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THE EFFECTS OF UTILIZING POSITIVE RITUAL BEHAVIOR IN  
MARRIAGE ON MARITAL SATISFACTION AND INTIMACY

BY

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy  
Seton Hall University

1997

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## Dedication

I have long eschewed those interminable awards ceremonies where the recipients find it necessary to thank everyone in their near and distant past. I must admit however, that as I began to think of dedicating this manuscript I fondly remembered my nursery school teacher, Sister Mary Felix IHM.

When I began to pursue my doctorate I was admonished that completion of the degree would never reflect my intelligence, only my tenacity. If that is true and I believe it is, then it is also a reflection of the love, prayers, support, and patience of many people in my life.

I would like to specially recognize some people because of their particular contributions to this long process. My parents Mary and Al Valenti were my first teachers of ritual. Indeed, they often make ritual out of making ritual. Their marriage is 56 years young, and they are a blessing to their children and grandchildren. For the past seven years through their own illnesses, there has always been a "Don't get discouraged, you'll be fine".

My brother Ron and his wife Marya have encouraged me, prodded me, helped me, loved me, and daily held me in prayer. These simple verbs cannot begin to describe the depth of activity they reflect. My niece Monica found that

dreams of a trip to Cancun were a good incentive for me to write. Matthew, my nephew and currently the fourth doctoral student in the family, copied articles, entered data, e-mailed me jokes, and on the blackest of days knew exactly the right thing to say and do. Christina found every appropriate Hallmark Shoebox greeting card to coincide with every phase of the writing as well as suffer the line at the deli.

The Gundry, Leonzi, and Noll families reminded me to play. My extended family of St. Anne's Episcopal Church in Trexlertown, Pa. advocated and advertised the study any way they could. Sharon Patent my statistician showed me through her enthusiasm that statistics has a fun side. Becky Reid who was willing to word process another dissertation for this family read, edited, and formatted every word. Her professionalism and care did so much to make the writing an enjoyable endeavor. She has become a friend.

The TLB (Thursday Lunch Bunch) sessions were invaluable to me. Marcia Kaufman was the midwife of this project, John Falbo and Virginia ViDoni became its godparents. My committee was a community. Dr. Dunn, Dr. Massey and Dr. Schreitmueller are a credit to Seton Hall and to the work of marriage and family therapy. They have guided and sometimes

chided but they have always been there for me and always believed in this work.

There is one for whom my gratitude knows no bounds; my soulmate and my husband, Michael. He has filled in all the blanks of my life and enabled me to live my dreams. He has taught me that supermarkets are places to dance as well as shop. He has proven that a date at the library to do research is as much fun at fifty as it is at twenty. He was and is the inspiration to understand the connection between ritual and intimacy and satisfaction.

Finally, the words of the Eucharistic Prayer in the Episcopal Rite of Worship say it best: It is right to give HIM thanks and praise. So, I thank and praise the God of us all for the good work He has begun in us.

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## Chapter I

### Introduction

The research, study and practice of marital work in psychology has by default most often centered around the pathology of marriage (Fenell, 1993). "Despite the fact that many marriages last for decades most of the marital research in psychology . . . has been more concerned with marriages that dissolve than with marriages that stay together" (Levenson, Cartensen, & Gottman, 1993, p. 30). Distressed couples experiencing difficulties are those who most frequently present to the clinician. The dynamics of these couples are gleaned by researchers in the hope that some insight may be gained into creating satisfying, enduring, good and happy marriages, through avoidance of the presenting distressed dynamics. This can be regarded as a minimalist approach in adding to the positive body of marital research. Limited vision can only produce a limited view. What has been learned by the research of marital distress is invaluable. What remains largely uncharted are the higher functioning tendencies of nondistressed couples.

This study will examine what may be one of those higher functioning tendencies. A little examined resource for couples is the use of positive ritual behavior. Ritual behavior is all around us, it is our milieu as human beings. It is integral to how we communicate with one another. It is integral to how we connect to each other. It is integral to our understanding of the paradox of our life cycle, that change is necessary to sustain continuity. "Couples who lack satisfying daily rituals will create unsatisfying ones" (Imber-Black & Roberts, 1992, p. 115). If a spouse comes home from work and sorts through the mail before greeting his/her partner, a message is communicated. If a spouse travels a great deal and does not contact his/her spouse during a business trip, a message is communicated. A kiss when a partner leaves for or returns from work communicates a message. A note tucked into a suitcase, or a greeting waiting at a hotel communicates a message. This research aimed to show how positive ritual behavior impacts on marital satisfaction and intimacy within marriage.

It has been acknowledged that a lack of intimacy in marriage breeds dissatisfaction. It has also been acknowledged that dissatisfaction is one of the major propellants of divorce (Spanier & Lewis, 1980). It would be valuable to the overall body of marital research to investigate ways in which intimacy and satisfaction may be

enhanced. This study focused on whether teaching couples about the use of positive ritual behaviors, as well as offering suggestions to incorporate positive rituals in their marriage would affect their overall levels of satisfaction and/or intimacy.

### Background

It is often touted in the media that the United States has become a society of divorce. ". . . the United States now has the highest divorce rate among major industrialized countries" (O'Leary & Smith, 1991, p. 192). Since the 1980's the rate and increase of marital dissolution have remained high enough, so that it is estimated that one half of all marriages through the 1990's will end in divorce (Cherlin, 1992). There are societal and cultural constructs as well as religious ideologies that espouse that marriage should be once and forever. Marriages dissolved by divorce are often referred to as failed or broken. Politicians, as well as sociologists and religious leaders, identify divorce as one of the main causes of the disintegration of the family and therefore a threat to the very core of the American way. Although the statistic of first marriage dissolution is indeed staggering, it is not a fully adequate portrayal. If anything, a more realistic descriptor is that the United States is now a society of multi-marriages.

According to Cherlin (1992) “. . .most divorced persons remarry, about two-thirds of the women and three-fourths of the men” (p. 80). Marriage remains the cornerstone of society, but is always in need of some masonry work. Couples need to form firm foundations, to cement relationships, and to consistently add to the existing structure. Positive ritual behavior embodies the components to facilitate the work of producing satisfying and enduring marriages.

Long term intact marriages are no longer the norm. The stigma of divorce is fading as “changes in attitudes toward divorce followed changes in divorce behavior” (Cherlin, 1992, p. 47). “In this milieu . . . divorce is not only an option, but a potentially positive growth decision” (Solomon, 1991, p. 27). This is not to say that divorce has reached such a level of acceptability as to be considered a typical marital pattern. The desire for permanence is still integral to marital relations.

Besides the issue of permanence, modern marriages are also beset by difficulties resulting from the redefinition of gender roles. Automatic washers and dryers, formula, baby bottles, disposable diapers, and more effective birth control, all of which emerged in the last 50 years, have had a major impact on changing the functional roles of women.

Mother's work no longer has to be exclusively ascribed to women.

Prescribed roles for men are also changing. As the male role of sole income provider of the household has changed, so has the structure of husband and father (Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990). Supplying material provisions is no longer the criterion for male performance in marriage and family. Women have become a significant part of the work force. Competition in the global market, mechanized production, and enforcement of equal opportunity laws have allowed more women to obtain more kinds of work than ever before. At the same time downsizing has reshaped many male-dominated employment environments. Dual incomes are most often perceived to be an economic necessity.

While the feminist movement gave some validation to the inevitability of women's changing roles as significant to the recognition of feminine identity, this has not been the case for men. This is partly attributed to the fact that male roles are being restructured in terms of the uses of position and power while women's roles are being redefined to promote the attainment of position and power (Aida & Falbo, 1991).

Along with this restructuring and redefinition of gender roles, expectations in the marital relationship have also changed. As income production has become a shared

responsibility in most marriages, there is now an expectation of equality (Schwartz, 1994). This expectation of equality extends beyond household chores to emotional participation and contribution. Spouses expect to find happiness within marriage. Partners sometimes hold one another singularly responsible for the other's individual happiness (Moore, 1994).

Marital or sexual dissatisfaction is not expected to be tolerated (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). The supposition of "once and forever" marriages promotes a mindset of perfect partners and perfect marriages. Often, divorce is instituted as a strategy for conflict resolution (Cherlin, 1992).

Couples have fewer resources for helping to navigate marital discord. It is now atypical to have extended family geographically available for support. Strong nuclear family systems have been overshadowed by complex blended systems which are often spread across large geographic areas. Involvement in religious or civic activities, that can often enhance relationships, falls victim to the frenetic life style of too much work, and too little time.

Distressed couples who are dissolving their marriages are often besieged by the stress of work, children, and money. However, couples who not only endure, but report their marriages as satisfying, happy, or good, face those

same life stressors. Couples who do not choose divorce as an option have not escaped the vicissitudes of life. In fact, surviving a crisis can as often knit together as well as pull asunder.

While distressed or dysfunctional marriages may be more recognizable because of poor communication, emotional distance, and lack of commonality and mutuality (Barbach & Geisinger, 1991), ironically, it is not as easy to describe higher functioning marriages. The descriptors good, happy, satisfied, well adjusted and enduring marriage are used almost interchangeably but do little to explain what is really happening in those marriages. Certainly, what may be perceived by an outsider as a "good" marriage may have little to do with how satisfied the partners are within a marriage. The length of a marriage gives no indication as to what occurs between the partners. The words we most often use to describe marriages perceived as successful fail miserably at representing the marriages themselves.

There has been a significant amount of research examining why marriages dissolve. Several themes have emerged. An imbalance of power or lack of equity no longer fits with the restructuring of men's and redefinition of women's roles (Beach & Tesser, 1993; Broderick & O'Leary, 1986; Schwartz, 1994). Communication skills are inadequate to facilitate conflict resolution (Aida & Falbo, 1991).

Lack of resources, financial and emotional, result in a sense of isolation for a distressed couple (Martin & Bumpass, 1989). Women indicate the most prevalent reason to dissolve a marriage is lack of intimacy and or satisfaction at the very time that men report adequate satisfaction (Fowers, 1991). Commonly partners themselves have different perceptions of their own intimate relationship (Cole, Cole & Dean, 1980; Merves-Okin, Amidon, & Bernt, 1991).

Intimacy itself has garnered a great deal of attention in the study of marital relations. Developmental theorists long ago drew the conclusion that intimacy could not be achieved unless an individual first achieved identity and autonomy (Franz & White, 1985). There is a misconception that the attainment of intimacy is terminal. Intimacy is often spoken of as an achievement, a state arrived at, rather than as a process, a state of becoming. Much of the research and study of relationships focuses on achieving intimacy rather than its maintenance. It is as if intimacy were to magically sustain itself within a relationship despite the changes and transitions of the life cycle.

Yet, even with all of the difficulties assailing marriage people still marry hopeful that it will last forever and many do. How and why marriages not only endure but are perceived and reported to be happy and satisfying is worthy of further empirical research.



### Significance of the Study

In 1993, David Fenell reported on his study of long-term marriages. His study of 147 couples who were married longer than 20 years yielded a profile of 10 characteristics that the spouses possessed. While the characteristics are descriptive of attitudes and behavior as reported by the couples, they fall short in respect to illustrating the processes of their marriages.

Dr. Judith Wallerstein is recognized as one of the foremost experts in the field of marital studies because of her longitudinal research on divorce. Her attention more recently has turned to what she describes as the good marriage. In 1995, she published with Sandra Blakeslee a book entitled The Good Marriage: How and Why Love Lasts. In this seminal work which was the product of extensive interviews of 50 couples who were identified by their peers and self-reported good marriages, the authors were able to identify nine tasks. The authors hypothesized that the successful maneuvering and achievement of these tasks throughout the development of the marriage seemed inherent in resulting in a marriage that had internal and external definition as good or satisfying. Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1995) state:

Every good marriage must adapt to developmental changes in each partner bending and yielding to the redefinition that all men and women go through . . . .As the external forces keeping modern marriages together weaken, the forces holding them together from within grow ever more important.

It is significant, then, to carefully research the forces or resources within marriage that may have staying power for a couple. As early as 1950, Bossard and Boll were articulating the need to examine what keeps people together:

In this process of living together there are certain techniques which make for success; others which tend toward failure. It is our conviction that these techniques need to be identified, understood, and evaluated. . . .We have come to think that not only can these techniques be identified and studied, but also that they can be cultivated consciously.

While some attention has been given to the forces that hold marriages together, the techniques alluded to by Bossard and Bell over 40 years ago remain largely uncharted. It was their assumption in 1950 that ritual was an overlooked mainstay of family life. In the intervening 46

years positive ritual use in marriage and family is still buried treasure. It is the premise of this study that ritual needs to be reconsidered not only as integral to family life but as integral to the staying power of coupleship. Ritual use can be a technique that accommodates the internal forces of marriage. Ritual use can be a technique that enhances intimacy and satisfaction levels within marriage.

The use of positive ritual behavior is not alien to the field of psychology or a clinician's practice. Evan Imber-Black and Janine Roberts (1992) have centered their research and practice on the significance of ritual in family therapy. They have identified ritual as "the lens through which we can see our emotional connectedness" (p.4). They believe that the aspects of ritual -- relating, changing, healing, believing and celebrating-- make the use of ritual an ideal therapeutic tool. While these two authors have more clearly articulated the specific conceptualization of ritual use in therapy, they follow in the footsteps of other family systems clinicians. Maria Selvini-Pallazoli and the Milan School were innovators of the use of ritual in family therapy (Selvini-Pallazoli, Boscolo, Cecchin, & Prata, 1977).

Patricia O'Hanlon Hudson and her husband William Hudson O'Hanlon (1991) are enthusiastic proponents of ritual use in

their solution oriented brief marital therapy. They espouse rituals as "relationship glue" (p.89). Creating meaningful rituals is a major component in their national workshops as well their private practice. They stress: "...designing rituals for declaring and clarifying the boundaries around the marital relationship can be crucial to the survival of intimacy between parents or stepparents" (p.91).

This study is needed, then, to begin to examine the use of positive ritual behavior within the context of marital relations. It is necessary to explore in a scholarly manner the possibilities of incorporating positive ritual behavior as a means of sustaining satisfaction and intimacy in marriage. This is not to presume that only marriages with a declared sense of intimacy or satisfaction would benefit from positive ritual use. It is just as likely that positive ritual behavior may also be the instigator of intimacy and satisfaction in some marriages.

#### Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study is to determine whether or not introducing and/or increasing positive ritualistic behavior within a marital dyad will significantly enhance the levels of intimacy and marital satisfaction.

### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested:

1. Educating couples in the use of positive ritual behavior significantly increases levels of marital satisfaction.
2. Educating couples in the use of positive ritual behavior significantly increases levels of intimacy.
3. There will be a significant difference in the ritual behavior between individuals who have received instruction in positive ritual behavior and individuals who have not, regardless of gender.
4. Men who receive instruction in positive ritual behavior will demonstrate significantly higher levels of ritual behavior than men who do not receive instruction.
5. Men who receive instruction in positive ritual behavior will experience a significant increase in intimacy.
6. Women in both groups will score significantly higher in ritual behavior than men.
7. Women in both groups will score significantly higher in intimacy than men.
8. There will be no difference between subjects' perceived experience of low, moderate, or high levels of stress with regard to marital satisfaction, intimacy, and ritual meaning.

### Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study, the following terms will be understood as:

Marital Dyad. A couple consisting of heterosexual partners who have publicly and legally entered the marital state. For the purpose of this study, couples will be over the age of 18. It may or may not be their first marriage. For the purpose of this study the length of the marriage will not be a determining factor.

Intimacy. The capacity to engage in a relationship in such a manner as to experience closeness, connectedness and mutual sharing. For the sake of this study intimacy is being considered as a process rather than an achievement and is therefore measured by The Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationship (PAIR) (Shaefer & Olson, 1981).

Marital Satisfaction. The self perception of each partner regarding the quality of marital relations as a whole, as well as individual aspects. For the sake of this study marital satisfaction is measured by The Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS) (Roach, Frazier & Bowden, 1987).

Positive Ritualistic Behavior. A repetitive activity utilizing sign or symbol that has the properties of relating, changing, healing, believing and celebrating while embracing both continuity and change. In this study

positive ritual behavior will be measured by the Family Ritual Questionnaire (FRQ) (Fiese & Kline, 1993).

Marital Stress. The realization of pressure or difficulties because of life events. In this study marital stress does not allude to discord between the spouses, but to the level of stressful life events experienced by the couple. In this study marital stress is measured by the Family Inventory of Life Events and Changes (FILE) (McCubbin, Patterson, & Wilson, 1987).

#### Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to this research project. First, the manner of solicitation chosen to insure confidentiality might have also resulted in the attrition of some subjects. There was no mechanism included to allow for reminders to complete the posttest phase. Second, because subjects were self-selected rather than directly recruited, the subject pool was small. Third, although the solicitation area covered a wide geographic expanse, it was a very homogenous population sampling. Most of the population in the geographic area has a Pennsylvania German ethnic heritage. There was no racial diversity, and very little diversity in religion or educational backgrounds. Therefore, the generalizability is limited. Fourth, the study does not discriminate between higher functioning and

distressed couples. Consequently, the results may mask potentially significant differences between those two populations.



## Chapter II

### Review Of Related Literature

This chapter examines some of the literature on ritual, marital satisfaction, intimacy, and issues of gender in relationships as they relate to the research study. Ritual is considered from a nonreligious theoretical framework, and its place in family psychotherapy. Marital satisfaction is explored in terms of conceptualizations versus perceptions, and the dialectic of satisfaction, adjustment and quality. Intimacy is examined as both a process and an experience. Issues of gender in relationship focuses on those studies that have investigated male and female response differential in the areas of marital satisfaction and intimacy, as well as ritual and marital stress. A brief investigation of stress and its impact on marriage is included. A discussion of the empirical research and measurements used to assess the salient topics of this research is also incorporated.

#### Ritual

During the early days of television one of the first family situation comedies was the Burns and Allen show. The

end of every telecast was uniquely the same and yet different each week. At the end of the sketch, George and Gracie would step from behind the curtain, and George would ask Gracie a relatively simple question. Gracie would then proceed to totally confuse the situation to the delight and amusement of the audience. When her logic was exhausted George would beam at her, wink knowingly to the audience and utter: "Say Goodnight, Gracie." Gracie in turn would respond simply "Goodnight" and the theme music signaled the end of the show. That tender yet humorous ending is one of the simplest examples of positive ritual behavior. One could imagine George and Gracie leaving a cocktail party much the same way they ended their show.

Positive ritual behavior is activity. Activity that is repetitive yet different. Activity that holds continuity and change. Activity that uses a sign or symbol, spoken or unspoken. Activity that allows two or more people to relate, to hold a belief, to change, to heal, and to celebrate.

In the closing sequence of that vintage television show we can see just such activity. The format was the same each week, but the question posed was different. Everyone knew that Gracie's logic or lack thereof would constitute the joke, but the experience was different week to week. The audience knew by George's wink that they were included in

the joke. The activity served to transition the closing of one show and the anticipation of the next. It probably worked as well as it did for as long as it did because it seemed to very much reflect the activity of the relationship between the couple.

Ritual behavior is all encompassing and universal. It would seem that everyone, everywhere, has experienced some type of ritual behavior (Driver, 1991; Wyrostok, 1995). According to Mize (1995), "Throughout the world, in all times and under every circumstance, humans have enacted rituals, told stories about the experience, and thus proposed meaning to it" (p. 109). This is not a grandiose statement. It is a statement that would seem obvious in its experience, yet is not often explicitly expressed. Da Matta (1977) stated:

It seems clear that there exist as many "rituals" as there are events or domains in the social world which can be perceived, distinguished and classified . . . Since the social world is based on conventions and symbols all social actions are really ritual acts or acts arising from a ritualization. (p. 256)

Since the essence of being human involves social action, it follows that everyone, everywhere, experiences ritual at some time in one's life. Ritual experience or

behavior is generally catalogued by anthropologists into certain categories. Social scientists speak of two major categories of ritual, religious and nonreligious. Within those categories are many subtexts including big and little, and open and closed. Big rituals are distinguished from little rituals in the manner that some children perform in the annual Christmas pageant is different from some children providing milk and cookies for Santa on Christmas eve. Both rituals have to do with Christmas, but the scope, durability, and involvement vary. Open rituals are distinguished from closed rituals in the way that teenage drivers may borrow the family car for the first time, and the winner of the annual Indy 500 is saluted with milk. Most teenage drivers borrowing the family car will hear approximately the same advice, rules, requirements even though each family may present it differently. Each year only one racer takes the flag at Indy, the salute is the same but only a limited number of people have had the experience. Driver (1991) reflected on the universality of ritual as an aspect of human nature.

Our thinking about rituals as far as it goes is directed toward the "big ones" church services, funeral processions, state ceremonies, weddings, pilgrimages, festivals and the like. These we tend to separate from the little ones: acts of greeting and leave taking,

table manners, making beds, issuing invitations, going to grandma's house, making a date and so on. Ignoring these because of their daily familiarity, we do not notice how greatly our lives are affected by ritualizing activities that have become as they are supposed to do, our "second nature" . . . Ritualizing is our first language, not our "mother" but our "grandmother" tongue, and as such it is something we do not outgrow. (p. 12-13)

If so much of human interaction is ritual in form, how can ritual be distinguished from other forms such as habit. Ritual defines itself by its own process. "Ritual is not a 'what', not a 'thing'. It is a 'how' a quality and there are degrees of it" (Grimes, 1990, p. 13). According to Collins (1988), there are five ingredients of ritual:

1. The group (which may be as small as two persons) is assembled face to face. Ritual is a microsituational phenomenon, though it has macro, transsituational consequences.
2. The participants develop a mutually aware focus of attention. They focus on the same thing, action, or thought; they become aware that each other is focusing upon it, and that each is aware of this awareness. The content of ritual is arbitrary, in the sense that

whatever action, object or thought can sustain this mutual focus is sufficient grist for the mill.

3. The participants share a common emotional mood.

Again, the particular emotional content is arbitrary, since any mood held in common can sustain a ritual . . .

4. If these ingredients are present an intensification takes place. The mood becomes heightened.

5. The consequences of such ritual interactions are to shape the subsequent behavior, thought and feelings of those who took part in them. (pp. 44-45)

Presence, symbolism, repetitiveness, and transition are key to explaining how ritual works and what ritual is (Driver, 1991; Grimes, 1990; Turner, 1969). Although there is not a universal definition of ritual, there does seem to be universal agreement about these four components. Whether an anthropologist, sociologist, or psychologist is discussing ritual, the four components of presence, symbolism, repetitiveness, and transition are pivotal. Primary to all ritual is the need for the participants' presence, the incorporation of some symbol, the necessity to have the action repeated, and the effect of change by that action. Presence is not just the physical attendance, but also the intent of the participants to focus on the event or

action. The incorporation of symbol may be verbal or nonverbal, but serves the purpose of representing the event or action in total. This is an essential corollary to the repetitive nature of ritual. Symbol serves as the shorthand or heuristic that calls the ritual into being again and again. An action or event may have presence and symbol, but if it is not repetitive or transitional, it is not ritual. The core of ritual is the ability to be stable and changing at one and the same time. The repetitive nature of ritual assures its constancy, while its transitional quality allows for evolution and change both in the ritual itself and its participants.

#### Nonreligious Ritual

The study of ritual is as old as anthropology. Most of the theoretical understanding of ritual was garnered from the vast studies done of tribal cultures. Rituals in these primitive societies were primarily religious in etiology. The Post Modern World created by two world wars and advanced technology in travel and communication has all but obliterated the tribal cultures that were the sources of our understanding of how ritual worked. The study of ritual, ritology, is now a discipline in and of itself (Grimes, 1990). Although there are still purists who believe that all ritual is inherently religious (Driver, 1991; Grimes,

1990; and Turner, 1969), within the last fifty years anthropologists, sociologists, and psychologists have begun to seriously examine and research nonreligious ritual.

There cannot be a simple transposition of religious ritual elements onto secular rituals. While all forms of ritual, religious and nonreligious alike, contain certain elements, they are distinctly different phenomena. Bruce Kapferer (1977) cautioned:

The anthropological study of religious ritual has yielded both insight and to some extent an analytic frame for the study of secular behavior, particularly where this behavior is highly symbolic, stereotyped, stylized and repetitive. While the results of such an approach might be enlightening, the unqualified labeling of behavior as ritual, irrespective of its secular or religious aspect, could lead to the overlooking of significant differences in the organization of symbolic object and action in secular contexts as distinct from religious contexts. There is a real danger, inherent in the use of common analytical frameworks together with unqualified labels, of treating qualitatively different phenomena as if they were the same. A variety of symbolic and organizational devices commonly found in the religious



ritual contexts studied by anthropologists will of course be evident in those occasions termed secular ritual. But a concentration on these to an exclusion of the other properties of these "ritual" performances might deny certain aspects of their form, and the way elements of their content are organized into it, essential to an understanding of their meaning and the way they interrelate and organize those who participate in, and witness, them. (p. 93)

Nonreligious ritual cannot be explained as the opposite of religious ritual. "Conventionally 'secular' exists only as a counterpart of 'religious'. They can be defined only by implying each other" (Moore & Myerhoff, 1977, p. 22). Both religious and nonreligious rituals are situationally specific events (Moore & Myerhoff, 1977). However, in religious ritual the event is linked in a more general way to all previous events. The prayers of a funeral liturgy or a wedding liturgy link the particular to all deaths, and all marriages, throughout time. In nonreligious rituals there is also a link to a larger reality, but one that is more immediate in nature. An anniversary dinner may be linked to previous anniversary celebrations in one family, but not to all anniversary celebrations throughout the population.

Myerhoff (1977) spoke of sacred and secular rituals as being the ends of a continuum. This is in agreement with Middleton (1977) who also espoused continuum theory. Middleton stated: "Even the most technical behavior contains some touch of the ritual; and even the most religious act some aspect of the technical (p. 73)." While both religious and nonreligious rituals hold transition and transformation as key, in nonreligious ritual the transition and transformation are on a lateral plane. In religious ritual the transition and transformation move from the human to the supernatural or from the supernatural to the human. Suffice it to say that religious rituals are always involved with the supernatural, and nonreligious rituals are not. However, just as religious ritual has doctrinal efficacy, so does nonreligious ritual (Moore & Myerhoff, 1977). For Moore and Myerhoff (1977) the doctrinal efficacy of secular ritual is postulated in its outcome which can be examined from five aspects:

1. Explicit purpose: . . .manifest meaning, the simplest to understand . . . likely to be superficial
2. Explicit symbols and messages: . . .presents selected ideas necessarily related to larger cultural frameworks of thought and explanation . . . make momentarily visible an ideology or a part of one.

3. Implicit statements: . . . iterates all manner of less conscious social and psychological materials.
4. Social relationships affected: . . . effects on the participants which directly involve their social roles, identities, sense of collective contact, attitudes toward others.
5. Culture versus chaos: . . . through order, formality and repetition it seeks to state that the cosmos and the social world, or some particular small part of them are orderly and explicable and for the moment fixed. (pp. 16-17)

Not everyone is in agreement with the concept of nonreligious ritual. In his book on ritual criticism, Ronald Grimes (1990) called for a "terminological division of labor among 'rite', 'ritual', 'ritualizing' and 'ritualization' . . . rather than treat the terms as synonyms" (p. 9). Durkheim who is to the theory of ritual as Freud is to the theory of psychoanalysis, "considered ritual to be inseparable from religious ideation" (Reeves & Bylund, 1992, p. 114). Although these are respected theorists, their purist views of ritual are limiting. There remains a general consensus that nonreligious ritual is prevalent throughout social and interpersonal relationships and warrants additional research across disciplines (Driver,

1991; Grimes, 1990; Manning, 1994; Moore & Myerhoff, 1977; Rogers & Holloway, 1991; Schweizer, Klemm, & Schweizer, 1993).

