



BUFFALO COVENANT

MARCH MARRIAGE MILESTONE

The Power of **US**

Richard Marks, PhD serves as Vice President of Live the Life, Inc. Dr. Marks, who likes to be called “Rick” has been married since 1984 to his precious wife and best friend, Louella. She and Rick have three children: Trey, Madison, and Jesse.

Rick and Louella both came from broken homes as children and were committed to doing things differently for themselves and for their children.

Rick completed a PhD in Psychology and Counseling, an M.A. in Marriage and Family Therapy, an MA in Religious Education from Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary as well as a BA in Psychology from the University of North Florida in Jacksonville, FL. He is a Clinical Member of the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy as well as an ordained minister. Rick has served in various capacities from an Assistant Professor of Counseling at Regent University, to Private Practice work. In addition to being a veteran of the U.S. Navy he served on staff at a 28,000 member church and developed their



Center for Family Ministry. Dr. Marks also served for four years as a Commissioner on the Florida Commission on Marriage and Family Support Initiatives and most recently spent the last year developing the statewide healthy marriage and fatherhood initiative for Governor Brownback of Kansas.

Rick has written various articles and speaks at conferences and seminars across the country from the American Counselors Association, American Association of Christian Counselors, and annual Smartmarriages Conference. In addition, Rick is a sought after speaker for faith-based relationship retreats for singles, youth, couples and married as well as for business, the military, and social service organizations. He has been seen on shows such as the 700 Club as well as local television and radio media, such as weekly on The Chat on Channels 12 and 25 in the Northeast Florida market.

Louella and Rick are committed to seeing families and marriages strengthened through the relationship principles in Scripture and through modeling Father’s heart to those they come in contact with.

A happy marriage is a long conversation that always seems too short. Andres Maurois

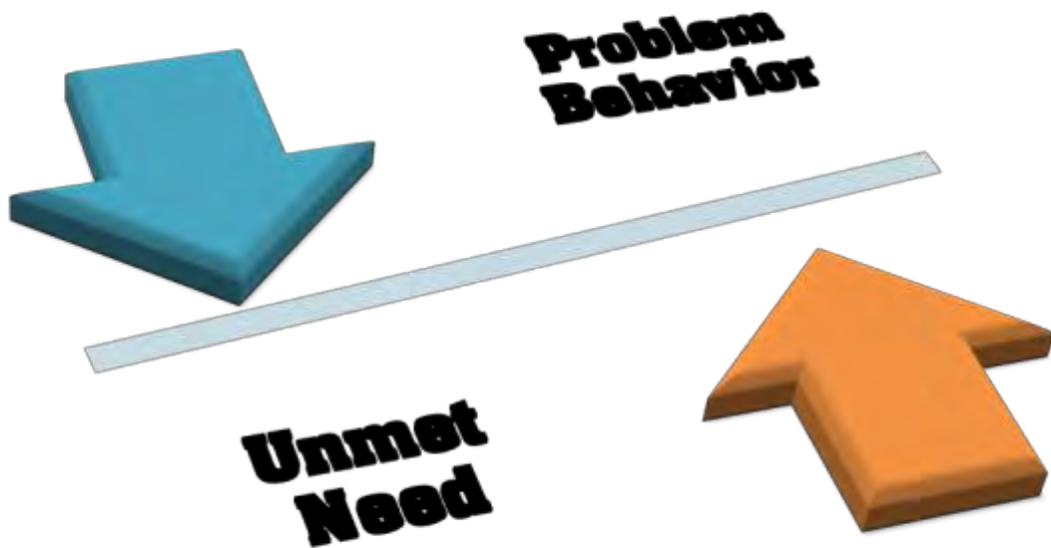
CA⁵RESS Your Relationship

The following list of core emotional needs was programmed into us at conception. Like food, air, water, and shelter, these emotional needs are biologically based. The difference is you cannot meet these needs on your own. They are met in relationship.

