



Connecting
Couples

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Thought of the Month News and Notes

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Dear Friends,

Summer is upon us! We look forward to workshops, phone calls and conversations with you, sprinkled among some lazy, hazy days of relaxing with family and friends. This thought is a reflection on the dialogue process you learned in the workshops. It's a little refresher that I hope will give you some new insight: let me know what you think!

As always, if you need us, just call.

Donna and David

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JUNE 2016: "Dialogue Is the Therapy"

What is it that helps a relationship get better? What moves a relationship from a passive co-existence, or worse, a realm of negative feelings and constant defenses, to a relationship of relaxed and joyful connection?

What would help your relationship become one where you both are delighted to be in each other's company and where you look to your partner to truly have your back in any and all situations, even when you are not at your best?

Well I know that my wife, Donna and I experience this positive connection when we are attending to each other, or "showing up" as we like to say. Beyond showing up we need to feel that each of us is "gotten" to use another of our terms. And "gotten" is regardless of whether we agree or not. Then the icing on the cake of connection is for us to feel that we get what each other is feeling around any given situation.

Now this sounds great and we approximate this connection "some" of the time. The rest of the time we try to keep negativity out of it. Any negative comment or action is a no-no and requires a "do-over." I can tell you that each time we connect in this positive way it helps each of us feel a bit better: physically, mentally, and spiritually. Guess what! We actually have a tool for doing this connecting. It is called dialogue. Intentional Dialogue to be exact. Do we always sit across from each other and mirror perfectly and validate and empathize in the structure that we teach in the workshop? No, I can tell you that we get closer to the actual structure when the subject gets dicey or feelings seem vulnerable.

But I am talking more in this piece about the "spirit" of the dialogue. The commitment to withhold anything negatively presented and to be willing to cross the bridge and mirror (or actively listen without defense or response.) The commitment to validate (or let our partner know that we really "get" them.) The commitment to empathize (or to show our compassion and a bit of willingness to open our heart to what our partner might be feeling.)

I know this is simply review for all who read this. But my point is that "dialogue," in my mind is more of an attitude than it is a perfect completion of a precise communication exercise.

When I served as campus minister at a small

mid-western college, the music teacher was a fanatic for Bach, and Bach done perfectly, if you know what I mean. "There is no interpretation while playing Bach," she would say. The students were bored and lifeless. I yearned for them to learn Tchaikovsky with his freer form and wonderfully passionate melodies.

There is a case for both. The dialogue cannot be sloppy. But it also cannot be without spirit and passion for loving the otherness of the other. At any rate, being in a "dialogical" place with another is always therapeutic.

As always, I love your feedback or 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

July 15-17, 2016, Frederick, MD

August 26-28, 2016, Frederick, MD

October 7-9, 2016, Frederick, MD

Next Step Workshops

September 24-25, 2016

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"The only reason why we ask other people how their weekend was is so we can tell them about our own weekend." Chuck Palahniuk, *Invisible Monsters*

A sudden silence in the middle of a conversation suddenly brings us back to

essentials: it reveals how dearly we must pay for the invention of speech. E. M. Cioran

"Sometimes when it looks like I'm deep in thought I'm just trying not to have a conversation with people." Pete Wentz

"Good Morning!" said Bilbo, and he meant it. The sun was shining, and the grass was very green. But Gandalf looked at him from under long bushy eyebrows that stuck out further than the brim of his shady hat. "What do you mean?" he said. "Do you wish me a good morning, or mean that it is a good morning whether I want it or not; or that you feel good this morning; or that it is a morning to be good on?" "All of them at once," said Bilbo. "And a very fine morning for a pipe of tobacco out of doors, into the bargain." J.R.R. Tolkien, The Hobbit

"Can we talk?" Joan Rivers

A good conversationalist is not one who remembers what was said, but says what someone wants to remember. John Mason Brown

Conversation is an exercise of the mind; gossip is merely an exercise of the tongue. Anonymous

"Conversation, like certain portions of the anatomy, always runs more smoothly when lubricated." Marquis de Sade

If other people are going to talk, conversation becomes impossible. James Mcneill Whistler

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

Sincerely,

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