

LOVE & RESPECT

Workbook

DR. EMERSON EGGERICHES
WITH
FRITZ RIDENOUR



THOMAS NELSON
Since 1798

NASHVILLE DALLAS MEXICO CITY RIO DE JANEIRO BEIJING



Focus on the Family
Colorado Springs, Colorado

LOVE & RESPECT WORKBOOK

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Published in association with Yates and Yates, LLP, Attorneys and Literary Agents, Orange, California.

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Cover Design: Charles Brock, UDG | DesignWorks, Inc.

Cover Photo: Steve Gardner, shootpw.com

Interior Design: Rainbow Graphics; Kingsport, TN.

ISBN-13: 9-781-59145-348-2

ISBN-10: 1-59145-348-8

Printed in the United States of America

07 08 09 10 11 RRD 12 11 10 9 8

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BEFORE YOU START YOUR STUDY OF LOVE AND RESPECT . . .

Welcome to the *Love & Respect Workbook* experience. You are about to discover and apply the single greatest secret to a successful marriage. Today, you and your mate can start fresh with the ground-breaking guidance that Dr. Emerson Eggerichs provides in this workbook and the book it accompanies—*Love & Respect*. These two books are designed to be companions, so you'll benefit most if you have a copy of the book as well as this workbook.

Based on three decades of counseling experience, as well as scientific and biblical research, the book offers you the information and tools you will need to understand what is wrong in your relationship and begin the process of correcting it. The workbook gives you and your mate a private place to complete a wide variety of exercises that are crucial to the process of making Dr. Eggerichs' breakthrough techniques a permanent part of your marriage.

Before you start your actual study, here are some helpful hints on how you can benefit most from your experience:

Come ready to let God help you work on your marriage. As you experience *Love & Respect* you will be amazed at how these two simple but powerful concepts can affect your marriage. This is no quick and easy fix, but if you are willing to spend a reasonable amount of time and effort, and make the tiniest of adjustments, this study will change you and your marriage for the better.

Study at your own pace and preference. Some of the questions are quite simple—others take more thought and effort. But as you interact with *Love & Respect* concepts, you

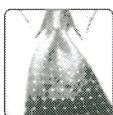
will begin to see what Emerson is talking about. In Emerson's words, you will "get it" and once you "have it," you will never be the same.

Get acquainted with how this workbook is constructed. It covers all the *Love & Respect* book in fourteen sessions. Some sessions cover one chapter of the book, and others cover as many as three chapters. As you go through each chapter, you will note that every subhead denotes a block or section of study, and generally there is at least one question for every section. The goal is to get you involved with what Emerson is saying, to see if you agree or disagree as you apply his concepts to your marriage. When some questions deal with difficult concepts, there is extra input and explanation in the form of Emerson's Additional Commentary (see *Workbook Appendix VI*).

This workbook was designed to be used by both individuals *and* couples, so you'll notice ICONS throughout that will help you understand which questions apply to you.

First, take note that the questions *without* icons apply to *all readers*. In each chapter, be sure to answer all these questions first. Then, take note of the three types of icons used in the workbook. There are certain questions designed especially for men, while others address women only. And some of the questions should be answered as a couple. Here is a quick review:

Unmarked questions should be answered first in each chapter by both the man and the woman.



Men answer these questions.



Women answer these questions.



Couples answer these questions together. Answer these questions last in each chapter.

You can study this book solo. The questions are written primarily for individuals and then for couples. Therefore, if your spouse is not yet interested in *Love & Respect*, you can gain much from working alone. But as you begin putting *Love & Respect* principles into action, your spouse may decide to join you!

For maximum benefit, study with your spouse. Virtually every question has a section for spouses studying together. Remember, these questions are marked with an icon of a couple. Both of you should answer these questions together *after* you answer each question individually. As you compare and discuss your answers, you will gain new understanding of each other and how each of you sees your marriage.

Take your time. There is no hurry and no requirement to cover every last question completely. Break each session into workable parts. Concentrate on the questions that really speak to your needs as husband and wife.

Treat each other with Love and Respect. Because some of the questions probe sensitive areas, it is possible that tension will develop—even irritation and anger. Your rule should be: when dealing with sensitive issues, be sensitive to each other! If a question becomes a bit too sticky, and one of you doesn't feel up to dealing with it at the moment, table that question for possible discussion later.

