



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

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**Issue: #93
January 2017**



Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! We are hopeful that 2017 will be transformative, for all of us. We continue to be optimistic.

I am a bit of a reluctant, late-comer to social media but became totally committed when my smart phone texts were returned immediately (or close to it!) from my sons. We are getting used to the fact that there is not always time for a phone conversation and that communication is possible in the oddest times. (Just don't ask where your fellow-texter is at any given moment!)

The same holds true for immediate social media communication, news and transfer of information. I know you know about our Facebook Page but do you also know that I am devoting myself to regular posts? Yes! My years of garnering pearls of communication wisdom are yours just for a quick glance on your smartphone at your FB feed. So if you haven't already "liked" us, please do so and please invite your friends to "like" us too!

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We don't want you to miss a little nugget or inspiration that might enhance (or save!) your communications!

Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

JANUARY: 5 Secrets about Men that may Surprise Women

#1 The one thing a man desires most.... Are you thinking success, or fame, or sex, or wealth, or a good golf score? Nope! All of these are nice, but I've discovered that the one thing a man desires the very most is.....to have a happy wife or partner and to feel that he is the chief provider of that happiness.

That's right. All the other things pale in comparison to this one. It is a secret desire because men do not generally go around thinking about this themselves, and they surely will not talk about it. And, while it is certainly unfair to women, any sign that the wife or partner is in discomfort or frustrated tends to send their man into a black hole of despair. That's why men feel so criticized even when women (like my wife, Donna) say "I'm just trying to be helpful" and then the man will either get mad or just go into the cave.

#2 What does a man want from sex?

It is a fact that men generally possess more testosterone than women. Thus, the common perception is that most men are longing for sexual connection at a higher frequency than women. Furthermore, many understand that men are often seeking relationship connection through sex, as this is their "love" language. What many women do not know is that for most men, the pleasure of satisfying his partner is equal to

or even greater than his own physical experience! So, when a man is pestering his partner to have sex, he is really yearning for the experience of being valuable or proficient, or even a good provider for his partner's perceived needs. Men feel the very best when they feel they have satisfied their partner, especially sexually.

#3 Why he won't talk to you?

It's an age old power struggle. "He won't talk to me!" "He must not care about me!" "He must not love me!" NOT TRUE!

When a man will not talk to his partner about something that seems so important to her and to the relationship, it's usually because he is afraid of failing, of making matters worse or of feeling shame for not having the right answer or solution. Even when the female partner has no intention of shaming or seeking a solution, the man can still have this response, although he may not know what is happening either. "Honey, let's talk about something" means the possibility of connection for the woman, where it spells doom for the man.

Men have the secret desire to please their partners above all else, and any hint that she is not pleased can result in shutting down behavior, or an angry response. I have found that when Donna says she is concerned about something but that it is not about me or anything I did, then I have a better chance of staying responsive to her.

#4 Why men have affairs.

I'm sharing my thoughts on this based on my observation of many couples through the years. The common conception is that men have affairs for more or better sex than they have been having, or that they are looking to start a new life with another person.

WRONG!

I believe most affairs that men "fall" into

have to do with the opportunity to feel respected and appreciated fully by another person. They are not so much about sex and certainly are not to ditch the current partner, in most instances. I believe a man gets DISCOURAGED after years of experiencing an unhappy wife and feeling or being told somehow that he is responsible. Men have the secret desire to be the provider (of satisfaction) to their partner. When there is little experience of being the "champion" or the "hero" then the conditions are ripe for the opportunity for someone else to provide this feeling. Notice I'm not condoning anything, just observing. Also this secret often is as hidden from the man as it is from his partner.

#5 Why men need to feel like winners
I've long noticed that women seek to connect in relationships and men seek to compete. Observe an elementary playground. I'll bet the boys are running around pushing each other down and the girls are involved in some connecting activity. Anthropologists suggest that 4-6 million years ago hunting was largely an individual, thus competitive, survival skill. The winner brought home the game and lived to hunt another day. Gathering and nurturing the young required much more cooperation and connection. As we have evolved, the (winning) survival instinct has less and less to do with manly skills like hunting and hand to hand combat.

So how does a man win these days? Often it is in the workplace, where his position or paycheck can be measured. In an intimate relationship, a man wins by having a satisfied wife, a happy home and routines that bring comfort and not discord. A man also wins when he can solve problems for his partner. Of course this creates a whole new set of challenges. The secret desire of a man to be seen as a provider of satisfaction for his partner is the new effort to "win" in his relationship.

Warmly,

David and Donna

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February 10-12, Frederick, MD

March 17-19, Frederick, MD

May 5-7, Frederick, MD

Next Step Workshop

April 1-2, 2017, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

**"The problem with winter sports is that--
follow me closely here--they generally take
place in winter." Dave Barry**

**"To shorten winter, borrow some money due
in spring. " W.J. Vogel**

**"Welcome, winter. Your late dawns and
chilled breath make me lazy, but I love you
nonetheless. " Terri Guillemets**

**"No winter lasts forever; no spring skips its
turn." Hal Borland**

**"Nothing is as easy to make as a promise this
winter to do something next summer; this is
how commencement speakers are caught."
Sydney J. Harris**

**"What good is the warmth of summer,
without the cold of winter to give it
sweetness. " John Steinbeck**

**"When I was young, I loved summer and hated winter. When I got older I loved winter and hated summer. Now that I'm even older, and wiser, I hate both summer and winter."
Jarod Kintz**

**Oh the weather outside can bite me
And my car won't start to spite me
And I can't feel any of my toes
Winter blows
Winter blows
Winter blows-- Lorie Ring**

**"Winter blues are cured every time with a potato gratin paired with a roast chicken."
Alexandra Guarnaschelli**

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

Sincerely,

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

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

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Issue: #94
February 2017



Dear Friends,

Dark February days make me somewhat introspective and, at the same time, very, very observant. Donna and I continue to spend delightful hours with couples who challenge and inspire us and in the midst of this, we find we are challenging each other!

