



## Episode 84: HELP YOUR MARRIAGE

This is the *Become an Unstoppable Woman* podcast with Lindsay Preston Episode 84, Help Your Marriage.

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Welcome to the *Become an Unstoppable Woman* podcast, the show for goal-getting, fear-facing women for kicking ass by creating change. I'm your host, Lindsay Preston. I'm a wife, mom of two, and a multi-certified life coach to women all over the world. I've lived through enough in life to know that easier doesn't always equate to better. We can't fear the fire, we must learn to become it. On this show, I'll teach you how to do just that. Join me as I challenge you to become even more of the strong, resilient, and powerful woman you were meant to be. Let's do this.

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Hey there, Ms. Unstoppable, so happy to have you for this episode today. We're talking about helping your marriage. Now, if you are not married, this episode still applies. It's really for any relationship that you are in, and this is for gay and straight couples. Welcome, everybody. I have a very, very special guest today, Kimberly Holmes. She is part founder, I believe, or she's the CEO of Marriage Helper. She is amazing.

This interview I recorded a few days ago at the time that I'm now recording this intro. I have had so many nuggets from it that have already been something that's helped me a lot in my marriage. Like in the past few days, since this interview, I just have a different outlook about my marriage. I have, yes, just so many different positive things came out of this interview for me. I'm hopeful it will come out for you too.

Let me tell you about Kimberly. As I said, she's the CEO of Marriage Helper and you just have to wait until she tells you her story as to how she got into marriage counseling. Anyways, she helps many people every single year with their marriages. Her company, Marriage Helper has a 77% success rate in saving marriages. She talks about how she works with her dad in Marriage Helper, which is a really cool story. She has a master's degree in psychology and she lives in Tennessee. She's been married for nine years, has two kids that she's adopted from India.



She just has a really cool story and gives so many amazing tips. Again, today, just sit back, get ready to listen, get ready to take all of these in. This may be one you come back to many times again when you're having a hard day in your marriage. Two, at the end, we talk about how you can work with Kimberly and her team at Marriage Helper. I know I'm really interested in doing one of their workshops now. She just, again, over-delivers in this episode.

I hope you enjoy it. I hope you learn a lot from it like I did. Without further ado, here is my interview with Kimberly Holmes. Hi, Kimberly.

Kimberly Holmes: Hi, Lindsay.

Lindsay: Hi.

Kimberly: Hi there.

Lindsay: So excited to have you. We haven't really talked about marriage a lot on my show and we're almost at like 90 episodes, Kimberly, so you are so welcome and so needed.

Kimberly: Wow, that's really exciting. That means you've talked about a whole lot of really great stuff though and now you're just to the--

Lindsay: [laughs] Because it is not my area of expertise at all.

Kimberly: Well, I appreciate people who know where the line is for them because a lot of people can do way more harm than good when they start speaking a lot of things they don't know.

Lindsay: I bet. I am curious before we get into all the questions of everything, how did you get into this?

Kimberly: Well, so there are two ways that ended up converging. I went to college and got my Bachelor's in Psychology, got my Master's in Psychology. Actually, I started getting my Master's in Marriage and Family Therapy. It was the middle of the way through that therapy degree that I also started working at Marriage Helper. I started working there because it was an organization that my dad had originally founded. I'll get to a little bit of that backstory in just a minute, but never thought I'd go work there. None of this was what I thought I would do.



In the middle of getting my Marriage and Family Therapy degree, my eyes were really opened to just how, for me, number one, I knew it wasn't my strong suit. Sitting in a room one-on-one with other people was something that was so draining to me and not life-giving. The second part of it was I in my work at Marriage Helper, I was seeing an amazing success rate. The workshops that we do, the ones that my dad had originally put together, they have a 77% success rate at saving marriages.

Then on the flip side, in my day job, so to say, I was sitting over at my school job, I was seeing that it was so hard to get any movement happen with couples. In fact, even according to the American Psychological Association, they say that the gold standard of marriage therapy, what they consider as a success is 30% of couples staying together, just 30%. I was seeing 77% over here in what I was doing with Marriage Helper. I really started to say, "I think this, I think I'm called to do more of spreading the word of how we can help more marriages on a larger scale over at Marriage Helper."

