

Couples' Foundations Workbook

Lesson 1: Built to Last

Do you agree that marriage is “more than a piece of paper”? Why or why not?

Considering your relationship as a two-way contract, what do you commit to do in order to keep it strong?

What do you expect your partner to do?

Lesson 2: Smart Dating: Finding the Right One

How does early physical involvement create a “counterfeit intimacy”?

How can it make you feel like you're more in love than you may actually be?

What does it take to actually know somebody? How can you determine if they are trustworthy?

Lesson 3: Be Okay to Be on Your Own

Why is integrity arguably the sexiest personality trait?

Do you have to be similar to be compatible? In what areas do you want to be the same as your partner?

Homework:

In order to strengthen integrity in your relationship, pick one way that you can be a better person and tell your partner what you are going to do, specifically, this week to improve in that area. Have your partner do the same for you.

Your commitment to your partner:

Your partner's commitment to you:

For example, you might commit to not tell "little white lies" and to correct yourself immediately if you do. Or you might commit to work on controlling your temper, saying "I'm sorry" for misbehavior, spending more time with family, or something else that you decide.

Lesson 4 : Nurture Your Relationship

Since marriage is like a garden, what will you do to give yours regular sunlight and water (love and affection)?

What thorns do you simply need to tolerate?

What weeds need to be pulled?

How can you increase the ratio of positive to negative interactions in your relationship?

Lesson 5: Speaking Your Partner's Language

Of Dr. Gary Chapman's 5 Love Languages® (words of affirmation, acts of service, receiving gifts, quality time, and physical touch) which one do you feel is your primary?

Which one do you feel is your partner's?

(If you wish, visit www.5lovelanguages.com and take the brief assessment quiz.)

Why is it important to treat your partner how they want to be treated instead of how you'd like to be treated?

Lesson 6 : Is Anger the Problem?

How can you validate emotions while fixing the problem?

Think of the last time that you were angry. What vulnerable emotion(s) did you feel underneath the anger?

Homework:

Pick one of these and commit to working on it this week:

1. calm down when angry
2. try to see your partner's perspective
3. express your vulnerable emotion instead of your anger

Lesson 7: Pride vs. Humility

Is there a conflict situation that keeps coming up in your marriage? What's your part in that conflict? What will you change?

Think of something you want your partner to improve. How might you be making it harder for them to change?

Lesson 8: Staying Best Friends

What can your partner do to increase your comfort and lighten your load?

What can you do for them?

What are some interests that you and your partner share? If you can't think of any, what options could you explore?

Lesson 9: Supporting One Another

What is the difference between forgiveness and trust?

What are some of your partner's dreams?

How can you support them in pursuing these?

What are your dreams?

How can your partner support you?

Homework:

Ask your partner for suggestions of things that you can do to lighten their load or support their dreams. Pick one of their suggestions and commit to doing that this week. Have your partner do the same.

What's your commitment to your partner?

What's your partner's commitment to you?

Lesson 10: Kids

How could trying to control a person's behavior damage a relationship?

How does that extend to your relationship with your children?

How can you honor your child's free will while teaching them responsibility?

Why is it important to apologize to your children?

Lesson 11: Money & Sex

How, specifically, can you and your partner get on the same page regarding finances?

What can you and your partner do to increase connection, comfort, and trust in physical intimacy?

Regarding friendships outside of your marriage, what behaviors do you consider to be inappropriate?

What would your partner consider to be inappropriate?

Lesson 12: Endurance: Never-ending Honeymoon

What things would you and your partner discuss as part of a weekly sit-down meeting?

In what areas does your partner give you strength?

How do you strengthen him or her?

Homework:

Discuss with your partner what you consider to be healthy boundaries for non-marital friendships, as well as what is inappropriate. Have them do the same. Commit to specific boundaries or, if you can't come to an agreement, calmly defer the issue until your next counseling or coaching session and discuss it with your therapist or coach.