

Why My Marriage Walk Has Not Matched My Marriage Talk

This is a tough post for me to write. You see, I've written hundreds of posts about marriage. However, I came to the startling realization that recently I've been writing and speaking about how to have a great marriage, but I haven't been putting all of it into practice.

Oh, sure, I've done a lot of these things. But I have not gone after it with great zeal and passion like I should.

I really feel bad about it. It makes me sad that, over the past year, instead of giving my wife, Susan, my freshest and best, she's received my leftovers. And there is no excuse for that.

But I had to ask myself "Why?" Well, I didn't realize it, but there are several things that have kept me from being the kind of husband I need to be to Susan. Here are a few:

- House flood and move. The "My Family Is Houseless but Not Homeless" blog post explains what happened.
- Writing books. I spent quite a bit of time writing the *All Pro Dad* book that was released last year, and Susan was in the middle of writing her first book, *The Passionate Mom*.
- Speaking at fatherhood, parenting and marriage conferences and events around the country.
- Financial pressures. Unexpected expenses from our home flood coupled with school and college tuitions consumed much money, time and energy.
- Health challenges with several family members.
- The rut. It's easy to get stuck in the rut of daily routines and the cares of the world without even realizing it. The rut can keep us from being on the

correct relational course.

- Oh, and by the way, I am responsible for serving you and millions of others through Family First and our All Pro Dad, iMOM and Family Minute programs.

So, there you have it. But what am I doing about it? Here is my initial action plan:

1. I'm reviewing several of my blog posts that I think will greatly help me and give me some ideas. The ones I'm reading are:

- 5 Common Mistakes Men Make in Marriage
- 8 Mistakes I've Made in Marriage
- Leftovers Again: 4 Ways to Give Your Spouse Your Freshest and Best
- 10 Things Wives Want to Hear from Their Husbands

2. I'm vowing that I will not speak harshly or critically to Susan.

3. I'm putting reminders at the top of my calendar every day of things I need to say to, and do for, Susan. Susan's "love language" is words of affirmation and encouragement, so I'm going to especially focus on that. My plan is to use sticky notes, texts and face-to-face time to use words to build up and encourage her.

4. I'm going to make date nights with Susan a priority. Some will be scheduled and some will be spontaneous.

5. I'm going to have "service days" for Susan. Yes, we should serve our spouses every day, but a service day will be a day that I am doing anything and everything she wants me to do. For example, yesterday Susan needed to spend the entire day working on a speech she needs to give this week. So I made it a "serve Susan day." I did laundry, watered the flowers, went to the grocery store, cooked dinner, washed the dogs and brought her refreshments.

That's my initial plan, but I want to expand it. Would you please share your ideas of other things I can add to my marriage action plan?

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