

# 3

## RECIPROCALLY MEETING NEEDS

Reliance, the third relationship bond in the RAM, refers to the ways you depend upon your partner to meet your personal, emotional or physical needs. When your partner meets your needs in positive ways, then you would expect your opinion or “trust picture” to be altered and your feelings of trust increased. Many of these needs are met by what you do for each other, what you do together, and how you have divided the responsibilities of your home between yourselves. It is much easier to keep a positive attitude toward your partner when both are trying to meet each other’s needs. A positive “trust-picture” prompts you to “rely” on your partner again and with more meaningful needs. This is especially bonding when both partners are mutually meeting each other’s needs.

### Session Outline

- 1 The Give and Take of Love: Your Top-Ten Lists
  - 2 Making Differences Benefit Your Relationship in Your Roles & Finances
  - 3 Keeping Your Relationship a Priority with Huddles
  - 4 Description of the Top Ten Intimacy Activities
- Huddle Step Three: RELY (Dream Up)

### HUDDLES

**KNOW: CATCH UP** on what has happened with each other since your last huddle. What would you like to talk about? If too long, then set a later time to discuss.

**TRUST: PATCH UP** your trust and positive attitudes by sharing how your spouse has benefited you since your last huddle. Affirm apologies and resolutions from misunderstandings/ conflicts.

**RELY: DREAM UP\*** what you would like to do before your next huddle to meet some of the needs and wants on your spouse’s top ten list. Be sure to put your plans on your calendars!

**COMMIT: BACK UP** each other by looking ahead on your calendars and finding ways to support each other in your upcoming responsibilities and activities.

**TOUCH: BUILD UP** each other by taking some extra time to talk about your affection, romance and sexual intimacy. Express your love in words and affection as you wrap up your time.

**notes**  
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# The Give & take of love

## qualities of reliance

Rely is the feeling of \_\_\_\_\_ that comes from what you do for your partner and what your partner does for you. What are some ways that you rely on your partner?

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What are 4 qualities of a reliable partner?

- C \_\_\_\_\_
- A \_\_\_\_\_
- R \_\_\_\_\_
- E \_\_\_\_\_

Your partner's "mental load" is the unspoken, mental running list of everything they need to do. What are some examples of your own mental load, and ways you can apply the qualities of CARE both to understand and support your partner and their mental load?

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**notes**  
pages 74-77

# Making Differences benefit your relationship

*compatibility is not just the way that you & your partner are similar; it's also the way you blend your differences..this will make you more than you could be on your own*

There are times when your normal routine will change or new responsibilities will be added. Discuss some of the common obstacles to revisiting the division of responsibilities and brainstorm solutions to every obstacle.

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## EXERCISE: ROLES

Pair off and make a list of what you think are the 5-10 most important responsibilities you and your partner have in your relationship. Do this without your partner's involvement. Then compare and talk about the responsibilities you both identified. Discuss what you wish you would like your partner to "take charge of" in the relationship, "be more supportive of" or "give more back" (e.g. let me decorate the den).

MY RESPONSIBILITIES

MY PARTNER'S RESPONSIBILITIES

notes



## EXERCISE: ROLES & FINANCES

It can be rewarding—and sometimes challenging—to run the finances. Some couples have significant conflicts over differences in managing their finances. Studies have shown that money conflicts are among the top five sources of problems in marriage.

It can also be difficult making realistic financial goals and managing a budget because of unforeseen expenses. Therefore, you may need to have clear roles and plans for working together to regularly review your financial goals and make necessary adjustments.

1 Describe how you work together in your relationship to manage your finances. Do you have specific roles or responsibilities? How often do you discuss money and your finances?

2 List five financial goals that both of you want to accomplish. (What is your amount of debt? Do you have a savings plan? Do you use a budget? Do you have an emergency fund?).

3 If you were to regularly (e.g. weekly, monthly) review your finances, what major areas would you want to discuss (e.g. savings, expenses, bills, anticipated expenditures, goals, etc.)? Put a meeting time on your calendar when you can review your expenses, bills and goals.

**notes**  
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# Keeping Your relationship a priority

## actions of reliance

Since two partners will always have some differences, then what is the golden rule for couples?

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It is important to be your spouse's connoisseur, so what are some similarities and differences between what you and your spouse need and want?

