



# LIVES TRANSFORMED

Real Voices on How Relationship and Marriage Education Impacts Lives



---

**2013 © Healthy Relationships California**

Funding for this project was provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Grant 90FM0019. Any opinions, findings, and conclusions or recommendations expressed in this material are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families.



### **Contact HRC for more information:**

Healthy Relationships California  
1045 Passiflora Ave  
Leucadia, CA 92024

Info@RelationshipsCA.org  
www.RelationshipsCA.org

Find us on Facebook at Healthy Relationships California  
Follow us on Twitter at @RelationshipsCA

### **Other Resources by HRC**

Download and order *Lives Transformed* and other resources at [www.relationshipsca.org/store](http://www.relationshipsca.org/store)

Find RME classes at [www.relationshipsca.org/classes/find-a-class](http://www.relationshipsca.org/classes/find-a-class)

Visit HRC's Spanish site at [www.mejoratusrelaciones.com](http://www.mejoratusrelaciones.com)



# Letter from the President

---

Dear Reader,

When Healthy Relationships California began offering Relationship and Marriage Education classes in 2006, we knew it would have an important impact. But we had no idea how profound this impact would be—on marriages, families, and individuals—in homes, schools, and workplaces throughout California.

Over the next six years, Healthy Relationships California (HRC) sponsored more than 3,800 Relationship and Marriage Education (RME) classes, each lasting 8 hours or more, and serving more than 125,000 participants throughout California. These RME classes taught communication and conflict-management skills to participants from all socio-economic classes, across a wide diversity of ethnic, cultural, and religious backgrounds, and through eight different languages. And time after time, class after class, RME has transformed lives.

This booklet shares a small sample of the testimonials we have received from people whose lives have been transformed by attending one of our RME classes. These people are your neighbors, your co-workers, your family members. They share candidly how RME skills have improved their relationships and made a significant difference in their lives. And, most wonderfully, when someone's life improves, so do the lives of everyone around them!

After reading these compelling stories and real-life testimonies, ask yourself, how different would your family, community, nation, and our world be if everyone acquired and applied these relationship-improving skills? We know from teaching these classes, from the extensive outcome research we have done on participants, and the research of others in the field that by making RME widely available across the nation, the home life of millions of children and couples would be significantly better; classrooms in urban, suburban, and rural areas would have higher-achieving students with fewer behavior and disciplinary issues; the workplace would be more productive internally, more effective with customers, and a better environment for everyone; neighborhoods would be safer and our communities would thrive.

We also know that untold billions of dollars would be saved each year by reducing the need for costly social services that are currently extended to repair lives that have been damaged by family disintegration. If—and when—Relationship and Marriage Education is available on a wide scale, there will not be enough pages in a library of books to capture all the stories of Lives Transformed!



Patty Howell, Ed.M., A.G.C.  
President, Healthy Relationships California





# Table of contents

---

one

## **MARRIAGES TRANSFORMED | 4**

*STORY: "Our marriage made a 180-degree turn!"*

- \* Couples Saved from the Brink of Divorce
- \* Troubled Relationships Find Hope and Help
- \* Long-Term Marriages Make Breakthroughs
- \* Husbands Discover Secrets to Greater Love
- \* Wives Experience Relationship Renewal
- \* Hispanic Couples Make Huge Strides Forward
- \* Young Couples Gain Keys for a Lifetime Love

two

## **FAMILIES TRANSFORMED | 12**

*STORY: "Parenting is a team sport!"*

- \* Parents Learn Better Ways to Relate with Their Kids
- \* Hispanic Parents Find Help for Their Families
- \* Fathers Find Ways to Be Better Dads
- \* Children Make Breakthroughs with Their Parents

three

## **YOUTH TRANSFORMED | 18**

*STORY: "I needed to make big changes in my life!"*

- \* Teens Find Answers and Experience Life Changes
  - \* Youth Gain Blueprints for Healthy Relationships
  - \* Teenagers Learn How to Communicate with Skills
- STORY: "I was nothing but a body walking around!"*

four

## **AT-RISK POPULATIONS TRANSFORMED | 24**

*STORY: "Suddenly I knew why I'd been divorced 4 times!"*

- \* Divorced and Divorcing Learn Keys for Successful Future Relationships
- \* Domestic Violence Victims Find Hope for the Future
- \* Inmates Make Breakthroughs

*STORY: "Being arrested was the best thing for my marriage and kids."*

five

## **THE WORKPLACE TRANSFORMED | 30**

*STORY: "Having the right tools makes the job easier."*

- \* Employees Gain Tools and Skills for a Better Future
- STORY: "The job was mine before I walked in the door."*
- \* Unemployed People Learn Skills for Work...and Home

six

## **ABOUT RELATIONSHIP & MARRIAGE EDUCATION | 36**

- \* A Wide Range of Programs for Everyone
- \* People Everywhere Are Grateful for RME Classes

seven

## **ABOUT HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS CALIFORNIA | 38**

- \* Statewide Partnering Organizations
- \* Relationship and Marriage Education Class Sites

# *Marriages transformed*

---

Most Americans get married at some point during their lifetime. Unfortunately, too many marriages don't last a lifetime. While the issues surrounding a divorce are personal, the fallout from divorce is anything but private: Child custody, spousal support, selling the house, and splitting belongings are factors that affect almost all failed marriages. Additionally, for a great many people, there are also serious negative consequences to their health and economic status, resulting in a significant burden on publicly funded government assistance programs.

ME has proven to be a viable resource for couples before the wedding, after the "I do's" and throughout the life of their marriage. An average ME course lasts from six to sixteen hours and provides a range of immediate and long-term benefits to couples. From our own multi-year, multi-site, multi-program outcome study on married couples taking ME, we found a 55% increase among those rating themselves as happily married six months after the course—an outstandingly positive outcome that is rare in any social science.

Yet, Marriage Education is not just for troubled marriages or couples on the brink of divorce. ME helps couples in good times and bad times, at times when the relationship is in the doldrums or going through a major life transition.

The following pages are filled with accounts from husbands and wives who have attended a Marriage Education course that helped transform their relationship.





## STORY:

## *“Our marriage made a 180-degree turn!”*

*Marco and his wife were desperate for help. Frustrated, angry, exasperated...their marriage was taking a personal toll on each of them.*

*They were headed for divorce...quickly. Or worse. Marco admits that he was contemplating suicide. “It would have been very devastating.”*

*They searched the Internet anxiously to find professional help for their marriage. Scrolling through pages of search results, one got their attention—a Relationship and Marriage Education class called PAIRS Essentials.*

*Hesitant but hoping for a miracle, they attended the class together.*

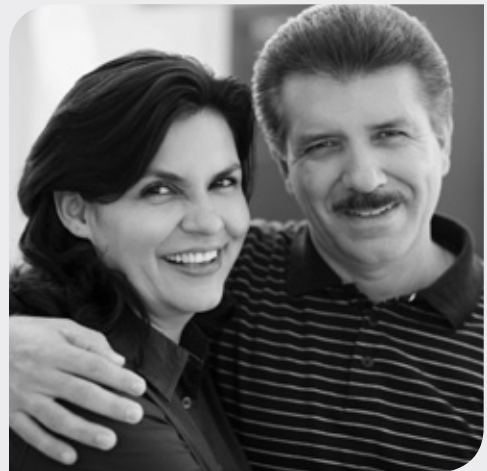
*“The class had a way of explaining certain topics and common situations [in most marriages]. It was very clear, very simple, not complicated, and easy to understand,” Marco explains. The class was “actually fun and interactive, not in a monologue format.”*

*Marco discovered something important about himself during the class. “I never realized I was so egotistical. I thought I had everything under control.” This was the key to a profound change in the couple’s relationship. “I learned to pay attention to my wife’s opinions, concerns, and feelings. We can now share freely with one another.”*

*At the PAIRS Essentials class, the couple learned several ways to manage conflict, and practical tools to improve communication. According to Marco, “Our marriage made a 180-degree turn!”*

*Because of the transformation that occurred in their marriage, the couple urges friends, family, and everyone else they meet to attend a Relationship and Marriage Education class.*

*Marco enthusiastically tells people, “Don’t think twice. Don’t doubt it. Don’t overthink it. Just go!” If their marriage can go from bad to good, anyone’s marriage can!*



## **\* Couples Saved from the Brink of Divorce**

*"We came to the class dragging many problems but we started attending and we started to treat each other better. In fact we were separated at the beginning of the year, but these talks helped us a lot, especially me."* – **Angel (Anaheim, CA)**

*"We came to this class because we needed help with our relationship. When we came we were living apart from each other, we had been separated for about a month and a half...Through this course I have learned to focus on the positive of our relationship not the negative. The frustration that we are not hearing each other is now consciously thought through on a daily basis and practiced with dialogue. We are now living in a positive marriage enjoying each other, loving each other more every day."* – **Marie (Live Oak, CA)**

*"I'm thankful for this course because it has changed my way of thinking and reflecting on my marriage. We had developed a damaging routine, we had many problems, and I was thinking of divorce. After this course I saw a new solution for my marriage. Now we have more understanding, love, respect, and communication..."* – **Rick (Sacramento, CA)**

