

## ADAPTATION FROM LOVE HABITS BY MARCI BELL, MA, LPC

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### QUESTIONS FOR PARTNERS

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IS YOUR MARRIAGE A SAFE PLACE TO ADMIT PERSONAL FAULTS, SHORTCOMINGS, AND FAILINGS?

WHAT CAN YOU DO TO MAKE YOUR MARRIAGE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT FOR ADMITTING FAULT?

WOULD YOU LIKE YOUR SPOUSE TO SPEND TIME FOCUSING ON HIS OR HER ISSUES BEFORE FOCUSING ON YOU?

IF THIS IS WHAT YOU DESIRE, WILL YOU AGREE TO WORK ON YOURSELF BEFORE HELPING YOUR SPOUSE TO CHANGE?

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### PERSONAL REFLECTION

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CONFLICTS ARE RESOLVED FASTER WHEN PARTNERS ARE PREPARED FOR RESOLUTION BEFORE DISCUSSING ISSUES.

AFTER CONSIDERING EACH ITEM FROM CHECKLIST 6-2, ARE YOU AGREEABLE TO RESOLVING ISSUES IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP?

### Survey 6-1: When is personal renewal required?

- Have you lost hope for the positive outcome of your marital problems?
- Do you believe that your mate only has bad intentions toward you, to the point that you doubt that he/she ever loved you?
- Do you believe that the cause of your problems is completely and entirely the result of your partner's contributions?
- Do you fail to see how your contributions are contributing to relationship distress?
- Is the "issue" so important that you are willing to do anything, including sacrifice your relationship in order to win the fight?

Are you and your spouse involved in an impasse that is harming the relationship?

### CHECKLIST 6-2: SELF-TEST CHECKLIST.

1. **BEGIN WITH PERSONAL RENEWAL.** MEDITATE AND PRAY FOR HELP IN THE PROCESS OF PERSONAL RENEWAL. BEGIN WITH PERSONAL REFLECTION AND TUNE IN TO YOUR INNER EXPERIENCE.
2. **WHAT ARE THE MAIN ISSUES AS YOU SEE THEM?** DETERMINE YOUR WILLINGNESS TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY CONTRIBUTIONS THAT YOU ARE MAKING TO THOSE ISSUES. WHAT IS YOUR ROLE IN ISSUES? WHEN YOU ARE PREPARED TO TALK TO YOUR SPOUSE, A WRITTEN LIST CAN ASSIST BOTH OF YOU IN FOCUSING ON ONE ISSUE AT A TIME.
3. **WHAT FACTORS ARE WITHIN YOUR CONTROL?** INSTEAD OF FOCUSING ON THE FRUSTRATION OR HOPELESSNESS OF THE SITUATION, WHAT CHANGES CAN YOU MAKE?
4. **WHAT ARE YOUR MOTIVES AND INTENTIONS?** YOU DON'T WANT TO PUNISH YOUR PARTNER BECAUSE IT'LL ONLY MAKE THE SITUATION WORSE. BE SURE THAT YOU HAVE THE BEST INTERESTS OF BOTH YOU AND YOUR SPOUSE IN MIND.
5. **ARE YOU PREPARED TO APPROACH YOUR SPOUSE WITH CALM EMOTIONS?** IT MAY REQUIRE SOME TIME, PRAYER/MEDITATION, JOURNALING, COUNSELING, ETC. UNTIL YOU CAN DISCUSS A DISTRESSING ISSUE WITHOUT VENTING A FURY OF EMOTIONS. DISCUSSIONS FRAUGHT WITH A BAD ATTITUDE CAN HALT THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS BY CAUSING ESCALATION OR WITHDRAWAL.
6. **ARE YOU PREPARED TO HEAR WHAT YOUR SPOUSE HAS TO SAY?** YOU WILL ALSO TAKE TURNS AS A LISTENER. DO YOU WANT TO HEAR YOUR SPOUSE'S THOUGHTS? IF NOT, YOU'RE NOT READY.
7. **ARE YOU CONSIDERING YOUR SPOUSE'S FEELINGS?** MAKE SURE THAT YOU CONSIDER YOUR SPOUSE'S FEELINGS AT LEAST AS IMPORTANT AS YOUR OWN.
8. **ARE YOU FREE FROM ASSUMPTIONS AND PRECONCEPTIONS?** TRY TO BE OBJECTIVE AND NON-JUDGMENTAL IN YOUR APPROACH. DON'T ASSUME YOU KNOW WHAT YOUR SPOUSE WILL SAY OR HOW YOUR SPOUSE WILL REACT; THAT ISN'T FAIR TO HIM/HER.
9. **DO YOU HAVE HOPE FOR THE POSITIVE RESOLUTION OF YOUR ISSUES?** REMAIN OPEN-MINDED ABOUT POSSIBLE RESOLUTIONS. DO HAVE SUGGESTIONS FOR RESOLUTION: HOWEVER, TRY NOT TO DECIDE IN ADVANCE ON JUST ONE RESOLUTION THAT ONLY YOU BELIEVE IS PERFECT.
10. **DO YOU SEE YOUR SPOUSE AS YOUR TEAMMATE/ALLY/CONFIDANT WITH WHOM YOU WILL WORK TO RESOLVE THESE ISSUES?** IF YOU APPROACH YOUR PARTNER AS AN OPPONENT, YOU WILL FIND ONLY CONFLICT AND NOT RESOLUTION.
11. **ARE YOU PREPARED WITH AN ATTITUDE OF LOVE?** THIS DOESN'T MEAN THAT YOU WILL ALWAYS FEEL LOVE; HOWEVER, YOU CAN CHOOSE TO PORTRAY AN ATTITUDE OF LOVE AND KINDNESS, JUST AS YOU WOULD TO ANY PERSON WHOM YOU MEET.
12. **IS YOUR GOAL TO WORK AS A TEAM IN DEVELOPING CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS?** IT'S NOT LIKELY THAT YOU'LL BE ABLE TO HAVE COMPLETE RESOLUTION THE FIRST TIME THAT YOU DISCUSS AN ISSUE. IT MAY TAKE A FEW (OR MANY) CONSTRUCTIVE DISCUSSIONS BEFORE YOU ENJOY COMPLETE RESOLUTION. [IT TOOK THE AUTHORS OF THIS PROGRAM ABOUT 8 YEARS OF PRACTICING TO BE ABLE TO DISCUSS FINANCES WITHOUT TRIGGERING UNPLEASANT EMOTIONS.]