

CONNECTIONS

A NEWSLETTER ABOUT FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS & PERSONAL GROWTH

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"Modern marriages require more mindfulness than marriages of the past, because we expect more of marriage, but we have not yet woken up to that fact."

William J. Doherty

PRACTICAL SOLUTIONS

Top Ten Behaviors of a Successful Marriage

A successful marriage can be defined as one that is able to problem solve, rely on each other during stress, continually progress, and form close bonds. There are many more behaviors than ten that will help a marriage, but the following patterns often indicate successful marriages versus marriages "on the rocks." Behaviors closer to No. 1 tend to be more difficult to accomplish, yet offer the most stability and satisfaction to a marriage. Listed in descending order (1 is the best) are:



10 Affection The ability to use touch in your relationship.

9 Remembrance The ability to celebrate your relationship.

8 Equality The ability to agree on how to share burdens.

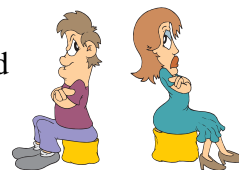
7 Service The ability to do good deeds to each other.

6 Kindness The ability to compliment each other.

5 Sexuality The ability to increase physical and spiritual attraction.

4 Friendship The ability to spend time together and share common interests.

3 Teamwork The ability to work through problems as a team rather than against each other.



2 Honesty The ability to disclose your strengths and limitations with each other.

1 Trust The ability to go to your partner during pain, anger, frustration, and/or stress rather than something or someone else as a means of healing the pain.



FROM THE DESK OF

Charlotte Shoup Olsen



Welcome to Connections!

We are excited about providing Kansas Extension agents again with a newsletter on family relationships and personal growth. *Connections* was last published in 1999. Provided in electronic form, this information can be used in any format for your Extension programming (e.g. newsletters, news columns, workshops). To help you to take advantage of the contents in this monthly newsletter, we have designed it to contain five types of information:

- an empirical study or research article relating to families;
- a practical article with more applied information relating to families;

- a personal improvement article for continued personal growth;
- educational resources and programs on a given topic; and
- a spotlight of an Extension person's program, idea, and/or work.

We are open to suggestions for topics and/or additional sections to be addressed. We may offer book reviews, special resource spotlights, etc. We hope you will find this newsletter helpful as you assist families in your particular county, district, or area.

Sincerely,
Charlotte Shoup Olsen, Ph. D
W. Jared DuPree, MS

Five-Year Action Plan Briefing

The Strong Marital and Family Relationships Extension action plan (2005-2009) programming is designed to influence familial relationship behaviors of Kansas residents that lead to individual, family, and

community well-being. The intended outcome is to strengthen marriages and positive family interactions, and mitigate the negative impacts of divorce. How can an agent participate in this programming?

LEVEL 1

- Engage in promotional activities (exhibits, news releases & columns, newsletters, etc.)
- Increase awareness among community coalitions and human service agencies.
- Conduct and report program/participant evaluation.

LEVEL 2

- Provide educational publications.
- Offer basic family relationship programs.
- Refer individuals to web-based course.
- Build community capacity to implement and disperse relationship education.
- Conduct and report program/participant evaluation.

LEVEL 3

- Teach web-based course in consultation with state specialist.
- Conduct workshop series on a given topic.
- Infuse family relationship education into other programming initiatives.
- Train community coalitions and other professionals.
- Conduct and report program/participant evaluation.

For entire action plan, see:

<http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/prev/5-YearWorkPlan2005-2009/Mar&FamRlshp-02Mar04.pdf>

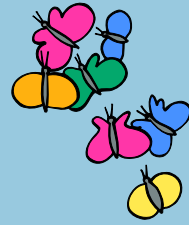
Extension Spotlight

Jared DuPree

Jared DuPree arrived on the K-State campus during the month of June with a wide array of experiences to his name. His goal is to earn a Ph.D. in Marriage and Family Therapy, but his many talents will increasingly become evident to K-State Research and Extension while he works as a graduate assistant on *relationship education* with Extension Specialist, Charlotte Shoup Olsen. He also will be in the classroom as a teaching assistant for the School of Family Studies and Human Services and seeing clients at the KSU Family Center.

