



**national  
healthy marriage  
resource center**

## **July 2009 Webinar Transcript**

### **Delivering Relationship Education to Singles: Programming and Marketing Issues**

Moderator: Patrick Patterson  
July 31, 2009

12:30 pm CT

**Operator:** Welcome to the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center conference call. During the presentation all participants will be in a listen only mode.

As a reminder, this conference call is being recorded, July 31, 2009. I would now like to turn the conference call over to Patrick Patterson. Please go ahead, sir.

**Patrick Patterson:** Thank you, (Brian). Good afternoon and welcome to the July National Healthy Marriage Resource Center webinar entitled Delivering Relationship Education to Singles: Programming and Marketing Issues.

I want to again welcome you guys back for another month and powerful hour of impactful information based on the topic that you guys have outlined for us. Many times we've talked about working with couples specifically.

There are a number of programs that are working with youth or young adults who are not married, maybe dating or engaged.

And so one of the focuses of this webinar is to focus on that specific target population, so we're very excited to have two presenters that can share practical information about working with couples but also individuals in that respect.

My name is Patrick Patterson. I'm the Program Manager for the National Healthy Marriage Resource Center and delighted to be your facilitator for today's webinar.

Our presenters for today are Dr. John Van Epp, developer of the PICK, Premarital Interpersonal Choices and Knowledge, a partner curriculum and the author of How to Avoid Falling in Love with a Jerk.

Our second presenter is Mr. Charles Jackson, Public Relations Coordinator for the Alabama Community Healthy Marriage Initiative at Auburn University.

Both have been in the field for a number of years and have great information to share with us today about working with individuals and these programs.

A few housekeeping notes for those of you that are taking notes before we get started.

This webinar is being recorded, so shortly thereafter, seven to nine days we'll be posting our webinar materials, the presentation as well as the frequently asked questions document on the Web site.

Submitting questions, we're delighted to have you guys join us via the webinar technology. Throughout the webinar as you hear the presentations, you will be able to submit questions using the technology.

So for a brief 101 on how you submit questions, I'll turn it over to Stephanie Wofford. Stephanie.

**Stephanie Wofford:** I'd like to direct your attention to the demonstration slide that you should be seeing on your screen. You will find the question and answer pane, which is designated by the letters Q&A located at the top of your screen.

You can either click on that portion of the menu bar to open the pane or you can open it and then drag the pane off the menu bar to display it as a standalone box.

To ask a question this afternoon, we request that you type your question into this inbox here. I'll highlight for you. And then you click the Ask button.

You will automatically receive a reply from us that says thank you for your question. It has been forwarded to the facilitator.

This automatic reply allows us to free up your question and answer pane, which will enable you to ask another question should you so choose. And then Patrick will facilitate questions and answers online. So thank you, Patrick.

**Patrick Patterson:** Thank you, Stephanie. Please look for the submitted questions. We enjoy the questions but I think you have a number of those based on today's presentations that we have planned for you guys.

Our objectives for today's webinar are twofold. The first objective is to divide webinar attendees with effective strategy for tailoring their program content to meet the relationship education needs of young adults.

Again, many of our webinars, much of what we might here at trainings and conferences focus on the actual couple. Today we're going to focus specifically on working with the individual in these programs, particularly the education needs of young adults.

The second objective provides practical strategies for how marriage and relationship education programs can effectively market to singles.

A number of programs again are designed, they do outreach, their recruitment strategies are for the couple. Today we'll focus on how you actually can market the program to singles.

So we'll begin. I'll first introduce our first presenter, Dr. John Van Epp. Dr. Van Epp is a developer of the PICK, Premarital Interpersonal and Choices and Knowledge, a partner curriculum program.

We'll discuss the themes and messages he believes are important for young adults to hear about relationships in preparation for marriage.

Dr. Van Epp has conducted numerous seminars and workshops over the past 20 years on topics related to marriage, family, recovery, singlehood, emotional makeup, relationships and divorce.

PICK is being taught in seven countries and 45 states by hundreds of churches, singles organizations, educational settings and agencies. His book, *How to Avoid Falling in Love with a Jerk*, is published by McGraw-Hill.

Dr. Van Epp holds two MAs in pastoral counseling and psychology and in church history from Ashland Theological Seminary and a PhD in counseling and psychology from the University of Akron. For that, we'll turn it over to Dr. Van Epp.

**John Van Epp:** I think just as a precursor I would say, you know, why we want to present relationship education to singles. I think the starting point would be that when a single person enters into a relationship and starts to become a couple, they don't come in with a blank slate.

They already have what I call the template in their mind. They have certain expectations of what this relationship is going to be like, they have a certain development of their own skills and practices and how they're going to be in a relationship.

They have certain filters that they or lenses you might say that they look through at the other person. And all of these different templates end up becoming acted out in the relationship.

And a lot of times then start to get challenged and create either difficulties or problems because the templates are leading them in an unhealthy direction.

So the key is the upstream idea that rather than just trying to jump into the troubled waters where couples are struggling or even the calm waters of trying to teach couples.

A big part of what the emphasis on singles is, really singles of all ages, is to say let's go upstream and teach people how to swim before they even get into the water, while they're on the dry land of not even being in the stream of relationships.

I've had a course now for 13 years that we've finally called how to avoid falling for a jerk or a jerkette. And a lot of what I'm going to be presenting is developed in much more detail in that particular course.

There are a number of different versions and I'll tell you why we have different versions. We have a team version; we have a college version that's even taught in college campuses, in college coursework. We have an adult version for singles that are not only adults but also singles again.

And the reason why is because from the earliest ages all the way to those that are 40, 50, 60 years old, back

in the stream of trying to choose a partner, in all of these cases there are these templates.

And these templates have led them to make decisions about what they're doing in the relationship, how they're building the relationship, what they're looking for in a partner and just who they are as a partner in the relationship.

So I just wanted to give four major constructs you might say. These are the major points of this curriculum. There are four major concepts that have to be presented in this webinar that really become the backbone of what I've tried to develop in that curriculum.

And the first one is - excuse me for a minute, I'm trying to make it move to the second slide and it's not going, so.

**Patrick Patterson:** We can advance it for you.

**John Van Epp:** Thank you. The first one has to do with character development. And it's very vital that we know how to be first of all, a healthy partner. So I would say looking in the mirror is the first step of any relationship.

And we need to teach, when we teach singles what it looks like to be a healthy partner, not just what relationships look like, what skills even look like and should be but we've got to start with who the person is.

Unhealthy partners are much more likely to choose unhealthy people to be in a relationship with and healthy relationships as well also develop unhealthy patterns that infect people and pull them down.

We can change all of these things, life is not stagnant. You know, we're - I'd say we're progressing, regressing or digressing through life. We're either going forward, backward or we're getting sidetracked.

We all have to deal with whatever particular things might interrupt our relationship, whether we're a young person like a teen coming out of a family and stepping into the early times of young adulthood, whether we are a 20, 30 something or whether have been in lots of relationships and here we are facing a new relationship in our middle life.

