TRAINING CAMP PLAYBOOK MARRIAGE & PARENTING



LET OUR GOD BE OUR HOPE. HE
WHO MADE ALL THINGS, IS BETTER
THAN ALL! HE WHO MADE WHAT IS
BEAUTIFUL, IS MORE BEAUTIFUL
THAN ALL, HE WHO MADE
WHATEVER IS MIGHTY, IS HIMSELF
MIGHTIER. HE WHO MADE
WHATEVER IS GREAT, IS HIMSELF
GREATER. HE WILL BE UNTO YOU
EVERYTHING THAT YOU LOVE.

Augustine of Hippo,
The Complete Works of Augustine,
Exposition on Psalm 40:8

7 KEY RELATIONAL CAPACITIES

Adapted From Resources Provided by Dr S. Stratton



Strong relationships are those in which both people practice seven key capacities with enough consistency to keep the bond alive and growing. Relationships are organic: with care they flourish, without it they wither.

1. THE CAPACITY FOR JOY & DELIGHT

This is the ability to experience and express joy, gratitude, interest, and excitement in and with each other (Phil. 1:3; Song of Sol. 2:10-12; Eph. 5:19). Growth involves expanding your ability to: Feel joy and gratitude in the relationship. Express it openly. Increase your spouse's joy through your presence. Consistent date nights are one simple way to build this capacity.

2. THE CAPACITY TO REPAIR RUPTURES

Healthy couples can acknowledge hurt, admit fault, express regret, seek forgiveness, and rebuild trust $(Col.\ 3:12-14;\ Gal.\ 5:19-23)$. A well-repaired rupture often leaves the bond stronger than before.

The Anatomy of an Apology:

Responsibility: owning your actions and their impact.

Regret: expressing genuine sorrow without toxic

Request Forgiveness: asking, not demanding.
Repentance: naming changes you will make.
Restitution: if possible, restore what was lost.
Keep repairs clear and heartfelt: no excuses, no minimizing, no blaming.

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3. THE CAPACITY FOR TRANSPARENCY

This is the ability to share honestly what is on your heart and mind, and for your partner to fully hear and connect (Rom. 12:15; Eph. 4:14-15). Whether the matter is deep or mundane, openness is essential. Practice staying present rather than shutting down or reacting defensively.

4. THE CAPACITY TO EXPRESS & RESPOND TO DISTRESS

Life includes joy, peace, and distress (Ps. 69:1-8; 2 Cor. 13:11). Partners must be able to voice distress clearly and hear one another's cries for comfort. Responding with care and soothing builds trust and deepens connection.

5. THE CAPACITY FOR COLLABORATION

Relationships involve constant partnership — managing finances, family, goals, or crises (Ps. 133; Rom. 12:3-8). Effective collaboration reduces stress, builds security, and allows couples to face life as a team.

6. THE CAPACITY TO ADAPT TO CHANGE

Change is constant, and God uses it to transform us (Eccl. 3:1-8; 2 Pet. 3:18). Long-term relationships require a willingness to accept and adapt to the many shifts of life together.

7. THE CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO DIFFERENCE WITH GRACE

Every person bears God's image uniquely, with different histories and gifts (Rom. 12:5; Eph. 4:29). Criticism over differences erodes relationships, but gracious responses strengthen them.

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Take a few minutes out of each week to do a quick evaluation on how each other are doing. See where each of you are thriving, or where you may need some extra practice.

IN THE CAPACITY FOR JOY & DELIGHT

How did you share joy and delight this week? On a scale of 1-5, how strong was it?

IN THE CAPACITY TO REPAIR RUPTURES

Did you have any ruptures? Were they repaired? What did you learn?

IN THE CAPACITY FOR TRANSPARENCY

What was the most vulnerable thing you shared? Were you able to stay present?

IN THE CAPACITY TO EXPRESS & RESPOND TO DISTRESS

Did you express distress in a clear way? How did you respond to each other's distress?

IN THE CAPACITY FOR COLLABORATION

How did you collaborate this week? What worked? What could improve?

IN THE CAPACITY TO ADAPT TO CHANGE

What changes are you navigating? How are they affecting your relationship?

IN THE CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO DIFFERENCE WITH GRACE

When do you respond with criticism instead of grace? What do you need to repent of?

12 EMOTIONAL NEEDS

Adapted From Resources Provided by Dr C. THURMAN



God designed us with deep emotional needs, not as flaws, but as invitations to connection. Just as food and rest sustain our bodies, these 13 emotional needs sustain our souls, drawing us closer to Him and to one another. Each of these is a gift from God. He is the ultimate source who meets our needs, yet He often does so through the people around us. These connection points are one of the ways God weaves our lives together.

- 1. Affection Physical reassurances of value and care. (Rom. 16:16; 1 Cor. 16:20; 2 Cor. 13:12; 1 Thess. 5:26)
- 2. Attention To feel worthy of someone's time and thought. (Phil. 1:3-4)
- 3. Acceptance To be valued, approved, and appreciated by those you see as important. (Rom. 15:5-7; Phil. 2:3)
- **4. Affirmation** To have your internal character qualities and personal characteristics valued. (Rom 12:10)
- **5. Appreciation** That you are able to make meaningful contributions to others. (1 Cor. 12:22-26)

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- **6. Comfort** (Psychological) To be at peace looking ahead to the future. (2 Cor. 1:3-7)
- 7. Encouragement To be energized to move forward toward a worthwhile purpose or goal. (1 Thess. 5:11; Heb. 10:24)
- 8. Respect/Significance/Approval To be affirmed and appreciated for contributions. (Rom. 14:18; 1 Thess. 5:12-13; 1 Pet. 2:17)
- 9. Security Confidence of harmony in relationships, to feel protected from things that can jeopardize your physical, emotional, spiritual, and/or mental well-being. (Rom. 12:16-18; Eph. 4:1-3)
- 10. Support Typically through acts of service. (Acts 20:35; Gal. 6:2; 1 Thess. 5:14)
- 11. Understanding Someone else knows and can empathize with why you are feeling and seeing situations the way you do. This is not the same as agreeing with them. (Rom. 12:15-18; Col. 3:12; James 5:16; 1 Pet. 3:8)
- 12. Growth The ability to continually become more alive spiritually, intellectually, psychologically, physically, and emotionally, (Everything is either growing or it is dying). Growth enables one to more fully exercise their spiritual, intellectual, psychological, physical, and emotional range. (Prov. 27:17; Eph. 4:13-16; Heb. 10:24; 2 Pet. 1:3-8)

THE FOUNDATIONAL RELATIONAL PRACTICE

Your Twice a Week Heart-to-Heart Conversations



Understanding our emotional needs and inviting our spouse (or a friend) to be a part of what God will do to meet those needs. Heart-to-heart conversations give our spouse, or a close friend, the opportunity to enter into the blessing of being used by God to meet our emotional needs.



5 min: Pray together asking God to bless the conversation. 20 min (10 min per person):

Each person talks about their heart.

If speaking, focus on emotions, rather than data, or facts. If listening, only listen, affirm, or seek to understand. Don't fix, interrupt, or change the subject.

Share feelings (separate from feelings in or about the marriage) that you have had since your last meeting. An important part of this practice is that couples do not talk about feelings related to their marriage. There will be times when this takes place, but that is not the purpose of these conversations.

THE FOUNDATIONAL RELATIONAL PRACTICE

Your Twice a Week Heart-to-Heart Conversations



"OVER THE LAST FEW DAYS...

- 1. What has been positive for you?"
- 2. What has been painful for you?"
- 3. What has given you hope?"
- 4. What has made you angry?"

 (Or a goal that you felt was blocked)
- 5. What has brought you joy?"

"IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS...

6. What do you need?"

(Identify an emotional need from 12 emotional needs.)

Share 1 of the 12 emotional needs you would like the other person to ask God to meet for you. End by praying for God to meet that need and ask for God to use you as a part of the way he meets the need of your spouse/friend.

THE FOUNDATIONAL RELATIONAL PRACTICE

Your Twice a Week Heart-to-Heart Conversations



AN IMPORTANT NOTE...

Since the goal of heart-to-heart conversations is to understand our emotional needs and invite our spouse(or a friend) to be a part of what God will do to meet those needs, this is not an attempt to manipulate our spouse into being responsible to meet those needs for us. If we look to someone else to meet the needs that only God can meet, we set them and ourselves up for frustration.

To protect us from that, God will graciously make our relationships unsatisfying when we rely on them rather than on Him to meet our emotional needs. God is capable of meeting our needs even if your spouse/friend(s) does not. This must be the foundational belief for the heart-to-heart conversations. Your spouse/friend(s) may (or may not) be a part of God's overall solution to meet the needs you have.

FATHER, GLORIFY YOUR SON IN MY MARRIAGETHROUGH ME.

