

VOICES IN YOUR EAR

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NEW CONVERSATIONS TO TRANSFORM YOUR MIND AND RENEW YOUR MARRIAGE

Dr. Chavonne Perotte

*For my mother, who told me what the title of this book
would be long before it was ever a thought in my mind...
and for reminding me when I forgot...by text message...
at 7:38 in the morning...after a conversation with God
And so it is.*

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INTRODUCTION

I AM SO glad that this book found its way to your hands. At this very moment, something is calling you to speak life into your marriage. I honor your desire and affirm that you are headed in the right direction.

Your marriage is beautiful. Your marriage is happy. Your marriage is a source of joy in your life. At least it can be.

This book is all about seeing what's possible for the relationship between you and your husband. It's all about changing the conversation you've been having with yourself. Perhaps you are in a place right now where all the things that are going wrong are overwhelming you. Or it's where the disappointments, unmet expectations, and frustrations of marriage are consuming your mind. Perhaps you are in a place where you've occasionally resolved yourself to just be unhappy, to sit passively by and watch things veer further and further off course. Maybe it seems like it's just not worth the effort, and you're starting to lose hope.

The good news is you have *not* lost hope, which is why you're reading this book. You're looking for some positive words, a bit of inspiration, and direction for how to change the conversation going on in your head and with yourself on a continual basis. You want a new voice in your ear that will encourage, motivate, and remind you that it's still worth your effort. This book will do just that.

The new conversation you will have is one of declaring and affirming what you want and will create in yourself and in your marriage.

Each declaration and affirmation provides you with a statement that speaks life into your mind and marriage. They will help you change the way you see yourself, your husband, and your marriage, all for the better. As I draw on the incredible power of your thoughts and with a foundation of faith in an almighty God, it is my hope that you will have an experience that forever changes your perspective on the things that have been happening in your marriage.

This book is designed to empower you to use your thoughts for good and to create the new reality you want to experience. Allow it to do that. Approach each day with an open mind to be led and directed toward a path of your greater good.

I take very seriously your time and do not receive lightly the opportunity I have to influence you. This book will serve you well if you are in a place in your marriage where you feel the connection, passion, and interest is no longer there. It's also where you have communication

issues or don't feel heard or understood in the way you would like. This book will be helpful if you find yourself overwhelmed and overburdened by too many things to do and not enough time and you have started to build up a little resentment because it seems like your husband is not doing his part. It will provide the right motivation when you feel tempted to allow your feelings to take you down a path of withholding your love, distancing yourself, and becoming indifferent to the things going on in your marriage.

I'm excited to share these next hundred days with you and hope you get everything you need and more to heal your marriage and your mind about it.



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

IF YOU ARE wanting a better, closer, more peaceful relationship with your husband, the messages here, once applied, will bring about the transformation in you to radically shift the direction your marriage is headed. But like anything in life, you will get out of it what you put into it.

I have organized this book into ten sections, each with ten specific declarations, affirmations, and statements designed to change your thinking, the conversations you have with yourself, and ultimately the results you are seeing in your life and marriage. To start, I suggest you begin with the section you are most drawn to and then stick with that category for the following ten days or until you have read and practiced applying each of the statements to your life. Then move on to other sections as you are led until you have read the entire book.

The benefit in doing it this way is that you will have planted a hundred seeds in your mind that will rest and preserve themselves until just the moment you need them. You'll be surprised how easily you'll be able to recall the sentiment of a declaration just as you are facing a

situation where it can help you. Be diligent to quiet your mind, and let it direct you in how you should see your circumstance.

While these sections are not an exhaustive list of every single thing you may need to focus on related to your marriage, they are ten of the most essential. Take the topics seriously and look for ways they apply to your situation, even if it's not obvious at first. Somewhere and someday, you may have something come up where one of these statements is just the thing you need to change your perspective and help you successfully navigate the experience.

Here are four recommendations for how to get the most out of this journey together:

- Commit to completing this entire book and absorbing each declaration, affirmation, and statement. So many times we have the best intentions. We even start out strong, totally motivated to read a book until the very end. Then something happens to distract us and take us off course. And we remain stuck in the same situation, getting the same outcomes. Decide right now to make this journey a habit in your life. Commit to completing it, no matter what. This means no matter what your husband is or is not doing, what you are feeling on a particular day, or what else is on your to-do list. Mark this time as sacred, and do not let anything or anyone come to steal it away.

- Soak up each declaration and affirmation as if it were food to sustain you throughout the day. Dedicate a particular hour to read, and take in its message. But reinforce the thinking over the course of your day. Write it down, and carry it with you. Get a Post-it note, and place it somewhere you will see it often. Take a photo of it, and review it each time you look at your phone. Repetition is the key to internalizing and truly being able to embody, and apply this way of thinking and being to your marriage.
- Be open-minded. There may be sections or declarations that you don't think apply to the situation you face right now. Read them anyway and be open to something being revealed that you never considered before. Allow God to speak to you in this time, calling to your remembrance His Word that lines up with what you've received for the day. Listen closely to the still, quiet voice inside that's trying to shut out the noise of negativity and limited thinking. Refuse to keep yourself in a box that no longer serves you, your husband, or your marriage. Come to each day already in agreement with the words you will read, and look for confirmation that you are headed in the right direction.
- Expect to feel resistance. This book, day by day, will show you how to think differently and how to use the power of your mind and beliefs to create something better in your marriage. And by

participating in this process, you are undergoing a transformation. But the mind's preference is to stay the same, to keep rehearsing the same old thinking and pattern of thoughts that have kept you in a stagnant place. Over your life, you have been conditioned and socialized to believe certain things as absolute truth, when in fact that's not the case at all. Your mind is not going to want to take the extra time to consider some new way of operating. But it will if you will it to. And soon you'll find that your new and positive mindset will make the old negative one a thing of the past.

I want to leave you with the assurance that this is what you need. This book was written for you out of my own personal places of struggle. As I scanned my mind to what was going wrong in my own marriage, it all started with my thinking, beliefs that had been so engrained that I couldn't even imagine another possibility. But knowing you have to "declare those things that are not as if they are so," I set my mind to practicing and rehearsing new thoughts that made me feel differently, almost in an instant. I know the same can happen for you. I hope you'll ready to embrace the shift in your mindset and the conversation with yourself. To new voices in your ear...



OPENING PRAYER: YOUR VOICE TO GOD'S EARS

Dear Heavenly Father,

Open my mind to receive what I need to receive.
Open my ears to hear what I need to hear. Open
my eyes to see what I need to see. Open my heart
to feel what I need to feel. Lead me. Guide me.
Speak to me now. In your name I pray, Amen.

THE VOICE OF GOOD COMMUNICATION



GOOD COMMUNICATION IS an essential component of a happy, healthy marriage. Being able to express ideas, exchange information, and successfully navigate disagreements can only serve to make stronger the relationship you have with your husband. Feeling heard, understood, and acknowledged are like incredible and magical ointments for the heart and soul.

Whenever I ask women about the area they'd like to improve in their marriage, communication lands at the top of the list. We don't talk. We can't communicate. He doesn't listen. We argue all the time. We just can't get on the same page. The same exact complaints appear repeatedly.

To them, communication is everything. To me, your mindset about communication is everything. If the story being told about communication, day in and day out, is that it's not happening or that it's going the wrong way, then there are no other possible outcomes than for it to be poor.

Over time, by allowing these thoughts and beliefs to dominate your mind, you essentially come to train yourself

to only see the challenges in communication, the breakdowns, and the things that seem to keep going wrong. And once a mind is set in a certain direction, it finds ways of continuing to get to that destination as quickly as possible over and over again.

If a couple is not able to communicate, there is a barrier between their connection. They lack information, understanding, and perspective that is essential for their ability to function well as a unit.

But so many times, communication is misunderstood, wrongly defined, and misinterpreted. Most women have a narrow definition of communication that includes the words that are spoken and the conversations that are had when, in reality, communication is made up of so many other nonverbal signals that often go unnoticed.

We are communicating with each other all the time every single day, even when no words are spoken. Silence is communication. It means there is some level of discomfort, a few feelings that have been buried deep away, or a type of fear that won't let the words come out.

Facial expressions and tone of voice are communication. It signals to the other person your approval, acceptance, and openness or your contempt, judgment, and close-mindedness. And if your words and body language are not in alignment, your nonverbal cues always communicate more loudly.

Listening is communication. It's one of the most important—yet least correctly implemented—aspects of communicating. Being able to hear what your husband is

saying, not only from his words but from the emotions that are coming from his heart, is a critical element to being able to connect and love each other fully.

So if this is an area where you consistently struggle, hear this:

The key to improving your communication lies in your thinking about your communication.

If you can begin to focus more on directing the thoughts swarming around in your head before a word ever leaves your mouth, you'll witness a dramatic improvement. The type of communication (or lack thereof) you are experiencing all stems from the beliefs you hold and the well-rehearsed sentences you allow to take root in your mind. If you tend the soil by adding the right mix of nutrients, you'll reap a better harvest.

You must see communicating with your husband differently. You must view it as something you enjoy doing, something that brings you closer together, something that allows you to understand, support, and encourage each other more.

You must see communication as something you can both do well. You must believe that you both have strengths that can work together to enhance your marriage, and you must look for examples every day that you are talking about the right things in the right way.

You must see any challenges in communicating as something you will figure out, something you will be able

to overcome, and something that offers you both an incredible opportunity for growth and self-improvement.

You must see communication as the vehicle for which you can grow together and be more intimate with each other. You must learn to allow yourself to be vulnerable and welcome him to share his own vulnerabilities without fear of judgment and rejection.

You must allow the following affirmations, declarations, and statements to become your new thoughts, your fresh mindset, and your renewed mentality about who you are and who you are becoming as a wife.

You must commit to living them and demonstrating them every chance you get.

THE NEW CONVERSATION: DECLARATIONS AND AFFIRMATIONS ON COMMUNICATION



COMMUNICATION: DAY 1



I'm a well-spoken wife who inspires my husband to listen because he wants to understand me and make me happy. The words I speak are from a place of love, peace, and kindness. My spirit guides me in what to say. And it is always right.

COMMUNICATION: DAY 2



Today I will exercise control over my tongue. When I want to complain or criticize, I will not do so. Instead I will speak life over the things I want and expect to see in my marriage.

