



This article appeared in the Sun Herald Tribune
THE PROBLEM WITH MARRIAGE

The title of this article is taken from my yet unpublished book “How in the Hell Did This Happen to Me?” The book will deal with patterns adults bring from childhood that are no longer useful or harmful to their life management. I am sharing some of the points on this topic because of their importance in hopes they might help people struggling with relationship issues.

The title does not signify that marriage is the problem. Marriage constitutes a vow or obligation taken by two partners to remain committed to one another. A recent article dealt with the issue of divorces taking its toll both socially and financially. This article explores some basic marital issues contained in this phrase: “A marriage does not a relationship make”. Hundreds of thousands of people are married but only relatively small percentages have healthy, functional and happy relationships. The basic reason is that most couples don’t really KNOW each other prior to marriage. In order to have a healthy marriage, you must first have a healthy relationship.

When people move into a relationship and subsequently toward commitment, more emphasis is placed on the relationship than on each letting the other know WHO THEY really are. Rather, the fun and excitement of the new relationship tends to overlook that first step in order to maintain the relationship. People are usually on their best behavior in order to impress each other. That’s part of the excitement and enjoyment of starting a relationship. This could lead to their putting off their individuality in order to create and maintain the relationship. Although not uncommon in early stages, that same pattern can exist in long standing relationships as well. When this happens, people have difficulty being honest and sharing feelings with one another in order to have a close, intimate relationship. As people may find out over time, it is not sexuality alone that provides closeness and intimacy since the need for true sharing is vital.

Another issue is that often, people tend to either tell too much or too little about themselves at the inception of a relationship which can cause problems later on. This pattern can lead to erroneous first impressions which can become lasting or might sabotage the relationship from its inception. It is very important for people to come to know one another but that process should take place over time and not be like a bomb that partners drop on one another in an untimely fashion. Relationships need to take time for maturing and closeness.

The last point I want to make is the tendency for people in committed relationships falling into playing roles as being the reason that the relationship continues. Although roles are important, the trick of a committed relationship is to be able to be one in the relationship while still enjoying the benefits of each other's individuality. This may be difficult to achieve but when accomplished, a new and vital sense of the relationship begins to emerge.

Here are some points to consider:

- Carefully listen to your partner in order to learn more about the person and not just being your partner;
- Make sure that both of you can depend on each other while not being dependent;
- Make conscious choices to change some set routines and introduce some new ones such as going dancing or bringing flowers.

These suggestions might lend a different perspective in order to help your relationship move in a more vital and positive direction.

And now, I want to apologize to any readers who may have tried e-mailing me while using the wrong address. The address has been corrected in this article and I would like to invite you to let me know if there has been any benefit from practicing any of these suggestions or any other comments you might choose to share.

A Brief Biographical Sketch

After an over 40 year career as a professional psychotherapist and Director of The Sports Stress Clinic in Amherst, NY, Charles Bonasera came to Florida and decided to use the benefits of his previous professional experiences in his new roles of Consultant in Life Management and Business Coaching as well as his expertise as a Motivational Speaker. He once again became involved with athletes in different sports training them with his techniques to help them develop and maintain focus as well as staying in their zone. Much of his training methods are derived from the CD collection he developed under the heading of WIN-WIN SECRETS as the President of Personal Identity Controls. This collection consists of thirty-six programs dealing with vital issues in the management of stress.

Another role that he adopted to add to his professional career was that of Author. Early in the 1980's he wrote Guide to a Life Management Process which he has rewritten as a workbook to successfully help people manage their stress which includes his own Working Model. As a result in his interest in golf and realizing that it was essentially a "mind game", he wrote The Mental Side of Golf which can benefit the beginner as well as professionals playing the game of golf.

He then compiled over five-hundred sayings that he had developed in the course of his professional career as stimuli to help people change patterns in their lives entitled How

to Stay Well and Live Life to the Fullest. This was followed by a book documenting case studies around disruptive life patterns including ways to change them under the name of How in the Hell Did This Happen to Me? Both his personal involvement in sports as a participant, coach, manager and in his role in officiating, inspired him to write a primer for parents and coaches entitled The Legend of Little League.

Charles invites you to view his website at www.charlesmbonasera.com as well as to write with your comments and questions to his e-mail address (charles@charlesmbonasera.com). He would also be very happy to communicate with his readers by telephone should they desire. His professional motto is “seeking alternative methods to happiness” and wishes those touched by his words to practice the three secrets to a happy life: “enjoy life and enjoy it thoroughly ... develop and maintain a sense of humor ... bring as much love into your life as possible.