

HD

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Volume 36 Issue 3 Spring 2016



GOD'S PROVIDENCE WITH US

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HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

Human Development Magazine is a quarterly publication for people involved in the work of fostering the growth of others. This includes persons involved in religious leadership and formation, spiritual direction, pastoral care, education and those interested in the development of the whole person.

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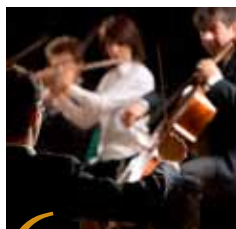
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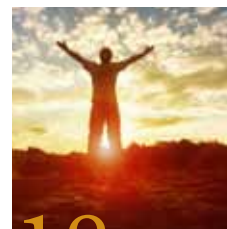
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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Spring 2016

Dear friends of Human Development,

The cover of this, our spring 2016 issue, dramatically presents the spiritual excitement, hope, challenge and fear of the discovery of one's vocation. With his characteristic chiaroscuro style of light and darkness, Caravaggio's "Call of St Matthew" contrasts the finger of Christ calling and Matthew's startled glance, pointing his finger at his breast as if to say, "Me? You want me?" This Renaissance painting has taken on special significance in recent years as Pope Francis has mentioned its on-going meaning in his own vocational discernment, to the point that this scene influenced his choice of an episcopal motto twenty four years ago: God's glance of mercy and choice of a sinner for His purposes.

In many ways this dynamic is at the heart of all vocational discernment: God mysteriously intervenes within our minds and hearts and that somewhat vague awareness is confirmed by people and events around us. Like Caravaggio's Matthew we feel both the attractive tug of God yet also the pull of gravity, the weight of our fears, uncertainty and sense of inadequacy.

This issue of Human Development seeks to address Vocational discernment within the context of Divine Providence. How much of my life choice is my own free decision? Did God have a specific plan or desire for me? How about the continuing evolution or development of my vocation as I go through different stages of personal health or communal needs? Many authors would be quick to remind us that by its very definition "vocation" implies discovering and responding to a call. No matter on which side of the chair we sit as counsellor or director, we all know discernment is a life-long necessity.

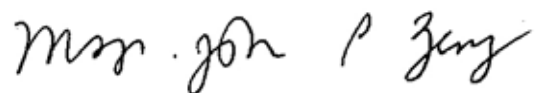
The Council Fathers of Vatican II wisely taught that ultimately there is just one same Christian calling and holiness - to love God and neighbors - and we do so according to the circumstances of our lives as married, single, consecrated religious or clergy. In this issue, we will hear different voices sharing their experience partnering with God's Providence and other companions on the journey. We are called to specific vocations not only for our own salvation but for that of others as well.

As our Editorial Board met and began reviewing essays, we realized we needed an introductory essay that would clarify and contextualize what all the essays mean when they speak of God's Providence and our discernment of His will and vocational desire for us; I accepted the challenge. Msgr. John Strynkowski also offers a brief overview of the dynamics of this process by reference to St. Augustine's own life story.

Dr. Susan Muto helps us appreciate the often-overlooked truth that the single life is a true vocation in every sense of the word. Dr. Tim Hogan, a seasoned marriage counselor, offers beautiful insights and touching stories of the vocation of married life. Using imagery from Blessed John Newman's *Lead Kindly Light*, permanent Deacon Owen Cummings reflects on God's providence in his own life experience as husband/father, theologian and deacon. Msgr. Dan Trapp, a Seminary spiritual director and pastor for a quarter century, discusses the call to priestly holiness through relationships, and Adrian Dominican Sr. Maribeth Howell discusses vocational discernment in religious life. Dr. Ed Hahnenberg ties it all together as he shares with us insights on vocation from his book *Awakening*. Finally we also have two short sidebars on providence and vocation from two young Jesuits – Aaron Pierre and John Wronski – in challenging but fulfilling ministerial settings.

