

EPS 10 With Host Connie Durham

– 5 ways to improve your marriage

It's the holidays and stress is camped out at your front door. Are you asking, how can I increase the joy this year? The key to keeping peace at home during the holiday season is maintaining a strong and healthy relationship with your spouse. That means learning to focus on what you want more of.

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GIFT - Why Loving Couples Argue & Fight

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Unedited Show Notes as transcribed by “Headliner”

Tips for a Happier Marriage During the Holidays

Discover real life stories and a path to overcome pitfalls every marriage encounters

Speaker A: Are you ready to open the door to more romance, fun, and adventure? Or maybe it's compassion, support, and strength you're looking for. Discover real life stories and a path to overcome the pitfalls every marriage encounters. Welcome to the extraordinary marriage. Welcome to episode Ten. I am Connie, and you are listening to the extraordinary marriage. What better time, then December to talk about five ways to improve your know, I remember when Jeff and I were first married, and it was pretty quick that we started having kids. And once children started coming along, not only was he working full time all day long, he worked part time playing the organ at the church, and then he was going to school two nights a week. I mean, that is really busy. And as a mom at home, I also taught dance three or four

nights a week. and so my mother in law watched our kids, or, a girl down the street watched them for a couple of hours before Jeff got. You know, those were busy times, and we were just busy figuring it. We. We didn't have any experience. I, have to say, I was probably very trusting. I was naive. I never really thought about anything except for what was right in front of me. And I wasn't really thinking about how busy he was providing for the family, because I was busy taking care of kids and house and figuring all of that kind of stuff out. So what happens is, when we're so busy, we're just unaware of what's going on around us. I remember on, my parents 50th wedding anniversary, we lived in Georgia, as we still do, and my parents live in North Carolina. So we headed to North Carolina. We had invited all their friends, sent out the invitations. We figured out the food that we needed, for the party that night. And I remember as I, got all the food out, I was very organized, got it all out, and my sister helped. And I remember thinking to myself, now, Connie, now, this is way past when we first got married, right? This is only so many years. About ten years ago, my parents had their 50th. But I thought, now, Connie, I know that when all those people come in, you forget to take care of business, like replenishing the food, making sure everyone has what they need. Yeah, I'm not real hostessy like that, because once I get with people, I literally forget to pay attention to the details. So we were into the party, and I was meeting a lot of my parents, friends that I'd never met before. They were, parents from all the way back in high school for them. and as I did, I just really enjoyed myself, because I am a people person. And the thing is, there's all different kinds of personalities out there. And, you know, I teach a lot on communication styles, and I became aware through the years that once people are in front of me and I'm talking to them, I forget about the task that I'm supposed to be doing. So about halfway through the party, all of a sudden, I've been talking to all these different people, meeting people, and I said I thought, to even pay attention to the food. So I went over to where the whole food layout was, and lo and behold, everything was full. People were eating, and everything was still full. Everything was taken care of. Why was that? because my husband knows me very well, and he doesn't say anything. He just goes and takes care of it. So he had refilled all the plates, all the dishes, refilled the punch, done all of those kind of things without me even having to ask. That's because he's really a supporter, and, he's always there for those kind of things. So I'm very appreciative. But, you know, as we go into the holidays, often we are stressed. We get stressed. How do you react? We need to stop and think about it. How do you react whenever you're thinking about stress and parties and going here and going there, and sometimes you have two dinners, two family dinners in one day, and you've overeaten and you're tired, and you really don't even want to go and be with a

bunch of people. But you said you'd be there, so you've got to be there. Right. So it's important to be aware of who we are and how we handle life, and it's important to be aware of how our spouse handles life. It's important to know whether we are a people person and comfortable with that, or whether we're kind of quiet and really don't like to be around a lot of people. Did you know that a lot of couples get married and they're opposites? Yeah. One's a people person, and one's a, take care of everything else person. But you know what? That's okay, because whenever you work as a team, everything rolls along fine. When you work as a team and you pay attention to who's good at this and who's good at that, everything rolls around fine.

