
Marriage Helper 911 Guidebook

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Section One

Introduction and What Will You Need

Congratulations. You've just completed a three day workshop to help your marriage become all that it can be. Whatever problems you brought into it may still exist. **But now, you have the tools to fix them.** We applaud the fact that you have been open and honest – that you've learned some great things. Now it becomes a matter of you applying those things. That's what this guidebook is for.

Each section will give you something to work on as a couple or perhaps a question that needs to be answered as you start trying to make your life better together. You may need some of the books we gave you during the workshop, your profile of behavioral styles, or even your workbook that we gave you during the workshop. Be sure to use these as they are called for and use the guidebook as you need it, skipping to whichever section is most appropriate to you at the time.

Again, congratulations and we hope you enjoy this guidebook as it helps you make a happy, loving marriage.

Please refer to the questions located in Section One of your corresponding workbook.

Section Two

What is the Next Step?

What is your next step in helping a marriage become all that it can be so that you can be happily in love with each other? As you probably heard during the workshop, we suggest that you be careful when you're listening to friends or family when you've been hurt. They take on your hurt and sometimes will give you advice that's very loving, but very poor. Because they've taken on your pain, they want to hurt the person that's hurt you.

But there are people who can be of assistance to you now - now that you've been through this workshop, now that you have a path forward. Be careful, though that if you pick somebody to help you grow as a couple, that you pick someone that is not prejudiced toward just one of you or still carries hurt in his or her heart about what's happened in your marriage here before.

We suggest that you think about a church leader, an older couple - someone that you can trust, someone that knows how to listen, who knows how to be honest, dependable, available, approachable; somebody who is safe and encouraging and supportive. What we're suggesting is that you choose a mentor couple with these characteristics that will be open to each of you and wants each of you to grow together in love as a married couple.

Now think of just three couples, if you can, that possibly would serve in this capacity. Because this mentor couple can really assist you in working through all the things you learned in the workshop over the next several weeks so that you can really grow to where you want to be.

So, what I'm going to ask you to do is just pause here and think about it together and come up with a list of three couples that you think would be a good mentor couple for you.

Please answer questions in corresponding workbook before continuing to the next page.

Now that you've decided on three couples to possibly mentor you, let's discuss how to approach them to see who's open to it.

Go to each of them and the first thing you do is explain to them what you've just completed in this workshop, and that you want to meet with them as a couple because you value their relationship with each other and their insight into relationships and marriage. Let them know that all they need to do is go through this guidebook and workbook with you and help guide resulting conversations, keeping both you and your spouse on track and being positive.

Explain that you don't have to share all the details of what's taken place in your marriage and you don't need them to counsel you or advise you so much as just to help you work through the material, providing encouragement and listening to you.

If you're not able to find a mentor couple, please don't be discouraged. This guidebook's intent is so that you can either do it with or without a mentor couple. We do encourage you to do it with a mentor couple if you can find one because that's better. But even if you can't, you can do it just with the two of you, and it will work just as well. It's all a matter of how much effort that you will put into it. So don't be afraid - and get started even if you don't find a mentor couple right away.

So, what are we saying? Find a mentor couple if you can. If not, work through this guidebook without them. The goal is to help you grow in love.

Third message

What Do We Tell Family?

So what do you tell your friends and family about what happened in the workshop or even what's happened in your marriage? You see, the days and weeks following the workshop are crucial in continuing the growth and creating the positive habits in your marriage that you need to be happily in love.

Now, we all know that the things that we hear and see have a major impact on the way we think and feel. **It's important to surround yourself with people that are positive and encouraging.** That's why it's important to set boundaries with family, friends, co-workers, and anyone else that might negatively influence or intrude on your marriage.

You see, as we've said before, your friends and your family take on your hurt. And that means they want to hurt the person that hurt you. It's a natural human tendency. It doesn't make them bad people. It just makes them human beings who love.

But be careful that you don't let them do that. You have enough pain on your own – rather than taking on their pain about your pain. And that's why you must be very careful about what you tell your family, your friends, your co-workers about your marriage, and even about what you discussed in the workshop.