Now Marriage Helper had originally been founded. Like I said, my dad had founded it, but it came out of my parent's own story of my dad leaving my mom before I was born. They were divorced for three years. My two older sisters had to experience that. My dad would be the first to tell you that during those three years he did things he never thought he did, said things he never thought he'd say, went places he never thought he'd go.

At the end of that came to his senses and said, "I don't like the person I've become. This life that I thought I was going to have post-divorce is not the life that I thought it would be." He went back to my mom, everyone in her life told her to not take him back. "You can't trust him again. Why would you?" She said to herself, "I believe he's a good person who's done a bad thing," and so she took him back. She remarried him, even though they weren't necessarily in love at that time, but they had two children together.

After they got remarried, they almost divorced a second time, but they said, "We're going to make this work. We're going to figure it out," and so they did. From their remarriage, they ended up having me. I'm a product of their second marriage. There's a really deep passion in me of I owe my life to a marriage being restored. I'm very passionate about it.

Now in my own marriage, I've been married 10 years now. I know we've gone through our own ups and downs. There's a personal connection, not just with my family, but with my own marriage, and then with my education, that everything converged to give me the passion and direction and vision that I have now of that I believe change comes through the family, and changing the family comes through marriage. I want to see marriages saved and strengthened and better than the day they said I do.



Lindsay: Wow, what a story? [laughs] I love it. That's so much better than I could have imagined. That's so cool. How cool is that? I want to go back on something you just said is that change happens with the family, right? Tell me more what you mean by that?

Kimberly: Yes. If you just think, I'll take me as an example of me and my family, I have two young children, a five-year-old and a three-year-old and it is my responsibility as a mother, I don't think anything or anyone would argue this, as my husband's responsibility is the father, we get to teach them and train them up. We are the first people they see in the morning, the last people they see before we go to bed.

While yes, they go to school and they go to these other activities that they go to and teach them there and teach them all those good things, it is first and foremost, our responsibility. Even as young children, they are going to see the interaction between me and my husband. They're going to start formulating a story in their head of what a healthy relationship should look like.

Now, I don't want that to scare anyone because most people will stop there and say, "Oh gosh, this is why children end up in therapy when they're adults." [chuckles] It's not as scary as it sounds because children also need to see that their parents can work through conflict, that their parents are able to disagree and work through that. Children need to learn from their parents how to respect people who have different opinions. How to not be contemptuous towards or look down towards people who are not like them. We're seeing a lot of that in the world today.

If you even just start looking at how the family unit started breaking down really 50 years ago is when divorce started really being on the rise. You started seeing that disintegration. We see that there's this same parallel with the way that there's less respect in society. There's less seeing things from other people's point of view. This goes together.

I had on the podcast I had, I had a cultural psychologist Dr. David Matsumoto. He has done so much work in other cultures looking at how terrorist groups start. Now, this is all going to come back together. He said, "What they have seen in these other cultures is that it is from the home unit that these other people are taught how to hate. It starts there." I asked him, I said, "Well, how is it going to change?" He said, "The only way it can change is beginning in the home. The only way it can change for people to start loving each other and treating others with respect starts within the home."

When he said that, for me, a light bulb went off of this isn't just something that's overseas. This is something that is here now, where we have that opportunity to not only instill it in



our children, which is the best opportunity but to also change the communication we're having and the relationships we have inside of our home.

With my husband and I, if I have a feeling of moral superiority to him, if I feel like I'm better than him, if I wish he did things differently, then that is going to trickle down into every other thing that happens inside of my home. If I can begin to change that way that I interact with my spouse and respect him and love him and have the conflict, but also work through it even if we don't come to an agreement, the same agreement together, at least learn how to respect each other in that.

Then that is where children begin to learn to do that differently. We do that differently at work when we have that inside of our home. I could go even further on how this goes with attachment theory, but I'm word vomiting. I just have to stop talking so much. Yes, that's what I meant by change happens inside the home.