| Core NEED | Understanding the NEED |
|-----------------------------|--|
| <i>C</i>omfort | To soothe, console, or reassure. Responding to a hurting person with words, feelings, and touch |
| <i>A</i>cceptance | Favorable reception. Receiving and loving another person willingly and unconditionally, especially when the other's behavior has been imperfect. |
| <i>A</i>ffection | A tender feeling toward another. Expressing care and closeness through physical touch |
| <i>A</i>ppreciation | An expression of Gratitude. Expressing thanks and praise for what another has accomplished or completed. |
| <i>A</i>pproval | Formal permission or sanction. Building up or affirming another; affirming both the fact of and the importance of another. A Blessing. |
| <i>A</i>ttention | Awareness. Consciousness. Conveying appropriate interest, concern, and care; taking thought of another; entering another's "world." |
| <i>R</i>espect | The state of being regarded or esteemed. Valuing and regarding another highly; treating another with good will. |
| <i>E</i>ncouragement | The act of giving hope and support to someone. Urging another to persist and persevere toward a goal; stimulating toward love and good deeds. |
| <i>S</i>ecurity | Well-founded confidence. Relationship harmony; freedom from fear or threat of harm. |
| <i>S</i>upport | To uphold by aid or assistance; Coming alongside and gently helping with a problem or struggle; |

(Adapted from the work of Dr. David Ferguson of Intimate Life Ministries)

UNDERSTANDING FALLENNESS VS. NEEDYNESS



Exercise:

1. Write one behavior your spouse does that you do not like. (Their Fallenness)
2. What unmet need do you think is the source of the pain that produces the problem behavior? (CA⁶RESS)
3. Share your answers and inquire of one another as to their thoughts and feelings about what the unmet need might be.

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO CONNECT?

CA⁶RESS EFFECTS ON RELATIONSHIP

TWO INGREDIENTS NECESSARY FOR INTIMACY:

1. _____ which requires you being emotionally open to each other
2. _____ closeness which is our need to connect physically

Humans were created in pleasure and sin brought about the experience of pain. Thus, we still tend towards pursuing pleasure even if pleasure is sought in unhealthy ways. When we experience close, loving and pleasurable relationships, a greater sense of USness, we will find ourselves feeling close, connected and peaceful. We are more open, sharing and vulnerable and our level of trust increases. However, when we walk in relationship pain, we find ourselves more guarded, wary, distrustful, are more prone to sickness and depression, and we may even move into addictions in order to medicate the pain and provide a sense of pleasure for the moment.



Marriage of Our Dreams

- *Love is a gift. We love because He first loved us
 - We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19 NIV)

- *Love is a choice that leads to a commitment
 - Choose to love the Lord your God...and commit yourself to him.... (Deut. 30:20 NLT)

