

PRE-MARITAL COACHING GROUNDWORK DECK

NAME: _____

FIANCE'S NAME: _____

CURRENT WEDDING DATE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

PHONE #: _____ BIRTHDATE: _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

CURRENT OCCUPATION: _____

EMPLOYER: _____

LENGTH OF EMPLOYMENT AT CURRENT JOB: _____

PREVIOUSLY MARRIED? YES NO HOW MANY TIMES? _____

DIVORCED? YES NO WHEN WAS IT FINAL? _____

WIDOWED? YES NO HOW LONG AGO? _____

NUMBER OF YEARS PREVIOUSLY MARRIED: _____

CHILDREN (IF ANY) NAMES & BIRTHDATES: _____

Understanding Your Personal History—A Worksheet

One of the riskiest, but most rewarding benefits of a marriage relationship is the exciting experience of knowing and being known—revealing yourself and having the other person reveal themselves to you. And as odd as it may sound, dating and engagement can sometimes work against this process. On the one hand, you want to know everything about this person. On the other hand, you could think that if this person knew everything about you, they might be repelled or lose interest. The temptation here is to hide or cover up some specifics about your past, but let me urge you not to begin your marriage by candy-coating or omitting important parts of your history. Vulnerable transparency is crucial.

Also, you may think you know your fiancé better than anyone else on earth, but we want to help you deepen that already existing knowledge by giving you the opportunity to fill out a worksheet that guides you through an intentional discussion. It will help you both to understand each other's past and how that past has affected each of you today.

The past shapes all of us in ways we rarely understand. Your past influences your behavior, your personality, your emotions, your opinions, and your convictions. And while you both have probably not attempted to conceal your background from each other, you still may not have taken the time needed to adequately examine how your past influences your future.

For example, when most couples marry, they assume that their marriage is between just the two of them. In reality, however, it's two people and *two families* that are coming together to form a new merger of sorts. We rarely consciously consider our family's impact on what will be a new family after marriage, but our past familial experiences must not be minimized in how they've shaped us into who we are today. Rather, they need to be understood, and planned for as we're preparing for marriage.

PART 1: YOUR RELATIONSHIP HISTORY

This worksheet will take a couple of hours to complete; the effort and time you put into it will be worth it. As you work through this, you'll no doubt uncover some gems along the way that will enrich your current relationship, but also be aware that you'll probably find some unpleasant things too. This is normal, but we urge you to handle all of it properly as to prevent future troubles in your upcoming marriage. Take your time and answer each question as thoroughly as possible.



Understanding Your Personal History

A. Your Current Relationship

1) How did we meet?

2) What attracted me to him/her?

3) How long have we been dating and how has that been?

B. Your Friendships

4) Friendships for me have generally been (check one):

- Easy—I can make friends with little to no effort.
- So-so—I can take them or leave them.
- Challenging—It's a lot of work, but ultimately satisfying.
- Discouraging—It's more painful than I can handle.
- Absent—I've never really had an authentic close friend.

Explain why you checked the one you did:



Understanding Your Personal History

- 5) Who are two of your closest friends, and what makes those relationships significant or special?

How long have they been your friends?

- 6) What are three to five words these friends would use to describe you?

C. Your Past Dating Relationships

- 7) Describe a serious dating relationship from the past, if applicable. Briefly state how it began, progressed, and ended.



Understanding Your Personal History

- 8) Can you identify any patterns that seem to be present in your relationships with the opposite sex? (Examples: “My tendency is to fall hard and fast, then get hurt” or “I am generally the more committed person in my relationships” or “I’ve always been super casual about romance.”)

PART 2: YOUR FAMILY

A. Home Environment

- 1) How would you describe your childhood?

What was best about your childhood?

What was most difficult?



Understanding Your Personal History

2) What was your family's socio-economic background as you were growing up and how did that shape your outlook on life?

3) How would you describe the emotional environment of the home you grew up in?

4) Did you experience any type of abuse (physical, emotional, sexual) as you grew up? Explain as much as you are able.



Understanding Your Personal History

5) What hardships (traumatic events, financial difficulties, etc.) has your family experienced?

6) As you look back over your family history, do you see any legacies that have been passed from one generation to the next? (For example, one family might pass on a tradition of trusting God in tough circumstances, while another family might pass on a tendency toward turning to alcohol to alleviate problems.)

B. Parents

7) What words would you use to describe your parents' marriage? Explain why you chose each word.

8) As parents, what did your dad and mom do well?

Dad:

Mom:



Understanding Your Personal History

9) As parents, what do you wish they would have done differently?

Dad:

Mom:

10) Describe the most significant impact your parents have had on you (positive or negative).

Dad:

Mom:

11) What roles did your parents assume in the household?

In general, who was the leader in the marriage?

Who was the leader as a parent?



Understanding Your Personal History

How did they make decisions?

12) Choose three or more words to describe your relationship with your father and explain why you chose those specific words.

13) Choose three or more words to describe your relationship with your mother and explain why you chose those specific words.

14) In what ways are you similar to each of your parents?

15) In what ways are you different from each of your parents?



Understanding Your Personal History

16) Currently, are there any unresolved issues between you and your parents? Articulate them here if possible.

17) What are your parents feeling about you getting married? How do they feel about your choice of a spouse?

C. Siblings and Other Relatives

18) Rate your relationship with each of your siblings (if applicable):

	DISTANT			CLOSE	
Sibling: _____	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling: _____	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling: _____	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling: _____	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling: _____	1	2	3	4	5
Sibling: _____	1	2	3	4	5



Understanding Your Personal History

- 19) Describe any special and unique relationships you have with other relatives (grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles, etc.)

PART 3: YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

- 1) What kind of religious upbringing did you have, if any?

- 2) What role does God play in your life today?

- 3) What does it mean to be a “born again Christian” and would you describe yourself that way? If you wouldn’t describe yourself that way, how would you put into words what you believe?



Understanding Your Personal History

4) How certain are you that you are in a personal relationship with the Living God?

- Absolutely Certain (100%)
- Sort of Certain
- Not Certain at All

Why?

5) Describe your spirituality and relationship to God over the past ten years. What were the high points?

What were the low points?



Understanding Your Personal History

What caused growth or prevented growth?

6) Check the areas of your life in which you find it difficult to trust God and give Him complete control:

- | | | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="radio"/> Sex | <input type="radio"/> Critical Spirit | <input type="radio"/> Relationships |
| <input type="radio"/> Thought Life | <input type="radio"/> Self Confidence | <input type="radio"/> My Future |
| <input type="radio"/> Worry | <input type="radio"/> Finances | <input type="radio"/> Anger |
| <input type="radio"/> Career | <input type="radio"/> Decision Making | <input type="radio"/> Relationships with Parents |

Other _____

7) How has your involvement in a local church helped you grow in your relationship with Christ and in your commitment to following Him?

PART 4: MISCELLANEOUS

1) What has been your history in handling finances?



Understanding Your Personal History

What are your strengths and weaknesses in handling money?

What type of debt do you currently have?

2) What types of health (physical or mental) struggles have you dealt with in the past?

What types of struggles are you dealing with currently?

3) What have been your biggest successes at work?



Understanding Your Personal History

4) What have been your biggest challenges at work?

5) What are the most courageous things you've ever done?

6) What have been your greatest triumphs in life?

7) What have been your biggest disappointments in life?



Personality Profile

Beginning with section I and working downward, in the space provided, identify the degree in which each characteristic or behavior most accurately describes you at home or in the relationships with your loved ones. Please use the following scale:

