

DISCOVERING NEEDS

Post Weekend Resource

PURPOSE: To share with couples the concept that feelings relate to our built-in needs, and how we can identify these needs through our dialogue. This outline includes a 10/15 and time for participation in small group sharing.

Questions to answer before writing this talk:

1. How do I distinguish between my wants and my needs?
2. What recent specific example can I give that shows the difference between a want and a need and why I should share my needs with my spouse?
3. How do we LIVE closer rather than just FEEL closer?
4. How does knowing my spouse's feelings and needs in one area affect other areas of our life together? Give a specific recent example.
5. How is our dialogue more meaningful when we share feelings and needs? Why can't we bypass our feelings and only share needs?

NOTE: Emphasize that we share feelings FIRST and then the needs. We can't just talk about needs without sharing feelings.

- I. We have found that feelings are more critical to the dialogue process than we first understood. The feelings we experience are signals of something significant going on inside us. Feelings relate to our built-in needs. (4 minutes Wife and Husband)
 - A. Briefly point out the difference between physical needs (food, shelter, security) and emotional needs (love, self-worth, belonging, autonomy).
 1. The need to LOVE another intimately and be loved back.
 2. The need for SELF-WORTH, to like who I am and appreciate my goodness.
 3. The need to BELONG, to be a part of, to make a difference in someone else's life.
 4. The need for AUTONOMY, to be free to be myself and to take responsibility for myself, to not have to lean on someone else to be complete, to have the freedom to be a whole person standing on my own two feet.

- B. Differentiate between needs and wants (i.e. I may say I want my spouse to stay home with me tonight, but if I don't identify my need as the need to be loved by him/her, then he/she may stay home and watch TV and my want is satisfied, but not my need).
 - 1. If a want is unsatisfied, I may feel discouraged; but if a need is unmet, something shrivels up inside of me and I don't function as well. Give personal examples.
 - C. I am responsible for my own needs and have to accept the fact that they can only be met in a relationship.
 - 1. My spouse can only HELP me meet my needs. His/her love is what can help me to meet them.
 - D. Sharing needs with my spouse tells him/her more about who I am.
 - E. Our needs are one of the blessings God gives to us. They call us to relationship as we seek to fulfill them.
- II. Feelings are signals of our needs. (2 minutes - Wife OR Husband)
- A. There are four broad feeling groups: MAD, SAD, GLAD, and SCARED.
 - 1. RED LIGHT feelings (mad, sad, scared) indicate needs are not being fulfilled.
 - 2. GREEN LIGHT feelings (glad) indicate that needs are being fulfilled.
 - B. Give an example of a recent experience of a red light feeling; where it came from; what need (s) it indicated were not being met.
- III. Feelings that are unidentified and unshared often negatively affect our relationship. When I am in touch with my feelings I can better control my behavior in order to become responsible for myself. (2 minutes - Wife OR Husband)
- A. Give an example of a time recently when I experienced a strong feeling and didn't really get in touch with it, label or share it.
 - B. How did living with this feeling affect my attitudes and behavior and our relationship? (Consider feelings like frustration, tenderness, hurt, nervousness.)
 - C. Why have I found it important for me and our relationship to be in touch with and share feelings I am experiencing both in and out of dialogue?

- IV. Why WE Dialogue (3 minutes - Wife AND Husband)
 - A. When we dialogue deeply we have a chance to LIVE (as opposed to merely feel) closer to each other.
 - B. Each day each of us is different because our ability to meet our needs differs.
 - 1. What happens to me and around me affects me and what my needs are.
 - 2. We need to determine each day where we are and what is happening within us as we strive to meet our needs.
 - C. Dialoguing down to the level of feelings to discover our needs positively affects all other forms of our communication: sex, discussion, prayer, non-verbal, fighting, etc.
 - D. Dialogue can help me get in touch with myself, with my behavior and how I should choose to live in light of my values and my commitments to myself, my spouse and my family.
- V. Dialogue and Exercise to Identify Needs (1 minute explanation - Wife OR Husband)
 - A. Give handout (Needs Identification).
 - B. Give question for dialogue and instructions.
 - 1. “In what area of our relationship do I feel most pressured? How do I feel about my answer?”
 - 2. Ask the couples to identify and share feelings first, and after they have done that, to answer the questions on the needs sheet, and share answers with each other. (10 minutes for writing - 15 minutes for dialogue)
- VI. Small Group Sharing (1 minute - Wife OR Husband) - about 20 minutes for group sharing.
 - A. What red light feelings have I experienced during the past 24 hours and what need is not being met?
 - B. Guidelines for sharing
 - 1. This should not be a time for discussion.
 - 2. Share only for yourself and not for others in the group.
 - 3. Don't comment on others sharing and do not interrupt others when they are talking.
 - 4. Do share honestly from deep within you.

5. Share one at a time around the circle. Individuals can pass, but when everyone else has shared, we ask that you come back to those who passed and give them another chance.
6. All should try to take their turn even if the same ideas have been verbalized by someone else. You might say it differently and possibly in a way others can relate to.

Dialogue Questions:

1. How did we talk and live together before our Marriage Encounter weekend? HDIF sharing this with you?
2. What effect did sharing feelings have on our weekend? HDIFAT?
3. What did the weekend do for me in my relationship to you? HDIFAT?
4. How is living the weekend an on-going journey? DFILD
5. What new avenues of communication have opened up through our dialogue? HDIFAT?
6. Have I always made the decision to love since our weekend? HDIFAMA?
7. What need (s) have I found to be unmet in our relationship? What recurring feeling is a signal of that need?
8. How can I be responsible for my own needs? (A self-reflection question, not dialogue)
9. How can my spouse help me fulfill my need (s)? (Self-reflection)
10. What "RED LIGHT" feeling (s) have I experienced lately? What need was not being fulfilled? DFILD
11. How is it helpful to have you share feelings and need (s) with me? How do I feel when you do not? DFILD
12. What happens to me personally when I touch you deeply through dialogue? What happens to our relationship? DFILD