COMMUNICATION: DAY 3



I declare that my husband will feel and be heard and understood. When he speaks, I will listen with the goal of understanding. I will hear his words but also feel what's in his heart.

COMMUNICATION: DAY 4



I communicate in a way my husband is sure to receive. I do not blame or point out his faults. Instead I lovingly encourage and guide him to doing the things that honor and respect whom he wants to be as a person.

COMMUNICATION: DAY 5



My husband and I are capable of communicating effectively. Today I draw on all the examples where we spoke with kindness, respected each other, and listened carefully to what the other had to say. I rest easy knowing that we will find the right words to bring us closer and to a greater understanding of each other.

COMMUNICATION: DAY 6



My words have power. They have the power to build up or tear down. They have the strength to create something great or to prevent the things I want. I commit to use my words in ways that bring greater joy, happiness, and peace to my marriage and my life. Because I know they can.

COMMUNICATION: DAY 7



Today I take great care in how I communicate with my husband. I recognize that, once spoken, they can never be taken back. If I leave him with any message today, let it be a message of my unconditional love, appreciation, and respect for the man he is now and will become in the future.

COMMUNICATION: DAY 8



I create things with my words, and today I am creating something incredible in my marriage. When I speak, my husband is compelled to listen because what I share brings us closer and to a greater understanding of each other. My words create connection, compassion, and calm instead of distance, defensiveness, and disharmony.

COMMUNICATION: DAY 9



I am a wife who thinks carefully before I speak. I do not let words fly out of my mouth before considering how they may be received. I set an example of active listening, patient understanding, and complete vulnerability, a definitive path toward better communication.

COMMUNICATION: DAY 10



I filter my husband's words through the eyes, heart, and ears of love. I do not take his comments personally, for I know he wants what's best for me and our marriage. When he can't find the right words or uses phrases that hurt me, I will search for the love and kindness that exists deeper within his heart.

FURTHER REFLECTION



1. How do you want to feel when you communicate with your husband? How can you keep that desire at the forefront of your mind when you engage in conversation with each other?
2. How do you want your husband to feel when he is communicating with you? What's one practice you can start to ensure he feels that way on a consistent basis?
3. What's been working well about how you and your husband communicate? What strengths do you feel you bring to your communication? What communication strengths does he possess that you aspire to have for yourself one day?
4. What new thought or belief are you taking away and integrating into your own mindset about communication now? How will you show your commitment to thinking this way on a regular basis?
5. Consider why having better communication is so important to you right now. What are you willing to sacrifice now for the greater reward in your marriage later?

THE VOICE OF EMPOWERMENT



ONE HALLMARK PRINCIPAL of success in any area of life is to take full responsibility for the results you experience. Being able to look in the mirror at the ways you contribute to situations, to own your role, and to remain fully responsible for your own actions and reactions is incredibly empowering.

But oftentimes, especially in a marriage, it's just easier to blame and point the finger somewhere else. It's not as difficult to look at how unfortunate our circumstances are and to get stuck as a victim of misfortune rather than as a contributor to what's going wrong.

You tell yourself that, when this one thing changes, then you'll be happy. When your husband starts doing a, b, and c, then you'll start doing x, y, and z. If only things didn't happen this way, then you'd be in a better place.

Excuse by excuse, complaint after complaint, you give away your power and leave yourself in a position where everything and everyone else except you is the reason you are experiencing unhappiness.

I want you to know that unhappiness is an inside job. You are 100 percent responsible for the way you feel. It's not because of your husband's words or actions or his lack of words or actions. It's because you have allowed some thought or some way of thinking to take up residence in your mind, find the right triggers and situations, and breed unhappiness. That's your doing.

What's great about it is that it's also your undoing. You get to choose how you feel at any given moment. You have the opportunity to take charge of your thoughts and direct them in ways that leave you feeling better in an instant. You get the chance to create the things you want rather than sitting by, hoping they'll one day happen.

Almost everything in your life right now is the result of some thought or belief that gave rise to some word, action, or response. The more you realize that, the more you step into the awesome power you have to make things happen for you.

It starts with a good look in the mirror and an honest conversation with yourself where you say enough to the excuses, rationalization, and reasons for why something is not the way you want it to be. And the answer is not in changing your husband, making some mistake go away, or removing some outside force that seeks to destroy your marriage. No, the solution is you. It has always and will always be you. You are the common denominator.

Every situation in your life has come to teach you a lesson. And when you don't master that lesson, life keeps

giving you opportunities to do so. Those opportunities may come as challenges, setbacks, disappointments, unmet expectations, and other obstacles you would not willingly volunteer for.

Yet they are gifts to you, if you choose to see them that way. They give you the chance to become stronger, kinder, more forgiving, more patient, more compassionate, and more understanding. They give you the opportunity to see things from a different point of view, to consider a perspective that's not your own, to broaden your thinking, and to expand your worldview.

Being able to own your actions is healing for your marriage. It lifts the veil of blame, shame, and need to complain and replaces it with vulnerability, responsibility, and accountability. Once you step up and acknowledge your own mistakes, guilt, and missteps, you give your husband permission and an example for how to do the same.

But most times, each of you is walking around with a wall of defensiveness, hoping the other doesn't point out your faults, weaknesses, and imperfections. This keeps you separated and prevents you from being able to support and help each other through your downfalls.

Yet it's the thing each of you craves the most. You were joined together to be one—one heart, one mind, and one accord. But if you're so worried and anxious he'll really see you for the complicated mess you really are, you run in the other direction and all but dare him to come after you.

The key in being an empowered wife who can create the marriage she wants is taking full responsibility for yourself and your actions. It lies in focusing your attention with laserlike precision on the things that right now are within your control: your thoughts, your attitude, your words, and your actions. It's about using each of these as powerful weapons to rein your marriage back in and take control of that which you've let get out of control.

It's not too late, and it's up to you. Now that doesn't mean your husband doesn't have a part to play. It just means he doesn't need to play yours. That's a role reserved just for you.

In the affirmations, declarations, and statements below, be intentional about stepping into your full power. Don't let the childish voice within convince you that you can't help yourself or that you should think, act, or respond a certain way. It's a lie.

You are the change you want to see in your marriage. You have the power to alter the course of things. You can become a different woman to create different reality.

So get ready. Bury each one of these deep within your psyche, and be unwavering in your commitment to operate in the fullness of your ability each and every day.

THE NEW CONVERSATION: DECLARATIONS AND AFFIRMATIONS ON EMPOWERMENT



EMPOWERMENT: DAY 1



Today I will be 100 percent responsible for how I feel. I will not let my husband's behavior or lack of action make me angry. I will not allow his words or lack of communication to make me sad. I choose how I want to interpret all situations. I create the story that feeds my emotions. And today I choose to feel peace, love, and joy.

EMPOWERMENT: DAY 2



I avoid complaining about things beyond my control. Instead I look for what is going well and focus my attention and energy on creating more of that in my marriage. I know I have the power to speak the things I want into existence.

EMPOWERMENT: DAY 3



I will not allow outside forces to create discord in my marriage. I know the real battle in my marriage is not against my husband. It is in my thoughts. I will take them captive and use the power within me to create the marriage I want.

EMPOWERMENT: DAY 4



Today I trade excuses for effort. I do the things I know in my heart I should do to create a happier, more loving marriage. I will be persistent in feeding positivity into my marriage and to being a loving wife to my husband. And I do so with gladness and joy.

EMPOWERMENT: DAY 5



I choose to let things go. Nothing can put me in a bad mood unless I allow it. So I won't. I am determined to enjoy every minute of this day.

EMPOWERMENT: DAY 6



I am secure in who I am and whose I am. I am confident in my abilities and effective in accomplishing what I set out to do. I will not be distracted by anything or anyone that exists to take me off course in creating a happy marriage. Today I am unstoppable.

EMPOWERMENT: DAY 7



I am prepared to handle any challenge that comes up in my marriage. I will not be deceived into believing that there is no hope. I am in the perfect position to demonstrate just how strong and resilient I am and how my marriage will be a success.

EMPOWERMENT: DAY 8



I know that each difficulty I face is designed to make me stronger. A lesson is in every struggle. My eyes, ears, and heart are open to learning, growing, and becoming a better person as a result. No setback will keep me down. Because I always choose to rise.

EMPOWERMENT: DAY 9



Today I exercise control over my reactions and responses. I know that my thoughts direct my behavior and that I can always respond to things in a loving and kind way. I choose to take responsibility in every area of my life because that is my path to creating what I want to experience in my life and marriage.

EMPOWERMENT: DAY 10



Today I have decided to fully acknowledge the power that is within me to create a marriage that is full of love, joy, and happiness. I focus on the things I have control over: my thoughts, my words, and my actions. And I make sure they all work together in ways that create a stronger and better relationship with my husband.

FURTHER REFLECTION



that time? How can you adopt and maintain that same mindset when it comes to your marriage?

1. What does taking full responsibility look like for you? How have you been hiding and avoiding taking responsibility for what's happening in your marriage?
2. What are three benefits to taking more responsibility in your marriage? How does your ability to own what's happening affect the circumstances you currently face?
3. What are the things within you that control what you will spend more time focusing on? What things outside of your control will you spend less time focusing on?
4. What's uncomfortable about taking full responsibility for the things happening in your marriage? How has blaming your circumstances and your husband been a crutch for you?
5. Think about a time where you felt truly empowered and determined to accomplish something good in your life. What was your mindset during

THE VOICE OF FAITH, HOPE, AND EXPECTATION



WHAT IF YOU knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that your marriage would not fail? What if you truly believed with all of your heart, mind, and soul that you and your husband would actually have your happily ever after? Consider that things were working out perfectly and your marriage was actually growing stronger every single day. How would you act? What would you think?

We know from the Bible that faith is the “substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb. 11:1)(KJV). It’s an essential component of being able to stay the course when it seems like things are going wrong.

Yet how easily do we lose our faith. The smallest disappointment, unmet expectation, challenge, or difficulty can set out our mind to generate negative thoughts that challenge any semblance of faith we might have. For example:

- “I can’t take this anymore.”
- “This was a mistake.”

- “I’m done.”
- “He’s never going to change.”
- “This is never going to work out.”
- “I should just give up.”
- “We’ll never get through this.”
- “This is the worst thing that could happen.”
- “I’m never going to be happy.”

And the list goes on and on.