We've got to step back and look at hey what's going in me and what do I need to do to change and grow. There's another kind of embedded concept about the fact that start with who you are rather than looking at who you are getting in a relationship with.

And that's the concept that really healthy dating relationships provide structures for developing maturity and character. In other words, it starts with looking at me. I know people that have been in a tough relationship and they've had a lot of difficulties.

They needed sometimes to take a break and not have one relationship overlap with the next and they've got to stop and work on them self for a little bit.

But the reality is, you can do all that work on yourself and really get your act together, which is a good thing. But then when you step into a relationship, the relationship itself begins to bring to the surface different issues, different concerns that you have to address.

And if you do a relationship in a healthy way, I have found and I think that we need to teach this, that healthy relationships are actual structures to help us grow in life and grow as people, so that we don't ever really stay the same.

We're always, you know, moving. And the relationship structure when done right actually becomes a good facilitator for growth.

I don't know if I have the control of the slides, so we'll move to the next slide. The second concept that I think is vital to be teaching is the concept of partner selection. It is really vital to know how to choose healthy partners.

And we've got to teach people how to be choosy, not only how to deal with their own issues and work on themselves but we have to teach them how to build a healthy relationship with another person that they've selected and know what to look for and how to figure this out.

Some people, you know, if we're quite honest with ourselves, are just really difficult to be within a relationship. And this, you know, is very true for men as well as women. It is not a gender issue. It is really just a people issue, that some people are just tough.

And if you start thinking, I know we can't interact here in this webinar, but if we could talk together about have you ever had a relationship with somebody that you just tried your darndest to get along with, you bent over backwards for them and after a period of time you concluded, you know, this person is just difficult.

You know, they have issues that make them unable to be within a good relationship. If we started listing characteristics, you know, we would come up with things like somebody that is perpetually selfish or they've got major anger issues or they're very argumentative or jealous or controlling or maybe the opposite side, very, very dependent.

After we make a whole list and look at all these characteristics and say, you know, that's the reality out there in the world, we'd have to just kind of lower our heads and say, you know, haven't we at one time or another been selfish?

Or haven't we had some anger issues? Or haven't we been overly controlling? And if we flip to the next slide, in other words when it comes to choosing a partner, can we move to the next slide please? Thanks.

You asked the question what is the difference between acting like a jerk and being a jerk? Well I think there is a critical difference.

And there are some people that to just be kind of simple about it, there is a fairly singular characteristic that goes through all of these other specific issues that we put on the board or we make a list and say avoid this, avoid that.

You know, the bottom line is a person who has a persistent resistance to changing a significant problem area in their life or their relationships, that becomes a person that you might say earns the label of the title of being a jerk or jerkette. That becomes a difficult person.

Just like we said in Point number 1, if we're teaching singles, you need to be growth oriented, life is not stagnant, and life is fluid. We're either moving forward, backward or we're getting sidetracked.

But the reality is, is that in a relationship, relationships don't just stay stagnant through the course of time. There are all kinds of things that keep changing over the terrain of life.

And if you're in a relationship with another person who has a rigid, persistent resistance to addressing some area that bothers you, that just becomes a thorn that many times start as a pebble in a shoe but becomes crippling to the relationship after you've walked miles together.

And so teaching people how to be good identifiers of a person that is able to be conscientious in changing and to know how to work that through is very, very critical. If we can go to the next slide.

In terms of the third area to teach, I think we need to teach relationship development.

And I'll come toward the end of this presentation and talk a little more in detail about the second one, what actually is the criteria to look for in terms of selecting a partner because I think research, which is really quite massive, there's literally hundreds and hundreds of research articles about different categories that would ultimately predict what would be success or predict risk in terms of long term relationships and marriage.

That bulk of research I think we can categorize and that's - I know what that's what I did for the How to Avoid Falling for a Jerk program is categorize that research into user friendly topics, areas to really explore and get to know.

And so we'll come back to that toward the end of the presentation and touch on some of those areas. The third construct though that we need to be teaching is the concept of relationship development that relationships don't run themselves.

We really have to be in charge of a relationship and love is not just some independent force that automatically

guides us not only in partner selection but just develops on its own.

Many times you'll ask people of all ages, you know, how do you know, how will you know when to go further in a relationship, maybe the further would be to get more serious or engaged or maybe it has to do with some sexual line that you're going to cross or maybe it'd even have to do with marriage.

Many times when you ask that kind of question, the answer you will hear is some kind of mystical intuitiveness that I'll just know, you know, I'll know when I know. I'll know when it's right.

And the reality of what many people have found is that that is not true, that relationships can develop in a highly accelerated way and ultimately backfire and create all kinds of problems. We need to teach singles that they are in charge of the relationship.

We ask this question why is love blind? Well, many times it's either because of a deficiency of what I call the head knowledge. You'll hear people say, if only I knew then what I know now, I wouldn't have made all those mistakes in the relationship.

But other people will say something different, which I would say is they lack a deficiency of or they have a deficiency of heart knowledge. You might say they have in many ways too much heart.

They saw the problems but they were just too invested, they were too in love, they were too caught up with the person. And as a result, this excess of heart knowledge has led them to minimize and overlook things.

I think that the solution, if we go to the next slide, the solution is really to teach singles or to empower them on how to have the head and the heart work together. Can we go to the next slide please? And then we can go to the one after that.

The real plan for having the head and the heart work together is to try to provide a road map that says here's the head knowledge, these are the things that pertain to partner selection. These are the areas that you need to get to know about somebody. You need to engage your thinking processes.

It's interesting to me, I've come from a, you know, my doctorate's in psychology, so I come from a therapy background where a big chunk of what you do is to sit down, whether it's an individual or whether it's a couple or whether it's a family.

The starting point is always assessment, what actually is going on here, make an assessment. You don't learn in your educational program when you're preparing for this profession. You don't learn that assessment is made just by following your intuition.

You're given guidelines or study research of what areas of a person's individual makeup or their relationship



experience would lead them to this result or that result. And so you put together the picture and you make an assessment of the person by looking at key areas.

When we teach people to do this in a profession that ultimately is trying to help someone but you're not, you know, making a decision to move in and live with that person for the next 50 years of your life.

And in this area of choosing a partner, it seems just somewhat crazy that we have so much education for professions where assessment are made but we have little to no education in terms of partner assessments when it comes to dating.

And almost as if that's something that, you know, gosh it's going to interfere with love because I'm going to lose my heart. But really the heart and the head, the mind, are part of the same overall organism.

You know, they're made to work together. We're not supposed to be discontinuous in a way where one stops and the other begins or incongruent where one is going one direction and the other is going another.

But we're made to work in harmony so that if we can teach a practical plan for how to keep your mind engaged while your heart is feeling chemistry and in love and attracted and all the things that the heart tends to generate.

If we can keep them working together and teach singles that plan, I think that really will empower singles to make better choices in their relationships and to also in this area that we're talking about, to build a healthy relationship.

If we can go to the next slide, you know, the question of what is love is just overwhelming to be honest. I mean you could - where do we go? Do we go to the literature that, you know, for not only hundreds but for thousands of years, we have literature written about love.

