



PSYCHOLOGY FOR
Living
SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2000

Understanding
Eating
Disorders

Plus: What To Do When Friendships Fail, & Can Dating Cure a Lonely Heart

Starvation, Abundance and Sacrifice

by Bruce Narramore

Our lead article this issue tackles a nagging dilemma facing millions of Americans, especially young women — eating disorders. After reading this article, I thought of Jesus' comment to the crowds after he miraculously fed 5000 people near the Sea of Galilee, "You shouldn't be so concerned about perishable things like food. No, spend your energy seeking the eternal life that I, the Messiah, can give you" (John 6:26, 27 Living Bible).

Eating disorders are almost unknown in many parts of the world, but they are rampant in the U.S. Why? First, we are a nation obsessed with physical looks. Magazines, radio, TV and other media tout the virtues of being slender. Fashion models are incredibly thin. And advertising for diets appeals to this same physical ideal. We are bombarded with messages telling us we won't be popular, appealing, or successful unless we have a certain look.

We also have an epidemic of eating disorders because we are a nation of amazing abundance. Where else in the world do people worry about eating *too* much? In many countries it is just the opposite. There are clear psychological causes of eating disorders, but they are confounded by the combination of our country's obsession with looks and our physical abundance. If we didn't have so much food available and such an obsession with how we look, our young people would feel a lot better about accepting themselves as they are. Life isn't primarily about the physical. It is about our relationships—with God, friends and family.

This issue also features a report on Keith and Ginny Edwards' ministry to missionaries in France. The wonderful men and women the Edwards ministered to are at the other end of the continuum from an obsession with physical abundance. They are sacrificing many of this world's pleasures to make Christ known throughout the nations, and I am pleased that NCF can have a small part in helping these committed Christian servants cope with the stresses and strains of missionary living.

Let us be grateful that we live in America and are blessed with physical abundance. But let's remember the Source of our abundance and what really matters. Jesus is our true bread of life and the source of all our physical and spiritual blessings. He loves us just as we are—not because of how we look. And He calls us to share in the good news that it is our friendships, our inner beauty, and our relationship with God that matters—not looking like the latest fashion model and starving ourselves to get there.



Bruce Narramore, Ph.D.

With deepest gratitude,

Bruce Narramore

Bruce Narramore, Ph.D., President

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What To Do When Friendships Fail

by Les and Leslie Parrott

Renee and I had a lot in common — same age, same school, same classes. We listened to the same music and watched the same movies. And we always made each other laugh.

That all changed, however, after graduation when I announced my plans to move to Seattle. At first, Renee shared my excitement about the transition and even orchestrated an elaborate and personal celebration in the form of a goodbye party. She gave me a gold engraved bracelet that day to remind me of our friendship. As I moved from California to Seattle, I felt no friend could be more fortunate. I was convinced it was a friendship that would last a lifetime. But it didn't.

Almost immediately, Renee seemed distant, not only geographically, but emotionally. Our phone conversations turned almost icy. I told myself it was just an adjustment period that would improve. But it didn't. When I gently confronted Renee with my feelings, it only seemed to add to the agonizing awkwardness. With the exception of an occasional Christmas card, contact between us virtually stopped. A friendship I considered to be of priceless value mysteriously vanished.

Mending a Broken Friendship

When two people forge a friendship, invest a lot of time and energy in it, then bitterly break apart, that doesn't necessarily mean the relationship is gone forever. Not all friendship failures are fatal. ➔



If you have a long-lost friend with whom things ended badly, you may be able to make a meaningful reconnection. The following five-step plan will help you determine whether or not a particular friendship should be saved and, if so, how you can do it. While these specific steps should not be treated as *the* answer for reconciling every failed friendship, they can serve as general principles for guiding you in your unique journey.

Step One: Count the Cost.

You must determine whether your failing friendship should be repaired. An unhealthy relationship is not worth repairing if it forces you to compromise your values or undermine your self-respect. You have the right to ask a friend to change if he or she is making you feel less cared about, less respected, or even worried. If your friend is pressuring you into something you want no part of, for example, and you stand by your convictions, a good friend will understand and respect that. He or she may even change as a result. If not, you're probably better off without such a destructive relationship.

Realizing that a friendship is no longer working can be a positive step. "I spent more than a year wondering why I didn't feel terrific about one of my friends who seemed very affectionate," someone recently told us in a counseling session. "Eventually I realized that she was competing with me. So I decided to pull away. We still talk from time to time, but we're no longer tight and the relationship no longer drains me."

If you find yourself knowing that a friendship is unhealthy for you but you keep pursuing it, we urge you to assess your relational neediness. Don't fall into the trap of believing that if you lose a friend, you'll never find another. The opposite may be true: You may not make another friend until you sever your association with an unhealthy person.

So carefully consider the price you pay for keeping your friendship alive. And if the cost is too high, make a clean break. If, on the other hand, your friendship is worth the cost of repairing and maintaining it — if it has redeeming qualities you value — you're ready for the next step.

Step Two: Make Meaningful Contact.

If you have decided it is wise to reestablish contact, you need to write a note or call the person to convey one primary message: "Our friendship is important to me, and I miss seeing you. Is there any way we can resolve what stands between us?" That's all. In making contact the point is simple, to convey your desire and explore the other person's openness to talk about it. At this stage, there is no need to say what's wrong, or even make elaborate apologies. That will come later. For now, you are simply calling a "peace talk" to discuss the option of repairing your relationship.

This step, though it appears quite simple and straightforward, is where things often get dicey. You will unknowingly

“An unhealthy relationship is not worth repairing if it forces you to compromise your values or undermine your self-respect.”

sabotage your simple message if you are not aware of any lingering desires to get even with this person. If your anger or resentment is about to burst through the surface, you're not ready to make contact. There is a key to re-

leasing these toxic emotions, however, and it is found in the next step.

Step Three: Forgive As Best You Can.

I've always found it difficult to bury the proverbial hatchet. If I've been wronged, it's tough enough to let it go even after the person says, "I'm sorry." But for me to take the initiative in forgiving is downright impossible—at least it seems so. Who wants to turn the other cheek? Isn't that the act of a coward or even a fool? It's always seemed so to me—that is, until I learned a valuable secret.

When someone hurts you, the urge to retaliate is natural: an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth. The problem with this urge is that we don't know when to stop. If we've lost an eye, we want more than an eye in return. If the truth be known, we don't want to *balance* the scales; we want them tipped in our favor. And once we feel the compensation is satisfactory, our enemy takes his turn at punishing us again. The cycle repeats itself over and over.

Forgiveness puts an end to all that. Our deep urge for "balancing the score" comes to a screeching halt when we set our pride aside and begin to forgive. It's for our own advantage. Why? Because getting even takes its toll, not only on the offender, but on the one seeking revenge as well. History has taught us that when Jesus tells us to "turn the other cheek" or "go the extra mile," He is not telling us to give our enemy some advantage over us. He is not telling us to be cowards. Cheek-turning is for our own protection. Christ in effect is saying, "Once you free yourself from a desire to hurt back, you put an end to your hurtful spirit and save yourself from further harm." Forgiveness helps *us* as much or more than our offender.

But let's get real. How do we do this? How do we forgive? It begins by setting our pride aside and trying our best to see the situation from the other person's perspective. In fact, if you are not open to seeing the other side of the story, you will never be able to approach your friend in a meaningful way. If you think the problems that are cooling down your friendship are totally and completely the fault of your friend, think again. The problems that plague a friendship are rarely 100 percent the other person's fault. If you keep this in mind, you will be well on your way to practicing forgiveness instead of trying to balance the scales.

And remember, the truth is, we can never balance the scales. "Do not repay anyone evil for evil," says the Apostle Paul, instead "live in peace." That's the result of forgiveness: peace. Sweet peace. And it sets the tone for the next step in repairing your friendship.

Step Four: Diagnose the Problem.

I (Les) had an amazing conversation recently with a guy who was feeling terribly lonely. I asked a standard question: “Do you have any close friends?”

“Nope. I’m friendly with people at work but I’m not close with anyone.”

“Why not?” I asked.

“Well, a few years ago I was real friendly with this guy. We used to work out together several times a week. Then one week he didn’t show up. I heard from a mutual acquaintance at work that he was upset over something I said. That was the last time I ever saw him.”

His story confused me. “What was it that offended him?” I asked.

“I have no idea.”

I couldn’t believe it. “You mean you never asked him what happened?”

“Nope, I just dropped it there. I decided that if he was going to get upset like that, what’s the use?”

What a sad story. Here was a guy who had a good friend, and yet, because of a minor misunderstanding, the friendship disintegrated. What baffled me was that *he had not taken the trouble to find out what had gone wrong.*

This scenario is more common than you think, especially in the process of trying to rebuild a connection. But finding out what went wrong is critically important if you are to learn what caused the problem in the first place — and avoid repeating it.

