



NEW MEXICO MARRIAGES FIRST PROJECT PRESENTS:

MARRIAGE LIFELINE!



Making Your Relationship A Priority

(by Leonie Oliva)

Welcome to the summer issue of The Marriage Lifeline! In this issue we are examining how we value our relationships and prioritize them compared with other things and people in our lives. We have relationships with many different people - family, friends, co-workers, neighbors - and obviously, the priority we give to each will vary. But what we are talking about here is our relationship with our "significant other" whether we are married, engaged or dating with the thought of having a long term relationship. How highly do we value this relationship and how does this show in how we prioritize the relationship in our day to day life?

Hopefully, we all value our partners highly but it is worth taking a moment to think about how we reflect this in our behavior and show this to them. Do they know without a doubt that they are our Number One? Are they actually Number One? Or is something or someone else taking first place? If the answer to either of the first two questions is "no," then there are likely to be problems in this relationship at some point. We have all heard the saying "what you put in to something is what you will get out of it" and this applies to relationships as much as any thing else. So, if your partner is not Number One, or does not feel like he/she is, this will affect how he/she treats you and can establish a vicious circle of bad feelings or resentments.

Maybe in your mind there is no question that your partner is Number One. You love them dearly and are completely committed to the relationship. Great! But how much time do you devote in your day to this "priority" and how does it stack up compared to work commitments, kids, hobbies, housework, extended family members, friends, voluntary

work, etc.? Obviously, we all have lots to do and cannot be with or be doing things for our partners 24/7, but if we take an honest look we may find there is some discrepancy between our partner being in the Number One spot and how much time or energy we devote to this "priority." It can be easy for us to fall into the trap of "taking for granted" the most important person in our life. After all, they are always around and keep on doing the things we want/need them to do and we are busy just "doing life." Sometimes we are busy helping other people or causes, with the best intentions, but with the unintended side effect that our primary relationship starts to suffer from a little neglect.

Another trap in this area has to do with communication and whether our feelings for our partner are being conveyed "implicitly" or "explicitly." For example, your thought process may go.... "My husband is Number One and he must know that because of all the things I do for him, like running our household and looking after our kids, making his lunch, lovingly folding his socks, and thinking about him all day." While your love may be implied in all these actions, is your partner actually aware that these are expressions of your love? Are you speaking his/her love language and do these actions mean the same to him/her as they do to you? Maybe not. In which case he/she may not be feeling very loved at all. We also need to make sure we use explicit communication and actions to get the message across; things that cannot be misunderstood or overlooked. Things like: an unexpected hug, holding hands, a date night, an "I love you" text message, time alone without the kids to let you reconnect as a couple, giving up something your partner knows you love to do to be with him/her and communicating that. These explicit communications let your partner know how much you care and "applied frequently," will certainly let them know they are Number One in your life!

Inside this issue:

Does Valuing Yourself Affect Love & Relationships?	2
Finding Balance	3
The Youth Lifeline & Dating Dilemmas	4
Love the One You're With.....	5
Love can Rock Without All The Talk!	6
Do You Need To Laugh?	6
Calendar of Events	7

Featured Upcoming Event:

Mark your calendar and plan to attend the "Love Can Rock Without All The Talk!" Event with Dr. Pat Love on Friday, August 21st, and Saturday, August 22nd!

Does Valuing Yourself Affect Love And Relationships?

(by Rebecca Holland)

When it comes to social and romantic relationships, people tend to feel most comfortable around those with a similar level of self esteem. This means that on a subconscious level, low self esteem attracts others with low self esteem and high self esteem attracts others with high self esteem. This is a generalized statement and will obviously not apply to every single relationship. In some cases, people with low self esteem may be attracted to people with high self esteem because they enjoy the security or comfort that relationship could provide. Likewise, someone with high self esteem may be attracted to someone with low self esteem. Although this is usually less common, it does happen, especially if the attraction was based on how a person looked. When it comes to the long term success of such relationships where there has been a “mismatch” of self esteem, there are two possible outcomes. The most common outcome of a mismatch of self esteem is for the relationship to end, usually within one year, or at most, two years. This is typically enough time for the “infatuation” period to pass, whereby physical attractiveness begins to play less of a role than it did at the very start of the relationship.

Breakups commonly occur due to insecurities, and possible self sabotaging behaviors of the person with the low self esteem. For example, if the male in the relationship talks to a lot of women or has many female friends, then his partner (*who has low self esteem*) may become jealous. This can then lead to arguments, over-controlling behavior and resentment towards each other. Unless these issues are resolved and overcome, the relationship will end.