Oh, the drama we create in our minds by how we choose to interpret situations! Now that’s not to diminish the heartbreak and pain you may be experiencing by the circumstances in your marriage or as a result of your husband’s behavior. But what I want you to see is that it’s not the end of the world unless you want it to be.

When you’re able to tap into faith and hope, there is a power within you, a motivation, and a relentless expectation that it will be OK things are going to work out. And when that’s your orientation to your marriage, you respond to situations and behave in ways that are in accordance with that expectation. You are not as easily distracted by the things that seem to be going wrong because you see them for what they are, mere distractions. You can maintain your focus on the big picture, the marriage you are truly after, and know that you know it will come to pass.

As Joel Osteen once said, “Your life will follow your expectations.” Expectations are powerful drivers of our

behaviors. They create the beliefs we hold and adopt. They are constantly working under the surface so our decisions, actions, and reactions line up with them. Whether consciously or unconsciously, they are running the show of our lives and influencing the results in our marriage.

Pause for a moment to consider where they have been leading you. What are the expectations you now have of your husband? He won't listen? He doesn't help out as much as you want? He doesn't consider your feelings? He's not interested in spending time with you? Or he's not putting forth much of an effort to make your marriage work?

When you hold these expectations, you approach communicating with him with a certain mindset. You have a certain attitude when asking (or demanding) to do a particular task that you sit by and wait for things to happen the exact way you've already told yourself they are going to occur instead of being empowered to create the reality you actually want. But that's impossible to do if you don't first believe and have the faith and hope that it's possible.

I want you to know that anything—and I mean anything—is possible in your marriage. No matter where you are right now, you can still have your best days ahead of you. You don't have to walk around discouraged and feeling defeated.

Tap into your faith by turning to God in prayer. Ask Him to restore your faith, that it would be built up like a

fortress able to withstand anything that would attack its strength. Make up in your mind that you have no plan B, this situation will turn around, and you are willing to go through whatever it takes to get to a better place.

Choose to be hopeful by looking for the positive, by seeing the tiny progress that's happening each day. Let the dream in your heart for your marriage sweep over you. Daydream about the life you're envisioning, and let the feeling of it happening overtake you. Picture the day unfolding exactly as you want it to, and begin to align your behaviors with the reality you are creating in your mind.

Change your expectations, and wake up each day like a child on Christmas morning, expecting to receive all that your heart desires. Let that positive expectation overtake you so that, as you go about your day, you are looking here and there for the signs that what you expect is actually happening.

Set your mind with certainty, confidence, and assurance that you will win.

THE NEW CONVERSATION: DECLARATIONS
AND AFFIRMATIONS ON FAITH,
HOPE, AND EXPECTATION



FAITH, HOPE, AND EXPECTATION: DAY 1



Today I look for signs of my husband's love and care for me. In every interaction, I expect confirmation that I matter to him and I'm irreplaceable in his life. And I find it each time.

FAITH, HOPE, AND EXPECTATION: DAY 2



I no longer complain about things that are not going well. I focus my attention on the positives, both big and small. What I focus on grows. And I'm creating a marriage that is great and full of joy.

FAITH, HOPE, AND EXPECTATION: DAY 3



I am looking forward to what this day will bring. I expect good things to happen and decide to be grateful in advance. My heart overflows with joy.

FAITH, HOPE, AND EXPECTATION: DAY 4



Today I focus on all that is going right. I look for examples that show me my husband is a source of joy in my life. And I find those examples easily.

FAITH, HOPE, AND EXPECTATION: DAY 5



I am patient and wait with confident expectation for the things I desire. I show love, compassion, and kindness even when it's hard, trusting that my effort will bring me the life and marriage I want.

FAITH, HOPE, AND EXPECTATION: DAY 6



I am a believer that all things are possible. I hold on to the hope that everything I desire will come to pass. My mind is made up that what may have caused me sadness and disappointment will become my greatest source of joy. All my thoughts and actions are consistent with this belief.

FAITH, HOPE, AND EXPECTATION: DAY 7



I believe that better days are ahead. I look to the future with the excitement of a child on Christmas morning, expecting my greatest desires to be wrapped up and waiting for me in the future. I step forward, confident that my marriage will arrive at a better place at just the right time.

FAITH, HOPE, AND EXPECTATION: DAY 8



I have faith to believe in the things I cannot yet see. The dreams in my heart for my marriage exist for a reason. I commit to nurturing the seeds, carefully watching and waiting for them to bloom into the most beautiful expression of love and unity between a man and a woman.

FAITH, HOPE, AND EXPECTATION: DAY 9



I declare a new day is coming for my marriage. Minute by minute and hour by hour, my husband and I are getting closer to a destination filled with love and happiness. The moments where we seem to be taking steps backward will not distract me. Instead I set my mind on the better season that is just around the corner.

FAITH, HOPE, AND EXPECTATION: DAY 10



I have an incredible vision for my marriage. I see myself happy and full of love for my husband. And I feel his love in return. I carry that vision with me daily so that, if we have a rough moment, I can easily access what I want to experience. And that image gives me the strength to remain optimistic and full of hope for what's surely to come.

FURTHER REFLECTION



1. In what ways has your past behavior been lining up with negative expectations in your marriage?
2. Whether you know it or not, you've been creating a self-fulfilling prophesy, an expectation that causes itself to come true because your beliefs reinforce your behavior. What new self-fulfilling prophesy will you create in your marriage now? What one belief will you change? How will you make sure your behavior and actions line up with that new belief?
3. What can you do to increase your faith right now? What's one habit you can maintain to feed yourself with hope and positive expectation?
4. Identify other areas in your life where you have faith and don't doubt that things are guaranteed. What are the things you "know for sure," for example, the sun will rise, your home will be standing, the mail will be delivered, and so on? How does your behavior align with these certainties?

5. What are the benefits of replacing worry with faith and hope? How do you feel when you worry versus how you feel when you choose faith and hope?

THE VOICE OF FORGIVENESS



FORGIVENESS MAY BE one of the most misunderstood concepts, but it's one of the most powerful forces to heal your marriage.

While many people may know on an intellectual level that forgiveness is for themselves and not the other person, they don't truly believe and embody that in their heart. They believe that forgiving means they excuse the offense. They believe that forgiving means they are weak. They believe that, by not forgiving, they are punishing the person who did them wrong. They believe that forgiving opens them up to being hurt again. But none of that has to be true.

Merriam-Webster's definition of forgiveness is to stop feeling anger toward someone who has done something wrong. Ask yourself the question: do I want to stop feeling angry? Or hurt? Or resentful? Or bitter? Do I want to completely eliminate that from my experience with my husband? If so, then you must make the decision to forgive every minute of every day by choosing not to be angry.

Forgiveness is not a one-time event. It's not a moment in time where all of a sudden you make the decision and never have to make it again. Forgiveness does not close the door. It does not prevent the memories from coming back up to break your heart all over again.

Forgiveness does not give permission to the other person to do wrong again and again. Instead it's a moment-by-moment experience where you trade blame and hostility for understanding and compassion. It's an open space in your heart where you choose healing instead of hurt.

Forgiveness is a never-ending commitment to keep moving forward through the messiness of confusion and unanswered questions. We don't forgive and forget. We forgive right in the face of remembering. Forgiveness does not make us weak. It makes us powerful beyond our own comprehension.

I studied forgiveness during a period in my life where I needed to let go of the pain I was feeling. What I found most helpful was that, if you can truly look at the situation and the person whose behavior has caused your pain as being part of a process that's for your ultimate good, there is nothing to be upset about.

If you can see that your husband did exactly what he needed to do, to lead you to a better future and outcome and to help you become the exact person God created you to be, then you can actually enter a state of gratitude for the experience as painful and heartbreaking as it is.

But you must believe and understand that it was meant to help you, not harm you. And that's often the hardest part.

I wanted to offer five key things you must do in order to forgive and have the peace you are looking for in your marriage:

1. You stop blaming and pointing the finger at what your husband did. It does not make him right or his behavior acceptable, but instead you no longer hold it against him. You conclude that whatever he did came from a place of pain, confusion, or lack of awareness for how his actions may hurt you.
2. You stop wanting him to fix the situation. What happened was meant to serve and help you in some way, even if it's a painful journey to get there. It cannot be undone, no matter how much you want him to go back in time and change the outcome. You must release the idea that there is a magic bullet or something he can do now to erase all the pain you felt. You accept that the hard work of feeling better and having a sense of closure is yours and yours alone.
3. You stop wanting him to pay for or be punished for his actions because you release the anger. Everyone has to face the consequences of his or her decisions. Instead of focusing on what should happen to him, be compassionate and pray that he no longer

suffers from whatever was going wrong to cause his behavior. Hurt people hurt others, and deep down, he's already suffering in some way. It's not your job to make sure that happens.

4. You stop being the victim. Eliminate the phrase "he did this to me." It's just not true. What is true is he did something for himself. Was his decision selfish? Yes! But underneath the wrongdoing is some need or driver of behavior that you just may never understand. Now you are left with the opportunity to claim the power you hold in the situation. The hurt you feel now is a result of you replaying things over and over. Only you can stop it by choosing to let it go.
5. You stop waiting to see proof that he is really sorry. Just believe that he is. The guilt and shame he feels can make him respond in unexpected ways. Some people are mature enough to admit their wrongdoing and make amends. Others are literally paralyzed by the bad feelings of what they've done. They want to sweep it under the rug or become defensive and angry when it's brought up. Don't expect your husband to react the way you would. He may not be capable of responding a different way right now.

I realize all of that is easier said than done. But if you truly do want to forgive, if you desire to stop feeling so angry,

then it starts with setting your mind to think in a new direction. And like all the other concepts in this book, being able to forgive is something you must first do for yourself before you can give it to someone else.

In the following declarations, affirmations, and statements, allow healing, forgiveness, compassion, and understanding for yourself as well.

THE NEW CONVERSATION: DECLARATIONS
AND AFFIRMATIONS ON FORGIVENESS



FORGIVENESS: DAY 1



I offer forgiveness and understanding when my husband makes mistakes. I remember that no one is perfect and that extending grace and compassion always feels better. I rise above my anger and frustration and choose peace and calm.

FORGIVENESS: DAY 2



I forgive myself for the days I don't meet my own standards. I look at my face with compassion, care, and concern for my own well-being. I consider my mistakes as learning opportunities to grow and become the person I was created to be.

