

Learning Exercises

1. Since getting to know each other is one of the primary purposes of a serious dating relationship, use the following questions to stimulate conversation.
 - *What personal accomplishments have we shared with each other?*
 - *What personal failures have we shared and what remains to be shared?*
 - *To what degree have we shared our sexual history with each other?*
 - *What do we know about each other's financial history?*
2. Since your extended family has influenced each of you greatly, use the following questions to help develop understanding of these relationships.
 - *How would you describe the marital relationship of your mom and dad?*
 - *From your perspective, what was your parents' main philosophy on child rearing? How do you agree or disagree with their approach to parenting?*
 - *What kind of relationship do you presently have with your father?*
 - *What is the nature of your relationship with your mother?*
 - *If and when you get married, in what way would you like for your marriage to be different from that of your parents?*

3. Since educational and vocational accomplishments are a big part of life, use the following questions to explore this aspect of life.

- *What are your educational goals for the next five years?*
- *From what you know about your interests, what vocational goals do you presently have?*
- *Has your dating relationship been an asset or a liability to reaching these goals? In what way?*
- *To what degree do you feel your dating partner accepts and appreciates your goals?*

4. Since a healthy dating relationship is a balanced relationship, use the following questions to identify areas that may need further development.

A. Intellectual

- 1) *Have you taken time to compare your college or high school grades?*
- 2) *Have you ever read a magazine or online article and discussed your perceptions of the validity of the article?*
- 3) *What TV programs do you typically watch? How often do you discuss your reactions to the programs that you view?*
- 4) *When you share your opinion on political issues, how does your dating partner typically respond?*
- 5) *When you have disagreements, to what degree do you feel free to share your perspective? How do you typically respond when your partner shares their perspective?*
- 6) *Have you learned to disagree without being disagreeable?*

B. Emotional

- 1) *What emotions have you felt throughout this day? What stimulated those emotions?*
- 2) *How often, and to what degree, do you share your emotions with each other?*

- 3) *When you do share emotions, how does the other person typically respond? What improvements would you like to see in this part of your relationship?*

C. Social

- 1) *What social events have the two of you attended together in the last month? Share with each other your level of enjoyment or frustration with these events.*
- 2) *What sports event do you most enjoy attending or watching on TV?*
- 3) *Do either of you have interest in attending musical events? Have you discussed how this interest affects your relationship?*
- 4) *How many movies have you watched together in the past six weeks? Did you discuss the content of these movies afterwards?*
- 5) *When you attend social events that involve talking with other people, what bothers you most about your partner's behavior?*
- 6) *What improvements would you like to see in this part of your relationship?*

D. Spiritual

- 1) *Have the two of you discussed your spiritual backgrounds?*
- 2) *If you grew up in a religious home, have you embraced the faith of your childhood? Or have you rejected it? Or are you still trying to decide? What is your view of God?*
- 3) *If you have children, will you raise them in a particular faith?*
- 4) *What changes would you like to see in this part of your relationship?*

E. Physical

- 1) *What kind of affirming touches communicate love to you?*
- 2) *Have you discussed with each other what you think are inappropriate touches?*
- 3) *To what degree have you felt pressured to accept touches that you feel are inappropriate?*
- 4) *What changes would you like to see in this aspect of your relationship?*

Notes

CHAPTER 1—That Being in Love Is Not an Adequate Foundation for Building a Successful Marriage

1. Dorothy Tennov, *Love and Limerence* (New York: Stein and Day, 1972), 142.

CHAPTER 3—That the Sayings “Like Mother, Like Daughter” and “Like Father, Like Son” Are Not Myths

1. James Garbarino, *Lost Boys: Why Our Sons Turn Violent and How We Can Save Them* (New York: Free Press, 1999), 50.
2. Theodore Jacob and Sheri Johnson, “Parenting Influences on the Development of Alcohol Abuse and Dependence,” *Alcohol Health and Research World*, vol. 21, no. 3 (1997): 204–209. For additional information, see the National Association for Children of Alcoholics website: www.nacoa.net/impfacts.htm.

CHAPTER 5—That Apologizing Is a Sign of Strength

1. 1 John 1:8–9.
2. Gary D. Chapman and Jennifer Thomas, *The Five Apology Languages: How to Experience Healing in All Your Relationships* (Chicago: Northfield Publishing, 2006), 125–28.

CHAPTER 6—That Forgiveness Is Not a Feeling

1. Psalm 103:12.

CHAPTER 8—That We Needed a Plan for Handling Our Money

1. Acts 20:35.
2. Ellie Kay, *The Little Book of Big Savings: 351 Practical Ways to Save Money Now* (Colorado Springs: WaterBrook Press, 2009).

CHAPTER 9—That Mutual Sexual Fulfillment Is Not Automatic

1. Deuteronomy 24:5.
2. See William G. Axinn and Arland Thornton, “The Relationship between Cohabitation and Divorce: Selectivity or Casual Influence?,” *Demography* 29 (1992): 357–74; and Zheng Wu, “Premarital Cohabitation and Postmarital Cohabitation Union Formation,” *Journal of Family Issues* 16 (1995): 212–32.
3. Barbara Wilson, *The Invisible Bond: How to Break Free from Your Sexual Past* (Colorado Springs: Multnomah Publishers, 2006).
4. Clifford and Joyce Penner, *The Gift of Sex: A Guide to Sexual Fulfillment* (Nashville: W Publishing Group, 2003).

CHAPTER 10—That I Was Marrying into a Family

1. Psalm 133:1 ESV.
2. Ron L. Deal, *The Smart Stepfamily: Seven Steps to a Healthy Family* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 2002).

CHAPTER 11—That Spirituality Is Not to Be Equated with “Going to Church”

1. 2 Corinthians 6:14–16.
2. Genesis 1:1.
3. Genesis 1:27 NLT.
4. Hebrews 1:1–3.

5. “In U.S., Decline of Christianity Continues at Rapid Pace,” Pew Research Center, October 17, 2019, <https://www.pewforum.org/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/>.

CHAPTER 12—That Personality Profoundly Influences Behavior

1. Adapted from *Covenant Marriage: Building Communication & Intimacy* (Nashville: B&H, 2003), 112.
2. Ibid.
3. For more information, or to locate a counselor in your area, visit www.prepare-enrich.com.

EPILOGUE

1. Kim McAlister, “The X-Generation,” *HR Magazine* 39 (May 1994): 21.