0 – not at all

1 – somewhat

2 – mostly

3 – very much

I	II	III	IV
<input type="checkbox"/> likes control <input type="checkbox"/> confident <input type="checkbox"/> firm <input type="checkbox"/> likes challenge <input type="checkbox"/> problem-solver <input type="checkbox"/> bold <input type="checkbox"/> goal driven <input type="checkbox"/> strong willed <input type="checkbox"/> self-reliant <input type="checkbox"/> persistent <input type="checkbox"/> takes charge <input type="checkbox"/> determined <input type="checkbox"/> enterprising <input type="checkbox"/> competitive <input type="checkbox"/> productive <input type="checkbox"/> purposeful <input type="checkbox"/> adventurous <input type="checkbox"/> independent <input type="checkbox"/> action oriented	<input type="checkbox"/> enthusiastic <input type="checkbox"/> visionary <input type="checkbox"/> energetic <input type="checkbox"/> promoter <input type="checkbox"/> mixes easily <input type="checkbox"/> fun-loving <input type="checkbox"/> spontaneous <input type="checkbox"/> likes new ideas <input type="checkbox"/> optimistic <input type="checkbox"/> takes risks <input type="checkbox"/> motivator <input type="checkbox"/> very verbal <input type="checkbox"/> friendly <input type="checkbox"/> popular <input type="checkbox"/> enjoys variety <input type="checkbox"/> group oriented <input type="checkbox"/> initiator	<input type="checkbox"/> sensitive <input type="checkbox"/> calm <input type="checkbox"/> non-demanding <input type="checkbox"/> enjoys routine <input type="checkbox"/> relational <input type="checkbox"/> adaptable <input type="checkbox"/> thoughtful <input type="checkbox"/> patient <input type="checkbox"/> good listener <input type="checkbox"/> loyal <input type="checkbox"/> even-keeled <input type="checkbox"/> gives in <input type="checkbox"/> indecisive <input type="checkbox"/> dislikes change <input type="checkbox"/> dry humor <input type="checkbox"/> sympathetic <input type="checkbox"/> nurturing <input type="checkbox"/> tolerant	<input type="checkbox"/> consistent <input type="checkbox"/> reserved <input type="checkbox"/> practical <input type="checkbox"/> factual <input type="checkbox"/> perfectionistic <input type="checkbox"/> detailed <input type="checkbox"/> inquisitive <input type="checkbox"/> persistent <input type="checkbox"/> sensitive <input type="checkbox"/> accurate <input type="checkbox"/> controlled <input type="checkbox"/> predictable <input type="checkbox"/> orderly <input type="checkbox"/> conscientious <input type="checkbox"/> discerning <input type="checkbox"/> analytical <input type="checkbox"/> precise <input type="checkbox"/> scheduled <input type="checkbox"/> deliberate
TOTAL:	TOTAL:	TOTAL:	TOTAL:

The personality inventory you just took is not a test that you fail or pass. It is like a fingerprint that shows your tendencies. Discovering your personality tendencies in relationships helps to show where your strengths and weaknesses exist. Now, let's take a closer look at four different personality types based on the four columns above.

	Lion (I)	Otter (II)	Golden Retriever (III)	Beaver (IV)
Relational Strengths	Takes charge Problem solver Competitive Enjoys change Confrontational	Optimistic Energetic Motivators Future-oriented	Warm/Relational Loyal Enjoys Routine Peace-maker Sensitive	Accurate/Precise Quality control Discerning Analytical
Strengths out of Balance	Too direct Impatient Too busy Cold-blooded Impulsive Big risk-taker Insensitive to	Unrealistic Daydreamer Over-bearing Manipulative/ pushy Avoids details Lacks follow-	Attract the hurting Stuck in a rut Easily hurt Holds a grudge Missed opportunities	Too critical Too strict Controlling Pessimist Lose overview
Communication Style	Direct or blunt One-way <u>Weakness:</u> Not as good a listener	Can inspire others Optimistic Enthusiastic One-way <u>Weakness:</u> High energy can manipulate others	Indirect Two-way Great listener <u>Weakness:</u> Uses too many words or provides too many details	Factual Two-way Great listener (tasks) <u>Weakness:</u> Desire for detail and precision can frustrate others
Relational Needs	Personal attention & recognition for what they do. Areas where he/she can be in charge. Opportunity to solve problems. Freedom to change.	Approval. Opportunity to verbalize. Visibility. Social recognition.	Emotional security. Agreeable. Environment.	Quality. Exact expectations.
Relational Balance	Add softness. Become a great listener.	Be attentive to mate's needs. There is such a thing as too much optimism.	Learn to say "NO" to establish emotional boundaries. Learn to confront when own feelings are hurt.	Total support is not always possible. Thorough explanation isn't everything.

How does understanding yourself and your spouse help you get along better???

Values and Hopes—A Survey

Go ahead and complete this upcoming survey individually, and when both of you finish, get together and discuss your answers with each other. Here are a few suggestions for your upcoming discussion:

- Identify where the value, hope, or expectation you hold came from. Don't be afraid to ask, *Is this a product of my background, education, culture, or personality?*
- Discuss why the value, hope, or expectation you hold is important to you and how you can express it in a non-demanding way.
- Resolve together how this value, hope, or expectation can be:
 - a. Accepted and met by your fiancé.
 - b. Adjusted so that it is reasonable.
 - c. Abandoned as unrealistic.

This survey and subsequent discussion should help you identify both realistic and unrealistic hopes, values, and expectations. The whole process can also be like mining for precious ore. You may have to move tons of earth to get ounces of gold, but those priceless nuggets are well worth the effort it takes to find them. In a similar way, many of our hopes, values, and expectations can be buried beneath a lifetime of conditioning, so we must work to uncover them.

Write down specific expectations, values, and hopes you have for your marriage in the following categories. Be sure to write down how you feel about the particular topic, not what you think your fiancé wants to hear. The more specific and honest you are, the more gold you'll discover.

MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP

- 1) How will you make decisions once you are married, and what will you do when you find that you cannot agree?



Values and Hopes Survey

2) How often do you expect to spend time with your friends after you are married?

3) How will you relate to opposite-sex friends after you are married?

FINANCES

4) Who will be the primary financial provider in the family and why?

5) Do you anticipate both husband and wife pursuing careers? If so, for how long?



Values and Hopes Survey

6) How will you decide on major purchases?

7) Who will pay the bills and keep track of expenses?

8) What is your philosophy of giving (charitable donations to your church or to other organizations/ministries) and how will you make decisions about giving?

9) What are your convictions about debt and credit cards?



H O M E

10) Where do you want to live?

In what setting would you want to live (city, suburb, small town, rural, mountains, coastal, etc.)? Would your desires change five to ten years in the future?

11) Do you want to live in an apartment or house? Will you rent or buy?

12) What do you expect your standard of living to look like after five years of marriage? Ten years? Twenty years?

13) How soon after you are married do you expect to have your home reasonably furnished?



SOCIAL / ENTERTAINMENT / HOME ENVIRONMENT

14) How important are family meal times to you? How often will you eat out?

15) Do you want a pet in your home? If so, what type?

16) How often do you want to invite people over to your home?

What kind of entertaining do you expect to do (formal or informal dinners, large or simple parties, etc.)?



Values and Hopes Survey

- 17) How often do you want to go out on dates with your future spouse?
- 18) What will be the role of screen time in your home, and what guidelines will you have about what you watch?
- 19) What will be your guidelines about more mature content (i.e. violence, language) in the entertainment you watch together?
- 20) How do you think your friendships with other people will change after marriage?



Values and Hopes Survey

21) What hobbies or recreational activities will you pursue individually?

Together?

How often will you pursue them?

22) How do you feel about drinking alcohol, or having alcoholic beverages in your home and why do you feel that way?

HOUSEHOLD RESPONSIBILITIES

23) Who will prepare your meals, and what types of food will you eat?



Values and Hopes Survey

24) How clean do you want your home to be? What does “clean” look like to you?

25) Who will do each of the following?

Laundry _____

Buying groceries _____

Car maintenance _____

Home repairs and yard work _____

General household cleaning _____

Making the bed _____

CHILDREN AND PARENTING

26) In general, how do you feel about kids?

26) When would you like to start having kids, and how many do you want to have?



Values and Hopes Survey

28) What would you do if you cannot conceive biological children? Is adoption an exciting option for you?

29) What is your view on abortion?

30) What is your view on birth control?

31) Who will be the primary caregiver of your children?



Values and Hopes Survey

32) How do you envision sharing the responsibility of disciplining your children and how will that discipline play out?

SPIRITUAL

33) When and how often will you pray and study the Bible together?

34) Where will you plug into a church and how involved will you be?

35) In what ways do you anticipate communicating your faith with others as a couple?



Values and Hopes Survey

36) Who will take spiritual leadership in your home, and what do you think that means/looks like on a day-to-day basis?

HOLIDAYS / VACATIONS / SPECIAL OCCASIONS

37) Where will you spend major holidays like Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter?

How will you decide?

38) What expectations do you have for major holidays?

39) How often will you go on vacation and what are your desires for what a vacation will look like?



Values and Hopes Survey

40) How will you celebrate birthdays and wedding anniversaries?

41) How much will you spend on gifts for family, friends, and each other (think birthdays, Christmas, weddings you attend, anniversaries, etc.)?

42) What would you want a typical weekend to look like?

PARENTS AND OTHER RELATIVES

43) How do you think your relationship with your parents will change after you're married?

44) How much time do you anticipate spending with your parents and your in-laws?

45) What other relatives (siblings, cousins, grandparents, etc.) do you expect to be involved with in your marriage and family? In what ways would they be involved?



Values and Hopes Survey

46) How involved do you want your parents and in-laws to be in your children's lives?

How will you accomplish this?

SEX

47) What are your expectations about sex on your honeymoon?

48) In your first year of marriage, how often do you expect to experience sexual intimacy?

49) What do you feel about your spouse sometimes saying "no" to having sex?



LIFE GOALS

50) What are your goals for your life?

51) What are your goals in mirroring God's image in your future marriage?

52) What are your goals to work together as an interdependent team to serve Christ?

53) How do you picture yourself in 10 years?

In 20 years?

In 30 years?