Marriage: How to Build It to Last

Practical, grace-filled rhythms for couples and churches

Rachelle Neal · Greater Europe Mission



HOPE FOR EUROPE albania 2026







What helps a marriage last through every season?

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ICEBREAKER

5

MINUTES

Keep it light. Keep it kind. Keep it moving.

1. Introduce yourselves.
2. Share a lighthearted wedding-blooper story.
3. **Choose one story per group to share.**

MARRIAGE TAKES WORK

"The wedding may last a day.
Building a marriage lasts a lifetime."

TODAY'S ROADMAP

Foundations of marriage

Four intentional movements

Warning signs and responses

Discussion and application time



FOUNDATIONS OF MARRIAGE

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Contract or Covenant?

50/50

Conditional

"What am I getting?"

100/100

Committed

"How can I serve?"

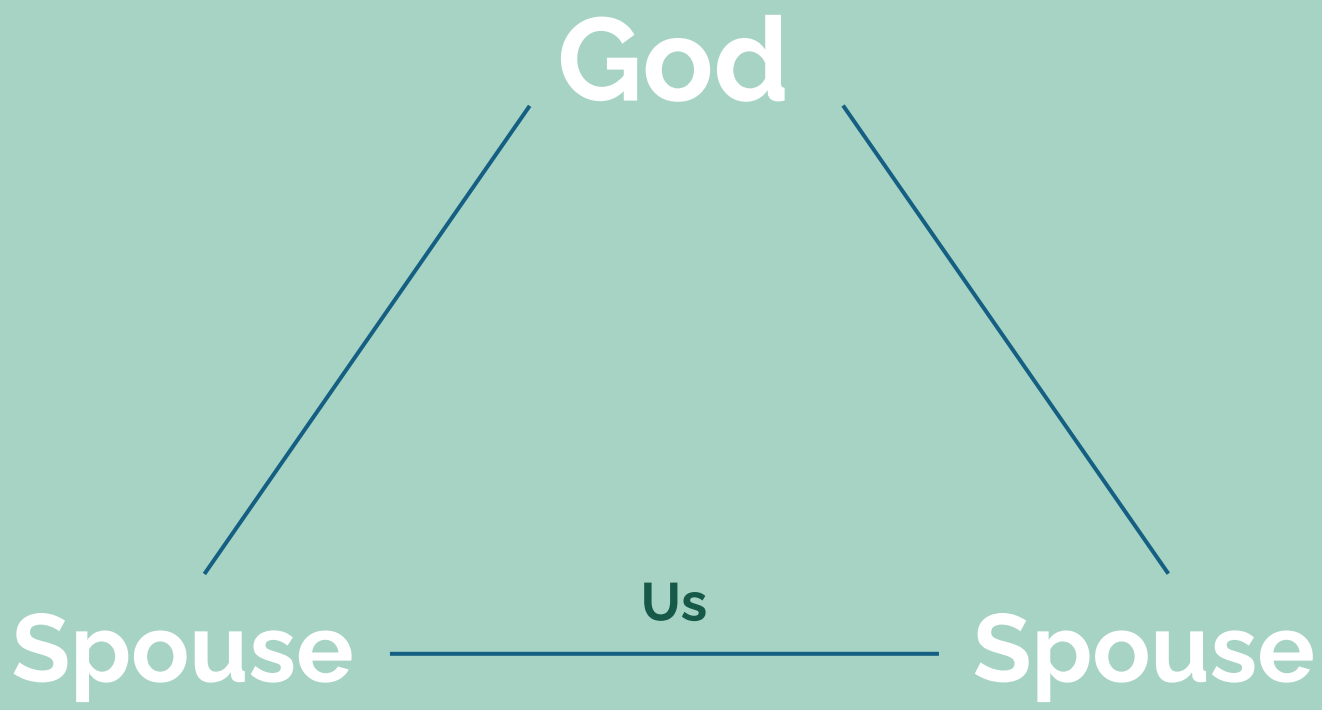
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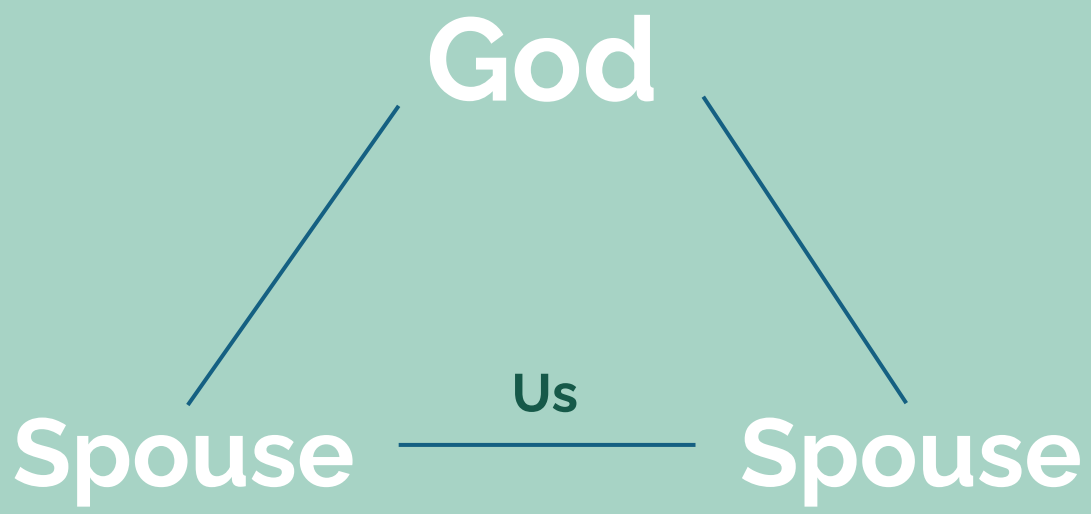
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Ecclesiastes 4:12

