

Turning a New Leaf



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- Promoting healthy relationships and personal growth from a Christian perspective -

Spring 2016

Embracing Healthy Family Ties

By Darla McKim, MSW, LCSW, Family Therapist



As therapists, we often talk with our clients about their families of origin. For some this is an easy conversation that fosters happy thoughts of support and gratitude. For many, however, it can bring up bad memories that involve strained relationships, disappointments and conflict.

If there was divorce or separation, emotional or physical abuse, poor or no communication or rejection, these issues can negatively affect our current relationships. How do we take those bad memories, difficulties, strained relationships and move forward?

First we need to acknowledge that our past is part of us, but we get to choose whether or not we let it define us. Sometimes this can be a challenging process that requires professional

support and guidance. A mental health counselor or therapist can help sort through the issues, understand our questions and work toward peace and forgiveness.

After dealing with issues in our past, we have the freedom to move forward and embrace what lies ahead. We get to decide what our extended family should look like. Family does not only consist of the people we are related to, grew up with or lived with, it can be the people in our lives that took the time to care, support and love us for who we were and continue to be.

One way to define a family is: *a collection of things sharing a common attribute*. So our extended family can consist of friends on the basketball team, fellow church members, our co-workers, neighbors or any other group with which we share a common bond. We begin to depend on these people and they are the ones we know we can trust and who will support us. If we have felt rejected by or disappointed with our past family relationships, we can focus on others who have influenced our lives and still may be active in our lives now. It is not too late to make new family memories.

Take for example, those who

were raised as part of a foster or adopted family. Often you will hear that it was their non-biological mother or father who had a positive influence on their childhood. Even children raised in good supportive homes often have memories of other adults or children that made an impact on their lives.

We also have to remember that becoming part of a family is not a one-way street. We need to contribute and be present to be part of a family and truly reap the benefits. We can't expect to be part of a team if we never show up for practice or get dressed for the games. It takes effort, time and commitment. Our family needs us to be active. If we think about the relationships that brought us the most joy and support, we should model future ones after those. It doesn't matter what your past family looked like. You can always make an effort to be part of a new family and bring a new attitude. Additionally, we might not even realize that we are making an impact on their lives as well.

As we reflect on what it means to be a family, some of us will have hurts and disappointments that run very deep. I encourage you to focus on making new memories, adding new support

systems and nurturing friendships. Let's be active and embrace the family ties we make with people in our lives that are impacting us in a positive way. Reach out and let the people who have made a difference in your life know they are appreciated. Give to someone else so they may also enjoy "family" and know what it feels like to be loved and supported.

Recommended Reading

"Boundaries"

by Cloud & Townsend

"The Art of Forgiving"

by Lewis Smedes

"When Helping You is Hurting Me"

by Carmen Renee Berry

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Our Mission

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

Budget Blunders

by Angie Cerniglia, Associate Marriage & Family Therapist

Budget. Just hearing the word can cause an argument to flare up between some couples. Money and finances can be a chronic theme that can cause strife in even the happiest of marriages. Often each partner has a different idea of how finances should be used, and it can seem easier to just ignore it and deal with the occasional fighting than to sit down and come to an agreement on how to spend your hard earned money.

Usually money isn't the actual issue, but the topic commonly brings to light other problems in the relationship. If there are issues in communication, feeling disconnected or feeling undervalued by your spouse, discussing money is a sure way to bring these things to the surface. This is why it can be so difficult to talk about. However, just like having common

goals for your marriage can help it thrive, having common goals for your money can do the same thing.

A great way to start the conversation about finances is to discuss what it's like to talk about money with your spouse. How do you feel when the topic of money comes up? As long as I can remember I have been a spender and my husband, a saver. However, just like you learn many things from your spouse, you can each learn something from how the other person uses money. In our case, we were able to see the benefits in the other person's perspective and find a balance between my husband's strict saving impulse and my audacious spending habit. Talk about each of your views about money, what your personal financial goals might be and what future goals you might want



for your family. Discussing what financial goals are important to each of you will help build the road map to where you want your budgeting to take you. You may even be surprised when you start budgeting to find that it is actually a freeing experience. When you share a common goal of how to spend your money it is no longer a cause of contention or source of guilt in your marriage. When you get on the same page about money, and are working as a team, the rest will fall into place.

For more tips on communicating about money with your spouse, go to Angie's Under Construction page at www.newleafresources.org.

Partnership with LARC Benefits Both Non-profits

When we needed help labeling, stuffing and sealing our newsletters, we asked the Workshop Director **Judy Wallen** at LARC, an organization for adults with developmental disabilities, if they could take on the job. We were excited to learn that mailings are one of their specialties. "It's a win-win. We get our newsletter to our constituency and these hard-working individuals have a job to do," said New Leaf Executive Director **Terry Top**. "The LARC employees are also doing our shredding."



