



Resilience Counseling & Training Center

*Providing counseling, training and
consulting services around the world.*



24 Reporter Court * PO Box 1435 * North Conway, NH 03860 * (603) 730-5467



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The Resilient Marriage

How would your marriage look if you could make it your ideal marriage? Reflect on this question for a few moments and then, with your partner, share your answers. What would you observe one another doing, saying, and experiencing differently or more often than now? A resilient marriage requires, first and foremost, that we clarify for both ourselves and our spouse what it is we truly desire and seek from the relationship. As Laurence Peter so aptly stated, *"If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably end up somewhere else."*

So often couples do not honestly communicate their desires and dreams with one another until it is too late and the buildup of resentments, disappointments, and pain has become overwhelming. Indeed, many of us never really clarify for ourselves what exactly our "ideal marriage" would look like; let alone what our spouse truly seeks and desires. Instead, we focus on that which we do not like, do not have, or our spouse does not do, or doesn't do "correctly"! This is like driving a car by looking out the rearview mirror at what we are driving away from, not where we seek to go.

Resilience in marriage. Resilience is the hallmark of any successful relationship. Resilience involves the ability to create together a clear, positive direction for your relationship, for your lives together. It also includes possessing the knowledge and skills necessary to effectively "bounce back", recover, repair and get back on course whenever your relationship inevitably encounters the myriad of obstacles, detours, challenges and potholes as you travel along the road of life together.

Research on the course of marriage life indicates that marital satisfaction follows a **U-shaped** curve. It begins high; but, as raising children, job demands, financial stressors and the tasks of maintaining a home enter the picture, our relationships suffer. The most stressful, least satisfying time tends to be during our children's toddler/pre-school age range. This is the family life stage that requires maximum parenting task involvement

so we devote less and less time to our marital relationship. Not surprisingly, this is also when divorce rates peak

But, we can always do things a little better! We can learn to meet our own, our children's, and our relationship's needs in a more balanced manner. We can also learn skills to more effectively resolve conflicts with one another and grow together. Remember, we all tend to choose a partner who will treat us as we expect to be treated. We unconsciously choose a partner with whom we either expect to continue our old personal relationship patterns carried since childhood or who offers quite the opposite, both can prove problematic!.

In marriage, we seek someone who shares our view of life but also appears to provide a missing dimension of ourselves; someone who compliments our personality style. However, the very characteristic that most attracts us to our spouse at the beginning is often the same one that later leads to conflicts and rejection. For example, you were attracted to his work ethic and divorce because he is always working, or you were attracted to her thriftiness but later relabel it as being cheap. We unrealistically think our spouse will always, forever and increasingly fulfill our need for that missing dimension in ourselves. Later, as the demands of life build, we devote less and less time to meeting our spouse's needs; in fact, we often forget what they were in the first place as resentment and distancing builds.

Maintaining, rebuilding and restoring our marriages. Our deepest beliefs in ourselves blend with our partner's beliefs in themselves. These intertwine to make up the marriage we are experiencing. Our approach to life is a result of early self-training. We can change or improve it in later years by realizing that such learned responses, while adaptive in our childhood, may not serve our marriage or our self well later in adulthood.

A resilient, emotionally intelligent marriage requires that we become self-aware, emotionally self-regulatory, develop true empathy via a deeper understanding of our spouse, and learn effective problem resolution skills. We can boost our marriage resilience by reinterpreting negative events, enhancing positive emotions through affirming yourself and your partner, learning new adaptive behaviors, accepting challenges together, building positive social networks, and imitating resilient role models.

Resilience enhancing strategies for couples. We recommend at least bi-weekly couples meetings of about thirty minutes in length with each partner communicating gratefulness for their lives, what was positive for the week, what they are working on individually to improve their personal lives, and what they desire from one another emotionally, verbally, physically, and psychologically.

Take time weekly to reflect upon self-correction and personal growth so as to be the best partner we can be for one another. How do you want your partner to see and experience you and what are you doing daily to be that person for your spouse? We each have control over only one person in this world, ourselves!

We each have our own unique "language" for expressing love. Socrates stated, "Know thyself".. Knowing our own love language and that of our partner and then sharing this with one another builds intimacy and closeness. You both learn to express love in one another's language so it is truly heard. To better understand how you each seek and experience love and affection in your relationship, answer these questions and share with one another:

- ***How was love shown in my family growing up?***
- ***What was missing for me that I would have liked more of in my family growing up?***
- ***How do we show love in our family/relationship now?***
- ***What would I like more of in our marriage now?***

How we answer these questions relates to what is lovingly important to us in our marriage. Knowing what is important to you and your partner allows an opportunity for you to express yourself in loving ways that mean the most to your partner.

Schedule regular date nights for one another focusing on your partner's love language. Even if you have young children and no babysitter, be creative, You can stay in and still create a special dinner with candlelight on the bed. Put the kids to bed and then snuggle in to watch a favorite movie together. Our hearts are in each other's hands; this is how precious our love is so take time to nurture it regularly!

Also, take time out for yourself. Learn to find peace within yourself. Wellness includes physical fitness, eating well, resting, hobbies, job satisfaction, and fun. Strive to be an interesting person for yourself and for your partner. This will give you both something interesting to share on your dates rather than just discuss the kids!

