Marriage A Lifetime Of Learning
Outline by Bill & Mary Anne Boylan

INTRODUCTION

• INTRODUCTION OF PRESENTERS

• WHAT THE DAY IS ALL ABOUT
  • SHARPENING THE SAW
    • WE ARE HERE TO TAKE TIME TO SHARPEN OUR RELATIONSHIPS
    • MIND - BODY - SPIRIT - SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL
  • LIVE THE PRESENT MOMENT
    • GET PAST THE OBSTACLES

• MARRIAGE - A LIFETIME OF LEARNING
  • TOUCH ON 4 AREAS
    • COMMUNICATION IN DIFFICULT AREAS
    • ATTITUDES
    • LIFE-GIVING CHOICES
    • MATRIMONY - A GRACE GIVING REALITY
  • EXERCISES TO APPLY CONTENT OF PRESENTATIONS TO YOUR LIVES

• SCRIPTURE
  • WE WILL BE TALKING ABOUT CHRISTIAN MARRIAGE SO WE WILL BEGIN EACH SESSION WITH A SCRIPTURAL BASE THAT IN SOME WAY SPEAKS TO THE TOPIC OF THE PRESENTATION

• NUTS AND BOLTS
  • FACILITIES
  • LUNCH
  • DAY ENDS AT 3:45PM
  • READING OUR PRESENTATIONS
    • TO STAY WITHIN OUR TIME FRAMES
    • TO AVOID GOING OFF ON A TANGENT
TALK 1 - COMMUNICATIONS
I THINK YOU HEAR ME BUT I’M NOT SURE YOU UNDERSTAND

- SCRIPTURE 1CORINTHIANS 13:1 “IF I SPEAK WITH HUMAN TONGUES AND ANGELIC AS WELL, BUT DO NOT HAVE LOVE, I AM A NOISY GONG, A CLANGING CYMBAL.”

- CHART ON LEVELS OF COMMUNICATION
  - EXPLAIN CHART ON PAGE AND WHY WE OFTEN HEAR EACH OTHER BUT DON’T UNDERSTAND.

- THE BENEFITS OF COMMUNICATING ON A FEELING LEVEL
  - TEACHING
    - EUGENE KENNEDY - REAL COMMUNICATION TAKES PLACE IN OUR GUT AND NO INSISTENCE ON LOGIC CAN EVER CHANGE THAT” “YOU CAN SHARE MONEY, FOOD AND EVEN SEX AND REMAIN BASICALLY STRANGERS. IT IS ONLY WHEN WE SHARE OUR FEELINGS THAT WE CAN GET TO KNOW ANOTHER HUMAN BEING.”
    - EXAMPLE OF SHARING FEELINGS
  - EXERCISE FOR THE COUPLES

- LISTENING
  - WHAT KIND OF A LISTENER ARE YOU?
  - NON-VERBAL
  - WHY LISTEN
  - SHORT EXERCISE ON IDENTIFYING WHAT KIND OF A LISTENER THEY ARE.

- FIGHTING - A MEANS OF COMMUNICATION
  - WHY
  - HOW TO

- TALKING ABOUT THE TOUGH AREAS OF OUR LIVES
  - COMMUNICATING ON TOPICS WE AVOID
  - PERSONAL SHARING OF AN AREA THAT IS DIFFICULT

DISCUSSION AREA
WHAT AREA OF YOUR LIVES IS DIFFICULT TO TALK TO EACH OTHER ABOUT? (MONEY, SEX, PARENTING, IN-LAWS, JOBS,...) INSTEAD OF TRYING TO RESOLVE YOUR DIFFERENCES IN THIS AREA, TELL EACH OTHER HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THAT AREA, EG. -IT’S HARD TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT SEX. I FEEL DUMB OR I FEEL LONELY OR I FEEL FRUSTRATED … MONEY - I FEEL CONTROLLED OR I FEEL MONITORED, OR I FEEL INADEQUATE AS A “PROVIDER OR …..”. SEE IF YOU CAN DESCRIBE THAT FEELING IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOUR SPOUSE CAN FEEL IT TOO. PAINT A MENTAL PICTURE OF HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THE TOPIC
TALK 2  SHEDDING SOME LIGHT ON OUR BEHAVIOR

SCRIPTURE: PHILIPPIANS 2:3-4 “NEVER ACT OUT OF RIVALRY OR CONCEIT; RATHER, LET ALL PARTIES THINK HUMBLY OF OTHERS AS SUPERIOR TO THEMSELVES, EACH OF YOU LOOK TO OTHERS INTERENTS RATHER THAN HIS OWN. YOUR ATTITUDE MUST BE THAT OF CHRIST.”

