

NEW MEXICO MARRIAGES FIRST PROJECT PRESENTS:

MARRIAGE LIFE LINE!



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Upcoming Events to Plan for:

- **NMMFP Marriage Mentor Training**, Mondays, September 17th and 24th, 2007 from 6:30 to 9:30 pm. Call to Register (891-1846)
- **"A Romantic Night Out of This World" Event**, September 22, 2007, 6:30 pm, Park Plaza Hotel in Albuquerque. **Sold Out!**
- **"Laugh Your Way to a Better Relationship" Event**, October 26, 2007, 6:00 pm, Pueblo of Jemez Youth Center. Call to Register (891-1846)
- **NMMFP Marriage Enrichment Day**, November 17, 2007, 9:00 am - 5:00 pm. Call to Register (891-1846)

Newsletter Date: Fall 2007 Volume 1, Issue 4

KEEP YOUR RELATIONSHIP FLYING HIGH!

(Written by Tony Oliva)

Balloon Fiesta time is here in Albuquerque and soon the morning skies will be filled with a mass of brightly colored balloons of every shape and size as balloonists from all over the world come to take part in the Fiesta. Each year we see balloons sinking to the ground in unexpected places - suddenly out of fuel or "good air" - and then it's back to base to work out what went wrong and to prepare to fly another day. Doesn't that sound a bit like marriage? At times the relationship is wonderful and you are "flying high" together. At other times you may be ascending (making progress) or descending (having problems). Sometimes the relationship may even hit rock bottom - your balloon is grounded and you have to work out how to fly again. We all want to be "flying high" in our marriages - to be in relationships that nurture, affirm and nourish our spirits and make our hearts soar. If your marriage is in descent mode, or maybe has even hit the ground, here are some steps to help get you airborne again. Don't focus on your grievances but instead start a "grow list." When things go wrong in a relationship it is very unlikely that you will be able to demand or complain your way back on track to love. Instead you have to "grow" back those feelings. Here's how to make a grow list:

1. **Decide on something you'd like to have different in your relationship. Examples:** "I want better sex" or "I want us to quit arguing about money."
2. **Figure out what your contribution to the problem is? Not what your partner does or doesn't do but what you do or don't do (this may be hard to think about!) Examples:** "I don't do enough romancing and courting, so my partner doesn't get her heart turned on" or "I justify breaking the budget by making excuses for impulse purchases."
3. **Design some experiments, in which you do the opposite of your usual behavior pattern identified in Step 2 and identify times to try them out. Examples:** "I'll send a card, call for no reason to say I love you, or sneak a love note into her laptop case" or "I'll confess to making excuses for breaking the budget, promise 10 days of careful spending, and then give a progress report."
4. **Do the experiments, but don't tell your partner you're doing them.** Don't wait for your partner to deserve them, just do them.
5. **Note the results, especially how your partner reacts.** Is there a change in your partner's behavior or response? Check to see if you like these results better than those which result from your usual behavior pattern. It's likely there will be a change and, if not, you may need to keep refining your experiments.

Complaining about a problem is like pouring fertilizer on a brown spot in your lawn. It just puts the energy into a place that's as good as dead. Instead, try working on a grow list to nurture your relationship back to health. By taking responsibility for your own behavior and experimenting with some modifications to how you usually act or respond to a problem, you are investing your energy in a positive way that can help your relationship "take off and fly again."



Tony Oliva,
Family Life Line, Inc.
Executive Director



Marriage Quote

“Adam and Eve had an ideal marriage. He didn't have to hear about all the men she could have married and she didn't have to hear about how well his Mother cooked.”

Unknown



BALLOON FIESTA AND MARRIAGE: WHAT DO THEY HAVE IN COMMON?

