

Every Day in Love

Insights and
Exercises

Session 1

Smart Loving



Ron and Kathy Feher
Fr Chuck Gallagher, S.J.

Session 1

Smart Loving

A proactive common sense approach to inviting more joy into our lives every day. This upbeat, three-hour session offers positive and affirming insights and fun yet thought provoking couple exercises to help us love smarter not harder by prioritizing being in love. Gain clarity and freedom from our common “dumb loving” mistakes including the elusive “unspoken expectation.” Set yourself up for success by filling out a special “gift registry” that will help you discover what makes your husband or wife feel most in love!

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Welcome to Every Day in Love



a parish program of enrichment and empowerment for married couples

It is with great enthusiasm that we welcome you to “Every Day in Love,” a uniquely positive, and refreshingly relevant program for married couples of all ages and experience. It is designed to create a sense of freedom and power over our own lives as well as a joyful realization that we really can live in love for a lifetime.

The program includes :

Session 1: Smart Loving - A proactive common sense approach to inviting more joy into our lives every day. You will set yourself up for success by filling out a special “gift registry” that will help you discover what makes your husband or wife feel most in love! A series of fun yet thought provoking couple exercises can help us love smarter not harder and gain clarity and freedom from our common “dumb loving” mistakes . Prioritizing being in love can make the work of marriage fun.

Session 2: The Passionate Couple - This session offers a paradigm shift from just getting along to being passionately in love, not just for our own sake but for the sake of those around us. It offers keen insights that bridge the gap between how men and women prefer to achieve intimacy and empowers us to become spiritual soul mates as a sacramental couple.

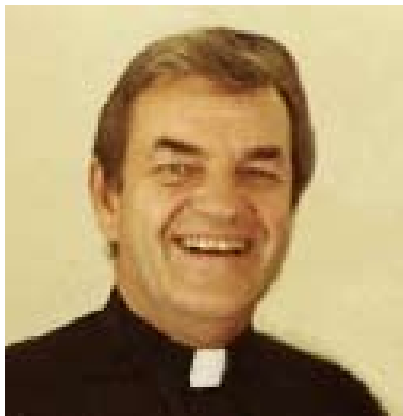
Session 3: Talking with Purpose - Offers simple strategies to help us avoid misunderstanding and teaches a powerful skill that can achieve an emotional connection, so that we can feel close in any situation. Learn practical strategies for reconciling hurts and freeing ourselves from outside pressures. The issue is not the issue; we are the issue!

Session 4: Living the Dream - Includes a fool proof process that can help a husband and wife to come together on any issue while still nurturing the tender atmosphere of being in love. This session can help us absolutely avoid ever having an argument and unleash an aura of deep respect in our marriage. Never fight to win because then you have to sleep with a loser! It will also guide us in discerning and directing our lives intentionally so that we can live in love the way we always dreamt we would.

Couples who experience all four sessions of Every Day in Love will have the tools plus the confidence and insight to use the right tool for the right job.

Your love for each other is a spectacular gift. May you embrace it whole-heartedly and pursue it passionately.

Ron and Kathy Feher



A Message from Fr Chuck

Whenever the church gets involved it seems that we get very solemn and serious. The Sacrament of Matrimony is different. Matrimony is a joyful sacrament. No other sacrament calls for such widespread celebration. Matrimony is a sexy sacrament. Sexual devotion is what brings us together in God's plan in the first place. Also, it is His wish that this devotion be the glue that joins us together forever. Even in human terms, sexual devotion is not ordinary; it is wondrous. The love of a man and a woman is awesome. Mighty poets have struggled to find words for it. When we experience it, it makes us breathless.

The love of a man and a woman is the most Christ-like love. "Husbands should love their wives as Christ Loves the Church" (Eph 5). Married love is the prime example of how Jesus loves the Church. Our sacramental couples are to be the model of this love for all of us in the church. No one can love like a couple can. Your love for one another is Godly. It is special. We know that you believe that with all your hearts, but we believe that you have no idea how Godly and special you really are. You are not just another couple among the millions who are married. You have been chosen by the Lord himself for a special mission to His chosen people. One of seven special ways Jesus makes Himself present to His people and empowers them is your unique Sacrament of Matrimony. Your sacrament is not just for your sake but also for the sake of the whole church. It is our privilege and our joy to join you in that mission.

Enjoy!

Fr. Chuck Gallagher, S.J.

Being "in love"

is not a stage you
grow out of!

It is not just about hormones or libidos. We can choose to be in love

We are just as much a man or a woman as when we first met; in fact, our masculinity and femininity is drawn out and developed in love relationships.

it is actually
a spirituality
we can grow into!

When we are "in love," we are "other-centered" rather than "self-centered," and that is a profoundly holy disposition of soul that releases unbridled joy!





Couple Exercise

It is “smart” to prioritize being in love

When we are approaching marriage we are very aware that being “in love” is a prerequisite for marriage, but we sometimes forget that that principle applies just as much after the wedding as it does before.

What’s more, if we are not “in love,” marriage becomes too much work, and we are doomed to fail or at least not live up to our potential. When we are in love, everything is easier. Nothing is hard when we’re in love, not spending time together nor talking nor even making love, nothing. So it becomes an economy of effort, and truly “smarter” to focus our attention on nurturing the atmosphere of being in love because it will clear the way for everything else.

The “perennial mutual attraction on man’s part to femininity and on woman’s part to masculinity” as St. Pope John Paul II calls it, is not only foundational and a pre-requisite to marriage, the absence of it is, according to marriage professionals (researchers, therapist, etc), the strongest indicator for divorce.

All the recent data indicates that couples are not divorcing just because they are conflicted as we once thought, but rather, because they are no longer ‘in love.’ Often, they still love and care for each other and are bonded as family, but they are not experiencing being in love, and that is the defining characteristic that distinguishes married love from all other kinds of love. We love a lot of people, but we are only “in love” with one.