Handle each other with care. As you proceed, you will soon see that a question may reflect the strength of one spouse and the vulnerability of the other. Where you are strong, or not so sensitive, your spouse is weaker and more sensitive. Where you can quickly see the need to change your attitude or something you are doing, your spouse may struggle, seeming to stubbornly hang on to habits you know have to go! By-words for your study of *love and respect* should be: patient, non-judgmental and forgiving. Always remember that God made us male and female—not wrong, just different. If both of you approach each question with compassion and empathy for each other, there will not be a critical or judgmental spirit on the part of the stronger one, and the vulnerable one will feel greater freedom to address issues and get feelings on the table.

As you study, expect God to work. To be sure, *Love & Respect* was written to put you in closer touch with your spouse. But the ultimate goal is to put you in closer touch with your Lord. Every session in this workbook includes scripture studies to guide you in times of meditation and prayer. Without prayer, your study will yield minimal returns. Pray without ceasing, and you will see God work at His pace, in His way, as He strengthens you “. . . with power through His Spirit in the inner man” (Ephesians 3:16). Love and respect each other as God loves and respects you. He will be forever pleased, and you will be forever rewarded.

Are you ready? Then let's begin!

PART ONE: THE CRAZY CYCLE

Sessions 1 to 4 cover the Introduction and Chapters One to Seven of *Love and Respect*

A PERSONAL WORD FROM EMERSON . . .

Welcome! You are beginning a journey to love and respect, a “new” way to approach marriage that is as old as the New Testament itself. Nestled in the fifth chapter of Paul’s letter to the Ephesians, hidden in plain sight, is the “secret” to controlling what I call the Crazy Cycle—and beginning to enjoy a marriage built on love for her and respect for him. Everyone who has ever been married knows what it is like to be on the Crazy Cycle: without love from him, she reacts without respect; without respect from her, he reacts without love. And so husband and wife go round and round saying and doing the same wrong and hurtful things, with seemingly no way to stop it.

As you study the first four sessions in this workbook, you will learn how the Crazy Cycle starts and why it often continues indefinitely. Most importantly, you will come to understand how to slow the Crazy Cycle and eventually bring it to a halt. I know this can happen because God empowered my wife, Sarah, and me to defeat the Crazy Cycle. He can and will empower you as well.

SESSION ONE

In preparation for this session, read the Introduction to *Love & Respect* (“Love Alone Is Not Enough”) and Chapter One, “The Simple Secret to a Better Marriage.” The following questions are for use in individual study or study by a husband and wife together. Remember to answer all unmarked questions first, then answer questions marked by the male or female icon (whichever applies to you). Finally, answer the questions with the couple icon, if you’re studying with your mate. (Suggestions for anyone planning to use this study with a small group are in *Workbook Appendix I*, page 201.)

Questions for Chapter One

1 On page 1 of *Love & Respect*, Emerson “absolutely disagrees” with the Beatles’ conclusion that “all you need is love.” Emerson goes on to say that five out of ten marriages are ending in divorce because love alone is not enough. Love is vital for the wife, but what we have missed is the husband’s need for respect. *Love & Respect* is all about how the wife can fulfill her need to be loved by giving her husband what he needs—respect.

Do you agree or disagree with the paragraph above? Can a wife get the love she needs simply by showing her husband respect? What if he doesn’t deserve respect? Do you think Emerson is talking about conditional respect, or unconditional respect? Put down some of your thoughts here:



Compare what you wrote. Be aware that this very first question in the workbook could possibly be sensitive, so be cautious as you declare your “firm opinion.” If you disagree with each other on the answers to the questions above, hold them until later in this session, when they may come up again.

2 On pages 2–4 of the book are different testimonial statements by wives who have attended a Love & Respect conference, or read Emerson’s books:

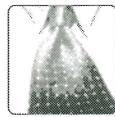
“*I never ever realized how important, how life-giving, respect was to my husband.*”

“*Just a few days ago, I decided to tell my husband that I respect him. It felt so awkward to say the words, but I went for it and the reaction was unbelievable! . . . I watched his demeanor change right before my eyes.*”

“*I wrote my husband two letters about why I respected him. I am amazed at how it has softened him in his response to me.*”

“*I GOT IT! God granted me the power of this revelation of respecting my husband . . . [it] has changed everything . . . my approach, my response, my relationship to God and my husband.*”

From your point of view as a spouse, what do these statements say to you?