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What are some ways that you can keep a good attitude toward these differences and make sure that they compliment your relationship rather than become a source of annoyance?

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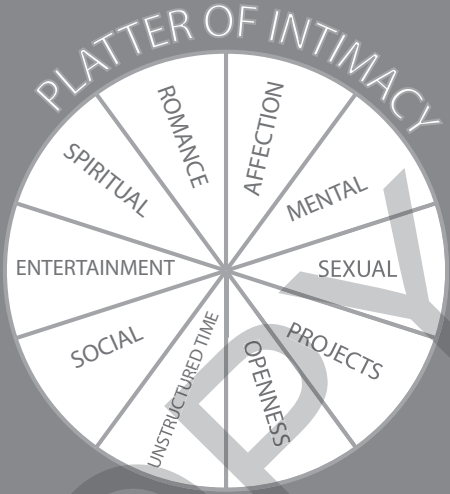
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## BALANCED VS. "BALANCING"

It is normal to have your routine disrupted and to become out of balance...it is only when you stop adjusting and balancing your relationship that little disruptions become life-long ruts. Unresolved little imbalances can become slow leaks in your relationship that eventually will lead to major blowouts. Making a commitment to have regular HUDDLES is the best prevention to these slow leaks! In every huddle, identify two or three activities that will strengthen your feelings of togetherness (see the chart on page 32).

**notes**  
pages 82-83

# Making your top-ten list



### My Top-Ten List

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

### My Partner's Top-Ten List

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

**notes**  
pages 83-84



exploring intimacy

List examples of what you have done and what you would like to do in each of the ten areas.

- Romance \_\_\_\_\_
- Affection & Nurturing \_\_\_\_\_
- Mental Stimulation \_\_\_\_\_
- Social Activities \_\_\_\_\_
- Projects & Tasks \_\_\_\_\_
- Openness in Communication \_\_\_\_\_
- Unstructured Time Together \_\_\_\_\_
- Spiritual Activities \_\_\_\_\_
- Entertainment & Recreation \_\_\_\_\_
- Sexual Relationship \_\_\_\_\_

What are some of the activities you find that you sometimes lose track of or neglect in your relationship?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

What are two or three activities that you think are most important, at this time, to plan to do in your relationship?

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**notes**  
pages 84-87

**HUDDLE STEP THREE RELY (CATCH UP)**

Review your relationship since your last huddle and talk about what you did and how happy you were with your relationship over that time. Use your top-ten lists along with the top-ten intimacy activities. Discuss what you would like to do differently before your next huddle. Know that there may be some things that you did that your partner would like you to do again, or just do more. So be sure to approach this in a positive and receptive attitude and without blame. Write out specific ideas of what you would like to do together in the “before next huddle” column. Use the calendar provided on page 13 (or your own calendar) to plan your specific dates.

ACTIVITIES	SINCE LAST HUDDLE	BEFORE NEXT HUDDLE
Romance		
Affection		
Mental		
Social		
Projects		
Openness		
Unstructured Time		
Spiritual		
Entertainment		
Sexual		



# Session Three

## answer key

### 1 The Give And Take Of Love

*Become connoisseurs of each other with top-ten lists.*

### 2 Make Differences Benefit Your Relationship

*Support each other by sharing responsibilities and finances.*

### 3 Keep Your Relationship A Priority

1. Balanced approach says that if we are not perfectly balanced then something is wrong.
2. Balancing approach says that if we are not constantly balancing our relationship then something is wrong.

### 4 Description of the Top Ten Intimacy Activities

1. Romance: Unexpected gifts/gestures and activities that are which are aesthetically pleasing (prompt an appreciation of beauty)- like a walk in the woods, or watching the stars, or listening to music, or a surprise gift/ act of helpfulness- these activities are most associated with romance
2. Affection and Nurturing: Some want affectionate touch, while others want affectionate words. Nurturing interactions are often more than just touch or words, they include care-taking behaviors and helpfulness.
3. Mental Stimulation: This would involve any type of activity in which learning or thought is stimulated- reading a book together, or listening to a workshop or seminar.
4. Social Activities: This includes activities that involve friends and family.
5. Projects and Tasks: This involves activities that are done together and separately, but are focused on some task or project.
6. Openness in Communication: This is both structured communication and spontaneous talks. It also involves the degree of openness that is experienced in these conversations.
7. Unstructured Time Together: This is time together when there is no specific event or plan. An example of this would be a Saturday when both partners are together without any specific plans- so they sit on the deck and talk, read etc.
8. Spiritual Activities and Closeness: This includes everything from attending a place of worship, to saying a prayer together, to talking about spiritual things.
9. Entertainment and Recreation: This includes attending something recreational or entertaining, as well as participating in some activity that has these qualities.
10. Sexual Relationship: Session five addresses this topic in more detail, but considering your sexual relationship is included in Step Three of your Huddles. This vital source of closeness, enjoyment and intimacy needs to be talked about regularly, and couples should make sure that they understand and meet each other's needs and desires in this area.

