

90 DAYS
TO A
FANTASTIC
Marriage

*How to Bring Out the
Soul Mate in Your Mate*

DR. DAVID HAWKINS



Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.
Carol Stream, Illinois

Visit Tyndale's exciting Web site at www.tyndale.com

www.yourrelationshipdoctor.com

TYNDALE and Tyndale's quill logo are registered trademarks of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

90 Days to a Fantastic Marriage: How to Bring Out the Soul Mate in Your Mate

Copyright © 2009 by David Hawkins. All rights reserved.

Cover photo copyright © Polka Dot Images/jupiterimages. All rights reserved.

Designed by Erik M. Peterson

All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated, are taken from the *HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION*®. NIV®. Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked NLT are taken from the *Holy Bible, New Living Translation*, copyright © 1996, 2004, 2007 by Tyndale House Foundation. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Carol Stream, Illinois 60188. All rights reserved.

Scripture verses marked *Phillips* are taken from *The New Testament in Modern English* by J. B. Phillips, copyright © J. B. Phillips, 1958, 1959, 1960, 1972. All rights reserved.

Scripture quotations marked AMP are taken from the *Amplified Bible*®, copyright © 1954, 1958, 1962, 1964, 1965, 1987 by The Lockman Foundation. Used by permission.

Scripture quotations marked NKJV are taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used with permission. All rights reserved. *NKJV* is a trademark of Thomas Nelson, Inc.

The names and identifying details of the couples whose stories appear in this book have been changed to protect their privacy.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Hawkins, David, date.

90 days to a fantastic marriage : how to bring out the soul mate in your mate /

David Hawkins.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references.

ISBN 978-1-4143-2324-4 (sc)

1. Marriage—Religious aspects—Christianity. 2. Man-woman relationships—Religious aspects—Christianity. I. Title. II. Title: Ninety days to a fantastic marriage.

BV835.H3775 2009

248.8'44—dc22

2009005466

Printed in the United States of America

15 14 13 12 11 10 09

7 6 5 4 3 2 1

“One of David Hawkins’s clients said she was no longer content to have an average marriage. She wanted more. That’s what makes this book worth reading. *90 Days to a Fantastic Marriage* doesn’t focus on or try to solve the problems of troubled relationships. Instead Dr. Hawkins offers a twelve-week program to maximize and to improve marriage—any marriage.”

CECIL MURPHEY

Author/coauthor of over 100 books, including *Gifted Hands: The Ben Carson Story* and *90 Minutes in Heaven*

“Falling in love is easy. Maintaining the passion after you’ve taken your marriage vows is harder. But you can do it! In this hope-filled book, Dr. David Hawkins provides a twelve-week plan that will help reignite the spark in your relationship. A valuable resource for any couple wanting more from their marriage.”

DR. GREG AND ERIN SMALLEY

www.smallleymarriage.com

“Dr. David Hawkins is warm, articulate, knowledgeable, and passionate about helping people. His latest book, *90 Days to a Fantastic Marriage*, is practical, well-written, and overflowing with the knowledge and insight we desperately need to rekindle the embers of today’s broken and mundane marriages.”

DEBRA MAFFETT

Host, *The Harvest Show*

“Dr. David Hawkins writes with penetrating insight and practicality. His entertaining and engaging style will make you smile, laugh, and reflect . . . and, most important, give you the tools you need to build a stronger marriage.”

BILL PERKINS

Founder and CEO, Million Mighty Men

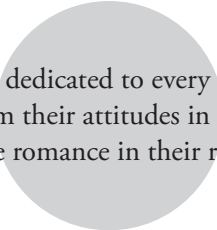
Author, *When Good Men Are Tempted* and *6 Rules Every Man Must Break*

“*90 Days to a Fantastic Marriage* delivers exactly that! Evidence of Dr. Hawkins’s deepest desire to empower couples, inspire individuals, and restore marriages is on every page along with practical and passionate steps to accomplish it. The way Dr. Hawkins challenges us to embrace our spouses as soul mates will definitely lead to a checkmate on the chessboard of marriage. I particularly found that his weekly encouragement to strike out on new adventures in my marriage is bringing me to a place of renewed friendship and intimate satisfaction with my husband. This is a must-read for all couples, not just those in trouble.”

LINDA GOLDFARB

Radio and Web TV personality

Founder/CEO of Live Powerfully Now Ministries



This book is dedicated to every couple ready
to transform their attitudes in an effort to
rekindle the romance in their relationship.

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments *xi*

Prologue: Making New Choices *xiii*

WEEK 1: Reevaluating Your Perspective *1*

WEEK 2: Choosing Rose-Colored Glasses *19*

WEEK 3: Bringing Out the Best Qualities of Your Spouse *37*

WEEK 4: Remembering the Reasons Your Mate Loves You *55*

WEEK 5: Giving Up Distractions to the Dream *71*

WEEK 6: Embracing the Ripple Effect *89*

WEEK 7: Nurturing Your Mate's Dreams *107*

WEEK 8: Teaching Your Mate to Nurture Your Dreams *123*

WEEK 9: Preparing Your Best to Meet Your Spouse's Best *139*

WEEK 10: Unleashing the Power of Positive Gossiping *157*

WEEK 11: Initiating Change by Encouragement *173*

WEEK 12: Maintaining Mutual Admiration *195*

Afterword: The Decision *211*

Notes *213*

About the Author *215*



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to first thank Tyndale House Publishers for inviting me and my wife, Christie, to be part of the family. Our time together in Orlando was wonderful, as your hospitality made us feel very privileged.

I want to specifically thank Jan Long Harris for meeting with my wife and me on numerous occasions and helping me articulate the message of this book. Thank you, Jan, for your creative energy, for your brainstorming ability, and for taking a chance on me and this book.

Thanks also go to Kim Miller for reading the book with care, tightening my writing, and walking me through suggestions to make it a stronger book. Thank you, Kim, for your work on this book.

This book, finally, is lovingly dedicated to my wife, Christie. While many other editorial touches to the manuscript have made it a better book, it is Christie's enthusiasm and unfaltering positive approach to life that makes this book what it is. Christie believes in everyone, it seems, but moreover believes in me. She also believes in each one of you! Thank you, sweetie, for loving me and for being an integral voice in this book.

PROLOGUE: MAKING NEW CHOICES

And now these three remain: faith, hope and love.

But the greatest of these is love.

—1 Corinthians 13:13

“I can’t believe it, Dr. Hawkins. I just had to call and tell you what’s happened.”

No sooner had I picked up my ringing office phone than a woman began speaking excitedly. She hadn’t even greeted me or given her name. I scrambled to place her voice and figure out why she was calling.

“Who is this?” I asked.

“Oh, I’m sorry. This is Susie Johnson. You saw me and my husband, Dillon, last year. We were caught in a vicious cycle of fighting, and you helped us learn to communicate. At the end of our final session, you invited us to contact you again to let you know how we’re doing.”

“Go ahead,” I said, still trying to place the name. “What’s happened?”

“When we came to see you, I just wanted my husband back. I wanted the relationship we had back when we were first married. But I got far more than I bargained for!”