- INTRODUCTION: FOR THE MOST PART PSYCHIATRISTS AGREE THAT WE ARE BORN WITH CERTAIN PERSONALITY TRAITS. THOSE OF YOU WITH SIBLINGS OR WITH SEVERAL CHILDREN OF YOUR OWN, WOULD PROBABLY AGREE THAT WE ARE ALL DIFFERENT TO SOME EXTENT. WE ALSO KNOW THAT IN ADDITION TO OUR BEHAVIORS THAT ARE BASED ON OUR PERSONALITIES, OUR FAMILY OF ORIGIN ALSO HAS AN EFFECT ON OUR BEHAVIOR. NOW WHILE ALL OUR PERSONALITIES ARE BASICALLY GOOD AND THE BEHAVIORS WE EACH LEARNED FROM YOUR FAMILY OF ORIGIN MAY OR MAY NOT BE GOOD, THEY BOTH CAN LEAD TO CERTAIN EXPECTATIONS THAT EACH OF US PROBABLY BROUGHT INTO OUR MARRIAGE.

- EXPECTATIONS - PERSONAL SHARING FROM PRESENTERS
  - SHARE AND DESCRIBE YOUR BASIC PERSONALITY.
  - SHARE/ DESCRIBE THE EXPECTATIONS YOU TOOK INTO YOUR MARRIAGE. E.G. HOW WOULD WE HANDLE OUR MONEY? WE WOULD HAVE LOTS OF CHILDREN/ WE WOULD NOT HAVE LOTS OF CHILDREN; WOULD THERE BE ROMANCE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP? ...

- COUPLE EXERCISE - BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR FAMILY OF ORIGIN AND DESCRIBE THE EXPECTATIONS YOU BROUGHT INTO YOUR MARRIAGE?

- ATTITUDES
  OUR “TRAINING” FROM OUR FAMILY OF ORIGIN PLUS SEVERAL OTHER SOURCES CAN LEAD TO ATTITUDES THAT CAN BE DETRIMENTAL TO OUR RELATIONSHIPS.

- TEACH THE FOLLOWING:

- WHAT IS AN ATTITUDE? AN ATTITUDE IS DEFINED AS A STATE OF MIND, BEHAVIOR OR CONDUCT REGARDING SOME MATTER AS INDICATING SOME OPINION OR PURPOSE. IT IS A PREDISPOSITION TO ACT TOWARD SOMEONE OR SOMETHING IN A FAVORABLE OR UNFAVORABLE WAY. IT GIVES US A MENTAL TILT.

- SOURCES OF ATTITUDES:
  - MY PERSONALITY.. E.G. PESSIMIST OR OPTIMIST; ORGANIZED OR FREE SPIRIT
  - MY EXPERIENCE.. E.G. FEAR OF FLYING BECAUSE OF NEAR ACCIDENT
  - POPULAR OPINION E.G. BIAS OR PREJUDICE
  - FAMILY OF ORIGIN. E.G. MONEY IS MEANT TO BE SAVED; MONEY IS MEANT TO BE SPENT; SEX IS DIRTY; WORK FIRST PLAY LATER…. 
• WHAT ATTITUDES DO:
  • COLOR MY VIEW OF THINGS OR PEOPLE
  • CONDITION MY JUDGMENTS
  • INFLUENCE MY BEHAVIOR
  • EFFECT MY RELATIONSHIPS

• ATTITUDES, UNLIKE FEELING CAN BE RIGHT OR WRONG… AND, WITH EFFORT, CAN BE CHANGED

• PERSONAL SHARING - SHARE A PRESENT ATTITUDE THAT I HAVE THAT IS NEGATIVELY IMPACTING OUR RELATIONSHIP. NAME THE ATTITUDE, DESCRIBE YOUR RESULTING BEHAVIOR AND THE EFFECT IT HAS ON YOUR RELATIONSHIP. INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW YOU FEEL WHEN YOU ARE LIVING OUT THIS ATTITUDE. REFER TO THE HANDOUT FOR EXAMPLES OF ATTITUDES.

