

## SPONSOR COUPLE PROGRAM - SESSION ONE

### **EXPECTATIONS ABOUT OUR MARRIAGE**

The following questions can be helpful in clarifying and sharing what you expect of your future life together. First, complete the statements and answer the questions as thoughtfully as you can. After that, you and your fiancé will spend time together comparing your answers. Remember, there are no right or wrong answers. Simply express what you really think and feel.

### **FAMILY OF ORIGIN**

The most influential system in anyone's life is their family of origin. The way members of a family interact with each other teaches us how we will interact in our own family system. What affects one member, affects the whole. Our perceptions of what is "normal or logical" are a result of being raised in a particular manner. Feelings, moods, views of life, a sense of right and wrong, an internal sense of what is important and what is not are all shaped by the family of origin.

1. How would you describe your parent's marriage?

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What aspects would you like to duplicate?

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What aspects would you like to avoid?

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2. If we come from different backgrounds or have had dissimilar role models, how do I see that affecting our marriage?

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3. What similarities and/or qualities, and behaviors do you see in your fiancé that also see in your mother or father?

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## A HEALTHY FAMILY

## MY FAMILY OF ORIGIN

	Didn't do this well		Did this well sometimes		Did this well
Communicates and listens	1	2	3	4	5
Affirms and supports one another	1	2	3	4	5
Teaches respect for one another	1	2	3	4	5
Develops a sense of trust	1	2	3	4	5
Has a sense of play and humor	1	2	3	4	5
Exhibits a sense of shared responsibility	1	2	3	4	5
Teaches a sense of right and wrong	1	2	3	4	5
Has a strong sense of family in which ritual and traditions abound	1	2	3	4	5
Has a balance of connectedness and independence among the members	1	2	3	4	5
Has a shared religious core	1	2	3	4	5
Respects the privacy of one another	1	2	3	4	5
Values service to others	1	2	3	4	5
Fosters family table time and conversation	1	2	3	4	5
Shares leisure time	1	2	3	4	5
Admits to and seeks help with problems	1	2	3	4	5
Expresses affection for each other	1	2	3	4	5

## MONEY

1. Of the two of us \_\_\_\_\_ will be responsible for handling the budget and paying bills on time.

2. I think this arrangement will work best for the two of us because

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3. I think I ought to be able to spend \_\_\_\_\_ dollars without consulting my spouse.

4. If my fiancé makes most or all of the money for us, how will I feel about using money he/she worked for?

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**CAREER**

1. My fiancé's career plans are

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2. How do I see my career plans affecting my fiancé's career?

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3. How will I react if my fiancé gets a promotion that requires us to move to a different city or state?

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4. How might the birth of a child affect our career plans or goals?

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**SEXUALITY**

1. If my spouse wants to make love and I don't, how will I express my feelings lovingly without rejecting him/her?

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2. In what ways do you and your fiancé express your feelings to each other non-verbally (without using words)?

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**RELIGION**

1. How do I describe my experience with religion when growing up?

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2. As far as I am concerned, religion will/will not have a real importance in our marriage. Why?

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**CHILDREN**

1. When do I want to begin a family?

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2. How many children would I like to have?

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3. How might I react if we are unable to have children?

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**GROWTH IN OUR RELATIONSHIP**

1. During the last month I deliberately tried to show my love for my fiancé by: (List 2)

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2. During the last month I felt most loved by my fiancé when: (List 2)

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3. I was hurt by my fiancé when

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How did I communicate my hurt?

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4. I think I hurt my fiancé when

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5. The greatest strength I will bring to our marriage is

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6. The greatest weakness I will bring to our marriage is

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### CAR QUESTIONS

1. After our session this evening, what do we think our different backgrounds will mean to us in the building of our lives together?

2. How are we going to celebrate our first Christmas?

## HOME ASSIGNMENT

People have two kinds of expectations - realistic and unrealistic. **Realistic** expectations are worth the time and effort it takes to attain them. **Unrealistic** expectations are the kind you cannot achieve.

Whether your expectations are realistic or not, you are always trying to fulfill them. This is one reason it is good to find out what they are. Once you know your expectations clearly enough, you can decide which ones are worth pursuing. Once you know your expectations you can share them with each other. This kind of sharing helps you to become closer in love. It allows you to support each other when expectations are unfulfilled.

A key to a successful relationship is learning to pay attention to the **most important and realistic expectations your fiancé has** - especially when those expectations are different from your own. As a way of becoming clearer about the **important, realistic expectations** that you both have, please go through the following steps.

1. Take a sheet of paper and make a list of all the expectations that you as an individual have about your present relationship and your future marriage. While you are writing, don't bother about whether the expectations are realistic or not. The order or priority they come in doesn't matter either.
2. After you have written down every expectation you can think of, number the 5 you consider the most important. Make number 1 the most important, 2 the second most important, and so on.
3. Next, look over the entire list of expectations you wrote. Put an X beside each one you consider **unrealistic** and a + beside each one you consider **realistic**.
4. After you have done the above three steps separately and privately, exchange your lists and discuss:
  - **Why did you label some expectations more important than others?**
  - **Why did you decide that some are realistic and some are not?**

Compare lists. Being unique individuals, you will discover some differences that are possible areas of conflict. This is normal! All couples who are honest have many areas of conflict.

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