



# TOGETHER FOREVER

COUPLES CONFERENCE



COMMUNITY CHURCH

[couples@visitonecc.com](mailto:couples@visitonecc.com)



**Hello Couples!**

**Welcome to our 2021 Couples Conference! I am grateful that you decided to hang out with us today, and choose to invest in a relationship intended to last forever. Hopefully, today will be a tiny seed planted in the soil of your relationship that when nurtured and cared for properly, can develop into a powerful view of the love God has for the church.**

**I am passionate about fighting for marriages. Marriage is God's way of giving the world a glimpse of His divine love. In order to keep that union strong, each person must be committed to investing in the marriage, but also investing in themselves and growing in their individual relationship with God. As you grow in that relationship you will be able to love one another sacrificially and understand that what you are experiencing is bigger than a momentary feeling.**

**I encourage each of you to continue to unselfishly pursue each other, considering the needs of the other as more important than your own. Fight for your marriage, seek God's purpose for bringing you together and embark on a mission to fulfil His intention for you two, together as one. I pray that as we leave the conference this afternoon, your spirits will be refreshed and you will depart with a renewed sense of why you decided to get married in the first place: remembering your commitment to being Together Forever!**

**Your humble servant,**

**Dr. Conway Edwards  
Lead Pastor**

*Welcome*

# Agenda



TOGETHER FOREVER

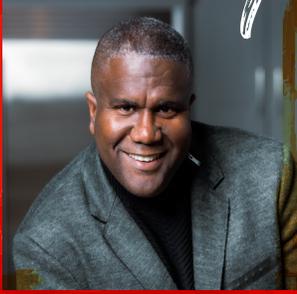
## Friday

- 7p • Pre-Show
- 7:30p • Conference Opening
- 7:45p • Comedian Mike Goodwin
- 8:15p • Session #1

## Saturday

- 8:45a • Pre-Show
- 9a • Opening Session
- 9:30a • Slow Dance Break
- 9:45a • Session #2
- 10:30a • Couples Competitions
- 10:45a • Session #3
- 11:30a • Closing Session

# Presenters



**Dr. Conway Edwards**  
ONE Community Church  
Lead Pastor

Dr. Edward's unique ability to communicate the truths of the Bible in a relevant and uncompromising manner has helped to reach a generation of men, women, singles, couples, and families. He is passionate about coaching leaders. In the local church. Dr. Edwards holds a Master of Theology, from Dallas Theological Seminary (DTS). He formerly served as Director of Singles at Oak Cliff Bible Fellowship in Dallas, Texas under the leadership of Senior Pastor, Dr. Tony Evans. Dr. Edwards and his wife, Jada, are proud parents of a son, Joah, and a daughter, Chloe.

Books authored by Dr. Edwards include *Before Love's In View*, *20/80 Rule*, *Fantastic Teams*, and coming Fall 2021 *Fencepost Leadership*. *When Love's In View*, *Undercover Woman* and *Going Up* were co-authored with his wife, Jada Edwards.



**Jada Edwards**  
One Community Church  
Creative Director

Jada Edwards is a Bible teacher and discipler. She has committed her life to equipping women of all ages, at all stages, with practical, biblical truth to help them live authentic and transparent lives. Jada has always had a passion for sharing God's word and has served in various directional capacities within the local church as well as numerous non-profit organizations. Jada currently serves as the Creative Director and the Women's Director for One Community Church.

Jada has authored books including *Galatians Bible Study*, *Be Bold*, *The Captive Mind*, and *Thirst* as well as co-authoring with her husband, Dr. Conway Edwards, *When Love's In View*, *Going Up* and *Undercover Woman*. Most recently, Jada co-authored newly released *World On Fire* and coming Fall 2021 is *Romans Bible Study*.



**Bishop Van Moody**  
Public Figure & Author

Bishop Van Moody has a passion for transforming people, organizations and the world.