Written by Rebecca Holland

Fall in New Mexico is amazing! The beauty of the trees changing color, the excitement of the state fair, and the grandeur of the balloon fiesta all make this time of year especially fun. During this time, I am also reminded of how marriages are placed under considerable strain. Children returning to school, traffic increasing around the city and the pressures and demands from employers as the end of the year approaches can all make this time of year a bit challenging for marriages. It would be incredible if the fun events of the fall could outweigh the challenges of life, but sometimes marriages struggle to “get off the ground” during this season. So, how can we as couples prepare our marriages for this season? Well, let’s take a lesson from the balloon fiesta experience and apply it to our relationships.

Seventeen years ago, Michael and I moved to New Mexico. It was August when we arrived here from North Dakota. As September arrived, we kept hearing all the excitement build regarding the balloon fiesta. We decided to set aside the time to go to the opening day of the fiesta events. What we experienced has stayed with us through all of these years. Since we were living in Los Alamos at the time, we knew that we had a bit of a commute to get to the balloon fiesta the morning of the first mass ascension. The night before the event, we prepared ourselves by packing extra clothes for our two children, bagging up some snacks and drinks, gathering some folding chairs and getting everyone to bed early so we could get up at 4:00 am to head to Albuquerque. None of us got much sleep that night because we were all so excited about going to the fiesta. When morning arrived, no one complained about getting up early because we had all anticipated and prepared ourselves for this. When we arrived at balloon fiesta park, the traffic, parking, people, cool weather, and walking were a bit cumbersome, but no one complained because we knew we were so close to seeing this amazing event. The mass ascension was indeed incredible. Walking out on the field with all of the balloons, watching them fill with hot air, take off and soar was beyond what words could describe. As a family, we were caught up in the morning activities and in awe of what we were feeling as we watched each balloon take off. Seeing the sky filled with wonderful colors was incredible and the special shapes brought much excitement to our children. We talked for a few minutes about the balloon landing and how they would ever get down from the sky again.

Somewhere between 9:00 and 10:00 am that morning, we all began to crash. First, the sun became very hot and we had to shed our second and third layers of clothing. Next, our feet began to hurt from all the walking and our arms were tired from carrying all our “stuff.” We became irritable as we dealt with all the people surrounding us. Tiredness kicked in and grumpiness took over from a lack of sleep and we began to snap at each other. The smells from all the food vendors enticed our hunger and the kids began to whine and nag for hot food. Spending a fortune on breakfast burritos and cinnamon rolls didn’t help our attitudes that morning. By 10:30 am, we were done with the festivities and ready to head for home. We became more focused on the inconveniences of the



morning rather than the joy of the event. Needless to say, we found ourselves arguing in the car on the way home and making statements like “You were the one who decided that this would be great fun!” or “Well, I hope you enjoyed yourself because I’m never doing this again!”

Now, I know none of you can share in this experience, but bear with me as I compare this to marriage. Isn’t it funny how excited we get about marriage prior to the event. We prepare and plan and talk nonstop about how wonderful it will be. When the day to say “I do” arrives, we are thrilled and excited and ready to handle just about anything. The wedding is (in most cases) an incredible day to remember. However, somewhere between day one of being married and day 1,894, we lose sight

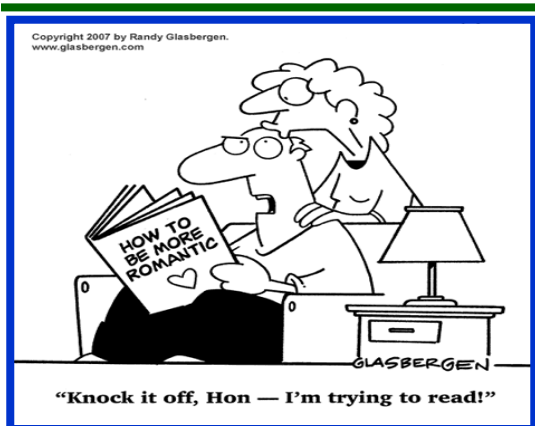


of the marriage and begin to focus on all of the negative by products of the relationship: she complains too much; he doesn’t pick up his clothes; she tries to control me; he never listens. Like the balloon fiesta experience, we lose sight of all the wonderful details of the event and we begin to turn an amazing covenant into nothing more than a mediocre event.

