

Calvary Marriage Conference

Session 1

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Electric Shock Study

Each woman experienced this scenario under three different conditions:

1. Alone in the scanner
2. Holding a stranger's hand
3. Holding her partner's hand

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Electric Shock Study

The results were striking:

- When alone, the women's brains showed high stress and pain responses, lighting up in areas linked to fear and anxiety.
- When they held a stranger's hand, there was a small calming effect, but still considerable distress in those parts of the brain.
- When holding their partner's hand, the threat response was significantly reduced. Their brains showed much lower activity in pain and fear regions. Not only did she feel less fear, but she also felt less pain.

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Additional Studies

- Those who felt that their needs were accepted by their partners were more confident about solving problems on their own and were more likely to successfully achieve their own goals.
- When we feel safely connected to others we understand ourselves better and report more positive attributes about ourselves.
- After supportive, warm conversations, the wounds healed much faster. After hostile or conflict-heavy conversations, healing was slower.
- Married people in secure, loving relationships have lower blood pressure, healthier hearts, and a reduced risk of cardiovascular disease. **FOREVER
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ARE Framework

- Accessible – Can your partner reach you?
- Responsive – Do you respond when needed?
- Engaged – Are you emotionally present?

Underneath all the distress and negative reactions,
partners are asking each other these questions

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Dialogue #1 – Find the Bad Guy

- Both partners feel attacked and misunderstood, so each tries to protect themselves—often by launching a counterattack.
- It may begin with frustration, but it quickly spirals into criticism, defensiveness, and accusations.
- This is also where we can slide down the “content tube” where partners bring up detailed example after detailed example of each other’s failures to prove their point.

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Dialogue #1 – Find the Bad Guy

Alyssa: You didn't even look up from your phone during dinner.

Seriously, do you even care about this family anymore?

Brett: Wow. That's rich coming from you—the person who's been snapping at everyone all day. Maybe I stayed on my phone to avoid one more lecture.

Alyssa: There it is. Deflect. It's always my fault, right? I'm trying to talk to you about something important, and all you can do is point fingers.

Brett: I'm pointing fingers? You're the one who came in ready to attack. Maybe if you weren't so dramatic all the time, we could have a normal conversation.

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Dialogue #1 – Find the Bad Guy

Alyssa: Oh, I'm dramatic now? I'm the one actually trying to make this relationship work while you just coast through like nothing matters.

Brett: You think I don't care? You don't know how exhausting it is to be around you when you're like this. You make everything so tense.

Alyssa: Right. It's all me. That's convenient. You never take responsibility. You're always the victim.

Brett: And you're always the martyr. Congratulations. You win again.

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Dialogue #2 – Protest Polka

- One person pursues, the other withdraws, and the more they dance this pattern, the more disconnected and frustrated they feel.
- These protests come from a place of pain and longing. This partner is trying to get a response, to spark engagement, to feel close again—but it often comes out as anger, blame, or frustration.
- The other partner tends to shut down or pull away in response, often because they are feeling attacked.

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Dialogue #2 – Protest Polka

Alyssa (speaking with edge): You were on your phone through most of dinner again. Do you even care about spending time with me?

Brett (sighing, avoiding eye contact): I'm just tired, Alyssa. Can we not do this right now?

Alyssa (raising voice slightly): Of course. Always “not right now.” That's what you always say. I try to reach for you, and you shut me out.

Brett: I'm not trying to shut you out—I just don't have the energy for another argument.

Alyssa (leaning in): It's not an argument. I'm trying to connect with you! But you always pull away. I feel completely alone in this relationship.

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Dialogue #2 – Protest Polka

Brett (quiet, looking down): I don't know what you want me to say.

Alyssa (frustrated): I want you to show up! I want you to actually care that I'm hurting instead of acting like I'm the problem!

Brett (softly): I just... I don't know how to make this better.

Alyssa (quieter now, but hurt): It would be nice if you even tried.

Brett (silent, retreats to another room)

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Dialogue #3 – Freeze and Flee

- Partners have given up trying to connect.
- Partners withdraw emotionally and physically, leaving the relationship in a state of cold silence and distance.
- The relationship may appear calm on the surface—but underneath, both partners feel lonely, discouraged, and unloved.
- At the heart of Freeze and Flee is protective numbness

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I. Happy and Hopeful

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Happy and Hopeful

Attachment

Brokenness

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Baseline

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I. Happy and Hopeful

II. Hards and Hurts

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- 1. Your spouse has a selfish, sinful nature.**
- 2. You have a selfish, sinful nature.**
- 3. In marriage, we come face to face with each others selfish, sinful nature.**

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I. Happy and Hopeful

II. Hards and Hurts

III. Humility

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Humility

Ephesians 4:1-2

I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling we have received. Be completely humble and gentle, be patient, bearing with one another in love.

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Humility

Matthew 11:29

Take my yoke upon you and learn, for I am gentle and humble in heart and you will find rest for your souls.

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Humility

Philippians 2:7-8

Jesus made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant...he humbled himself and became obedient to death - even death on a cross.

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Pride Versus Humility

Luke 18:14

All those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted.

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Pride Versus Humility

1 Peter 5:5

Clothe yourself with humility towards one another.

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Pride Versus Humility

Proverbs 3:34

God opposes the proud but gives grace to
the humble.

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Pride Versus Humility

Proverbs 11:2

With pride comes disgrace, with humility
comes wisdom.

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Pride Versus Humility

Proverbs 16:18

Pride goes before destruction, a haughty spirit before a fall.

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Humility

1. Humility softens my hearts towards my spouse
2. Humility helps me own my shortcomings
3. Humility gives me a willingness to “give more than I get”

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I. Happy and Hopeful

II. Hards and Hurts

III. Humility and Holiness

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Humility and Holiness

1 Peter 1:15 - But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do.

2 Corinthians 5:9 - So, we make it our goal to please him...whether we are at home in the body or away from it.

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