



## Thought of the Month News and Notes

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**Issue: #37**  
**JANUARY 2012**

**Dear Friends,**

We are a little late this month but have had a roller coaster of events. Life is interesting, isn't it? Our Thought this month is very personal and we wanted to share with you all, as you are so much a part of our lives.

**Donna and David**

**JANUARY: "Aspects of Grief...No Matter What the Loss."**



Most people reading this have had some connection with our dog, Cujo, who was a big part of the workshop. A few of you wished he had not been so present. The overwhelming majority of you found him to be a pleasant (and, often, important) part of your workshop experience.

Cujo died suddenly three weeks ago and the resulting grief has made me ponder anew this phenomenon of life. Grief is hard. It's fierce. Grief is relentless...a poison that must be drunk and suffered. There is no running from grief. It will catch up with us always.

Loss is final. It hurts...literally.

Grief flows as a river and every new loss opens the dam. Every loss in our life experience (however "small" and however traumatic) begins to wash over us. Some moments we are able to flow with the current. Some moments we are pulled under but quickly resurface. Some moments a current takes hold of

us and we feel as if we are going to die (and are puzzled as to how such a small amount of water can have such power.) Just as we have been taught about being caught in a rip current, we must move toward our grief and feel it and, well....grieve.

Each must grieve in our own way...no right or wrong. There is no substitute. There is no putting it off...the stark emptiness of grief. At the same time, grief is a blessing; a natural feeling phenomenon that allows us to move forward and live fully. It brings relief. Tears are cleansing. They deepen our experience of life itself. Grief reminds us that we loved much and had great joy together. Grief invites us to be conscious and hold both joy and pain at the same time...the inevitable experience that reminds us of our humanity and our aliveness...that we are wired for connection.

Below is an expression of that joy and pain that Donna shared with family and friends the day Cujo died. Perhaps you have similar thoughts and feelings about your own grief experiences.

Just wanted to share with all of you who love us and know how much we love Cujo, that he became suddenly ill early this morning and we quickly released him to a place where we know he will actually be able to catch those squirrels he has been chasing for 15 years. (We assured him that he has done a really good job of keeping them all on their toes for all these years and has certainly earned such a reward.)

We also imagined with him that there will always be bright sunshine that follows him around for his naps (rather than him having to follow those elusive sunny spots here in the woods) while, at the same time, it will always be a comfortable, energizing 50 degrees for him (his favorite temperature.)

We also dreamed with him that there will be cars that he can get into and drive any time he wants to take a ride rather than having to wait for us to "invite" him to go somewhere with us. And, of course, the drive-thru at the bank will be open any time he wants and he will be given at least TWO treats every time he drives through....even without a deposit!

And, rather than being on a leash to walk around the "loop" at the beach, he will finally be free to chase all those deer and rabbits without fear (okay...our fear) of all the traffic on Route 1 lest he stray.

We also encouraged him to share his singing talent with others....perhaps even teaching and tutoring while assuring others that they, too, have a voice and a song that is important to be heard and appreciated.

And, of course, no one will ever try to brush him again because his hair will grow perfectly, free of matts and shedding....as he will be just perfect the way he is.

And, we promised him that we will do our best to care for each other...even when he is unable to comfort each of us when sad or upset.

And, we acknowledged to him that in our workshops, couples will certainly be more bored listening to us while eating their snacks without his wide, beautiful, begging eyes...and that they will be more anxious without his presence and his soft body to be stroked. We assured him we will do our best to help them feel safe and relaxed (although we made it clear we draw the line at humping his toys in the middle of the floor...he seemed to be okay with that.) We reminded him of how important he has been for almost a 1000 couples and that we will really miss him and it will be a loss for future couples.

And, we asked him to finally explain to us how it has been that he growls at people he loves while wagging his tail (and sitting on their laps...Cari...and others!) He was clear that it was a mystery he was taking with him....but assured us we were right....he only wagged his tail with those he loved.

Another mystery he is taking with him is all his licking in the last months. He clearly only licked those he loved....along with the sofa, of course. but why just the last months? He's entitled to his mysteries!

He also knows he will be able to jump onto any sofa and any bed anytime he wants without having to wait for us to assist him. What a joy for him after these last few years.

And, we appreciated with him that somehow the unknown tumor in his spleen was relatively painless as it grew quickly before it ruptured this morning (rather than the middle of the night) and that Cujo called for us to provide comfort and care until the very loving caregivers at the vet's office (who have loved him and cared for him for 15 years...and where he still growled as I carried him in this morning because he REALLY has never liked going to the "doctor") could provide the information, guidance and support for all of us on this difficult day.

And, when we brought "Cujo" home from the vet and he was in the car for a little while until we knew where we wanted to move him, there were suddenly dozens of birds in our parking area....6 male cardinals, 3 female cardinals, finches, blue jays, woodpeckers, chickadees, etc. They are often in the back yard with the bird feeders but this was really unusual. Seemed meaningful but don't know exactly what...any ideas?

We wrapped him in an old and favorite Rehoboth blanket and placed him on his favorite wall outside the family room (after being unable to jump there for several years) so he (okay...we) could have a bit more time for good-byes...knowing, of course,

he was dreaming of those squirrels

We've chosen a special place for him where he will rest in our woods and where we can visit him.

Thanks for listening and for caring.

Donna and David

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS...LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES COMING UP!**

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### **Getting the Love You Want Workshops**

**February 3-5, Frederick, MD  
March 30-April 1, Frederick, MD**

#### **Next Step Workshop**

**March 24-25, Frederick, MD**

### **QUOTES OF THE MONTH**

The difference between friends and pets is that friends we allow into our company, pets we allow into our solitude. Robert Brault

Ever consider what pets must think of us? I mean, here we come back from a grocery store with the most amazing haul - chicken, pork, half a cow. They must think we're the greatest hunters on earth! Anne Tyler

Animals are such agreeable friends - they ask no questions, they pass no criticisms. George Eliot

An animal's eyes have the power to speak a great language. Martin Buber

Lots of people talk to animals.... Not very many listen, though.... That's the problem. Benjamin Hoff, The Tao of Pooh

Man is rated the highest animal, at least among all animals who returned the questionnaire. Robert Brault

