# SESSION 5 LIVING IT OUT

**Key Passage:** *“Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children;and walk in love, just as Christ also loved us and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.”* Ephesians 5:1-2 (ESV)

### A.REVIEW

For this final session of the “Return to Me in Relationship” series, we wanted to spend time reviewing what we have learnt and allowing each person or couple to share what they have tried to change, what went well or not so well.

The series aims to improve our closest committed relationships, so that we can better reflect Christ. Remember it’s the daily unspoken beliefs, assumptions, and practices that make the difference regardless of the big issues.

The following table reviews the key application points of the first four Sessions:

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| **SESSION** | **TITLE** | **KEY APPLICATION POINTS** |
| **Session 1** | Truth in Love | * It is important to tell the truth, but speak with intentional kindness * Understand different personalities types: conflict avoiding or confrontational * Reflect on and discuss how to bring up difficult topics before discussing the actual topic |
| **Session 2** | Conflict & Differences | * Realise differences can be a major source of conflict * Set realistic expectations in what the other person can do for you (don’t expect them to meet all your needs). * Commit to resolve differences |
| **Session 3** | The Inner Heart | * Negative emotions lead to negative words or actions * Choose to resolve your anger * Think positive—rightly assume the other party wants the best for you * Practice self-talk to “boss your feelings around” |
| **Session 4** | Practicing Generosity | * Being generous is one of the biggest contributing factors in happy, healthy relationships * Give without expecting something in return * Keep a positive score (how much the other person has done for you) |

### B.SHARE YOUR EXPERINCES

After reviewing the key points and watching the video, take turns to share at least one thing you have tried to apply from this series (it could be from any of the sessions). **How did it turn out, was it what you expected would happen?**

Note: It’s best to have an open-ended discussion about things you have learned and applied from the series. You could even use the time to share tips that have helped you and your loved one in your relational journey together.

### C.FURTHER DISCUSSION (OPTIONAL)

The five love languages describe the way we feel loved and appreciated. Depending on your individual personality types, you may feel loved differently than how others do. Understanding the different ways you give and receive love will help you to communicate love and appreciation with the other party.

**1.** **The five love languages are: Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Gifts, Quality Time, and Physical Touch – what are your top two?** You can identify your love languages from this quiz: https://www.5lovelanguages.com/quizzes/.

Here’s a quick summary of the Five Love Languages:

#### 1. Words of Affirmation

“If this is your love language, you feel most cared for when your partner is open and expressive in telling you how wonderful they think you are, how much they appreciate you, etc.” Conversely, criticism can be particularly upsetting to people who favour words of affirmation.

#### 2. Acts of Service

“If your partner offering to watch the kids so you can go to the gym (or relieving you from some other tasks) gets your heart going, then this is your love language.” Conversely, stick to your commitment. Forgetting to do chores or tasks you have promised to do can be interpreted as a lack of love and respect towards the other party.

#### 3. Affection

“This love language is just as it sounds. A warm hug, a kiss, touch, and sexual intimacy make you feel most loved when this is your love language.” Forgotten affection or self-isolation can often hurt the feelings of your loved one, so try to avoid physical distancing without giving an explanation.

#### 4. Quality Time

“This love language is about being together, fully present and engaged in the activity at hand, no matter how trivial.” Be deliberate to put away your phone or other distractions that can interrupt designated quality time.

#### 5. Gifts

“Your partner taking the time to give you a gift can make you feel appreciated.” To individuals who favour this love language, the absence of everyday gestures or a missed special occasion are particularly hurtful. Gifts with thoughts put into them are more treasured than expensive gifts.

**2. How do you account for the differences in Love Languages in your closest relationships?**

### D.LIVING IT OUT

Remember, it is often the small things that make a difference in building trust and showing love in a relationship. Ask members what are some of the things they will commit to practice or work on, towards bringing greater enjoyment to their relationships.

Have communion together as a connect group. Pray for one another.

