



HOME IMPROVEMENTS

*The Chapman Guide to
Negotiating Change With Your Spouse*

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Home Improvements: The Chapman Guide to Negotiating Change with Your Spouse

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

<i>Introduction</i>	vii
Chapter 1: Starting at the Right Place.....	1
Chapter 2: Learning the Power of Love.....	29
Chapter 3: Requesting Change	57
<i>Epilogue</i>	89
<i>Some Thoughts Worth Remembering</i>	91
<i>How to Get Your Spouse to Change Without Manipulation: A Three-Step Plan</i>	95
<i>What I Wish My Wife Would Change</i>	97
<i>What I Wish My Husband Would Change</i>	103
<i>Notes</i>	111
<i>About the Author</i>	113



Introduction

*A*fter thirty years as a marriage counselor, I have drawn one firm conclusion: All married people wish their spouse would change. Sometimes, these desires go unexpressed but are refined and deepened in the process of daydreaming. The husband pictures his wife as having made the changes he desires, and he relishes this new creation. The wife dreams of a husband who will take out the garbage without being asked. These secretly nurtured visions of the perfect spouse become barriers to intimacy in the real world.

At the other extreme are husbands or wives who overtly declare their demands for change, usually in the heat of anger. Harsh language and brutal behavior reveal the intensity of their desire for change. One wife reported that her husband pushed her against the wall, and when she complained, he said, “When you start acting like a wife, I’ll start treating you like one. Until then, you get what you deserve.” Behind the words “start acting like a wife” were no

doubt specific expectations he had that would require a change in her behavior. A wife who screams, “I am sick and tired of picking up after you; it’s time you grew up,” is revealing her expectations for change.

In between the two extremes of silent desire and brazen demands, thousands of couples live with unfulfilled expectations. If only their husband or wife would change, life would be so different. Sometimes they attempt to express their desires; other times, they simply give up in frustration.

What’s the problem? Why is the desire for spousal change so universal, and yet the reality of change so rare? I believe the answer lies in three factors:

- ☛ We start at the wrong place.
- ☛ We fail to understand the power of love.
- ☛ We lack the skills to effectively communicate our desire for our spouse to change.

This book will answer the question, “How do I get my spouse to change—without manipulation?” In the next few pages, I will show you the right place to start, how to leverage the power of love, and how to develop the skills for requesting change.

This book is concise and to the point because I know you’re busy. It is not a complicated book, but it is a powerful book. I believe that what you are about to read has the potential of bringing about the changes you desire in your spouse. It will not be easy to apply the principles I will teach you, but if you do, they will bear much fruit. In all my years of counseling, I have never known anyone who sincerely applied these principles who did not see significant change in the spouse’s behavior.

The book is divided into three sections, each addressing one of the key issues mentioned above. I am going to talk to you as if you were sitting in my counseling office, and I am going to share with you what I have shared with hundreds of couples over the past three decades. If you’re ready, so am I. Let’s get started.

1



STARTING AT THE RIGHT PLACE

*I*nvariably, people who want their spouse to change start at the wrong place. A young man named Robert was one such person. He came alone to my office and told me that his wife, Sheila, would not come with him.

“What seems to be the nature of the problem?”
I asked.

“For one thing, my wife is so disorganized. She spends half her life looking for her car keys. She never knows where to find anything because she can’t remember where she put it. I’m not talking Alzheimer’s—she’s only thirty-five. I’m talking

totally disorganized. I've tried to help her. I've made suggestions, but she's not open to anything I say. She says I'm controlling her. I'm not trying to control her. I just want to help make her life easier. If she would get more organized, it would certainly make my life easier, too. I waste a lot of time helping her find things she's lost."

I jotted some notes while Robert was talking, and when he was done, I asked, "Are there other problem areas?"

"Money. I have a good job. I make enough that we should be able to live comfortably, but not the way Sheila spends it. I mean, she makes no attempt to shop; she pays full price for everything. Like her clothes—if she would just buy them at the right season, they would be half price. We've gone for financial counseling, but she won't follow the financial planner's advice. Right now, we owe \$5,000 on our credit card, and yet Sheila won't stop spending."

