



Lutheran Marriage Encounter



March 24, 1997

AS I HAVE LOVED YOU®

Post Weekend Resources for Love Circles / Love Spirals

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A DEEPER DIMENSION (A Post-Weekend Presentation)

CIRCLES: Monthly or bi-monthly gatherings of five to seven Marriage Encounter couples who meet each month and to try to dialogue in between sessions. The purpose is to share with one another and show us how beautiful we are and how much we have to give. We do this by sharing and listening, by giving and receiving. Through this sharing we also develop a deeper trust in one another, thus building the Church. Each session should last about two-and-a-half to three hours.

GENERAL PURPOSE: The main purpose of this presentation is to explore and share with each other and our group some ways in which we can work some new dimensions into our relationship.

DESIRED RESULT OF THE DIALOG: To learn and grow deeper in love, through techniques of sharing our lives in a fuller and more exciting way. We do this by learning to be more for each other and by learning to "lay down our lives for each other (i.e. to sometimes give up what and how we want for how and what our spouse wants)

GENERAL GUIDELINES

---Each session is conducted by a lead couple with each couple participating in the circle taking a turn.

---After reading the introductory focusing paragraphs, tell the couples to take a few minutes to think about the material read, in the light of their own relationship. Then the lead couple asks the first question and then shares on the question. The person to the left shares next and so on, clockwise around the room until all have had a turn. Then the couple to the left of the lead couple asks the next question and shares first. Then the person to their left shares next. The question sheet passes around the room to the left with each couple having a turn to ask the question and share first. Sharing should continue all the way around the room on each question. Continue until all the questions have been shared and each couple has had an opportunity to share first.

---Wait for each person to finish sharing before the next person begins.

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---Stick to the question as much as possible. Repeat it if it is necessary.

---Share feelings as much as possible, however, this doesn't mean thoughts and opinions can't be shared too.

---Don't listen with YOUR answer cocked. Really listen to what the person sharing is

saying. That is really loving the person.

---If someone is having a hard time sharing, wait and support them with your attention and love.

---If someone can't answer the question, have them pass, but say you will try to come back before going to the next question, and see if they can share.

---Remember when it hurts the most to speak up is the time to share--the real you may be wanting to come out.

---Don't discuss what's been shared beyond the Love Spiral. Anything shared in the room stays there. We are building a deep level of trust in one another.

---Don't advise or console. If a person is having a tough time, let their spouse minister to them. They just want to be heard and this gathering is not the time or place for advise or council.

---Optional sharings can be written on & shared by both spouses, or skipped over and the presentation can be just read as it is.

---Start with a Prayer.

A DEEPER DIMENSION

(Read Scripture Reference ECC. 4:9-12)

God created and designed marriage. He didn't do it in a vacuum or in the dark. He gave us detailed instructions on how it should work. We can get great marriages if we want to follow his instructions so we must look to the scriptures for our principles. In Genesis 2:24 He says "...For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother and shall cleave to his wife; and they shall become one flesh." Right after God created Eve he knew the potential problems so he gave these basics (1) leave (2) cleave and (3) become one flesh.

"...Shall leave his father and mother..."

Leaving is a physical act but also an attitude. Many people enter marriage willing to "run home to mother" or with an "I can't take it any more" attitude at the first crisis. It's hard for them to cut the emotional apronstrings. The process of leaving involves refocusing our lives on each other - looking to each other to help meet all our needs - not looking to parents, friends or anyone else. It also involves giving other relationships and things (business, career, money, etc.) lesser priority than our relationship with our spouse. Is there an area in your life you need to "leave"? An area you need to give a lower priority than your relationship with your spouse (job, children, TV, community or church service, hobbies, friends, housework, yardwork, possessions)? You may want to jot down some ideas as they come to mind as areas you may want to explore in further opportunities of dialogue.

OPTIONAL SHARING: Share a time, person or thing you had to explore and prioritize in your life in order to make your relationship #1 and share what negatives and positives have accompanied this.

..And shall cleave...

Webster defines "cleaving" as: to adhere; to cling; to stick; to be faithful to. The principle is one of commitment and permanence. To cast in concrete is to permanently cleave. Divorce is not an option, there is no six months trial, or money back guarantee in marriage. Without this type of commitment it would be too easy to give up in the light of problems...and even couples married two weeks know that problems are a given factor in any marriage. We have daily opportunities to apply the "cleave" principle to our lives with the daily pressures, hard times and good times. The key is to pull together like a team. What type of things tend to pull you together? What kind of things tend to pull you apart? When you have a choice to make, ask yourself if this will bring us together or distance our relationship. When we leave our childhood homes and we are cleaving to our spouse we can truly become one.

"..they shall become one flesh..."

This means intimacy. Intimacy, as we all know is not lust sexual. It is a process of closeness that can really only be achieved in marriage by living as one and growing to know one another as NO ONE else can know them. Knowing them without masks and loving them unconditionally. In God's sight marriage means to become one...to walk side by side and complete one another. Marriage is a process - like a soccer game, there are no time outs. Marriages are constantly changing - withering or growing. Here are a few short suggestions for two people to use, to work on growing closer and more intimate and making their marriage a little "newer", a little "more exciting and different".

FIRST: Have fun: Even though you are married, have dates. After you are married for a while, you get so involved in tasks and responsibilities that you stop having fun. When that happens the only thing the other person represents to you is problems. For even more fun, alternate months or weeks of "setting up the date". One time the wife sets it up, and the next time the husband sets it up. Take care of every detail. To make it more intriguing, keep the date a secret until the very last moment when you HAVE TO reveal something about it so as not to ruin it.

OPTIONAL SHARING: Share a time or incident when you had the opportunity to set up a date or "mystery date" and what it did for your relationship. Share a few of the fun details.

SECOND: DIALOGUE - Don't problem solve. The point of dialogue is mutual understanding. You might pick a word once in a while and have some discussions on what that word means to you, how does it make you feel? what thoughts does that word bring to your mind? Some such words are mealtime, checkbook, fun It is so amazing how words mean different things to different people. This is one important way you can reveal yourself to your spouse. For example, do you know how important romance is to your spouse? Does he/she like it if you call during the day just to say "Hi"? Do you know if he/she likes a "drink" before your evening meal (tea, sherry etc.)? Do you give each other a short time after coming home from work to just have some "unwinding time"

before getting into the sharing of events and/or problems?

