



MARRIAGE EDUCATION AND RESOURCE CENTER

January, 2024 Newsletter from The Marriage Education and Resource Center (MERCY)



The gym coach said, "Don't do that." Then she corrected herself and said, "No negative comments. I'm not suppose to use negatives words, only positive ones." So she reframed it and said, "Let's do it this way."

Wouldn't it be great if we repeatedly told ourselves, "No negative comments," and tried to approach our communication from a positive standpoint?

It reminds me of the Scripture from Paul to the Philippians:

"Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy- think about such things."

- Philippians 4:8

As we launch into another year, many of us reflect on changes we

Upcoming Marriage Events

Close Encounters of the Best Kind

Begins January 16, 23 and 30,
2024

6:30 - 8:15 p.m.

MERCI Barn
8510 Highway 111
Memphis, IN 47143



Fall in love all over again with this three consecutive nights.

Think simple, fun, zero pressure. Each date will have food, fun and time with your spouse.

Week 1 - Prioritizing your Marriage - (Charcuterie Board)
Week 2 - Communicating to Understand (Ice Cream Sundaes)
Week 3 - Learning to Solve Problems as a Team - Chick-Fil-A-Nuggets)

Cost is: \$25/couple - covers all three dates.

Register soon - Limited to 8

want to make in our lives. Dr. Morgan Cutlip, recommends we focus on one minor shift that feels easy to implement. When we do this on a consistent basis, it helps build a positive momentum vs. a discouraging fail.

Whether it's agreeing to work on no negative comments, praying more, touching your partner more, greeting them differently when they come home or something else, one minor shift can make a major difference.

Grace and peace,

Penny and David Hudson

The Importance of Non-Sexual Touch



Do you remember how it used to be? In the early days of your relationship there was likely more touching - whether it was hugging, kissing cuddling, or just being side by side, it was a special connection.

These are the type of touches that are not only essential for your marriage but also your health. Loving touches reduce cortisol, the stress hormone and increases oxytocin, the love hormone.

Over time this is often one of the first areas couples experience disconnect.

couples.

To register, [click here](#)

Valentine Dinner Date Night -
February 10, 2024
6:00 - 8:30 p.m.

MERCI Barn
8510 Indiana 111
Memphis, IN 47143

MERCI is partnering with the "Growing Your Marriage" team to bring you a fun night of high energy, interactive fun and dinner. Spend the evening reconnecting with one another through experiential activities, practical marriage tips and laughter - consider this a date and more.

Dinner will be catered by Amy Ballentine Catering in Corydon.

Cost: \$60/couple

To register, [click here](#)

Pure Life Ministries - How to Get Free From Pornography - Part 2 - Q&A

February 3 - 10:00 a.m. EST



Pure Life Ministries will be hosting

Here are three steps the team from Extraordinary Marriage recommends to overcome common challenges and create a stronger marriage.

Discover your physical intimacy preferences.

Ask yourself, "When, where and how do I like to be touched?" Be specific. Maybe you don't like hugs, but you like foot massages or kisses.

Identify cracks in this area of your relationship.

Consider the following signs that may cause cracks:

- Your kisses have gone from heart-racing make-out sessions to barely a peck on the cheek.
- You feel like you have to beg your spouse to touch you.
- Where you once used to cuddle up on the couch to watch a movie, you now find yourselves on opposite ends or on entirely separate couches.
- Instead of holding hands or wrapping your arms around one another, you walk side-by-side and don't touch at all.
- You don't know how your spouse likes to be touched.

Be Intentional with touch

Once you identified a crack, you need to take action. It doesn't have to be complicated but it will take a little effort. - See the Couplettime activity below.

It may take some practice before these loving touches become a habit but as the Extraordinary Marriage team reminds us, "It is a habit worth building."

another live Men's Sexual Sin Q&A.

Steve Gallagher and the rest of the Pure Life Ministries leadership team will be sharing biblical principles on this vital topic.

With nearly four decades of experience ministering to sex addicts, they have seen thousands of men set free from the bondage of pornography and sexual addiction.

