

Pastor Launches MyMarriageCoach.com

Want to take your marriage beyond ordinary? Need a coach to encourage and equip you? Rev. Jay Tenney, pastor of Barnesville First UMC, has developed a tool to help: www.mymarriagecoach.com.

The simple, confidential marriage assessment tool asks couples to answer 100 quick questions individually or together that evaluate ten key areas of the marriage including faith, finances and communication.

"As a pastor involved in marital counseling, I've discovered that there are a lot of couples who want to improve their marriages but just need a little help getting their hands on the right resources," Tenney said. "I have also found that some couples won't go to counselors or pastors for help, but in today's world they might go online."

With that in mind, and because he couldn't find any good marriage websites out there, he decided to develop his own. The project took five years of research and development to complete.

The way it works is that the couple answers the questionnaire, their responses are instantly analyzed, and an easy to read "Coaching Report" is generated for each person. The report includes a relationship profile that reveals the strengths and weaknesses of the marriage, and a list of recommended resources that target the primary "weak spots" of the relationship.

Couples are encouraged to talk about the results and to considering sharing it with a pastor or counselor if needed. Tenney is clear that the site is designed to be a resource that couples can use to strengthen their relationship, but that it isn't a substitute for counseling for those couples whose marriages are in crisis.

He suggests that clergy might find the site useful as they counsel couples. Tenney often asks couples who reach out to him for marriage counseling to fill out the questionnaire first and bring in the results to their session.

While couples and pastors are his target audience for the site, Tenney ultimately sees mymarriagecoach.com as an evangelism tool. Questions of faith are built into each of the ten sections of the questionnaire and he hopes the feedback may spark a couple to consider trying a church or talking about their faith.

"On the surface it's not blatantly Christian, but faith is a major component," he said. "Please check it out, give me your feedback and pass it on to anyone who you feel would benefit from it. I hope this is a wonderful tool for couples and for ministry."

--Sybil Davidson
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