

Newsletter

East Central Illinois Refugee Mutual Assistance Center

302 South Birch, Urbana Illinois 61801

Telephone (217) 344 - 8455

Volume 24 No. 8

March, 2007

Talking to One Another

"Relationships are a huge part of what makes our lives great or miserable, and we're clueless about them." (p. 1)



The main way that couples enjoy and accomplish, or disrupt, the business of living together is through talking. Talking together shows that you want to share your experiences, that you value each other's thoughts, and that you care about each other. What you say and hear as you talk to each other becomes your shared world. Your tone of voice and words convey attitude toward each other---liking, respect, or irritation. Connecting by talking, like sexual connection, both expresses and unifies your relationship.

When your talking feels safe, loving, and satisfying, your relationship feels like a good one. If the conversation becomes dominating, tense, rude, or hurtful, then the relationship feels less secure and less appealing. Moreover, since talking occurs during so much of the time you spend together, and is essential to the business of living together, how to talk to each other becomes a single best sign of the health of the relationship.

When most people are old enough to have a job, they have developed reasonably good skills at cooperative interaction (i.e., talking). Few adults fight with friends, neighbors, colleagues, or anyone outside the family. Most of us know enough to keep our public face friendly and cooperative.

But what changes when we go home? Family life requires considerably more shared decisions than a friendship does: when to come to the dinner table, how much money to spend on what, who get to do what when. All these and many more decisions need joint agreement. The more issues touch high charged and emotionally sensitive concerns like power, money, sex, self-esteem, and personal freedom, the more likely conflict will erupt.

A second difference is that at work, school, or in social situations, most people try to look their best. We all know how people are supposed to behave and we try to look good when judged by those standards. But when we return home that effort to look good may stop. We want to relax, let our hair down, put our feet up. We want to be free to do what comes naturally and that is often a replay of what we heard and saw in our homes as we grew up.

People are creatures of learning. Patterns of behavior we learned as children become the guide for the ways we behave as an adult. These patterns also determine how we expect our spouses to behave. For example if a child experienced unfair criticism throughout their childhood he/she may as an adult become very sensitive and hear every comment as blame and react defensively even when no criticism was meant.

People are what they learned and they are likely to repeat what they have seen others do. How our mother and father related/talked to one another becomes the model for how we as adults talk to our spouses. If our parents handled problems by fighting, we may respond to sensitive home situations with an argument. If our parents dealt with problems by ignoring them, then when a problem occurs in our homes we may ignore our concerns. By continuing the marital interaction patterns observed in our parents we risk continuing the patterns that may not be ideal for contemporary couples. (Source: Hietler Ph.D., S., The power of two, New Harbinger Publications, Inc., Oakland, CA, 1997)

Immigration News

Returning Home Could Affect Asylum Status: According to a fact sheet issued by the U.S. government "immigrants who obtained green cards after receiving asylum now risk losing them [green card] if they return to the countries where they claimed they were persecuted" (p. 3).

Posted on the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Web site in the closing days of 2006, the warning....stirred fears among immigrants with asylum-based green cards. Some worry that even a trip home to see an ailing parent could result in revocation of the green card.



This warning was not for the people who go to see a ill or dying relative but instead those people who abuse the system and return home frequently for reasons that may raise suspicions of fraud.

According to Ira Kurzban, a national authority on immigration law,...immigration officials may scrutinize more aggressively the trips of people who have won asylum grants and those with asylum-based green cards.

Officials...could argue that since a person does not fear persecution in his home country, the original asylum claim is not valid and the green card was obtained fraudulently. As a result, deportation proceedings could be instituted. (Source: Chardy, A., Advisory alarms green card holders, Chicago Tribune, Monday January 22, 2007, section 1, p. 3)

Poverty Guidelines for 2007: Effective March 1, 2007 the following poverty guidelines will go in effect for all I-864 (Affidavit of Support) filed on or after that date.

Family Size	100% Poverty Line	125% of Poverty Line
1	10,210	12,763
2	13,690	17,113
3	17,170	21,463
4	20,650	25,813
5	24,130	30,163
6	27,610	34,513
7	31,090	38,863
8	34,570	43,213

For families larger than 8, add 4,350 for each additional member to determine the 125% of poverty level. (Source: Clinicsf@aolcom, Poverty income guidelines for 2007, February 7, 2007)

Parenting Tips



Getting Your Child Ready for Kindergarten: Introduce you child to numbers and counting by using the number words and pointing out the written numerals as you and your child do things. When you are cooking or working in the kitchen you could ask your child to set 3 forks and plates on the table. If grocery shopping read the signs to your child or make a game of it and ask your child to put 6 blocks in a stack.

Play Simon Says. "Say to your child, "Simon what you to clap your hands 5 times." "Simon says take 3 steps backward".

Then switch roles and let your child be Simon and you do what Simon says.

Make number cards. Write index cards with the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (one number per card). Ask your child to place the correct number of pennies on each card. Read, tell stories, and say nursery rhymes about numbers and counting with your child. For example read the Three Bears; Three Billy Goats Gruff; One, Two, Buckle My Shoe; and Baa Baa Black Sheep with your child. Or sing counting songs such as This Old Man with your child.

The following are good books for four and five year olds:

Bunny Money	By	Rosemary Wells
Chicka Chicka 1,2,3		Bill Martin Jr, Michael Sampson, Lois Ehlert
Count		Denise Fleming
Feast for 10		Cathryn Falwell
Fish Eyes - A Book you Can Count On		Lois Ehlert
Mouse Count		Ellen Stohl Walsh
This Old Man		Pam Adams

(Source: U-Way Getting Ready for Kindergarten Calendar)

For Your Information

Power of Two: Has the transition to life in the United States put a strain on your relationship with your spouse?

Do you feel that you and your partner often misunderstand each other?

Is your relationship strong? Would you like to learn how to keep it that way?

The Refugee Center is proud to host a new and ongoing program, **THE POWER OF TWO**, for refugee and asylee couples. In this program, you will learn techniques that can help you to strengthen communication between your partner and yourself and avoid the many pitfalls that can cause misunderstandings between couples.



Throughout the year, we will be offering classes in a variety of languages. Call the Center (344- 8455) to find out when the Power of Two classes are being offered in your language. Childcare will be provided.

Check Scams: It's always nice to get a check in the mail, right? There is a deceptive sales tactic that involves sending a check to the recipient who then cashes it. But the fine print on the check, that few people read, stipulates that by cashing the check, the recipient agrees to terms for purchasing a product or monthly service such as a phone directory listing. If you receive an unexpected check in the mail, read the fine print and all accompanying literature or just shred the check. (Source: The Volunteer Connection, March 2007)

Cell Phone Scams: Reminder, all cell phone numbers will be released to telemarketing companies and you will start to receive sales calls. **YOU WILL BE CHARGED FOR THESE CALLS!** To prevent this call the following number from your cell phone: 888-382-1222. This is the National DO NOT CALL list. It will only take a minute of your time. It blocks your number for five (5) years. You must call from the cell phone number you are wanting blocked. You cannot call from a different phone number. . (Source: The Volunteer Connection, March 2007)

Local News

New Birth: Ha and Dang Ho are the proud grandparents of *Gabriel Thanh Dac Heath*. Gabriel, the son of Van Anh & Leo Heath III arrived January 1, 2007.

Mr. Vinh Nguyen and Mrs. Dieu Vo are happy to announce the birth of their daughter *Khuyen Nguyen*. Khuyen was born March 27, 2007 at Carle Hospital and weighed 8 lbs. She is the granddaughter of Mr. Kha Nguyen.