

FFWPU USA Blessing and Family Ministry: Featured Blessing Couple Ayaka and Jakob

Carina Mendez
May 29, 2026



FAMILY FEDERATION

Blessing & Family Ministry Newsletter

MATCHING | MARRIAGE | PARENTING

May 29, 2026

Hello family. Featured Blessing Couple. Building a deeper connection.
Having the Talk. Being a good listener.

what's new?

On the Path to Forever: 2026 Blessing Couple



We are excited to feature one of our newly Blessed couples from the 2026 Blessing. Their journey reflects faith, intentional preparation, and a shared commitment to building a God-centered marriage. As they begin t, let their story inspire all of us—especially those still on the journey—to trust the process and invest deeply in relationships rooted in purpose. Please keep this newly blessed couple in your prayers.

[read testimonies](#)

events

Building A Deeper Connection With Your Child After the Blessing

Zoom Webinar:
Building a Deeper Connection with your Child after the Blessing
June 4 @ 9 pm EST

The image is a promotional graphic for a Zoom webinar. It features a red background with a white speech bubble containing the title and date. Below the speech bubble is a circular portrait of a woman with glasses and a blue patterned top. At the bottom, a family of four (a man, a woman, and two children) is sitting on a grey couch. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner.

The Marriage Blessing offers a path to build a world of stronger marriages and healthier families. Restoration and living for the sake of others takes on a whole new level when we bring together two families. When your adult child is blessed with another, it is a wonderful opportunity to move to a new level of heart. Join Myrna Lapres, West Region BFM Coordinator and Family and Relationship Coach and Educator, on Thursday, June 4, 6 pm PST/9 pm EST to better understand how to best support your newly blessed son or daughter in building a deeper connection and relationship.

[register here](#)

School of Love: Breaking Up the Talk





SCHOOL OF LOVE WEBINAR

THE TALK

Breaking it up
into much more doable &
needed conversations -
for life

 **THURSDAY**
4th of June

 **STARTING**
8:00 PM, PT

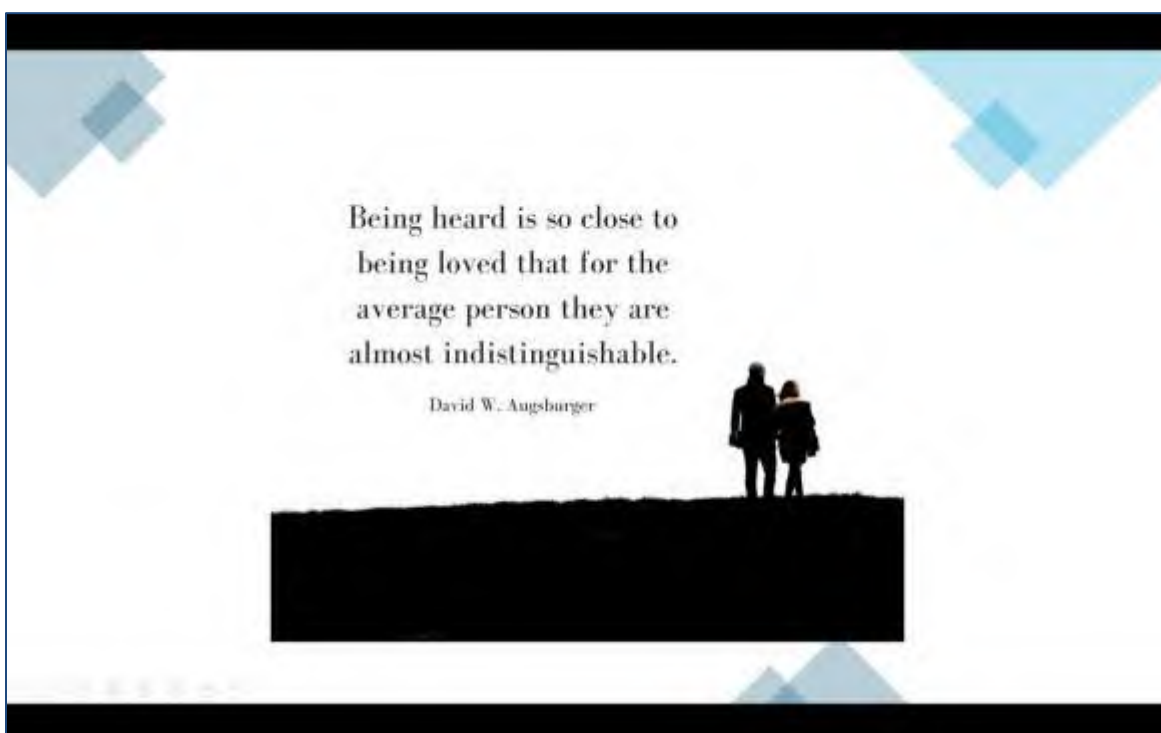
ZOOM LINK BELOW!