"A cord of three strands is not quickly broken."

FOUNDATIONS OF MARRIAGE



In your ministry experience, what are the most common signs that a couple is operating on a **"contract" (50/50) mindset** rather than a **"covenant" (100/100) mindset**?

How can we, as church leaders, better preach and teach the reality of *covenant* to engaged couples before they walk down the aisle?

FOUR INTENTIONAL MOVEMENTS

Foundations of marriage

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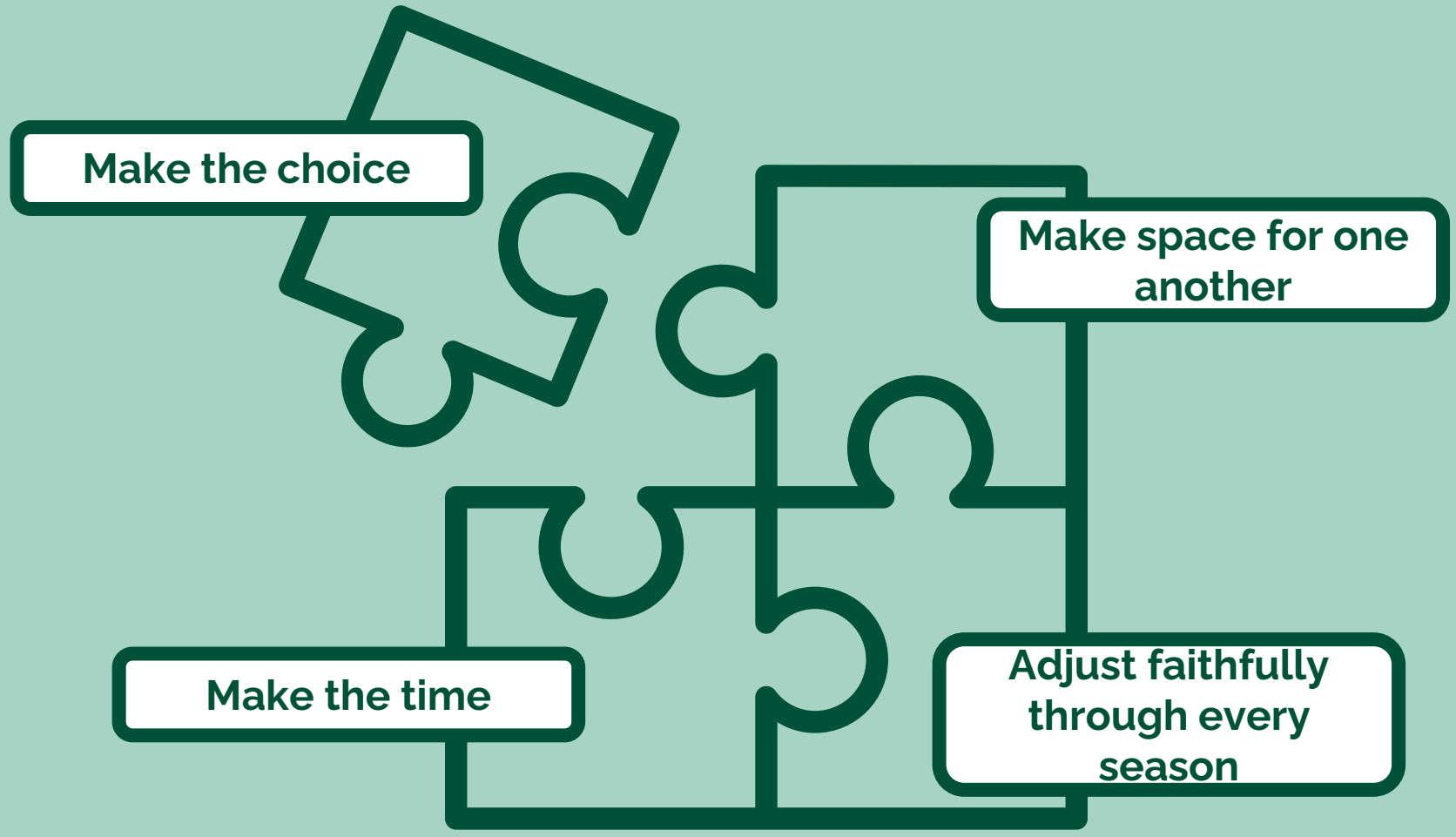
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FOUR INTENTIONAL MOVEMENTS

