

[00:00:00] The other tool I wanted to talk about today was the, the, uh, how, how to help couples think through what is creating stress, what are some of the things that they need to manage that's flowing into their life. And this is a, I don't know how you would do this specifically if you're working with couples, if you don't use Prepare Rich, because that's the, the data for, for filling in this tool comes out of that assessment.

There may be other online stress tools or lists of stressors. You could have people go through and, and, and, and walk through, but we use it specifically in context of walking through preparing rich with people. So that's, that's what this is. And this is this, we hadn't edited this at all. This is straight out of their, [00:01:00] out of their workbook, um, as a tool that you can use to, um, evaluate stress.

It's kind of an interesting tool. This is what the whole page looks like. We'll blow up to the boxes here in a second. Um, How we would typically use this is we, because they have their report, we give them the report that says these are the things you said stress you either occasionally, often, or very often.

The goal of this is to figure out what to do with those stressors. And the beauty of this is we organize them in there and then we give them a way to discuss what are we going to do with these stressors. So the idea of this box is very similar to Covey's urgent versus important quadrant and how you, you organize the things in your life and say, which one belongs in which quadrant is this, is this thing urgent, but unimportant?

Is it feel noisy? Is it the wheel squeaking real bad? And, and, or is this something that [00:02:00] could be, um, truly important and oftentimes the thing that's things that get neglected. In, in that, in, in the Covey model is those things that don't make a lot of noise, but they're really important. Similarly, in, in our stressors, sometimes the things that really feel big may not be as big as they, as they feel.

So as you walk through this, and a number of those things could be, my job stresses me, my family stresses me, um, I'm not eating enough, I'm not getting enough exercise, finances are stressing me. So all the, all the normal things are included on the list for people to choose from. Um, health challenges. Are stressing me, but my desire to win a, uh, a Nintendo championship of online gaming is stressing me.

Whatever it is there, you can figure out what it, what, what box it goes in. So similarly, the X Y axis is this difference between high priority, low priority. So

this is a high value thing or a low value thing. [00:03:00] And then in the stressors, the, the, the X axis is, can I change this? Or can I not change this? Or is it pretty hard to change?

And, and, and where you want to get people through this is the question in the box is how you deal with the stressor, okay? So the first hard work is to go, what's stressing you, and then where does it belong on this grid? And then once you're in the correct box, or you feel like it's in the correct box, then you ask that question.

So, as an example, I've got several grandchildren that have food issues. Um, kids that have food issues. And, and it really creates some health challenges. Um, so, and that can create a lot of stress. How do you feed it? Do you find the right stuff? Do we know, do we know what's causing all the food issues or the allergic reactions?

Whatever it might be. And, and, and, and I don't know how to fix it. I can't change it. So that goes into that box too. It's [00:04:00] difficult to change. I can't just stop a health challenge and it's pretty important. I want to, I want to take care of and be sensitive to those things that are, that are hard and difficult for kids, grandkids, etc.

So it goes in that box too. And in those, the question becomes, how do you plan to cope? Because you can't change it. What are things you're going to try to do to make allowance for that? And that might mean taking more time to prepare food or recognizing the budget needs to be adjusted to make sure you get the food that will be less likely to create challenge for you.

So that's a coping question. So the other high priority is something you could change. Uh, might be we need to get more exercise. Um, well, that's something I can change. I can, I can make it a different change to, to take that off the stress pile and on to the, um, critical thinking or problem solving pile.

Say, okay, how are we going to plug in more [00:05:00] exercise? And the question is, what changes can you each make? We as a family would like to be healthier in our exercise, so we're going to, we're going to jump into that. Now, so, and you do that, and so then when you go to low priority, the questions become, uh, a little easier.

To, to find, the, the question becomes a little more about is this really important? Should you really be stressed about this? That's kind of the feel of those bottom two. Can you just, if you can't change it, and it's a low priority,

why are you thinking about it? Why, why, why would you, why would you just, why would you not just let it go?

Can you accept or forget about these issues? Box three, maybe that's where the, the video game championship might go. It's low priority, uh, you can change it. You don't have to have that goal. Uh, maybe you're spending too much time on that. Maybe you're making that too big a deal. So, so that's the basic flow of how you use this tool but it's really, really helpful if, if couples or even individuals can go, what box is this in really?

