RON and NAN DEAL TERRY and SHARON HARGRAVE

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Workbook

Create Your

BEST RELATIONSHIP

Through UNDERSTANDING

and MANAGING Yourself

INTRODUCTION

We all—Ron and Nan Deal, and Sharon and Terry Hargrave—really desire for you and your spouse to have less conflict, more nurturing and loving moments, and more constructive time working together. These worthy goals happen when both of you are becoming more loving, nurturing, and giving.

The truth is—and this is an encouraging truth—that this loving, nurturing, and giving self is already there inside of you. It comes out when you are settled in safety, confident in being loved, and able to deploy your gifts and talents freely. In short, it comes out of you when you are emotionally regulated.

When you are in your "old self," you are running your relationship by the old rules and the old ways of the worst part of who you are and how you act. We want to help both you and your spouse overcome this through our own experiences as married couples and seasoned therapists utilizing the therapeutic model of Restoration Therapy (which we'll be exploring more as we go along).

This is what this book is all about: helping you and your spouse do the good work of learning how to nurture, care for, and grow up in your usness while you engage in the wonderful practice of learning about yourself and the power you have to change.

As you read, we pray you learn about your own strength to be kind, to be loving, and to be wise in how you love and live with your us every day and find joy in all God has given you through your marriage.

Terry Hargrave and Sharon Hargrave Ron and Nan Deal

PART ONE The Old Self

Chapters 1-6

CHAPTER 1: Nurturing Your Usness

1. Every one of us becomes emotionally dysregulated from time to time. Do you have a sense of when it happens in you?
2. What part of the apostle Paul's struggle between his old self and his new self can you relate to?
3. What is your reaction to this statement, "Humility is not thinking poorly of yourself or thinking yourself less valuable than another, it is thinking rightly about yourself"?

CHAPTER 2:

The Two Pillars of a Healthy Relationship Are Love and Trust

Trust depends on three essential factors. Reflect on these and check which ones you feel are either strong in your relationship or need more attention and work (refer to Chapter 2 for more in-depth descriptions). Reliability. If we can predict loving and reliable interactions, we can tolerate occasional disappointment. However, when someone is reliable less than 90 percent of the time, we hesitate to trust. Transparency. Transparency cultivates trust. Secrets undermine trust. Have you ever experienced relationships or situations where secrets were kept, or someone was unwilling to be open or honest with you? You knew something was wrong, but you didn't know what. It is simply impossible to feel safe in relationships when we do not have the whole story and truth. At best, we will withdraw and be tentative in the relationship; at worst, we'll cut ties altogether. Fairness. Healthy relationships depend on mutual give- and- take. Fairness. Healthy relationships depend on mutual give- and- take. It does not have to be an

exact 1:1 give-a nd-t ake situation, and no one is earning points, keeping a ledger to win the other's obligation, or seeking to gain an advantage in the relationship. But neither can we expect to be vulnerable with each other if love and trust is not reciprocated.

Strong & Healthy Relationships Trust Love Unique Reliable Worthy -Transparency. (Openness) Belong Fairness (Not Alone) Identity Safety ("Who am I?") ("Am I safe?")

The Two Pillars of Healthy Relationships

1. What does God's steadfast and faithful love tell you about your worth, identity, and eternal safety? (If you're not sure this is true about you, how might you feel if it was?)
2. If you could lean into the truth about yourself from God's point of view, how would that make a difference when you don't feel loved or safe with your spouse?
3. Review the illustration on page 23 about the Two Pillars of Healthy Relationships. Notice the descriptive words (e.g., Unique, Transparency, etc.). What would it look like to have them in your marriage often?

- 4. If you feel safe enough, share your responses to the following questions with your spouse:
 - How did you know (as a child) you were loved?
 - How did you know you were safe? What did you have to do (as a child) to make sure things were safe?
 - At times when you didn't feel loved or safe, what did these moments say about your worth or value or tell you about how to behave?



IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS IN YOUR PAIN CYCLE



When I am upset, unsettled, anxious, insecure, or triggered, how do I usually feel? An alternative question may be: What messages have I received about my worth, value, or importance from my spouse, family, or friends when I'm upset, and what emotions are connected to them?

Circle one or two emotions that best answer the question. If you circle more than two, put a star beside the emotions that are most common.

Unloved	Unworthy	Insignificant	Alone	Hopeless
Worthless	Devalued	Defective	Inadequate	Unappreciated
Rejected	Unaccepted	Unwanted	Abandoned	
OTHER:				

The words you have circled usually pertain to the primary emotions associated with your IDENTITY when you are not feeling at peace.

2

When I am upset or unsettled, how do I usually feel about the situation or relationship? What messages about relationships have I received from family or friends, and what emotions are tied to them?

Circle one or two words that best describe how you feel.

Unsafe	Unfair	Used	Guilty	Unsure
Fearful	Powerless	Controlled	Out of Control	Unknown
Vulnerable	Disconnected	Betrayed	Insecure	Not Enough
OTHER:				

The words you have circled almost always pertain to the primary emotions associated with your sense of SAFETY when you are not feeling at peace.

CHAPTER 3: What's Your Trigger? My Pain Story

1. The origins of these painful emotions reside in both past and current relationships. At the point in your life, what is usually happening when you feel these strong, painful emotions Talk aloud about a recent moment when you felt this pain. Saying it aloud won't resolve it (that part comes later), but it verbally acknowledges a part of you that is caught in your old self.
2. Have you ever reacted to your partner's behavior or words in a way that was out of line with what they were really doing or saying? Which painful emotion were you feeling at the time?
3. This and the previous chapter may have resurrected some very difficult emotions. Begi journaling about these emotions as you continue reading. This may help you better understand your pain cycle.