*"This program helped me a lot, I learned to communicate in a way that does not offend my partner. It helped me understand, listen, have patience, and above all I learned to love and accept him as he is. Thank you very much because we were on the brink of divorce...The program was very helpful for me and my husband."* – **Angela (Montclair, CA)**

*"I have overcome the desire to separate from my partner. Today when we have a big problem I remember the skills and try to implement them. Thanks for making us re-discover the mysteries of love that are what bind us together and strengthens our relationship."* – **Marina (Claremont, CA)**

*"When I first began this class six weeks ago I was really unhappy in my relationship with my husband. I had a lot of feelings, concerns, and issues that I had no idea how to communicate in a positive and healthy way. This [Mastering the Mysteries of Love] class has helped me tremendously to find the tools I needed to be able to communicate what I needed to with my husband in a way I never thought possible. We are using these tools frequently and they are very affective [sic]. I feel as though I am heard and I believe he feels the same."* – **Lisa (Fresno, CA)**

*"I thank you because this program has helped me a lot in my relationship with my husband and my children...In my relationship with my husband, I have improved. We were going through a situation that would have ended in divorce. But with the tools I've been learning, I didn't give up and made efforts for my marriage. I started putting into practice what I learned and I started to have more communication with him. I have become more attentive and understanding. Today, everything is fine...I've made a change in me and that is why, I'm so grateful. Thanks for everything."*

– **Alondra (Santa Ana, CA)**

*"When we began attending, our marriage was in crisis. Through the stories, sharing, and teaching of each topic we have been able to add tools to our toolbox of communication. We did not only get past our crisis, but beyond it onto a deeper level of intimacy and communication in our marriage."*

**– Tif (Newport Beach, CA)**

*"My marriage was very bad, almost to the point of separating, but these classes have helped us in communication, understanding, and expression. Before I did not feel heard or understood...now I feel listened to, I feel understood and there have even been changes. I'm practicing in the way of expressing myself..."*

**– Estela (Anaheim, CA)**

### **\* Troubled Relationships Find Hope and Help**

*"My partner and I have only been to a couple of lessons, but this has already had such a great impact on our communication...We are excited to attend and feel an overwhelming feeling of hope and happiness toward one another when we leave. We have tried couples counseling and seen a psychologist and still remained in the same rut. This has been the only thing we have found that has truly worked for us."*

**– Marcus (Newport Beach, CA)**

*"I found this class to be the most helpful educational tool I have used. I've been to many classes, counseling, workshops and read books and for some reason this was the one tool where everything just clicked. I feel more peace and hope about my marriage. It has allowed for actual communication in our household. A lot less screaming and yelling and this is just the beginning. It has allowed me to understand why things have been so bad, how to change and has given us a glimpse to what it can be like. What it will be like."*

**– Rachel (Oakland, CA)**

*"I found this program to be most enlightening. I have gone to therapy, couples counseling and have never left with 'tools' or an actual thought of how and why to change. Every class that I attend just adds more to my tool box and for that I am so utterly grateful."*

**– Michele (Newport Beach, CA)**

*"We are now loving each other more every day."*



## \* Long-Term Marriages Make Breakthroughs

*"Being married 41 years in June and I'm still learning...[It] has helped me to work through getting someone to understand my perspective."* – **Dennis (Fresno, CA)**

*"After almost 21 yrs of marriage, my husband and I communicate in a healthier way after taking the class. It has opened our eyes and our hearts and I feel that our lives will be happier and more satisfying after learning the proper tools, especially empathy and vulnerability."* – **Edinah (Corona, CA)**

*"The changes in my husband and I are so much better. After 49 years of marriage there is such a different attitude between us both. Our children see so much more love and understanding between the two of us and also to everyone else."* – **Mary (Fresno, CA)**

*"I wish you could have offered these classes thirty years ago. We wouldn't have had to struggle so much."* – **Matthew (Fresno, CA)**

*"I really recommend these courses to all couples...I believe it is useful even to people who already have a good relationship and it could make a significant difference for people in troubled relationships."* – **Francine (San Diego, CA)**

## \* Husbands Discover Secrets to Greater Love

*"Since we went through the class we hold hands. And look into each other's eyes and talk about our issues, without one of us standing over one another. We can see that each one of us has an emotional side that each needs to talk about."* – **Steve (Corona, CA)**



*"Not only do I understand my wife more clearly, I also can feel how she feels and walk in her shoes. We practice using this process daily and have even shared deeper experiences and this has brought us closer and brought a softness in our communication with each other. We have had more laughs and more passion also. Even in the most difficult situations this process takes out the selfishness and brings out the kindness in ourselves through dialogue."* – **Jeffrey (Live Oak, CA)**

*"This class has helped us in so many ways. I look forward to using the relationship skills I've learned. I know it will get rough at times but if we continue to apply what we have learned we can get through anything."* – **Armando (Fresno, CA)**

*"Our children see so much more love"*

*"I had already loved my wife, but now I have a much deeper sense of love for my wife and she reflects the same to me. Subject matters don't seem so huge anymore and are way easier to handle."*

**– Steven (Fresno, CA)**

*"I see my wife in a whole new way today; she is someone who desires to listen, to share and to explore life with me. I could see the beautiful woman I met so long ago and not [just] as a person who shares a house and children with me."*

**– Jeff (Fresno, CA)**

*"Taking this class has made me a more understanding person to my wife's needs, it has helped me understand that there are more helpful ways of dealing with problems in the relationship."*

**– Angel (Hesperia, CA)**

## **\* Wives Experience Relationship Renewal**

*"The class has been very helpful in making my husband and I able to communicate better in our marriage...Had I known this process years ago my life would have been much easier. It's always helpful to know good ways to communicate and this is a program that helps with strategies for any type of communication."*

**– Liz (Hesperia, CA)**

*"This course sincerely opened my eyes to how I can communicate better with my husband! The listening technique exercises helped me 'step out' of my box of insecurity. I never knew I 'fought dirty' until this class! I no longer blame my husband, but take responsibility for communicating and listening. I've always known my husband loves me, but this course has helped him understand my needs for communication, too. We 'talk' instead of fight over disagreements, now."*

**– Becky (Fresno, CA)**

*"I felt like this class helped me prepare for my partner's military leave. There is not much you can do when the military tells you that you have to leave your family."*

**– Jenny (Claremont, CA)**

*"When [my partner] and I first started attending these classes we were not sure about how exactly this class was going to help. Six weeks later we have grown exceptionally. We are now talking out problems without hurt, blame, resentment, or any of the other relationship pitfalls we were constantly digging for each other."*

**– Debra (Fresno, CA)**



*and understanding between the two of us..."*

*"The content was eye opening. It taught me how to be a better listener. I did not realize prior to the class how often I would 'pretend' to listen to my husband—rather than actually receive, understand and acknowledge what the other person had to say. It has also provided me valuable skills on how to handle conflict in a meaningful way—address issues with confidence and look toward a resolution that all parties are happy with."* – **Rosalyn (Stockton, CA)**

*"I am currently separated but wanted to learn how to communicate better with my spouse to see if we could improve our relationship to get back together. I realized that we did not have good communication and didn't have any idea on how to talk to each other. This course has given me tools to work on this area of our relationship to help build and repair the damage we have done. I can already tell a difference in my way of relating to my husband and the positive response I have received from him. I hope to continue this process and practice what I have learned."* – **Terry (Fresno, CA)**

### **\* Hispanic Couples Make Huge Strides Forward**

*"La diferencia que este programa a echo en mi vida es que aprendí una nueva forma de comunicación con mi pareja y me di cuenta de muchos errores que cometí por no saber una estructura mejor de comunicación. Estos talleres me han ayudado a poner más atención en cómo nos llevamos mi esposo y yo, y darme cuenta como uno se puede llegar a dañar por falta de orientación."* – **Ana (San Bernardino, CA)**

*"Antes de venir con usted, yo era una persona que no me gustaba contar nada de lo que me pasaba. Ni a mi esposo se lo contaba. Yo sufrí mucho desde que yo me acuerdo, porque en mi casa nada más había gritos y golpes, y nunca disfrutamos de nada. Al paso del tiempo, me toco trabajar para salir adelante y nunca tuve cariño de mis papas. Nunca me dijeron que me querían...Pero ahorita, que vengo con usted, me ha ayudado mucho. Y también, para decirles a mis hijos y a mi esposo, que yo los quiero mucho."* – **Anna (Long Beach, CA)**

*"Yo recomiendo este taller especialmente a nosotros los Latinos para romper con tradiciones y costumbres sobre el matrimonio. Y para aprender a comunicarse apropiadamente por el bien de los dos sin herirse."* – **Anita (San Bernardino, CA)**

*"Y sobretodo me gustaría que mas programas como este se dieran en nuestra comunidad Hispana. Para que mas parejas tuvieran la oportunidad de conocerlos y poder arreglar a tiempo su matrimonio. Disminuirían las familias separadas con los hijos pagando consecuencias que no les corresponden."* – **Eliana (Anaheim, CA)**

