

What is Exceptional Marriage Mentoring?

By Marcia & Brian Gleason

Couples Helping Couples

The process of Exceptional Marriage Mentoring (EMM), developed by Marcia and Brian Gleason, MSW's, is based on the conviction that the committed relationship is the perfect environment for the development of human potential. We believe that couples are drawn together in order to encourage and challenge each other to exceed both of their wildest expectations. Marriage can bring out our best (and our worst)! The power inherent in long term, committed relationships can take us to unimagined places, but we also can run like the wind from its demand for intimacy. Sadly, many couples choose to settle into control patterns that choke off the lifeblood of passion and intimacy. Control patterns are styles of interacting that are motivated by protection of the status quo rather than by growth. Couples who remain embedded in control patterns fail to open their eyes to possibility.

EMM is a process that stimulates the relationship to break out of the prisons of self preservation. It is designed to guide couples through the stages of self discovery that is always there for them to explore. Mentoring helps couples to move from self preservation styles of relating to greater self expression and intimacy. The goal is to provide tools that will allow couples to develop Exceptional Marriages.



EMM differs from conventional marital counseling in several fundamental ways.

- # Mentoring is not about moving from *dysfunctional* to *functional* - it offers couples the opportunity to take the relationship into uncharted territories of love, honesty, individual fulfillment, and pleasure.
- # Mentoring focuses on what we call "full self expression." this means each partner becomes more and more open to the broad range of human emotions. Greater passion is the result.

- ✦ Conventional couples counseling emphasizes conflict resolution. In mentoring, conflict is seen as an important aspect of the Exceptional Marriage. Conflict that is expressed honestly allows for two strong people to draw from each others differences.
- ✦ In mentoring, couples are working with other couples who have "walked the walk." The mentors are people who have developed themselves and their relationships though devotion, hard work and a willingness to continually grow.
- ✦ In mentoring great emphasis is placed on unblocking the negative energy that prevents people from fully letting each other in.
- ✦ Mentoring isn't about techniques so much as it is about taking risks to reveal deeper and deeper aspects of oneself to one's life partner.
- ✦ In mentoring we view problems couples are having as information that tells us where they are in the process of relationship development.
- ✦ In mentoring we see recognize that all people become "embedded" in viewing life from narrow perspectives. The mentoring process is designed to help each partner to make "perspective leaps" which moves them to higher levels of awareness.
- ✦ The ultimate aim of the EMM process is to assist couples in reaching the full potential for happiness, pleasure and personal fulfillment that is the promise of long term commitment to another human being.



We are extremely excited about the EMM process. After a combined half century of searching, we have pulled together the wisdom gleaned from our numerous gifted teachers and combined it with the insights drawn from our own commitment to each other. We have been "in the trenches" learning what it takes to be fully involved with another human being. The result is a profoundly practical, yet passionately exciting approach to relationship development.

EMM is not for everybody. Those couples who truly feel that they want to take their marriages to higher and deeper places will benefit from the mentoring process. Our vision is to offer couples a unique relationship with a mentor couple who will work closely with them on developing their unique potential. Mentoring involves a combination of "two-on-two" couples work as well as Exceptional Marriage intensives with other couples.