With a background in leadership, business, and ministry, he is qualified uniquely to position and empower people for success in every aspect of their lives. In 2016 Moody became a Core Team member of Dr. Oz Show on ABC. He writes frequently for The Christian Post and Fox News and his other articles have been featured in Essence Magazine, Investors' Business Daily, Forbes, American Express Open Forum, Maxim and many others. He is the author of five books, three of which have been bestsellers *The People Factor*, *The I-Factor*, and his latest book *Desired By God*.



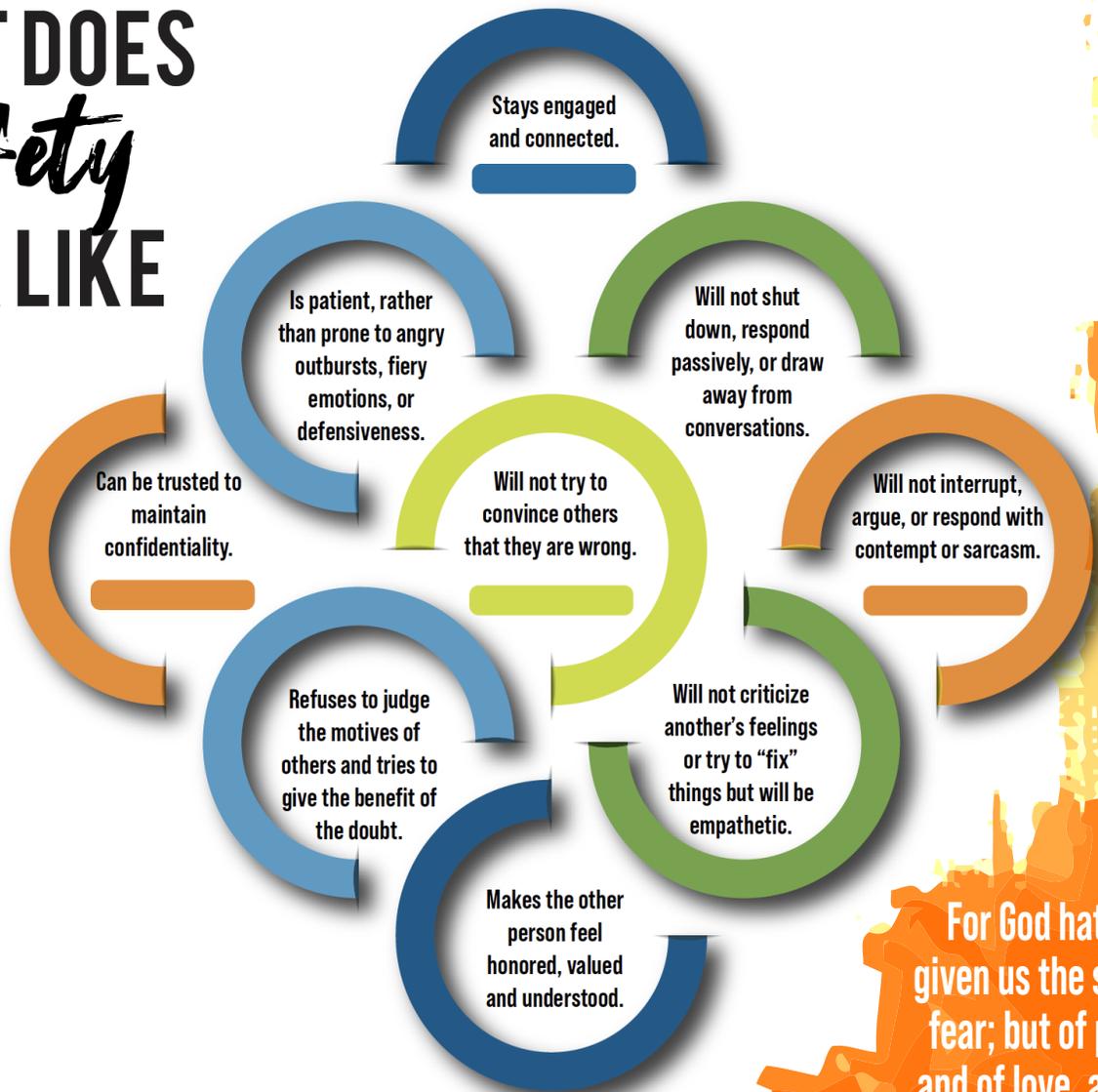
**Pastor Steve Stroope**  
Lake Pointe Pastor