As a husband I think:



As a wife I think:



Compare your answers and talk about what you have covered so far. Some couples may find it easier to talk than others—do not force it; be sensitive to each other's feelings. Your study is just getting started, and you should have many good sharing times as you get farther into this workbook.

3 In an introduction to Part One (page 6), Emerson writes:

“I wrote this book out of desperation that was turned into inspiration. As a pastor, I counseled married couples and could not solve their problems. The major problem heard from wives was, ‘He doesn’t love me.’ Wives are made to love, want to love and expect love. Many husbands fail to deliver. But as I kept studying Scripture and counseling couples, I finally saw the other half of the equation. Husbands weren’t saying it much, but they were thinking, *She doesn’t respect me*. Husbands are made to be respected, want respect, and expect respect. Many wives fail to deliver. The result is that five out of ten marriages land in divorce court (and that includes evangelical Christians).

“As I wrestled with the problem, I finally saw a connection: without love from him, she reacts without respect; without respect from her, he reacts without love. Around and around it goes. I call it the Crazy Cycle—marital craziness that has thousands of couples in its grip.”

You will be learning and talking about the Crazy Cycle a lot more as this study progresses, but for now, understand that Crazy Cycles come in all shapes and sizes, as Emerson’s daily mail attests. One man caught in a severe Crazy Cycle wrote:

“We were in the middle of one of our fights . . . My wife was saying things that made me fume. She had no respect for me at all. I knew she loved me but her belligerence was too much. Fed up, I turned and went into my computer room. I left her screaming in the kitchen.”

Granted, the above letter describes a marriage with the Crazy Cycle out of control. But there are other ways to be on the Crazy Cycle or to start one. Here are three more examples, based on mail Emerson has received:

A husband and wife are looking at jewelry together while shopping. The husband points excitedly and says, “Look, honey, I think those earrings are what you’re looking for!” Her condescending response: “No, they aren’t! Those are yellow gold and I don’t like yellow gold; I want white gold!”

A wife greets her husband as he comes in from work. She wants to share what happened that day while she visited a friend. He cuts her short with: "Don't bother me. Traffic was a nightmare. I just want to kick back and watch the news until dinner."

A husband and wife have had a disagreement (the same one they usually have). She wants to talk about it; he clams up. As she badgers him to share his feelings, he picks up a newspaper and is soon engrossed in the sports page.

Choose one or more of the situations reported above. What is going on? Why could the husband feel disrespected or the wife feel unloved?



Compare notes on the examples above of how the Crazy Cycle can start up (or just keep going). If you don't seem to have a lot to discuss at this point, move on. You are just getting introduced to what the Crazy Cycle is and how it affects marriages.

4 What is your response to the term, Crazy Cycle? Does it seem to apply to your marriage—at least some of the time?

YES NO MAYBE

I think:

Check any of the following that apply.

I see the Crazy Cycle starting up when:

- a. My spouse appears unreasonable
- b. I appear unreasonable
- c. My spouse doesn't make sense
- d. I don't make sense
- e. My spouse is harsh and/or critical
- f. I am harsh and/or critical
- g. My spouse is inconsiderate
- h. I am inconsiderate
- i. We argue about sex, money, in-laws, or _____
- j. My spouse won't talk
- k. I won't talk
- l. My spouse talks too much
- m. I talk too much
- n. Other (describe your experience or viewpoint): _____



Share your answers. Take note of what each of you has checked, but do not get into a lengthy discussion at this time. The main idea is that you both recognize how either of you could start the Crazy Cycle.

5 In 1 Corinthians 7:28 the apostle Paul writes: “Those who marry will face many troubles in this life, and I want to spare you this” (NIV). Did you ever stop to think that all married couples will have trouble? In other words, all married couples take a

spin on the Crazy Cycle from time to time. Should couples conclude they have a bad marriage simply because they sometimes have troubles and things get a bit crazy? (Additional commentary is available in *Workbook Appendix VI*.)



