

MARRIAGE
COURSE

After “I Do”

THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO NEWLYWED LIFE

MODULE 7

SMALL STUFF



MAIN IDEA

SMALL STUFF CAN CREEP INTO MARRIAGE AND CAN LEAD TO CONFLICT, BUT YOU CAN MANAGE THEM.

WHAT IS THE “SMALL STUFF?”

SMALL STUFF IS _____ .

A pet is something you love dearly. It's precious to you. A peeve is something that irritates you in an irrationally upsetting way. So a “pet peeve” is an oxymoron. It's an annoyance that you coddle and nurture.

IT'S **YOUR** PET PEEVE. **YOU CHOOSE** HOW FAR TO LET YOUR ANNOYANCE AND FRUSTRATION GROW.



CHECK YOUR EXPECTATIONS

Who doesn't love personality tests?? AND, with this one, you get to guess your spouse's answer, too (let the competition begin!). You each have one of these pages, so grab your pens and get started! **In Column 1, rank how much you relate to each of these pet peeves on a scale of 1-5** (1 being “Who would get annoyed at that??” and 5 being “Oh my gosh, I'm not alone??”).

THEN, **in Column 2, rate your SPOUSE on a scale of 1-5, too!** Once you're done filling out those two columns, compare your pages. **Write in their answers to each of the pet peeves in Column 3, and finally, write the difference between what you thought your spouse would be and what they actually are in Column 4.** Tally up your total, then flip this page over to see what it means! (**HINT:** the lower the number, the better!)

THE TEST:

1	2	3	4	
___	___	___	___	1. Leaving dishes in the sink
___	___	___	___	2. People talking with their mouths full
___	___	___	___	3. Slow drivers
___	___	___	___	4. Excessive use of the word “moist”
___	___	___	___	5. When the toilet seat is left up
___	___	___	___	6. When someone leaves the fridge open for too long
___	___	___	___	7. People interrupting when you’re speaking
___	___	___	___	8. Making a slurping sound with a straw
___	___	___	___	9. Smacking gum or chewing food too loudly
___	___	___	___	10. Tapping, fidgeting, clicking pens, bouncing knees, etc.
___	___	___	___	11. People talking during a movie
___	___	___	___	12. People staring at their phone/screen even if you’re talking to them
___	___	___	___	13. Being “accidentally” woken up
___	___	___	___	14. When people have no sense of a personal bubble
___	___	___	___	15. When someone doesn’t use turn signals
___	___	___	___	16. Being late
___	___	___	___	17. People not covering their mouths when they cough
___	___	___	___	18. Someone eating food off your plate without asking
___	___	___	___	19. When someone changes the song in the car AS they’re asking if they can
___	___	___	___	20. Hair. Everywhere. (the shower wall, the couch, the floor, the drain, etc.)
TOTAL: ___				

So how’d you do? If you scored between 0-24, do a little celebration dance, because you’ve got a really good idea of who your spouse really is! If you scored between 25-49, make sure to keep being aware of your spouse, their moods, and their patterns. It’s a great way to keep getting to know them and understand the things that drive them nuts! If you scored between 50-74, you might have a long way to go before you totally understand your spouse, but that just means there’s room to keep growing together. And if you scored between 75-100, you might want to be a little more intentional about focusing on the reality your spouse lives in moving forward.

And speaking of moving forward...

PET PEEVES VS. REAL DEALS

PET PEEVES:

- Dirty dishes in the sink
- Hair on the shower wall
- Dirty clothes on the floor
- Makeup stacked on the bathroom counter
- Not agreeing on where to go for dinner
- What should be done (or not done) on a Saturday

REAL DEALS:

- Cancelling a date night last minute to hang out with friends
- Spending waaay outside of your limits/boundaries with money
- Your spouse is never in the mood
- Chores falling on one person's plate
- Bad mouthing friends or family
- Bad mouthing each other to friends or family

FOR MORE ON THESE **REAL DEALS**, CHECK OUT THE CONFLICT MODULE.



WHY ARE YOU THE WAY YOU ARE?

THE MAJORITY OF SMALL ISSUES IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP CAN BE SMOOTHED OVER WITH ONE OF 2 "F" WORDS: _____ OR _____ .

Fixing the problem. Your spouse isn't deficient because they're different. You're fixing the issue, not each other.

Forgetting the story. You need to forget the story you made up about the situation. This allows you to move forward with your spouse and see them in a positive light.

BOTH REQUIRE AN ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF THE ISSUE **AND A BOLDNESS TO SOLVE THAT ISSUE.**

SIGNS YOU'RE LETTING IT GO TOO FAR

Let's talk popcorn for a sec. It starts off this small, harmless kernel. But when it gets too hot, it totally explodes. The small stuff in your marriage can explode and burn you both if you let it sit in the heat for too long. Here are a few ways you can tell if the small stuff is about to explode and how to keep it from happening:

- ♥ **You have a “running list.”** What to do: Acknowledge that you have a list and think through each item as a sole instance.
- ♥ **You start saying “always” or “never.”** What to do: Set a rule in your marriage that “always” and “never” are not allowed to be used when describing negative things about your spouse, whether in your mind or in conversation.
- ♥ **You avoid your spouse.** What to do: As much as you may not want to, talk it out. If things have gotten too heated and tension is too high, seek the help of a certified counselor or therapist to mediate the conversation.



DID YOU KNOW?

There's a scientific way to evaluate your relationship to see just how “happy” you are! A study conducted by The Gottman Institute found that the happiest couples had 5 positive interactions with each other for every 1 negative interaction.

To break it down... For each instance of a raised voice, complaint or outburst, there were 5 instances of good listening, validation, affirmation, physical affection, compliments, using soft words, etc. How does your marriage compare? When you think about every interaction, do the positives outweigh the negatives 5 to 1?



