

Week 2:

IF YOU FEEL CONTROLLED BY YOUR SPOUSE

SAVE MY MARRIAGE ONLINE COURSE



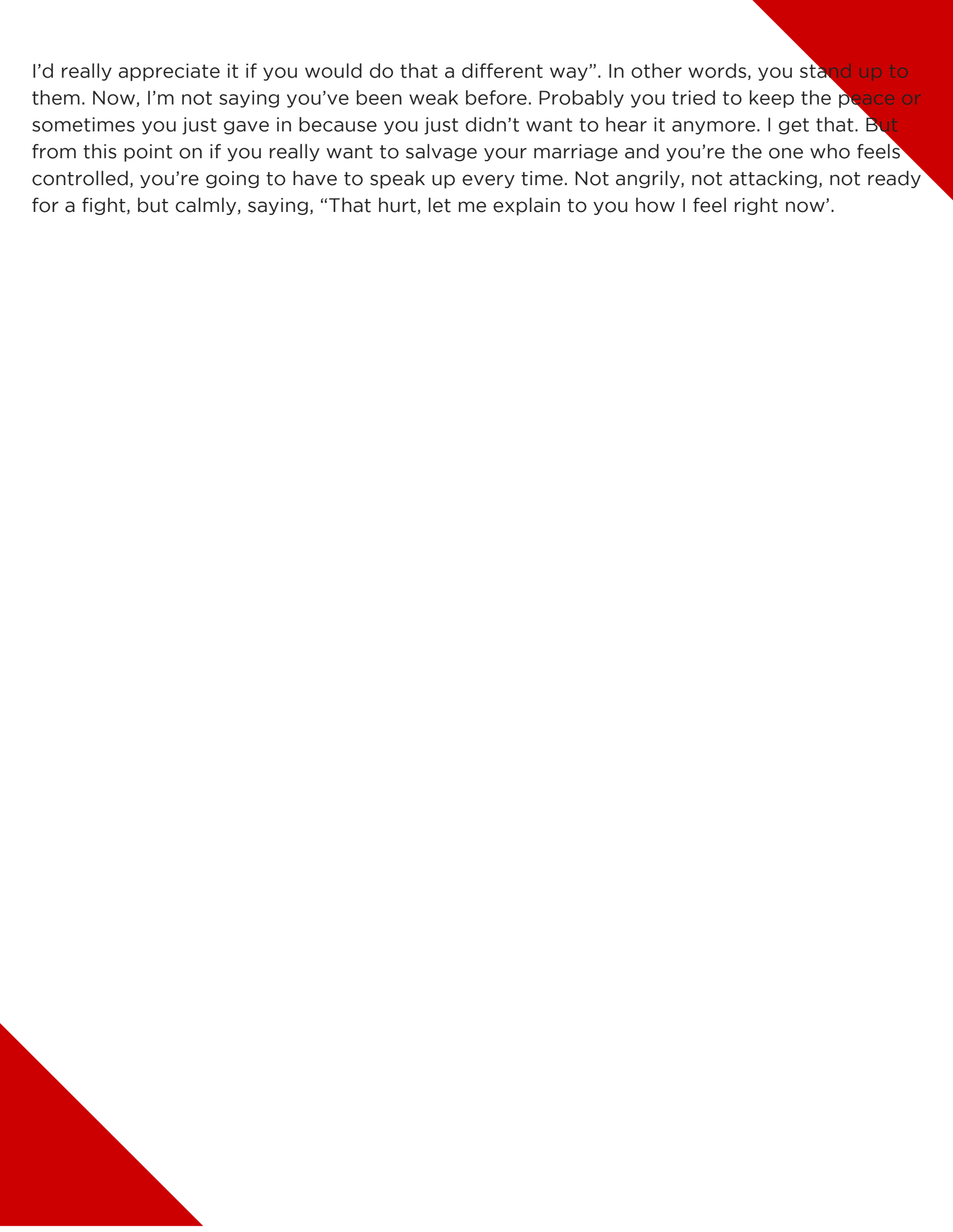
MarriageHelper

Week 2: If You Feel Controlled by Your Spouse

So what if a major problem in your marriage is the fact that you feel controlled? It's terrible, I understand. And if you have reached that point where you just had it up to here, I realize you probably have left or you've thrown your spouse out. And you're not letting him or her have much interaction with you because you feel that whatever that person will say or do is just trying to reassert control and now that you've had some independence you feel freedom. You feel good about yourself again, you're thinking, I don't want anything to do with him or her because if I do that, there's just going to be so much pain. I know what he or she is like and I don't want to live in that again. I get it. I understand, I don't blame you. I would feel exactly the same way. But if, if you wish to try to reconcile this marriage, then, is there any possibility that your spouse would listen, truly listen to you?

Now, what I mean by that is that you will sit down with him or her and say, "Can you listen for fifteen minutes without saying a word? And what I'm asking you to do is not to defend yourself, not to hear this as an attack but just to hear my heart. Can you do that? Will you listen to that?" Think it through in advance. As a matter of fact, you can even make notes for yourself and always do it in terms of what you feel rather than what they do if in the fifteen-minute conversation you say "you are a dictator" the other person is not going to hear what you're saying after that because they will be defending themselves, "Wait a minute, I love you, I do what I think is best, etc." Instead, the better way to approach this is to say, "When you do blank, I feel blank. Honey, when you come in and tell me how to cook, I feel as if I'm a child and that you're my father. Honey, when you correct my pronunciation, I realize that you have gotten your degree in English Lit and that you teach at the college and here, I'm your husband, not your student. And when you're correcting my pronunciation, particularly when it's done in public, I feel like that you're saying I'm not as smart as you and I'm embarrassed or humiliated about that". In other words, you don't attack their behaviour, you explain how you feel by giving specific examples of things they have done or things they have said and how you feel about it but careful, careful, careful not to make it and appear an attack on their character, their integrity, their intent, their motivation or anything else. Because the moment they become defensive, they won't hear you anymore.

But if you can say it in the standpoint of this is what I feel and if indeed he or she will listen, then you get a chance at salvaging your marriage. Now, are you also committed to learning how to demand respect? What I mean by that is that you can have this conversation and things will go well for a while but people are creatures of heaven which means that at some point along the line, he or she is going to do it again. Not necessarily because their motives are bad but just because that's the way he or she has always done it. Can you stop at that point and look at him or her and say, "Babe, I felt disrespected.



I'd really appreciate it if you would do that a different way". In other words, you stand up to them. Now, I'm not saying you've been weak before. Probably you tried to keep the peace or sometimes you just gave in because you just didn't want to hear it anymore. I get that. But from this point on if you really want to salvage your marriage and you're the one who feels controlled, you're going to have to speak up every time. Not angrily, not attacking, not ready for a fight, but calmly, saying, "That hurt, let me explain to you how I feel right now'.