

The Couples Connection

What's Cooking?

Written By Sarah Lee LMFT—Program Director

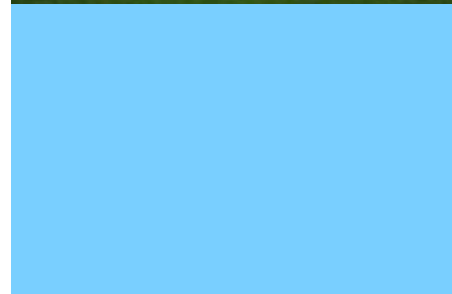
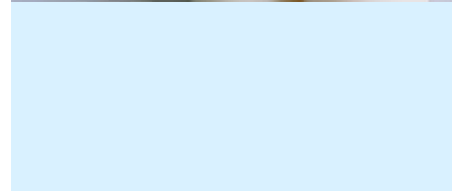
How do couples last? We at Healthy Marriages get asked this question often. While there are many elements of a lasting relationship, one aspect is maintaining a spark in the relationship. Any couple who has been together for any length of time knows that while we all have the best of intentions, life makes it difficult for us to keep a spark in the relationship. It is easy to fall into routines and habits. We have the kids to take to practice and work demands a lot from us, not to mention how predictable we all can become. For many there seems to be a slow slide into "doing what we have always done." But for a relationship to last there must be a balance between routine and spontaneity. As the saying goes, variety is the spice of life. Without variety, often there is not a lot of life to the relationship.

When I think of spice, I think of hotness or fire. Fire is also a great analogy for the relationship. Fire is one of the four classical elements of ancient Greek philosophy. Qualities commonly associated with fire include energy, assertiveness, and passion. A flame starts as a small spark, but within minutes it can be a roaring fire. The same is true in our relationships. One small spark can lead to lots of passion and life.

We at Healthy Marriages have been working on expanding our program to create a little variety or "spice" if you will. We are exploring fresh new topics, presented in a variety of new ways to help couples continually learn and grow in their relationship. Our marketing efforts have stretched to include Facebook, and we are currently working on developing video testimonies to get the word out about our services. We are continuing to explore new relationships with partnering organizations in the community and faith-groups to help extend our reach to all couples in New Mexico.

As we look forward in anticipation to the New Year, we are so grateful for our accomplishments for the first quarter of this fiscal year. So far we have reached over 100 couples in our advanced 6-week services. The demand has greatly increased as the word has spread about our services. We couldn't have done it without all the volunteers; administrative volunteers, video testimony participants and amazing Wise Couples willing to share their time and talents.

The staff at Healthy Marriages remains passionate about our work. We hope that you will make it a priority to add a little variety and spice into your relationship by attending one of our upcoming events.



Save The Date...

Saturday, April 17, 2009

Our annual Super Seminar will feature
National Finances Educator,
Syble Solomon

More details inside...

If you wish to be taken off the mailing list, please contact Silvia Pacheco @ 888-892-4250



Statewide education and support, provided in English and Spanish,
to strengthen the relationships of engaged, married and committed couples.

The Healthy Marriages Team

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Wise Couple Corner • Being Flexible for Passion

Written By Gabriel Gonzalez-Camargo, MDiv., M.A. Training Coordinator

Throughout my years as a relationship educator—and trying to build a better relationship of my own every day, I've found that getting the best for you and your partner takes action. Early in my adulthood and after experiencing stress-related back pain I learned that stretching gives us flexibility and along with it the ability to move freely. Stretching is not easy; it takes some effort from us. Sometimes it is difficult and painful (try some intense yoga exercises and you'll see what I am talking about). Today we even have places or websites that offer help in learning to stretch our minds; to be open to learn new things, to change the routine of our day, and so on.

In relationships we need to learn to stretch as well. It may be comfortable to stay where we are but that may not be what is best for us. Isn't it refreshing to hear people that display openness and flexibility and willingness to entertain new ideas? It could be the difference between life and death (being bored to death). I know a couple that has been married for many years—although they are not as young as they used to be, they have taken on the challenge of learning how to operate a computer. Their main motivating factor was sending or receiving pictures and emails. Certainly, this new skill will help them to accomplish this, and even more things: surfing the internet; chat rooms, visit sites where people connect, and so on. However the interesting point to me was that this same couple was not open to learning more about their relationship, they weren't interested in developing new approaches to have a better time together.