I nodded my head as I listened. "Are there other problem areas, Robert?"

“Well, yes. Sheila is just not interested in sex. I think she could live without it. If I didn’t initiate it, we would never have sex. Even when I do, I’m often rejected. I thought sex was an important part of marriage, but apparently she doesn’t feel that way.”

As the session continued, Robert shared a few more of his frustrations about his wife’s behavior. He said he had made every effort to get her to change, but he had seen few, if any, positive results. He was frustrated and at the point of hopelessness. He had come to me because he had read my books and thought that perhaps if I were to call his wife, she might talk to me and maybe I could get her to change. I knew from experience, however, that if Sheila came to my office, she would tell a different story than the one I’d heard from Robert. She would tell me about her problems with him. She would probably say that instead of being understanding, Robert is demanding and harsh with her. She would say, “If Robert would treat me with a little kindness and be a little romantic, I could be interested in sex.” She would say, “I wish I could

hear one compliment from him about some purchase I have made, rather than always condemning me for spending too much money.” In essence, her perspective would be “If Robert would change, then I would change.”

Is there hope for Robert and Sheila? Can they get the changes they desire in each other? I believe the answer is yes, but first they must radically change their approach. They are starting at the wrong place.

ANCIENT WISDOM

In my counseling practice, I have discovered that most of the relationship principles that really work are not new. Many are found in ancient literature, though they’ve often been overlooked for years. For example, the principle of starting at the right place can be found in a lesson that Jesus taught, commonly known as the Sermon on the Mount. I will paraphrase the quote to apply the principle directly to the marriage relationship: “Husband, why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your wife’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? Or,

wife, how can you say to your husband, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your spouse’s eye.”¹

The principle is clear: The place to start is getting the plank out of your own eye. Notice carefully that Jesus did not say, “There’s nothing wrong with your mate. Leave him or her alone.” In fact, he indicated that there is something wrong with your mate when he said, “Once you get the plank out of your own eye, then you can see more clearly to get the speck out of your spouse’s eye.”

Everyone needs to change. There are no perfect spouses—although I did hear once of a pastor who asked the question, “Does anyone know of a perfect husband?” One man in the back of the church raised his hand quickly and said, “My wife’s first husband.” My conclusion is that if there were any perfect husbands, they’re all dead. I’ve never met a real live husband who didn’t need to change. Nor have I met a perfect wife.

The most common reason people do not get the changes they desire in their spouse is that they start at the wrong place. They focus on their spouse's failures before they give attention to their own shortcomings. They see that little speck in their spouse's eye and begin to go after it by tossing out a suggestion. When that doesn't work, they overtly request a change. When that approach meets with resistance, they turn up the heat by demanding that their spouse change—or else. From there they move on to intimidation and manipulation. Even if they succeed in bringing about some change, it comes with deep resentment on the part of the spouse. This is not the kind of change that most people desire. Therefore, if you really want to see your spouse change, you must start by dealing with your own failures.

GETTING THE PLANK OUT OF YOUR OWN EYE

Dealing with our own failures first is not the way most of us have been trained to think. We're more likely to say, "If my spouse weren't like that, then I wouldn't be like this." "If my spouse didn't do that, then I wouldn't do this." "If my spouse would

change, then I would change.” Entire marriages have been built on this approach. One wife said, “If my husband would treat me with respect, then I would be able to be affectionate; but when he acts like I’m his slave, I want to run away and hope he’ll never find me.” To be honest, I empathize greatly with this wife; however, “waiting for my spouse to change” has led thousands of couples to an emotional state of hopelessness, which often ends in divorce when one or both spouses conclude, “He (or she) will never change; therefore, I’m getting out.”

