



Connecting
Couples

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Thought of the Month News and Notes

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Dear Friends,

We just returned from New Orleans and got an energy boost: Imago positivity and Creole jazz! Such a fun and unique combination! One cannot be sitting on the sidelines when revitalized by the thinking of Harville Hendrix and Helen Hunt.

A change in environment, sounds, smells, energy--all of these are both thought-provoking and when we are open to it, able to tweak our complacency and open us to the experience. For us, the experience was both challenging and affirming! We challenge you and your partner to try a new "take" on positivity this month as well take a trip in your mind. If you cannot get away from your normal environment (like a fun trip to New Orleans) maybe change a little something in your day-to-day view--re-arrange furniture, create a little nook to escape and dream, step away from the everyday chaos and try something new. If mornings are chaotic, take the family out to an early breakfast or donuts during the work/school week. Yes! During the week! Watch to see how family members and your partner are re-vitalized, at least in the short-term. Read on for our challenge for the month.

We have two open spaces for our Next Step Workshop on November 16-17. If this is not a good time for you, perhaps a friend and his or her partner would benefit. Be sure to let them know.

See the links below and on the side panel.

I hope you have "liked" us on Facebook and encouraged friends and family to do so also. Please share our "Thought" with those who may be interested--you never know when your thoughtful "share" makes the difference in a couple's life and relationship!

As always, if you need us, just call.

Donna and David

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OCTOBER: The Zero Negativity Challenge

Having just returned from the Imago conference in New Orleans, I will share with you the latest thinking of our founders, Harville Hendrix and Helen Hunt. They are currently practicing zero negativity in relationship as a way of promoting healing and growth.

I'll explain. You decide. The idea of the Zero Negativity Challenge is to agree to take negativity out of your Relationship each day for one month. Negativity is any negative comment or behavior...any critical comment or behavior...any devaluing comment or behavior. In short, anything that is experienced by your Partner as negative is deemed as negative. Notice the determination of negativity resides with your Partner. So the statement, "I wasn't meaning to criticize" is of no use. It's all about what your Partner experiences as negative.

Now...how will you know? It's very simple. The person who experiences something as negative simply says, "Ouch!" Then the Partner who created the "Ouch" has a chance to ask for a "Do Over." This is a second chance to move whatever was negative to an expression of Connection and Abundance. (None of this should sound new to anyone reading this as Donna and I have been preaching "Do Overs" in our workshops for years.)

So, for one month, commit to "no negativity" each day and then evaluate it. (AND, if your Partner is not in a place to participate....trust me....eliminating your contribution of negativity in your relationship is still transforming!) If there was no negativity (i.e. no "ouches") then you get a + (Harville and Helen use smiley face stickers on a monthly calendar.) If you have a negative interaction, you get a - (or frowny face.) OR, if you had a successful "Do Over", you add a "Repair" to the - or frowny face. You try for all positives for a month but, realistically,

you will likely have some frowny faces. In that case, you make an agreement for another month. (The couple who shared at the conference said it took three months before it became "natural.")

The equally important part of the Challenge is to share three appreciations each day with your Partner. This is done for a month. Each appreciation is new...one you have never shared with your Partner. (The couple from the conference said they had to pay such attention to finding new appreciations, they didn't have time or energy for negativity....go figure!)

We are interested in how you might do with this Challenge. Please let us know what you think, what questions you have, how we may support you and how it goes!

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 Workshops

**November 16-17, 2013, Frederick, MD
(Only room for a one more couple!!)**

Getting the Love You Want Workshops

December 6-8, Frederick, MD

January 3-5, 2014, Frederick, MD

January 31- February 2, 2014 Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

People deal too much with the negative, with what is wrong. Why not try and see positive things, to just touch those things and make them bloom? Nhat Hanh

Positive thinking will let you do everything better than negative thinking will. Zig Ziglar

Positive anything is better than negative nothing. Elbert Hubbard

Always turn a negative situation into a positive situation. Michael Jordan

You must not under any pretense allow your mind to dwell on any thought that is not positive, constructive, optimistic, kind. Emmet Fox

Once you replace negative thoughts with positive ones, you'll start having positive results. Willie Nelson

In order to carry a positive action we must develop here a positive vision. Dalai Lama

I've always believed that you can think positive just as well as you can think negative. James A. Baldwin

Chaotic people often have chaotic lives, and I think they create that. But if you try and have an inner peace and a positive attitude, I think you attract that. Imelda Staunton

Fortune cookies are a good idea. If the message is positive, it can make your day a little better. Yao Ming

I was going to buy a copy of "The Power of Positive Thinking", and then I thought: What the hell good would that do? Ron Jaworski

Don't miss the sunshine because you're thinking of the rain. Stay positive, focused and present! Ricardo Housham

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

Sincerely,

**David and Donna Bowman
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