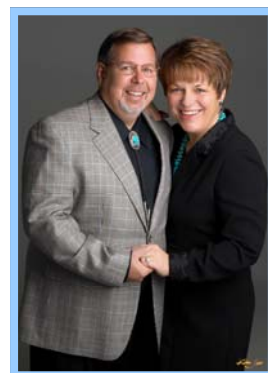
The second outcome in a relationship where there has been a mismatch of self esteem is for a type of “harmonizing” effect to occur. As the relationship progresses over time, both partners begin to adopt each others level of self esteem, ultimately striking somewhat of a balance between the two. The most common form of harmonization occurs as the person with the lower self esteem adopts his/her partner’s higher self esteem. In other words, being with his/her partner causes him/her to feel better about him/herself, more confident and more valued as a person. These factors alone will naturally cause self esteem to rise.

Of course the opposite of this may also occur.

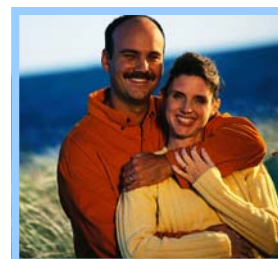
The person in the relationship with high self esteem may slowly begin to adopt his/her partner’s low self esteem. For example, he/she may pick up various insecurities or anxieties his/her partner may have, thereby lowering his/her own self esteem. Ultimately, less insecurities in a relationship lead to lower suspicions, lower worries and less arguments. Overall, this makes the relationship happier and more satisfying.

One of the biggest barriers self esteem poses to a relationship is ending the relationship before it has even begun. This happens because with low self esteem often comes feelings of being unworthy or undeserving of love. As a result, the person may feel that love is something that cannot be achieved, and that he/she will never experience it. Consequently, this mental attitude may cause the person to never actively pursue a potential love, or alternatively, avoid love when it appears. This happens because he/she does not think he/she is good enough to be loved. People, who do not think they are good enough to be loved, very often have low self worth. This lack of self worth comes from a lack of self love, whereby they do not truly love and accept themselves and so cannot accept love and acceptance from others. A lack of self love also leads to a state of emotional impoverishment. This means that because you are unable to create the feelings of love and acceptance within you, you look to other people as a source of approval or disapproval to create those feelings for you. While this may sound like a valid way of creating love and acceptance, it has a major drawback. A lack of self love causes you to see people not for who they really are, but rather for what they can or cannot do for you.

As you can see throughout the numerous examples given in this article, self esteem plays a very big role in not only finding love, but also in maintaining love. If successful love is something you desire, then you should continue to actively improve your self esteem. If you have value for yourself, others will see that and be drawn to it. This will benefit not only the relationships you have, but also every aspect of who you are.



**Michael and Rebecca Holland,
NMMFP Directors**



New Mexico Marriages First

Project

(NMMFP)

exists to:

Provide culturally appropriate relationship education, relationship enrichment events, and programs that explore positive relationship models for married couples, engaged couples, couples interested in marriage and teenagers thus strengthening marriage and reducing the incidence of divorce.

*The
NMMFP
Motto:
"I Do! I Did? I
Will . . .
For LIFE!"*

Finding Balance

(by Michael Holland)

For many couples, finding time to spend together is difficult considering the demands of work, household obligations, business commitments and running everyday errands. However, research tells us that for the strength and longevity of a couple, the individuals need to spend quality time together. All of us have 24 hours each day so the answer is not in finding more time, but using the time that we have wisely and to our advantage. In a previous issue of the Marriage Lifeline, we discussed the topic of intimacy and the various forms that intimacy takes. One type of intimacy that was mentioned is the kind of intimacy that is formed from spending time together doing routine activities such as chores and errands. There are many ways to manipulate our time and schedules so that we can spend more time together. Here are some suggestions and ideas to get started:

- Get up a little earlier. Mornings are usually rushed with getting children ready for daily activities and making lunches. Try getting up 15 minutes earlier and sharing a cup of coffee during that quiet, uninterrupted time of the day.
- Save some water - shower together!
- Try running errands together. Who says one of you has to get the dry cleaning and the other has to do the grocery shopping? Do the errands together once in a while and then stop for a cup of coffee or even a nice lunch afterwards. Turn the time into a date!
- Work together to accomplish some of the housecleaning. Perhaps one person can work in the kitchen and the other can dust in the next room. You are close enough to talk, yet not under each other's feet. Not only will the cleaning get done, but you will have spent time together!
- Preparing meals together can be another way of carving out time for each other. One can prepare the main dish, while the other prepares the salad and dessert. This works well when you are not rushed to get a meal on the table.
- Go for a walk. Walk the dog together or take the baby out in the stroller. Plan time to exercise together. Often we exercise alone, but exercising together is a great way encourage one another to reach toward your fitness goals.

