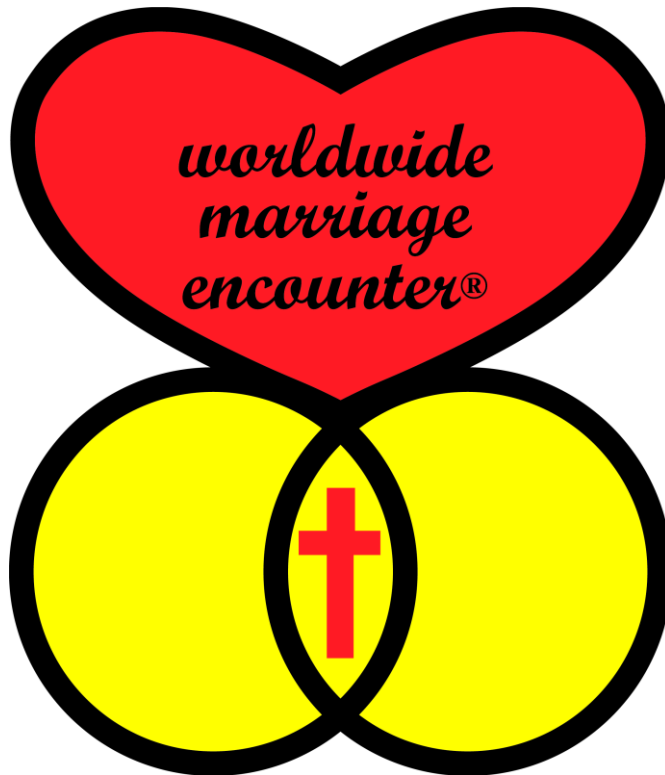


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# WORLDWIDE MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER

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LOVE ONE ANOTHER, AS I HAVE LOVED YOU

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JOHN 15:12

## **THE WEDS MANUAL**

### **LUTHERAN MARRIAGE ENCOUNTER**

## WELCOME to the Marriage Encounter Community!

Dearest Lovers,

We extend our warmest welcome into the family of Marriage Encounter! It is our hope that you will find continuing support and enrichment for your marriage by your active participation in Community. We are glad you have decided to use this WEDS manual, providing you with an easy way to navigate your way through the next 90 days. Why 90 days? Many experts say that it takes 90 days to make a new action/behavior a habit. (In fact, we hope that dialogue will become more than a habit, but rather a value for the rest of your lives.) Interestingly, many years ago, 90 was also the number of questions that couples answered in their "extended dialogue time," which eventually became 90 minutes of writing and 90 minutes of verbal dialogue on Sunday morning which still take place on many Weekends around the world.

This WEDS manual can help you see the true value of dialogue: to connect on the more intimate level of feelings in even the "normal" activities of life and to have a simple vehicle with which to mine the depths of your hearts, enabling you to have inner adventures of love as you discover each other in new and richer ways. You may even notice positive signs in your family and workplace as you implement the communication skills learned on your Weekend.

**THE VISION** of Worldwide Marriage Encounter is "Love one another as I have loved you."

When we respond to our Lord's call and allow His Light to shine through our relationship, we become a visible sign of God's Love. Our love for each other reflects Christ's great unconditional love for us. Our light is needed in today's world more than ever before. As we respond to our call to love each other and to share our love, our relationship becomes more trusting and intimate. Our families are strengthened by our compassion and acceptance. Our Church is renewed! All from the simple discipline of Daily Dialogue!

You will achieve God's desire for your marriage and your relationship when you continually use the five tools learned on your Marriage Encounter Weekend experience to keep your covenant-love a priority:

- (1) Constant attention to our communication,
- (2) Attention to our sexual relationship,
- (3) Couple prayer,
- (4) Journeying with others, and
- (5) Re-evaluation.

Striving to keep our covenant-love alive is a wonderful journey. All of us in the Marriage Encounter Community are honored to travel with you.

Changing the world is a difficult task, but we believe we can make a difference beginning with one couple at a time. Define the "world" you can influence with your great love and commitment—your spouse, your family, your neighborhood or your church---and then open wide your doors, and go out into that world! Together, we can make an incredible difference!

*Use Of This Manual*

*... The Pattern*

- ♥ Read the short reflection for the day. You can do this together or separately but do it before you write your love letter.

**DAY 1**

On our Weekend we learned that feelings are neither right nor wrong ... they simply are. A feeling is: a spontaneous inner reaction ....

- ♥ Dialogue – Write your love letters on your feelings. Dialogue on the strongest feeling.
- ♥ When finished with your verbal dialogue, read the reflection for the next day right away so you can be thinking about it before writing.

*... WEDS*

- ♥ **Write** your love letters. (We suggest about 10 minutes). These can be written together or separately.
- ♥ **Exchange** your love letters and read your spouse's letter. Try to reserve this for prime time ... you deserve it!
- ♥ **Dialogue** on your feelings (10 minutes maximum suggested, so you don't go into problem solving.) Remember that the purpose of dialogue is to come to a common understanding of the feeling being explored, not to have a discussion of the topic or to solve the problem.
- ♥ **Select** your question for the next day.

*(While using this manual, selecting the question means reading the reflection for the next day, unless you have something else that comes up that you really need to dialogue about.)*

- ♥ Read the “**Guidelines for Dialogue**” on the next page before you begin. This will help you continue to learn to dialogue together. At first, this may seem like a lot to do, but once you get past day one it will only take about 20 minutes each day. Most of all, **ENJOY** your time of intimacy together!

### ... Guidelines for Dialogue

#### **WRITE:**

First of all, keep in mind the person you are writing to...your spouse. Try to use the full, available time to write honestly and sincerely about your feelings on the reflection. Concentrate on your feelings, remembering the difference between thoughts and feelings. Describe your feelings as completely as possible and in terms that your spouse can relate to.

In writing, try not to blame or justify the way you feel. Do not try to impose guilt on your spouse or try to change each other. Simply reveal yourself deeply and intimately. Dialogue is not meant to solve problems or reach decisions, but to get to know each other more intimately. Become one flesh. Finally, a suggested writing time is 10 minutes.

#### **EXCHANGE:**

When you get together after writing your love letters, exchange your notebooks gently and lovingly, for you are giving a precious gift. Comments are unnecessary; as you do not want to influence your spouse before he or she has had a chance to read it.

Read each other's love letter twice silently. The first time, read with your head to understand the words. The next time, read with your heart to go beyond the words and absorb the person, and all the richness of his or/her feelings. Or, you might also choose to read aloud some of your letters.

