

1. Get comfortable so you do not need to support any part of your body. You can lie down on the floor or a couch. ⌚ 1 MIN
2. Scan your body and see where you feel tense or stiff. ⌚ 1 MIN
3. Take some deep breaths from your belly, then tighten your whole body. Begin to relax, starting with your face, then neck, shoulders, back, hands, arms, stomach, buttocks, legs, feet, and finally, toes. Try several rounds of this body quieting sequence. ⌚ 2 MIN
4. After some time spent tightening and releasing your muscles, scan your body again to see what you notice. ⌚ 1 MIN
5. Share with your partner what you are feeling. ⌚ 1 MIN
6. Position yourselves so your knees are touching, and hold hands. Briefly share three things you feel thankful for today. ⌚ 4 MIN
7. Next, while still holding hands, practice the eye smiles exercise from chapter 4. ⌚ 2 MIN
8. Discuss what you notice after trying these steps, and close with quiet cuddling and resting. ⌚ 3 MIN

Finding Your Marriage Flavor ⌚ 15 MIN

1. Start by sharing highlights from your day. Once you feel relational, discuss the following topics.

What we like: What do you like about your marriage? How does this make you feel? (*This is not a time to use the word "but" or stir up what annoys you about your marriage.*)

EXAMPLE: I like that we value quality time. It makes me feel encouraged thinking about how we protect opportunities to connect with each other and the people we love.

Who we are: Talk about the unique flavor in your marriage. What important qualities are present in your marriage? What specific qualities are meaningful for you?

EXAMPLE: I like that we are people who value relationships, and we prioritize time with each other and with friends.

Looking back: When the day comes and you are at the end of your life, what things would you like said about how you valued your marriage? What would you like to be able to say about how you cultivated and tended your marriage? In other words, what kind of marriage legacy do you want to have?

EXAMPLE: I want to say that I finished well and I loved my spouse with all my heart. I want my

loved ones to recognize that I deeply valued my marriage. ⌚ 9 MIN

2. Practice the eye smiles exercise for a joy and rest sequence. Remember to look away when you feel the joy is no longer growing. ⌚ 3 MIN

Note: *You can play music if you like.*

3. Discuss what you noticed about this exercise, then close with quiet cuddling and resting.

⌚ 3 MIN

Wrap Up: Making a PLAN

WE STARTED THIS BOOK with the promise that investing fifteen minutes a day to do the exercises in our joy workout program and doing them for at least thirty days would lead to a noticeable growth in the joy in your marriage. The more consistent you are, the more quickly these exercises will lead to new habits. We hope you have been doing the exercises, but perhaps you just read the book and skipped the exercises. That sounds like something we would have done. We encourage you to go back through the book with your husband or your wife and do the exercises. Remember, your relational brain benefits from practice and interaction, not information. If you are intentional about following the PLAN, you will start building new habits that will help you find the joy you

APPENDIX 4

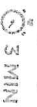
More “Nurture a Rhythm” Exercises

Resting and Kissing 15 MIN

Shortening the window of time between moments of shared joy requires us to notice that joy and rest are needed, and then practice strategic rhythms to increase the joy.

1. Make yourselves comfortable and spend some time resting as you cuddle.

NOTE: Keep this nonverbal to enhance the bonding experience. You can set a timer if you like.



2. Holding hands and looking at each other, take turns telling your spouse the qualities you first observed in him or her that made you fall in

love. Include examples where you saw these qualities in action. ⌚ 5 MIN

- Next, position yourselves knee to knee and hold hands. Practice eye smiles for a joy and rest sequence. Remember to look away at the right times when you feel the joy is no longer growing.

NOTE: *You can play music if you like.* ⌚ 3 MIN

- Kiss each other like you mean it, then discuss what you notice from this joy and rest sequence. ⌚ 2 MIN
- Close with quiet cuddling and resting together. ⌚ 2 MIN

More Bedroom Joy ⌚ 15 MIN

You will want some privacy for this exercise.

- While lying in bed holding each other, practice the following sequence.

First, use quiet, soothing touch to comfort and relax your spouse while you tell your spouse what you enjoy about his or her character and personality.

