

**FREEING YOURSELF FROM DISTRACTIONS THAT WILL INTERFERE WITH THE EXPERIENCE**

**EXERCISE**

What obstacles and worries do I have to put aside in order to participate fully in this weekend?

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# QUESTIONS

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- 1. Why did I come here this weekend?*
- 2. What do I hope to gain?*

## EXERCISE

1. Recall a situation when you have had a strong feeling, an inner reaction. In one or two sentences describe the situation in writing

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2. Name the feeling about the situation.

“I felt...\_\_\_\_\_”

3. Read what your spouse has written.

## DEFINITION AND IDENTIFYING A FEELING

**A feeling is a spontaneous inner reaction to a person, place or situation.**

Feelings are neither right nor wrong. They have no morality attached to them. Morality only enters in when the feeling is acted upon.

I THINK vs. I FEEL RULE:

**If you can substitute “I am” for “I feel,” you have expressed a feeling.**

*Example: I feel satisfied. I am satisfied. The substitution works; therefore this is a feeling.*

**If you can substitute “I think” for “I feel,” you have expressed a thought or judgment.**

*Example: I feel you are upset. I think you are upset. This substitution works; therefore it is a judgment or thought, not a feeling.*

## EXERCISE

1. Describe this room.

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2. Using feeling words, describe how the room affects you.

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3. Read what your spouse has written.

## COMMON MISUNDERSTANDINGS (AND CLARIFICATIONS) ABOUT FEELINGS

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| 1. Feelings are unimportant.              | (They <u>are</u> important.)   |
| 2. “Real men” don’t have tender feelings. | (“Real men” <u>do</u> have tender feelings.)   |
| 3. Some feelings are wrong or bad.        | (Feelings are <u>not</u> wrong or bad; it is the behavior that can be right or wrong.) |
| 4. Others are to blame for my feelings.   | ( <u>No one</u> is to blame for my feelings; they are my spontaneous inner reactions.) |

# QUESTIONS

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- 1. What do I appreciate most about you? What are my feelings as I write this to you? Describe the feelings in full detail.*
- 2. What do I appreciate most about us? What are my feelings as I write this to you? Describe the feelings in full detail.*

(Use the opposite sheet and the back of this page if you need more space.)

## PERSONALITY STYLES ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

1. THE PERSONAL QUALITIES I AM MORE AWARE OF IN MYSELF ARE ...	gentleness & warmth		strength & capability		consistency & clarity		spontaneity & creativity	
2. THE STRONGEST VALUE (PRINCIPLE) FOR ME IS ...	relationship		responsibility		being correct		Freedom	
3. I AM ATTRACTED TO PEOPLE WHO ...	are cooperative and easy to get along with		are responsible and get things done		are thorough and think things through		are fun and unique	
4. I TEND TO MAKE DECISIONS BY ...	trusting my intuition		following the rules		careful analysis and consideration		my gut reaction	
5. I GET PEOPLE TO COOPERATE BY ...	creating friendship and harmony with them		persuasion and direction		influence, discussion and a logical approach		motivation and an out-going, creative style	
6. I FEEL BEST ABOUT MYSELF WHEN I AM ...	helping people feel good about themselves		getting things done		advising people & helping them work things through		causing things to happen	
7. I WANT OTHERS TO SEE ME AS ...	warm and personable		reliable and effective		confident and logical		skillful and unique	
8. WHEN SOMEONE CRITICIZES ME, IT'S LIKELY THAT I WILL ...	withdraw & not deal with it		deal with it and defend myself		analyze the situation and others' motives		ignore it and move on	
9. WHEN I AM REALLY DOWN ON MYSELF, THEN I SEE MYSELF AS ...	having very little to offer		incapable of doing what is needed		confused & out of control		a loser	
10. WHEN I AM UNDER STRESS I TEND TO ...	withdraw & compromise		redouble my efforts		discuss & analyze		challenge & confront	
TOTALS ...	<b>H</b>		<b>O</b>		<b>T</b>		<b>C</b>	

# QUESTIONS

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- 1. What do I like most about myself?*
- 2. What do I like least about myself?*
- 3. What is the way I try to present myself to others? Describe it briefly.  
How does it limit my relationships?*
- 4. What are my feelings about what I have written? Describe fully.*

(Use the opposite sheet and the back of this page if you need more space.)