CHAPTER 4: Four Coping Reactions to Pain Are Blame, Shame, Control, Escape

When threatened physically, your coping reactions may save your life, but in marriage, coping isn't always positive. Keep in mind that the actions you take to mitigate painful feelings and restore peace often make things worse.

The table below shows four coping behaviors we deploy when we're dysregulated. Which one characterizes how you tend to react when unsettled or anxious?

	(External Energy)	(Internal Energy)	
	Blame	Shame	
	Control	Escape	
and escape are int Imagine that rattles	ernal, flight reactions. An nake on your path. Are y	y focused, aggressive, fight All four attempt to alleviate pa rou likely to be aggressive or from a family member. Which	ain in various ways. fleeing in that

Keep in mind that your reactive behavior is trying to restore love and/or safety to your relationship. To do so, your highly efficient brain relies on the same tricks that it has used in the past. It's common to employ one, two, three, or even all four of these coping behaviors at one time.

In the following scenarios, see if you can pinpoint the behavioral reactivity or the actions taken to restore love or safety. Then identify the coping category or dysregulation—shame, blame, control, or escape.

- **A.** "I cannot live in a disorganized and chaotic house. It confuses my thinking and bothers me. So, I take control and tell you what needs to be done to make things okay for me. My needs justify this."
- **B.** "I could not take my boss telling me about one more problem or being dissatisfied with my performance, so I just blew up, cussed at him, and quit my job!"
- **C.** "Talking about serious issues is too much for me. Life is way too short to concentrate on problems that can't be solved. I just prefer to hang loose, have a few drinks, have fun, and not talk about heavy things."
- **D.** "I know my friend wants me to be more open, but it does not come naturally to me. I think I was just born under a cloud. I'm not really worthy or deserving of anyone's friendship."

In the above scenarios, each person felt a threat to their sense of identity (worth or feeling loved) and sense of safety, then took action (coping) to try and rectify the negative feeling. Here are the answers:

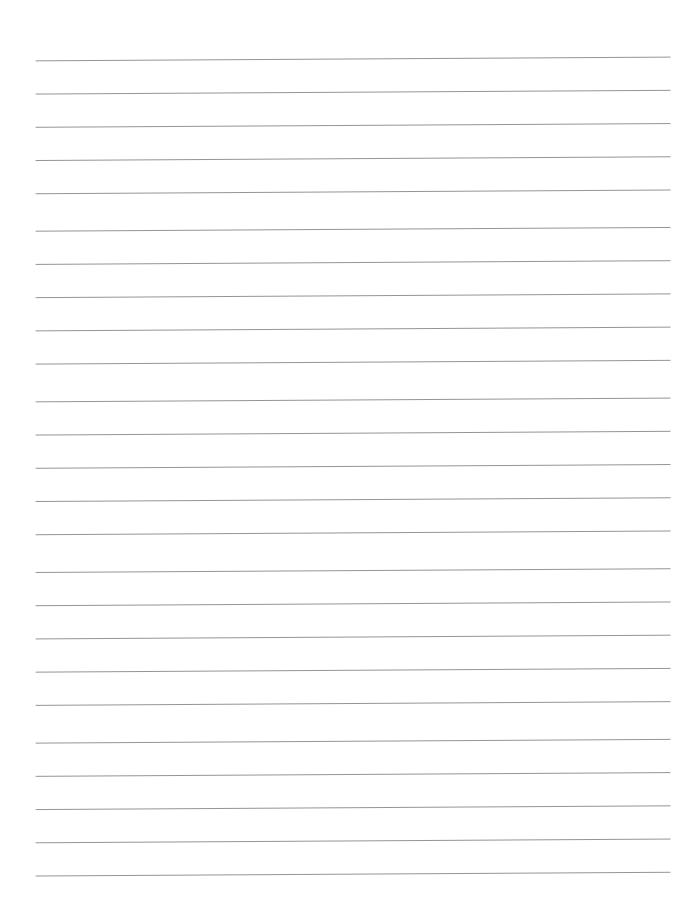
- **A.** Behavioral Reactivity: taking control of the situation, telling others what to do. Coping Category: Control.
- **B**. Behavioral Reactivity: verbally blowing up, being contemptuous toward someone, and quitting their job. Coping Categories: Blame and Escape.
- **C.** Behavioral Reactivity: eat, drink, and be merry. Coping Category: Escape.
- **D.** Behavioral Reactivity: withdrawn, reserved, insecure. Coping Category: Shame.

We all do at least one of these coping mechanisms. All of us. When our identity or safety feels threatened, we will take action in some way. Knowing our old self tendencies helps us avoid unhealthy coping.

Refer to chapter 4, page 44 for the in-depth descriptions of each coping strategy. Pay special attention to your responses to each, and see if you are prone to do any of them.

Do you recognize yourself in these coping categories? Reflect on them below. As previously said, you can be reactive in one, two, or even all four. Once you discover your coping methods, you can map your pattern of pain-coping reactivity. We call it your pain cycle. That's next.			

