

REACHING OUT TO EACH OTHER BY ACCEPTING OUR FEELINGS

(A Lutheran Marriage Encounter Post-Weekend Resource)

Each month's Spiral is intended to give encountered couples a mini effect of the weekend, a boost, a shot in the arm. Through the formal presentation, followed by unmasked, sincere, "where you are at" sharings, knowing that you will be accepted with no judgment, each individual and couple is given support, encouragement and the knowledge that they are not alone in their struggles.

Feelings are neither right nor wrong, they just are, and as a result it is neither fair to argue with our own feelings as well as our spouse's feelings. Simply rejecting and tolerating our feelings are two obstacles that prevent us from reaching out to one another, and are in effect saying "NO" to our spouse. But by accepting our spouse's feelings, we are in effect saying "YES" to our beloved, and thus we are encouraged to reach out to one another and grow in our relationship, even in difficult areas.

1. What was my reaction when I first heard that feelings are neither right nor wrong?
What is my reaction to this now? (H & W)
2. In what ways do I reject and tolerate my spouse's feelings? And how does this affect my attitude towards my spouse and prevent me from reaching out to him/her?
 - a. during our dialogue
 - b. in our daily life
 - c. in problem areas
3. What joys do I experience with my spouse when I accept him/her for where he/she is?
How does this encourage us to reach out to each other in dialogue?
4. How are we encouraged to reach out in feelings to our children, friends, and God?

10 + 10 QUESTION: How can we help each other to experience each other's feelings more? HDMAMMF?

OPEN SHARING: Share with us what prevents you from accepting each other's feelings and how you can overcome these obstacles.

SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 3: 14-21

OTHER QUESTIONS: 1. HDIF when I accept your feelings?
2. HDIF when you accept my feelings?
3. HDIF when you reject my feelings?

WAYS OF REJECTING AND TOLERATING OUR FEELINGS

REJECTING:

Now that's a stupid feeling to have!

How could you ever feel that way?

That's an awful feeling to have. How can I make you feel better?

TOLERATING:

Feelings that we put up with, but can also be very annoyed with.

Ignoring each other's feelings.

Sympathizing with but not getting involved with each other's feelings.

Admiring our spouse's feelings.

Actively cooperating to help our spouse feel a certain way.

ACCEPTING:

This is actually experiencing your spouse's feelings. That is actually touching, tasting and taking on our spouse's feelings. It is not an intellectual comprehension of a feeling, but actually experiencing every little facet of that feeling with your mind and body.