



Anesís Marriage Training

Your paragraph text

TRAINING HANDBOOK

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www.anesismarriagetraining.com

Dedicated to the couples who are finding their
way to a place of peace in their Christian
marriage.

This handbook is available for your A'nesis Marriage Training.

Each Lesson has some homework assignments you'll find easily accessible in this handbook.

Also available in hardcopy from www.lulu.com.



Praying together as a couple is important!

If you are not used to praying together as a couple it can be awkward or uncomfortable. This is what the enemy wants! .

MARRIAGE PRAYER

Lord,

I pray you will protect our marriage from anything that will harm or destroy it. Shield our marriage from our own selfishness and neglect, from the evil plans and desires of others and from unhealthy or dangerous situations. May there be no thoughts of divorce or infidelity in our hearts and none in our future. Set us free from past hurts, memories and ties from previous relationships and unrealistic expectations of one another.

I prayer there would be no jealousy in either of us, or low self-esteem that precedes that.

Protects us from influences like alcohol, drugs, gambling, pornography, lust or obsessions. Let nothing come into our hearts and habits that would threaten our marriage in any way.

I pray you would unite us in a bond of friendship commitment, generosity and understanding. Eliminate our immaturity, hostility or feelings of inadequacy.

Help us make time for one another alone, to nurture and renew our marriage and remind ourselves of the reasons were got married in the first place. I pray our love for each other will grow stronger everyday so that we will never leave a legacy of divorce to our children.

In Jesus Name, Amen7

BEGINNING VIDEOS

Start here with reading and
exercises

Let Yourself dream again about your marriage!

Rx

Your Vision of Your Relationship

Have you ever discussed what you want from your relationship with your partner? Do you and your partner have the same ideas? Make a copy of this worksheet and both you and your partner should take 10 minutes to write down the 7 most important things you each want from your relationship. Do this independently and then share what you wrote. Rate the importance of each statement on a 1 to 10 scale with 1=Low and 10-High. Be honest, but also be considerate of your partner's feelings.

Things You Want From Your Relationship	Rate Importance	Rate Degree of Difficulty

Notes:

The Demise of Marriage:

HOPES AND DREAMS

Disappointment

Discouragement

Distance

Disconnect

Discord

Divorced Emotionally



**DEAD MARRIAGES
or
AFFAIRS
or
DIVORCE LEGALLY**

Are you emotionally divorced?

Take the evaluation on the next page.

**You shouldn't have more
than four "yes" answers.**

Little or no eye contact

Lack of sharing on a personal level- surface conversation only

Lack of checking in with each other on a daily basis

Conversations begin harshly

Conversations begin with criticism

Lack of humor in daily interactions

Lack of interest in each others interests

Living separate lives in the same house (sleeping, eating)

Lack of awareness of each others dreams, hopes or personal goals

Apathy about the other persons emotional state

Daydreaming about separate lives

Making decisions about major purchases on your own

No fun in downtimes; Fun times are separate from each other

Have a hard time thinking positively about spouse

Very few positive recent memories with spouse

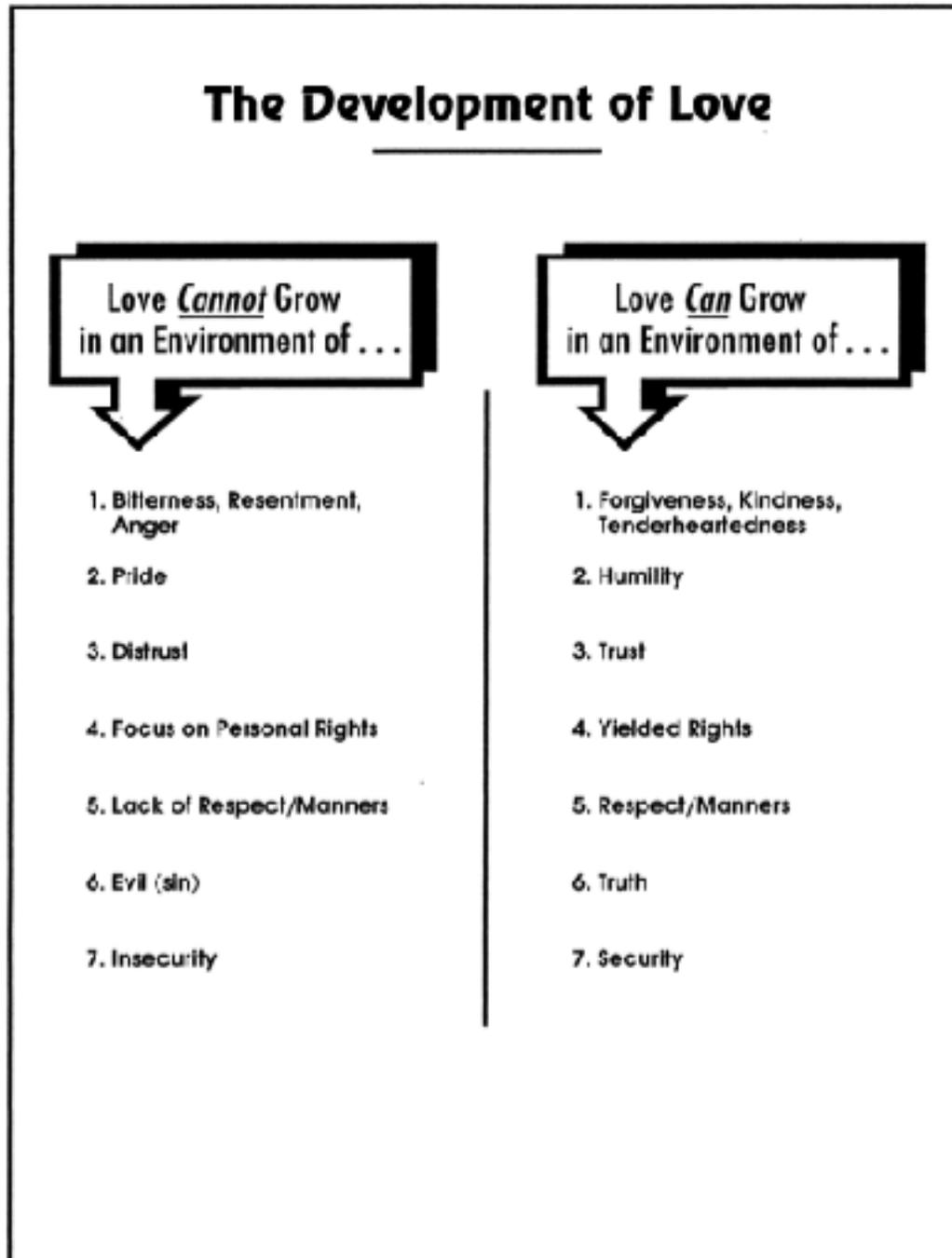
Shutdown at the sound of spouse's voice

Past memories of spouse seem more like manipulation now

Body has a visible reaction when in spouse's space

Struggle feeling safe having sex with spouse

I can't imagine forgiving my spouse. I want my spouse to pay for what they've done



Marriage Tidbits of Wisdom:

Men and women fight differently but have the same basic hurts and pains.

If you must change everything you must love nothing!

The car is never a place to solve problems. Rather it is a source of a lot of conflict when you try to talk seriously there.

Another place of great conflict is when either of you walk in the door “from the world.” You need at least 20 minutes to diffuse before you tackle serious problems.



FIGHTING IN CAR

Before you Begin...

STATISTICS:

85% of problems in marriage were brought into your marriage from your family of origin or other past baggage.

Research by Kimberly Newell
OpenStax-CNX module: m45043

82%-couples who make it of the long haul start out as best friends.
www.gottman.com

82%-marriages with conversations that begin with criticism or harshly will end in divorce.
www.gottman.com

70% of solving a problem is *understanding* what the problem is.

69% of couple arguments revolve around the same topic over and over. This is called "gridlock." www.gottman.com

62%- marriages decrease in satisfaction 62% after the birth of the first child.
www.gottman.com

59%- tone of voice in communication

34%- eye contact in conversation

7%- content (why texting isn't communicating, especially to solve a problem.)

6 seconds - you can tell how a conversation is going to go in the first six seconds (John Gottman www.gottman.com)

15-25— It takes 15-25 good times to wipe out the hurt of one bad conflict.



BEFORE YOU BEGIN:
 COMMUNICATION STYLE
 EXTERNAL VS INTERNAL

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WHICH ARE YOU?

EXTERNAL PROCESSORS:	INTERNAL PROCESSORS:
Process by talking through.	Don't need the details.
Need to talk through to get to the bottomline.	Want the facts.
Might not know where the bottomline is until they verbally process through	Want to quickly get to the bottomline.
Might go through a lot of bunny trails until they reach their final conclusion about where they are going.	Can't listen to details, as they are trying to get to the bottomline.

SPOUSE A	SPOUSE B
EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION STYLE?	EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION STYLE?
INTERNAL COMMUNICATION STYLE?	INTERNAL COMMUNICATION STYLE?

CIRCLE YOUR COMMUNICATION STYLE AND
TALK ABOUT IT TOGETHER.

WRITE EXAMPLES OF YOUR STYLE IN THE
ABOVE BOXES.

How can you help each other with your
communication styles?

DISCUSS YOUR LIFESTYLES:

ARE YOU ACTIVE OR QUIET?



BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

ACTIVE vs QUIET

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HOW TO CARE FOR EXTROVERTS	HOW TO CARE FOR INTROVERTS
RESPECT their independence.	RESPECT their need for privacy.
COMPLIMENT them in the company of others.	NEVER EMBARRASS them in public.
ACCEPT and ENCOURAGE their enthusiasm.	Let them OBSERVE first in new situations.
Allow them to EXPLORE and talk things out.	Give them time to THINK. Don't demand instant answers.
Thoughtfully SURPRISE them.	DON'T interrupt them.
UNDERSTAND when they are busy.	Give them ADVANCE NOTICE of expected changes in their lives.
Let them DIVE RIGHT IN.	Give them 15 minute WARNINGS to finish what they are doing.
Offer them OPTIONS.	Reprimand them PRIVATELY.
Make physical and verbal gestures of AFFECTION.	Teach them new skills PRIVATELY.
Let them SHINE.	Enable them to find ONE BEST FRIEND who has similar interests and abilities.
	Don't PUSH THEM to make lots of friends.
	RESPECT their INTROVERSION. Don't try to remake them into EXTROVERTS.

COUPLE TALKING POINTS:

Discuss your differences and how you can understand each other's lifestyle tendencies.



What I learned about my spouse

Places of conflict:	SPOUSE A	SPOUSE B
Car?		
When I walk in the door?		
Other? Hungry		
Concentrating/distracted		
Internal or External processor?		
Activity Level? Quiet or Active		



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BEFORE YOU BEGIN:

MY GOD BAG:

Lord, help me put these “hot topics” into my “God bag” for you to hold as I work through improving my marriage.

Make a copy of this page so that you can do your work individually without sharing what’s in your God bag with your spouse (but with the Lord.)

God Here is what I need you to hold:





HELP OUR MARRIAGE ISN'T WORKING!

Hard. Marriage is hard. Well, marriage can be hard. Sometimes it is EASY in the dating process, but when two sinners are relating 24/7 couples can be caught off guard when things get hard. Once this happens it is easy to revert back into old patterns of surviving to stay safe.

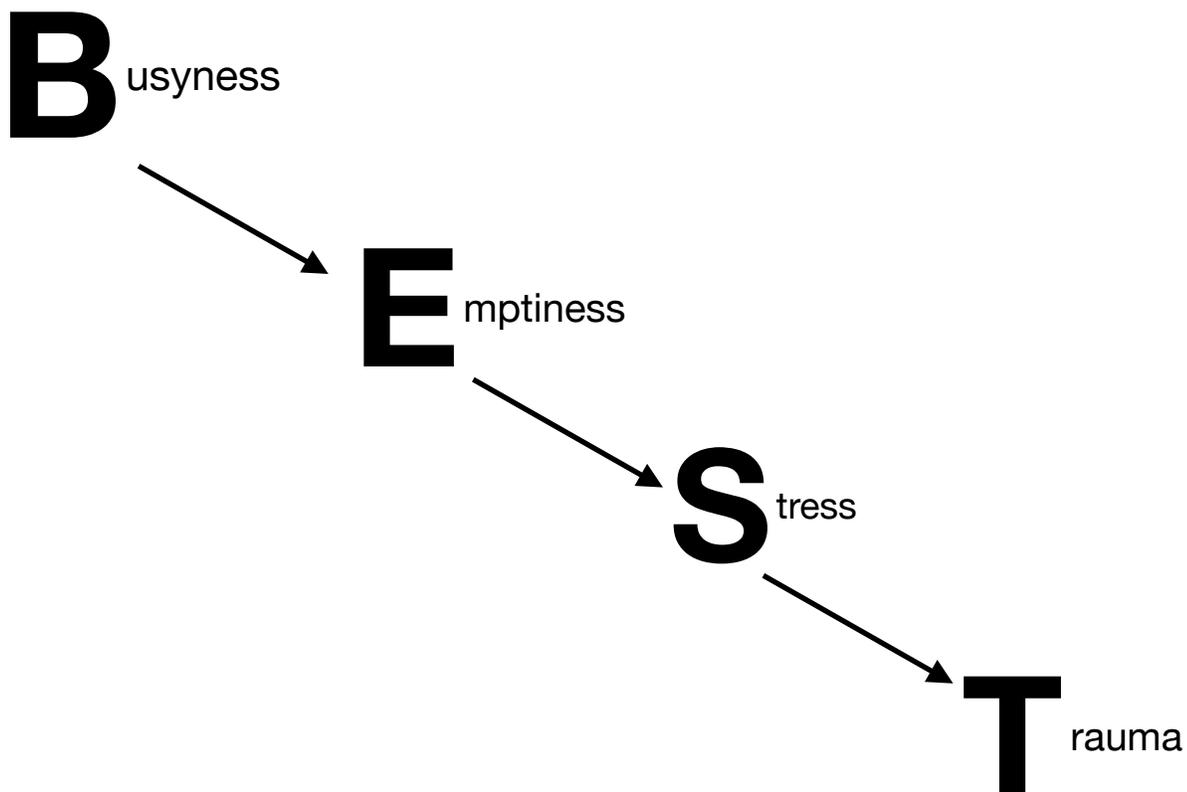
Expectations. We expect so much from our spouse. The expectation is they will never hurt us and we expect to always feel safe with them.

