

We should admit childish needs

Do you love me? Seems like a simple question, doesn't it? Yet it is so often misunderstood, and it is almost always answered incorrectly. In fact, most people don't even realize that there are correct answers, but there are.

Take, for example, the instance of a wife named Julie. Lying in bed, she feels too tense to fall asleep easily. The worries of her day keep her head humming and she begins to feel lonely next to her sleeping husband, Tim. And that turns her tensions into an ache. She feels a need to be held, and stroked, and reassured that everything is all right.

Like a child, Julie needs to be cuddled by a person who cares about her and wants her to feel better. Probably, it would take about four minutes of concentrated cuddling and reassurance from Tim to relax her worried thoughts and help her to sleep.

RESPONDING to these feelings, Julie reaches for Tim's shoulder. "Tim?" she says softly.

"What, Hon?" replies her sleepy husband, trying not to wake up.

"Tim, do you love me?"

"Huh? Sure. Of course I do."

Tim mumbles. But his drowsy thoughts

are already starting to crystallize around a resentful feeling. Does this mean that she's about to start one of those We're-not-romantic-anymore discussions? What will it take to finally convince her that he plans to stay married to her?

Why is she always testing me? he asks himself. A frown has begun to form on his face.

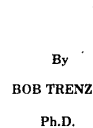
Meanwhile, Julie is feeling disappointed and hurt by Tim's response. It feels like a brush-off. Why can't he just take a few minutes to show her he cares for her?

Depending on how often this scene has been played in the past, it could turn into an emotional battle. It could become a silent stand-off with neither person admitting their resentment or disappointment. It could even be one of the first stages in the serious consideration of a divorce.

All because of one misinterpreted, mis-stated question.

IT MAY SEEM far-fetched that four words could snowball into such serious marital problems. But the vast majority of marriage conflicts come from just such "petty" subtle misunderstandings.

In the case of Julie and Tim, both in



By
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terpreted the problem as a general weakness in their love relationship. But the real problem was much less complicated. Julie needed to be held and reassured, but was too embarrassed to admit this to Tim. And Tim, interpreting his wife's words as a request for general reassurance of his commitment, failed to see that there must be some reason why she chose that particular moment to ask.

Just think how differently the interchange might have ended if Tim had replied: "What's the matter, Julie? Are you upset about something?" Or if Julie could have said: "I know

you're sleepy Tim, but I'm feeling lonely and worried. I could really use a hug."

WHEN YOU LOOK carefully at most marriage problems, it's amazing how many of them follow this same pattern. A couple may be arguing about money or responsibilities, but it's likely that the initial reason for the fight is a disappointed, misinterpreted need for reassurance and loving.

Burdened by a stilted view of being grown-ups, we are embarrassed to admit our childish needs. So we find some "adult" way of expressing them. And we are doomed to be disappointed by the results.

This is frustrating when you consider that one of the main reasons we choose love partners is that we hope to get our nurturing needs taken care of.

Think about it. Doesn't being in love mean that you can get a hug and some loving concern when you need it? It's so important, and yet it is easily swept aside by practical, logical, responsible grown-up concerns.

Communication for couples

Bob and Nancy Hildebrandt of Pleasant Ridge will lead a communications workshop for couples from 7:30-10:30 p.m. Friday, April 29 at Oakland University's Continuum Center.

The Hildebrandts, trained workshop coordinators for the center, will help participants to examine the various ways in which they interact with one another as well as with colleagues, family members and friends.

Nancy joined the center staff first, as a trained group leader in programs that were originally designed for women. When Bob noticed that communications began to change around the house, he decided that he wanted

to also explore new communications skills for use both at home and on the job. Hildebrandt works at Sperry Vickers, a division of the Sperry Rand Corporation.

"It doesn't take much time to become aware of how better or how worse, well, you are communicating," he said. "It takes a lot of daily practice to put it all together and make it work."

The workshop will provide a starting point for couples who want to practice new ways of communicating with one another and with other people. The fee is \$15 per couple. For information contact the center at 377-3033.

Volunteers

The Oakland County Volunteer Bureau, a program of Volunteer Action Center of United Community Services, has weekly listings of agencies needing volunteers. Further information about the agencies and type of volunteer services needed may be obtained from the bureau, 612-7272.

Duties include assisting nurses on the floors, working in emergency room or at the information desks, acting as messengers, and transporting patients. Preference is for persons who could work from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. one day a week.

Patient care training will be given in June and American Red Cross training, at the end of each month.

NEW HORIZONS in Pontiac needs volunteers age 18 and older to tutor

handicapped adults. Training is provided by supervisor.

BIRTHRIGHT of Oakland County is looking for volunteers to work in a pregnancy aid program. Women over 18 are needed to assist in the office. Duties include referring clients to professional counseling or medical assistance as needed.

Part of the program also includes a free pregnancy test and registered nurses are needed for this area. The agency stresses that a pro-life attitude is of primary importance.

ROYAL OAK OPPORTUNITY CENTER needs tutors to assist teachers by working with young people on a one-to-one basis with academic skills. Areas include reading, writing and math, but tutors are placed according to their own backgrounds. The commitment here is for a two-hour period three or five days a week during the school year.

Women seek candidates

Liz Giese of Milford, spokeswoman for the Michigan Democratic Women's Caucus, has announced the formation of the Democratic State-Wide Candidate Search Committee.

The committee, chaired by Mary Johnson, staff coordinator for the Women's Commission of the Detroit Department of Human Rights, will also meet with all Democratic gubernatorial candidates

to offer names of well-qualified women for the position of Lieutenant Governor.

Other members of the committee include Mary Brown, state representative from Kalamazoo, Olga Nadar, president of the Coalition of Labor Union Women, Annetta Miller, of Huntington Woods, vice-president of the State Board of Education and Rose Mary Di Pomo, Democratic state party officer.

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