

## **Risking to Trust in Dialogue – 33:00**

### **Outline & Mentality - Common Protestant Outline**

#### **Objective**

To help the couples realize that we all have obstacles and fears that keep us from risking to trust our spouse in dialogue; to motivate them to face their fears and risk being vulnerable by trusting in the goodness and love of their spouse.

#### **Goals of this presentation**

##### **To know**

- there are obstacles and fears that limit their willingness to trust
- trust is having confidence in their spouse's love for them
- risking to trust is an action, not a feeling
- risking to trust in dialogue can bring about intimacy in their relationship

##### **To do**

- trust in their spouse's love for them
- trust in the goodness of their spouse
- risk being vulnerable with their feelings in their dialogue

##### **To experience**

- love and acceptance from their spouse
- deeper intimacy in their relationship

#### **Flow of the presentation**

Risking to Trust in Dialogue begins by illustrating obstacles and fears that limit our willingness to trust our spouse with our feelings in dialogue. The couples are invited to complete an exercise on “The Ways I Limit My Trust” in order to determine how they may be reluctant to share their feelings in their dialogue. We then give clear, specific examples of the difference between trust and risk and define how these terms are used on this WWME experience. We illustrate a personal experience of risking to trust our spouse with our feeling in dialogue. The transformation story of Aldonza/Dulcinea is introduced, followed by two personal stories of transformation. Clergy leader or spouse shares about the power of love's affirmation and its transforming effects, and teaches the dialogue question, with special emphasis on what is meant by a feeling that is difficult to share. The talk is concluded by strong motivation from the Lay couple for the couples to risk to trust their spouse in their own dialogue. Throughout this talk, teach and reference that trust refers to having confidence in our spouse's love for us and risk refers to actually sharing our feelings.

### **Connection with other presentations**

In Encounter with Self, we discover that our self doubts often influence our willingness to risk being vulnerable with our spouse. In Marriage in Today's World, we learn about making the decision to love or the decision to be loved, which is necessary if we take the risk to trust our spouse with our feelings in dialogue. In Listening, we learn the importance of listening with our heart, which helps us to build trust. The dialogues in Areas for Reaching Out to Each Other provide examples of reaching out to share feelings in sensitive areas of our relationship. We make a decision to risk sharing our feelings in dialogue because we have trust and confidence in our spouse's love for us and believe that our spouse will accept our feelings, rather than reject or tolerate them. Making a decision to risk being vulnerable to our spouse connects to God's Desire for Marriage because it illustrates how we are accountable for the quality of our relationship, which can increase our capacity for intimacy.

**I. Introduction and optional opening prayer** (LH or LW: 0:30)

State:

*This talk is entitled Risking to Trust in Dialogue. We are on page \_\_\_ of the Workbook.*

Opening prayer (optional)

Suggested wording:

*Lord, you have opened our hearts to the beauty of living an intimate and responsible relationship; but still, there are so many doubts and fears that hold us back. Give us the courage to leave our fears behind, to trust in the tender love and goodness of our spouse, and to discover how the power of love can transform us.*

**II. Obstacles and fears that limit our willingness to trust**

(Total time: 5:30)

**II A. Illustrate how I sometimes cannot accept my own feelings**

(CL or CS: 1:00)

CL or CS introduces this section by pointing out that there are obstacles and fears that limit our willingness to trust in dialogue.

- Explain that when you do not accept a particular feeling in yourself, it is difficult to trust your spouse with this feeling.
- Give a brief current example.

Formation:

The whole foundation of this talk is based on having feelings that I find difficult to accept in myself – and therefore, will not risk to share with my spouse in dialogue. This is a pivotal point that weaves throughout this talk. It is critically important for each presenter to understand how our self-worth can be deeply affected by experiencing such a feeling and how we may fear revealing this feeling to our spouse.