Lindsay: Oh my gosh. My mind is already like, "Here are some areas of improvement for you, Lindsay." Let's talk deeper than about marriage because I have so many questions for you and from my community. The one thing when I asked my community, and this is one I have myself and I think so many people have is obviously when you meet your partner, you fall in love, usually, you've got the romance there and the passion, and then it dwindles over time. How can you keep that attraction and that romance up?

Kimberly: Well, let's go back to the attraction or the feelings that we continue to compare our marriage to, or our relationship to, as it continues. The majority of people, the feelings that you have in those beginning stages of your relationship are unmatched over time. Here's what I mean by that. There's actually this term called limerence. It began back in the 1970s. Some different anthropologists and sociologists began looking at this phenomenon that would happen when people would have this feeling that they would call "feeling madly in love." They started to quantify that.

What does it mean when people say that? It's typically people when they're at the beginning stages of a relationship, and there are these heightened levels of chemicals in our body. There's an increase of serotonin, a decrease of dopamine, increase of oxytocin. All of these things are happening, which is sending our brain a flutter. It's a concept that came to be known as limerence.

It's similar to, it's not exactly the same, but it's similar to a person who is in the middle of an addiction because of the way that it still works with those chemicals in our body, it's like we're chasing that high. We want that high to continue. The way we feel, those



butterflies in our stomach, all of those things, it's that excitement of the new relationship. This is a good and healthy thing to happen when two people are single and good for each other. This is how a lot of relationships start. Those really strong feelings.

Well, it's also a biological part of us that can get us to be attracted and to start a relationship and to start those feelings of wanting to procreate and things like that. There's an evolutionary aspect to it. Over time, even if you look at the biology of it, we cannot continue to have those feelings of being madly in love and still be a productive person in society.

I remember when my husband and I first started dating, all I wanted to do was be with him, talk to him, think about him. It's actually said that when people are in limerence, those beginning stages of feeling in love, 85% of their thoughts are dedicated towards the limerent object. Well, you can't do that in your whole life. We would all stop working, the economy would fail, all of that would happen. It's actually meant kind of as something that glues you to someone and gives you that initial start you need in order to create a strong foundation going forward.

The downside of this is that as our relationship should continue to move forward, so my husband's name is Rob, we had those feelings in the beginning, we get married, the first couple of months are like that and then over time, real-life sets in. Well, then in my mind, I'm comparing it to the first 10 months of our relationship. We've been married 10 years now. It doesn't look today.

The feelings are not the same as it was the day we started dating or even on month 10 that we started dating. That's not a bad thing because what has instead occurred in our relationship is we've built commitment, we've built a deep intimacy with each other, where we know more about each other now than we knew then, we have gone through more together, historically in our relationship than we had back then.

What we've ended up replacing that with is a deep lifelong satisfaction that still needs to be worked on. It's not just because it's there, it's always there, but I believe we do a disservice to ourselves when we're trying to catch that first feeling. That is what can open people up to affairs and doing things that chase that feeling, which end up hurting their current relationship and honestly, end up hurting their future because if you're just continuing to chase that high, then you're giving up a lifelong relationship. You can't have both.



Now, that's not to say that you can't have deep feelings of romance and intimacy in a lifelong relationship. You can, but it's the expectation that you bring into it of how it's going to feel and what it's going to look like that will end up making the difference. At year 10, year 20, year 30, it might not be those butterfly feelings.

Instead, my husband and I, what we should be working on is saying, "What is it that you still need to feel romantically pursued? What is it that you still need or that you would like in order to feel like we have really great intimacy between us?" If you have that open conversation and communication with each other, and you give and take, then it can continue those feelings of romance no matter how long.

Lindsay: Yes, so good. That's the next question I have. It comes from my community is how do you let go of expectations and still feel passionate about it? [laughs]

Kimberly: That's hard. That's really hard, I constantly have to check my own expectations. Part of this is there's expectations that we get from our childhood experiences from either what we saw with our parents, brothers, whatever it might be, we've seen something and therefore we have expectations or we've seen something we don't want to happen and therefore, our expectations are coming from that.

A lot of times we don't maybe consciously realize what some of these expectations are until we're met with the feeling of frustration or those feelings of unmet expectations. Identifying what your expectations are and asking yourself some questions can be helpful, but you also have to realize it may not be that you realize what they are until you're in the moment. Going back to what your original question was, so how do we identify them?

