

# Part 2

## The Three-Color Love Cycle

*Growing in love is clearly not a weekend hobby. Nor is it a project that you undertake for a few weeks and at the end say, "Finished! What's next?" The journey to fully reflecting God's love is a continuous process that began before you can remember and will continue until the end of this life—if you are deliberate about it.*

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## Breathing love in, and breathing it out

**I**n a perfect world, loving and being loved should be as natural as breathing in and breathing out. Breathing is both an activity that our bodies do automatically—even while we are asleep—but at the same time can be deliberately stopped by us. Like love, it should happen all by itself, but our will has the capacity to upset its natural rhythm which can lead to breathing difficulties or even more dire consequences.

### Breathing difficulties

Unfortunately when it comes to growing in love, we each start the process with breathing difficulties that often cause us to give up very quickly. Try this simple exercise.

*Breath out completely... now push a little more air out...  
and then a little more... now hold it for 10 seconds...  
Breath normally again.*

In a perfect world,  
loving and being  
loved should be as  
natural as breathing  
in and breathing out.

This exercise in extreme *exhaling* is a metaphor for those who seek to grow in love purely through their own effort. They will expend whatever love they have and work until they are completely spent—motivated by a desire to be a more loving person. But such an approach is literally suffocating. For a short time, it makes a difference and



perhaps others will even notice it. But ultimately you are forced to give up; exhausted; feeling like a failure; wanting to love more; but depleted.

Now try another exercise.

*Take a deep breath in... breath in a little more...  
and then a little more... now hold it for 10 seconds...  
Breath normally again.*

This extreme *inhaling* is a metaphor for those who understand the absolute importance of taking in the love of God and the love of others. After all, you can only give what you have received. However, the discomfort of holding two very full lungs of air is equally suffocating but in the opposite way to extreme exhaling. The air you have taken in contains the oxygen you need, but if you fail to exhale you will soon become delusional as the breath of life becomes stale within you.

### **A more natural cycle**

Of course, the approach of both types of people above is wrong, and yet at the same time, right. We *must* draw in great draughts of love directly from God and from God through others. But we *must also* exhale that love with all our might until it fills every last corner of our world. Only in deliberately trying to breath out the fullness of God's love, can you discover what you do not have to give. And only in taking the time to breath in, can you hope to fill up on that which you lack. Like all of God's creation, love exists in an eternal natural cycle of giving and receiving where finding the natural rhythmical balance leads to life.

### **More than a metaphor**

Love is as essential to experiencing *real* life as breathing is for keeping you alive over the next five minutes. In fact, the metaphor of breathing as a way of understanding both the way to grow in love and why so many relationships in the world are choking, is an almost perfect one.

From the businessman who exhales excessively into his work and then, gasping for breath, inhales pornography or excessive alcohol to give a quick fix to his collapsing lungs. To the tired mother who breathes out every last breath of love over her family and then secretly inhales comfort food to fill the empty void.

On the other side you have the teenager who breathes in all that his or her parents have to offer without any intention or expectation of returning the love. Or you have the consumerist Christian who will jump from church to church breathing in all that is on offer, while never looking for opportunities to serve or be stretched in their faith.

Add to these, thousands of different relational scenarios where love is not inhaled and exhaled naturally and you start to get a very clear picture of our world. The question for now though is, will *you* take the time to learn to breath properly for your own sake and the sake of those you love?



*Visit the web site  
for more discussion  
about the breathing  
metaphor.*

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## Taking the time to grow in love

**I**t is often said that “Growth takes time!” Of course this is true. But everything in this world takes time. A closer look at what some people actually mean by this statement is helpful.

When the extreme ‘exhaler’ mentioned in the previous section says growth takes time, they simply mean “If I just keep trying hard enough for long enough, I will eventually love like God!” When the extreme ‘inhaler’ from

the previous section says growth takes time, they mean “If I just sit at the feet of Jesus for long enough (and continue to absorb the love others give to me) I will eventually radiate God’s love.”

They are both right in saying their approach will take time. Considering they are both missing half of the respiration process, it will take forever! (Though of course they won’t survive that long.) However, taking time to grow *does* mean you must be prepared to take all the time available to you—past, present, and future (see diagram auf Seite 49).

Taking time to grow means you must be prepared to take all the time available to you—past, present, and future.

### Those who live in the past

Saying that a person lives in the past is usually intended as a negative comment. It generally means they are not prepared to seize the moment or that they show a disregard for the future or the next generation. If a person exclusively lives in the past, it is a clear problem that will slow or stunt their growth and the growth of those in their care.

However, embracing the past as a means of learning where your love has been underdeveloped or where your ‘love’ has harmed more than helped, is essential to growth—as long as those lessons are passed into concrete plans for the future. People who are strong in the past dimension of time tend to be analytical, evaluating love in light of principles like the Fruit of the Spirit. They also tend to have an open-mindedness that allows them to see things from different, sometimes very unusual perspectives.

The Bible graphically depicts the importance of learning from past mistakes. “As a dog returns to its vomit, so a fool repeats his folly” (Proverbs 26:11). Embracing love-lessons from the time that has past would seem to be a very wise (and palatable) thing to do.

### Those who live in the present

Spontaneous people who live in the moment are often criticized by others for not thinking about the future implications of their actions, or for not learning from their past mistakes. It is true. If a person exclusively lives in the now, then the best they can hope for is that they might accidentally do the right things or be in the right place at the right time, to accidentally grow in love—hardly the recipe for consistent growth.

On the other hand, you may have great insights about love from past experiences, or even make the greatest plans to love in the future, but love can only be *experienced* in the present. If you are able to fully embrace the *present* moment; to just allow the love of God to wash over

you; to permit others to love you as you need to be loved; to feel the pain of another who needs an aspect of love that you are not able to give, and then allow those experiences to become a foundation of your ever-changing *past* and the basis for plans of how to love better in the *future*, then you will be well on your way to life and love in all its fullness.