1. Why do we avoid exploring our pain story?
2. People generally judge themselves based on their intentions and desire for the relationship but judge their partner based on what they do. In what way is this true for you?
3. Every person has a neurological rut comprised of a painful emotion that sparks predictable behavioral reactivity. What are you learning about how this works in your life?
4. Which of the four reactions to pain (blame, shame, control, or escape) do you suspect you utilize most?Tell a story aloud of a recent time you acted in blame, shame, control, and/or escape.



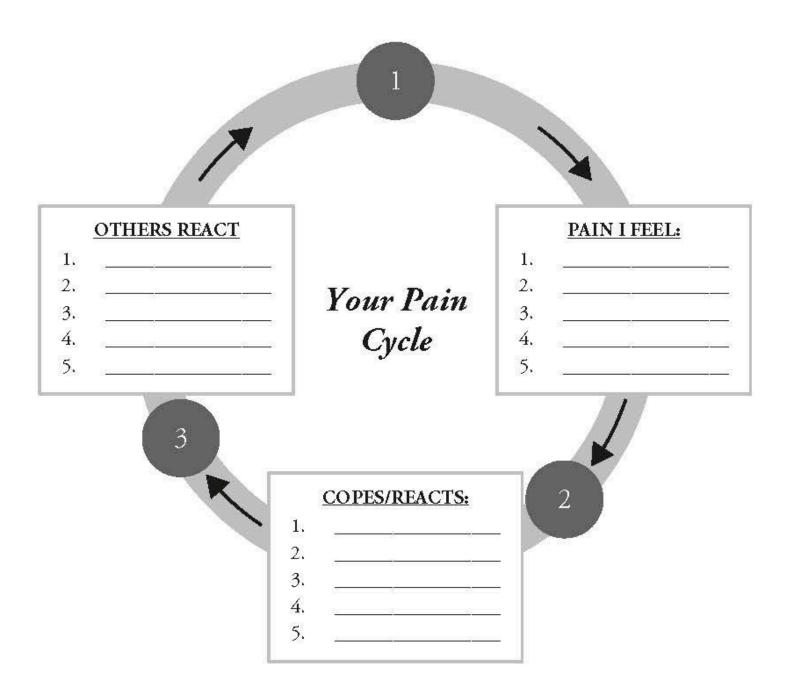
MAPPING YOUR INDIVIDUAL PAIN CYCLE

- Look back at the feelings that you identified in Exercise 1. In the Pain Cycle diagram on the next page, write those words in the first box under the title PAIN I FEEL.
- Connect those emotions with the actions or coping reactions from the list below.

 When you feel those emotions, how do you normally react? Circle up to five of the most common or consistent reactions/coping that best describe what you do.

BLAMES OTHERS	SHAMES SELF	CONTROLS	ESCAPES/CREATES CHAOS
Rage	Depressed	Perfectionists	Impulsive
Angry	Negative	Performs	Numbs Out
Sarcastic	Whines	Judgmental	Avoids Issues
Arrogant	Inconsolable	Demanding	Escapes Using Substance
Aggressive	Catastrophizing	Critical	Escapes Using Activity
Retaliatory	Manipulative	Defensive	Irresponsible
Threatening	Fearful	Anxious	Selfish
Punishing	Pouting	Intellectualizes	Minimizes
Fault Finding	Harms Self	Nagging	Addicted
Discouraging	Needy	Lecturing	Secretive
OTHER:			

On the Pain Cycle diagram on the next page, write the words you've circled above under the title COPES/REACTS.



Think about how people around you respond to you when you react in the ways described in the prior two sections. What do they usually say or do? Write up to five of those responses under the title OTHERS REACT in the Pain Cycle Diagram above.

At the back of this workbook, we've offered an additional blank Pain Cycle Diagram you can reproduce for your own use later or if you are leading others through the process of identifying their own pain cycle.

CHAPTER 5: Mapping Your Pain Cycle

1. Take some time to reflect on your pain cycle and think back through some reoccasions when you got dysregulated. Can you see a few of the emotions are coming to life? Notice the sequencing of your pain, your coping, and other's Keep in mind, this pain cycle (or at least the seeds of it) likely preceded your What is the implication for your marital conflict?	nd reactions reactions.
2. React to this: knowing your pain cycle alone doesn't bring an end to it. Beco intimately familiar with it is the first step. Throughout your lifetime, you will co unpack your story of pain, what it leads you to do, and how to self-regulate.	_

3. Getting intimately familiar with your pain cycle is an important step to growing beyond it. To that end, begin saying your pain cycle out loud. You've mapped it, but to get this awareness into other parts of your brain you need to say it out loud. Fill in the blanks to this sentence and say it aloud to yourself:
"When I feel [name one pain], I tend to react by [name one coping]. When others see that, they often [name their reactions], which just makes me feel [name the same pain or perhaps another that arises at that point]."
Keep going until you've said all of them aloud.
When you're ready, share your pain cycle with a safe, trusted friend.
It might also be helpful to write a brief narrative of your pain cycle like we did in this chapter. It doesn't have to be long; just spell out in a few sentences your pain, how you cope, and how others tend to react.

4. Vulnerability is high when sharing a pain cycle. If your spouse trusts you with their pain cycle, guard your response. Like someone handing you an infant, hold it delicately and with respect for the value it has. Be trustworthy and compassionate.			

5. Take a picture of your pain cycle to refer to it when triggered. Having a picture on your smartphone gives you quick reference to the words (emotions and actions) that can be hard to remember when you're dysregulated.

