

the seven principles for making marriage work exercises

The seven principles for making marriage work exercises are essential tools for couples seeking to strengthen their relationships and enhance their emotional connection. Based on extensive research conducted by renowned psychologist John Gottman, these principles highlight the importance of effective communication, conflict resolution, and emotional attunement in a marriage. By engaging in specific exercises designed around these principles, couples can cultivate a deeper understanding of one another, resolve conflicts more effectively, and build a lasting partnership. In this article, we will explore each of the seven principles in detail, along with practical exercises to implement in everyday life.

1. Enhance Your Love Maps

Love Maps refer to the foundational knowledge partners have about each other's lives. This includes understanding their partner's dreams, hopes, fears, and daily experiences.

Exercise: Love Map Questionnaire

- Create a list of questions to ask each other, such as:
- What are your goals for the next five years?
- What are your favorite things to do on weekends?
- What is your biggest fear?
- Set aside time each week to discuss these questions.

Enhancing your love maps fosters intimacy and ensures that you remain emotionally connected to each other's lives.

2. Nurture Your Fondness and Admiration

A strong sense of appreciation and respect for each other is crucial in maintaining a healthy marriage. Couples who express fondness and admiration for one another are more likely to weather conflicts gracefully.

Exercise: Gratitude Journals

- Each partner keeps a journal where they write down three things they appreciate about the other person daily.
- At the end of each week, share these entries together.

This exercise helps to remind couples of the positive aspects of their relationship and reinforces admiration.

3. Turn Towards Each Other Instead of Away

In a relationship, partners often make bids for attention, affection, and support. Turning towards these bids, rather than away, can significantly strengthen the bond between partners.

Exercise: Bid Recognition

- Keep a log for a week, noting instances where one partner makes a bid for connection (e.g., asking for help, sharing a story, etc.).
- Discuss how each partner responded to these bids and reflect on ways to improve responsiveness.

This exercise encourages awareness and responsiveness, crucial for emotional connection.

4. Let Your Partner Influence You

In successful marriages, both partners respect each other's opinions and are willing to share power. This principle encourages collaboration and compromise, rather than control and dominance.

Exercise: Collaborative Decision-Making

- Choose a decision that impacts both partners, such as vacation plans or financial investments.
- Each partner should express their views, and together, find a compromise that honors both perspectives.

Engaging in collaborative decision-making fosters mutual respect and partnership.

5. Solve Your Solvable Problems

Not all conflicts can be resolved, but many can be solved when approached with the right strategies. Learning to identify and resolve solvable problems is key to reducing marital stress.

Exercise: The Soft Start-Up Technique

- When discussing a disagreement, practice starting the conversation gently.
- Use "I" statements to express feelings instead of accusatory "you" statements (e.g., "I feel neglected when..." instead of "You never...").

This technique minimizes defensiveness and promotes healthier conversations.

6. Overcome Gridlock

Gridlock occurs when partners feel stuck in perpetual conflict about a specific issue. Overcoming gridlock requires understanding the underlying dreams and values of each partner.

Exercise: Dream-Share Dialogue

- Set aside time to discuss dreams that may be causing gridlock.
- Each partner should articulate their dream associated with the conflict and seek to understand the other's perspective.

This exercise allows couples to uncover deeper emotional needs and work towards mutual understanding.

7. Create Shared Meaning

Creating shared meaning involves establishing a culture of appreciation, values, and goals that both partners can embrace. This principle encourages couples to build a life narrative together.

Exercise: Create a Shared Vision Board

- Gather materials such as magazines, scissors, and glue.
- Each partner should cut out images and words that resonate with their shared goals, values, and dreams.
- Collaboratively create a vision board that represents your aspirations as a couple.

This exercise fosters a sense of teamwork and shared purpose.

Conclusion

Engaging in the seven principles for making marriage work exercises can be transformative for couples seeking to deepen their relationship. By enhancing love maps, nurturing fondness, responding to bids for attention, sharing power, solving solvable problems, overcoming gridlock, and creating shared meaning, partners can build a resilient bond that withstands the test of time.

These principles are not merely theoretical; they can be applied in daily interactions, fostering an environment of love, respect, and understanding. By committing to these exercises, couples can cultivate a thriving partnership, navigate challenges effectively, and experience greater satisfaction in

their marriage.

Incorporating these principles into your relationship requires intention and effort, but the rewards are profound. As you embark on this journey together, remember that every small step counts, and the insights gained from these exercises can pave the way for a deeper connection and a more fulfilling marital life.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the seven principles for making marriage work?

The seven principles are: 1) Enhance your love maps, 2) Nurture your fondness and admiration, 3) Turn toward each other instead of away, 4) Let your partner influence you, 5) Solve your solvable problems, 6) Overcome gridlock, and 7) Create shared meaning.

How can couples utilize 'enhance your love maps' in their relationship?

'Enhance your love maps' involves knowing each other's inner worlds, including their dreams, goals, and life history. Couples can exercise this principle by regularly discussing their experiences, aspirations, and feelings to deepen their emotional connection.

What is the significance of nurturing fondness and admiration in a marriage?

Nurturing fondness and admiration helps couples maintain a positive perspective of each other, which fosters respect and affection. Exercises may include sharing daily appreciations or recalling positive memories together to strengthen this bond.

What types of exercises can help couples turn toward each other instead of away?

Couples can practice turning toward each other by engaging in daily check-ins, actively listening to each other's concerns, and responding positively to bids for attention, affection, or support, enhancing their emotional connection.

How do couples tackle gridlock in their relationship?

To overcome gridlock, couples need to identify underlying dreams or values that fuel perpetual conflicts. Exercises include discussing these dreams openly and finding ways to support each other's aspirations, fostering compromise and understanding.

The Seven Principles For Making Marriage Work Exercises

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