Called to pastor Lake Pointe shortly after its founding in 1979, Steve leads a congregation that has grown from 53 in attendance to more than 14,000 each week at six Dallas campuses.

In addition to his role at Lake Pointe, Steve provides coaching to partnership churches throughout the world. Pastor Steve's spiritual gifts are evangelism, leadership, and teaching. He has a passion for seeing the Gospel presented to unchurched people in a culturally relevant style without compromising truth. He also believes that one of the keys to an effective church is keeping a balance between evangelism and discipleship.

Let the peace of Christ keep you in tune with each other, in step with each other. None of this going off and doing your own thing. And cultivate thankfulness. Let the Word of Christ—the Message—have the run of the house. Give it plenty of room in your lives. Instruct and direct one another using good common sense. And sing, sing your hearts out to God! Let every detail in your lives—words, actions, whatever—be done in the name of the Master, Jesus, thanking God the Father every step of the way.

# WHAT DOES *Safety* LOOK LIKE



For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.

*2 Timothy 1:7*

# Work On *You* First

Here are four things you can do instead of trying to change your partner that can change your relationship for the better.

## 1. BE A BETTER PARTNER

Many people stay in bad relationships with the desire to change their partner. If you don't change your part in a pattern, no change will occur. Change comes from the person who is in the most pain, or who has the least power, or who has lost or compromised too much in the relationship.

## 2. FOCUS ON THE ISSUES AT HAND

When you focus on changing your partner, you miss the opportunity to work together to come up with a solution. Focus on the issues at hand to meet both of your needs.

## 3. TAKE RESPONSIBILITY

We are responsible for how our words and actions make our partner feel. Apologize to your partner by taking responsibility for the problem, even just a small piece, and this will validate their feelings, promote forgiveness, and allow you both to move on.

## 4. COMPLAIN WITHOUT BLAME

Criticizing your partner is one action that predicts divorce. It is different from offering a critique or voicing a complaint. A criticism attacks the core of a person's character while a complaint focuses on a specific behavior.

Successful couples remember to give each other the benefit of the doubt and consider that they are both doing the best they can. By being good friends, you can build a healthy bond that will help you repair and navigate challenging moments together.

Instead of trying to change your partner, be the change you wish to see in your relationship.

### For Better Or For Worse

In Ephesians 5, the apostle Paul compares marriage to the relationship between Christ and the church. What does that mean to you?

### A Safe Place

Want to be a great spouse? Be trustworthy, compassionate, and approachable. Would your spouse use those three words to describe you?

### Desires Or Demands?

You have God-given needs and desires, but what's the difference between a desire and a demand?

### Family Of Origin

Your family of origin is the lens through which you see your own marriage. Burying your past won't make it go away.

### Communication And Conflict

The ways we express ourselves differ, but couples in great marriages navigate difference so they lead to intimacy instead of isolation.

### The Gift Of Forgiveness

Your spouse will hurt you from time to time. When it happens you can give in to resentment and bitterness, or you can forgive.

### Intimacy

God wants us to experience fulfillment and satisfaction through the intimacy of marriage.



*Join* **Couples' Ministry**  
Where no *couple* walks alone...

W O M E N ' S

*Bible*

S T U D Y

**RESUMES WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 1**  
1ST & 3RD WEDNESDAYS @ 7P CST



**MANCHURCH**

**RESUMES**  
*September 8*



**MEN'S BIBLE STUDY**  
2ND & 4TH WEDNESDAYS @ 7P CST

# One Community Fights



## CONNECT

Connect with other like-minded married couples.