One of the reasons we avoid diagnosing the problem is that we don’t like to acknowledge there *is* a problem. We know that “everybody’s human,” but we often assign larger-than-life qualities to certain individuals and if they are “good friends,” we see them as all good. But when they let us down, we tend to see them as all bad. Viewing things in black and white seems easier and more practical. But most of life—including our friendships—comes in shades of gray. And if you don’t accept that, you miss out on a lot of relationships that might have been. So don’t pretend there’s no problem. Diagnose it together and move to the next step. After all, if a friendship can’t survive an honest discussion of differences, that may be a sign that the relationship ought to end.

Step Five: Rebuild Respect.

I once read a book by a guy named Cicero, who insisted that what brings true friends together is “a mutual belief in each other’s goodness.” That’s a good thought, because seeing the good in a friend who has let you down is usually the last thing on your mind; but it’s essential to the final step in mending a broken relationship. Most likely, your respect for your friend has been battered and bruised so it will take some nurturing. But if your friendship is to survive, it will ultimately depend on

showing a little respect. If you remove respect from a friendship, it has no hope of survival.


You may be wondering just how one revives respect for a fallen friend. We suggest two things. You begin by noting your friend’s most admirable qualities. Ask yourself, what traits does he or she possess that inspire you to become a better person? Make a list of these qualities. If you’re like most people, you may find yourself weighing these good qualities against the bad. That’s okay. The point is not to whitewash your friend’s personality. In fact, you may discover that he or she is simply deficient as a certain kind of friend. Some friends, for example, are great when you need a ride to the mall, but no help at all when you’re in despair over a lost love. Once you know a friendship’s limits, it’s easier to enjoy it for what it is without feeling let down about what it’s not. The goal here is to rebuild your respect by highlighting those qualities you like best about your friend.

Next, you need to own up to your end of the relationship by offering a sincere apology for not being the kind of friend you could have been. Identify specific things you did that contributed to the friendship’s failure and confess them to your friend in an apology. Take ownership and ask for forgiveness.

Four years after Renee and I went our separate ways, I phoned her, not necessarily to rebuild our friendship but to bring a bit of closure to what happened between us. “I know you didn’t expect to hear from me,” I told her, “but I just wanted you to know I still think about our days in California and wanted to see how you were doing.” Renee sounded like her old self: warm, enthusiastic, and funny. What surprised me, however, was Renee’s confession of remorse about our lost connection. Renee told me that saying good-bye to me stirred up a storm of personal issues in her own life about loss and betrayal and that our relationship suffered the consequences. We caught up on each other’s lives for awhile and then said good-bye once more, knowing we would never fully bridge the gulf that time and space had brought between us.

That day on the phone was bittersweet. It was marked with relief as well as regret. Both of us knew there would be no going back to the way things once were. This was a friendship reconciled, but not recovered. Was that enough? Was it worth the effort? You bet. We still exchange

Christmas cards and the occasional letter — more in tribute to the friendship we once shared than as an expression of our current connection.

In their own way, even failed friendships can last. 

“ If your friendship is to survive, it will ultimately depend on showing a little respect, without it, there is no hope of survival.”

Les Parrott III, Ph.D. & Leslie Parrott, Ed.D. are co-directors of the Center for Relationship Development at Seattle Pacific University. This article is adapted from *Relationships* by Les and Leslie Parrott. Copyright © 1998 by Les and Leslie Parrott. Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House. Visit Les and Leslie on the web at www.RealRelationships.com.



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Imagine a world where an ordinary daily activity, performed three times daily, is to blow up purple balloons. Blowing up these balloons is very pleasurable, but it's also a necessity to live. Everybody does it, looks forward to it, and has been doing it all their lives. Everybody but you. You used to be like everyone else. But in the past couple of years, you feel strange about purple balloons. You don't know how many is enough. Furthermore, you are terrified of them. You think if you blow up even one balloon you may become horribly ugly or fat. Or the balloons might even poison you. Everyone will notice, and your life will be ruined.

You look at others and think, *They need balloons, but I'm different. Since balloons are potentially dangerous, I'll blow up as few as possible. Then I'll be OK.*

The problem is, you can never get your balloon blowing regulated normally. Some days you hardly blow at all; other days you blow so many you are sick and disgusted with yourself. Soon this mess with the balloons is all you can think about. It is consuming your waking hours. *Should I or shouldn't I? Is it good, or bad? Am I*

binge eating followed by self-induced vomiting or purging) and anorexia (self starvation) struggle with severe problems of body image, balanced eating, discipline and self loathing. People suffering from anorexia have deliberately restricted their food intake to the point that they are at least 15 percent below ideal body weight.

Both anorexia and bulimia primarily inflict teenage girls and young women, although the incidence of occurrence among young men is on the rise. The problem has reached epidemic proportions in our society. There are more than five million diagnosable anorexics and bulimics in the United States. One percent of teenage girls in the U.S. develop anorexia and at least one thousand die each year. Up to 5 percent of college women in the U.S. are bulimic. In addition to people actually suffering from anorexia and bulimia, another 20 million Americans demonstrate eating-disordered thinking that could quickly switch to an active disorder.

The most frightening aspect of this problem is how distorted the person's thinking is about his or her body and the impact of even the smallest amount of food upon it. Girls are convinced if they eat more

student council. She was president of her church youth group and tutored underprivileged children on Saturday mornings. Jennifer is the only child of a physician father and a mother who is CEO of the local chamber of commerce.

About eighteen months ago Jennifer and a good friend, Rachel, began hanging out at each others' homes looking at fashion magazines and comparing their bodies with the models they saw there. About the same time, Jennifer tried out for the cheerleading squad and was not chosen. She was not used to losing and was devastated. Always slender and attractive, Jennifer began to imagine she had not been selected because she was too fat. She began dieting, but quickly decided she was not getting the results she wanted.

Once she tried throwing up after dinner. It felt weird but also instantly cleansing. Her stomach felt flat, and she liked the accompanying empty feeling. She began doing this regularly and soon her entire day was filled with thoughts of how to get enough food for a binge, and then how she could get rid of it without anyone being the wiser. It was not unusual for her to throw up six times a day.

Jennifer's grades began to plunge.

Understanding Eating Disorders

ugly, or pretty? You long to be free. You hardly know yourself any longer. You have no feeling, no life inside. You have nothing to look forward to when you wake up. Just the torment and the mocking of purple balloons.

This preposterous fantasy is an attempt to help you enter the hellish world of eating disorders. People suffering from bulimia (repeated

than lettuce, for example, they will gain more weight than they can exercise off. Many teenage girls with eating disorders complain that they are fat, even when others see them as little more than skin and bones.

Jennifer,* for example, is a 17-year-old bulimic. Until a year ago, she was a straight A student, active in the school drama club, track, and

She dropped out of most of her activities because they interfered with her schedule for bingeing and purging. Finally, a school counselor contacted Jennifer's mom who confronted Jennifer. At first she denied anything was wrong. But when her mom persisted, Jennifer admitted she was feeling out of control with her obsession. She agreed too →

for counseling and began to see a physician for the problem.

After a few months she began to find the emotional roots of her problems. Being the darling only child of two driven, successful parents put her under a lot of pressure. She felt she could never live up to their expectations. Deep down she wondered if they truly loved her. And she sensed her parents' underlying unhappiness, which they were trying to mask with their own extreme work ethic.

Jennifer felt responsible somehow, for their pain, and unconsciously tried to solve their problems and earn their love by pleasing them every way she could.

This was at the expense of her own childish innocence and vitality.

She grew up too quickly and now felt angry as well as empty and lost inside. The immediate feeling she received by stuffing herself with food followed by the "magic solution" of purging was a powerful, but sadly temporary antidote to these feelings.

It took many months of learning how to accept herself as she was, and to admit her neediness and discover alternative means of fulfillment and good feelings in life, before Jennifer could move beyond her addiction to food to embrace a more healthy identity. She will always have to be alert to her tendency to seek solace in food and thinness, but now she has tools with which to recognize and combat the problem. Her grades are at a B level, and she is learning that she doesn't have to be perfect in order to love herself.

If you know someone whom you suspect has an eating disorder, don't minimize or ignore the problem. Talk directly and honestly about your concerns, but avoid being critical or judgmental. At first, they will probably deny anything is wrong. People with bulimia and anorexia are very secretive about this part of their lives. People who are scrupulously honest in every other area become unbelievably devious about this!

If they don't open up, make it clear that you are concerned and also emotionally available. Ask how you can be supportive. Don't push, but make it obvious you care and want to listen to whatever they want to share.

Women with eating disorders often have the erroneous perception that they don't matter to anyone. Make sure they have a trusted friend in you, whether you are their parent, relative, or church youth leader.