MAPPING YOUR COUPLE PAIN CYCLE

Refer to your completed individual pain cycles. Copy the lists under PAIN I FEEL and how you COPE/REACT and paste them in the cycle diagram below. Have your spouse do the same. (If each of you has a copy of this workbook and is recording your thoughts separately, decide which of you will be Spouse #1 and Spouse #2 so you can be consistent in your documents on your pain cycle.

SPOUSE #2 COPES/REACTS:	PAIN SPOUSE #1 FEELS:
1.	1
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5	5
•	
PAIN SPOUSE #2 FEELS:	SPOUSE #1 COPES/REACTS:
PAIN SPOUSE #2 FEELS:	
1	· ·
1. 2. 3.	1
1 2	1

At the back of this workbook, we offer a blank Couple Pain Cycle Diagram you can reproduce for your future use or if you are leading others through the process of identifying their couple pain cycles.

CHAPTER 6: Your Couple Pain Cycle

artner? Can y afety?) (This	s your first cha	•		•		
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3. What insight have you gained about your pattern of pain and coping? Talk about your pattern and tall about a recent time it happened.
4. If you currently feel safe in your usness, then with great compassion, ask questions abo your partner's painful narratives.
5. As you look at your couple pain cycle, acknowledge one thing you do (coping) that you now realize taps your spouse's pain. (This can be a sobering realization, but it is important to recognize and admit out loud.)
Notes:

PART TWO The New Self

Chapters 7-11

IDENTIFYING SELF-REGULATING TRUTHS

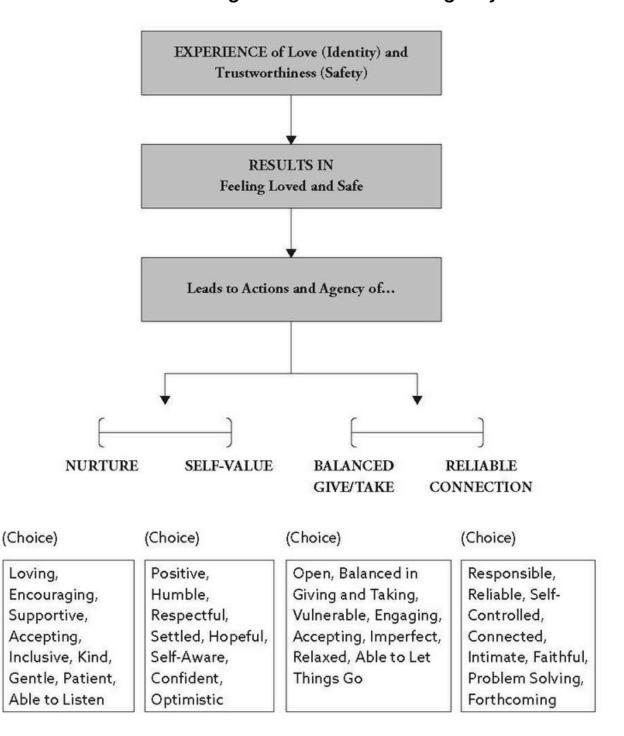
Think about the words that can emotionally regulate the painful lies about yourself, your identity, and your sense of safety. Which words below are meaningful and powerful to you because they represent the truth about your identity and safety? Choose words that directly repudiate the lies your pain cycle has been telling you. For example, if one of your painful feelings was "unloved," then you might circle "worthy" (of being loved) below. If you feel "inadequate," you might circle "enough."

Circle three to five words that you would like to be able to claim as your own that would be representative of the new reality or truth about your identity and sense of safety.

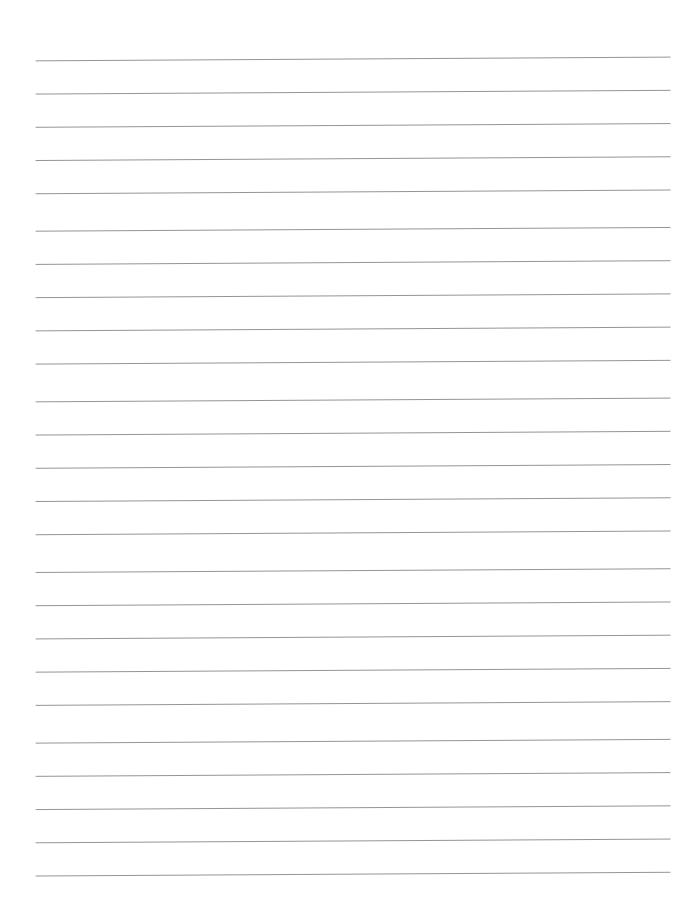
These words are your Emotionally Regulating Truths.