When I have feelings that I consider unacceptable – or even wrong – I may judge myself as unacceptable too. My self-worth plummets because I believe that “I should not feel that way.” The feeling I cannot accept in myself often contrasts with the way I see myself and wish to present myself to others. For instance, I may see and present myself as capable, responsible, and effective; but there are times when I may feel ashamed, confused, or hopeless. It is difficult for me to accept these feelings because they are so contradictory to how I see myself. Experiencing these feelings may lead to harsh judgments about myself and trigger fears about how my spouse may see me. Deep down, I may be afraid that I am not worthy of my spouse’s love. I am often reluctant to trust my spouse with a feeling in dialogue because I fear how my spouse will react – or worry how this might affect our relationship. When I have a feeling that shakes my self-confidence, it is a personal risk to reveal this feeling to my spouse, especially when I do not accept the feeling myself. It is only through sharing these feelings that we come to experience the depth of our spouse’s love and acceptance.

## **II B. Illustrate how my poor self-image limits my willingness to trust** (LH or LW: B & C: 2:00)

### **NOTE:**

Lay husband or wife shares both B & C.

Transition into this section by advising the couples that our poor self image is another obstacle that limits our willingness to trust in dialogue.

- Give a brief current example to illustrate how your poor self-image is an obstacle that keeps you from fully trusting your spouse in dialogue.
- This section should focus on the same kind of self-doubts that were identified in Encounter with Self - the self-doubts that arise when you experience a feeling that is in sharp contrast to how you wish to be seen. Describe how this view of yourself as unacceptable or unlovable makes it difficult to trust in your spouse's love for you and to risk sharing your feelings. Do you worry that your spouse might judge you the same way you judge yourself?
- Do not refer to physical or psychological abuse, alcoholism, or other addictions.

## **II C. Illustrate how my fears limit my willingness to trust**

Transition into this section by letting the couples know that our fears also limit our willingness to trust in dialogue.

- Identify specific fears that limit your willingness to trust your spouse in dialogue. (See the list of “Fears” below for examples.) Give several personal examples to illustrate how these fears may limit you from fully sharing certain feeling with your spouse in dialogue.
- You may want to refer back to Encounter with Self (without naming your dominant personality style) to identify your self-doubts or what affirms you or brings you down, and link that to your fears.
- After identifying your own specific fears, end this section by listing a few other fears that may be obstacles for the couples.

Some examples of fears that limit our willingness to trust in dialogue:

- fear of anger
- fear of change
- fear of commitment
- fear of conflict
- fear of control
- fear of criticism
- fear of being disappointed
- fear of failure
- fear of having to live up to expectations
- fear of having to take responsibility
- fear of hurting my spouse
- fear of intimacy
- fear of losing control
- fear of losing my independence
- fear of losing my spouse's love
- fear of looking foolish
- fear of being overprotected
- fear of reaction or retaliation
- fear of rejection
- fear of rocking the boat

## **II D. Exercise: “The Ways I Limit My Trust”** (Other Lay spouse: 2:30)

### **II D 1. Introduce the exercise** (0:45)

The Lay spouse who did not share II.B & C refers the couples to the exercise on page \_\_\_\_ of the Workbook entitled “The Ways I Limit My Trust.” The purpose of this exercise is to help the couples recognize the ways they may be limiting their trust in their spouse and how these limits keep them from risking to share their feelings in dialogue.

- Introduce the exercise and ask the couples to reflect on their experience of sharing feelings with their spouse in dialogues this Marriage Encounter experience.
- Ask them to read through the exercise and check off all the ways they may have found themselves holding back from sharing their feelings in dialogue.
- Assure the couples that the exercise is for their personal reflection only and that they will not be sharing the results with their spouse.
- Encourage them to be honest in their assessment.

### **II D 2. Give the couples time to complete the exercise** (1:30)

### **II D 3. End the exercise with a closing statement** (0:15)

Suggested wording:

*Identifying our fears is a good start to moving beyond them. The next step is making the decision to trust our spouse enough to risk sharing our feelings in dialogue. Remember that courage is not the lack of fear - it is moving ahead in spite of the fear.*

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| <h2><b>III. Trust in dialogue is a decision to risk sharing my feelings with my spouse</b> (LH or LW: 1:30)</h2> |
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### **III A. Give clear specific examples of the difference between trust and risk**

Lay husband or wife uses a transition statement to lead into this section.

