

TouringCareerWorkshop.com - 2012

Panel Discussion: Navigating Relationships on the Road

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Navigating Relationships on the Road

Challenges of dating relationships on the road:

1. Long periods of separation
2. Little quality time to communicate
3. Difficulty getting to know the whole person
4. Idealizing the other person because you do not spend lots of time together
5. Idealizing the lifestyle
6. Temptation/distraction of other relationships that seem more immediate
7. Lack of any commitment keeping you together
8. Co-dependency/Addiction/Loneliness

Challenges for married couples:

1. Long periods of separation
2. Little quality time to communicate
3. Developing emotionally in different directions
4. Becoming disillusioned with the other person
5. Becoming resentful/tired of/bitter about the lifestyle
6. Temptation of infidelity
7. Trying to keep the commitment strong
8. Co-dependency/addiction/loneliness
9. Burden of the household/kids falling to one person
10. Financial stress

How to Successfully Navigate the Touring Life

I. Communication

1. Common struggles: lack of time, not making time, opposite schedules, one person having a crisis while the other is unavailable, co-dependency (see attached worksheet)
2. Solutions:
 - a. Share your **expectations** of each other/be honest
 - b. Set up a **communication system** that works for you
 - Skype, Facetime, Texting, Calling, Email, Facebook, journaling
 - pictures of what each person is doing, where they are, what the kids are doing helps to bridge the gap
 - c. Try to be available when emergency situations arise on either end

II. Transitioning In and Out of Home Life

1. Common struggles:
 - a. Routine is disrupted
 - b. **Routine/Expectations** of what each person needs during the transition is not communicated or discussed. Each person is emotionally depleted.
 - c. Decision making goes from a singular process to a joint process and back again
 - d. New rules for kids are introduced and then not upheld
 - e. Feeling distant/shut down emotionally
 - f. Working while at home lacks boundaries

2. Solutions:
 - a. The person transitioning back into the home needs to ask what the current routine is. If there are kids, then the person coming home needs to talk about what the rules are for them.
 - b. Both persons need to communicate what they need to relieve the stress of having been separated and recognize that in the first few days, there may not be much emotional reserve to give to one another.
 - c. Do not micro-manage each other. Respect that each person has been "single" while apart from the other. Understand that it is a transition that takes time.
 - d. Do not make up any new rules for the kids without discussing them first. The person at home may not be physically or emotionally able to fight every battle!
 - e. Go on a **date!!** Talk about all the things that have happened while you were apart that you did not have time to communicate on the phone. Recognize that being apart requires both people to have some mental coping skills, meaning that both people probably shut down some emotionally. Give yourselves some time to come out of this coping state into something more normal.
 - f. **Set boundaries** with road work while home. Keep office hours. Set aside family time.

III. Finances

1. Common struggles:
 - a. Lack of communication about spending or financial goals
 - b. Not saving money for times when work is slow
 - c. Burden of paying bills falls to one person

2. Solutions:
 - a. Budget spending money for each person. Establish separate bank accounts to keep records clear (can still be joint) or set up separate credit cards (and get extra points if you are financially responsible to pay the credit card balances each month).

- b. Sit down and make a **financial plan** for the year. Try to live on less than you make and save, save, save!!! Do not base your lifestyle off of one good year. This will make the lean times much less stressful. Be respectful of each other and the hard work that each person is doing (if spending seems to be a chronic problem for either person, this is usually just a symptom of a bigger issue and might require counseling)
- c. Split the bill paying duties. Or give it to the person who actually has the organizational skills to take care of paying the bills.

IV. The grass is NOT greener.....it's just different.

The most common struggle of touring couples is to imagine that the other person always has it better. The person at home envies the travel, the prepared meals, the time to watch movies for 8 hours on a bus. The person on the road envies the clean shower, the familiar bed, and all the comforts of home. The honest truth is: there are pros and cons to both sides. Yes, the touring person can experience some amazing job perks. A personal tour of the Pixar studios? Pretty sweet. Being at home, watching TV in your warm bed while your partner spends the night on an airport floor during a snow storm? Also pretty sweet.

So the overall goal here is understanding and communication.

Important Things to Consider:

1. Have a strong network of family and friends.
2. Get extra help when you need it. Check out our list of resources!
3. Put your relationship before career. You never know when an artist is going to take a year off, have a breakdown, be at the center of a scandal, go to rehab, or die. (we have seen all of these happen....) Do not put all your eggs in their basket and forget the most important part of your life!
4. Be brave. If a working situation is ruining your personal life, consider a change.
5. Plan an exit strategy. You will not want the touring life forever. That is a promise!
6. Put on paper the reasons for accepting this separated assignment and refer to it periodically, as a reminder.
7. Be honest with each other about your concerns and fears.
8. Establish areas of responsibility (who will pay what, who will do what, find a plumber, grass cutter, electrician, housekeeper to help)
9. Talk about the experience!! (of being home and of being on the road)

Are You Co-Dependent?

From the workbook, *Love Is a Choice*, by Dr. Robert Hemfelt, Dr. Frank Minirth, Dr. Paul Meier, Dr. Deborah Newman, and Dr. Brian Newman

Check the statements from the following list that fits your life:

1. ___ I can't stand to be alone
2. ___ I am a perfectionist.
3. ___ I am driven by the approval of others.
4. ___ I feel desperate when I cannot gain the approval of other people.
5. ___ I find myself making decisions based on how they will affect other people and rarely consider myself.
6. ___ Many times I feel obsessed by a need for total order in my life.
7. ___ I put my work first, above everything.
8. ___ I find myself adjusting to my spouse's needs rather than communicating my feelings.
9. ___ I do not experience anger.
10. ___ I overeat often.
11. ___ I am constantly wondering what other people think of me.
12. ___ I cover up my feelings so others won't realize what I really think.
13. ___ I am afraid that if others really knew me they would run and hide.
14. ___ I am constantly trying to figure out how to stay ahead in my relationships.
15. ___ I cover up my feelings of self-doubt with drug or alcohol use.
16. ___ I can't say no when I am asked to do a favor or serve on a committee.
17. ___ When I begin to feel sad or angry I go shopping, work harder, or eat.
18. ___ I tell myself it shouldn't hurt so much when others let me down.
19. ___ I need to control those close to me.
20. ___ I need everyone to be happy with me so that I can feel good about myself.
21. ___ I need others to be strong for me without requiring anything from me in return.

