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# A Model for Group Marital Preparation in a University Setting

Terry Swan

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Terry W.

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Specialist Project  
Presented to  
the Faculty of the Department of Counselor Education  
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Bowling Green, Kentucky 42101

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Specialist in Education

by  
Terry W. Swan  
July 1986

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A MODEL FOR GROUP MARITAL PREPARATION  
IN A UNIVERSITY SETTING

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ABSTRACT

A MODEL FOR GROUP MARITAL PREPARATION IN A UNIVERSITY SETTING

Terry W. Swan

March 1987

83 pages

Directed by: Emmett L. Burkeen, Dwight H. Cline, and Thomas L. Updike; Department of Department of Educational Leadership, Western Kentucky University.

The author created an experimental model workshop for group marital preparation in a university setting. Eight couples attended the April 16-17, 1984, workshop, and nine couples attended the March 25-27, 1985, workshop. All persons, with the exception of two couples, were university students.

Each couple was contacted by a form letter which contained questions about their expectations and invited them to take a temperament test. A participant evaluation was done after the workshop.

A great majority of responses support the need for marital education. The workshop enabled the participants to better understand their intended spouses. The basic divisions of commitment, compatibility, communication, conflict and cooperation met the primary needs of the participants. Greater need for the topics of finance and theology was exposed.



## SECTION I

## A RATIONALE FOR A MARRIAGE PREPARATION WORKSHOP

A. The Need for Marriage Preparation

Popular literature today is saturated with articles describing the problems of American marriage and family life. Almost everyone seems to recognize the problem, but there is a great diversity of possible answers. Changes over the past few decades have furthered the complexities of married life. These changes include the move to a nuclear family, highly individualized mate selection, the two-vote system and more fluid roles.

Experts in the marriage and family field generally do seem to agree that the status of marriage today is not necessarily a happy one. Some professional marriage counselors estimate that half of all couples are unhappy. Some pastors have suggested that twenty-five to forty percent of the persons in their congregations have unhappy marriages.<sup>1</sup> Norman Wright cites Dr. J. A. Fritz who considers eighty-five percent of marriages to either be simply agreeable or tolerable.<sup>2</sup>

Carl Rogers has said,

To me it seems that we are living in an important and uncertain age, and the institution of marriage is most assuredly in an uncertain state. If 50-75 percent of Ford or General Motors cars completely

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<sup>1</sup>Antoinette and Leon Smith, Growing Love in Christian Marriage, United Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, 1981, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup>H. Norman Wright, Premarital Counseling, Moody Press, Chicago, 1977, p. 8.

fell apart within the early part of their lifetimes as automobiles, drastic steps would be taken. We have no such well-organized way of dealing with our social institutions, so people are groping, more or less blindly, to find alternatives to marriage (which is less than 50 percent successful).<sup>3</sup>

While the complexities are great, common elements do run through the strings of every marriage. Topics such as commitment, communication or conflict are germane to any marriage relationship. Because there are similarities, there are possibilities for being of assistance to each unique couple.

From a pastor's viewpoint, nine of every ten couples planning to marry will come to see a clergyman. There will rarely ever be a time again when a couple will be so open for assistance in their yet embryonic relationship. Abraham Stone has said, "An hour's discussion before marriage may be more valuable than weeks of counseling later after difficulties have risen."<sup>4</sup>

Aaron Rutledge commented saying,

Here is one of the "teachable moments" or opportunities for learning, the like of which comes only a few times after early childhood. With the total impetus of nature, tremendous growth can occur, if motivation is stimulated and direction is provided. A minimum of concentrated help here can bring about personality changes which might take years of psychotherapy to affect later.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Carl Rogers, Becoming Partners: Marriage and Its Alternatives, Delacorte, New York, 1972), p. 11.

<sup>4</sup> Charles Stewart, The Minister as Marriage Counselor, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1970, p. 60.

<sup>5</sup> Aaron Rutledge, Premarital Counseling, Schenteman Publishing Company, Cambridge, 1966, p. 76.

The time preceding marriage, then, is an opportune period for offering a couple the help needed to establish a good marriage. By the United Methodist Discipline, all pastors are "to perform the marriage ceremony after due counsel with the parties involved."<sup>6</sup> This "due counsel" can take any form that will enable the couple's marriage to be off to a good start.

Despite this time being a key point to reach couples, is it possible that they are simply not ready to seriously address the issues of marriage? Are they simply looking through rose-colored glasses, unwilling and in some cases unable to ponder the depth of this commitment? Some counselors think this is the case.

Cecil Osborne claimed that he

. . . long ago abandoned as futile the effort to instruct young couples in these matters before marriage. They tended to look at me through star dust with amused tolerance. Yes, they had their disagreements and realized their life would not be one hundred percent bliss, but they had pretty well worked these matters out and had come to an understanding of each other.<sup>7</sup>

J. D. Ball and Lawrence Henning noted similar difficulties. They say that "couples anticipating marriage typically hold unrealistic expectations about the nature of the marital relationship, and it is often difficult for them to rationally

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<sup>6</sup> Book of United Methodist Discipline, United Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, 1980, 438.2C, 4th ed.

<sup>7</sup> Cecil Osborne, The Art of Understanding Your Mate, Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 1970, p. 15.

examine these expectations."<sup>8</sup> However, they also felt couples can benefit from an awareness of irrational expectations and the knowledge that crises will occur.

There is really very little research indicating the benefit of premarital preparation. Because of the lack of significant research and interdisciplinary literature, there are some problems in how to construct a program that will be of worth to a couple. Walter Schuman and Wallace Denton noted that some persons have found little or no change in couples who had been through such training. Most of the results were mixed.<sup>9</sup>

A Canadian experiment has provided one of the few documented pieces of research on the value of marriage preparation. In this Toronto model the two main themes of communication and conflict resolution were stressed. Their two major hypotheses were

- a. Spouses who have taken part in a marriage preparation program will be less likely to engage in destructive conflict with each other than those who have not taken part in such a program.
- b. Spouses who have taken part in a marriage preparation program will seek assistance in solving either individual or marital problems more quickly than those who have not taken part in such a program.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> J. D. Ball and Lawrence Henning, "Rational Suggestions for Premarital Counseling," Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy, Vol 7, No. 1, January 1981, p. 69.

<sup>9</sup> Wallace Denton and Walter Schuman, "Trends in Premarital Counseling," Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy, 1979, Vol. 5, No. 1, p. 27.

<sup>10</sup> Edward Bader, Brenda Conway, Gisele Microy, Carole Sinclair, Elizabeth Willett, "Do Marriage Preparation Programs Really Work?: A Canadian Experiment," Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy, 1980, Vol 6, No. 2, p. 173.

Their conclusions were that the study demonstrated a positive effect for a couple to understand their needs, resolve their conflicts in a constructive fashion and to seek help when they needed it.

The author has found the two major hypotheses to be true in his personal experience. Especially interesting has been the number of couples who have come for post-marriage counseling to assist them in the early months of adjustment. Verbal reports also seem to indicate the lessening of destructive conflict after having participated in some type of marital preparation.

Personal contacts with twelve professional persons significantly involved with marriage and family concerns indicate similar value in marital preparation. Four of these persons were professional counselors, four were pastors, two were hospital chaplains and two were seminary professors of pastoral care. Each filled out a form containing questions about marriage preparation. All twelve established a need for marriage preparation calling it "critical," "a desperate need" or "vital."

The 1980 White House Conference on the Family strongly suggested development of marriage skills, particularly at the high school level. It contended that it "can substantially aid young adults in their lives as singles, engaged individuals, newlyweds and settled spouses."<sup>11</sup> Yet another voice in favor of

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<sup>11</sup> Arthur Shostak, "Tomorrow's Family Reforms: Marriage Course, Marriage Test, Incorporated Families and Sex Selection Mandate," Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy, Vol. 7, No. 4, October 1981, p. 522.

marriage preparation was Charles Stewart. Although speaking in the particular context of sex education, Stewart thought the best place to begin family life education is with couples immediately facing marriage.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps the strongest advocate for marital preparation has been David Mace. He is convinced that the best way to enable couples toward a successful relationship in the future is to assist toward a more successful relationship in the present. Mace noted:

Drawing on our knowledge of the factors that cause marriage to fail and tracing those factors back to their origins, we have discovered that many of them could have been eliminated if the couple had been helped early in their association to recognize the dangers and take appropriate steps to avoid them.<sup>13</sup>

Mace insisted that the major reason people have deep problems in marriage is because they do not get the help they need in the incipient stages of their relationship. In Getting Ready for Marriage, he listed five important reasons for marriage preparation:

1. The couple will understand what marriage is and how to go about it.
2. They'll make critical early adjustments more smoothly and quickly.
3. They'll have a better chance for higher marital fulfillment.

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<sup>12</sup> Stewart, op. cit., p. 193.

<sup>13</sup> David Mace, Getting Ready for Marriage, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1972, p. 8.

4. Chances will be increased for being successful parents.
5. A couple will understand the wisdom of seeking marriage counseling when needed.<sup>14</sup>

These are all crucial reasons for marital preparation in whatever fashion it takes. Why else could it be important? As Antoinette and Leon Smith expressed, "Preparation for marriage is important because marriage is important--both to persons involved and to society in general."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Ibid., pp. 23-29.

<sup>15</sup>Smith, op. cit., p. 14.