THIRD: PROBLEM SOLVING - If you are in a relationship, there are going to be problems. The quicker they are taken care of the less large they are going to become and they are solved easier and quicker if they do not become large problems. Have a set time, sometime during the week, just for problem solving and nothing else. This really frees up an enormous amount of time during the week.

FOURTH: MEALS - Have meals together. Try to at least have **ONE MEAL A DAY** together - giving each other all your attention. Mealtime is not problem solving time. The purpose of a meal is sharing and sharing is more than food. Try to have at least one meal a day together **WITHOUT** watching TV. This tends to isolate you and does not allow for all your attention given to each other.

FIFTH: PRAY TOGETHER: It is very difficult to bicker with someone you pray with consistently. It is an activity that bonds. Pray together and pray out loud for each other as you pray together. If you do, there is no limit to the potential of your relationship:

1. What do I think of the principle of "Leaving"?
2. What area in my life do I see that I need to "leave" to be closer to my spouse?
3. From my point of vision, what evidence do I see that tells me that the cleaving" principle exist in our relationship.
4. As an exercise, everyone will take the word **MEALTIME** and give the following three things: (1) How does it make you feel? (2) Briefly describe what memory the word triggers and (3) What need do you think is underlying the feeling it gives you?
5. What kind of "dates" do you think you would like your spouse to plan for you?
6. What do you think of the idea of keeping the "date" secret till the very last minute you can? How does it make you feel thinking of doing this?
7. What is the toughest part of problem solving for you?
8. What does it mean to you when you think of "sharing" your life with your spouse?
9. Give three ways your spouse encourages you and/or builds you up when you are in the pits" Turn to your spouse and share with him and us how you feel about this.

QUESTION FOR 10/10: A time, place or situation where I feel the very closest to you and really "feel" our love and intimacy is_____ Describe fully how I feel then. What need of mine is being fulfilled at this time listed in my statement.

PRAYER (A Post-Weekend Presentation)

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GENERAL PURPOSE: The main purpose of this presentation is to begin to recognize that prayer is conversation with God and to determine how our prayer life came about and how it is being, has been or will be nurtured.

DESIRED RESULT OF THE DIALOG: To begin to focus on and explore where we are in our couple prayer life. To begin to build a trust factor in this subject where we may be able to surge ahead and build on our prayer life if we have one and build one if not.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

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---Begin with a Prayer.

PRAYER

(Read Scripture Reference Isaiah 6:19)

We all know the feeling. Standing outside a door...to an office or to someone's home...and we are about to ring the doorbell...for a first meeting. All sorts of questions pass through us. How will I be accepted? What will I say? How will the meeting go? What will the other person think of me?

It doesn't take too long after we have entered the room for most of these questions to be answered. A few minutes into any conversation reveals to us a mood or climate. The encounter will be either friendly or unfriendly; almost immediately we know whether or not we are welcome. Even before all our specific questions are answered, we perceive the climate or tone of the situation.

We are all sensitive to moods or climates today. We often go to great lengths to create atmospheres to help people know they are welcome. We try to prepare a climate that shows an attitude of openness, warmth and respect. The climate can say as much as our words do (and at times, even more).

When we enter into prayer - our encounter with God - what is the climate of this relationship? This climate will be determined by our personal attitude and our image of God. If God is abstract or a formless idea for us, a rather impersonal or routine climate will exist. If God is harsh or a fearful image to us, our mood of prayer will reflect this also. If "our" God is one who expects" a lot from us we will "do" much to try and please Him. The mood of our prayer will be a reflection of our attitude toward God. We do not form an attitude toward God in a vacuum.

OPTIONAL SHARING: Both share what "kind" of God image you brought into your relationship (i.e. a punishing, threatening God; a Fatherly type; a Loving, giving God

and how you came to him in prayer - fearfully, wanting, joyfully?)

We grow up in our families and our Church who each share with us an image of God. We see how others have encountered God throughout the ages and their reaction to Him. When God revealed Himself to the Israelites on Mt. Sinai, the people feared and trembled but after his dream of the staircase or ladder that extended from earth to Heaven, Jacob proclaimed "How awesome is this shrine!" We see the same wonder and amazement after the many miracles of Jesus.

Prayer is our personal encounter with the living God but it is not a casual meeting. For we come as creatures to meet the Creator, as sinners to meet the Sinless one, as the straw and wood of humanity into the blazing furnace of divinity, yet we are not consumed. This is a great miracle and wonder.

For God comes to meet us in love. His presence surrounds and envelops us yet we know we are not worthy of this. It is this spirit of awe-full-ness for which we pray. For when we are filled with awe and reverence, the quality and tone of our prayer finds a new and deepened level. We begin to see with wonder and hear with trembling.

OPTIONAL SHARING: Share a time when prayer was different and more meaningful for you than usual. Was a prayer answered immediately or in an awesome way that really bowled you over? A time perhaps when you were unmistakably aware of the "presence of God" with you in prayer.

Prayer and the whole area of God and Faith can be a very difficult and personal area for someone to share on but remember that everyone here loves you for where you are and is willing to support you in your position. As we learned on our weekend, feelings and needs are neither right nor wrong and in that you can rest assured that you will not be judged.

1. Do I have a special time that I like to pray? When is that time?
2. When do we pray as a couple or as a family? Would I like to?
3. What is my favorite prayer/hymn? How do the words make me feel?
4. What do I think of praying aloud in a "popcorn prayer"?
5. HDIF when they told us on our weekend someone was praying for us?
6. What is my image and attitude of God? What mask does God wear to me?
7. I can't pray when _____ (complete the sentence).
8. Who in our family can I talk most comfortably with about prayer?
9. Has my prayer life changed recently/or Do I want it to change? How?

Question For 10/10: HDIF about our individual and/or couple prayer life; do I believe it is adequate, or can be improved on? Describe my feelings and any needs I become aware of.

