

A MarriageTeam Christmas Story

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Autumn Ray

Tw'as the night before Christmas and all through our place
Dad's yelling, Mom's crying, of joy there's no trace.
The words that were spoken hung dark in the air.
"You don't listen; you're selfish; you don't even care."

We children were huddled far out of the way
In hopes that our parents wouldn't divorce one day.
When I in my sadness, and sister, in fear
Reluctantly settled in for a day like last year.

When out in the living room I heard quiet talking.
I hid on the stairs where I sat there gawking.
Away to the kitchen, Dad flew in disregard,
And ran back to Mom with a Dynamic Play Card.

"Honey," he read, Let's try a different approach.
Remember what we learned with our MarriageTeam
coach?"
Then Mom spoke to Dad with her eyes still glistening,
"Maybe we could try some active listening?"

With a bit of a shiver, I stifled a moan.
I knew in a moment I was in the wrong home.
This wasn't normal, not the right text
But I sat and I watched to see what would come next.

"Now, you use an 'I' statement; I'll try understanding."
My Dad was just saying – not even demanding.
"To the feelings you go, then behavior and impact.
If you have any trouble, I'll keep you on track."

As two rational adults, they ceased in their fight.
My Dad just kept saying, "Did I get that right?"
Sometimes they stumbled, and it seemed like a chore
For my dad to say, "Do you feel understood or is there
more?"

And then, in a twinkling, I knew in my heart.
Things would be different and this was the start.
I closed my eyes and held fast to this dream,
And gave thanks for those coaches from MarriageTeam.

You see, in our family, we had learned the wrong plays.
We thought yelling and fighting were the only ways.
So, up until now we had continued this sinning,
But from this moment on, I knew we'd be winning.

I turned back to my parents who were deep in their chat
Discussing some options - can you believe that?
There was more than one way, they both could be heard?
And neither was saying, "Your idea is absurd?"

Sometimes I saw that my Mom would grow still.
I knew she was fighting her own stubborn will.
Dad read his play card, per MarriageTeam rules,
Saying, "I like it when we use our MarriageTeam tools."

When they solved their problem, I thought I would
burst.
Could this really be happening? It's truly a first.
Then Dad hugged my Mom with a kiss on her head,
And they started upstairs to get ready for bed.

They spoke not a word when they saw me there sitting
But sat down beside; which seemed to be fitting.
They said they were learning to play on the same team.
And that someday I'd know for sure what that means.

But tonight as they tucked me in bed with no fuss,
I whispered a prayer to my friend - He is Jesus.
Please bless those people who answered my dream.
You know them, Jesus – they're MarriageTeam