Because [00:06:00] it's a different question. If we, if we say all these stressors are equal and we put them all in the same box and we say, I gotta do it all, I gotta do it all and I can't change it, it has to stay the same. We're not thinking very critically about, about building a life that has a, has a healthy rhythm.

So, this isn't a part of preparing riches, I just reflected on this tool in my own life and watched other couples kind of struggle through stressful things. I think, at least in Western culture, third world cultures, or in poverty situations, or, or, um, you know, very difficult governmental situations around the world.

There may be other things, but in Western culture, I think a lot of the stress we experience, this is just my observation, Is, is when our, our values list, what we say is important to us, does not match our calendar and money list. The, the, the things we say are important don't actually match up [00:07:00] with what we actually do.

And then it begins to create that stress. It's not a function of how, how full your life is or how much stuff you do. It's, am I, am I walking according to my values? Um, am I, am I living out what I should, and what I believe God wants for me, not just for me. So, that's, that's how I would define what creates stress.

It's, well, it's when our, our value systems don't match up with reality. And we feel like we're not doing what's important. Um, now what we feel like is important may or may not actually be important. It's, but if we feel it's important and we're not doing it, then it starts to create that stress. Just an observation.

The other thing to coach couples in is to recognize as you're doing this, there are, there are things that are truly important. There are voices that are of God or general wisdom that almost anybody that wants to live a godly Christ Jesus would say, yeah, that's important. We need to make sure that gets into our calendar, budget, whatever it is somehow.[00:08:00]

Taking care of our kids, taking care of our families, those are important things. Can't change that. They're high priority and they're difficult to change. However, we also have a number of other voices that create stressors. Our culture tells us certain things that create stress. Are your kids having enough fun?

Is your vacation cool enough? Do you have enough money? Do your kids feel goofy because you don't buy them the right clothes? Or, is your car good enough that your neighbors don't think you're, you know, something weird? So there's all these voices from advertising, cultural standards, cultural norms that say you need this to be right and good and honorable.

The whole world is designed to push us like sheep down the dopamine trail. Just like, find more dopamine, find more flashy, exciting, [00:09:00] new, shiny, fun tasting things to do. And if you're not doing it, Then you are missing out and we can absorb that stress that we're not doing what the culture says is normative.

We also have families of origin, um, creating pressure on us, saying this is, almost every family has their own list of commandments, there may be ten. Or more or less, but that maybe it was never said, but everybody in the family knows this is what's expected. This is, this is how we operate. Some of those are very clearly delineated in a family.

Others are just, it's just the soup that you swim in as a family. You will get a college education. You will do XYZ. Um, you will, your kids will do this. You're, um, and, and, and that can create a stressor pressure. There's other things like health. Where, where we, we, we, we can take it to an extreme, something that is a right and good, [00:10:00] honorable desire to be, to be healthy, to steward well our bodies, and it can become, I need to be a, uh, triathlete, or I need to be, uh, a model, or I need to be, whatever it, that can create a stress, so something that is good, we want to eat reasonably healthy, we want to get some exercise, we want to steward our bodies well, And it could become, I am not, I am not honoring God if I don't get 60 minutes of aerobic exercise per day.

I have to do that. And that creates a stress. And so sometimes, the box that goes in is based on bad information. Uh, based on family of origin, uh, expectations, cultural expectations, and then those out of balance kind of ideas that I need a new car. Where did that come from? Well, cause that's, that's the way we do it.

We are Oldsmobile people and everybody needs a new car every two years. And you can live your whole life thinking that's true, that I [00:11:00] have to, I

don't love my family if I make them drive a car with more than a hundred thousand miles on it. And you can make all kinds of stress filled decisions. Based on that pressure you experience it so helping people know every one of us have them by the way we can laugh Well, that's stupid, but we all have them this pressure the voice of my dad saying you you know A real a really good husband father will do this and it's floating around in the soundtrack of my mind And if I'm not doing it, I can feel this.

Well, wait a minute. I gotta do that so coaching people to think objectively and critically about what is really a high priority and what is really either able to change or difficult to change. Sometimes they get stuck in loops of just not being able to see the wisdom of losing money, losing a little money in the short term to save a lot of money in the long term.

That can create an incredible stress for [00:12:00] people, getting caught in a bad car loan, as an example. And they go, no, I can't lose a thousand bucks. Dude, you're going to lose eighteen thousand bucks. So, lose a thousand, move on. No, I can't. That would just completely stress them out. And it becomes, I can't change it.

