

MARRIAGE IN MOTION

Transcript: Module 4, Lesson 4

LAURA

You guys... you're about to graduate. I hope that you're able to reflect back on the last few weeks and see how far you've come. In the last lesson I hinted at a debate about what marriage is in just two words. I don't know if debate is the right word. It's probably more "discussion". Or "dialogue".

ZACH

I love that you're using alliteration to make your point.

Listen, as a writer, a reader, a teacher, a therapist, a person... I think words matter. Swap a single word out of a sentence and it changes the entire sentence. Note the difference between "I'm sorry but you're being unreasonable." And "I'm sorry AND you're being unreasonable." Or, as we've discussed before, the difference between desire and demand.

This lesson is about words. Specifically, two words, but also all the words. Mostly we want to give you some ideas to consider as you craft the next steps of your relationship.

LAURA

So we're going to weigh in from a few different directions. In this video:

1. I'll offer two words.
2. Zach will offer two words.
3. We'll consider Dr. Gottman's two words.
4. We'll consider two more words.
5. We'll invite your words...
6. As always, we'll want you to become clear about your next, and last, MARRIAGE in MOTION step.

ZACH

In the spirit of all of our previous lessons, our focus sentence is: You only need two words to keep your MARRIAGE in MOTION. But, for the record, we're going to give you a whole bunch more.

LAURA

So, my two words are Intentionality and Respect. I want you to think about two different type of people. The first person I want you to draw in your mind is someone who lives life on autopilot. You know this person because they are never really happy about their relationships, job, friendships, physical appearance... and never seem to make any strides to improve their position. They drift from one job to another, one relationship to the next, never pursuing novelty or risking failure to grow and

better themselves. They have become complacent with the comfort of sitting still and predictability. Do you have someone in your life that fits this description?

Now I want you to draw another person to mind. This person lives an intentional life. They are on fire with desire and passion for accomplishment and growth. You know this person because they start their day with writing lists and goal setting. They seem to always be focused on achieving one dream or another. If they set their sights on something, they are going to get it! Zach is a great example of this... in fact... as we film this right now, Zach has been tracking how many days in a row he can workout, floss his teeth and consume an unseen amount of water in a day. This is who Zach is. He lives his life by design. He doesn't just wake up and see what the day has in store for him, he commands his day with purpose and will.

My hope for you is that you create an intentional marriage. You create a direction and purpose for your marriage and you move each and every day toward achieving the marriage you desire. You can absolutely have a mediocre marriage that just HAPPENS to you. I desire more for you. I want you to have an intentional marriage by your own design.

My second word is Respect. Mutual respect is a cornerstone of successful marriages. Respect is shown when you value the feelings and opinions of your partner, even when you disagree. It is shown when you are willing to negotiate and compromise on difficult issues.

Respect is speaking highly of your partner when they are not present. Respect is lifting your partner up and supporting them in times of weakness.

Respect is honoring your partner's unique and unchanging qualities and choosing to love them in spite of them. Like Intentionality, respect doesn't just happen in your marriage. You must give respect... and keep giving it.

ZACH

I love it. Thanks. And let the record show, I have no objection to Intentionality and Respect. In fact, I think Intentionality is probably my third word. But I want to offer two other words: Imagination and Hope.

I don't know if you noticed, but the word Imagination is planted throughout this course. I haven't done this, but I bet if I went back and did a wordsearch of all the big words in this series, Imagination would be top-5, easy.

In Lewis Carroll's *Through the Looking Glass*, Alice says, "one can't believe in impossible things." But the White Queen responds, "Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast."

Imagination is the ability to believe in impossible things. I think couples, people, get so hung up in what they are experiencing that they lose sight of what's possible.

I know what's possible, so I spend a TON of time helping people imagine. That's why I ask about magic fairies and warn about dragons. Your ability to imagine is closely attached to your ability to play. I dare say, if you can't imagine, you can't expect to move.

My second favorite word is Hope. The deal with hope is that it's hard. But it's also magical. It's really tough to believe in something that you can't ... imagine ... but it's also the place where intimacy lives.

In that hard, vulnerable place.

When I'm with couples, I always preach Imagination and Hope. You can't expect to convert "the way things are" to "the way they should be" without imagination and hope. Imagination opens you up to all the possibilities. Hope opens you up to the idea that the best of possibilities is ... possible.

LAURA

So, we promised you "two words". So far, we've given you four. I want to tell you about the two that Dr. Gottman considers the "weight bearing walls" of a Sound Relationship House. Dr. Gottman's pillars are Trust and Commitment.