Jesus gave a powerful message about seizing the moment of love when challenged about Mary 'wasting' perfume on his feet. In a few short sentences, he made clear the need to both allow others to express love toward us, and to receive God's perfect love given to us (John 12:1-8).

### **Those who live in the future**

Living in the future can mean that you fear what change might bring about, and therefore rigorously avoid it. Alternatively, you are so focused on the possibilities of what *could* be, that you completely ignore what *is* going on right now. In either case, such people see sticking to the plan regardless of the outcome as *the* way to change the world.

However, for all the inhaling of God's love that we do, he will never violate our freedom and *make* us love others. True love is always a gift freely given. Applying the future dimension of love means making a concrete decision to reflect love to another and ensuring that the form of that love is what they truly need. What is probably clear by now though is that this *future* perspective of love must emerge from lessons learnt in the *past*, which are themselves the result of regularly putting yourself in a place to receive love in the *present*.

Proverbs 14:22 summarizes well what awaits those who actively look to the future, drawing upon the knowledge of God's goodness that accumulates in your past. "Do not those who plot evil go astray? But those who plan what is good find love."

### **Getting your time in order**

Passive people who move through life without any intention to grow in love or make a difference in the world, simply drift from what was the past, into the present, and then onto the future. They don't get smarter, more loving, or experience life in all its fullness. They just get older.

However, people who understand growth as a sign of life and love, intentionally move through time in a different way. They study the *lessons from the past*, which inform *plans for their future*, which soon becomes a *present full of new experiences*, which in turn becomes a more wisely understood *past*... And so it continues in an endless cycle of growth.



Visit the web site for more discussion about the past, future, and present cycle of growth.



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# The six stages of the Love Cycle

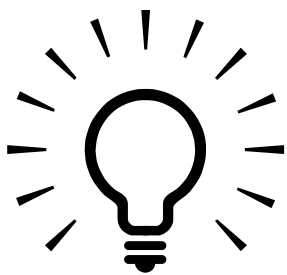


"So how do I find the natural rhythm of breathing in and breathing out while fully embracing the past, present and future of love in my life?"

I'm glad you asked!

The six simple stages of the Three-Color Love Cycle represent a continuous pathway to growth that encompasses all of the above. Being cyclical, you can start wherever you like. What's more, if growth in love ever drifts off your daily priority list, you can come back to the cycle at any time. Sounds kind of like the way Jesus is prepared to keep picking us up no matter what happens along life's journey.

Here are the steps in a little more detail.



There will be an affinity between your 3 Colors of Love tendency (see the Justice, Truth and Grace table on page 69 of *The 3 Colors of Love* book) and the stages of the Love Cycle that you are most likely to do well.

For example, classmates who have a green/red 3 Colors of Love tendency could really help you in the Understand stage.

## Understand: "What are the facts?"

(Please refer to the diagram above or the colored version of it on the back cover insert) As you attended the School of Love over the *past* few weeks, you have been *perceiving* what God's love looks like. You have also—on your own and in your meetings—*tested* some of those assertions and even evaluated yourself against those principles with the help of The Fruit of the Spirit Test. While you no doubt understood love to a particular level before, (hopefully) you now better understand your personal reflection of God's love. You should be able to state some hard facts about it.

In light of this, the Understand stage should not be mistaken as a passive *inhaling* of information. It is a *breathing out* of what you believe the facts are right now beyond reasonable doubt. "I'm not sure if I am really that strong in goodness, but I would agree beyond reasonable doubt that my highest fruit is patience and my lowest fruit is self-control!"

While you will have some understanding of your love tendencies now, it is unreasonable to think that you have fully grasped what your lowest fruit is all about (If you had fully grasped it at an experiential level, you'd be doing it already!). But, with every revolution of the Love Cycle that you work through, your understanding will be enhanced. "Now I know in part, then I will know in full" (1 Corinthians 13:12).

## Plan: "What is most important now?"

With an *understanding* of both the bright and dim aspects of your reflection of love, you need to look at your future growth by asking the question, "What is most important now?" At a general level, this means focusing some energy on your least developed Fruit of the Spirit. More

specifically, it involves deciding on a simple plan of action for you to begin practicing that which will help you to act differently in your lowest fruit area. The plans that you make are not the end in themselves, just as an aspiring concert pianist does not practice scales so as to one day perform scales to hundreds of people. They are disciplines you engage in to help you grow to the point where—after numerous cycles—your current lowest fruit naturally reflects from you as your spirit has moved over time into perfect harmony with the Spirit of God.

Like the Understand stage, the Plan stage is not passive but an active expression of what you are willing to do. But it is equally an exhaling of other activities that you have deemed to be less important right now.

Again, it is unreasonable to expect you to come up with the perfect plan straight away. So the aim is to start with something simple, that will get you going on a cycle which will bring you back around to an even better plan in the next cycle. A little later on, you will be introduced to some *push-start cycle plan ideas* to help get you started.

Some may wonder at how loving Jesus was in progressively reducing his sphere of ministry over time from the crowds, to the twelve and then to an intense focus on Peter, James and John. It seems he knew that a plan to love the whole world required severe prioritization. Maybe he was right.

**Do:** “Are you following through and inviting God and others to go beyond the plan?”

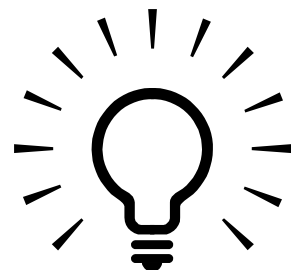
It is of course possible to have wonderful understanding and even a great plan but still fail to do anything about it. The Do stage really tests our resolve to grow in love—and in cyclical terms—whether we are committed to step out in faith, even if we don’t have all the answers yet about our lowest fruit area. Of course, if the previous stages have been worked through carefully, you can enter this stage with reasoned confidence.

