



**WinShape
Marriage**

Healthy Alone Time in Your Marriage



What does it mean to have healthy alone time in your marriage?

Have you ever heard someone say, “Happy couples do everything together.” Whether you’ve heard it, or you and your spouse have fallen for this marriage myth, we’re here to bust it. *Happy couples know that being apart creates anticipation.* There’s truth to the saying, “Absence makes the heart grow fonder.”

As important as it is to spend time connecting with your spouse, everyone needs time alone, too. It’s good to spend time apart doing your own things. When you do, you contribute to your well-being as an individual, and you create excitement around coming back together with your spouse! So, how do you determine what healthy alone time looks like, and how do you navigate conversations surrounding this topic? This guide will help!

Laying the Groundwork

Let's set the stage—when having conversations about alone time, it's first important to understand what healthy alone time looks like and means to each of you. Something that seems like a pointless activity to you might be the very thing that rejuvenates your spouse.

First, we'll have you each take time to consider what healthy alone time looks like and means to you. Then, you can begin having honest conversations about what nourishes your mind, body, and soul. When you fully understand what your spouse needs to recharge their battery, you lay the foundation for a supportive marital environment, where you'll both be the best versions of yourselves.

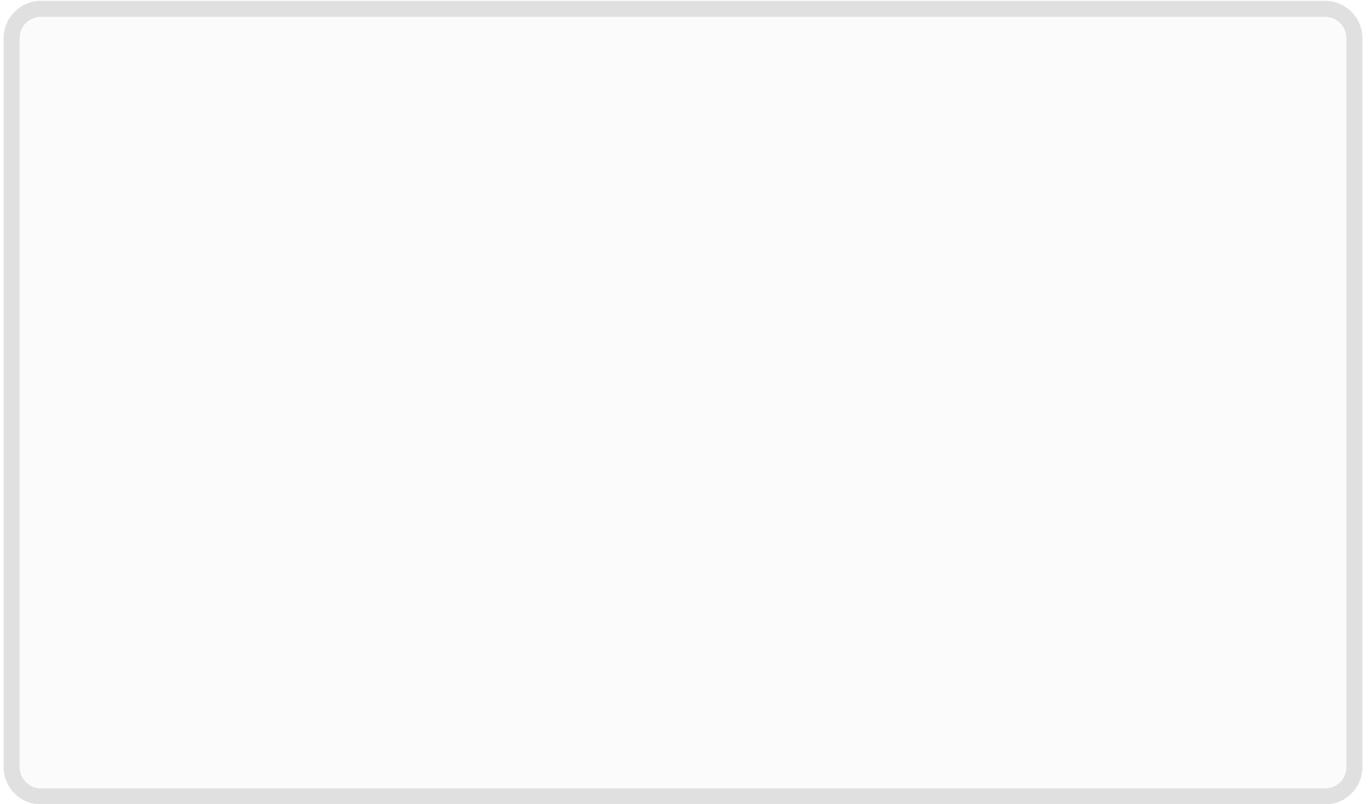


Step 1

Determine what healthy alone time *looks like* and *means* to you.

- Individually, take a few moments to think about the question, “What does healthy alone time look like to me?” Think about activities or hobbies you enjoy doing by yourself or with others (not your spouse, but friends).
- Then, use the boxes on the following two pages (one for you, one for your spouse) to draw or describe what healthy alone time looks like to you. You could draw a picture of you going on a run, or write down a few key phrases—praying, taking a hot bath, watching a movie, etc.
- After filling in the box, take a few moments to think about the question, “What does healthy alone time mean to me?” When I do X activity, I feel X. When I go for a run, I feel energized, for example.
- Then, circle a few words or phrases, or write in your own, to describe what healthy alone time means to you.
- Once you’re both finished, share with each other regarding both exercises, and discuss what healthy alone time looks like and means to each of you.

Alone time for _____ looks like:

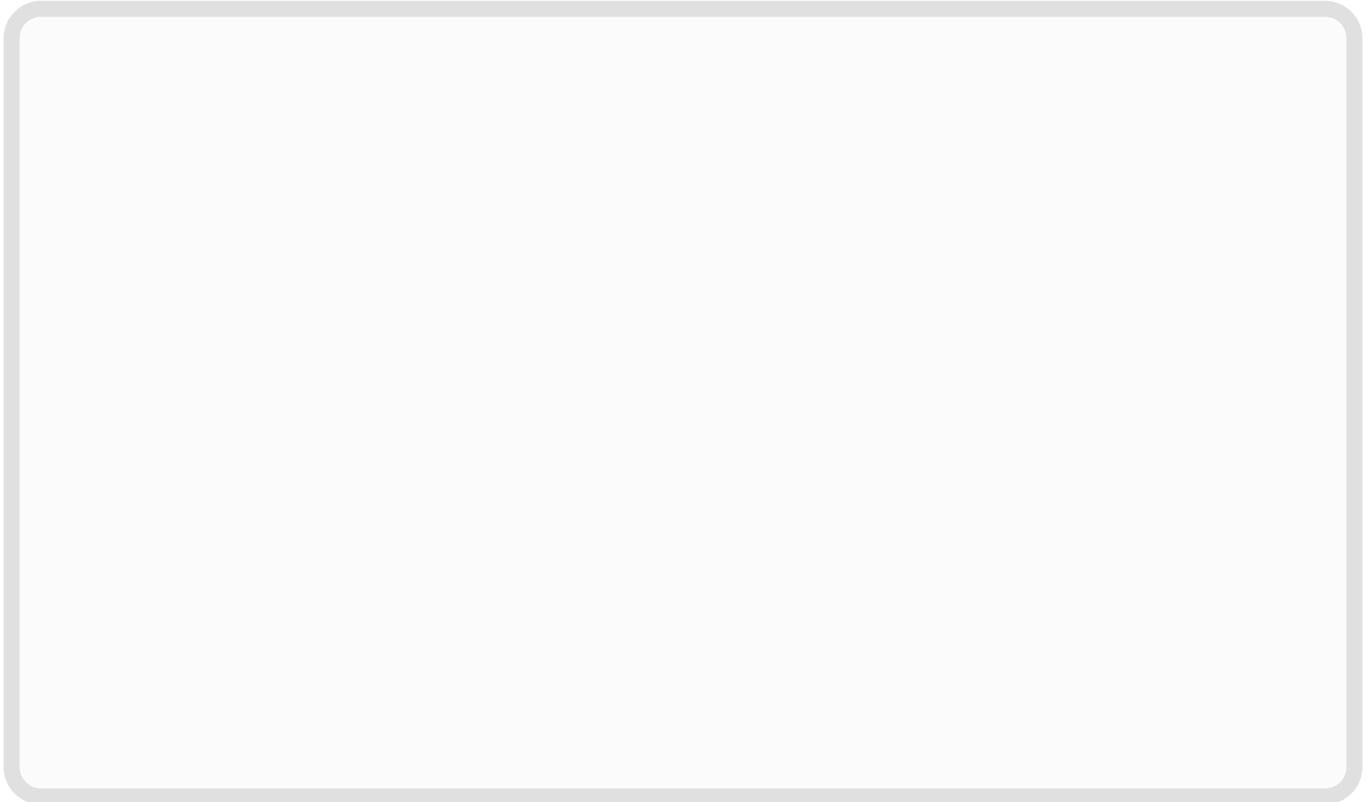


Alone time for _____ means:

Circle all that apply, or write in your own.

Recharge	Restful	Energizing	Healthy	Connection
Refreshing	Unplug	Refocus	Intentional	Time to think
Protected	Necessary	Purposeful	Productive	Sweet
Calm	Relaxing	Easy	Nice	Time to pray
Creative	Fun	Wisdom	Growth	Patience
Slow down	Time to listen	Sacred	Peaceful	Life-giving

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Step 2

Take the conversation deeper.

Now that you've completed the activity, spend as much time as you need talking through the following processing questions.

1. What keeps you from taking time for yourself?
2. Do you think it's selfish to spend time alone?
3. How much alone time do you feel you need on a regular basis?
4. How can we balance our need for alone time with our responsibilities to each other and our family?
5. Other than what you identified in your drawing, are there any other activities coming to mind that you'd enjoy doing during your alone time?
6. How can we ensure we both get the alone time we need without neglecting our relationship?
7. What are some boundaries we can establish to respect each other's alone time?
8. How can we communicate our need for alone time without hurting each other's feelings?
9. How can we ensure our alone time doesn't become a way to avoid dealing with conflict we're facing?
10. How can we support each other's need for alone time?

What We Need

Think of this page as a synopsis of what you and your spouse have discussed—a central location to remind each other what healthy alone time looks like and means to you as individuals, so you can support each other.

For _____:

Healthy alone time <i>looks like</i> ...	Healthy alone time <i>means</i> ...
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For _____:

Healthy alone time <i>looks like</i> ...	Healthy alone time <i>means</i> ...
