

Claire Hatch, MSW Counselor and Mediator



Newsletter



Fall 2002

Staying Connected

Stop Misunderstandings Before They Start

“Honey, guess what?” Beth called out, opening the front door. “My presentation was a big hit! George paid me several compliments and everyone says he hardly ever does that.” She found her husband sitting at the computer.

Steve turned around, smiled, and said, “That’s wonderful, Sweetie.” And then he turned back to the computer.

That’s it? In two seconds, Beth went from elated to crushed. She had been about to give Steve the blow-by-

blow. She pictured her story as the main event of the evening. And she wanted to give him attention to make up for all the time her presentation had taken. She saw her vision of the evening fizzling away fast.

Is a little support too much to ask? thought Beth, changing out of her suit. After the way I slaved over that thing. Hmm, maybe that was the problem. Maybe he didn’t *like* her slaving over it. He *seemed* supportive, but maybe underneath, he resented the time it took. After all, he had

(Continued on page 3)

Something New

“What if I don’t feel like I’m supposed to?”

If you or someone you know is getting married, you are probably experiencing “the emotional cocktail.” The joy of getting married is only part of the story. Sadness at saying goodbye to single life, the disorientation of being in-between married and single, and fear of the unknown—these are just some of the feelings that are natural for brides, grooms, and their loved ones.

“What can I do?” asked Terry, a December bride. “This emotional roller-coaster is overwhelming.”

The trick is to do what we resist most: accept ALL your feelings. Somehow we feel afraid to do this when we are engaged—we are supposed to exist in a state of perpetual bliss. However,

(Continued on page 2)

Win a professional organizing consultation—
Name this newsletter.

Welcome to my new, expanded newsletter! It replaces the e-newsletter that some of you have been receiving.

These pages will be devoted to the joy of a committed relationship. Getting off to a good start and deepening the connection as time goes by. I hope it will be helpful and fun.

But it needs a name. Do you have an idea? Please let me know by email, letter, or phone.

The prize for the winner? A gift certificate for an introductory consultation with professional organizer Sandee Fahlen of Prioritiesfirst.com. Because a clutter-free life brings a lot of joy to committed relationships!

**Send your ideas to:
Claire.hatch@gte.net.**

Good luck!

“What if...?”

(Continued from page 1)

pressuring ourselves to feel constant joy tends to boomerang. It is not having feelings such as sadness that causes pain; it is fighting with yourself and your natural impulses. When you accept these feelings, you find they are not so terrible or frightening. Not only that, when you accept them, you find that they tend to dissolve more quickly.

Right now you're probably thinking, How can I accept feeling angry? I'm supposed to be deliriously happy! I've got 18 days (or 30 or 45) to get to that pinnacle of joy that I'm supposed to be on!

You don't have to work so hard to make yourself feel joy. The joy will come naturally—as long as you're not fighting yourself. The more you accept ALL your feelings, the more the un-

comfortable ones will dissolve, and the more joy you will feel—naturally.

Tips for Dealing with Feelings

Sit quietly. Breathe deeply. Notice the sensations in your body. Say: I feel scared and I accept it.

Spend time with reality-based people. Take a risk and tell one of them how you really feel. They'll take it in stride and you'll feel reassured.

Tell your fiancé(e) how you really feel. Most likely they won't take it personally and they will have similar feelings. You'll both feel closer—and more relaxed.

Try to *do* less and *be* more. I know—it seems impossible. But after the wedding, everyone says the same thing: I wish we'd let go of some of the details and just enjoyed it all more.

Counseling with Claire Hatch, MSW

What is it like?

The Honeymoon Toolkit

This is a 4-session package for pre-wedding and newlywed couples. I teach how-to's for a happy marriage, such as communication, handling the emotions of getting married, and “becoming We without losing Me.” You also have plenty of time to raise your special concerns. Visit www.thebridesoasis.com for more info and special events.