“Really?” I said. “Tell me what you mean.”

“So you do remember us?” she asked.

“Of course, I remember you,” I said, piecing together my work with them.

When they had arrived for their first appointment, Susie struck me as reserved. Dillon, her husband, had been more animated, greeting me warmly with a smile and firm handshake. After we were all seated, I asked why they had come.

“There’s nothing really wrong with our marriage,” Susie said. “But there has got to be more. We don’t fight, but we don’t seem to have much passion either.”

Here was a woman going for the gusto. Unwilling to settle for a mundane, stable but boring marriage, she wanted more and she was willing to rock the boat a bit to get it.

“What do you think, Dillon?” I had asked.

“I agree with Susie. We’ve gotten too busy with our work and raising a family, and we have kind of lost each other. I want the spark back too.”

My memory of that first meeting was interrupted by Susie’s voice over the phone. “I remember thinking, just before we came for our first appointment, that maybe all couples reach a point when they just have to slog through their marriages.”

“And I remember telling you,” I said, “how glad I was that you’d come in when you did. Too many couples wait far too long, letting their love slip away and resentments grow. That clearly wasn’t a problem with you two yet. You had a lot to build on.

“When you and Dillon came to see me a year or so ago, you guys said you wanted to strengthen your marriage. Things are better, I take it?”

“They’re not just better, Dr. David. This is going to sound like an infomercial, but it’s true. We came to you as mates and left as soul mates. It’s incredible.”

“I’m curious,” I said. “What do you mean when you say ‘soul mate’?”

“Hmm. I’ll have to think about that,” Susie said, pausing for a moment. “It’s not any one thing. It’s a lot of little things.”

I smiled. When we’d started meeting, I’d stressed the need to examine the unhealthy ways Susie and Dillon had been relating to one another so we could understand why their marriage felt stale. I had to zero in on those patterns—like criticizing, interrupting, and tuning one another out—that were pulling them apart.

“So what little things are different?” I said, taking a few notes as she began talking.

“Let me mention a couple of things that come to mind,” she said, sounding pleased that I had asked her to elaborate on their current relationship.

“Just last week, my parents were visiting. When my mom told me—as she has on her last ten visits—that I really should rearrange my cupboards so my dishes would be closer to the table, Dillon just smiled at me. I knew he was saying, ‘It’s okay. I love you.’ Then later, when the four of us took a walk around the block, he just grabbed

my hand spontaneously. He never would have done that a year ago. We even catch ourselves saying the same things at the same time, and then we smile and say, ‘We’re soul mates.’”

Susie paused for another moment and then continued. “You know, I haven’t really sat back and thought about all the little things that make us soul mates. But when I think about it, there are many things we do now that we never used to do.”

“Susie, what you’re telling me is what I tell every couple that comes to see me. Any couple willing to exchange destructive ways of relating for positive ways can bring the excitement back into a relationship. It’s great to hear you sounding so content. I presume Dillon is happy as well.”

“Oh,” she said, laughing. “I think he’d tell you he’s very happy. What man doesn’t want a woman who thinks she’s married to a prince?”

Does Susie’s story sound like a fairy tale? Maybe a Hollywood love story? When you hear the word *soul mates*, are you more likely to think of Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan in *Sleepless in Seattle* than a couple like Susie and Dillon, a husband and wife with ordinary jobs living in an ordinary town who had come to me because their marriage had become, well, too ordinary?

The good news is that most of us are far more like Susie and Dillon than Meg and Tom. Our lives may seem pretty average to us, but our marriages don’t have to be. Susie and Dillon’s marriage improved once they discovered that finding their soul mate was a matter of uncovering, recovering, and discovering what had drawn them together in the first place. It required work and intention. It was more of a journey than a destination.

You may be wondering if you have the time and energy to invest in your relationship. You may be thinking, *With everything else my spouse and I are dealing with—pressures on the job, issues with our kids, struggles with finances—why is it worth investing time in trying to become soul mates? And what does it mean to be a soul mate, anyway?*

These are good questions, and there are solid answers. In fact, I discovered the hard way the extraordinary cost of drifting along after my first marriage ended in divorce. Both my ex-wife and I had gotten caught up in our careers and family and forgot the importance of keeping the relationship between the two of us strong.

As a result of that heartache, I resolved that if I married again I would make that relationship a priority. I'm so grateful for my wife, Christie, who desires a soul mate marriage just as much as I do. I know from my experience that there is nothing more satisfying than enjoying a rich relationship. Nothing will make you feel quite as complete as being completely loved by your mate. To be treasured, prized, and appreciated is part of being a soul mate—and you'd probably be willing to give nearly anything to have those qualities in your marital relationship.

The Best Intentions

Finding your soul mate is not a matter of chance, serendipity, or luck. It isn't about making sure you're in the right place at the right time. You don't drop the one you're with to go looking for that perfect match—he or she is sitting across the dining room table from you, waiting to be discovered. The primary ingredient required to bring out the best in your mate—which is the basis of becoming a soul mate—is intentionality.

Finding your soul mate is as simple as deciding to alter your behavior in ways that will enable your mate to become your soul mate. Starting with one step, one intentional action, you can encourage your mate to be your soul mate. Choosing to bring out the best in each other, day after day, week after week, revolutionizes a relationship.

In *90 Days to a Fantastic Marriage: How to Bring Out the Soul Mate in Your Mate*, I'm asking you to commit for twelve weeks to a process designed to help you discover and nurture the soul of your mate—and enable your mate to do the same. This book is packed with ideas to transform your marriage by bringing out the best in your spouse—and in you. Each week, you'll learn a new skill to help you draw closer to your spouse, using the tools that have helped thousands of couples transform their relationships, just as Susie and Dillon did.

Now I realize your marriage may be broken. Perhaps your spouse has expressed no interest in drawing closer to you. If so, you may have resigned yourself to a lifeless marriage, expecting nothing to change. Maybe you've even thought of leaving your mate.

I'm going to offer you a third option based on this simple truth: If

just one spouse wants to change a stale or mundane marriage, he or she has the power to start the transformation. (If you and your spouse are dealing with very serious issues, such as alcoholism or abuse, however, I urge you to seek support from a counselor or pastor as you seek to work through these problems.)

Still don't think it's possible? It's really not much different than planning a fabulous vacation. Imagine sitting with your mate on the couch, reading about some far-off exotic land in the travel section of your Sunday paper. The photos tease you into feeling like you're almost there, surrounded by the sights and sounds of a tropical paradise.

Although reading about this enchanting land doesn't get you there, it can inspire you. Intoxicated with possibilities, you and your mate may start talking, dreaming, and planning. You decide right then and there you *will* travel to this destination on your next vacation. In your mind's eye you see the white sand on those tropical islands. You feel the fine linens on the plush bed in the seaside resort. You hear the rolling waves as you rock softly in a hammock beneath a palm tree. You can almost taste the fine seafood at a waterfront restaurant as you watch the sun set over the horizon. Ahhhhhh.