Share ideas on what each of you thinks about Emerson's claim that there will always be "trouble" of some kind to deal with in marriage. It may be small, it may be huge, but trouble is something that does come up from time to time.

6 In Chapter One, Emerson recounts his early life and first years of marriage as he and Sarah rode the Crazy Cycle. Reread the story of "The Jean Jacket 'Disagreement'" (pages 9–10) and analyze what Emerson learned. What was Sarah feeling? What was Emerson feeling?



Compare what you wrote down. Can either of you relate to this story? Have you had similar things happen?

7 During an argument after attending a Bible study (book pages 10–11), Emerson responds to Sarah’s criticisms by saying: “Sarah, you can be right but wrong at the top of your voice.” Does this statement ring a bell for you? Is your spouse ever right but wrong at the top of his/her voice? Are you ever right but wrong at the top of your voice? How does this keep the Crazy Cycle spinning?



As you discuss this question with each other, the wisest approach is not to accuse your spouse, but to confess the times when you may have been “right but wrong at the top of your voice.”

8 Read the story of “And Then I Forgot Her Birthday” (book page 12). Has something like this happened in your marriage? Did you feel unloved or disrespected? Did your spouse? Think back and describe what happened as you remember it.



Recalling a forgotten birthday may not make much difference to him, but it will to her. If a husband is the one at fault, he would do well to apologize. For more on how important birthdays and anniversaries are to wives, see Session Eight, page 115.

9 On pages 13–14 Emerson describes a pattern in his marriage of “Loving Times and Spats of Ugliness.” He and Sarah love each other, but they still irritate each other in certain ways—even to this day. Can you relate to their experience? In what way?



This is another question where you should go easy on each other. Try to identify what happens when the positive times turn negative. Are certain words said? Are certain things done or not done? Always remember the key questions: Does she feel loved? Does he feel respected?

10 In Song of Solomon 2:15, the lovers resolve to “Catch the foxes . . . the little foxes that are ruining the vineyards.” In other words, they don’t want anything to spoil their relationship. What are some “little foxes” that threaten to spoil your marriage and keep the Crazy Cycle rolling along?

Though we will have “trouble” in marriage (1 Corinthians 7:28), that doesn’t mean we should assume trouble is always inevitable. Some trouble can be caused because we have not dealt with the “little foxes” that we know are there. What could you do to

reduce some of the crazy negativity that causes unnecessary trouble? Write down some different steps you can take to drive out the “little foxes.”



Share ideas on how to go “fox hunting.” Each spouse will do well to think of things he or she needs to do, not what the other spouse needs to do.

11 In “The ‘Secret’ Hidden in Ephesians 5:33” (book pages 14–15), Emerson explains how God helped him see the secret to defeating the Crazy Cycle. This secret is in Ephesians 5:33 (NIV):

*However, each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself,
and the wife must respect her husband.*

In “How God Revealed the Love & Respect Connection” (book pages 15–17), Emerson explains how his study of Ephesians 5:33 began to show him a definite link between love and respect. He realized that a husband is to obey the command to love even if his wife does not obey the command to respect, and a wife is to obey the command to respect even if the husband does not obey the command to love. As Emerson saw it, Ephesians 5:33 didn’t leave much wiggle room. A husband can’t say, “I will love my wife after she respects me.” Nor can a wife say, “I will respect my husband after he loves me” (see page 16). A husband’s love for his wife must be unconditional, and a wife’s respect for her husband must also be unconditional.

What do you think? Is there any “wiggle room” in Ephesians 5:33? Many wives believe (some with good reason) that their husbands don’t deserve respect. What is Paul saying to wives who may feel like this deep down? (Additional commentary available in *Workbook Appendix VI*.)



Keep in mind each other's comfort zone. (For example, some spouses like discussing the meaning of the Greek more than others.) The key point Emerson is making is Ephesians 5:33 clearly teaches that husbands must unconditionally love their wives and wives must unconditionally respect their husbands. This can be new and striking information for a wife, so the husband should be sensitive to her need to process this idea over time.



12 For more on the concept of unconditional respect, read "Why Love & Respect Are Primary Needs" (book pages 17–19). See especially pages 18–19, which give additional comment on Ephesians 5:33 and then show how 1 Peter 3:1–2 also teaches unconditional respect for husbands. What kind of a husband is Peter talking about? How can a wife feel respect for a man who does not believe, or who is not treating her lovingly? Is she supposed to feel respect, or is Peter asking her to do something else? Write your thoughts below. (For additional interpretation of 1 Peter 3:1 and its application to husbands, see *Workbook Appendix II*.)



