



YOUR RELATIONSHIP

In five, ten, twenty years from now, when you look back over your wedding photographs or reflect upon your partnership ...

Do you want to be able to feel as much love and joy for your partner as you did on that special day or when you first met? Do you want to still hold hands, laugh together and hold a twinkle in your eye for each other?

Do you want to feel joy, knowing that they are someone who has been through the ups and downs with you, with respect, care and support?

When you hear yourself say, 'I love you', 'I care about you and I want to spend the rest of my life with you', 'I want to have fun with you, do you really, truly mean it?

Well, for many of us, as we have journeyed through life, we haven't had any training in the art of relating. We have made it this far, quite often flying by the seat of our pants, picking up snippets of information (and conditioning) here and there, from family and friends, schools and colleges, co-workers or from more dubious sources such as magazines, television shows and movies – need I say more.

What we come up with is a hotch potch of ideas, values and ways of communicating. Sometimes it works, sometimes it doesn't. There are exciting and fulfilling ways to gain further information and ideas that can fill up your relationship 'tool bag' with some essential life skills. You might want to think of it this way. Quite often you may undertake professional development or study to further your work or career to reach new goals or for your ongoing success. When we consider the importance of your home and family life, it might be time to book in for some ongoing relationship development for your shared growth, happiness and success!

Marriage celebrants have had the opportunity to come in contact with many couples – young and old, short-term and long-term relationships, first time marriages, second time. Our experience indicates that couples who take the time to participate in a relationship education program get tremendous benefits and insights into the art of relating.

Relationship education programs are designed to take a practical look at relating in an intimate relationship. Whilst each of the programs may have a different focus, it is highly likely they will primarily explore communication skills and ways to enhance relationships. They will also share how to 'fight fairly' – otherwise known as conflict resolution skills. Different topic areas like children, finances, work and leisure, family of origin, sexuality, spiritual beliefs, couple compatibility are also common components. Many of the skills learnt

are basic interpersonal skills which are invaluable and transferable into many different areas of our lives. Work, family, in the community ...

'We don't have the time', or 'the money', or 'We never fight' or ...

There are 101 things that can stop you from exploring this area further. However, given that most couples spend months preparing for their wedding day, what could be more important than 6 hours or more of preparation for the 30 years – or 10,950 days of living together – sharing the delights and the successes and meeting the challenge of sorrow and mistakes in healthy and mature ways so that their relationship can be long and happy and satisfying.

An example in the words of one couple is as follows: 'We would also like to thank you for your advice in the area of marriage education. Although we did not get a chance to investigate this before we were married, we have taken the opportunity to see someone before the birth of our child. This experience was so valuable to both of us, and it has enabled us to take our marriage to another level of understanding. Without your encouragement to seek out this type of support for the simple purpose of improving our marriage, we may not have had the courage to see someone.'

Marriage or relationship education is invaluable for building strong and healthy relationships. It reveals many keys to communicating and resolving conflict effectively; understanding the many different processes and cycles that relationships and families go through; discovering the many styles of loving and caring; and it helps to build networks and support amongst couples and families.

Most couples attending pre-marriage education courses are happy and stable couples wanting to develop their life skills together. The friendships and network of support that often occurs from couples attending groups is stimulating and rewarding.

The courses on stepfamilies and parenting are a wonderful investment in your family's life. Build strong and healthy relationships. Discover ways to manage the differences and the challenges.

Finally, if you ever get into relationship difficulties, take heart, there is support to help you get through it. It can help to have the services of a counsellor, even for one session, to help bring light to the situation. It is important to find someone you both like and can work with.

For further information contact or visit the following organisations:

<http://www.familyrelationships.gov.au/Interrelate> **Family Centres**

www.interrelate.org.au

Telephone 1300 736 966

Excellent courses at very minimal rates Plus access to affordable counselling.

Coffs Harbour Relationship Services Centre

Ph 6659 4150

Relationships Australia

www.relationships.com.au

Telephone 1300 364 277

Stepfamilies Australia

www.stepfamiliesaustralia.org.au

Telephone 03 96396611 (Call or email them for a contact in your state)

Keys to living together Free DVD and workbook (ask me) Taking the first step, building a stronger, healthier relationship

THE STICK KIT- Marriage preparation and counselling

<https://thestickkit.co/about-us/>

Very simply, we help make good relationships easier through insight and skills."

There are also many great books available: *1000 Questions, Passionate marriage, Seven habits of highly effective families, Raising happy families* – just to name a few.

There are websites that offer great insights into specific styles of communication and relationships:

I quite like the following books:

The Five Languages of Love – www.fivelovelanguages.com (complimentary info sheet available from Silvana)

Madly in Love Forever- www.madlyinloveforeverforcouples.com

And Really Relating, How to build and enduring relationship by David Jansen & Margaret Newman (complimentary extract available from Silvana)

Passionate marriage: Keeping love and intimacy alive in committed relationships is written by Dr Schnarch and there is an online forum for couples - www.passionatemarriage.com.

This is a fantastic site with Questionnaires that will really help you.

http://www.marriagebuilders.com/graphic/mbi4503_phq.html

There are many private organisations and individuals who offer marriage education and counselling. Check your local yellow pages, library notice board, church, neighbourhood centre, adult communication education office or health practitioner's surgery. Schools and community centres may also run courses.

All the web sites listed offer online, phone and Skype counselling, as well as pre-marriage questionnaires and pre-marriage information.

Your relationship is very special and unique, it is very rewarding to do a small amount of ongoing work to keep it that way,

Very best wishes I would love it if you stayed in touch

<https://www.facebook.com/coffsmarriagecelebrant/>

Silvana x