

CONNECTING

Healthy Information from the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center  March / April 2002

Work and Worth

In a consumer-oriented culture, the worth of an individual seems inherently tied to work and productivity. What happens to people's sense of worth and self-esteem when they receive the "pink slip" that disqualifies them from continuing their current employment? In a world where corporate downsizing, restructuring, buy-outs, mergers, hostile take-overs, and bankruptcies occur, it is difficult to feel very safe and secure in one's work. There are numerous examples where not only employment but also retirement, which people had worked most of a lifetime to accumulate, were annihilated by decisions made by one or two individuals.

Work and identity have long been connected for men. As gender parity has increased in the workplace, work and identity is more an issue for women. Job loss and forced termination are equal opportunity "unemployers." The grief, anger, and loss of esteem and identity can weigh equally as heavy upon women as men. Individuals who have received the pink slip, may not understand their own emotional reaction to this loss. They may rationalize and minimize by saying, "It was only a job!" Or, "I was looking for a job when I found that one!" It is important for people to recognize what the job meant to them personally and what the secondary effects of losing the job are for them.

The loss of a job certainly represents the loss of one's livelihood at this given point in time, but it is more than that. It may also represent the loss of numerous personal relationships, the loss of a significant part of the individual's emotional support network, and in some cases, it may represent the loss of a career path. Grief is a normal reaction to loss. Those who specialize in working with grief indicate the only way to grieve is to go through the pain of the loss. Feelings of shock and disbelief or denial may be the first reaction to job loss or termination. In a normal grief process, feelings can include shock, anger, numbness, disbelief, rage, guilt, sadness, and fear. These feelings tend to cycle and may manifest themselves several times over the course of several months. Each time they appear, they will tend to be less intense. Gradually the energy contained in the feelings will dissipate. If the intensity continues, the person may want to seek the help of a professional counselor to facilitate the process.

In this time of economic adjustment, I am sure we all know someone who has lost his/her job by one means or another. How can we be helpful and supportive to this person? The first rule of empathy is to validate the feelings the person is experiencing. It is critically important not to suggest how they should or shouldn't feel. It is not helpful to minimize

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Thirty Years

From its beginning in February 1972, the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center has served as a healing resource for central Iowa and beyond. Since started by Dr. Ray Martin and First United Methodist Church, the Center has been a counseling resource for thousands of individuals, couples, and families in central Iowa. In addition, the Center's educational offerings have trained clergy, mental health professionals, educators, parents, and others who have in turn extended the influence of caring and healing to the lives of many.

The Center's consistently solid board has interfaced the Center with the outside community while providing a nurturing environment which enabled the Center's growth and outreach. The outstanding Center staff has provided a setting, hour after hour, where people can tell their stories and begin a healing process for themselves and their relationships.

We are grateful for all those who have offered their support in bringing together a staff of 20 counselors working directly with 1,500 persons each year; one-fourth being children and adolescents. The prayers and financial support of individuals, congregations, businesses and foundations have made this important work possible.

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their situation. No one should assume that they know how to “fix it.” We should avoid saying things like, “It was only a job!” “Get over it and move on!” “You should put an application in at ACME, I hear they are hiring!” It will be far more helpful to say something to the effect, “I know this is a really difficult time of transition for you. I want to be supportive.” It is best if offers of assistance can be specific. An example might be, “I would be happy to assist you with updating your resume if that would be helpful.” In offering assistance, keep in mind that everyone handles job loss differently.

When considering our own job loss or someone else’s, we must recognize that our worth as individuals goes beyond work and productivity. Our inherent worth as human beings is present as the divine spark within all of us. Our worth and our identity should incorporate our relationships, our creative expressions, and beyond.

Lowell Houts, D.Min.
Clinical Therapist and Pastoral Counselor

Cancer Support Group

The Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center’s Cancer Support Service offers a monthly support group for people living with cancer. The support group meets on the second Wednesday of each month at West Des Moines United Methodist Church. You must pre-register in order to take part. If you would like more information about the support group, call the Center at (515) 274-4006.

New Board Members

Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center welcomes three new board members in 2002. They are:

Gail Allen
Sid Ramsey
Philip Stoffregen

Healing Touch Brochures

In 2001, Kathy Reardon, holistic nurse, spiritual director, and Certified Healing Touch Practitioner, joined the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center staff. If you would like more information about her services, including Healing Touch and/or Integrative Energy Work, call the Center at (515) 274-4006 to request a brochure.

Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation

The Center’s Foundation was created to ensure the financial security of the Center for years to come. In the future, earnings from the Foundation will help people with limited financial resources have access to healing at the Center. We encourage you to consider a planned gift to the Foundation. Some of the ways gifts can be made include:

- A will directing a portion of your estate to the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation.
- An insurance policy naming the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation as your beneficiary.
- A retirement plan or IRA naming the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation as the beneficiary.
- A trust arrangement naming the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation as the beneficiary.
- A gift of property, with retained life interest, to the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center Foundation.

Please let the Center know if you have already included our Foundation in your estate plan.

C.O.O.L. Corner

One way to help children learn to pick themselves up when they are feeling down is to teach them to give of themselves. Planned activities of giving to others “for free” are building blocks of self-esteem.

