

# REUNION TIMES



ISSUE SEVEN

USAREUR MINISTRY TEAM

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## INTIMACY

One of my all-time favorite cartoons is **Calvin and Hobbes**, by **Bill Watterson**. Some of Calvin's "wisdom" is captured below as he explains life to his faithful companion, his stuffed tiger, **Hobbes**:

- The only skills I have the patience to learn are those that have no real application in life.
- God put me on Earth to accomplish a certain number of things. Right now I am so far behind I will never die.
- Know what's weird? Day by day, nothing seems to change. But pretty soon, everything is different.
- I think life should be more like TV. I think all of life's problems ought to be solved in third minutes with simple homilies, don't you? I think weight and oral hygiene ought to be our biggest concerns. I think we should all have powerful, high-paying jobs, and everyone should drive fancy sports cars. All our desires should be instantly gratified. Women should always wear tight cloths and men should carry powerful handguns. Life overall should be more glamorous, thrill-packed, and filled with applause, don't you think, Hobbes?

Reality is different than imagination and make-believe. We don't live in a world where every problem is solved in 30 minutes or an hour. Through our daily struggles over time, our families grow in INTIMACY...that is a "feeling of belonging together".

- Chaplain Erkkinen



"Man! I can't wait for them to get home!"

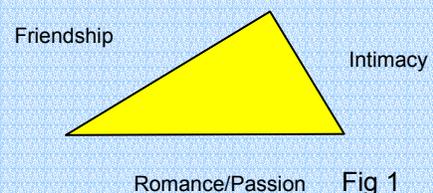
## FLAT TIRES

My wife called me at work one day and told me that one of our tires was going flat. Apparently, a nail had worked its way into the tire and air was slowly escaping over time. Now, flat tires can occur in two ways...either a **slow leak** or a **blow-out**. Either way, at the end of the day you have a flat tire.

Sometimes in marriages a similar thing occurs. Over time, interest, passion, and the feeling of "belonging together" seem to leak from the relationship. In most cases, the flat tire in marriages is not the result of a blow-out, rather it is the result of a steady leak of the stuff that makes the marriage fulfilling.

This does not need to happen. To minimize the slow leak process, it might be helpful to understand how a good, solid marriage is build over time.

In the early years of a relationship, say years one to five, the relationship is established and fueled by physical attraction/romance/passion. It is basic to the relationship. Friendship and intimacy are present to varying degrees but passion is the base. (Fig.1)



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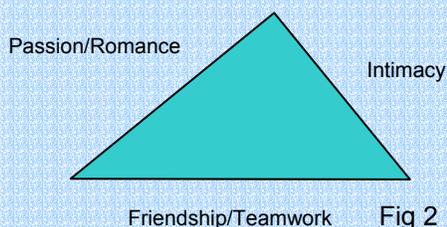
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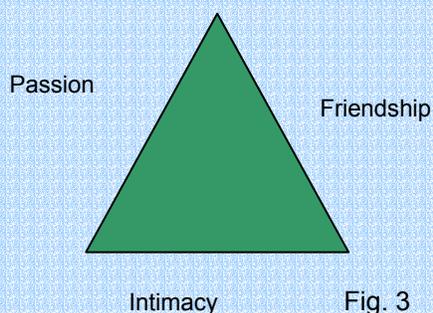
As the relationship evolves, friendship becomes more prominent as husband and wife enjoy doing things together. The "friendship years" begin around the five to ten-year mark as the couple shares child-rearing, family activities, car pools, ups and downs in income, job challenges, and the joys and struggles of marriage and family responsibilities.

A bond of friendship and teamwork is foundational with passion taking less of a role and intimacy, the overarching feeling of "belonging together", is growing. NOTE: in healthy family relationships, romance continues to thrive. Often, however, couples must PLAN times together to ensure passion doesn't deflate. (Fig. 2)



As the couple continues to grow together, to weather the storms, they will find themselves sharing common goals, dreams, thoughts, and loves. This is intimacy, that sense of common purpose and belonging together.

When children see this, it gives them a sense of security like nothings else can. When intimacy becomes the foundation of a relationship, both friendship and passion tend to grow as well (Fig. 3).



Keep in mind, all relationships will have their struggles. There are NO perfect marriages since there are NO perfect people. Every marriage is a "work in progress".

Listening, demonstrating care, sensitivity, honesty, and patience are great building blocks to developing an **intimate marriage**. Keep checking the tires!

Chaplain Erkkinen



Can you hear me NOW???

### KIDS ARE DOWNLOADING...

It is true! Kids today are downloading much of their parents' marriage data. In a way, we all have a "hard drive" that is constantly being programmed and receiving data on what it means to be a family, a husband, a wife, a mother, or father. In our society, we see many who have a virus on their hard drives. Unfortunately, nobody has invented a "Norton" anti-virus to purge or scrub the damaged drive. There is no "clean sweep" program that will undo or erase bad data from a young child who sees a husband and father abuse his wife. There is no download that will delete the hurtful words, the memories, the tears.

Over time, the old can be replaced with good data, positive role models, and hard work. Sometimes it takes counseling. Remember, you are the most significant source of data for YOUR CHILD. You are the example that will mold your child's vision of marriage and family. Hmmm. That is something to ponder.

### Some quotes...

Husbands are awkward things to deal with; even keeping them in hot water will not make them tender.  
- Mary Buckley

Try praising your wife, even if it does frighten her at first.  
- Billy Sunday