

FEELINGS AND DIALOGUE

(A Post-Weekend Resource)

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

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.

---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.

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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.

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.

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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 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?

HDIFAT?