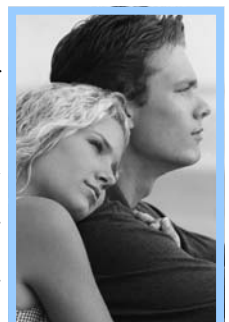
- Spend time relaxing together. Who said you have to be engaged in conversation? For example, each of you could read your own magazine and just enjoy being near each other while relaxing at the end of a busy day.

By thinking creatively, and using time wisely, couples can increase the amount of "togetherness" that is available to them.

Another frustration for many couples is finding time to be together as a family by balancing the time spent together with the time spent in other outside activities such as sports, music, and other interests. Here are some tips to consider as you are seeking to balance your family life:

- Schedule a family night. Make one night a week "family time" and play games, read, share music, or cook together. Make that time special by turning off the TV, the computer, and the phones.
- Consider your travel time. Use the time in your car traveling to soccer practice, church activities, music lessons, or errands to talk with your children. Today's parents spend eleven hours per week less with their teenagers than parents did two decades ago. Use your "car time" to create togetherness!
- Eat dinner together. In today's fast paced life, many couples and many families do not eat together. Only six out of ten children eat dinner regularly with their parents.
- Ask yourself how important each activity you are involved in REALLY is! Will it matter in 10 years whether or not you attended the latest and greatest sports contest or concert? Are your activities allowing you to spend time connecting with your spouse and children? By spending time together with your spouse and children, you strengthen your bonds!!

Thinking about togetherness in a different light can actually help us to make the most of our time. Spending time with our spouse and children helps us to know their likes, and what pleases them. In short, we get to know each other better and more intimately, resulting in closer, stronger bonds.



THE YOUTH LIFELINE

(by Ashley Salazar)

Celebrate Youth!!!

We had a GREAT time with Justin Lookadoo at our Celebrate YOUth event on Saturday, May 9th! Justin really taught us so much about having healthy relationships!

We thought it would be fun to share some of his tips with you:

1. The Way a Relationship Begins Is the Way It Will End.
2. What You Put Into the Relationship Now Will Determine the Pain In Your Relationship.
3. You Will Be Treated the Way You Dress.
4. Girls, Control How Far You Go.
5. Guys, Control How Far You Go.
6. Girls, Never Compromise Who You Are To Get a Guy To Like You.
7. Guys, Stand Up and Be a Man.
8. Girls, You Can Be a Ferrari Or a Ford... It's Your Choice!



“Pick the day.
Enjoy it to the hilt.
The day as it
comes. People as
they come... The
past, I think, has
helped me
appreciate the
present - and I
don't want to spoil
any of it by
fretting about the
future.”

Audrey Hepburn

Dating Dilemmas

“You have brains in
your head. You have
feet in your shoes.
You can steer yourself
any direction you
choose. You're on
your own, and you
know what you know.
And you are the one
who'll decide where
you'll go.”

Dr. Seuss



“WE'VE BEEN ON THIS DATE FOR TWENTY MINUTES...ISN'T IT A LITTLE SOON TO TELL ME YOU LOVE ME?”



Ashley Salazar,
Youth Educator

LOVE THE ONE YOU'RE WITH....

(by Ashley Salazar)

From the day you are born, until the day you die you will always have a relationship with yourself. When no one else knows who you are, you will know. When no one else knows what you are doing, you are always aware. I take that with great responsibility because often times we act our best when we know others are watching us, but we don't allow ourselves that same luxury... shouldn't we be on our best behavior when it is just us? Shouldn't we think highly enough of ourselves that we want to be a person of great character not only to impress others but to impress ourselves?

I am a person who really values what other people think of me. I like to be told that I am a good person, that I am doing a good job and I like to impress people! Is this bad? Absolutely not! But as I have grown up I have discovered something else. I like to wake up, and go to bed, and look in the mirror and really like the person I am looking at! I am not necessarily talking about the way I look, but rather I like to like the person I am. I like to know that I have integrity, and that I am a good family member, and a good friend. I want to know that I enjoy spending time with people like me! After all, I can't expect others to be something I cannot be, right?

