

the seven principles for making marriage work worksheets

The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work Worksheets: Your Guide to a Stronger Relationship

Are you and your partner ready to invest in a stronger, more fulfilling marriage? Feeling a little lost or overwhelmed by the challenges of long-term commitment? You're not alone! Many couples find themselves searching for practical tools and strategies to navigate the ups and downs of married life. This blog post provides you with exactly that: a deep dive into the seven principles for making marriage work, along with actionable worksheets to help you apply these principles to your own relationship. We'll break down each principle, offer insightful explanations, and provide downloadable resources to guide you on your journey towards a healthier, happier marriage. Let's get started!

Understanding the Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work

Dr. John Gottman, a renowned relationship researcher, identified seven principles crucial for building and maintaining strong, lasting marriages. These aren't just abstract ideas; they're practical tools you can use to enhance communication, resolve conflicts, and foster intimacy. These principles, when understood and applied consistently, can transform your relationship from one characterized by conflict and distance to one filled with love, respect, and mutual understanding.

1. Enhance Your Love Maps: Know Your Partner Inside and Out

This principle emphasizes the importance of understanding your partner deeply – their hopes, dreams, fears, and daily experiences. A "love map" is essentially a mental roadmap of your partner's inner world. It's about going beyond surface-level knowledge and truly understanding their perspectives, values, and emotional landscape.

Worksheet Idea: Create a joint worksheet with sections like "My Partner's Dreams," "My Partner's Fears," "My Partner's Favorite Things," and "Things I Admire About My Partner." Regularly revisit and update this map to ensure it stays current.

2. Nurture Fondness and Admiration: Focus on the Positive

Relationships thrive on appreciation. This principle encourages you to actively look for and express your fondness and admiration for your partner. Focusing on positive qualities and actions, even small ones, strengthens the bond and combats negativity bias.

Worksheet Idea: Create a gratitude journal specifically for your partner. Each day, write down three things you appreciate about them. Review this journal regularly to remind yourself of the positive aspects of your relationship.

3. Turn Toward Each Other Instead of Away: Prioritize Connection

In busy lives, it's easy to drift apart. This principle highlights the importance of responding to your partner's bids for connection, however small they may seem. A bid can be anything from a simple question to a shared glance. Turning towards your partner shows that you value their presence and their attempts to connect with you.

Worksheet Idea: For a week, track each bid for connection initiated by you and your partner. Note whether the bid was turned towards or away from. This exercise provides valuable insight into your communication patterns.

4. Let Your Partner Influence You: Embrace Compromise and Collaboration

Healthy relationships involve give and take. This principle emphasizes the importance of being open to your partner's influence and willing to compromise. It's about finding mutually satisfying solutions and respecting each other's needs and opinions.

Worksheet Idea: Use a conflict resolution worksheet to collaboratively brainstorm solutions to recurring disagreements. Focus on understanding each other's perspectives before suggesting solutions.

5. Solve Your Solvable Problems: Develop Effective Conflict Resolution Skills

Conflicts are inevitable in any relationship. This principle focuses on developing effective strategies for resolving disagreements constructively. It's about approaching conflicts with a willingness to understand, compromise, and find mutually acceptable solutions.

Worksheet Idea: Create a "Conflict Resolution Plan" worksheet. Outline steps for identifying the problem, expressing emotions calmly, listening actively, brainstorming solutions, and agreeing on a plan of action.

6. Overcome Gridlock: Identify and Address Unsolvable Issues

Not all problems have easy solutions. This principle acknowledges the existence of "gridlocked" issues – deeply entrenched disagreements that seem impossible to resolve. The key is to learn how to manage these issues and find ways to live with them without letting them destroy the relationship.

Worksheet Idea: Use a worksheet to identify your gridlocked issues and brainstorm ways to manage them. Focus on understanding the underlying needs and desires driving the conflict, rather than focusing solely on finding a "solution."

7. Create Shared Meaning: Build a Strong Foundation

This principle highlights the importance of shared goals, values, and experiences. It's about building a strong foundation of mutual understanding and purpose that binds you together.

Worksheet Idea: Create a "Shared Meaning" vision board or worksheet. Collectively brainstorm your shared values, long-term goals, and dream experiences.

Conclusion: Embracing the Journey to a Stronger Marriage

Applying these seven principles isn't a quick fix; it's an ongoing process of growth and mutual understanding. By using these worksheets and actively engaging in the principles, you'll pave the way for a more fulfilling and resilient marriage. Remember that seeking professional guidance from a therapist or counselor can be incredibly beneficial, especially when navigating complex relationship challenges.

FAQs

1. Are these worksheets suitable for all couples, regardless of their relationship stage? Yes, these principles and accompanying worksheets can benefit couples at any stage of their marriage, from newlyweds to long-term partners. The focus is on continuous growth and improvement.

1. How often should we complete these worksheets? The frequency depends on your needs. Some worksheets, like the gratitude journal, can be done daily. Others, like the conflict resolution plan, can be revisited as needed. Regular review and reflection are key.
1. What if we disagree on how to use these worksheets? Disagreements are opportunities for communication. Discuss your concerns openly and collaboratively find a way to approach the worksheets that feels comfortable and productive for both of you.
1. Can these worksheets help if we are facing serious marital problems? While these worksheets offer valuable tools, they may not be sufficient for addressing severe marital problems. Seeking professional help from a therapist or counselor is highly recommended in such cases.
1. Where can I find the downloadable worksheets mentioned in this article? Due to the complexity of creating tailored and legally sound downloadable resources, we encourage you to adapt the suggestions outlined in this blog post to create your own personalised worksheets. A simple notebook and pen will suffice! Alternatively, you can search online for readily available marriage workbooks or templates based on Gottman's seven principles.

Additional Resources

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