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[register here](#)

food for thought

How Good of a Listener Are You?



by Myrna Lapres

Did you know that most of us significantly overestimate our listening abilities? Many of us think that we are good listeners, but research indicates that the average person only retains around 50% or less of what they hear in a conversation or lecture. One of my favorite quotes is by Dr. David W. Augsburger, "Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person they are almost indistinguishable."

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Testimony from Ayaka Orikasa & Jakob Bratkovic

Dear Beloved True Mother,

First and foremost, I would like to offer my deepest gratitude to Heavenly Parent and True Parents. My name is Ayaka Orikasa. I am a second-generation Blessed Child from Oklahoma in the United States.

When I was 18 years old, I made the important decision to join UPA and stand on the front line to help True Parents fulfill the dream of Heavenly Parent. Ever since making that decision, I have felt that Heavenly Parent has been guiding and protecting me more than ever, so that I can grow to become the best version of myself and a filial daughter who can contribute to the fulfillment of Heavenly Parent's dream.

Last year, in 2025, Heavenly Parent once again showed me that He has never left my side by guiding my fiancé, Jakob Bratkovic, into my life.

In 2025, I had just begun my two-year mission in Zambia as a Heavenly Top Gun missionary. I officially began the matching process and went through a couple of communication processes, but they did not work out. During the second communication process, I was very stressed due to the mission, the uncertainty of the environment (such as unreliable electricity and Wi-Fi), and the overwhelming responsibilities. Because of this, I told my parents that I would take a break and reopen my Blessing profile after completing my two-year mission. My parents agreed, and I made my profile invisible for a few months.

However, one day, my older brother told me, "Ayaka, if you don't open your profile, how can God work? Opening your profile is like opening the door for Heavenly Parent to work." Hearing this, I decided to reopen my profile—to open that door—even though I was busy with witnessing and mission responsibilities. I told my parents not to actively search, but simply to wait for a family to contact us.

Soon after, one family reached out. After reviewing the profile, I agreed to begin a communication process, but after several days without a response, we decided not to continue. I reopened my profile, and the very next day, a family from Slovenia contacted my parents.

Jakob was someone I had met before through a

European youth online workshop called “Foundations,” which I attended during my mission in Albania in 2023. We were in the same team, and through our team discussions, I could tell that he was a nice brother. That is why I agreed to begin communication with him.

Something I promised myself to do on the first call of every matching communication process I had was to honestly share about my past and any significant mistakes I had made. I felt that if the person I was speaking with could be the husband Heavenly Parent had prepared for me, then the first thing I wanted to say was, “I am truly sorry.”

That is how our first call went. We skipped much of the small talk, and I shared honestly about my past. To my surprise, he listened without judgment and accepted me with all my flaws. He then shared openly about his own past as well. Because we were so honest and understanding from the very beginning, our communication flowed very naturally from that point on.

Since 2024, I had been praying to Heavenly Parent about what kind of husband I hoped for. Every day, I prayed, “Dear Heavenly Parent, please send me a husband with whom I can build a family that brings the greatest joy to You and True Parents—a family where each member helps the others grow to their fullest potential, so that we may contribute as much as possible to the Providence.”

