

Speaker 1: [00:00:02](#) They always want to be looking at whatever negativity might exist in our relationship and asking ourselves, how am I responsible here? What could I do to improve our relationship and myself so that we have less conflict and my wife feels more taken care of?

Speaker 1: [00:00:20](#) Alright, front row dads, welcome back. Today we are going to be focusing on marriage and whatever else comes up on the show, but my guest today is more for towel and we're going to dig into marriage with this man in just a moment and I'm grateful that he's on the show. If you're new to this podcast, this is the show for family, men with businesses, not businessmen who happen to have families. And we are a group that focuses on parenting strategies and work life balance or we call it integration. We talk about marriage, we talk about health, we talk about all sorts of things that relate to family life. And if you've just found the show, I'm glad you're here and if you're back for more, well we've got a great guest for you today. More welcome to the show. Thank you. So let's first start off with some easy stuff.

Speaker 1: [00:01:06](#) Where are you today? I never bothered to ask. Where are you calling in from? My office in Baltimore. Okay, cool man. Is that where you grew up? No, I grew up in Philadelphia, but we've lived here for veterans teen years. Nice man. My wife and I spent 13 years in South Jersey and I love Philly. When did you leave? How long were you in Philly? I wasn't sure. I was born in Philly. I was raised in Philly. I went to college, went to Penn. Oh, nice school business. And um, and then I went to New York after I graduated. That's great man. You went to Wharton. That's awesome. My buddy Earl Kelly, you guys might be around the same age. He also went to Wharton. Good dude from the local area. Lots of good memories from Philly. What do you miss about that area? Well, I'm not far from there and I still have family there, so I, you know, returned periodically. I love Philly. I love South. Um, uh, you know the sound of the shore, right? My parents had a place in Margate, New Jersey and I go there periodically. And what do I love about it? Running up to the U a art museums.

Speaker 1: [00:02:07](#) There's a great restaurant in your old city. It might be in old city actually, but it's called high street on market. Have you ever been there? No. Oh man. When you go back please go eat at high street on market. It's like for me, one of my favorite restaurant experiences in the city. That's one of the things I missed about Philly was the food. It's just such a cool area. That's wonderful man. Well more. Tell us what it is that you do today. Cause I recognize that bios can be big and there's lots of

avenues. But as of this morning when you woke up, what is it that you're focused on? So I um, work with couples in marital crisis and I help them save their marriage. Yeah. Created a methodology called marriage fitness that I use to help them achieve that. And I do private phone sessions for they intensives.

Speaker 1: [00:02:56](#) And primarily most people join the marriage. Tell a bootcamp, which is a whole, you know, a whole program designed to help people walk, walk them through the steps of saving and reconciling their marriage. Yeah. I'm curious about the success rate. You know, where we're like, what the intention is when somebody goes, is it, Hey, you know, your thought is, and I'm not trying to save every marriage. In fact, sometimes marriages might need to dissolve. Like maybe somebody comes to you and to help figure out their shouldn't be married. Do you believe that or do you feel like every marriage should be saved? So in theory, I believe that there is a time and a place for people to get divorced. I don't think that people are responsible for being martyrs and for staying in a miserable marriage for their whole life. I'm not a marriage at all costs kind of guy.

Speaker 1: [00:03:45](#) There is and can be a time and a place for divorce. That's in theory, in practice. I have met very, very, very few people who have actually conducted themselves in what I consider to be a responsible way during the course of the marriage, such that they earn the right to exit with a clear conscience. In other words, most people who are looking to exit their marriage have not done what they should do before they take that path. They haven't tried what they should try. They haven't worked on their fixing, they haven't taken responsibility. Whatever. There's a whole sort of checklist of things that I think a person should do before they call it quits. It's not a toaster oven. It's not something we just, you know, dispose of or returned because, you know, because it's a, it's not working. Um, it's something that really warrants significant time, effort and energy.

