

“Marriage re-Branded ~ Healthy Expectations” [8.09.09]

Fill in the blank...“I wish my spouse understood _____?”

When you get married you brought a baggage full of expectations & a satchel full of emotional needs that you expected your spouse not only to understand, but fulfill.

There are literally hundreds of emotional needs that are unique to each marriage; that when they are satisfied, leave you with a feeling of happiness & deep contentment; & when they are unmet, unsatisfied or unnoticed, leave you sad & frustrated.

These emotional needs range from a need to be recognized on your birthday, a need for comfort food, to a need for a quiet Sunday afternoon nap.

All of us bring unique emotional needs into our marriages. Identifying these needs [self & spouse] is key to creating a healthy and thriving marriage.

Here are some of my personal emotional needs that Becky has helped me identify:

- Home environment = needs to be safe & predicable
- Favorite place = dinner table ~ hands down; good cooking & conversation
- Conversational faux-pa’s = I don’t like to bring work home with me
- Best time of the week = Sunday afternoon; celebrate God sightings; finally time to relax & enjoy time with my family!
- Unspoken ways she tells me, “I love you!” = Pinto beans, cornbread, fried potato’s, grape Kool-Aid, watching Tennessee Vols on a Saturday night ☺

This didn’t happen overnight - - my wife was able to i.d. my personal needs because she invested in me over the years emotionally, not because she is a natural intuitive.

We’ve learned together that unspoken expectations will always go UNMET & allowing these needs to go unmet eventually destroy any relationship. HUSBANDS & WIVES, get re-acquainted with your spouse; figure out what makes them tick; begin to explore how God uniquely & wonderfully created them emotionally & start figuring out how to meet those needs!

Listen to how beautifully complex God created your spouse ☺
(R) Psalm 139: 13 – 18 or p. 476 in pew Bible

Say with me = re-paraphrase v. 14a
I - - am - - WONDERFULLY COMPLEX!

If you think your husband or your wife is hard to understand; difficult to figure out; you’ve not lost your mind = IT’S EXACTLY how God created them ☺

This is one tangible way to keep your marriage fresh & alive; pursuing emotional intimacy with your spouse!

The gift of intimacy is referenced in Ephesians 5: 31 – 32

“As the Scriptures say, ‘a man leaves his father & mother & is joined to his wife, & the two are united into one.’ This is a great mystery, but it is an illustration of the way Christ & the church are one.”

One of the keys to unlocking this ‘great mystery’ of ‘becoming spiritually one’ surrounds this idea of INTIMACY.

Intimacy literally means = IN - - TO - - ME - - SEE

Mutually trusting each other enough to vulnerably share your innermost selves; an unbridled mutual self-disclosure!

Back in 2001 Dr. Willard Harley introduced the idea of a 'Love Bank' that helped me envision how critical it is to meet the emotional needs of our spouses. He explains that within each of us is a 'Love Bank' that helps us keep track of the way each person treats us.

Each person we know has an account & the things they do either deposit or withdraw love units from their accounts.

You are either making deposits or withdrawals from someone's 'Love Bank.' In marriage when the 'Love Bank' reaches a certain level of deposits the feeling of love is triggered. As long as you have more deposits than withdrawals, you will experience deep feelings of joy & satisfaction.

As you can well imagine, you must be sure to protect your spouse & their 'Love Bank' from withdrawals.

These emotional withdrawals come in the form of everyday behavior that can eventually deplete your interest & enjoyment.

- I. Love Busters = differing manifestations
 - A. Selfish Demands – who wants to live with a dictator?
 - B. Disrespectful tone – who wants to live with a critic?
 - C. Angry Outbursts – who wants to live with a time bomb?
[Proverbs 26: 21] “A quarrelsome person starts fights as easily as hot embers light charcoal or fire lights wood.”
 - D. Dishonesty – Who wants to live with a liar?
[Proverbs 26: 28] “A lying tongue hates its victims;”
 - E. Annoying Habits – who wants to live with a dripping faucet?
[Proverbs 27: 15], “A quarrelsome wife is as annoying as constant dripping on a rainy day.”
 - F. Inconsiderate Behavior – who wants to live with an inconsiderate jerk?

Each of these nasty, insensitive behaviors if unchecked will eventually destroy any feelings of love spouses have for each other ☹

One of the most popular reasons cited for divorce today is that a husband & wife have “grown apart from each other.”

It's easy to allow this to happen ~ no one intentionally allows this to happen:

- (1) spouse goes to work in order to pay for the other's education; interest grew apart ☹
- (1) spouse gets a promotion that takes them away from the home during the week due to travel ☹
- Children can also impact a couples interests & send them in different directions ☹

Instead of learning how to meet each other's needs under new circumstances, couples assume that their instincts will carry them.

When their natural instincts seem to fail, they often conclude that they must be incompatible & give up on the idea of marriage.

Extramarital affairs + multiple marriages represent one strategy in adjusting to the failure of growing apart.

Over time a search for a new person begins to meet their emotional needs ☹
God has a better way - - He has a different plan for you to find satisfaction with the spouse you have today!

There are (2) essential steps you must take:

- I. 1st step = Discover your spouse's most important emotional needs:
 - A. Basic tool that assists in defining the [basic needs] of a man & woman.
 1. I don't agree with everything in Willard Harley's book, His Needs, Her Needs, but I think he did a pretty good job of defining the basic needs of a man & woman.
 2. [As you can well imagine] those needs are quite different - - failure to understand those basic differences contributes to a great deal of dissatisfaction in marriage.
 3. He lists the man's basic needs as being:
 - B. [INSERT] His Needs
 1. Sexual fulfillment:
 2. Recreational companionship:
 3. Physical attractiveness:
 4. Domestic support:
 5. Admiration:
 - C. [INSERT] Her Needs
 1. Affection:
 2. Conversation:
 3. Honesty & openness:
 4. Financial support:
 5. Family commitment:

When we get married we think, *I've found the mate who's will fulfill all my needs*
The women are thinking, *I'll be valued & understood*
The men are thinking, *I'll have sex regularly & a playmate to share my hobbies.*

The reason that does not work @ my house is, my wife & I do not share the same interest in hobbies. Becky enjoys shooting skeet, compound bows & gardening. I'm much different. I love to cook, read books, & go to the mall & shop all day. No, I got that confused = reversed that order ☺
Father-in-laws advice, allow her to go shopping - - she will allow you to go hunting. Men do men things & women do women things = makes the world go round ☺ He was right!

II. 2nd step = Identify your needs

A. Unspoken expectations will always go unmet!

- Communicate your emotional needs – your spouse is not a mind reader

B. (2) of my top emotional needs came from the Men's Needs & the # 1 emotional need came from Her list:

- Be honest & take a risk to be vulnerable!

C. Make a date out of these 10 basic needs = INSTRUCTIONS

Truth is, there's nobody in this whole world that can meet all your needs except Jesus Christ. He said,
"Blessed are those who hunger & thirst after righteousness,
for they shall be satisfied." [Matthew 5: 6]

If you expect your mate to fulfill all of your needs, you will be disillusioned,
Placing God 1st in our lives provides the understanding - - the security - -the
peace - - the unconditional love that are essential for our self-worth;

With this peace we are now better able to serve our spouse!

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