



Connecting
Couples

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

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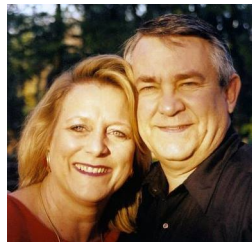
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Issue: #117
January 2019



Dear Friends,

The New Year, new beginnings and a new start on the same old promises. What? You aren't starting a diet or vowing to exercise more? I don't really look at the new year that way anymore, not that there is anything wrong with this view. I just find I am more forgiving of myself, very familiar with my quirks and habits and well, just easy enough in my skin to roll with whatever seems to work in the here and now. Where I always find room for improvement though, is in communication. A friend told me that if the key to paradise is mastering communication, she was going to be on earth a long, long time!

We lost our dear dog, Ben, and I wanted to share an old Thought with you. I always enjoy your comments.

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Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

JANUARY: In Praise of Dogs

We are grieving the loss of our famous dog, Ben, who died peacefully on January 5. I say he was famous because he was a mainstay of my men's group, always taking his place under our table. He also brought joy to maybe 1400 of you who did our workshops over the last 8 years. There were about 7 of you who were allergic or afraid or just did not like him. That's OK . Ben was also the Mayor of our community, freely visiting all the homes on his excursions. Some of our neighbors are grieving with us.

We miss Ben.

Dogs are great.

Voltaire said "The best thing about man is the dog"

Ben Franklin said "There are three faithful friends- an old wife, an old dog, and ready money."

Sir Walter Scott said "Recollect that the Almighty, who gave the dog to be a companion of our pleasures and our toils, hath invested him with a nature noble and incapable of deceit."

Perhaps it's time for a repeat of my 2013 thought:

"Why can't my wife be more like my dog?" In the great musical classic, "My Fair Lady," Pickering (played in full sexist fashion by Rex Harrison) ponders lyrically: "Why can't a woman be more like a man."

I have been spending a lot of time with our dog, Ben, and it has caused me to ponder: "Why can't my wife be more like my dog?" Think about it! Our big black lab/great dane hybrid is always pleasant. He doesn't expect much. Actually he doesn't expect anything. He loves it when I pet him. He likes me to get close and play with him, but he never complains when I forget to show him affection. He likes it when I feed him and never complains that we don't ever go out to eat.

Sometimes we just are in a room together in silence and he never once has insisted that I share my feelings with him. Even when I am in a foul mood he is his steady lovable self.

No reactivity to my moods. He loves to go anywhere with me in the car and he never complains about my driving or asks if I really know the directions for where I'm going. I got pulled over for speeding once and he just sat quietly without shaming or blaming. He just looked at me with his adoring brown eyes as if to say, "I'm sorry." Sometimes I go somewhere without him and he has not once asked me where I am going or when I will be back.

We can watch a whole Nationals baseball game together and he doesn't seem at all bored. When I come into the house Ben always greets me with a joyous wag of the tail and a lick. When he comes into a room where I am located, he always comes over to check and see if I'm ok. Then he goes and minds his own business.

On a more revealing note, he doesn't mind that I go out to pee in the yard. No embarrassment for him. In fact, he often goes with me. And if I am browsing and happen to linger on a picture of Heidi Klum in a bikini, he doesn't make a big deal of it. I guess he pretends to not even notice. When I get sloppy and leave my clothes on the floor he sees it as a good thing and promptly lays down on them. All kinds of things are broken around the house and Ben never even mentions any of them. He's happy with things just as they are.

So why can't my wife be more like my dog? Of course I know that we need human connection for our completion, for true intimacy. But my memory of Ben reminds me of some of the qualities that I need to integrate in order for the people around me to be safe with me.

Your comments are always welcome. **[See our website](http://connectingcouples.net)** connectingcouples.net for upcoming workshops or call us at 301-404-7711 to schedule a FaceTime appointment or an in person intensive and check up.

Warmly
D&D

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COMING UP!

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Getting the Love You Want Workshops

February 8-10, 2019, Frederick, MD

March 8-10, 2019, Frederick, MD

May 3-5, 2019, Frederick, MD

Next Step Workshop

April 6-7, 2019, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"The better I get to know men, the more I find myself loving dogs." - Charles de Gaulle

"My little dog - a heartbeat at my feet." - Edith Wharton

"It is amazing how much love and laughter they bring into our lives and even how much closer we become with each other because of them." - John Grogan

"To err is human - to forgive, canine." - Author Unknown

"Happiness is a warm puppy." - Charles Schulz

"You know, a dog can snap you out of any kind of bad mood that you're in faster than you can think of." - Jill Abramson

Before you get a dog, you can't quite imagine what living with one might be like; afterward, you can't imagine living any other way." - Caroline Knapp

"Money can buy you a fine dog, but only love can make him wag his tail." -Kinky Friedman

"My idea of absolute happiness is to be in bed on a rainy day with my blankie, my cat, and my dog." - Anne Lamott

"If there are no dogs in Heaven, then when I

**die I want to go where they went." - Will
Rogers**

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

Sincerely,

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



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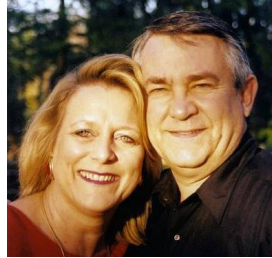
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Issue: #118
February 2019



Dear Friends,

We were running to catch up with you with the Thought of the Month, when we realized that the pesky, SHORT, month of February was about to pass the baton to March. I try to remind myself to get these inspirations early in the month but my usual issue is that you all inspire me with many, many ideas. I am so blessed to be on your journey with you, and each day I see new issues and situations that inspire new thoughts.

I love the message in this Thought, Do 5 Kind Things, and though we missed Valentine's Day with this one, tomorrow or the next day could be Valentine's Day all over again. Try this and see what joy and love will ensue. Oh, and share with me, please!