Fortunately for us, we have the skills of dialogue (which have saved us many, many times) and also spark some moments of wisdom. Please read on and look in the window of our relationship...(never boring, to us at least!)

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David (and Donna)

FEBRUARY: The Space In Between

This month I would like to describe the concept of the "space in between." It was Martin Buber, the Jewish theologian, who said that our relationship lives in the space

in between us. The relationship is not in me, and it is not in you. It is in the life we create and share together. It is a sacred space. Everything that we say and everything that we do has an effect on the space. If we have a sour look or a criticism or a withdrawal, we affect the space. If we speak of appreciation or make a warm gesture, we affect the space.

The problem is that we generally are not thinking about the space. We are generally thinking about our own wellbeing in our own sphere of consciousness. And we put our own defenses and reactions into the space without thinking. And then the space becomes a bit uncomfortable. It has become polluted. Then we both react to the discomfort in the space, and it becomes even more uncomfortable. Then it feels like a dangerous space and now we are in full blown reactivity. Sound familiar?

It happens to us. The other day Donna says "I think we should have a new stove top. There is one on sale at HH Gregg." Without thinking about the space I said "Why do we need a new stove top?" To which Donna says "I have been frustrated with this stove for 15 years. Where have you been?" Of course I had to remind her that we fixed the burners several years ago and that other than the burner that sometimes won't cut off, the stove works just fine. (Can you feel us spiraling down into the bottomless pit of reactivity with each other?) The accusations began and now the subject of a silly stove became a dangerous place in our space. Thankfully we remembered the miracle of dialogue and the image of "the bridge" which I will cover next month. And after rediscovering some of the childhood hurts and adaptations that were at play, we came back to a good space around the stove. It was an "opportunity" for us to revisit the use of dialogue and the bridge to make a good decision and to enjoy a powerful and positive connection.

Surrender, generosity, empathy, curiosity, compassion. These are the gifts that we can bring to the space in between to keep it joyful and alive.

I texted Donna an hour ago "I'm glad you finally agreed to let me get the stove top." She replied "I am too. Thanks for persisting."

Your comments are always appreciated.

David and Donna

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QUOTES OF THE MONTH

They invented hugs to let people know you love them without saying anything. Bil Keane

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

Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Love is our true destiny. We do not find the meaning of life by ourselves alone - we find it with another. Thomas Merton

Let us always meet each other with smile, for the smile is the beginning of love. Mother Teresa

The greatest healing therapy is friendship and love. Hubert H. Humphrey

Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage. Lao Tzu

Ever since it started snowing my husband is standing in front of the window and watching. If the snow gets much worse, I might let him inside the house. Anonymous

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

Sincerely,

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

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Issue: #95
March 2017



Dear Friends,

Spring is springing. In some places at least and sleet is sleeting in others. Snow is snowing and wind is blowing and we find ourselves just rolling with it! Sometimes it is just fun to BE, no expectation, no agenda, no big plans, just BE. If you find it hard to do this, I have a recommendation: stow the electronics, mute the "noise" and hold your Honey's hand. And. Just. Be.

When you are thoroughly in the moment, refreshed and ready, enjoy this Thought. There are some great nuggets about what women want that you both will want to read.

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Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

**MARCH: 5 Things Women Need to
Feel Loved (that men should learn)**

[This month the Thought is a reflection of](#)

what I have observed in working with couples regarding women.

5 Things women need to feel loved (that men should learn)

- 1. To feel connected**
- 2. To feel cherished**
- 3. To feel secure**
- 4. To feel equal (cooperation)**
- 5. To feel comfort**

1. To feel connected.

One of the most prevalent experiences of conflict in couples that I have observed is around the women's need to feel connected. In the experience of disconnection women are likely to react with either hurt feelings or criticism. Men often misunderstand these reactions as signaling that they are seen as lousy husbands. Then men typically have just two responses: to withdraw or to get angry. As you can imagine, neither of these responses helps the women to feel more connected. In fact it sets up a cycle that Donna and I describe as the fear/shame cycle. The fear of disconnection from the women creates shame of failure in the man which creates even more fear of disconnection and even more shame etc. The RX is to help the man see that the woman is just crying out for connection with him and to help the woman to present this connection need in an abundant way rather than in a shaming way.

2. To feel cherished

Being connected is necessary for a woman to feel loved, but more is needed. Couples can be connected in such a negative pattern that the feelings of love can actually erode. What I hear from working with couples is that women want to feel "cherished" although they rarely use that word. The need is really to know that their partner has them at the top of their priorities. That they are seen as special in the eyes of the partner. One woman said "I want the

assurance that you have me in your mind when you do or say things." Each man will have to discern what specific behaviors or words will help his partner feel cherished. I suggest simply asking "What can I do to help you feel special?" or "when do you feel most cherished by me?"

3. To feel secure

I want to be careful here. I am aware that most women are perfectly capable of taking care of themselves financially, professionally, and every other way. This is not a sexist view of this security need. I have, however, noticed with couples a need for the women to feel secure in the commitment, the reciprocity of connection, the finances, and in all other areas of life. Anxiety results when this security is in question. Anthropologists would say this need is a carry over from ancient times when the woman was the childbearer, the gatherer, and the keeper of the family unit. Men do not seem to voice the security need of "being cared for" in the same way. I do know that the relationship improves dramatically when the man is aware of and attentive to this need.

