

POWER *for* LIVING

A quarterly publication of Empowered Living Ministries

January - March, 2010

Dear friends,

Happy New Year! As a fresh page of history opens before us, we wish you the blessing of making God and your closest relationships the top priority in your life. May you find the very soul of a pure life right at home and then share that as far as your influence goes.

Has conflict ever derailed you and those you love? I think we've all experienced that. The good news is that God's principles offer a way to turn conflict into a gateway to deeper understanding and closer connection between two individuals. Is it easy? No. Is it worth it? Yes!



Talk to Me!

\$4

This issue's article "**Communication Conflicts: Derailers or Gate-Openers**" is a story about how Rady and Jeanette Houghtelling found themselves derailed by conflict and then, using God's "gate-openers", turned that conflict into a gateway for a deeper connection. The article is an excerpt from a message by Rady and Jeanette called **Talk to Me!** It is available on a single CD.

The **CD companion to the book Irresistible** is now available. It includes eight dynamic messages presented by both Jim and Sally to live audiences this past year. You will find fresh ideas and encouragement to revitalize and empower your marriage and closest relationships.

We are grateful to all of you for your support of this ministry through your prayers, sharing the materials with others, giving of your finances, and—most important of all—taking Christ's hand and applying the messages to your lives.

Happy New Year!

Jim & Sally



Irresistible CD

\$32

Speaking Schedule

Upcoming Seminars

January 8 - 11 & 15 - 16

Warwick SDA Church
Warwick, Bermuda
Call (203) 404-0759

February 5 - 7

Plantation SDA Church
Fort Lauderdale, FL
Call (954) 684-1839

March 5 - 20

Brazil

Call 55-19-3858-1088

Email: dosreis1@terra.com.br

Annual Camp Meetings 2010

April 22 - 25 Leoni Meadows, CA

Call (406) 387-4333

June 10 - 13 Hood River, OR

Call (706) 375-1707

July 22 - 24 Polebridge, MT

Annual Open House

Call (406) 387-4333

September 5 - 7 Hickory, NC

Call (406) 387-4333

October 14 - 17 Roach, MO

Call (417) 661-6161

December 2 - 5 High Springs, FL

Call (406) 387-4333

**EMPOWERED
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MINISTRIES**

It's About Walking With God!



But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ.
Ephesians 4:15

Rady and Jeanette had decided to have their carpet professionally cleaned. The contractor had openings on either Friday or Monday morning. Jeanette told Rady, "We have plans for both Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Let's do it on Monday so that we won't be so pressed."

"Oh, don't worry about that," Rady reassured her. "I have time to get everything ready and put everything back." Then he spoke some fateful words: "You won't have to lift a finger."

"Well, if that's the case, I guess it would be all right."

Rady scheduled the carpet cleaner for 8 am Friday. When they got home from their Thursday night appointment, Jeanette noticed that Rady had moved some of the furniture out of the living room, but there was still quite a bit more to be moved. She felt just a twinge of anxiety.

You have to understand a major difference between

their personalities to fully appreciate what was building. Jeanette likes things settled, decided, and done ahead of time. Rady is much more comfortable doing things in a spontaneous, last minute sort of way and if it's not getting done, surely Jeanette will lend a hand.

The next morning, Rady got up and surveyed what needed to be moved before the cleaners came. They have a rather large coffee table and he wanted help moving it. "Hey Jeanette," he called to her, "Let's make the bed and then you can help me carry the coffee table in here and store it on top of the bed."

Jeanette could quickly trace in her mind what was coming. Former experience told her that it wouldn't be just one little thing. She thought, "Poor planning on his part does not constitute an emergency on my part." (**Assumption—***"he's tricking me into doing more than I planned on".*)

Based on that assumption she replied, "I thought you said I wouldn't have to lift a finger."

Rady's blood instantly began to boil. He sensed that she was going to hold him accountable in the strictest sense of their agreement—which really tweaked him. In his mind, "You won't have to lift a finger" means "you won't have to do it all". In her mind, it meant exactly what he had said: "You won't have to do anything".

Rady didn't want to give her a choice. He wanted to push her into just doing it. "Oh, just real quick, Sweetie. Come out here and help me lift it onto the bed and it will be done." (**Escalation**)

Jeanette replied coolly, "Well, Sweetheart, I was just heading for the shower. I haven't scheduled time into my morning to move furniture, but I will help you with this one thing after I get out of the shower."

Rady shouted back, "Look, I've done everything else and you can't help with one little thing? You little snoot! If you won't help with this one thing, then you are not a team player!!!" (**Attack**)

Jeanette was a bit stunned at this outburst. She rolled her eyes (**counter-attack**) and disappeared into the bathroom (**retreat**). Rady took a deep sigh and did it himself. When Jeanette came out of the bathroom he was silent and distant. (**Retreat**)

For the next couple of days, the two of them went about their life together correctly, properly, and politely—but it was a chore, not a joy. They were stuck in **retreat**—a familiar pattern on the incompatible side of conflict. But they've tasted what it is like to be on the irresistible side and they weren't content to stay where they were. Jeanette was thinking about how to find a gateway back to understanding ASAP. Rady was thinking about resolving it by letting

some time pass. You can see the differences in their personality again here!

"You want to go cross-country skiing?" Rady invited.

"Sure" she said. But just the way she said "sure" said volumes.

Rady probed, "What's wrong?"

Taking a deep breath, Jeanette responded, "The comments you made to me about being snooty and not a team player really hurt. I'm finding it hard to just go on without any resolve taking place." (*Honest ownership*)

"Hey, I'm looking forward to an enjoyable XC ski—so don't bring up anything disagreeable now." (*Assumption—"this is going to be negative".*)

"Well, you asked."