You see, if you're going to be sharing secrets with each other, which is what intimacy is all about, then that intimacy stops the very second that your spouse finds out that you told somebody else their secret. So, if you tell your wife or your husband something that you just open up and say, “This is something I struggle with,” or, “This is something that I am,” or, “This is something that I have done,” if you tell your best friend, you'll be saying, “Now, whatever you do, don't tell anybody.” And that's the exact same thing they'll tell their best friend and... That's what they'll tell their best friend and... It'll finally come back to your spouse. Now, think about how much honesty and openness there will be if your spouse was to find out that you shared his or her secret.

So, if you need somebody to talk to, find a pastor. Find a professional counselor or therapist –

someone who will not share those secrets. But with your friends and your family, you sit down together as husband and wife and decide, “These are the things we will share that occurred,” or that we feel or think, “These are the things we won't share. These are the boundaries.”

And when you come to those agreements about which boundaries you will set and what you will honor, then do not dishonor that. Because what you want is the ability to trust each other completely, openly, honestly – sharing everything in your heart. And that cannot occur unless you absolutely, completely, and positively trust each other.

So, make sure that if you need help, you find someone who is a professional, who cannot ethically tell anyone else. But when it comes to sharing with your friends, your mentor couple, your family, only share those things that your spouse agrees that you can share. This is extremely important. It'll keep the atmosphere of openness and honesty so you can grow happily in love.

Please answer the questions in the corresponding workbook.

Fourth Message

What Motivates You?

If you go back to the commitment section of your workbook, you'll remember that we showed you several reasons that people stay together. They came under three categories: Want To, Ought To, Have To. Sometimes, people come to the workshop thinking, "The only thing that's worthwhile is if I want to stay, and if I don't want to stay, there's no good reason to be committed to this relationship." Actually, that's not true.

My wife, Alice, and I were married the first time for fifteen years. Then we were divorced for three, and then remarried each other. And at the time of this taping, have been married twenty years. Yes, that's right. Fifteen years the first time. Three years when neither of us was married to anybody else and then twenty years married to each other this time.

You say, "Well, what motivated you to go back together? What kind of commitment did you have? Was it the fact that you fell in love with your wife again and you just WANTED TO be with her?"

No.

"Well then, what was it? Was it HAVE TO, that you couldn't exist without it, that you had to be with her because of some professional reason or some reason?"

No. Actually, we were married to each other because we felt that we OUGHT TO. It was for the sake of doing what we believed was right based on our moral convictions, but also because of the fact that we felt that our daughters needed that.

So you say, "Well, the day you remarried, then there weren't bells, and there weren't rocket ships and there weren't doves flying?"

No. There was just a very strong commitment to marry each other and make this relationship work. You say, "Well, doesn't that make a terrible marriage?"

No, actually, it doesn't make a terrible marriage at all. That was our original motivation. But as

we worked on our marriage, doing the kind of things we needed to do, we fell in love with each other again. So that now, Alice is my best friend. I can't imagine living without her. My WANT TO is much stronger than anything else.

But, believe it or not, there is still an OUGHT TO. This is the right thing to do. There is still a HAVE TO because of the fact that I have given her irretrievable investments. I've given my life to her completely as she has done for me.

And so, at any given moment, it may not be that you are doing this because you WANT TO. It may be because you HAVE TO or OUGHT TO, but that's ok for now. It keeps you together. It helps you to work out everything that you need to do. And that's the power of commitment.

I think I learned it best with our daughter, who was six when we divorced and nine when we remarried. A couple of years after our remarriage, I began to travel quite a bit, speaking here and there and, when she was ten – maybe eleven – I was traveling a lot and every time I left town, she would cry inordinately.

I didn't want to ask her because I was afraid of the answer, but finally I had to, “Baby, why do you cry so much every time I leave? You know, airplanes are safe. I'm coming back.” And she said what I knew she would say and didn't want to hear. She said, “Are you coming back?”

