

# Marriage & Family

## Treatment Planning & Divorce Proofing

### Wise Counsel

There are many things to be done in the process of divorce proofing, and it is more than just avoiding the bad. Divorce proofing is about building strength. It is about actively striving to build a strong union that can withstand the problems and pressures that the world will at times throw at one's marriage.

### Action Plan

#### *Have a Dream for Your Marriage*

All couples need to have a "Dream" for their marriage. Without a dream, there is less reason to make the relationship work. There are three sides of love that need attention:

- A. Passion. Passion is a side of love that involves both the sensual and the physical needs of both marriage partners. Often overlooked, it is an extremely important aspect of keeping the marriage bond strong.
- B. Intimacy. Intimacy has many faces. It involves the emotional and relational aspect of one's being. Marriage partners who are strong on intimacy often describe their spouse as being their best friend or even their soul mate.
- C. Commitment. Commitment in marriage is a willful decision to provide unconditional love and support no matter what the circumstances. Ask the couple if they have made such a commitment. Though they may not remember, they probably have once when they agreed to love and cherish the other in sickness and in health. Have them re-dedicate to the vows they have already made.

#### *Love Banking*

Love banking means to put more emotional deposits into a relationship than emotional withdrawals. Research shows couples need about 4-20 positive interactions to outweigh one negative interaction.

#### *Action-Character*

To have a secure and healthy relationship, marriage partners should display the following positive characteristics: forgiveness, patience, kindness, love of truth, loyalty at all costs, and faith in partner.

To have a secure and healthy relationship, marriage partners should NOT display the following negative characteristics: jealousy, envy, selfishness, irritability, grudges, and disrespect.

## ***Love Styles***

Gary Chapman has identified five love languages. Each person has a primary and a secondary way that they best give and receive love and affection: (1) Words of love and encouragement; (2) Acts of service, (3) Time; (4) Gifts; and (5) Physical touch and closeness.

Marriage partners need to be aware of their own and their partner's love style. There are 3 questions to be asked: (1) How do you show love to your partner?; (2) How does your partner show love to you?; (3) How would you like your partner to show love to you?

## ***Areas of Attention***

Relationships are work. Both partners must invest time and effort into the relationship. Four areas to pay attention are:

- A. Significant events (traditions, anniversaries, holidays)
- B. Needs (small and large)
- C. Moments (appreciating the moment more than the past or the future)
- D. Companionship (communication, closeness and partnership in everything)

## ***God-centered***

God needs to be seen as the center of the relationship. God needs to be the monolithic unmovable force to hold on to when everything else is fleeting away.

## ***Accept Influence***

Both partners need to be able to accept influence in marriage. Sources of influence include: spouse, marriage mentors, preacher, trusted friends, professional counselor

Material taken from the American Association of Christian Counselors.