Five ways to improve your marriage with awareness of stress

Speaker A: Well, as we're looking at today, five ways to improve your marriage. I want you to start out with awareness, and that means you have to stop and think just a little bit.

Awareness. What personality, style are you, are you that fast paced people person? You love to talk with people or are you kind of quiet and, you really kind of rather sit by yourself? You don't mind talking to somebody if they talk to you first, but you're not just going to walk up to them and start talking? Well, this time of year, as there are so many parties and so many family get togethers, it's important to think about how do I react to stress and then how does my spouse react to stress and how do I react to them when they are stressed? How do they react to me when I am stressed? Do we pay attention that it's really not about us, but it's about our energy level and how we're feeling? Well, for one thing, I consider myself an optimist. I think I'm pretty easy to get along and I do like people. But guess what? When I started studying the communication styles that we have, I realized that when I got tired or low on energy, I got sarcastic, I got grumpy, I got a little critical, I got sarcastic, and I didn't mean to be that way, but it's just how I reacted to stress. Some people get very critical. They see everything around them that's not being done right because they figure that they could do it better. But when we're at a holiday party, we have to think, did you want to have the party at your house? Yeah, maybe you could do it better, but it would need to be at your house. Right? And then there's other people who, when they're low on energy, they react to everything with anger. They're frustrated. You can kind of see the person. I was out on the road yesterday, headed somewhere, and, somebody kind of pulled out in front of somebody, and then this other person honked on their horn. They laid on their horn and guess what?

Next thing I knew, they were turning into the CBD store. Is that right? The pot store. They were turning into the CBD store. And I thought, oh, they're a little bit stressed and, they're needing something to calm them down. Right. Well, as we go into December, there's a lot of people who are hurrying about, shopping for their family, trying to get ready for parties, and they're just stressed. And what happens with that is they start to react and that goes upon all the people around them. And when we go home into our houses, it happens at home because we're tired. It's important to be aware of this and do whatever you need to do. Only you can do that. Stop give yourself some time to recoup. It might be 30 minutes in your room by yourself or reading a book, taking a hot bath. It might be, straightening up something and organizing. There are people that are relaxed whenever they are getting something done. it might be stopping and whatever you're doing and talking to a friend that you can laugh with and have a good time with for a while. Hopefully that's your spouse, right, that you can chat with. And it's important to figure out, what am I going to say yes to and what am I going to say no to. Some years ago, I was really frustrated, probably about everything I was doing. And I thought, what is the matter with me? I like people. I like all the things that I'm doing, but I'm so frustrated. Well, what I found was if I said yes, it might have been to my kids, it might have been to something at church, it might have been, to, my husband for something. If I said yes, but I did not want to do it. I did not want to do it, then I became, frustrated. So if I was helping with an event and I said I would do it, then about one week before that event, I would start feeling frustrated, tired, annoyed, moody all over something that was a week away. Once I realized that I was saying yes, and then I was frustrated about doing it because I didn't really want to do it. But if I said no, then I felt guilty that I had said no. So it's like, ah, it was a no win situation, a, no win situation, because if I said yes to help with whatever it was, and I was frustrated and didn't really want to say yes, but I said yes because that's the popular thing to do. Then I was frustrated, but if I said no, I felt guilty, and then I was miserable because I had let somebody else down. Well, I had heard something on, ah, like a speaker, a motivational speaker, and they said, let your yeses be yes and your no's be no. And that means if I say yes, I'm saying yes because it's something that I want to do. And if I say no, it's okay. I don't have to say yes to everything. If I say no, by golly, I'm going to be okay with that. Well, the same week I had heard that from a motivational speaker, I was also at church. At church. And guess what? The pastor used that passage. I should have written down what it was so I could quote it off, and I was like, oh, my gosh, I've heard that two times in one week. Let your yeses be yes and be happy with it. And let your no's be no and don't feel guilty. Some of us think that we need to say yes and be there for everyone on

everything, and we're just one person. We can't do everything. And when you say yes to one thing, guess what? You're having to say no to somebody else or to something else. So let your yeses be something that you're excited about, that you're energized. It's something you want to do. Don't try to be anybody that you're not and let, your no's be no and don't feel guilty.

