

What Your Husband Wished You Knew About Him

Do you know a couple who has been married for a long time and are still deeply in love? You might find yourself wondering what their secret is or how that woman was lucky enough to find such a perfectly wonderful man. However, in *If My Husband Would Change, I'd Be Happy & Other Myths Wives Believe* (Harvest House), Rhonda Stoppe shows readers the secret to a happy marriage isn't related to how "ideal" a spouse is, but rather having a relationship grounded in a love deeper than their own.

Q: Can you tell us a little bit about the inspiration behind *If My Husband Would Change, I'd Be Happy & Other Myths Wives Believe*?

My husband, Steve, is a pastor, and we are committed to help couples build marriages with no regrets through one-on-one mentorship, premarital counseling and teaching No Regrets marriage conferences.

For more than 30 years we have biblically counseled numerous married couples. More often than not, when wives get their husbands into our office, they are secretly thinking, "Oh good, now they will fix him, and then I can be happy." When a wife learns the secret to her happiness lies not in how well her husband measures up to her expectations, but in how well she loves God, she discovers the secret to her happiness in marriage. *If My Husband Would Change, I'd be Happy* is a resource to help wives learn this truth.

Q: As a newlywed, what were some of the expectations you had about your husband and marriage in general that were unrealistic? What were some of the big things—or even the

small things—you wished your husband would change?

Before my husband and I were married, our weekends were filled with fun dates and lazy days picnicking near a river's edge. I was convinced being married to this man of my dreams was the key to my happily-ever-after.

After the honeymoon, it wasn't long before my weekends became consumed with doing housework. Gone were the weekend dates. I remember one Saturday in particular, as I heard my husband and his brother laughing together in the garage while they worked on my car, I was in the house working. I began to feel resentment toward my husband over the lack of fun in my life. Even though I had seen marriages in my own family fall apart from resentment, I found myself falling into the habit of harboring wrong attitudes toward my husband. Those feelings of bitterness scared me and sent me to look for godly older women to mentor me.

Q: How does the way a wife thinks about her husband influence her happiness in the marriage?

I know women in difficult marriages who find their marriages transformed when they choose to think only what is good about their husbands. The battle is in your minds, ladies. When you determine to think on what is good, right and honorable about your man—you know, the way you hope he will think about you—then the peace that surpasses all understanding will rule in your hearts, minds and homes (Phil. 4).

When you learn to enjoy your husband for who he is and not who you wish he would be, you will be on the right path to a happy marriage.

Q: You talk about how a wife pursuing her husband physically ministers to him deeply. Can you shed some light on what that means to a man?

There is so much I can say on this topic! Wherever I speak, women regularly come up to me and make comments like, "I'm just not that into having sex with my husband." When you mistakenly view your husband's need for sex as some sort of primal urge to be satisfied from time to time, you are missing the true ministry God has given you to affirm your husband's deepest emotional needs through sex.

Did you know that when you pursue your husband sexually, you have a profound influence on him in all areas of his life? Men tend to struggle with feelings of inadequacy and loneliness. When you find your husband sexually desirable and he feels loved for who he is, then you fill him with a sense of strength, well-being and confidence.

When your husband says he feels better after you have had sex with him, you would be wise to understand he is not simply talking about the physical pleasure he experiences through love-making. He may never be able to put into words the effect making love to you has on his emotional well-being. But it really does impact him in a big way. Just watch and see if the results aren't reflected in your husband's confidence and overall satisfaction with life.

Q: What else do wives need to know about their husbands when it comes to approaching sex and physical intimacy with the right mindset?

Ladies, your husband just wants you to want him! My husband, Steve, makes this powerful statement in the book:

"When a husband knows his wife desires him sexually, it gives him a special sense of empowerment ... This is not about 'conquering his woman' nor is it arrogance. Rather, it is a quiet confidence that comes over a man when he believes his wife actually wants to make love to him. When my wife puts my needs above her own through love-making, her selflessness

empowers me to be effective for God's kingdom. And you may be delighted to find your husband energized to accomplish whatever God is calling him to do as well. In my experience as a pastor and biblical counselor, husbands who are sexually satisfied at home are deeply in love with their wives."

If you are one who really just does not enjoy sex with your husband, or if you have issues that prevent you from wanting to make love to your husband, I wrote an e-book to help entitled *A Christian Woman's Guide to Great Sex in Marriage*.

Q: Raising kids can bring a great deal of stress to a marriage relationship. What are some practical ways to keep marriage strong amidst the chaotic years of raising children?

Your children's security lies in the health of your marriage relationship. When you learn to live with your sights upon God's calling on your life—to know Christ and make Christ known—this will influence how you live at home. God intends you to live in a manner that draws your kids to Christ in good times and in difficult seasons. In 18 years of youth ministry, we observed the number-one thing that drove kids away from Christ was the hypocrisy they observed in their Christian parents.

Remember that your genuine love for the Lord—no matter how happy or trying your marriage may be—will do far more to draw your kids to Christ than any words you can ever say to them. Whatever trials you encounter, if your kids see you and your husband united in purpose to display Jesus' character in your relationship to one another, they will come to understand your relationship with Jesus really is the answer to all of life's problems.

And if your husband is not a Christian, do not fret. God can shine brightly to your children through a godly woman who

determines to honor the Lord in how she relates to her unbelieving husband.

Q: Trials often ruin marriages. What encouragement can you offer to a woman who finds herself amidst the storm or in a difficult, tumultuous marriage?

You are on a mission: Every follower of Christ is called to reach people for God in their generation. We are to know Christ and make Christ known so that people might come to redemption. When you and your husband learn to live with a missional perspective, you will stop looking to each other to fix the difficult situation and turn to God instead. And you will trust that whatever trials or blessings come your way are divinely orchestrated by God so “that you may be blameless and harmless, sons of God, without fault, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, in which you shine as lights in the world” (Phil. 2:15). This allows God to use whatever means necessary to grow your faith to shine His glory through you to create an appetite in others to know Christ—beginning with your own children.

Q: What special features are included at the end of each chapter? Tell us more about the contributions your husband, Steve, made to the book.

I love the special features that are included in this book. At the end of each chapter you will be encouraged to go to my website, , to listen to a short audio excerpt of me teaching on each chapter. You will hear me share intimate details of my own marriage and many of the wonderful love stories, as well as practical application to help you build a no-regrets marriage.

Each chapter also has sections titled “Thinking it Through” and “Living it Out.” These sections have questions to answer based on what the reader learned in each chapter. There are

also Bible verses to look up. This is a great study to do alone, or to use for a book club. I encourage women to start an online book club through Facebook so they can read through the book with their friends and have a virtual discussion online.

My husband, Steve, wrote the section "From a Husband's Perspective" for each chapter to help wives gain insights from his perspective as a husband, pastor and biblical counselor. Steve did such a wonderful job trying to help women realize how their husbands think on specific issues. Many women have emailed me that they have been reading Steve's perspective to their husbands, and the husbands are all in agreement his words are spot on how they think and what they wish their wives would know about them. Often husbands end up reading through the book with their wives once they listened to Steve's insights.

Learn more about more about *If My Husband Would Change, I'd Be Happy* and Rhonda Stoppe at , on Facebook (RhondaStoppeLiveDeliberately) and on Twitter (@RhondaStoppe).