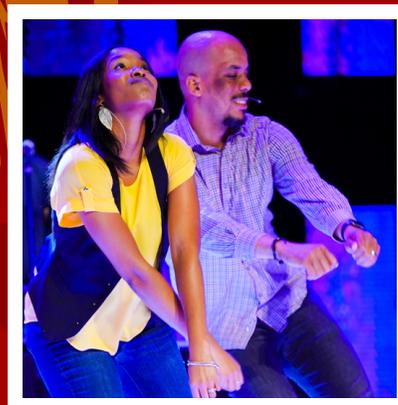
- Life Groups
- Events
- Meet-Ups



## PREPARE

Explore whether you are ready to take the next step to marriage.

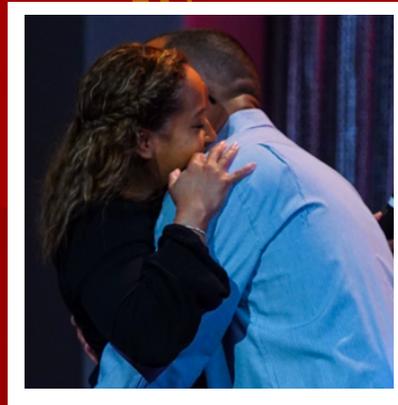
- Premarital Classes



## ENRICH

All marriages need regular maintenance to THRIVE. Come get a short-term or long-term tune-up.

- Marriage Enrichment
- Marriage Mentors



## HEAL

Resources to help move from a hurting marriage to a healed one.

- Renew (Drop-in Crisis Support)
- Oasis (5-day Intensive)
- Pursuit (Recovery, Redemption)
- Counseling



*Scan for  
Healing Resources*

# For Healthy Couples



JOIN A  
*Couples*  
SMALL GROUP

A **Life Group** is a group of people who come together on a regular basis for a common purpose, and are led by hosts.



All Classes Are Virtual • Wait List Is Now Open

## I PROMISE

PREMARITAL CLASSES

Thursday • Sept 9 – Thursday • Oct 14 | 7p - 9p CDT  
Saturday • Sept 11 – Saturday • Oct 14 | 10a - 12p CDT

**I-Promise** is an exciting 6-week interactive marital-preparation class for seriously dating or engaged couples. By the end of the course each couple will be confident and secure in their decision to marry (or perhaps NOT to marry).



All Classes Are Virtual  
Wait List Is Now Open

**The Love she desires.  
The Respect he needs.**

Saturday • Sept 11 - Saturday • Oct 16  
All classes are from 9a - 12p CDT

The **Marriage Institute** is offering “Love & Respect”, a 6-week interactive course focused on the vast and frustrating cycles of communication and perception within the marriage. Women are wired to need unconditional love while men need to feel unconditionally respected.



5-DAY  
**OASIS**  
MARRIAGE  
INTENSIVE

FOR COUPLES FACING DIVORCE

**Oasis** marriage intensive retreat is about hope, love, and relationships renewed, about being vulnerable without fear of judgment. You and your spouse will examine the root of your marital conflict through a biblical lens in order to begin the healing process toward restoration.

Scripture gives us an important emphasis.  
Husbands are told specifically to love their wives as Christ loved the church  
(*Ephesians 5:25*).

Wives are told specifically to respect their  
husbands as the church does Christ  
(*Ephesians 5:33*).

# Love and Respect

## BASICS FOR MARRIAGE

### WE ARE CALLED TO LOVE AND RESPECT

“A woman loved by her husband will grow in loveliness. A man respected by his wife will become more respectable.”

