



Extreme Makeover or Strength and Balance? Either Objective Requires a Plan!

*Love is not merely a feeling. It is a deep unity, maintained by the will
and deliberately strengthened by habit. C.S. Lewis*

Extreme makeover television shows were fun to watch during their popularity. Viewers anticipated the "great reveal" of a person's home (or body) after it had undergone a transformation through the touch and craftsmanship of professionals

The audience would become captivated as they observed the initial state of the house or body, and waited with great anticipation to see what the experts will do to take something outdated, out of condition, or dilapidated, and reveal it as new and spectacular.

What the makeover program didn't reveal is all the hard work required to make an old house new, all the grueling physical pain required to change an out of condition body to a state of fitness and health. These parts of the process were minimized for the public because it is tedious, and not as exciting as the contrast of a broken beginning to the grandiose reveal.

Your marriage may need refreshment and updating, you may need an extreme makeover or you may need to "start over" by tearing down the old structure rebuilding from the ground up. Jeremiah 18:3 – *I went to the potter's house, and sure enough, the potter was there, working away at his wheel. Whenever the pot the potter was working on turned out badly, as sometimes happens when you are working with clay, the potter would simply start over and use the same clay to make another pot.*

Whatever your circumstance, there is good news. One person, like a single rudder turning a large ship, can change the dynamics in a marriage relationship and begin the process of transformation. It takes one person who is willing to take responsibility for their own behavior to cause the dynamics to shift from a downward spiral to something that is strong and steady.



Marriage Goal Setting Retreat General Guidelines

What is a Prayorities Goal Setting Retreat?

This is a special time you and your spouse go away from home to set goals toward realizing your individual and collective objectives for the coming year. Both of you understand the primary purpose of your time away is to pray about, discuss and create a set of goals you will use as a roadmap for the New Year. It is a time of communicating to one another your needs and dreams and agreeing upon the direction God is leading you as individuals and as a couple.

Where will you go on your retreat?

The only requirement is to be away from home and distractions, and to be someplace where you can have quality quiet time with the Lord and one another.

How can you make your retreat special?

Be your best on your retreat! Plan to practice healthy habits on your weekend away and not slip into unhealthy patterns of indulgence. Decide in advance to enjoy healthy meals and treats instead of eating things that you'll later regret. Bring workout clothes and spend sometime exercising together. Either go for a long walk or run, or visit a gym. This will help clear your mind, and energize and refresh you as you continue to plan your year through goal setting. And last, but not least, plan some romantic time together. Set the mood by bringing a candle and some beautiful music, and plan to end your goal planning session early, to enjoy special time together before returning home.

How do we get started?

Begin with individual prayer. Take at least thirty minutes to be alone to spend some time in God's word and to pray for

- 1) A changed, pure heart
- 2) The ability to hear God's voice.

Then, pray together before you begin. Ask the Lord to make this a special time that you'll look forward to repeating each year. Determine to work together and not allow this to become a divisive time.

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Why have a goal setting retreat?

Why set goals in marriage? We're all familiar with the expression "if you don't know where you're going, you're already there." Are you satisfied with your life the way things are, or do you want to continue growing and developing new skills, experiences and knowledge? We are all called to the process of sanctification, being and becoming all that God intended.

What are some guidelines to use in setting goals?

If you cannot clearly write your vision, you certainly will not be clear enough mentally to achieve it. Clearly writing your vision will align your mental, spiritual, physical and emotional strengths toward achievement of your vision and goals.

- 1) **Be specific.** Instead of saying, "I'll grow in Bible knowledge", be specific and say: "I'll spend 30 minutes a day in personal Bible study, 5 days a week." The goal now expresses not only a desire, but also the means to accomplish it.
- 2) **Be realistic.** Your goals should be ambitiously obtainable. If you make them too easy, they will be meaningless. If you make them impossible to obtain, they will be discouraging.
- 3) **Include a way to measure your success.** A good goal will answer the questions of what, how, and when; it's measurable. Instead of saying, "I will de-clutter my entire house," say, "I will clean out one closet or drawer each Tuesday and Saturday until my house is de-cluttered."
- 4) **Think short-term and long-term.** Short-term goals (cleaning one closet a week) allow us to experience success at smaller intervals while working toward long-term (de-cluttering an entire house.)
- 5) **Review periodically and be flexible.** Life can, indeed, get in the way. Here is one person's example of needing to adjust a goal. "Two years ago, I planned to jog 500 miles over the course of a year. That worked out to be 2 miles a day, 5 days a week, 50 weeks out of the year. It was a specific, realistic, measurable, short-term and long-term goal. I was well on my way to achieving that goal when I hurt my knee. Did I quit? No. I wanted to stay in shape, so I learned to be content walking. I had to become flexible, which allowed me to stay on course, and ultimately contributed to my healing; walking gave my injured knee a chance to recover. After my knee healed, I started running again."

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Regular review allows us to stay on course, track our progress, and adjust course as necessary. Plan to review your goals monthly or quarterly. Ask yourself these questions:

How am I doing? Am I still on course?

Which goals am I encouraged about?

Which are frustrating me? Can I be more flexible?

Have circumstances changed since I set this goal?

Is my goal realistic? Specific? Measurable?

Is this the right season of life to work on this?

Have I prayed about this goal?

