

MARRIAGE CARE

ACT ON THE PINCH

A major crisis in marriage is almost always a climax resulting from a series of small irritations that were not dealt with when they arose. So we ask our facilitator couples to stress the great importance of clearing up each small crisis when it arises. Ideally, we think this should be done in a regular “daily sharing time” when all issues are examined and cleared up.

We use the work “pinch” to describe one of these minor crises; and we think that the quality of a relationship is largely determined by whether or not, as a couple, we regularly and faithfully “act on the pinch.”

- You forget to tell me about the meeting you have a 7:30 p.m.
- You talk to me while I am on the telephone.
- You leave a mess in the bathroom.
- You talk to me from another room.
- You don't ask what is wrong when you know that something is wrong.
- You make light of a problem I tell you about.
- You use up all the gas in the ca.
- You come home from work and yell at the children because you are tired.
- You remind me of something stupid I did five years ago.
- You are often not ready on time.
- You sometimes pay more attention t the newspaper or the TV than to me.
- You repeat something that I have told you in confidence.
- While I'm talking, you walk away and do something else.
- You forget to do something I asked you to do.
- You start a job but you don't finish it.
- You tease me about my cooking in front of others.
- You keep putting off that weekend alone you promised we would take.
- You question my judgement in front of the children.
- You drank the last coke.
- You let the kids eat my peanuts.

Here are twenty typical “pinches” which seem likely to occur in the life of an average couple.

Now for the exercise. Each of you should pick from the list a few pinches that strike you as familiar. Then take turns sharing one each and talk about it together. Finally, look at your whole policy for dealing with pinches. Do you agree that they should be faced and cleared up as soon as possible after they arise? Do you believe that you could improve your relationship significantly if you did this? If so, are you prepared to make a contract to do so in the future?