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Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

FEBRUARY: Do 5 Kind Things

I have a very practical and old fashioned sounding idea this month. It is intended for

those of you who have a relatively safe and connected relationship as well as those of you who live in a state of tension with each other.

I am suggesting that each of you develop a plan for yourself and that you keep it to yourself. The plan is to do 5 nice things for your partner each day. This will be a conscious but informal commitment of growth for yourself. It could be an appreciation for some behavior or trait. It could be a thoughtful act such as getting your partner a coffee or washing their car. It could be a generous act of just listening to your partner without response or reactivity or watching the kids while your partner goes for some private time. It could be sending a loving text or even a full love letter. It could be initiating some physical affection out of the blue. It could be giving a surprise gift such as a favorite meal or a concert.

You pick the behavior that suits your life. The reason to keep it to yourself is to keep the exercise pure, with no strings or return expectations attached.

For those in calm relationships this may seem unnecessary. Do it anyway. See how your space changes.

For those in troubled or stressful relationships, this suggestion may seem out of place, or just down right stupid. He already treats me so awful, and you want me to be nice to him? Yes.

She will think I want something from her like sex. She may even think I'm having an affair. This would be so out of character for me. That's right. That's the power of the suggestion.

Outrageous acts of kindness can shake things up. They can shift the balance. They can make us feel better about ourselves. They can even change our character. I heard the story of a flight attendant who

had a colleague that received a huge monetary gift from a traveler just for being nice to this man. She reports that she decided to start being extra nice to passengers in hopes of receiving such a gift. Over time, she says, while never getting any material gift, she began to feel so much better about herself. She loved her job again. "It was as though I came home to who I really am, and who I want to always be."

I am hoping this for all of you who take the time to read this. And see what happens in your relationship space!

David (and Donna)

P.S. Just a reminder that Donna and I are presenting our "**Next Step- Overcoming Reactivity**" workshop on April 6-7. We have limited space of course, but many couples have found this two day weekend to be a valuable follow up and refresher for those who have appreciated the initial Imago journey. You can click here: [Visit Our Website](#) or just call or text me at 301-404-7711 to register. This workshop is very informal and relaxed. We hope to see some of you.

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QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a harder battle." Plato

"Three things in human life are important: the first is to be kind; the second is to be kind; and the third is to be kind." Henry James

"Attitude is a choice. Happiness is a choice. Optimism is a choice. Kindness is a choice. Giving is a choice. Respect is a choice. Whatever choice you make makes you. Choose wisely." Roy T. Bennett, The Light in the Heart

"Do your little bit of good where you are; it's those little bits of good put together that overwhelm the world." Desmond Tutu

"Kindness is a language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see." Mark Twain

"My religion is very simple. My religion is kindness." Dalai Lama XIV

"Guard well within yourself that treasure, kindness. Know how to give without hesitation, how to lose without regret, how to acquire without meanness." George Sand

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

Sincerely,

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



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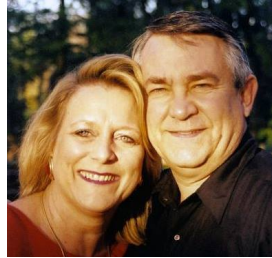
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Issue: #119
March 2019



Dear Friends,

We hope you are enjoying the changing seasons....it is quite lovely here on some days and then the cold returns to remind us to "chill" and not to rush things. I constantly need to remind myself to stop and appreciate the here and now, the wonderful love in my life, the joy of giving to another and the simple pleasures of coffee and Donna.

This Thought was inspired by a blog in the National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Medicine- NICABM. I hope you find it as interesting as I did.

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Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

MARCH: Shame vs Guilt

This month I want to offer thoughts that can help free us from some of our negative self - judgments, self-criticism, and self-rejection. After all, the more we judge ourselves, the more likely we are to judge those around us, particularly our own partner and children.

There is a fundamental difference between Shame and Guilt. Guilt is experienced when we do or think something that is against our true values. When I was little I stole a piece of rock candy from a store. I just opened up the box and took a piece to satisfy my curiosity about how rocks could be candy. I felt guilty. I still feel slightly guilty for this. This is known as "real" guilt or "healthy" guilt. It was a behavior that broke my own definition of right and wrong.

Sometimes "real" guilt is not so straight forward. I felt and still feel strains of guilt over the divorce I initiated 39 years ago. While it was in my best interest and I am glad for the life I have led since, the phenomenon of being divorced still went against my belief system and even against vows that I made.

"Healthy" or "real" guilt can be positive. It can drive us to seek forgiveness, to correct a wrong, and lead to healing. (In my case it can lead to a life path of becoming a renowned marriage coach. OK, I got a little carried away there.)

Then there is another form of guilt that I'll call "false" guilt, or "unhealthy" guilt. Again when I was little, I once placed some small stones on a railroad track. I don't recall why I did this, but I vividly recall feeling tormented for some time that I might have caused a train wreck and killed scores of people. I now laugh at my childhood ignorance of how physics works.

"False" guilt is a condition that severely plagues and limits many people. "False" guilt is born out of irrationally high standards we have developed to please someone (such as parents or the church.) Or it can result from irrational beliefs about how things work. "I know our son died because we didn't go to church as often as we should."

Shame is a very different animal. Shame is

an intensely painful feeling of being fundamentally flawed. It does not arise from a particular event, but is more of a chronic condition. Shame can begin in infancy and is more deeply wired in our brain than most other emotions. Shame is difficult to reverse. You can tell someone over and over they have nothing to be ashamed of and it will have no effect. I developed a sense of shame for feeling sexual in particular, and just alive and exuberant in general. My family was oppressively non-feeling about anything. And sexual things did not even exist.

Shame is brought about by an innate sense of unworthiness, probably fed by an environment of criticism, rigidity, or some other existential threat. It causes us to disconnect with others out of fear of being rejected. It can lead to clinical depression, substance abuse, or criminality.

The antidote for shame is stretching into pursuing healthy relationships and to nurture our connections and sense of belonging with others.

