



CONFERENCE WORKBOOK

Newhope Marriage Conference

“Top Ten Habits”

Rodney and Kate Wardwell

1. Learn to _____

2. _____ Each _____

3. Give your spouse permission to _____ and _____

Ephesians 4:2 says, *“Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.”*

4. Protect Your _____ Day/Night

5. Make sure your _____ isn't neglected

6. Prefer your _____ over your own _____

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.” – Philippians 2:3

7. _____ together

8. _____ with a Plan

9. Agree on and set _____

10. Have _____ together!

SESSION ONE:

MARITAL INTIMACY: HOW ARE WE DOING?



THE FIRST HUMAN CRISIS

HIGHLIGHTS

Here are the key points to remember from the first human crisis. In Genesis 2, we encounter Adam's dilemma. Before there was sin in the world, Adam had everything, but everything was not enough. He lived in a **perfect environment, possessed everything**, and had an **exalted position**. Adam was also in **perfect relationship with God**. Yet, God said, "It is **NOT GOOD** for you to **BE ALONE**." (Genesis 2:18a) The word translated as "alone" means to be separated or disconnected. We can have everything and everything will not be good enough. Have you ever experienced the "not good" of being disconnected from God or in your relationships with meaningful others? Do you sometimes value status and resources over relationships? In what areas of your life do you feel alone?

Not only do we encounter Adam's dilemma, but we also witness God's declaration. God declares, "I will make a helpmate..." (Genesis 2:18) God created a helpmate to minister to Adam. And, this helpmate came through the divine relationship of marriage. (Genesis 2:24) The Scriptures teach that there are three divinely ordained human relationships through which He ministers to remove aloneness and meet our intimacy needs: **marriage** (Genesis 2:24); **family** (Genesis 4:1; Psalm 127); and the **church** (Matthew 16:18). Do you sometimes resist admitting that you need others? Why? Do you sometimes resist allowing others to need you? Why?

In addition to Adam's dilemma and God's declaration, we have the issue of God's design. God has created you and me such that we need both an intimate relationship with Him AND meaningful relationships with others. Read I Corinthians 12: 12-21. Intimate relationships remove aloneness. There are three biblical words that are often translated as "intimacy." The first is "**to know**" (Jeremiah 1:5) - an intimate relationship involves a deep knowing of the other person. Another is "**to disclose**" (Proverbs 3:32) - an intimate relationship involves disclosing transparently who we are to the other person. The third word means "**caring involvement**" (Psalm 139:3) - this reflects a motive for intimacy - an active caring for and engaging with the other.

Intimacy is deep mutual knowing for the purpose of caring involvement. How might this definition of intimacy apply to your relationship with God? How would it apply to your relationship with your spouse? How would it apply with regard to your children or with other friends or colleagues? It may be helpful to take inventory of the relational intimacy in your life at this time.

Hebrew Words for Intimacy

YADA - to know; intimate knowledge of another person

"Before I formed you in the womb, I knew you." (Jeremiah 1:5)

"O Lord... You know me." (Psalm 139:1)

Intimacy involves deeply knowing someone.

SOD - to reveal; vulnerable disclosure

"God is intimate with the upright." (Proverbs 3:32)

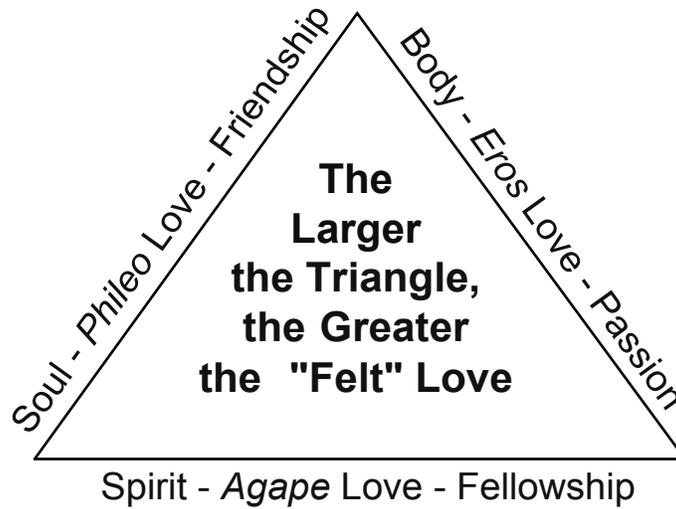
Intimacy requires allowing someone to know you.

SAKAN - to be of use, service or profit; caring involvement

"You are intimately acquainted with all my ways." (Psalm 139:3)

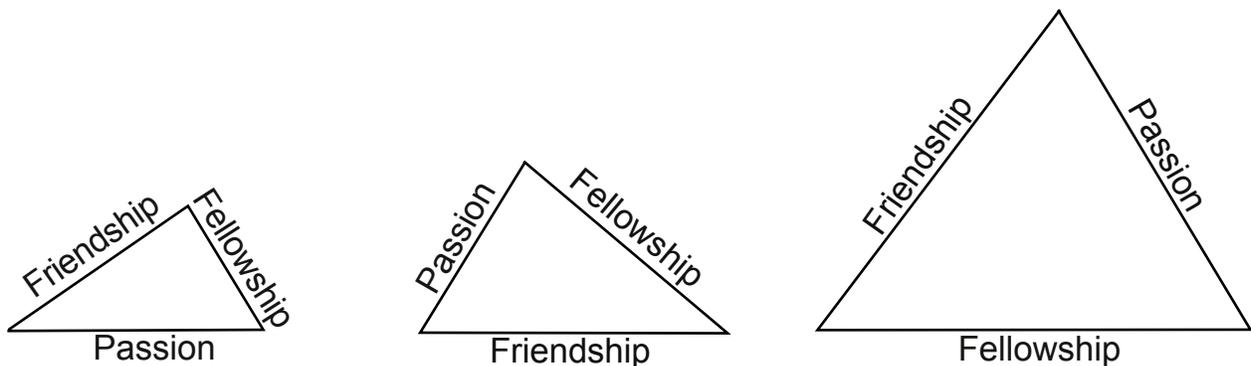
Intimacy must be motivated by the desire to be caringly involved with someone.

