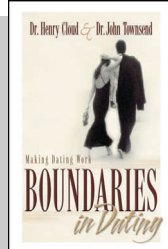


**RECOMMENDED RESOURCES & SUPPORT****Boundaries in Dating**  
Dr. Henry Cloud &  
Dr. John Townsend

Cloud and Townsend outline the tremendous opportunities dating provides individuals to grow in character, communication, and the ability to choose healthy relational skills. This is a great resource for those thinking dating for the first time or dating again after the loss of a relationship.



We will be offering a

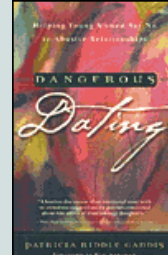
**RELATIONSHIP GROUP**  
beginning  
FEBRUARY 7, 2006  
1:00—2:30 P.M.

This 10-week Group will focus on developing healthy relationship skills

Please call us for details. Dr. Les & Leslie Parrott's book *Relationships* (includes workbook) will be available to purchase.

**Dangerous Dating**  
Patricia Riddle Gaddis

Patricia Gaddis offers parents, counselors, and pastors a helpful guide for helping teens and young women to avoid or break out of abusive dating relations. She also discusses what signs to look for and how to open communication when signs of abuse are detected. Dating violence is a leading cause of death in young women 15 to 35 years of age.



**UPDATED 2006 ADA COUNTY RESOURCE DIRECTORIES WILL BE AVAILABLE IN FEBRUARY!**  
Cost including binder and tabs is \$35.00. Refills are \$15.00.  
Call or e-mail the SPM office for your copy.

**Contact us at 323-2169 or [splace@spro.net](mailto:splace@spro.net)**



Safe  
Place  
Ministries

P. O. Box 4892  
Boise, ID  
83711  
208-323-2169

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We want very much for *SAFE PLACE NEWS* to be a helpful resource for many people. With this in mind, permission to duplicate this newsletter for free distribution is granted. Any quotations or references to it should give proper credit to SAFE PLACE MINISTRIES. We encourage input and suggestions. Send correspondence to:  
SPM, P. O. Box 4892, Boise, ID 83711, or call 208-323-2169.  
An annual tax deductible gift of \$10.00 is welcome to help cover expenses.

**SAFE PLACE NEWS**

*Promoting safe places, consistent with the character of Christ,  
for women and their families to heal and grow.*

Issue 27  
January 2006

**COME HELP US CELEBRATE SPM'S 10TH ANNIVERSARY****SAFE PLACE  
MINISTRIES  
Annual Benefit  
Dessert & Auction**

February 4th, 2006  
7:00—9:30 P.M.

Hatch Ballroom  
BSU Student Union  
Building

Reserved parking is  
available behind the  
Student Union

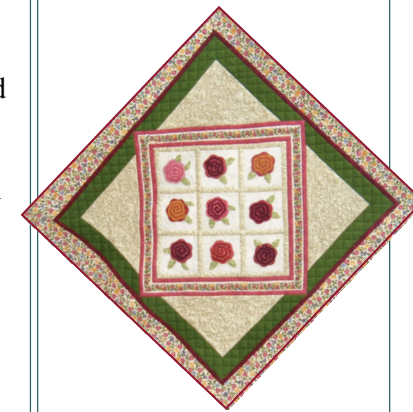
Call SPM office to  
reserve tickets—  
323-2169

Tickets are free but  
seating is limited

Safe Place Ministries is ten years old and we are amazed and in awe of what God has accomplished through the prayers and compassionate hearts of our friends and supporters. We would like to invite you to join with us to hear about and celebrate what God has done and the part you have played in the lives of women and their families across Idaho.

This year's quilt, pieced by Connie Werner and hand appliquéd by Lucy Rishel, is named "Roses in Bloom." Connie chose the name because, "it is representative of the way SPM helps wounded victims grow and blossom to their full potential."

The quilt will be on display at the dessert and raffle tickets may be purchased before or during the dessert. One lucky person will be chosen to become the quilt's new owner at the end of the evening. Raffle tickets are \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00. Last year's raffle totaled \$3,841.00.

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**HEALTHY DATING RELATIONSHIPS**

Healthy relationships make us feel more alive and in tune with God, ourselves and others. One client, however, succinctly summed up the thoughts and feelings of many when she said with a great deal of sadness, "I wouldn't know what a healthy relationship looked like if it bit me on the nose."

Mika (not her real name) like most of us, is caught between two realities. The God-given thirst for authentic relationships and the confusing and often pain-filled realities of the relationships we have experienced.

God created us with a tremendous capacity for relationship—with Himself and with others. Some social scientists call this 'longing for belonging,' assimilation, affiliation, or webbing. Christians often use the words fellowship, connecting, or relating. Whatever we call it, the drive to connect with others in meaningful ways is a gift to be nurtured.

*(Continued on page 2)*



## CLIENT'S CORNER

I have been a client at SPM for one year, almost to the day. It has been a year of unbelievable transformation, so much of it due to the extraordinary faithfulness of the women at SPM.

Through their unconditional love and tireless encouragement, they have shown me that I am a person of incredible value and worth and through their examples of Christ-likeness I am truly becoming the woman my Heavenly Father had planned all along.

I will be eternally grateful to SPM for giving me the tools through Christ to live a truly extraordinary life and the faith to believe that I can accomplish anything through Him who gives me strength."