One of the things I've had to do, and this may sound cheesy and it also may sound really cliché, but I've even had to get down to thinking about the people I follow on social media. I've been on social media for two months now, I've been taking a break and it's been amazing. When I was really active on social media, there were people that I had to realize if I had a certain feeling about my own relationship when I saw their posts.

If I'm watching a movie and I have a certain feeling that's making me start to doubt or be angry at my husband when before watching it, there wasn't a doubt there but because of what I'm consuming, whatever it might be, in a book, on TV, on social media, then, for me, I've had to disengage.

Some people might look at that and say, "Well, you're weak or that's ridiculous." Sure, but I would rather just not have the temptation because everything else is going to try and ruin





my relationship. The world is going to try and put things in my way to ruin my marriage. I don't need to voluntarily put stuff there that's going to make it harder than it is on top of that. For me, I have had to disengage from that.

If there's people in your life who are constantly saying negative things about their husband, and it's making you start to wonder more about, "Well, maybe that's a problem in my marriage." If you're getting more of that fear coming to you from what other people are saying, doing, or posting, then that might be a sign that you should just disconnect from those conversations or from seeing those things, that's one tangible way to do it. It's not necessarily easier, but just one way to really--

Another thing that you could do is to ask yourself if the expectations you do have are realistic. If they're not, then ask yourself, "Well, what is it?" We're not saying you should give up your happiness. You shouldn't just say, "Well, I'm going to be stuck in an unhappy marriage just because this is my lot in life."

No, we should work on trying to make it better, but maybe ask yourself if your expectations are realistic and ask yourself how to bring them down to move towards them and meet them so that you won't always be dissatisfied with everything happening in the relationship. Does that answer your question?

Lindsay: Yes, but then my next question is how do you know when your expectations are too high? We go back to the whole movie thing. We see all these movies of here's how it's going to be. Then you see some people that are like, "Oh, we have that." Then you look at your own marriage and you're like, "Well, we don't really have that anymore. Is that bad?" When do we know?

When you said earlier of building up a happy marriage, again, what's that line? I'm sure everybody's is different, but what determines a happier marriage versus not? I get it from a lot of people, from my clients and my community. It's like, "We're kind of like roommates and we're good friends and we love each other, but where do we go from here?"

Kimberly: One of the things that we've done at Marriage Helper is we've actually found that there's a process to falling in love, and we call it the love path. In this explanation, I'm going to try and bring some light to the question. I don't know that I have the right answer to your question, but let's talk through it and see what we'll come to together. In this process, there's four stages.





The first step or stage of falling in love starts with attraction. This isn't just how you look, but there's actually four aspects of attraction. There's the physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual. We call them the PIES. In these PIES, these are four ways that you can continue to work on becoming the most attractive you can be, first and foremost for you, and then the secondary benefit is because it continues to keep your relationship attractive. It continues to keep your spouse attracted towards you. That's the first step.

Always important, no matter how old you are, no matter how long you've been in a relationship attraction continues to be important. The second step is acceptance. Just because I'm attracted to someone, doesn't mean that I actually want to continue in a relationship with them. Think back to when you were dating.

I know there were plenty of people I was super attracted to and then as soon as they opened their mouth, I was like, "Oh gosh, no, don't think I could marry someone who has the IQ of a carrot," but really nice to look at, but that's not something that's going to keep our relationship moving forward. There comes a point where you have to start accepting, is this someone I want to be with, faults and all? Is this someone I'm going to accept and want to continue a relationship with? That's step two.

Step three is attachment. This is what we were talking about a little bit earlier in regards to that limerence and when the limerence fades, what comes in its place? It's this attachment. It's building this lifelong connection with each other that goes deeper than most other relationships in your life. It's something that will stand the test of time, weather the storms that come, all of those things. This is attachment.

The fourth step is aspirations. Now most couples don't get to the fourth step because of what you just said. Well, the underlying of what you didn't say is life has taken them apart. Whether it is kids have ended up maybe taking the focus of one person and not the other, work has maybe taken the focus of one or both of them, something in their lives have started tearing them apart.