Theoretically Ideal Intimacy



Example Intimacy History

Notice that the area of the triangle increases over time. This represents an increase in "felt" love.



1. Pre-marriage

Passion is foundational; spiritual fellowship is of relatively little importance.

2. Married Five Years

Friendship is foundational; increasing interest in spiritual fellowship.

3. Married Ten Years

Spiritual fellowship is foundational and intimacy is increasing in all three areas.

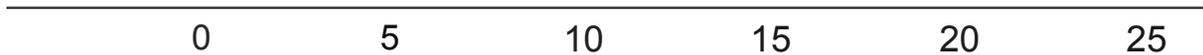
Marriage Intimacy Inventory

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. My spouse supports and encourages my personal spiritual growth.	1	2	3	4	5
2. We each give our undivided attention to the other when he or she is talking.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My spouse is attentive and sensitive to my needs in the area of sexual foreplay. We	1	2	3	4	5
4. practice honest confession followed by genuine forgiveness when one of us hurts the other.	1	2	3	4	5
5. My spouse values my feelings and provides understanding reassurance when I share them.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I am very comfortable communicating my sexual desires and preferences to my spouse.	1	2	3	4	5
7. We often share our long-range hopes and dreams with one another, even those that might seem silly.	1	2	3	4	5
8. My spouse is very good at expressing appreciation and verbalizing love.	1	2	3	4	5
9. We make it a priority to frequently have romantic evenings out together.	1	2	3	4	5
10. We frequently recount the good times and blessings that we have shared.	1	2	3	4	5
11. We share together in strong emotions such as joy and sorrow.	1	2	3	4	5
12. I am very satisfied with my spouse's sensitivity in meeting my sexual needs.	1	2	3	4	5
13. My spouse and I agree on most issues concerning values and beliefs.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I feel free to share my needs and desires with my spouse.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am satisfied with the frequency with which my spouse initiates sexual intimacy.	1	2	3	4	5

Marriage Intimacy Inventory: Interpreting Your Score

- Add up your responses to Questions #1, #4, #7, #10, and #13 and chart your score on the line below:

Spiritual Intimacy Scale:



- Add up your responses to Questions #2, #5, #8, #11, and #14 and chart your score on the line below:

Friendship Intimacy Scale:



- Add up your responses to Questions #3, #6, #9, #12, and #15 and chart your score on the line below:

Physical Intimacy Scale:



Did this inventory provide you with any new insights or provoke any new questions? If so, record these here:

Marriage "Staff Meetings"

Developing and maintaining marital intimacy requires a consistent investment of quality time and sharing. The external pressures of work, children's activities, and managing a household should not be allowed to undermine marital intimacy. We must consistently and cooperatively manage family events before they "manage" us!

How is this to be done? We recommend setting aside a minimum of one hour a week to talk together about any important events, issues, and emotions that need to be addressed. More specifically, you should be sure to do the following:

- **Schedule a time.** Do not leave your meeting times to chance. Establish a consistent weekly meeting time or, if it is necessary for the time to vary from week to week, routinely schedule your meeting time for the coming week every Sunday evening.
- **Prioritize the time.** Make your weekly meeting time as inviolate as possible. Consistency is crucial, and prioritizing time together encourages increased emotional closeness.
- **Protect the time.** Make every effort to minimize interruptions and distractions by finding a quiet meeting place away from other people and turning off your cell phones.

Some couples might wonder, "What in the world would we talk about for an hour a week?" A typical agenda for a marriage staff meeting could include any or all of the following:

1. **Coordinating calendars for the coming week.** Who is working late? Which child is going where, and when? What social activities have been planned? (Note: It is important to discuss time commitments that affect the entire family and come to an agreement before accepting social invitations.) In addition to considering job, school, and church-related activities, be sure to plan dates as a couple and family outings. You may even find it helpful to occasionally schedule times for lovemaking.

2. **Setting goals and monitoring your progress toward them.** You should develop written annual goals for your marriage and family and break them down into quarterly or monthly target dates. Important goal-setting areas to consider include finances, diet, exercise, education, spiritual growth, vacations, hobbies, and the cultivation of new friendships.
3. **Discussing parenting issues.** It is important to be united on major parenting decisions so that the children cannot "divide and conquer." Spend time in your staff meeting discussing any ongoing behavioral or attitude problems, agreeing on discipline strategies, dividing up parenting responsibilities for the coming week, and making plans for family outings and for special activities that you want to share with each child individually.
4. **Sharing and listening.** One or both of you may just need to talk about your feelings, needs, hopes, desires, dreams, fears, concerns, and/or stresses. Express yourself lovingly, being careful to avoid criticizing or blaming your spouse and addressing any difficult issues in a positive way. Be sure to give each other undivided attention, eye contact, comforting touch, and expressions of empathy and support. Finally, make a special effort to consistently express your appreciation to your spouse, both for what he or she does and (more importantly) for who he or she is.

Marriage Staff Meeting: Session 1

Set aside at least one hour sometime before the next class session. After completing any necessary planning, calendar coordination, and discussion, do the following:

1. Express to one another how much you appreciate each other's willingness to work on deepening your marital intimacy.
2. Discuss the results of the **Marriage Intimacy Inventory** you each completed in class. Take turns sharing insights and asking questions, in order that you might both be understood and understand your spouse in turn.
3. After processing your inventories together, take turns sharing specific areas in each dimension of intimacy in which you desire to make constructive changes in order to increase your marital intimacy.

For example:

"As I look over your responses in the area of spiritual intimacy, I see that I do not encourage you enough spiritually. I would really like to learn how to change that."

"I see that I am probably not expressing to you enough just how much I appreciate you and why. I really want to do better at that."

"I can see that I need to give you more of my undivided attention. Would that be helpful to you?"

4. End your staff meeting by holding hands and thanking each other for having the courage to be open and vulnerable in your responses. Then pray together that you might both be able to make the necessary changes that you identified.