“It took many months of learning how to accept herself as she was, and to admit her neediness and discover alternative means of fulfillment and good feelings in life, before Jennifer could move beyond her addiction to food to embrace a more healthy identity.”


If they talk about their fears of being fat, don't argue with them. And don't get into discussions about what they are doing to their bodies. All the facts in the world do not matter because their perception of themselves distorts reality. Remember that an eating disorder is a symptom that a person feels terribly about him or herself and has little control over her life. They think nothing they do is good enough, so they resort to the idea that if they could at least get really thin, then they'd be a success at something. Gently persist with the idea that they must talk to a professional. People do not grow out of eating disorders on their own. They are complex and deep rooted and involve deeply painful feelings.

While it is best if the person seeks help without coercion, there are times when you have to take more drastic action. If a child is under eighteen, and you, a parent, are concerned about weight loss, dehydration, or symptoms of physical jeopardy, contact your physician and a therapist experienced with eating disorders for help.

Above all, become a living example to this troubled

person through your own life. Avoid diets and pre-occupation with thinness and food. Be physically active and enthusiastic about life. Try to evaluate your tendency to affirm others'

worth based on performance. Begin demonstrating that it is the person, not their accomplishments, that is important to you. Admit that you get angry, frustrated, afraid, and needy. Talk about your own feelings and emotional and spiritual needs and model how to take responsibility for them. Seek professional help yourself when necessary.

The proliferation of eating disorders is just one more sign of our unbalanced society. As individuals and families, we can reject many of the values portrayed by the media and the culture. Within our own circles, return to lives anchored in the meaning of the person as God sees us — complex and unique souls deeply loved and cherished for the spirit within — not for a skinny model look. 

- Jennifer is a fictional composite of traits, family, and environmental factors typical of the eating disordered client.
- For more information on eating disorders, see the home page of the American Anorexia Bulimia Association, Inc. at www.aabainc.org.
- Vicki K. Harvey, Psy.D. is a clinical psychologist in Southern California.

Teenage NEGATIVISM: How much is NORMAL?

by Bruce Narramore

Soon after he began his sophomore year of high school, Keith, a bright and inquisitive middle adolescent, started pestering his teachers. He asked question after question, like, "Why do we have to learn algebra if we're not going to be mathematicians?" and "What use is this in real life?" When his teachers' explanations failed to satisfy him, Keith decided that education was a "vicious cycle" in which teachers taught useless facts so students could pass the same useless information on to the next generation.

Like Keith, many adolescents begin challenging their teachers, parents, pastors, and other authorities. It is as if their brains opened up and a scanner signaled, "Look how childish you have been till now. All your life, parents and teachers have told you what to do and how to think. Do you really believe everything they taught you? Do you want to remain a child forever, or do you want to learn to think for

yourself, and grow up and become like your parents and make your own decisions?"

This questioning of authority grows out of one of the major developmental tasks facing middle adolescents. They need to make important changes in their understanding of themselves and others in order to stop seeing themselves as small, powerless children, with much less intelligence than adults. They need to develop the confidence that they can think for themselves and do much of what you and other adults used to do for them. The Bible says that we are to "leave" our parents in order to "cleave" to our spouses (Genesis 2:24). Adolescence is the time our sons and daughters make huge strides in leaving us emotionally so they can grow up and eventually cleave naturally to a marriage mate.

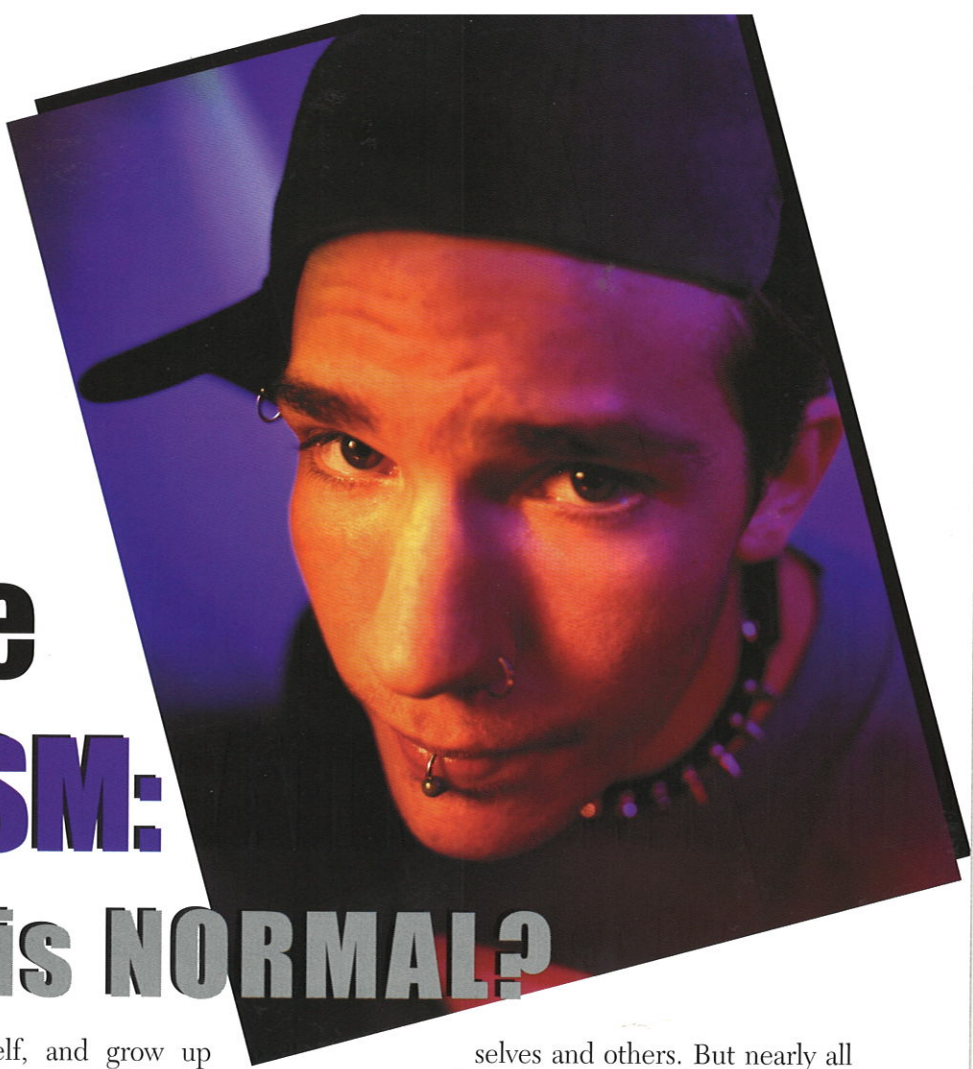
Most teenagers do not jettison their parents' values, go completely off the deep end, or seriously rebel as they reshape their understanding of them-

selves and others. But nearly all go through a stage in which they have at least a little negativism and test out their ability to take care of themselves, make their own decisions, and select their personal standards. They do this to prove they no longer need to be dependent on you. Once your teenagers have done this, they are free to adopt many of your values and beliefs while mixing in other role models, the teaching of Scripture, and their own unique perspectives.

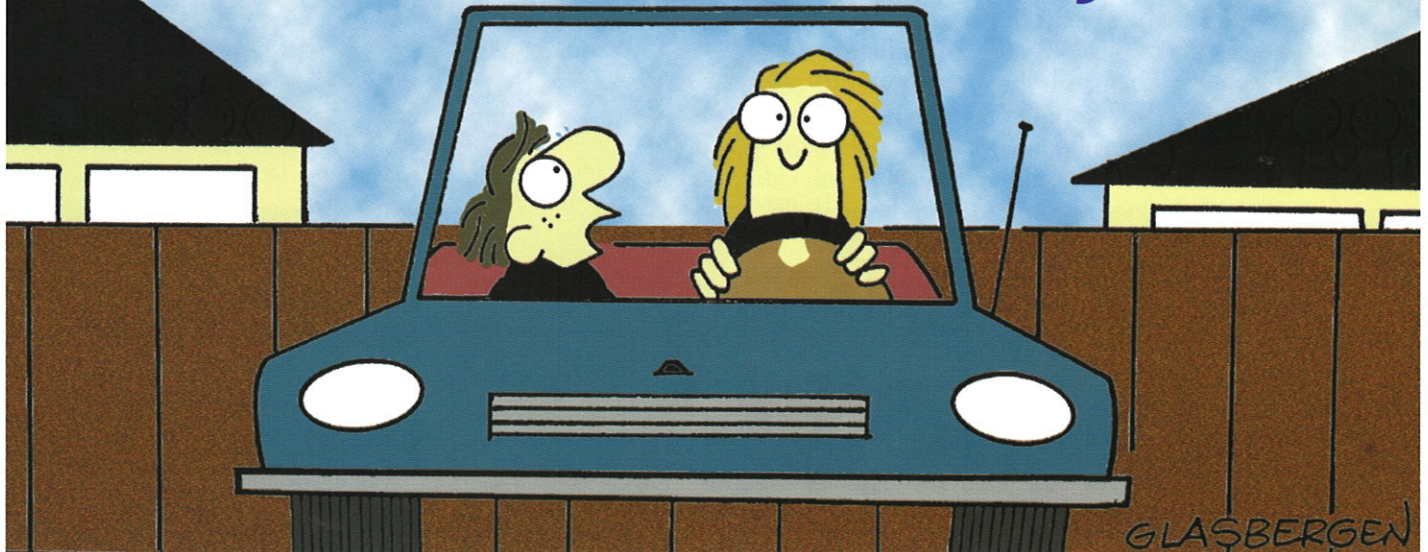
In the meantime, nearly every parent of a teenager asks, "How much independence, competitiveness, challenging of authority, negativism or rebellion is normal? Is my teenager's attitude in the normal range, or is he over the edge?"

