

The Couples Cure

Miraculous Recovery for Couples on the Brink

Phase IV: Unity and Teamwork (side-by-side)

Lesson 12: Living in Unity (Moving Forward Together)

We are now finishing up with phase four, which is all about unity and teamwork. This is our last lesson in the course. Aside from some bonus lessons that you're gonna have, this is actually the final lesson in the core curriculum of the Couple's Cure. Congratulations on making it this far! This is amazing! And this is a perfect piggyback to the lessons that we've done before because now that you understand the neuroscience of harmony and the "Us" consciousness and how to get on the same team, this is where you can really start living in unity and moving forward together to create and sustain the marriage that you've already built the foundation to support. This is where we take everything that you've learned and integrate it into the new culture of your marriage into the fabric of your lives together and really anchor in what you've learned as an ongoing practice. The question that I get a lot at the end of the curriculum, and when I had my previous curriculum as well, is "What's next?" "Now what?" Like, "how do I make sure that I really apply and internalize and integrate everything that I've learned so that I can actually get the results and not forget and not go back to my old ways?" It's really like a live event. When you go to a live event, there's all this energy and motivation. Everybody's super excited. You have a great sense of vision and excitement to come back and implement it. Whether it's for professional development, maybe it's personal development, parenting, whatever it is. But then you come back home and it's really hard to keep that energy going. We just kind of fall back into our old ways. The answer really is that we have to consciously build it into our lives going forward. Practice it. We can't just let it sit. This lesson is going to help you with that. The objective now is to really stand side by side. Look out at the life that you're creating consciously together in a way that honors the both of you. What we need to do now is bring together your individual relationship visions that you developed in lesson one, create a shared vision and then break that vision into a plan of action, like a road map, so that you can get to the outcome of what you really want in your marriage.

Essentially, lesson 12 is about marriage maintenance. It's about tweaking, supporting and getting occasional tune-ups. If you do this with intention, you're gonna live in the emotional home that a healthy relationship supports. It's raising your baseline. The place that you live most often is a place in which you feel supported, healthy, connected, strong and clear. You're going to ride the momentum of your marriage, moving in the right direction. It's sort of like, "the worse it gets, the worse it gets. The better it gets, the better it gets." The more movement you get in the right direction, and you probably already had a taste of this by now, the easier it is. We really want to capture the momentum and expand on the energy that you're generating with this work.

- **Integrating what you've learned**

This is going to be ultimately all about integrating what you've learned, as I've mentioned, taking who you are - your functional adult self and your life dreams - taking your commitment to express yourself authentically in healthy ways, leaving the past in the past and receiving your spouse from that place of acceptance in the present moment and working as a team. Just taking all of that into the future. We're going to be capturing the essentials of the work that you've done so far, the most fundamental and supportive aspects of what you've done, in order to bring them into the shared marriage vision that you're going to have at the end.

- **Building on the foundation**

You're also going to learn how to build on the foundation that you've laid so far. That means not so much a whole lot of new information or tools but really using the tools and drawing from any and all of the new story that you started to create. We're going to use the progress as your interpretive lens, coming from the stance of "we're doing so much better, here's what we've started to build," "this is what we've accomplished so far, let's keep going." Part of that is going to involve taking stock, going back and looking at what you envisioned in the beginning. Then bringing that in and anything new into the shared vision.

- **Maintenance work - Marriage as an ongoing practice**

Another really important part of this lesson is viewing marriage as an ongoing practice. I really think of it as a maintenance work, like when you have a car that breaks down, you have to get it fixed. But then, you still have to bring it in occasionally to get some things done to it. Just the regular maintenance work that happens - whether it's getting the oil changed or having

everything looked at every so often depending on what your mileage is. It's like that, only easier. Once you have the tools in place and you remember to use them and you build them into your calendar and your schedule and your routines of life, this becomes the new default. You just have to commit to practicing.