This will be live on You Tube channel, face book page, website and smartphone app. For more information, [click here](#)



For Those in Troubled Marriages

If you are struggling in your marriage, please be sure to check out this upcoming program:

Retrouvaille - A Weekend for Troubled Marriages

- Weekend of February 16 - Louisville. KY

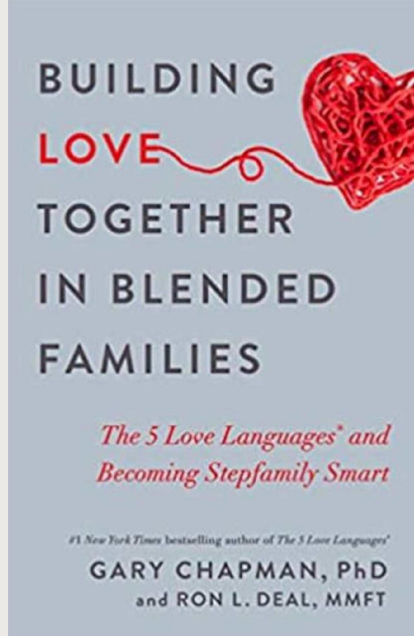
Please note: this is an international program and if you are in a different location, please check their website for other locations.

The cost for registration is normally between \$350 - \$400.

For more **click here**.



A counselor-led workshop for



Building Love Together by Gary Chapman, Ph.D. and Ron Deal, MMFT, have written a book specifically for Stepfamilies. They have taken the key insights of the Five Love Languages' concepts and applied them to stepfamily situations.

Chapman said, "70% of people they surveyed in blended families had questions or were confused about how to apply the Five Love Languages to a blended family." Questions like:

- "If my stepchild's love language is Quality Time, how do you do that when they don't want to spend time with you?"
- "How do you avoid a rivalry between stepsiblings? My stepson's primary love language is gifts. If I give him a gift and my child sees it, even though their love language isn't receiving gifts, they still saw the other child receive something they didn't. Does that add to the rivalry between them?"
- "Stepparents are pretty sensitive to the needs of their stepchildren—I try to love them well—but how do you get the children to be sensitive to the needs of the stepparent?"

couples in crisis.

A New Beginning is a turn-around weekend designed to help couples who feel stuck in an unhealthy marriage, couples who are frustrated and unhappy and couples considering divorce.

Nashville, TN - January 19-21, 2024

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

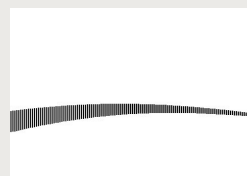


The Dating Divas have a brand new Couple's Calendar. There are 12 marriage challenges for 12 different areas of marriage.

They created the calendar with daily, actionable steps to prioritize your marriage.

For more information and cost [click here](#)

Tiptoeing Up to Valentine's Day



Twelve days before Christmas this year I (Penny) gave

David a little item each day leading up to Christmas. But this could work just as well for Valentine's Day. Perhaps starting February 1 - February 13, give your spouse one of his/her favorite things. Following are a few suggestions. And, of course, it would be fun to leave a little love note. Remember the Valentine candy hearts with sayings like - Love You; Be Mine; You are Sweet, etc.

- “How do you navigate marital issues in a way that builds the stepfamily, rather than tear it down?”

In their book, they address these questions and more.

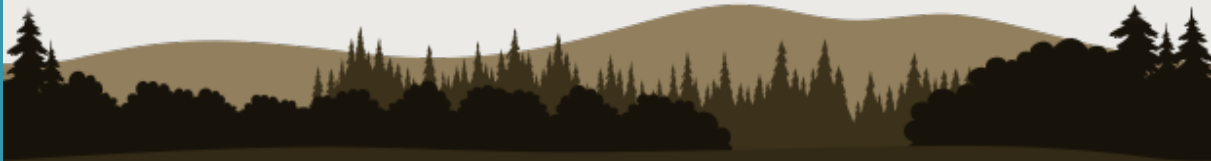
- Candy bar
- Favorite salty snack
- Restaurant gift card
- Favorite cookie
- Favorite drink
- Favorite meal
- Etc.

Couptime Activity


In this month's newsletter, we've talked about focusing on one minor shift that can be easily implemented. We talked about the power of non-sexual touch and I'm sure you can think of more things that have gotten buried in the busyness of life.

As a couple, please pray about that one thing you would like to bring back into your marriage.

- Try to remember those special moments and describe your behavior.
- Recall your spouse's behavior.
- What happened along the way that made you lose those special moments?
- What have you stopped doing? What has your partner stopped doing?
- What behavior would each of you like to rekindle in your relationship?
- Vow to begin again. Remember you'll need to do this one thing on a consistent basis for it to become a habit.



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