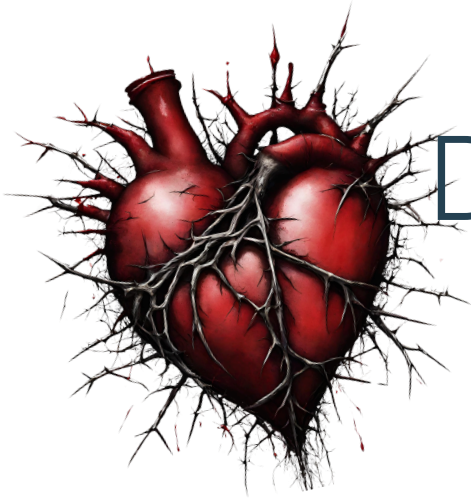


*The* NOBLE  
MARRIAGE




# Discovering *Your* Thorns

1. Begin by taking a moment to pray, seeking the Holy Spirit's guidance and revelation of Truth. Trust in the promise of James 1:5, which says, "If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you."
2. Reflect on a specific instance in your life when you experienced conflict, tension, or disharmony that significantly impacted your perspective.
3. Consider both recent circumstances and the broader timeline of your life to gain a comprehensive understanding.
4. Explore the thorns or triggers that tend to emerge during conflicts. These are the specific aspects or circumstances that provoke intense reactions within you.
5. Identify the feelings you typically experience when these triggers are activated. Check all that apply from the list below.
6. Finally, mark your top 5 feelings with a star (\*), which have the most significant impact on you during conflicts.
7. **Keep this worksheet accessible throughout your course, as you will need it for various exercises and reflections.**

# The NOBLE MARRIAGE

✓	THORNS	"As a result of conflict, tension or disharmony, I'm concerned..."
	Abandoned	People will ultimately leave me and I will be alone.
	Alone	I will be by myself or on my own; I will be without help or assistance: I will be lonely and isolated.
	Betrayed	People are disloyal or unfaithful; my spouse or others has given up on the relationship; people share or reveal private information with others about me.
	Controlled	I will be dominated; I will be made to submit; What others "say" goes; I will be treated like a child or others act like my parent.
	Deceived	My relationships will lack truth, honesty or trustworthiness; Truth will be perverted in order to cheat or defraud me; I will be misled or given false appearances.
	Defective	Something is wrong with me; I'm the problem; I am broken and unlovable.
	Disappointment	I will let others down; I will disappoint people in my life; Others will be disillusioned by me.
	Disconnected	I become emotionally detached or separated; There are walls or barriers between my relationships.
	Disrespected	I will be treated rudely; My thoughts and opinions will be disregarded; Others do not respect or admire me; People have a low opinion of me.
	Failure	I am not successful as a person; I will fall short in my relationships; I won't make the grade.
	Helpless/Powerless	I am unable to do anything to change others or my situation; I am at the end of my power, resources, capacity, or ability to get what I want; Things are unmanageable and beyond my control.
	Humiliated	I will be shamed, degraded and embarrassed; My dignity and self-respect are attacked; I will be made the fool.

# The NOBLE MARRIAGE

	<b>THORNS</b>	<b>"As a result of conflict, tension or disharmony, I'm concerned..."</b>
	Ignored	People do not pay attention to me; I feel neglected and invisible.
	Inadequate	Others are more competent than me; I am incapable and ineffective.
	Inferior	Everyone else is better than I am; I am less valuable or important than others.
	Insignificant	I don't matter in relationships; I will be of no consequence to others; I am immaterial, not worth mentioning, trivial in the eyes of others.
	Intimacy	I am afraid of opening up emotionally to others; I will be hurt if I allow loved ones past my "walls;" It is uncomfortable to open up the deepest, most essential parts of who I am.
	Invalidated	Who I am, what I think, what I do, or how I feel doesn't matter.
	Judged	I am always being unfairly criticized or misjudged; People form faulty or negative opinions about me; I am always being evaluated.
	Misportrayed	I will be portrayed inaccurately; I am described in a negative or untrue manner; Others paint a wrong picture of me.
	Misunderstood	Others will fail to understand me correctly; He/she will get the wrong idea or impression about me; I will be misperceived or misread.
	Not Good Enough	Nothing I do is ever acceptable, satisfactory or sufficient; There will always be more "hoops" to jump through; I won't measure up to expectations of others or myself.
	Phony	I strongly desire to act in accord with who I say I am, yet, I don't know how to reconcile the contradictions that lie within me; Others will discover those contradictions within me and believe the worst.

