

A background image featuring a bright sunburst or starburst pattern with rays emanating from the top center, set against a light blue and white sky. The rays are soft and diffused, creating a sense of energy and optimism.

*e*quip  
*e*ncourage  
*e*nergize

**Fellowship of Christian Athletes  
Cove Couple's Getaway | June 22-24, 2012**

# The Wholehearted Marriage: Fully Engaging Deep Connection

Dr. Greg & Erin Smalley

## 1. THE FOUNDATION OF A GREAT MARRIAGE

- a. The foundation of a great marriage is an \_\_\_\_\_.

*Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard..." (Matthew 19:8)*

- b. In order for intimacy and deep connection to occur, \_\_\_\_\_ must be \_\_\_\_\_ to each other.

*...love one another deeply from the heart." (1 Peter 1:22)*

*....open wide your hearts also. (2 Corinthians 6:11-13)*

*Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life. (Proverbs 4:23)*

## 2. WHY DOES A HEART CLOSE?

- a. Hurt Feelings
- b. Hungry
- c. Tired
- d. Exhaustion
- e. Anger
- f. Loneliness
- g. Sin
- h. Satan's lies
- i. Fear

- j. When we don't feel "\_\_\_\_\_" in a relationship our heart will \_\_\_\_\_ and then we will \_\_\_\_\_ from that person.

Unsafe → Closed → Disconnected

- k. When people feel \_\_\_\_\_ they are naturally inclined to open their \_\_\_\_\_.  
Intimacy occurs effortlessly and naturally when hearts and spirits open to one another.

Safety → Openness → Intimacy

- l. Goal: Create an emotionally \_\_\_\_\_ marriage! *The name of the LORD is a strong tower; the righteous run to it and are safe. (Proverbs 18:10)*

### 3. WHAT IS EMOTIONAL SAFETY?

Feeling free to \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ who you really are and know that your spouse will still love, understand, accept, and value you.

### 4. WHAT MAKES PEOPLE FEEL SAFE?

*"for no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ also does the church." (Eph 5:29)*

- a. CHERISH: This is an "attitude"—recognize your mate's incredible \_\_\_\_\_. "*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*" (Luke 12:34)

**Cherish List:** Make a list of things that you value about your spouse.

- b. NOURISH: This is an "action"—treat your spouse in \_\_\_\_\_ ways. "*Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.*" (James 1:22)

#### **"I Feel Emotionally Safe When You..."**

- Pray with me and share a deep faith
- Provide positive affirmation
- Express gratitude
- Listen and validate my feelings
- Spend time with me
- Act curious about me
- Provide affection
- Serve me in ways that are meaningful to me
- Have fun and laugh with me

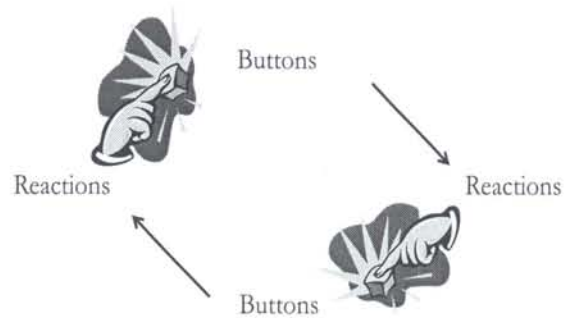
**Next Step:** Personalize your own list by answering the following statement:

*"I feel emotionally safe (loved) when you..."*

# STOP PUSHING MY BUTTONS!

## THE REACTIVE CYCLE

*“What causes fights and quarrels among you? Don’t they come from your desires that battle within you?” (James 4:1)*



The reactive cycle is anti-relational because it sets us up as \_\_\_\_\_—makes the relationship feel very \_\_\_\_\_. When we feel unsafe, our \_\_\_\_\_ close and we disconnect. *Jesus replied, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives because your hearts were hard..."* (Matthew 19:8)

## PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY – *What To Do When Your Buttons Get Pushed*

*How can you say to your brother, "Let me take the speck out of your eye," when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.* (Matt. 7:4-5)

{ *He who guards his mouth and his tongue keeps himself from calamity. ~ Proverbs 21:23* }

Deal with you \_\_\_\_\_, get your heart \_\_\_\_\_, so you can \_\_\_\_\_ to your spouse.  
“...but he who hardens his heart falls into trouble” (Proverbs 28:14).

