



Thought of the Month News & Notes

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Issue: #1.

January 2009

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! We wish you all the best of connections for 2009. Without a doubt, we all faced challenges this past year and now as individuals, couples and citizens. we have the opportunity to embrace new beginnings, change and hope for strong and happy relationships this year.

We are with you in your journey and hope that you will continue to call, email and write us with your questions and concerns. Together we can make 2009 the best year ever!

PLEASE PARDON THIS DELAYED THOUGHT. HOLIDAYS, TRAVELS, ILLNESS AND INJURY ARE OUR REASONS....NO EXCUSES, JUST ASKING FOR A LITTLE VALIDATION, PLEASE!

Warmly,
David and Donna Bowman

Thought of the Month

January--"I wish MY mother was here with me!"



Happy New Year! I hope you each had joyful and blessed holidays and that you are excited and optimistic about all the possibilities of 2009. I want to invite each of us to live with an attitude of Abundance in the world as we move forward. Energy follows attention so transformation is available with our help...even in these challenging times.

I, Donna, am writing this month to share a powerful experience with you that I had New Year's Eve, with our son, Seth. As some of you may know, our youngest son, Seth, is gay and moved to Hawaii this summer after he graduated from college. David, Micah (our oldest son) and I visited him the week after Christmas.

First, let me be clear, when Seth "came out" to us when he was 15 (although, as parents we had "known" for most of Seth's life that he is gay); I was so appreciative that he shared with us and I was also frightened for our son. Life is hard enough for any young person and I knew, in spite of Seth's assurances, that being a young gay man in this world today would be even harder. I worried about his physical safety, his health, and his journey of finding a partner worthy of him.

I also felt sad and spent some weeks grieving for all "I" had lost (e.g.

planning with a future daughter-in-law for a wedding, sharing the pregnancy and birth of a grandchild, accepting the fact that with the death of my daughter, Stephanie, and with no other biological children, Seth was the end of my "family line.") I confess that was all very ego-centric but I think/hope it was a pretty natural response.

I am happy to say that all my worries still make sense to me but actually seem pretty silly eight years later. Don't get me wrong...I am still sometimes worried but I think it is a level of concern that is common for Mothers of all children.

Anyway...all this is a preface for the experience and the plea I want to share.

David and Micah traveled New Year's Eve to the Big Island for a day and a half to visit Volcano National Park. I chose not to go as I had visited last year. That left Seth (who had to work) and me together for New Year's Eve. He invited me to join him and his friends at Hula's, the oldest gay bar in Honolulu, to celebrate New Year's Eve. I told him I would be happy to go but assured him I would understand if he wanted to just be with his friends (whom we had briefly met earlier.) He insisted...so off I went to Hula's "Sparkle and Glitter Party."

I admit I was a little anxious but the evening quickly became a profound experience that I will always treasure. I felt honored that Seth wanted me to be with him and share a part of his world with me. Hula's "bar scene" was much more civil, respectful, and calmer than most groups at "mainstream" bars I have observed...even though the male dancers were unique...and quite good.

Seth's friends were amazing. I was reassured by someone each time others moved away to visit with other friends as they told me, "I'll stay with you." or "I'm going to the bathroom but Nathan will be with you." They asked me about three times every 15 minutes, "Are you okay?" and "Are you having a good time?" They finally all relaxed after I assured them repeatedly that I was "okay" and, though I appreciated their care, I would be okay on my own.

And finally...and this is what I want you each to really hear...more than a dozen men came up to me, hugged me and said, "I so wish my Mother would want to be here with me. I know she loves me but she doesn't approve/accept that I am gay so I can't talk with her or share my whole life with her." These men, ranging in age from 22 to 50 years old, were grown, successful men, and yet, were still sons and "little boys" who just "want and need their Mothers."

I left Hula's with Seth (who said, "This is the best night I have ever had at Hula's") feeling grateful, blessed, and very sad. I had encouraged each son to hang in there and know that their Mothers were just fearful, confused, and that they loved them and would be there when they needed them. I also felt some anger at a world that too often promotes disconnection based on something too few really understand.

I am aware that some of you may have a strong reaction to what I am sharing. Please know that I don't expect you to agree with me. I do ask that you understand "my world": my son is gay and my experience of him is that he has been gay since birth. It was not a choice he made. The only choice he made was to live with courage and integrity.

My cousin was gay and completely disconnected from his family because of his sexual orientation. His Father died in a state of disconnection with his only son and only when he was diagnosed with AIDS did my cousin reconnect with his Mother. They were

.....
together when he died. David's brother was an award winning high school teacher, was gay, never came out, never had a significant intimate relationship, and killed himself when he discovered he was HIV positive. So...that is my world.

My plea is that each of us (especially Mothers) remains open, curious, and available to our sons, always in connection. And that we each invite others (especially Mothers) to do the same.

Thanks to those of you who have read this long epistle. I would appreciate it if you would share this with anyone for whom it might be useful. And I would appreciate your feedback.

As you know, David and I are on a mission of providing healing, connection, and safety for the planet....for all relationships. I invite you to join us...with your doubt, your confusion, your fears, your courage, and your vision for a world of connection and safety for each member of this planet...especially our sons.

With hope and faith,
Donna (& David)

News & Notes

Tired of the Cold? There is still time to join us for our Fun and Romance Cruise...a great opportunity to enrich your relationship!

We are looking forward to the Cruise 2009, coming up in a few short weeks. If you missed this, we are planning the first ever (for us, at least) workshop/fun cruise for couples who have already been to a workshop.

There is still some space available for our "High Seas Fun and Romance...Imago Style" cruise February 15, 2009 - February 22, 2009 on Celebrity ship, the Solstice. (AND THE PRICES HAVE DROPPED!) We will spend time during the cruise focusing on re-romanticizing and fun but will provide plenty of time for you to explore and experience the week as a couple. (Remember this will be LITE....nothing heavyjust finding that Juice in your Space and making it Juicier!!!)

Call us today!

REMINDER: There is still time to join us for our workshop, "The Next Step: Overcoming Reactivity" and/or "Conscious and Connected Parenting in the next months.

The Imago Process

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experienced even amidst the stresses of life. The powerful bond between the couple creates a sacred space for healing and transformative growth. The trained IMAGO coach gently holds the couple as they find their way back to the marvelous impulses of the romantic days and helps them solidify their vision for the future.

We hope you enjoyed our first Thought of the Month in this new format. This makes it easier for you to subscribe and unsubscribe and forward to your friends and family. Let us know what you think!

With joy,

David and Donna



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Quotes of the Month

HEART TO HEART

"Our first teacher is
our own heart."---
Cheyenne Saying

"Words that come
from the heart enter
the heart."---Moses
Ibn Ezra

"Just as a mother
would protect her
only child, even at the
risk of her own life,
even so let one
cultivate a boundless
heart toward all
beings."--Shakyamuni
Buddha

"To see that we are
loved by the whole
cosmos is
important."--Thich
Nhat Hanh

"If I told patients to
raise their blood
levels of immune
globulins or killer T-
cells, no one would
know how. But if I

Issue: #2.

February 2009

Dear Friends,

We love the opportunity to share our relationship journey with you. By giving you insight into our own journey we are hopeful that you see how another couple faces day to day challenges and how the Imago tools can help, even tools to help with parenting. They help us every day!

Just a reminder: There is still time to join us for our Fun and Romance Cruise...departing February 15...a great opportunity to enrich your relationship!

We still have room in our workshop "Conscious and Connected Parenting", February 28, 2009 - March 1, 2009. (Reduced price....read below!) It is not too late! Call or email us today!

Thought of the Month

FEBRUARY: EMPOWERING PARENTS



Donna and I have had the privilege of being in connection and supporting almost 600 couples in the "Getting the Love You Want" workshops. This has changed our lives and the lives of many others.

