

Family or Couple “R.B.A.” Assignment

Robert D. Jones, adapted from John Bettler

Introduction: Intimacy and closeness within marriage or family life does not happen automatically. Instead, it often results from shared experiences together. In other words, while we cannot directly create intimacy in our families/marriages, we can create and carry out activities that provide the environment in which such intimacy can develop. We call these activities Relationship Building Activities (RBA’s).

An RBA has three criteria:

1) It is an *activity*—something you do, not something done to you. You and your spouse must be active not passive. For example, watching a film or attending a concert together is a good activity, but probably not an RBA (unless you discuss it afterwards).

2) It is an activity that *both* spouses (or *all* family members) *like* to do. For example, browsing through the Sears’ tool department or linen department might not equally please both spouses.

3) It is an activity that *permits conversation* (although it need not require “deep” conversation). For example, playing tennis might not be a good RBA (unless you often meet at the net to retrieve balls that fall short!). Of course going to Dairy Queen afterwards to talk would be an RBA.

Assignment:

1) Brainstorm with your spouse (or other family participants) and write down together at least 30 possible RBA’s. Do not discuss, veto, object, attack, or defend any of them as you write them down. No idea (e.g., skydiving together) is off limits.

2) Go through your list together, veto and cross out the undesirable ones, and narrow your list down to 5-7 RBA’s. Be sure each one meets the three criteria above.

3) Choose one RBA and schedule it right away. Then schedule three more over the coming weeks (ideally one per week). Write out below your scheduled RBA’s:

#1	_____	Date _____	Time _____
#2	_____	Date _____	Time _____
#3	_____	Date _____	Time _____
#4	_____	Date _____	Time _____

4) Be prepared to discuss your RBA’s with your spouse (and with your biblical counselor if this is a counseling assignment). What RBA did you do? Did you each enjoy it? What resulted? How might you do it differently next time? What is next?