

MEETING EACH OTHER'S NEEDS

Discuss with students the importance of meeting each other's needs in marriage. Generally speaking, men's needs are more physical than emotional. When these needs are satisfied, he tends to be happier with his marriage and more willing to meet his wife's needs.

Women's needs are more often emotional. Acceptance, communication, and love may be more important than physical needs. As she finds these areas of her life satisfied, she is happier with her marriage and more willing to meet her husband's needs. A positive relationship is thus very circular. (Show transparency--Meeting Needs)

Sometimes, however, the cycle breaks down. Suppose one evening the husband comes home in a bad mood. He snaps at his wife. He then criticizes her and refuses to talk to her until bedtime. Will she then be willing to meet his physical needs? Or will she turn a cold shoulder to him and get a headache? Does he then want to make her feel appreciated and loved? Not likely. The cycle can break down at any point and begin spiraling in a negative direction when partners refuse to give the other what they need.

The negative cycle can also be reversed. What if the husband or wife deliberately sets aside his/her own needs to meet the needs of his/her partner? Suppose the wife decided to respond to what her husband wanted: she cooks him his favorite meal, gets him his slippers, then rubs his back as they watch a video? He soon turns his feelings for her around and tells her what she has been longing to hear him say. The cycle is then headed in the right direction again.

Although we may have over-simplified these situations, remember:

1. Your spouse can only meet your needs if you are meeting his/hers.
2. Different people have different needs. What your spouse wants is not always what you want.
3. Positive and negative cycles are continuous unless one of you steps in to consciously or unconsciously reverse the direction.