Most parents don't mind a little negativism, and most of us eventually want our teenagers to become more independent. But it's scary to realize that our children are now old enough to make some really bad decisions that

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Children's Activities: How much is enough?



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“Between soccer practice and karate class, I have 15 minutes of free time. What can I sign up for?”

by **Karen Johnson Zurheide**

It was late fall. It had been a good season. My two children had gotten a fine start to school, with one in second grade and the other in sixth—her first year of middle school. But suddenly I was wondering, *Maybe it had been too good. Their homework had been getting done. The kids had been playing with friends and riding bikes. We had shared some quality family hours. We had all been healthy, consistently getting to bed at a decent time.* But here I was, feeling guilty.

Guilt by Comparison

It started when my son's baseball coach called to talk about the indoor winter league in which the team hoped to play. Making friendly conversation, I asked what he was doing with all his free time, since the team had decided not to play that fall. Well, he was enjoying the break from baseball after a spring season that had started with practices in February and hadn't ended until July. But he still felt pretty busy, having taken a denmaster position for his son's Cub Scout pack, and with his son taking golf and Tae Kwon Do, not to mention dance lessons. They were busy most nights of the week. Oh ... I didn't quite know what to say. I couldn't top – or even hope to match – that level of activity.

My two children had been taking weekly tennis lessons. My daughter was continuing with piano lessons and the requisite practice. She was also taking violin at school and participating in the book club. I felt embarrassed that that's "all

we were doing." What duds we were! In silent self-defense, I thought, *We also go to church on Sundays and every Wednesday evening where the kids participate in vocal and instrumental music programs and in missions education. And we try to read together every night.* But my short list sounded so lame compared to the activities of my coach friend and his family; and we didn't even get into what their older child was doing. I could only imagine!

I suppose I could have explained that my children have

CHOOSING CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Time is limited – for your child, for you, for every other member of your household. Realizing that every "yes" is a "no" to something else, consider these guidelines in your picking and choosing:

• **Pray for God's guidance:** Ask to understand your child's gifts and needs, and for wisdom in making choices.

• **Determine priorities and build in time for them from the start:** ...such as family togetherness (at meals, evenings, on weekends), attendance at worship and church activities, homework, and adequate sleep for all.

• **Relax and let go of the notion that you are causing your child to miss out:** Few children

both played soccer in the past, but they no longer care for it. I could have said that my son is going to start piano next year, at the recommendation of his future teacher. I could have added that he has previously done two levels of Tae Kwon Do, or that my daughter's softball team was also taking the season off, or that she was a Brownie for years, or that my husband was a Boy Scout and didn't much enjoy the experience, or that our church obligations are big (my husband being the pastor), including more adult events than most parents have. But I didn't bother. Instead I hung up the phone and felt guilty, suddenly questioning whether I was providing my children with a full enough range of activities.

The Voice of Reason

But another voice reminded me how much we had all enjoyed that fall. It seemed like the first time since we had moved cross-country a year earlier that we had a moderate enough pace to relax and enjoy our home and each other. My daughter was adjusting well to middle school, with its dramatically increased homework volume. My son was having friends over to play quite often. For the first month of school our pool was still open and the kids — usually we parents too — could swim many evenings. It's not that we were sitting around doing nothing. But neither were we running like crazy all over town every afternoon and evening. Besides, my son was only seven years old, for goodness sakes!

Our respite didn't last that long. The holiday season — crazy for everyone — soon arrived. Then winter baseball, and before long, spring ball. My daughter decided to call an end to her softball career, however, choosing instead to get more serious about tennis in hopes of playing on her seventh grade school team. She also signed up for weekly tumbling lessons to perfect back handsprings and such. And piano and church continued. We have ended up with an average of one or two doable activities each day. We are busy enough, but not going mad — most of the time.

Finding One's Own Rhythm

So why did I think there was something wrong before? Were my children unhappy? Hardly. Did I honestly think they were missing out on anything that important? No. As least not as long as I didn't compare my family to other families. Our newfound, sane lifestyle felt good — very good. Thinking back, it was definitely one of life's less-is-more experiences. Not that I have anything against the many great academic, athletic or artistic opportunities available to children these days. Separately, they can each be a blessing. But taken together, they can be a curse.

Like any parent, I enjoy the satisfying feeling of discovering an activity that one's child truly enjoys or at which he/she especially excels. Sometimes that is being the star of the swim team or the orchestra's first violinist. But it can also be riding a bike like the wind, or doodling contentedly, or playing hide-and-seek with the neighborhood kids. Those activities don't require a spot on the calendar, or the writing of a check — neither do they offer public bragging rights to busyness or accomplishments. They don't satisfy our desires to keep up with the Jones' kids. Maybe they can actually help us resist that "pull" as we learn to pay more attention to what seems right for our families and our children, and less attention to what others do.

I am reminded of the lifestyle of Jesus. Admittedly, ours is a vastly different world than His was, but He was under constant pressure from all who were coming to Him — some out of curiosity, others out of jealousy looking for any excuse to get rid of him, and innumerable people wanting to be healed. In the midst of all these demands "... because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, He [Jesus] said to them, 'Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest'" (Mark 6:31, NIV).

May we learn to do the same.



Karen Johnson Zurheide is former director of a parent support network and co-author of *In Their Own Way: Accepting Your Children For Who They Are* (Augsburg, 2000).

will end up making a career of a childhood activity, and those that are talented will likely find a way to follow that path even if they aren't pursuing it at age five or ten or even fifteen.

• **Work with your actual child, not your ideal:** Be realistic, considering your child's interests and talents, not just what you want your child to do

(although what's important to you might at least be tried by your child).

• **Seek balance in activities, especially with younger children:** ... among sports, arts, intellectual pursuits — not necessarily trying all at once, but offering a variety over time.

• **Focus in on fewer activities:** ... as your

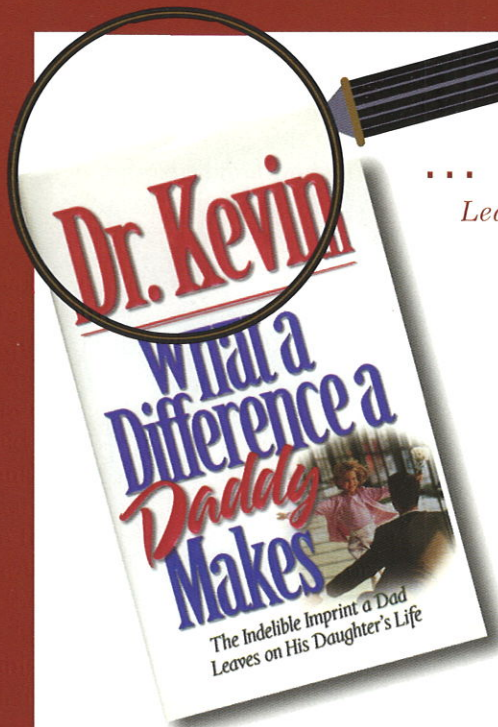
child's interests and talents develop, but allow for possibility of a new interest arising.

• **Know when to quit:** Do the right thing, regardless of what others are doing, even if it might be socially unacceptable.

• **Support your child, not your child's activities:** Remember that the

child and the family are what matter, not what the child is doing. Relationships are far more important than activities and performance.

• **Reserve some time for self:** You need to be more than a chauffeur and cheerleader; and your child needs you to pursue your own interests along the way.



What a Difference a Daddy Makes
By Dr. Kevin Leman

Humor and side-splittin' laughter. In addition to Dr. Leman's intellect and compassion, he is hilarious. He uses his humor to communicate helpful tools about understanding yourself and your family dynamics. He has written numerous books addressing how birth order influences your personality and parenting, the roles of parents and stepparents, how to positively influence your child's self-esteem, as well as some basic communication techniques that can improve your close relationships. While some authors might be tempted to point a finger with "shoulds" and "ought-tos," Leman invites you to join him in discovering the beauty in serving one another, as well as modeling strength and humility for your family.

