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*Whether she's
left physically or
emotionally, all
that matters is...*

Winning Your Wife Back

Before It's Too Late

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

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Step
Six

*Understand Why Some Women Are Not in a
Position to Reconcile*

The Personal Strength Survey

Lion		Otter	
<i>"Let's do it now!"</i>		<i>"Trust me! It'll work out!"</i>	
Likes authority	Productive	Enthusiastic	Takes risks
Takes charge	Bold	Visionary	Motivator
Determined	Purposeful, goal driven	Energetic	Very verbal
Confident	Decision maker	Promoter	Friendly
Firm	Adventurous	Enjoys popularity	Fun-loving
Enterprising	Strong willed	Likes variety	Spontaneous
Competitive	Independent, self-reliant	Enjoys change	Creative
Enjoys challenges	Controlling	Group oriented	Optimistic
Problem solver	Persistent	Initiator	Mixes easily
Action oriented		Infectious laughter	
Golden Retriever		Beaver	
<i>"Let's keep things the way they are."</i>		<i>"How was it done in the past?"</i>	
Sensitive feelings	Loyal	Accurate	Consistent
Calm, even keel	Nondemanding	Controlled	Reserved
Enjoys routine	Dislikes change	Predictable	Orderly
Warm/relational	Gives in	Factual	Conscientious
Indecisive	Dry humor	Perfectionistic	Discerning
Adaptable	Sympathetic	Detailed	Analytical
Thoughtful	Nurturing	Inquisitive	Precise
Patient	Tolerant	Persistent	Scheduled
Good listener	Peacemaker		
Avoids confrontations			

Personal Strength Survey Chart

	"L"	"O"	"G"	"B"
40				
30				
20				
10				
0				

Write Your Game Plan for Reconciliation

Reconciliation Game Plan and Contract

What Type of Relationship Do You Want?

On a scale from 0 to 10, with 0 being terrible and 10 being a great marriage, where would you like your relationship to be most of the time?

Terrible Average Great

0—1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10

Where Is the Relationship Today?

On a scale from 0 to 10, overall where would you rate your marriage today?

Terrible Average Great

0—1—2—3—4—5—6—7—8—9—10

Identify What Hasn't Helped—Do Less of It!

As you look at your relationship, what are some specific things you could stop doing over the next few weeks that would move you closer to your goal? Mark the following negative behaviors or penalty flags that you need to stop using with your wife and family.

- ___ Recruiting others against your wife.
- ___ Blaming your wife or others for the marital problems.
- ___ Using dishonoring (critical) speech with your family.
- ___ Being impatient if your wife does not respond (or slowly responds) to your reconciliation efforts.
- ___ Setting a time frame for your wife to return.

- ___ Initiating unwanted physical displays of affection.
- ___ Overkilling with flowers, cards, and gifts.
- ___ Underestimating the hurt you've caused your wife and family.
- ___ Disregarding your wife's boundaries.

For the penalty flags that you marked, review how to discontinue doing these things found in step one. Write out the specific details that will help you stop these destructive behaviors.

I, _____, intend to do the following in order to stop these damaging behaviors:

Recruiting:

Blaming:

Having a critical spirit:

Being impatient:

Setting a time frame:

Displaying affection in physical ways:

Overkilling:

Underestimating hurt:

Disregarding boundaries:

In addition, we have discovered several everyday behaviors that can keep the relationship ball behind the line of scrimmage. Place a check mark before each of the following actions that typified your marriage in recent years. All of us lose ground from time to time and fumble the ball. However, it usually takes five positives to offset one negative. As you mark the ones you are doing, make a commitment to terminate the behavior(s). Then use the list to occasionally review whether you are inadvertently doing any of these destructive things again.

- ___ Turning on the TV or the computer while tuning out your wife.
- ___ Being sarcastic with her.
- ___ Ignoring or degrading her advice or opinions.
- ___ Criticizing her family and friends.
- ___ Overcommitting yourself to outside interests.
- ___ Talking to her or treating her as though she were a child.
- ___ Living a double standard (doing things you won't allow her to do).
- ___ Using profanity or name-calling.
- ___ Letting things go around the house; ignoring her honey-do list.
- ___ Letting your eyes wander to other women.
- ___ Criticizing the way she does things (housecleaning, child rearing, etc.).
- ___ Giving looks of disgust.
- ___ Raising your voice in anger.
- ___ Showing more attention to other people than to her.
- ___ Giving your wife the silent treatment.
- ___ Correcting her or being rude to her in public.
- ___ Pressuring her.
- ___ Lecturing her.
- ___ Ignoring her.
- ___ Honking the horn at her.
- ___ Breaking promises.
- ___ Making comments about women on TV or in magazines that make her feel inferior.
- ___ Holding resentment about something she did.
- ___ Coercing her into an argument.
- ___ Not trusting her.