Or do we go to the academic world where love is attempted to be defined. Or do we go even just grammar and word studies for different languages have many different words that are translated into at least English into the word love.

So do we look at all of those? You know, love is very complex experience of life and yet it is so powerful and it's at the core of what we're talking about when we talk to singles. We have to have a way to help singles know what love is and we have to have some kind of a universal approach.

If we go to the next slide, I know that in my course, what I tried to do was to create a model and if you look into the PICK course you'll see that this model, the relationship attachment model attempts to portray the bonds of love.

Part of what makes love or closeness or a relationship complex is that there is not just one strand of what connects you with another person. The feeling of closeness and a bond with another person actually comes from more than one contributing strand in the relationship.

You might say that there are key fibers that connect me with another person when I'm developing that relationship. How well we know each other, how we go about, you know, meeting each other's needs, these are some of the strands that are there.

And I think it is important to teach whether you call it sequencing or whether you call it the dynamics of your relationship, to teach the logic of how your trust relates with your commitment.

You know, should you - how invested should you be? We have to find language to translate the abstract into very concrete ways.

So that's a main reason, at least from my standpoint that I really felt that a visual model becomes so helpful for singles because it's very hard to practice something that you can't even visualize.

But if you can give them visualization for what love is and how a relationship is formed and what are the dynamic links that go into that relationship.

Then if you do that, you really empower them to exercise some intentionality and control over the pacing of their relationship. If we go to the next slide, I really think that many times the partner selection is overridden by the pace of the relationship development.

In other words, one of the most common ways people are set up to get involved with a jerk or a jerkette is by having such an accelerated pace of these particular bonds of the relationship, that they go way beyond the degree that they really know the person.

In other words, they've known a person only a short amount of time but they feel completely enraptured with them. They do what I call filling in all the gaps in their mind and so their understanding of the person, their image of the person is much, much more developed.

And then they start doing things in the relationship, whether it's how much time they invest or whether it's where they go or whether it's the rate of their sexual involvement, they accelerate all of these things in just a very short amount of time, not nearly enough time to truly know the person, they have developed a very strong and intense relationship.

So that the development of the relationship as I said overrides the true selection of the partner and the discernment of the mind, the heart in those cases override the thinking and the judgment of the head.

I'll give you a quick example, if you go to, you know, we're going to kind of go through these slides quickly. So in the next slide, I don't know if you recognize this person, this is just a little bit of tabloid history, okay.

Her name is Shar Jackson and she was a television actress or is a television actress. And she got involved a number of years ago with this fellow in the next slide, which is, if you don't recognize him, I'll tell you, this is Kevin Federline.

And if you go to the next slide, Shar and Kevin got together and go to the next slide please, and they had a baby. And a couple years later when the baby was about two, if you go to the next slide, Shar had a second baby.

And just about the time that this second baby was about to be born, somewhere right around a fourth, I think it was about the fourth year of their relationship, she was nine months pregnant and she caught wind that Kevin was cheating on her.

And he was a backup dancer for this person in the next slide, if you go to the next one. And he kind of like leaves Shar quickly. If you go to the next slide please. He leaves Shar quickly and hooks up very fast with Britney Spears.

And so all of a sudden, the tabloids are all about this new relationship that's going on, Britney and Kevin. And if you go to the next slide, Shar and Kevin now are history. And if you go to the next slide, and the next thing you know, Kevin and Britney are married. It's been nine months.

If we were to chart out the relationship, you would see that certain aspects of this relationship development like I've mentioned, were way more developed than others. I'll give you a quick example.

Britney didn't know him real well but she very early on began to talk about marriage and they started talking about their marriage plans. I think they were married nine months into this relationship.

And her parents wanted her to get a prenuptial agreement and she was unwilling. And so there was this big feud that went on in the tabloids about whether she'd get a prenu.

So even though the relationship was new, even though he cheated on his previous partner, who was nine months pregnant with their second child, even though there were all these warning signals, her trust level, which is very, very bonding, that's one of the intense bonding links.

But it's very different than how well you know somebody but here's - her trust was way, way up there for somebody that there were clear red flags that she was overlooking.

And as a result, her intense involvement with him overrode judgment that everybody else was looking at,

shaking their heads saying what are you doing? What's going on here?

And I'm not trying to say that this relationship was one sided. But I am saying that in the early stages of it, you can see where it developed in a very imbalanced way. Next thing you know, they have a child, a couple years later, and they have a second child.

And around the fourth, fifth year of their marriage, right about the time that the second child was born, Britney much like, you know, years ago, Kevin's ex, Shar, Britney catches wind, if you go to the next slide, Britney catches wind that he was cheating and the tabloids come out with this she never really loved Kevin.

And I would say, you know, in some ways there may be some truth to that. And I say, well why do we use this example? Well, I use this example, first of all because everybody knows what happened.

At least, if they didn't know about this storyline of Kevin and Shar and all of that, you definitely know what happened to Britney when her marriage broke up.

She shaved her head, she ended up going to rehab, she endangered her children, she actually gave up custody of her children at one point. She really had a pretty severe breakdown all the way around.

And when you look at all of that, you would say listen, all of the money in the world and all of the fame and success does not protect you or your children from relationship catastrophes. If you go to the next slide, the really sad part of it all is that here we have, go to the next slide please.

Here you have all these children and, you know, these adults as well that are just broken by making poor choices in the development of a relationship, not using the relationship to be a structure to promote character but just kind of like letting the relationship develop with all of the acceleration and all the intensity without any intentionality, without any sense of pacing, and not using good judgment, you know, not using partner selection which helps to raise the bar of trustworthiness and character development.

And so here are people that have all kinds of wonderful worldly goods and could probably provide the best of living conditions and relationship qualities and yet are having devastation and brokenness.

And if that happens to those that have so much, it is even harder and even worse for those that have less and don't have anything to kind of buffer things with.

And so, you know, what is being done there, you know, in the tabloids unfortunately if we look around is happening at all ages.

It's happening in our high schools, in our youth areas, it's happening in our campuses, it's happening in the extended period of the 20-something's, and it's happening in singles again that get out of a bad relationship

and next thing you know they struggle.

The last couple slides that I'll just show you if you move to the next slide is that the fourth concept is we've got to teach an understanding of what predicts higher rates of marital quality and longevity. In other words, what do you need to know?

If you go to the next slide, the first thing that we need to be teaching is to slow down in the early stages of a relationship. Don't be so accelerated. Be slower. Give it what I call the 90-day probation period. So, give it a little bit of time.

Time reveals patterns. The immediate things that you see are not necessarily what are going to be lasting. But if you give it a bit of time, the patterns start to be revealed.

And if you go to the next slide, the last areas I would just add would be you can look at how the person treats you obviously but I would say don't just get stuck there. Look at relationship scripts. How do they act in other relationships?

I have a whole section in my course on the different relationships to look at, how to get to know people's family roles, what they have taken from their family, what they are most likely to repeat in the family that they establish.

