

5 STEP ACTION
The PLAN TO A
HAPPY & HEALTHY
Marriage
WORKBOOK

INCREASE THE JOY
OF SANCTITY, SAFETY, AND
STABILITY IN YOUR HOME

A GLOBAL INITIATIVE OF THE MARRIAGE RESTORATION PROJECT
KEEPING COUPLES TOGETHER, HAPPILY

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The following exercises are designed to complement the material in both the book and the audio cds. The questions are designed to get you thinking about how you can practically apply what you have learned. To gain the most from these exercises, please read the chapter in the book and listen to the corresponding audio before completing. If you are doing this program along with your spouse, you may want to do the exercises together or separate

STEP 1: COMMITMENT

Commitment is the prerequisite to any successful relationship. With commitment, you can weather almost anything that comes your way. Without it, even the smallest problems will knock you off balance. Although you may have thought you committed by getting married, most couples don't foresee the challenges that wait them after their nuptials.

Now is the time to “renew” your vows, so to speak, and commit to the relationship, even if it did not yet turnout the way you were expecting. Committing, even before the relationship improves will help you show up so that you can do the work to make it better.

Take some time and think about the following questions. When you have an answer, fill in the blanks. These questions will help you understand how ready you are to commit, and what may be getting in the way of actualizing this first step to saving your marriage.

1) Do you think you can commit to your relationship, even before it improves? If yes, how may that be challenging for you? If no, why not?

2) What is holding you back from committing to your relationship? Is there something that you are afraid of losing or letting go of?

3) What would it look like if you dropped all of your inhibitions and you fully committed to your relationship (even if your spouse has not)?

4) List one action step you can take to show your commitment today.

The key to commitment is remaining in the present, not in the future. If you have set a “deadline” for your relationship to improve, you may be already pronouncing your marriage as dead.

1) Do you have a “deadline” that you are giving your relationship? If so, why?

2) Even if you have not set a date, have you mentally checked out of your relationship?

There are many “good” reasons not to commit to your marriage. Even if you believe in theory that commitment is necessary, you may be too _____ (fill in the blank) to commit. If you are too angry with your spouse or you even hate your spouse, how can you move beyond these feelings and invest in your marriage?

Many couples in crisis conclude that they simply married the wrong person. In that case, commitment seems pointless, as their marriage was a mistake. Although it may seem your spouse is not the same person you married, know that if you chose to get married, there is a deeper reason why you made that choice.

Whether it be a part of the Divine Plan or to fulfill an unconscious psychological agenda, it is not a coincidence that you chose your spouse. Let’s explore some of the issues you are experiencing with your spouse and how they are not a proof that you married the wrong person, rather they demonstrate how you picked the perfect match that will help best facilitate your growth and healing.

1) Why did you pick your spouse?

2) What did it look like when you fell in love?

3) Describe in detail some of your favorite memories from your dates.

4) How has your spouse changed since you first met and committed to him/her?

5) List all of the things that bother you about your spouse that you have discovered since you have been married.

6) List some of the negative character traits of your primary caregivers (mother, father, etc...)

7) Is there any similarity between what triggers you about your spouse to some of the negative memories you had growing up or in other relationships?

8) How might you be triggering your spouse's negative past experiences?

9) How can you take responsibility for your role in the relationship?

There are surprisingly some couples that claim to never have really liked their spouse. If you got married and have children, you have made a commitment to make an effort to create a loving relationship. Love can grow by performing acts of love. It can also increase by learning new activities together.

1) List thoughts, words, and actions that you can implement to increase your love for your spouse.

2) What new activities can you do together to increase your bond? (i.e., playing tennis, taking a cooking class)

Mental illness is real, yet often treatable. Unfortunately, it can be a major factor in discouraging commitment. It is important to know whether a competent professional has actually diagnosed your spouse and, if so, he/she is being treated effectively. Despite what you may think, it is quite possible to have a fulfilling marriage even if your partner has a mental illness.

1) Do you believe your spouse has a mental illness or psychological disorder?

2) What psychological disorders have you thought your spouse has?

3) Have others suggested that your spouse has a mental illness?

4) Could they be biased? Are they licensed mental health professionals?

5) How has this “diagnosis” impacted your marriage on a day-to-day basis?

6) How has this “diagnosis” impacted the way you see your spouse?

7) Are you using your spouse's mental illness as a way to get out of your marriage?

8) Do you think you too suffer from mental illness?

9) Do you or spouse suffer from stress?

10) How do you think mental illness is different from ordinary life stressors?

