

By Carol Ummel Lindquist, Ph.D.

How to Create Your



Couple Vision Statement CVS

"CVS helped us improve our finances, our sex life, our parenting and gave our relationship more meaning."

What is It? CVS is an outline for a couple's overall lifestyle plan ... how they want their lives together to be ... goals and dreams and how they are going to work together to make them come true.

Why Couples Do a CVS Many reasons; most importantly can and will help them face and resolve problems. Many have used CVS to improve finances, sex lives, parenting and give relationship more meaning.

How Will Your CVS Change Your Relationship?

- 1 Helps change view of marriage from individual (no-win) to being part of a team (win-win)
- 2 Encourages each to work as a team member and take feedback better
- 3 Easier to make changes
- 4 Very handy when difficulties arise; use CVS to guide actions in difficult times to help your actions take you closer to your goals. Will the time you are spending help you feel closer or farther apart?

Couple Vision Steps You will need three blocks of time without kids, cell phones or interruptions. Each partner creates four lists.

- **Appreciation List:** What is it that you like about your partner, your marriage, and your life? As long as possible.
- **Dream List:** Seven words or seven things that represent a happy family life to you: small and silly or deeply meaningful.
- **Values List:** Make second list of words that represent the values that you believe you share.
- **Goals List:** Make a list of specific goals you want to achieve. including "processes" or ways you could better work together



Consider the Ten Challenges
These will spark some ideas and help get you started

**Commitment ■ Caring ■ Cash ■
Chores ■ Change ■ Clan ■ Conflict
Resolution ■ Career and Meaning ■
Charity and Beliefs ■ Celebrations
and Holidays**

Start With Positives Share what's working; what you do best; things you have done well already.

Sample questions: How does your life match your dreams? Do you have great kids? Are you good with money? What projects have you done together? What crises have you handled well? What is really for fun for both of you? What do you like most about each other's personalities and habits? Do you split duties easily in the household? Do you have great sex? Do you share religious values? Do you treat each other with respect? Do you give each other lots of room to be who you are? Do you feel really safe with the other person? Are you never bored? Do you fight well or disagree in positive way? Can you talk about anything? If things are rough right now, look back on the beginning of the relationship and ask yourselves, "What worked best then?"

Affirmations Your combined "Goals List" should sum up what you both like and agree on as the heart of what you are becoming or want to become as a couple. Affirmations will then help you as you work through each problem. Put affirmations in the present tense as though they have already happened. Some examples are: We are a fun couple. We can talk about anything. We support each other. We are deeply committed. We can learn anything. We are constantly growing and changing together. We manage money well. We are devoted to our kids.



Dr. Carol's Two-Day CVS Session

*Two days over a weekend
Or couple's own schedule*

First Evening:

- Start with positives. Either exchange what you have written or read the results out loud to each other.

Next Morning:

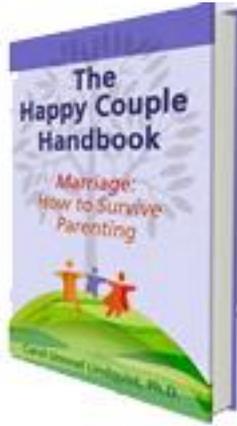
- Find a comfortable, private place and combine lists. Take turns reading aloud your dreams, needs, and wants
- Combine your lists.
- Record results on big sheets of paper, a dry-erase board, or a large computer screen.
- Use your best communication skills.
- Stay positive or neutral.
- Talk about each of your dreams until you feel you deeply understand each other's dreams.
- Neither of you will get everything you wish for right away, but you can feel closer right away.
- Take a Fun Break. Think about what you have heard. This break is a clear marker between listening and resolving conflict.

Follow-Up:

- Start resolving conflicts and defining solutions acceptable to both of you. Happy couples have different styles at this stage. Some are very detailed; others like to address only the big picture.
- Set mutually agreed upon next steps. Break solutions into real steps. Some goals will be primarily for one with the other playing supporting role. Okay if agreement feels mutual to you both.
- Discuss how to work together and support each other. What will happen first? What order? How to pay for it? How to adjust schedule to make it happen? Notice items that are easy because you are already working toward them and congratulate yourselves.
- Plan for follow-up. When will you talk about this again?

Celebrate!

- Congratulate each other. Just agreeing and taking one small step is an important milestone.
- Drink a toast! Make love!



Dr. Carol Would Love To Have Your Feedback

From Dr. Carol:

Thank you so much for downloading **Couple Vision**. Good luck to you now and always in your progress toward creating a happy, lifelong relationship with your spouse. It is the best gift you can give yourselves, your kids, and everyone around you. More ideas about your two-day session, the goal-setting weekend, will be outlined in Chapter 10 of my new book that will be published soon!

When you successfully create your CVS, Dr. Carol would love to hear your comments. Share with her your process of creating your Couple Vision and what it means to you. Visit her website or email her directly: <mailto:carol@doctorcarol.com>

“At www.doctorcarol.com you can share your experiences by commenting on [Vision Statement podcast you can listen to here](#) in my blog or comment on the other blog topics. You can also subscribe to my newsletter list for more information.



Coming soon... Learn Fun Fighting!

Happy Couples need to learn how to disagree and Dr. Carol addresses “fun fighting” in another Free PDF Download that is coming early in 2011. Follow Dr. Carol on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)

If you would like personal counseling to help you through this important step of your marriage, or for any other relationship issues, I am also available for private appointments in my Laguna Beach office. I also do email and phone counseling sessions. For more information or to set up an appointment, contact me through:

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The ideas for Dr. Carol's Couples Vision Statement were inspired by the work of Peter L. Sheras and Phyllis R. Sheras.