You see, when she was six, I walked out that door and didn't come back for three years. Oh, I was there every other weekend. I never missed my every other weekend, but it's not the same as living together.

And so I looked at her and I said, “Honey, what you need to understand is this: If I leave happy, I'm coming back. If I leave sad, I'm coming back. If I leave mad, I'm coming back. There is nothing that will keep me coming back to you, to your mother, to your sister. Unless I die. And if I do, based on what we believe, I'll be waiting for you in Heaven. But I'm always coming back. That's the commitment I make to you.”

What I discovered was you can't make that commitment verbally just once to a ten or eleven-year-old. You have to say it several times for her to believe. And then I realized that the same

thing had to occur with my wife, the adult. I needed to tell her again and again and again, “I am committed. I will be here.”

Now, if she'd forced me, saying, “Do you WANT TO?” Sometimes my answer, honestly would have been, “No, no I don't want to. Sometimes our relationship is not as happy as I want it to be. But I ought to. And I have to.”

But see, she didn't ask that because what was important was the commitment, not the particular motive on a particular day. We knew that if we kept doing all the right things, we would be in love and we would be happy.

And, we are.

I cannot imagine living without her. So, look at your commitments. Why are you committed? It may be not important at all to tell the other person, if it's a WANT TO, HAVE TO, or OUGHT TO. What's important is to say to each other, “I am here. On the good days, the bad days, the sad days, the mad days, I am here.”

Keep saying that to each other and to yourselves, and that kind of commitment will keep you together as you work on all the things to be... Happily in love.

Please answer the corresponding questions in your workbook.

Fifth message

How Do We Communicate?

Have you had your first argument yet since the workshop? If you haven't, you will. You're human beings. It is bound to happen. No two humans can live together without conflict. Occasionally, you just don't see things the same way. You don't feel the same way, and you're going to fuss with each other. Well, welcome to the human race.

The thing is not be afraid of an argument, but to argue wisely. Wisely? What we mean by that is, don't destroy each other when you do have a conflict.

Remember how we went through the four horsemen in the workshop? In Gottman's book, you can go back and read all about them again or go through your workbook again to make sure you understand them. You signed a contract with each other that you would not let the four horsemen out during the three days of the seminar.

We're suggesting that you agree that you won't let them out EVER again. And if they do trot out of the barn, the other person can say, "Horseman!" And rather than arguing and saying, "No, no, no! That was not a horseman," you say, "Ok, I'm sorry. I won't do that again."

Remember that criticism is when you are blaming or attacking the character of the other person. It's when you're giving the impression, "What is wrong with you?" That's always a bad thing. Contempt conveys disgust, which can include name calling, sarcasm, hostile humor; it's when you treat the other person like they're not as smart as you are, even as if they're worthless to you.

Defensiveness is a way of blaming your partner. You're saying, "I'm not the problem. It's not me. It is you." It always escalates the conflict. I mean, it's human. We all want to defend ourselves. But if you stop to think, "Wait a minute. If I do this, all I do is make this worse. Rather than defending myself, maybe I'm going to be just mature enough to look at him or her and say, 'Obviously you're upset. Let's talk about what you really are upset about.'"

And then stonewalling happens when one person tunes out the other by looking away or down,

or seem not to care what's being said. In this day or time, it might even be that they are doing a text message to somebody else. Or the classic, "Ok, honey, I'm listening but I'm also watching the fourth quarter so, let's just communicate the best we can. Stonewalling is saying to the other person, "I'm really not paying any attention to you." And it really, really escalates conflict.

Now, when you're doing one of these, take note, say, "I'm sorry," and quit. Keep in mind that each of you will do these things occasionally because you are human. It's not bad that you do it. It's bad if you continue it. It's when the other person says, "Ah, that's a horseman that hurts. Ok, ok. Let's back up and do it right."

So remember, talk about you and not about the other person. Rather than saying, "You idiot, look what you did," say, "Here's how I feel when that occurred." If you put it in the domain of self, it doesn't feel like an attack and the other person can listen to what really happened and what you really feel as opposed to the conflict itself.