Suggested wording:

*Trust and risk are two very important, but distinct, elements in our daily interactions. Trust is a state of mind - a firm belief in the reliability of someone else. Risk is taking action based on that belief. Here are a few quick comparisons of the difference between trust and risk.*

Give at least three specific examples to illustrate the difference between trust and risk, such as:

- **Trust** is letting someone else pack my parachute; **risk** is when I jump out of the airplane with that parachute on my back.
- **Trust** is believing that my doctor is experienced and capable; **risk** is when I let him take me into surgery.

- **Trust** is believing that our teenagers have good values; **risk** is when we leave them alone for the weekend.
- **Trust** is believing that my spouse is a good driver; **risk** is when I let him or her drive while I take a nap.
- **Trust** is believing that my spouse has a good sense of direction; **risk** is when we leave the house without a GPS.

Conclude with the following statement:

*As you can see, trust is a state of mind; risk is taking an action.*

### **III B. Define trust and risk as these terms are used in Marriage Encounter**

Begin this section with a transition statement:

Suggested wording:

*In any intimate relationship, trust and risk go hand-in-hand. On this Marriage Encounter, when we use the terms trust and risk, we are referring to how those elements are important in our dialogue.*

Refer them to page \_\_\_\_ in the Workbook and read the definitions as they appear.

- **Trust** is having confidence in my spouse's love for me.
- **Risk** is going beyond my obstacles and fears and becoming vulnerable by sharing my deepest feelings with my spouse.

Formation:

Trust and risk are both viewed as actions. However, trust is also a state of mind. Trust is having confidence in my spouse's love for me. The focus is on believing in the love and goodness of my spouse, who will receive the feeling I risk to share in our dialogue. However, even having confidence in my spouse's love for me does not totally eliminate my obstacles and fears. I must still make the sometimes difficult decision to risk and become vulnerable. Trust is believing in my spouse. Risk is a personal decision about what I am willing to DO. Risk is sharing about me.

### **IV. Sharing of an experience of risking to trust in dialogue**

(Total time: 10:00; LH or LW and CL or CS: A-D, 5:00 each)

**NOTE:**

Lay husband or wife and the Clergy leader or spouse share an experience of risking to trust in dialogue in a specific area where it was difficult to share your feelings with your spouse. When identifying an area in which it has been difficult to share your feelings, remember the focus is on an area of your relationship, not a personal behavior, fear, weakness, or fault in yourself or your spouse. It is not necessary to elaborate, defend, or give a lengthy explanation of the area. This is merely a starting point to illustrate how you risked to trust in dialogue.

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A wide range of possible areas for the risk sharing is listed below. Far more important than the area, however, is the risk involved in sharing your feeling. The risk should be significant. Even though the topics of sexual relationship, finances, and separation by death are the focus in Areas for Reaching Out to Each Other, it is quite possible that the strongest risk here may involve feelings in one of those areas - particularly sex, since it is so central to a couple and the way husbands and wives view themselves. Any area may be considered as long as it is associated with a strong feeling that you find difficult to share with your spouse and does not lead into any of the topics that do not belong in dialogue, as outlined in VI A.

Possible areas to consider for the Risk dialogue: (This list is not meant to be all-inclusive.)

- Career choices or responsibilities
- Communication in our marriage
- Disciplining children
- Division of household tasks
- Elderly parents
- Entertaining/socializing with others
- Health issues or concerns
- Holiday celebrations
- Leisure/vacation time
- Masculinity/femininity
- Material possessions
- Prayer life
- Process of decision making
- Punctuality
- Relationship with adult children
- Relationship with in-laws or other relatives
- Religious practices and beliefs
- Rest
- Retirement
- Special interests or hobbies

While any area is appropriate for dialogue outside this experience, topics such as addictive behaviors, sexual orientation, or confessional material would be distracting to the couples if shared now. These should be avoided, as they would shift the focus to the area, rather than keeping the focus on the risk and trust involved in sharing feelings in dialogue.