One more observation about shame and guilt. It is interesting to me to note that while most of us possess way too much shame and/or "false" guilt, there are a number of people who seem to lack any semblance of these feelings. They are often hardened criminals on one end of the spectrum and people in powerful positions (such as politicians or executives) on the other. The current diagnostic terms for these people are malignant narcissists, antisocial personality disorders, and psychopaths. The negative impact of such individuals is that they tend to diminish or destroy the lives of people around them. They can even infect the healthy systems of culture and order that most of us rely on for a moral and healthy life.

Maybe a bit of guilt and shame can have a useful purpose after all.

As always, I welcome your comments on my

thoughts. This Thought was inspired after reading a blog from the National Institute for the Clinical Application of Behavioral Medicine- NICABM.

David

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Next Step Workshop

April 6, 2019, Frederick, MD

Getting the Love You Want Workshops

May 3-5, 2019, Frederick, MD

May 31-June 2, 2019, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"I'm selfish, impatient and a little insecure. I make mistakes, I am out of control and at times hard to handle. But if you can't handle me at my worst, then you sure as hell don't deserve me at my best." Marilyn Monroe

**"You've gotta dance like there's nobody watching,
Love like you'll never be hurt,
Sing like there's nobody listening,
And live like it's heaven on earth." William W. Purkey**

"You know you're in love when you can't fall asleep because reality is finally better than your dreams." Dr. Seuss

"A friend is someone who knows all about you and still loves you." Elbert Hubbard

"It is not a lack of love, but a lack of friendship that makes unhappy marriages." Friedrich Nietzsche

**"Love all, trust a few, do wrong to none."
William Shakespeare, All's Well That Ends
Well**

**"Have you ever been in love? Horrible isn't it?
It makes you so vulnerable. It opens your
chest and it opens up your heart and it means
that someone can get inside you and mess
you up." Neil Gaiman, The Kindly Ones**

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

**"We're all a little weird. And life is a little
weird. And when we find someone whose
weirdness is compatible with ours, we join up
with them and fall into mutually satisfying
weirdness-and call it love-true love." Robert
Fulghum, True Love**

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

Sincerely,

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



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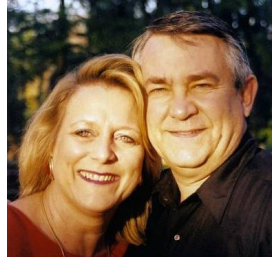
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Issue: #120
April 2019



Dear Friends,

It is Spring and for Donna and I, the month of April holds a very deep and somber reminder. It is the month we lost our child. This Thought is very personal, as all of them are, and it contains a special message and a way to improve your communication skills. I hope you will consider having a very special conversation with those in your lives who have suffered personal loss.

Please let me know if this resonates with you and if it is helpful.

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Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

APRIL: We lost a child....and here's what we would like you to know.

Stephanie was 16 when she died in an automobile accident about three miles from our home. It was April 27, 1995. She had just returned from a church sponsored seminar in New York City. While I picked her up in D.C., Donna had not seen her for a week. She

never saw her alive after she left for New York.

First, I want to celebrate Stephanie by telling you a bit about her. Stephanie was brilliant. (e.g. "How do you think you did on the PSAT?" "I wasn't sure about the answer to one question.") Stephanie was determined. (e.g. At the age of 7, she took me up on a challenge of not watching TV for a year in exchange for \$1000. A year later, she used the \$1000 toward the purchase of our first computer.) Stephanie was strong willed. (e.g. "If you say I have to wear boots, I just won't go to the sledding party.) Stephanie was a free Spirit. (e.g. "I couldn't find two that matched. No one at school will care if one shoe is red and one is black.") Stephanie was compassionate and persuasive. (e.g. "We have to recycle! The earth needs us to take care of it and everyone on it!")

The death of a child is the most hideously cruel event that a human being can endure. It is marked by crushing grief, unspeakable loneliness, and a desperate bewilderment about the nature of life itself.

The death of a child breaks the parents in a way that is not fixable. Their lives will never, ever be the same. Even though they may seem normal and even joyful, there is not a minute of any day that the parents are not staggeringly aware that everything is forever different. And it is a lonely journey!

We had a vast array of beautiful people who cradled us with love and support. It was truly awesome. The outpouring was almost an embarrassment of relational riches. We felt overwhelmed with the mixture of grief and confusion while being in the spotlight of so much goodwill and attention.

Then time goes by. And a curious thing happens. We find that our grief continues to flourish. Every Holiday, every July 2 birthday, every April 27 anniversary, every niece and nephew wedding, every graduation, every new baby born in the extended family...all of

these carry the potential for a stinging reminder of what is not and what will never be.

This is all normal. What is also normal is that Stephanie is rarely mentioned, especially around big events. We understand that folks aren't sure what to say. We understand that people are afraid we will become sad. We understand that talking about a child who has died can trigger parent's fears about losing their own children.

What we want you to know is that it is helpful, even healing, for Stephanie and her memory to be included in whatever is going on. A simple "I'm sorry Stephanie is not here" or "I wonder what Stephanie would be doing" or "I bet you miss her" would be like manna from heaven.

You see, without any mention of her and of what happened, it is as though she never existed. It is as though all memory of her has been erased. And as if the death was not enough, this deafening silence regarding her short life and what it meant is almost unbearable. We long for celebration and recognition of Stephanie and the ways she blessed us and so many others while sharing her brief Journey on this earth.

So, if you have a chance with us or any other grieving parents, please step into the courage to mention the name of the child. Tell this dreadful club of survivors that something reminded you of their kid. Invite them to tell a funny story about their son or daughter. You will be like an angel bringing respite and relief to grieving and frozen parents who have long since given up hope that anyone notices anymore.

