

The Marriage Foundation

..Marriage was given to complete Man & Woman.
 ...Companionship is the highest relational priority in life.
 ...We need associations that encourage us in this process.
 ...When we get stuck we should find help.

PARTNERS	ORIGINS
COMMUNICATION	
ROMANCE	PLANNING
ONENESS	

PARTNERS

- ___ ___ Partners learn to trust each other and divide responsibilities, maximizing strengths and minimizing weaknesses.
- ___ ___ Partners learn to recognize, give, and receive valid criticism (differentiated from personal preferences with self-centered motives).
- ___ ___ Partners never run their spouse down in front of others and they are careful to build and maintain mutual respect.
- ___ ___ Partners are very interested in each other's spiritual welfare and truly desire to see their spouse excel and grow in all areas of life.

FAMILY OF ORIGIN

- ___ ___ You do marry your spouse's family system.
- ___ ___ A new system must be allowed to develop, but we are by nature resistant (It takes a decade).
- ___ ___ We cannot afford to be overly critical or blindly accepting of our own or our spouse's family of origin, which could cause us to overreact or avoid helpful insights and make healthy modifications.
- ___ ___ Negative and unhealthy influence must be grown through from myself and my spouse outward as we take care to face our weaknesses and cultivate our strengths.
- ___ ___ We are developing healthy community support relationships.

COMMUNICATION

- ___ ___ Opposites do attract and difficulty in communication is normal.
- ___ ___ Communication patterns and needs often differ.
- ___ ___ Character qualities and personalities are a double-edged sword and greatly impact our ability to communicate.
- ___ ___ To not communicate is the epitome of self-centeredness. We can be so ego-centric that meaningful and satisfying communication is the exception, not the rule. The embittered will not communicate.

THE MARRIAGE FOUNDATION CONTINUED:

ROMANCE

___ ___ Negative or unrealistic pre-conceptions develop dysfunctional shortfalls and expectations for intimacy and sex.

___ ___ Affection must permeate our lifestyle. Physical touch, verbal encouragement, and caring body language are all critical.

Here are several key expressions of romance:

___ ___ He or she is interested in things that are important to me.

___ ___ He or she is a willing participator in the mutual responsibilities of our life together.

___ ___ He or she is physically affectionate and initiates non-sexual contact, offering me affection and emotional support when I need it.

___ ___ We have a satisfying and growing physical relationship, taking care to not let our intimacy be consumed by selfishness, bad habits or disproportionate life demands.

___ ___ Bitterness, feeling sorry for myself, and an out of control temper are in check in our lives together.

PLANNING

___ ___ We know and share our goals, taking the time to check signals and make plans.

___ ___ We consult and communicate on important decisions that we make.

___ ___ We actively plan activities and experiences that maximize both of our strengths and minimize our weaknesses.

___ ___ We have a system and "appointed times" for recording our memories and reflecting upon our achievement milestones.

ONENESS

___ ___ I embrace the concept of independent responsibility for my personal spiritual welfare.

___ ___ I contribute to experiencing a living, spiritual, mutual exchange.

___ ___ We are facing and negotiating the difficulties of living by one another's past and present decisions/challenges.

___ ___ The fear factor in angry issues (broken trust and respect) is under control in our lives.

___ ___ The arrogance factor in angry issues (lack of compassionate love) is under control in our lives.

Here are some helpful thoughts on developing your marriage as a partnership.

What are your individual goals for your marriage? In what ways do they overlap?

How would you rate your mutual respect for one another?

How would you rate your shared compassion for one another?

The overall focus of your marriage:

- ___ Build it on **Empathy**...this is the ability to put yourself in your spouse's place and to truly search after his or her best interests.
- ___ Enemies of empathy: A driving or intolerant personality, an uninvolved or aloof partner, and a non-reflective or overly busy lifestyle.
- ___ Build it on **Maturity**...this is the learned wisdom of acting responsibly and unselfishly toward your spouse.
- ___ Enemies of maturity: Unrealistic views of life and marriage, uncontrolled anger or temper, uncontrolled lust or jealousy, and baggage from my family of origin.
- ___ Build it on **Dignity**...dignity is the ability to be gracious, thoughtful, and measured about our responses to life's challenges.
- ___ Enemies of dignity: An unrestrained tongue, wandering affections, or a scoffing heart.

An overall principled understanding on a marriage partnership includes:

What are the attractive qualities in any man or woman?

How is a spouse to deal with what he or she feels is unacceptable in their spouse?

What is the root of most women's anger? Most men's anger?

How are respect and trust established in the arena of a marriage relationship?

What does it mean to "live with your spouse in an understanding way?"

How do we "give honor" to someone as a partner in life?
