

Embrace These Godly Truths to Heal a Rocky or Stale Marriage

The question at the marriage workshop took us by surprise: “Has your marriage turned out ‘*as advertised*’? Have you ever wished you could start all over and do things differently?”

Rebekah and I exchanged glances and laughed out loud! We’d been invited to the Q&A as “experts,” but, of course, we’re a constant work in progress like everyone else.

In that moment we both thought of the same sticky patch. Over a decade we’d become so busy and distracted we didn’t really know each other anymore. When that happens it’s only natural to fall out of love, because love requires the intimacy of knowing, and we were consistently invested anywhere and everywhere other than the relationship. We’d both changed, and we’d taken it for granted that our love would keep up. We may have *fallen in love* at the beginning, but we needed to *stand in love* to make it last.

Standing requires a foundation, something we had to learn to build, to shore up and to maintain. The truth is anything that crosses the threshold from routine to wonderful is going to cost something.

Our 37 years have been quite the adventure so far. That’s why Rebekah and I were asked to attend the Q&A. Five truths emerged that I believe say a lot about the road we’re traveling. We love to encourage others because we know what is possible when we apply all of our resources to the relationship.

Check out the following five truths for your failing marriage:

1. Marriage is hard work and we like it that way! By hard work I'm talking about putting in the effort: going the extra mile, showing up with flowers at her job, asking her out on dates, complimenting her on anything and everything, always trying to be worthy of her special love. The investment of such effort contributes to our appreciation of the result; that's just how we are wired as people who were designed to work rather than simply sit around.

2. Sharing an active relationship with God has frequently saved us. It's important to realize that we are not the beginning and the end of everything, that we have been created by a higher power and with purpose, and that we need our Creator. Tapping into God's support, encouragement and creative love is a crucial element of shaping our lives both as individuals and as a married couple. We're not ashamed to acknowledge that our relationship needs God.

3. The children must always come a distant second to your relationship with your spouse. This is important. We talk to people all the time who say, "It's all about the kids, we'll work on us later." But what the kids need more than anything is a loving home where mom and dad are crazy about each other. Your relationship with your spouse must be the number one priority.

4. Absolute honesty and 100 percent disclosure are sacrosanct. You can't love someone you don't know. Withholding truth from our spouse puts insurmountable roadblocks in the way of love. Share your struggles, your questions, your feelings and your dreams. Share it all. Marriage that is not a 100/100 partnership is always compromised.

5. Kindness is more important than almost anything. The man who has a relationship with his wife where kindness is the most obvious factor is invariably a man whose wife adores him. "When in doubt," I tell the guys I work with, "default to kindness." Whatever is going on, it can be good and

strengthening for our relationship if it is approached in kindness. Mostly it's the little things. Serving one another and doing what we can to make the other's life easier, more comfortable and a little more pleasant. We work to demonstrate moment by moment that love is an active, continuous, present-tense verb. {eo}

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