# The NOBLE MARRIAGE

✓	THORNS	"As a result of conflict, tension or disharmony, I'm concerned..."
	Rejected	He/She doesn't want to be with me and does not accept me; I will be pushed away and discarded.
	Taken Advantage of	I will be cheated by others; I will feel like a "door mat;" My good will is overlooked.
	Unaware	I do not know what is going on in my relationship with him/her; I do not have the necessary information; I'm in the dark; I'm clueless; Things feel secretive, hidden or undisclosed.
	Unfair	I will be treated unfairly; I will be asked to do things he/she is unwilling to do (double standard); I will be asked to do things that are unreasonable or excessive; I will be treated differently than others.
	Unimportant	I am not important to my loved ones; I am of little or no priority to the people in my life.
	Unknown	I'm afraid to move forward because the outcome is uncertain; If I am not prepared then I won't feel secure.
	Unloved	He/she doesn't love me anymore; he/she has no affection, care or desire for me.
	Unwanted	I am not desirable; people stay in my life out of duty, obligation, or because it's the "right" thing to do.
	Worthless	My value and worth are not recognized; I feel cheapened, less than, or devalued in relationships; I have little or no value to others; I'm not seen as priceless.
	Other	

# The NOBLE MARRIAGE

## 02

What do you do when your thorns get pricked? What are common ways you react when you feel what you indicated above in feelings? Check all that apply, then star your top 5 most important reactions or coping behaviors.

✓	Reactions	Explanation
	Abdicate	I give away or deny my authority and/or responsibility.
	Act-Out	I engage in negative behaviors like drug or alcohol abuse, extra-marital affairs, excessive shopping, or overeating.
	Anger/Rage	I display strong feelings of displeasure or violent and uncontrolled emotions.
	Arrogance	I posture myself as superior, better than, or wiser than others.
	Avoidance	I get involved in activities to avoid that person or certain topics.
	Belittle	I devalue or dishonor someone with words or actions; I use name calling, use insults, ridicule, take potshots, or mock others.
	Blame	I place responsibility on others, not accepting fault; I'm convinced the problem is not of my own.
	Broadcast	I share my problems and concerns with people outside of my relationships.
	Care Take	I regularly take on the burdens of others; I find it hard to rest until everyone around me is provided for; I "over function" by taking on the details, tasks and responsibilities of others.
	Catastrophize	I use dramatic, exaggerated expressions to depict that the relationship is in danger or that it has failed.
	Clinginess	I develop a strong emotional attachment or dependence on others; I hold tight to my relationships.

# The NOBLE MARRIAGE

✓	Reactions	Explanation
	Complain	I readily express unhappiness or make accusations.
	Control	I hold back, restrain, oppress, or dominate others; I "rule over" others; I talk over or prevent others from having a chance to explain their position, opinions or feelings.
	Criticize	I find and verbalize fault in people around me. I bring up what is wrong and focus on negative aspects of others or my relationship.
	Cross-Complain	I often meet others complaints (criticism) with an immediate complaint of my own.
	Defensiveness	Instead of listening, I defend myself by providing an explanation; I make excuses for my actions.
	Demand	I try to force others to do something, usually with implied threat of punishment if they refuse.
	Denial	I refuse to admit or I ignore the truth or reality.
	Dishonesty	I lie about, fail to reveal, give out false impressions, or I falsify my thoughts, feelings, habits, likes, dislikes, personal history, daily activities, or plans for the future.
	Earn it Mode	I try to do more to earn others' love and care.
	Escalate	My emotions spiral out of control; I argue, raise my voice, or fly into a rage.
	Exaggerate	I make overstatements or enlarge my words beyond bounds or the truth: I make statements like: "You always » or "You never".
	Fact Find	I actively seek the facts and details to determine what really happened. I pursue evidence to prove my point.