4. To feel equal

My experience of women and equality in intimate relationships does not have so much to do with equal pay or any of the other issues of social inequality. Intimacy for women is more about having a partner, a real presence, someone willing to pitch in. For all of our progress in the area of liberation consciousness, women still tend to be the directors of the household, the keepers of everyone's appointments, the CEO's of family goings on. I've found that most women do not mind this. They just want to know they have a willing partner. Someone who is ready to help. Someone who notices the things that need to be done and is willing to cooperate in tasks. Women feel connected and cherished and secure simply by knowing their partner

really wants to "partner" with them in all things. Men should always be ready to ask "Is there something I can do to help you?"

5. To feel comfort

I come to the last ingredient for a woman to feel loved in an inverse way. I have noticed the extreme hurt that emerges when there is a negative life situation and comfort is not experienced. It is as though one of the ways the man is counted on as a provider is to be there and to provide comfort. Notice that there is no fixing required. Comfort is not an action so much as a presence, an awareness that a hurt has occurred. Men need to understand that this need is far more obvious to the woman than to the man. While underneath men need comfort just as much, they are not as conscious of the need and thus sometimes miss how pronounced this need is in the woman.

Your comments are always appreciated.

David and Donna

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QUOTES OF THE MONTH

**Spring is nature's way of saying, 'Let's party!'
Robin Williams**

**Spring has returned. The Earth is like a child
that knows poems. Rainer Maria Rilke**

**I want to do to you what spring does with the
cherry trees. Pablo Neruda**

**The best and most beautiful things in this
world cannot be seen or even heard,
but must be felt with the heart. Helen Keller**

**Real love stories never have endings. Richard
Bach**

**I love you not only for what you are,
but for what I am when I am with you.
I love you not only for what you have made of
yourself, but for what you are making of me.
I love you for the part of me that you bring
out. Elizabeth Barrett Browning**

**Two things you should NEVER say to the one
you love:
"I love you, but..." and "If you loved me, you
would..."
Should you really qualify love with conditions?**

**Come live in my heart, and pay no rent.
Samuel Lover**

**Saying "I Love You" is like a warm fuzzy, it
feels good for only a short while.
When you tell someone you love them by
doing something for them, the message will
mean much more and last longer.**

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

Sincerely,

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Issue: #95
April 2017



Dear Friends,

What a joy to have spring again! We love the warmth of the sun on our faces and dry, clear paths to walk together, holding hands and just letting conversation flow, or not. Somehow we appreciate nature more when we have been forced to stay indoors. And, those slow meandering walks help us to preserve the belief that we are exercising!

This Thought might challenge a previous held belief that all jealousy is bad. Read on and let me know what you think.

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Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

APRIL: Use Jealousy to Enhance Your Relationship

We usually think of jealousy as a bad thing in relationships. It creates suspicion and mistrust. We think of the jealous person as

one who is weak and insecure. It promotes disconnection and rupture.

What if there was another use for the term jealous? Just like the God of the Hebrews in the Old Testament is described over and over as a jealous God. It meant that God was very protective of the covenant with his people. That anything that came in between that mutual covenant (e.g. idols, false gods) was to be avoided.

What if a couple learned to jealously guard their relationship against exits and outside intrusions? What if a couple envisioned their relationship with a strong boundary around just the two of them?

I encourage couples toward this kind of jealous behavior. No encouragement like this was necessary in the romantic stage. A couple falling in love will say no to anything that does not promote their hormone enhanced experience. But things change as the "drugs" wear off, and the business of living comes to the fore. Time is occupied with making a career, building a house, dealing with extended family, raising children.

It is a stretch to continue to cherish the couple relationship above all else. We feel pushes and pulls in all kinds of directions. And yet this is exactly what is needed. It gets especially sticky when it comes to children.

I tell couples that the very best thing they can do for their kids is to do the Imago work in their own relationship. The kids will be the great benefactors, even if they don't name it or show it immediately. I've never had a client complain that their parents spent too much time nurturing their marriage.

So I encourage you to be bold in jealously defending your intimate relationship against

all outside threats, including children and their needs.

Terrence Real in his book, *The New Rules of Marriage*, has a wonderful final chapter on how to cherish your relationship by reclaiming your rights to have romantic time, to share just with each other

Your comments are always appreciated.

David and Donna

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QUOTES OF THE MONTH

We all have baggage, find someone who loves you enough to help you unpack.

Any man who can drive safely while kissing a pretty girl is simply not giving the kiss the attention it deserves. Albert Einstein

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

All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt. Charles M. Schulz

I love you so much I'd fight a bear for you.

Well not a grizzly bear because they have claws, and not a panda bear because they know Kung Fu... But a care bear, I'd definitely fight a care bear for you. Anonymous

He grabbed her hand and held it tightly, and she thought, "he loves me!" And he thought, "wow this sidewalk is icy!" Anonymous

Forget the butterflies, I feel the entire zoo in my stomach when I'm with you. Anonymous

I looked into my wallet and it was empty, I looked through all my pockets and they were all empty. Then I looked into my heart and I found you, and only then I figured out how rich I was. Anonymous

Beer is proof God Loves us and wants us to be happy. Anonymous

Some relationships are like Tom and Jerry, they argue and disagree all the time, but they still can't live without each other. Anonymous

The most important four words for a successful marriage: 'I'll do the dishes.' Anonymous

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

Sincerely,

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Issue: #96
May 2017



Dear Friends,

As our blood warms and thoughts turn to possible vacations, sleepy days by the shore or pool and relaxation, we hope you are anticipating some summer fun to come. We know that the weather hasn't really changed a lot in most areas and that we are all still at the daily grindstone and kiddos are still putting in the last days of school...but gosh! Summer is almost here! Enjoy the anticipation and for a few minutes, enjoy our video Thought this month.

