

Personal Marriage Workshop

Setting the Course to a Lasting Marriage Rick Rupp, M.Div., MFT



Remember when you used to talk to each other until 2 AM and you couldn't learn enough about each other? Remember how great you felt? Why not do it again? Write out your answers to the following questions and then talk about them with your spouse. Make it a date. Compare your answers. Ask more questions if you like. Get to know each other all over again.

The Three Main Reasons I was attracted to My Spouse:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The Three Main Reasons My Spouse was attracted to Me: (don't ask your spouse for this one. If you really don't know, then make your best guess)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The Three Greatest Strengths of Our Marriage are:

- 1.
- 2.'
- 3.

Three Challenges in Our Marriage are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My Three Best Memories or Times with my Spouse (either before or after marriage)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Three things that helped me get through the worst times with my spouse

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My Three Dreams in the Future with my Spouse

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My Three Worst Fears about the Future

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

If I Could Change Three Things about My Self, they would be:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

If I Could Change Three Things in our Life Together, it would be:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Three Things my Spouse does that turn me on sexually:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Three Things that I do to turn on my spouse sexually: (be sure to ask your spouse later if he or she really likes these or not. You may think they work, but he or she might not think so)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Three *Little* Things That I Do That Make My Spouse Happy:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Three *Little* Things that My Spouse Does That Makes me Happy:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My idea of a perfect day with my spouse would include...(describe activity, location, etc.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

My spouse's idea of a perfect day with me would probably include...

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The Three Major Ways That a Man Measures His Worth:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The Three Major Ways that a Woman Measures Her Worth:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The Three Best Things That My Spouse Can Say to Me:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The Three Best Things That I Can Say to my Spouse:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The Three Best Things That I Can Pray for my Spouse:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

The Three Best Things That My Spouse Can Pray for Me.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Personal and Family History

Before a man can successfully unite together with his wife in marriage, he first needs to leave his father and mother. The same is true for the wife. Whether or not you have left your parents physically (as in another house, state or country), how well have you left them *emotionally* and become your own separate person? (and getting over any feelings of anger, guilt or hurt?) These questions can help you leave your parents and be your own unique and best self. Your spouse may also learn some new things about you and learn new ways to support you in your growth.

What was the best part of your childhood?

What was the most difficult part of your childhood?

How did the above experiences affect you?

How did your mother and father communicate and work out their differences?

How do you and your spouse communicate and work your differences?

Your Mother

How do you feel about your mother?

What did your mother always say?

Describe the most pleasant and unpleasant experiences with your mother:

Pleasant:

Unpleasant:

How did these experiences affect you?

How did she affect your self-image and self-confidence?

How did she affect how you feel about women?

Your Father

How do you feel about your father?

What did your father always say?

Describe the most pleasant and unpleasant experiences with your father:

Pleasant:

Unpleasant:

How did these experiences affect you?

How did he affect your self-image and self-confidence?

How did he affect how you feel about men?

Your Marriage

How do you want your marriage to be like your parent's marriage?

How do you want your marriage to be different than your parent's marriage?

Think of a married couple that you know and respect. What qualities does their marriage have that you admire?

What are three basic qualities of a good marriage, and what are three things you must do to have these in your marriage?

Is there anything else that you would like to talk about with your spouse?

Our Marriage Vision

What is the vision for your marriage? Write down a list of twenty actions that will guide you in reaching that vision together. Make these as practical as possible.

Start each one with “We...” Some examples:

1. We greet each other with a kiss when we come home.
2. We apologize when we have wronged the other person.
3. We go on regular dates together

Write your list individually and then compare with your spouse’s list. Circle five actions that you both agree on and write up a new list of your top five. You now have a Personal Marriage Vision that is unique for your marriage. Practice your list daily and review your Marriage Vision every year on your anniversary, evaluating and revising your list as needed.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.
- 11.
- 12.
- 13.
- 14.
- 15.
- 16.
- 17.
- 18.
- 19.
- 20.

Preparing for Your 25th Anniversary

A sailboat needs a destination point and a hand on the wheel to keep it on course. So does marriage. The 25th anniversary is a milestone for couples. Talk with your spouse about where you wish to spend your 25th anniversary, and how old each of you will be on that day. Depending on your age, go ahead and talk about your 50th too.

Our ages:

Possible places to celebrate alone as a couple and also with a party.

When people ask you at your 25th anniversary, “What was the secret of your marriage all these years?” what will be your answer? Give three answers that you believe will get you there.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

This final exercise will be used in your 25th anniversary. Write a letter your spouse to be opened on your 25th wedding anniversary. Write about why you have chosen to marry him or her, your feelings for him/her, and how you intend love, honor and cherish your spouse. Write three dreams that you have for your life together. If you like, include any picture, quote, prayer, Scripture, memento, or anything else that you would like to add with your letter. Discuss a place that you would like to meet on your 25th to exchange these letters, and then open and read them together. Keep these letters with your important records until that day.

Stay the course.

Along the course in marriage, there will be times when your boat will be rocked. You may even be battered by a hurricane or two. But if you are committed to your destination and to each other, and make daily adjustments with grace and respect for each other, your marriage can go the distance into the sunset of your lives.

Fair Winds to you and your beloved, Rick Rupp, MFT