As a UPA cadet, I knew I would receive a mission appointment after graduation, so I needed someone who would support my mission. He did not need to be rich, handsome, or perfect. My only sincere wish was that he would support whatever mission I receive from True Mother.

I also prayed continuously, “Please guide my future husband and me so that we may meet at the right time, so that we will not be matched with the wrong person, and so that when we meet, we will recognize each other as the spouse You have prepared.”

Until then, I had never felt so strongly that my prayers were heard. Jakob’s parents had contacted around 20 families, but most of those attempts ended in rejection. After the Foundations workshop, many teammates followed each other on social media. Because I was active on Instagram and had also started a YouTube channel to share about my faith and missionary life, Jakob was able to get a sense of who I was.

Then, in 2025, a thought came to him—one that had never crossed his mind before: “What about Ayaka?”

When he first checked my profile, it was not visible. However, when he checked again a few months later, it appeared. At that point, he suggested me to his parents, who then contacted my parents. Jakob later shared that I was the first person his parents contacted who agreed to begin a communication process with him.

I had always expected the matching process to be difficult and challenging, but my experience with Jakob was unexpectedly smooth. As he was serving

as staff for High Noon, he invited me to attend one of the online workshops together. Through that experience, we were able to have even deeper conversations. I truly felt that the heart can recognize the person Heavenly Parent has prepared.

Despite limited electricity and unstable Wi-Fi, we were able to communicate consistently. We even held Hoon Dok Hae together regularly as a condition and offered two one-day fasting conditions for True Mother. I felt that these small conditions of jeongseong allowed Heavenly Parent to protect and guide our relationship.

Although we only communicated for five months, we were able to build a strong relationship grounded in trust, faith, and respect.

Finally, on March 8, we held our commitment ceremony in Slovenia, surrounded by the love and support of many members and non-members, both in person and online. I cannot express enough gratitude to Heavenly Parent and True Parents for blessing me with Jakob.

Who would have imagined that we would be matched together? He is 6 feet 5 inches tall, while I am 5 feet tall. He is European; I am American. He studied medical physics; I studied theology. We are very different, yet I deeply appreciate these differences. Because of his unique experiences, he can see things from perspectives I cannot. Through him, I believe I can grow even more than I could on my own.

I know that the reason we can come together so harmoniously is because our center is the same. It is rooted in True Parents. Our strong faith in and love for True Parents is what allows us to work together, accept each other, and support and love each other unconditionally.

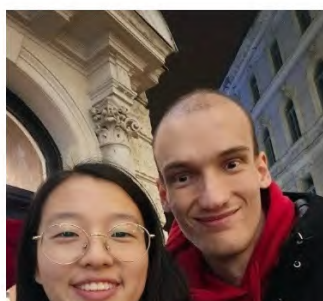
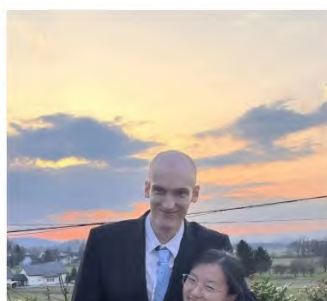
Beloved True Mother, our Holy Mother Han, through this matching process, I have truly experienced the love and grace of Heavenly Parent and True Parents. When we center our hearts on Heavenly Parent, have absolute faith, and allow Him to work, He not only listens to our prayers but answers them. Truly, God knows best.

True Mother, throughout my life, you have always given strength to us. Now, Jakob and I want to become true filial children who give strength to you. We promise to do our very best to become a Blessed Family that brings you strength, joy, comfort, and hope. We will walk this path together with Heavenly Parent and together with True Parents.

참여머님, 항상 감사합니다. 영원히 사랑합니다.