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In today's fast-paced culture, it is easy to move through your day without taking time to care for yourself. But, it is necessary.

When you properly care for yourself, you bring your whole, healthy self to your marriage and family. Spending time alone is not meant to fulfill selfish desires—I want to play golf to better my game. Bettering your golf game may be a bonus, but the goal of alone time is to care for yourself, so you bring your best self to your spouse. In turn, you'll be able to care for your marriage and family better.

Healthy alone time looks different from individual to individual and marriage to marriage, especially based on the season of life you're in. The best way to determine what works for you and your spouse is to do exercises like the ones provided and have honest conversations with each other.

Invite your spouse into your alone time. *Wait, what?!*

You might be thinking, “Alone time is meant to be alone. Now, you want me to invite my spouse.” What we mean is to invite your spouse to invest in how you care for yourself.

Ways To Support Your Spouse During Their Alone Time

- Be interested in what your spouse is interested in. Ask them questions after they spend time alone such as, “How was your time with the girls/guys?” or “Did you enjoy your workout?”
- Remember the words/phrases your spouse chose to identify what spending time alone means to them. Ask them...When you spent time painting this afternoon, did it help you feel creative?
- Pray for your spouse when they're spending time caring for themselves. Lord, help my husband to truly unplug as he spends time working on his car. Lord, I pray my wife's body, mind, and spirit will feel renewed after she gets a massage.
- Have check-ins from time to time, revisiting the processing questions from earlier.
- Remind yourself—you're on the same team. When you win individually, you win as a couple! When you recognize the importance of caring for yourself, you feel more invested in helping your spouse to do the same.