One thing I forgot to mention about our balloon fiesta experience was what happened as we got further and further away from the field. In the midst of our arguing, we looked up at the sky and saw all the colors from the balloons and all the specialty shapes and stepped right back into awe concerning the whole event. Within minutes, we had turned to each other and smiled. We suddenly remembered what the day was all about. Maybe you and your spouse have lost sight of what your marriage is all about – maybe you have gotten so caught up in all the negative that you cannot see the reasons you fell in love in the first place. Maybe you aren’t looking up at the “sky” but you are focused on the “hot sun” or “your tired feet.” It only takes a minute to change your focus and to look for the good in your relationship. It’s there – it has been all along – it’s just a matter of where you are looking and what you are choosing to remember.

As we head into balloon fiesta season, spend some time thinking about your marriage and how you can look at it differently. If you want to soar in your relationship, you have to remember all the wonderful things that brought you two together in the first place. Then, jump on board and enjoy the ride.

DOES YOUR MARRIAGE NEED A LAUGH?



New Mexico Marriages First Project (NMMFP)

exists to:

Provide culturally appropriate marriage education, marriage enrichment projects, 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!”*

www.thefamilylifeline.net



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

www.thefamilylifeline.net

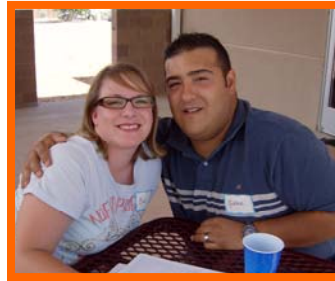
Marriage Quote

*“The first year of
marriage is like wet
cement; the
impressions made in
it are much harder
to change once it
has set.”*

**Robert
Wolgemuth**

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT AND MENTOR TRAINING

(Written by Michael Holland)



This has been a busy summer for the NMMFP staff! We have had several events that have impacted many couples throughout the Albuquerque area. In June, twelve couples became Marriage Mentors and were taught to use the PREPARE/ENRICH curriculum. Mentors are couples who have been taught to work with couples who come to the New Mexico Marriages First Project for assistance with their relationships or to prepare for marriage. The couples who call our office generally are seeking help for

a troubled relationship or want to prepare for marriage. However, we also see couples who want to take a good marriage and make it even better. Our trained Marriage Mentors can work with couples to improve their relationships and by using the PREPARE/ENRICH curriculum, we can ensure that the couples who are served are receiving high quality “relationship education!” Marriage Mentors must complete an application process that includes taking an assessment that measures their own relationship, attending a minimum of six hours of mentor training, and going through a personal interview. In addition, Marriage Mentors must attend quarterly trainings throughout the year.

In August, NMMFP trained another seven couples to be marriage mentors, and in September we will be training another 15 couples. Educated Marriage Mentors serve throughout the communities in various churches and organizations, as well as mentor for the NMMFP. The NMMFP is always recruiting couples who would like to serve at the NMMFP, in their church, or at other organizations by becoming trained Marriage Mentors. If you and your spouse would like to become a Marriage Mentor, please call or e-mail the office. We would be glad to give you more information about becoming a Marriage Mentor.



In July, we held a marriage enrichment event and addressed several critical areas for married couples: marriage as a process, communication, intimacy, compatibility, and commitment. At the marriage enrichment event, couples were given time to work together on issues in their marriage, as well as hear from other couples about the struggles and difficulties they face and how they have overcome them. One couple said that they were so grateful for the enrichment event because it gave them the tools that they needed to discuss topics that were very difficult. They said: “Thank

you for this training. More couples should attend as they will find that this will help them to talk at a deeper, more meaningful level than they have experienced before.” We encourage you to take advantage of the opportunities for enriching your relationship by signing up for one of the workshops listed on our calendar of events.



For more information on Marriage Mentoring or Marriage Enrichment Events, please call the office at 505-891-1846 or visit us on the web at www.thefamilylifeline.net.