### B. Rationale for Workshop Setting

The author, until one year ago, served a campus ministry appointment in which a considerable number of students came for premarital counseling. Each year approximately twelve weddings were performed in that setting. There was difficulty in the compatibility of schedules with couples to do premarital counseling. The author is committed to the need and worth of premarital preparation. Because several hours are necessary to adequately counsel the couple, there is considerable conflict in fitting all the sessions into three persons' schedules. The question arose as to how to meet these needs and assist couples in marriage preparation without giving limited counsel simply because of schedule incompatibility.

A workshop model would seem to provide the best answer. Such a workshop should allow greater time with each of the participants. If held at a convenient time with enough advance notice, it would be possible for most couples to attend this event. Some common areas of preparation could be dealt with in the group setting. In later individual and couple counseling, questions that had surfaced in the workshop could be dealt with on a more intimate level.

Various professional persons have seen great advantages in group premarital preparation. David Mace strongly recommended that couples get involved in marriage preparation groups. Since they are traveling over the same stretch of road, they already



have a great deal in common.<sup>16</sup> Leon Smith encouraged pastors to take advantage of the opportunity for group preparation, especially if there were several couples to be married about the same time. He saw it as an effective use of counseling time.<sup>17</sup>

Stahmann and Hiebert noted that there is little detail on group premarital programs that would lend itself to either evaluation or duplication. However, in listing advantages and disadvantages of a group model, they appear to come down on the side of a preference for a group if it can be facilitated.

Using R. D. Kilgo's guidelines, they listed the advantages and disadvantages of a group model:<sup>18</sup>

#### Advantages

1. More economical use of counselor time and client money
2. Influence of peers
3. Reality
4. The "not alone" feeling
5. Direct education
6. Satisfaction of helping others

#### Disadvantages

1. Spouse inhibition
2. Problems that are too intimate

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<sup>16</sup> Mace, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>17</sup> Smith, op. cit., p. 18.

<sup>18</sup> William Hiebert and Robert Stahmann, Premarital Counseling, D. C. Heath, Lexington, 1980), pp. 87-90.

With all these factors considered, one can decide if the group model will work in his or her setting. The author agrees with the advantages and feels that problems too intimate for a group setting can be dealt with in couple exercises or couple counseling. Spouse inhibition may have to be covered in individual sessions. However, simply the workshop setting can help break the marital taboo that says "we don't talk to anyone about our marriage."

Speaking in the context of group marriage counseling, Charles Stewart offered further rationale:

1. More marriage problems can be treated at incipient stages.
2. Couples with problems about which they hesitate to seek individual counseling may safely come to a group where less of a spotlight is upon them.
3. A pastor with limited time and energy can counsel more couples in a group over a year.
4. Couples with common problems can face them with others who have suggestions and emotional support to help them "turn a corner" in their lives.<sup>19</sup>

Finally, in individual contacts with professional persons in the marriage and family field, the majority were in favor of a workshop model. Three persons were unsure because they had never participated in a marriage preparation workshop, and one thought couples generally felt their relationship was too special to be worked out in a group setting. Overall, the attitudes were positive toward group premarital work.

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<sup>19</sup> Stewart, op. cit., pp. 160-161.

SECTION II  
APPROACHES TO PREMARITAL TRAINING

Over the years, persons have experimented with various forms of premarital preparation. Walter Schuman and Wallace Denton noted that there are only four basic approaches to premarital education.<sup>1</sup> They are as follows:

1. Generalized education preparation exemplified by family life education.
2. Therapeutic counseling designed to meet the specific needs of couples.
3. Instructional counseling which provides information and exposure to help couples realistically adjust their expectations of marriage.
4. An enrichment approach with the premise that equipping couples to deal with their own concern is more useful than simply conveying information or advice.

David Mace examined basic approaches to the task of premarital work in only a slightly different sense. He saw three different categories, one often recommended over the others.<sup>2</sup>

1. The basic facts of life approach is again mentioned. This model assumes the primary need of the couple is for information and facts about the various aspects of married life.

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<sup>1</sup>Wallace Denton and Walter Schuman, "Trends in Premarital Counseling," Journal of Marriage and Family Therapy, Upland, CA, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 24-25.

<sup>2</sup>David Mace, Getting Ready for Marriage, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1972, pp. 9-10.

2. When more than one couple can be brought together, a premarital lecture style has been utilized. This is just a bit more sophisticated version of the one-on-one facts of life model.
3. The third approach suggested by Mace (and the one he felt is most effective) is to help the couple to make a careful evaluation of themselves, of each other and of their relationship. Some educational aspects may grow out of this and some counseling may grow out of it, but the central work is a discovery of themselves by the couple.

In commenting on the third kind of format, Ronald Flowers saw great advantage.<sup>3</sup>

This way of dealing with the couple builds on their usual willingness to invest in an understanding and enhancement of the relationship which they are now enjoying dividends of which they will, of course, take with them into marriage. It can be carried out in such a way that the couple, who so often resists any kind of input from anyone during pre-wedding days, discover by themselves areas in which they are ignorant and unskilled or need advice and counsel. They may be stimulated to consider the deeper aspects of their relationship and develop a thirst for knowledge and skills that will meet their needs.

The author supports this final approach to marriage preparation. The couple needs stimulation to discuss the unique contours of their own relationship. The old "you sit still while I instill" lecture method promoted little dialogue. It also produced little change.

In a study by Microys and Bayer (who compared couples' self reports), the lecture approach was the least popular means of marriage education. Far more appealing to the couples was either a small group discussion format or a weekend premarital program combining lecture and discussion.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Ronald Flowers, "Good Marriages Don't Just Happen," Ministry, Washington, D.C., March 1982, p. 19.

<sup>4</sup> Denton and Schuman, op. cit., p. 29.

A combination of lecture, discussion and considerable couple interaction has worked well in the author's experience. A variety of learning experiences can prevent monotony from occurring. It can also be instrumental in easing a couple's fears of having to "bare it all" in a group setting.

Group size is a factor as well. The author's two workshops have had eight and nine couples, respectively. These have been manageable groups. Stahmann and Hiebert suggest that with more than six couples (plus two leaders) the group becomes large and unwieldy.<sup>5</sup> If group discussion and interaction are important to the model, then over fourteen people can hamper group process.

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<sup>5</sup>William Hiebert and Robert Stahmann, Premarital Counseling, D. C. Heath, Lexington, 1980), pp. 91-92.

SECTION III  
MAJOR AREAS OF PREPARATION

In this section the author will examine major areas of marital preparation, prioritize and discuss them. In an attempt to prioritize the major areas of preparation, the author realized that couples have different needs. Most couples are not totally unrealistic. They just need particular assistance in two or three areas of adjustment. Hence, this listing of priorities will not be true of every couple. However, these divisions should generally apply to most couples, particularly couples entering their first marriage.

Commitment

Commitment is putting a lock on a marriage relationship. Why exalt it above every other possible area? The reason is perhaps best expressed in the wedding rituals. The couples commit themselves "as long as you both shall live" and "until death us do part." Foremost, marriage is a commitment to each other. Antoinette and Leon Smith say

As to the nature of marriage, we believe that, normatively, marriage is meant to be a monogamous, lifelong union based on love and fidelity, even though many persons do not reach that norm.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Antoinette and Leon Smith, Growing Love in Christian Marriage, The United Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, 1981, p. 28.

For a couple to enter marriage with thoughts of a temporary, trial basis is to court disaster. Commitment holds a couple together. A first public commitment of their love is made in the wedding ceremony. After that, there are an endless number of smaller commitments to love one's partner.

Commitment could be seen as two-fold. It is a commitment to each other in God's care and embrace. It is also a commitment to continued marriage preparation. H. Norman Wright insists that commitment is a final element which must be present for success. In buttressing his point, he quoted Robert Blood as saying<sup>2</sup>

Commitment is dangerous. It can be exploited. If my wife takes my commitment for granted, she may rest too easily on her laurels. Perhaps commitment should not be simply to each other but to the highest potentialities we can achieve together. Commitment then would be to marriage not simply as a static but as a dynamic process. Let me commit myself to a lifelong adventure, the adventure of living with this woman. The route of this adventure has been only dimly charted by those who have gone before. Because I am unique and my partner is unique, our marriage will also be unique. We commit ourselves to undertaking this adventure together and to following wherever it may lead. Part of the excitement of marriage is not knowing in advance what either the joys or sorrows will be. We can be sure, however, that we will be confronted with countless challenges. Commitment provides the momentum for going forward in the face of these challenges.

How, then, is commitment cultivated? This question is a difficult one for commitment and is hard to assess. It would seem that it could be facilitated by at least three means.

Knowledge is not always virtue, but it certainly can assist a couple to understand the need for working at their marriage.

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<sup>2</sup>H. Norman Wright, Premarital Counseling, Moody Press, Chicago, 1981, p. 35.

Attendance at a workshop, personal counseling, church special events or readings can help provide an impetus. Negative information such as divorce statistics may not help so much as constructive information about possibilities in marriage.

An understanding of a Christian perspective of marriage can help. Marriage is a "three-fold cord." Knowing that God is there to enable and strengthen them in times of difficulty can assist persons to continue to commit themselves to each other.

Finally, a better understanding of love as a basis for a relationship can be profitable. Couples will have to deal with the romantic fallacy and come to grips with what love involves in marriage.