SESSION TWO:

**WHAT DO WE REALLY
NEED FROM EACH OTHER?**



NEEDS AND OBSTACLES HIGHLIGHTS

Look up Philippians 4:19. The Apostle Paul seems convinced that God has both the concern and the resources to meet all his needs. God is a needs-meeting God. As human beings, we have an ongoing need for physical nourishment. God in His sovereignty chose to meet those needs through food and water. We also have an ongoing need for rest to restore our strength. Again, God in His sovereignty chose to meet our need for physical restoration through the process of nightly sleep and rest from labor. When it comes to relational/intimacy needs, we have an ongoing need for attention, affection, security, comfort, approval, acceptance, etc. Maturity teaches us to humbly admit our needs and exercise faith in God's provision. In reality, that is how we experience God's love. We need acceptance and He gives it (see Romans 15:7); we need forgiveness and He gives it (see I John 1 :9); we need comfort and He gives it (see II Corinthians 1:3,4).

If we are to enjoy the relational intimacy that God intends, we must first understand our own key needs and how God is pleased to meet them through our walk with Him, and oftentimes, through our spouses and others. Generally speaking, there are two or three relational needs that are higher priority to us than the others. This is often because those particular needs may not have been fully met during our growing up years. Additionally, sometimes our needs are shaped by our life circumstances and situations. To help you identify your priority needs, we have prepared the list of the top ten relational needs and their definitions. Express to your partner that by God's grace you will accept God's provision for your relational needs in part through him or her and that you desire to be God's channel for ministering to your partner's needs as well. Ask your partner how you can best meet each of his/her needs. God wants to give you the freedom through love to serve your partner (Galatians 5:13).

There are obstacles to relational intimacy. One of these is selfishness (or self-centeredness), a preoccupation with securing what we need that leads to "taking" from others through manipulation, demands, and conditional love. Such "taking" will never satisfy what God has created us to freely receive. Another obstacle is prideful self-reliance (self-sufficiency). If we persist in such self-reliance, God will resist us and we will miss out on the flow of His grace (James 4:6). Finally, there is the obstacle of self-condemnation that suggests, "I know I have needs, but I feel guilty because I do," questioning one's worth or questioning that it is wrong to feel lonely, as though a person should be spiritually mature enough to be immune to such situations.

Which of these obstacles to relational intimacy might you most often experience or demonstrate? How has it hindered the depth of your relationship with your spouse in the past? How has it hindered or limited the depth of your relationship with your friends or co-workers? How might it have robbed you of a deeper relationship with God?

Top Ten Relational Needs Assessment

Instructions: Read the definitions below and select the three needs that you believe are most important to you by marking the boxes in the column on the left. Then select three that you believe are most important to your spouse at this time by marking the boxes in the column on the right.

<u>You</u>		<u>Your Spouse</u>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Acceptance: Receiving others willingly and unconditionally (even when their behavior has been imperfect) and loving them in spite of any differences that may exist between you (Romans 15:7).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Affection: Expressing care and closeness through physical touch and through words such as "I love you" or "I care about you" (Romans 16:16; Mark 10:16).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Appreciation: Expressing thanks, praise, or commendation, particularly in recognition of someone's accomplishments or efforts (1 Corinthians 11:2).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Approval (Blessing): Building up or affirming another person, particularly for who they <i>are</i> (as opposed to what they <i>do</i>); affirming both the fact and the importance of our relationship with another person (Ephesians 4:29).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Attention: Conveying appropriate interest, concern, and care; taking notice of others and making an effort to enter into their respective worlds (1 Corinthians 12:25 NASB).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Comfort: Caringly responding to a hurting person through words, actions, emotional responses, and physical touch; hurting with and for others in the midst of their grief or pain (Romans 12:15 NASB; Matthew 5:4; 2 Corinthians 1:3-4).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Encouragement: Urging others to persist and persevere in their efforts to attain their goals; stimulating others toward love and good deeds (1 Thessalonians 5:11; Hebrews 10:24).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Respect: Valuing one another highly, treating one another as important, and honoring one another with our words and actions (Romans 12:10; 1 Peter 2:17).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Security (Peace): Establishing and maintaining harmony in our relationships and providing freedom from fear or threat of harm through expressions of vulnerability, deepening of trust, and the successful resolution of conflict (Romans 12:16, 18).	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Support: Coming alongside others and providing gentle, appropriate assistance with a problem or struggle (Galatians 6:2).	<input type="checkbox"/>

Top Ten Relational Needs Questionnaire

Instructions: Respond to these questions by placing the appropriate number beside each item.

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
-2	-1	0	+1	+2

- ___ 1. It is important to me that people receive me for who I am, even if I am a little different.
- ___ 2. It is important to me that my finances be in order.
- ___ 3. I sometimes become "weary in well doing."
- ___ 4. It is vital to me that others ask me my opinion.
- ___ 5. It is important to me that I receive hugs and warm embraces.
- ___ 6. I feel good when someone "enters into my world."
- ___ 7. It is important to me to know where I stand with those who have authority over me.
- ___ 8. I am blessed when someone notices that I need help and offers to get involved.
- ___ 9. When I feel overwhelmed, I want someone to come alongside me and bear my burden.
- ___ 10. I feel blessed when someone recognizes and shows concern for how I am feeling.
- ___ 11. I like to feel that I am valuable and important to others.
- ___ 12. It is important to me to express my thoughts and feelings to those around me.
- ___ 13. It means a lot to me when loved ones say, "I love you."
- ___ 14. I resist being seen only as a part of a large group - my individuality is important to me.
- ___ 15. I am blessed when a friend calls to listen and encourage me.
- ___ 16. It is important to me that people acknowledge me not just for what I do, but also for who I am.
- ___ 17. I feel best when my world is orderly and somewhat predictable.
- ___ 18. When I have worked hard on something, I am pleased when others express gratitude.
- ___ 19. When I fail, it is important that others reassure me that I am still loved.
- ___ 20. It is encouraging to me when others notice my effort or accomplishments.
- ___ 21. I sometimes feel overwhelmed with all I have to do.
- ___ 22. I want to be treated with kindness and equality by all regardless of my race, gender, looks, or status.

