



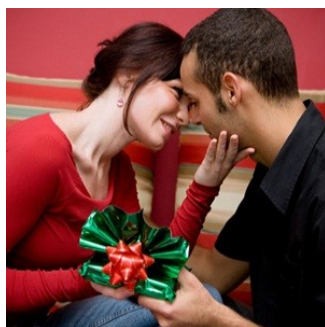
# Marriage Matters



Great Marriages for Sheboygan County | 612 Center Ave., Sheboygan, WI 53081 | Ph: 920-783-3660 | www.Great-Marriages.org

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## Take Christmas Couple Time— Give a Gift That's Priceless

It's hard to keep our priorities straight during the Christmas season. There is so much going on that couples usually put little priority on themselves.

This Christmas, be different. Make time for each other. Make shopping, wrapping or baking dates if needed.

Sneak out for just an hour or two of "us" time at least once a week. Discuss your strengths and weaknesses as a couple and pick something to work on during December to strengthen your marriage. Think about what YOU can do to make your marriage stronger.

Instead of focusing on tangible gifts for each other, plan something special. Consider planning a surprise date or weekend getaway, write down your favorite memories together or a poem for your spouse, give coupons for backrubs or for your spouse's jobs around the house...the ideas are limitless. Remember the true meaning of Christmas.



## GMSC Highlights Every Man's Battle

We have an exciting new workshop at Great Marriages this fall. It is the first time we have offered a men only program. Today, all forms of media from television to the internet, are constantly presenting men with an assault of sensual images. It's impossible to avoid exposure to those temptations. Every Man's Battle is a program designed to help men confront and gain victory over them. A victory essential to providing the proper foundation for men to strengthen and enhance the biblical relationship that God intends them to have with a woman in the challenging environment that we live in today.

Hal Ribich leads this Bible-focused program, which is based on the book *Every Man's Battle* by Steve Arterburn and Fred Stoeker. To date, the men in this group have gone through ten chapters of the book addressing the trap of sexual immorality with a detailed and practical plan designed to help every man reach the goal of sexual purity. Accountability is a key feature in how these men are facing these challenges. God has a higher standard for holiness than the world leads us to believe. The men are working together in finding success in attaining this higher goal.



Hal Ribich



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and  
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at **gm4sc**





Do you have a story about life and love for our Marriage Moments and Memories column? Married life has many surprises, joys, and challenges. What are yours? We would love to hear the secret to your success. It can be kept anonymous. Send your story to [editor@great-marriages.org](mailto:editor@great-marriages.org) or stop by our office.



You can pay now or you can pay later, but the later you pay, the more penalties and interest you accrue.

-Linda and Charlie Bloom

Your partner cannot rescue you from unhappiness, but they can help you to rescue yourself.

-Linda and Charlie Bloom

There's a difference between sex and intimacy.

-Linda and Charlie Bloom

## Marriage Moments and Memories

### Renewal of Vows?

I remember my parent's 12th wedding anniversary. I was nine and my siblings ranged from 6 to 11 years of age. We had been rummaging through our attic and found my mother's wedding veil.

We decided on our own to reenact my parent's wedding ceremony. They played along.

I made a chocolate cake with layers and frosted it white. It must have been one of my first cakes because I distinctly remember chocolate crumbs sticking out all over.

One sister played the Wedding March on a toy piano as my parents walked into the living room. The veil was placed on my mom's head and the youngest two siblings were the flower girl and ring bearer.

As I remember this special day in my childhood, it's a reminder as parents, we have an important job to teach our children about marriage, love and

commitment—values that they will take into adulthood.

*Married 12 years*

### Making Christmas Easier

I remember a time when my children were small that even though I looked forward to Christmas every year, it was just really stressful when it came. Christmas Eve and Christmas Day were really busy visiting both families and doing our own family traditions. By the time we would get to bed on Christmas Eve, we were exhausted and of course, our young children were up bright and early to see what Santa brought.

We didn't want to stop seeing our families on Christmas. We felt that was very important. So we decided to have Christmas Eve brunch with one family and Christmas Day dinner with another.

That left almost a whole day in between to prepare, go to Mass, see what Santa brought and just do our own traditions.

*Married almost 15 years*



## Communication Traps

We all know good communication is very important in relationships. Many people have learned unhealthy and ineffective patterns of communication.

**The Placator**—The placator wants peace so they agree with everything while resenting it inside. We need to be open with our thoughts and feelings.

**The Blamer**—The blamer thinks his spouse can't do anything right and it's always their fault. This destroys communication. We need to try to understand the other person's point of view.

**The Professor**—The professor is calm and logical. If their spouse will just listen, they will agree. We need to listen and remember that we are emotional creatures.

**The Statue and/ or Subject Switcher**—Ignoring or changing the topic does not help you find a solution. A discussion is necessary.

Identifying these patterns and making an effort to change them to healthy communication patterns will help you build a healthy marriage.

Quotes were found in:  
*101 Things I Wish I Knew*  
*When I Got Married*;  
*Simple Lessons to*  
*Make Love Last*  
by: Linda and Charlie Bloom

**HEALTHY**  
**Marriage**

You can view our award winning cable television show on WSCS, in the Sheboygan cable area every Tuesday at 9:30 am and Thursday at 8:30 pm.