Cautions:

- The sharing of risking to trust in dialogue can stray into a focus on the area in which it is difficult to share feelings, rather than describing the specific feeling that is difficult to share (as opposed to a “difficult” feeling).
- Do not tell dramatic or traumatic stories.

- As with all personal sharings, care must be taken to avoid letting our story become a distraction for the couples. Do not give them an excuse to focus on you instead of their relationship.
- Remember that our non-verbal communication should be clearly demonstrated to the couples. When presenting an experience of risking to trust in dialogue, do not portray an instance of forgiveness and healing. The focus is on risking to trust your spouse with your feelings in dialogue.

**IV A. Briefly identify an area in which it has been difficult for me to share my feelings (1:00)**

Lay husband or spouse begins this section with a transition statement.

Suggested wording:

*Now we are going to give you a personal example of how we trust and risk in dialogue.*

Each person speaking (LH or LW and then CL or CS) then begins IV. by clearly identifying an area in which it has been difficult to share feelings in dialogue before continuing.

**IV A 1. Explain what it is about me that makes it difficult to share in this area**

- Explain what it is about yourself that makes it difficult to share your feelings with your spouse in this area.
- You may want to refer back to how you described your qualities, values, likes, dislikes, strengths, weaknesses, etc. in Encounter with Self; however, there should be no mention here of your dominant personality style.

**IV A 2. Name my specific fears and explain how these fears make it difficult to risk to trust my spouse in dialogue**

- Name your specific fears.
- Explain how your fears make it difficult for you to risk to trust your spouse with your feelings in this area of your relationship.
- Refer to the type of “fears” mentioned in II C.

**IV B. Describe how I decided to risk sharing my feeling in this area in dialogue (2:00)**

Begin this section with the transition statement:

*Recently we dialogued in the area of \_\_\_\_\_, and I risked to share my feeling.*

Address points 1 through 5 below, sharing your personal experience during this specific dialogue. This is not a story about the area, but a sharing about you and the process you went



through in risking to trust your spouse with your feeling in the area. In this section you are sharing only the strongest feeling you experienced.

### **IV B 1. State the feeling in this area that was difficult for me to share**

Begin with a transition statement.

Suggested wording:

*The feeling I found most difficult to share with \_\_\_\_\_ in my love letter was \_\_\_\_\_.*

Caution: This is not a difficult or painful feeling, like one related to the death of a good friend, but a feeling that is difficult to share.

### **IV B 2. Briefly describe the inner turmoil I experienced before making the decision to share myself with my spouse**

Briefly describe the inner turmoil you experienced leading up to your decision to risk to trust your spouse in dialogue. (A feeling that is difficult to share often involves a mental “wrestling match” with competing fears.)

### **IV B 3. Describe why I decided to share my feeling and what I wanted for our relationship**

- Describe why you made the decision to share your feeling with your spouse in dialogue.
- What led you to take the internal leap of faith and go past your fears?
- What did you want for your relationship? Was not sharing/trusting having a negative impact on your relationship?
- Your reasons should clearly point to confidence in your spouse’s love for you, which is how trust is defined. (Note: We do not decide to share our feeling so we can unburden ourselves or because we “can’t live with the feeling.” The beauty of our decision is the realization that our spouse loves us and will accept us as we are with our feeling, not in spite of our feeling.)
- Inspire hope in the couples by giving them a compelling reason to risk to trust their spouse and share their feelings in dialogue.

### **IV B 4. Describe the feeling from my love letter in full and loving detail**

- Describe one feeling from your love letter in detail. Continue to teach and model the dialogue process introduced in Welcome, Introduction, and Feelings by incorporating some, but not all, of the “Suggestions for Describing Feelings” listed in the Workbook, and by periodically reiterating the name of the feeling.
- Do not justify or rationalize your feeling in your love letter.

- Be careful not to refer to your feeling as a “difficult feeling.” It is a feeling that is difficult to share with your spouse. Perhaps it is a tender feeling in a person who usually keeps their emotions under control, or an enraged feeling in a person who prides themselves on gentleness. You are taking a risk to trust your spouse to accept a feeling that you may have difficulty accepting in yourself.

