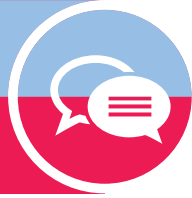


DAY 1

Monday 1 September



International **Marriage week** SA  
1-7 SEPTEMBER 2014  
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## 7 KEYS TO A FANTASTIC MARRIAGE

### - CHOOSE POSITIVE THOUGHTS

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Every thought about your partner or your relationship will affect you on an emotional level, moving you either one step further or one step closer to your partner. Negative thoughts will pull you away from your partner and positive thoughts will make you feel emotionally closer to your partner. This is why it is so important to consciously choose to think positively about your partner and your relationship.

Even though there are several reasons within every marriage to have negative thoughts, they won't make anything better. Successful couples will avoid negative thoughts and rather focus on 'detoxing' their thoughts because they realise that this is the key to ensuring a happy marriage.

Four easy steps to 'detox' your thoughts:

- Choose a week for 'detox' and every evening write down a few negative thoughts about your partner or your relationship.
- Replace each negative thought with a positive one.
- Start telling your partner about your positive thoughts regularly.
- As soon as it makes you draw nearer to your partner, then it's the perfect time to discuss the cause of those negative thoughts. Handle one at a time and make use of our communication tips to ensure that the conversation is successful.

**(Complete e-Course "Negative Thoughts or God's Thoughts for your Marriage" available at [www.beterverhoudings.co.za](http://www.beterverhoudings.co.za))**

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## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (tonight)

*Discuss these questions with your partner tonight. Remember, you don't have to agree about everything. Allow some room for differing opinions and listen to each other's hearts.*

- When do you usually have negative thoughts about your partner?.

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- What can you do about negative thoughts?

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## ACTION PLAN

Use this space to summarise your plan of action for the way forward.

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## BIBLE STUDY

Read this Bible verse in a few Bible translations and write down what impacts you the most. Discuss what you wrote down with your partner.

- Prov. 4:23

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Tomorrow you will get day two's section of this short course. Tomorrow's theme is titled, 'Make room for differences!'

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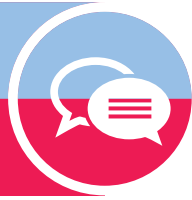
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DAY 2

Tuesday 2 September



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## 7 KEYS TO A FANTASTIC MARRIAGE

### - MAKE ROOM FOR DIFFERENCES

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An orchestra is comprised of several different musicians with different musical instruments. Each musical instrument has its own unique qualities and brings with it unique sounds to the fore. It's only after a lot of practice that the grouping of different musicians with different instruments can learn how to harmonise to make the most beautiful music.

A marriage is very similar to an orchestra. Two people that get married are in many ways very different, with different preferences, unique qualities and they do things in different manners. It is only through lots of exercise that two married individuals can learn how to live together in harmony and to enjoy each other despite their differences.

"Elna and I differ in so many respects," explains Gustav. "I want to plan ahead and she often wants to be spontaneous. I usually get upset over something that goes wrong while she can laugh about it more easily. We like different types of food and cold-drinks. I gain energy by being alone why she gains her energy when socialising with people. We also handle toothpastes differently, have different sleeping patterns and I prefer open windows and curtains in the evening while she wants them closed to prevent insects from coming indoors during the night. So the list goes on . . . pages long!"

"Some of these differences in the past could've easily resulted in conflict between us which would've soured our relationship. Originally, we wanted to change each other but that didn't work. We had to learn to give each other the space to be different. This required a lot of time and practice but we soon realised that it was the only way to make a marriage work. Now, after a lot of practice, there is hardly anything that prevents us from enjoying and celebrating our marriage's love music."

**(Complete e-Course on the differences between men and women available at [www.beterverhoudings.co.za](http://www.beterverhoudings.co.za))**

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## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (tonight)

*Discuss these questions with your partner tonight. Remember, you don't have to agree about everything. Allow some room for differing opinions and listen to each other's hearts.*

- What differences between you and your partner often causes conflict?

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- How can you make space for these differences so that your marriage can function effectively?

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## ACTION PLAN

Use this space to summarise your plan of action for the way forward.

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## BIBLE STUDY

Read this Bible verse in a few Bible translations and write down what impacts you the most. Discuss what you wrote down with your partner.

- Rom. 15:7

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Tomorrow you will get day three's section of this short course. Tomorrow's theme is titled, 'Dealing correctly with disappointments'.

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DAY 3

Wednesday 3 September



International **Marriage week** SA  
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## 7 KEYS TO A FANTASTIC MARRIAGE

### - DEALING CORRECTLY WITH DISAPPOINTMENTS

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If you have been disappointed by your marriage partner, you will experience one of the following three consequences of disappointment:

Firstly, the disappointment can result in the formulation of several questions that you think of on and off again, it gets you thinking what you want to ask and what you are wondering about. It can include anything from "Why did you do this?" to "Is our marriage not important to him?"