FORGIVENESS: DAY 3



I offer forgiveness because it is what's best for me. I set my mind on healing, peace, and contentment even through the greatest disappointments in my marriage. Holding on to resentment and punishing my husband only creates unhappiness within myself. I offer forgiveness today because it really is what's best for me.

FORGIVENESS: DAY 4



I forgive easily. I do not let my ego and pride deceive me into believing I should not forgive. Forgiveness always feels better. It feels lighter. And I have decided to release this burden and carry a lighter load. I move past this disappointment with grace, dignity, and strength.

FORGIVENESS: DAY 5



I no longer hold myself hostage to anger, resentment, and frustration. I release myself and my husband from the mistakes of yesterday. I refuse for unforgiveness and a hardened heart to bind me. I commit to taking one step toward freeing myself and my mind from the thoughts that try to keep me down.

FORGIVENESS: DAY 6



Today I make forgiveness a minute-by-minute decision. Whenever feelings of resentment and hurt creep into my heart, I will meet them with an even stronger effort to feel love, peace, and compassion. I let my spirit guide the way, for it will never lead me in the wrong direction.

FORGIVENESS: DAY 7



Today I rest, knowing it's OK to extend forgiveness and still experience pain. I acknowledge the hurt and disappointment and still choose to forgive. By offering forgiveness, I demonstrate my strength and the power of God that's at work within to heal the suffering I no longer want to endure.

FORGIVENESS: DAY 8



I forgive my husband and no longer seek to make him pay for his mistakes. I focus on showing him compassion and recognize the guilt and shame he carries over disappointing me. I keep no score of his wrongs; I focus instead on creating an abundance of things that are going right in our marriage.

FORGIVENESS: DAY 9



I can choose to forgive right now. I do not need to wait for an apology or to require certain things to be in place before committing to forgive. I know that forgiveness is a gift to myself. And it's always a good time to be good to myself.

FORGIVENESS: DAY 10



I forgive. I forgive. I forgive. I forgive him. I forgive myself. I forgive. I forgive. I forgive.

FURTHER REFLECTION



1. What has unforgiveness cost you? In what ways has it kept you stuck?
2. Have you ever told yourself, "I will never forgive him for that"? If so, why? How does thinking that way benefit you? How does it harm you?
3. Think of a time (big or small) when you have been forgiven. Did you deserve the forgiveness that was offered you? How did it feel to receive it?
4. What do you really want from your husband? How have your thoughts, actions, and attitude prevented that from taking place? What can you do now to create more of what you want from him?
5. Come up with three to five reasons why forgiveness is actually a gift to yourself.

THE VOICE OF MOTIVATION



A QUOTE SAYS, “You can never expect to succeed if you only put in work on the days you feel like it.” It’s easy to accept that reality when it comes to work, household responsibilities, and even weight loss. We expect to have to push through and just get it done because we need the income. It’s our obligation or something we greatly desire. But what about when it comes to doing what’s required to build a happy and lasting marriage?

So many times when I speak with women, they talk about a lack of motivation, a lost longing to work on things, or a diminished desire to put for the effort. This often comes on the heels of a negative response from their husband. Maybe he didn’t notice the effort. Perhaps he didn’t reciprocate, or even worse, he diminished or criticized the gesture. It’s disappointing, demotivating, and, in some instances, devastating. Nothing hurts more than to put yourself out there, set aside your ego, and do what you know is right, only to have it slapped back in your face, shrugged off, or judged.

Feelings of shame, embarrassment, and humiliation seep in, and you tell yourself “never again” or “I’ll never forgive him for that.” And so you don’t.

The mistake in all of this is, once again, you create more of the very situation you desire to avoid. You build up a wall, slowly or instantly, that blocks you from making the progress you ultimately want.

You let your drive and motivation be controlled by your husband’s response, his efforts in turn, or his approval. But if you focused more on your own approval, your own internal sense of integrity, and doing what’s right even in the face of discomfort, how much happier and at peace you would be. But instead it’s so easy to let pride, ego, and a sense of entitlement cloud our judgment.

When it comes to motivation, the thing to remember is that it’s your job to motivate yourself. You may have heard the popular gospel song, “Encourage Yourself.” And the message is true: “Sometimes you just have to encourage yourself. Pat your own self on the back.”

Part of being able to do that is having a clear vision and goal for your marriage that you want to achieve. That could be an experience you want to have together, a feeling you want to have more often, or a relationship you want to model for your children. It’s so important to clearly identify your why. Why do you want things to be better? Why are you even reading this book right now? There must be some small voice telling you it’s worth it, this is not the end of your story, or you are to keep pushing through.

Why is that? And while there is no right or wrong answer here, try your best to think of positive or aspirational reasons. Those reasons paint a positive picture and lead

you toward gaining some benefit rather than losing or avoiding some pain. For example, it's the difference between "I want my marriage to be better because I love my husband and know we were joined together to stay together" versus "I want my marriage to be better because I don't want a divorce."

One gives you a hope and future to aspire to; the other capitalizes on your fears and insecurities. You always want to be in a place of positivity and optimism when you think of your why.

Once you have that, it's time to shift your mindset and mentality about motivation. Up until now, you've probably been thinking of it as a feeling, something that comes and goes depending on external circumstances, the latest conversation or argument, or how you feel about or interpret his actions.

But I'd like to suggest you look at motivation as an absolute commitment and does not change and is not dependent on what's happening around you. Motivation is an inside job that you have 100 percent responsibility and control over.

Here's another quote I think captures the essence of what I'm saying, "I survived because the fire inside of me burned brighter than the fire around me" (extramadness.com). You must not let the fire within you dim. You must not let a disappointment take you down. You can literally create the motivation you need and overcome feelings of

apathy, resistance, and hesitation by directing your mind in the right way.

Stop waiting for your husband to say or do something before you take action. Also stop waiting for the feeling to overtake you and propel you to do something. Do something first, and let the feeling come after, when you're feeling proud, accomplished, and at peace because you did the right thing. Don't allow your right behavior be determined by someone else's wrong behavior.

You know in your heart that you need to reach out, to apologize, to keep trying, and to figure out a way to make this work. But you've gotten accustomed to creating and replaying a story in your mind that tells you over and over again to just give up, saying there's no hope and your efforts don't matter.

Don't believe those lies. Set your mind to be motivated, no matter what, and use the declarations, affirmations, and statements below as your guide.

THE NEW CONVERSATION: DECLARATIONS
AND AFFIRMATIONS ON MOTIVATION



MOTIVATION: DAY 1



Today I trade excuses for effort. I am no longer willing to remain stuck in the same place. I do the things I know in my heart I should do to create a happier, more loving marriage. And I do them with gladness and joy.

MOTIVATION: DAY 2



I will do what I need to do. I no longer want to be weighed down by feelings of guilt for not doing my part and making the effort required to strengthen my marriage. I refuse to blame my husband for everything without first looking at myself.

MOTIVATION: DAY 3



I am the change I want to see in my marriage. I am driven by the emotions that serve me and the relationship with my husband. I focus on how I want to feel, what I want to experience, and who I want to be. And then I go do the very things that will bring those results into my life.

MOTIVATION: DAY 4



I am focused and intentional about what I am creating in my marriage right now. I no longer allow things to be on cruise control, going this way and that. I am determined to direct my energy and effort in ways that give me more of the experiences I want to have with my husband.

MOTIVATION: DAY 5



I am motivated. I do not need my husband to say or do a certain thing for me to do what I should do. I am mature, wise, and inspired enough by my own desires to be persistent in moving this marriage in the direction it should go.

MOTIVATION: DAY 6



I am unstoppable in showing my love for my husband. I will let nothing distract me from what my heart feels for him. I will not be deceived by my ego and negative thoughts that would create division among us. No matter what, I am motivated to love today.

MOTIVATION: DAY 7



I am determined to be happy in my marriage—to find the good even when it's hard; to keep trying even when I feel it doesn't matter; and to keep a positive perspective even when negativity creeps in. My mind is set on happiness; that is my only option.

MOTIVATION: DAY 8



I am determined to win the war on my marriage. I know the only failure I can experience is when I give up trying. And that is not an option for me. I am driven by an unrelenting desire to be happy and completely in love with my husband and the life we have created together.

MOTIVATION: DAY 9



There are no limits to what I can create in my marriage. If it enters my mind, it is possible. All the love, joy, and excitement I want to experience is waiting for me. Today I am determined to let my faith, persistence, and loving actions get me there as quickly as possible.

MOTIVATION: DAY 10



Today I turn my hopes, wishes, and prayers into a plan of action. I accept the reality of right now as motivation to spring into action and create what will become. I now see the things I can do differently with greater clarity, and I commit myself to being the architect of the happiest and most loving marriage possible.

FURTHER REFLECTION



1. What is your why? Why do you want your marriage to be better?
2. What are the things that have demotivated you in the past as it relates to your marriage? What were the things you told yourself in those situations?
3. How can you create more of a motivating story for yourself so that, when things are not moving fast enough or getting better in the way you imagined, you're still willing to push through?
4. Motivation is an inside job. Why is that true for you right now? How can that reality be a good thing for you?
5. What does it mean to be unstoppable for you? What will it take for you to be truly unstoppable when it comes to creating a better marriage?

THE VOICE OF PATIENCE



THE ABILITY TO develop patience is one of the most important qualities you can embody as a wife. Patience leads to understanding. Understanding leads to healing. It's defined as the capacity to accept or tolerate delay, trouble, or suffering without getting angry or upset.

Can you imagine how many arguments would have been avoided if we were able to fully exercise patience? Or how many times could we have avoided unnecessary upset and frustration?

The unfortunate reality is that some people just don't believe they can be patient. They put themselves in a box, making up in their mind that patience is a characteristic they will never be able to master. And so it is. End of sentence. End of story.

But what if that weren't true? What if you could actually develop, cultivate, and nurture patience within yourself? What then? And if we take this even a step further, what if your ability to be patient was guaranteed? Sign, sealed, and delivered?

Like with anything we truly want for ourselves, you have to first believe, not only that it's possible, but that it will happen. As I'm sure you've heard, you have to speak things into existence. So speak patience into your life and your interactions with your husband.

To do so, it's important to know what patience looks like for you. Consider what you do when you lose your patience. What are your triggers? When is it hardest to remain patient? And importantly, how would you like to respond instead? If you were patient in those situations, what would you do, and what would happen as a result?

