

Marriage Mentoring Training

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I. Rediscovering the “lost” art of “MENTORING”

- A. Definition of “mentor”
 - a. Webster’s dictionary defines mentor in the verb form as: “to give ADVICE and instruction to (someone) regarding the course or process to be FOLLOWED
 - b. “A wise and trusted teacher or counselor.”
 - c. Thesaurus: coach, counselor, guide, guru, instructor, teacher, trainer
- B. A Mentor is a model, encourager, and an IMPARTER of knowledge.
- C. Multiple studies report that “mentoring” is one of the most powerful tools we have for INFLUENCING behavior.
- D. **The Desperate “NEED” for mentors**
- E. History of western civilization
 - a. Mentoring has been the primary means of passing on KNOWLEDGE and SKILLS in every field and in every culture.
 - b. **“Apprentice”** - *A beginner; a learner.*
 - c. Cultural change mandates a paradigm shift
 - d. II Timothy 2: 1-2 principle: *“Timothy, my dear son, be strong with the special favor God gives you in Christ Jesus. You have heard me teach many things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Teach these great truths to trustworthy people who are able to pass them on to others.”* (NLT)

II. STATISTICS RELATED TO MARRIAGE

- A. In the 1930s one out of SEVEN marriages ended in divorce
- B. More than 200,000 marriages will end before their second anniversary.
- C. In 1950 only 12% of children had the experience of a broken family. Only 4% were born out of wedlock, and 8% suffered the divorce of their parents.
- D. By 2000, 60% of children experienced a broken family, 33% born out of wedlock and 27% suffering the divorce of their parents.
- E. In 2015 overall children born out of wedlock increased to 42% and now was 72% in the African American community,

- F. Adults who live in intact marriages report to be happier, healthier, live longer and enjoy sexual intimacy more than single, cohabiting or divorced people.
- G. Young men from intact marriage families have a more positive attitude toward women, children and family than those from broken or single parent homes.

III. HONORING THE LORD IN MARRIAGE

- A. The constant awareness that God’s REPUTATION is on the line. That means OUR marriage is a part of HIS reputation.
- B. If Proverbs 1:7 states that, *“The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge,”* then we cannot afford the luxury of being ignorant of that. What that fear is in both our THINKING and PERSONAL experience.

Functional Definition - “The continual awareness that I am personally in the presence of a holy, just omniscient, and almighty God and therefore every ACTION, every Thought, and every ATTITUDE is open before Him and being judged by Him.”

What if marriage in fact is more about our HOLINESS than our HAPPINESS.

B. THE POWER OF INTENTIONALITY

What does “**intentionality**” look like?

- 1) Attitude shift from CHANGE HIM/HER, God **CHANGE ME!**
 - a. Attitude of “What is there in ME that gets in the way of US”
 - b. Attitude of “receiving” our mate as a gift from God designed to help us and help to conform us more into the image of Christ.
- 2) It is processing past HURTS and asking for forgiveness.
 - a. Alone, ask God to show you where you have not been the husband or wife you should have been. Ask where have I had a critical spirit, where have I not been a “godly” spouse?
 - b. Write your spouse a letter sharing your heart and asking them to forgive you.
 - c. ALWAYS be proactive in seeking reconciliation and forgiveness not waiting for you spouse to “go first”.
- 3) It a priority placed in TIME!
 - a. Set up at least two “date nights” per month. Take turns planning your time out. Person who plans the “date” makes ALL the arrangements.

- b. Start a weekly “**marriage meeting**” (a time you can both count on without interruptions)
 - i. Go over your schedules for the coming week.
 - ii. This may include a devotional time sharing the things God is teaching you in your own time with Him.
 - iii. Prayer for your marriage and your family.
 - iv. May both read a chapter from a book and discuss what you learned.
 - v. Do the “COMMUNICATION” study from Proverbs
 - c. Find other couples who share your values for marriage to build meaningful relationships with.
- 4) Become a STUDENT of your spouse
- a. Do the “Love Languages” inventory <http://www.5lovelanguages.com/profile/>
 - b. After taking this sit down and discuss this and give your spouse some practical ways to speak your love language.
Exercise: Complete this sentence 20 times; “I feel love and cared for when you (tangible behaviors)
 - c. Talk about your hopes and dreams, both individual and for your marriage and family.
- 5) Commit to working on this. You have to have the attitude that says, “**I’m not settling for tolerable or mediocre.**” I’m not going to allow us to slip into “Invisible Divorce.”