You will notice that the Do stage falls exactly between the exhale and inhale side of the cycle. This is not just a graphical coincidence but illustrates a vital point about *doing* in Kingdom community. We must be very sensitive as to when our part of the partnership with God or others is complete or has been exhaled. To over-do things robs you of the life and love that you already have. It also pushes others out of community with you as their contributions and love for you are ignored.

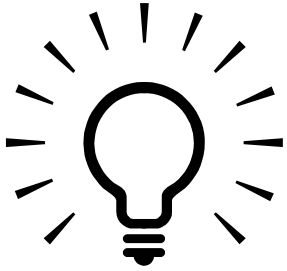
In Matthew 7:9-11, Jesus reminds us that God is not only the Father who gave us life and will one day give us an inheritance; and that he is not just our master who instructs us how to live; but also that he is our Dad who is intimately interested in all of our plans and requests. So in the Do stage, don’t forget to invite your Heavenly Dad (and his other children) to bless you with good gifts. And then prepare yourself to inhale the love he wants to breath into your life.



*Classmates who have a red 3 Colors of Love tendency could really help you in the Plan stage.*



*Classmates who have a red/blue 3 Colors of Love tendency could really help you in the Do stage.*



*Classmates who have a blue 3 Colors of Love tendency could really help you in the Experience stage.*

**Experience:** "Have you freed yourself to receive from God and others?"

Having just invited God and others to fill you with their love, there is little sense in not hanging around long enough to receive it. The Experience stage is very much about freeing yourself to inhale love from others; freeing your timetable so that there are moments to just experience; freeing your mind from some of your pre-conceptions about love; freeing yourself from the notion of self-sufficiency. As God (and most others who actually have good gifts for you) will not force themselves upon you, providing time and space in the present moment to receive is your decision.

Of course, just as you are not going to have perfect understanding, the perfect plan, or perfectly do that plan in your first cycles, the experiences you have will not necessarily all be good. You could be teased for acting differently from usual. You might feel quite unnatural about the plan you have just applied. You could also experience just how poorly developed you actually are in your lowest fruit area. But just as with the other stages, each cycle will bring you closer to what it feels like, to love others as they need to be loved, and to be loved in return.

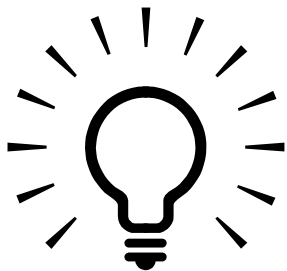
This stage has a strong connection with the 'fullness of life' that Jesus promised his followers (John 10:10). The Greek term for this fullness, *perissos*, literally means something excessive. If you are not regularly overwhelmed by the love of God for you, then paying special attention to this stage within every cycle you repeat, will be life-transforming.

**Perceive:** "What do you see?"

Depending on how the previous stages of the cycle have gone, your experience of growing in love will resemble anything from a beautiful, nourishing display of fresh fruit, through to a horrific crime scene, or anything in between. Either way, the Perceive stage asks with an intense curiosity, "What do you see?" This is where the inhale side of the cycle moves from taking love (or the absence of it) to heart, to taking it into your head and allowing it to begin transforming your mind (Romans 12:2).

You become a detective in this stage looking for any clue that might indicate where you have clearly made progress in love, or where you are just not getting it. You are not trying to exhale your theories or excuses at this time. Like any good detective you are taking in every detail that could form part of the story. In this way you should not rule out any possibility. Evaluating the clues and making a hypothesis is done in the next stage. For now, you must open your eyes to the lessons of the immediate past, regardless of whether they are pleasant or deeply disturbing. Your openness will make the Perceive stage the point at which powerful revelations can take place and many creative ideas are given birth to.

When Jesus said to the disciples just before his death that it was better for them that he was going, they surely would have been intrigued to hear



*Classmates who have a blue/green 3 Colors of Love tendency could really help you in the Perceive stage.*



his reasoning (John 16:7-8). His response about sending the Holy Spirit to convict the world of its sin makes a strong statement. It seems he understood that alongside all of his perfect plans and actions on earth, there is an incredible power in a perceptive heart prepared to listen to the voice of God speaking in the back of their mind. What is the Spirit saying to you?

**Test:** "Are you seeing clearly?"

The Test stage is located in the very center of the *past* dimension of the cycle (review diagram on page 50 of this workbook). At this point you look back in time to soberly assess your growth process so far. Necessarily, testing requires the use of a benchmark that sits outside of your own perceptions, experiences, actions, plans, and understanding. This is why you can really only work through this stage effectively with at least one other person who is prepared to ask you the tough questions.

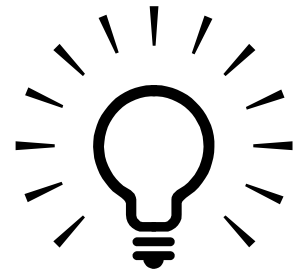
In this stage you both breath in a little and breath out a little as you are asked questions and give answers in what you could call a mini cycle of its own. The initiative must come from you though to let whoever you are meeting with know that it is important to you to see your love (or lack of love) clearly, and that you are prepared to have your perceptions proven wrong. While you begin by testing your perceptions, they of course are dependant on all the stages that have gone before them. If you have been making great progress in love then the test time will probably be quite short. However if the clues you have gathered resemble more a crime scene than a celebration, it will be necessary for your friend to test you back through the previous stages to see where the wheels of your cycle probably fell off.

The Test stage is often seen as a waste of time or unspiritual by those who *just want to get things done* (a red tendency) or want to *allow the Holy Spirit to have free reign* (a blue tendency). So it is very significant that a reason sighted by one of Jesus' greatest disciples for the need to *test all and hold onto the good*, is so that we *do not put out the Spirit's fire* (1 Thessalonians 5:19-21).