Speaker 1: [00:04:44](#) Yeah. And that's part of what I do is teach and preach that message, which is you're not happy. Okay. That's not unusual. Let's talk about what you should do now that you're not happy before you exit. Yeah. On your homepage of your website, you say there's a few reasons why somebody would jump in, right. Cause you'll learn. And then here I'm going to read off some of the bullets, why marriage counseling fails, how to deal with I don't love you, how to forgive and be forgiven, how to reconnect with your spouse, how to get your spouse to change, how to rebuild broken trust, how to get over the past, how to avoid a separation, how to ruin their affair. I laughed at that one

and plus five marriage assessments. Now I've got to tell ya, I see a lot of sites and that one really was like one of the most compelling reasons to click that button and say yes, like those are really powerful statements. Now I'm curious, do you know which one or two of those gets people to click that button more than anything else? I don't know. Yeah. What would you guess? What do you think the most with all your work? They're all different ones are compelling for different people depending on their situation. Yeah. It's not like one wins over all religions.

Speaker 2: [00:05:58](#) Some people are hearing from their spouse, I love you but I'm not in love with you. Other people are dealing with infidelity. Of course when you're dealing with infidelity, you're also wondering how to rebuild trust. So some of the, some of them are sort of related to each other also. Yep. Um, but they're, they're, they're all pretty compelling depending on one situation. What is the percentage of couples that cheat? What are the percentages from men to women and women than men? It's very hard to answer the question because, um, surveys have been taken, but of course everybody lives because seaters don't answer the survey correctly. Right. But the people that have done the research trying to factor in the number of people that they think lie estimate that between 30 and 50% of men at some point in their marriage will become adulterers. Probably 20 to 40% of women.

Speaker 2: [00:06:57](#) Okay. And tell me what constitutes cheating in your mind or in the minds of maybe the people that you're working with. And the thing is, is like a legit question. When it comes to being in a marriage, it's like, is flirting, cheating is sending a cute ex? Or maybe it's like, maybe that's just to be determined by the couple. So that's a brilliant question because it's obvious that if you sleep with somebody, if you're physical incident with somebody, that that's a total betrayal on that. But, um, but I believe that, that you don't have to sleep with somebody to be unfaithful. There's such a thing as emotional infidelity. If I'm sharing with somebody in a private, you know, coffee or drink, setting the deepest hopes and dreams or fears of my life, that's very intimate. Yeah. And that shouldn't be very private between my wife and I.

Speaker 2: [00:07:51](#) And that would be a complete betrayal and I would consider that unfaithful. Is porn an issue? It's gotta be, it's huge. Yeah. That's really a terrible issue. What's your take on that? What's your thought on that? You know, as it effects the marriage. Cause some guys could be like, well, I'm just looking at porn, right? It's not hurting anybody. I'm not physically cheating. And I think there's a lot of easy justifications around that. I mean, I

don't even know the stats on porn, but it's gotta be huge. I've seen the Google search stats on porn. I know the industry, it's massive. What's your take on that? Huge problem? You know, it used to be that if you wanted to watch porn, it had to bear the consequences. The embarrassment of going downtown, buying a ticket, showing yourself in public, walking out of a place where you might be seen.

Speaker 2: [00:08:38](#) So you know the number of the percentage of people that were willing to take that risk was very small. Today, there's no risk of humiliation, right? Yeah. There's no risk of embarrassing. Well, there is a little bit, right? But it's not enough to get people to stop the risk of like one day your internet browsing history being opened up to the world. Like somebody is going to hack it and basically say, do you want to see anybody's lifetime browser history? Here it is. I shouldn't. Right. You're right. This is not that. There's no risk, but it's drug a different whole different ball game. You know, you don't have a Playboy subscription showing up in your door. You know, a, you really have total privacy. So as a result, it's become a gigantic problem. Yeah. And what's my, and for anybody who justifies that, you know, what's the big deal?

