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Summer 2015

PRACTICAL family LIVING NEWS

Skills and Hope

Practical Family Living is a not-for-profit corporation dedicated to providing affordable healthy relationship principles to the public.

Radio Themes

July 2015

- Relating With Wisdom
- Family Finances: Don't Go Solo
- What Guys Need to Hear From the Women They Love
- Surviving Infidelity
- Christian in a Secular School
- College
- Attachment with God and Others
- But I'm the Nice One
- Acute Stress Disorders

August 2015

- **Selling Sex: Sarah's Story**
- Flexibility in Family
- Preparing for End of Life
- 3 Styles of Families
- Characteristics of Adult Children of Alcoholics
- Being Human 101: Managing Your Mind
- Spiritual Needs of Children
- Success and Family Loyalty

September 2015

- Transitioning to a Family With a Child
- When Secret Sin Breaks Your Heart
- Sabotaging Love
- Why Children Misbehave
- An Audience of One
- Loving a Young Alcoholic

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What's The Big Deal About Jesus?

By Lynda Savage, M.S., LMFT, LPC

Why the big deal about Jesus? I used to wonder that. It scared me. What if Jesus was the only way to the Father? He said: "No one gets to the Father except through me." I believed all the transcendent ways to obtain peace with oneself before I asked the Jesus question one particularly hurtful afternoon. I was discovering that my good hearted but ultimately anarchist colleagues and professor friends were full of doo doo. It didn't work to perceive reality a certain way and then that way was truth for me. I got supremely stuck in becoming one with the universe. I was sinking fast. So, in all my fake agnosticism, I cried out in great emotional pain: "God, why did you do this...?" Hmmm. It seems we know, or for sure I knew, there is a God after all. And...He was NOT doing His job, I thought or felt.

Of course, I was kicking up my heels in all the wrong places ignoring Him. I WANTED to kick up my heels in all the wrong places. Until that afternoon, when the puzzle pieces were not coming together but were jiggling farther and farther from understandable places on the board of life. Help God! Why are YOU doing this to me, to us, to...to...my loved ones...to... me.

Why, why, why...It couldn't be that God's book was full of answers. That ancient old half fairy tale thing? I prayed. Hmmm. I kept praying. I

read it some, then some more. I could actually "feel" God in a scary but compelling way. How could a card carrying Democrat with an advanced degree justify this, this Republican (ya... the bad Republicans against the poor and for war...Nixon, Bushes, and those guys) this churchy thing that was starchy and, and... old. Yeah, OLD. Old people believed that Jesus actually is God. Right? Right. But what if? But what if?

"What if it's TRUE?" is a question I overheard my very accomplished teacher friend say about Jesus. What if it's true? What if it's true... What if it is true....He is God, He loves you and me, He died to save us, we need to admit we have wanted life without Him and ask for forgiveness for this, He welcomes us to His enormous never failing love and everlasting life with Him...what if it's true that He is who He says and that this is what we need? What if it's true?



Lynda

Check out: *The Case for Christ: A Journalist's Personal Investigation of the Evidence for Jesus Christ* by Lee Strobel.

AN INSIDE LOOK...

Guess What? (Brenda Spina)	2
A Rock through the Front Window (Christine Vander Wielen)	2
EQ: What Emotional Intelligence Is and How to Develop It (Carrissa Pannuzzo).	3
Knowing IF and WHEN to have Difficult Conversations (Laura Demetrician).	3

Guess What?

By Brenda Spina, M.S., LMFT



There is a kind of guessing game that exists in many relationships. The guessing game is based on dishonesty and fear. It looks like this:

"If I tell you how I feel, you seem to respond with anger, attack me, or withhold from me. I am afraid of your anger, so I can't tell you my feelings. I live a lie.

If I tell you how I feel, you seem to respond by feeling hurt. I can't stand how

I feel when you are hurt, so I can't tell you. I live a lie."

If one has to prepare for an attack for being honest about their feelings, they will distance rather than draw close. Read Ephesians 4:25-32. This passage touches on the need for putting away this destructive quality of both positions. These positions keep people guessing as to what is the truth in you. Paul defines this relating style as "lying, corrupt, and grieving the Holy Spirit."

We need to get comfortable with the risk of confiding our true thoughts and feelings AND listen with understanding and

empathy. It is destructive to the relationships to withhold, attack, or distance from the person opposite you.

Here is what may help:

- Stop lying to the person.
- Hold off defensiveness, assuming there is something legitimate the other is going after.
- If unresolved, call a truce at the end of the day for the sake of getting rest.
- Do not under-mind the person by running to talk to everyone else about things first.
- Identify and practice saying what you want to say with respect for the other person and for your own struggle.
- Do not nurture or hang onto resentment.

The focus of our attention is given to honoring the presence of the Holy Spirit by not causing grief to Him. Allow His presence to influence your thinking and responses. Your cooperation with the leading of God's Word and Spirit will guarantee distancing between bitterness and you...not your loved one.

Adapted from "Guess What?, Spina, M.S., LMFT, Brenda, Loosening the Noose, 2011

A Rock through the Front Window

By Christine Vander Wielen, MSW, LCSW

Psalm 147:3 - He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds.

Have you ever felt as if someone threw a rock through the front window of your life? Maybe, it was after a divorce, sudden job loss, serious accident, grave medical diagnosis, death of a loved one, or broken relationship. It may have felt as if your life and dreams were shattered to pieces and you were left to grieve the loss amidst the shards.

