

*If we were forced to pick just one suggestion for having a successful marriage, it would be the value of communication.*

*[Love] always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.  
—1 Corinthians 13:7*



## married like you meant it

An Interview with People Resources Team members Don & Elaine Lanier, by Peggy Skattebo

*Don and Elaine Lanier have served with The Navigators for more than 40 years. Drawing from their 50-year marriage, they lead Becoming One marriage retreats for Navigator staff couples.*



*Don and Elaine Lanier*

### 1. What's the secret to staying happily married for 50 years?

**Don:** Though we have had our share of bumps and bruises, we have always been emotionally and physically attracted to each other. We not only love each other, we really like each other, enjoy each other's company, and are loyal advocates for each other. We are soul mates.

**Elaine:** We are committed to making our marriage top priority. Despite all of Don's travel for so many years, I never doubted that I was priority in his life. Early in our marriage, Dr. Howard Hendricks taught us that "the best way to love your children is to love your spouse." We encourage young couples to start preparing for the empty nest when the baby is born. In other words, keep your marriage top priority.

### 2. What one marriage suggestion would you give young couples?

**Don:** If we were forced to pick just one, it would be the value of communication. We are very aware that keeping communication lines open is a deal maker. We attempt to keep each other current and involved, and strive to keep short accounts—meaning we don't allow conflict to go unresolved. The enemy's strategy is to isolate us from each other, because isolation saps the strength from marriage.

### 3. What are some common obstacles to a healthy relationship?

**Elaine:** This one is easy—selfishness. We are selfish human beings! There is a lack of willingness to compromise or to put the other mate first.

**Don:** Time pressure is another big obstacle—making time for each other amidst all the pressures of living life. There has to be a deliberate, intentional plan for communicating.

### 4. What advice would you give for dealing with conflict?

**Don:** We believe that most conflict originates from lack of communication. Understanding how to have a healthy conflict is to utilize biblical forgiveness. When each partner asks and gives forgiveness, then together they can deal with the problem.

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## oneness


Dave Legg,  
People Resources Team Director

A wise friend once said, "Anyone married more than 20 minutes needs help." Marriage is one of the most critical issues facing The Navigators today. Many older staff couples are



living separate lives and often younger ones haven't had any help with the basics of marriage. Recently, after reading a marital survey of a couple

coming to PRT for help, I said to myself, "This guy missed Husband 101."

We long for intimacy but often aren't aware of our own or our spouse's intimacy needs. All too often we retreat into separate corners, and silence becomes the language of the relationship. It's what David Ferguson describes as "living on opposite sides of a big desert." We all long for oneness in marriage. It's a God-given desire, and it is achievable. We hope this issue of *UpFront* encourages you in your pursuit of oneness, whether you are single or married. 

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**February 25–27, 2009**

Shepherds' Network Seminar  
Colorado Springs

**March 3–6, 2009**

Sabbatical Orientation Workshop  
Colorado Springs

**March 18–20, 2009**

Personal Contribution Workshop  
Colorado Springs

**April 7–9, 2009**

Relational Healing Seminar  
Colorado Springs

**April 24–25, 2009**

Counselor Network Meeting  
Colorado Springs

**May 13–15, 2009**

Personal Contribution Workshop  
Colorado Springs

**May 18–19, 2009**


Listening & Healing Prayer Seminar  
Colorado Springs

For more information contact (719) 594-2555.

## top ten emotional intimacy needs

**Instructions:** Select three or four needs that are most important to you, then select three or four needs that you believe to be most important to your spouse. Discuss your answers. This tool is also useful among singles, ministry teammates, family members, friends, . . .

