

MARRIAGE LIFE LINE!

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Upcoming Events to Plan for:

- **Premarital Classes**, Beginning Wednesday, April 18, 2007 for 4 weeks. 7-9 pm. Call to Register (891-1846)
- **Marriage Enrichment Classes**, Beginning Thursday, April 19, 2007, for 5 weeks. 7-9 pm. Call to Register (891-1846)
- **Marriage Mentor Training**, Saturday, April 14, 2007 from 9 am to 4 pm. 9 am - 4 pm. Call to Register (891-1846)
- **Husbands Are Heros**, June 16, 2007, 10 am - 3 pm, Haynes Park, Rio Rancho

Newsletter Date: Spring 2007 Volume 1, Issue 2

HONORING MOTHERS AND FATHERS

Every year, we set aside one day to honor mothers and one day to honor fathers. However, we oftentimes forget their dedication and sacrifice the other 364 days a year. Research indicates that children who have active and dedicated parents (or a parent) in their lives are less likely to have difficulties in school, run ins with the law, and are



less likely to abuse drugs, tobacco, or alcohol. It is also a proven fact that families who share mealtimes together routinely also reduce the chances of risk activities for their children. I want to thank each mom and dad for being engaged and involved in their children's lives. Regardless of what you might think, your time does make a positive difference, even to children (especially teens) who act like they are disinterested. Keep communicating with your children; it makes more of an impact than you would ever know.

Each May, we celebrate Mother's Day, one day where we get to pamper mom with flowers, a special meal, gifts, etc. How would it make mom feel if we honored her much earlier this year and long after that special day in May? What about appreciating the routine things she does during the weeks and months?

How about our dads? I don't get too excited about Father's Day and some men might agree with that statement. Regardless of how some men feel about Father's Day, this year plan on honoring dads anyway. As most women appreciate acts of love, most men appreciate acts of respect. Look for ways to honor and respect your dad and let him know how much you appreciate him for being involved in your life. For children who have not had a proper role model in one or both of your parents, here are a few pearls of wisdom. Find it within yourself to forgive them. Sometimes reconciliation is impossible, but forgiveness helps liberate the forgiver. Sometimes we hold grudges longer than we ever should and we hold onto hurts over things that we should get past. Take this spring to appreciate your parents and let them know how much they mean to you. For husbands and wives, this is also a great time to help build up and support each other and to include your children in the process. Nothing brings a smile to a person's face quicker or more effectively than to be appreciated.

“WAFFLES AND SPAGHETTI” COUPLE COMMUNICATION

(Written by Rebecca Holland)



Communication Quote

“Good communication is as stimulating as black coffee, and just as hard to sleep after.”

**Anne Morrow
Lindbergh**



This quarterly Marriage Life Line newsletter is focused on developing healthy communication and learning how to handle conflict in a positive manner. Much of the information in this article is being used by permission from Bill and Pam Farrel's incredible book entitled: *Men are Like Waffles - Women are Like Spaghetti*. We thank them for their contribution to healthy marriage communication and also thank them for allowing us to use their material.

Communication in marriage is really quite simple when we understand the differences between men and women. How do we understand the differences between men and women? Well, men are like waffles and women are like spaghetti! Men process life in boxes. The boxes are all separate from each other and make convenient holding places. Their typical thinking is divided up into boxes that have room for one issue and one issue only. The typical man lives in one box at a time and one box only. When a man is at work, he is at work. When he is in the garage working on a project, he is in the garage working on a project. When he is watching TV, he is simply watching TV. Social scientists call this “compartmentalizing” – that is, putting life and responsibilities into different compartments. As a result, men are problem solvers by nature. They enter a box, size up the “problem,” and formulate a solution. In communication, they look for the bottom line and get there as quickly as possible. In decision making, they look for an approach they can buy into and apply it as often as possible. Men also take a “success” approach to communication. If they believe they can successfully talk with their wives and reach a desirable outcome, they will be highly motivated to talk. If, on the other hand, the conversation seems pointless to him or he finds understanding his wife impossible, he loses his motivation to talk and clams up. The bottom line with men is: they feel best about themselves when they are solving problems. As a result, they spend most of their time doing what they are best at while they attempt to ignore the things which make them feel like failures.