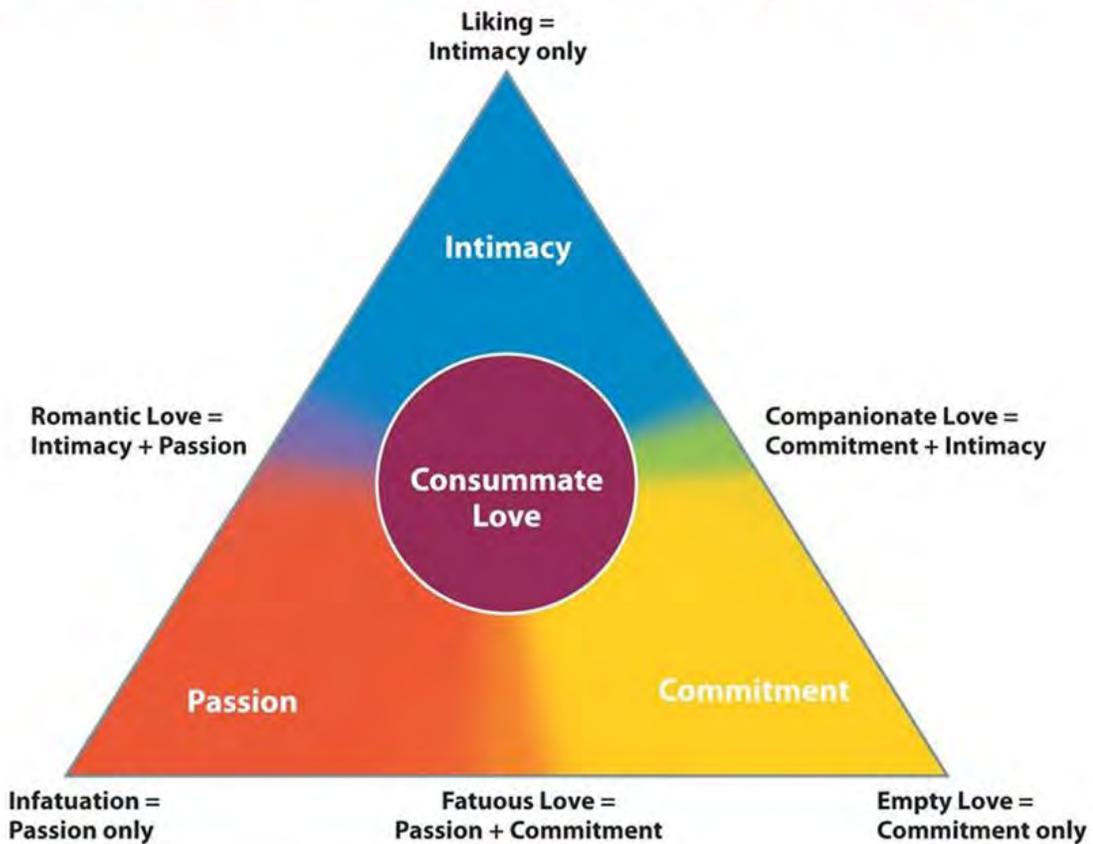
- *Love is an action and not simply an emotion
 - Let us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and in truth (1 John 3:18 NIV)

- *Love is a skill that you get better at as you practice loving.
 - Dear friends, let us practice loving each other, for love comes from God and those who are loving and kind show that they are the children of God, and that they are getting to know him better. (1 John 4:7 LB)

- *Love is a habit and can become second nature for you.
 - Continue to love each other with true Christian love (Heb. 13:1 NLT)

- ⊙ Love has three components:
 - ⊙ (1) **intimacy**: which encompasses the feelings of closeness, connectedness, and bondedness one experiences in loving relationships,
 - ⊙ (2) **passion**: which encompasses the drives that lead to romance, physical attraction, and sexual consummation, and
 - ⊙ (3) **decision/commitment**: which encompasses in the short term the decision that one loves another, and in the long term, the commitment to maintain that love. (Robert J. Sternberg of Yale University)

Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love



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EXPRESSIONS OF LOVE WORKSHEET

Commitment
Intimacy
Passion

The primary ways love is expressed in your relationship change over time. As one area is prioritized, another area tends to decrease. To some couples, one aspect is more important while to others, another is prioritized.

Discuss how your expression of love in your relationship changed over the years?

Just before you got married. _____

On your honeymoon. _____

At the end of your first year of marriage. _____

After having your first child. _____

With children. _____

At empty nest (if applicable). _____

Now _____

The Great Commandment Heart and Your Marriage

The Great Commandment: Matthew 22

³⁴ But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. ³⁵ And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶ “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” ³⁷ And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸ This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹ And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. ⁴⁰ On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”



LOVE GOD WITH YOUR...

| | ASPECT | BLOCKS |
|----------|------------------------------|--|
| HEART | Feelings: emotions | Fear, Anxiety, Panic, Anger, Rage, Insecurity, Shame, etc. |
| SOUL | Desires | Power, Prestige, Possessions, Other |
| MIND | Thoughts | Discouragement, Disillusionment, Depression, Irrational Beliefs, Lies, |
| STRENGTH | Habits | Addictions, Compulsions, Obsessions, Poor Habits, |
| NEIGHBOR | Relationships | Dependency, Unhealthy Boundaries, Abandonment, Rejection, Impropriety, Selfishness |
| YOURSELF | Self-esteem and Self-Respect | Worthlessness, Shame, Fear, Negative Self-Talk |