And we've got to teach the difference between chemistry and true character and not to confuse a person's character and conscience with their chemistry.

Go to the next slide. The head and the heart, as we said, are really meant to work together.

If we help singles to know, to get to know the right areas while keeping a good pace over their relationship, hanging it into what I call the safe zone, we will really empower them to keep their heads and hearts working together.

If you go to the final slide, I would just say, these four concepts that we've mentioned really become the core of what my course is all about and what I think any course or any program should be teaching are Number 1, we've got to teach people to look in the mirror, you know, to know that hey, first and foremost, I've got to get my act together.

Number 2; don't think just because you have your act together, you're automatically going to get into a relationship with the right person. You've got to be wise about how you choose a partner. You've got to know what criteria to look at.

You've got to, in many ways, make an assessment even more importantly than the professions that make

assessments and diagnose people and so forth. You've got to make an assessment of a person that's going to be not only good for you but a person that's going to treat you well and help you grow in life.

Number 3, you've got to know how to run your relationship. Teach relationship development.

And Number 4, as we just said, we've got to teach people how to be doing this, in many ways, on their own because individualism has just risen very, very high, more higher than it's ever been in history.

And so we have to empower individuals to run their relationships, choose partners, and do things without all of the guidance even of society in general and families. Those things kind of dropped off.

And if we empower singles and help them to look at their templates, change their templates, pre-relational, we will do some of the greatest preventative work for marriage success.

**Patrick Patterson:** Thank you, Dr. Van Epp. A number of questions coming in for you. We've got a number of questions. We're going to do it at the very end of Charles' presentation. We'll hold those questions for both of you guys. But again, we just want to say thank you for the presentation and we're looking forward to asking a number of questions to you.

**John Van Epp:** Thank you.

**Patrick Patterson:** Our next presenter is Mr. Charles Jackson. Charles is the public relations coordinator for the Alabama Community Health and Marriage Initiative at Auburn University.

He will discuss how best to market marriage and relationship education classes to post-high school aged singles.

At the Alabama Health and Marriage Initiative, Mr. Jackson is responsible for coordinating national and state-wide events, managing social and marketing campaigns, coalition building, and community awareness.

He is also involved in the design of billboards, public service announcements, and various media.

In addition, Mr. Jackson is the program coordinator for the Teen Advisory Board, educating teenagers and young adults about the importance of healthy teen dating and peer relationships.

Previously, he was the program coordinator for the Greater Montgomery Chapter of 100 Black Men of America, and this national organization of professional men dedicated to empowering their communities through mentoring, education, economic development, and health and wellness.

With this organization, he currently serves on their Board of Directors. With that, we'll turn over to Charles. The

time is yours.

**Charles Jackson:** Hi. Good afternoon, everyone. First up again by saying that today's presentation engaging teens and young adults in your community, healthy marriage initiative, we'll start out looking at the research that we are already familiar with and how that can be transferred over into creating your marketing initiative for your campaign.

One of the things I want to do in the very beginning here is, if you would with me, there was some video that I wanted to include in the presentation that we weren't able to get in the presentation.

So if I could get those of you that are on the call to actually open up a Web browser and actually go to the Web site that you actually see, uploading the video to the Web site that we'll make references throughout the presentation.

It's [www.realteenrelationships.org](http://www.realteenrelationships.org). You'll see it on the first slide there, and you can click on the real teen's media. And what you will see a link to the video that I'll make references to in the presentation.

**Patrick Patterson:** Could you repeat the Web site one more time?

**Charles Jackson:** It's [realteenrelationships.org](http://realteenrelationships.org). [Realteenrelationships.org](http://Realteenrelationships.org). And on the home page, you will see at the top where it says Real Teen Media, if you click there you'll see where it says Click Here For a Special Video for Today's Presentation. All right?

And now going back to our PowerPoint here, why do we feel that it's important for us to engage teens? One of the things that we realize that teenagers, they have perceptions, different perceptions about love and marriage that, you know, transcends from childhood into their teen years.

And we feel that, you know, with those perceptions or whatever, there are certain things that we would like to address.

First of all, one of the comments that you see here was from Craig, age 9. It says, "I don't want to get married even though I'm already not. You're never alone and your wife always around you at all times."

Also you hear from Alan who says, "You've got to find somebody that likes the same stuff. Like if you like sports, she should like sports also and keep the chips and dips coming." Alan is going to have a tough time in his teenage years and adult years. We see that already.

Moving to our next slide here, we actually see where - I'm sorry, here, I'm sorry. There we are. Moving to our next slide, you see where now we're looking at some of the thoughts that some of our teenagers actually have.

Mrs. (Nadine) is a mom at the age of 17, says, "A relationship is a job. The ultimate promotion is marriage. What if you go your entire youth years without any positive relationship smarts and get married without a prior relationship?"

That would be like running a company without education or prior experience, total disaster."

But most importantly, if you look farther down, you see where one of the young men says, "Love is certainly not inevitable. There are many who die alone, never finding that special someone."

"I also realize that marriage is not what it used to be with divorce rates as high as the Rocky Mountains, people obviously don't believe in growing old together anymore."

With sentiments like this and perceptions like this, we find that it's very important that we do understand the perceptions that we are actually working with and kind of made our target audience where they are in developing our marketing initiatives.

Moving on to the next slide - all right, here we are. Moving on to the next slide, we actually, you see where most of the perceptions that a lot of our kids are actually getting are, you know, are coming from home, things that they witness in their home environments and everything which, in many cases, are not always the healthiest.

We know that couple functioning has a direct impact on, you know, parent wellbeing, parenting practices, co-parenting quality, and father involvement, which all of those have a direct implication on, you know, the adolescent outcomes and teen outcomes which transcend into their dating environments which transcends into, you know, the teens that we are actually working with and also young adulthood.

Going to the next slide, why do we feel like it's important to work with these teens? You know, for one that's participants that start the pipeline up, the high divorce rates, and things of that nature.

But today what we really want to focus on more than anything is how we feel it's important to actually engage your teens as practitioners, as a group of individuals that can actually help you in developing your marketing campaigns and things of that nature.

What we've done here and found success is engaging a group of teenagers to actually help us market our initiative, conceptualize ideas for our initiative.

And then ideas that we create for ourselves to be able to advise us as far as do we feel - if they feel that that would transcend well into, you know, their teen audience and their peers and everything.

We realize very quickly while sitting around the table trying to create a marketing campaign for teens that we



were very distanced from, you know, what is engaging to them and what is impactful for them.

One of the things that we're doing now is actually using them as facilitators. We train members of our teen advisory board to be able to be peer facilitators and this is very important with our marketing campaign in which we are going to talk about on the next slide here.

We realize with peer-to-peer learning, we recognize that peers are more open to actually receiving information from, you know, their fellow peers than from an outsider, someone that's not a part of their group.

So what we've realized also is that however this is true, also peer-to-peer learning has, you know, key benefits for, you know the peer leaders as well. Most of that is self esteem and also self efficacy.