The kind man feeds his beast before sitting down to dinner. Hebrew Proverb

Animals have these advantages over man: they never hear the clock strike, they die without any idea of death, they have no theologians to instruct them, their last moments are not disturbed by unwelcome and unpleasant ceremonies, their funerals cost them nothing, and no one starts lawsuits over their wills. Voltaire, letter to Count Schomberg, 31 August 1769

**It often happens that a man is more humanely related to a cat or dog than to any human being. Henry David Thoreau**

**Our perfect companions never have fewer than four feet. Colette**

**Most pets display so many humanlike traits and emotions it's easy to forget they're not gifted with the English language and then get snubbed when we talk to them and they don't say anything back. Stephenie Geist**

**I believe in animal rights, and high among them is the right to the gentle stroke of a human hand. Robert Brault**

**Be it human or animal, touch is a life-giving thing. Has anyone ever had a stroke or a heart attack while cozied up with a pet? I doubt it. Robert Brault**

**I have been studying the traits and dispositions of the "lower animals" (so called) and contrasting them with the traits and dispositions of man. I find the result humiliating to me. Mark Twain, Letters from the Earth, 1907**

**If all the beasts were gone, men would die from a great loneliness of spirit, for whatever happens to the beasts also happens to the man. All things are connected. Whatever befalls the Earth befalls the sons of the Earth. Chief Seattle of the Suquamish Tribe, letter to President Franklin Pierce**

**We are on this journey with you. Keep in touch!**

**Sincerely,**

**David and Donna Bowman  
Bowman & Associates, PA**

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**Issue: #38**  
**FEBRUARY 2012**

**Dear Friends,**

February is almost gone and we find ourselves busy as usual. How are you handling this longer-than-usual-month? Are you feeling enthusiasm and optimism that it is early in the year and so many options are open for you? Or, are you feeling that the new year is moving far too fast and all of the challenges from the world at large are affecting the world within--your heart, mind, body and relationship!

You are not alone! We are all in this together and we are here for you. Keep in touch and we will all be stronger.

**Donna and David**

### **FEBRUARY: "The Courage to Intervene"**



**I am compelled to write this Thought! If it saves a life, then it will have been worth the effort.**

**Our son, Seth, called us this week and sadly spoke of the death of his favorite pop singer, Whitney Houston. While it was sad to me in a "Princess Di" kind of way, I didn't really get worked up until some of the interviews began happening.**

**Some said they wanted to focus on her wonderful talent and not dwell on the way she died. Others who were "close" to Whitney said she seemed very happy lately, especially at the party held the night before her death. The film shows a "happy" woman staggering around with a glass of**

champagne in each hand. I've been "happy" like that a few times in my life and I'm not proud of it. And I've not been through two substance abuse treatment programs.

The point I am getting to is yes, it's sad. It's very sad that the woman found alone and dead in her bathtub had lots of help along the way to her final outcome. Where were her friends she needed the night before to yank the alcohol out of her hands, wrestle her to the ground if need be and carry her immediately to an inpatient program? Were these people on drugs themselves? Did they have amnesia about her decades of struggle with substances? Do they not realize an addict cannot ever again get "happy" with alcohol? Alcohol combined with powerful prescriptions on top if it?

Yes, I know that substance addiction is a fatal disease that can only be ultimately diagnosed and treated by the patient themselves. It is nasty! Bad things happen! But here in 2012 we still seem to turn our ignorant eyes away from true help and sobriety and we find all kinds of ways to support addiction.

I've been in on interventions. It takes courage. It can be scary. And it's the most loving act you'll ever take. It's a lifeguard saving a person who doesn't know how to swim.

Some of you reading this are living close to a Whitney Houston in your own life. Don't let them drop. Take on the challenge. Have the courage to intervene. Ask for help. Call us! WE are not experts but some of our best friends are. We know people who can put you on the right course. There are spectacular treatment programs all around.

Yes, how sad...a beautiful woman who could belt out record breaking songs covering five octaves. Maybe the best ever! How great if her biggest legacy would be a wake up call.

(P.S. Thanks for all your loving thoughts as you responded to the Thought last month about our loss of Cujo. Connections certainly help grief become softer.)

Always in Connection, David

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**[Getting the Love You Want Workshops](#)**

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April 13-15, Rehoboth Beach, DE**

**[Next Step Workshop](#)**

March 24-25, Frederick, MD

## QUOTES OF THE MONTH

The only way to keep your health is to eat what you don't want, drink what you don't like, and do what you'd rather not. Mark Twain

To keep the body in good health is a duty, otherwise we shall not be able to keep our mind strong and clear. Buddha

Life is not merely being alive, but being well. Marcus Valerius Martialis

Those who do not find time for exercise will have to find time for illness. Edward Smith-Stanley

A vigorous five-mile walk will do more good for an unhappy but otherwise healthy adult than all the medicine and psychology in the world. Paul Dudley White

The body is like a piano, and happiness is like music. It is needful to have the instrument in good order. Henry Ward Beecher

The groundwork of all happiness is health. James Leigh Hunt

Without health, life is not life; it is only a state of languor and suffering. Francois Rabelais

A healthy body is a guest-chamber for the soul; a sick body is a prison. Francis Bacon

You pray for good health and a body that will be strong in old age. Good - but your rich foods block the gods' answer and tie Jupiter's hands. Persius

Health and intellect are the two blessings of life. Menander

**We are on this journey with you. Keep in touch!**

**Sincerely,**

**David and Donna Bowman  
Bowman & Associates, PA**

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# Connecting Couples

Donna Reeves Bowman, LCSW-C & David L. Bowman, MDiv

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**Issue: #39  
MARCH 2012**

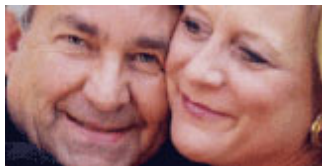
**Dear Friends,**

**Did March roar in like a lion in your little corner of the world? If it did not weather-wise, perhaps it did so in other ways. You will read a bit about our happy news at the end of the Thought. In relating it, we realize that we cannot know of all the happy events in your own lives--all of the special little happenings as well as the major events.**

**As we share our happiness, we are even more aware of the challenges we all face daily such as illness, the loss of a loved one or friend, problems with family members or issues in the workplace--those common difficulties and joys that make us human! We are happy to be on this journey with you. Don't hesitate to let us know how we can make your journey better. We are here for you!**

**Donna and David**

### **MARCH: "A Workshop or Private Sessions?"**



It is very common for people to ask, "How should we get started in Imago work....through private sessions or through a workshop?" Let's try to sort this out.