First, the commands are directed to our respective and relative weaknesses. We are told to do things that we might not do unless we were told. For example, children are told to obey their parents because it is easy for children not to do so (*Ephesians 6:1*). In the same way, husbands are told to love their wives because it is easy for husbands not to do so. Wives are told to honor their husbands because it is easy for wives not to do so. We are called to do things that might not occur to us. If we were all doing these things naturally, why bring it up?

Women are better at loving than men are. Men do well at respecting. C.S. Lewis once observed that women think of love as taking trouble for others — which is much closer to a scriptural agape love than what men naturally do. Men tend to think of love as not giving trouble to others.

So men must be called to sacrifice for their wives, to take trouble for them, as Christ gave himself for the church. Women must be urged to respect their husbands. A woman can naturally love a man she does not honor or respect very much, and this is something that Paul would identify as a trouble. How many times have we heard a terrible story about a girl returning to her abusive boyfriend because she “loves him,” even though he treats her like dirt? But if we asked her if she respects him, she would reply, “Are you kidding? Him?” And men must be called to give themselves away for their wives. This is what a wedding means.

### MEN RUN ON RESPECT, WOMEN ON LOVE

Second, the command reveals something about the needs of the recipient. In other words, if the Bible said that shepherds should feed the sheep, a reasonable inference would be that sheep need food. When husbands are told to love their wives, we can infer from this

that wives need to be loved. When wives are told to respect their husbands, we can infer from this that husbands need to be respected. Think of it as two kinds of cars that run on different kinds of fuel — diesel and regular say. Men run on respect, and wives run on love.

“Fill your spouse’s tank. Men run on respect. Women live on love.” In saying this, remember that we are talking about emphasis. On a basic level, everyone needs to be loved and everyone needs to be respected. But when Scripture singles out husbands and wives living together, the men are told to love and the women are told to respect. Flip this around, and you see that men should remember that their wives need to be loved, and their wives should remember that their husbands need to be respected.

Remembering this keeps us from giving what we would like to be getting. George Bernard Shaw once observed that we should not do unto others as we would have them do unto us — their tastes may not be the same as ours. I once knew a husband who got his wife a nice shotgun for Christmas. She was a shrewd Christian woman, and so the following Christmas, she got him a nice string of pearls. And as she told my wife, “They were very nice pearls.”

Often when a marriage is in a tough spot, both spouses tend to give what they feel they need — love and respect, respectively. Wives reach out to their husbands with love, when respect is what would really help. Husbands can back away, thinking of this as a form of respect, “giving space,” when what they need to do is close in with love.

## BOTH ARE POWERFUL TO PRODUCE CHANGE

But third — here is where it gets glorious — love and respect are both potent. The Bible teaches that this kind of love is efficacious. This kind of respect is powerful. This sort of love bestows loveliness. This kind of respect bestows respectability.

“Men tend to think of love as not giving trouble to others, but women think of love as taking trouble for others.” Husbands cannot duplicate the love of Christ, which efficaciously made his bride lovely. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us (*Romans 5:8*). But while we cannot duplicate this kind of love, husbands are told to imitate it. And in imitating it, we see some of the comparable effects. A woman who is loved by her husband is a woman who will grow in loveliness. He washes her with the water of the word (*Ephesians 5:26*). The entire passage assumes that this kind of love bestows loveliness. And the same kind of potency can be found in a godly woman’s respect. Peter tells us that reverent and chaste behavior can break down a man’s disobedient spirit (*1 Peter 3:1-2*).

So then, men and women should love and respect each other. They should do so with all their hearts. But when they are concentrating on their marriages, the men should lean into love. The women should lean into respect. The results can be astonishing.



# Notes



Love is patient, love is kind, it is not jealous; love does not brag, it is not arrogant. It does not act disgracefully, it does not seek its own benefit; it is not provoked, does not keep an account of a wrong suffered, it does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; it keeps every confidence, it believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.