Patience is important because it helps you remain in control of your emotions and reactions. It helps you keep the right perspective in the face of things not happening on your timetable or in the way you expected and wanted. Patience offers an unconditional acceptance in situations where oftentimes we have no control. It requires that you have a mindset that things will work out and all will be well.

Patience breeds contentment and peace within. It allows you to be fully present in the moment, soaking up all that is good and ignoring anything that would distract you from embracing the way things are unfolding. Patience gives you a greater appreciation for the process over the outcome. And that's where true growth and transformation happens.

But it takes time. Lots of time. More time than you'd like. And that's the irony of it all. Developing patience takes patience. But once you can master it, you'll see

and experience your marriage in a completely different and better way. If you want to be more patient, you have to be fed up with being impatient. You need to see how your lack of patience creates more stress, strain, and discord than the actual outcomes you want. You have to truly believe that being impatient will get you nowhere fast.

Here are a few quick tips to develop more patience:

- Start small. Identify a specific area or situation where you typically lose your patience. Understand what about that situation makes you feel impatient. What are you wanting to happen instead? Focus on responding differently in that one specific area until you can do so automatically.
- Decide ahead of time. Knowing your triggers, make up in your mind ahead of time that you will react with patience. Play out the scenario in your mind and see yourself patient, relaxed, and at ease about it, accepting things as they come without anger or upset.
- In the moment, remind yourself to slow down and be patient. Having a specific phrase or word that calls to your memory your commitment to be patient will really help. Remind yourself to breathe and relax, and think about why exercising patience is the right thing to do.

- Assess and evaluate how you did. Reflect on how you handled the situation. Think about how it felt during and after to exercise patience. Were you successful by your own standards? What worked well? What could you try differently next time?

The ability to be patient is certainly one that will benefit every area of your life. It enables you to make better judgments, to respond in ways that align with your values, and to be in control of your emotions rather than the other way around. You are not a puppet to your circumstances. You are a powerful person who can access patience any moment you choose.

In the following declarations, affirmations, and statements, allow yourself to let patience wash over you, breathe it in, and allow it to become part of your being.

THE NEW CONVERSATION: DECLARATIONS
AND AFFIRMATIONS ON PATIENCE



PATIENCE: DAY 1



I am patient and wait with confident expectation for the things I desire. I show love, compassion, and kindness even when it's hard, trusting that my effort will bring me the life and marriage I want.

PATIENCE: DAY 2



I am patient with myself. I acknowledge that change takes time and, as long as I keep trying, I'm doing the right thing. I know that, when I'm patient with myself, I have more patience to offer my husband and can respond to any situation with grace and composure.

PATIENCE: DAY 3



I exercise patience with my husband today. When I am tempted to push, nudge, or pressure, I will take that as a sign to relax, ease into patience, and stay there for a while.

PATIENCE: DAY 4



I experience peace while waiting. Even though things are not yet as I would like, I am confident they will be. I take in all that this time is trying to teach me. I learn the lessons I need to learn. I grow in the ways I need to grow. And I am grateful for it all.

PATIENCE: DAY 5



I am strong in patience. I can see the positives when things don't happen on my set timeline. In this time of waiting, all the right things are being worked out and put into place for my ultimate good. I rest easy, trusting in the process and staying confident in faith that things will turn around.

PATIENCE: DAY 6



Today patience is available to me any time I choose it. I refused to be forced into a frenzy of activity, trying to control the things beyond my control and exerting my energy in the wrong places. I take a deep breath now and inhale the peace and serenity that come to me when I allow things to happen in their own time.

PATIENCE: DAY 7



I am willing to be patient. I know, in my willingness, the circumstances of my marriage will show me that the change I want is coming. When I relax and focus on creating the right mindset for myself, a shift takes place that can only happen when I step aside and wait for my efforts to show up in results.

PATIENCE: DAY 8



I do not force things before their time. Everything must follow the appropriate process. The changes I want to see in my marriage and in my husband are underway. I patiently watch and prepare myself to receive all that my heart desires.

PATIENCE: DAY 9



Being patient is always a good idea. My way of seeing and doing things is not necessarily the way it has to be done. I remember to step back and let my husband lead without trying to control every situation. For when I allow him the time and space to be the man he is, I'm better able to be the woman I was created to be.

PATIENCE: DAY 10



Patience looks good on me. It fits just the way it's supposed to. It makes me feel better and more like myself. It attracts my husband to me. Patience is a virtue. And today I choose to wear it well.

FURTHER REFLECTION



1. What story have you been telling yourself about patience that makes it harder for you to achieve it?
2. What new belief can you now rehearse so you yourself will be more patient?
3. Think of a time where you really lost your patience. How did it feel in your body? How did you feel after that situation? What do you wish you had done differently?
4. Think of a time where someone lost his or her patience with you. How did you feel? What did you think of him or her? How would you have liked for him or her to respond instead?
5. How will your ability to be patient create a new and better reality for your marriage?

THE VOICE OF POSITIVITY AND GRATITUDE



THE LAW OF attraction states, "A positive mind attracts positive events." And nothing beats a positive attitude. To easily see the bright side and draw on all that is going right is a priceless skill. Many women desire to be more positive. They recognize its value yet find that sometimes it's difficult to do.

That's because, over time, we've trained ourselves with a critical eye. We've learned to anticipate what could go wrong, what is going wrong, and what has already gone wrong. We focus on the things that need to be improved rather than being content with all the things that are going right.

This way of thinking has served us well in many aspects of life. It seeks to protect us from danger and harm. It keeps us cautious and from potentially avoiding costly mistakes. It helps put us in a state of constant growth and self-improvement. Yet when you really consider it, thinking negatively is largely based on fear.

As we consider this within the context of marriage, there's the fear of abandonment, rejection, criticism,

disappointment, unmet expectations, betrayal, and failure, just to name a few. When these are the drivers of our thoughts, attitudes, and actions, we behave in ways that continue this negative cycle and begin to essentially drown in these feelings. We become passive recipients of our thoughts, letting them wreak havoc in our minds and marriages

And being positive and thinking positively becomes an uphill battle. It's something you have to be incredibly intentional about. It's a quality that must be kept in the foreground, where you remind yourself to do it over and over again. And the key to successfully crowding out the negative and replacing it with the positive is understanding that you have a choice for how you think and feel. It's your decision, and you can actually direct your thoughts to lead you to feel differently. But unfortunately we resolve that we have to feel a certain way because of the situations we find ourselves in or as a result of our husband's behavior. Not true!

You always have a choice in how you feel. You can always choose to be positive. And the first step is understanding how you feel and the thoughts in your mind that are leading you to feel that way. Simply pause and complete the following sentence "I'm feeling _____ because I'm thinking that _____."

Examples might include "I'm feeling sad because I'm thinking that my husband doesn't appreciate all that I do"

or “I’m feeling angry because I’m thinking that we’re never going to agree on this issue.”

The next step involves asking yourself, “How do I want to feel?” Consider which emotion you are after. Is it happiness, peace, contentment, love, appreciation, or value?

Once you’ve identified the emotion you are seeking, begin to come up with beliefs and thoughts that will support that emotion. Just like feeling badly is the result of negative thinking, feeling better is the result of positive thinking. What can you tell yourself (and actually believe) that will generate a different emotion?

Here are two responses to the examples above, “There are time where he has expressed appreciation. He has said that anything is possible and that we can find a solution to this.” And while it’s simple enough to remember this in an isolated moment, it needs to become your regular habit and practice if you are to master the skill of being more positive.

And I believe there is no quicker path to being positive than the practice of gratitude. You’ve seen it everywhere on social media. Every few months, there’s a new gratitude challenge where your friends are tagging you to post daily about the things you appreciate in your life. And while I believe these types of exercises have their advantages and disadvantages, what is clear is that gratitude works. In many ways, it’s the cure-all for any negative experience.

But gratitude is more than a simple expression of appreciation. It’s a deep sense of gratefulness that puts things in the right perspective. It calls to your remembrance just how blessed you truly are and returns into focus all the gifts you experience in life on a minute-by-minute basis.

I like to use the phrase “step into gratitude” because, to truly experience gratitude at its deepest level, you have to enter it and let it take over. It’s almost like allowing a downpour of appreciation to wash over you. It’s like creating an avalanche of thankfulness from the smallest and most mundane detail to the biggest, more profound miracle. Once gratitude becomes a more natural state for you, thinking positively becomes an automatic reflex.

But like with any positive self-development principle, there is a more pervasive and tempting counterforce. In this instance, it’s complaining. I don’t think anyone on this earth is aware of how much time he or she spends complaining. It’s a destructive habit that only brings more of what you don’t want into your life.

So for the next ten days, I challenge you to avoid complaining about anything in your life. When you feel the temptation to do so (or even when one slips out), I want you to meditate on the declaration, affirmation, or statement of the day. Repeat it over and over again, and imagine you are literally driving out the complaint. Imagine yourself having a battle, an all-out fight with negativity.

And instead of letting your negative emotions fuel more negativity, use it for good by shutting it out and bringing in more of the good stuff.

THE NEW CONVERSATION: DECLARATIONS AND
AFFIRMATIONS ON POSITIVITY AND GRATITUDE



POSITIVITY AND GRATITUDE: DAY 1



Today is a new day. I embrace it with fresh energy, a renewed spirit, and positive mind. I look forward with great anticipation for the breakthrough I need to propel me to something even better than I imagined.

POSITIVITY AND GRATITUDE: DAY 2



I look forward to starting fresh. I am grateful for the change to begin again. I leave yesterday's frustrations, disappointments, and annoyances right where they belong, behind me. I move onward with an open mind and heart.

POSITIVITY AND GRATITUDE: DAY 3



I will find a way to make it through this day that makes me glad. I will fill my mind with things that make me happy. I will navigate every moment that comes my way with patience, grace, and peace. I will express appreciation in the tiniest of things and smile with every blessing that comes my way.

POSITIVITY AND GRATITUDE: DAY 4



My mind is set to focus on all that is going right. I look for examples that show me my husband is a source of joy in my life. I will appreciate all that's good about him. I search for the ways that he is exactly the person I need him to be. And I find those examples easily.

POSITIVITY AND GRATITUDE: DAY 5



I will be grateful for this day. I will focus on the positives even when it seems as though everything is going wrong. I will hold on to all that has made me happy in the past and expect even greater happiness in the future. My gratitude will pave the way for better days ahead.

