

It Happened On The Way To The Dance

By Randy & Jeanne King

My wife, Jeanne, and I were asked by some friends where we went dancing last Saturday night. We explained we were at a Marriage Encounter community dance, and described the fantastic night we had. And then they asked how we ever got wrapped up with that group—and what was it all about? Boy, is that an invitation waiting to happen??

So how did we ever get wrapped up in this group? Not too long ago, a couple got up at church and talked about a Marriage Encounter Weekend. Their experience sounded great, so we signed up after Mass. At our Weekend, I couldn't believe how the presenters were talking about the very things Jeanne and I wrestled with! It was like they knew our every up and down in life!

The Weekend was like opening the drapes to a window that had been long closed. It gave us a fantastic view of the tremendous gift we had in each other, and what a beautiful life could be like for us, if we worked at it. When the presenters were talking about how we "Continue our Journey," I'm not sure if I heard all the words. But as I looked around the room, I realized I didn't want to leave behind these other couples that seemed to believe in the same things we did. How long do we search for neighbors or friends with these same values? I didn't want this weekend to just become a memory for us. But then I thought about the letter we got from our "prayer couple." Wow! I couldn't help but wonder if we would meet them someday.

To say we were blown away at the "Greet-off" is an understatement! I think my insides darn near turned to jello, we were so overwhelmed. When we were hugged by our prayer couple, it was as though we had known them forever. They were so excited for us.

And then they told us they wanted to go to our "reunion" with us, and also have us become a part of their circle, or sharing group! They explained that the Weekend just got us started, and that the most important part was yet to come. What came next was supporting each other as we would work to build our relationship, live the way the Weekend showed us, and build a community of lovers made up of all the couples that shared the experience of a Weekend.

Our prayer couple picked us up and took us to the reunion—what a group! Not all the other Weekend couples could make it, but I think most of us had our prayer couples there. About a week and a half later, they picked us up again and took us with them to their circle. We couldn't believe how it was like sitting with the couples on our Weekend that Sunday afternoon, not so long ago. In fact, it felt better than "family." Two of the other circle couples we recognized from our parish; we had just never met them before. They were excited for us as they talked about our upcoming "Journey" sessions, describing how it would help "jump-start" our dialog efforts, and help us face some of the "hurdles" living out the Weekend would present. The Journey sessions we attended

were presented by other couples from other circles—evidently many of them took turns doing this.

The way the members of the circle talked about upcoming events in the community, which events they were going to be helping organize, and how we would help with upcoming Weekends made Jeanne and me all the more excited about sharing this community with everyone we knew.

We began to understand what life in this circle was all about. It was about inviting other couples to go experience a Weekend. And then, even more importantly, it was to pray for them up to and through the weekend, and catch them with open arms on the other end. Our circle knew that without being there to catch the Weekend couples, and provide the supporting community, most couples would just fade away from a Weekend, to slowly return to “life before encounter.” It didn’t take long for Jeanne and me to realize that those newly encountered couples also gave our circle new life and excitement after each and every Weekend that we could “catch” another couple.

We realize what an important role we have, as a couple and as a circle. Once we get the couple to a Weekend, the presenting team helps the couples open the blinds to what can be, while we provide the prayer power to sustain them through the emotional rollercoaster of the Weekend. And then we get to “angel” them into our community and help provide each other the mutual support to live the dream and build our church—one couple at a time. Being able to help tuck couples in on a Weekend, pray for the couple we are going to “angel” into our circle, help build our community by helping organize the baseball tailgate party, and help put on a Journey session makes us understand what a tremendous role our circle gets to play in changing this world and building our church.

So, do you think that the couple that asked us about the dance will be coming to the next Weekend? We’ll be praying!!

Our love,
Randy & Jeanne