### Ritual Use In Psychotherapy

"Rituals are primarily instruments designed to change a situation . . ." (Driver, 1991, p. 93). Because transformation is the outcome of ritual, and change is the desired outcome of psychotherapy, ritual is perfectly suited to the therapeutic process. "Rituals are perhaps the oldest form of therapy. Virtually every culture has developed rituals for major social-psychological functions" (Gilligan, 1993, p. 238). Speaking of the use of rituals in therapy Janine Roberts (1988) stated: "The ability of rituals to link time, hold contradictions, and work with relationship shifts in action offers us particular tools to work with and hold incongruities between the actual and the ideal" (p.12). Roberts believed that the three stages described by anthropologists in healing rites of tribal cultures are useful to incorporating rituals in psychotherapy. The three stages of separation, limen [margin], and aggregation [reintegration] are the composition of transition rituals (Turner, 1969). For Roberts, the three stages help define the therapeutic process of detaching or separating from the original state requiring change, being in the margin or

between the old and new states, and finally full integration of the new state of desired change. According to Imber-Black and Roberts (1992), the typology of therapeutic rituals is contained in "four categories (daily, traditional, celebrations and life cycle); five ways that rituals work (relating, changing, healing, believing, and celebrating); and six ritual styles (minimized, interrupted, rigid, obligatory, imbalanced, and flexible) . . . " (pp. 77-78). According to this schema daily rituals are the day-to-day purposeful and meaningful actions that create a sense of rhythm in family life. Because daily rituals are not just routines, but expressions of who we are as we make transitions from one aspect of our daily lives to another, they also provide the participants with a sense of "continuity and security" (p.15).

In this context, traditional rituals have to do with what Imber-Black and Roberts (1992) referred to as the inside calendar. The inside calendar is a variation of the daily rituals having to do with events that are special to the family such as birthdays or anniversaries. Traditional rituals are contained within particular systems. Celebrations by contrast emanate from the outside calendar. Celebrations are those variations in the daily rituals which are linked to larger systems by sharing common symbols or symbolic actions. Christmas, Passover, Halloween, Fourth of

July picnics may be celebrated differently from one family system to another, but they incorporate elements which define them as celebrations, such as Christmas trees, Seder meals, trick or treat customs, and fireworks, for example.

Life-cycle rituals are also linking rituals. The linkage is between and among nuclear communities, extended communities, and larger global communities. Life-cycle rituals pertain to "generational shifts in roles" (Imber-Black & Roberts, 1992, p.21). As family systems are realigned by events such as birth, graduations, marriages, and death, they are marked by life-cycle rituals. Weddings, funerals, Bar Mitzvahs, retirement dinners and the like are rituals that link within and between at one and the same time. These rituals signify the changes within one particular system, while acknowledging their placement between other larger systems.

In Imber-Black and Roberts typology (1992), rituals are not segregated according to religious or nonreligious, but by more purposeful delineation. In their typology the purpose of the ritual, such as celebration or life-cycle, may be equally served by religious and nonreligious rituals. For Imber-Black and Roberts rituals are seen as inherently therapeutic, and that position supersedes any demarcation according to religion.

The authors (Imber-Black & Roberts, 1992) stated:  
Rituals . . . function . . . to enable relating,  
changing, healing, believing, and celebrating, which  
are in fact major elements in all of human existence .  
. . relating, the shaping, expressing, and maintaining  
of important relationships . . . changing, the making  
and marking of transitions for self and others . . .  
healing, the recovery from loss . . . believing, the  
voicing of beliefs and the making of meaning . . . .  
Finally, celebrating, the expression of deep joy, and  
the honoring of life with festivity. (pp. 27-28)

Understanding how the six ritual styles of Imber-Black  
and Roberts' (1992) typology configures with ritual is  
somewhat complex since "every family develops its own  
individual style of ritual practice" (p.57). Families may  
and do adopt more than one style across the four types of  
rituals. Birthdays might not be acknowledged, at the same  
time that Thanksgiving dinner might be akin to a command  
performance. In this context ritual style addresses the  
intensity with which rituals are practiced.

A minimized ritual style indicates a system in which  
"everything simply blends into everything else" (Imber-Black  
& Roberts, 1992, p.58). Daily, traditional, celebration or

life-cycle events go virtually unmarked. Minimized ritual disallows continuity.

"An interrupted ritual style is really a signal . . . that you are struggling through a crisis" (Imber-Black & Roberts, 1992, p.60). For the most part an interrupted ritual style is a temporary response to handling crises. Special holidays or events may be postponed or canceled because of the hospitalization of a family member. An interrupted ritual style is not merely a postponement or cancellation because of crisis, it is the fact that the ritual itself becomes secondary to the trauma. Interrupted ritual style can evolve into minimized ritual style, such as Christmas no longer being celebrated because of a certain family member's death, if the family does not resume the pretrauma ritual style or develops a replacement style.

Rigid ritual style is a "metaphor for a narrow range of relationship possibilities" (Imber-Black & Roberts, 1992, p.63). Rigid is self-descriptive in that roles are inflexible; the atmosphere is severe, bereft of humor and play; little or no variation is permitted; and there is no elasticity of parameters of inclusiveness.

Stress is indicative of obligatory rituals. "Often obligatory rituals are only one aspect of a family pattern that is burdensome and guilt-ridden and allows little room for difference" (Imber-Black & Roberts, 1992, p. 67). A



very restricted range of meaning and experience, coupled with an inordinate amount of anxiety and guilt, disallows spontaneity, a creative ingredient in ritual design.

Imbalanced rituals are clustered as within generations or between generations. Within generation imbalance occurs when one partner dominates the direction of a family's ritual experience according to a personal ritual preference. This is more likely to occur in interfaith or interethnic families. Between generation imbalance occurs when the rituals are dominated by the needs of one generation over another (Imber-Black & Roberts, 1992).

A flexible ritual style is the highest functioning style of ritual experience. Since life is not stagnant, growth and change are essential to thriving relationships. "Members entering and leaving the family, work and career changes, gender role shifts, and changes in belief, all need to be reflected in flexible rituals . . . [that] capture and express the changes, . . . still offering a sense of continuity and connectedness through time" (Imber-Black & Roberts, 1992, p.74).

Van der Hart (1983) proposed a two pronged typology of therapeutic rituals. He addressed rituals of transition and rituals of continuity. There has been a general decompensation of transitional rituals in postmodern society. Courtship and marriage are overshadowed by

cohabitation. The birth of child into a family may now be by in vitro semination, or genetic donors, or surrogate mothers. In his opinion "society is now so differentiated . . . through the absence or lack of various rituals, some people lack the means to be able to safely make a transition . . . therapy forms a modern substitute for traditional transitional rituals" (p.75). Transition rituals for Van der Hart are the crisis rituals of marriage, birth, or death for example. Rituals of continuity are subdivided into teleketic rites and intensification rites. Although Van der Hart used the word rite, it is not meant to imply ceremony in the conventional sense. Both teleketic and intensification rites have to do with everyday living and the interactions of people in more than peripheral relationships. Teleketic centers around "taking off the old and putting on the new" (p.9). Intensification rites directly influence the entire group. These two aspects of ritual make them ideal in Van der Hart's therapeutic schema to "break an impasse and initiate a change process" (p. 109). ". . . The correct performance and the proper mentality" (p. 140) are the two most important rules for assigning and developing rituals in a therapeutic protocol.

Gilligan (1993) offered three kinds of therapeutic rituals transitional rituals which assist people from one life stage to the next, continuity rituals which affirm

values and identity, and healing rituals which provide recovery from trauma.

Therapeutic rituals are especially useful in systemic therapies (Imber-Black, 1988; Roberts, 1988; Sanders, 1988; Wolin, Bennett, & Jacobs, 1988). Janine Roberts, (1988), elaborated:

The functions of ritual have important implications for the use of ritual in family therapy precisely because they offer many possibilities for holding duality. First, with rituals as a connection for structure and meaning, both aspects of family life can be brought into play. Second, holding contradictions as rituals do, is the essence of work in therapy. Finally, ritual with its capacities to link both the analogic and digital aspects of communication offers possibilities for expression and experiencing that which cannot be put into words. (pp. 21-22)

Sanders (1988), believed in prescribing rituals in couples therapy in order to enhance problem solving skills. It would seem logical then that educating couples to recognize their current ritual use or to create positive rituals in their marriage should affect their levels of satisfaction and intimacy. In their work with alcoholic families, Wolin, et al. (1988) found rituals to be excellent

vehicles for assessment and treatment. Because rituals are universal, a microcosm of family identity, a conscious activity, and can be taught, changed and/or dropped, Wolin, et al. incorporated ritual useage in both their treatment of alcoholics and their research on assessing alcoholic families.

A major proponent in the use of therapeutic rituals was the group of therapists that comprised the Milan School. In their work with the families of patients with eating disorders, Selvini-Palazzoli, Boscolo, Cechin, & Prata, (1978) developed the Family Ritual Technique as a way of converting existing dysfunctional behavior sequences into healthy functioning patterns.

Patricia O'Hanlon Hudson and William Hudson O'Hanlon (1991) are nationally known psychotherapists noted for their innovative solution oriented brief marital therapy. In their book Rewriting Love Stories: Brief Marital Therapy they place heavy emphasis on the utilization of rituals as a therapeutic means to break an impasse. The authors stated:

Using therapeutic symbols and rituals is one way to bridge the gap between internal meanings, experience, and feelings and external actions.

They are designed to externalize people's problems and give them something active to do in order to change their feelings or resolve the problem.

Rituals and symbols serve, then, as special forms of task assignments that change both the viewing and the doing of couples' problems. (p.99)

There is supportive physiologic evidence as to the benefit of using ritual in psychotherapy. Participation in ritual can "produce positive limbic discharges, which lead to increased contact between people and social cohesion" (Roberts, 1988, p.20). She continued, "Both digital and analogic information are combined in ritual, so that the more verbal and analytical arena of the left brain is connected with the more nonverbal, intuitive right brain" (p. 20).

Eugene d'Aquili (1993) has been at the forefront of studying ritual use as part of the functioning of the brain. He has made two interesting, if not startling, postulations regarding simultaneous cortical functioning. He wrote:

Normally, either the sympathetic or the parasympathetic system predominates, and the excitation of one subsystem normally inhibits the other . . . in the special case of . . . rhythmic stimuli, it appears that the simultaneous strong discharge of both autonomic systems creates a state of stimulation of the median forebrain bundle generating not only a pleasurable sensation but under proper conditions, a sense of union

with conspecifics and a blurring of cognitive boundaries. [we] suggest that such driving of the autonomic subsystems by rhythmic stimuli powerfully activates the holistic operator allowing various degrees of gestalt perception . . . . Hence we are postulating that the various ecstasy states, which can be produced in humans after exposure to rhythmic auditory, visual, or tactile stimuli, produce a feeling of union with other members participating in that ritual. In fact, the oneness of all participants is the theme running through most human rituals. It is probably the sense of oneness and the vagueness of boundaries, which are experienced at certain nodal points in ritual, which allow the symbol to be experienced as that for which it stands itself . . . .

What is new is the discovery that the so-called nondominant or minor hemisphere has extremely important nonverbal, nonanalytic functions . . . it is related to the perception of visual-spatial relationships. Over and above this, there is good evidence that it perceives the world not in terms of discrete entities but in terms of gestalts, or nondiscrete, holistic perceptions. (pp. 67-68)

d'Aquili's (1993) research is imperative to understanding the interrelationship between cognitive processes and ritual. His research provides a paradigm for differentiating human ritual from mere habit, or animal ritual.

There are some who caution regarding the use of ritual in psychotherapy. Franklin Olson (1993) noted that "current and traditional rituals have become inoperable, ineffective, unintelligible, and consequently irrelevant" (p. 13), and that "rituals may also reinforce and act out dysfunctional behaviors" (p. 14). He called for an awareness and active exploration of dynamic rituals. There are also reservations expressed by other writers that designing rituals for therapy will be ineffective if the client(s) is (are) not involved or are unprepared (Gilligan, 1993; Imber-Black, & Roberts, 1992; Wyrostok, 1995).

#### Assessing And Measuring Ritual Behavior

Because of the abstract nature of rituals, measuring or assessing ritual use is as complex as the nature of ritual itself. The typology of Wolin and Bennett (1984) of family traditions, family celebrations, and patterned routines has been the basis for several measurements of ritual. The Family Ritual Scale was constructed by Madianos and Economou (1994) for use in their work with schizophrenics. The

eleven-item scale was measured on a four-point range. The alpha coefficient of 0.894 for a total sample of 138 (71 schizophrenics and 67 normals) indicates good internal consistency. However, the wording of the items was drawn from the clinical observations of the schizophrenic families, and as it was a Greek study, so emphasis was placed on Greek rites of passage. While the study was enlightening in terms of schizophrenic families, it was not intended to significantly add to the body of ritual literature.

Wolin, et al. (1988) have revised their Family Ritual Interview three times. This research was designed to enhance the study of alcoholism using ritual as a vehicle rather than empirical research in the area of ritual. The Family Ritual Interview is conducted by an interviewer posing a total of 24 questions to a family in an open-ended interview. A coding manual is used to determine placement of the answers into four categories: level of ritualization, evidence of change, similarity to rituals in the spouses family of origin, and role of drinking. The open-ended format as well as the emphasis on alcoholism make the Family Ritual Interview too specific an instrument to be incorporated in a generalized study of ritual.

The Circumplex Model of Olson, Sprenkle, and Russell (1979) spawned the Family Ritual Typology and Family Ritual



Typology Checklist as conceptualized by Hecker and Schindler (1994) on the dimensions of cohesion, adaptability, and communication. For Hecker and Schindler (1994) family rituals can be assigned to one of three categories: over ritualized, ritualized, and under ritualized. Ritualized is the optimum healthy functioning style. The Family Ritual Typology Checklist is a series of questions for a therapist to use in a subjective manner, while investigating the cohesion, adaptability, and communication functions of a family. The authors are clear that research is needed to validate the typology and the assessment.

The only self-report instrument available to date to assess ritual is the Family Ritual Questionnaire authored by Barbara Fiese and Christine Kline (1993). The authors considered two main components of ritual in constructing the scale settings and dimensions. This resulted in a scale which evaluated seven ritual settings across eight dimensions. Dinner time, weekends, vacations, annual celebrations, special celebrations, religious holidays, and cultural traditions were the settings studied across the dimensions of occurrence, roles, routine, attendance, affect, symbolic significance, continuation, and deliberateness. Since it is a self-report measure on ritual, the authors were duly concerned about response bias. A forced-choice answer format was utilized to minimize the

effect of social desirability. The limited response range of really true and sort of true protects for idealizing the family ritual process. The result was a scale that "evidenced good psychometric properties with adequate levels of internal consistency and test-retest reliability" (Fiese & Kline, 1993, p. 297).

### Marital Satisfaction

Central to any discussion of marital satisfaction is the quandary as to just what is being discussed. At issue is the debate between the conceptualization of marital satisfaction that is externally imposed, and the internal experience of the couple as articulated through their perceptions. The conceptualization of the elements of marriage that should indicate satisfaction are often formulated from academic research of the distressed marriage literature. Perceptually what a couple feels or believes about their marriage may be satisfactory to them while falling short of conceptual norms. For example, a conceptual norm for a satisfactory marriage may be an active sex life. The operative word here is active. Some couples might engage sexually every day, others once a week, still others once a month. Is sexual activity in marriage qualitative or quantitative? The couple who engages

sexually once a month may be every bit as satisfied, or even more so than a couple who engages sexually more frequently.

Suffice it to say that marital satisfaction itself may be a misnomer to describe what is happening between and to the individuals in a marriage. Often the words from the research literature to depict marital interaction-- satisfaction, quality, stability, and adjustment-- are used interchangeably as a description of the dynamic of the couple. By default marital satisfaction is generally defined by the parameters of marital distress, because most of the empirical studies of marriage measure and assess levels of marital discord (Fenell, 1993; Lauer, Lauer, & Kerr, 1990; Levenson, et al. 1993). "The great bulk of the research has been on variables that disrupt marriage: there is little on those that contribute to an enduring satisfying union" (Lauer, et al. 1990, p. 190).

Conceptually there are many sociocultural factors that researchers believe impact marital satisfaction. Rina Shachar (1991) identified six: attitude on a continuum between liberalism and conservatism, homogeneity between spouses, duration of courtship, premarital cohabitation, desire to marry, and pattern of spouse selection. These six aspects could well serve as a template for examining the conceptual imposition of marital satisfaction since they appear consistently in one form or another in much of the

literature. Each of these aspects lends itself to ritual and ritualization either by implication or by overt design.

Put another way, attitude on a continuum between liberalism and conservatism addresses the dichotomy between traditional and nontraditional marital roles. Attaining a balance between a liberal and a conservative view of marital roles seems to be more conducive to marital satisfaction (Aida & Falbo, 1991; Van Yperen & Buunk, 1990). According to Craddock (1991), "congruent equalitarian role expectations are strongly associated with relationship satisfaction. Equalitarian expectations involve commitment to a democratic role structure, and the rejection of rigidly segregated role performances based upon conventional sex-role stereotypes" (p. 11).

An interesting conundrum presented in the research is that males who hold more liberal or less traditional views of marital roles are more satisfied in the marriage if their wives hold more conservative or more traditional views of marital roles. Lye and Biblarz (1993) as well as Shachar (1991) found definitive associations between higher levels of satisfaction expressed by husbands who had a more liberal view of their marital roles when their wives were more conservative or traditional than when their wives were as nontraditional as themselves. Conversely, the authors also found a correlation in the wives expressed levels of

satisfaction. When wives held a less liberal or more traditional view of marital role, they reported higher levels of satisfaction regardless of their husband's views of marital roles. This seems to be indicative of the confusion of role identity that is one of the byproducts of the feminist movement.

It has been reported that homogeneity is salient to marital satisfaction (Bumpass & Sweet, 1972; Crohan, 1992; Deal, Wampler, & Halverson, 1992). Shachar (1991) found homogeneity to be significant for the marital satisfaction of wives, but not necessarily husbands. This is consistent with earlier research. The discussion of homogeneity as it correlates to marital satisfaction goes beyond socioeconomic or ethnic factors; considerable attention is paid to personality similarities (Kelly & Conley, 1987). O'Leary and Smith (1991) reported: "Rather than differing in their personalities spouses tend to be similar; and the degree of similarity is positively correlated with their marital satisfaction" (p. 196). In David Fenell's 1993 study, "husbands and wives in satisfactory marriages of over 20 years duration demonstrated considerable congruence" (p. 152). Although congruence and homogeneity are not interchangeable concepts, they have been appropriately interrelated in the literature on marital satisfaction. While congruence connotes agreement and homogeneity the

matching of likes, there are reported aspects of marital satisfaction, humor, and spirituality that have special congruence when they are homogeneous.

Humor and its use has an important impact on marital satisfaction (Aida & Falbo, 1991; Beavers, 1985; Ziv & Gadish, 1989). Humor is cited as both an example of homogeneity and as a salient factor in marital satisfaction. While men and women agree on the importance of humor in marriage, humor functions differently for women than for men. Men are more reliant than women on the functioning of humor as a means of conflict resolution and stress reduction in marriage (Ziv & Gadish, 1989). Couples who have identified their marriages as satisfying cite humor as an important element (Schwartz, 1994; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995; Ziv & Gadish, 1989).

Since couples in satisfying marriages place a similar value on humor, there also is significance to a homogeneous view of spirituality. Although couples need not hold the same religious ideology, satisfied couples generally ascribe to the same value of incorporation of a spiritual domain (Fennell, 1993; Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995). In their study on spiritual intimacy and marital satisfaction, Hatch, James, & Schumm (1986) found that while men and women in satisfying marriages were similar in the value they each placed on spirituality, it had a different meaning and

usefulness for women than for men. For women the level of spiritual intimacy in their marriages was indicative of their perceived emotional intimacy. Another study by Heaton and Pratt (1990) concluded that greater marital satisfaction was positively correlated with "church attendance, denominational affiliation, and homogenous beliefs about the Bible" (p. 203).

An interesting question has been raised by Weishaus and Field (1988). Is it necessary for a couple to be homogenous before marriage in order to have a satisfying marriage, or does homogeneity evolve as a result of couples living an enduring satisfied marriage? It is their contention that husbands and wives grow more similar in attitudes and traits over time. They, therefore, made a supposition that because couples tend toward more congruency over the course of a marriage through tolerance and acceptance, "increased marital satisfaction results" (Weishaus & Field, 1988, p. 771).

In the not too distant past, marriages were arranged by parents for their children for very pragmatic reasons. "The notion of marriage for love is a relatively recent historical idea" (Golden, 1991, p. 64). This is not to say that all contemporary marriages are based on romance. In some parts of the world arranged marriages are still the norm, particularly in cultures with strong traditional

religious beliefs (Shachar, 1991). Whether the motivation is traditional or not, romantic or pragmatic, there are four universal, albeit unspoken, considerations in mate selection.

First, potentialities for compatibility and gratification . . . that are a part of the partners own personal makeup. Second, potentialities for current and immediate future economic well being that are linked to personal qualities of the partner. Third, potentialities for economic advantage that are linked with whatever economic advantage the family in which the partner grew up may have had. And, fourth, long range prospects in terms of personal health and qualities for whatever children may be born (Quale, 1988, pp. 38-39).

According to O'Leary and Smith (1991) "need complementarity is thought to exert an influence upon spouse selection . . . it is also thought to influence satisfaction in the resulting marriage" (p. 194). This is in opposition to the old theory of mate selection as a substitute for unattained ego ideals. While there are many theories of mate selection contingent on personality and compatibility, the research fails to conclusively identify a structure for successful spouse selection. In fact, Streaan, (1980)



commented: "Perhaps the reason that a harmonious marriage is unusual in our society is that there is a lack of understanding of why mates select each other" (p.46).

One researcher believes that: "marriage evolves out of a desire of the partners for a special interpersonal relationship that nourishes emotional needs" (Fields, 1983, p. 37). This sense of marriage as an evolution gives credence to the significance of the partners' perceptions within the marriage of marital satisfaction. According to Fields (1983), "people who are accurate in their perception of the their spouses are also able to respond empathetically toward their spouses" (p. 40). Mutual empathy enhances marital satisfaction. Some of the research indicates that what the spouse perceives to be true about one's partner is more relevant than what is objective reality (Beach & Tesser, 1993; Cole, et al. 1980; Ziv & Gadish, 1989). ". . . It is not necessarily what actually exists that is important, but rather what one thinks exists" (Cole, et al. 1980, p. 535). A favorable perception of the other is a strong indication of marital satisfaction. The authors explain their findings in terms of ". . . the importance of each spouse perceiving the other as a rational, fair, competent individual who is relatively easy to get along with and potentially capable of providing a variety of interpersonal rewards" (Cole, et al. 1980, p. 536). Deal,

et al. (1992) in their research on similarities were eloquent as to the importance of similar perceptions held by the couple regarding their marriages and family lives for the well functioning of the marriage. In their work with couples who described themselves as satisfied, their study was able to establish that: "perceptual differences between husband and wife are minimized over time with the individual realities that each brought to the marriage [being] replaced by a new conjoint reality created through their interaction" (Deal, et al. 1992, p. 371).

If holding positive perceptions about a marriage can in a sense induce marital satisfaction, then the converse position is also plausible. Van Yperen and Bunnk (1990) were able to link perceptions of inequity that were independent of functioning equity to relational dissatisfaction.

This is an indication of the difficulty with the conceptual versus perceptual view of marital satisfaction. Can a couple truly formulate individual perceptions about what is happening within their marriage without regard to any conceptual view of what makes marriages satisfactory. Put another way it may be possible that the internal perceptions might be influenced by the external conceptualizations of satisfactory marriages. Certainly there is a variety of opinions presented by professionals

and nonprofessionals alike as to what makes for satisfaction in marriage as attested to by the sales of books on relationships and the current booking practices of talk shows. It would seem that there is a concurrent influence between external conceptualization and internal perceptions on whether any marriage is describable as satisfactory.

Within the vast writings of conceptual and perceptual approaches to marital satisfaction there are three nearly universal themes of study. These themes more than underscore this sense of concurrent influence. Many clinicians and researchers alike have investigated the links between marital satisfaction and communication (Gray, 1992; 1993), and between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction (Donnelly, 1992; McCann & Biaggio, 1989) as well as what appears to be a cycle or pattern of marital satisfaction over the course of the marriage (Weishaus & Field, 1988). An in-depth exploration of these topics is beyond the scope of this study, but there are several relevant points which need to be acknowledged.

Of particular interest to this study is the research done on idiosyncratic communication by Bruess and Pearson (1993). They reported that "an idiomatic system of communicating facilitates a 'shared reality', or greater intimacy and togetherness which is reportedly an emphasis of satisfied couples" (Bruess & Pearson, 1993, p. 610). A

significant expression in relational cultures is a form of personalized communication behavior. Couples form a "culture of two" (Bruess & Pearson, 1993, p. 609). As couples customize their language to include nicknames or pet phrases that have meaning to no one else, they in fact create a "culture." This implies that this element of communication directly related to the couples' perception of the relationship and overall marital satisfaction lends itself to ritualization within the marriage.

Aida and Falbo (1991) concurred with other researchers that "the most consistent finding in the majority of the studies is that there exists a communication skill deficit among less satisfied married couples" (p. 44). At issue is the inability for many people to self-disclose. While it has been established that ". . . the disclosure of intimate self-information within a close relationship has a beneficial effect on satisfaction with that relationship and in subjective feelings of well-being generally" (Franzoi, Davis & Young, 1985, p. 1585), self-disclosure is a difficult skill to master. The simultaneous blending of risk and trust remains elusive in many marriages. There appears to be some support to gender being a factor in the ability to self-disclose (Franzoi, et al. 1985).

The gender issue is pertinent also to the correlation between sexual satisfaction and marital satisfaction

(Davidson & Darling, 1988; Fowers, 1991; Frank, Anderson, & Rubinstein, 1979; McCann & Biaggio, 1989; Rosenzweig & Dailey, 1989; Vannoy, 1991). According to Frank, et al. there is a "similarity between role satisfaction and sexual satisfaction" (p. 1102). The suggestion here is that role satisfaction within marriage is amorphous because of the changing gender regulated role definition. It is no longer "implicit . . . that those who fulfill the prescribed marital roles will be content both with themselves and their marriage" (Frank, et al. 1979, p. 1096). Distressed couples frequently cite sexual dissatisfaction when they present for therapy. "Couples are oftentimes seen in therapy because of dissatisfaction with the frequency of sexual activity, the types of arousal techniques utilized or feelings of boredom or apathy with sex" (McCann, & Biaggio, 1989, p. 60). These dissatisfactions could be spawned when either the intimate or the ritual aspects of the sexual relationship becomes habituated. It is not uncommon in some marriages for the relationship of sexual satisfaction to marital satisfaction to be somewhat tangential. A couple may experience both satisfaction and dissatisfaction sexually over the course of their married life without serious consequence to the overall level of satisfaction in their marriage (Levenson, et al. 1993).

Marital satisfaction has a distinctive ebb and flow pattern throughout the typical course of a marriage. Weishaus and Field (1988) noted: "a curvilinear trend in marital satisfaction . . . . A sharp drop during the childrearing stage . . . with satisfaction moving up again in the postparental period, although never attaining the original level" (p. 763). Several years later a similar finding was cited by Levenson, Cartensen and Gottman (1993)

Early cross-sectional surveys of marital satisfaction suggested that marital satisfaction declines steadily during the first 10 years of marriage . . . . Marital satisfaction appears to follow a curvilinear path over the course of marriage . . . starting high, dropping sharply after the birth of children, reaching an all time low when children are adolescents, and then increasing as children leave home and couples retire (p. 302).

It would be simplistically misleading to assume that children alone are responsible for the decline in marital satisfaction. While there is not any empirical data to date on whether childless couples experience the same pattern of marital satisfaction, there are other explanations for the general decline in marital satisfaction. Couples seem to lose momentum, treating one another in less positive

attentive ways after the early years of marriage (Huston & Vangelisti, 1991). Other factors in waning marital satisfaction are the physiological changes that occur with the aging process, as well as fatigue brought on by stress from job and family concerns (Levenson, et al. 1993; 1994). It is the contention of Stephen Marks (1989) that marital quality is a consequence of the healthy organization of the self in marriage. In his view marital satisfaction is directly proportionate to how the self in a marriage organizes to its own care and well being.