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Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

**MAY: The Hidden Purpose of
Relationships**

**We have posted a great video on our
Facebook page. Visit (and while you are
there, "Like" the page) and enjoy!**

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Your comments are always appreciated.

David and Donna

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QUOTES OF THE MONTH

My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style. Maya Angelou

America is hope. It is compassion. It is excellence. It is valor. Paul Tsongas

Love and compassion are necessities, not luxuries. Without them humanity cannot survive. Dalai Lama

Happiness is having a large, loving, caring, close-knit family in another city. George Burns

The purpose of human life is to serve, and to show compassion and the will to help others. Albert Schweitzer

We need more kindness, more compassion,

more joy, more laughter. I definitely want to contribute to that. Ellen DeGeneres

Our task must be to free ourselves by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty. Albert Einstein

To succeed in life, you need three things: a wishbone, a backbone and a funny bone. Reba McEntire

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Issue: #97
June 2017



Dear Friends,

Summer is here and we are so ready! We look forward to lazy days and catching up with each other. That's right! Sometimes we are so busy with teaching, workshops and life, we miss out on the joys of sitting on the swing and just talking to each other. This Thought broaches that very subject and how we get things messed up so easily. Read, enjoy and maybe reach out to us if you need us!

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David (and Donna)

JUNE: Winning or Connecting

Are you in your Relationship to win or to connect? No, I'm serious. There is a difference. Many of the couples that I see are in a dance of seeking to win. I call them competitive couples. "I have it worse than you." "You never help around the house." "You don't take responsibility." "Why don't

**you like my family? I try to like yours."
"You're playing poker tonight? When do I
get a night out?" "You bought what?" "I'm
trying to work things out, but you never
want to deal with anything."**

**In one way or another the interactions for
many couples seem to revolve around the
idea that "I'm a better Partner in this
relationship than you." This is not
connecting! This is seeking to win. This is
NOT the path to Intimacy...that we all long
for. It can start out rather harmlessly.
Bantering and mild sarcasm can seem fun at
first. Competing around small things can be
fun to an extent.**

**As the romantic drugs wear off, the
competitive dance can take on more serious
forms. We can then be in a power struggle
that Hedy Schleifer calls the Survival Knot.
"As long as you are acting this way then I
need to act this way to defend myself and to
survive." And vice versa. We don't say this
out loud, but it is exactly the belief we build
our defenses around. If things progress to
an even deeper level we start seeking not
just to win but to get even. You'd be
surprised at how many couples move from
"connecting" to "getting even" EVEN as they
are going through "therapy."**

**Some people have such painful histories that
"getting even" or "winning" is very
understandable. (BECAUSE, as we
know....everyone makes sense if you have
enough information and it is not personal.)
Even so, it is just not productive and it is a
terrible strategy.**

**The goal, of course is connecting on a
joyfully alive level. The path to this goal is to
use 100% of your effort toward building a
safe space between the two of you no
matter what your partner is doing at any
particular time. There is no score keeping or
outcome expectations. (And, yes...it would
be a very lousy ball game. But it's NOT a**

game.) It is a living relationship with generosity of spirit and a withholding of blame and shame even if it might not be "deserved" in that moment. It is a spiritual journey of the deepest kind

Have a great connection!

David and Donna

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August 25-27, Frederick, MD

October 13-15, Frederick, MD

Next Step Workshop

September 9-10, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

Silence is one of the great arts of conversation. Marcus Tullius Cicero

A happy marriage is a long conversation which always seems too short. Andre Maurois

Summer is the annual permission slip to be lazy. To do nothing and have it count for something. To lie in the grass and count the stars. To sit on a branch and study the clouds. Regina Brett

A conversation is a dialogue, not a monologue. That's why there are so few good conversations: due to scarcity, two intelligent talkers seldom meet. Truman Capote

A lot of parents pack up their troubles and send them off to summer camp. Raymond

Duncan

Life always offers you a second chance. It's called tomorrow. Anonymous

For the best seat in the house, you'll have to move the dog. Anonymous

Silence is golden, unless you have kids, then silence is just plain suspicious. Anonymous

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

Sincerely,

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

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

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Issue: #98
July 2017



Dear Friends,

Communication! How many times a day do we hear this word used in some context: at work, on sports teams, between teens and parents, and most importantly, with couples? We all feel we are experts and ANYONE would be able to decipher the meaning of our communication, right? Once you attended the Getting the Love You Want workshop, you realized that communication, real communication is not easy! This Thought is a challenge and an invitation to you...hone those acquired communication skills, build on them and freshen your relationship at the same time. Please read on....

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Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

**JULY: An Invitation: "The Next Step,
Overcoming Reactivity"**

**This month we want to make an appeal to
those couples who have benefitted from the**

basic "Getting the Love You Want" workshop. (Which according to evaluations is virtually every couple.)

We created "The Next Step..." weekend to meet several strands of feedback we were hearing. One was the common concern that goes like this, "We learned a lot in the first workshop but when we get reactive with each other we still do not seem to know how to calm our relationship using the dialogue." A more general and similar concern goes like this, "We started out really well after the weekend, but we gradually slipped back into old habits and lost ground".

We felt compelled to come up with a shorter (two day) workshop that would help couples get "over the hump" in feeling confident in building a safe and lasting relationship of consciousness and satisfaction.

