

Week 1 Assignment – Hot Stoves

Purpose: To help you become oriented and steady by noticing how you have been understanding marriage up to now.

This is not homework.
There is nothing to fix, solve, or decide.

This assignment is simply about slowing down enough to see what has already been shaping your experience.

Set aside 15 to 20 quiet minutes. No phone. No multitasking. Just you and the questions below.

PART 1 – Notice the Stove You Have Been Touching

1. When I think about marriage failing, the first feeling that shows up in my body is:

2. If my marriage ended, the story I quietly fear I would tell myself about what that means about me is:

3. Growing up, marriage was mostly shown to me as:

- Stability
- Duty
- Identity
- Safety from being alone
- A lifelong promise no matter what
- Something people endure
- Something people outgrow
- I honestly don't know

Write one or two sentences about where those ideas came from.

PART 2 – What Marriage Has Been “For”

Finish these sentences honestly:

- In my life, marriage has mostly been a way to _____.
- I have been depending on marriage to help me feel _____.
- If marriage does not do that, I start to feel _____.

PART 3 – The Orientation Shift

“Confusion does not mean failure. It often means I am touching something powerful without understanding how it works.”

When I consider that maybe nothing is wrong yet, I notice that my body feels:

One thing I feel slightly less pressured about right now is:

PART 4 – The Only Practice This Week

For the next seven days, when you notice urgency, panic, or self-judgment about your marriage, quietly say to yourself:

“I don’t need to decide anything today. I am learning how this works.”

Progress this week is not emotional relief. Progress is increased clarity and steadiness.

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