

SEVEN PRACTICES TO MAKE YOUR MARRIAGE
BETTER THAN YOUR HONEYMOON

the second happy



Kevin & Marcia Myers

WITH CHARLIE WETZEL

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

The Second Happy

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Introduction

CONVERSATION FOR A COUPLE

Answer these questions on your own, with your spouse doing the same. Then make an appointment with each other to discuss your answers. Have an honest conversation with the goal of serving each other in order to develop a better marriage. Be honest with your feelings, but focus on how *you* can change by applying the practice described to yourself, not your spouse.

- 1. What was your level of happiness (contentment, joy, satisfaction) in your relationship with your spouse at each of these stages, with 1 representing hopeless and 10 totally happy?

Dating	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Honeymoon	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
First Year of Marriage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
At Its Lowest Point	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Today	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Be prepared to discuss why you chose those ratings with your spouse.

2. What would you identify as the most difficult problem or challenge your relationship needs to overcome for the two of you to have a happy, healthy, fulfilling marriage?
3. What is your greatest hope for your marriage? Describe what your best relationship would look like.
4. Where do you most need to improve to make your relationship better?

Once you've shared your answers, discuss what each of you needs to do as a result of your conversation.

DISCUSSION FOR A SMALL GROUP

1. Introduce yourself by telling everyone your name, how long you've been married, your occupation, and one interesting or little-known fact about yourself.
2. How did you and your spouse meet? What attracted you to each other?
3. What prompted you to read *The Second Happy* and become a part of this group?
4. Which of the promises in the introduction is most appealing to you?
 - Really getting along
 - Stopping the pretending
 - Treating each other with kindness every day
 - Truly loving each other
 - Finding ways to compromise happily
 - Never considering giving up
5. What is your reaction to the idea of being able to invest in your marriage and "renovate" it to the point where you will be happier than you were on your honeymoon?
6. On a scale of 1 to 10, what is your level of hope for improving your marriage?
7. Did you answer the questions from "Conversation for a Couple" above individually and then talk to each other about your responses? If so, how did that go? What did you learn? If not, are you willing to commit to doing that for the introduction and practice 1 before the next meeting?
8. Finish this sentence: When we've finished this book, a win in our marriage would be _____.



PRACTICE 1

Break the Quit Cycle

CONVERSATION FOR A COUPLE

Answer these questions on your own, with your spouse doing the same. Then make an appointment with each other to discuss your answers. Have an honest conversation with the goal of serving each other in order to develop a better marriage. Be honest with your feelings, but focus on how *you* can change by applying the practice to yourself, not your spouse.

1. What is the B Zone in your marriage? The issue or area that frustrates you the most, because you don't seem to be able to make progress? How does it make you feel? Why is it important that you work through it?

2. How long has this been a problem? Can you remember when and how it started? What is the most recent example you can think of?

3. What is your C-Zone hope for this problem? What would a win look like for you and how would you celebrate it?

4. What could you do to change that would help in this area? What actions could you take beginning today to wash your spouse's feet and remove your contribution to this problem?

Once you've shared your answers, discuss what each of you needs to do as a result of your conversation.

DISCUSSION FOR A SMALL GROUP

1. What's the best celebration you've ever been a part of? Why was it significant or special to you?
2. In life, do B Zones usually take you by surprise or do you expect them and plan for them? Explain.
3. When you enter a new A Zone, how do you decide whether the C-Zone goal will be worth fighting through the B Zone to reach it?
4. How are B Zones in marriage different from B Zones in other areas of life, such as careers, hobbies, finances, and so on?
5. What is the hardest thing about washing other people's feet and putting them first? How do you get yourself to do it when you don't want to?
6. Is washing your spouse's feet easier or more difficult than washing someone else's? Why?
7. If you answered the questions from "Conversation for a Couple" above, how did it go?
8. What change in your actions did you identify that you need to make to put your spouse first? What will you do differently to make that change? When will you do it?



PRACTICE 2

Get Your Hands Up

CONVERSATION FOR A COUPLE

Answer these questions on your own, with your spouse doing the same. Then make an appointment with each other to discuss your answers. Have an honest conversation with the goal of serving each other in order to develop a better marriage. Be honest with your feelings, but focus on how *you* can change by applying the practice described to yourself, not your spouse.

1. How would you describe your attitude toward prayer up to now? What is the single greatest obstacle you must overcome to engage in hands-up prayer?

2. In your eyes, what is the greatest barrier to praying with your spouse? What can *you* do to overcome your reluctance?

3. What challenge or problem are you facing *together* in your marriage that you would like your spouse to pray about?

4. What personal challenge or problem of *yours* would you like your spouse to pray about for you?

Once you've shared your answers, discuss what each of you needs to do as a result of your conversation.

