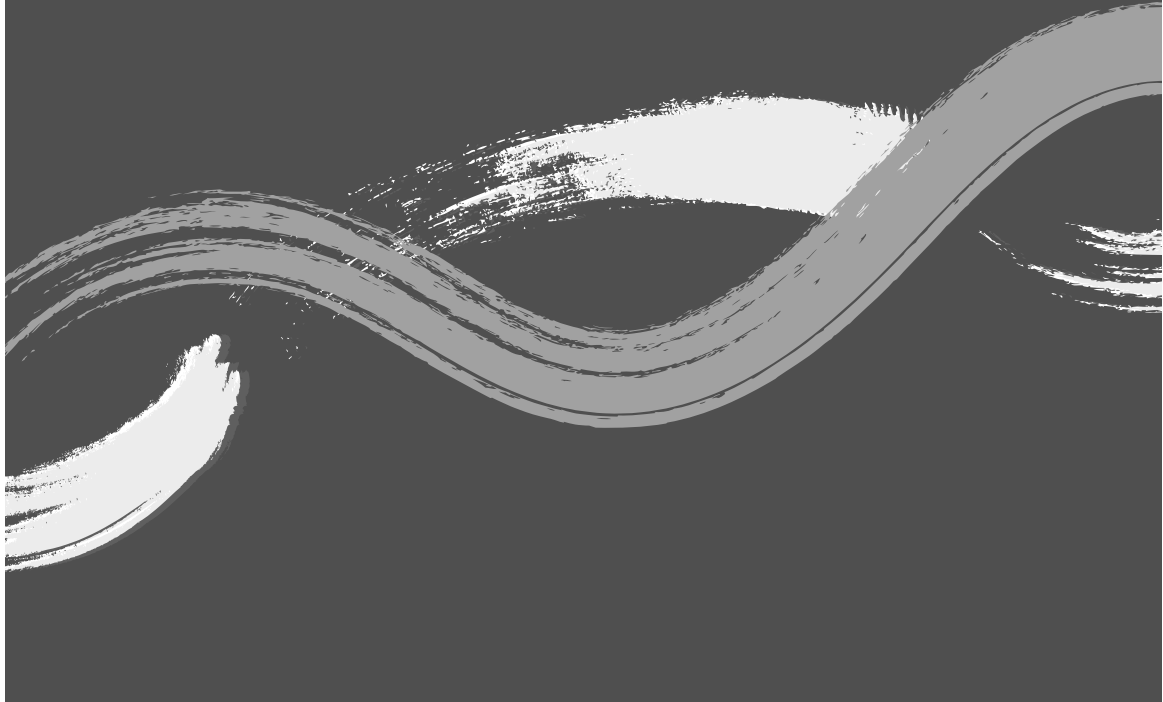


Session 3

Commitment





RECAP



- Look back at Session 2 to remind yourself what was covered.
- Then discuss with your partner which of your differences cause conflict and how these could be complementary in your relationship.

Session 3 – Commitment

Making a commitment to each other enables us to plan our future together; it allows us to try things out, to get things wrong, to forgive, to have the confidence to raise issues, and to make ourselves vulnerable—commitment is “the essence of marriage”, its very heart.

Two consequences of commitment in marriage:

1. Friendship

Marriage meets our longing for connection, for intimacy.

Marriage isn't the only way to counter aloneness but it is the closest possible human relationship.

“It is not good for the man to be alone.”

– GENESIS 2:18

“This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh.”

– GENESIS 2:23

2. Family life

The ideal is for children to grow up seeing an intimate, committed, long-term relationship between their parents.

One of the best ways parents can love their children is by loving each other.

A strong marriage can break a cycle of failed relationships.

“

There is no perfect marriage. There are bound to be arguments or disagreements but what matters is coming back together again and forgiving and loving each other. It's important that children learn that it's okay to have differing opinions.

DR. MOSUN DORGU

CONVERSATION 1

5 minutes



THE BENEFITS OF MARRIAGE

Discuss between the two of you:

- What, in your view, is the role of marriage in society?
- What excites you, or frightens you, about marriage?