#### Communication

If commitment is a lock on a marriage relationship, communication is the key to opening it up to be deep, intimate and satisfying. Without communication there is no relationship. It is crucial that this area be nourished in the lives of married couples. Why is communication so important? It is necessary for the individual health and marital health of the persons involved to be able to share their deepest needs each with the other. Otherwise, a sort of emotional starvation can occur, and a relationship will rupture.

The Smiths suggest that information is one way to encourage communication. One helps "the couples to see the importance of communication in their marriage, for marriage at its best is an intimate relationship and must be nourished to grow."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Smith, op. cit., p. 61.



The teaching of communication skills will also be a factor in moving couples toward growth. Awareness of feelings, styles of communicating and listening are all factors which need some probing in order to help a couple understand each other.

### Compatibility

David and Vera Mace saw the three elements of a successful marriage to be commitment, communication and conflict resolution.<sup>5</sup> They felt that given these three essentials, that all other areas in a marriage relationship can be dealt with in a successful manner. The author takes only a slightly different approach by placing compatibility before conflict resolution.

By compatibility, the author is referring to self-understanding, correct perceptions of each other and living together out of these understandings. Believing that conflicts are mostly generated by unmet needs, the knowledge of these needs would seem to precipitate conflict resolution.

Cecil Osborne felt that naming incompatibility as a root problem is rather ridiculous. "All couples to a degree are incompatible." David Mace, on the other hand, called it one of the "two distinct factors that influence success in marriage."<sup>6</sup> This writer leans toward the latter interpretation of the importance of compatibility. Compatibility does not mean

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<sup>4</sup> David and Vera Mace, How to Have a Happy Marriage, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1977, p. 30.

<sup>5</sup> Cecil Osborne, The Art of Understanding Your Mate, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1970, p. 16

<sup>6</sup> David Mace, Getting Ready for Marriage, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1977, p. 56.

couples have to be alike. It does mean they explore fuller understandings of each other's backgrounds to explain present-day behavior. Diagnostic testing and exercises concerning the habits and expectations one brings to marriage can facilitate these understandings.

### Conflicts

Handling conflict is the next prioritized area of marriage preparation. Couples have difficulties with the meshing together of personal values and needs. This manifests as symptoms, particularly in the areas of finance, sex and in-law relationships. Entirely different ends can be met by a verbal clash, and some can be healthy. Couples will need to be shown that conflict can open the doors of communication as well as shut them. They will also need to understand that conflict is a natural phenomenon and can be part of the growth process.

Beyond this knowledge, couples can be assisted by interaction with other persons who share common problems of early adjustments in relationships. Skills can be taught in conflict resolution, particularly problem solving. Finally, a good hard look at the couple's decision-making process would be helpful.

### Cooperation

Cooperation is listed as the final important area of marital preparation. By cooperation, the author means taking all the knowledge gained from the other areas and putting them in action together. If one marriage partner is striving for a more

enriching marriage but the other is not, great frustration will set in.

To have maximum fulfillment, the couple must be intentional about their marriage relationship. Setting goals together is an important part of reaching toward a better relationship. Couples can be encouraged to decide what they want in their lives together and go about planning how to get there. Taking these goals and committing them to prayer can assist these couples to work at enriching their lives together.

SECTION IV  
MARRIAGE PREPARATION WORKSHOP

Utilizing these materials, the author sought to propose a Marriage Preparation Workshop at Western Kentucky University. Through advertisement and word of mouth, students were informed of the workshop offering. Eight couples attended the April 16-17, 1984, workshop; and nine couples participated in the March 25-27, 1985, workshop. All persons, with the exception of two couples, were university students.

Each couple was contacted by a form letter which contained questions about their expectations and invited them to take the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis Test before the workshop. The appendix contains a sample copy of this letter. Because the Wesley Foundation is a religious organization, there was an expectation that the workshop would be theological at points. Expectation was reflected in student answers concerning the help that could be offered toward marriage preparation.

Out of the author's reading and research, the formation of a workshop came into being. The five "C's" make up the structure of the marriage preparation workshop. The five "C's" are Commitment, Compatibility, Communication, Conflict and Cooperation. Each makes up a separate workshop section.

Resources were either devised by the author or drawn from marriage preparation/marriage enrichment books. The sections

are a combination of the presentation context and exercises in which the couples for themselves discover the unique contours of their relationships. The overall goals for the workshop and the weekend schedule format follow this introduction to the reader. The actual workshop is presented beginning with the Introduction to Workshop.

#### GOALS

1. Couples will commit themselves to a life of marital growth and enrichment.
2. The couples will discover and clarify the basic behaviors of each partner.
3. Significant areas of communication will be exposed to each couple.
4. Couples will discover they will be closer if they share their strengths and weaknesses.
5. Couples will be more realistic about their marriage expectations.
6. Couples will better understand how to handle conflicts.

#### WEEKEND SCHEDULE FORMAT

Day	Times	Topic
Friday	7:00 p.m. - 10:00 p.m.	Introduction, Commitment
Saturday	9:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon	Compatibility, Communication
	12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m.	Lunch
	1:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.	Communication
	7:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.	Sweetheart Banquet/Forum
Sunday	9:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.	Conflict
	11:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon	Worship service
	12:00 noon - 1:30 p.m.	Lunch
	1:30 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.	Cooperation, Communion and Evaluation

Breaks every one and one-half hours.

### Introduction to Workshop

Welcome to the Marriage Preparation Workshop. I'm exceptionally glad to have each of you here.

I'd like to commend each couple for coming to the workshop. Your presence shows an interest in your upcoming marriage. It displays a willingness to make a time investment that should reap great benefits. Tonight, tomorrow and Sunday morning will be some of the most productive hours you and your future spouse have ever spent together.

There are several administrative details to get out of the way:

1. We'll meet here promptly at the time listed in the schedule. Please come early if possible, have a cup of coffee and get settled. Punctuality is so important for the group.
2. I want you to feel relaxed. Come dressed in casual, comfortable clothing.
3. We'll be taking breaks approximately every one and one half hours depending where we are in the exercises. (Point out restrooms.)
4. You can shift the chairs around, sit on the couches together or wherever you have the privacy you need to do the exercises. The library may be utilized for this purpose as well as these front two rooms.
5. Each of you have an individual folder containing various pieces of information, exercises, pencil and scratch paper. Please do not forget to bring it back if you take it home with you. Upon completion of the workshop all materials are yours to keep.

(Questions)

### What the Workshop Is Not

To explain what the marriage preparation workshop is, I'd like to do this by contrasting what it is not.

1. You will not be forced, coerced or made to say anything about yourself or your partner which you do not wish to reveal. This is not a time to make you feel uncomfortable, but a time to expect a very positive experience.
2. This is neither a group therapy nor group encounter session. In fact, the overwhelming amount of time will be spent between you and your future spouse. There will be some group experiences in which you will benefit from the thoughts of others.
3. I do not serve as an answer person. I am a supporter/facilitator. You are to carve out your own understandings. You know far better your own growing edges. You are aware of the intimate details that make up the unique contours of your special relationship.
4. A final conviction is that in this workshop no one else works out your conflicts nor solves problem areas for you. I'm not an arbitrator of disputes. You will receive support through exercises that will open up areas of communication. From that base, you and your partner will be able to analyze the sources of conflict and deal with them.

### What The Workshop Is

1. This workshop is a time for personal honesty. It is delving deep inside yourself and grappling with the questions that present themselves. The best results are achieved with this kind of attitude.
2. It is a time for loving listening. It involves hearing out your partner. It is waiting to let him or her finish a sentence and making a focused attempt to understand what your partner is saying.
3. It is a time of expectation. Expect something good to happen and it can. Relax, enjoy yourselves and plan for good results.
4. It is a time of facing your future spouse and really looking at him or her. Therefore, all exercises will be done face to face. Turn your chairs inward or sit on the couch looking straight

at each other. Too often we spend our day looking at each other out of the corner of your eyes while driving or glancing over the top of a newspaper.

5. The method used will be a combination of teaching content and planned exercises. Tonight there will be more teaching as we establish a base for marriage preparation. Saturday and Sunday will be primarily couple or small-group exercises with teaching input.
6. The five major areas to be covered this weekend are those of:
  - Commitment
  - Compatibility
  - Communication
  - Conflict
  - Cooperation

Within this format, please feel free to ask any questions that may come to mind.



SECTION IV  
A MODEL OF MARRIAGE EDUCATION

A. "Commitment"

In the first division of the workshop, the concern is the issue of commitment. The goals and outlines are listed on this page. The actual workshop presentation follows the outline. Exercises can be found in the appendix. Included with the exercises is the purpose for utilizing them in the section.

Objectives

1. Couples are able to describe reasons for marriage preparation.
2. Couples will understand three meanings of the word love.
3. Couples will consider ways to enhance love in their marriage.

Outline

1. Talk - "Commitment to Marital Enrichment"
2. Exercise #1 - Men-Women Groups
3. Talk - "Commitment to Each Other"
4. Exercise #2 - Couples
5. Talk - "Love"
6. Exercise #3 - Couples

### Commitment

A major focus of the writer's life's work has been in helping couples prepare for marriage. A large part of this concern comes from excessive involvement on the negative side--divorce. There is no need to describe statistics. But statistics were not the convincing element for such concern. It was spending time with couples, human beings utterly unprepared for the relationship to which they were legally committed. These times were some of the most difficult counseling experiences.

On the positive side, the author's motivation for such a commitment to marriage preparation comes from the realization that marriage is the most wonderful of human relationships. The author's marriage relationship has produced some very fulfilling times.