Yes, you can. And so sometimes you have to coach people to work out of those, those stressors that feel so critically important. And I'm obviously gently, carefully doing that, but those are, those are real things that people feel. And it's, it's not as simple as saying, don't think that way because it's, it's, it can be deeply ingrained in what they consider success or honorable or anything.

Um, but, but this, this grid is super helpful to, to help them sort it out and then ask that question as you would sit, if you were doing it with them, if you're sitting down, walking through big stressors, and if you do, uh, get trained in preparedness, you will, there will be some that come across your desk that they're both just pegged.

90, 95, completely stressed out [00:13:00] and, and this is going to be an important thing for them to have hope. Can we kind of work through and help you think through, well, maybe, maybe you don't need to have a resting heart rate of 41. Um, maybe that's not actually where you need to be to be healthy. Um, and help them kind of reevaluate some of those pressures.

So, I think it's a great tool. Encourage you using it. We don't always get to it in, in, in our weekend events. Um, but it'll be in the booklet and available for download and, um, people can really work themselves. It can cause a lot of conflict if they're experiencing a lot of stress and they don't even know what,

why they feel so amped up, but it is the pressure and stress that they're going through.

Yeah. I guess, uh, one question that comes to my mind is when you have a couple that maybe can't agree on the priority of something, uh, whether it's high or low. Um, how do you get to a place [00:14:00] of, you know, I want to say unity, but agreement on whether it's one or the other. And, uh, maybe have you learned anything through experiencing that with couples as you've walked them through this?

Uh, what are some simple maybe tactics to use to kind of guide a couple along in that way? Yeah, a huge piece of that is how they bought into the Genesis mandate. Can we call them back to? Oneness versus rightness, or I mean, that's a huge piece of how, how we can just gently move them back to what's the goal here, the goal, get your way.

Um, and then I would say, well, is there, is it a problem solving tool? Could we, could we, could we take it to the 10 steps to resolve conflict if we really are seeing this different? Maybe one or the other needs to move one direction or the other, um, and then at the end of the day, it may be. Can we grant grace to see this differently and create slightly different systems?

What we don't is what we don't want is [00:15:00] judgment. You're wrong. You shouldn't be doing that. Um, that's what you want to coach away from. Um, but if they haven't done the Genesis mandate, then I, I, I personally am not super hopeful that the couples are going to be willing to be in that posture. Oh yeah, wait a minute.

What's the goal here again? Do I really, you know, I'm, I'm not just looking out for the interest of Christ and considering others more important than myself. Kind of those, those more sanctifying kind of call, um, it goes through there. The other thing I would look for, Tom, in that is, are there past hurts that make it, that there's more skin in the game?

Because I've been hurt, because this has cost me in the past, I'm going to plant my flag here. And so there may be reconciliation things or understanding, uh, why is that so important to you? What, what, what is significant about that? And so it can be a lesson of knowing. Tell, tell me where that is. Because you, you can find a report somewhere to say whatever you want,

It's just [00:16:00] crazy that there is no objective truth available anywhere in the world anymore. And so somehow there has to be a higher bar than just

trying to find the right answer. But I think those are the tools I would use to shepherd people towards that.

And if that doesn't work, I just tell 'em to stop it.

And it, if I remember when we did this, it's been a long time, but Holly and I put this, put things in different boxes. I mean, that's, that's part of the exercise. That's, that's pretty normal. It's not like a couple is going to put things in the same box. I put it in one box and Holly's going to put it in a different box.

And so that's part of the discussion, I think, is why did you put it in this box? And so it's an opportunity to hear as much as an opportunity to be like. I don't know. We have to agree. I don't know. [00:17:00] It's kind of, yeah, an idea if you're going to work together on something that's a stressor for both of you, then probably you need to agree where it fits, you know, somehow move that direction.

But that's where the problem solving 10 steps tool can be helpful to say, what do we, what do we need to do to think this differently? Or that, again, that understanding why, why does that feel important to you or why do you think? That belongs in that box. Explain that to me. I want to study you. I want to know you and understand you.

I want to care about you. Not, I just want to gear up my arguments for why you're wrong. I really want to hear you. And so that active listening process, um, tell me, tell me what would, how that would care for you if that was true. Why would that be important to you? And I want to know that, understand that.