Ultimately, as believers we see all our lives as providentially connected and trust that God uses us in ways that far exceed even our own best hopes and dreams. I give the last word to Francis Thompson, a life-long alcoholic who died famous for just one thing - *The Hound of Heaven*. He asked that these words be on his tombstone: "I may not have accomplished anything but I trust God has done great things through me!"

Happy reading,



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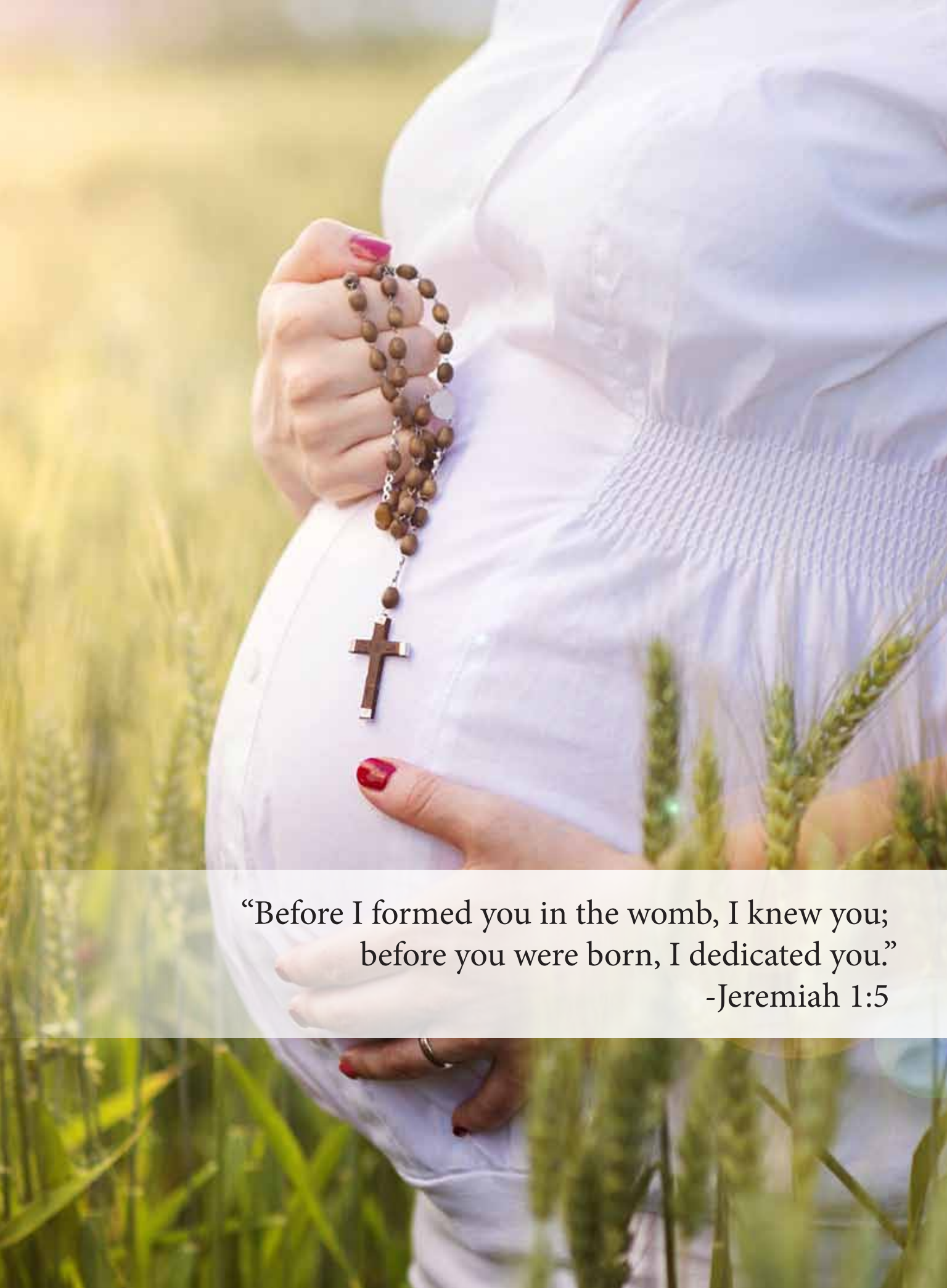
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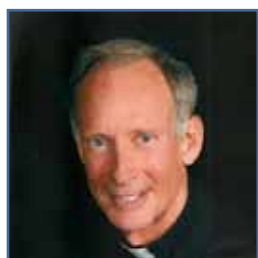
Rev. Hans Zollner, S.J., Ph.D.