The centrality and significance of being “in love,” is far more profound and important than most of us realize. The truth is that the special “chemistry” that worked to attract us to each other in the first place is more integral and central to our continuing relationship than we are often aware. Please, do not misunderstand, we are not talking about an immature stage of infatuation but rather stating categorically that mature conjugal love is intrinsically sexual because we are, and that chemistry that draws us to each other is a force for good.

Getting in touch with our story

When and where was your first kiss? What was the strongest feeling you had at that moment? Do you remember what you were thinking?

Remember when you got engaged. Where were you? What were you most in love with about your fiancé(e)? Who did you tell first? What were you feeling?

Cracking open the *Mystery* of being a man and woman in love

To help us pick apart the whole mystery of sexuality, and for the purpose of clarity, we will make a distinction between the “nature” and the “nurture” aspects of our masculine or feminine personhood.

The nature aspect is our physiological maleness or femaleness. It's hard wired and genetically coded. On the other hand, the nurture aspect is what's developed in relationships. It is what drawn out of us in all our relationships with the opposite sex. Each person's masculinity or femininity is as unique and unrepeatable as their relationships, so stereotypes are foolish.

Let's look first at the nature component, because over the past two decades, medical literature has exploded with new information. We now have new technologies they can literally observe and measure the differences, and there has been a whole avalanche of medical studies that show the hard facts of our physiological differences in brain structure, organ development, and hormone levels to name a few. Our maleness and femaleness is literally stamped on every cell of our bodies.



Stories of the

Heart

I remember how hurt I was when my husband did not rush to my side the first time I cried in our marriage. I expected him to respond the way that I would, and I interpreted his response as a lack of caring. I did not realize that he felt like a failure when I was upset or angry. In the face of failure, my husband withdraws inside himself or seeks to do something at which he can be successful as an escape. Once I let go of my expectation that he be drawn to me like a woman would tend to do, I did not take offense.

vive la *difference*

We are created intrinsically male or female which impacts our way of loving and our propensity toward specific virtues in relationship.

Male physiology is wired for action. Men sense direction using the hippocampus, spatial relations develop earlier in males, and surges to the limbic system can cause a man to literally spring into action in crisis. Even his retina is thicker with more “m ganglions” that track motion and direction through space. Men are testosterone loaded with a drive to conquer, go forward, provide, and protect. They naturally prefer to process emotions physically rather than verbally, and are gifted with a desire to build, win, and solve problems. Masculine virtue in relationship is often willing to sacrifice for the common good, do the greater physical labor, or take heroic risk. Because men generally see virtue in terms of strength and sin in terms of weakness, strength of character, honesty, competence, integrity, or principled behavior can be ways of loving for a man. He will tend to feel most loved when his strength is needed or appreciated and physical expressions of love are likely to be most natural and powerful for men.

Female physiology is finely tuned for human interactions. Her retina has more “p ganglions” to interpret facial expressions, color, and texture. Female hearing is more sensitive in the range of sound where human voices lie. Women are estrogen laden. They are gifted with a natural ability to nurture and are urgently drawn to respond to those in tears, in need, or in pain. Direct pathways from the amygdale to the language centers are formed earlier in girls making it easier for them to express their feelings verbally and to empathize. The female brain is globally organized with more connectors between the frontal lobes; so that, women can be naturally responsive and adjust to change. Feminine virtue tends to be personal and attentive in relationship. Because women see virtue in terms of beauty and sin in terms of ugliness or shame, they will likely express love through beautiful words, thoughtful or compassionate deeds, and by making things beautiful. They will typically feel most loved when they are listened to, understood, and cherished.

Foot Note:

1. “Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in more general ways, the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others.” Catechism of the Catholic Church, 2332.

Couple Exercise

The gift of Masculinity and Femininity

In general, **Sexuality** is our ability to be attracted out of ourselves into relationship with the opposite sex and our attractiveness to the opposite sex. When we are attracted, even in our celibate relationship, we tend to lead with our virtues, that is, what we like best about ourselves. It follows that each woman's unique **femininity** will be the sum total of all the virtue drawn out of her in relationship with all of the men and boys in her life. Likewise a man's **masculinity** can only be defined in terms of what is drawn out of him in relationship to the women and girls in his life. So, our masculinity or femininity is unique to each of us, as unique as our relationships are.

A couple's sexuality, their attraction and attractiveness to each other, is not just physical. Sexuality draws us into relationship with the other. It is other-centered rather than self-centered disposition, and we are at our best when we allow ourselves to be attracted. What's more, when the atmosphere between us is conscious of the other as "man" or "woman," the work of marriage becomes easier and even fun. We are naturally more tender, generous, attentive and responsive.



Pope Francis Says

Don't forget that your vocation is to render your wife more a woman! and your vocation is to render your husband more a man!

Work space for the Husband

When I think of my wife's beauty, what most comes to mind?.....
.....
.....

What is it about my wife's femininity that is most attractive to me today?

- Innocence
- Warmth
- Nurturing
- Girlish playfulness
- Generosity
- Empathy
- Creativity
- Passion
- Energy
- Thoughtfulness
- Sensitivity
- Gentleness
- Awareness of others
- Selflessness

Something else:.....
.....

Describe the effect that this aspect of her femininity has on you as a man?
.....
.....

Work space for the Wife

When I think of my husband's strength, what most comes to mind?.....
.....
.....

What is it about my husband's masculinity that is most attractive to me today?

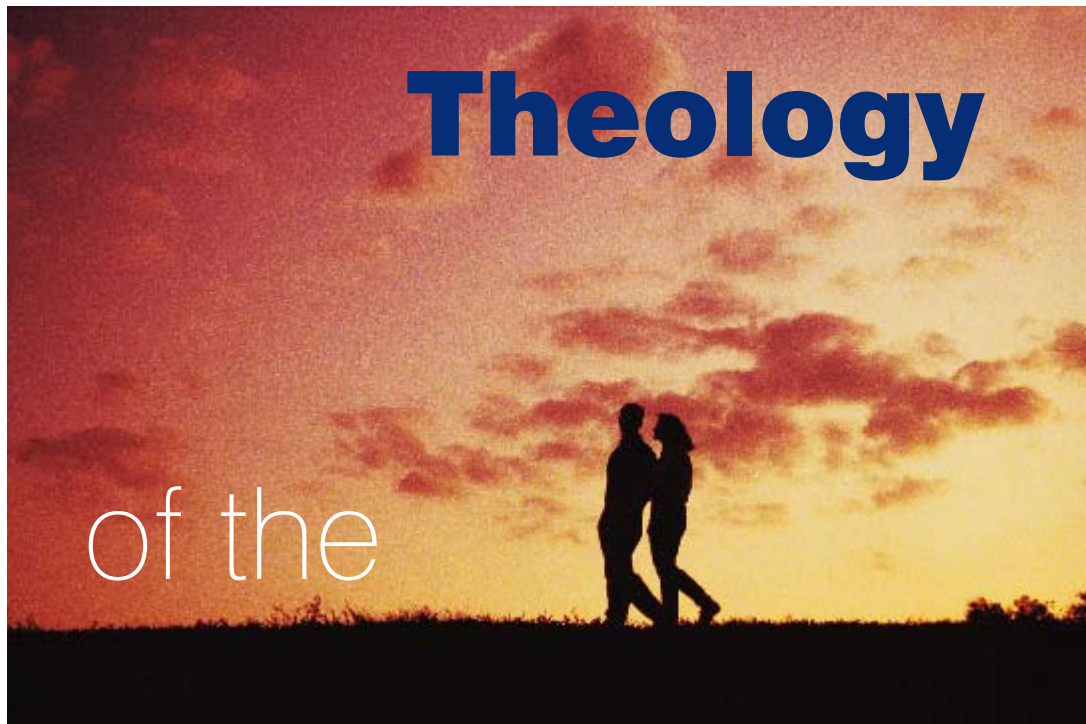
- Courage
- Willingness to sacrifice
- Desire to provide
- Constancy
- Pureness of heart
- Integrity
- Honesty
- Passion
- Wisdom
- Sense of humor
- Sensitivity
- Adventurousness
- Service to others
- Fun loving spirit

Something else:.....
.....

Describe the effect that this aspect of his masculinity has on you as a woman?
.....
.....

The

Theology



of the

...from the beginning the Creator
'made them male and female'
Mt19:3

Vive La Difference

The good news is that we are sexual by God's design. Our masculinity and femininity are completely integrated with our personhood. They are stamped into our spirituality, hardwired into our brains, completely ingrained in our personality and manifested in and through every part of our bodies. The even better news is that as sexual beings we are designed for intimate love relationships that are the image of God.

Saint Pope John Paul II writes:

"The fundamental fact of human existence at every stage of its history is that God 'created them male and female'. He always creates them in this way and they are always such." pg 74

"The constitution of the women is different as compared to the man. We know today that it is different in the deepest bio-physiological determinants. It is manifested externally only to a certain extent, in the construction and form of her body." pg 81

Body

Quotations are from John Paul II's Theology of the Body taken from *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan*, Daughters of St Paul, 1997

"As Genesis 2:23 already shows, femininity finds itself, in a sense, in the presence of masculinity, while masculinity is confirmed through femininity. Precisely the function of sex, which is in a sense, 'a constituent part of the person' (not just 'an attribute of the person'), proves how deeply man, with all his spiritual solitude, with the never to be repeated uniqueness of his person, is constituted by the body as 'he' or 'she'." pg 49

Affirmation

Consistent, sincere affirmation has the capacity to heal the wounds of inadequacy from which so many of us suffer. It communicates acceptability and loveliness. It lifts us up, and helps us feel better about ourselves. However, the power of affirmation is not limited to the recipient only. The person making the affirmation is also transformed. We become more optimistic, and we're more fun to be with. Looking for and affirming the goodness in the other lifts our spirit and cultivates an attitude of gratitude and generosity in us.

Affirmation is an attitude and a posture of the heart that is focused on the other's virtue and is filled with tender respect and gratitude for their love. As husbands and wives, one of the greatest gifts we can give each other is to communicate God's unconditional love and acceptance by intentionally affirming each other.

Criticism

Criticism damages the sense of worthiness in our husband or wife. It works against our mission to love and to communicate

his or her acceptability. When we criticize the other, we also damage our own spirit; instead of focusing on our blessings, we see only his or her inadequacies. Criticism saps the enjoyment out of our life, and is like a poison to a marriage.

We are certainly not saying that we should avoid correcting mistakes or confronting problems, but it is important to do so with an affirming spirit.

There is a distinct difference between criticism and correction. Criticism assigns a negative motive or implies an innate inadequacy in the other. It is aimed at the personhood and is negative. Correction is a simple truthful statement that assumes virtue or goodwill in the other and is aimed only at objective facts.

Even words that are intended to be simple correction can come across as criticism if we use a tone of voice that is accusatory, exasperated, or disrespectful. It is all in our attitude.

Rooting out criticism

Our job is to convince our spouse that he or she is loved and lovable. That is the good news of salvation, and so it is a vocation and a serious mission from the Lord to communicate His love to him or her. Criticism is not only counterproductive, it absolutely destroys the atmosphere of being in love. It can take 50 praises to make up for one criticism! The best way to root out our tendency to criticize is to proactively focus on affirming the other's goodness.