- ___ 23. I like to be greeted with a handshake or other appropriate friendly touch.
- ___ 24. I like it when someone wants to spend time with me.
- ___ 25. I am blessed when a superior says, "Good Job."
- ___ 26. It is important that someone expresses care for me after I have had a hard day.
- ___ 27. When facing something difficult, I appreciate having other people's input and assistance.
- ___ 28. Written notes and calls expressing sympathy after a serious loss or difficulty are meaningful to me.
- ___ 29. I feel good when someone close to me expresses satisfaction with me.
- ___ 30. I am blessed when someone spends time doing something with me that I really enjoy, even if it is not one of their favorite activities.
- ___ 31. I am a person who likes caring touch.
- ___ 32. When a decision is going to affect me, it is important that I be involved in the decision-making process.
- ___ 33. I am blessed when someone shows interest in what I am working on.
- ___ 34. I appreciate trophies, plaques, or special gifts as permanent reminders of something that I have done.
- ___ 35. I sometimes worry about the future.
- ___ 36. When I am introduced into a new environment, I typically search for a group with which I can connect.
- ___ 37. The thought of change produces anxiety for me.
- ___ 38. It bothers me when people are prejudiced against someone just because they dress or act differently.
- ___ 39. I want my friends and loved ones to be there for me "through thick and thin."
- ___ 40. I enjoy receiving written notes and other specific expressions of gratitude.
- ___ 41. Knowing that someone is praying for me is meaningful to me.
- ___ 42. I am bothered by people who are controlling.
- ___ 43. I am blessed when I receive unmerited, spontaneous expressions of love.
- ___ 44. I am pleased when someone listens carefully to me.
- ___ 45. I am blessed when people commend me for a godly characteristic that I exhibit.
- ___ 46. I typically do not want to be alone when experiencing hurt and trouble.
- ___ 47. I do not enjoy undertaking a project by myself; I prefer to have a partner.
- ___ 48. It is important for me to feel like I am a part of the group.
- ___ 49. I appreciate it when someone tries to understand me and shows me loving concern.
- ___ 50. I would rather work with a team of people than by myself.

Top Ten Relational Needs Questionnaire: Scoring

1. Add up your responses to the items related to the need for Acceptance.

1 _____
19 _____
36 _____
38 _____
48 _____
Total _____

2. Add up your responses to the items related to the need for Affection.

5 _____
13 _____
23 _____
31 _____
43 _____
Total _____

3. Add up your responses to the items related to the need for Appreciation.

18 _____
20 _____
25 _____
34 _____
40 _____
Total _____

4. Add up your responses to the items related to the need for Approval.

7 _____
11 _____
16 _____
29 _____
45 _____
Total _____

5. Add up your responses to the items related to the need for Attention.

6 _____
12 _____
24 _____
30 _____
44 _____
Total _____

6. Add up your responses to the items related to the need for Comfort.

10 _____

26 _____

28 _____

46 _____

49 _____

Total _____

7. Add up your responses to the items related to the need for Encouragement.

3 _____

15 _____

21 _____

33 _____

41 _____

Total _____

8. Add up your responses to the items related to the need for Respect.

4 _____

14 _____

22 _____

32 _____

42 _____

Total _____

9. Add up your responses to the items related to the need for Security.

2 _____

17 _____

35 _____

37 _____

39 _____

Total _____

10. Add up your responses to the items related to the need for Support.

8 _____

9 _____

27 _____

47 _____

50 _____

Total _____

Top Ten Relational Needs Questionnaire: For Reflection and Discussion

1. On which three needs did you score highest? What were these scores?

2. On which three needs did you score lowest? What were these scores?

3. On which three needs did your spouse score highest? What were these scores?

4. On which three needs did your spouse score lowest? What were these scores?

5. What might be some of the implications of your scores relative to your spouse's scores?

Mom

Dad

Acceptance

Affection

Appreciation

Approval

Attention

Comfort

Encouragement

Respect

Security

Support

Figure 3

Selecting the Right Marital "Strokes"

Marital therapists often ask couples to focus on how often they give each other positive marital "strokes" (smiles, hugs, compliments) because a couple's "stroking" pattern significantly affects the happiness of their marriage. Suppose that a husband smiles and says to his wife, "You look great." He then gives her a little hug and adds, "I love you." A few minutes later, he says, "By the way, thank you for picking up my shirts from the cleaners." His statements, "You look great" and "I love you" are *unconditional* strokes that he *is* giving his wife just for *being*. His comment, "Thank you for picking up my shirts" is a *conditional* stroke he gives his wife for *doing*. Note also that he gave her three *verbal* strokes ("You look great," "I love you," and "Thank you") and two *physical* strokes (the smile and the hug).

Unfortunately, many people do not know whether their spouses prefer physical strokes, conditional verbal strokes, or unconditional verbal strokes. To help you gain insight concerning the types of strokes that you and your spouse prefer, check the items below that seem to appeal to your spouse in the first column, and those that appeal to you in the second column. *Check no more than four items in each column.*

Your spouse	Yourself	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Holding hands
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Going for a walk
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Being given an unexpected hug
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Finding a love note
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Being given a surprise gift
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Being served a favorite meal
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Being told "I love you"
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Being given help with the kids
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Being approached sexually
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Finding that the house has been cleaned
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Seeing the lawn looking nice
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Receiving compliments on physical appearance
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Taking a shower together
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Going on a surprise date
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Getting a back rub or massage
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Having dinner out together
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Being praised for achievements
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Having a quiet conversation

Marriage Staff Meeting: Session 2

Set aside at least one hour sometime before the next class session. After completing any necessary planning, calendar coordination, and discussion, do the following:

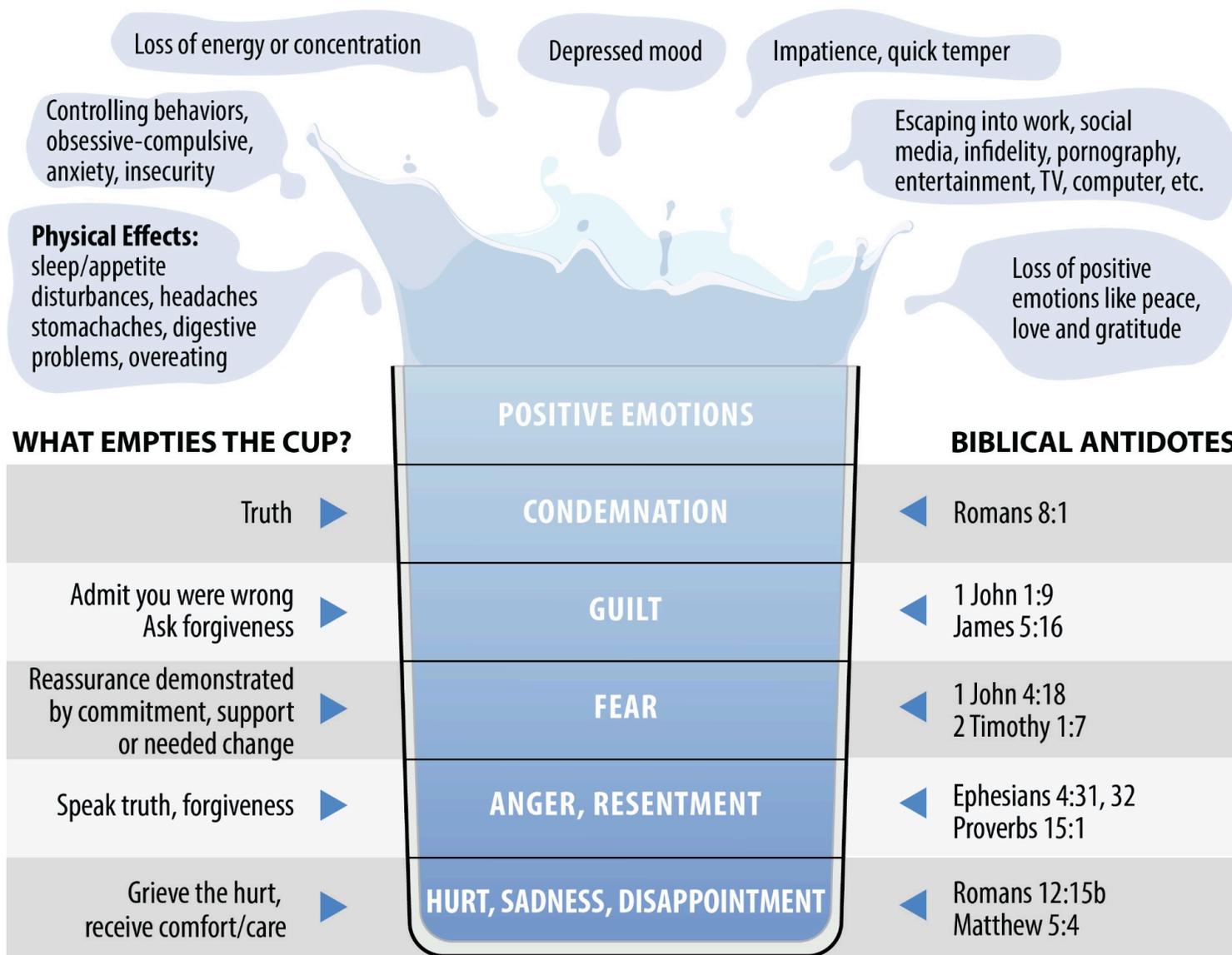
1. Spend a few minutes talking about your responses to the **Top Ten Relational Needs Assessment** and **Top Ten Relational Needs Questionnaire**. Specifically, you may want to ask each other how you might meet one or more of each other's three high-priority needs this week. If there is anything you do not understand, inquire further. For example, "I would like to meet your need for encouragement, but I am not exactly sure how I could go about it. Would you be willing to tell me more about how I could encourage you right now?"
2. If you have not already completed the **Selecting the Right Marital "Strokes"** exercise, do so before this staff meeting. Then:
 - Share your responses.
 - Consider how accurate you were in predicting your partner's responses. If your partner's responses surprised you, take some time to reflect and discuss possible reasons for this.
 - Discuss any correlation between the "strokes" each of you selected and the three high-priority needs you each identified in the previous exercise.
 - Make a note of your partner's responses on your sheet. Commit to initiating at least one "stroke" that your spouse selected sometime this week.
3. Close your staff meeting by holding hands and praying specifically for yourself, asking God to continue to help you to become the husband or wife that He wants you to be.

SESSION THREE:

**WHAT IS FILLING
YOUR “EMOTIONAL CUP?”**



THE EMOTIONAL CUP



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RELATIONAL NEEDS *UNMET* OFTEN BRING ONE OR MORE OF THESE PAINFUL EMOTIONS. THIS DECREASES OUR CAPACITY FOR POSITIVE EMOTION AND OFTEN RESULTS IN UNHEALTHY SYMPTOMS.

How is the Emotion in Your Cup Being Expressed?

Look over the following list of potential symptoms of a full emotional cup and circle any that you suspect have been manifested in you in recent months "owning" some of your symptoms.

Physical Disorders: digestive problems; frequent headaches; stomach aches

Sleep Difficulties: going to sleep; staying asleep; sleeping too much

Loss of Function or Desire: chronic fatigue; burnout; exhaustion; difficulty concentrating

Loss of Desire: inhibited sexual desire; diminished appetite; lack of motivation

Obsessive/Compulsive Patterns: over-thinking-racing or pervasive thoughts; over-doing-ritualistic behavior, perfectionism

Dependencies that "Numb" Emotions: alcohol or drugs; gambling; pornography; eating; shopping

Escapes into Activity that Distracts from Pain: television/computers; hobbies/recreation; work; ministry; church activities; escaping into the lives of the children

Mood Disturbances: depressed mood; anxiety; panic attacks; excessive worry; chronic irritability; impatience; quick temper; angry outbursts

Eating Disorders: anorexia; bulimia; compulsive over-eating

Loss of Positive or All Feelings: limited experiencing of joy, hope, love; totally numb or flat affect