In contrast to men's waffle-like approach, women process life more like a plate of pasta. If you look at a plate of pasta, you notice that there are lots of individual noodles that all touch one another. If you attempted to follow one noodle around the plate, you would intersect with a lot of other noodles and you might even switch to another noodle seamlessly. That is how women face life. Every thought and issue is connected to every other thought and issue in some way. Life is much more of a process for women than it is for men. This is why women are typically better at multitasking than men. Women can talk on the phone, prepare a meal, make a shopping list, work on the agenda for tomorrow's meeting, give instructions to the kids and close the door with her foot without skipping a beat. Because all of her thoughts, emotions and convictions are connected, she is able to process more information and keep track of more activities. As a result, most women are in pursuit of connecting life together. They solve problems but need to talk things through. In conversation, women link together the logical, emotional, relational and spiritual aspects of the issue.

The differences between the way men and women communicate can cause significant stress for couples because while she is making all the connections, he is frantically jumping boxes trying to keep up with the conversation. In addition, she is becoming frustrated because he cannot see how everything they are discussing is tied together. In honesty, one of the best approaches to dealing with this is to develop a good sense of humor. Humor is a great way to break the tension that exists in the differences between the way men and women think. The second important thing to do in communication is to slow down your conversation and discuss one issue at a time. Women need to refrain from connecting every problem together and complicating the conversation while men need to allow women time to talk without trying to solve all their problems. If women can remember that men do best in conversations when they feel like something can be “solved”, then they can present the problem or issue in a way that promotes a positive outcome. Likewise, if men can remember that women need to talk to figure out how they are feeling about an issue, they can allow women to talk and simply listen without feeling like they have to respond to everything that has been said. It's really all about approaching conversation with your spouse in mind. What does my husband or wife need in order to be successful in conversation. You will be amazed at the difference it makes when you approach communication by putting yourself in your spouse's “waffle” or plate of “spaghetti!”

“ROMANCE AND ROSES” MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT EVENT A SUCCESS!

(Written by Mike Gibson)



Mike Gibson,
NMMF Project
Director

Love was in the air!! Romance and Roses, a Valentines event for local couples, was held Saturday night, February 10th, at the ballroom in the Best Western Inn of Rio Rancho. The ballroom was transformed into a romantic atmosphere filled with flowers, balloons, and decorations and quiet background music. There were banners displayed throughout the ballroom declaring: “Fact: Married people live longer” and “Fact: Married people have healthier children.” These and other banners provided statistics from the US Department of Health and Human Services indicating married people statistically live healthier, happier lives. The sold out event was hosted by the New Mexico Family Council - Best Choice (NMFC-BC), and their healthy marriages initiative, New Mexico

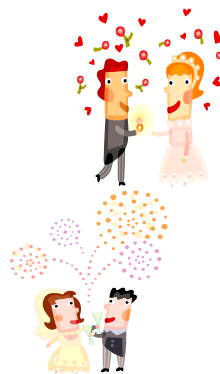
Marriages First. As the Master of Ceremonies opened the event, he said, “Let’s answer the two questions all of you have asked yourself since hearing of the event: ‘What’s the catch; and who are the people putting this on?’” The answers given: “There is no catch, and the people providing this event are the staff of a federally funded organization (NMFC-BC) located in Rio Rancho. Our project specifically promotes healthy marriages in Sandoval and Bernalillo Counties.” The event cost \$10 per couple, and the complimentary childcare sounded a little too good to be true, but as the attendees found out, it was all the “real deal”. A warm welcome by Mayor Kevin Jackson, followed by the giving away of over thirty door prizes provided by local business, served as the precursor to the three course meal provided. The featured speaker for the evening was comedian/actor/author Kenn Kington of Atlanta, GA. Kington had the crowd roaring as he spoke about marriage and family relationships