In *What a Difference a Daddy Makes*, Dr. Leman helps you actively love your daughter, helping her grow into a loving, giving, and self-assured adult. He speaks of "imprinting" your daughter when she is young: Spending time with her, showing her

Fathers & Daughters ... what a difference a Daddy Makes

Leah McDill reviews a book on a father's relationship with his daughter

she is valuable, and helping her implement firm boundaries. Imprinting your daughter when she is young will serve her well when others try to take advantage of her (and they will try!), she does not comply out of low self-esteem, but can defend herself appropriately.

"Too many Christians think they have to present this pristine, error-free image to their children. ... In reality, this is one of the most damaging things you can do as a parent. ... If daughters are going to learn how to handle their own failures in life, they need to see how their father has handled his failures — and that means he can't cover them up." Dr. Leman invites you to be vulnerable and model failure so your daughter can avoid the pitfall of perfectionism.

Dr. Leman also addresses how fathers can talk with their daughters about sex. A subject seemingly difficult for most parents, Leman writes of how honesty breeds trust, which in turn invites more intimacy. He paints a picture of how beautiful sex can be in marriage, and how a wife's eagerness toward physical intimacy speaks volumes to her husband and solidifies their marriage even further. Leman's humor extends even when talking about sex and how to better equip a daughter for a more secure and exciting marriage.

A daughter's first awareness of love and intimacy comes not from God, but from her parents. Leman notes that a father's priority with his daughter is not to force his daughter to devote complete allegiance to an abstract concept (such as God), but to allow her to fall in love with him as her father. Only as age allows her cognitive development to understand abstract concepts can a

father then encourage her previously developing spirituality and relationship with God to become her priority. "A good father learns to transfer his daughter's allegiance from himself to two others, her God and her husband. We must work our way out of our jobs for the simple reason that someday we will not be present to fulfill a father's duties. ... Dads, there is no better inheritance you can give your daughter than the inheritance of faith."

Dr. Leman sites numerous examples of research that points to fathers preparing their daughters for success. An involved father [whether or not he lives in the same house as his child or children] increases her psychological adjustment and health, encourages higher academic achievement, and promotes her awareness of and compassion for others. And as Dr. Leman says, a positive connection with your daughter "bolster(s) the status of women," as she views herself more positively, and is proud to be a woman.

As Dr. Leman examines the characteristics of a healthy father-daughter relationship, he notes that it is not built in one day; it's built one day at a time, one connection at a time. "Trust is connected to security and consistency; a father makes his daughter feel secure by being consistent. ... And that kind of parenting, any father can do. ... You can be the father your daughter needs."

What a Difference a Daddy Makes first gives you laughter, and leaves you with hope.

—Leah Wilson McDill

Leah Wilson McDill is a doctoral candidate in Marriage and Family Therapy at Fuller Theological Seminary and a Licensed Professional Counselor in Texas.

Back To School Jitters

First Days of

How to Give Your Child a Calm Start

by Barbara Curtis

“I’m so nervous about Brooke’s first day of school!” my friend Jennifer confided as we watched our children on the neighborhood playground.

“I know it’s been a long time, but I still remember how scared I was on my first day of school. My mother said goodbye and my legs turned to mush.

“If only there were something I could do to make it easier for my daughter,” Jennifer finally sighed.

Having launched eleven children on various first days of school, I did have some suggestions for Jennifer. But first I gave her a hug and told her what a good job she was doing as a mother, anticipating a major event in her child’s life and looking for ways to ease the transition.

Whether your child is starting kindergarten or a new school, both of you may also be feeling those “off to school jitters.” If so, here are several suggestions

that can help both you and your



child to lessen the level of anxiety.

Visit first. If your child will be attending a new school, it would be helpful to visit the school before classes commence to acquaint yourself and your child with the school location, its grounds, its surroundings, and the distance from home. Be sure to explain to your child how he or she will be transported to and from school. Also, if possible, arrange for both of you to meet your child’s teacher ahead of time.

Sort the feelings. While it isn’t always easy for a young child to understand his or her feelings, assure him or her that it’s quite normal to feel either excited or frightened at such a time. Some children are afraid of new experiences or of the unknown. Others are afraid of leaving mom and dad. So try to sense your own childhood fears. Get him/her to talk about their fears, then offer some clear but casual reassurance. You could say, “Honey, most kids have jitters on the first day of school. I remember when I first started school, the first week was scary, but my mother had older children of family friends take me with them and bring me home, and make sure I was okay. Pretty soon I settled in, made new friends and felt okay. I’ll do the same for you. I’ll take you to school and pick you up every day until you settle in. If you need help, your teacher will be able to call me at work (or home) on the phone.”

Find out what’s “in.” Ask teachers and other parents how the average child dresses. Do they take their own lunch or do most of them buy it at the school cafeteria? Do they take snacks as well? If they take their own lunch, do they take it in lunch boxes or bags? It’s important for your child to feel that he or she fits in and isn’t the “odd

child out.” The latter can make a child feel very insecure. If you pack his or her lunch and snacks, be sure to pack their favorite foods and include a special treat that you know they will enjoy.

Go light on school supplies. Unless you get a notice of what’s required, don’t overdo sending supplies with your child on the first day of school. Teachers often give a list on the first day. Besides, taking your child shopping to purchase the required supplies can be a fun experience for both of you.

Help him or her feel useful. Assure your child that every other child is going to feel the same as he or she does at first and will be hoping someone will talk to them. You might say, “You are always good at being friendly, and other kids love someone to talk to them. See if you can talk to one or two other kids, as this will help them and you as well.”

Pray. Spend a little extra time the night before school starts when tucking your child into bed. Ask him or her how he or she is feeling, and encourage talking about it. You might ask your child to share one thing he or she is looking forward to at school and one worry he/she might have. Be sure to pray for your child, assuring him/her that Jesus has promised he would never leave us.

The next morning, have a brief time of devotions or prayer before school. Back-to-school days can be an excellent time for the family to set a good spiritual tone. Read a suitable Scripture verse or passage and discuss it, or read from a devotional book that is of interest to the children. This can be a very helpful way of unifying your family and getting God’s perspective on your day.

Can Dating Cure A Lonely He

by Henry Cloud & John Townsend

“Just call him and tell him that it’s over,” I said to Marsha. I had listened to her for months now about her relationship with Scott and how she

could not stand some of his hurtful patterns. And I was getting both concerned and tired of her denial of the kind of person that he really was. I began to push her.

So she decided to do it. She called him and broke it off. As expected, he went crazy and showed up at her door begging for her to not go through with it. There were all sorts of promises of change and the usual things that people in denial say when threatened with loss

of love. But she held her ground. At least for a day.

Two days later, Marsha called and canceled her next appointment. I called her back and found out the truth. She had gone back to Scott and was ashamed to tell me. I told her to come in anyway so we could talk about it.

As Marsha talked, I felt for her. She described the depression and aloneness that she went into when she broke it off and held her ground. She felt as if she were in a black hole that she could not see out of, and she felt completely hopeless. It was really a dangerous state.

No one who knew Marsha would have suspected her inner agony.

art?



She was a strong person in the business world, a committed Christian, and a ministry leader in her church. Everyone loved her, and no one would have thought that she would put up with someone like Scott, or that she could be so devastated by breaking up with such a jerk. But the breakup had left her so sad that she could barely function.

As we worked on her feelings, we found there was a deep part of her that felt very much alone and unloved, and breaking up with Scott was bringing out a deep aloneness that normally she did not experience. And, as we began to look at her history, she avoided experiencing this internal aloneness by dating men. Each time she would end one relationship, there would be another one, even though they would not be men that she would want to be with long term. She just could not stand to be alone. And so, her fear of being alone kept her from having bound-

aries with bad relationships. She would rather give in to a bad relationship than have no relationship at all.

This is a key point about boundaries in dating. If you do any of the following, then you might be giving up boundaries because of a fear of being alone:

- Putting up with behavior that is disrespectful
- Giving in to things that are not in accord with your values.
- Settling for less than you know you really desire or need.
- Staying in a relationship that you know has passed its deadline.
- Going back into a relationship that you know should be over.
- Getting into a relationship that you know is not going anywhere.
- Smothering the person you are dating with excessive needs or control.