This typically happens earlier in our marriage than we would probably think because when we're dating, we're both looking towards having that aspiration or that shared vision of getting married or getting engaged. Once we're engaged, we're looking towards the wedding day. Once we get married, we're looking towards the kids or our first house or whatever it is. Then after those firsts come and go, we're left with, "Well, what's next?"

Then we get bored and then we don't have anything we're working towards together, and we lose connection. We stop having the date night. We stop having the energy to connect



with each other after work. These are the things that begin happening, and then one day we wake up and say, "I feel like we're just roommates. We've lost that passion. We've lost that happiness." You asked how do you know when, how do you know what a happy marriage is?

I think that answer is going to be different for different people and even different based on where they are in the stage of their life, in their marriage. This is actually a question we ask at the beginning of the workshops that we do, that I talked about, that have that 77% success rate. At day one, we asked, "How would you define a happy marriage?" Everyone has a different answer. Some people say where we're able to go and have adventures together, some say trust, some say having that romance that spark, some people say, when I know we're a partnership and we're equals together.

I think it depends on what each person needs in each stage of their life as to what they would define what a happy marriage is. Now, I guess this is going to get us into expectations in just a minute. If I am in a situation where I feel like my spouse isn't supporting me. I'm the work person at my house, my husband is a stay-at-home dad and I'm the working mom.

This isn't the case for us, but if I felt like he was not supportive of me being a working mother, then happiness for me I would say that I need more support. I need more help from him around the house. That is what's going to make me feel like we have a happy marriage right now because it's my current need.

If my expectations were that I expect him to do absolutely everything perfectly, flawlessly without me having to say what my needs are or what my wants are, then I would say those are unrealistic expectations because still to this day, even just last week, we had the conversation where I said, "I need more help around the house." He said, "Well, just ask me." I literally said that. I said, "I did two months ago." [laughs] He said, "Okay. Yes, but keep asking me."

For him, it's not a huge deal for me to say, "Hey, can you get the laundry today." For me, I'm like, "I said it two months ago, he should know." Well, that's probably an unrealistic expectation. I was working with a couple, this was several years ago where her happy right now, what she needed to feel that happiness was she wanted more of that romance.

She wanted to feel like she was pursued by her husband. He would start putting into his phone certain days of the month that he would put in his calendar, send flowers. Here's



the thing now, when she found out that he was scheduling it, she got pissed and said it didn't count. Now I would ask you, is that an unrealistic expectation?

Lindsay: For me, I would love that.

Kimberly: Right?

Lindsay: Yes. I'd be like, "How smart." [laughs]

Kimberly: Exactly. Her expectation that he should just think of it in the moment and that is what counts as it being her feeling pursued, that's unrealistic because now she's expecting him to be a mind reader. She's expecting him to-- when she hasn't done her part. Maybe the answer to this of how do you know if your expectations are unrealistic is even to ask, have you communicated what your expectations are to your spouse? The ones that you're aware of and even just starting there. I think the majority of us would say to some extent we haven't communicated them.

Lindsay: It goes back to what you said is even when we do communicate it, because the one of helping around the house relates so much to my marriage, my husband actually says that to me all the time like, "Do the dishes, do the dishes during the day," and I just keep forgetting. Then he makes it mean like I'm disrespectful or something. I keep telling him like, "Just keep reminding me. I'm really just trying to build this habit." It's like he takes it something so much deeper than that versus it just being as what it is.

Again, here's what I hear. We all need to define what is a happy marriage, what does that mean to us? Then from there, maybe build out some of the details of that of like, if this is what a happy marriage is, then we're doing this and we're doing this and we're doing that and you're doing this for me and that kind of thing. Right, Kimberly? Am I following this?

Kimberly: Yes, you are following this.

Lindsay: I'm okay?

Kimberly: You are.

Lindsay: Then you communicate it with your spouse and then say, "How can we get this done?"

Kimberly: Yes. One thing to be conscious of during this process is we don't want it to come across like here is my bullet list of things that you have to do for me to love you because



that is not going to go over well. I think it needs to be more conversational. If it can, then here's what I've sat down and talked about or thought about, and here's what I've written out, and here's exactly what I need you to do.