Speaker 2: [00:09:26](#) Uh, ask your wife if she thinks that's a good deal. That's a good point. I mean, would you say that if the wife says it's not a big deal, like yeah, go ahead. Like enjoy. No, I would not say that, but no, but ask your wife because most wives, you know, would be upset and feel betrayed. Right? Even if they wouldn't. What I tried to explain to people is worse than you're hurting your wife and your marriage is you're hurting yourself. When you expose yourself to that kind of imagery, the damage it does to your dignity and to your soul is worse than any damage it does to your wife and your marriage. And so the most important reason to refrain from such disgusting behavior is too protect and maintain your own character and dignity. I mentioned the impact that it has on, you know, your wife and your marriage.

Speaker 2: [00:10:22](#) And by the way, for those who say, Oh, it doesn't, you know, it doesn't affect my marriage. You have to appreciate there is a direct correlation between exclusivity and intimacy, right? Meaning the more exclusive something is, the more intimate it is. So for example, if you and I are buddies when we're nine years old and after school we'd go into the forest and we build a little tree house and we'd bring box games and we play, you know, tag. So as long as it's just the two of us sharing that, it'll be a very special experience. As soon as one of us goes to school and brings all the other friends to this private tree house. I've now, it's true, I will now have shared this with other people, but

I will have diluted the power and the specialist and the uniqueness of that experience between you and I.

Speaker 2: [00:11:11](#) yeah. So that's one of the consequences to using pornography is something that should be exclusive and unique and special and therefore intimate just between my wife and I becomes something that is not special, not unique, not exclusive, and therefore not nearly as intimate. So you're robbing yourself of the intimacy and the power of the sexual experience you could be experiencing with your wife. Yeah. Good points. What do you think about husbands and wives who choose to watch it together? Social contract does not determine the truth, right? It doesn't matter if we agreed to do something. If what we're agreeing to do is it will be just as damaging. What's damaging about it in your mind? I just explained there is a correlation between exclusivity and intimacy. Oh, it still applies. There is that and make that connection. Yeah, of course. Yeah. You're bringing other people, even though their images on a screen, nonetheless, you're bringing other people into an experience that's designed to be exclusive and intimate. Got it. So can I take a stab at the fact that you don't believe in polyamory?

Speaker 2: [00:12:27](#) Yeah. Okay. All right. I mean, I don't know. It's like, like you said, I'm not going to toss you all the questions. You get a million times a week, so I'm going to give you some tough ones here. More. Not going to go easy on you. All right, so fair enough. Let's talk about some of these bullet points that you shared because they really did get my attention. So now how to get your spouse to change. Do we really get our spouse to change or is that sort of speaking to the language of what somebody is feeling when they come to your website? Because I get, like I've said, how do I get my wife to change? But then I recognize that when I processed that I'm not going to get her to change. I'm going to change me. Who's changing in the situation? Right? So you know, people always say that, you know, I can only change me.

Speaker 2: [00:13:11](#) And usually when they say that what they're thinking is that I have no impact or influence on my spouse. It's like almost a dismissal of the impact that I can have with my spouse. And the truth, I think is a little bit more sophisticated. Like in other words, you have people that are thinking, I want to change my spouse and I'm going to persuade them and I'm going to convince them and here's how I'm going to get them to change. And all of their energy is directed. And then you have like their friends or their counselor or something come to them and say, no, forget about them. And you can't change them. You can only change yourself. And generally people like flip back and

forth between these two modes. And I think they're both, uh, sort of not be as sophisticated and understanding of how it really works in relationships.