#### **IV B 5. Describe my thoughts and feelings as I anticipated my spouse reading my letter**

- Tell the couples what thoughts and feelings were going on inside you when you anticipated your spouse reading your love letter.
- Did you second-guess yourself as soon as you finished writing and/or question whether you really wanted to share this with your spouse?

#### **NOTE:**

This section should not relate to what you were experiencing when your spouse was actually reading your letter.

#### **IV C. Briefly describe verbal dialogue (including non-verbals) (1:30)**

Be certain to clearly define the beginning and end of your verbal dialogue about the feeling.

#### **IV C 1. How did we choose the strongest feeling?**

Point out how you mutually decided to dialogue on the strongest feeling from your love letters (although the strongest feeling is not necessarily determined by a number on the intensity scale).

#### **IV C 2. Share some of the descriptions of the feeling that we shared in our dialogue**

- Give a summary of your verbal dialogue, illustrating your mutual collaboration as you described your feeling in numerous ways and your spouse sought to experience it.
- Allow the couples to witness the realistic interplay between you, including examples of your non-verbal communication.
- Use some, but not all, of the “Questions for Verbal Dialogue” listed in the Workbook to help the couples continue to learn the dialogue process.
- You are modeling for the couples what their verbal dialogue can be like back in their rooms. Try to include at least 4 or 5 of the following: specific questions, descriptions, or interactions, as well as general statements such as “after a few more questions or exchanges....” You want the couples to understand that there was more involved in your dialogue than just the examples described in your summary. Do not give them the impression that verbal dialogue is only one-sided or that experiencing your spouse’s feeling is achieved easily after only one or two descriptions of the feeling are shared.

### **IV C 3. At what point did I realize that my spouse had experienced my feeling?**

- Conclude your verbal dialogue by clearly identifying the point at which you realized your spouse was experiencing your feeling. Remember, the goal in dialogue is not just an intellectual understanding of the feeling, but for your spouse to actually walk in your shoes and experience your feeling.
- As indicated in the Welcome, Introduction, and Feelings talk, the appropriate way to end the dialogue is to verbally indicate to your spouse that you think he/she is now experiencing your feeling. Merely pointing out non-verbal clues (“the look in his eyes” or “the nod of her head”) as an indication of your spouse’s acceptance of your feeling is not sufficient at this point. The couples are not yet experienced enough in the dialogue process to rely on non-verbal communication alone.

### **IV D. Briefly describe the effects of this dialogue on me, my spouse, our communication with each other, and our relationship (0:30)**

#### **IV D 1. What was it like for me during this dialogue?**

#### **IV D 2. What was my spouse's response to me?**

#### **IV D 3. Were my fears resolved?**

#### **IV D 4. How has this affected my willingness to risk in the future?**

#### **IV D 5. What has been the impact on our relationship?**

- Answer the questions listed in light of your total experience of risking to trust your spouse in this dialogue, including overcoming your poor self-image and fears and having confidence in your spouse’s love for you.
- Briefly describe the specific effects of this dialogue on you, your spouse, your relationship, and your overall communication so there is compelling motivation for the couples to risk to trust in dialogue themselves.
- Be certain to include how risking to trust your spouse in dialogue has enriched your relationship and continues to impact your day-to-day communication.

## **V. The affirming power of love and its effect on my spouse (Total time 13:00)**

### **V A. Introduce the story of Dulcinea (LH or LW: 1:30)**

#### Suggested wording:

*Now we would like to briefly revisit the story from earlier today. Aldonza, the kitchen maid,*

*whom Don Quixote calls “My Lady,” resisted his attempts to treat her like a lady or to see herself as his beautiful Dulcinea. Don Quixote has persistently reflected back to her the nobility and beauty he sees in her. In this scene, Don Quixote is on his deathbed. He is broken and confused, convinced by his family that it is madness to ride around the countryside pretending to be a knight. Aldonza has heard that Don Quixote is dying, and she comes to see him. Through his belief in her, she has come to see herself through his eyes and to believe in her own goodness. Now transformed into his lady, Dulcinea, she is strong enough to reach out to Don Quixote in return – to love him and affirm him and help him see his own goodness. She pleads with him to remember – and repeats the words he used to inspire her. He dies, not as a broken man, but transformed once more into a noble knight, believing in his dream. You will find the words to the song on page \_\_\_\_\_.*

**V B. Play the song, “Dulcinea” (5:00)**

**V C. Share your own story of transformation**

(LH or LW and CL or CS: 2:30 each)

Lay husband or wife begins with a transition statement. CL or CS adapts this appropriately.

