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**AN EVALUATIVE STUDY OF ONE APPROACH TO
MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT**

by

Myrle Lutterloh Swicegood

**A Dissertation Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy**

**Greensboro
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This dissertation has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

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Marriage enrichment retreats, as conceived and conducted by David and Vera Mace or leaders trained by them, were the focus of this study. The primary purpose of this exploratory study was to determine if any measurable change in consensus, communication, and/or commitment between spouses resulted from their participation in a weekend marriage enrichment retreat.

Marriage enrichment is regarded as a process that focuses on growth and development, a facilitating process that brings into play existing but latent resources within the marriage. It is a process designed for couples with a "reasonably stable" marriage.

A preinventory and postinventory measure was used at the beginning and end of the weekend retreat. An experimental and a pilot study group comprised the basic population for the study. Subjects in the experimental group were 23 couples who were retreat participants. The pilot group, composed of 18 couples who had not participated in a marriage enrichment retreat, was primarily used as a check against such phenomena as change resulting from pre/posttest, time lapse between pre/posttest, and awareness of marriage enrichment. Evidence was sought of change in consensus, communication, and commitment between spouses.

From a listing of ten standards by which family success has been measured rankings were made by spouses. Spearman's Rank Order Test and the sign rank t-test for paired

observations were used to test significance of change in consensus between the responses of husbands and wives from pre-inventory to postinventory. Following the retreat, consensus between spouses in their ranking of selected values did increase.

A marital communication and agreement test was used to assess change in participant couples' frequency of discussion and agreement on selected topics. Walker and Lev's Chi-Square Test for Significance of Change was used to test the differences. Following the retreat experience, significant (.05 level) improvement was shown between spouses in their ability to communicate with each other their thoughts, feelings, and intentions.

Couples who experienced a marriage enrichment retreat expressed increased commitment to their own marriage. Although some participants evinced commitment to help other couples enrich their marriage, some expressed doubt as to their ability to help other couples.

Increased skill in communication was seen by participant couples as the aspect of marriage that needed most improvement and as that concern into which they gained deeper insight as a result of the retreat experience. Skills that facilitate marriage enrichment apparently can be taught and learned effectively within a group setting as afforded through marriage enrichment retreat.

Anecdotal records of interviews with six retreat participant couples provided some evidence of washout effect

of the retreat with time lapse. It appears unlikely that a weekend experience could meet the needs of participants to the depth desired or possible in all dimensions of their relationship. Further reinforcement following marriage enrichment retreat participation is a recognized need.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The family may be regarded as a social system and a subsystem of a larger society. The family also may be considered as a complex system of interpersonal relationships. There is little doubt that the family and society act upon each other, and that each has much to gain when the other is in a state of well being.

It is now an accepted fact that change has impinged upon the traditional roles of the family, resulting in a reassessment of the functions of the family and society. Although many of the previously assigned functions of the family have been shifted to, or are being shared with, other institutions, at least two basic functions remain as traditional roles of the family, i.e., the affectional function and that of giving meaning and stability to life.

This change in assignment of family functions appears not to have made life more simple, but more complex, often with diverse manifestations of family stress. One obvious manifestation is the increased number of marriages ending in divorce. One might surmise that this increase in the divorce rate would lead to a concomitant decrease in the number of marriages, but the marriage rate continues to rise, and those who divorce continue to remarry in search of a meaningful relationship.

No longer do couples feel bound by societal norms to remain in an unhappy relationship. It appears that the will to stay married must come from within, and derives from a satisfying and meaningful relationship. Why does it appear that such a relationship is increasingly difficult to achieve?

Vincent (1972) believed that the single most important barrier to improving the quality of life through marriage is a legacy from preindustrial times, the myth of naturalism. This myth continues to deceive mankind into believing that people intuitively know how to live together and live happily ever after, thus obscuring the fact that marriage is the most complex relationship into which any two people will enter. Farson et al. (1969) theorized that many marriages fail because expectations are too high. Perhaps it is typically American to expect everything to get progressively better, and dissatisfaction results if this is not the case in marriage. Such concepts are now recognized and challenged, resulting in educational efforts to provide a more realistic approach to marriage as a mutually satisfying experience.

A study sponsored by the Association of Administrators of Home Economics emphasized the urgency for study of the family--especially the husband-wife relationship. The ensuing report clearly delineated five mission-oriented research goals. The first was (Schlater, 1970, p. 16) "to improve the conditions contributing to man's psychosocial and social development." Schlater (1970, p. 22) recommended

that "since the survival of a family unit depends on the husband-wife relationship research in this area should be accelerated."

Reports by experts in the field and personal experience increasingly indicated that when there is a strong, growing, healthy relationship between the couple, other family problems may be prevented or minimized. The desire to focus on strengthening the husband-wife relationship stimulated this researcher's interest in marriage enrichment.

This study dealt with one educational or preventive measure, "marriage enrichment retreats." These retreats are a form of assistance being made available to couples with relatively stable marriages who wish to achieve a more in-depth relationship. Concern on the part of family life educators, mental health educators, ministers, counselors, and others in the helping professions has resulted in varied educational efforts with similar intent. There is a diversity of programs labeled "marriage enrichment." This study dealt with the marriage enrichment retreats conceived and carried out by Mace and Mace (1972) and those leaders trained by them. Mace and Mace are internationally recognized authorities in family counseling and are pioneers in the marriage enrichment movement.

Mace and Mace conducted their first marriage enrichment retreat in 1962, and since that time the demand for such

retreats has steadily increased. To date informal evaluation of these retreats (comments and unsolicited letters) has been most favorable. A need for more rigorous evaluation has long been recognized by Mace and Mace, and was welcomed when this study was proposed.

Purpose of the Study

An evaluative study of marriage enrichment retreats appeared justifiable in view of the need, the interest of the investigator, the cooperation of the innovators, and compatibility with the goals of the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service. It appeared that this study would make a beginning attempt at evaluating marriage enrichment retreats as an educational process and assessing some of the change that ensued from participation in such retreats.

The objectives of this study were to:

1. Initiate formal evaluation of marriage enrichment retreats as conducted by Mace and Mace or leaders trained by them.
2. Develop an instrument by which some of the changes that occurred during marriage enrichment retreats could be described and measured.
3. Evaluate marriage enrichment retreats as an educational method for gaining additional meaning from husband-wife relationships for couples with "relatively stable" marriages.

In efforts to learn if other marriage enrichment programs could be evaluated in this same study, contacts were made with some of the North Carolina groups involved in such programs. Although the purposes of these groups were similar, there was such diversity of approach that the researcher decided to limit this study to the marriage enrichment retreats conducted by Mace and Mace or leaders trained by them. In the larger cities of North Carolina (Charlotte, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, Raleigh) and in the University community of Chapel Hill there appeared to be much interest in marriage enrichment and increased educational efforts in that direction. Church groups (especially the Catholics, Friends, and Presbyterians) have been pioneers in this effort. A common concern was evinced in each contact made; i.e., "We need some sort of evaluation of what is being accomplished through our efforts at marriage enrichment. We believe we are helping people, but specific evidence is lacking."

Retreat leaders and participant couples have expressed many opinions as to the value of marriage enrichment retreats. From personal conversations with leaders, with participant couples, and active participation in two retreats, it appeared that certain attitudes and behaviors changed both during and following such retreats. These changes included:

1. Each participant tended to see his partner differently.

2. Couples gained support from group interaction.
3. Couples gained a positive approach to problem-solving.
4. Couples developed increased ability to communicate thoughts and feelings to their spouse.
5. Couples achieved an increased appreciation for the other's point of view.
6. Participant couples wished to share what they had learned with other couples.

These changes in attitudes and behaviors were incorporated in structuring hypotheses for testing the data gathered for this study.

If education is one approach to achieving a more realistic concept of marriage, are marriage enrichment retreats an effective educational tool for couples with "reasonably stable" marriages who are seeking marital growth? At least a partial answer to this question was sought in this study.

Research Hypotheses

Four hypotheses, stated in the positive direction, were structured to guide this study.

Hypothesis I: Following participation in a marriage enrichment retreat, consensus between the responses of husbands and wives in ranking selected values will increase.

Hypothesis II: Following participation in a marriage enrichment retreat, husbands and wives will show improvement in their ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, and intentions.

Hypothesis III: Following participation in a marriage enrichment retreat, husbands and wives will express increased commitment to their own marriage.

Hypothesis IV: Following participation in a marriage enrichment retreat, husbands and wives will express commitment to help other couples enrich their marriages.

Definition of Terms

To assure understanding of certain terms used throughout this study the following operational definitions are offered.

Competence: denotes capabilities to meet and deal with a changing world, to formulate ends and implement them (Foote and Cottrell, 1955). Moreover, competence implies that individuals are capable of integrating their goals with those of others and collaborating in the realization of those goals.

Interpersonal competence: that competence, as previously defined, that involves relations between persons.

Marital growth: positive movement toward goals established by a married couple.

Marriage: a relationship of one man to one woman which is recognized by law and involves certain rights and duties of both parties entering the union, and to the children who may result from the union.

Married couple: the man and woman who are joined in marriage and who are currently living together.

Marriage enrichment: a concept or process that focuses on growth and development, a facilitating process that brings into play existing but latent resources within the couple themselves that can promote growth and development within the marriage (Mace and Mace, 1974).

Limitations of the Study

An intensive search of the literature revealed a dearth of literature dealing with marriage enrichment as a process. Apparently, few attempts have been made to describe the process and to evaluate its outcomes. It was hoped that this study would provide beginning guidelines for formal evaluation which would help to quantify previously made informal evaluation.

This study had several limitations. The subjects comprised a stratified population; the participants' educational levels and incomes were above average, and an all-white population made up the sample. These characteristics of the sample population limited any generalizations to other groups or populations. The fact that the subjects asked to become a part of a marriage enrichment retreat may mean that even initially they had a different attitude than the general population toward marriage enrichment.

Only one form of marriage enrichment was evaluated. Due to the great diversity of educational efforts labeled as marriage enrichment, the decision was made to limit this study to the weekend marriage enrichment retreat as conceived by

Mace and Mace and carried out by them or by leaders whom they have trained.

The follow-up of couples who had participated in a marriage enrichment retreat was limited. It would have been desirable to have had a second evaluation for each couple six months or one year after participation. The time limitation imposed on this study, however, precluded a second evaluation. In partial compensation for a second evaluation of the study population, personal interviews were conducted with six couples who had participated in one or another of the type marriage enrichment retreats evaluated in this study. The purpose of these interviews was to determine what the couples perceived to be the lasting effects, if any, of their experiences in a retreat. The recorded interviews, presented in anecdotal form, were used in this study as a source of additional insight in evaluating marriage enrichment retreats. The value of this approach was amplified by Waller (1930, p. 316) when he wrote:

No generalization can be so clearly buttressed by facts as one which is definitely supported by one or two well-understood cases; generalization from statistics is even more tenuous and inconclusive than generalization from persons.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

To understand or describe the functioning of society attention must be directed to its basic components: the individual and the family within which the individual is generated and nourished. Emphasis in this review of related literature was on strengthening the family, with attention to the positive rather than the negative aspects of this relationship. Marriage is regarded as a developmental process with focus on the marital dyad. This approach thus limited the review to developments within the past 25 years, for it was within that period that major concern evolved for marriage as a means of achieving mutually satisfying experiences rather than the achievement of societal needs.

Psychologist John B. Watson was credited with making the prediction in 1927 that the institution of marriage would not last until 1977. Twenty-five years later, David Olson (1972) cited marriage as the most popular voluntary institution in our society. East et al. (1972) agreed that the family is making yet another change and suggested that "adaptability" is the key word for the family of the future. These contrasting points of view are perhaps representative of the concern that has been expressed over time for the basic institution of marriage and the family. Differing points of view are always useful in that they cause one to question basic beliefs.

The institution of marriage and the family exists within a dynamic, thus continuously changing, society. It too must change if it is to survive. Since society and the family exist in an interdependent manner, it appears logical that the stimulation and orientation of research on the family has derived from societal crises and needs. In the 1920s there was great concern over the weakening of traditional codes of behavior. The economic depression of the '30s caused research to be focused on the economic adjustments of the family. World War II brought problems of anxiety, separation, loss, and stress. The multiplicity of problems since World War II has been difficult to categorize, but it may be said that these problems appear to be "people problems." An increasing concern for improving the quality of life for all people has resulted. Platt (1972) contended that most of the really dramatic societal changes have come since World War II. He called 1945 "World Year 0," and stated that 1974 should be labeled "World Year 029" of the new era. Platt hypothesized that society has come to the end of the period of natural selection and is now at the era of evolution by human selection. Human activity now shapes the present and the future. Past technological success made it possible and desirable to plan for change, to focus on the individual and his needs so that he might be better equipped to deal with change. As Tofler (1971, p. 27) expressed it, "we must concern ourselves with man's copeability." One cannot look at the

individual without regarding him within his primary relationship--the nuclear family and the larger society of which the family is a subsystem.

The Changing Function of the Family

Otto (1972, p. 111) studied the American family extensively and concluded:

Never before in the history of Western Civilization has the institution of marriage been under the searching scrutiny it is today. . . . The American family of the 1970's is entering the unprecedented era of change and transition, with a massive reappraisal of the family and its functioning in the offing.

Traditionally, the family has performed seven functions: reproduction, protection, care of children, economic production of family goods and services, socialization of children, recreation, and affection giving (Otto, 1972). Many of these family functions are now shared, and some have become the primary concern of other institutions. Family authorities and sociologists have expressed the belief that the affectional and socialization functions are the only remaining functions of the family that justify support of the family as a social institution. These appear to be major functions, and if the family does not adequately perform these functions the goals of society may not be realized. Human problems appear to be more complex or perhaps society is more aware of far-reaching effects. A look to the future foresees increasing complexity and greater demands. Perhaps, then, attention should be focused on personal qualities, capacities, and

skills, initially developed within the family, that are required for competent participation in a democratic social system (Cottrell, 1968).

Winch (1971, p. 101) viewed the family as a social system and defined socialization as "the general process of training people to enact the roles that constitute the social positions they occupy, are about to enter or aspire to." He delineated the four aspects of socialization as: the acquisition of intellectual and motor skills, the development of moral character, preparation for assuming adult roles, and the development of personality.

Clausen (1966) viewed the nuclear family in all societies as the initial social matrix within which personality is rooted and cultivated. Hawkes (1971) credited the Family Service Association of America as a leading proponent of the belief that the quality of family relationships has profound effects, both positive and negative, on the emotional development and the social adjustment of all members of the family.

The views of Cottrell (1968), Hawkes (1971), Winch (1971), and Otto (1972) are perhaps representative of contemporary opinion relative to family functions. Earlier researchers were less likely to mention the more humanistic functions of the family, which are now considered primary functions.

The Affectional Function

Through the affectional function of the family, a sense of belonging, caring, identification, and meaning for life is derived for both children and adults. Personality appears to be optimal when developed within a cohesive family unit (Erickson, 1950; Parson and Bales, 1955; Lidz, 1968; Ausubel and Sullivan, 1970).

Researchers attest to the difficulties in assessing affectional variables, while at the same time acknowledging their importance and existence. Hicks and Platt (1972, p. 562) indicated that there is some evidence of a "positive relationship between affective involvement in marriage and happiness in marriage, and between open communication and happiness in marriage." Luckey (1964) attempted to answer the question: Do persons who are satisfied with their marriages see in their spouses certain personality characteristics which are different from the ones that individuals who are not satisfied see in their spouses? She found that satisfied persons perceived their spouses as "less extreme persons" and as "warmly affectionate." This would reinforce the belief advanced earlier that one of the major functions of the family is the affectional function. Levinger (1966) found that middle-class spouses were more concerned with emotional and psychological interaction, while lower-class spouses found unstable physical actions and financial problems of greater

concern. Perhaps this would indicate that lower-level needs must be met before higher-level needs are of concern.

Bernard (1972) expressed the opinion that marriage is getting better, and because society is facing a "revolution of rising expectations," it does not tolerate forms of marital behavior that were matter-of-fact in the past. Individual and shared meaning for life is the expectation of each marital partner. Farson (1971) supported this point of view in the statement that because marriage is so good people are led to make excessive demands, to expect too much. He further emphasized that discontent with marriage has increased not because it is so bad, but because it is better than ever. People are prone to expect continuous improvement in every aspect of life, and if there are some elements of life that do not measure up, they are regarded as obsolete.

Gruin et al. (1960) opined that the quality of the interpersonal relationship is associated with marital happiness. People reporting happiness in marriage are more likely to concentrate on relationship sources of happiness, while the less happy concentrate on situational aspects. These writers also found that the more educated tend to be happier, but they express more feelings of inadequacy than the less educated. Awareness of potential might have been a variable in this research.

