

What is a Marriage Encounter?

A Worldwide Marriage Encounter is a weekend away, offering married couples a special kind of "time out", a different kind of "weekend getaway". It is an opportunity to recharge your relationship batteries and more deeply explore the precious nature of your marriage. It offers a gentle, nurturing environment, away from the pressures and distractions of daily living. Thus, it allows you both to share your feelings, hopes and dreams with each other in ways that normal, daily living tends to inhibit.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter's research tells us that one of the key stumbling blocks in maintaining and enriching marriage relationships is the fact that few of us find loving, open communication easy, no matter how much we love each other.

A Marriage Encounter is a weekend about love. It is a positive and personal experience offering married couples an opportunity to learn a unique approach to loving communication that you can use for the rest of your lives. It encourages you to focus on each other, your communication skills, and your relationship.

Marriage Encounter is for couples with basically sound marriages who want to take their relationship a step further and enrich and/or revitalize their marriage. The weekend is not equipped to deal with problems like domestic violence, infidelity or separation. Marriage Encounter is definitely **NOT** marriage guidance or marriage counselling. There are various government and privately funded counselling services offering assistance to marriages in crisis.

Why should you go on a Marriage Encounter weekend?

Success at anything only comes with a constant striving to adapt to our environment and learn new ways of dealing with people and problems. Modern couples know that marriages just like jobs need to be worked at. New stages of our lives need new ways of adapting. As individuals we all change, develop and move forward. Marriages need to move forward and develop too.

Some of the times when our marriages can be most challenged are:

- before starting a family
- when one or other partner changes/loses job or career path
- when all the kids have started school
- when adolescents begin to challenge your perceptions of your world

- when you're finding it difficult to comfortably balance all your commitments (eg marriage, work, family, leisure)
- when ill-health affects one of you
- when the realization hits that you are alone together either due to childlessness or children leaving home
- when preparing for retirement
- when major milestones loom in your lives (birthdays, anniversaries)

Some of the things that a weekend can achieve are:

- an acceptance that we all have our ups and downs
- getting you talking and listening constructively to each other
- a reminder of how much you appreciate each other
- a sense of how important you are to each other

Market research indicates that couples with average or poorer communication skills seem to benefit most from the experience. But the benefits also extended to romance and intimacy, problem solving, self-esteem, sexuality and spirituality.

While approximately one third of Australian marriages end in divorce, conversely, two thirds of married couples are successfully working through the joys and challenges of married life in the nineties. A Marriage Encounter weekend is a time for you and your spouse to be alone together, rediscover each other, re-create the romance, re-celebrate the joy and reflect on what you have learnt from the inevitable struggles in your relationship.

Just like no diamond is perfect and flawless, neither is any marriage so good that it can't be made better. Worldwide Marriage Encounter offers you a new and creative way to "work at" your marriage. It is designed to make good marriages better.

A Marriage Encounter weekend is for any married couple who want to have a richer, fuller life together.

Whether you're twenty or eighty years old, and married for one year or sixty, you and your partner **deserve the gift** of each other's precious and exclusive time and attention.

Over two million people in over fifty countries have experienced a Marriage Encounter weekend. So many people can't be wrong!

For more information go to www.wwme.org.au