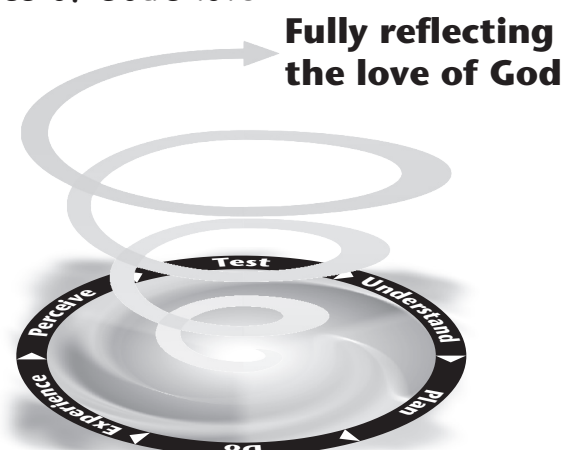
### **Spiralling upward and outward toward the fullness of God's love**

Repeating your lowest fruit cycle in partnership with God and some other friends will—over time—deepen your *understanding* of it; help you to *plan* it more deliberately into your life; *do* your part more effectively; experience the light that it brings; see the effects of it more clearly; and teach you how to better test the quality of that fruit.

Of course the greatest gift of this upward spiral of love is that you will ultimately love God with all of your heart, and with your soul and with your mind, and know him as never before.



*Classmates who have a green 3 Colors of Love tendency could really help you in the Test stage.*



Part 2:  
The Three-Color  
Love Cycle

## Your Love Cycle partnership

**I**n the School of Love, a substantial commitment of your time has revolved around understanding the teaching within *The 3 Colors of Love*. In leaving the School of Love on the 3 Color Love Cycle, the teaching of *The 3 Colors of Love* literally begins revolving around your life. In beginning to apply the Cycle as described over the previous pages, you will be infusing the ordinary and extraordinary events of your life with the aspects of love in which you most need to grow.

However, just as you cannot love completely on your own, you also cannot grow in love on your own. You need a growth partner. Now Jesus has made known in many and various ways his desire to help you experience the fullness of love, not the least of which is His promise to be with you to the very end of the age, as you seek to reflect the fullness of God's love to all nations (Matthew 28:19-20).

But Jesus also makes it very clear that we will be known as His disciples by our love for one another (John 13:34-35). And an essential act of love is in helping another learn to love. So who will help you to grow in love?

### A partnership of mutual mentoring

Continuing the 3 Colors of Love journey with the help of the Love Cycle will be easiest in a mutual mentoring relationship. In contrast to a regular mentoring relationship where one person tends to be the student and one the teacher, a mutual mentoring partnership takes place when two people submit their areas for growth to each other. Your partnership could consist of more than two people, but in the interest of open sharing and keeping your meetings relevant, you will usually not have more than four people.

Apart from finding a partner who is willing to have you hold *them* accountable for growth, you need someone who is willing to...

- ask you the hard questions that will help correct your inhaling or exhaling imbalances,
- hold you accountable for embracing the past, present and future of your love,
- and test whether you are seeing yourself as God sees you.

Ideally, they should also be someone who will...

- celebrate with you when you make progress in love,
- and show grace to you when you fail to make progress.

In addition, they will be a person who...

- is faithful in meeting with you and sees your growth as a priority,
- and will help you in practical ways week after week.

Of course, while this job description represents Justice, Truth and Grace, it could probably only be filled by Jesus himself! So, when looking for a cycle partner, simply try to find someone who embodies as many of these points as possible.



Visit the web site  
for the possibil-  
ity of cycling with  
a person from  
another part of the  
world.

### How and where to meet

It may be that you went through the School of Love with a group that will continue to meet together and that you will now simply include the Love Cycle as a small ongoing part of your regular meetings. If so, great! Once you get used to the Cycle meeting format and test questions (more on this later), you will find that you can test each person on their progress and move them through to a revised plan very quickly at the beginning of your meeting, and then just move onto your other agenda items.

On the other hand, your group may not be continuing to meet together or they may not be including the Love Cycle in regular meetings. Fortunately, you can either include a brief cycle meeting in another meeting you may already have with your cycle partner, or simply make a time at a convenient location where you can relax and grow together.

### For how long?!

One of the difficulties in getting people to commit to a process is that there is often no time limit placed on it. In asking "Will you be my Love Cycle partner?" you might as well be saying "For the rest of your life, will you commit to walking with me in a growth process that neither of us fully understand yet?" Doesn't sound very appealing does it?

Every partnership will have a commitment threshold. There will be an amount of time or energy that you will not commit to. There will be an amount that you will commit to but only in a half-hearted way. Then there will be a time and energy commitment that you are both prepared to give your all to. This is the only level to which you should commit. No matter how low it is as a starting point.

### A Love (more) Letter

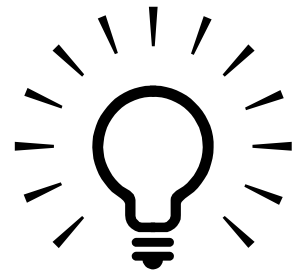
There is something significant in finding a simple way to document a commitment. It brings clarity, accountability and boundaries. Later on, you will be encouraged to write a *Love (more) Letter* as a concrete sign of your intent to grow in love and to submit to each others help.

### Push-start cycle plan ideas

With your cycle partnership established, your primary task is to begin working through your first Love Cycle. You may be able to come up with your own unique first plan based upon your lowest fruit and what it currently looks like in your life. If not, there are a number of push-start cycle plan ideas on page 58-61 of this workbook to help get you started.

### Love Cycle questions

In a practical sense, what you are requesting of your cycle partner is to ask you various test questions each time you meet that will help you to see your progress more clearly. An assortment of these questions can be found on pages 65-66. They are organized to help your cycle partner move first to the questions that are likely to be most helpful for you.



