



“...encourage one another daily...”  
(Hebrews 3:13)

# Family Care



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Classis Quínte Fellowship Ministry

## Marriage and Family Ministry

**B**ecause our interpersonal relationships are flawed, it is difficult for us to interact with others in always satisfying and conflict-free ways. We realize that we are imperfect beings and that we don't live up to God's expectations for us. One reason is our self-centredness. We tend to focus on what we want to do and have rather than on thinking what others may want to do and have. Whether we are single or married, we have a hard time loving the way that Christ loved us. We are not very sacrificial in our loving.

Moreover, another reason for not living up to God's expectations for healthy relationships is the fact that we don't have much EQ knowledge. What I mean to say is that we know very little about our emotional development and the dynamics involved in relationships. Therefore, we get easily irritated and ticked off by what others are saying or doing.

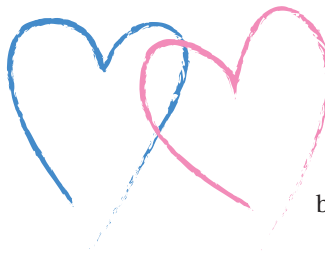
Classis Quínte wants to use this newsletter as an encouragement in improving our interpersonal relationships by providing helpful quotes and brief articles that illustrate EQ knowledge. Our churches should actively foster such knowledge, for it is connected to the building up of each other in the new life

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## Loving Deeds Generate Loving Relationships

**I**n their book *The Transformation of the Inner Man*, John and Paula Sandford write, “What some counselees actually were seeking was what they had never received; the wholesome love of parents by which to come to life. If we would offer ourselves (Romans 12:1) to Him as a vehicle for the Father's love, He would so satisfy [the counselees'] hearts that they would not only not drain us, they would become whole.” The authors here mean that counselors are to act as loving parents for a while, so that God's Father-love will flow through them to the counselees. In this way, these counselees will feel loved. It is through earnest interest and caring deeds in our loving relationships that healing can take place in the lives of troubled people.

This is something I also discovered when someone referred to me a 20-year old Chinese student who had dropped out of university and isolated himself in his room. His parents did not know how to deal with their taciturn son, who avoided others and holed himself up like a cocoon. When I phoned this young man, he was not eager to talk to me; yet, he sensed that I was genuinely interested in him. He was surprised that a total stranger from Canada called him frequently to asked him about his interests, so he began explaining to me that he liked



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**Deep-seated problems don't vanish instantly without consistent work by the couple and relying on God's strength for daily endurance.**

**- from *Love Is a Decision* by Gary Smalley**

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## Untying Our Own Knots

There is an important reason why forgiveness plays such a pivotal part in opening a person's spirit. It has to do with the very way the Bible defines the word. In the original biblical language, remember, the word for forgiveness means "to release, set free, to untie."

With that picture in mind, when we say or do something offensive to other people, we are actually helping, emotionally and spiritually, to tie them in knots. Perhaps what we've done has come as the result of knots someone else has left in our lives.

Do you know why most "difficult" people are so ill-natured, people who don't like themselves, who are resentful, or who feel rejected? Such people battle forgiving others – or feeling forgiven themselves. The way they tell us that they're tied up is through their negative, obnoxious actions. That's one reason why the Scriptures say we are to love our enemies. Their negative reactions are warning signals that their lives are tied up in knots.

*What about my own knots, though?* Someone may be thinking. *How can I get the knots out of another person's life when I'm all tied up*

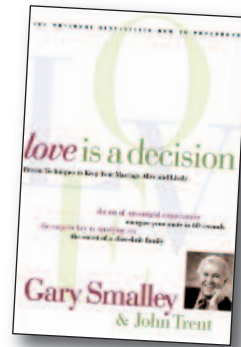
*myself?* In the Lord's Prayer, Christ answers this important question.

If we could paraphrase a few verses, using the literal definition of forgiveness, it could read like this: "If you are willing to untie the knots of the one who offended you, then God will untie your own knots (forgive you). If you refuse to untie their knotted lives, then God won't untie yours." One major reason why forgiveness is so necessary is that anger blocks the working of God's spirit.

Can you see now that leaving someone angry is allowing them to be in "darkness" and tied up in "knots"? Not only are we damaging a person emotionally when we provoke anger in them, but we are also cutting them off from God's light. There is, however, an antidote to unhealthy anger.

If we are attaching value and honor to the people around us, then we will do our best never to do anything that ties them up in knots. If we do, we will try to untie them. "Do not let the sun go down on your anger." (Ephesians 4:26 RSV).