One of the things that we quickly wanted to do in setting up our marketing initiative was to tailor a message that wasn't our voice going to the teens but was the voice of teens speaking directly to teens, because we realize that it would be more engaging and more powerful to what we wanted to do.

One of the things that we realize is with emotions, you know, it enhances our ability to, you know, form memories that are valid about certain events and things of that nature.

We realize that this is even especially true with adolescents and teens also because, you know, they're not - their brains are still under development. Their frontal cortex, their thinking brain, is still under development up until the age of approximately 25.

So it's even more important to, with your marketing initiative and your programs, to be able to engage teens and connect with their emotions of these young people to be able to create an experience in your marketing campaigns, using such elements like music, video, and other visually stimulating graphics and things of that nature that will actually create a memory through the emotions in making that direct connection with our young population.

Translated into marketing, what does that mean? For teens, we find that it may be a number of you all that were actually at the round table discussion at Chicago where a gentleman from the TRU Advertising Agency actually mentioned that our teen population is very emotional when it comes to family connections and things of that nature.

One thing that we realize is with teens that, with that deep emotional connection that they have, we have to start pulling on their heartstrings a little bit.

You know, teens are deeply impacted by ads that, you know, draw them into a story that actually makes them feel good about themselves or feel good about the situation.

One thing we can also focus on with our ads is actually creating an advertising campaign that actually shows that our program will bring them and their friends closer together as well. If you will at this time go to your Web browser, those of you all that are on the Internet with me right now.

And under the media page there is a great example of a McDonald's ad that actually did a great job of actually showing how to actually connect with the teen population by, you know, engaging them with music that they're familiar with and also with showing that they can indeed have fun with their family as well also.

So if you click that if you want, you can actually see that play in your browser there for a second. And while you're watching that, I'll go ahead and move onto the next slide here.

One of the things that you see actually in this advertisement campaign right now that you are seeing that McDonald's did, they actually show, you know, the family actually enjoying themselves having a good time actually at the restaurant together, using music and everything to really engage their audience.

This is an advertisement campaign that actually went over very well with the teenage population and also the age group that we're talking about, post-high school teenage group also.

And that information that you see on the presentation was found from a media awareness network which I have a link to a presentation that actually shows a lot of research that actually has been done by this organization in the areas of teen marketing.

Also, one thing you want to do is, that I mentioned earlier, is create a marketing or program ambassador. You know, it's essential to create a campaign that, you know, will speak directly to your teen and target audience.

Also something that we realize is very important is to, you know, go with the bandwagon approach. For the second time, I'm not really going to have you go to the next video but I'll speak about it very briefly.

Everyone is familiar with the T-Mobile Fave 5 commercials and advertising campaign with Charles Barkley and Dwayne Wade and the other basketball stars that they had involved with that. One thing that teens like to feel is feel as if they're part of an in-crowd.

They like to feel connected. You know, you have to create a message for your teens to convince them that if they're not involved in your programs, if they're not involved in your classes and things of that nature, which they're being left out.

They have to feel like there is some value to coming and that if they're not there, they'll really miss something.

So it has to be exciting and engaging. With the T-Mobile Fave 5 commercial, basically Charles Barkley was continually trying to get Dwayne Wade to actually give him, you know, put him in his Fave 5 which is his calling

circle and everything.

Then at the end of the commercial it basically says, who do you have in your Fave 5? Do you have Fave 5? Leaving them feeling very left out if - those who didn't have the Fave 5.

Also one thing that we can do is not really think that kids can really absorb or teens can really absorb and digest numbers and facts. Sometimes we may water down our message a little bit too often thinking that they can't digest it.

I feel like we shouldn't overburden them with the numbers and the facts, but we should definitely give them something to think about in a way in which is still engaging and a way in which it actually promotes critical thinking, more like shock therapy I would say.

And it also enhances your credibility when you actually have numbers and facts. Also one thing you want to do is repetition as always.

Some of the things that we've been able to do with our report and created this group to market and promote for us is they've been able to go out to different conferences and assemblies and communities, events and also present it through panel discussions.

One thing that we do with them is when they first come on board each year they actually go through relationship education themselves so that we can get them to buy into our vision and our mission and everything.

And then once they do we actually put them on a forefront as ambassadors to actually go out and help promote our events, our initiative and things of that nature. They've had opportunity to present at various conferences.

Most recently they attended the African American Healthy Marriage Initiative Conference at UNC Chapel Hill. They had a panel discussion there and also performed a play that they also developed themselves as well. They're very involved and actually developing a Web site.

We have on video PSAs what you'll also see on our Web site if you have time later to go back and look at it that the scripts and everything was specifically written all by them and also performed by them which, you know, creates a great feel for other things and everything.

We also do various - they also have various billboards, t-shirts, radio ads and things of that nature.

On this slide here you can see a couple of pictures from one of the performances that they recently did. The name of the stage production that they created is called You've Got to Hear It.

Next we'll get into more specifically where you should be advertising. Basically the Internet, teens are definitely connected to the Internet. As you see in the presentation it says, "Teens are heavy consumers of technology. Over 90% of them are using the Internet."

That's a statistic that actually just came out from the State of Our Nation's Youth survey 2009 here. We definitely have a wireless generation as well.

More than I think four out of five teens carry wireless devices and, you know, text messaging is actually on a rise also which I'll discuss that a little more of that in a few seconds here as well.

Television, definitely, you know, television is still somewhat of a viable place for ad placement I will say especially in areas that lack broadband. But one thing that we want to keep in consideration that a lot of teens now can actually sit in front of their computers and watch a whole television show.

One thing where you're actually looking at doing television placement ads you have to think about the impact that TiVo and DVR has actually had a reduce in opportunities for advertising there because some of your digital recorders were not able to record commercials and others will also allow you to just fast forward through the advertisements.

That's something you want to keep in mind. Also with radio, you know, we have some radio ads and PSAs, but we're learning also from our Teen Advisory Board that, you know, we should focus on more Podcast or more Podcasting and things of that nature because kids are really not as in tune to sitting down, tuning into a radio stations these days.

They're more listening to CDs, digital music and podcasts and things of that nature. And also with your traditional print ads and everything, you know, place your print ads in places, your billboards and things of that nature, places where kids and teens are going to frequent, you know, rec centers, community centers, on campus, at local colleges, universities and everything, at the Student Union, things of that nature, you know, actually partner with the university in your area.

See if people offer a community-based class at the university and market it directly to your student population there. One of the things that we want to talk about pretty much for the rest of the presentation is social networking.

It's the big thing that everyone is actually doing now. As you see about 75% of teens are actively maintaining a social networking profile.

That is defined as teens are actually on the Web site every day checking to see what their peers are doing, actually seeing what's going on. They're being connected to the outside world.

One thing that we realize with our teens is talking is down. Even checking their emails is less frequent as has been because now they're really communicating heavily via text messaging or on their cell phones.

And as you see about 58% text message frequently. And that number is also increasing.

This actual slide presentation here, recently these figures actually came from a recent study. It's actually a marketing strategy campaign that actually MTV has done. They called this campaign Generation P Report which stands for Generation Producers.

