

## YIELD TO WIN EXERCISE

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Below is a series of common situations faced by couples. The purpose of the exercise is to visualize yourself and your wife as having these conflicts. The more vividly you visualize, the more effective the exercise will be. Try to think of her negativity as her way of emphasizing how important this issue is – and not as an attack on you. Assume there is a message she is trying to convey and within that message is a reasonable request with which you could agree. Writing your answers down in a notebook helps crystallize your thoughts and commit to a response. There are no right or wrong answers.

1. You and your wife have not been getting along lately. Part of the problem is that you think she spends way too much money. Now she's insisting that you undergo expensive marital counseling. You point out that there is simply no money to pay for that until expenses are cut somewhere else. Your wife says, "I disagree. We can't afford not to get counseling. It's like borrowing for a needed vacation. We've got to do it!"

Reasonable part of wife's request:

You say:

2. Since your wife is not working, you've asked that she clean the house and have dinner on the table by the time you come home. Tonight you walk in to find that the laundry isn't folded and dinner isn't made. You complain, and she says, "You never notice how much I have done during the day. You just don't appreciate how much work it takes to keep the house going."

Reasonable part of wife's request:

You say:

3. You've gone down to the local bar with a few friends to have a couple of beers. You and your wife have argued frequently about your going out drinking too often. Tonight she keeps calling you at the bar to say that if you don't come home right now, she's going to come get you. When you finally walk in the door, she is crying. "Instead of spending all your free time with your buddies at the bar, why don't you ever take me dancing?"

Reasonable part of wife's request:

You say:

4. It's a Saturday afternoon, and your wife has been cleaning and telling you about some repairs the house needs. You feel that she is not willing to make the financial sacrifices in other areas so that you can afford these repairs. She says, "You just don't think that what I want is important. You'll find money for things if you want them."

Reasonable part of wife's request:

You say:

5. For the past few days your wife has been complaining about your not being very affectionate and considerate when you have sex with her. Tonight after having sex your wife tells you she feels dissatisfied and want you to touch her more. You tell her that you're not used to doing things that way. She says, "I understand how you feel, but we've got to learn how to turn each other on more. I'll try to help you."

Reasonable part of wife's request:

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You say:

If you honestly and with serious thought do these exercises you should have a good sense of what it means to "give" in a relationship. The next step is to get used to giving to your spouse and sharing power more in your own marriage.

(Modified from The Seven Principles of Making Marriage Work, John M. Gottman, Ph.D.)