



Marriage Forecasting: Changing the Climate of Your Relationship One Conversation at a Time
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Can Your Marriage Weather the Storms of Life?

Marriage Forecasting is based on the simple idea that marriages are a lot like the weather. Some marriages have a stable climate, while others have an unpredictable one. For some of you, the climate of your marriage is like that in Southern California—bright sunshine and wonderful predictability. For others, marriage is a lot like living in the Midwest, where they say, “If you don’t like the weather, wait five minutes and it’ll change.” More than likely, you are somewhere in between: seasons of turbulence, seasons of calm.

Marriage Forecasting equips you to make a climate reading of your marriage and to develop communication strategies to improve it. The good news: communication climates are not *exactly* like the weather. While the weather outside is out of our control, the communication climate within our home is largely our responsibility.

What Is a Communication Climate?

A communication climate is the overarching sense of value and satisfaction individuals feel as they interact with each other and go about daily activities. While all marriages engage in roughly the same activities—dividing up household responsibilities, making ends meet, instructing and disciplining children, helping with endless homework, balancing work and home schedules, preparing for holidays, interacting with in-laws—the communication climate for each particular couple can greatly vary.

Some couples live in a perpetually chilly climate. They don’t argue with each other, yet there is no warmth or intimacy between them. They go about their daily routines and never really connect. Other couples exist in a climate that is stormy and filled with arguments. These couples can’t seem to agree on anything, and talking about issues only seems to make matters worse. Others live in a climate that is partly cloudy; communication is fine as long as certain topics—finances, sex, schedules—are avoided. Like rain clouds, these topics hang over a marriage and threaten to disrupt intimacy if they are discussed. And some couples seem to live in a state of never-ending sunshine. They seem to always be happy and affirming of one another, and they never utter a harsh word toward each other. The key for each of these couples is to understand how their climate formed and what it takes to maintain or alter it.

How you regularly interact with your spouse is the single greatest factor in establishing the communication climate that surrounds your marriage.

—Adapted from the introduction and chapter one, “What Are Communication Climates?”