*If you or your prospective Love Cycle partner have any hesitations about the length of time you should commit to each other, then reduce the time until you can both say, "Why wouldn't we give it a go?"*

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## A Love (more) Letter

**A**s you get ready to leave your formal time in the School of Love, you are encouraged to write a *Love (more) Letter* to a friend with whom you have discussed being in a Love Cycle partnership. It is a time-limited growth covenant between friends who are committed to helping each other more fully reflect God's love.

You may of course be quite creative and wish to produce your own personalized *Love (more) Letter*. If so, great and please just take ideas from the template on the next page. Otherwise work through the steps below either on your own or together with your prospective cycle partner.

### Step 1: Choosing your growth partner

If you haven't already done so, prayerfully spend some time perceiving who might be a good Love Cycle partner for you. Discuss the possible partnership with them to ensure that they would be comfortable submitting their growth areas to you for assistance and to determine the length of time to which you will initially commit. When you are in agreement, write their name after 'Dear' at the top of the template.

### Step 2: Confessing your strengths and weaknesses

In the space to the right of the word 'My' write your highest Fruit of the Spirit (eg. patience). Then, in the center of the cycle template, write your lowest Fruit of the Spirit (eg. self-control).

### Step 3: Stating how often and for how long you will meet

After the phrase 'What I ask of you is to meet with me' write the frequency of meetings you have agreed upon (eg. every Monday morning, every second Thursday night, after worship, etc.). Then write the duration that you are committing to (eg. 4 weeks, 2 months, 6 months, etc.) next to the word 'for'.

### Step 4: Copy, sign and deliver

Make a copy of your letter so that you and your cycle partner each have one. Then sign each one on the lower left line. Deliver the letter to them and ask them to sign each copy so that you can each have the reminder to hang on your office wall, refrigerator, or some other prominent place in your day-to-day world.

### Step 5: Decide on your first meeting time and place

In consultation with your Love Cycle partner, decide upon a mutually convenient time and place to meet for your first meeting.

### Step 6: Start doing your first cycle plan

Prior to your first Love Cycle meeting it will be important that you have completed a plan, do and experience stage as your first attempt to move forward in your lowest fruit. If you do not have your own unique plan in mind, then please make use of the push-start cycle plan ideas on pages 58-61 of *How to Implement The 3 Colors of Love*.



Visit the web site  
for a color version  
of the "Love (more)  
Letter" template.

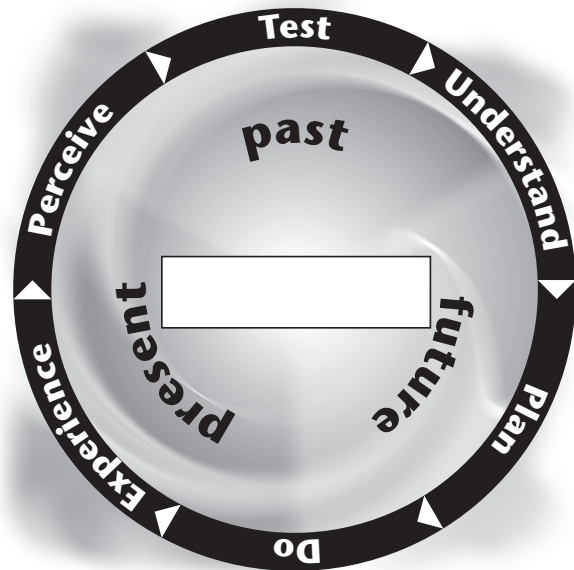
Dear \_\_\_\_\_

My desire is to grow in love . I want to embrace and reflect God’s love more and I’m asking you to walk with me on this journey.

My \_\_\_\_\_ allows others to see Jesus in me.

However, I am aware that my lack of love prevents people from seeing Jesus clearly. Therefore, I am committing to grow in

I am beginning to see that growing in this area is one of the most practical and powerful ways for me to love God with all my heart, soul, mind and strength and to love my neighbors as myself.



What I ask of you is to meet with me \_\_\_\_\_

for \_\_\_\_\_

and with the help of the Three-Color Love Cycle, to test me as to whether I am...

- understanding where I need to grow more in love
- planning well to grow in it
- following through with my part of the growth process
- willingly receiving all that God and others wish to give me
- and seeing myself with sober judgement.

I have some questions that you can ask me and would welcome other questions that you feel might be helpful along the way. At the end of that time, I commit to and ask you to review our growth partnership with me to determine if we will continue with the same process for longer. You are completely free to finish up at that time.

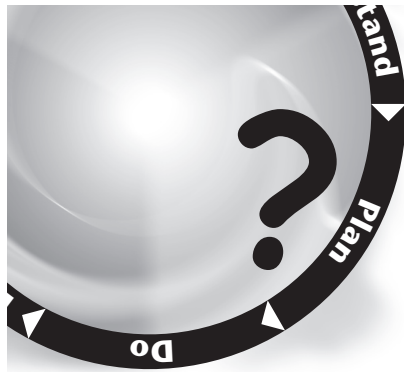
I want to create within my life, a place where the Fruit of God’s Spirit can grow and become an attractive, sweet-smelling and nourishing gift to those around me who need to be loved. Will you help this to become a reality in my life?

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Your signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Growth Partner’s signature)

Part 2:  
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## Push-start cycle plan ideas

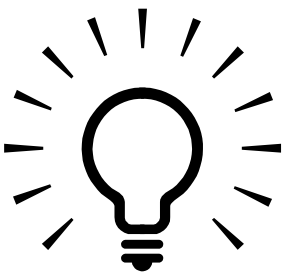


Cyclical growth is the most natural way to grow anything. However, like riding a bike, you may require a 'push-start' to help you get going and gain some momentum for growth in love. The following lists contain simple ideas that you can insert into the plan stage of your personal Three-Color Love Cycle to get you started and then simply move through the other stages from there.