Remember that in marriage there is no such thing as "not communicating". We are always communicating, verbally or nonverbally, in ways that are either constructive or destructive to our relationship. It is important to listen to understand or partner, not to debate. Reflect upon what your partner is saying so as to clarify deeper understanding; hear the deeper meaning your partner is attempting to convey. If at any time there is emotional arousal around an issue, pause and let your partner know that you do not wish to use your anger or pain against them and instead take a time-out. Take an hour or two, go for a walk, hot shower, yoga break, deep breathing, or wash the car. But do not begin until you are both calm. Reflect upon why this is so upsetting to you, the deeper meaning you attach to it. Return to peace talks with both increased inner knowledge and possible solutions that honor you both.

Learn to create your ideal marriage; it is in your heart and mind! Accept there will be obstacles and stressors along the way; but learn how to be resilient and get yourselves "back on track" to realizing your ideal marriage.



Intensive Marital Counseling/Coaching Retreats

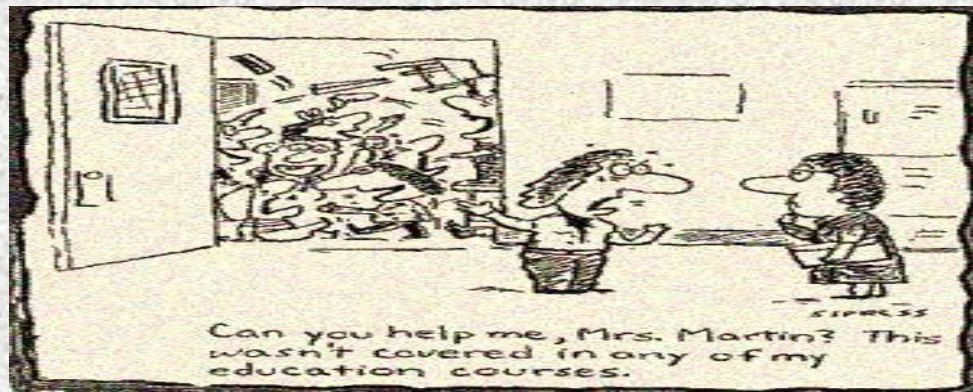
The Resilience Counseling & Training Center offers intensive marriage retreats intended to assist couples in building more satisfying marital relationships. Each couple meet with our RCTC co-counseling team over a 3-day time period spending 4 hours daily engaged in intensive counseling/coaching sessions.

Take the time now to "Roll up Your Sleeves" and earnestly get to work on building a more mutually fulfilling and resilient marital relationship.

Create your Ideal Marriage while enjoying together the many year-round recreational activities and the natural beauty of New Hampshire's White Mountains.

For information: Call RCTC at 603-730-5467





The Resilience-Focused Classroom: Empowered Teachers, Positive Schools, Resilient Students

RCTC offers training for teachers & school administrators interested in going beyond the old, counter-productive reward/punish models. Learn how to implement a more positive, empowering approach instead.

A research based approach for creating more effective classrooms, positive school culture, & social-emotionally competent students.

Increase student achievement & learning motivation while reducing bullying & resolving classroom behavior problems

Contact RCTC about the possibility of bringing

THE RESILIENCE-FOCUSED CLASSROOM

training program to your school.

Call: (603) 730-5467 or Email: resiliencectc@aol.com

Participant Comments from Past RCTC Training Workshops

- *"Revolutionary information that changes the way I view my profession!"*
- *"Amazing presentation! Provocative and engaging; thank you for talking about the 'elephant in the room'."*
- *"I appreciate the speaker's willingness to ask the difficult questions...and to challenge the audience as to our current practices and perceptions."*
- *"Dr. Nicoll is the most knowledgeable presenter I've seen in years".*
- *"[Dr. Nicoll] combines interesting lectures with excellent demonstrations of the skills. He provides an excellent role model in doing what he teaches so effectively."*
- *"Most valuable and practical workshop I have taken in fifteen years of study."*
- *"One of the best speakers I've attended... inspirational"*
- *"Excellent, very inspiring! I wish everyone could hear you."*
- *"Knowledgeable speaker & humorous approach to sharing a lot of content, so interesting!"*
- *"The most knowledgeable presenter I've seen in years."*
- *"I have attended many continuing education programs before; this one ranks as the best."*
- *"Excellent, relevant, organized and practical"*
- *"Inspiring, motivating, eye opening and humorous!"*



“Raising Resilient Children”

Parenting Classes

Learn how to create a positive home environment and raise your children to be successful in school and life. A Responsible, Resilient, & Respectful member of the community

**Each class consists of four weekly sessions – Morning and Evening sessions available.
(Cost: \$99 per/person; or \$150 per couple; includes all class materials)**



Contact RCTC to enroll in the next four-week session

OR,

**Schedule a Raising Resilient Children class at your school, church, or organization
(603) 730-5467**

PARENTING



**Resilience
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Providing counseling, training and consulting services around the world.

Monica A. Nicoll, Ph.D., LCMHC

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