This vacation is possible, but it takes inspiration, perspiration, and lots of planning. As enchanting as a trip to a tropical island sounds, I want you to imagine another trip—the most incredible trip of a lifetime—a journey leading you to your soul mate. As with planning your dream vacation, this trip will also take preparation and commitment. For twelve weeks I want you to be intentional about finding your soul mate, meticulously following the planned route laid out in this book. Letting your imagination soar, trust that the map I give you will lead you to soft music, quiet interludes, and shared secrets with the one you love.

Let the Music Play

Maybe it's been a long time since you had romantic feelings. The music has faded into the background and you no longer feel close enough—physically, emotionally, or spiritually—to dance in perfect rhythm with your mate. You have doubts that your ordinary, routine relationship can be transformed. I understand.

But, you *want* to dance again. While perhaps hidden, the romantic in you is still alive, buried beneath the busyness of daily life. You've learned to distract yourself so as not to be disappointed. But you want nothing more than for your mate to be your soul mate again.

Whether you've been married for forty-two years or engaged for four months, this kind of relating is possible. What is needed is a change of heart, a change of pace, and a change of mind. Moving from mate to soul mate is possible. All that stands between you and an enchanting relationship is a little inspiration.

This, again, is very good news. Like the physician listening to the patient list symptoms that fit into a predictable pattern, together we can learn the predictable problems that lead to a mundane marriage. Focusing on these problems, and then replacing them with "soul mate behavior," leads to incredible changes.

Bringing Out the Best in Your Mate

Counselors, like doctors, are trained to focus on problems. We identify the patterns challenges take and then intervene. While this approach is helpful, it is not enough. Instead of focusing only on what is going wrong, we must focus on replacing problem behavior with constructive, healing behavior. In this book, we'll discuss ways you can interact with your mate so he or she responds with love, kindness, and affection, demonstrating that he or she is downright head over heels in love with you.

While this may initially sound too good to be true, positive action almost always leads to positive reaction. When you treat your mate with love and respect, you're likely to receive love and respect in return. When you intentionally choose to bring excitement and energy into your marriage, your mate is likely to respond in kind. You can, in large part, determine how your mate will respond to you.

In active pursuit of this "soul mate encounter," let's briefly consider some of the tools you'll master to revolutionize your relationship.

1. *Reevaluating your perspective.* As the Scriptures say, "Those who live only to satisfy their own sinful nature will harvest decay and death from that sinful nature. But those who

live to please the Spirit will harvest everlasting life from the Spirit” (Galatians 6:8, NLT). In other words, the choices you make have predictable effects. This is particularly true when it comes to deciding whether to view your spouse from a positive or negative perspective. Even during difficult times you can choose to amplify the positive.

2. *Choosing rose-colored glasses.* When you choose to focus on the positive in your spouse, you’ll be happier, healthier, and able to relate more effectively. Learn when to focus on a problem and when to ignore it. Even if you’re in a challenging marriage, you can learn how to build a bridge from a problem to the benefit inherent in it. Every crisis is an opportunity for positive change. Every frustrating issue in your relationship is an opportunity to explore character changes that need to be made.
3. *Bringing out the best qualities of your spouse.* Learn not only how to notice your mate’s best qualities but how to amplify them and create an environment in which they can thrive.
4. *Remembering the reasons your mate loves you.* Your mate fell in love with some magical qualities in you. Are they still apparent? Do you remember why he or she fell in love with you, and are you nurturing those traits in yourself?
5. *Giving up distractions to the dream.* Calling forth your mate’s best qualities takes focus. Give up distractions and practice recognizing, amplifying, and remembering these qualities again and again. You must notice, pay attention to, and attend to the qualities you want in your relationship.
6. *Embracing the ripple effect.* When you notice what’s wonderful about your spouse and he or she notices what’s great about you, good feelings ripple back and forth in the relationship. You have the power to begin this wave of positive feelings, positive behaviors, and positive attitudes. You have the power to change negative patterns into positive ones.

7. *Nurturing your mate's dreams.* Your mate has his or her own musings, ideas, and dreams. These hopes can be nurtured and encouraged; in fact, everything you do to actively encourage your mate's dreams will build intimacy.
8. *Teaching your mate to nurture your dreams.* When you nurture your spouse's dreams, he or she is more likely to nurture yours. And when you dream together, a powerful bond occurs.
9. *Preparing your best to meet your spouse's best.* Instead of perpetuating destructive patterns, agree not only to notice each other's best but also to nurture it and allow your best to be front and center as well.
10. *Unleashing the power of positive gossiping.* When you focus on the positive qualities of your mate, you naturally talk about him or her. Telling others about your spouse makes his or her positive qualities more real to you and creates an extremely favorable dynamic in the relationship.
11. *Initiating change by encouragement.* It's no secret—we make changes more easily and effectively with encouragement than with criticism. While encouragement breeds cooperation and trust, criticism breeds resentment and hostility. Learn to create an environment filled with positivity, warmth, and encouragement.
12. *Maintaining mutual admiration.* It takes intentionality and focus to maintain positive momentum. Resist the natural temptation to slip into negativity and regression, and insist on a mutually admiring relationship.

Positivity. Upwardly spiraling relationships. That is what this book is about. Determine to bring out the best in your mate, and encourage him or her to bring out the best in you. The result will be revolutionary.

While it takes effort to shift from the criticism and negativism that come naturally, you can do it. If you are intentional, you can choose a new perspective that will positively change your relationship.

You are facing the opportunity of a lifetime, a chance to discover your soul mate and be a soul mate. The change must begin with you, but I guarantee your mate can't help but respond favorably to these changes.

Teaching a Chicken to Dance

Behavior is amazingly predictable. We are creatures of habit, and we dance in predictable ways. Not only that, but our mates react and respond in predictable ways as well. Action leads to reaction, and so on.

Before ending one of my last sessions with Susie and Dillon, I used a story to challenge them to maintain the changes in the way they related to one another.

“Did you know you can actually teach a chicken to dance?” I asked.

They looked puzzled, as couples always do when I start this story. I had their attention, however.

“It's true,” I continued. “Ask any experimental psychologist who, for whatever reasons, studies these things. If you reinforce a chicken for making certain moves by giving it a small pellet of corn, it will make more and more moves toward your desired goal. Assuming you want to teach the chicken to dance, you reinforce every move that even resembles the dance you are teaching.”

Susie and Dillon looked at each other, a slow grin breaking out on their faces. They were beginning to see the connection between chickens and people—specifically, them!

“Here is what else my colleagues discovered. If you kick the chicken in the head when it makes a move in an undesirable direction, it will flop over dead or run frantically for its life. Either way, the dance is over.

“So if you want to teach a chicken—or a spouse—to dance, you can. The choice is yours.”

That is your task as well—to pay attention and carefully choose

how you will behave with the one who means the most to you. As you prepare to begin implementing positive change over the next twelve weeks, begin by simply noticing what brings negativity to your relationship and what brings positivity and joy. Don't worry too much about changing anything for now. Just notice.