Foundations of marriage — **Four intentional movements** — Warning signs and responses — Discussion and application time



Choose to start with the right posture...

Before God

Examine your heart

Find your identity in God

See your spouse as God does

With your spouse

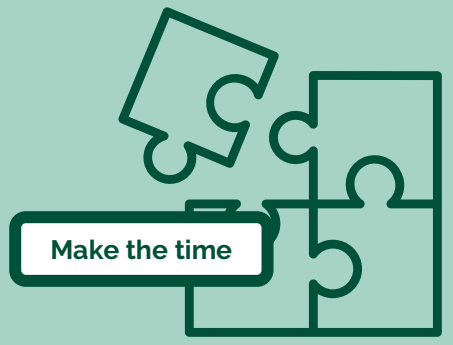
Choose grace and humility

Name gratitude

Turn toward connection

FOUR INTENTIONAL MOVEMENTS

Foundations of marriage — **Four intentional movements** — Warning signs and responses — Discussion and application time



Protect connection time

Put it in the calendar before the week fills.

Pray, serve and dream together

Share a future, not only a schedule.

Stay curious

Keep learning who your spouse is becoming.

FOUR INTENTIONAL MOVEMENTS

Foundations of marriage

Four intentional movements

Warning signs and responses

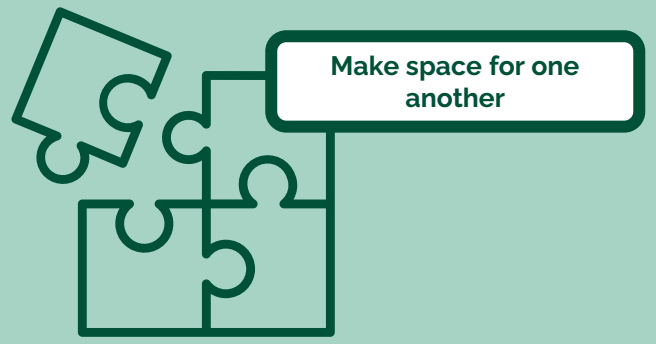
Discussion and application time



"Small bids for connection create strong relationships."

FOUR INTENTIONAL MOVEMENTS

Foundations of marriage — **Four intentional movements** — Warning signs and responses — Discussion and application time



BOTH

Life shared together

AND

Room to grow individually

friendships · gifting & service · rest

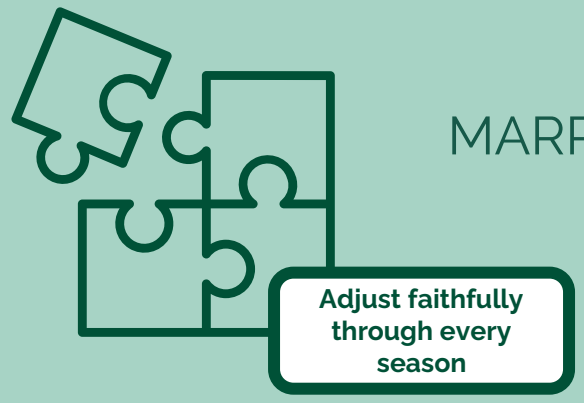
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MARRIAGE THROGH THE SEASONS . . .

Roles and rhythms change; covenant and connection remain.