The same transformation is now possible for those of you wanting to become more "successful" parents...more connected parents....more conscious parents. We have created a rich weekend full of common sense and empowering tools to help you become more conscious and less stuck in your parenting.

The following are our assumptions that we will help you live into through this workshop:

1. You are better parents than you imagine.
 - Your kids love you.
 - You need to be strong parents and people.
 - Your mistakes are miniscule compared to the power of your connection.
 - The Universe has gifted you with a sacred opportunity for connection and growth.
2. Our parenting is heavily influenced by our own childhood story.

**KNOW HOW. BUT IF I
can teach them to
love themselves and
others fully, the same
change happens
automatically. The
truth is: Love heals."-
-Bernie Siegel**

- Wherever we were stuck in our own development is where we find ourselves stuck as a parent.
 - As we better understand our own story we are empowered to become more and more conscious parents.
3. We become more conscious parents as we reflect on the parts of us that are blocked.
 - Our reactivity diminishes as our consciousness increases.
 - Reclaiming our lost parts allows us to share our full aliveness with our children.
 4. Children need to be enjoyed and valued rather than managed.
 5. The best model for life you can give your children is your own relationship.

We are so passionate about empowering parents and so hopeful for the next generation that we are offering the following "incentives" for you to help us create energy in the Universe for this groundbreaking workshop:

1. \$100 reduction in the registration fee (making it \$485 per couple) as a way of encouraging an attitude of abundance and consciousness in these times that challenge our frontal lobes to soothe our fearful lizards.
2. A 60 minute phone session (at no additional charge) with one or both of us (your choice) around any specific question or stuck place you may be experiencing in your parenting.
3. Your money back Sunday afternoon if the workshop experience is not helpful to you.

Just use our website or call us to make a \$200 deposit and secure your place for the weekend. Mail to: info@connectingcouples.net.

News & Notes

It is February, the most romantic month of the year! Wouldn't you and your sweetheart love to escape the winter weather, work and day to day challenges and really get away? There is still time to join us for our Fun and Romance Cruise...a great opportunity to enrich your relationship! Departure date is February 15, 2009....days away but it is not too late! This is the first of what we hope will become an annual event, a workshop/fun cruise for couples who have already been to a workshop.

Our "High Seas Fun and Romance...Imago Style" cruise February 15, 2009 - February 22, 2009 is on Celebrity ship, the Solstice, a beautiful ship and we promise you a wonderful and memorable time. Oh, yes, THE PRICES HAVE DROPPED! Take advantage of this opportunity today!

We will spend time during the cruise focusing on re-romanticizing and fun but will provide plenty of time for you to explore and experience the week as a couple. (Remember this will be LITE....nothing heavyjust finding that Juice in your Space and making it Juicier!!!) Call us today!

Last note....be sure to check out the upcoming workshops in the link above. We are sure there is something there for everyone!

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Have a wonderful Valentine's Month and we hope to see you soon!

With confidence and hope for the future,

David and Donna



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Quotes of the Month

LOVE & MARRIAGE

More than kisses,
letters mingle souls.
-- John Donne

Love does not consist
in gazing at each
other, but in looking
outward together in
the same direction.
Antoine de Saint-
Exupéry

An archaeologist is
the best husband a
woman can have; the
older she gets the
more interested he is
in her.
Agatha Christie

We love because it's
the only true
adventure.
-- Nikki Giovanni

"I love surprises."
Donna Bowman

Trouble is a part of
your life, and if you
don't share it, you
don't give the person
that loves you enough
chance to love you
enough.
-- Dinah Shore

One cardinal rule of

Issue: #3.

March 2009

Dear Friends,

Believe it or not, Spring is just around the corner! With the chance sighting of a bud in bloom or trees just starting to flower, our relationships might just feel a stirring...a feeling that *renewal* is possible. Imago is the perfect tool to help relationships bloom. We are here on this journey with you and we would like to bring the power of Imago to each of your relationships so it can flower!

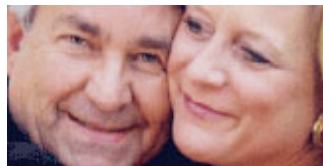
Our first 2009 Teleclass will be Monday, March 9, 8:00 - 9:00 p.m. EST. The topic is, *"Five Steps to a More Alive Sexual Relationship."* We will remind you of some information you probably already know, present information that has been helpful in our own "Adventure", and provide specific Imago based steps for increasing the sexual connection in your relationship.

Just Email or call (301-898-0527; 301-404-7711) to let us know you want to participate and we will send you the phone number to join us.

Mark your calendar for future 2009 Teleclass dates: Mondays, June 15, September 14, and December 14.

Thought of the Month

MARCH: "What Not to Say.....and How to Say It.
(Part One: Ten Things Not to Say to Your Man)"



I was thinking of how we use deficit and negative language, especially with our partner, to try to communicate our frustrations. In doing so we wind up clogging up the Space rather than making things better by saying what we really mean.

Here's my Top Ten List of things women say to men...what the men hear...and what she is really trying to say (could say instead):

1. **What she says:**
"Why can't you be more like Mary's husband?"
What he hears:

One cardinal rule of marriage should never be forgotten: "Give little, give seldom, and above all, give grudgingly." Otherwise, what could have been a proper marriage could become an orgy of sexual lust.
-- Ruth Smythers, Marriage advice for women, 1894

I think men who have a pierced ear are better prepared for marriage. They've experienced pain and bought jewelry.
-- Rita Rudner

To keep your marriage brimming, with love in the wedding cup, whenever you're wrong, admit it; whenever you're right, shut up.
-- Ogden Nash

What he hears:

"I'd rather be with someone else."

What she probably means:

"I'd love to feel cherished by you."

2. What she says:

"I need you to be more emotionally available."

What he hears:

"????????????????????"

What she probably means:

"I want us to be closer and more connected."

3. What she says:

"Why don't we just hire someone to do it?"

What he hears:

"You're not an adequate man."

What she probably means:

"I'd like us to have more time together."

4. What she says:

"All you ever want is sex."

What he hears:

"You're obsessed and you bother me."

What she probably means:

"Sometimes I just want to talk and hang out with you."

5. What she says:

"I never should have gotten married."

What he hears:

"You're disgusting and I'm miserable."

What she probably means:

"I'm lonely and I don't know how to tell you."

6. What she says:

"I think you're depressed."

What he hears:

"Your mental problems are what's wrong with us."

What she probably means:

"I'm concerned about you and I want you to be happy."

7. What she says:

"Be honest...does this dress make me look fat?"

What he hears:

"You're going to be in trouble, no matter what."

What she probably means:

"I'm afraid I'm not attractive anymore."

8. What she says:

"Why are you so mean to the kids?"

What he hears:

"You're a lousy father."

What she probably means:

"I'm worried about our children and don't know what to do."

9. What she says:

"I wish we had a bigger house."

What he hears:

"You're a lousy provider."

What she probably means:

"I'm overwhelmed with the clutter in this house and feel inadequate."

10. What she says:

"Why do I have to do everything around here?"

What he hears:

"You're a lazy schmuck."

What she probably means:

"I'm overwhelmed and I need you."

Good communication is partly about saying what we really mean rather than speaking out of pure emotions. It's amazing to learn that almost everything we want to express, even complaints, can be said in a safe, positive, palatable, abundant way. It takes conscious practice....and some (a lot of) "Do Overs."

REMINDER:Our next second level workshop, "The Next Step: Overcoming Reactivity" is May 2 - 3. With life the way it is....it's never too early to mark your calendars and gift your relationship with a weekend of conscious connection and increased empowerment for your Journey together.

Last note....be sure to check out the upcoming workshops in the link above. We are sure there is something there for everyone!

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Our thoughts are with you and you live and love!

Please stay in touch!

**Working to live in abundance,
David (& Donna)**



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Quotes of the Month

LOVE & MARRIAGE

Neither a lofty degree
of intelligence nor
imagination nor both
together go to the
making of genius.
Love, love, love, that
is the soul of genius.
-- Wolfgang Amadeus
Mozart

We cannot really love
anybody with whom
we never laugh.
-- Agnes Repplier

Love is like the
measles. The older
you get it, the worse
the attack.
-- Mary Roberts
Rhinehart

Saying that men talk
about baseball in
order to avoid talking
about their feelings is
the same as saying
that women talk
about their feelings in
order to avoid talking
about baseball.
-- Deborah Tannen,

You Just Don't
Understand

I have found the
paradox that if I love
until it hurts, then

Issue: #4.

April 2009

Dear Friends,

We received a lot of feedback last month and are happy our sample dialogue resonated with so many of you. The beauty of Imago is that you realize that your experiences with your relationship are not that different from the relationships of your friends and co-workers. We are all here to love and be loved and finding our way through this maze is the challenge! We continue to relive the joy and challenge of our own journey when we relate to each of you. We are so grateful for your trust in us and willingness to share your journey with us.

A SPECIAL INVITATION: Please consider joining us at Rehoboth Beach for a second experience of the *Getting the Love You Want Workshop*. Remember it is half price the second time and there is no better place to have the experience than at the beach. You may be saying, "Why would we do it again?" Well....it is far too much information to absorb in one weekend....your relationship is in a different place now and it is time for the next step....and what better way to re-energize and deepen your connection? Many of our colleagues do the workshop every several years and always find it fresh. We frequently participate and/or assist in such experiences and always find it valuable! And, besides....*it's the beach!* We promise time for you to explore this great little town with wonderful restaurants, shops, and just a chance to walk on the beach at sunset!



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Thought of the Month

APRIL: "What Not to Say.....and How to Say It. (Part Two: Ten Things Not to Say to Your Woman")



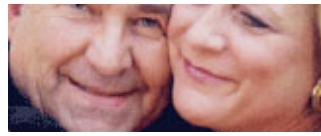
there is no hurt, but
only more love.
-- Mother Teresa

The first duty of love
is to listen.
-- Paul Tillich

Love is blind --
marriage is the eye-
opener.
-- Pauline Thomason

If love is the answer,
could you rephrase
the question?
-- Lily Tomlin

That is the best -- to
laugh with someone
because you think the
same things are
funny.-- Gloria
Vanderbilt



Okay! Here it is, men....my Top Ten list of things men say to women....what the woman hears...and what he really is trying to say (or could say instead.)

1. *What he says:*

"Just relax. It's not that big a deal."

What she hears:

"I don't care about your feelings."

What he probably means:

"If you're not happy, I'm a bad husband."

2. *What he says:*

"If you'd exercise, you'd feel better."

What she hears:

"You're too fat and I'm not attracted to you."

What he probably means:

"I really want the best for both of us and I'm trying to help."

3. *What he says:*

"Why don't these kids ever behave?"

What she hears:

"You're a lousy mother."

What he probably means:

"I'm worried about our kids and my parenting."

4. *What he says:*

"This house is a mess."

What she hears:

"You're a lousy manager."

What he probably means:

"I'm frustrated in my life and don't know how to tell you."

5. *What he says:*

"We never have sex anymore."

What she hears:

"There is something deeply wrong with you."

What he probably means:

"I miss you and the way we used to be together."

6. *What he says:*

"You bought what?"

What she hears:

"I only care about money/not what matters to you."

What he probably means:

"I'm concerned about you and I want you to be happy."

7. *What he says:*

"I'll talk to you when you calm down and are rational!"

What she hears:

"You are crazy!"

What he probably means:

"Strong feelings scare me and I don't know how to be with you."

8. *What he says:*

"Did you send my Mother a birthday card?"

What she hears:

"You are supposed to take care of everything."

What he probably means:

"I feel guilty."

9. *What he says:*

"Quit worrying...you always look fine."

What she hears:

"I don't care what you're feeling. I just want peace."

What he probably means:

"I just want to be happy."

10. What he says:

"I told you not to....!"

What she hears:

"You don't know what you need and need to be fixed."

What he probably means:

"I want to be your champion."

Good communication is partly about saying what we really mean rather than speaking out of pure emotions. It's amazing to learn that almost everything we want to express, even complaints, can be said in a safe, positive, palatable, abundant way. It takes conscious practice....and some (a lot of) "Do Overs."

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Please stay in touch! Hope you enjoy the new promises and new growth of Spring!

Working to live in abundance,

David (& Donna)



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Quotes of the Month

LOVE & MARRIAGE

Life is to be fortified
by many friendships.

To love and to be
loved is the greatest
happiness of
existence.

-- Sydney Smith

The course of true
love never did run
smooth.

-- William
Shakespeare

Love is what we are
born with. Fear is
what we learn. The
spiritual journey is
the unlearning of fear
and prejudices and
the acceptance of
love back in our
hearts. Love is the
essential reality and
our purpose on earth.

To be consciously
aware of it, to
experience love in
ourselves and others,
is the meaning of life.
Meaning does not lie
in things. Meaning

lies in us.

-- Marianne
Williamson, A Return
to Love

Issue: #5.

May
2009

Dear Friends,

May is here and we thought winter would never end. If we were in Camelot, that magical kingdom, we would dance around a May pole and sing, "It's May, it's May, the lusty month of May! That lovely month when every one goes blissfully astray." But reality is, for most of us, that the distant thought of dancing at all, of beaches to roam, warm summer breezes and long, long days is just that--a distant dream. We are in the here and now, dealing with work, almost warm days, end of year school projects, work reports and demands on our time and, as a result, demands on our relationships.

We are here for you as a support system as well as to give you a little nudge now and then. We like to offer reminders and examples of things that pop up due to those pesky reptilian brains and as a result, so often get in the way of our relationships. I hope you enjoy this Thought and that it helps you a little on your relationship journey and enjoy the promise of spring!



PLEASE JOIN US...for our "Conscious and Connected Parenting Workshop" June 6 - 7 in Frederick.

We often hear during the "Getting the Love You Want" workshop, "I am just wondering what I have been doing to my children!" Be assured...it is never too late to create a safer and more conscious relationship with your children. During the weekend:

One word frees us of
all the weight and
pain of life: that word
is love.

-- Sophocles

Anyone can be
passionate, but it
takes real lovers to be
silly.

-- Rose Franken

Keep your eyes wide
open before marriage,
and half shut
afterwards.

-- Benjamin Franklin

Immature love says:
"I love you because I
need you." Mature
love says: "I need you
because I love you."

-- Erich Fromm

Gravitation can not be
held responsible for
people falling in love.

-- Albert Einstein

People need loving
the most when they
deserve it the least.

-- John Harrigan

Love is the great
miracle cure. Loving
ourselves works
miracles in our lives.

-- Louise Hay

The love we give
away is the only love
we keep.

-- Elbert Hubbard

Hatred paralyzes life;
love releases it.

Hatred confuses life;
love harmonizes it.

Hatred darkens life;
love illumines it.

-- Martin Luther King,
Jr.

'Tis better to have
loved and lost
Than never to have
loved at all.

-- Alfred, Lord
Tennyson, In
Memoriam, 1850, line
27, stanza 4

children. During the weekend.

- You will learn to make sense of those power struggle places you experience with your children and how to apply the Imago concepts and tools to that relationship.
- You will also learn how you, as a couple, can transform whatever differences you may have about parenting into the most powerful and healthy experience for your children. It is a profound experience.



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Thought of the Month

MAY: How to Move a Mule



I remember an inspiring story about a farmer who was trying to load his ornery mule onto a truck so he could take him to sale. He pushed and he pulled and he hollered and he kicked, but the madder he got the more the mule dug in and would not budge. Meanwhile his ten year old daughter came out of the house to see what all the noise was about. When she saw the stand-off between her father and the determined mule, she asked, "Could I try something?" "Good luck," said the tired and skeptical dad.

The little girl raced into the house and shortly returned, moved in front of the mule and stuck out her hand. Almost instantly, the mule began moving forward until the girl had magically led him onto the truck. The father, in disbelief, asked, "How did you do that?" The daughter held out a wet thumb and said, "I put strawberry jam on my thumb. He likes strawberry jam."

I sometimes marvel at how we (myself included) so often think we will persuade our partner to act differently by pushing, pulling, yelling, kick, and screaming. It is a though we think our reptilian behavior

will actually make our partner turn wonderful and give us just what we want.

No strategy could be more ill-advised!

Donna has become very smart. She has long since quit complaining that I never see things that need doing around our house. (She has learned to override her reptilian reaction to many things I do or do not do.)

Instead she says something positive like, "I would love it if you could help me with...." Like the little girl who used sweet stuff to appeal to what the mule wanted, Donna appeals to my desire to be a partner, a good husband...a hero, if you will. She appeals to my better nature rather than stirring up my dark reactionary side.

The next time your partner is being a "mule" (e.g. a ###*##), try overriding your natural reptilian response and use some strawberry jam, or honey, or whatever will appeal to your partner's higher nature.....their natural impulse to be connected and safe with you.

Mark your calendars for our next teleclass, Monday, June 15, 8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. We would like your input as to the topic(s) you would like most to explore. Let us know what has become confusing, where you may be stuck, what areas you need encouragement. We will announce the topic in our June Thought for the Month so please share your ideas with us in the next few weeks.

Last note....be sure to check out the upcoming workshops in the link above. We are sure there is something there for everyone!

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Hope you enjoy and celebrate together the amazing promises of Spring.

Sharing the Journey,

David (& Donna)



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Quotes of the Month

CHANGE

George Bernard Shaw:

Some men see things as they are and say, "Why?" I dream of things that never were and say, "Why not?"

frequently attributed to Robert F. (Bobby) Kennedy, who used it in a speech which his brother, Edward F. (Teddy) Kennedy quoted at RFK's funeral.

George Will:

The future has a way of arriving unannounced.

Aldous Huxley:

There's only one corner of the universe you can be certain of improving, and that's your own self.

Gloria Steinem:

The first problem for all of us, men and

women, is not to learn, but to unlearn.

Alice Walker:

No person is your friend who demands

Issue: #6.

**June
2009**

Dear Friends,

June is such a special month. Most of our thoughts turn to summer and relaxation, but some thoughts turn to romance. Did you marry or get together in June? Do you have a lot of weddings and anniversaries to celebrate this month? Whether the romance is yours or someone close to you, we all sense the changes in the air and welcome warm days and warmer romantic thoughts and ventures.

We thought we would focus a bit on change this month. Mario Andretti (a hero of David's) said that "if everything's under control, you're going too slow." Now we don't know about that, but we *do* know that change sometimes makes us feel a little out of control, especially in our relationships.

Remember, we are here for you! We hope our newsletter gets you thinking, brings you a little out of your comfort zone and even helps you to embrace change. Don't let your reptilian brain sabotage you. Enjoy change--of seasons, of weather, of relationships and of life!

We hope you enjoy this Thought!



friend who demands
your silence, or
denies your right to
grow.

Eric Hoffer:
In times of change,
learners inherit the
Earth, while the
learned find
themselves
beautifully equipped
to deal with a world
that no longer exists.

Franklin D. Roosevelt:
When you come to
the end of your rope,
tie a knot and hang
on.

Leo Tolstoy:
Everyone thinks of
changing the world,
but no one thinks of
changing himself.

Pearl S. Buck:
A good marriage is
one which allows for
change and growth in
the individuals and in
the way they express
their love.

Epictetus:
It is impossible for a
man to learn what he
thinks he already
knows.

Harriet Tubman:
Every great dream
begins with a
dreamer. Always
remember, you have
within you the
strength, the
patience, and the
passion to reach for
the stars to change
the world.

Gloria Steinem:
If the shoe doesn't
fit, must we change
the foot?

Pearl S. Buck:
You can judge your
age by the amount of
pain you feel when
you come in contact
with a new idea.

Anne Wilson Schaeff:
Life is a process. We
are a process. The
universe is a process.

Anthony J. D'Angelo:
Become a student of
change. It is the only
thing that will remain
constant.



***PLEASE JOIN US...for our next teleclass,
Monday, June 15, 8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.***

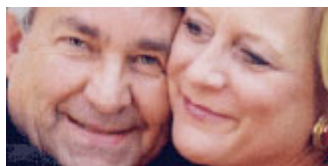
- ***We will explore the ways shame and fear impact our relationship experience....that inevitable dynamic that shows up regardless of our best intentions and efforts.***
- ***We will discuss the origin of the experience and present strategies for eliminating it.***



Just Email or call (301-898-0527; 301-404-7711) and let us know you want to join us and we will provide the phone information for you.

Thought of the Month

JUNE: How to Keep Your Relationship Connected



Donna and I are blessed to receive overwhelmingly positive feedback from those who experience our

Barack Obama:
Change will not come if we wait for some other person or some other time. We are the ones we've been waiting for. We are the change that we seek.

Charles Darwin:
It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to change.

Charles DuBois:
The important thing is this: To be able at any moment to sacrifice what we are for what we could become.

Charles Kettering:
If you have always done it that way, it is probably wrong.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman:
... while we flatter ourselves that things remain the same, they are changing under our very eyes from year to year, from day to day.

General Eric Shinseki:
If you don't like change, you're going to like irrelevance even less. [Chief of Staff, U. S. Army]

positive feedback from those who experience our "Getting the Love You Want" Workshop. Almost 100% of participants report significant improvement in satisfaction and hope for their relationship at the end of the weekend. What a joy to be part of something so helpful for couples.

We are now trying to address the two main concerns couples have in keeping their "new" relationship alive and growing. The first concern couples report is, "We don't seem to use the dialogue process at home. How do we get started?" The second concern is, "Reactivity has continued and we just don't seem to be able to use the tools to manage it."

We have no way of knowing for sure how many couples need follow up help but we want to do everything we can to support Imago relationships in growing stronger after the workshop rather than sliding backwards. We think relationships progress is a bit like plowing snow...if the snow has accumulated you have to make more than one run at it to clear it away. One simple sweep is not enough. You'll most likely just start spinning your wheels.

Donna and I have designed our workshop, "**The Next Step: Overcoming Reactivity**" specifically to help couples with the difficulties they have in maintaining their better connection.

- We do a review of Imago concepts and provide all new tools for better connection.
- We also explore, in depth, the major vulnerabilities that men and women bring to relationship conflict.
- Donna and I do a spontaneous (i.e. Donna doesn't know what my frustration will be) dialogue around a real life problem we have.
- And we have a segment called "Reality Imago Moments" in which couples practice getting a safe dialogue started in real life situations.

Many couples have reported that this two day workshop has been invaluable in helping them "cross the hump" into a truly conscious and fully alive relationship.

We invite you to register for our next "**The Next Step: Overcoming Reactivity**" opportunity in Frederick, July 25 -26. Just let us know you are interested and we will do everything we can to make the weekend possible for you. (If this date does not work for you, the next date is November 14 - 15 in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware....off season prices in a delightful beach town.

Mark your calendars for our next teleclass, Monday, June 15, 8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. We are still taking your input as to the topic(s) you would like most to explore. Let us know what has become confusing, where you may be stuck, what areas you need encouragement. We will continue to keep these lists for future teleclasses. Remember, if you are interested, you know that more people are, too!

Last note....be sure to check out the upcoming workshops in the link above. We are sure there is something there for everyone!

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Enjoy the sunshine!

David (& Donna)



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Quotes of the Month

RELAXATION

This art of resting the mind and the power of dismissing from it all care and worry is probably one of the secrets of energy in our great men.

Captain J. A. Hadfield
Acquire inner peace and a multitude will find their salvation near you.

Catherine de Hueck Doherty
Nothing is permanent in this wicked world - not even our troubles.

Charlie Chaplin (1889 - 1977)
Sometimes the cure for restlessness is rest.

Colleen Wainwright, Communicatrix, 08-06-08

Put duties aside at least an hour before bed and perform

soothing, quiet activities that will help you relax.

Dianne Hales
No matter how much

Issue: #7.

July
2009

Dear Friends,

Ahh, the sweetness of summer! Are you relaxed yet? We hope so. Remember the joys of long summer days as a child? Playing outside until just before dark, hoping that your Mom would consider the day's swim equivalent to a bath, and playing, playing and more playing?

We would like this issue to be as relaxing as we hope your summer is to you and your loved ones. Even if there is no trip in the plans, we encourage you to relax and enjoy simple pleasures and joys--loved ones, your gifts and talents and your relationship.

Even during the relaxing days of summer, we are here for you! Take it easy on yourself and those around you, sip a tall iced tea and RELAX...you deserve it!

We hope you enjoy this Thought!



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no matter how much pressure you feel at work, if you could find ways to relax for at least five minutes every hour, you'd be more productive.

Dr. Joyce Brothers
(1928 -)

There is no need to go to India or anywhere else to find peace.

You will find that deep place of silence right in your room, your garden or even your bathtub.

Elisabeth Kubler-Ross
We have to fight them daily, like fleas, those many small worries about the morrow, for they sap our energies.

Etty Hillesum, O Magazine, Oct.2002
Light be the earth upon you, lightly rest.

Euripides (484 BC - 406 BC), Alcestis, 438 B.C.

When we are unable to find tranquility within ourselves, it is useless to seek it elsewhere.

Herodotus (484 BC - 430 BC), The Histories of Herodotus

We spend most of our time and energy in a kind of horizontal thinking. We move along the surface of things [but] there are times when we stop. We sit still. We lose ourselves in a pile of leaves or its memory. We listen and breezes from a whole other world begin to whisper.

James Carroll
To sit in the shade on a fine day, and look upon verdure is the most perfect refreshment.

Jane Austen (1775 - 1817)

Never lose sight of this important truth, that no one can be truly great until he has gained a knowledge of himself, a knowledge which

there is something there for everyone:



Remember, we are just Email or call (301-898-0527; 301-404-7711) away! Let us know what you would like us to discuss here or a good topic for a teleclass. We're listening!

Thought of the Month

JULY: Out of the Words and Into Connection



**"Somewhere we know that without silence words lose their meaning, that without listening speaking no longer heals, that without distance closeness cannot cure."
Henri Nouwen (1932 - 1996)**

This month I want to use this quote to challenge us to step out of the box in our relationship. The quote captures some of the ideas I have been coming to about intimacy and connection.

The first idea is that we use way too many words in trying to connect with our Partner. Some of the deepest and most significant moments in our workshop and in our work with individual couples are moments now words are used.

Secondly, we often think that speaking is what helps people...especially since we so often are convinced they are in need of our wisdom. My emerging idea is that listening is the better healer.

Third is the idea that we sometimes confuse closeness with enmeshment. It's when we genuinely recognize,

can only be acquired by occasional retirement.

Joseph Conrad (1857 - 1924)

If you can attain repose and calm, believe that you have seized happiness.

Julie-Jeanne-Eleonore de Lespinasse, O Magazine, October 2002

Besides the noble art of getting things done, there is a nobler art of leaving things undone. The wisdom of life consists in the elimination of nonessentials.

Lin Yutang

Stress is an ignorant state. It believes that everything is an emergency. Nothing is that important.

Natalie Goldberg

Before you agree to do anything that might add even the smallest amount of stress to your life, ask yourself: What is my truest intention? Give yourself time to let a yes resound within you. When it's right, I guarantee that your entire body will feel it.

Oprah Winfrey (1954 -)

Take rest; a field that has rested gives a bountiful crop.

Ovid (43 BC - 17 AD)

Learning to ignore things is one of the great paths to inner peace.

Robert J. Sawyer (1960 -),

"Calculating God", 2000

Working in the garden...gives me a profound feeling of inner peace.

Ruth Stout

Sometimes I sits and thinks, and sometimes I just sits.

accept, and celebrate how different we are that real closeness starts happening.

Now a few challenges for us to try if we are ready to stretch out of our comfort zone:

1. Spend 15 minutes with yourself in silence, solving and thinking about nothing. Then spend 5 - 10 minutes with your Partner in silence, just gazing. Be aware of all your thoughts.
2. Take one day...all day...and just listen to your Partner and/or children. Tell them you are practicing listening and just mirror important things you hear. Remember, you are telling them nothing.
3. Think of one way you are very different from your Partner and find a way to see it as a good thing. Tell them what you have discovered.

Notice what changes about your Space and your connection as you stretch!

Donna shared a book with me, *When No Words Are There*, by Sandra Magsamen. It is a beautiful book describing the possibilities available to each of us, each of our relationships, and the planet if we stretch out of words and into connection.

Happy Stretching!

P.S. Henri Nouwen just may be my favorite writer. (I don't read much.) He is simple, authentic, and spiritually uplifting.

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Quotes of the Month

SUMMERTIME

In the depth of winter, I finally learned that within me there lay an invincible summer.
Albert Camus (1913 - 1960)

One swallow does not make a summer.
Aristotle (384 BC - 322 BC),
Nichomachean Ethics

There shall be eternal summer in the grateful heart.
Celia Thaxter

Summer afternoon -
Summer afternoon...
the two most beautiful words in the English language.
Henry James (1843 - 1916)

The tendinous part of the mind, so to speak, is more developed in winter; the fleshy, in summer. I should say

winter had given the bone and sinew to literature, summer the tissues and the blood.
John Burroughs

Issue: #8.

August 2009

Dear Friends,

Summertime and the livin' is easy...or at least that's how the song goes. We know differently, don't we? We know that life, the economy, work, the family, life--well it all conspires to ensure that the livin' isn't easy!

We know you because you are just like us and pretty much like most of the population of the planet! You are busy, busy, busy and finding time to carve out for yourself, your relationship and your family is a real struggle. That's why we are here! We offer ideas, suggestions, solutions and often just a listening ear when "the livin'" gets difficult and you are feeling a little (or a lot!) overwhelmed.

Keep in touch! Share your problems and ideas. We are here for you.

We hope you enjoy this Thought!



MARK YOUR CALENDARS...LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES...PLEASE JOIN US:

Teleclass, Monday,

September 14, 8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m

We would like your input as to the topic(s) you would like most to explore. Let us know

John Burroughs
(1837 - 1921), *The
Snow-Walkers*

What a beautiful,
sunny morning. It
makes you happy to
be alive, doesn't it?
We can't let the sun
outshine us! We have
to beam, too!

Takayuki Ikkaku,
Arisa Hosaka and
Toshihiro Kawabata,
*Animal Crossing: Wild
World*, 2005

The summer night is
like a perfection of
thought.

Wallace Stevens
(1879 - 1955)

In summer, the song
sings itself.
William Carlos
Williams

what has become confusing, where you may be stuck, what areas you need encouragement. We will announce the topic in our September Thought for the Month so please share your ideas with us in the next few weeks.

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November 14-15, 2009

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Workshop in Frederick**

November 21 - 22, 2009

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(This is powerful for parents of all age children.)





Thought of the Month

August: The Big Challenge



Harville Hendrix has repeatedly said that the main problem couples face in getting along is that they have to deal with the fact that the "other" is not "me."

"He/she does not think like me or feel what I feel or see things the way I see them." Someone said that this actually a good thing for if we were both alike, there would be no need for one of us!