- ___ Being unsympathetic when she is tired, ill, upset, sad, or frustrated.
- ___ Not telling her that you love her.
- ___ Not attending church as a family.
- ___ Demanding that she be involved with you sexually when you are not in harmony.
- ___ Not being involved with household chores and care of children.
- ___ Criticizing her womanly characteristics or sensitivity as being weak.
- ___ Being unwilling to admit when you're wrong.
- ___ Reading or watching pornography.
- ___ Being stingy with money.
- ___ Not eating meals with her.
- ___ Complaining while doing something with her (having a bad attitude the whole time).
- ___ Forgetting and/or not celebrating special occasions (her birthday, your anniversary, and Valentine's Day).
- ___ Minimizing her efforts.
- ___ Not encouraging and supporting her interests.
- ___ Being impolite.
- ___ Wanting to do things that embarrass her sexually.
- ___ Disregarding her requests to read a certain book, listen to a tape, watch a video, or hear a speaker.
- ___ Continuing distasteful or harmful habits.
- ___ Taking her for granted.
- ___ Being preoccupied with your own agenda.
- ___ Monopolizing the TV remote control.
- ___ Blaming her for everything.
- ___ Being impatient with her: hurrying her to get ready, to finish shopping, or to get to the point.

- ___ Becoming absorbed in self-interests to the exclusion of her and/or the kids.
- ___ Kidding or making unkind comments about her body or age (about how she used to look or how much she used to weigh).
- ___ Questioning her spending.
- ___ Not consulting or honoring her in decisions to spend/invest money.
- ___ Telling her what to do.
- ___ Taking no time to prepare her for sexual intimacy.
- ___ Being unwilling to join her in the things she enjoys.
- ___ Not fully appreciating the mundane and exhaustive chores a wife and mother does (picking up clothes and toys all day, washing, ironing, vacuuming, doing dishes, sweeping, straightening, folding, running errands, making calls).
- ___ Always showing indifference instead of showing initiative and making plans.
- ___ Joking about her monthly mood swings.
- ___ Having an unkempt or unclean appearance.
- ___ Giving no thought to gifts for her.
- ___ Physically abusing her (from shoving to beating).

*Identify What Has Been or Could Be Helpful in the
Reconciliation Process—Do More of It!*

As you look at your relationship, what are some specific things you could begin to do over the next six weeks that would move you closer to your goal? Respond to the following eight positive behaviors that you need to start or continue using with your wife and family.

Winning Your Wife Back Before It's Too Late

1. Open your wife's closed spirit (if needed, review step two).

I, _____, commit to doing these four things to open the spirit of my wife and children:

- a. Become soft and tender.
- b. Use "drive-through talking" to gain a better understanding of what they have gone through.
- c. Acknowledge that they are hurting, then admit my mistake and seek forgiveness.
- d. Demonstrate genuine repentance.

2. Show honor to your wife and children (if needed, review step three).

We have found certain everyday honoring actions and behaviors that advance the relationship ball and keep possession of it. (Please note that some of them cannot be implemented until you are reunited.)

Since it can take five positives to offset one negative remark or behavior, from the following "honor" list,

I, _____, commit to picking out five or more to use during the next week:

- Regularly say, "I love you."
- Promptly attend to needed household repairs.
- Receive her help without rejecting her or being defensive.
- Call her during the day.

- Share with her my calendar schedule for the coming week/month/year.
- Pray together.
- Show good manners (saying, “thank you,” “please,” “excuse me,” holding doors open, helping her carry things, etc.).
- Know her favorite things and sizes.
- Hug her each and every day.
- Share household chores and do them together.
- Cook together.
- Write little notes to her.
- Give her foot and back rubs.
- Treat her with as much courtesy as I would a friend or even a stranger.
- Kiss her good-bye and hello each day.
- Take her prayer list to work with me.
- Remember birthdays, anniversaries, and other special occasions (celebrate her!).
- Watch her favorite TV program with her.
- Share the control of the TV remote.
- Ask her opinion frequently, and value it.
- Wink at her from across a crowded room.
- Schedule quality time to talk.
- Compliment her often (privately and publicly).
- Make specific family goals for each year.
- Be forgiving when she offends me.
- Plan and initiate fun outings together.
- Show her I need her.
- Plan and prepare a picnic lunch.
- Admit my mistakes.
- Give flowers, cards, or small gifts for no reason.

