

# **MARRIAGE ON THE BEACH.....REALLY?**

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# ON BUILDING HOMES...

- **24** “Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock: **25** and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it did not fall, for it was founded on the rock.
- **26** “But everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man who built his house on the sand: **27** and the rain descended, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house; and it fell. And great was its fall.”

MATT 7: 24-27 KJV

# Wise and Foolish Compared

- Both men similar in terms of:
  - Gender
  - Ambitions
  - Intentions
  - Aspirations

# Lesson # 1:

Don't be fooled by appearances: Wise men and foolish men look very much alike on the surface!



# Location vs. Foundation

- **Location** determines foundation
- You have to select a **location** that can support your **foundation**

*For no other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Jesus Christ. 1 Cor. 3:11 NKJV.*

# Beach Defined....

*A pebbly or sandy shore, especially by the ocean between high- and low-water marks OR an expanse of sand or pebbles along a shore.*

*--Merriam-Webster;*

*Dictionary.com*

# People who Love The Beach.....

- 1. Adventure-loving people
- 2. Laid-back people
- 3. Pleasure-loving people
- 4. Daring people



# Challenges to living on the beach

- 1. Life on the beach could be dangerous.
- 2. Living may be cheap but maintenance costs and lifestyle costs are high.
- 3. Privacy may be an issue--You may own the beachfront but you never own the sea!

**It's one thing, to visit the beach—another to set up permanent residence!**



## **Lesson # 2:**

The easier more attractive option is very often not the best choice.

# Both Houses 'At Risk'

- The house **on the rock** **AND** the house **on the sand** succumbed to the same merciless blasts of the winds, the waves and the flood.

Families rooted in Christ, as well as those outside of Christ, are targets of the storms of life.

## **Lesson # 3:**

Storms are going to hit regardless of where you build.....

# Stress as Threat

- Houses fall when the Foundations are **STRESSED!**
- **Definition:** Stress occurs when “demands outstrip resources”

# WHY HOUSES FALL

The most common reasons WHY people get divorced:

- lack of commitment (73%)
- too much arguing (56%)
- infidelity (55%)
- marrying too young (46%)
- unrealistic expectations (45%)
- lack of equality in the relationship (44%)
- lack of preparation for marriage (41%)
- abuse (29%)



# Storms of Stress

What really is “STRESS”?:

- (1) Stress as a stimulus (certain **critical life events** that trigger stress ) (Dohrenwend & Dohrenwend,1974)
- (2) Stress as a specific psychological and physical reaction. Body’s **response** to demands placed on it (Selye, 1974)
- (3) Stress as an **imbalance** or gap between a demands and resources (Lazarus & Folkman,1984).

# Stress in Couples

- Dyadic stress:

A stressful event or encounter that affects both partners

# Stress Classified

(affects impact of stress)

- The **locus** of stress (external versus internal stress)
- The **intensity** of stress (major versus minor stress)
- The **duration** of stress (acute versus chronic stress).



# Locus of Stress

## A. External stressors:

- Originate outside of the diadic relationship
- Mainly include the interplay between partners and their social environment

## B. Internal stressors:

- Arise from conflicts and tensions between the partners

# Intensity of Stress

## A. Major Stress:

- Critical life events impacting couple
- Major stressors (normative & Non-normative)