According to the following feedback after participating in our workshop, "The Next Step: Overcoming Reactivity," I think we have succeeded:

"This was exactly what we needed to build on the tools we learned in the first workshop. We were challenged to grow and heal and learn more, dig deeper, and work on our own stories and our story as a couple." KK

"I liked the workshop very much. I thought it was more relaxed than the first weekend but also very challenging and a great follow up. Thank you!" JB

"After 34 years of a good marriage, this workshop has given us the hope and the tools to make it a transformational marriage full of depth and passion." EK

"My amygdala feels better ..."GS

"...An extremely warm, safe environment during which couples have the capacity to

completely revolutionize their relationships. For couples in crisis, this can be life-changing. For those in a good marriage that need a boost of energy, or for those who simply want to love their partner in the deepest, most meaningful way possible, this workshop is incredibly valuable." CH

Donna and I simply want to appeal to some of you who are still hurting, who learned some things but need a refresher, who have found reactivity creeping back in...or maybe rushing back in. This is for those of you who are "believers" and may still need some reminders, review, and/or more.

You deserve to have a joyful and fully alive relationship. And we can help with that! Remember the feelings you had when you left the first workshop Sunday afternoon....hopeful, empowered, connected? Those are still available and still very real. You may just need a "refresher/tune-up." I know that when we went skiing for the first time I was intrigued by this new physical experience. I could see how it could be exhilarating. But you know what? I had to go back a second time to really feel like I could be a skier and to really feel satisfaction in the effort. I think this Imago work is similar.

A one-time experience provides the introduction/foundation but many still need a follow-up. "The Next Step..." weekend is more informal, more relaxed, more fun, and more effective in some ways in solidifying Imago concepts and tools. And it is a cool reunion with us, with others and with your own relationship.

Please call or email us to enroll for "The Next Step..." weekend September 9-10 or December 2-3. When our room is full we will cut off registrations.

Email us at info@connectingcouples.net or call (301-404-7711) to discuss the weekend

or any questions/concerns you may have.

We want to be there for you, our huge base of Imago believers...all the couples who are working to heal the Planet!

Have a great connection!

David and Donna

MARK YOUR CALENDARS...LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES
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QUOTES OF THE MONTH

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.
Tony Robbins

Communication leads to community, that is, to understanding, intimacy and mutual valuing. Rollo May

The most important thing in communication is hearing what isn't said. Peter Drucker

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

Don't tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on broken glass. Anton Chekhov

Write drunk; edit sober. Ernest Hemmingway

Science may never come up with a better office communication system than the coffee break. Earl Wilson

Of all of our inventions for mass communication, pictures still speak the most universally understood language. Walt Disney

When I'm bored, I send a text to a random number saying, "I hid the body... now what?"

Fill your paper with the breathings of your heart. William Wordsworth

I believe more in the scissors than I do in the pencil. Truman Capote

I always wanted to be somebody. Now I realize I should have been more specific. Lily Tomlin

The more articulate one is, the more dangerous words become. May Sarton

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

Sincerely,

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

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Issue: #99
August 2017



Dear Friends,

Love is in the air! At least it is at our place! In fact, Love is pretty much always in the air at the Bowman cottage...lucky us! Are you lucky to have Love in the air all the time? Or at least some of the time? If not, read the August Thought...it may just give you a few ideas. Oh, and I Love to hear from you. Let me know what you think!

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Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

AUGUST: Reflections on Love

When you think about Love, what do you think? Is it mostly an emotion? Is it an action? Is it a decision?

How about this? Is Love something you long for and wish to receive? Is that where your energy is around Love? Or is Love something you yearn to give?

Here is what I think. I think at the purely emotional level, we are all pretty selfish beings. We need, after all, to look out for our own survival. As infants we need someone to take care of us, at least...if not Love us. Even as adults, people who have no one who Loves them do not fare very well in this world. So at the purely emotionally selfish level, it is understandable that we confuse Love with someone doing something nice or helpful for us. Like cooking a meal...or buying us a car...or being affectionate with us. There is a very real hazard in confusing Love with what someone is doing or feeling for us.

I thought I was so in Love with Donna because in the beginning she wanted to play tennis with me on the weekends. She wasn't real good at it, but it didn't matter. She was meeting a need from deep in my childhood to have someone genuinely share in something that was fun for me. I felt Loved. Then, when the "novelty" of the tennis began to wear off for her, and she said, "I really don't want to play so often," I had an existential crisis. Does this mean the Love is not real? Because I feel hurt and disappointed, and surely Love should not result in hurt feelings.

See...I was basing the status of our Love on Donna's behavior. It is so tempting and natural to do this. If my Partner is nice to me, then I Love her and it means she Loves me. If she is not acting in the ways I feel Loved and behaving in ways that feel Loving to me, then our "Love" is in question. OK. How about this for a radical idea? What if you only thought of Love as the mission you are on regarding another? What if your energy is completely focused on what you are giving rather than what you are receiving? What if you are constantly thinking of ways to Love the Other...ways to extend yourself for the sake of the Other, as Scott Peck says?

There is no obligation in your Love, either way. You are looking for nothing in return. You Love because you want to. It is a pleasure. It's fun. There are no expectations in your Love. You do nice things in Love because you want to, not because you want something in return.

Your Love is totally generous and compassionate. If your Partner fails at Love, it does not stop your flow of Love and compassion. It simply makes you curious. Your Love is responsible. You are a mature human who takes ownership for all your actions.

Your Love is always kind. When you get afraid you do not mask it with anger, but you report your vulnerability in a kind way. Your Love is unconditional. You Love your Partner for "no particular reason" as Forest Gump was so fond of saying. (Come to think of it, the fictional Gump character was a terrific study in Love.) And you certainly don't expect to change another.