using situation comedy material. He often touched on issues that most couples encounter. “It sounded like he was describing my husband and me” one woman said, “it was funny and eye opening.” Positive comments received during and after the event indicated that the couples who attended were grateful for such a lovely evening and a chance to ‘re-connect’ with their spouses. Couples said things such as: “Thank you, we loved the night out. We couldn’t have afforded this on our own” and “It’s been years since we danced together. Thank you for making it possible.” There were too many comments to list, however the overall feeling was that the event served its intended purpose: promoting healthy marriages in the community!

New Mexico Marriages First (NMMF) exists to:

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



The NMMF Motto:
“I Do! I Did? I Will . . . For LIFE!”



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Contact the Holland's if
you would like to schedule
a marriage event in your
community!!

www.thefamilylifeline.net

Conflict Quote

*"Peace is not the
absence of conflict
but the presence
of creative
alternatives for
responding to
conflict!"*

**Dorothy
Thompson**

WHAT IS NEW MEXICO MARRIAGES FIRST (NMMF)?

(Written by Michael Holland)

Is divorce the answer to your problems?

Why do healthy marriages benefit local businesses?

What is marriage insurance and how can I get it?

What can the NMMF do for me?

I feel like there is no hope for my marriage - can the NMMF help me?

Yes!! Relationship Skills CAN be learned!!

The impact of divorce to our society is enormous and costly. Sadly, the reported divorce rate in New Mexico is nearly double the national rate. Only four states have higher divorce rates than NM. The good news is that research shows that relationship skills can be learned. Once learned, these skills can help a couple to have improved communication, solve conflict more effectively, and even reduce domestic violence, child abuse, divorce, and its impacts. The NMMF can help you learn these skills through programs or referrals to other service agencies.

What if I have a good marriage? Why should I be interested in the NMMF?

Just as a car needs periodic "tune ups" marriages need to be "tuned up" from time to time as we deal with the changes and stresses that life brings. The NMMF provides Marriage Enrichment events to help good relationships become even better!! Look for NMMF sponsored events to occur each quarter of the year throughout Bernalillo and Sandoval Counties. Attend our "Husbands are Heros", event on Saturday, June 16th, 2007. (See the article on this page)

The New Mexico Marriages First is here to help you and other organizations that support marriage!

We are here to serve the communities in Sandoval and Bernalillo counties with pre-marital and marital education programs and skills training. We work with individuals, couples, community service agencies, and churches. The NMMF'S services are readily available and in most cases, *at no cost or very little cost to you!!* Please call us to see if we can answer any questions that you might have! WE ARE HERE TO SERVE YOU!!

HUSBANDS ARE HEROS: A WONDERFUL WAY TO HONOR HUSBANDS!

(Written by Leonie Oliva)

On Saturday June 16th, New Mexico Family Council - Best Choice, New Mexico Marriages First will be hosting a family celebration "fun day" at Haynes Park in Rio Rancho and the guests of honor will be husbands! The next day is Father's Day so why not make a weekend of celebrating the men in our lives? The event will run from 10 am through to 3 pm and is completely free. Everyone is welcome so please make it a date in your family schedule and invite your friends too! Enjoy the free food and drinks or bring your own picnic. Entertainment will include a rock climbing wall, car show, live music from a variety of bands, children's activities such as a bouncy castle, face painting, puppet show as well as other sports and games. Haynes Park is located off Rio Rancho Blvd (NM 528) between 19th and 21st Avenues. This is not a ticketed event. For further details call 505- 891-1846 or check the website: www.thefamilylifeline.net.

CALENDAR OF MARRIAGE EVENTS

March 2007

Legacy Church presents: **“Laugh Your Way to a Better Marriage”** Encounter with Mark Gungor, March 16th - 17th at Legacy Church, 7201 Central Avenue NW, Albuquerque, New Mexico (505-831-0961) \$35.00 per person, \$25.00 for groups of 4 or more, \$40.00 at the door.