Many couples experience dramatic shifts in their relationship as a result of the weekend. I boldly assert that the weekend is transformative. I think it's a combination of learning new tools for communication, really getting each others' story, feeling the comfort and validation of others in the group who are having

similar struggles, and having safe and transparent guides who really grasp what it takes to be successful in relationships. The truth is that many couples get enough from the weekend alone to move forward in a newly revived relationship. We get

plenty of feedback to this effect.

There are also many couples who need more individual follow up. They grasp the Imago concepts but their particular power struggle needs more specific attention in order for them to develop a transformed way of understanding each other and a transformed way of behaving with each other. Just as group golf or group ski lessons are great, some people need more individualized attention to really move forward and get "on top" of the sport. We have identified several patterns that are particularly effective in enhancing relationship growth.

One is "easy" and economical. People who attend the basic workshop a second time report a surprising surge in their grasp of Imago concepts and tools. I think it is like the first time I went skiing. While it was fun and exhilarating, I spent a lot of time trying to get my boots on and figuring out how to navigate that nasty ski lift. (Donna was even worse than me on the ski lift.) But we decided to go back. It was a completely different experience. We understood the basics and we got so much more actual skiing time and it was a much more enjoyable. We actually began to learn to ski.

This is like the second experience at the workshop for many couples. AND, it is half price...the best deal going.

Another option that we notice enhances a couple's experience is to meet with a coach for an extended session...an intensive. Donna and I each do this but more and more often we are working with couples together for three, six, or nine hours. Couples report that the benefit of working with both of us is having both the male and female perspective as these differences are part of what contributes to the misunderstandings and disconnection they experience. We are able to celebrate and transform them into connection.

We strongly encourage couples to follow up in whatever way makes sense for them. It is well worth the effort. Our second level workshops also provide a powerful experience to support and encourage your continuing growth and connection. Our new "Gender to Gender: What Men and Women Need to Know" is Saturday, April 28th. "The Next Step: Overcoming Reactivity" is May 19 - 20. Let us know what questions you may have.

We hope to see many of you again.

(Donna insists that I tell you we are now grandparents of a wonderful little girl, Abigail Elizabeth (Abby Beth). Another chapter in our Journey.....a blessed and exciting chapter.)

**Always in Connection, David**

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**Getting the Love You Want Workshops**

**March 30-April 1, Frederick, MD  
April 13-15, Rehoboth Beach, DE  
Same Sex Couples: April 20-April 22, Rehoboth Beach, DE**

**May 4-May 5, Frederick, MD**

**Next Step Workshop**

**March 24-25, Frederick, MD  
May 19-May 20, Frederick, MD**

**QUOTES OF THE MONTH**

**"These things I warmly wish for you  
Someone to love,  
some work to do,  
A bit o' sun, a bit o' cheer,  
And a guardian angel always near"**

**"May the road rise up to meet you,  
may the wind be ever at your back.  
May the sun shine warm upon your face  
and the rain fall softly on your fields.  
And until we meet again,  
May God hold you in the hollow of his hand."**

**"May the sun shine all day long,  
everything go right and nothing wrong.  
May those you love bring love back to you,  
and may all the wishes you wish come true!"**

**"May you always have work for your hands to do.  
May your pockets hold always a coin or two.  
May the sun shine bright on your windowpane.  
May the rainbow be certain to follow each rain.  
May the hand of a friend always be near you.  
And may God fill your heart with gladness to cheer you."**

**"May you never forget what is worth remembering,  
nor ever remember what is best forgotten"**

**"May you live as long as you want and never want as long as you live"**

**We are on this journey with you. Keep in touch!**

**Sincerely,**

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**Issue: #40**  
**APRIL 2012**

**Dear Friends,**

**Yes, it is the last day of April but this IS the April Thought of the Month, a little (or a lot) late. It is very different and more of a letter from the heart. We share this with you as you are such a part of our journey as we are of yours.**

**Don't hesitate to let us know how we can make your journey better. We are here for you!**

**Donna and David**

**APRIL: So Amazing, So Here....**



Okay...it is 5:38 p.m. April 27, 2012...17 years and 10 minutes after I learned that my daughter, Stephanie Grace Miller, my beautiful, brilliant, independent, often difficult, gifted daughter died in a car accident 2 hours and 12 minutes earlier. So...why am I talking about this now? For those of you who know me (both then and since), it probably seems to you that I have "recovered", "moved on" and have "dealt with IT." And I have...and I HAVE NOT!

There is not a day that goes by that I don't miss Stephanie, wondering who she would be now and what she would be doing for this planet. I feel rage that she is not here with me/us...to celebrate Micah's loving relationship with Dana and their amazing daughter, Abby. (And, Dana.....watch out...Bananagrams would be her forte and she would beat us both!)

She would be cheering Seth on as he lives his Dream and trusts that "where he belongs" (Hawaii) and "showing up" will

provide the opportunity for him to step into and live his Dreams and Gifts... with all the growth "opportunities" along the way. And...just as she tried to tell me during her 16 years on this planet...she would still be trying to tell me to "lighten up"..."get a life"..."relax."

So, Stephanie, in these 17 years since you left us, I have listened a little more carefully and I am slowly learning from you, my amazing daughter. I am trying to focus my attention/energy on what provides connection and safety (versus appearances). I am trying to just "SHOW UP" and trust that the Universe will provide what points us toward wholeness and healing....along with the wisdom to "notice" it and follow it.

I love you, Stephanie Grace, and miss you. So many of us long to be with you.

Thank you for your wisdom, Stephanie Grace.