Exercise:

1. What positive feelings are dominant in your heart? What negative feelings tend to dominate you?
2. What would you say is your greatest desire? What do you think makes it so?
3. Do your thoughts tend to be more positive or negative overall? What about in your marriage?
4. What habits do you have that negatively affect your marriage?
5. How would you describe your relationships with others overall? More positive? Negative? What would you need to do different to make them more positive?
6. How well do you love yourself? What behaviors do you have that reveal a healthy sense of self-love and self-respect. What thoughts do you have that take away from your self-love and self-respect?

We Were Created For Love

I have loved you with an everlasting love: Therefore, I have drawn you with loving-kindness (Jer. 31:3)

And God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. (Gen 1:27)

God is love, and the one who abides in love abides in God and God abides in him. We love, because he first loved us. (1 John 4:16,19)

There is a teaching in Christian circles that we can live without love and connection to others and/or God. Some people have been so wounded in relationships they see intimacy and people as a source of pain and vowed to keep their hearts closed and guarded. Others chose to live with a numb heart and feel no emotions, no warmth, no passion, thinking that this will keep them from being hurt again. However this only results in living a life of independence, self-reliance, isolation and detachment. Mankind was created for intimacy: intimacy with God, Self, and Others.

The following are four keys to opening your heart to intimacy. Intimacy should come naturally to us. We were created by God's love and for love.

Key 1: The image we have of ourselves determines the depth of intimacy in which we dwell.

Key 2: We must become aware of our need for intimacy.

Key 3: We must be willing to embrace our responsibility for intimacy

Key 4: Intimacy requires us to find our value and self-worth in being who God created us to be - a gift of love to others.

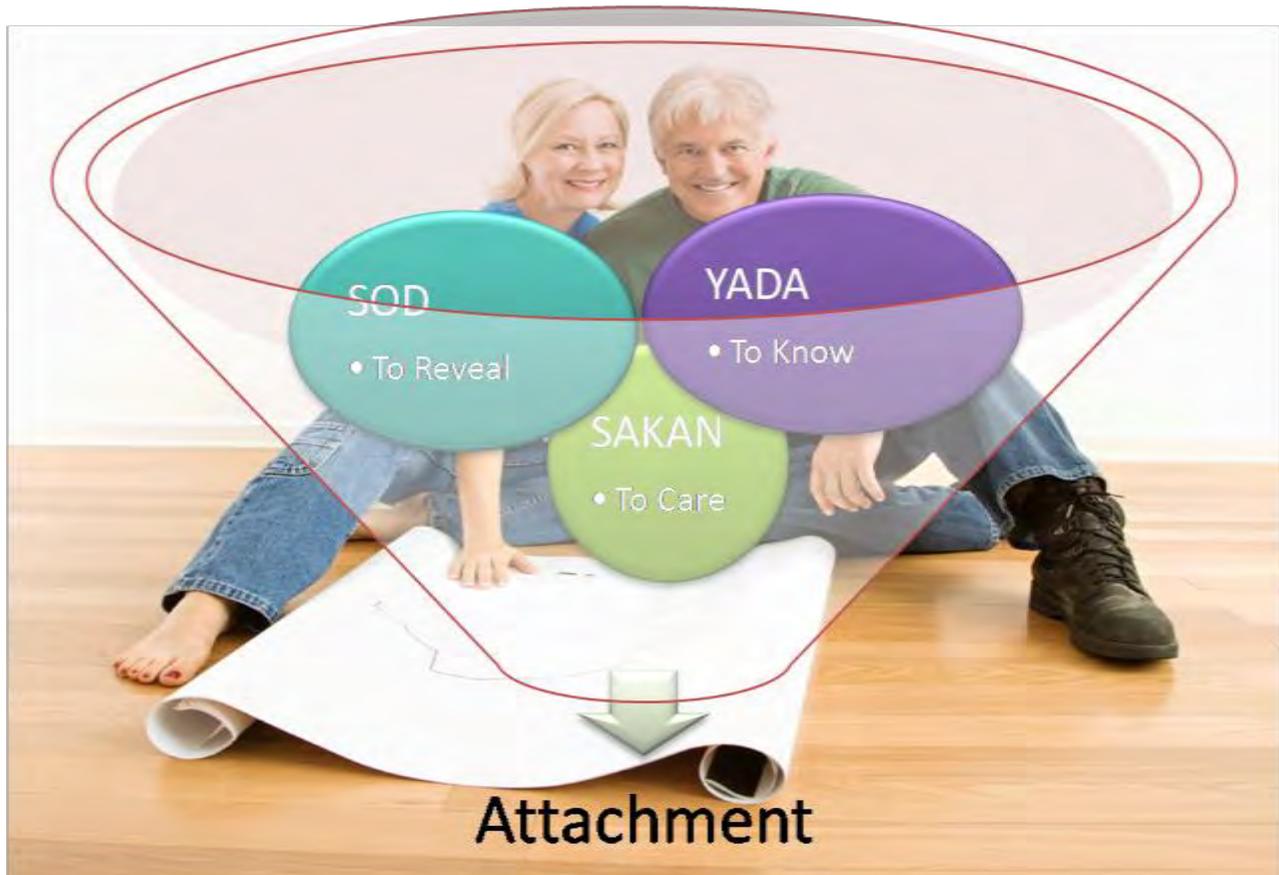
WHAT ABOUT US?

