

Clarke Counseling Center

Monthly Newsletter

February 2010



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Conscious Dating Class



Are you a conscious or an unconscious dater? Come find out for yourself and discover how to say "YES" to what you want in a relationship and "NO" to what you don't want.

On March 6, 2010 - Learn how to be in control and become a "chooser." Most of all, learn how to find the love of your life and the life that you love.

For more information or to register now, click [HERE](#)

Quick Links

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Greetings!

I hope you enjoy this month's issue of the newsletter. I would love to hear any of your feedback about the content. Is there anything you would enjoy seeing here?

Remember, I specialize in the following:

- [Life Coaching](#)
- [Adult AD/HD](#)
- [Marriage and Family Therapy](#)



If you know of anyone who would appreciate what you read in this newsletter, please take a moment to forward it to them. They can choose to subscribe to the mailing list if they wish (See "Quick Links" in left column).

Sincerely,

Sherry Clarke MA, LCMFT

Achieving Balance

An Important Key



Human beings are complex and fascinating creatures. We are designed to accomplish so much with our "human-ness," but we REQUIRE so much to function fully. Unlike any other creatures on the earth, we must maintain a delicate balance between what is physical, mental, emotional, spiritual and social (relationship-oriented) in our lives. When we suffer in one of these areas, the effects spread easily to other areas.

It is much like a wagon wheel with five spokes. If you were to remove one of the spokes, the wheel might still move forward haltingly, but over a greater distance the missing spoke would inevitably produce a catastrophic breakdown of the entire wheel; leaving you stranded. Likewise, if you were to suddenly suffer a loss of physical strength, it wouldn't be long before it affected your social life or your mental life, and eventually all other aspects of your existence.

We all know someone who has suffered a debilitating physical condition, so how do they continue on? In order to continue indefinitely without physical strength, they needed to reinforce all other "spokes" (re-ordering their lives) before proceeding forward. In rare and extreme situations, and with the assistance of modern inventions, people who suffer a debilitating illness or injury may still continue their lives successfully, but only after "re-ordering" or reinforcing themselves in some way.

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Most of us, however, do not need to replace our physical abilities by strengthening all other areas. We are blessed to have full use of all our "spokes," allowing us to move forward in some amazing ways. To do that, we must learn to exercise and strengthen each one separately.

You cannot expect a daily workout at the gym to take care of all your spiritual needs. Nor can you expect to take a geometry class to handle your need for physical exercise. To expect effort in one area to cover the need in another area sounds absurd, but we often hear of people who somehow expect it to be that way, especially when it comes to their emotional lives.

If you are feeling "down" emotionally, friends will often advise you to engage in more social outlets. While this is probably a good supplemental strategy, it cannot replace more direct and specific approaches to strengthening emotional health. To believe otherwise would be similar to believing you could prepare for a physics exam by running laps around a track. Running laps could have an indirect benefit in keeping your mind sharp for the exam but would never replace the more direct need to study the course material.

What are some direct ways to strengthen yourself emotionally? Everyone is different, but some common emotion-strengthening exercises are: meditation, journaling, setting boundaries, self-nurturing, seeking help when necessary, etc. For more help in determining some ways that will work for you, contact Sherry Clarke, MA, LCMFT.

It is important to recognize the need to strengthen yourself as a whole person. Everything you do to strengthen one area has an indirect affect on other areas, but it is also necessary to have specific strengthening strategies for each area of life. Balance in life is not a luxury, it is a necessary part of being human and living a fulfilling life.

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Counselor's Corner

Advice From Sherry Clarke, MA, LCMFT

Q: Sherry, my family is getting tired of SNOW, SNOW, AND MORE SNOW in the DC area. What can I do to help my family survive 'til spring comes? Signed "Tired of shoveling in Damascus"



A: Dear "Tired...in Damascus": Thousands of DC'ers understand your dilemma. Here are a few ideas to help.

1. Throw a beach party - invite guests to come dressed in beach gear; serve summer foods with fruity drinks; decorate with summer beach supplies.
2. Have a summer movie night - watch favorite movies with summer themes.
3. Attend an indoor "summer" attraction - rock climbing course; indoor volleyball; roller skating; indoor waterslide; or indoor golf course or driving range.

Of course, those are things to do when your street is plowed! Here's some ideas while you are still snowed in -

4. Sled or toboggan - many neighborhoods have small hills. Prepare ahead (we may get more snow!) with equipment.
5. From my New England childhood - gather some clean, fresh snow in a shallow baking/cooking pan and drizzle "real" maple syrup over it. THE best candy ever!
6. Have a baking day - gather variety of ingredients, help children choose favorite recipes, everyone can help, decorate and EAT - and take pictures for your scrapbook.
7. Read a good novel or autobiography, etc, together. Turn off the TV - snuggle up together in front of the fire or other comfortable place. For older readers, take turns reading aloud. Many children's books have winter themes - Laura Ingalls Wilder, for instance.
8. Have themed dinner nights - For example, if you choose Chinese, serve Chinese foods, fortune cookies and decorate the table with Chinese crafts the children have made. (Visit www.enchantedlearning.com for ideas.)
9. Play board games and now you have the time to play an all-day game of Monopoly! Enjoy! Cherish these precious family memories together - before the snow melts and we're back to rushing here and there.
10. Discuss with the family how you can be better prepared for the next "BIG Snow," such as battery powered lanterns, radios, cell phones, alternative heat sources, food and cooking supplies, extra water and warm clothes. Does everyone have warm gloves and high boots?

Interesting Quotes

"After ten years in therapy, my psychologist told me something very touching. He said, 'No Hablo Ingles.'" - (Dennis Wolfberg)

"Life is like an onion. You peel off one layer at a time and sometimes you weep." - (Carl Sandburg)

"No matter how bad things get, you got to go on living, even if it kills you." - (Sholom Aleichem)

"In the game of life, it's a good idea to have a few early losses, which relieves you of the pressure of trying to maintain an undefeated season." - (Bill Vaughan)



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