“For this reason a man [and a woman] will leave their father and mother and be joined to [each other] and the two will become one flesh.”

– GENESIS 2:24

Creating an equal partnership

Every couple has to work out:

- who does what
- who decides what
- who takes the lead on those things that need to be done

We may hold assumptions from our parents' (or main role models') marriage.

Talk about your expectations.

**What assumptions do you hold from your parents'
(or main role models) marriage?**



"Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ."

— EPHESIANS 5:21

Submitting to each other

New Testament model

- radical new way of living together
- requires mutual giving to each other (see Appendix 2)
- undermined male dominance

Christian teaching has led to the marriage relationship coming to be seen as an equal partnership of mutual giving.

Submitting doesn't mean being passive

- opposite of demanding or controlling
- seeking to put each other first
- putting each other's needs before our own

Discover which responsibilities you are each best suited to

- use your differences to serve each other
- in some areas, take the lead and initiate
- in others, support your partner

Loving like this is very active and involves making sacrifices for the sake of the other.

Submitting to one another is the key to a loving marriage

"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."

— EPHESIANS 5:25

CONVERSATION 2

10 minutes



DIVIDING RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Each write down up to six areas for which you expect to take responsibility.

For example: *housework, cleaning the bathroom, taking out rubbish, cooking, paying bills, organizing vacations, ironing, thank you letters, driving, map-reading, DIY, earning money, gardening, insurance, shopping...*

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

2. Each write down up to six areas for which you expect your partner to take responsibility.

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

3. Each write down up to six areas that you expect will be a joint responsibility.

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

4. When you have finished, compare lists.

5. In which of these areas would you expect your partner to take the lead in marriage?

The marriage covenant

The covenant we make when we get married is a decision to give ourselves completely to each other in love, and is then a decision we reinforce day-by-day.

The marriage covenant holds a couple together when they go through tough times, as every couple will.

The marriage vows bring deep security and provide us with a safe space

- within which we are able to be open and vulnerable with each other
- they give us the confidence to allow our partner to know us as we are (including revealing those parts we keep well hidden) and that builds intimacy
- the vows focus not on what our partner can do for us but on what we can do for them

Try asking your partner each day, “How can I make your day better?”

CONVERSATION 3

10 minutes



THE MARRIAGE VOWS

Read through the marriage vows together and decide which is the most important phrase for each of you. Explain your choice to your partner (see Appendix 3).

“Love and faithfulness meet together.”

– PSALM 85:10

Dealing with finances

Marriage involves sharing everything.

Every couple needs to set aside time to discuss finances.

Recognize your different attitudes to money.

- are you more of a "saver" or a "spender"?

Make a budget together

(see Appendix 4, Creating a Budget)

- calculate your joint income
- calculate / forecast your expenses
- discuss the balance of spending / saving / giving

If you're in debt or you're aware that your spending is out of control, seek help.

Compare your feelings about money; ask yourself:

- does money fascinate me or bore me?
- does it make me feel anxious or confident?
- or excited or guilty?
- or out of control?



The aim in marriage is to develop a dynamic partnership in which we double the experience and wisdom we bring to managing our finances and work on them together as a team.

Managing relationships with the wider family

1. Leaving

When we get married, our relationship with our parents must be different to the way it was as we were growing up

- our marriage takes priority
- our first loyalty is now to our husband or wife

We mustn't underestimate what a massive change this is, particularly if there is ongoing emotional dependence by one of us on a parent or the other way round.

Our marriage relationship becomes our new center of gravity

- the first place we look to for comfort, security, affection
- a new decision-making structure

**Make your own decisions and support each other,
however small the issue may seem.**

2. Respecting our parents

Prioritizing our marriage doesn't mean we stop loving or respecting our parents.

We put in boundaries, where necessary, as kindly and sensitively as we can.

Show gratitude to your parents for all they do and have done for you.