Speaker 2: [00:13:58](#) The way it really works is yes, of course I can only change me. I can't change my wife. However, it's important to recognize the influence that I have on my wife might change. We can't be dismissive of the impact that might change has on my wife. Totally. A marriage is a system. Um, we, we, uh, my wife isn't just who she is. She also is who I am. In other words, when you're in a relationship, if I smile right now to you, you're much more likely to smile back at me. Yeah. If I give you a look, you know your energy is going to change, you know, and try it. Try it with friends, try it with a stranger on streets. You know, we don't appreciate generally the impact that we have on our whole family culture. You know, it used to be a hundred years ago, nobody would ever walk outside and shorts.

Speaker 2: [00:15:05](#) Why not? Because nobody did it today. We would have no problem walking outside in shorts because it's the culture. So there is a culture in our home. The difference is out in the world. I can't impact the fashion norms and mores of our society because I'm only one person and I'm not a fashion designer, but in my home, I'm the patriarch and there's only one other, you know, the matriarch. So the impact, the cultural impact I can have is unbelievable. I'll give you a quick personal example. We at home live by the ma. The mantra, we repeat it all the time. I repeat it to them. They repeat it to each other, always speak in a calm voice, always speak in a calm voice over and over again. We teach it, we tell stories about it. We demonstrated it's a value and it goes, not just, it's obvious that when you're angry, you shouldn't scream or yell.

Speaker 2: [00:16:10](#) But I'm not talking about this, that if it's time for dinner, we don't scream dead. It's not dignified. If somebody upstairs and you want to call them to dinner and knock on their door and say, it's time for dinner, why don't you join us? You know? And so that's the culture and assault. So what's my point? How do I tie this back in? Because in our home, when, when we make a mistake and somebody raises their voice, it's as if they stepped outside and shorts the a hundred years ago. It's like that, that doesn't belong here. Hmm. That's odd here. That doesn't fit in here that they wouldn't feel comfortable behaving that way and the, and they shouldn't that when they, by the way is sometimes me, it could be me cause my wife could be no one of my five kids, you know, it's just not how we do things here.

Speaker 2: [00:17:02](#) So two in a marriage, when we become a certain kind of person, we contribute significantly to the marital culture. And we basically tell our wife or husband, we tell them through our behavior or actions that this is how we behave here. This is, these are the norms, these are the mores, this is what the sort of the expectation is. People don't appreciate the impact that, that art, that our behavior has on the marital culture and whether or not a person feels comfortable behaving in the marriage in a certain way. So, you know, usually if we're being criticized, but we don't like them, we don't want them to criticize where they're screaming and we don't, they're doing it because we've allowed a marital culture blossom

Speaker 1: [00:17:50](#) such that they feel comfortable behaving that way in the marriage. Yeah. Very good man. Hey, I like that you've apparently thought this out. You're not new to this field, buddy. This is great. I like this a lot, man. Um, have you always spoken in at such a calm voice? Have you always been even healed that way? No. Okay. So how did you get that way? It's just one day big decision. That's it. Or how did you train? Because I'm fascinated by this because I'm definitely more, I'm much more emotional person. Yeah. My wife is Russian and I remember early on did her mom would be here and speaks no English and I'd be telling Tatyana something passionately and she's like, my mom thinks you're yelling at me. I'm like, no, I'm just really passionate about this. But her mom took it as I was yelling at her.

Speaker 1: [00:18:34](#) So I get the benefits of calm voice. I really would like us to improve in that area as a family. Yeah. Don't misunderstand it. Nothing. Balls, passion, energy. We have lots of passion. Lots of energy. When I say speak in a calm voice, I'm speaking about the opposite would be the ugly, angry, frustrated, right. High volume voice that, you know, we sometimes, you know, remind each other and share with our kids. Pardon the language. But you know, when, when when a person speaks and not in a calm voice, it's kind of like hoping on the living room floor. Yeah. Like it's just the real stench. Not typically, but emotionally and spiritually. Yeah. A real stench in the house. Yeah. Anyway, to answer your question, I'm headed I, so no, no personal, no authentic, real personal transformation happens overnight on a switch. The inspiration, it can happen overnight.