And surely there are other signs as well. But the point is, your dating is ruled by your internal isolation, rather than by your God,

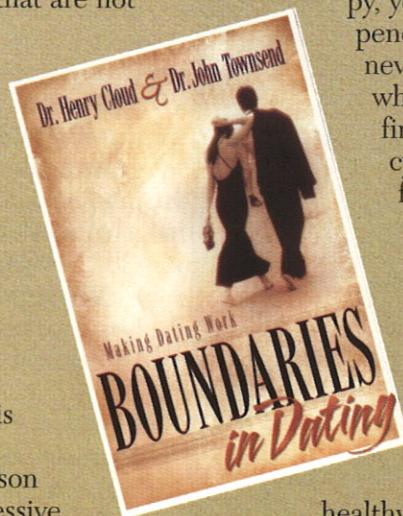
goals, values, and spiritual commitments. Your aloneness makes you get involved in relationships that you know are not going to last. It also keeps you from being alone long enough to grow into a person who does not *have to be in a relationship* in order to be happy.

There is an important rule in dating and romance: *To be happy in a relationship, and to pick the kind of relationship that is going to be the kind you desire, you need to be able to be happy without one.*

If you must be dating or be married in order to be happy, you are overly dependent; and you will never be happy with whatever person you find. The dependency will keep you from being selective enough to find the kind of person who will be good for you, or will keep you from being able to fully realize a relationship with a

healthy person. If you are afraid of aloneness and abandonment, you cannot use the love of people who are truly there until you deal with your own fears.

So, aloneness must be cured



first, and this is a good boundary for dating. Here is the boundary: In order to cure your fear of being alone, you need to put a boundary around your wish for a relationship. *Cure that fear first, and then find a relationship.*

How do you cure your aloneness without a dating relationship?

First **Strengthen your relationship with God.**

Make Him your first priority so that you are not trying to get “God needs” met by a relationship with a person.

Second **Strengthen your relationships with safe, healthy Christians.**

Make sure that you are not trying to get your people needs met by a dating relationship, or by God. Yes, you need God. But you also need people.

Dating is an adult relationship meant for mature, intact adults to

engage in. And mature adults will always have a good support system that meets their needs for human contact. In addition, mature adults are able to take their needs to others for healing. If you try to have a romantic relationship meet your needs for healing, it is not going to work. You need a support system to ground you so that you can make choices out of strength, not weakness or dependency. Marsha was choosing men out of her weakness, and thus could never find the kind of man she wanted. If you have your needs met outside of dating, then you can choose out of strength.

Be vulnerable in those support settings. Many people have a lot of friends, but those friendships are not meeting their deepest needs. So they are still vulnerable to dependencies in dating. Just because you have friends does not mean that you are being healed. Make sure that in some of those relationships you are allowing yourself to be dependent, have needs, and express pain and hurts. You may need to include counseling or a counseling group as part of that support system. But a support system is only going to do you as much good as you allow it to by expressing your needs. This vulnerability will connect you to where you can be strong enough and not lonely.

Have a full life of spiritual growth, personal growth, vocational growth, altruistic service, hobbies, intellectual growth. The more you have a full life of relationship with God, service to others, and interesting, stimulating activities, the less you will feel like you need a relationship in order to be whole.

Third **Pursue wholeness.**

In addition to an active life, work on the issues that are in your soul. Whatever those issues are, as you are resolving them (past childhood hurts, recurring themes and patterns in your relationships

and work life, and other areas of brokenness, pain, and dysfunction), your aloneness will be cured as well. It is a curious thing, but the process of spiritual growth itself can help cure aloneness. As you grow spiritually, you are going to naturally be closer to others and develop a fuller life. The whole person is not a dating addict. He or she is happy and fulfilled. As Psalm 1:3 says of the person who is growing into all of God’s ways and law: “He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.” The whole life is a full life. And the by-product of fullness is that the fulfilled person is also a very attractive one.

See if your fear of aloneness is pertaining to a specific issue. For example, Marsha suffered abandonment as a child. Other people have to deal with unresolved losses of other kinds. There are many kinds of pain that drive fears of aloneness. See if your pain is specific to a particular thing that you have gone through in your life, and then work to resolve that issue.

The best precaution against giving in to bad relationships, less-than-satisfactory relationships, or bad dynamics in a good relationship is your not needing that relationship. And that is going to come from being grounded in God, grounded in a support system, working out your issues, having a full life, and pursuing wholeness. If you are doing those things, you will not be subject to saying yes when you should be saying no.

Drs. Henry Cloud and John Townsend are psychologists, popular authors, radio personalities, and co-founders of Cloud Townsend Communications, Inc. Taken from *Boundaries*, by Dr. Henry Cloud, and Dr. John Townsend, Copyright © 2000 Used by permission of Zondervan Publishing House.



How Long Should I Live With Such An Attitude?

Dear Dr. Narramore,

A few years ago my husband began leaving home without telling me where he was going and came back hours later without an explanation. Worse yet, sometimes I found out he had lied about where he had been. Recently I saw him at a restaurant with a woman from his work. When I confronted him, he looked me right in the eye and said, "Why would I want to take you anywhere with me?" The problem seems to be escalating — belittling, disrespect and contempt for me and our children. I don't believe in divorce, but how long should a spouse live with such an attitude? The more I become aware of how serious the problem is, it seems to get worse instead of better. Do you have any advice?

Dr. Bruce:

Thank you for sharing such a difficult and sad situation. You are correct when you say that the more you know, the worse the



Bruce Narramore Ph.D.

problem seems to become. This happens because as long as one marriage partner is living deceitfully he thinks, "I'm getting away with this." So he continues in his pattern. But once the mate is aware of the deceit, the hiding game is over and the real problem has to be faced. Psychologists predict that when you confront a spouse like this, things are initially going to become more tense, angry and conflictual because your spouse knows something is going to change: You aren't going to stand by and ignore the problem any more.

You describe several things that concern me.

First, is your husband's deceit: If he isn't doing something wrong, why doesn't he tell you where he is going?

Second, spending time alone with another woman without your knowledge: While in some settings it is common for men and women who work together to occasionally have lunch, this should never be done without the spouse's knowledge. And even then, it should never become a pattern.

Third, you mention your husband's open contempt and disrespect for you and your children: This may be the biggest problem of all, and I am wondering what lies behind it. Does he have a longstanding pattern of anger, insensitivity and blaming others? Or is this coming from years of problems in your marriage that have never been faced and resolved? The fact that he is cruel to you and the children suggests that his problem goes much deeper than a marriage problem. For a man to turn on his own children, he must have some deep hurts and wounds of his own. Most likely these are from his childhood, rather than your marriage relationship.

You say you are opposed to divorce and ask if I have any advice. Yes, I do. At least at this point, you are not stuck with having to choose between a miserable relationship and divorce. There are several actions you can take that have potential for dramatically improving your situation. You have taken the first step by confronting your husband about the deceit. I would suggest that you now approach him about going for professional marriage counseling. If he is not willing to go, you can go on

your own, at least initially. You need someone to talk to — preferably a Christian professional who can help you understand what is going wrong in your marriage and what you can do to maintain your self respect, and that of your children. This will involve becoming aware of your contribution to the problem, and seeing what you can do to encourage and love your husband, and help to build a more supportive relationship. However, you will need to learn to set healthy boundaries of what you will and will not tolerate from your husband. This applies to his spending time with other women, being deceitful and treating family members disrespectfully.

The key to all of this will be for you to become as spiritually and emotionally mature as you can be. Although we all like to grow through loving, supportive relationships with our spouses, sometimes we have to "go it alone," or grow through pain and hardship. You may need to get counseling for yourself so you can learn to feel good about yourself, even if your husband does not. It will also help if you develop some good friendships that will support and encourage you, and teach you how to lovingly set boundaries. If your husband won't go for counseling with you, ask him to at least get his own separate counseling.

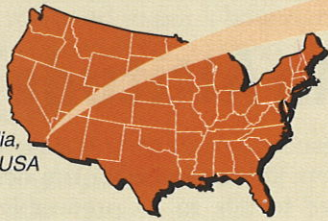
In all of this, keep a long-term perspective. The Bible tells us that God works in even difficult situations to bring good for us (Romans 8:28). Even if your husband never changes, and even if you can't see it now, God can work to bring incredible good out of this for you and your children.

Bruce Narramore

Mission to France



France



Arcadia,
CA - USA

by Bruce Narramore

Narramore Christian Foundation staff associate Dr. Keith Edwards and his wife, Ginny, ministered this summer to missionaries and their families from Germany, Benin (Africa), France, Peru, Turkey, Malawi, Eastern Asian countries, and limited access countries.

This was in the mountains of France, near Grenoble, which formed a beautiful setting for the annual camp led by Drs. Larry and Lois Dodds of Heartstream Resources, in partnership with NCF and Camp of the Peaks (Camp des Cimes). The Dodds, Edwards, and other staff put together a time of renewal of spiritual and emotional growth for missionaries and their families.