So, uh, the discussion is not debate. The discussion is, I want to know. I want to understand. I want to hear you.[00:18:00]

Anything else about this would be helpful to talk through?

I guess, I was just wondering, you were saying you need to already have the prepare and enrich kind of evaluation done to really make this effective, but uh, just wondering even if like those uh, strength and growth areas that were you had earlier in the thing, if uh, if just going through those could be like put, put those growth areas in those, I don't know, I was, [00:19:00] I was just wondering.

If there's a way to generate some topics without having to go through the actual prepare and enrich. I just haven't looked. My guess is there's all kinds of stress

indicators that you could find online tools to generate a list to play with. Probably even just brainstorming from memory. What do you feel stressed by?

It wouldn't be as long a list as being prompted by examples, but my guess is you could, you said, Hey, let's just kind of sort through what's stressing us. And you spent 20 minutes going, Well, I feel fat. Okay, well, that that that's probably creating some stress that stresses me out. And that's true of me.

So it's a real one. What's going on? Like, um, it's creating stress and the easy one for me to figure out. Um, so I'm if you find things, I'd love to have them as individual tools. I may call prepared rich and see if they'd be willing to [00:20:00] make that that list of stressors available that we just posted somewhere so that we're Transcribed Um, creating tools for couples or, or even singles, um, that they, they would, they would have access to those lists.

And they, they make it, make it available. They're, they're really generous with stuff.

Other thoughts, questions, ideas?

He has some great tools if people are willing to use them, but sometimes it's just more, it's just more fun or easier just to stay in the conflict. I don't know. Yeah, these are great tools. It's a little bit more fun, but [00:21:00] certainly the status quo is the easy place to stay.

Objects at rest tend to stay at rest, and I think that's true. Patterns of relating as well.

And I do think that's why it's the urging couples to prayerfully consider the Genesis mandate. It's hard to say, it's hard to say the status quo is good enough. Once we've allowed the, you know, said yes to the Lord to pursue a higher value than that. The reality is most of the couples we sit with, they, they are content with the status quo.

Otherwise they would have already done something.

Okay, [00:22:00] well, anything else on your mind? It's all I have for today, but I'm happy to, there's other stuff coming up or questions or things you want to kick around. Otherwise, we can call it early.

Hey, Pat, just a question on the, you know, kind of the accepting the Genesis mandate type of thing. I can't remember if when we went through this, you

know, a few years back, if you had a set aside time to do this or you kind of. I'm trying to remember if I've ever, if we've officially done this, but I guess we would know if we've done this as a husband and wife, or likely, um, pretty sure Morgan would know if she's done it.

The husband's don't always, uh, wives usually do. Yeah. Um, I've hesitated to make it a part of any, um, curriculum, like we're getting now we're going to do this [00:23:00] primarily because it's one of those things somebody may sit and do and say, we did that. But if it doesn't flow from their own choice somehow, their own initiative, I just, I would feel suspect that they would just, it could be very plausible and maybe probable that they would just go, I'm just going through the motions here.

But, so I asked them to take the initiative. Find a time and a place to do this. Um, I may be wrong on that. You can feel free to do that however you'd like. But. For me, it's one of those, like at the end of a conference, who wants to follow Jesus, everybody stand up and, well, really, did they really want to, or did they just feel peer pressure to stand up because everybody else did?

It's one of those kinds of ideas to me. I want, I want, I want you to feel the conviction of the Lord to make this promise to each other. And then do whatever you want with it. And it doesn't have to be fancy. Some have been, you know, second, it's [00:24:00] foundational to in some form or fashion to do that though.

Yup. And I try to say that a lot, but if you don't do this two years from now, everything we're doing, you'll go, Oh yeah, that was kind of good, but it will not have changed you. Um, the likelihood that it will become a new bad pattern. If you will walk through the Genesis mandate, it goes up exponentially that you will find the courage, the spirit will bring conviction, pressing on you to move that direction.

Um, so, but it is an appeal for them to make that commitment and find the time and the space to do that. Sure. Okay. That's good.

Yeah, that makes sense. Thanks.

And that may not be the right way to do it. It's just how I'm hesitant to [00:25:00] create a potentially artificial environment. And then they, I did it, it didn't work. Well, did you really do it?