



Connecting
Couples

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

Thought of the Month News and Notes

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Dear Friends,

**Happy Holidays! Merry Christmas!
Happy Hanukkah! Happy Kwanzaa! We keep sharp by recognizing that this busy, busy commercial season is also one that has spiritual significance to everyone in one way or another. We don't worry so much about the proper greeting, we just want those we encounter to feel a bit happier, cheerier and have a bigger smile as a result of meeting us. We wish you joy!**

This Thought addresses the issues we all face as we are bombarded with messages, reminders, challenges, memories...everyone is dealing with things that cause stress. We are hopeful that this Thought may help you through.

As always, if you need us, just call.

Donna and David

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DECEMBER 2015: Beware of Holiday Exits

One of the things I like most about the world of Imago understandings is the fact that the concepts that dare to be most helpful are not always the most popular. Take the 90/10 rule for instance. It is not a popular thought that 90 % of my response to anything that happens in my relationship is about me and my childhood story. I'd rather

that not be true!

The concept of "exits" may also be one of those truths that is not easy to accept. In many ways life presents challenges to a couple's intimacy that can tend to pull us away from each other. It just happens. And we often just accept that life is that way.

I've been thinking that the Holidays present extra challenges in the form of exits that can put a lot of extra stress on a relationship. I think of Ellen Griswold in the movie Christmas Vacation. When her daughter is complaining about all the intrusions of the relatives into her life, Ellen says "I don't know what to say except that it's Christmas and we are all in misery".

As a fierce advocate of the couple relationship I have thought of several exits for us to be mindful of around the holidays.

1. The sheer preparation and all the energy it entails. "Are you ready for Christmas" is a popular phrase that certainly implies some kind of extra effort is needed at this time to be "appropriate." Just be mindful that your relationship does not get lost or abused in all the preparation. It should be a joyous source of fun and connection.

2. Extended Family. Yes it has become a time of year to be together with relatives and others that we love. I imagine I don't have to list all the ways this can become a stressor and a threat to the positive connection between a couple. Donna and I have found it helpful to prepare by making a game plan that honors our relationship first. That way we welcome relatives and face any challenges with a united front.

3. Money. Many families spend huge amounts of money to make sure the holidays are happy. This can be a creeping stressor for many. "Conscious" giving can be joyous and meaningful, and can avoid residual

stress.

4. Alcohol. It may not be popular to bring it up but the holidays seem to give some sort of license to even non-problem drinkers to exit relationships through alcohol. We really need to ask why we need to be in a state of inebriation to celebrate the holidays and all that is meaningful.

I hope these thoughts are helpful as you all have a mindful, meaningful and connected Holiday season.

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

January 8-10, 2016, Frederick, MD

February 26-28, 2016, Frederick, MD

April 1-3, 2016, Frederick, MD

Next Step Workshops

April 23-24, 2016

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

**The spirit of Christmas is the spirit of love and of generosity and of goodness. It illuminates the picture window of the soul, and we look out upon the world's busy life and become more interested in people than in things.
Thomas S. Monson**

**Christmas is a time when everybody wants his past forgotten and his present remembered. What I don't like about office Christmas parties is looking for a job the next day.
Phyllis Diller**

**Why is Christmas just like a day at the office?
You do all the work and the fat guy with the
suit gets all the credit. Anonymous**

**"The holiest of holidays are those kept by
ourselves in silence and apart; The secret
anniversaries of the heart." - Henry
Wadsworth Longfellow**

**Anyone who believes that men are the equal
of women has never seen a man trying to
wrap a Christmas present. Anonymous**

**Once again, we come to the Holiday Season, a
deeply religious time that each of us
observes, in his own way, by going to the mall
of his choice. Dave Barry**

**The moment we break faith with one another,
the sea engulfs us and the light goes out. -
James Baldwin**

**So powerful is the light of unity that it can
illuminate the whole earth. - Bahá'u'lláh**

**I wish you immense warmth and happiness at
hanukkah. May the light of the Menorah glow
in everlasting blessings for you and your
family. Unknown quotes**

**The true meaning of hanukkah is that of
courage, peace and everlasting freedom. I
pray that this season is rich in traditions and
renewed faith for you and your family.
Shalom. Unknown quotes**

**Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a
state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill,
to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real
spirit of Christmas. Calvin Coolidge**

**Christmas is a season not only of rejoicing but
of reflection. Winston Churchill**

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

Sincerely,

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

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