- Defend her to others.
- Prefer her over others.
- Do not expect her to do activities beyond her emotional or physical capabilities.
- Take time to notice and acknowledge all that she does for me and the family.
- Discipline the children in love, not anger.
- Help her finish her goals (ministry, work, hobbies, or education).
- Get rid of habits that annoy her.
- Hold her hand in public.
- Do not expect a band to play every time I help with the housecleaning or watch the kids.
- Do little things for her (bring her coffee, hold her hand while going up/down stairs, help with errands).
- Treat her as an intellectual equal.
- Take advantage of Valentine's Day to make her feel like the most loved and cherished woman on earth.
- Discover her fears in life and what makes her feel insecure, then see what I can do to alleviate them.
- Ask her how I can better meet her sexual needs.
- Ask if she is jealous of anyone and what I can do to alleviate her suspicions.
- Ask if she is uncomfortable about the way money is spent or invested.
- Honor her thoughts and feelings about how the money is spent or invested.
- Learn to enjoy shopping with her.
- Honor her requests to read a certain book, listen to a tape, or watch a television show or video.
- Take her on weekend getaways.

- Encourage her to spend special time alone and with her friends.
- Have a generous attitude (with my money and time).
- Receive her criticism with humility and gratefulness.
- Be attentive to her—notice what she’s wearing, what colors or styles look good on her, how her hair looks.
- Honor her request to wear a certain outfit.
- Look at her when she talks to me.
- Wear a cologne she loves.
- Let her know where I’m going and what I’m doing.
- Discuss spiritual themes together.
- Hug her in nonsexual ways—more than eight times a day.

3. Learn how to love sacrificially (if needed, review step four).

I, _____, commit to loving my wife and family by doing the following:

a. Becoming a servant. (List several ways to serve your wife and family.)

b. Continuing to support them financially. (What are your wife and family’s financial needs?)

c. Providing additional help when needed. (What are sev-

eral specific ways that you could provide other kinds of help for your wife?)

4. Initiate change in myself (if needed, review step five).

I, _____, commit to initiating change in the following areas of my life:

a. Mental. (List the specific things you can do to grow in this area.)

b. Physical. (List the specific things you can do to grow in this area.)

c. Spiritual. (List the specific things you can do to grow in this area.)

d. Social. (List the specific things you can do to grow in this area.)

5. Understand why your wife may not be in a position to reconcile at this time (if needed, review step six).

I, _____, commit to exploring and understanding the following reasons why my wife may not be ready to reconcile at this present moment:

a. Has your wife been the victim of emotional, physical, or sexual abuse (either by you or someone else)? Without using names, list the possible ways that your wife has been victimized in these areas. As you think about what she has been through, ask the Lord to give you understanding and wisdom in how you can best help your wife in this area.

b. Circle the personality that seems to fit your wife the best: lion, otter, golden retriever, or beaver. As a result of her personality, list several reasons why your wife may be resistant to your reconciliation. (You may need to review the section on personality types.)

c. As a result of your actions, are there any reasons why your wife's spirit is still closed?

You may need to repeat the following four steps in order to open her spirit:

- a) Become soft and tender with my wife.
- b) Gain a better understanding of what she has gone through.
- c) Acknowledge any hurt, then admit my mistake and seek forgiveness.
- d) Show genuine repentance.

6. Understand your ultimate goal in the reconciliation process (if needed, review step seven). What do the following passages tell you?

- James 5:16:

- Colossians 3:17:

- Psalm 112:

- Romans 5:3–5:

I, _____, commit to knowing God and letting Him become my strength. I will do the following specific things to seek after His ways:

7. I, _____, commit to learning what it means to be persistent in the reconciliation process.

Read Luke 18:1–8. What does this story have to do with your situation? What do you think God means by being persistent? What happens if you get a divorce? Does this mean you are to never give up on reconciliation? We encourage you to prayerfully and carefully consider these questions. Each situation and every individual is different. As a result, it is very important to think through questions like these in order to formulate your belief.

People around you will try to convince you that they have all the “right” answers. Be careful. You need to decide what you believe God is calling you to do in your situation. Even among Christians there is no agreement on how we should interpret what the Bible says about divorce and remarriage. In the book *Divorce and Remarriage*, Wayne House presents four perspectives on this difficult issue. We strongly encourage you to read his book to help you define your position more clearly.

8. Be responsible for your own accountability by joining a support group (if needed, review step nine).

I, _____, commit to joining a support group for the purpose of being held accountable to doing the things needed to bring about reconciliation with my wife and family.