Loved	Worthy	Significant	Not Alone	Prized
Valuable	Precious	Adequate	Approved	Accepted
Wanted	Appreciated	Hopeful	Free	Safe
Secure	Sure	Fulfilled	Capable	Empowered
In Control	Protected	Connected	Intimate	Competent
Validated	Successful	Enough		
OTHER:				

Understanding Peace and Actions of Agency



The peace cycle helps us be our best self—indeed, a more mature version of the person our spouse fell in love with in the first place. It helps us follow Jesus, loving our neighbor as ourselves (James 2:8). Write any personal observations on the next page.



NEW ACTIONS BASED ON TRUTH

Look back at the truths you identified in Exercise 4. Concentrate on these words, and let the reality of these truths about your identity and safety soak in. Write these words below so you can remember them easily.

Talk to your spouse. In the peace cycle diagram below, record the word you both identified as EMOTIONALLY REGULATING TRUTH from exercise 4 in the appropriate box (spouse #1 or spouse #2).

SPOUSE #2 ACTION/AGENCY:		SPOUSE #1's EMOTIONALLY REGULATING TRUTH:
2	U->	1
4.		3.
5		4
		7
	Your Couple	
4	Your Couple Peace Cycle	2
4	Your Couple Peace Cycle	
A	Your Couple Peace Cycle	
A	Your Couple Peace Cycle	
POUSE #2's EMOTIONALLY REGULATING TRUTH:	Your Couple Peace Cycle	SPOUSE #1 ACTION/AGENCY 1 2
POUSE #2's EMOTIONALLY REGULATING TRUTH:		SPOUSE #1 ACTION/AGENCY 1 2 3
POUSE #2's EMOTIONALLY REGULATING TRUTH:	Your Couple Peace Cycle	SPOUSE #1 ACTION/AGENCY 1 2

Now look at the list of words below that describe different actions/agency. When you are focused on the truth, what behaviors/actions would you likely take or choose to do?

Circle two to five action/agency word that best describe what you would choose to do when you are in your truth and feel a sense of peace. Choose words that directly oppose the actions you take when you are in pain.

Loving	Values Self	Balanced Give/Take	Responsible
Encouraging	Respects Self	Vulnerable	Reliable
Supportive	Positive	Open	Self Controlled
Inclusive	Flexibile	Engaging	Connected
Kind	Optimistic	Appreciative	Intimate
Listening	Hopeful	Gentle	Faithful
Accepting	Self-Aware	Relaxed	Forthcoming
Patient	Confident	Lets Things Go	Problem Solving
Compaassionate	Affirming	Nurturing	
OTUED			
OTHER:			

Record the words you circled above in your ACTION/AGENCY space on the peace cycle diagram on the previous page. Talk to your spouse and record their words in their space.

At the back of this workbook, there is an additional peace cycle diagram for your future use or if you are leading other couples through their identifying their pain and peace cycles.

CHAPTER 7: Choose to Emotionally Regulate

1. On a scale of 1 to 10, how hopeful does your couple peace cycle make you feel about your usness? If there's a part of you that holds doubt about its ability to improve your relationship, give voice to the pain that is speaking. You are probably very familiar with that
pain at this point but give voice to it anyway so you can be mindful of how it continues to cast a shadow on change.
2. Let each partner talk about the truth they have identified for themselves and why it's significant to their sense of identity and safety in life and your marriage. Assuming you feel safe, speak these truths over yourself so you can experience yourself beginning to claim them. Partners should tune in to the truth your spouse is claiming. Celebrate and affirm what this might mean for them.

	hen you spontaneously acted out your peace cycle. Perhaps share a time at happen in your spouse—and celebrate it!
viidii yod saw tii	at happen in your spouse - and colobrate it:
I. Review the fou nave you been g	r misuses of the pain and peace cycles. Speaking for yourself only, which uilty of?
5. Share any furth	er insights you're gaining into your pain cycle and now what you seek to
do about it (peac	e cycle).

CHAPTER 8: The Path to Peace in Four Steps

Tips for Implementing the Four Steps:

\checkmark	Take a picture of your pain and peace cycles and review them often so you can pull
•	the words to mind when it comes time to use the four steps.

- Write out a couple versions of your typical four steps using different pain and coping words, and the corresponding truth and new action responses.
- Record yourself speaking your four steps. Then listen as you replay them for repetition to retrain your brain.

If You're In a Difficult Marriage

The four steps work. If you're in a difficult marriage with a partner who shows no interest in working on the marriage, know that God cares for you and will not abandon you, even in your pain (especially in your pain). Keep your-self moving forward based on God's truth. Do not let pain dictate your actions. Pursue self-care, and emotional and physical safety for you and your children. Respond as best you can from a posture of peace. For example, you may say, "I want this marriage to work but I won't continue to subject myself to contempt. I'm going to take care of myself and the kids while you decide if you want to work on this with me." Manage you while they decide if they can manage themselves.