Speaker 1: [00:19:36](#) The inspiration can be like a switch, but the real work of character development, uh, takes time. Yeah, it's energy. So I don't know how to answer the question concisely. I consider it a lifelong journey. Good. Well it's great. I appreciate your tone and tempo. I do. And that's something that I'd like to work on a

bit in my life. Let me ask you a question. Hopefully you don't get asked a bunch, which is, how do you stay sharp now as a counselor and how do you keep everything fresh because you've been studying this for a long time, you work with a lot of people. How are you continuing to grow as, sorry, I just labeled you, which is probably not the appropriate label, but as a marriage expert, how do you continue to stay fresh in that field? How do you challenge yourself? Where are you going for information and learning and what's that look like? That's a great question. Uh, the first thing that comes to mind in that, for sure, the most important thing is my relationship with my wife. So practice what I preach. I consider myself, or I try to be like a live wire. I feel, I really deeply believe that I can't give you something that I don't have. And so

Speaker 2: [00:20:48](#) I have to prioritize my wife and my marriage and work on being a great husband day in and day out. Because my greatest, my greatest teaching is my example. And even though like on this podcast, you know, I'm just delivering words and in fact, you know, the words could be truncated from the reality of my life in theory. But in practice, I believe that there is a, an energy that emanates from every one of us that really speaks to who we are and that people can feel they can come up these sensitive. Um, and I, you know, the, the, the constant feedback that I get from people in the program is that, um, you know, they, they, they really resonate with my personal experience and example. Um, and that's part of what they're, you know, really appreciating about my guidance and my leadership. And so, so the first thing is that I just, you know, remind myself every day that, uh, I have to be a Livewire.

Speaker 2: [00:21:52](#) Um, and so that's number one. And then number two is, um, I try to do something that people are doing less than less and less of a, it gets more and more challenging and that is read, um, access to real. And you know, most of the reading people today do with headlines and just, I mean, I was commenting to somebody that, you know, you can't even go to like what is in theory a news sites like Fox news or yahoo.com and just like consume real news for five minutes just to be a knowledgeable person that was going on in the world, right? Not being bombarded with all these inappropriate images and all this trashy, stupid stuff that they want to call news. I mean, I was looking@yahoo.com the other day and half the stories literally half or either about sports or entertainment or something. Just stupid. You know, and, um, anyway, I got a little distracted there, but when I was, sorry, I, what I, what I mean to say is that I try passionate more passionate.

Speaker 2: [00:23:01](#) I spent time reading something real. Yeah. Deep, like the real wisdom literature of the agents. Can you give us an example of, yeah. What have you been reading lately? So I'm constantly reading, uh, Stephen Covey's seven habits of highly effective people, which is a no, just a phenomenal book. Um, you know, over the years I've read Plato, I've read Kirkwood guard, I read a lot of Jonathan sacks writings, who references a lot of the great thinkers of, you know, of the ages. Um, I'm constantly reading scripture. Um, uh, I listened to podcasts, um, uh, and, uh, I just tried to fill my mind and my heart and my soul with, with good information, useful information, inspiring information, clean information. Yeah. And the more I do that more, the more it keeps me, you know, directed, focused on my values and my mission. Do you have a GoTo podcast when you listen to more than others?

Speaker 2: [00:24:13](#) Um, I have a whole bunch of them. Uh, front row dads hadn't seen me. I listened to a couple of our old dads and I like it is your teaching faith-based? Interesting question. No, but you're guessing exactly. That's why it's an interesting question. I intentionally designed marriage fitness as a non-faith based marriage program because I wanted to reach everybody. I didn't want to pigeonhole my teachings in that way and I didn't want to exclude people that weren't God or faith oriented. And so, um, so generally the feedback I get from people that faith is that they didn't realize that the program was so faith oriented because they kind of feel the biblical principles emanating through my teachings. Uh, but the feedback I get from people that are not faith oriented is well, no feedback about it because I never mentioned, I rarely mentioned God or scripture or anything like that.

