



Connecting
Couples

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Thought of the Month News and Notes

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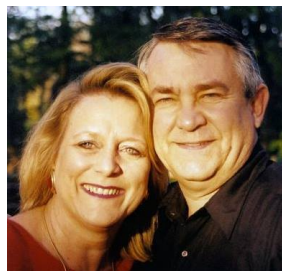
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Dear Friends,

Summer is almost here and I hope you are looking forward to a little more quiet time and maybe a lot more time with your partner. These times are fraught with danger...a simple question can lead to major misunderstandings. I preach a lot about this so please, read this Thought and let me know if it helps!

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Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

MAY: Let's Clear Something Up

I feel like a broken record. I have preached often on the theme of the big misunderstanding between men and women in their relationship. But because I keep seeing this theme played out, I fear that many have slept through my sermons.

Here I go again!

Often, the scenario of conflict in intimate relationships has to do with misunderstandings. The misunderstanding goes like this: David tends to feel that when Donna expresses any hint of dissatisfaction with the relationship that she is setting out to criticize him. He reacts badly to being criticized (see childhood story,) When he reacts with anger or silence, Donna interprets his action as disconnecting and as unloving. She ramps up her emotional investment in getting him to really "hear" her. David now forms the narrative that his wife is either crazy or contemptuous. She picks this up as meaning she can never have her "voice" about seeking to make things better for herself (see childhood story.) She then shuts down in grief or raises the emotional intensity even more.

A real example of this scenario was a number of years ago when David and Donna had a car whose engine gave up the ghost. The car people suggested that maybe the oil had not been changed as much as required. (Guess who changes the oil!) On the way home in the new car Donna innocently asked, "Did you remember to change the oil regularly?" (If there are hundreds of men reading this and blowing their own gaskets, then I'm on the right track.) David said nothing but inside was building an urge to drive the both of them into a tree. (While probably not changing oil exactly on the manual's time line, David felt that his maintenance was probably no worse than average.)

David felt so disrespected to be questioned this second time about his competence (see childhood story again.) Donna was surprised that her question was seen as critical as she was just seeking information that would help

their life be safer and less problematic (see childhood story again.)

Once again, the sermon:

Men- you have got to understand that women are always seeking to be safely connected in the relationship and longing to be cherished as a desired partner in that connection. When you experience her as nagging or criticizing or contemptuous or anxious or crazy, it is most likely because she does not feel safe in that connection and not because she hates you or wishes you harm or disrespect.

Women- you have got to understand that men want, above all else, to have you be happy with them. Any sign of your unhappiness can trigger feelings of doubt and shame. When you experience him as reacting in anger or shutting down, it is most likely because he does not feel respected for trying his best to provide you with that happiness.

I know this is a dreadful cycle, but it is so, so real.

If you have read this, have a sit down with each other and dig out the morsels of truth in it for your relationship.

As always, we welcome your responses to this thought or to any other concern. If you want a face time session, or an intensive, we can arrange it.

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

June 1-3, 2018, Frederick, MD

July 20-22, 2018 Frederick, MD

August 24-26, 2018, Frederick, MD

Next Step Workshop

September 15-16, 2018, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"Any fool can know. The point is to understand." Albert Einstein

"Understanding is the first step to acceptance, and only with acceptance can there be recovery." J.K. Rowling, Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire

"Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves." C.G. Jung

"Just because you don't understand it doesn't mean it isn't so." Lemony Snicket, The Blank Book

"Rabbit's clever," said Pooh thoughtfully.

"Yes," said Piglet, "Rabbit's clever."

"And he has Brain."

"Yes," said Piglet, "Rabbit has Brain."

There was a long silence.

"I suppose," said Pooh, "that that's why he never understands anything." A.A. Milne, Winnie-the-Pooh

"Don't you understand that we need to be childish in order to understand? Only a child sees things with perfect clarity, because it hasn't developed all those filters which

prevent us from seeing things that we don't expect to see." Douglas Adams, Dirk Gently's Holistic Detective Agency

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

Sincerely,

**David and Donna Bowman
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