

Suburban Life

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RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Diana Kuper, a psychotherapist in private practice, is now teaching classes to women striving for healthy relationships with their partner.

About relationships

Self-responsibility and high self-esteem are necessary for healthy interaction

By Loraine McClish
staff writer

MARRIAGE COUNSELOR: "After listening to you talk I've been wondering, do you really believe that all of your marital problems are your wife's fault?"

CLIENT: "Why no. Fifty percent is my wife's fault, the other 50 percent is because of my mother-in-law."

The story comes from Diana Kuper to illustrate that when one is lacking in self-responsibility the blame for whatever is wrong with a relationship is put on somebody else, or anybody else who happens to be handy.

"Satisfying relationships begin with ourselves," Kuper said, a psychotherapist who is now teaching courses in relationships for women. "Expecting our partner to fulfill our dreams, expecting that someone else is going to make us happy is just unrealistic."

Learning to exercise self-responsibility along with learning how to operate from feelings of high self-esteem comprise Kuper's course called "Regarding Relationships."

"When we have low self-esteem we create a relationship where we are unequal. We cater. We are self-effacing. We can't voice our real needs because we are afraid of revealing what we think of as our unworthiness. We don't rock the boat," she said.

"When we enhance self-esteem and then take responsibility for ourselves we start to love ourselves. Then we can heal and transform."

WHEN KUPER wound up her

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— Diana Kuper
Woodcreek Counseling

first class in "Regarding Relationships" the women in her class asked to continue on with a Part 2, which extended to Parts 3 and 4. Meanwhile more Part 1's kept steadily starting up.

Kuper believes the sessions have snowballed the way they have because "For all of our schooling, for all of the formal education or training we've ever had, no one has ever taught us how to have a satisfying relationship with a man."

"If we were lucky, we had parents with a good relationship and we took our lessons — unbeknownst to us — from them. A lot of us weren't that lucky. So we read self-help books. Why do you suppose so many of them are on the best seller lists today? The most popular one now is 'Women Who Love Too Much' — part of the struggle for self-knowledge. So many women realize that something is wrong, but they've never had any training in learning how to figure out what is wrong, much less what they can do about it."

"Unfortunately what some of them do about it is over-eat, or get an ulcer or go on a shopping spree."

These people don't need therapy. What they need is knowledge."

Kuper stresses that "Regarding Relationships" is not group therapy. "I lecture," she says. "I lecture for two hours a night for four weeks. I take questions and allow time for discussion, but this is a lecture course. It is only in the latter parts that we go deeper into self-exploration."

The self-exploration circles about all of the elements Kuper believes are necessary for healthy relationships: vulnerability, commitment, self-regard, healthy interdependence, respect, trust, acceptance, honesty, forgiveness, self-disclosure and self-responsibility.

"IT IS NATURAL to me, it is within my nature to want to explore my own feelings. I've been doing it since I was in my '20s. 'Regarding Relationships' just sort of evolved. It is a culmination of my life's work."

"I teach a class in relationships between mothers and daughters, but any tension there is an entirely different thing. The class for women and their relationships with men

seems to be the one that is most needed."

Kuper is affiliated with Woodcreek Counseling where she counsels men, women, couples and families.

She has taught courses on relationships and the psychology of women at Wayne Community College, Oakland Community College and Henry Ford Community College.

She is a graduate of University of Michigan and Tel Aviv University. She took her masters degree from Merrill Palmer Institute (now Center for Humanistic Studies) and attended The Institute for Social Workers' year-long marital therapy seminar in Israel.

During her seven year residence in Israel she was affiliated with Community Mental Health Center in Jaffa where she counseled adults; and with the Ministry of Defense where she facilitated support groups for parents whose sons were killed in the Yom Kippur War.

KUPER THINKS of man-woman relationships as a 'pas de deux,' a dance for two.

"In every relationship we have choreographed an elaborate dance with another person," she said. "It does not happen by chance. Sometimes we glide effortlessly across the floor. Sometimes we step on each others' feet."

"It is possible to interpret the pas de deux to better understand the reasons why we chose the mate we did. We don't have to be doomed forever for what we didn't learn in our early years."

Woodcreek Counseling is at 31275 Northwestern Highway, Farmington Hills.

New singles club is launched

WHITE WATER rafting, weekend trips to Chicago and Toronto, a road rally, soft ball play, canoeing, and theater parties are all on Farmington Professional Singles (FPS) spring and summer agenda.

"The group was initiated for people who wanted to meet new people by participating in sports, cultural, and social activities, and that's just exactly what it is doing," said Linda Foster, speaking for the fledgling club.

"We've had as few as 10 and as many as 45 turn out for what has already been planned. But we're just getting started. We have a committee that's scheduling two-three activities each month to see what is popular, to find out what the interests are, to get us going. Hopefully all of our members will eventually get involved in this input."

Members and potential members can have a say in the scheduling of future activities "by just showing up at our end of the month meetings," Foster said.

The once-a-month get-togethers are cocktail parties, from 6-8 p.m. on the last Friday of each month in Farmington Community Center, on Farmington Road, north of 10 Mile.

