An Interactive Course for Transforming Traditional Marriages
Dynamic Marriage is based on
  His Needs, Her Needs
  Love Busters
  and 5 Steps to Romantic Love
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and published by Fleming H. Revell

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Money Back Guarantee

If you attend all eight sessions and complete all homework assignments, including writing answers to all questions and discussing your answers with your spouse, you are eligible for a money back guarantee if this course isn’t satisfactory to you. If you wish your money back, have your facilitator write a letter requesting the refund to Family Dynamics within two weeks of the completion of the eighth session of your class. The facilitators must verify that you met all conditions mentioned above. We refund moneys received by Family Dynamics, but cannot refund any extra charged by your sponsoring church, organization, or facilitators to cover incidental costs.
Learning How to Evaluate Our Love

Ephesians 5:33

The Three Stages of Marriage

There are several stages of a relationship that lead up to marriage. There are also several ways to measure the stages of a relationship in marriage. In this study we will focus on these three important stages of marital relationship.

Intimacy
Conflict
Withdrawal

Your marriage at this very moment is in one of these three stages. Which one? Let’s examine them.

Intimacy

Intimacy takes place when a marriage is categorized by two things:

1.) Each meeting the other’s needs.

2.) Each avoiding causing unhappiness to the other.

When both are fulfilling the needs of the other and neither is causing unhappiness in the other, emotional bonding takes place. This causes you to drop your defenses and become more sensitive. That’s good, but it also has a few built-in drawbacks. For example, when you’ve emotionally bonded with a person, you find that things that don’t bother you if other people do them DO bother you when your mate does them. Your natural defenses keep others distant from you so that you don’t take their actions as personal. But with your mate those natural defenses are removed, and you take almost everything your mate does as personal.

Easy irritation with your mate is a sign that you have intimacy. If you didn’t care about her, you wouldn’t feel any irritation. You would just ignore her.

Doubt that? Keep reading.
Conflict

Conflict takes place when the marriage is categorized by:

1.) Not meeting the other’s needs.

2.) One or both causing unhappiness in the other.

When the irritation you feel toward your mate (or that your mate feels toward you) escalates enough, conflict enters the marriage. That means there is a “love buster” present and hurting your marriage. What’s a love buster?

We’ll talk about love busters in detail in the next session. A love buster is something that causes a person to lose good feelings toward another and take on negative feelings about that person.

If your mate meets your needs to a sufficient level, you don’t let love busters drive you out of the marriage. You have more to gain by staying than by going. Rather than leaving the relationship, you wind up arguing with your spouse about the things you find painful.

Those arguments and the subsequent bad feelings constitute the stage called conflict. It doesn’t mean your marriage is over or is sure to end. It just means that it has unhappiness—but it is an unhappiness you will endure as long as enough of your needs are being met.

Withdrawal

If the pain of the conflict becomes great enough that you find it too painful to live with, you will want out. At this stage all intimacy is abandoned. There is little arguing, little irritation. To a great degree you have rebuilt your defenses and pushed the other person away, making her distant. (Or, she may be doing this to you.)

If you are the one who has withdrawn, the situation would be something like this. Your husband, if he has not yet withdrawn, continues in conflict, feeling painful emotions and wanting to argue, fight, or intensely discuss things. You don’t want to participate in those arguments or discussions. By emotionally withdrawing, you have found peace and don’t want to reopen the wounds by going through conflict to reestablish the relationship.
As soon as another person comes along who will fulfill your needs, you will likely establish a relationship with him. The only thing that will prevent this from happening is a strong moral barrier or a strong circumstantial barrier (like knowing your family will reject you or feeling great obligation to your children.) If the new person meets your needs in an exceptional manner, the barriers might not be strong enough to prevent you from leaving your current husband for the new man.

**Renewing the Relationship**

If a person is currently in withdrawal, it doesn’t mean the marriage is irretrievably broken. It does mean it will be more difficult to repair, but it can be done.

Unfortunately, the repair process is a painful one. If a mate moves from withdrawal back into a relationship with the spouse, he goes backward through the same process. Remember the steps? Intimacy, then conflict, then withdrawal. To return means to go back through the conflict stage. That’s important to remember. Often when a marriage begins to improve, things get more emotional and painful. That’s not a sign that the marriage is hopeless. It well may be a sign that the marriage is improving—going back in the right direction.

**A Quick Review**

The following scriptures were not written in the context of marriage but of relationships with others. For the moment, apply them only in the context of your marriage.

**How do the following passages help explain whether a spouse is in intimacy, conflict, or withdrawal?**

1. Philippians 2:2-3

2. Colossians 3:12-13

3. I Peter 3:8-9
How does Matthew 7:12 help explain the Love Bank model?

Learning New Habits

You know from the Love Bank concept that the things you do affect your spouse—either for good or bad. That naturally brings up a question. Since we know that, why don’t we consistently do the things to make deposits in our spouse’s Love Bank? The answer is that we spend more time doing things that make ourselves feel good.

The above graphic represents what makes us feel good. Things you do that are in YOUR circle make you feel good. Things you do in YOUR SPOUSE’S circle make your spouse feel good and make deposits in his or her Love Bank. Things you do in the area where the circles overlap make you both feel good. Those actions make deposits in each person’s Love Bank and make each of you feel good at the same time.

Things that fall outside YOUR circle are actions that either make you feel bad or cause no feelings within you at all. Some things you could do to make deposits in your spouse’s Love Bank are things that you don’t want to do because they make you feel bad. On the other hand, some of those actions wouldn’t cause you any bad feelings. They just aren’t attractive to you because they have no self-reward. They don’t make you feel good.

Learning to meet your spouse’s needs means learning to do the things that make her feel good. Things you don’t do now. It means learning to feel good about doing new things to make your spouse feel good. That means you have to learn new habits. Remember, the Love Bank concept means that anything you do either creates love or hate within your spouse toward you. Also remember these words:
During the next eight weeks you will learn what your spouse needs and what you should do to meet those needs. Some of those things won’t be actions that you will find immediate pleasure in. Some may even be uncomfortable or have initial negative feelings for you. But if you do them, your spouse will learn to love you more than he ever has. And you will learn the same for him because of two reasons:

- As you meet your spouse’s needs, your spouse will be more compelled to meet your needs, even the ones he has not met before
- As you meet your spouse’s needs, you will find that the very action of doing that makes you love her more

**What Are Your Mates Needs?**

You’ll discover that very soon. You’ll learn about them in the book, His Needs, Her Needs, and you’ll read about them in this handbook. You’ll hear about them on the tapes. And they’ll be talked about quite a bit in class. But most importantly, each of you will tell the other. We’ll help you organize your thoughts about what you need and help you to share them in a way you’ll both understand and appreciate.

✈️ Complete the questions on page 8 now!
Worksheet for Session 1

What is one of the nicest things your spouse has done for you?

List your top two most important emotional needs that you want your spouse to fulfill for you, and what each means to you. (see pages 205-212 in His Needs, Her Needs book)

Your most important emotional need:

What this need means to you:

Your second most important emotional need:

What this need means to you:

What do you most want to gain from this course?

How would you like to better meet your spouse’s needs?
Prayer Notes for Session 1: