



MARRIAGE EDUCATION AND RESOURCE CENTER

March, 2022

The Marriage Education and Resource Center (MERCY) Newsletter



Like so many other businesses and organizations, things have been different for MERCY since the pandemic.

We've been praying a lot and even asking the Lord if He still wants us in this Kingdom work. Is He removing our lampstand?

Within the last few weeks, we've received calls from four people requesting help. So apparently He isn't finished with us yet.

Will you pray for us and MERCY's ministry? We want to do God's will and we need His wisdom and direction going forward.

Thank you. In the end, the Battle Belongs to Him.

Upcoming Marriage Events



A counselor-led workshop for couples in crisis.

Weekend of March 18-20 -
Online

May 13-15 - Nashville, TN

For more information, **click here**

Marriage on a Mission -
Free Workshop
Friday, April 8 -
6:30 - 8:00 p.m.



Ben and Crystal

This workshop will be a time leaning into the why behind the what of

Battle Belongs

Healthy vs. Unhealthy Conflict



The Gottman Institute has done some of the most groundbreaking research on fighting and arguments. One of the most popular conflict concepts from their research is called the four horsemen. These are the styles that toxify marital arguments and send the relationship spiraling downward.

I'm going to borrow some examples that were posted on the Dating Divas by Ellie Lisitsa, author of *The Four Horsemen: The Anecdotes*. They are:

- **Criticism** in an argument attacks your partner's personality traits or character. A gentle startup starts with asking yourself: **What do I feel? And what do I need?**

Criticism: "You always talk about yourself Why are you always so selfish?"

Antidote: "I'm feeling left out of our talk tonight, and I need to vent. Can we please talk about my day?"

- **Contempt** vs. Building a Culture

marriage. It will also offer some practical steps on how to run in rhythm together, moving forward on mission and creating family identity and culture of discipleship in your home.

Ben and Crystal have lived a shared mission to surrender their story for God's eternal purposes. Together, they lead "The Brave Way Home," an incredible ministry. If you would like to read more about their story and this ministry [click here](#).

This workshop will be at:
MERCi Barn
8510 Highway 111
Memphis, IN 47143

To register for this workshop, [click here](#).

Pure Life Ministries - Annual Conference - "When Jesus Returns What Will He Find?"

April 22-23

Answers Center - The Ark
Encounter - Northern, KY



The heart of Pure Life Ministries is to lead people struggling with sexual sin into an encounter with Jesus Christ.

Each year they hold a conference featuring Spirit-led worship, powerful and timely messages from God's

of Appreciation

Contempt: "You forgot to load the dishwasher again? Ugh. You are so incredibly lazy."

Antidote: "I understand that you've been busy lately, but could you please remember to load the dishwasher when I work late? I'd appreciate it."

- **Defensiveness** vs. Accepting Responsibility

Defensiveness: "It's not my fault that we're going to be late. It is your fault since you always get dressed at the last second."

Antidote: "I don't like being late, but you're right. We don't always have to leave so early. I can be a little more flexible."

- **Stonewalling** vs. Physiological Self-Soothing.

Stonewalling: "Look, we've been through this over and over and over again. I'm tired of reminding you."

Antidote: "I'm sorry to interrupt you, but I'm feeling overwhelmed, and I need to take a break. Can you give me twenty minutes, and then we can talk?"

(Note: Notice how many of the four horsemen begin with the word "You" and the gentle startups use the word "I?" This is one of the first communication tools we teach our couples. That shift alone makes a world of difference.)

Praying Out Loud

Word and informative panel discussions. This year there will be a pre-conference event entitled, "Called to Purity" on Thursday, April 21.

To see the trailer for this conference, watch it below.

For information on Pure Life Ministries [click here](#)



Husband and Wife Journey

May 13-15 or

October 14-16

Harvest Heights Orchard and Vineyard

795 Yates Lakeview Circle
Scottsville KY 42164



GROWING YOUR MARRIAGE

With the busyness of life and unexpected challenges, couples often lose sight of what first brought them together. Conflict and coexistence was not God's design for marriage; it can be so much more. Embark on a journey with your loved one, blending biblical teachings with rest and recreation. You will have designated time during the sessions to talk intimately one-on-one with



Something else we ask couples we work with to do is to hold hands and start praying together silently -- for each other and their marriage. If they aren't used to praying together, starting out praying silently is a great first step.

However, learning to pray out loud and together for each other on a regular basis, can have an even deeper impact. Not only will you feel closer, but you are allowing your partner to hear your heart on a more intimate level.

We challenge you to try it. We think you will like it.

Who Made the First Move?

The Institute for Family Studies surveyed 1500 couples to learn more about how couples are meeting, who initiated the first date, and how happy couples are. Results show that 70% of men and 63% of women are happier when the man initiates the first date.

Rebuilding Trust



Reggie Madison wrote an article on "How to Rebuild

your spouse through guided, insightful activities. As you share adventures, laughs and delicious food with your spouse we are confident you will reignite the joy of sharing life together.

The cost is \$250 which includes housing, program materials, meals-snacks, recreational activities and more.

Your fun filled weekend begins Friday evening and wraps up by noon on Sunday.

For more information and some testimonies from couples, [click here](#).

Celebrate Your Marriage

May 22-23
Grand Hotel
286 Grand Avenue
Mackinac Island, MI



If you want a great get-away, join Jay and Laura Laffoon at the Grand Hotel on Mackinac Island.

Trust in Marriage." Following are highlights from this article.

When trust is broken within a marriage, rebuilding it cannot automatically be assumed. While there are no guarantees the trust may be rebuilt, here are some things you can do.

Person Who Has Broken The Trust:

- Listen without being defensive.
- Own your actions
- Accept the emotional impact on your spouse.
- Give space for expressions of grief.
- Apologize.
- Makes necessary changes.
- Be patient.

If you would like to read this entire article that was posted on First Things First, [click here](#).

For over 25 years this couple has helped thousands of couples celebrate their marriage through fun and laughter as they grow together. A special guest at this event is funny refreshingly Michael Goodwin

For more information and pricing details, [click here](#).

My Love Thinks

Dr. John Van Epp, Ph.D and his daughter, Dr. Morgan Cutlip, Ph.D now have a podcast.

I (Penny) actually trained under Dr. Van Epp and he offers very practical advise.

So if you would like to listen in on their new podcast as they take on real relationship questions we hope you will check it out.

For more information, [click here](#)

Couple's Couplettime Activity

When you first met your future spouse, the feelings were exciting and new. Many assume those feelings will last forever. Unfortunately, they don't. Those feelings normally last about two years. Then it requires more effort to keep romance alive.

Following are some tips to rekindle some of that excitement.

- Define what romance means to you.
- Do things you did when you first started dating and fell in love.
- Little things mean a lot - a whole lot. Say, "I love you" often. Say please and thank you. Hold hands more. Kiss more. Do some things like bring him/her a cup of coffee or smoothie. In other words, make an effort to serve your spouse.
- Show them how much you appreciate them being in your life -- Say it; show it; express it.

Couple Exercise:

Individually respond to these questions. When finished share your answers with one another.

- What three things did your partner do when you were dating that made you feel special?
- When your spouse does one of those three things now, how does it make you feel?
- List the daily things your spouse does that are romantic to you.
- List ways your mate can make you feel loved and appreciated.

MERCY'S STATUS REPORT FOR 2021

In spite of the challenges we've faced, MERCY was able to achieve the following in 2021:

- Held an event, "Building a Lasting Promise," which was an in-depth, faith-based, two-day marriage enrichment program. Ten couples attended and feedback was very positive.
- MERCY presented the Five Love Languages to a small group of couples at Missionary Baptist Church.
- MERCY offered a monthly on-line Couplettime group. Our average attendance was five couples.
- MERCY continued to publicize marriage events for our area in our monthly newsletter. Our open rate increased this year to 44%.
- David and I personally mentored six couples. This involves working with each couple 16-18 hours. Several of our trained mentors also worked with additional couples.
- MERCY was able to offer a scholarship for professional counseling.
- I (Penny) began meeting with eight ladies, on a quarterly basis, who have a heart for marriage ministry. We can share, pray, encourage and collaborate with one another about our ministries.
- MERCY scheduled a free pastor's luncheon and presentation in November 2021 at Hometown Pizza. We sent out 23 invitations to local pastors who were not familiar with MERCY; however, we only received three responses. Because Hometown needed a minimum number of attendees, the luncheon was cancelled. This was disappointing.
- As a follow-up to pastors, MERCY sent them an article that appeared in *Newsweek* magazine about a book entitled *Endgame: The Church's Strategic Move to Save Faith and Family in America*. The authors of this book believe a central cause of the drop in America's belief in God (from 70% in 2000 to 47% today) is the demise of our marriages and families and how the church must invest in strengthening them. We only received one comment as a result of this article.



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