Controlling Behaviors: controlling through aggression, criticism, dominance, put downs, intimidation

Manipulative Behaviors: passive aggressive sarcasm, cynicism, procrastination, withdrawal, guilt trips

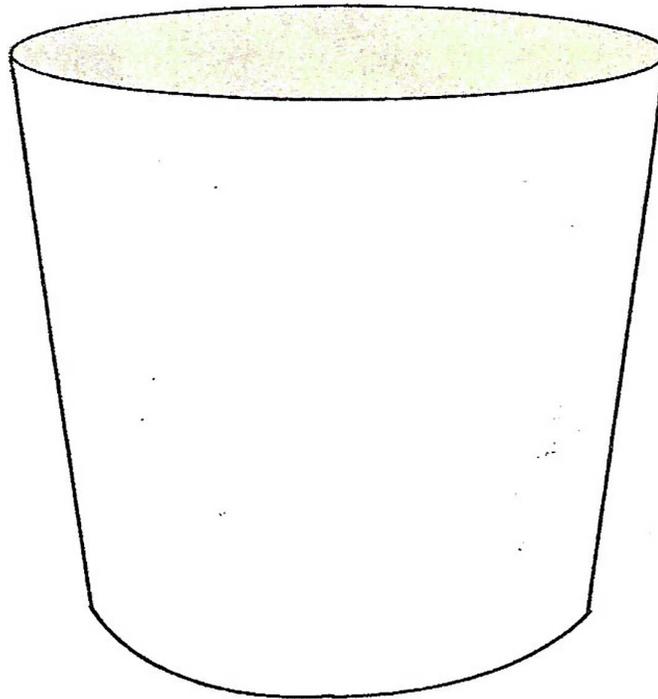
Loss of Self-esteem: chronic sense of worthlessness, insignificance, importance; feeling guilty

What is Filling Your Emotional Cup?

Write inside the cup diagram below, words that reflect some of the predominant emotions you have felt during recent months. Choose from the lists on either side or use other feeling words if you prefer.

Possible Emotions

Afraid
Angry
Anxious
Ashamed
Contented
Confused
Creative
Delighted
Depressed
Disappointed
Disgusted
Embarrassed
Excited
Frustrated
Grateful
Guilty
Happy
Hopeful
Hurt
Insecure
Inspired
Insecure



Possible Emotions

Jealous
Joyful
Lonely
Loved
Misunderstood
Nervous
Optimistic
Overwhelmed
Pressured
Regretful
Rejected
Relaxed
Relieved
Resentful
Sad
Satisfied
Successful
Unappreciated
Unloved
Violated
Vulnerable
Worried

Problems with Which We Struggle

Read through the following list and put a check beside those problems with which you struggle.

- Dependencies: using alcohol, drugs, food, gambling, pornography, shopping, or other things to distract you or numb your emotions
- Difficulty going to sleep, difficulty staying asleep, or sleeping too much
- Anorexia, bulimia, compulsive over-eating, or other eating disorders
- Low or inhibited sexual desire within marriage
- Headaches, stomach aches, or digestive problems
- Impatience or a critical attitude
- Obsessive-compulsive tendencies
- Fatigue or burnout
- Escaping into activities such as TV; internet, work, hobbies, extra-marital affairs, or even church in an attempt to avoid your emotions
- Inappropriate controlling of other people or situations
- Feeling guilty when relaxing
- Quick temper, rage, outbursts of anger
- Depression
- Anxiety disorders or perfectionism
- Chronic sense of worthlessness
- Passive-aggressive behaviors: procrastination, withdrawal, intentional "forgetfulness," sarcasm
- Loss of positive emotions such as romance, love, joy, or hope

Healing Family Emotional Hurt

(Do not share for session 4)

"Put away all bitterness, rage and anger. . . . Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other. . . ." (Ephesians 4:31-32)

IDENTITY HURT

Alone, list ways in which you have hurt your spouse and your marriage.

Examples: being selfish, critical, insensitive, disrespectful, verbally abusive, unsupportive, ungrateful, unfaithful, unforgiving, manipulative.

Healing Family Emotional Hurt

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"Put away all bitterness, rage and anger. . . . Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other. . . ." (Ephesians 4:31-32)

IDENTITY HURT

Alone, list ways in which **your spouse** has hurt you and your marriage.

Examples: being selfish, critical, insensitive, disrespectful, verbally abusive, unsupportive, ungrateful, unfaithful, unforgiving, manipulative.

Marriage Staff Meeting: Session 3

Set aside at least one hour sometime before the next class session. After completing any necessary planning, calendar coordination, and discussion, do the following:

1. Express to your spouse that you sincerely desire to heal the hurts of your marriage.
2. Share with each other the symptoms of "emotional cup overflow" that each of you identified on the **Problems with Which We Struggle** handout. Discuss which of these you would most like to see changed in yourselves.
3. Explore whether some of the negative emotions you find within yourselves may be related to your relationships with people other than your spouse. (For example, you might feel annoyed at a friend from whom you only seem to hear when he or she needs something, or you might be angry at your boss for not giving you the raise that you expected.)
4. Discuss any childhood hurts that you might still be carrying in your emotional cups. (For example, you might feel hurt because your parents ignored you as a child.)

As your partner answers each of these questions, allow yourself to be moved with compassion for him or her.

At this point, do not share with your partner your responses to the two **Healing Family Emotional Hurts** handouts.

Close your staff meeting by holding hands and asking God to heal any and all hurts between you and your spouse.

SESSION FOUR:

HEAL HURTS THROUGH CONFESSION AND FORGIVENESS



How to Respond to My Spouses Hurts

If you have already asked God to show you the ways in which you have hurt your spouse, select one from your list for consideration. If not, identify one now. If you find this difficult, reflect on the following questions: What do you do that irritates, provokes, or otherwise bothers your spouse? About what do you typically argue? "What do you think your partner would like to see changed in you?"