Living in another culture brings incredible stress, especially in some areas of the world. Language barriers, strange cultural customs, lack of physical comforts, isolation from friends and family, lack of playmates for the children, and even the trauma of suffering through an earthquake or other natural disasters, compound all of the normal problems we all face. So a group of over 50 missionaries and family members were glad to heed Jesus' words, "Come with me ... to a quiet place and get some rest."

Each day began with worship time for all the families. The adults moved into a devotional time, with a special focus on renewal and overcoming stress. Subsequently, they had lectures on family life, interpersonal relationships, and other practical topics. Following the lectures, the missionaries chose between personal counseling or discussion groups on either marriage or parenting. Individual counseling sessions and free time were available every afternoon. Following the worship the children had daily Vacation Bible School, and volunteers offered child-care so the parents could also attend individual counseling and

other sessions.

This time of ministry impacted the Edwards as well as the missionaries they served. "I was impressed by the depth of the missionaries' commitment to the cause of Christ," Dr. Edwards commented. And Ginny, a third-grade school teacher who co-facilitated the children's program, said, "It was great to work with the children and hear them interact, especially since many of them were from isolated areas where they don't have any English-speaking friends."

At the end of the two weeks, missionaries and their families returned to their respective mission fields renewed in their faith and commitment to Christ, having received help to deal with their families and interpersonal issues.

As one conferee put it, "I was so depressed last year I could hardly move. I was at the end of my rope. Now I have hope."





3



#1 - Dr. Keith Edwards sharing with missionaries.

#2 - Dr. and Mrs. Edwards enjoying France's mountain beauty.

#3 - Missionary families enjoying themselves around the outdoor fire.

#4 - Drs. Larry and Lois Dodds at dinner with a missionary couple.

#5 - Some of the 92 missionary family members who participated in Refresh! 2000.



Kathy Narramore Ministers in Hong Kong

Kathy Narramore, wife of Dr. Bruce Narramore, was a keynote speaker at the first conference on Missionary Member Care sponsored by the Hong Kong Christian Missions Association. The 27 Chinese mission agencies have sent out over 250 missionaries — many to Muslim countries. Unfortunately, nearly half of them have already left the field. To help keep these dedicated missionaries on the field, the Missions Association invited Kathy to address their leadership on the topic of Missionary Member Care. The meeting was a homecoming for Kathy, who was born in Beijing China, where her parents were missionaries for many years.

Kathy discussed the screening and pre-field preparation of missionary candidates, as well as ways that agencies and local churches can help their missionaries through the many areas of stress in missionary living. She emphasized that missionaries need emotional, relational and spiritual support even more than they need financial support, since more relational and family problems send missionaries home from the field than finances. Kathy then led the 90 delegates in times of conversational prayer

about their own needs to model the type of support these leaders could

give to their missionaries. At the conclusion of the three day conference, Dr. Raymond Lo, president of the Mission Association, wrote the following note of appreciation to Kathy: "Words cannot tell how much we appreciate your ministry among us. Many were ministered to in the prayer sessions - some with tears. Ministry is indeed relational. I trust this conference has already sent out a clear and loud message to the Christian community here in Hong Kong."

Hong Kong Update

Dr. Bruce Narramore recently announced the appointment of Dr. Ben Wat as an NCF staff associate in Hong Kong. Dr. Wat, a Chinese Christian Marriage and Family Therapist, will begin a counseling practice that will serve the Christian community in Hong Kong, including many



Continued on page 24 ↪

The Great Depression

Dr. Clyde M. Narramore, founder of the Narramore Christian Foundation, has had a world-wide ministry for nearly 50 years. He is currently writing an intriguing book sharing many of his interesting experiences as a pioneer in the field of Christian psychology. For several upcoming issues, *Psychology For Living* will be running this feature giving Dr. Clyde's reflections and perspectives on a variety of experiences.

— Editor

by Clyde M. Narramore



Dr. Clyde M. Narramore

“The Great Depression of 1929” lasted for about ten years. It was triggered by a serious crash in the stock market in “Black October, 1929.” With no television and little radio in the farming community where our family lived, we received most of our information from a newspaper, usually delivered one day late to the general store.

Like other kids of that period, the Great Depression affected me throughout junior high, high school and college. The people in our ranch area were probably not as seriously affected as those in big cities. I remember seeing pictures in the newspaper of men, women, and children standing in long lines in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, and other cities, hoping to be given a bowl of soup. And a world-renowned bridge — the Arroyo Seco in Pasadena, California — was soon referred to as “Suicide Bridge.” Many people were taking their lives because they were hungry, out of work, despondent, and felt that they were unable to go on any longer.

In our farming community people could produce much of their own food, but it was still very difficult to meet expenses. Families passed clothing on from an older child to the next, and since everybody was doing it, there was no special stigma attached. Life went on. Young people fell in love, got married, and raised their families. Young fellows usually began farming with their dads.

People from our community met occasionally at the schoolhouse, put on their own entertainment, sang songs,

and had a lots of fun.

The community owned a 10-gallon ice cream freezer. This was important inasmuch as no ice cream was available at our local store, and the Arizona weather was more than hot. This huge freezer was kept at our home, so I got to see everything that happened. Ladies came in the afternoon with milk, cream, eggs, sugar, and vanilla. They mixed the ingredients together, attached the belt to a motor, and away it would go, turning and freezing. I remember people saying, “It’s real homemade — not that slimy store-bought kind!”

In the evening, the freezer was loaded onto a pickup truck and taken to the community schoolhouse. After the festivities of playing games, singing songs, and talking with friends, it was time to enjoy homemade ice cream and cake.

Life at my home was crowded with hard work, good food, and much love. Although my father died when I was a baby, my mother did a super job of raising us, and my older brothers treated me fairly. In fact, I hardly ever remember seeing them quarrel or fight. We knew what the financial limits were, and we never asked for things we couldn’t afford. Naturally, there was no such thing as an allowance. I had never even heard about that. By sixteen, I worked in the fields all summer like an adult and earned one dollar a day!

By the time I was half way through high school, we were beginning to have electric lights, electric irons, and other conveniences in our area.

My brother Earl, just older than I, was a fine pianist, and three of my brothers were tenor soloists. So I had the privilege of hearing and taking part in music all the years I was growing up. My senior year of high school was in the midpoint of the Great Depression and we even sang songs about it. I wondered if I would be able to attend college. However, I prayed every day that the Lord would make it possible for me to go — and He did just that! I was so grateful.

The Great Depression taught us a lot. We learned to trust God to provide for our needs. We learned to work hard. We learned to be frugal, to make do with what we had. We learned to work together. And we learned to appreciate even the smallest pleasures in life. I believe I have been able to minister and lead a major Christian organization because of the lessons of family, loyalty, hard work, and faith that were developed in me as a boy.

Sitting Still ...

by Ruth E. Narramore



Ruth E. Narramore

Dad was a very talented person. He could make almost anything – and do a good job of it. While serving in China on the mission field, he built the chapel where he held services in the little village where we lived. He also made artificial limbs for some of the children in the Home of Onesiphorus, a Christian orphanage where Mother and Dad served for a time. This was a wonderful blessing to these children who had met with misfortune or an accident of some kind that left them with an amputated leg. He never had any special training in making prosthetics, but Dad saw what needed to be done, and he did it.

Liu was a special little girl whose handicap included *both* of her feet. Orphaned as a young child, she had been abused and mistreated while just a toddler. Those in whose care she had been committed did not really want her and often left her outside in the ice and snow.

“How strange, I thought, that by sitting still and doing nothing I was making it possible for my father to make something useful and beautiful!”

Consequently, her little feet had become frozen and had to be amputated. This left the little girl no way to get around but to crawl on her knees. Then someone brought her

to the orphanage where she was clothed, fed, cared for, and loved.

When Dad saw Liu, he was touched with compassion. He seemed to sense God saying, “Well, why don’t you do something about it?”

“How, Lord?” my Dad responded. “I’ve made artificial limbs for those who have lost *one* of their legs – but *both* feet would require special skills and I’ve never had training in that.”

“You can do it,” the Lord assured him. “Just look at your own feet and see how they work.”

With that encouragement, Dad went on to make Liu two wooden feet that fastened onto the stumps of her legs. He had nothing to work with but crude items like door hinges and the like. But if Dad didn’t have the tool he needed, he made the tool. When he had finished the two feet for Liu, Dad had her try them on. She was one ecstatic little girl. She could both walk and run!

But making prosthetics was only one part of Dad’s creative ability. As a child I didn’t realize how gifted he was. I just took it for granted that Daddy could make anything.

Through the years, I always enjoyed watching Dad work. He knew just what he was doing and consistently worked with great precision. While watching, I would talk to him about all sorts of things, and he always seemed interested in whatever I was saying. These were wonderful times in which my Dad and I bonded closely.

But occasionally he would say,

“Ruth, would you like to help me?”

“Sure, Daddy,” I replied, “What do you want me to do?”