If we’re honest with ourselves, we have to admit that waiting and hoping has not worked. We have seen little change unless it has been the result of manipulation—external pressure, either emotional or physical, that was designed to make a spouse uncomfortable enough to want to change. Unfortunately, manipulation creates resentment, and the marriage ends up worse after the change than it was before. If this has been your experience, as it was in the early years of my own marriage, then I hope you will be open to a different approach, one that works without creating resentment.

Learning to deal first with your own failures will not come easy. If I were to give you a sheet of paper, as I often do to those who come to me for counseling, and ask you to take fifteen minutes to make a list of the things you would like to see changed in your spouse, chances are you could make a rather formidable list. However, if I gave you another sheet of paper and asked you to take fifteen minutes to make a list of your own failures—things that you know need to be changed in the way you treat your spouse—my guess is that your list would be very short.

The typical husband's lists will have twenty-seven things wrong with his wife and only four things wrong with him. The wives' lists are not much different. One wife came back with a list of seventeen things that she wanted her husband to change, but the page of her own shortcomings was blank. She said, "I know you are not going to believe this, but I honestly can't think of a single thing I'm doing wrong."

I have to confess I was speechless. I had never met a perfect woman before. I thought about call-

ing my secretary to bring in the camera: “Let’s get a picture of this lady.”

After about thirty seconds of silence, she said, “Well, I know what *he* would say.”

“What’s that?” I asked.

“He’d say that I am failing in the sexual area, but that’s all I can think of.”

I didn’t say it, but the thought did run through my mind: *That’s pretty major, even if it’s the only thing you can think of.*

It’s not easy to get the plank out of your own eye, but let me give you three steps that will help you do it:

STEP 1: ASK FOR OUTSIDE HELP

Most people will not be able to identify their own flaws without some outside help. We are so accustomed to our own ways of thinking and acting that we fail to recognize when they are dysfunctional and negative. Let me suggest some sources of help in identifying the plank in your own eye:

TALK TO GOD

For some people, this might be uncomfortable, but I suggest you ask God's advice if you want some good insight. Your prayer might go something like this: "God, what *is* wrong with me? Where am I failing my spouse? What am I doing and saying that I shouldn't? What am I failing to do or say that I should? Please show me my failures." This simple prayer (or one like it) has been prayed and answered for thousands of years. Take a look at this prayer from the Hebrew Psalms, written in approximately 1000 BC by King David, Israel's second king: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life."² We can be certain that when we pray a prayer like this, God will answer.

If you're ready, take fifteen minutes to ask God to show you your failures in your marriage, then list whatever he brings to your mind. These may not be major moral failures, but could be words and actions that have not been loving and kind. Whatever

things come to mind that have been detrimental to your marriage, write them down.

Here are the lists that one couple compiled after praying this prayer. (I suggest you complete your own list before looking at these.)

Husband

I watch too much TV.

I need to be more helpful with things around the house.

I don't use my time wisely.

I don't listen to her like I should.

I don't act kindly to her at times.

I don't talk things out with her.

I don't listen to her ideas.

Our time of sharing is sparse.

I have made her afraid to voice her views.

We don't pray together like we should.

Wife

I fail to encourage him.

I put myself and my needs above his needs.

I put him down at times.

I am not affectionate enough.

I expect him to do things the way I would.

I am sometimes rude and harsh in my speech.

I spend too much time on the computer.

I am not sensitive to my husband's love language.

I don't like to admit when I'm wrong.

I don't spend enough time with God.

I focus more time and energy on our son than
on our marriage.

I hold on to wrongs from the past and use them
in arguments.

I need to stop looking at his faults and look
at mine.

TALK TO YOUR FRIENDS

In addition to talking with God, I suggest that you talk with a couple of friends who know you well and who have observed you and your marriage. Tell them that you are trying to improve your marriage and you want them to be completely honest with you. Tell them you are focusing on areas in which you need to improve in your own life. Ask them to give you honest feedback on whatever they have observed in your life, particularly the ways you respond to your spouse. Tell them that you will still be friends after they give you the truth—in fact, it's because of your friendship that you know you can trust them to be truthful with you. Don't argue with your friends. Simply write down whatever they tell you.