DISCUSSION FOR A SMALL GROUP

1. What do you consider to be one of your greatest accomplishments? It can be in any area of life: athletic, professional, personal, relational, spiritual. Who helped you accomplish it?
2. Before reading this practice, what was your opinion about the interplay between the natural and supernatural worlds? What is your opinion now? Do you think these two worlds still interact today the same way they did in the time of Moses and Joshua? Explain.
3. What is your personal experience with prayer? Describe it.
4. Why do you think the image of having *hands up* was used? What is the significance? How can you apply it to your prayer life?
5. How difficult do you find it to pray for your spouse? How about *with* your spouse? What are the challenges for each?
6. What do you hope will change in your marriage by praying with and for each other?
7. What lesson or practice can you adopt as your own in prayer? How will you apply it?
8. Are you willing to commit to praying for each other and together for ten consecutive days? When, where, and how will you do it? Who will you ask to hold you accountable?



PRACTICE 3

Pick a Fair Fight

CONVERSATION FOR A COUPLE

Answer these questions on your own, with your spouse doing the same. Then make an appointment with each other to discuss your answers. Have an honest conversation with the goal of serving each other in order to develop a better marriage. Be honest with your feelings, but focus on how *you* can change by applying the practice described to yourself, not your spouse.

1. How would you describe the way you currently resolve conflict in your marriage? And how would you describe the results?
2. What unresolved issue, disagreement, or recurring conflict would you most like to resolve in your marriage?

3. Would you be willing to abide by the fair-fight rules? How do you think they would work for you? How would they work for your spouse?

4. When will you call for your first fair fight? What should be the penalty for someone who violates a rule?

Once you've shared your answers, discuss what each of you needs to do as a result of your conversation.

DISCUSSION FOR A SMALL GROUP

1. What was your favorite competitive activity to watch or participate in when you were growing up? Why?
2. Are you a fan of boxing, MMA, or martial arts? Explain.
3. How did people fight in your family growing up? What practices have you adopted or deliberately tried to avoid?
4. Are you typically a good sport, a bad sport, or a no sport (someone who declines to play at all)? Why? Would your spouse agree with your self-assessment?
5. When you experience conflict, are you more likely to fight, dig your heels in, or flee? What about your spouse? How do your styles interact?
6. What do you expect to be most challenging about the process of picking a fair fight and following the fair-fight rules? Why?
7. How do you think your marriage and family would change if you learned to fight fair and resolve conflict?
8. Are you willing to commit to picking a fair fight, scheduling it, and completing at least rounds 1 through 4 before the next group meeting?



PRACTICE 4

Take a Knee or Two

CONVERSATION FOR A COUPLE

Answer these questions on your own, with your spouse doing the same. Then make an appointment with each other to discuss your answers. Have an honest conversation with the goal of serving each other in order to develop a better marriage. Be honest with your feelings, but focus on how *you* can change by applying the practice to yourself, not your spouse.

1. What do you find most difficult about the idea of mutual voluntary submission?

2. If you were to put yourself in the vulnerable position of submitting to your spouse, would you trust them to do the same? If not, why not?

3. Where in your marriage have you struggled the most when trying to determine who's the boss? Describe the issue as you see it.

4. Have you tried using the fair-fight rules to resolve the issue? If not, try them. If you have, and the issue is still unresolved, what specific action could you take to practice mutual voluntary submission?

Once you've shared your answers, discuss what each of you needs to do as a result of your conversation.

DISCUSSION FOR A SMALL GROUP

1. Who is the best boss you've ever had? Describe them and tell a story that illustrates why you believe this.
2. Do you have a funny story about a battle of wills in your marriage similar to the one Tony told about him and Kellie? If so, share it.
3. What happens in a relationship when there is a struggle over who's the boss?
4. What was your reaction when you read about the concept of mutual voluntary submission? How do you think practicing it would benefit a marriage, a workplace, and a community?
5. What potential challenges do you foresee in making mutual voluntary submission work in any relationship?
6. What makes it difficult for you personally to take a knee or two for your spouse?
7. In what ways have you struggled with deferring to your spouse and submitting to them as an act of love in Christlikeness?
8. How would your marriage change if you practiced mutual voluntary submission? Are you willing to commit to trying mutual voluntary submission in your marriage? When and how will you do so?



PRACTICE 5

Don't Settle for the Hollow Easter Bunny

CONVERSATION FOR A COUPLE

Answer these questions on your own, with your spouse doing the same. Then make an appointment with each other to discuss your answers. Have an honest conversation with the goal of serving each other in order to develop a better marriage. Be honest with your feelings, but focus on how *you* can change by applying the practice to yourself, not your spouse.

1. How committed and successful have you been in living out the faith nonnegotiables listed in the practice? Why have you succeeded or failed with each?
 - Spend time with God daily.
 - Worship God together weekly.
 - Put God first in finances always.

2. How would you describe the differences between your and your spouse's attitudes toward these biblical principles in marriage? What might be the source of those differences?

