

Couple's Workbook

MARRIAGE
Prep



M | The
Meaningful
Marriage

ABOUT US

Did you know that over 50% of marriages end in divorce? This number is way too high, and that is why it's our mission to provide every marriage with the best fighting chance for success.

The Meaningful Marriage is the result of countless conversations within our own marriage and with hundreds of other couples to not only better understand why over 50% of marriages end in divorce but what we could do about it. Tips, tricks, hacks, and tools alone are typically short-term solutions to a way bigger problem: our beliefs about marriage.

We often inherit beliefs and notions about how marriage is "supposed" to happen. Whether it be what we were taught or somehow inadvertently absorbed, these beliefs can have detrimental impact on our marriage without us ever realizing why.

Ashley and I had been happily married for 7 years, when all of a sudden our reality didn't match our expectations as a result of misguided beliefs about marriage. When I say "all of a sudden," that is only how it felt. The reality is we experienced a slow decline and distance based on the lies we believed about having found the perfect match and a love that would last a lifetime.

We focus on developing deep, lasting relationships that not only stand the test of time but also thrive on meaning so that your marriage can be a Meaningful Marriage!



The Basics (what you will learn)

This is a 6-session comprehensive course designed specifically for couples preparing for marriage and newlyweds. Our goal is to offer new insightful information, allow room for conversation, and provide tools to navigate a lifelong meaningful relationship. In the many hours, experiences, and conversations that shaped this program, we worked hard to include the many things that cause couples to say, "I wish I would have known that before getting married."



01

Marriage Mindset

Celebrate Together

Relationships require an intentional shift in the way we do life. Your marriage mindset is the foundation upon which all other things are built.



02

Personality Differences

Permission to be you

Understanding each other gives us permission to be ourselves and adjust to better interact with our spouse.. Our differences make us complimentary.



03

Talk & Fight Styles

More Than Words

Healthy relationships have fair expectations, navigate conflict together, and communicate both positive and negative emotions.



04

Upbringing

We are Family

Family is a crucial part of healthy relationships. We need to be intentional about how our upbringing shapes our marriage and how we raise our families.



05

Money Moves

Can't Buy Me Love

Finances, budgeting, and career planning are all key actions for marriage. Making intentional money moves will set you up for a successful tomorrow.



06

Love Life

Let's Talk About Sex

Develop healthy sex expectations and practices for your love life. Get on the same page when it comes to intimacy inside and outside the bedroom.

The Workbook

This workbook is designed as a guide for couples to work through and discuss the key areas of marriage success. While the workbook is useful on its own, it is designed as a companion to our full online video course complete with couple interviews and additional resources.

The Videos

Each video session is broken into chapters. In each chapter, couples will share real-life examples of marriage struggles and successes. The Meaningful Marriage experts, Mark and Ashley also explain how you can apply each session to your marriage. The videos and workbook combined instruct couples when to pause and discuss a topic and when to push play on the next video. If you are using the workbook on it's own, you will see these prompts but can move along without pushing play on the next video. **Use CODE: WORKBOOK10 to get 10% off our video course and coaching programs.**

The Assessment (optional)

We are certified SYMBIS assessment facilitators. SYMBIS stands for Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts. In our quest to build the best online marriage program, we have provided opportunities for the SYMBIS Assessment to integrate into our program for an additional personalized enhancement to your experience. It's currently the most renowned marriage assessment available.

Go to www.themeaningfulmarriage.us/SYMBIS_PREP to get your assessment.

What to Expect...

Expectations

You will get as much out of your time together as you put in. If you want to just scratch the surface, you can; but this is intended to be a time where you can dig into topics that you otherwise wouldn't.

- Our goal is to give you some common language upon which to discuss things. Each session is designed to provide conversation starters and action steps so that you can reference these conversations throughout your marriage.
- Marriage is work. There is nothing we can do in these sessions that will protect you from the challenges of marriage, but we can help you plan your route on the marriage journey with The Roadmap to Marriage Success!