One of the factors missing in many relationships, even Wise Couple relationships, is passion. I did not say love because most of the time couples love each other but passion isn't present. One dictionary defines passion as "that emotion applied to a very strong feeling about a person". Love might be there; but that emotion and that very strong feeling toward the other are missing. How to recover the passion? Here are a few ways that come to my mind:

- First, acknowledge as a couple that passion is missing. It is important for both partners to recognize this lack since it is both who need to work together to recoup it.
- Second, be flexible and open to explore new things in your life as a couple. This for sure requires an extra effort (this is the stretching part) from each partner. Once the couple experiments these new things, such as new activities or new approaches to different matters, they will harvest the "hidden benefits" of being flexible.
- And third, take action. Unless we take action we are not going to be able to enjoy the benefits. This action plan requires that both partners work to ensure that things happen. Remember, we don't have to be perfect; we just need to try and do our best.



ANNOUNCING SUPER SEMINAR 2010! Syble Solomon • Saturday, April 17, 2010

- Is money the root of all upheaval?
- Have you ever been frustrated when your partner forgets to enter a check or pay a bill?
- Would you rather watch a bad sitcom than talk about your budget?

April 17th is your chance to look at money in a whole new way! Discover how your relationship with money affects your relationship with your loved one. Nationally acclaimed speaker and educator, Syble Solomon will make it easier for couples to talk about money, especially in these rough times.

In this interactive presentation, you will use a unique deck of Money Habitudes cards to discover your own money habits and attitudes (habitudes). See how they influence the way you and your partner approach money issues and make (or don't make!) money decisions. You may be surprised at how your cards fit together.

...further details will be posted in the next newsletter

When details are finalized, you can also be notified immediately by sending an email to:
pvandever@samaritancc.com



Tips For Two • New Year's Resolutions for Couples

Written By Hillary Bravo, MA



The New Year provides us with the perfect opportunity to take stock of our lives – examine how things are going, strive for healthier habits, maybe set some new goals. Whether you have been dating for a few months, or married for 20 years, relationships require work. Here are 5 New Year's Resolutions every couple should consider making. Hopefully these will get you thinking and you can come up with some of your own.

We resolve to work on our communication. Pay attention to how you talk with one another. Validate each other's feelings. Really listen to your partner.

We resolve to pay attention to each other's needs. If you are communicating clearly, this should not be too difficult. Pay attention to where your partner is coming from and how they are feeling. Remember, neither of you are mind readers (right?) so communicate to your partner what your needs are.

We resolve to put some romance back in the relationship. You've probably tried this before, this year – bring back date night. It's too easy to slip into the same routine week after week. Set aside a few hours a week to spend time with your loved one. Why not go to a coffee shop and reminisce about your early days as a couple?

We resolve to establish a new tradition. Traditions hold us together and give our lives shared meaning. Create a tradition that works for you. It may be formal, casual, silly, or serious and it should reflect your personality as a couple.

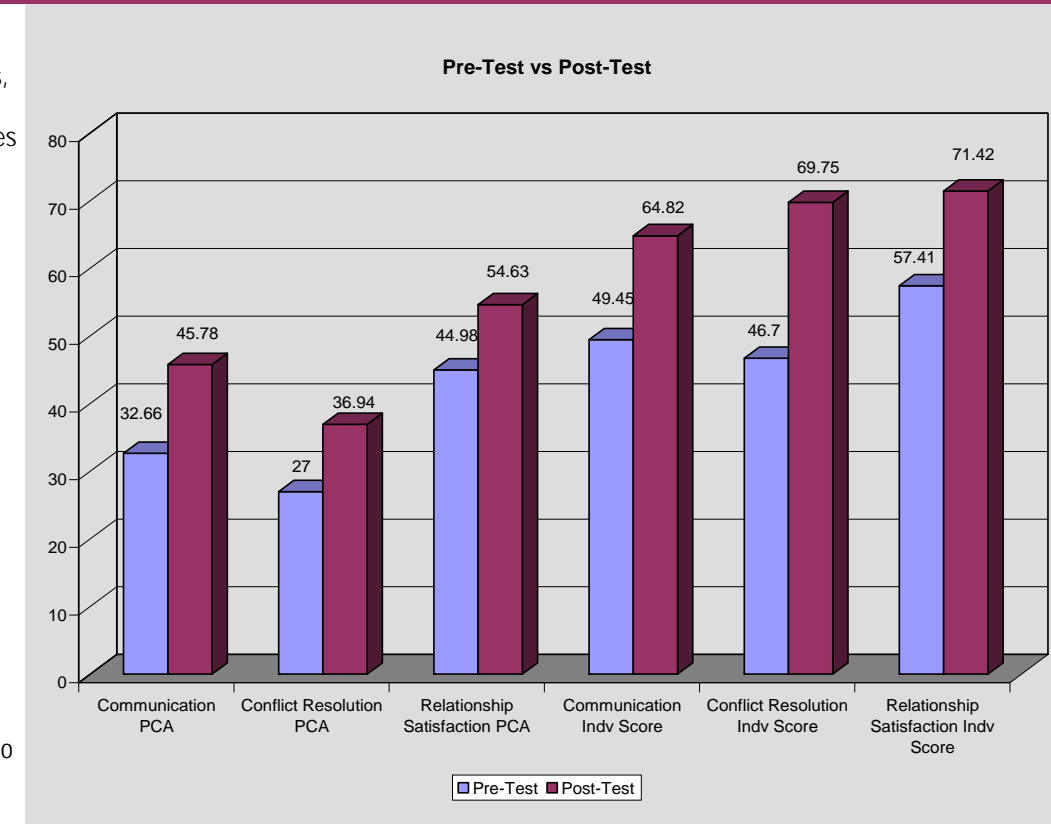
We resolve to exercise together. Exercise releases feel good chemicals in the brain that make you feel energized and balanced. If you can exercise as a couple, even better – this may give you a chance to talk and connect in a new way.

