

Therapy Services

- Adults
- Families
- Couples
- Teens
- Children

Assessment Services

- Academic Struggles
- Attention and hyperactivity difficulties
- Social and emotional difficulties
- Parenting and family issues

Speaking Services

Members of our staff are available (often on a volunteer basis) to speak to groups on topics related to emotional, relational and spiritual issues. We can work with you to customize a talk to suit your needs.

Vital Sources Staff

Jim Roembke, Psy.D.
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Dr. Allen Lish, Psy.D.
Managing Partner of Vital Sources



Allen received his doctorate in clinical psychology from Wheaton College. As

the son of a pastor, Allen has lived in many places both in the U.S. and abroad. Having had a successful first career in management he uses his business experience as a Partner and Executive Coach here at Vital Sources. He has co-authored and published three articles and presented papers specifically on the topic of Church/Psychology Collaboration. Allen feels a called to work with men either individually or in their marriages; and has expertise in child and adolescent development.

Why did you leave your first career and choose psychology instead?

After reading a book by Larry Crabb, I found that the process within psychology was a great way to help me understand myself, which soon led to a passion to help others do the same.

What are the biggest struggles you see people having to face?

It's hard to live in this broken world, so it's often hard for people to accept their own brokenness. We often look to other things or people to help alleviate our angst in this life. I think everything else just stems from that same brokenness.

If you could tell our readers anything, what would it be?

Similarly as above, if we weren't broken we wouldn't

need a Savior; but we are broken. Find a way to accept that and then will come (eventually) the peace and motivation to live despite brokenness.

What is something that most people do not know about you and probably would not guess?

Most people can easily see my "no non-sense" approach to life. Only a few know that I'm actually an emotionally sensitive guy - I'm actually proud of that sensitivity. A good friend and mentor told me once, "Never diminish or under estimate the tears of a man." Guys, the toughest guy is the one with enough strength to be sensitive to those around them - just check out Jesus.



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THE NEXT CHAPTER
Women in Midlife
by Margie Brubaker, M.A., L.C.P.C.

Introduction

Every person has a life story. I find that, generally speaking, women's lives correspond well to the book analogy. Early on, the chapters of career building and/or having a family may follow a predictable course, driven largely by physical realities and personal choices. Some chapters may correspond directly to the life stages and activities of her children in their development. However, the focus here is the life story of a woman in her midlife chapter, and the unique process that many women have to negotiate.

Her Setting

In a youth obsessed culture, it is an anomaly for a woman to enter midlife with abundant grace and anticipation. Her early formation and subsequent life experiences already taught her how to think about her life in all its facets. At this point in time, however, she faces some daunting challenges she has only read about or been told of by a seasoned counterpart.

Developmentally, all midlife systems within a woman struggle to capture equilibrium. As many experience, menopause is often turbulent, confusing, and complex. Physical issues clash with her mental,

emotional, and spiritual self understanding. The unavoidable reality of a clock that cannot be turned back has its own anguish and anxiety. Many women have little or no emotional support when they turn the page and physically accommodate the end of an era. She feels quite alone in her world and highly misunderstood. Jokes about menopause and aging, looking at the effects of time in the mirror, and feeling the uncertainty about the future all mock what she cannot control. They converge upon what just a chapter or two ago seemed so far away.

Her Story Line

The possibilities are endless. She may be the caretaker of aging parents or a terminally ill spouse. Perhaps marital stress minimizes what peace she can find at home. Her nest is empty and she is trying to fill the silence, but hasn't figured that out yet. Maybe she will re-enter the work place, though it seems daunting to do so. She may have divorced recently, or her husband has died, or she herself is ill. Her relationships with adult children may not be all she wishes they were, and she struggles to orient herself to her role in their lives now. Early life events that she did not process may arise and evoke insecurity, alienation and detachment. Financial issues worry her and she visualizes growing

old alone and destitute. Normal activities may suddenly feel unfamiliar and her usual social confidence may feel strange and artificial.

The difficult reality is that several of these scenarios usually happen in her life simultaneously. Because of all that is required of her, a woman may feel the frustration of feeling lost in the plot of her own story line. She recognizes that she has no time to care for herself, find an enriching spiritual community or fulfill her longing to belong in a meaningful, supportive friendship. The physical toll truly leaves her exhausted and often without internal resources.

Her Outcome

It can be easy for an uninformed on-looker to observe a mid-life woman and make inaccurate assumptions. Many women have “just enough” internal strengths to present an intact exterior. But to underestimate the difficulties of her internal reality is to do her a great disservice. Also, women with complicated life issues who live without meaningful relational support often feel judged, exposed, and alienated.