The Roadmap to Marriage Success



There are some issues for that are beyond this course and for which you should seek counseling.

Religion

Regardless of your spiritual beliefs, the Bible has many good “words to live by” when it comes to marriage. We have provided biblical references to support the discussion content. However, we believe the inclusion and application of faith should be practical and accessible; we do not use the Bible in ways that are oppressive, unrealistic, or exclusive.

Resources and Recommended Reading

- The Love List – Les & Leslie Parrot
- Saving Your Marriage Before It Starts – Les & Leslie Parrot
- The 5 Love Languages – Gary Chapman
- Total Money Makeover – Dave Ramsey
- The 5 Sex Needs of Men & Women – Dr. Gary & Barbara Rosberg
- Things I Wish I Knew Before Marriage – Gary Chapman
- Marriage Rebranded – Tyler Ward
- Marriage Hacks: 25 Practical Ways to Make Marriage Last – Gary Chapman, Gary Thomas, WP Young, Danny Silk
- *The Meaning of Marriage* - Tim Keller

SESSION 00 | Fairytales are the Worst (The Meaningful Marriage Model)

00

We (all of us) have inherited certain beliefs about marriage that leave us ill-equipped to navigate life with another person.

After 1000s of conversations with 100s of couples we have identified that nearly all issues marriages face fall into 3 categories...**Adversity, Incompatibility, and Deception**. These are what we affectionately call **RELATIONSHIP KILLERS**.

The other reality we have come to learn is that it's not ultimately the relationship killers that cause marriages to fall apart. Although all marriages face these relationship killers in some way or another, they don't kill all relationships. **WHY?** Different beliefs!

The hard truth is...and we hate to say it...**FAIRYTALES ARE THE WORST**. Fairytales have set us up for failure because they have taught us **3 LIES** that we continue to believe that make us ill-equipped to face and overcome adversity, incompatibility, and deception.

There is **GOOD NEWS**. We have also identified the **3 MINDSET SHIFTS** that help us overcome the lies we believe. Unfortunately, these shifts don't just happen. But if you invest the time and effort in the right areas, you can experience deep meaning in your relationship.

What do you think is the **biggest challenge** facing your marriage?

Spouse 1 | What do you think?

Spouse 2 | What do you think?

Before we further define the 3 Relationship Killer categories, which do you think your challenges fit into ?