Once you are up and going, you might modify that push-start idea each time you come to the Plan stage. Or, if your understanding has grown, you might move to a completely different plan that better suits your current growth needs.

If at any stage you lose momentum for growth or retest your Fruit of the Spirit and discover a new minimum fruit, then return to these push-start suggestions to help get you going in a slightly different direction. Of course, if you can come up with your own unique simple plan steps to address your minimum Fruit of the Spirit areas, all the better!

Keep in mind at all times that doing any of these plan ideas is not the goal, but simply an exercise to strengthen your underdeveloped love muscles. The real result you are seeking is to become the kind of person from whom the Fruit of the Spirit radiates all by itself without you even thinking about it. Eventually, reflecting the love of God more brightly in your current lowest fruit area will be like riding a bike. It will feel natural and take your life and those around you to places you've never imagined.



*For other push-start plan options you may wish to revisit some of the exercises in The 3 Colors of Love book.*

*Patience*  
pages 71, 87, 107

*Joy*  
pages 72, 85, 112

*Peace*  
pages 73, 91, 103

## Patience

### 1. "Jesus gives them time"

When somebody makes a mistake that gets you a little angry, say over 5 times in your mind or out loud if possible, "Jesus gives time to people like this." Emphasise a different word each time.

### 2. "Count out the thymos" (anger)

When getting angry with someone or about a situation, pause and count to ten (or much higher if you're really angry!) with your arms relaxed by your side. This is to give yourself time to gain increased perspective on the situation.

### 3. "Give it two more minutes"

When you are frustrated and at the point of giving up on a current challenge that you face, apply yourself to it for two more minutes even if it is still not fully resolved in that time.

#### 4. "Take the long line"

Whenever you need to line up (eg. in traffic, at the shopping center, etc.) deliberately join the longest line. While waiting in that line, focus on the people around you and your environment at that moment and ask God about his bigger picture in life for you or those around you.

## Joy

#### 1. "Rise and give me 10"

When feeling that a circumstance seems a little hopeless, pause and think of ten things you can be thankful to God for from the last 24 hours. Raise a finger as each thought comes to mind.

#### 2. "Take along some joy"

Before every meeting you have with other people, take time to think of a point of celebration that relates to the group or an individual within it. Present that to the group at an appropriate time during your meeting and encourage others to celebrate it with you.

#### 3. "Things could be worse"

When alone or in a group you experience a setback, say out loud "things could be worse!" and then list three ways in which the current situation could be worse (but of course do everything you can to improve the current situation from then on).

#### 4. "Jesus loves me this I know"

When you feel a little down about life or feel that you are going nowhere, stop and speak the words "Jesus loves me this I know." Repeat it several times with short pauses and ask yourself what that truth means for your past, present, and future.



Visit the web site for more push-start ideas for giving momentum to your Three-Color Love Cycle.

## Peace

#### 1. "Reconnecting eyes, hands or words"

When finding yourself near a person with whom you have even the slightest relational tension, deliberately make eye contact and shake hands or greet them. Ask how they are going generally or with a specific project you know they are involved with.

#### 2. "Tell me one thing you respect"

When coming across two or more people who have tension between them, deliberately ask each one of them (when they are alone) to tell you one thing they respect about the other person. Encourage them to find a way to communicate that to the other person.

**3. "What are the facts?"**

In emotional situations, stop and ask yourself and those involved what the facts are and what is just speculation. Encourage everyone to only act upon the clear facts at that point until more facts become clear.

**4. "Please forgive me"**

As soon as you become aware of having upset or wronged God or another person, immediately let them know that you are sorry and ask for forgiveness without trying to justify your actions in any way.

## Faithfulness

**1. "Don't knock them down"**

When you are in a group of people that begin to attack another person's character, either leave the conversation, highlight something positive about that person, or change the subject.

**2. "Repeat it in your mind"**

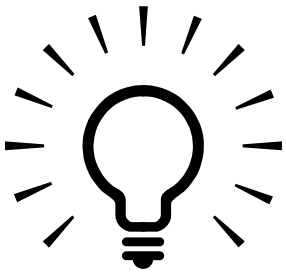
Each time you are verbally asked to do something, repeat it five times in your mind to help you remember it (and then make sure you do it!).

**3. "Finish off"**

Each day finish one small project that you started some time ago or have been putting off. Then ask others to celebrate that achievement with you.

**4. "The latest will be first"**

Be the first to arrive or at least 10 minutes early for each appointment you have. If it helps, change your watch forward by 10 minutes and then use that as your only time reference point.



*For other push-start plan options you may wish to revisit some of the exercises in The 3 Colors of Love book.*

*Faithfulness  
pages 74, 94*

*Goodness  
pages 75, 115*

*Kindness  
pages 76, 82, 110*

*Self-control  
page 77*

## Goodness

**1. "It's just not good enough"**

At the end of each day choose one circumstance or relationship that doesn't represent life in all its fullness and note in your mind three things that should be different about it from God's perspective.

**2. "Illuminating a blind spot"**

Be courageous enough to humbly point out to a close friend something that is not right in their life.

**3. "Balancing the relational scales"**

Take quality time out to spend with a person who tends to be looked down upon in your world. Affirm and encourage them.

**4. "One for me, one for you"**

Each day, spend time reflecting on a luxury that you or your family have enjoyed. Place one dollar in a jar while thinking about the kind



of people who cannot enjoy that luxury. After one month, or at the end of your current love cycle partnership, give the money to a representative of the kind of people who came to your mind most often.

## Kindness

### 1. "Remember the name"

When meeting new people, use their name immediately while speaking to them and when saying goodbye to them; think of a clever way to remember their name for the next time you see them.