*"...aprendí una nueva forma de comunicación con mi pareja..."*



*“Aprendí como comunicarme mejor con mi pareja y obtuve una comunicación que para nosotros no existía...Ahora existe en nuestra vida cotidiana y me gustaría seguir practicándola. Yo pensaba antes que problemas muy fuertes no podían ser solucionados con este tipo de métodos, pero quede impactada con los resultados que obtuvimos cuando aplicamos las técnicas. Ahora algunos de nuestros problemas son fácilmente resueltos con paciencia y amor y también he encontrado sentimientos sobre mi matrimonio que antes no conocía.”* – **Jose (San Bernardino, CA)**

## **\* Young Couples Gain Keys for a Lifetime Love**

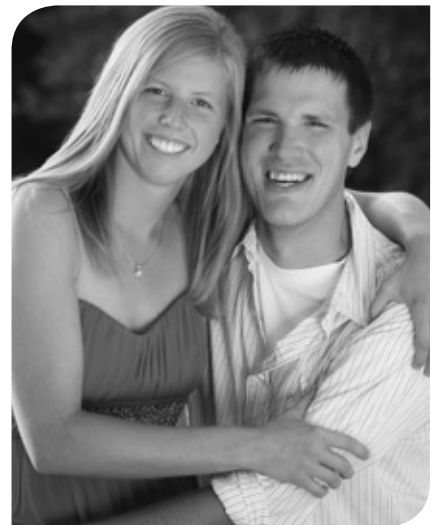
*“My partner and I are engaged to be married. After taking these classes I feel more prepared for that step. [It] has helped us most...to repeat what you have understood your partner says in a conversation. I noticed, that often there are disagreements or arguments by a misunderstanding...that can easily be resolved...It helped us to know and understand each other more.”* – **Lauren (Auburn, CA)**

*“My boyfriend and I knew our issues were issues we couldn't resolve on our own. We knew we would continue our same patterns, I wanted new tools to help us. Although we have only attended 3 two hour courses, we have found this program to be incredibly insightful. It is always taught by couples like us who have now learned how to communicate effectively. We are excited to learn more and we understand this takes time.”* – **Cynthia (Newport Beach, CA)**

*“I am very grateful for this class. Within the two days, I've learned 16 pillars that will help me build a lasting marriage. Before this class, I did not think it was possible to have a happy, lasting, and committed relationship; I was fearful of getting stuck with an unhappy relationship. Not only have I realized that it is possible to have a happy, lasting, and committed marriage, ‘forever’ does not sound so scary at all because I know that whatever challenges my partner and I will face, we have the tools/resources to tap into to make it through and resolve them in a way where we both win. Now, I can't wait for us to get married and have lots of kids.”* – **Janelle (Santa Ana, CA)**

*“I learned some things that I will apply to my future and current relationships. I learned that I need to communicate with people better to have better relationships with them. I am a quiet person and get shy easily, so it's hard for me to communicate to people what I am really feeling, and sometimes it puts strains on my relationships, especially with my family...[It] helped me with my boyfriend, because my past relationships haven't been with the best of people, so now I know how to talk to my boyfriend about what I am feeling and how to take his feelings into consideration better.”*

– **Rebecca (Madera, CA)**



# *Families transformed*

---

**Family:** This word has a lot of meaning for everyone. Some people have fond memories of their family growing up; others have painful experiences that haunt them to this day. Some grow up with the same people in the same house, while others have a patchwork of many different people and many living arrangements that make up their childhood memories.

Whatever form it takes, family is not something we leave completely in the past. Parent and sibling relationships are always with us, and they color the way we create new relationships and a new family of our own.

Relationship Education (RE) plays an invaluable role in helping people move away from damaging past relationships, recover from hurt, and create healthy and satisfying relationships with those they love.

Following are accounts from moms and dads who have attended a Relationship Education course, as well as some reports from teens and adult children. For all of them, the skills and insights they learned from RE gave them hope and a new beginning in their family relationships.





## STORY:

## *“Parenting is a team sport!”*

*Joe and Becky knew parenting has its ups and downs. But they weren't prepared for their different parenting styles, or their different ideas of what their young autistic son needed. Frustrated, and with growing desperation, they attended Raising Kids Together, an RE course for young parents. They quickly learned that parenting is a team sport made up of two partners.*

*Both experienced a similar light-bulb moment during the course: Their expectations were out of whack and they hadn't known it, let alone known how to fix it. “I had a tendency to arrange my priorities in a way that wasn't beneficial to my family,” Joe admits. “That created conflict, but I lacked the skills to address and resolve those issues. I thought we could exchange apologies and our problems would go away, but they wouldn't.”*

*Becky looked in the mirror and didn't like what she saw. “I think we all know deep down that we have some bad habits and bad behaviors, but we are much quicker to judge others because we can see it so clearly in them...I didn't realize that my critical comments and nagging were causing my husband to withdraw from me, from us.”*

*Not only did Joe and Becky learn vital skills and techniques to use with their child, they also learned life-changing skills to use in their relationship. “We benefited greatly from this because one of the things that was standing in the way... [of] an incredible relationship was the disrespect that would occur when we had strong disagreements,” says Joe.*

*Joe and Becky learned they needed to get in touch with their feelings and share them with each other. And while the process took time, it also opened up doors of deeper understanding and greater intimacy.*

*And perhaps the biggest benefactor was their only child. Joe and Becky applied the skills they learned with their mildly autistic son, who could communicate only through visual cues. “These skills flourished my son,” says Becky enthusiastically. “Although he still couldn't tell me what he felt or his reaction to what I said about his feelings, he became so much calmer once he felt understood.” Their son's behavior also improved, making therapies much easier and productive.*

*“[I]...feel more of a team with my husband and better able to parent our child,” says Becky. Joe agrees. “Our marriage and family has improved immensely because of skilled communication, and I know that how I interact at home touches upon all other aspects of my life.”*



## **\* Parents Learn Better Ways to Relate with Their Kids**

*"This course helped me with my children to understand and listen without getting angry. My daughter is amazed at my changes and that I no longer lose control. Because of these changes, she speaks more openly with me. I no longer get aggressive and I know how to control my anger and my children see it..."* – **Virginia (Anaheim, CA)**

*"I picked up a lot of tools I can use to be a better father to my four daughters, to be a better husband to my wife, show my daughters the right way to live."* – **Luis (Orange, CA)**

*"I have used techniques from the class with my spouse and teenager."* – **Ronald (Corona, CA)**

*"Thanks to your lessons I've learned how to be more patient with my children. How to listen and have more communication with the father of my children. To stop screaming and know how to apologize when I'm wrong. And thanks to that I have learned to express myself more, to love myself more and be who I really am. I'm able to say what I feel and how I feel. Express myself and talk about it to the father of my children. Thanks for giving me the most beautiful thing a woman wants to have and helping me to forgive his mistakes."* – **Alma (Long Beach, CA)**

*"I have found new ways of communication with my wife, and at the same time with my children. It was only four weeks or rather, four workshops, and I learned quite a lot. My relationship with my family has slowly been improving, using the methods and skills the program teaches."*

– **Daniel (San Bernardino, CA)**

*"People need to go to this class to learn to release past issues. This class has helped me see others, as well as my family, in a new way than I viewed them. It helped me see that they have feelings also. The class is a blessing to me and others."*

– **Jonas (San Bernardino, CA)**

*"I just want to say that it did help me realize how I did wrong when I blamed my loved ones. It help [sic] me to want to become a better person, mother, and someday again a better wife. Know how to open up to my children and let them know that they are always goin [sic] to be loved by me. That I can become an independent woman and succeed and provide for my family made me feel that I am worth something. It gave me some kind of confident [sic]."* – **Kendra (Ontario, CA)**



*"This program has helped me to have less problems with my husband and to control my anger towards him. How to control my kids in a good way to turn a negative thought to a positive thought. How to have rules and how to speak to a child instead of screaming or using profanity."*

– **Selene (Santa Ana, CA)**

*"The course taught me about listening and how the different types of listening can make me a better person, help me feel better about myself and show my loved ones how much I love them and I want to help them with their needs. I implemented power listening with my son. Awesome results!"*

**– Melissa (Corona, CA)**

*"This workshop has helped change my life...and allowed me to effectively communicate with my 4 year old son by getting down to eye level and using power listening with him."*

**– Vanessa (San Bernardino, CA)**

*"World Class Marriage gave me ideas on better ways to communicate with my husband, children, family, friends, and colleagues. It's a course in 'World Class Living.'"*

**– Katie (Corona, CA)**

### **\* Hispanic Parents Find Help for Their Families**

*"La diferencia que este taller ha hecho en mi vida es inmenso y lo defino con la palabra 'esperanza.' Esperanza que me hacía falta tener y que llego a mi vida para seguir trabajando en mi matrimonio que tanto me ha costado mantener...También algo que aprendí en este taller fue a escuchar más atentamente y saber comunicar mis sentimientos o problemas a mi esposo y gente que me rodea. Este taller me ayudo especialmente a escarbar muy profundo en mi corazón para expresar mis sentimientos a mi esposo e hijos, sin herirlos o molestarlos."*