## B. Minor Stress:

- Everyday demands
- Daily Stressors

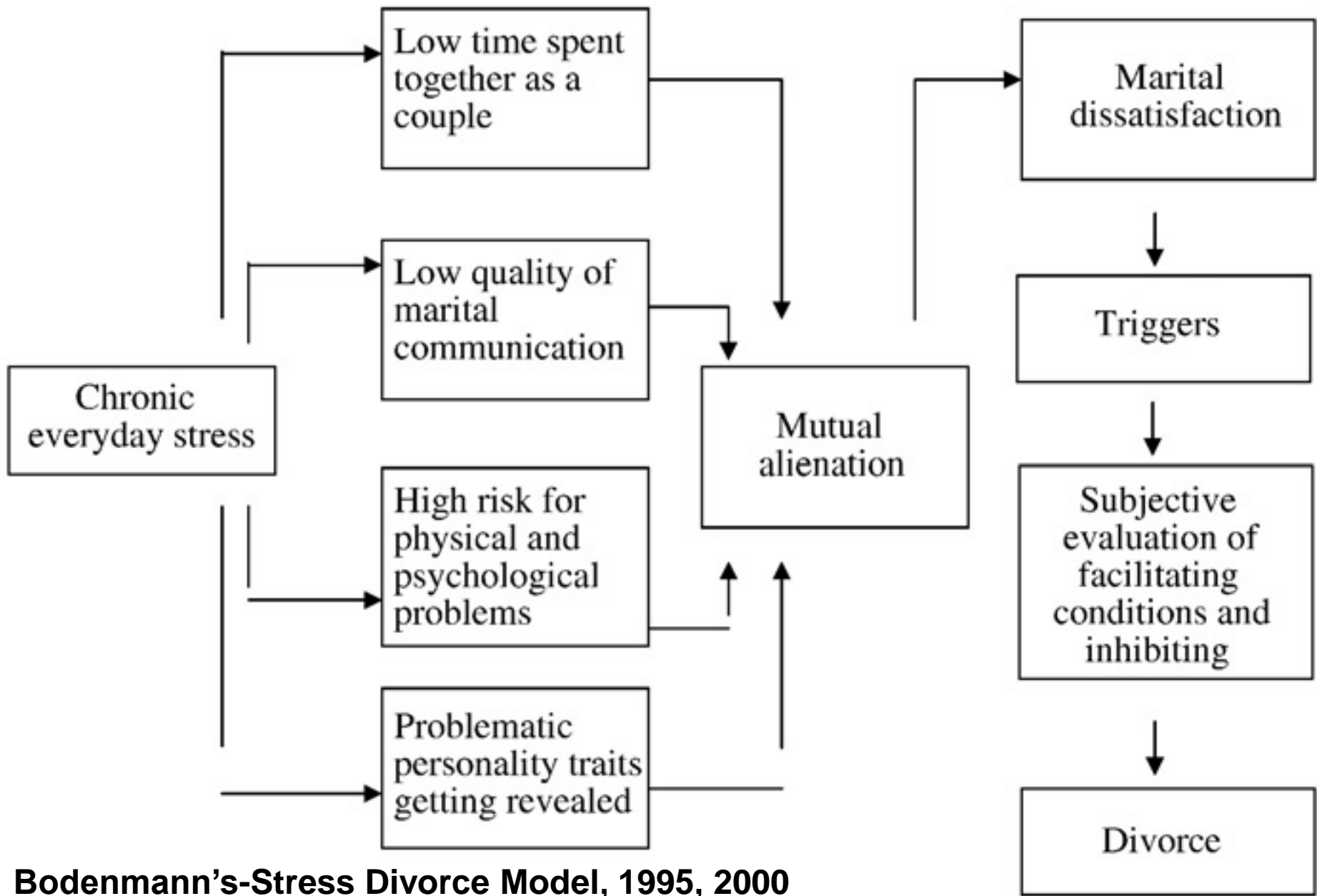
# Duration of Stress

## A. Acute Stress:

- Temporary Stressors
- May be limited to a single event

## B. Chronic Stress:

- Stress of ongoing, major life events
- Effects can be long lasting



**Bodenmann's-Stress Divorce Model, 1995, 2000**

# Role of Social Support-2

- Research strongly suggests that individuals with **“secure and supportive”** interpersonal ties tend to experience lower levels of stress than those who lack support (Hardy, et al., 1998).



# Role of Social Support

- Cohen & Willis (1985): Stress Buffering Hypothesis
- Social Support can improve quality of life—even in high stress situations
- Even though stress negatively impacts quality of life—Social support can buffer negative effects

# Benefits of Social Support

- **Social support may influence well-being in 3 ways:**
  - by providing the means of meeting basic human needs for love, social integration and security
  - By reducing the intensity and frequency of interpersonal conflict and tension
  - By buffering or moderating the impact of the pathological effects of stress

# Conclusions on Stress Research

- In summary:
- There is a consistent inverse relationship between minor stress and relationship quality;
- Everyday stress is often associated with relationship deterioration
- Several studies report a spillover of external stress (e.g from work) on marital communication and quality
- Inconsistent relationships were reported between major stress events and marital quality.