PREPARE-ENRICH RESEARCH FINDINGS

When couples go through mentoring, classes, or groups, they use a curriculum called Prepare-Enrich. This program teaches couples skills such as healthy communication and conflict resolution. Our hope is that couples who go through this curriculum will have increased satisfaction in their relationship.

Recently, Prepare-Enrich ran pre and post tests on 728 couples who have gone through our Healthy Marriages programming to determine two things: 1. Did "positive couple agreement" - that is how much the couple agrees on something - improve; and 2. Did individual relationship satisfaction improve?

The findings, in the graph to the right, show that individual relationship satisfaction and positive couple agreement improved in the areas of communication, conflict resolution, and overall couple satisfaction. This shows that a small investment in time of participants in Healthy Marriages programming can lead to a big increase in relationship satisfaction.



2010 Upcoming Events

Keep the Flame Burning In Your Relationship



JANUARY

- ♥ Dinner & Dance Night For Wise Couples Saturday, January 9
4:00 PM to 6:30 PM Healthy Marriages Classroom
Albuquerque, NM

- ♥ 6-Week Couple Class Series Beginning January 13
Tuesday Nights-6 sessions 6:30 PM to 8:30 PM Healthy Marriages Classroom
Albuquerque, NM
*Register By Jan. 4th

- ♥ 6-Week Couple Class Series Beginning January 21
Thursday Nights-6 sessions 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM Santa Maria de la Paz Church
Santa Fe, NM

- ♥ Wise Couple Training Friday, January 22
6:00 PM to 9:00 PM Catholic Center
Albuquerque, NM
Saturday, January 23
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM *Register by Jan. 15th

FEBRUARY

- ♥ "Secrets to Love" Couple Seminar Thursday, February 25
6:45 PM to 8:30 PM Healthy Marriages Classroom
Albuquerque, NM

MARCH

- ♥ Emotional Intelligence Seminar Thursday, March 25
6:45 PM to 8:30 PM Healthy Marriages Classroom
Albuquerque, NM

- ♥ Wise Couple Training Friday, March 5
6:00 PM to 9:00 PM Location TBA
Saturday, March 6 Albuquerque, NM
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM *Register by Feb. 26th

Registration is required for all Healthy Marriages opportunities listed above. **Space is limited.**
Please call our office to register and for more information: (505) 247-1511 or at 1-888-892-4250



Healthy Marriages Presents...

The Premiere Seminars

YOU ASKED FOR THEM, YOU GOT THEM! You have asked for more intriguing topics and we have got them for you! We will feature various topics throughout the 2010 year in our “**Premiere Seminars**”. These seminars are exclusive and limited with unique topics that are not a part of our ongoing program curriculum. Whether you’re dating, engaged, or married, the **Premiere Seminars** are for ALL couples.

February 25th, 6:45pm-8:30pm, SECRETS TO LOVE—View a compelling documentary about relationships, marriage, and of course, love. Learn how to make your relationship last a lifetime. Includes interviews with real-life couples and relationships experts. Engage in discussion after the film.

March 25th, 6:45pm-8:30pm, EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE FOR COUPLES—Has your emotional connection waned? (or have you lost that emotional connection with your partner?) Learn new skills to reconnect emotionally and improve that emotional connection the two of you share.

April 17th, (time and location TBA) SUPER SEMINAR WITH SYBLE SOLOMON—This is your chance to look at money in a whole new way! Discover how your relationship with money affects your relationship with your loved one. Nationally acclaimed speaker and educator, Syble Solomon will make it easier for couples to talk about money, especially in these rough times.

February 25th and March 25th Premiere Seminars are **FREE** and will be held at:
The Healthy Marriages Classroom, 217, Locust St. NE, Albuquerque, NM
Refreshments will be provided

SPACE IS LIMITED, please register early for the date (s) you would like to attend.
(505) 247-1511