As you share answers, you may want to just touch on this question. To go into it in depth (see *Workbook Appendix II*) may be something you want to do at another time. The key point is that 1 Peter 3:1 is a cross-reference support to Ephesians 5:33. Both passages teach unconditional respect for the husband by the wife.

13 On page 16 of *Love & Respect*, Emerson relates that he still did not totally understand the Love & Respect Connection until God guided him to see that it is a connection that can be strained or even broken. Without love she reacts without respect, and without respect, he reacts without love—the Crazy Cycle.

Read pages 15–16 again to be sure you follow Emerson’s reasoning. Does it make sense? Why or why not? How do his ideas apply to your marriage? Husband, do you think you understand how to love your wife? Wife, are you certain you understand how to respect your husband? What are some examples of how you believe you are doing this?



I love my wife by:



I respect my husband when I:



You can take one of two approaches on this question:

- Keep your answer to yourself at this point and use it as your personal checkpoint on how you are treating your spouse.
 - Share your answer with your spouse and get his or her feedback. Try to give each other positive suggestions and encouragement whenever possible.
-

14 On page 20, Emerson describes and illustrates the “life-changing decision” he and Sarah have both made. He has decided to believe that no matter what Sarah says or does, she does not have evil intentions. She might have a nasty or peevish moment but deep in her heart she intends to do good. She may come across in a way that seems disrespectful to Emerson, but that is not her real purpose. And Sarah has decided to believe that, no matter what Emerson says or does, he does not intend, deep in his heart, ill will toward her. He may come across in an angry way, and give her a cold stare that seems unloving, but his real purpose is not to be uncaring. (See his accounts on pages 20–22 of the book concerning peppered eggs and wet towels to see how this plays out in their marriage.)

Take a few minutes to end your study of Session One by thinking and praying about a woman’s deep need for love and a man’s deep need for respect. Consider how the decision Emerson describes on page 20 of the book applies to you. If you are studying alone, you may be in one of several situations: You may be trying to find answers for your marriage, but your spouse isn’t interested in studying anything with you at this point. You would like to decide that no matter what your spouse says or does, deep down your spouse loves (or respects) you, but you aren’t quite sure this is always true. In fact, at this point you may be thinking you need more time and more study of how love and respect work in a marriage. Emerson has many more insights to share, beginning with Session Two, which covers why men and women are so different, and which often causes communication problems.



Talk about what this chapter has been saying to both of you. Share any “light bulb moments,” questions, or concerns you may have. Perhaps you are ready to make the same decision about each other’s good intentions that Emerson and Sarah have made (see book page 20). Perhaps one of you isn’t quite ready. Wives, in particular, if your husband seems unwilling or uncomfortable about

taking this step so early in your study together, do not be critical or disrespectful. Do not rush something like this. Be willing to pray and think about it. Both of you may need more time, or more information about the Crazy Cycle and why people can't seem to slow it down. As Emerson says, there is much more he wants to tell you. In Session Two he will talk about how husbands and wives can learn to communicate, despite their differences as men and women.

A JOURNAL OF MY JOURNEY TO LOVE & RESPECT

Every session will conclude with Emerson's meditations on foundational Scripture passages cited in *Love & Respect*. The space provided below for you to interact with his observations will allow you to create a personal journal of your journey to love and respect. By the time you finish this workbook, you'll have a permanent record of your growth and development as an individual or as a couple.

SCRIPTURE MEDITATIONS

1. “Enjoy life with the woman whom you love” (Ecclesiastes 9:9). When on the Crazy Cycle, many a husband wants to throw up his hands in defeat. Does Ecclesiastes 9:9 suggest that a husband could influence the emotional temperature of his marriage more than he might think? As a husband, what might you do for or with your wife in the next several hours that is wholesome and enjoyable—something to ignite a smile in both of you?
2. The Crazy Cycle is, indeed, “the evil of folly and the foolishness of madness” (Ecclesiastes 7:25). When the Bible speaks of “madness,” it does not refer to someone who is mentally deranged. This person has a sound mind, but he or she is acting or reacting in ways that God deems foolish, unfruitful, even “crazy.” Think about it: how crazy is it for a husband to react in unloving ways when feeling disrespected? How crazy is it for a wife to react in disrespectful ways when feeling unloved? You might say, “But it’s natural to react sometimes in an unloving or disrespectful way.” Natural, yes, but effective, no. What do unloving or disrespectful reactions do to the spirit of a spouse?