Foote (1963) regarded spouses as agents in mutual development, and contended that, after the parents, the marriage

partner is in the most favorable position to affect adult development in a positive or negative manner. Foote advanced the idea of development or underdevelopment of each family member, and regarded the self as the cumulative process of identity; a process in which family members are the source of greatest influence.

In their study of patterns of child rearing Sears et al. (1957) found that a warm, accepting, supportive family environment appears to be the most favorable setting for optimal development of children and adults. Love relationships among family members are perhaps the most effective means toward socialization and future personality development of the child. These same relationships give meaning to life for adults and youth. These researchers concluded that man does not just react to his environment, he responds to it.

Some Components of a Well-Functioning Family

Carl Rogers (1972a), one of the early proponents of man's capacity for becoming a fully functioning person, believed that man has a fundamental craving for secure, close, communicative relationships with others. When such relationships do not exist he feels very much cut off, alone, and unfulfilled (Rogers, 1972b). If man has this natural tendency and yearning toward wholesome growth, as espoused by Rogers and others, it would appear that he would be receptive to all possible assistance in achieving these goals. Society should

be equally receptive to providing needed assistance in light of the far-reaching effects of man's behavior.

Although no one way is "right" for all couples, there appear to be major identifiable elements of a successful marriage. Lederer and Jackson (1968) identified these elements of a successful marriage: the spouses respect each other, are tolerant of each other, and exert great effort to make the most of the assets and minimize the liabilities of their marriage.

Clinebell and Clinebell (1970) believed that many married couples are actively seeking ways to deepen their relationship and to make the whole of life more meaningful. They spoke of the role of educators in providing growth-facilitating experiences for married couples. Clinebell and Clinebell (1970, p. 11) stated that greater depth in marriage can be achieved provided "both partners decide they want more in their marriage; both are committed to working persistently towards that goal; and both are willing to draw on whatever outside resources are needed to lower their walls." These researchers further believed that (a) it is possible for couples to accomplish this goal on their own, but the process is accelerated by joining small groups of like-minded couples under a leader who is trained in marital enrichment, and (b) self-methods rarely suffice if the walls are too high or too thick. In such cases a professional counselor rather than group interaction would be required. Clinebell and Clinebell

postulated that there is a latent marriage hidden within each actual marriage relationship. The desire to improve their marriage may activate couples to seek help.

Good Communication

Nauran's study of the relationship between effective communication and marital adjustment showed that happily married couples have better verbal and nonverbal communication than unhappy couples. He also found that good verbal communication is more strongly associated with good marital adjustment than nonverbal communication. Nauran (1967, p. 182) felt that happily married couples

. . . talk more to each other, convey the feelings that they understand what is being said to them, have a wider range of subjects available to them, preserve communication channels and keep them open, show more sensitivity to each other's feelings, personalize their language symbols, and make more use of nonverbal techniques of communication.

Cutler and Dyer (1965) discovered in their research that talking openly about one's violations of expectations does not always enhance adjustment. There may be some things that are best left unsaid. Knowing what to say, when to say it, and how to say it are significant to positive relationships.

Vincent (1973, p. 43) described most spousal dialogue as two monologues: "What passes for marital communication is in reality two simultaneous monologues with each partner defensively concentrating on vulnerable areas, defending his own and probing for those of the spouse." Vincent also

advanced the idea that a major source of differences in marital communication is the failure to accept the spouse's impression as real for that spouse. He emphasized that there are six persons in every two-person dialogue--the real John, John's ideal John, Mary's ideal John, the real Mary, Mary's ideal Mary, and John's ideal Mary. This is true in every dyadic relationship. Since impressions are real, and not right or wrong, good communication is crucial to good relationships.

Miller et al. (1974) viewed increasing communication skills to be as important as increasing a couple's ability to shape relationships as they choose, instead of being shaped by others outside the relationship. According to Miller et al., the Minnesota Couples Communication Program, which they developed, has resulted in three kinds of benefits for couples involved: couples have learned to solve problems more effectively, preventing the problems from becoming serious; couples have learned more about themselves, which helped the relationship to grow; and couples have found increased enjoyment in their relationship. Satir (1972) endorsed communication training by stating that all communication is learned so it may be changed if change is desired.

Carkhuff's (1971) study of human resources showed that training in communication is more effective than insight therapy in increasing interpersonal skills, and can be accomplished within a relatively short time.

Duvall (1970, p. 493) found that interaction declines through the family life cycle and "children sharply curtail marital communication." Her study of family development showed the need for cooperation and consensus in the task of child rearing, and that a current major concern is how to help the couple to grow in their communication skills. Duvall cited essential developmental tasks that cannot be optimized without proper communication.

Interpersonal Competence and Consensus

Cottrell (1968) suggested that the components of personal and interpersonal competence must be identified in order to accomplish necessary familial developmental tasks. As a start he defined the components of personal competence as: empathetic capacity--the ability to take the role of the other; social inventiveness or fresh perspectives, innovativeness, and flexibility; self-other balance, which is essential to performing as a responsible, cooperative member of society; intelligence; and health. Cottrell's identified components are essential to individual and family development. The learning of rules and appropriate behavior occurs within the family setting, is utilized within the family, and is transferred to situations outside the family as needed. If one stage of development is not successfully accomplished, the next stages of development are likely to be less than optimum.

Foote (1963) viewed marriage as a developmental process and the family as a small group acting and interacting with each other. He believed that the failure or success of interaction results in the failure or success of the family as a stable unit.

Farber (1957) developed an Index of Marital Integration which deals primarily with interpersonal relations and consensus. He found that in a highly integrated marriage it is important for the husband to identify with the wife, but not necessarily with the children; the wife should especially identify with the children. This might appear to be a source of conflict, but Farber found that in a highly integrated marriage the husband tends to stress the social emotional aspects of family living so the wife is not caught in conflicting expectations. In the consensus component of the Index of Marital Integration values are ranked. Farber found that a common ranking of values provides a situation both congenial to effective mutual coordination of the life careers of the family members and compatible with effective socialization of the family members. He regarded competence in interpersonal relations as essentially a value, and a value that is highly regarded in our society.

Communication, interpersonal competence, and consensus appear to be essential components of a well-functioning family. These also appear to be skills that can be taught and learned. How to teach parents so they can teach their

children may be the question for which researchers are actively seeking an answer.

The Significance of the Marital Dyad to
Family Development

Farber (1964) regarded the family as an institution and a group, and credited Charles H. Cooley with first conceiving of the family as a primary group. Farber considered that the primary group contact provides the basis for the most long-lasting developmental patterns. McCandless (1967), Lidz (1968), Klemmer (1970), Schaefer (1972), and other eminent researchers have examined the family and its primary influence in the development of group members. Schaefer (1972, p. 29) emphasized that "the family initially establishes the child's level of intellectual functioning, maintains it, and the schools have been relatively powerless to change it." Gray (1970) reported greater effectiveness in early childhood education when parents were involved in the teaching-learning process.

Central to the family is the nuclear pair of husband and wife, with these two central family figures exerting dominant influence. When there is strength in this relationship many problems of the family are prevented or minimized. Conversely, when there is a lack of cohesion, stability, and growth in the husband-wife relationship, the resulting problems are reflected in child development and parent-child relationships (Satir, 1972). In what she described as

nurturing families Satir found that self-worth is high; communication is clear, direct, specific, and honest; rules are flexible, humane, appropriate, and subject to change; and there is an open, hopeful linkage to society. In troubled families there is often an identifiable weakness in the husband-wife relationship.

Mace and Mace (1974, p. i) viewed the marriage relationship as the prototype and model for all other adult relationships for, "as marriage goes so goes the family, as the family goes so goes the community, as the community goes so goes the nation." Miller et al. (1974) viewed the husband-wife relationship as the most important relationship that a married couple has--even more important than parent-child or other relationships. O'Neill and O'Neill (1972) affirmed this belief. They concluded that it is in the arena of interpersonal relationships that marriage and the family will have to find new meaning and gain greater strength. And further, children cannot be taught the value of supportive love and caring, responsibility, problem-solving, and other dimensions of personal competency unless the parents have first developed these qualities in their own relationship.

The Danjczek study, cited by Schaefer (1972), suggested that the husband-wife relationship may correlate with the child's adjustment and competence in school as much as the parent-child relationship, and that it is as important to analyze husband-wife relationships as it is to analyze

adult-child relationships. Schaefer (1972, pp. 41-42) predicted:

When we have found ways of training for family living and of strengthening and supporting families, the current emphasis on marriage and the family as a source of social problems and psychopathology may be replaced by an emphasis on marriage and the family as a positive force for human development.

New efforts in education for more effective family living hold promise. Anderson (1974) cited family growth groups--a mode of family education--as an emerging means of strengthening families.

Marriage Enrichment--An Evolvment

Increased awareness of potential in marriage, changing life styles, a more person-centered society, awareness of the far-reaching effect of the relationship within the marital dyad, and a concern for the type of human being necessary to meet the needs of the future have all contributed to the current trend of education toward marriage enrichment. A relatively small body of literature deals specifically with marriage enrichment, but one may surmise that research and concerns in other areas of human potential gave rise to this movement. It would also appear logical that the human potential movement with encounter groups caused leaders in the helping professions to give thought to training for preventive measures and enrichment in the marriage relationship. The whole trend of current thinking has been toward preventive rather than corrective measures, the accomplishment of which

has been enhanced by a higher level of education and aspiration. Mace and Mace (1972, p. 2) contended that marital stability can no longer be achieved through external coercion, but must be achieved through "internal cohesion."

The term "marriage enrichment" appears to have evolved. No one person or group claims credit for coining the term. There appears to be consensus as to its meaning, for it is most often described as an in-depth relationship that comes from within the couple themselves, but which can be facilitated. Mace and Mace (1972) used the term "marriage enrichment" to describe a concept that focuses not on failure or pathology but rather on growth and development. Mace and Mace (1972, p. 4) viewed marriage in terms of "relationship potential . . . challenging the couple to an unlimited experience of personal and mutual growth that will continue throughout the whole period of their life together," and posed the question, "Is this marriage suffering from arrested growth?" Thus they regarded marriage enrichment as a catalytic process which promotes growth and change that has been inhibited, a facilitating process that will bring into play the existing inoperative resources that can promote growth and development. These writers began conducting marriage enrichment retreats in 1962, utilizing their backgrounds and experiences as marriage counselors. In the early days of their work in marriage enrichment they identified what they called "inter-marital taboo," and concluded that a cultural

taboo exists that prevents married couples from sharing their intra-marital experiences with other couples, and this taboo deprives married couples of much-needed help and support from each other. From their varied experiences with marriage enrichment retreats Mace and Mace (1972, pp. 31-32) concluded that marriage enrichment retreats have at least three positive outcomes:

1. Participating couples gain a new awareness of growth potential in their marriage;
2. Some obstacles to growth are cleared away;
3. Participating couples develop a sense of vocation to help others.

They adhered to the growing conviction that much more can be gained by preventive rather than corrective measures, though society as a whole has done little to prepare couples for the marital role.

Clarke (1970) commented that a great deal has been said about an increase in leisure time with opportunities for enriching one's life; however, little has been said about how husbands and wives may enrich their marital experience. As affirmation of the need for training in marriage enrichment, Clarke developed a procedure requiring six meetings held in sequence to increase awareness of the positive aspects in the marital relationship. He described this procedure as a variety of group formations in which five couples described each other's behavior which expressed love, respect, understanding; the qualities and traits which one valued in the other; and the ways in which each met the other's needs for

love, acceptance, dependency, etc. Clarke found that such sessions helped normal couples to become more skillful in a type of dialogue that is often a forgotten or unlearned interpersonal art. Imig (1972) continued Clarke's work in instructing couples and made use of an individual log for husbands and wives in which are recorded homework experiences between group sessions. Imig has started training Michigan Agricultural Extension personnel in this technique.

Otto, in projecting man-woman relationships in the society of the future, forecast that marriage enrichment programs will replace weekend outings in popularity. He further stated (Otto, 1973, p. 50):

The recognition that marriage is a framework for personal growth for the man and the woman will mean a conscious commitment to dyadic and group experiences designed to foster growth and the self-actualizing processes in both members of the couple.

Bosco (1972) wrote about the marriage enrichment process of the Catholic church, which is termed "marriage encounter." She cited the development of the movement, how it began in Spain, spread to twenty-four countries, and came to the United States in 1967. In the New York area alone over 12,000 couples have been involved in marriage encounter, and there is a continuous weekly program for new couples. In the marriage encounter process a group of couples gather together for a weekend retreat. The encounter is a private one between husband and wife, and group interaction is confined to socializing only. The group support and interaction derived from

other marriage enrichment experiences is not experienced in this type of encounter. One or more "lead" couples and a priest are in charge. A lead couple speaks of some aspect of marriage, while the participating husbands and wives record their perceptions of their own marriage. These notes are used as a basis for dialogue when husband and wife are alone. They exchange notebooks and encounter each other relative to what has been written about the aspect of marriage under consideration. They return to the group and the same process is repeated throughout the weekend. Bosco maintained that these encounters have brought about dramatic changes in many marriages, with channels of communication opened and feelings expressed and released.

Lieberman et al. (1973) recognized the need to evaluate what actually takes place in marital enrichment and encounter groups. In an effort to determine what could and could not be measured they attempted to measure how such factors as the group's theoretical conceptions, leadership style, cohesiveness, and other variables affected the overall goal of the encounter group--that is, some type of personal change in behavior or beliefs, values, or lifestyle. Although 60 percent of the participants in this study initially felt that their experience was positive, the findings indicated that only one-third made what they termed "unambiguous positive changes." Another one-third gained nothing, and the remaining one-third had negative outcomes, with 8 percent sustaining a "significant psychological injury." Lieberman et al.

searched further to find the factors that caused participants to react as they did. Leadership style appeared most significant. The leader as a "provider," i.e., someone who offered love as well as information and ideas in a style that the authors described as "enlightened paternalism," achieved the greatest number of positive changes. Charismatic and highly aggressive leaders produced the greatest number of negative outcomes. The researchers suggested that perhaps encounter groups have been oversold, and should be viewed not as people-changing mechanisms but people-providing environments where individuals can overcome some of the anomie and alienation of modern life.

Clinebell and Clinebell (1970) wrote what some family counselors have termed a book about marriage enrichment. The authors viewed their work as a handbook for couples who want to use it on their own, for those receiving premarital counseling as individuals or in groups, for participants in courses on marriage and the family, for participants in marital growth groups, and for professionals in marriage counseling and family life education. They described a marital growth group as three to six couples all striving for more depth in their marriage, and advised that the participants should be couples with reasonably happy marriages. They saw a skilled leader as an asset to the group, believing that he could draw out the group's potentialities and accelerate the communication process. Interaction and support within

the group appeared to be significant characteristics of a marital growth group. Statements from participants attested to benefits received from growth groups, but no formal evaluation attempts were reported.

The persisting effects of retreats and growth groups are of concern to those interested in the marriage enrichment field. No formal research or evaluation has been designed to study these effects. Msgr. James McHugh, Director of the Family Life Division of the U.S. Catholic Conference, in a personal letter to this researcher, stated that there is no formal evaluation of which he is aware.

Rokeach's (1971) findings offered one suggestion as to the lasting effects of experience. He reported that, using no coercion, a psychologist can alter basic values and change behavior with just a forty-minute exposure of students to teacher. University students showed changed behavior as long as seventeen months after the experiment. According to Rokeach, social psychologists agree that before changes in attitudes can occur there must exist what John Dewey called "a felt difficulty," and what social psychologists now call a state of psychological imbalance or dissonance. He advanced the idea that an attitude always has both a historical and a personal context. Rokeach viewed values as the source and foundation of attitudes and behavior toward specific events, people, or situations, and aroused feelings of dissatisfaction by making his subjects aware that certain of their

values and attitudes were incompatible with one another. Results pointed to a long-range attitude change, and the time lag suggested that a change in the ordering of values preceded the change of attitude. Individual awareness of inconsistency between values and attitudes resulted in changed behavior. Rokeach pointed up the inherent danger in manipulating values, as well as the positive benefits that could result. Proper training and delineation of a code of ethics for leaders were of paramount concern.

As the popularity of marriage enrichment spreads and the demand increases for help in that area, there is a likelihood of increased vulnerability by the consuming public. Commercial enterprises will develop to satisfy the demand. Various recordings, kits, workbooks, and books for the couple to study together have been developed and are being marketed. Educational agencies, such as the Agricultural Extension Service, and mental health organizations have initiated programs in this area. It would appear that there is positive benefit that can be derived from a couple working on their own, but stimulus and support from group interaction appear to be most useful. Specialists with the Agricultural Extension Service over the United States are developing bulletins and helping to train agents in conducting special-interest sessions for small groups. The goal is not to "patch up" troubled marriages, but to enrich marriages and reverse the divorce trend. The exercises included in materials developed by

Hawkins (1972, 1973) were to be used by North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service agents in small group meetings. These techniques are similar to those used by others who deal with positive interaction as the focus for marriage enrichment groups. One-night sessions are designed to deal with need satisfaction and communication within the marriage, an understanding of values and behaviors, and marital roles. Couples may be involved in only one meeting of this type, or a series of meetings may be conducted by an Extension agent who has had specialized training.