WWW.THEFAMILYLIFELINE.NET

CALENDAR OF MARRIAGE EVENTS

September 2007

NMMFP Mentor Training, September 17th and 24th from 6:30 pm to 9:30 pm. Contact New Mexico Marriages First, 1207 Golf Course Road, Suite E, Rio Rancho, New Mexico to Register (505-891-1846) **FREE!!**

"A Romantic Evening Out of This World" sponsored by the NMMFP. Saturday, September 22nd, at the Park Plaza Hotel in Albuquerque. ***The event includes a three course dinner, dancing, free childcare and educational comedy*** from Kenn Kington. The evening will star the internationally renowned performer and speaker for the "Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus" message - Michael Najarian. ***\$10.00 per couple for the first 250 couples who sign up and pay!***

Sold Out!

October 2007

Laugh Your Way To A Better Relationship, Friday, October 26th. 6:00 - 11:00 pm. Event will be held at the Pueblo of Jemez Youth Center. Contact New Mexico Marriages First, 1207 Golf Course Road, Suite E, Rio Rancho, New Mexico to Register (505-891-1846) **FREE!!**

November 2007

NMMFP Mentor Booster Training, November 5th from 7:00 - 9:00 pm. Contact New Mexico Marriages First, 1207 Golf Course Road, Suite E, Rio Rancho, New Mexico to Register (505-891-1846) **FREE!!**

Marine Marriage Enrichment Workshop, November 10th from 10:00 am to 12:00 pm. Contact New Mexico Marriages First, 1207 Golf Course Road, Suite E, Rio Rancho, New Mexico to Register (505-891-1846) **FREE!!**

NMMFP Premarital Education Class at the Pueblo of Jemez, Thursdays, November 15th and 29th. 7:00 - 9:00 pm. Contact New Mexico Marriages First, 1207 Golf Course Road, Suite E, Rio Rancho, New Mexico to Register (505-891-1846) **FREE!!**

NMMFP Marriage Enrichment Day, November 17th from 9:00 am to 5:00 pm. Contact New Mexico Marriages First, 1207 Golf Course Road, Suite E, Rio Rancho, New Mexico to Register (505-891-1846) **FREE!!**

December 2007

NMMFP Premarital Education Class at the Pueblo of Jemez, Thursdays, December 6th and 13th. 7:00 - 9:00 pm. Contact New Mexico Marriages First, 1207 Golf Course Road, Suite E, Rio Rancho, New Mexico to Register (505-891-1846) **FREE!!**

A HEART FELT THANK YOU!

Written by Mike Gibson

It is hard to believe the first year of the NMMFP grant is nearing an end. The year has gone by so rapidly and it is hard to fathom that we are approaching the second year of the New Mexico Marriages First Program.

What an interesting series of events this last year brought us - the challenges we have gone through and most of all, the successful interactions we have had promoting healthy marriages in communities. These experiences only serve to make us more united in our efforts, and have given us each a uniquely focused perspective for the upcoming year and the future. It is indeed a blessing to realize how much we have accomplished in this first year. We also recognize that this was only made possible with the partnership of some very special local business, churches, and caring individuals. We now express with a sincere heart felt voice, "Thank you! May the help and concern you have shared with us over this past year be given back to you in abundance!"

We proudly recognize the following businesses, churches and individuals for their contributions to our project. We could not have accomplished the task at hand without your partnership!

