

Workshop Edition

keeping
MARRIAGES
healthy



by David and Teresa Ferguson



A global network empowering people to experience and reproduce great relationships through loving God and others

Keeping Marriages Healthy
by David y Teresa Ferguson

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How to use this online course:

Throughout the workbook, you will find QR codes that you will need to use to watch videos. If you have a smart phone, you are set. iPhones have a QR reader built into their camera system. For all other smart phones, you will need to go to your APP store and download a free QR code reader, so you can scan the QR codes and complete this workbook.

IF YOU DON'T HAVE A SMART PHONE, THIS PDF IS INTERACTIVE. JUST CLICK ON THE GREEN PROMPT BY EACH QR CODE AND YOU CAN WATCH THE VIDEO THAT WAY.

Green QR codes are for the CONTENT of each session. You will need to watch these Green QR codes in order to get content of each session, as well as instructions about activities and when to watch other video content on QR codes that are in that session.

Black QR codes are the additional videos/quizzes that the presenter(s) will prompt you to watch throughout each session.

At the end of EACH session, there is a Black QR code with a quiz about each session. EACH of you need to click on the QR code at the end of EACH session and complete the quiz at the end of EACH session. ALSO, at the end of each session is a BLUE "Coach Calendar" link and a QR code for you to use if you want to schedule a FREE coaching session to process anything that comes up during the class.

TEXAS RESIDENTS: At the end of all six sessions, there is a final quiz for each of you to take. When you have completed this final quiz, click on the BLUE "CoachCalendar" link or QR code and schedule your final one-hour session to "debrief" the course. After this debrief, the coach will send you a 2gtx certificate for you to take to a county clerk to get a discount on your marriage license.

If you are NOT from Texas, but would like a relational coach to contact you after you have completed this online course, please click on the BLUE "coach calendar" link or QR code at the end of any of the sessions to schedule a time with one of our relational coaches.

Questions? Please email us at: rvaworkshops@gmail.com

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Session 1

Intimacy in Marriage

Session 1 Presentation



Scan QR code
or
[Click HERE](#)

Intimacy—What is it?

What does the word mean to you?

E.g. closeness, exclusiveness, being of the same mind, freedom to share all of yourself with another person, being vulnerable, sharing, giving, receiving

In order for intimacy to flourish, three things are necessary. First, there needs to be a desire to know and to be known. Secondly, there must be the willingness to be vulnerable in allowing someone to know us. This second element cannot happen without a third—trust. That is, we only make ourselves vulnerable if we are sure that the person who seeks to know us, cares for us and will not harm us.

Intimacy therefore means to know someone deeply and to be known by them; to be able to disclose innermost thoughts to someone who in turn chooses to reveal themselves to you. It means to be caringly involved with one another, choosing to affirm and build up rather than criticizing. We are two complex individuals often with very different personalities, but marriage gives us an opportunity to lovingly know each other deeply in this special intimate way. When this is achieved, only then will we be living within marriage as it was meant to be.

Life Events May Challenge Intimacy

Marriages typically pass through predictable stages brought on by certain events:

- Early days together
- Settling into life together
- First baby, or struggling with infertility
- Employment/unemployment pressures
- Growing children
- Teenage pressures
- Children leaving home
- Responsibility for aging parents
- Retirement from employment

It would seem that the marriage relationship was created for specific purposes as we will explore together. Imagine the possibility that marriage was intended to be a source of great blessing in your journey together emotionally, spiritually, and physically.

During each of these stages, relationships will develop and mature as new challenges are faced. Sometimes external pressures or family tensions cause strain on the marriage and previously enjoyed intimacy is lost. The arrival of a baby, the difficulties of making time for one another in the midst of both having demanding and challenging careers, time spent away from home on business trips, teenage years, extended family, aging parents all create demands on time and emotions. It can become easy for a couple to drift apart, reacting to the most current pressing demand upon them, resulting in their own relationship receiving little attention. Too often couples reach the time of “the empty nest” when the children have grown up and left home to find that they have few shared interests. The friendship in their relationship is lacking. In fact the thought of the retirement years and spending even more time together is viewed with dread. Marriages that reach that stage have not collapsed overnight. The erosion has been gradual and often unnoticeable. The Keeping Marriages Healthy course is designed to equip us to maintain and even deepen our intimacy at every stage, and through every challenge of life.

We will learn how to communicate love and affirmation on a regular daily basis, to deposit strength and build closeness into our marriage relationships.

Finding opportunities to tell each other that you love one another will increase closeness whatever your current stage or situation.

Consider turning to each other now and saying something like, “I’m glad you are/are going to be my husband/wife and I’m looking forward to learning how to better love you.”

Assess Your Relationship—Where are we?

You are encouraged to reflect upon your intimacy in each of these three dimensions.

- What does it mean to be a friend to each other?
- What would your spiritual or faith journey together involve?
- What does it mean to be physically intimate with my marriage partner?

Now take a few minutes to reflect on your relationship.

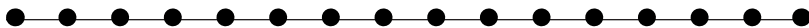
On the following page, indicate your perception of the degree of intimacy in each dimension. Place a mark on the scales to signify your view of marriage health. Work individually on this. You will be sharing your thoughts later with each other.

Assessing Our Marriage Closeness

Take this assessment and share with each other when prompted by the presenters

1. The Emotional or Friendship Dimension of Our Relationship is:

Lacking in Intimacy



Very Intimate

What aspect of being a friend to your spouse would you most like to see changed or improved in your marriage?

2. Our Spiritual Beliefs and Values

Lacking in Intimacy



Very Intimate

What beliefs or life values would you like to share more in together?

3. The Physical Dimension of our Relationship is:

Lacking in Intimacy



Very Intimate

What aspect of your physical closeness would you most like to see changed or improved in your marriage?

Sharing “Truth in Love”

Reflect on the three dimensions of marriage intimacy noted on the previous page and finish the following sentences:

It would really mean a lot to me if we could...

I could look forward to us having more...

Increasing Intimacy: Practical ideas

Friendship takes time. You can't get close to someone who isn't there. When was your last fun time together without family or friends? What is the next thing you are looking forward to doing together to relax and enjoy being together?

Common Interests—Spend time together sharing an interest. Prioritize each other's interests and know what each finds important or enjoyable. What would you look forward to doing together?

Feelings—When you talk, express how you feel. Share anxieties, hurts, and joys. This can be a challenge for many but being able to share how you really feel with another will bring closeness.

Dream together—Set aside regular time for each of you to share goals about the future—your marriage, family, career, friends, finances, etc.

Think about a positive memory or celebration from your growing up years...a pleasant occasion when you felt loved, cared for, or special.

E.g., a birthday, family trip, favorite holiday experience, receiving a much wanted pet, taking part in a school play, a sporting achievement, an activity shared with a friend, working alongside a parent at something.

Share that positive memory now with your marriage partner.

As your partner shares with you identify what feelings you have for him/her. E.g., *happy, glad, joyful, excited.*

Express those feelings to your partner. “*I'm glad that happened; I'm excited for you; that sounds great.*”

Now swap roles.

What did it feel like to rejoice together?

Responding with joy about something good is an example of increasing care for each other. Sharing the good memory involves disclosing something about ourselves to each other. This exchange is an example of what's involved in knowing each other more deeply.



Click [HERE](#) OR scan this QR code and take this quiz after you have finished session 1 presentation video AND activities.