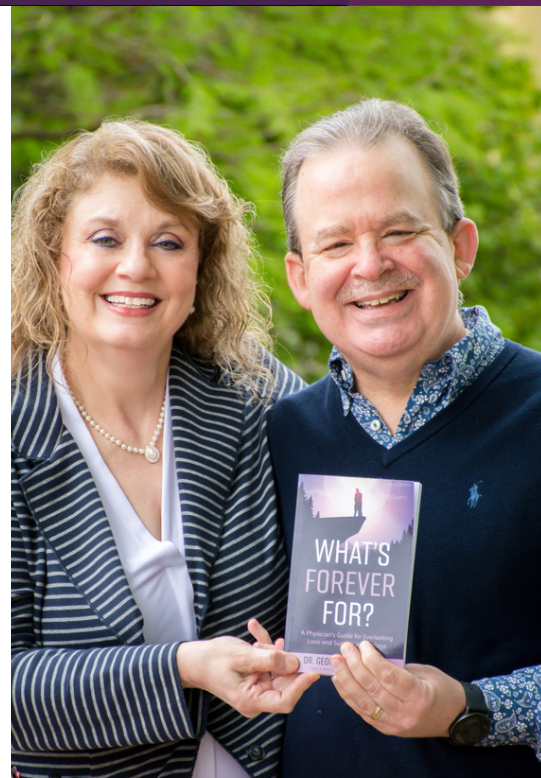


LOVE HUDDLE METHOD

Gain greater love and connection in marriage.



What's Forever For? A Physician's Guide to Everlasting Love and Success In Marriage

Chapter 9-

As John Gottman's research has proven, "A more profound friendship will be a powerful shield against conflict" (40). What does being or having a best friend mean to you? Have you thought about your partner as a best friend? Do you like each other? Do you cherish each other? These are great questions to ask yourselves about each other.

My partner is my best friend. What that means is that no matter what, I know she has my back. No matter what- means that there is an intense commitment that feels indestructible. This of course has been built from mutual affection, respect, trust, and intimacy.

We have to be cognizant now more than ever about affection and respect for each other. We live in a society that is dependent on cell phones or outside stimuli to keep us entertained 24/7. There are lots of distractions that go on in our daily lives. There needs to be a conscious effort by each partner to focus on connecting with each other on a daily basis.

I would like to propose the idea of what I like to call a *Love Huddle*.

A love huddle consists of choosing a time every day to come together in love to discuss each other's day. It is a time of connection. If you have something on your mind that needs to be talked about, take turns sharing. The goal of the love huddle is to build intimacy.

What does it mean to build intimacy? It is a time to ask questions in order to know each other more deeply. That takes courage. From the courage to be our true authentic selves, the love huddle becomes the vehicle by which trust and intimacy build. Use love huddle time to share

qualities that you love and admire about each other as well as any conflicts that may be happening in your lives.

This love huddle should not be used exclusively to be a gripe session nor a promise for sex, but rather, a communication session created to build trust and love for each other. If sex happens, enjoy it. The love huddle requires us to risk vulnerability, but that is how true love and true joy in our relationship is built. You will see. Coming together in a love huddle with the intention of growing your relationship will break down walls that may be dividing you.

Agree to one question you will ask each other.

Take 10-15 minutes to write your answers down. When you are finished writing, exchange papers and read what your partner has written. The best way to do this is to answer the question with as many words as possible to express your true feelings.

Rate each feeling from one to ten to describe the strength of the feeling. Next, describe your feeling as a taste, smell, touch, place, image, sound, color, or nature scene and describe why you have that feeling. To give you an idea of how this works, let's put this into practice. I'd like to share an example of a love huddle exchange between Vanessa and me.

We do this in the privacy of our bedroom.

Question: What qualities do I love most about you today?