- Early marriage
- Young children
- Career / ministry change
- Disruption or loss
- Empty nest

WARNING SIGNS AND RESPONSES

Foundations of marriage — Four intentional movements — **Warning signs and responses** — Discussion and application time



WARNING SIGNS AND RESPONSES

Four warning signs


CRITICISM


DEFENSIVENESS

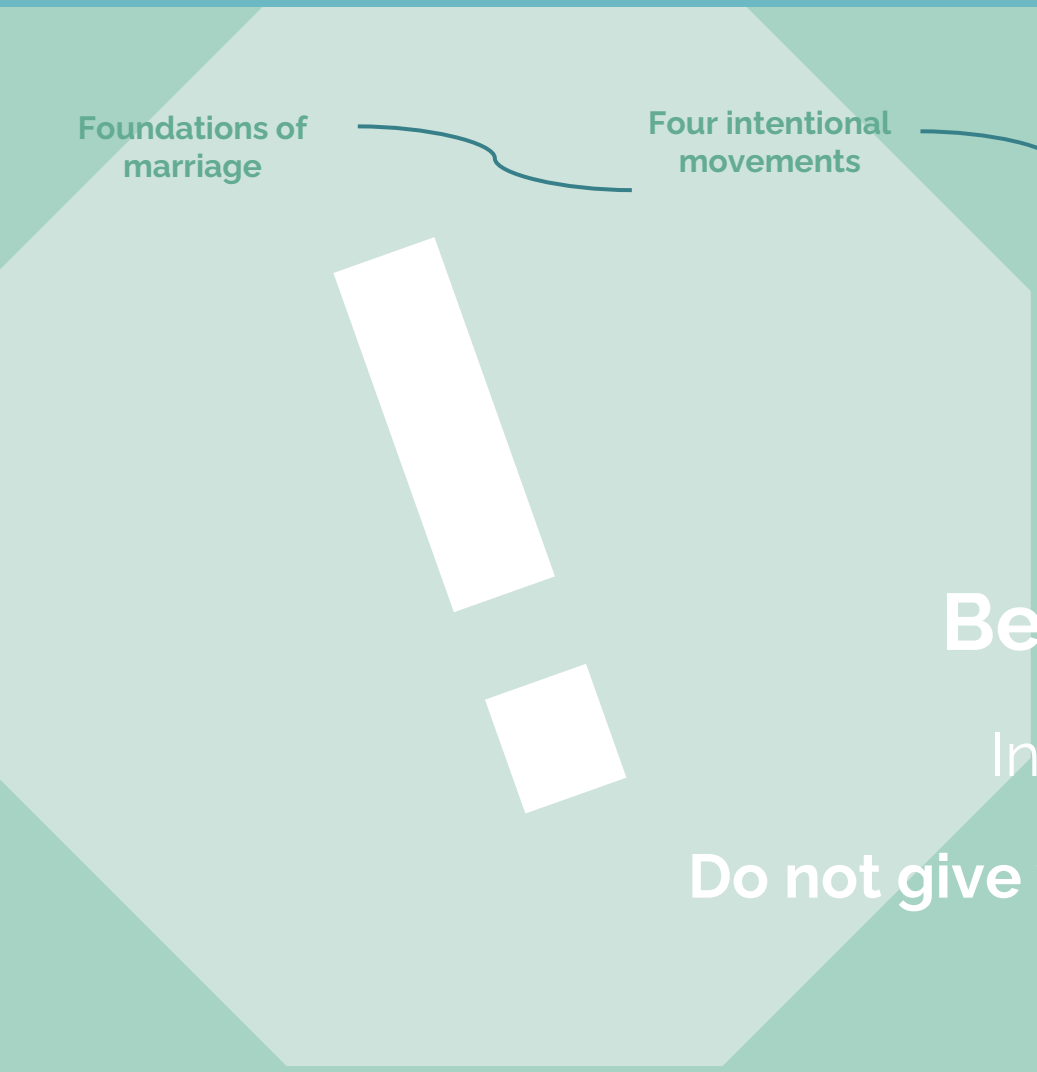

DISRESPECT


SHUTTING DOWN

When warning signs appear, return to the foundations—and the order matters.

WARNING SIGNS AND RESPONSES

Foundations of marriage — Four intentional movements — **Warning signs and responses** — Discussion and application time



Be on your guard.

Invite accountability.

Do not give your spouse only the scraps.

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION TIME

Foundations of marriage

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DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION TIME

Personal reflection time

WHERE DOES YOUR MARRIAGE MOST NEED ATTENTION?

