

THE SEASONS WORKBOOKS

REALIGN

SEASON OF STRETCHING

Six weeks for a marriage carrying more than it was built to carry.

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NEW RHYTHM MARRIAGE · WHATSEASON.COM

THE SEASONS WORKBOOKS

REALIGN

Season of Stretching

Rhythm of Realign

Shelly & Jason Yost

WHATSEASON.COM

CONTENTS

REALIGN
SEASON OF
STRETCHING

Every line is a link. Tap one.

BEFORE YOU START

Welcome	6
Why this format	7
How it works	8
The shape of a week	9
The ground rules	10
Safety and support	11
The four seasons	12
Why this season needs its own rhythm	13
If you received two seasons	14
Which book comes first	15
Your starting snapshot	16
Before the first week	18

THE SIX WEEKS

One · Naming the Pressure	19
Two · What the Stress Costs Us	37
Three · Desire Under Pressure	55
Four · The Ask	73
Five · The Fight That's Really About Capacity	91
Six · Shared Direction	109

AFTER THE SIX WEEKS

The six-week review	127
Retake the assessment	131
What comes next	133
Working with us	136
About	138
Notes	140

WELCOME

REALIGN
SEASON OF
STRETCHING

You took the assessment. It placed you in the season of Stretching.

That result is not a verdict. It is a description of what your marriage is carrying right now.

Stretching means the relationship is under load. Something outside the two of you is pressing in. Work. Money. A diagnosis in the family. A move. A baby. A parent who needs more than you have. A calendar that filled up and never emptied.

The load is real, and the relationship is absorbing it.

Couples in this season usually do not describe themselves as unhappy. They describe themselves as tired. Short with each other. Efficient. Running a household well and a marriage barely.

The most common sentence in this season is some version of: *we are fine, we are just stretched thin.*

That sentence is often true. It is also often the last thing said before a couple stops talking about anything that is not logistics.

WHAT THIS BOOK ASSUMES ABOUT YOU

That you still like each other. That the friction between you is recent enough that you can remember when it was not there. That you are not asking how to save this. You are asking how to stop feeling like two people who are very good at scheduling.

WHAT IT DOES NOT ASSUME

That the pressure is anybody's fault. That one of you is handling it worse. That there is a problem underneath this you have not admitted to yet. Sometimes a heavy season is just a heavy season, and the only thing wrong is how much of it is landing on each other.

WHY THIS FORMAT

REALIGN
SEASON OF
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Six weeks will not reduce your load. Nothing in these pages will pay a bill or heal a parent. What changes is the friction the load creates between you.

That is the whole aim. Keep the pressure outside the marriage instead of letting it settle inside it.

Most fights in a stretched season are not about the topic. They are about capacity.

The dishes are not the problem. The dishes are what was standing there when the last of your margin ran out.

That is not an excuse for how either of you behaved. It is a more accurate description of what happened, and accuracy is what lets you fix something.

TWO COPIES, WRITTEN PRIVATELY

You each work in your own copy. You do not read each other's pages.

That rule matters more than it sounds like it does. If you are writing to be read, you edit. If you edit, you write the version of yourself you want your partner to see. That version is polite and useless.

Write the true thing in your own copy. Then decide what you want to say out loud on CONNECT Night.

WHY FIVE SHORT DAYS INSTEAD OF ONE LONG SITTING

Because one long sitting is the first thing a hard week cancels. Ten minutes survives a bad Tuesday. An hour does not.

There is a second reason. Some of what this book asks you to see only shows up between the pages, in the ordinary hours when you are not thinking about it. Five separate days gives that time to happen.

HOW IT WORKS

REALIGN
SEASON OF
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Five short days, then one conversation. That is the week.

Each day is two pages and takes ten to fifteen minutes. Read the left page. Write on the right page. Close the file.

On the sixth day you sit down together for twenty minutes. That is CONNECT Night, and it is the only part of the week that needs both of you in the same room at the same time.

TYPE IN IT, OR PRINT IT

Every writing space in this book is a real form field. Open the file on a laptop or a tablet and type. Your answers save with the file.

Or print it at 100 percent with no scaling and use a pen. The ruled lines are there underneath. The same file does both, and you can switch halfway through if you want.

IF YOU FALL BEHIND

Do the day you are on, not the days you missed. A week done in three sittings still works. A week abandoned because you were four days behind does not.

There is no penalty for taking two weeks over one. The order matters more than the speed.

IF YOUR PARTNER IS NOT DOING THIS

You can do this book alone. It was built so you could. Every private prompt works with one person, and every CONNECT Night carries a box headed *Doing this on your own* that gives you a real alternate, not a smaller version of the same thing.

A marriage changes faster when two people are working. It still changes when one is. You control your own reactivity, your own clarity, and your own requests. In a stretched season those three account for more of the friction than most people expect.

THE SHAPE OF A WEEK

REALIGN
SEASON OF
STRETCHING

Every week in this book runs the same five days, in the same order. The order is the method.



- 1 **Notice.** What is actually happening, before you explain it.
- 2 **Understand.** Why it happens that way.
- 3 **Own.** Your part, on paper, in your own words.
- 4 **Practice.** One timed exercise. Short on purpose.
- 5 **Prepare.** Decide what you are bringing to CONNECT Night.

Days three and four are flex days. If a week gets away from you, those are the two to move. Days one, two and five hold the arc together.

WHAT A DAY ACTUALLY LOOKS LIKE

Open to the day. Read the left page once, at reading speed. Do not study it. Turn to the right page and write.

The last thing on each right page is headed *For CONNECT*. That is the piece you are carrying into the conversation, so it is worth the extra thirty seconds.

Then close the file. Ten to fifteen minutes, and the day is done. The strip down the right edge of every page tells you where you are.