### E.MOVING FORWARD

This is the last session of the relationship series. You may like to read up further using the resources referred to during the series:

* Surprising Secrets of Highly Happy Marriages (2013) by Shaunti Feldhahn.

Published by Multnomah Books (hardcover) or the Crown Publishing Group.

* Use the online resource shaunti.com to read other relevant articles or recommended books
* Try applying Shuanti’s 10 tips for highly happy couples (Appendix)

If you have any feedback or would like to pursue more courses on building better

relationships please contact Ps. Chris Ong on chris.ong@fgam.org.au or any of our connect pastors.

# APPENDIX

# TEN RELATIONSHIP TIPS ANYONE CAN DO

(for couples)

**Your Plan for Getting from So-So to Highly Happy in Your Marriage**

We have extracted these application points from Shaunti Feldhahn’s book “The Surprising Secrets of Highly Happy Marriages” (Chapter 14). This is for couples who want to work more on their relationship together. It is possible for your relationship to improve and even become happy as you have always dreamed it would be. It is about creating small habits, things that are not hard to do but they send huge signals to the other party of your commitment and care for them. Even if you have a terrific marriage, it requires constant tending and no matter how great it is, there is always room to grow.

1. **Identify What You Are Already Doing Well**

Either on your own or (ideally) with your spouse, go through the list of habits in this book and identify what you are already doing well. Maybe you don’t even realise it, so give yourself credit! Recognising this helps you to keep them going.

1. **Pick Your Bite: Choose One or Two Habits—Max—to Try at a Time**   
   To make big changes, start small. The temptation is to get so excited about the habits that they try them all at once, but experience has shown it doesn’t work. Pick only one or two habits to practice, ideally for several weeks. And even narrow it down to one particular habit within a habit where necessary! If you’re feeling confident with one another you can talk about it and pick it together.

1. **Be Ready to Connect the Dots**

Don’t wait for the perfect time, because there probably won’t be any perfect time! So start now, and be ready to watch and connect a given effort with a given result, from day one. Some habits build happiness over time, but others (such as small things like saying Thank You) may make a difference almost immediately.

1. **Try These Habits Alone If You Have to—It Still Works!**

Even if one spouse is reluctant, you can still start. Each habit requires just one partner to begin, and all of them will help to make you both happy, even if just one of you does them. Quite a few of the happiest couples in Feldhanh’s study started out in the struggling category and changed because just one partner began implementing these habits.

1. **Plug Into Community**

So many couples said that it was much easier to apply these things when they were talking with other couples and touching base regularly. Support network is especially helpful if you are flying solo in making changes to the marriage.

1. **Listen to and Lean on God**

Pray for God’s guidance before you make the final choice of what to start with—or what your spouse should start with! As one husband cautioned, “For example, there might be one thing that you think your husband just needs to do. You may be absolutely sure! But when you pray about it, God might say, No, this other thing is what I want you to ask him to do … because he can do this one, and that will then give him confidence to try others. Giving this process to God and asking for His guidance is so key.”

1. **Create Reminders**

There is a real value and importance of reminding yourself to keep what you’re working on front and centre. One tip could be to write yourself a sticky note that asks a question related to the habit you are struggling with, such as “are you grumpy?” Honestly answering that enables greater self-awareness and can increase your motivation.

1. **Stick with It**

All these habits are based on your choice, not feelings. That’s why it’s important to make a commitment to what you can do and stick with it. If it helps you can set a time limit (such as a certain number of weeks) and review after that.

1. **Be Generous with Yourself and Each Other**

This is a marathon, not a sprint. This is a new lifestyle of learning. If you stumble, that’s okay. Get up and take another step instead of letting it totally stop you. Don’t let failures rule you out. The point is you are trying and that is important in and of itself.

1. **Celebrate Results**

As you see results, celebrate them! Talk with your spouse about how great it feels now that she’s saying “Thank you” or he’s saying “I love you”. Applaud each other for how loved his/her new approach has made you feel. You may even want to write things down and capture what changed so you can encourage yourself later when it is needed.

NOTES: