

Put the Spark Back into Your Marriage!

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Offered by Jack & Angel LaBate

Forty four years ago a young man, eyeing a beautiful young woman standing by the juke box, walked across the dance floor, slipped a quarter into the slot, selected a slow, romantic song and asked her to dance. That was the beginning of a beautiful love affair.

Dating Angel was a joy-filled, romantic time for me. She was a warm, sensitive, caring person and I adored her. Angel's quiet, easy-going manner was calming and reassuring. When I was with her I felt special. When we were together, we had so much to talk about. I felt so close to her and no matter what we did we enjoyed each other's company.

The early years of our marriage were beautiful and full of love and wonderful surprises. It was great waking up with Angel beside me. Angel was there for me, praising my efforts, encouraging me and giving me support. The smile on her face lit up my life. Our caring, tenderness and involvement with each other made our lovemaking even more passionate. Life was all that I hoped it would be.

When Jack and I started dating I can remember the excitement I felt when he picked me up for our dates. When I was with him I felt safe and secure. I loved how strong and confident he was. I knew I could depend on him. Jack was always on time and took care of everything for the both of us.

It was wonderful being married to Jack. He was gentle, tender and loving and so much fun to be with. I felt desired, beautiful and very special. I couldn't wait to get home from work to be with him. During dinner we'd talk about us and all we wanted for our life together. There was lots of laughter and playful teasing that often turned into tender, beautiful moments of lovemaking. Jack's tenderness and love filled my life.

As time passed, the demands of our jobs, getting ahead and being parents began to get in the way of our time together. I saw Jack's organized qualities and his ability to take charge and get things done, as something that would enhance our relationship, but when he put all his energy and focus on his list and what he wanted to do, I felt left out. When he took control and made decisions for us, I began to think that what I had to say wasn't important. These issues and behaviors began to get in the way of our closeness.

We began to realize that our expectations for our marriage were not being met. There were times we felt disappointed and frustrated with the way things were. Our personalities and behaviors, even some of the qualities that we fell in love with in the

beginning began to irritate us. I always admired the way Angel looked, but when I realized how long it took her to get ready, I felt frustrated. Being on time and getting things done in an efficient manner was very important to me and I began to see Angel's easy-going behavior getting in the way. There were times when I was ready to make love and I found out quickly that Angel was in a different place. Our differences and expectations began to cause tension in our relationship.

Our intimate communication lessened. Our conversations were more about the children, our jobs, the bills, the house, and the endless lists of things that had to get done, rather than about us. There was a lot going on inside of us that we were not talking about. We had lost some of the focus that we had with each other during the early years of our marriage. There were times when we felt confused and lonely and we didn't understand why. We thought we were working at our relationship, but things didn't always come together. Something was missing. We began searching for a way to enrich our marriage.

We made our Marriage Encounter Weekend 27 years ago. It was an exciting, rewarding and life-giving experience. It gave us an opportunity to look at how we were living. It helped us to see how we lost sight of the most important person in our life. We realized that we were taking one another for granted. We recognized that there were behaviors and attitudes that we needed to change in order to improve our relationship. By using the Dialogue Technique that we learned on our weekend our communication improved. We became better listeners and more aware of the feelings and needs that we both have and how they affected our relationship. We talked about us, what was going on inside. It was easier for us to get through the issues that once kept us apart. We rediscovered one another and recaptured the deep love and passion that made our relationship so life giving. We saw how important our love relationship is to our family, our church, and to God. We realized how much God yearns for our closeness and that He wants us to be united in our love for one another. By using the Dialogue Technique and the many Tools we were given on the Weekend we found the intimacy and joy that we somehow lost. **The spark came back into our marriage and after 44 years is still there.**

We offer you the gift that we received 27 years ago, a gift that can last a lifetime. The Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend experience teaches a unique method of communication. It is for couples with good marriages who want to enrich their relationship. The weekend is a very private experience, there is no group sharing. This life-giving experience is for all couples whether you've been married a year or 50 years or more. The Weekend is a great way to put the spark back in your marriage and to celebrate your love for one another. Catholic Marriage Encounter Weekends are offered throughout the year in the Atlanta Area. Please call **866-ATL-WWME (866-285-9963)** or visit our website at **www.wweatlanta.org**