

**Antelope Springs
Advanced Parenting
Session 9**

*“The research my colleagues and I have done lends support to the conviction that children do indeed need fathers. But our work also offers this important distinction: Not just any dad will do. Children’s lives are greatly enhanced by fathers who are emotionally present, validating, able to offer comfort in times of distress. By the same token, **children can be deeply harmed by fathers who are abusive, highly critical, humiliating, or emotionally cold.**”*

Gottman

Agenda

1. Understanding Emotions in parents and children
 - a) How emotions are generated, Ellis’s model, (Social Intelligence by Goleman)
 - b) Strengthening your marriage, key concepts; complaints – criticism – requests, encouragement ratio, soft start ups, repair attempts, champion for their dreams.
 - c) The Four Horsemen

2. Marriage pointers
 - a) Research Overview
 - b) EC in your marriage
 - c) Resources
 - d) Divorce? Resources
 - e) Indicators of problems in marriage

*“With so much evidence pointing to the harmful effects of divorce on children, unhappily married parents may wonder whether it’s best to stay in a truly miserable and undeniably hopeless marriage for their children’s welfare. **Our research and that of others answers this question with a definite and resounding no.** That’s because certain kinds of marital conflict can have the same deleterious effects on children as divorce. **In other words, it’s not necessarily the divorce that hurts the kids, but the intense hostility and bad communication that can develop between unhappily married mothers and fathers and may continue after the divorce. Hostility between spouses is linked to kids becoming aggressive with peers.**”*

Gottman

3. The Father’s Crucial Role (Gottman, chapter 6)
 - a) “Fatherhood in Transition” pgs 167-168 *Handout
 - b) Keys for Fathers

Fatherhood in Transition From Gottman

*“Fathers typically relate to children differently than mothers do, **which means their involvement leads to the development of different competencies, particularly in the area of social relationships.** . . . Many researchers believe that fathers influence their children primarily through play. . . . Studies of three and four year old children conducted by Ross Parke and Kevin MacDonald provide evidence of this link (that how dads PLAY with their children influences how the child interacts in society) and an interesting and significant qualifier emerged in this study, however; **Kids with highly physical dads were only rated as popular if their dads played with them in ways that were NONDIRECTIVE AND NONCOERCIVE.** **The children whose dads were highly physical but also highly bossy received the lowest popularity scores. . . . such discoveries fit in with my own findings, which highlighted the importance of dads avoiding criticism, humiliation, derogation, and intrusiveness with their kids.”***

Gottman

1) Historians trace the beginnings of a major shift in male parenting/family structure back 200 years to the Industrial revolution. What happened at that point?

2) In the 1960s another major shift occurred that “dealt the father dominated family system a crippling blow”. Describe what that shift was.

3) Between 1960 and 1987 divorce rates _____

- a. increased 10%
- b. increased 40%
- c. increased 100%
- d. none of the above

(How do you believe this has impacted our social structure?)

4) A recent study from the University of Michigan suggests that among first time marriages the divorce rate may be as high as:

- a. 47%
- b. 35%
- c. 67%
- d. 58%

(What are some reasons for this figure?)

5) When a divorce occurs, ___ % of the time custody of the children is awarded to the mother.

- a. 65%
- b. 75%
- c. 90%
- d. none

(Why does this occur? What is the effect on the children?)

6) Historian Robert L. Griswold makes the statement, “Women’s work, in short, has destroyed old assumptions about fatherhood and required new negotiations of gender relations.”

What do you think he means by that statement?

Keys for fathers

1. Get involved in your child's care from pregnancy on. List 3 ways to accomplish this.
2. Stay tuned into your child's everyday needs as he or she grows. (Biller's study pg 177 –178) What does this study suggest? How do quality time and quantity time compare with children's needs?
3. Strike a balance between work and home life. List at least 5 ways that you might accomplish this. (Or ways that you ARE doing it now.)
4. Stay involved in your child's life despite your marital status. What are some of the difficulties that might arise from "marital status"?
5. Understand the three areas of impact that fathers have on kids; (Lamb 1986) (Direct interaction, accessible and responsibility) What conclusions does Gottman suggest from the research? How might you explain the 3 areas of impact?
6. Understand that the quality of your PLAY has a great impact on your child's development. What are some factors that produce "quality" in the play with your children?
7. Remember that numerous studies have shown that children do not fare well when there is substantial conflict or hostility in the family (Hetherington and Parke, 1993; Peterson and Zill, 1986; Rutter, 1979) Studies also show that children of parents who have a high conflict after divorce also do not fare as well as children whose parents have a better relationship (Kelly, 1993). What happens with children who are exposed to a lot of hostility? What do you think about the research suggesting that it is conflict and hostility that produce the detrimental impact on children, more than a specific structure?
8. Learn and understand the basics of good validation techniques (emotion coaching, reflective listening, etc) List some of the areas that you feel competent in your validation techniques. Now share with your group at least 1 example of how you applied those skills in a real life situation.

What is Functional in Good Marriages

- a. According to 4 groups of studies (Jacobson, Snyder & Wills, The Munich Study, Greenberg & Johnson) 3 things must change.
 - i. **Increase overall positivity** in marriage (non-conflict)
 - ii. **Decrease negativity during conflict** discussions
 - iii. **Increase positivity** during conflict discussions
- b. What works in all 4 studies
 - i. Communication skills + behavior changes
 - ii. Management of stress overspill into marriage
 - iii. Insight into past marital dysfunction (self AWARENESS)
 - iv. **An Emotion FOCUS** (all emotions are acceptable)
- c. **Love Maps**
 - i. Knowing your partner's psychological world
 - ii. Updating this knowledge
 - iii. Genuine interest in one another
- d. **Fondness and Admiration**
 - i. Affection, kindness, gentleness
 - ii. Respect, admiration, encouragement
 - iii. **A culture of admiration rather than criticism**
- e. **Turning TOWARD rather than turning away**
 - i. Emotional bank account
 - ii. Mostly neutral moments
 - iii. **Mindless moments are made mindful**
 - iv. These small moments are the basis of romance, great sex, passion in marriage.
- f. **Positive Sentiment Override**
 - i. Versus Negative S. O.
 - ii. Buffer against irritability
 - iii. Determines effectiveness of Repair Attempts
 - iv. Will occur if previous levels of "Sound Marital House" are in place.
 - v. Can't manipulate it directly
- g. **The Regulation of Conflict**
 - i. Dialogue with perpetual problems instead of gridlock
 - ii. Solving problems that CAN be solved.
- h. **Supporting one another's dreams**
- i. **Creating or strengthening Rituals of Emotional Connection**
- j. **Creating Shared Meaning**