



# Marbles

## Instructions:

1. **Discuss with participants the current divorce statistics**, which usually say that about 50% of marriages end in divorce. Ask if this means that any given couple getting married today has a 50/50 chance of getting divorced? Have participants explain their points of view.
2. Help participants understand that there are many factors that can either increase or decrease a couple's chances of getting divorced. **Ask participants for known risk factors.**
3. Discuss with group **what risk factors can be changed and what can't be changed.**
4. Explain to group that red marbles will symbolize a marriage that is ending in divorce or is extremely unhappy while the green marbles will represent a marriage that is mostly happy and successful. Explain that **now we are going to talk about how they can increase their odds of having a happy, successful marriage.**
5. Place a few red marbles in the glass and mention a few risk factors that some couples may face that they really can't change. For example, you can add a marble and say this marble is for the fact that a couple got married really young. It is a risk factor that you can't change. Another could be that a spouse's parents are divorced. Once again another risk factor, but you can't do anything to change it.
6. Pass out green marbles to the class. **Go around the room and ask participants to share something individuals or couples (not necessarily themselves) can do to improve their marriage.** This should include things like make time for fun, or improve the way they handle conflicts. For each good idea have participants place green marbles into the glass.

**Title:** Marbles

**Group Size:** Any

**Time Needed:** 10 to 20 minutes

**Goal:** To help participants understand that relationships can improve with work and to help them to distinguish between what can and cannot be changed

**Audience:** Couples, Parents

**Special Considerations:**

Participant's view of the positive things they are able to bring into relationships may not be readily known. You may have to coach them along when it comes to describing actions to symbolize the green marble.

**Materials:**

- ✓ About 10 bright red marbles
- ✓ 20 to 30 bright green marbles
- ✓ 1 clear glass with opening wide enough to stick hand in

7. Place hand over top of glass and shake to mix them.
8. Ask group, "if you were to close your eyes and pull out a marble what color would you most likely get?" At this point there should be many more green marbles than red marbles. Discuss how every good thing they do for their marriage improves their odds.

**Tip for Discussion and Processing:**

This activity is a great motivator and can give participants a great deal of hope. It is important to acknowledge that we all will have challenges in our relationships, but we also have ways to overcome those challenges. It is also useful to acknowledge that sometimes as hard as we work we may still pull out a red marble (meaning we didn't get the desired outcome), but once again turn the conversation back to improving your odds. You can do the same activity with parents except red marbles mean children are not successful, happy, etc. Green means they are. This activity can initiate a fascinating discussion on what it means to be a successful parent.