Most expect to find deep happiness and fulfillment in marriage. Yet the major area of life for which people are most poorly prepared is marriage and family living. The author's assumption is that despite poor training, one will not settle for a mediocre marriage but wants the gourmet kind. Everyone wants a special marriage.

A special marriage takes a struggle with priorities. Which is more important--having a congenial job and an unhappy home or a happy home and a difficult job? Like many others, the writer would take the happy home and put up with a rough job. Many people spend four years in college and learn a skill that is utilized eight hours a day, but marriage is for twenty-four hours a day. Changing jobs is easy, but it is not so easy to change marriage partners.

Somehow couples think that they already know what marriage is all about. The fact is that other marriages are known only by the facade the couple presents to the world. What goes on between a husband and wife in the intimate life they share is hidden. In our culture the instinct is to conceal our conflicts and turn a brave, smiling face to the world. Many have probably known of a marriage breaking up and said, "I never expected this. I thought they were getting along fine."

An intentionally prepared couple can have a better understanding of the complexity of marriage before entering the wedded state. Automobile mechanics say the way a car is treated during the first one thousand miles will have a lasting influence on the way it behaves later. Something like that is true of a marriage relationship.

David Mace said <sup>1</sup>

We now know that the shape of a marriage develops quite early. In the first six to twelve months a couple develops habits of behavior toward one another that become settled and are not easily changed later. Habits such as dominant-submissive roles, final decisions, money management, meeting of sexual needs, in-law relationships and leisure time become formed during this period.

If good patterns are developed during the initial months of a marriage, it is off to a good start. If a couple falls into destructive ways of interacting, further conflict will probably occur in the future. The best way to have a successful marriage in the future is to achieve a more successful relationship now.

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<sup>1</sup> David Mace, Getting Ready for Marriage, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1972, p. 25.

The idea a person should bring to marriage preparation is that a marriage is a building never completed. It is a journey, not a destination. It ends up with what each partner contributes to it. A marriage is what the couple creates.

It may be noted, too, that a wedding is not a marriage. The traditional wedding vows say little or nothing about continued growth. Pledging to stick together for better or worse is great, but being committed to each other does not necessarily mean a couple is committed to work for growth and the shaping of their destiny. Commitment to marriage enrichment that may grow out of this workshop is something the author prays will become a lifelong pattern for each couple.

#### Commitment to Each Other

Commitment to marriage preparation is important. So is a commitment to each other. Norman Wright quoted David Mace as saying that

Marriage has shifted from an institution to a companion relationship. Because of this emphasis, many couples simply do not stay together because of society's demands or the pressures of family. Today it's easier to get out of this arrangement than the book of the month club. External pressures will simply not hold a marriage together.<sup>2</sup>

What is the key to holding a marriage together? Many marriage counselors (and the writer agrees) say that commitment to each other is the key.

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<sup>2</sup> H. Norman Wright, Premarital Counseling, Moody Press, Chicago, 1981, p. 13.

Elaborating on this, Mace said

In this quest I see loyalty as the central quality. How can love and trust be sustained without loyalty? It is this kind of determination to stand by each other and to work at their marriage and make it succeed that is lacking too often today and that lies, in my opinion, behind a great many of the failures. If two people, having chosen each other and being satisfied this choice is a sound one, are quite determined to please each other in the fullest and deepest sense of the word<sup>3</sup>-it's rather difficult to imagine how they could fail.

In the movie "Butterflies are Free," Goldie Hawn is about to run away from her blind lover. She has been a superficial, scatter-brained nymphet. She explains her flight . . . "Because you're blind. You're crippled!" And at the most profound moment of the movie, the young man replies, "No, I am not crippled. I am sightless, but not crippled. You are crippled because you can't commit yourself to anyone. You can't belong."<sup>4</sup>

Here is the key to holding your marriage relationship. It is the commitment to each other.

### Love

Most couples say they marry because of love. But this idea of love, while it is an integral part of marriage, is often misunderstood. Someone has said that love is blind, but marriage is a real eye opener.

Plato once called love "a grave mental disease." George Bernard Shaw, writing about love in marriage said, "When two people are under the influence of the most violent, most insane,

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<sup>3</sup> Mace, op. cit. p. 111.

<sup>4</sup> John Powell, The Secret of Staying in Love, Argus Communications, Allen, TX, 1976, p. 53.

most delusive and most transient of passions, they are required to swear that they will stay in that excited, abnormal and exhausting condition." A student once referred to love as "a feeling you feel when you get in a feeling you never felt before."

Part of the limitation in explaining love is the English language. The Greek language gives us a better understanding. Three words in the New Testament describe three types of love necessary in a marriage. Most likely each person has been exposed to these words, but not applied them specifically to the context of marriage.

EROS is the love that seeks sensual expression. It is romantic love. In a good marriage a husband and wife will love each other erotically. Some examples of EROS would be

- a deep kiss
- a massage
- a candlelight dinner
- a moonlight walk

Elaine Walsh, a psychology and sociology professor at the University of Wisconsin, confirmed the short-lived nature of romantic love. During the past fifteen years she has observed over one hundred thousand persons to study differences in passionate and compassionate love. Dr. Walsh says that for most couples intense passion only lasts from six months to two and one-half years.<sup>5</sup> For love to last, it must move from the eros stage to friendship.

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<sup>5</sup> H. Norman Wright, The Pillars of Marriage, G. L. Regal Books, Glendale, CA, 1979, p. 78

PHILEO is a friendship love. It is companionship. Phileo expresses communication and cooperation.

Phileo as companionship could be watching TV or going shopping together. As communication it could be sharing something you have read or reminiscing over old memories. In its expression as cooperation, phileo is a shoulder-to-shoulder activity such as weeding the garden or doing the dishes together.

AGAPE is the final definition of love. This could be called self-giving love or unconditional love. It is being sympathetic, kind and thoughtful to the needs of a loved one. Agape is intentional love. It does not just happen. It is not what someone has called "sloppy agape."

Agape kindness is being gentle when she burns the toast. It's treating his case of the flu as if it were a combination of the eight most awful ailments known to humankind.

Agape is also being content with things that don't live up to all expectations. For example, it is refraining from making nostalgic comments about mother's good cooking. Agape is learning to live with less than perfection.

Finally, agape is forgiving love. It is forgiving a partner for squeezing the tube of toothpaste "the wrong way." It is forgiving a mate for not having that favorite shirt out of the wash yet. It is seeking forgiveness for being the offender.

All three types of love enhance and enrich any marriage. Usually it has been found that when agape and phileo are nurtured, eros increases. Perhaps the majority of couples begin

their marriage with an abundance of eros and a minimum of agape and phileo. A marriage cannot be sustained by eros. All three types of love need a conscientious effort.



SECTION IV  
A MODEL FOR MARRIAGE EDUCATION

B. "Compatibility"

The second area, compatibility, concerns what a couple brings to the marriage relationship. This section is designed to help a couple to look at expectations, character traits and habits. Following this list of objectives and an outline is the workshop presentation. The actual exercises are in the appendix.

OBJECTIVES

1. Each person will be able to articulate some of the traits he or she brings into the relationship.
2. The couple will examine their similarities and differences.

OUTLINE

1. The UNGAME with marriage questions - group of six
2. Expectations talk
3. Exercise #1 on Clarifying Goals and Values - couples
4. Compatibility talk
5. Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis Scores with Explanation - couples
6. Similarities/Differences Exercise #2 - couples
7. Partner's Habits Exercise #3 - couples

### EXPECTATIONS

Every person who marries enters the relationship with certain expectations. These expectations come from different sources. Through parents, books, television, the church and numerous other places everyone develops a set of criteria for marriage expectations. It is important to realize these expectations and evaluate them. Often they remain a hidden agenda, and hence, a source of frustration. When one realizes expectations, it is easier to begin to deal with disappointment when things do not go according to plan.

In this section the writer will identify some of the "baggage" most bring to a marriage in addition to uncovering expectations and character traits (through the use of the TJTA) and habits. First, to help couples in verbalizing expectations, this section of the workshop starts with an exercise on clarifying goals and values. Usually couples are not totally unrealistic. Most are simply unrealistic about two or three areas of adjustment. The task here is to identify these areas and find ways to work on them.

### COMPATIBILITY

In his book, The Art of Understanding Your Mate, Cecil Osborne lists what he calls his Ten Commandments for Wives.<sup>6</sup> The first three commandments are appropriate to this section as well as both men and women.

1. Learn the real meaning of love. If you want to be loved, be loveable. This was already dealt with in the first session.

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<sup>6</sup> Cecil Osborne, The Art of Understanding Your Mate, Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1970, p. 158.

2. Give up dreams of a perfect marriage and work toward a good marriage. This comes under expectations which we have just touched on.
3. Discover your spouse's personal unique needs and try to meet them.

The third commandment is of ultimate importance to husbands and wives. Both come as two separate individuals with different family backgrounds, personal habits, philosophies and interests. Part of the fascination of marriage comes from these differences. Each brings his or her unique personality and insights into life.

One problem area that occurs here is that spouses fail to evaluate their differences as being only differences and not marks of inferiority. Later on couples do an exercise to evaluate communication on primarily a cognitive level or an emotional level. Neither way is bad, it is simply a difference. Sometimes couples will want to make their partner fit into a pre-conceived notion of how he or she should be.