Think of a recent argument you and your spouse had. How can or could you have implemented for 4 steps to help resolve the conflict? Write them out below like the example in the previous page.

you're dysregulated? 2. Can you agree that the phrase "What I know about me" should be honored as a signal that someone is trying to manage their pain better? How will you respond when the other says it?	1. What do you imagine it would be like to say the four steps in front of each other? It may
2. Can you agree that the phrase "What I know about me" should be honored as a signal that someone is trying to manage their pain better? How will you respond when the other says it?	be comfortable when you're calm and in a good mood, but what would it be like to do when
2. Can you agree that the phrase "What I know about me" should be honored as a signal that someone is trying to manage their pain better? How will you respond when the other says it? 3. What does calming down look like for you?	you're dysregulated?
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	3. What does calming down look like for you?
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4. Ironically, some people get really aggravated when their spouse begins to make to their pain cycle. What do you think you'll do?	e changes

5. Say the four steps out loud with each other. Reference your pain cycle and peace cycle if necessary. Remember, steps 1–2 are from your pain cycle and steps 3–4 are from your peace cycle.

CHAPTER 9: Practicing the Four Steps

assumptions before letting them dysregulate us?
2. Could you relate to any of the people in the stories in this chapter? What do you have in common?
3. How are you doing so far at taking baby steps toward the four steps?

4. It is practice that rewires neurons within the brain and quite literally renews the mind,	
transforming us into a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God (Rom. 12:1-2). Practice makes our new responses stronger and more familiar to the brain. When do you practice	
our steps? (Remember, practice both when you're not dysregulated and when you are.)	
and real eleper (hernemeer, praeties bean anier, yeare net ayenegatatea ana anier, yea ar	,
5. When abuse or costly addiction is present, couples need outside intervention. Are you i	1
need of that?	

CHAPTER 10: Peace for the Journey

1. If a blended family couple, you may have other relationship pain cycles, for example, between former spouses or between a stepparent and child. What other pain cycles are
pressing on you currently?
2. If dating, what are the circumstances of your relationship that need attention?
3. If parenting, what are the current issues that trigger dysregulation in your children or you?

4. If you are facing a particular season of difficulty, how situation?	w can you apply self- regulation to the
5. If trust has been damaged significantly in your relationship?	

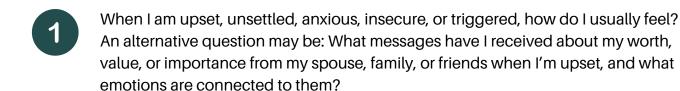
CHAPTER 11: Humility and the Four Steps in All Your Relationships

1. Consider each section of this chapter. What jumped out to you as you applied humility and the four steps to your parenting, leadership roles, friendships, and/or sex life? (Take note of topics that you want to dedicate time to discuss soon.)
2. What triggers you most in parenting? Put words on how this connects to your identity and/or sense of safety, as well as how it connects to your anxiety regarding your child's developing identity and sense of safety in the world.
3. Can you think of humble leaders whom you would like to emulate? Who are the pridefunction ones and how do you see others or yourself opposing their leadership (e.g., rejecting, doubting, not voting for, etc.)?

4. What are the core pains in your current friendships? Share how your spouse can support you while you learn to manage your pain differently.
you write you team to manage your pain differently.
5. What are some unique pains connected to your sex life? Speak for yourself, talking about your pain and how it's tied to your larger pain story. If your sexual pain story or couple pain
cycle feels too fragile to manage on your own, find a Christian sex therapist who can help
(Look at sexualwholeness.com for more information).
6. What's your coping pattern with sorrow or grief? Read Psalm 77 and notice the two rails the author speaks about. How might this inform your grief journey?
the author speaks about. How might this inform your gher journey?

Additional Printable Workbook Pages

IDENTIFYING EMOTIONS IN YOUR PAIN CYCLE



Circle one or two emotions that best answer the question. If you circle more than two, put a star beside the emotions that are most common.

Unloved	Unworthy	Insignificant	Alone	Hopeless
Worthless	Devalued	Defective	Inadequate	Unappreciated
Rejected	Unaccepted	Unwanted	Abandoned	
OTHER:				

The words you have circled usually pertain to the primary emotions associated with your IDENTITY when you are not feeling at peace.

When I am upset or unsettled, how do I usually feel about the situation or relationship? What messages about relationships have I received from family or friends, and what emotions are tied to them?

Circle one or two words that best describe how you feel.

Unsafe	Unfair	Used	Guilty	Unsure
Fearful	Powerless	Controlled	Out of Control	Unknown
Vulnerable	Disconnected	Betrayed	Insecure	Not Enough
OTHER:				

The words you have circled almost always pertain to the primary emotions associated with your sense of SAFETY when you are not feeling at peace.

MAPPING YOUR INDIVIDUAL PAIN CYCLE

- Look back at the feelings that you identified in Exercise 1. In the Pain Cycle diagram on the next page, write those words in the first box under the title PAIN I FEEL.
- Connect those emotions with the actions or coping reactions from the list below.

 When you feel those emotions, how do you normally react? Circle up to five of the most common or consistent reactions/coping that best describe what you do.

BLAMES OTHERS	SHAMES SELF	CONTROLS	ESCAPES/CREATES CHAOS
Rage	Depressed	Perfectionists	Impulsive
Angry	Negative	Performs	Numbs Out
Sarcastic	Whines	Judgmental	Avoids Issues
Arrogant	Inconsolable	Demanding	Escapes Using Substance
Aggressive	Catastrophizing	Critical	Escapes Using Activity
Retaliatory	Manipulative	Defensive	Irresponsible
Threatening	Fearful	Anxious	Selfish
Punishing	Pouting	Intellectualizes	Minimizes
Fault Finding	Harms Self	Nagging	Addicted
Discouraging	Needy	Lecturing	Secretive
OTHER:			

On the Pain Cycle diagram on the next page, write the words you've circled above under the title COPES/REACTS.

