

# Turning a New Leaf



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## Newly Married: The Power of Encouragement

Marriage rates are falling worldwide, with many opting out entirely. It's concerning and begs the question: *Why?*

I believe many jump into marriage with the wrong mindsets or expectations. If you have been married for even a day, you've found that marriage is challenging. While it can be joyful and rewarding, it takes a lot of work. I am going to share on the topic of encouragement and the power it holds within our relationships.

As I am newly married, I do not claim to have all the right answers; but from my own experiences, study on the topic, and learning from many around me I believe I can point couples towards some Truths about marriage and building a successful relationship. According to Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth, giving encouragement to our spouses is just as important as communicating our needs to them.

In 1 Peter 3:8-9 (CSB), we read Peter's instructions on marriage and how to treat one another; "love one another, and be compassionate and humble, not paying back evil or insult for insult but, on the contrary, giving a blessing, since you were called for this, so that you may inherit a blessing." Also, in Ephesians chapter 5 (CSB) we read Paul's similar instructions in marriage and he urges Christians to "walk in love". The Bible gives many instructions on how to walk in love, and specifically in the books of Hebrews and 1 Thessalonians, Christians are urged to encourage one another when faith is wavering and when one is feeling disheartened.

Proverbs 18:21 (CSB) says, "Death and life are in the power of the tongue". Meaning words can either build up, or tear down. Sharing an encouraging word with a spouse builds them up and promotes joy and love. Proverbs 16:24 says that pleasant words are like a honeycomb which is sweet to the taste and health to the body.

In an article in Psychology Today, the author makes the point that encouragement is able to infuse courage into another person. Encouragement can be shown in words of praise, admiration, cheers and applause, and even hugs and positive touch. Even if we cannot remember the exact words spoken, we do remember how they made us feel.

I bet you can remember a time when someone made you

by Michaela Padilla, MS, LMFT



feel bad with their discouraging words. I also believe you can remember a time when someone made you feel on top of the world just by their encouragement to you.

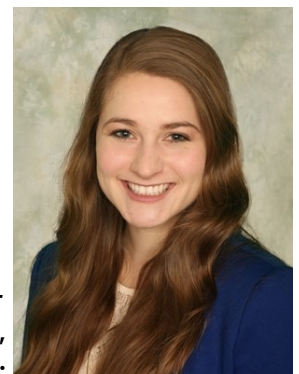
When you encourage your spouse, it also fights against any negativity built up in your own heart and mind against your spouse.

Encouragement in a marriage helps to build one another up, infuse courage, and lift down-cast spirits. It also leads to positive feelings and secure attachment. In 'The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work', John Gottman writes that positive interactions are needed for a healthy connection. He challenges that for every negative interaction, five positive interactions are needed to outweigh it. FIVE!

When we are negative and discouraging, we wound our attachment and it needs to be healed through positives and encouragement. Consistent and genuine encouragement for your spouse will foster deeper love and intimacy.

See the '**Continued**' inside for ideas on adding encouragement to your relationship!

**Michaela Padilla, MS, LMFT**  
is based in our Crown Point Office,  
call 708-895-7310 for appt.



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2325-177th Street  
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**Our Mission:**

To promote healthy relationships, personal growth and healing through professional counseling, education, and consultation from a Christian perspective.

**Behold, the virgin shall be with child and give birth to a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel, which when translated, means "God with us." Matthew 1:23**

That fact that God sent His son into the world to be with us is one of the most hopeful and encouraging things I can think of. It is such an astounding gift and changes everything. It is one of the things God has done for us for which we can never quite thank Him enough or capture in words our gratitude. The verse bears witness to a Presence of God more direct, personal, and immediate than any that had been known before, a future hope that had become a divine reality.

Given the current state of our world, we need this hope quite desperately. In terms of mental health, what is happening in our country and around the world is very serious. We don't talk about it enough, but we need to. Fortunately, it is the bipartisan political issue of our time. Currently, there are several mental health crises affecting people in our country across all ages. It is particularly affecting teen girls and is an urgent need. According to the CDC, nearly 6 in 10 teen girls felt persistently sad or hopeless in 2021, and more than 3 in 10 teen girls seriously considered suicide, while 13% made one or more suicide attempts. Our girls need help.

**Immanuel, God with us.**

Unfortunately, our boys are struggling too. According to the NIH, nearly 20% of children and young people ages 13-17 in the United States have a mental, emotional, developmental, or behavioral disorder. Suicidal behaviors among high school students increased more than 40% in the decade before 2019, and the COVID-19 pandemic has ballooned these numbers to 60%. Mental health challenges are the leading cause of death and disability in this age group. Sadly, the rates of death from suicide in this age group have nearly doubled.