“Prepare/Enrich Training” sponsored by Samaritan Counseling Center, March 31, 2007 8:30 am - 4:00 pm. Cost is \$195.00. Call (505) 765-1100 for additional information.

April 2007

Premarital Education Classes, Beginning Wednesday, April 18th for 4 weeks. Contact New Mexico Family Council - Best Choice, 1207 Golf Course Road, Suite E, Rio Rancho, New Mexico. 7 to 9 pm. Call To Register (505-891-1846) **FREE!!**

Marriage Enrichment Classes, Beginning Thursday, April 19th for 5 weeks. Contact New Mexico Family Council - Best Choice, 1207 Golf Course Road, Suite E, Rio Rancho, New Mexico. 7 to 9 pm. Call to Register (505-891-1846) **FREE!!**

Marriage Mentor Training, April 14th from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Contact New Mexico Family Council - Best Choice, 1207 Golf Course Road, Suite E, Rio Rancho, New Mexico. 9 am to 4 pm. Call to Register (505-891-1846) **FREE!!**

May 2007

Mother’s Day, May 13, 2007

June 2007

“Husbands are Heros” Celebration in the Park, Saturday, June 16th from 10 am to 3 pm Haynes Park, Rio Rancho, New Mexico (505-891-1846) **FREE!!**

Father’s Day, June 17, 2007



I Do!



**I Did?
For Life!**



I Will ...

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HOW TO RESOLVE A CONFLICT

(Used with Permission from Dr. Gary Smalley, Smalley Relationship Center, January 9, 2003)

Resolving every argument with your spouse may seem impossible at first thought. You may be thinking, "Yeah right--you've never met my mate!" However, by doing four important things, you not only can improve your ability to resolve conflicts, but can also decrease the emotional injuries as well. My wife, Erin and I discovered this while in the middle of a heated argument.

During my doctoral studies, I was required to take a class in research design. I knew I was in trouble when during the first class meeting, the professor recited a list of statistical concepts and formulas that we should know. My stomach sickened when nothing he said sounded remotely familiar. I rushed home and informed Erin that I was dropping the class. Unfortunately, Erin didn't think quitting was the answer and a major argument erupted.

The conflict might have lasted longer except my two year old daughter, Taylor interceded. "That's enough guys!" she yelled and walloped me on the backside. The shock of being reprimanded by our two year old caused us to double over with laughter. Once the tense moment had ended, Erin and I realized that our disagreement was starting to cause hurt feelings and emotional injury. As a result, we used the following four steps to resolve our conflict.

- **Take a time-out!** For many couples an argument is a time of heightened emotions. Because it can be difficult to think clearly, physically distancing yourself can help your emotions to settle. However, never leave without giving an explanation or without agreeing to resume the discussion at some later time.
- **Communicate to uncover hidden needs.** Erin and I would not have resolved our disagreement without having made a transition from intense conflict to some type of useful communication. In other words, we needed to get past the arguing and selfishness towards some productive dialog. As you attempt to clarify the conflict, repeat, using your own words, your mate's position. Actively listen and understand what your mate is saying. In turn, this slows down the process and allows each person to feel heard and understood. After the conversation has shifted to slow speech and quick listening, try to uncover any hidden needs. Erin and I each had needs that were difficult to express. I didn't want to spend extra time to pass such a difficult class; while Erin wanted us to finish school on time. Addressing those hidden needs was essential as we moved toward a solution. As you attempt to uncover such needs, it can be helpful to ask questions like, "What is really going on?" or "What must change or happen to meet your needs?"
- **Create a "win-win" solution.** Once your emotions have settled and constructive communication exists, the third step in resolving conflicts is to find a "win-win" solution. This doesn't necessarily mean compromising. Sometimes compromising creates a quick-fix solution where no one is pleased with the outcome. Furthermore, important issues may be overlooked. Instead, in a "win-win" situation, needs are met on both sides. In our conflict, a "win-win" situation was found when we decided that I would ask two different professors what they thought about me dropping the class. After seeking wise advice, Erin and I both felt that the right decision was for me to remain in the class. As it turned out, I got an "A" and Erin was right once again! Win-win solutions can be created in a variety of different ways. Techniques like "brainstorming" and "pros vs. cons" lists work great.
- **Resolution.** After a "win-win" solution is found, the resolution process isn't complete until you've made sure that forgiveness has taken place. This step is so crucial because emotional injury can occur when resentment or anger continues after the conflict has ended. Although feelings may be hurt once the argument has finished, it's important not to let the sun go down on your anger. Therefore, try to identify your own contribution to the problem and seek forgiveness.