Towards that end, here's what we're going to cover in this lesson. The outcome for this lesson is really, by the end, you're going to be:

- Understand the Principles of Co-creativity
- Capture the essentials
- Revise individual vision
- Craft a Shared Relationship Vision and Plan

There's going to be some homework that will take you step by step. For now, I just want to piggyback on what we discussed in the last lesson, which was all about getting on the same team and moving out of positionality. This is what allows us to get into that space, where you're in the "we" space and you're looking at the creative space between you, where you're stepping into the unknown, which is really part of releasing your position. Anytime you release your position and move out of the 'me versus you' mentality, you're stepping into the unknown. You're collaborating from a shared intention to answer the question, which is "how can we figure this out together in a way that works for both of us? Like the Us-ness place? We are committed to a win-win." And you're operating from the assumption that you will find that.

PRINCIPLES OF CO-CREATIVITY

One of the best concepts to support this, and the overarching goal of living in unity and moving forward together, is the concept of co-creativity. You may have already heard of this concept or maybe you haven't, but this term comes from the really wonderful book called *Conscious Loving* by Gay and Katie Hendricks. It's an old book but it's really good. I just love this concept and the term because it's so much a part of what it takes to not only live in harmony but be in unity and work together as a team forever.

What I love about co-creativity is all about increasing your energy and excitement after all the work that you've done because it's tiring. There's been times along this journey where you've been just absolutely exhausted. This is sort of the antidote. We want to be able to go back and expand the energy between you so that you can maintain your successes and continue to grow. This is absolutely essential. If you run out of steam or you run out of energy, you're going to go back into protection mode. You're going to go back into survival mode. You can't grow when you're in protection mode. You can either be growing or you can be protecting yourself. You cannot be doing both. Really understanding the principles of co-creativity is going to help you be able to stay in growth mode from a place of unlimited energy.

But first, let's define it:

- Co-creativity is two people becoming more creative as a result of their interactions
- When the relationship is in harmony, each person benefits from an enhanced energy that allows each to make greater contributions than either could have made alone.
This occurs because when the relationship is in harmony, each person benefits from an enhanced energy. This enhanced energy allows them to make a greater contribution than either of them could have made alone in their lives.
- Engagement in a joint creative venture. *The push and pull of ideas, and the integration of separate unique contributions creates a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts.*

Finally, co-creativity is simply the engagement in a joint creative venture. Your relationship is a joint creative venture. It can really be anything though. Anything in terms of building your lives together - whether that's taking on a project around the house, whether that's raising a child, whether that's taking on a project to move into some kind of business together, whether it's planning a trip, your garden - anytime you're working together to create something new in your life, you are involved in a joint creative venture. The way that this works is that you're really building on each other. You're kind of working with what they give you and they're building on what you give them. You end up expanding on what you already have. You build on each other's ideas like "what if we did this?" "that would work, maybe. But how about if we did this?" "What about this?" "How about if we combine these intentions?" "How can we bring both of these threads into what we're creating?" It's really the push

and pull of ideas and the embracing of each other's ideas and building on each other that creates a whole that's greater than the sum of its parts. When you're creative together, you're actually adding a spark back into your relationship. You're bringing new life to the ordinary tasks of everyday living. This is also really great for the passion in your relationship, that sense of excitement to wake up in the morning and have fun, like just living life as opposed to it feeling like drudgery.

HOW TO CO-CREATE

That's really the great part about this is. It's really fun when you can live like this. If you think about when you're feeling creative or inspired, separate from the relationship - whether it's music, whether you're an artist, whether you like to dance - it's fun and it's joyful and things flow. You're not laboring. You're playing. You're trusting. You're allowing the divine intelligence and your higher self to guide you and transcend the old programs of the past. Just once and for all, old programs are no longer running you. That's what this is about. The question is, how do we do this? I'm going to share with you seven ways that you can move into co-creation with your spouse. These are commitments that you can make each morning and look for these opportunities. I'm going to share this with you as a framework. You can come together using these guiding principles as you work on your shared relationship vision. There are seven ways that you can generate co-creativity together. This is basically the how to:

1. Learn to receive, not deflect positive energy

Number one is to learn to receive, and not deflect positive energy. This is just a mental stance. Gay and Katie Hendricks talked about this upper limits problem. If you've read *The Big Leap: Conquer Your Hidden Fear and Take Life to the Next Level*, you know what I'm talking about. That is the tendency to have a limit on how much positivity we can handle in our life. The upper limits problem can be in any area of life. In particular, in our relationship, sometimes we put a cap on the positivity or the good feelings that we allow ourselves to have without even realizing it. Then, when we reach a certain point and it's like too much, we're not going to be available for anything positive coming our way. No good energy is going to be received. What you have to do is notice the ways in which you may not allow positive energy to remain between the two of you. Notice the ways in which you're breaking connection in subtle ways - whether it's complaining, whether it's not meeting a bid for connection, whether it's walking around in a really disempowered state, whether it's moving into criticism or whether it's just pulling away after a period of good times. The ultimate goal of all healthy relationships is to keep good energy flowing at all times. If that's your goal and you really want to think about this, "how can I have this flow of positive energy in my life and receive the positive energy coming my way?" You can repeatedly ask yourself the question: "Am I creating separateness or closeness right now?" Everything we do is creating one or the other. You're either creating separateness or closeness. Just like you did in the Us place and asking "what effect do I have on my partner?" "What effect does this action have on them?" Our relationship really is an ecosystem where everything affects everything else. If you're feeling critical, even if you're just critical of yourself, look into your partner's eyes. See the reaction. Be aware of what you're feeling and what you're afraid of. Just try to allow the positive energy to remain between you and not deflect it. When you feel the impulse to deflect it, even just calling it out, you don't have to stuff it. You can call it out and acknowledge that from a place of non-judgment. Then that usually allows it to pass just on its own, just through the light of observation.

2. Taking Space

The second way that you can move into co-creativity is by taking space. Being creative requires space for yourself or making space for your partner. It has to be totally okay for you to take time off from closeness. There has to be some built-in wiggle room there. And that's imperative to allow yourself to integrate and prepare for moving to the next higher level of closeness. It's almost like we have to pull back a little bit, integrate the love that we've just received, let that sink in and then we can come back together and take it to the next level. You don't want to be pushing, pushing, pushing, pushing all the time. You want to allow those organic moments of space or if you feel like you're going to go into defense mode or put your walls up because it's almost too much positive energy, it's important to take space. Not as a way of backsliding or having a setback or creating distance, but as a way to nurture your closeness. It improves your performance. It improves your sleep. It improves your self-awareness. There's lots of different ways you can take a break - whether it's you take more time to eat, whether you make plans without your spouse or you just have some alone time journaling, watching a show that you want to watch separate from them, vegging out - whatever it is that rejuvenates you, make sure that you give yourself permission and your spouse permission to do that so that you can prevent the deflection of positive energy.

3. Be willing to step into the unknown consciously

The other thing you have to do is be willing to step into the unknown consciously. Now, you've already practiced that. We've talked about that before. This is not a new concept for you. But you really might have to commit to dropping certain attitudes or adopting new attitudes that might be uncomfortable day to day. When you're stepping into the unknown, it's scary but

that's also where everything gets created. Everything new comes from that place. It's the ultimate creative energy. Being willing is what reduces your fear. When there's no fear, it's exhilarating. You come into each relationship interaction with a willingness to learn, with a beginner's mind by taking a risk. You're going to feel the benefits of that. Especially with some of the tools that you have maybe learned conceptually or theoretically in this program that you haven't yet fully practiced. You're going to feel the benefits of that. You'll be able to release the energy that gets blocked from stuffing your feelings or resisting certain things or just from fear itself. Also, being willing to step into the unknown gives your psyche permission to kind of just let go of that because it's a conscious choice. You're opening the gates for greater and newer possibilities that you just couldn't see before.