Those individuals who are leading marriage enrichment experiences appear to recognize the far-reaching implications and the responsibility involved. The cost on the part of the facilitators and couples is considerable. Most agency-sponsored marriage enrichment retreats are operated as a non-profit service in an effort to hold costs at a minimum. Some private enterprises have charged up to \$150 per couple for a weekend retreat, with the couples paying in addition for room and meals. The energy and effort expended in the organization and execution of a marriage enrichment retreat are a concern to both facilitators and participants.

The findings of this evaluative study should provide some insight into the effectiveness of the marriage enrichment retreat as an educational effort. If the technique

proves to be effective current efforts would be justified, and leader-training efforts may be accelerated so that marriage enrichment training can be extended to more couples.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

A preinventory and postinventory utilizing an experimental and a pilot group comprised the basic design for this study.

The Evaluation Instruments

Instrument components were selected on the basis of literature related to the field, participation by the researcher in two marriage enrichment retreats, interviews with retreat leaders, suggestions from colleagues, and findings from other studies. Copies of the instruments used appear in Appendix A. Farber's (1957) Marital Consensus Test was used as one index of marital integration. This test requires the ranking of 10 items relating to family success. Hill's (1970) Marital Communication and Agreement Test was slightly modified and used in the study as a communication index.

The instruments were pretested with eight couples who were participating in a marriage enrichment retreat conducted by Mace and Mace. The researcher and her husband also participated in this retreat so that she might conduct the pretest and achieve greater insight as to its acceptability to the retreat participants. Observations made as to the clarity of items resulted in minor revisions.

The preinventory and postinventory instruments were completed independently by each spouse. Couple responses

were identified. Numbers were assigned to each retreat, with each couple drawing a number. The husband used the number plus the letter "a" to identify male response; the wife used the same number with the letter "b" to identify female responses (i.e., 1a, male response; 1b, female response, for the couple).

Subjects

Three groups of subjects were utilized in this study--an experimental group, a pilot group, and an interview group. Each group is discussed in the sections that follow.

The Experimental Group

Couples participating in a marriage enrichment retreat conducted by Mace and Mace and leaders trained by them were the experimental subjects for this study. The majority of couples requested the opportunity to participate in a retreat. Others were invited by some interested participant. Participants were enlisted by the Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment (ACME), Barium Springs (North Carolina) Presbyterian Home for Children, or personnel of the North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service at Raleigh. All of these organizations have provided leadership and support for the marriage enrichment program. The final selection of couples for each retreat was primarily the responsibility of the individual or organization sponsoring the retreat, with adherence to AMCE guidelines. Only couples who were thought

to have "reasonably stable" marriages were selected, for the purpose of the retreat was marital growth, not therapy.

Subjects varied as to educational and socioeconomic backgrounds, but the majority were middle or upper middle class, and all were white. These were not stipulations for participation, but couples who expressed interest in retreat participation were of this background, with one or both of the partners either college graduates and/or professionals.

Some of the retreats under study were partially subsidized, so costs to participating couples varied from \$25 to \$65 per couple. Travel expenses and home care for children were additional expenses which were considerations that prevented participation by some interested couples.

During the period of time available for this study, four retreats were conducted and evaluated. Six or seven couples were in each retreat, with two other couples who served as leader and co-leader for the group. Some couples did not wish to participate in the evaluation. A total of twenty-five couples participated in the study as experimental subjects.

The Pilot Group

The decision was made to use a pilot group rather than the traditional control group, since composition of the experimental group could not be predetermined. The major purpose of the pilot group was to assess the effect of the

pre/posttest so that in the final analysis change that could be attributed to the treatment could be more nearly determined.

Subjects who made up the pilot group had not participated in a marriage enrichment retreat, but were selected to match some of the demographic variables of the experimental group. A list was made of likely subjects, all of whom were thought to be middle or upper middle class couples, white, with above-average education and with "reasonably stable" marriages; none had been in therapy. Individual contacts were made with one or both of the spouses of these couples, at which time they were made aware of the intent of the study and were invited to participate as members of the pilot group. Although the pilot group varied widely in their knowledge of marriage enrichment retreats, with most of them associating retreats with encounter or sensitivity groups, after hearing the objectives of the study cooperation was assured. Only one of the twenty-five couples contacted declined to participate in the pilot group. Of the remaining twenty-four couples eighteen comprised the pilot group.

Four weekends were chosen in which the pilot couples were asked to complete the inventories. Care was taken to choose weekends that were not unusual in nature. Contacts were made and inventories were delivered on Thursday or Friday before participation. Printed directions (Appendix A) were placed in the envelope with the inventories. The

preinventory was to be completed Friday night before bedtime, and the postinventory after the noon meal on Sunday. Couples were asked to complete their inventories independently and to refrain from discussing the inventories until after the postinventory was completed. They were further requested to place the inventories in an enclosed, self-addressed envelope and return to the researcher on Monday following the weekend participation. As stated earlier, male responses were designated with the letter "a" and female responses with the letter "b"; no other identification was made.

Interview Group

Six couples were selected for the interview group; all had prior participation in a marriage enrichment retreat led by Mace and Mace as long ago as one and one-half years and as recently as two weeks prior to the interview. Consideration also was given to varying professional interests, age, economic circumstances, and family size to provide more diverse representation. Personal contact was made with each of the couples to arrange a time convenient for both spouses to be interviewed jointly. The participants were requested to allow the interviewer to tape-record the conversations as they responded to four predetermined questions. The same four questions were asked of each couple, and other points of discussion were introduced when it appeared appropriate; but the interviews were structured. The following questions were asked successively:

1. What, if any, are the lasting or persisting effects of your marriage enrichment retreat experience?
2. In what ways could the retreat be improved?
3. Have you recommended marriage enrichment retreats to other couples?
4. Do you feel that you are more able to help other couples since your retreat experience?

None of the couples declined to have the conversations recorded. No names were used and care was given to conceal identity. A full text of the interviews with the six couples appears in Appendix B.

Description of Process in a Typical Retreat

Retreats were organized several weeks in advance, and those couples who were to participate received a letter giving them the names of other couple participants, details of arrangements, and the time they were expected to arrive. Retreats usually began with the evening meal on Friday and concluded with the noon meal on Sunday. This provided about 15 hours for group interaction and private encounter.

The first evening was spent with the entire group getting acquainted with one another in as much depth as possible. Each participant was given a name tag stating first name only, and first names were used throughout the sessions. One couple opened themselves for questioning from the group. The lead couple in this "getting acquainted" session was most

likely to be the couple who were the facilitators. Mace and Mace did not view themselves as leaders, but as "participating facilitators." Common interests and concerns were discovered during this first evening, and there was soon a feeling of growing friendship and group support.

The retreat had no structured agenda. A "rolling" agenda was developed by the couples, which dealt with topics of interest to them. A rolling agenda is one that can be altered at any time the group desires, rearranged, added to or deleted, and attention moves from topic to topic at the discretion of the group and participating facilitators. Such concerns as constructive handling of conflict, individual identity, spouse dependency, middle-age syndrome, child rearing, and developing greater intimacy were high on the agenda, which was usually developed on Saturday morning.

At the beginning of each session during the weekend the participating facilitators asked if there were any concerns. A concern may be thought of as any disturbing or stressful situation; any wish to go back to a topic that has been previously discussed, but not to the satisfaction of an individual; anything that prevented a participant from feeling comfortable, open, and receptive. Any disturbing or stressful factor that becomes a "concern" to an individual or couple can block participation. Physical comfort, appropriate breaks, and group arrangement were carefully attended aspects of each retreat.

A starting topic was determined by group consensus, and that topic was dealt with until the group was ready to move on to the next topic, or the facilitators felt that it would be beneficial to move to another topic. Full use was made of communication by dialogue between husband and wife, and a couple could volunteer to dialogue about a topic that was under consideration. This meant that issues or topics were considered at the experience level, rather than the opinion, generalization, or philosophical level. If, during dialogue, a couple drifted into either of these levels of conversation the facilitators reminded them that they should speak only from the experience level.

An examination of beliefs and values, behaviors, and communication problems resulted from this intergenerational learning experience as couples provided a support system for each other. Within a nonjudgmental atmosphere, Mace and Mace described this as "communication in-depth about relationships in-depth." If a couple developed problems or strong feelings that were disruptive one of the facilitators worked privately with them until they were ready to return to the group. No couple was pressed to participate in any way. Participation was voluntary, but each couple was required to be present for all sessions of the weekend retreat.

Beginning at about nine o'clock on Saturday morning and lasting until Sunday noon, this regimen proceeded, and new topics were dealt with as the group desired. Different

styles of communication were identified and sometimes practiced in dialogue or role playing. Varied learning experiences were provided as needed. Before the group adjourned for lunch on Saturday, each couple was asked to do some writing. Each participant listed five things liked most about his/her marriage, five things that could be better, and five things that he/she could do to improve the marriage. This was done individually, without conversation, and became the basis for discussion when the couples had their private encounters Saturday afternoon. After lunch each couple decided where they would like to go to discuss together what they had written. There might or might not have been a sharing from this experience when the group reconvened at midafternoon, but sharing was usually spontaneous. This appeared to be a very meaningful experience, with couples reporting great progress in communication. Items on the rolling agenda continued to be dealt with until the dinner hour Saturday evening.

The group reconvened after dinner and this session was closed with what was called "positive interaction." At this time couples could volunteer (there was usually time for about four couples) to talk together before the group about the positive aspects of their marriage, their feelings and appreciation for each other, and the total family relationship. One of the couples would start and continue uninterruptedly until they had expressed themselves. Each of the volunteer couples had this opportunity, while other couples listened quietly

without verbal participation. Phrases such as "I appreciate . . . ," "I feel good when you . . . ," "I haven't told you this before . . ." were frequently heard during positive interaction. Couples were likely to be seated on the floor, facing each other, holding hands, and often appeared to be unaware of the total group as they participated in this experience. This ended the Saturday night session.

Sunday morning was used to deal with remaining items on the agenda and for quiet meditation. Experiential learning philosophy was utilized here which enabled couples to reflect on the experiences in which they had participated. If an individual wished to express himself during the period of meditation he could do so; or if he chose to remain silent, this was equally acceptable. As a conclusion for the retreat Mace and Mace told the group about the National Association of Couples for Marriage Enrichment (ACME), which they had conceived and launched. The purpose of this organization is to provide couples a means of joining together to strengthen the institution of marriage. It is planned that ACME will become national and international in scope and membership. One function of this organization can be the formation of growth groups for participants in marriage enrichment retreats who wish to continue to meet with other couples for group support and interaction.

Prior to adjournment Sunday afternoon, the postinventory was completed by participants and returned to the retreat leader.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

The basic design of this study utilized a preinventory and postinventory administered prior to and after the treatment. The treatment was a marriage enrichment retreat for couples. Recognizing that sheer pre/posttest could cause change to occur, it was thought essential to have a group to test for this purpose. It was also recognized that the time lapse from Friday night, when the preinventory was taken, until Sunday noon, when the postinventory was taken, afforded time for thought and change of opinion. Spouses were asked to refrain from discussing the inventories until both had been completed, but there was no way to assure that this request was honored. In view of these considerations a pilot group of couples who had not participated in a marriage enrichment retreat was solicited. In selecting the participants attention was given to certain known variables, as race, socioeconomic status, and especially to stability of marriage. As will be seen, this group did not match the experimental group in many ways; therefore, it seemed better to consider them as a pilot group to serve as a check for phenomena already described. This approach seemed more logical than to consider this group as a control group in the sense that a control group is utilized in an experimental design--that is, a group matched with the experimentals on relevant control variables and with the dependent variables in the two groups directly

compared statistically. Table 1 shows the characteristics of the two groups and Table 2 the chi-square tests of significance.

Few of the participants in either group had been married more than once. The experimental group had more children than the pilot group, and five couples in the pilot group had no children. Experimental group males were significantly more highly educated than pilot group males. Of these 23 males 16 had more than 17 years of education. Females in the two groups were not as differently educated. In the experimental group 87 percent of the males were professionals as compared with 44 percent of the pilot group males. Little variation in income was noted between the groups; nine couples in each group had an annual family income of over \$21,000

Pilot Group

The pilot group was examined on the three major pre/posttest items--consensus, communication, and agreement.

Consensus

From a listing of ten standards by which family success has been measured (Farber, 1957) participants were asked to rank the items from one to ten. The item ranked number one was of greatest importance and the item ranked number ten was of least importance, in their opinion. The ranking of each couple was correlated using the Spearman Rank Order (Rho) to determine agreement on preinventory and postinventory.

TABLE 1
Demographic Characteristics of Experimental
and Pilot Groups^a

Variable	Males		Females	
	Exptl	Pilot	Exptl	Pilot
Times married:				
Once	22	17	22	17
Twice	2	1	1	1
Number of children ^b :				
None			0	5
1			1	1
2			9	7
3			6	1
4			6	2
5			2	1
6			0	1
Level of education, yr:				
12	2	7	0	4
13-15	0	0	6	5
16	6	8	10	5
17+	16	2	7	4
No response	0	1	0	0
Occupation:				
Professional and managerial	20	8	10	8
Clerical and sales	1	5	2	4
Craftsman and operative	1	1	0	0
Service and laborer	0	0	0	0
Homemaker	0	0	9	5
Student	0	1	0	0
No response	1	3	2	1
Family income ^b :				
Under \$5,000	1	0		
\$ 5,000-10,999	4	0		
\$11,000-20,999	10	9		
\$21,000-30,999	6	8		
\$31,000 and over	3	1		

^aThroughout the tables total response may not equal total n's or N's due to omission of response by subject.

^bFor convenience in presentation of these data, children are listed under "Females" and family income under "Males."

TABLE 2
Comparison of Pilot and Experimental Groups
by Demographic Characteristics

Variable	df	χ^2 - value	p
Times married:			
Male experimental vs. male pilot	1	<1.0	NS
Female experimental vs. female pilot	1	<1.0	NS
Number of children:			
Experimental	6	10.8	NS
Pilot			
Level of education, yr:			
Male experimental vs. male pilot	3	13.1	<.01
Female experimental vs. female pilot	3	5.2	NS
Occupation:			
Male experimental vs. male pilot	4	9.3*	NS
Female experimental vs. female pilot	3	1.8	NS
Family income:			
Experimental	4	4.8	NS
Pilot			

*Very close to .05; need 9.5.

In a ranking of the consensus items correlation between couples ranged from .09 to .83 with a mean of .49. The correlation on the postinventory ranged from .06 to .87 with a mean of .52. Some couples showed very high consensus, while others showed almost no consensus on these items. The concern, however, did not relate to the degree of consensus, but whether it changed from preinventory to postinventory. To assess this change the sign rank t-test for paired observations was used. Table 3 shows the correlations and the

t-test results. The amount of change in consensus between couples from preinventory to postinventory was found to be nonsignificant.

TABLE 3

Correlations Between Pilot Group Spouses on Consensus Items
and t-Test in Change of Correlation

Couple	Preinventory Rho	Postinventory Rho	Change	Rank
1	.34	.41	.07	7
2	.50	.52	.02	3
3	.38	.38	.00	1.5
4	.45	.56	.11	10
5	.44	.55	.11	10
6	.83	.71	-.12	12
7	.24	.81	.57	18
8	.72	.49	-.23	13
9	.71	.73	.02	4.5
10	.60	.60	.00	1.5
11	.61	.88	.27	15
12	.50	.44	-.06	6
13	.09	.64	.55	17
14	.73	.49	-.24	14
15	.22	.11	-.11	10
16	.83	.75	-.07	8
17	.09	.07	-.02	4.5
18	.57	.27	-.30	16
Preinventory \bar{M} = .49				$\Sigma+$ ranks 87.5
Postinventory \bar{M} = .52				$\Sigma-$ ranks 83.5
N = 36				p = NS

It might be of interest to ascertain how the standards of family success were ranked generally by subjects in the pilot group. This was done separately from the preinventory and postinventory responses. The sums for the items were then ranked. Rank-order correlation between males and

females on the preinventory was .96 and a correlation of .95 was obtained on the postinventory (Table 4). There was very high agreement in terms of items being ranked the same way by all the females and all the males. This being true, the rankings of males and females were combined to correlate all preinventory rankings with all postinventory rankings, resulting in a correlation of .95. This is not to be taken that all individuals agreed with each other that well. These are correlations based on the summated ranks across fairly large numbers of individuals. Thus it can be said that the consensus of fairly large numbers of individuals agreed very highly. Consensus across the groups between preinventory and postinventory was very high.