As Dillon and Susie discovered, you don't have to do what you've always done. It really is possible to change your focus, to notice what brings your relationship down and what takes it back up. You can master the art of discerning what makes your mate melt with desire to be near you. This book is all about making new choices as well as embracing and mastering new strategies. It's about hope and the belief that a "twinkle in your eyes" love is still possible, no matter how long you've been married. It's about catching each other making the right moves, and then building upon those actions.

At the end of every chapter, I'll offer a Weekly Quiz, giving you an opportunity to reflect on that week's lesson and apply it to your life. You'll quickly notice your strengths, as well as those areas needing further attention. The "Putting It into Practice" questions and exercises that follow each quiz provide practical tools you and your spouse can use to strengthen your marriage.

You won't always relate perfectly, of course, but if you can isolate the things you do that are hurtful and identify those that are helpful, it is possible to make choices so that your mate falls in love with you all over again.

You have an incredible opportunity, and it all begins with you. You can decide to draw closer to your spouse as his or her soul mate. This decision can make a profound difference, one that I'm privileged to enjoy with my wife, Christie. Singlehandedly you can begin the transformation process.

Are you ready to be in a marriage filled with zest and vitality, where your mate adores you and where you adore your mate? It's all very possible.

So let's get started.

Week 1

REEVALUATING YOUR PERSPECTIVE

Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.

—John 20:29

SIGNS THAT YOU NEED A NEW PERSPECTIVE

1. You're as surprised when someone compliments your spouse as you are when Simon Cowell has something nice to say about a contestant on *American Idol*.
2. You're more than willing to assign responsibility for your marital problems—to your spouse.
3. You think there's a better chance of winning the lottery (without buying a ticket) than there is for your marriage to become exciting again.
4. You include your prerogative to hold a grudge against your spouse on your personal list of "inalienable rights."
5. It bugs you when your spouse ruins a perfectly pleasant day by bringing up a problem or concern.

Not appearing a day over twenty-five, Dr. Taylor, my ophthalmologist, gave me a few more specifics about cataract surgery. Parts of the surgery would be unpleasant, and I was a bit anxious as I considered having my left lens replaced.

"I take it that your vision has been getting worse," Dr. Taylor said, making notes in my chart.

"For a while it was just an annoyance," I said, opening and closing each eye, "but it bothers me all the time now. I feel like I'm looking out through a dark, smudged lens."

"I can see why your world looks dark and blurry. It's like looking through a dirty window. We're going to put a new window into your eye, and you'll love the difference."

He reminded me that the risks to the surgery were very minor compared to the benefits. “Everyone has to decide for themselves when it’s time for the cataract surgery. But if it were up to me, and I had the fuzziness you obviously have, I’d say do it now.”

Glancing down at the numbers he’d calculated on my vision, Dr. Taylor enthusiastically told me, “You’re not going to believe the difference.”

“Perfect,” I said, smiling. “Let’s get it done.”

I felt comfortable with Dr. Taylor. Though young, my doctor had a demeanor that gave me confidence in his skills.

I was prepared to undergo the procedure for another reason. Just two years ago I had cataract surgery on my right eye. I knew the routine.

My vision had gradually regressed into a lifeless and blurry picture as the first cataract grew. I didn’t realize how bad it was until the doctor gave me visual examples of clear versus gray vision. “You get used to the way you view things and don’t know there is a much better way,” he said, going on to talk about the quick, relatively painless procedure of installing a new lens on the cornea of my eye.

After undergoing a half-hour preoperative anesthetic and a four-minute implant procedure, I went from having blurred vision of grays in my right eye to seeing clear, crisp images of reds, yellows, and blues. The difference was startlingly dramatic. I’m now a poster boy for cataract surgery, and soon I will have two eyes with clear, dynamic vision.

Fuzzy Lens Relationships

I can’t help comparing my literal blurry, cataract-laden lenses with the figurative dark-colored glasses so many of my clients wear. They often don’t realize how their negative attitudes and interactions affect their relationship with their mates. Just as I lost out on the vibrancy of life because of blurry and dull vision, so many couples wearing dark-colored glasses forfeit a vibrant marital relationship due to their perspective on the situation.

One hurt here, a negative interaction there, and soon the relationship takes on a hazy, disappointing hue. Hardly aware that they’re see-

ing their mate through a foggy lens, husbands and wives can begin to interact from a distorted perspective. This “fog,” however, is far from innocuous—it taints and discolors everything a person sees when looking at his or her mate.

Laurie and Stephen came to see me when the lens in their relationship became a bit distorted. Walking toward them for our first meeting, I watched the couple chat with one another in my waiting room. They had arrived separately and appeared to be catching up with one another when I greeted them. I introduced myself and escorted them back to my office.

“Where should we sit?” Laurie asked nervously. “We’ve never done this before. We weren’t sure if there’d be a couch or what,” she said.

“Sorry to disappoint you,” I said, smiling. “Just old-fashioned living room chairs.”

Looking at each other, Laurie jumped in. “We’re not sure where to start.”

Stephen raised his eyebrows, indicating he wasn’t sure how to start either.

“Stephen means the world to me,” Laurie began. “But we’ve slipped a bit since we married five years ago. This is our second marriage, and we’re not going to let this thing get away from us. Been there, done that.”

“I think we’ve developed some small habits that we want to stop,” added Stephen. “We’ve started seeing each other in a negative light and saying hurtful things to one another, and that is just not our heart.

“We know better than to do what we’re doing, but I think both Laurie and I have become too complacent in the way we look at one another. We want to bring the magic back into our marriage. We think we need someone to hold us accountable for doing that.

“You go ahead and talk,” Stephen said softly, turning to Laurie. Seeing her hesitate, he added, “It’s okay if you talk about me. I know I’ve got some things to change.”

“I’m not here to put Stephen down,” Laurie said.

“Go for it,” Stephen reiterated. “It’s really okay. I want him to know what I do that takes us down. Of course, after that you can add some wonderful things about me too.” He grinned.

“He really is all that,” Laurie said, reaching for Stephen’s hand.

“So, what’s happened?” I asked. “Tell me about your marriage and the pluses and minuses.”

“We had a wonderful marriage,” she said slowly. “I don’t know what’s happened. We used to spend lots of time together, but now not so much. With the economy in trouble, I’ve gone back to nursing four nights a week, and Stephen has had to pick up the slack at work after a large company layoff.

“We used to share with each other how much we cared about the other, but not so often anymore.” She shrugged. “Maybe we take our love for each other for granted now, but I think we both feel like we’re losing something really important.”

“In a sad way,” Stephen stated, “we both feel a little like we’re dying on the vine. Do you know what we mean?”

“Dying on the vine doesn’t happen overnight,” I said, a slight smile on my face. “It takes a fair amount of neglect to get a vine to die. So tell me what’s happening—or not happening.”

“We used to be close,” Laurie added, “and now it seems like we’re too busy for each other. We’re both too rushed. If something funny happens at work, I always think, *I can’t wait to tell Stephen!* But when I get home, I’m bone tired and Stephen is heading off to work, so it never happens. When he gets home in the afternoons, he often seems preoccupied. If he is behind at work, he gets critical with me for anything and everything. When he’s irritable, I just back off.”

