

# H B A

HUMAN BEHAVIOR ASSOCIATES, LLC

## EAP NEWSLETTER

October 1, 1999

### IS YOUR MARRIAGE FULL OF MYTHS?

Fifty Percent of American marriages end in divorce. Some of these marriages might be saved if couples took the time to examine their myths concerning their marital relationship.

The following are some common myths:

**Myth: Successful marriages come naturally and effortlessly.** Many couples want their marital relationship to “always be there” without having to invest in it. We must attend to the marital bond and work to make it healthy. Not only must we work at our marriage, we need to make this relationship a priority. When couples put their marriages first, their children benefit and their careers are more productive.

**Myth: If my partner “really loved me,” he/she would know what I need.** This is definitely one of the most prevalent fantasies. It is not reasonable to expect our mate to “guess” what is on our minds. Ultimately, each partner is responsible for making their thoughts and wants known.

**Myth: Marriage will “heal” old wounds from our families.** Marriage is not a cure-all, nor a solution to personal problems. When we expect our mate to bolster our ego, compensate for our weaknesses and/or meet all our needs, we are invariably disappointed; we alone must take responsibility for our own self-worth and for healing “old hurts”.

**Myth: Fighting is detrimental to marriage.** Happy couples do fight, some more than others. Anger is a healthy emotion, and if expressed fairly, can enhance a marriage. To fight fairly – means not “dumping” your anger, not name calling and being careful not to use words that may be “fatal” to the relationship. Healthy partners are able to exercise self-control. If you are too angry to discuss an issue, take a “time out” and make an appointment to do it later.

**Myth: Friendship, not sex, is the only key to a long lasting relationship.** In reality, both friendship and sex are important. True, the intense infatuation of a new relationship often diminishes, so it is essential to keep the feelings of passion alive. It is vital, no matter how long you are married, to keep

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“courtship” going – by dating, sending flowers, holding hands, hugging and touching often.

**Myth: A good relationship does not change.** Nothing could be further from the truth. Marriages, like individuals, inevitably change. Adapting to change is an essential ingredient for the survival of a marriage.

If couples take the time to re-examine their beliefs in marriages, they may discover old myths that are blocking the way to a healthy long-lasting relationship.

### SOAP IS BETTER

Antibacterial hand soaps are the rage these days, but researchers at Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston say that it's better to use ordinary soap.

When antibacterial soap is used, germs adapt and get tougher to kill. Some think that even E coli bacteria could survive an antibacterial bath and mutate into a form that is resistant to other antibacterial products.

Unless someone at home is chronically ill, ordinary soap and water will do the job.

### PUNCHING PILLOWS IS PASS

Though pop psychology books and articles perpetuate the notion that “getting your anger out” is cathartic and can help dissipate hostility, researchers have found just the opposite: Venting anger on inanimate objects - punching a pillow or hitting a punching bag, for example – increases rather than decreases aggressive behavior.

Even more disturbing, the researchers found, books and articles that recommend “catharsis” as a good method of dealing with anger actually may foster aggression by giving people permission to relax their self-control. In the studies, which appear in the March issue of the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, angry subjects who hit a punching bag were later more aggressive in blasting their rivals in a competitive task with loud, unpleasant noises than subjects who did not hit a punching bag.

## WOMEN ACTING SAFELY

Here are some safety tips that might seem like common sense, however; it doesn't hurt to read them over. You can never be too safe!

✦ **You go home to an empty house.** If a friend has dropped you off, ask them to wait until you signal that everything's OK. If you're alone, don't go in if you suspect that someone has been there. Leave immediately and call the police.

✦ **You're home alone and a stranger is at the door.** Always respond to the doorbell. So a potential burglar won't think the house is unoccupied. Before approaching the door, shout, "Honey, can you get that?" Wait a few minutes and tell the person, "We can't answer the door right now, what do you need?" If the person needs help, offer to make a phone call for them. If it is an unexpected serviceman, get the name of the company; look up the company in the phone book and call to verify that he should be there. Do a similar check on anyone who says he is a police officer.

✦ **Your car breaks down.** If you have a cell phone, stay in your car and call for help. Tell whoever responds that your husband is with you. Some criminals listen on police radios for women who are alone and in distress. If you don't have a phone, wait in the car with the doors locked and windows rolled up. If a stranger offers help, ask him to call a garage or the police.

✦ **You're exercising outdoors alone.** Don't wear earphones, especially in an isolated area. You won't be able to hear an attacker approaching.

✦ **An armed stranger is trying to get you to get into his car.** Try to get away. The chances that you will be harmed are much higher if he can get you to a remote location.

### EASY Fix for Foot Pain

*Try this:* If your foot or heel is bothering you, place a can of frozen juice concentrate on the floor and lightly roll your heel and arch over it. You'll combine the benefits of ice, massage and stretching.

*For extra relief:*

Afterward, pull your toes upward for a few seconds.

## IS MY CHILD READY TO STAY HOME ALONE?

Fall is here and our children are back in school, you have to work...., so what do you do with your middle school children after school? Many children are caught up in a power struggle with their parents over after school plans, they want to stay home alone and be independent. But is your child ready to stay home alone?

Many state laws permit leaving children alone only after about 12 or 13, though they are seldom enforced. Just because your child meets the age limits doesn't mean they are ready to go it alone. Some middle-schoolers are ready to take care of themselves and benefit from the freedom and responsibility. Others are too immature.

Amid school shootings and other horrors, many parents worry that their 11 to 14 year olds need closer supervision. Many studies show a sharp rise in juvenile crime in the hours right after school and before parents get home.

If your child does come home alone, make rules and stick to them. Have them check in with you, or another designated person by telephone when they get home. Make this "homework time". Give them simple chores to complete. Make their time home alone as structured as possible.

Is your child ready? Test them to check that they are following the rules you have instilled. Testing your child will give you a better idea of your child's ability to accept the responsibility of staying home alone.

As societal concern about teenagers mounts, employers should bend if possible, so parents can oversee kids at this difficult age. Remember a child's safety should always come first!

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**HBA is your 24-hour employee assistance program. Eligible employees and family members may call for confidential assistance with personal, legal, childcare, financial, alcohol/drug and other problems. HBA has identified a variety of community resources and self help associations. Also available is a panel of professional counselors and hospitals that have agreed to provide free or low cost counseling and treatment services to persons who have been referred by Human Behavior Associates. Dial 1-800-937-7770 for information or assistance.**

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