

## THE HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF YOUR MARRIAGE

### Part One: The History of Your Relationship

1. Discuss how the two of you met and got together. Was there anything about your spouse that made him or her stand out? What were your first impressions of each other?
2. What do you remember most about the time you were first dating? What stands out? How long did you know each other before you got married? What do you remember about this period? What were some of the highlights? Some of the tensions? What types of things did you do together?
3. Talk about how you decided to get married. Of all the people in the world, what led you to decide that this was the person you wanted to marry? Was it an easy decision? Was it a difficult decision? Were you in love? Talk about this time.
4. Do you remember your wedding? Talk to each other about your memories. Did you have a honeymoon? What do you remember about it?
5. What do you remember about the first year you were married? Were there any adjustments you needed to make?
6. What about the transition to becoming parents? Talk to each other about this period of your marriage. What was it like for the two of you?
7. Looking back over the years, what moments stand out as the really happy times in your marriage? What is a good time for you as a couple? Has this changed over the years?
8. Many relationships go through periods of ups and downs. Would you say that this is true of your marriage? Can you describe some of these periods?
9. Looking back over the years, what moments stand out as the really hard times in your marriage? Why do you think you stayed together? How did you get through these difficult times?
10. Have you stopped doing things together that once gave you pleasure? Explore these with one another.

### Part Two: Your Philosophy of Marriage

11. Talk to each other about why you think some marriages work while others don't. Decide together who among the couples you know have particularly good marriages and who have particularly bad marriages. What is different about these two marriages? How would you compare your own marriage to each of these couples'?
12. Talk to each other about your parents' marriages. Would you say they were very similar to or different from your own marriage?
13. Make a chart of the history of your marriage, its major turning points, ups and downs. What were the happiest times for you? For your partner? How has your marriage changed over the years?

Taken from ["The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work"](#) by John M. Gottman, Ph.D.