Now, you went through this in the seminar. You heard all about it. You've got your workbook. You can read back through that chapter right now in Gottman's book or go through your notes in the workbook. Talk to each other and make sure that you are in agreement that when a horseman comes out, that you will not react negatively if the other person says, "Horseman!" That, rather than defending yourself, "That wasn't a horseman!" which, by the way, is a horseman, you just back up and say, "Ok, let me try that again. Let me approach that differently." And then you can disagree, but it will actually help you to get somewhere; to accomplish something; to resolve conflict rather than just having this terrible fight.

And if you can resolve conflict, you can grow happily in love.

Please answer the corresponding questions in your workbook.

Sixth message

How To get Feelings Back

People often say, “Joe, I don't know if we can ever be in love with each other again.” And I understand how a person feels when he or she says that because that's exactly the way I felt when Alice and I put our marriage back together way back in 1987. We did it because we thought it was the right thing to do. But how in the world were we going to be in love with each other again?

Now, by that time, we were no longer enemies; we weren't fighting like cats and dogs. It wasn't a hate situation. But it wasn't a, “being in love” situation, either. As a matter of fact, if you wanted to describe the kind of love we felt for each other at that point, it would be more like a brother toward a sister. But who wants to be married to his or her sister?

What it is, is that we decided we wanted to be romantically in love. Now, since then, I have learned how to actually diagram this and you saw it in your seminar. We called it for many years, “The Falling in Love Model” now known as the Love Path. And, it starts with being attracted to the other person either physically, intellectually, emotionally, or a combination thereof.

And if you want to be attractive to the other person – to your husband or to your wife – what you want to do is understand, “What is it that I can do at my age and situation in life that can make me more physically attractive to my spouse? Should I take care of my health better? Should I exercise more? Should I eat less? Should I eat more? What should I do? Should I put on my makeup every morning? Should I fix my hair differently? Should I dress differently? What can I do to be more physically attractive to my spouse at my age and situation in life?”

I'm not talking about the standards of the world, which are impossible. Don't look on models on billboards. Who can be that? Why don't you just be what you can be, but say, “I'm going to be everything I can be physically for my spouse?”

“I'm going to be intellectually attractive to my spouse.” That means that you are a person that continues to grow and you stimulate your spouse to grow mentally and intellectually.

And then, make sure that you're emotionally attractive, which means that you're available; that the other person can approach you and feel safe... And that you protect your spouse from all others and everything because you stand by him or her no matter what. And even where you can share humor; just to be funny with each other.

I actually know a couple that they would fight with balloon bats. What I mean is, they blew these things up and whenever they'd get into a fight with each other, pull them out and start beating each other with these balloon bats, which were completely harmless, until finally, they would fall onto the floor in just convulsions of laughter. And then that was the end of the argument. They usually wound up... Well, you know how they wound up. Humor is a wonderful thing.

So, be physically attractive, intellectually attractive, and emotionally attractive as much as you can be to your spouse. And then remember that acceptance comes by giving the other person permission to tell you the truth no matter what.

That means you have to grant immunity sometimes, "I will not punish you in any shape, fashion, or form – even if what you tell me hurts, I am not going to punish you." As you know, that's easier said than done, but if you can do that, you will become best friends. You actually can talk to each other on the deepest levels possible. And then, the attachment that comes through, fulfilling each other's emotional needs, and fulfilling each other's physical needs, and fulfilling each other in every single way.

You can do this.

Now, go back to your workbook. Look at the notes you made when we went to that "Love Path" and then start writing down what you can do for your spouse. If your relationship is already strong enough, look at your spouse and say, "What would you wish of me physically?"

Now, it's not just in terms of health. It's not just in terms of appearance and hygiene. It can also be, "What do you wish of me in terms of our lovemaking?" We have a book that we suggest that you go through called, "Becoming One." It's a book, and it has a couple of workbooks with it called, "Exercises in Intimacy." They're actually exercises you can go through with that book and those

workbooks that will help you learn how to be better lovers to each other physically.

