

Fight the Problem, Not Each Other

What conflict pattern do I bring into the marriage?

Print this alongside the module, or type into it — every box is a real form field.
The workbook records what you did. This sheet records what you learned.

1 · WATCH AND LISTEN

Take these one at a time. A note you write in your own words is worth more than a highlight you never reread.

Resolving Conflict

Session video on working a disagreement without making the marriage the battlefield.

Notes — and the timestamp you want to come back to

Navigating Conflict

How couples move from position-trading to shared problem-solving.

Notes — and the timestamp you want to come back to

How to Externalise a Conflict

Putting the problem on the table instead of across from you.

Notes — and the timestamp you want to come back to

Why Your Partner Is Not the Problem

Deep-dive audio on separating the person from the problem.

Notes — and the timestamp you want to come back to

When Good Marriage Advice Goes Wrong

Critical audio on where conflict advice misfires. Read against the module caution.

Notes — and the timestamp you want to come back to

When Marriage Tools Become Dangerous Weapons

Safety inversion: how a fair-fighting rule becomes a control tactic.

Notes — and the timestamp you want to come back to

2 · DECKS AND FIELD GRAPHICS

On this module: The Marriage Blueprint; Marital Conflict Blueprint; Engineering Us; Marriage Conflict Resolution Field Guide; Marriage Conflict and Teamwork Guide; Marriage Teamwork Guide.

What stood out — and what I would push back on

3 · READING NOTES

Each report is an optional study aid built from thematically related research. It reflects the source material, not ministry doctrine — read it against the module's caution.

Conflict Resolution and Partnership

*The third episode of *The Marriage Course* focuses on the inevitability of conflict in marriage and provides a framework for resolving disagreements through partnership rather than opposition.*

Executive briefing — best starting point.

What I take from this

From Clashing Oars to Gliding Boats

Popular media and modern culture often propagate a systemic fallacy: the idea that a "correct" relationship is one characterized by perpetual harmony.

Systems-flavoured treatment of the rowing metaphor.

What I take from this

Why Your Biggest Disagreements Might Be Your Secret Weapon

We have all been sold a cinematic lie: the myth of the "soulmate" with whom life is a seamless, friction-less glide. We're told that if we truly found the "right" person, our gears would mesh perfectly, and conflict would be a relic of the past.

Popular-article register — the headline overclaims; read against the caution.

What I take from this

11 questions

Answer from memory first, then mark yourself against the answer key on the last page. The score matters less than the last column: a question you missed shows you exactly which part of the module to reread.

1. According to the course, why is conflict described as 'inevitable' in marriage?

RIGHT

MISSED

2. What is the primary message conveyed by the rowing boat illustration used in Episode 3?

RIGHT

MISSED

3. Regarding the first principle, what does the research of John Gottman suggest about relationship stability?

RIGHT

MISSED

4. What is the core function of the '10 o'clock rule' discussed in the session?

RIGHT

MISSED

5. The course uses a 'sofa' image to explain how to focus on an issue. What does this metaphor imply?

RIGHT

MISSED

6. What does the course define as 'external processing' in the context of personality differences?

RIGHT

MISSED

7. Why does the course advise against 'bargaining' as a conflict resolution style?

RIGHT

MISSED

8. Which statement best reflects the course's teaching on the ability to change people in a marriage?

RIGHT

MISSED

9. How does the course distinguish between a 'request' and a 'demand' for change?

RIGHT

MISSED

10. In Step 5 of the problem-solving process, what is the recommended approach to a chosen solution?

RIGHT

MISSED

11. How does Nicky Gumbel reframe the conflict between a 'saver' and a 'spender'?

RIGHT

MISSED

Score out of 11

The one I missed that matters most — and what I am going back to reread

5 · FLASHCARD DRILL

This module's deck holds 38 cards. Run it until you can answer without help, then note what still slips.

Cards marked known

Cards I still need to review

Mark yourself here

Every answer carries the reason it is the answer. If you missed one, the reason is the part worth rereading — not the letter.

1. According to the course, why is conflict described as 'inevitable' in marriage?

Differences in background, personality, and priorities combined with natural selfishness.

The source explicitly states that conflict arises because spouses bring different histories and tends to focus on their own needs over their partner's.

2. What is the primary message conveyed by the rowing boat illustration used in Episode 3?

Progress is made when partners stop competing and start synchronizing their efforts.

The anecdote highlights that moving forward requires a rhythmic, shared effort rather than trying to prove who is the stronger rower.

3. Regarding the first principle, what does the research of John Gottman suggest about relationship stability?

A lack of shown appreciation is a key indicator that a relationship is in trouble.

The course cites Gottman's claim that he can predict relationship trouble by observing if couples still show appreciation for one another.

4. What is the core function of the '10 o'clock rule' discussed in the session?

To postpone difficult discussions when fatigue is likely to distort perspective.

The rule acknowledges that late-night exhaustion often leads to futile arguments and permits a planned delay until a better time.

5. The course uses a 'sofa' image to explain how to focus on an issue. What does this metaphor imply?

The couple should view the problem as something external to be addressed together.

By 'moving the issue to the front,' the couple shifts from attacking each other to attacking the problem as a team.

6. What does the course define as 'external processing' in the context of personality differences?

Thinking out loud as a way to sort through thoughts and reach a conclusion.

Extroverts are described as 'external processors' who may say things with passion before their final opinion is fully formed.

7. Why does the course advise against 'bargaining' as a conflict resolution style?

It can lead to a stalemate where one partner refuses to act until the other does.

The course argues that transactional 'tit-for-tat' bargaining doesn't build closeness and often stops progress if one person feels the other hasn't done enough.

8. Which statement best reflects the course's teaching on the ability to change people in a marriage?

The only person an individual has the power to change is themselves.

This is a recurring theme in the material, emphasizing self-examination and personal adjustment for the sake of the partnership.

9. How does the course distinguish between a 'request' and a 'demand' for change?

Requests are a healthy part of marriage, whereas demands are harmful.

The presenters teach that asking for change is good, but requiring or insisting upon it as a condition for the relationship is damaging.

10. In Step 5 of the problem-solving process, what is the recommended approach to a chosen solution?

Adopt it as a provisional experiment and set a date to review its effectiveness.

The course suggests trying the 'best solution for now' and reviewing it later to see if it actually resolved the conflict.

11. How does Nicky Gumbel reframe the conflict between a 'saver' and a 'spender'?

As a difference in complementary strengths rather than one person being 'better' with money.

Nicky realizes that he is better at 'managing' money while Sila is better at 'using' it, creating a team dynamic.

Before you close this module

Field action: Establish and use your pause-and-return rule

Finish line: Your rule is written down, every boundary was honored, any pause included a specific return time, and one moderate issue ended with a written next step and review date.

Study is not the assignment. The finish line is.