H. Norman Wright has listed eight marriage ability traits which can assist couples toward a solid relationship.<sup>7</sup>

1. Adaptability and flexibility
2. Empathy
3. Ability to work through problems
4. Ability to give and receive love
5. Emotional stability
6. Communication
7. Similarities in couples
8. Similar family background

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<sup>7</sup> Wright, op. cit. p. 7.

That list can be rather intimidating. It certainly does not mean that someone must have these traits to have a good marriage. "Compatibility in marriage is not so much a state of affairs as a job of work."<sup>8</sup>

Our basic personalities may be generally fixed and unalterable, but our behavior (the way we use our personalities to relate to others and to gain the rewards we need for our happiness) can be adapted in a thousand ways. You can change your behavior almost without limit when you are completely convinced that it is in your best interests to do so.<sup>9</sup>

With that background in mind, the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis should be returned to participants for their study and enrichment.

#### TAYLOR-JOHNSON TEMPERAMENT ANALYSIS STATEMENTS

1. The TJTA is designed to provide an evaluation in visual form showing a person's concept of him/herself.
2. It is a quick and efficient method of measuring certain personality traits which influence adjustment (personal, social, sexual, marriage and family).
3. The TJTA can assist participants to have a more adequate appreciation of themselves and their partner. It can also identify some personal problem areas.
4. The criss-cross profiles lay the basic descriptions of each partner side by side in a graph format. This should provoke discussion concerning basic similarities or differences.
5. A discussion period follows for questions and individual interpretation of scores.

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<sup>8</sup> David and Vera Mace, How to Have a Happy Marriage, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1977, p. 43.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

SECTION IV  
A MODEL OF MARRIAGE EDUCATION  
C. "Communication"

The Communication portion of the model for marriage education has a considerable number of exercises along with the teaching content. The exercises and the reasons for utilizing them are in the appendix. Goals and an outline are listed here, followed by the presentation of material in the workshop setting.

OBJECTIVES

1. Couples are able to describe the four styles of communication.
2. Couples are able to state reasons for the importance of communication in marriage.
3. Couples will discuss sexuality questions.

OUTLINE

1. "The Wall"
2. Talk - Importance of Communication
3. Cognitive - Feeling Exercise #1 - couples
4. Exercise #2 - fishbowl. Men in center circle, women around. Then vice-versa. First discuss perceptions/stereotypes of how men communicate. Reverse roles to discuss perceptions/stereotypes of how women communicate.
5. Four styles of communication
6. Exercise #3 - Couples each describe examples of how they've communicated at each level

7. Importance of listening - Exercise #4 - couples
8. Three minute Monologue - couples. Each partner speaks for three minutes on any topic. Listening partner be able to reflect thoughts and emotions conveyed by fiance' in the three minutes of talking.
9. Exercise #5 - Sexuality Questions - couples
10. Couples fill out questions for that evening's forum on 3x5 cards

### The Wall

Their wedding pictures mocked them from the table, these two, whose minds no longer touched each other. They lived with such a heavy barricade between them that neither battering ram of words nor artilleries of touch could break it down. Somewhere between the oldest child's first tooth and youngest daughter's graduation, they lost each other.

Throughout the years, each slowly unraveled that tangled ball of string called self, and as they tugged at stubborn knots, each hid his searching self from the other. Sometimes she cried at night and begged the whispering darkness to tell her who she was. He lay beside her, like a snoring hibernating bear, unaware of her winter.

Once, after they had made love, he wanted to tell her how afraid he was of dying, but fearing to show his naked soul, he spoke instead about the beauty of her breasts. She took a course in modern art, trying to find herself in colors splashed upon a canvas, and complaining to other women about men who were insensitive.

He climbed into a tomb called "The Office" and wrapped his mind in a shroud of paper figures and buried himself in customers.

Slowly the wall between them rose, cemented by the mortar of indifference.

One day, reaching out to touch each other they found a barrier they could not penetrate, and recoiling from the coldness of the stone, each retreated from the stranger on the other side.

For when love dies, it is not in a moment of angry battle, nor when fiery bodies lose their heat.

It lies panting, exhausted, expiring at the bottom of a wall it could not scale.

Author Unknown

#### Importance of Communication

In a report of a four-year study on American families many problem areas were listed. On the average, problems such as sex, money, leisure time, relatives and children appeared on around thirty-five percent of the list. But standing far above all these other areas was communication. Communication was listed as a problem in eighty-six percent of the families.<sup>10</sup>

Why is it such a problem? Doesn't everyone know how to communicate? Yes and no. We all know how to talk. We all listen to some extent. But are we very effective at either? Probably not.

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp. 71-72.

It is difficult to share of ourselves in communication. As long as we keep a distance from people we feel safe. In marriage, we find it more difficult to hide. Communication is an art we must learn to cultivate.

John Powell makes a distinction between discussion and dialogue. In discussion, we simply share thoughts, values, plans and ideas of a rather intellectual nature. Dialogue is harder. It is a sharing of emotions and feelings as well. He said that "Laying yourself on the line in the self-disclosure of dialogue will challenge all the courage, determination and faith you can muster. The most universal fear of all men is to be found out; to be known and rejected." <sup>11</sup>

Persistence at communication is a hard lesson to learn. Yet, it is worth it, for it enriches everything else in a marriage relationship.

Consider what two authors have said about the importance of communication.

Nothing communicates more readily than trust and concern for another's happiness. For an earnest Christian couple, the basic for mutual trust is already established. And since they believe that God will bring forth His best in the face of human weakness, failure and conflict, they dare to communicate openly and honestly with full acceptance of each other. <sup>12</sup>

This is one way of saying that no amount of communication can make marriage perfect; therefore, we should not expect it. God is perfect, the ideal of the Christian marriage is perfect and the means God puts at the disposal of Christian couples are perfect. Yet there is no perfect marriage, no communication perfect

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<sup>11</sup> John Powell, The Secret of Staying in Love, Argus Communications, Allen, TX, 1976, p. 88.

<sup>12</sup> Dwight H. Small, After You've Said I Do, Fleming H. Revell, Westwood, NJ, 1968, p. 75.



in marriage. The glory of Christian marriage is in accepting the lifelong task of making continual adjustments with the disorder of human existence, ever working to improve communication skills necessary to this task and seeking God's enabling power in it all.<sup>13</sup>

Communication never ends. What we are to one another cannot be silenced. What we say to each other by our words should resonate with our deeds, acts and gifts to the other. Successful marriages are built by partners who achieve consistent communications both verbally and nonverbally.<sup>14</sup>

#### Four Styles of Communication

In their book, Alive and Aware, authors Miller, Nunnally and Wackman described four styles of communication.<sup>15</sup> Understanding these four styles can assist readers to a greater comprehension of how to communicate and how marriage partners communicate.

Style I is friendly, sociable conversation which is essential to carrying on everyday activities. It usually has a topical focus and discloses little about ones self.

Style II is conversation that shoots for an outcome. The intention is to force change in the person or the situation. Style II can be used to control by ordering, praising, persuading, or complaining.

Style III is the speculative, pondering, analyzing style. It can be used to search for reasons or to give expressions.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 81.

<sup>14</sup> David Augsburger, Cherishable: Love and Marriage, Herald Press, Scottsdale, PA, p. 16.

<sup>15</sup> Sherod Miller, Elam W. Nonally and Daniel B. Wackman, Alive and Aware, Interpersonal Communication Programs, Inc., Minneapolis, 1975, p. 173.

Style III typically expresses a commitment to deal with an issue at a cognitive level. But there is no commitment about action.

Style IV could be called a committed style. When in this communication pattern, you demonstrate the commitment to deal completely with an issue. Importantly, this includes feelings. Disclosure of awareness to a marriage partner comes after self-realization. Individuals can take ownership of their feelings without becoming defensive or blaming or attacking a partner.

Each style plays an important role in effective and flexible interpersonal communication. There are two reasons for highlighting Style IV. One reason is that the way people learn how to use Styles I and II is often learned in college. Style IV still often remains as the one form still missing from a person's communication repertoire. The second reason is that Style IV is the most effective way to deal with relationship issues.

#### Listening

Someone has said that "Communication is to love as blood is to life." It is impossible to have any kind of relationship (good or bad) unless there is communication. With many couples, much of the problem is listening.

Listening means:

1. When the other person is speaking, you are not rushing to think what you will say next when he or she takes a breath.
2. Complete acceptance of what is said and how it is stated.
3. Being able to restate accurately both the content and feeling of a message.

Psychologically we can listen five times as fast as we can speak.

So why do we have listening problems?

1. Boredom is one reason. We think we have heard it before, so we put our ears on automatic pilot.
2. Narrowness is another reason. Call it cognitive dissonance. You only hear what you agree with or want to hear.
3. Defensiveness is a final reason. We twist statements into personal attacks.

SECTION IV  
A MODEL FOR MARRIAGE EDUCATION  
D. "Conflicts"

The section on Conflict begins with a listing of objectives and an outline. The following presentation on conflict is relatively short, but there are five exercises in the appendix that are related to this division.

OBJECTIVES

1. Couples will look upon conflict as an opportunity for growth.
2. Couples can describe the different ways of handling conflict.
3. Couples will have examined points of conflict in their relationship.

OUTLINE

1. Talk - Conflicts
2. Exercise #1 - couples
3. Exercise #2 - couples
4. Ways of Handling Conflict
5. Exercise #3 - couples
6. Decision Making - Exercise #4
7. Exercise #5

### Conflict

A woman once related an incident involving the six-year-old daughter of a neighbor who had just heard the story of Cinderella for the first time. The little girl retold the story up to the climax and then asked, "Do you know what happened then?" The woman said, "They lived happily ever after." "No they didn't," replied the little girl, "They got married."