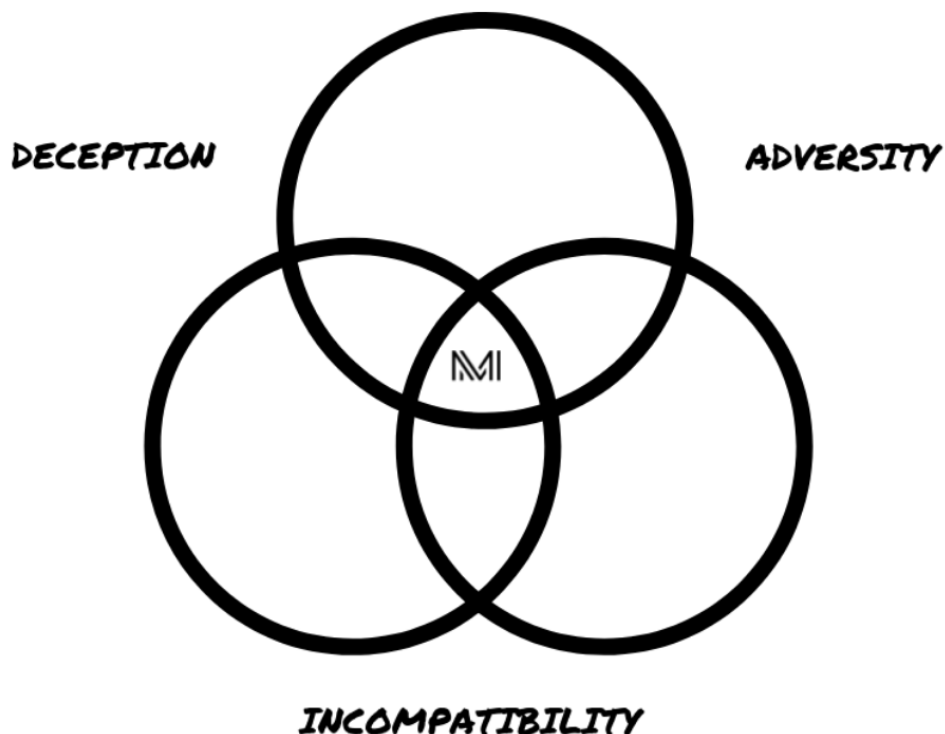
Press **PLAY** to move on to Chapter 3

The 3 RELATIONSHIP KILLERS...

Deception. Incompatibility. Adversity.

Regardless of the biggest challenge facing your marriage, our research shows that almost all challenges can fall into one of 3 categories we call RELATIONSHIP KILLERS...Adversity, Incompatibility, and Deception.

- **Adversity** = Transitions, difficulties, and bumps in the road.
- **Incompatibility** = Seeing our differences as irreconcilable
- **Deception** = Anything from big lies (infidelity, debt, etc.) to not following through on your word.



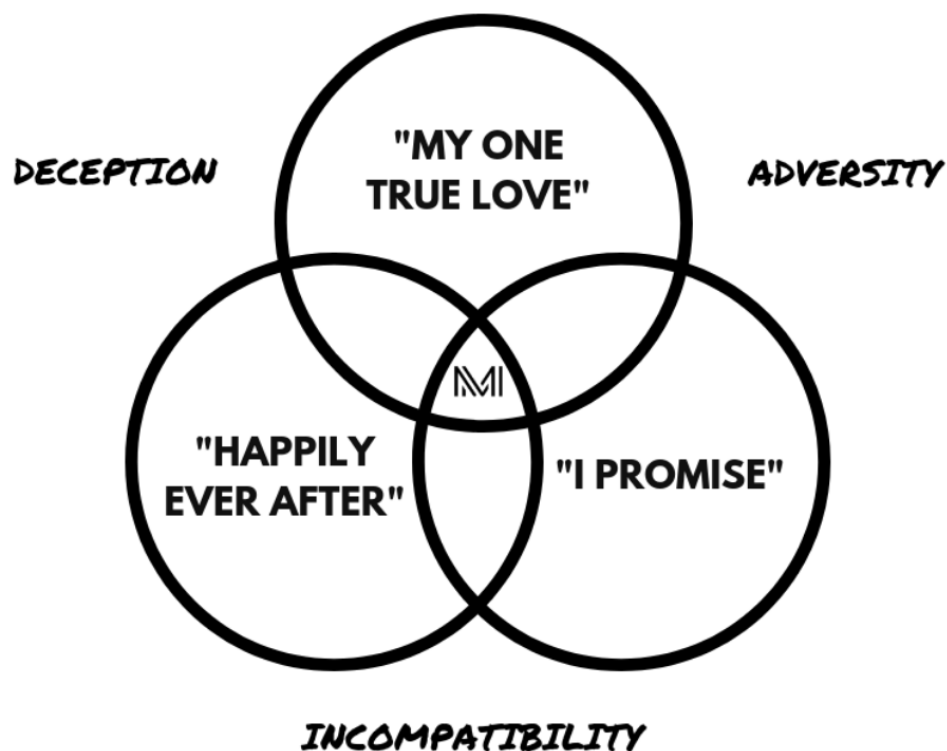
The best relationships are not measured by the absence of these issues. The best relationships are measured by how well they navigate them.

The 3 LIES

Happily Ever After. My One True Love. I Promise.

From a very early age we have been taught that a fairytale relationship is the desired future dream. We were taught that things like "happily ever after," "my one true love," and "I promise" were enough to overcome whatever comes our way, or even worse, that these things would prevent us from ever having to face difficulty in our own marriage.