At times you may experience subtle rage but at other times you will wonder how you managed to get so very angry in the first place, this is the second consequence.

Thirdly, you may also become despondent and feel like your marriage will never recover again. This despondence can lead to depression.

Unfortunately, many people think that these three consequences of disappointment can just be ignored and will go away by itself. Others linger too long on asking questions, getting angry or despondent, and carry this disappointment with them till old-age.

The best is to tell yourself that disappointment is part of any relationship and that the three consequences thereof is normal. Give yourself the opportunity to experience each of these three effects of disappointment without harping on them too long. Ask the questions (hopefully your partner will be prepared to answer the questions), be angry and be despondent. When you do that, you give yourself a chance to grieve – something that is necessary if you want to successfully work through the disappointment.

Make sure that you forgive your partner, even if you find that it is a process as opposed to a one-time occurrence.

Triggers are anything that reminds you of the disappointment after it has happened. It can be anything like a specific sound, specific music, an advert on TV or the manner in which someone says or does something. If you want to handle the disappointment correctly long-term, you will have to ensure that the triggers don't pull you back to the questioning, anger or despondent stages.

**(Complete e-Course on how to process disappointments available at [www.beterverhoudings.co.za](http://www.beterverhoudings.co.za))**

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## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (tonight)

**Discuss these questions with your partner tonight. Remember, you don't have to agree about everything. Allow some room for differing opinions and listen to each other's hearts.**

- Which one of the following makes it difficult for you to process disappointments successfully: questioning, despondence, forgiveness and triggers?

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- How can you handle disappointments more efficiently in the future?

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## ACTION PLAN

Use this space to summarise your plan of action for the way forward.

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## BIBLE STUDY

Read this Bible verse in a few Bible translations and write down what impacts you the most. Discuss what you wrote down with your partner.

- Phil. 3:13

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Tomorrow you will receive day four's section of this short course. Tomorrow's theme is titled, 'More fun.'

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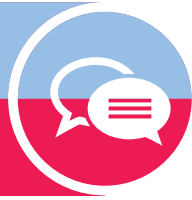
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DAY 4

Thursday 4 September



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## 7 KEYS TO A FANTASTIC MARRIAGE

### - MORE FUN

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There is a saying that says: "Couples who pray together stay together." This is very true but another saying that is also very valuable says, "Couples who play together stays together". Married couples that play have fun and fun ensures that two people enjoy each other. Do you and your partner have enough fun together? We usually tell couples about three types of fun, namely; play fun; romantic fun and bed fun.

#### Play Fun

Play fun is any type of fun that doesn't include romantic or sexual fun. It can be physical like tickling each other, a pillow fight or play fighting. It can also be a hobby that makes you and your partner laugh. It can also be something like practising a sport together, watching sport or at the same time, being playful and silly.

#### Romantic Fun

Romantic fun focuses on the sensual and romantic relationship between a couple. Try a new way of kissing or a massage with a silly twist. Use your imagination and be more fun in the romance department of your relationship.

#### Bed Fun

Bed fun focuses on the sexual relationship between married couples. Make sexual intimacy more fun with something naughty, something new or just something silly.

*(Another great variety of keys in the e-Course 'Keys to a Fantastic Marriage' available at [www.beterverhoudings.co.za](http://www.beterverhoudings.co.za))*

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## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (tonight)

*Discuss these questions with your partner tonight. Remember, you don't have to agree about everything. Allow some room for differing opinions and listen to each other's hearts.*

- What type of fun do you enjoy most in your marriage?

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## ACTION PLAN

Use this space to summarise your plan of action for the way forward.

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## BIBLE STUDY

Read this Bible verse in a few Bible translations and write down what impacts you the most. Discuss what you wrote down with your partner.

- Eccl. 9:9

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Tomorrow you will receive day five's section of this short course. Tomorrow's theme is titled, 'Satisfying each other's core needs'.

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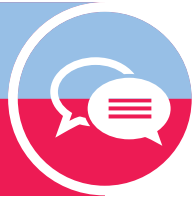
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DAY 5

Friday 5 September



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## 7 KEYS TO A FANTASTIC MARRIAGE

### - SATISFY EACH OTHER'S CORE NEEDS

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Married couples usually have several needs but there are always two or three that are more important than the rest. Those two or three needs are called 'Core Needs'. According to WF Harley (His Needs, Her Needs), couples will keep finding each other irresistible as long as they satisfy each other's core needs.

Here are a list of examples of typical needs that married couples have. Married couples can use this list to identify their core needs (two to three needs that are more important than the rest).