It is very important for a woman to make sense of her current life changes and to integrate them into a new sense of personal meaning. Therapy at this time can be richer and deeper since physical and emotional realities are impossible to ignore. Often this process involves the grieving of losses; of what is past and never will be again.

Reflection clarifies which dreams about her future she wants to lay down, keep alive, or kindle anew. It helps her proactively release leftover feelings of regret, guilt, or bitterness that accumulated over the years. It also prepares her for writing ideas for the subsequent chapters of a second half of life adventure. Most of all, it connects her to her own reality and sense of self that may have been clouded for years. Greater clarity opens the way for more internal spiritual strength, preparing her for a more satisfying resolution throughout the rest of her life story.

Conclusion

When a woman faces her aging process honestly and with a growing spiritual component, she learns to manage depression, anguish and hopelessness. A revived sense of humor, finding fun again, and seeing her interests and purpose unfold breathes new life into her. Finding continued personal meaning, attaching to a new life focus, and building upon re-assessed mental, emotional and physical health provides opportunities for her to live in the next chapter with grace and anticipation.

A final observation invites those in relationship with a woman in this chapter of life to draw nearer; to take the risk to stay with her in these tumultuous pages. If you are that family member or friend who makes this commitment, you provide the supportive connection that helps keep her grounded in reality and hopefulness. Your presence and support helps her shore up her own strength and build genuine confidence again. While you are not responsible for her actions and reactions, nor omniscient to control any outcomes, your constancy and attempt to understand her reassures her that she will not be alone in this chapter.

NOTE: *Margie Brubaker* is available to churches and women's groups for talks, seminars, workshops and retreats about this important subject.

For Pastors & Other Leaders

Caring for Mary and Martha

by R. Allen Lish, Psy.D.

Painting by Peter Paul Rubens



Remember the sisters Mary and Martha in the New Testament? They were good friends with Jesus and His disciples. Jesus cried with them about the death of their brother. The women were very comfortable with Jesus; one said, “What took you so long? Our brother would not have died if you had come sooner (paraphrased).” Mary and Martha were counting that day, on the peace and provision of Christ’s love; that’s why it was unsettling for them when Jesus was late.

Mary and Martha personalities play a huge role in the church even today; admittedly it has been Mary and Martha personalities by whose talents and abilities much of the modern church has been built. The relative nurturing and organizing skills, so useful to church ministry, come from the natural personalities of these types of women. What often goes unnoticed, though, is the lack of liberty (physical, social or spiritual) actually experienced by Mary and Martha personalities. As we all do, these personalities often err on what they do best; the error is not in the application of what they provide, but in what is not provided for them when they do too much nurturing and organizing.

Mary’s as nurturing pleasers and Martha’s as organizing doers often try to purchase or earn their acceptance through the gifts they offer. Love is not something we purchase and grace is not earned by our efforts. Like Sarah with Abraham, we can’t experience the peace and provision of Christ’s love when we are doing for our self.

Mary personalities need to know they are valued even if they haven’t purchased that through acts of pleasing and giving service. Mary personalities have been taught that they must provide some service pleasing to others in order to be valued. That’s why so many moms have a hard time when the nest is empty; they can’t let go, because they’re losing their sense of value.

Martha personalities need to be welcomed and accepted even if they don’t “do” something. Martha personalities have learned that they must do more than others just to be wanted. That’s why so many women have a problem when they don’t have something to organize or control. As the song says, “It’s a hard habit to break”.

I wonder what we can do in our churches so that Mary knows she’s valued as a daughter of God, and Martha knows she can just sit at Jesus’ feet. Pastors and leaders, you can be the embodiment of Jesus’ care when you show up just at the right time. Just when Mary or Martha is about to launch off into another round of earning, you might say, empathically, “Stop pleasing or doing and just be a daughter of God.”

If you are Mary or Martha, Jesus has more for you than what you can provide for yourself. He wants to show up for you, when you stop trying to purchase or earn his love and acceptance. **It’s a faith walk to let Jesus and others get close to you without trying to provide security for yourself; and, you know that hasn’t worked anyway.**

Pastors, Mary, Martha, call me if you’d like to talk more 301-620-8700 ext #5.

How Can We Best Serve You?

What kind of information can we provide to help you in your life? Are you interested in seeing an article or information on a particular topic in a future issue of this newsletter? Please contact the editor, Erik N. Hadden, M.A. at: erik@vitalsources.org. Please include your name, position and email where you can be reached. Thanks!

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