In their own rights one thing we realize with teens is they're producers and reporters in their own rights. With certain cell phones and technology now they're going around taking video, taking images and posting and sharing almost immediately.

We should, this is a talent among this population of and target audience that we can indeed benefit from by engaging them and having them actually go out and do pretty much the same thing for our initiatives.

On the next slide what's very interesting to me is you'll see a lot of the social networking sites here listed throughout the, this particular slide.

But what are interesting are to the left of the slide you see where it says social and to the right it says media you'll see which is your social, it's more your social sites or whatever online community where people can socialize and network is and things of that nature.

But further to your right you see your sites that are really created for the purpose of posting media, pictures, and video and actually just sharing. One thing that I would like to highlight about this particular slide is the placement of where YouTube is on this slide.

YouTube is a very valuable asset when it comes to actually promoting your initiatives and things of that nature because it falls right in the middle of social and media.

YouTube has truly evolved from your, since your media placement site to allowing you now to fully engage an audience by posting your video, not only just posting your video, but having an online community where you can actually dialogue and discuss different videos that you've posted.

One of the things I will highlight going to the next slide about that as well is that one thing that YouTube allows you to do if you create PSAs and announcements and things of that nature when you place it on YouTube.

YouTube will allow you to actually send out an automatic feed to Facebook and Twitter and other social networking sites to say hey, this is a new video that we just posted. You know, check it out. You know, go to YouTube and actually view it.

If you will I will show this one particular video going back to our media's page here on the Web site there. You will have to go on back to the media page where it says Hide Video you have to hide the previous that we showed.

And Number 5 on our list I believe it says, "That's Not Cool." That's Not Cool is the agency that actually has began creating this campaign talking about digital dating abuse, texting, text messaging and things of that nature and how digital dating, digital abuse is actually on a rise and things of that nature.

If you click on Video and Begin to Play, and I'll talk about it briefly, but you have to click Show Video again. I'm sorry, but Video, Begin to Play. And basically what they have done with these videos is be able to engage teens in a way in which will be appealing to them.

But then if you were actually looking at this video on YouTube as it's actually posted it has a discussion forum where teens are actually involved in the conversation about the topic that this video is actually addressing.

One thing that I like about the way that this particular organization has set up is their video is they allow you to kind of choose your own path. It's not interactive here on our Web site because it's downloaded.

But if you actually go to YouTube to actually see this video you can kind of choose what direction you want the video to go in by selecting A, B or C and actually show the next video.

And like I said it pretty much sets up more of a drama and more of a learning experience and engaging experience as we were saying earlier about connecting with the emotions and everything of this particular population as far as being able to engage and create memorable experiences in your marketing campaign.

Going back to our slide presentation now I want to talk briefly about how we actually have used Facebook also. Facebook is very integrated now where you can actually set up discussion forums there as well.

Not only can you set up discussion forums, but also you can use Facebook for setting up community events sending out information about your community events. One thing that we've done also is we've integrated our Facebook, YouTube and also Twitter that I haven't mentioned yet.

And we use those sites to actually drive teens back to our Web site where we have more useful information that - well not more useful, but more resources and information all together on our Web site that we do not have in these places.

So that whenever we have a new blog posting or we have a new video or PSA that we're featuring on our Web site we can always send that information through these feeds and actually get people to our Web site.

I was recently asked a question of how can we tell the impact that, you know, Facebook, YouTube and Twitter

has. That's through Web site traffic. And it's been a way in which we've been able to somewhat monitor that.

You can, based off of our PSAs and video traffic and, or video releases and things that we're doing, we can send out a message on Twitter that says, you know, new video here, go visit our Web site.

And then if you're actually monitoring the traffic on your Web site you actually see the impact that and the increases of hits and visits to our Web site and everything through just sending out your messages on Twitter, YouTube or Facebook.

One thing we'll, I like to say also about those and talk, well first talking about texting. It came in a conversation where it happened yesterday with our project manager. She was saying that, you know, it's just come to her realization that her teen daughters no longer check, you know, voice mail.

And that's something that even myself I have to say I'm guilty of because I feel that once I see the missed call I'll call back, but that the person will also send me a text message. And I feel like a lot of our kids are doing the same thing now.

A lot of people are, a lot of the kids are calling; a lot of the teens that I call coordinating events and meetings and stuff. I get their voice mail that says sorry, your voice mail is full. That's something constantly that I'm dealing with.

And I can call and call and call and never get an answer. But as soon as I text I get a reply. Our kids are rally in tuned to texting right now.

One thing that I will say about using Facebook, Twitter and YouTube is they can all be integrated through your phone where some phones may not - they may not be able to get to see the full content of your Web site.

But if you send out micro blogs or micro snippets of information through Twitter or through YouTube or through Facebook, they can go automatically to their phones in which can actually drive them to your Web site because they may not be sitting in front of computers all day as we may assume that they are.

But once they get that information to their Web site it does encourage them to actually go and, to your Web site to see the new information or content that you actually uploaded to your Web site or to find out more about your events and activities and things of that nature.

Going to the next slide here - okay, well actually I can't get to the next slide. Here we are. All right. Just going to the next slide I just wanted to give some of the credits as far as where a lot of the information came from.

I first wanted to thank, you know, Dr. Francesca Adler-Baeder, not only because she's the boss, but because she was very helpful in pulling together a lot of the research on the front end of the presentation about, you

know, when it came to peer-to-peer education and inspirational learning and things of that nature.

Also a lot of the information on this slide you'll see came from, directly from YouTube, their Audience Reach Report, the Annual Audience Reach Report, also MTV, as I mentioned to you earlier their Generation P report.

Another Web site that I feel that will be useful for you visit [www.whatteenswant.com](http://www.whatteenswant.com). This Web site, this organization holds an annual conference where you have different people who are marketing to teens actually come and present.

Their conference was in June of this year. They have all of their presentations from this year's conference where you can download and get more information as well and also pull some information from That's Not Real also.

On my final slide here I just included contact information. If you have any further questions for us our contact information is there. And like I said I know we have questions and answers coming up at this time.

But if you have anything else that you want to get with us on a later basis you're free to do so. And I'll send it over to Patrick.

**Patrick Patterson:** Thank you, Charles, a wonderful presentation, great detail - there are a number of questions I have for both you and Dr. Van Epp. Before we do that we've got a couple of questions came in for the video that you referred to. So I did write down how I got to them.

The Web site for folks is [www.realteenrelationships.com](http://www.realteenrelationships.com). You go to the top of their Web site once you get on the home page. The top right you'll see one of the live links for Real Teen Media.

At the very bottom of that page is a live link that says Click Here for Special Video, which is where he's actually created a number of videos for today's webinar which we really appreciate.

And there you will be able to find the McDonalds video that Charles referred to earlier, the Faves 5 video and also the That's Not Cool video.

The Web site [realteenrelationships.com](http://realteenrelationships.com), click on that live link. There are four of them at the top. You'll see the one that says, "Real Teen Media." Click that. Once you get to that page at the bottom you'll see "Click Here for Special Video."