A close-up photograph of a pregnant woman's belly. She is wearing a white, long-sleeved button-down shirt. Her hands are resting on her belly; one hand is holding a wooden rosary with a cross, and the other is gently touching the fabric. She has red nail polish. The background is a soft-focus field of green wheat stalks under warm, golden light.

“Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you;
before you were born, I dedicated you.”
-Jeremiah 1:5

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Lake Orion, MI

May 20, 2016

60th Anniversary Mass and Luncheon
Guest House Campus
Lake Orion, MI

May 21, 2016

Run Over Addiction-5K Run/Walk
Guest House Campus
Lake Orion, MI

June 1-3, 2016

Walking with the Wounded Workshop
Guest House – Scripps Mansion
Lake Orion, MI

June 13, 2016

31st Annual Guest House Golf Classic
Oakhurst Golf and Country Club
Clarkston, MI

July 3-9, 2016

Alumnae ICAP/Guest House Retreat
Carmelite Spiritual Center
Darien, Il

July 11-13, 2016

Summer Leadership Conference
Chicago Marriott Naperville Hotel
Naperville, Il

August 2-4, 2016

Alumni Reunion
La Porte Center
La Porte, IN

August 7-13, 2016

Alumnae ICAP/Guest House Retreat
Guest House-Scripps Mansion
Lake Orion, MI

October 3-6, 2016

Alumni Fall Seminar
Immaculata Retreat House
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INFORMATION FOR AUTHORS

The editors of Human Development are quite eager to publish articles that translate the latest research in psychology, health, medicine, and spirituality to ministry, formation and practice. Our hope is that Human Development will be known as the most user-friendly ministry publication. This will require making complicated theoretical knowledge, research, and concepts understandable and applicable to the personal and professional lives of our readers.

Since ministry is in a time of significant transition and change, we anticipate that the articles we publish will enlighten and positively influence the daily decisions and practices of those in Church leadership, ministry formation, spiritual direction, and counseling of any kind. There are also a number of previously under-appreciated forces that uniquely influence ministry and ministers: cultural, organizational, and situational factors. We intend to highlight and honor these factors in the pages of Human Development. Accordingly, we ask prospective authors to be mindful of these considerations in their manuscripts.

Manuscripts are received with the understanding that they have not been previously published and are not currently under

consideration elsewhere. Feature articles should be limited to 4,500 words (15 double-spaced pages), with no more than six recommended citations and or readings; filler items of between 500 and 1,000 words will be considered. All accepted material is subject to editing. When quoting sacred scripture, the New Revised Standard Version is preferred. All manuscripts are to be prepared according to the Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association (6th edition).

Letters are welcome and will be published as space permits and at the discretion of the editors. Such communications should not exceed 600 words and are subject to editing.

Authors are responsible for the completeness and accuracy of proper names in both text and Bibliography/suggested readings. Acknowledgments must be given when substantial material is quoted from other publications. Provide author name(s), title of article, title of journal or book, volume number, page(s), month and year, and publisher's permission to use material.