David V. and Tim G. of LARC label, stuff and seal New Leaf's newsletter.

Finding Peace and Perspective Amid Pain

A client recently shared how her experience at New Leaf Resources has given her hope, help and healing:

"On that day in July, my life as I knew it ended with the passing of my adult son. Everything I ever knew or was taught to believe changed in the one brief moment.

When you lose a child much less your only child you are lost with no purpose, no direction, no goal. The pain is beyond belief - worse than any illness or treatment - and much worse than the loss of a parent, friend or neighbor.

New Leaf showed me how to find my way amid the anguish. I am now participating

with some normal activities, not at the same level but more each year. I've learned so many coping skills and I've found a place of peace.

I know a lot of counselors out there are generic, but New Leaf tailors their sessions with compassion.

**- "Jean," 60
in therapy for
grief counseling**



**"New Leaf
showed me how
to find my way
amid the
anguish."
- "Jean"**

What's "New" at New Leaf Resources

We are excited to welcome four new members to the Board of Directors: **Bruce Bere, Glenn Fiala, LaVerne Jordan** and **Brian Smith**.

Bruce resides in Palos Park with his wife **Peggy**. They have three grown sons and attend Christ Community Church. Recently, he started training with the Chicago Prison Outreach to serve in a youth detention center. Bruce is a commodities broker and in his spare time enjoys travel, photography and golf.

A resident of Indian Head Park, **Glenn** is the Director of Finance and Administration for the Illinois Podiatric Medical Association and is a member of Willow Creek Community Church. He also serves on the Board of the I&M Canal Civic Center Authority. When not working, Glenn enjoys biking, golfing and sailing.

LaVerne recently retired from Colorado Christian University where she served as Dean of Social Science and

Humanities in the College of Adult and Graduate Studies. She received a Ph.D. in Counselor Education at Purdue University and has been active in state counseling organizations. LaVerne and her husband, **Gary**, have two daughters and six grandchildren and are members of Hope Christian Reformed Church.

Brian and his wife, **Amy**, have two sons and live in Crown Point. A former counselor who worked with domestic violence victims, Brian now is a Financial Planner. He and his family belong to Faith Church.

We are truly grateful for the dedication and time of our retiring Board Members **Lisa Doot Abinoja** and **Thelma Venema** who served the ministry with insight, compassion and spirited enthusiasm. We wish them well in their future endeavors.

Our sympathies to the family of former Board Member **Liz Metcalfe** who recently lost her long battle with cancer.

We are also sad to share the news of the passing of our Office Manager **Pam Jacobson**. Though her time at New Leaf was brief, she made a lasting impression.

Congratulations to Therapist **Alli Kaminski** and her husband, **Mark**, on the birth of their first baby, **Alec**.

We are very happy to introduce new staff members to our ministry. **Margie Clark** brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to the Office Administrator position. A resident of Highland, Margie has worked in a variety of ministry positions all over the country. Most recently she served as the office manager at Bethel Church in Crown Point. She has six siblings, numerous nieces and nephews and loves to travel.

Therapist **Amber Hightower** is a Licensed Professional Counselor and primarily works with children, adolescents and adults and specializes in the areas of de-

What's "New"...

pression, anxiety, self-esteem, trauma recovery, among others. Amber will be seeing clients in the Lansing office. She and her husband, **William**, live in Chicago and she enjoys running, cooking and traveling.

This year's Student Therapist Intern is **Kelly Strick**. Currently enrolled in the Purdue University Calumet Child Development and Family Studies Masters Program, Kelly's specialization will be in Marriage and Family Therapy. Kelly will be seeing clients in the Lansing office and her interests include relationship concerns, adjustment to college and families coping with illness and stress. Originally from Ohio, Kelly lives in Orland Park. She enjoys drawing, painting and cooking.

Save a tree

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**"The greatest
prison people
live in is the fear
of what other
people think"**

-David Icke



Kass' Quotes

A compilation of Therapist
Kass Cooper's favorite quips & quotes,
humorous & inspirational.

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Spring 2016

You are warmly invited to
New Leaf Resources'
Celebration Banquet
"Commit to Restore Hope"

Thursday, April 28, 2016
The Center for Visual & Performing Arts
1040 Ridge Road
Munster, Indiana

Featuring Author & Comedian

Kenn Kington

Kenn is one of the most popular
comics on XM Radio, has written
two best-selling books on
relationships and leaves his
audience wanting more!

Doors open 5:30pm 🍷 Dinner 6:15pm

**The cost of the event will be underwritten.
An opportunity to support the ministry will
take place at the event.**



Please RSVP by April 14 ~
(708) 895-7310
banquet@newleafresources.org
www.newleafresources.org

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