

Getting the Love You Want



Call today about workshops and other help for
your relationship

Imago Center for Relationships
Betsy & Bruce Bergquist
(Married 52 years)

betsy@betsyandbruce.com
(908) 735-7650

Hello Friends,

Avid swimmers that we are, we've been thoroughly enjoying the warm and sunny end of summer and first days of fall. We had three days of ocean swimming this past weekend and with luck the season may not be over yet. Getting away for a few days was a great reminder of the pure gold of finding time for fun and freedom from work, no matter how much we like what we are doing.

Our September 14-16 weekend workshop was one of our best ever. The group was small, but the energy, growth, and healing was something to behold.

As we noted in this letter just last issue, **each workshop seems to bring out fresh energy and passion from us.** We know we are not just serving our participants, but also their families and the larger society of which we are all a part. Divorce and broken relationships are an ongoing silent social epidemic, and that's the larger malaise we are committed to addressing - one couple at a time. If you haven't attended one, please review our schedule and information below or at www.betsyandbruce.com.

Our feature article this issue is **Facing Conflict - When Love is Not Enough.** Do read it and **fearlessly take the included self inventory** to assess your own relationship. There's no judgment to be drawn from the results - just information that may be more helpful than you may think.

Also, please note Betsy's short article **Putting Your Money Where Your Relationship Is!**

Until next time, best wishes for the relationship of your dreams.

Facing Conflict

When Love is Not Enough

You knew how to fall in love back then, right? It was easy. Just let it happen. Bliss!

But knowing how to stay there now or get back there is not quite so simple, right?

That's because doing so requires tools and skills and information well beyond what even the most fortunate of us learned from our families, churches, schools, or friends.

So to be more specific: when the glow of initial romance wears off, most of us **simply lack the skills or under**

Imago Center for Relationships

12B Leigh St. * Clinton, NJ 08809 * (908) 735-7650 * betsy@betsyandbruce.com

Copyright 2008 BetsyandBruce.com

standing of how to see and use the inevitable conflict in a positive way to learn more about ourselves and our partner and move forward.

Instead, **conflict stands ready to rule our relationship**, and to end up creating more and more distance between us.

Yet **we can also see conflict, which can be described as disagreement or frustration, as good**, a positive invitation to know each other and ourselves better.

However, if you are anywhere near where we were 30 years or so ago, **you probably need some outside help to guide you through.**

As for the two of us, no matter what it was we were fighting about or in disagreement about, **we needed someone not to try and fix it, judge who is right, or point the finger at one of us, but someone to step in and help us** communicate with each other with respect and listen beyond our own reactivity and absolute belief that one opinion is the absolute right one. **We needed someone to guide us** beyond that place and see if we could understand our differences.

Without it, our relationship was always at some level of risk, and **we were fortunate eventually to find what it is we now share with others.**

Put differently, **Love alone may well not be enough to pull you through your moments of conflict.** Deep inside you may really love each other, but if conflict has a history for you, **its daily wear and tear has probably eaten away** the connection until you may feel too bruised to continue.

In his landmark bestseller *How Can I Get Through To You*, psychotherapist Terry Real notes **that the longer couples live together, the lower their reported contentment** - especially if couples are not able to turn their conflicts into growth. And, incidentally, **he adds that 70% of divorces are initiated by women!**

So here are **some homework questions** for you and your partner to each ask yourselves **so that you can gain realistic picture** of some aspects of your relationship, its relative health and how you deal with conflict. **Ask them of yourselves fearlessly!**

1. When we are in conflict do little conflicts escalate into fights with accusations, criticism, name calling, or bringing up past hurts?
2. Do we criticize or belittle each other's opinions, feelings, or desires?
3. Does my partner seem to view my words or actions more negatively than I mean them to be?
4. When we have a problem to solve, does it seem as if we are on opposite teams?
5. Do I hold back from telling my partner what I really think and feel?
6. Do I sometimes think seriously about what it would be like to date or be in a relationship with someone else?
7. Do I often feel lonely in this relationship?
8. When we argue, does one of us withdraw, that is, not want to talk about it anymore or leave the room?
9. If you have more YES than NO answers to these questions, your relationship maybe headed for trouble.

10. If so, please consider what we offer and which are described below. Besides the **Getting the Love You Want weekends coming up October 12-14, November 9-11 and November 3-December 2**, we will be offering on **Saturday October 6 a one-day workshop on the topic of Moving from Blame to Dialogue**. It will be an introduction to the main communication tool we teach in the weekend workshop. This is an excellent chance to learn some basics of **restructuring your frustrations with one another** in a safe and reliable way.

This one day workshop would also be **appropriate for workshop grads looking for review** as well as newcomers to Imago.

Putting Your Relationship Where Your Relationship Is

I can't tell you how often I hear couples whose relationships are in serious trouble say, **"But we can't afford counseling or coaching or workshops!"**

When I hear this, my response is always the same: I suggest they **look at their credit card expenses and what this information tells them about their priorities**.

What I'm getting at with them is this: **Is investing in your relationship as important as spending on the car you own, your appliances, latest sports equipment, vacations, travel?**

And if your relationship is in real crisis, have you considered **the cost of separation and divorce** - not to mention **the psychological cost that accompanies divorce** for your children as well as the both of you?

Making a financial commitment to your relationship along with your commitments to the health and material well-being and comfort of your entire family may be **the best decision you could make for your future**.