3. What other family nonnegotiables would you like to see embraced and practiced in your marriage and family?

4. How would you personally need to change to build a more solid marriage? What would you need to start doing differently?

Once you've shared your answers, discuss what each of you needs to do as a result of your conversation.

DISCUSSION FOR A SMALL GROUP

1. Have you ever experienced anything like Dan and Patti Reiland's animal disaster where everything seemed to go wrong or fall apart? If so, share the story.
2. In your family, growing up, did you practice any faith nonnegotiables? If so, what were they, and how did they influence you?
3. In your family, growing up, were there any other nonnegotiables? If so, what were they, and how did they influence you?
4. How would you describe the bunny of your marriage? Is it more solid or more hollow? Would you describe the chocolate as sweet, bittersweet, or unsweetened? Why?
5. In the story with the building blocks, who did you relate to more: Steve or his more consistent brother? Why?
6. Have you and your spouse ever discussed and agreed to the nonnegotiable values you want to practice in your marriage? If so, what are they? If not, are you willing to have that discussion?
7. How would your marriage look if you agreed to practice values that made it more solid? Describe how it would change.
8. What is the single greatest obstacle preventing you from consistently living the values you desire to embrace? How can you overcome it?



PRACTICE 6

Evict the Elephant

CONVERSATION FOR A COUPLE

Answer these questions on your own, with your spouse doing the same. Then make an appointment with each other to discuss your answers. Have an honest conversation with the goal of serving each other in order to develop a better marriage. Be honest with your feelings, but focus on how *you* can change by applying the practice described to yourself, not your spouse.

1. Which of the six elephants listed in the practice are issues in your marriage: money, escaping, health and fitness, boundaries, boredom, or sex? List all that apply.

2. How do each of the elephants you identified negatively affect your relationship with your spouse or children?

3. Which elephant do you want to deal with first? What must you do to evict it inwardly?

4. How can you deal with the elephant outwardly by discussing it with your spouse? Write out the problem as you see it, including how you negatively contribute to it.

Once you've shared your answers, discuss what each of you needs to do as a result of your conversation.

DISCUSSION FOR A SMALL GROUP

1. Who was your favorite pet? If you never had a pet, explain why.
2. What subjects were taboo in your family when you were growing up? Why?
3. How did your family of origin deal with difficult issues? Describe it. What practices have you taken into your own family?
4. Why do you think couples pretend they don't have problems, instead of identifying them and working on them together? Name as many reasons as you can.
5. What does pretense do to a marriage? A family?
6. What have been the greatest obstacles to you for evicting the elephants in your marriage or family?
7. How would your marriage improve if you could evict the elephants and live completely without pretense?
8. Did you and your spouse discuss your answers to the "Conversation for a Couple" questions? How did that go? Are you willing to start working on the problems one shovelful at a time? When will you start?



PRACTICE 7

Choose Your Bucket Wisely

CONVERSATION FOR A COUPLE

Answer these questions on your own, with your spouse doing the same. Then make an appointment with each other to discuss your answers. Have an honest conversation with the goal of serving each other in order to develop a better marriage. Be honest with your feelings, but focus on how *you* can change by applying the practice to yourself, not your spouse.

1. How were relational difficulties handled in your family when you were growing up? How much have that modeling and those habits influenced how you respond now?

2. How do you respond when you experience a troubling relational spark, ember, or flame with your spouse or children? How many times out of ten would you say you tend to use the gasoline bucket? Would your spouse agree with your assessment? When you use the gasoline instead of the water bucket, why do you think you do it?

3. How would your relationship change if you learned to use only the water bucket? Are you willing to commit to learn that process and make that change?

4. What help do you need from the Holy Spirit to help you use only the water bucket? In what ways do you need him to repent you? What can you do to remind yourself as you grow angry that you need to pick up the water bucket, not the gasoline bucket?

Once you've shared your answers, discuss what each of you needs to do as a result of your conversation.

DISCUSSION FOR A SMALL GROUP

1. If you could go on any kind of vacation to any place in the world, where would you go and why?
2. Was your upbringing more like Kevin's or Marcia's? Explain.
3. What kinds of things tend to set you off or make you angry? Why do they bother you?
4. How would you rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being "slow to anger" and 10 being "hot-tempered"?
5. How do you think the way you handle anger (based on the rating above) affects your relationship with your spouse? Your family? Your colleagues?
6. What would change in your marriage if you were able to lower your rating down to "slow to anger"?
7. Which practice do you find most difficult to do when conflict arises and why?
 - Pause and put out the fire.
 - Forgive the offense.
 - Restore the relationship.
8. What are you willing to do to become someone who is slow to anger (Prov. 15:18), uses a soft answer to turn away wrath (Prov. 15:1), brings calm (Prov. 29:11), and forgives others (Eph. 4:32)?