“When I’m cranky, I get testy,” admitted Stephen. “I start to think Laurie is making too many demands on me. I start to actually believe she doesn’t love me. I know it sounds crazy, but that’s one of the attitudes I can easily slip into.”

“Me too,” Laurie added. “When Stephen gets busy, I think maybe he doesn’t love me as much anymore. I even get a little panicky.”

“Then we reassure each other and pull things together,” Stephen continued. “But we can’t believe it’s even gotten to the point where we question each other’s love.”

“You know, folks,” I began, “I know you’re very concerned about these patterns, and that encourages me. I’ll bet you’re already trying to change some of these patterns. Is that right?”

Both nodded.

Far from being overly concerned, I felt slightly encouraged. Laurie

and Stephen were strongly committed to one another. They had enjoyed vibrancy early in their marriage, clearly appreciating each

HOPE IS CLOSE AT HAND

Once you are prepared to accept responsibility for some of the negative patterns creeping into your marriage and replace them with healthier ones, you can begin to restore your marriage's vitality.

other. If they were willing to follow my lead and follow biblical principles, they could find that vibrancy again. They were ready to take full responsibility for negative patterns creeping into their marriage, and they were willing to replace them with positive ones. We were off to a great start.

Believing Is Seeing

Can you relate to Stephen and Laurie? Perhaps you had a dynamic marriage at one point, only to discover that you have begun allowing negative patterns to develop. It happens easily, often without notice.

I spent the first session helping Stephen and Laurie uncover the destructive patterns that were developing in their marriage. I asked them to set their judgments aside, as much as possible, and simply notice with me what they were doing.

Upon reflection, Stephen and Laurie agreed they had stopped sharing with each other personal stories from their day. Instead they tended to walk in the door and plop down on the couch, hardly sharing a word. No wonder their relationship began to shrivel and become mundane.

We are a pattern-seeking species. Not only do we have a tendency to slip into patterns of behavior—which was happening with Stephen and Laurie—but we tend to see situations in patterns. Something happens and we make a judgment about it. Something happens again and we make another judgment, leading to an opinion. Soon we've developed a judgment that is lasting, affecting our behavior.

We use this pattern-forming ability all the time. For example, how

many times have you seen an image in a cloud? That image, of course, is not in the cloud—we have imposed our own interpretation on the way it's shaped. How often have you been sure you've spotted something you're looking for in the distance, only to find when you're up close that it is something totally different? Recently while out sailing and looking for whales, I spotted what I thought to be a sea lion more than once, only to find out it was a bobbing piece of driftwood. So much for perception.

Though we may not realize it, we bring this same pattern-forming tendency to our relationships. The evening meal is the most natural time of the workday for Laurie and Stephen to talk. He arrives home shortly before dinner, and Laurie leaves for her job a few hours later. A few weeks after the layoffs, Laurie began noticing that Stephen often came home from work looking tired and anxious. Laurie asked him several times when he thought his boss would get Stephen some help. She intended her query to show her concern; however, he bristled inside at the implication that he wasn't capable of keeping up with his workload. More than once, he snapped at Laurie, leading her to conclude that it wasn't safe to probe too deeply. They never discussed their perceptions; instead, they both learned to steer clear of anything other than small talk over dinner.

Unfortunately, when it comes to relationships, once we've made a decision about how something appears, it is difficult to change our minds. Once we've made a judgment about a person or viewed an event from a certain perspective, it's a difficult and arduous task to view it from another angle.



BELIEVING IS SEEING

What you believe to be true about your spouse
will affect how you view him or her.

Our pattern-forming abilities are acute and fairly accurate at times, while completely flawed at other times. Consider how quickly you form an opinion about whether or not you like someone. Consider

how long it takes to change your mind if you first decide you don't like that person.

Let's apply this same principle to the issue at hand—viewing your mate through dark-colored glasses. We each develop attitudes toward our mates, and these attitudes fluctuate over time. Depending on what we believe, we will “see” different things in them.

If, for example, we believe we are loved and cherished, we're likely to respond positively toward our mates. If, on the other hand, we feel disrespected, we're going to have difficulty acting with love toward them. Can you see that our attitudes—what we believe—are critical to how we behave?

Stephen and Laurie came to see me because they were developing some troubling behavior patterns, which were affecting their attitudes toward one another as well. Each began to question whether the other really held him or her in positive regard. Each started to wonder if he or she was really loved. With this attitude, their marriage lost its stable footing, further darkening their relational lens.

A profound truth and central principle of this book is simply this: believing is seeing. What you believe to be true about your mate will influence how you view him or her. Your attitudes will influence how you treat your spouse. In everything, your attitude is showing.

Looking at Your Attitude

Your attitude is the lens through which you view your mate, seeing him or her either in a primarily positive or predominantly negative light. Have you considered your attitude toward your mate?

It is time to step back and evaluate your perspective. Are you wearing brightly colored glasses, allowing light and goodness in, or are you wearing dark-colored glasses, focusing on all that is wrong in your relationship? Your answers to the following questions will help you determine your attitude.

1. Do you believe your mate loves you?
2. Do you believe your mate has your best interests in mind?
3. Do you believe he or she sincerely cares about your well-being?
4. Do you notice more of your mate's positive or negative qualities?

5. Do you dwell more on your mate's positive qualities or negative ones?
6. Do you spend time encouraging your mate's positive qualities?
7. Do you pray for your mate?
8. What single word best describes your attitude toward your mate?

Once you've answered these questions, consider what you've learned. Did you decide your mate truly does love you and has your best interests in mind? Do you believe he or she cares about you and your well-being? Is your attitude generally positive or negative, trusting or distrusting, hopeful or discouraged? Your answers reveal how you view your mate and your relationship with him or her—not necessarily the reality of the situation.

If you're unsure how your spouse really feels, check out your perceptions with him or her. Find out if what you believe to be true is actually the case. This is an opportunity to clarify misperceptions. Your answers will direct you to some important discussions you need to have. Next reflect on how your attitude influences your interactions with your mate.

I often tell my clients that perception is everything. What you believe to be real, in many instances, becomes your reality. If you perceive your mate to be against you, you will likely take on an adversarial position against him or her. If, on the other hand, you perceive your spouse as being primarily *for* you, you will likely have a positive attitude toward him or her.

Now here's where things get interesting. While perception is everything, perception is not necessarily accurate. Let me give you a practical example from my life.

Recently our grown children visited for the weekend. Excited to see one another and wanting to spend lots of time catching up, we all stayed up well past my bedtime. Around eleven o'clock I politely excused myself and went to bed. I quickly fell asleep, only to wake an hour later to laughing. I immediately became annoyed. I tried, unsuccessfully, to muffle the noise, but in my sleepy state I became increasingly irritated. When my wife finally came to bed, I had been nursing a grudge for over an hour and made some sharp comments.

In that moment I viewed my wife as uncaring, insensitive, and

unloving—traits completely uncharacteristic of her. My perception had been appreciably altered by my tiredness, lack of assertiveness, and ability to hold a grudge.