V. REDISCOVERING THE “LOST” ART OF “MENTORING”

- a. History of western civilization.

II Timothy 2: 1-2 principle: *“Timothy, my dear son, be strong with the special favor God gives you in Christ Jesus. You have heard me teach many things that have been confirmed by many reliable witnesses. Teach these great truths to trustworthy people who are able to pass them on to others.”*

BIBLICAL EXAMPLES OF “MENTORS”

Eli and Samuel	(I Samuel 1-3)
Elijah and Elisha	(I Kings 19:19-21)
Moses and Joshua	(Deut. 31 & Joshua 1)
Naomi and Ruth	(Ruth 1)
Elizabeth and Mary	(Luke 1: 39-56)
Barnabas and Paul	(Acts 13-15)
Paul and Timothy	(Acts 16:1-5, I Tim 4, 6:11-20)

(What qualities do you see that made the relationship successful?)

VI. The “PURPOSE” OF MARRIAGE MENTORING

- a. “PURPOSE” is a starting place. “Mission” is important to start right and stay on track.
- b. The PURPOSE of “Marriage Mentoring” is to lovingly invest in the PREPARATION, maximization, and RESTORATION of lifelong marriages by walking alongside couples who are less experienced than their mentors.

The MARRIAGE MENTORING TRIAD



VII. ROLES THAT “MENTORS” PLAY

- a. Giving timely INFORMATION to mentorees.
- b. MODEL aspects of what they wish to impart.
- c. CHALLENGING and MOTIVATING mentorees to move to higher levels.
- d. Directing mentorees to helpful RESOURCES when needed.
- e. Encourage GOODNESS and INSPIRE greatness.

- f. Lessening mentorees anxiety by NORMALIZING experiences.
- g. Helping mentorees SET GOALS and keeping them ACCOUNTABLE to the goals.
- h. Providing periodic REVIEW and EVALUATION of mentorees progress.

VIII. YOUR “HISTORY” WITH MENTORS

- Think of someone that has been a mentor to you sometime in your life (didn’t need to be in formal sense)
- Who was this person?
- How did the relationship begin?
- What were the traits and qualities this person possessed that made them a help to you?
- What traits in this person can you carry with you to assist you as a mentor to a young couple?

IX. WHAT IS A “MARRIAGE MENTOR”?

- A. Some one defined a “mentor” as, *“Someone whose HINDSIGHT_ can become your FORESIGHT”*
- B. A “Marriage Mentor” is a relatively happy, more experienced couple purposely investing in another couple to effectively NAVIGATE a journey that they have already taken.”
- C. Can not overly prescribe every aspect of the mentor/mentoree relationship. WHY?

X. WHAT DO THE MENTORING COUPLE DO?

1. Willingly share what they KNOW..
2. Represent SKILL, knowledge, VIRTUE, and accomplishment because they have gone before the couple they are mentoring.

3. Take a personal and heartfelt INTEREST in the other couple's DEVELOPMENT and well-being.
4. Offers SUPPORT, challenge, PATIENCE and EARTFELT enthusiasm while guiding other couple's to new levels of COMPETENCE..
5. Points the way and represents tangible EVIDENCE of what another couple can become.
6. Expose the mentorees to new IDEAS, perspectives and STANDARDS..
7. Have more EXPERTISE in terms of KNOWLEDGE yet view themselves as equals to those they mentor.

