



One thing is absolutely certain. You cannot change your spouse. Let me say that again. **You cannot change your spouse.** We all have been given a gift from God called “free will” which is solely owned by the individual. Each of us has a choice on how we will use that free will, impacting our ability to grow and change.

If you understand that one truth, then you must shift your mindset from being focused on your spouse to being focused on YOU! I know, I know, you’re saying, “but you don’t know what they’ve done, or what they fail to do for me.” That all may be true, but focusing on your spouse’s shortcomings isn’t going to solve the discord in your marriage. We call that “negative sentiment”.

We can sit and wait for the other person to make the first move, but that means we have no control over if or when change will happen. This just leaves you waiting, accruing more reasons to reinforce your “negative sentiment”, leaving you feeling helpless, powerless, and hopeless. Do you know what the opposites of those words are? They are helpful, empowered, and hopeful!

This means we must change our mindset! Don’t miss this part. Things start in the mind. Your part in improving your relationship starts in your thoughts. I’m talking about the story you are running in your head about your spouse and your marriage. The typical trajectory of every romantic love story starts with rose-colored glasses, with each person seeing the best in each other and willing to overlook any faults. The couple is just happy to be together and to stare into each other’s eyes with love. We call this a “positive sentiment” toward one another.

Over time, those initial feelings fade, so we need to learn how to re-cultivate the love between each other, starting with our thoughts. We have to monitor the story in our heads about our spouse and work toward keeping it from going negative. Time, inattention, and relationship wounds erode the positive sentiment, slowly allowing the negative to override it.

Your journey of reviving your marriage BEGINS here. We must reverse that negative override system and start with the positive once again. If you will both commit to this journey together, you will realize that the love you thought you had at the beginning was only a shadow of the love you can experience together now and in the future. It all starts with looking at our thoughts. Our thoughts lead to feelings which lead to action.

## ACTION STEPS WEEK ONE:

### STEP ONE:

Over the next 24 hours, each of you individually write out your Love Story. Don’t forget the details - especially if the steps below remind you of the positive story in your head about your partner.

- How you met.
- Your initial impression and thoughts.
- First date/most memorable date.
- When you know he/she was “the one”.
- Proposal - do you remember what he/she said?
- The wedding - remember the visceral feeling in your body during this experience.
- The honeymoon.

## **ACTION STEPS WEEK ONE (continued):**

### **STEP TWO:**

**THIS IS AN IMPORTANT STEP! DO NOT SKIP!** Each of you think of two or three **CURRENT-TENSE** affirmation statements about you, your spouse, and your marriage. These statements are to affirm the positive and true versions of your marriage.

### **EXAMPLES:**

- "I am madly and passionately in love with my husband/wife."
- "My wife/husband is madly and passionately in love with me."
- "We have a promising future in front of us."
- "I have the utmost respect for his/her personality differences."
- "I am capable of feeling and showing my affection for my spouse."

**Write or type these statements out and place them on your bathroom mirror. Every morning, take time to read and affirm these statements over your spouse/marriage. Be prepared to share them with your spouse when you meet.**

### **STEP THREE:**

#### **MEET TOGETHER AT YOUR PRE-ARRANGED TIME:**

- ☐ Exchange your story with one another. It might surprise you at the differences of details each of you remember that will hopefully remind you of positive things you may have forgotten.
- ☐ Share your affirmations that you have written and are speaking over your spouse daily.
- ☐ Pull out those wedding photos. Dust them off if you have to. Watch that old video of the wedding. If it's still in VHS format, have it converted! Now is the time! Enjoy!!