David

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Getting the Love You Want Workshops

May 3-5, 2019, Frederick, MD

May 31-June 2, 2019, Frederick, MD

July 12-14, 2019, Frederick, MD

Next Step Workshop

September 21-22, 2019, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"Sadly enough, the most painful goodbyes are the ones that are left unsaid and never explained." Jonathan Harnisch, Freak

"Loss is like a wind, it either carries you to a new destination or it traps you in an ocean of stagnation. You must quickly learn how to navigate the sail, for stagnation is death." Val Uchendu

"The mindset of loss of a loved one is to understand that the loss will never be undone. You must live with it, like it or not. But, to live well, you must turn that loss into something positive. That way, you can become the best version of yourself; scarred, flawed and unstoppable" Val Uchendu

"Memories saturate my heart and the story of you spills from my eyes." Grace Andren

"Any woman who'd ever lost a child knew of the hollowness that remained within the soul." Brittainy C. Cherry, Disgrace

**"Like a deep sad note
played beneath the ocean
waving through the orb
the memories of you
the bittersweet echoes
infixd forever in my heart" Pawan Mishra**

"No farewell words were spoken, no time to say goodbye. You were gone before we knew it, and only God knows why."

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

Sincerely,

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



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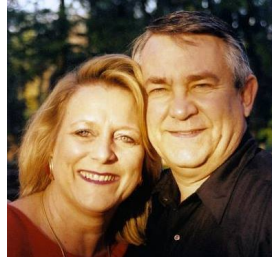
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**Issue: #121
May 2019**



Dear Friends,

We hope you are ready to greet summer! End of school, book groups taking a vacation, gardens calling you for some TLC, and a yearning for a hammock and a cool beverage! As you consider "laying back" please consider taking time to work a little (or a lot) on your relationship. Take advantage of slower days ahead to spend a little extra time on you and your Partner. Trust me, it will be worth it!

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Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

MAY: Beware of the Saboteur

For a long time I have been mystified about something that often happens in a relationship during the process of consciousness and healing. Let me describe it to you.

A couple has a great breakthrough and is singing the praises of Imago coaching. Each person is feeling new hope and safety. It's like they have their earlier connection back

again.

Then it blows up. One, and then both are back in defense mode and are feeling more hopeless than ever.

Our mentor and friend, Maya Kollman, says that this is evidence of a "little saboteur" that lives in us all. This creature has one mission and that is to keep us safe in the same way we kept ourselves safe in childhood. And so it directs us to get suspicious, to get anxious, to go into disbelief and even to fight in order to maintain our equilibrium. The new experience of getting what we want from our Partner can, ironically, trigger a form of panic and bewilderment instead of the peace and joy we would expect....and long for.

Emily had expressed frustration with Jim for years that he no longer did little acts of kindness for her to remind her that he loves her. So Jim accepted my homework of consciously putting into place a steady series of behaviors (bringing her flowers, sending her notes, etc.) because he really did love her and wanted her to feel loved. Guess what! She found all manner of ways to reject his new behavior. "He just wants to have more sex." "He only did it because you suggested it." "I think he feels guilty for something."

When we finally get what we want some strange things may begin to happen. We may not know how to act in a new abundant environment. (We knew exactly how to act before when we needed defenses.) We may experience "Reunion Grief". This is the reminder of all the times we did not feel safe or connected. And those memories make us sad.

When we get what we want we may be stretched into new behavior ourselves. It can be unnerving to use something we had previously "lost." And when we get what we want, we are pushed into the terror of what

could happen in the future. The good stuff might go away. We might get rejected again.

There are ways to put the Saboteur in its place.

1. Have a conversation with your own little child and assure him/her that you are all grown up now and have the courage to face things differently.
2. Have a dialogue with your Partner to tell them how vulnerable you are even as you appreciate the new safety and connection.

I am grateful to Maya Kollman for her contribution to these thoughts and to many other beautiful Imago learnings through the years. (And for teaching us how to do our workshop.)

Your responses are always welcomed.

David

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August 23-25, 2019, Frederick, MD

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September 21-22, 2019, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

Rest is not idleness, and to lie sometimes on the grass under trees on a summer's day, listening to the murmur of the water, or watching the clouds float across the sky, is by no means a waste of time. John Lubbock

Summer is the annual permission slip to be

**lazy. To do nothing and have it count for something. To lie in the grass and count the stars. To sit on a branch and study the clouds.
Regina Brett**

If summer had one defining scent, it'd definitely be the smell of barbecue. Katie Lee

**We go old-school during the summer, like swimming or setting up lemonade stands. I try to teach my kids to make their own fun.
Gail Devers**

**I just like the beaches in the summer, man.
Rob Gronkowski**

**Let a man walk ten miles steadily on a hot summer's day along a dusty English road, and he will soon discover why beer was invented.
Gilbert K. Chesterton**

**I believe that summer is our time, a time for the people, and that no politician should be allowed to speak to us during the summer. They can start talking again after Labor Day.
Lewis Black**

A lot of parents pack up their troubles and send them off to summer camp. Raymond Duncan

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

Sincerely,

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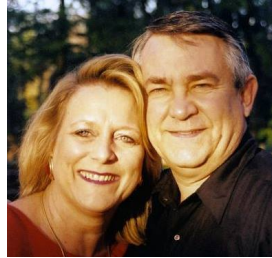
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Issue: #122
June 2019



Dear Friends,

Connecting Couples is bursting with enthusiasm about our workshops and some new and exciting tools we are bringing to them. Summer is a great time to relax and focus on your partnership and this Thought will help you in that endeavor! Maybe it's time for a workshop refresher!

[Be Sure to "Like" Us on Facebook!](#)

Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

**JUNE: Opportunities For
Empowerment
More Imago with David and Donna**

The Next Step: Overcoming Reactivity

The first time we went skiing, we were both anxious and excited at the same time. We spent a good deal of the time trying to get our boots on, learning to get on and off the lift, and of course, falling down the hill . . . again and again and again! Through all this, we could still experience the exhilaration and potential of this new thing called skiing.

The second time we went skiing, it was SO much better. We knew how to put on our boots, how to negotiate the lift, and we were relaxed enough to actually do some skiing.

This workshop is like skiing for the second time. Couples return for a weekend refresher, already knowing the basics, ready to achieve a solid deepening and satisfaction in their connection.