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JOURNEY OF PURIFICATION:

DISCOVERING GOD'S REAL PRESENCE IN THE VOCATION TO MARRIED LIFE

Tim Hogan, PsyD, CIRT



INTRODUCTION: TWO DIFFERENT EXPERIENCES OF MARRIAGE

Mike and Becky walked into my office with a familiar, painful look on their faces. Married for 19 years, they had all the ingredients for a happy life: three healthy children, financial security, friends, religious faith and a commitment to regular participation in their parish. However, while family life seemed to be flourishing, their marriage was largely dead. As business partners they were awesome; as intimate lovers and friends they were sick and dying. As each shared their stories of lost passion and growing resentment they were rocked with sorrow. How could things have gone so wrong?

Mike and Becky were well aware of the lofty words we (rightly) use to describe Christian marriage. Marriage is a divine *calling*, a sacred *invitation* from God to experience God's presence in an intense and transformative way. This is why our tradition understands it to be *sacramental*: This union of man and wife becomes a visible sign and symbol of God's steadfast, faithful, permanent and creative love for people. When people look at married couples they get to see a picture of what God's love looks like.

Sometimes we even get to see a flesh and bones picture of this theological truth. Take my parents, for example. Coming from profoundly different backgrounds, they fell in love, quickly married, then spent 57 years learning how to love well, fight well, make up well and construct an effective partnership. They raised a large family and poured out their lives in the community. A few weeks before my father died I watched him slowly limp down my driveway to his car, supported by my mother's stiff forearm. Before she opened his door he looked up at her with gratitude and they both paused, getting lost in each other's eyes. Their deep love and connection took our breath away. That was it! They had become a real, visible picture of Trinitarian love. Because of their faithfulness to their vocational path, they had become an unmistakable living sacrament and a source of serious inspiration.

Their story is not the norm. Rather, becoming this living picture of Trinitarian love is more often stunningly difficult and confusing. As a young couple stands at the altar we rightly smile and celebrate love that is innocent, beautiful, orgasmic and glorious. But we all know that the day will come when the journey will become difficult, even brutal. If we were honest we would not just stand, smile and wave. We would also fall to our knees and beg God to sustain them on the day when the romantic pixie dust is spent and their deeply human and wounded hearts collide. Those of us seasoned by the transforming work of marriage know that old hurts, abandonments and betrayals, not to mention patterns of habitual self-protection, will eventually bubble to the surface, wreak havoc, and release tears. How the couple responds to this inevitable struggle will determine whether they will become transformed by this divine vocation and end up looking more like my parents, or, like Mike and Becky, get lost along a path of increasing resentment and frustration.

The purpose of this article is to explore the exciting and transformative adventure of the marital vocation. There is reason to be hopeful. Clinical and brain research over the past 20 years has transformed the way we work with couples. I now coach couples to re-enter their vocational calling to transformation in three areas. First, I invite married partners to re-activate and transform the connecting energies of romantic love. Second, I encourage couples to embrace marital conflict as a pathway of growth and transformation. Finally, I coach couples to both study and learn about their partner so as to become the indispensable

“go-to” person who enables the person God brought into their lives to flourish.

ROMANTIC LOVE AS A PATHWAY TOWARD DIVINE TRANSFORMATION

We are now in a historical era where marriage is built upon the foundation of romantic love. Gone are the days when marriage was driven and held together by parents or elders in society as a rational way to maintain stable homes for children, ensure property rights, or control the gene pool. Disappeared is the societal pressure to stay married and/or the public condemnation for getting a divorce. Instead, people typically get married today because they are “in love” and are often encouraged to exit their marriage when they no longer feel “in love” with their partner. Not surprisingly, this new romantic foundation for marriage has not proven to be very stable. Today the divorce rate continues to hover around the 50% mark, and fewer than half of those who stay married report being happy or thriving.

But what does this mean for our understanding of marriage as a sacrament, a divine vocation? Well, it is tempting (and common) to push back against this cultural shift and encourage couples to let go of their longing for romantic love and instead preach the value of the more mature, agape, self-sacrificing love that Jesus came to model for us. I know this is tempting because it used to be exactly what I would say to couples who complained of not being in love anymore. Unfortunately, as it turns out, this is not terribly helpful for couples. And by that I mean it never worked for me. Not even once.

