

Discussion Preparation Guide

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“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to become angry.” -James 1:19
“Listen to counsel, accept criticism that you may be wise the rest of your days.” -Proverbs 19:20
“A word spoken in the appropriate context is like ‘Apples of gold in settings of silver.’” -Proverbs 25:11

"Sometimes you can't see yourself clearly until you see yourself through the eyes of others." The Marriage Mirror helps you see yourself through the eyes and ears of your partner. Your partner is your "mirror." As the poet lamented, "If only we had been given the power to see ourselves as others see us." The Marriage Mirror gives you that power. Take advantage of this invaluable opportunity to see yourself as your spouse sees you, make appropriate changes, and watch what God does for your relationship.

“So don't be averse to converse. Don't balk at a talk. Let's get ready to really communicate.” -R. Petersen

Advance Preparation for Meeting Together

1. Choose a time and place at home where you will be uninterrupted for 45 minutes, to review and compare your assessments.
2. Collect, in advance, at least five compliments that you will give your partner. What attracted you to your partner? What do you most appreciate about your partner? What did your partner do this past week that you admired or liked? The more you focus on your partner's positive attributes and behaviors, the more you will continue to notice.

Follow this Procedure to Review and Discuss Your Marriage Mirror

A. Review the Purpose of your Discussion.

Having this kind of conversation will:

1. Show that you are making your relationship a priority.
2. Help each other feel valued and loved.
3. Increase self-esteem.
4. Foster trust, romance, and intimacy.
5. Strengthen your overall relationship.

B. Review the “Ground Rules” for your Discussion.

Remember, how you provide feedback is as important as the feedback itself.

1. Avoid these “Turn-Offs”
 - a. **Do not meet if either partner is tired, hungry, irritable, or intoxicated.**
 - b. Set aside, avoid, and eliminate any complaints or criticisms you may have of your partner. Do not even hint at disappointments or hurt feelings. THAT WON'T HELP!!

2. Practice these Powerful “Turn-Ons”
 - a. Sit close to or next to each other, not across from each other.
 - b. Smile, make eye contact, and relax.
 - c. Maintain an optimistic tone of voice and a friendly facial expression.
 - d. Keep your communication warm and caring.
 - e. Keep an open posture.

C. Always Begin your Discussion with Compliments.

Beginning the conversation with compliments will create a warm climate and positive energy for the rest of the meeting.

1. Decide who will begin to share the 5 (or more) compliments about your partner that each of you collected in advance.
2. Take turns complimenting your partner’s positive attributes and behaviors.
3. Sincerely thank each other for the feedback.

D. Focus on the Following as you Review and Compare your Answers.

1. Remember you are concentrating on fostering harmony and goodwill.
2. Pay attention to what the “mirror” is revealing:
 - a. Where are your perceptions **similar**?
 - b. Where do your perceptions **differ**?
 - c. What do you and your partner **like** about how you communicate with each other?
 - d. What would you and your partner like to **change** about your communication?
 - e. Is there anything about what your partner said that **surprises** you?
3. How can your partner help you improve your communication skills? Offer positive ideas and suggestions.
4. End with a positive note and thank each other for the feedback.

Next Steps

The following steps may be completed at the same time as your Assessment Review, or you may choose to set a time to meet again, preferably within a week, to complete the remaining steps. Each time you meet, encourage each other with positive feedback.

- A. Choose a Skill to Work on.
- B. Complete Your Action Plan together.