1. Hit the \_\_\_\_\_ button.

Take a “time-out” and do something that will help you \_\_\_\_\_: breathing, take a walk, exercise, listen to music, talk to a friend, pray, journal, etc. *A fool gives full vent to his anger, but a wise man keeps himself under control* (Proverbs 29:11).

2. \_\_\_\_\_ what you are feeling.

Welcome your feelings—don’t stuff, minimize, deny or ignore your emotions. *Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts* (Ps 139:23). Allow yourself to feel your feelings and take them as they are, be curious, understand your emotions and use your feelings as a source of great information.



{ *Emotions are celebrated and repressed, analyzed and medicated, adored and ignored—but rarely, if ever, are they honored.* }  
~ Karla McLaren

You can't even begin to manage your emotions until you figure out exactly what you are feeling.  
*In your anger do not sin; when you are on your beds, search your hearts and be silent (Ps 4:4).*

3. Discover the \_\_\_\_\_.

Feelings don't always equal \_\_\_\_\_. Because I feel something doesn't necessarily mean that it's true. *But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth...* (John 16:13)

Don't let others be your source of truth! Instead, ask God to reveal His "\_\_\_\_\_."

#### **RELATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY: *What to do relationally when both hearts are open***

{ *People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care!* }  
~ Theodore Roosevelt

### **L.U.V.E. TALK**

#### **Speaker vs Listener**

Speaker:

Focus on your \_\_\_\_\_ "I feel..."

Listener:

Instead of trying to be understood, defend yourself, debate, solve or fix the problem, make your goal \_\_\_\_\_.

LISTEN = \_\_\_\_\_

Be present:

- Turn towards your spouse
- Give eye contact
- Resist distractions

*My dear brothers, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak...*

(James 1:19)

Don't get sidetracked by facts or opinions. *Do not pay attention to every word people say...* (Ec 7:21)

UNDERSTAND = \_\_\_\_\_

Be curious & fascinated:

- Ask questions.
- The phrase "*help me* \_\_\_\_\_" communicates curiosity and understanding.

*You have searched me, LORD, and you know me...you are familiar with all my ways.*

(Ps 139:1-3)

VALIDATE = \_\_\_\_\_

Be honoring ("*Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.*" Rom 12:10):

- Communicate: "*You matter to me and what you are feeling is important to me, whether it makes sense or not.*"
- Don't judge, correct or minimize their emotions

Validation occurs when you reflect back what your spouse is saying. *Listen and hear my voice; pay attention and hear what I say.* (Is. 28:23)

- "Is that what you are saying?"
- "Am I understanding you right?"
- "It makes sense to me that you are feeling that way."

When you disagree with facts/opinions, focus on their feelings! "*Do not pay attention to every word people say...*" (Ec 7:21)

EMPATHIZE = \_\_\_\_\_

Empathy is entering into their world and feeling *with* a person, rather than feeling sorry for a person. *Jesus wept.* (John 11:35)

*Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another; be sympathetic, love as brothers, be compassionate and humble. (1 Peter 3:8);*

\_\_\_\_\_: If necessary, seek forgiveness for any hurt or pain you've caused.

"I was \_\_\_\_\_."

"I am \_\_\_\_\_."

"Please \_\_\_\_\_ me."

"I \_\_\_\_\_ you!"

## WE ARE ON THE SAME TEAM!

In a marriage, you are on the same team. Thus, you either "\_\_\_\_\_" together or "\_\_\_\_\_" together.

There is *no such thing* as a "WIN/LOSE" because you are on the same \_\_\_\_\_.