Think about how people around you respond to you when you react in the ways described in the prior two sections. What do they usually say or do? Write up to five of those responses under the title OTHERS REACT in the Pain Cycle Diagram above.

MAPPING YOUR COUPLE PAIN CYCLE

Refer to your completed individual pain cycles. Copy the lists under PAIN I FEEL and how you COPE/REACT and paste them in the cycle diagram below. Have your spouse do the same. (If each of you has a copy of this workbook and is recording your thoughts separately, decide which of you will be Spouse #1 and Spouse #2 so you can be consistent in your documents on your pain cycle.

SPOUSE #2 COPES/REACTS:	PAIN SPOUSE #1 FEELS:
1	1
2	2
3	3
4.	4.
5	5
Your Pain	Couple Cycle
PAIN SPOUSE #2 FEELS:	Couple Cycle SPOUSE #1 COPES/REACTS:
Pain	Cycle
PAIN SPOUSE #2 FEELS:	SPOUSE #1 COPES/REACTS:
PAIN SPOUSE #2 FEELS: 1.	SPOUSE #1 COPES/REACTS: 1.
PAIN SPOUSE #2 FEELS: 1 2	SPOUSE #1 COPES/REACTS: 1. 2.

IDENTIFYING SELF-REGULATING TRUTHS

Think about the words that can emotionally regulate the painful lies about yourself, your identity, and your sense of safety. Which words below are meaningful and powerful to you because they represent the truth about your identity and safety? Choose words that directly repudiate the lies your pain cycle has been telling you. For example, if one of your painful feelings was "unloved," then you might circle "worthy" (of being loved) below. If you feel "inadequate," you might circle "enough."

Circle three to five words that you would like to be able to claim as your own that would be representative of the new reality or truth about your identity and sense of safety.

These words are your Emotionally Regulating Truths.

Loved	Worthy	Significant	Not Alone	Prized
Valuable	Precious	Adequate	Approved	Accepted
Wanted	Appreciated	Hopeful	Free	Safe
Secure	Sure	Fulfilled	Capable	Empowered
In Control	Protected	Connected	Intimate	Competent
Validated	Successful	Enough		
OTHER:				

NEW ACTIONS BASED ON TRUTH

Look back at the truths you identified in Exercise 4. Concentrate on these words, and let the reality of these truths about your identity and safety soak in. Write these words below so you can remember them easily.

Talk to your spouse. In the peace cycle diagram below, record the word you both identified as EMOTIONALLY REGULATING TRUTH from exercise 4 in the appropriate box (spouse #1 or spouse #2).

SPOUSE #2 ACTION/AGENCY:		SPOUSE #1's EMOTIONALLY REGULATING TRUTH:
2	U->	1
4.		3.
5		4
		7
	Your Couple	
4	Your Couple Peace Cycle	2
4	Your Couple Peace Cycle	
A	Your Couple Peace Cycle	
A	Your Couple Peace Cycle	
POUSE #2's EMOTIONALLY REGULATING TRUTH:	Your Couple Peace Cycle	SPOUSE #1 ACTION/AGENCY 1 2
POUSE #2's EMOTIONALLY REGULATING TRUTH:		SPOUSE #1 ACTION/AGENCY 1 2 3
POUSE #2's EMOTIONALLY REGULATING TRUTH:	Your Couple Peace Cycle	SPOUSE #1 ACTION/AGENCY 1 2

Now look at the list of words below that describe different actions/agency. When you are focused on the truth, what behaviors/actions would you likely take or choose to do?

Circle two to five action/agency word that best describe what you would choose to do when you are in your truth and feel a sense of peace. Choose words that directly oppose the actions you take when you are in pain.

Loving	Values Self	Balanced Give/Take	Responsible
Encouraging	Respects Self	Vulnerable	Reliable
Supportive	Positive	Open	Self Controlled
Inclusive	Flexibile	Engaging	Connected
Kind	Optimistic	Appreciative	Intimate
Listening	Hopeful	Gentle	Faithful
Accepting	Self-Aware	Relaxed	Forthcoming
Patient	Confident	Lets Things Go	Problem Solving
Compaassionate	Affirming	Nurturing	
OTHER.			
OTHER:			

Record the words you circled above in your ACTION/AGENCY space on the peace cycle diagram on the previous page. Talk to your spouse and record their words in their space.

Your Pain Cycle Diagram

OTHERS REACT 1 2 3 4 5	Your Pain Cycle	PAIN I FEEL: 1
3	COPES/REACTS: 1 2 3 4 5	2

THE MINDFUL MARRIAGE

By Ron and Nan Deal and Terry and Sharon Hargrave
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Your Couple Pain Cycle Diagram

SPOUSE #2 CORES/REACTS	DAIN SPOUSE #1 FEELS
SPOUSE #2 COPES/REACTS:	PAIN SPOUSE #1 FEELS:
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3
4.	4.
5	5
	Couple
	Couple
	Cycle
PAIN SPOUSE #2 FEELS:	Cycle
PAIN SPOUSE #2 FEELS: 1.	SPOUSE #1 COPES/REACTS
PAIN SPOUSE #2 FEELS: 1 2	SPOUSE #1 COPES/REACTS 1.
PAIN SPOUSE #2 FEELS:	SPOUSE #1 COPES/REACTS 1 2.

