



TESTIMONIAL OF EDDIE AND LIBBY - July, 2007

While on his annual vacation to India from his job in the Middle East, Eddie bumped into the woman of his dreams by sheer chance. “Four days after meeting we got engaged and 10 days later we were married on Valentine’s Day 1967. A month after our marriage we were on a flight back to Eddie’s job in the Middle East.” For Libby this began a whole new chapter in her life, leaving the comfort and security of her stable home and family behind. Having only known Eddie for a short time before marriage, this was a learning time for Libby. And the more she learned about Eddie and his life out in the desert the more disillusioned she became. “It was like a mirage in the desert!” Nothing seemed to be meeting up to Libby’s expectations. Eddie’s long working hours leaving Libby home alone with no friends, TV or even Telephone during those early years in the Middle East made her frustration, loneliness and disillusion increase. Then three children followed: 2 sons and a daughter. The early child-rearing years kept Libby occupied and busy for a while, but as the children grew up and started school her gray clouds of doubt grew darker. “Due to lack of good school facilities in the Middle East at the time, we were forced to send our children away to boarding schools.”

Eddie’s partying days with friends took priority over Libby, which so often left her home alone crying her eyes out, miserable and even more disillusioned. Coming from a male-dominant culture Eddie’s unconcern and insensitivity to Libby’s hurt feelings did not really matter too much to him. “It was a way of life that could not be questioned”, said Libby. So Libby became adept at putting on a smiling face for the sake of the children even in times of dire hurt and worry. “Our family backgrounds and culture played prominent roles in our lives and we somehow just kept plodding along and making believe that things between us would improve with time. Perhaps the children’s decision to move to USA for further studies was a blessing in disguise because it made us both ponder about their future lives ahead.”

“We moved to Calgary almost 15 years ago and soon got immersed into making a life for our selves here. It was hard-going for us at first, immigrating to this country almost as retirees!! Again this was a whole new country with a completely different culture to what we were accustomed to, adapting was not going to be easy. By then the 3 children had graduated from their universities in USA and had joined us here. With the children around it made life bearable and there was

some excitement with the children looking for jobs, finding a home for us, settling in, etc, etc. And pretty soon they each found their life-partners and got married a few years apart. Our last child got married last September and the 'empty nest' syndrome took over in our home."

"Getting involved with various volunteer activities for our Church and community we both managed to keep ourselves fairly busy over the years. Every year we tried to attend the Weekend Couples Retreat at Mount St. Francis in Cochrane. Whilst eating supper the first evening of the 2006 Weekend Couples Retreat in Cochrane, one of the couples at our table mentioned something about Retrouvaille. We had read the announcement about it on our Parish newsletter occasionally but never thought anything about it." But it got Libby thinking and she kind of blackmailed Eddie into attending the Retrouvaille Weekend with her just two days after their 40th.wedding anniversary. This was in lieu of a Ruby anniversary gift for Libby.

By attending the Retrouvaille Weekend Eddie felt sure that he would be keeping his wedding anniversary promise to Libby, that it would get her off his case and that it would do nothing else for him, - just talks, meditation, prayers, etc, etc. He was pleasantly surprised that it was not at all what he thought it would be. "There was no need to be intimidated or embarrassed because neither of us had to tell anybody anything about our private lives other than to each other in the privacy of our own rooms. The 3 presenting couples had themselves been through the Retrouvaille program and they very unabashedly spoke about their unhappy experiences before attending and becoming involved in Retrouvaille. Kudos to them for being so brave and courageous to share their lives with us. The Priest in attendance at all the weekend sessions was a wonderful boost as well."

For Eddie in particular the Retrouvaille weekend was an eye-opening experience, "it was only the beginning for us both. The follow up Post sessions gave us more insight with proper tools to tackle any kind of problem within our marriage. By attending Retrouvaille we have realized that it is the greatest gift that a spouse can give to one another no matter how many years you have been married. It has made our bonds of love and unity even stronger." Libby is ever grateful to Eddie for (reluctantly) consenting to go with her to Retrouvaille.

"We highly recommend this program to all married couples; you have nothing to lose but so much to gain. Retrouvaille is a French word meaning 'to discover and to find one's self again'. By sacrificing a weekend to attend Retrouvaille you will find each other again and it will make a huge difference in your relationship. Why not give it a try?