You can get that through Marriage Helper. You can get it from Amazon.com. You can get it from the person who led your workshop over the weekend. But, if you go through that book, it will help you understand how to fulfill each other physically, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually.

The whole idea is, “I want to do everything I can to make myself more lovable to you. Not because of the fact that I'm not lovable if you don't love me. I'm lovable no matter what.” You have to understand that.

You can never picture yourself only through the eyes of your spouse. You have to be able to stand on your own and believe that you are lovely and lovable no matter what. That's not what we're discussing here. We're not saying you have to do something to be loved. We're saying now you're doing something out of sacrifice to the other person so that love can deepen even more because you are giving of yourself to him or her.

And if, in reciprocity, he or she is giving himself or herself to you, can you imagine what kind of relationship develops?

Now, be careful that you don't move over to the addiction side. That's the side where you want to control the other person. “This is what you must do,” or, “This is what you must be,” or “This is what you must think,” or, “This is what you must feel...” Control is a terrible thing. You are partner. Neither one of you is the parent, controlling the other person.

So, whatever happens, don't let yourself do that. And make it so that the other person can openly and honestly tell you if he or she feels that you are doing that.

So sit down with each other and say, “What kind of things might I do that you would feel controlling? Let's talk about those.” Remember, always talk about it in terms of self, not, “Well here's what you do,” but, “Well, sometimes I feel this when this occurs.” And then talk about, “Well, what would you like of me physically? What would you like of me spiritually? What would you like of me emotionally?” Go through all of that – but only as you can be calm and rational and understanding and willing to hear; and willing to do.

If any point you start getting defensive, if at any point, any of the four horsemen start arising, stop the conversation. “We'll finish this next week...” But, if you do this on a regular basis, you will find that you can be in love with each other more than you ever have – no matter what you feel about each other right now.

In 1984 when I left my wife; when I divorced her, I hated her. In 1987 when I remarried her, I loved her like my sister, but that was all. Now, at this day and time, I love her with all of my beating heart, soul, and mind and cannot imagine life without her.

I am not the exception. I could literally bring hundreds of couples to you... Thousands of couples to you, who could tell the same story.

You can fall in love with each other again by following the Love Path. It will lead you to be happily in love.

Please answer the corresponding questions in your workbook.

Seventh message

How To Value Differences?

I'll never forget the time when I was leading this workshop over one weekend when a couple came on on Sunday angry. The night before at a restaurant, she had just poured out her heart to him. And as she did, she looked at him to respond and he just sat there, looking at her. After a couple of minutes, she got up and stormed out of the restaurant. And when she came back on Sunday, she was furious. "I am done with this man! I poured out my heart to him and he just ignored me!"

It was fun on Sunday afternoon to watch the light dawn for her. You see, she's what we call a, "Communicator." She can talk very openly about her emotions and her feelings, and she did.

He is what we call a, "Calculator," which means he has to process before he can act. He wasn't ignoring her. He was processing all those things she had just said. He couldn't respond quickly because of the fact that he had to put it all together, make it make sense to him – put it in some kind of order in his brain for comprehension.

And when she finally comprehended that herself, "Oh! He was not ignoring me! He just operates in life differently than I..." It was amazing to see what it did to their marriage.

Maybe you had that same kind of epiphany when you went through the behavioral styles on Sunday afternoon in the workshop, when you began to understand about Commanders and Calculators and Completers and Communicators.

You can go back and look at all your notes about that and see how they're all different. Commanders are typically fast-paced, cool and distant. They want to be noticed, but not in the same way as the Communicator, who is saying, "Look at me!" A Commander is saying, "Notice me."

And then the Calculators are typically slow-paced, cool, distant – usually practical and logical. The Completers are typically slow-paced – not because they are slow people, but because they process things first; and they are warm and are friendly, and they typically don't want to call attention to themselves.

And Communicators typically are fast-paced people, warm and friendly. They shout, “Look at me! I’m a happy person, aren’t you?”

