



# Marriage Mentors: Why and How

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# Paul VanValin

- Preacher's Kid (PK)
- Married 38 years with three married sons  
Clinical Psychologist and founder of ECC
- President of Eden Counseling and  
Consulting & Eden Leaders Institute
- Eden Celebrated 20 years 9/15/2015

# 38 years of marriage





# Mission Statements

- Paul: To help you see who you truly are and live as if you truly believe
- ECC: To provide Transformational Christian Professional Counseling, Consulting and Psychiatry services through innovative service delivery while developing effective leaders
- ELI: To equip leaders to develop healthy families, dynamic communities and meaningful legacies

# Why is Paul here? Love

- Love Bishop McBath
  - Met in 1990
  - Franklin Graham Festival 2006 -2007
- Love CRC – met many leaders at FGF
- Love Marriage mentoring
- Love to hear myself talk

# Who Shaped You? (Identity)

- Parents
- Siblings
- Friends
- Other Relatives
- Teachers
- Coaches
- Mentors – Formal and Informal

# Paul VanValin

- PK – intelligent, shy, sickly, socially awkward
- Developed Leadership in the church
- Discovered self in the church
  - Musician
  - Teacher
- Learned about Community in the Church
- Blessed to be loved in the church

# Mentors for PVV

- “church family” modeling life
- Many strong leaders
  - FBI, Business, Education
- Relationships with pastors and directors
- Youth for Christ – boundaries around sex
- Pastor I served under as youth director
- Central Michigan University professor and wife

# Mentors for PVV

- Older students at U. of Missouri
- Pastors and Elders at U. of Missouri
- Superior officers and Chaplains in the Army
- Older couple in Virginia Beach
- Prior employer before Eden Counseling
- Gary Sweeten of Sweeten Life
- Many peer relationships – Bishop McBath

# We Need Relationship

- Adam and Eve
- Noah and his family
- Abraham and Sarah
- Jesus and the Disciples - Master
- Sent out in “two’s” - Peers
- Paul and Timothy - Mentor
- “Do not forsake the fellowship as the heathen do”

# Teams – Ecclesiastes 4:9-12

Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

# Many Advisers

- Proverbs 11:14 For lack of guidance a nation falls, but victory is won through many advisers.
- Proverbs 15:22 Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.

# When do we need Advisers?

- Transition
- When we are lost
- Conflict and Crisis
- Opportunity

# Why Marriage Mentors?

- Paul and Becky had many
- 50% success rate in the first two years with Pre-Marital Counseling alone
- Success rate increases with Mentoring
- Mentors Marriages improve
- 90% probability failures make it to the top 10%



# God Redeems Disasters

James 1:2-4 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance.

Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

## Romans 5:3-5

...we also glory in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope. And hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit, who has been given to us.

# Factors Affecting Divorce Rates

- Isolation/Lack of Community
- Friends and Family Encourage Divorce
- New Love Interests – Adultery and Child Birth
- Economic Capacity to Live Apart
- Reduced Shame due to Anonymity
- U.S. culture expects divorce
- Hedonism – It is unacceptable to feel bad

# Marriage Counseling Success

- Certificate of Divorce is a Marriage Death Certificate
- Meta analysis of secular marriage counseling yields 10% of couples improve
- VanValins see over 90% improvement

# Factors in Counseling

- 10% attitude of counselee
- 15% quality of relationship with counselor
- 25% skill of counselor
- 50% impacted by life events and other relationships and acts of God
- Wise Family/Mentors/Friends/Pastors make a HUGE difference.

# Disaster for VanValins

- Adultery
- Divorce
- Midlife Crisis for a 29 year old
- Who am I? Who is going to love me?  
What am I going to do with myself?
- 6 hours a day counseling and encouraging
- 2 to 3 times a week contact for a year

# Misconceptions About Mentoring

- Mentors must be perfect. Your worst stories are your best stories.
- Mentors have all the answers. Sometimes we are the answer, sometimes we know the answer, but mostly we help them discover the answer.
- Formal Mentors teach a curriculum. The teachable moment follows a sincere question.

# What a Marriage Mentor is NOT?

- A mentor is not a *mother or father*.
- A mentor is not a *friend*.
- A mentor is not "*on call*" for every little crisis.
- A mentor is not a *know-it-all*.
- A mentor is not *committed long-term*.

# Mentors are Relational

- Enjoy people
- Realistically Optimistic and Hopeful
- Authentic
- Willing to share
- Willing to grow
- Can be Objectively Kind and Honest



# Mentors are Observant

## Exercise - PV

- The next slide contains a photo.
- The photo will be on the screen for 60 seconds.
- You are to write down as many phrases as possible that communicate the content of the photo in 60 seconds.

# Observe and Describe



# Mentors are Non-Judgmental

- Matthew 7: 1-5 “Do not judge, or you too will be judged. <sup>2</sup> For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you. <sup>3</sup> “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? <sup>4</sup> How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? <sup>5</sup> You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.
- Observe and Describe
- Words, posture and tone communicate Judgment

# Judgment vs. Observation

- Judgments contain: Should, Ought, Must
- Judgments stop dialogue
- Judgments increase conflict
- Judgments increase shame
- Judgments are subjective
- Observations increase communication
- Observations are Truthful

More Hope than Judgment

There is  
Hope



# Mentors Build Trust

- Trust helps couples ask questions they would not ask elsewhere.
- Be authentic – Your life experience is the greatest asset in a mentor relationship
- Confidentiality creates safe conversations.
- Be respectful.
- Be accepting and non-judgmental.
- Care and prayer create safety and trust.

# A Mentor *IS*...

- Honest and truth telling.
- Authentic and Genuine.
- Willing.

# Tools and Resources

- Third Thursday Online Training from Eden Leaders Institute – 12 noon
- Counsel Tools – [www.edencounseling.com](http://www.edencounseling.com)
- [www.AACC.net](http://www.AACC.net)
- Gary Chapman
- John Gottman
- Gary Smalley and family
- Les and Leslie Parrott