

MODULE 6 — MOTHER-IN-LAW DYNAMICS

Understanding the Complex Mother-In-Law Relationship Worksheet

INSTRUCTIONS: Complete this worksheet individually, then discuss your answers with your spouse. Be honest about what you have observed, not what you wish were true.

1. THE MOTHER-IN-LAW & YOUR SPOUSE

What is the relationship between your spouse and their mother like? Close, distant, tense, codependent?

Does your spouse feel they can never be good enough for their mother?

Does their mother still treat them like a child who needs direction and correction?

2. COMPARISON & COMPETITION

Does your spouse's mother compare you to her, or make it clear you can never replace her?

Does she make subtle (or not-so-subtle) comments about how you do things differently than she did?

Does she compete for your spouse's time and attention?

3. YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH MOTHER-IN-LAW

What is the tone of your relationship with your spouse's mother? Warm, cold, transactional, conflict-filled?

Do you feel welcomed as a family member, or do you feel like you're being tested or judged?

Have you felt criticized or excluded by her?

4. YOUR SPOUSE'S LOYALTY

When you and their mother disagree, whose side does your spouse take?

Does your spouse defend you to their mother, or do they stay silent or side with mom?

How does your spouse respond if their mother criticizes you?

5. EXPECTATIONS & OBLIGATIONS

What does your spouse's mother expect from your marriage? How involved does she want to be?

Does she expect you to maintain close contact with her? How often?

Are there unspoken expectations about holidays, grandchildren, or your future together?

KEY REFLECTION: What is the most challenging aspect of your relationship with your spouse's mother?

How can your spouse help create a healthier dynamic that protects your marriage?