

IE-CAMFT Mission Statement: We are professional visionaries dedicated to providing training, networking, and advocacy for Marriage and Family Therapists to promote healthy individual, and couple and family relationships.

With the above mission in mind, please consider the following invitation to speak before IE-CAMFT at a future date.

Dear Members:

One of the best known ways to build your practice is to get into the community and speak about your expertise. And, your local association of therapists is interested in learning new theories, skills, tools, and approaches to treatment. Share your knowledge, experience and wisdom with us!

I am looking for presenters for these future IE-CAMFT meetings in 2011:

Friday September 23 8:30am-10:30am
Friday October 28 8:30am-10:30am
Friday December 2 8:30am-10:30am

There will also be opportunities in March, April, May and June 2012.

I'd be thrilled with 1) your self-nomination, or 2) recommendations of other talented folks. The more recommendations the merrier! Call or text me at 951-347-1837, or e-mail me at Doreen@ABetterWayCenter.com

Doreen Van Leeuwen, LMFT
Program Chair

Read the other columns herein for awareness of therapeutic focus of next meeting, May 27.

"Imago Couples Therapy: Keeping Your Cool in the Eye Of the Storm"

In our second look at Imago Relationship Therapy and Theory, we will be including a look at the work of Hedy and Yumi Schleifer, who have enriched and expanded the art of working with couples through their experience, creativity, and genius. Come enjoy the rich work of Imago via movies and experiential learning, as developed by Harville Hendrix and Helen Lakelly Hunt, and complemented by Hedy and Yumi Schleifer. The following material is included for your development and growth as a therapist.

Commandments for Committed Relationship By Hedy Schleifer, MA, LMHC

Our relationships live in a "relational space" between us.

There is an invisible bridge that CONNECTS us to our partner and that allows us to visit and get to know them.

Our total 100% presence to the other creates a genuine encounter with them.

Our relationship is a living laboratory for the creation of two adults.

Give partner at least 100 small Gestures of Love and Caring every day.

Carry a picture in your wallet of your partner as a young child.

Remember the 90-10 formula in any conflict: 10% of the energy comes from the present; 90% comes from past frustrations and hurts.

"Incompatibility" is a boost to your relationship!

Transform our point of view from: "The two of us are one and I'm the one!", to "The two of us are two (individuals) on a joint journey."

Create a safe harbor for the "other", in order to free our passion.

The mission of committed relationship is to complete unfinished childhood developmental issues and become relationally mature adults.

When things are very difficult, growth is trying to happen.

Keep the fire going through romance: All day is foreplay.

Make the Divine Presence a partner in your relationship.

With increasing consciousness and intentionality, it gets better all the time.

Objectives of the Imago Relationship Therapy Workshop / Presentation:

- To provide a conceptual reframing of relationships
- To shift couples to “dissolving” rather than resolving problems
- To develop a deeper understanding of the purpose and dynamics of intimate relationships
- To learn new connection skills, via demonstration
- To assist couples in envisioning the relationship of their dreams

Brief Summary of how Imago Relationship Therapy Transforms Relationships

by Doreen Van Leeuwen

“Once upon a time” you found a special someone who seemed capable of loving you in just the ways you needed to complement and complete you. The “drugs” of romantic love held you in their spell long enough to open your heart and life to this person. And, as fairy tales often do, they begin to crumble under the weight of the all too real DIFFERENCES! Why, the very qualities that attracted you to each other now often drive you mad!

It's vital to identify the hidden forces that control your relationship. You may think that you are perfectly aware of “just what's going on here”, yet to create a relationship with *sustainable intimacy* both of you have to move from automatic reaction to deliberate action.

As you learn how to get to the root of your issues, you can begin to dissolve them. This requires developing the skill of what I will call *Leaning-In Listening*, a 100% focused forward-leaning posture of heart, mind, and body that allows the other in. As you cultivate this intimate capacity you will hear and fill your partner's needs with laser-like precision.

This requires a discovery process of the traits of your childhood caretakers, both the positive and negative ones, and uncovering the childhood agenda that each of you brings to the relationship. Whenever developmental needs are unfinished, those issues often surface later, in an intimate relationship, but rarely in a conscious and intentional way. Usually the pain or our adaptation to it shows up in reactive, intimacy-diminishing behavior (like a temper tantrum, you know?)

The beauty of the Imago approach is that it offers a way for you to go about this discovery in a systematic way that allows both people in the relationship to piece together the core frustrations with their partner

and the unfinished script from the past. Through exercises such as the Imago Profile of Childhood Caretakers, and the Profile of My Partner, we start to see how certain traits overlap, how “my” unfinished details of the past frequently complement “yours”, and most potently, how to begin the process of helping each other grow up. The empathy is built through Parent-Child Dialogues, another of the powerful Imago tools for healing.

Frustrations can be seen as opportunities for “a double blessing.” Through the process of Frustration Dialogues, we are able to transform complaints and criticisms into positive requests for change. The relationship benefits in two ways: as partners gift each other with the desired change, the giver stretches into new behavior, and the receiver gets the healing attention needed. Both become increasingly whole. Just imagine what could happen if both of you shift your conflict paradigm from “OMG, another argument!” to “Yes! This is a perfect opportunity for us to heal, grow, and become more connected!” (It ain't easy. Just ask my husband!)

Even more important than the retrospective work is the future focus. Together, you identify the characteristics of your ideal relationship via the Ideal Relationship Exercise. You then pick a component of your vision to work on, and decide on how to “behavioralize” it. An ideal becomes real through using the Vision Into Action Exercise.

Finally, much attention is paid to Re-romanticizing the Relationship, via Appreciation and Positive Flooding Dialogues, Caring Behaviors, Surprise Lists, Sexual Caring Behaviors, Intimacy-Building Rituals, and High Energy Fun Activities. The more you care for the relationship in these ways, the better you feel, and the greater your joy and delight in each other!

Brief Biography

Doreen Van Leeuwen is a licensed marriage and family therapist, certified Imago Relationship Therapist, and relationship coach serving the Inland Empire. She loves working with couples! For the past ten years, she has worked with hundreds of them to help restore intimacy. When you feel frustrated in your work with a couple, or in your personal relationship, and you think to yourself “There's GOT to be a better way!” contact Doreen. She is offering any current dues-paying member of the Inland Empire Chapter of CAMFT a **50-minute FREE consult**. Call, text 951-347-1837, e-mail Doreen@ABetterWayCenter.com.