I love you,

Mom

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**June 8-9, Frederick, MD**

**July 20-22, Rehoboth Beach**

### **Next Step Workshop**

**May 19-May20, Frederick, MD**

### **QUOTES OF THE MONTH**

**God could not be everywhere, therefore he made mothers. Jewish saying**

**A mother's love for her child is like nothing else in the world. It knows no awe, no pity, it dares all things and crushes down remorselessly all that stands in its path. Agatha Christie**

**Of course if you like your kids, if you love them from the moment they begin, you yourself begin all over again, in them and with them. William Saroyan**

In family life, love is the oil that eases friction, the cement that binds closer together, and the music that brings harmony. Eva Burrows

In truth a family is what you make it. It is made strong, not by number of heads counted at the dinner table, but by the rituals you help family members create, by the memories you share, by the commitment of time, caring, and love you show to one another, and by the hopes for the future you have as individuals and as a unit. Marge Kennedy

[A mother] discovers with great delight that one does not love one's children just because they are one's children but because of the friendship formed while raising them. Gabriel Garcia Marquez

The Family is the Country of the heart. There is an angel in the Family who, by the mysterious influence of grace, of sweetness, and of love, renders the fulfillment of duties less wearisome, sorrows less bitter. The only pure joys unmixed with sadness. Giuseppe Mazzini

Smile at each other, smile at your wife, smile at your husband, smile at your children, smile at each other - it doesn't matter who it is and that will help you to grow up in greater love for each other. Mother Teresa

Children are the bridge to heaven. Persian proverb

One laugh of a child will make the holiest day more sacred still. Robert G. Ingersoll

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**Issue: #41**  
**May 2012**

**Dear Friends,**

**Surprise! Yes, you really are hearing from us so soon. This Thought was originally planned for April but you know why we wanted to share our story with you last month instead. We didn't want you to miss this wonderful opportunity to learn a bit about Couples Therapy and to have some time to think about this type of coaching as it might relate to your own partnership.**

**Please take a few minutes to read our Thought, email or call if you have questions or concerns. Maybe we will be the right coaches at the "right time."**

**Don't hesitate to let us know how we can make your journey better. We are here for you!**

**Donna and David**

**MAY: "What is Couple's Therapy?"**



**A strict dictionary definition of therapy is "a treatment for a disease or disorder." Physical therapy helps restore proper movement and body motion. Chemotherapy is designed to restore the balance of healthy cells so the organ can function properly. Psychotherapy is traditionally the treatment of the mind and the matters of social adjustment. How fascinating that "psyche" or "psycho" actually comes from the Greek word "psyche" which means breath, life, principle of life, soul.**

**In most forms of therapy we expect healing or restoration to come from some outside source...a pill, a chemical, a guided physical manipulation, or a wise suggestion or interpretation.**

**Here is why I love Imago "therapy": the therapy takes place within and between the couple. No magic potions, no machinery to manipulate, no wise person giving advice or diagnosis.**

**I love being a coach and gently (sometimes not so gently) guiding a couple to call upon their essential impulse of love and desire for connection; to restore a more joyful, safe, and relaxed relationship. Here is where the healing, the therapy, takes place in the couple's Space. The healing agents are the people themselves and their desire to heal and be healed; to stretch and grow; to provide a safer place for the Partner to give and receive the love that's been there all along. We are all good people with good intentions and the essential ingredients to love and be loved, to see and be seen, to be intimate.**

**But we do have those lizards. Those pesky adaptations that say, "Don't be a fool to trust him again" or "It's best if I just leave her alone until the criticism blows over: or "My partner will never truly understand me or give me what I need." Here's where the coach comes in. Robert Griffin, III is being drafted by my Washington Redskins. He is a gifted quarterback and is a good solid human being. He has all the ingredients. But he will fall flat on his face without good coaching. He will not know the plays. He will not mesh well with the other players. He will lack the encouragement to be his best without good coaching.**

**Couples are the same. They are good human beings, gifted in love and the desire for connection and possess all the ingredients. Most of us just need a good coach to guide the therapy that actually takes place...now, get this...within our own psyche or soul first, and then within our Space or relationship with another.**

**Now, for a great chance for this "therapy" to occur: our "The Next Step: Overcoming Reactivity" workshop. Great review, new information about male and female brains, great practice for really "doing" the dialogue...and great food, as always! May 19 -20 is the next opportunity.**

**In healing,**

**David (and Donna)**

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**Love one another and you will be happy. It's as simple and as difficult as that. Michael Leunig**

**Love looks through a telescope; envy, through a microscope. Josh Billings**

**Love is friendship that has caught fire. Anonymous**

**It's no trick loving somebody at their best. Love is loving them at their worst. Tom Stoppard**

**I love being married. It's so great to find one special person you want to annoy for the rest of your life." Rita Rudner**

**"There will be sex after death, we just won't be able to feel it." Lily Tomlin**

**Love is the wisdom of the fool and the folly of the wise. Samuel Johnson**

**To love deeply in one direction makes us more loving in all others. Anne-Sophie Swetchine**

**Love is the river of life in the world. Henry Ward Beecher**

**We come to love not by finding a perfect person, but by learning to see an imperfect person perfectly. Sam Keen**

**Love is an act of endless forgiveness, a tender look which becomes a habit. Peter Ustinov**

**Falling in love consists merely in uncorking the imagination and bottling the common-sense. Helen Rowland**

**Love needs no map, for it can find its way blindfolded. Anonymous**

**We are on this journey with you. Keep in touch!**

**Sincerely,**

**David and Donna Bowman  
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# Connecting Couples

Donna Reeves Bowman, LCSW-C & David L. Bowman, MDiv

## Thought of the Month News and Notes

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**Issue: #42**  
**June 2012**

**Dear Friends,**

**Welcome to summer! What a great time to think about childhood summers with no school, no homework and lots and lots of daylight to enjoy. Friends, fun and lazy days are part of our childhood memories. I hope you can drift a bit on a warm day and go back to a great childhood memory of summer. It isn't always easy when we are faced with the realities of our grown-up lives but we promise, if you can catch a little dream of the past, you will enjoy the present.**

**This Thought is Part I about communication--that bugaboo that gets us all once in awhile. I hope it resonates with you. We'd love to hear what you think about this important topic.**

**Enjoy your June!**

**Donna and David**

### **JUNE: The Big Mistakes: Part 1**



**The way I see it, there are two major mistakes men and women (yes, I think it applies to same sex couples, as well) make in their relationships. Okay...men first!**

**The biggest mistake men make is confusing their Partner's upset or complaints with abject criticism. I spent seven years believing that my wife, Donna, was hell-bent on finding fault with me. And she seemed to have a better way than I did to do everything!**

**"Are you sure you got the car fixed? It still sounds funny?"**

**"You're not going to wear that shirt to the party, are you?"**

**"If you would just put the silverware right side up in the**

dishwasher, it would get clean!" ETC.....

I heard these as full scale assaults on my character. I could take one or two but a constant barrage of "Wrong way, David!" and I felt defeated, ashamed, and downright angry! What I had to learn was that it was not criticism. It was simply my Partner wanting to have things come out right and trouble-free (her childhood story.) Of course, my childhood story of never getting it right came into play and formed a nasty dance for us.

