

The Excuses Worksheet

By Peggy L. Ferguson, Ph.D.

A. Identify your excuses for not spending more time with your spouse. Write them down. Identify how you and your spouse are complicit in maintaining the status quo.

Categories of Excuses:

Time: “We just don’t have the time because...”:

Kids: “We have kids. We can’t have alone time because...”

Money: “We can’t afford to have special time together because...”:

Individual awkwardness: “I am uncomfortable spending time with you because...”: Examples: “*We don’t have anything in common*”; “*I don’t want to spend time with someone who will be criticizing me.*”; “*We don’t have anything to talk about.*”; “*I’m afraid if we spend more time together we will discover that we don’t want to be together and will get a divorce.*”

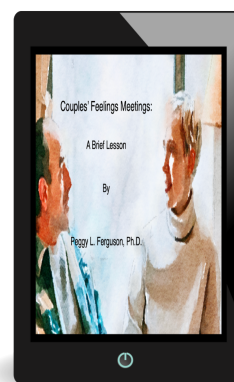
Additional Miscellaneous category: “We can’t carve out more time together because...”

B. Identify how you and your spouse are complicit in maintaining the status quo. Go back through your lists above and identify the ones that your partner reinforces in some way. They may be the same excuses used by your partner or they may be excuses that your partner believes to be “real reasons” why it is difficult to carve out time together.

Put a checkmark by those on your lists above.

C. Now go back and identify the items that are actual roadblocks or problems to be solved. At this point it does not matter whether you believe that you can solve it. Just identify the circumstances/conditions/items that are really in the way of being able to spend more time together.

D. Take this worksheet back to your counselor for assistance with problem solving on those barriers. A basic Problem Solving Model (See Fair Fight Tactics: A Brief Lesson) can be used to eliminate the impediments to spending more time together. Make spending time together a routine with Couples Feelings Meetings. **Note: This article has been revised and edited from its original version, which was previously published in 2012 on this site. The content has been updated for clarity and accuracy.**



*When you find yourself grappling with a hectic schedule, leaving little time to connect with your significant other, it's easy for excuses to creep in, veiling the underlying reasons for your lack of connection. **Fair Fight Tactics** will help you frame your discussions about your lack of connection. "**The Honey Jar**," a couples communication exercise designed to open up the lines of communication by providing topics for those couples who think they have run out of things to say. **The Couples Feelings Meetings** will help you establish a routine of carving out time for communication and emotional intimacy. These exercises and lessons are pillars upon which you can restore a thriving relationship. For more information, go to WWW.PEGGYFERGUSON.COM/MYSTORE*