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澳洲家庭更新協會
Marriage and Family For Christ

A date with my spouse

It was a hectic exhaustive week already; I still had to rush to my parents' home to get back the Library books my three kids left behind a week ago. Mum caught my tired look and said, "Gee! The kids really keep you on the go all the time! Hope you are not neglecting your marriage. How about you and Peter take a night out, on a date, while Dad and I look after the kids?" The words "neglecting your marriage" struck me **hard** and also instantly synchronized my recent feelings that the original shimmer of intimacy between Peter and I seemed to have faded. The realities of married life for Peter and me, for the past ten years, are occupied by deprived sleep, dirty diapers, constantly filling up the groceries to feed the family, preparing food, washing dishes, laundry, bills and the kids' individual different needs. We no longer have the time and energy to be close or feel close to each other. With the burden of the responsibilities of the family on my shoulder, I replied Mum casually, "Yes, why not! Really appreciate your offer, let me talk to Peter."

From my conversation with Peter about the Date, he felt that our marriage was not in difficult strain, but agreed that our marriage was suffering from some neglect, centering on raising children, church activities, focusing on our financial means, and his workload at work.

The Date

I put on some make-up and groomed my hair to make myself attractive while Peter had a shave and smartly dressed for dinner at our favourite quiet little restaurant that we frequently went to before our marriage. The place brought back some reminiscence of our intimate time together. After selecting our favourite dishes from the Menu, Peter looked me in the eyes and gently said, "You look beautiful, especially in that dress, the colour suits your complexion." At that instant, those words lifted me to blissful joy.....he took notice of me, he is complimenting me! I took his hands and held them tight to respond my affection and appreciation for him, I whispered, "Thank you, it is so nice to hear you say that." He squeezed my hands, we both smiled, acknowledging the pleasure of the moment and focusing our undivided attention, deep into our inner souls.

I asked about how he had been feeling about life and how he viewed our marriage. He revealed to me that he was stressed at work with some "politics" issues on promotion to the next level of management. He felt that our marriage was going great and affirmed that he loved me deeply but simply did not express them enough. I reciprocated with my feelings on our marriage, "I feel that I am being "pulled apart" by all the pressures and demands of running the family. I sometimes query the usefulness of my life. I also fear that I am wasting my potential being a wife and mother. At times I get discouraged

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because so much of what I do seemed to go unnoticed and unappreciated. “At this point Peter drew close to my side, had his arms firmly around my shoulders and said warmly with affection, “Honey, without your support, I cannot be the man I am now. You have given up your brilliant Marketing career to be a devoted wife and mother, to invest your time and energy in me and the children. I really thank you for your selfless sacrifice and I know that God blesses me through you. I always know this in my heart and always wanted to tell you, but I regret that I just took things for granted, and have not expressed this to you much earlier, I hope it is not too late now. I am glad that you brought this up, I will remind myself to say this more often.” On hearing those affirming words, tears just welled up in my eyes and overflowed down my cheeks. They were tears of joy, the joy that our emotions are connected, bonding our love for each other.

Driving home to pick up the kids from my parents’, in our blissful mood, we laughed, joked, recalling some silly things we did at our first date. We agreed in unison that to keep our marriage alive and refreshed, we need to take up this Dating regularly as a routine maintenance of our marriage. In that happy note, the first thing I asked my parents was, “Can we go on a date again next week? Next month?”

Some reflections

Still lingering with the joy of our dating last night, I reflected on the goodness that it effected:

- Spending time in giving one another the undivided attention results an in-depth communication
- Enhancing emotional connectedness to building up marriage intimacy
- Strengthening and deepening the bond of affection, reviving the spark in marriage
- Satisfying our human needs for attention, affection, comfort, companionship
- Humans grow and change in developmental stages, we need to constantly update our understanding about our spouse, in the same way we need to regularly update our computer software
- Healthy loving relationships don’t just evolve, they are nurtured with commitment and regularity
- Dating need not be expensive at restaurants, it is merely a couples’ together time, away from family pressures, to get out and get closer. It can be a date walking in the park, or over a cup of coffee at Starbucks.
- Recalling moments of our past that make us laugh. Some fun and laughter at our date are healing balm for our marriage. “A cheerful heart is good medicine” (Prov 17:22)

“Enjoy life with the woman whom you love all the days of your fleeting life.....” (Eccl9:9)

“Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot wash it away. If one were to give all the wealth of his house for love, it would be utterly scorned.” (Songs8:7)