Please take an honest look at your own behavior. Ask yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 how much do I criticize:

My spouse.

Our children.

The people I work with.

People I do not even know.

Living in Love at Home

Daily Affirmation

Build your relationship on a steady diet of affirmation with this simple daily exercise. At least once a day, tell each other one thing that you appreciate or find endearing or attractive about the other.

When and how will I affirm my wife's femininity or my husband's masculinity on a daily basis?



Saint Pope John Paul II writes

“Love obliges the bridegroom-husband to be so solicitous for the welfare of the bride-wife. It commits him to desire her beauty and at the same time to appreciate this beauty and to care for it. Here it is a case of visible beauty, of physical beauty. The bridegroom examines his bride with attention as though in a creative, loving anxiety to find everything that is good and beautiful in her and which he desires for her.”

Theology of the Body, p 319

Sexuality, a resource for Loving

To the extent that we accept our own maleness and femaleness and develop our masculinity or femininity in authentic relationships, we become more aware of ourselves as whole persons and can give ourselves to the other as gift. When we see the other as a whole, integrated person, mind, body, and soul, we see the depth of who they are as a man or woman and we are attracted in love to that femininity or masculinity. What the Holy Father calls the “perennial attraction” of the male and female draws out our generosity and virtue or tenderness and our ability to love unselfishly. Our sexuality is revealed and developed in relationship. Sexuality is a resource because we are designed to live in love. God designed us to experience the joy of intimacy and the thrill of self donation not just when we are making love (certainly then) but also in our every interaction. Our love is inherently sexual because we are.

Saint Pope John Paul II writes:

“... Gn 2:23 ... seems to say that here is a body that expresses the person ... it can also be said that this ‘body’ reveals the living soul.”
pg 61

“The human body, oriented interiorly by the sincere gift of the person, reveals not only its masculinity or femininity on the physical plane, but reveals also such a value and such a beauty as to go beyond the purely physical dimension of sexuality.” pg 65

“... the perennial mutual attraction on man’s part to femininity and on woman’s part to masculinity is an indirect invitation of the body. But it is not lust in the sense of the word of Matthew 5:27-28” pg 148

“On the one hand, the eternal attraction of man toward femininity (cf. Gn 2:23) frees in him - or perhaps it should free - a gamut of spiritual-corporal desires of an especially personal and ‘sharing’ nature ... On the other hand, lust limits this gamut, obscuring the pyramid of values that marks the perennial attraction of male and female.” pg 149

“... the body is the expression of the spirit and is called, in the mystery of creation, to exist in the communion of persons in the image of God.” pg 125

“The body, which through its own masculinity and femininity right from the beginning helps both to find themselves in communion of persons, becomes in a particular way, the constituent element of their union, when they become husband and wife.” pg 50

“There is a deep connection between the mystery of creation, as a gift springing from love, and that beatifying ‘beginning’ of the existence of man as male and female, in the whole truth of their body and their sex, which is pure and simple truth of communion between persons.” pg 61

Sexual Affirmation

The Holy Father’s reflections on the Song of Songs teaches us to focus on what is most wonderful about our beloved, to keep our attention on what attracts us into love. Sexual affirmation draws us to each other in love. Our mission to love, to bring the other the “good news of salvation” that they are loved and lovable, is fundamentally a mission of sexual affirmation.

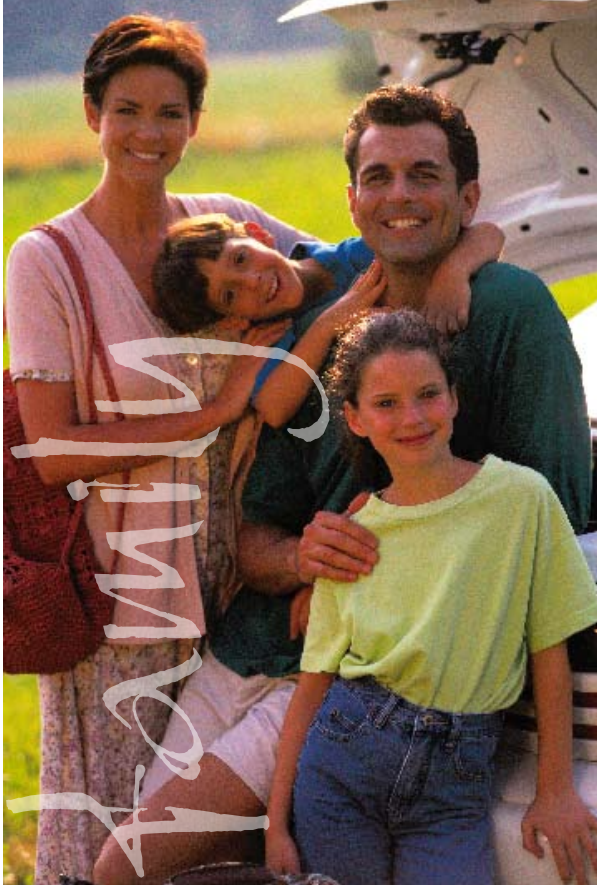
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“On seeing the woman created by God, man’s first words express wonder and admiration, even more, the sense of fascination (cf. Gn 2:23). A similar fascination - which is wonder and admiration - runs in fuller form through the verses of the Song of Songs ... Even a summary analysis of the text of the Song of Songs allows the language of the body to be heard expressing itself in that mutual fascination. The point of departure as well as the point of arrival for this fascination - mutual wonder and admiration - are in fact the bride’s femininity and the groom’s masculinity, in the direct experience of their visibility. The words of love uttered by both of them are therefore concentrated on the body, not only because it in itself constitutes the source of the mutual fascination, but it also, and above all, because on the body there lingers directly and immediately that attraction toward the other person, toward the other “I” - female or male - which in the interior impulse of the heart generates love. In addition, love unleashes a special experience of the beautiful which focuses on what is visible, but at the same time involves the entire person.” pg 369

In the Image of God

Quotations are from John Paul II’s Theology of the Body taken from *The Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan*, Daughters of St Paul, 1997



My Family of Origin

We often say that we marry into a family. This is certainly true in that we gain a whole new set of relatives, but it is also true in that we will be exposed to all the customs, traditions, and family values that are characteristic of the people to whom our spouse belongs.