As this child senses, getting married and living happily ever after are not necessarily synonymous. There are innumerable barriers to surmount before most persons can achieve a satisfying marriage. Yet our culture seems to buy into the idea of living happily ever after. Most couples are not prepared to deal with marital conflicts.

Marriage is the coming together of two unique and different individuals in order to share life with each other. Differences are quite unavoidable. They've lived separate lives for 20-25 years or so, during which each has developed a set of individual tastes, preferences, habits, likes and dislikes, values and standards. It is unreasonable to suppose that these two people, just because they get married, will want to do the same thing in the same way at the same time.

Verbal conflict is not harmful. It can open doors or shut them depending on the use of the conflict and the maturity of the couple. It is part of the growth process and can be creatively managed for good.

Conflict involves personal values and needs. Every human has basic needs. When a personal conflict arises, one or more of those needs are not being met. Conflict is usually a symptom.

Some assumptions about conflict. (Paraphrased from Norman Wright.)<sup>16</sup>

1. Conflict is going to occur in your marriage.
2. Conflict involves personal values and needs.
3. Conflicts are usually a symptom of unmet needs.
4. A major reason people don't openly deal with conflict is because they don't understand conflict resolution.
5. Conflict can provide growth in your marriage relationship.
6. If conflicts remain unresolved, it can stagnate growth in your relationship.

#### FIVE WAYS OF HANDLING CONFLICT

David Augsburger listed five options in conflict situations.<sup>17</sup> They are listed with the author's interpretation in parentheses:

1. I win--you lose (win)
2. I want out--I'll withdraw (withdrawal)
3. I'll give in for good relations (yielding)
4. I'll meet you half way (compromising)
5. I can care and confront (resolution)

All five models have some merit with resolution having the greatest effectiveness.

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<sup>16</sup> Wright, op. cit., pp. 138-140.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 140-141.

Some steps to resolution would be

1. Pick an appropriate time to discuss the issue.
2. Listen carefully to each other's side.
3. Focus on what need each is expressing along with expectations.
4. Use "I" statements (refer to Style IV).
5. Define the problem. What are you contributing to it?
6. Decide which option you will choose for resolving the conflict.

SECTION IV  
A MODEL OF MARRIAGE EDUCATION

E. "Cooperation"

The final division of cooperation employs a slightly different format. The only exercise (contained in the appendix) is a listing of marriage goals. The rest of this portion contains a presentation, a short worship service and a time for evaluation. The objectives and outline are listed here. The presentation follows.

OBJECTIVES

1. The couples will together plan goals for their marriage.
2. The couples will come to understand marriage from a Christian perspective.
3. The couples will commit themselves to marriage enrichment and growth at the worship service.

OUTLINE

1. Marriage as Cooperation
2. Marriage Goal Setting
3. Worship Service
4. Evaluation



### Marriage as Cooperation

The final section of the workshop concerns cooperation. Cooperation here refers to taking all that has been learned and together putting it into action. David Mace said the two sovereign remedies for most ills of marriage are really quite simple. "Communication--improve it! Cooperation--increase it!"<sup>18</sup>

Charles Stewart said one of his goals in marriage counseling is to help a couple play down personal goals and work toward ones that are mutually set.<sup>19</sup> The goal in this section of the workshop is for participants to come to common understanding and agreement concerning marriage goals. To get there, they need a better understanding of the unity they experience when coming together as husband and wife.

Marriage is a vocation. It is a calling from God to love each other totally, irrevocably and uniquely. Just as people are called to certain professions, so they are called into marriage to a lifetime of loving one another.

Marriage is also a covenant. A theory of covenant in the Old Testament says that marriage is more than just an agreement between two people. God is part of this relationship. Yahweh's covenant love conveys the idea of stability and solidarity. The focus is on God's unconditional love for a couple.

John B. Youngberg and Luis del Pozo comment that

At the highest and deepest level, marriage is a covenant between a couple and God. Vows are uttered in

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<sup>18</sup>Mace, op. cit., p. 69.

<sup>19</sup>Charles Stewart, The Minister as Marriage Counselor, Abingdon Press, Nashville, 1970, p. 83.

the presence of God. Through the prayer of benediction, God's blessing is invoked upon their marriage.<sup>20</sup>

A couple will fail many times to keep the promises they made that day. But a covenant theory does not compose itself of what the couple does. The covenant focuses on God's love which bestows grace and strength for restoration and improvement.

Marriage is a partnership. James Olthius calls for a revival of the Old English word "troth" to describe this partnership.

Troth is an Old English term for truth, faithfulness, loyalty and honesty. The call to troth is a unique dimension to be human, the call to love God and neighbor. The single word troth captures the nuances of trust, reliability, stability, scrupulousness, ingenuousness, authenticity, integrity and fidelity.<sup>21</sup>

Troth means "I'm not only called to you, I'm not only with you, I'm committed to be your partner." This idea of cooperating to the fullest extent probably captures the essence of what partnership is about. It demonstrates a willingness to be there when needed to provide support. David Mace has said this, "Honest communication opens the way for cooperation."<sup>22</sup>

In fact, Charles Swindoll reveals that inherent within the Biblical description of male and female, the idea of partnership is present. When the English translation of Genesis 2:18 describes the creation of a "helper" for Adam, it does not do justice to the original language.

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<sup>20</sup> Luis del Pozo and John B. Youngberg, "How Seriously Should We Take Marriage?", Ministry, September 1982, p. 5.

<sup>21</sup> James H. Althius, I Pledge You My Troth, Harper & Row publishers, New York, 1975, p. 21.

<sup>22</sup> Mace, op. cit., p. 71.

The Hebrew, however, is much more meaningful. It conveys the idea of someone who assists another to reach complete fulfillment. It is used elsewhere in the Old Testament when referring to someone coming to rescue another.

And if that isn't vivid enough, God adds that the one He would bring alongside Adam would be "suitable for him". Literally, "corresponding to" him. She would complete him as a qualified, corresponding partner. It is a beautiful picture of a dignified, necessary role filled by one whom God would make and bring alongside the man.<sup>23</sup>

Whatever your anthropology, surely this Biblical picture presents an elevated view of partnership. Partnership is a part of marriage.

Finally, marriage is a ministry. Particularly, it is service to each other. With a full acceptance of each other, the partners can let down their guards and venture to live a life of risk and discipleship. This ministry of self-giving love can only perpetuate itself. The more they give to each other and God, the more grace they experience. The more grace they experience, the more enabled they are to share God's love with the world.

As the old United Methodist Church's Manual for Premarital Counseling expresses

When couples respond positively to the stimulation of God's spirit, marriage becomes a channel for the expression of God's love--unconditional, sacrificing, forgiving, sustaining, affirming love. Under the influence of God's love, the events of everyday life of families, in prosperity or adversity, become a "means of grace" to help persons "go on to perfection." Not that persons become perfect in the sense of being free from sin or the problems of everyday life; but that they "grow in grace" so that they seek to become "perfect in love," always seeking to let God's

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<sup>23</sup> Charles R. Swindell, Strike The Original Match, World Wide Publications, Minneapolis, 1980, p. 19.

steadfast love find full expression in all their relationships with their marriage and beyond to the whole family of God.<sup>24</sup>

Two people cooperating with each other and with God to reach their greatest fulfillment and potential in marriage is the best of what marriage can be.

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<sup>24</sup> Henry M. Bullock, ed., To Love and To Cherish: Pastor's Manual, United Methodist Publishing House, Nashville, 1970, p. 60.

COMMUNION/COMMITMENT SERVICE  
Marriage Preparation Workshop

- Leader: Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it. (Psalms 127:1)
- For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven. (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)
- Women: A time to be born, and a time to die;  
A time to plant, and a time to pluck up what is planted;
- Men: A time to kill, and a time to heal;  
A time to break down, and a time to build up;
- Women: A time to weep, and a time to laugh;  
A time to mourn, and a time to dance;
- Men: A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones together;  
A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
- Women: A time to seek, and a time to lose;  
A time to keep, and a time to cast away;
- Men: A time to rend, and a time to sew;  
A time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
- Women: A time to love, and a time to hate;  
A time for war, and a time for peace;
- Together: Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Ephesians 5:31)
- Leader: Our Lord Jesus Christ has given us the example and admonition to lay down our lives for each other. One aspect of Holy Communion is remembering this self-giving love.
- Today as you offer the body and blood of Christ to your intended spouse, may you commit yourselves to applying this same example of love to your marriage relationship.
- Together: My beloved is mine and I am his. (Song of Solomon 2:16) God brings us to the banqueting table and his banner over us is love.

COUPLE'S PRAYER

OFFERING OF COMMUNION

BENEDICTION

## PARTICIPANT EVALUATION OF THE WORKSHOP

Before the March 25-27 Marriage Preparation workshop, a sheet was sent out to each participating couple. A sample of this letter is contained in the appendix. The letter provided the benefit of contact before the workshop with instructions for the couple to take the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis at their convenience. Two questions were then asked of the eighteen participants. The questions were, "What are the pertinent issues to your marriage preparation?" and "In what way can the workshop assist you and your fiance' to better prepare for your marriage?"

In the answers to these questions, the participants often answered in generalities, probably due to the format of the letter. To correct that type of response in the future, the author recommends a changed format in which he would suggest specific areas of possible adjustment immediately following the first question. A listing of prioritized items might be helpful. Participants could then check off crucial areas of preparation.