But, in general, we have problems when our partner does not ("refuses") to see it our way and acts in a different way than we think they should. And, then, there is our reaction. Some of us "stuff it" and live in a resentful or low burn state of anger. Some of us react strongly and become critical and openly reactive. Whatever the reaction, the challenge of intimacy comes in dealing with the fact that our partner is a wholly (Holy) other person than ourselves.

(Of course, we know that in the romantic stage we either believed our partner was just like us, or we thought their differences were just cute. I remember thinking it was neat and kind of interesting that Donna had a certain way of folding clothes and making the bed. Somehow those behaviors began to feel like expectations over the years, feeling downright oppressive and controlling.)

I truly believe the ultimate challenge in moving toward a fully alive and mature relationship...a relationship of safety and joyful, relaxed energy...is a five step process of dealing with the "otherness" of the other. Here are the steps in this challenging process:

1. RECOGNIZE that my partner lives and moves in a totally different world.

"Oh, you are not just waiting for me to do the dishes...you really prefer to wait to wash the dishes until the end of the day and do them all at once."

2. ACCEPT that my partner lives in a different world (we can recognize things and not really accept them.)

"I can live with that."

3. HONOR the differences my partner brings (we can accept things without honoring them.)

"It really is a relief to me to know that you will take care of the dishes at the end of the day."

take care of the dishes at the end of the day.

4. **LOVE** the differences my partner brings (we can honor something without loving it.)
"I love how you get so energized and sing in the kitchen while you wash the dishes."

5. **CELEBRATE** the differences my partner brings.
"I was telling my Mom today how wonderful it is to wake up to a clean kitchen each morning because you wait until everyone is finished with their evening snacks and then wash the dishes."

An appreciation....Donna has "suffered" through all of my phases of passion in life. There was the tennis phase...the model railroad phase...the woodworking phase...the classical music phase...the tropical plant phase...the opera phase...etc. (Just now it's the bird phase.) Through each phase she's been right there, supporting me and buying me just the right items I needed. This is what I mean by celebrating.

So...go forth and be different!

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November 21 - 22 for "Conscious and Connected Parenting" workshop in Frederick.

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Please stay in touch and let us know how to support you.

Enjoy the rest of your summer!

David (& Donna)



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Quotes of the Month

Quotes to Keep You in
Attraction Mode

"When things go
wrong as they
sometimes will;
When the road you're
trudging seems all
uphill;
When the funds are
low, and the debts
are high
And you want to
smile, but have to
sigh;
When care is pressing
you down a bit-
Rest if you must, but
do not quit.
Success is failure
turned inside out;
The silver tint of the
clouds of doubt;
And you can never
tell how close you are
It may be near when
it seems so far;
So stick to the fight
when you're hardest
hit-
It's when things go
wrong that you must
not quit."
-Unknown

It's not whether you
get knocked down;
it's whether you get
up."

-Vince Lombardi

Issue: #9.

September 2009

Dear Friends,

Can you feel Fall in the air? In some areas of the country we can and some of our friends live where the seasons are all pretty much the same all year round. We love our country home and the anticipation of the leaves falling and crackling under our feet, of longer walks with Cujo and holding hands as we anticipate cooler weather and all of its joys and preparations.

It occurred to us this week that we often spend time preparing the house, the car and everything physical in our lives but neglect preparing our relationships for the coming season. Just think, ultimately we will be spending more time inside, the children's noise and clutter will be more noticeable and those little annoyances our partner may have will become even more annoying. Donna and I are with you! Let's prepare for the winter together!

Keep in touch! Share your problems and ideas. We are here for you.

We hope you enjoy this Thought!



-VINCE Lombardi

"Let me tell you the secret that has led me to my goal. My strength lies solely in my tenacity." -Louis Pasteur

"If you are going through hell, keep going." -Winston Churchill

"When you reach the end of your rope, tie a knot in it and hang on."
-Thomas Jefferson

"I think and think for months and years. Ninety-nine times, the conclusion is false. The hundredth time I am right." - Albert Einstein

"Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept on trying when there seemed to be no hope at all." -Dale Carnegie

"A champion is someone who gets up, even when he can't."
-Jack Dempsey



MARK YOUR CALENDARS...LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES...PLEASE JOIN US:

Teleclass, Monday,

September 14, 8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m

We will explore "The Art of Abundant Requests" or how to ask for what you need from your partner using abundant language. Such a request provides a safe opportunity for your partner to give you what you need and avoids inviting a defense instead.

Just Email or call (301-898-0527; 301-404-7711) to let us know you want to participate and we will send you the phone number to join us.

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(This is powerful for parents of all age children.)



Thought of the Month

September: Curiosity and Compassion



Here I was...trying to plug my weed eater into an outside receptacle. This receptacle had a hard, plastic, box-like covering that I had never seen before. It was a hot day and I was tired from mowing, and do you know...I couldn't, for the life of me, get that plastic box open. I pulled, pushed, twisted, and began to feel awfully stupid that this simple physical object was stubbornly keeping me from my plug-in. It wasn't until prying with a heavy duty screwdriver and breaking the hinge on the covering that I discovered a simple latch on the bottom that you could open with one finger.

In our attempts to get our partner to "open up" to us...to what we need...how often do we pull, push, twist, and pry? Most of you have heard Donna or me say that safe communication requires a visit into the strange world of the Other. What is hardest to learn is that the only tickets needed for that visit are Curiosity and Compassion....the simple latches for opening places protected by "hard" coverings.

"Tell me more" or "Is there more" are the words for expressing curiosity. "You make sense to me because..." are the words for expressing understanding and compassion. NOTHING else is likely to be constructive.

This is so hard....I can hear some of you out there

This is so hilarious can hear some of you out there saying:

"But what if he's wrong?"
"She's not telling the whole story."
"I'm sick of hearing this."
"He's not telling me his feelings."
"If she'd calm down, we could have a rational discussion."

You see, I could write these responses all day. I've used them all trying to "fix" Donna, to get her to relax, to get my point across, to show her the "real truth", etc. Here's a case where less is more. Get stupid if you have to (meaning respond as if you have never met this person before.) Don't worry...you'll get your turn but we can only visit one world at a time.

Trust me...the turtle will open up and show up and the hailstorm will calm down if we can remember the two key tools in communication: Curiosity and Compassion. (Try it with your kids, too.)

For real help with this read, ***Receiving Love*** by Harville Hendrix and Helen Lakelly Hunt.

Hope to talk with many of you on the teleclass!

November 14 - 15 for "The Next Step: Overcoming Reactivity" opportunity in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware....

November 21 - 22 for "Conscious and Connected Parenting" workshop in Frederick.





The Imago Process

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Please stay in touch and let us know how to support you.

Welcome to Fall!

David (& Donna)



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Quotes of the Month

Quotes on Humor

A joke is a very serious thing.
Winston Churchill

A person without a sense of humor is like a wagon without springs. It's jolted by every pebble on the road.
Henry Ward Beecher

A sense of humor is a major defense against minor troubles.
Mignon McLaughlin

A sense of humor... is needed armor. Joy in one's heart and some laughter on one's lips is a sign that the person down deep has a pretty good grasp of life.
Hugh Sidey

A well-developed sense of humor is the pole that adds

balance to your steps as you walk the tightrope of life.
William A. Ward

Common sense and a

Issue: #10.

October 2009

Dear Friends,

Another month has passed and it is time to visit with you again through our Thoughts...

After a recent trip to the drug store we noticed to our shock, next to the Halloween candy, masks, costumes and decorations was Christmas decor! Amazing...time passes quickly enough and how frustrating to see retail stores rushing us even more. We would like to invite you to pause, refresh yourself and explore your relationship for a few moments at least.

Knowing that the holidays are fast approaching often brings anxiety, fear, and the feelings that we had as children, some good feelings and some not so good...remember that baggage stuff? We want to suggest a lighter approach. A reach deep within to that child who loved knock-knock jokes, who has a sense of humor. But beware, we may be stepping outside the boundary of humor, something even the most experienced comic has done. We hope this thought gives you pause, our quotes give you a laugh and that you enjoy yourselves. Donna and I are with you! Let's laugh a little together!

