

Newsletter

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www.Mourning-Dove.org

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CHANGED LIVES

Dear Partners,

Change is a choice. Despite our best efforts, we can't force others to change, but we can choose to assess how we have undermined the intimacy in our marriages.

The common element in those couples who experience deeper intimacy and healthier interactions is the willingness of each partner to accept ownership for his or her part in the *unhealthy* patterns that permeate the relationship.

The comments by the following couples reflect the results of choosing a different direction for their marriage and their family legacy.

Kent and Sara wanted so much more for their marriage. They were committed to work on their relationship as evidenced by the following comments: "You taught us about confession and forgiveness. Being sorry was not enough. It was important to acknowledge how what we

have done has affected the other person's feelings. Our two hour sessions in your living room often ran over. You were so kind to be looking at us and not your watches. We noticed this and it really made us feel special and cared for. You both encouraged us to grow individually, as a couple, and closer to God. We are now talking to each other every day, working on reading the devotional you gave us and praying together each morning. **I have my best friend back.** Thank you so much for letting God use you."

Kent and Sara were very complimentary towards us, but it was *their* willingness to receive all that God had in mind for them that made the difference.

Bert and Laura are a loving couple who, like many empty-nesters, found themselves in a much different "season of life." After a lifetime of investing in our kids, we some-

times feel like asking our spouse, "Do I really know you?"

Laura wrote, "When we began our journey called marriage, we never would have believed that it was going to be so very tough.

Yet, in all the hard times, God kept His loving and gracious hand on Bert and I. His gentle guidance led us to the two of you! Words can't express how deeply moved we are by God's love. Yet, our hearts are being healed new every day because of your ministry.

'Grateful beyond words' - that's where Bert and I are today. You both have touched our hearts with God's truth and we will be forever thankful!"

Praise God for these couples' decisions to choose a more intimate path. Where is your marriage today?

Our Love,
Gary & Elvira Delaplane

MINISTRY BY THE NUMBERS

6 - years since Mourning Dove Ministries was conceived.

18 - months since we launched MDM as a full-time marriage ministry.

19 - people are currently on the MDM Prayer Team, praying daily for the couples and families with whom we interact and for the ministry. (Contact us to join the team!)

32 - couples have gone through the Pre-Intensive training sessions since January 2006.

36 - couples have come to MDM in 2007 for counseling and coaching.

86 - children's lives will be greatly impacted by the decisions made by those 36 couples.

238 - hours spent with the 32 couples to prepare them for the Marriage Intensives.

YOU MAKE THIS MINISTRY POSSIBLE...

Without the selfless contributions that so many of you sow into this ministry it simply would not exist.

The fees collected by the ministry cover approximately 42% of the ministry's operat-

ing budget; the rest comes from the contributions from those of you who have partnered with MDM to save marriages and families from the ravages of divorce and unhealthy environments.

We need your contributions to continue to come alongside couples and individuals regardless of their ability to pay. Every donation makes a difference and is deeply appreciated. MDM

is a registered 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. Please send your gifts to Mourning Dove Ministries, 870 Doe Hill Lane, Roswell, GA 30075 or through the secure web-site: www.mourning-dove.org.



Weathering the Storms of Life

MDM'S DIFFERENT APPROACH TO COUNSELING

"We've been to counseling several times and never saw any changes."

"I spent the time before the counseling session 'preparing my case' against my spouse."

These are typical of the quotes that we have heard from couples with whom we have worked over the past two years.

It was similar personal experiences that led us to create

a different model of counseling to "Strengthen Marriages to Weather the Storms of Life."

Key differences include:

- Couple with couple interaction
- Minimum session lengths of 2 hours; extended sessions are available
- The creation of a warm and safe environment - the "living room" approach

- Intimacy Therapy as our core theory - to promote healing and to address *causes* rather than symptoms.

- The integration of coaching into the sessions to equip couples to interact in new ways in their relationship.

Call to Action: Please pass on our information to those couples who may benefit from this approach.

MAKE YOUR HOME A SAFE PLACE

Unless you've lived in a cave, you probably realize that "the world" can be a cruel and hurtful place.

From elementary school to the workplace, we can receive a constant flow of messages that tell us that we don't quite measure up. If we internalize those lies, we eventually don't need anyone else telling us of our shortcomings - we constantly play the tapes in our own minds. God's desire is that we come to know our "true selves" - the image of Christ.

One aspect of that transformation is to hear truth

and edifying words of affirmation. Our homes should be one of the indisputably safest places to hear those things.

How safe is your home? We knew that changes needed to take place when we realized that we often treated our coworkers or the clerk at Kroger with more respect and grace than our own family members. So how do you begin to make your home a safe place for your spouse and children? Start with these suggestions:

- Affirm one another. We often forget the power

we have to build up rather than to criticize.

- Choose your words wisely. We don't have to share every opinion or thought that enters our minds.

- Speak the truth in love. We often speak "the truth" but somehow forget the "love" part.

- Delight in the presence of your loved ones. Do your eyes sparkle with love when your spouse or child enters the room? Do they feel that they are deeply cherished?

Is your home a refuge?

We flatter those we scarcely know,

We please the fleeting guest,

And deal full many a thoughtless blow

To those who love us best.

Ella Wheeler Wilcox

The Pain of Divorce

As he sat alone in his apartment one evening, a dear friend - who had gone through an unwanted divorce - shared the pain of his heart in a passionate e-mail. Some of his thoughts included the following: "I'm tired of being alone at night. I'm tired of being away from my kids. I'm tired of not being able to read them books before bedtime. I'm tired of not being able to give them baths and cuddle with them in their bed. I'm tired of having to speak to my kids on the phone like I was in a prison. I'm tired of only seeing my kids one day a week and every other weekend. I'm tired of coming home to a one-bedroom apartment. I'm tired of not having somebody hug and kiss me at night. I'm tired of all the shed tears. I'm tired of having to remain strong and focused when everything in my life is gone, broken, and in pieces. I'm tired of the agony experienced by sleeping alone in a bed. I'm tired....." "I just hope and pray that none of you ever has to go through this pain associated with divorce." Any questions?