After a restless night's sleep and a few more terse words, I finally apologized and began to review the situation. The truth of the matter is our children were having a good time and deserved to have fun with their mother. The truth of the matter is that the children were not being insensitive. In fact, they had tried to be quiet and sensitive to my feelings. The truth of the matter is that I didn't get up and ask them to keep the noise down, or join in the fun, or find a good book to read. Instead, I allowed myself to fall headlong into a pit of self-pity—and a terribly foul mood.

Can you see the difference perception makes? Yes, I missed out by not recognizing my error sooner. But what if I had been a bit more cantankerous, deciding to hold my position in spite of evidence to the contrary? What if I had dug in my heels, rehearsing the “rightness” of my position? Christie and I could have become divided, our hearts set against one another. The results could have been disastrous.

Moods—Temporary Insanity

While I escaped that evening with just a few hours of tension, things could have been worse. Moods can envelop us, causing us to lose perspective. A little anger, a dose of discouragement, some nursed resentment, and soon our thoughts can spin out of control.

Not long ago I received a call from a woman who is incredibly anxious. Her marriage is slipping away, and her husband of fifteen years is seriously considering a separation.

I've worked with Gayle and her husband, Michael, for some time. Unfortunately, they came to me late in the game, only after years of conflict. Now Michael is tired and restless, saying he no longer has the strength to continue fighting.

Michael's mood is one of profound discouragement. He projects past disappointments into the future, creating a perception of despair. He cannot see how things will possibly get better since the past several years have been so bad. Gayle is intensely fearful, and she wonders how she can survive if her husband leaves. Both feel desperate.

Their moods are palpable. Talking with Gayle on the phone was stressful for me, as I felt powerless to save this couple.

“You’ve got to do something,” Gayle protested. “You’ve got to make Michael see that he’s making a huge mistake. God can save our marriage. Michael just needs to give us more time.”

I felt sorry for Gayle. If only I could offer her the assurance that Michael wouldn’t leave. What I did was try to help her see that clutching at Michael, trying to use guilt to induce him into staying, was not the answer. She might have to let him go, if that was his intent, and then begin working on their marriage in a new and different way.

In other words, she could decide to end their negative, vicious cycles by refusing to beg and plead with him to stay. As frightening as that was for her, she understood that refusing to get locked into her part of the cycle could instill a small dose of hope that things could change. We could then begin to unlock other destructive patterns in their marriage, working to build a spiral of positivity. As we talked, Gayle finally began to see that criticizing Michael would do no good and that viewing him continuously in a negative light only reinforced her resentment.

Michael revealed his troubled state in a counseling session not long after.

“I don’t have any hope,” he said. “I hate the idea of leaving Gayle and the kids, but all we do is fight. That’s all we’re ever going to do.”

“I can understand your discouragement, Michael,” I offered, “but the past doesn’t have to dictate the future. Just because you two have fought a lot in the past doesn’t mean you can’t learn new skills.”

“I don’t believe anything can change,” he said, looking down. His mood was dark, his face hollow from continued disappointment.

“You feel hopeless,” I said, “and that colors everything you see. But you and Gayle can learn new skills. She is motivated to change and that is a good sign. You both can make a decision to change old patterns—you can decide to rebuild, interact in healthier ways, and solve your old problems. The work is very doable if you’re willing to give it a try. One step at a time, Michael.”

Michael looked up, taking in every word.

“I’ll think about it,” he said cautiously. “But I’m not promising anything.”

At this writing Michael and Gayle have begun pulling out of their negative spin. Though cautious and still somewhat discouraged, Michael is starting to see Gayle in a different light. He notices her efforts to be sensitive to his needs and less clingy. Gayle notices the slight shift in Michael's attitude and behavior and is mildly encouraged. A new light is creeping into their marriage.

Many Angles

While perception helps us frame our experience, it's often very inaccurate. Moods tend to make us intractable, closed to new information. Michael's perceptions had become rigid, not allowing new, helpful information to become part of the equation. He didn't even notice the first few times Gayle didn't panic when he threatened to leave. Only slowly and with the help of counseling did he realize that his wife was not the needy, emotional woman he had come to view her as.

CHOOSE YOUR PERSPECTIVE

By remaining flexible and willing to see things from different points of view, you can begin to stop viewing your spouse negatively.

So how can Michael and Gayle's situation help you? Realize that there are many ways of viewing the same event. You don't have to view any event or set of circumstances from a reduced, narrow perspective. You can cultivate an open mind and an open heart, embracing new possibilities.

If ten people view the same event and then are interviewed about it, you'll get ten different interpretations and observations. Things are not always as they seem.

Let's revisit the night when our children kept me awake. Consider what would have happened if, when their laughing woke me up, I had thought:

- *It's great that our children are having such fun.*
- *We're so fortunate that our children love being with us.*

- *How wonderful that our children enjoy each other.*
- *Here is an opportunity for me to kick up my heels.*
- *Our children would welcome my participation.*

Each of these statements, by the way, was true. Sadly, I couldn't see them at the time because I was wearing dark-colored glasses. My wife, wearing rose-colored glasses, had a ball. Guess who got the better deal?

When it comes to relating to your mate, you have a great deal of room to decide how you will view things. The key is flexibility and openness to seeing things from different angles. Healthy couples stay loose, looking at things from different points of view. In fact, they practice seeing situations from different angles, asking their mates for input into other possible points of view and empathizing with their positions. They turn things over in their minds, listen to alternate perspectives, and remain open to new information.

Attitudes Are Contagious

Recently I was grouching about the amount of rainfall in Washington State to a woman who is originally from Kansas.

"I absolutely love the green of Washington," she said, "and it's our rainfall that makes it so beautiful."

"Yeah," I continued, "but we get too much of it."

She couldn't believe her ears. "Well," she said, "I absolutely love the moist, soft air. I love the damp breeze coming off the salt water. I love the green mountains and forests, the lakes, streams, and ocean. I think you're taking for granted all that you have here." Her enthusiastic words stopped me in my tracks, reminding me that we have the opportunity of viewing things from different angles.

In his groundbreaking book *Emotional Intelligence*, Daniel Goleman explains that we actually "transmit and catch moods from each other." That means some exchanges are toxic, some are nourishing. "This emotional exchange," he says, "is typically at a subtle, almost imperceptible level; the way a salesperson says thank you can leave us feeling ignored, resented, or genuinely welcomed and appreciated. We catch feelings from one another as though they were some kind of social virus."¹

So that's why I get cranky when my wife is in a bad mood! And that explains why she gets irritable when I'm moping around the house! This also explains why I'm on top of the world when Christie greets me at the door and says, "Hello, handsome. I'm glad you're home." After a long day, a warm hug and a sweet word make everything right with the world.

Goleman is, in my experience, right on.

I recall when our younger son, Tyson, was an adolescent and prone to grumbling. When things in his world were not suiting him, he had a way of letting everyone—and I mean everyone!—know it. His attitude could be seen and felt from some distance.

For a time, Tyson would come to the dinner table in a bad mood and expect us to ignore him.