“Romantic love ...is a gift from God. It gives us a temporary glimpse of Trinitarian love. Romantic love activates an intense physiological experience of primitive attachment...”



Attachment research showed me why. While people may go to soup kitchens and on mission trips to serve others; they get married because they desire a loving human connection. And, while self-giving and agapic love does and should flow from a connected and maturing couple, it does not stand well on its own. So, if a couple cannot re-establish any romantic-like emotional connection, then they are simply not likely to stay married. So, rather than only appealing for self-giving and sacrificial love, we do well to better understand and activate the powerful energy from romantic love.

I have found that this process starts by redeeming the value of romantic love. Romantic love is not simply an immature, vacuous and untrustworthy imposter for the real thing. I actually find it to be a gift from God. It gives us a temporary glimpse of Trinitarian love. Romantic love activates an intense physiological experience of deep and primitive attachment, similar to the experience that infants and toddlers have with their caregivers. And so it fills the lover with waves of chemically-induced euphoria, a sense that life now has purpose and that purpose is love. This gives the lover a great capacity to overlook their lover's shortcomings, sometimes to a

fault. (i.e. "I know he just got out of prison and still hasn't divorced his fourth wife, but he is so wonderful!") This experience of raw love and connection is marked by the simultaneous mix of deep connection/familiarity (i.e., "we are one") that is combined with a strong sense of novelty (i.e., "You are a mystery that I long to uncover.") I believe that this chemically-induced state of mind is a gift from God that reminds us that we were made for all-in, Trinitarian-like love above all else. It is the feeling that triggers (or tricks, depending on the situation) lifetime commitment to the marital covenant. It is also an experience that is often needed later in marriage to energize the movement towards healing.

Here's the challenge: Couples on this sacramental adventure of marriage must learn to put the energies of romantic love to work for their marriage, while learning to protect their marriage from the potentially devastating impact of poorly managed romantic energy that could destroy it.

The first challenge is to re-romanticize a relationship by activating memories from the initial (and subsequent) experience of falling in love with their partner. I do this by asking couples to reflect with great detail on the early days of their relationship.

The second step to re-romanticize a marriage involves re-activating the attachment centers of the nervous system. The human body is wired to experience a deep sense of connection with those who are close. These attachment centers are on display every time a small child who is upset stops crying and relaxes in the arms of the parent. The same connection can be stirred to life intentionally when partners increase skin and eye contact, commit to extended hugs and/or kisses and take special care of each other every time they leave or come back together. Even when just running to the store, partners should re-affirm their love, make brief eye contact and ensure each other that they will be back. These small changes can go a long way to "prime the pump" and re-activate the joy and soothing of romantic attachment.

Finally, just as the powerful energies of romance can re-energize a stale or dying marital connection, these same energies can wreak havoc when a partner does not guard his or her heart against other relationships. Attachment research is clear that we are not only vulnerable to the power of romantic love with people who are objectively attractive; we are also vulnerable to fall in love with people who unconsciously remind us of early childhood caregivers. This is a large challenge in our globalized and digitally hyper-connected world today, as married men and women often work together and form meaningful connections. This leaves men and women vulnerable to falling in love with people who are sometimes even more powerful unconscious “matches” than is one’s partner. Therefore, married partners need clear boundaries for relationships with anyone not their spouse who could potentially trigger romantic energy and destabilize the marriage.

Couples who want to embrace the full transformational power of their vocation can begin by attending to their potential to experience deep connection through romantic love. Couples can start by awakening and nurturing their romantic connection with one another. The two best ways to do this are by activating old positive memories and by stimulating the attachment centers of the brain. It is also crucial for partners to guard their hearts against these same forces getting sparked in a relationship with someone other than their partner.