Remember to keep in touch! Share your problems and ideas for other Thought topics. We are here for you.

We hope you enjoy this Thought!



Common sense and a sense of humor are the same thing, moving at different speeds. A sense of humor is just common sense, dancing.
William James

Humor is mankind's greatest blessing.
Mark Twain

Humor is perhaps a sense of intellectual perspective: an awareness that some things are really important, others not; and that the two kinds are most oddly jumbled in everyday affairs.
Christopher Morley

One doesn't have a sense of humor. It has you.
Larry Gelbart

The more I live, the more I think that humor is the saving sense.
Jacob August Riis

The satirist shoots to kill while the humorist brings his prey back alive and eventually releases him again for another chance.
Peter De Vries

There is no defense against adverse fortune which is so effectual as an habitual sense of humor.
Thomas W. Higginson

When humor goes, there goes civilization.
Erma Bombeck

You can turn painful situations around through laughter. If you can find humor in anything, even poverty, you can survive it.
Bill Cosby



MARK YOUR CALENDARS...LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES...PLEASE JOIN US:

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**Just let us know you are interested and we
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children.)**





Thought of the Month

October: Does Humor Always Help?



"Laughter is the best medicine."

"A little humor lightens the load."

"Laugh and the world laughs with you."

These are the phrases that flag the importance of humor for survival. My family was depressed, detached, and certainly not humorous. Even strangers would comment to me that my Father's face was etched with a permanent scowl. (I forgave him for this before he died. He had his own story, too, you know.) But I used my youngest child position to bring humor (and life) to our family. So I'm a big fan of humor. Now, ask Donna if I always use humor wisely or if my antics are as funny to her as I think they are. You know the answer, don't you?

I've learned that humor can be used for harm in relationships. Humor that is degrading or used at the other's expense belongs on late night television. Comments couched in humor but really coming from a serious frustration are not usually helpful in creating a safe Space. Humor that is deflective and used to avoid a serious conversation can be infuriating. (This is one that I am quite good at, but I'm progressing.)

Let me give real examples of several types of destructive humor:

Degrading Humor: "She's so bad on directions; she couldn't find her way out of a paper bag." Funny? Maybe....maybe not. Be careful!

Blind-side Sarcasm: "Wow! A 1% raise! Before long, I bet they'll make you CEO of the company!" Whatever the frustration being expressed, it's probably hurtful to the recipient.

Deflective Humor: "Let's just sell everything and join a nudist commune. That will solve our money problems." Whatever the concern or fear that led to this comment, it is not being addressed by this attempt at humor.

.....

I really believe we have to be more careful about our use of humor in our intimate relationships than anywhere else in life. Remember, our Partner lives in a wholly/Holy other world and is most likely not cued into our use of humor as we imagine they are. The safest and most relational thing to do when one of those "funny" comments comes into our head is to replace the joke with mirroring and validating. You will feel more connected with your Partner and you will be able to explore the real things that are going on.

Final thought....if this has made you wonder about your own use of humor with your Partner or your children, there is one true way to find out. Just ask them, "Do I ever use humor with you in a way that is less than helpful?"

Good luck!

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Hope you enjoy this new fall season!

David (& Donna)





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Quotes of the Month

Quotes on
Thanksgiving

O Lord that lends me
life,
Lend me a heart
replete with
thankfulness.
~William
Shakespeare

None is more
impoverished than
the one who has no
gratitude. Gratitude
is a currency that we
can mint for
ourselves, and spend
without fear of
bankruptcy. ~Fred
De Witt Van Amburgh

Hem your blessings
with thankfulness so
they don't unravel.
~Author Unknown

Nothing is more
honorable than a
grateful heart.
~Seneca

If the only prayer you
said in your whole life
was, "thank you,"
that would suffice.
~Meister Eckhart

Issue: #11.

November 2009

Dear Friends,

We are so grateful for the opportunity to connect with each of you and are reminded of this privilege even more during the holidays. Thanksgiving and gratitude are natural topics for the Thought this month and though we touched on "baggage" last month, let's just find ways to enjoy the holiday ride, shall we?

When we are caught up in daily routine, the reminders of our opportunity to be thankful are all around us. By taking time to look outside ourselves, we find we are blessed to have experiences each day which give us pause and enable us to say "thank you." For some it is the simple gift of living with a child and experiencing life through a child's eyes, or it could be the kindness of a stranger---or better yet, the unexpected kindness of a spouse or partner. We hope this Thought is a reminder of how thankfulness and gratitude make life so worth living.

Remember to keep in touch! Share your problems and ideas for other Thought topics. We are here for you.

We hope you enjoy this Thought!



**MARK YOUR CALENDARS...LOTS OF
OPPORTUNITIES...PLEASE JOIN US:**

Thanksgiving Day is a
jewel, to set in the
hearts of honest men;
but be careful that
you do not take the
day, and leave out the
gratitude. ~E.P.
Powell

So once in every year
we throng
Upon a day apart,
To praise the Lord
with feast and song
In thankfulness of
heart.
~Arthur Guiterman,
The First
Thanksgiving

As we express our
gratitude, we must
never forget that the
highest appreciation
is not to utter words,
but to live by them.
~John Fitzgerald
Kennedy

Remember God's
bounty in the year.
String the pearls of
His favor. Hide the
dark parts, except so
far as they are
breaking out in light!
Give this one day to
thanks, to joy, to
gratitude! ~Henry
Ward Beecher

Thanksgiving Day
comes, by statute,
once a year; to the
honest man it comes
as frequently as the
heart of gratitude will
allow. ~Edward
Sandford Martin

Our rural ancestors,
with little blest,
Patient of labour
when the end was
rest,
Indulged the day that
housed their annual
grain,

With feasts, and
off'rings, and a
thankful strain.
~Alexander Pope

What we're really
talking about is a
wonderful day set
aside on the fourth
Thursday of

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**Just let us know you are interested and we
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**(This is powerful for parents of all age
children.)**



**December 14, 2009 Teleclass,
8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. EST**

**Please let us know of any topic that would be
of particular interest or help to you. We will
choose and send the topic in our December
Thought. Email or call to let us know you
want to participate.
info@connectingcouples.net**

Thought of the Month

November when no one diets. I mean, why else would they call it Thanksgiving?
~Erma Bombeck, "No One Diets on Thanksgiving," 26 November 1981

Thanksgiving, after all, is a word of action. ~W.J. Cameron

He who thanks but with the lips
Thanks but in part;
The full, the true Thanksgiving
Comes from the heart.
~J.A. Shedd

Thanksgiving was never meant to be shut up in a single day. ~Robert Caspar Lintner

For each new morning with its light,
For rest and shelter of the night,
For health and food, for love and friends,
For everything Thy goodness sends.
~Ralph Waldo Emerson

Thanksgiving dinners take eighteen hours to prepare. They are consumed in twelve minutes. Half-times take twelve minutes. This is not coincidence. ~Erma Bombeck

For flowers that bloom about our feet;
For tender grass, so fresh, so sweet;

For song of bird, and hum of bee;
For all things fair we hear or see,
Father in heaven, we thank Thee!
~Ralph Waldo Emerson

An optimist is a person who starts a new diet on Thanksgiving Day.
~Irv Kupcinet

November: Connecting through the Holidays



In my growing up days, my family was absent of emotion and affection. We did, however, have some "rituals" of connection that I remember fondly.

One of these was to spend cold winter nights playing card games (Rook and Hearts are what I remember.) I really like the evenings we did this. We had other connecting rituals that were not as much fun, such as family thistle digging day and family butter bean picking/shelling day.

But the card playing was often done when there was a holiday or when we were snowed in. It was great fun for me though nobody ever described it as such.

