

Confidence and Dialog



Take
A Risk
Today —
Talk And Listen

Purpose of Presentation: We have all experienced the technique of dialoging on our Marriage Encounter weekend, we know it can work, yet why are so many of us afraid to take the risk to try and keep alive our dialog? The purpose of this talk is to show that our willingness to take a risk is necessary for conjugal dialog. We will look at and examine some of the things that prevent us from a deep sharing of our feelings with our spouse.

Preparation for Meeting By Presenting Couple

Method: A. Do your written personal reflection and dialog on the following questions. They will help you to write your talk.

1. How do I feel when I don't take the risk of opening myself to you?
2. How do I feel when I need to talk to you?
3. What feelings prevent us from dialoging?
4. How do I feel when I don't listen? When you don't listen?

Give these questions to your group at the end of your presentation. They are good for continuous dialoging after the meeting.

- B. After you have dialoged on the questions, use the following outline to prepare your talk.
- C. When writing your talk use feelings and experiences from your own marriage to make your talk real and belonging only to you. Make your examples simple.
- D. Remember that the most important part of the talk is **you!** and what you share of yourself and your feelings. If you are open and honest your talk will be **terrific!**

The Meeting

Dialog and Sharing Question: "How do I feel when you have taken the risk to share your feelings with me?"
Group sharing on question follows 10-10.

Suggested Reading: What is a Dialoging Couple (Taken from IN-JOY! May 1975) Use in place of Scripture. "A dialoging couple is a couple who writes to each other most of the time in the form of a love letter, sometimes garbage dumps, misses days now and then, feels guilty, depressed, and gets back to it and tries again. A dialoging couple exchanges their notebooks lovingly, but has been known to occasionally have a strong desire to throw the books at each other. A dialoging couple wastes a lot of time wondering if they are "doing it right". This kind of couple sometimes doesn't know what to say after reading the love letter. They laugh and cry with more intensity than they ever did before. But each of these couples wants to dialog. They want to do it because they want to love each other more, and be in communion with God."

Outline of Talk

I. Introduction (2 min each)

- A. What is the purpose of today's talk? (Read Purpose) What are the feelings I get when we are about to begin a dialog? What are my initial feelings when I first read the dialog question? What keeps me from revealing all of my feelings in my reflection?
- B. How did I feel the first time I dialoged with my spouse? How do I feel whenever I have to dialog on a threatening question? Do I avoid being open with my true feelings? Why? Am I afraid I will hurt my spouse? Am I afraid I will be attacked — unloved — put down: — given the "silent treatment"? Am I afraid to risk all the negative feelings that can come if my shared feelings are not lovingly received? Do I lack confidence in my spouse — the confidence that my spouse can handle my feelings and receive them lovingly without judgment or blame?

II. Body (5 min. each)

- A. In order to dialog — to openly and honestly share our feelings with our spouse — we must have confidence in our spouse. Until confidence is developed in our spouse, we must take a risk to dialog. What are some of the feelings which have kept me from dialoging with my spouse? When have I been unwilling to take the risk to share my feelings with my spouse? Was I ashamed of these feelings and afraid of what my spouse would think of me for having these feelings? Was I afraid my spouse couldn't handle my feelings? Was I afraid that someday these feelings would be used against me? Was I afraid to risk listening to my spouse — listening to my spouse's feelings? Was I afraid I couldn't handle these feelings? Was I afraid I would be hurt? Did I lack confidence in my spouse? Did I lack confidence in myself?
- B. Through dialog, a husband and wife build confidence in each other. Give examples where taking the risk to dialog has helped develop confidence in one another. How did I feel when the feelings I shared with my

spouse were lovingly received in dialog? How did this affect my feelings toward sharing more with my spouse? How did I feel after we had dialoged a number of times? How did I feel after a deep sharing on a subject which was very important and meaningful to both of us? Give definite examples and explain fully.

- C. As the feeling of confidence between a husband and wife increases, the feeling of risk is lessened. The dialog grows and deepens. Give examples that show where the increase in confidence in one another through dialog has helped to increase couple dialog. How has my confidence in my spouse helped me to continue to dialog? — to dialog more deeply? — to approach "sensitive" subjects in our relationship? How has my confidence in my spouse made dialoging easier? How has it changed my feelings about dialog or my feelings in approaching dialog? How do I feel about dialog as a result of the growth in confidence in my spouse? How do I feel about dialog requiring a risk?

III. Conclusion (3 min. each)

- A. The Circle of Growth in dialog:
 - 1. Confidence is needed for dialog.
 - 2. Dialog builds confidence.
 - 3. Confidence helps improve dialog.Give examples of how the circle of growth in dialog has been experienced in your marriage.
- B. There is a feeling of risk involved when beginning to dialog. As confidence grows through dialog the feeling of risk is diminished. Give an example of a question which threatened me in the past; which now because of our increased confidence has become less difficult. Share your feelings when you first began to dialog and compare them to your feelings toward dialog today.
- C. I have confidence in my spouse when we dialog on certain subjects but lack confidence in other areas. What are my feelings when we dialog on the difficult subjects? How has our dialog in the past helped me to take the risk to dialog on these difficult subjects?