

Approach to Consensus Decision Making

Consensus and Friendship

1. Value the marriage more than the subject.
 - What are the verbal and nonverbal indicators each of you give that indicate a subject is becoming more valuable (at least in that moment) than the marriage?
 - What day-to-day forms of marital encouragement are most important for displaying a high value of relationship in your marriage?
2. Value unity more than preference.
 - What are your strongest pet peeves and preferences (which probably emanate from your strengths)? How do you regularly ensure that they are serving your marriage instead of expecting your marriage to serve you?
 - What are the indicators that your marriage is “good” that have little to do with your personal preferences?
 - What shared goals do the two of you have that are not the re-articulation of your personal preferences?
3. Value relationship over certainty.
 - Picture a spectrum where trust is in the middle with naïve / gullible on one end and fearful / controlling on the other. Where are you? Where is your spouse? How does this affect your marital decision making?
 - How strong are your “marital trust muscles”? When are the times when you should be intentionally exercising those muscles (i.e., relatively safe times of uncertainty)?
4. Values participation over efficiency.
 - Which do you naturally value more: mutual participation or efficiency? For what kind of decisions does your normal preference change? Is that change made because of fear, ease, or wisdom?
 - Do you have adequate time set aside for marital communication in order to allow for a larger percentage of marital decisions to be made through consensus? Do you manage the basics of life well so that consensus decision making time is not consumed by logistics?

What Fits in “Consensus”?

1. Level One: Life Stewardship (Pre-Consensus)
2. Level Two: Unique Decisions (Active-Consensus)
 - Non-Moral Decisions
 - Differing or Unclear Objectives or Preferences
 - Non-Rushed Decisions
 - Decisions Requiring Mutual Execution
 - Decisions Affecting Family Balance

What is the Process for Consensus?

- Step One: Define the Decision
- Step Two: Listen to Each Other
 - Listening and Consensus Require Humility
 - Listening and Consensus Require Mutual Participation
 - Listening and Consensus Require Fairness
- Step Three: Differentiate Opinions from Facts
- Step Four: Begin From Where You Agree
- Step Five: Assess What Is “At Stake” for Each Person
- Step Six: Understand the “Win”
- Step Seven: Headship-Submission is Not Failure