HUDDLE Step 3: RELY (DREAM UP)

# 4

## RESILIENTLY CHARTING YOUR COURSE

Commitment is both the promise or vow you made in marriage, and the priority you make your relationship. The heart of commitment refers to the way you belong to each other in the relationship and carry your partner in your heart. Deep commitment also produces a resilience in the marriage that strengthens a couple's ability to cope with stress, life challenges, losses and unavoidable separations. And because your commitment can be weakened by both blessings and challenges, it is essential to review your priorities and renew your commitment in your regular huddles.

### Session Outline

- 1 Being Secure With Belonging to Your Partner (your promise of commitment)
  - 2 Becoming Stronger From the Times of Testing (your perseverance in commitment)
  - 3 Putting Your Commitment to Action (your priorities from commitment)
- Huddle Step Four: COMMIT (Back Up)

### HUDDLES

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**notes**  
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# Being Secure With belonging to your partner

exploring commitment

What is commitment? Think of all the words you associate with commitment.

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How many of the words about commitment also apply to love?

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The promise (vow) of commitment produces a presence with your partner, a perseverance through difficult times, and a resetting of your priorities day by day. What are some ways that you can strengthen the feeling of your partner being with you even though you are apart?

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## EXERCISE: HOLDING YOUR PARTNER IN YOUR HEART

The heart of commitment is found in taking your partner with you in all you do... even though time and space separate you, the depth of your commitment keeps him/her close— together while apart.

1 Practice taking short breaks in the day and think about your partner. Reflect on a good memory, a recent enjoyable or tender time, things that you love about your partner, or ways that your partner loves and cares for you. If you have a personal faith, then say a prayer for your partner... give thanks and ask for ways that you can let your partner know how much he/she means to you. Write down some examples of things about your partner that you would be able to reflect on through the day.

2 Tell your partner what you missed about him/her today. This doesn't have to be anything major or greatly significant. But letting your partner know that you were thinking about him/her at different times through the day while you were apart deepens the security of knowing that you carry your partner in your heart. List some examples of when you think about your partner when you are not together, and what typical things occur in your day that makes you think of him/her.

**notes**  
pages 96-103

# Becoming Stronger From the times of testing

exploring resiliency

Commitment produces the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ the \_\_\_\_\_  
times that develops a resilient spirit and a \_\_\_\_\_ marriage.

Can you think of some examples when commitment helps a marriage persevere through a time of testing? List some examples below.

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### MODEL OF RESILIENCY



COHESION



DESTABILIZATION



MOBILIZATION



ADAPTATION

What are some resources (personal, relational, or community) that you draw upon (or can draw upon) to mobilize (or cope) during times of stress and change?

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**notes**  
pages 104-105

For better or for worse, relationships have a built-in resistance to change!

### EXERCISE: CATCHING YOUR SECOND WIND

It is crucial to be able to work through difficult challenges. Commitment is both the source of this perseverance, as well as the bond that is exercised and strengthened as a result of the problems or hardships that you work through. The following four actions can help you grow through new challenges you face. Begin with reviewing a time when you were “successfully resilient” and talk about how you applied each of the following actions of commitment.

**1 Clean out your bad habits.** First, identify important priorities in your relationship that have kept you close through difficult times. Then come up with at least one way that you have acted in the relationship that has weakened your bond and commitment. Promise to stop this bad habit and to replace it with something better.

**2 Establish some new habits.** Challenges disrupt your normal way of getting along. However, when a challenge or crisis settles down there is an opportunity to get into some new and better habits. You must be careful that you do not let the rush of life direct your choices. Determine one new way of practicing your commitment to your partner that will strengthen your relationship, especially during future challenging times.