We have new and powerful ideas about how men and women come together with drastically different hidden agendas and fears about their relationship.

We will teach you how to understand and "bridge" those differences.

We will present new tools for unleashing those impulses to connect, replacing reactivity with fun and passion.

You will witness a "real-life" frustration in our relationship, and watch how we handle it using the dialogue process. We will then help you troubleshoot the "stuck" or difficult places in your relationship. (Sometimes skiing is harder because we just do not have the boots buckled right!)

This two-day workshop is for couples who have participated in a Getting the Love You Want workshop. It is for couples who believe in Imago, but still need help in using it with each other day-to-day.

Conscious and Connected Parenting

The joy of having a child is all encompassing . . . the miracle of birth, the thrill of baby's first smile, first word, and first step. As our family grows and as each child becomes an individual who has definite ideas on how they want to live their life, challenges emerge, conflicts arise and we start to look for the User's Manual that came with the child. Quickly we realize that there is no User's Manual and we are often stressed to

find out that we are on our own and we have questions!

Countless parents have participated in a Getting the Love You Want workshop and have been positively impacted, even transformed, by learning and using Imago ideas and tools. Many have asked, "Can this work with our children?" The answer is, "Absolutely!"

The newest idea on the Imago horizon is a down-to-earth training experience for parents to learn how to apply the powerful skills of Imago to the daunting task of parenting. We have created a two-day weekend workshop that will materially improve your confidence, empowerment, and success as you travel through your parenting adventure.

We will teach you how to use the "Dialogue" with your kids even when they do not "want" it.

We will teach you how to eliminate the most common ways parents lose connection with their children.

We will teach you how to validate your children while maintaining your "executive function" as parents at all times.

We will help you grapple with your toughest questions about the stuck places that everyone will surely find familiar.

We will encourage you in the use of discipline in such a way that your children will respect and honor your role as their parents.

We will teach you how to remain connected with your children through it all.

(Participation in a Getting the Love You Want workshop is a prerequisite to this workshop.)

You know how powerful and trans-

formative the basic Imago workshop was for your relationship. Donna and I truly hope you will consider these opportunities to be with us again for more conscious learning.

The Next Step is September 21 - 22, 2019 and **Conscious and Connected Parenting** is October 26 - 27, 2019.

Please email, text or call 301-404-7711 so that we can get you registered with a \$200 deposit. We are limited in space and taking registrations now. (We will offer a discount if you register for both.)

We hope to be with you again this fall.

Warmly,
David

**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

July 12-14, 2019, Frederick, MD

August 23-25, 2019, Frederick, MD

Next Step Workshop

September 21-22, 2019, Frederick, MD

Parenting Workshop

October 26-27, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

Friends are chocolate chips in the cookie of life!

In the morning you beg to sleep more, in the afternoon you are dying to sleep, and at night

you refuse to sleep

The great pleasure in life is doing what people say you cannot do. Walter Bagehot

Life isn't measured by the number of breaths you take, but by the number of moments that take your breath away.

Never take life seriously. Nobody gets out alive anyway.

I'm old enough to know better, but young enough to do it anyway. Anonymous

Stop worrying about the world ending today. It's already tomorrow in Australia. Charles M. Schulz

My bed is a magical place where I suddenly remember everything I forgot to do.

Friends come and go, like the waves of the ocean, but the true ones stay like an octopus on your face.

Long time ago I used to have a life, until someone told me to create a Facebook account.

Be yourself; everyone else is already taken. Oscar Wilde

Life is not about how you survive the storm, it's about how you dance in the rain.

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

Sincerely,

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



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

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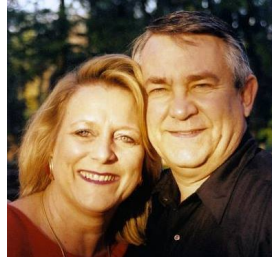
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Issue: #123
July 2019



Dear Friends,

Don't you just love getting away from it all? To me, sometimes it is just a walk through the nearby woods and other times, it is a total scene change. We are fortunate to have some time away this month and I find I enjoy new surroundings, new people, new conversations and a renewed spirit.

I hope you have time to get away from it all this summer...even if it is just a tiny bit "away." Enjoy the time to renew your spirit!

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Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

JULY: Redefining Power

I'm growing weary of the way our world increasingly looks at power. In my view a scary proportion of people are falling for a massive set of illusions:

- * those who are not like me (the "others") are to be feared and even eradicated;**
- * attacking these "others" makes me look**

strong;
*** calling adversaries names will reduce their power to hurt me;**
*** showing compassion will make me look weak;**
*** admitting wrong will make me look weak;**
*** cooperation will reduce my own power;**
*** keeping score is the only way I can stay safe;**
*** scaring "others" into submission makes things safe for me;**
*** living in untruth will enable me to avoid criticism.**

Okay! All of you reading this know me. And you are probably thinking that I am making a political statement here. Well.....Donna forbids me to be politically partisan in our workshops. And rightly so.

So I ask you to re-read the nine assumptions above with only your intimate relationship in mind. What do you notice? The late James Baldwin in his classic "The Fire Next Time" says simply, "No one ever debases another without also debasing himself."

I, therefore, submit some alternative concepts of power for us to consider in politics as well as in our relationships:

- * the power of Compassion.**
- * the power of Generosity.**
- * the power of Sacrifice.**
- * the power of Cooperation.**
- * the power of Surrender.**
- * the power of Vulnerability.**
- * the power of Lifting Up Another.**
- * the power of Impeccable Truth.**
- * the power of Non-violence.**

I have detailed examples of all these alternative concepts of power. They are not new. Virtually all the great thinkers, movements and religions in history have advocated most of these concepts. Why, I wonder, are we falling for so much that goes against the history of human experience?

I would love to hear your thoughts and examples.