It’s ok to be any one of those or any combination of those. Now, what it really tells us is how to communicate to the other person. How I communicate with a Communicator? Well, they want to hear something exciting and fast-paced, and just give it to them in the best possible way.

How do you communicate with a Commander? Don’t try to compete. Just give the facts and not too many details because it drives them nuts.

How do you communicate with a Calculator? Detailed, logical, all the facts that they need so they can process.

What about to a Completer? Warm and friendly and laid-back and relaxed with no pressure.

Well, I’m not going to go through all of that again here after you’ve gone through it in the workshop, but remember that this really does make a difference in how you communicate to each other. And that’s the primary thing to understand about the behavioral styles – is how the other person wants to be communicated to.

So, talk to your husband or wife based on which style they are. And when your spouse communicates to you, understand that sometimes, you just need to translate. “Ok, let me think that through. Let me put it into my behavioral style to understand what he or she is really saying. And it’s ok that we are different.”

Now, here is the general rule-of-thumb: The more similar you are, the easier it is to have a good marriage. The more dissimilar you are, the more work it takes to have a good marriage. But either way, you can have a good marriage. Concentrate on understanding who the other person is and how they operate rather than demanding they be like you.

Don’t do that. Accept each other as you are. Acceptance and tolerance of the other person’s quirks, peculiarities, and idiosyncrasies is the biggest secret to any two people getting along, whether they’re husband and wife, or just friends.

You can do that! And it’ll be fun if you do. As a matter of fact, celebrate your differences and

it will lead you to be happily in love.

Please answer the corresponding questions in your workbook.

Eighth message

How Quickly Should We move Forward?

The weekend workshop you just attended was pretty intense. You learned a lot of things and it's hard to process all those things immediately. Some couples leave saying, "Hey, we have everything we need. Let's just put this thing together and go from here. We're fine from this point on." Other couples are leaving where one of them, at least, is saying, "Well I heard it and it seemed to make sense. But I'm just not sure. How are we going to do all of these things right now?"

Remember that not all of the healing in a relationship takes place in just three days. As a matter-of-fact, we've had spouses leave at the end of the third day saying, "This marriage is over. I'm going to go ahead and leave with my lover." Or, "I'm going to go ahead with my plans to divorce or whatever..." and then a week or two later, after they've had a chance to process this, they start going, "Wait a minute. I actually think we can make this work. I think we can put this back together and actually have a happy marriage."

So, don't press for everything to happen at once. Sometimes a little time needs to pass. Sometimes these things need to settle into your brain and finally into your heart. So, don't be pushing for everything to happen at once. You're going to have to move forward at a pace that's comfortable for each of you and not what is dictated by anybody else or even by one spouse.

Now, we discussed several topics at the workshop which will require time to process. And, it's important to allow that time to occur. Our success rate is three out of four marriages, and saving those marriages; and they stay together for years later. And we hope that happens for you.

But, don't think that three days just in-and-of themselves make that occur. We call this a "turn around" workshop or, "turn around" weekend because that's what we hope to do for you there. But now you have to move forward together, discussing what you want your relationship to look like; carefully discussing with your spouse what you expect of each other if you are to live together happily again.

And, so you need to consider things like, "Well, what behaviors are acceptable to you and which are not? What are "deal-breakers?" If one of you continues to be an alcoholic, is that going to be

a deal-breaker or not? If one of you is going to continue to have an addiction to porn, is that a deal-breaker or not? You need to sit down and think those things through. Do you expect to start making financial decisions together, and if so, now? Or, at what point?

What expectations do you have for your sexual relationship with each other? And I'll talk more about that in a later track.

How are you going to discuss your situation with your children? And if you divorce proceedings have already begun, what are your plans in regard to that? And what are the steps that you can take to start dating each other again?

Now, if you have a mentor couple, it would be great if you sit down with them and discuss each of those six questions. Let them help you think it through, seeing the pros and the cons, the “goods and the bads,” what will work and what might not work. If you don't have that mentor couple, maybe you want to try this with your pastor or even call a counselor and say, “We want to discuss these questions. We just need a guide to make sure we think about them well.”