And then you'll see at the very bottom it looks like an iPod where you'll see a number of the different videos that have been uploaded for today's webinar.

But specifically if you refer to the McDonalds video, the Faves 5 video and That's Not Cool video. So Charles,



again we appreciate you doing that for today's webinar.

Well I'm going to go through the questions. Dr. Van Epp and Charles, we're ready. I'm going to go through the questions as many as I can. We've got a number that just started processing.

A couple of the questions, Dr. Van Epp and Charles, I'll ask both of you to respond to and then the ones that are specifically for each of you actually respond to individually. I'll start with Dr. Van Epp.

"How early should programs or parents begin introducing children to healthy relationships, skills?" And the question that's second part of that is, "How? How early should programs and parents begin introducing children to healthy relationship skills and how?"

**John Van Epp:** Well, you know, I'd start with parents. I think parents from day 1 are doing that. I know when both of my daughters were growing up just as a parent myself I was riding around with my daughter when she was four years old. And we were talking about healthy relationships.

And I can remember doing that from that age all the way through from relationships that they were in, from observing other people. And I think that goes to something that is implied by that question which would be are we educating parents to know what to talk to their kids about.

I know in our, you know, not to keep bringing up my program, but in my program we developed a parent guide, about a 28-page parent guide, and a seminar for parents to know how to talk to their kids because a lot of that education never was done for parents.

So parents are just kind of feeling their way and not really knowing what they can do. In terms of programs I think we need to bridge healthy friendships and what they look like.

And choosing a friend that has good qualities of trustworthiness and understanding what, you know, a healthy friend and a healthy friendship looks like we need to bridge that concept in kids' minds at an early age with healthy romantic relationships that ultimately in the long run all of the qualities of a good friendship are embedded in a healthy romantic relationship.

And then you have romance in other aspects as well. But helping them to see that they're not qualitatively different, but that there is a tremendous amount of overlap really puts our young people at early ages in a much better position.

So we can be teaching healthy friendships, choosing healthy partners, you know, all through elementary school.

I know that we have taught, you know, my course in at least the teen version in the middle school era from

sixth to eighth grade so that you begin to work at the expectations of what relationships are going to be and what to look at and as I mentioned earlier affecting those templates.

So I think that too soon is not really the concept that we should be going with here. We should be looking at how we do it at the earliest of ages.

**Patrick Patterson:** Thank you. Thank you. A question for Charles, "I know that Aberdeen University works for college students. You described several different ways that you have outreached to the teen program."

"The question is are those same marketing and outreach strategies, Facebook, Twitter, the YouTube, all those social networks and sites do they work with college-aged students as well?" And I'm going to translate that question to also mean folks of that age that are not in college, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24. Will they work with that group as well?

**Charles Jackson:** I would have to say it does with a number of our teen advisory reports students that we actually started out with. The group actually started as a college, or high school students.

We actually chose high school students from two of the local high schools. Since then we've had a number of them actually graduate and have actually started college in the local area and other places.

So we bounce a lot of our information still off of them. I personally feel that the use of Facebook, Twitter and really Facebook in general and also even MySpace still even though it's on the decline now it's still relevant because you have a lot of people really going to these social networking sites to stay in touch with friends from high school, things of that nature.

One of the things I realize right now, I'm getting ready to approach my ten-year high school reunion, a lot of my friends that it appears that actually didn't go to college and things of that nature are on Facebook trying to stay engaged and connected to people who have moved on and things of that nature.

The only thing I will say is maybe the access to computers and things of that nature may not be as available, but they are actually finding time to actually get onto those sites.

**Patrick Patterson:** So it is a great way to connect with that age group as well.

**Charles Jackson:** Correct.

**Patrick Patterson:** Okay. A question for Dr. Van Epp, "How much of an influence - you have a couple of media-type slides in your presentation - how much of an influence would you say the media has played in the way that individuals date nowadays and how?" is the question.

**John Van Epp:** Well that question almost has been answered by Charles through his entire presentation because we're talking media; we're talking the electronic world, the Internet world.

It is really the world, you know, it is, it's an abstract invisible world, but it becomes, you might say that the social arena more and more for the generation of teens and those in their 20s right now I would say.

My oldest daughter is 27. She is very, very adept at this whole world that we're talking about. So you know, that's almost the entire 20s all the way down to younger ages. That's the world they live in.

So reality shows, you know, a good five years ago started really becoming more and more in the forefront to the point where they, in many ways they dominate. And part of that was indicating what's going on in just all of the social networking.

And it's just one reality show after another when you go through Facebook or MySpace or any of these other places.

So I think that change in the whole experience, the whole social networking of, by youth, and it's ultimately be just our society probably at large as time goes on, but that change that trend has heightened the influence that media places.

So when you see media it becomes a fine line between reality and fantasy in many ways. That's why reality shows, you know, can have a lot of fantasy in them, but we want the media to be more and more reality.

And as a result I think it's become even more influential than when we watch it we just think that was just something made in Hollywood.

And so, yes, I think that there's a lot of doing whatever you see, you know. The role modeling is happening more and more in cyberspace than it is necessarily in the home.

**Patrick Patterson:** Okay. Thank you. A question for Charles, "How much with you working with teens and also college-age students how much do you engage the friends and families of some of the youth and singles that you're dealing with?"

**Charles Jackson:** Well one of the things that we're actually doing now would - our Teen Advisory Report is creating opportunities for friends and family to become involved where once a month now we're actually hosting what we call Relationships Smarts weekend where family and friends are actually being invited for a weekend of activities and also many lessons in relationship education really to give them a glimpse of what we're doing and also try to target them into our, it gets them interested in actually taking a full class and things of that nature.

I feel that it's very important to actually as much as you can to engage, you know, the entire family also their entire environment also with their peers and their friends also to be able to, you know, impact not only them, but also change their environment instead of working them and sending them back into adverse situations.

But like I said that's pretty much what we're doing, trying to just on our relationships smart's weekend to actually impact their environment that way.

They can bring their family, their friends and things of that nature to that weekend activity or whatever to find out more about relationship education, what we're doing, things of that nature.

Also we do community events. Right now we're playing some things centered around, you know, football season.

Football's a big thing here really in the south, really in Alabama. What we're planning right now is, you know, during game days we want to have a presence out while everyone is tailgating.

And there are some family activities and things going on on certain parts of the campus and everything having a presence where we're creating - we started this whole thing.

We have what we call kind of like live statues where we actually have them actually posing on the concourse and actually with statistics and things.

And they're kind of like a shock therapy kind of thing that actually engage them, you know, people visually that's walking by seeing, you know, somewhat like street performance sitting there. And that's an environment where, you know, families are there and things of that nature.

Patrick Patterson: Thanks, Charles. I've got a few more minutes. I'll try to get a few more of these questions

A question again for you, Charles, second question, "You shared that invoking emotions creates memories that are much more meaningful for youth. Can you share an example of what kind of emotions?"

"You shared that invoking emotions creates memories that are much more meaningful for youth. Can you share an example of what kind of emotions you're referring to?"