FEELINGS AND DIALOG

(A Post-Weekend Presentation)

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GENERAL The main purpose of this presentation is to explore and share the importance of sharing feelings and dialoguing. Through this method of communication we can enhance our couple relationship and draw closer in intimacy and unity

DESIRED: To give us the opportunity to grow in the richness of sharing feelings
RESULT and to give us a greater passion and craving for the communicating
OF THE of those feelings through our dialogue. To help us grow and possibly
DIALOG: rededicate our lives to the practice of dialogue.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

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---Begin with a Prayer.

DIALOGUE AND FEELINGS

(Read Scripture Reference 1 COR 13:1-7)

We write and dialogue because we need to make an attempt to give feelings so they can be understood and felt by our spouse. We write because a written record of our feelings helps to avoid having them escape and it's not as easy to be judged and you cannot be interrupted. By writing I can avoid embarrassment or fear of rejection or risk is lessened. At first maybe we wrote because we were told to, then we wrote because we found out it worked and we could see growth in ourselves and in us as a couple. The quietness and time taken to reflect before and during our writing time is not apt to be found under ordinary circumstances.

OPTIONAL SHARING: Share a time when you wrote a love letter that contained a feeling and need that could probably not have been shared as easily without the written dialogue.

When we write we contemplate - This is the most effective way for us to give of ourselves to our spouse. We write feelings and not judgments and thoughts. We want to write feelings and see if we can identify the needs behind the feelings we share. This goes a long way toward making our lives more complete and fulfilling. We must be vulnerable enough to allow our spouse to know what needs are not being met so that he or she can help us to satisfy those needs.

OPTIONAL SHARING: Share a time when you were vulnerable and shared a negative feeling that was tough to share and identified the need underlying the feeling so your spouse could help you meet that need.

When we write and dialogue, we want to avoid trying to solve problems, garbage dumping, trying to change the other person or manipulating situations. During this meeting, we should attempt to bring out our individual struggles with sharing our feelings and with doing our dialogue. We all fight against having to depend on it, but once we admit the need for dialogue, our lives become more fun and we are happier than ever before. Dialogue makes us greater lovers....it makes us thoughtful of each other, unselfish and develops our self awareness.

We all want to belong to a community of loving people. Dialogue is the channel for our love. We reach out..first to our spouse, then to our family, then to those around us. We learn through our own experience that dialogue sets the mood for loving discussion and that often our daily life is more rewarding because of this. Let's remember how dialogue has made us feel close to each other. How empty our lives seem to be when we have stopped dialoguing.

1. Try to focus and share with us: Was there an instance where dialogue made a marked difference in your lives?
2. What joy has dialogue brought to us?
3. Is there pain when we miss dialogue? How does it affect our lives?
4. How do I think this Community could help us with our Dialogue?
5. Where is my favorite place for Dialogue?
6. What is my favorite thing about writing a Love Letter and getting one?
7. When is my favorite time and place for writing my Love Letter to you
8. What do I dislike most about being asked about our Dialogue?
9. How do I feel about not being a "dialoguing" couple?

Question For 10/10: Do I want to make a commitment to Dialogue with you more frequently and HDIFAT

THE GIFT OF YOU (A Post-Weekend Presentation)

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GENERAL PURPOSE: The main purpose of this presentation is to explore and share the importance of really giving the true gift of myself through sharing feelings and dialoguing. Through dialogue we can enhance our couple relationship by being open and honest and revealing to our spouse who we really are with our masks off.

DESIRED RESULT OF THE DIALOG: To give us the opportunity to grow in the richness of sharing feelings. To enable us to find those feelings and the needs that prompt them. To know ourselves in an honest way and then to be able to share that knowledge with our spouse for a close relationship.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

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---Begin with a Prayer.

THE GIFT OF YOU

(Read Scripture Reference- 1 Corinthians 3:1 6-17)

What is the best possible gift I can give to someone I love very much. Of course the answer has to be Myself. I can remember how much Jesus loved. He gave Himself for those He loved and that surely included me. I am cautioned to - be thou like unto Him", and what better way to be like Him than to be myself, die to myself, lay down my life (wants and desires) for my spouse? How can this best be accomplished? Through Dialogue. How is our dialogue? Are we recommitting ourselves every day? Are we renewing the gift of ourselves to our spouse in dialogue? Perhaps for some people this may be easy but for some it can be a chore - a real effort to give oneself through their feelings - to bare themselves in a love letter and become vulnerable. Some people perhaps are afraid.

OPTIONAL SHARING: Both share a time when we were extremely vulnerable to our spouse in dialogue when it was very difficult to do. Share the outcome of working through it.

We are what life has made of us. We can take comfort in that for then we don't have to take full responsibility. But it can also make us uncomfortable. If we are not too comfortable being what we are, we can change. But do we want to change? Do we want to make ourselves work through the effort or just sit and blame. Could it be we are

afraid of change? Many people are but we could also be just lazy, or really comfortable as we are even though it causes some dissension, some controversy or discomfort for another. It is comfortable to be on a familiar path, we can be calm and sure of ourselves. But in a strange place, in unfamiliar surroundings it is quite different. The byways of our inner selves may be unfamiliar to our own selves.

OPTIONAL SHARING: Each share a time when, in dialogue we discovered something about ourselves through self reflection that surprised us.

Confidence (change) is the key to dialogue? Remember that from the weekend? Sometimes in dialogue there is such pain! such AGONY! but sometimes there is such LOVE! Ecstasy ! Dialogue can lead us down many avenues of familiarity but also down unfamiliar paths. In dialogue we may have to wrestle with feelings that have always been there but have been kept in check, held in a safe place deep inside and we could say we don't have those kind of feelings and never have. Maybe we aren't too comfortable with them nor well acquainted with them and certainly hesitate to share them with anyone, especially not our spouse.

Loving our spouse as we do, we want them to be all things beautiful. In order for that to happen we must be all things beautiful to reflect their image back to them. We know we are Aldonza but perhaps we can be Dulcinea too. Within the breast of each of us lurks a most beautiful Dulcinea. We know that through dialogue we can be Dulcinea so we make the decision to be. This is the gift of myself - my true self - that unique and individual self that we want our spouse to possess for we love them with all our being. Dialogue is not a chore. It is not a burden. It is a grand and glorious adventure. It is the gift of myself that the Father created for my beloved. Whenever I start to falter I must remember there is only one of me - there will never be another. That one of me is the best gift I can ever give my beloved.

