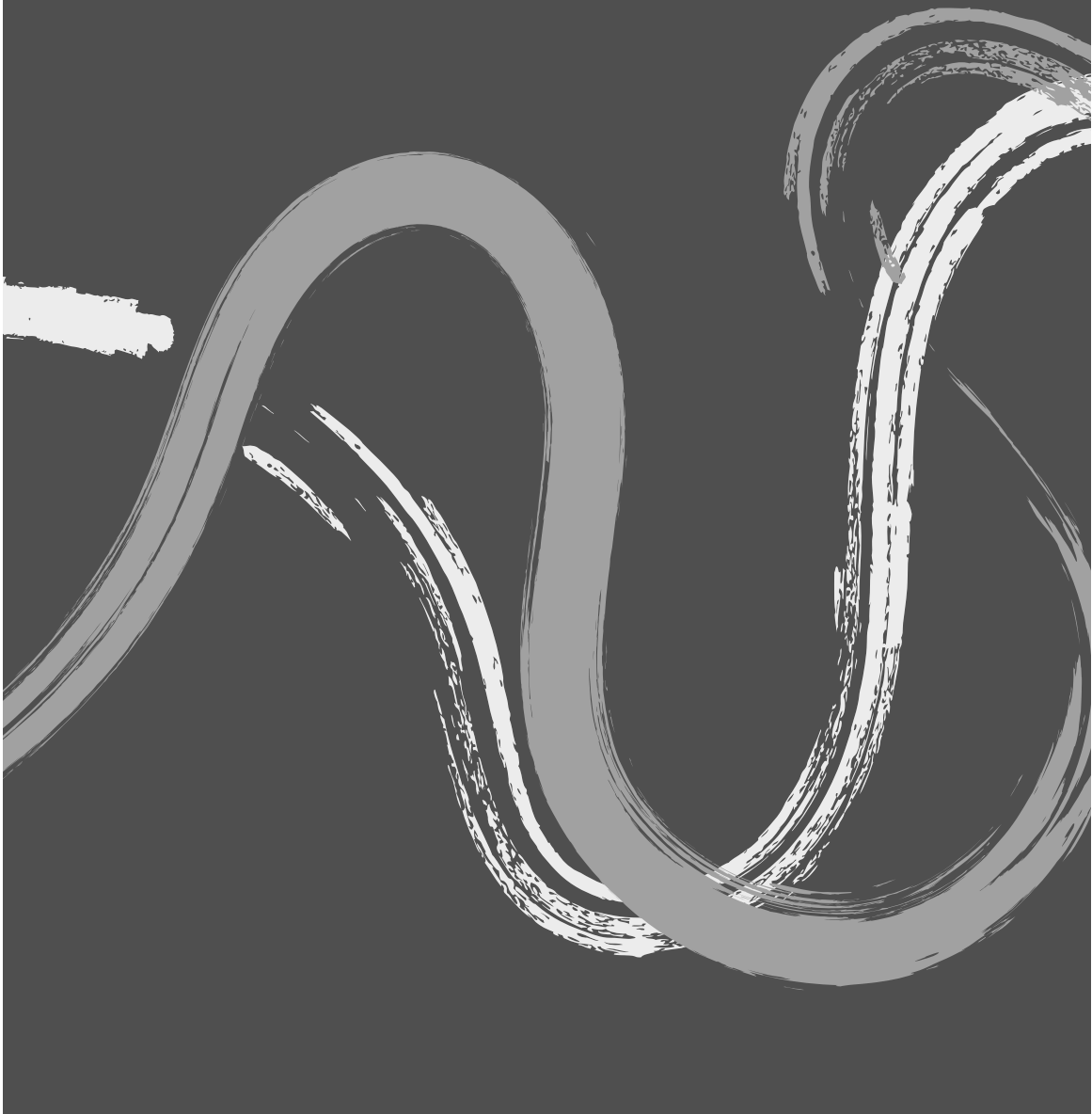


Session 5

Adventure





RECAP

- See if you can remember the order of importance of the "love languages" for your partner. Look back to Session 4, Conversation 2, if you can't remember.



Session 5 – Adventure

Marriage provides us with one of life's greatest opportunities and one of its greatest challenges:

- **the opportunity** to build the most intimate of relationships, the benefits of which go way beyond ourselves
- **the challenge** to go on learning what it means to love another person, to look beyond our own needs and to go on finding out what is important to our partner, and then make adjustments in our own behavior

Are there ways that I need to change for the sake of our partnership?



Pulling in harmony

1. Show appreciation

No marriage can survive a lack of appreciation.

Express your appreciation of each other even when you don't feel like it.

Showing appreciation every day will draw out your partner's potential and build their self-esteem.

“

**For every one critical remark, there
needs to be at least five positive ones.**

DR. JOHN GOTTMAN

CONVERSATION 1

10 minutes



EXPRESSING APPRECIATION

Write a list of your partner's strengths and the qualities you most admire
in him or her:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Then take turns to read out to your partner what you have each put.