• TEACHING ON ATTITUDE MODIFIERS

• PERSONAL SHARING - SHARE A SUCCESS STORY. NAME A TIME YOU MADE AN “ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT”. NAME THE ATTITUDE. WHAT DID YOU DO TO MODIFY YOUR ATTITUDE? WHAT WAS THE POSITIVE EFFECT ON YOU AND YOUR RELATIONSHIP? INCLUDE A DESCRIPTION OF HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT. REFER TO HANDOUT FOR EXAMPLES OF “ATTITUDE MODIFIERS”

COUPLE EXERCISE - PAGE 8. TELL THE PARTICIPANTS THAT THEY WILL HAVE A TOTAL OF 20 MINUTES FOR THIS EXERCISE INCLUDING THE EXCHANGE. THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE EXERCISE ARE ON THE TOP OF PAGE 9.
### ATTITUDES AND MODIFIERS

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<tr>
<th>ATTITUDES</th>
<th>MODIFIERS OF ATTITUDES</th>
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<td>• SUPERIORITY</td>
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<td>• INDIFFERENCE</td>
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<td>• GENTLENESS IS A WEAKNESS</td>
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<td>• LIFE MUST BE FUN/SERIOUS</td>
<td>BALANCE, PERSPECTIVE</td>
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<td>• IT’S NOT MY JOB/ “50 - 50”</td>
<td>UNCONDITIONAL LOVE</td>
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<td>• MARTYR/VICTIM</td>
<td>CONFIDENCE, OPTIMISM</td>
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<td>• MACHO</td>
<td>VULNERABILITY, SENSITIVITY</td>
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<td>• OTHER ______________</td>
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TALK 3  FOR BETTER NOT WORSE

- SCRIPTURE: - “I HAVE COME THAT YOU MIGHT HAVE JOY AND THAT YOUR JOY MAY BE COMPLETE.”

- GOOD NEWS/BAD NEWS
  - GOOD NEWS - MARRIAGE BRINGS WITH IT THE GREATEST POTENTIAL FOR JOY
  - BAD NEWS - THE JOY PART DOESN’T HAPPEN UNLESS WE WORK AT IT!

THE BEST ANALOGY WE HAVE IS THAT IT IS THE JOY OF THE TWO OF US SITTING SIDE BY SIDE ON THE ROLLER COASTER RIDE THAT LIFE IS - WE ARE THERE TO BRACE AND SUPPORT ONE ANOTHER THROUGH THE BUMPY TIMES - WE ARE THERE TO ENJOY TOGETHER WHEN GOOD TIMES COME OUR WAY. GOD REALLY LOVES COUPLES. IF GOD HAD A REFRIGERATOR, YOUR PICTURE WOULD BE ON IT. BUT HE WANTS US TO TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR OUR RELATIONSHIP. HE WANTS US TO MAKE CHOICES THAT ARE GOOD FOR US. FOR REMEMBER, WE ARE WHERE WE ARE BECAUSE OF THE CHOICES WE MAKE..... AND DOING NOTHING IS A CHOICE!! AND FRIENDS, THERE ARE CONSEQUENCES ASSOCIATED WITH ALL THE CHOICES WE MAKE.

- CHOICES - WHO INFLUENCES YOUR CHOICES
  - EXERCISE - FILL IN THE DIAGRAM WITH THE PEOPLE WHO INFLUENCES YOUR CHOICES.

- SPECIFICALLY WHAT IS IT THAT WE HAVE TO WORK ON; WHAT ARE THE CHOICES HE EXPECTS US TO MAKE TO BE A GREAT COUPLE.
  - ELEMENTS OF INTIMATE AND RESPONSIBLE RELATIONSHIP
  - WE HAVE NARROWED THEM DOWN TO TEN. WE FIGURED THAT IS ENOUGH TO KEEP US BUSY. THESE TEN ELEMENTS OF INTIMACY AND RESPONSIBILITY CAN MAKE A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE IN OUR RELATIONSHIP.

- ELEMENTS OF INTIMATE AND RESPONSIBLE RELATIONSHIPS

1. SECURITY    I feel secure in your love. I know that your job or the children or money or __________ is not more important than me. I feel sheltered where I am vulnerable. e.g. in the area of money, parenting, my health, weight, education, job, __________.

2. COMMUNICATIONS    I feel connected and able to communicate at the deepest level. Our dialogue helps me to know myself and you better every day.

3. ROMANCE    I feel special. You plan things for us. You take the initiative. You romance me. You treat me as a person of worth.

4. INTIMACY    I feel free to share all of myself, body, soul and spirit. I can share my innermost thoughts and feelings. You freely give this intimacy to me as well. You physically share yourself in sexual closeness. Intimacy = In-to-me-see

5. PEACE    Despite the stress in our lives, you create an environment that brings me peace. Our home is a place where we can refuel and relax.
6. **AFFIRMATION**  
The world has a knack for knocking me down. You lift me up and reaffirm my goodness as a person. You notice and express your gratefulness for what I do and who I am.

7. **RESPECT**  
I feel respected in the way you honor my opinions about important areas of our lives such as parenting, God, money, sex, family, ________.

8. **SPIRITUALITY**  
We invite God to be part of us and I feel His presence in our relationship.

9. **JOY AND LAUGHTER**  
You bring joy and laughter to our relationship. You help me to not take myself so seriously. You are not a second mother or father. You are a helpmate not another boss. You are a “completer” not a competitor.

10. **INVOLVEMENT WITH COUPLES OF SIMILAR VALUES**  
“No man is an island”. You encourage me and together we actively seek out couples of similar values.

- **PERSONAL SHARING - WHAT MEANINGFUL CHOICES DO I SEE MY SPOUSE MAKING NOW FOR THE SAKE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP? WHAT ARE THE CONSEQUENCES? I.E., WHAT SPECIFIC EFFECT DO THESE CHOICES HAVE ON OUR COMMUNICATIONS, OUR SEXUALITY, OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD AND OTHERS?**

- **PERSONAL SHARING - THE PREMISE FOR THIS SHARING IS THAT IF I WANT TO BE LOVED IN A PARTICULAR WAY, THE BEST PERSON TO TELL IS MY SPOUSE SO HE/SHE DOESN’T HAVE TO GUESS. WHAT SPECIFIC CHOICE(S) WOULD I LIKE MY SPOUSE TO MAKE NOW FOR THE SAKE OF OUR RELATIONSHIP? HOW DOES MY ANSWER MAKE ME FEEL?**

**COUPLE EXERCISE**  
**THE INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE EXERCISE ARE ON THE TOP OF PAGE 12**
ELEMENTS OF INTIMATE AND RESPONSIBLE RELATIONSHIPS

1. **SECURITY**
   I feel secure in your love. I know that your job or the children or money or _________ is not more important than me. I feel sheltered where I am vulnerable. e.g. in the area of money, parenting, my health, weight, education, job, ____________.

2. **COMMUNICATIONS**
   I feel connected and able to communicate at the deepest level. Our dialogue helps me to know myself and you better every day.

3. **ROMANCE**
   I feel special. You plan things for us. You take the initiative. You romance me. You treat me as a person of worth.

4. **INTIMACY**
   I feel free to share all of myself, body, soul and spirit. I can share my innermost thoughts and feelings. You freely give this intimacy to me as well. You physically share yourself in sexual closeness. Intimacy = In-to-me-see

5. **PEACE**
   Despite the stress in our lives, you create an environment that brings me peace. Our home is a place where we can refuel and relax.

6. **AFFIRMATION**
   The world has a knack for knocking me down. You lift me up and reaffirm my goodness as a person. You notice and express your gratefulness for what I do and who I am.

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   I feel respected in the way you honor my opinions about important areas of our lives such as parenting, God, money, sex, family, ________.

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9. **JOY AND LAUGHTER**
   You bring joy and laughter to our relationship. You help me to not take myself so seriously. You are not a second mother or father. You are a helpmate not another boss. You are a “completer” not a competitor.

10. **INVOLVEMENT WITH COUPLES OF SIMILAR VALUES**
    You get like the company you keep. You encourage me and together we actively seek out couples of similar values.
TALK 4 WE MADE A COVENANT
(STatement of Sensitivity to those of other Faiths if needed)

- Scripture John 13:34 “I give you a new commandment: love one another. Such as My love has been for you, so must you love be for each other.”

- What is this passage telling us
  - Love your spouse as Christ love
  - Unconditional love - no 50/50

- Covenant vs. contract
  When we were married we made a Covenant with each other. And a Covenant is a lot different than a contract. In a marriage contract the couple agrees to certain terms and conditions. Failure to abide by these terms releases the couple from their obligations. In contrast, we entered into a Sacrament and a covenant with each other and our God. A covenant is a promise, a promise to be faithful and to love each other no matter what. In a covenant, God takes the initiative and His promises far surpasses anything we can give in return. He will never go back on what is promised. God’s love is unconditional. This covenant kind of love is what we need for our relationship. A covenant is unconditional. A covenant is forever. A covenant is limitless.

