

Time commitment key to building a strong marriage, book advises

By Katharine Bird
NC News Service

"A healthy, satisfying marriage relationship is never accidental," write Don Dinkmeyer and Jon Carlson in the book, "Time for a Better Marriage" (American Guidance Service, 1984, \$7.95). "Basic to the process of building a stronger, happier marriage is a commitment to spend time together learning and applying relationship skills."

The authors, experienced marriage and family counselors, add that their book is a "program designed to help you better understand your marriage and learn important skills that will enable you to enrich your relationship." Each of the 10 chapters deals with a different skill.

Dinkmeyer and Carlson point out that problems are going to be a fact of life in every marriage. And problems in one area have an annoying habit of cropping up in another.

For instance, in sexuality. "A couple's sexual relationship is like a barometer, reflecting the highs and lows of the relationship," they write. What happens outside the bedroom all day has a tremendous influence on what happens inside it.

Learning how to carry on discussions calmly is a key skill to develop, the authors indicate. Especially in such an emotion-laden situation as sex, they say, "it is important to clearly understand and accept each person's point of view." Only then can a couple move forward and grow as a couple.

Being able to share feelings is another important skill in a relationship. Sometimes, the authors say, "fear and insecurity block the way to communicating what we are really feeling." But, they add, sharing feelings takes courage and a willingness to risk rejection for the sake of developing a deeper relationship.

Dinkmeyer and Carlson recommend making "I" statements to share feelings. And they stress the need to be as concrete as possible: "I'm lonely when you're not here" is preferable to a more general statement like "I'm feeling so lonely."

As in other sections in the book, the authors list some questions for self-evaluation on how well couples share feelings. These include:

- Do you avoid intimacy by not sharing feelings?
- Are your conversations general or do you share on a personal level?
- Do you ask a lot of questions and give opinions rather than reveal how you feel?

For couples and groups interested in marriage enrichment, the book serves as a "how-to" manual with 10 weekly lessons. The lessons explore topics vital to couples involved in the exciting process of learning to live with each other on a daily basis.

Included are activities for improving skills, such as a step-by-step approach for handling conflict; case histories describing commonly encountered situations such as in-laws or money management; exercises for self-evaluation.

Company offers pamphlet on toasting for marriages

Never be at a loss for words at weddings with an informative, free guide to toasts for special occasions.

The new guide offers insight into unique toasting customs from around the world and, with the help of phonetic pronunciations, lists ways to say "Cheers" and good luck in 23 languages. A description of how toasting

rituals have evolved since ancient Greek and Roman times is also included.

To obtain a copy of the booklet, send a stamped, self-addressed business-size envelope to: Bells Scotch "Extra Special" Toast Guide, 888 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10106.

Encounter scheduled for hearing-impaired

On May 2-4, Engaged Encounter will present a weekend for the hearing-impaired at Keuka College in Penn Yan. Interpreters will be available to assist in understanding of the presentations and with communication between the hearing and hearing-impaired.

The session will run from 8 p.m. Friday, May 2, to 4 p.m. Sunday, May 4. The cost is \$100. To register, obtain a brochure and form from your parish priest, or call Les and Janice Bradt (716)352-1082.



After 50 years of marriage, Mr. and Mrs. Fiandack of Assumption Parish, Fairport, re-exchange wedding vows during Thursday night's service.

Fairport couples renew their vows

Like "putting the Christ back in Christmas," restoring St. Valentine's Day to its original character as a Christian holiday is a worthwhile endeavor for any parish to undertake. A special Valentine's eve celebration at Assumption Parish in Fairport was a recent attempt to "Christianize something which seems to have been taken over by Hallmark (Greeting Cards), according to the pastor, Father John P. Norris.

Married couples got into the Valentine's spirit early in a special ceremony on Thursday, Feb. 13. Under the sponsorship of the parish pre-Cana team, Father Norris celebrated a Mass dedicated to all married couples present. After the homily, the couples renewed

their vows after the homily, and then, touching each others' rings, were asked to renew their pledge of fidelity.

Readings and prayers of the faithful were proclaimed by representative couples. Music for the Mass was provided by the parish's adult choir, and included songs and hymns appropriate to the occasion. After Communion, Mr. and Mrs. Duncan Montgomery offered some suggestions about future marriage-enrichment possibilities within the parish community.

A reception with punch and wedding cake followed the Mass. During the reception, the couples were treated to an original adaptation of the Broadway musical "I Do, I Do," performed by Stu and Val Sanford.



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