**WSCS**  
**SHEBOYGAN**

Dr. Gary Chapman  
*Now You're Speaking My Love Language*

## Simplifying Christmas



“The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.”  
— Marcel Proust

“Start by doing what is necessary; then do what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”  
— St. Francis of Assisi

Focus on the true meaning of Christmas and keep your Christmas simple this year by considering the following:

1. **Simplify Traditions**—Discuss your traditions as a family. Pick your favorite ones and discard the ones that have lost meaning. Start new ones such as caroling, making a birthday cake for Jesus, creating a Christmas scrapbook or making handmade ornaments.
2. **Simplify Celebrations**—Have practical parties which may include baking cookies, wrapping gifts or decorating.
3. **Simplify Gift Giving**—Shop all year. Make homemade gifts. Give to charity. Give gifts of self or service, family recipes, random acts of kindness and lots of smiles.

Downscaling Christmas by Kimberly D. Malkogainnis  
<http://www.kyria.com/topics/marriagefamily/homelife/downscalingchristmas.html>  
Have Yourself a Very Simple Christmas by Dave and Claudia Arp  
<http://www.kyria.com/topics/marriagefamily/parenting/holidays/4.58.html>

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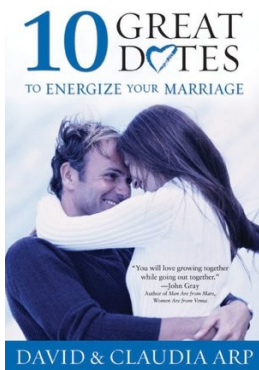
## 10 Great Dates To Energize Your Marriage

By David & Claudia Arp



### Date 1

#### Choosing a High Priority Marriage



Enjoy a synopsis from the popular book:

### 10 Great Dates To Energize Your Marriage

The book outlines 10 great dates to take to rejuvenate your marriage.

Find this, and other great books in our Resource Library.

Look at marriage as a journey and consider the following goals and principals before planning your date.

#### Three Goals

- 1) Consider where your marriage is currently at. Do you feel connected? Have you grown apart?
- 2) Determine what your marriage goals are. Set some for six months, one year and five years... Start with small ones.
- 3) Work on important skills such as listening, coping with anger and stress, and conflict resolution.

#### Three Principles

- 1) Your marriage needs to come first. Schedule couple time before activities such as golfing and shopping.
- 2) Make a commitment to grow as a couple. Needs change over time.
- 3) Make an effort to remain close.

#### Dating Rules

- 1) Focus on your relationship and marriage goals in a positive and fun way.
- 2) Use your healthy communication skills.
- 3) Don't forget the follow-up activities.

#### The Date

Before the date read chapter one and do the exercises. Write down the answers if helpful. Dress up to impress for your date. Plan enough time so you don't feel rushed. Pick a nice restaurant.

During the date discuss the exercises.

#### Exercises for the Date

Remembering your firsts (date, kiss, meeting), happiest and most romantic memories, and your wedding day. Also discuss three great things about your marriage, two things you can improve and the one thing you each selected to do for your marriage.

During the time after your date and before the next one, give a minimum of one compliment a day to each other. Work on one thing to improve your relationship.

## Upcoming Events, Seminars and Programs

### Invest in Your Marriage

Read a marriage book together and compare notes. Check out our Resource Library if you are not sure where to start.

### New Book Arrivals!

*Now You're Speaking*

*My Language*  
By Gary Chapman

*Empty Nesting*

By David and Claudia Arp, et al

*And Baby Makes Three*

By John M. Gottman, PH.D. and Julie Schwartz Gottman, PH.D.

*Boy Meets Girl*

By Joshua Harris

*The Ring Makes All The Difference*

By Glenn T. Stanton



### Song of Solomon

It's known the Bible provides wisdom for righteous living and spiritual growth. But it can guide us in our dating, courtship and marriage relationships as well. As you learn about the relationship of the Bible's most passionate lovers, you'll see how you, too, can find the deep emotional, sexual, and spiritual satisfaction that God created to be enjoyed in marriage. Please bring a Bible to class. Presented by Pastor Andy Shanholtz.

**Date:** Wednesdays, January 11 through March 7

**Time:** 6:30-8:00 pm

### Four Seasons

This program is designed for all married couples so that they are able to better understand and manage the natural cycles of marriage. The program provides the words and framework that equips couples to talk about their marriage and work together to strengthen and enhance their relationship.

**Date:** Saturday, January 28

**Time:** 9 am-noon

### 7 Principles of Making Marriage Work

Through a series of quizzes, checklists, and exercises, this class provides the framework for coping with differences and strengthening your marriage. Learn the seven principles that will reinforce the positive aspects of a relationship and help your relationship endure during the rough moments.

**Date:** February 2012

### How to Avoid Marrying a Jerk(ette)

This program is for adults who want to make smart choices in dating including: individuals who have experienced a divorce and are dating again; never married singles, and anyone who wants to know how to find a mate who is compatible for a healthy relationship.

**Date:** March 2012

### Prepare & Enrich **\*\* (call for appointment)\*\***

Unlike our regular monthly programs, this program is *not* a group program, couples meet with marriage mentors as a couple and it includes a marriage inventory that is specific to them. Prepare and Enrich is for both engaged couples who are preparing for marriage and married couples that may be struggling in an area or who just want to strengthen and enrich their marriage. This program is the most advanced couple assessment tool available. The couple will learn skills that aid in overcoming the challenges in order to build a happy, healthy relationship and strong marriage.

### Visit Our Relationship Resource Library

A variety of books and DVDs are available to be checked out at no charge at the Great Marriages office. Topics include general communication and enrichment; sex, intimacy and infidelity; parenting and families; singles, engaged couples and newlyweds; divorce prevention; finance; devotionals; and empty nesters. We also have limited resources available in Spanish.

**NOTE:** Most programs are free. Registration is required. Call (920) 783-3660.