**3 Form new connections that foster meaningful relationships.** No matter where life takes you as a couple, you need to have an umbrella of support and friendships. It is very difficult to stay strong without the encouragement and involvement of others. “Friends sharpen friends like iron sharpens iron.” Make a plan for how you are going to improve your friendships and reach out more often to those who benefit your relationship.

**4 Find a positive way of looking at the hardships that you have worked through (or are still working through).** Identify one or two benefits that can come from this situation or difficult time. Look past the situation itself and find something positive that has come out of it. Discuss ways that you want to look back on the situation that has challenged your relationship. In many ways, it is not the events which happen but the way you live with them that determines the story of your relationship.

**notes**  
pages 105

# Putting Your Commitment into action

practicing daily promises

What are some *daily promises* you make to your partner on a regular basis?

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What is one thing you can do to improve your success rate at fulfilling your *daily promises*?

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*Commitment is more than a life-long pledge. It is a **daily promise** to fulfill the needs and desires of your partner.*

**notes**  
pages 105-106



#### HUDDLE STEP FOUR: COMMIT (BACK UP)

Commitment has a very practical side. Commitment prompts you to review the activities of your life and find ways to prioritize your marriage. Committing to regular huddles makes this practical aspect of your commitment a weekly reality and keeps both of you actively involved in running your relationship.

**Here are some questions to use in this step of your huddle.**

- What is one way this week that you felt I was there for you?
- How did we keep each other present in our hearts and minds while we were apart?
- What did I do that made you feel important to me?
- What are some opportunities for me to support you in this next week?
- What can I do or say to you this coming week that will make you feel important, a high priority, and valued?



# Session Four

## answer key

### 1 Being Secure With Belonging To Your Partner (your promise of commitment)

*Commitment is the unwavering belief that I belong to you and you belong to me.*

### 2 Becoming Stronger From The Times Of Testing (your perseverance in commitment)

*Commitment produces the perseverance through the turbulent times that develops a resilient spirit and a resilient marriage.*

*For better or for worse, routines have a built-in resistance to change.*

*Until the pain of staying the same exceeds the pain of change, old patterns often remain.*

*Commitment transforms the hardships into building blocks for positive change in a marriage.*

### 3 Putting Your Commitment Into Action (your priorities from commitment)

*Commitment is more than a life-long pledge. It is a daily promise to fulfill the needs and desires of your partner.*

### Huddles Step Four: COMMIT (BACK UP)

# 5

## ROMANTICALLY RENEWING YOUR UNION

Sexual intimacy is essential to the ongoing bond of closeness, attraction and vitality in your relationship. This session explains the differences between romance, sexual drives and arousal. Learn ways to make your differences work together to keep your love and lovemaking alive. It concludes with a review of the importance of practicing the RAM in regular huddles in order to keep your relationship close and growing.

### Session Outline

- 1 What is Your Sex Drive?
  - 2 What Turns You On?
  - 3 How do you Spell Romance?
  - 4 Is Sex a Physical or Emotional Activity?
  - 5 Good Sex: A Meeting of the Minds (and Bodies)
- Huddle Step Five: TOUCH (Build Up)

### HUDDLES

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# What is Your sex drive?

## exploring sex drive

What do you think is the most common sexual conflict married couples experience? Why is this so prevalent?

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A sex drive is the frequency of your desire or need for sexual contact and closeness. Describe your own sex drive. Rate it on a 1-10 scale with the high drive being a 10.

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# What Turns you on?

## exploring arousal

Try to honestly describe what creates your feelings of arousal. Arousal refers to a feelings of sexual stimulation or excitation.

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How have you and your partner experienced the challenge of meeting each other's needs, especially when your needs are different?

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**notes**  
pages 115-116

### EXERCISE: SEXUAL AND NON-SEXUAL TOUCH

Talk together about what you think would enrich your sexual experience as a couple. Meeting each others' sexual and non-sexual needs is important to keep in balance. Write down what is important to you in both categories. Set mutually agreeable goals to accomplish some of the things in both categories.

SEXUAL NEEDS/DESIRES	NON-SEXUAL NEEDS/DESIRES	GOALS

If you have a higher drive, talk about how you do at meeting the nonsexual needs for closeness and intimacy?

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If you have a lower sex drive, talk about how you do at responding to your partner's initiations, and allowing your partner to bring you into arousal?