The two most pertinent issues to these persons were the areas of conflict and marriage fulfillment. Six persons listed conflict or conflict resolution as the important issue to marriage preparation for them. Keeping their marriage fresh or fulfilling was named by five persons. The author would place these items under the area of commitment.

Three persons named communication as the key issue. Two persons each listed budgeting and more time together as pertinent to marriage preparation. Named once were finances,

home location, understanding first-year difficulties, learning how to encourage your spouse, relationship with God, security, family issues and knowing scriptures on patience. This varied list reflected a wide agenda for participants.

In their behalf, the participants were not aware of all the mechanics of the workshop. Some came to see the author individually about the make-up of the workshop. These persons were given an understanding of the weekend format.

The second question about how the workshop could help the couple prepare for marriage was answered quite differently. By far, the most frequent answer was that the workshop could improve the couple's understanding of each other. Eight participants listed this issue.

Only two other areas were listed more than once. Better communication and organized understandings of marriage appeared twice. Single topics listed were discipline, a Biblical understanding of roles, budgeting, commitment, knowing first-year difficulties and "don't know." Again, since couples were not sure of all that the workshop entailed, they were not exactly sure how to answer this question.

After the workshop, the couples answered the evaluation form more specifically. This form (Appendix F) asked eight questions with a space for additional comments. The initial question asked if the person had gained a better classification about his or her partner's basic behaviors. On sixteen of the eighteen evaluation sheets, this question was answered in the affirmative. While most participants simply gave a "yes" answer, several went into detail describing how they had come to better

understand each other's backgrounds, drives and goals. The workshop, then, did serve as a tool to fulfill the expectation of better understanding which the participants had listed in the pre-workshop form.

The second question asked how marriage expectations had changed. Nine of the participants saw themselves as more realistic in their marriage preparation. Three commented that they were now prepared for conflict. Two persons felt there were few changes in marriage expectations. Realistic expectations are certainly in line with the workshop's goals. Simply having knowledge of what to expect is a great advantage of marriage preparation.

Question three asked if the workshop furthered the couples' communication skills. Each participant answered yes. The couples did not talk to each other a great deal. Division three of the workshop centered on developing such skills.

Question four inquired as to the skills and understanding gained during the conflict section. A great variety of answers were given here. Six persons listed the methods of handling conflict as a great help. Three participants felt that understanding conflict as inevitable and possibly healthy as being of benefit to them. Remaining answers were concerned with issues such as appreciating strengths, learning how to attack conflict instead of each other, knowing how conflicts arise and understanding that conflict arises from unmet needs. The variety of answers reflected the breadth of teaching in the



conflict section. Such variety is a good sign. Also, the attentiveness level may have been higher since more persons had listed conflict as their most pertinent marriage issue.

In reply to the fifth question, five of the eighteen participants did not think their understanding of marriage was strengthened when interpreted in the light of Christian faith. Two participants commented that this area was perhaps the weakest link in the seminar. Since religious elements were present in many of the expectations, the author must further refine the workshop to meet this need. Also taken into consideration must be that many of the crucial issue of marriage are not essentially religious, but common to all persons in marriage relationships.

In answer to questions six and seven, many exercises were listed. Question six asked about the most helpful exercises. Question seven asked about the least helpful exercises.

Nine persons also listed the conflict exercises as helpful to their preparation. A considerable number of persons said before the workshop that a better understanding and assistance with conflict was important to them.

Seven people said goal-setting exercises were helpful. Four named the partners' habits as important, while two each listed the Percentage of Decision, Awareness of Listening, Communication and Sexuality questions as helpful. One person said all compatibility exercises were of benefit to him.

The exercises that most of the participants found least helpful was the Cognitive-Emotional exercise. Four persons said this exercise was of little benefit. Awareness of listening was

not helpful to three participants. Two named the Ungame and Compatibility exercise as being of little help to them. Many of these answers will simply reflect individual needs.

The final question was crucial: "How are you now better prepared for marriage?" The most common answer, as given by seven participants, was a better understanding of each other. On the pre-workshop form, eight persons had listed this as the pertinent issue. These responses indicate that the workshop assisted several persons to a better understanding of their partners.

Five participants said they had a more realistic understanding of marriage. Two said they've now set concrete goals for marriage. Two others indicated they felt prepared to handle conflicts. While the final answers were not very detailed on question eight, they were specific in that the workshop was of assistance to marriage preparation.

## PERSONAL EVALUATION

The author is more convinced than ever of the need for marriage preparation. The readings and the actual workshop describe advantages for premarital education.

Further questions were answered directly pertaining to issues raised in the proposal.

A weekend workshop format was preferred by every couple present. The March 25-27 workshop schedule went well. It may be possible in the future to end the activities by noon on Sundays so couples may have the afternoon for rest and reflection.

Nine couples seem to be a large enough group. It perhaps surpasses the limit for greater active group participation. Smaller sub-groups may be necessary if more than nine couples attend the workshop.

A number of audio-visual aids have been developed. Several appear as couples' exercises in the appendix. The majority of exercises are for couples alone, with several exercises employing a group format.

The author attempted to obtain a retreat center for the March 25-27 workshop, but most camps are not open until late spring. Since the workshop was held within the school calendar, it was best scheduled in late March or early April. Also costs at retreat centers would probably be prohibitive. Careful arranging of the center with comfortable chairs, good lighting, colorful posters and private rooms provided a conducive atmosphere for marital preparation.

With the workshop lasting Friday through Saturday, ample time was available for coverage of the material. Preassigning the Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis saved important workshop time.

While couples gave a generally positive view of the workshop, the author sees areas of weakness. A greater depth of theology will have to be expressed. The participants expect this. It is a necessary part of marriage preparation. The workshop division of Commitment and Cooperation are the best areas to affect these understandings.

Greater time can be given to group activities. There is an abundance of couple-oriented activities. A search must be made for possible group exercises that can meet this need. The author may need to develop group interaction programs so that couples can have the benefit of each others insights.

In the future, greater consideration should be given to the issues of finance/budgeting, a particular source of conflict to newly-married couples. Little is presented in this area during the workshop.

There are limitations to what can be accomplished in a weekend format model of a marriage preparation workshop. The author will need to continually refine the workshop to stay abreast of the rapid changes in family life today in our culture.

A marriage preparation workshop provides a valuable service to couples considering marriage in the near future. The group setting enables similar material to be covered by a number of

people at the same time. The author believes such marital preparation has a legitimate place alongside premarital counseling. It is especially appropriate in the university learning arena.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A  
"Commitment"

The following exercises are utilized in the division of commitment concerns: Exercise #1 is primarily for the purpose of stimulating persons to think about issues in marriage preparation. While Exercise #2 lists several areas of marital preparation, it calls to attention the pertinent and neglected area for individual couples. Exercise #2 causes couples to take the definition of the word "love" and record specific examples of how it is operative in their relationship. The three exercises move from a larger focus (Exercise #1) to a very individualized focus (Exercise #3).

Exercise #1

1. When is a person ready for marriage?
2. How many good marriages are you aware of?
3. What makes these marriages good?
4. How have you (intentionally) prepared for marriage?

Exercise #2

1. List major areas of marital relationship we've been committed to discuss.
2. What areas have we neglected? Why?
  - a. Common goals and values
  - b. Commitment to growth
  - c. Communication skills
  - d. Creative use of conflict
  - e. Appreciation and affection
  - f. Agreement on gender roles
  - g. Cooperation and teamwork
  - h. Sexual fulfillment
  - i. Money management
  - j. Child-rearing expectations
  - k. Decision making

APPENDIX A--Continued

## Exercise #3

Under each word, write three specific examples of what you will do to enhance your love relationship.

Eros

Phileo

Agape

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.





- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Be a manager; have responsibility for the work of others
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Have children of our own or adopt children
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Be active in community work: service clubs, volunteer work
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Participate in church activities
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Have leisure time for hobbies, sports, vacations

#### Exercise #2

1. How are my partner and I similar?
2. How are we different?
3. How can these similarities or differences complement each other in our marriage?
4. How can these similarities or differences hinder our marriage relationship?

## Exercise #3

How I Feel About My Partner's Habits

	Very Bothered	Sometimes Bothered	Usually Neutral	Sometimes Pleased	Very Pleased
Punctuality	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Appearance, dress, grooming	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Forgetfulness	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Suggestions my partner gives	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Attention my partner gives me when we are with each other	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Use of tobacco	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Use of alco- holic beverages	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Use of drugs; medications	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Driving habits	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Sense of humor	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Expressions of affection	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Housekeeping, neatness	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Openness, flexibility	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Honesty, truth- fulness	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Respect for others, for me	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Care of property, belongings	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Money habits	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Encouragement  
of me

\_\_\_\_\_

Cooperation,  
consideration

\_\_\_\_\_

Conversational  
skills

\_\_\_\_\_

Speech--swearing  
jargon

\_\_\_\_\_

Sleep habits

\_\_\_\_\_

Daily  
scheduling

\_\_\_\_\_

Food and eating  
habits

\_\_\_\_\_

APPENDIX C  
"Communication"

While three of the communication exercises are listed in the appendix, there are actually five exercises in this division. Exercise #2, described in the outline, is to help males and females to better understand how each communicates. Perceptions and stereotypes will be brought into focus. Exercise #3, also listed in the outline, is in response to the presentation of four styles of communication. Couples will describe examples of each style in their relationship.

