

OPTIONS OF INTEGRITY

Praying & applying God's Word to be able to show up as your Most Healthy Self (Be List)

PRAYER

In our fear, it is difficult to see ourselves, our spouse and even God accurately. Satan is darkness and he often starts with fog and confusion. Ask God to give you His eyes to see yourself, your spouse, and your situation as He does. 2 Kings 6:17-20, Psalm 139:23-24, Matthew 26:31

EXTEND GRACE

Through God's lens, you may recognize the need to extend or receive grace. You may see the offense that took place hit an old button or a more recent hurt causing it to feel out of proportion. Remember you and your spouse are human, making mistakes daily. Choosing to let go and extend grace will free you up to not carry the old list of offenses. This is not the same as avoiding, ignoring or minimizing, but truly choosing to lay something down. Extending grace frees you from the burden of pain, anger or whatever has built up in reaction to the offense. Colossians 3:12, Matthew 18:21-35, Ephesians 4:32

HUMBLE YOURSELF

When we are hurt and offended, it is difficult to see the ways in which we are contributing. Ask the Lord to help you identify your own selfish desires that may be causing bitterness. Examine the interests and desires you may be putting ahead of your spouse, minimizing their pain or design. James: 3:13-18, Philippians 2:1-4, Proverbs 18:2

FORGIVE

Forgiveness does not mean what happened was okay. In fact, forgiveness is acknowledging what was done was sin and damaged the relationship. Forgiveness is not natural. Through God's example of mercy and forgiveness we have received, we are able to forgive others. This does not mean we forget, yet it does mean we choose to not remember it over and over, carrying a list of our spouses past mistakes. Forgiveness is not the same as excusing or minimizing. Forgiveness may lead to reconciliation. Forgiveness *fre*es you from the burden of the pain, anger, bitterness, or whatever has

built up in reaction to the offense. Colossians 3:12-14, Matthew 6:14-15, Matthew 18:21-35

INVITE SPOUSE TO HEART TALK TO LISTEN THEIR HEART

While using the Care Cycle you may recognize a desire to seek to understand what your spouse is feeling. You may identify some of your old negative and unhelpful assumptions clouding your vision of your spouse. You can approach your spouse with curiosity and humility to hear their feelings. James 1:19, Proverbs 18:13, Proverbs 20:5

APOLOGIZE

Often we recognize a need to apologize for the things we said or did in a reactive cycle. By inviting your spouse to share their heart before your apology, you are giving them a safe space to feel heard and understood, validating the depth of the wounds before taking responsibility for your part. Rushing in with “I’m sorry,” can feel like a bandaid meant to get our spouse to talking about their uncomfortable feelings. Listening first and then asking, “will you forgive me for....” shows the impact on your heart in the apology. Matthew 5:23-24, Psalm 51:17, 2 Corinthians 7:10

INVITE SPOUSE TO A HEART TALK TO SAFELY SHARE YOUR HEART

As you sort out your feelings and what God is doing in your heart, you may recognize a desire to share with your spouse your feelings so they can have an opportunity to hear, understand and care about what you were feeling. Having completed the care cycle releases you from the need to seek your spouse to heal your heart, but instead be able to approach them as a helpmate who you can share the journey of what God is healing in you with one another. Invite your spouse to a heart talk with a specific “topic” (a heart talk about our conversation in the kitchen this morning) and ask them when they would be willing and ready to listen. Ephesians 4:2, Galatians 6:2, John 13:34-35

ASSERT YOURSELF

Assertive communication is one in which we hold ourselves in a posture that expresses, “I matter and you matter. We both matter.” Being assertive does not mean being aggressive. Aggressive communication minimizes the other person. Sometimes looking back we see we have minimized our own feelings in order to keep the peace. This is not a posture of integrity and leads to a heart of bitterness and resentment. Philippians 2:2, 1 Corinthians 3:16-17

SET A BOUNDARY

The purpose of a boundary is to create safety in the marriage for both spouses. It is not an effort to control your spouse. When creating a boundary, you are clearly identifying for yourself and your spouse when something is unsafe and the need to exit the marriage/relationship circle in order to go to your own yard to continue in your care cycle to keep your own heart open in the waiting. For example, if your spouse is name calling or talking disrespectfully, you might say, “this conversation does not feel safe and respectful. I am going to go work on my care cycle and I’ll check back to see if we can continue in a more safe and respectful way.” When you set a boundary, be prepared to follow through, both in caring for your heart and being willing to come back. Proverbs 4:23, Psalm 28:7, Psalm 18:1-2

WAIT WELL

Healing takes time. It is challenging to wait with an open heart while God is at work in our spouses heart and healing in our marriage. We can get discouraged and lose patience with God and our spouse, especially when we can’t see evidence of the changes immediately. Ask the Lord to keep your own heart open and soft while you wait on His timing and His healing. Only God can do the change in our hearts. He gives us a new heart! Isaiah 40:31, Isaiah 55:8, James 1:2-4

CHOOSE THE OPPOSITE

When we are in a reactive cycle, we let fear lead our behavior and it is often not our best self that emerges. Think about your current reaction or review the reactions you identified and ask yourself, what would it look like if I chose to do the opposite? For instance, your reaction may be to defend yourself and point the finger back at your spouse. Instead, you could take a look at your own behavior and choose to be curious about your spouse or the situation. Choosing the opposite is not designed to manipulate your spouse, but equips you to show up as your best self. Luke 6:27-36, Proverbs 15:1

BE A CONDUIT OF GOD'S LOVE

After spending time experiencing being Loved by your maker, you may feel filled with love and compassion for your spouse. You will not need to create or muster up your own love, but simply be a conduit of God’s love to those in your life, loving them as God loves you. John 13:34-35, Matthew 7:12, Matthew 22:36-40

OTHER

What else might God be wanting to heal in your heart today? Ask Him to open your eyes to Him and the work He is doing in your life and marriage. 2 Kings 6:17-20