POSITIVITY AND GRATITUDE: DAY 6



I no longer complain about things that are not going well. I focus my attention on the positives, both big and small. What I focus on grows. And I'm creating a marriage that is great and full of joy. And for that, I am truly grateful.

POSITIVITY AND GRATITUDE: DAY 7



Today I step into gratitude and stay there for a while. I sit back and relax, letting it consume my mind and invade my thoughts. I let gratitude for my marriage overwhelm me. It may not be perfect, and there are challenges yet still ahead, but my heart is full of appreciation for all that has and that will forever be right.

POSITIVITY AND GRATITUDE: DAY 8



Today I easily find things to be grateful for. Things I appreciate about my husband fill my mind. I focus on the ways he adds value to my life and how I am better for being married to him. I find those things, hold on to them, and pass them on to him in every interaction on this day.

POSITIVITY AND GRATITUDE: DAY 9



Today I feel like being positive. I've set my mind to be happy and full of joy. Nothing can bring me down because I'm determined to keep the right outlook. I find the good in every situation, even when it's buried deep. For the deeper I go into positivity, the happier and lighter my marriage and life becomes.

POSITIVITY AND GRATITUDE: DAY 10



This is the beginning of something great. My husband and I are on our way to our best days together. Things are working out for us even when I can't see it. My gratitude and faith water the seeds that were planted in us on the day we got married. With my attitude and positive mindset, I'll see them blossom into a beautiful life very soon.

FURTHER REFLECTION



1. What are some of the negative thoughts you find yourself most commonly drawn to and why?
2. How can you get more comfortable and develop the habit of thinking positively more of the time?
3. What are some positive thoughts, quotes, or scriptures that really work for you? Where can you set or place reminders so they are easily accessible when you have a tough moment?
4. What did it feel like to avoid complaining? How often were you tempted to point out the negative about something? How did you handle those situations?
5. Why do you want to be a positive person? How do you directly benefit from being more positive?

THE VOICE OF SELF-LOVE



“Self-love is the best love.”

—DR. CHAVONNE PEROTTE

IF YOU WANT true love, you must first find it within yourself. Because you are a child of God and because God is love, you too are love. You radiate love. Love is part of your DNA. Love fills every cell within you.

Yet over time, we’ve been conditioned to hate ourselves. Pressures, demands, and expectations tell us we’re not doing and being enough. Comparison, envy, and competition would have us think we can never measure up and that other people are inherently better than we are for some reason. Fear of being conceited, self-absorbed, or vain would have us diminish our greatness, strength, and power. We go around with these wrong perceptions of ourselves, with huge gaping holes in our hearts and irrational, paralyzing fear in our minds.

And then we join with someone else who has his or her own set of issues, insecurities, and self-doubts and expect to create a perfect love.

But if neither of you have truly cultivated a deep sense of love for yourselves, you'll constantly look to the other person to provide that for you. That's an impossible task because he or she doesn't have the love you need. That's something you can only get from the original source, your creator.

Self-love is such an important area, yet it's a place where we do the least amount of work. It feels like a luxury we don't have time for as the demands of work, motherhood, and life burden us. Self-love is so essential to our being, yet we want to outsource it to our husbands and don't realize he can never truly satisfy this insatiable need.

Only when we've cultivated self-love within ourselves can we truly recognize and access the other sources of love that exist in our lives. If you don't know how to feel and experience love for yourself, you'll miss all the signals and expressions of love your husband offers you every day. You don't know what you're looking for, or you have the wrong idea of what love looks like because you have not spent the time creating and generating it for yourself.

I believe that, in the moments where you feel like your husband is not loving, he doesn't care for you, or he is pulling away, those are the times where you need to love yourself more, care for yourself more, and draw closer to the love that's within you. You were created from love, with love, and completed with love. No matter how you arrived here on this earth, God had you in mind, and He loved you before He even created you.

Just pause for a moment and feel what that feels like.
You...are...loved.

You don't have to do or be anything. You don't have to look a certain way or portray a specific image. You just are loved.

Why would you reject that for yourself by downplaying your gifts, hiding your talents, and giving up on your dreams? Why would you hesitate to feel great about yourself, embrace the miracle that you are, and hold up your head with a deep appreciation for who you are. You are God's masterpiece. Do you believe it?

Self-love is essential to create healing, restoration, and love in your marriage. You cannot give what you don't have.

Here are twenty ideas for how to keep loving yourself at the top of your list.

- Be gentle with yourself.
- Be kind to yourself.
- Be forgiving of yourself.
- Give yourself the benefit of the doubt.
- Be patient with yourself.
- Appreciate yourself.
- Be proud of yourself.
- Be affectionate with yourself.
- Compliment yourself.
- Express love to yourself.
- Do something nice for yourself.
- Take time out for yourself.
- Pray for yourself.
- Accomplish a goal for yourself.
- Dress for yourself.
- Have fun with yourself.
- Brag about yourself to yourself.
- Thank yourself.
- Write a love note to yourself.
- Date yourself.

Remember that self-love is something that you cannot expect to receive from an outside source. It's a quality you must create from within yourself at the deepest part of your soul.

Let the following declarations, affirmations, and statements saturate your mind and connect deeply with the love that already exists within you.

THE NEW CONVERSATION: DECLARATIONS AND AFFIRMATIONS ON SELF-LOVE



SELF-LOVE: DAY 1



I will not compare myself to others. I focus on what I already have and what I admire most about myself instead of what someone else has that I don't yet see as reality in my own life. I take time to appreciate what's great about me and the life I have with my husband. For in my gratitude, I create room for more of what I want.

SELF-LOVE: DAY 2



I choose to let go of the unnecessary expectations I put on myself as a wife. I handle what I can with ease and let the other things go for now. I know everything will eventually work itself out in the end. I refuse to let stress and overwhelming things create issues and division in my marriage.

SELF-LOVE: DAY 3



Today I focus on the things I love about myself and the things I do well. I choose to be my own best friend, offering the encouragement and praise I need to feel my best. When my husband is unable or unwilling to support me in the way I would like, I support myself. And know that I can do so perfectly.

SELF-LOVE: DAY 4



I am an amazing person. I am deserving of good things to happen for me. I am worthy of a marriage that lights me up inside. The love I seek from my husband can only exist as a result of the love I first show to myself. I love myself to completion, and the love I receive in my marriage is in overflow to what I've already created.

SELF-LOVE: DAY 5



I deeply care about myself. I deeply love myself and enjoy what it feels like to love me. I tune in to the powerful love that resides within me. I touch it and feel it overtake my body and mind. I allow it in the deepest places of my heart to heal any hurts and to bring forth more love in my life.

SELF-LOVE: DAY 6



I approve of myself just as I am, faults and all. I honor every part of my life journey and am hopeful about what is yet to come. I am patient with myself and know that I'm becoming a true masterpiece. I enjoy this time of molding and shaping me into an even better version of myself that I can be truly proud of.

SELF-LOVE: DAY 7



I am a wonderful work in progress. I have so many amazing qualities already to be proud of. I take my strengths and magnify them. I take my weaknesses and turn them into opportunities to learn about myself. I've come so far, and I love who I am becoming. I'm grateful for this process of self-discovery.

SELF-LOVE: DAY 8



I love myself more than I could ever imagine. I am totally and completely in love with myself. I am absolutely amazing. I am the perfect person for me. When I think about myself, my heart skips a beat, and I feel all warm inside.

SELF-LOVE: DAY 9



I am worthy of all the love my heart can hold. I release the negative thoughts that crowd the space so that more love, peace, and joy can reside there. I make room for the emotions I want to feel and the experiences I want to have. I overflow with love.

SELF-LOVE: DAY 10



I am not a mistake. No matter how I arrived on this earth, my life has purpose and meaning. What I do makes a difference in the lives of those I love. I am here to fulfill my destiny, and that includes being an example of incredible love.

FURTHER REFLECTION



1. What lies do you believe that make it hard to truly love yourself? What negative self-talk dominates your mind?
2. If you had to come up with twenty great things about yourself, could you do it? Why or why not? What does your answer or response to that task tell you about yourself? How can you change that thinking if your answer were no?
3. In what ways have you been looking for your husband to love you more as an excuse for not loving yourself more?
4. What's one thing you can do today to show yourself a little love?
5. Complete this sentence: Loving myself means _____.

THE VOICE OF SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING



ONE OF THE most basic emotional needs is to feel heard, understood, and acknowledged. You want it. I want it. Your husband wants it. Yet so often it's hard to achieve in a marriage. Most times, we are so in our own heads, thinking about ourselves, what we want to say, and how we want our own feelings recognized and validated, when in conversation, we focus more on getting our point across and trying to direct the other person to agree and endorse our position. We don't support each other in the ways we should. We don't seek first to understand. And our marriages suffer for it.

We walk around blaming each other for being selfish, unsupportive, and unappreciative. And as a result, our desire to serve each other is limited because we're too busy counting up the ways we are not being served.

But our role as wives is to be a helpmate to our husband. That means to help, support, encourage, and make his life easier. Now I want you to notice how you respond to that statement. Do you embrace it and yield to its message with a heart to do better in that area? Or do you feel

resistance creeping up over every inch of your body, spilling over to your mind, and filling it with some version or another of the following questions:

- Why do I always have to be the one to support him? What about him supporting me?
- How can I encourage him when he doesn't even appreciate all that I do?
- Why should I make his life easier if he's not doing the same for me?

These questions lead us directly down a path of more ego and pride-driven thinking and behaving, which creates more disharmony and division. The relationship with your husband becomes more of a competition than a collaboration. He becomes more of your rival than your responsibility, and you feel you must keep track more than keep on task.

You've fallen prey to the lies we are fed that marriage is about partnership, teamwork, and mutual benefit. And while that's true, we pursue that with the goal of receiving those things rather than giving those things. How often have you focused on how you can contribute more and go out of your way to make your husband's life easier?

If you see your role as his helpmate, then that's at the forefront of your mind, not how much you need some "me" time and how lazy and unhelpful you deem him to

be. And you'd stop making plans for the things you are not going to do for him because he doesn't deserve it.

As I write these words, I realize it's no small undertaking. It requires a radical shift in perspective to where we take the focus off ourselves. As for as much as you'd like to be a more giving, loving, and kinder person, you find that the struggle is constant and relentless.