More significantly, what either of us observed in our family in terms of how women relate to men and men relate to women can influence our attitudes toward the opposite sex and form pictures in our brain of what is “normal”. We all bring these unconscious expectations, notions of what is appropriate in terms of husband/wife interactions, into our marriage. We call this our “formation”.

Our formation was primarily influenced by our parents or the couple who was most present to us growing up. If they modeled a successful marriage, we tend to suppose that what they did would work for anyone, sort of a “one size fits all” approach to marriage. In truth, every relationship is unique and complex. Each individual needs to be loved differently. It is very helpful to discover how I think I am supposed to love you and compare that to how you actually want to be loved.

If our parents are divorced, we may lack confidence in our own ability to be successful or be so determined to do things differently that we may not be open to interactions that would be helpful. For example, if our parents fought terribly, we may avoid confrontation or conflict at all costs.

Patterns of pleasing, influencing, confronting, or showing affection were modeled for us one way or another, and unless we reacted negatively, we are likely to behave the same way when placed in a similar situation. That is why we

can find ourselves sounding just like our mother or father even though we never intended to.

If we come from very different formation there is likely to be tension or misunderstanding. For example, if Dad was the dominant figure and he made most of the major decisions in your home, you, as a man, might naturally take the lead and expect to have the final say. You might react very negatively should your wife take charge in a particular area. If she, on the other hand, had come from a home where dad was absent a great deal and Mom generally set the agenda, she might feel frustrated if not free to lead.

Part of marrying each other well is learning how to let go of what you think is ‘right’ or ‘normal’ in exchange for what makes the other feel most loved.

Even if we have similar formation and are generally comfortable with our patterns of interacting, it does not follow that it is the most effective way to love each other or in the best interest of the marriage. If you both had a mother who made the day-to-day decisions at home, you would both see that as normal, and it would be easy to fall into that pattern yourselves, she thinking that it was her job to make the decisions and he also thinking that it was her job. This would work against shared responsibility and could lead to loneliness and resentment.

We are generally content with whatever feels comfortable or “normal”, but being content can lead us to settle for less when there is greater potential for joy and intimacy.

It can be incredibly liberating to examine our own patterns of behavior in order to be free to choose to love more intentionally.

Prayer

Thank you Father
for our families who have taught us
how to love from birth.
Help each of us to learn how
to best bring your love
to the unique person with whom
we have chosen to begin a new family.

We ask this through Jesus, our Lord,
Amen.

Stories of the

Heart

My Mom is a peacemaker. Whenever there is disagreement, she is the first to seek reconciliation. In our marriage, I have adopted this same role. The problem is that we seem to be having the same arguments over and over. I feel really uncomfortable when there’s disharmony between us, but I realize that in my rush to restore peace, we bypass the important task of understanding what is dividing us. I’ve learned to tolerate my feelings enough to slow down our reconciliation; so that, we can fully explore the issue before we forgive and bring it to closure.

Freedom from *dumb* Loving

This following exercise is designed to help you see clearly the pictures in your brain, your perceptions or notions of what is normal. These are your unconscious expectations of the dynamic between a husband and a wife.

Even if your parents were extraordinarily happy in their marriage, what worked for them was unique to their relationship. It does not necessarily follow that their behavior patterns will model the best way for you to love your spouse. You have your own unique relationship with someone who is very special and very different from the person your Mom or Dad married. **The purpose of this exercise is to begin to set you free to love your spouse the way they most need and want to be loved.**

All of us experienced some amount of **Direct Formation**, the unconscious learned behavior we accepted without question or perhaps adopted without noticing, like an accent or gesture.

Oppositional Formation happens when you see something that turns you off or offends you and you do the opposite out of a kind of knee-jerk reaction. Neither are freely chosen behaviors. The ideal is to be free to choose to love the way the other wants to be loved.

This is not an objective, or analytical exercise. Just note your immediate reaction to each of the questions. Take your best guess at answering as many of the questions as possible.

If you come from an intact marriage, that is, Mom and Dad stayed together, answer the questions based on your **perceptions** of their relationship. We are not interested in what

may have actually been going on between them; that is their business, but what you **thought** was going on is your business because you carry that into your marriage. The reality is irrelevant because it is not reality that formed you, it was your **perception** of what was happening that formed your attitudes and expectations.

If your parent's were divorced or if you lost a parent early in life, answer the questions in terms of the general attitudes toward the opposite sex of the parent you lived with and his or her significant relationships with the opposite sex, a father, brother, friend, or boyfriend.

It may be that you married late in life, or that you are in a second marriage for one or both of you.

In the case of a second marriage, it is important to examine how what you observed in your family of origin affected your behavior in your first marriage. It can be enlightening and liberating to see what was really going on in the first marriage, what your reaction was to that dynamic, and it's subsequent effect on your present relationship. It will be very helpful to work on forgiveness and closure where necessary in order to be free to love whole-heartedly and to fully trust again.

Even if we left home a very long time ago there is no doubt that we took 'home' with us.