Suggested wording:

*The transformation of Aldonza into Dulcinea is also my story.*

- Share your personal story of transformation in your own relationship. This should not be a single event, but a gradual transformation in you and in your relationship. It most likely occurred over a period of time, and was a result of your growing ability to be vulnerable and intimate in sharing your fears and self-doubts with your spouse. In return, you were loved unconditionally and gradually began to see yourself through your spouse's eyes. This brought about a change in attitude and behavior and growth in your relationship.
- Give an example of how you, like Aldonza, were trapped within your poor self-image and found it difficult to believe in your own goodness and lovability. If this applies, you can mention the specific area in your relationship that was most affected by your poor self-image.
- Describe how you were able to gradually come out from your self-made prison and risk to share your deepest feelings with your spouse. Your description need not be confined to dialogue. These are supposed to be steps in a transformation that actually changed your whole life.
- Mention several specific ways in which your spouse affirmed you, encouraged you, and continued to lift you up along the way.
- How did your attitudes or behaviors change when you began to see yourself through the eyes of your beloved?
- Be specific about the effects of this transformation on your relationship.
- How is your openness to love and to be loved by others affected by this transformation?

**V D. Inspire the couples to use the affirming power of love to bring about transformation in their own relationship** (CL or CS: 1:30)

Suggested wording:

*You, too, have the power to bring about a similar transformation in your spouse.*

*Don Quixote offered his love to a person who repeatedly turned away from him, yet he never gave up. Through his persistent, unconditional love, Aldonza was transformed and became the lady he saw. Aldonza also took a risk in deciding to visit Don Quixote. She could not be sure how she would be received after repeatedly rejecting him – or if he would even recognize her; but she was able to make herself vulnerable to Don Quixote because she trusted in his goodness and love.*

*Because unconditional love is the foundation of your committed relationship, an even more profound transformation is possible for you. When you risk to share your deepest feelings and trust in the love and goodness of your spouse, your unconditional love for each other allows you to lift each other up, to become who God wants you to be. To truly believe in yourself, you have to experience being loved. You have to believe in the goodness your spouse sees in you – and their unconditional love for you – and risk revealing yourselves to each other.*

*This is the power of unconditional love – to look at a person and, even knowing their faults, recognize the nobility in their soul and their worth before God. This is a love that can bring about transformation, because when you believe in your own goodness and beauty, you blossom. We urge you to share this gift of unconditional love with each other right now, with this dialogue, for the sake of your relationship.*

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| <b>VI. Motivation to risk (Total time: 2:30)</b> |
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**VI A. Read and teach the dialogue question** (CL or CS: 1:00)

- Clergy leader or spouse reads the dialogue question after an appropriate transition. The question is designed to motivate the couples to write a love letter and dialogue about a feeling that is difficult for them to share because it makes them vulnerable.
- Teach the dialogue question by explaining that a feeling difficult to share challenges us to let our guard down and become vulnerable to reveal the full extent of our feeling.
- Point out that this is different from a painful feeling, which often focuses on a traumatic situation, such as the loss of a loved one.
- Briefly review topics or behaviors that were introduced in Areas for Reaching Out that are not appropriate in dialogue. Mention the following, but do not elaborate: confessional material, negative things about your spouse, blunt or cruel comments, garbage dumping, manipulating, problem solving.
- Emphasize that this dialogue can be especially significant. There are feelings deep within each of them that need to be shared now for the sake of their relationship.