Instead of making it, "Hey, I want us to have an even better marriage. What would a happy marriage look like to you right now? How would you describe a happy marriage?" Asking your spouse that, and then answering that to yourself. I've been thinking about it and here's what I think it is, how could we work to make that happen so that you're doing it more as a team and not as, here's what I decided your chore list is? You're right. That is the process, but how can we do it in a way that, that brings us together and brings conversation that's going to be a better result of it?

In it, also remembering, what are the things that my spouse is doing now that I do appreciate and that I do love? This is something I have to come back to all the time, partly because of the line of work I'm in and I see so much heartbreak and the hard things happening in marriage that I can over-analyze my own.

I'm like, "Oh, my gosh, I can't let this happen. Let me add this to my list of things to not let happen in my marriage." I can be so focused on those things that I miss, I love that my husband sat and read for 30 minutes with my daughter today. I love that we cuddled for 20 minutes before bed. Just those little things that we can really miss if all we're focusing on is what I want to be different.

Lindsay: Yes. Anybody out there who's listening who's a client of mine, we do things called wins and gratitude and all that, like pretty general psychology kind of stuff. In essence, it's like, what were the wins yesterday in my marriage? What am I grateful for in my marriage, because our brain is always just going to go the negative and what needs to be fixed and the next problem and all that.

For them, I have them just doing their own work for their own wins, but to apply it to their marriage again is like, "Let me think about specifically my marriage and what's going well." I love how you said the conversation piece. Again, with my clients, it's I'm working with them and what they need to do, but really, this is a two-parter. They need to make it very conversational. I can't come across as here's my list. [laughs] It's very jarring. My husband does it sometimes. I'm like, wow, [laughs] and I do it to him.

Kimberly: It sounds like I'm much like your husband, and you're probably more like my husband. [laughs] I would be the one in my marriage that would be like, "Here's the



things." Rob would be like, "Do you not appreciate anything I do? Do you not see all of the other things I'm doing?"

[laughter]

Lindsay: Yes.

Kimberly: Totally you. I appreciate your perspective right now. Yes, 100%. Yes, we do need to bring them into it.

Lindsay: The next lesson I have, and this is a big one in the community. This one might be the one we end with, is how do we know when it's like, we need to leave, like it's crossed that line? Of course, everyone's going to have their different, but I'd love your take on it.

Kimberly: Follow up question. Are you talking about for any relationship or for a marriage?

Lindsay: Let's do both.

Kimberly: I'll start with the marriage. I believe that a marriage is over when one of three things has happened. Number one, if you have gotten divorced and your ex-spouse has gotten remarried. If they're in a new marriage relationship, then I believe you should stop fighting to save this one. This next one is going to sound maybe a little ridiculous, but if your spouse has passed on or died, then you need to move on and let go of that marriage.

The third one is, if you have a spouse who is engaged in a destructive behavior, and will not stop that behavior, then you need to consider protecting yourself first. Let me say that. You always need to protect yourself first, and you may want to consider ending the relationship. I'm very careful to not tell people when to divorce because I believe that should come from the person. There are way too many people in the professional space, therapists, counselors, pastors, all these people who are quick to say, "There's no hope for your marriage, and it's time to divorce."

Those are the people we get and still see the marriage saved 77% of the time. I believe that there's more hope than people realize for most marriages. The ones where it's the most difficult is the last one I said. If there's a person who is engaged in a destructive behavior, and this could be it's a physically destructive behavior towards themselves or towards other people, you need to get safe. Always get safe, you can worry about fixing your relationship later, get safe.



It could be, if it's an emotionally destructive behavior, where it really is you are being emotionally abused, it's toxic, you cannot mentally stay in that environment, get safe. That still doesn't necessarily mean the marriage has to be over unless you feel peace about the marriage being over. If the person won't stop those destructive behaviors, then that's not on you and you need to do what you can to get safe. That is my answer in terms of a marriage.

The reason I have a different answer, whether regarding if they're dating versus married is because I do believe in marriage. I believe in what marriage does for the family. I believe in what it does for the economy. I believe that when people can work through difficult things and stay together, that their relationship will be better long term. We've seen it happen.

