9. DIALING IN JOY

Adapted from “[Making Marriage Simple](http://makingmarriagesimple.com/)” by Harville Hendrix & Helen laKelly Hunt

**Truth #9: Your Marriage is a Laughing Matter**

Our core is joy. It is our essential nature. We experience this joy when we are peacefully and happily connected to our partner. Seriousness kills joy. One way seriousness sneaks into relationships is through Relationship Jeopardy. This includes:

a) Assuming our partner knows what you want without telling

b) Expecting and demanding that your partner meets your needs without telling them what your needs are

c) Assuming we know what your partner wants without asking them.

The best way to stop the game of Relationship Jeopardy is through sharing Caring Behaviours.

1. Write down all the behaviours that feel most caring to you. These are the secret wishes that you expected your partner to figure out without you having to tell them. This list can include things your partner already does. If you reinforce the good stuff, they’ll keep it up!

Caring behaviours may involve any one or combination of the [Five Love Languages](http://vivianbaruch.com/free-stuff-3/toolkit/gary-chapman/) devised by Gary Chapman. These are:

1. Words of Affirmation (Talk) - This language uses words to affirm other people.

2. Acts of Service (Tasks) - For these people, actions speak louder than words.

3. Receiving Gifts (Tokens) - For some people, what makes them feel most loved is to receive a gift.

4. Quality Time (Time) - This language is all about giving the other person your undivided attention.

5. Physical Touch (Touch) - To this person, nothing speaks more deeply than appropriate touch.

1. Give your lists to each other & put them where you’ll see them every day (on the bathroom mirror, on the fridge, in your phone etc.) **Do at least one of these every day**. The more you do, the better things will be between you. Remember the magic ratio of 5 positives to every negative are needed to rewire your brain so that your partner feels safe to you, they’re “on your team” and have your back.
2. Some of the behaviours each of you asks for are going to feel spot-on for the other to do. Some may not. They will feel like a stretch. That’s OK, as stretching is necessary to help you and your relationship grow. Pick the ones that feel more doable or excite you when you think about doing them – and **do** them. Every couple of months you and your partner should spend 30 minutes adding to your written list. You can practice Dialogue by sharing them too ☺

**Remember: Your partner is longing to be a hero or she-ro to you. Often all it takes is the awareness of “Oh, this is what feels caring to you!” to make the shift.**