Learned patterns of coping. We might not be aware of ways we have learned to be safe. Our learned patterns can push each others buttons.

People. Like it or not people from our past taught us about love. We learned whether or not love was safe. Maybe we learned love was easy to get or that it was impossible to get.

Why don't we have the BEST marriage like we see everyone else has?

First of all, don't compare YOUR MARRIAGE with what you THINK everyone else has! We are all sinners and we all struggle in different ways in our relationships.



Busyness can lead to emptiness can lead to stress. If a person has past trauma this is a recipe for disaster. Once there is stress in the relationship it can put them back into mimicking their past trauma and cause them to do a lot of over-reactions or under-reactions (shutting down).

Once there is a sense of out-of-control or lack of safety or chaos it can lead to a lot of trauma reactions and coping.

Helping couples understand how their past is influencing their present will help their marriage be the best!

LIFE CHANGE INDEX SCALE

DEATH OF A SPOUSE	100	
DIVORCE	73	
MARITAL SEPARATION	65	
JAIL TERM	63	
DEATH OF A CLOSE FAMILY MEMBER	63	
PERSONAL INJURY OR ILLNESS	53	
GETTING MARRIED	47	
FIRED AT WORK	45	
MARITAL RECONCILIATION	45	
RETIREMENT	44	
CHANGE IN HEALTH OF FAMIY MEMBER	40	
PREGNANCY	39	
SEX DIFFICULTIES	39	
GAIN OF A NEW FAMILY MEMBER	39	
BUSINESS READJUSTMENT	39	
CHANGE IN FINANCIAL SITUATION	38	
DEATH OF A CLOSE FRIEND	37	
CHANGE TO A DIFFERENT LINE OF WORK	36	
CHANGE IN NUMBER OF ARGUMENTS WITH SPOUSE	35	
MORTGAGE OVER \$20,000	31	
FORECLOSURE OF MORTGAGE	30	
CHANGE IN RESPONSIBILITIES AT WORK	29	
SON OR DAUGHTER LEAVING HOME	29	
TROUBLE WITH IN LAWS	29	
OUTSTANDING PERSONAL ACHIEVEMENT	28	
SPOUSE BEGINS OR STOPS WORK	26	
BEGIN OR END SCHOOL	26	
CHANGE IN LIVING CONDITIONS	25	
REVIISON OF PERSONAL HABITS	24	
TROUBLE WITH BOSS	23	

The body is a finely tuned instrument that does not like surprises. Any sudden change in stimuli which affects the body, or the reordering of important routines that the body becomes used to, can cause needless stress, throwing your whole physical being into turmoil.

The chart will give you some idea of how to informally score yourself. Since being healthy is the optimum state you want to achieve, being sick is the state of being you most want to avoid of course.

LIFE CHANGE UNITS	LIKELIHOOD OF ILLNESS IN THE NEAR FUTURE
300+	About 80%
150-299	About 50%
Less than 150	About 30%

T.H. Holmes and T.H. Rahe "The Social Readjustment Rating Scale"

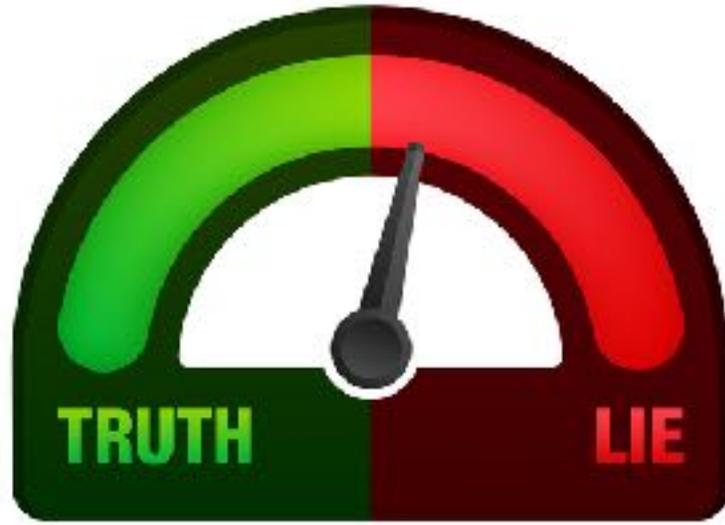
The Journal of Psychosomatic Research, 11:213, 1967.

This scale does not include minor activities that could also be included as life stressors such as Change in church actives, social activities, change in eating habits or vacations.

TAKING THIS EVALUATION TOGETHER WILL SHOW YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE HOW MANY STRESSORS IN YOUR MARRIAGE COULD CONTRIBUTE TO YOUR FUTURE PHYSICAL HEALTH.

Having the BEST marriage means marriage should be without stress as much as possible. This means LEARNING how to communicate and be connected so that your marriage is a safe haven and a soft place to land from the stressors of the world.

TAKE TIME and INVEST TIME in YOUR MARRIAGE!



BIG LIE: "I married the wrong person!"

Taken from “The Meaning of Marriage” by Tim Keller

The Bible explains why the quest for compatibility seems to be so impossible. As a pastor I have spoken to thousands of couples, some working on marriage-seeking, some working on marriage-sustaining and some working on marriage-saving. I’ve heard them say over and over, “Love *shouldn’t* be this hard; it should come naturally.” In response, I always say something like, “Why believe that? Would someone who wants to play professional baseball say, “It shouldn’t be so hard to hit a fastball?” Would someone who wants to write the greatest American novel of her generation say, “It shouldn’t be so hard to create believable characters and compelling narrative?” the understandable retort is, “But his is not baseball or literature. This is *love*. Love should just come naturally if two people are compatible, if they are truly soul mates.”

The Christian answer to this is that *no two people* are compatible. Duke University ethics professor Stanley Hauerwas has famously made this point:

Destructive to marriage is the self-fulfillment ethic that assumes marriage and family are primarily institutions of personal fulfillment, necessary for us to become “whole” and happy. The assumption is that there is someone just right for us to marry and that if we look closely enough we will find the right person. This moral assumption overlooks a crucial aspect to marriage. It fails to appreciate the fact that we always marry the wrong person.

We never know whom we marry; we just think we do. Or even if we first marry the right person, just give it awhile and he or she will change. For marriage, being the enormous thing that it is, means we are not the same person after we have entered it. The primary problem is...learning how to love and care for the stranger to whom you find yourself married.

Hauerwas shows that the quest for a perfectly compatible soul mate is an impossibility. Marriage brings you into more intense proximity to another human being than any other relationship can. Therefore, the moment you marry someone, you and your spouse begin to change in profound ways, and you can’t know ahead of time what those changes will be. So you don’t know, you can’t know, who your spouse will actually be in the future until you get there.

Of course there are graduations in Hauerwas’s Law. Some people are really, *really* the wrong people to marry. But everyone else is still flawed and therefore incompatible.

Change is hard!

This is an exercise to help you do a simple change request. In this exercise, please try to choose a simple change you would like your spouse to make that would improve your life. Try not to make this a conflict producing request. You could ask the change to be a simple “if you would call before you leave work I would know what time to expect you home.”

“If nothing changes, nothing changes...”

THIS TRIGGERS FRUSTRATION IN
ME:

THIS IS WHAT I DESIRE:

TRANSFORM YOUR NEED INTO A POSITIVE DESIRE, THEN TRANSFORM YOUR
DESIRE INTO A SPECIFIC BEHAVIOR CHANGE:

This behavior change request should be specific, doable and positive.



Christian marriages read scripture together.



Christians pray together.



**TALKING POINTS:
WHY I AM UNCOMFORTABLE PRAYING
OUTLOUD WITH MY SPOUSE**

I'M NOT USED TO PRAYING OUTLOUD WITH ANYONE.	
I AM NOT SURE WHAT TO SAY. MY MIND GOES BLANK. I'LL LOOK STUPID.	
MY SPOUSE IS MORE SPIRITUAL THAN ME.	
I FEEL LIKE I'LL BE JUDGED IF I DON'T SAY THE RIGHT THING.	
I FEEL LIKE A HYPOCRITE BECAUSE I MESS UP SO MUCH.	
I DON'T FEEL SAFE ABOUT SPEAKING LIKE THAT IN FRONT OF MY SPOUSE.	
IT LOOKS EGOTISTICAL AND INSINCERE. PRAYER IS A PRIVATE THING.	
GROWING UP MY DAD PRAYED AND HE WAS A HORRIBLE MAN.	
I CAN'T SAY WHY. IT JUST FEELS VERY UNCOMFORTABLE.	
I'M JUST AFRAID I'LL MESS UP. I'M NOT USED TO PRAYING OUTLOUD AT ALL.	



COMMITTING TO THE TRAINING

Here is our commitment to spending time improving our marriage.



Our marriage has gotten off track.

We need to change our ways.

We are powerless to do this on our own.

**We will invest _____
(amount of time: one hour, etc)**

(every week, every other week, every month, etc)
in our marriage. We will listen and talk and learn how to be married. We will learn how to pray together and have faith that God will help our marriage turn around.

_____ and _____ (date)



WHAT ARE OUR CORE BELIEFS?

WHAT IS YOUR NORMAL?

Looking at my family of origin here are some basic things I started viewing as normal:

Men in my family are:

Women in my family are:

Marriage in my family is:

Conflict in my family is:

Communication in my family is:

Coping in my family is:

Feelings in my family are:

The addictive patterns in my family are:

In my family divorce is:

In my family abuse is:

In my family religion is:

In my family God is:



WHAT ARE OUR CORE BELIEFS?

WHAT IS YOUR LOVE STYLE?
Take a moment to assess how you love.

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AVOIDANT	<p>Independent Self-sufficient Wonder why others need so much connection Avoid conflict Anger repels them Emotional needs from others make them run</p>
PLEASER	<p>You keep your opinions to yourself to stay close to others. You constantly trying to monitor the moods of others to keep them happy. - emotional temperature taking Sacrifice own needs to make others happy</p>
VACILLATOR	<p>Idealize relationships at first - expect a lot from relationships Constantly disappointed in relationships Try to stay close but then push away when others don't come through for them</p>
CONTROLLER	<p>Need to be in control of relationships Expect relationships to be chaotic like in childhood Make relationships chaotic in order to feel normal</p>
SECURE	<p>A safe person emotionally Likes to be connected and works toward that Can give and receive love easily in relationships</p>

More information: www.howwelove.com



WHAT ARE OUR CORE BELIEFS?

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What causes you the MOST distress or reaction in relationship?

_____ Not being heard.

_____ Not being appreciated for your efforts.

_____ Being judged or criticized.

_____ Being reprimanded or corrected.

_____ Hearing elevated level of voice.

_____ Being ignored.

_____ Being dismissed.

_____ Unresolved conflict.

What we Learn from our Families:!

THINKING!

Don't think.! Don't be intuitive.! Don't solve problems.! Don't assert yourself.! Don't be creative.

FEELING!

Don't feel.! Don't show feelings.! Don't show certain feelings.! Don't exaggerate.!

SENSING! Don't touch.! Don't be sexual.! Don't enjoy your body.!! Don't enjoy your five senses.

ACTING! Don't move your muscles.! Don't show off.! Don't be strong.!

Circle the points you that pertain to your childhood. Take a few moments to discuss with your spouse about the differences with what you learned

WHAT IS YOUR 85%?

85% of problems in marriage were brought into your marriage from your family of origin or other past baggage.

Research by Kimberly Newell

What is your 85%?

COMMUNICATION	
	"I have to scream to be heard."
	"Conflict is fearful - only one person gets to be angry and it's not me."
	"I have to avoid conflict to stay safe."
	"Don't try to communicate. I won't be heard."
	"Conflict means someone will get hurt."
	"Conflict is terrible and is never about problem resolution."
VULNERABILITY	
	"Don't be vulnerable, it's not safe."
	"Keep everything hidden. It's not safe to be known."
	"Guard your heart to stay safe."
INTELLECTUALLY LOCKED HEART	
	"I communicate with my head and logic, not emotionally."
	"Emotions are scary, bad or unnecessary."
	"Think, don't feel."
PAST PAINFUL RELATIONSHIPS	
	Attachment is painful and unsafe.
	I might automatically react when my spouse reminds me of a past painful event.
	I won't ever try to get comfort from anyone because I won't be heard.
	Don't have needs.
	Don't have a voice.

'I WILL ENJOY AND RESPOND TO WHAT I DID RECEIVE. WHAT I DIDN'T RECEIVE AS A CHILD I WILL LONG FOR ALL MY LIFE.'

JOHN REGIER www.caringfortheheart.com



WHAT I RECEIVED

CHECK WHAT YOU RECEIVED:	DAD	MOM	OTHER
Acceptance			
Acknowledged			
Affection			
Appreciation			
Approved of			
Attention			
Being Understood			
Believed in			
Cared for			
Cherished			
Chosen			
Comforted			
Encouraged			
Honored			
Hugs			
Precious			
Recognized			
Respect			
Security			
Significant			
Supported			
Touched non-sexually			
Valued			

LOSING CONNECTION — MISC INFORMATION ABOUT ATTACHMENT STYLES AND HOW IT IMPACTS MARRIAGE.

Most couples do not see that most fights are really protests over emotional disconnection. Underneath all the distress, partners are asking each other: Can I count on you, depend on you? Are you there for me? Will you respond to me when I need, when I call? Do I matter to you? Am I valued and accepted by you? Do you need me, rely on me?

ATTACHMENT PANIC

When we become disconnected in our closest relationships, we express the panic in one of two ways:

“Notice me. Be with me. I need you.” OR “I won’t let you hurt me. I will chill out, try to stay in control.”

DEMON DIALOGUES

The longer partners feel disconnected, the more negative their interactions become.

PROTEST POLKA

One partner become critical and aggressive and the other defensive and distant. Relationship becomes marked with resentment, caution and distance. The more angry and critical one partner becomes, the more silent and distant the other partner becomes.

FIND THE BAD GUY

A dead end pattern of mutual blame that effectively keeps a couple miles apart, blocking reengagement and the creation of a safe haven.

FREEZE AND FLEE

Demon dialogues and find the bad buy go on so long that spouses begin to feel so hopeless they give up and put their own emotions and needs in the freezer. Both people step back to avoid hurt and desperately try to cope.



What are our core beliefs?

WHAT IS YOUR ATTACHMENT STYLE?

Read each description and select the one that best captures the way you approach close relationships.

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<p>It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others accept me.</p>	<p>SECURE</p>
<p>I'm uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close others.</p>	<p>FEARFUL OR FEARFUL-AVOIDANT</p>
<p>I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I'm uncomfortable being without close relationships, but sometimes I worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.</p>	<p>PREOCCUPIED</p>
<p>I am comfortable without cost emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.</p>	<p>DISMISSING OR DISMISSING-AVOIDANT</p>



WHAT ARE OUR CORE BELIEFS?

What is your love language?

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LOVE LANGUAGES- Circle the action that best speaks to your heart about being loved.

LOVE LANGUAGE	NEEDS THIS ACTION
Words of affirmation	Spoken words, notes, cards
Quality Time	Running errands, taking trips, doing things together, going on walks, sitting/talking at home
Gifts	Giving gifts remembering special occasions
Acts of Service	Assisting w/ house chores, ongoing acts of helpfulness, exchanging chores
Physical Touch	Hugs, pats, sitting close, touches (non sexual touch)

More information available:

The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate is a 1992 nonfiction book by Baptist minister Gary Chapman. It outlines five general ways that romantic partners express and experience love, which Chapman calls "love languages". [Wikipedia](#)



How are we doing in our Christian marriage?

An Honest evaluation: Wife

I don't encourage you enough.	I don't listen close enough when you try to talk.	I've been lazy in_____	I interrupt you when you are talking.
I raise my voice rather than responding you softly and graciously.	I use biting sarcasm when I talk to you.	I turn on my heel and walk away when I'm upset.	I punish you by not talking or touching you for extended periods of time.
I've been selfish sexually by____	I'm too harsh with you.	I'm too critical with you.	I'm inattentive to you.
I treat the children better than I do you.	I am married to the children.	I don't seek your help when I have a serious problem.	I make it seem like I don't need you or I don't care.
I'm difficult to satisfy when it comes to_____.	I'm not interested in your hobbies or what you care about.	I complain about how much you work but like it when you bring home a big check.	I talk bad about you to the children or put you down in front of them or fight in front of them.
I get my feelings hurt too easily.	When my emotions overwhelm me I scream and shout.	When my emotions overwhelm me I shutdown and refuse to talk.	When you ask what is wrong, I say "nothing."
I become angry or resentful when I'm too tired for sex.	I often make unreasonable demands on you and expect too much especially in regard to_____.	I spend too much money or don't consult you when I do.	I'm a perfectionist about _____ and expect you to be too.
I conceal how I really feel about____	I allow my anxiety to disturb my peace.	I resent or resist your suggestions.	I'm too jealous or untrusting.



How are we doing in our Christian marriage?

An Honest evaluation: Husbands

I recognize I criticize you in the area of_____.	I lecture you when you do something wrong rather than comforting you and encourage you to change in a loving way. I don't want to do this.	I don't make it a point to spend time everyday having significant communication with you. This is something important I need to change.	I want to show you enough affection in our home.I want to show you enough affection in public. I don't do this well.
I don't cultivate your friendship, your companionship.	I have a closer relationship with _____in some ways than with you. This is wrong.	I'm usually affectionate to you only before I desire sex. This is wrong, I want to change it.	I don't ask for your advice or opinion as often as I should.
I don't show concern for your interest in_____.	I don't give you enough assistance with_____.	I take your love for granted by _____.	I neglect your desire or need for_____.
I haven't helped enough with_____.	I initiate plans without your input.	I tease you too much in front of others.	I leave food, clothing and other items around the house.
I murmur and complain about_____.	I pout when_____.	I'm too critical of your family.	I interrupt you when you are talking.
I don't show you my love in the tangible ways that I know please you, such as _____and _____.	I've been hypocritical with you in regard to _____. I want to change this.	I'm still too dependent on my parents for _____.	I'm more concerned with pleasing my parents or _____than I am with pleasing you.This is wrong I don't want to do this.
I haven't been a good example of a Christian to our family.	I'm inconsistent with devotions and church.	I make everything about sex, like that is the only thing I care about you.	I don't reveal my heart to you especially in the area of _____.

SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT FORGIVENESS

Understanding Forgiveness

MISCONCEPTIONS REGARDING FORGIVENESS

Misconceptions can look like:

- Forgiveness means condoning the behavior.
- Forgiveness means the behavior didn't matter.
- The offender cannot be held accountable if forgiven.
- The offender has to confess + repent before you forgive.
- Forgiveness is mainly for the offender's benefit.
- I have to trust or reconcile with the offender.
- My feelings will immediately change.
- I should always go + tell the offender I've forgiven them.

WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT FORGIVENESS FROM YOUR FAMILY OF ORIGIN?

Forgiveness is easily given.	Yes	Sometimes	No
Loved ones that hurt me, quickly identified their wrongdoing + corrected their behavior.	Yes	Sometimes	No
Loved ones in my past, apologized but then used that as an escape from punishment without changing their behavior.	Yes	Sometimes	No
Circle the words that best define your definition of forgiveness.	Forgetting Excusing Moving on	Condoning Letting go Ignored/Swept Under	Accepting Reconciling

HOW DO I KNOW IF I'VE FORGIVEN?

I'm not constantly thinking about the person or situation.	That person's action doesn't dictate my peace anymore.
I'm not constantly expecting a certain response from that person any more.	I'm not consumed by that person- what they're doing or saying.
I'm not thinking of ways to get even with the person.	I'm not joyous over bad news about the person.



FORGIVENESS INFORMATION

ASKING AND GIVING FORGIVENESS

Directions

Sometimes someone does something in a relationship that feels like the “last straw.” Asking and giving forgiveness may be the only way to heal and restore the relationship. Forgiveness means giving up thoughts of vengeance and retribution in order to be free of anger and resentment. Forgiveness does not mean forgetting or condoning wrong behavior. Asking and giving forgiveness are processes that can take time. The following steps can help you get started.

Six Steps for Seeking Forgiveness

1. Can you admit that what you did was wrong or hurtful? Try writing down exactly what you did.

2. Can you understand the pain you have caused? Write down how your spouse is feeling.

3. Have you taken responsibility for your actions? Write down how you have done that.

4. Have you assured your partner you will not to do it again? How did you do that?

5. Have you forgiven yourself? How has this helped you?

Six Steps for Granting Forgiveness:

1. Have you truly acknowledged your pain and anger? Write down what you are feeling.

2. Were you specific with your partner about your future expectations? What are they?

3. Have you given up your right to get even? How do you know?

4. Have you let go of blame and resentment toward your partner?

5. Have you told your partner you forgive him/her? What did you say?

6. Are you working toward reconciliation? How?



**ABOUT
FORGIVENESS**

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LORD HELP ME FORGIVE.

Prayerfully consider what your contribution to the demise of your marriage has been. Honestly think of what you have to confess to the Lord first and then also to your spouse.

Your contribution to the demise of your marriage:

- **Things you didn't do** that you should have done in your marriage
- **Things you did do that you should have not have done in your marriage** •
Accidental items
- **Money**- spending too much; controlling or attempting to account for every penny;
- **Sex**-not responding to or initiating sexual activity; boring sexual patterns including frequency; same kind of sexual love-making; lack of emotional involvement; lack of pleasing and touching •
- **Power/control**- The use of intimidation, anger, jealous; demanding an account for every second spend away from spouse, secrecy with long periods unaccounted for, demeaning and cruel speech.
- **Fun**- a loss of fun in marriage; the failure to take responsibility for having fun; giving too much responsibility; recent refusal to spend money on fun
- **Nurturance**- a loss of caring for each other; failure to provide tenderness, sympathy, appreciation for each other; a tendency to become self-absorbed, thus withdrawing emotionally emotionally from spouse; moving in separate worlds

FIVE THINGS I'M RESPONSIBLE FOR THAT CONTRIBUTED TO THE DEMISE OF MY MARRIAGE.

THIS LIST OF FIVE THINGS IS PERTAINING TO THE SPECIFIC AREAS BELOW. There is another forgiveness exercise that will let you name additional items.

- THINGS YOU DIDN'T DO YOU SHOULD HAVE DONE
- THINGS PERTAINING TO MONEY
- SEX
- POWER/CONTROL
- FUN
- NURTURANCE

SITTING KNEE TO KNEE YOU WILL SHARE YOUR LIST WITH EACH OTHER . NEITHER PARTY SHOULD JUDGE THE OTHER ONE FOR 'THEIR LIST'AS TO WHETHER THEY CAME UP WITH THE RIGHT ISSUES ON THEIR LIST.

FORGIVENESS PRAYER:

Dear Lord,
Please forgive me for contributing to the demise of my marriage in the following ways:
(Name your list). I was wrong not to honor and take care of my marriage and _____
(name of spouse) and I'm asking your help in them forgiving me and that you also would forgive me. In Jesus Name, Amen.

EMOTION PAIN WORD LIST

abandoned	exposed	pathetic
accused	failure	pressured
afraid	fear	pressure to perform
all my fault	foolish	publicly shamed
alone	forced	rejected
always wrong	frustrated	rejection
angry	good for nothing	repulsed
anxious	guilty	revenge
apathetic	hatred	ruined
ashamed	hate myself	sad
bad	helpless	scared
belittled	hollow	secluded
betrayal	hopeless	self-disgust
betrayed	humiliated	shamed
bitter	hurt	stressed
blamed	hysterical	stupid
can't do anything	impure	suffocated
right	inadequate	suicidal
can't trust anyone	indecent	taken advantage of
cheap	inferior	thwarted
cheated	insecure	torn apart
condemned	insensitive to my needs	trapped
confused	insignificant	trash
conspired against	invalidated	ugly
controlled	left out	unable to communicate
cut off	lied to	unaccepted
deceived	lonely	uncaring
defeated	lost	uncared for
defenseless	made fun of	unchosen
defrauded	manipulated	unclean
degraded	mindless	unfairly judged
desires were rejected	mistreated	unfairly treated
despair	misunderstood	unfit
destroyed	molested	unimportant
devalued	neglected	unlovable
didn't belong	no good	unloved
didn't measure up	not being affirmed	unnecessary
dirty	not cared for	unprotected
disappointed	not cherished	unsafe
disgusted	not deserving to live	unsympathetic
disrespected	not listened to	unwanted
dominated	not measure up	used
embarrassed	not valued	violated
empty	opinions not valued	vulnerable
exposed	out of control	wasted
failure	overwhelmed	wickedn
fear		worthless
foolish		wounded
forced		

PERSONAL FORGIVENESS EXERCISE:

You will make a list of the way your spouse has hurt you that you harbor bitterness and unforgiveness for. Forgiveness is a process you accomplish with the Lord as takes the pain and helps you release your spouse. You will ask the Lord to take this pain from you. This is not anything your spouse can take from you. They have a responsibility NOT to hurt you again in this manner but it is between you and the Lord to help you be released from this pain.

HERE ARE FIVE THINGS I NEED TO FORGIVE MY SPOUSE FOR:	THIS MADE ME FEEL: (see emotion pain word list)

Each of you go to your separate areas to do this exercise. **YOU WILL NOT DO THIS EXERCISE TOGETHER.** The next page has a prayer you can pray to help you release your unforgiveness toward your spouse to the Lord.

Jesus expects us to take the mature role when we forgive others. Regardless of how they behave, the word forgive is the Greek word, *Aphiemi*, which means in modern terms to “let it go.”

Rather than be held hostage by what someone has done to you, or by what you may think the intentions were of what that person has done you you, Jesus says,

“Apheimi—let it go!”

My Prayer of Release

I declare by faith that I am an offense-free person! Other’s actions, or lack of actions, do not have the power to put me into a state of bitterness and offense.

To be offended requires my agreement, and I will no longer agree to stay in a state of unforgiveness and offense.

Jesus, I release _____ to you and I am freed from anxiety, worry and control by them from this day forward.

AFTER YOU HAVE INDIVIDUALLY WORKED THROUGH WHAT YOU NEED TO FORGIVE YOUR SPOUSE FOR YOU WILL PRAY THE ABOVE PRAYER.

