

Couple Offers Life-Changing Tips to Avoid Divorce

Ted and Charity Bradshaw have something in common with many couples today: They're both the children of divorce. The impact those divorces had on their young lives led each of them to decide never to marry "because we didn't even want that kind of pain," Charity says.

But after they met and later became engaged, that early pain moved them to make a special commitment in their own marriage, they tell host Marti Pieper on the "Hope for Your Marriage" series on Charisma News. "We both very soberly went into marriage, knowing that there are possible negative outcomes that we didn't want, and we really wanted to set our marriage up from the beginning for success," Charity says.

That mindset, and how they have sought to live it out, inspired their recent book, *Staying I Do*. In this podcast, the Bradshaws each offer a top tip for couples who want to maximize their marriage potential and avoid divorce. Charity says that early on in their marriage, "I was putting God-sized pressure on Ted to be everything for me." She has what may seem like an ordinary solution for this common problem—but in her view, it's not ordinary at all.

"One of the best things I did was I actually started reading the Bible every day; I used the YouVersion Bible app," Charity says. "I would encourage every single person [whether you're struggling in your marriage or not] ... This is not contrived. This is not trite. This is the truth: You need to know more about what God has to say about you, how He designed you, who He decides to use, how He's equipped you, how special you are to Him. And once you have the knowledge, it translates into confidence. It translates into belief that you have value, and then when you have value, when you believe that, you can add

value to somebody's life versus sucking all the value that they could possibly have, and it will never be enough for you."

And Ted has his own top tip for those who want to succeed in marriage: "Be yourself. You have to be open and honest ... but you have to also be vulnerable and be willing to show every side of you," he says. "Don't hold anything back thinking that the other person can't handle it. Because No. 1, that's not true. We all have problems and issues that we have to work through. Your spouse does as well. They're not as perfect as you think they are. You're not as perfect as you think you are!"

"But being yourself, being your true, authentic self, you'll never come to a place where they think, *Who is this person that I married?* If you're growing together with God's guidance in your life, and your spouse is growing with you, you both can achieve what you want. But if you're trying to be somebody else, or what you think they want, you're never going to hit that moving target."

For more from Ted and Charity Bradshaw and their tips for building a stronger marriage, listen to this podcast.