

Friendship Matters

MARRIAGE IN MOTION ▶ Module 3: An Epic Friendship

3.2

MODULE 3, LESSON 2

SUMMARY

- The happiest of marriages are based on the deepest of friendships. All friendships have this in common: trust, loyalty, accountability, truth, depth, common interests, history, future. Best friends find comfort in the vulnerable places of their life. They share secrets and adventures but most importantly best friends play.
- Dr. Gottman's theory holds that the marital friendship is made up of three core elements. "Enhance Love Maps," "Share Fondness & Admiration," "Turn Towards."

Love Maps: "I know you."

The best way to get to know your partner is to ask questions.

Fondness & Admiration: "I like you."

Look for things to appreciate about your partner and say it out loud.

Turning Toward: "I'll be there for you."

Look for ways to show up for your partner and demonstrate that they are important to you.

- Stan Tatkin's basic thesis is that human beings are biologically wired for love and the best way to honor that wiring is through a marital friendship where partners serve as the primary "go-to" people for one another and help one another put the "security seeking" parts of their brain to rest.

It is amazing to be touched by the person who understands your mind, acknowledges your flaws and loves your soul.

"The falling in love part is easy. It's the keeping it together part that takes consistent choices day after day. To do the work. To show up for your partner and for yourself. It's not that relationships are hard, it's that they require effort. Choose to make one."

— MARK GROVES

ACTIVITIES

This lesson is about how to treat your spouse like your best friend. Dr. Gottman’s theory is that the marital friendship is made up of three core elements:

1) Enhance Love Maps; 2) Share Fondness & Admiration; and 3) Turn Towards.

To be clear, a friendship with your partner means that you “know them,” “like them,” and “will be there for them.” These activities are intended to help strengthen each element of your friendship.

1 I KNOW YOU

Have you ever seen the Newlywed Game? It is an old game show that pits couples against one another — asking each couple to answer personal questions about their relationship, in order to see which couple knows their partner best. In the game, questions range from historical facts about childhood, likes and dislikes, habits, embarrassing moments and more. Some couples on the game show have known each other for decades, while others are newlyweds.

Ultimately —it never really mattered how long a couple had been together. The couples who won the game were the ones who asked a lot of questions and remained curious about their partner throughout their marriage.

This exercise is intended to help get to know your partner better — even if you’ve been married for years.

Be sure to set aside sufficient time to ask each other the questions below. Take turns answering the question before moving onto the next.



You may already know the answer to these questions. If so, ask your own follow up questions to help glean information you may not know about your partner.

1. Who was the most influential person in your life? Why? How did they impact you?
2. If you could get a “do-over” and had a chance to go back in time to change an event or circumstance, what would you change?
3. What are you most proud of over the course of your entire life? This year? Today?
4. Have you ever had a recurring dream? If so, what was it? What do you think it means?
5. What is one thing you think I don’t know about you?

2 I LIKE YOU

The previous Activity Sheet asked you to begin a daily habit of gratitude, which falls perfectly in line with this element of friendship: "I like you."

Continue this process of naming and expressing, daily, at least one character or personal trait, skill, or passion you are grateful for in your partner. Share these each day. Here are more questions to help you scan your relationship for the positives:

1. What have I learned from my partner?
2. What does my partner do that makes my life easier?
3. How does my partner challenge me?
4. How has my partner encouraged me to grow?
5. How has my partner supported me?
6. How has my partner been there for me when I was weak or vulnerable?
7. How has my partner shown selflessness?
8. What about my partner am I physically attracted to?
9. How has my partner cared for me and the people I love?
10. What does my partner do everyday that contributes to our well-being?

3 I'M HERE FOR YOU

Your actions speak louder than words when it comes to turning toward your partner in small but meaningful ways... day in and day out.

You can build your marital friendship by consistently showing up for your partner and supporting their needs and wants.

BE AWARE:

This isn't so much an 'exercise' as it is a state of mind. A context. This week, be sensitive and aware of your partner's requests and make an extra effort to turn toward them in any capacity. **If you sense a need, or request... turn into it, and try and address it. For example:**

Can you empty the dishwasher?

Sure thing, let me finish up this email first.

Honey, I can't find the dog leash.

I'll grab it, I left it outside on the porch.

I am so overwhelmed at work.

I'm sorry honey, what can I do to help you feel more at ease right now?

I didn't sleep a wink last night. I'm so exhausted.

How about if I take the kids out to a movie this afternoon to give you an opportunity for a long nap?

My mom called this afternoon and needs a ride to the airport.

Would you like me to ride along so you have company for the ride home?

I miss you.

I miss you too babe, let's schedule a date night to get away and reconnect.



TAKEAWAY

What was your #1 takeaway from this lesson? Describe any breakthrough(s):