Give this essay some thought as to how you are thinking of Love in your life. Let me know what you think. *And sign up for our Dec 2-3 second level workshop. We'll take you to new heights in your relationship.*

David and Donna

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QUOTES OF THE MONTH

We all have baggage, find someone who loves you enough to help you unpack. Anonymous

Love is when the other person's happiness is more important than your own. H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

All you need is love. But a little chocolate now and then doesn't hurt. Charles M. Schulz

Friends show their love in times of trouble, not in happiness. Euripides

There is no love without forgiveness, and there is no forgiveness without love. Bryant H. McGill

The greatest healing therapy is friendship and love. Hubert H. Humphrey

I love you so much I'd fight a bear for you. Well not a grizzly bear because they have claws, and not a panda bear because they know Kung Fu... But a care bear, I'd definitely fight a care bear for you. Anonymous

Unconditional love really exists in each of us. It is part of our deep inner being. It is not so much an active emotion as a state of being. It's not 'I love you' for this or that reason, not 'I love you if you love me.' It's love for no reason, love without an object. Ram Dass

Any man who can drive safely while kissing a pretty girl is simply not giving the kiss the attention it deserves. Albert Einstein

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

Sincerely,

David and Donna Bowman

Bowman & Associates, PA

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

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Issue: #100
September 2017



Dear Friends,

Finally, the long, hot and climate-challenged summer is over! Our thoughts and prayers continue for all of those who have been touched by the hurricanes, floods and disasters. Life is so uncertain...love, love, love one another.

This is our 100th Thought of the Month! WOW! I was once asked if I would have difficulty coming up with a Thought full of fresh ideas each month. I guess the answer is "No!" I have ideas bubbling up in my brain and you, dear friends, my family and those whose lives touch ours continue to inspire me...here's to the next 100!

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Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

SEPTEMBER: The Tale of Four Marriages

First, let's consider the marriage of my parents. Carl and Vera Bowman grew up in a

rural farming community in the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. They attended the same grade school, the same high school, the same church (which was the same church that their parents and grandparents had attended before them.) My father's sister married my mother's brother and one of my father's other sisters married one of my mother's other brothers. These people didn't get out much! Their wedding consisted of them dropping in to the Pastor's home one Sunday afternoon and saying "I do." No license required. (No driver's license was required back then either.)

They were happy I suppose, but as their marriage evolved, happiness was not a prerequisite. Their commitment was a pragmatic alliance from having made the choice of each other; they simply belonged together. My father provided income and my mother provided a home. That's it! No talk of "He's not emotionally available" (Even though he wasn't.) No talk of her needing to help with income. (She never did.) "They didn't need no stinkin' counseling!!" They died in love with each other.

Next, let's consider the typical first marriage that might occur currently. Things have changed. First, the couple is probably much older than my parents were; most likely in their mid to late twenties or even older. They both have had several serious relationships before falling in love with each other. And, clearly, they are deeply in love and deeply committed to each other and to their relationship. They will probably expect the traditional provisions of marriage—security, respect, material success, and children. But they will also probably expect so much more.

She may want him to listen deeply to her feelings and for him to share from the center of his soul. She may expect him to be an equal participant in all things domestic, such as cooking, cleaning, childcare (if children.)

And, of course, to be a tender and sensitive lover. He may expect her to contribute equally to the income, to advance in her career, to be the executive director of the household, to go through pregnancies (if children) and, of course, to be a sexy and available lover.

Who can possibly fulfill all the expectations we have come up with in modern love life? What a contrast from the simplicity of my parents' deal with each other.

Now, the third marriage. I was invited by my son to spend a week with him in Dubai when he had a business trip to this unique place. We were invited to dinner with his Indian colleague and his wife. She cooked some delicious traditional Indian dishes which I'll never forget. Over dinner she finally got around to asking me "What do you do for work?" "I'm a marriage counselor" was my reply. "A what?" "Well, I'm a person who helps people have a better experience in their marriage." Her reply surprised me: "What do they need that for?" This opened up the discussion of their marriage which was arranged (although she did say that she sort of had a right of refusal.) She went on to say "We don't always please each other, but we would never think of not being married or needing a stranger to help us."

Now, the fourth marriage. A good friend of mine recently shared with me her joy of being in a new relationship of several years after an earlier failed marriage of many years. They are making plans for retirement down the road and enjoying life together in a rather exotic location. Dumb me asked her about the M word and she quickly said that neither of them saw any need for that. All righty then! She is voicing the current trend of people young and old away from the institution of marriage and to a covenant, nevertheless, to be partners in life.

I believe we now live in a society where

more people are unmarried than are married. A good 30% of the couples who attend our workshop are not married. Like all things, there are more choices in intimate relationships than ever before. And along with all these choices, the expectations of our intimate relationships, whether married or not, have risen to epic proportions. Maybe it is a good time to practice grace and compassion and some generosity of spirit. And with Imago there is hope for us all.

Your comments on my thoughts are always wonderful to read.

Don't forget the "Overcoming Reactivity" second level workshop on Dec 2-3. We may fill this one and you can register here: [Overcoming Reactivity](#)

Happy Fall!

David

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QUOTES OF THE MONTH

I now pronounce you man and wife, you may now change your Facebook status.

Anonymous

If you want your wife to listen to you, then talk to another woman; she will be all ears.
Sigmund Freud

The most important four words for a successful marriage: 'I'll do the dishes.'
Anonymous

Marriage is the bond between a person who never remembers anniversaries and another who never forgets them. **Ogden Nash**

I looked into my wallet and it was empty, I looked through all my pockets and they were all empty. Then I looked into my heart and I found you, and only then I figured out how rich I was. **Anonymous**

Stop! You're under arrest for being too sexy. Your sentence is an eternity inside my heart.
Anonymous

Keep your eyes wide open before marriage, half shut afterwards. **Benjamin Franklin**

Our love is like a train with no brakes, unstoppable. **Anonymous**

Being married means mostly shouting "What?" from other rooms. **Anonymous**

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

Sincerely,

David and Donna Bowman
Bowman & Associates, PA

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Issue: #101
October 2017



Dear Friends,

Fall is such a pretty time of the year at our place. We love walking down the road, crunching leaves under our feet and anticipating a crackling fire at the end of our trek. This is also a good time to catch our breath before the flurry of holiday activities are upon us and to re-connect. Yes! We do that too....take time for us. I suggest you think about this also. When was the last time you took a walk with your partner? Had a quiet cup of coffee for just the two of you? Maybe it's time!