*Jesus knew their thoughts and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand." (Matt. 12:25)*

### **"Win/Win" Solutions:**

Make it unacceptable for either person to walk away feeling as if he/she lost. Both recognize that if either loses, the whole team "LOSES". Redefine winning as finding a solution that "\_\_\_\_\_" feel good about.

## 5 STEPS TO A WIN/WIN:

#1. Think \_\_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_\_—reaffirm this to each other.

#2. Take time to \_\_\_\_\_ what the win is for each person (find the “nuggets”).

#3. Pause, \_\_\_\_\_ and seek God’s will.

#4. \_\_\_\_\_ possible solutions.

#5. \_\_\_\_\_ a course of action that both of you feel good about and  
\_\_\_\_\_ it.

{ *Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.* }  
~ Philippians 2:1-5



## The Reactive Cycle

1. Describe a recent conflict, argument, or negative situation with your spouse—something that really “pushed your button.”

2. How did this conflict make you feel about *yourself*? What did the conflict say about *you*? What was the “*self*” message—the message that it sent to *you*? What were the “*buttons*” that got pushed? Circle all that apply, but “star” the most important feelings you felt about yourself.

“As a result of the

conflict, I felt...”

What That Feeling Sounds Like

Rejected	My spouse doesn’t want me; my spouse doesn’t need me; I am not necessary in this relationship; my spouse does not desire me; I feel unwanted.
Abandoned	I will be alone; My spouse will ultimately leave me; I will be left alone to care for myself; my spouse won’t be committed to me for life.
Disconnected	We will become emotionally detached or separated.
Like a failure	I am not successful at being a husband/wife; I will not perform right or correctly; I will not live up to expectations; I will fall short in my relationship; I am not good enough.
Helpless/powerless	I cannot do anything to change my spouse or my situation; I do not possess the power, resources, capacity, or ability to get what I want; I will be controlled by my spouse.
Defective	Something is wrong with me; I’m the problem.
Inadequate	I am not capable; I am incompetent.
Inferior	Everyone else is better than I am; I am less valuable or important than others.
Invalidated	Who I am, what I think, what I do, or how I feel is not valued.
Unloved	My spouse doesn’t love me anymore; my spouse has no affection or desire for me; my relationship lacks warm attachment, admiration, enthusiasm, or devotion; I feel as if we are just roommates—that there are no romantic feelings between us.
Dissatisfied	I will not experience satisfaction within the relationship; in our marriage, I will exist in misery for the rest of my life; I will not be pleased within my marriage; I feel no joy in my relationship.
Cheated	My spouse will take advantage of me; my spouse will withhold something I need; I won’t get what I want.
Worthless/devalued	I am useless; I have no value to my spouse.
Don’t measure up	I am never able to meet my spouse’s expectations of me; I am not good enough as a spouse.
Unaccepted	My spouse does not accept me; my partner is not pleased with me; my spouse does not approve of me.
Judged	I am always being unfairly judged or misjudged; my spouse forms faulty or negative opinions about me; I am always being evaluated; My spouse does not approve of me.
Humiliated	This marriage is extremely destructive to my self-respect or dignity.
Ignored	My spouse will not pay attention to me; I will be unknown in my marriage; I feel neglected.
Unimportant	I am not important to my mate; I am irrelevant, insignificant, or of little priority to my spouse.
Intimacy	I am afraid of opening up emotionally to my mate; I will be hurt emotionally if I allow my spouse past my “walls.”
Misunderstood	My spouse will fail to understand me correctly; He/she will get the wrong idea or impression about me; I will be misinterpreted or misread.
Misportrayed	My spouse has an inaccurate portrayal of me; I am misrepresented or represented in a false way; I am described in a negative or untrue manner; My spouse paints a wrong picture of me; My spouse has negative beliefs about me.
Disrespected	I will be insulted; my mate does not admire me; my spouse will have a low opinion of me; I will be disregarded; my mate has does not respect me; my spouse does not look up to me.
Out of control	My marriage will be wild, unruly, or hectic; my mate will be unmanageable or uncontrollable; Things will feel disorganized or in disorder.
Unaware	I do not know what is going on in the relationship; I do not have the necessary information; I’m in the dark; I’m clueless; Things feel secretive, hidden or undisclosed; I’ll appear ignorant or uninformed.
Alone	I will be by myself or on my own; I will be without help or assistance; I will be lonely; I will be isolated.
Unfair	My spouse will treat me unfairly; My mate wants me to do things he/she is unwilling to do (there is a double standard) ; I will be asked to do things that are unreasonable or excessive; My spouse treats me differently than others; I won’t be treated equally.
Disappointment	I will be a let down in the marriage; My mate will be disappointed in me; My spouse will be disillusioned by me.