One friend said to a wife who had asked for input, “Do you really want me to be honest?” When the wife said yes, the friend said, “You are critical of your husband in front of other people. I have often felt sorry for your husband. I know it's embarrassing for him.” The truth may be hard to hear (in some cases, it will be *very* hard), but if you

don't hear it, you'll never take the necessary steps to change and you won't accomplish your goal of a better marriage.

A friend said to a husband who had asked for feedback, "My observation is that you often try to control your wife. I remember that just last week she was standing in the lobby of the church talking with another lady, and you walked up and said, 'We've got to go.' It was like you were her father telling her what she needed to do." Friends will often give you perceptions of yourself you have never imagined.

TALK TO YOUR PARENTS AND IN-LAWS

If you are really courageous, and if your parents and your in-laws have had a chance to observe you and your marriage, you might ask them the same questions you asked your friends. Begin the conversation by telling them that you are trying to improve your marriage and you are focusing on the things that *you* need to change. Again, please don't argue with their comments. Simply write them down and express your appreciation for their honesty.

TALK TO YOUR SPOUSE

Now, if you really want to get serious, ask your spouse for the same information. You might say, “Honey, I really want to make our marriage better. I know that I have not been a perfect spouse, but I want to get better in the areas that are most important to you. So I want you to make a list of the things I’ve done, or failed to do, that have hurt you the most. Or perhaps it’s things I’ve said or failed to say. I want to deal with my failures and try to make things different in the future.” Don’t argue with your spouse’s list or rebuff the comments you are given. Simply receive them as information and thank your spouse for helping you become a better person.

STEP 2: REFLECT ON THE INFORMATION YOU HAVE GATHERED

When you have collected all the lists, what you will have in your hands is valuable information—about yourself and the way you relate to your spouse, from God’s perspective and from the perspective of the people who are closest to you. Now it’s time for you to come to grips with this information. This is

not a time to develop rationalized defenses to the comments you've received. It is a time to accept the possibility that there is some truth in all these perspectives. From the lists you have received, make your own list of things that you agree are wrong in the way you treat your spouse.

I suggest that you personalize each sentence, starting with the word *I*, so that you are honestly reporting your own awareness of the flaws in your behavior. For example, "I recognize that I often lose my temper and say hurtful words to my spouse." Starting your sentences with *I* will help you keep it personal. Include statements about things that you should be doing but aren't, as well as things you are doing that you shouldn't. For example, in addition to the statement above about losing your temper and saying hurtful things to your spouse, you might also say, "I do not give my spouse enough positive, encouraging words."

In this time of reflection, be as honest as possible with yourself. You might even ask God to help you honestly evaluate your failures. Trying to justify yourself or excuse your behavior based on your spouse's

behavior is a futile attempt at rationalization. Don't do it. You will never get the plank out of your own eye as long as you are excusing your failures.

STEP 3: CONFESSION

We have long known the emotional and spiritual power of confession. Confessing the things we've done wrong liberates us from the bondage of past failures and opens us up to the possibility for changed behavior in the future. I suggest that you begin by confessing your failures to God. Here is King David's confession, written after God showed David his failures. Your own confessions may not be expressed as poetically as David's, but you may find that his words of confession will help you express your own.

HAVE MERCY ON ME, O GOD, BECAUSE
OF YOUR UNFAILING LOVE.

BECAUSE OF YOUR GREAT COMPASSION,
BLOT OUT THE STAIN OF MY SINS.

WASH ME CLEAN FROM MY GUILT. PURIFY
ME FROM MY SIN.

FOR I RECOGNIZE MY REBELLION; IT HAUNTS
ME DAY AND NIGHT.

AGAINST YOU, AND YOU ALONE, HAVE I
SINNED; I HAVE DONE WHAT IS EVIL IN
YOUR SIGHT.

YOU WILL BE PROVED RIGHT IN WHAT YOU SAY,
AND YOUR JUDGMENT AGAINST ME IS JUST.