Sincerely,

Ayaka Orikasa





Testimony from Annaelle Mafuku & David Kasilembo >

BLESSING & FAMILY MINISTRY of FFWPU-USA

Build your Blessed Family. ♡

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US



*Blessed Family
photos by
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Please register :)

Webinar for June 4th
8:00 PM, PT



* Indicates required question

Email *

Your email



Name *

Your answer

Age

Your answer

Country

Your answer

Do you have kids? How old are they?

Your answer

Shall I add you to the School of Love WhatsApp Community to receive any updates regarding School of Love?

- Yes
- No
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On our journey in life, the most profound thing that we can offer others--
partners, children, parents, friends, co-workers, bosses, neighbors--
is our own healing and growth towards being a more loving person.

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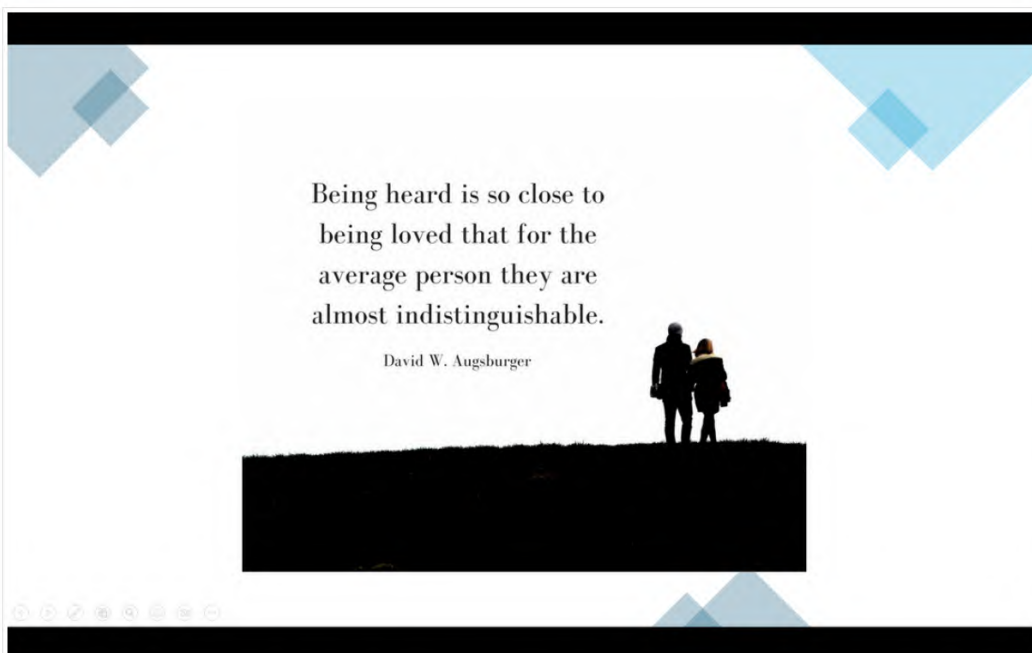
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How Good of a Listener Are You?

5/29/2026



Did you know that most of us significantly overestimate our listening abilities? Many of us think that we are good listeners but research indicates that the average person only retains around 50% or less of what they hear in a conversation or lecture. One of my favorite quotes is by Dr. David W. Augsburger, "Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person they are almost indistinguishable."

Being present to those we love takes effort, especially in the fast-paced world that we live in where:

- we are overcommitted
- all of us are plugged into multiple types of technology
- and family dinners are occurring less often

However, learning to listen with intention is a skill that we can all get better at. Listening to respond is the standard way that most of us communicate. What that means is that instead of really paying attention to what the other person is saying with their words and body language, we are already thinking about how we want to reply or what our rebuttal will be. The good news is that relationships skills and better ways to communicate can be learned. More on this in a previous blog--link below.

[learning-better-ways-to-communicate.html](#)

Listening can be an act of love. I challenge you to pay attention this week to ways that you can love through listening. Need some more ideas how to get started? Here are some:

[questions-to-ask-your-child-or-grandchild.html](#)

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