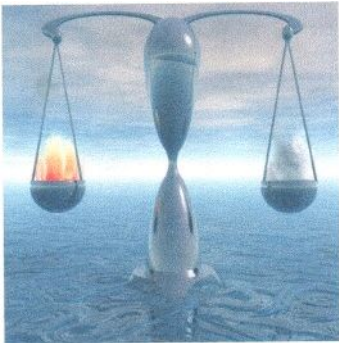


COMMITMENT - MAINTAINING EQUITY IN MARRIAGE

MAY 15, 2007

When the ratio of contributions to the relationship versus the outcomes benefits from the relationship is about equal for the two partners in the marriage, that relationship is said to be equitable. In other words, both spouses feel they are getting a fair shake.



A marriage incorporating equity is more likely to generate the kind of satisfaction and commitment most people want in their relationship. This is because the element of trust, so essential to higher levels of intimacy, depends on a perceived sense that one's partner will treat one fairly if there is a conflict of interest.

AND THERE
WILL BE!



Occasional inequity is inevitable in every marriage. And when it occurs, there must be a way to repair the associated damages. There must be rules that govern behavior when other rules are broken, just like in society at large. Examples might include "Never go to bed angry", or "talk

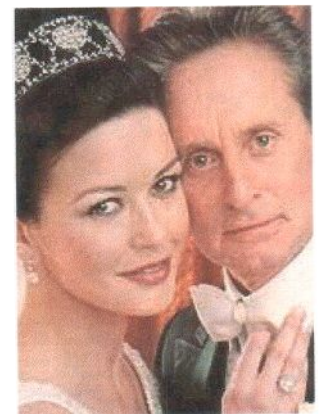


about issues rather than stifling them." These

are strategies that can assist a couple to reestablish basic trust when things get out of balance. In every marriage, trust is the foundation of that relationship. Without a firm foundation, the structure will eventually crumble. This can easily be prevented if the couple chooses to perform the necessary emotional repair work along the way.

Several skills and attitudes will help a couple to resolve equity problems. Primary is the attitude that each partner's needs are equally important and deserving of satisfaction. There should be an on-going willingness to consider the legitimacy of each other's complaints and an effort to find solutions which result in neither party's feeling short-changed. Couple these attitudes with communication

skills, i.e., the ability to listen empathetically to one's partner's positions and to clearly and non-aggressively assert one's own positions and the formula for resolving problems with equity is almost complete. The only thing remaining is to PRACTICE actually doing it! For it is only with experience that a couple gains the confidence that their marriage can endure hard times without sacrificing fairness. Then you know you've got a good thing going!



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