If after unsuccessful attempts have been made to solve a conflict, or if you are exhausted from the physical as well as emotional strain, it might be time to find a person (e.g., counselor or pastor) who can intercede and help bring about reconciliation. Remember the saying from an ancient historical text: "The way of a fool is right in his own eyes, but a wise man is he who listens to counsel."

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Leonie Oliva, NMMF
Executive Assistant

Communication Quote

"The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention."

**Rachel Naomi
Remen**



MORE THAN WORDS CAN SAY

(Written by Leonie Oliva)

Effective communication between husband and wife is critical to a successful relationship and is a vital component of the "healthy marriage tool kit". So many upsets, stresses and arguments, not only in a marriage but in all our relationships, result from failures to communicate effectively with each other. "Communication failures" come in many varieties, for example:

- The straight forward misunderstanding - "I said this and you took it to mean that, which is not what I meant at all....!"
- The implication added by tone of voice - "You said this but your tone of voice sounded to me like you meant that."
- The complete lack of communication caused by silence - maybe because one spouse is too afraid to speak his/her mind, wishes to avoid an argument, or is seeking to dominate the other with silence.
- Listening problems - "You may be listening to me but do you 'hear' what I am saying?"

Do any of these sound familiar? In order to have the best chance of avoiding misunderstandings, resolving conflicts and helping each other through difficult times, it is important that we learn to communicate as well as possible with our spouse. In addition to our verbal communication (our words), each of us gives and responds to thousands of non-verbal messages daily - these consist of our body language, gestures, posture, facial expressions, tone of voice and eye contact. Together with our words, these non-verbal cues add up to our total "communication package". For example, the simple phrase "what time will you be home tonight?" will land quite differently depending on the non-verbal delivery style:

- A sweet loving smile and soft tone of voice will add something like "...because I can't wait to see you again, Honey."
- Folded arms, a tight lipped face and hard tone of voice will add something like ".....you better not be late again and mess up my evening!"
- A lack of eye contact and disinterested tone of voice will add something like ".....actually, I really don't care what time you get home."

Here are some pointers for developing your communication skills:

- Try paying particular attention to your own non-verbal communication for the next few days and experiment by intentionally using positive facial expressions, postures and tones of voice (or avoiding using negative ones!) when having discussions with your spouse - particularly if you are discussing a difficult issue.
- Work on observing the non-verbal communication cues from your spouse - not just the obvious ones, but also the more subtle looks, postures and expressions.
- Develop your active listening skills - give your spouse your full attention when he/she is talking to you and if you cannot give your full attention, explain why and agree to continue the discussion later.
- Think carefully about your communication - is there any possibility of a misunderstanding or misinterpretation?
- Finally, the simplest step of all - make sure you have some quality time to talk to your spouse each day, when there are no distractions, and take time to find out how he/she is feeling and how his/her day was.

Many marriage enrichment workshops or classes cover communication and go into much greater detail on these vital skills. Invest in your marriage today - book a course and keep on talking!



From:
New Mexico Marriages First
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Rio Rancho, NM 87124

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

To:

**Mark Your Calendar and Plan to Attend the
“Husbands Are Heros” Celebration on June 16, 2007!**

www.thefamilylifeline.net