FOR I WAS BORN A SINNER—YES, FROM THE
MOMENT MY MOTHER CONCEIVED ME.

BUT YOU DESIRE HONESTY FROM THE WOMB,
TEACHING ME WISDOM EVEN THERE.

PURIFY ME FROM MY SINS, AND I WILL BE
CLEAN; WASH ME, AND I WILL BE WHITER
THAN SNOW.

OH, GIVE ME BACK MY JOY AGAIN; YOU HAVE
BROKEN ME—NOW LET ME REJOICE.

DON'T KEEP LOOKING AT MY SINS. REMOVE
THE STAIN OF MY GUILT.

CREATE IN ME A CLEAN HEART, O GOD.
RENEW A LOYAL SPIRIT WITHIN ME.

DO NOT BANISH ME FROM YOUR PRESENCE,
AND DON'T TAKE YOUR HOLY SPIRIT
FROM ME.

RESTORE TO ME THE JOY OF YOUR SALVATION,
AND MAKE ME WILLING TO OBEY YOU.

PSALM 51:1-12, NLT

The word *confession* means, literally, “to agree with.” When we confess to God, it means that we agree with him that what we have done or failed to do is wrong. Confession is the opposite of rationalization. Confession makes no attempt to minimize our wrongdoing but openly admits that our behavior is inexcusable.

The God who is revealed in the Bible is a God who stands ready to forgive those who admit their sins. Here is one brief quote: “If we confess our sins [to God], he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness.”³

The New Testament tells us that the reason God can forgive our wrongdoing and still be a God of justice is because Christ has paid the penalty for

our failures. The ultimate penalty for wrongdoing is death. Because Christ took that penalty in our place, God is willing to forgive us. The penalty has already been paid by Christ. That is the central message of the Christian faith.

However, confession of wrongdoing needs to be broader than simply admitting your failures to God. You also must confess to the person you have wronged. In marriage, that is your spouse. Having confessed to God, you should now have the courage to confess to your spouse. Your confession might go something like this: “I’ve been thinking about us, and I realize that in a lot of ways I have failed you. I sat down the other day and made a list of the things I feel I have done that are wrong. I have asked God to forgive me for each of these things, and if you have a few minutes, I’d like to share my list with you and ask if you would forgive me, as well. I really want the future to be different, and I think this is where I need to start.”

Most spouses will be willing to forgive when they hear an honest confession. If there has been a drastic violation of your marriage vows, it may

take time for trust to be rebuilt. But the rebuilding process starts with an act of genuine confession.⁴

If you have gone to your parents or in-laws to ask for their input about your failures in your marriage, you might also want to confess your failures to them and ask for their forgiveness. Such confessions will go a long way toward rebuilding trust, respect, and a positive relationship with them. Even if you did not ask for their input but you know they are aware of your marital failures, I would encourage you to confess to your parents and in-laws.

COMMON QUESTIONS ABOUT STARTING AT THE RIGHT PLACE

Having read these ideas about starting at the right place, you may have questions floating in your mind. When I present this concept at my marriage seminars, I hear some common questions. For example, a wife in the Midwest said, “I understand what you are saying. I know that I need to get the plank out of my own eye, but I don’t think you fully understand my situation. What if your spouse really *is* the problem?”

I thought for a moment and responded, “Let’s assume that your husband is 95 percent of the problem. That would leave only 5 percent for you. But even if the problem is mostly with your spouse, you wouldn’t say that you are perfect, would you?”

“Oh no,” she said. “No one is perfect.”

“Well, if we’re not perfect, then we’re imperfect, right?”

“Right . . .”

“So let’s assume your husband is 95 percent imperfect and you are only 5 percent imperfect. What I’m suggesting is that if *you* want to improve your marriage, and if *you* want to see changes in your husband, the place for you to start is with *your* 5 percent. Your marriage will immediately be 5 percent better, and you will be freed from the guilt of past failures and emotionally liberated to be a positive influence on your husband.”