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Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

**OCTOBER: From Judgment
to Freedom**

**It is no wonder that couples can easily get
locked into a pattern of judgment and blame**

with each other. We learn about judgment at a very early age.

Imagine a two year old boy playing in his room with his newest discovery...a box of crayons. He first takes out one crayon at a time. But how much more fun to dump all 16 crayons out on the carpet at once. That way he can pick anyone he wants. He is also feeling restricted to just color on one page of the book. How much more exciting would it be to use the great big white wall to explore colors and figures? He discovers new freedom and joy. He is playing.

Enter his mother. If she has had a frustrating day at work or is in a power struggle with his father, she may have a lot of negative feelings about this mess on the wall. She will convey those feelings to the boy one way or another. She may take away his new treasure....the crayons. She may even spank him.

To the boy everything has changed and he is confused. This person who holds him and cuddles him and protects him and shows him warm love, has now turned on him in a mean way. He is being punished and he has no idea why. His freedom to be himself has been eroded a bit. It is no longer safe to be himself and to play exactly the way he wants.

As he grows the list of "judgers" expands. His freedom to be himself may be further eroded at school or with other relatives. He learns to judge himself before getting into more trouble.

Ok. I can hear some of you saying "What is wrong with a spanking? This is how we learn to behave" or "Are you saying to let a kid do anything he wants?" or " There are natural disciplines we need to learn as humans."

I agree that learning is going on here. But the learning I am describing right now is the

learning that others are not completely safe and unconditional. That not everything about us will bring positive attention. And we will adapt. Some will adapt by staying out of the way and avoiding any chance of judgment. Others will adapt by taking on the "Judgers" and fighting back.

Fast forward to adulthood. Even though the wife loves her husband, she feels discounted when he comes home late and doesn't call to tell her. Now here is the important part. She will likely respond to her husband the very way she learned to respond to being discounted as a kid. She may just cry, or she might be enraged. She may threaten to run away.

And the husband, upon receiving this "judgment," will, in return, respond with his own arsenal of defenses that he learned growing up. And the scene gets uglier and uglier, even though these are two beautiful people who have a Space of love and connection between them. (And, of course, if they have children, then there are little ones witnessing as a way of handling their future emotional wounds.)

No wonder we think that our Partner is the source of our grief and hurt and disappointment.

It seems in each incident that it just has to be "their" fault. And then after a pattern of these slights or judgments going back and forth, we form a narrative that our Partner is out to get us...to criticize...to blame...to clam up...to withhold.

Let me invite you to consider where this blame and judgment originated in each of us. And to further consider how we learned to judge back or to otherwise cope with our wounds in order to survive. This is the illusory satisfaction of "getting even". Let me further invite you to the relief and spectacular freedom of putting energy into

your own story, realizing that you are no longer that helpless child. And that you can learn new and positive (though vulnerable) ways to communicate your desire for joyful connection with your Partner. Of course the Imago workshops or some Imago coaching can really help you back on track if you've jumped the rails for a spell.

As always I welcome your comments or feedback.

Happy Fall!

David

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QUOTES OF THE MONTH

**"Autumn is the hardest season. The leaves are all falling, and they're falling like they're falling in love with the ground."
Andrea Gibson**

"But when fall comes, kicking summer out on its treacherous ass as it always does one day

sometime after the midpoint of September, it stays awhile like an old friend that you have missed. It settles in the way an old friend will settle into your favorite chair and take out his pipe and light it and then fill the afternoon with stories of places he has been and things he has done since last he saw you." Stephen King, 'Salem's Lot

"Fall is my favorite season in Los Angeles, watching the birds change color and fall from the trees." David Letterman

"Don't you love New York in the fall? It makes me want to buy school supplies. I would send you a bouquet of newly sharpened pencils if I knew your name and address." Nora Ephron

"Love the trees until their leaves fall off, then encourage them to try again next year." Chad Sugg

**"I would rather sit on a pumpkin, and have it all to myself, than be crowded on a velvet cushion."
Henry David Thoreau**

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

Sincerely,

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

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Issue: #102
November 2017



Dear Friends,

I love November! I like the fact that I have 30 days in a month that is designated for Thanksgiving to express my own gratitude for the little things and the big things in my life. One of the big things for Donna and I is the absolute awe that we have to be able to work every day to strengthen our own partnership and to help strengthen and nurture the partnerships of those who come to us. The workshops, the conversations, the calls, emails and texts, the little things, all give us joy and opportunities to be Thankful.

If we haven't said it as much as we should, please know we are thankful for each of You♥

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Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

**NOVEMBER: Men Behaving Well...The
Forgotten Many**

It is really great in this pivotal moment in our cultural history that some groups of people are finally getting the attention they deserve. The one group is men who, for whatever reason, have been entitled to behave very badly toward women. The other group is the vast number of women who, until now, have not had the cultural support to voice the indignations of the sexual power abuses that have been foisted upon them by these men. One can only wonder where we will evolve as this social scourge continues to be brought to light.

This essay represents my need as a man to honor and admire the vast majority of men who are being left out of this national conversation.

I honor and admire the many men who would never consider actually touching a woman sexually anywhere against her will. (Fantasies are one thing; actual abuse is another.)

I honor and admire the many men who can learn even from their committed partner that groping and any other demeaning behavior is not loving.

I honor and admire the many men who no longer engage in locker room talk, even in the locker room. (It was cool in college. NO MORE!)

I honor and admire the many men who actually respect their partner's sexual desire timetable and seek to talk through any discrepancy.

