

**Pastor's Corner** – 7-14-2018

Making Marriage Work: Principle 1 – Enhance Your Love Maps

According to the book, “the seven principles for making marriage work” healthy marriages are ones where the couple has extensive love maps. What is a “love map,” you ask? Excellent question.

If you pick up a good road map of North Dakota and take a look you will find that it contains all kinds of important details. Not only will it tell you where to find the bigger cities like Fargo and Bismarck but also the little ones like Burnstad and Bowdon. A good map will show you interstates and county roads. There will be lakes, rivers, state parks, national parks, and points of interest. The purpose of a map is to help you get to where you want to go, and the more complete the map, the better it will accomplish its purpose.

Similarly, in a good marriage, each person has a well-rounded understanding of the details of their spouse's life. A strong love map means you know the big things as well as the little things about your spouse. You know when your anniversary is and your spouse's birthday (big things). But you also know that she doesn't like cilantro because it tastes like soap. You know that even a fleck of pepper will make a dish too spicy for her. You know the names of coworkers and friends. Deeper than that, you know about hopes, dreams, fears, and feelings. The more detailed your love map, the better equipped you will be to navigate life together.

By contrast, marriages where the love maps are incomplete are headed towards a crisis. One of the first steps towards a loveless marriage and a disjointed life with your spouse is when you lose touch with them and their world. If you don't know those details, big and small, your love will fade.

The author of the book tells the story of Dr. Rory and his wife Lisa. Dr. Rory was a pediatrician who was likeable, intelligent, and warm. Yet when he was asked about the details of his home life it was discovered that Dr. Rory didn't know the name of the family dog or even where the back door of the house was located. He had lost touch with the details of his spouse's world that he hardly knew her anymore. It's difficult to be in love with someone that you don't know.

When couples first get married they often have very complete love maps. Think about when you first met your spouse or significant other. You probably spent hours trying to get to know one another. You learned about all the things they like and dislike.

You asked questions about their past and their dreams for the future. Unfortunately, as time goes by, people change and it's all too easy to stop updating your love maps. Before you know it you have lost touch and no longer know what makes your spouse tick.

Having strong love maps is also important because it can help you weather significant changes in your life. Take for instance, the arrival of a first child. This happy event will radically change the nature of your home life. It's not uncommon for priorities to abruptly change when that little one comes along. Suddenly the person you came to know and love while you were courting is dramatically different. If you have strong love maps and have learned how to keep in touch, then those changes won't catch you by surprise and throw you for a loop.

If you find that you might be a little bit weak in this area there are steps you can take to enhance your love maps. Set a time for date night where you reconnect. Ask questions again. Relearn about your spouse. Do whatever it takes to fill the gaps in your knowledge of your spouse. In Revelation 2 Jesus advises the church in Ephesus (which had lost its first love) to go back and do the things they did at first. You can do the same in your relationship. Go back and do the things you did when you were first falling in love. Retrace those steps and re-ask those questions. Re-build the love maps.

The whole point behind this love maps thing is that we need to make room in our brains for our spouse. We need to partition some space in our mental hard drives where we store all the information we can about those we love. The more you know, the more you can love.

Happy Sabbath  
Pastor Tyler

## the {mini} Love Map Game

### Step 1:

Write the numbers 1 through 20 down a column on the left-hand side of a piece of paper.

### Step 2:

Take turns asking your partner the questions below. If your spouse answers correctly (you be the judge), he/she receives the number of points indicated for that question, and you receive one point. If your spouse answers incorrectly, neither of you receives any points. High score wins.

1. Name my two closest friends. (2)
2. Where was I born? (1)
3. What stresses am I facing right now? (4)
4. What personal improvements do I want to make in my life? (4)
5. What kind of present would I like best? (2)
6. What was my favorite vacation? (2)
7. Who is my greatest source of support (other than you)? (3)
8. What turns me on sexually? (3)
9. What do I most like to do with time off? (2)
10. What kinds of books do I most enjoy reading? (3)
11. What is my favorite TV show? (2)
12. Name one of my concerns or worries. (4)
13. What was my most embarrassing moment? (3)
14. Of all the people we both know, who do I like the least? (3)
15. What are some of the important events coming up in my life? How do I feel about them? (4)
16. What would I consider my ideal job? (4)
17. What was my worst childhood experience? (3)
18. What is one of my favorite desserts? (2)
19. Do I have a secret ambition? What is it? (4)
20. What is one of my favorite ways to spend an evening? (2)

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