1. In what ways do you believe you give to your USness?
2. What prevents you from giving to your sense of USness?
3. What does your US like to do that you personally do not like? (Think of going to the mall, the opera, playing golf, going fishing, etc.)
4. What does your partner do that motivates you to give to US?
5. What does your partner do that inhibits you from wanting to give to US?
6. How do you think your self-esteem and/or self-image helps or hinders your ability to have a healthy, strong and vibrant US?

THREE HEBREW WORDS FOR INTIMACY

Healthy relationships require vulnerable communication on the part of the speaker and empathy upon the part of the listener. It is through vulnerability and empathy that intimacy and connection are achieved and maintained. Fear prevents the building of intimacy. The Hebrew language has something to say about intimacy and connection and it comes in the form of communication.

- YADA (*to know*): speaks of deep personal awareness and understanding
 - *Job 19:14...my intimate friends have forgotten me*
- SOD (*to disclose; to know another*): speaks of disclosing one's Self to another so that we can be known
 - *Prov 3:32 But He is intimate with the upright*
- SAKAN (*caring involvement*): this speaks to the motivation behind the knowing.
 - *Ps. 139:3 He is intimately acquainted with all my ways.*



DOES THIS SOUND LIKE TALKING TO YOU?

DAILY TEMPERATURE READING *(With appreciation to Virginia Satir)*

The key to connecting to someone is through spending time with them and being open and confiding. Thus, confiding is the key to connecting with another person. The following is a confiding exercise adapted from the Daily Temperature Reading by Virginia Satir. We ask couples sit close to each other, facing each other, preferably holding hands, and each shares with the other one part of the DCI at a time, while the other listens. During the DCI exercise, couples do not argue, debate, judge, or evaluate what their partner says. Listen with care. Yada is when you want to know, Sod is when you confide, and listen with care (Sakan).

Appreciations: We need to hear what is good about us and who better to tell us than someone that know us and is close to us. Hearing appreciations helps one feel loved, special, accepted, and that they have a sense of value. An encouraging word, a gentle smile, and the words of appreciation boost one's sense of value, their belief in themselves, and in the relationship.

New Information: We are always changing and growing and we learn and experience things on a daily basis that we really need to share with our loved ones. Sharing things that interest us or that we experienced, learned, etc. keeps you both up to date with each other and what is taking place in your life. Share the things that are important as well as those that you might deem less important.