4. Interrupt routines

The other thing that's super helpful in co-creativity is interrupting your routines. That's another way of releasing energy out of the old familiar stagnant patterns and shifting your perspectives. This could be just something really small, like which side of the bed are you sleeping on or who's going to make dinner or any routine that you have. If you feel like you need to infuse your day with some a little bit of energy and you're not feeling inspired and it's not related to the relationship, you can shift out of complacency and get some energy just by doing your routines differently and be like "this week I'm gonna try it this way," or "I'm gonna try a different meditation," or "I'm going to try not exercising," and just doing something that makes me feel super nurtured and comfortable like taking a hot bath or reading a good book.

5. Taking full responsibility for things in the relationship

The other thing that helps with co-creativity is taking full responsibility for things in the relationship. Going back to that 100/100, as opposed to looking at it 50/50. Like I said, some of this is familiar. We've already touched on this. But the thing to remember is that when you take full responsibility for the things that in the relationship you're releasing the energy that you otherwise would have spent on power struggles or deflecting or trying to get them to be accountable for something or vying for the victim position or arguing your stance. Now, the energy is freed up and can be put to good use in the things that you're trying to create.

6. Generous listening

Another super important part of remaining in co-creativity, we don't normally think of this, is generous listening. Co-creation flourishes with generous listening. I think it's because it's really just that when you're generously listening, you are bringing energy and attention to your partner. When you're really listening from that place, your partner can shift their attitude. They can feel what your intention is. They soften and then they're able to even share more than they might have shared. They might even be able to think of things in that conversation that they wouldn't have thought of before. I know for me, when I feel like somebody's giving me their full attention and generously listening, it helps me actually organize my thoughts. It helps me come fully present into what am I experiencing right now because I have that person's observation. There's something about that. I think that this really connects to that taking space in a little bit of a different way. You're giving, your holding space through your generous listening. This means really coming into a conversation with an open heart to your partner. You're going to have to receive things that you didn't get before. You're going to have to allow for a flow of new ideas and a new vitality between you. The way that you can do this, specifically, is instead of asking like, "what am I trying to get from this conversation?" 'What's in it for me' mentality. The question becomes "how can I contribute?" "How can I add value to my spouse while they're talking and while I'm listening?" You have the energy to grow their ideas and help them come forward as their fullest self. They feel more alive and they feel grateful, connected, excited and happy. That energy is going to come back to you. You can see how this really fits into the larger unity piece because it also nurtures that emotional connection.

7. Telling the Microscopic Truth

Finally, we talked about this already but I have to add this under co-creation, which is telling the microscopic truth - microscopic honesty. This is huge. I'm not going to go all the way into it again because we just touched on this. It is going to be essential in generating energy that's required to create the relationship that you desire. It demands that you share your sensations, that you tune into your sensations, your emotions, without interpretation of what it means, without judgment. That requires a leap of faith that you can share that, that you don't have to hang on to your interpretations or you don't have to stay in meaning making. You can just notice it and communicate it and feel it. And that's exhilarating when you can share your truth and be heard and be able to release the tension that you're holding from not being aware. There's something about just being able to share what's actually happening in your body that allows you to just let it go, come back to the present moment and whatever you were hanging on to gets released. It takes energy to hide. It takes energy to hide things to ourselves or to others. It takes energy to not be self-aware. It takes energy to ignore or to avoid. The safety and the freedom that comes from a relationship that fosters microscopic honesty is the most amazing thing ever. Hopefully, you've had a chance to experience that by now. If not, we will get there. Be very self-aware so that you can bring the full beautiful truth of who you

are into the relationship, what are you experiencing and be willing to share that and be willing to hear that from your spouse in order to create an amazing, expansive, loving, authentic relationship.

There's going to be a sheet that you can print out and hang up to remind you of these things. These ways that you can co-create in the PDFs. But I just wanted to share this with you now as just to kind of set your mental frame around what we're going to be doing next.