If you checked two or more of the preceding statements, you have some codependent issues worth looking at. These represent areas where codependency is robbing you of joy in life.

Resources

Counseling:

Restore Ministries of the YMCA

4041 Hillsboro Circle

Nashville, TN 37215

Individual, Couples, Family and Children's counseling available throughout Middle Tennessee. Nurse Practitioner and Clinical Psychologist on staff.

Rates are based on a sliding scale.

615-565-6278

www.ymcamidtn.org

Daystar

2801 Azalea Place

Nashville, TN 37204

Individual and family counseling with a focus on helping children

Services provided on a sliding scale

615-298-5353

www.daystarcounseling.com

Pastoral Counseling Centers of TN

100 Vine Court

Nashville, TN 37205

Professional counseling with a theological/spiritual approach

Services provided on a sliding scale

615-383-2115

www.pcctinc.org

Stephen Navyac, LMFT (previous experience in the music industry)

Individual, Couple, and Family Counseling

615-300-0883

navyacs@gmail.com

Ashley Boyd, M.A., M.Ed., NCC, LPC-MHSP

2924 Berry Hill Drive

Nashville, TN 37204

615-519-8105

www.ashleyboydcounseling.com

ashleyboydcounseling@gmail.com

Debra Clements, LMFT
2924 Berry Hill Drive
Nashville, TN 37204
(additional Franklin office)
615-497-7388
debjclem@aol.com

Laura Parks, MMFT
Counseling for couples and women
2924 Berry Hill Drive
Nashville, TN 37204
615-519-9336
lauralynchparks@gmail.com

Teresa Hardy, LMFT
Fellowship Bible Church
1210 Franklin Road
Brentwood, TN 37027
615-777-8501
thardy@FellowshipNashville.org

Addiction Treatment:

Centerstone

Counseling for all ages with a focus on trauma, abuse, depression, anxiety, substance abuse, learning challenges
Offices in Bedford, Cheatham, Coffee, Davidson, Dickson, Franklin, Giles, Hickman, Houston, Humphreys, Lawrence, Lewis, Lincoln, Marshall, Maury, Montgomery, Robertson, Sumner, Wayne, Williamson counties

www.centerstone.org

888-291-4357

Cumberland Heights

615-356-2700

Admissions: 1-800-646-9998

www.cumberlandheights.org

Alcohol and drug outpatient and inpatient treatment

MusiCares

Debbie Carroll: Executive Director

1904 Wedgewood Ave.

Nashville, TN 37212

615-327-0050

1-877-626-2748

www.musicares.org

Provides a safety net of critical assistance for music people in times of need.

MusiCares' services and resources cover a wide range of financial, medical and personal emergencies, and each case is treated with integrity and confidentiality.

Support Groups:

Restore Ministries of the YMCA

www.ymcamidtn.org

Christian based 8/10/15 week support groups meet throughout Middle Tennessee that deal with life change, self-esteem, fear/anxiety, grief, health, relationships, and addiction.

Davidson County: Heather Thomas hthomas@ymcamidtn.org or 297-6529

Williamson County: Sara Hamill shamill@ymcamidtn.org or 373-2900

Rutherford County: Susan Davenport swdavenport@ymcamidtn.org or 895-5995

Mt Juliet: April Gammon agammon@ymcamidtn.org or 773-5363

Dickson: Pam Edmond pedmond@ymcamidtn.org or 202-4894

Bellevue: Chuck Frazier cfrazier@ymcamidtn.org or 646-9622

Putnam County: Julie Gibson jgibson@ymcamidtn.org or 931-528-1133

Robertson County: Mary Grayson mgrayson@ymcamidtn.org or 382-9622

Daystar

2801 Azalea Place

Nashville, TN 37204

Numerous youth groups available for all ages

www.daystarcounseling.org/events/groups

DivorceCare

Help and healing during a separation or divorce

To find a group in your area go to: www.divorcecare.org/findagroup

GriefShare

Support for you after the loss of a loved one

To find a group in your area go to: www.griefshare.org/findagroup

Celebrate Recovery

Rick Warren's Christian based 8 step recovery program based on the original 12 Steps used in AA

To find a group in your area go to: www.celebraterecovery.com/find-a-group

Worldwide Marriage Encounter

Catholic based marriage enrichment weekend for couples who are struggling with communication.

To find out more go to: www.wwme.org

Retrouvaille

Christian based marriage enrichment weekend followed by 6-12 post weekend sessions following.

To find out more go to: www.retrouvaille.org

Nashville Coordinators: James and Judith Johnston

615-274-6272

jjjohnston2@yahoo.com

Suggested Reading:

Journey to Freedom by Scott Reall

Love Is a Choice book and workbook by Dr. Robert Hemfelt, Dr. Frank Minirth, Dr. Paul Meier

Boundaries by Henry Cloud and John Townsend

Boundaries in Marriage

Boundaries in Dating

Boundaries with Kids

Boundaries with Teens

Voice of the Heart by Chip Dodd

CoDependent No More by Melodie Beattie

Changing for Good by Dr. James Prochaska

Addiction and Grace by Dr. Gerald May