

# MARRIAGE IN MOTION

## Transcript: Module 3, Lesson 2

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### ZACH

I enjoy beer. While I'm not quite a beer snob, I definitely have a refined palate. I've learned what I like and what I don't. My preference these days is a nice hoppy IPA. Where we live in Washington, microbrews are a big deal. LOTS of attention paid to the smallest details.

There's an IPA out of California called Pliny the Younger. It's very good and very rare...especially in Seattle. A couple years ago, one of my favorite pubs in Seattle got a keg and they actually issued tickets in advance of tapping the keg to help manage demand. Because it was a favorite pub, and I was sort of a regular, I ended up with an extra ticket for this beer.

I have a lot of beer snob friends who would love that ticket, but the first person I called was Rebecca. I didn't even think about it. She was my best friend and she deserved the ticket. She's not my best friend in the traditional sense, but she is definitely the best friend I have.

Couples who are thriving have at their core, a strong friendship. I know that for some, this sounds like a deathknell. We're friends, but we're just friends. But think about it. You've knit your life to this person. Your friendship is absolutely essential.

### LAURA

A marriage is more than a friendship. But it's at least a friendship. Here's what all my friendships have in common. Trust, loyalty, accountability, truth, depth, common interests, history, future.

My friendships do not include sex, and they rarely include conflict. They're based on mutual respect, admiration, appreciation and enjoyment. Let's be clear about one thing, a Marriage in Motion will have friendship as its foundation but not as its goal.

Best friends find comfort in the vulnerable places of their life. They share secrets and adventures but most importantly best friends play. I find so many couples have given up on the art of play with each other and how important fun is to relationship.

### ZACH

This lesson is about how to treat your spouse like your best friend. Including how to "play". In James Karse's book he says, "If you have to play, you cannot play".

Friendship shouldn't be work. It should be a enjoyable and freeing. It should be a declaration.

In this lesson you'll learn...

1. The three declarations of a marital friendship.
2. How to say “I know you.”
3. How to say “I like you.”
4. How to say “I’ll be here for you.”
5. What matters most.
6. To become clear about your “next step”.

## **LAURA**

When my husband and I were first “dating” I was a typical college co-ed....single and ready to mingle. We spent our first summer together lounging in the mornings, sipping coffee, reading and basking in the sun. This was a rare occurrence for 20-something me and the dating script that I usually followed, which was typically late night ventures out to local hot spots, shallow conversation in crowded bars, and a pile of makeup and high heels. There was something uniquely different about the way in which Ryan and I got to know each other. We simply included the other person in our day to day activities. We cooked breakfast. We grocery shopped. We went for runs together. We carpooled. There was zero effort paid in my appearance or fret over what we would do to pass our time. We simply were present and that was enough. In fact, it was better than enough. The truth is that we didn’t even realize we were dating. We were became friends and decided to make our friendship last forever. So... he put a ring on it!

The focus for today is simple: The happiest marriages are based on the deepest friendships.

## **ZACH**

Let’s actually define a marital friendship. The definition of a marital friendship. Dr. Gottman’s theory holds that the marital friendship is made up of three core elements. “Enhance Love Maps”, “Share Fondness & Admiration”, “Turn Towards”.

Love Maps: I know you. I like the term maps because of what it suggests about a journey. Imagine a barely detailed map...a pencil sketch with rudimentary landmarks. Then imagine a live map, constantly updated, kindof like the app on your phone. We’re aiming for the latter...understanding that things change often. To be a best friend is to stay on top of those updates.

Fondness & Admiration: As far as the marital friendship is concerned, this is far more about “I like you” than “I love you”. It’s “I like you.” Look I know that Rebecca loves me. When we’re struggling, however, I need her to remind me that she likes me. Sometimes, however, she doesn’t like me and that’s when I know our friendship needs work.

Turning Toward: I’ll be there for you. Turning toward is about saying, when you need something, I can give it to you. Or I can tell you that I won’t.

## **LAURA**

Let’s talk about how to say, “I know you.” This idea of “Love Maps” is helpful because again, the more detailed the map, the more you “know” your partner. Again, the best way to get to know your partner is to ask questions. Remember we’re chasing small wins. Here’s an easy way to “get to know” your partner.

At the beginning of the day, ask about the one thing that you should ask about at the end of the day. This is subtly powerful. And it will give you insight into the characters and settings and problems and joys of your daily life together. Instead of beginning the day with polite disinterest, try beginning the day with purposeful interest.