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**notes**  
pages 117-118

# How Do You spell romance?

exploring romance

What are some romantic things partners do for each other or do together in their relationship?

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## EXERCISE: MAKING LOVE WITHOUT SEX

1 Identify five ways you would like to be romanced, and then discuss it with your partner. Look at your partner and reassure him/her that you will try to “do unto your partner as your partner would like”—not what you like to do.

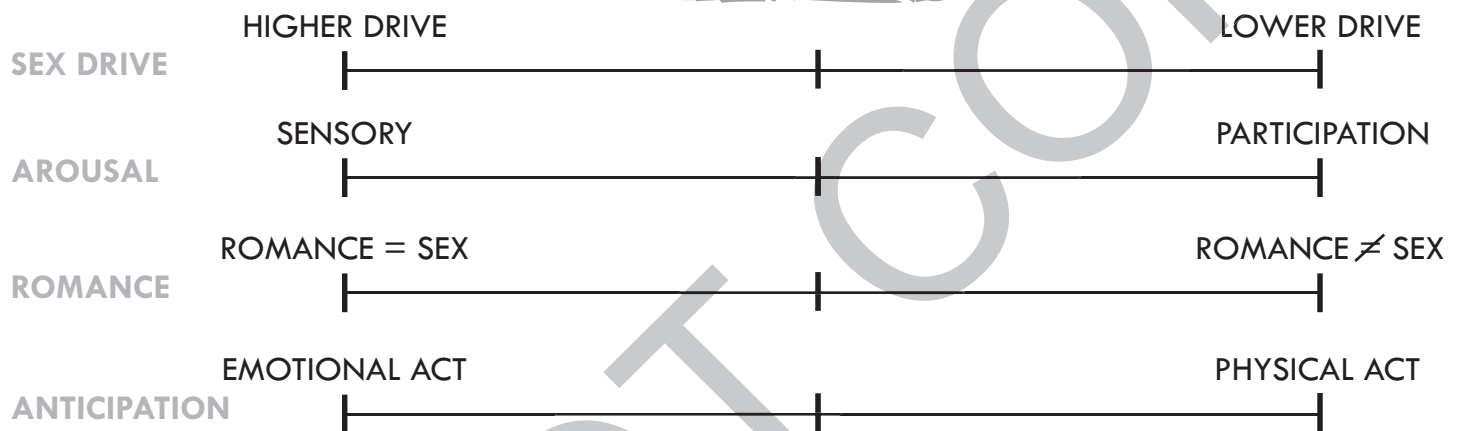
2 Set dates to do each thing on your partner’s list. Romance will be sparked in your relationship ONLY if you do what you have promised. Setting a date will help move you to action!

3 Reminisce about your favorite romantic times with your partner. Come up with ways that you can repeat exercises like this in the future.

**notes**  
pages 119-126

# Is Sex a Physical or emotional activity?

exploring sexual compatibility



## DISCUSSION POINTS

- 1 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 \_\_\_\_\_

Set three agreed-upon goals that will help improve your sexual relationship.

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# Good Sex: A Meeting of the minds & bodies

## HUDDLE STEP FIVE: TOUCH (BUILD UP)

Sex is more than just a physical act—it involves the entire person. When you and your partner engage in sex it may be romantic, passionate, adventurous or just a “quickie.” But regardless of the mood of your lovemaking, it is always your whole self (body and mind) joining with your partner’s whole self.

All of your memories and experiences in the past become woven in this act of intimacy so that you continue to grow in your sexual relationship through the years of your marriage much more than just the physical sexual interaction. The meeting of your hearts deepens and becomes more enriched by the accumulating experiences of your lives together—strands of support, laughter, hardship, separations, reunions, forgiveness, fun, losses and gains—all become woven together in this act of sexual closeness and openness.



# Session Five

## answer key

### 1 What is Your Sex Drive?

Higher and lower sex drives are described—sex drive refers to the frequency that you desire sexual activity.

### 2 What Turns You On?

Differences between the ways that higher and lower drive individuals experience arousal are explained. Arousal refers to a feeling of sexual stimulation or excitation.

### 3 How Do You Spell Romance?

Romance can be sexual and non-sexual. The differences between sexual drives explains much of the differences between the partner's perception and understanding of what makes up romance in a relationship.