And maybe the path of least resistance is to begin to see your service, support, and understanding as a gift to yourself. Perhaps there is a way to use our selfish desires to position us in a place of humility because we gain from it ourselves. The truth of the matter is that it feels good to be good. It feeds our own needs when we have a sense of value, purpose, and contribution. We like to know that what we did matters and made a difference. It feeds our self-esteem to be needed and to have someone depend on us. It makes us feel important. We want to feel like we matter.

The problem is that we've been looking for validation from our husband's response, his reciprocation, his appreciation, and his acknowledgement. And because we don't often first provide that to ourselves, we feel devalued. But if you are able to experience a sense of knowing that you are doing the right thing and when you can begin to see how you win when you act in ways you know you should, the reaction—or lack of reaction—from your husband is of no consequence. Because that's not your reason for doing it. Your reason for doing it is because *you* feel good about it.

Here's the truth of the matter:

When you set out to do something nice for your husband, the very first thing on your mind is not, "I hope he says thank you." The very first thought in your mind is, "I want to do something nice for him. I want to show how much I love and appreciate him. I want him to know he's important to me. I want him to feel special." Your gestures of kindness and acts of love come from your own desires. It's not until after you've done the thing that you look for the gratitude and return of the favor. And once you start along that line of thinking, you completely lose sight of why you did what you did in the first place.

So part of the solution is really thinking about why you want to be supportive and understanding. And I'm going to guess part of your reason will be because it will make you feel good or it meets some expectation you have of yourself. So go with that, and leave the rest alone.

Meditate on the declarations, affirmations, and statements for this section that will remind you that it's nice to be important but it's more important to be nice.

THE NEW CONVERSATION:
DECLARATIONS AND AFFIRMATIONS ON
SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING



SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING: DAY 1



I support my husband in the things that are important to him. I cheerfully encourage him, even when it seems he has it all together. I know that my reassurance matters to him, even if he doesn't express it directly. I gladly have his back and will hold him up in the areas where he may be weak.

SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING: DAY 2



I am happy to be a help to my husband. I look for ways to make his life easier and better. I willingly go out of my way to do nice things for him, for he is an extension of me. By treating him with kindness and consideration, I create more of those things in my own life.

SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING: DAY 3



My husband's happiness is a priority to me. I constantly look for ways to show him that I'm here for him, I care about him, and I consider his needs. I act and speak in ways that uplift him and give him confidence in my love and himself.

SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING: DAY 4



I listen to my husband with my whole heart because I want to understand him as deeply as I can. I make it a goal to give him my full attention and open my heart and ears to learning something new about him every day. I approach our time together with a willingness to understand his perspective and to see things from his point of view.

SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING: DAY 5



I am a safe place for my husband. When he is in my presence, he receives my positive energy and goodwill toward him. He feels loved, understood, respected, and acknowledged. Because of the way I treat him, he craves being in my presence, and with me, he feels comfortable and at home.

SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING: DAY 6



I am committed to backing my husband and to giving him the benefit of the doubt. When I don't understand, I will not make assumptions that leave me thinking negatively about him. I will search for the good in his behaviors and words. I will be quick to express my support and careful to challenge or accuse him of things without having a full understanding.

SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING: DAY 7



I create unity between my husband and me. If he lacks anything, I will do all I can to make up the difference. There is no him versus me. There is only we. We win together, we rise together, we love together, and we make it together. For I know when I truly become one with him, I only stand to gain too.

SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING: DAY 8



Today I ask more than I assume. I inquire from a place of genuine curiosity and not to prove my own point. I am eager to see my husband from a different point of view. I will learn something I didn't think of or consider before. I suspend all prejudgements because I am committed to creating something bigger, better, and different than what my old way of thinking has brought me.

SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING: DAY 9



I am a wife who is able to put myself in my husband's shoes. I am intentional about seeing things from his eyes. I consider how he must feel in certain situations, and I imagine how I would react if I were him. When I understand him in this way, I am able to easily choose to be compassionate, caring, forgiving, and kind.

SUPPORT AND UNDERSTANDING: DAY 10



I am my husband's biggest advocate. When he is unsure, I provide him with certainty. When he is overwhelmed, I find ways to relieve his stress. When he lacks confidence, I am first to build him back up. Instead of focusing on how I want him to support me, I become the example of the support I want to receive. And it always comes back to me in one way or another.

FURTHER REFLECTION



1. Are you willing to go out of your way to make your husband's life better without expecting anything in return? Why or why not?
2. In what ways have you let your own selfishness prevent you from doing what you know in your heart you should do for your marriage? What would it take for you to overcome this way of thinking and being?
3. What do you feel you lose by providing your support and help to your husband when he doesn't do the same for you? What could you stand to gain by offering your support and help even when he doesn't deserve it?
4. What is your personal mission as a wife? What are the things you feel are your duty to provide to your marriage? What role do you want to play in your husband's life?
5. When you do something nice for your husband, what are you expecting in return? How can you provide more of that for yourself rather than looking for it to come from him?

THE VOICE OF UNCONDITIONAL LOVE



FOR BETTER OR for worse. For richer or for poorer. In sickness and in health. To love and to cherish. Until death do us part. Those very words—or some variation thereof—were spoke to the world directly to your husband with a heart-felt promise and commitment before God. At the time, making that sort of permanent declaration seemed easy or at least doable.

And then somewhere along the way, things changed. Now perhaps you are still as committed to upholding your vows, especially the “until death do us part.” But are you really willing to give your unconditional love in good times and bad?

Or does your love have conditions? As long as your husband is treating you a certain way, he's doing certain things for you, and showing up to your marriage in a particular manner, things are all good. In those instances, not only do you love him, you are totally and completely *in love* with him.

So many times we think we are giving unconditional love because we turn a blind eye to the ways we step back, withhold, and withdraw our love. We express our

love when we feel like it. We give the benefit of the doubt when it suits us. We demonstrate appreciation when it's convenient for us to do so. Our love is not always on and easily accessible and available to our husbands. It's not a twenty-four-hour drive-thru.

At the earliest sign of frustration, conflict, or a mistake on his part, we close up shop. We lash out and refuse to play anymore. And we've conditioned ourselves to think that this is perfectly ok. We give ourselves a pass to be led by what feels right in our heart instead of what we know is right in our spirit.

That's love with conditions. And it's not what we've been called to do in a marriage. Yet time and time again as I speak with women, I hear of the times where they've threatened to leave and give up, where they've built up walls and shut out their husband, and where they've been unlovable themselves, and then they blame him for not wanting to be around them. And no one has a problem with that. I think that's because, in many ways, we've lost sight of the purpose of marriage and our roles as wives.

From a biblical perspective, marriage is a covenant with God. It is a representation of His love and permanent commitment to us. Think for a minute about God's love for you. Consider all the ways you don't make time for Him, you don't do the things He asks, you betray him with your thinking or actions, you don't consider Him, and you don't express your appreciation. Yet this all-loving God is

available to you at any moment you seek Him. He doesn't bring up your mistakes and shortcomings. He doesn't hold the grudge and place conditions on His love. And that should be our example.

As wives, our goal is to model God's unconditional love to our husbands. It's not about what he's giving to us. It's about what we can give him and how much we can pour out of ourselves in love and admiration for him. It's about how many times we can overlook his failings, forgive his errors in judgment, and offer compassion instead of complaint.

And again, a lot of resistance often meets this line of thinking. We want to judge. We want to place rules on when someone deserves to be loved. We want to set boundaries about how we express our love.

But we must understand that marriage is more of a spiritual endeavor than a personal or emotional one. The goal is not then to get our needs met and our hearts fulfilled by the words, actions, and deeds of our husbands. Instead we must seek to offer our love constantly in every way every day.

Love is a treasured gift from God that has no end and knows no bounds. There is an endless supply of love. And pouring it out for your husband doesn't leave any less for you. Giving it time and time again in the face of frustration, anger, and disappointment does not make you weak. In fact, it makes you strong. It makes you obedient to the calling and desires of your soul.

Choosing to love unconditionally is one of the best things you can do for yourself and your marriage. It frees you from having to check if the conditions have been met, it eliminates the need to determine if he's deserving, and it breaks up the fight you have with your mind and your heart.

It erases this story that you shouldn't love certain people in specific situations in particular ways. But why not? Love just wants to love. It doesn't have to condone bad behavior, it doesn't have to accept the unacceptable, and it doesn't have to tolerate the things that are harmful and dangerous.

But love can just love...from close up...from far away...from inside...from outside...from within...from without. Love is just love.

I hope the following declarations, affirmations, and statements help you to give your unconditional love freely, constantly, and relentlessly.

THE NEW CONVERSATION: DECLARATIONS AND AFFIRMATIONS ON UNCONDITIONAL LOVE



UNCONDITIONAL LOVE: DAY 1



Today I let go of any excuses holding me back from loving completely. My husband's words and actions don't determine how I feel. Just as I have been loved when I am unlovable and difficult to be with, I will show the same love in return.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE: DAY 2



Today I am full of grace. Just as I've received kindness and blessings that were not deserved, I will extend kindness and bless my husband in ways he may not deserve. I will love him from a place of abundance, where I have so much to give. I will make up for anything he may lack.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE: DAY 3



The love for my husband is stronger than any disappointment or unmet expectation. I choose to express more love than anger and frustration. Love always feels better because, at my core, I am love. When I show my unconditional love for him, I love myself at the highest level and become more of the person I was created to be.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE: DAY 4



I give my love freely to my husband...without conditions, expectations, or exceptions. I look for ways and reasons to love him more, not less. I don't feel the need to hold on to or withdraw my love from him. I have love in abundance, and there is no fear in giving him all I have because there is always more.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE: DAY 5



I approach every conversation, interaction, and moment with my husband from a place of love. Love brought us together, and once I return to a place of complete and total love, I am home. I am where I am supposed to be, feeling the way I was created to feel about him. I bring love with me wherever I go.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE: DAY 6



My love for my husband knows no bounds. My past hurts, disappointments, regrets, frustrations, anger, sadness, and pain cannot confine the love I feel for him. Love flows out of me because I allow it to. I choose to be led by emotions that bring me closer to him rather than those that would draw us farther apart.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE: DAY 7



I love to love my husband. I am in love with the idea of loving him more. My heart is open to giving him all the love I have because he is worthy of all of it. I can never run out of love for him because I am full of love, and each day, we create more love together.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE: DAY 8



My love is unconditional. My love is intentional. My love is never-ending. Thinking about it this way leaves me feeling abundant and empowered. I love my husband in this way because I choose to love him in this way. He does not have to earn it, and he can't lose it. Just as unconditional love is granted to me each day from my Creator, I give it back to the one He created for me.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE: DAY 9



Today I choose love. When my feelings get hurt. When an expectation is not met. When a frustration arises, I choose love. My love is powerful, and it feeds my marriage. When I don't choose to love, my marriage starves. And so do I. So I consciously choose love, and today I will be full of it.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE: DAY 10



I love you, my husband. I love you, my husband. I love you, my husband. My heart, head, mind, body, and soul love you. When I don't want to, I still love you. When I don't think you deserve it, I still love you. Love is always right. Love always wins. Love is always the answer. And so today, I choose to love you at the highest level possible.

