

Couple Huddles: Session Three

This is your time to regularly realign and reconnect with each other. But remember these tips:

***Pray**

***Limit distractions**

***Approach each exercise with a positive attitude**

***Carve out 30-45 minutes for this process**

***Avoid blowups - take a break if necessary**

***Share three positives for every negative**



There are two essential skills for maintaining a positive attitude of trust in your marriage and keeping your trust-picture focused on the best qualities of your spouse.

First, it is important for you to acknowledge and express your spouse's strengths, their best qualities and the ways their life benefits you.

Second, you need to be able to apologize and reset your attitude when you become irritated, frustrated or focused on something negative about your spouse.

There is terrific advice in the Scriptures for how to keep your attitude positive in your marriage.

Since God chose you to be the holy people he loves, you must clothe yourselves with tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. Make allowance for each other's faults, and forgive anyone who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds us all together in perfect harmony. (Colossians 3:12-14, NLT).

Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. (Philippians 4:8 (MSG))

1. Take turns describing something (to your spouse) that your spouse did recently, and how it benefited you. Try to connect what they did with a positive quality or strength of their personality or character. Don't just express appreciation or say, "thank you." Rather, try to **elaborate on how this action specifically helps you, benefits you, makes your life easier** ... how they have enhanced your life! Do this three or four times each. More meaningful sharing occurs after the first two or three times.

Here is an example of what it might sound like.

"I just want to thank you for getting my car cleaned ... you are always on top of things that make my life easier; you are a doer — and would never mention what you did! But I want you to know that I feel taken care of and loved by the things you do without ever being asked."

Or, "I was watching you with the kids yesterday ... and I want to tell you how much I appreciate the patience you show them. Sometimes, I take for granted that you are so good with them ... I just relax and never worry. But I am so blessed that our kids have a father (or mother) like you."

2. It is also normal for little things to set us off in marriage — to sometimes become irritated, or be ungrateful, or overlook something positive about our spouse. **Practice apologizing in a meaningful way by thinking about a recent situation where you slipped into a negative attitude or neglected to express your appreciation.** Meaningful apologies have two main parts. **First**, they express a genuine and heartfelt apology for what you said or did (or neglected to say or do). **Second**, they express a

thoughtful understanding of how you came across to your spouse — how your spouse felt and what you looked like through his/her eyes.

It would sound something like this: *"I was thinking about how I reacted to you this morning when I snapped at you for correcting me. I know that it is a pet peeve of mine when you do that, but I also know that you were just trying to help. I am sorry for getting irritated, and coming across in such a dismissive way. Please forgive me."*

And if you were the one to do something like correct your spouse, certainly it is good to acknowledge that you will do your best to not push their buttons by correcting them next time. And **you can apologize:**

"I know that when I correct you it really pushes your buttons ... I am so sorry. Sometimes, I correct you before I even know what I am doing, but please know that I will do my best to stop doing that."

Now, it is your turn to think back over the last week or so and **find some small things for which you can apologize.** This will help you to let go of those small "stones in the shoe" that could easily add up and lead to resentments.