MARITAL CONFLICT AS A PATHWAY OF GROWTH AND TRANSFORMATION

Just as marriage is the source of intensely pleasurable connection and love, it also produces a diverse array of conflict. Some of this conflict is simply the product of the ongoing necessary friction that naturally flows from things like dividing chores, planning meals and negotiating where to spend Christmas. That level of conflict is common to all relationships. However, marriage usually produces a very unique, deep and intense form of conflict that flows from the subterranean

and complex waters of romantic love and attachment.

My wife, Karen, and I were introduced to this deeper conflict quickly. Soon after marrying we moved from Detroit to Southern California so I could attend graduate school. We were madly in love and excited for this new adventure. Karen quickly became involved with our new parish, as we expected. However, the more involved she became, the more irritable and angry I became. We were frequently in conflict. My emotional distress and anger made no sense. Karen was doing nothing unexpected or wrong. What was going on?

Enter Dr. Harville Hendrix. He offered a virtual “decoder ring” that freed Karen and me to allow our conflict to create a process of healing and growth. Here’s what we learned: While I am blessed to come from a wonderful Catholic family that was very involved in our home parish, this was also where I was (unintentionally) significantly wounded. On many occasions I felt lost and unimportant to my parents because they spent so much time at church. Predictably, I fell in love with a woman (Karen) who also loved serving in her parish. It was not long before I was reliving my childhood wound: Karen was at church and I was at home feeling lost and unimportant. Again. My childhood wounds had been triggered and so my anger with Karen was far more intense than the situation called for. (As we psychologists say, “If it’s hysterical, it’s historical!”) With Hendrix’ wisdom and support, Karen and I were able to explore my marital frustration and connect it with my childhood pain. She was able to help me to heal these old childhood wounds. This was the first of many times that our marriage was doing its job: By creating and triggering pain from childhood, we are able to talk and pray our way to transformation.

Twenty years of doing intense marital therapy has convinced me that Karen and I are not alone. Hidden within the romantic forces that draw couples together are the seeds of this kind of deep conflict. In fact, it is part of our unconscious longing to heal that causes us to

fall in love with our partners in the first place. I like the way Solomon and Tatkin (2011) summarize this dynamic: “It is no accident that of all the possible people to choose from, often the person we select to become the center of our world turns out to have an uncanny resemblance to a person who raised us.” In other words, we step into our marriages with pre-wired relational maps, patterns and unhealed wounds that were formed by our most powerful attachments with caregivers. The vocational calling into marriage provides the holy and transformative ground to faithfully, lovingly, and consciously embrace these frustrations as growth and transformation trying to happen.

Unfortunately, most couples do not reflexively see conflict as a sign that “growth is trying to happen.” Rather, most people feel the pain of conflict as a sign that “I married the wrong person.” What, then, is the secret to embracing conflict as a pathway to transformation? I tell my couples who are in intense conflict that they are hanging on a precipice, one step away from the “river of death” that will lead to frustration and resentment, and one step away from the “river of life” that leads to redemption and transformation. Let’s take a look at these two fast-moving rivers.

THE RIVER OF DEATH: HOW CONFLICT DESTROYS MARRIAGE

The “river of death” is easy to find. Most people in conflict quickly jump into it by focusing on how others have caused their pain. People do this because the human brain is wired to create a story that essentially always has the same theme: “I am in pain because of something you did to me.” Sometimes called the “fundamental attribution error,” our nervous system automatically attributes the source of bad things in our lives to our partners, and the good things in our lives to ourselves.

This problem gets worse when people talk about their marital conflict with others. Unless they are careful, talking about marital problems with others when their partner is not with them often strengthens this fundamental

attribution error. This is why marriages typically get worse when partners go for individual therapy, even when the individual therapist is well-meaning and competent. After going outside of the relationship for support and understanding, partners are then more likely to return strengthened in their false belief that their partner is the problem.

This does not mean that partners should not go for individual therapy or spiritual direction when having marriage problems. They should. It often helps. And it is often crucial for wounded partners to feel heard and understood so that they can re-enter the relationship in a creative and constructive way. However, it is important for helpers to ask questions that invite people to allow marital conflict to bring transformation, such as:

“I wonder how this pain reminds you of other pain. Could it also be stirring up old childhood wounds?”