Now I know what you are thinking. Getting a family to gather for such a Norman Rockwell moment in our current world would be virtually impossible. It's true-we had many more snowed in times when I was a kid and, clearly, we did not have much else to do.....no internet, no texting, not even many channels (much less sports) on TV. Yes, couple rituals and family rituals are hard to pull off with all of us going in so many different directions.

This holiday season, consider creating some intentional connecting moments for you as a couple and with your own nuclear family. You may find a new richness in your relationships and in your life.

Now, for some ideas:

How about cooking or baking with your Partner and/or children?

How about a special time for you and your Partner to privately exchange a special holiday gift (no money required....remember the Flooding Exercise...the

Visioning Exercise....write and share a current love letter...etc?)

You might be surprised to hook your Partner (or even your children) on Dominoes, Scrabble, or any other board game. Or if your kids must be high tech, then set up a Wii tournament. Prizes could be relief from a chore for a week.

Do I sound corny? Perhaps...or probably! But with so many experiencing so much stress preparing for and "getting through" the holidays, I want to invite us to slow ourselves down and to celebrate the real connections that are most important to us. We really do

Thou hast given so much to me,
Give one thing more,
- a grateful heart;
Not thankful when it pleaseth me,
As if Thy blessings had spare days,
But such a heart whose pulse may be Thy praise.
~George Herbert

The unthankful heart... discovers no mercies; but let the thankful heart sweep through the day and, as the magnet finds the iron, so it will find, in every hour, some heavenly blessings! ~Henry Ward Beecher

connections that are most important to us. We really do have much to celebrate!

With abundant blessings,
David (& Donna)

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HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

With abundant blessings,
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Quotes of the Month

**A Few Quotes on
Christmas, Hannukah
and Kwanza**

Christmas waves a
magic wand over this
world, and behold,
everything is softer
and more beautiful.
~Norman Vincent
Peale

Colorful candles
burning bright, each
lit on eight very
special nights.
Author Unknown

May the lights of
Hanukkah usher in a
better world for all
humankind.
Author Unknown

Issue: #12.

December 2009

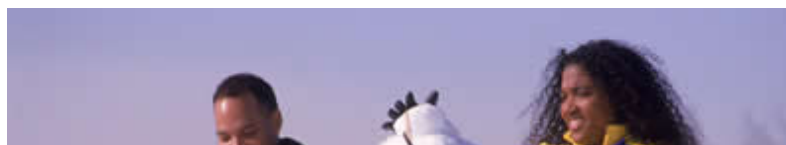
Dear Friends,

**Do you remember what a special time of the year
Christmas and Hannukah (and now, Kwanza) was when
you were a child? It was magical! You behaved better
than ever, made funny little homemade gifts for parents
and they loved them and you had a constant feeling of
expectation. You *knew* that wonderful things were in
store for you! Well, we all know how and why we lost
that feeling but wouldn't it be nice to capture it once
again?**

**We're sure you know someone who has totally shut him
or herself off from things because of unhappiness,
depression, bad luck, job loss, debt and/or illness. We
also know of someone who has experienced one or more
of these issues but is the happiest person we have ever
met! What makes the difference? Is it hope, optimism or
is he or she just naive? Science has proven that people
who have hope and optimism live longer and are
healthier and happier. You know what else? You can ACT
happy and optimistic and get the same results! Somehow
you just start believing.**

**Our wish for you this season is to BELIEVE! Try it and
you and your loved ones will benefit.**

**Remember to keep in touch! Share your problems and
ideas for other Thought topics. We are here for you.**



Author Unknown

He who has not
Christmas in his heart
will never find it
under a tree. ~Roy L.
Smith

Christmas, children, is
not a date. It is a
state of mind. ~Mary
Ellen Chase

Once again we find
ourselves enmeshed
in the Holiday Season,
that very special time
of year when we join
with our loved ones in
sharing centuries-old
traditions such as
trying to find a
parking space at the
mall. We traditionally
do this in my family
by driving around the
parking lot until we
see a shopper emerge
from the mall, then
we follow her, in very
much the same spirit
as the Three Wise
Men, who 2,000 years
ago followed a star,
week after week,
until it led them to a
parking space.
~Dave Barry

Put on your yarmulke,
Here comes
Hanukkah!
So much funukah,
To celebrate
Hanukkah!
Hanukkah is the
festival of lights.
Instead of one day of
presents, we have
eight crazy nights.
Adam Sandler
The Hanukkah Song

The best of all gifts
around any Christmas
tree: the presence of
a happy family all
wrapped up in each
other. ~Burton Hillis

Santa is very jolly
because he knows
where all the bad
girls live. ~Dennis
Miller

They celebrated it for
eight days with
gladness like Sukkot
and recalled how a
little while before,
during Sukkot,
they had been
wandering in the
mountains and
caverns like wild



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**(This is powerful for parents of all age
children.)**



animals.
So carrying lulavs
...they offered hymns
of praise
to God who had
brought to pass the
purification of His
own place.
II Maccabees 10. 6-7

There has been only
one Christmas - the
rest are
anniversaries. ~W.J.
Cameron

It is Christmas in the
heart that puts
Christmas in the air.
~W.T. Ellis

Faith is taking the
first step even when
you don't see the
whole staircase.
~Martin Luther King
Jr.

Faith makes the
discords of the
present the
harmonies of the
future. ~Robert
Collyer

For Africa to me... is
more than a
glamorous fact. It is
a historical truth. No
man can know where
he is going unless he
knows exactly where
he has been and
exactly how he
arrived at his present
place. ~Maya
Angelou

"I must do
something" always
solves more problems
than "Something
must be done."
~Author Unknown

The time is always
right to do what is
right. ~Martin Luther
King, Jr.

Act as if what you do
makes a difference.
It does. ~William
James

In the old days, it was
not called the Holiday
Season; the
Christians called it
'Christmas' and went
to church; the Jews
called it 'Hanukkah'
and went to
synagogue; the
atheists went to
parties and drank.



**December 14, 2009 Teleclass,
"Curiosity and Compassion: The Keys to
Intimacy."
8:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. EST**

**E-mail or call to let us know you want to
participate so we can send you the number to
call. 301-898-0527 or 301-404-7711
info@connectingcouples.net**

Thought of the Month

December: Celebrate and Enjoy!



This month finds us in the same place many of you find yourselves. Busy trying to stay healthy and "bug" free (and not doing a great job of that!) and dealing with the issues of family, shopping, travel and the hustle and bustle of the season.

Our Thought is simple this month---*Celebrate and Enjoy!*
In case you didn't already know it, we don't have a perfect marriage, we also don't have a perfect life...or management of it...so the January Thought will be doubly interesting. We hope everyone has great holidays and, like us, finds a way to slow down in order to celebrate enjoy the joyful connections in our lives.

With abundant blessings,
David (& Donna)

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People passing each other on the street would say 'Merry Christmas!' or 'Happy Hanukkah!' or (to the atheists) 'Look out for the wall!' ~Dave Barry, "Christmas Shopping: A Survivor's Guide"



Chanukkah, Oh
Chanukkah
Come light the
menorah
Let's have a party
We'll all dance the
hora
Gather round the
table, we'll have a
treat
Shiny tops to play
with, latkes to eat.
And while we are
playing
The candles are
burning low
One for each night,
they shed a sweet
light
To remind us of days
long ago.
Chanukkah, Oh
Chanukkah (Song)

And the Grinch, with
his Grinch-feet ice
cold in the snow,
stood puzzling and
puzzling, how could it
be so? It came
without ribbons. It
came without tags. It
came without
packages, boxes or
bags. And he puzzled
and puzzled 'till his
puzzler was sore.
Then the Grinch
thought of something
he hadn't before.
What if Christmas, he
thought, doesn't
come from a store.
What if Christmas,
perhaps, means a
little bit more. ~Dr.
Seuss

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Please stay in touch and let us know how to support you.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

**With Love and Abundant Blessings,
David and (Donna)**



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