Adding to the complexity of investigating marital satisfaction is the fact that many terms are used to indicate like entities (Burnett, 1987). Words such as quality, adjustment, and satisfaction are used to describe a process of interaction between spouses. Unfortunately these same words give the impression that what occurs between a husband and wife can be made to conform to the limits of those words. As rich as the English language is, there is a poverty of expression in trying to describe how well a marriage functions. In fact, so many terms have been used to describe how a marriage functions that there is often confusion about what is being measured (Burnett, 1987; Heyman, Sayers, & Bellack, 1994). In the review of the literature for the 1970's, Spanier and Lewis (1980) reported 150 journal articles and 182 North American doctoral

dissertations that included the words quality, satisfaction, stability, adjustment, or happiness as a variable of marriage in the title. Twenty plus years later researchers are still struggling with what is actually occurring between the spouses, although there are now numerous instruments to measure what seems to be occurring or not occurring. The real interest according to Spanier and Lewis and it holds true for current research as well, is why do some marriages remain intact while others dissolve. In their view: ". . . marital quality is inexorably related to marital stability since the quality of most American marriages is the primary determinant of whether a marriage remains intact." (Spanier & Lewis, 1980, p. 826)

The concurrent influence of conceptual and perceptual views of marriage is central to the difficulty of quantifying the function of marriage to be measured. The measured variables of satisfaction, quality, or adjustment, for example, often try to straddle both conceptual and perceptual views. An approach of recognizing the concurrent influence and integrating the conceptual and perceptual might produce research that not only explains what is happening inside a marriage, but also be helpful in directing other marriages.

Contemporary researchers/clinicians such as Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1995) through their 25 years of research on



divorce have abandoned the satisfaction, quality, adjustment dialectic all together. They now speak in terms of "good marriages." The sense of Wallerstein and Blakeslee's most recent work is that satisfaction, adjustment, and quality may be facets which are too narrow for the multihued prism called marriage. More precisely the authors feel that the word marriage cannot be one dimensional. They identify four types of marriage:

- [1]romantic . . . at its core a lasting, passionately sexual relationship . . .
- [2]rescue . . . comfort and healing for past unhappiness, healing takes place during the course of the marriage . . .
- [3]traditional . . . clear division of roles and responsibilities . . .
- [4]companionate . . . core is friendship, equality, value system . . . appreciation for changing men and women's roles. (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995, pp. 22-23)

Couples may begin their life together in one type of marriage and traverse the others sporadically or shift entirely, during the marital course. Schwartz (1994) is also in agreement that marriage is multi-varietal. One type is not necessarily a better form of marriage than another. Regardless of the type of marriage, Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1995) ". . . propose[d] that a good marriage is

built on a series of sequential psychological tasks that the man and woman address together . . . the achievement of these goals is essential to the success of the marriage" (p. 26).

The nine tasks as identified by Wallerstein and Blakeslee were extrapolated from extensive and intensive interviews with 50 couples. Literally hundreds of hours of dialogue with these couples produced themes on which the researchers based the tasks requisite to achieve a good marriage. The couples were 'nominated' by others as having good and happy marriages. The couples also described their marriages as good and themselves as happy with their marriages. The nine tasks are:

- 1) To separate emotionally from the family of one's childhood so as to invest fully in the marriage and at the same time to redefine the lines of communication with both families of origin.
- 2) To build together by creating the intimacy that supports it while carving out each particular autonomy . . . . These issues are central throughout the marriage but loom large at the outset, mid-life, and at retirement.
- 3) to embrace the daunting roles of parents and to absorb the impact of . . . the baby's dramatic entrance. At the same time the couple must work to protect their own primacy.
- 4) To confront and master the inevitable crises of life

maintaining the strength of the bond in the face of adversity. 5) To create a safe haven for the expression of anger and conflict. 6) to establish a rich and pleasurable sexual relationship and protect it from the intrusions of the workplace and family obligations. 7) To use laughter and humor to keep things in perspective and to avoid boredom by sharing fun, interests, and friends. 8) To provide nurturance and comfort to each other, satisfying each partner's needs for dependency and offering continuing encouragement and support. 9) To keep alive the early romantic, idealized images of falling in love while facing the sober realities of the changes brought by time. (Wallerstein & Blakeslee, 1995, pp. 27-28)

It is clear that the tasks as they are identified consolidate much of the fragments of marital-satisfaction, marital-adjustment, and marital-quality research. More importantly, there is a rightness of fit between the tasks proposed by Wallerstein and Blakeslee and many of the assessment instruments designed to measure satisfaction, quality, or adjustment in a marriage.

### Assessing And Measuring Marital Satisfaction

In the late 1970's there were close to one thousand instruments "purporting to assess thoughts, feelings or behaviors characterizing the marital relationship" (Snyder, Willis, & Keiser, 1981, p. 262). Quantity, however, should not be confused with quality. While there was and continues to be a proliferation of measurements, psychometrically sound instruments with reliability and validity, that do what they say they do, are rare. It was to this end that the Marital Satisfaction Inventory (MSI, Snyder, 1979) was developed. Prior to the Marital Satisfaction Inventory, the most widely used measurement of marital satisfaction was the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment Test. Two difficulties with the Locke-Wallace were contamination by social desirability, and the low correlation between husbands' and wives' scores. These difficulties suggested that "this and most other marital measures assess not the marital relationship itself, but rather individual adjustment to that relationship" (Snyder, 1979, p. 122). The Marital Satisfaction Inventory is a 280-item, 11-scale instrument that is a "comprehensive multidimensional measure with well-constructed norms that permit the simultaneous assessment of a broad range of dimensions in marriage as they relate to global marital satisfaction" (Snyder, 1979, p. 121). Primarily, the Marital Satisfaction Inventory is able to

distinguish between distressed and nondistressed couples. The length of the instrument is somewhat unwieldy, resulting in the popular use of the global dissatisfaction scale (GDS) only, which has a reliability coefficient of .88 (Snyder, 1987). The MSI can provide the clinician with a narrative summary profiling problem areas for the couple (Boen, 1988).

Another widely used instrument is the Dyadic Adjustment Scale (DAS, Spanier, 1976). Eddy, Heyman and Weiss (1991) cited the DAS as having "had a central role in determining the results of behavioral research on marital functioning" (p. 200). Spanier did not develop the DAS as a measure of marital satisfaction, but more particularly as a measure of adjustment. However, common usage of the DAS includes assessment for satisfaction. What evolved was a "sensitive and specific measure of marital distress" (Eddy, Heyman, & Weiss, 1991, p. 214). While the DAS has an excellent hit rate for labeling distressed couples between 70% and 80%, Eddy, Heyman, and Weiss are also quick to add "we should consider whether marital dissatisfaction is indeed the opposite of marital satisfaction, or whether it is a separate construct" (Eddy, et al. 1991, p. 217). Heyman, et al. (1994) recommend combining the DAS with another global satisfaction measure for future outcome studies.

An inherent difficulty in all of the measures of marital satisfaction, however named, is that they are self-report measures. Fowers, Applegate, Olson, and Pomerantz (1994) believed that all marital satisfaction measurements have a "ceiling effect" (p. 99). Marital conventionalization is the "tendency to distort the evaluation of one's marriage in the direction of social desirability" (Fowers, et al. 1994, p. 98). Through various factor analyses Fowers, et. al. were able to conclude that conventionalization and marital satisfaction appear to have the same underlying construct. Only one conventionalization scale was used in the analysis, the Marital Conventionalization Scale (MCS, Edmonds, 1967). The results provided a promising indication for use of conventionalization scales in assessing marital satisfaction.

Fincham and Bradbury (1987) favored an index format based on global judgments because "unlike traditional tests they do not confound description of the marriage with evaluation" (p. 799). The authors cited three reasons for their bias. First, global evaluations can differentiate between satisfaction and dissatisfaction while self-reports of behavior may not. Second, global evaluations are consistent with existing research. Third, global

evaluations promote research into the correlates of marital satisfaction.

The Marital Satisfaction Scale: (MSS, Roach, Frazier, and Bowden, 1987) conforms to the recommendations of Fincham and Bradbury. The Marital Satisfaction Scale is a 48-item scale. Its internal consistency estimate of .97 warranted Form B, a 20-item shorter version. The size of both forms provides easy facilitation. The MSS has good validity correlating .79 with the Locke-Wallace. Because the items are designed to elicit opinion rather than facts about the relationship, the scale provides substantial global evaluation that is sensitive to changes in the relationship (Roach, Frazier, and Bowden, 1987).

### Intimacy

If marital dissatisfaction is understood to be a propellant of divorce, then intimacy is routinely accepted as the propellant to success in marriage. “. . . Intimacy defines a positive love relationship. Intimacy is what many consider the core of mature love” (Nelson, Hill-Barrow, & Benedict, 1994, p. 37). Although this is a statement that could easily elicit nods of approval from all who study marriage, it can be very misleading. The difficulty with this statement is the use of intimacy as a quantifiable entity. As with so many aspects of the research on marital

relationships, there is a tendency to discuss abstractions as concrete constructs. Intimacy can be both a concrete construct and an abstraction, as it can be both a process and an experience or achievement. "Intimacy means the degree of closeness two people achieve . . . . Intimacy is a process by which we attempt to get close to one another" (Perlman & Fehr, 1987, p. 17). The process of intimacy is engaging in the activity of intimate behaviors. The experience or achievement of intimacy is the outcome of the intimate process. "Colloquially the term intimacy is used to describe a variety of relationship dimensions ranging from sex and sexuality to the extent to which the persons feel close or emotionally bonded" (Tolstedt & Stokes, 1983, p. 573). Because of the multivaried relationship dimensions, all fitting under the auspices of intimacy, it will be germane to this study to limit the focus to process and experience.

What is the process of intimacy? Schnarch (1991) forewarned that "there is a distinct poverty of clinical wisdom on the process of intimacy" (p. 89). How does someone become intimate? Some developmental theorists would present the process of intimacy as the navigation of life tasks. "Intimacy . . . is not just a status that is achieved at a particular point in time, but is a developmental process with a developmental history" (White, K.M.,



Speisman, J. C., Jackson, D., Bartis, S. & Costos, D., 1986, p. 152). The process of intimacy may also be considered as the activity of an individual in relationship with another with the specific purpose of intensifying that relationship. Tolstedt and Stokes (1983) suggested that ". . . research should consider intimacy as a multifaceted construct and operationalize it accordingly" (p. 579)

Intimacy as activity is what takes place within the dyad. Most of the intimate activity between partners in a marital relationship occurs in three specific areas - - verbally, affectively, and physically (Tolstedt & Stokes, 1983). All three dimensions involve the willingness to risk and trust simultaneously.

Verbal intimacy has been operationalized in previous research to be understood as self-disclosure (Derlega, 1984; Levinger & Senn, 1967; Shaefer & Olson, 1981; White, et al. 1986). "Communicating positive feelings about self and others is critical in fulfilling the role of marriage" (Merves-Okin, et al. 1991, p. 117). It is the self-disclosure element which makes verbal intimacy different from casual communication within a marriage. The content of verbal intimacy is a person's deepest sense of self. To give what is so integral of self to another is in its very essence a sacred trust. It is also an exchange of power. Martin (1985) indicated that it is more essential for these

types of exchanges to be rewarded between husband and wife than to be equal. This research is significant because it suggests that husbands and wives expect their self-disclosures to be of different quality. As long as each partner perceives the self-disclosure to be received and accepted with respect and understanding, i.e. reward, satisfaction ensues. "Reward level then, independent of equity and equality appears to be a significant factor affecting satisfaction within intimate exchanges" (Martin, 1985, p. 598).

If verbal intimacy is the offering of self to the other, then affective intimacy is the exchange of selves by action. Wilner (1982) chose to:

. . . define intimacy between people as the experience of another's wholeness, whether the other is physically present or not; the essential characteristic of the intimate relationship would be the enduring ability of two people to undergo such experiences with one another. The characteristic of whole presence would distinguish the intimate relationship from partial-need-satisfying ones. (p. 22)

It is not only what is being said in the marriage that builds intimacy, but how each partner presents oneself through affect. According to Denes (1982), ". . . intimacy

for humans is both behavior and notion. It is what we do and what we think we are doing. It is the fact and the abstraction" (p. 128). Negative affectivity has been researched in conjunction with couples' attributes and levels of satisfaction within a marriage. Karney, B. R., Bradbury, T. N., Fincham, F. D., & Sullivan, K. T. (1994) found:

Consideration of whether negative affectivity covaries with spouses' attributions raises the possibility that negative affectivity is itself important in marriage and, more specifically, that the association between making unfavorable versus favorable attributions about the partner's behavior and perceiving the marriage as unsatisfying versus satisfying is simply a reflection of the more general tendency to evaluate many types of social events and experiences in a critical and disparing manner. (Karney, et al. 1994, p. 414)

Positive or negative affect is the vehicle for drawing close or detaching in a relationship. Positive affect as displayed in attributions, gestures, and symbols seems to cement trust and safety within a marital relationship. Negative affect on the other hand creates distance, so that emotional, verbal and physical intimacy may be compromised. ". . . The ratio of positive to negative interactions is a

key factor in maintaining a happy loving relationship” (Bryne & Murnen, 1988, p. 302).

Physical intimacy is often misconstrued as to be only sexual in nature. “Sex and intimacy are increasingly and erroneously perceived as synonymous in American society” (Brown, 1995, p. 101). Physical intimacy covers the gamut from full body contact to how people share the same physical space. Physical intimacy is particularly relevant to the study of ritual. How couples assume sleep positions or morning rituals of washing and dressing may be ritualistic in function, but are reliant on the degree of physical intimacy the couple tolerates. Brown (1995), addressed this as loving touch:

Within the context of intimate relationships “loving touch” enhances intimacy by offering a profound level of acceptance and affirmation; an essential expression of caring and support which can connect the individuals not just with another human being, but to his/her essential humanity. (p. 106)

The concept of intimacy tolerance is integral to understanding intimacy in marriage. Intimacy as a process is highly individualistic and personal in its development. It is fortunate and according to some researchers rare when

the intimate process in marriage evolves in a rhythmic compatible sequence. According to Schnarch, 1991:

What is intimate to one person may be stifling and uncomfortably self-revealing to another . . . .

Discrepancies in intimacy need and intimacy tolerance play a crucial role in the interplay of individual and dyadic issues creating conflict and determining the ebb and flow of relationships over time. (Schnarch, 1991, p. 183)

This discrepancy in intimacy tolerance and intimacy need among couples, for example, can manifest itself in the two versions likely to be reported on a sexual encounter. The very reasons many couples present to the clinician complaining of sexual difficulties has more to do with the discrepancy the couple is experiencing in their intimacy needs and tolerance.

If the process of intimacy can be so difficult to explain, trying to determine what is the experience of intimacy can also be stymieing. Conceptualizing the experience of intimacy as the outcome of the process of intimacy can be helpful. Generally the outcome or experience of intimacy is typified by a feeling. Couples often describe their feelings of intimacy as feelings of closeness or connectedness, wholeness or oneness with the

other. "Intimacy refers simultaneously to a feeling state as well as an interpersonal event." (Denes, 1982, p. 134)

Judith Ladner (1982) gave an example of the circuitous course of intimacy process and intimacy experience:

There are many couples in which both partners fear intimacy so that even though they may consciously yearn for closeness, when they achieve a particular and consistent measure of that closeness one or the other will create distance until the distance itself triggers a new move toward one another. (p. 220)

The experience of intimacy can be achieved only by the process of intimacy, the very outcome of which promotes the ongoing intimate process. In 1985, Patton and Waring defined an eight-part topology of the intimate process/experience within marriage:

- 1) conflict resolution--the ease with which differences of opinion are resolved;
- 2) affection--the degree to which feelings of emotional closeness are expressed by the couple;
- 3) cohesion--a commitment to the marriage;
- 4) sexuality--the degree to which sexual needs are communicated and fulfilled;
- 5) identity--the couple's level of self-confidence and self-esteem;
- 6) compatibility-- the degree to which the couple is able

- 1

to work and play together comfortably; 7) autonomy--the couple's degree of positive connectedness to family and friends; and 8) expressiveness--the degree to which thoughts, beliefs, attitudes and feelings are communicated within the marriage. (p. 177)

The nine tasks of a good marriage as conceptualized by Wallerstein and Blakeslee (1995) are very compatible with this topology of intimacy. Similar to both topologies is the implication of a viable construct that integrates both procedure and accomplishment. There is room for incorporation in both topologies for the divergent theoretical views in the research literature. There is indication for a new course of intimacy research in marital studies. While intimacy can be process and experience for individuals within a relationship, when both participants perspectives are in accord, there results an intimacy that is a blending of those perspectives and remains a product of the relationship with its own life force, truly the couple's intimacy.

In their synopsis of the intimacy literature, Acitelli and Duck (1987) used the metaphor of the elephant as described by three blind men, each could only "see" the section being examined. They suggested an enlightened view of intimacy:

It is clear that some elements of intimacy are both dynamic and static, both personal and situational: The mediating factor is the perspective on it that is taken by the participants, particularly their judgments about the level of intimacy appropriate for a given situation or occasion. (Acitelli & Duck, 1987, p. 301)

Understanding intimacy as inherently dynamic and static is the most pragmatic approach to the comprehending the place of intimacy in the research literature. This coexistence of seemingly opposite states bears a distinct resemblance to the ritual phenomenon. The fact that both intimacy and ritual have the capacity to be dynamic and static or simultaneously to be process and achievement fosters kinship.

Assessing And Measuring Intimacy

As there are a plethora of intimacy theories, so are there numerous intimacy measurements. In her 1995 work, The Psychology of Intimacy, Karen Prager cited a sampling of 45 intimacy measures categorized by various conceptualizations of intimacy. Again the elephant metaphor comes to mind. By necessity intimacy measures are myopically designed to gauge intimacy in a narrow view. "Both theories and measures of intimacy differ in their implicit or explicit views about



the locus of intimacy (Acitelli & Duck, 1987, p. 298). Intimacy measures can be self-serving in the research capacity because they are less global. Of the 45 measurements cited by Prager (1995), 22 were developed using college student populations; 5 on single adults; 6 on couples (defined only as "in a relationship"); 4 were based on children populations; 2 on family populations; and only 6 of the measures were developed using populations of married couples.

One of the difficulties predominant in intimacy measures is that they are generally individual assessments. The Waring Intimacy Questionnaire (1987) is a true-false instrument that queries eight facets of intimacy: conflict resolution, affection, cohesion, sexuality, identity, compatibility, expressiveness and autonomy (Waring, 1987). A total intimacy score is obtained by a discrepancy between the spouses' individual intimacy scores. The questions are reflective of an individual introspection rather than a perspective of the marriage. This leaves intimacy to be assessed by mathematical reductionism.

Often intimacy is measured by obtaining scores on the subscales of other inventories. Subscales of personality inventories as well as marital satisfaction instruments are often extrapolated to assign an intimacy quotient. This leaves intimacy to be assessed by similarity.

In 1981, Shaefer and Olson developed the Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships. This measurement remains unique since it is still the only measurement to date which is designed to measure the intimacy of the couple's relationship. The PAIR was not developed specifically for marital couples, but measures the kinds of intimacy that couples experience; emotional intimacy, social intimacy, sexual intimacy, recreational intimacy, and intellectual intimacy (Shaefer & Olson, 1981). The PAIR measures both the perceived and the ideal levels of intimacy within a dyad. The PAIR is a good attempt at measuring intimacy from a position that is integrated.

### Gender Differences

An outgrowth of the feminist movement is that much of the recent research literature has been devoted to gender differences. "At a time when efforts are being made to eradicate discrimination between the sexes for social equality and justice, the differences between the sexes are being rediscovered in the social sciences" (Gilligan, 1982, p. 6). The difficulty with the resurgence of interest in gender differences is that often differences are viewed comparatively as if one is better than or less than the other. Some of the fault lies in the fact that many of the available scales were normed on male populations and often

do not measure feminine constructs (Jordan, J. V., Kaplan, A. G., Miller, J. B., Stiver, I. P., & Surrey, J. L., 1991; Yoder & Kahn, 1993).

Frequently the empirical studies done on marital relationships were based on theories of identity and autonomy which have been accepted as integral to marital satisfaction. Until recently it was presumed that the feminine identity task was not resolved in adolescence as it was for males. This was predicated on the belief that feminine identity needed to remain receptive to accommodating mate and children (O'Connell, 1976). The bias is evident in that the same theoretical construct "barely mentions fatherhood as a male identity issue" (Franz & White, 1985, p. 232).

Women have been acculturated to believe that their identities rest in their roles as wives and mothers. Autonomy for such women was secondary to their fulfillment of such roles. "Women are socialized to value relationships . . . men are socialized to value mastery and success" (White, K. M., Houlihan, J., Costos, D., & Speisman, J. C., 1990, p. 384). This has placed unrealistic expectations regarding the satisfaction to be garnered from such roles. It is not unusual, therefore, that studies investigating marital satisfaction and/or intimacy have reported significant gender differences.

Shachar (1991) found that a male's desire to marry as well as his liberal views on marital equality were determinants of marital satisfaction as long as the female partner held conservative views of marital equality.

". . . Husbands evaluated their marriages more positively than their wives in terms of finances, parenting, family and friends" (Fowers, 1991 p. 218). There are indications that men derive more good from marriage than do women.

"Regarding gender, there is substantial evidence that marriage disproportionately benefits men" (Levenson, et al. 1993, p. 302). That is not to say that the literature often reports this phenomenon as women's dissatisfaction or negative affectivity.

Tronto (1987) reported that the gender-related differences in response revolves around the observation that "men are usually separate/objective in the self/other perception and women more often view themselves in terms of a connected self" (p. 648). It is necessary to avoid stereotypical assignments of male and female attributes. Lye and Biblarz (1993) cautioned:

Each partner must struggle to balance the competing demands of the relationship for intimacy and commitment, and the self for personal autonomy and fulfillment . . . reduced marital satisfaction is often the result of this balancing act particularly where

partners hold differing view about family life and gender roles. (p. 183)

This view that men and women share the same struggle is more cohesive with contemporary theories of attachment. Cancian (1987) noted how previously "women were expected to provide affection and care at home and forego autonomous achievement, while men provided money for the family and sought individual success foregoing close attachments with their children" (p. 4). While men and women may form attachments differently, the attachments formed hold similar values. The process of attachment may be less germane to relationship quality than the attachment bond itself.

How attachments are formed is only one of the areas of gender roles that has to be reexamined in empirical studies. It is evident, however, that there has been as Blumberg (1991) stated, a "reduction in the functional importance of many sex differences" (p. 36). With the introduction of baby formula early in this century, and more recently approved paternity leave time, fathers are recognized care givers. Shachar (1991) reported that "spouses that foster multiple roles and androgynous skills which are consistent with the changing needs of marriages tend to be more satisfied than those who hold a narrow view of gender identity" (p. 452). It is likely that there may be more

congruence in the satisfaction reported by men and women as they assimilate their gender identities into less rigid gender roles.

This is not to say that roles that are predominantly male or predominantly female will be eliminated. Di Leonardo (1987) spoke of a particularly feminine task that she calls the "work of kinship" (p. 442). She contended that, even though women have emerged from absorption in their families, they overtly strategize to promote "kin centered networks" (p. 443) to the end of fulfillment and autonomy. This compliments the view of women as ritual keepers. The instigating and maintaining of family rituals is integral to the fostering of kin centered networks. Di Leonardo argues that this task does not just fall to women, but is actively sought by women. Laird (1988) somewhat disputed this position. "Female rituals everywhere celebrate and define women's entry into and participation in domestic life" (p. 337). This is plainly demonstrated in the fact that women are given bridal showers complete with gifts for kitchen or bath while the groomsmen throw stag parties. In his book, The Gift Economy, David Cheal (1988) referred often to how women invent ritual by celebrations and gift giving as a means of ensuring the durability of a family. Imber-Black (1989) saw the role of women as keepers of rituals as a natural extension of "women's position as

keeper of the domestic sphere . . . expected to remember and acknowledge birthdays for both sides of the family, or . . . responsible for all gift selection" (p. 457).

### Stress Within Marriage

One definition of stress is the nonspecific response of the body to any demand (Selye, 1976). It is not too presumptuous to state that marriage and family constitute constant demands. "The list of potential stressors is virtually endless . . . ubiquitous . . . and unavoidable (Barbach & Geisinger, 1991, p. 228). Some stress within marriage is produced by the confusion, balancing, and redefining of roles. "It is generally recognized that managing three roles is more complicated than managing one or two and that women are more likely than men to suffer overload or conflict from the accumulation of roles" (Helson, Elliott & Leigh, 1990, p. 85). It is not that women are less adept at managing roles, but rather that women accumulate more roles than men. There is a tendency for the male provider role to contain other roles (Barnett, & Marshall, 1993). Men who hold onto a provider role attitude see their roles as husband or father incorporated into the provider role (Perry-Jenkins & Crouter, 1990). For women the role of wife is distinct from the role of mother which is distinct from the role of wage earner (Helson, et

al. 1990). Even in dual income couples it is likely that men and women both will maintain their "psychological responsibility" to the traditional roles (Helson, et al. 1990). The implications of this directly affects the physical division of labor for the upkeep of home and family. Women are still responsible for the major portion of child care and household chores (Coltrane, 1989; Lewis & Cooper, 1987; Marshall & Barnett, 1993; Mederer, 1993; Wiersma & Van Den Berg, 1991). Who is responsible for chauffeuring children to child care or little league, or the week's laundry or grocery shopping are obviously not the major stressors in a marriage. However, the cumulative effect of consistent daily stress has the same consequence in terms of well-being and marital satisfaction for a couple as life's "big" stressors.

Any life-cycle transition, because it involves real or perceived loss, is likely to be accompanied by stress. The natural course of marriage is synonymous with life-cycle changes. Job attainment, changes and loss; acquiring and maintaining residences; the arrival and departure of children; and retirement are typical if not expected events in marriage (Mederer & Hill, 1983). Sustaining levels of marital satisfaction may depend on whether the not-so-expected stressors in marriage compromise the coping skills of the couple (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983).



Willits and Crider (1988) found that health was a significant factor in marital satisfaction. Severe and terminal illness in one partner has been known to down regulate the immune system of the other (Kennedy, Kiecolt-Glasser, and Glasser, 1988). Dealing with the illnesses of other family members, especially children or aging parents depletes a couple's as well as an individual's resources for coping. On the other hand, a satisfying marriage enhances the opportunity to replenish those same resources.

One of the mechanisms, albeit not necessarily a positive one, for coping with stress within the marriage is distancing. Distancing can be expressed symptomatically through: "boredom, quarreling, anxiety, alienation, depression, sexual apathy, insomnia, disturbances in eating, increases in drinking or smoking, and psychosomatic or physical illness . . . but the most radical and destructive distancing technique of all may be that of having an affair" (Barbach & Geisinger, 1991, p. 229,235). Prins, Buunk, and Van Yperen (1993) found in their study that 30% of their research population had engaged in extramarital affairs and that women engaged in as many affairs as men. Women were more likely to cite lack of reciprocity as the motivator, while men claimed dissatisfaction. This is in keeping with the results of the Glass and Wright study (1992) in which

the female justification for extramarital affairs was emotional intimacy while the male justification was sexual satisfaction. The population of Glass and Wright's (1992) study also had high percentages of extramarital involvement, 47% of the women and 63% of the men.

A particular reaction to some stressors in marriage is the impact on sexual functioning. Erectile dysfunction was found to be directly related to husband's unemployment in a recent study by Morokoff and Gilliland (1993). The same study identified decreased sexual desire and activity as a stress response for women.

One of the most severe stressors on a married couple is the death of child. While the divorce rate for bereaved parents is the same as the general population, the bereavement process is often divisive (Schiff, 1978). Men and women express the bereavement process differently, without substantial external and internal resources, the death of a child can become almost insurmountable for a couple.

As the age for marrying has increased so has the pressure to produce children increased on some couples. Infertility, miscarriages, and stillborn birth issues are also extreme stressors which can result in higher than

average divorce rates and marital distress (Borg & Lasker, 1989).

Extreme stress warrants extreme response unless of course there are adequate resources to withstand the stress. The best resource for any couple to foster in their relationship is the maintenance of the relationship itself. Positive ritual behavior within a marriage may be a natural but unrecognized technique for relationship maintenance. Keying into their own positive couple interactions at nonstressful times and fostering those dynamics which deepen the relationship are essential to the survival of a marriage (Baxter & Simon, 1993; Davis & Oathout, 1987).

There are numerous instruments to assess stress levels in individuals, and relatively few that examine stress in relationships. Most instruments are rating scales which do little more than quantify how much stress has been endured. The File scale is an instrument that quantitatively examines the impact of each family member's stress on the entire family system. Other approaches in stress assessment have been toward global measures rather than discrimination by severity or response. Stress subscales have also been included in some instruments not specifically designed to assess stress. McCubbin, Patterson, and Wilson developed the Family Inventory of Life Events and Changes (FILE) in 1982 to help families examine the stressful strains

experienced in the previous 12 months in order to better facilitate a family's flexibility.