“I wonder, if we looked at a video recording of your conflict, would there be any part of it that you would like to change? In other words, how have you helped to create this nightmare?”

“I wonder what God might be up to. Could this be an opportunity for either or both of you to heal and grow?”

The River of Life: How Conflict Leads to Transformation

On the other hand, couples in conflict are also one short step away from the “river of life.” Couples who choose the river of life simply agree to keep their relationship safe, to dialogue about the conflict in ways that are healthy and open and to release the need to find a solution to every problem.

Couples must commit to keeping the relationship safe at all costs. Attachment research has demonstrated that connection and intimacy cannot happen when our nervous system is experiencing threat. So, when threat is in the air, nothing good can happen. This means that couples must agree to protect the relationship, to never hurt

each other intentionally and to soothe each other when the conversations get tense. I also coach couples to periodically re-affirm their commitment to healing while in the middle of conflictual conversations, saying things like “I know this is hard but I am committed to letting God work through this pain so I can learn how to love you better and make our marriage stronger.”

Second, couples confidently step into the river of life if and when they learn how to have healthy and open dialogue. This means that partners agree to share vulnerably and listen actively. This also means that couples are open and curious about how other issues, such as childhood wounds, might be fueling the current conflict. I coach couples to practice “throwing a catchable ball.” This means that partners work to share their pain in ways that are “catchable.” For example, when Karen and I were working through our conflict I needed to learn to say “I don’t know why but I feel incredibly hurt and angry when you leave me here to go serve at church,” rather than “What is wrong with you? You act like you don’t even want to be married to me anymore. All you do is serve at church!” As you can see, the second way is not very “catchable”!

Finally, couples need to accept that not every conflict has a satisfying solution. Sometimes couples deeply and authentically disagree about very important issues. This does not mean, as many think, that such couples have “irreconcilable differences” and should divorce. In fact, John Gottman’s (1999) now-famous research found that the “masters of marriage” do not resolve 69% of their disagreements. Instead, they continue to focus on the positive aspects of their relationship without the unrealistic expectation that they will find a way to resolve every conflict.

Taken together, conflict is not the enemy of a good marriage. Rather, it is an invitation to allow God to heal our inner world and transform and strengthen the marital covenant. This can happen when couples are able to move into the “river of life,” protecting their

relationship and communicating openly without the pressure to always find a solution.

MARRIAGE: THE VOCATION OF “LIVING IN EACH OTHER’S CARE”

“Never forget that you are in each other’s care.”

These words changed the way I work with couples, and I repeat them relentlessly to my clients. I believe that “being in each other’s care” might be the best summary of what it means to embrace the vocation to married life. I first heard these words from Dr. Stan Tatkin (2011), the founder and creator of the Psychobiological Approach to Couple’s Therapy (PACT). Tatkin’s vision for marriage puts flesh and bones on what it means to live the divine vocation.

When couples accept that they are “in each other’s care” love stops being a general idea or set of philosophical principles and becomes a specific and passionate journey of becoming an expert at loving one person well. This means that married people get to spend a lifetime in “the school of their partner,” curiously exploring the sacred mystery of their partner and using what they learn to love their partner in deeper and more powerful ways. I call this learning process “writing your partner’s owner’s manual.” There are four components to this process.

First, partners must approach their vocation with a sense of awe and mystery. Marriage is always holy ground. No person is ever fully knowable. Made in the image of God, every partner is first and foremost a “sacred other.” This helps to correct the temptation married partners often have of thinking “I know just what he’s like and he’s never going to change.” This is the most destructive, false and self-fulfilling belief a person can have about their spouse. Rather, when spouses remember that their partner is made in God’s image and because of that is filled with mystery, possibility and the unknown, it is much easier to activate curiosity to lovingly explore what makes one’s partner tick.