There's a difference between complaints and criticism. In my experience, very few women set out to criticize or shame their Partners. Very few women are truly disgusted with their Partners...in spite of how "us Partners" want to believe.

Think about it, men. Even in the age of more equality, women are still generally the chief executive of the household along with her career and any other personal activities. It's in her interest to have things run smoothly. She probably already feels overworked. Add to that her vulnerability of feeling disconnected, unloved, and/or uncherished and we, of course have some complaints.

Men, let's stop making the mistake of confusing some negative emotions here and there with outright unhappiness with us. We have to learn to separate what she's feeling from what we experience as an outright critique of our manhood. This is a challenge because most of us men work off of performance, measuring the happiness of our Partner with our success as a husband or....even as a man.

Ironically, our Partners are not so much interested in changing us as they are in being listened to and feeling connected. So...suck it up, men! And just cross the Bridge into her world with all of your Dialogue skills. You can do it! And, you'll be surprised at what you start getting back. After all, it only took me seven years to get this!

Next month, I will talk about the biggest mistake women make in relationships....equally powerful in the disconnection happening in relationships.

Please let me know if this Thought hits the mark for any of you (men or women.) I would love to know. Donna and I

send you warm, relaxed energy for your summer together!

David

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS...LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES COMING UP!**

*Be sure to watch this space or check our web*

***Be sure to watch this space or check our web site for future opportunities.***

## **Getting the Love You Want Workshops**

**July 20-22, Rehoboth Beach, DE**

**August 17-19, Frederick, MD**

### **Next Step Workshop**

**July 14-15, Frederick, MD**

#### **QUOTES OF THE MONTH**

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place." George Bernard Shaw

"Speak when you are angry - and you'll make the best speech you'll ever regret." Dr. Lawrence J. Peter

"To effectively communicate, we must realize that we are all different in the way we perceive the world and use this understanding as a guide to our communication with others." Anthony Robbins

"We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak." Epictetus

"Communication works for those who work at it." John Powell

"The way we communicate with others and with ourselves ultimately determines the quality of our lives" Anthony Robbins

"He who knows, does not speak. He who speaks, does not know." Lao Tzu

"Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee, and just as hard to sleep after." Anne Morrow Lindberg

"Deep listening is miraculous for both listener and speaker. When someone receives us with open-hearted, non-judging, intensely interesting listening, our spirits expand." Sue Patton Thoele

"The most important things are the hardest to say, because words diminish them." Stephen King

"If we are strong, our strength will speak for itself. If we are weak, words will be of no help." John Fitzgerald Kennedy

"Men and women belong to different species and communications between them is still in its infancy." Bill Cosby

"Music can name the unnamable and communicate the

"I wish I had more time to communicate the  
unknowable." Leonard Bernstein

**We are on this journey with you. Keep in touch!**

**Sincerely,**

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**Issue: #43**  
**July 2012**

**Dear Friends,**

**Today's world has instant communication! Try as we might to grab a moment of solitude, we are bombarded with TV newsflashes, radio alerts, phone calls, email and the whole world of "instant": text messages, "facetime" video, Skype....you name it, we are CONNECTED and unless we make an effort to remove ourselves from this world, we are going to find some stress and some misunderstandings.**

**This Thought is Part II and continues with last month's topic about communication. The focus, once again, is about the difference between men and womens' communication style and the misunderstandings that crop up, well, every day, right? By sharing our personal examples we hope that our honesty helps you to realize that these issues are part of life and it takes a little work and a lot of patience to "get it right."**

**Keep in communication---we WANT to hear from you!**

**Donna and David**

### **JULY: The Big Mistakes: Part II**



**Last month I described the biggest mistake men make in relationships. It has to do with our tendency to confuse our Partner's emotion with criticism. Men tend to conclude that if their Partner is unhappy in anyway it must be his fault. This leads to a nasty cycle of disconnection. (The other part of this cycle is where the woman makes her mistake.) Let me try to describe this by sharing an example from my own experience.**

About a week ago Donna and I were talking about our life together and she randomly mentions that we don't entertain much anymore. Now, what I heard (with some history of similar conversations) was that she was upset that we "have no friends" and it is my fault! (Do you recognize my "male" mistake here?) By the way, a little mirroring would have worked wonders here.....BUT I just shut down in a paralytic mixture of guilt, confusion, shame, and rising anger.

AND so enters the mistake of the month...better known as the woman's contribution to the cycle. Hearing nothing from me but a defensive retort or two about how we do these workshops all the time and I don't really want anymore friends, etc., she concludes that I don't care about her needs and that I am some degree of unreachable on this subject. She experienced my shame response as an unwillingness to understand and connect with her.

So let's be clear about the mistake I am describing. I really believe there are gender differences at play here. Women seek to connect and if there is some degree of disruption, they seek connection with more intense and fiercer energy. Men are different. While we want to connect, we also want "relief" (i.e. respite) from connection. And when there is disruption in the connection, we often seek the safety of solitude. This, of course, often leads to even more upset from our Partner and what we perceive as criticism (e.g. "You never want to work through our problems.") The man then becomes angry. See the cycle? I actually remember my parents (in the few rare moments of emotion I ever witnessed) as my Mother chased my Father around the house trying to get him to talk to her. It was pretty funny, in retrospect.

Here's the thing for women to get: men can feel "bad" very easily. This "bad" is connected to shame and guilt, though those words will likely never be spoken. Donna says, "There are a lot of bugs in the house." I immediately "know" that means I've not fixed the screens or have not taken care of something

and that I am a lousy provider and a poor excuse for a husband. A little exaggeration here but the point is this: I hear criticism, feel shame, and react badly. She now feels like I am a disconnected Partner....out of touch with (and not really caring about) being in relationship.

The corrective for women is this: Be careful not to

mistake your man's shame and guilt reactions as an unwillingness to be connected. Sometimes we men simply don't know what to do to make things better.

Or to put it into abundant terms: **WOMEN** - Learn to know your Partner's vulnerability to bad feelings of shame or guilt. It could move you from criticism to compassion. How great would that be?

Let me know what you think!