-THE PRAYER

RELATIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES



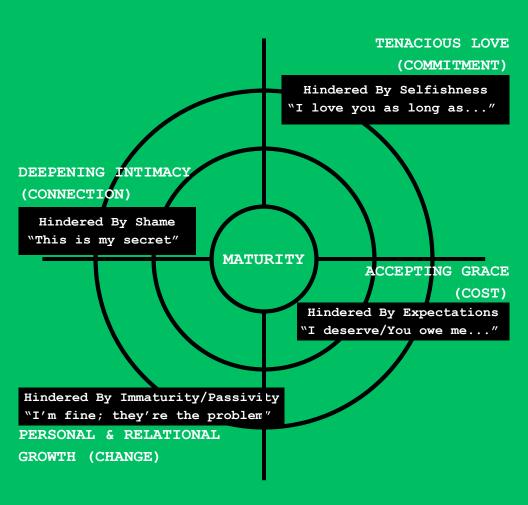
No relationship will be healthy if one or both run from their defects by focusing on someone else's shortcomings. The most urgent and important issues for us to focus on in our relationships are our brokenness, sinfulness, and immaturity. Instead of focusing on someone else's shortcomings, strive to cultivate your own emotional and relational maturity. Some possible growth opportunities include:

- 1. Learning how to understand and contribute to meeting the emotional needs of your spouse.
- 2. Learning how to take ownership of your own life in ways that would enable you to have the capacity to love and care for your spouse without enabling their sinful behavior or rescuing them from the things that God is doing to mature them.
- 3. Learning how to disagree without damaging your relationships.
- **4.** Learning how to set and hold appropriate boundaries with intentionality rather than reactivity.
- 5. Learning how to understand the right balance between freedom, responsibility, and maturity in your relationship.
- 6. Learning how to deepen your vulnerability and sustain your transparency in an appropriate way at a wise pace.

RELATIONAL GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES

- 7. Learning how to grow in your ability to understand more deeply through listening.
- 8. Learning how to begin a conversation in a way that leads to harmony and how to end a conversation gracefully.
- 9. Learning how to forge relational bonds by entering into someone else's suffering without trying to distract them from their suffering or fix it.
- 10. Learning how to explain what is upsetting to you in a way that the other person can understand.
- 11. Learning how to move toward your spouse when they are upset in a way that is clearly an effort on your part to comfort and soothe that distress.
- 12. Learning how to respond to the differences between you and your spouse with graciousness and curiosity, rather than criticism.
- 13. Learning how to accept that your relationship will change, then adapt in ways that move toward what is good about the change.
- 14. Learning how to experience and express joy, gratitude, delight, interest, and excitement, in, with, and for your spouse.
- 15. Learning how to say "No" because of a bigger
 "Yes."

THE COVENANT MATURITY CYCLE



7 WAYS TO RECLAIM IDENTITY, MARGIN, AND JOY

ADAPTED FROM LIVING LETTERS WITH JOSH STRAUB, SESSION I



1. RECLAIM THE GOSPEL

We are temples of the living God.

Jesus came to lovingly win us back
to Him. We carry Him wherever we go.
It gives us a purpose.

2. REMEMBER YOUR IDENTITY

The gospel is all about how we love others. Show up going, "Oh, there you are." Don't confuse identity with assignment.

3. THINK GENERATIONALLY

How you raise your children today to raise your great-great-great-grandchildren. It's about leaving a spiritual legacy. Create an environment where they want to be there.

4. SPEAK TRUTH IN LOVE

All external conflict is a result of internal conflict.

- 5. SET LIFE-GIVING RHYTHMS
- 6. LIVE FROM ABUNDANCE
- 7. HELP KIDS CREATE VALUE

5 PILLARS FOR RAISING EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY KIDS

ADAPTED FROM LIVING LETTERS WITH JOSH STRAUB, SESSION II



1. LEAD IN GRACE; FOLLOW WITH TRUTH
Recall self control. Problem solving.
Cognitive flexibility. Language
processing. Social skills. Emotional
regulation.

2. TALK ABOUT EMOTIONS

Don't shy away from honest talks about feelings. Make emotional words normal in your home. We can bring all prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, to God.

3. CELEBRATE WHO THEY ARE; DON'T MOURN WHO THEY'RE NOT Remember, these are God's kids. The brain equates care with love. Become a student of your kids. How are they being used to further the kingdom? Praying for your kids is the most important thing you can do.

4. RIGHT YOUR WRONGS

To yourself. To God. With each other. Especially about your emotions.

5. PRIORITIZE WHO YOU'RE BECOMING

Our kids become who we are—how we treat our spouse, how we love, how we handle stress. God's love is what enables us to show up for others in emotionally healthy ways. Jesus needs to be at the center of it all. He is the one who heals.

DR. STUART BROWN INSTITUTE OF PLAY

ADAPTED FROM LIVING LETTERS WITH JOSH STRAUB, SESSION III



Brown identifies different "play personalities" that describe the unique ways people engage in play. Each type has distinct benefits, and understanding your preferred play style can help improve creativity, social skills, and overall well-being.



1. THE JOKER

Enjoys humor, practical jokes, and making others laugh.

Benefits: Enhances social bonding by breaking tension. Reduces stress and anxiety through laughter.

2. THE KINESTHETIC

Enjoys physical activity as a form of play.

Benefits: Improves physical health and coordination. Reduces stress by releasing endorphins.

THE EXPLORER

Loves discovering new things, whether physically (travel around town or planned trips), mentally (ideas), or emotionally (new experiences).