- Personal sharing - graces of the sacrament - these are ours for every day
  - Elevation - no one has the “grace” to lift my spouse’s spirits as much as I do
  - Radiation - a couple most clearly radiates Christ’s love for His people….think about that privilege
  - Parenthood - the grace for when we as a couple just don’t know what to do.
  - Healing - please forgive me vs. I’m sorry
    - Exercise of healing in place….. please forgive me for the times I’ve hurt you. Sign of cross on forehead. See the difference in saying “please forgive me” versus “I’m sorry”

Couple exercise
Living intimately as a husband and wife presents lots of opportunities to step on each others toes. Using the grace of healing, a couple can truly renew and refresh their relationship and be whole again. Go aside to a quiet place and speak to each other of hurts you each have or have had in the recent past. Don’t go through a detailed account of the hurt. Simply recall the incident. The spouse who inflicted the hurt should stop, look his or her spouse in the eye and say, “please forgive me”. The other should respond, “I do”. Maybe it’s asking forgiveness for taking each other for granted or for putting your job ahead of your spouse or for trying to control your spouse, or its some small thing that really gets on your nerves. It is not to be confessional material. That is “garbage dumping” and doesn’t belong in this setting. Whatever it is look each other in the eye and ask for forgiveness. This grace of healing that comes with your Sacrament is available to you at all times for both the big hurts and the little ones. Use it as often as needed.
OUR HOLINESS COMES FROM LIVING OUT OUR SACRAMENT

- It is simply being the best couple you can be - that is all God wants for you and from you.

- Matrimonial spirituality (all day sexuality) the value of touch
  - It’s the pat on the fanny at the sink (his or hers); it’s a phone call to say “I was thinking of you”; it’s taking the time to sharpen the saw like you are doing today; it’s turning the TV off when the other needs to share; it’s praying together; it’s dinner out; it’s passion; it’s a thousand little things that say you are important to me. That is your spirituality, that is living as a sacrament.

- Our sexual relationship is holy
- Differences in male and female See page 11

- Sacrament of service
  - A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. Of the seven sacraments, two of them are recognized as the sacraments of service in the church, namely, holy orders and matrimony (US). The other sacraments have to do with initiation, i.e. becoming someone in the church.

- We celebrate our sacrament not so much to receive but to give. “Love isn’t love until you give it away.”

- Just as we each are our own person, so our love relationship as husband and wife is unique. It is a two become one composite of all the gifts and talents you each as individuals, bring to our marriage. You are like no one else. You are the clone of no other couple! No one else can offer you to anyone. If you do not share your couple love, it is never given away.

- The bottom line to all that we have said is, “Do something together guys” it doesn’t have to be big; although you are capable of doing big things. It could be reaching out as a couple to a relative or friend who is hurting on fallen on bad times. It certainly should be doing something together with your kids. You will find a great deal of joy and a great strengthening of your bond by using the couple power you possess.

Couple Reflection: Separate and follow the instructions on the top of page 14

How far have we come with our dreams for our marriage? Specifically, what am I going to begin to do for the sake of our relationship? (eg. listen better; make love more often; make time for us; be vulnerable and share what going on inside me; get out to dinner; work hard on a specific element of intimacy, ....

Exchange of vows?
SOME ACTIONS THAT OTHER COUPLES HAVE FOUND THAT MADE A DIFFERENCE IN THEIR RELATIONSHIP. (IN NO PARTICULAR PRIORITY)

- AVOID CRITICISM - CRITICISM KILLS
- AFFIRM EACH OTHER. LOOK FOR THE GOOD!
- SHARE YOUR HURTS
- DON’T BE TOO SENSITIVE; DON’T BE INSENSITIVE
- DON’T TAKE YOURSELF SO SERIOUSLY
- BRING LAUGHTER INTO YOUR RELATIONSHIP
- WORK ON SOMETHING TOGETHER
- BE THE INITIATOR IN SEX
- FIGHT FOR THE SAKE OF YOUR RELATIONSHIP
- TAKE THE TV OUT OF THE BEDROOM
- STOP PARENTING ONE ANOTHER - SHE’S A BIG GIRL; HE’S A BIG BOY
- PRAY FOR PASSION
- REEVALUATE TIME ON THE JOB
- REEVALUATE TIME ON THE COMPUTER/TELEPHONE
- COMMIT TO TIME TOGETHER EVERY DAY.
- ROMANCE EACH OTHER. DINNER OUT
- TAKE A SHOWER TOGETHER
- STOP BLAMING
- PRAY AS A FAMILY
- HELP EACH OTHER AROUND THE HOUSE