Jared already is writing a book that reflects his professional mental health experiences in rural Mississippi while working with men that had violence issues often combined with alcohol or drug situations. He found that problems related to intimacy and emotional connectedness seemed to fuel many of the men's systemic troubles. Helping them gain skills to form attachments appropriately was an exciting and rewarding part of Jared's job. He drew upon a conglomerate of therapeutic and mental health approaches to bring about change in the men's lives, but the work was intense. He had to find a balance between too much emotional involvement with their pain and suffering, to emotional detachment as a way to avoid burnout. Finding a balance in which he could understand, sympathize, and empathize and still be able to assist, guide, or facilitate was his challenging goal.

For Extension, Jared will be working on the *Connections* newsletter that will be published monthly for county agents. He will assist in agent training, web development,



"I enjoy understanding the workings of individuals, couples, and families. I believe it is the final frontier of scientific study. After all is said and done, we only have ourselves and our relationships."
Jared DuPree

curriculum writing, program evaluation, and other assorted tasks. After finishing his Ph.D., Jared is interested in research and academia, hoping to eventually establish a research institute/private practice while continuing to write academic and non-academic books.

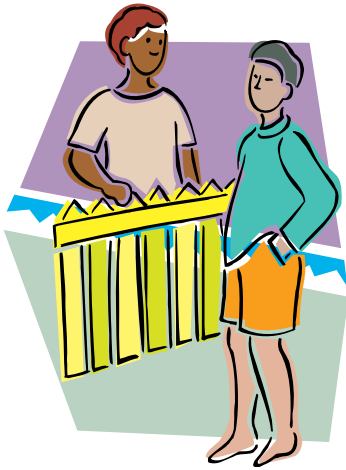
Jared has spent time living in South America, speaks Spanish fluently, reads Portuguese and French, and relishes learning from the many strengths that different cultures both here and abroad bring to one's life. He and his wife, Anna who has a BFA in choreography, enjoy swing and latin dancing and have their own publishing company to meld their two careers. Their three-year-old daughter, Sienna, will have a new sibling that is due in January. Jared's hobbies are basketball, lifting weights, running, playing the piano, painting, reading, and playing around with different computer applications.

WELCOME JARED!



PERSONAL INVOLVEMENT

Building Trust with Others



Knowing how to build trust with another person is an important technique when working with the general public on sensitive issues.

In addition, these

principles tend to work in marital and family relationships as well although on a much more intimate basis. Although multiple issues can be related to building trust, here are five items to consider that may help one improve trust-building skills:

Establish Commonality

Being able to identify common areas of interests is an important first step in building a relationship of trust. Asking one about personal interests, family, hobbies, etc. can open

many doors to establishing trust. It is important to be honest during this process. Falsely identifying with someone can jeopardize trust in the future.



Self-Disclose

People tend to self-disclose more to you when you self-disclose to them. This does not mean you share all your past mistakes. However, identifying with them through

a statement, "I have felt nervous like you have when..." This helps people know you are wanting to get closer to them. Once again, it is important to disclose honestly.

Regulate Boundaries

Boundaries refer to how much information you let people share with you and how much information you personally share with others. Thus, sharing too much in the

beginning can backfire. Being able to regulate these boundaries through observations of comfort-level is important in order to maintain a professional relationship. You will not want to share too much personal information in a manner in which they become your therapist. You are there to help them, thus, maintaining a professional boundary is important.

Reflect Feelings

Most people feel mistrust when they feel misunderstood.

Reflecting feelings lets people know you are trying to understand them. Simply saying, "You seem

frustrated..." or "You seem down..." will increase trust greatly.