**Charles Jackson:** Yes. Well since with pretty much anyone, you know, a lot of times the things that you remember most are things that were very exciting moments of your life or even traumatic experiences in your life.

Basically one thing that we realize is that, you know, kids and these things actually have whether both parents are involved in their lives or not they really have a strong sense of family or a strong desire of wanting to know,

you know, their parent or their father if their father is not involved and things of that nature.

So they have a strong, they're strongly connected with their family. It's kind of like that thing where you hear people say that, you know, I can talk about my family, but you can't say anything about them.

Well with our teens, you know, one thing that even the McDonalds commercial did it actually kind of pulled in the whole nature of family. I feel like at the age that a lot of these teens and young adults are at they're still somewhat positive about getting married and being in positive relationships.

They have already had some negative experiences and may have some perceptions, but they're still at an impressionable age. And at this point they have that desire to want something that's positive and everything. And you can play off of that.

You can actually pull on those heart strings as I was mentioning earlier showing, having (to ask) and everything of that nature to actually show that, you know that you can do it.

I feel like one of the things that I hear a lot from our Teen Advisory Board and not just them, but some of the ones that moved onto college is that, you know, with the advertising campaigns that are out here they get a lot of the negative. They promote a lot of the negative.

These are the negative statistics. These are the teens that are doing badly. But they are looking for hope. They're looking for messages of hope that you know what, there's a lot bad, but there's opportunity for good also.

So they're looking for that desire of, or looking for that opportunity or someone showing them that there is an opportunity and can pull on those heart strings and say that, you know, you can do it. You can do well. That's one thing that we realize.

**Patrick Patterson:** Okay. All right. Thank you for that. A question for Dr. Van Epp, "Over the 20 years that you've been working with individuals in this field what would you say is different about the way that individuals enter) relationships now than in past generations?"

"Over the 20 plus years that you've been working with individuals in this field what would you say is different about the way individuals enter relationships now than in the past generations?"

**John Van Epp:** Well I think if I look maybe a little farther than just the 20 years I would say that if we look at the last three generations, you know, going from my father's generation to my generation to those that are now growing up and have kids, this third generation that, you know, there's been some major shifts.

And at the very end of my slide show I talked about individualism is (range), it's, that individualism was on the

rise and social guidance meaning that society had certain norms that you had to follow. There were norms of what you did when you dated.

And this would have been different for different cultures and ethnicities. But almost all cultures and almost all ethnics and cultural pockets, and not just Western society in America, throughout Europe, but even in other areas of the world there were these guidance systems that were tracks of society that not everybody had to follow exactly the same track.

But there were general kind of global tracks. There was also an understanding of what relationship looked like and what roles were fulfilled in the relationship.

If you, you know, were growing up in the '40s and you're Italian you were expected to date another Italian and to fulfill the role of an Italian, you know, woman or an Italian man.

Whatever your ethnicity and background was societies were more segmented. Tracks leading from adolescence all the way into adulthood into marriage were much more established socially. And families were much more involved.

All of those things have shifted toward being more complex. The world has kind of shrunk with what, you know, Charles is talking about so much in terms of the world of the Internet and cyber-social relationships.

And the influence of some social norms has tremendously lessened so that there are, you know, not these clear tracks anymore. It's kind of like anything goes.

So there's the sense of openness to being influenced and directed and led is much, much higher. And a sense of I know what I'm doing and I know where I'm going and, is much lower.

So this has led to lots of talk and tremendous amount of input about love and relationships in the world of singles, but very little clarity and understanding and confidence. So almost like the more we know the more confusing it's become in the world that we're in.

So I think a lot of what we're trying to do today is to give fairly universal truths in practical language that empower singles to feel like they know better what they're doing, what healthy looks like, what relationships should look like in a premarital world and what marriage can look like and how to make it successful.

But that has been a tremendous challenge with these changes and these social shifts that have occurred, particularly in Western society and I think its influence in other societies as well.

**Patrick Patterson:** Thank you. Thank you. Well that concludes our Q&A portion of today. What I want to do now is extend a heart-felt, warm thank you to both Dr. Van Epp and Mr. Charles Jackson for taking the time to

present today on our topic related to individuals and how they can be approached by programs working with them.

Both presentations both will be on the Web site shortly thereafter.

The Web site is [www.healthymarriageinfo.org](http://www.healthymarriageinfo.org). We'll post the presentation as well as a Frequently Asked Questions document along with the recording of today's webinar as well.

At this time what I'd like to do is present poll questions to get your feedback on today's webinar. You can email me directly to say how today's webinar went.

My email address is [patrick.patterson@publicstrategies.com](mailto:patrick.patterson@publicstrategies.com), [patrick.patterson@publicstrategies.com](mailto:patrick.patterson@publicstrategies.com). Or we'd like you to complete the survey questions that we're going to post on the slides for the next few minutes or so.

The first question, "I better understand the perspective of emerging adults toward long-term relationships and love. I better understand the perspective of emerging adults toward long-term relationships and love."

There are five options there. There are six options there actually for you to vote. Next question, "I have a better idea of how relationships education program concept to meet the needs of emerging adults.

I have a better idea of how relationship education program concept to meet the needs of emerging adults," - same set of options.

Next question, "I better understand which media vehicles best target the emerging adult population. I better understand which media vehicles best target the emerging adult population," - same set of options.

Next question, "I am better equipped to market messages about relationship education to appeal to emerging adults. I am better equipped to market messages about relationship education to appeal to emerging adults."

And our final question, "I found today's webinar to be informative and useful. I found today's webinar to be informative and useful."

A couple of quick reminders and a couple of points that I want to make before we close, the first is many of you if you are working with couples probably have seen the last CNN featuring the Black in America series.

Very proudly, we all are very proud that one of the segments was on marriage education. And one of the providers that many of us know, Nisa Muhammad, out of Washington D.C. with the Wedded Bliss Foundation.

She's found Black Marriage Day, but also conduct programs in the D.C. area. She will feature the wonderful, wonderful feedback in response to the way she was featured; the program was featured during the series. So I

just want to say thank you to her for her effort.

As a follow-up to that she was actually recently featured this past Wednesday night on a live chat on twoofus.org, T-W-O-O-F-U-S.org, a Web site designed for the same population that we focused on today on today's webinar, individuals, those that are single, engaged, dating, but also married couples as well.

Coming up, and this was widely attended, I would say there were more than 200 folks that tuned into this past Wednesday's live chat with Nisa.

Next month we have another feature speaker that many of you know, Dr. Rozario Slack. He will be the featured live chat speaker on twoofus.org on August the 26th at 8:00 pm.

So if you have not been to twoofus.org yet I would encourage you to do that now to make sure you log on to become a member of the community, but also pay special attention to the date August 26 at 8:00 pm.

We'll have Dr. Slack as a live chat person as well. With that again I want to say thank you to Dr. John Van Epp and Mr. Charles Jackson. And I wish you all a wonderful evening.

**Operator:** Ladies and gentlemen, that does conclude the conference call for today. We thank you for your participation and ask that you please disconnect your lines.

END