Blessings,

David

**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 23-25, 2019, Frederick, MD

October 11-13, 2019, Frederick, MD

Next Step Workshop

September 21-22, 2019, Frederick, MD

Parenting Workshop

October 26-27, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"People are illogical, unreasonable, and self-centered.

Love them anyway.

If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish ulterior motives.

Do good anyway.

If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies.

Succeed anyway.

The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow.

Do good anyway.

Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable.

Be honest and frank anyway.

**The biggest men and women with the biggest ideas can be shot down by the smallest men and women with the smallest minds.
Think big anyway.**

**People favor underdogs but follow only top dogs.
Fight for a few underdogs anyway.**

**What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight.
Build anyway.**

**People really need help but may attack you if you do help them.
Help people anyway.**

**Give the world the best you have and you'll get kicked in the teeth.
Give the world the best you have anyway."**

Kent M. Keith, The Silent Revolution: Dynamic Leadership in the Student Council

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

Sincerely,

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



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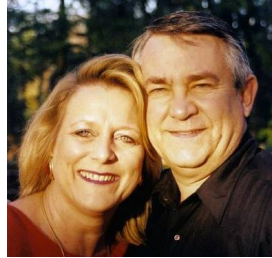
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Issue: #124
August 2019



Dear Friends,

Summer is almost over and the days are getting shorter. We loved these days when our children were younger and we helped prepare them for the new school year. Donna especially loved buying school supplies and new clothes for our daughter. Even though those days are upon a lot of you and your family, sometimes you might just feel a bit of relief that the kids will be on the bus or in the carpool soon. Out the door and with them, some of the problems, challenges and issues that surfaced during summer vacation.

If you, like all families, faced a few challenges this summer, I recommend that you seriously consider our upcoming workshop, Conscious and Connected Parenting . It might be just what your family needs!

[Be Sure to "Like" Us on Facebook!](#)

Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

**AUGUST: Conscious and Connected
Parenting**

Would you love to have more peace in your interaction with your children?

Would you love to feel more confident that you had the tools to be a more effective and respected parent?

Would you love to enjoy your family rather than seeing your family as a source of stress?

Would you love the relief of knowing that you have within you everything you need to be an excellent parent for your children?

If any of these questions speak to you, we have a rich and wonderful two day workshop that will absolutely give you an empowered sense of your skill in parenting. Money back guarantee. The weekend is October 26-27. Saturday, 9:00-6:00, and Sunday, 9:00-5:00. The cost is \$675 and the deposit to hold your place is \$200.

This event is different than any other parenting instruction in that we come at parenting with the wonderful concepts and tools of Imago that you are already familiar with.

Following are the "David and Donna assumptions" around which we have built this weekend. Please consider making this investment for your selves and for those who look to you for guidance and protection in a crazy world.

1. You are better parents than you imagine.

- Your kids love you.**
- You need to be strong parents and people.**
- Your mistakes are minuscule compared to the power of your connection.**
- The Universe has gifted you with a sacred opportunity for connection and growth.**

2. Our parenting is heavily influenced by our own childhood story.

- Wherever we were stuck in our own development is where we find ourselves stuck as a parent.
- As we better understand our own story we are empowered to become more and more conscious parents.

3. We become more conscious parents as we reflect on the parts of us that are blocked.

- Our reactivity diminishes as our consciousness increases.
- Reclaiming our lost parts allows us to share our full aliveness with our children.

4. Children need to be enjoyed and valued rather than managed.

5. The best model for life you can give your children is your own relationship.

You can call or text 301-404-7711. You can email us at bofolks@comcast.net. Or you can go to our website [Parenting Workshop](#) and register for "Conscious and Connected" parenting that way.

We look forward to our continued connection with all of you.

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

October 11-13, 2019, Frederick, MD

November 1-3, 2019, Frederick, MD

December 6-8, 2019, Frederick, MD

Next Step Workshop

Parenting Workshop

October 26-27, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

Children really brighten up a household. They never turn the lights off. Ralph Bus

Never underestimate a child's ability to get into more trouble. Martin Mull

To be a successful father there's one absolute rule: when you have a kid, don't look at it for the first two years. Ernest Hemingway

Children ask better questions than adults. "May I have a cookie?" "Why is the sky blue?" and "What does a cow say?" are far more likely to elicit a cheerful response than "Where's your manuscript?" "Why haven't you called?" and "Who's your lawyer?" Fran Lebowitz

I have just returned from a children's party. I'm one of the survivors. Percy French

Children are the most desirable opponents at Scrabble as they are both easy to beat and fun to cheat. Fran Lebowitz

There are only two things a child will share willingly; communicable diseases and its mother's age. Benjamin Spock

You can learn many things from children. How much patience you have, for instance. Franklin P. Jones

In general my children refuse to eat anything that hasn't danced in television. Erma Bombeck

The easiest way to teach children the value of money is to borrow some from them.

Anonymous

Children have never been very good at listening to their elders, but they have never failed to imitate them. James Arthur Baldwin

I've noticed that one thing about parents is that no matter what stage your child is in, the parents who have older children always tell you the next stage is worse. Dave Barry

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

Sincerely,

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



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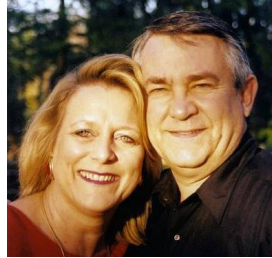
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Issue: #125
September 2019



Dear Friends,

It must be time for the holidays! I can tell because the last trip to the drug store enlightened me: Halloween costumes on two aisles, Thanksgiving on one aisle and YES! Christmas on the next! If I wasn't as self actualized and self-possessed as I am, I would be *stressed out!* (Instead, I bought something on each aisle and called it a day!)

This Thought touches a bit on stress and gives you insight into Donna and my life. I hope this is something you can relate to!

[Be Sure to "Like" Us on Facebook!](#)

Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

**SEPTEMBER: When Your Partner
Triggers You
(A Three Step Approach)**

I want you to know that I get it! Your Partner can be very irritating. He or she must be mentally challenged to keep acting the same way after you have discussed this thing over and over.