So, what exactly is valuing yourself? I like to think that a lot of that has to do with staying true to yourself, and always being able to answer to yourself. It is easy to lie to others about what you may or may not be doing, but it is really hard to lie to yourself! Abraham Lincoln once said, "Whatever you are... Be a good one." How true is this? We all have different dreams, goals, and ambitions, things we value! This is what makes us unique, but whatever our goals are... we need to pursue them and make sure they are healthy for us.

So exactly how do we act when we really value something? Well, I really value my family and friends. Because of this, I love them and I respect them. I would never let someone talk badly about them, and I would defend them. I trust them when they tell me something, and I am always honest in return. I would never betray them, make them do something they don't want to do, or encourage them to do something that is bad for them. I want what is best for them because I love them!

Shouldn't we do the same for ourselves? Shouldn't we want what is best for us because we really value our lives and don't want to waste it on things that don't matter? Why would we allow someone to bring us down and to make us something less than what we are? Why would we be in an unhealthy relationship or friendship? Why would we do something that we know isn't good for us or could have a negative affect on our future? If we set a goal, we need to work toward fulfilling it! Do it because you owe it to yourself to be the best you that you can be.

Someone once said that, "Character is who you are when NO ONE is looking." How true is that? Well, it got me to thinking... who am I when no one is watching? Does it match up to the person I am when society is watching me? Honestly, not always... but it's something to work on and something to think about. How great would it be to be so transparent that you have nothing to hide, because you have so much character strength and value in your life!

If anything, be true to who you are and to the choices you make. You are the only one that can really decide what you are going to do and who you are going to be. That is a great responsibility... don't take it lightly!!!

"I Do Not Hook Up"

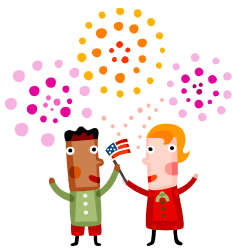
The first time I heard this song on the radio, I really wasn't sure what to make of the words Kelly Clarkson was screaming about. When she sings: *"Oh, no, I do not hook up, up, I go slow . So if you want me, I don't come cheap, Keep your hand in my hand, your heart on your sleeve. Oh, no, I do not hook up, up, I fall deep. 'Cause the more that you try, the harder I'll fight to say goodnight."* It got me thinking... Do we do that in society today? Do we take things slow or do we "hook up" and jump in head first? I really think we hook up. We don't date and have healthy relationships. Why not? Why don't we slow down, and actually get to know the person we are dating before we jump in physically? Will it really hurt anything... probably not! In fact, I guarantee that if you stop and really get to know the person you like before you start seriously dating, your relationship is probably going to be much healthier! So sit back, slow down, and start thinking what you can give instead of get and what you can learn instead of regret!





**Leonie Oliva,
Project and Events
Coordinator**

**Contact NMMFP if you
would like to schedule a
marriage event in your
community!!**



1207 Golf Course Road, Ste. E
Rio Rancho, New Mexico 87124
Phone: (505) 891-1846
Cell: (505) 401-5734 or
400-9869
Email:
mholland@nmmarriagesfirst.org
rholland@nmmarriagesfirst.org



**Mike Gibson,
Office & Public Relations
Manager**

Love Can Rock Without All The Talk!

(By Leonie Oliva)

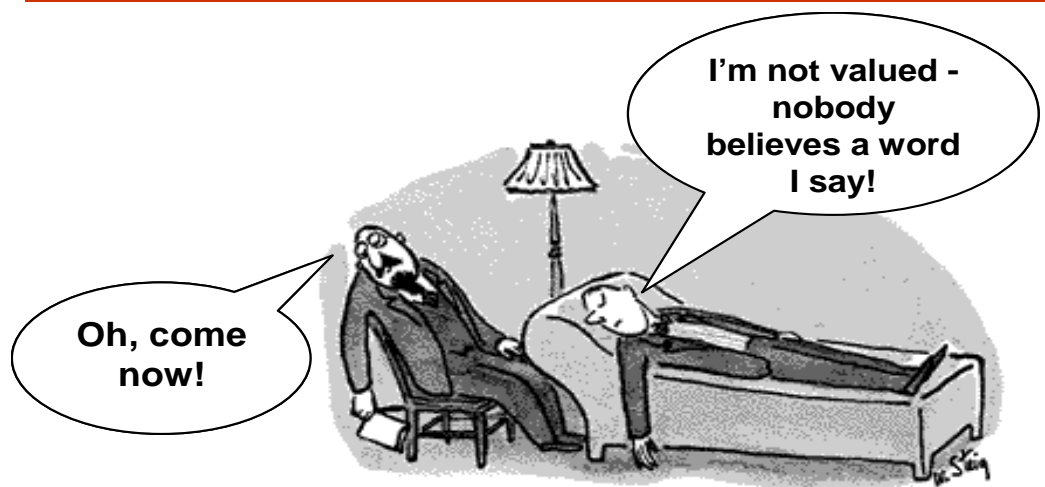
Would you like to know how to make your relationship rock without spending hours in classes and days analyzing and talking about it? If you could learn the secrets for creating and maintaining a great love life in just a few hours, wouldn't you jump at the chance? If the answer is "yes", here is your opportunity! On August 21st and 22nd we are partnering with Healthy Marriages to bring distinguished professor and "Certified Love Educator" Dr. Pat Love to Albuquerque to lead a couples' conference - "Love Can Rock Without All The Talk!"

