

3 Reasons Why You Need to Attend a Marriage Conference

In case many of you do not know, I am big on being a Marriage Conference Man. Shortly after my wife and I were able to restore and bring Christ into the center of our marriage, we agreed that we need to either attend a marriage conference once a year or do a marriage class at our church once a year.

All I can say is that it has paid off every time, and these conferences and classes continue to be the huge part of the success in our marriage.

Last month, my wife and I attended a great marriage conference in our central Virginia area titled "The Surprising Way to a Stronger Marriage," hosted by Michael and Amy Smalley. Michael and Amy, along with their family, operate the Smalley Institute and programs like ER4LOVE. Be sure to click on the links and find out more information.

I'll be real honest with all of you. I never really know what to expect going into these conferences, but I give it to God and know that the plan is in His hands. With what seemed like more than 300 people, Michael and Amy jumped right into their message, and we quickly found out how great they were.

Michael is no doubt the comedic relief of the two and very down to earth, and Amy brings about some amazing passion when speaking about the many topics on marriage. Together they were wonderful to listen to and were great at keeping you engaged and involved in the topic.

Here are three topics I really enjoyed:

- **Do not focus on the facts.** We must learn to stop making such a big deal about the facts (receipts, laundry, etc.) and start focusing on the heart of our spouses. If

your wife wants you to keep every receipt, don't just say no because you don't want to; instead find out why it's important to her. Apply this to all situations!

- **Figuring out each other's hot buttons.** This can be better understood when the problem may not be the problem. You might assume your wife is frustrated with you for one reason, but she's actually frustrated for much different reasons. Buttons are things like feeling disconnected, controlled, ignored and so on. Don't push your spouse's buttons!
- **Love talk.** I love some love talk with my wife. Especially over frustrated or annoyed talk. I think we can all agree on that. Love talk means you let your wife talk to you and you only get to listen. Then at the end, you say the words back to her so that you may understand better what she is saying. And yes, this goes both ways. A good marriage starts with great communication.

Here are three reasons why you need to attend this conference:

- **Build unity in your marriage.** It is always better to experience things together. Taking the time off together for the conference and making time to discuss the topics will make for a very strong and unified marriage.
- **Supply your marriage with more tools.** Even after seven years of marriage, I am still amazed at what I don't know about marriage. Each conference or class will supply you and your spouse with more tools that will help you continue to build a solid marriage.
- **Your marriage will grow.** We go to more training at work to grow, we practice sports so that we may grow, and we go to marriage conferences so that our marriages may grow. "The only way your marriage won't grow is if you don't go!" (Write that one down.)

I know I went over these main points very quickly, and I would love to discuss any of them in more detail with you. Or you can check out the Smalley website or check out some of their

many resources.

Overall, and back to what I said in the first paragraph, I highly recommend every married couple attend a marriage conference or class each year. “The Surprising Way to a Stronger Marriage” is a great conference to attend, but also check to see what else is going on in your area or church, and take your marriage to the next level!

Men, join me in becoming a Marriage Conference Man.

Why do you think something like a marriage conference or class is important in building a stronger marriage? Share your comments below.

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