Monitor Personal Needs

It is important to keep yourself physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually healthy. Make sure you take time for yourself in all these areas so that you avoid

burnout. This helps you focus on your job needs when you're working and personal needs

when you are away. Balancing these two needs is important in order to fully build the trust level.



Marital Satisfaction and Attachment Patterns

A recent study of married couples found that attachment styles of each partner correlated with levels of marital satisfaction. In other words, those with secure attachment patterns reported higher levels of satisfaction while those with insecure attachment styles reported lower satisfaction levels. In fact, attachment style accounted for 20% of the variance of satisfaction. This is very high and basically means that 20% of a marriage's level of satisfaction depends on the attachment style of each individual while 80% accounts for other factors. (Forness, 2003).

Attachment style refers to the research of John Bowlby (1907–1990). Attachment basically means the ability an individual has

to seek, form, and maintain a healthy relationship. In the beginning, attachment theory developed out of research studying why separation anxiety occurred among children. As Bowlby examined the relationship of attachment, he noticed patterns of attachment in adults as well. Today, attachment theory has been highly researched because of its promising implications in helping children and adults form healthier attachments (relationships) (Bowlby as cited in www.attachmentnetwork.org 2004).

One researcher, Kim Bartholomew, combined attachment theory with theories of self-esteem and trust to form the following types of attachment styles:

(continued next page)

Attachment Styles

		Level of Interpersonal Trust	
		TRUST	MISTRUST
Level of Self-Esteem	HIGH	<p>SECURE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I find it easy to meet new people. • I enjoy looking at myself in the mirror. • I'm very happy with my life right now. • Dancing is great. 	<p>DISMISSING</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I would rather depend on myself than on other people. • I don't like to reveal things about myself to others. • My friends seldom live up to my expectations. • I can get along quite well without a close emotional relationship in my life.
	LOW	<p>PREOCCUPIED</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I am more affectionate than my partner. • I fall in love easily. • Sometimes I tell people too much about myself. • My most important goal is to be truly appreciated by another person 	<p>FEARFUL-AVOIDANT</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whenever I hear a doorbell ring, I'm usually a little worried about who it might be. • I feel that most people don't like me. • I don't have much to be proud of. • It's really much safe just to think about a relationship instead of actually initiating one.

(Bartholomew, 2004)



Resources

Resources for Couples

K-State Research and Extension

www.oznet.ksu.edu/library

Materials with specialist support from Charlotte Shoup Olsen:

- Stepping Stones for Stepfamilies
- CoupleTALK Enhancing Your Relationship
- Family Change: Separation and Divorce
- Basic Family Communication
- What Happens Now? The Children Are Gone

Research-based Books

- *The Seven Principles for Making Marriages Work*, by John M. Gottman (published by Crown Publishers).
- *Becoming Parents: How to Strengthen Your Marriage as Your Family Grows*, by Pamela Jordan, Scott Stanley, & Howard Markman (published by Jossey-Bass).
- *Fighting for Your Marriage*, by Howard Markman, Scott Stanley, & Susan Blumberg (published by Jossey-Bass).
- *Building Relationships: Developing Skills for Life*, by David H. Olson, John DeFrain, & Amy K. Olson (published by Life Innovations).
- *The Heart of Commitment*, by Scott M. Stanley (published by Thomas Nelson Publishers).
- *Strengthening Family Resilience*, by Froma Walsh (published by Guilford Press).

CYFERnet

www.cyfernet.org

A national Extension resource listing research-based tools, curricula, and activities.

Websites

www.aamft.org

- American Association of Marriage & Family Therapists for:
Therapist Locator
Couples Resources

Marital Satisfaction & Attachment Patterns

(continued from page 5)

Understanding what type of attachment style an adult has can help one understand what areas may be lacking in his or her life that may be hindering healthy relationships. Thus, improving these limitations may help individuals form healthier relationships with increased satisfaction in the future.

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