For the preinventory males ranked companionship as the item of greatest importance, while females ranked emotional security first. The item of least importance to males was a place in the community, while for women everyday interest was slightly ahead as the item of least importance. On the postinventory males held to companionship as the item of greatest importance, and females changed to companionship as the item of greatest importance. On the postinventory both males and females rated a place in the community as the item of least importance.

TABLE 4

Summation of Ranking of Standards by Which Pilot Group
Family Success Was Measured^a

Standard	Pre		Post		Total	
	M	F	M	F	Pre	Post
A place in the community	10	9	10	10	10	10
Healthy and happy children	4	4	4	4	4	4
Companionship	1	2	1	1	1	1
Personality development	6	5	6	6	6	6
Satisfaction in affection shown	7	7	5	7	7	5
Economic security	8	8	8	8	8	8
Emotional security	2	1	2	2	2	2
Moral and religious unity	3	3	3	3	3	3
Everyday interest	9	10	9	9	9	9
A home	5	6	7	5	5	7

^aRank = 1-10; N = 36.

Communication

The question to be posed was whether or not there was change in the pilot group from preinventory to postinventory as to marital communication and agreement. This involved discussion and agreement on selected items of interest to couples, and a projection of future communication. Hill's (1967, p. 413) Marital Communication and Agreement Test was adapted for this purpose.

Inspection of the data for the pilot group, as was characteristic of the experimental group, revealed a lack of normality in distribution of responses; i.e., there was clustering on the upper end of the scale. Therefore, nonparametric statistics were used in analyzing the data. Change from preinventory to postinventory was assessed for each topic using the chi-square test for significance of change (Walker and Lev, 1953). This measure was designed to assess correlated frequencies as in the preexperimental and post-experimental design. It essentially asks whether the proportions of subjects showing positive change and those showing negative change are significantly different.

The data in Table 5 show that males and females responded in similar patterns. Two things may be noted about this analysis: few subjects changed compared to those who remained the same, and the pattern of change--the relative number increasing as opposed to decreasing--was essentially the same for males and females. In no case was there a significant change of pattern.

The distributions being somewhat similar and small n's involved, responses of males and females were combined for a final test of change involving larger n's (Table 5). This test revealed significant changes relating to increased discussion on two items--recreation and in-laws. As will be seen in further presentation of data, many tests were run on

TABLE 5

Change in Pilot Group Discussion from Preinventory to Postinventory
and Chi-Square Test for Significance

Topic	Change in discussion			df	χ^2 - value	p
	Increase	Decrease	Same			
<u>Males (N=18)</u>						
Handling family finances	3	0	14	1	1.3	NS
Matters of recreation	4	1	12	1	<1.0	
Religious matters	1	0	16	1	<1.0	
Showing affection	0	0	17	1	<1.0	
Friends	1	2	14	1	<1.0	
Disciplining children	1	1	15	1	<1.0	
Sexual relations	1	0	16	1	<1.0	
Table manners	1	1	15	1	<1.0	
Ways of acting in public	3	0	15	1	1.3	NS
Ideas about what is best in life	2	1	14	1	<1.0	
Ways of dealing with your in-laws	4	1	12	1	<1.0	
Wife's working	1	1	15	1	<1.0	
Sharing household tasks	0	4	13	1	2.3	NS
<u>Females (N=18)</u>						
Handling family finances	1	3	14	1	<1.0	
Matters of recreation	5	0	13	1	3.2	NS
Religious matters	0	0	18	1	<1.0	
Showing affection	4	1	13	1	<1.0	
Friends	2	1	15	1	<1.0	
Disciplining children	4	0	13	1	2.3	NS
Sexual relations	1	0	17	1	<1.0	
Table manners	1	0	17	1	<1.0	
Ways of acting in public	1	0	17	1	<1.0	
Ideas about what is best in life	6	1	11	1	2.3	NS

TABLE 5 (continued)

Topic	Change in discussion			df	χ^2 - value	p
	Increase	Decrease	Same			
Ways of dealing with your in-laws	5	0	12	1	3.2	NS
Wife's working	4	0	14	1	2.3	NS
Sharing household tasks	4	0	14	1	2.3	NS
	<u>Total (N=36)</u>					
Handling family finances	4	3	28	1	<1.0	NS
Matters of recreation	9	1	25	1	6.4	<.05
Religious matters	1	0	34	1	<1.0	NS
Showing affection	4	1	30	1	<1.0	NS
Friends	3	3	29	1	<1.0	NS
Disciplining children	5	1	28	1	<1.0	NS
Sexual relations	2	0	33	1	<1.0	NS
Table manners	2	1	32	1	<1.0	NS
Ways of acting in public	4	0	32	1	2.3	NS
Ideas about what is best in life	8	2	25	1	3.6	NS
Ways of dealing with your in-laws	9	1	24	1	6.4	<.05
Wife's working	5	1	29	1	1.5	NS
Sharing household tasks	4	4	27	1	<1.0	NS

the pilot group with few significant results. In running a large series of statistical tests some significant results will, of course, occur by sheer chance. It is possible that the two results found represent such a chance occurrence.

Agreement

For the agreement section of Hill's test the same type of analysis was used as for consensus. Again, distributions were not normal, with clustering in the agreement range. As before, few changes were noted from preinventory to postinventory.

The distributions being somewhat similar and small n's involved, responses of males and females were combined. The only significant change found from analyzing the larger n was concerned with the topic of tables manners, with the males saying they were going to discuss it less (Table 6). This was possibly a chance result. Overall, the combined scores of males and females yielded no significant change.

Summary for Pilot Group

Although the pilot and experimental groups were not matched, the pilot group served a useful purpose. In essence the pilot group increased confidence in the study, since, as will be seen, change did occur in the experimental group, while little change occurred in the pilot group. The writer is forced to admit that in future studies a better

TABLE 6

Change in Pilot Group Agreement from Preinventory to Postinventory
and Chi-Square Test for Significance

Topic	Change in agreement			df	χ^2 - value	p
	Increase	Decrease	Same			
<u>Males (N=18)</u>						
Handling family finances	3	1	13	1	<1.0	<.05
Matters of recreation	1	1	15	1	<1.0	
Religious matters	2	2	13	1	<1.0	
Showing affection	3	1	13	1	<1.0	
Friends	2	0	15	1	<1.0	
Disciplining children	0	2	15	1	<1.0	
Sexual relations	1	3	13	1	<1.0	
Table manners	0	6	11	1	4.2	
Ways of acting in public	0	1	16	1	<1.0	
Ideas about what is best in life	2	1	13	1	<1.0	
Ways of dealing with your in-laws	3	1	12	1	<1.0	
Wife's working	3	3	11	1	<1.0	
Sharing household tasks	4	1	11	1	<1.0	
<u>Females (N=18)</u>						
Handling family finances	1	4	13	1	<1.0	
Matters of recreation	3	1	13	1	<1.0	
Religious matters	1	1	16	1	<1.0	
Showing affection	2	1	14	1	<1.0	
Friends	2	1	15	1	<1.0	
Disciplining children	2	3	12	1	<1.0	
Sexual relations	2	0	14	1	<1.0	
Table manners	3	3	11	1	<1.0	
Ways of acting in public	3	1	13	1	<1.0	
Ideas about what is best in life	1	3	14	1	<1.0	

TABLE 6 (continued)

Topic	Change in agreement			df	χ^2 - value	p
	Increase	Decrease	Same			
Ways of dealing with your in-laws	1	1	12	1	<1.0	
Wife's working	0	0	17	1	<1.0	
Sharing household tasks	0	1	16	1	<1.0	
	<u>Total (N=36)</u>					
Handling family finances	4	5	26	1	<1.0	NS
Matters of recreation	4	2	28	1	<1.0	NS
Religious matters	3	3	29	1	<1.0	NS
Showing affection	5	2	27	1	<1.0	NS
Friends	4	1	30	1	<1.0	NS
Disciplining children	2	5	27	1	<1.0	NS
Sexual relations	3	3	27	1	<1.0	NS
Table manners	3	9	29	1	3.0	NS
Ways of acting in public	3	2	29	1	<1.0	NS
Ideas about what is best in life	3	4	27	1	<1.0	NS
Ways of dealing with your in-laws	4	2	24	1	<1.0	NS
Wife's working	3	3	28	1	<1.0	NS
Sharing household tasks	4	2	17	1	<1.0	NS

matched group would be desirable. It is conceivable that a group more like the experimental group might also change. As marriage enrichment retreats are documented, it will be possible to determine matched subjects.

Experimental Group

The experimental group was tested in two major areas of consensus and communication on preinventories and post-inventories. There were additional short items that were tested with this group.

Consensus

In a listing of 10 standards by which family success has been measured (Farber, 1957) experimental subjects also were asked to rank these items from 1 to 10. The number 1 would represent the item of greatest importance and the number 10 the item of least importance in the opinion of the respondent.

The ranking of each couple was correlated using the Spearman Rank Order (Rho) test to determine agreement on pre-inventory and postinventory. Correlations between couples ranged from .13 to .995 on the preinventory with a mean of .49 (Table 7). On the postinventory correlations between couples ranged from .13 to .89 with a mean of .59. To assess the degree of change from preinventory to postinventory the sign rank t-test for paired observations was used. Table 7

show a significant increase in couple consensus between pre-inventory and postinventory. This positive change may be attributed to the marriage enrichment retreat, since change in consensus was not significant in the pilot group.

TABLE 7

Correlations Between Experimental Group Spouses on Consensus Items and t-Test in Change of Correlation

Couple	Preinventory Rho	Postinventory Rho	Change	Rank
1	.66	.20	.46	-22
2	.99	.85	.14	-11
3	.17	.16	.01	- 4
4	.23	.69	.46	23
5	.28	.66	.38	20
6	.29	.63	.34	19
7	.27	.32	.05	6
8	.74	.89	.15	13
9	.38	.60	.21	16
10	.38	.77	.39	21
11	.74	.85	.11	7.5
12	.38	.61	.23	17
13	.68	.50	.18	-15
14	.65	.65	.00	1.5
15	.53	.56	.03	5
16	.73	.87	.14	10
17	.45	.46	.01	3
18	.56	.67	.11	7.5
19	.38	.53	.15	14
20	.61	.85	.24	18
21	.23	.37	.14	9
22	.77	.62	.15	-12
23	.13	.13	.00	1.5
Preinventory \bar{M} = .49			$\Sigma+$ ranks 212.0	
Postinventory \bar{M} = .59			$\Sigma-$ ranks 64.0	
N = 46			p < .05	

To determine how the standards of family success were ranked by experimental subjects ranks were summated for each item across all males and all females. This was done separately for preinventory and postinventory responses. Each item was then ranked. Rank order correlations between males and females on the preinventory were .96 and .91 on the postinventory, indicating very high agreement in terms of items being ranked the same way by all males and all females. This being true, rankings were combined to correlate all preinventory with all postinventory rankings. This resulted in a correlation of .95. Rankings of the pilot and experimental groups were very similar.

Examination of Table 8 shows that in the preinventory both males and females ranked emotional security as the most important item. On the postinventory males held to emotional security as the most important item, while emotional security and companionship tied ranks for first place with the females. The item of least importance on the preinventory as ranked by males was everyday interest, while for females the item ranked of least importance was place in the community. It can be seen, however, that ranking of these two items was very close for both males and females. On the postinventory males ranked a place in the community as the item of least importance, while females ranked economic security as least important. A summation of all scores for males and females placed emotional security as the most important item on

preinventories and postinventories. On the preinventory there was a tie between place in the community and everyday interest as the item of least importance. On the postinventory economic security was rated the item of least importance, closely followed by place in the community.

TABLE 8

Summation of Ranking of Standards by Which Experimental Group Family Success Was Measured^a

Standard	Pre		Post		Total	
	M	F	M	F	Pre	Post
A place in the community	9	10	10	9	9.5	9
Healthy and happy children	5	6	5	5	5	5
Companionship	3	2	4	1.5	3	2
Personality development	2	3	2	3	2	3
Satisfaction with affection shown	4	4	3	4	4	4
Economic security	8	8	8	10	8	10
Emotional security	1	1	1	1.5	1	1
Moral and religious unity	7	7	7	7	7	7
Everyday interest	10	9	9	8	9.5	8
A home	6	5	6	6	6	6

^aRank = 1-10; N = 46.

If a couple with complete consensus did exist it would be one in which all values were similarly rank ordered by both spouses. Farber (1957) suggested that a common ranking

of values provides a strong sense of identity among family members, and that it provides a situation congenial to the mutual coordination of life careers and compatible with effective socialization of family members.

Hypothesis I--following participation in a marriage enrichment retreat, consensus between the responses of husbands and wives in ranking selected values will increase--is accepted.

Communication

Was change brought about in marital communication and agreement following marriage enrichment retreat? The aforementioned Hill's test was used as the indicator of change. Inspection of the distribution showed that again the distribution was clustered at the upper end of the scale. Since this was true for both the pilot and the experimental groups, this phenomenon might be partially due to the selection of couples with "reasonably stable" marriages.

Nonparametric statistics again were used. Change from preinventory to postinventory as to how often spouses would discuss selected topics again was assessed for each topic using the chi-square test for significance of change (Walker and Lev, 1953). Table 9 shows for all topics the number of males and females who indicated they expected to discuss the topic more often, less often, and those who did not change. Somewhat greater numbers were changing, but still the majority did not change.

TABLE 9
Change in Experimental Group Discussion from Preinventory to Postinventory
and Chi-Square Test for Significance

Topic	Change in discussion			df	χ^2 - value	p
	Increase	Decrease	Same			
<u>Males (N=23)</u>						
Handling family finances	3	2	18	1	<1.0	
Matters of recreation	7	3	13	1	1.6	NS
Religious matters	0	7	16	1	5.1	<.05
Showing affection	6	3	14	1	<1.0	
Friends	1	5	17	1	1.5	NS
Disciplining children	0	7	16	1	5.1	<.05
Sexual relations	4	6	13	1	<1.0	
Table manners	2	2	19	1	<1.0	
Ways of acting in public	3	1	19	1	<1.0	
Ideas about what is best in life	10	2	11	1	5.3	<.05
Ways of dealing with your in-laws	2	4	17	1	<1.0	
Wife's working	5	1	17	1	1.5	NS
Sharing household tasks	4	2	17	1	<1.0	
<u>Females (N=23)</u>						
Handling family finances	2	5	15	1	<1.0	
Matters of recreation	1	2	20	1	<1.0	
Religious matters	0	4	19	1	2.3	NS
Showing affection	9	1	13	1	6.4	<.01
Friends	3	5	15	1	<1.0	
Disciplining children	0	4	19	1	2.3	NS
Sexual relations	4	5	13	1	<1.0	
Table manners	4	2	17	1	<1.0	
Ways of acting in public	5	4	14	1	<1.0	
Ideas about what is best in life	7	1	15	1	3.1	NS

TABLE 9 (continued)

Topic	Change in discussion			df	χ^2 - value	p
	Increase	Decrease	Same			
Ways of dealing with your in-laws	1	3	19	1	<1.0	
Wife's working	5	1	17	1	1.5	NS
Sharing household tasks	4	0	19	1	2.3	NS
<u>Total (N=46)</u>						
Handling family finances	5	7	33	1	<1.0	NS
Matters of recreation	8	5	33	1	<1.0	NS
Religious matters	0	11	35	1	11.0	<.001
Showing affection	15	4	27	1	6.4	<.05
Friends	4	10	32	1	2.6	NS
Disciplining children	0	11	35	1	11.0	<.001
Sexual relations	8	11	26	1	<1.0	NS
Table manners	6	4	36	1	<1.0	NS
Ways of acting in public	8	5	33	1	<1.0	NS
Ideas about what is best in life	17	3	26	1	9.8	<.01
Ways of dealing with your in-laws	3	7	36	1	1.6	NS
Wife's working	10	2	34	1	5.3	<.05
Sharing household tasks	8	2	36	1	3.6	NS

The same pattern of change was characteristic of both males and females in the experimental group. For example the females showed a significant change in the discussion of affection. While the males did not show a significant change in this item, the change pattern was the same. Females in the experimental group showed significant change in the one area, affection, while the males showed significant change in disciplining children, religious matters, and ideas about what is best in life. Since the patterns of change were similar, perhaps the most meaningful part of Table 9 is that section in which males and females were combined, providing a larger n. Five significant changes resulted from combining these responses. Some items were to be discussed more and some less. It is possible to surmise that a point of understanding or acceptance was reached on those items that were to be discussed less. Disciplining of children and religious matters were to be discussed less, while showing affection, ideas about what is best in life, and wife's working were to be discussed more. One could speculate that through group interaction concern for some problems increased and others decreased. This appears to be typical behavior when it is found that other people have the same problems that one experiences.