Counseling for Longer-Term Couples

I meet with both of you together and separately. You tell me what makes you happy and what you feel you are missing. I describe the skills that would turn the relationship you have into the relationship you want. Some examples might be giving support and expressing feelings without attacking. Then, I teach you those skills.

Please call or email to learn more.

425 823-2273 Claire.hatch@gte.net

Stop Misunderstandings

(Continued from page 1)

questioned her closely about the wisdom of taking this job. And he had wondered if two high-pressure jobs in the family would mean shortchanging the kids. Of course, his job was not up for debate, thought Beth resentfully.

He talks about how he wants her to fulfill her potential, but what happens when it's time to walk the talk? She finally gets her big moment and he barely notices!

When Steve came into the bedroom to hear more about her presentation, he was astonished to find that excited Beth had turned into furious Beth. It took them an hour to sort everything out. Steve had seemed preoccupied when she came home because he had just read an email saying his brother had just been laid off.

From the outside, it's easy to see that Beth was weaving a story about what Steve was thinking. It was this story that she was upset about, rather than anything he actually did. If only it were so easy to see from the inside! The truth is, every day, all of us write such stories without even realizing it.

Why do we do this? Maybe it's our natural creativity working overtime. Maybe it's our nature to constantly search for meaning, as many philosophers have claimed. We're so good at it, we find meaning where there is none! Who knows for sure?

What we do know is that we're sensitive, emotional creatures. (Yes, men, too!) This means that the meaning we find usually has something to do with us not being good enough, respected enough, or cared for enough.

The good news is we are also rational beings. We can test our stories to see whether they are fact or fiction. The next time you are upset with your partner, try these 3 steps:

1) Separate "what they did" from your story about "what they did." Ask yourself which is really bothering you.

2) If it's the story that's bothering you, ask these 2 questions:

What's the evidence for this story? Could a different story be true?

3) Find out the truth: ASK. Steps 1 and 2 will help you bring an open mind to this conversation. But to really separate fact from fiction, you have to ask.

Beth and Steve did get to step 3, but not before they spent an unpleasant hour arguing.

Use these three steps to stop misunderstandings before they start. Then you can spend less time arguing and more time supporting, appreciating, and enjoying each other.

P.S. It works with friends, family, and co-workers, too!

Did You Know...?

What do you think is the #1 goal for most Americans? To raise happy kids? To become a millionaire? To lead a balanced life? According to Gallup, it is to get married and stay married. Between 85% and 90% of Americans walk down the aisle at some point in their lives.

Wedding Sanity Tip

The wedding professionals you choose to work with will affect your state of mind throughout your engagement and wedding.

Pay attention to how you feel when you are with them. Do you feel calm or rushed? Respected or dismissed? Is your experience important to them?

Choose to work with people you feel very comfortable with.

**Claire Hatch, MSW
Counselor and Mediator**

The Brooks Building
615 Market Street, Suite C
Kirkland, Washington 98033



Inside this issue:

Longing for an orderly home?
Win a session with a
professional organizer!
It doesn't have to be so hard!
3 steps to stopping arguments.

**Wedding Diplomacy for The Wise Bride
Special Workshop**

Monday Evening September 23 7:00-9:00

A Perfect Celebration!

900 198th Avenue NE, Suite 104

- ?? Understand your loved ones' reactions.
- ?? Learn a 5-step communication model.
- ?? Enjoy the support of the people who really understand—other brides.

"It was very helpful to have 'time out' and look at the big picture of a wedding and engagement. I learned skills and thoughts to remember not just on 'The Big Day' but throughout the marriage."

—Amy

A Perfect Celebration! is Gayle O'Donnell's unique destination store for brides.
Come relax in beautiful surroundings and get the information you need for bridal peace of mind.

Advance Registration Required

\$10.00 Limited to 10 brides.

Call Claire at 425 823-2273 or see Gayle at A Perfect Celebration!

For more information: Claire@abridesoasis.com www.thebridesoasis.com www.aperfectcelebration.com.