NMMFP Donors and Supporters

JM Builders – Micheal Dickenson, Timeless Images Photography – Mike Trompak, Forms Plus – Greg Dart, Rio Rancho Presbyterian Church – Pastor Jerry Faoust, Exhibit Solutions of New Mexico – Gina M. Euell, Grace Outreach – Pastor Kent Barnard, Haven House – Joy Tauber, Rio Rancho Regional Chamber of Commerce – Debbie Moore, Rio West Church – Pastor Don Schlichte, Legacy Church of Albuquerque – Pastor Bruno Alfieri, Church Alive! – Pastors Michael and Sheri Schaefer, Rio Rancho Department of Public Safety – Sgt. Roberta Radosovich, Men's Warehouse – Charles Maese, Flowers Unlimited – Dave and Judy Higgins, New Mexico Healthy Marriage Coalition, A-1 Storage Westside – Mike Mason, Taza Coffee Shop – Jon & Paula Barbuto, Family Life – Bill Sturgill, KKIM Radio 1000 – Dewey Moede, J&M Pack and Ship, Baruch Hashem – Rabi Dees, Sal-E-Boys Pizza – Sal LaRosi, Best Western Inn, Defined Fitness, Albertson's, Chili's Restaurant, Satellite Coffee, Kim Jew Photography, Merle Norman, Chronicles Book Store, Serenity Gardens Spa, Hot Tamales Restaurant, High Desert Bicycles, O'Hares Restaurant, Dr. Herbert Betty, Debra Whitlock Hair Stylist, Hastings, Alternative Health Concepts – Chris Hall, Sunflower Market, Byron & Rosemary Linebaugh, Barbara Bartlein, Flying Star Café, The Hair Care Salon, Copeland's Restaurant



Mike Gibson, Office and Public Relations Manager

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Brad Biggers,
IT Support

Lois Coleman,
Receptionist/
Librarian

(505-891-1846)



Leonie Oliva,
Project and Event
Coordinator

Marriage Quote

"When my grandmother got arthritis, she couldn't bend over and paint her toenails anymore. So my grandfather did it for her all the time, even when his hands got arthritis too. That's love."

Rebecca - Age 8



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BEFORE YOU CAN SCORE, YOU MUST HAVE A GOAL

(Written by Leonie Oliva)

Are You Achieving Your 2007 Relationship Goals?

In our December 2006 newsletter we included an article on setting marriage or relationship goals for 2007 ("Have a Marriage Goal for 2007"). We suggested putting aside some time with your spouse or partner early in the year to identify goals that you could work towards during the year. As well as practical aims, we urged you to include some inspirational goals or dreams and to not be afraid to **THINK BIG** and "go for it," remembering nothing ventured is nothing gained! Goals are simply tools to focus your energy in positive directions. They can be changed as your priorities change, new ones can be added and others can be dropped. Setting goals is a good way to positively influence your future and to intentionally live the life you want - not just the one that "turns up".

So did you create some goals for 2007? And, if so, have you taken time to review your progress through the year? You could be in one of several places right now - perhaps you are making good progress and right on track to achieving your objectives by the end of the year - **CONGRATULATIONS!** Alternatively, you may have started off with good intentions but something happened that created an obstacle to reaching your goal and you have not managed to get past it. Maybe you never set any goals in the first place. Or perhaps you are thinking: "Oh those goals - we completely forgot about those!"

Well there are still three months left in the year so it is **NOT TOO LATE** to either set some goals for the first time or make progress on those that have fallen by the wayside. The important thing is not to give up - keep reaching for your dreams together! It will give you something extra to celebrate together on New Year's Eve if you can look back on the past year and see that you have achieved a specific outcome or moved a step forward in your life together. Then you can start thinking "what's next - what can we build or create together now?" Achieving planned or desired outcomes in your life is empowering. It creates confidence and a taste for success. Achieving goals as a couple is doubly wonderful because it demonstrates your success working as a team - and successful team playing lies at the heart of every strong marriage relationship.

By the way, if you are struggling with your goals, don't be discouraged. The very activity of identifying agreed goals, and taking even the smallest steps towards achieving them, is a process through which you will learn and grow as a couple. So **DON'T GIVE UP** - just keep taking small steps each day remembering that sometimes the reward is in the journey and not the destination.

"It is good to have an end to a journey, but it is the journey that matters, in the end."

Ursula K. LeGuin



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

To:

**Mark Your Calendar and Plan to Attend
“Laugh Your Way to a Better Relationship”
at the Pueblo of Jemez on October 26, 2007!
Call to Register!! (505) 891-1846**

www.thefamilylifeline.net