

RE: Empirical Basis for **Within My Reach**

FROM: Scott Stanley, Ph.D.

At this time, we know of no program that is focused on the relationship and marriage issues of individuals that has already been studied in its entirety in outcome research, per se. However, that does not mean that Within My Reach (WMR) is not empirically based. In fact, WMR is deeply and thoroughly empirically based, throughout. The various points made here are referenced for your use.

The way to talk about (or write about) the empirical basis is as follows. For starters, there is extensive empirical basis for the PREP skills components of Within My Reach as well as the research on PREP that covers the exploration of expectations, etc. and emphasis on commitment. Within My Reach is based substantially on the core of PREP about things like communication, conflict, commitment, expectations, core beliefs, forgiveness, and marriage. As such, it is very much research based and, in fact, empirically tested in outcome studies.¹

Yet, Within My Reach is also a different curriculum from PREP. It covers topics such as how people make decisions in relationships, and this information is based on extensive research on relationships development such as in the commitment and cohabitation literatures that informs the curriculum on core messages based on research. In essence, WMR contains a great deal of content that is extensively researched in both basic science studies as well as outcome studies, as well as core strategies throughout that are based on research in accordance with the most up-to-date research on those areas.

Within My Reach is a very different curriculum (than PREP) that focuses on the individual rather than a couple. It delves into issues that many individuals deal with, including (and at times, especially) those who are economically disadvantaged (references pertaining to each are in endnotes):

- What a healthy relationship is and what it is not,² and how adult (and parental) relationships affect children in the home³
- The negative consequences of sliding into a relationship, with a particular focus on the risks for children⁴
- How to make good relationship decisions⁵
- Understanding family background patterns and how they shape us and our expectations⁶
- Communication skills⁷
- Infidelity and forgiveness⁸
- Commitment and why it matters to adults and children⁹

- Stepfamilies and the significance of fathers¹⁰
- The importance of self-esteem, social support, and financial independence in life, especially when one is facing tough relationship decisions¹¹

You can also utilize the website for Within My Reach at www.withinmyreach.com for more detailed information on the curriculum.

¹ Various references on outcome research on PREP.

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² For example:

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³ See:

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⁵ Based on all the other research background.

⁶ For example:

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⁷ See references under endnote 1 above.

⁸ See

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⁹ See

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¹⁰ See

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¹¹ There are many branches of research that support these points. A few examples:

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