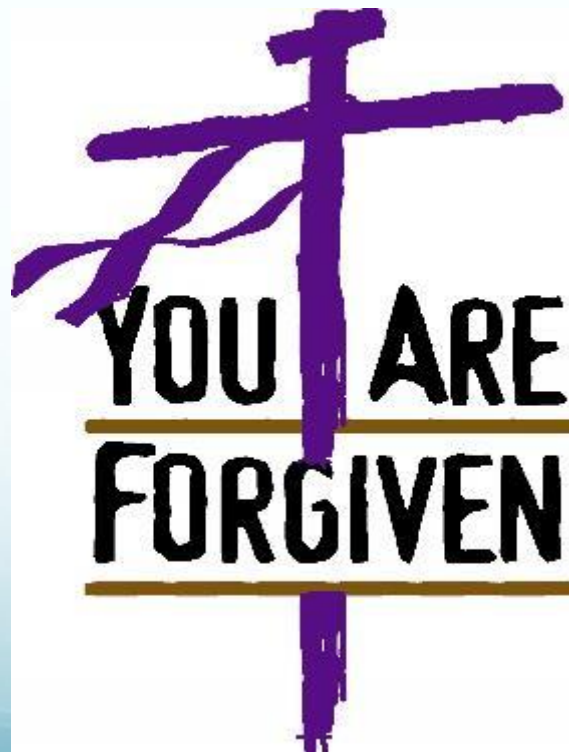
# The Role of Forgiveness in Mitigating Stress

“A happy marriage is the union of two good forgivers”.

--Garrison Keilor

# Forgiveness Defined...

- A deliberate process that transforms a vengeful negative response into a positive one (Finchman, 2000).



# What Forgiveness is **NOT**...

- .....pardonning, condoning or excusing the offense or the offender
- .... denying or suppressing the emotions induced as a result of the offense
- the equivalent of “letting the offender off the hook”

# The Forgiveness Process

- **Stage 1:** A recognition that an offense has occurred
- **Stage 2:** Negative thoughts and emotions in response to the event
- **Stage 3:** Recognition that previous strategies are not working
- **Stage 4:** A freely-chosen decision to forgive
- **Stage 5:** Affective, cognitive or behavioral changes toward the offender

# Benefits of Forgiveness

- **Ameliorate chronic or possible acute stress responses**
- **Capable of decreasing negative emotions (e.g. depression stress and anger)**
- **Dispositional Forgiveness strongly linked to stress reduction and improved mental health**

# Effects of Unforgiveness

- While **forgiveness** has been demonstrated to **relieve** stress, **unforgiveness** has been shown to **create** stress!

# Effects of Unforgiveness

- **Unforgiveness** is experienced as a range of negative emotions producing both biological and psychological effects
- **Unforgiveness** is reflected in higher cortisol levels and adrenaline production
- **Unforgiveness** also increases stress levels

# Differences in Forgiveness

(Maio, Thomas, Finchman, & Carnelly, 2008)

- Researched how family relationships affect forgiveness
- The disposition to forgive and the perception of forgiveness is related to the strength of the relationship

Example: Parents (both humans & animals) tend to forgive their children more easily than they forgive each other



# Differences in Forgiveness

(Maio, Thomas, Finchman, & Carnelly, 2008)

