



Building Strong Marital and Committed Relationships

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Agenda

- Introduction
- Family Constellations
- Characteristics of loving relationships
- Issues that strain relationships
- Overcoming relationship difficulties
- Strengthening relationships (elevating love)
- The effects of parental harmony and/or tension on children



Introduction

- Origins of this topic
- The importance of recognizing different family constellations
- How health and loving relationships support children

Types of Relationships

- Marriage
- Committed relationships
- Separated, divorced relationships

Characteristics of a Strong Relationship

- Trust
- Respect
- Good communication
 - Confront difficulties
 - Work together on solutions
- Flexibility or compromise
- Letting go of small grievances
- Healthy sexual activity



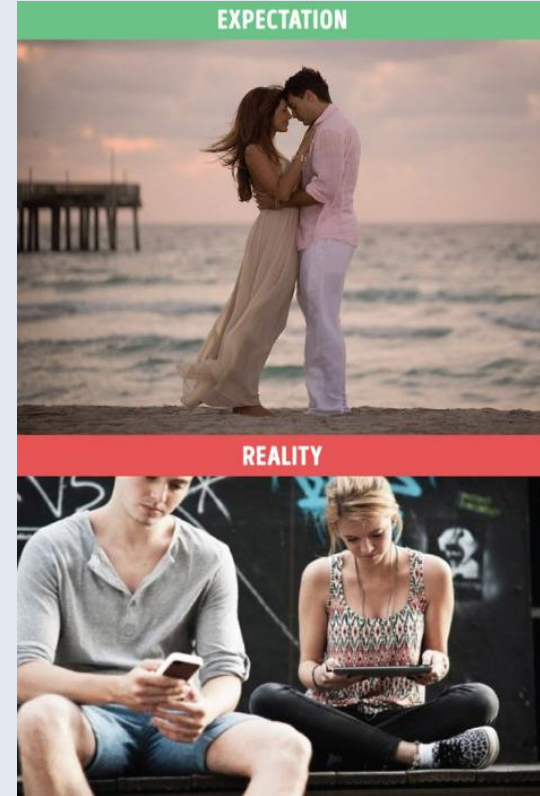
Expectations Of and From Marriage/ Committed Relationships

How did those expectations develop:

- Storybooks
- Media
- Experiences
- Family

What happens when expectations and reality

- Mesh?
- Clash?



Issues that Strain Relationships

- Work responsibilities
- Loss of employment
- Career changes
- Financial issues
- Substance Abuse
- Illness and health issues
- Loss of a spouse or important family member

Relationship Strains (Continued)

- Children
 - Change the family dynamic
 - Create different demands
 - Health of the child
- Different child rearing practices

Relationship Strains (continued)

- Less time together
- Growing apart
- Trying to change someone
- Sexual incompatibility

When Relationships Falter

- What can be done?
- For starters:
 - Self- reflection
 - Confront difficulties

Personal Reflections

- Are your goals realistic?
- Are your goals compatible with your spouse?
- Do you recognize your own humanity and your spouse's humanity?
(Neither can meet all of the other's needs)
- Are you attentive to the important needs of yourself and your spouse?
- Are you willing to put your best self forward to continue to *grow* the marriage, relationship?

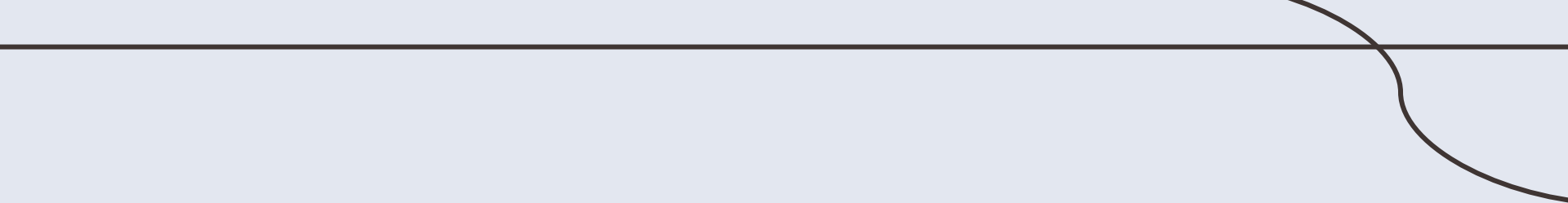
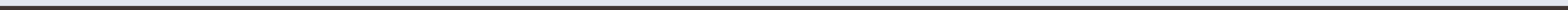
Confronting Difficulties

- Let go of small grievances; focus on the bigger problems
- Raise concerns without judgment (try hard)
- Listen (calmly) when your behaviors are brought up for change
- Reflect on discussions and suggest if necessary, a cooling off time to consider the issues as well as come up with solutions.
- Keep it to yourselves



Strengthening Your Partnership

- Be truthful
- Communicate – your worries, recognize your spouse's concerns about or aside from the children
- Avoid public feuds
- Avoid involving others
- Befriend each other's families and friends
- Don't bash insecurities
- Have common interests, activities, religious services/community
- Recognize that one's sense of self varies and spouses are not always at the same point at the same time

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- Make important decisions together
 - Have sex
 - Non-sexual touch
 - Leave the past behind
 - Apologize
 - Have fun together
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Parenting Relationships and Raising Children

You are *modeling*; they are *watching*:

- Avoid unkindness. Show *care* and *consideration*.
- Avoid aggression. Use your *words* carefully but air your concerns
- Set aside time to speak of grievances
 - Speak directly to the problem at hand with thought and without judgment.
- Let children observe affection between parents; it helps them to feel loved.
- Help children understand that different families handle love and upset feelings differently.



SUMMER

It's almost here!

Time to catch up on fun!

Time to reflect on relationships in your family .

Time to reflect on making **small** relationship changes that
can grow **big** rewards.

Time to take some deep breaths: breathe in the good,
exhale the stress



Thank you for joining us!