**– Gloria (San Bernardino, CA)**

*"Al comenzar el taller mi esposo y yo creíamos que nos llevábamos bien...Aprendimos muchas habilidades en clase y en la casa nos hemos dado cuenta que nos han ayudado en la forma que nos comunicamos. Ahora seguido nos mostramos aprecio, buscamos tiempo juntos, resolvemos problemas sin pelear o gritar y nuestros hijos han notado la diferencia. Nuestra relación con los hijos también ha mejorado. El ambiente en la casa es diferente, pacífico, alegre."*

**– Lorena (San Bernardino, CA)**

*"Este curso no ha ayudado a comunicarnos más efectivamente con nuestros hijos. No creía que un curso de solo cuatro semanas no ayudaría tanto. Me sorprende al ver la diferencia que se siente en el ambiente en casa."*

**– Laura (San Bernardino, CA)**

*"Este programa me ha ayudado mucho a mí. Yo siempre había sido una persona muy insegura y tenía muchas ganas de no vivir. Mis hijos son las únicas personas que me detenían. Pero ahora, después de venir aquí, he aprendido a valorarme más y a ser una mejor madre. Me comunico más con mis hijos...También, mi relación con mi pareja está mejorando. Platico más con él y he aprendido a escucharlo mejor, a entenderlo y a saber controlar mis enojos...Yo tenía muchos problemas, y gracias a todas las herramientas que nos has enseñado, ha mejorado mi vida."*

**– Fabiola (Santa Ana, CA)**



## \* Fathers Find Ways to Be Better Dads

*"I was coming from a household where my mom had been divorced and had children from multiple partners so my background didn't give me the skills I needed to have healthy interactions with my wife and son. I learned that children don't always benefit from being lectured to... This course gave me the ability to listen to my son and to develop healthy communication and dynamics in my relationship with my wife."* – **Alfredo (Fresno, CA)**

*"It's made me a better man and father."* – **Roger (Hemet, CA)**



*"This class was extremely helpful with me being a more positive father & boyfriend. It's taught me to keep pushing and to never give up. It taught me to love and become more patient and understanding."* – **Alberto (Riverside, CA)**

*"[This class] has helped me a lot with my relationship with others and you also help [sic] my relationship with my fiancée and my son grow stronger between us."* – **Eric (Corona, CA)**

*"After going through the World Class Relationships class... I feel so strong about this that this may have saved my marriage and the health of my kids."* – **Ron (Los Angeles, CA)**

*"This class has improved my emotional intelligence and closeness with my kids. It has helped me to do more listening and less preaching. My kids trust me now more than before."* – **Eduardo (Sacramento, CA)**

*"Thank you very much for doing this class. It helped me to open up with my partner and my kids and other family... I am so happy now, not sad any more. Thank you."* – **Angelo (El Centro, CA)**

*"This class taught me to love and become more patient and understanding."*

## \* Children Make Breakthroughs with Their Parents

*"...I found that it was helpful in getting my father and I to connect..."* – **Carolina (Oakland, CA)**

*"This program has been really good for me. I've experienced a better relationship with my mom. I have given her a chance to get close to me and forgive her for our past..."* – **Erika (Santa Ana, CA)**

*"This course is very helpful for my family and me. I tried first to listen to my mother when she talked with me this week. Skills help me to understand her and bonded us with a healthier relationship. When my mother criticizes me with hurtful words, now I know her underlining reason is she cares deeply, worry reflects in her words. This learning relaxes me and makes me no longer feel attacked when I relate to my mother. I no longer feel depressed and frustrated, instead, I am grateful to have a caring mom."* – **Amy (Oakland, CA), translated from Cantonese**

*"Right away my relationship started changing for the better."*

*"This class has helped me communicate with others especially with my mother...I'm taking the skills and applying them to my life."* – **Jen (Fresno, CA)**

*"I loved this class...My mother and father see a big difference in my attitude towards them, and in my listening skills."*

– **Amanda (Ontario, CA)**

*"This class really helps to fix your relationships or what to do or not to do...Personally, I do not communicate very well with my mom and when I used [the skills] in a family matter she actually listened to me and changed her attitude."*

– **Marissa (Fresno, CA)**

*"Right away my relationship started changing for the better. When I talk to my parents I try to stay calm when they say 'no' to me, usually I would get mad right away, throw a fit, and cry. But now I can talk to them without the situation getting out of control. And now I always say thanks when they have done something I appreciate."* – **Jennifer (Riverside, CA)**





# Youth transformed

---

The teen years are all about relationships—relationships with parents and siblings and other family members, boyfriend and girlfriend relationships, friendships of all kinds, and relationships with teachers and coaches.

Unfortunately, many learn how to “do” relationships by watching and talking to other teens, from what they see on shows and on social sites, and from reading teen magazines and websites. The likelihood that today’s youth will figure out on their own how to create and foster healthy relationships is slim to none.

Relationship Education (RE) offers teens proven, skills-based learning about relationships—a fourth “R” that is as foundational to life as “reading, ‘riting, and ‘rithmetic.”

The following candid and personal stories of teens attending an RE program reveal that not only did the RE classes give them insights on relationship situations they were dealing with, these courses changed their lives.



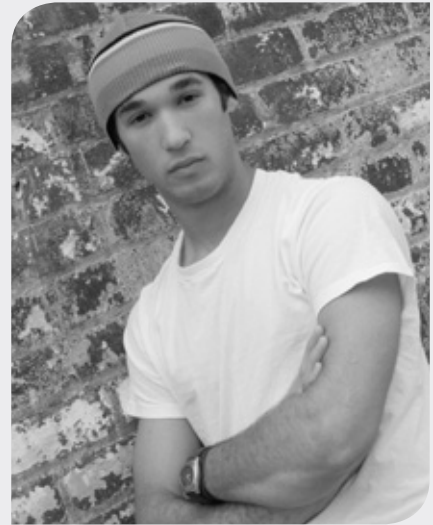
## STORY:

## *“I needed to make big changes in my life!”*

*Michael was a 15-year-old three-time felon attending a continuation high school when he enrolled in a Healthy Choices, Healthy Relationships class, and, later, a PICK a Partner class. Michael didn't seem to engage with the material and when he did talk, he never made eye contact with the instructor, named Randy, or anyone else in the class. A year after first attending the classes, Michael called Randy at home to let him know that he had run away from home and that he wanted to talk.*

*Michael explained that he had become involved in illegal drug activities because he had chosen to go along with his friends' poor choices. The classes had instilled in him the importance of taking the time to see people in a variety of situations and really get to know them. Michael had since come to realize that he didn't truly know the boys he had called his friends, yet he had followed them into activities that were dangerous and compromising. Michael realized, “I needed to make big changes in my life!”*

*Randy convinced Michael to return home and focus clearly on the situation he found himself in as a three-time felon. Then Randy encouraged him to brainstorm solutions, urging him to think through all possible consequences, both positive and negative, helpful and unhelpful, for his current situation and for each potential next step. Randy reminded Michael of a concept learned in PICK a Partner: “You must honor your personal values, because if you do something contrary to who you are, you will always be unsettled with it.”*



*With this guidance, Michael chose a new path. He laid out where he would like to go and the steps he needed to take to get there. Following through with these, Michael ended friendships that had led him into trouble. He applied himself at school, and was able to transfer back to a regular four-year high school. Subsequently, Michael has been absolved of all felonies by a judgment of the court.*

*Now nearly 18, Michael currently advocates for his new high school to allow Randy to teach Relationship Education classes there. He has seen the impact of Relationship Education in his own life and he would like his peers to experience these programs so that they, too, can reap similar long-term benefits of life-changing growth.*

## \* *Teens Find Answers and Experience Life Changes*

*"This program really opened my eyes on how I can be a good girlfriend/wife to my future boyfriend or husband because it's not about looking for the best partner but instead it's about us being the best we can. Over the first few weeks of the class, I decided to apply what I was learning to my relationship. This has opened a bigger view into relationships yet at the same time redefined everything. This program can lead to better relationships between your peers and family, once you learn and see how to communicate and listen with others. In total this program is helpful, educational, and informational, especially for those who take advantage of it."* – **Gabriela (Madera, CA)**

*"This program has made a huge impact in my life. When this program began I had problems that were only about relationships. I was lost on that one aspect of my life. I was at the point in my life that I needed to sort out my file of difficulties due to relationships. When I started this junior year in high school, my main goals were to catch up on my credits and get my relationship problems solved. I have accomplished both. I have recommended this program to my friends who don't attend my school because this is the crucial point in our lives when we need to get our priorities straight."* – **Beatrice (Madera, CA)**



*"I really enjoyed all the info. It made me understand more about life. There's more than just getting arrested or being on probation. There's success in life, there's loving what you do for a job. Just hearing all about what you have to say really opens my ears and it does stick in my head too. I feel way better about life now than I did before..."* – **Frank (Tollhouse, CA)**