*1 Corinthians 13:4-7*

# 6 WAYS TO PURSUE SPIRITUAL INTIMACY IN MARRIAGE

If you find it difficult to consistently connect spiritually with your spouse, you're completely normal. Without true spiritual intimacy, our marriages will flounder. It can be difficult to intentionally pursue spiritual intimacy with your spouse, but God designed our marriages to deepen our joy in Him as we dig into the goodness of the gospel with our most precious partner.

**1** **KEEP AN OPEN HEART**  
When we don't experience the spiritual closeness we hope for, it's all too easy to close off our hearts and shut down. Instead, acknowledge the hurt, and cry out to God with your disappointment.

**2** **PURSUE JESUS MORE THAN YOUR MARRIAGE.**  
When we treasure Jesus above our spouse, we become the sort of person our spouse will want to draw close to.

**3** **REPLACE THINGS THAT KILL SPIRITUAL INTIMACY**  
Put off destructive patterns and put on new ones that reflect who we are in Christ. Learn to ask God for help to stay open to what He's doing to reduce conflict and draw closer.

**4** **INTENTIONALLY SHARE YOUR WEAKNESSES.**  
God saved us according to His own mercy. Letting our spouse in on a failure becomes natural and fosters spiritual closeness.

**5** **CHOOSE SOMETHING TO DO TOGETHER.**  
Make a plan to pursue God together that you're both comfortable with and get started.

**6** **BE PATIENT AND PERSISTENT**  
Without true spiritual intimacy, our marriages will flounder. There's always hope for a new beginning because God's mercies and faithfulness for your marriage truly "never come to an end".

# Date Your Wife

Dating your wife will look different depending on the season you're in. But the attentiveness and intentionality should never go away.

If you only imagine a date night to be dining at a five-star restaurant, hiring an expensive babysitter, and heading to the theater for a Broadway show, very few of us would ever be able to go! But what if we defined "date night" by having intentional time with your spouse (without your children!)?

God's word calls husbands to love their wives as Christ loved the church and give himself up for her (Ephesians 5:25). This is one facet of your relationship where you can live that out.

Here are six specific ways husbands can take the lead in making intentional times together a reality — and a joy.



## REST

01

To have intentional time with your wife, it's best that you both be awake and alert. Sometimes that's hard to come by when you have young kids. So one thing you can do as a husband is make sacrifices for your wife's sleep. If you can get up with the crying baby at night, or give your wife some down time in the early evening by cleaning up after dinner or putting the kids to bed, that will make your intentional times together more meaningful. Exhaustion is a common hurdle, especially for moms.

What can you do to bear some more of that burden?

## REALISM

02

Of course, it's not just young kids that contribute to a couples' exhaustion. It's also out-of-control schedules. We need some realism in our planning in order to safeguard the margin we need to have intentional times together.

Perhaps you're active and ambitious. But if your career goals, hobbies, children's activities, and church calendar are running you (and your wife) ragged, then something needs to change.

Take the lead in saying no to some stuff. Prioritize the most important things and then say no to a few things.

## REMEMBER

03

There's something romantic about remembering. Sometimes it's fun to watch your wedding video. Other times to leaf through a photo album or watch short iMovie project of special trips taken. Take time to pull out journals from times when you were dating and engaged. It's fun to escape to that former life.

04

## REMOVE DISTRACTIONS

Our electronic devices can make it difficult to have a sustained and significant conversation. If a text message appears on the screen, a phone call comes through, or if the television is on, it will be hard to really focus on one another. We enjoy looking at Facebook and Twitter, and relaxing by watching Netflix. But we also know that sometimes all of that needs to be turned off.

A messy house might also be a hindrance to intentional time together. If your entire house is covered in piles of laundry and stacks of papers, and the kids have left their toys all over the place, that's going to make it difficult to focus on each other.

Take some time to think about your home, and any house projects you might need to tackle, so that it can be a haven, a retreat, a place for you to enjoy being together.

05

## REMOVE YOURSELVES

Most of us know that the piles of laundry and stacks of paper will never completely go away. So it's important for us to remove ourselves from the home periodically.