Dr. Love is known for her warmth, humor and commitment to relationship education. She is in demand as an expert presenter at national and international conferences and has appeared numerous times on Oprah, The Today Show and CNN. As well as being a regular contributor to magazines such as Cosmopolitan, Men's Health and Woman's World, Pat's popular books include "Hot Monogamy" and "The Truth About Love."

The August workshop will be held in Albuquerque (venue to be announced) and will start on Friday, the 21st, 6:30 to 10:00pm, and conclude on Saturday, the 22nd, 9:00am to 1:30pm. The cost is just \$10 per couple and includes light snacks, refreshments and on-site, adult supervised childcare (for children aged 0-11 years). The topics that Dr. Love will take an in-depth look at include: intimacy and establishing deep connections and understanding one another by embracing differences. The event promises to be a great two days so sign up for this conference and learn the secrets for long lasting intimacy, passion and romance!! *Space is limited, so sign up early!!*

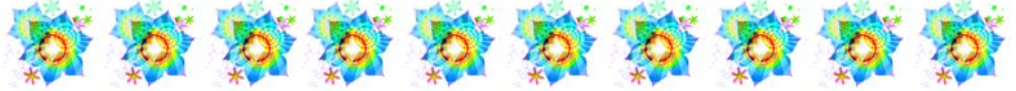


DO YOU NEED TO LAUGH?



www.TheMarriageLifeLine.com

Calendar of Events



New Mexico
Marriages First
Project Staff:

Rebecca Holland,
Project Director

Michael Holland,
Assistant Project
Director

Mike Gibson,
Office and Public
Relations Manager

Leonie Oliva,
Project and Events
Coordinator

Ashley Salazar,
Youth Educator

Anita Bruce,
Accountant

Gary Scheller,
IT Support

(505-891-1846)



NMMFP Events

We ask that you register for all of the NMMFP events. NMMFP events include childcare, meals or snacks!!

June 2009

NMMFP Premarital Education Class, Saturday, June 6th, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm. Located at the Inn at Rio Rancho. Contact NMMFP to register (505-891-1846). **Class is FREE!!**

July 2009

Healthy Marriages 2009 Summer Class Series:

- **Building Resiliency**, Tuesday, July 7th, 7:00pm – 8:30pm. When difficult things happen what are your resources? Come and learn ways to handle the unexpected.
- **Hold me Close**, Tuesday, July 14th, 7:00pm – 8:30pm. Come and learn about the 8 stages of intimacy. (*)
- **Anger & Forgiveness**, Tuesday, July 21st, 7:00pm – 8:30pm. Come to a workshop on forgiveness. (*)

Classes are FREE!! Call Healthy Marriages for more information and to register (505-247-1511). Classes marked (*) are open only to couples who have attended any relationship enrichment service in the last 18 months.

August 2009

“Love Can Rock Without All The Talk!” with **Dr. Pat Love**, Friday, August 21st, 6:30pm to 10:00pm and Saturday, August 22nd, 9:00am to 1:30pm. Venue to be announced. Contact NMMFP to register (505-891-1846). **Conference is \$10 per couple!!**



September 2009

NMMFP Premarital Education Class, Saturday, September 12th, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm. Venue to be announced. Contact NMMFP to register (505-891-1846). **Training is FREE!!**

NMMFP Marriage Mentor Training, Saturday September 26th, 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Venue to be announced. Contact NMMFP to register (505-891-1846).



The Family Lifeline, Inc.
New Mexico Marriages First Project
1207 Golf Course Road, Suite E
Rio Rancho, NM 87124

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Paid
Rio Rancho, NM
Permit # 750

**Your Summer Marriage
Life Line Newsletter
Is Inside!**

To:

**Mark Your Calendar and Plan to Attend the
“Love Can Rock Without All The Talk!” Event
on Friday, August 21st, and
Saturday, August 22nd!**

www.TheMarriageLifeline.com