

Get a Marriage Mentor

Life is much easier when you have some help from those who are further up the trail. Their wisdom and insight will prove to be invaluable in your own journey together. Mentoring is becoming even more important as the majority of the population today has come from homes that experienced divorce. You may have never lived with both a mother and a father. How are you supposed to know what an intact family looks like? Who is going to model for you how to work through conflict if your own parents decided to abandon their marriage?

Mike McManus of *Marriage Savers* shared the results of mentoring in the church he attends. Seems of the couples who took a marriage prep course with a mentor couple, there is only a 2.5 percent failure rate over a course of almost 10 years (compared that to the 50 percent divorce rate average in the rest of society.)

Bill and I were so desperate for mentors when we got married, we would go to church on Sunday and sit behind a couple with grey hair who looked they were still in love. During the greeting time, Bill had an amazing gift for getting asked out to lunch where we could ask lots of questions! That is why in our newest book, *10 Best Decisions a Couple Can Make*, we have Mentor Moments, so you can go out to meal with another couple and have dinner and dialogue that will build into your marriage.

How do you find a mentor?

- Look for a couple who has the love that you'd like to have. Look around and see who holds hands, who acts kind to one another, who opens the door, who prays for one another or for other couples.
- Look for a couple who has done what you want to do: Some careers have unique marital pressure: physicians (especially OBGYNs!); politicians, ministry and clergy couples, CEO's and entrepreneurs, media or military marriages. Look for a couple that has not just survived in your particular fishbowl but thrived and found a life rhythm that has served them and their families well.
- Look for a couple who lives in your world somehow. They will be stronger mentors if they live in your neighborhood, are a part of your work world or attend your church. You will be able to see them in a variety of circumstances and they will be there to answer those day to day issues and questions that may crop up. A great way to discover a marriage mentor is to join a marriage enrichment class at a church or through an organization like United Marriage Encounter, Marriage Savers, etc (See Smart Marriage website for many options).
- Look for a couple who may share something in common with you. We have enjoyed having mentors who raised all boys since we have three of them. We have enjoyed mentors who are also clergy couples and ones who also are writers and speakers. We have enjoyed sports minded mentors as we can attend games or do exercise or outside activities with them or even vacation with them.
- Look for a couple who is willing. They don't have to be perfect—no couple is!

They don't even necessarily need to be trained marriage mentors or marriage educators. They just need to have a strong, stable relationship themselves. Make a list of 2-5 couples that might be willing to mentor you. Start with the one that you feel might be the best fit, call them up and ask them to dinner!