Benefits: Increases curiosity and problem-solving skills. Encourages adaptability and open-mindedness.

DR. STUART BROWN INSTITUTE OF PLAY

ADAPTED FROM LIVING LETTERS WITH JOSH STRAUB SESSION III

4. THE COMPETITOR

Enjoys games and contests, especially when there's a chance to win. Gamifies fun.

Benefits: Encourages goal-setting and resilience. Boosts motivation and drive to improve.

5. THE CREATOR

Finds joy in making things, whether art, music, crafts, or DIY projects.

Benefits: Enhances creativity and problem-solving. Provides emotional release and stress relief.

6. THE DIRECTOR

Enjoys planning, organizing, and taking charge of situations.

Benefits: Develops leadership and management skills. Strengthens social coordination and collaboration.

7. THE STORYTELLER

Finds joy in imagination and narrative in writing or acting.

Benefits: Strengthens empathy and emotional intelligence. Enhances communication and persuasion skills.

7. THE COLLECTOR

Loves gathering and organizing objects, experiences, or knowledge.

Benefits: Enhances focus and patience. Can provide comfort and a sense of control.

4 PARENTING STYLES

J. ROTHWELL, Parenting Is the Key to Adolescent Mental Health

This is the parenting style that results in the highest emotional health in adolescence.

HIGH AFFECTION	HIGH AFFECTION
LOW DISCIPLINE	HIGH DISCIPLINE
Permissive	Authoritative
Parenting	Parenting
results in higher rates of anxiety	results in higher rates of security and a greater sense of being loved
LOW AFFECTION	LOW AFFECTION
LOW DISCIPLINE	HIGH DISCIPLINE

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

MIZZIGE

- 1. How We Love by M. Yerkovic & K. Yerkovic
- 2. Boundaries in Marriage by H.
- & J. Townsend
- 3. Sacred Marriage by G. Thomas
- 4. Real Marriage Made Simple by ${\tt C}$. Thurman
- 5. Attachments by T. Clinton & G. Sibcy
- **6. You and Me Forever** by F. Chan & I. Chan
- 7. The Meaning of Marriage by T. Keller
- & K. Keller
- 8. Caring & Commitment: Learning to Live the Love We Promise by L. B. Smedes
- 9. The Five Love Languages by ${\tt G}$. Chapman
- 10. Before a Bad Goodbye by T.
- 11. Changes that Heal by H. Cloud
- 12. A Lasting Promise by S. Stanley,
- D. Trathen, S. McCain, & M. Bryan
- 13. The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work by J. M. Gottman
- 14. Difficult Conversation by D. Stone, B. Patton, & S. Heen
- 15. 10 Great Dates to Energize
 Your Marriage by D. Arp & C. Arp
 16. Intimate Allies by D. Allender
 & T. Longman
- 17. The Mystery of Marriage by M. Mason
- 18. Incompatibility: Still Grounds
 for a Great Marriage by C. Snyder and
 B. Snyder
- 19. Building Your Mate's Self-Esteem by D. Rainey & B. Rainey
- ${\bf 20}\,.\,$ Sacred ${\bf Sex}$ by T. A. Gardner
- 21. The Marriage Builder by L. Crabb
- 22. Men and Women: Enjoying the Difference by L. Crabb

PARENTING

- 1. Habits of the Household by
- J. W. Earley
- 2. Boundaries with Kids by H. Cloud & J. Townsend
- 3. 5 Traits of a Healthy Family by
- G. Chapman
- 4. Sacred Parenting by G. L. Thomas
- 5. Common Sense Parenting by
- K. Hughes & B. Hughes
- 6. The Gift of the Blessing by
- G. Smalley, J. Trent, & K. Trent Stageberg
- 7. Hide and Seek by J. Dobson
- 8. The Heart of Anger by L. Priolo
- 9. Parenting Isn't for Cowards by
- J. Dobson
- 10. Dare to Discipline by J. Dobson
- 11. Soulcraft by D. Webster
- 12. Things that Go Bump in the Night
- by P. Warren & F. Minirth
- 13. The Father Book by F. Minirth,
- B. Newman, & P. Warren

SINGLES

- 1. 7 Myths about Singleness by
- S. Allberry
- 2. Whole in Christ: A Biblical Approach to Singleness, Edited by Owen Strachan by O. Strachan, D. Platt, & G. Castleberry
- 3. Kingdom Single: Living Complete and Fully Free by T. Evans
- Single Today: Conquer
 Yesterday's Regrets, Ditch
 Tomorrow's Worries, and Thrive Right

Where You Are by R. Wekenman

- 5. The Emotionally Healthy Leader: How Transforming Your Inner Life Will Deeply Transform Your Church, Team, and The World. by P. Scazzero
- 6. www.singleminded.community/ resources