THIS EXERCISE IS TYPICALLY DONE SEPARATE FROM EACH OTHER.



ABOUT FORGIVENESS

Try to sincerely pray this prayer to the Lord. Ideally it would be great if you could pray it together.

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MY VERBAL PRAYER OF FORGIVENESS

Lord, just as I receive forgiveness for my sins and repent of them and turn from them, I ask by the Blood of Jesus you would give me the power in my heart to forgive the sins committed toward me, either knowingly or unknowingly against me by my spouse.

I make the decision right now to release my spouse of any obligation to pay for this hurt and pain. I release my spouse to you Jesus and free them of their debts toward me.

In Jesus Name, Amen



MAINTAINING THE POSITIVE VIEW

LEARNING TO APPRECIATE YOUR PARTNER

Learning to Appreciate Your Partner

You Should Know

Over time, many couples begin to take their relationship for granted. One element that is something lost is appreciation for one another. You do not have to wait for your partner to appreciate you more. Instead, you can take steps to identify what you appreciate about your partner and to express your positive feelings to them.

What to Do

Complete this form for 5 days - Tuesday-Saturday. Share on Sunday together.

Three things I appreciated about my partner today and/or

Three ways my partner contributed to my life today

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday



MAINTAINING THE POSITIVE VIEW

Friendship Assessment

Am I a good friend?

	YES
I check in with you often to see how things are going for you and express my care and concern for you in a tangible way.	
I use kindness when we talk, even if I'm needing to tell you a difficult thing.	
I know more of your deep fears than any other person.	
You can tell me your most vulnerable secret.	
You can safely tell me anything about you without judgement.	
We laugh a lot when we are together.	
I might tell you something you need to know negative, but it sounds like love, not judgement.	
You can call me anytime you are in distress and I will respond with understanding.	
We enjoy being together, even if we're doing something simple.	
I would never make fun of you or belittle you in public.	
I don't demand your time or energy.	
You look forward to our time together.	
You never dread spending time with me.	
You know I have your back, that I would defend you if you needed it.	
I would take care of you if you were sick.	
I know the intricate details of your heart...your likes, dislikes, preferences.	
We are connected regardless if we are together or if we are apart.	
Your heart is safe with me. I'm intentional about repairing if I mess up.	
We pray together comfortably.	



THE POSITIVE VIEW

FROM THE LIST CIRCLE 7 QUALITIES YOU CHERISH ABOUT YOUR SPOUSE

Ambitious Analytical Adventurous Authentic Bold
 Caring Appreciative Confident Consistent Creative
 Disciplined Compassionate Fierce Flexible Generous
 Hospitable Honest Fun-seeking Funny Gentle
 Hopeful Faithful Gracious Kind Leader
 Loving Trusting Observant Nurturing Organized
 Persistent Fierce passion Loyal Problem solver Respectful
 Responsible Self-controlled Socially intelligent Strong Spiritually
 Spontaneous Straightforward Devoted Team player Open Thrifty
 Merciful Relaxed Energetic Supportive Warm
 Hard Worker Insightful Versatile Visionary Understanding
 Patient Leader Communicative Planner Integrity
 Steady Focused Persuasive Determined Helpful



THE FOUR NEEDS OF WOMEN AND MEN

The Four Needs of Women and Men

NEEDS: WOMAN AND MAN IN MARRIAGE Taken from 4 Laws of Love by Jimmy Evans

WOMAN:

- ***Security Knowing her needs and desires will be met in a faithful manner by a sacrificial and sensitive husband***
- ***Open and Honest Communication Having unhindered access to her husband's thoughts and feelings through loving, patient and regular communication with him***
- ***Soft, Nonsexual Affection Feeling valued and cared for as a whole person and not just a sex object through regular and gentle affection that is non sexual.***
- ***Leadership Having a husband who is the loving initiator of the well being of the marriage and family but who treats her as an equal.***

MAN:

- ***Honor/Respect Being talked to and treated with dignity and as though he is believed in and valued.***
- ***Sex Having his sexual needs met in a regular and energetic manner***
- ***Friendship with His Wife Having his wife as his best friend and doing enjoyable things with her on a regular basis***
- ***Domestic Support Having a wife who is domestically centered and focuses on the needs of the home (Tone of home)***



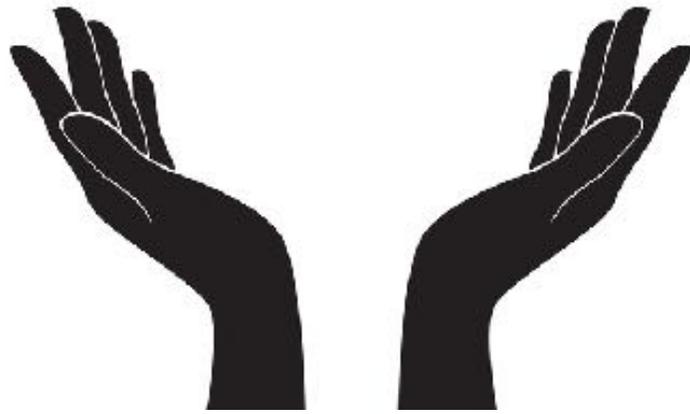
THE FOUR NEEDS OF WOMEN AND MEN

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SEARCH YOUR OWN HEART

THIS IS A TIME OF PERSONAL REFLECTION. INSTEAD OF LOOKING AT YOUR SPOUSE (BECAUSE YOU CAN'T CHANGE THEM), LOOK AT THE LIST OF YOUR SPOUSE'S NEEDS AND ASK GOD TO SHOW YOU HOW YOU ARE DOING MEETING THEIR NEEDS.



SEARCH YOUR OWN HEART

HONEST EVALUATION OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP

IF YOU FEEL SAFE ENOUGH TOGETHER IT WILL BE GREAT FOR YOU TO EVALUATE HONESTLY YOUR RELATIONSHIP. IF YOU ARE IN TOO MUCH CRISIS TO DO THIS, PERHAPS YOU CAN DO THIS AT A LATER DATE. A'NESIS HIGHLY ENCOURAGES YOU TO HONESTLY LOOK AT YOUR MARRIAGE SO YOU CAN BEGIN TO CHANGE.

Research has shown that couples who consistently check up on their relationships experience improvement in the quality of those relationships. A relationship checkup can identify potential problems before they develop or spiral out of control. Identifying and working on problems is easier during a relationship checkup than if couples wait until there are serious problems to address.



HONEST RELATIONSHIP CHECK UP

	It's difficult to discuss disagreements we have. Nothing ever gets settled.
	I wish we communicated better.
	We don't seem on the same page, like we are out of sync.
	I feel my spouse finds me unattractive.
	Problems don't get easily resolved. We don't come back to anything. I hate leaving things hanging.
	I cannot be 100 percent myself in this relationship.
	I feel my partner doesn't see me or know the real me.
	It feels like we are drifting apart, are in different worlds.
	I don't confide in my spouse.
	My spouse doesn't confide in me.
	We can't seem to resolve anything. We end up arguing. it's not worth it.
	I don't understand where my spouse is coming from.
	We don't laugh or have fun together.
	My spouse spends more time with others than with me. (friends, children)
	We don't express physical affection to one another (holding hands, kissing, hugging)
	I don't feel respected or valued.
	We don't engage in outside activities together.
	We don't share Christ together. (Church, praying, scripture)
	I find myself saying hurtful things to my spouse.
	I know my spouse is stressed but they don't share with me.



HONEST RELATIONSHIP CHECK UP

How many days has it been since you and your spouse:

Had a serious argument? _____

Went on a real date? _____

Took a walk together? _____

Did an important errand together? _____

Visited with friends? _____

Had a serious discussion about your relationship? _____

Had sex? _____

Made an important decision together? _____

Laughed hard at something together? _____

Did any of these answers surprise you? Explain.



HONEST RELATIONSHIP CHECK UP

LIST THE TOP TWO AREAS YOU THINK YOUR MARRIAGE NEEDS WORK:

DESCRIBE RECENT STRESSORS THAT HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO YOUR MARRIAGE SUFFERING:

DESCRIBE THE CURRENT DEMANDS ON YOUR RELATIONSHIP:

LIST FIVE RESOURCES/STRENGTHS YOU BRING TO YOUR MARRIAGE:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

ARE THERE FACTORS PREVENTING YOU FROM USING YOUR STRENGTHS?



COMMUNICATION 101

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse

www.gottman.com has a lot of information about this concept.

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Concepts created by John and Julie Gottman

The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse is a communication pattern that keeps couples locked in destructive cycles. Couples who have this communication style have an 82% chance of divorce according to statistics gathered over decades by John and Julie Gottman.

- > **HARSH START-UP OR CRITICISM -**
Conversations begin harshly or with criticism
- > **DEFENSIVENESS-**
This is answered with defensiveness
- > **CONTEMPT-**
Either or both come back with "I know better than you" answers
- > **STONEWALLING-**
Either or both parties shut down, emotionally detach and remove themselves

Take time to reflect:

Are you caught up in the Four Horsemen communication style?

If so, this is something that needs to change in your marriage!



COMMUNICATION 101

Mapping your Crazy Cycle

What is your personal crazy cycle?

Couples reactive cycles cause them to get caught up in a “crazy cycle.”

Mapping out your crazy cycle will help you see how your reactivity keeps you stuck in a destructive cycle. Most couples have their own unique crazy cycle!

The next pages will help you identify your cycle.

Once identified you will have an easier time breaking the cycle, especially as you learn new communication techniques.

Think about a topic that isn't TOO inflammatory to use as an example to map out your crazy cycle. Examples could be:

- > Husbands not helping with the household tasks
- > Wives answering sharply when asked how they feel.

Make sure you watch the video first so that you can see how the process of mapping your cycle works.



MAPPING OUR CRAZY CYCLE WORKSHEET

HERE IS MY MAIN TRIGGER:	MY THOUGHTS THAT GENERATE A NEGATIVE REACTION:	The person/event in my past this reminds me of is:
ACCEPTANCE LIE: NOT GOOD ENOUGH	Nothing I do is ever acceptable, satisfactory or sufficient; there will always be more hoops to jump through.	
CARING LIE: I'M UNIMPORTANT	I am not important to my mate; I have little or no priority to my spouse.	
COMMITMENT LIE: I'M ON MY OWN; ALONE	My spouse will ultimately leave me; Isn't with me; I'm alone	
INTEGRITY LIE: NO ONE WILL SEE THE REAL ME. I'M ALWAYS JUDGED	My thoughts and options are always disregarded. Not seen for who I am.	
RECOGNITION LIE: I'M A FOOL; I'M INCAPABLE; INEFFECTIVE; INVISIBLE	My value will never be recognized. I'm not recognized with dignity or respect.	
CONTROL LIE: I'M ALWAYS TREATED LIKE A CHILD; I HAVE NO POWER	I have to submit or be treated like a child. No voice.	

WORK THROUGH A TRIGGERING SITUATION TO MAP OUT YOUR CRAZY CYCLE:

SPOUSE A DOES "THIS" HURTFUL THING: (EX: You accuse me of not pulling my weight with the kids). This hits my main trigger of _____(choose a trigger):

ACCEPTANCE
CARING
COMMITMENT
INTEGRITY
RECOGNITION
CONTROL

and I will react this way:_____ (choose a reaction)

CRITICISM
HARSH PUSH BACK
ANGER
DEFENSIVE
CONTEMPT
STONEWALL

my reaction hits "this trigger" for my spouse:

ACCEPTANCE
CARING
COMMITMENT
INTEGRITY
RECOGNITION
CONTROL

and my spouse will react this way:_____ (choose a reaction)

CRITICISM
HARSH PUSH BACK
ANGER
DEFENSIVE
CONTEMPT
STONEWALL



COMMUNICATION 101

Mapping your Crazy Cycle

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OUR CRAZY CYCLE

CHOOSE TWO DIFFERENT COLOR PENS TO MAP OUT YOUR CYCLE BY DRAWING LINES BETWEEN TRIGGERS AND REACTIONS.

See explanation or review the video to see the process. Eventually you will see “your mess” of a crazy cycle by drawing lines between your trigger and your reaction and what trigger that hits for your spouse and their subsequent reaction.

MAIN TRIGGERS:	MAIN REACTIONS:
ACCEPTANCE	CRITICISM
CARING	HARSH PUSH BACK
COMMITMENT	ANGER
INTEGRITY	DEFENSIVE
RECOGNITION	CONTEMPT
CONTROL	STONEWALL



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COMMUNICATION 101

HONESTLY ASSESS YOUR COMMUNICATION

What to Do

Make a copy of this worksheet to give to your spouse so each of you can identify problems in communicating with each other. Rate each communication problem from 1 to 10, where 1 = this is not a problem in our relationship, to 10 = this is a major problem in our relationship.

My spouse:

- _____ criticizes me frequently.
- _____ finds fault with everything I do.
- _____ offers advice when I don't ask for it (instead of listening to what I have to say).
- _____ doesn't listen to me.
- _____ tends to talk too much.
- _____ frequently yells or screams.
- _____ avoids conflict.
- _____ interrupts.
- _____ apologizes too much.
- _____ often says "you always" or "you never."
- _____ constantly nags.
- _____ has to have the last word.
- _____ gives me the "silent treatment."
- _____ insists that he/she is always "right."
- _____ shows very little interest.
- _____ assumes or "jumps to conclusions."
- _____ enjoys arguing or debating.
- _____ brings up issues at the "wrong" time (when one of you is stressed, tired, or hungry).

Add up your score: _____

If you scored between 18-70, you might have slight problems in communication.

If you scored between 71-130, you have moderate problems with communication.