List the names of some people whom you would like to hold you accountable:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.
- 9.
- 10.

By signing my name, I, _____, commit to following through with this plan for reconciliation. I also commit to being open to modifying my plan when changes are needed. But above learning to love my wife and children, I commit to becoming a man of God, no matter what happens in my marital relationship.

Your Signature: _____

Date: _____

Witness: _____

Date: _____

(A person who is going to hold you accountable)

Appendix

A

Training Exercises

These are excellent for individual study or small group interaction.

1. Suppose you scored your marriage in terms of a football game. What is the score, and how much time is left in the game?

- Down by four touchdowns at half time.
- Down by a touchdown and into the two-minute drill.
- Down by a ton, with no timeouts; she has the ball.
- I don't know the score.

2. Let's say it's half time, and you're on the short end of a lopsided score. You're huddling with the guys in the locker room. What's your focus?

- Stop making stupid plays, turnovers, and penalties.
- Analyze why I have fallen behind.
- Get the ball back, and make several first downs.

- Listen to the Head Coach, and do the plays He calls.

3. If you are willing to do whatever it takes to win, but admit that until now you have not given it your best shot, which of the following have you not done consistently?

- Study the rule book (the Bible) and play by the rules.
- Understand the playbook (my wife).
- Obey the Head Coach (the Lord).
- Listen to others who coach and cheer me on.
- Get equipped with other resources.

4. To put together a balanced offense, you will want to enlist the help of the rule book (the Bible), the playbook (your wife), the Head Coach (God Himself), any assistant coaches you know (supporting ministries), scouts (counselors), and the other men in your huddle group. Spend some time identifying your behavior and attitudes that incur penalties, negative yardage, and loss of possession (turnovers). Of the following, what have you been flagged for in the past year? For which have you had repeated infractions?

- Illegal substitution—recruiting violations
- Intentionally grounding—playing the blame game
- Unsportsmanlike conduct—displaying a critical spirit
- False start—rushing her by your impatience
- Illegal snap—imposing a time frame for reconciliation
- Holding—prematurely initiating physical displays of affection
- Piling on—resorting to overkill in trying to do good
- Unnecessary roughness—underestimating hurt

- Offsides—disregarding boundaries

5. Suppose you are clueless about what happened in your troubled marriage. Invite others into your huddle to review the game films of your marriage up to the present. With 20/20 hindsight and instant replay, and in light of what you have learned in this book, what rules of the game do you now see that you violated?

6. The second half is about to begin and your Coach will put you back in the game only if you can clearly assess all the damage that your plays have caused the team. Look at the list under number 4. Give yourself a penalty—5 yards for unintentional fouls, and 15 yards for intentional ones. Total up every one of the minus yards. How much ground have you lost in the first half of the game?

7. With the help of instant replay (any letters or messages from your wife), plus the encouragement of other men in your huddle group, try to identify the things you do that make first downs, gain positive yardage, keep possession of the reconciliation ball, and even score a few touchdowns. Next, which of the following behaviors typify you this past year?

- Giving thanks, even for my wife's wake-up call.
- Asking forgiveness and showing genuine repentance.
- Regarding my wife as the star QB calling the plays.

- Honoring my wife's boundaries, especially her "no."
- Loving my wife sacrificially, even when it hurts.
- Listening to her and learning from her built-in play-book.
- Contributing financially and helping in other areas.
- Showing tenderness, being vulnerable.
- Being in accountability relationships with others.
- Initiating change in myself—not her.

8. Review step five. Where have you gained the most yards? Where do you have the most room to improve—mentally, physically, spiritually, or socially?

9. Choose one aspect of your game to improve the next time you have the ball. What is that one aspect, and what specific changes do you plan on making?

10. Reflecting on your first few years of marriage, check which measure of each ingredient your wife would say you provided her.

Key: (a) not enough to survive, (b) enough to maintain the status quo, (c) enough to grow and flourish together

Sunlight: unconditional security (a) ____ (b) ____ (c) ____

Water: meaningful conversation (a) ____ (b) ____ (c) ____

Soil: emotional/romantic bonding (a) ____ (b) ____ (c) ____

Air: positive physical touching (a) ____ (b) ____ (c) ____

11. As you consider your relationship just prior to the separation or divorce, which ingredient(s) was particularly weak or absent?

- Sunlight
- Water
- Soil
- Air

12. Having identified that missing ingredient, list specific ways you can provide it for your wife, once you are given the opportunity.

13. The five things that women reported they valued most in a man make a fitting report card for husbands. Grade your effectiveness in each of these areas.

