

# MARRIAGE IN MOTION

## Transcript: Module 3, Lesson 4

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### LAURA

Hello again. You know the drill by now, so let's get right to it. This Module has been about creating daily intimacy. Over the last two lessons we've talked about how to move toward intimacy with your heart and your mind. Today, we want to talk about moving toward intimacy with your body.

### ZACH

Here we are at the end of Module Three, nearly 3/4 of the way through MARRIAGE in MOTION , but before we move on, I'd like to pull the curtain back just a little bit if I may. Trust me...I have a plan. Laura and I met almost four years ago. Almost immediately, we said something like, "we should find a way to work together." We tried a few different things including a consultation group, dreaming about speaking gigs, actually working together at the Gottman Institute, speculating about a book, but nothing ever really clicked. We knew we wanted to help couples, but we didn't know how.

I'd always had a seed of an idea about creating something online, but I couldn't get it off the ground. Another friend, Sean - who is right over there - and I probably had half a dozen conversations about what might be possible. But again, we never got anything off the ground. Then I got a call from my friend Charles who said...I think we can actually do this, and I know how to pay for it. That was almost a year ago, and we've been moving pretty quickly since then.

I'm writing this on a Sunday. It's a gorgeous, hot day in Seattle, and my wife and kids are at the pool. I'm in a dark lonely kitchen. I've been ignoring my family for weeks trying to hit deadlines before we start filming.

That's today. It's a Wednesday. The way it's worked for us is that Charles and Sean have managed most of the back end of the process. Laura and I have been creating content and making sure that we stay "camera ready". She and I have collaborated to write these modules for you. We've had a totally separate process creating the activity sheets.

We write like crazy in order to have content ready for filming dates. We found this cool penthouse in downtown Seattle that we rent on a per day basis. It's a pretty sweet spot. We show up with about 6 wardrobe changes. Laura and Sean tell me what to wear. And then we sit down on this couch to start filming the modules. My main job is making sure that this pillow right here is perfectly centered.

Some days I'm here. Some days she's here. Some days we're both here. Sean is always here. Charles is not here...he's in Minnesota today...but he's working really hard to make sure that all of our back end systems are buttoned up. We also have a really cool team of photographers, including our friends John and Brenda, and even a new friend whose job is to run our teleprompter, which I'm reading off of now. (Weird that I wrote that sentence a couple weeks ago. That one too.)

Once we're done filming, there's a whole other process of editing, producing and publishing these videos for you. In all, we'll spend about six months dotting Is and crossing Ts before you see anything online. All that to say, it's a LOT more work than I ever imagined way back when we just had the seed of an idea. At this point, we're really proud of what we're creating, confident that it'll look great, and that it'll be helpful to you.

So...I have two reasons for telling you all this...I want to remind you, and myself, that what you see isn't necessarily all there is to see. No matter what this course looks like, there's still a ton going on behind the scenes that makes it both better and worse than it might otherwise be. Just like a marriage.

The second is that, just like a marriage, the seed of an idea is a long way away from the full grown tree. You get this crazy idea that maybe, just maybe if you commit to a thing called marriage or a person called...Rebecca or Ryan or whatever...you might be able to create real change in the world. You might achieve happiness, or satisfaction, or bliss. But it's work. It's really really hard work.

If you're lucky, you'll have some really good friends travel with you along the way. Like Laura and Sean and Charles. But in a marriage, I really want you to think about the power of friendship. That's been the entire focus of this third module. The cultivation of an epic, intimate, friendship between you and your spouse. I can tell you for sure...as much as our forBetter team has labored to bring this course to life, my absolute biggest source of support has been Rebecca. I know for certain that Laura and Sean and Charles would all say the same thing...not that Rebecca was their biggest support, but that their friendship with their spouse was their sustaining effort.

So... we want to spend the rest of this last module talking about epic friendship.

## **LAURA**

In this video we'll focus on how to how to strive for an epic friendship. You'll learn more about:

1. Love languages.
2. How to play.
3. More about the power of small things..
4. How to ruin a friendship.
5. Friendships with other people.
6. To become clear about your "next step".

## **LAURA - Cont'd**

In the last lesson, we introduced the idea of "Love Languages" which was introduced by Gary Chapman in his book *The 5 Love Languages*. The 5 Love Languages are:

- Gifts
- Quality Time
- Words of Affirmation
- Acts of Service
- Physical Touch

These categories basically represent primary ways we may prefer to give and receive love. Some of us prefer gifts. Some prefer kind words. Do a quick self assessment. If you were to rank the top 2-3 ways that you prefer to give love, what would you pick?

What about the ways that you perceive love?

Imagine if these were actual languages. Say you're an English speaker and you fell in love with someone who only spoke French. Would you try to learn French? Wouldn't you hope they'd try to learn English.

It's no different with Love Languages. We've given you a quick quiz in the activity sheet to help you name your love language. It's entirely possible, it's not on the list but regardless, epic friendships are built by learning to speak one another's language.

### **ZACH**

Another thing that epic friendships have in common is an ability to play. We spent a lot of time on that in the first lesson of this module, but I think it bears repeating. You ought to commit to having fun together. No one wants to spend 50 years in a relationship without authentic laughter and joy. In an epic friendship, you learn how to have fun in unfun places. What's the most unfun place? Maybe the DMV? Airport? Emergency room?