You have been to the workshop, and even follow up coaching. And still... your Partner thinks they can act this way and no conflict will ensue. They are mighty forgetful.....or just down right mean!

I believe this is a common description for all couples, even those who are Imago savvy. Let me see if I can help.

This situation happened to me (us) recently and I made some mental notes as we were able to avert disaster. In fact three steps emerged as I reflected on the incident. I would like to bottle the steps for my future use and yours as well.

The scene was on our patio. Donna and I are preparing for a crab feast for forty of our colleagues. I'm tired from setting up, and Donna is.....well... let's just say that Donna never holds an event with too little preparation. Without remembering exactly how it went down, it was surely an age old pattern of Donna suggesting that something should/could be done in a different way than I had just done it. I thought I detected a little snarkiness. That seems to be our go-to conflict trigger, at least for me.

So I could feel the lizard coming to life. That is a scary place for us hailstorms. Because I'm not exactly sure what's going to happen next. Will I just fume? Will I resign from the joint preparation somehow? Will I respond with something nasty (probably my favorite.) Or will I break something?

Well, it turns out that a higher angel or two made a visit and I would like to share the steps with you.

1. I detached and then connected to a place of reflection. I stopped and remembered that Miguel Ruiz writes that the Second Agreement is "Don't take anything personally." I remembered that David and Donna preach that every feeling is 90%

about me. By detached and reconnected I mean detached from the immediate hurt and all its side effects. By reconnected I mean coming back to the whole of the Partnership and the truth that we are both doing the best we can at any one time to make a go of this marriage.

2. I looked upon Donna with compassion.

She may be stressed about things being right for the guests. That is her childhood MO after all. She may even be going to another childhood place where she had to see that everything was done correctly and safely. She also worked all week in a highly active calling with troubled teenagers. Can't be easy. I even waded into the area of ownership by imagining that I may have forgotten how we had discussed this particular thing earlier. I wouldn't put it past me!

3. I remembered my own story.

Steps one and two gave me time to quiet myself and reflect on how Donna's "correction" was a bulls-eye on that still sore place I have from when my Dad would point out things I didn't do quite right. He wasn't mean but the message I took was that my efforts were usually vulnerable to correction. I know in my head that that story should be finished for me but it just isn't. And that has nothing to do with Donna.

I wish I could report that this occurrence of relational maturity was more common with me than it is. But I truly hope the steps I put to words may help you some time when you get triggered.

I would love to hear any response you may have.

Respectfully,

David

Be sure to watch this space or check our web site for future opportunities.

Getting the Love You Want Workshops

November 1-3, 2019, Frederick, MD

December 6-8, 2019, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

"Before you marry a person, you should first make them use a computer with slow Internet service to see who they really are." Will Ferrell

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

"If you can stay in love for more than two years, you're on something." Fran Lebowitz

"There are only three things women need in life: food, water, and compliments." Chris Rock

"Women need a reason to have sex. Men just need a place." Billy Crystal

"The great question... which I have not been able to answer... is, "What... does a woman want?" Freud

"People who throw kisses are hopelessly lazy." Bob Hope

"A guy knows he's in love when he loses interest in his car for a couple of days." Tim Allen

"Love is blind but marriage is a real eye-opener." Pauline Thomason

"Love is being stupid together." Paul Valery

"Men are from Earth. Women are from Earth. Deal with it." George Carlin

**"Women marry men hoping they will change.
Men marry women hoping they will not. So
each is inevitably disappointed." Albert
Einstein**

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

Sincerely,

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



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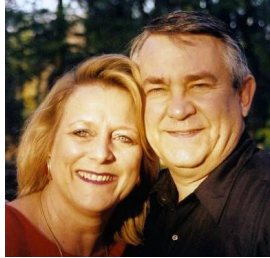
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Issue: #126
October 2019



Dear Friends,

Do seasonal changes energize you? I wonder about this a lot when I see articles on self-improvement, home renovation tips, community college class schedules...well, you get the idea. I feel like the universe is nudging me to do something and everyone else is energized! I actually like procrastination. I like lazy weekends. I like to sit and pet the dog. I must admit that working on myself, my partnership, my life just seems hard sometimes.

If you are even a little bit like me, this Thought might help you move forward. Let me know what you think.

[Be Sure to "Like" Us on Facebook!](#)

Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

OCTOBER: A Puzzling Truth

Our workshop trainer and friend, Maya Kollman, has often said that couples will continue to live in a familiar "Hell" rather than risk an unpredictable "Heaven". As I

reflect on the thousands of couples I have been privileged to be with, I find that this observation, while puzzling, is largely true. Hey, it's true in my own life.

Donna and I do this dance where I procrastinate around something we have agreed on. She gets frustrated and remains quiet or just does it herself. I pick up her frustration and do the refrain of "You are always criticizing me." She reacts with "It seems like I don't matter; that I don't have a voice." This dance is a re-enactment of old feelings and behaviors we had growing up. Sometimes we will break out of the dance with me taking initiative in the agreed upon task. Or Donna will remind me in an adult-to-adult way of what is needed. This is a new path that usually feels victorious. But why is the new behavior so difficult to live into and to integrate.

*You'd think some affection would be far better than a mutual standoff.

* You'd think the dialogue would be far preferable to arguments.

* You'd think gratitude would be so much healthier than resentment.

* You'd think the freedom from smoking would outweigh the health risk and expense of the habit.

* You'd think that the real joy of sobriety would win over the dreadful effects of addiction.

I could go on and on. So what makes a familiar hell preferable to an unpredictable heaven?

I've come up with some ideas that may account for this puzzling truth.

1. We have to do something to change our behavior. It takes mental and physical effort. The inertia of routine is so much easier because I am basically lazy.

2. There is risk involved. What if "heaven" does not turn out as great as I hoped? What if bad things happen on the way?

3. I'll have to keep it up. (It takes 28 days

for something to become a habit.) I tend to quit new projects after a while. So what's the use?