FURTHER REFLECTIONS



1. What does unconditional love mean and look like to you? Why is it hard to give to your husband? What things within your control would make it easier for you?
2. When have you felt or received unconditional love? What was good about it? What did you think of the person who offered it to you?
3. What story could you create such that offering unconditional love was the only option you had?
4. Are you loving yourself without conditions? If not, what are the things you need to do or achieve before you can love and accept yourself completely?
5. Complete this sentence: When I love unconditionally, I feel _____.

FINAL ENCOURAGEMENT



My dear friend,

You *can* do this. You *can* get through this. You *can* transform your mind and renew your marriage. Practice patience. Activate faith. Believe in yourself and the love that brought you and your husband together. Know that there is nothing that is too hard for you with God on your side. Commit yourself to having this new conversation every single day. And do so until it becomes second nature and effortless. Remember that you are empowered and equipped. And be encouraged.

I'm rooting for you right now.

Dr. Chavonne



CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Lord,

I come before you humbly today, seeking your guidance and wisdom. Lord, I need you in this moment. I need your presence, your power, and your peace. For so long I've tried to figure this out on my own when you already have the answers. You've gone before me and already worked out this situation for my good. And for that, I give you praise.

I honor you and thank you for being an all-knowing God who wants what's best for me. I thank you for being with me during this time in my marriage. I'm grateful that I can turn to you at any moment and you are there with open arms, ready to comfort, lead, and guide me.

I admit that I've allowed myself to focus on the negative and have allowed the enemy to influence my thinking in ways that do not honor you, my husband, or the covenant of marriage. Forgive me. I know I've acted in ways that feed my own needs, in ways that have not been honoring to you or myself.

Lord, in this moment, I ask that you create in me a clean heart and renew in me a right spirit, a spirit of patience, kindness, humility, selflessness, compassion, understanding, acceptance, and unconditional love.

I pray that you would fill me up so there is less of me and more of you in the way I interact with my husband. I pray that you would open my mind to see what I need to see, learn what I need to learn, and grow in the ways I need to grow. Show me your example, remind me of your commandments, and speak to me through your Word. Lord, open my mind to consider new perspectives, different ways of thinking, and a mindset that uses any challenge to make me stronger and better, not resentful and bitter.

Lord, help me keep you at the center of my marriage. Help me to remember that the relationship with my husband is a living example of your love for me daily and moment by moment and that, in all our interactions, I would seek to serve, look to love, and choose to forgive.

May your Holy Spirit convict me to do what's right even when my ego wants to resist. Make plain the path I need to walk, the words I need to say, and the actions I need to take. Show me how to speak to my husband in ways that touch his heart and spirit, compel him to listen and understand

me, and connect us and create greater intimacy and closeness.

Lord, help me to remember to love myself. For when my cup is full, then I can love from a place of completeness, abundance, and overflow. Help me to remember that I am worthy of love, I am deserving of love, and at my core, I am love. Help me to see the ways my husband shows me love on a daily basis, help me to receive the love that he wants to share with me, and help me to stop doing anything that would create a barrier to him loving me even more.

Lord, I thank you in advance for what you are doing in me, through me, and for me. I thank you for this time of testing because I know on the other side of all this is something greater than I could ever imagine. I thank you for keeping me in the palm of your hand and for now allowing me to experience anything you haven't already given me the tools to handle. Lord, increase my faith and trust in you. Increase my dependence on you. For I know that when I am weak, you are strong. You carry me when I can't walk myself. You pick me up each and every time I fall. And I'm so grateful.

I rest in the confidence that you are working this out. Behind the scenes, you are busy making a way and clearing the space for me, a new me, a better me, a transformed me. I will keep my

mind stayed on you and continue to think upon the things that are true, noble, right, pure, lovely, excellent, and praiseworthy.

I thank you for all the ways you are moving me in the direction you want me to go. Help me to remain obedient and willingly submit to your will and your way. In the matchless and powerful name of Jesus I pray. Amen.



THE VOICE OF GOD THROUGH HIS WORD

Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.

EPHESIANS 4:29 (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION)

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails.

1 CORINTHIANS 13:4–8 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)

Above all, love each other
deeply, because love covers
over a multitude of sins.

1 PETER 4:8 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)

Instead, be kind to each other,
tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just
as God through Christ has forgiven you.

EPHESIANS 4:32 (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION)

Understand this, my dear brothers
and sisters: You must all be quick to
listen, slow to speak, and slow to get
angry. Human anger does not produce
the righteousness God desires. So
get rid of all the filth and evil in your
lives, and humbly accept the word
God has planted in your hearts, for
it has the power to save your souls.
But don't just listen to God's word.
You must do what it says. Otherwise,
you are only fooling yourselves.

JAMES 1:19–22 (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION)

A gentle answer turns away wrath,
but a harsh word stirs up anger.

PROVERBS 15:1 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)

There is no fear in love. But perfect
love drives out fear, because fear has
to do with punishment. The one who
fears is not made perfect in love.

1 JOHN 4:18 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)

The whole point of what we're urging
is simply *love*—love uncontaminated
by self-interest and counterfeit
faith, a life open to God.

1 TIMOTHY 1:5 (THE MESSAGE)

Since God chose you to be the holy
people he loves, you must clothe
yourselves with tenderhearted mercy,
kindness, humility, gentleness, and
patience. Make allowance for each other's
faults, and forgive anyone who offends
you. Remember, the Lord forgave you,
so you must forgive others. Above all,
clothe yourselves with love, which binds
us all together in perfect harmony.

COLOSSIANS 3:12–14 (NEW
LIVING TRANSLATION)

Don't copy the behavior and customs of this world, but let God transform you into a new person by changing the way you think. Then you will learn to know God's will for you, which is good and pleasing and perfect.

ROMANS 12:2 (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION)

And now, dear brothers and sisters, one final thing. Fix your thoughts on what is true, and honorable, and right, and pure, and lovely, and admirable. Think about things that are excellent and worthy of praise.

PHILIPPIANS 4:8 (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION)

So don't lose a minute in building on what you've been given, complementing your basic faith with good character, spiritual understanding, alert discipline, passionate patience, reverent wonder, warm friendliness, and generous love, each dimension fitting into and developing the others. With these qualities active and growing in your lives, no grass will grow under your feet, no day will pass without its reward as you mature in your experience of our Master Jesus.

2 PETER 1:5–9 (THE MESSAGE)

Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age,^[a] against spiritual *hosts* of wickedness in the heavenly *places*. Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand.

Stand therefore, having girded your waist with truth, having put on the breastplate of righteousness, and having shod your feet with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith with which you will be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God; praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, being watchful to this end with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints.

EPHESIANS 6:10–18 (NEW KING JAMES VERSION)

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

EPHESIANS 3: 14–21 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
ROMANS 15:13 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)

But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.

ROMANS 8:24–25 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)

That is what the Scriptures mean when they say, No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no mind has imagined what God has prepared for those who love him.

1 CORINTHIANS 2:9 (NEW LIVING TRANSLATION)

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

ROMANS 15:13 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)

For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

2 CORINTHIANS 4:17–18 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)

And the Lord said, "Simon, Simon! Indeed, Satan has asked for you, that he may sift *you* as wheat. But I have prayed for you, that your faith should not fail; and when you have returned to *Me*, strengthen your brethren."
LUKE 22:31–32 (NEW KING JAMES VERSION)

Be careful how you think; your life is shaped by your thoughts.
PROVERBS 4:23 (GOOD NEWS TRANSLATION)

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
COLOSSIANS 3:12–14 (ENGLISH STANDARD VERSION)

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.
PSALM 139:13–14 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)

Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.
MATTHEW 11:28–30 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.
MATTHEW 7:7 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)

Do not judge, or you too will be judged.
For in the same way you judge others,
you will be judged, and with the measure
you use, it will be measured to you.

Why do you look at the speck of
sawdust in your brother's eye and pay
no attention to the plank in your own
eye? How can you say to your brother,
'Let me take the speck out of your
eye,' when all the time there is a plank
in your own eye? You hypocrite, first
take the plank out of your own eye,
and then you will see clearly to remove
the speck from your brother's eye.

MATTHEW 7:1–5 (NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION)

Get rid of all bitterness, rage and
anger, brawling and slander, along
with every form of malice. Be
kind and compassionate to one
another, forgiving each other, just
as in Christ God forgave you.

**EPHESIANS 4:31–32 (NEW
INTERNATIONAL VERSION)**



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

DR. CHAVONNE PEROTTE is a relationship expert and marriage coach who helps women develop the mindset and skills to create happier, more loving marriages, all without requiring their husband to change. She believes the quickest path to one's personal happiness starts with a good look in the mirror. She is a trained public-health researcher who, over the past fifteen years, has developed a range of curricula on healthy relationships and conducted educational trainings, interactive workshops, and large conferences.

Dr. Chavonne received her doctorate from the Johns Hopkins University and focused her research on communication and intimate partnerships. There, she discovered her passion for hearing people's stories, writing about their lives, and creating solutions for common relationship issues.

Dr. Chavonne is a dynamic coach and speaker who uses her experiences, skills, and knowledge to inspire people to take action in their own lives. She is the founder and CEO of RelateAble, a relationship development and

coaching company that provides virtual counseling and coaching services to clients all over the country.

She works passionately to inspire women to transform their mindset as a way of experiencing more joy, happiness, and fulfillment in their marriages. Dr. Chavonne grew up in Northern Virginia and now lives in New Jersey, where she enjoys her roles as a wife to Dr. Schubert Perotte and mother of two adorable children, Madison and Benjamin. You can find out more about Dr. Chavonne and her work at BeRelateAble.com or join her Facebook group, Happily Married Woman.