If you score more than 131 points, there are several problems in communication to address.

Now is the time to LEARN new ways to communicate!

COMMUNICATION TOOLS ~ HAND SIGNALS





COMMUNICATION 101

TONE OF VOICE

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59% OR 72% OF TONE OF VOICE IS COMMUNICATION



PUTTING LANGUAGE TO MY HEART'S CRY - TAKING OUR TONE OF VOICE

59%-72% of communication is
tone of voice.

Using sign language helps take
the memorized
tone out.



COMMUNICATION 101

EVALUATION OF YOUR COMMUNICAITON

Thinking of your tone of voice and non-verbals, how safe are you in your communication?

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SAFETY ASSESSMENT IN COMMUNICATION

When I think of sharing my softest feelings with you, it is hard to do. My worst fear is that this will happen:

Here is what causes me fear:

- — — tone of voice — — — hearing judgment — — — being dismissed or ignored
- — non-verbal response (rolling eyes, sighing, hands on hips, shrugging)

Here is what is going on inside...what I'm feeling when I think of sharing my softest feelings with you:

abandoned accused afraid all my fault alone always wrong angry anxious
 ashamed bad belittled betrayed blamed can't do anything right can't trust anyone
 condemned confused failure fear foolish frustrated good for nothing hate myself
 helpless hopeless humiliated hurt hysterical inadequate inferior insecure
 insignificant, invalidated, left out, pressure to perform, rejected, sad, scared,
 secluded, self-disgust, stressed, stupid, suffocated, torn apart, trapped, ugly,



MAIN SIGN: HAND ON HEART	“I’m not OK. I’m starting to shut down; I’m starting to accelerate. My heart is hurting.
SECONDARY SIGN: FIST OF HAND RUBBING IN CIRCULAR MOTION ON THE HEART	I CARE. (Doesn’t <i>require</i> agreement)
BOTH HANDS ON HEART	We are going to take our 20 minute break. We are NOT going into our destructive cycle.



COMMUNICATION 101

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Practice the two main signals to help you communicate each other's heart temperature:

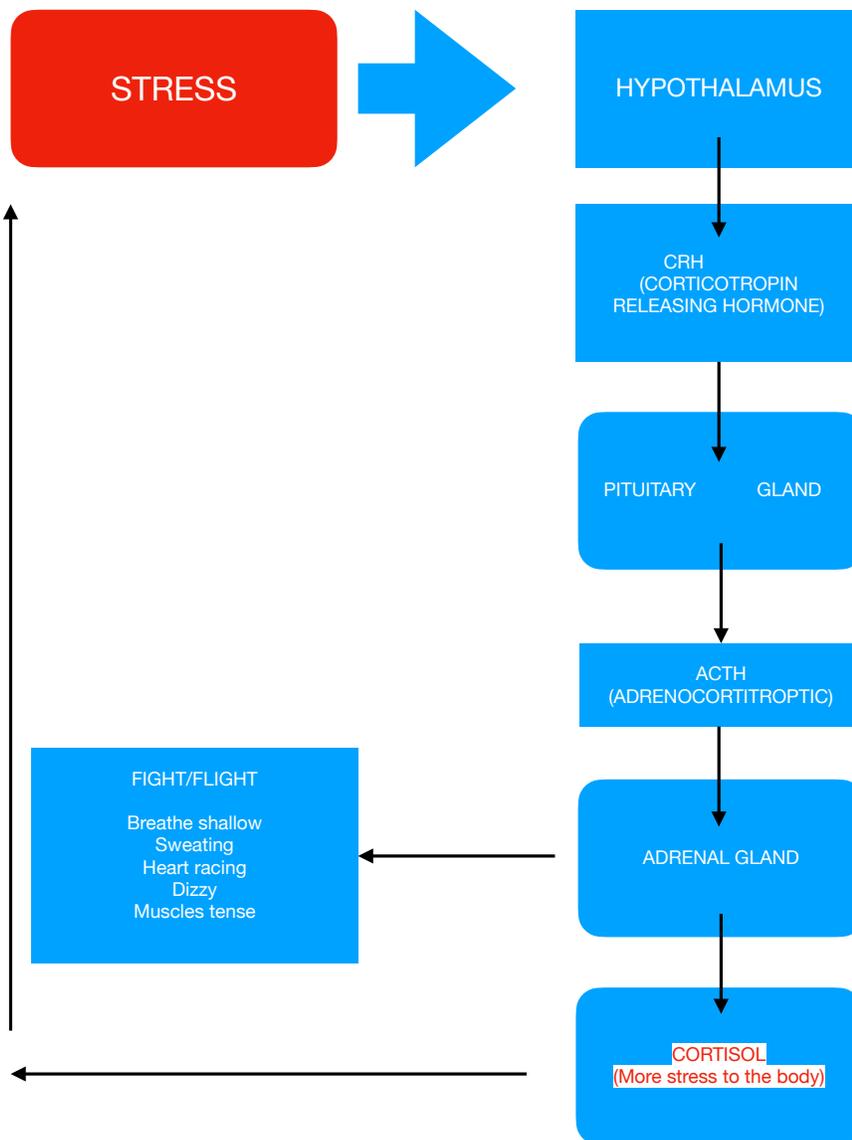
Hand on heart = my heart temperature is going HOT or my heart temperature is going COLD.

**Rubbing motion on heart=
"I care."**



COMMUNICATION 101
 STOP TONE OF VOICE
 AND
 DESTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATION

How physiology interacts with trauma-producing communication~
 WHY destructive communication needs resolution!



www.drtrudyjohnsoncounseling.com

www.anesisretreats.com

www.anesistransformationmodel.com (handouts for counselors)

The Physiology of Destructive Communication

Destructive communication patterns of reaction can get imbedded in our neuro-network systems. These negative interactions can start causing physical symptoms in our bodies.

Other factors for communication:

- > Tone of Voice 54%-72%
- > Eye contact 39%
- > Body language

Memorized patterns of interaction: Over-reactive patterns

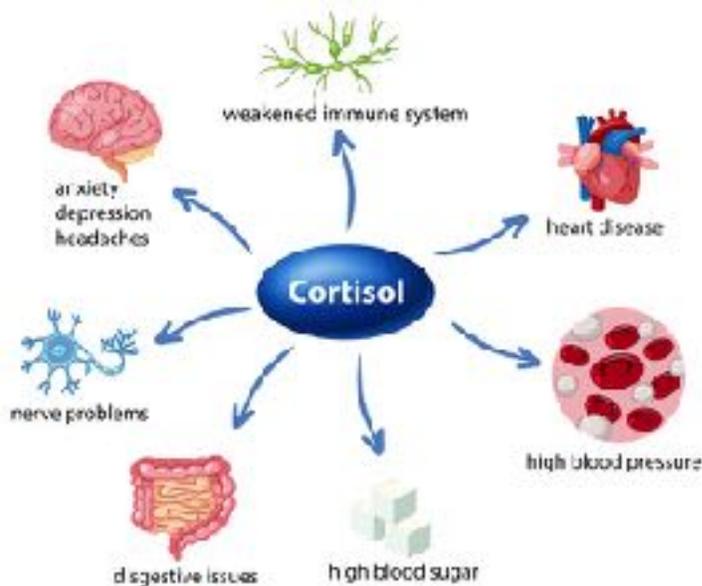
80% OF COMMUNICATION IS *LISTENING!*

7% OF COMMUNICATION IS THE ACTUAL CONTENT!

Once amygdala gets “hi-jacked” it takes 20 minutes for it to calm down.

COUPLES HAVE TO TAKE A 20 MINUTE BREAK WHEN THEY GET ELEVATED

Once amygdala gets “hi-jacked” it takes 20 minutes for it to calm down.



Cortisol surges through the body!



COMMUNICATION 101

STOP DESTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATION



HANDS ON HEART IS A SIGNAL TO TAKE A BREAK (at least 20 minutes)



COMMUNICATION 101

STOP DESTRUCTIVE COMMUNICATION

- **MY HEART HURTS-** switch from head (accusation) to heart
- **I CARE -** response needed for the pain
- **STOP! Take a break!**

THREE IMPORTANT HAND SIGNALS



20 min

LETS FOLLOW THE STEPS TO RE-SET - 20 MINUTES

IT TAKES 20 MINUTES FOR YOUR AMYGDALA
TO KEEP FROM "FIRING."



Steps to Re-set:

TAKE A 20 minute break:

STEP ONE: I am responsible for my own regulation. I'm in charge of my own heart.

BREATHE IN - SMELL THE FLOWERS The Lord is my shepherd

BREATHE OUT - BLOW OUT THE CANDLES I shall not want

STEP TWO: I can choose to believe the truth. I choose to remember who the enemy is. The enemy has sent this to cause us harm. I choose to believe we are on the same team.

STEP THREE: Self Examination (What is the log in my own eye?)

What's my part?

- > I was critical or harsh in my tone of voice
- > I defended myself.
- > I came across as knowing more. I stayed completely logical in my head.
- > I completely froze, shut down and locked up my heart.

STEP FOUR: Prayer

Other Tools





COMMUNICATION 102

OTHER TOOLS

HELP ME STATEMENT

The “Help Me Statement” is a pre-written statement that couples give each other that helps give them emotional affirmation. The “Help Me Statement” is one of the best tools you can ever have to re-connect. You can ask for your “help me” statement anytime and whenever you would like your spouse to help you emotionally.

ICU Talk

ICU talk is a way to concentrate on the emotional state of your spouse while the other one listens for the emotion and cares about the emotion, even though they don’t agree.

20 Minute Break

The 20 minute break time is structured and followed in a step by step way to re-set in order to talk in a regulated way.

Business Meeting

The business meeting is a scheduled structured time of talking using a clipboard to talk about difficult topics —-win-win—-same team!



COMMUNICATION 102

OTHER TOOLS

The Help Me Statement is a tool you should use often to help each other when you need to comfort each other.

The hand signal is a “hitchhiker sign” from one hand sitting on the palm of your other hand.

You can learn to ask for help from your spouse and your spouse can learn how to give you what you are needing in a crisis moment.



COMMUNICATION 102

Emotional Affirmation for my Spouse :

(HELP ME STATEMENT)

When I am struggling with life and under pressure or in emotional distress here are two sentences you can say to me that will comfort me to help me bring me out of my emotional crisis.

(Each sentence should not be more than ten - twelve words.)

The best way to bring me this emotional affirmation would be:

CIRCLE ONE:

- >Standing in front of me looking me in the eyes
- >Standing beside me holding my hand
- >Sitting beside me holding my hand
- >Hugging me face to face
- >Standing in front of me with your hands placed gently on my shoulders

Sample affirmations: I can see you must be feeling pressured and inadequate. I need you to know you have what it takes and I appreciate you. (possible sample man emotional affirmation)

I can tell you are feeling alone, afraid and unloved. I need you to know you are precious to me and I am right here with you and that I am not leaving. (possible sample woman emotional affirmation).



COMMUNICATION 102

OTHER TOOLS

I C U Talk

Identify CARE Understand

"ICU" Talk is used in the www.hoperestored.com marriage intensives.



COMMUNICATION 102

I C U TALK

SPEAKER	LISTENER
IDENTIFY MY EMOTIONS	IDENTIFY SPOUSE'S EMOTIONAL MESSAGE
CARE ABOUT MY HEART/FEELINGS/ASK FOR TIME	CARE ABOUT MY SPOUSE'S FEELINGS. (DONT HAVE TO AGREE OR FIX).
SEEK TO BE UNDERSTOOD. I FEEL _____ ABOUT _____.	SEEK TO UNDERSTAND. (WHAT I HEAR YOU SAYING IS...)

I FEEL	I DON'T HAVE TO AGREE. I DO HAVE TO CARE.
abandoned, alone, betrayed, deceived, defective, disrespected, ignored, inadequate, inferior, insignificant, unimportant, unloved, not good enough, rejected, unwanted, unvalued, frustrated, exasperated, unheard	I see you are feeling:
WHEN	
I NEED	
acceptance, to be accurately portrayed, to feel adequate, affection, attention, care, companionship, grace, hope partnership, peace, support, understanding, validation, to know I'm wanted	What I'm understanding is:
	LET'S FIND A WAY TO WORK THROUGH THIS: >Let's pray >Let's say our Help Me Statement >Give me some time to think and pray and let's talk about this in our business meeting. >Thank you for sharing what you feel and what you need. I want to consider how you feel and what you need (husband says) or I want to respect what you feel and need. (wife says).

MAKE DUPLICATE COPIES OF THE NEXT PAGE
AND ATTACH THEM TO A CLIPBOARD FOR
FUTURE TIMES YOU ARE NEEDING TO
UNDERSTAND THE EMOTIONS ATTACHED TO A
COMMUNICATION CHALLENGE.

Mirroring: “I hear you saying:_____”

“Am I getting it right?” “Is there more?” “Did I miss anything?”

Validating: “What I can understand about what you saying is _____”

It makes sense to me that you would feel that way because_____”

“I can see your point about why you feel_____”

Empathy: “I can see how you would feel_____.”

“It hurts my heart to know you are feeling_____. I can understand why this is so painful.”



SPEAKER	LISTENER
IDENTIFY MY EMOTIONS	IDENTIFY SPOUSE'S EMOTIONAL MESSAGE
CARE ABOUT MY HEART/FEELINGS/ASK FOR TIME	CARE ABOUT MY SPOUSE'S FEELINGS. (DONT HAVE TO AGREE OR FIX).
SEEK TO BE UNDERSTOOD. I FEEL _____ABOUT_____.	SEEK TO UNDERSTAND. (WHAT I HEAR YOU SAYING IS...)