1. What is the best quality about myself that I have discovered through dialogue?
2. What is the best quality about me that my spouse has shown me through dialogue?
3. If I could pick any mask that I wanted, what mask would I wear?
4. How has my self image improved since our weekend?
5. What one thing would I most like to improve about myself?
6. What do I see as my biggest asset and as my biggest drawback?
7. What was my reaction when I heard the words "God Does Not Make Junk"?
8. Describe one of my greatest fears?
9. Describe a time or situation when I grew from a dialogue.

Question for 10/10: What in me prevents me from being Dulcinea to you, my beloved?
HDIFAT?

THE "FALL" OF OUR LIVES
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GENERAL PURPOSE: The Main purpose of this presentation is to explore our feelings and thoughts about the time in our lives when we again will be a couple without the distractions we have now.

DESIRED RESULT OF THE DIALOG: To give us an opportunity to think and talk about what feelings we will have in this time of our lives and what needs we may be experiencing at that time. Perhaps to allow us to begin now to prepare for some of that to come.

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---Remember when it hurts the most to speak up is the time to share--the real you may be wanting to come out.

---Don't discuss what's been shared beyond the Love Spiral. Anything shared in the room stays there. We are building a deep level of trust in one another.

---Don't advise or console. If a person is having a tough time, let their spouse minister to them. They just want to be heard and this gathering is not the time or place for advise or council.

---Optional sharings can be written on & shared by both spouses, or skipped over and the presentation can be just read as it is.

---Begin with a Prayer.

THE "FALL" OF OUR LIVES (Scripture: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

Fall, like spring is a beautiful time of the year. It is a time of harvest, a time of bounty; it is a glorious time of color, apple cider and big golden pumpkins. Spring is a time of awakening; fall is a tribute to glory. Spring brings us the resurrection; fall a preparation for His birth. After the heat of summer we have crisp nights, beautiful sunny days and all the trees dressed in their finery. Everywhere you look there is color; bright red apples, orange, yellow and red leaves, cornstalks, mums, zinnias and marigolds. God in His wisdom has given us soft pastel colors in the spring after the stark white, gray and black of winter; through the summer we have the bright greens of life against the colors of the peony and the rose; and then in the fall He fills our eyes with the bright reds, oranges and yellows before once again He puts His earth to sleep under a soft mantel of white.

OPTIONAL SHARING: Both share what season of the year especially is your favorite, why and how you feel during that time of year. Try to share a need that time of year helps meet in your life.

Thinking of fall and it's beautiful colors, might make one think about how we might be in "The Fall of our lives"! Spring is birth and the growing years, summer is marriage and children, a time of work - feeding, watering and weeding; and fall, the most beautiful season of all. Our crops are grown. The nest is empty and instead of mourning that our job is over, it is time to enjoy the glory of the harvest.

Fall is the time to sit back and enjoy a job well done. It is a time of sorting and removing

that which is no longer needed. It is a time of reflection, but it is also a time of energy; the heat of summer which drains and makes us tired is over. There is a freshness to the air, the nights are crisp and the days are beautiful.

A time of reflection, A time for US ! We can sleep late in the morning or sit quietly reading our papers with a cup of coffee. No school bus to watch for. We can do what we want, join a club, take classes, our days are free. We can take time for US! We can find out what's inside, paint a picture, write a book...a time to find out who and what we are. Oh, what a beautiful season.

These are the Glory years. After scrimping and saving to give our children what they needed there is a little extra for us...yes US - the glory years are a time for husband and wife to stop and take a long look at each other. Once again it is just we two. We can do what we want without guilt for leaving the children or spending the money that should be used for shoes or saved for college. What a glorious time this can be. We can meet downtown after work, we can wander through the Arcade, have diner, take in a show. NO baby-sitter to worry about paying, no children to rush home and feed and get to this game or that race. We can take that vacation we have always wanted, not picnics, zoo trips or camping with the kids but maybe a cruise or the golfing vacation we talked about.

OPTIONAL SHARING: Each share a few of the future dreams you have harbored in your heart for that time of your life. How do you feel about those dreams and when you think of them. What needs do those dreams answer for you in your life.

Someone asked "What then is Winter?" The words come to mind "The stark white, grays and black". These would be the colors of death, death as seen by those we leave behind, not be us as we go; we see only the white -the light that is God. Winter is a time of sleep, a time of regeneration, a time for preparation. God covers us with a soft mantle of white.

Webster says "a mantle is something that covers, enfolds or envelopes; a lacy hood or refractory material that gives light by incandescence when placed over a flame; mantle: the portion of the earth lying between the crust and the core. Webster says it all; our bodies are placed in the crust and the core that is Him; our soul is enveloped in God's love and His radiance lights our way, as we wait for the resurrection. If there was ever any doubt of life after death, we have only to look at the four seasons; God tells us every year, Death is not the end, it is only a time of rest before you begin again.

1. What plans do I envision for us now that we are/when we are "two" again?
2. Do I believe there is no more point to our life since/after the children are gone?
3. What one thing do I now/will I then want to change about "US" as a couple?
4. What has been/will be the hardest adjustment to the children being gone?
5. What has been/will be the most fun since we've been/when we are "alone" again?
6. What kinds of things do I enjoy/will I enjoy doing most now that we are/when we

are a couple again?

7. What do I look forward to the most in the next few years?
8. Are there any "new" things I want to try as we grow older together?
9. Do I see Dialogue as part of our closeness in the months to come?

Question for 10/10: What are my thoughts and feelings about the "Fall" of OUR life and how I will handle it? HDIFAMA?

OUT ON A LIMB (A Post-Weekend Presentation)

CIRCLES: Monthly or Bi-Monthly gatherings of five to seven Marriage Encounter couples who meet each month and to try to dialogue in between sessions. The purpose is to share with one another and show us how beautiful we are and how much we have to give. We do this by sharing and listening, by giving and receiving. Through this sharing we also develop a deeper trust in one another, thus building the Church. Each session should last about two-and-a-half to three hours.

GENERAL PURPOSE: The main purpose of this presentation is to explore and share with each other and our group some ways in which we can work some new dimensions into our relationship through a deeper communication..

