

Marriage Mentoring
Tidbits from “The Complete Guide to Marriage Mentoring”
By Drs. Les and Leslie Parrott

“The purpose of marriage mentoring is to lovingly invest in the preparation, maximization, and restoration of lifelong marriages by walking alongside couples who are less experienced than their mentors”

What a marriage mentor IS

One who gives timely information, models, challenges and motivates, gives resources, encourages goodness *and inspires greatness*, normalizes experiences, helps set high goals and periodically evaluates.

**Warmth, genuineness, and empathy are a must!!!*

What a marriage mentor IS NOT

A parent, a “buddy” or “pal”, “on call” for every crisis, a professor, or a “know-it-all”.

Some DO’S and DON’TS

DO: Listen before trying to solve problems

DO: Make open-ended statements that invite further disclosure

DON’T: Rush mentorees into making rapid changes; be patient

DON’T: Make moral judgements: earn the right to intervene by understanding first!

DO: Refer if needed

MAXIMIZING: Mentoring couples from good to **great**
“The greatest enemy to a great marriage is a good marriage”

What sets the “greats” apart?

-Generosity outweighs selfishness: Get rid of subtle self-focus.

-Purpose that overshadows plodding: Remember why you got married in the first place.

-Parenting with pleasure rather than mere parenting.

-Spending time together: Prioritize your time; don’t expect to “find” it.

-Spending time talking: Identify when and where you have your best talks.

-SLOW down. Alleviate the sentence, “Get to the point.”

-Laughter is the tell tale sign that marriage is great.

-Ask The Big Question: “What would make me a better spouse this week?”

ESSENTIAL SKILLS to help you be a great mentor:

Build Rapport

Have warmth: *trust, affinity, harmony, understanding, comfort...*

Get to know what is real about them: What they care for, stand for, feel and know.

Identify: You are with them because of your similarities

Be credible: Believable and trustworthy.

Minimize differences; harmonize experiences and values.

They want to know...Do you understand? Do you have the ability to help? Are you invested?

Walk In Their Shoes

What is *empathy*? It involves both your head and your heart...analyzing as well as sympathizing. It is sensing a person's unspoken concern and understanding what lies behind their feelings.

What is *compassion*? It is the recognition of and concern for another's need and appropriate action to meet that need.

**Realize that how you would feel in a similar situation is only a projection. Say, "I know how I would feel in this situation, but I am not you. How do you feel?"*

Work As A Team

1. Understand your own unique strengths: Talk about your comfort zones
2. Empower each other's voice: Underscore what your spouse is saying
3. Embrace your differences: Let them watch you successfully navigate your differences

Ask Meaningful Questions (see "Six Helpful Questions To Ask Others" handout)

People crave to be known and appreciated. "A quality question conveys kindness, warmth, concern, and interest. It is couched in affirmation and appreciation."

Listen Aggressively

Listen to understand; not reply.

Advice Giving

Advice can be self-centered: It is important to feel *their* pain.

Advice can make a couple feel worse: Be sensitive and persistent in listening!

Advice can be boring: Beware of the monologue!

Tell your story

-Stories stick: People remember stories because they are able to personally identify.

-Stories are meant to be shared: Use life experiences to help others

-Stories require vulnerability: Don't "tell all", but enough to help mentorees identify with the times you've stumbled and feel hope and healing from your success.

Pray Together

*Encourage your couple to pray together and/or for each other daily.

Three great questions to ask before praying for them are:

1. As you review this last week, what are you most thankful for in your partner?
2. What's a pressure point the two of you are likely to encounter in your upcoming week?
3. What's one positive and concrete action for improving your marriage that you'd like to take this week?

Staying Sharp and Refreshed

“A Mentor cannot always be about teaching truth, he must also feed on it”. C.S. Lewis

-Retreat as a couple

-Read a book together

-Get mentored yourself!