SHARED RELATIONSHIP VISION

This is where we get to anchor in everything and bring it all together. This is going to set up the foundation for your shared relationship vision and your plan, which is essentially a map that you can follow to make it actionable. You're going to be able to clearly see what values are guiding you and what actions specifically will create the shared vision in your relationship. There are a couple of things we have to do first. I'm going to first share the process in these slides. I'm going to explain a little bit about the purpose and the why. But you'll also get to go through this step by step in the exercises for this lesson.

Take Stock and Capture the essentials

The first thing that we have to do is to take stock and capture the essentials from all the previous lessons, recommit to the mindset and strategies that support your vision and really know “what is it that I want to take with me?”

- Go back through your notes and homework
That's going to mean going back through the lessons and homework. Thinking about what have you gleaned that was most helpful to you. Were there things that you really feel are important theoretically but you haven't fully habitualized yet that you want to internalize? Any of that counts.
- What tools or principles resonated most?
You want to ask yourself these questions: What tools or principles resonated the most that I really want to keep practicing? What did I learn that is most relevant to what I desire? For example: Did the lesson on emotional connection touch something that is powerful? Do you feel like if you could really have that dialed in then everything else would be relatively easy? If that's the case, make sure to capture that. If you feel like resentment is still in the air between you, if that's still a barrier and you need to revisit that lesson on forgiveness including resentments, is that something that you want to integrate into the future of your marriage that you can continue working on? What feels most fundamental?
- What gave you the biggest payoff?
What would give you the most payoff? What did give you the most payoff?
- What do you most want to expand on?
You also want to really think in terms of what feels the most doable to bring into my marriage as a habit? What do I most want to expand on and get better at in my relationship journey? This could be stuff that you really clicked with or also stuff that you noticed your spouse really clicked with.
- What did you find was most effective with your spouse?
It could also include stuff that you find really impossible, that you need more clarity on and that can be brought into your vision as well.

Those are the kinds of questions that you'll be asking and this will be in the PDFs and exercises. You don't have to worry about capturing all of that right this second. But this is just so you get an idea of what this is going to look like. This is just to get the wheels turning so you can look back and see what you want to highlight and what do you want to deepen. See what it is that you must bring forward that you may have overlooked or forgotten about. Just take about 30 minutes for this portion. Look back at the curriculum. Look at your PDFs or transcripts. Review your notes. Just brainstorm: What do you remember that was the most impactful and supportive of what you ultimately want?

Re-visioning of your ideal relationship

The next part is that we're going to actually re-vision your individual relationship vision. I call this re-visioning because it's like you're revising it, but you're re-envisioning. You're coming back to what you had at the outset. In lesson one, that was really the first thing that we did. We tried to really get you to think in terms of where do you want to be, what's your destination. The reason that we go back and do this again now is that, a lot of times, what we come up with in lesson one, at the beginning, it comes from a more limited mindset in terms of what you think is possible. As you go through the course, and you might have discovered this already, you're going to learn things along the way. You're going to gain clarity around things you didn't have before. Greater self-awareness and hopefully way more confidence from the belief work. It's important to revisit and clarify and further develop and flesh out your individual vision to see if there's anything that you would add or anything that you would remove or put differently or expand on in more detail. You're going to want to do this individually first, with the relationship re-visioning sheet. There's a PDF for this. You're going to ask and answer questions like:

