

Along with demonstrating style, we rely on shoes to get us from place to place. With a never-ending variety of styles and types to choose from, we tend to select certain shoes for certain things. In a way, we can think of the people in our lives as shoes. **The relationships we have are essential in moving us from place to place and provide a certain function for us along the way.** *Who is the person in life that is our cozy slipper: comfortable and safe? Or perhaps our dress shoe or high heel: aesthetic and fun yet not sensible in tough times? Or maybe a tennis shoe: someone that we can grab and go wherever the terrain takes us?* Maybe the same person can play different roles at different times. Recognizing and appreciating the different types of relationships we have benefit us in myriad ways.

**Good-fitting relationships, like shoes, provide safety and balance to our lives.** When we have a favorite pair of shoes, we take special care in preserving them. Are we giving the same kind of attention to our special relationships? Do we have relationships that we overlook? When we decide to take on life alone it's like running barefoot. Though it can feel freeing and independent, it can be short-lived. When life throws challenges our way and the ground seems unsafe, we rely on others to help ease our way.

## WHO'S your cozy slipper?

*Who's your go-anywhere shoe?*



**Imagine...** understanding the power and functionality of our connections to one another.

### — From Pondering to Practice —

#### **Activity:**

Like a good pair of shoes, a great relationship is one that truly fits.

#### **Try this – Shoe Flyer, Shoe...**

- Bring in several copies of shoe catalogs from various places.
  - (Payless, department store ads, etc.)
- Pass out an ad to each member of the group.
- Ask them to assign a person in their life to the shoes in the flyer.
  - (example: Dad = leather penny loafers)
- After everyone has had a chance to do the activity, go around the room and share with the group.
- *What is the significance of each shoe assignment and the role it plays in the relationship you have with that person?*

#### **Reflection:**

When was the last time we took inventory of the relationships we have?

#### **Try this – What's in your shoe closet?**

Take time to look into the arsenal of relationships you have.

- *Which relationships are collecting dust?*
- *Which ones are missing from our closet?*
- *Do you have too many of the same kind of 'shoe' in your life?*
- *Are the relationships you have worth the time and energy you put into them?*
- *What kind of shoe are you for others?*
  - *What kind of assistance are you providing them?*
- *Have you celebrated these relationships to the fullest for what they bring to your life?*

***"He that scatters thorns, let him not go barefoot."***

– Benjamin Franklin