

Speaker Notes

Title of Presentation: Mission Based Marriages

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- Create a mission based on your need. **What is your mission?**
- You need have a good sense of what you're doing and why.
- **Example:** A man who asks a woman to marry him buys a ring and proposes -- planning to be known for the most loving, providing, and honorable husband... obsessing over details. But if this vision lives only in his head, what will happen? He can get side-tracked, cut corners to improve profit margins without realizing what he's sacrificing: quality time, creativity, and service -- the very factors his goals depend on. He may work 14-hour days and triple-check the bills, but if his wife just sees him as an impossible guy to live with, then the mission is bound to fail. That's why a mission statement is a critical tool for every marriage.
- **Why Bother?**
- The best mission statement talks about the philosophies that will guide the marriage.
- It's a total package: goals, aspiration, and principles.

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- Mission statements are among the best mechanisms for getting people to pull together in the same direction. That's why it's best to develop the statement with the input of those who will have to carry it out.
- **How:**
 - A mission statement doesn't have to be long. Include your family's highest priorities.
 - Brevity carried to the extreme may not be enough to give everyone a shared sense of mission!
- **Managing Expectations:**
 - Be aware of what you expect.
 - Be reasonable about what you expect.
 - Be clear about what you expect.
 - Be motivated to meet your partner's expectations even when they're different from your own.

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- Care. Protection. Honesty. Time. These are the four key promises you should try to make to each other – and to keep for a lifetime.
- *I Promise You* - (recommended reading) talks about the four key promises, showing you practical ways to make them work in your marriage.
- "I do" doesn't just mean in good times....It means "I'll do" the work with you.

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- Battle buddies: work together, don't leave each other in frightening conditions, work together to solve the issues...PRACTICE communication and problem solving before situations arise.
- Discuss the situation --- be specific and detailed with examples.
- Solve the problems --- have a sense of humor.
- Set an agenda.

- Brainstorm --- no one's ideas are bad or wrong. Think outside the box... take time.
- Agree on a solution.
- Follow up --- specific plans, times, roles, responsibilities, hold everyone accountable.
- Be open to trying something new.
- Know where your history lies: Questions to ask yourself: How were you raised? What do you want to keep from your youth and how do you want you family to be different?
- What unknown expectations are there?
- Communicate these answers with your partner.

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- **Filtered listening:**
- Why I hear things differently than their intended meaning: distractions, emotions, beliefs and expectations, differences in style, and self-protection.
- Ask yourself:
 - Where did I learn these from?
 - What did my family of origin practice?
 - How do I want to be different?
 - What values do I feel I need to defend? What values am I compromising?
- Channel your inner MacGyver --- be creative
- **Additional Examples:**
 - Use of sarcasm
 - Acting like a victim or martyr
 - Acting with or showing contempt
 - Stonewalling, leaving the room, or pouting
 - Don't pacify partner by agreeing to solutions that you can not or will not sincerely accept
 - Threatening
 - Making excuses or assumptions

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- **Communication:**
 - I feel _____ because _____ and I want or need _____.
 - Don't assume – ask for clarifications
 - Call a time out and a time to return to conversation
 - Soft tones – calm and kind
 - Written Plan
 - “Ok, I'm not sure exactly what I said, and I'm sorry if I wasn't clear. But I want to tell you now what I meant to say.”
- **Intimacy:**
 - Romance vs. Sexuality
 - Goal of intimacy isn't always sex
 - Keep partners from growing apart
 - If the only intimate time you have together can lead to performance anxiety or disinterest
 - Personal growth individually creates a stronger family
 - Take time for play... play box, love notes
- **Additional Examples:**
 - Education
 - Respect

- Quality time
- Communication
- Responsibility
- Intimacy
- Rules and Regulations
- Social Supports
- Center marriage around core values
- Focus on Mission
- Forgive and Learn

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- Events trigger explosions regarding pent emotions - discuss before explosion.
- Couples who are most effective at solving problems work on them as a team. Get help... unbiased third party – tell your mission and approach the situation at hand as a team working towards completing the mission.
- Most couples hurry to solve their problems, which doesn't give them time to address concerns, especially hidden ones. Those concerns can resurface so quick fixes often don't last.
- Not every problem can or needs to be solved. Sometimes accepting and appreciating differences are what is necessary.
- **Resources available to you:**
 - MFLC
 - Family Advocacy
 - Mental Health/Medical
 - TRICARE
 - Military One Source

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- **Social Support:** Service members may develop intensely strong relationships within the military community. Keep communication open about balancing time with both work relations and family relationships. Increase social opportunities that include both relationships. Appreciate those who helped your spouse in your absence.
- **Roles:** Taking on extra responsibilities during work absences can be stressful for both parties. Help your spouse resume some of the family roles previously held by sharing in the day to day decision and responsibilities. Be patient with each other and communicate needs.
- **Control:** Service members maintained strict control of weapons and safety in the field but at home spouses head the home. The house is not a military unit. Renegotiate priorities to incorporate everyone's needs.
- **Your mission is successful if it meets everyone's values.** Discuss what areas have decreased in control for survival purposes during absences. Chat about what areas could use more control. Respect the jobs the other is doing and let go of little things.
- **Talk about the "stuff":** Military members are used to sharing information only on a need to know basis and due to time and technology communication from the home front can be very difficult. Understand that you may not always get all the information because of emotionality coupled to the situation. Share as much as you can. Keep a share journal so you don't forget the important things that happened.
- **Loyalty:** People can take on their roles whether on the battlefield or at the home if they understand that they are safe with a committed partner in life. Take time to tell each other what

you appreciate about them, why you love them, and don't hesitate to get help on issues with mistrust.

- **Assess each others' needs for help:** If the other is struggling with a work or home related issue, ask yourself and your partner "what can I do to help?" If you get lost ask for outside help. It often takes a village to make a marriage work much like it takes all parties in the military to create a successful mission. All of these coordinating make for successful missions.

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- "A mission statement only achieves value when everybody turns to it as a touchstone."
- Stick by your mission and find a way to honor your goals.
- Remember, mission statements can evolve. As conditions change, you can reexamine and revise your mission.
- Share your mission statement with all those who have a stake in this marriage: friends, in-laws, children, neighbors, spiritual family. You want them all to know what you're trying to achieve....they can help you stay on track and be part of your team.

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