Five ways to improve your marriage by changing your attitude

Speaker A: Certain people don't feel guilty. They're able to say yes and no and have no problem with it. And it's literally the power of our words because my words said to me as that event started to come up, oh, my gosh, I've got such and such coming up, and it just sapped my energy every single day. Terrible, isn't it? But that's reacting. How do you react? What do you say yes to? What do you say no? Do you feel all right with that? And that's the first area of five ways to improve your marriage. Because when you're frustrated and you don't want to do something or you're low on energy, then, you're going to take it out on your spouse. So when you're stressed, are you sarcastic? Do you react to everyone with anger, or are you criticizing everything that's going on around you? Do you like to be around somebody like that? Not me. So I try to be the person that I want to see in others. I, try to be the person I want my husband to be nice and enjoyable. So I try to be that way, too. The second thing is our attitude, and this just goes from the first thing. How are you act right? Our attitude. Some people are naturally pessimist and they see everything that can go wrong. And some people are naturally optimist and they see everything that can go right. I remember when I was in grade school and I learned those two words and I remembered them. There's many things I don't remember, but there again, when we're tired, we don't have a very good outlook. Some years ago, probably five or six years ago, I was teaching voice at music and arts. And, sometimes the kids would come in and they were tired. They weren't tired. They just come from school. And it's something we're excited about in the beginning. Sometimes we're a little less just because we're tired and we don't want to go. Well, when they came in and they kind of had a sad face and no energy, I could kind of tell that from them. I did something. I, had them clap their hands. And I was reminded about this the other night as I heard my husband coming into choir practice, and I heard him in the back hallway, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap at his hands. And it gives you energy. It's like a smile. If you let your face crack when you're in a bad mood, you smile. It starts to give you energy. And so I would have the kids clap their hands really fast, or I would have them, like, run in place

really fast, lifting their feet. Run. And guess what? And then they're laughing, and guess what? It gave them energy. It started to give them energy. So you got to figure out, what do you have to do to change your attitude and give yourself a little bit of energy? Often, it's simply the words we say to ourselves. Literally, if we tell ourselves everything that's going wrong, everything we're not happy with, everything, critical that goes on in our head, or if we reverse our words. So if I say, oh, my gosh, I am so tired. Instead say, I am gaining more energy minute by minute. Now, this is really a weird thing to share. Don't hold it against me. So, on the way home this morning, I had, gone to a 07:00 business meeting with about 50 people. And on the way home, I was thinking, oh, man, I'm just so tired today. There goes those words, voices in my head. and then I thought, I can't afford that. I have things to do. I got to change my thoughts. And so this is kind of funny, but sometimes I think my personality is a little childlike. Yes, it is. So, anyway, if you're on podcast, you can't see this, but I literally put my hand up under my arm, and my elbow was out, kind of like a chicken wing. And I literally thought in my mind, I know you're thinking I'm weird. And I thought. And I thought, pump her up. I know. I can't believe I shared that with you. So I thought, pump her up. And then I pumped up the other side. And just simply the thought and doing it, I thought, I actually feel a little better.