Although we cannot control all the circumstances in our lives, we have free will and we can control how we respond. Do we turn away from God? Do we allow disappointment, fear, anger, and bitterness to take root in our heart? Do we harden our heart and thereby prevent the healing hand of God in our lives? Or...

Do we respond to our hurt by turning to God? Do we bring Him the pieces of our hearts and ask for His healing touch? Do we stand on and trust God's word in the midst of our pain?

Psalm 147:3 states, "He heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." In this verse, the psalmist makes it clear that The

Lord is able and willing to heal us. More powerful than any difficulty we can ever face, His heart's desire is to restore us and make us whole. Our Everlasting Father is our Hope and our Future.

The Lord also promises to bind up and care for our wounds. We cannot understand the depth of His care and compassion for us for when we hurt He hurts. The God of the universe that created all things cares about you and your pain. He treasures, protects and suffers along side each one of us. "The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit" (Psalm 34:18).

When you are hurting and feel as though your heart has been broken, you can choose to place your hope and trust in The Lord; He never fails you.



"What gives me the most hope every day is God's grace; knowing that His grace is going to give me the strength for whatever I face, knowing that nothing is a surprise to God."
-Rick Warren

EQ: What Emotional Intelligence Is and How to Develop It

By Carrissa Pannuzzo, M.A., LMFT-T, LPC-T



EQ is a popular term, but what about EQ? EQ, also known as Emotional Intelligence, is defined as the “intelligence [involving] the ability to monitor one’s own and others’ feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one’s thinking and actions”. In other words, EQ is being able to understand one’s own emotions and those of others and is the ability to use this information in relationship.

Identifying emotions happens in many different ways, some of which include reading body language, facial expressions, using reasonable intuition, and even asking oneself or another how they are feeling.

Reasoning with emotions is when we are able to convert the emotion we have identified (in ourselves or others) into information that helps us make healthy personal and relational decisions.

Understanding emotions happens when a person is able to identify an emotion and then discern the reason for it. An example here is a boss who is on edge at work due to a divorce at home.

Managing emotions is the ability to use all the information we have gathered to regulate our own emotions and respond appropriately to ourselves and others. For example, this could mean recognizing that our anger in the moment is coming from fatigue and not what we are angry about.

Some people are predisposed to EQ and while others are not, but EQ can be developed. One way to start is by becoming aware of one’s own feelings by learning to identify them. Many, if not most people, struggle with this because of messages they received in childhood and through significant life experiences. These messages may include: “You should be embarrassed for getting sad over that” or “Don’t you get angry at me”. In these two scenarios the initial emotions are sadness and anger but they have been covered by a secondary emotion, shame. Shame is the idea that “My feelings are wrong, therefore I was created wrong.” and is a major factor in keeping people from identifying their own emotions and those of others.

Beginning here, emotional intelligence can begin and grow. As we learn to recognize our own emotions and to allow ourselves to feel we can extend the same permission to others and, in turn, become more emotionally intelligent, healthy, relational people.

Knowing IF and WHEN to Have Difficult Conversations

By Laura Demetrician, M.S., LMFT



Knowing if and when to have a difficult conversation is an important skill to have in any kind of relationship and situation. These conversations, of course, occur more frequently with family members. This is because we expect and want our emotional, physical, and spiritual needs to be met in these relationships.

Some factors determine IF we should pursue a discussion about a disagreement or emotionally charged subject. Disagreements and frustrations occur often, and not all of them need to be or should be discussed. First, it is vital to address concerns that are harmful (your loved one, yourself, others, etc.). If patterns have emerged and haven’t been addressed, this is also another indicator that a conversation is essential in maintaining the closeness of your relationship.

It is important, though, to have self-discipline in bringing up matters of disagreement. We as humans tend to err on one side or the other. We either are too quick to initiate these conversations or we tend to avoid conflict and minimize our own hurt.

Once you have decided you need to have the conversation, the next step is to determine WHEN to have the discussion. I recommend “holding it” for a short time. Ask God to give you wisdom about IF you need to have the conversation and to give you insight and kindness for the other person as well as what you may have contributed to the situation. This increases our

capacity for self-control and it also safeguards our emotions from taking over if we have the conversation too quickly.

And above all else, always have love and kindness in these conversations.

Proverbs 15:1 A gentle answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.

STABBED AND LEFT FOR DEAD

Selling Sex: Sarah’s Story

You will want to hear this four part series. Our own Sarah Boes, PFL Editor, tells of being stabbed and left for dead in a Green Bay Park on Practical Family Living. Listen on PFL.org or WEMI/WEMY 91.9/91.5 FM at 12:45 p.m. August 3-6, 2015.



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by Christine Vander Wielen, MSW, LCSW

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Being Human 101: Managing Your Mind

by Carrissa Pannuzzo, M.A., LMFT-T, LPC-T

There are some parts of being human that come more easily than others: Eating and simple hygiene are pretty easy, but what about dealing with emotions, thoughts, and relationships? Most of us can use some help in these areas. Join this five week therapy group in a safe environment to learn skills specific to your desired improvement or needs in your life. Groups are forming soon. Please call for dates and times.

Healthy Dating Relationships for Teenagers

by Laura Demetrician, MS, LMFT

What: This 2 week class will help Teenagers and Parents think about healthy relationships. Taking information from: "How to Avoid Falling in Love with a Jerk" by Van Epp, Ph.D. Learn practical ways to think about dating, who to trust, how close to become, and how to become healthier in your relationships. Cost: \$10 per family/individual for the 2 week class. Teen and Parent(s) welcome together

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