I have personally known people who have their spouse has been involved in an affair, they've had an affair, they've gotten pregnant by another person, their spouse has gotten another person pregnant, there's been alcoholism, but they were able to fix it. All of those things, I've still seen the marriage be saved. I don't believe there's any one thing that a person could do that's necessarily unforgivable. I believe that most things, forgiveness can happen and restoration of the relationship is possible and there's an even stronger marriage waiting on the other side.

For any given relationship, if you're dating someone and someone while you're dating is engaging in behaviors that you're saying, "I don't know about this. They're constantly lying. They've already cheated on me." Well, then at that point, if you've been dating a couple of months or even just a couple of years, then you might want to ask yourself, "Is this something that I see happening, staying together long term? Do I want to keep putting myself through this now when maybe this isn't even a good long term relationship for me?"

If you're single and dating, you have a much easier time making that decision, as opposed to once you've been married and you have life together, you have kids, you have finances intertwined, you have family shared friends, all of your things become shared. The decision becomes more complex once you have been married. Does that make sense?

Lindsay: Yes. I want to go back to what you said of destructive behavior. Obviously, physical, any kind of abuse really, is that what you would define as destructive behavior?

Kimberly: Yes.



Lindsay: What about addiction?

Kimberly: What did you say?

Lindsay: addiction.

Kimberly: I would consider most addictions, I say most because I'm just trying to think, is there any that I wouldn't consider destructive? Gambling, I would consider an addiction, and I would also consider that a destructive behavior if the person is spending all of the money, it's affecting the way that you're having to live, it's affecting your own sense of security and stability, then that's still a destructive behavior.

Even if it is alcoholism and they won't stop it, even if it's not necessarily affecting you because they're out about when they do it and you don't have kids or anything like that, you still have to consider, they're destroying themselves. If they're drinking that much and won't stop, is it a destructive behavior that they can ever get--

Some people could argue here, what about if they're addicted to work, or what if they're addicted to their phone? In this century, there's a lot more things that are addiction, because of the way that they're made and the way that we engage with them. It can become a little bit harder to say, would any addiction be a destructive behavior, and should someone leave their spouse or a relationship because the person is involved in an addiction? This becomes so hard.

There's also a side to argue of it, which is if a person is stuck in an addiction, then what's going on in their brain is more than they can have the choice to control. Is there something to say about a person who still can unconditionally love someone, even when they're going through the middle of that really hard time? Yes. Does that mean that they have to sacrifice themselves for that? No. I think that there is a line there. I think it's different for every person because I think people can handle different amounts of this in different ways.

I know a woman who has been standing by her husband who's had a pretty bad alcohol addiction for 40 years, but she had the ability to do that. It's not bad if there's someone who's saying, "My spouse is an addict and I can't handle it. I can't do all of this." I think you can still love them and draw a line, set a boundary, protect yourself, and want the best for them, but also begin to move forward with your life and allow that person to try and find healing. Then if healing does occur, maybe at that point is when you restore the relationship.





It's so nuanced and there's so many different situations. It's hard to say a blanket statement, but the bottom line of it, I think destructive behavior, if you as a person are feeling like perhaps your spouse is involved in a destructive behavior, then I would gain insight from a non-biased third-party first because a family member or a friend is going to be biased towards whatever you say.

I would probably try and get some outside counsel to say, "Is this actually something that is that destructive?" Even if you don't do that part, if you are feeling like you are physically or mentally or emotionally hurting and being hurt by what is happening, then consider setting boundaries to protect yourself. You can still love the other person while that happens, but always protect yourself first.

Lindsay: Obviously, that's extreme circumstances, but I wanted to go there because I think some of my clients they have husbands that drink a lot and things of that sort. It's like, "At what point is this too much?"

Kimberly: Another side of this is if your spouse is drinking too much or playing video games too much or spending too much money, if there's something happening, then it's a warning sign that your spouse is going through pain of some kind because most of the time when we engage in an addictive type of behavior, it's because we are looking for peace inside. That's where we're wanting something that can make us stop thinking about the hurt or the pain or the anxiety that the outside world is putting in us.