David

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS...LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES COMING UP!**

***Be sure to watch this space or check our web site for future opportunities.***

### **Getting the Love You Want Workshops**

**August 17-19, Frederick, MD**

**September 7-9, Rehoboth Beach, DE**

### **Gender to Gender: What Men and Women Need to Know**

**September 15, Frederick, MD**

#### **QUOTES OF THE MONTH**

"When all other means of communication fail, try words"  
"Communication is the real work of leadership." Nitin Nohria

"Kind words can be short and easy to speak, but their echoes are truly endless." Mother Teresa of Calcutta

"The more elaborate our means of communication, the less we communicate." Joseph Priestly

"Communication is depositing a part of yourself in another person."

"First learn the meaning of what you say, and then speak." Epictetus

"All noise is waste. So cultivate quietness in your speech, in your thoughts, in your emotions. Speak habitually low. Wait for attention and then your low words will be charged with dynamite." Elbert Hubbard

"Good communication does not mean that you have to speak in perfectly formed sentences and paragraphs. It isn't about slickness. Simple and clear go a long way "

Don't about sickness, simple and clear go a long way.  
John Kotter

"Give sorrow words. The grief that does not speak  
whispers the o'er-fraught heart, and bids it break."  
William Shakespeare

"To listen well is as powerful a means of communication  
and influence as to talk well." John Marshall

If you could choose one characteristic that would get  
you through life, choose a sense of humor. Jennifer  
Jones

"Two men in a burning house must not stop to argue."  
African Proverb

"The tongue is the only tool that gets sharper with use."  
Washington Irving

"Don't appear so scholarly, pray. Humanize your talk,  
and speak to be understood." Moliere

"Speech is the mirror of the soul; as man speaks, so is  
he." Publilius Syrus

"In the last analysis, what we are communicating far  
more eloquently than anything we say or do." Stephen R.  
Covey

**We are on this journey with you. Keep in touch!**

**Sincerely,**

**David and Donna Bowman  
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**Issue: #44**  
**August 2012**

**Dear Friends,**

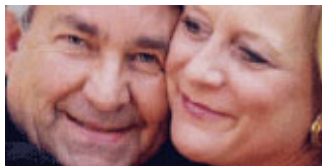
**We hope you are enjoying your summer. Our wish for you is that you have found time to spend with family and friends as well as to take some special moments with your partner. Summer always reminds us of young love and the excitement of meeting new people outside the normal school contacts. How about you? Is there a favorite summer memory that takes you back, reminds you of that carefree, adventurous soul you once were? Why not put on some music from a fond remembered time and bask in a little nostalgia? The sweet vibrations will warm your memory and maybe provide a spark of happiness. We hope so!**

**This Thought is very personal and one that we hope will help you to understand what may be going on in your own life or that of a loved one or friend. Depression is a real and prevalent issue in the daily lives of many, and often it is misunderstood. I hope this is of interest to you. Keep in communication---we WANT to hear from you!**

**As always, if you need us, just call.**

**Donna and David**

**AUGUST: "Sometimes You Need a Pill"**



**Have I got your attention? Yes, I'm saying sometimes a pill is needed to make a person's life better. I'm talking about depression, the debilitating and mysterious mental illness that strikes anyone of any age, class, or faith. It's one thing I have in common with Peter Tchaikovsky, Abraham**

**Lincoln, and Winston Churchill.**

**Please, understand. I'm not talking about feeling blue for a few days. I'm talking about a biochemical shift in the brain which severely disrupts the proper flow of substances that create calmness, ordered thinking, life energy, and pleasant feelings.**

**Our natural state is to be relaxed and joyful. Our precious granddaughter, Abby, is six months old. She is relaxed and joyful. We are meant to experience life in that way. Things can happen in life to cause depression; a birth or a death, or loss of a job, or an illness. In addition, depression can be "inherited", meaning we have a genetic propensity to the neurotransmitter irregularities. Whether depression is "situational" or "endogenous" it still can require chemical treatment if the mood problem is severe enough or persistent enough.**

**I was trained to first address depression through talk therapy alone. If, after several months, there was not improvement, then consider medication. Now we know that the combination of therapy and medication provides the best result. With the advent of such new and wonderfully effective drugs, I tell people there's no reason they need to keep suffering. Drugs are not without problems, however. All have potential side effects and, of course, there are situations where medication is used when not warranted. Proper referral, expertise, and monitoring are essential.**

**My Thought this month is in support of those people who don't know they are depressed and/or think they should just "soldier on." I will tell you that once the chemical imbalance occurs, no diet, no amount of exercise and no amount of talk therapy alone will be able to do what a properly prescribed anti-depressant can do as quickly or as well. The effect is dramatic for many.**

**So, I invite you to take a second look at your sleep problems, your anxiety symptoms, your overwhelmed, discouraged feelings, your somatic (body) symptoms, and your exhaustion then consider that you might be depressed. ("Join the club!" ) Life is hard enough and we all deserve to remove any factors in our control that may be making life harder.**

**Listen to those people who love you who mean well when they think you might be depressed.**

**Call Donna or me for a referral or find someone who has been down the road and see who helped them.**

**As always, please send your feedback, especially if you don't agree or have questions.**

**David (and Donna)**

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS...LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES  
COMING UP!**

***Be sure to watch this space or check our web  
site for future opportunities.***

## **Getting the Love You Want Workshops**

**September 7-9, Rehoboth Beach, DE**

**September 21-23, Rehoboth Beach, DE,  
Same Sex Workshop**

## **Gender to Gender: What Men and Women Need to Know**

**September 15, Frederick, MD**

## **Parenting Workshop**

**October 13-14, Frederick, MD**

## **QUOTES OF THE MONTH**

**"Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass  
under the trees on a summer's day, listening to the  
murmur of water, or watching the clouds float across the  
sky, is by no means a waste of time" John Lubbock**

**"All we need is the truth in our hand. Someone to call a  
friend. Never fear the darkness. All we need is just the  
sun in the sky. And the hope of a summer to come with  
the meaning of love." Anonymous**

**I hope your summer is just like a little box filled with  
surprises. Unknown**

**Someone asked me what book I read of the summer. I  
replied with, "Facebook." Unknown**

**"Summer is the time when one sheds one's tensions with  
one's clothes, and the right kind of day is jeweled balm  
for the battered spirit. A few of those days and you can  
become drunk with the belief that all's right with the  
world." Ada Louise Huxtable**

**Summer is the season when a man thinks he can cook  
better on an outdoor grill than his wife can on an indoor  
stove. Unknown**