Agreement

The degree of agreement on specific topics also reflected change. Males projected a greater degree of agreement

on table manners, acting in public, ideas about life, and sharing of household tasks. The female respondents projected a greater degree of agreement on friends, ideas about what is best in life, and ways of dealing with in-laws (Table 10). Again, the pattern of change was similar between males and females, making it possible to combine responses to secure a larger n. As can be seen in Table 10, there was significant change in 9 of the 13 items as to projected agreement in the future.

Hypothesis II--following participation in a marriage enrichment retreat, husbands and wives will show improvement in their ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, and intentions--is accepted.

One may question the phenomenon that apparently occurs in a group setting that increases communication between spouses, especially since many of the problem areas are personal. Mace and Mace contended that this is one of the major results of marriage enrichment--that barriers to communication between spouses can be broken down and new levels of communication can be achieved.

Over time in a marital relationship there are likely to be differences between spouses. Most of these differences may be satisfactorily resolved. Others may be resolved or accommodated to, but not necessarily to the satisfaction

TABLE 10

Change in Experimental Group Agreement from Preinventory to Postinventory
and Chi-Square Test for Significance

Topic	Change in agreement			df	χ^2 - value	p
	Increase	Decrease	Same			
<u>Males (N=32)</u>						
Handling family finances	5	1	17	1	1.5	NS
Matters of recreation	6	3	14	1	<1.0	
Religious matters	2	1	20	1	<1.0	
Showing affection	7	3	13	1	1.6	NS
Friends	5	3	15	1	<1.0	
Disciplining children	8	3	12	1	2.3	NS
Sexual relations	7	1	15	1	3.1	NS
Table manners	8	0	10	1	6.1	<.05
Ways of acting in public	9	0	10	1	7.1	<.01
Ideas about what is best in life	7	0	12	1	5.1	<.05
Ways of dealing with in-laws	8	2	11	1	3.6	NS
Wife's working	9	4	9	1	1.9	NS
Sharing household tasks	6	0	15	1	4.2	<.05
<u>Females (N=32)</u>						
Handling family finances	5	0	17	1	3.2	NS
Matters of recreation	9	3	11	1	3.0	NS
Religious matters	4	3	10	1	<1.0	
Showing affection	7	1	15	1	3.1	NS
Friends	9	1	13	1	6.4	<.05
Disciplining children	6	4	13	1	<1.0	
Sexual relations	5	2	15	1	<1.0	
Table manners	5	8	6	1	<1.0	
Ways of acting in public	7	5	7	1	<1.0	
Ideas about what is best in life	6	0	14	1	4.2	<.05

TABLE 10 (continued)

Topic	Change in agreement			df	χ^2 - value	p
	Increase	Decrease	Same			
Ways of dealing with your in-laws	10	2	10	1	5.3	<.05
Wife's working	7	6	10	1	<1.0	
Sharing household tasks	9	3	10	1	3.0	NS
	<u>Total (N=46)</u>					
Handling family finances	10	1	34	1	7.4	<.01
Matters of recreation	15	6	25	1	3.9	<.05
Religious matters	6	4	36	1	.4	<.05
Showing affection	14	4	28	1	5.6	<.05
Friends	14	4	28	1	5.6	<.05
Disciplining children	14	7	25	1	2.3	<.01
Sexual relations	12	3	30	1	5.4	<.05
Table manners	13	8	16	1	1.2	<.05
Ways of acting in public	16	5	17	1	5.8	<.05
Ideas about what is best in life	13	0	26	1	13.0	<.001
Ways of dealing with your in-laws	18	4	21	1	8.9	<.01
Wife's working	16	10	19	1	1.4	<.05
Sharing household tasks	15	3	25	1	8.0	<.01

of both spouses. When there is such a difference the spouse who continues to experience dissatisfaction with the solution, but accommodates his feelings to the situation because he sees little possibility of resolving the conflict, may find help in marriage enrichment retreats. Within the group setting the dissatisfied spouse who has accommodated to the feelings of the other spouse may again bring up the unresolved difference. This appears to happen often, to the surprise of both spouses. Support from an objective, empathetic group seems to provide the climate within which the conflict that has been accommodated to, but not satisfactorily resolved, can again be dealt with. Communication between spouses through dialogue, experiences of other couples, and the use of alter ego methodology may lead to conflict resolution and a breaking down of some of the barriers to marital growth.

Commitment to Their Own Marriage

In thinking of their own marriage each spouse was asked to list two things about their marriage that could be better, and two things "I would like to be able to do to improve our marriage." These responses appeared on the pre-inventory instrument. On the postinventory instrument each participant was asked to list (1) the concerns about marriage into which he gained deeper insight and (2) the concerns about marriage which, in his opinion, were not adequately dealt with in the retreat experience.

After all these responses were recorded as they were stated on the inventories, categorization of responses appeared necessary. In doing so attention was given to preserving all the intent and content possible, while at the same time arriving at some means of handling varied answers as would be characteristic of an open-end question. The advantage of open-end questions appears to be that choices do not have to be made from a provided source. Rather, the individual is free to express his own ideas and opinions.

From the varied responses the following categories of responses were established by the researcher in collaboration with a Family Life Specialist:

1. Feelings and understandings
2. Communication
3. Management
4. Children
5. Personal growth
6. Group support
7. Sex
8. Leisure and recreation
9. No improvement; couldn't be better.

The data in Table 11 show that both males and females gave top rating to communication as the factor in their marriage that could be better. The second largest response from the males was leisure and recreation, while for the females there was a tie between leisure and recreation and children.

TABLE 11
Experimental Group's Desired Changes in Marriage

Factor	Things about our marriage that could be better		Things that I would like to do to improve our marriage	
	Males (N=23)	Females (N=23)	Males (N=23)	Females (N=23)
Feelings and understanding	5	5	3	1
Communication	15	11	13	8
Management	3	6	4	5
Children	3	8	7	2
Personal growth	4	6	18	18
Group support	0	0	0	0
Sex	2	1	0	4
Leisure and recreation	10	8	2	7
No improvement; couldn't be better	2	0	2	0
No second response	2	1	0	1

In listing the things that each spouse would like to be able to do to improve his marriage, both males and females cited for first priority some element of personal growth (Table 11). These responses ranged from "I want to grow and help my marriage grow" or "I want to help my spouse grow," to a specific personal growth need as "I need to learn to handle conflict constructively." In second place males

and females cited some element of communication as what they would like to do to improve their marriage. A greater number of males than females gave second priority to communication.

In the postinventory there was an open-end response to "concerns about marriage into which I gained deeper insight." Again, communication was the overwhelming response by both males and females, with feelings and understandings second, followed closely by management (Table 12). For concerns about marriage which, in their opinion, were not adequately dealt with in the retreat the largest response for both males and females was "no improvement; couldn't be better." In some cases this response was qualified with such statements as "in view of the time available" and "according to the wishes of the group." When the scattering of responses across other categories were combined, the second largest response concerned some area of personal growth.

One may conclude that those subjects who had come to the marriage enrichment retreat were already committed to their marriage or they would not have made the investment. There also appeared to be a note of optimism throughout most of the inventories. This would again reinforce the selection of participants for marriage retreat as couples with "reasonably stable" marriages. As previously stated, this was a major criterion for retreat participants.

The responses to the postinventory indicated that significant changes occurred following the marriage enrichment

TABLE 12

Experimental Group's Reactions to Marriage Enrichment Retreat

Factor	Concerns about marriage into which I gained deeper insight			Concerns about marriage that were not adequately dealt with		
	Males (N=23)	Females (N=23)	Total (N=46)	Males (N=23)	Females (N=23)	Total (N=46)
Feelings and understanding	7	8	15	0	1	1
Communication	17	17	34	3	2	5
Management	7	5	12	0	2	2
Children	1	0	1	4	2	6
Personal growth	2	3	5	6	4	10
Group support	4	1	5	0	2	2
Sex	4	3	7	2	1	3
Leisure and recreation	1	1	2	3	1	4
No improvement; couldn't be better	2	0	2	18	14	32
No second response	0	8	8	10	17	27

retreat in the way that one spouse thought his/her partner saw their marriage (Table 13).

TABLE 13

Changes in Experimental Group's Perception of Marriage from Preinventory to Postinventory and Chi-Square Test for Significance of Change

Response	Change in perception			χ^2 -value ^a	p
	Increase	Decrease	Same		
I see my marriage as dynamic	5	0	39	3.20	
My spouse sees our marriage as dynamic	7	0	36	5.14	<.05

^aRequires 3.80 at .05.

As Vincent (1973) reminded, impressions are real--not right or wrong. There appeared to be some indication that the individual thought his perceptions of their marriage was better than the opinion that he thought his spouse had of the marriage. Again, such reaction may be partially explained by the tendency for individuals to express negative rather than positive feelings to a marriage partner, as demonstrated in the interaction sessions of the retreats when positive feelings were verbalized. In many instances partners who had been married for 20 years or more said, "I have never heard you say that before!"

Although there appeared to be no statistical proof, frequency counts on the postinventory showed that 44 of the

46 respondents thought they had a better marriage than most couples they knew. One spouse thought their marriage was worse than that of most other couples, and one spouse made no response. It may be argued that one tends to be defensive of the choice which one has made in a marriage partner.

From this retreat experience 42 participants agreed that their marriage had been enriched, while 4 were unsure, which reflects a favorable response to this learning experience. Responses to the question that asked for a general reaction to the retreat reinforced the positiveness of the group's reactions: 25 were very satisfied, 19 were satisfied, and 2 were dissatisfied. Overall, these responses reflected a satisfied group of participants.

All respondents thought that a periodic marital check-up would be helpful, which perhaps either indicated their desire for positive growth or was an expression of willingness to devote time and money to that purpose. The need for assistance with marital problems was a topic of conversation in many of the retreats, was written into questionnaires, and was found in interview responses from selected couples. Marital health apparently is becoming an accepted concept. As the general public becomes more dedicated to preventive rather than corrective measures in all dimensions of life, marital health logically should become a recognized dimension of concern.

Hypothesis III--following participation in a marriage enrichment retreat, husbands and wives will express increased commitment to their own marriage--is accepted.

Commitment to Help Others

Once having experienced something good, most Americans desire to share the experience with others. This held true for many of the participants following a marriage enrichment retreat. Forty-one participants indicated on the postinventory that they felt able to help other couples enrich their marriage; five were unsure. Responses to the open-end question on the postinventory, "I wish I could . . ." included:

- Help other couples realize that no marriage is perfect, and encourage them to seek help as ____ and I have and make divorce extinct.
- Help others see the importance of working on marriage success.
- Have more time to learn the leadership role so that I could help others in an effective manner.
- Find a method of providing marriage enrichment retreats for low-income families.
- Attend more retreats and interest others in participating in such events.
- Continue with and help others in this same vein in marriage enrichment, either in weekends, growth groups, or whatever.
- Continue until I can become a leader.
- Have the depth of insight into marriage that I see in David Mace. I wish I could someday lead or assist in retreats of this nature.

--Help others find marriage as enriching and satisfying as I feel it is.

--Share this experience with others.

--Attend more and tell everyone in the world how wonderful marriage can be in spite of problems (or because of problems). The problems can be used as stepping stones.

Twelve of the 46 participants expressed themselves as directly concerned with helping other couples. They appeared to be desirous to help, but expressed doubt about their capability to do so. This same doubt was expressed by some of the couples selected for interview. The need for further training and learning experiences was written into many of the responses. Some participants obviously were more concerned about their own needs and personal growth than interested in helping others. Marriage enrichment is the primary objective of the retreat.

Since no statistical evidence was found to reinforce hypothesis IV--following participation in a marriage enrichment retreat, husbands and wives will express commitment to help other couples enrich their marriage--it is neither accepted nor rejected, although there appeared to be some evidence of such commitment. Further research may produce an answer to this prediction. Some evidence may be provided through determination of the number of couples who experience marriage enrichment and then become members of ACME, an organization whose major objective is the building of support for the institution of marriage through sharing with other couples in mutual efforts toward marital growth.

Anecdotal Record

Six interviews with selected couples who had participated in a marriage enrichment retreat with Mace and Mace comprised the anecdotal record. These interviews were tape-recorded and then transcribed verbatim.

The couples interviewed were selected to give as diverse sample as possible with a small number. The time lapse from retreat participation to interview ranged from one and one-half years to two weeks prior to the interview. The same questions were asked of each couple:

1. What if any are the lasting or persisting effects of the marriage enrichment retreat?
2. How could the marriage enrichment retreat be improved?
3. Have you recommended the marriage enrichment retreat to other couples?
4. Have you had the opportunity to help other couples as a result of this experience?

After the recording session the couples were eager to discuss other areas of interest relating to marriage enrichment and were willing to provide their assistance in the evaluative study.

The most lasting effects of the marriage enrichment retreat for the interviewees seemed to be in the area of improved communication. This improvement was mentioned by four of the couples and was referred to indirectly by the other

two couples. Couple communication and improved communication with children were mentioned. The opportunity to be away with time to themselves was mentioned by two couples, with one couple being made aware of how much they needed time to themselves.

In the area of suggested improvements of the retreat responses varied. Time management was one concern; the length of the first evening session was mentioned specifically by two couples and long periods of sitting was mentioned by others. The number of couples in the retreat was mentioned, but it was difficult to ascertain how this much time could be invested in fewer couples. The idea of a longer period of time for the retreat was advanced, but most of the participant couples seemed to feel that the weekend was long enough. Each of the couples made reference to their need for some kind of follow-up, as was the need for another retreat experience. The desire to join with other couples in a growth group was expressed. The ACME was mentioned as a possible source of continued assistance, but a need for ongoing personal relationships with other like-minded couples was apparent. More specific training for leadership of other groups was a concern of one couple.

Most of the couples interviewed had shared their experiences with other individuals or couples. There was some diversity of opinion as to what type of person would benefit most from a retreat experience. Some felt that those

participants who had considerable training in the area of human relations would benefit less from a retreat experience than those who experienced retreat as a first insight into the area. One couple thought that it would be better if retreats were comprised of individuals who did not know each other.

The interviewer concluded that four of the couples were enthusiastic about their retreat experience, one couple was moderately enthusiastic, and one couple was less than enthusiastic. Their degree of enthusiasm would, of course, partially influence their recommendations to other couples. In general it appeared that retreat participants would recommend the experience.

Each couple interviewed obviously was concerned for their own marriage, yet also were concerned about other couples who were in need of help. Responses were divided as to whether or not they felt better able to help other couples since their retreat experience. Time schedules and specific phases of the family life cycle often were determining factors as to whether or not participant couples felt they could be of help to other couples. Concern also was expressed by these couples as to whether or not they were capable of helping other couples until they themselves had further training.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Believing that the husband-wife relationship is vital to the well being of the family and society as a whole, it appeared desirable to determine the success of marriage enrichment retreats as one approach to marriage enrichment. Marriage enrichment is regarded as a process that focuses on growth and development, a facilitating process that brings into play existing but latent resources within the couple themselves that can promote growth and development within the marriage.

Specifically, the marriage enrichment retreats, as conceived and conducted by Mace and Mace or leaders trained by them, were the focus of this study. The primary purpose of this exploratory study was to determine if a measurable change resulted from a couple's participation in a weekend marriage enrichment retreat.

A preinventory and postinventory utilizing an experimental and a pilot group comprised the basic design for this study. Subjects in the experimental group were 23 couples who were retreat participants. The pilot group, composed of 18 couples who had not experienced a marriage enrichment retreat, was primarily used as a check against such phenomena as change resulting from pre-posttest time lapse and

awareness. Attention was focused on changes in consensus, communication, and commitment between spouses as a result of participation in a weekend marriage enrichment retreat.

From a listing of ten standards by which family success has been measured (Farber, 1957) preinventory and post-inventory rankings were made by both spouses. Spearman's Rank Order Test and the sign rank test for paired observations were used to test significance of change in consensus. Following participation in marriage enrichment retreat, consensus between the responses of husbands and wives in ranking selected values did increase.

Hill's (1967) Marital Communication and Agreement Test was used as the indicator of change in communication between spouses. Change as to frequency of discussion and agreement on selected topics was assessed for each topic using Walker and Lev's (1953) Chi-Square Test for Significance of Change. Significant improvement between spouses in their ability to communicate thoughts, feelings, and intentions was found following participation in marriage enrichment retreat.

Couples who had experienced a retreat expressed increased commitment to their own marriage. Some expressed commitment to helping other couples enrich their marriage; others felt that without further training their ability to help other couples would be limited.

Throughout the study the number of couples changing was not great. Homogeneity of the subjects and atypical

demographic characteristics may have contributed to lack of change among retreat participants.

Improvement in communication was seen by the participant couples as the aspect of marriage that needed the most improvement and the concern about marriage into which they gained deeper insight as a result of the retreat experience. Skills that facilitate marriage enrichment apparently can be taught and learned effectively within a group setting as afforded through marriage enrichment retreats. Comparisons with other educational approaches to the enhancement of husband-wife relationships would need to be made to determine if the time, money, and energy required on the part of leaders and learners could be used in a more productive manner.

Anecdotal records of interviews with six retreat participant couples after a time lapse ranging from one and one-half years to two weeks provided some evidence of washout effect of the retreat over time. It appears likely that a weekend experience could not meet the needs of participants to the depth desired or possible in all dimensions of their relationship. The need for further reinforcement following marriage enrichment retreat participation was evinced.

From this study it appears that marriage enrichment retreats can be a successful educational technique for couples with relatively stable marriages who choose such an experience.

Objectives of this study were to:

1. Initiate formal evaluation of marriage enrichment retreats as conducted by Mace and Mace or leaders trained by them.
2. Develop an instrument by which some of the changes that occur during marriage enrichment retreats can be described.
3. Evaluate marriage enrichment retreats as an educational method for gaining additional meaning from husband-wife relationships for couples with "relatively stable" marriages.

These objectives were dealt with and met in the study; however, no claim is made that this exploratory study met all of the objectives to the degree possible or desired. Rather, this researcher believes that the study constituted a beginning to the evaluation of the marriage enrichment retreat as an educational tool. It is hoped that the study findings will be improved upon by family life educators through ongoing experiences with marriage enrichment retreats.

The preinventory and postinventory experimental design appeared to be appropriate for this study. The major tests used for the consensus and communication aspects of the study were satisfactory. Since all items to be ranked for consensus were of importance, they proved both difficult and time-consuming for some participants. A subsequent study may

utilize a different table, but it is difficult to find a generally brief table where all items are easily understood. Most consensus tables are lengthy and require more reading time. Since time from the marriage enrichment retreat that could be devoted to evaluation was limited, this was a major consideration in instrument design. In the communication test a wider choice of responses might decrease clustering of responses. Regardless of design, this will likely continue to be a problem if groups who participate in retreats are as homogeneous as they were in this study.

Improved wording of some questions would perhaps yield responses of greater clarity. If less educated participants were involved in marriage enrichment retreats there might be a lack of understanding of terminology.

The type of experiences treated herein needs to be tested with all races and with subjects of varying socioeconomic background. The educational experience of marriage enrichment retreat appeared to be useful to most of the participant couples. Success apparently depends on the leader, for the less educated may be more suspect of such an experience than are the more educated. Cost of such training is a major concern. Couples who may need the training most may be least able to afford the cost. Some type of cost-sharing educational program could be one answer to this dilemma.

Implications and Recommendations

From the experiences and findings of this study, as well as personal experience, the following implications and recommendations are offered.

1. There has been little support of the family, and especially the husband-wife relationship, a relationship which appears crucial to the well-being of the total family and worthy of educational effort. Problems of children may be minimized if there is a strong, viable husband-wife relationship. The myth of naturalism must be defeated. Educators should teach men how to be husbands and women how to be wives. The next step would be to build upon this foundation and teach parenting, if the couple chooses to rear children. Such instruction would be significant to the individual, the family, the community, and society as a whole.

2. The suggested instruction appears dependent upon teachers who have the knowledge, skill, and personal attributes to teach in this area of human development. Marriage enrichment retreats appear to be effective. There may be other ways of reaching and teaching adults that are equally effective. Certainly, if this type of teaching is to be effective the personal attributes and knowledge of the leader is of primary concern. The leader of marriage enrichment must be able to create an atmosphere of mutual trust, and he must have the basic confidence in the ability of normal people to help themselves. People must be helped to believe

that resources for growth and change lie within themselves. Leaders appear to be influential in modeling behavior and sharing problems. Can the training of such leaders become a part of college curricula? This would appear to be possible and essential, for the recruiting and training of such leaders may be lost if left to volunteer programs.

3. A single weekend marriage enrichment program may not be enough impetus for change without some follow-up. Mace and Mace readily agreed to this need. Weekend experiences need to be internalized and integrated into the family system if they are to have lasting effects. Growth groups, enabling groups, resource groups, or by whatever name, continued reinforcement appears essential to most families.

4. The Cooperative Extension Service, as a part of its dedication to lifelong learning, could develop a corps of trainer consultants to train lay and professional leaders, and to include a support system of ongoing consultant services. Qualifying standards should be set for people who lead retreats and other training in the area of marriage enrichment, concomitant with training leaders and teachers for this role.

5. Skills in interpersonal relationships developed within the marital relationship are likely to be transferable to other relationships. Competency in interpersonal relationships enables one to be more successful in all of life's experiences.

6. Most of the problem areas of the couples under study dealt with inadequate skills, such as poor communication; poor management of finances, time, and energy; and ineffective relationships. All of these are skills that can be taught and can be learned. Improved skills in these areas would enhance the adult's opinion of himself, which could in turn promote further achievement resulting in a cyclic effect.

7. Man must be helped to retain his humaneness. Training throughout the whole of life may be needed to equip the individual to interact effectively in a changing world. Certainly basic relationships are at stake. If the husband-wife relationship can be strengthened society as a whole will tend to benefit.

The family is the basic unit of the social structure. If this essential unit of society is to be strengthened, more must be learned about its behavioral aspects. People continue to search for meaning in life that perhaps can best be found within the family unit. Throughout history the family has been able to cope with a variety of problems. The need for the family is a societal need, for, as Mace and Mace said, as marriage goes so goes the family, as the family goes so goes the community, as the community goes so goes the nation.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: The Preinventory and Postinventory

Directions for Completing the Inventories

(Pilot Group Only)

The enclosed preinventory is to be filled out Friday night after supper. The postinventory is to be filled out the following Sunday after the noon meal. Please do not discuss the inventories with each other until after you have completed the postinventory.

The inventory with the letter "a" is for the husband's response; the inventory with the letter "b" is for the wife's response. For example, 70a would be for the husband to complete and 70b would be for the wife.

There are some questions you cannot answer, for you will not have participated in a weekend marriage enrichment retreat. Please fill out all you can. This is confidential information.

PLEASE DROP YOUR INVENTORIES INTO THE MANILA ENVELOPE THAT IS ENCLOSED AND MAIL ON MONDAY. THANK YOU!

NUMBER

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT RETREAT

PREINVENTORY

By participating in this inventory you are helping us to know whether or not your needs are being met in the Marriage Enrichment Retreat. Thank you. Your response will be kept confidential.

Section I

1. _____ is the number of years I have been married.
2. _____ is the number of times I have been married.

3. _____ ages of boys.
_____ ages of girls.
4. _____ are other members of our household.
5. _____ is the year in which I was born.
6. What was the year you completed in school? (Circle one.)
7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20+
7. _____ is my chief occupation.
8. Would you please check (✓) the general group in which your FAMILY income fell last year. Remember, there is no way that you can be identified.
- | | | |
|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| _____ under \$5,000 | _____ \$15,000-16,999 | _____ \$27,000-28,999 |
| _____ \$5,000-6,999 | _____ \$17,000-18,999 | _____ \$29,000-30,999 |
| _____ \$7,000-8,999 | _____ \$19,000-20,999 | _____ \$31,000-32,999 |
| _____ \$9,000-10,999 | _____ \$21,000-22,999 | _____ \$33,000-34,999 |
| _____ \$11,000-12,999 | _____ \$23,000-24,999 | _____ \$35,000 & over |
| _____ \$13,000-14,999 | _____ \$25,000-26,999 | |
9. The reason I came to the retreat is _____
-
10. I think that our own marriage can be enriched. Check (✓) one.
- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| _____ Strongly agree | _____ Disagree |
| _____ Agree | _____ Strongly disagree |
11. I feel that we can help other couples to enrich their marriage. Check (✓) one.
- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| _____ Strongly agree | _____ Disagree |
| _____ Agree | _____ Strongly disagree |
12. Two things about our marriage that please me. Please list
-
-
13. Two things about our marriage that could be better. Please list.
-
-

14. Two things that I would like to be able to do to improve our marriage. Please list.

Section II

Below are listed ten standards by which family success has been measured. Mark "1" after the item you consider most important in judging the success of families (in the column headed Rank). Mark "2" after the item you consider next most important. Keep doing this until you have a number after each item.

There is no "correct" order of items; the order you choose is correct for you. Remember, there can be only one item marked "1," one item marked "2," one item marked "3," . . . , one item marked "10."

	<u>RANK</u>
A PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY. The ability of a family to give its members a respected place in the community and to make them good citizens (not criminals or undesirable people).	_____
HEALTHY AND HAPPY CHILDREN.	_____
COMPANIONSHIP. The family members feeling comfortable with each other and being able to get along together.	_____
PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT. Continued increase in family members' ability to understand and get along with people and to accept responsibility.	_____
SATISFACTION IN AFFECTION SHOWN. Satisfaction of family members with amount of affection shown and of the husband and wife in their sex life.	_____
ECONOMIC SECURITY. Being sure that the family will be able to keep up or improve its standard of living.	_____
EMOTIONAL SECURITY. Feeling that the members of the family really need each other emotionally and trust each other fully.	_____
MORAL AND RELIGIOUS UNITY. Trying to live a family life according to religious and moral principles and teachings.	_____

RANK

EVERYDAY INTEREST. Interesting day-to-day activities having to do with house and family which keep family life from being boring.

A HOME. Having a place where the family members feel they belong, where they feel at ease, and where other people do not interfere in their lives.

Section III

As you know, some married couples discuss things that other married couples do not discuss. We would like to have you indicate by a check (✓) in the proper column how often you discuss the following matters and how closely you think you agree on them, even if you do not discuss them. Just answer as YOU see it. Do not try to guess how your spouse will respond.

CODE: Under WE DISCUSS: A = Often
B = Once in a while
C = Never

Under I THINK WE: D = Always agree
E = Almost always agree
F = Frequently agree
G = Frequently disagree
H = Almost always disagree
I = Always disagree

[illegible]

Ways of acting in public	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
Ideas about what is best in life	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
Wife's working	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
Sharing house- hold tasks	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___
Ways of dealing with your in- laws	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___

Section IV

Please check (✓) the response that best reflects your opinion regarding it:

- I need to learn to: My spouse needs to learn to:

___ Understand thoughts, feelings, intentions	___
___ Communicate thoughts, feelings, intentions	___
- I need to develop: My spouse needs to develop:

___ A more positive view of self	___
___ A more positive view of others	___
- I think: My spouse thinks:

___ That our marriage is dynamic (growing)	___
___ That our marriage is static (not growing)	___
- I think: My spouse thinks:

___ That we have a better marriage than most couples	___
___ That we have a worse marriage than most couples	___
- I think: My spouse thinks:

___ A periodic marital <u>checkup would</u> be helpful	___
___ A periodic marital <u>checkup would not</u> be helpful	___

NUMBER

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT RETREAT
POSTINVENTORY

By participating in this inventory you are helping us to determine whether or not the Marriage Enrichment Retreat was meaningful to you. Thank you.

Section I

1. These are some concerns about marriage into which I gained deeper insight:

2. These are some concerns about our marriage that in my opinion were not adequately dealt with:

3. I think that our own marriage has been enriched. Check (✓) one.

___ I agree ___ I am not sure ___ I disagree

4. I feel that we are now able to help other couples to enrich their marriage. Check (✓) one.

___ I agree ___ I am not sure ___ I disagree

5. In general, my reaction to the retreat is: Check (✓) one.

___ Very dissatisfied ___ Satisfied
___ Dissatisfied ___ Very satisfied

6. I wish I could _____
- _____

Section II

Below are listed ten standards by which family success has been measured. Mark "1" after the item you consider most important in judging the success of families (in the column headed Rank). Mark "2" after the item you consider next most important. Keep doing this until you have a number after each item.

There is no "correct" order of items; the order you choose is correct for you. Remember, there can be only one item marked "1," one item marked "2," one item marked "3," . . . , one item marked "10."

	<u>RANK</u>
A PLACE IN THE COMMUNITY. The ability of a family to give its members a respected place in the community and to make them good citizens (not criminals or undesirable people).	_____
HEALTHY AND HAPPY CHILDREN.	_____
COMPANIONSHIP. The family members feeling comfortable with each other and being able to get along together.	_____
PERSONALITY DEVELOPMENT. Continued increase in family members' ability to understand and get along with people and to accept responsibility.	_____
SATISFACTION IN AFFECTION SHOWN. Satisfaction of family members with amount of affection shown and of the husband and wife in their sex life.	_____
ECONOMIC SECURITY. Being sure that the family will be able to keep up or improve its standard of living.	_____
EMOTIONAL SECURITY. Feeling that the members of the family really need each other emotionally and trust each other fully.	_____
MORAL AND RELIGIOUS UNITY. Trying to live a family life according to religious and moral principles and teachings.	_____
EVERYDAY INTEREST. Interesting day-to-day activities having to do with house and family which keep family life from being boring.	_____
A HOME. Having a place where the family members feel they belong, where they feel at ease, and where other people do not interfere in their lives.	_____

Ways of acting in public

Ideas about what
is best in life

Wife's working

Sharing household tasks

Ways of dealing with your in-laws

Section IV

Please check (✓) the response that best reflects your opinion:

1. I have learned to: My spouse has learned to:

— Understand thoughts, feelings, intentions —
— Communicate thoughts, feelings, intentions —

- 2. I have developed:** **My spouse has developed:**

— A more positive view of self —
A more positive view of others —

3. I think: _____ My spouse thinks: _____

_____ That our marriage is dynamic (growing) _____
 _____ That our marriage is static (not growing) _____

4. I think: _____ My spouse thinks: _____

— That we have a better marriage than most —
 couples
 — That we have a worse marriage than most —
 couples

5. I think: _____ My spouse thinks: _____

_____ A periodic marital checkup would be _____
helpful

_____ A periodic marital checkup would not _____
be helpful

Appendix B: Anecdotal Record

The following is a transcription of taped interviews with six couples who had participated in marriage enrichment retreats.

INTERVIEWER: In the retreat of August, 1973, what, if any, do you feel were the lasting effects of the marriage enrichment retreat weekend?

COUPLE 1, HUSBAND: Personally, I think it was very helpful. It's sort of a highlight to the retreat to have that period alone with my wife to talk about those five things, as I recall, that I felt that I could and should change in relation to my part of marriage. In addition to those things which, if my wife took a look at, might improve our relationship and those of the other five groups, I believe were those things which maybe jointly we could work on. I've really forgotten, and I'm not sure it's terribly important that the description be accurate. But the process that came about as a result of our sitting together in private with the assignment to take a hard look at what we contribute to the marriage, both positively and then in a sense negatively, opened up a realm of communication, a level of communication that I don't feel we've ever enjoyed before. Additionally, I feel that a very definite residual effect from that has been a breakthrough which we made as a result of that conversation in terms of things--a couple of things--which had been blocking our communication, such as her fear of my anger. For in effect I said, you have to take that gamble that I can handle my anger, and that you can, and that by working through this our relationship will be a good bit deeper than it had. That's been a real residual effect, where we've learned to work through the walls--to work through the barriers. The dialoging was helpful in terms of not being afraid to do that--not necessarily to do it the same way, physically facing one another in a cross-legged fashion or whatever, or with such intensity; but, again, it was another tool or technique which we experienced--not watching someone else, but having to go through it ourselves, which I feel has helped us with a more honest communication between the two of us. I think, thirdly, that the styles of communication, though frankly I get confused--what's 1, 2, 3, 4--but, nevertheless, the simple fact that there is a way you can communicate with your partner which is less desirable, less reinforcing, and less positive than another. It's helpful to know. It's a simple thing to know it, but it's a little bit more complicated or complex when it comes to applying the general knowledge that you can put someone down, and that you do put someone down, and that it is often done for the purpose of making yourself look

superior while at the same time, of course, they feel more inferior. I think to consciously be aware that that is something that we do, and that there are other and better ways to achieve a desired rapport . . . This was extremely helpful. Ways to communicate and ways not to communicate. I think this is all I have to say.

COUPLE 1, WIFE: I do feel that in the setting in which we were in Montreat we were able to close out other things, such as children and washing dishes and this sort of thing, and really concentrate on each other and communicating with each other. In this way this setting did make it different from everyday life. I do think that it helped to improve our communication, although we still have a good way to go. I feel that the role-playing with the different styles of communications was excellent. I do think that you forget this if you don't have some reinforcement of it. I have found that I remember fairly well, although I have to remind myself every now and then that I'm using style 2 communication when I should be using perhaps style 4, and remind my partner of this also. I think that perhaps we need a little bit more reinforcement on this. But I do think that, overall, our communication has improved and, of course, we have had experiences before which have helped. But I do think this weekend was particularly helpful with this.

INTERVIEWER: Now let's think for just a minute about ways that the retreat might be improved if we were doing this again, and if you were doing this again. Just from your point of view, is there any suggestion that you would make as to how we might improve the retreat experience? Either one of you may lead out.