Stories of the Heart

One of the ways my mom loved my dad was to care for him when he was sick. She would cover him with a blanket, bring him soup, make sure he was comfortable and warm. This worked well for them. He just ate it up and reciprocated when she was sick or not feeling well. I thought it was a beautiful way to love and show compassion towards each other, and so I developed the attitude that a good wife cares for her husband with lavish attention when he is not up to par. As a result when my husband came down with a bad cold I would fuss over him and he hated it! He never saw his dad sick, and being a strong, autonomous and resilient man he did not appreciate any behavior toward him that could be construed as being babied. He insisted that he could take care of himself and that I need not wait on him. I did not realize that doing these things that came natural to me made my husband feel less of a man and hurt him because he didn't want me to see him as weak..Lavishing TLC on dad when he was sick really worked for mom in loving dad but it certainly does not work for us.

Preparation

What was the situation in your family of origin: Do you come from an intact marriage, single parent, widowed, divorced or re-married?

What was the most significant marital relationship during your years growing up?.....

Keep these relationships in mind as you examine your formation for marriage in your homework.

If you were raised by a single parent, think about his or her attitude about the opposite sex or comments they may have made about men or women in general.

Unpacking our Formation

Conflict

- How did dad handle conflict with mom? Did he confront or did he withdraw? Or did he stuff it until it built up and he exploded?
- What do you do? The same or the opposite? How is that working for you?
- What was mom's pattern in conflict with dad? Did she withdraw or confront?
- What do you do? How does that play out with your husband's pattern?
- Did you ever see your parents make up? Ask forgiveness of each other?

Control and irresponsibility

- Who was the center of life in your home growing up, mom or dad?
- Who made the decisions?
- Who had the final say?

Affection

- Were your parents physically affectionate in public? Did you like? Or were they very reserved? Did you think that was normal and appropriate?
- How do you behave with your husband or wife in public? Is that his or her heart's desire?

Dad's attitude towards mom

- Did dad place mom on a pedestal? Did he see mom as mysterious?
- Did he try to please her? Keep her happy?
- Did he bombard her with logic or insist on having the final word?
- Was he always right?
- Did he give up and never try to influence her, allowing her to control?
- Was he absent? Withdrawn? Uninvolved with mom and the things that were important to her?
- How personally communicative was your father with your mother?
- Did he change diapers, bathe, dress, or groom the children?
- Did he pray with, read to, or help the kids with school work?
- What effect has this had on me and the way I behave in my marriage.

Mom's attitude towards dad

- What was your mother's attitude towards your father? Was he the boss did she often defer to him?
- Was he a big kid that broke her rules? Did she tell him what to do? Did she have the attitude that mother knows best?
- Did she think it was her job to shape him up?
- Was dad charming but irrelevant in her life?
- Was she very independent?
- What has been your reaction to that? Have you adopted the same attitude or reacted oppositionally?.

Parent of the opposite sex.

Husbands: Did I marry someone very much like my mother or the opposite of my mother?

Wives: Did I marry someone very much like my father or the opposite of my father?

Husbands:

Were you your mom's favorite? Could you charm her and get away with anything? Did she encourage you to be independent?

As a result do you tend to be focused outside of the home or uninvolved with household chores.

Was mom very demanding? Critical or nagging? Has that caused you to be self protective or withdrawn?

Wives:

Were you daddy's girl? In his eyes could you do no wrong?

As a result do you always need to be right? Do you bristle at correction?

Reflection Point

Husbands

Did you marry someone just like your Mom or someone quite different?

What do you expect of your wife because of the way your Mom showed or failed to show love to you?

Wives

Did you marry someone just like your Dad or someone quite different?

What do you expect of your husband because of the way your Dad showed or failed to show love to you?

Stories of the

Heart

Wife:

I am and have always been a daddy's girl. I am very close to my dad and there is a lot of affection between us. Growing up he was incredibly patient and kind to me, especially when I was struggling with something in my teenage years. He would sit and listen to me with the patience of a saint for hours if I had a problem or conflict.

That sounds wonderful, but how would you like to be married to someone who expects you to sit and listen to her with the patience of a saint for hours as she processes and analyzes everything? Not so much, right? Add to that, I married someone very different from my dad in some ways. My husband is quick and decisive, assertive and action oriented, yet I can expect him to walk me through a long, drawn out process. It's not only unrealistic, but unfair, and it can lead me to fail to affirm his unique special talents and gifts. My husband may be a lot like my dad in other ways but, he is not my dad, and he deserves to be loved for the unique and unrepeatable man that he is.

Husband:

Let's face it I was mom's favorite. I don't mind admitting that I am a big Momma's boy...which our five month old son has seemed to adopt ☐ Growing up, my mom was very generous with all of us. She was the one that made sure we had all our needs met and never demanded anything of us. On weekends, she just wanted us to go out and play. When she gave me a head or back rub. She never expected one in return. It was a great childhood!

I love my mom and I'm very grateful for her. We are still extremely close and affectionate, but to be honest, her undemanding and generous attitude toward me has had unintended negative consequences in my marriage. For example, it's easy for me to accept a massage from my wife without ever offering to give her one in return. Which leaves her feeling uncared for and taken for granted.

Also, my wife would much rather I pull my weight with the work at home than go out and play on weekends.



Smart Loving

Loving by intention

Every person experiences love in a unique way. Some gestures of love will more powerfully communicate love to you than others. For example, some people feel close and connected when they can physically touch the other person. Others demonstrate love through words of affirmation or affection, acts of service or thoughtfulness, or by spending time in intimate conversation. Still others feel deeply loved and connected through eye contact or other body language.

Both you and your spouse will naturally tend to give love in the way that you most like to receive it. However, it is unlikely that you both will experience love in exactly the same way. In order to be effective in your efforts to love, you will need to learn how your husband or wife wants and needs to be loved.

