

Retrouvaille... A Lifeline for Married Couples

"Take the first step..."

Dave and his wife Rose were beaming with earnest enthusiasm as they shared with us the impact the Retrouvaille Program had on their marriage of 40 years.



"Very soon after we were married we knew we were having trouble but we didn't seem to be able to make it better. I found myself becoming more focused on our children and on trying to be a good housewife and in later years my job as well as a deep commitment to my brother who was very ill with cancer meant that our relationship went down a path of a married singles lifestyle and by the time things had settled down for me, Dave had made a life for himself which didn't include me or the children.

Dave agreed and added: "It was like we were playing on different ball teams and I felt insignificant, out in left field or something. Every time we tried to really communicate, things spiraled into arguing more and more. The more we argued the more the wall between us just got thicker and thicker. Rose tried several times to interest me in seeking help for our relationship but through the years I had made a lot of mistakes and it seemed easier to build walls and even easier to avoid the truth."

"We just kept plodding on and pretending we were just going through a bad phase and someday things would be better," said Rose, "the trouble with that kind of thinking is that if they are not getting better, they are really getting worse and finally you reach your limit. I sat in the swing one day and thought to myself: 'this marriage is a living hell and I want it to end'."

Shortly after this the two were in Church and Dave noticed an article in the Carillon about a program called Retrouvaille. He showed it to Rose and suggested that they try it.

"I couldn't wait to get home and register for the Sept. weekend in Calgary even though we knew living in Medicine Hat would make it a challenge to benefit from the 3 month follow-up program but somehow we both had new hope."

"I really knew we had to do something" said Dave "I guess everyone has a time of awakening but I found that only the first step was hard, making the decision, after that I was pleasantly surprised to find myself surrounded by people looking for help just like us so I felt at home right

away and discovered through the whole program I was not required to say a word to anyone but Rose in the privacy of our hotel room. I could remain totally anonymous. There was a priest and 3 Presenters who had been through the program themselves so it was pretty well people helping people.”

When asked what has changed since Retrouvaille Dave piped up: “Our whole life has changed since that weekend! It’s like living in a different house! No! It’s like living in a different world! As soon as we finished the weekend we came home feeling great, and really encouraged, and the follow-up sessions helped us just as much as the weekend.”

Rose thought the ongoing part of the program actually was where they benefited the most. “We picked up new practical tools every week which helped us resolve each issue as it came up, now we can handle everything together as a team. We actually know what it takes to build a happy marriage!” The couple drove to Calgary several weekends for the follow-up sessions and when they couldn’t make it videos of the talks were mailed to them.

Asked to rate their marriage on a scale of 1 to 10 before and after Retrouvaille, Dave promptly replied: “Before Retrouvaille I’d say it was ‘1’ and after Retrouvaille it is ‘10’!

Rose had a slightly different answer: “I think we were down to ‘0’ before and now we are up to ‘8’ because I’m looking forward to even more good things happening. I don’t think we’re perfect yet but we’re working on it!”

We asked this couple what advice they have for couples that know their marriage could use some improvement but are hesitant to make a move. Both spontaneously replied: “Tell them to take the first step and go to Retrouvaille! They have nothing to lose and a lifetime of happiness to gain!”

Rose and Dave are currently involved in promoting the Retrouvaille Program in their community of Medicine Hat and welcome any inquiries from couples in their area. Just call: (403) 527-5893 for information for yourself, a friend or a relative.

www.helpourmarriagecalgary.com