

## Letter No. 2

A letter to the reader,

This is my second attempt at writing something about marriage. We, Dianne and I disagreed about what was in the first letter. We disagree about something's and that's O.K. in fact it's healthy. Stephen Cummins from Accord talked last year at National Marriage Week that "Conflict is normal". Another thing that I learnt is "Conflict is an opportunity for growth". Dianne and I encourage each other, believe in each other, care for each other, Love each other and yes challenge each other. That can be difficult. How do you tell your spouse that you disagree without hurting them? What you need to say can be said in a graceful way. That is the challenge. Do we bring our frustrations, impatience, intolerance, pigheadedness into the situation (that's me sometimes!)? Or Can I put this down and listen? I can be a bit of a "Mr fix it " Dianne starts telling me something and I try to race ahead and fix it and in a way shut her out. We went on a marriage course and that talked about going over the bridge in your mind to the other person's world. Not bringing anything of my own issues, just being in Dianne's world. No right or wrong, no judgment, just trying to understand and be in Dianne's world." When we feel understood we feel loved." I am an encourager and encourage Dianne, but what I have to be careful is that I don't shut Dianne down. By trying to "quick fix "her. I now try to listen and understand.

I need forgiveness. I used to justify all my mistakes, there is a logic to why I made this mistake, but do you know something it was still a mistake and I need to say sorry and ask for forgiveness. The words "I forgive you "are so powerful. The holding on to unforgiveness holds us all back. If the one needs forgiveness and wants it and you have that power, that feeling and bitter enjoyment it gives by not forgiving. Where is it going with all this unforgiveness? Making us more bitter and unhappy. Forgiveness doesn't change the situation; it changes how we look at it. I have been hurt by Dianne and I have hurt Dianne but we choose to forgive each other and it changes the way we look at each other. I have not had my daughter killed by the I.R.A. like Gordon Wilson who forgave them or Corrie Ten Boon who met the Nazi Jailer who was responsible for her sister's death, but with great resolve and strength forgave him with God's help. The people I need to forgive seem so trivial compared but sometimes it is the small things that grow big if not dealt with.

The first letter I wrote was about pain and walking through it like a three legged race, together with Dianne at each other's pace. In life pain is part of it. It is not the situation that makes us but how we react to it. My business is failing now and I will become unemployed. Who am I when all is stripped bare? I am a man who is loved by God, Dianne, Family and Friends. That is a privilege.

### **Alan and Dianne**

Jeremiah 29 verse 11 " For I know the plans I have for you declares the lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.