- from *Love Is a Decision* by Gary Smalley



## Loving Deeds Generate Loving Relationships

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drawing. Gradually he opened up as he realized that I was someone who truly wanted to understand him and that I was not someone who gave up on him. He began to feel loved, so he came to enjoy our regular conversations. His father once wrote me to say that whenever I called, his son would perk up and become more alive.

Because he was good at drawing and was interested in video games, I arranged with a Chinese video game manufacturer – whose troubled son I had also helped – that this 20-year old student would work in her company until he would go back to university in the next school year. This arrangement has worked well.

At the same time, I am coaching my young friend to take an earnest interest in coworkers by getting to know them better. In this way, I am encouraging him to push himself to think about and to care for others. He is quite willing to learn. It is a

delight to see that God's love to this young atheist is flowing through me into his life.

He feels genuinely loved as never before and is now tentatively developing the courage to reach out to others in small steps. Hopefully, he will also come to know God through our friendship.

As God's people, it is important that we become more proactive in reaching

out to relatives, neighbours, church members, coworkers, or even strangers who seem to be troubled, confused, easily angered, unable to relate, or depressed. Paul wrote to the Philippians that Timothy took a *genuine interest* in their well-being, while everyone else looked out for their own interests and not those of Jesus Christ. In Peter's first letter, he urges us to have *sincere love* and to *love one another deeply, from the heart*. This genuine interest in the well-being of others and this heartfelt love become obvious to others when we love them persistently and intensely. It is the *sacrificial quality* of our love that people will sense and take note of. This is not merely a matter of kind words, but earnestly convincing deeds, for it is *in the way we love* that others will feel truly loved. When we all become eager, intentionally loving "wounded healers," restoration will gradually begin to take place in their lives.



# Understanding the Hidden Self

Most human behavior is motivated by what psychologists call the hidden self. Our motives are hidden from most observers and many close friends, even spouses. Behavior that is motivated by internal physical needs is probably the easiest to observe and understand... But behavior motivated by psychological or spiritual needs is much harder to recognize. Yet understanding such behavior – exposing the hidden self – is crucial for helping your spouse and your marriage.

For the individual who seeks to be a positive change agent in a troubled marriage, reality living must be coupled with one other important factor: understanding the motivation behind human behavior, both yours and that of your spouse. It's likely that your spouse's negative behavior has been a big part of your troubled marriage. Understanding the inner motivation behind your spouse's unreasonable, illogical, hurtful, and often destructive behavior may give you helpful insight as you seek to take a new approach to your life and marriage. Insight into *your own* inner self also may help, as you evaluate your own behavior more realistically...

[Since we may not always understand our own inner motivations for what we do], how can we possibly understand someone else's behavior? We can't – totally. But we can have educated guesses. What is important is to know that all of my spouse's behavior is motivated by internal desires or needs... The closer we can come to understanding the internal motivation for our spouse's behavior, the better equipped we are to be agents of positive change. If we can help him/her meet those needs in a healthier manner, then we may well see our spouse's behavior change in a positive direction...

First, and in my opinion most fundamental, is the need to love and be loved. I feel good about myself when I am helping others...

Then there is the need for freedom – the desire to order my own life and not to be controlled by another. What we want is freedom to choose how we live our lives...

It will be obvious to most that the need for freedom and the need for love are often in conflict...

Freedom is never without boundaries. Freedom is never absolute; to be totally free is to live a life without love...

A third need that motivates much of our behavior is our need for significance. There is within each of us the desire to do something bigger than ourselves, to accomplish something that will impact the world, that will give us a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction. This need often motivates altruistic behavior. It is sometimes behind the driven nature of the workaholic...

A fourth need is the need for recreation or relaxation [or playfulness]. Physically, mentally, and emotionally, humans are designed

with the need for rhythm, of movement between work and play...

Then there is what I call the need for peace with God. This is at the center of man's inner self... There is something within man that reaches out to make connection with the nonphysical world. This need for a spiritual connection has not been eradicated by modern scientific dogmas and much of human behavior is motivated by this search for peace with God...

If we are to understand each other, we must ask the questions: "What motivates my spouse's behavior? What needs is he/she consciously or subconsciously trying to meet? What motivates my own behavior? What needs am I trying to meet?" As we answer those questions we are more able to understand human behavior.

One other aspect of the hidden self greatly impacts our behavior. It is what we typically call *personality*, our patterned way of responding to life. When people speak of others as *extroverted* or *introverted*, *neat* or *sloppy*, *pessimistic* or *optimistic*, *decisive* or *indecisive*, *excitable* or *calm*, they are talking about personality traits. They are predictable ways in which one tends to respond to life's situations...

There are scores of these personality traits, and they tend to cluster in certain patterns... But let me mention four common types... First is *the peacemaker*. This is the calm, slow, easy-going, well-balanced personality...