COUPLE 1, WIFE: I really don't have any suggestions about how to improve the retreat except perhaps for the follow-up, and I feel that there could be some sort of follow-up. But I'm not sure just the best way, so I'll just have to leave it there.

INTERVIEWER: Were you thinking perhaps of a growth group or any further communication or another opportunity to get back together? Would any of these three be possibilities to you?

COUPLE 1, WIFE: Yes. Maybe another opportunity to get together at a later date.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any suggestions--this one about whether or not there are ways to improve the marriage enrichment retreat?

COUPLE 1, HUSBAND: Oh yes. Well, yes, in my mind at least. There's always a danger whenever you have a conference, for whatever the purpose, that after people have worked for part or all of the day and then driven a considerable distance they're tired and they come into a situation, particularly if it's a situation where their personality is somewhat on the line, where they are without means to avoid participating in a discussion such as we had the first night. Granted, as he said, you'll find this; I'm sure he didn't say it that night. He may have. He said, you'll find this will be a relaxing weekend, so I mean he must have said it that night. But we did go on for I would say at least three hours and maybe four and maybe five after we got there. And I'm always very sensitive in this and I set up the conference--or if I have anything to do with setting up the conference--that we go easy, a little bit easy. Particularly if it involves relationships when we kick it off. I think it depends on the makeup of the group a great deal--obviously in who leads the group and the purpose of the group meeting. But I think I would raise a yellow flag, orange flag of caution, and not go too far, either in depth or in time the first night. I think it was splendid that we had that Quaker service on Sunday. It was an experience I have never been exposed to. I doubt if others have, if many others had, either. And I feel it sufficient to mention it from the standpoint that many of us--some of us--speak too often and listen and reflect too little, and I think that was a practical exercise in introspective thinking--in reflection. From this standpoint, I'd particularly like to commend their giving us the time to do that. I'm glad that it was a Quaker service. I'm glad it wasn't any other sort of thing, like Presbyterian or whatever. I think the only other comment I would make is I wish that there might be enough time in the time frame for husbands and wives to go off with an assigned exercise, and I think that's how I would do it; and I guess I'd need to amplify that just a bit. As a part of a learning process--again to reinforce the fact that it can be done--would be that you could sit down and talk about some very personal and painful things without it blowing up. And if it does blow up you have the group to come back to and to help you put it back together, in focus, and in the right perspective. So I think to have two sessions with husbands and wives who went out with maybe a little touchy subject to explore, and knowing that the group is going to again back you up if things get out of hand--I think this would help.

INTERVIEWER: Have you recommended this marriage enrichment retreat experience to any other couples since you experienced it?

COUPLE 1, HUSBAND: No, I have not been able to do that. I have done this. I have felt so strongly about ACME--the purpose of it--that I've testified to the General Assembly, to the Mental Health Study Commission which is now writing its report, and I have spelled out specific purposes of ACME and have suggested that they talk with David Mace (?), and I have told David this also. I have mentioned this to a very responsible and highly thought of psychiatrist friend of mine in Atlanta, who is also a real swinger in terms of things of this sort. So, whereas I've really from my own personal situation not been able to talk to others about it in the limited period of time I had after the retreat, I did push it hard at the highest levels that I could, which would hopefully spread the word on the broadest basis.

INTERVIEWER: Have you had a chance to talk to any of the women who might be friends of yours, or have you felt that you wanted to talk about the retreat?

COUPLE 1, WIFE: I've told several friends--teacher friends and members of our church--about it and they've shown an interest. The retreats, I haven't known exactly where they were, or whether they could get in, so I'm sure there would be some that might be interested in it if they knew when they would be held.

INTERVIEWER: Have you had the opportunity to help any other couples as a result of this experience? In other words, have you felt that you were more able to help a couple if they had a problem; or has this opportunity come to either one of you?

COUPLE 1, WIFE: We have participated in a growth group--an organizational meeting and two other meetings in which we had some opportunity to help other couples. But due to our present situation--physical illness at home--we have not been able to do this as much as we probably would otherwise.

COUPLE 1, HUSBAND: I would like, if I may, to add that a few of the insights which I feel that I got from participating in it, I've been able to apply some of these insights in talking to other couples on separate occasions--not in the fashion of a counselor or counselee, but as a friend, on a friend-to-friend basis. I also would like to add that I have plugged this very hard. To me this is care and treatment of marriage, and so I pushed it from that standpoint.

INTERVIEWER: This is a couple that was in the retreat about a year and a half ago. Is that right--or two years?

COUPLE 2, HUSBAND: Well, we went to two retreats.

COUPLE 2, WIFE: We went to a follow-up with the same group.

COUPLE 2, HUSBAND AND WIFE: Six months later.

INTERVIEWER: When was the first one?

COUPLE 2, WIFE: Three years ago?

COUPLE 2, HUSBAND: I was thinking either two or two and a half years.

COUPLE 2, WIFE: It was the year before I went back to work, so it was year before last. And then the six months came while I was teaching. So it's probably been within the last two and a half years, okay?

INTERVIEWER: What, if any, were the lasting effects of this experience of a marriage enrichment weekend for you? Would you mind expressing yourself; or do you think there were any lasting effects?

COUPLE 2, WIFE: I think there were some lasting effects in that it opened up a whole new area of communication, which I personally hadn't thought that much about. It was a sort of training thing, and also made you more conscious of how important it is to communicate with your partner and get in touch with your feelings.

COUPLE 2, HUSBAND: That's my strongest response, too. If there were any lasting effects, I think it would be that. And it also made you feel the need for some continued growth experiences. We were just going back every six months, so to speak, and we found that even going back six months later we couldn't plug in and pick up where we left off with the same group. So, it pointed out . . . I think you might call this a lasting effect. They pointed out to us the need for a continued something in between there that needed to be done.

INTERVIEWER: Well, this I think needs writing down. Next question--our next concern--do you have suggestions for improving this experience of a weekend marriage enrichment retreat, or do you have other suggestions to make that would follow up the weekend? Any particular kind of thing that you can think of, or any experience during the weekend that you would like to see changed, or any improvement we could make?

COUPLE 2, HUSBAND: Well, of course, one of the things that bothered us was the brevity of time. I feel that its very difficult for a group to become a group in that length of time--to really get to the place where they can open up and trust each other. It's very unusual that a group can do

that in that length of time. I feel that a little longer time there--not a whole week. I think maybe that might be too much, but a little longer time than we had.

INTERVIEWER: Do you think that same group might come back together--say in two weeks or a month? Would this be more useful?

COUPLE 2, HUSBAND: That would be more useful than the six months, because we found that the second time we came back together, nothing happened. It was just flat, and nobody understood why. Nothing had happened with any . . . Well, there was one couple that had tried marriage enrichment--a group on their own--but outside of that there was nothing. It was just really a bad experience the second time.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any other comments on that?

COUPLE 2, WIFE: I agree with that feeling. I think it helped us communicate with each other, but as far as accomplishing what we should have, by the time we met back together we had not really grown very much in our communication. It's really like starting over.

INTERVIEWER: Well, since you had this experience, and I know that you are both in helping roles, have you had the opportunity to say to any other couple that you feel they would benefit from this experience?

COUPLE 2, WIFE: We were just saying that probably there are some other ways of improving rather than thinking about how we helped other couples. Let's go back to that, okay?

COUPLE 2, HUSBAND: Well, I think one thing about the brevity of time we had, I think when we went away from the experience and came back six months later we had not accomplished very much. And I think that if we are going to be limited to a weekend experience maybe we ought to try to figure out some way where the leader of that particular group--whoever it might be--could provide something for these couples to work on in the way of printed materials, in the way of concrete suggestions. Or, the group might work out its own suggestions or its own goals, so if they came back a month or two months later they would have something to go on. We went away empty-handed and we came back empty-handed, so to speak. That would be another way to improve it. And then, you know, we were talking about the time, and that sort of

thing. However, that might be allowed for. At the same time I don't think that there was enough time for the group to be together in activities outside of group sharing. You know, you get that intensity built up, and then you go your separate ways and you come back and you build it up again; and it just seems to me that there needed to be some other kind of group activity or recreation where we could really come together. And that also is part of becoming a group, I think, and we didn't have time for that.

INTERVIEWER: Did you feel pushed for time all the way through?

COUPLE 2, HUSBAND: I didn't, did you?

COUPLE 2, WIFE: I think the second time we went I did more than the first time. The first time was not so rushed.

INTERVIEWER: If you think of other suggestions, we'll come back to them, if you like, or if you have other things you want to tell us . . .

COUPLE 2, WIFE: One of the things that they did suggest was the book More Joy in Your Marriage--using the exercises in this book, that being my first experience in a group situation or really doing much communication of that type. That book was very hard to start right into, and I think if we had met several times and had grown acquainted that would have been more of my speed.

INTERVIEWER: Have you tried Clinebell's The Intimate Marriage? Did you find this easier to follow?

COUPLE 2, HUSBAND: Very helpful. But, you know, unless you've got something that the group agrees upon mutually, or someone gives you for guidelines and that sort of thing, and you have a definite goal to accomplish or try to accomplish--something to work on and come back with later--most of the couples I don't think are really going to get much done.

INTERVIEWER: Continued nurturance or something?

COUPLE 2, HUSBAND: Yes, yes some kind. One of the other things that frustrate me, too, is the fact that I don't know why the leaders of our group felt this way. Perhaps they assumed that we knew more than we did about this kind of experience. But one of the things that disturbs me a little bit is that when we go away to have one of these experiences it not only is a personal growth thing, it's also supposed to be a training experience where we would go out and do the same kind of thing with people, where we are. And it seems

to me that there is a lack of structured training for--let's say a need for--more training. I don't really believe that the average couple who goes and has a weekend experience is really qualified to go back and lead a retreat.

INTERVIEWER: I think that Dr. Mace is saying now that at least four retreat experiences would be necessary before you would try to co-lead with someone who has had more experience than that. I think part of this has come from insight with couples who have had maybe not as good experiences in trying this.

COUPLE 2, HUSBAND: I'm glad to hear that, because I didn't know that. Well, I believe he did state it in his last memo.

INTERVIEWER: Co-lead twice so you would have six retreat weekend experiences before you would try to launch on your own. Have you had a chance or would you recommend this to other couples for a weekend retreat in the helping roles that you are both in; or have you seen couples who you feel would benefit from this type of experience?

COUPLE 2, WIFE: I know some couples right now in our own community that I think would really benefit from this type of experience. A lot of groundwork needs to be laid about an enrichment group, because they identify sensitivity groups with this, and are afraid of them. Once this information gets around--what it really is--accenting the positive aspects of marriage, I think more people will be interested in it.

COUPLE 2, HUSBAND: Yes, I see a lot of potential there. And we have talked enthusiastically about our experiences to the people who have asked us about it, and to some who haven't asked us about it. We've recommended it--not only to those in our own parish, but others outside.

INTERVIEWER: Have you had the opportunity to use any of what you learned at the weekend retreat in helping other couples, since your experience? Have you felt that, as you mentioned in the first, your communication--have you felt that you've been able to transfer some of this into helping other couples improve their communications?

COUPLE 2, HUSBAND: Yes, I think so, but in an indirect sort of way--not in a structured group situation. But, yes, I've definitely used it.

INTERVIEWER: Just in your helping roles. I guess what I'm really saying is, do you feel that what you learned as a marriage enrichment experience is transferable into other relationships, in husband and wife relationships? For instance, if you were teaching, would you find some of these same things useful in understanding your pupil or your pupil understanding you?

COUPLE 2, HUSBAND: Yes.

COUPLE 2, WIFE: In following feelings, and learning to express feelings.

INTERVIEWER: This is important to anyone. Thank you. Is there anything else you would like to add?

INTERVIEWER: This is a couple who were in a marriage enrichment retreat approximately five months ago--a husband and wife who are going to share with us. First of all, we'd like to ask what, if any, are the lasting effects or persisting effects from the marriage enrichment retreat experience?

COUPLE 3, HUSBAND: I'll try to answer this first. I guess in trying to answer this I have difficulty, in that this experience for me is something which is embedded in a lot of other experiences that I have had recently. However, I've felt that the identification of how I related with my wife and seeing this in relationship to other people--other couples in the group--that this was helpful. I think that one of the lasting effects would be maybe a greater awareness of the variety of how people do relate, and realizing that for my wife and for myself there can be variety in relating. And so this, I guess, is one lasting effect. It's sort of an other awareness, so that this helps us to realize that we need not be rigid in how we approach each other in our relationship--that there are other ways. I'll turn this over to my wife here.

COUPLE 3, WIFE: Yes, the thing that meant so much to me was simply getting away--just the two of us, which is a rare treat for us. We've been tied down with young children, and we're just beginning to have some time of our own. But it pointed up to me how much we need this time just to look at ourselves. We're so often dealing with so many problems that we haven't taken time to just look at the two of us in our marriage, and where we are, where we've been, and where we're going. I felt that this was very helpful to do this; and I think that the lasting effect is that it has made me conscious that we need to take time to continue to do this.

INTERVIEWER: Excellent! Now may I ask you, as you think back on this weekend retreat, would you have suggestions for improving the weekend--content, organization, anything that comes to your mind? (Long pause).

COUPLE 3, HUSBAND: I'm glad you said this because I think this is important. One of the things--experiences--I recall was at the very beginning where we introduced each other. I thought the method of introduction was beautiful in that the question asked of couples--well, it wasn't one question, it was just an open-ended to ask them anything about the marriage that they would like to relate. However, this took three hours, and it was tiring, even though interesting. And part of the difficulty there was in the numbers; and I felt this not only in the introduction the first evening but all the way through. There was maybe not the opportunity for some couples, unless they took the initiative themselves, to relate either in a dyad of exchange of information or feelings. The tendency, I felt, was somewhat to let them be where they were without encouraging them. Now I realize part of the dynamic was that you did not have to say anything, unless you wanted to. But I still felt that some encouragement might have helped with some couples--that if they were encouraged they would have related, whereas just leaving it to themselves they did not relate as much.

INTERVIEWER: Did you feel this way, too?

COUPLE 3, WIFE: Well, I do feel that we have had difficulty in that we have been to some more intensive sessions dealing with personal growth, and so forth, and have seen stronger encouragement in helping a person deal with problems. But as we've talked about this, and this was a good experience for us--to see a low-keyed approach, particularly as a first experience, because some people can begin on this, and I guess when you come down to it growth is slower than we like. But having it low-keyed like this I think definitely I can see the benefit in enabling some folks to begin to open up. And there is a real danger in trying to force growth or having too much too soon; so I guess I really don't have any suggestions as evaluations. I think it is very good.

INTERVIEWER: Have you recommended this experience to any other couples? Have you had a chance to do this?

COUPLE 3, WIFE: Yes, we have talked about it to other couples. We haven't taken any real steps as far as saying, I know when one is coming up and you really ought to go. I think we have been a little bit more knowing where we are going to go. We have not been back to another one yet. We intend to.

COUPLE 3, HUSBAND: Yes, I'd like to say that overall my feeling was that it was a beautiful experience, even though I had some drawbacks, as I mentioned just a few minutes ago; but we, in relating the experience to others, related it enthusiastically. I see this as a great promise. I'll just say that.

INTERVIEWER: All right, let's look at one more question, or one more idea. As a result of the experience you had, have you been able to help other couples in a manner you feel you could attribute to the experience of a marriage enrichment retreat?

COUPLE 3, HUSBAND: Yes. I found something in this marriage retreat that was particularly helpful to me. Before I mention this, let me preface my remarks by saying that in my counseling and in my experiences with personal growth and other experiences that has created risk in conflict utilization. Most of what I've been involved in has been more intense than what I experienced at the marriage enrichment retreat--it has been more in the mode of confrontation. What I found quite valuable in this, I take as sort of a key for myself in the future, in being able to see that you can get some mileage in helping people to relate and to see each other in their dynamic in the low-keyed experience. This I think was very significant because what I have experienced tends to run the risk of threatening people--of putting them very quickly on the defensive. And seeing what happened at the marriage enrichment retreat where you could bring people together and very quickly help them to feel comfortable with what they were doing and therefore in this were able to relate in substance. I think this is very significant.

INTERVIEWER: Do you have anything to add?

COUPLE 3, WIFE: I've been involved in a good many other things--for instance, Parent Effectiveness Training; and then we have a support group that has been going through transformation, and we are attending this weekend the Minnesota Couples Communication Training Program. Let me say we are hoping maybe to use this more and more as we are involved in these other things. I think it definitely has shown us the importance of couples communicating, and this stands out to me as a priority--that if we're really going to help people in any preventive kind of way, if you get the couples and get them to develop communication there, I think it's given me--helped me--to see the importance of this [communication].

