009 and received an overwhelming response! If you missed the SUMMER SERIES 2009, sign up today for our FALL SERIES 2009, which will repeat the same riveting topics from SUMMER SERIES 2009. Attend 1, 2, or all 3!

♥ Fall Series: Building Resiliency (2-Part)

Tuesday, October 20 & 27
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM

Healthy Marriages Classroom
Albuquerque, NM
*Register by Oct. 16th

♥ Fall Series: Anger & Forgiveness (2-Part)

*ONLY OPEN to couples who've attended a Relationship Enrichment service in past 18 mo.

Tuesday, November 10 & 17
7:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Healthy Marriages Classroom
Albuquerque, NM
*Register by Nov. 6th

♥ Fall Series: Hold Me Close

*ONLY OPEN to couples who've attended a Relationship Enrichment service in past 18 mo.

Tuesday, December 1
7:00 PM to 8:30 PM

Healthy Marriages Classroom
Albuquerque, NM
*Register by Nov. 27th

Wise Couple Events

Become a couple that helps another couple strengthen their relationship as a 'Wise Couple' of Healthy Marriages! You will be rewarded with an unbelievable experience. Call us today!

♥ Wise Couple Get-Together

Friday, October 16
6:00 PM to 9:00 PM

Healthy Marriages Classroom
Albuquerque, NM

♥ Wise Couple Training

Friday, November 13
6:00 PM to 9:00 PM
Saturday, November 14
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Location TBA
Albuquerque, NM
*Register by Oct. 23rd

♥ Wise Couple Training

Friday, December 4
6:00 PM to 9:00 PM
Saturday, December 5
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Location TBA
Albuquerque, NM

Registration is required for all Healthy Marriages opportunities listed above. Space is limited. Visit website for more info. or to download the flyer about the event. Please call our office to register or for more information: (505) 247-1511 or at 1-888-892-4250

October Couple Classes and Groups are currently underway. To be notified of upcoming events via email, call us or send an email to pvandever@samaritancc.com.



CALL FOR AUDITIONS

★★★★ You Could Be a Star!

Audition for the chance to be a part of the Healthy Marriages Media Campaign! We simply ask that you share a few thoughts or comments about how our program has strengthened your relationship. You can respond either as a couple who's participated in our educational services or a Wise Couple who has served a couple (s) within your community.

WHEN: **Thursday, November 12 6-8 PM**
Saturday, November 14 9-11 AM

WHERE: Healthy Marriages Office
217 Locust St. (SW corner of I-25 & MLK Jr.)
Downtown Albuquerque, NM

REFRESHMENTS Will Be Served.

A \$25.00 Borders Gift Card will be awarded as a Raffle Prize.

(505) 247-1511 for more info.