The second personality type is *the controller*. The controller is the quick, active, practical, strong-willed person...

Then there is *the caretaker*. This is the self-sacrificing, gifted perfectionist who wants to meet the needs of others...

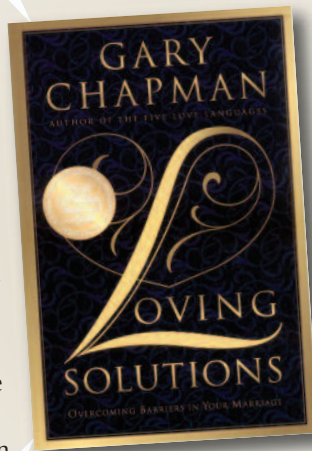
Finally, there is *the party maker*. This is the warm, lively, excited personality. For this person, all of life is a party...

Each of these personality patterns has strengths and weaknesses when it comes to the marital relationship. Although none of us fits neatly into these four personality patterns, we all tend to identify with one more than the others...

The important thing is understanding your personality and that of your spouse. The reason that it is so important to understand personality patterns is that we tend to seek to meet our psychological and spiritual needs in keeping with our personality...

The methods we use to satisfy our hidden need to love and be loved, our need for freedom, significance, recreation or relaxation, peace with God, and all other psychological and spiritual needs will be influenced by our personality. Understanding this reality will give you significant insight into your own behavior and that of your spouse. In fact, the manner in which you seek to be a positive change agent in your marriage [or in any other relationship] will be greatly influenced by your personality.

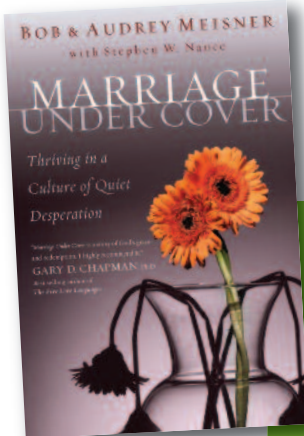
- from *Loving Solutions* by Gary Chapman



# Deceiving Thoughts

Quite often, desperation is born out of a sense of lack. Something seems to be missing in our life, but we don't know exactly what. The more we think about it, the more we realize that the zest for life, or the excitement and sense of adventure, are gone. Perhaps we become dissatisfied with our job or with the amount of money we make or with the house we are living in. We begin to feel that we don't have everything we want or need. Our natural tendency is to seek to satisfy our lack by acquiring more "stuff," thinking that more money or more possessions or a nicer car or a bigger house will make us happy.

- from *Marriage Under Cover* by Bob & Audrey Meisner



*Like every other sin, adultery begins in the mind*

- from *Marriage Under Cover* by Bob & Audrey Meisner

Modern western society encourages unfaithfulness. Adultery is the very epitome of selfishness, but look at our culture. Every aspect of our contemporary consumer culture is built around instant self-gratification: whatever you want, you deserve to have it right now. If you can't afford it, charge it. If it feels good, do it. If you are unsatisfied or unhappy in one relationship, simply drop it and move on to another one.

- from *Marriage Under Cover* by Bob & Audrey Meisner

# Dissatisfied Marriage

One of the people I know very well has been struggling in marriage for a long time. She felt that she had married for the wrong reasons and was not really in love with her husband. Before she married, I had pointed out to her that the two of them were not yet ready for marriage, but that they needed to understand each other better. She paid no attention at that time, but got married. When she discovered that her husband paid insufficient time to her and their children, she became increasingly upset.

Several times she was on the verge of giving up altogether. Yet, deep down within her, she knew that she should also look at her own flaws that were contributing to an unhappy relationship. By God's grace, she still continues to seek to understand herself and her husband better and to look for improvement in her own attitude. And her desire to seek God's will for herself, for her marriage, and for her children motivates her not to give up struggling. At times she is beginning to see encouraging glimpses of positive change, and these fuel her commitment to work for inner and relational renewal.

# Marriage and Family Ministry

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that Christ offers us. We must not only hear His word but also put it into practice if we want this new life to become a reality in our relationships at home, at church, at work, and elsewhere. This newsletter, therefore, is published every January, May, and September. As a reader, you must take responsibility for how you understand and reflect on what you read in these newsletters and how you apply your reading. We think that it is best to read the entire book or article that a particular quote is referring to.

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## How you can reach us

Please contact us at Classis Quinte Fellowship Ministry and provide us with your suggestions or questions. Do you need to talk to a Christian counselor? Consult the counselors in our ads or send us a message at [cqfellowship@hotmail.com](mailto:cqfellowship@hotmail.com). All requests and/or concerns will be treated with strict confidence.

*Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.*

- James 1:19b (NIV)