- What do you see on your vision that you now have?
What do you notice that's on there that is now already in place? And celebrate that! Like you might have something on your vision that felt really far away at the beginning and you're like, "Wow! We actually have this now!" That's amazing to notice! You might still want to hang on to that, capture that and bring that forward.
- What would you like to add or further develop?
What on there would you like to further develop? Is there something that's not on there at all that now you've discovered through the lessons that you'd really like to have? Or that you've had a taste of that you really want to anchor in as well that felt too big at the time.
- Is there something you realized in this process that changes what you wrote?
Is there something that you realize along the way that changes what you originally wrote? Maybe there's something you just feel like isn't that essential. That's what you want to be thinking about. You can always add more as your vision gets bigger. You can have a new sense of what's possible. You might have other things that pop up, a month from now that make you think, "Hey, I'd really like to have that. I think that's possible." Make sure you always add to it as you go along. It's just like any goal right. Once you reach it, then we have new goals. That's human nature. You also may find that you love it the way that it is and that's great, too! Like there might not be much that you're gonna change and that's okay. But I really want you to do this exercise because I want to make sure that you're not overlooking any growth that you've already made, that you're not thinking big enough. I want to make sure that any adjustments or changes or insights or revelations that you've had along the way that may impact your vision are taken into consideration.

Craft your Shared Relationship Vision

Once you've done all that, now you can come together with your spouse to craft a shared relationship vision statement. If you're doing this on your own, you can still do this. Fill it in for your spouse knowing them the way that you do. Some people are doing this together. Some people are planning on doing it together but they're not there yet. Then some people are doing this on their own. If you don't have any preconditions in your relationship, then you still can be a very powerful catalyst for transformation even if they're not doing this with you. So I advise, if you are doing this alone, that just follow along these steps but just kind of step in for them to do their part and kind of give your best guess. Or you could even ask them if there's something that you don't really know. But it will really help you a lot. You can still come up with a shared vision based on what you know that matters to your spouse.

- Share your individual visions
First, you're going to come together and you're going to share your new individual visions. What's new on there? Share what is it that you noticed about your vision in reflecting: What is it that you're celebrating? What are you keeping that you realize that's never going to change? This is a core thing that's always going to be something that I'm going to be striving to continue getting better at. That's what you want to do first.
- Reflect on what is most important
Then you want to reflect on what's most important to you going forward through engaging some general questions, which will be on the questionnaire or on the PDF. You're going to kind of go through those questions one by one. Questions like: What do you like about our marriage? What do you think is unique and special about our marriage that I'm glad that we have that we

can build on? What do other marriages have that we really respect and why? What is most important out of all of the things that we have on here for the future and the longevity of our marriage? What did you find that was most helpful so far? Which tools? Which strategies? Which concepts? Which mindset shifts? Which lessons? What did you find most helpful? Each of you should be answering these. What role does like faith play or spiritual development play in your marriage? What role do you want it to play in your marriage? Other questions along the lines of: What do we want our relationships outside of our romantic relationship to be like? What do we want our relationship with our family, our children to be like? Our extended family, our community, our relationships at work? Acts of service in the community? If we are involved in any kind of charitable giving. Really thinking about what values are guiding you.

- Identify guiding values

Then doing even a deeper dive on a separate set of questions, which is really identifying “what are the core values that we want to be in forming everything that we do?” There’s a lot of different core values that could be guiding you. You might really like all of them but you’re really going to be honing in on a few main ones that you want to prioritize. Examples of core values would be something like: Integrity or truth and honesty and transparency or mutual respect or gratitude, is a guiding value, or security and making sure that we make financial decisions and all of our future decisions around prioritizing security. It might be adventure or it might be communication. Just anything that you really feel like is something that you want to be guided by or informed by. The healthiest marriages are connected to larger values. They have a sense of, even if you’re not a religious or spiritual person, there’s a sense of principle-based foundations like, “I’m in this marriage... This is what I stand for,” “this is what matters to me and I’m going to be in service of these ideals. Because then I know that even when my spouse isn’t showing up the way that I would want them to or even when I have moments of disconnection or disappointment, I’m still connected to what matters most.” When you’re in integrity with those values, everything is better. You just have way more of a full well to bring to the relationship and your spouse does too.