- Love
- Respect
- Romance
- Trust
- Unity
- Understanding
- Alone time
- Friendship
- Transparency
- Special time together
- Honesty
- Physical contact
- Support
- Parenting
- Emotional closeness
- Constructive conversations
- Protection (emotional/physical/spiritual)
- Care/Provide for (emotional/physical/spiritual)
- Interest/Involvement
- Security
- Admiration
- Doing things together
- Sex
- Appreciation
- Excitement/fun
- Grace
- Company
- Family ties
- Spiritual intimacy
- Financial Security

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## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (tonight)

*Discuss these questions with your partner tonight. Remember, you don't have to agree about everything. Allow some room for differing opinions and listen to each other's hearts.*

- What are your current three core needs (choose from the list above)?

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- How can your partner best satisfy these three core needs?

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## ACTION PLAN

Use this space to summarise your plan of action for the way forward.

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## BIBLE STUDY

Read this Bible verse in a few Bible translations and write down what impacts you the most. Discuss what you wrote down with your partner.

- Phil. 2:2-5

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Tomorrow you will receive days six's section of this short course. Tomorrow's theme is titled, 'Argue Correctly'.

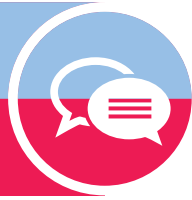
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DAY 6

Saturday 6 September



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## 7 KEYS TO A FANTASTIC MARRIAGE

### - ARGUE CORRECTLY

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If a couple is dedicated to working together, then their conflict management will improve. Consider the following three steps:

Step 1: Understand that conflict management requires a couple to talk through their differences in opinions.

Step 2: Work together to avoid destructive methods of conflict management.

Step 3: As far as possible, work together to handle conflict according to rules that have been agreed upon.

Examples of conflict rules:

- Choose an appropriate time and place to deal with the conflict (make an appointment to talk through differences in opinion).
- Identify the real problem (it isn't your partner).
- Each party gets the opportunity to thoroughly talk about their needs.
- Listen to each other and give each other room for differing opinions.
- Make a list of alternative solutions and discuss it.
- Don't keep dragging the past into your arguments.
- Don't criticize or break-down each other (or each other's things, family or friends) down.
- Focus on "we" and not "me" and "you".
- Focus on "I feel . . ." instead of "you this" or "you that".
- The goal is to acknowledge each other's different views and to find a middle ground that works.
- Be prepared to accommodate each other.

**(Comprehensive e-Course on conflict management available at [www.beterverhoudings.co.za](http://www.beterverhoudings.co.za))**

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## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (tonight)

*Discuss these questions with your partner tonight. Remember, you don't have to agree about everything. Allow some room for differing opinions and listen to each other's hearts.*

- Which conflict rule is the most important to you?

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## ACTION PLAN

Use this space to summarise your plan of action for the way forward.

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## BIBLE STUDY

Read this Bible verse in a few Bible translations and write down what impacts you the most. Discuss what you wrote down with your partner.

- Ps. 15
- Rom. 14:3 (Ampl & NLT)

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Tomorrow you will receive day seven's section of this short course. Tomorrow's theme is titled, 'Make God the Centre Point'.

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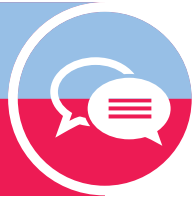
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DAY 7

Sunday 7 September



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## 7 KEYS TO A FANTASTIC MARRIAGE

### - MAKE GOD THE CENTRE POINT

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A marriage without God is like a TV that isn't plugged in. Successful couples know that God is the author of marriage and that He should be at the centre point of it.

If a married couple want to make God their centre point, there are two very important things that they must pay attention to.

The first is to discover the easiest way for each individual to spiritually grow (move closer to God and grows in faith) and how they help each other to achieve this. There are different types of activities that can help one to grow spiritually, but each one has to do with the Word of God (the Bible).

Here are a few examples of activities that contribute to spiritual growth:

- Read the Word (Bible).
- Pray about a section of the Word.
- Sing songs that contain portions of the Word.
- Listen to the Word in a sermon.
- Read spiritual books that explain portions of the Bible and provides perspective, background and context of the Word.
- Isolate yourself en reflect on portions of the Word.
- Listen to spiritual music on Biblical truths.
- Discuss the Word in a Bible Study group.
- Do what the Word asks of you. Be guided towards action.
- Encourage someone with Biblical truths.

The second crucial aspect is that a married couple strengthens their spiritual intimacy (spiritual connection) by talking about spiritual growth experiences and by praying for each other.

**(Comprehensive e-Course on spiritual growth and spiritual connections within a marriage available at [www.beterverhoudings.co.za](http://www.beterverhoudings.co.za))**

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## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION (tonight)

*Discuss these questions with your partner tonight. Remember, you don't have to agree about everything. Allow some room for differing opinions and listen to each other's hearts.*

- What is the easiest way for you to grow spiritually?

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- What do you need your partner to pray about for you as an individual?

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## ACTION PLAN

Use this space to summarise your plan of action for the way forward.

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## BIBLE STUDY

Read this Bible verse in a few Bible translations and write down what impacts you the most. Discuss what you wrote down with your partner.

- Exo. 15:2 (Message)
- Joh. 15:5

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