I’m not sure she was totally satisfied with my answer, but she did nod her head and say, “Okay, that makes a lot of sense.”

Rob, a middle-aged husband from Birmingham, asked me another question: “If I confess my failures to God and to my wife, do you think she will come back in a few days and confess her failures to me?”

I wish I could have answered affirmatively and with confidence, but in all honesty, I had to say, “I don’t know. But that would be nice, wouldn’t it?”

Rob nodded as tears coursed down his cheeks.

“I’m not even certain that your wife will forgive you,” I continued. “I wish I could guarantee that, but the fact is we can’t predict human behavior. She may be so deeply hurt and angered that she cannot honestly forgive you at the moment. You must be patient with her and give her time to process your confession.”

What I did guarantee Rob, and can guarantee you, is that when you confess your failures in your marriage, you have removed the first barrier to marital growth. Confession creates a climate that fosters positive change. You cannot erase your past failures, but you can agree that what you did, or failed to do,

was wrong, and you can sincerely ask for forgiveness. In so doing, you are starting at the right place.

“But if she doesn’t forgive me,” Rob said, “how can there be hope for change?”

I reminded him that confession of one’s failures is only the first step in seeking change. Your spouse’s immediate response may not be the ultimate response. A woman who initially said to her husband, “I don’t know that I can ever forgive you; too much has happened, and the hurt is too deep,” three months later said, “I didn’t know that I would ever be able to forgive you, but today I want you to know that the past is the past. I no longer hold it against you.” What happens after the confession will have an impact on whether or not your spouse chooses to forgive you, but we’ll discuss what comes next when we get to chapter 2.

The process described in this first chapter will obviously take some time. I doubt that the confession phase can be completed in less than a month. However, I want you to read the rest of the book now because I want you to see where we’re going.

I can assure you that, in the end, I am going to give you the key to getting your spouse to change without manipulation.

After your confessions have been made, you have taken the first step in creating an atmosphere for requesting change from your spouse. I was honest with you from the beginning when I said that the road to change is not easy. I am fully aware that confessing your failures to God and to your spouse is a major accomplishment. However, few things are more important than confession for maintaining both mental and marital health. When you confess your failures, it is like emptying your conscience and cleansing it of all the guilt that goes along with those failures. Living with a clean conscience will keep you mentally and relationally alert, and it will free you from the bondage of past failures. After you have confessed, you will feel better about yourself, and your spouse will begin to look at you with more respect and dignity because you have been strong enough to deal with your own failures.

After confession, you will likely feel emotionally elated because a burden has been lifted and

because you are being authentic with your spouse. There is something exhilarating about being honest and dealing with our failures. However, please don't jump to the conclusion that you can now request change and expect your spouse to comply. There is another major ingredient that must be added before you are ready to take that step. It has to do with the power of emotional love. Read on.



TAKING ACTION

1. In the past, what has been your approach to your own failures in your marriage?

___ blame them on my spouse

___ deny them

___ admit them, but refuse to change

___ say, "I'll change when you change."

___ fully confess my failures and ask for forgiveness

___ other

2. If you are willing, say to God, “I know I’m not perfect, so where have I failed in my marriage?” Make a list of what comes to your mind.

3. If you are willing to seek outside help, write the date you asked for input from the following people:

_____ God

_____ close friends

_____ parents

_____ in-laws

_____ spouse

4. Admitting your failures and asking forgiveness may be difficult, especially if you believe that your spouse is 95 percent of the problem. But would you be willing to *start at the right place* and see what happens? If so, write the dates when you made your list _____ and verbally confessed your failures to your spouse _____.

A decorative horizontal frame with a dark, textured background. The frame has ornate, symmetrical flourishes at the top and bottom. The word "EPILOGUE" is centered in white, serif, all-caps font within the frame.

EPILOGUE

*I*n my own life and in the lives of hundreds of couples I have counseled, the principles in this book have brought real change. It is my hope that you will now do the hard work of implementing this three-fold approach. You have the plan. It has worked for other couples, and I'm encouraging you to try it in your own marriage. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. And if it works for you, I hope you will share it with your friends. In today's cultural climate, successful marriages are more difficult than ever to effect. I believe the ideas shared in this book have the potential for helping thousands of couples move down the road of marital intimacy with greater harmony. If that happens, I will be greatly pleased.



SOME THOUGHTS WORTH REMEMBERING

- ☛ The most common reason people do not get the changes they desire is that they start at the wrong place.
- ☛ Most of us have lived by the philosophy, “If my spouse would change, then I would change.” If most of us are honest, we will have to admit this approach has not worked.
- ☛ Confessing wrong liberates us from the bondage of past failures and opens up the possibility for changed behavior in the future.



WHAT I WISH MY WIFE WOULD CHANGE

This is a collection of what husbands have said when asked the question, “What would you like to see your wife change?” Some of these are specific and others are too general to be helpful. They are presented here simply to stimulate your thinking as you make a list of the things you would like to request of your wife. (Remember: Limit your requests to one per week, or according to your agreement with your wife.)

I wish she would not snap at our children.

I wish she would share more of her dreams and fears with me.

I wish she would spend thirty minutes a day
talking with me.

I wish she would keep the kitchen desk
organized.

I wish she would not clean and fuss with the
house when I'm home.

I wish she would develop more confidence in her
appearance and be willing to wear "sexy"
clothing.

I wish she would stop bringing up the past.

I wish she would stop trying to control my
thoughts and activities by making demands.

I wish she would not worry so much.

I wish she would stop being my mother
(e.g., reminding me to brush my teeth).

I wish she would look for positive things rather
than focusing on the negative.

I wish she would answer my questions with an
answer rather than another question.



WHAT I WISH MY HUSBAND WOULD CHANGE

This is a collection of what wives have said when asked the question, “What would you like to see your husband change?” Some of these are specific and others are too general to be helpful. They are presented here simply to stimulate your thinking as you make a list of the things you would like to request of your husband. (Remember: Limit your requests to one per week, or according to your agreement with your husband.)

I wish he would sit down each evening and talk with me for ten minutes.

I wish he would clean the garage and keep it clean.

I wish he would take nightly walks with me.

I wish he would watch ESPN less.

I wish he would not go from 0 to 60 miles per hour in 2.4 seconds when he is angry.

I wish he would help me give the girls a bath.

I wish he would help me pick up and keep the house cleaner.

I wish he were able to accept some feedback from me. He is extremely sensitive to any comments that may be less than 100 percent positive.

I wish he would not fall asleep when I talk.

I wish he would stop smoking.

I wish he would plan date nights once or twice a month.

I wish he would give me his undivided attention

CHAPTER 1

1. Author's paraphrase of Matthew 7:3-5.
2. Psalm 139:23-24, NLT.
3. 1 John 1:9.
4. For more information on the topic of rebuilding trust, see Gary D. Chapman, *The Five Languages of Apology* (Chicago: Northfield Publishing, 2006).

CHAPTER 2

1. Ollie Jones, "Love Makes the World Go Round," 1958.
2. Gary D. Chapman, *The Five Love Languages* (Chicago: Northfield Publishing, 1992, 1995, 2004).

CHAPTER 3

1. Richard M. Sherman and Robert B. Sherman, "A Spoonful of Sugar," from the movie *Mary Poppins*.
2. 1 Peter 4:8.

— *About the Author*

Dr. Gary Chapman is the author of the perennial best seller *The Five Love Languages* (more than 3.5 million copies sold) and numerous other marriage and family books. He is currently working with best-selling author Catherine Palmer on a new fiction series based on *The Four Seasons of Marriage*, the first book of which is scheduled to release in the spring of 2007. Dr. Chapman is the director of Marriage and Family Life Consultants, Inc.; an internationally known speaker; and the host of *A Growing Marriage*, a syndicated radio program heard on more than 100 stations across North America. He and his wife, Karolyn, live in North Carolina.