**The more we express gratitude TO each other,
the more grateful we become FOR each other.**

2. Let go of unrealistic expectations

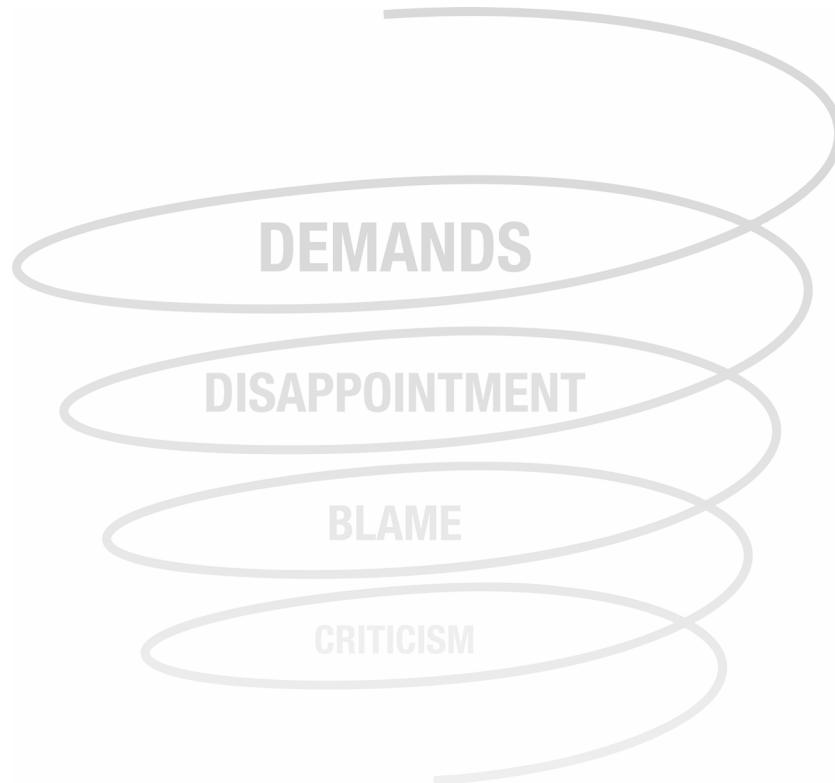
Marriage cannot meet all of our needs.

Our partner will never love us perfectly.

We have to accept our partner as they are rather than as we would like them to be.

Unrealistic expectations lead to a downward spiral of demands, disappointment, blame, and criticism.

**If we expect
perfection, we'll
never be satisfied.**



3. Be prepared to change

We can change ourselves; we can't change our partner.

Find out what matters to your partner.

Showing our partner in big ways and small ways that we're prepared to change our behavior, rather than trying to force them to change, sends a powerful message of love.

4. Recognize our common overreactions

We may overreact when our partner touches a "raw spot"

- this will usually be a result of negative experiences from our past
- may cause us to charge (like the rhino) or withdraw (like the hedgehog)

We need to look at our reactions and ask:

- "Is that reasonable?"
- "Is that in proportion to the situation?"

Change is possible but usually happens gradually:

- it takes courage
- requires self-awareness
- involves being vulnerable and talking about why we react as we do
- may involve forgiving those who have hurt us or let us down in the past

CONVERSATION 2

15 minutes



REFLECTING ON YOUR UPBRINGING

1. Describe to your partner any situations in which you know you overreact.

For example: *"I get angry and moody when I am being rushed to get ready."*

2. Explain any reasons you are aware of for this overreaction.

For example: *"This reminds me of how my dad used to rush us out of the door for school in the mornings and shout at me to hurry up. I always felt unprepared for my day and annoyed with him."*

3. Reflect on whether there is anyone you need to forgive from your past.

For example: *"I need to forgive my dad for getting so angry and impatient with me every morning."*

4. Tell your partner how they could help you to avoid this overreaction in your relationship.

For example: *"Always give me plenty of time to get ready and try to avoid shouting at me if we are behind schedule."*

Now show each other what you have put and discuss how you can help each other.

Agree on our priorities

Our priorities in life will be determined by our values.

We may have very different personalities, but having similar core values and an agreed set of priorities will enable a couple to build a strong marriage.

Share your dreams, aspirations, hopes, and longings

- set aside time to work out an order of priority for different areas of your lives

Giving priority to the people and the values that matter most to us doesn't just happen—we have to be intentional about it.

Four areas that will be affected by our priorities:

1. Friendships

- don't cut yourselves off as a couple
- protect your marriage from any relationships that might threaten it
- set boundaries to guard yourselves from the risk of an affair

2. Children and family life

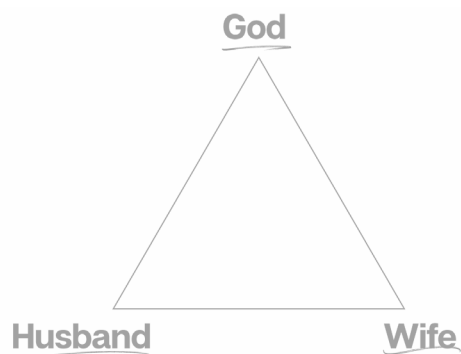
- discuss your expectations for having children
- keep making time for each other

3. Work

- don't compete with each other
- talk about how you would balance work and taking care of children

4. Spirituality

- exploring our core beliefs can draw us closer together
- talk about what beliefs and values you would want to pass on to children
- praying together connects us with each other as well as with God



As we each look to God to receive and experience his love, forgiveness, and a sense of his purpose for our lives, we are better able to love each other.