**VI B. Motivate the couples to risk to trust their spouse with their feelings in dialogue** (LH & LW: 1:30)

- Motivate the couples to risk to trust their spouse with their feelings in dialogue.
- Your motivation should include examples of risking to trust from your own relationship.
- Personalize the statement, “Trust builds as we make the decision to risk.” Or consider expanding on the following: freedom from fears and loneliness; freedom to be honest; to be loved and accepted as I am; to know myself better and to entrust this to my spouse.
- Risk does not always come without hard work, struggle, and pain, but strongly urge the couples to believe that the risk to trust their spouse with their feelings is worth taking – and that they can begin right now. This is your opportunity to convince the couples of the powerful effect that risking to trust in dialogue can have on their relationship.

**Formation:**

When we are full of doubt and insecurity, it is extremely difficult to reveal ourselves. We may hold back, over-compensate, strive for perfection, even lash out – all of which diminish our relationship rather than build it up. We have deeply hidden fears and doubts that are not only destructive to us personally, but can poison our relationship. We have to be able to admit that sometimes we are plagued with insecurity or filled with feelings of loneliness or disappointment.

If I only share what I want my spouse to see, I will never know that the love coming back is for me rather than the person I’m pretending to be. When we reveal our own bumps and bruises and risk to share our deepest feelings, we show our spouse how much we trust in their love and so our relationship grows stronger. Likewise, when our spouse invites us to share in their deepest feelings, it is an honor to be trusted with such vulnerability. The irony is that when we share our doubts and insecurities, we do not drag each other down. Rather, we lift each other up with the gift of intimacy and the reassurance that, even with all our imperfections, we are still lovable.

**NOTE:**

Be very clear that the focus here is on risking to share feelings with their spouse in their love letter and dialogue.

**Question:**

**What feeling do I have that is most difficult for me to share with you because it makes me vulnerable? Describe that feeling in full and loving detail.**

Writing time: 20 minutes

Dialogue time: 25 minutes

Husbands stay in the conference/presentation room to write (recommended).

**How we live out the concepts of this presentation:**

We live out the concepts of Risking to Trust in Dialogue by acknowledging that our poor self-image and our fears are obstacles that limit our willingness to trust our spouse in dialogue. We purposefully choose areas in our relationship in which it is difficult for us to share our feelings and make a decision to risk to trust our spouse with those feelings in dialogue.

**An assessment for us as a couple:**

- Do I consistently decide to risk to trust you with my feelings in dialogue?
- Do I avoid certain areas of our relationship in our dialogue? Why?
- What motivates me to explore my feelings in sensitive areas of our relationship?
- When you risk to trust me in our dialogue, do I focus on accepting the feeling being shared?
- Which of my behaviors and attitudes TODAY most often interfere with my willingness to risk to trust you in our dialogue?

**Dialogue questions to help presenters develop their presentations:**

|          |                        |          |                          |
|----------|------------------------|----------|--------------------------|
| HDIF?    | How do I feel?         | HDIFA    | HDIF about?              |
| HDIFAT   | HDIFA this (or that)?  | HDIFAMA? | HDIFA my answer?         |
| HDIFTYT? | HDIF telling you this? | HDIFRTN? | HDIF recalling this now? |