YOU	INTIMACY NEEDS	SPOUSE
	<b>Acceptance:</b> Receiving another person willingly and unconditionally. Being willing to continue loving in spite of offenses. (Romans 15:7)	
	<b>Affection:</b> Expressing care and closeness through physical touch; saying "I love you." (Romans 16:16; Mark 10:16)	
	<b>Appreciation:</b> Expressing thanks, praise or commendation. Recognizing accomplishment or effort. (Colossians 3:15b; 1 Corinthians 11:2)	
	<b>Approval (Blessing):</b> Building up or affirming another; affirming both the fact of and the importance of a relationship. (Ephesians 4:29; Mark 1:11)	
	<b>Attention:</b> Conveying appropriate interest, concern, and care; taking thought of another; entering another's "world." (1 Corinthians 12:25)	
	<b>Comfort:</b> Responding to a hurting person with words, feelings, and touch; to hurt with and for another's grief or pain. (Romans 12:15b; Matthew 5:4; 2 Corinthians 1:3–4; John 11:35)	
	<b>Encouragement:</b> Urging another to persist and persevere toward a goal; stimulating toward love and good deeds. (1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24)	
	<b>Respect:</b> Valuing and regarding another highly; treating another as important; honoring another. (Romans 12:10)	
	<b>Security (Peace):</b> Harmony in relationships; freedom from fear or threat of harm. (Romans 12:16,18)	
	<b>Support:</b> Coming alongside and gently helping with a problem or struggle; providing appropriate assistance. (Galatians 6:2)	

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# how God can get the most out of your marriage

by David and Teresa Ferguson, Intimate Life Ministries

It had been another stressful yet fulfilling day of juggling a secular job and a demanding ministry. By the time I got home that night, Teresa was in bed but still awake. I slipped into bed beside her and turned out the light. We talked in generalities about the day. I described my accomplishments, and she related how the kids had behaved—and misbehaved—at home.

Our conversations were rather superficial, as was the rest of our relationship. I was so busy with my job and leading a growing student ministry, and she was so busy running the home that we rarely connected deeply. We were not enemies, yet our marriage had a distance that was unsettling to me.

Staring up at the ceiling in the darkness, I addressed the issue. “Teresa, I sense a dryness between us, like we live on opposite sides of a big desert. We are so involved in our own separate worlds of activity that we hardly notice each other. Is this the way it’s always going to be with us?”

There was silence on Teresa’s side of the bed, followed by a deep sigh. “I don’t know, David.”

Finally I found the courage to ask the question that had been haunting me for months. “Teresa, do you really love me?”

Silence again. When Teresa finally answered, I was not prepared for the directness of her response. “David, I don’t feel anything for you. I’m just numb.”

The words stung my heart. Teresa and I provided premarital and marital counseling in our church. We would soon be teaching together at retreats and conferences on biblical principles for a strong marriage. We were supposed to know what makes a marriage work. Our relationship wasn’t perfect, but up until that night I had thought it was working all right. But Teresa’s shocking answer suddenly caused me to wonder if we had any future together at all.

That sobering exchange in our bedroom took place more than twenty years ago. It was the beginning of an intense, sometimes painful, and ultimately fulfilling marital journey for me and Teresa—a journey that continues to this day.

## longing for oneness

Teresa and I have come to a better understanding of this longing for oneness in marriage placed within each of us by our Creator.

We believe there are four intrinsic elements of oneness that every couple desires from their marriage relationship. These four “longings for oneness” are realistic and attainable.

**1. We long to know and be known by someone.** God created each of us as relational beings with a need to be known. We want a soul mate who will probe us deeply to understand our aspirations, dreams, fears, and struggles and yet fully love

and accept us no matter what he or she finds. And we long to know and accept another in the same way.

**2. We long to be cherished by someone who ministers to our inner needs.** The Bible reveals practical ways God has designed for us to lovingly meet needs in a marriage relationship. For example, when we are brokenhearted, we need *comfort*. When we fail, we need *acceptance*. When

we struggle, we need *support*. During times of frustration and rejection, we need *encouragement*. When we are afraid, we need *security*. There are other times when we need *attention*, *appreciation*, *affection*, *respect*, and *approval*. We all long for a cherishing love relationship in which our most basic inner needs can be met.

**3. We long for someone through whom we can experience comfort for life’s inevitable hurts.** We live in a pain-filled world in which disappointment, criticism, loss, rejection,

and heartache are inevitable. Wouldn’t it be wonderful if spouses could be loving instruments of God’s comfort and healing from our inner wounds—both past and present?

**4. We long to give ourselves freely to someone without fear or reservation.** When life’s inevitable disappointments and relational hurts cut deeply or go unhealed, we are often ruled by mistrust and fear of others, even those closest to us. The baggage of unresolved hurt hinders husbands and wives from giving themselves freely to each other and experiencing deep oneness.



