

EXPECTATION COURSE

MODULE 4

When Expectations Clash

TRANSFORMATION WORKSHEET

Mr. Marriage • The Successful Couple • Lloyd Allen Ministries

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When Expectations Clash

Work through this together. Stay curious. Stay kind. The goal is understanding — not winning.

PART 1 — MAP YOUR CLASHING EXPECTATIONS

Write in your expectations honestly for each area — then circle Y or N if a real clash exists.

Area	His Expectation	Her Expectation	Clash?
Sex & Frequency			Y/N
How we handle conflict			Y/N
Roles & responsibilities			Y/N
Time with family / in-laws			Y/N
Finances & spending			Y/N
Spiritual life & worship			Y/N
Parenting style			Y/N
Affection & emotional needs			Y/N

Of the clashes you identified — which one has caused the most recurring conflict? Why does it keep coming back?

PART 2 — GET BENEATH THE CLASH

Most conflicts are not about the surface issue. Beneath every clash is a deeper need or fear.

The Surface Clash	His Deeper Need / Fear	Her Deeper Need / Fear
<i>He wants sex more often; she wants emotional connection first.</i>	May need: to feel desired and respected	May need: safety and closeness first
<i>He wants to lead decisions; she wants her voice equally heard.</i>	May need: to feel trusted as a leader	May need: to feel valued, not dismissed
<i>He wants to relax weekends; she wants planned family time.</i>	May need: rest and decompression	May need: intentionality and togetherness

Now apply this to YOUR biggest clash:

What is the surface issue you keep fighting about?

What is the deeper need or fear underneath YOUR position in this clash?

What do you think the deeper need or fear is beneath YOUR SPOUSE'S position?

PART 3 — THE 5-STEP CLASH RESOLUTION PROCESS

Use this framework whenever you hit a clash. Work through it together — step by step.

Step	Action	What This Looks Like
1	Pause, Don't React	Call a time-out before words cause damage. Agree to revisit within 24 hours.
2	Name the Clash Clearly	Each spouse states their expectation without blame. "I need X" — not "You always / never."
3	Find the Root Need	Ask: what am I really afraid of losing? What am I really protecting? Share that — not just the position.

4	Build Toward Each Other	Find the overlap. Where do both needs point to connection, security, respect, or love?
5	Make a Shared Agreement	Create one concrete agreement that honors both spouses. Write it down. Revisit in 30 days.

Using the 5 steps above — walk through your biggest current clash. What agreement can you reach today?

PART 4 — THREE WAYS COUPLES HANDLE CLASHES

Only one of these three patterns builds a healthy marriage. Circle which pattern you default to — then reflect.

DOMINANCE	SURRENDER	COVENANT
<i>"My way or nothing. I push until they cave."</i>	<i>"I give in to keep the peace. I stop expecting anything."</i>	<i>"We work through it together. Both of us are heard."</i>
Result: Resentment and fear.	Result: Bitterness and slow emotional death.	Result: Trust, intimacy, and a stronger bond.

Which pattern do YOU default to — and where did you learn it? Be honest — this is your mirror, not a weapon against your spouse.

What would it cost your marriage if you continue this pattern for the next 10 years?

PART 5 — HONEST CHECK-IN

Q1. When you and your spouse clash over expectations, what usually happens?

A	One of us shuts down and the issue never gets resolved
B	It becomes a full argument — same fight, different day
C	One person always gives in just to restore the peace
D	We work through it — sometimes messy, but we get there

Q2. What is the hardest part of navigating clashing expectations for you personally?

A	Staying calm — I escalate quickly when I feel unheard
B	Staying engaged — I check out to protect myself
C	Trusting the process — I don't believe it will actually change
D	Vulnerability — being honest about my real need feels risky

Q3. After a clash, how does your marriage usually feel?

A	More distant — like a wall went up
B	Unresolved — we moved on but nothing changed
C	Cautious — we're okay but walking on eggshells
D	Closer — we worked through it and came out stronger

PART 6 — COUPLE CONVERSATION STARTER

Choose the ONE clash that has caused the most repeated conflict. Navigate it together using the 5-step process.

"The expectation I've been holding that I think you didn't fully understand is..."

"The reason this matters so deeply to me is..." (Share the root need — not the argument.)

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"The shared agreement I think we can both live with is..."

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PART 7 — COVENANT COMMITMENT

MY COMMITMENT

"I will stop fighting to win and start building to last.

When we clash, I will stay in the room — emotionally and physically.

I will seek to understand before I seek to be understood.

I choose covenant over conflict, every time."

Signed (Husband): _____

Signed (Wife): _____

Date: _____