

Choosing Growth in Marriage

Make a decision not to let battles tear you or your marriage down. This is something both people in the marriage team need to commit to. In today's culture, people do not respect the marriage union like they used to. The reality is that there are many pressures, stresses and temptations. We as a marriage team need to take responsibility and choose to fight against those stresses.

Essential Objectives in Fighting the "Good Fight"

- 1. Be proactive in choosing a community {friends} that are going to encourage and build up, rather than tear down.** For example, many women have experienced the "pity-party" conversations. Negative conversations with other wives, that draw out the "frustrations" of the marriage relationship. They justify talking about "issues" because they just need to get them out... but really most times those conversations are not productive and do not create change. In fact most of those situations lead to tempting the women towards hurting her relationship with her husband rather than encouraging it. **"We're all influenced by who we associate with."**
- 2. Train yourself to evaluate the productive battles from the non-productive battles.** Years ago, my husband and I decided to not to fight over things that were not eternal. Evaluating all potential arguments through this paradigm helps you to keep perspective and not make certain arguments that should be overlooked.
- 3. Allow the lessons, trials, hardships, and extra work that marriage can be motivate us to improve ourselves first vs. try to improve our spouse.** Marriage isn't always a honeymoon. But instead of focusing on the "hard things"-- choose to let those experiences and situations grow you. We all struggle with those moments of really wanting to put ourselves, desires and needs first. Pursuing a strong thriving marriage means you're going to try. So anticipate approaching those experiences in marriage head on, confronting those temptations in yourself to be focused on your own needs rather than putting your spouse's needs above yours.
- 4. Choose to forgive.** Letting go of burdens is the biggest key to moving on. Truly letting go of these things allows each of you to change and grow. Marriages that get stuck in the mindset that "my husband always" or "my wife never" rarely experience the freedom that comes from forgiveness. A marriage that can't forgive will not survive. **A marriage that chooses to forgive often and embrace growth will thrive.**
- 5. Communicate in a way that honors your spouse.** We all have a unique bent towards what makes us feel more valued. When a spouse takes the time to genuinely value his/her partner both are built up. **Work as a Team focused on valuing one another, building one another up, and helping one another to give your best and highest contribution to the world.**