

Witnesses

*“Why is it that people get married!? **Because we need a witness to our lives.** There’s a billion people on this planet. What does any one life really mean? In a marriage you’re promising to care about everything. Life is an endless series of things. Good things and bad things and terrible things and mundane things...all of it. All the time. Every day. You are saying, ‘Your life will not go unnoticed because I will notice it. Your life will not go unwitnessed because I will be your witness.’”*

This statement from the 2004 movie, “Shall We Dance?”, contains a truth especially meaningful to those who attend 12-Step meetings for recovering sex addicts and/or their partners.

We live a lifetime and no one else witnesses it in its entirety...not even our parents as most of us outlive them. Not our children, who arrive when we’re adults, and are so busy with their own lives that they seldom pay attention.

We develop a sense of ourselves by being listened to, being observed. Every child has said: “Mommy, watch me swing;” “Daddy, throw the ball with me.” A smiling baby, attracting the attention of others, is asking us to become a part of his or her experience...to witness his or her existence.

Perhaps the most constant witness is a spouse, a significant other. When we exchanged our vows, I agreed to listen to my wife, to verify the experiences of her life, good or bad. To share her joys, her disappointments, her moments of failure. I agreed to see her through from beginning to end. She agreed to do the same for me.

At 12-Step meetings, we provide a very unique gift to one another. **We listen...without interruption and without judgment.** We encourage one another in the hope of a happier life. We **witness** one another’s lives...the painful moments as well as it’s accomplishments. We call it sharing and receiving **“experience, strength and hope.”**



Note: the opening statement is from the 2004 movie, “Shall We Dance?”, in which Beverly (played by Susan Sarandon) is explaining to a detective about her marriage to John Clark (played by Richard Gere).

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