



Connecting
Couples

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

Thought of the Month News and Notes

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Dear Friends,

Words, words words! Everything seems to be about words these days. We are inundated with social media, texts, phone calls and politics. But what about the words we use daily with our loved ones? Even the words bouncing around in our private thoughts? I would like to get you thinking about the narrative with which we delight and burden ourselves. I hope this Thought is helpful!

As always, if you need us, just call.

Donna and David

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JULY: "What Narrative Are You Carrying?"

This article is designed to encourage all of us to examine the narrative we create and carry about our Partner. If your narrative about him/her is that they are the sweetest, kindest, and safest person you can imagine, then you can quit reading. (You can even withdraw from receiving these Thoughts of the Month.)

But if your narrative is that she is always critical or that he doesn't listen...or that she spends too much money or that he is only interested in sex...or any of a thousand different negative narratives that we create

and maintain about our Partner...then we need to talk!

It is so easy and natural for us to develop a negative narrative. Our reptilian brain (affectionately known as our lizard) has the task of reminding us that this hurtful thing happened once so we better be on guard as it will happen again and again. And so we look for the hurtful behavior in everything our Partner does. In other words, we assign a role to our Partner that says they are always this way or that way.

I went through some years of truly believing that Donna had a daily mission of finding every wrong thing that I did and criticizing me for it. I was on the way to making myself miserable and feeling trapped. She, in turn, was developing a counter narrative that said I was touchy and would not allow her to voice any opinion, idea, or frustration. Once we were able to drop our narrative of each other (through countless dialogues and repeated telling of our Stories) we both began to connect more freely and joyfully with each other.

Here are a few of the reasons to drop your negative narrative:

- 1. Your Partner will hate being "pigeon holed" by you. It will pollute your Space in powerful and painful ways.**
- 2. You may be wrong. Narratives often represent a subjective and flawed view of his/her intentions.**
- 3. Your narrative is mostly projection. Remember that 90% of your feelings are about you and your story.**
- 4. Focusing on negativity is unhealthy for you, your Partner, and your Relationship. ("Energy follows attention.")**

So I invite you to do two things:

1. Put an end to the expectation you carry of your Partner's bad behavior and approach every interaction as if it is new.

2. Visualize your Partner as a child telling their Story in order to stay safe and survive. This will develop your compassion rather than your reactivity.

We welcome comments and ideas about this and any other issues.

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

August 26-28, 2016, Frederick, MD

October 7-9, 2016, Frederick, MD

November 18-20, 2016, Frederick. MD

Next Step Workshops

September 24-25, 2016

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

Good, better, best. Never let it rest. 'Til your good is better and your better is best. St. Jerome

One advantage of talking to yourself is that you know at least somebody's listening. Franklin P. Jones

Our greatest weakness lies in giving up. The most certain way to succeed is always to try just one more time. Thomas A. Edison

Get your facts first, then you can distort them

as you please. Mark Twain

I believe that if life gives you lemons, you should make lemonade... And try to find somebody whose life has given them vodka, and have a party. Ron White

You can't cross the sea merely by standing and staring at the water. Rabindranath Tagore

If you can dream it, you can do it. Walt Disney

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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