Second, being in each other's care means that partners have the chance to become each other's number-one encourager, cheerleader and reminder of each other's original blessing. Life is difficult. Not only is it full of external stress and pressure, but most people live with an inner critic that constantly calls into question the reality that they are God's beloved child. Couples have the chance to do this for each other. To help couples to master this I coach them to frequently create a gratitude inventory involving their spouse. I guide them

to notice every small way their spouse brings goodness or blessing to the world, from the big things (i.e., "I love the way you lead your team at the office.") to the little things (i.e., "I love how kind you are to the clerk at the store.") Even further, I encourage people to learn specifically what works to cheer their partner up when they are down, to reassure them when feeling insecure and to motivate them when discouraged.

Third, being in each other's care means that

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partners get to know each other's stories so that they understand each other's vulnerabilities, insecurities and needs for ongoing healing. Everyone shows up to their marriage with old disappointments, hurts and losses that have not fully healed or resolved. Partners have the opportunity to learn this landscape of each other's inner lives. It is particularly helpful for couples to learn what their partner needs when in emotional pain. Some people need to talk. In fact, the more upset they get the more energy they put into talking. Others like to withdraw and get their thoughts together. In fact, the more distressed they become the more they feel compelled to withdraw. Hendrix and Hunt (2013) call the first group "hailstorms" and the second group "turtles". As you might expect, turtles tend to marry hailstorms and drive each other crazy. Thus, when working with someone in therapy or spiritual direction it can be helpful to invite them to consider how they and their spouse need different things when in emotional pain.

Finally, being in each other's care means taking the adventure of discovering what brings one's partner to life. Partners can get at this by asking good questions about past fun memories, current desires and future dreams. Learning these things helps partners to activate positivity and enjoyment with each other. This also allows couples to take exciting risks and design new adventures with each other, from traveling the world to exploring new and creative dimensions of their sensual connection.

Taken together, engaging the vocation of marriage invites couples to be authentically in each other's care. This allows partners to effectively write a personal owner's manual for their spouse. This sacred text guides them to skillfully and lovingly become the best person on the planet to both appreciate and love their partner.

Living out the vocational adventure of marriage is difficult. I have suggested three opportunities for couples to embrace this spiritual adventure. Couples can begin by re-activating their emotional connection,

both re-romanticizing their relationship and by initiating their design for attachment. Second, rather than viewing conflict as a sign that something is wrong with their marriage, couples can embrace conflict as an opportunity for growth and transformation. Finally, the vocation of marriage can be captured by the encouragement to “never forget that you are in each other’s care.” As couples move in this direction, they more and more become a divinely constructed picture of Trinitarian love and an encouraging image of God’s persevering loving kindness for humanity.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Tim Hogan is a psychologist and Certified Imago Relationship Therapist who co-authored *How to Find the Help You Need*, a guide to psychotherapy and spiritual direction, and recently released an album of guided meditations, *Awakening Your Heart* (iTunes). He directs The Grace Counseling Center in Detroit. He lives in Plymouth, Michigan, with his wife of 27 years and three children. Tim’s weekly blogs inspire us to transform our desires and deepen human connections. He blogs at DrTimHogan.com/my-blog/. He contributed to RCL Benziger’s Family Life series.

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

1. Dr. Hogan speaks of Christian marriage as a journey of purification; romantic love can take on new meaning and depth as a couple go through the seasons and challenges of life and especially conflict. As a married person, how have I found conflicts as occasions to experience healing of each other and even to encounter the Lord? As one not married, could the insights of Dr. Hogan about transformation through conflict apply to my life in community, in ministry or in friendships?
2. In his own marriage and in working with other couples as a therapist, Dr. Hogan has found a helpful phrase: “Never forget you are in each other’s care.” Regardless of your state of life, how might that saying apply to relationship(s) in your life?

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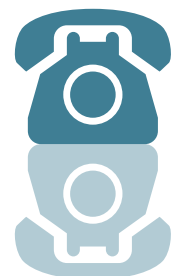


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