#### **DIALOGUE:**

The verbal dialogue is the time to talk about the strongest feeling in your love letters. Sit close to each other and give your full attention. Explore the strongest feeling between the two of your love letters. (Do your best to balance whose feeling is chosen – this may mean sometimes choosing a feeling not quite as strong, but one belonging to the spouse whose feeling has not been explored lately.) Concentrate on talking about feelings, asking questions to try to understand more fully what the feeling is like. Be careful and gentle, attempting to grow in your awareness and acceptance of each other. Once you have understood the feeling as fully as you can, your dialogue for that day is over. If you want to discuss something that came up during that dialogue, put your notebooks aside and continue the discussion. Try to stick to focusing on the feelings for the time of dialogue, as you do not want to get into a longer routine that is hard to continue on a daily basis.

#### **SELECT:**

Select a question for the next day. (While using this manual, means reading the reflection for the next day now.)

Key to dialogue acronyms in this manual:  
HDIFAT – How do I feel about that?  
WAMFAT – What are my feelings about that?  
HDIFSTWY – How do I feel sharing this with you?  
DFILD – Describe feelings in loving detail.

## THE WEDS MANUAL

### *... Love Letter Format*

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

In the beginning of your love letter, you can share a quality that you see in your spouse today, and how you have seen this quality in him/or her during the day. This alone makes a very pleasant daily gift.

Write 2 or 3 sentences describing your thoughts and reactions to the question or reflection, to set the stage but not to justify your feelings.

State your strongest feeling(s), and spend the rest of the letter describing your feeling. You can use shared experiences, a time when you believe your spouse may have experienced the same feeling you are describing; describe your feeling by giving its intensity or by using your senses (smells like, tastes like, feels like, sounds like, or looks like). The purpose of the love letter is to reveal your heart to your spouse to help them experience you.

Close with an endearment and signature.

#### **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 (yes, our behaviors can be the wrong choice).

Name the feeling and then describe the feeling using the word “like” and a description of what the feeling is like. You may want to use some of the following characteristics:

Category	Ways to describe the feeling	Example
Intensity	Rate feeling from 1 to 10	“My feeling is a ‘10’ ”
Taste	sour, sweet, bitter, spicy.	“My feeling tastes sour like a lemon.”
Touch	scratchy, soft, prickly, etc.	“It is soft like silk.”
Color	red, blue, etc.	“If my angry feeling were a color, it would be bright red.”
Sound	high pitched; screech; wail of a siren; crack of thunder	“It sounds like birds singing on a spring morning.”
Physical reaction	sick, chilled, giggling, etc.	“It's a sick feeling, like having an upset stomach.”
Similar past experience	childbirth, riding a bike, etc.	“My feeling is excited, like the time our child took her first steps.”
Nature scene	beautiful sunset; crashing waves; still forest	“My joyful feeling is like watching an amazing sunset at sea.”
An image	hitting a home run	“I feel gleeful, like a kid who hit his first home run.”

*...Feeling Words Starter List***Happy**

airy  
animated  
blissful  
bright  
brisk  
buoyant  
cheerful  
cheery  
comfortable  
complacent  
content  
debonair  
ecstatic  
elated  
enthusiastic  
exhilarated  
exultant  
festive  
free & easy  
frisky  
genial  
glad  
gleeful  
happy  
high-spirited  
hilarious  
inspired  
jaunty  
jolly  
jovial  
joyful  
joyous  
jubilant  
lighthearted  
lively  
merry  
mirthful  
peaceful  
playful  
pleased  
rapturous  
satisfied  
saucy  
sparkling  
spirited  
sunny  
transported  
vivacious

**Sad**

cheerless  
clouded  
crestfallen  
dark  
dejected  
depressed  
despondent  
disconsolate  
discontented  
discouraged  
disheartened  
dismal  
downcast  
downhearted  
dreadful  
dreary  
dull  
flat  
frowning  
gloomy  
glum  
heavy-hearted  
ill at ease  
in the dumps  
joyless  
low  
low spirited  
melancholy  
moody  
moping  
mournful  
out of sorts  
sad  
somber  
sorrowful  
spiritless  
unhappy  
woebegone  
woeful  
sullen  
sulky

**Eager**

ardent  
avid  
desirous  
eager  
earnest  
enthusiastic  
intent  
zealous

**Angry**

acrimonious  
angry  
annoyed  
bitter  
boiling  
churning  
enraged  
furious  
hot-headed  
in a huff  
in a stew  
incensed  
indignant  
inflamed  
infuriated  
irate  
irritated  
mad  
offended  
provoked  
resentful  
sulky  
up in arms  
virulent  
worked up  
wrathful

**Hurt**

aching  
afflicted  
agonized  
crushed  
distressed  
grieved  
hapless  
heartbroken  
hurt  
in despair  
in pain  
injured  
mournful  
offended  
piteous  
rueful  
suffering  
tragic  
woeful  
worried

**Afraid**

afraid  
aghast  
alarmed  
anxious  
appalled  
apprehensive  
chicken  
cowardly  
diffident  
dismayed  
doubtful  
fainthearted  
fearful  
fidgety  
frightened  
hesitant  
horrified  
hysterical  
in fear  
insecure  
irresolute  
menaced  
misgiving  
nervous  
panicked  
petrified  
quaking  
scared  
shaky  
shocked  
suspicious  
terrified  
threatened  
timid  
trembling  
tremulous  
worried  
yellow

**Interested**

absorbed  
affected  
concerned  
curious  
engrossed  
excited  
fascinated  
inquisitive  
interested  
intrigued  
nosy

**Fearless**

audacious  
bold  
brave  
certain  
confident  
courageous  
daring  
dauntless  
determined  
encouraged  
enterprising  
gallant  
hardy  
heroic  
reassured  
resolute  
secure  
self-reliant  
spirited  
stouthearted

**Doubtful**

distrustful  
doubtful  
dubious  
hesitant  
indecisive  
misgiving  
perplexed  
questioning  
skeptical  
suspicious  
unbelieving  
uncertain  
wavering

**Other**

awed  
oppressed  
pathetic  
restful  
serene  
tranquil

On Sunday afternoon of the Weekend you were introduced to the **five tools to keep your relationship a priority**. This WEDS Manual will help you to focus on them and make them a part of your daily life. In Weeks One and Two we focus on the tool of **Constant attention to our communication**. There are three aspects to this that we learned about on the Weekend: faithfulness to dialogue, attentive listening, and communication in and out of dialogue. To keep our relationship a priority, we need to be good communicators of our thoughts and feelings. The following dialogue questions will help you focus on the area of communication in your relationship.