- **Posture**
- **Time**
- **Space**
- **Current season**

Write down one next step

DISCUSSION AND APPLICATION TIME

Foundations of marriage — Four intentional movements — Warning signs and responses — **Discussion and application time**



Roundtable discussion

1 COVENANT

2 WARNING SIGNS

3 SHARED VISION

4 MINUTES STRATEGY

7-8 MINUTES PER TOPIC

CHOOSE ONE STEP IN THE NEXT 24 HOURS

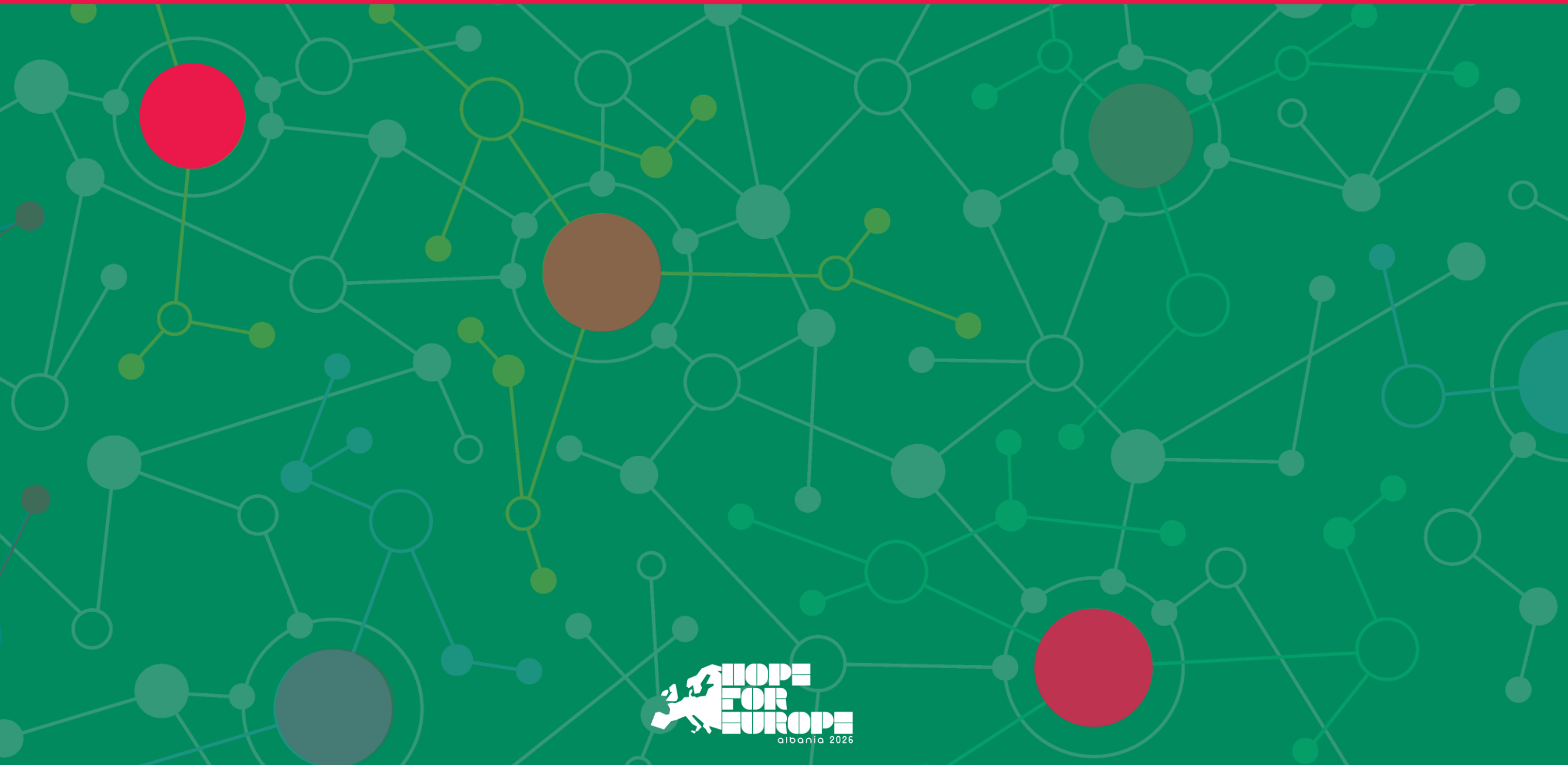
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Serve in one small way.

Express sincere appreciation.

Pray intentionally for your spouse.


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