Dr. Jeep to Vanessa:

Honey,

The quality that I appreciate most about you is your love for me and our kids. I feel excited about this like when I was waiting in line in Toronto at the Pantages Theatre knowing I was about to ask you to marry me, or like in Paris at the Eiffel Tower as I was waiting to give you your 10-year anniversary ring knowing you had no idea that was about to happen. The feeling is a 10 out of 10. If the feeling was a smell, it would be the sweet smell of a rose. The quality that I like about us the most is that we enjoy being together and we value our relationship first above all else. Writing this to you, I feel absolutely blessed. If this feeling was a color, it would be bright sunshine like the beach at Labadie while drinking rum punch and relaxing. If it was a touch, it would be like when you rub or scratch my back. If it was an image, it would be the blessing I felt when you had Quinn sing "Only God Could Love You More" at our wedding when I had a huge tear running down my cheek. If it were a nature scene it would be like watching the moon at midnight off the coast of Scandinavia when we were on top of the ship. I was feeling how incredibly lucky I was to be there with you experiencing that together.

All My Love,

Jeep

Vanessa to Dr. Jeep:

My dearest Jeepie,

The qualities I most appreciate about you are your faithfulness, gentleness, and kindness. How do I feel as I write this to you? I feel peaceful, secure, and loved. I would say that my feelings are a 10 out of 10. To explain it as a sensation would be like when we are laying in each other's arms totally at peace and relaxed drinking in the feeling as if it were a smooth, sweet wine we're sipping on. If it were a smell, I would describe it as lavender. Fresh, calm, and relaxed. If it were a nature scene it would have us out in the middle of the vast ocean together on a ship in the hot

tub, floating and enjoying the moon and stars and our togetherness. The quality in us that I appreciate the most is our commitment to our marriage and to each other. I feel a strong 10. The feeling is much like Sami (our dog) when she feels safe enough to lay on the floor and not move when we walk by because she trusts we won't step on her. The taste would be Sarris' chocolate pretzels. I am the salt and you are the sweet chocolate, and it is a perfect match. They go together so smoothly. The voice of my feeling would shout, "As a child, this is exactly what I dreamed of having in my marriage with my spouse!" I hit the jackpot with you, my Jeepie.

*I love you deeply,
V.*

As you can see, we use descriptive words to convey our feelings. We are painting the picture for our partner to see, touch, smell, taste, and feel. This communication engages all of our senses and touches our souls. I gave an example of a positive question. However, if there is an issue between the two of you that needs to be fixed, this provides a better form of communication.

We are taking the time to think it out by writing it. The description of negative feelings is less threatening when they are written. They can be communicated in a kinder and gentler way. As John Gottman says, "Although it is stressful to listen to your partner's negative feelings, remember that successful relationships live by the motto: 'When you're in pain, the world stops and I listen.' This is even true when your partner's anger, sadness, disappointment, or fear is directed at you" (40).

I will attest to the fact that arguments can get very heated and emotional when we don't take our disagreement to the love huddle. Instead, it becomes a shouting match. At times, if I feel that I am right, I dig my heels in to make my point. By the time I get to that part in a disagreement, I'm out to win! So instead of us zeroing in on what our argument is about, we are fighting to win. I can tell you from experience that it is better for our relationship if we go straight to the feelings.

We can more fully express our feelings by writing rather than speaking. Through writing, we communicate our feelings without a tone of voice or facial expressions that can be misinterpreted by our partner.

Writing is non-threatening. We defuse our emotions through writing and learn that no one is right. We must discuss the disagreement and work on a solution that we are both comfortable with. The topics in disagreements are most often related to money, sex, kids, work stress, and housework according to John Gottman's research (40).

Remember the Golden Rule: treat your spouse as you want to be treated.

Some questions to explore in the love huddle might be:

- What is the most vulnerable thing I should share with you today?
- How do I feel when I have sex when I don't want to?
- How do I like you to touch me?
- Is our marriage bed sacred?
- How do I feel when you say no?
- What do you love the most about me?
- What about you excites me the most?

We have used this technique in our relationship when we have differences in intimacy (both physically and emotionally), finances, and family. This technique allows me to really sense how my wife feels and how deeply she feels it. It allows me to dial right into that feeling and truly understand her. There are endless possibilities with questions.

Doctors are among the most overworked professionals in the workforce. In fact, physicians report working an average of 55 hours a week according to a recent study. These high demands can often leave them feeling isolated from their spouses and family members. And, as a result, they face a higher risk of divorce.

Click [HERE](#) to take our Relationship Needs Assessment and schedule a FREE consultation.

40) John Gottman. The 7 Principles to Making Marriage Work

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