Puzzles: Intimacy requires that you are both on the 'same page' when it comes to understanding things. Many times we are assuming things without checking out our assumptions. If you don't understand something or need something clarified, ask it as a puzzle. "I am puzzled why you look so down today?" "I am puzzled why you don't reach out to me when I am hurting."

Complaints with Recommendation for Change: Everyone has things they do that bother their partner and they have things that bother you. However, we spend so much time complaining about what we do not like and this complaining comes across verbally and non-verbally. Frustration has its body language and so does love. Additionally, when complaining about what you do not like we never get around to sharing what we do like. Here, you have the opportunity to confide something you do not like that your partner does (a behavior) and then ask for what you want (what you prefer they do different). State your complaint with recommendation for change in the following format:

When you _____ I feel _____. What I would prefer you do different is _____.

Apologies: Share anything you need to apologize for and ask forgiveness.

Pray About: Developing your spiritual relationship is important and this is where you can both confide what you would like your partner to pray about with you. You might even want to end your DCI with a prayer for your partner and their request.

Hopes and Dreams. We all have hopes and dreams and things we wish for. This part of the DTR allows you to reflect on what you hope or dream for and share it with your partner. When we share our hopes and dreams with our partner's it allows them to not only share them with us but also opens the doorway for that wish or dream to be realized.

THE DAILY TEMPERATURE READING



Exercise:

Complete the Daily Temperature Reading (DTR) by sharing the various parts with each other. We recommend the husband share an appreciation, the wife says "thank you", and then she shares an appreciation with him. He says "thank you." Then go back and forth sharing the remaining parts of the DTR.

**UNDERSTANDING YOUR PARTNER'S INNER WORLD:
Time to YADA and SOD**

Exercise: Take time to interview your partner and write down their answers to the following. Be sure to not argue or interrogate your partner, but merely ask them the statements below and see what you can learn.

1. What are three things that have brought you joy in the past month?

2. What are three things that have brought you anxiety in the past month?

3. What are three things that have made you sad in the past month?

4. Name two people that you would say you are closest to at this time in your life?

5. Name two people that you would say you are in conflict with at this time in your life?

6. What personal improvement would you like to make in your life?

7. Who would you say is your greatest source of support?

8. What stresses do you face in the future?

9. Name two hopes or dreams you have for yourself?

10. Name one thing that you have done that when you think about it causes you to laugh.

FORGIVENESS: PATHWAY TO RESTORING INTIMACY AND TRUST

Forgiveness defined:

Forgiveness is a _____ to give up your _____ for vengeance, retribution, and negative thoughts towards an offender.

What forgiveness is not:

1. Forgiveness is not _____.
2. Forgiveness is not necessarily _____.
3. Forgiveness is not _____ what they other person did.
4. Forgiveness is not allowing _____ to continue.

Physical Effects of Unforgiveness

- Distresses central nervous system
 - Irritability, nervousness, anxiety, hostility, anger, resentment, depression
- Stresses circulatory system
 - High blood pressure, heart rate irregularity, strokes, heart attacks
- Stresses muscular-skeletal system
 - Headaches, muscle and joint aches, dizziness
- Stresses glandular (endocrine/lymphatic) systems
 - Unproductive adrenaline, when unused, dissipates to agitate other body systems
- Depresses immune system
 - Unable to ward off acute and chronic disease

Benefits of Forgiving:

1. It frees the offended one from toxic resentment, bitterness and anger.
2. It is meant for the offended one to be free from the weight of the pain.
3. It opens the door to heal from the offense.
4. It restores one to experience love, joy and peace.

The weak can never forgive.
Forgiveness is the attribute of the
strong.
Mahatma Gandhi

FORGIVE FOR US

At this point in our journey it is assumed you would have identified at least one event or thing you did that hurt your mate. This exercise is to give you an opportunity to ask forgiveness of each other for something you have done that hurt your partner. Remember, true remorse comes from a sense of regret for what you did and empathy for the pain that was caused.

- Sit in your connected position.
- Choose one area where you believe you have hurt your spouse.
 - Things you have done, should have done, did not do, areas of neglect, etc.
- Ask for forgiveness. (*1 John 1:9; Is. 53:5; James 5:16*)
 - I did it.
 - I was wrong, no excuses.
 - I hurt you and God.
 - Will you forgive me?
- Spouse grants forgiveness.
- Pray and ask for your spouse's healing.

'Tis the most tender part of love, each other to forgive.
John Sheffield

**MATURITY REQUIRED FOR HEALTHY US
Intelligence and Emotions!
“Love God and others as you love yourself”**

The hallmark of a mature adult is that they are teachable. Immature adults react to situations in a relationship that do not bring honor, respect, or build up neither the other person nor the relationship. Reacting to situations comes from a position of one who has given up their personal power and has allowed the other person or situation to control them. In order to respond differently, you must be in a position of self-control and maintain personal power: thus you must become a mature adult.

Mature adults understand that they have limitations, don't necessarily “have it all together”, don't feel the need to prove themselves, are able to respect other opinions and feelings (even when they disagree: remember respecting someone's feelings and thoughts is not necessarily agreement), and they have a healthy sense of self and are not ruled by fears and insecurities. What does it mean to be a mature/secure person? Here are some aspects:

| IMMATURE AND INSECURE | MATURE AND SECURE |
|--|---|
| Driven by impulses, urges and appetites | Self-controlled in spite of one's feelings |
| Gives no thought to consequences for one's actions | Takes into account and understands their actions have consequences |
| Takes no responsibility; shifts blame and expects others to be responsible | Takes responsibility for one's actions and the consequences |
| Self-centered and uses other people | Able to live beyond themselves to serve others |
| Driven and Anxious | Lives in peace and are at rest |
| Strives to get acclaim, still need to prove one's value | Accepting of one's self: one's strengths and limitations; lives in the confidence of one's value to God |
| Constantly comparing, envying, coveting | lives a life of contentment |
| Jealous and controlling, manipulative and demanding of others | Able to bless, affirm and encourage others |

(Appendix 1)

CA⁵RESS Assessment Tool

INSTRUCTIONS: Respond to each statement by placing the appropriate number beside each sentence.

| STRONGLY DISAGREE AGREE | DISAGREE | NEUTRAL | AGREE | STRONGLY AGREE |
|----------------------------|----------|---------|-------|-------------------|
| -2 | -1 | 0 | 1 | 2 |