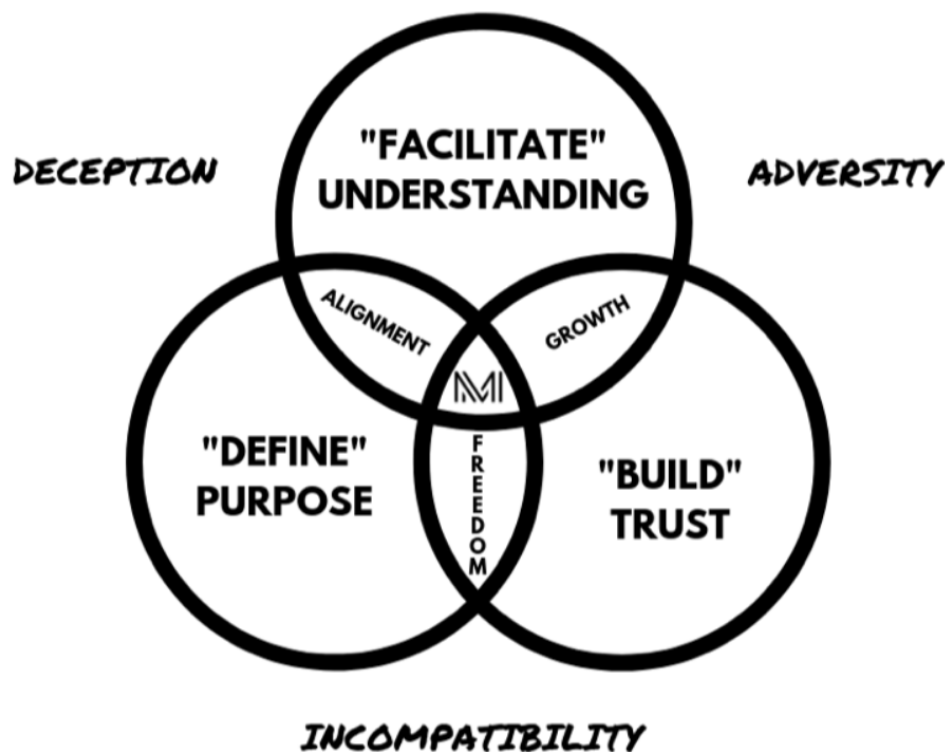
The problem is...THESE ARE LIES. They are well intentioned lies, but lies nonetheless.



Our course is designed to provide the antidote to these lies that are infiltrating marriages worldwide.

The 3 ANTIDOTES

Define Purpose. Facilitate Understanding. Build Trust



MM Meaningful Marriage Model

- **The antidote to adversity** is taking time to DEFINE PURPOSE. We should know why we chose each other and we should revisit where we are going regularly.
- **The antidote to incompatibility** is to FACILITATE UNDERSTANDING. “Facilitate” implies that the process of knowing and understanding each other is ongoing.
- **The antidote to deception** is working to BUILD TRUST. Building trust takes continual honesty and transparency, as well as, grace when we get it wrong.

How does your marriage measure up?



The following pages are designed to help you determine how prepared you are to navigate the relationship killers in your relationship.

We recommend doing this separately and then coming together to compare your scores. To get one combined score, add your totals together and divide by 2 for an average score.

If doing this alone, you can use this as a way to approach your spouse in an objective way.



LIE #1 | Happily Ever After

Mindset Shift - From Length to Meaning = DEFINE PURPOSE

What good is a long marriage if it's terrible?

"Happily Ever After" focuses on length of marriage and leads us to believing the myth that happy couples don't have problems. If we shift our focus from length to experiencing meaning in our marriage, the length will be a byproduct and the result will be a lasting & meaningful marriage. The key to developing a meaningful marriage is to first define your purpose.

DEFINE PURPOSE

On a scale of 1 to 10...