4. What if I'm the only one who makes changes? What if my partner does not want to experience heaven with me?

5. There is this old voice that says "You must not have things too good. You know what happens when you start hoping for too much. You'll get shot down."

I hope this provides some understanding and courage for those of us who want to move to a better place in our lives.

Comments are always welcome.

Respectfully,

David

**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

December 6-8, 2019, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

But I love Halloween, and I love that feeling: the cold air, the spooky dangers lurking around the corner. Evan Peters

I love that in celebrating Halloween, we can get lost in the magic of make-believe and fantasy no matter what age we are! Natalya Neidhart

The worst thing about Halloween is, of course, candy corn. It's unbelievable to me. Candy corn is the only candy in the history of America that's never been advertised. And there's a reason. All of the candy corn that was ever made was made in 1911. And so, since nobody eats that stuff, every year there's a ton of it left over. Lewis Black

Charlie Brown is the one person I identify with. C.B. is such a loser. He wasn't even the star of his own Halloween special. Chris Rock

This Halloween, the most popular mask is the Arnold Schwarzenegger mask. And the best part? With a mouth full of candy you will sound just like him. Conan O'Brien

Being in a band you can wear whatever you want - it's like an excuse for Halloween every day. Gwen Stefani

I see my face in the mirror and go, 'I'm a Halloween costume? That's what they think of me?' Drew Carey

On Halloween, kids get to assume, for one night the outward forms of their innermost dread, and they're also allowed to take candy from strangers - the scariest thing of all. Kate Christensen

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

Sincerely,

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



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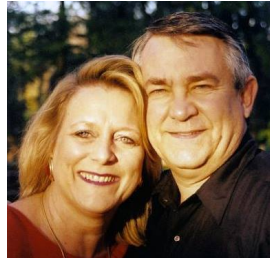
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Issue: #127
November/December
2019



Dear Friends,

I went to a Holiday Music Concert today and a tenor soloist sang a sweet song I had totally forgotten! He sang "My Grown Up Christmas List." The words have such poignancy today I would like to share them with you.

**"Do you remember me?
I sat upon your knee
I wrote to you with childhood fantasies
Well I'm all grown up now
and still need help somehow
I'm not a child but my heart still can dream.
So here's my lifelong wish
My grown-up Christmas List**

**Not for myself, but for a world in need
No more lives torn apart,
Then wars would never start
and time would heal the heart
And everyone would have a friend
And right would always win
And love would never end, oh
This is my grown-up Christmas List."**

I kind of love this grown-up Christmas list!

Donna and I wish you all a wonderful holiday season, be it Christmas, Hanuka, Kwanzaa, Winter Solstice, Las Posadas, Diwali or Chinese New Year!

[Be Sure to "Like" Us on Facebook!](#)

Keep in touch!

David (and Donna)

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER: A Holiday Thought

It is the holiday season for most folks in the Western World. And while this can be a time of celebration and family connection, I've noticed some holiday hazards for couples.

Here are a few:

- The holiday season can be stressful, especially for women who usually wind up doing the shopping, cooking, arranging family stuff, worrying about how drunk Uncle Bill will get, etc. I notice that men tend to escape or avoid these extra stresses, which can, in itself, lead to conflict.**
- Extended families and in-laws usually come into the picture which, for many couples is a built-in source of conflict.**
- The extra business and effort to be with the larger family can take a couple away from each other, even if all the families get along.**
- Spending, debt, and other stress about money seem to peak around this time of year which adds another potential conflict ("opportunity", I mean) for couples.**

Here are some tips:

- Men...for heaven's sake, help her out with stuff, even if you are not that much into it! You will be her HERO!**
- Women...for heaven's sake, tell him thank you and that you appreciate that is willing to**

- help, even if he doesn't do it exactly the way you would have done it.
- Use dialogue to strategize and plan for the visits with extended families. Learn about each others desires and fears ahead of time. Also, strategize ways you can "check in" with each other throughout the time and stay connected.
 - Develop some simple rituals or traditions for you as a couples and/or your nuclear family. Slow it down and really connect meaningfully with those you live with.
 - Dialogue again about gifts and spending expectations. You know by now that you, as a couple, are probably at opposite ends of the galaxy from each other. Also, remember that generosity and giving does not have to involve just money. (And be sure to show up and tell each other clearly what gifts you may want so your partner doesn't have to guess and get it wrong!)

Donna and I wish for you joyful, relaxed, blessed and connected holidays. With great encouragement and hope, David and Donna.

P.S.: If you are interested, we did a local podcast in Frederick for people to listen to. We are podcast #7. It's about Imago in general and the holidays in particular.

Find it here: thenewmid.com/podcast.

**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 10-12, 2020, Frederick, MD

February 21-23, 2020, Frederick, MD

March 27-29, 2020, Frederick, MD

Parenting Workshop

February 3-4, 2020, Frederick, MD

QUOTES OF THE MONTH

Blessed is the season which engages the whole world in a conspiracy of love. Hamilton Wright Mabie

The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched - they must be felt with the heart. Helen Keller

Christmas, my child, is love in action. Every time we love, every time we give, it's Christmas. Dale Evans

Unity, to be real, must stand the severest strain without breaking. Mahatma Gandhi

Christmas is a necessity. There has to be at least one day of the year to remind us that we're here for something else besides ourselves. Eric Sevareid

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

Every piece of the universe, even the tiniest little snow crystal, matters somehow. I have a place in the pattern, and so do you. Thinking of you this holiday season! T.A. Barron

Love the giver more than the gift. Brigham Young

I stopped believing in Santa Claus when I was six. Mother took me to see him in a department store and he asked for my autograph. Shirley Temple

Do what you do. This Christmas, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, New Year's Eve, Twelfth Night, Valentine's Day, Mardi Gras, St. Paddy's Day, and every day henceforth. Just do what you do. Live out your life and your traditions on your own terms. If it offends others, so be it.

That's their problem. Chris Rose

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

Sincerely,

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