In "What Makes Love Last?" Dr. Gottman's introduces the importance of trust through the lens of betrayal. He says, "Betrayal is the secret that lies at the heart of every failing relationship – it is there even if the couple is unaware of it." This implies that relationship failure isn't caused by a deficit in communication, compatibility or compatibility – three of the most popular relationship clichés – but rather the presence of betrayal, the one thing you swore you'd never tolerate.

The most damaging betrayals are the everyday ones. The ones that pile up over time as you and your partner consistently ask and answer the question, "Can I trust you?" Can I trust you to pick up the milk? To listen to my feelings? To not get drunk at that party? To respect my time? To focus on our kids instead of the television? To choose me? For better and for worse? Again? And again?

Dr. Gottman suggests that trust is built by saying "Yes". Again. And again. And again. In the everyday moments that create a long term stability for the relationship. But trust isn't enough.

The other key word, according to Dr. Gottman, is Commitment. My favorite definition of commitment is "taking your partner with you wherever you go." It's a daily choice to remember and reinforce your choice for your partner. Another way to put it. If trust is "I LOVE you." Commitment is "I love YOU".

Dr. Gottman is clear that the healthiest relationships are the ones where partners prioritize the relationship, but also one another in the relationship. Commitment is about cherishing. It's about having appropriate walls and windows. It's about choosing. As Dr. Gottman says, "Commitment is a full moral choice." That's what your vows are about. Choice.

ZACH

As we were thinking through this lesson, I decided we'd also ask you... or at least the "yous" that came before you. I asked clients, I asked friends, I asked strangers I met through our various social media outlets. In the end, I probably asked 200 to 300 people their two words.

There's something incredible about "market research". No matter what experts think, what really matters is what you think. In this case, we got a ton of words, but two came clearly to the top of the list. Here are the two words we heard from "you":

The first was **Humor**, recalling again how important it is to include fun and play in your relationship. Fun fact, my favorite movie of all time is Who Framed Roger Rabbit. At least part of why I love the movie is Jessica Rabbit's rationale for why she loves Roger. "He makes me laugh" she says.

Humor is a great way to keep levity in the relationship. Of course, it's important to remember that the goal is to laugh with one another, not at one another. Negative humor and sarcasm are unpro-

ductive.

Another thing about humor is that it's a great tool for repair. Whenever you can bring the tension with a little comedy, you can create an opportunity to reconnect without taking yourselves or your problems too seriously. But of course, repair is more than just comedy. Ideally it's an avenue to re-stored relationship.

This leads to your second word: **Forgiveness**. I've been talking about forgiveness a lot with clients lately. Somewhere in your life, you learned about forgiveness. Or you didn't.

The ability to forgive is absolutely essential for your relationship. If you can't or won't... again, you don't have any reason to expect your relationship to move. This includes forgiving past grievances as well as future ones. You're imperfect people and you will continue to frustrate and even infuriate one another from time to time.

But remember, it's not "forgive and forget". Forgiveness is a deliberate choice to accept and trust the person being forgiven. But it's also a kind of accountability. True forgiveness invites a greater degree of trust and response-ability.

I think our "market research" hit the nail the head. Humor and Forgiveness.

LAURA

So the only thing that's left is to find out what your words are. So far, you've got Intentionality and Respect. Imagination and Hope. Trust and Commitment. Humor and Forgiveness. That sounds incredible to me. What does it sound like to you? What would you add to the list?

Remember, words matter. We want you to claim your words. This is another way that you can create meaning for your relationship. The words you choose, put them up on your fridge. If you can't come up with just two right away, that's okay. Pull out your butcher paper and list all the words you want to be about and work through your list together until you get down to two.

You'll be surprised how bonding this exercise can be.

ZACH

Well, that's it. You're done! We hope...sincerely...that you can feel your MARRIAGE in MOTION. That you can feel the wind at your back. We want to hear what was most helpful. What you would like to have learned more about. What you're celebrating and what you're still working on.

LAURA

And remember, you have lifetime access to these videos, so if you're feeling stuck, come back. Massive change doesn't happen overnight. Small wins over time create big change. Consistency over time is what really matters. You. You're the difference maker.

ZACH

Yeah...come back any time. And THANK YOU. Thank you for the honor of participating in your life this way. It's a huge honor to all of us.

LAURA

Thank you for trusting us, for doing such great work, and congratulations!