### Summary

The literature substantiates investigating the use of positive ritual as a workable means for effecting marital satisfaction and/or intimacy. Ritual is a cultural universal and proven vehicle for change and continuity. Ritual has also been established as a viable means of therapeutic intervention. Ritual has the ability to tolerate simultaneous dichotomies.

The literature on marital satisfaction has illustrated the difficulty in determining what qualifies as satisfaction. Although some researchers may interchangeably use quality, satisfaction, or adjustment, the literature indicates certain distinctions between distressed and nondistressed couples. The primary focus of much of the literature has been on highlighting distress. Marital satisfaction is more readily predictable when there exist homogeneity, skilled communication, and sexual satisfaction between the couple. New research focuses on the ongoing engagement in tasks as critical to good marriages. It will be essential to concentrate on ways to help couples sustain their resources while developing new means. Ritual may provide such a vehicle.

The interconnectedness of the process and experience of intimacy is evidenced throughout the literature. The process of intimacy begets the experience of intimacy, which begets a continued process of intimacy. An example is how self-disclosure enables closeness between the partners which enables further self-disclosure. Intimacy cannot be confined to one domain, it is multidimensional. Physical intimacy is different from emotional intimacy, as it is different from spiritual intimacy.

Interest in gender differences has been renewed in more contemporary psychological research. Central to the exploration of gender differences is the significance of perceptions and perspectives. Researchers must refrain from comparative studies of gender that presume difference to be a hierarchical value. Understanding gender difference relies on an appreciation for role identity. Role identity is evidential in ritual. It is not coincidental that mother cooks and serves the turkey, but father carves it.

Stress is a major and unavoidable factor in marital life. Stress reduction or management is often a less likely course of action within a marriage than extreme responses. Severe stressors have severe consequences. Stress has disrupted and dissolved some marriages, while the endurance of stress has strengthened others. Adding to a couples resource pool to combat stress is a necessary direction for

marital research. While ritual may not directly combat stress, it may provide a basis of fortification from which a couple can withstand stress.

## Chapter III

### Methodology

#### Introduction

This chapter will explain and describe the methods and procedures that were used to accomplish this study. Because the original recruitment plan failed to produce a subject pool, it was necessary to restructure the format for recruiting subjects and executing the study. The first section of this chapter focuses on the subjects and is followed by an explanation of the procedures and a discussion of the instruments. The conclusion will be an explanation of the design of the study and its statistical analysis.

#### Subjects

There were 45 couples who met all criteria and completed all phases of this study. Both partners of the marital dyad agreed to participate and completed the three stages of the study. It was important that both spouses be involved since the study assessed levels of intimacy, marital satisfaction and positive ritual behavior within the

marriage, as well as in the individuals. Frequently research in these areas of marital life is conducted by the assessment of only one of the partners. It is hoped that by assessing both the couple and each partner individually we will have a clearer illustration of marital activity.

To be included in this study, the dyad had to be heterosexual and in a legal marriage with the individuals over 18 years of age. There was no requirement for minimum or maximum length of the marriage. Couples married a year or less are sometimes excluded from research studies to avoid confounding the assessment with honeymoon effects. Since this study focused on the relationship between positive ritual behavior and intimacy and satisfaction, it is important to have a broad range of marital duration.

Couples were not eliminated if their current marriage is not their first marriage. Divorce in the fiftieth percentile of all marriages is now a matter of fact. It would be reasonable to assume that there would be some difficulty in assembling an adequate sample of first-time-only marriages. The literature has shown that the process of divorce affects ritual behavior. This is not to imply that the effect is negative, but to denote that blended families may have rituals to accommodate new family constellations and alignments. Since ritual behavior is indicative of



married life, it is not relevant to this study if the couples are first or multiple married dyads.

Neither were couples eliminated if they had received or are currently receiving marriage counseling. The level of distress the couple may experience is not at issue. It is presumed that the couples in both the experimental and control groups will have experienced proportionately similar kinds and amounts of marital stress. The experience of positive ritual behaviors, intimacy, and satisfaction are not contingent upon the level of stress a couple may be experiencing.

The study was to commence in September, 1996. Only two couples responded to the original recruitment plan. These two couples became the pilot study affording us valuable information for reformatting the study.

The couples who participated fully and are included in this study were drawn from two different geographic areas. In November, 1996, from a data base of 500 couples involved in the marital ministry of the Diocese of Baltimore, 23 couples self-selected to participate in the study. Out of that number 16 couples also completed phase II. However, one couple did not complete phase III, and two other couples did not follow instructions for the posttest, thus nullifying their data. The data from the remaining 13 couples are included in this study.

The second population was drawn from a geographic area which is populated by a fairly homogeneous group. The 60 mile radius extending from northern New Jersey in the east, to Lebanon County Pennsylvania in the west, and from the coal regions of Pennsylvania in the north to the suburbs of Philadelphia in the south, is more diverse in its topography than its demography. There is little racial diversity, with a predominantly Caucasian population of Pennsylvania German ancestry. The socioeconomic strata is narrow. The predominantly low to middle income reflects a depressed area with a higher than national average rate of unemployment and suicide.

The advantage of utilizing such a homogeneous group is that significant changes in the levels of intimacy or marital satisfaction may be more readily attributable to enhanced positive ritual behavior. A disadvantage is that the generalizability of the study may be compromised.

Also in November, 1996, one week after the Maryland cluster met, 20 couples from the Lehigh Valley area self-selected to participate in the research study. Of that pool, 15 couples completed phase II, and of those, 12 couples completed all three phases, and their data are included in this study. In February, 1997, the process was repeated in the Lehigh Valley. At that time 26 couples agreed to participate, 21 of whom completed phase II, of which 20

couples completed phase III. Their data are included in this study.

Couples from the Maryland cluster received course credit from the Diocese of Baltimore for their participation. Couples who completed the study from the Lehigh Valley cluster received a 10 dollar per couple stipend.

### Procedures

Recruitment of subjects. The subjects were solicited in several ways. Since the original recruitment plan was unsuccessful in producing an adequate subject pool, the study as conceptualized had to be reformatted. The method for recruitment was not changed, but enhanced to afford direct contact between the researcher and prospective subjects. Therefore, there is considerable overlap between the original plan and subsequent efforts.

Original recruitment plan. First, an open advertisement (Appendix A) was placed in the Sunday edition of three local newspapers: The Morning Call (Allentown and Bethlehem), The Express Times (Easton) and The Reading Eagle (Reading). The combined readership of all three newspapers is 346,625 subscribers. The circulation area is contained within a 60 mile radius. The Morning Call has the largest circulation of 186,183 distributed in Berks, Bucks, Carbon, Lehigh, Monroe, Montgomery, Northampton and Schuylkill

counties in Pennsylvania and Warren County in New Jersey. All eight counties are predominantly rural, with Berks, Lehigh, and Northampton counties having the highest concentration of industry and population. The Sunday edition of the Express Times has a circulation of 55,000 and is distributed in Bucks, Northampton and Monroe counties in Pennsylvania, and Hunterdon, Warren and Sussex counties in New Jersey. All six counties are rural and agricultural areas. The Sunday edition of the Reading Eagle has a circulation of 105,442 throughout the counties of Berks, Chester, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Luzerne, Montgomery and Schuylkill, all of which are in rural or agricultural Pennsylvania. The newspaper ads were identical. The ads were placed in the three Sunday editions of all three papers for the three Sundays immediately preceding the first session. The text of the ad was an invitation for interested couples to participate in a scholarly study of marital interaction. In the ad, the purpose of the study was identified as the "survivability of marriage in a culture of divorce." The ad directed people to a phone number for complete details and information but did not give the name of the researcher. All phone calls were handled by a twenty-four hour answering service, The Dispatch Answering Service of Zionsville, Pennsylvania. The phone number accessed a voice mail recording (Appendix B) made by the

researcher that gave the criteria for participating in the study, and details about the study itself, and how to participate. The message could play as often as the caller wished. Callers also had an option to have the researcher contact them if they had any additional questions. The recorded message clearly stated the requirements for participating in the study: the couple must be a legally married, heterosexual couple; both spouses must be over 18 years of age; both spouses must be willing to participate; both spouses must be available for all three consecutive phases. The message clearly stated the time and place of all three phases of the study and that a small remuneration would be offered to couples who completed the study.

Second, additional ads were placed in special interest publications. The Minority Voice is an African-American newspaper distributed throughout Berks and Lehigh counties. It has a subscribership of 20,000. It is circulated once every 2 months. An ad appeared in the Sept-Oct edition. The A.D. Times is the newspaper for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Allentown. It is published twice a month and has a readership of 63,000 people. It is distributed in Berks, Carbon, Lehigh, Northampton, and Schuylkill counties in Pennsylvania. The newsletter of the Jewish community, the Center News is mailed to 20,000 residents of the Lehigh Valley. The ads were identical to the advertisements placed

in the commercial papers. The ads appeared in the edition most proximate to the first session scheduled for September 21, 1996. Diocesan Life is a monthly newspaper for the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem. It is distributed throughout the six county area which comprises the Episcopal Diocese of Bethlehem and has a circulation of 50,000 readers. While Diocesan Life does not accept advertisements, they published a short article on the research in their September edition and included a call for participants

Third, a request (Appendix C) was made of 15 Roman Catholic churches, 19 Protestant denominations, eight synagogues, the Muslim Association, and the Hindu temple to include the same request in their service leaflet or bulletin and or congregational newsletter. With the exception of the Muslim Association and the Hindu Temple, congregations were selected by membership size (larger than 150 families) and inclusion in the same central area covered by the publications. While the request used identical text, these were not paid advertisements. It is not known how many if any, of these requests were acted upon in the congregations. It is known, however, that some congregants of one Episcopal church did circulate the request at several places of employment including an elementary school, a hospital, and a beauty salon. Two additional Episcopal

churches reported on their own accord that they included the request in their worship leaflets. One synagogue reported including the request in their service leaflet, and one synagogue responded that they had no interest in promoting the study. One Pastor of a large Lutheran congregation placed the request in the service leaflet as well as made personal contact with several couples suggesting participation. The largest Presbyterian congregation in the Lehigh Valley placed the request in their service leaflet as well as their congregation newsletter.

Fourth, a request (Appendix F) was sent to the following colleges and universities: Allentown College of St. Francis, Cedar Crest College, Kutztown University, Lafayette College, Lehigh University, Lehigh-Carbon Community College, Muhlenberg College, Northampton Community College, and Reading Area Community College. All of the academic institutions are located in the same geographic area as the newspaper publications. The request sought to have the text of the ad included in the administration news briefs which are circulated daily to faculty and staff. It was unlikely that the invitation appeared more than once if the request was honored at all. The publication relations office from Kutztown University advised the researcher that, while space prohibited the request being included in the daily news brief, it was circulated to "appropriate

departments" (faculty dining room, psychology department chair, and counseling center). Cedar Crest College also responded that, while they did not have a news brief per se, they did include the request at least once in their weekly calendar notes.

Fifth, a request (Appendix G) was also sent to fifty-one local marriage counselors and licensed psychologists to consider recommending participation in the study to friends, family, or clients. A copy of the ad was included for the practitioner to use. Four of the letters were returned as undeliverable. Two licensed psychologists did acknowledge receipt of the request and indicated they had suggested the study to several clients.

Dispatch Answering Service which handled the voice mail process, tallied 229 interest calls (callers who listened to the entire recorded message at least once). Of that number, 126 replayed the message, and of that number 83 replayed the message more than three times. An assumption was made that people who listened to the message more than once would more than likely be seriously considering participating. Of the 83 replays, 17 callers did request to have the researcher return calls to them. The researcher was confident that this was a concentrated and thorough attempt to saturate the area and would more than likely result in 30 to 60 couples responding positively to participate. In fact, only two



couples did actually respond. Both of these couples were among the 17 requests for call backs.

Enhanced recruitment plan. The input from the two couples who responded in September of 1996 was that it was only after speaking directly to the researcher and getting a personal sense of the study did they feel able to commit to the project. For the November, 1996, recruitment campaign, the advertisements were again placed in all of the same newspapers and in the same time frame preceding the study.

However, the researcher's name was included in these advertisements. The voice mail recording method was discontinued, and the researcher received all calls direct. In the November, 1996, offering for the Lehigh Valley, 38 phone calls were received.

Additionally, four clergymen upon receiving the second request (Appendixes D, E) for support in recruiting subjects invited the researcher to directly address their congregations. Three Episcopalian priests and the minister of the largest Presbyterian congregation in the Lehigh Valley were enthusiastic in their efforts to support the project. The direct address to their congregations resulted in 4 respondents self-selecting for the November Lehigh Valley session.

Finally, letters (Appendix H) were sent to the 206 members listed in the Allentown branch yearbook of the

American Association of University Women. The letters asked the membership to not only consider participating in the research themselves but to also encourage friends, family, and coworkers to participate. It is known that one couple in the first Lehigh Valley cluster was recruited from this request and that the request was passed along by several other members to nonmembers.

For the second Lehigh Valley cluster, the only renewed ad was placed in the major publication, The Morning Call. That ad ran in three Sunday editions, and one Wednesday edition. However, an additional ad was run for two consecutive weeks on the local cable TV channel. The media ad used the same text as the print ad. For the February, 1997, session there were 52 phone calls received. Interestingly, several of the 52 respondents indicated that they had seen the previously placed ads, and had thought about it but did not respond at that time. The researcher was also contacted by a local radio station to do an on-air interview regarding the study. The interviewer read the ad over the air and announced how to contact the researcher. The radio interview resulted in 10 respondents (not included in the tallied number from the print campaign). None of these callers were qualified to participate in the study; they did, however, wish to express their opinions to the researcher.

The Maryland cluster was recruited when the director of the Family Life Ministry of the Diocese of Baltimore contacted the researcher for possible inclusion in the study. The director wrote a cover letter to the 500 couple data base that the diocese uses in its marriage and family ministry. The cover letter strongly endorsed participation in the research study. Included in this mailing was a detailed explanation of the study (Appendix I culled from the original voice mail format). The researchers personal contacts were also included. The letters were presumed to have been sent first class mail 4 weeks prior to the scheduled session. Unfortunately, due to a Diocesan interdepartmental miscommunication, the 500 letters were sent bulk mail and were not received until the week prior to the first session and in some cases after the fact. The insufficient time for notification most likely resulted in poor response.

Randomization of subjects. Prior to the first scheduled meeting with the subjects in September, what was believed to be an adequate number of research packets were prepared. Dispatch Answering service had tallied 126 replay calls. It was decided to prepare 100 packets of materials. Each packet was numbered from 1 to 100 and prefixed by the number 13 to result in a five digit identification code. Each packet contained two manila envelopes, with the same

number, but one was coded A and the other B (A was intended for the wives and B for the husbands). Each envelope also contained an index card with the same reference number. The reference number for each couple was known only by the couple. The index card was used as an admittance ticket to the subsequent sessions. Each envelope also contained detailed instructions (Appendix K) for completing the surveys, and one each of the following instruments: Demographic Data Form (Appendix L), the Attitude Toward Social Desirability Scale, (ATSE, A scale created by combining the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale Short Form X1, [MC10] interspersed with the Overall Agreement Scale [OAS]), the Personal Assessment Of Intimacy in Relationship (PAIR), the Marital Satisfaction Scale, the Family Ritual Questionnaire (FRQ), and the Family Inventory of Life Events and Changes (FILE). All enclosed assessments were numbered with the same reference number identifying the packet. Using a randomized table, numbers in the sequential range of the completed packets were extracted and designated experimental group. These numbers were distinguished by a red dot, the other packets had a blue dot and became the control group. The randomly assigned packets were then randomly distributed to the couples who participated.

Research sites. All three meetings of the study conducted in the Lehigh Valley were held at the same

location, but not in the same rooms. The gathering place was intended to be the grand- rounds auditorium of the Lehigh Valley Hospital Center. The hospital is a major trauma center and teaching hospital, and is adjacent to a major interstate, at approximately the epicenter of the geographical area of recruitment. The room is a large amphitheater that seats 200, and the September gathering which became the pilot did convene there. The room was unavailable for the subsequent meetings. The second and third Lehigh Valley Clusters met in two identically arranged classrooms across from the grand-rounds auditorium.

The Maryland site was selected by the Family Life director of the diocese. The education hall of a large parish familiar and convenient to the participants was utilized.

Every research site on every occasion was arranged in the same fashion. Couples sat side by side classroom style, facing the researcher. The grand-rounds room had theater-type seats, the education hall had table and chairs, and the hospital classrooms had student chairs. Coffee, tea, water, and pencils were provided on each occasion at all locations.

Phase one - pretest. Originally, the plan of the study was that all three phases be conducted as individual sessions. The two couples from what became the pilot did actually meet with the researcher on three separate

occasions. They indicated that the most severe drawback to participating was the time constraint of trying to commit to three separate sessions. It was then determined that the aforeplanned sessions would become phases. Phases one and three (pretest and posttest surveys) could be completed in the subject's home with phase two (intervention) conducted by the therapist at the research site. It was hoped the reduced time commitment away from home would make volunteering for the project less objectionable.

The couples in the pilot study were welcomed and acknowledged for their interest. The researcher gave a brief description of the research project as investigating marital interactions in order to understand marital survivability in a culture of divorce. The criterion for participating in the study was restated as well as reiterating the time commitment. The format of the project, completion of questionnaires, and attending one lecture were explained. The parameters of confidentiality, the anonymity of the responses, and how the responses were to be used were also explained. If the couples did not wish to participate, they were free to leave. Since both couples chose to remain, they were given informed consent forms (Appendix M) to sign. After the consent forms were completed and collected, the randomized packets were distributed. Completion of the questionnaires took approximately 45 to 90

minutes. Before departure, the couples were reminded to take their reference number. The red-dot couple was to return in the morning at the next scheduled meeting and the blue-dot couple was to return in the afternoon on the next scheduled meeting date. While time of day may be a confounding variable, the decision was made to meet with both the control and experimental couples on the same day in favor of continuity and consistency.

In the reformatted Phase I, couples who were interested in participating received the informed consent forms to sign first. When those were returned signed to the researcher, the randomized packets were randomly distributed and delivered by express mail. These couples also received the same welcome, explanations, and acknowledgments during the telephone conversations and in the cover letter (Appendix N) with the packets. Couples receiving the phase I surveys were told to return them sealed in their envelopes to the research site on the meeting day for phase II. With the exception of the Maryland cluster, all other participants had the pretest surveys between 3 weeks and 7 days prior to the intervention phase.

Phase two - intervention. All experimental group participants met in the morning section of session two. The pilot couple had exactly 3 weeks between pretest and intervention. All other participants had their pretest

surveys 3 weeks to 1 week prior to that intervention session. It is unknown, however, how close to attending the intervention session the surveys were actually completed. The experimental group received an interactive lecture on the significance of positive ritual behavior in everyday life. The lecture included (Appendix O) an overview of the external and internal resources that enable marriages to survive and thrive; an explanation of the kinds and functions of ritual; examples of positive ritual behavior; three worksheets (Appendix P, Q, R) to help each couple determine their own activity with positive ritual behavior specifically focused on daily routines, dinner time, and weekends (shared only by the couple); a suggested reading list (Appendix S); and suggestions and encouragement (Appendix T) to apply positive ritual behavior in their marriages. This session took approximately 2 hours. Couples had the option to ask questions and/or make comments throughout the lecture phase. In order to assess the uniformity of the presenter throughout phase II with both control and experimental groups in all of the clusters, the couples were asked to complete an evaluation form of the presenter. A semantic differential instrument was employed as the consistency measure and were completed by all participants before departure from phase II.



At departure, the pilot couple was reminded of the final meeting date and time. All other participants picked up their posttest packets and were reminded of the deadline dates for their return.

The control group met in the afternoon of the second session date. This session also took approximately 2 hours and was conducted in the same interactive lecture style. The content of this lecture (Appendix U) was centered on a general presentation of good marriages. The lecture included an overview of the external and internal resources that enable marriages to survive and thrive; a description of the seminal study of good marriages conducted by Wallerstein and Blakeslee; a checklist worksheet (Appendix V) on the nine tasks of a good marriage from Wallerstein and Blakeslee book The Good Marriage in a Culture of Divorce; an exercise worksheet (Appendix W) on marital interaction (shared only by the couple); and the suggested reading list (Appendix X minus the suggestions for ritual materials). Couples had the option to ask questions and/or make comments throughout the lecture phase. The environment for the control group was an exact replication of the experimental group. The control couples were given the same evaluation form at the conclusion of the lecture. Before departure the pilot couple was reminded of the final meeting date and time. All other participants picked up their posttest

packets and were reminded of the deadline dates for return of the surveys.

Phase Three - posttest. The third and final session for the pilot couples took place exactly 3 weeks after the intervention session in the same location as the previous two sessions. The researcher reiterated the purpose of the study, and gave instructions for the completion of the posttest assessment instruments. Completion of the surveys took approximately 45 to 90 minutes. The pilot couples then offered the researcher input, responses, and suggestions regarding the assessments and lecture. The researcher distributed contact forms. The contact forms (Appendix Y) included the researcher's name, address, and telephone number, and made clear the participants' rights to have the results of the study made available to them if they so chose. The contact form also stated that results released to subjects will be an aggregate of the entire study. The contact form advised participants that therapy referrals would be provided, should any adverse effect of the study be realized. The pilot couples received their stipend check at their final session.

All other participating couples completed their posttests in their own homes. Packets for the posttest phase contained instructions (Appendix Z) and time frame (not before three weeks elapsed) for completing the surveys,

a complete set of the assessment instruments with the exception of the demographic data form, and the contact form.

The packets bore the same identification code with the additional letter X affixed to all materials to distinguish posttest data from pretest data. For consistency all packets were also coded with the color dot that was indicative of their random assignment. Attached to the packets were prestamped and preaddressed express mailers for the return of the materials to the researcher. Included in with the mailers was a postcard preaddressed to the researcher. Couples were instructed to fill in their names and addresses, indicating the completion of the surveys, and to return the postcards some time after but not with the materials as a means of obtaining their stipend checks (Appendix AA).

### Research Instruments

Demographic Data Form. The Demographic Data Form is a fifteen-item multi-purpose questionnaire (Appendix L). Questions 1, 2, 3, 5, 9, and 10 yielded basic demographic information about age, gender, race, education, and employment. Question 4, regarding religious affiliation was used to correlate with level of ritualization. Questions 6, 7, and 8 helped to profile the family status as to number,

length, and presence of children. Questions 11 and 12 reflected family-of-origin data which will provide information on the group means differences of ritualization and divorce. Questions 13 through 15 were direct questions regarding the subject matter of the research -- ritual, marital satisfaction, and intimacy. These self-report questions were correlated with the overall scores on the published instruments. The data form was reviewed for clarity and content by three licensed psychologists.

Attitude Toward Social Environment Scale (ATSE). The Attitude Toward Social Environment Scale was constructed to protect against response bias. Response bias is a concern since all of the instruments in this study are self-report measures. Self-report measures contain the risk of contamination by social-desirability response bias (Ballard, 1992). Social-desirability scales are not interchangeable. Some scales reflect a respondent's desire to be perceived as acceptable by others, and other scales are constructed so that the respondents present the self as best as possible (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964). Holden and Fekken (1989) suggested using more than one scale to test for social desirability. They recommend the Marlowe-Crowne which is directed to the other-component combined with at least one or two scales directed toward the self-component. The ATSE is a scale which is comprised of the 10 questions from the Marlowe-

Crowne Social Desirability Scale Short Form X1 (Strahan & Gerbasi, 1972), interspersed with the 15 questions from the Overall Agreement Scale (Couch & Kenniston, 1960). The twenty-five item questionnaire used a six-point Likert-like scale of response.

Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale Short Form X1 (M-C 10) (Strahan and Gerbasi, 1972). The X1 short form version of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale is a ten-item true-or-false report. The questions describe behaviors likely to be approved by society but very unlikely to occur. Responses to the scale discriminate those answers which are most likely to present the responder in a good light regardless of probability. The original form of the Marlowe-Crowne contained 33-items answered true or false. Strahan and Gerbasi (1972) constructed two short forms -- X1 and X2 -- each consisting of 10 items from the original scale. Fisher and Fick (1993) compared all existing short forms of the Marlowe-Crowne and found that X1 "would be the scale of choice. It is a significant improvement over all the others . . . it has high internal consistency and is highly correlated with the original scale" (p. 423). Pearson product-correlations with the original scale exceeded .87 (Fraboni & Cooper, 1989). Use of the Marlowe-Crowne (M-C X1) allows "the researcher to attempt to estimate the amount of variability . . . which can be

attributed to social desirability" (Fraboni & Cooper, 1989, p. 595). For uniformity and consistency the true- false response choice was transposed to Likert format.

The Overall Agreement Score. The Overall Agreement Score is based on a 15-item scale constructed by Arthur Couch and Kenneth Keniston (1960). The scale was derived by correlating 681 items of agreement and disagreement responses to the MMPI and Cattell personality assessments, and the Thurstone Temperament Scale. The authors were able to determine that agreement response is a function of personality. The authors "consider this scale to be the best short scale measure of the agreeing response tendency" (p. 159).

Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships (PAIR) (Shaefer & Olson, 1981). Shaefer and Olson (1981) developed the Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships (PAIR) not as a global measure of intimacy, but rather as a personalized assessment of how each couple perceives and expects intimacy to be expressed in their relationship. PAIR is a 36-item self-report measure of six scales regarding five areas of intimacy -- emotional, social, sexual, intellectual and recreational intimacy. A conventionality scale is included in the perception section as an indicator of a respondent's desire to present positively. Each partner responds on a five-point Likert

scale the degree of agreement. Each partner answers all items twice. Each answers as one perceives the marriage to be currently, and how one would like the marriage to be. Because the questionnaire describes the current perception of the relationship as well as the desired relationship, it is highly sensitive to realized changes in perception and expectation of intimacy, since a discrepancy score between the two may be formulated. This sensitivity makes it ideal for inclusion in this study. The individual item content of the PAIR more accurately serves the purpose of this research, since intimacy is investigated as a process rather than as an achievement. Reliability on the PAIR scales ranges from .70 for intellectual and recreational intimacy to .77 for sexual intimacy (Shaefer & Olson, 1981). Validity of the PAIR is reflected in a .98 correlation with couple scores on the Locke-Wallace Marital Adjustment scale (Shaefer & Olson, 1981). The scores for each partner can be plotted on a profile percentile chart.

Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS) (Roach, Frazier, & Bowden, 1987). The MSS is a 48-item self-report scale which emphasizes opinions about the marriage rather than factual recall. The response categories range from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). The item content is phrased in equal proportions to be considered as both favorable and unfavorable toward marriage. The MSS was

designed to measure the effectiveness of counseling interventions. Fredman and Sherman's (1987) recommendation that the MSS is an effective way to measure the success of a marriage workshop warrants its inclusion in this study. The internal consistency estimate is .97 with a three-week test-retest reliability of .76. The validity of the MSS is reflected in a correlation with the Locke-Wallace of .79.

Family Ritual Questionnaire (FRQ) (Fiese & Kline, 1993). The FRQ is a 56-item self-report instrument which assesses levels of ritualization. Seven ritual settings -- dinner time, weekends, vacations, annual celebrations, special celebrations, religious holidays, and cultural and ethnic traditions -- are investigated. The items are presented in a forced-choice format. Within each setting eight dimensions are considered: roles, routines, attendance, affect, symbolic significance, continuation, occurrence, and deliberateness. Scores for settings and dimensions are calculated; then a total score across dimensions and settings is calculated. Each item is scored on a four-point scale with higher scores denoting higher ritualization. For the purpose of this study the scores for dinner time and weekends will be used to obtain a score for ritualization of the couple. The FRQ is the only self-report measure to date to assess family rituals. All other measures of family rituals are based on structured



interviews. It is imperative to the design of this research project that family ritual be measured by self-report. The authors calculated Cronbach's alphas for the different settings and dimensions. The internal consistency of the scales ranged from .52 to .90. The instrument demonstrates good test retest reliability, with an overall .88 retest reliability across all dimensions.

Family Inventory of Life Events and Changes (FILE)  
(McCubbin, Patterson, & Wilson, 1987). FILE (McCubbin, Patterson, & Wilson, 1987) is a 71-item questionnaire that measures an individual's perception of stressful events that occurred in the preceding 12 months. The response is a yes or no choice. The instrument takes approximately 10 to 15 minutes to complete. A yes response is given a value of one and a no response has no numerical value. While the File may be scored five ways, the family-couple events score was used for this study. For this type of scoring the partners complete the instruments separately, but the instruments are scored simultaneously. If either partner answers yes to an item, the item is assigned a score of one for both partners. All items are then summed, and the total score can be categorized as low, moderate, or high stress level. The measure was designed to identify the sources of stress that may weaken a family's flexibility. "Life changes upset stability and call for readjustment" (p. 194). At the core

of this study of positive ritual behavior are change, stability, flexibility and readjustment. Total scale internal consistency estimates vary from .79 to .81. After a five-week period, test-retest reliability was .80 for the total scale.

Presenter Evaluation Form. The evaluation form used by the couples to rate the presenter of the lectures is actually a Semantic Differential Scale. The evaluation form was constructed by extrapolating 20 items from the 50-item semantic differential created by Osgood and Suci (1969). The 20 items selected were the highest loading items in the three dimensions of evaluation, potency, and activity. The 11 highest factors on the dimension of evaluation, 5 from potency, and 4 from activity comprise the evaluation form. These include items 1, 5, 7, 10, 12, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 25, 28, 32, 33, 35, 40, 41, 43, 44, and 45. Since the semantic differential is an objective measurement of meaning, it was deemed appropriate to use it as an evaluation form of the presenter, as way of insuring uniformity and consistency of the presentation of both lectures, even though the content of the lectures was different.

#### Design And Statistical Analysis

The design of this study has been identified by Campbell and Stanley (1963) as a true experimental pretest-

posttest control-group design. It is also known as a pretest-posttest completely randomized design by Levine and Parkinson (1994). The design of this study could best determine that any effect in the experimental group was attributed to the treatment of educating couples to use positive ritual behavior.

The eight hypotheses tested in this study were:

1. Educating couples in the use of positive ritual behavior significantly increases levels of marital satisfaction.
2. Educating couples in the use of positive ritual behavior significantly increases levels of intimacy
3. There will be a significant difference in the ritual behavior between individuals who have received instruction in positive ritual behavior and individuals who have not, regardless of gender.
4. Men who receive instruction in positive ritual behavior will demonstrate significantly higher levels of ritual behavior than men who do not receive instruction.
5. Men who receive instruction in positive ritual behavior will experience a significant increase in intimacy.
6. Women in both groups will score significantly higher in ritual behavior than men.
7. Women in both groups will score significantly higher in intimacy than men.

8. There will be no difference between subjects' perceived experience of low, moderate, or high levels of stress with regard to marital satisfaction, intimacy, and ritual meaning.

Several statistical techniques were used in this study. Two one-way analyses of variance (ANOVA) were used to statistically test for hypotheses one and two. Hypotheses one and two stated that educating couples in the use of positive ritual behavior would significantly increase levels of marital satisfaction, and levels of intimacy. Because there are continuous dependent variables -- marital satisfaction and intimacy -- and a categorical independent variable, two one-way ANOVAS will determine if there were a difference in outcome for the experimental versus the control group. One-way ANOVAS were used for the first two hypotheses because the researcher is interested in the couple score rather than individual scores on marital satisfaction and intimacy.

Hypotheses three through seven were tested through one-way analysis of variance. Hypotheses three through seven investigated the impact of gender and treatment. The last hypothesis, that there will be no difference between subjects' perceived experience of low, moderate, or high levels of stress with regard to marital satisfaction, intimacy and ritual meaning, was to be tested by an ANOVA.

It was not tested because the disparity in cell size (low 22, moderate 58, high 10) violated the rules of multivariate statistics.

Power, "the probability of recognizing an effective independent variable" (Levine & Parkinson, 1994, p. 111) is essential in research. Power is the probability of correctly rejecting the null hypotheses. Because the number of subjects in this study could not be identified previous to the first session, a power analysis was conducted and is presented in Table 1.

Using a conservative effect size of .30 and a conservative number of couples 30 divided into two groups, the power would be .37. Using the same small effect size of .30, but increasing the number of couple subjects to 55 increases the power significantly to .61. However, increasing the effect size to .45 and the number of couple subjects to 45 yields a very respectable .85 power. From the power analysis it was determined that if 55 couples participated the research should have adequate power. Certainly, the larger the number of couple participants the larger the power of this study. For hypotheses three to seven, all of which are based on individual scores, the smallest expected couple population of 30 would still yield an individual sample size of 60 subjects providing adequate power.

Table 1

Pre-study Power Analysis

| Effect Size | <u>N</u> | Power |
|-------------|----------|-------|
| .30         | 30       | .37   |
| .30         | 45       | .52   |
| .30         | 55       | .61   |
| .45         | 30       | .68   |
| .45         | 45       | .85   |

## Chapter IV

### Results

In this chapter the results of the study are introduced. Presented will be the results, including the analysis used for hypothesis testing, additional analysis, and a summary of the findings.

#### Overview

Synopsis of demographic results. Of the 69 couples who agreed to participate in the study, 45 couples met the criterion of completing all three phases. The data base against which the hypotheses were tested is constructed from the responses of these 45 couples. There were three study sites, one in Maryland and two in Allentown, Pennsylvania.

At the Maryland site, 13 couples participated, 7 in the control group and 6 in the experimental. Of the remaining 32 couples, 12 attended Allentown I, 5 in the control group and 7 in the experimental group. The remainder of subjects attended Allentown II, 12 couples in the control group and 8 couples in the experimental. Because both couple and

individual scores were gathered the sample size of the study is 90 as distributed by condition and session presented in Table 2.

Demographic information was gathered from each participant regarding questions on age, education, employment, religious affiliation and importance. Years married and number of marriages as well as the number and ages of children, and information on their parent's marriages were requested. Additional questions relative to the topic of this study were also posed. People were directly queried on ritual expression in their families of origin as well as their current marriages. Individuals also characterized the levels of satisfaction and adequacy of intimacy in their marriages.

All of the participants were Caucasian. Several of the participants opted not to answer some of the demographic questions.

Of the 90 subjects, one did not respond to the question of age. The average age of the participant was 48.9 years in a range from 23 to 78 years old as presented in Table 3. The oldest population was reflected in Allentown I and the youngest in Allentown II as presented in Table 4. Pairwise comparisons were made and t-test for equality of means showed a significant difference in the ages between the Maryland session and the second Allentown session and



TABLE 2

Frequency Distribution of Session Attendance by Condition

| Attendance   | Control | Experiment | Total | %     |
|--------------|---------|------------|-------|-------|
| Maryland     | 14      | 12         | 26    | 28.9  |
| Allentown I  | 10      | 14         | 24    | 26.7  |
| Allentown II | 24      | 16         | 40    | 44.4  |
| Total        | 48      | 42         | 90    | 100.0 |

TABLE 3

Frequency Distribution of Subjects' Ages

| Age | Frequency | %   | Cum % |
|-----|-----------|-----|-------|
| 23  | 1         | 1.1 | 1.1   |
| 25  | 1         | 1.1 | 2.2   |
| 29  | 5         | 5.6 | 7.9   |
| 32  | 2         | 2.2 | 10.1  |
| 35  | 1         | 1.1 | 11.2  |
| 36  | 1         | 1.1 | 12.4  |
| 37  | 3         | 3.3 | 15.7  |
| 38  | 4         | 4.4 | 20.2  |
| 39  | 2         | 2.2 | 22.5  |
| 40  | 4         | 4.4 | 27.0  |
| 41  | 1         | 1.1 | 28.1  |
| 42  | 3         | 3.3 | 31.5  |
| 43  | 1         | 1.1 | 32.6  |
| 44  | 3         | 3.3 | 36.0  |
| 45  | 8         | 8.9 | 44.9  |
| 46  | 3         | 3.3 | 48.3  |
| 48  | 3         | 3.3 | 51.7  |
| 49  | 5         | 5.6 | 57.3  |
| 50  | 2         | 2.2 | 59.6  |

(Table Continues)

TABLE 3 (continued)

| Age | Frequency | %   | Cum % |
|-----|-----------|-----|-------|
| 52  | 2         | 2.2 | 65.2  |
| 53  | 5         | 5.6 | 70.8  |
| 54  | 1         | 1.1 | 71.9  |
| 55  | 4         | 4.4 | 76.4  |
| 59  | 1         | 1.1 | 77.5  |
| 60  | 1         | 1.1 | 78.7  |
| 61  | 3         | 3.3 | 82.0  |
| 62  | 1         | 1.1 | 83.1  |
| 63  | 2         | 2.2 | 85.4  |
| 64  | 1         | 1.1 | 86.5  |
| 65  | 2         | 2.2 | 88.8  |
| 66  | 3         | 3.3 | 92.1  |
| 70  | 1         | 1.1 | 93.3  |
| 71  | 1         | 1.1 | 94.4  |
| 72  | 1         | 1.1 | 95.5  |
| 74  | 1         | 1.1 | 96.6  |
| 75  | 1         | 1.1 | 97.8  |
| 76  | 1         | 1.1 | 98.9  |
| 78  | 1         | 1.1 | 100.0 |
| *99 | 1         | 1.1 |       |

\*99 - Missing Value       $\underline{M}$  = 48.9 yrs       $\underline{SD}$  = 1

TABLE 4

Summary by Session of Subjects' Ages

| Session      | <u>N</u> | <u>X</u> | <u>SD</u> |
|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Maryland     | 26       | 50.3462  | 11.5480   |
| Allentown I  | 24       | 52.5000  | 15.5004   |
| Allentown II | 39       | 45.7179  | 10.1539   |

between the first and second Allentown sessions. Allentown II reflected the youngest couples in the study as presented in Table 5.

One person chose not to answer the education question. All of the respondents were high school graduates. More than half (54) of the participants were college graduates or post-graduates. The range of education was from 12 to 22 years with an M of 15.8 years as presented in Table 6. All three locations had very similar education distribution patterns as presented in Table 7. A pairwise comparison t-test for equality of means was performed and indicated no statistical significance in the level of education as presented in Table 8.

While there were 90 responses to the employment status question, there were 85 responses to the employment type question. The demographic questionnaire did not allow for the category of homemaker. The question on employment type did not offer a distinction between active or retired occupations. More than three-fourths of the sample (78.9%) were employed. More than half of the respondents (61.2%) worked as professionals. The frequency distribution of employment by status, type, condition and session is presented in Table 9.

All participants answered the question on religious affiliation. One person chose not to answer the question

TABLE 5

A Pairwise Comparison t-Test for Equality of Means of the  
Ages of Participants from the Three Sessions

| <u>Session Pairs</u>       | <u>t</u> | <u>df</u> | <u>Sig.</u> |
|----------------------------|----------|-----------|-------------|
| Maryland x Allentown I     | -.554    | 42.373    | .583        |
| Maryland x Allentown II    | 1.704    | 63        | .093        |
| Allentown I x Allentown II | 1.907    | 35.263    | .065        |

TABLE 6

Frequency Distribution of Subjects' Education Level in Years

| Education In<br>Years | Frequency | %    | Cum % |
|-----------------------|-----------|------|-------|
| 12                    | 16        | 17.8 | 17.8  |
| 13                    | 10        | 11.1 | 28.9  |
| 14                    | 8         | 8.9  | 37.8  |
| 15                    | 1         | 1.1  | 38.9  |
| 16                    | 23        | 25.6 | 64.4  |
| 17                    | 2         | 2.2  | 66.7  |
| 18                    | 12        | 13.3 | 80.8  |
| 19                    | 6         | 6.7  | 86.7  |
| 20                    | 9         | 10.0 | 96.7  |
| 22                    | 2         | 2.2  | 98.9  |
| *99                   | 1         | 1.1  | 100.0 |

\*99 - Missing Value

M = 15.79      SD = 2.81

TABLE 7

Summary of Subjects' Years of Education by Session

| Session      | <u>N</u> | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> |
|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Maryland     | 26       | 15.8077  | 2.7132    |
| Allentown I  | 24       | 15.4583  | 2.6206    |
| Allentown II | 39       | 15.9744  | 3.0304    |



TABLE 8

A Pairwise Comparison t-Test for Equality of Means of the  
Education Level of Participants from the Three Sessions

| <u>Session Pairs</u>       | <u>t</u> | <u>df</u> | <u>Sig.</u> |
|----------------------------|----------|-----------|-------------|
| Maryland x Allentown I     | .462     | 48        | .646        |
| Maryland x Allentown II    | -.226    | 63        | .822        |
| Allentown I x Allentown II | -.690    | 61        | .493        |

TABLE 9

Frequency Distribution of Subjects' Employment Status by  
Condition and Employment Type by Condition and Status

| Employment Status | Control | Experiment | Total | %     |
|-------------------|---------|------------|-------|-------|
| Employed          | 33      | 38         | 71    | 78.9  |
| Unemployed        | 3       | 2          | 5     | 5.6   |
| Retired           | 12      | 2          | 14    | 15.6  |
| Total             | 48      | 42         | 90    | 100.0 |

  

| Employment Type | Control | Experiment | Total | %     |
|-----------------|---------|------------|-------|-------|
| Professional    | 30      | 22         | 52    | 61.2  |
| Technical       | 6       | 5          | 11    | 12.9  |
| Clerical        | 5       | 2          | 7     | 8.2   |
| Laborer         | 2       | 2          | 4     | 4.7   |
| Trade           | 1       | 4          | 5     | 5.9   |
| Service         | 1       | 5          | 6     | 7.1   |
| Total           | 45      | 40         | 85    | 100.0 |

(Table continues)

TABLE 9 (continued)

| Employment<br>Type | Maryland | Allentown<br>I | Allentown<br>II | Total | %     |
|--------------------|----------|----------------|-----------------|-------|-------|
| Professional       | 17       | 12             | 23              | 52    | 61.2  |
| Technical          | 3        | 5              | 3               | 11    | 12.9  |
| Clerical           | 4        | 1              | 2               | 7     | 8.2   |
| Laborer            | -        | 2              | 2               | 4     | 4.7   |
| Trade              | 1        | -              | 4               | 5     | 5.9   |
| Service            | 1        | 2              | 3               | 6     | 7.1   |
| Total              | 26       | 22             | 37              | 85    | 100.0 |

regarding the degree of importance religion had in his/her life. The major religious affiliation was Protestant (53.3%), which was not delineated by denomination. The second predominant affiliation was Catholic (32.2%). As expected the Maryland session was predominantly Catholic, 23 of the 26 participants. The Maryland session had no Protestant affiliation but did have 1 Jewish and 2 Other affiliations. Allentown I was the most diverse in religious affiliation with 15 Protestants, 4 Catholics, 1 Jew, 3 Other, and 1 no religion. Allentown II had 33 out of 40 participants affiliated as Protestants, 2 Catholic, no Jewish, 2 Other, and 3 no religion. The frequency distribution of religion by condition and by session is presented in Table 10. The degree of religious importance was scored by the values of very, somewhat, minimal, or not at all. Better than half, 54 of the 90 subjects (60%), responded that religion was very important in their lives. Relatively few had minimal importance, 9 (10%) or none at all 5 (5.6%). The distribution and summary by session are presented in Table 11. Pairwise comparison  $t$ -test for equality of means indicated no statistical difference in the degree of religious importance in the three sessions as presented in Table 12.

The majority of the participants have had only one marriage. Of the 90 respondents, 75 (83.3%) were in first

TABLE 10

Frequency Distribution of Subjects' Religious Affiliation by  
Condition and by Session

| Value      | Frequency |    | %     | Cum % |
|------------|-----------|----|-------|-------|
| Protestant | 1         | 48 | 53.5  | 53.3  |
| Catholic   | 2         | 29 | 32.2  | 85.6  |
| Jewish     | 3         | 2  | 2.2   | 87.8  |
| Other      | 4         | 7  | 7.8   | 95.6  |
| None       | 5         | 4  | 4.4   | 100.0 |
| Total      |           | 90 | 100.0 |       |

  

| Religious<br>Affiliation | Control | Experiment | Total | %     |
|--------------------------|---------|------------|-------|-------|
| Protestant               | 28      | 20         | 48    | 53.5  |
| Catholic                 | 13      | 16         | 29    | 32.2  |
| Jewish                   | 1       | 1          | 2     | 2.2   |
| Other                    | 4       | 3          | 7     | 7.8   |
| None                     | 2       | 2          | 4     | 4.4   |
| Total                    | 48      | 42         | 90    | 100.0 |

(Table continues)

TABLE 10 (continued)

| Religious<br>Affiliation | Maryland | Allentown<br>I | Allentown<br>II | Total | %     |
|--------------------------|----------|----------------|-----------------|-------|-------|
| Protestant               | -        | 15             | 33              | 48    | 53.3  |
| Catholic                 | 23       | 4              | 2               | 29    | 32.2  |
| Jewish                   | 1        | 1              | -               | 2     | 2.2   |
| Other                    | 2        | 3              | 2               | 7     | 7.8   |
| None                     | -        | 1              | 3               | 4     | 4.4   |
| Total                    | 26       | 24             | 40              | 90    | 100.0 |

TABLE 11

Frequency Distribution of Participants' Self-Reported Degree  
of Religious Importance and Summary by Session

| Reported Degree of<br>Religious Importance |   | Frequency | %     | Cum % |
|--|---|-----------|-------|-------|
| Very Important                             | 1 | 54        | 60.0  | 60.7  |
| Somewhat                                   | 2 | 21        | 23.3  | 84.3  |
| Minimal                                    | 3 | 9         | 10.0  | 94.4  |
| Not at All                                 | 4 | 5         | 5.6   | 100.0 |
| Missing, Value                             | 9 | 1         | 1.1   |       |
| Total                                      |   | 90        | 100.0 |       |

  

| Session      | <u>N</u> | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> |
|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Maryland     | 25       | 1.36     | .8602     |
| Allentown I  | 24       | 1.7083   | .8587     |
| Allentown II | 40       | 1.700    | .9115     |

TABLE 12

A Pairwise Comparison t-Test for Equality of Means of the Degree of Religious Importance to Participants from the Three Sessions

| Session Pairs              | <u>t</u> | <u>df</u> | Sig. |
|----------------------------|----------|-----------|------|
| Maryland x Allentown I     | -1.418   | 47        | .163 |
| Maryland x Allentown II    | -1.495   | 63        | .140 |
| Allentown I x Allentown II | .036     | 62        | .971 |



time marriages. For 14 (15.6%) the current marriage was their second, and only one individual was in a third marriage. The frequency distribution of the number of times married are presented in Table 13.

Longevity characterized the number of years married by the study population. Interestingly one person did not report the length of marriage. The span of duration of marriage was less than 1 year to 52 years, creating a mean of 22.07. The frequency distribution of number of years currently married is presented in Table 14. Pairwise comparison t-test for equality of means indicated no statistical significance for the number of years currently married as presented in Table 15.

There were no missing values regarding the responses to all questions regarding children. Of the 90 respondents 13 had no children from any marriage, while 24 had no children from the current marriage. While only 14 of the respondents had children under 5 years of age, half of the respondents 45, had children over 22 years of age. Slightly more than half of the respondents, 46, still had children residing with them. The frequency distributions for the total number of children from all marriages, from the current marriage and residing with the couple are presented in Tables 16, 17, and 18 respectively. A frequency distribution of the children by age category is presented in Table 19.

TABLE 13

Frequency Distribution of Subjects' Number of Marriages

| Number of Marriages |   | Frequency | %     | Cum % |
|---------------------|---|-----------|-------|-------|
| First               | 1 | 75        | 83.3  | 83.3  |
| Second              | 2 | 14        | 15.6  | 98.9  |
| Third               | 3 | 1         | 1.1   | 100.0 |
| Three +             | 4 | -         |       |       |
| Total               |   | 90        | 100.0 |       |

M = 1.18    SD = .41

TABLE 14

Frequency Distribution of Subjects' Current Marriages in  
Years and Summary of Session

| Duration of Current<br>Marriage in Years | Frequency | %   | Cum % |
|--|-----------|-----|-------|
| < 1                                      | 2         | 2.2 | 2.2   |
| 2  | 2         | 2.2 | 4.5   |
| 3  | 2         | 2.2 | 6.7   |
| 4  | 5         | 5.6 | 12.4  |
| 5  | 2         | 2.2 | 14.6  |
| 6  | 2         | 2.2 | 16.9  |
| 7  | 2         | 2.2 | 19.1  |
| 8  | 2         | 2.2 | 21.3  |
| 9  | 2         | 2.2 | 23.6  |
| 11                                       | 4         | 4.4 | 28.1  |
| 14                                       | 2         | 2.2 | 30.3  |
| 15                                       | 6         | 6.7 | 37.1  |
| 17                                       | 2         | 2.2 | 39.3  |
| 18                                       | 2         | 2.2 | 41.6  |
| 19                                       | 2         | 2.2 | 43.8  |

(Table Continues)

TABLE 14 (continued)

| Duration of Current<br>Marriage in Years | Frequency | %     | Cum % |
|--|-----------|-------|-------|
| 21                                       | 2         | 2.2   | 46.1  |
| 22                                       | 2         | 2.2   | 48.3  |
| 23                                       | 6         | 6.7   | 55.1  |
| 24                                       | 2         | 2.2   | 57.3  |
| 28                                       | 2         | 2.2   | 59.6  |
| 29                                       | 8         | 8.9   | 68.5  |
| 30                                       | 2         | 2.2   | 70.8  |
| 32                                       | 4         | 4.4   | 75.3  |
| 37                                       | 4         | 4.4   | 79.8  |
| 30                                       | 4         | 4.4   | 84.3  |
| 41                                       | 2         | 2.2   | 86.5  |
| 43                                       | 2         | 2.2   | 88.8  |
| 45                                       | 2         | 2.2   | 91.0  |
| 47                                       | 2         | 2.2   | 93.3  |
| 48                                       | 2         | 2.2   | 95.5  |
| 52                                       | 2         | 2.2   | 97.8  |
| *99                                      | 1         | 1.1   | 100.0 |
| Total                                    | 90        | 100.0 |       |

\*99 = Missing Value

 $\bar{M} = 22.07$  $\underline{SD} = 14.04$

TABLE 14 (continued)

| Session      | <u>N</u> | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> |
|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Maryland     | 26       | 23.9231  | 12.5759   |
| Allentown I  | 24       | 24.6667  | 17.7025   |
| Allentown II | 39       | 19.2410  | 12.0739   |
| Total        | 89       | 22.0719  | 14.0397   |

TABLE 15

A Pairwise Comparison t-Test for Equality of Means of the  
Number of Years Currently Married of Participants from the  
Three Sessions

| <u>Session Pairs</u>       | <u>t</u> | <u>df</u> | <u>Sig.</u> |
|----------------------------|----------|-----------|-------------|
| Maryland x Allentown I     | -.169    | 41.055    | .866        |
| Maryland x Allentown II    | 1.506    | 63        | .137        |
| Allentown I x Allentown II | 1.318    | 36.112    | .196        |

TABLE 16

Frequency Distribution of Subjects' Total Number of Children  
Inclusive of All Marriages

| Total # of Children<br>From All Marriages | Frequency | %     | Cum % |
|---|-----------|-------|-------|
| 0   | 13        | 14.4  | 14.4  |
| 1   | 15        | 16.7  | 31.1  |
| 2   | 24        | 26.7  | 57.8  |
| 3   | 25        | 27.8  | 85.6  |
| 4   | 8         | 8.9   | 94.4  |
| 5   | 1         | 1.1   | 95.6  |
| 6   | 4         | 4.4   | 100.0 |
| Total                                     | 90        | 100.0 |       |

$\bar{M} = 2.21$        $SD = 1.47$

TABLE 17

Frequency Distribution of Subjects' Total Number of Children  
From Current Marriages

| Total # of Children<br>From Current<br>Marriages | Frequency | %     | Cum % |
|--|-----------|-------|-------|
| 0  | 24        | 26.7  | 26.2  |
| 1  | 18        | 20.0  | 46.7  |
| 2  | 14        | 15.6  | 62.2  |
| 3  | 22        | 24.4  | 86.7  |
| 4  | 8         | 8.9   | 95.6  |
| 6  | 4         | 4.4   | 100.0 |
| Total  | 90        | 100.0 |       |

M = 1.87

SD = 1.61



TABLE 18

Frequency Distribution of Couples Who Have Children  
Currently Residing With Them

| Children Residing<br>with Couple | Frequency | %     | Cum % |
|----------------------------------|-----------|-------|-------|
| No                               | 44        | 48.9  | 48.9  |
| Yes                              | 46        | 51.1  | 100.0 |
| Total                            | 90        | 100.0 |       |

M = .58

SD = .62

TABLE 19

Frequency Distribution of Children by Age Groups

| Ages of Children | Frequency       | %     | Cum % |
|------------------|-----------------|-------|-------|
| <u>&lt; 5</u>    |                 |       |       |
| 0                | 76              | 84.4  | 84.4  |
| 1                | 10              | 11.1  | 95.6  |
| 2                | 4               | 4.4   | 100.0 |
| Total            | 90              | 100.0 |       |
| <u>M</u> = .20   | <u>SD</u> = .50 |       |       |
| <u>6-13</u>      |                 |       |       |
| 0                | 70              | 77.8  | 77.8  |
| 1                | 10              | 11.1  | 88.9  |
| 2                | 8               | 8.9   | 97.8  |
| 3                | 2               | 2.2   | 100.0 |
| Total            | 90              | 100.0 |       |
| <u>M</u> = .36   | <u>SD</u> = .74 |       |       |

(Table continues)

TABLE 19 - (continued)

| Ages of Children | Frequency        | %     | Cum % |
|------------------|------------------|-------|-------|
| <u>14-21</u>     |                  |       |       |
| 0                | 69               | 76.6  | 76.7  |
| 1                | 15               | 16.7  | 93.3  |
| 2                | 2                | 2.2   | 95.6  |
| 3                | 4                | 4.4   | 100.0 |
| Total            | 90               | 100.0 |       |
| <u>M</u> = .34   | <u>SD</u> = .74  |       |       |
| <u>22+</u>       |                  |       |       |
| 0                | 45               | 50.0  | 50.0  |
| 1                | 12               | 13.3  | 63.3  |
| 2                | 9                | 10.0  | 73.3  |
| 3                | 14               | 15.6  | 88.9  |
| 4                | 6                | 6.7   | 95.6  |
| 6                | 4                | 4.4   | 100.0 |
| Total`           | 90               | 100.0 |       |
| <u>M</u> = 1.33  | <u>SD</u> = 1.69 |       |       |

The data indicated that the participants had parents who also had marriages of a long duration. Of the 90 respondents, 5 did not answer the question regarding the number of years of their parents' marriages. The length of the participants' parents' marriages ranged from 4 years to 59 years with the mean falling at 38.8 years. The frequency distribution and summary by session for the length of the participants' parents' marriages is presented in Table 20. Only one of the participants did not answer the question on how the marriage of the parents ended. A large number, 31 (34.8%), of the participants parents' marriages were still intact, while a relatively small number, 9 (10.1%), of the participants' parents divorced. The frequency distribution by condition and session of how the marriage of the participants' parents ended is presented in Table 21.