Third thing is having quiet time together. It's really important in this busy world

Speaker A: Sometimes it's music that helps us pump up our energy, and you have to change what you expect. Are you expecting the best Are you expecting something wonderful or are you expecting everything to go badly? Attitude. How does that affect you at home? When you have a good attitude, are you nice to everyone? Are you lifting up everyone else in your house? When you have a bad attitude, are you attractive? Do you like people with a bad attitude? they kind of repel you, don't they? The third thing is having quiet time together. It's really important in this very busy world, in this very busy day to have some quiet time together. Something that's kind of gone by the wayside is simply families eating together all together at the same table, having a little conversation. Now, I have heard of people like, everyone be quiet at the table, no one talking. But I don't believe in that. I believe it's a great time when you come together and everybody maybe tells something that's gone on in their day. It makes the whole family feel like a part and a unit and important. And as you share

with each other, you continue to get to know each other better and better and better. Think about teenagers who you're like, I don't even know who they are anymore. They don't even like to talk to me. They spend no time with me. If you don't continually spend time together, talking and sharing your life and sharing events, little by little, you drift apart. And that's the same thing for people in marriage. Spouses drift apart if they're not spending time together. Time is one of the love languages that everybody needs to spend some kind of time together. Hey. And we've got to eat. Whether it's a sandwich or a full meal, it's important to sit down and spend time together eating. Another way you can spend time together is riding in the car. Often. M I go one way, my husband goes the other. But once in a while, we are in the car together, and it's a great time to talk. When you're headed out on a trip, it's a great time to talk. Somebody just said the other day that they read a, book to the spouse who is driving, and that gives a little interaction, and then you can talk about the book or talk about things that are going on in life. when the kids go to bed, that's a good time to spend time together. Going on a little vacation and ditching work and not paying attention to work is a great time to spend time together. And let's get real. In this day and time, you've got to give up those devices. You got to turn them down, turn them off. At what time of night, turn them down, turn them off, put them away. You could take care of whatever tomorrow, right? And also realize that when that phone rings and it's at the table and you answer it, that's saying to your spouse or your whole family, every little ding on my phone is more important than you. So you have to guard against those things that distract you away from what's most important to you. And the last thing on that is date night. That's probably one of the things I regret the most, because I was very possessive of my children. And I had all three of my kids within five years. Very possessive of my kids. I really didn't like to leave them. I don't know if I thought something might happen to them when I wasn't around, or maybe it was a controlling thing. I literally was just possessive of my kids. And it's important to pay attention to that relationship with your spouse, because there's too many spouses that don't make it these days. And, go back to the first thing we talked about, awareness. When people are getting irritated with each other, when you're finding that you don't have things in common, when you're not spending time together, it starts to have some wear and tear on your relationship. So remember, take time. Whether it's every month or every couple of months. Dates don't always have to cost a lot. You can go to the park, and take a picnic lunch one day. there's a lot of things that you can do that don't cost a lot. We got a blow up canoe. Not canoe, Kayak. We got a blow up kayak summer, ah, or two ago. And so once in a while, there's a local lake and we'll go over and we'll kayak for about an hour. I think my husband does that just to make me

happy, because I like to do it. But that's something that we can do together. And guess what? We have to work together on that. I have a couple of YouTube videos where, one day when we went on our kayak, I realized, hm, I have my way of, rowing and he has his way of, M It's not working out so good together.

Fourth thing is being open minded about different ways to do things

Speaker A: Anyway, we have to talk about things in order to, work together. And the fourth thing is being open minded. You might not believe this, but some people are my way or the highway. How I do it is the only way to do it. Well, if you're thinking that it's just not true, how I've done it all my life, how my family did it. Guess what? There's more ways to do everything, and we all have so much more in common than we think we do. But when we're growing up, there's certain things we learn, and we think that's the only way to do it. Like, the other day, I was working on my computer, and I was having some technical difficulties, and I asked my husband to come over and help me. He's great helping me with those things, because I only ask when it's something I don't understand on the computer. So we had fixed that, and then we were looking at something else, and I started working and, clicking with the mouse, doing the different things. And he said, oh, no, that's not how you do. It's right over here. I'm like, I do it like this all the time. And so, literally, we witnessed two absolutely separate, different ways of doing the same thing. And that happens over and over in life, whether it's making a grilled cheese sandwich, how you put the butter on and how you toast your sandwich. M or it's how you parent one person, parents with a swift, pop to the bottom, and another one, parents with words and never pops the bottom. I kind of believe on the in between of that, a little bit of this and a little bit of that. But there's two ways of doing everything. I mean, sometimes there's three ways or four ways. And so it's always important to be open minded and to learn to think from the other person's point of view. Like, if I'm home with the kids and I'm getting a little bored, I do get a little bored. I need a little change in life. So sometimes I get a little bored. I'm home with the kids, and he's out at work. He comes home from work, he's tired. And maybe I don't think about all the stuff he's done at work or all the people he had to relate to or all the running around he had to do. And he's not thinking about the kids fussing and, feeding kids all day, and he's not thinking about me getting bored. Sometimes I simply get bored. So be open minded and realize that there's more