When you understand what is important to your husband or wife, you can then freely choose how to love: you can give love in exactly the way he or she best experiences it.

This is “Smart” loving because it is most effective.

Stories of the

Heart

My Dad loved to have company, and one of the ways that my Mom would romance my Dad was to provide lavish meals and an immaculate house for their guests. Dad would beam with pride and become playful and affectionate and shower her with affirmation. When I got married I naturally did the same thing, often staying up late cooking and cleaning to prepare for guests, but my husband would be annoyed and distant. It did not make *him* feel loved. I soon learned that he would prefer that I snuggle up on the couch and watch a ball game or come to bed. It seemed so simple, yet when we spend time together he is overjoyed; he delights in my presence and feels especially loved and close to me.

Footnote:

1. The term “Smart Loving” was originally coined by Byron and Francine Pirola and is also the title of a series of articles on love and relationships (see www.smartloving.org)

Discovering how to Love You

Falling in love is a conversion experience. Most of us start out as self-centered individuals and suddenly find ourselves caring more about someone else’s happiness than we do our own. Some of the joy that we associate with being in love is really that freedom to be outside of ourselves, caught up in the goodness of the other. Their strength or beauty may attract us, but to love with an authentic other-centered love we need to know the other. You can not love someone effectively until you know them well.

Think about your husband or wife:

- When is he or she most joyful?
- What do they long for or desire most?
- What do they worry about or fear the most?
- When does he feel most manly, or she feel most feminine?
- When does he or she experience self doubt or feelings of inadequacy?
- When do you think that he or she feels most loved?
- When does he or she feel most appreciated? Respected?
- When does he or she feel most needed? Trusted?

Close your eyes and ask the Lord to show you what your husband or wife most needs. Is it peace, hope, attention, appreciation, trust, intimacy, or a sense of success in loving you? How can you bring that to him or her?

Sexuality and prayer can fuel our other-centered energy, but it also takes learning what makes the other feel loved and lovable. When we choose to love someone on their terms, it is truly loving and life giving.

Couple Exercise

Love Languages

Each of us has a preferred Love Language, that is, the way that we most easily experience love and tend to express it. When someone relates to us in our primary Love Language, we will experience strong positive emotions such as feeling connected, nurtured, affirmed, energized. Gestures of love made to us in a different Love Language may not be readily recognized nor appreciated as having a loving intention. Love languages can even apply to celibate relationships in the family or among friends.

The following exercise is an adaptation of Gary Chapman's *"The Five Love Languages"*.

Write

1. Which way of expressing love do I appreciate most. Rank order the following (if I could only have one, which would it be? If I could have two? etc.)

- **Words**
- **Touch**
- **Deeds**
- **Gifts**
- **Time spent together**

If your preferred Love Language is not obvious to you:

- a) recall a recent time when you felt particularly loved, nurtured, connected with your spouse or a loved one. What did they do to make you feel loved?
- b) identify the ways you most often express love to others. How do you show someone that you love them?

2. Which Love Language do you think your spouse ranked number 1?

.

3. Give specific examples of what behaviors you would include in your most preferred Love Languages.

4. Reflect on your childhood. To whom in your family did you feel closest? What did they do that made you feel loved? How did your family typically show others that they cared about them?

Share

- How do your preferred Love Languages (Numbers 1 and 2) compare with your spouse's?
- How does your ranking compare with what was normal in your family growing up?

Summing Up

How my *Spouse* likes to be loved

Make a note of your spouse's preferred Love Languages:

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

The Theology of the



The Nuptial Meaning of the Body

We give ourselves as “Gift” to each other

Saint Pope John Paul II
writes:

“Man or woman, in the context of their beatifying beginning, are free with the freedom of the gift. To remain in the relationship of the ‘sincere gift of themselves’ and to become such a gift for each other, through the whole of their humanity made of femininity and masculinity (also in relation to the perspective which Genesis 2:24 speaks of) they must be free precisely in this way. We mean here freedom especially as mastery of oneself (self-control). From this aspect, it is indispensable that man may be able to ‘give himself’ in a ‘sincere giving’ of himself ... This freedom makes possible and qualifies the nuptial sense of the body.” pg 64

“We know from the analysis of Genesis 2:23-25 that the human body ... ‘from the beginning’... has a nuptial character. It is capable of expressing the love with which the man-person becomes a gift, thus fulfilling the deep meaning of his existence.” pg 125

“‘Christ set us free in order that we might remain free’, precisely in the sense that he manifested to us the ethical (and theological) subordination of freedom to charity, and that he linked freedom with the commandment to love.” pg 197

Saint Pope John Paul II writes:

“... man willed by the Creator in this way right from ‘the beginning’ can find himself only in the disinterested giving of himself ... This ... helps us to understand even more the nuptial meaning of the body. This meaning seems inscribed in the original condition of man and woman (according to Genesis 2:23-25) and in particular in the meaning of their original nakedness. As we have noted, at the root of their nakedness is the interior freedom of the gift – the disinterested gift of one self. This gift enables them, both man and woman, to find one another, since the Creator willed each of them ‘for his (her) sake’ (cf GS 24).” pg 64

“Happiness and innocence are part of the framework of the communion of persons ... We can understand that original innocence as a particular ‘purity of heart’ which preserves an interior faithfulness to the gift according to the nuptial meaning of the body ... the link which, in the analysis of man’s beginning, can be seen between his innocence (purity of heart) and his happiness.” pg 69

“... man’s and woman’s way of existing as persons ... is in a mutual ‘for,’ which can and must serve the building up of unity of communion in their mutual relations. This happens also on the basis of what can be defined as the sexual need, according to the objective dimension of human nature. Such is the fundamental meaning characteristic of the perennial and reciprocal attraction of masculinity and femininity.” pg 151-152

Quotations are from John Paul II’s *Theology of the Body* taken from the “*Theology of the Body: Human Love in the Divine Plan*”, Daughters of St Paul, 1997

A Gift

Registry

For the Very Married

In marriage, the most intimate relationship, there are specific expressions of love unique to individual couples, **behaviors or words that make us feel “in love” and express love in a uniquely sexual and romantic context.** Some such love gestures will be more powerfully effective at helping your husband or wife feel “in love.” These gestures nurture the atmosphere of being in love and are therefore even more significant and impactful than our celibate love languages at helping us to prioritize being in love in marriage.