### **DAY 1**

On our Weekend we learned that feelings are neither right nor wrong...they simply are. A feeling is: a spontaneous inner reaction to a person, place or situation we are experiencing or thinking about. Feelings can influence behaviors, and a behavior does have morality. I can feel angry and that in itself is not wrong, but if I punch someone because of my anger, then my action has morality. Understanding this is important to our future with dialogue. When we know we are not going to be judged about our feelings, we can feel free to share them with each other. This is the first step to building a new sense of intimacy and trust in our relationships.

*What was my reaction to hearing about feelings on our Weekend, and what is my reaction to it today? How do I feel about my answer? (HDIFAMA?)*

### **DAY 2**

Our feelings are constantly changing and are of different intensities. I can have many feelings all at once. I can have a strong feeling about something today and next week it may not seem as strong to me, which is why Daily Dialogue makes so much sense. If we are to truly stay in touch with each other, then we should share with each other who we are over and over again.

*What is my strongest feeling today? How do I feel sharing this with you? (HDIFSTWY?)*

### **DAY 3**

When I share my feelings, I am sharing a unique part of me. I give myself as a gift to you. When you share this part of yourself with me, you are giving me the most precious thing you could ever give me....you!

*When I reflect on what a gift you are to me I feel....? Describe feelings in full and loving detail. (DFILD.)*

### **DAY 4**

When you accept my feelings without judgments, I feel close to you. Rejecting my feelings is rejecting me, and closing the door on me. While anyone can be critical of my thoughts and ideas, my feelings are different. They are simply and completely me. When I share them with you, then you know me as I really am.

*When have I experienced your acceptance of me this week? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 5**

Unpleasant or difficult feelings are as important a part of me as are pleasant ones. These feelings are often more difficult to share than happy feelings. When we make a commitment to give ourselves to each other we must give all of ourselves. Remember...my feelings are neither right nor wrong...because they are who I am.

*What feelings have I not shared with you this week because I thought you might not accept me? HDIFSTWY?*

**DAY 6**

Three rules that verify whether I am sharing a feeling or stating a judgment.

1. *If you can replace "I feel" with "I am," then you are sharing a feeling.*
2. *When I say: "I feel that," "I think that," or "I judge that," then I am sharing a judgment and not a feeling*
3. *When I say: "I feel that you," "I think that you," or "I judge that you," then I am sharing a judgment that I have about you and not a feeling.*

When I make a judgment about you, or about what you do, I open the door to criticism, blame, accusation, defensiveness, and arguments. This often is the beginning of a fight. I don't want to fight with you...I want to love you.

*Have I been critical of you or accepting of you this week? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 7**

We have many things in our busy lives that we deal with daily: our sexual relationship, children, the budget, the house, my job or your job... the list goes on. The power of dialogue is not in solving the problems surrounding these areas of our lives. The power is the intimacy we gain through dialogue, which allows us to communicate better when we do sit down to discuss an issue. (If we first share our feelings about the amount of money we have, we are more sensitive to each other when we balance the checkbook.) We can problem solve better after we learn our feelings through dialogue!

*What issue do we have facing us that I haven't shared my feelings with you?*

*What are my feelings about that issue? DFILD.*

***Remember:***

**Write for ten minutes.**

**Dialogue is not about solving problems, but sharing feelings.**

**CONGRATULATIONS!! YOU HAVE FINISHED YOUR FIRST WEEK!!!**

Celebrate with each other as you strive to keep your relationship a priority through the tool of Constant attention to your communication. You are now on your way to making dialogue a positive habit in your life.

Is a Reunion/Renewal or K.Y.R.A.P. event planned in the coming weeks? Try to attend. Take your questions about dialoguing there and get answers from veteran lovers who have shared your struggles.



**DAY 8**

Now we focus on the gift of listening. We listen in a variety of ways, and there are many barriers to the way we listen. Some barriers are based on fears of deeper involvement with each other. Some are based on the thought that if I listen to my spouse, he/she will expect me to change and listen like this all of the time. Most of us listen with our motors running. Recall the listening barriers you admitted to. Although we all want to listen attentively, it is difficult for us to do because we have many old patterns and poor listening habits.

*How well do I think I listen to you? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 9**

Listening goes beyond hearing the words. We are talking about listening with our hearts. We need to try to listen to experience the other person and what he/she is feeling, not just hearing words but accepting the person. This listening is a choice, a decision to love. Listening with our hearts allows ourselves to be affected by what our spouse is saying and who our spouse is. And enables us to experience being listened to and cared about in turn. This listening isn't dependent on what is being said but on the importance of who is speaking.

*How do I feel when you listen to me with your heart? DFILD*

**DAY 10**

We need to go beyond passive listening, to becoming an active participant in the exchange. Encourage your spouse to tell you more. Ask the questions you need to have answered to experience your spouse more. Check back, telling him/her what you think you heard. Avoid judgments or getting defensive. Listen to the tone-of-voice; watch for non-verbal expression.

*Do I listen better to you or to others? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 11**

We all want to be listened to, regardless of what we say, because we need to be loved and accepted. I feel important and special when you listen to me without judging. When I realize how good it feels to be listened to by you, then I am better able to become a better listener to you. We both can benefit from this type of listening. By listening, we build a deeper respect for each other, a sense of belonging and new closeness.

*What kind of listener was I before our Weekend? How do I feel remembering this?*

**DAY 12**

On our Weekend, we heard the presenters sharing their feelings about death and their sexual relationship. These are only two areas where many have difficulty sharing feelings. Others are money, in-laws, jobs, and children, just to name a few. It seems the longer we have been married the longer the list. The dynamics of sharing feelings requires that we revisit those areas that we haven't talked about in a long time. Only this time, instead of sharing thoughts and judgments, we can share our feelings. Maybe I know what you think about these areas because you have told me many times. But today I want to know how you feel. In this way we begin to regain the intimacy we once had.

*I have difficulty sharing my feelings about .... HDIFAMA?*

*(Remember: your feelings are what are important here ... not the area.)*

**DAY 13**

Sometimes our inability to listen is rooted in how we see ourselves. If we are to really listen we must free our minds of preconceived ideas and opinions. That means clearing our minds and taking on an attitude of openness, even to the extent of allowing our spouse to help us form our opinions. (We often prevent ourselves from doing this because it means letting go of how we see ourselves or how we think others see us.) Another word for listening might be openness.

*In what ways does my Dominant Personality Style interfere with my listening to you?  
HDIFAT?*

**DAY 14**

Remember, for dialogue to work we must write. Often after a few days of dialogue we start to think that we can just sit down and talk. We can, but not with the freedom that we have with written dialogue. Writing our feelings down on paper enables us to really focus on us without distractions. If we are only talking, we tend to start editing our words based on our spouse's reaction. Writing our feelings down avoids that. Remember your Weekend and how much you opened up to each other. You have learned a terrific way to do this...dialogue. Hang in there...you are worth it!