Another suggestion for staying on track and keeping communication lines open with your mate is to plan a time to have a **"Team Meeting."** Sunday afternoons are usually a relaxing time to have a coffee and pull out your calendars to review activities and commitments you are obligated to cover the next week. It is also a good time to pencil in things you will do this week to work towards you goals. Your team meeting time should be a strong commitment to yourself to meet regularly without interruption. Over time, this can help set a positive rhythm within your marriage, and be a time you both look forward to enjoying each week. During your team meeting, don't miss the opportunity to pray together over what is on your calendar and on your heart.

Now you're ready!

Well, almost ready. Your goals are just that: your goals. However, may we ask you to consider implementing these two things into your lives?

- 1) **Consider Journaling.** This should not be another thing on your "to do" list, but rather an activity that quiets and stills your heart. Your journal should reflect and interpret your interior life. What is happening in your life and what is the Lord teaching you through it? What are your prayer requests, and what prayers have been answered in your life? Try journaling a few times a week to stay in touch with your heart and to guard against becoming out of touch with what's going on in your life.

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- 2) **Discuss ways you can reduce noise in your life and disconnect from the Internet and technology.** Our homes should be a refuge from the world, a place where we can freely set boundaries and avoid things like mindlessly watching television programs that send out all the wrong messages and create false desires in your heart. Another way to reduce the noise in your life is to choose music that soothes your soul and brings life to your spirit and listen to it regularly.
- 3) And last, but not least, after establishing, and when you reach your goals, take time to **celebrate your victories!** Smell the roses, enjoy the wonderful feelings that accompany hard work that has led to accomplishment and success.

Thank the Lord, and offer Him praise for providing the opportunity for you to grow and develop into the person He intended you to be all along.

Suggested Categories for Goal Setting Work

Spiritual LIFE: How will I deal with my relationship with God?

List goals relating to your commitment to serving God, your family, and others through your time, talents and dedication.

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
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Personal & Intellectual LIFE: How will I protect, sharpen, and take care of myself?

List goals relating to character development, intellectual growth and practical living. Ask yourself what books you want to read this year, or what you will do with your spare time instead of watching so much television? *Consider penciling in on your calendar two or three times during the year that you will take a "personal" retreat to evaluate your personal goals.*

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
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Marriage LIFE: How will we enhance our marriage relationship?

When will you have a date night? (Strongly commit to one night a week when the two of you will spend time together doing something you both enjoy.) Plan organized times for talking, for intimacy, and list related get-a-ways on your calendar.

1.

2.

3.

Financial LIFE: How will I manage all of my financial resources?

What will we support above and beyond our tithe and offering? How will we use our all of financial resources to honor God? List goals relating to income growth, savings, investments, retirement, and budget planning.

1.

2.

3.

Vocational LIFE: How will I treat my employer, co-workers, and do my work?

List goals relating to, work attitude, skill set development, additional education, and future ambitions. Others?

1.

2.

3.

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Physical LIFE: How will I exercise and keep my body healthy?

List goals relating to exercise, diet and your overall health and well being. Be specific about what you will do. Answer these and other questions: Where? When? How long?

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
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Relational LIFE: How will I deal with my family, friends, and other relationships?

List goals relating to maintaining your spouse, children, additional family, circle of friends, and goals to enrich existing relationships. List friends and families with whom you are committed to spending time this year. What new friendships do you feel led to cultivate? Do you have friends who mentor you, and are you involved in mentoring younger couples?

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
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Domestic & Recreational LIFE: How will I rest, recreate, and manage my spare time?

List goals relating to using time wisely for hobbies, travel, outside interests, household improvements, and general home maintenance.

- 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.
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Worksheet for Planned Times to Connect

- What activities do you and your spouse do together on a regular basis, that creates a rhythm or cadence in your relationship?
- Do you have a date night? Have you planned projects to complete together?
- Do you have a sexy night? Planned church activities? Social commitments? Intellectual endeavors? Travel plans?

List your current practice / activity

Daily

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Weekly

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Monthly

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Only occasionally

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What can you add that will create or strengthen the rhythm or predictability of events in your married life?

Daily

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Weekly

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Monthly

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Occasionally

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What activities can you do with your spouse to strengthen your relationship with God?
(Consider prayer, fellowship with other believers, service to others, evangelism, Bible study)

Daily

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Weekly

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Monthly

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Occasionally

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Team Meeting

Determine before you begin that this will be a time to connect, to intentionally minimize all possible interruptions, and not the time to raise issues that you know will cause dissension and strife.

A planned WEEKLY “Team Meeting” is a suggested way to keep communication open with your mate and work toward staying focused on your relationship. Sunday afternoons are usually a relaxing time to have a coffee and pull out your calendars to review activities and commitments you are obligated to cover the next week. It is also a good time to pencil in things you will do this week to work towards you goals. Your team meeting time should be a strong commitment to yourself to meet regularly without interruption. Over time, this can help set a positive rhythm within your marriage, and be a time you both look forward to enjoying each week. During your team meeting, don’t miss the opportunity to pray together over what is on your calendar and on your heart.

Suggestions:

Review calendars and commitments for the following week

Share personal prayer requests and family prayer requests (consider creating a prayer box in which to place written requests)

Discuss plans for date night, sexy night, travel, social commitments, budgets, projects, etc.

Other items specific to you and your family