This is what we would call the traditional "date night." The main thing is simply intentional time together without the kids. This is a great way to take the lead.

Instead of waiting for your wife to drag you out on a date, you take the initiative. Give it some forethought. Arrange for the babysitter. Study your wife to know what she would enjoy. Come up with some ideas ahead of time, so that you're not stuck asking each other, "What do you want to do?"

06

## ROMANCE

When you remain attentive to the things your wife wants to tell you about her day, about her struggles, about her joys, it deepens the bond between you. Most men aren't wired this way. So it requires some effort and sacrifice. You need to look into your wife's eyes, listen carefully, and ask follow-up questions that show her you really care. Then speak words of encouragement, compassion, truth, and love.

Date night may feel like a thing of the past. It will at least look very different during a season of intense child-rearing. But don't let it slip away altogether. Enjoy the exciting and exhausting ride of work, ministry, kids, and activities. But make sure there's margin for intentional, face-to-face time with your wife. Show her your love by making sacrifices to keep those date nights alive.

# TOGETHER FOREVER

COUPLES CONFERENCE

# SWAG

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2021 Conference Digital  
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# Notes

““  
For this reason a man shall leave his father and his mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh. This mystery is great; but I am speaking with reference to Christ and the church. ””

*Ephesians 5:31-32*



REGISTER  
*Today!*

**\$25**

**Together Forever**  
2022 COUPLES CONFERENCE  
*Special Pricing this weekend only!*