“Just sit on this board,” he would tell me.

“Is that all? How is that helping you?” I asked.

“By sitting on it, you stabilize the board so I can work on it. Believe me, you are a real help!”

How strange, I thought, that by sitting still and doing nothing I was making it possible for my father to make something useful and beautiful! Yet, that is exactly the way it was.

How often we think that we are only doing God’s work when we’re running around and wearing ourselves out with an overabundance of busyness!

But that’s not always the way He wants it. God tells us, “Be still, and know that I am God” (Psalm 46:10).

Sometimes God would have us to sit quietly and watch Him, the Master Craftsman, as He works and creates something special. It’s a learning process for us as we stay still, keeping our eyes glued on what He is doing, and listening to what He is telling us. It’s a way for us to get to know God on an intimate, personal level.

I like what the Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians in Corinth: “Be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord” (I Corinthians 15:58).

God is looking for “steadfast, immovable” Christians who are willing to just sit if He so directs. We may not think we are accomplishing much, but God assures us that our “labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

Living Memorials



To Honor The Memory Of:

Ezra O. Brubaker
John (Jack) Kirby
Don C. Rock
Homer L. Stoltzfus, Jr.

Presented by:

Berneice K. Brubaker
Anne and John Powell
Dorothy Rock
Jean Stoltzfus

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could actually destroy their lives. We don't want to overprotect them, but neither do we want to neglect our responsibilities with our growing adolescents.

Here are some guidelines to help you decide if your teen's increasing negativism is a normal, God-given part of becoming independent, or if he is being just plain obnoxious or even pathological.

Normal early and middle adolescents usually show one or more of the following characteristics:

- Increased assertiveness
- More direct expression of their own opinions about clothes, entertainment, politics, family activities, etc.
- "Forgetting" to do their chores or family responsibilities
- Complaining about chores and family activities
- "Goofing off" or "being silly" — especially around their friends
- Making a few decisions with which you disagree
- Keeping some secrets from you
- Occasional stubbornness
- Periods of a critical or condemning attitude toward parents or other authorities


Although these reactions can be irritating or upsetting, a little of any or all of them are well within the normal range. And most of these pass after several months. Normal teenagers also usually have some good friends who are emotionally and spiritually healthy so that even if they are temporarily struggling to get along with you, it's clear they can get along

with other people.

By contrast, a relatively small portion of adolescents display one or more of the following characteristics:

- Chronic irritability and negativism
- Rebellion or defiance
- A "don't care" attitude toward parents and all authorities
- An inability to work cooperatively, even with their peers
- Frequent depressing or raging outbursts
- Prolonged angry withdrawal

These reactions are beyond the normal, healthy range. They are usually caused by teenagers' long-standing negative feelings about themselves, a lack of understanding and communication in the family, a lack of inner emotional stability and strength, or the feeling that their parents somehow don't trust them to grow up.

If your adolescent is consistently displaying these attitudes or behavior, seek out professional help. He may just reflect a passing phase, but a professional can help you decide if this is just a phase, or if he is struggling with some deeper problems. And if a counselor recommends counseling, be prepared to go to at least some of the sessions yourself. Most adolescent problems involve the teenager's efforts to struggle with feeling loved, appreciated, and respected at the same time he or she is growing up and learning to think for him or herself. You will be a big part of that process! 

Compiled by
Eva Hallam Solberg

Antioxidant Supplements and Dementia

A recent study suggests that vitamin C and E supplement use may reduce the risk of certain types of mental deterioration (dementia). The study also suggests that popping antioxidant pills alone isn't enough to protect the brain from damage.

Japanese-American men who participated in two long-term studies and who reported taking both vitamins C and E were found to have a 88 percent lower risk of vascular dementia than those who took neither supplement.

This study hints that vitamins C and E may protect against dementia in general. A major shortcoming of the study is that the researchers couldn't measure the dose of vitamins each study participant took. Recently updated daily intake recommendations suggest that these nutrients do play important roles in health, but it remains to be seen what doses might help prevent dementia and just how large their impact can be.

HealthNews

Alcoholism and Related Psychiatric Disorders

Many alcoholics have other psychiatric disorders that complicate their problems and their treatment. A recent nationwide survey found that nearly half of people suffering from alcohol abuse or dependence had another lifetime psychiatric diagnosis. Twenty-one percent were illicit drug abusers, and 30 percent had other disorders including major depression, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, generalized anxiety, panic attacks,

and antisocial or borderline personality disorder. Psychiatric symptoms are especially common during periods of heavy drinking.

Much alcoholic drinking is a misguided attempt to treat one's anxiety or depression rather than getting professional help. Eventually, however, the alcohol dependence and the anxiety, depression, or personality disorder increase the problem and reinforce each other in a way that makes cause and effect difficult to distinguish. Alcoholism can mimic the symptoms of a psychiatric disorder or disguise its presence, and people with serious psychiatric disorders are often evasive about their problems with alcohol, making the dual diagnosis difficult.

There is no unique technique for treating a patient with both alcoholism and another emotional disorder. The problems vary greatly and require individual solutions. Psychotherapy is helpful for anxiety, depression, personality disorders, and other psychiatric conditions that make recovery from alcoholism more difficult. Supportive therapy, sympathy, encouragement, and advice is most common in the early stages; insight into the past and the relationship with the therapist may be more helpful after the patient becomes reliably sober. But the effects of psychotherapy are limited as long as drinking continues, and it is important not to be distracted from the alcohol problem.

Fortunately, alcoholism treatment programs are now using a more holistic approach to treatment. Some programs for the mentally ill have added drug and alcohol treatment, and case managers or case management teams

are helping the mentally ill to negotiate both systems.

The Harvard Mental Health Letter

Electroconvulsive Therapy

Electroconvulsive Therapy (ECT), a controlled electrical shock to the brain, has proven effective in treating severe depression, although scientists do not know exactly how it works.

Most doctors recommend the technique only after other treatments fail. ECT is not painful and does not produce noticeable convulsions, because people receive anesthetics and muscle relaxants before the procedure. But there are potential post-treatment side effects — most commonly, short-term memory loss and learning difficulties.

"For people who are suicidal or depressed to the point of immobility, trying ECT first may make sense because medication often takes two or three weeks to take effect," according to the associate editor of HealthNews. ECT is also less likely than antidepressants to interact with drugs taken for other conditions.

Most physicians, however, still feel ECT is too aggressive an approach for mildly depressed people who can tolerate and respond well to antidepressants. ECT is also unsuitable for any depressed person who is alcohol- or drug-dependent.

HealthNews

Editor's note: NCF's staff is supportive only of the use of ECT in cases of severe depression that has not responded to psychotherapy or antidepressant medications.

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THE THINGS YOU
OWN TO BE USED
IN GOD'S
SERVICE, YOU
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NCF IN ACTION

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pastors. Dr. Wat will also be holding seminars and workshops for Chinese pastors and missionaries in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. He will also be preparing and distributing sets of tapes on parenting and marriage and family relationships to Cantonese-speaking Chinese in Hong Kong, mainland China and Southeast Asia.

NCF to Co-sponsor International Missionary Member Care Conference

In November, the Narramore Christian Foundation, along with World Evangelical Fellowship (WEF), are co-sponsoring the first gathering of international missionary member care leaders. This will be a conference of psychologists, counselors and mission-agency personnel, responsible for the personal/family support of missionaries from non U.S. sending agencies. Other countries are increasingly sending out substantial numbers of missionaries, but they often do very little by way of psychological screening of candidates or offering spiritual and emotional support to missionaries on the field. Consequently, their casualty rate is very high. To stimulate progress in this area, NCF and WEF are calling together approximately 20 national leaders from Indonesia, Brazil, Australia, Hong Kong, Africa, Argentina and other places to share together ways in which to support missionaries from the new missionary-sending agencies around the world.

WEF is the worldwide equivalent of the U.S. based National

Association of Evangelicals. NCF staff associate Dr. Kelly O'Donnell is working with the Missions Commission of WEF to put together this conference. It will be held in Indiana immediately after the annual Mental Health in Missions Conference.

MK ReEntry Seminars

For nearly 20 years the Narramore Christian Foundation has offered a reentry seminar for missionary kids (MKs) who have just completed high school in a foreign country and are returning to the United States and Canada to attend college. Since 1997 NCF and Barnabas International have co-sponsored these seminars under the leadership of Jim and Ruth Lauer and Perry Bradford.



The MKs take psychological and vocational tests, discuss cross-cultural re-entry issues, have group and individual counseling, share devotional time, and enjoy some recreational outings.

Two seminars were held on the campus of Biola University in Southern California this summer; the first was from June 27 to July 8, and the second from July 11 to July 22.

Pictured above are the sons and daughters of missionaries from 27 countries and 26 mission agencies who participated in this year's re-entry program.



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