I FEEL	I DON'T HAVE TO AGREE. I DO HAVE TO CARE.
abandoned, alone, betrayed, deceived, defective, disrespected, ignored, inadequate, inferior, insignificant, unimportant, unloved, not good enough, rejected, unwanted, unvalued, frustrated, exasperated, unheard	I see you are feeling:
WHEN	
I NEED	What I'm understanding is:
acceptance, to be accurately portrayed, to feel adequate, affection, attention, care, companionship, grace, hope partnership, peace, support, understanding, validation, to know I'm wanted	LET'S FIND A WAY TO WORK THROUGH THIS: >Let's pray >Let's say our Help Me Statement >Give me some time to think and pray and let's talk about this in our business meeting. >Thank you for sharing what you feel and what you need. I want to consider how you feel and what you need (husband says) or I want to respect what you feel and need. (wife says).

Mirroring: “I hear you saying:_____”

“Am I getting it right?” “Is there more?”

“Did I miss anything?”

Validating: “What I can understand about what you saying is _____”

It makes sense to me that you would feel that way because_____”

“I can see your point about why you feel_____”

Empathy: “I can see how you would feel_____.”

“It hurts my heart to know you are feeling_____. I can understand why this is so painful.”

Consider the following tips for good communication:

Speaker

- Be specific
- Clearly state your emotions
- Be as positive as possible
- Use “I” statements
- Be clear about what is helpful
- Avoid “you” statements
- Avoid blame, insults, accusations
- Avoid labels or absolute statements

Listener

- Listen attentively without interrupting
- Reflect on your partners emotions
- Summarize what you think was said
- Ask for additional information
- No counterattacks or defensiveness
- Clarify without excusing
- Find points of agreement
- Apologize or express regret, if applicable



COMMUNICATION 102

OTHER TOOLS

Use the ICU sheet to talk through an issue that has been difficult to discuss. The listener makes notes and listens for emotion as the speaker talks.

The listener then speaks back what they think they heard the speaker say using some of the prompts suggested here.

The listener then gets to speak with the speaker taking notes, being sure to catch the emotion of the conversation. This tool slows down the conversation and moves it from the head to the heart as each person is asked to voice their emotions about the topic, not **FIXING** the issue.



COMMUNICATION 102

OTHER TOOLS



SCHEDULED BUSINESS MEETING

The hand sign for business meeting is a thumb over the shoulder, signifying “later.”



COMMUNICATION 102

OTHER TOOLS

OUR BUSINESS MEETING

DATE:

GROUND RULES:

We will take turns talking about important issues.

One person talks while the other person LISTENS without judgment, specifically making note of the other's person's emotions/heart about the issue being discussed.

OUR GOAL:

Problem solve an important issue pertaining to our marriage and/or our family.

SLOW DOWN! Escape acceleration by taking turns talking and listen.

AGENDA ITEMS: (Listed thru the week):

USING A CLIPBOARD - ONE TALKS/OTHER LISTENS AND TAKES NOTES

SPOUSE A: "I feel.....about.....I need."

This is similar to the ICU talk process except as much as possible is more focused on a solution. FOLLOW Compromise steps on the next page to think about solutions.

SPOUSE B: "I hear you say you feel.....about.....and what you need is....."

We agree to TAKE A BREAK if we start to get accelerated.

We agree to use sign language and also ask for help when needed. (HELP ME SIGN)

AGENDA ITEMS ARE USUALLY TOPICS THAT CREATE CONFLICT:

- 1) Money
- 2) Children
- 3) Schedules
- 4) Vacations
- 5) other

We don't have to agree but we do have to care. We agree not to let these difficult topics to cause conflict during the week -- early morning, dinner time, etc.

We are on the same team. We can make our goal "win-win." *If a later sign is given, the topic for conversation is put on the agenda list for talking about in the business meeting. You each commit to praying about solutions during the week.*



COMMUNICATION 102

OTHER TOOLS

MAKE COPIES OF THE NEXT PAGE AND PUT ON A CLIPBOARD IN AN EASILY ACCESSIBLE PLACE. (Refrigerator, kitchen cabinet, etc.).

During the week when important things need discussing you will put that as a subject on the Agenda for the business meeting.



COMMUNICATION 102

OTHER TOOLS

DATE:	WE PRAYED BEFORE WE BEGAN. Yes No
AGENDA ITEM:	SPOUSE A feels/needs:
	SPOUSE B feels/needs:
Do we need to do a compromise sheet and come back to this topic?	YES- We will talk about this next week
HERE is our WIN-WIN solution:	

MAKE COPIES OF THE BUSINESS MEETING WORKSHEET AND PUT IN A BINDER TO ACCESS IN YOUR BUSINESS MEETING AND TO KEEP A RECORD OF YOUR DISCUSSIONS.



COMMUNICATION 102

OTHER TOOLS

ICU talk vs Business Meeting

ICU TALK:

- > Understand your spouse's heart
- > Move from head knowledge to heart connection
- > Used to help talk through an emotional situation to reach an understanding of each other on an emotional level.
- > Might be used after a heart signal is made or a Help Me statement is given.
- > Business meeting topics are NOT discussed in the ICU talk time.

BUSINESS MEETING:

- > When a topic comes up that needs talking about or a problem needs resolving
- > These topics like money, business situations, children schedules and things needing solved together often disrupt the whole week because we try to talk about them at dinner, in the morning or other times when we are distracted by daily life activities. Couples write down what needs to be talked about on the agenda and then schedule their weekly or bi-weekly business meeting.
- > Business meeting should be held in a physical place where there aren't distractions or interruptions.
- > Many couples have a business meeting then plan a date time together afterwards.
- > ICU talk might be needed in the business meeting, but not usually.



TOOLS TO HELP US GET BACK ON TRACK

Summary Process:

Hand on heart:

"I'm not OK. I'm starting to shut down; I'm starting to accelerate. My heart is hurting.

I CARE - Immediate response:

I CARE. (Doesn't *require* agreement)

Help me:

HELP ME. I need my help me statement please. I want to also give you your help me statement.

This might re-set the tone.

ICU talk:

GO thru the ICU talk format

2 hands on heart:

We are starting to accelerate we need our 20 minute break

Follow 20 minute BRAKE protocol

Help me and I Care

ICU talk

GO thru the ICU talk format



COMMUNICATION 102

CONNECTING COMMUNICATION

CHECK IN with your spouse “Couch Time”

Directions: Set a time to meet **AT LEAST 15 MINUTES A WEEK**in a specific place of calm where there are few distractions. Focus **ONLY** on each other. Can have candles/music.

POSITION: Wife sits up/ husband with head in wife’s lap...(non-sexual)

Listen to your partner’s soul, not just his/her words. Discuss feelings about how you see the relationship and how each other’s heart is doing. This is not a time to nag, complain, lecture, whine, withdraw, get defensive or criticize. Heart -connection is the objective
Emotional Intimacy Questions\

General questions to open conversation on a “heart level” with your spouse.

- What have you enjoyed most about the years we’ve been together? ■ Describe one of the happiest periods in our relationship?
- What do you like about me?
- Do you ever think about me when you’re alone?
- Do you ever miss me?
- When we’re together, what do you enjoy doing most? ■ Do you enjoy spending time with me?
- What is it about me that you don’t like?

Questions to open conversation about your spouse’s feelings. ■ What’s going on inside right now?

- Are you ever afraid? Of what?
- Are you ever discouraged?
- What causes you to be discouraged?
 - Do you ever feel rejected by me?
 - Describe the one thing about me that frustrates you the most?
 - Have you ever felt unconditionally loved and cared for as a person? By whom?
- Do you ever feel: worthless? angry?Unaccepted by me? cut off?
guilty for past failures unloved? unwanted? left out? stupid?trapped?ugly?
uncared for? unlovable? unprotected?it’s all your fault? unaccepted by others? inadequate?
overwhelmed? sad?stressed? despairing? like trash? dirty? controlled?
like a failure? helpless? inferior? insecure? cheap?unfairly treated?



COMMUNICATION 102

CONNECTING COMMUNICATION

SHARING THINGS WE LIKE AND HAVE IN COMMON

Sharing Things As A Couple

When couples are going through a difficult time, they often concentrate on their differences rather than on the things they have in common and the activities they like to share. This worksheet can help focus you on the things you enjoy about your relationship. Talking about the things you have in common may bring you closer and the worksheet may also give you some ideas of things you want to do together more often. You can fill out this worksheet together or make a copy and fill it out separately, then comparing your answers. If some statements don't apply, just skip them.

MUSIC WE BOTH LIKE:	
TV SHOWS WE BOTH LIKE:	
HOBBIES WE BOTH LIKE:	
VALUES WE SHARE:	
PLANS FOR THE FUTURE:	
GAMES WE BOTH LIKE TO PLAY:	
RESTAURANTS WE BOTH LIKE:	
OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES WE BOTH LIKE:	



COMMUNICATION 103

HOW TO APOLOGIZE

DO NOT SAY "I'M SORRY."

**"I'M SORRY" IS NEVER RECEIVED AS
AN APOLOGY.**

APOLOGIES THAT WILL BE RECEIVED FOLLOW
THIS EXAMPLE:

- 1). Sincerely examine your heart. What did you do wrong and how did your wrong make your spouse feel? Recognizing exactly what your actions were and trying to understand the pain it cost your spouse will be much better received.
- 2). "I was wrong when I.....(said, did).
- 3). " This must have made you feel.....(state at least three emotions).



SEARCH YOUR HEART

Think of five things you've contributed to the demise of your marriage and name what that must have made your spouse feel.

(WORKSHEETS ARE ON THE NEXT PAGES.)

HERE IS A LIST OF EMOTIONS TO HELP YOU LIST EMOTIONS.

144 of 190

abandoned	exposed	pathetic
accused	empty	pressured
afraid	failure	pressure to perform
all my fault	fear	publicly shamed
always wrong	foolish	rejected
angry	forced	rejection
anxious	frustrated	repulsed
apathetic	good for nothing	revenge
ashamed	guilty	ruined
bad	wounded	sad
belittled	hate myself	scared
betrayed	helpless	secluded
bitter	hollow	self-disgust
blamed	hopeless	shamed
can't trust anyone	humiliated	stressed
cheap	hurt	stupid
cheated	hysterical	suffocated
condemned	impure	suicidal
confused	inadequate	taken advantage of
controlled	inferior	torn apart
cut off	insecure	trapped
deceived	insensitive to my needs	trash
defeated	insignificant	ugly
defenseless	invalidated	unable to communicate
defrauded	left out	unaccepted
degraded	lied to	uncaring
despair	lonely	uncared for
devalued	lost	unchosen
dirty	made fun of	unclean
disappointed	manipulated	unfairly judged
disrespected	misunderstood	unfairly treated



COMMUNICATION 103

I was wrong when I:

I know this must have made you feel: (3 emotions)

I hope you can forgive me.

I was wrong when I:

I know this must have made you feel: (3 emotions)

I hope you can forgive me.

I was wrong when I:

I know this must have made you feel: (3 emotions)

I hope you can forgive me.

I was wrong when I:

I know this must have made you feel: (3 emotions)

I hope you can forgive me

I was wrong when I:

I know this must have made you feel: (3 emotions)

I hope you can forgive me.



COMMUNICATION 103

WAYS TO START A REPAIR STATEMENT:
We are on the same team. Let's pray and start again.
We' re starting to do our thing.....let's take a break and try to work through this.
I want to understand you, let's slow this down so we can hear each other.
I am on your side. Let's talk so we can understand each other.
I can see your point.
I'm wanting to understand. Let's do an ICU so I can hear your heart on this.
I want to hear you andI hope you want to hear me.
We're on the same team. We're not enemies.
I really blew that one, let me start again.
We're on the same team, let's figure this out.
We're smart people. Let's take a break and we can figure this out and God will help us. Let's pray.



COMMUNICATION 103

HOW TO REPAIR

Couples who make it for the long haul don't leave arguments hanging and unresolved. They always come back and repair a conflict.

Use Hand Signals:

"I Care."

"Help Me."

You start in a good place by using the hand signals."

Pray together.

Repair using the Repair Statements in an authentic way. If you need, you can also use the ICU talk to hear each others emotions on the issue.

How do we come up with a win-win solution?

Answer these questions:

WHAT DO WE AGREE ABOUT?

WHAT FEELINGS DO WE HAVE IN COMMON?

WHAT COMMON GOALS DO WE HAVE?

HOW CAN WE ACCOMPLISH THESE GOALS?



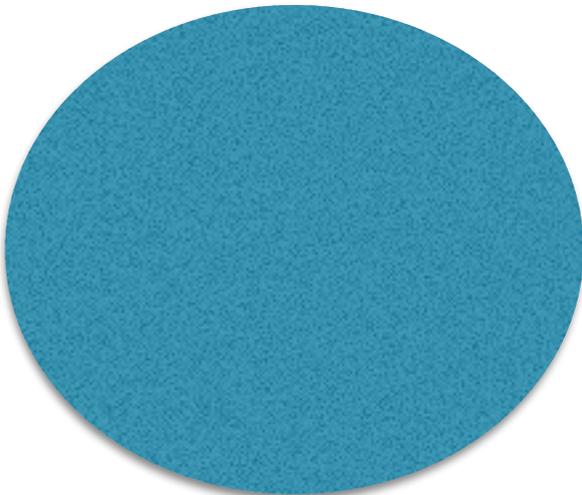
COMMUNICATION 103

SOLVING A PROBLEM WHEN WE DISAGREE

HERE ARE THINGS I CAN'T BUDGE ON:



THIS IS IMPORTANT TO ME BECAUSE:



HERE ARE THINGS I CAN COMPROMISE ON:

GRIDLOCK

A perpetual problem creates gridlock.