*Finally I found the courage to ask the question that had been haunting me for months. “Teresa, do you really love me?”*

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## married like you meant it *(continued from page 1)*

**Elaine:** Not only does conflict impact your marriage, it hinders your ministry. Years ago Don and I were in the middle of a spat and Don said, “I do not have time to stand here and argue because I have to go lead Bible study!” A few minutes later I heard the car returning. Don walked in the house, took me in his arms, and said, “When we are out of fellowship, I am worthless in the ministry.”

### 5. What are your thoughts about the importance of partnering as a couple in ministry?

**Elaine:** From the beginning we understood that marriage was a partnership. When God called Don to The Navigators, I really struggled with it. When I was finally ready to hear from God, I read 1 Samuel 14:7: “So his armor bearer said to him, ‘Do all that is in your heart. Go then; here I am with you, according to your heart.’” God totally turned my heart around to want to partner with Don in this ministry, to be his armor bearer. Partnering enables us to fill in the gaps for each other, to keep us accountable, to build on each other’s strengths and protect our weaknesses.

**Don:** Not having a clear understanding of one another’s design and desires can hinder a couple from ministering together. As Howard Hendricks says, “Be a lifelong student of yourself and a lifelong student of your mate.”


### 6. What advice would you give couples to be able to blend and maximize their gifts and values?

**Elaine:** Appreciating and celebrating each other’s differences leads to wonderful fullness and contentment in marriage. There is reasoning behind why you are together. Don and I are very different, but we continue to learn how to accept and move into each other’s world, which really enlarges our horizons.

**Don:** There are four steps involved in maximizing the positive contributions of your mate: 1) Understanding, 2) Accepting, 3) Appreciating, and 4) Celebrating. The show stopper is acceptance. If couples cannot accept and appreciate their spouse’s differences, then they are blocked from celebrating the other’s accomplishments, strengths, and contribution.

### 7. What have you learned about growing in intimacy?

**Don:** David Ferguson (Intimate Life Ministries) has helped us understand that intimacy is caring involvement where we meet each other’s deepest needs. Elaine and I believe there are three ways to explore intimacy in marriage:

- ⊕ Understanding the emotional needs of your spouse. (See *Top Ten Intimacy Needs* on page 2.)
- ⊕ Accepting responsibility to help meet the aloneness in your mate. God did not intend to meet all of our needs. He purposefully gave us relationships to alleviate the aloneness we all feel (Genesis 2:18).
- ⊕ Nurturing the spiritual, emotional, and physical closeness we each need. We have to keep communicating about our deepest feelings, asking how we are doing in specific areas of our marriage, learning to grieve with each other, and asking what changes are needed to make our spouse feel more loved. 

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## receiving the love of God

Vic Black, National Prayer Director



Gazing into the character of God is like being captivated by a huge multifaceted diamond. Turn the diamond in

the light; look deeply into the infinite expression of each facet. When we focus on something true about God, we are changed. We believe more truth, and the truth sets us free as we are “transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another” (2 Corinthians 3:18).

As you gaze into the facet of the love of God, allow yourself to be drawn into the depth of His love. Discipline yourself to remain focused on His love rather than thinking about your love for Him. Enjoy God’s love. Receive God’s love. You can only receive God’s love to the degree in which you allow God to love you, regardless of the amount of love God has for you. Allow the truth of the following verses to wash over you.

- ⊕ Jeremiah 31:3
- ⊕ Zephaniah 3:17
- ⊕ Deuteronomy 7:6-8
- ⊕ John 15:13
- ⊕ Ephesians 3:17-19

Explore the warmth of God’s love as you meditate on this song.

### *The Love of God*

Could we with ink the ocean fill,  
And were the skies of parchment made,  
Were every stalk on earth a quill,  
And every man a scribe by trade,  
To write the love of God above  
Would drain the ocean dry;  
Nor could the scroll contain the whole,  
Tho’ stretched from sky to sky.  
O love of God,  
How rich, how pure!  
How measureless and strong!  
It shall forevermore endure  
The saints’ and angels’ song.

The Love of God / © 1917 / F. M. Lehman 