# The NOBLE MARRIAGE

✓	Reactions	Explanation
	Fix-it Mode	I focus almost exclusively on what is needed to solve or fix the problem.
	Humor	I use humor as a way of not dealing with the issue at hand.
	Independence	I become independent (separate from my relationships) in my attitude, behavior and/or decision-making.
	Innocent Victim	I see my loved ones as an attacking monster and myself as put upon, unfairly accused, mistreated, or unappreciated.
	Invalidate	I discredit others thoughts, feelings, and actions; I give no weight to others opinions and seek to nullify and refute them.
	Isolate	I shut down and go into seclusion or into my "cave".
	Judge	I negatively critique, evaluate, form an opinion, or conclude something about my loved ones.
	Lecture	I sermonize, talk down to, scold, or reprimand others.
	Manipulation	I control, influence, or maneuver my relationships for my own advantage.
	Mind Read	I make assumptions about others private feelings, behaviors, or motives.
	Minimize	I assert that she/he is overreacting to an issue; I intentionally underestimate, downplay, or soft-pedal the issue or how they feel.
	Nag	I badger, pester, or harass others to do something I want.
	Negative Beliefs	I believe he/she is far worse than is really the case; I see him/her in a negative light or attribute negative motives to him or her; I see them through a negative lens.


# The NOBLE MARRIAGE

✓	Reactions	Explanation
	Negative Body Language	My feelings are expressed through non-verbal cues (facial expressions, tone of voice, posture, etc.) that are noticeable to all.
	Pacify	I try to soothe, calm down or placate others; I try to get them to not feel negative emotions.
	Passive-aggressive behavior	I display negative emotions, resentment, and aggression in passive ways, such as procrastination, forgetfulness, and stubbornness.
	Personalize	I make the actions or inactions of others about myself. I interpret comments and actions as critical messages directed at me even if I am not specifically mentioned.
	Pessimism	I become negative, distrustful, cynical and skeptical in my view of him/her or relationship.
	Provoke	I intentionally aggravate, hassle, goad, or irritate others.
	Rationalize	I attempt to make my actions seem reasonable; I try to attribute my behavior to credible motives; I try to provide believable but untrue reasons for my conduct.
	Repeat Myself	I state my own position again and again instead of understanding his/her position.
	Replay	I rewind and replay the argument over and over; I ruminate about what he/she does or doesn't do that frustrates or hurts me.
	Rewrite History	I recast your earlier times together in the relationship in a negative light; My recall of previous disappointments and slights becomes dramatically enhanced.
	Right/Wrong	I argue about who is right and who is wrong; I debate whose position is the correct or right one.



✓	Reactions	Explanation
	Righteous Indignation	I believe that I deserve to be angry, resentful or annoyed with him/her because of what they did.
	Righteousness	I make it a moral issue by arguing about issues of morality or righteousness.
	Sarcasm	I use negative or hostile humor, hurtful words, belittling comments, cutting remarks, or demeaning statements.
	Self-abandon	I desert myself; I neglect me; I take care of everyone except me.
	Self-deprecate	I run yourself down or become very critical of myself.
	Selfishness	I am concerned with me and my interests, feelings, wants, or desires while disregarding or paying little heed to those of others.
	Shut Down	I detach emotionally and close my heart towards him/her; I numb out; I become devoid of emotion.
	Stonewall	I put up walls by and stop responding to him/her; I refuse to share or show any emotion.
	Strike-Out	I lash out in anger, become verbally, or physically aggressive or abusive.
	Stubborn	I will not budge from my position; I become inflexible or persistent.
	Tantrums	I have a fit of bad temper; I become irritable, crabby, or grumpy.
	Vent	I emotionally "vomit", unload, or dump on him/her.
	Withdraw	I pull out of arguments when they become too much; Once I pull out, I rarely if ever revisit the conflict; I get distance, sulk or use the silent treatment.

# The NOBLE MARRIAGE

	Reactions	Explanation
	Withhold	I hold back your affections, feelings, sexual intimacy, or love from my loved ones.
	Yes But...	I start out agreeing (yes) then I end up disagreeing (but).
	Other	

Congratulations on completing this worksheet! Now that you have gained clarity regarding your thorns and reactions, let's move on to the next section. It's time to identify your top 5 thorns and the corresponding top 5 reactions for each thorn. This will further deepen your understanding and provide insights for personal growth.

# INTERNAL VORTEX DISCOVERY

Think of the last time your heart was pricked (big or small) and write the circumstance out below.

Using your thorns & reactions worksheet, what are the top 5 thorns that were pricked and what reaction followed each thorn in the above circumstance?