XI. WHAT A MENTOR IS “NOT”

1. A MOTHER or FATHER. Your job is not to parent the couple you are mentoring.
2. A “pal” or “buddy”. Your job is not necessarily to be FRIENDS for the purpose of SOCIALIZING..
3. An “on call” for every little CRISIS..
4. Necessarily a “LONG term” commitment.
5. A PEOFESSOR You are not lecturing but rather sharing out of your lives.
6. A “KNOW IT ALL” You don't need to have all the answers.
7. Remember our definition: *“A “Marriage Mentor” is a relatively happy, more experienced couple purposely investing in another couple to effectively navigate a journey that they have already taken.”*

XII. What is a Marriage Mentor Relationship?

1. This relationship is “INTENTIONAL”
2. It is “MUTUALLY AGREED UPON”

3. The definition highlights “EXPERIENCE”

XIII. Exploring your “Natural Role”

1. Although each relationship has its own unfolding style, you still must discuss initial expectations of the relationship. Therefore you **MUST** be clear on your mentoring style before meeting the couple.
2. Think of how you see yourself as a mentor. Which of the following do you see you and you spouse fall into. Rank the roles from 1 being the most likely and then compare them with your spouse.

_____ Models _____ Coaches _____ Teachers _____ Guides

3. Do your rankings line up with your partners? If not what does this tell you about what you bring to the mentoring relationship? If different how will you complement each others roles as mentors and what cautions might you have to be aware of?
4. Are there other mentoring roles beyond the four mentioned here? If so how will they impact your mentoring relationship?

XIV. Qualities to be a “Marriage Mentor”

1. WARMTH

“Anyone with a modicum of human warmth, common sense, some sensitivity to human problems, and a desire to help can benefit many.” Jerome Frank

2. GENUINENESS

“Let one who wants to move and convince others, first be convinced and moved themselves. If a person speaks with genuine earnestness the thoughts, the emotion and the actual condition of their own heart, other will listen because we are knit together by the tie of sympathy.” Thomas Carlyle

3. EMPATHY

Remember this is about THEM not US as mentors

XV. CAUTION FLAGS for “marriage mentors”

- You are battling some ADDICTION
- You have UNCONTROLLABLE emotional outbursts you have not MANAGED.
- You have had a recent significant SETBACK (financial, emotional, etc.)
- Your marriage is fraught with CONFLICT
- You are STRUGGLING with financial debt
- One of you is much more MOTIVATED to be a mentor
- You don't have a deep sense of PURPOSE in your life
- You are PESSAMISTIC about marriage in general
- You avoid personal RESPONSIBILITY for your problems
- You are not CONTENT and at peace with your LIFE and OWN marriage.
- You are not really living your life SUBMITTED to Biblical principles.
- You are primarily motivated to be a mentor in order to HELP your own marriage.
- You have been COUNSELED by others that you are not in a good place presently, to be mentors

XVI. MENTORING “Engaged & Newlyweds”

Predicable Issues...

- 1) Establishing marital ROLES and responsibilities though NEGOTIATIONS_.
- 2) Adjusting to personal HABITS.
- 3) Providing emotional fulfillment and SUPPORT.
- 4) Establishing family and EMPLOYMENT priorities by learning to balance and NEGOTIATE
- .
- 5) Managing budgetary and financial MATTERS..
- 6) Establishing relationships with extended family and learning to set BOUNDARIES_ with family of ORIGIN..
- 7) Participating in the larger community by making friends with other MARRIED_ couples and being involved in the community.

8) Making sexual ADJUSTMENTS by learning how to discover mutual pleasure and satisfaction.

“The success of a marriage comes not in finding the right person, but in the ability of both partners to adjust to the real person the inevitably realize they married” John Fisher

XVII. PREDICTORS of Marriage Crisis

Certain issues make a couple more likely to have serious problems.

- 1) Couple meets after a significant LOSS (*like a parent, child or spouse*)
- 2) There is no desire to distance oneself from the FAMILY of origin.
- 3) The family BACKGROUNDS of the couple are significantly different.
- 4) The couple is overly DEPENDENT on either extended family.
- 5) They marry before age 21.
- 6) They marry after an acquaintance of less than SIX months.
- 7) They marry after THREE or more years of engagement.
- 8) The wedding occurs without FAMILY or friends present.
- 9) The wife gets PREGNANT either before or in the first year of marriage.
- 10) Either spouse has a very poor RELATIONSHIP with their parents.
- 11) Either spouse CONSIDERS their family of origin to be a very unhappy time
- 12) Marital patterns in either family were UNSTABLE.