According to www.gottman.com

69% of problems for couples end up in gridlock.

> **GRIDLOCK:** TALKING, TALKING, TALKING, WITHOUT MAKING HEADWAY >

THERE IS ZERO EMPATHY, AFFECTION OR HUMOR

EACH PARTY GETS DEEPER EMBEDDED IN THEIR OPINION.

IT FEELS LIKE IF YOU COMPROMISE YOU ARE GIVING INTO YOUR CORE BELIEFS, VALUES OR SENSE OF SELF. YOUR CORE LONGING IS VIOLATED. USE A CLIPBOARD WITH ONE PERSON TALKING AND THE OTHER PERSON TAKING NOTES AND LISTENING.

QUESTIONS TO ASK EACH OTHER:

- 1, Do you have some values or ethical belief about this issue?
2. Is there a dream behind this issue? Does this related to your history in some way? Help me understand what that means to you.
3. If you could wave a magic wand and you could have exactly what you need, what would that look like? Is there anything you would be OK with giving up?



COMMUNICATION 103

Summary:

Hand on heart:

"I'm not OK. I'm starting to shut down; I'm starting to accelerate. My heart is hurting."

I CARE - Immediate response:

I CARE. (Doesn't *require* agreement)

Decide to work through the problem using the "win=win" process.



SEX BEGINS IN THE KITCHEN!

THINGS THAT WILL MAKE YOUR SEX-LIFE BETTER:

>UNDERSTANDING YOUR SPOUSE ON A DEEP LEVEL

>IMPROVING COMMUNICATION - KEEPING THE BADS TIMES TO A MINIMUM!

>HAVING AT LEAST 20 MINUTES OF CONNECTING CONVERSATION ONCE A WEEK!

>MAKING TIME FOR EACH OTHER OUTSIDE OF THE BEDROOM

>HAVING UN-INTERRUPTED TIME TOGETHER



THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AND SEX

Dr. Trudy suggests you watch the videos about sex before you begin talking about your sexual relationship. Additionally, you will take the evaluations concerning sexual issues before you begin dialoging about where you as a couple sexually. The videos and the evaluations might contribute a lot of information for you as you think of ways to either begin again (restore sexual purity) or think of ways you can improve and have more satisfying sexual interactions.

The end of this lesson provides 3 prayers:

Prayer for restoration of sexual purity

Prayer to break soul ties You will individually ask the Lord to break off any ties spiritually with past sexual partners. This exercise alone will greatly restore your sexual interactions.

Prayer of release

PROCESS:

- >Watch the videos
- >Take the evaluations if they apply
- > Talk about your sex-life in your marriage using the worksheets
- > End with the prayers

WHAT IS SEXUAL ABUSE?

Sexual abuse occurs whenever a person (child or adult) is sexually exploited by an older or more powerful person for the satisfaction of the abuser's needs.

Sexual abuse is a felony in all 50 states. By age 18, 1 in 3 women and 1 in 6 men will be sexually abused. (NIMH)

Sexual abuse is probably even more common because of the secrecy involved in reporting. The average age of the child when abuse begins is between 6 and 12. The majority of abusers are male. Most perpetrators are considerably older. Some states require an age difference of 5 years, but the age of the perpetrator does not determine whether the person is harmed by the experience.

Criteria for Sexual Abuse

___ As a child I experienced an older person or an adult making sexual threats, sexual comments about my body, lewd or suggestive comments and inappropriate discussions. (Talking with a child about sexual needs and preferences).

___ Before adulthood, I experienced exposure to pornography or to any sexually provocative scene.

___ I've experienced physical situations of sexual abuse that includes touching and/or other sexual stimulation. Sexual Abuse is much broader than intercourse (forced, unforced or simulated). It includes touching that is intended to sexually arouse the abuser. Also includes exposure of the victim's body to others.

It is important you get healing for any past sexual abuse you may have experienced... even if you feel like it is a "sleeping dog" that needs to lie.

SEXUAL ABUSE AND ATTITUDES TOWARD SEX

This is a non-scientific evaluation that suggests ways that past sexual abuse can cause men and women not to connect sexually when married and in a committed relationship.

- Unable to enjoy kissing
- Guilt and dirty feelings before or after sex
- Problems concerning boundaries in sex
- Inability to tolerate own body
- Dissociation from own body during sex
- Feelings of worthlessness if unable to provide sex
- Inability to look at a naked person/revulsion
- Complete avoidance of sex / Lack of sexual desire
- Compulsive sexual behavior
- Lack of modesty or extreme modesty
- Unable to relax during sex/ feeling caught
- Crying during or after sex
- Need for darkness during sex
- Needing to feel helpless during sex
- Aversion to touching oneself
- Inability to be playful during sex
- Preoccupation with other concerns during sex
- Nervousness at being stimulated
- Inability to have alcohol-free sex
- Eagerness for sex to be over with
- View of self as a sex object only
- Feeling sexually inadequate/impotency

Sexual Anorexia Inventory

Sexual Anorexia can best be described as “terror of sex.” Generally, this condition occurs after a woman has endured years of sexual abuse. For a season after the abuse, she may go into a period of extreme acting out via promiscuity. Eventually the pendulum swings the other way and a woman can go into a condition referred to as sexual anorexia.

This small inventory can tell you are so shut down sexually that you’ve gone into sexual anorexia.

Check the lines that apply to your situation:

- A dread of sexual pleasure
- A morbid and persistent fear of sexual contact
- Preoccupation with others being sexual
- Obsessive concern or worry about the sexual intentions of others
- Intimacy avoidance because of sexual fear
- Extreme loathing of body functions
- Shame and self-loathing over sexual experiences
- Self-destructive behavior to limit, stop, or avoid sex

If you checked more than three boxes in this inventory, you might need to consider that a serious emotional problem might be present that needs looking out with professional help.

Use only with permission. www.missingpieces.org

Understanding Sexual Addiction

Objective: To identify if you have an addiction to sexual behaviors or sexual materials.

What to Know: No one wants to admit they are a sex addict, but if your sexual behavior is negatively impacting your life, your safety, or your health, you need to look at your choices before they cause serious problems. The following are traits typically seen in people with a sex addiction:

- Extreme preoccupation with sexual fantasies and behaviors, for six months or longer
- Loss of control over sexual behaviors and an inability to quit or cut back
- Negative consequences related to sexual behaviors, including relationship problems, issues at work or school, mental health problems, diminished self-esteem, financial concerns, loss of interest in hobbies, legal trouble, and so forth
- Consistent sexual objectification of self and/or others
- Heightened tolerance and escalation
- Denial there is a problem
- Isolation from others
- I have regrets about the amount of time I spend searching for, fantasizing about, and having sex, and/or masturbating.
- I have promised myself to stop visiting sex websites, viewing pornography, or fantasizing but have been unable to.

RESOURCES FOR HELP: www.puredesire.org

Coping with Anxiety About Having Sex

What to Know: Sexual anxiety is a common problem for both men and women while dating, in established or casual relationships, or in any other sexual situation. Sexual anxiety can be an occasional or chronic issue, and it can lead to avoiding sexual activities, talking about sex, or engaging in anything related to sex. It can be caused by many different issues.

Check off any of the following problems you experience. _

___ Body image problems. Common for both men and women, it refers to feeling insecure or ashamed about their bodies. Men may feel insecure about their penis size, and women often worry about physical aspects like body weight or the size of their breasts.

___ Sexual dysfunction. Body image issues, anxiety, or physical problems can contribute to erectile dysfunction, problems having an orgasm, low libido, painful sex, and more.

___ Shame and guilt about having sex. This may be related to cultural, religious, family of origin, or other issues.

___ Relationship problems. When couples experience conflict, arguments, stress, or other issues, this can lead to anxiety and an inability to experience sexual pleasure.

___ Sexual trauma. A history of sexual abuse can create sexual anxiety. Even when someone is with a partner they love and trust, sexual activity can trigger past emotions. ____

Infidelity. If a partner cheats, the other partner may worry they cannot trust them, or they will contract a sexually transmitted infection. Discovering infidelity can lead to resentment, anger, insecurity, or sadness, all of which can interfere with sex.

___ Pressure to have sex. Sexual pressure, spoken or unspoken, diminishes sexual pleasure. Sex should always be consensual, and if a person feels pressured to have sex or to engage in sexual activities, they may feel anxious, angry, or resentful.

___ Lack of sexual experience. If someone has little or no sexual experience, they may have "performance anxiety." Rather than being focused on pleasure, they engage in "spectatoring," which refers to being very self-conscious and stuck in their head

. ___ Stress and worry. Too much stress takes people outside the sexual experience. Even if unrelated to sex, it can be difficult to relax enough to enjoy sex.



THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AND SEX

Couples and their sexual interactions is one of the most important parts of their marriage. Yet so many Christian couples are caught in the trap of never talking about their sexual needs. For this reason, this training offers couples an opportunity to dialogue about this important part of their relationship. The following exercise comes from [Between resources.com](http://Betweenresources.com) and is a secular source but I've found it to be a good help for couples to begin these conversations. Hopefully, with the other seven lessons, you are beginning to communicate and also understand each other much better.

Talking About Your Sexual Needs with Your Spouse

Objective

To help you identify the sexual needs and desires that you might have trouble communicating to your partner, and to learn strategies for talking about them.

You Should Know

Although sex and sexuality are all around us in our culture, many people still have a difficult time talking about their own sexual needs and desires. It is still considered taboo by some people to be open and honest about what you like, what you don't like, what turns you on, what turns you off.

Many couples struggle to discuss sex openly, perhaps out of some fantasy that their partner should be able to read their mind and know what they like. Many people worry that if they raise the issue of wanting more sex that their partner will think they're "too sexual" or aggressive. Others are concerned that if they share that they would like less sex that their partner will think they're unloved or unattractive.

Putting into words one's sexual needs, desires, fears, worries, and hopes can be a challenge. But learning to communicate authentically with your partner can greatly improve your sex life together, whether you've been together a long time or not. This doesn't mean sitting down and doing it all at once—it's a dialogue that evolves and grows over time, with the goal of deepening your level of intimacy and mutual pleasure.

What to Do

Describe your current sexual relationship with your partner in the following ways:

1. Frequency of sexual activity (list everything from affectionate hugging to making love), e.g., daily kissing, weekly intercourse, and so on.

2. When you engage in sexual activity with your partner, who usually initiates? How do you feel about that? Are you happy with that pattern? If not, how do you wish it were different?

3. What do you enjoy about your current sexual relationship with your partner?

4. What are your top three concerns about your current sexual relationship with your partner?

5. What was your sexual relationship like before now (if you have been together for a while)?

What has changed, if anything? Why?

6. Have you ever talked about your sexual needs with your partner before? What is your current communication like with your partner in general? That is, do you communicate openly and honestly about all aspects of your relationship or just some? Describe.

7. What types of sexual activity are off limits for you, even if your partner desires them?

8. What other aspects of your communication with your partner about sex and sexuality, needs, and desires, are important to you that have not otherwise been addressed? Be specific.



THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AND SEX

Now that you have identified some of the issues that concern you, here are some tips and strategies for beginning a new, healthy conversation about sex:

- Schedule a time to talk about sex with your partner in a “safe” location, with no kids around.
- Do not talk about sex when you are tired, hungry, angry, or distracted.
- Do not talk about sex when you are in bed or right before bedtime; or just before, during, or just after sex.
- If you are initiating the conversation, start slowly by saying you’d like to talk about your desire to be closer and to have a more satisfying intimate life.
- Learn to use “I” statements in your communications and avoid blame. That is, instead of saying, “You’re always in a hurry when we make love,” try, “I would love to slow down our lovemaking so I can feel closer to you,” or “I like it when you’re on top of me; can we do that more often?” or “I get really turned on by foreplay—can we talk about how to do that more before we make love?”
- Ask your partner what they like, what satisfies them, what turns them on?
- Listen with an open mind and don’t respond defensively.

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If you would like to talk further about sex and your marriage the next section also has some helps for this discussion.

At the end of this section are several suggested resources for further help. The important thing is for you to be able to talk about this together as a couple.



THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AND SEX

Steps to Address the Lack of Sexual Intimacy

Objective:

To rekindle sexual intimacy through exploration of needs and desires

You Should Know

A couple's sex life is often a good measure of the overall health of their marriage or committed relationship. Once a couple stops having sex, or no longer values sex as an important part of their relationship, it is an indicator that the relationship might be in trouble. Discussing this issue with your partner can be intimidating – particularly if you feel disconnected (sexually or otherwise).

When a marriage lacks sexual intimacy, there is often underlying unhappiness or discord that exists (if the couple has not agreed to the situation). The health of your marriage depends on mutual sexual attraction and satisfaction. Candidly discussing your sexual feelings and preferences with your partner is important, but this might be difficult, awkward, or uncomfortable. However, there is nothing shameful at all about sexuality or a robust sex

1. When sex is a positive experience for you, approximately how frequently would you like to have sexual intercourse or activity? If it varies, what does it depend on?

2. How often do you have feelings of sexual desire?

3. How satisfied are you with your current sexual experiences with your partner?

4. Describe what you believe are your partner's current sexual experiences:

5. Is there anything you would like to change?

6. Is it important to you who initiates sexual intimacy? _____ If yes, who should initiate and in what manner?

7. What are solutions to the excuses that you are "too busy" or "too tired" to have sex?

8.. Are there feelings or situations that impact your sex life? (for example: conflict, children at home, work schedule, etc.):

9. After you have learned about your partner's point of view on sexual intimacy, describe activities and changes to enhance your sexual experience:

Dr. Trudy's suggestions:

> MAKE TIME to talk using the "connecting conversation" teaching. This is going to greatly enhance your sexual interactions.

