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Personal Life Coaching



A Volley of Conversation September, 2007

Greetings everyone!

This fall finds us at SAM making some major adjustments once again as we designate time for a new service that will provide needed regular income. We will be juggling schedules over the next month or two as Marilyn Zierhart Guffey and I adapt to the new arrangements. There is a greater need for personal consultations these days, too, as people both within our community and elsewhere meet personal and relationship challenges. We are honored to provide support and coaching for all of them and appreciate every one as they, in turn, encourage us.

Several of us will also be traveling to southern California in early November to participate in a conference on community living and development for Messianic groups. Our website development work will be delayed a bit until time and resources permit, although we hope to be able to continue our two newsletters. We will let you know how things develop and appreciate your prayerful support.

What are **you** finding most challenging as this season comes around? Maybe it's

re-organizing the family for another school year, or accomplishing the home improvement tasks needed before winter. Maybe it's planning a personal retreat.

In most situations, we find that being able to communicate our plans and needs effectively causes the process to go much more smoothly. What happens when the people nearest you don't do well with the proverbial "conversational ball?" Are you the person who sends out many words with infrequent replies or are you one who stands in the midst of a flood of words, letting them fly past? Both extremes can mean frustration and whittle away the joy in a relationship.

Be encouraged! Adjustments can be made!



A Volley of Conversation

Tennis has become a useful metaphor that gives a word picture of the concepts of conversation that otherwise seem so abstract.

- It's no fun to play unless the ball goes back *and forth* across the net!
- This simple comment alone has freed up several people I know to realize a source of communication issues.

Of course, it does help if both parties are on the same court; i.e. addressing the same topic, actually looking toward one another, and so forth. After that I ask if both parties play cooperatively, sending the conversational ball in a direction that the other is likely to be able to return? A "spike" in the game may get a point but it ends the volley. In conversation, a verbal spike is a stopping point as well.

For the one who wonders why they get little response, consider the "serve." Are conversational openings like underhanded, high floating balls that are easy to get underneath and return or are they more like the overhand slam that attempts to put the ball over the net into the floor before it can be touched?

As the skill and enjoyment of the game grow, so the challenges of the content of the conversation may grow. The deeper the intimacy that develops between the speakers the more freedom they will have to express their honest beliefs and emotions. Sometimes that feels like hard ball--surprising, refreshing to converse at that level --but unnerving at times, too. We may not always like what we hear in the volley.

Of course, there is a limit to the metaphor: In a competitive game of tennis, each

person scouts the other to determine their strengths and weaknesses. **Their** goal is to be able to play to the weakness of their opponent, taking advantage of any perceived problem areas.

When I coach "a volley of conversation" my intent is a little different. Prudence and consideration for the other player take on a higher value than winning the point or the game. Though I encourage attention to weak areas, my goal is to help each player to play in such a way as to show their conversational partner to their best advantage, setting up the play for best return. If these volley lessons are observed, conversational partners may be surprised at how easily the flow can be established and at the depth that comes forth, never before seen in their partner.

- Rather than looking to make a point, relationship strength and connection is the goal.

Bouncing observations back and forth, considering both positions and the setting aside of personal ambition all generally lead to greater relational connection and strength. Out of that strength better decisions can be reached and more joy will be found along the way to life-giving relationships.

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*Better is open rebuke  
 Than love that is concealed.  
 Faithful are the wounds of a friend,  
 But deceitful are the kisses of an enemy.  
 Oil and perfume make the heart glad,  
 So a man's counsel is sweet to his friend.  
 A prudent man sees evil and hides himself,  
 The naive proceed and pay the penalty.  
 Proverbs 27: 5, 6, 9, 12*  
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If you would benefit from a little volley coaching in your relationships, give us a call! The first consultation is always free of charge and gives us both the opportunity to find out whether we suit one another in a coaching relationship!

Both Marilyn Zierhart Guffey and myself are available to pass a few conversational balls back and forth with you, though we will appreciate your patience with our answering machine as we make our seasonal adjustments here!

You will find information on our site [about the two coaching packages as well as the option to design a custom package](#) just for you!

If you find yourself wondering just what coaching is about, you can [learn more here!](#)

In Service to our Messiah,

Barbara L. Klika, MSW, LCSW, Personal Life Coach
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