

# *Sam's Corner*

## **"When Trust is Lost"**

I believe that marriage is a “garden” we create when we exchange our vows. At that time we build a fence around a large garden (relationship), and inside this fence we plant other gardens. We grow flower gardens that reflect the experiences of joy, beauty, and companionship. Some are annuals and others are perennials as we establish our routines and traditions. We plant vegetable gardens that symbolize those things that nourish our relationship such as our home, belongings, and careers. The most important plant in the garden is placed in the center of the garden. It is an oak tree, and it represents our commitment, and it is nourished by love and trust. The oak is the most important plant in our garden and when it is damaged in any way, the marriage itself is endangered. The other plants can be neglected and even lost, but they can be restored with some attention and work.

When trust is lost or damaged, it is very difficult to restore. It is interesting that when one spouse loses trust, the other often has difficulty understanding how much damage has been done to the “oak.” Even when the “oak” has been severely injured by unfaithfulness, the unfaithful person frequently cannot understand why their spouse cannot recover more quickly.

When trust is lost, the one who loses it feels horribly betrayed, empty and hopeless. The whole “garden” suffers because the person who is betrayed no longer knows what is real and what to believe. The whole garden can seem like a mirage that has disappeared and is replaced by an arid desert. The terrible aloneness and isolation that follows is devastating. The oak is poisoned and could die.

When trust is lost, every other aspect of the relationship that requires trust is questioned. If the spouse is late, doesn't call, goes on a business trip, stays on the computer, or is quiet and preoccupied the conclusion is that something is wrong. When trust is lost, the wound is so great almost anything can stimulate the pain.

When trust is lost, the recovery of the oak depends on the determination of both people to understand the extent of the damage and be committed to withstand the storm of pain and grieving that follows. The oak must be fed with large amounts of communication, compassion, acceptance and patience. It takes an abundance of nourishment to overcome the hopelessness and restore the oak. Ironically, the restored oak is actually stronger than the original because the roots had to push deeper and the limbs grow thicker to withstand the storm when trust was lost.