Rady opened her heart and then shut it down again. As they headed out to the frozen lake for a ski, her heart was crying out, "Talk to me. I want to understand you. I want you to understand me. I want our hearts to be together again." Rady longed to re-connect too, but feared what might be entailed with accomplishing it.

Finally he spoke. "OK, go ahead and say what's on your mind."

Jeanette began, "I was hurt by the names you called me. I can forgive you for that, but I sense a real distance between us and it feels to me like we're back to the old game of pretending everything is fine while avoiding each other." (*Honest ownership*)

"Oh you're exaggerating. You always take things to the nth degree. It's not that bad." (*Assumption: "this is going to be negative".*)

Jeanette was momentarily intimidated, but decided not to retreat. (*Stay with it*) "Rady, you've got to hear me. And you've got to be real about what's happening inside of you or we're going to lose everything we've worked so hard to gain. I don't want that, do you?"

Rady stood there feeling caught between the differences in their personalities and approaches. He reached a decision to *stay with it*.

"OK, Sweetheart. Tell me how this all affected you."


As Jeanette began to share, Rady put aside his own perspective and *listened* to understand her. Then he understood why his actions hit her so deeply. There were a lot of years in their relationship where Rady made promises he didn't follow through with. She has a deep need to know that she can count on him. Also, his derogatory comments discounted in her mind all that she does to keep their home running smoothly. It triggered her fear that her total worth

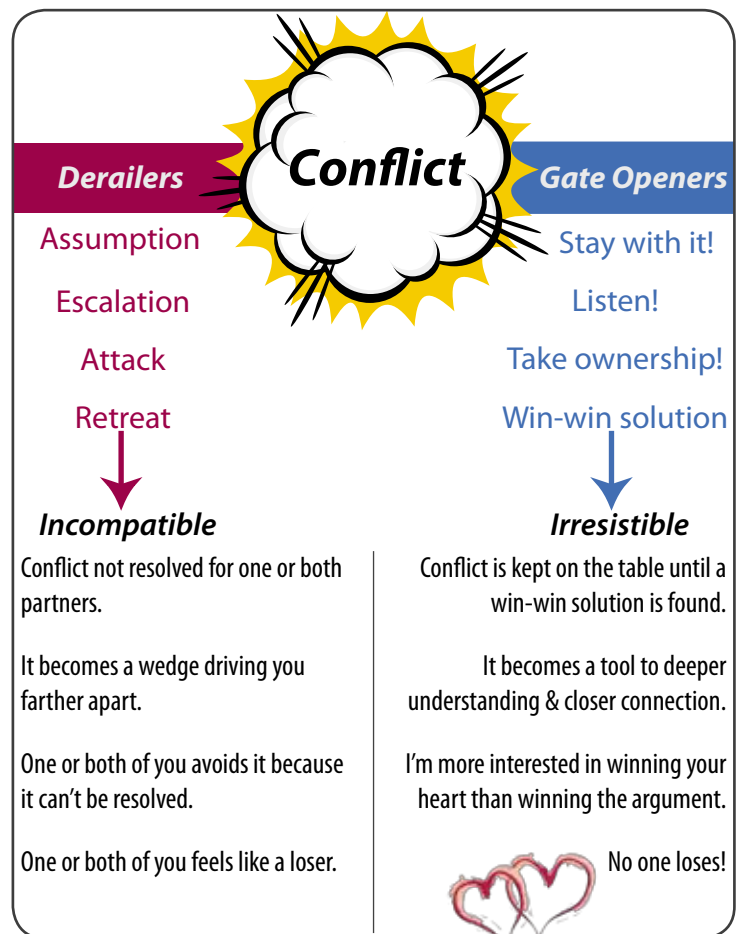
will be judged by one failure to please him.

After Jeanette honestly owned her side, it was Rady's turn to honestly share his perspective while Jeanette *listened to understand*. Then it clicked with Jeanette why her actions had pinged him so sharply. Because of experiences in Rady's early years, he has a deep fear of isolation. Jeanette's questioning his one request triggered that sense of insecurity and he felt judged and condemned. He just needs to know that he won't have to face everything alone.

As Rady and Jeanette shared their hearts with each other, the understanding opened empathy between them and they felt drawn towards each other like magnets. They had found a *win-win solution!*

It was a little thing—moving the coffee table. But that little coffee table at first derailed them and then ended up being the gateway to a deeper connection and understanding of each other.

Conflict is inevitable in any close relationship. Do you find yourself more often using derailleurs or gate openers? Are you on the incompatible side or the irresistible side? Don't be discouraged if you find yourself on the left side of this diagram. God is there for you! By listening to His Spirit and applying the principles of His Word, conflict can become a gateway to an irresistible relationship. 





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Empowered Living Ministries 3945 North Fork Road, Columbia Falls, MT 59912.
Email: Office@EmpoweredLivingMinistries.org
Office: (406) 387-4333 Fax: (406)387 4336 Order Toll Free: (877) 755-8300

It's About Walking With God!

Want to build security into your marriage? Grab onto this one principle: My spouse is not there to fulfill me. He or she is there for me to learn to love as Christ loves me.

Our natural inclination is to try by various means to extract the love and fulfillment we need from each other. Some do it by trying to please others and thereby gain their approval. Others attempt to control those about them to make sure they get what they want.

What happens when a pleaser and a controller meet? They get married! But they don't live happily ever after—because both are bent on extracting from the other what only God can give.

Here's a better plan. 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind.' " He is the great I AM. He was. He is. And He is there for you. He takes a personal interest in you and me.

Loving God means that He—not your spouse or anything else—becomes your source of joy and love. You accept the love that comes from your spouse as an overflow of God's love for you. Your love for your spouse is God's love flowing through you. And the homes where God's love flows are the most secure places on earth. 