3. In Ephesians 5:33, Paul writes: "Each one of you also must love his wife as he loves himself, and the wife must respect her husband" (NIV). Because Ephesians 5 contains what is considered the greatest treatise in the Bible on marriage, it is safe to say that Ephesians 5:33 is, in effect, God's "last word" to us on this subject. But God's last word on marriage won't help you if it isn't heard. Do you believe that if, as a couple, you apply love and respect to your marriage you will experience marriage in the way God intended? Do you believe love and respect will guide the two of you in responding correctly to troubles that are bound to come to your marriage? Do you believe that at the end of your life, after living out love and respect, you will be able to pray:

Thank You, Lord, for showing me Your simple plan for marriage"? (Put down your honest thoughts here. If you have any doubts write them out, then give them to God in prayer.)

My current thoughts about our marriage:

SESSION TWO

In preparation for this session, read Chapter Two in *Love & Respect*, “To Communicate, Decipher the Code.” The following questions are for use in individual study, or study by a husband and wife together. Remember to answer all unmarked questions first, then answer questions marked by the male or female icon (whichever applies to you). Finally, answer the questions with the couple icon, if you’re studying with your mate. (Suggestions for using this workbook with a group are in *Workbook Appendix I*, page 201.)

Questions for Chapter Two

1 On page 25, Emerson opens Chapter Two by asserting that husbands and wives communicate in “code” and must learn how to decipher the messages they send each other. What do you think?

How often does your spouse seem to communicate in a “code” that is hard to decipher or understand?

CONSTANTLY ____ OFTEN ____ NOW AND THEN ____ SELDOM ____



Discuss this question gently and sensitively, particularly if your answers fall in the “constantly” or “often” range. If you do have a communication problem, this session is designed to get you talking about it and learning how to work on it. Guard against getting into an argument about “who communicates the worst.”

2 Read the story of the “Tenth Anniversary Card” that turned out to be a birthday card (book pages 25–27.) When the wife responded in anger, what coded message was she sending to her husband? What coded message was he sending to his wife when he responded defensively by saying, “I made an honest mistake; give me a break”? How did they start the evening anticipating a wonderful tenth anniversary and wind up on the Crazy Cycle?



Compare notes with your spouse (and with Emerson’s additional commentary on Question 7 found in *Workbook Appendix VI*). Talk about how the couple wound up on the Crazy Cycle on a night when they should have been celebrating.

3 Read the story that starts under the heading, “All You Want Me for Is Sex!” (book pages 27–29). What message was the wife sending in code as she reeled off a barrage of problems, appointments, and assignments the minute her husband returned from his trip? What message was the husband sending in code when he said sarcastically, “Great to see you after a week”?

4 Later, when this same husband and wife go to bed after their exhausting day, what coded messages do they send each other? What mistakes do they make in doing so? Why can't either spouse decipher the other's code? How did they get on the Crazy Cycle?



Compare your answers to Questions 3 and 4. If you aren't sure you have identified the encoded messages correctly, hold them for discussion in Question 7, where Emerson will review this story and make comments on what the encoded messages meant.

5 Under "Craziness—Just Keep Flipping the Light Switch" (book page 29), Emerson compares the Crazy Cycle to mindlessly flipping a light switch over and over when the light won't come on. Instead of figuring out the problem, you just keep flipping that switch. Emerson's point is simple: "Craziness happens when we keep doing the same things over and over with the same ill effect." What things do you or your spouse do over and over that help start you both on the Crazy Cycle?



Go easy with each other when discussing this question. Confess your faults, not your spouse's. Try to have some fun with this, and don't call each other "crazy." The truth is, any couple can get on the Crazy Cycle together, and you must work together to slow it down and stop it.