than one way to do things. Learn to think from the middle. Learn to look at, put on the shoes of the other person and see it from their side.

The fifth way to improve your marriage is give credit. Everybody has their strengths, everybody has their things

Speaker A: And the last thing today, and this is a great thing to be. The fifth. The fifth way to improve your marriage is give credit. Everybody has their strengths, everybody has their things. That they're, good with. Everybody has their place, they're helpful. And too often we get too focused on what irritates us, what bugs us, what they're not doing. And that's the words that are going around in our head, and we say that to ourself over and over. He never helps with this. He never does that. But what could he be saying about you? She didn't make dinner last night. I was hungry when I came in from work. She didn't do this, she didn't get my clothes washed. She didn't do this. That these days, both people work. And so it's important to work as a team. You have to sit down and think, what are you going to do? And what am I going to do? And then it's important to appreciate one another. It's important to appreciate one another. How do you feel when your spouse compliments you? Not just somebody. How do you feel when your spouse compliments you? How do you feel when, they respond to you affectionately and they have that twinkle in their eye like they really care? It makes a lot of difference, doesn't it? I like to be appreciated. How about you? So make sure that you use the power of words. You want to be aware of things that are challenging. You want to be aware of how you react. You want to be aware of your attitude and how you look at each situation. You want to be aware that you're spending time with your spouse. You want to be open minded and know that there's not only one way to do things, but another. Your spouse may know something and know how to do something, better than you, and it's important to appreciate one another. My mom used to always say, whenever she, said, never go out the door angry at somebody, never go out the door angry at somebody, because what if something happened to them and you never saw them again? And that really stuck in my head. I thought, no matter what's going on, even with my teenagers, I remember when my teens, one of my boys might be really bugged with me and I would not let him leave. I'm like, never let anyone, never let your spouse go out the door angry. Always learn to resolve whatever it is and never go to bed angry. Oh, my gosh. It's like, putting it in the oven and it baking all night.

Happy couples equal happier kids, Connie Durham says on extraordinary Marriage podcast

Speaker A: So what's most important to you? What's most important to you? I think that relationships are important because happy couples equal happier kids. And you may have kids or you may not, but many of us have kids. And when we're happy as a couple and we're meeting each other's needs and we're there for each other, we're appreciating, we're encouraging one another, then guess what? That pours over into your children, and you have happier, more confident, more well balanced children who will be able to make better choices in life. Five ways to improve your marriage all right, so that's all I've got for you today. Thank you for listening. I hope you'll share this podcast and subscribe, share it with your friends. Because you know what? If I want a happy marriage, I want all my friends to have happy marriage. And guess what? I have three married kids. Yes, I really want my children to have happy marriages. what is it my husband should say? Happy wife, happy life. Thanks for listening to the extraordinary Marriage podcast. If you've been encouraged today, please hit subscribe and help me spread the word. By sharing with your friends. You'll find show notes and how you can connect with today's guest@theextrordinarymarriage.com. Get ready to uncover the best kept secrets of happy, healthy marriages and gain the power of understanding how you and your spouse think, act and respond differently. Learn more about the unique communication secrets for marriage@theextrordinarymarriage.com. This is your host, Connie Durham, and I'll see you next week.