**"I know I am but summer to your heart, and not the full  
four seasons of the year." Edna St. Vincent Millay**

**"Summer afternoon, summer afternoon: to me those**

**"Summer afternoon, summer afternoon, to me these  
have always been the two most beautiful words in the  
English language" Henry James**

**"Warm summer sun, shine kindly here. Warm southern  
wind, blow softly here. Green sod above, lie light, lie  
light. Good night, dear Heart, Good night, good night."  
Mark Twain**

**Summer meant watching cartoons all morning, roaming  
the neighborhood all day and going back home when the  
streetlights turned on. Unknown.**

**"Summer bachelors, like summer breezes, are never as  
cool as they pretend to be." Nora Ephron**

**"In summer, the song sings itself." William Carlos  
Williams**

**"Deep summer is when laziness finds respectability"  
Sam Keen**

**"Summer makes me drowsy. Autumn makes me sing.  
Winter's pretty lousy, but I hate Spring." Dorothy  
Parker**

**He was in love with life as an ant on a summer blade of  
grass" Ben Hecht**

**"Being a child at home alone in the summer is a high-  
risk occupation. If you call your mother at work thirteen  
times an hour, she can hurt you." Erma Bombeck**

**It's almost Summer! Time to find out what my friends  
with swimming pools have been up to since last  
summer... Unknown**

**That awkward moment when you write a super long,  
heartfelt note in someones yearbook and they write  
'Have a Great Summer!!' Unknown**

**We are on this journey with you. Keep in touch!**

**Sincerely,**

**David and Donna Bowman  
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**Issue: #45  
November 2012**

**Dear Friends,**

**Life has certainly been a roller coaster lately. Our hearts and thoughts go out to all who have been affected by the major event, "Sandy." We have had power outages but know that many of you have been more sorely tried and we pray for those who have lost loved ones, friends, homes and material goods.**

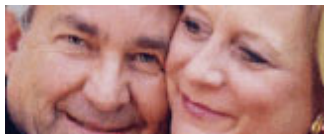
**It seems that there is never enough time to do all that we have on our lists and especially not enough time to spend with those we love but it is at times like this that we are reminded about the true important things in life. Prioritizing family and friend time is so important and often we find the stresses of everyday creeping in and over-taking this time. I'm sure we are not alone in thinking that carpool duty, preparing meals and housework is "family" time, but really, is it? Wouldn't a child rather have you toss a ball with them or read a story or watch a favorite movie and share popcorn? How about a walk with your partner? Yes, even time for a dialog is precious. Those duties that we all must do should never be allowed to take over our lives and squeeze out time with those we love--it definitely takes planning but the result is priceless! We have been reminded that love of family and friends is by far the most important thing we possess. Let us never take it for granted!**

**Keep in communication---we WANT to hear from you!**

**As always, if you need us, just call.**

**Donna and David**

**NOVEMBER: "Are You a Competing Couple?"**





I like to coin phrases for what I see in relationships. It's a privilege I give myself for having been around for a good while. One phenomenon that I see is what I call the "competing couple." You probably know who you are. You fight with each other over things that often don't amount to a hill of beans! One will say, "It rained on Tuesday." and the other replies, "No, it rained on Wednesday." Then, the other says, "I'm sure it was Tuesday." "No, it had to be Wednesday because...." Then the energy in the couple's Space becomes about who was "right." And then you can see the lizards from each person come crawling out like gilas in a desert twilight, ready for an ugly, devolved, and drawn out battle.

It is now about winning, about survival. Most of us know this feeling, "I've got to get my point across." "I've got to win this." "I can't let him/her be right again." "I'm digging in on this one." What is going on here? Why are these feelings so common to so many of us?

It is actually amusing to step back and watch the things couples will compete over. I also get amused watching people fight and claw over some silly give-away at a store or a sporting event. It seems like most of us have an intrinsic need to "not to be left out." When the Nationals baseball team is giving away tee shirts, I believe our worry about "not getting" far exceeds our desire to have one. It's like when we were children fighting to the death over things that aren't even important and that we don't even really want.

Maybe I've found the answer...the childhood story. Probably most of us had a rival sibling vying for parental attention. Or in some other way, we didn't get all we needed. Perhaps in our own personal stories, we can see why it's so important for us to not lose the 'fight.' What is the remedy here? Let me suggest that other than reflecting on our childhood story and its resulting adaptations (this is always a good idea) we might also look at our attachments.

Am I attached to the need to win...to be right? What am I afraid of if it turns out I am wrong...or don't have the answer?

Intimate relationship is not about winning, or about being right, or even about appearing smart! Relationship is about connection, about crossing the Bridge to acknowledge and validate the precious Other, even if their view is opposite of ours.

If we can get attached to the idea of growing and perfecting the Connection rather than perfecting our position or our own standing, then we will be on the way to real love and

relational maturity.

As always, I appreciate your feedback and questions.

David (and Donna)

**MARK YOUR CALENDARS...LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES  
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### **Next Step Workshop**

**November 10-11, Frederick, MD  
(PLEASE NOTE: Venue change from Rehoboth  
Beach, DE)**

### **Getting the Love You Want Workshops**

**November 30-December 2, Frederick, MD**

#### **QUOTES OF THE MONTH**

**If you were going to die soon and had only one phone  
call you could make, who would you call and what would  
you say? And why are you waiting? Stephen Levine**

**Sometimes it is the person closest to us who must travel  
the furthest distance to be our friend. Robert Brault**

**Sticks and stones are hard on bones  
Aimed with angry art,  
Words can sting like anything  
But silence breaks the heart.  
Phyllis McGinley, "Ballade of Lost Objects," 1954**

**Assumptions are the termites of relationships. Henry  
Winkler**

**Having someone wonder where you are when you don't  
come home at night is a very old human need. Margaret  
Mead**

**Shared joy is a double joy; shared sorrow is half a  
sorrow. Swedish Proverb**

**Remember, we all stumble, every one of us. That's why  
it's a comfort to go hand in hand. Emily Kimbrough**

**There are days when you need someone who just wants  
to be your sunshine and not the air you breathe. Robert  
Brault**

**There's one sad truth in life I've found  
While journeying east and west -  
The only folks we really wound**

The only folks we really wound  
Are those we love the best.  
We flatter those we scarcely know,  
We please the fleeting guest,  
And deal full many a thoughtless blow  
To those who love us best.  
Ella Wheeler Wilcox