Stay in touch with them

- take the initiative
- decide together on level of contact with your parents and parents-in-law

CONVERSATION 5

10 minutes



PARENTS AND IN-LAWS

Discuss as a couple:

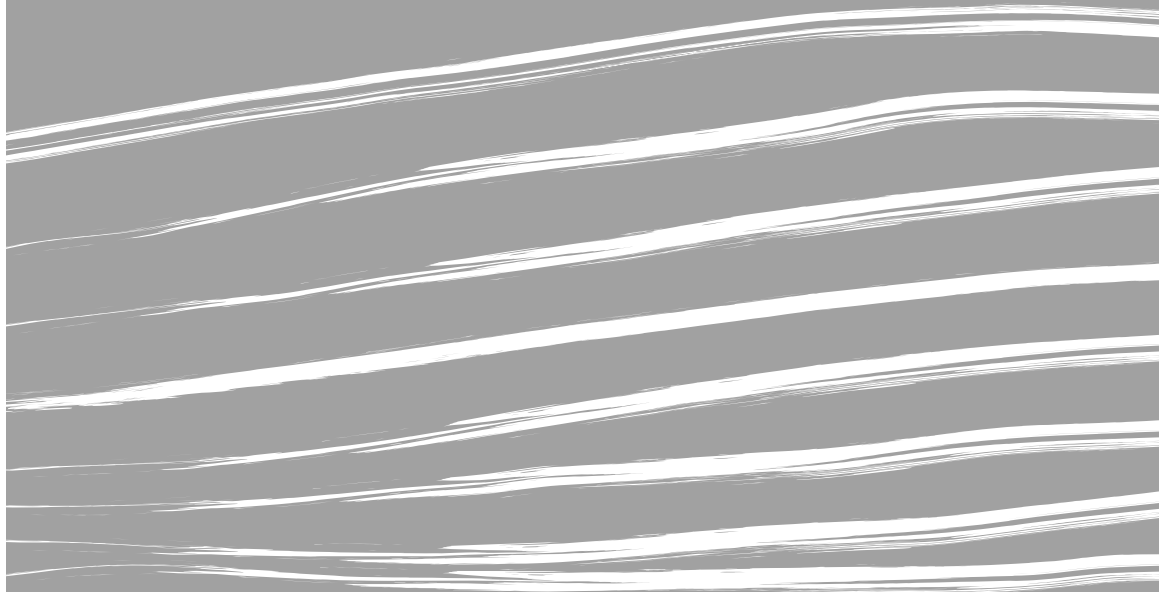
From the following list, what possible areas of tension can you foresee with your parent(s)/parent(s)-in-law?