THEN, at the end of the day, ask about the thing. Close the loop. I think you'll be surprised about how quickly you become invested in one another's story as you get to know them. Subtly they become your collective story and your friendship is transformed.

### **ZACH**

As your friendship strengthens, you'll find that you have much more tolerance for the things that drive you crazy. Still, it can be hard to reinforce your fondness and appreciation without intention. So, here's a super easy way to say "I like you."

Say, "I like you." Look for the things about your partner that you love and appreciate and notice them out loud. Train your own brain to tell yourself what you like. Tell your partner what you like...about them.

But honestly, here's the most powerful thing you can do. Tell other people how much you like your spouse. Watch what happens when you tell other people about the things you're proud of, the things you're attracted to, the things that you're grateful for.

We have some ideas for how you can mechanize this effort in the activity sheet, but for now, just take a quick minute focus on one thing you genuinely enjoy about your partner. See what it does to your frame of mind.

### **LAURA**

Finally, the third declaration of a marital friendship. "I'll be there for you". When I was pregnant with my firstborn, Ryan and I decided to take a three month course to prepare us for pregnancy and delivery. He selected the course titled "Husband Coached Childbirth". This course was designed to put Dad in the driver's seat, not just for the labor and delivery but over the pregnancy as well. Ryan took over the role of manager so that I didn't have to. He monitored my daily hydration and protein. He encouraged me to go to the gym or take a nap after work. When my water broke at home, he sprung into action and started calculating my contractions on an app he had already installed on his phone. Once active labor started, Ryan verbally coached me through my contractions. He was literally my biggest cheerleader. Fear is said to be your biggest enemy during labor. The moment a mother is fearful of the process, her body releases adrenaline that is counterproductive to the process. I didn't have a moment to feel fearful, because I had the person I trusted more than anyone reassuring me that I could DO this...and I was doing this...and I was a rockstar. He made me feel like the most powerful woman on the planet.

What Ryan did in that moment was show up. He said, I've got your back. That's what friends do for one another. Dr. Gottman's template for this is what he calls "turning toward versus turning away". Turning toward is answering the question, will you be there for me with saying "Hell yes I'll be there for you! You have opportunities all throughout the day to show up for your partner, to demonstrate your that they matter and are important to you. These opportunities can be small, like, sure, I'll stop at the store to grab you contact solution. Or a bit bigger..yes, I will take my 2 weeks of vacation to travel to Paris to support you as you said goodbye to your ailing mother.

You can also turn away or even against your partner. In fact one of the easiest ways to turn against your partner is to not be present. The little handheld device that is intended to CONNECT you is actually a distraction that can come between you and your partner..if you let it. One couple I worked with had the pleasure of a daily commute from the suburbs into the city. They sat side by side on the commuter bus, both completely entranced by their cell phones. They used this time to begin their workday and catch up on emails that came in overnight. From time to time, one would make a com-

ment about something they read or how busy their day was shaping up to be...each time...without response from their partner. Why say it out loud unless they were asking for a response? That was an attempt to connect with their partner...and instead of engaging in dialogue, the sharing fell flat and reinforced the disengagement. When you miss your partner's bid or ignore their bid (intentional or not), you are turning against or in other words..communicating a lack of support for them. This is an important concept for cultivating a healthy relationship built on a strong friendship. Remember, you have the response-ability to turn toward your partner in small but meaningful ways.

## **ZACH**

Ok. we said you'd learn "the most important thing". I'm going to cheat here, because I don't actually know what the most important thing here. I thought I was sure but I might be changing my mind. I was gonna say the most important thing is Attachment. Stan Tatkin has done some really great writing in this area for couples. His basic thesis is that human beings are biologically wired for love and the best way to honor that wiring is through a marital friendship where partners serve as the primary "go-to" people for one another and help one another put the the "security seeking" parts of their brain to rest.

This is the power of a strong friendship. That said, I'm also open to the idea that the most important thing is the idea of play, just as Laura suggested at the top of the video. Yes, I'm talking about learning to play the "infinite game", but I'm also talking about actual play.

Here's your next step. I want you to actively pursue your friendship with your partner. Seek to know your partner deeply. Sing your partner's praises. Make your support known through small but powerful gestures of turning toward. But most importantly, I want you to play with your partner. Do something enjoyable to the two of you that is fun, maybe even exciting. When was the last time the two of you rode a rollercoaster, went snorkling, had a picnic, went to a waterpark and went down the massive slides, went for a bike ride, attended the farmers market? Download the activity sheet titled "BFF" and focus your attention on pursuing your friendship.

Remember: Small wins builds lasting momentum.