- *How well do you feel you focus on the positive aspects of your relationship?*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- *How would you rate the clarity of your future mission and vision for your relationship?*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- *How aligned are you and your partner when it comes to worldview and beliefs?*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



LIE #2 | My One True Love

Mindset Shift - From Finding to Knowing = FACILITATE UNDERSTANDING

Are you that good or just that lucky?

“My One True Love” focuses on our ability to find the “perfect person.” If we believe the myth that we are somehow that good or that the stars have somehow perfectly aligned, we will at some point be very disappointed when we realize our perfect person is anything but. If we shift our focus from finding the perfect person to focusing on really knowing our partner, we allow for giving and receiving understanding as our relationship grows.

FACILITATE UNDERSTANDING

On a scale of 1 to 10...

- *How well do you feel you and your partner understand and adjust to each other's differences?*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- *How would you rate your ability to communicate on important or difficult topics?*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- *How well do you understand how each other's upbringings affect your relationship?*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10



LIE #3 | I Promise

Mindset Shift - From an Event to a Journey = BUILD TRUST

Perfect Wedding Day = Perfect Marriage, Right?

“I Promise” is not enough. Unfortunately, focusing so much on “I do” tends to trick us into believing the myth that marriage as a one time decision is enough. If we shift our focus to a journey full of daily choices rather than one choice that will last a lifetime, we not only actively build trust, we leave room for extending grace and restoring trust when things don’t go perfectly.

BUILD TRUST

On a scale of 1 to 10...

- *How well do you handle conflict and fight fair?*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- *How would you rate your ability to plan and manage your money together?*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

- *How aligned are you and your partner when it comes to expectations for intimacy?*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

YOUR RESULTS

Add up all of your scores from the previous pages and record your total here:

If you and your partner had differing opinions, add both totals and divide by 2.

If your scores added up to a number between 80-90:

Congratulations! Your relationship is in good shape. You may have your differences of opinion now and then, but you share an understanding for one another's point of view, and you have a solid foundation for the future. However, don't wait until things are bad to invest in your marriage.

If your scores added up to a number between 65-79:

Some aspects of your relationship are in order, and you are probably happy with each other MOST of the time. However, there are some potential roadblocks that could continue to cause stress and problems that may erode your relationship over time. Ensure that your relationship stays on the right track by investing now.

If your scores added up to 64 or less:

Don't panic! While your relationship is in need of some improvements, it's never too late. Communication and underlying issues cause stress and frustration in everyday life. You have likely experienced a loss of interest in one or more things that once brought you joy. There can still be plenty of hope for your future, and we can help. Don't wait... invest now!

Based on **your answers** in each section, which session are you most looking forward to?



Press **PLAY** to move on to Chapter 4

What's Next

- As you move through the course, be sure to keep your scores from Session 00 handy so you can get the most out of each session.
- Prepare to dig into Session 01 and make a plan for getting started.

SESSION 01 Marriage Mindset (why marriage, the mindset, celebrate)

01

Relationships require an intentional shift in the way we see life. Your marriage mindset is a crucial part of your relationship upon which all other things are built.

A Willingness To Serve

Marriage requires a complete shift in how we see others, especially our spouse. The best marriages are between two people who continually put the other's needs before their own.

- What are some common "pet peeves" between the two of you?

Expectations

Starting with "pet peeves" may seem odd, but discussing them helps us see how insignificant they are, and that we each have things we do that are annoying. Marriage doesn't exist simply to meet your needs or to make you happy. Marriage is both crazy difficult and incredibly rewarding. Marriage strengthens us and shapes us into better versions of ourselves.

*By focusing on meeting the needs of others, your needs are more regularly met. -
The Meaningful Marriage*

What is your motivation/ambition for getting married (write your partner's name below)?

Why [name]_____?

Why [name]_____?

- What are some key characteristics you want to be present in your relationship?

Visit www.themeaningfulmarriage.us to purchase the full 6-Session Marriage Refresh Program!

Get Started!