# Building Your *Love* Map



**Name your partner's two closest friends.**



**What was your partner wearing when you first met?**



**Describe in detail what your partner did today or yesterday.**



**What is one of your partner's greatest fears or disaster scenarios?**



**What is your partner's fondest unrealized dream?**



**What stresses your partner right now?**



**What is your partner's ideal job?**



**Name a person your partner dislikes.**



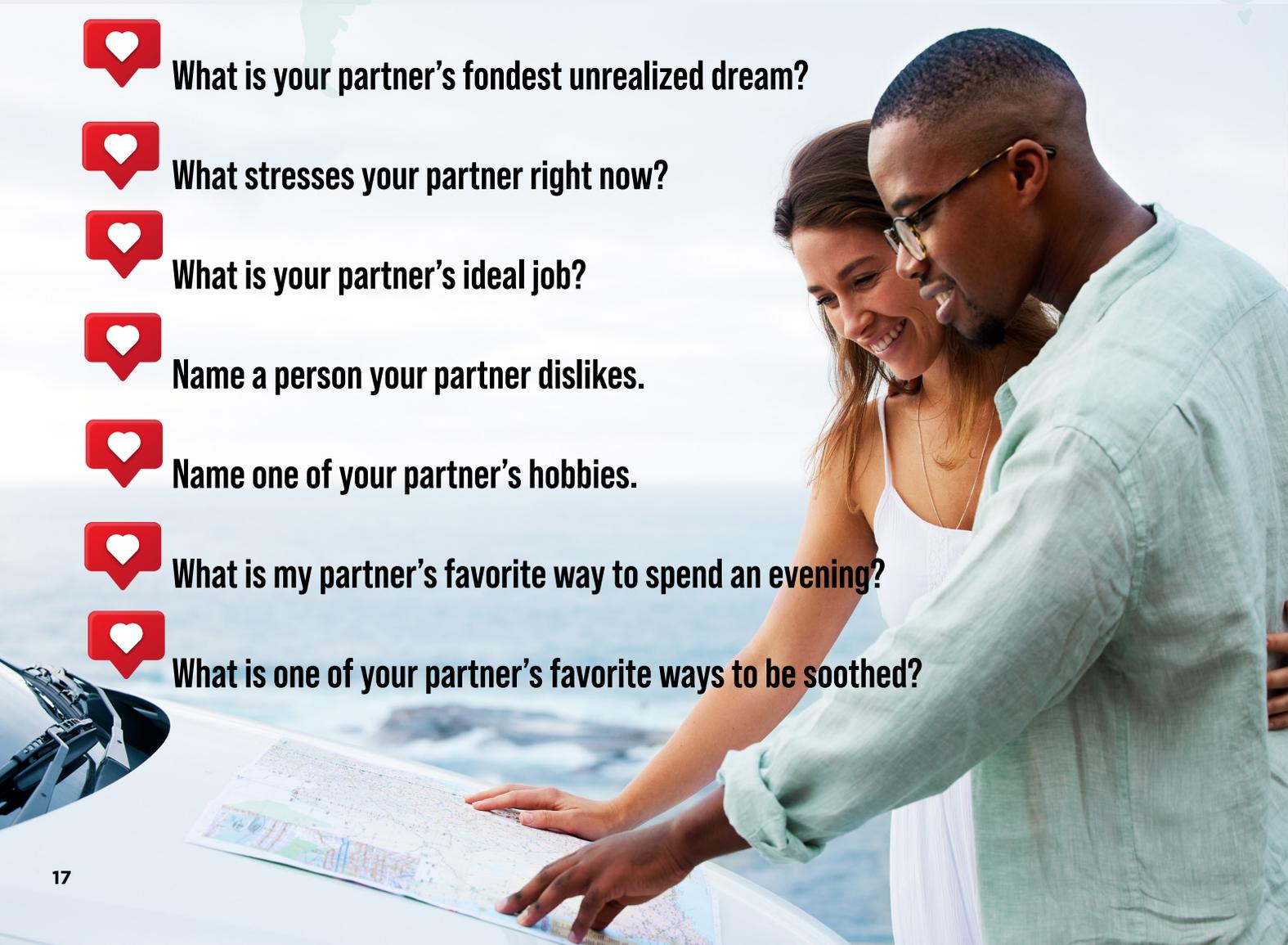
**Name one of your partner's hobbies.**



**What is my partner's favorite way to spend an evening?**



**What is one of your partner's favorite ways to be soothed?**



# MM marriage mentors

PREPARE  
ENRICH &  
RESTORE

Needing a mentor couple to help guide, encourage, and impart life skills in you as husband and wife? Mentorship can help you in building better communication, conflict resolution and overall marital satisfaction.

Contact

[marriagementors@visitonecc.com](mailto:marriagementors@visitonecc.com)



# BACK TO SCHOOL

CALLING ALL STUDENTS...  
weekend **AUG. 21**  
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# GROUPS

CONFERENCE  
AUG 25 2021



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# Marriage Center

ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

## PREMARITAL/ ENRICHMENT CLASSES

Strong Biblical Emphasis  
Unique Personality Assessment  
Facilitator Support

## MARRIAGE MENTORS

Intentional Process  
Mentoring Support System  
Trained Mentors

## ENRICHMENT CLASSES

Six-Week Classes  
Marriage Enrichment  
Three-Week Mini Sessions

## AMAZING EVENTS

Yearly Conference  
Semi-Annual Focus Nights  
Relevant Socials

## OASIS

Crisis Intensive  
Good to Great  
Couples Leadership Intensive

### PLANO

SAT @ 5:45P  
SUN @ 9A & 11A

2400 SH - 121  
Plano, TX 75025

PLANO CAMPUS  
info@visitonecc.com

### LEWISVILLE

SUN @ 10A

2150 TX - 121 BUSINESS  
Lewisville, TX 75067

LEWISVILLE CAMPUS  
lewisville@visitonecc.com

### PROSPER

SUN @  
9:30A & 11:15A

2601 Prairie Drive  
Prosper, TX 75078

PROSPER CAMPUS  
prosper@visitonecc.com

### DALLAS

SUN @ 10:30A

Angelika Theater Dallas  
5321 E Mockingbird Ln  
#230  
Dallas, TX 75206

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