Exercise #1, shown below, can help a couple to appreciate the primary level from which each other communicates. Exercise #4 causes couples to verbalize the listening patterns they see present in their relationship. The final exercise contains questions designed to explore some premarital issues in sexuality.

Exercise #1

Persons who communicate primarily on a cognitive level deal mainly with factual data. They like to talk about such topics as sports, the stock market, money, houses, jobs, etc., keeping the subject of conversation out of the emotional area. Usually they are quite uncomfortable dealing with issues which elicit feelings, especially unpleasant feelings such as anger. Consequently, they avoid talking about subjects which involve love, fear and anger. These persons have difficulty, then, being warm and supportive of their spouses.

Others communicate more on a feeling level. They tire easily of purely factual data, and feel a need to share feelings, especially with their spouses. They feel the atmosphere between husband and wife must be as free as possible from unpleasant feelings like tension, anger and resentment. So, of course, they want to talk about these emotional things, resolve conflicts with their spouse, clear the air, and keep things pleasant between them.

Of course, no one is completely cognitive or completely emotional.

#### WHERE ARE YOU AND WHERE IS YOUR PARTNER?

---

Emotional

Cognitive

A person on the left side of the graph, who shares more feelings, is not less bright or less intelligent. This person is simply aware of his/her feelings and is usually better able to do something about them.

A surprising fact is that the so-called cognitive person (on the right) is controlled by his/her feelings just as the so-called emotional person, but he/she does not realize it. For example, the stiff, formal intellectual has deep feelings also, but uses enormous energy to keep them buried so he/she will not be bothered with them. But, unfortunately, they do bother him/her. Whenever someone (like an emotional wife or husband) is around asking for affection and warmth, he/she is not only having difficulty responding, but may be angered that his/her precious equilibrium has been disturbed.

## Exercise #4

## AWARENESS OF LISTENING

1. How can you tell nonverbally (body language) that your partner is listening to you?
2. What words or verbal responses lets one know that your partner is listening to you?
3. When I want to really listen to my partner, I try to:
4. When I do not want to listen to my partner, I:
5. When my partner really listens to me, I feel:

## NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION

Make a list of things you and your partner do to communicate ideas without using words. (Example: slam the door, shrug shoulders, etc.). In one column, write what it means. Check with your partner to see if your interpretations are the same.

## Exercise #5

## SEXUALITY AND COMMUNICATION

I have chosen to include the topic of sexuality under the communication umbrella. It is also something in which you cooperate. It is something in which you will have conflicts. Primarily, however, sex is communication of the most intimate kind. Sex is a gift of God for us to enjoy unashamedly.

When we come to a marriage relationship, we bring a good bit of "excess baggage" that can be detrimental to the greatest fulfillment possible. The questions below will assist you to think through some concerns about sexuality. Furthermore, it is strongly recommended that you listen to the three-hour tape

series (available at the Wesley Foundation at Western Kentucky University), Sex Techniques and Sexual Problems in Marriage, by Dr. Ed Wheat. You will find in this tape series a thorough amount of basic information you should have by the time you marry.



## QUESTIONS

1. What were some of the prominent sources of my information or education concerning sexuality (parents, friends, teachers, reading, entertainment, harmful childhood experiences, childhood experiences of love in my home, etc.)?
2. What are my attitudes now? (Do you see sex as good, bad, fun, annoying, frightening, enjoyable, a necessary evil, fearful, etc.)
3. What qualities of yours do I find sexually attractive? (Sensitive, tenderness, physical attractiveness, need for affection, etc.)
4. What qualities of mine do not fit society's expectations of male and female?
5. How are we handling our sexual drives and needs, now, before marriage and how will we handle these after marriage?
6. How do I feel about your seeing me nude?
7. What sexual acts do I think are improper in marriage?
8. How do I feel about our potential (or lack of it) to create new life?

## APPENDIX D

## "Conflict"

All five of the following exercises are to assist the couples in understanding conflicts peculiar to their relationship. Exercise #1 is designed on the theory that each conflict is a result of an unmet need. A better understanding of personal needs is essential to full conflict resolution. Exercise #2 identifies specific conflict areas while Exercise #3 is a reflection on the presentation about conflict styles. The final two exercises are concerned with decision making. Exercise #4 identifies strengths each person brings in making particular decisions, and Exercise #5 causes couples to examine several areas of decision making necessary in a marriage.

## Exercise #1

Personal needs

What my partner can do  
to help fulfill these  
needs.

---

  
Physical:

Emotional:

Spiritual:

Social &amp; Intellectual:

## Exercise #2

## CONFLICT ANALYSIS

Most persons have disagreements and conflicts in their relationships. Please indicate below the approximate extent of agreement or disagreement between you and your partner for each item on the following list.

	Total Agreement				Total Disagreement	
	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Handling family finances	—	—	—	—	—	—
2. Matters of recreation	—	—	—	—	—	—
3. Religious matters	—	—	—	—	—	—
4. Demonstrations of affection	—	—	—	—	—	—
5. Friends	—	—	—	—	—	—
6. Sex relations	—	—	—	—	—	—
7. Conventionality (correct or proper behavior)	—	—	—	—	—	—
8. Philosophy of life	—	—	—	—	—	—
9. Ways of dealing with parents or in-laws	—	—	—	—	—	—
10. Aims, goals, and things believed important	—	—	—	—	—	—
11. Amount of time spent together	—	—	—	—	—	—
12. Making major decisions	—	—	—	—	—	—
13. Household tasks	—	—	—	—	—	—
14. Leisure time interests and activities	—	—	—	—	—	—
15. Career decisions	—	—	—	—	—	—
16. Praying and Bible study together	—	—	—	—	—	—
18. Where we live	—	—	—	—	—	—

## Exercise #3

1. Which style of conflict do you usually use?
2. What style does your fiance' usually employ?
3. How do you feel about your style? Your fiance's style?
4. Describe times when you need other styles. What happened?

## Exercise #4

## YOUR PERCENTAGE OF THE DECISION

Describe the decision-making process of your marriage by putting the percentage of influence you have and your spouse has for various issues. The total for each decision must be 100%. (Those who put 50:50 too many times will be considered dishonest.)

	My Vote	My Spouse's Vote
Choice of a new car	_____	_____
Choice of a home	_____	_____
Choice of furniture	_____	_____
Choice of your wardrobe	_____	_____
Choice of vacation spots	_____	_____
Choice of decor for the home	_____	_____
Choice of mutual friends	_____	_____
Choice of entertainment	_____	_____
Choice of church	_____	_____
Choice of TV shows	_____	_____
Choice of home menu	_____	_____
Choice of husband's vocation	_____	_____
Choice of wife's vocation	_____	_____
Choice of what money is spent for	_____	_____
Choice of number of children	_____	_____

## Exercise #5

## DECISIONS IN MARRIAGE - QUESTIONS

1. What decision have we made that I am proud of? What steps did we follow to come to that decision? What decision have we made that I felt was wrong or that I regretted? What steps did we follow to come to that decision?
2. In what area am I competitive or jealous of you and how must I change to show your specialness daily?
3. What kind of relationship do I hope we will have with my parents? My friends?
4. How close do I think we are in agreeing on having a child? Have we really made a mutual decision about this?
5. Am I satisfied with my concept of God? Am I looking for something different in my relationship with God?
6. How can we as a couple support each other's faith and religious beliefs and make God a part of our relationship?
7. How will we as a couple share our leisure time?
8. What decisions about my/your career do we have to make as a result of our marriage?

APPENDIX E  
"Cooperation"

The purpose of the listing marriage goals is for couples to consider all they have learned about themselves and marriage preparation and then list what they want to have in their marriage. The couples together name the goals most important to them. These goals are then committed in prayer to God during the Communion Service. Setting such goals helps couples be more intentional about reaching what they want in marriage.

MARRIAGE GOALS

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

## APPENDIX F

SAMPLE EVALUATION FORM  
MARRIAGE PREPARATION WORKSHOP

1. Did you gain a better clarification about the basic behaviors of your partner?
2. How have your marriage expectations changed?
3. Did you further develop your communication skills as a couple?
4. Describe what skills or understandings you gained during the section on Conflict.
5. Do you better understand marriage as interpreted in light of the Christian faith? How?
6. Which exercises were most helpful to you?
7. Which exercises were least helpful to you?
8. How are you now better prepared for marriage than before taking the workshop?
9. Additional comments:

## APPENDIX G

## SAMPLE LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear \_\_\_\_\_:

I'm so glad that you'll be participating in the Marriage Preparation Workshop at the WKU Wesley Foundation. Be assured that this will be one of the most intriguing, interesting times of your life as you and your future mate spend many hours in deep conversation and consequently, better understandings of each other.

Two items of preparation are necessary on our part. First, I need you to come in sometime before the workshop to take the TJTA (Taylor-Johnson Temperament Analysis) test. This extremely accurate diagnostic test will be a real source of self-understanding. Please call me to set up a time (about 1 1/2 hours) to take the test at your convenience. The sooner the better as it will prevent a crowd of persons taking the test in the last couple of days.

Secondly, please answer these two questions and return them to me as soon as possible. Answer them on this sheet please.

1. What are the pertinent issues to your marriage preparation?
2. In what way can the workshop assist you and your fiance' to better prepare for your marriage?

I'm looking forward to the best workshop yet.

Sincerely,

Terry W. Swan



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