DESIRED RESULT OF THE DIALOG: To grow deeper in love through understanding one another on a deeper level. To recognize and share we how are always experiencing feelings and they are a vital part of intimate communication. To agree to delve into our communication and to explore and share our fears and anxieties connected with it.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

---Each session is conducted by a lead couple with each couple participating in the circle taking a turn.

---After reading the introductory focusing paragraphs, the lead couple asks the first question and then shares on the question. The person to the left shares next and so on, clockwise around the room until all have had a turn. Then the couple to the left of the lead couple asks the next question and shares first. Then the person to their left shares next. The question sheet passes around the room to the left with each couple having a turn to ask the question and share first. Sharing should continue all the way around the room on each question. Continue until all the questions have been shared and each couple has had an opportunity to share first.

---Wait for each person to finish sharing before the next person begins sharing.

---No interrupting or answering a sharing. After all have shared anyone may ask to share again and add more, but please wait until the sharing has gone all the way around the room.

---Stick to the question as much as possible. Repeat it if it is necessary.

---Share feelings as much as possible, however, this doesn't mean thoughts and opinions can't be shared too.

---Don't listen with YOUR answer cocked. Really listen to what the person sharing is saying. That is really loving the person.

---If someone is having a hard time sharing, wait and support them with your attention and love.

---If someone can't answer the question, have them say pass, but say you will try to come back before going to the next question, and see if they can share.

---Remember when it hurts the most to speak up is the time to share--the real you may be wanting to come out.

---Don't discuss what's been shared beyond the Love Spiral. Anything shared in the room stays there. We are building a deep level of trust in one another.

---Don't advise or console. If a person is having a tough time, let their spouse minister to them. They just want to be heard and this gathering is not the time or place for advise or council.

---Optional sharings can be written on & shared by both spouses, or skipped over and the presentation can be just read as it is.

---Begin with a Prayer.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO USE THIS OUTLINE:

1. Do the talk in the first person.(e.g.: I was the one who wanted to do , It was MY opinion , etc.)
2. When a feeling is put down, immediately write the word "Like" so that a feeling description follows and not a reason or judgment: (I felt sad, like , I felt frightened, like a little kid etc.)
3. Be sure to mention any needs (that are met or unmet) that you found as a result of exploring feelings.
4. Simply answer each question (with a short paragraph) and then go on to the next one. Number each paragraph to make it easy later to blend the talks. When you have finished answering all the questions you will have your portion of the talk written. Blend with your spouses answers and your talk is ready to workshop. Remember to include feelings and needs as part of your answers.

OUTLINE: I. INTRODUCTION - Introduce yourselves briefly and tell:
A: Where you are from.
B. How long you've been married
C. Share briefly about your children if you have any.
D. Share When you were encountered and where.

II. SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: I COR. 13:4-7

III. FOCUS OF TALK: To grow deeper in love through understanding one another on a deeper level. To recognize and share how we are always experiencing feelings and they are a vital part of intimate

communication. To agree to delve into our communication and to explore and share our fears and anxieties connected with it.

IV. FORMAT FOR WRITING THIS TALK:

A. Explore your attitudes and judgments

1. Where were we in this area before our W/E?
2. Did we talk much before our W/E? Why?
3. HDIF about our communication then? Describe my feelings.
4. How did I feel then when YOU really wanted to talk?
5. Where did I see you in this area?
6. Where did I see myself?
7. How did my family communicate with each other? HDIFAT?
8. What needs do I find underlying my feelings in this area?

B. How did this subject become an area to share?

1. What caused me to explore my own feelings on our communication ? (W/E? This Talk? Dialogue?)
2. What caused me to begin to share my feelings with you?
3. How did I feel about exploring and sharing on this subject, after our weekend?
4. What were the barriers, obstacles and conflicts I had to overcome in order to risk, trust and make a decision to love and share with you in this area?
5. How did I feel during our dialogues on this?
6. What needs did I become aware of underlying my feelings about sharing on this subject?

C. What resulted from sharing feelings & needs?

1. What awareness did I develop in this area (about and for myself and for my spouse)?
2. Where and how am I/are we different NOW since we looked into this area? HDIFAT?
3. What kind of feelings have I experienced (joy, relief) after having opened this area up to dialogue?

D Results of discovery, awareness and openness.

1. What significant growth has taken place for us in this area?
2. What new doors were opened for us in this area?
HDIFAT
3. What are the outward signs of change for us as a result of our dialogues on this subject? HDIFAT?
4. What are the inward signs of change for us as a result of our dialogues on this subject? HDIFAT?
5. Have any needs that were previously unmet been as a result of NOW being able to share feelings on communication?

6. Where do I see us heading in this area now?
7. Summarize how your life & relationship have been enhanced by becoming more open & trusting on this subject.

DIALOGUE QUESTION: Select a question for 10/10.

OPEN SHARING QUESTION: Select a question for open sharing.

A GIFT TO CELEBRATE (A Post-Weekend Presentation)

CIRCLES: Monthly or bi-monthly gatherings of five to seven Marriage Encounter couples who meet each month and to try to dialogue in between sessions. The purpose is to share with one another and show us how beautiful we are and how much we have to give. We do this by sharing and listening, by giving and receiving. Through this sharing we also develop a deeper trust in one another, thus building the Church. Each session should last about two-and-a-half to three hours.

GENERAL PURPOSE: The main purpose of this presentation is to explore and share with each other and our group some views and attitudes on sex.

DESIRED RESULT OF THE DIALOG: To be able to explore within ourselves the way we feel about sex and what we can do to enhance and/or change our attitudes about it. As a result of our dialogue we hope to be able to share more easily with our spouse and our group any fears and anxieties we may have in connection with sex.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO USE THIS OUTLINE:

1. Do the talk in the first person. (e.g.: I was the one who wanted to do , It was MY opinion , etc.)
2. When a feeling is put down, immediately write the word "Like" so that a feeling description follows and not a reason or judgment: (I felt sad, like , I felt frightened, like a little kid etc.)
3. Be sure to mention any needs (that are met or unmet) that you found as a result of exploring feelings.
4. Simply answer each question (with a short paragraph) and then go on to the next one. Number each paragraph to make it easy later to blend the talks. When you have finished answering all the questions you will have your portion of the talk written. Blend with your spouses answers and your talk is ready to workshop. Remember to include feelings and needs as part of your answers.