(For example: My wife would like to see me work less - she thinks my work is more important to me than she is. My husband wishes I would not be on the phone all the time when he is home so I could give him more attention. She accuses me of taking her for granted. He thinks that I let my mother control me too much. She is bothered that I never come home when I say I will. She says that I do not care about her feelings, that I ignore her when she is upset. She accuses me of having a bad temper. I pressured her sexually before marriage, and I know that we have never dealt with that.)

1. Identify one of your spouse's hurts here.

Note: If you have been unfaithful to your spouse and this infidelity has not previously been revealed, we recommend that you not consider that particular hurt in this exercise. It would be best to address that or any other such hidden sin with a trusted pastor or counselor. At this time, strive to address a marital hurt of which your spouse is already aware.

One of the ways in which I have hurt my spouse is _____

2. Try to view this hurt from your spouse's perspective.

Refuse to allow yourself to avoid responsibility, blame your spouse, or excuse your behavior.

With regard to this hurt, my spouse probably feels _____

(For example: sad, upset, discouraged, lonely, unappreciated, disrespected, invisible, unimportant, afraid, wounded, put-down, ashamed, abandoned, used.)

3. Your spouse is in pain. Do you care? What feelings do you have for your spouse as you consider how you contributed to his or her pain? (For example: *sorrowful, regretful, upset, concerned.*) Note that the key issue here is feeling something **for your spouse**. You may be feeling guilty or ashamed, but those are feelings about yourself.

*As I consider my spouse's feelings, I feel _____
for him or her. I care about how I have contributed to his or her pain.*

4. How does God view what you did to contribute to your spouse's pain?
What does He say and feel about it?

- You did it. (No denials.)
- What you did was **wrong**, period. (No justification.)
- What you did hurt Him. (It caused Jesus to have to go to the cross to suffer and die. See Isaiah 53:5.)
- What you did hurt your spouse (who had relational needs that went unmet).
- As the offender, you need to be forgiven. (Thus, requests for forgiveness from both God and your spouse are appropriate.)

(For example: God says that I have been very undependable and insensitive. He says that it is wrong for me to tell my wife I will be home by 6:00 and then not show up until 7:30 without even calling. He also says that I have hurt Him -- that His Son Jesus actually had to suffer and die on the cross because of my wrong-doing. He says that I have really hurt my wife, too -- She needs security, but when I behave in this way she feels very insecure and unimportant. Thus, He says that I need to request forgiveness from both Him and my wife.)

Write out what you sense God might be saying and feeling about the way in which you have hurt your spouse:

As I consider how I have hurt my spouse, I feel that what God might be saying about it is.

5. Confession means to agree with God about our wrongdoing. It means to express what He says about it directly to Him. Stop now and say to Him in prayer what you have written in the space above. Then ask Him to forgive you, and thank Him for forgiving you (1 John 1:9).

6. What emotions do you feel now?

As I reflect upon what God has done for me by forgiving me, I feel:

(For example: grateful, overwhelmed, loved, accepted, valued.)

7. Express to your spouse what you confessed to God, especially your feelings of sorrow for your spouse. Ask your spouse to forgive you. Then pray for your spouse, asking God to heal the hurts to which you have contributed.

(For example: Dear, I sense that my lack of sensitivity to your feelings has really hurt you. Am I right? It was wrong of me to say I would be home by 6:00 and then not come home until 7:30 without even calling. I have done this to you many times. I have been very insensitive to your feelings. You should never have to worry about where I am and whether I am alright. I see how my actions could have contributed to your feelings of insecurity, and I am deeply sorry that I put you through all that. My insensitivity and lack of dependability has hurt you and it has hurt God. Will you forgive me?)

Such words -- spoken sincerely and humbly without blame, excuses, rationalizations, explanations, or minimizing of the other's hurt, and delivered in a tone of voice that communicates, "I really care about you and your feelings, and it saddens me that I have hurt you" -- can bring about healing of the pain in your spouse's life to which you have contributed.

What Do Your Confessions Usually Sound Like?

Check any of the following statements that represent ways in which you tend to phrase your apologies:

"I am sorry."

"I am sorry if I hurt you."

"I am sorry that I hurt you. I did not mean to hurt you."

"I am sorry that I hurt you. I will try not to let it happen again."

"I am sorry that I hurt you, but I would not have done it if you had not "

"I am sorry that I hurt you, but if you would only _____, I do not think that I would hurt you so much."

"I am sorry that I hurt you. You just have to understand that this is the way that I am."

"I am sorry that I hurt you. I guess that I am just having a bad day."

"I am sorry that I hurt you. I hope that you can get over it soon, because it really bothers me when you are upset with me."

"I am sorry that I hurt you. I guess that I really am a lousy husband/wife. I do not see why you even stick around."

"Please forgive me for hurting you. "

(Other): _____

Experiencing Confession and Prayer for Healing

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness"(1 John 1:9).

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed"(James 5:16).

Experiencing Confession with God and Others

- "One of the ways in which I have hurt you is" (State specifically what you did or did not do.)
- "I was wrong to treat you this way because"("I was wrong" is better than "I am sorry."It is also important to acknowledge **why** your behavior was wrong.)
- "You must have felt"(Express an awareness of how your wrong behavior affected the other person. This is empathy -- tuning in to another person's feelings.)
- "I feel ____ for you."(Express godly sorrow and offer comfort.)

(At this point it is usually good to say, "I really want to make sure that I understand how I have hurt you. Is there anything else you would like to tell me about this particular hurt?"Listen and receive whatever is shared with you.Then offer additional confession and comfort as needed. It is very important for the other person to know that you understand how you hurt him or her, and that you care.)

- Will you forgive me? (Wait for a reply.)

Experiencing Prayer for Healing

- "Can I pray for God to heal your hurt?"(Wait for an answer.)
- (If "yes"): Pray as follows: "Lord, you know how much I have hurt _____ by _____.
Please heal the hurt that I have caused. Please change me, helping me to become _____ so that I do not continue to hurt _____ in this way. In Jesus' name, amen."
- (If "no"): Accept this answer and pray on your own for the person to be healed.