*"I learned in this class that you should know how to take care of yourself. The difference it has made in my life is that now I could stand up for myself."* – **Guadalupe (Fresno, CA)**

*"I learned a lot like how to deal with uncomfortable situations, how to approach these problems. I have used [the] 'I message' resolution, and some conversations may make me very emotional, but in the end everything is simply ok afterwards. My mom and I are closer now. These methods really work. Hands down I would totally recommend this course for other students*

*to take. It's very informational and a positive way to approach life situations. It has really opened my eyes to look at things from other perspectives...[this class] really impacted me in a huge way. It has taught me a lot about how to react to different kinds of situations."* – **Dominique (Fresno, CA)**

*"This program has made a huge impact in my life."*



## \* Youth Gain Blueprints for Healthy Relationships

*"This program helped me realize how relationships should be and how relationships shouldn't be. The most important discussion about this program that opened my eyes is that a better relationship with your parents can help with better communication."* – Vivian (Fresno, CA)

*"I've always had trouble with relationships in my life but the course has helped me understand what a healthy relationship looks like. I've learned that you don't have to just settle for a jerk, but that we deserve a nice partner. Listening to this course improved my relationship with my new boyfriend and my family as well. I learned how to balance my relationship so that it's healthy and lasting. I've learned that people can change if the right ingredients are added. [The class] really breaks down a relationship and shows the key aspects that I never saw it before. My relationships have grown stronger and I've been able to mend them into better ones. This has been an amazing course."*

– Alexa (Clovis, CA)

*"I really understood everything that was taught about healthy relationships. It helped me change the way I am in a relationship. It showed me the bad things that should be avoided, gave me ideas and taught me that the way you are raised completely affects the way you are going to raise your family. What was most helpful was the tips of how a relationship can be healthy. I recommend it because you are going to have many relationships in life and it is helpful to know how to create a healthy relationship."* – April (Fresno, CA)

*"This program made me realize the importance of the actions of a person. I learned the right and wrong between a relationship, I know the difference now."* – Sierra (Dinuba, CA)

*"I learned how to balance my relationship so that it's healthy and lasting."*

*"Throughout this course I've learned a lot about teen relationships. Much of it really has helped me understand things about boys and relationships...I recommend this course to any teen before they get into any relationships with a boy or girl. It really helps you fully understand what you're getting into."* – Shari (Kingsburg, CA)

*"This program has really informed me of how relationships can escalate fast if there's a lack of trust in either the male or female...Two of my friends are in a relationship they don't want to be in or are unhappy but don't want to leave their boyfriend because they have been in the relationship for over a year. I've had a talk with them from what I've learned in this program...[it] informs students of what relationships should look like."* – Bethany (Reedley, CA)

## \* Teenagers Learn How to Communicate with Skills

*"I thought [the class] was helpful. It showed me how I act and how others act towards me. [It] also showed us how our emotions should be expressed by talking, not arguing and yelling."*

– Angelica (Riverside, CA)



*"This course helped me to identify, and admit, what kinds of reaction I have when I get mad. I'm going to make sure I control them with calm and not say something I'll later regret. This will help me help others avoid abusive relationships."*

– Todd (San Diego, CA)

*"The thing I found most important was that I learned how to talk to people and thank them for things they have done for us. This made it even easier for me to get happy, and stop being sad."*

– Francisco (San Bernardino, CA)

*"This program helped me learn better ways to deal with my stress and how to talk about my problems."*

– Jessica (Riverside, CA)

*"The difference this program made in my life is how to keep a healthy relationship and how to communicate with each other."*

*I thought the most helpful thing from this workshop is how to communicate with your partner in a relationship to make sure you understand each other. The reason I recommend this is because I have had bad relationships in the past which we did not have communication or did not know how to talk about how we feel or if we had any problems."*

– David (Reedley, CA)

*"The difference this program made in my life is how to keep a healthy relationship and how to communicate with each other."*

## STORY:

## ***“I was nothing but a body walking around!”***

*Brittany from Madera, California, writes to her RE Instructor, “I would like to personally thank you for doing this program at our school this year. Even though I probably seemed very uninterested most of the time, I was very engaged in everything you were teaching us. A lot of the things you brought up hit me hard personally, and I tend to isolate myself and draw away from people when I’m upset, so I distanced myself and tried not to seem too interested in the conversations.*

*“I struggle with anger and depression issues a lot because of my whole life with my father up until three years ago. There was always tons of mental, physical, and emotional abuse to both myself and my mother. There were drugs and drinking constantly as well, and I always felt like the way things were going were my fault. I got to a point where I didn’t care anymore and started just doing anything to feel alive. I honestly felt like I was nothing but a body walking around, and if I couldn’t find a way to feel alive, I just wanted to end it completely. I thought that since I already felt dead, I might as well be dead. I gave up on trying to be happy, I gave up on school, and I gave up on relationships I was in with everyone around me. It has been 19 months since the last time I hurt myself. I still struggle almost daily with the urges to do it.*

*“Not only have you taught me to better myself, but to better my relationships as well. I have learned that it’s okay to trust people, if I do it the right way and the right amounts at the right times. I’ve learned that I can control my anger better and not hold it in until I explode on someone who most likely doesn’t deserve it. I think a lot of the things you taught us will stick with me for a long time, and I have already started applying them to my life. I hope that one day I can apply them to the little bit of a relationship I have with my father so I can forgive him. I don’t think forgiving him will be for him, but more for me. I think it will take a huge weight off my life and let me move past a lot of things I still struggle with. But I also know it won’t be an overnight process, and it’s going to take a while.*

*“So again, I just want to thank you for taking time from your life to do this not only for my peers and me, but for students all over the world. I think so many people can relate to a lot to what you teach, even if they want to pretend they don’t, and I think everyone walks away with something that will eventually better some part of their life.”*



## *At-risk populations transformed*

---

Relationship breakdown, family fragmentation, and unhealthy relationships are major contributors to people turning to high-risk behaviors.

Prisons are filled with men and women from broken homes. Domestic violence centers shelter women who repeatedly end up with abusive men. Treatment centers rehabilitate people whose lives have unraveled through substance abuse. Welfare rolls are filled with women who have newly fallen into poverty and been forced to receive government assistance after their divorce. Family fragmentation is linked to numerous at-risk behaviors that plague people's lives, are damaging to our communities, and drain public resources.

Healthy Relationships California's Relationship Education classes have been offered with great success to at-risk populations at numerous institutions: Prisons, juvenile detention centers, drug rehabilitation centers, domestic violence treatment centers, homeless shelters, and social service agencies. The stories of individuals who are classified as at-risk reveal that learning that relationships can be healthy and safe, and acquiring the skills to make their relationships succeed, is nothing short of transformative.



## STORY:

## *“Suddenly I knew why I’d been divorced 4 times!”*

*Deborah took World Class Relationships because her supervisor asked her to, as part of a workplace RE project. She saw it as an opportunity for professional growth. But, “Oh my goodness!” she exclaims. “Within the first half-hour, I realized I would have to put myself in the mindset that this is for me personally, not just professionally.”*

*Personally, Deborah was dealing with a series of failed relationships. “It’s embarrassing,” she reveals, but “I shared with the class, this is my fifth time being married.”*

*As they progressed through the curriculum, Deborah recognized issues that had undermined her previous relationships. When the instructor talked about “harsh starts” to arguments and how they sabotage your partner’s willingness to continue the conversation, a light bulb went on. “Suddenly, I knew why I’d been divorced four times and why my fifth marriage was also in trouble!” Years of marital problems flashed before her eyes, countless conversations that had gone from bad to worse, followed by discouragement, despair, and divorce.*

*Many of the realizations were difficult. “The art of apology,” Deborah recounts. “Most of my life...I thought I said what I meant and meant what I said, so there was no need to apologize. But I learned it’s OK to apologize, and that it’s imperative for a relationship to move forward.”*



*Perhaps most importantly, Deborah learned how vital it is to have your needs met. “[Women] don’t say what we need, on the pretense that men read minds,” she chuckles. But at the same time, “we don’t have to be dependent on others, we can provide for some of our own needs.”*

*Deborah acted quickly to take home the lessons she was learning. “I gave my husband the [work-book], and I asked for one favor. I asked him to open to the middle of the book and answer the questions about love languages. When I woke up [the next morning] at 5:30, he had already done it.”*

*Deborah says that just that one exercise “has moved us profoundly. Now we know what the other needs, what [we] think is great, what needs to improve. It’s just a deeper love.” After struggling for years to find Mr. Right, Deborah is confident she now has the right skills to nurture her marriage. “This class gave me tools that will allow me to be married for the rest of my life.”*

## **\* Divorced and Divorcing Learn Keys for Successful Future Relationships**

*"This class was somewhat painful to go through because I'm currently in divorce proceedings. This class has literally opened up my eyes as to my errors/faults that resulted in the breakdown of my marriage and ended in divorce. If I had known this information in the last month before he left, we would have had a better chance at rectifying our serious problems and bad communication. I now completely understand the process by which my marriage deteriorated and broke down. I will not repeat the same behaviors, now that I have the tools to make my relationship work."*