Summing Up

What makes my *Spouse* feel most in love

Make a note of his or her two most important items of the gift registry:

1.
2.

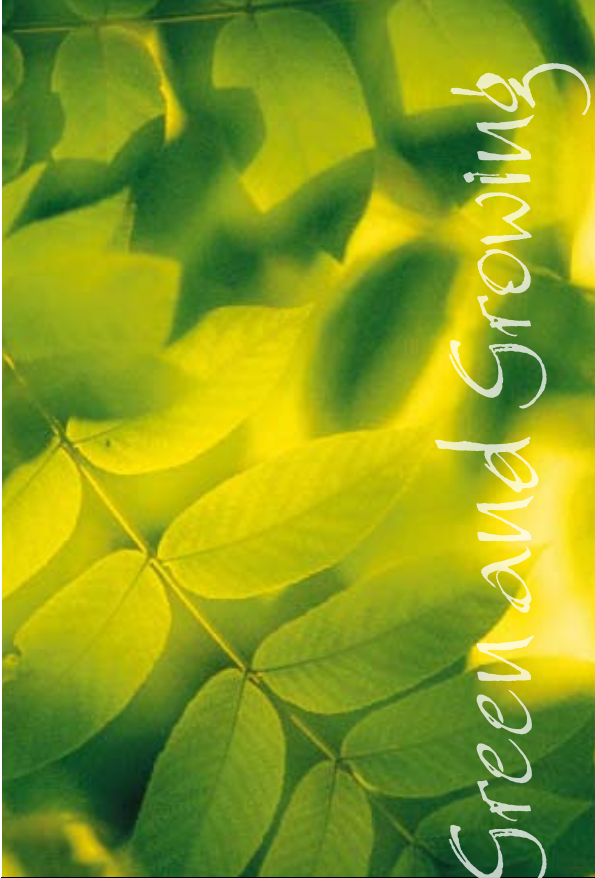
Remember that your job is to convince your spouse that he or she is loved and lovable. It is pro-active and unilateral. No need to evaluate if he or she is doing their job. Put your expectations only on yourself, never on the other.

Which gestures help you to feel the most in love?

Read through the entire list. Then go back and circle the gestures that make you feel most “in love”. What would you most want your husband or wife to give you as a gift? Please rank order your top 5. Ask yourself, if I could only have one, what would it be? Two?

- Eye Contact, giving full and undivided attention
- Winks, tickles, and tender touches throughout the day
- Dancing
- Words affirming my attractiveness to you
- Playful flirting
- Dressing up for each other (visual attractiveness)
- Speaking the meaning and the message of lovemaking
- Showing up naked
- Showering together
- Sexy love notes or love letters
- Brush bys (deliberate body contact while passing in close proximity, e.g., in the hall, kitchen, or bathroom)
- Snuggling on the couch and kissing, or even heavy petting
- Praying together; sharing your relationship with God with me
- Making love outside of the bedroom (no one home)
- Praying while making love together
- Playing our song
- Bringing home flowers
- Date nights without the kids
- Candlelight dinners
- Verbal Intimacy, sharing feelings, hopes, and fears, tender words of affection
- Light hearted teasing and laughter
- Other

When you finish identifying your own, try to guess what your husband or wife’s preferred gestures might be. Share your answers with him or her, and record their answers.



Living in Love at Home

When and how will I initiate one or more of my husband or wife's favorite conjugal love gestures daily this week?

Smart Loving at Home

All the "Smart Loving" exercises you have done during this session are in many ways the "Gift Registry" of your marriage.

They can help you to give the gift of yourself in the ways that will be most meaningful to your husband or wife.

The Theology of the body

Intentionally choosing to love the other the way that they most need and want to be loved is not only "smart" because it is effective, it is also holy because it is "other-centered." It is authentic love and therefore bears the fruit of great joy.

Saint Pope John Paul II writes:

"... man willed by the Creator in this way right from 'the beginning' can find himself only in the disinterested giving of himself ... This ... helps us to understand even more the nuptial meaning of the body. This meaning seems inscribed in the original condition of man and woman (according to Genesis 2:23-25) and in particular in the meaning of their original nakedness. As we have noted, at the root of their nakedness is the interior freedom of the gift – the disinterested gift of one self. This gift enables them, both man and woman, to find one another, since the Creator willed each of them 'for his (her) sake' (cf GS 24)." pg 64

Decoding the TOB

The "Nuptial" or "Spousal" meaning of the body is essentially that we are designed as male and female to be "gift" to each other.

In the words of John Paul II, "The human body... contains 'from the beginning' the 'Spousal' attribute that is the power to express love, precisely that love in which the human person becomes a gift and through this gift fulfills the very meaning of his being and existence."¹

"Man and woman are free to become a gift, each to the other, through their whole humanity made of femininity and masculinity."¹

¹Theology of the Body, General Papal Audience, January 16, 1980

"Happiness and innocence are part of the framework of the communion of persons ... We can understand that original innocence as a particular 'purity of heart' which preserves an interior faithfulness to the gift according to the nuptial meaning of the body ... the link which, in the analysis of man's beginning, can be seen between his innocence (purity of heart) and his happiness." pg 69

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