All participants answered the question regarding ritual emphasis in their lives. Ritual emphasis was presented as birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, and/or special occasions. The possible ratings were presented as: ignored (0 = no mention, unsure of dates); acknowledged (1 = some mention made, perhaps cards exchanged); and celebrated (2 = special meal, possibly gifts exchanged, people invited, decorations, treated as an event). Participants answered the question twice, once regarding their families of origin, and then in regards to their current marriages. The data

TABLE 20

Frequency Distribution of Longevity of Subjects' Parents' Marriages and Summary by Session

| Length of Parents' Marriage | Frequency | %   | Cum % |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----|-------|
| 4                           | 1         | 1.1 | 1.2   |
| 10                          | 1         | 1.1 | 2.4   |
| 12                          | 2         | 2.2 | 4.7   |
| 13                          | 1         | 1.1 | 5.9   |
| 15                          | 1         | 1.1 | 7.1   |
| 17                          | 2         | 2.2 | 9.4   |
| 20                          | 1         | 1.1 | 10.6  |
| 21                          | 1         | 1.1 | 11.8  |
| 23                          | 1         | 1.1 | 12.9  |
| 25                          | 2         | 2.2 | 15.3  |
| 26                          | 3         | 3.3 | 18.8  |
| 27                          | 1         | 1.1 | 20.0  |
| 28                          | 1         | 1.1 | 21.2  |
| 29                          | 2         | 2.2 | 23.5  |
| 30                          | 2         | 2.2 | 25.9  |
| 31                          | 3         | 3.3 | 29.4  |
| 32                          | 2         | 2.2 | 31.8  |

(Table Continues)

TABLE 20 (continued)

| Length of Parents' Marriage | Frequency | %   | Cum % |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----|-------|
| 34                          | 1         | 1.1 | 32.9  |
| 35                          | 3         | 3.3 | 36.5  |
| 36                          | 5         | 5.6 | 42.4  |
| 37                          | 3         | 3.3 | 45.9  |
| 38                          | 1         | 1.1 | 47.1  |
| 39                          | 1         | 1.1 | 48.2  |
| 40                          | 2         | 2.2 | 50.6  |
| 42                          | 3         | 3.3 | 54.1  |
| 43                          | 1         | 1.1 | 55.3  |
| 44                          | 2         | 2.2 | 57.6  |
| 45                          | 3         | 3.3 | 61.2  |
| 46                          | 1         | 1.1 | 62.4  |
| 47                          | 5         | 5.6 | 68.2  |
| 48                          | 5         | 5.6 | 74.1  |
| 49                          | 4         | 4.4 | 78.8  |
| 50                          | 2         | 2.2 | 81.2  |
| 51                          | 1         | 1.1 | 82.4  |
| 53                          | 2         | 2.2 | 87.1  |
| 55                          | 4         | 4.4 | 91.8  |

(Table Continues)

TABLE 20 (continued)

| Length of Parents' Marriage | Frequency | %   | Cum % |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----|-------|
| 56                          | 2         | 2.2 | 94.1  |
| 57                          | 4         | 4.4 | 98.8  |
| 59                          | 1         | 1.1 | 100.0 |
| *99                         | 5         | 5.6 |       |

\*99 = Missing Value       $\underline{M} = 38.8$        $\underline{SD} = 13.10$

| Session      | <u>N</u> | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> |
|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Maryland     | 25       | 38.0400  | 13.8458   |
| Allentown I  | 24       | 32.5833  | 12.6759   |
| Allentown II | 36       | 43.4722  | 11.2084   |
| Total        | 85       | 38.8000  | 13.1020   |

TABLE 21

Frequency Distribution of Termination of Subjects' Parents'  
Marriages by Condition and By Session

| How Parents'<br>Marriages<br>Ended | Control | Experiment | Total | %     |
|------------------------------------|---------|------------|-------|-------|
| Death                              | 27      | 21         | 48    | 53.9  |
| Separation                         | -       | 1          | 1     | 1.1   |
| Divorce                            | 6       | 3          | 9     | 10.1  |
| Intact                             | 14      | 17         | 31    | 34.8  |
| Total                              | 47      | 42         | 89    | 100.0 |

  

| How<br>Parents'<br>Marriages<br>Ended | Maryland | Allentown<br>I | Allentown<br>II | Total | %     |
|---------------------------------------|----------|----------------|-----------------|-------|-------|
| Death                                 | 13       | 17             | 18              | 48    | 53.9  |
| Separation                            | -        | -              | 1               | 1     | 1.1   |
| Divorce                               | 3        | 3              | 3               | 9     | 10.1  |
| Intact                                | 10       | 4              | 17              | 31    | 34.8  |
| Total                                 | 26       | 24             | 39              | 89    | 100.0 |



indicated an extremely high ritual emphasis in the study population. None of the respondents experienced ignored rituals. In their families of origin rituals were celebrated by 73 (81.1%) of the respondents. In their current marriages rituals were celebrated by 84 (93.3%) of the respondents. The frequency distribution of ritual emphasis in family of origin by condition and by session is presented in Table 22. The frequency distribution of ritual emphasis in the current marriage and by session and condition is presented in Table 23.

The final questions on the demographic questionnaire gave the participants an opportunity to characterize the level of satisfaction and the adequacy of intimacy in their marriages. All subjects responded to these questions. Participants used a five-point Likert scale to describe overall the level of satisfaction: very satisfying, somewhat satisfying, neither satisfying/nor dissatisfying, somewhat dissatisfying, and very dissatisfying. The majority of subjects, 69 (76.7%) reported a very satisfying marriage. An additional 18 (20%) reported somewhat satisfying marriage. The frequency distribution and summary by session for reported satisfaction are presented in Table 24. Pairwise comparison  $t$ -test for equality of means indicated there was no statistical significance between Maryland and Allentown I. However there was significance between

TABLE 22

Frequency Distribution of Verification of Ritual Emphasis in  
Family of Origin by Condition and Session

| Ritual Emphasis in<br>Family of Origin |   | Frequency | %     | Cum % |  |
|--|---|-----------|-------|-------|--|
| Ignored                                | 0 | -         | -     | -     |  |
| Acknowledged                           | 1 | 17        | 18.9  | 18.9  |  |
| Celebrated                             | 2 | 73        | 81.1  | 100.0 |  |
| Total                                  |   | 90        | 100.0 |       |  |

  

| Ritual Emphasis<br>in Family of<br>Origin | Control | Experiment | Total | %  | Cum % |
|---|---------|------------|-------|----|-------|
| Ignored                                   | 0       | -          | -     | -  | -     |
| Acknowledged                              | 1       | 8          | 9     | 17 | 18.9  |
| Celebrated                                | 2       | 40         | 33    | 73 | 81.1  |
| Total                                     |         | 48         | 42    | 90 | 100.0 |

(Table Continues)

TABLE 22 (Continued)

| Ritual Emphasis | Maryland | Allentown | Allentown | Total | %     | Cum % |
|-----------------|----------|-----------|-----------|-------|-------|-------|
| in Family of    |          | I         | II        |       |       |       |
| Origin          |          |           |           |       |       |       |
| Ignored 0       | -        | -         | -         | -     | -     | -     |
| Acknowledged 1  | 6        | 5         | 6         | 17    | 18.9  | 18.9  |
| Celebrated 2    | 20       | 19        | 34        | 73    | 81.1  | 100.0 |
| Total           | 26       | 24        | 40        | 90    | 100.0 |       |

TABLE 23

Frequency Distribution of Subjects' Verification of Ritual  
Emphasis in Current Marriages by Conditions and Session

| Ritual Emphasis<br>in Current<br>Marriages |   | Frequency |  | %     |  | Cum % |
|--|---|-----------|--|-------|--|-------|
| Ignored                                    | 0 | -         |  | -     |  | -     |
| Acknowledged                               | 1 | 6         |  | 6.7   |  | 6.7   |
| Celebrated                                 | 2 | 84        |  | 93.3  |  | 100.0 |
| Total                                      |   | 90        |  | 100.0 |  |       |

  

| Ritual Emphasis<br>in Current<br>Marriages |   | Control | Experiment | Total | %     | Cum % |
|--|---|---------|------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Ignored                                    | 0 | -       | -          | -     | -     | -     |
| Acknowledged                               | 1 | 2       | 4          | 6     | 6.7   | 6.7   |
| Celebrated                                 | 2 | 46      | 38         | 84    | 93.3  | 100.0 |
| Total                                      |   | 48      | 42         | 90    | 100.0 |       |

(Table Continues)

TABLE 23 (continued)

| Ritual Emphasis<br>in Current<br>Marriage |   | Maryland | Allentown<br>I | Allentown<br>II | Total | %     | Cum % |
|---|---|----------|----------------|-----------------|-------|-------|-------|
| Ignored 0                                 |   | -        | -              | -               | -     | -     | -     |
| Acknowledged 1                            | 1 | 2        | 2              | 2               | 6     | 6.7   | 6.7   |
| Celebrated 2                              | 2 | 24       | 22             | 38              | 84    | 95.3  | 100.0 |
| Total                                     |   | 26       | 24             | 40              | 90    | 100.0 |       |

TABLE 24

Frequency Distribution of Self-Reports on Degree of Marital  
Satisfaction in Current Marriages and Summary by Session

| Self-Reported<br>Marital<br>Satisfaction |          | Frequency | %         | Cum % |
|--|----------|-----------|-----------|-------|
| Very Satisfied                           | 1        | 69        | 76.7      | 76.7  |
| Somewhat Satisfied                       | 2        | 18        | 20.0      | 96.7  |
| Neither Satisfied/<br>or Dissatisfied    | 3        | -         | -         | -     |
| Somewhat<br>dissatisfied                 | 4        | 2         | 2.2       | 98.9  |
| Dissatisfied                             | 5        | 1         | 1.1       | 100.0 |
| Total                                    |          | 90        | 100.0     |       |
| <br><u>M</u> = 1.31 <u>SD</u> = .70      |          |           |           |       |
| Session                                  | <u>N</u> | <u>M</u>  | <u>SD</u> |       |
| Maryland                                 | 26       | 1.1154    | .3258     |       |
| Allentown I                              | 24       | 1.1667    | .3807     |       |
| Allentown II                             | 40       | 1.5250    | .9335     |       |
| Total                                    | 90       | 1.211     | .6777     |       |

Maryland and Allentown II as well as between Allentown I and Allentown II as presented in Table 25.

The participants also reported a highly positive perception of the adequacy of intimacy in their marriages. A five-point Likert scale - - very adequate, adequate, somewhat adequate, minimally adequate, and inadequate - - was used by the respondents to report their evaluation of intimacy in their marriages. Close to half, 43 (47.8%), reported very adequate intimacy. Another 29, (32.3%), reported adequate intimacy, the remaining 18 respondents were dispersed between somewhat, minimal, and inadequate. The frequency distribution and summary by session for the adequacy of intimacy in their marriage are presented in Table 26. Pairwise comparison  $t$ -test for equality of means indicated there was no statistical significance between the three sessions as presented in Table 27.

In order to ascertain if there were any inherent differences at the pretest between the experimental and control groups, three one-way ANOVAS were conducted. There was no significant difference between the two groups in marital satisfaction as presented in Table 28. There was no significant difference between the two groups in intimacy as presented in Table 29. There was no significant difference between the two groups in ritual meaning as presented in Table 30.

TABLE 25

A Pairwise Comparison T-Test for Equality of Means of the Marital Satisfaction of Participants from the Three Sessions

| <u>Session Pairs</u>       | <u>t</u> | <u>df</u> | <u>Sig.</u> |
|----------------------------|----------|-----------|-------------|
| Maryland x Allentown I     | -.513    | 48        | .610        |
| Maryland x Allentown II    | -2.547   | 52.135    | .014        |
| Allentown I x Allentown II | -2.148   | 56.288    | .036        |



TABLE 26

Frequency Distribution of Subjects' Self-Reports on Adequacy  
of Intimacy in Current Marriages and Summary by Session

| Adequacy of<br>Intimacy in<br>Current Marriage |   | Frequency        | %     | Cum % |
|--|---|------------------|-------|-------|
| Very Adequate                                  | 1 | 43               | 47.8  | 47.8  |
| Adequate                                       | 2 | 29               | 32.2  | 80.0  |
| Somewhat Adequate                              | 3 | 11               | 12.2  | 92.2  |
| Minimally Adequate                             | 4 | 4                | 4.4   | 96.7  |
| Inadequate                                     | 5 | 3                | 3.3   | 100.0 |
| Total  |   | 90               | 100.0 |       |
| <u>M</u> = 1.83                                |   | <u>SD</u> = 1.03 |       |       |

  

| Session      | <u>N</u> | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> |
|--------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Maryland     | 26       | 1.5000   | .7071     |
| Allentown I  | 24       | 1.9167   | 1.2129    |
| Allentown II | 40       | 2.0000   | 1.0622    |
| Total        | 90       | 1.8333   | 1.0304    |

TABLE 27

A Pairwise Comparison T-Test for Equality of Means of the  
Marital Intimacy of Participants from the Three Sessions

| <u>Session Pairs</u>       | <u>t</u> | <u>df</u> | <u>Sig.</u> |
|----------------------------|----------|-----------|-------------|
| Maryland x Allentown I     | -1.468   | 36.400    | .151        |
| Maryland x Allentown II    | -2.112   | 64        | .039        |
| Allentown I x Allentown II | =.288    | 62        | .774        |

TABLE 28

A One-Way Analysis of Variance of the Pretest Marital  
Satisfaction Scores by Condition

| Source         | Sum of<br>Squares | <u>df</u> | Mean<br>Square | <u>F</u> | Sig. |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|----------|------|
| Between Groups | 1914.134          | 1         | 1914.34        | 2.039    | .157 |
| Within Groups  | 82521.155         | 88        | 938.677        |          |      |
| Total          | 84535.289         | 89        |                |          |      |

TABLE 29

A One-Way Analysis of Variance of the Pretest Discrepancy  
Between Perception and Expectation of Marital Intimacy  
Scores by Condition

| Source         | Sum of<br>Squares | <u>df</u> | Mean<br>Square | <u>F</u> | Sig. |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|----------|------|
| Between Groups | 11269.145         | 1         | 11259.145      | 2.448    | .121 |
| Within Groups  | 40475.0           | 88        | 4599.511       |          |      |
| Total          | 416016.1          | 89        |                |          |      |

TABLE 30

A One-Way Analysis of Variance of the Pretest Ritual Meaning  
Scores by Condition

| Source         | Sum of<br>Squares | <u>df</u> | Mean<br>Square | <u>F</u> | Sig. |
|----------------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|----------|------|
| Between Groups | 78.002            | 1         | 78.002         | 1.206    | .275 |
| Within Groups  | 5697.58           | 88        | 64.745         |          |      |
| Total          | 5775.600          | 89        |                |          |      |

### Hypotheses Testing

The hypotheses for this study and the results of their statistical analyses follow.

1.0 Educating couples in the use of positive ritual behavior significantly increases levels of marital satisfaction.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test the difference between the control and experiment groups with regard to pre- and posttreatment change in levels of marital satisfaction. The analysis did not support the hypothesis. The results are presented in Table 31. A one-way analysis of variance showed that there was no significant difference in levels of marital satisfaction from pretest to posttest between the control and experimental groups ( $F = .8922, p > .05$ ).

2.0 Educating couples in the use of positive ritual behavior significantly increases levels of intimacy.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test the difference between the control and experimental groups with regard to pre- and post treatment change in levels of intimacy. The direction of change was different than expected. The analysis did not support the hypothesis. The results are presented in Table 32. A one-way analysis of variance showed that there was no significant difference in levels of

TABLE 31

Scores on Couples' Marital Satisfaction by Treatment  
Condition and Assessment Phase and One-Way Analysis of  
Variance Comparing Pretest to Posttest Differences Between  
Groups For Scores on the Marital Satisfaction Scale (MSS)

| Treatment<br>Condition | Post - Pre |           | Mean<br>Square | F | Sig. |
|------------------------|------------|-----------|----------------|---|------|
|                        | <u>M</u>   | <u>SD</u> |                |   |      |
| Experimental           | .3571      | 11.2862   |                |   |      |
| Control                | 5.8542     | 24.46     |                |   |      |

  

| Source  | Sum of<br>Squares | <u>df</u> | Mean<br>Square | F     | Sig.  |
|---------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|-------|-------|
| Between | 338.4334          | 1         | 338.4334       | .8922 | .3502 |
| Within  | 16311.3110        | 43        | 379.3328       |       |       |
| Total   | 16649.7444        | 44        |                |       |       |

TABLE 32

Scores on Couples' Intimacy by Treatment Condition and Assessment Phase and One-Way Analysis of Variance Comparing Pretest to Posttest Differences Between Groups For Scores on the Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships (PAIR)

| Treatment Condition | Post - Pre |           |
|---------------------|------------|-----------|
|                     | <u>M</u>   | <u>SD</u> |
| Experimental        | -9.14      | 34.42     |
| Control             | -3.88      | 23.47     |

  

| Source  | Sum of Square | <u>df</u> | Mean Square | <u>F</u> | Sig.  |
|---------|---------------|-----------|-------------|----------|-------|
| Between | 310.8036      | 1         | 310.8036    | .3676    | .5475 |
| Within  | 36357.1964    | 43        | 845.5767    |          |       |
| Total   | 36668.0000    | 44        |             |          |       |



intimacy from pretest to posttest between the experimental and the control groups ( $F = .3676, p > .05$ ).

3.0 There would be a significant difference in the ritual behavior between individuals who have received instruction in positive ritual behavior and individuals who have not, regardless of gender.

Three one-way analyses of variance were conducted to test the differences between the control and experimental groups with regard to pre- and posttreatment change in ritual behavior. The analyses tested for differences in overall ritual behavior and specific dinner time and weekend ritual behaviors. The results are presented in Tables 33, 34, and 35. The analyses did not support the hypothesis. A one-way ANOVA showed that there was no significant difference in overall ritual behavior from pretest to posttest between control and experimental groups ( $F = 1.0102, p = > .05$ ). A one-way ANOVA showed that there was no significant difference in dinner time ritual behavior from pretest to posttest ( $F = .6263, p = >.05$ ). A one-way ANOVA showed that there was no significant difference in weekend ritual behavior from pretest to posttest ( $F = 1.2204, p > .05$ ).

4.0 Men who receive instruction in positive ritual behavior would demonstrate significantly higher levels of ritual behavior than men who do not receive instruction.

TABLE 33

Scores on Individuals' Ritual Meaning by Treatment Condition and Assessment Phase and One-Way Analysis of Variance Comparing Pretest to Posttest Differences Between Groups For Scores on the Family Routine Questionnaire (FRQ)

| Treatment<br>Condition | Post - Pre |           |
|------------------------|------------|-----------|
|                        | <u>M</u>   | <u>SD</u> |
| Experimental           | .19        | 7.20      |
| Control                | -1.04      | 4.22      |

  

| Source  | Sum of<br>Squares | <u>df</u> | Mean<br>Square | <u>F</u> | Sig.  |
|---------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|----------|-------|
| Between | 34.0071           | 1         | 34.0071        | 1.0102   | .3176 |
| Within  | 2962.3929         | 88        | 33.6636        |          |       |
| Total   | 2996.4000         | 89        |                |          |       |

TABLE 34

Scores on Individuals' Dinner Time Ritual Meaning by Treatment Condition and Assessment Phase and One-Way Analysis of Variance Comparing Pretest to Posttest Differences Between Groups For Scores on the Dinner time Setting of the Family Routine Questionnaire (FRQ)

| Treatment<br>Condition | Post - Pre |           |
|------------------------|------------|-----------|
|                        | <u>M</u>   | <u>SD</u> |
| Experimental           | .1429      | 2.4352    |
| Control                | -.2708     | 2.5073    |

  

| Source  | Sum of<br>Squares | <u>df</u> | Mean<br>Square | <u>F</u> | Sig.  |
|---------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|----------|-------|
| Between | 3.8335            | 1         | 3.8335         | .6263    | .4308 |
| Within  | 538.6220          | 88        | 6.1207         |          |       |
| Total   | 542.4556          | 89        |                |          |       |

TABLE 35

Scores on Individuals' Weekend Ritual Meaning by Treatment Condition and Assessment Phase and One-Way Analysis of Variance Comparing Pretest to Posttest Differences Between Groups For Scores on the Weekend Setting of the Family Routine Questionnaire (FRQ)

| Treatment<br>Condition | Post - Pre |           |
|------------------------|------------|-----------|
|                        | <u>M</u>   | <u>SD</u> |
| Experimental           | -.0238     | 3.5303    |
| Control                | -.8750     | 3.7452    |

  

| Source  | Sum of<br>Squares | <u>df</u> | Mean<br>Square | <u>F</u> | Sig.  |
|---------|-------------------|-----------|----------------|----------|-------|
| Between | 16.2294           | 1         | 16.2294        | 1.2204   | .2723 |
| Within  | 1170.2262         | 88        | 13.2980        |          |       |
| Total   | 1186.4556         | 89        |                |          |       |

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to test the difference in pre- and posttreatment change in levels of ritual behavior between males who received instruction in ritual behavior and males who did not. The analysis did not support the hypothesis. The results are presented in Table 36. Data showed that there was no significant difference in ritual behavior pretest to posttest between males who had received instruction in ritual behavior and males who did not ( $F = 1.007, p = > .05$ ).

5.0 Men who receive instruction in positive ritual behavior will experience a significant increase in intimacy.

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted to test the difference in pre- and posttreatment change in intimacy levels between males who received instruction in positive ritual behavior and males who did not. The analysis did not support the hypothesis. The results are presented in Table 37. The ANOVA showed that there was no significant difference in intimacy in males who had received instruction in positive ritual behavior from males who did not ( $F = .624, p > .05$ ).

6.0 Women in both groups would score significantly higher in ritual behavior than men.

An ANOVA was conducted to test the difference in pre- and posttreatment changes in ritual behaviors between women in both the experimental and control groups as compared to

TABLE 36

A One-Way Analysis of Variance Comparing Pretest to Posttest  
Differences in Ritual Behavior Between Males in the Control  
Group and Males in the Experimental Group

| Source                     |   | Sum of<br>Squares | df | Mean<br>Square | F     | Sig. |
|----------------------------|---|-------------------|----|----------------|-------|------|
| Main<br>Effects            | (Combined)                                | 53.570            | 2  | 26.785         | .793  | .456 |
|                            | Control or<br>Experimental<br>Group       | 34.007            | 1  | 34.007         | 1.007 | .319 |
|                            | SEX                                       | 19.563            | 1  | 19.563         | .579  | .449 |
| 2-Way<br>Interac-<br>tions | Control or<br>Experimental<br>Group * SEX | 40.896            | 1  | 40.896         | 1.211 | .274 |
| Model                      |   | 90.948            | 3  | 30.316         | .897  | .446 |
| Residual                   |   | 2905.452          | 86 | 33.784         |       |      |
| Total                      |   | 2996.400          | 89 | 33.667         |       |      |

TABLE 37

A One-Way Analysis of Variance Comparing Pretest to Posttest Differences in Intimacy Levels Between Males Who Have Received Instruction in Ritual Behavior and Males Who Have Not

| Source  | Sum of Squares | <u>df</u> | Mean Square | <u>F</u> | Sig. |
|---------|----------------|-----------|-------------|----------|------|
| Between | 539.506        | 1         | 539.506     | .244     | .624 |
| Within  |                |           |             |          |      |
| Groups  | 94912.405      | 43        | 2207.265    |          |      |
| Total   | 95451.911      | 44        |             |          |      |

men in both groups. The analysis did not support the hypothesis. The results are presented in Table 38. A one-way analysis of variance showed that there was no significant difference in the ritual behavior of women in both control and experimental groups then from the men ( $F = .474, p = > .05$ ).

7.0 Women in both groups would score significantly higher on intimacy than men.

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to test any differences in the levels of intimacy in the women of both control and experimental groups as compared to the men. The analysis did not support the hypothesis. The results are presented in Table 39. A one-way analysis of variance showed that there were no significant differences in the intimacy levels of the women in both control and experimental groups in relation to the men ( $F = .018, p > .05$ ).

8. There will be no difference between subjects' perceived experience of low, moderate, or high levels of stress with regard to marital satisfaction, intimacy, and ritual meaning.

Because of uneven cell sizes, this hypothesis could not be tested. The means and standard deviations presented in Tables 40 and 41 indicate that the same relationship existed pretest and posttest.



TABLE 38

A One-Way Analysis of Variance Comparing the Ritual Behavior of Females in Both Experimental and Control Groups with the Ritual Behavior of Males in Both Groups

| Gender | <u>N</u> | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> |  |  |
|--------|----------|----------|-----------|--|--|
| Male   | 45       | -.8889   | 3.7551    |  |  |
| Female | 45       | -.0444   | 7.3235    |  |  |
| Total  | 90       | -.4667   | 5.8024    |  |  |

  

| Source         | Sum of Squares | <u>df</u> | Mean Square | <u>F</u> | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----------|-------------|----------|------|
| Between Groups | 16.044         | 1         | 16.044      | .474     | .493 |
| Within Groups  | 2980.356       | 88        | 33.868      |          |      |
| Total          | 2996.40        | 89        |             |          |      |

TABLE 39

A One-Way Analysis of Variance Comparing the Intimacy Scores of the Females in Both Experimental and Control Groups with the Intimacy Scores of Males in Both Groups

| Gender | <u>N</u> | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> |  |  |
|--------|----------|----------|-----------|--|--|
| Male   | 45       | -3.1556  | 46.5764   |  |  |
| Female | 45       | -4.3778  | 39.8333   |  |  |
| Total  | 90       | -3.7667  | 43.0965   |  |  |

  

| Source         | Sum of Squares | <u>df</u> | Mean Square | <u>F</u> | Sig. |
|----------------|----------------|-----------|-------------|----------|------|
| Between Groups | 36.611         | 1         | 33.611      | .018     | .894 |
| Within Groups  | 165266.5       | 88        | 1878.028    |          |      |
| Total          | 165300.1       | 89        |             |          |      |

TABLE 40

Summary of Means and Standard Deviations of Subjects'  
Perceived Experience of Stress in Relationship to Marital  
Satisfaction, Intimacy, and Ritual Meaning at Pretest

|              | Stress | <u>N</u> | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> |
|--------------|--------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Marital      | Lo     | 20       | 77.0500  | 17.6530   |
| Satisfaction | Mod    | 54       | 87.0370  | 30.9455   |
|              | High   | 19       | 108.8125 | 35.1420   |
|              | Total  | 90       | 88.6889  | 30.8194   |
| Intimacy     | Lo     | 20       | 61.75    | 40.78     |
|              | Mod    | 54       | 77.59    | 67.79     |
|              | High   | 16       | 132.88   | 77.67     |
|              | Total  | 90       | 83.90    | 68.37     |
| Ritual       | Lo     | 20       | 48.800   | 6.8256    |
| Meaning      | Mod    | 54       | 48.111   | 8.0486    |
|              | High   | 16       | 45.1250  | 9.3728    |
|              | Total  | 90       | 47.7333  | 8.0557    |

TABLE 41

Summary of Means and Standard Deviations of Subjects'  
Perceived Experience of Stress in Relationship to Marital  
Satisfaction, Intimacy, and Ritual Meaning at Posttest

|              | Stress | <u>N</u> | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> |
|--------------|--------|----------|----------|-----------|
| Marital      | Lo     | 22       | 83.8182  | 26.8535   |
| Satisfaction | Mod    | 58       | 85.7414  | 28.3985   |
|              | High   | 10       | 118.4000 | 41.4225   |
|              | Total  | 90       | 88.9000  | 31.1582   |
| Intimacy     | Lo     | 22       | 76.82    | 61.40     |
|              | Mod    | 58       | 69.46    | 59.05     |
|              | High   | 10       | 149.20   | 94.63     |
|              | Total  | 90       | 80.13    | 58.13     |
| Ritual       | Lo     | 22       | 46.4091  | 8.4721    |
| Meaning      | Mod    | 58       | 47.8448  | 7.9732    |
|              | High   | 10       | 45.8000  | 6.8605    |
|              | Total  | 90       | 42.2667  | 7.9405    |

### Additional Analysis

Paired t-tests were conducted on each question of the Attitude Toward Social Environment Scale assessing the respondents' tendencies to present themselves in a socially desirable manner. As there was no significance the tests were summarized and one  $t$ -test summary is presented in Table 42. The analysis indicates that the subjects exhibited moderate to high approval motives with no significant change from pretest to posttest ( $t = -.103$ ).

A  $t$ -test for paired samples comparing the pre- versus posttest scores on the Overall Agreement Scale (OAS) and the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability (MC 10) components of the Attitude Toward Social Environment Scale (ATSE) was also conducted. The analysis showed no significance. The results are presented in table 43. The participants showed moderate to high approval motives in both components of the ATSE with no significant change from pretest to posttest (pair 1  $t = 1.216$ , pair 2  $t = -.127$ ).

