



Connecting
Couples

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Thought of the Month News and Notes

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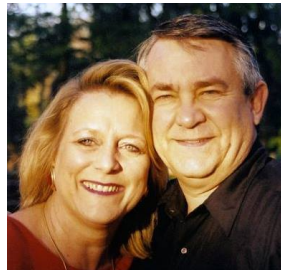
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Dear Friends,

Dark February days make me somewhat introspective and, at the same time, very, very observant. Donna and I continue to spend delightful hours with couples who challenge and inspire us and in the midst of this, we find we are challenging each other!

Fortunately for us, we have the skills of dialogue (which have saved us many, many times) and also spark some moments of wisdom. Please read on and look in the window of our relationship...(never boring, to us at least!)

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Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

FEBRUARY: The Space In Between

This month I would like to describe the concept of the "space in between." It was Martin Buber, the Jewish theologian, who said that our relationship lives in the space

in between us. The relationship is not in me, and it is not in you. It is in the life we create and share together. It is a sacred space. Everything that we say and everything that we do has an effect on the space. If we have a sour look or a criticism or a withdrawal, we affect the space. If we speak of appreciation or make a warm gesture, we affect the space.

The problem is that we generally are not thinking about the space. We are generally thinking about our own wellbeing in our own sphere of consciousness. And we put our own defenses and reactions into the space without thinking. And then the space becomes a bit uncomfortable. It has become polluted. Then we both react to the discomfort in the space, and it becomes even more uncomfortable. Then it feels like a dangerous space and now we are in full blown reactivity. Sound familiar?

It happens to us. The other day Donna says "I think we should have a new stove top. There is one on sale at HH Gregg." Without thinking about the space I said "Why do we need a new stove top?" To which Donna says "I have been frustrated with this stove for 15 years. Where have you been?" Of course I had to remind her that we fixed the burners several years ago and that other than the burner that sometimes won't cut off, the stove works just fine. (Can you feel us spiraling down into the bottomless pit of reactivity with each other?) The accusations began and now the subject of a silly stove became a dangerous place in our space. Thankfully we remembered the miracle of dialogue and the image of "the bridge" which I will cover next month. And after rediscovering some of the childhood hurts and adaptations that were at play, we came back to a good space around the stove. It was an "opportunity" for us to revisit the use of dialogue and the bridge to make a good decision and to enjoy a powerful and positive connection.

Surrender, generosity, empathy, curiosity, compassion. These are the gifts that we can bring to the space in between to keep it joyful and alive.

I texted Donna an hour ago "I'm glad you finally agreed to let me get the stove top." She replied "I am too. Thanks for persisting."

Your comments are always appreciated.

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

March 17-19, Frederick, MD

May 5-7, Frederick, MD

June 16-18, Frederick, MD

Next Step Workshop

April 1-2, 2017, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

They invented hugs to let people know you love them without saying anything. Bil Keane

I love being married. It's so great to find that one special person you want to annoy for the rest of your life. Rita Rudner

Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Love is our true destiny. We do not find the meaning of life by ourselves alone - we find it with another. Thomas Merton

Let us always meet each other with smile, for the smile is the beginning of love. Mother Teresa

The greatest healing therapy is friendship and love. Hubert H. Humphrey

Being deeply loved by someone gives you strength, while loving someone deeply gives you courage. Lao Tzu

Ever since it started snowing my husband is standing in front of the window and watching. If the snow gets much worse, I might let him inside the house. Anonymous

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

Sincerely,

**David and Donna Bowman
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