OUTLINE: I. INTRODUCTION - Introduce yourselves briefly and tell:

- A. Where you are from.
- B. How long you've been married
- C. Share briefly about your children if you have any.
- D. Share When you were encountered and where.

II. SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: I COR 7:1-5.

III. FOCUS OF TALK: To be able to explore within ourselves the

way we feel about sex and what we can do to enhance and/or change our attitudes about it. As a result of our dialogue we hope to be able to share more easily with our spouse and our group any fears and anxieties we may have in connection with sex.

IV. FORMAT FOR WRITING THIS TALK:

A. (3 minutes) Explore your attitudes and judgments

1. Where were we in this area before our W/E?
2. Did we actually talk much about sex before our W/E? Why or Why Not?
3. HDIF about this subject then? Describe my feelings.
4. How did I feel when YOU wanted to discuss sex?
5. Where did I see you in this area?
6. Where did I see myself?
7. How did my family handle this subject of sex? HDI FAT?
8. What needs do I find underlying my feelings in this area?

B. (7 min) How did this subject become an area to share?

1. What caused me to explore my own feelings on sex? (W/E? Love Circle Presentation? This Talk? Dialogue?)
2. What caused me to begin to share my feelings with you?
3. How did I feel about exploring and sharing on sex, after our weekend?
4. What were the barriers, obstacles and conflicts I had to overcome in order to risk, trust and make the decision to love and share with you in this area
5. How did I feel during our dialogues on sex?
6. What needs did I become aware of underlying my feelings about sharing on sex?

C. (3 Min) What resulted from sharing feelings & needs?

1. What awareness did I develop in this area (about and for myself and for my spouse)?
2. Where and how am I/are we different NOW since we looked into this area? HDIFAT?
3. What kind of feelings have I experienced (joy, peace, relief) after having opened this area up to dialogue?

D. (7 min) Results of discovery, awareness and openness.

1. What significant growth has taken place for us in this

- area?
2. What new doors were opened for us in this area? HDIFAT?
 3. What are the outward signs of change for us as a result of our dialogues on sex? HDIFAT?
 4. What are the inward signs of change for us as a result of our dialogues on sex? HDIFAT?
 5. Have any needs that were previously unmet been met as a result of NOW being able to share feelings on sex?
 6. Where do I see us heading in this area now?
 7. Summarize how your life & relationship have been enhanced by becoming more open & trusting on this subject.

V. DIALOGUE QUESTION: Select a question for 10/ 10.

VI. OPEN SHARING QUESTION: Select a question for open sharing.

REFLECT IONS (A Post-Weekend Presentation)

CIRCLES: Monthly or bi-monthly gatherings of five to seven Marriage Encounter couples who meet each month and to try to dialogue in between sessions. The purpose is to share with one another and show us how beautiful we are and how much we have to give. We do this by sharing and listening, by giving and receiving. Through this sharing we also develop a deeper trust in one another, thus building the Church. Each session should last about two-and-a-half to three hours.

GENERAL PURPOSE: The main purpose of this presentation is to explore and share with each other and our group some deeper understandings of who I am and what I am about.

DESIRED RESULT OF THE DIALOG: To learn and grow deeper in love, through techniques of sharing our lives in a fuller and more exciting way. We can do this by first exploring more fully who we are and how we act/react to specific situations; share them with our spouse and explore how this affects our relationship.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO USE THIS OUTLINE:

1. Do the talk in the first person.(e.g.: I was the one who wanted to do , It was MY opinion , etc.)
2. When a feeling is put down, immediately write the word "Like" so that a feeling description follows and not a reason or judgment: (I felt sad, like , I felt frightened, like a little kid etc.)
3. Be sure to mention any needs (that are met or unmet) that you found as a result of exploring feelings.
4. Simply answer each question (with a short paragraph) and then go on to the next one. Number each paragraph to make it easy later to blend the talks. When you have finished answering all the questions you will have your portion of the talk written. Blend with your spouses answers and your talk is ready to workshop. Remember to include feelings and needs as part of your answers.

OUTLINE: I. INTRODUCTION - Introduce yourselves briefly and tell:

- A: Where you are from.
- B: How long you've been married
- C: Share briefly about your children if you have any.
- D: Share When you were encountered and where.

II. SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 1:26-27.

III.FOCUS OF TALK: To learn and grow deeper in love, through techniques of sharing our lives in a fuller and more exciting way. We can do this by first exploring more fully who we are and how we act/react to specific situations; share them with our spouse and explore how this affects our relationship.

IV.FORMAT FOR WRITING THIS TALK:

A. Explore your attitudes and judgments-

1. Where were we in this area before our W/E?
2. Did we talk much before our W/E about ourselves and what we thought and felt? Why?
3. HDIF about this subject then? Describe my feelings
4. How did I feel when YOU wanted to talk about yourself and how you felt about things?
5. Where did I see you in this area?
6. Where did I see myself?
7. Was I raised to talk about who I was and how I felt about things? HDIFAT?
8. What needs do I find underlying my feelings in this area?

B. How did this subject become an area to share?

1. What caused me to explore my own feelings on who I am and how I feel deep inside myself? (W/E? This Talk? Dialogue?)
2. What caused me to begin to share my feelings with you?
3. How did I feel about exploring and sharing on this subject, after our weekend?
4. What were the barriers, obstacles and conflicts I had to overcome in order to risk, trust and make a decision to love and share with you in this area?
5. How did I feel during our dialogues on this?
6. What needs did I become aware of underlying my feelings about sharing on this subject?

C. What resulted from sharing feelings & needs?

1. What awareness did I develop in this area (about and for myself and for my spouse)?
2. Where and how am I/are we different NOW since we looked into this area? HDIFAT?
3. What kind of feelings have I experienced (joy, relief) after having opened this area up to dialogue?

D. Results of discovery, awareness and openness.

1. What significant growth has taken place for us in this area?
2. What new doors were opened for us in this area?
HDIFAT
3. What are the outward signs of change for us as a result of our dialogues on this subject? HDIFAT?
4. What are the inward signs of change for us as a result of our dialogues on this subject? HDIFAT?
5. Have any needs that were previously unmet been as a result of NOW being able to share feelings about ourselves?
6. Where do I see us heading in this area now?
7. Summarize how your life & relationship have been enhanced by becoming more open & trusting on subject.