A one-way analysis of variance was conducted on each question of the semantic differential form to evaluate the consistency of the presenter's lectures throughout the three sessions. The results showed that the presenter remained consistent through all three sessions since there were no

TABLE 42

A t-Test Summary of Paired t-Tests Comparing Pre- and Post-  
Test Scores on the Attitude Toward Social Environment Scale  
(ATSE) as an Indicator of the Subjects' Approved Routine

| Source                                    | <u>N</u> | <u>M</u>  | <u>SD</u> |           |        |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|--------|
| Pretest ATSE<br>(Combined OAS<br>and MC)  | 90       | 83.17     | 13.54     |           |        |
| Posttest ATSE<br>(Combined OAS<br>and MC) | 90       | 83.01     | 15.42     |           |        |
| Paired<br>t-Test                          | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> | <u>T</u>  | <u>df</u> | 2-Tail |
|   | -.1556   | 14.2804   | -1.03     | 89        | .918   |

TABLE 43

Paired Sample t-Test Comparing the Overall Agreement Scale (OAS) and the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability (MC 10) Components of the Attitude Toward Social Environment (ATSE) Pretest Versus Posttest by Condition

| Source         |          | <u>N</u>  | <u>M</u>       | <u>SD</u> |           |                 |
|----------------|----------|-----------|----------------|-----------|-----------|-----------------|
| Pair 1         | ATSE OS  | 90        | 46.83          | 9.55      |           |                 |
|                | ATSE OSP | 90        | 45.97          | 10.75     |           |                 |
| Pair 2         | ATSE MC  | 90        | 37.14          | 5.11      |           |                 |
|                | ATSE MCP | 90        | 37.21          | 4.60      |           |                 |
| Paired T-Test  | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> | Std Error Mean | <u>t</u>  | <u>df</u> | Sig. (2-Tailed) |
| ATSEOS-ATSEOSP | .87      | 6.76      | .71            | 1.216     | 89        | .227            |
| ATSEMC-ATSEMCP | -.00667  | 4.96      | .52            | -.127     | 89        | .899            |

significant differences on the dimensions across the three sessions. Questions 7, 8, 15, 16, and 20 appear to approach significance but do not. The data is supportive of the presenters' consistency across sessions. The results are presented in Table 44.

A discriminant analysis was also conducted on the questions of the semantic differential to evaluate the presenters consistency across dimensions. The Wilks' Lambda was reasonably high (.716) for question 1 - - good-bad - - so it served as the subset for the analysis. The results are presented in Table 45.

### Summary

This chapter addressed the analyses of eight hypotheses. A total of 45 couples completed the three required phases to participate in the study. The analysis yielded a profile of subjects who were approximately 48.9 years old, in a first marriage of at least 22 years. The participants typically were employed and had achieved at least a 15 years of education. The couples had on the average two children. The participants maintained strong religious affiliation in that 53.3% identified themselves as Protestant and 32.2% as Catholic. Better than half, 60%, of the subjects declared that religion was very important in their lives.



TABLE 44

Analysis of Variance of Each Question of the Semantic  
Differential Evaluating the Consistency of the Presenter for  
All Three Sessions.

| Question                        | Maryland |           | Allentown I |           | Allentown II |           | <u>F</u> |
|---------------------------------|----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|----------|
|                                 | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> | <u>M</u>    | <u>SD</u> | <u>M</u>     | <u>SD</u> |          |
| 1. Good -<br>Bad                | 1.8077   | .8953     | 1.5000      | .6594     | 1.6250       | .8378     | .9158    |
| 2. Strong -<br>Weak             | 2.0000   | .9381     | 1.8750      | .7974     | 2.1000       | .8712     | .5018    |
| 3. Calm -<br>Agitated           | 2.0769   | 1.0168    | 1.7003      | .8065     | 2.0250       | 1.2504    | .8731    |
| 4. Valuable<br>-Worth-<br>less  | 1.8846   | 1.0325    | 1.5417      | .6580     | 1.8500       | 1.0013    | 1.0591   |
| 5. Hard-<br>Soft                | 3.7308   | 1.2824    | 3.6250      | 1.2446    | 3.900        | 1.0077    | .4544    |
| 6. Deep-<br>Shallow             | 2.5600   | 1.0440    | 2.4167      | 1.0180    | 2.9000       | 1.1048    | 1.7436   |
| 7. Pleasant<br>-Unplea-<br>sant | 1.3462   | .4852     | 1.0417      | .2041     | 1.5000       | 1.0860    | .0801    |
| 8. Happy -<br>Sad               | 1.5385   | .6469     | 1.2083      | .5090     | 1.7250       | 1.1764    | .0901    |

(Table Continues)

TABLE 44 (continued)

| Question                       | Maryland |           | Allentown I |           | Allentown II |           | <u>F</u> |
|--------------------------------|----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|--------------|-----------|----------|
|                                | <u>M</u> | <u>SD</u> | <u>M</u>    | <u>SD</u> | <u>M</u>     | <u>SD</u> |          |
| 9. Sharp -<br>Dull             | 2.1154   | 1.0325    | 2.2083      | 1.1788    | 2.5750       | 1.1297    | 1.5793   |
| 10. Heavy -<br>Light           | 4.1923   | 1.3862    | 3.8750      | 1.3929    | 4.2000       | 1.2237    | .5256    |
| 11. Relaxed<br>- Tense         | 1.7308   | 1.0023    | 1.5833      | .8297     | 2.1250       | 1.3046    | 2.0575   |
| 12. Clear -<br>Hazy            | 1.6154   | .8038     | 1.5417      | .7790     | 1.8750       | 1.2023    | 1.0068   |
| 13. Nice -<br>Awful            | 1.4615   | .6469     | 1.3750      | .7109     | 1.5750       | 1.1068    | .3906    |
| 14. Honest -<br>Dis-<br>honest | 1.5000   | .6481     | 1.2917      | .6903     | 1.6500       | 1.2310    | 1.0425   |
| 15. Active -<br>Passive        | 2.0385   | 1.0385    | 1.7500      | .8470     | 2.3250       | .8286     | .0487    |
| 16. Fresh -<br>Stale           | 1.9615   | .7736     | 1.6667      | .8681     | 2.2250       | .9997     | .0611    |
| 17. Fast -<br>Slow             | 3.2692   | 1.1509    | 2.9167      | 1.0180    | 3.3250       | .8883     | 1.3271   |
| 18. Fair -<br>Unfair           | 1.9231   | .8449     | 1.6667      | .7020     | 1.8500       | 1.0013    | .5581    |
| 19. Hard -<br>Soft             | 4.3846   | 1.2673    | 3.9167      | .8805     | 4.5000       | 1.0522    | 2.2613   |
| 20. Hot -<br>Cold              | 3.2692   | 1.1509    | 3.3750      | .9696     | 3.2750       | .7841     | .0923    |

TABLE 45

Discriminant Analysis of the Semantic Differential  
Evaluating the Consistency of the Presenter as Expressed in  
Subset Factor 1 - Good-Bad

| Eigenvalue   | Eigenvalue    | %              | Cum % | Canonical<br>Correlation |
|--|---------------|----------------|-------|--------------------------|
| Factor 1 -<br>Good-Bad   | .398*         | 100            | 100   | .533                     |
| *First 1 canonical discriminant functions were used in the<br>analysis |               |                |       |                          |
| Test of<br>Function(s)   | Wilks' Lambda | X <sup>2</sup> | df    | Sig.                     |
| Factor 1   | .716          | 25.776         | 20    | .173                     |

An unusually high number (34.8%) of the subjects parents' marriages were still intact, with an average duration of 38.8 years. In both their families of origin (81.1%) and their current marriages (93.3) subjects reported high emphasis on ritual behavior. The subjects also reported high levels of marital satisfaction and intimacy adequacy. The reported stress experienced by the couples over the past 12 months was considered moderate.

None of the seven hypotheses relating to ritual behavior, marital satisfaction, or intimacy was supported by the data. The data did support that stress in marriage is a constant and is not impacted by ritual behavior, marital satisfaction or intimacy or vice versa.

Additional analyses verified that the researcher maintained a consistent presentation through the three phases and three sessions of the study. Additional analysis also indicated that the subjects had moderate to high need-for-approval motive.

## Chapter V

### Discussion

#### Restatement of the Problem

Every day men and women marry with the hope and the belief that their marriage will bring them happiness as well as last forever. Unfortunately it is estimated that only half of the marriages will remain intact (Cherlin, 1992). It is not known how many of those remaining intact will be able to claim happiness or satisfaction. It is obvious that helping marriages to survive and thrive is of national and religious concern, as well as important clinical and academic pursuits.

The purpose of this study was to explore the possibility that positive ritual behavior may be the buried treasure in assisting couples to attain durable and happy marriages. There are relatively few studies on positive ritual behavior. Ritual has been employed as a therapeutic technique over the last 40 years (Bossard & Bell, 1950; Fiese & Kline, 1993; Hecker & Schindler, 1994; Hudson & O'Hanlon, 1991; Imber-Black, Roberts & Whiting, 1988; Moore & Myerhoff, 1977; Selvini-Palazzoli et.al., 1977; Turner,

1969; Van der Hart, 1983). This study was devised to ascertain if educating couples in positive ritual behavior might enhance marital satisfaction and intimacy. While the study did not answer that question directly, it did raise other questions. The development of ritual behaviors in marriage, and the quantity and diversity of positive ritual behaviors are but two aspects that demonstrate the need to further explore the use of positive ritual behavior especially in the field of marital therapy.

Eight hypotheses were tested:

1. Educating couples in the use of positive ritual behavior would significantly increase levels of marital satisfaction.
2. Educating couples in the use of positive ritual behavior would significantly increase levels of intimacy.
3. There would be a significant difference in the ritual behavior between individuals who have received instruction in positive ritual behavior and individuals who have not regardless of gender.
4. Men who received instruction in positive ritual behavior would demonstrate significantly higher levels of ritual behavior than men who do not receive instruction.
5. Men who received instruction in positive ritual behavior would experience a significant increase in intimacy.
6. Women in both groups would score significantly higher in ritual behavior than men.

7. Women in both groups would score significantly higher in intimacy than men.
8. There will be no difference between subjects' perceived experience of low, moderate, or high levels of stress with regard to marital satisfaction, intimacy, and ritual meaning.

#### Research Hypothesis I

The first hypothesis was not supported by the research. There may be several possibilities for this occurrence. First, the population that self-selected to participate was unusual in that they were involved in predominately intact first time marriages. The average length of marriage was 22 years. This was an unexpected demographic. It was presumed by the wording of the recruitment ad that much younger or multi-married couples would most likely respond. It is worth noting that several of the subjects in responding to the researcher when applying to participate indicated that they felt they had something to share about what helps marriages to survive in a culture of divorce.

Second, the majority of couples in both groups self-reported a very high satisfaction level in their demographic data questionnaire, as well as scoring high in satisfaction on the Marital Satisfaction Scale. The couples, therefore, may have perceived there to be little or no need for

improvement creating a ceiling effect. An assumption that can be drawn is that the couples essentially saw a relationship between the durability of their marriages with their satisfaction levels.

Third, the Marital Satisfaction Scale may not have been a sensitive enough scale to detect changes in the satisfaction level. The scale contained an answer value which allowed the person to indicate an undecided response. A forced-choice instrument would probably have yielded more accurate detection.

Fourth, the range of standard deviations on the marital satisfaction variable was confounding. The standard deviation on the self-reported degree of satisfaction in the marriage had a short span of .6777. However on the measurement scale of the marital satisfaction the standard deviation range was 11.2862 for the experimental group and 24.46 for the control. This indicates that the questions on the measurement scale may have had large latitude in their interpretations.

### Research Hypothesis II

The second hypothesis was not supported by the research. The majority of respondents reported very adequate or adequate intimacy in their marriages. Only a small percentage reported less than adequate or inadequate



intimacy. An implication that can be drawn is that the couples presumed a certain adequacy of intimacy in their relationships that they may have felt was conjunctive with the duration of their marriages. Since intimacy was not defined it is not known how the respondents interpreted the word intimacy. There could have been some confusion about intimacy in regards to a sexual connotation as related to satisfaction.

Another reason the desired results may not have been realized may be the instrument used to assess intimacy. While this instrument met the researcher's design of understanding intimacy as a process and an experience, it was somewhat limited as an assessment instrument. The assessment chosen, PAIR (McCubbin & Patterson, 1983), was included because its design purportedly detects minor changes. The PAIR does not actually calculate an intimacy score, but rather rates intimacy by the differences between the individuals' perceptions and expectations of five kinds of intimacy. The authors of the instrument designed it as a vehicle for feedback to couples to look at their intimacy patterns.

The PAIR instrument itself was cumbersome to answer. The number of erasures indicated that people were confused by the layout of the survey. The questions were provided in a separate booklet, while the answer sheet had two sections

side by side. The directions instructed the respondents to answer all the questions first by how they felt their marriages were currently (perceptions), and then to repeat the process using the other section to reflect answers about how they would like their marriage to be (expectations). An individual score was then assigned by the difference between those two numbers and a couple score was derived by the sum and means of the individual scores. Unfortunately, the scoring cells are printed on the answer sheet which seemed to cause confusion or distraction in some respondents as indicated by the notes they wrote on the answer sheet.

The data for this instrument actually indicated a negative reaction. The differences between perception and expectation were typically nominal at baseline. It is possible that the negative reaction may have been caused by the couples' experiences of actually talking about issues and expectations which they may have not previously discussed. It is also possible that the workshop phase may have stirred old wounds or unresolved issues, thus lowering both perceptions and expectations. It is conceivable that the couples may have had a sense of pride in their intimacy levels which was challenged by the awareness of how better, closer, or greater intimacy could be achieved. Considering that the majority of respondents characterized their

marriages as containing high or adequate intimacy, it is also possible that there was a regression to the mean.

The range of standard deviations was again confounding. On the self-reported intimacy question the standard deviation had a small range only 1.0304. On the intimacy measurement however the span was much larger 23.47 for the control group, and 34.42 for the experimental group again indicating large latitude in the perception of the questions.

### Research Hypothesis III

The third hypothesis was not supported by the research. It is very likely that the premise of educating couples in the use of positive ritual contained a major flaw. The hypothesis presumed that positive ritual behavior would be a relatively new idea presented to the couples. The premise also assumed that couples would not have a working knowledge of positive ritual use in marriage.

Also, the emphasis on education was based more on disseminating information rather than on an experiential approach. It is likely that, although couples may have understood what positive ritual use is in marriage, a true experience of creating such rituals would have been a more effective treatment.

Here also, the instrument itself was confusing in nature. The Family Ritual Questionnaire is the only self-report instrument on ritual use and therefore the only available instrument for this research. The layout of the instrument is such that while the answers are rated on a one to four scale they are actually presented as an either/or selection on either side of the questions. People automatically tried to answer the question twice despite the clear spoken and written instructions that there only could be one answer per question. Calls received by the researcher prior to the second stage indicated the difficulty that people were having in responding to this instrument. At the lecture phase, prior to the presentation, everyone was asked to double check this instrument to make sure the directions had been followed. In all three locations time had to be taken for several people to redo the survey. Two couples had to be eliminated from the data base because of incorrect completion of this instrument posttest.

Another difficulty with this instrument is that while it yields a score for ritual meaning, meaning and behavior are not synonymous. From the outcome of the research it is more likely that in this instance meaning and behavior were not related. The hypothesis focus was on the improvement of or increased ritual behaviors. At no time were couples

asked to enumerate or describe the rituals they had developed through their marriages. Such questions would more accurately gauge effect.

#### Research Hypotheses IV, V, VI, and VII

These hypotheses were not supported by the research. It is possible that gender effects were masked in hypothesis I. It is also difficult to generate statistical significance in hypotheses that are predicated on a nonsignificant finding in a previous hypothesis.

It is also probable that the gender questions are moot in regard to ritual behavior in marriage. Since two people form a culture for ritual (Driver, 1991), attempts to assess positive ritual behavior in marriage have to assess the marital culture rather than the individuals' perspectives.

#### Research Hypothesis VIII

This hypothesis could not be tested because of the uneven cell sizes. The hypothesis was formulated on the idea that stress is a relative constant in marriage as well as an unavoidable component. Each life stage has its own stressful tasks as a matter of development.

The FILE used to assess marital stress in this study is a fairly comprehensible instrument. However, at least one respondent from each location made note that there were no

questions regarding miscarriages or infertility issues. One disadvantage of the FILE is that stress is tallied by the number of yes or no answers regarding events occurring in the past 12 months, not by whether any of these events have ever happened, only if they have occurred in the last year. The overall moderate stress level for the research population was in keeping with the age range of the participants. Another instrument of stress that yields continuous variables might better illustrate the relationship between stress, marital satisfaction, intimacy, and ritual meaning.

#### Practical Implications

Despite the lack of significant results found in this study, there was a yield of practical implications. The most obvious indication is that, if this study did not produce statistically significant results, then the examination of how positive ritual behavior is taught must be considered in future studies. It might have been more effective to personalize the use of positive ritual behavior. If couples had a way to specifically identify the rituals they were already using within their own marriages then the logical extension would be to improve or enlarge those if necessary or to expand into additional rituals. A more targeted way to personalize the education to positive

ritual use would be to work with couples on designing a specific ritualization to celebrate or heal a specific marital event.

The one-on-one experience with the two pilot couples in the study was most encouraging as to the practicality of helping couples to identify their positive ritual behaviors and to look at those behaviors as strengths and resources in their marriages. In that instance there was an opportunity to speak directly and personally about their marriages, as well as to follow up on what had actually occurred after the education to positive ritual use. The experimental couple in the pilot verified the potential for pursuing research in this area. That couple advised that they had not only purchased the suggested book on ritual use by Imber-Black and Roberts (1992), but they had also created a "we made it" ritual to celebrate their awareness of the strength of their marriage.

The work of rituals, relating, changing, healing, believing, and celebrating (Imber-Black & Roberts, 1992) is the very essence of the work of marriage that can facilitate intimacy and satisfaction. Individuals who are preparing couples to marry as well as those individuals working with marriages in process can employ any aspect of ritual for the enhancement of a couple relationship.

Because of the divorce rate, our society may have unwittingly fostered a notion that satisfied durable marriages are in the minority. This misconception may be the result of the plethora of media attention to divorce, and the genre of material directed as "how to make a better marriage." The unintentional generalization emerges that there are very few marriages that are durable, intimate, and satisfactory. The research arena has focused primarily on distressed or dissolving marriages.

This study certainly implies that, given a venue of expression, couples of intact durable marriages believe they can offer some ideas on "how to make a better marriage." The couples in this research expressed pride and attitudes that somehow they had weathered the difficulties of marriage and had something to contribute. It would seem, therefore, that we have resources in our midst that support the concept of marital mentoring. It also suggests that a system, theory, or therapy that fosters a couples sense of accomplishment in marriage may result in more accomplished marriages. A ritual to celebrate the accomplishment of weathering marital difficulties such as the pilot couple created has the potential for such affirmation. In a clinical context this may mean a paradigm shift for therapists to direct focus and interventions emphasizing the couples achievements rather than trying to resolve what may



be unresolvable issues. To accomplish this paradigm shift a therapist would be well served to be versed in positive ritual behavior.

#### Recommendations for Further Study

Although testing the hypotheses did not result in statistical significance, the findings do not mean the idea of exploring the use of positive ritual should be disregarded. Witte (1989) cautioned not to presume that statistical significance and practical or clinical importance are synonymous. Indeed, the results of this study do seem to indicate that further research in the area of positive ritual behavior needs to be developed. The hypotheses were predicated on the idea that ritual use was an unknown entity, so an educational approach was fostered. The participants' self-reported high ritual emphases corroborated by the high ritual meaning scores on the Family Routine Questionnaire. This implies that people may not need to be educated to positive ritual use as much as they may need direction on how to create, implement, utilize, and experience rituals in a more knowledgeable way and in keeping with the ongoing changes within a family's development cycle.

There are several possible directions that additional research might explore. A larger sampling of the population

utilizing the same method may be one indication. The power analysis conducted prior to the implementation of this study suggested that a sample of 55 couples might produce respectable significance. Since no significance was found with 45 couples a larger sample size is necessary. If the same method were to be replicated with the same or slightly larger population sample, significant results might be achieved by implementing the first conceptualization of the study including a more focused ritual creation experience. The three separate meetings with the couples allowed for greater control over the testing environment and adequate time to experience change. Greater control of the testing environment ensures that all pretests and posttests are completed without consultation, in unison, as well as adequate separation time from the intervention. The interim period between the three phases in this study was arbitrarily chosen. Future studies would be better served with a longer period between intervention and follow up, especially if the intervention is experiential and the follow up specific to each couple's progress. Shorter and more strategic surveys could also favorably alter the response effect. The lecture phase might also be more appropriate if the intervention were of an experiential nature with perhaps guidelines or suggestions as well as a specific task assignment for the couple to continue at home.

A structure for creating ritual including the components and practical applications may be more conducive as a handout for the couple rather than an explanation of ritual.

One direction further research might take is to employ a longitudinal study. Effects of positive ritual behavior may be more easily proven a benefit over the course of a marriage from early stage to retirement. Certainly, the benefits of longitudinal studies are often outweighed by the cost and time elements. A longitudinal study would be a more accurate exploration between marriages where couples are taught and monitored in creating specific rituals and couples who may evolve rituals naturally or not at all. A cross-sectional design could yield the most information by tracking the ritual use across different age groups as well.

Another consideration for possible further research would be to take a clinical approach and to work with couples who self-identify as distressed or near dissolution. Since some of the key elements of positive ritual behavior are belief and the ability to heal and change, working with distressed marriages lends greater credibility to the clinical advantages of positive ritual behavior as an intervention. Accessing couples who are involved in therapy also implies a population that is desirous of change within their marriages and lessens the likelihood of attrition.

Approaching the use of positive ritual behaviors from the perspective of experienced stress within a marriage is also indicated by the results of this study. Examining the relationship between stress and the ability of ritual use to mitigate stress is suggested by the data gathered in this research.

A clearly indicated need in furthering the study of positive ritual behavior is for an appropriate measure of ritual behavior. The Family Ritual Questionnaire employed in this study was lacking in its distinction between routine and ritual as well as between meaning and behavior. An appropriate measure would be one that enables a researcher to establish a baseline of positive ritual use in a marriage against which change is measurable. An appropriate measure would also have sharper distinctions between routine, ritual, meaning, and behavior with more pointed questions that incorporate the schemata or topology of ritual. The establishment of such a measure is probably one of the more daunting tasks of continuing research in this area. Like art, what is ritual can be very subjective. Since every culture sustains its own ritual use, and each couple forms a culture, establishing language and norms that are universal to the experience of positive ritual behavior within marriage will not be easy. Developing and standardizing such a measure would in and of itself be research material.

### Limitations of the Study

This study is limited by several factors. While homogeneity is desirable to ascertain the nuances of difference, this study population was so homogenous as to impair generalizability. Also, the mean duration of marriage, 22 plus years, combined with the mean duration of their parents' marriages, 38 plus years, along with the high incidence of first time marriages (75 of 90) profiles a subject that is atypical in the general population. Couples who have been married only once, for over 20 years, from a family of origin in which the parents were married over 30 years would not have seemed a likely occurrence given the divorce rate. The fact that the couples were fairly religious may also imply more familiarity with ritual as well as a stronger sense of commitment to marriage vows. It is just as likely that these subjects did self-select precisely because they presumed themselves to have better-than-average marriages.

This study may also have been limited by the very instruments employed to test the hypotheses. Since all of the instruments were self-report, and given the aforementioned profile of the subject, there was an obvious investment in presenting themselves and their marriages in

the best possible light. The consistently high approval motive scores on the social desirability scale supports this investment.

The instruments produced a large number of variables, thus increasing the likelihood of random error. Also the broad span in standard deviations in some areas suggests that people may have interpreted the questions with a vast variability. In contrast, the lack of deviation in other areas implies a highly restricted range. The instruments measuring intimacy and ritual were confusing to answer as evidenced by the number of erasures and requests for explanation of directions. The measurement for stress yielded noncontinuous variables suggested other instruments be considered in future studies. Difficulty in following response directions may have contaminated the subjects' abilities to answer.

Another limitation of the study may have been a lack of distinction between the control and experimental conditions. The content of the experimental lecture may have been as benign as the control group lecture. It is possible that the experimental group lecture was not robust enough in content to reflect any change. It is possible that the content of the control group lecture on good marriages had the same impact on the participants in that group as the content of the experimental group lecture had on those

participants. This may have resulted in a parallel process of change rather than a significant change between the groups.

Finally, the most severe limitation of the study was the inability on the part of the researcher to control the research environment. Since pretests and posttests were completed at home it cannot be known, how closely the instructions were followed, if the respondents completed the surveys privately and without discussion, and whether they were indeed completed at one time in one setting. There was also no ability to control completion of the surveys in such timely fashion as not to confound the effect of the lecture phase. The time span between the lecture phase and the posttest surveys may not have been adequate to provide opportunities to employ positive ritual techniques. Nor was there any vehicle to determine if indeed any discussion or employment of positive ritual behavior actually transpired.

### Summary

This research study examined the utilization of positive ritual behaviors in marriage in relationship to marital satisfaction, and intimacy. While the data did not yield any statistical significance the results did support the need for continued research of positive ritual use. Positive rituals have been proven to be of therapeutic value

in marital and family therapy. Positive ritual behavior is a vehicle for change and can be accommodated to many family systems theories.

This research has indicated that ritual use is a component of marriage especially durable marriages. Positive rituals are resources within marriage that have the potential to influence satisfaction and intimacy.



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Appendix A  
Paid Newspaper Advertisement



**CALL FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS**

Survivability of Marriage  
in a culture of divorce  
is of concern and interest to many.

A doctoral candidate from Seton Hall University  
is currently conducting research on this timely topic.  
We are seeking willing and interested couples to participate  
in this project.

Criteria for participation and complete details may be  
obtained by calling 610 965-7480.

Appendix B  
Recorded Telephone Message

Thank you for calling the Seton Hall University marital study information line. For complete details on how to participate in the research project please press 1 now.

Thank you for your interest in the research studying how marriages survive in a culture of divorce. The research is being conducted by Rita Valenti, a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University. To participate in the project it is necessary to meet the following criteria:

1. Participants must be in a legal, heterosexual marriage
2. Participants must be over 18 and can be married for any length of time, and this need not be their first marriage.
3. Both husband and wife must participate
4. Both husband and wife must be present for all three phases of the study

The research project consists of three phases. Phase one, is a two hour session of completing 6 questionnaires. Phase two is a two and one half hour lecture on the topic of how marriages survive in a culture of divorce. Phase three is a two hour session of completing similar questionnaires to phase one.

All three phases will be held in the auditorium in the Anderson Wing of the Lehigh Valley Hospital Center, Cedar Crest Blvd and Rte. 78. All three phases will be on Saturdays. Phase one will be held at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, September 21. Phase two on Saturday, Oct. 12 will have two sessions. The morning session begins at 9:00 and the afternoon session will begin at 1:00 pm. Couples will be randomly assigned to either session, but must attend their assigned session. Phase three will be held on Saturday, November 2, at 9:00 a.m..

All information will remain confidential. To insure this all questionnaires will have a reference number that is known only to the participants. No one, including the researcher will be able to match identities to responses. Your participation in this project will help to further the understanding of marital relations. In appreciation of your interest and time participating couples will receive a \$10.00 cash stipend upon completion at phase 3.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human subjects research. The IRB believes that the research

procedures adequately safeguard the subjects privacy, welfare, civil liberties and rights.

If you and your spouse decide to participate please be at the auditorium of the Lehigh Valley Hospital Center, Cedar Crest Blvd. and I 78 before 9:00 am on Saturday, Sept. 21.

You may listen to this message as often as you wish. If you would like to hear this message again please press 1.

If you would like to receive a call from the researcher about this project please press 2. To receive a call from the researcher of this project, please leave your first name only and a telephone number. Calls will be returned as messages are retrieved.

Appendix C  
Recruitment Letter Religious Leaders

Seton Hall University  
Department of Professional Psychology and Family Therapy  
South Orange NJ 07079

Dear Pastor,

I am a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University, in the department of Family and Professional Psychology. I am working on a research project that investigates the survivability of marriage in a culture of divorce. Dr. Adriana Dunn is guiding this research project.

I would appreciate it if you would include the enclosed request for participants in your congregational bulletin or service leaflet on the two weekends prior to September 21st (Sept. 7-8, and Sept. 14-15). The research project involves completion of questionnaires and attendance at one lecture. It is open to husbands and wives only, and would take a total time commitment of 6 1/2 hours over a six week period. All responses are made anonymously and held confidential. A small remuneration would be made to couples completing the project. Couples are free to withdraw from the study at anytime, without fear of penalty.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subjects privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and research Services. The telephone number of the Office is (201) 378-9809.

I hope you will positively consider making your congregants aware of this request. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me locally at 610 776-7116 or 610 965-5199.

Thank You,

Sincerely

Rita Valenti

Appendix D  
Recruitment Letter Religious Leaders

Rita Valenti  
3251 Sequoia Dr.  
Macungie, Pa. 18062  
610 965-5199

Dear Pastor,

I am a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University, in the department of Family and Professional Psychology. I am working on a research project that investigates the survivability of marriage in a culture of divorce. Dr. Adrianna Dunn is guiding this research project.