I honor and admire the many men who genuinely seek their partner's pleasure as much as their own.

I honor and admire the many men who believe women when they courageously come forth with the truth they have been

shamed into hiding. (Do you know how rare false claims of abuse are?)

I honor and admire the many men who celebrate the drive for more women in power.

I honor and admire the many men who right now are ashamed of some unfair behavior they have done with some woman in the past. (We've all done something...not necessarily sexual!)

I honor and admire the many men who are confused right now about what behavior is friendly and appropriate and what behavior is beyond.

I honor and admire the many men who are willing to listen to their partner for the answer to the previous item.

I honor and admire the many men who truly want to know how to respect and cherish their partner.

I honor and admire the many men who want their sons to be completely free of the gray confusion of this national conversation. And who want their daughters to be safe from even having to think about being abused.

***Note:* This essay is very personal for me and for the many men who relate to every one of the points above.**

Your feedback will be so welcomed.

David

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February 3-4, 2018, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"Gratitude is a currency that we can mint for ourselves, and spend without fear of bankruptcy." Fred De Witt Van Amburgh

"The way to develop the best that is in a person is by appreciation and encouragement." Charles Schwab

"He is a wise man who does not grieve for the things which he has not, but rejoices for those which he has." Epictetus

**"The world has enough beautiful mountains and meadows, spectacular skies and serene lakes. It has enough lush forests, flowered fields, and sandy beaches. It has plenty of stars and the promise of a new sunrise and sunset every day. What the world needs more of is people to appreciate and enjoy it."
Michael Josephson**

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

"Let us rise up and be thankful, for if we didn't learn a lot today, at least we learned a little, and if we didn't learn a little, at least we didn't get sick, and if we got sick, at least we didn't die; so, let us all be thankful." Buddha

**"Silent gratitude isn't very much to anyone."
Gertrude Stein**

**"Gratitude and attitude are not challenges;
they are choices." Robert Braathe**

**"When I started counting my blessings, my
whole life turned around." Willie Nelson**

**"This a wonderful day. I've never seen this
one before." Maya Angelou**

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

Sincerely,

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

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

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

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Issue: #103
December 2017



Dear Friends,

Donna and I wish you all a wonderful, joyous and love filled holiday season. It seems as if everyone is rushed and we hear the words "stressed out" a lot, but at the same time, there is magic in the air! Our hope for you is to re-live the happy holiday memories from your childhood when all was joy and anticipation. Take a step back in time and enjoy the here-and-now, just like your kiddos do--they have the right idea!

This February we will be holding our favorite workshop on parenting. If you haven't been to one and have children in your lives, I highly encourage you to join us!

Let me know if you have any questions.

[Be Sure to "Like" Us on Facebook!](#)

Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

DECEMBER: Principles of Conscious and Connected Parenting

We have shared our principles for a fully alive intimate relationship from Imago theory.

This month I will share with you our Principles of Conscious & Connected Parenting from Imago theory.

1. Honor the Space between you and your children.

The goal is safe connection. Decide to nurture and cleanse the space. Admit to your part of the pollution when you become aware of it.

2. Work on making sense of your own childhood story.

This is important for providing healthy development for your children. Often it is where we had difficulties as children that we experience difficulties in parenting.

3. Honor your childrens' need to be validated.

Kids are the least validated persons in the world. Many conflicts are dissolved once the child feels validated for their thoughts and feelings. *Remember:* validation is not agreement or permission!

4. Welcome discipline as part of your job. Your children need guidance and protection. They expect and even count on discipline to keep them safe. The discipline you provide needs to be what they need rather than what you need. Discipline is about natural consequences...NOT punishment. Punishment is about power. Natural consequences is about accountability.

5. Celebrate your relationship and growth with your partner in plain view of your children.

This is the strongest model they will ever have for their own successful relationship.

6. Develop a network for your children. Help your children develop a network of adults they can count on or call when you are not available OR when they don't want to call you. Have them tell you the 5 - 10 people they will call when they need help and do not want to call you.

7. Own and share your own vulnerability (in age appropriate ways, of course) with your children, including your mistakes.

Admitting your imperfections and asking for a "do-over" is an awesome example and an opportunity for repair and connection with your children.

Given your requests, we are again offering a *"Conscious and Connected Parenting"* weekend February 3-4, 2018.

We hope you will take advantage of this one of a kind workshop that employs the Imago understanding of relationships as a way of creating a safer and more joyful parenting relationship with your children..., of course, your Partner. This weekend is applicable to parents of children of all ages, even adults.

Register at [Conscious and Connected Parenting](#) or just call me at 301-404-7711. We are limited to ten couples.

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 5-7, 2018, Frederick, MD

February 9-11, 2018, Frederick, MD

March 16-18, 2018

Next Step Workshop

April 21-22, 2018, Frederick, MD

Parenting Workshop

February 3-4, 2018, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"Every book is a children's book if he can read." Mitch Hedberg

"A characteristic of the normal child is he doesn't act that way very often."

There Are Only Two Things A Child Will Share Willingly, Communicable Diseases And His Mother'S Age. Benjamin Spock

"It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men." Frederick Douglass

"Little girls are cute and small only to adults. To one another they are not cute. They are life-sized." Margaret Atwood

"Children find everything in nothing; men find nothing in everything." Giacomo Leopardi

"Kids: they dance before they learn there is anything that isn't music." William Stafford

"Children are the living messages we send to a time we will not see." John W. Whitehead

"In America there are two classes of travel - first class, and with children." Robert Benchley

"A child can ask questions that a wise man cannot answer."

"Children are the anchors that hold a mother to life." Sophocles

"What is a home without children? A quiet one" Henny Youngman

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

Sincerely,

**David and Donna Bowman
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