V. DIALOGUE QUESTION: Select a question for 10/ 10.

VI. OPEN SHARING QUESTION: Select a question for open sharing.

BEYOND THE CURTAIN (A Post-Weekend Presentation)

CIRCLES: Monthly or bi-monthly gatherings of five to seven Marriage Encounter couples who meet each month and to try to dialogue in between sessions. The purpose is to share with one another and show us how beautiful we are and how much we have to give. We do this by sharing and listening, by giving and receiving. Through this sharing we also develop a deeper trust in one another, thus building the Church. Each session should last about two-and-a-half to three hours.

GENERAL PURPOSE: The main purpose of this presentation is to explore and share with each other and our group some thoughts and fears we may have in the area of Death.

DESIRED RESULT OF THE DIALOG: To be able to explore within our own selves how we feel about getting old and approaching a time in our lives when one of us is going to leave the other through Death. To be able to share with each other and our group any fears or anxieties we experience connected with Death.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO USE THIS OUTLINE:

1. Do the talk in the first person.(e.g.: I was the one who wanted to do , It was MY opinion , etc.)
2. When a feeling is put down, immediately write the word "Like" so that a feeling description follows and not a reason or judgment: (I felt sad, like , I felt frightened, like a little kid etc.)
3. Be sure to mention any needs (that are met or unmet) that you found as a result of exploring feelings.
4. Simply answer each question (with a short paragraph) and then go on to the next one. Number each paragraph to make it easy later to blend the talks. When you have finished answering all the questions you will have your portion of the talk written. Blend with your spouses answers and your talk is ready to workshop. Remember to include feelings and needs as part of your answers.

OUTLINE:

- I. INTRODUCTION - Introduce yourselves briefly and tell:
 - A: Where you are from.
 - B: How long you've been married
 - C: Share briefly about your children if you have any.
 - D: Share When you were encountered and where.
- II. SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Ecclesiastes 3:1-8.

III. FOCUS OF TALK: To be able to explore within our own selves how we feel about getting old and approaching a time in our lives when one of us is going to leave the other through Death. To be able to share with each other and our group any fears or anxieties we experience connected with Death.

IV. FORMAT FOR WRITING THIS TALK:

- A. (3 minutes) Explore your attitudes and judgments
1. Where were we in this area before our W/E? HDIFAT?
 2. Did we talk much about Death before our W/E? Why?
 3. How did I feel about this subject then? Describe my feelings completely.
 4. How did I feel when YOU wanted to talk about Death? What feelings did I have about this?
 5. Where did I see you in this area? HDIFAT?
 6. Where did I see myself? HDIFAT?
 7. How did my family handle the subject of death or death itself? HDIFAT?
 8. What needs do I find underlying my feelings in this area?
- B. (7 min) How did this subject become an area to share?
1. What caused me to explore my own feelings on Death? (W/E? A Death in the family? This Talk? Dialogue?)
 2. What caused me to begin to share my feelings with you? HDIFAT?
 3. How did I feel about exploring and sharing on Death, after our weekend?
 4. What were the barriers, obstacles and conflicts I had to overcome in order to risk, trust and the decision to love and share with you in this area?
 5. How did I feel during our dialogues on Death?
 6. What needs did I become aware of underlying my feelings about sharing on this Death?
- C. (7 Min) What resulted from sharing feelings & needs?
1. What awareness did I develop in this area (about and for myself and for my spouse)?
 2. Where and how am I/are we different NOW since we looked into this area? HDIFAT?
 3. What kind of feelings have I experienced (joy, relief) after having opened this area up to dialogue?
- D. (3 min) Results of discovery, awareness and openness.
1. What significant growth has taken place for us in this area?
 2. What new doors were opened for us in this area?

HDIFAT?

3. What are the outward signs of change for us as a result of our dialogues on Death? HDIFAT?
4. What are the inward signs of change for us as a result of our dialogues on Death? HDIFAT?
5. Have any needs that were previously unmet been as a result of NOW being able to share feelings on Death and/or growing old?
6. Where do I see us heading in this area now?
7. Summarize how your life & relationship have been enhanced by becoming more open & trusting on subject.

V. DIALOGUE QUESTION: Select a question for 10/10.

VI. OPEN SHARING QUESTION: Select a question for open sharing.

NEW BEGINNINGS
(A Post-Weekend Presentation)

CIRCLES: Monthly or bi-monthly gatherings of five to seven Marriage Encounter couples who meet each month and to try to dialogue in between sessions. The purpose is to share with one another and show us how beautiful we are and how much we have to give. We do this by sharing and listening, by giving and receiving. Through this sharing we also develop a deeper trust in one another, thus building the Church. Each session should last about two-and-a-half to three hours.

GENERAL PURPOSE: The main purpose of this presentation is to look into areas of our life where we may have to do some changing and adjusting for a time when we will not have the distractions from our relationship we have now.

DESIRED RESULT OF THE DIALOG: To share and explore any fears or anxieties that we may experience as we enter the time in our life when our children leave our home and we are left alone together, once more dependent only on one another for companionship.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO USE THIS OUTLINE:

1. Do the talk in the first person.(e.g.: I was the one who wanted to do , It was MY opinion , etc.)
2. When a feeling is put down, immediately write the word "Like" so that a feeling description follows and not a reason or judgment: (I felt sad, like , I felt frightened, like a little kid etc.)
3. Be sure to mention any needs (that are met or unmet) that you found as a result of exploring feelings.
4. Simply answer each question (with a short paragraph) and then go on to the next one. Number each paragraph to make it easy later to blend the talks. When you have finished answering all the questions you will have your portion of the talk written. Blend with your spouses answers and your talk is ready to workshop. Remember to include feelings and needs as part of your answers.

OUTLINE:

- I. INTRODUCTION - Introduce yourselves briefly and tell:
 - A: Where you are from.
 - B: How long you've been married
 - C: Share briefly about your children if you have any.
 - D: Share When you were encountered and where.

II. SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: 1 PETER 3:1-7.

III.FOCUS OF TALK: To share and explore any fears or anxieties we may experience as we enter the time in our life when our children leave our home and we are dependent only on each other for companionship.