- Go through toys and/or clothes and drive to a donation place where a child gives over the box.
- Set up a time to “help” a senior citizen living in the neighborhood.
- Make a meal together and deliver it to a homeless shelter.
- Collect recyclables for a week, cash in and make gift shoeboxes for the homeless (toothpaste, toothbrush, soap, lotion, socks).

For more information about raising resilient children, read [The Optimistic Child](#) by Martin Seligman.

200 | Contributors to Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center

For three decades, the Center has offered counseling on an ability-to-pay basis. We have been able to do this through generous contributions from corporations, foundations, individuals, and churches. In 2001, the following people and organizations made a gift to our annual campaign, to our Women Helping Women Fund, or to honor a special occasion or the passing of a loved one. We thank you for including the Center in your charitable giving.

Corporations and Foundations

AE Easter Family Charitable Foundation
Allied Insurance
American Republic Insurance Company
AT&T
Barton Solvents
Boesen The Florist
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The Waldinger Corporation
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Wells Fargo Financial Foundation
West Bank

Churches

Central Presbyterian Church
Covenant Christian Church
Covenant Presbyterian Church
First United Methodist Church-Des Moines
First United Methodist Church-Winterset
Grace United Methodist Church
Highland Park Christian Church
Holy Trinity Lutheran Church
Park Avenue Presbyterian Church
Shepherd of the Valley Lutheran Church
Wakonda Christian Church
Walnut Hills United Methodist Church
West Des Moines Christian Church
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Windsor United Methodist Church
Zion Lutheran Church

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James and Marian Agnew
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Emma and Joe Anderson
Jim and Carol Austin
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Doug and Mary Barakat
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George and Darlene Bradner
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Barbara Bradley
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Anne Broderick
Martha Bueneke
Phyllis Cacciatore
Lois Carlson
Miriam Davis
Kathy Day
Virginia Deuben
Karen Dluhos
Anne Dols
Marsha Duke (In memory of her
mother and grandmothers)
Sondra Eddings
Martha Gerstenberger
Diane Glass
Barbara Hans
Trudy Holman
Mary Keables
Mary Kramer
Shari Kuhn
Carol Long
Claudette McDonald
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Sr. JoAnne Talarico
Claudia Tank
Joyce Templeman
Karen Unrau
Ann Valdez
Dee Willemsen
Roberta Yoder

Honorary and Memorial Gifts

In Honor of
Dolores and Woody Belcher
Cella Dayton
Pam Fox and Larry Warren
Kenn Hurto
Judy Rhinehart
Joyce and Dave Smith
Louise Stetter
Paulette Wood
Jim and Lynn Fox

In Honor of Jeff Means
Margaret Swanson

In Memory of Beth Levy
John Levy
Jeanne Schossow

In Memory of Audrey Swanson

The Audrey Swanson Family
Dwight Swanson
Mark Swanson
Nancy Hughes
Grandchildren
Maynard and Irene Axtell
Carol Lee Baldwin
The Barbican Owners Association
Waldo Bargmann

In Memory of Audrey Swanson continued...
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John and Marcella Bloem
Sidney and Barbara Bradley
Elizabeth Burns
Margaret Campbell
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Leo and Patricia Cleeton
Marion and Ruth Cottingame
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Wilbur Swanson
Arlene Thieman
Ralph and Helen Van Der Beek
Daniel and Patricia Walter
Randall and Lyra Winters
Joe and Nadine Woods
Mr. and Mrs. Winton G. Znerold

New Staff at the Center



Linda Simonton

We are pleased to announce the addition of Linda Simonton to the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center staff. Linda will be providing aging-related counseling to adults. She has a particular interest in working with adult children whose parents have had a change in their ability to live independently, been diagnosed with a chronic illness such as Alzheimer's disease, or are experiencing other transitions related to aging. Linda

was Director of Older Adult Services at Iowa Methodist Medical Center for 16 years. She earned her M.S.W. from the University of Michigan.

www.dmpcc.org

Visit the Center's website for information on Center counseling services, Center staff members, support and interest groups offered by the Center, special events taking place in the coming months, and classes the Center offers to mental health clinicians and clergy.

2002 Manifest Events

Manifest workshops focus on topics that are significant in men's lives and are rarely talked about. The workshops involve presentations and discussion. The richness of the workshops comes from the shared experience of the participants themselves. Manifest workshops are held on scheduled Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Manifest weekends provide opportunity for men to discuss their journey as men, while creating a sense of community. Retreats are held in a rustic, outdoor setting that provides a sense of connection with nature. They begin Friday evening and conclude Sunday noon on scheduled weekends.

March 16, 2002 Manifest Workshop – Male/Female Communication

May 3-5, 2002 Manifest Weekend

June 22, 2002 Manifest Workshop – W-O-M-A-N

August 3, 2002 Manifest Workshop – Men and Their Fathers

September 20-22, 2002 Manifest Weekend

October 18-20, 2002 Manifest Weekend

For details, visit the Manifest website at www.manifest.themenscenter.com or call Lowell Houts or Mike Sears at (515) 274-4006.

CONNECTING

is a publication of the Des Moines Pastoral Counseling Center, an independent, interfaith, not-for-profit organization. For nearly 30 years, the Center has been providing counseling and educational services to individuals, couples, and families for the purpose of enhancing emotional, spiritual, and relationship health. The Center has satellite offices in West Des Moines, Altoona, and Ankeny.

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Des Moines Pastoral

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