



Dear I-K Synod Rostered Leaders,

Effective ministry and faithful relationships require maintaining appropriate boundaries so that our priorities are maintained. Attending to one's boundaries is important for all persons in ministry whether married or single. The relationships that we have with the people with whom we serve are very important, but they can be very challenging or even compromising. The following guidance is focused on those in ministry who are married but may also be helpful to single persons in ministry.

In Christ,

I-K Synod Pastoral Counselor Pr. Ted Stoneberg

### Close Call Friendships

adapted from Dr. David Carder, speaker at the international Smart Marriages Conference,  
Orlando, Florida

“Dr. Dave Carder believes that infatuation - sudden unreasonable emotion attraction to someone or something else - is more powerful than it is given credit. People don't think in their right mind when they are infatuated with something. Any relationship with potential for quick chemistry is dangerous.

It's okay to be friends with people of the opposite sex who are not your spouse, but you need to have **STRONG BOUNDARIES**.

When people come together around the same interests and passions, it can be dangerous, especially when these people are old girlfriends or boyfriends from your past.

Be careful of all these new social networking sites, such as Facebook. They are great fun but also provide easy doors to dangerous attractions. Many of them encourage you to find old schoolmates and buddies from the past. Can you handle the renewal of those relationships in the present?



## Consider the following danger signs for a close-call friendship:

- You save topics of conversation for someone other than your spouse.
- You share spousal difficulties with this person. For example, “You’re a woman; help me understand how my wife works.”
- Your friend shares relationship difficulties with you.
- You anticipate seeing this person more than your spouse. This is a sign you are already sliding sideways. Keep in mind that you see your spouse at
- the two worst times of day - first thing in the morning when things tend to be chaotic and in the evening when you are trying to get dinner ready, homework done and you are tired from the day.
- You provide special treats for your friend.
- You fantasize about marriage with this friend.
- Your spouse does not have access to all of the conversations you are having with this person - e-mail, texting, in person, etc.
- You spend money on this friend behind your spouse’s back.
- You lie to your spouse to spend time with this friend; i.e. you go into work an hour before you really need to be there to see your friend.
- You hide interactions with your friend from your spouse. For example, “Don’t smile at me when you see me at church; my husband is watching.”
- You accuse your spouse of jealousy when the friendship is brought up.
- You develop special rituals with your friend that are highly anticipated by both parties. When the rituals don’t happen, there is great disappointment
- Your friend shares his or her feelings or touches you, which creates an inward response.
- You have conversations with your friend that include sexual content.
- You participate in corporate travel with your friend, also known as corporate dating.
- You participate in business travel in which meals, alcohol and entertainment are involved, and you are staying at the same hotel.

**Relationships are what life is all about, and that starts with your relationship with your spouse.**

**Protect it.**

# Anxiety Management

*Respond to the following:*

How do you function within your family system through a time of change? Do you generate, amplify, or lower the anxiety among your family, friends, and colleagues?

Think about a time when you took an “I” position in your family or some other emotional system to which you are connected. What was the effect on others in the system?

Do you know where you are headed? Do you have a direction, a vision, or a goal? Try to write where you hope to be—your personal and professional goals—in the next five years.

What are three essential “I believe” statements you can make about life? What are your convictions?

What are four strengths that you have to offer personally and professionally?

Think of a time when you reacted without thinking to something said in either your family or work setting. What was the result? Think of another time when you chose to reflect and respond non-anxiously to someone’s comment or action. What was the effect on the other person and the system when you responded nonanxiously? What did you do differently in the two responses?

**Visit [www.psychcentral.com/quizzes/anxiety](http://www.psychcentral.com/quizzes/anxiety) to help assess your anxiety.**

## Family of Origins Patterns

*Reflect on the following questions about family of origin, anxiety, and transition.*

What experiences from your childhood that cause you anxiety and pain have you resisted remembering?

How did your family of origin deal with change?

What is your learned anxiety style? Do you generate anxiety in your relationships, do you amplify it, or do you regulate the anxiety, bringing calm to relationship systems?

How do the ways you function with your family or friends, or in your workplace, reflect what you learned in your family of origin?

What are personal signs that you are becoming highly anxious?

How do you deal with anxiety (exercise, art, play, food, argumentativeness)?

Is there any common issue or motif that keeps surfacing in your family from generation to generation?

How has your family of origin influenced your vocation of ministry and your ways of relating to others?

How has your family of origin influenced your way of respond to change and anxiety?

How can you function differently? What effect would that change have on your family system?

**Another way to assess your handling of anxiety is to respond to the following series of questions to learn what you have learned from your family.**



## Ways to Regulate Anxiety

*Check each of these ways to manage anxiety that you use. Then go back and prioritize which is most preferred with "1" down to the least often way you use.*

- \_\_\_\_\_ Make time for play with your family and friends
- \_\_\_\_\_ Exercise regularly
- \_\_\_\_\_ Listen to music
- \_\_\_\_\_ Tend to art and creativity
- \_\_\_\_\_ Sign up for a class, creating a new interest or nurturing an old one.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Pray
- \_\_\_\_\_ Read
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clean your house or apartment
- \_\_\_\_\_ Plant or work in a garden
- \_\_\_\_\_ Keep a journal
- \_\_\_\_\_ Make the anxiety you feel into a research project
- \_\_\_\_\_ Spend time talking to family members and extended family to learn about your past
- \_\_\_\_\_ Encourage or lend someone a helping hand
- \_\_\_\_\_ Volunteer for services in the community
- \_\_\_\_\_ Take time to breathe deeply, slowly
- \_\_\_\_\_ Keep your daily routine, remembering that your feelings come and go
- \_\_\_\_\_ Care for and play with your pets
- \_\_\_\_\_ Stay in contact with your friends
- \_\_\_\_\_ Keep healthy and regular eating and rest habits
- \_\_\_\_\_ Invest in a spiritual director, therapist, or pastoral counselor
- \_\_\_\_\_ Get a physical examination and stay in touch with your physician
- \_\_\_\_\_ Formulate your vision and write a plan for it and share it with family
- \_\_\_\_\_ Throughout the transition, try to focus on the positive
- \_\_\_\_\_ Affirm yourself and your household and friends
- \_\_\_\_\_ Write letters to older friends and family members
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other strategy \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other strategy \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ Other strategy \_\_\_\_\_



**If you have any reactions or suggestions for future items in the newsletter, email I-K Synod Pastoral Counselor Pr. Ted Stoneberg at [tastoneberg@anderson.edu](mailto:tastoneberg@anderson.edu).**