INTERVIEWER: We're talking with a couple who was in a marriage enrichment retreat approximately six months ago.

What if any were the lasting or persisting effects of your experience in the marriage enrichment retreat? You may dialogue or take turns in how you want to do it.

COUPLE 4, HUSBAND: Lasting effects were beginning to fade out in about three to four weeks, and now it's barely a memory, for me.

COUPLE 4, WIFE: We thought about it for a while and we kept saying, now you know we talked about this, this, and this. What are we going to do about it in our relationship, or how can we handle this situation on what we may have discussed there? We did a lot of talking for a while about how we reacted to some things and how we thought it helped us talk about some things we hadn't talked about before. Then we sort of quit, didn't we?

COUPLE 4, HUSBAND: Yes.

COUPLE 4, WIFE: But we still think about it every now and then. But I think it was--it gave us some opportunity at the moment to focus in on how we were right at that time. How our relationship was at that time--to focus in on it and to think about it. And I don't think we have said that we felt the effects may have dwindled down, but I think there was an impression made that's still there.

INTERVIEWER: Such as?

COUPLE 4, WIFE: We zero back in. Well, we--maybe I should say I. For at the time we had just had a baby and we were spending so much time in physical care and in the activities of running a home and moving and things that we had forgotten to communicate--had forgotten to talk--and that was one of the things that we talked about a great deal. And I think it's something that we say to each other now and then when we're not talking enough to each other. And maybe if we hadn't zeroed in at a certain point we would not recognize that was what was going on and wouldn't be able to just point-blank say to each other, now look, we know what's happening!

INTERVIEWER: Do you have any suggestions for improving the marriage enrichment retreat weekend contentwise or organizationwise--numbers--anything?

COUPLE 4, HUSBAND: From my limited experience of it, I don't. Yes, I do think that it's very good. I think we enjoyed it, and I appreciated it for the time it gave us to stop and look. But I seriously question anybody being able to conduct a retreat on any level other than what Dr. Mace and his wife did.

INTERVIEWER: You mean you question people just deciding that they're going to do this? That it takes a certain amount of skill?

COUPLE 4, HUSBAND: Yes, very definitely. I may be wrong, and I'm not saying that Dr. Mace and Vera would be the only ones that could do it. But I am saying it would have to have the quality that they gave it; and without this I think it's just a weekend in the mountains, or anywhere else. But I have no idea how I could improve it, or give you any idea how to improve it.

COUPLE 4, WIFE: The only thing that we talked about at one time was that some people just can't sit for long periods of time. And there's a lot of sitting and batting around ideas; and that you have to be able to do that in order to physically endure it. But, it was planned in such a way that if you got tired of sitting in the chair you could just get up and sit down on the floor, or move around, or feel free. You felt so comfortable that you could get up and move around to make yourself stay tuned into what was going on.

COUPLE 4, HUSBAND: That is one thing, that with a new group together, as you would have in our situation, you would have to be very careful--or you might could improve on this. The session should be in a reasonable amount of time; you could get too long. You work up this high emotional feeling between many of the couples and then you just hold that pitch too long.

INTERVIEWER: Have you recommended marriage enrichment retreat as an experience for other couples?

COUPLE 4, WIFE: We talked about it with other couples, but we didn't just say, "I think you ought to go and get in on some of this." We talked about it--we talked about the fact that we had gone, and I did particularly to some co-professionals, fellow students, and that sort of thing, who knew that we were going and were interested from that standpoint--both personally and professionally. They wanted to know about the experience, and they wanted us to share it with them.

INTERVIEWER: Have you, as a result of this weekend experience, been able to help other couples, or do you feel better equipped to help other couples meet their needs and their problems?

COUPLE 4, HUSBAND: I don't think we have directly, but we have thought that we probably could if the occasion arises. But we have been raising babies, and we really haven't been that involved with other couples.

COUPLE 4, WIFE: I don't think I have directly done this, but I think that because I've had these experiences I might be aware--more aware--of a situation that a couple might need some help in or by asking me for help in that I might not have recognized before. I think it sort of enlarged my view of marital communication.

[After the husband went back to work:]

I don't think that we intended to have a negative view of the persisting effects of marriage enrichment retreat. I think what we've said about this was an indication that we feel that there should be some sort of recharging session or maybe time a few months later where you can get together for a brief period to talk again--to review and to search in new areas. Sort of like a renewed growth session, I guess, to keep you in touch--to keep you on the track of things that you have learned. Perhaps if we had had such an experience, maybe three months after the first retreat, we might not have been so quick to say that we felt that the levels that we had attained waned after three months or so. The very fact that we have recognized--perhaps we stopped thinking very keenly about the things that went on during the specific weekend that we experienced marriage retreat--may be an indication that we are feeling some persisting effects, but that they are on a slightly different plane or geared in a little different direction from what they were right at the close of the sessions. We've often said that these particular sessions--the individual sessions themselves, perhaps--left the couples at a pretty high emotional tone, either in relation to their own relationship or to how they empathized with the other couples as they shared experiences during the sessions. And perhaps we expected this to go on for a longer period of time, and it didn't. Maybe this is the reason we're so quick to say there were not as many persisting effects as we would have liked.

BECAUSE OF CIRCUMSTANCES OF GETTING HUSBAND AND WIFE TOGETHER, THE INTERVIEWER TALKED WITH THE WIFE OF COUPLE 5 AND THEN THE WIFE ASKED THE QUESTIONS OF THE HUSBAND AS THEY RECORDED THEIR CONVERSATION.

COUPLE 5, WIFE: What, if any, are the lasting or persisting effects of the marital enrichment retreat?

COUPLE 5, HUSBAND: I don't think that the retreat itself has any very tangible lasting effect that would be easily measured. I think that because of our own peculiar situation that we're doing a lot of things that would cause us to maintain some of the communication emphasis, or bias, that we have.

COUPLE 5, WIFE: I don't see the retreat itself as having any lasting effects at all. One thing I did enjoy was the interaction with the other couples, and I have run into one or two of the persons since then. This has been the only lasting effect that I see--the friendships that were formed there. Also, with the Maces, I think we have formed a good friendship with them that has been lasting. But as far as the retreat itself, I can't see that it's had any effect. I do remember specifically the drawing that you made of our marriage, and that had a lot of meaning for me. I remember that; it gave me some insight into your feelings about our marriage that I didn't have before.

COUPLE 5, HUSBAND: I think that probably the only lasting effect would be in terms of maybe some ideas or some information about attitudes, rather than any particular skill that you might have learned, of any kind. The only thing that I can see is that it might be the first insight or the first information into some attitudes and ideas of the other person.

COUPLE 5, WIFE: I wonder if you and I had not had an experience before, doing communications groups, or I wonder . . . Of course, we hadn't done a communications group at that time, but we had talked about it a lot. I wonder if you and I had been a different couple . . . I think that you and I have always had a good marriage, and we've done a lot within the last couple of years ourselves that has been enriching to our marriage, I think; and I wonder if all of these things had not occurred if this would have had more effect.

COUPLE 5, HUSBAND: It might have had more of an impact on us at the time and also continuing impact. But, again, I think that the biggest thing, from any short experience like that, is to see that there are other people who have the same kind of problems and the same kind of good things going on that you do; and that you're not alone--that you do have other people who are involved in the same kinds of things that you are. That might be one of the lasting effects.

COUPLE 5, WIFE: I didn't really see that. I didn't see that we were involved in the same kinds of things that other people were.

COUPLE 5, HUSBAND: Well, what I mean by that is that the other people are concerned about their marriage and about improving their marriage, and maybe not even doing it the same way.

COUPLE 5, WIFE: Let's see how to improve the experience. One way I would like to see it improved is much less emphasis

on training professionals. I felt that the weekend we spent, David spent a lot of time talking about the concept of marital enrichment, and I didn't think that was too relevant. Also, I'd like to see the more specific skills taught. This is one advantage I think our program--communications program--has over the enrichment weekend, is that I think we teach specific skills that can be used later--the couple can use them themselves.

COUPLE 5, HUSBAND: But it could be that the objectives are different, too, because I think that, in my own mind, one of the objectives that I would generate for this weekend retreat is the situation where you can put away your day-to-day problems and deal with the kinds of things that are important to you as a couple. This retreat setting allows you to do that; whereas, when you're not into that at all, it's not the thing we're trying to do. So I don't know. Given that--that is, an objective--to allow a couple to remove themselves from the mundane and everyday, and allow them to concentrate on their relationship, I think that the weekend retreat pretty well fulfills that objective. One of the things that I saw about the retreat that we were on, there were entirely too many couples to get into any kind of a personal experience. A lot of time was spent on my own part on not opening my big mouth, because I know I'm a big talker to begin with, and given half a chance I would pretty well monopolize any kind of situation. So I had to be very aware of not overtalking. And I think that if there were fewer people involved, or maybe to subdivide a large group into small groups and to cross-switch them when you go to different things would be an advantage.

COUPLE 5, WIFE: I'd also like to have the opportunity to get back together with the couples again later on, just because I got a good feeling about the people that were there. I'd like to have an opportunity to see them again.

COUPLE 5, HUSBAND: That goes back to what I'm saying about the unreal nature of being away on a retreat. It's not like real life--it's make-believe. You're not in that situation all the time. It's a nice situation to be in with people who are like-minded, and it's very enjoyable; but you do have to come down off that cloud into real life when you get back home. I would enjoy the experience of being with those people, not even necessarily that same group, but a group like that again. It would be very enjoyable.

COUPLE 5, WIFE: I guess that the main thing that I have to suggest would be to work toward more specific skills, and maybe give the couples something tangible to go home with

and to work on, because I think that the weekend experience was very intense, and I think it had an immediate washout effect. I recommend marital enrichment; not Dr. Mace's program so much, but just the general concept. I've talked about it at many groups, and I've recommended the concept. I've recommended marital enrichment to my classes and several other groups. And, of course, we have been talking up the communication program.

COUPLE 5, HUSBAND: Yes, I've recommended ACME to several couples, and I have discussed the concept of ACME--the association of couples for a common goal--to several other people, and I think that it's something that needs to be done. I think more and more people need to be involved in the concept, if not necessarily in the ACME organization itself.

COUPLE 5, WIFE: Right now I think the marital enrichment retreats themselves and the ACME itself--their biggest downfall has been that everybody that I've seen have been professional people in one way or the other. There were a couple of couples who were not professionals, but it seems to me that the biggest problem is that the overload is on the professional persons, both in the retreats and in the organization.

COUPLE 5, HUSBAND: That's true. Even though I think that the real idea of the ACME organization is to the layman, it seems that the program itself is very much slanted to the upper middle-class professional type person in general, and marriage professionals in particular.

QUESTION: Has this experience helped you in working with other couples, or have you helped other couples as a result of your experience?

COUPLE 5, WIFE: We were already interested in helping other couples anyway, and so we have not helped other couples as a result of this experience, but we have continued to work with couples. I think of the most profitable part of the weekend, as far as I was concerned, in terms of discussing concerns in my group. I like that concept of talking about concerns and going ahead and getting them out in the open.

COUPLE 5, HUSBAND: I agree that one of the technical features of operating with a group that we picked up during the weekend retreat was Vera's idea of discussing concerns. Other than that, I don't see anything in the group that was oriented toward anyone in the group helping another couple. I don't think that ought to be one of the objectives of that

type of weekend retreat. I don't think it ought to be oriented toward teaching you to help other people.

COUPLE 5, WIFE: I'm not sure that was the intent of this question. It seems to me that the experience was for us, for our own good, and for our personal growth. Because we have grown personally, we may then in turn help others to grow. Not that it was the intent of the retreat to help us to help others, but because we have grown, we might help others from it.

COUPLE 5, HUSBAND: That may be. In that case I don't think that I have. I don't think the retreat has made me more aware or helped me in any way to help other couples.

COUPLE 5, WIFE: No, I think the experience was too short, really, to have any lasting effect on us. I think maybe for some couples it may open up some potential that they haven't seen in their relationship before. But I think you and I have seen a great potential in our relationship, and I don't think the retreat did anything to alter that one way or the other.

COUPLE 5, HUSBAND: No, I don't think so at all.

INTERVIEWER: This is a couple who were in a marriage enrichment retreat experience just two weekends ago, and we're going to talk to them, asking them first, what are any lasting or persisting effects of the weekend experience that you have been able to identify since you've been back home? Did it make any difference?

COUPLE 6, WIFE: I think we were careful in talking, you know. I think we're much more conscious of communication because that's what we talked about the whole weekend, and I think I can see a difference in my husband in that he's more careful to consider my feelings. I really believe this.

INTERVIEWER: How about you?

COUPLE 6, HUSBAND: Well, I was thinking that maybe I was expressing my feelings where I used to have a tendency to not say things that might upset my wife. Maybe she is accepting them better, or something. I feel like I can say things more freely without having to worry about her taking the wrong impression, or something.

COUPLE 6, WIFE: One thing I think we have plans to do that we haven't gotten involved in yet is to read books together that were recommended by the group, and this would be

helpful to us both. I've usually been the reader, but I think he would be able to participate in the reading, and at least we'd be able to discuss it. There are a lot of good books out we have not read.

COUPLE 6, HUSBAND: I feel like, or try to be at least with the children a little different than I was before. We spoke a good bit about children and so forth. Instead of ordering them around, hear what they have to say--to work out something that would be agreeable to both parties.

INTERVIEWER: Let's think for a moment about the weekend itself. Do you have recommendations for improving or changing the weekend retreat experience--either one of you?

COUPLE 6, WIFE: It was a great weekend for both of us because we got closer and opened up more with each other than we had in a long time. There was one couple there that was having some trouble, and I think most of the discussion we had with them was very profitable. But there were times when it dragged. Of course I guess that's the trouble, any time you get in that kind of discussion.

INTERVIEWER: Did you feel the weekend was a long enough time or would you want more time?

COUPLE 6, WIFE: I felt that with the intensity of the feelings that we were getting into that it was long enough. I was awfully tired when I got back.

COUPLE 6, HUSBAND: I agree. I felt that we got on one couple's problems more than we should. They didn't seem to be offended by it. I also felt it was very concentrated, and that length of time would probably be enough at one time without some kind of break.

COUPLE 6, WIFE: Well, one of the benefits as well as the disadvantages of having the couple that was having trouble was that I felt so much more thankful for what my husband and I had, and we came back feeling grateful for each other. We have problems, but we felt like they were not as drastic.

COUPLE 6, HUSBAND: Relative to those that we found out about, in our own situation ours might not have been as big as we thought.

INTERVIEWER: When you came back to work on Monday, or came back to your home, did you find yourself recommending this to other couples or sharing with them or individuals

whom you may be in contact with at work anything about your weekend?

COUPLE 6, WIFE: Well, the neighbors all knew that we had gone--something about marriage enrichment. They were all very curious what it was about, particularly the women. I explained to them that it was discussion and everybody talked about his own concerns--David's term. And, yes, I recommended it. I was real excited. It's still exciting to me, to us.

INTERVIEWER: Shall we get a man's point of view?

COUPLE 6, HUSBAND: I know some I haven't, but I know some from around here that I think would benefit from going to this thing. We actually discussed whether people who knew each other would do as well as total strangers as far as opening up, and we decided that maybe strangers were better. So a couple who were here and neighbors went separate from those of us who have already gone.

INTERVIEWER: Good point. Have you found any resistance or questioning to the term of marriage enrichment?

COUPLE 6, WIFE: I think there's a bit of carry-over from all these articles about these encounter groups, or sensitivity groups, and people want to know did we go and have all this going on that you read about.

COUPLE 6, HUSBAND: Then there are those who wonder if you need to go to a marriage counselor, if something's wrong, where they kind of have a questioning look about them when you tell them what you're going to do.

COUPLE 6, WIFE: Most people thought . . . If you say you know David Mace, they say, Oh!

INTERVIEWER: Wonderful! We just wish we had more David Maces. This is interesting. You think we have a great deal of education to do. You think we are not really in serious trouble when we go for marriage enrichment, but you are hoping to make something that's good better. This is the real concept that we have to get across. Can you think of a better term than marriage enrichment?

COUPLE 6, WIFE: Now that I've been through the weekend, no! It was a little bit unclear. I think if we had been more exposed to ACME before, we wouldn't have had any questions. But we've not been in before, so we don't know.

COUPLE 6, HUSBAND: I think it's good timing.

COUPLE 6, WIFE: That's exactly what it is.

COUPLE 6, HUSBAND: It's not disguised in any way--that's exactly what it's all about.

INTERVIEWER: Well, I'm sure you really haven't had time to apply this in helping other couples and, of course, the primary aim was to help yourselves, and you said so nicely you found this helpful with your children. We do feel that probably the skills you learned will be transferable into other relationships, and I believe that you would agree with that, even perhaps in teaching or whatever field of work you might be in.

BOTH: Oh, yes.

INTERVIEWER: Thank you.