

Claire Hatch, MSW Counselor and Mediator



Newsletter

Winter 2002



Staying Connected

Holidays: No Time to be Perfect

The holidays are tough on a lot of people. They're tough on dieters, who face the temptations of cookies, chocolate, and the latest holiday latte flavor. They're tough on recovering drinkers, who face the temptations of hot mulled wine, egg nog, and hot buttered rum.

But there is one group that suffers more than all the others; a group that faces enormous pressures and risks the likelihood of devastating failure. I am referring of course to

those of us who are recovering perfectionists.

If you're one of us, maybe you've been doing a pretty good job of resisting the pressure to be perfect this fall. You let the kids go off to school in outfits they chose themselves. You laughed when you ran out of Halloween candy at 7:00.

When the fall catalogs came out, you limited yourself to just one self-improvement class. Sure, some days

(Continued on page 3)

Something New

Off to a Great Start

Have you heard of the honeymoon before the honeymoon? That's that romantic, timeless period right after you decide to get married.

And then? All too often, couples find that the enchantment gives way to stress when they roll up their sleeves and start to actually make their dreams come true. Costs, fam-

ily disagreements, and the pressure to please everyone can turn the dream into a nightmare. But it doesn't have to be this way.

Toni had watched this happen to her best friend. When she became engaged to Jim, she was determined it would not happen to her. Here is

(Continued on page 2)

What's New?

I'm excited to announce that I am now writing a column for the website: **Weddings by Recommendation Only.**
www.byreonly.com

This is a San Francisco-based site that is expanding into the Seattle area. Covering much more than just weddings, it is a really a monthly magazine filled with useful and fun information about married life.

Check out my column: "Relationship Guide." Better yet, send a relationship or wedding question to: claire@byreonly.com and I'll answer it!

See Page 3, Column 3 for more news...

Off to a Great Start

(Continued from page 1)

how Toni and Jim kept their wedding from “taking on a life of its own.”

First, she and Jim set aside some time just for talking and dreaming, before they announced their engagement. It felt kind of unnatural not to tell their parents right away, but they felt it was worth it to create a very clear vision first.

Toni and Jim talked about their future life. What were their career aspirations? Would they have children? Why were they getting married anyway? How would it change the life journey that each of them were on?

Then, they talked about the wedding. What kind of experience did they want to have? What kind of rituals would make them feel married?

They threw out some ideas of locations, numbers of guests and so forth, but they didn’t start to worry about the details yet.

Later on, they did agree to some of their parents’ suggestions, without feeling pressured, resentful, or guilty.

Does this mean they cruised through their engagement as calm as the Dalai Lama? Not quite! A wedding is still a wedding! But they do remember it mostly as a time of joy.

All engaged couples can learn something from Toni and Jim. Allow the vision of your wedding to spring from the vision of your marriage. Start talking about it early on. Get in the habit of putting each other first.

Have a beautiful engagement!

Counseling with Claire Hatch, MSW

What is it like?

Counseling for 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 suggest the actions you can take to turn the relationship you have into the relationship you want. Some examples might be giving support and expressing feelings without attacking. Then, you learn to use these skills in your daily life.

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 and “becoming We without losing Me.” I also help you handle the complicated emotions of this amazing time of life. We focus on those areas of most importance to you.

For more information, visit www.clairehatch.com.

I welcome your questions at 425 823-2273 or claire@clairehatch.com.

Holidays: No Time to be Perfect

(Continued from page 1)

it's two steps forward and one step back, but all in all you're holding our own.

Until...the Lands' End catalog arrives. Suddenly, you realize your family doesn't have fur-lined, shearling house slippers for sitting around the fire on Christmas Eve. Maybe you don't even have a fireplace! Quick, order one from the Pottery Barn!

Once the Christmas holidays are over, we can relax, right? Wrong! That's what being a perfectionist means—you can never relax! After Christmas comes.....Valentine's Day.

Valentine's Day is less work than Christmas. You only have to find ONE perfect present! But hey, that just gives us more time to come up with something stunning. Not only that, but a lot of us stress over the perfect gift we hope to RECEIVE.

Let's do a little honest reflection. Do you think that your partner should know what you want without you telling him or her? Do you think the extent to which they accomplish this correlates directly with how much they love you? If so, you may be headed for a very imperfect holiday, indeed.

Romantic gestures such as gifts and weekends away are very important. Without them, love dies. But love also suffers if we take these gestures too seriously. After all, how does it make you feel to give a gift knowing it will be judged against some impossible standard? Romantic? Probably not.

Last year my dear husband decided to surprise me with a weekend in Port Townsend for the weekend. The only problem was that he didn't understand that when Valentine's Day and Presidents' Day fall on the same weekend, you'd better make reservations in advance.

The hotel he managed to get was ...well, let's just say I haven't stayed anyplace quite like it since I was a starving college student. Guess what? In the end, it made our trip MORE romantic. The best laid plans just don't make you laugh the way we laughed that weekend. Of course, this year, I think I'LL make the reservations...

For me, a rewarding holiday is a lot like a rewarding relationship. I want to feel close and connected. I want to laugh and take a vacation from my daily cares. I want to make room for the joy of the unexpected. I want to take gifts in the spirit in which they are meant. If they're not absolutely perfect, it really doesn't matter.

Speaking of Websites...

I'm happy to announce the new, expanded version of my own website. Now you'll find more info about all my services, plus articles, links, and resources.

This means the easiest way to subscribe to this newsletter is log on and click!

The new address is: www.clairehatch.com. To go directly to The Bride's Oasis page? www.thebridesoasis.com.

Coming up... The 2003 Seattle Wedding Show

Saturday and Sunday

Jan. 4 10:30 -5:30

Jan. 5 11:00-5:00

Washington State
Convention Center

I'll be in Booth #1220.
Come say "Hello"
and take the Marriage

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Inside this issue:

How holidays are like relationships.

Get your marriage off to a good start.

Take a Class with Claire at Discover U!
“Stop Arguments Before They Start”

Have you ever reacted negatively with someone during an argument?

Did you later wish you could rewind and change the outcome?

Very often we overreact because we write stories about what the other person’s actions *mean*. It happens so fast, we don’t even know we’re doing it.

In this class, you’ll learn three simple steps to untangle the stories from what’s really going on. You’ll get tools for thinking and responding rationally, even in the heat of the moment. Practice them in class, then take them out into the “real world.”

There are much more rewarding ways to spend your time.

Don’t waste it on unnecessary arguments!

**North Seattle Location
Thursday, February 27
6:30-9:30 pm**

**Kirkland Location
Saturday, March 29
10:00 am-1:00 pm**

To register, call Discover U at 206 365-0440 or visit: www.discoveru.org.