WEEK

ONE

NAMING THE PRESSURE

What is happening outside the marriage that keeps landing inside it.



THIS WEEK

DAY ONE · THE PRESSURE IS NOT THE MARRIAGE

DAY TWO · WHY IT LANDS ON THEM

DAY THREE · WHAT NAMING DOES

DAY FOUR · THE LOAD LIST

DAY FIVE · WHAT IT IS LIKE TO BE YOU

CONNECT NIGHT · WHAT IS IT LIKE TO BE YOU

WHY THIS WEEK MATTERS

Start with the most useful sentence in this book. The pressure is not the marriage.

That is obvious written down. It is almost never obvious while it is happening.

Here is what happens instead. The load arrives from outside. A deadline, a bill, a parent's health, a child's behavior, a commute, a move. You absorb it all day. By evening you are running on the last of your capacity.

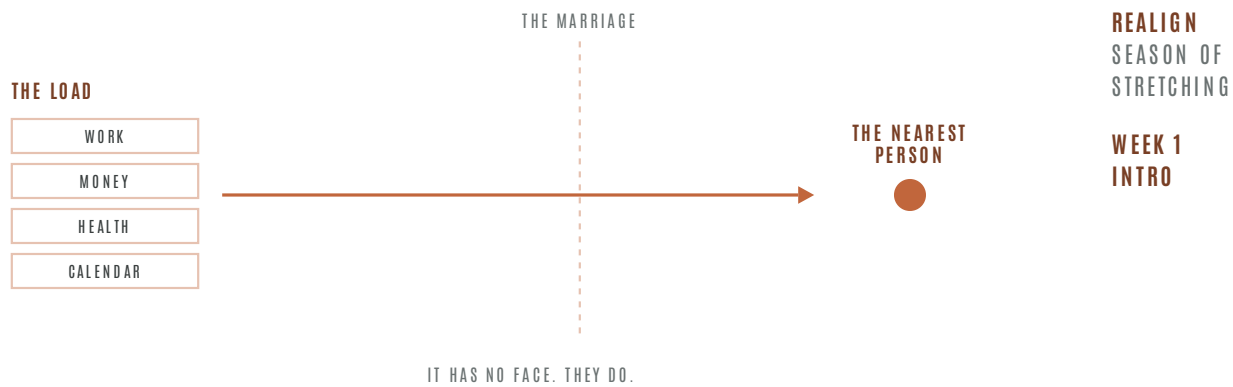
Then your partner asks a normal question at a bad moment. And the feeling that comes up is not *I am at the end of my capacity*.

The feeling that comes up is *you always do this*.

The pressure came from outside. Inside of four seconds, it got assigned to the person standing closest to you.

This week you separate the two. Most couples in this season have never done it on paper, and the effect of seeing it in one place is larger than it sounds.

Two things this week is not. It is not a complaint session, and you are not building a case for who has it worse. And it is not problem-solving. You will not fix the load this week. Naming and solving are different operations, and running them together is why most of these conversations end badly.



You cannot argue with a mortgage. You cannot be short with a diagnosis. Your partner has a face, and your partner will still be there tomorrow no matter how you speak to them tonight. That is exactly why they get the version of you that nobody else does.

THE WEEK

DAY ONE	The pressure is not the marriage	NOTICE
DAY TWO	Why it lands on them	UNDERSTAND
DAY THREE	What naming does	OWN
DAY FOUR	The Load List	PRACTICE
DAY FIVE	What it is like to be you	PREPARE
CONNECT	What is it like to be you in our relationship right now?	20 MIN

WHAT THIS SOUNDS LIKE IN AN ORDINARY HOUSE

WHAT GETS SAID

You never help with any of this.
 Why is it always me who has to remember?
 Fine. Do it however you want.

WHAT WAS TRUE

I have not had ten unclaimed minutes since Sunday.
 I am holding four things nobody knows I am holding.
 I do not have one more decision in me today.

THE PACE THIS WEEK

Ten to fifteen minutes a day, then twenty minutes together on the sixth day.
 Days three and four are the flex days. If the week gets away from you, move those two and keep one, two and five in order.

LEARN

THE PRESSURE IS NOT THE MARRIAGE

This week has one job. Separate the load from the relationship.

The load is everything pressing on your life from outside the two of you. Work, money, health, family, the calendar, the house. The relationship is what happens between you.

In a stretched season those two collapse into each other. The load arrives, you absorb it, and by the time it comes back out it is wearing your partner's face.

Today you only name it.



WHAT IS LEFT FOR EACH OTHER IS WHATEVER SURVIVED THE DAY

One instruction for the page opposite. Write the small items too. Everyone remembers the large pressures. The list gets useful when the unglamorous ones go on it as well. The car that needs something. The text you have not answered for nine days. The thing you keep meaning to cancel.

Those are rarely serious on their own, and together they are often most of the weight.

SCRIPTURE FOR TODAY

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.

MATTHEW 11:28

Notice what is asked for first. Not a solution, and not a plan for the load. An honest account of being tired.

OPTIONAL. THE DAY WORKS WITHOUT IT.

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STRETCHING

WEEK 1
DAY 1

NOTICE

10 TO 15 MINUTES

REFLECT

What is pressing on our life right now?

Everything. Work, money, health, family, calendar, house, kids, church. Do not sort it or rank it. Get it on the page.

REALIGN SEASON OF STRETCHING

WEEK 1
DAY 1

PRACTICE

Mark the two that take up the most room in your head.

Not the two that sound most serious. The two that are actually running in the background.

FOR CONNECT

Which item did you almost not write down, and what made you hesitate? How long has this stretch been going on? Give an actual number.

NOTICE

10 TO 15 MINUTES