*What was a time this week, in dialogue, when I really felt listened to by you?  
HDIFAT?*

**YOU HAVE JUST FINISHED TWO WEEKS OF DIALOGUE!  
GOOD FOR YOU! GIVE YOUR SPOUSE A HUG!****Remember, these things do NOT belong in dialogue:**

- Getting hung up on grammar or spelling.
- “Garbage dumping” (bringing up old hurts).
- Giving “You” messages.
- Blaming; i.e., “you made me...” or “you didn't...”
- Measuring how much your spouse wrote.
- Using critical judgments.
- Interrupting while your spouse is sharing.
- Expecting your spouse to change because you shared your feelings.
- Short-changing the time together by not spending the full time talking about and continuing to draw out/explore the feeling about which you have written.

Our next tool is **Journeying with Others**. Our married life together is a journey. Journeying with others with similar values can help us stay on track to having a great marriage. Marriage Encounter has many Communities around the world. It is not a club to join: it is a group of couples living the new lifestyle taught on the Weekend.

**DAY 15**

On our Weekend we were told that if we surround ourselves with couples who have the same values, it will help keep our relationship strong. It is difficult to find support for marriage in the modern world. Marriage Encounter Communities are “Good Marriage Country,” where couples love each other and want the most for their relationships and families.

*Who are the couples we spend time with who have the same values? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 16**

People invest money in worthwhile ventures. Investing our time can be rewarding also. We can invest our time and talents in our church community, in our town community, and in M.E. communities. If these things are going to succeed, then we need to offer our support wherever we think we need to be. Just showing up for the meetings will not be enough. (For Lutheran Marriage Encounter Communities, this means attending meetings/circles/dialogue support groups, or praying for and greeting couples ending their Weekend.) Our work and support will insure the continued growth of good marriages throughout the world.

*In what area am I interested in investing our time, talents, support, and couple love? HDIFAT?*

**DAY 18**

There are barriers that can keep us from going to the regularly scheduled Community meetings. Some of these are time, finding childcare, putting work as a higher priority, tiredness, fear of the unknown, laziness, fear of sharing our feelings with others, etc. It is a choice we make as to whether or not this becomes a priority in our lives.

*What are my barriers to going to Community? HDIFAT?*

**DAY 19**

In Community we are accepted for who we are. Our age, occupation, or status in life do not matter. Community is a group of couples supporting Marriage. What we share in Community is kept private. We can rely on Community for friendship, emotional, spiritual, and even physical help.

*How has Community been a support to us? What are my feelings about that?*

**DAY 20**

No one dialogues alone! It can be difficult to keep dialogue as a priority if none of our friends or family is using that tool to communicate. Other couples can help us, teach us, and encourage us to keep dialogue a priority in our relationship.

*What are my feelings when I realize that we have couples to support us in our decision to dialogue? DFILD.*

**DAY 21**

Our friends in LME help us on our journey as we work to live what we learned on our Weekend. If we don't continue to learn about each other and our marriage, we will just go back to where we used to be. Our Community supports us and reminds us that we must keep our relationship a priority to be more for our children and our Church.

*Am I willing to make Community a priority in my life? HDIFAMA?*

The third tool is **Attention to our sexual relationship**. The way we respond to each other all day long is communicating our sexuality. We need to work on tenderness, playfulness, attentiveness, gentleness, and romance. All of these things and the many ways we experience each other during the day help to build a stronger sexual relationship, which is an important part of our total relationship.

**DAY 22**

Our sexual relationship is something that often seems difficult for us to discuss. When we were falling in love, our passion was strong for each other. (It may still be, but we may not talk about it much anymore.) Talking about our sexual experiences is important for our relationship, for we are communicating about ourselves, not about a thing or an activity. Intimate, trusting, open communication about and through sex is absolutely necessary for open communication in our relationship.

*If our lovemaking is a form of communication, how well are we communicating?  
HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 23**

Often the hurts that arise in our sexual relationship occur because of unspoken fears of rejection. While we don't expect our spouse to be perfect, we often place that expectation on ourselves, especially in the areas of sexual performance and sexual attraction. Part of our growth in intimacy is dependent on our believing that our spouse loves us completely, even with our imperfections.

*What is it about you that I find most attractive? HDIFSTWY?*

**DAY 24**

Romance is more than just doing the romantic things together like a special candlelight dinner. It is the experience of being loved and being seen as important and special. It's belonging to someone in an intimate way that allows us to meet our needs. It means being involved with one another and treating each other special all of the time.

*When, recently, did you do something to help me feel special? Remembering this, how do I feel? DFILD.*

**DAY 25**

On our Weekend, we realized that we had been trained very subtly for marriage by everyone we came in contact with, even "the world." This training reaches into every area of our lives, particularly the area of sex. We have been shaped by many things we have heard about sex and entered marriage with certain expectations.

*What is an attitude I had about sex when I entered marriage? HDIFSTWY?*

**DAY 26**

When we were dating, romance came naturally for us. We did everything we could to make each other happy and wanted to be with each other all of the time...this is why we got married! Then, as life became filled with other things, we had less and less time for us. Most of us promise we are going to regain romance in our lives; however, other things seem to keep taking up our time. I may do nice romantic things for you, but those are things I think are romantic. For me to really know how you like to be romanced, you must tell me.

*How do I like to be romanced? HDIFSTWY?*

**DAY 27**

As we settle into married life, there are times when we take each other for granted, busy with jobs, hobbies, chores, children, family, and many of life's demands. Too often we wait for our spouse to romance us the way he/she did when we were dating. Let's not forget about the many little things our spouse does for us still. Romance can come with the love notes left in the lunch or even in the cup of coffee offered. When there are small acts of kindness exchanged throughout the day, they are often followed with romance and passion.

*What do I like that you do to add romance and passion to our relationship?*

*HDIFSTWY?*

**DAY 28**

When we were dating, all the romantic things we did for each other made us fall in love more and more. We still need to be falling in love with each other every day. One of the ways we can measure how much romance is in our lives is by our love making. If we are romancing each other daily then making love seems like the natural thing to do.

*How do I feel about putting more fireworks into our life? DFILD.*

**CONGRATULATIONS – YOU HAVE COMPLETED  
YOUR FIRST MONTH OF DIALOGUE.  
Celebrate!**

Our sexual relationship is a very important part of our total relationship. It can be a barometer of how we are doing. It can be helpful to use dialogue about our sexual relationship at least once monthly to encourage open communication on this.