- Conflict styles

The next thing you’re going to do is you’re going to decide on your conflict styles. You might have very different conflict styles. But what’s really important is being able to come together and acknowledge these are the different kinds of styles that couples have. This is what we generally agree upon as something that we can live with, that we would agree can be in the culture of our marriage. Where couples get into trouble is they haven’t really acknowledged or articulated or even been aware of their different styles or the fact that actually there’s a preferred style. You might really feel like, “this is how I want to resolve things.” This is about agreeing on a process. It’s not so much about compatibility around content of what you’re arguing about or where you disagree. This is about coming to the table and saying, “we agree that this is how we are going to process things, when we have a difference of opinion.” It’s really agreeing on the how, not the what so much. I’m going to give you some examples of conflict styles. These really come from John Gottman. He identified this as one of the biggest predictors of success is being able to recognize and be compatible in your conflict resolution style. Here are some categories of these styles and how they differ. You want to see if you can agree on which end of the spectrum for each category you’d like to prefer or that you would prioritize and then shake on it. You’re going to go through these different categories on the sheet.

- Togetherness versus separateness - How much do we do on our own or how much do we decide on our own. How much do we decide together. Togetherness versus separateness on all areas of decision making.
- Romance and companionship - If you value keeping your relationship dynamic and romantic, you may like a more volatile style.
- Validating styles - tend to be more concerned about being good companions and friends. How much romance do you want? How much volatility do you want in your processes versus how much validating and calm, stable, companionship do we want to have?
- Honesty - Do you want to be really bold and upfront and not hiding anything and speak the truth, unfiltered, no matter how much it hurts? Do you want to be more selective about when you share things and what things are shared?
- Persuasion - Do you need active engagements and discussion? Or can you be fine with just like, “Yeah, you know what? As long as you’re cool with it, you have my blessing. Go ahead,” then that’s okay. How much do you want to collaborate? Sometimes, I know that with my husband, I don’t just want him to say, “yeah” to me. I want him to give me his opinion and I want to collaborate. I want to engage. I want to have that contrast experience so that we can come up with something that feels like both of us had buy-in. Whereas, you might really prefer to take the lead on something and your spouse just agrees with you because that’s your area of expertise or something like that. You really want to think

about that as well.

- Expressing emotion - How much do we express emotion? How intense are we okay with that? How often the frequency, the duration? And obviously, we're going to still be healthy. We're not going to be using the losing strategies of unbridled self-expression. This is really just more like how much emotion is going to come into our conflict resolution or problem solving when we're trying to work something out.
- Traditional roles - Or you could just call it roles in terms of how do we decide. How do we divide things up? Who's in charge of what? What if we don't agree then how do we decide?
- Philosophy and beliefs - Which beliefs do you want to share? Which ones are less important that you have to have together? You might have a different spiritual approach and that's totally fine. But you do need to have similar beliefs around parenting. You kind of can divide that up. Look at the major areas where you do have conflict. Look at what are the beliefs and and philosophies where you need to be the same and which are the ones that you don't need to be the same.

- Brainstorm and exchange your ideals

Once you've done that and you've identified your conflict styles, then you're going to go to the next stage, which is brainstorming and exchanging your ideals. You're going to be asking questions like: What do I want the very very most? What are the things I must have? Going back to your vision and really thinking of it. Do another brainstorm, obviously, to add to your vision. Go from like a clean slate. Set aside everything that you've worked on. Then come to this next section and just ask yourself, "what do I want the most in my relationship?" Most of everything that you desire is going to fall into one of these three categories: Feelings, dynamics, and values. How do you want to feel? How do you want to relate? How do you want to live? Just do a brainstorm. You're going to dump what comes out of your mind. Just like answering these three questions: What are the feelings I want to have? What are the relationship dynamics I desire? What do I want our guiding values to be? Of course, for that part, the values part, you're going to be drawing from the values part that you've already thought about.

- List, rank and review vision items

List your ideals. Then you're going to rank and review them to prioritize. This is going to be explained in detail how to do this in the worksheet. But you're going to make them present tense. You're going to use short statements using 'we.' Then you're going to rank your own. You're going to swap and you're going to rank your spouses. You're going to write it out with the priorities at the top going in order.