**– Tricia (Sacramento, CA)**

*"I have gone through a divorce and need guidance in all rebuilding processes. Most people these days need these workshops. If they realized the value the world would be a better place to live in and our children and grandchildren will live in a peaceful world."*

**– Roger (Sacramento, CA)**

## **\* Domestic Violence Victims Find Hope for the Future**

*"This course helped me recognize what abuse really is. It helped me know if I myself am doing it. It helped me know all the different kinds of abuses. I didn't know many of these, but now I know. It will help me teach others who don't know about abuse."*

**– Amy (San Diego, CA)**

*"This workshop gave me a comprehensive set of guidelines to consider as I meet and consider men in the future. After 43 years in...Domestic Violence situations I find it imperative that I put together a new toolbox...I believe this workshop was a great start in doing just that."*

**– Kathy (Sacramento, CA)**

*"I truly appreciate being here because I can rediscover myself after being in a DV relationship. Being surrounded by people and learning is what I love. I love to learn about and from people especially now, I've begun to learn about me. Thank you."*

**– Noemi (San Diego, CA)**

*"The experience was the best thing that has happened in my life."*

**– Vikki (San Marcos, CA)**

*"The program has given me a lot of support both emotionally and in my life. Because I was a person who had been left with a bad self-esteem but thanks to the program I know as a person I'm valuable. Before I was depressed, sad and stressed. I think because of the separation of my marriage and the violence in my home...I put the techniques into practice with them as well as the technique of respect, towards myself and others. Before my daughter had behavior changes, but thanks to the program I recovered the love and respect of my children and there is nothing more important in this world than my children."*

**– Dolores (Santa Ana, CA)**



## \* *Inmates Make Breakthroughs*

*"I must admit, I owe you a great service. The technique in which you taught me 'empathic listening' not only opened my ears, but my heart as well. I am 34 years old and it seems that until [now], I had never listened or had a heart felt conversation with anyone!!! Now I identify with people with a greater perspective by placing myself in the other person's shoes. I become them in a sense, therefore enabling me to concern myself with what concerns them, to see what they see, or feel what they felt. In doing so, one may achieve understanding which is the focal point of humanity. Thank you for giving me the gift of communication."* – **M.A.S. (Maximum Security Inmate from Oakland, CA)**

*"This is a necessary class for a man that has been incarcerated for 28 years of his adult life in a prison setting who's forgotten what it's like to have a significant other...This class has helped me to reunite, to be able to live life on life's terms in the real world. Learning to understand and appreciate each other, talk and listen to each other is very important in any marriage."* – **Paul (Fresno, CA)**

*"This class has been a learning experience for me because it has given me tools how to communicate with my loved ones and others. I have learned the importance of listening and understanding. This knowledge of education I will take back to society so I can become a better husband, father and man."*

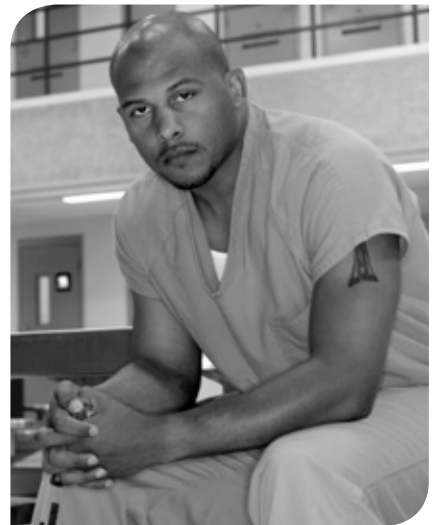
– **Marco (Oakland, CA)**

*"I appreciate this program...I have learned a lot and found many ways to make me and my girlfriend's relationship better thru communication, listening and how to solve problems."*

– **Arvin (Daly City, CA)**

*"I've learned how to listen and communicate better with my partner in life and with people in general. This class has helped me understand where my faults are and what I need to do to have a healthy relationship."* – **Bruce (Vallejo, CA)**

*"I really enjoyed the opportunity to learn communications skills from this course. I was able to apply the 'listen before you speak' with my wife to enhance our communication. I strongly recommend this course to everyone who would like to improve everyday life skills."* – **Charles (Oakland, CA)**



*"This class has helped me understand what I need to do to have a healthy relationship."*

*"I really appreciate this class. It taught me how to talk to others and be considerate of their feelings. It also has taught me to have a better understanding of how to have a better relationship with others as well."* – **Diego (Richmond, CA)**

*"I want to let you know that I'm grateful for attending your class. Since you've shown me these communication skills, I have to admit my life has turned a complete 180-degrees. Now I think about what I say before speaking. Also, I've learned how to listen with empathy and put myself in the other person's shoes. Not only have I been getting a better understanding when communicating, but also the other person seems good that I'm able to listen to them all the way out and understand how they feel. So again, I'm grateful and extremely thankful for this class. It really makes a difference."*  
– **S.H. (Maximum Security Inmate from San Mateo, CA)**



*"This class has taught me a lot of valuable lessons in life and relationships. It's taught me to sit down and listen to others and take time to understand where the other person is coming from and also taught me to forgive myself and others."*  
– **Gerald (Oakland, CA)**

*"This class has helped me so much that I have changed my life and my thinking abilities in many ways. I have come to an understanding with myself and others that I will help anyone that is around me in my life. I will listen and help them with any issues in their life."*  
– **Lamar (Maximum Security Inmate from East Oakland, CA)**

*"I appreciate being in this class. It has opened my eyes and made me see that communication plays a big part in any type of relationship. Also, I have learned how to show people that I listen in a different way. Good communication is the key to good relationships."* – **Terrance (East Oakland, CA)**

*"Since you've shown me these communication skills...my life has turned a complete 180-degrees."*



## STORY:

## ***“Being arrested was the best thing for my marriage and kids.”***

*Diego is an inmate at Buena Vista jail, two months into his sentence for drunk driving.*

*How he ended up there is not surprising. “Whenever my wife and I would talk, it ended up in who could yell the loudest. I would get frustrated and go out and drink.” One night, he was followed by a black and white car with flashing red and blue lights on its roof.*

*While in jail, Diego began attending a Mastering the Mysteries of Love (MML) class. “It has helped me establish a relationship with my wife,” he explains. “I have always loved her. But before, I didn’t know how to talk to her.”*

*The skills Diego learned from MML classes now have played a pivotal role in his marriage and future, deepening his wife’s trust and respect in him. “My wife has seen a difference in me. In fact, I have noticed she smiles more often.”*

*The skills he has learned and the changes he made also had an unexpected bonus: “My wife has talked to my boss, and she has told him the differences that she has noticed in me, and he’s interested in rehiring me back [when I’m released from jail]. I am very thankful for everything,” says Diego.*

*“I am very grateful for these classes because now I know my marriage can be saved and my kids can have a better father.” If Diego hadn’t been arrested, he wouldn’t have attended a class like this. “You could say that being arrested was the best thing for my marriage and kids.”*



## *The workplace transformed*

---

If you have a job, you spend most of your day at work. And more than likely, you interact with co-workers at work more than with your loved ones at home. While fulfilling the company's mission and meeting the bottom line are driving forces at work, a major contributor to job satisfaction and workplace productivity is the quality of relationships at work.

A toxic co-worker, a cut-throat boss, or a high-maintenance customer will take its toll at work—and the quality of relationships at work can affect the quality of your relationships at home.

Relationship Education (RE) can be extremely helpful in making workplace relationships more positive, the workforce more productive, employee retention more stable, and the company more profitable.

RE also provides key skills for those without a job or looking to make a job transition, providing vital communication tools, conflict-management skills, and insights into relationships that make the unemployed more employable.

The following are quotes from both employed and unemployed individuals who benefited from a Relationship Education program.



