

Relationship Rehab Show

FREE DOWNLOAD Show #3

FREE GIFTS to Improve Your Relationships: Encouragement

This excerpt is taken from "How to Stay Married & Love It EVEN MORE!" by Nancy Landrum, with Jim Landrum

Chapter 5 A World-Wide Famine



**“. . . abundance and lack are parallel realities;
every day I make the choice of which
one to inhabit.”**

Sarah Ban Breathnach

ENCOURAGEMENT

The last nourishing gift I'm going to discuss is encouragement. As he was growing up, Jim's mother repeatedly told him that he could do anything he wanted to do in life. He so thoroughly believed her that, even though he was socially awkward and insecure, it never occurred to him that he couldn't do whatever he chose as a profession. He consistently got top grades. From the age of eight he mowed lawns and by 14 years old was working the equivalent of three paper routes. As soon as he was old enough, he worked in a grocery store. He saved most of the money from all of these jobs for college. In spite of marrying after his first year of college, he supported his wife and first daughter while finishing college and graduate school. His beautiful baritone voice and youth choirs have been heard in hundreds of churches throughout the Southwest. At one time, in one church, he had more than 600 persons from toddlers to seniors involved in choirs. He's

sold thousands of gospel music albums. He's sung the national anthem for the Los Angeles Lakers and Dodgers and dozens of Anaheim Angels ball games. He's done exactly what he wanted with his life, because his mother was willing to give him the encouragement he needed in order to thrive.

Florence Littauer, a highly respected speaker and author of numerous books, has delivered her "Silver Boxes" speech¹ to hundreds of audiences. In it, she likens giving precious words of encouragement to handing out little silver boxes with ribbons on them.

In that speech she tells about her father who ran a struggling corner grocery store during the years Florence and her brothers were growing up. Florence excelled in English and Composition, earning a scholarship to college. One day when she came home for the weekend, her father took a small brown box out of hiding behind the piano. He opened it, showing her numerous articles he had written that had been published by community and denominational church papers. She had no idea he could write! She asked why he hadn't pursued writing as a profession. He shrugged his shoulders as he explained that her mother was afraid they would be embarrassed by rejection since he was "uneducated." Even though he had nurtured a broad and varied interest in literature and poetry in his children and had many letters to the editor published, he believed his wife. A few days later, he unexpectedly died, never having known the pleasure of doing what he loved for a living. His dream was never realized, in part because he was starved to death from lack of encouragement.

I've wanted to write a book since I learned to read. It was a secret desire, not one I dared to share with anyone. While a junior in high school, my English teacher gave us the assignment of reading a classic from the list he provided. We were to write and orally present a book report. I loved my choice and enjoyed writing about it. I was so timid I rarely spoke up in class, but for some reason he called on me to deliver the first book report. When I finished, my teacher immediately jumped up and said, "Now, *that* was a professional-quality book review!" Those eight words fanned the flame of my dream, and helped to keep it alive until I had time to do all the living I needed to do before having something to write *about*!

Before we were even married, Jim began to tell me I had a book in me. As our marriage stabilized and our love deepened, Jim continued to give me occasional words of encouragement to pursue my dream. A few years ago he read about a little girl, like me, who dreamed of seeing her book featured in her hometown library. More than 30 years later, she visited the library where her dream had been born, to see her book promoted on the display by the checkout desk. He cut out the article, attached a note of encouragement, and left it on the stairs where he knew I'd find it. At that time, writing a book was the furthest thing from my mind, but when I read his words of belief in me, I burst into tears. Underneath the clutter of my life at that time, Jim's encouragement fed my dream.

I recently mailed book proposals along with a few sample chapters to six agents in New York. I came home and, again, burst into tears. What if they don't like it? What if they tear it apart? Jim told me, again, that this book is good and, if they have any sense,

¹ Her inspiring presentation is available as a book, cassette, or video from CLASServices, Inc. Phone #505-899-4283 or www.classervices.com.

these agents will fight over the chance to represent me to a publisher! Jim printed "How to Stay Married & Love It! by Nancy Landrum" on a sheet of paper. I wrapped it around a book from our shelf. He drove me to a new bookstore in our neighborhood and was glad to look foolish with me as he took a picture of me holding "my book" up in front of the store. If you're reading this, it's because it has, indeed, been published. Without Jim's encouragement, I seriously doubt that this book would ever have found its way into your hands.

A few weeks after publication, we hosted a "meet the author" session in that same book store!

If, by any chance, you are saying to yourself, "*I'm* the one who is starving for appreciation and encouragement. Why doesn't George (or Mary) give them to *me*?" Perhaps because he (or she) is in the death throws of starvation as well. Remember how Jim told me during our dating that he intended to love me, and love me, and love me, until my loving cup filled up and overflowed to love him back? Remember how, by *giving* respect, I *gained* self-respect?² Do you understand that by *giving* recognition for behavior you want, you *get* more of it back? It's a law. Somewhere I heard it called the Law of Reciprocity. The prophets of all the major religions taught some version of this Golden Rule, "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."

Call it the Golden Rule, or Karma, or The Rule of Reciprocity—you can't consistently be a *giver* without richly *receiving* in return. None of us needs the influence of high office or great wealth to wield a great deal of power. Each of us has *immense* power to alleviate the "famine" by feeding the "hungry" around us with our words of gratitude, recognition, appreciation and encouragement. Let it begin with your SoulMate!

Puzzle Piece #6: Feed your relationships with thoughtfulness.

"I will nourish my partner and others by generously giving words of gratitude, recognition, appreciation, and encouragement."

*"Kind words are like honey—enjoyable and healthful."
Proverbs 16:24*

*"Gentle words cause life and health;
gripping brings discouragement."
Proverbs 15:4*

² Corner Puzzle Piece #3 in How to Stay Married & Love It by Nancy Landrum.

Putting these rehab tools into practice!

The most effective words of encouragement, appreciation, recognition and gratitude are naming something very specific. For instance, "You're a wonderful husband" is not nearly as powerful as, "It was so thoughtful of you to clean up the kitchen last night" or, "I know you always do this chore, but I want you to know how grateful I am that you take care of the grocery shopping"
SPECIFIC...not GENERAL!

Recall someone who was encouraging to you. Who was it? And what were you experiencing at the time? _____

How did their encouragement influence you? _____

Who could you gift with your words of encouragement today? _____

Do you recall a story from the show that left an impression with you? Jot down the main points here to help you remember them: _____

Changing our emotional focus from the negative to the positive has a wonderfully healing effect on not only the receiver, but on you, the giver. AND if you are in need of encouragement, ASK FOR IT!