

MARRIAGE IN MOTION

Transcript: Module 4, Lesson 2

ZACH

Let me tell you a secret: Most of the couples who invest in this course will never watch this video.

And they'll have LOTS of good reasons why this effort - their MARRIAGE in MOTION- will fall off their radar. Too busy. Too much energy. My partner didn't participate. Or maybe they didn't like me and/or Laura too much.

Whatever it is, the fact that you're still here is both unique and commendable. I hope and trust that you've benefited from your process so far. And that you've got a much more clear idea about what you're moving toward rather than what you're moving away from.

LAURA

In our practices, we've found there's usually a moment when a couple explicitly or unconsciously makes the transition from trying to make their relationship less bad, to making it more good. In other words they start focusing on forBetter rather than for worse.

The problem is that when couples start planning for the future, they rarely have a meaningful process for doing so. In this video we're going to give you a construct - a context - for how to chase better problem solving.

If "problem" is the wrong word. Then maybe we're talking about "possibility". In any case, we want to begin thinking about how to get you to "more good".

ZACH

You might have learned by now that I'm pretty obsessed with alliterative lists. Lists of things beginning with the same letter. This list is no different. This lesson is about a new paradigm for how to consider next steps. You'll learn...

1. The four elements of a "next step" mentality.
2. To allow space for Dreaming,
3. To collect Data.
4. To create a context for Discussion.
5. To actually make a Decision
6. To become clear about your "next step".

Another of my favorite phrases is "Here be dragons". It refers an old medieval practice of putting dragons or serpents on the dangerous or unexplored and uncharted territories in ancient maps. You're headed now into uncharted territory, which brings us to our Focus:

The journey from dreaming to deciding is dangerous without a map.

LAURA

The four elements of a “next step” mentality. Or perhaps I should say, there are at least four steps to a “next step mentality”. It won’t surprise you that it’s a journey. The problem is that couples often skip steps and that often leads to them feeling stuck or just circling an issue over and over.

The movement here is goes like this:

- Dreaming
- Data
- Discussion
- Decision

Let’s start with dreaming. We know based on Dr. Gottman’s research that a core competency for happy couples is their ability to “make life dreams come true”. In order to do that, you need to be allowed to actually dream. And you need to be able to articulate those dreams. (This is where your epic friendship comes in.)

Somewhere along the way, dreaming got coached out of us. Or maybe parented out of us. Or maybe it’s just life. If you ask a classroom full of third graders to raise their hand if they consider themselves an artist, nearly every hand will go up. Ask that same classroom of kids in 8th grades and only a handful of hands will go up - that’s if they have the courage to confess being in the minority.

Today, I want to give you permission...as adults...to dream, to be in the minority, to be an artist. In fact, As you imagine your problem or possibility, I encourage you to be be young and clueless and maybe even foolish. Be playful with this.

Get some butcher paper and hang it up on a wall in your house. Tie a sharpie to a piece of string and use it to write down all the ideas, goals, and dreams you have for your marriage and your life. ALL OF THEM.

Being able to look at your ideal date night, your plans for the backyard, the business you want to start, the things you want to show your kids -- this is really powerful and motivating. It’s not time to judge these ideas. You need more information first.

ZACH

The only way to get more information is to collect data. Seems like a total buzz-kill, right. To go from dreaming to data, but the reality is simply can’t make a decision without data. Also, it’s just information, so it’s not time to judge it. Just get it.

Data comes in all forms. How much does it cost? How much time, energy, attention will it take? Is it even possible? It’s okay to dream about buying a castle in Ireland and then recognize that’s simply not a realistic dream. But I want to propose that by and large, your dreams are more realistic than you think.

You can and should ask for help here...from a financial advisor, a landscaper, a mentor, a dentist, a therapist...you are surrounded by wisdom. Do not hesitate to ask for it. Collecting data and looking at it from all angles will help you take the small first steps toward bigger next steps. Again, not time to

judge...it's just a context for discussion.

Here's the best meeting you've ever been in... (Zach tells a story).

It is really important to differentiate between discussion and decision. This is where couples get into the most trouble. I cannot tell you how many times I have seen couples get to war because they were not clear what kind of conversation they were having.

Literally label it: "We we're just having a discussion. None of this counts as decision. We'll do that later." Label that time too.

LAURA

Once you've done some dreaming, collected data, and blocked off time for discussion, it's time to get to a decision. But let's reiterate, if you skip any of those steps, you're in dangerous waters. There be dragons.

The key here is to know "how" the decision is getting made. In the meeting that Zach was describing, even if the guy in charge said, "we're gonna talk for 20 minutes, then I'm gonna go smoke a cigarette and come back with my decision, you'd know HOW the decision was getting made.

This is another place that couples really get hung up. They don't know whether they're in a democracy (which is hard with two people) or a dictatorship (which is hard because of contempt). You could try flipping a coin. Or evaluating strictly on financial cost. Or take turns. But you really need to agree on this point.

Once you decide, you're free to get moving with confidence...and together. That said, you're always allowed to go back to dreaming.

LAURA

We want to turn up the volume on your dreams today. You will need to schedule some time this week to get your butcher paper as a couple. Start dreaming. If butcher paper isn't your thing, just get moving.

ZACH

You are becoming more and more clear about the direction you are moving...and we want to continue to encourage you to keep your laser focus on the relationship you deserve and desire. That means you'll have to make some decisions...just make sure you're doing that together. Because if you don't, expect dragons.

Leave us a comment to let us know how it's going. We'll see you in the next video.