I would appreciate it if you would include the enclosed request for participants in your congregational bulletin or service leaflet on the weekend prior to September 29th. The research project involves completion of questionnaires and attendance at one lecture. It is open to husbands and wives only, and would take a total time commitment of 6 1/2 hours over a six week period. All responses are made anonymously and held confidential. A small remuneration would be made to couples completing the project.

I hope you will positively consider making your congregants aware of this request. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me at the above phone number.

Thank You,

Sincerely

Rita Valenti



APPENDIX E

Notice Placed in Church Bulletins for Recruitment of  
Participants

**SEEKING  
INTERESTED COUPLES TO PARTICIPATE IN  
MARITAL RESEARCH STUDY**

I am a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University currently conducting research on how couples survive in a culture of divorce. I am seeking married couples over the age of 18 to participate in this study. To qualify for this study couples may be married any length of time, their marriage does not have to be their first marriage, but both spouses must participate in all three phases of the study.

The three phases of the research are: completing six surveys on various aspects of marriage, attending one lecture and completing five additional surveys. All of the surveys are completed at home. Completion of all the surveys will take between 45 and 90 minutes to complete. The lecture will last approximately 2 1/2 hours and will contain input on various aspects of good marriages, worksheets and a suggested reading list. The lecture will not include any group sharing or discussion. Because of the nature of the research participating couples will be randomly assigned to either a morning or afternoon lecture, but must attend the session to which they are assigned. The lecture phase is scheduled for Saturday, February 8, (snow date Feb. 15) and will be held at the Lehigh Valley Hospital Center.

Anonymity and confidentiality are assured to those participating in this study. Responses cannot be personally identifiable. Couples who complete all three phases of the study will receive a ten dollar stipend. All of the information gathered will be used for this research project only, and while personal results cannot be reported all participants may receive the aggregate results of the study.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects Research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subjects privacy, welfare, civil liberties and rights.

**If you and your spouse are interested in participating in this research, or know of another couple who may be interested, please contact Rita Valenti at 610 965-5199 or 610 776 7116.**

Appendix F  
Recruitment Letter Universities

Seton Hall University  
Department of Professional Psychology and Family Therapy  
South Orange NJ 07079

To: Public Relations Director  
Re: Request for research subjects

I am currently a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University in the department of Professional Psychology and Family Therapy. I am working on a research project that investigates the survivability of marriage in a culture of divorce. Dr. Adriana Dunn is guiding this research.

I would appreciate it if you would include the enclosed request for participants in your news brief to faculty and staff, at least once during the weeks of September 2nd and/or September 9th. The study is scheduled to begin on September 21st. The research project involves completion of questionnaires and attendance at one lecture. It is open to husbands and wives only, and would take a total time commitment of 6 1/2 hours over a six week period. All responses are made anonymously and held confidential. A small remuneration would be made to couples completing the project. Couples are free to withdraw from the study at anytime without fear of penalty.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subjects privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research services. The telephone number of the Office is (201) 378-9809.

I hope you will positively consider circulating this request among your faculty and staff on campus. If you have any questions do not hesitate to contact me locally at 610 776-7116 or 610 965-5199.

Thank You,

Sincerely,

Rita Valenti

APPENDIX G

Recruitment Letter Psychologists

Seton Hall University  
Department of Professional Psychology and Family Therapy  
South Orange, NJ 07079

Dear Colleague,

I am currently a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University in the department of Professional Psychology and Family therapy. I am working on a research project that investigates the survivability of marriage in a culture of divorce. Dr. Adriana Dunn is guiding this research project.

I am looking to recruit participants for this study. The research project involves completion of questionnaires and attendance at one lecture. It is open to husbands and wives only, and would take a total of 6 1/2 hours over a six week period. All responses are made anonymously and held confidential. A small remuneration would be made to couples completing the project. Couples may withdraw from the study at anytime without fear of penalty. The study is to begin on September 21st, 1996.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional review board for Human Subjects research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subjects privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the office is (201) 378-9808.

I would appreciate it if you would consider circulating the enclosed request among family, friends, former and/or current clients that you feel might have an interest in this topic. If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact me locally at 610 776-7116 or 610 965-5199.

Thank you for your positive consideration.

Sincerely,

Rita Valenti

APPENDIX H  
Recruitment Letter AAUW

Rita Valenti  
3251 Sequoia Dr.  
Macungie, Pa. 18062

Dear Fellow AAUW member,

I am a member of the Allentown Branch of the AAUW. I am also currently a doctoral candidate at Seton Hall University in the department of Family and Professional Psychology. I am working on a research project that investigates the survivability of marriage in a culture of divorce. Dr. Adriana Dunn is guiding this research project.

I am seeking couples to participate in this research study. I am hopeful that because of the AAUW commitment to education, you would be willing to consider participating or to encourage family, friends or co-workers to be participants. The research project involves completion of questionnaires and attendance at one lecture. It is open to husbands and wives only, and would take a total time commitment of 6 1/2 hours over a six week period. All responses are made anonymously and held confidential. Couples are free to withdraw from the study at anytime without fear of penalty. A small remuneration would be made to couples completing the project.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subjects privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research services. The telephone number of the Office is (201) 378-9809.

I have enclosed a copy of an ad that has been placed in local newspapers seeking participants. The ad may be circulated to anyone you feel may be interested in this project. For full criteria to be a participant and information on the study please call 610 965-7480.

Thank you,

Sincerely,



APPENDIX I

Recruitment Letter Diocese of Baltimore

Dear Couple,

Your work with the Family Life Ministry of the Diocese of Baltimore has identified you as people with an interest in helping good marriages survive. I am a doctoral candidate from Seton Hall University who shares that interest. In fact, examining how marriages survive in a culture of divorce is the topic of my dissertation research.

I am currently recruiting couples who would be willing to participate in this research study. Couples who participate need to be over 18 years of age, must be in a legal, heterosexual marriage and both husband and wife must complete all three phases of the research.

The three phases of the research are: completing six surveys on various aspects of marriage, attending one lecture, and completing an additional five surveys. All of the surveys are completed at home. Completion of the surveys takes between one and two hours. The lecture will last approximately 2 1/2 hours and will contain input on various aspects of good marriages, worksheets and a suggested reading list. The lecture will not include any group sharing or discussion. Because of the nature of the research couples who participate will be randomly assigned to one of two sessions, but must attend the session to which they are assigned. Participation in this study assures anonymity and confidentiality, as the responses are not personally identifiable. All of the information gathered will be used for this research project only, and while personal results cannot be reported all participants may receive the aggregate results of the study.

There are several benefits that may be realized by your participation in this research. Although we understand a great deal about how and why marriages dissolve we actually know very little about how and why other marriages not only survive but thrive. Your participation may add to this body of knowledge. The information gathered in the study as well as the lecture may be of benefit to you as it offers suggestions and insights regarding marital relations. And finally, there may be a benefit to your own ongoing ministry of working with the office of Family Life.

I sincerely hope you will consider accepting this invitation.

APPENDIX J

Cover Letter for Recruitment of Subjects -  
Diocese of Baltimore

Rita Valenti  
3251 Sequoia Dr.  
Macungie, Pa. 18062  
610 965-5199

Dear Couple,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the research study examining how marriages survive in a culture of divorce. We are hopeful that this study will be beneficial not only to those couples participating but to all who have an interest in marital relations.

Enclosed you will find two packets with the same numerical reference number, marked a and b. Wives should complete the surveys in envelope a and husbands those in envelope b. Detailed instructions are included in each packet. The surveys should take approximately 90 minutes to complete. It is encouraged and recommended that each person complete the surveys at one time and **without** consultation with your spouse. It is also requested that there be no discussion about the study with other couples you may know who are participating.

The completed surveys are to be replaced in their individual envelopes, sealed and returned when you attend the lecture. If your packet has a red dot, you are to attend the lecture at 9:00 am on Saturday, November 9 at Nativity Parish, 20 Ridgely Rd. Timonium, MD. (410 252-60809). If your packet has a blue dot your lecture is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. on Saturday November 9th, at Nativity Parish in Timonium.

Should you have any questions regarding any of the surveys, instructions, or any aspect of this research you may contact the researcher at the above address and telephone number.

Thank you again for your participation and support of this study.

Sincerely,

Rita Valenti

APPENDIX K  
Instruction Sheet

### Instruction Sheet

Please read instructions carefully before proceeding.

1. Remove and retain the index card with your reference number. This reference number will be your admittance to the lecture, and is known by you alone.
2. Check to see that all the materials have the identical reference number.
3. Please answer the questionnaires in the order in which they appear. Please complete all questionnaires at one time.
4. Please use pencil to mark your answers.
5. Please follow the specific instruction on each questionnaire.
6. Please answer all questions. Be sure to check both sides of the sheet as some surveys are two-sided. There are no incorrect answers so please do not leave any blanks.
7. Please do not reveal, share or compare your answers with your spouse.
8. Please do not discuss the study with other couples involved in the project.
9. For the Demographic Information form, please use the following guidelines:
  - a) **Do not use any birth dates**
  - b) **Do not use any names**
  - c) Question 10 is to be understood as:
    - Professional*-any occupation that requires a professional degree
    - Technical*- any occupation that is technically oriented, degree or non-degree
    - Clerical*-general office work
    - Trade*-skilled occupations (carpenter, plumber etc.)
    - Laborer*-non skilled occupations
    - Service*-retail, food service, domestic
  - Do not use job titles**
  - d) Questions 12 and 13 are to be understood as:
    - Ignored*-no mention, not even sure of dates
    - Acknowledged*-aware of the date, some mention of the event, perhaps a card.
    - Celebrated*- come activity occurred, others may be included (party, gifts, dinners decorations)
  - e) Questions 14 and 15 are to answered as you feel about or view the marriage today.
10. In the Family Routine Questionnaire each question has two parts but can only have one answer. You can only answer A,B, C, or D.
11. The last survey - PAIR - has a separate answer sheet. You will answer each question twice. First use Section 1, responding to how you view the marriage today. You will place the number of your answer directly above the question number. Note the question number are in rows across, not in columns. You repeat the entire process again using Section 2 responding to how you would like the marriage to be.
12. If your packet has a red dot you should report to Classroom 2 in the Anderson wing of Lehigh Valley Hospital Center (I-78 & Cedar Crest Blvd) at 9:00 am. on Saturday, Feb. 8th. If your packet has a blue dot, you report to the same location, same day, at 1:00 pm. *Tentative snow date is Saturday Feb. 15.* If you have any questions call the researcher at 610 965-5199.

APPENDIX L  
Demographic Data Form

## Demographic Data Form

Code Number \_\_\_\_\_

1. Age \_\_\_\_.
2. Gender: M \_\_\_\_ F \_\_\_\_.
3. Mother's ethnic background \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Father's ethnic background \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Race: African \_\_\_\_ Asian \_\_\_\_ Caucasian \_\_\_\_ Native American \_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Religious Affiliation: Protestant \_\_\_\_ Catholic \_\_\_\_  
 Jewish \_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_ None \_\_\_\_.  
 How important is religion in your life: (check one) very \_\_\_\_  
 somewhat \_\_\_\_ minimal \_\_\_\_ not at all \_\_\_\_.
5. Highest education level: (years completed) \_\_\_\_.
6. This marriage is my: First \_\_\_\_ Second \_\_\_\_ Third \_\_\_\_  
 Third+ \_\_\_\_.  
 Previous marriage ended in divorce \_\_\_\_ death of spouse \_\_\_\_.
7. Number of years married (current marriage only) \_\_\_\_.
8. Number of children (total from all marriages) \_\_\_\_.  
 Ages of children \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Number of children from present marriage only \_\_\_\_.  
 List number and ages of children currently residing with you \_\_\_\_\_.
9. I am currently employed \_\_\_\_ unemployed \_\_\_\_ retired \_\_\_\_.
10. My occupation is professional \_\_\_\_ technical \_\_\_\_ clerical \_\_\_\_  
 laborer \_\_\_\_ trade \_\_\_\_ service \_\_\_\_.
11. The number of years of my parents marriage \_\_\_\_.  
 My parents marriage ended in death of spouse \_\_\_\_ separation \_\_\_\_  
 divorce \_\_\_\_ still intact \_\_\_\_.
12. In my family of origin, birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, and/or special occasions were: ignored \_\_\_\_  
 acknowledged \_\_\_\_ celebrated \_\_\_\_.
13. In my current marriage, birthdays, anniversaries, holidays, and/or special occasions are: ignored \_\_\_\_  
 acknowledged \_\_\_\_ celebrated \_\_\_\_.
14. Overall I would describe my marriage as: (check one only)  
 very satisfying \_\_\_\_ somewhat satisfying \_\_\_\_ neither satisfying/nor dissatisfying \_\_\_\_  
 somewhat dissatisfying \_\_\_\_ very dissatisfying \_\_\_\_.
15. In my current marriage I believe the level of intimacy is: (check one only)  
 very adequate \_\_\_\_ adequate \_\_\_\_ somewhat adequate \_\_\_\_ minimally adequate \_\_\_\_  
 inadequate \_\_\_\_.



APPENDIX M  
Informed Consent Form

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be involved in research that is expected to be of benefit to those who are interested in and concerned about how marriages survive and thrive. Your eligibility as a participant is based entirely upon you and your spouse being willing to participate, you and your spouse being over 18 and in a legal, heterosexual marriage, and you and your spouse agreeing to fulfill all three aspects of this study.

If you decide to participate you will be asked to complete six questionnaires, and attend one lecture. The six questionnaires are: The demographic data form; The Personal Assessment of Intimacy in Relationships (PAIR, Schaefer & Olson, 1981) which assesses how couples experience intimacy; The Marital Satisfaction Scale: (MSS, Roach Frazier & Bowden, 1981) which emphasizes a persons opinion about their marriage; The Family Inventory of Life Events and Changes (FILE, McCubbin, Patterson and Wilson, 1985) which measures an individual perception of stressful events that may have occurred in the previous 12 months; The Family Routine Questionnaire (FRQ, Fiese & Kline, 1991) which examines how families engage in routines in different settings such as meals, weekends, and vacations; and the Attitude Toward Social Environment Scale (ATSE) which measures comfort levels of various social situations. All but the demographic data form will be readministered. You will also be required to attend one lecture. The lecture will be on a topic of marital interactions and will include handouts, worksheets, and reading material. At the end of the lecture, you will asked to complete an evaluation form rating the presenter. The total time involvement is approximately 6 1/2 hours over a six week period.

All information will remain confidential. To insure this names or identifying information will not be used. All inventories will be coded. It will be impossible for anyone including myself, to match names with responses.

All participation is voluntary. There will be no penalty or loss if you do not agree to participate. If you decide to participate you retain the right to discontinue at any time. If you complete all three aspects of the study you will be compensated by a ten dollar stipend per couple.

The questionnaires used in this study have been used successfully in countless research on the topic of marital relations. The questions investigate interest, attitude and perceptions. It is unlikely that having participated in this study will have a detrimental or adverse effect.

However, if that were to occur, counseling would be provided for you.

Signing this consent form indicates you have read, understood, and agreed to the preceding information. Should there be any questions you might have at a later time, you may contact Rita Valenti 610 776-7116.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Seton Hall University Institutional Review Board for Human Subjects research. The IRB believes that the research procedures adequately safeguard the subjects privacy, welfare, civil liberties, and rights. The Chairperson of the IRB may be reached through the Office of Grants and Research Services. The telephone number of the Office is (201) 378-9809.

I have read the material above, and any questions I asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I agree to participate in this activity realizing that I may withdraw without prejudice at any time.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Subject or Authorized Representative

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

APPENDIX N

Cover Letter for Recruitment of Subjects - Allentown

Rita Valenti  
3251 Sequoia Dr.  
Macungie, Pa. 18062  
610 965-5199 (H) 610 776-7116 (O)

November 6, 1996

Dear Couple,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the research study examining how marriages survive in a culture of divorce. We are hopeful that this study will be beneficial not only to those couples participating but to all who have an interest in marital relations.

Enclosed you will find several items. There are two informed consent forms. Each of you needs to sign a form and return it to me at your earliest convenience but prior to the lecture session. Sign your name only, **do not** include an address. A stamped self addressed envelope is provided.

There are two packets with the same numerical reference number, marked A and B. Wives should complete the surveys in envelope A and husbands the surveys in envelope B. Detailed instructions are included in each packet. Although spouses do not have to complete the surveys at the same time, it is encouraged and recommended that the surveys be completed at one time and **without** consultation with your spouse. It is also requested that there be no discussion about the study with the other couples you may know who are participating.

The completed surveys are to be replaced in their individual envelopes, sealed and returned to the researcher when you attend the lecture. If your envelope has a red dot, the lecture will be held at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, November 16th, in classroom 1 in the Anderson Wing of Lehigh Valley Hospital Center, I-78 and Cedar Crest Blvd. If your envelope has a blue dot you should report to classroom 1 in the Anderson Wing of Lehigh Valley Hospital at 1:00 p.m. on Saturday, November 16th.

Should you have any questions regarding any of the surveys, instructions, directions, or any aspect of this research, you may contact the researcher at the above address and telephone numbers.

Thank you again for your participation and support of this study.

Sincerely ,

Rita Valenti

APPENDIX O

Outline for Experimental Workshop

## Positive Ritual Behavior

9:00 am Introduction

Need to examine resources that enable marriages to survive and thrive.

External resources:

Extended family

Network of friends

Community involvement

church

neighborhood

interest groups

Internal Resources:

Individual coping skills put to use for the good of the couple

Relationship skills

communication

shared interests

humor

Ritual

9:15 to Understanding Ritual as a Resource in Marriage

10:00 am What is Ritual (Driver)

Common to all cultures

presence

symbol

repetition

change

Kinds of ritual (Imber-Black & Roberts)

Daily rituals

Traditional rituals

Celebrations

Life-cycle rituals

How do rituals work

relating

changing

healing

believing

celebrating

10:00 STRETCH BREAK

10:10

10:10           Ritual Styles  
10:30            minimized  
                  interrupted  
                  rigid  
                  obligatory  
                  imbalanced  
                  flexible

10:30           Work sheets and exercises (Couples complete  
11:00           individually and share only with spouse)  
                  Dinnertime  
                  Weekends  
                  Anniversary

11:00           Practical Applications  
11:20            Suggestions to begin incorporating  
                  rituals at home.  
                  Examine and enlarge what is already  
                  being done  
                  Create a ritualization to mark the  
                  success of your marriage  
                  Reading List

11:20           Presenter Evaluation  
11:30            Adjourn



APPENDIX P

Worksheet Experimental Group Positive Ritual Behavior

Identify the couple routine that seems most familiar or comfortable to you. Think in terms of daily activities.

Identify a gift from your partner that remains the most memorable of your marriage. What makes it memorable.

What was the last event you and your spouse celebrated, what did it commemorate, and how did you celebrate.

What did you do on your last wedding anniversary. Who was responsible and what was the outcome.

APPENDIX Q

Exercise Sheet for Experimental Group

Please complete the following sentences. Answer the questions as you are feeling today.

Weekends are for

When I think of the weekend I get \_\_\_\_\_ because

My idea of a perfect weekend is

Next weekend I wish I could

The most memorable weekend my spouse and I had together was the time we

If I could change one thing about how we spend our weekend time, I would change

APPENDIX R

Exercise Worksheet for Experimental Group

Please complete the following sentences. Please answer the questions as you are feeling today.

Dinner time is like

Dinner time when I was growing up was like

My most memorable meal was

because

What I enjoy most about sharing meals with my spouse is

If I could change one thing about our dinner time I would change

APPENDIX S

Reading List Experimental Group

Going the Distance: Finding and Keeping Life Long Love.  
by Lonnie Barbach and David Geisinger 1991 A Plume Book

Intimate Marriage: Developing a Life Partnership.  
by Barry and Emily McCarthy 1992 Carroll and Graf Publishing

Peer Marriage: How Love Between Equals Really Works.  
by Pepper Schwartz 1994 The Free Press

Rituals for Our Times: Celebrating, Healing and Changing Our Lives and Our Relationships.  
by Evan Imber-Black Ph.d, and Janine Roberts, Ed.d 1992  
HarperCollins Publishers

The Fragile Bond: In Search of an Equal, Intimate and Enduring Marriage.  
by Augustus Napier, Ph.d 1988 Harper and Row

The Good Marriage: How and Why Love Lasts.  
by Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee 1995 Houghton  
Mifflin Co.

The Magic Of Ritual: Our Need for Liberating Rites that Transform Our Lives and Our communities.  
by Tom F. Driver 1991 HarperSanFrancisco

Why Marriages Succeed or Fail...And How You Can Make Yours Last.  
by John Gottman Ph.d 1994 Simon & Schuster



APPENDIX T

Suggestions for Implementing Rituals Experimental Group

In their book Rituals for our Times: Celebrating, Healing and Changing Our Lives and Our Relationships the authors, Evan Imber-Black and Janine Roberts identify the five purposes of ritual as: *relating, changing, healing, believing, and celebrating*. They believe that all rituals whether daily, special or traditional, contain one or more of these elements. As you think about the rituals in your marriage and/or family use the following definitions to understand how ritual may best serve you.

**Relating** Ritual has the ability to help us to view our relationships from different vantages. Ritual provides occasions to redefine and rework rules, roles, patterns and opportunities.

**Changing** Ritual has the ability to mark our transitions in life and to be the vehicle of change. Ritual is the action of change.

**Healing** Ritual has the ability to illustrate the commonality we share with one another in our desire for love, support, and understanding. Ritual is the connector to forgiveness, empathy, compassion and justice.

**Believing** Ritual has the ability to root us in shared history. Ritual accommodates variations of that shared history to reflect changing norms, customs, and opinions.

**Celebrating** Ritual has the ability to be a tangible, visible marker of change in individuals, families and communities. Ritual honors the totality of life with all its dichotomies.

At a later time you and your spouse may want to examine the rituals you now experience in the light of the above definitions. Identify and examine daily routines, special events and traditional holidays. Discuss and consider enhancing current rituals, or implementing additional ones.

APPENDIX U

Outline for Good Marriage Workshop

1:00 p.m. Introduction

Need to examine resources that enable marriages to survive and thrive.

External Resources:

Family (nuclear & extended)

Network of Friends

Community involvement

church

neighborhood

interest groups

Internal Resources:

Individual coping skills put to use  
for the good of the couple

Relationship skills

communication

shared interests

humor

spirituality

romance

1:45 Wallerstein and Blakeslee study of good marriages in  
a culture of divorce.

Nine tasks of a good marriage

2:10 stretch break

2:20 worksheets on good marriage checklist  
couple dialog and exchange

3:15 Evaluation Form  
Final Instructions for return surveys  
Wrap-up

APPENDIX V

The Good Marriage Check List for Control Group

Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee in their book The Good Marriage describe nine tasks that seem to indicate the ability to maintain a marriage that is satisfying to both partners. The nine tasks are listed below. You and your partner may want to use this list as a checklist to discuss these tasks as they have been a part of your own marriage.

1. The couple needs to separate emotionally from the family of childhood so as to fully invest in the marriage. Communication with both families of origin need to be redefined, accepting the couple as a unit.
2. The couple has to build togetherness by creating intimacy that will support the marriage while providing for each partner's autonomy. This issue is important throughout the marriage but is particularly sensitive at midlife and retirement.
3. Couples with children have to accept their roles as parents and absorb the impact of children on their lives. The couple has to maintain a sense of privacy within the context of life with children.
4. The couple must together face whatever crises life may provide, in a direct way so as to strengthen their bond.
5. The couple needs to create marital space that is safe enough to endure the expressions of differences, anger, and conflict.
6. The couple has to develop a sexual relationship that is pleasurable and fulfilling and sheltered from the encroachment of work or family obligations.
7. The couple has to encourage the use of laughter and humor as a means of keeping things in perspective and to avoid boredom by mutuality of fun, interests and friends.
8. Each partner must provide nurturance and comfort to the other. Needs for dependency, encouragement and support are to be satisfied within the marriage.
9. The couple has to sustain the romantic and idealized images of the falling in love stage, while accepting the changes of time through the aging process.

APPENDIX W

Worksheet Control Group Revised

Using the Wallerstein Good Marriage Check List please answer the following questions.

Which task do you feel is most relevant to your marriage and why?

Which task do you feel is the most difficult for couples to master and why?

What task would you personally add to the list and why?



APPENDIX X

Reading List Control Group

Going the Distance: Finding and Keeping Life Long Love.  
by Lonnie Barbach and David Geisinger 1991 A Plume Book

Intimate Marriage: Developing a Life Partnership.  
by Barry and Emily McCarthy 1992 Carroll and Graf Publishing

Peer Marriage: How Love Between Equals Really Works.  
by Pepper Schwartz 1994 The Free Press

The Fragile Bond: In Search of an Equal, Intimate and  
Enduring Marriage.  
by Augustus Napier, Ph.d 1988 Harper and Row

The Good Marriage: How and Why Love Lasts.  
by Judith Wallerstein and Sandra Blakeslee 1995 Houghton  
Mifflin Co.

Why Marriages Succeed or Fail...And How You Can Make Yours  
Last.  
by John Gottman Ph.d 1994 Simon & Schuster

APPENDIX Y  
Contact Form

Thank you for participating in this research project which hopes to examine how marriages survive and thrive in a culture of divorce.

As a participant in this study you have a right to the results of this study if you are so interested. As all responses anonymous and statistically analyzed and grouped, there will be no individual results.

If you are interested in obtaining results you may contact:

Ms. Rita Valenti  
3251 Sequoia Dr.  
Macungie, Pa. 18062  
610 965-5199

It is unlikely that results will be available before December, 1997.

The questionnaires used in this study, have been used successfully in countless research on the topic of marital relations. The questions have investigated interest, attitude, and perceptions. It is unlikely that having participated in this study will have a detrimental or adverse effect. However, if that were to occur, referrals for counseling would be provided for you, by the researcher.

APPENDIX Z  
Posttest Instruction Sheet  
(Allentown)

Please read all instructions carefully before proceeding. It is important to wait three weeks before completing these surveys. The surveys should be completed between March 1 and March 8, and should be returned to the researcher no later than March 15. If there is a problem meeting the return date please call the researcher.

1. Check to see that all materials have the identical reference number, and that the reference number matches your original reference code.
2. You must answer the surveys with the same letter reference as you answered in the first set. Wives should be envelope A and husbands envelope B. It is important to use the same letter code as previously used.
3. Please answer the questionnaires in the order in which they appear. Please complete all questionnaires at one time.
4. Please use pencil to mark your answers.
5. Please follow the specific instructions on each inventory.
6. Please answer all questions. **Do not leave any blanks.** Be sure to check both sides of the sheet, as some questionnaire are two-sided. Please note there are no incorrect answers.
7. Please do not share or compare your answers with your partner.
8. Please do not discuss the study with other couples involved in the study.
9. Answer all questions as you are feeling the day you complete the surveys, do not try to remember how you might have answered the questions before.
10. In the Family Routine Questionnaire, each question has two parts, but can only have one answer either A B C or D.
11. The last survey-PAIR- has a separate answer sheet. You will answer each question twice. First use section 1, placing the number of your answer (0-4) directly above the question number. Then repeat the entire process using section 2. Note: on the answer sheet the question numbers are in rows across the page, not in columns.
12. When you have completed the surveys, replace them in their individual envelopes and seal them. Place both envelopes in the provided self addressed and posted mailer. Within a week of completing the surveys **but not at the same time**, fill in the enclosed postcard, and return it to the researcher, your stipend check will then be mailed to you.

APPENDIX AA

Cover Letter Accompanying Stipend Checks to Subjects

Completing Study

Rita Valenti  
3251 Sequoia Dr.  
Macungie, Pa. 18062  
610 776-7116(o) 610 965-5199(h)  
e-mail ritap@postoffice.ptd.net

Dear Couple,

Thank you for your willingness to participate in the research project "The survivability of marriage in a culture of divorce. Enclosed is a small stipend to express our gratitude for couples such as yourselves, who were willing to be a part of this study.

As we are still in the process of analyzing data, it is unlikely that any summary of the results will be available prior to December of 1997. As all information was collected anonymously there are no individual results possible. If you are interested in receiving a copy of the summary of the findings, please use the above address, phone, or e-mail to contact me.

The entire process has proved to be encouraging as to the current attitudes toward marriage in our culture. Again we greatly appreciate your own interest in helping to improve marital relations. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Rita Valenti