## STORY:

## *“Having the right tools makes the job easier.”*

*Josh and Emily wanted to do something positive for their marriage relationship. So they signed up for Mastering the Mysteries of Love (MML). Not only did they enrich their own relationship, they also discovered communication skills to enhance their work relationships.*

*“The MML skills have come in handy at the office where I work, as well,” reflects Josh. “The staff was almost divided down the middle on a handful of issues. We were all fairly emotional about our opinions. [After taking MML,] I tried to separate from my own agenda and hear the others’ points of view. That seemed to calm the atmosphere for everyone.” Josh learned that expressing himself in non-judgmental, non-threatening ways helped his co-workers understand his point of view. “It was difficult to do because not everyone knew the skills or was even trying to be nice! But just one or two people trying to use skills affected the tone of the group interaction for the better.”*

*Emily was in a similar situation at her workplace. “I’ve had a relationship at work that’s been strained. So I applied the skills to that relationship and it made a huge difference. When I took the focus off of my feelings and trying to get my way, I tried to see the issue from her point of view. Much of the tension was relieved. I was able to regain my emotional balance and maintain a good working relationship with this person.” Emily discovered that her co-worker needed what everyone needs...to be heard.*

*Not only have they improved their relationships with those they work with, the skills have also improved their overall job performance: “In addition to my co-workers, using good skills has made a difference in how well I do my job,” says Josh. “I meet with parents who are looking to send a child to the university where I work. I show empathy to the parents to draw out their concerns, to hear where they’re coming from, to discover their own personal perspective. They end up voicing concerns they weren’t even consciously aware that they had.”*



*Josh and Emily have received positive outcomes by persistently using their skills in the workplace. Emily shares, “I find the skills...to be empowering without being manipulative. I don’t have to force myself to do something their way or be stuck in an emotion or pattern of behavior that doesn’t work very well. Change or cooperation comes about more naturally when I understand the other person. Having the right tools makes the job easier.”*

## \* *Employees Gain Tools and Skills for a Better Future*

*"I have gained a new sense of self-awareness. I now know where I have gone wrong with relationships in the past. I am a better listener because of the class. I want to change. I have a choice, a voice now. I have chosen not to give up my power. I will be a better employee, friend, spouse, and mother in the future because of this class."* – **Christina (San Jacinto, CA)**

*"I will be able to have a better relationship with coworkers and family. [I know how] to solve my problems and [help with] others' problems that may occur. I feel the need to go and achieve my Goals. I feel that this is a milestone in my life and I feel like a new man today!"*  
– **Johnny (Coachella, CA)**



*"This class has given me the tools to make better decisions in my life and my career. Tools like Power Listening, understanding behavior, and most importantly assuming self-responsibility, will allow me to have the life I see for myself and my family. Everyone should take this class!!!"* – **Maria (Indio, CA)**

*"This class really helped me to learn how to listen. And it taught me [to] never give up on my dreams and to not judge people before I listen. It also taught me how to let go of fear and disappointment in myself and to set goals for myself. To know how to handle any situation whether at work or home. I am able to resolve conflict without arguments. These are skills you need in the workplace. You have to have good listening skills and even better communication skills."* – **Natalie (La Quinta, CA)**

*"Participating in this class has been truly life changing. It's amazing how my life has changed. The knowledge and skills I've learned are key in the workplace and will be something I'll use in everyday life. This class has given me the tools to feel confident and be a leader. I truly appreciate what I've been taught and would like to see the info passed onto others. I will forever be grateful for this class."*

– **Claudia (East Hemet, CA)**

*"This class has given me the tools to make better decisions in my life and my career."*

## STORY:

## *“The job was mine before I walked in the door.”*

*Latanya needed a job. She joined the job club at the local employment center. She attended a number of classes and trainings at the center, but what she learned had not resulted in much success on the job front. Until the day she was assigned to attend World Class Relationships (WCR).*

*“On the same exact day of the WCR class, I was scheduled to have an interview for a potential job. So I could only stay for the first half the class,” explains Latanya.*

*“I learned so much. I was interested in what I was learning, but also very nervous about the interview.”*

*One of the lessons Latanya learned was about Power Listening. She later admitted that this lesson was a strong influence on her and her nerves that day. “I took in all the information I could and went to my interview.”*

*When Latanya arrived at the job interview, she used everything she learned earlier in the day. The interviewer “was so intrigued with my attitude, my understanding, my power listening skills...the job was mine before I walked in the door.”*

*“What I learned wasn’t just for the job,” Latanya enthusiastically proclaims. “This class prepared my mind set to go and get this job for me and my children in order to provide and reach my goals. I plan on using my communication skill throughout my life for old relationships, new relationships, everything. I want these qualities to be embedded in and become traits of my personality.”*



## **\* Unemployed People Learn Skills for Work...and Home**

*"This program is necessary!! This class really helped me to get motivated once again. It gave me the extra push to make the changes needed to face the world and see my opportunities more clearly by making the right changes in my attitude and relationships at work, home and the community environment."* – **Sandra (Thermal, CA)**

*"I mainly need these skills outside of my marriage because I don't get along with anyone. I hope to use these skills in a job interview for I have not had a job in 3 years."* – **Hector (Fresno, CA)**

*"I think this class will be great for everyone who is in the GAIN [employment] program. It will help people to become better parents, co-workers, and friends. I learned from my own experience how to power listen, and become a better person overall. And I'm a very stubborn person, set in my ways. Now I feel like I can be someone better."* – **Guillermo (East Hemet, CA)**

*"I really loved this class. This class made me more confident and I'm very able to apply everything I learned in this class in a future work place and in my personal relationship with my partner. It has made me aware of my relationship w/ my kids, I learned to listen more to what my kids were saying from their heart. The growing pillar was great & the forgiveness pillar is what touched me the most. It made me think in a whole different way that I didn't know was possible."* – **Melissa (Mecca, CA)**

*"This class not only taught me how to set better goals, greater communication skills but how to reconnect with others on all levels personal, business & in general public and NOW have communication skills covering conflict resolution. I believe and know this class will & has changed me to be a better mother, spouse, friend & business partner...This class changed many of my behaviors & attitudes to be a better communicator in [interviews]. I'm now back to being a confident, strong skilled woman who can apply all pillars in my work ethic, personal life...Thank you so much for the reflection this class had on my life. There are honestly no words to describe how this has changed my life for the better."* – **Megan (San Jacinto, CA)**

*"My life has changed for the better in just four days. This class definitely benefits every one. I've done the job club before and got nowhere. And in just four days, I know exactly how to handle any issue I have now. Plus I have learned so much more than the job club. I'm glad I had the privilege to be in this class...it has changed my life and that is priceless."* – **James (Coachella, CA)**

*"I believe this program would be very beneficial for those on welfare as many on it come from broken homes and suffer from depression. I could see it working with [these] people."*  
– **Adrian (Riverside, CA)**



*"I think this class would help in the workplace with all relationships. Apply these skills for better relationships at home will benefit everyone, and the skills and positive attitude cultivated will definitely pore [sic] over into the workplace as well. This class should most definitely be offered in more employment programs, it will lead to more motivated individuals, which means better chances of getting jobs. I think a lot of the people on welfare need this motivation, as they are in depressing situations."*

**– Andrea (San Bernardino, CA)**

*"I have participated in a WCR [class] over four days and count myself as very privileged. I have taken communication training with previous employers but they pale in comparison to WCR. Because the training workshop was offered over four days, I had the time to go home and implement activities from WCR to improve my family communication. I sincerely believe that anyone who is experiencing a difficult time, due to unemployment, under employment or in transition will greatly benefit because the interpersonal skills are universally applicable. I believe what I learned will help me on my job search, interviews and most importantly benefit my ability to be a positive role model for my daughters. These tools are universally applicable and transformational."*

**– Rosa (Riverside, CA)**

*"What I learned will help me  
on my job search..."*



# About relationship and marriage education

---

## \* A Wide Range of Programs for Everyone

Relationship and Marriage Education (RME) refers to educational programs conducted in a group setting that teach individuals and couples a variety of skills, attitudes, and behaviors that are associated with being able to form and sustain healthy relationships. RME is an all-encompassing term with a number of sub-categories—including Youth Relationship Skills Training, Premarital Education, Marriage Education, Parenting Training, Fatherhood Training, Conflict-Management Skills, Relationship Skills for the Workplace, etc.

Typically 8-16 hours in length, RME courses come in a wide array that target individuals and couples across important ages and stages of relationships and life. Program instructors teach from a prescribed curriculum that generally includes multiple teaching modalities, with a typical format being instructor lecturette followed by demonstration, then skill practice between pairs/couples or small groups of participants, then debriefing and further coaching. Classes typically have 15-30 participants but may be as small as 6-8 or as large as thousands of participants. The content of Relationship Education varies across the target population for which a program is directed in regard to the range of subjects, the level at which the subject matter is taught, and the amount of skill practice. In addition to specific topics for each target population, RME programs typically include age-appropriate instruction and skill practice in foundational communication skills such as Active Listening, Non-blameful Confrontation, and Problem-Solving Skills.