"Just leave me alone," he would say. "You don't have to let my bad mood affect you. It's my problem, and I'll get over it on my own."

"That's not the way it works, Ty," we'd reply. "Your mood affects the whole family."

"Well, it shouldn't," he protested. "Don't let it bother you."

"That's easier said than done," we'd say. "Moods are contagious. We feel what you're feeling. We're happy to try to help you if you want to talk about a problem, but if you're simply going to be grumpy, you're going to have to deal with it on your own."

That's exactly what we decided—he could go to his room and linger in his bad mood as long as he wanted, but he wasn't allowed to come to the dinner table and pull down the mood of the entire family with him.

Our attitudes, whether good or bad, are contagious. The good news, as we will discuss in greater detail later, is that we have the power to influence the attitudes of our mates by our attitudes. We can allow our bad moods to resonate back and forth between us, or we can choose to influence each other with our positive moods and attitude.

Bringing Out the Worst in Each Other

Dark moods cast a pall over the happiest moment, the most peaceful home. They create an environment of confusion, leaving everyone feeling helpless and perplexed as to how to eliminate the heavy mood.

While all bad moods are troubling, some moods cause more damage than others. Some are particularly hurtful and can move your marriage from a place of safety and satisfaction to a place of hardship. Here are a few attitudes I want you to be especially careful to guard against. These attitudes cannot be allowed free rein if you want to create an environment where love can grow.

Things are hopeless. Nothing pulls down a relational mood faster than hopelessness. When Michael insisted to Gayle that there was no hope for changing their marriage, his despair was contagious, leading her to give up hope as well. A dark mood creates a cloud of gloom over a marriage, creating a sense of hopelessness and sometimes profound discouragement.

Fortunately, the situation is rarely as bleak as the dark mood might indicate. There is almost always a crack or crevice for hope to seep through, and the smallest amount of hope is enough to change an attitude. As people of faith we can ask for the wisdom of God to help us find answers where we feel discouraged.

You don't care about me. When antagonistic feelings are swirling inside us like a bad case of stomach flu, it's hard to have warm and fuzzy feelings for our mates. Perhaps we've been nursing these bad feelings for some time, leaving little room for positive feelings. If so, we're sure to develop a foul attitude.

But the truth of the matter is usually (and hopefully!) that we do care for our mates. And they care about us. Perhaps the caring has been shielded by bad attitudes and discouraging behavior, but we're one small step from turning everything around. One small act of caring leads to another and another and another. And over time, caring actions lead to a new attitude being formed within us.

I have a right to be angry. Oh, the delight of righteous indignation! We spend so much time rehearsing how right we are and how wrong our mates are. We spin things easily in our direction, so our mates are the "bad guys" and we're the innocent parties. We're the victims and they're the villains. This attitude is dangerous, damaging, and incredibly divisive.

But what if your spouse has deeply wounded you through some sort of betrayal? Of course you'll feel hurt and anger. The truth of the matter, though, is that we never have the right to camp out with our anger. While you may have been victimized, setting up an angry house will do no good. Allow yourself to feel anger, and then move into effective action. Make choices. Set boundaries. Reframe the problem so that you're working on solutions. Accept that your mate is very human, just like you.

There's a right and wrong way of doing things. Once we believe we are doing things the “right” way and our mates are doing them the “wrong” way, we shift into a disgruntled and angry attitude. This narrow perspective, limiting our vision, only serves to alienate our mates from us.

Remember Laurie, who fretted that her husband's work demanded too much of him? Concerned that Stephen's supervisor was taking advantage of her husband, she repeatedly asked when his boss would ease his workload. Once the couple finally discussed the situation, Stephen told Laurie that his boss's responsibilities had also increased. Stephen had begun giving his boss weekly updates and getting clarification on which projects were most pressing. His approach enabled him to feel less overwhelmed during an otherwise stressful work situation.

Most often, when we loosen up and take a breath, we realize how wrong we've been to look at things from such a narrow point of view. Practicing viewing issues from multiple angles allows us to see our mates with new eyes—not as adversaries, but as beloved spouses.

My spouse is against me. When we assume our mates are opposing us, it's easy to view them as the enemy. *Why won't he see things my way? Why won't she go along with my plan?* As we rehearse these negative beliefs, our anger and bitterness grow, and we push further away from one another. With enough rehearsing, we can actually view our spouses as being overly critical toward us. That's exactly what Stephen did.

Of course, this perspective may be wrong. Our mates can disagree with us without being “against us.” When we see with new eyes that

they love us in spite of disagreeing with us, we soften and are willing to draw them closer.

The first step to revitalizing your marriage is reevaluating your perspective. By now I hope you have considered the possibility that your negative attitude, internally rehearsed and justified, may actually be causing serious harm to your marriage. This first week's challenge is to responsibly inspect your attitude, considering the distinct possibility that there are better ways to view your situation.

It is tempting to slip into passivity, believing you have little impact on what happens in your marriage. Nothing could be further from the truth. Yes, you can simply react to situations, but there is a better way. You can act deliberately, choosing those actions and words that will bring out the best in your mate. Obviously, you will benefit tremendously from the more positive approach.

Now that you've taken off your dark-colored glasses, what's next? In chapter 2, we'll explore how you can put on rose-colored ones. Instead of dreading conflict in your marriage, learn to see the possibilities as you work through struggles between you and your spouse. Instead of seeing all that is wrong with your mate, consider viewing him or her with new eyes. Looking for the positive qualities in your marriage and in your mate will lead to a stronger, closer partnership.

Weekly Quiz

It's time to evaluate your marital perspective. Remember that positive actions almost always lead to positive reactions. And positive actions are easier if you start from a positive perspective. You have the ability to set the tone for your relationship. Consider how you would act in the following scenario:

You sent your spouse to the store an hour ago, asking him to buy just eggs, milk, and dog food. You thought he'd be home by now, and your dog, who's now barking and pacing the floor, is even more keyed up than you. You think to yourself:

- a) *Figures. I knew I should have gone to the store myself. That man can never find anything! Hmmm. I bet he's stalling so he can get out of doing the dishes.*

b) *I'm so glad he went out for me. I knew it might be hard to find the brand of dog food that Brutus likes. I wouldn't be surprised if he's had to go to another store to locate it.*

.....

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE THIS WEEK

1. Take some time to talk with your mate about the "lens" through which you see and respond to one another. For help, refer back to the questions on pages 7–8.
2. Recall an incident that led to an argument or misunderstanding between the two of you. Allow each other to give your perspective on the situation. Then discuss the differences in your perceptions and whether both might have at least some validity.
3. Look over the list of "toxic" attitudes on pages 14–15. Which, if any, do you think exist between the two of you?

THE DECISION

We have reached the end of our journey together. I've been a silent witness to your courage to revolutionize your marriage by choosing to bring out the soul mate in your mate.

We've traveled together for twelve weeks—just enough time to learn and practice twelve incredibly valuable skills, each woven together to form a foolproof formula for bringing out the soul mate in your mate. Of course you haven't completely mastered these skills yet, but you have begun the journey. Each tool, every strategy, is meant to be used time and again. As you do so, you'll notice amazing results.