> MAKE TIME for yourselves without work, children or phones! Go on fun dates and have fun activities...just the two of you! (THIS IS HOW YOU STARTED!)



THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE AND MONEY

Are Financial Problems Affecting Your Relationship?

According to surveys, money is the number-one issue that couples fight about. In a 2014 American Psychological Association "Stress in America" survey, 31 percent reported that financial issues were a major source of conflict. Arguments about money tend to be more intense than other types of conflicts in a relationship and are likely to remain unresolved unless they are approached directly.

The source of the conflicts between couples is often twofold: 1) lack of knowledge about the other's values and beliefs about money and financial management, and 2) lack of communication and teamwork or collaboration between the partners

Many times, couple's attitudes about spending or saving, sharing or not sharing, acquiring debt, investments, etc., are not even conscious. Awareness of your and your partner's values will help you to make wise choices as a couple. Such awareness can then lead to improved communication around problems and building a more team-oriented approach to your financial life.

With patience and practice, couples can sort out their similarities and differences and learn to approach their financial lives maturely and with mutual respect.

<p>What does money mean to you?</p> <p>SPOUSE A _____</p> <p>SPOUSE B _____</p>	<p>The number one thing money means to me:</p> <p>SECURITY FOR THE FUTURE</p> <p>STATUS</p> <p>A CHANCE FOR FUN & PLEASURE</p> <p>SECURITY FOR THE PRESENT</p>
<p>What does money mean to you?</p> <p>SPOUSE A _____</p> <p>SPOUSE B _____</p>	<p>HOW WAS MONEY HANDLED IN YOUR FAMILY OF ORIGIN?</p>
<p>What does money mean to you?</p> <p>SPOUSE A _____</p> <p>SPOUSE B _____</p>	<p>WHAT ARE YOUR BELIEFS ABOUT SPENDING VS SAVING?</p>
<p>What does money mean to you?</p> <p>SPOUSE A _____</p> <p>SPOUSE B _____</p>	<p>DEBT IS TOTALLY OK</p> <p>DEBT IS A NECESSARY EVIL</p> <p>DEBT IS TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE</p>

<p>What does money mean to you?</p> <p>SPOUSE A _____</p> <p>SPOUSE B _____</p>	<p>Tithing is:</p> <p>Absolutely required</p> <p>Ok when it can be afforded</p> <p>Not necessary, but nice to do</p>
<p>What does money mean to you?</p> <p>SPOUSE A _____</p> <p>SPOUSE B _____</p>	<p>Managing money in the home:</p> <p>Should be one person's responsibility</p> <p>Doesn't matter who does it</p> <p>Should be equally worked out</p>
<p>What does money mean to you?</p> <p>SPOUSE A _____</p> <p>SPOUSE B _____</p>	<p>Budgets are:</p> <p>Annoying and I hate them</p> <p>Necessary but not always followed</p> <p>Absolutely should be followed</p>
<p>What does money mean to you?</p> <p>SPOUSE A _____</p> <p>SPOUSE B _____</p>	<p>My personal fear about money:</p> <p>Paralyzes me; keeps me awake at night</p> <p>I think about it a lot; try not to though</p> <p>I know God will provide and I'm not worried.</p>



THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

THE TOUGH ISSUES

The Tough Issues

If either of you are dealing with an addiction, you simply must seek the help that is so readily available. Now is the time because your marriage will never be victorious if there is a “third party” in it.

The addiction is the silent partner in your marriage that is sabotaging your relationship and every other part of your life.

Addiction or anger help: Focus on the Family referral system
www.family.org/counselor

Betrayal help: www.affairrecovery.org

ADHD help: www.amenclinic.com

Screen time: Take the evaluation provided in this workbook

Included in this portion of your workbook are some articles on these topics.



THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

THE TOUGH ISSUES

SCREEN TIME

Can you imagine what life would be like without your cell phone? There are so many things you do with your mobile devices, however, too much screen time can distract you from responsibilities like chores, exercising, and even spending time with your friends and family.

You might believe that you cannot live without your cell phone, but consider if your cell phone use is interfering with other aspects of your life.

Do any of these sound like you?

- Constantly texting people and checking for incoming messages.
- Checking social media accounts more than 15 times each day.
- Playing video games or using apps for more than 2 hours a day.
- Feeling anxious or moody if you are without your phone.
- Becoming upset if your phone dies or you do not have access to a charger.
- Frequently hassled by others about how much time you spend on your phone.
- Neglecting important tasks.

How many hours a day do you estimate you spend on your phone?

You can see if your estimate is correct by going to 'Settings' on your phone and checking for 'Screen Time,' which will tell you how much time you spend on your phone.

Can you think of tasks or other responsibilities that are neglected because of your screen time?

Here are some suggestions for managing your screen time.

- While doing important tasks or spending time with friends and family, put your phone on "do not disturb."
- Practice turning off your phone for short periods of time. Consider shutting it off during dinnertime or when you go to sleep.
- You can download apps that help you manage your phone distractions. Some examples include Forest, which helps you stay off the phone while you focus on your work, and RescueTime, which tracks how you spend time online and sends you weekly summaries.

Understanding the Impact of ADHD in Romantic Relationships

You Should Know

Your romantic relationship can be negatively affected if you or your partner has ADHD because of distractibility, disorganization, and impulsivity.

If you have ADHD, you might feel like you are constantly criticized, nagged, or micromanaged.

No matter what you do, your partner never seems happy with your efforts. You might not feel respected, so you say whatever is required to get him or her off your back. You might hope your partner will change – relax a little or stop their controlling behavior.

If your partner has ADHD, you might feel frustrated, lonely, ignored, or unappreciated. You are probably tired of taking care of everything on your own, or feel like you are the only responsible adult in the relationship. The cycle repeats itself: your partner is unreliable or fails to follow through, so you remind, badger, and eventually end up doing it yourself.

These feelings and experiences can contribute to destructive cycles in the relationship.

One partner complains or becomes resentful, while the other partner feels defensive, judged, and misunderstood. Neither of you are happy. But there are ways to create a happier partnership, where both of you choose to respond to the challenges ADHD brings to your relationship, so you both can communicate in healthy and productive ways.

A good resource: www.amenclinics.com



THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

A WORD ABOUT TRAUMA

Traumatic wounding can impact one's ability to connect and be vulnerable. Unresolved trauma will keep the person who experienced it stuck with a guarded heart. This impacts one's ability to give and receive love from others AND from God.

Receiving freedom from past trauma is well worth the intensive effort required to work through things.

Dr. Trudy offers online individual intensives with a unique processing protocol that helps release that past trauma in an amazing way.

www.anesisonline.com



THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

OUR DREAM FOR MARRIAGE: WHAT I WANT

Sitting knee to knee in chairs, facing each other with eye contact, share your desires for what you want in your marriage. You'll use the evaluation and name your top ten choices in order of 10—-what you want most, down to 1.

Acceptance	I want to be warmly received for who I am without condition.
Accurately portrayed	I want to be seen correctly; I want my mate to represent me in a true and accurate manner.
Adequate	I want to feel like I measure up and am good enough.
Affection	I want to feel fondness and warmth.
Appreciation	I want what I do to be noticed, valued, and acknowledged.
Approval	I want to be liked and accepted.
Assistance	I want a helpmate; I want help support, backing, and assistance from my spouse.
Attention	I want to be noticed and attended to.
Care	I want to know others care about me and are interested in my well-being.
Comfort	I want to feel a sense of well-being.
Commitment	I want to have unconditional security in relationships.
Companionship	I want to enjoy spending time with my mate and them with me.
Competence	I want to have skills and an ability that bring success.
Grace	I want something good (forgiveness) that I don't deserve.
Hero	I want to be the knight in shining armor to be my mate's champion.
Hope	I want confidence that I will get what I love and desire.
Intimacy	I want to open my heart and not have walls in my marriage; I want to feel a deep closeness and connection with my mate.



THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

OUR DREAM FOR MARRIAGE: WHAT I WANT

Joy	I want to feel lasting satisfaction and happiness; I want to be thrilled with my marriage.
Love	I want to be loved deeply; I want to know that others experience me as lovable.
Partnership	I want to feel like I have a teammate or partner for a spouse; I want us both to share equal responsibility for our marriage.
Passion	I want excitement, fascination, intrigue, romance and adventure.
Peacefulness	I want calmness, serenity, and tranquility; I want to feel relaxed in my marriage.
Power	I want to impact and influence my life and my marriage. I want to feel like I'm making a difference.
Respect	I want to be admired and esteemed.
Safety	I want to feel protected and secure.
Self-determination	I want to have independence and free will.
Significance	I want to have meaning and purpose.
Success	I want to experience a sense of achievement and accomplishment.
Support	I want others to be on my side; I want someone to be beside me through thick and thin.
Trust	I want to have faith in others and know they are reliable.
Understanding	I want to be known and understood at a deep level.
Useful	I want to contribute something valuable to the marriage.
Validation	I want to feel valued for who I am, what I think and what I feel.
Wanted	I want to be sought after; I want to be desirable to my mate.

DON'T HAVE A FEAR-BASED RELATIONSHIP!

FEAR-BASED RELATIONSHIP:

I CONCENTRATE ON WHAT I'M AFRAID OF LOSING INSTEAD OF PRAYING FOR WHAT I KNOW GOD CAN GIVE ME IN MY MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP

"THE LORD HIMSELF GOES BEFORE YOU AND WILL BE WITH YOU; HE WILL NEVER LEAVE YOU NOR FORSAKE YOU. DO NOT BE AFRAID, DO NOT BE DISCOURAGED." DEUT. 31:8 (NIV)

THE BEST WAY TO DISPEL FEAR AND GROW IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP IS TO PRAY TOGETHER EVERYDAY!

HERE IS AN ANESIS SUGGESTION FOR LEARNING TO PRAY TOGETHER:

- 1) CHOOSE VERSES TO PRAY OVER YOUR FAMILY**
- 2) EACH SPOUSE HAS A VERSE, A VERSE TO PRAY OVER YOUR MARRIAGE AND A VERSE FOR EACH CHILD. FOR GROWN CHILDREN YOU CHOOSE THE VERSE FOR THEIR FAMILY IF THEY ARE MARRIED.**
- 3) EVERY NIGHT YOU PRAY FOR ONE FAMILY MEMBER AS YOU GO THROUGH THE LIST. THROUGH THE COURSE OF THE MONTH EACH PERSON WOULD GET PRAYED FOR AT LEAST TWICE. THE PRAYERS ARE POWERFUL BECAUSE YOU ARE PRAYING SCRIPTURE OVER YOUR FAMILY!**

ASSESS YOUR STRENGTHS!

This exercise will help you identify the individual strengths you and your spouse bring to your relationship. Make two copies of this worksheet, one for you and one for your partner. Rate yourself and your partner on your areas of strength, using a 1 to 5 scale, with 1 = needs work, and 5 = very strong. You should add any strengths that you or your partner might have that are not on this list.

When you are done, identify strengths you both possess and discuss how you might utilize your individual strengths to enhance your relationship.

On the next page you'll be able to see what your positive qualities and strengths you can draw on to create your new marriage.

Have fun!

This can make great dialogue between the two of you as you see how you can best "marry" your strengths and what you need to improve upon.

Personal Strengths

Areas of Strength	Me	My Partner
Openly expresses feelings.		
Listens without judging.		
Manages conflict effectively.		
Budgets and manages money well.		
Easily expresses affection.		
Effectively makes decisions.		
Willingness to find solutions to solve problems.		
Works hard and/or is employed.		
Maintains relationships with family and friends.		
Willingness to grow and evolve together.		
Parenting skills (if applicable).		
Spiritual/religious beliefs.		
Community involvement or hobbies.		
Thoughtful and considerate.		
Playfulness and humor.		
Trustworthiness.		
Respectful.		
Open, undefended, and willing to be vulnerable.		
Optimistic, positive point-of-view.		
Healthy coping skills; effectively deals with stress.		
Organized.		



THE CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE

OUR DREAM FOR MARRIAGE: WHAT I WANT



MARRIAGE IS A GIFT

Dear

Marriage is a gift. I want to always remember what the gift of you was that drew me to you. In tough times I want to refer back to my remembrance of seeing you as a gift. Here are three ways I consider being married to you a gift:

(1)

(2)

(3)

Here are three things I appreciate about your essence:

(1)

(2)

(3)

Signed,



Our Christian marriage has scripture and prayer!

MARRIAGE PRAYER

Lord,

I pray you will protect our marriage from anything that will harm or destroy it. Shield our marriage from our own selfishness and neglect, from the evil plans and desires of others and from unhealthy or dangerous situations. May there be no thoughts of divorce or infidelity in our hearts and none in our future. Set us free from past hurts, memories and ties from previous relationships and unrealistic expectations of one another.

I pray there would be no jealousy in either of us, or low self-esteem that precedes that.

Protects us from influences like alcohol, drugs, gambling, pornography, lust or obsessions. Let nothing come into our hearts and habits that would threaten our marriage in any way.

I pray you would unite us in a bond of friendship commitment, generosity and understanding. Eliminate our immaturity, hostility or feelings of inadequacy.

Help us make time for one another alone, to nurture and renew our marriage and remind ourselves of the reasons we got married in the first place. I pray our love for each other will grow stronger everyday so that we will never leave a legacy of divorce to our children.

In Jesus Name, Amen