The RME programs offered to participants whose testimonials are reflected in this booklet include:

### **RE for Youth/Singles:**

Connections  
Healthy Choices, Healthy Relationships  
Love U2 Relationship Smarts Plus  
PAIRS for PEERS  
PICK a Partner/How to Avoid Marrying  
a Jerk/Jerkette

### **RME for Adults:**

Mastering the Mysteries of Love  
Mastering the Mysteries of Stepfamilies  
PAIRS Essentials  
Raising Kids Twogether  
Ready for Love  
Relationship Enhancement  
The Third Option  
World Class Marriage  
World Class Relationships



## \* People Everywhere Are Grateful for RME Classes

*"Thank you very much for your support and presence within our communities."*

**– Lawrence (San Bernardino, CA)**

*"I would like to thank the people behind this program...I hope you continue helping the community... Thanks for everything and hopefully you can get more help so that these types of programs can be offered more frequently."*

**– Marco (Anaheim, CA)**

*"I hope they continue doing these programs because they really do work, to have a better family and better community."*

**– Tom (Santa Ana, CA)**

*"I think these courses could make a big impact on families and marriages."*

**– Lori (San Bernardino, CA)**

*"I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this type of program, because they are central to social and family integration. Hopefully, these programs were offered more often because in my opinion they are extremely helpful, giving us the tools for strengthening families and improving relationships with others (neighbors, relatives and friends)."*

**– Maria (Santa Ana, CA)**

*"Please continue this form of relationship education for parents to learn to be better parents..."*

**– Virgie (Anaheim, CA)**

*"Good thing these programs exist and I hope these programs continue to exist."*

**– Nisa (Santa Ana, CA)**

*"Creo que es muy importante que se mantengan estos cursos para poder salvar y ayudar a matrimonios... Por lo tanto me gustaría que hubiera más cursos como estos para invitar a mis familiares y amigos."*

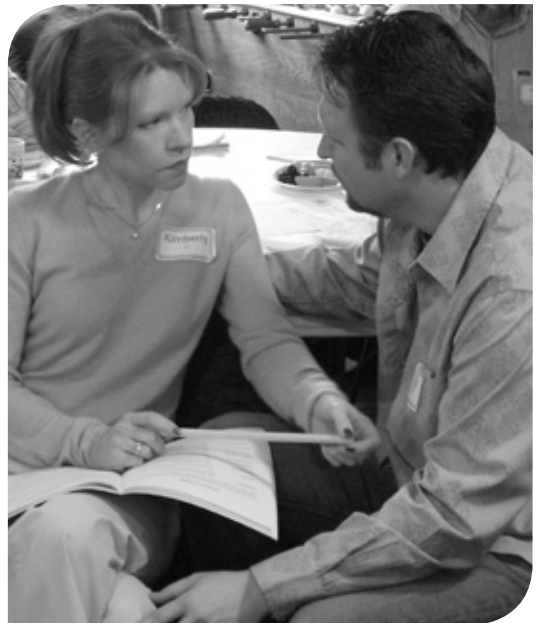
**– Blanca (Mecca, CA)**

*"Gracias por la ayuda. Es necesaria para nosotros los Hispanos. Ya que en mucho, carecemos de estas habilidades. ¡Gracias!"*

**– Pedro (Auburn, CA)**

*"Espero que sigan existiendo estas clases, para ayudar a más mamas."*

**– Claudia (Long Beach, CA)**



# About Healthy Relationships California

---

Life is all about relationships. Healthy Relationships California (HRC) gives people the skills they need to get the most from, and give the most to, their relationships!

Relationship Skills are taught through Relationship and Marriage Education (RME) classes, helping individuals to make all of their relationships healthier, safer, and more meaningful and satisfying.

HRC is one of the nation's preeminent RME organizations, having taught over 150,000 people of all ages and relationship stages, from teenagers to seniors, in all parts of California. Because of the breadth of impact RME classes have on lives, families, communities, and society, HRC stands at the forefront of cultural change.

As a result of RME classes, we have witnessed:

- Couples ripping up their divorce papers.
- Parents keeping their family together.
- Teenagers learning to form healthy relationships with their peers, getting along with their parents, and aspiring to meaningful careers.
- Women from abusive pasts starting a new pattern of healthy relationships.
- Stepparents overcoming the strain and tension of blending families together.
- Troubled lives turning around, and good lives becoming great.

This is satisfying and meaningful work! Founded in 2005, HRC has built partnerships with a wide range of community-based organizations interested in offering RME programs. Through trainings and collaborative strategies, RME classes have been offered in English, Spanish, Korean, Chinese, Farsi, Hmong, and other languages throughout California.

In 2006, HRC received the nation's largest Healthy Marriage Demonstration Grant—a five-year grant provided by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families—which was followed in 2011 by a three-year Community-Centered Healthy Marriage and Relationships grant to expand services into low-income populations around the state.

HRC's original research data show resoundingly positive impacts on participants, and national studies reveal the outstanding return on investment from RME programs, which decrease the need for costly social services resulting from family breakdown.

Healthy Relationships California is passionate about Relationship and Marriage Education because of its potency as a highly cost-effective means for creating widespread positive impact on society, and its much-appreciated ability to transform the lives of its participants.

## **\* Statewide Partnering Organizations**

*Healthy Relationships California has partnered with more than 40 organizations to provide Relationship and Marriage Education classes around the state.*

*Abide in Love  
AMOR de Orange County  
Buenanueva Foundation  
Catholic Family Movement  
Center for the Empowerment of Families  
Christian Counseling Center  
The Clinebell Institute  
COGIC Bakersfield  
COGIC Vallejo  
Diocese of Monterey  
Diocese of San Bernardino  
Diocese of Stockton  
Family Saver Center  
Formacion Matrimonial  
Happy Families, Inc  
Healthy Marriage Coalition of Fresno/Madera County  
Healthy Relationships Bay Area  
Healthy Relationships Orange County  
Healthy Relationships Sacramento  
HOME International  
IMPACT South Bay  
International Institute of Los Angeles  
Korean Churches for Community Development  
LA HALO  
MAPS 4 College  
National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference  
Protestant Healthy Families Coalition of Orange County  
Relate for Life  
Relationship Research Foundation*

*REnovando Familias  
Sacramento Healthy Marriage Project  
Sacred Commitments  
Saints Healthy Marriage Project  
San Diego North County Latino Marriage &  
Family Resource Center  
San Gabriel Valley Marriage Resource Center  
Solutions 4 Families  
Stanislaus County Healthy Marriage Coalition  
Strong Relationships LA  
Talk It Out  
We Care San Jacinto  
Yuba-Sutter Healthy Marriage Coalition*

## **\* Relationship and Marriage Education Class Sites**

More than 1,000 community-based organizations, schools, social service agencies, churches, faith-based organizations, prisons, and mental health facilities have hosted Relationship and Marriage Education classes taught by HRC. A partial list of sites includes:

7 H Foundation  
Abundant Life Church of God  
in Christ  
All Peoples Community Center  
Anaheim Family Resource Center  
Armenian Relief Society  
Bayview YMCA  
Berean Seventh Day Adventist  
Church  
Bethel AME Church  
Boys & Girls Club  
Bresee Foundation  
Buena Vista Jail  
C. A. P. Recovery Home  
California Rehabilitation Center  
California Youth Authority  
Camino Nuevo High School  
Casa Despertar  
Cathedral of the Annunciation  
Catholic Charities Center  
CDI Headstart  
Central California Women's Facility  
Central Coast Counseling Center  
Child Abuse Prevention Council  
Children Planning Council  
Children Services Division  
Chinese Independent Baptist Church  
Chucos Justice Center  
Chula Vista Senior High School  
Claremont School of Theology  
Claremont Youth Activities Center  
Clinica Monsenor Romero  
Clovis High School  
Coalition of Youth Justice  
Coastal Community Hospital  
Comprehensive Addiction Program  
Coptic Orthodox Christian Center  
Corcoran Substance Abuse Facility

Coronado Alternative School  
Department of Public Social  
Services  
Diocese of Los Angeles  
Downey Adult School  
East Sarang Community Church  
Eastlake Juvenile Hall  
Episcopal Community Services  
Family Education & Resource Center  
Family Support Network  
Federal Correctional Complex  
First Evangelical Free Church  
of Fullerton  
First Lutheran Church  
Folsom Prison  
Fresno City College  
Fresno County Head Start  
Fresno County Housing Authority  
Fresno County Jail  
Fresno Unified School District  
Fundacion de Sobrevivientes  
de Trafico Humano  
Glenn E. Dyer Jail  
Hesperia Knights of Columbus Hall  
Holy Family Catholic Church  
Iglesia Adventista de San Jose  
Inglewood Unified School District  
Inland Valley Recovery Services  
Joslyn Senior Center  
Kedren Mental Health  
Kohan Foundation  
Korean Community Services  
LA County Probation  
LA Juvenile Detention Center  
Life Builder Women's  
Resource Center  
Maxine Waters Employment  
Preparation Center

Methodist African Zion Church  
Onecare Medical Group  
Oscar De La Hoya Animo Charter  
High School  
Parents Who Care of San Francisco  
Pomona United High School District  
Pregnancy Resource Center of Lodi  
Primera Iglesia Bautista  
Rancho Cucamonga Family Center  
Roseville Health & Wellness Center  
Saddleback Valley Community  
Church  
Salvation Army  
San Diego Dept. of Education  
Sandy Bluffs Continuation  
High School  
Santa Ana School District  
Scharp Medical Health  
Rehabilitation Program  
Sinai Temple  
Solano State Prison  
South County Crisis Center  
St. Paul Newman Center  
Templo Camino a Damasco  
Thomas Riley High School  
Union Rescue Mission  
Valley State Prison for Women  
Valley Teen Ranch  
Voluntaries de America de  
Los Angeles (Hawthorne)  
Walker Temple A.M.E.  
Watts DV Shelter  
West Covina High School  
Teen Mom Program  
Wicked Wheels Motorcycle Club  
Wilshire United Methodist Church  
Yeda Academy  
Young Nak Church