Next, use high-energy stimulating touch to arouse your spouse while you share what you like about his or her body.

Now return to rest using soothing touch while you share the ways your spouse makes you feel loved and valued.

Use high-energy, stimulating touch to arouse your spouse while you affirm your love and desire for your beloved. ⌚ 9 MIN

(As much time as you need!) Enjoy relational intimacy that makes you both smile.

- Share appreciation or pray, thanking God for your partner, so your partner can hear. ⌚ 3 MIN
- Spend some time resting together with quiet cuddling. ⌚ 3 MIN

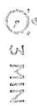
Using Your Joy Senses ⌚ 15 MIN

We now practice an exercise designed to maximize marriage joy using your five senses.


- Sight:** You see because your eyes translate light into images the brain can process via the optic nerve. Sit across from each other while you hold hands. Tell your beloved what you like about him or her as you peer into your beloved's eyes. Include qualities you can see as you look at your spouse. ⌚ 2 MIN

- Sound:** Through a complex series of steps, your outer and inner ear work together to funnel sound waves that turn into vibrations that your cochlear nerve receives and then sends to the brain for processing. Hold each other and take turns placing your head on your spouse's chest. With your eyes closed, listen to your spouse as


he or she tells you the things you do that make him or her feel loved, special, and appreciated.



3. **Smell:** Nerve receptors located in your nasal cavity pick up chemicals in the air which trigger a response that sends information to the brain for processing via the olfactory nerve. Smell is one of the fastest ways to trigger an old memory. While cuddling and holding each other, lean into each other's necks and take several moments to quietly rest as you breathe in the scent of your spouse. When finished, share how his or her familiar smell brings you comfort.

NOTE: *You may want to be sure this step doesn't happen after a sweaty workout, so take the appropriate steps to keep joy levels high.*  3 MIN

4. **Taste:** Thanks to small bumps on your tongue called papillae, chemicals from the food you eat go to your taste buds, which stimulate special cells that activate receptors and signals. These signals are then sent for processing. Close your eyes and tenderly kiss your spouse, then share what you enjoy about kissing your beloved.

NOTE: *As a friendly reminder, Marcus and I suggest you avoid a meal containing onions and garlic before you practice this step.*  3 MIN

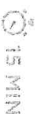
5. **Touch:** Your skin has three layers, and receptor

cells embedded in these layers send signals to the brain for evaluation. Some areas of the body have more and different kinds of receptors, so certain areas of your beloved's body are more sensitive than other areas. Touch your beloved's face and body and describe what you feel. Enhance this step by closing your eyes.

NOTE: *If you feel adventurous, alternate touch that calms your spouse with touch that excites your spouse.*  3 MIN

6. Discuss whether you prefer one sense over another as you cuddle together.  1 MIN

Fun with Friends



Here is a chance to have fun while you share some joy with your friends. Creating a narrative (telling a story) helps your brain add more value to something important to you and it gives your brain the opportunity to spread joy.

Go on a date with another couple. Tell some stories, share what you learned from this book, and invite them to try one of the four habits: Appreciate Daily.

1. Before practicing, highlight the effect on your marriage from learning the material and trying the four habits. As an example, you may want

to share your favorite exercises from the book and explain why these were helpful for you.



5 MIN

2. Give your friends the opportunity to enjoy the power of appreciation by doing the following exercise during your time together. Follow the steps below, and be sure each person has the chance to contribute.

Share three highlights from your week.

Share three qualities you enjoy about your spouse.

Share three characteristics you appreciate in the other couple.

Share what you notice after you practice this appreciation exercise.

For homework in the comfort of your own home, talk with your spouse about what you enjoyed from your date night, then close with quiet cuddling and resting together. 10 MIN

Congratulations on the completion of your exercises! You have worked hard to get here. Marcus and I encourage you to continue practicing the exercises and insert the habits into your daily life and routine. Discuss pitfalls you predict that lie ahead as you begin to walk this out. Schedule time in your day and week for joyful connection. Protect your time before bed to discuss the

day and address any problems *before* you climb into bed so your bedroom remains a haven for joy and rest. Marcus and I celebrate your success and pray that joy will blossom in your marriage.