## SYMPTOMS OF DISILLUSIONMENT

### Instructions:

1. Review the list below, and check all the symptoms of disillusionment that in any way ever applied to your marriage.
2. In your notebook, write the symptom from which you experience the strongest feelings.
3. Write your love letter, focusing on your feelings. Describe your feelings as fully as you can. The love letter you write is about you and your feelings and not about the symptom.

- Check all that apply
- Moodiness in our marriage
- Feelings of disillusionment, boredom, emptiness or loneliness in our relationship
- Indifference to each other's problems, interests or jobs
- Not enough affection and small courtesies between us
- Feelings of insecurity or jealousy
- A sense of being better understood by others than by my spouse
- Nagging
- Lack of planning things together
- Sense of being used
- More interest in position and money than in me
- Taking each other for granted
- No excitement in our relationship
- Frequent quarrels
- Insults, rudeness, sarcasm or criticism
- Continuous escapes, together or alone, such as TV, sports, socializing, liquor, hypochondria, etc.
- A desire to be right all the time
- Possessiveness of my checkbook, my kitchen, my children, my body, my taste in the house, my friends or my time
- Overly sensitive
- Irresponsibility around the house, with the children, with money or with commitments
- Acting independently
- Closed to having (more) children
- Distance in our sexual relationship
- Too controlling
- The way we spend our money
- The way we spend our time



## THE WAYS I LIMIT MY LISTENING

### Instructions:

Check off the ways you limit your listening in your relationship.

Check all that apply

- Listening for facts: I listen for my own purposes and information, ignoring everything else (not concerned with the feelings that accompany the facts).
- Preparing my answer: I form my answer in my head while the speaker is talking.
- Problem-solving: I listen with the intent to get enough information to fix the problem. (When the intent is only on providing a solution, you may miss the whole point the other is trying to communicate.)
- Motor running: I can do other things and still listen
- Pacifying: I try to bring peace and calm to a tough situation without listening to the feelings being expressed.
- Impatience: I give the impression that I am very busy and leave my spouse thinking what he/she has to say is not important (anxious to get on to something else).
- I've heard all this before: I assume I know what my spouse is going to say and I stop listening, preferring to think there is nothing new being communicated.
- Hanging onto words only: I take all the words at face value and literally, zeroing in on words only instead of the other forms of communication being used.
- Personal past history: I allow things that I have experienced in my past before our marriage to preclude me from listening to any other position on the issue. This experience could be derived from parents, church, school, etc. (e.g., My dad only gave a dollar during the collection. My parents taught me to save for a rainy day. In school, I learned that ... )
- Other. Describe:  
\_\_\_\_\_

## AREAS FOR REACHING OUT TO EACH OTHER

### Instructions:

1. Review the list below and check all the areas where you think that you and your spouse have difficulty communicating.
2. Choose an area in which you have strong feelings.
3. Write a love letter mentioning the area, but focusing on your feelings. Describe your feelings as fully as you can. Remember, the love letter is about you and your feelings and not about the area.

- Check all that apply
- Money
- Health
- Time
- Job(s)
- Rest
- Sex
- Our communication with each other
- Children (step-children)
- Relatives
- Relationship to God
- Atmosphere in our home
- Relationship with our adult children
- Retirement
- In-laws
- Death
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

**CANA: JOHN 2: 1-11**

On the third day there was a wedding in Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him, "They have no wine." And Jesus said to her, "Woman, what concern is that to you and to me? My hour has not yet come." His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." Now standing there were six stone water jars for the Jewish rites of purification, each holding twenty or thirty gallons. Jesus said to them, "Fill the jars with water." And they filled them to the brim. He said to them, "Now draw some out, and take it to the chief steward." So they took it. When the steward tasted the water that had become wine, and did not know where it came from (though the servants who had drawn the water knew), the steward called the bridegroom and said to him, "Everyone serves the good wine first, and then the inferior wine after the guests have become drunk. But you have kept the good wine until now." Jesus did this, the first of his signs, in Cana of Galilee, and revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

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**SHARING QUESTIONS**

*As a result of our time together today, what do I most appreciate about you?*

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*What is something meaningful that is happening in our relationship because of our dialogue?*

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## FIVE TOOLS

1. Constant attention to our communication

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2. Attention to our sexual relationship

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3. Prayer for each other, including couple prayer

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4. Journeying with others committed to similar values

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5. Re-evaluation

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