**And make a commitment to have a weekly date night. It need not be expensive, but you need to take time as a couple in order to keep your sexual relationship a priority.**

Another tool to help us keep our relationship a priority is **Prayer for each other, including couple prayer**. This may be a new experience for you, but one worth working on. Studies have shown that couples who pray together do stay together. Invite God into your relationship, and draw on His strength to keep your marriage strong.

**DAY 29**

On our Weekend, we learned that God has a plan for us. His plan for us is unity and for us to be truly happy together. He wants us to be open to the miracle of His works and love. God wants to be a part of our marriage, but we need to invite Him in. It is easy to go about our lives and follow what the world says we should be doing, but God's plan brings joy to our marriage.

*What do I think God's plan is for our marriage? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 30**

For many of us, praying out loud in front of others may be a new experience. We are told in scripture "where two or more are gathered, Jesus is there in their midst." If we have never prayed together as a couple, it can be difficult to get started. But, we won't know the benefits of praying together unless we try it. The first step to becoming comfortable may be to pray silently for each other while holding hands, or taking turns reading a simple printed prayer.

*How do I feel about praying together with you? DFILD.*

**DAY 31**

We each may have a different experience of prayer. It's time to consider making couple prayer a priority in our lives if we haven't already done so. Consider buying some books to get started. There is no right or wrong way to pray. Praying together helps us to bring God into our relationship each and every day.

*Do I believe couple prayer is important? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 32**

On our Weekend, we heard that one special couple was praying for us the entire time. This may have been a big surprise to us. Maybe we didn't even know the couple. Consider being a prayer couple for someone else!

*What were my feelings when I learned that a couple was praying for us? DFILD.*

**DAY 33**

For many of us, we have always considered prayer to be a very private experience. Maybe our prayers are the ones we learned as children, or maybe we just talk with God. It is common to pray when we are troubled, or when things are difficult in life. But in order to have a full relationship with God, we need to praise and thank Him every day.

*How has my prayer life changed since our Weekend? WAMFAMA?*

**HAVE YOU CALLED YOUR PRAYER COUPLE TO THANK THEM?**

**If not, you might want to do so today.**

**DAY 34**

Sometimes in our relationship there will be hurts between us. Often when this happens, we aren't sure how to heal the situation. However, if God is a part of our relationship, He will carry us through even the toughest of times. This means it is the two of us working together with God to make our marriage the best it can be.

*When things are difficult in our relationship, am I willing to pray with you for God's grace to heal our hurts? HDIFSTWY*

**DAY 35**

Our days are filled with so many important things that it can be hard to prioritize and take time for dialogue and prayer. We can have such a hectic day that we are tired and just want to fall into bed at night. It takes discipline and determination to put the important things first. When our relationship with God and each other is first, the rest of life will go more smoothly.

*How can we make prayer an important part of our daily lives? HDIFAMA?*

**Seven Steps to Being Comfortable Praying as a Couple:**

- Day 1. Pray individually - silently - for one minute, sitting side by side.
- Day 2. Pray the Lord's Prayer together holding hands, sitting side by side.
- Day 3. Each person prays aloud briefly, side by side, asking God for help for friends.
- Day 4. Each person prays aloud briefly, side by side, asking God for help in your marriage.
- Day 5. Each person prays a prayer of praise to God.
- Day 6. Each person prays quietly aloud thanking God for your blessings.
- Day 7. Holding each other in your arms, pray quietly aloud thanking God for the gift of your spouse.

**The intimacy you gain will make you want to pray together for the rest of your life!**

The last tool is **Re-evaluation**.

This is actually used to find out how you are doing with the other four tools. We need to re-evaluate regularly to see if we are keeping our promises to each other. We can use our dialogue to help us re-evaluate all aspects of our life; however, remember that dialogue is not to solve problems, but to share our feelings in areas of life so that when we do discuss them we can understand each other more fully.

**DAY 36**

Living a "married singles lifestyle" is something each has done and can easily fall into again. It is more than just a series of activities that separate us physically. It is an independent attitude that causes a lifestyle of "take care of me" and "satisfy my needs," instead of concern for the other. Remember, it is not the activity chosen, but our attitude and why we are doing what we are doing.

*In what area of my life am I still living as a married single? HDIFAT?*

**DAY 37**

When we are disillusioned in marriage, we feel disappointment, loneliness, and doubt, and we see our spouse differently. We find the "ideal" person we married is actually a person with faults that irritate us. Occasional disillusionment is not something that goes away after a Weekend. But now when we find ourselves in disillusionment we know we don't have to stay there--we can move on together with a decision to love.

*When recently have I put your needs ahead of mine? HDIFAT?*

**DAY 38**

Sharing our feelings can be frustrating if we are still living out our same old patterns. The goal of dialogue is to gain intimacy, not to change each other. Through our dialogue we find acceptance and love, which gives us the freedom to change ourselves. (The only one you can change is yourself.) This allows us to love one another completely and without strings.

*What changes can I make in my behavior that will help me grow closer to you?  
HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 39**

On your Weekend, you may have learned that you have a good or even great marriage. Don't "rest on your laurels," thinking you don't need to dialogue every day. For a few weeks after our Weekend, our lives did seem so much better than before. (Often the difference is only in our attitudes and willingness to talk about difficult areas.) Then we remembered that the success of our Weekend was because dialogue was the tool that helped us.

*How do I feel about our relationship today compared to before our Weekend?*

**DAY 40**

We heard the call to a radical lifestyle, making each other our priority and finding a way to meet our needs through each other. Often our jobs are the source of our sense of self worth and importance. To be great couples we must keep our jobs in their right perspective, and find our greatest sense of self worth and importance in each other's eyes.

*What does my/your job mean to me? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 41**

On our Weekend, we began to focus on ways to put each other first, by daily decisions to love, by reaching out and sharing with each other, and in the changes we're making to keep our relationship top priority. Our Daily Dialogue should be showing all this.

*When was a time recently when I tried to get to know you better? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 42**

Now that we have been remembering old times, let's think about the future. Ten years on, the times we have NOW will also be past memories. Let's make exciting, romantic memories, which requires us to make a decision to talk about what we enjoy most about each other.

*What can I do this week to make memories? HDIFSTWY?*



**DAY 43**

Let's turn our attention to remembering some of the concepts of the Weekend. On Friday night we were asked to share with our spouse one of his/her endearing qualities. Later that night we began to learn about feelings as the presenters started us on our journey to new closeness. It was very awkward but here we are, 43 days. We have come a long way!

*One of your most endearing qualities of late is .... HDIFSTWY?*

**DAY 44**

On our Weekend, there were times when we felt afraid, threatened, or confused. There was a lot we were being asked to do, and we did it! As we did, we grew more trusting of each other and fell more in love. When we left, we were asked to take dialogue home. It hasn't always been easy but we have done it! Here we are almost 1/2 way through with our first 90 days.

*How have we benefited by choosing to dialogue at home? WAMFAMA?*

**DAY 45**

In Encounter With Self, we were asked to take a close look at ourselves and how we let others see us. Sometimes we do not see ourselves as acceptable and lovable, and present ourselves differently than we really are. Before you write your love letter, reread what you wrote about yourself in the self description from your Weekend workbook.

*How do I feel about what I wrote in my Weekend notebook? DFILD.*

**DAY 46**

We learned that fighting is a constructive means of communication. If we have taken seriously the decision to love we can take on fighting/confrontation as an important part of communication. All couples should fight for the sake of their relationship, not to hurt one another or to win, but to strengthen their relationship. Remember the rules ...No name calling...stick to the subject...no back packing (nothing over 24 hours ago should be brought up)...stay in the same room...stay physically close to each other...don't fight to win

*Which of these rules for fighting is the hardest for me to do? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 47**

On the Weekend, we were asked to write reflections in the form of a love letter. For many this was the first time in a long time (if ever). We learned that this has a special purpose. It was a way to communicate feelings without the distraction of seeing how our spouse was reacting to our words. It also made us more sensitive to one another.

*How do I feel writing a love letter to you every day? DFILD*

**DAY 48**

During the "Covenant" talk when we heard that we were going to write and dialogue for such an extended time, our first thought was disbelief. How could we possibly have any more to say! But we were amazed at how quickly the time went. There was no one to interrupt us...no children, phones, schedules ...it was a time to focus solely on each other. (*Option: Take time to read to each other what you wrote during your extended love letter*).

*What is my memory of our Extended Dialogue on Sunday of our Weekend? HDIFAT?*

**DAY 49**

We were excited about us again! There seemed to be nothing that could ever bring loneliness and isolation into our lives again.

*What promises did we make to each other on our Weekend? How have we done with those promises? HDIFAMA?*

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**DAY 50**

Now let's turn our attention to how we can share our love with others. Many of us didn't realize that we entered into a Covenant-love relationship on our wedding day. That adds a whole new dimension to our life together. We define our Covenant-love as an external living sign of God's love. When we are out and about our relationship is always on display. When people see us they should be reminded of God's love.

*What kind of sign of God's love do I think we have been this week? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 51**

This concept of us being a sign of God's love puts more responsibility on us than most of us have been used to. Many of us have seen our relationship as our own private affair. Now we have a mission, to bring God's love to everyone, not by preaching and teaching, but by being living examples of God's love. This means that when we are fighting we try to follow the rules, that we must take time to listen when our spouse needs it, not just when convenient.

*How do I feel about us being important to the Church and the world? DFILD.*

**DAY 52**

Just as we are a sign of God's love, there are many couples around us who are a sign for us to see. They are couples we look up to in many ways. Maybe they have the kind of family we would like to have...life-giving and joyful or maybe they have a marriage that we almost envy when we see them together. Regardless what it is, they affect our lives.

*What couple do I see as important to us; how have they affected our life? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 53**

As we think about an involvement in our LME Community or another area, it is important to reflect on our Covenant-love and how we are going to live a life sharing it with others. We must remember that our Covenant-love keeps our life together from being our own little private affair because how we live it can have an affect on those around us.

*How have we shared our relationship with other people in our community, church, and neighborhoods this week? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 54**

Just like there were special people in our lives when we were children, we are special people in the eyes of our children and other children we're around and can be a sign of God's love.

*How do I feel about being a sign of God's love to our/other children? DFILD.*

**DAY 55**

Recognition that we are a sign of Christ's love increases our awareness of our responsibility. That means not only are we called to be in love but we are also called to share our love. Christ chose us, but it is up to us to share our love with the world for all to see.

*How do I think others experienced us as a sign today? HDIFSTWY?*

**DAY 56**

One of the most precious memories we can share with each other is our wedding day. The glow of that day filled us with light for a long time. As life became more complicated, the glow may have dimmed a little. But we should always remember that day and the feelings, as this can rekindle some of our old romance. Before you write your love letter, take out your wedding album and look through it together. You may want to plan a candlelight dinner.

*What is my fondest memory of that day? What feelings do I have recalling it? DFILD.*

**DAY 57**

Now let's focus on accepting each other's feelings. When we just tolerate each other's feelings we try to understand but don't get personally involved or let ourselves be affected by what our spouse is feeling and experiencing. We remain at the level of intellectual understanding or focus our attention on the topic rather than on the person. Unfortunately, this is the level at which we communicate most often. Its effects are harmony and getting along, after all, but it doesn't allow for the intimacy that is necessary if our needs are to be truly satisfied.

*What are two specific areas in which I tolerate your feelings, and how does this generally cause me to act? HDIFAT?*

**DAY 58**

Rejecting a person by rejecting their feelings destroys relationships and causes the person being rejected to draw away. The effects are hurt, emptiness, and isolation. Rejection is a failure to respond to a person's basic human needs for love, self worth, belonging, and autonomy. We have all done this at some time and maybe not known how to avoid it. But, now we also know that if we take time to listen to each other, we are more sensitive with each other, and we are beginning to feel really accepted. Sure, we are still going to hurt each other sometimes - we are only human -but we know how not to.

*When recently have I rejected your feelings? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 59**

With many things we do, we seek support from someone else. If I go on a diet, begin an exercise plan, return to school to finish my education, try to break a habit, enter a new position at work, or change careers...it helps to have support and acceptance from others. As a couple, I know there are many ways we can support each other that we do not discuss often.

*In what way have I felt most supported by you? HDIFSTWY?*

**DAY 60**

A close intimate relationship is very much a matter of priority. We are the only ones who can make each other number one in our lives. We need to be able to look at each other without judgment...only with admiration and love. Sharing feelings honestly and gently can help us.

*Why do I want to make you number one in my life? What stands in my way?  
HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 61**

When we practice acceptance of each other, we gain a new awareness of who our spouse really is - right now. As we begin to accept each other more, we begin to accept those closest to us more also...our children, my family and your family, and our friends. Accepting does not mean agreeing necessarily. It simply means accepting a person for who he/she is.

*How accepting have I been of others this week? HDIFAT?*

**DAY 62**

In order to live God's plan of unity and happiness for us, we must build a relationship that is open and honest, and this will take trust. However, we are often blocked from communicating fully with our spouse because of fears. Examples of some: the fear of intimacy – afraid we will look foolish; or if we get too close in a relationship we will lose our freedom – our own identity; the fear of commitment – afraid to make promises we won't be able to follow up on; the fear of disappointment – afraid we will invest more than our spouse and reveal our real feelings and our spouse will not; or afraid to get our hopes up.