## Children and Parents

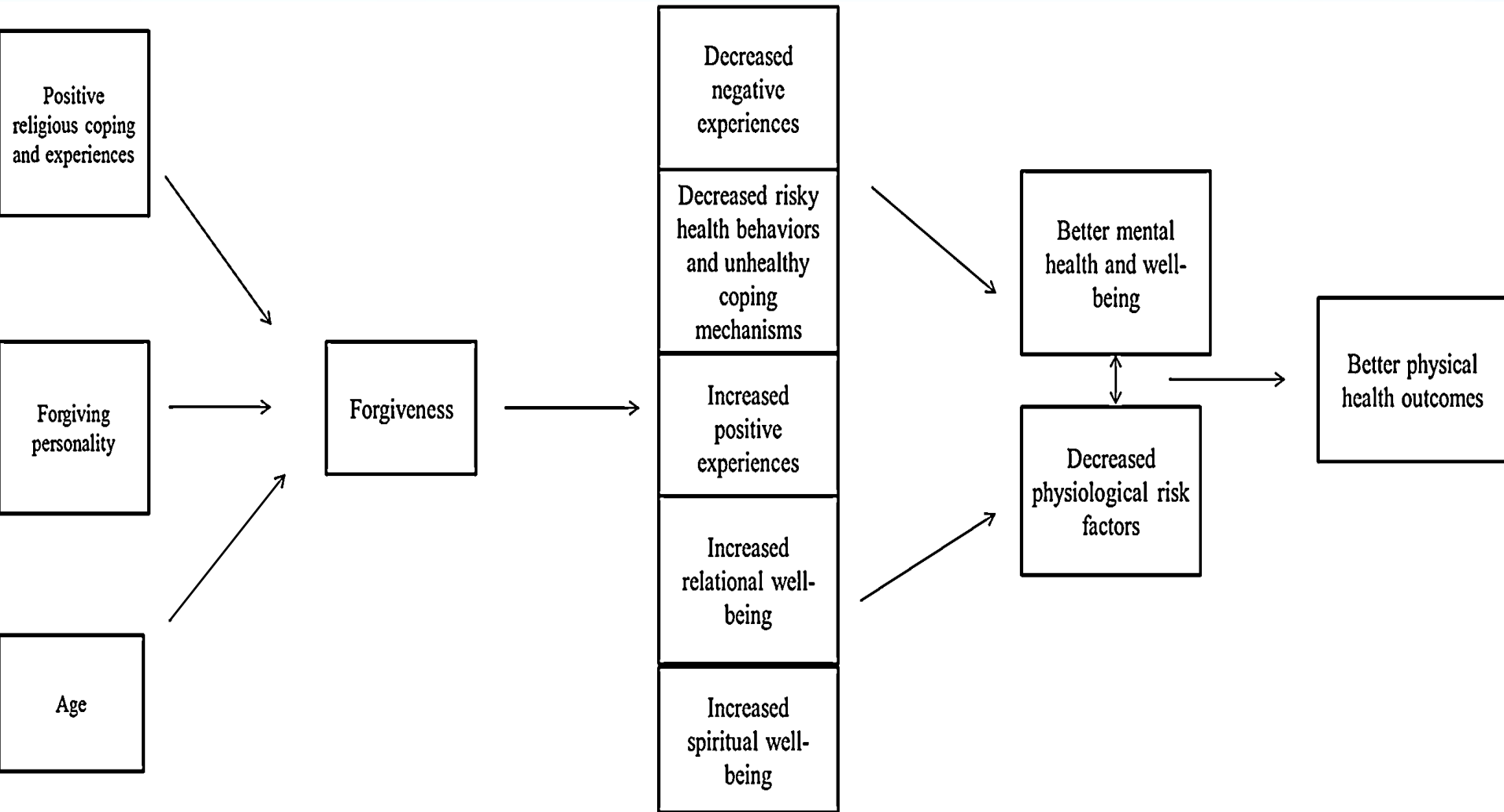
Differences in father-child relationships vs mother-child relationships

- Children forgave their mothers significantly more than they forgive their fathers
- Children were more likely to forgive their fathers if they had received apologies from their fathers in the past
- Children were willing to forgive their mothers whether or not their mothers apologized

# Differences in Forgiveness (Perceptions)

- **Perception of Forgiveness:**
- Children did not perceive their father's forgiveness--- even when fathers reported that they forgave
- Fathers were less likely to perceive forgiveness from their children (who reported forgiving them).
- Children more likely to perceive mother's forgiveness even if mothers did not report forgiveness

# Positive Effects of Forgiveness on Stress (Mental Health)



# Summary on Forgiveness

- **First**, forgiveness of family members differs as a function of the relationship involved.
- **Second**, forgiveness impacts and is impacted by the quality of the relationship
- **Third**, the quality of family relationships is associated with health outcomes
- **Fourth**, forgiveness among family members is related to psychological health, especially depressive symptoms & stress

# Implications for Family Life Professionals

- How does **Stress, Social Support** and **Forgiveness** relate to building Healthy Families on Strong Foundations?

# Implications for Family Life

## Professionals-2

- All families are vulnerable to the harmful effects of stress.....SO?
- Acute stress events may be just as detrimental to family's health as Chronic major stress.....SO?
- The reality of Social Support is just as important as the perception of Social Support.....SO?
- The disposition to forgive is based on the strengths of the relationship—fathers & children often struggle.....SO?

# Forgiveness is the Answer!

“We are not forgiven *because* we forgive, but *as* we forgive. The ground of all forgiveness is found in the unmerited love of God, but by our attitude toward others we show whether we have made that love our own”.

*(The Faith I Live By, p.131)*

**Forgiveness is the answer....Let's help families let go and find Peace!**