I think this starts with perspective. One of my favorite thinkers, Tim Urban, of the blog Wait But Why notes, "when you choose a life partner, you're choosing a lot of things, including your parenting partner and someone who will deeply influence your children, your eating companion for about 20,000 meals, your travel companion for about 100 vacations, your primary leisure time and retirement friend, your career therapist, and someone whose day you'll hear about 18,000 times."

That's intense. You can't afford to be a party pooper over a lifetime. Sure you're going to have bad days, but over the long haul you need to take yourself less seriously and commit to a sense of appropriate humor about this complex world we live in.

### **LAURA**

One of the things we've been talking about throughout this course is power of small changes. There's an incredible piece of research that blows my mind every time I think about it. Basically, the researchers set up cameras in couples' homes and said, "Do what you do: Cook dinner, do homework, clean up, get your kids to bed and bath. Just live your life."

Couples had been pre screened as either in either a generally positive, or generally negative state. When researchers watched the video, they counted the number of positive interactions. Any time there was a smile or a wink or a "thank you" or a pat on the butt. Anything, they'd mark down a little hash mark. Later when they had the couples watch the video back, they also had to count the number of positive interactions.

Couples who had pre-screened as in a positive state, they were able to see that same number of positive interactions as the researcher. Couples in a negative state...they missed about 1/3 of the positive interactions seen by neutral observers. Do you know that this means?

It means being in a negative state of mind, it actually distorts your view of reality. It is really important that you not dismiss this study. And it's really important that you strive for a positive perspective on your world and your relationship. Epic friendships can only thrive in a realistic environment. They cannot exist in a world filled with guessing and second guessing.

### **ZACH**

Yeah, a negative state of mind is a great way to ruin a friendship. I have a client who claims to suf-

fer “the malady of negative thinking”. She claims it’s like a pair of glasses that turns everything to a yucky mossy green. We’re working on getting her some new glasses.

But that’s actually not the biggest killer of a friendship. That’s easy. It’s contempt. I started this video with a soliloquy, so I’ll try not to finish with one. But I simply don’t think a marriage can thrive and survive without a strong sense of mutual appreciation and regard between both partners.

If one partner is in a superior, or one-up, or more powerful position over another, you simply cannot cultivate an epic friendship. I see this most often in really conservative relationships - political and religious - where men have ascended to a “leadership” role that doesn’t honor and respect the women. It’s not always contempt, and it’s not always a bad relationship, but it’s never an epic

I want to beg you...if you’re in a relationship without an equal measure of respect...especially if you’re the one lacking respect for your partner. Go back a little bit and find a new path. The path you’re on will only lead to “for worse”.

## **LAURA**

I want to add just one thought that I think bears noting as we talk about your epic friendship. That’s the role of others. Shirley Glass - who is Ira Glass’ mom, if you’ve ever listened to This American Life - wrote an incredible book about rebuilding trust after infidelity. The book is called Not “Just Friends”.

In it, she offers a beautiful metaphor about how true friendships work within the context of a marriage. The image of windows and walls symbolizes the level of intimacy within the marriage. You can have intimacy in your marriage only when you are honest with your partner about things that are significant to you. When you withhold information and keep secrets, you are erecting walls between you that act as barriers to free flow of thoughts and feelings that deepens your intimacy.

The goal is to create windows between you so that you are able to be unfiltered and uniquely you. I’m talking about allowing yourself to be truly seen by your partner. Remember when we said Intimacy was Into-Me-You-See?

Allowing your partner to peer into your delicate places is an act of vulnerability that can and SHOULD only take place within the context of your marriage. Let me step on my soap box for a second...these windows that you are creating are to allow complete visibility, transparency and access to one another.

I want to warn you now that these windows are not intended to be had with others. That would be a betrayal. Let me give you an example...you may find yourself enjoying a coworker’s company and gradually overtime you begin to disclose more and more details about yourself. The conversation has transitioned from how your weekend went to more personal details about your family and even details about how your marriage isn’t going so hot. This depth of self disclosure is you creating a window where a wall should be. That’s a no-no. Your marriage is a special union in which you are creating windows with the one you love and trust. Not creating windows with another.

Let me tell you a story real fast. Past couple comes to my office following the revelation of an emotional affair. Her cell phone and ipad were connected. While the husband was in the bathroom with the ipad, she was in the living room on her cell phone skypeing with a coworker. The tone of the conversation was familiar. Too familiar. The husband watched every message exchange as it popped up on his ipad. It was clear to him that his wife had been betraying him for a while. I want you to imagine this scenario whenever you find yourself slipping into an intimate place with someone outside

your marriage. Imagine that your husband or wife can see and hear everything you are saying. Would they be uncomfortable? Would they feel betrayed? If you feel a twinge of guilt, pay attention to that feeling.

## **ZACH**

Well, nice work getting to the end of Module 3. We're really excited for you and also super grateful. The fact that you've stuck with us is encouraging and I hope and trust that you'll give us the kind of feedback that will make this course even better for couples in the future.

Please send us your comments, questions, and ideas. And as always, complete the activity sheet titled "Epic Friendship". As I mentioned at the top of the video, this is a team effort and we're glad you're part of the team.

We're looking forward to seeing you in Module 4. It's where we really talk about the legacy of your marriage. How you make meaning, shape a future, establish roots. Can't wait to walk that road with you.