Key: A (the best), B, C, D, F (the worst)

- ___ A growing Christian and spiritual leader
- ___ A sense of humor and fun to be with
- ___ Integrity, honesty
- ___ Tenderness, gentleness, sensitivity
- ___ Prioritizes family

14. How many pieces of emotional baggage is your wife carrying around? Are they light or heavy? From what point of origin? Destination? Any lost items?

15. Which personality bent best describes your wife? With which animal do you most identify?

16. Read through the ten verses of Psalm 112. What do you sense is God's timely message for you?

17. You must understand the root cause of your marital problems. To help you toward that end, what would your wife say is the main reason you are not together right now?

18. Write down the things you did, but shouldn't have done, plus the things you should have done, but didn't.

19. Asking for help is difficult for many men, but the wise man asks. When was the last time you asked anyone for help? Whom do you know, trust, and respect enough to ask for significant help with what you are going through right now?

20. Pray for her (and you) to be relieved of deep-seated anger. The less anger on both your parts adds to her ability to receive your loving acts. If either you or your wife has too

much buried anger and/or bitterness, both will not be able to readily give or receive loving efforts. We gave you specific tools throughout this book to lessen anger levels.

21. You might consider doing a topical Bible study on patience, asking the Lord to cultivate His calm steadfastness in you. Remember the beautiful promise of Isaiah 26:3 (NKJV), “You will keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on You.” You will need to trust the Lord on this one, and that’s the posture He has wanted from you all along.

Trust in the LORD with all your heart,
And lean not on your own understanding;
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He shall direct your paths. (Prov. 3:5–6 NKJV)

Appendix

B:

Resources to Equip You

Rule book: the Bible

Playbook: your wife

Home field advantage: if you two live together

Huddle group: for support and accountability

Head coach: God

Assistant Coaches (Ministry Organizations)

- Smalley Relationship Center: call (800) 84-TODAY (to order books or videos) or (417) 335-4321 for seminar information (garysmalley.com).
- Promise Keepers: call (800) 456-PK94 (to order products) or (800) 888-PK95 (for men's conferences and information on small groups in your area).
- Focus on the Family: call (800) A-FAMILY.
- DivorceCare: call (800) 646-2001.
- Fresh Start: call (800) 882-2799.

Qualified Scouts (Counseling Centers)

- RAPHA Clinics: call (800) 383-4673.

- Larry Crabb & Associates: call (508) 977-5080.
- American Association of Christian Counselors: call (800) 526-8673.

Game Films (Video Series)

- *Hidden Keys to Loving Relationships*, eighteen thirty-minute videos by Gary Smalley
- *Love Is a Choice* (one video) by Drs. Minirth, Meier, and Hemfelt
- *Inside Out* (four videos) by Larry Crabb
- *Growing Closer: Building Christ-Centered Relationships* (three videos, six sessions) by Gail and Gordon MacDonald
- *DivorceCare* (fourteen videos) by Steve Grissom

Field Manuals (Books)

- Neil Anderson, *Breaking Through to Spiritual Maturity*
- Paul Billheimer, *Don't Waste Your Sorrows*
- Larry Crabb, *The Marriage Builder; Inside Out*
- Gordon Dalbey, *Healing the Masculine Soul; Fight Like a Man*
- James Dobson, *Straight Talk to Men and Their Wives; What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew About Women*
- Tony Evans, *Returning to Your First Love*
- Bruce Fisher, *Rebuilding: When a Relationship Ends*
- Gene Getz, *The Measure of a Man*
- R. Kent Hughes, *Disciplines of a Godly Man*
- Jerry Jenkins, *Loving Your Marriage Enough to Protect It*
- Ann Jones and Susan Schecter, *When Love Goes Wrong: What to Do When You Can't Do Anything Right*

- Howard Markman and Scott Stanley, *Fighting for Your Marriage*
- Michael McManus, *Marriage Savers*
- Gary Oliver, *Real Men Have Feelings and How to Change Your Spouse Without Ruining Your Marriage*
- John Powell, *The Secret of Staying in Love*
- Promise Keepers, *Power of a Promise Kept; Seven Promises of a Promise Keeper; What Makes a Man?*
- Gary Rosberg, *Guard Your Heart*
- Gary Smalley, *Joy That Lasts; Hidden Keys of a Loving, Lasting Marriage*
- Gary Smalley and John Trent, *The Blessing; The Hidden Value of a Man; Love Is a Decision*
- John Trent, *Lifemapping*
- E. Glenn Wagner and Dietrich Gruen, *Strategies for a Successful Marriage*
- John White, *Eros Defiled*