*Where do I feel most alone in our relationship?*

*How well have I communicated this to you? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 63**

We spend much of our time together talking about all the things in our life...our children, the budget, our jobs, our home, our schedules. Usually all of these types of discussions are an exchange of our ideas, opinions, or maybe just facts. When we sit down to dialogue it is a good chance to share our feelings and to make contact with one another in a very real and personal way. It is a form of communication that puts on an equal plane no matter what the topic is because we are simply sharing our feelings.

*What is the one thing that I like most about our dialogue time together? WAMFAT?*

*Remember:* Feelings are neither right nor wrong ... they just are.

**There are basic ways we react to what our spouse communicates to us about themselves. They are: Rejection, Toleration, and Acceptance. The goal of dialogue is acceptance, but to get there we must first look at how we practice rejection and toleration in our relationship.**

Trust: Having confidence in my spouse's love for me.

Risk: Deciding to go beyond my obstacles and fears to become vulnerable to my spouse by sharing my deepest feelings.

Trust is a state of mind. Risk is taking action.

**DAY 64**

Now we turn our attention to how dialogue can shape our priorities. As we are growing closer through dialogue, we still find we sometimes argue over the same things. We may have expected to see a change in this area by now and have not. For us to understand how we each need to personally change ourselves for the sake of our relationship, it is important to share our values with each other. Dialogue is not for solving problems, but to understand.

*Are we using dialogue to share our feelings and grow in intimacy? WAMFAT?*

**DAY 65**

Sometimes there are so many demands on us that there is no time left for us. It seems there is always one more thing to do and one more place to go. Part of our examination of our lives involves evaluating how we are spending our time. Often the things that are the most important to us are the things we give the least amount of time to...like our marriage. Sometimes we allow our dialogue to fit into an already full schedule and when something unexpected comes up; our dialogue doesn't get prime time.

*What does the way I spend my time tell me about my priorities?*

*Am I spending my time on what I value the most? HDIFSTWY?*

**DAY 66**

We all must work for a living. For many couples today that involves both spouses working. We set high standards for our lifestyle. Often those standards are based on decisions we made early on in our marriage. As we begin to look at our life together now, we need to re-evaluate what is important to us and what value all those things we work so hard for have for us.

*Have our decisions changed over the years about what is most important to us?*

*HDIFSTWY?*

**DAY 67**

An important item on a list of values for many couples with children is the activities of the children. There is a world of activities for young people today that take up large amounts of time. Many of them are very good for our children and help form them for adulthood. But often the price we as parents pay is great. Evening activities may dictate whether or not we have an evening meal together as a family, or just grab something on the run. Schedules have to be figured out and we find ourselves racing to meet a deadline.

*Are activities our children are involved in taking away from our couple relationship?*

*WAMFAT?*

**DAY 68**

Our lovemaking seems to be a particular casualty of busy schedules. We are often so tired when we go to bed that sleep is the only thing on our mind. Lovemaking is no longer spontaneous but something we have to plan and fit into our schedule.

*Where do I place our time for making love on my list of priorities? HDIFSTWY?*

**DAY 69**

The area of in-laws is often difficult to discuss. We may have had situations either with my or your parents which have caused us pain. We find ourselves torn and do things your way, my way, or their way to ease the friction. What about US? What about our family...you, me, and our children? Where is our priority? Are things always going to be dictated to us by your family or my family? Our families are important to both of us, and we love them very much...but our family, our children, our relationship, you and me, are important also!

*How do I feel when we are torn between our families? DFILD.*

**DAY 70**

Daily Dialogue is no easy task. If it were, then every couple leaving a Weekend would dialogue every day for the rest of their lives. Because of our humanness and the pressures we face in life, many of us slip away from dialogue after our Weekend because we see it as "just one more thing to do." Is our relationship something we can let go of, or do we really want to grow closer each day?

*What sacrifices am I willing to make for our Daily Dialogue? HDIFSTWY?*

***Remember: Dialogue is to experience how our spouse feels about some area.***

***Stick to sharing feelings and not discussion.***

***Remember: Write for ten minutes.***

**Dialogue is not about solving problems, but sharing feelings.**

**Prime time**

Choose a time to write that is best for you. This time does not have to be the same time for both spouses, but it does have to be when you are able to write for a full 10 minutes without interruption. When you dialogue, choose a time when you both have 10 uninterrupted minutes.

**Eliminate Distractions**

It is impossible to share deeply in our letters or in our verbal dialogue if we are distracted by TV, phones, children, and other outside influences.

**DAY 71**

In 1967 the first Catholic Weekend was held at Notre Dame, presented to seven couples and a few priests. Together with the help of Catholic couples (now organized as Worldwide Marriage Encounter), Lutheran Marriage Encounter was eventually birthed. All these couples dreamed, sacrificed, and worked hard. Today, there are Weekends being held in over 90 countries (wwme.org), with Lutheran Marriage Encounter in the U.S., Canada, Brazil, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden.

*When I think of all the people who made it possible for the Weekend to be available for us, I feel.... DFILD.*

**DAY 72**

Most businesses have a mission statement in order to know what their focus is. What is the focus of our marriage? It is time for us to create our mission statement for our marriage and for our family. *Take 10 minutes to create a mission statement.*

*How do I feel knowing that we as a couple have a mission for our marriage? DFILD.*

**DAY 73**

The Mission of LME is to assist married couples live intimate, responsible relationships by providing an Encounter experience and ongoing community support. Sounds like a big job, but when we think of what has already been done, we can see it is attainable. It takes couples like us! We are the only ones who can tell our families and friends and invite them to go. We are the only ones who can share with them what the Weekend has done for our relationship.

**DAY 74**

Yes, it takes a lot of work to make a Weekend happen. There are many things we can do to help and support them: be a prayer couple, greet couples on Friday night, help out by giving Temple talks, and join a Community that supports the Weekend. All of this is done by loving volunteer couples who want to do their part to help keep Marriage Encounter going.

*What are we going to do to make Weekends available for other couples? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 75**

Just like we probably never thought much of the importance of our Covenant love, we probably never thought about the importance of our couple power. We know we have individual power, but the thought of couple power is new (the love of Christ present in our relationship). When we take our individual powers and combine them, the sum is something bigger than both of us!

*Where can we share our couple power? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 76**

There are couples in our neighborhoods who have not even heard about Weekends. We cannot be satisfied with how things are, but rather we must dream for how they can be. Our children are growing up fast in a stressful modern world. The Weekend can do a lot to change the direction for things in our churches and neighborhoods for couples.

