



Connecting
Couples

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Thought of the Month News and Notes

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Dear Friends,

I love the dog days of August! It starts getting dark a little earlier and everyone starts thinking about the "new" year: school starting with the advent of new teachers, classes and friends; business goals wrapping up for the calendar year (can we really achieve these??) and realizing that we still have time to address issues left on hold over the summer.

Donna and I have been enjoying family so much this summer and have felt a sense of renewal that these relationships can bring to our busy lives. Just holding a child's hand while taking a walk, sitting next to one of our sons sharing a quiet moment before dinner--renewal of the spirit and heart! We are ready to help you and your partner in this relationship business...we are here to help!

As always, if you need us, just call.

Donna and David

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AUGUST 2015: "How to Save Your Relationship"

I was recently asked a familiar question, "David, what would you say is the key to having a successful relationship?" This question often comes up at social gatherings when people find out what life work I do.

Of course anyone can google all sorts of answers and angles to this question. You'll get things like, "Never go to bed angry" and "Learn to really listen" and "Have a date night once a month." All good stuff.

Well, I'll take a stab at answering the question with what I have learned from my career in Imago Coaching (and my 32 year relationship with Donna.)

1. REPLACE CRITICISM WITH APPRECIATION.

The single most life changing positive thing you can do is to make a commitment to take all negativity out of your relationship. Negativity is defined as criticism, harsh comments, cursing, discounting, stonewalling and physical acting out. (Please note that anger and protest, when shared in a responsible way is not considered negativity.)

This is very difficult because our lizard brain, the part that wants to defend us and keep us safe, is most likely to inflict negativity on our environment. It's why war happens.

You'll have to be very intentional and just "Stop It" when you feel like being ugly or negative. And then you'll have to do something really crazy....find and share an appreciation to infuse positive energy where the negativity was about to destroy things.

2. DROP YOUR EXPECTATIONS.

I wrote a controversial article on this a while back. While expectations are very human, you have to be careful. Expectations expressed, or even unexpressed, are loaded for trouble. If the expectation is unmet the result is anxiety. And anxiety has a way of steering the lizard toward anger and negativity.

I suggest that you learn to replace expectations with gratitude for what is wonderful about your partner. I am not channeling Pollyanna here. I am being doggedly strategic. It will help you live longer.

3. GET A GOOD PICTURE OF YOUR PARTNER AS A CHILD AND HOLD IT IN YOUR HEART.

Memorize your partner's story and the accompanying adaptations. Become able to describe any of your partner's behavior in terms of their pursuit of safety, no matter how misguided you think they are. While you're at it, develop some compassion for your own story and your own adaptations.

4. LEARN WHAT MAKES YOUR PARTNER FEEL CHERISHED.

Let them know that they are at the top of your priorities. Show them that you have them in your mind wherever you are and whatever you are doing.

5. LEARN WHAT MAKES YOUR PARTNER FEEL RESPECTED.

Tell them that you are proud of who they are. Show them that you are happy with them and let them know how they make you feel secure. Find a way every day to let them know how lucky you are to have them in your life.

6. MAKE THE POWER OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP THE NUMBER ONE MISSION IN YOUR LIVES.

Put your relationship above your children, your careers, your hobbies, and your wealth. If you are spiritual or religious, incorporate your relationship squarely in your spirituality or your faith. Enjoy the adventure of intimate collaboration as the greatest therapy experience you could ever have. Be thankful for your conflicts as

**opportunities to see something in a new way
and to become whole.**

**(As always, I love your feedback and
responses to what I have come up with.)**

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.***

Next Step Workshop

September 19-20, 2015, Frederick, MD

Getting the Love You Want Workshops

October 2-4, 2015, Frederick, MD

November 6-8, 2015, Frederick, MD

December 4-6, 2015, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

**"Renewal requires opening yourself up to new ways of
thinking and feeling" Deborah Day, BE HAPPY NOW!**

**"And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves
growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had
that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again
with the summer." F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby**

**"Things are always better in the morning." Harper Lee, To
Kill a Mockingbird**

**Love that does not renew itself every day becomes a habit
and in turn a slavery. Khalil Gibran**

**"If there is nothing new under the sun, at least the sun itself
is always new, always re-creating itself out of its own
inexhaustible fire." Michael Sims, Apollo's Fire: A Day on
Earth in Nature and Imagination**

"Let your soul be washed by the waves of love to feel the joy

of life." Debasish Mridha

If you want the world to beat a path to your door, just try to take a nap on a Saturday afternoon. George Burns

"You have to renew your mind with positive thoughts daily." Lailah Gifty Akita, Pearls of Wisdom: Great mind

"Why couldn't two unhappy people refresh each other on their way through this dusty business of life by a little talk-real, natural talk, about what they felt, what they would have liked, what they still tried to hope?" Elizabeth von Arnim "If you want a new tomorrow, then make new choices today." Tim Fargo

"Life is like a flowing stream; once the flow stops, our life becomes stagnant. When we remove the dams and debris we have accumulated and encourage it to flow freely, it becomes a source of sustenance and renewal and growth for us and for all with whom we share it." Tom Hackett

Paper is always strongest at the perforations. Carolyn Corry

A generous heart, kind speech, and a life of service and compassion are the things which renew humanity. The Buddha

Take a course in good water and air; and in the eternal youth of Nature you may renew your own. Go quietly, alone; no harm will befall you. John Muir

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

Sincerely,

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

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