If you've begun practicing some of the tools in this book, you know results are possible. You may have already had moments of giddiness, laughter, finishing each other's sentences, and knowing what your mate thinks and wants. You've felt the closeness that is enjoyed only by soul mates.

Everything, however, hinges on a decision. Will you choose to bring out the soul mate in your mate? Conventional wisdom says to wait until he or she is a soul mate to you and then offer something in return. This simply doesn't work.

You have the power to set positive or negative patterns into motion. If you choose patterns of positive action, you'll be encouraged, and your mate will be as well. You will be enlivened and so will your mate. By choosing to be a soul mate, as well as bringing the soul mate out in your mate, you'll be in for a lifetime of passion and romance.

Everything hinges on your decision to initiate being a soul mate and, moreover, your ability to bring out the soul mate in your mate. Do you have the vision?

Choose to practice the strategies offered in this book—they're powerful and they work. Trust me. My marriage has had non-soul-mate moments and plenty of soul mate moments, and I much prefer the latter. I have found, unquestionably, that I determine whether or not

Christie is my soul mate. As I do my part in bringing out the soul mate in her, I am blessed with her being a magnificent soul mate to me.

You must make a rock-solid decision to continue on this journey. Review the chapter summaries, deciding to practice these tools, making them habits in your life. You must decide you're going to admire and appreciate your mate. Even when you notice qualities not fitting a soul mate, look deeper. Try harder. Pursue something more. There is a soul mate waiting for you, right in the middle of your marriage.

There are no perfect people, and certainly no perfect marriages. Fortunately, being a soul mate does not depend on being perfect. It depends only on being real, being classy, and being committed to a vision for what is possible. Like the spectacular mosaic of broken pieces, you can choose to see your mate for who he or she is—a soul mate. It is your decision and task to bring out the soul mate in your mate. God bless you in your journey.

NOTES

WEEK 1: REEVALUATING YOUR PERSPECTIVE

1. Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995), 114.

WEEK 2: CHOOSING ROSE-COLORED GLASSES

1. William Bridges, *Transitions* (Cambridge, MA.: Perseus Publishing, 2001), 85.
2. Donald Clarke, *A Marriage After God's Own Heart* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2001), 183.
3. Daphne Rose Kingma, *True Love* (Berkeley, CA: Conari Press, 2002), 37.
4. Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander, *The Art of Possibility* (New York: Penguin Books, 2000), 9.

WEEK 3: BRINGING OUT THE BEST QUALITIES OF YOUR SPOUSE

1. Julia Cameron, *The Artist's Way* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1992), 91.
2. Alexandra Stoddard, *Gracious Living in a New World* (New York: William Morrow & Co., 1996), 46.

WEEK 4: REMEMBERING THE REASONS YOUR MATE LOVES YOU

1. Thomas Moore, *Soul Mates* (New York: HarperCollins Publishers, 1994), 11.
2. Kahlil Gibran, *The Prophet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1923), 15.

WEEK 5: GIVING UP DISTRACTIONS TO THE DREAM

1. Robert Paul, *Finding Ever After* (Minneapolis: Bethany House Publishers, 2007), 26.
2. Frances G. Wickes, *The Inner World of Choices* (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 64–65.
3. Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2005), 97.
4. Michael Gurian, *Love's Journey* (Boston: Shambhala, 1995).
5. Scott Peck, *The Road Less Traveled* (New York: Touchstone, 1978).

WEEK 6: EMBRACING THE RIPPLE EFFECT

1. Seth Godin, *Purple Cow* (New York: Penguin Group, 2002), 31–32.
2. Malcolm Gladwell, *The Tipping Point* (New York: Little, Brown & Co., 2000), 5.
3. Laura Schlessinger, *The Proper Care and Feeding of Marriage* (New York: Harper, 2007), 191.
4. David Schwartz, *The Magic of Thinking Big* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1959), 106.

WEEK 7: NURTURING YOUR MATE'S DREAMS

1. Sherry Suib Cohen, *Secrets of a Very Good Marriage* (New York: Carol Southern Books, 1993), 132.
2. Daniel Pink, *A Whole New Mind: Moving from the Information Age to the Conceptual Age* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2005), 159.
3. Irwin Kula, *Yearnings* (New York: Hyperion, 2006), 188–189.
4. Matthew Kelly, *The Seven Levels of Intimacy* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2005), 56–57.

WEEK 8: TEACHING YOUR MATE TO NURTURE YOUR DREAMS

1. Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), 13.
2. To find out more about morning pages, see Julia Cameron's book *The Artist's Way*, 9–18.
3. Ed Wheat, *Love Life for Every Married Couple* (New York: HarperCollins, 1980), 133.

WEEK 9: PREPARING YOUR BEST TO MEET YOUR SPOUSE'S BEST

1. P. M. Forni, *The Civility Solution* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2008).
2. Thomas Moore, *Soul Mates*, 30–32.
3. Susan Baur, *The Love of Your Life* (Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks, Inc., 2002), 88–89.
4. *Ibid.*, 91.
5. *Ibid.*, 90.

WEEK 10: UNLEASHING THE POWER OF POSITIVE GOSSIPING

1. See <http://gossipfree.org> for more information.
2. Rosamund Stone Zander and Benjamin Zander, *The Art of Possibility*, 125.
3. Peggy Klaus, *Brag!* (New York: Warner Business Books, 2000), 2–3.
4. *Ibid.*, 5.
5. Stephen Covey, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1989), 239.
6. Sarah Ban Breathnach, *Simple Abundance* (New York: Warner Books, 1995). This quote appears in the entry for April 5.
7. Julia Cameron, *The Artist's Way*, 110.

WEEK 11: INITIATING CHANGE BY ENCOURAGEMENT

1. Harville Hendrix, *Keeping the Love You Find* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992), 288.
2. Thomas Moore, *Soul Mates*, 255.
3. Stephanie Dowrick, *Forgiveness & Other Acts of Love* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1997), 185.
4. John Gottman, *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1994), 73.
5. Lewis Losoncy, *If It Weren't for You, We Could Get Along* (Sanford, FL: DC Press, 2001), 52.

WEEK 12: MAINTAINING MUTUAL ADMIRATION

1. Bob Murray and Alicia Fortinberry, *Creating Optimism* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2004), 95; italics in original.
2. Denis Waitley, *Seeds of Greatness* (Old Tappan, NJ: Fleming H. Revell, 1983), 41.
3. Dennis and Barbara Rainey, *Building Your Mate's Self-Esteem* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1985).



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. David Hawkins has been counseling for over thirty years and is the author of more than thirty books, including the best-selling series, *Your Pocket Therapist*. He is also the weekly advice columnist for both Crosswalk.com and CBN.com. Dr. Hawkins founded the Marriage Recovery Center and owns Pacific Psychological Associates with offices located throughout Washington State. He lives on Bainbridge Island, Washington, with his wife, Christie. Visit him online at <http://www.yourrelationshipdoctor.com>.