**Immanuel, God with us.**

Adults, both men and women, are having a difficult time as well. There are escalating rates of depression, anxiety, and suicide. In fact, the WHO has declared depression as the leading cause of ill health and disability worldwide. In 2023, depression rates among US adults have reached the highest level ever recorded since the national public opinion firm, Gallup, started tracking it in 2015. In their survey, 30% of adults said they have been diagnosed with depression. Those rates are up 20%. Add to that the rising rates of burnout among medical professionals, mental health providers, and other professionals; plus, increased rates of alcoholism and related deaths, as well as an opioid crisis with significant overdose fatalities, it is clear we are facing a tidal wave of brokenness that for many people is unaddressed and untreated. All of this occurs at a time when we are experiencing a shortage of mental health providers across the country.

**Immanuel, God with us.**

Why am I sharing such somber and upsetting information in my newsletter article? Because I think it is important that you understand the depths of the need on every level, and because I need you to join us in responding to this brokenness with urgency. Jesus has tasked us with responding to the needs of His people. We have the hope people so desperately need, we can offer them the professional help they require and the light of Jesus that will bring true and lasting healing. We need to work together, we all need to play a role with the treasure, time and talents God has given us. Please join us by giving whatever gift God lays on your heart to give. Be aware that our electronic giving platform allows for recurring giving, and I encourage you to consider that option as well. It is easy to set up, and you can use the QR code below to be taken directly to our giving page. Whatever you give, please know that your gift will be treated with respect and humble stewardship, using it to make a difference in people's lives and to please our Savior by accomplishing the work that He has set before us. **Immanuel, God with us.**

God Bless You and Thank You,  
Steve Butera



## Newly Married: The Power of Encouragement Continued:

### A few ideas to share encouragement with your spouse:

- Write a note expressing how you feel about them and leave it for them to find
- Say “thank you” and acknowledge what they do for you and the household
- Initiate positive physical touch (especially if this is one of their love languages)
- Cheer them on during a task or an activity
- Tell them one thing you love about them every day
- Pray for them daily
- Ask your spouse what they would need prayer for and take the time to pray with them then and there
- Plan a shared activity that you know they would love
- Send them encouraging texts throughout the day
- Tell someone else what you admire about your spouse, in front of your spouse

For more resources, Nancy DeMoss Wolgemuth and her ministry of Revive our Hearts has many blogs, articles, and podcasts on encouragement and other helpful topics for marriage. She even has a 30-day Husband Encouragement Challenge for wives. Also, check out *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work* by John Gottman.

References: Scripture quotations marked CSB have been taken from the Christian Standard Bible®, Copyright © 2017 by Holman Bible Publishers. Used by permission. Christian Standard Bible® and CSB® are federally registered trademarks of Holman Bible Publishers.

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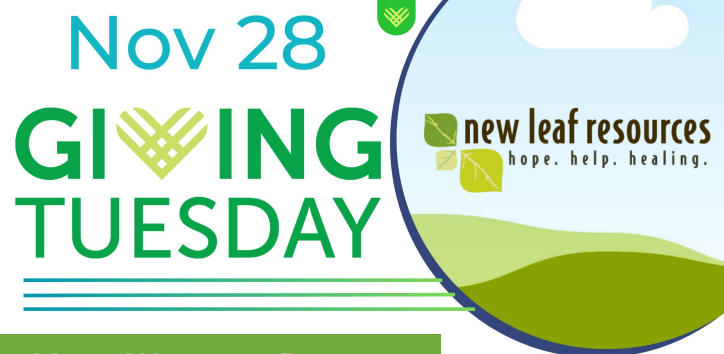
Live and On-Demand Sessions on Smart and Powerful Giving



## Crown Point CRC's Trunk or Treat



New Leaf staff, board members, and some young volunteers spent an evening giving out treats and info. We enjoyed seeing hundreds of great plumbers, princesses & pets; while also telling the community about their local mental health ministry.



## New Ways to Partner

As we plan for the future, New Leaf is grateful to have the skills, strengths and ideas to handle many of the emerging needs and opportunities relevant to our community. We also need your support. Here are several opportunities for you to consider:

- A Recurring Donation Program,
- An Organizational Wishlist requesting help with: items, opportunities, vendor suggestions, etc
- A Volunteer Sign Up page
- Business sponsorship opportunities, large & small
- A new partnership with Thrivent for creative giving

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