If none of those are available, then do them with each other, but making sure you don't let the horsemen come up and you're not going to be angry and trying to punish the other person – that you'll discuss them like two rational, reasonable adults.

We do recommend, though, for this, if at all possible, find that mentor couple - that wise couple that can help you think this through... Or the pastor... Or one of the associate pastors... Or a therapist.

This is that important.

If you think these things through, it will help you process where you're headed and how you can get there, and what is an acceptable, reasonable time frame for making those happen. If you're separated, you'll even have to think about these things in terms of, “When do we move back in with each other,” and, “How do we make all of these things occur?”

So, this is a process that you have to work through. If you have any hope for your future at all, we suggest you talk about these and any other questions that become important to you. Think them through carefully.

And I'll say it just one more time: If at all possible, use a guide. As a matter-of-fact, a better word might be, "referee," somebody who can help you think it through.

If all else fails, call us because we want to help you be happily in love, forever.

Please answer the corresponding questions in your workbook.

Ninth message

What if My Spouse Will Not Change?

So now the workshop is over, you've been gone for a few days, maybe even a few weeks by the point you listen to this particular track and you're thinking, "I am doing everything I know how to do but my spouse just won't change." Let me talk about a couple of things here if I may.

First of all, and hear this in the right way. I don't want to sound mean at all, but, it is no one else's responsibility to make you happy. Oh, let me finish...

What I'm saying is, happiness comes from within you. And you shouldn't say, "I'll be happy only if he or she does this or that." Your happiness is your responsibility based on what you do with your life, with who you are.

And if you take that concept and carry it through, "I am going to be a healthy human being. Even if my spouse changes not at all, I am going to take care of myself physically in terms of health and hygiene and appearance. I am going to do those things for myself. I am going to become emotionally mature and confident. I am going to learn how to be everything I can be for me." That's still the best thing you can do for you.

Now, quite interestingly, it also may be the very thing that leads your spouse finally to change. We've seen it happen so many times. When finally one spouse quits demanding, "You change!" but just starts working on self, then interestingly, the other spouse changes.

Carl Rogers, a famous psychologist, said, "When I accept myself as I am, I change. When I accept others as they are, they change."

And, believe it or not, over a span of at least 50 years, I have seen that happen once and again and again and again. It really does work.

So, you work on you. "I am going to accept myself as I am. I am going to be happy with who I am. And, if I need to make some changes in myself for health reasons or whatever, I am going to do that. I am going to be a confident, healthy, good-looking person as best I can be at my age and

situation in life and happy with who I am.

First of all, it makes you much more attractive to everybody including that spouse. Secondly, it makes you happier with yourself because you're being happy with who you are. And thirdly, it's amazing how that can change the other person. Now, you don't do it just for that reason because it may not. You do it for you! But it does have that great power.

And then you just accept that other person as he or she is. “Hey, I'm doing what I need to do for me. I hope you do that for you. I encourage you to do that for you. I'll even help you do that for you if you ask. But I'm not going to demand that of you in order for me to accept you as a human being. I'll treat you with respect and dignity and decency, no matter what you do.

We may not always be together because I have to make decisions about my life and there are certain things that are deal-breakers that, for example, if you continue this addiction or that particular behavior, I can't live with that. But I'm not making anymore demands of you as a human being. I'm saying I accept myself as I am. I will accept you as you are, even if I can't accept a relationship.”

And then, when you have that kind of relationship with each other, you actually become friends. Sometimes, best friends. And it is the best way to help the other person become what he or she should be. And if they don't, you still become what you need to be for you.

So, exercise. Eat right. Fix yourself up. Wear nice clothes. Cut your hair in a way that you like. Do all the things that you enjoy that are healthy – emotionally healthy, physically healthy, intellectually... healthy spiritually. That's what you do for you.

And then you hope your spouse changes. But if he or she doesn't, you still will live happily forever.

Please answer the corresponding questions in your workbook.