



GROWING YOUR MARRIAGE

The Marriage Almanac

August 2021

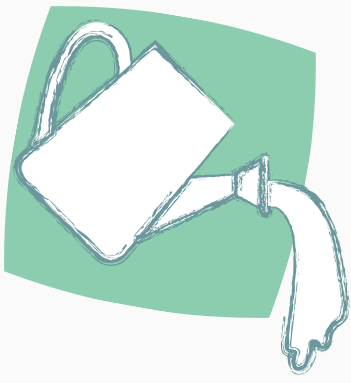


WATERING THE GARDEN OF YOUR MARRIAGE: T.H.I.N.K. BEFORE YOU SPEAK BY DORI GOMES

Growing up I spent copious amounts of time on my grandparent's farm. The farm was a place full of life and lifelong lessons. Much of what I learned about life I learned at the knee of my father and grandparents in the garden or in the fields. I recall Grams and Gramps likening their garden to their marriage. It took love, discipline, constant care, and attention to keep the plants happy, healthy and producing- just like a relationship.

When I would squabble with my sisters or cousins, Grams would gently say, "Are you watering your garden or drowning it?" She was asking if I was being gentle with my words or drowning others in my emotional words. I didn't give much thought to her sayings until she was no longer here. Little did I know the lessons she taught me as a child would be the very lessons I would need in my marriage.

Marriage grew me. While revealing beautiful aspects it also uncovered unbecoming qualities like pride and selfishness. I became increasingly aware of these ugly traits in conversations with my husband. My prideful and selfish assumptions slowly drowned our relationship. As it turns out, my advanced degrees in communication didn't exactly translate into a husband whisperer.



After an evening of going back and forth about the best way to handle a situation we were facing, our frustrations came to a head. In that moment, I heard Grams, **“Are you watering your garden or drowning it?”** I was drowning it in accusations and assumptions. I knew I needed to repent and talk to the Master Gardener about to how to best handle this situation and how to speak with my husband about it.

Jesus was a man of few words, yet he communicated precisely and effectively. His words were peppered with empathy, compassion, and direction while being holistic and honest. He asked questions that led people to the truth without making assumptions or offering judgmental commentary. He asked questions to gain clarity and understanding. In love, he communicated expectations, revealed concerns, and directed future actions.

If we want to know how something should be done, we only need to look to Him. Jesus was angry, yet he did not sin. He connected before he corrected. He spoke the truth without condemnation. He chose to believe the best of others, despite their past. He didn't walk away from hard conversations or dismiss those he didn't agree with. People left his presence feeling seen, heard, understood, validated, valued, and loved. Jesus appropriately watered the garden of His people's hearts.

Despite being betrayed, rejected, despised, whipped, mocked, and judged, Jesus never once responded in a hurtful, sinful, or resentful way. We have an option; we can say what feels good in the moment, tattooing our words of fury on the hearts of those we love, or we can be like Jesus and T.H.I.N.K. before we speak. Before uttering a word, ask yourself, is what I am about to say:

TRUE. HELPFUL. INSPIRING. NECESSARY. KIND.

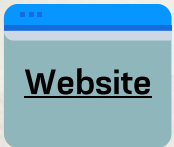
I learned that if it's not all five of these things, I must consider keeping it to myself or find a better way to say it. Our words will either help us grow together or grow apart. Jesus ensured his words challenged, encouraged, and loved others; may we also do the same. Let me ask you, are you watering the garden of your marriage or drowning it? Are you growing seeds of trust, understanding, and love in your marriage or seeds of bitterness, resentment, and pride?



FARM TO TABLE MARRIAGE EXPERIENCE

Growing Your Marriage Leaders will facilitate you and your spouse through a unique and fun experiential "date night" that culminates at the table with delicious food and rich conversation. The Farm to Table Marriage Experience will provide an opportunity for connection, reflection, and growth.

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FREE MARRIAGE WORKSHOP {Personality Differences in Marriage} Tuesday, September 7th, 2021 8:00-9:15 PM EST

Join Growing Your Marriage Leaders, Joe and Toni Rose, as they help unpack personality differences in marriage.

As you understand your spouse better you will find greater relational connection and satisfaction.

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