

# Small Wins – Big Gains

MARRIAGE IN MOTION ▶ Module 3: An Epic Friendship

3.1

MODULE 3, LESSON 1

## SUMMARY

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- This lesson is about how to create BIG change with small wins.
- Charles Duhigg, author of *The Power of Habit* says, “A large body of research has shown that small wins have a lot of power and great influence. Small wins convince people that larger accomplishments are achievable.” **Small wins** can create new patterns of hope, momentum, confidence, and contentment in the midst of this game called marriage.
- **Intellectual Intimacy** — Get in the habit of saying, “What do you think?” Play the noun game. Pick a noun and share a story about it.
- **Emotional Intimacy** — Ask for what you need with the belief you will get the response you want. Asking gives your partner the opportunity to answer your request and put deposits in your emotional bank account.
- To cherish something is to protect it, nurture it, appreciate it. To fix it when it breaks. Doesn’t your marriage deserve to be cherished?
- There are 168 hours in the week. Protect your time to dedicate energy and effort to your partner and your marriage.

*Marriages are not made or broken by the big, grand gestures.  
Instead, they live and die by the small decisions  
we make each and every day.*

# ACTIVITIES

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This lesson is about how to create BIG change with small wins. In this lesson we ask you to begin creating opportunities for small wins by focusing on a few habits in your relationship in the following areas:

**1) The Art of Play; 2) Curiosity; and 3) Cherishing your Partner.**

## 1 PLAY

Play between partners is often the first thing to go after the honeymoon period is over. Happy couples in thriving relationships make time to laugh, play and enjoy the lighter side of life.

You may already be great at this, and if so... FAB! However, you can always mix things up with new ideas and spontaneity, so the following is a list of ideas you can choose from to integrate play into your daily lives.



**Select one thing that you will try this week, and give it a shot:**

1. Play a game of hide and go seek in the dark. If you have children, they will want to join in too. Better yet, go to your local IKEA with a group of other couples and play hide and go seek at IKEA.
2. Research local co-ed teams you can join to play a weekly sport with other couples in your area.
3. Build a pillow fort and sleep in it for the night.
4. Test drive your dream car. Agree in advance you are only test driving.
5. Play a game of Twister.
6. Prank call a friend.
7. Agree to talk in accents the entire day.
8. Go to an amusement park.
9. Rent a tandem bicycle and be a tourist in your own city.
10. Share childhood photo albums and tell funny stories of growing up.
11. Embrace your inner artist and take turns painting your partner's portrait. Think Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio in Titanic!
12. Go for a long walk in the dark with your favorite beverage.
13. Get a group together to play tag in a park.
14. Download an app on your phone like "Words with Friends" that would allow you to play a game throughout the day.
15. Select a board/card game to play after dinner.

*Remember, it's not about the "thing," it's about being spontaneous and finding ways to laugh.*

## 2 INTELLECTUAL INTIMACY

One essential form of relational intimacy is intellectual intimacy, created by the exchange of ideas, thoughts, and perspectives. Like the exercise above, you may already be great at this, in which case, keep at it. If you need some new conversation starters, here are some ideas.



**We encourage you to discuss your viewpoints on the questions below, and really listen. As you listen to your partner, remember to stay curious and interested in their point of view. This is not an opportunity to convince your partner — rather, the exercise is to share, listen, understand, and engage. Be sure to do everything you can to make your partner feel comfortable sharing with you.**

- What are your thoughts on assisted suicide?
- What do you think about making human organs available for purchase?
- When do you think it should be legal to drink alcohol?
- What benefits/disadvantages do you see to single-sex primary education?
- What would you do to improve the incarceration system?
- What are your thoughts on governmental spending to explore the Universe? Should space exploration be a priority?
- If you could have dinner with anyone, living or dead, who would it be? What questions would you ask? What would you want to tell them?
- Deserted Island Questions: You're stuck on a Deserted Island... what three books / albums / movies would you want to have, and why?

## 3 YOU CAN'T HAVE A GREAT MARRIAGE WITHOUT BEING GRATEFUL



Creating a “habit of mind” is a big undertaking. Luckily, habits develop over time and only require small consistent efforts from you.

Our mission is to help you see the good, positive and wonderful things happening around you and in your relationship. **In order to develop that positive habit of mind, you need to commit to scanning your relationship and your partner for one thing that you are grateful for each and every day.**

### CONSIDER:

1. **Setting an alarm on your phone to alert you to send a daily affirmation text to your partner.**
2. **Write a brief affirmation on a sticky note and put it somewhere surprising.**
3. **Verbally affirm your partner each morning before you leave each other for the day.**

*It may seem simple, or even silly... but trust us. Expressing gratitude, on a daily basis — even in the small things — will reset the equilibrium and context of your relationship over time.*

*Whatever you choose, commit to making real, tangible expressions of gratitude a daily habit.*

## 4 WHY I FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU

In the space below, reminisce about two qualities that you first fell in love and found endearing about your partner.

YOU

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR PARTNER

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Now, think about two things you are **PRESENTLY** most grateful for in your spouse and write them below.

Be sure to find a special way to share these thoughts of gratitude with your partner. REPEAT THIS EXERCISE EVERY DAY FOR A WEEK to begin training your brain to see the positives in your partner and relationship.

YOU

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

YOUR PARTNER

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_



### TAKEAWAY

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What was your #1 takeaway from this lesson? Describe any breakthrough(s):