### 2. "Two for one"

Each time you go to say something critical about another person, start with a heartfelt positive affirmation about them, followed by the criticism (if it is still appropriate), and finish with another different affirmation. Take all the time you need to prepare them.

### 3. "Thinking of you"

Each day write a note, send a message, or call one person on the phone to express your appreciation of them or something they have done. (Don't just say it as they walk past. Go out of your way a little.)

### 4. "Taking care of the little things"

Throughout the day look for one small need that another person has that you could easily assist with. Set about taking care of it as inconspicuously as possible.

## Self-control

### 1. "Downsize me"

At your main meal of the day, use the smallest plate and the smallest cutlery available and politely say no to any second helpings and snacks before or after.

### 2. "What is most important today?"

Everyday update a to do list indicating your priorities as 1. very important, 2. important later, and 3. important much later.

### 3. "I'll get back to you"

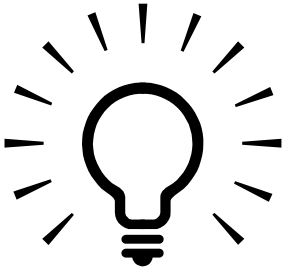
When asked to do anything (unless it is life threatening) regularly say, "I'll get back to you with an answer" to give yourself more time to think about whether it is the most important thing to which you should be committing.

### 4. "A focused moment with Jesus"

Before a regular task (eg. making a telephone call, starting the car, eating, returning from the bathroom, etc.), be still for a moment, close your eyes and focus exclusively on an image of Jesus and yourself together somewhere. Make yourself a sign to help you remember.



Visit the web site for more push-start ideas for giving momentum to your Three-Color Love Cycle.



*For other push-start plan options you may wish to revisit some of the exercises in The 3 Colors of Love book.*

*Gentleness  
pages 78, 100*

## Gentleness

1. **"Putting it another way"**  
When having said something in an ungentle way, immediately ask for forgiveness and restate your feelings in a more humble way. After the encounter, think of two other ways you could have more humbly expressed your feelings.
2. **"All is forgiven"**  
When it is clear that someone around you has made a mistake that impacts upon you, tell them they are forgiven as soon as possible.
3. **"What I like about you"**  
Each time you have a meal, think about a person who has recently frustrated you and look for something that you admire about that person. Write a note to them affirming that aspect or tell them about it next time you meet.
4. **"Thank you, I will think about that more"**  
When someone suggests to you a better way of doing something or offers some criticism about something you have done, relax your shoulders and arms and either ask them for more information or say thank you, I will think about that more.

# Three-Color Love Cycle Meeting Outline

## Part 2: The Three-Color Love Cycle

**H**aving asked a friend to be your Love Cycle partner for a time and having started to act upon a cycle plan idea, it's time to start your cycle meetings. Below is an outline for a cycle meeting that will take you from having perceived what is happening with your growth, through to a new or revised plan for your next cycle.

Depending on the meeting forum you have chosen and whether your Love Cycle meeting is part of another meeting, you may choose to add various activities to your time together that would further enhance the growth environment (eg. dinner, extended time of prayer, Scripture reflection, etc). Just make it a natural environment in which to grow.

Always remember, you are not trying to fix everything in one cycle. The journey is as valuable as the destination. So be prepared to leave some questions unanswered if necessary. Maintaining progress in growth is more important than reaching a certain level of love by a certain time. Just have some honest discussion and get yourself onto the next cycle.

### 3 Color Love Cycle Prompt

Folded inside the back cover of the *How to Implement The 3 Colors of Love in Your World* workbook you will find a visual prompt for use in your cycle meetings (or your group facilitator will have provided you with a copy). Spoken words and unique questions will be an important part of your meetings, but the Three-Color Love Cycle prompt is there to visually help you keep focused on the big picture of growth and maybe bring about a revelation or two along the way.

As you become more experienced in devising your own unique test questions suited to your cycle partner, you will find that you can use the Love Cycle Prompt on its own as an overall guide to growth.

### Test stage: "Are you seeing clearly?"

At some stage during your last cycle, your growth will have been a little wobbly or perhaps didn't roll along as freely as it could. The Test stage in every cycle is a time for going back to the past to try to find out which stage of cyclical growth is proving to be a challenge for you. With that clarified, you then move onto your next cycle with deeper understanding and a new or revised plan. Here are the Test stage steps.

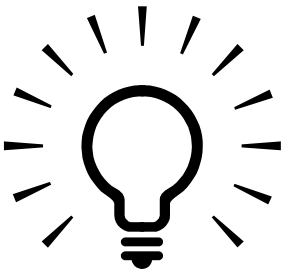
1. In your first meeting, let your cycle partner know that what you need is to move forward to a deeper understanding of your lowest Fruit of the Spirit, see its effect on your relationships, evaluate your progress with growing in it and then arrive at a revised plan.
2. If you feel you have made good progress in the most recent cycle and already know what your next cycle plan needs to be, share it with your cycle partner. If the partner agrees with you, celebrate together and move onto the other person. If instead your progress has been shaky or non-existent, then move onto step 3.



Visit the web site for

- the chance to learn from the experiences of other people's Love Cycle meetings around the world.
- the opportunity to ask questions or get tips and advice in conducting your cycle meetings.

3. Briefly explain to your cycle partner what your most recent plan has been for growing in your lowest fruit.
4. There will be an affinity between your 3 Colors of Love tendency (see the Justice, Truth and Grace table on page 69 of *The 3 Colors of Love* book) and the stages of the Love Cycle that you are most likely to do well. For example, those who are strongest in the red (Truth) color are likely to do the Plan stage well. It therefore makes sense that your cycle partner starts by asking you questions relating to the opposite stage of the cycle. Tell your cycle partner which color is your current strength and ask them to turn to that set of starter questions on page 65 or 66. Ask them to begin asking you questions from that list (inserting the name of your lowest fruit into the questions where necessary). Invite them to discuss or challenge you about your answers until your current barriers to further growth become clear.
5. If they have gone through most or all of those questions and you are still struggling to get a clearer understanding of your barriers to growth or feel that your progress could be stronger, invite them to look at another closely related set of questions. For example, if you have been looking at the green/red questions, ask them to turn to the green questions or the red questions as these will also be helpful for you. (The more your cycle partners are used to asking these kind of questions, the more freedom they should be given in asking whichever questions from whichever sets they think are best for you.)