### 4 Is Sex a Physical or Emotional Activity?

Both the body and the mind contribute to the experience of the sexual experience. Some sexual difficulties are related to mental and emotional blocks like negative associations with sex, difficulties relaxing or focusing, and unresolved relationship conflicts.

#### DISCUSSION POINTS

1. Both (especially lower drives) need to initiate sometimes.
2. Both (especially higher drives) need to not always be looking for the green light.
3. Both (especially lower drives) need acceptable times to say “not now”.
4. Both (especially higher drives) need to find acceptable ways to initiate.
5. If there are frequent refusals then the reasons need to be discussed and understood.
6. Sometimes sex can be enjoyed without intercourse or climax.

### 5 Good Sex: A Meeting of the Minds (and Bodies)

#### Huddles Step Five: TOUCH (BUILD UP)

Sex is more than just a physical act—it involves your entire person. Sexual intimacy grows with the overall intimacy and closeness in the relationship.

# HUDDLES

Here are a few suggestions for how to make the most out of your huddles:

**First, try to find a time when you have few to no distractions.** Turn off your phones or put them in the other room. If you have kids, find a time when the children will not be around ... when you two are able to focus on each other.

**Next, know that your huddle is designed to take only about 20-30 minutes.** You can certainly take longer if you wish but be careful because too long of a huddle will discourage you from having your next huddle.

**It is important to approach this time together with a positive attitude.** Do not use huddles as a springboard to air all your grievances. Remember, it is normal to have some needs unmet and some deficits in areas of desired activity or closeness. But stay focused on setting relationship goals that will strengthen specific relationship bonds represented in the RAM.

**Review and express the things you have appreciated about each other since your last huddle.** This is a big part of step two (trust-attitudes) and is so vital to maintaining good attitudes and a warmth in your huddles and throughout your relationship.

**Use the RAM to reflect on your relationship bonds, review what has changed, and plan activities that will meet needs and increase your closeness.** Huddles are like a relationship management meeting; however, they are not to be cold or business-like. Rather they are to be warm, positive, playful, productive and mutually satisfying!

**Be willing to take just one step at a time rather than trying to fix everything at once.** Huddles are for both of you and will be best experienced with grace and kindness.

**KNOW: CATCH UP** on what has happened with each other since your last huddle. What you need would like to talk about? If too long, then set a later time to discuss.

- Overall, how has our communication been going?
- Have we been having our regular talk times?
- What usually interrupts these times—distractions, devices, schedules?
- What are any changes we need to make to improve talk times?
- What topics or issues do we need to talk about, or talk more about?

**TRUST: PATCH UP** your trust and positive attitudes by sharing how your spouse has benefited you since your last huddle. Affirm apologies and resolutions from misunderstandings/conflicts.

- Admit your own shortcomings. Restate apologies, affirm forgiveness and trust.
- Describe your partner's strengths. Take time to reflect and express your appreciation of your spouse. Describe in detail how your spouse's actions reflect strengths you value.
- Share the ways your partner's strengths benefit you. Review the past week and put into words the ways that your life is benefited and blessed by what your spouse has done for you.

**RELY: DREAM UP** what you would like to do before your next huddle to meet some of the needs and wants on your spouse's top ten list. Be sure to put your plans on your calendars!

- Review your top-ten list, your spouse's list, and the top-ten intimacy activities.
- What have we done in the last week that has fulfilled

*something on our top-ten lists?*

- What would be good to do in the upcoming week to fulfill something on the top-ten lists?
- How can we work together this week to share the load?
- Are there any aspects of our finances we need to set a time to talk about?

**COMMIT: BACK UP** each other by looking ahead on your calendars and finding ways to support each other in your upcoming responsibilities and activities.

- What is one way this week that you felt I was there for you?
- How did we keep each other present in our hearts and minds while we were apart?
- What did I do that made you feel important to me?
- What are some opportunities for me to support you in this next week?
- What can I do or say to you this coming week that will make you feel important, a high priority, and valued?

**TOUCH: BUILD UP** each other by taking some extra time to talk about your affection, romance and sexual intimacy. Express your love in words and affection as you wrap up your time.

- Are there any changes you desire in our expressions of affection?
- Has our sexual relationship recently been mutually enjoyable and satisfying?
- Do we have any romance planned for the upcoming week or two?

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