THE MINDFUL MARRIAGE

Your Couple Peace Cycle Diagram

POUSE #2 ACTION/AGENCY:	0	SPOUSE #1's EMOTIONALLY REGULATING TRUTH:
2		1
4.		3.
5.		4.
		5
	Your Coup	ole
POUSE #2's EMOTIONALLY	Your Coup Peace Cyc	
POUSE #2's EMOTIONALLY	Your Coup Peace Cyc	SPOUSE #1 ACTION/AGENCY
4	Your Coup Peace Cyc	
POUSE #2's EMOTIONALLY REGULATING TRUTH:		SPOUSE #1 ACTION/AGENCY
POUSE #2's EMOTIONALLY REGULATING TRUTH:	Your Coup Peace Cyc	SPOUSE #1 ACTION/AGENCY 1. 2.

THE MINDFUL MARRIAGE

Additional Resources

Find Bonus Content, Host an Event with Ron and Nan Deal, Attend a Livestream

The Mindful Marriage Conference | Grieving Child Loss |
Smart Stepfamily Seminars
rondeal.org/themindfulmarriage

For Marriages in Crisis (The Hideaway Experience) or to Find a RT Therapist

intensives.com | restorationtherapytraining.com/find-a-therapist

For Professional Counselors and Therapists

Restoration Therapy Training restorationtherapytraining.com

For Professional Coaches and Church Leaders

Restoration Coaching restorationtherapytraining.com

For Small Group Material for Churches (consistent with The Mindful Marriage principles)

RelateStrong for Couples boonecenter.pepperdine.edu

For Resources Related to Mental Health Concerns

RelateStrong Leadership Series boonecenter.pepperdine.edu

For Blended Family Couples, Counselors, & Ministry Leaders

smartstepfamilies.com | familylife.com/blended

The Humility Shift Daily Exercise

When you intentionally choose humility and practice it daily, you can emotionally self-regulate. Triggering makes you feel like an out-of-control automobile screaming down the highway at one hundred miles per hour. You get angry, become controlling, shame yourself, and/or escape and run away—sometimes all four—in a cascade of emotion, totally focused on what someone has done that has been insulting or insufficient to you feeling loved (who you are) or emotionally safe ("Can I trust you?"). Your heart will lie to you—telling you that it is your spouse, friend, child, boss, someone other than you who is responsible for what you feel and how you are reacting. They are the ones that are wrong and need to change and I am right in the way I feel and the way I am acting. When this happens, you need to exit your emotional dysregulation at the next ramp. You need to slow down and see yourself rightly. Self- soothe and manage your emotions and your own pain to cultivate peace.

One way to get more accustomed with this "slow down and exit" is to daily remind yourself of the truth. Doing this on a regular basis helps rewire your brain to respond out of truth instead of pain. Every person will benefit from taking a few minutes each day to repeat this simple Humility Shift statement. Persons who have experienced little love and trustworthiness in their life or who have been the victims of traumatic violations of their identity and safety will need to practice this humility shift with more intentionality to override their pain cycle.

This is not something you just say; you are creating a new story about yourself rooted in truth. Posture your heart to be open to the work of the Holy Spirit and prepare yourself to enact the four steps in dysregulated moments during your day.

Read the following Humility Shift Daily Exercise out loud daily (or until it becomes a natural part of you). It will show you how to renew your mind. Be transformed. Become a living sacrifice of love and trustworthiness.

The Humility Shift Daily Exercise (2 minutes)

1	REMEMBER YOUR GOAL. Read the following aloud.					
	Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in one body. And be thankful. (Colossians 3:12–15 ESV)					
2	PROCLAIM TRUTH ABOUT GOD IN YOUR LIFE.					
2	Raise your open hands at arm's length toward heaven and say some truths about God and God's nature, being, and character aloud. For example: God is the Creator the Authority over all, Perfect and Loving, and has a Specific Plan for me. God is More, I am Less. If you'd like, write your own statement here:					
3	SAY THE TRUTH ABOUT YOURSELF AND HOW GOD SEES YOU.					
	Lower your open hands and place them over your heart and say some truths about yourself that God says about you OUT LOUD. For example: I am Special, Chosen, Holy and Beloved by God who Sacrificed All for me. I am Loved Like No Other. Using the truths from your peace cycle, write your own statement here:					



RECKON WITH YOUR CURRENT REBELLION THROUGH OUT-OF CONTROL EMOTIONAL DYSREGULATION

Lower both open hands to your sides and let your head drop downward and state the reality of what you are feeling and doing in comparison to the Colossians passage you read above OUT LOUD. For example: My old self moves against God and who I am Created to be. My heart often rejects the fruits of the Spirit. I do not have the compassionate heart that God gave to me, and I struggle with humility and patience.

Write your statement here:							



RELEASE THE DRIVE TO BE REACTIVE AND EMBRACE SELF-REGULATION AND GROWTH

Either place your open hands on your opposite shoulders (cross arms) or take a knee to the ground holding your hands open and say what your next step is OUT LOUD.

I chose the path of humility and will slow down and repent of my blame, shame, control, and/or escape reactivity. Instead, I will do my four steps and move my heart to be self-controlled, patient, and humble.