Supporting each other

Consider praying together for each other

- daily prayer—ask your partner: "What can I pray for you today?"
- focus on each other's needs
- accept the same requests day after day
- start with thankfulness
- praying doesn't just happen—needs to be planned

If you don't pray, ask your partner: "How can I best support you today?"

A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.

— ECCLESIASTES 4:12

CONVERSATION 3

10 minutes



WORKING OUT YOUR PRIORITIES

Try to write a list of your top five priorities as a couple.

Then put against each priority one way you would hope to live that out in your lives together.

Use the list of examples below to help you, but do not be limited by it. When you have finished, compare and discuss what you have each put.

Examples of values: *health, creativity, marriage relationship, sport, vocation / job, good stewardship of money and possessions, local community involvement, adventure, having fun, hospitality, friendships, care of environment, nurturing children, ongoing education, spirituality / relationship with God, wider family, generosity, church activities.*

Examples of how you might plan to live out a value:

Relationship with God: seek to pray together for each other each day.

Our marriage relationship: set aside time each week to have fun together.

Priority	How to live that value out
1.	:
2.	:
3.	:
4.	:
5.	:

Adventurers and nurturers

Recognize whether one of you is more “adventuring” and the other more “nurturing”.

Every marriage needs to give enough space for both adventuring and nurturing. When you can get these two forces working well in your marriage, marriage itself becomes one of life’s great adventures.

Adventurers

Tend to want to make the most of all the possibilities that life offers.

View marriage itself as a joint adventure.

Nurturers

Often see their marriage as a safe place to return to after whatever adventures or challenges life brings.

Nurturers bring consistency and routine in the relationship.

There is no gender correlation to either style.

Both adventuring and nurturing make an equally important contribution to the relationship

- **too little adventure and your relationship can become stagnated**
- **too much adventure and you can be overstretched**

As a couple, your responsibility is to value both the energy of adventure and the security of recovery.

“

**Everybody is looking for two things
in life: adventure and security.**

G. K. CHESTERTON

CONVERSATION 4

10 minutes



ADVENTURER OR NURTURER

Complete the following exercise on your own and then talk about it together.

Mark with your initials where you think you and your partner each come on the line between the two extremes:

ADVENTURER

NURTURER

New friends	_____	Same friends
Explore new places	_____	Create a secure home
Enjoy change	_____	Enjoy routine
Love traveling	_____	Love staying put
Holiday in new places	_____	Return to same places
Relax by being active	_____	Relax by being restful
Like uncertainty	_____	Like certainty
Like surprises	_____	Don't like surprises
Enjoy a challenge	_____	Prefer comfort zone
Like flexible working hours	_____	Prefer set working hours
Energetic	_____	Relaxed
Pursue new interests	_____	Prefer familiar interests
Enjoy setting off	_____	Enjoy returning home
Live on adrenaline	_____	Live more calmly
Need enough action	_____	Need enough sleep
Take risks	_____	Risk-averse
More task-oriented	_____	More relational
Always wanting to try something new	_____	Enjoy sticking to known tasks

- Discuss whether one of you is more on the adventuring side and the other more on the nurturing side.
- Discuss whether you need to increase the adventuring or the nurturing in your relationship.
- Talk about how well you balance each other out.

When we apply the tools in this course—talking and listening well, using each other’s love languages, expressing our appreciation for each other, living out our shared priorities—we build a relationship of love that can weather even the strongest storm.

Place me like a seal over your heart, like a seal on your arm; for love is as strong as death, its jealousy unyielding as the grave. It burns like blazing fire, like a mighty flame. Many waters cannot quench love; rivers cannot sweep it away. If one were to give all the wealth of one’s house for love, it would be utterly scorned.

— SONG OF SOLOMON 8:6-7

Continuing the Conversation





“Over the whole lifetime of a marriage we will never fully know everything about our partner—there will always be more to discover and appreciate.”

— Nicky and Sila Lee

Plan a date together



Morning



Afternoon



Evening

<i>Mon</i>	<i>Tue</i>	<i>Wed</i>	<i>Thurs</i>	<i>Fri</i>	<i>Sat</i>	<i>Sun</i>

My turn / your turn to organize what we do.

This week, we could.....

Ideas for our dates this month...



- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

Conversation starter on your next date:

Tell your partner, "If I think about us in twenty years' time, the thing I most look forward to is..."



The three things I most admire about you are...



Putting it into practice



Three things I especially want to remember and practice from
The Pre-Marriage Course:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Show your partner what you have written.

Now ask him / her, "What three things would you especially like me to
remember and practice from the course?" Write them down here:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.