How to Respond to My Hurts

If you have already asked God to show you the ways in which you have been hurt by your spouse, select one from your list for consideration. If not, identify one now. If you find this difficult, reflect on the following questions: What does your spouse do that irritates, provokes, or otherwise bothers you? About what do you typically argue? What would you like to see changed in your partner?

1. Identify one of your hurts here.

One of the ways in which I have been hurt by my spouse is _____

2. Identify any relational needs that went unmet as a result of this hurt.

(Refer to the **Top Ten Relational Needs Assessment** handout from Session 2 if necessary.)

What I really need is _____

(For example: What I really need is respect. It really hurts when my spouse puts me down in front of the kids.)

3. How do you sense that God feels about your hurt?

I sense that God _____

(For example: I sense that God cares about my pain. It saddens Him when I am treated that way.)

4. Choose to forgive your spouse for this hurt. When we have been hurt, we must be careful not to let the pain turn to anger, bitterness, or resentment. Instead, we can choose to forgive our spouses for the ways in which they have hurt us, even if they have not yet apologized. Some perspectives on forgiveness:

- We are to forgive out of gratefulness for the forgiveness we have received from God (Ephesians 4:32).
- Forgiveness is a choice, not a feeling. Just as God chooses to forgive us, we can choose to forgive our spouses.
- Forgiveness deals with the **anger** that we feel because of an offense. We may forgive and yet still feel the **pain** of the offense. Expressing the hurt and receiving comfort helps us deal with the pain.
- My forgiveness may benefit my spouse, but ultimately I am the one who benefits by being freed from the bondage of bitterness.

5. Express to God your forgiveness of your spouse for the hurt you have identified. Write out what you will say below.

Dear God, _____

(For example: Dear God, my husband has hurt me by contradicting me and my decisions in front of the kids. I really need his respect in this situation, and it hurts and angers me when I do not receive it. But in light of all for which You have forgiven me, I choose to forgive my husband for disrespecting me, I let go of my anger. I choose not to hold this offense against him any longer, I declare that he is under no obligation to pay me back or make this up to me in any way. I ask for Your comfort and healing for this hurt.

Experiencing Comfort from God and Forgiving as Needed

"Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort, who comforts us in all our troubles..." (2 Corinthians 1:3-4).

1. Identify a hurt that you have experienced -- perhaps one for which you are having a hard time forgiving someone.

2. Express your hurt to God in prayer, telling Him about your pain:

- "Dear God, I feel sad about _____"
- "It really hurt when _____"
- "I felt disappointed that _____"

3. Ask Jesus these questions and wait for His responses:

- "Lord, do You understand my pain? Do you understand how I was hurt by _____ (loneliness, abandonment, abuse, neglect, unfair criticism, rejection, or ridicule)?"
- "Lord, when did You experience something like this?"
- "Lord, what do You feel for me as a result of this hurt?"

4. Thank Jesus for His compassion and comfort and, if applicable, express your decision to forgive the offender:

"Dear Lord, thank You for caring so much about me, being moved with compassion for my pain, and understanding exactly what I am feeling. Thank You for forgiving me of all my sins. I know that You do not hold anything against me because Jesus has paid for all my sins on the cross. In light of Your forgiveness, I choose to forgive _____ for _____ (express details). I choose to let go of my anger. I choose to take _____ "off the hook." This person is accountable to You -- please change him/her as You see fit. I choose to no longer hold a grudge against him/her. In Jesus' Name, amen."

Healing Family Emotional Hurts

"Put away all bitterness, rage and anger Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other. . . ." (Ephesians 4:31-32).

I. List ways in which you have hurt your spouse and your marriage.

Examples: being selfish, critical, insensitive, disrespectful, verbally abusive, unsupportive, ungrateful, unfaithful, unforgiving, manipulative.

II. Confess to God and receive His forgiveness.

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9).

Example: "God, I have deeply hurt You and my spouse through my _____ . I was wrong and I ask You to forgive me and to change me."

III. Confess to each other and receive forgiveness.

"Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed" (James 5:16).

Example: I know that I have hurt you deeply by _____. I was wrong. Will you forgive me?"

Remember that forgiveness is primarily a **choice**, not a feeling. The question is never, "Do you **feel** like forgiving me," but rather, "**Will** you forgive me?" If you choose to forgive, more positive feelings will follow.

IV. Exchange lists and tear them up.

"Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead . . ." (Philippians 3:13).

Start the "forgetting" process by exchanging and destroying your lists.

V. Start a new habit.

"Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry" (Ephesians 4:26).

Confession and forgiveness must become daily habits if intimacy is to be maintained. Otherwise, your emotional cups will begin to fill with hurtful emotions again.

Marriage Staff Meeting: Session 4

For this meeting, you should plan to allow two hours of uninterrupted time. In addition to any calendar coordination, planning, and goal evaluation, you will be seeking to heal the emotional hurts which may have been accumulating in your emotional cups for some time now: Thus, this is one of your most important "staff meetings." Some guidelines:

1. Both spouses should have prepared for this meeting by completing Parts I and II of the **Healing Family Emotional Hurts** handout. Both should bring their handouts to the staff meeting.
2. We suggest that the husband begin the process of going through Parts III, IV, and V of the handout. One by one, he should confess each wrong that hurt his wife. After each wrong is confessed, forgiveness should be requested. The wife should then verbalize her decision to forgive by saying "I forgive you." The husband needs to hear these words in order to fully receive forgiveness, and the wife needs to say them in order to seal her choice to forgive. After the husband has finished confessing and asking for forgiveness, he may want to vulnerably ask his wife, "Are there any other ways in which I have hurt you that I have not yet confessed? I would really like to know, because I care about your hurt." He should then respond to anything else that is shared. The husband should close his portion of the meeting by praying that God would heal any hurt inflicted by his wrong-doing.
3. The wife should then repeat the same procedure.
4. Both spouses should remain especially mindful of the fact that both comfort and confession are crucial responses to their partner's pain. Genuine confession is especially important because it serves as a vulnerable declaration that you care enough about your partner's pain that you are willing to overcome your pride and accept responsibility for your part in hurting him or her. In many instances, your partner may have been alone in his or her pain, and your comfort and confession can help to remove this aloneness.