

CREATING SHARED MEANING

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Meaninglessness to Meaning

- **Ecclesiastes 1:2**
"Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity."
- The Hebrew word for "vanity" is hevel which means "emptiness, futility, vapor."
- **Ecclesiastes 2:24**
"There is nothing better for a man, than that he should eat and drink, and that he should make his soul enjoy good in his labour. This also I saw, that it was from the hand of God."
- **Psalm 16:11** "Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

Sharing as Believers

Shared Meaning

- **Philippians 2:5** "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus"

Shared Reality

- **2 Corinthians 4:18** "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen: for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal."

Shared Hope

- **Hebrews 6:18-19** "That by two immutable things, in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have a strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold upon the hope set before us: Which hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and stedfast, and which entereth into that within the veil;

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO CREATE SHARED MEANING?

Is this all there is?

What is Marriage About?

- Owning a house?
- Doing dishes?
- Paying bills?
- Making love?
- Raising kids?
- Dodging conflict?

- "A crucial goal of any marriage, therefore, is to create an atmosphere that encourages each person to talk honestly about his or her convictions. The more you speak candidly and respectfully with each other, the more likely there is to be a blending of your sense of meaning"

The Seven Principles of Making Marriage Work (Gottman and Silver, 2015)

Graphic by Kevin Richardson

HOW DO WE CREATE SHARED MEANING IN MARRIAGE?

Content in this section adapted from - The Seven Principles of Making Marriage Work (Gottman and Silver, 2015)

Shared Meaning

RITUALS

ROLES

GOALS

VALUES

Connecting through Rituals

A routine or event that strengthens sense of “we.”

These can be – formal / informal, tied to specific event / stand alone, daily / weekly / monthly / yearly.

Minimize distractions and eliminate logistical conversation.

What are your favorite rituals?

What rituals would you like to start?



Supporting Roles

We play various roles in life and give meaning to these roles.

What does it mean to be a father, mother, spouse, employee?

The meaning you make out of these various roles form expectations for yourself and your spouse.

How do you support your spouse in these roles?



Sharing and Supporting Goals

Our union is strengthened not just by knowing our spouse's deepest aspirations and goals, but by supporting and honoring these goals together.

Do you know your spouse's goals? How are you actively supporting you spouse's goals?

Consider a yearly goal setting activity.



Sharing Values and Symbols

Values guide how we want to live our life together. They often flow out of scripture.

How do you want to share your life together?

Often shared values are represented by symbols.

What symbols (actual or tangible) hold meaning to you as a couple?

