

Dear Friends and Family,

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**Prayer Team**

Self-sufficiency was an affliction with which I (Gary) dealt most of my life. Of course, I didn't view it as a problem – I was just capable of taking care of my own problems. That attitude extended towards God as well. "Don't call me; I'll call you if I need any help." For thirty years I operated under this delusion until I had to admit, "My life is in shambles. God, please take over!" I finally realized that I was in "control" of nothing.

The gift of sharing our hearts with God in prayer is priceless. And having others come together with you in agreement for those things that you seek in your life brings additional power and peace to the process. We strongly encourage you to send prayer requests for your marriage or family to us through the "Contact Us" page of the web site. Mourning Dove Ministries has a powerful team of people who pray for individuals, couples, families, and the ministry. We use only first names and keep your requests confidential among the team members. You don't have to try to get through this life alone.

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**Priceless**

Every one of us knows, intellectually, that the relationships in our lives are the most important things that we have. Tomorrow is promised to no one; we need to live our lives daily in such a way that those closest to us should have no doubt of their importance to us.

The dialogue in Matthew 22 reinforces this: "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it; you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets."

Automobiles rust, homes crumble, and savings can evaporate, but the relationships that are sprinkled throughout our lives can transcend eternity. Do the priorities in your life reflect that fact? During the next week, take the time to write a letter to a special friend, call a family member you haven't seen in a while or simply express your unconditional love to those nearest to you.

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**Said even better...**

If you were going to die soon and had only one phone call you could make, who would you call and what would you say? And why are you waiting? *Stephen Levine*

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## Emotional Responding

In each of our newsletters we attempt to share a fundamental concept for increasing relational intimacy – in your marriage, your parenting or your friendships. This material comes from the Intimate Encounters teaching curriculum of Intimate Life Ministries, Inc., Austin, TX and has been used by thousands of people to deepen their relational intimacy.

When a spouse, child, friend or even a stranger is struggling with a difficult or troubling situation, what's the most helpful, loving way to respond? If our child or close friend shares exciting news, how can our response deepen the intimacy in our relationship? The answer is *Emotional Responding* – responding to emotion with emotion.

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## For the Joyful...

There are so many ways in which someone's joy can be extinguished by an inappropriate response to shared good news. For example, a husband comes home excited about the pay raise that he received. Some of the poor ways in which we often respond to someone's good news include:

- **Comparison** – *"Hey, that's great (with a less enthusiastic tone). I know when I got my last raise I celebrated for a week. I felt so good about..."*
  - **Complaint** – *"That's wonderful, Sweetheart. I just thought you were expecting a little more."*
  - **Neglect** – *"Boy, we need it. That'll sure pay some bills."*
  - **Criticism** – *"That's good, Honey. Just be sure and don't get too cocky."*
  - **Fine Tuning** – *"Three zeroes are great; I can't wait for four zeroes!"*
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## Rejoice!

Instead, we need to respond with sincere joy, happiness or encouragement when any positive event or feeling is shared. Rejoicing always includes expressing joy for another – keeping the focus on the other person in a positive way. Emotional responding communicates what you *feel* for that other person.

Rejoicing might sound like: *"Wow, that's terrific! I know you must be very proud. I'm thrilled for you." or "Fantastic! I am so proud of you. All your hard work is really paying off."*

Don't miss the many opportunities to simply celebrate the joyous moments – both small and large – with your loved ones.

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## For the Hurting...

We also need to eliminate responses that do not express comfort and care for those who are upset. Many times we answer with other things that don't help. Suppose your best friend just said some hurtful words to you. As you tell someone else about it, you get these responses:

- **Facts, logic and reason** – *"Don't let what she says bother you, you know it isn't true."*
  - **Criticism** – *"You sure are sensitive. Why do you let her get to you so easily? You really need to toughen up."*
  - **Complaints** – *"It sure was stupid to let all those people know how easily she gets to you. I found the whole thing embarrassing. If you keep this up we won't have any friends."*
  - **Neglect** – *"Well, I sure hope you can work it out. It's not my problem."*
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## Comfort

When someone is hurting – whether it is a friend suffering through a personal tragedy or a child upset over a poor report card – we need to respond with care and compassion. The response should always include understanding, empathy, gentleness, and reassurance.

As you consider your response, think of the *feelings* (not solutions!) that you may have for the other person's situation or what they are going through – sadness, compassion, etc. Don't try to "fix" them!

Communicate what you feel for the other person: *"It saddens me to see you hurt because I care about you; I care about you when you hurt because I love you."*

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## Using It!

The following examples will give you an opportunity to think more about emotional responding. Be careful not to answer with facts, logic, criticism, complaints, neglect or "non-emotional responses." Then apply what you may have learned with your spouse, children and friends – you'll be astounded at the impact on the quality and intimacy of your future conversations.

- You come home from work. The house is a mess and so is your wife. You can see she is visibly upset. You say \_\_\_\_\_.
- Your spouse or friend complains that he/she is burned out, there's not enough time to accomplish all that needs to be done. Your response?
- You and your friend or spouse had a special evening planned and you get held up at the office. What will you say when you finally arrive?
- Your spouse tells you that his family is coming for a visit. He is excited because it's been so long since he's seen them. You find their visits to be stressful and unpleasant. What do you say?

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## Overview of Mourning Dove Ministries

The information on this page is provided for those who may want additional details concerning the services of MDM – for personal needs or to assist other couples.



*Warm, Safe and Inviting - A Place of Refuge*

**The Vision:** Strengthening marriages to weather the inevitable storms of life.

**The Mission:** 1) Create warm, safe, and inviting environments of healing and enrichment for individuals, marriages and families through a creative, non-traditional model of counseling and coaching.

2) Equip pastors and lay people with the tools to create self-sustaining, family-focused ministries through seminars, workshops and retreats.

### What we offer:

- A non-traditional approach to coaching, counseling and training for couples. We are also available to counsel individuals, especially when one spouse is not willing or ready to attend.
- Accelerated Care – extended half-day, full-day or two-day Marriage Intensives for those couples who desire faster change in their relationship or resolution of their intimacy issues.
- Pre-Intensive workshops for couples to prepare them for attendance at Marriage Intensives at the WinShape Marriage Retreat Center in Rome, GA.
- Pre-marital coaching and marriage enrichment.
- Workshops and retreats. We are available to speak to groups or to conduct weekend training sessions using the theories of Intimacy Therapy. We have also shared our testimony with Stephens Ministry teams and other organized groups.

### How we differ:

Marriage counseling is a valuable resource for those who are struggling through the trials of life and there are many resources for couples, including psychologists, marriage and family therapists, and pastoral counselors. We offer a unique approach that appeals to couples whose expectations may have not been met in more traditional approaches. Mourning Dove Ministries differs from many of those in the following ways:

- Sessions last a minimum of two hours – a full 120 minutes versus 50 minutes – which facilitates deeper discussions and faster progress.
- We meet couple-with-couple so that the clients benefit from the perspectives of both genders.
- Coaching on the basics of relationships, the healing of past pain and the use of genograms are core to our approach. The couple is equipped with tools to sustain their progress.
- The counseling environment is significantly different – one that is warm, safe and inviting.

### Contact us for more information:

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