

FROM THE CREATORS OF FACING THE GIANTS

FIREPROOF



HELP YOUR SECOND MARRIAGE LAST FOREVER

by David and Lisa Frisbie

It's not working out," Emily confides to a close friend. "We both thought we loved each other, but maybe we don't. All we do is fight all the time. I don't think we're going to make it."

With 60 percent of remarriages ending in divorce during the first decade, Emily's experience is hardly unique. By one report, two out of three remarriages in California now end within the first 24 months.¹

Surprisingly, the secret of success for a long-term remarriage is not rooted in sharing identical values or holding the same opinions. Instead, thriving relationships center around healthy habits and persistent practices, building unity and affection into the life of the married couple.

In first place among these healthy habits: forming a spiritual connection centered on serving God. This unifying activity has roots in spiritual disciplines that grow a couple together while also growing them up. Personal maturity and marital satisfaction are built at the same time, by the same consistent choices and patterns.

How can remarried partners form a meaningful spiritual connection?

Pray Together

Gary is a morning person; Linda is not. Finding a time when the two of them could share a meaningful prayer life seemed impossible. Yet somehow they sensed that God wanted the two of them to pray together regularly. Now, every evening at a fixed time, they go to a room in their house, close the door, and spend 30 minutes in prayer.

"It was incredibly difficult to get started with this," Linda admits. "We couldn't find a time that was good for both of us. When we did try to set a time, it seemed like everything conspired against us. The phone would ring, the children would need us, and there were interruptions and setbacks."

Sound familiar? Welcome to life in most households. Yet by staying committed to the idea, Gary and Linda settled on a time.

"Now that we're doing this so regularly, I can't imagine giving up this time for anything else. This is one of the best times of our day."

Learn Together

Bob and Rachel met in a small growth group at their church. They would gather to study the previous week's sermon and to share some biblical homework. Both divorced, busy, and challenged as single parents, they kept discovering that their growth group was a place of acceptance, support, and encouragement. When they eventually began to date, and later as they married, Rachel and Bob remained closely connected to the members of this original group. Over time, Bob decided that he would like to try his hand at leading a growth group. Now, they find that leading a group unifies them as husband and wife.

"We work on the devotionals together," Rachel smiles, "although Bob is usually the one doing the talking during group time. We have as much fun getting ready for group as we do during the session itself."



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For a couple in the early stages of a remarriage, few things are as helpful as being surrounded by a caring, supportive network of godly friends. Studying and learning together helps couples connect and grow.

Serve Together

For Tim and Jamie, building a home with Habitat for Humanity® helped unify their new marriage: his second, her first. "I did a Habitat project while I was in college," Jamie shares. "After just one project with Habitat, I was hooked."

In the early days of their marriage, the couple managed to get away for a week in order to build a Habitat house together. Tim's parents watched the children while the still-newlyweds gathered carpentry tools and flew to Florida, spending eight days on a construction site. The experience definitely served to bond and connect the couple.

"We were sweating together," Jamie laughs. "We got a lot closer to each other during that week. We were working for others, not for ourselves." The experience became a chance to learn about each other while also doing something positive for someone else.

Mission trips, soup kitchens, homeless shelters, and other service projects are a great way to grow closer to each other while glorifying God through serving others.

Worship Together

Taking time to worship is the final component of forming a spiritual connection, rather than the first. The reason? Attending worship together might become an essentially passive event when it should engage a couple in meaningful, active participation.

Couples can sit side-by-side in church while not connecting with each other or with anyone else. For Kellie and Jackson, however, sharing worship is at the heart of their growing union. Different in church backgrounds, they found common ground in a contemporary, Saturday-night worship service at a large church near their home. Whether Saturday or Sunday, formal or informal, the key is to share the experience together.

When it functions as God intended, the Sabbath experience can be a unifying, health-giving respite during the week of a couple. When praising God together is at the core of the experience, sharing in worship can help a couple bond, connect, and grow closer.

We keep finding remarried couples that are "going the distance." Our current record holders are Fred and Verna Beffa of Rice Lake, Wisconsin, married 56 years until Fred's death. Fred and Verna invited us to share their 50th anniversary celebration; doing so was one of the great joys of our lives. We tell their story in Happily Remarried.



<http://www.lifeway.com/lwcf/>

David and Lisa Frisbie serve as executive directors of The Center for Marriage and Family Studies in Del Mar, California. The center's focus is helping families adapt to transition and change, particularly in the aftermath of divorce. They are the authors of numerous articles and several books, including *Moving Forward After Divorce* and *Happily Remarried*. Frequent speakers at camps, retreats, seminars, and conferences, they have traveled to all 50 states, 11 provinces of Canada, and two dozen other nations. Happily married for 28 years, David and Lisa reside in southern California.

¹The Center for Marriage & Family Studies, "Survey of Remarried Persons, 2001-2004," Del Mar, California.



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