- Write out vision

Then you're gonna take all of the things that you've written out, combine it and write this vision out as your joint shared vision. There's gonna be two things. There's gonna be your vision, that's very broad in terms of things like, *we respect each other, we are honest with each other, we care about how the other person feels.* We have that list of just broad overview of what your vision is from the 'we.' Then, what you're going to do is you're going to break that down into a plan of action, that will make this vision a lived reality. You get to spell out exactly what does that look like. And use it as a roadmap. At the beginning, it was more of a distant vision and there were so many unknowns. But at this stage, you can see clearly what to do. You have the tools to implement the dynamics that you desire and to clear out everything that gets in the way. This is the time to be like: What does it look like for us to respect each other? What does it look like to have total honesty? What does it look like to have trust? What's actually happening? What are the actions that you're taking? What are the actions that I'm taking? Then you're going to write out a plan. You're going to have a vision and then you're going to have a plan. Those are two separate things. They're only separate in that one is sort of the broad overview and one is the actionable way to create that vision. But they're really connected. They're one and the same. But I'm splitting them up for the sake of being able to have the broad vision guiding you, that you can tune into, that you can put on a plaque or you can hang up on your wall. Then you've got your action steps that you take with you, that are a little bit more specific, that's in a separate location. But it's all part of the same thing.

- Break it down into a PLAN of action

Finally, what you're going to do is you're going to capture and elevate and commit to doing these action steps. You're going to print it out. You're going to make an agreement with each other. We might even create a ceremony around that. You're going to declare your intentions. Then every morning, you're going to look at those actions that will create your vision. Literally, every day, you're going to have a road map in front of you that's going to tell you exactly how to live your relationship dream.

That's it, you guys! I mean, this is really where the rubber meets the road. Now, it's just about doing the work. This lesson is mostly about going through the steps, putting it all together, following with the PDFs. I lay this out very clearly so that you can take stock, capture the essentials, get super clear on what's going to guide you from this moment forward and have an actionable plan to create a healthy, loving marriage.

There are only two worksheets but they have multiple steps. Give yourself enough time. I would recommend doing them in separate settings.

Complete the following to develop your Shared Relationship Vision:

1. Review and Capture Worksheet
2. Shared Relationship Vision

Review and capture what you've learned so far. Do that worksheet first. When you've done that, you're going to go back and you're going to follow the steps of the shared relationship vision sheet. Then I want to hear how it goes. When you guys are finished with this, please send it to me. Let's celebrate you in your graduation call in the group! I would love it if you wanted to share it in the Facebook group and show people what you've come up with, if it's not too personal so that we can honor you, so that you can have that accountability of declaring it in a public space and so that we can cheer you on, so that we can really see you! See all the work that you've done! And also grow! I know that other members can grow from seeing other people's work. It's inspiring to the people that are not as far along on this journey. It generates a lot of really great ideas for people that may feel stuck.

Now you have everything you need. You can do this! It's just a matter of practicing and keeping it on your radar as you move forward into the maintenance phase. So don't stop! Just keep going! I look at the end of this lesson and the end of this curriculum for you as just the beginning. This is just the beginning of living into the new foundation that you have set up and getting stronger and better week by week. You may have to go back through the lessons every now and then, and that's okay. That's why you have access forever. You're going to have access to the lessons forever, as well as any updates that I do. You're also going to have access to the ongoing support group for the members of the Couples Cure and live coaching with me monthly, for tweaks, for reframes, for coaching, if there's a setback or just to celebrate and connect with those members that you have journeyed with thus far. You guys, as I always say on the group calls, I truly honor you and respect you for showing up the way that you have, for showing up for yourself and taking a stand for your marriage. I know how much courage this journey takes. The willingness to engage this work is definitely not for the faint of heart. It's messy. It's difficult. I know that you've been tired along the way. And so, I celebrate you. I'm so proud of you! I hope that you're able to celebrate you too for coming this far. You're amazing! I've loved every minute of supporting you so far. So let me know how this goes. And I will see you in the ongoing support group.