"The meetings are social affairs, always informal. Maybe 20 minutes are allowed for short business sessions, but it is the time to speak out to tell your interests and have a say

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— Linda Foster
Farmington Professional Singles

in how we are structured," she said.

FARMINGTON Professional Singles is the latest in a long string of special interest groups initiated by the community center's board of directors. The board gives space in the center without charge as a public service for the residents, for a group to organize itself and structure itself to fulfill its own needs.

"If there is a group anywhere in this area that is doing the same thing we are they sure aren't promoting themselves. We know about Parents Without Partners and a lot of us don't qualify for that. We know about a lot of dance parties for singles. We don't know any group who offer the diverse range of activities we offer to get people acquainted with one another by participating in something of common interest," Foster said.

"We're covering the gamut of activities; educational, cultural, sports,

purely social. The lowest turnout we had was a cross-country ski party that didn't come off because of lack of snow. We walked back (from Heritage Park) to the center and played Trivial Pursuit and it turned out to be a fun party."

The things FPS members have in common are being single, their age, from 25-35, and a professional status.

Foster, who heads up the communications committee and whose biggest job is writing the FPS newsletter, has a mailing list of 40 members.

"The addresses are predominantly Farmington Hills," Foster said, "but there are addresses in Farmington, Novi, Livonia, Plymouth, Dearborn and Royal Oak. I'm sure they are willing to travel from as far as Dearborn or Royal Oak because we're doing something different than most single clubs."

Members are also predominantly never-marrieds.

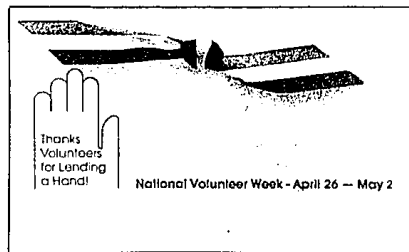
CHAIRMAN FOR FPS is Eric Schaefer. His treasurer is Mike Gruba and secretary is Lynn Pearson. Barbara Ott heads up the membership committee; Dave Hurlbert the activities committee and Foster the communications committee.

"All of us are volunteer officers. We never had a formal election. The two people who hosted our first combination cocktail party and orientation meeting asked who was willing to do what so we could get a steering committee to start things rolling," Foster said.

"This month we should have our membership criteria set — we already know the word 'professional' is going to be loosely defined or not defined at all — and we should have some by-laws ready for adoption because we will be structured. The structure is going to hold us together."

There will be no residency requirement listed in the by-laws. Dues will be \$10, payable every six months, "which members can easily recoup with lower costs for our activities given to members than they would be for non-members," Foster said.

Inquiries about the organization or the activities scheduled for the coming weeks will be taken by Ott, at 474-5534, or Hurlbert at 425-9663.



Say 'Thanks'

Week honors volunteers

"Thanks Volunteers for Lending a Hand" is the theme for the week.

"Cheers for Volunteers" is the motto for the week. The week is April 26 to May 2 designated National Volunteer Week by President Ronald Reagan to recognize the contributions of 92 million Americans who give their time and energy to helping others.

The Volunteer Network, a coalition of Detroit area volunteer groups, joins with communities across the country in the recognition by coordinating local activities to recognize volunteers in Oakland, Wayne and Macomb counties.

"Metro Detroit has an invaluable resource that responds to community needs. It cuts across socioeconomic lines, ethnic and racial barriers, religious and cultural differences. It has only to recognize a need and it responds. This resource is volunteerism," says Victoria Buckley, chairwoman for the week's activities here.

The network asks residents to stop and say 'Thanks' to those who will be wearing the red, white and blue ribbon, distinguishing them as a volunteer through the week.

"We expect to distribute about 30,000 ribbons to volunteers through the 1,800 organizations participating in the ribbon-wearing campaign," Buckley said.

THE WEEK begins with the annual Kick-Off Breakfast and the network's annual meeting at 8:15 p.m. Monday, April 27 in Lansdowne Restaurant on Detroit's waterfront.

"Everyone is invited to attend the breakfast and the presentation of awards to our VIV's (Very Important Volunteers)," Buckley said. "It is given to bring all the volunteers and community representatives together for an enthusiastic send-off for a week-long celebration."

Reservations, at \$8.50 each, are made by calling Fran Goldberg, 626-3586.

Meanwhile Buckley's committee stands ready to assist any organization that depends on volunteers to recognize and thank its volunteers, or promote volunteerism.

The Center for Volunteerism can be reached by calling 833-0622.

The network urges area residents to consider their own community volunteer activity and to renew their commitment during National Volunteer Week," she said. "Volunteer recognition is more than saying thank-you. Carefully planned recognition events also serve to call public attention to the contribution of community volunteers and encourage others to become involved in the community as volunteers."

Nation-wide the contribution of volunteers amounts to \$64 billion in work hours given to hospitals, community centers, scout troops, schools, youth, senior groups, religious, civic and community organizations.

The network lists 1.7 million Detroit-area citizens as volunteers.

National Volunteer Week began in 1972 under a directive from President Richard Nixon.

Singles who volunteered to take offices to get the new club under way are Linda Foster (at left), Mike Gruba, David Hurlbert, Eric Schaefer and Barb Ott. There are about 40 singles on the mailing list now and members want to increase the roster.

