New Choices Worksheet

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Reflect on each of these new choices and how you and your spouse are reacting to each. Work alone on filling in the first 3 columns.
2. Compare your notes with your spouse’s.
3. Affirm your spouse in areas where he or she is doing well or has especially been a blessing to you.
4. Work together on the final column, identifying a few areas of change that may be prime opportunities to grow both individually as disciples, and as a couple.
 | Husband “Grade” (good, fair, poor) | Wife “Grade” (good, fair, poor) | Is this pulling you apart or drawing you together? | Opportunity for marriage growth? How? |
| Stressors for Ministry Marriages in a New Context  |  |  |  |  |
| **Lack of privacy** (e.g., Susie and Joe have children peeking through the window of their hut every morning.) |  |  |  |  |
| **Public displays of affection** (e.g., Ellen was shocked when a grandmother at church scolded her for holding hands with her husband on the street while walking to church.) |  |  |  |  |
| **Time spent together** (e.g., Brian’s office is in the home, and it is a frustration to him that Erin constantly interrupts him with quick 5-minute household chores.) |  |  |  |  |
| **Competition in language** (e.g., David grimaces when asked who is better in language.) |  |  |  |  |
| **Competition in ministry** (e.g., Because he picked up the language faster, Eric is able to minister with people more. This is really frustrating for Sheryl because she is much more extroverted, and her ministry involvement had always exceeded his.) |  |  |  |  |
| **Physical distress** (e.g., During stressful times, Jenny wants to go to bed early while Wayne wants to be comforted with physical intimacy.) |  |  |  |  |
| **Borrowing norms from the new culture** (e.g., Vivian is increasingly frustrated that Trent feels the freedom not to share with her where he is going since other men in town never do so with their wives.) |  |  |  |  |
| **Working together** (e.g., Kris and Kevin would never have worked together in their home country, but now their mission expects them to team together well as colleagues.) |  |  |  |  |
| **Roles in flux** (e.g., Loretta has a regular vocational role set up with the school where she was recruited as a 3rd grade teacher, while Mike has been scraping together tasks for his job description so that he’ll feel needed in the ministry.) |  |  |  |  |
| **Paradoxes** (e.g., Paula and Allan love the kindness and openness of the people they are ministering among, but they are frustrated by the daily wondering about whether their home will be robbed while they are away.) |  |  |  |  |
| Temptations Common to Those in Cross-cultural Ministry |  |  |  |  |
| **Sexual** (e.g., A married missionary on his way to language lessons in a big city stops and buys pornographic material.) |  |  |  |  |
| **Substance abuse** (e.g., A missionary locks himself in his apartment and drinks until drunk to escape loneliness and discouragement.) |  |  |  |  |
| **Financial indiscretion** (e.g., An independent missionary couple convinces two different churches to each fully support them financially – a double salary!) |  |  |  |  |
| **Withdrawal** (e.g., A missionary wife sleeps in until 2:00 p.m. every day.) |  |  |  |  |
| **Security** (e.g., A missionary couple refuses to join local believers in outreach ministry activities in the “bad part of town” for fear that they may be in danger.) |  |  |  |  |
| **Social substitution** (e.g., A young missionary mom really has no friends in her town, which she doesn’t mind or really have time for since she spends an average of 4 hours a day on Skype and Facebook.) |  |  |  |  |

Examples of new stressors adapted from Sue Eenigenburg, “Preparing Missionary Couples for Cultural Stress”, *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (EMQ), October 1, 2008. Available at https://missionexus.org/preparing-missionary-couples-for-cultural-stress/.

Examples of new temptations adapted from George Murray, “Missionaries' Temptations”, *Evangelical Missions Quarterly* (EMQ), January 1, 1998 . Available at https://missionexus.org/missionaries-temptations/.