

Enrich Your Marriage: Work Talk

Couples have to make decisions on a daily basis, and Work Talk is a communication tool to help you and your spouse make decisions you both feel good about.

Steps for Work Talk:

1. Adopt the “No Losers” Policy.

- a. I will not accept any decision if either one of us is unhappy about it.
- b. I’m going to work with you to find an outcome that we can both be happy about.
- c. If we cannot arrive at an outcome we are both happy about, no decision will be made.

2. Have a Heart Talk about the issue. Many decisions are loaded with emotion; by doing a Heart Talk first, you can identify what’s going on under the surface to avoid conflict. Tell your spouse:

- a. How you feel
- b. What you fear
- c. What you are longing for

3. Pray for unity. By praying *after* you adopt a “No Losers” Policy and have a Heart Talk, your prayer will be less selfish and more wise.

4. Brainstorm the issue. No idea is shot down; *all* ideas go on the page. Have fun with this!

5. Evaluate the options. Go through each idea and as soon as one spouse says, “That’s not a win for me,” cross it out. If a spouse says, “I like that idea if,” put a question mark beside it and come back to it. If there are ideas both agree on, put a checkmark next to it.

6. Choose an idea or wait. You can either go with the best option for both of you or, if there are no ideas you both agree on, you might need to wait. If you are in a deadlock, check your heart. Remember: no decision is more important than your relationship with your spouse.

7. Come back and rework if necessary. Some decisions are final (e.g., buying a house or car) but some decisions are ongoing decisions (e.g., who makes dinner when).

Final word of caution: Avoid compromise. Compromise usually ends up with one spouse “winning” and one spouse “losing,” and it quickly leads to scorekeeping. The goal should be “win-win” for both of you.