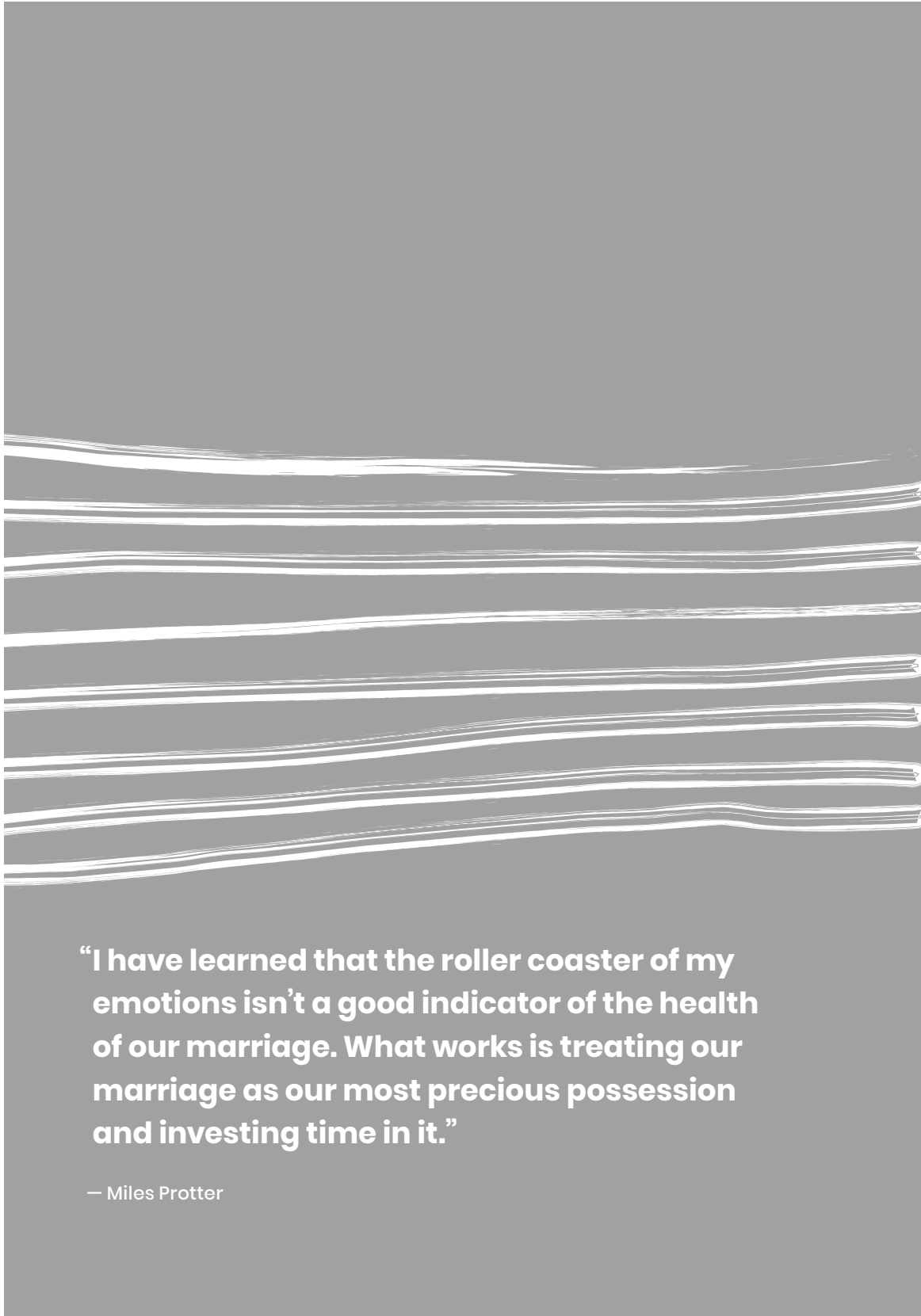
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|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Vacations | 5. Frequency of visits |
| 2. Christmas / other holidays | 6. Length of phone calls |
| 3. Finances | 7. Changed loyalty |
| 4. Interference | 8. Other... |

How could they be resolved?

Our aim in marriage is to build mutually supportive relationships with our parents and our parents-in-law, rather than sidelining them or being controlled by them.

Continuing the Conversation





“I have learned that the roller coaster of my emotions isn't a good indicator of the health of our marriage. What works is treating our marriage as our most precious possession and investing time in it.”

— Miles Protter

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.....

Conversation starter on your next date:

If money was no object in planning a memorable date for us,
I would...



You make me feel loved when you...



A healthy marriage involves an equal partnership within which we work out, and then both work to, our strengths.

Making decisions



In the left-hand column, write down who decided what in your parents' (or main caregivers') marriage as a percentage of their influence (e.g., 50:50 or 70:30 or 90:10). Then in the right-hand column put your expectations for your own marriage.

Discuss what you have each put. (If you grew up with one parent, only fill in the right-hand column.)

My parents		Decisions	Our marriage	
Father	Mother		Husband	Wife
		Choice of new car		
		Choice of where to live		
		Choice of furniture		
		Choice of china		
		Choice of own clothes		
		Choice of vacations		
		Choice of decoration of home		
		Choice of pictures		
		Choice of how to bring up children		
		Choice of TV shows		
		Choice of food		
		Choice of number of children		
		Choice of husband's job		
		Choice of wife's job		
		Determining how money is spent		