Don't smother each other. No one can grow in the  
shade. Leo Buscaglia

In the end, who among us does not choose to be a little  
less right to be a little less lonely. Robert Brault,

You can kiss your family and friends good-bye and put  
miles between you, but at the same time you carry them  
with you in your heart, your mind, your stomach,  
because you do not just live in a world but a world lives  
in you. Frederick Buechner

Present your family and friends with their eulogies now -  
they won't be able to hear how much you love them and  
appreciate them from the grave. Anonymous

Piglet sidled up to Pooh from behind. "Pooh!" he  
whispered. "Yes, Piglet?" "Nothing," said Piglet, taking  
Pooh's paw. "I just wanted to be sure of you." A.A.  
Milne

I felt it shelter to speak to you. Emily Dickinson

**We are on this journey with you. Keep in touch!**

**Sincerely,**

**David and Donna Bowman  
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**Issue: #46**  
**December 2012**

**Dear Friends,**

Once again, national issues are facing us as we look to this holiday season. Last month it was a super storm and hurricane and this month another tragedy affecting the community in Connecticut. As we individually and collectively process and deal with these issues, we search for answers and strength to be there for those who need us and to survive ourselves. Our hearts are heavy and we pray for all those affected, yet again.

Although we can get overwhelmed at the holidays anyway, adding to this general "busyness" and stress can push us into higher levels of distress. When it does, it is natural to need an outlet: overeating, alcohol consumption, over-spending, short-temper and general need for relief! We hear you! We are all in the same situation though our degree varies. We encourage you to **BREATHE!** Just take time to step away and do whatever self-care activities work for you and your loved ones. When we think of others, it somehow helps us to deal with our own issues and may be a short-term answer.

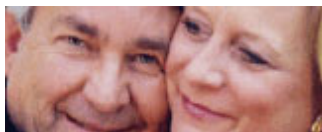
Don't forget to lean on your partner and ask for what you need. Plan some time together and together you can stay strong and more centered! As we said last Thought, love of family and friends is by far the most important thing we possess. Let us never take it for granted!


**Keep in communication---we WANT to hear from you!**

**As always, if you need us, just call.**

**Donna and David**

**DECEMBER: "What Causes Couples to Fight?"**





When you see a couple in conflict it is easy to begin surmising that they don't like each other at that moment. Or even to think they don't love each other anymore. There's a big difference!

When a couple fights it does not suggest to me that they don't love each other. It's just the opposite. I think they do love each other and are just put out or disappointment and moving into protest about not getting the connection that they want. People who do not care for each other do not have the energy or desire to carry on a fight!

Harville Hendrix has never been so clear about what really goes on in the power struggle as he was at the Imago Relationships International conference in Vancouver six weeks ago. I want to summarize his presentation.

*Relationship is about Connection.  
Connection is our Essence. We are "wired" for Connection.  
The Experience of Connection is Joy. The Loss of Connection is Anxiety.  
The Loss of Connection leads to...  
Anxiety (about Disconnection) and Desire (for Connection) which leads to...  
Self-absorption and Loss of the Idea of Otherness which leads to...  
Emotional Symbiosis (i.e. "You are in my movie so you play the part I give you.") which leads to...  
Loss of Empathy where "Others" become "Objects" of Fear (of Disconnection) and Desire (for Connection) then...  
We create a "Story" about the World and about our Partner. This "Story" is mostly a projection of our own Worst Fears and Deepest Desires...  
With which our Partner will sometimes unwittingly collude. Assumptions from this Understanding are....  
All desire is for Restored Connection.  
All Conflict is an Attempt to Restore Connection.  
Most of our Behavior (both Good and Bad) is an Attempt to Restore Connection.  
Paradoxically, the way into Deep Connection is to be fully Differentiated from our Partner.  
We have to Emotionally Separate from the Symbiotic Trap to be Truly Connected and Interdependent.  
And Dialogue is the Tool!*

Hope this all makes sense and is helpful as you think of your own experience of your relationship. Please share your thoughts and questions with me.

Donna and I hope you and your loved ones have blessed holidays and a joyful New Year!

David

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES  
COMING UP!

***Be sure to watch this space or check our web  
site for future opportunities.***

## **Getting the Love You Want Workshops**

**January 11-13, 2013, Frederick, MD  
February, 8-10, 2013, Frederick, MD**

## **Next Step Workshop**

**March 16-17, 2013, Frederick, MD**

### QUOTES OF THE MONTH

**This is my wish for you: peace of mind,  
prosperity through the year, happiness that  
multiplies, health for you and yours, fun around  
every corner, energy to chase your dreams, joy  
to fill your holidays! D.M. Dellinger**

**Time for work- yet take much holiday for art's  
and friendship's sake. George James De Wilde**

**To many people holidays are not voyages of  
discovery, but a ritual of reassurance. Philip  
Andrew Adams**

**For centuries men have kept an appointment  
with Christmas. Christmas means fellowship,  
feasting, giving and receiving, a time of good  
cheer, home. W.J. Ronald Tucker**

**Even as an adult I find it difficult to sleep on  
Christmas Eve. Yuletide excitement is a potent  
caffeine, no matter your age. Carrie Latet**

**Christmas is a time when kids tell Santa what  
they want and adults pay for it. Deficits are  
when adults tell the government what they want  
and their kids pay for it. Richard Lamm**

**Blessed is the season which engages the whole  
world in a conspiracy of love! Hamilton Wright  
Mabie**

**Love is what's in the room with you at Christmas  
if you stop opening presents and listen. Author  
unknown, attributed to a 7-year-old named  
Bobby**

**Christmas is forever, not for just one day**

**Christmas is forever, not for just one day,  
for loving, sharing, giving, are not to put away  
like bells and lights and tinsel, in some box upon  
a shelf.**

**The good you do for others is good you do  
yourself...**

**Norman Wesley Brooks, "Let Every Day Be  
Christmas," 1976**

**The best and most beautiful things in the world  
cannot be seen or even touched. They must be  
felt with the heart. Wishing you happiness. Helen  
Keller**

**We are on this journey with you. Keep in touch!**

**Sincerely,**

**David and Donna Bowman  
Bowman & Associates, PA**

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Bowman & Associates, PA | 7823 Chestnut Grove Road | Frederick | MD | 21701