*What dreams do I have for Lutheran Marriage Encounter in our area? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 77**

Dare to dream BIG. Anyone can say "I wish," but commitment is required to make dreams come true. The world needs us to dream and commit to make our dream come true.

*How do I feel about being needed by others? Does our church need us as a couple to share our talents? DFILD?*

**DAY 78**

On our Weekend, we had strong feelings when we wrote the extended dialogue. For many, it had been a long time since we talked about our future and dreams together. Dreaming was so natural in our early years of marriage, but the stress, pressures and realities of life seemed to strip away our dreams. Let's not waste one moment. Let's look at how we might be.

*What is one thing I would like to change; how do I wish we could be? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 79**

When we were married we dreamed about how many children we would like to have and prayed they would be healthy. We had hopes and dreams for them. After the realization of all the work it is to raise children, our dreams may have faded as we spent all our energy in raising them. Maybe our dreams faded when they grew up and left home. Maybe our dream faded when we discovered we could not have any children.

*What were the dreams we had for our children? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 80**

We spend time talking about all that we need to do to assure our needs are taken care of when we grow old. We are practical about things like the modern world tells us to be. While this is good, what are my dreams for us in our retired years? Like we planned our lives together when we were engaged, are we planning our future together now?

*What are my dreams for us when we grow old? HDIFSTWY?*

**DAY 81**

As our communication is improving and we begin tearing down the barriers that kept us apart, our relationship with our children and with the rest of our family is changing also. There is new family spirit emerging (whether you have children or not). We are aware that this only a beginning of a closer relationship with our children and our family.

*What family spirit and atmosphere do I dream of for our home? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 82**

Let's dream about our sexual relationship. Not fantasies, but the realities of what we would like our sexual relationship to become. We all have thoughts, hopes, desires, and dreams of what we would like our sexual relationship to be, but we don't spend time sharing these with each other. The first part of making dreams come true is sharing them with each other.

*What are my dreams for our sexual relationship? HDIFSTWY?*

**DAY 83**

Often we think we have to do something big to do anything great for the world. One of the greatest mission fields is located in our very own neighborhood. We have all seen the pain of divorce or neighbors troubled with teenagers, and we feel helpless. When church family and friends lose their jobs we feel helpless. Finding a way to help and support those around us requires us to dream about what we can do together.

*What dreams do I have for our hurting friends at our church or neighborhood?  
HDIFAMA?*

**Day 84**

There are so many places for us to spend our couple love. The world needs us. Maybe it is with troubled teenagers or the homeless. Maybe it is taking care of a couple's children so they can have a romantic night out together. We have to remember we can't just look at how things are, but rather how they might be.

*What dreams do I have for a better world? HDIFSTWY?*

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**DAY 85**

As we begin our last week of dialogues in this booklet, we can take pride in all the different things we have discussed and the feelings we have shared with each other. We have learned so very much about each other through the many different feelings we have shared together. Looking back, there is one in particular that has meant the most to me. (Take time to really think about what your spouse has shared that meant the most to you).

*Which of our dialogue questions has been very significant to me? HDIFSTWY?*

**DAY 86**

Our dialogue is strengthening many areas of our relationship. It is important for our continued growth to take time to reflect on how we see ourselves growing closer.

*What area of our relationship has dialogue strengthened the most? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 87**

It is important to remember that feelings are neither right nor wrong. We don't have to justify our feelings and we don't have to apologize for our feelings. Sharing them with each other simply gives us an opportunity to grow closer to each other. Our goal is acceptance of one another ...unity.

*How has your writing a love letter to me each day affected our relationship?  
HDIFSTWY?*

**DAY 88**

There are common areas we married couples often avoid. By not discussing or sharing our feelings in these areas, we create barriers between us. The most common areas are finances, in-laws, sex, children, death, and religion.

*In what area is it difficult for me to share my feelings? What are my feelings in this area? DFILD.*

**DAY 89**

God made us all good, lovable, and unique. *"I am fearfully, wonderfully made"* (Psalm 139: 14). This is a statement of hope, for no matter how I can see myself, it's what God sees that's important, giving me the courage to choose to make the changes in my behavior and attitude to reveal the real me that God made and that He wants to reveal to the world.

*When God made me, what do I think were His dreams for me? HDIFAMA?*

**DAY 90**

This is our 90th day of dialogues. At times it has been difficult and yet at times we have experienced great joy. We have laughed and cried together, and grown closer. I am looking forward to continuing to grow closer to you and loving you more.

*What are my hopes and dreams for us through our continued dialogue? HDIFSTWY?*

**When you have finished this dialogue, don't forget to select your question for the next day from the questions you have written this week for your dialogue jar. Or make up one. THE POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS, as is your love!**

Congratulations on completing your first 90 days of dialogue. We hope you will continue as we have. Daily Dialogue is the key to a growing relationship and a great marriage. May God bless you.

- ♥ Offer yourselves to support the upcoming Weekend - be a prayer couple.
- ♥ Call the presenters on your Weekend and let them know what dialogue has accomplished for your relationship. "Challenge" them or another couple to dialogue non-stop for the next week.
- ♥ Attend a Community gathering - or ask the presenters how to get one started. It's simple. Resources are available on [www.ilme.org](http://www.ilme.org) website under: "Resources for Encountered Couples."
- ♥ Keep up your question jar, finding more resources on the [www.ilme.org](http://www.ilme.org) site or in the dialogue section at the Catholic Marriage Encounter Website: <http://wwme.org/dialog-questions.html> which has some 9,100 questions many of which can be searched by category.
- ♥ You can even share with Community on Facebook.

*Now that you have completed 12 weeks, you may want to try **Family Dialogue**.*

1. Teach your children about feelings. Encourage them to share their feelings and that feelings are neither right nor wrong.
2. Give them the list of feeling words and helpful hints to describe feelings.
3. The younger children can draw pictures to describe their feelings and then describe the picture to the family.
4. You should not use family dialogue more than once per week. Choose a question for the whole family. Let them write for 10 minutes and then gather together and let everyone read their letter out loud.
5. Listen with patience, not judging, not pacifying or criticizing their feelings.
6. Choose one person's feeling to share about. Try to understand the feeling fully. Don't interrogate, but gently ask questions until you can empathize with the feeling. You will not have time to share on everyone's feeling.
7. Set the time and place for the next family dialogue.
8. Enjoy your time together as a family!

### **About the WEDS Manual**

The WEDS Manual was originally designed for use by the Catholic expression of Worldwide Marriage Encounter in the United States and was received by LME with much enthusiasm in 1994 when modified by Dennis & Becky Lucero. It has been updated frequently since then, including 2014's changes to accommodate the Common Protestant Outline format.