*In each newsletter we set aside space to share some of our clients' thoughts, poetry or artwork. If you would like to contribute your work, please give us a call or send us a copy. Your contributions will remain confidential and if we choose to publish them we will not include your name or other identifying information.*

"Here I am, all of me.  
But what kind of offer is that?  
This pain, this brokenness,  
these tears,  
What can You make of these?  
Sacrifices to be given up?  
"A broken and contrite heart  
You will not despise!  
But aren't these poor offerings  
For a King?  
But child,  
Look at ME:  
My heart in Gethsemane—  
A broken, bleeding thing.  
And my body on that tree—  
A gift that God  
Did not despise.  
Kingly offerings for the poor!  
And Child,  
Look what I did with these!

## HEALTHY DATING RELATIONSHIPS (cont.)

The concept of dating, however, has nearly lost its meaning in our media saturated culture. Dating by design, "gives people the opportunity to learn about themselves, others and relationships in a safe context. When done properly, dating is an incubator time of discovering the opposite sex, one's own sexual feelings, moral limits, one's need for relationship skills, and one's taste in people." (Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend)

Healthy dating should also have a proper context. "A single person must date within a community of people who care about him or her. Dating gives people a place to grow and learn in the safety of people who can help them develop...before making a marriage commitment. (Cloud & Townsend).

The God of the Bible, who believes that relationship with the opposite sex, is a very good thing, chose not to give a formula for healthy dating. Instead, He shows us His heart of love for us and draws us into a love relationship with Him. In the context of personal

relationship, he patiently teaches us (if we are willing) ways to honor, love and serve others. Let's look at some of the principles He has designed for healthy relating.

**First, we are to find our satisfaction in Him.** If we don't know how to do that (or we refuse to do that), our hunger for relationship easily becomes an obsession. We search for *the one* relationship that will fulfill us. Then, when we find *the one*, the pressure (subtle or blatant) we put on the relationship to keep fulfilling our needs is too great to bear and the relationship crumbles under its weight. It is only in beginning to trust that God loves us and has good plans for healthy relationships that we can let go of our frantic search for the relationships that we think will sustain us, and focus on the deeper issues of the heart.

**Second, God gives us both freedom and the responsibility for our own lives.**

God gives each of us the freedom to choose how we live and yet holds

us accountable for the choices we make. This would be a cruel fate if he left us to our own devices. Thankfully, He doesn't. His Word is filled with principles to guide us. Yet nowhere are relationships more confused than in the area of freedom and responsibility. What is it we are responsible for? What are we free to choose.

There are many answers concerning our life in total. But on the subject of dating. Drs. Cloud and Townsend in their book, *Boundaries in Dating*, suggest five areas that we are responsible to define and protect in our lives.

1. Your love: your deepest capacity to connect and trust.
2. Your emotions: your need to own your feelings and not be controlled by someone else's feelings.
3. Your values: your need to have your live reflect what you care about most deeply.
4. Your behaviors: your control over how you act in your dating relationship.

*I urge you to live according to your new life in the Holy Spirit. . .*

*When the Holy Spirit controls our lives, he will produce this kind of fruit in us: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Galatians 5:16, 22-23*

### Suggested Reading:

*Boundaries in Dating* by Dr. Henry Cloud & Dr. John Townsend

*Relationships* by Dr. Les & Leslie Parrott

*I Gave Dating a Chance* Jeremy Clark

*I Married Adventure* by Luci Swindoll

*Dangerous Dating* by Patricia Riddle Gaddis

The authors label these five areas *boundaries*, or property lines, that *define* and *protect* us. Personal choices that tell us "who we are and who we are not; what we agree with and disagree with; what we love and what we hate."

God is not shy about communicating his boundaries. He clearly tells us who He is and what relationship with Him looks like. Then he gives us the freedom to choose relationship with Him or walk away. Likewise, healthy dating is a process of getting to know each other and what boundaries define each person. For instance, if your spiritual life is extremely important to you and you clearly and honestly communicate this to your date, he or she then has important information about you. He can then freely decide whether that is an interest he currently shares or one he might like to learn more about. His response will, in turn, give you important information about him and allow you to make a decision about whether this is a relationship you want to pursue as a friendship or a friendship that you hope will deepen over time.

Boundaries also protect us. If the things you value are met with silence or rejection that are hurtful to you, you might decide that the person's opinions are consistent with a casual friendship, but not someone you would trust with the intimacy and deepening relationship you desire in a marriage partner.

**Third, the healthiest dating relationships are those between two healthy people.** Not perfect people, but those who can own their own faults without denial or blame. People who earn trust by their character instead of demanding trust. Those who help you, by their example and their words to become a better person. Those who take responsibility for their side of an issue. People who are committed to honesty, not deception. People who know that intimacy grows over time and who won't pressure you into false intimacy. People who enjoy doing some of the same things you do and encourage your interests even when they are not mutual.

**Imagine for a moment two healthy people running a marathon.** They are both exercising their God-given freedom to run with passion. They have individually taken responsibility for their own health. They have trained mentally and physically, eaten well, rested and are excited about the race. They are running in the same direction with the same goal in mind.

At the halfway point they pull alongside each other and find they are good for each other. They know how to encourage each other and their strides match. When one stumbles, the other reaches over and extends a hand. When one is mentally ready to quit, the other urges him on. They share the same goal—doing their personal best—as they run toward the finish line. They may not cross the line together. When one shows signs of exhaustion, he or she urges the other to go on, to finish the race. Then the one who crosses the line first waits eagerly for his friend to join him.

Dating can be a lot like training for a marathon. Much of the work is personal and often solitary, like running in the rain at 5:00 a.m., and becoming the person God longs for you to become (not for His sake but for yours). Then you must faithfully show up and run the race, and keep your heart open to the running partners who may literally fall in step beside you.