

3.4 Recreational Companionship

Before you were married, chances are pretty good that you planned your dates around your favorite recreational activities. That's because when it's an important emotional need, recreational companionship can often deposit enough love units to trigger romantic love. And since you wanted your relationship to flourish, you probably chose activities that you both enjoyed.

But you may have made the mistake of doing whatever the one with the greatest need for recreational companionship wanted to do. That's what happened to my wife, Joyce, and me. She was willing to join me in all of the recreational activities I liked most -- right up to the day we were married. But after marriage, she announced that she would only be joining me in activities that she also enjoyed. And it turned out that she shared very few of my recreational interests.

Most couples whose marriages begin the way mine did make a crucial mistake -- they go their separate ways. He joins his friends in recreational activities he enjoys most and leaves his wife to find her own recreational companions for activities that interest her. That's a formula for marital disaster. If someone else of the opposite sex joins either of you in your favorite recreational activities, you are at risk to fall in love with that person. Besides, if you are not together when you are enjoying yourselves the most, you are squandering an opportunity to deposit love units.

Fortunately, Joyce and I took the path that led to marital fulfillment. We exchanged activities that only I enjoyed for new activities that we both enjoyed. We remained each other's favorite recreational companions after marriage even though most of our recreational activities changed. And it's a good thing, because recreational companionship is definitely one of my most important emotional needs.

Think about it for a moment in terms of the Love Bank. How much do you enjoy these activities, and how many love units would your spouse be depositing whenever you enjoyed them together? What a waste it would be if someone else got credit for all those love units. And if it were someone of the opposite sex, it would be downright dangerous.

Who should get credit for all those love units? The one you should love the most, your spouse. That's precisely why I encourage couples to be each other's favorite recreational companions. It's one of the simplest ways to deposit love units.

The need for recreational companionship combines two needs into one. First, there is the need to be engaged in recreational activities and second, the need to have a companion. To determine if you have this need, first ask yourself if you have a craving for certain recreational activities. Then ask yourself if the activities require a companion for fulfillment. If the answer is yes to both questions, include recreational companionship on your list of emotional needs.