6 In "Why Do Couples Communicate in Code?" (book page 30), Emerson paraphrases a well-known explanation of why and how we send messages in code and don't communicate: "What I say is not what you hear, and what you think you heard is not what I meant at all." Read the story about Emerson and Sarah almost getting into a serious argument about who was listening to what on the radio. How did Emerson finally break the codes they were sending and stop the problem from escalating?



You can learn a lot about communicating as you discuss your answers to this question. The way Emerson stopped the Crazy Cycle from spinning was to realize he was not being clear (and not very loving either). Once he broke the pattern of miscommunication, he and Sarah were able to understand each other and prevent sparks from becoming a fire.

7 Read the section titled, "When the Issue Isn't the Issue" (book pages 31–32). What was the real issue when the husband gave the wife the wrong kind of greeting card?

What was the real issue as the businessman's wife turned him down when he wanted sex?



Compare your answers. Did you agree that the real issue in these stories, as it usually is in all marital arguments or fights, is love and respect? She doesn't feel loved or she desperately needs a kiss or a hug—something to assure her she is loved. And he doesn't feel respected. He needs to feel he is appreciated and that he is someone his wife looks up to, not down upon. For interpretation of the encoded messages the spouses were sending each other in each story, see additional commentary on Question 7 in *Workbook Appendix VI*.



Are you beginning to see the importance of “decoding” each other when one or both of you sounds irritated, angry, or sarcastic? No spouse can decode his or her mate perfectly, but it is vital to understand that the need to decode is always there, and the more you both work on doing it, the better your communication will be.

8 In “We’re as Different as Pink and Blue” (book pages 32–35), how is male-female communication described? According to Emerson, women see the world through _____ sunglasses and hear with _____ hearing aids. Men see the world through _____ sunglasses and hear with _____ hearing aids. Why is it important to understand these differences? How could understanding their pink and blue perspectives have helped the couple whose tenth anniversary was spoiled by the wrong kind of greeting card or the couple who reconnected so badly after his week on the road?



Compare your answers, as well as your respective understandings of the pink and blue analogy. This question is really a continuation of Question 7. Obviously, the pink and blue perspectives of the wife and husband have everything to do with the kinds of codes they send and the decoding that needs to be done. Try working together to re-create each story to make it come out with a happy ending, or at least with the Crazy Cycle slowing down and even stopping. In either story, what might the husband have said or done that would have felt more loving to the wife? What might the wife have said or done that would have felt more respectful to the husband?

9 Emerson constantly receives letters from spouses who finally “get it” concerning the deep need in wives for love and the deep need in husbands for respect. Following is one such letter, from a wife, who came to see clearly the difference between “pink” and “blue”:

I read your book this week and I have been convicted. I have always felt that if I just loved my husband enough, he would come around and be the kind of man my father was. Then God proceeded to show me the many ways I have been disrespectful towards my husband—and my father!

I now see that most of the arguments have been started by me, in my misunderstanding of the way my husband thinks. I have been arrogant and self-righteous in my misguided attempts at communication in hopes of bringing us together. What a fool I've been! It sounds so dumb when I write it down!

I wrote him a letter today in apology and my desire to change. He called to say, “It's okay, it was nothing!” What a man!

I never saw my disrespect as disobedience to Christ before. That really hurt. I know now what a grievous sin it is and I pray for grace and help to change. Thank you for this liberating truth.

Grace and peace to you and may I see and hear in blue!

What has this wife understood? What does she mean when she says: “. . . may I hear and see in blue!”?

Here's another letter, from a husband who also finally “got it.” He and his wife had started going to a counselor before they attended a Love & Respect Conference, and they continued to go afterward as they tried to apply love and respect principles. He writes:

Recently, I had forgotten to do something for my wife. She expressed hurt and anger toward me at the next [counseling] session. Our counselor concluded that I have not been “hearing” her because I react in a “defensive” way to her comments, and this has hurt her and caused her to shut down. He has challenged me to learn her “language” [pink] so that I will “hear” her. Subsequently, she will melt and then respond with respect. . . .

I accept my divine command to unconditionally love my wife through any technique that works. I still do fall into the Crazy Cycle, but I try my best to stay off of it. I do intend to sign up for “pink language lessons.”

What has this husband understood? What does he mean when he says he wants to “sign up for ‘pink language’ lessons”?