___ 1. It's important that people receive me for who I am – even if I'm a little “different”

___ 2. It's very important to me that my financial world be in order.

___ 3. I sometimes become “weary in well doing.”

___ 4. It's vital to me that others ask me my opinion.

___ 5. It's important that I receive frequent physical hugs, warm embraces, etc.

___ 6. I feel especially good when someone “enters into my world.”

___ 7. It's important for me to know “where I stand” with those who are in authority over me.

___ 8. It is particularly meaningful when someone notices that I need help and then they offer to get involved.

___ 9. If I feel overwhelmed, I especially want someone to come alongside me and help.

___ 10. I feel blessed when someone recognizes and shows concern for how I'm feeling emotionally.

___ 11. I always like to know if “who I am” is of value and is meaningful to others.

___ 12. Generally speaking, I don't like a lot of solitude.

___ 13. It means a lot to me for loved ones to initiate an “I love you.”

___ 14. I resist being seen only as a part of a large group – my individuality is important.

___ 15. I am particularly blessed when a friend calls to listen and encourage me.

___ 16. It's important to me that people acknowledge me not just for what I do but for who I am.

___ 17. I feel best when my world is orderly and somewhat predictable.

- ____ 18. When I've worked hard on a project, I am pleased to have people acknowledge my work and express gratitude.
- ____ 19. When I "blow it" it is especially important to me to be reassured that I am still loved.
- ____ 20. It's particularly encouraging to me when I realize that others notice my "pluses."
- ____ 21. I sometimes feel overwhelmed and discouraged.
- ____ 22. I want to be treated with kindness and equality by all regardless of my race, gender, looks, status.
- ____ 23. The sexual aspect of our marriage is/would be very important to me.
- ____ 24. I love it when someone wants to spend time with just me.
- ____ 25. I am particularly blessed when a "superior" says, "good job!"
- ____ 26. It's very important to me for someone to hold me and love me after I've had a hard day.
- ____ 27. While I feel confident about what I "do" (my talents, gifts, etc.), I always sense that I need other people's input and help.
- ____ 28. Written notes and calls expressing sympathy after the death of a loved one, health problems, divorce are very meaningful to me.
- ____ 29. I feel good when someone close to me shows satisfaction with the way I am.
- ____ 30. I enjoy being spoken of or mentioned in front of a group of people.
- ____ 31. I would be described as a "touchy-feely" person.
- ____ 32. When a decision is going to affect my life, It's important to me that I have a "say so" in the decision.
- ____ 33. I am particularly blessed when someone shows interest in current projects I am working on.
- ____ 34. I appreciate trophies, plaques, and special gifts, which are a permanent reminder of something significant that I have done.
- ____ 35. I sometimes worry about the future.
- ____ 36. When I am introduced into a new environment, I immediately search for a group

of people to connect with.

- _____ 37. The thought of change (moving, new job, etc.) produces anxiety for me.
- _____ 38. It bothers me when people are prejudiced against someone just because they dress or act differently.
- _____ 39. It's necessary to me to be surrounded by friends and loved one who will be there "through thick and thin."
- _____ 40. I am particularly blessed by written notes and phrases of gratitude.
- _____ 41. To know that someone is constantly praying for me is very meaningful.
- _____ 42. I am particularly bothered by "controlling" people.
- _____ 43. I am blessed by unmerited and spontaneous expressions of love.
- _____ 44. I am pleased when someone looks me in the eye and listens to me speak.
- _____ 45. I am particularly blessed when people commend me for a godly characteristic I exhibit.
- _____ 46. I never want to be alone when experiencing hurt and trouble; it's important for me to have someone with me.
- _____ 47. I really don't enjoy working on a project by myself; I prefer to have a partner on every project.
- _____ 48. It's important for me to feel a "part of the group."
- _____ 49. I really respond to someone who tries to understand me emotionally and who shows loving concern.
- _____ 50. When working on a project, I would much rather work with a team of people than by myself.

CA⁵RESS Assessment Tool Item Interpretation Form

INSTRUCTIONS: Add up your responses using the scale (-2, -1, 0, +1, +2):

ACCEPTANCE:

1 _____
 38 _____
 48 _____
 36 _____
 19 _____
 Total: _____

SECURITY:

2 _____
 17 _____
 35 _____
 37 _____
 39 _____
 Total: _____

APPRECIATION:

16 _____
 18 _____
 20 _____
 34 _____
 40 _____
 Total: _____

ENCOURAGEMENT:

3 _____
 15 _____
 21 _____
 33 _____
 41 _____
 Total: _____

RESPECT:

4 _____
 14 _____
 22 _____
 32 _____
 42 _____
 Total: _____

AFFECTION:

5 _____
 13 _____
 23 _____
 31 _____
 43 _____
 Total: _____

ATTENTION:

6 _____
 12 _____
 24 _____
 30 _____
 44 _____
 Total: _____

APPROVAL:

7 _____
 11 _____
 25 _____
 29 _____
 45 _____
 Total: _____

COMFORT:

10 _____
 26 _____
 28 _____
 46 _____
 49 _____
 Total: _____

SUPPORT:

8 _____
 9 _____
 27 _____
 47 _____
 50 _____
 Total: _____

1. What were your three highest totals? Which needs do they represent?

2. What were your three lowest totals? Which needs do they represent?

3. Which were your partner's highest and lowest totals?