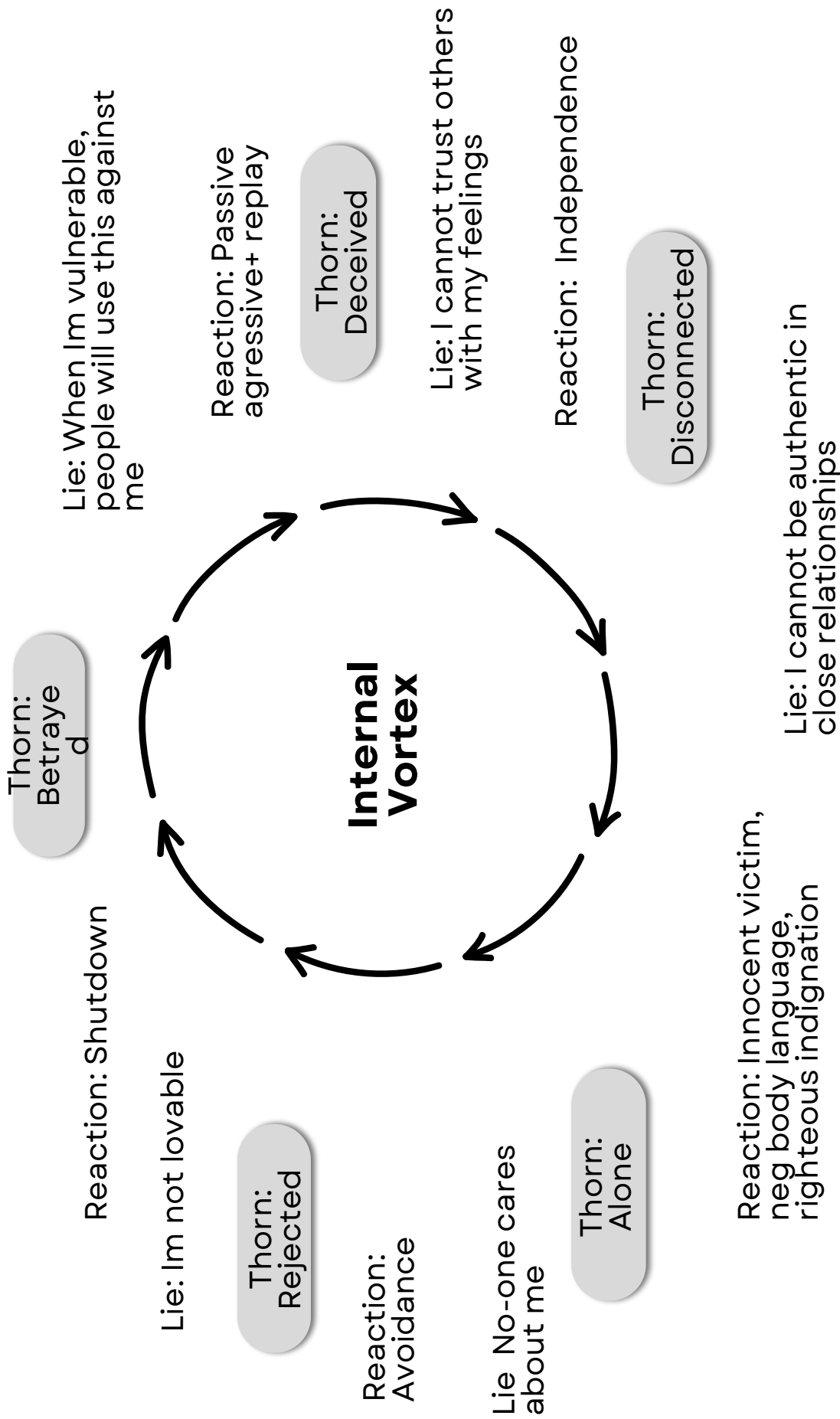
Top 5 Thorns

Reaction To This Thorn

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Reflect on the lies you've believed and agreed with, about yourself, about him/her, or about the relationship for each thorn. Write detailed descriptions below, noting the internal narrative and beliefs that arise in response to each thorn.

# EXAMPLE WORKSHEET



Using this worksheet, fill in the following information for each thorn: the THORN itself, the STORY you tell about that thorn, and your REACTION to the story. Each reaction is a coping mechanism that aims to make you feel better internally, but it actually has the opposite effect, making you feel worse and pricking another thorn. Make sure to include all top 5 thorns and their corresponding reactions in this worksheet.