XVIII. PRACTICE ANSWERING: Give it your best shot!

- How can we be honest without hurting the others feelings?
- What should we do when we can't agree?

- How do we find time for each other when our schedules are so full and we are so busy?
- It's said that men and women communicate differently, How?
- Should we have separate bank accounts?
- What if my spouse changes after we marry?
- What can we do if our sex drives are different?
- How can we have a consistent and meaningful devotional time together?
- How can we keep our families from interfering in our marriage?

YOUR FIRST MEETING WITH A COUPLE

- You call to set up the meeting
- You invite them to your home if you are comfortable.
- Also can meet for coffee somewhere. However, make sure it is a setting conducive to conversation.
- Remember the goal is to MENTOR not entertain.
- Don't hesitate to reveal who you are.
- Tell them a short version of your relationship, How you met and what you like about you marriage.
- However remember the main focus is the "mentorees".
- Ask their story, how they met, what attracted them to one another, etc.
- Find out what THEIR EXPECTATIONS are of the marriage mentoring relationship
- ALL THIS TIME PRACTICE USING ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS
- Focus on WHAT KIND OF MARRIAGE DO THEY WANT TO BUILD?
- What marriages have they seen that they respect and why?

- What they observed in their own parent's marriages?
- What qualities patterns, behaviors attitudes and rituals do they want to incorporate into their marriage?

Exercise of GOAL SETTING

- In exploring your mentoree's goals for marriage, you may want to have them write down their ideas in specific terms.
- You may write something like this: *“One of the most important yet least talked about domains of marriage is the vision you share for your first year together. Discuss what you hope to achieve (your goals) as a couple. What would you like to accomplish at three months, seven to eight months and at one year? Consider communication, conflict, spirituality, finances, sexual intimacy, outside relationships, traditions for holidays, and so on. Be specific as possible.*
- Have them write them down for three months, seven-eight months and at one year
- PRACTICE: Pretend you could start you marriage over. Discuss and write down what your own three month, seven month and one year goals would be.

YOUR FIRST MEETING WITH A COUPLE

- Before concluding your first meeting you will want to discuss a specific meeting time and place for your next meeting.
- Discuss anything you wanted them to do before the next meeting. (reading, and exercise, etc)
- Workbooks such as:
 - “SAVING YOUR MARRIAGE BEFORE IT STARTS” or “SAVING YOUR SECOND MARRIAGE BEFORE IT STARTS” by Les and Leslie Parrott or...
 - “BEFORE YOU SAY I DO “ or “BEFORE YOU REMARRY” by H. Norman Wright are excellent resources.
- Books
 - The Meaning of Marriage: Tim Keller
 - A Book of Romance: Tommy Nelson
 - His Needs Her Needs: Willard Harley
 - The Good Fight: Les & Leslie Parrott
 - Moments Together: Dennis & Barbara Rainey (devotional)

- Moment with You: Dennis & Barbara Rainey (devotional)
- Love Talk: Les 7 Leslie Parrott (devotional)

IN FUTURE SESSIONS YOU WILL ADDRESS THE FOLLOWING TOPICS:

- Setting up a NEW HOME together
- Agreeing on FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT
- Negotiating marital ROLES
- Managing CONFLICT
- Dealing with IN-LAW relations
- Preparing for HOLIDAYS
- Coping with GENDER issues
- Cultivating SPIRITUAL intimacy
- Celebrating ONE ANOTHER and married life

MENTORING BETWEEN MEETINGS

- Keep the couples contact information in a convenient place.
- Mail a note of encouragement from time to time.
- If you find a good article on marriage mail it to them with a quick note
- With permission, contact their parents simply to introduce yourself and tell them you are enjoying their children.
- If you hear of a appropriate television show or a speaker in town make sure to let them know.
- Let them babysit your children
- Continue to send them anniversary cards over the coming years.

XIX. The Need for TRAINED, COMPETENT “Marriage Mentors”

- a. Sees this is a calling
- b. Demonstrated to have a growing, God centered marriage committed to the principles of the Word of God.
- c. Interviewed and/or recommended.
- d. Willing to go through additional training and supervision.