It could even just be asking your spouse what's going on? Where are you hurting? What's hurting you? What has happened in your life? Again, your spouse may not be able to answer that right now. They might be caught off-guard. They may not want to answer it. You may not always get that answer the first time, but being a listening ear over a period of time to hear where is this coming from may provide the empathy and perspective that you need to understand, okay, is my spouse a good person who's doing a bad thing or are they a bad person who's doing a bad thing right now?

Most of the time, our spouses are good people who are doing a bad thing with things like addiction or affairs or anything like that. When that's the case, I believe they deserve to be rescued. Now, that doesn't mean we lay ourselves down and become a doormat in order to try and make our relationships work, there's ways to do it. That's everything we teach at Marriage Helper, but it doesn't always have to be this is the end. There are a lot of things you can do before ever having to considered ending it, but without hurting yourself.



Lindsay: Let's talk about Marriage Helper. How does that process work? Do you guys work with people all around the world?

Kimberly: We do. Yes. We have international people contacting us all the time. I think we've worked with tons of different countries. We have three different main things that we do. We have our workshops that I've already talked about which are three-day workshops and we call them our Turnaround Weekends. They are amazing.

We have them about every other weekend. Right now, all of them are happening online. Before they were all in Nashville, Tennessee. Going forward, we'll probably do a hybrid of in-person and online. Those are just the Turnaround Weekends. The couples that come to that, a lot of them bring their spouse who they're on the brink of divorce. They're only there to get divorce papers signed. Of course, we have couples who come just because they need enrichment because they're looking for a spark back in their marriage. We have a ton of different types of couples come.

Those are our three-day workshops. Then we have online courses. Our online courses are go at your own pace. We teach you the research-based and proven material that works in this situation. The two main ones that we have right now, we have one called the Save My Marriage course for the one spouse who was looking to save their marriage even if the other spouse wants out. Then we have one called Exploring Reconciliation.

After you've gone through a crisis in your marriage and you're trying to put your marriage back together, this is the framework that you can go through to reconcile the best way possible. Those are our main courses. Then our coaching that we do. Our coaching is done over phone or over Skype and anywhere in the world.

Our coaches are all Marriage Helper certified to help you think about moving forward in your relationship while implementing the marriage principles that we teach. Those are the three main things that we do. You can find more about us on YouTube or on our website. You can go to [youtube.com/Marriage Helper](https://www.youtube.com/MarriageHelper). We have tons of free videos and then [marriagehelper.com](https://www.marriagehelper.com). You can see our free mini-course that we have in all of the good things there as well.

Lindsay: You have a podcast, right?

Kimberly: I do have a podcast. When I mentioned that love path and how falling in love is a process and the process starts with attraction. My podcast is called *It Starts With Attraction*. Every week we're talking about how you can do something, whether it's



physically, intellectually, emotionally, or spiritually to become a more attractive person. Every week there's a new thing that we're talking about. Lots of goodies there. I love my podcast.

Lindsay: Oh my gosh. I can't wait to listen. I didn't know you had one. So fun.

Kimberly: You'll love it.

Lindsay: Oh, my gosh. I feel like you dropped so much goodness today. My mind is already spinning. I can think of so many people who are listening to this whose minds are spinning about what to do next.

Kimberly: Well, good. I appreciate that. Anything we can do to help absolutely, I would love to be able to. I think the question a lot of people ask themselves is, "Is there hope?" The encouragement that I would leave with your listeners is to say that there is always hope. That doesn't necessarily mean that it's going to end up the way you might think that it will, but there's always hope for whatever situation that you're going through. We believe that we can help you find that hope.

Lindsay: Awesome. Thank you, Kimberly.

Kimberly: Thank you, Lindsay. It was great.

[music]

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In my nine-month simple success coaching system, I am going to walk you every single step of the way to ensure that you get the goals and dreams that you want. The first step is to apply for a free 60-minute consult call. Just go to [LindsayEpreston.com/apply](https://LindsayEpreston.com/apply) to get started. As always, my friend, remember, you're only as unstoppable as you believe you can be, so believe in yourself. You got this.