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

3. What do you do when you feel \_\_\_\_\_ [insert the most important feeling from question #3]? How do you react when you feel that way? Identify your common coping strategies to deal with your “buttons” being pushed. Check all that apply—but “star” the most important reactions:

Withdrawal	You avoid others or alienate yourself without resolution; you sulk, use the silent treatment.
Escalation	Your emotions spiral out of control; you argue, raise your voice, fly into a rage.
Earn-it mode	You try to do more to earn others’ love and care.
Negative beliefs	You believe your spouse is far worse than is really the case; you attribute negative motives to your spouse.
Blaming	You place responsibility on others, not accepting fault; you’re convinced the problem is your spouse’s fault.
Exaggeration	You make overstatements or enlarge your words beyond bounds or the truth.
Tantrums	You have a fit of bad temper.
Denial	You refuse to admit the truth or reality.
Invalidation	You devalue your spouse; you do not appreciate who your partner is, what he or she feels or thinks or does.
Defensiveness	Instead of listening, you defend yourself by trying to provide an explanation.
Clinginess	You develop a strong emotional attachment or dependence on your spouse.
Passive-aggression	You display negative emotions, resentment, and aggression in unassertive passive ways, such as procrastination and stubbornness.
Caretaking	You become responsible for others by giving physical or emotional care and support to the point you are doing everything for your spouse and your partner does nothing to care for himself or herself.
Acting out	You engage in negative behaviors or addictions like drug or alcohol abuse, extra-marital affairs, excessive shopping or spending, or overeating.
Fix-it mode	You focus almost exclusively on what is needed to solve the problem.
Complain/criticize	You express unhappiness or make accusations; you present a “laundry list” of faults about your mate.
Striking out	You become verbally or physically aggressive, possibly abusive.
Manipulation	You pursue your mate to get them to do what you want; you control your spouse for your own advantage.
Anger or rage	You display strong feelings of displeasure or violent and uncontrolled emotions.
Catastrophize	You use dramatic, exaggerated expressions to depict that the relationship is in danger or that it has failed.
Emotionally shut down	You numb out emotionally; you become devoid of emotion, or you have no regard for other’s needs or troubles.
Humor	You use humor as a way of not dealing with the issue at hand.
Sarcasm	You use negative humor, hurtful words, belittling comments, cutting remarks, or demeaning statements.
Minimization	You assert that your spouse is overreacting to an issue; you intentionally underestimate, down play, or soft pedal the issue.
Rationalization	You attempt to make your actions seem reasonable; you try to attribute your behavior to credible motives; you try to provide believable but untrue reasons for your conduct.
Indifference	You are cold and show no concern.
Abdication	You give away responsibilities.
Self-abandonment	You desert yourself; you neglect you; you run yourself down.
Other:	_____



# THE REACTIVE CYCLE



\_\_\_\_\_’s Buttons



\_\_\_\_\_’s Reactions

\_\_\_\_\_’s Reactions



\_\_\_\_\_’s Buttons



## **Vision**

*To see the world impacted for Jesus Christ  
through the influence of coaches and athletes.*

## **Values**

*Integrity | Serving | Teamwork | Excellence*