*Consider occasionally asking a guest to come to your cycle meetings to provide a fresh perspective, give some instruction in an area of strength, or to introduce them to the process.*

#### **Understand stage: "What are the facts?"**

6. Once you have clearly identified the facts (good and bad) about your progress or at least have a clear enough understanding to take a few steps forward, state the facts succinctly to your cycle partner.

#### **Plan stage: "What is most important now?"**

7. State what your new or revised plan will be for the next cycle.

#### **Moving onto the other person or wrapping up**

8. Repeat the Test Stage from step 1 with you asking your cycle partner the questions this time around.
9. If each cycle partner has been tested, then agree upon your next cycle meeting time and start doing your next cycle plan.
10. If you have come to the end of your growth agreement time (see the *Love (more) Letter*), ensure that it is honored by allowing each person to withdraw from the partnership if they prefer, or revisit the *Love (more) Letter* to make a fresh commitment for a fixed time period. Your next phase of growth could begin with repeating the Fruit of the Spirit Test to accurately assess your progress and see if you have a new lowest fruit. The next phase could also include inviting another person to join your love cycle partnership.

# Test stage questions

## Part 2: The Three-Color Love Cycle

### Starter questions for blue people:

#### Testing their Understand stage "What are the facts?"

- Do you really accept that your lack of [lowest fruit] has a negative effect in your relationships?
- Are you able to share in detail with someone else what [lowest fruit] is all about and what the lack of it in your life looks like?
- In specific terms, how does your expression of love to those around you differ from the way that Jesus loves people?
- When you look at your lack of [lowest fruit] in the past, what gives you confidence that your [lowest fruit] will be stronger in the future?
- Do you really believe that you have a part to play in your own growth in love? Can you explain it to me?
- Do you perhaps need to go back to *The 3 Colors of Love* and re-read about [lowest fruit] or re-read about the *3 Color Love Cycle*?

### Starter questions for blue/green people:

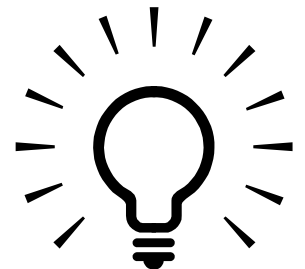
#### Testing their Plan stage "What is most important now?"

- Are you clear on the detail of your current [lowest fruit] plan?
- Is there something you should do less of in your life to make time for growing in [lowest fruit]?
- When your lack of [lowest fruit] causes a problem in one of your relationships, are you able to take responsibility for what happened or are you more likely to focus on the faults of the other person?
- Where is the best environment for you to practice [lowest fruit]?
- Do you think your plan is easy enough for you to manage, given your current level of [lowest fruit] or should you simplify it?

### Starter questions for green people:

#### Testing their Do stage "Are you following through and inviting God and others to go beyond the plan?"

- Did you actually do anything concrete about growing in [lowest fruit] this week?
- Have you possibly avoided working on [lowest fruit] for fear of not having the "perfect plan"?
- When it comes to doing your [lowest fruit] plan, does your mind say "Why not give it a go?" or "Why would I bother?"
- Do you have any secret fears when it comes to acting on your [lowest fruit] plan?
- Is your plan too complicated or challenging for you to do?
- When trying to love others, are you conscious of when you have done all that you can do, and when you need to ask for help from God and others?



*Spend some time between meetings reflecting on the test questions (including any that you might come up with yourself) to see if God speaks to you about the areas in which your Cycle Partner is not seeing clearly yet.*

**Starter questions for green/red people:****Testing their Experience stage "Have you freed yourself to receive from God and others?"**

- Do you really believe God wants to bless you as his child?
- Do you expect God to do anything tangible to help you with [lowest fruit] in your everyday?
- Have you asked God to help you to grow in [lowest fruit]?
- Who do you know that would like to help you with [lowest fruit]?
- Have you ignored any offers for help in [lowest fruit] recently?
- Did you allow time to inhale the love of God or others this week?
- Do you think you understand and have experienced most of what there is to know about [lowest fruit]?
- Do you really believe that God has a part to play in growing you in love? Can you explain it to me?
- Do you need to ask someone who is with you regularly to prompt you about [lowest fruit] with some simple question?
- Do you really think God likes you?
- What part does God's grace have to play in your growth?

**Starter questions for red people:****Testing their Perceive stage "What do you see?"**

- What progress have you seen in your [lowest fruit] this week?
- What impact has your [lowest fruit] had on you this week?
- What impact has your [lowest Fruit] had on your friends/family?
- Are you aware at the time that others are suffering from your lack of [lowest fruit]?
- What do you think Jesus would say to you about your [lowest Fruit] and its effect on the immediate world around you?
- Can you recall times when you were loved by someone else's [lowest fruit]? What was the effect?
- Is it more important for you to get your [lowest fruit] plan done, or to see what fruit comes from it?
- Do you think the [lowest fruit] plan you have been working on has become too easy and you need to increase the challenge within it?

**Starter questions for red/blue people:****Testing their Test stage "Are you seeing clearly?"**

The Test stage (green) is the most important stage for red/blue people to start with. However, since all of the above questions are Test stage questions, red/blue people should first be asked the starter questions for red people or the starter questions for blue people.



*Visit the web site  
for more Test stage  
question options.*