

THE MARRIAGE INSIGHTS PROCESS

The Marriage Insights process is designed to strengthen marriage relationships by assisting couples in improving their understanding of and communication with each other. Prerequisites for a great marriage are respect for each other's strengths and an ongoing blending of personal differences.

The Family Insights questionnaire generates a report on each individual's God-given strengths and communication style. Each spouse (or spouse to be!) completes a Marriage Insights Assessment, which generates a personal report for each person. Each person enters a personal password and follows the on-screen directions at www.justrespond.com. After both spouses have received their Marriage Insights reports they are ready to begin the Marriage Insights process.

THERE ARE 4 EASY STEPS IN THE MARRIAGE INSIGHTS PROCESS AFTER THE REPORTS ARE GENERATED AND PRINTED:

- 1) Each spouse reads his or her Marriage Insights™ report. It may take more than one reading to understand what the report is telling you about yourself.
- 2) Each spouse highlights at least 4 statements in each section of the Marriage Insights report that they believe are most true of them.
- 3) Have interaction about the reports by sharing the statements you highlighted with each other.
- 4) Make commitments for improving communication and appreciation for each other's strengths using what you learned from the marriage interaction time.

CREATING THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT FOR MARRIAGE INSIGHTS

The marriage interaction around the Marriage Insights reports can be the catalyst for many positive changes and increased understanding in your marriage. When spouses begin to understand and respect the differences in each other's unique strengths and communication styles, conflicts can be anticipated or avoided and the relationship will improve. Personal interaction and discussions, however, must be held in an appropriate environment in order to be meaningful.

The following suggestions will help to create the proper environment:

1. It is recommended that couples decide when they will meet, how much time they will spend together for the discussion, and then follow through with meeting together. It is important to agree on the time and place and hold each other to the commitment.

2. Remove or minimize all distractions. Turn the television off. It is also helpful to turn off the telephone and cell phones during Marriage Insights discussions. A key to the success of the process is that both spouses commit to not let anything or anyone else interrupt or interfere with the discussion time.
3. The purpose of the Marriage Insights process should be clear to both partners: to improve understanding, appreciation, and communication for an improved relationship. The purpose of the meeting is not to resolve all issues. The information in the Marriage Insights reports will, however, be extremely valuable in helping couples to understand the source of some of their conflicts and perpetual problems with each other.
4. It is recommended for couples to establish ground rules for Marriage Insights discussions. For instance, couples may need to agree that if a conflict or difference of opinion arises, that they would not make any coarse jokes or sarcastic remarks, and voice tone and volume would stay at low levels.

EXERCISES FOR MARRIAGE INSIGHTS INTERACTION

GENERAL STATEMENTS

- Identify and share with each other the four statements you have highlighted in this section, or others that stand out as especially important for your spouse to know.
- Discuss any positive relationship experiences recalled as you share.
- Identify ways in which the information in this section of each of your reports provides insight on why some marriage experiences have been more positive than others.

KEYS TO MOTIVATING

- Discuss your “top” four statements from this section. What can your spouse reasonably do to consistently support you in each of these areas? Give specific examples.
- Take one or two statements from your list and share an example with your spouse when he or she acted on one or both of these motivators in a positive way.

RELATIONSHIP STRENGTHS

- Choose four statements from your spouse’s report in this section and give one positive example to your spouse about when he or she exhibited each one of these statements.

KEYS TO COMMUNICATION

- What are the most important items to you on your list for your spouse to keep in mind?
- On your report, rank from 1 to 10 (1 being the most important) the statements that mean the most to you for your spouse to follow in communicating with you. Share your ranked lists with each other.
- Without being defensive or accusatory, share one specific example when your spouse ignored or forgot your top (#1) ranked statement. Be constructive and forgiving, and make a plan to recognize this key to communication in the future.

BARRIERS TO COMMUNICATION

- Using the suggestions provided in the *Barriers to Communication* section of each spouse's report, discuss what you should and should not do in order to avoid conflicts and improve communication with each other.
- What situations come to mind where the communication between you and your spouse could have been more effective?

HINDERING FACTORS

- Cooperatively work through each other's *Hindering Factors* section and discuss specific examples when each statement was shown to be a limitation that affected each spouse individually or you as a couple.
- If needed, use this section as an honest springboard to setting some goals for personal and marriage growth. Ask each other, "how can I help you in this area?"

ACTION PLAN

- Using the *Action Plan* section of your reports, discuss the possible commitments you are willing to make in order to improve your communication and relationships with each other.
- Each spouse should then make a list of people outside the family with whom they would like to share their Marriage Insights report. These lists should include significant people in the couple's life such as friends, bosses, pastors, etc.

ADDITIONAL INSIGHTS

Spouses' Core and Adapted Styles are compared in the *Additional Insights* section of the report. It is necessary to make adjustments in marriage in order to create a positive home environment. The Marriage Insights report graph pages are visual representations of how each person is responding to the home environment and marriage relationship.

STYLE ANALYSIS GRAPHS

- Your Core Style represents your natural, more hard-set traits.
- Your Core Style is how God wired you and is the least changeable. This is how you naturally meet challenges, solve problems, and prefer to communicate with others.
- The Adapted Style graph reveals how you are responding to your home environment and relationships. Your Adapted Style can be viewed as your “mask” or public self.
- The differences between your two graphs reveal how much you are adjusting in each of the four factors to meet the demands of your environment.
- Discuss the differences in your Core and Adapted graphs with your spouse.

HOW ARE YOU HAVING TO ADAPT?

- Each spouse highlights three statements from this section that are the best examples of how they are “adapting” in order to be successful in the marriage relationship.
- Which factor(s)- Lion, Otter, Golden Retriever, or Beaver- do you and your spouse have to change the most to keep your marriage running smoothly?
- Have a discussion on why it is important for each of you to understand each other's strengths and style. Do both of you share a primary style, or are you very different?
- Are there certain adaptations that you need to make in your relationship regardless of your Core Styles? Why?

THE MINISTRY INSIGHTS WHEEL

- Using one of your Ministry Insights Wheels, plot each spouse's Core Style dot on the wheel and label each dot with the corresponding name.
- Place the “Marriage Wheel” on the refrigerator door as a reminder of your unique strengths and differences.

AFTER THE MARRIAGE INSIGHTS PROCESS

After experiencing the benefits of the Marriage Insights process, you and your spouse should continue to meet on a regular basis to discuss relationship issues. Creating a solid and positive foundation for your marriage takes time and effort. Keeping communication effective is something that must be practiced on a daily basis. The rewards each member will receive from practicing this positive behavior will be priceless and endless.

- It is recommended that couples reinforce any positive changes that occur in their relationships. Spouses should make a concerted effort to try to congratulate each other on any improvements they notice in their understanding, communication and/or relationship with each other. Positive reinforcement is always encouraged.

We encourage you to share the value of Marriage Insights with everyone you know. Give the address of our web site, www.ministryinsights.com to people at your place of work, church, community association, or anyone that you feel might benefit!