1. HDIF when I hear the phrase “risking to trust in dialogue”?
2. Is my self-image an obstacle that limits my willingness to trust in specific areas?  
HDIFAMA?
3. HDIF when I hear the statement: “trust means having confidence in your love for me”?
4. What fears limit my willingness to trust? HDIFTYT?
5. What obstacles make it difficult to share with you? HDIFTYT?
6. Do I fear failure? HDIFAMA?
7. Do I fear intimacy? HDIFAMA?
8. Do I fear commitment? HDIFAMA?
9. Do I fear disappointment? HDIFAMA?
10. Do I fear rejection? HDIFAMA?
11. Do I fear your reaction when I bring up a particular subject in our relationship?  
HDIFAMA?
12. Do I fear retaliation if I bring up a particular subject in our relationship? HDIFAMA?
13. Do I have confidence in your love for me? HDIFAMA?
14. What can you do to help me share my feelings in the area of \_\_\_\_\_? What must I  
do? HDIFAMA?
15. In the past two weeks, when did I judge that my feelings were not acceptable? What were  
the feelings? HDIFAMA?
16. What do you do when you listen to me that makes me want to continue? HDIFTYT?
17. In the last two weeks, when did your response to me help me to get past my initial fears  
about sharing my feelings with you? HDIFAMA?
18. Make a list of those areas where I avoid sharing my feelings. Prioritize them. HDIFTYT?
19. In what area is it most difficult for me to share my feelings with you? HDIFAMA?
20. What is the feeling in this area that is difficult for me to face and share? HDIFAMA?
21. Why is this feeling difficult for me to share? HDIFAMA?
22. HDIF knowing that sharing my feelings will benefit our relationship?
23. Recall a time when your unconditional love affected me. HDIFTYT?
24. Recall a time on or after our WWME experience when I really knew that you loved me.  
How did I know? HDIFRTN?
25. Recall a time when I risked sharing deeply and you responded with love. What were the  
effects? HDIFRTN?
26. How are my attitudes and behaviors affected when I believe in the goodness you see in me?  
HDIFTYT?
27. How have I experienced transformation in our relationship? HDIFAMA?



## THE WAYS I LIMIT MY TRUST IN OUR DIALOGUE

### Instructions

1. Reflect on your experience of sharing feelings with your spouse in dialogue this Worldwide Marriage Encounter.
2. In the exercise below, check off all of the ways you may have found yourself reluctant to share your feeling in your dialogues.

### Exercise

- I did not accept my own feelings and I was not ready to share them with you.
- I worried that if I shared my feelings, you would see me as:
- weak      unattractive      silly      dumb
- uninformed      stubborn      other \_\_\_\_\_
- I feared that being open and vulnerable with my feelings could lead to your having higher expectations of me.
- I thought that sharing my feelings could lead to rejection or being “put down.”
- I feared being misunderstood if I shared feelings that I don’t even understand myself. I judge I have been misunderstood in the past and don’t want that to happen again.
- I didn’t want you to see my feeling as a problem for you to solve.
- I was afraid you might use what I revealed about myself against me.
- I thought that if I shared my feelings with you, I might have to change.
- I found it more comfortable not to share too deeply.

Other: Describe: \_\_\_\_\_

**Note:** You will NOT be sharing the results of this exercise with your spouse.

## ***DULCINEA***

*from the death scene in Man of La Mancha*

*“Please ... try to remember ... you looked at me and you called me by another name ... Dulcinea, Dulcinea. Once you found a girl and called her Dulcinea. When you spoke the name, an angel seemed to whisper, ‘Dulcinea, Dulcinea.’*

*Dulcinea, Dulcinea ... Won’t you please bring back the dream of Dulcinea? Won’t you bring me back the bright and shining glory of Dulcinea, Dulcinea?”*

**“Perhaps ... perhaps it was not a dream.”**

*“You spoke of a dream ... and about the ‘quest’ ....”*

**“The quest ... the words ... tell me, tell me the words.”**

*“To dream the impossible dream ... but they’re your own words ...  
to fight the unbeatable foe ... don’t you remember?  
To bear with unbearable sorrow ... you must remember!  
To run where the brave dare not go.”*

**“To right the unrightable wrong ....[Yes!] To love pure and chaste from afar.... [Yes!] To try when your arms are too weary, to reach the unreachable star!”**

*“Thank you, my Lord.”*

**“But this is not seemly, my Lady. On thy knees to me?”**

*“My Lord, you’re not well!”*

**“Not well? What is illness to the body of a knight errant? What matter wounds? For each time he falls, he shall rise again! And woe to the wicked! Sancho!”**

*“Here, your grace!”*

**“My armor, my sword!”**

*“More misadventure ...”*

**“Adventures, old friend. Oh, the trumpets of glory now call me to ride. Yes, the trumpets are calling to me. And wherever I ride, ever staunch at my side, my squire and my lady shall be. I am I, Don Quixote, the Lord of La Mancha; our destiny calls and we go. And the wild winds of fortune shall carry us onward ... Withersoever they blow ... onward to glory ..... I ..... go.”**

*“My Lord!”*