IV. FORMAT FOR WRITING THIS TALK:

A. (3 minutes) Explore your attitudes and judgments-

1. Where were we in this area before our W/E?
2. Did we talk much before our W/E about Our Children leaving and/or our growing old? Why?
3. HDIF about this subject then? Describe feelings.
4. How did I feel when YOU wanted to talk about being alone, our children being gone and our growing old?
5. Where did I see you in this area?
6. Where did I see myself?
7. How did my family handle this subject or react to this time of life in people & relatives? HDIFAT?
8. What needs do I find underlying my feelings in this area?

B. (7 min) How did this subject become an area to share?

1. What caused me to explore my own feelings on our children leaving and/or our growing old? (W/E? A Death in the family? This Talk? Dialogue?)
2. What caused me to begin to share my feelings with you?
3. How did I feel about exploring and sharing on this subject, after our weekend?
4. What were the barriers, obstacles and conflicts I had to overcome in order to risk, trust and make the decision to love and share with you in this
5. How did I feel during our dialogues on this?
6. What needs did I become aware of underlying my feelings about sharing on this subject?

C. What resulted from sharing feelings & needs?

1. What awareness did I develop in this area (about and for myself and for my spouse)?
2. Where and how am I/are we different NOW since we looked into this area? HDIFAT?
3. What kind of feelings have I experienced (joy, relief) after having opened this area up to dialogue?

D. Results of discovery, awareness and openness.

1. What significant growth has taken place for us in this area?
2. What new doors were opened for us in this area? HDIFAT

3. What are the outward signs of change for us as a result of our dialogues on this subject? HDIFAT?
4. What are the inward signs of change for us as a result of our dialogues on this subject? HDIFAT?
5. Have any needs that were previously unmet been as a result of NOW being able to share feelings on our children being gone and/or our growing old?
6. Where do I see us heading in this area now?
7. Summarize how your life & relationship have been enhanced by becoming more open & trusting on subject.

V.DIALOGUE QUESTION: Select a question for 10/10.

VI. OPEN SHARING QUESTION: Select a question for open sharing.

LIFE IS A PUZZLE (A Post-Weekend Presentation)

CIRCLES: Monthly or bi-monthly gatherings of five to seven Marriage Encounter couples who meet each month and to try to dialogue in between sessions. The purpose is to share with one another and show us how beautiful we are and how much we have to give. We do this by sharing and listening, by giving and receiving. Through this sharing we also develop a deeper trust in one another, thus building the Church. Each session should last about two-and-a-half to three hours.

GENERAL PURPOSE: The main purpose of this presentation is to explore and share with each other and our group the many areas and facets of being parents and raising children.

DESIRED RESULT OF THE DIALOG: To learn and grow deeper in love, through techniques of sharing our lives in the area of parenting. To bring out into the open and share on any fears or anxieties we may have about raising our children; the way our parenting differs; our relationship in terms of parenting and other things connected with being a parent.

SUGGESTIONS FOR HOW TO USE THIS OUTLINE:

1. Do the talk in the first person.(e.g.: I was the one who wanted to do , It was MY opinion , etc.)
2. When a feeling is put down, immediately write the word "Like" so that a feeling description follows and not a reason or judgment: (I felt sad, like , I felt frightened, like a little kid etc.)
3. Be sure to mention any needs (that are met or unmet) that you found as a result of exploring feelings.
4. Simply answer each question (with a short paragraph) and then go on to the next one. Number each paragraph to make it easy later to blend the talks. When you have finished answering all the questions you will have your portion of the talk written. Blend with your spouses answers and your talk is ready to workshop. Remember to include feelings and needs as part of your answers.

OUTLINE:

- I. INTRODUCTION - Introduce yourselves briefly and tell:
 - A: Where you are from.
 - B: How long you've been married
 - C: Share briefly about your children if you have any.
 - D: Share When you were encountered and where.

II. SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: Eph 6:1-4.

III.FOCUS OF TALK: To learn and grow deeper in love through techniques of sharing our lives in the area of parenting. To bring out into the open and share on any fears or anxieties we may have about raising our children; the way our parenting differs; our relationship in terms of parenting and other things connected with being a parent.

IV. FORMAT FOR WRITING THIS TALK:

A. Explore your attitudes and judgments-

1. Where were we in this area before our W/E?
2. Did we talk much before our W/E about our children and our way of raising them? Why?
3. HDIF about this subject then? Describe my feelings
4. How did I feel when YOU wanted to talk the way we disciplined and handled children situations?
5. Where did I see you in this area?
6. Where did I see myself?
7. How was I raised and how does this affect the way I want to raise our children? HDIFAT?
8. What needs do I find underlying my feelings in this area?

B. How did this subject become an area to share?

1. What caused me to explore my own feelings on how I feel about being a parent and raising our kids? (W/E? A friend or neighbor's problem? This Talk? Dialogue?)
2. What caused me to begin to share my feelings with you? HDIFAT?
3. How did I feel about exploring and sharing on this subject, after our weekend?
4. What were the barriers, obstacles and conflicts I had to overcome in order to risk, trust and make a decision to love and share with you in this area?
5. HDIF during our dialogues on this subject?
6. What needs did I become aware of underlying my feelings about sharing on this subject?

C. What resulted from sharing feelings & needs?

1. What awareness did I develop in this area (about and for myself and for my spouse)?
2. Where and how am I/are we different NOW since we looked into this area? HDIFAT?
3. What kind of feelings have I experienced (joy, relief) after having opened this area up to dialogue?

D. Results of discovery, awareness and openness.

1. What significant growth has taken place for us in this area?
2. What new doors were opened for us in this area?
HDIFAT
3. What are the outward signs of change for us as a result of our dialogues on this subject? HDIFAT?
4. What are the inward signs of change for us as a result of our dialogues on this subject? HDIFAT?
5. Have any needs that were previously unmet been as a result of NOW being able to share feelings on parenting and raising kids?
6. Where do I see us heading in this area now?
7. Summarize how your life & relationship have been enhanced by becoming more open & trusting on subject.

V. DIALOGUE QUESTION: Select a question for 10/10.

VI. OPEN SHARING QUESTION: Select a question for open sharing.