Speaker 2: [00:25:15](#) I, I just, I just speak about it in a non faith oriented language. Yep. Um, and that was, that was all by design and um, yes, I personally am a personal faith, um, but I don't bring that so much into my work unless really requested. How many of your decisions are you making based on your own personal intuition or how many have been principals that have been given to you by God, let's say? Or is that the same thing? Yeah, it's a good question. You're really, you're really forcing me to, uh, and it's okay. You're really forcing me to go into the, you know, the lesser requested. So yeah, I mentioned earlier that social contract does not determine the truth. Yeah. So it begs the question. So then what does the term in the truth [inaudible] like if we all agree that something is true, it doesn't mean that it is.

- Speaker 2: [00:26:10](#) We can all agree that we don't believe in gravity. We could start a website, get millions of followers, make great posters, and all March to the co the edge of the grand Canyon and in protest of gravity jump and what's going to happen? We're all gonna die, you know, because it really doesn't matter what we think. We don't get to determine the truth. The truth is the truth. Now our job is to try to understand it and to align our life with it. The better we understand it, the better we align our life with it. Uh, more peace and harmony and success we have. The more we either it or try to ignore it or claim that there is some other reality and try to live according to those things, then the more we've frustrated and suffer and have no negative consequences. So from a faith perspective, you know, we believe that God is the source of that truth.
- Speaker 3: [00:27:00](#) Yeah. Well, thanks for playing along.
- Speaker 2: [00:27:02](#) I said I'm not going to ask you the softball questions everybody else asks you, so I promise.
- Speaker 3: [00:27:10](#) Oh, that's cool. What's your big vision for this work? You know, if you fast forward and you're on your death bed looking back at your life and you've achieved what you set out to achieve, how will you know that you'll have been successful? What will that look like or feel like to you? What type of letters will you have received?
- Speaker 2: [00:27:26](#) Is there a numbers attached to that? How will you know? Is there a metric that probably should be, I mentioned that I went to the Wharton school of business, right? [inaudible] that's right. You're asking a real business oriented question. That's a great question. But the truth is that, you know, the work I'm doing is really coming from a very personal place. It's really coming from a very mission oriented place. I mean, yes, it's true. I have to make money and I have to support my family and I do make money and I do support my family, but it's not, you know, I'm not driven by metrics and numbers and I just don't run my idea. I just don't run my work in my life like that. Yeah. Um, you know, how will I know if I'm successful? Uh, I'll leave that for everybody else to decide.
- Speaker 2: [00:28:12](#) I just try to do the best I can every day. Yeah. My mantra or my mission is to be useful. Um, I don't think we're here to just consume the pleasures of clients. I think we're here to contribute, to serve, to be useful to others. And, um, I ask myself every day, you know, and every moment of every day am I doing what will make me useful to others before I accepted this invitation to come on this podcast. You know, I checked out

John and what is he doing and who is his audience and am I going to be useful, you know, go, what do I think I'm going to make a difference in this hour? Um, and uh, of course I had determined that I would and you're doing great work. So here I am. Thanks man. But that's the uh, you know, I, I it's not about metrics. Um, yeah. Everybody else can decide whether or not I'm succeeding. I just try to do the best I can every day.

Speaker 3: [00:29:07](#) What's up guys? Hey, I want to take a quick second to tell you about our next open enrollment for you to join the brotherhood. This happens twice a year and our next open enrollment is November 1st through the 15th. And you might be asking what is the brotherhood that's currently a group of about 120 high performing hard charging entrepreneurial men who've decided that they not only want to keep growing their business, but that it's more important to grow their life at home as a husband and as a father. Our group of men gets together and they have valuable discussions around five key areas of family life, thriving relationships, which is really your marriage. Intentional parenting is considered that education integrated living, which many would call a work life balance, emotional mastery, your self awareness and the awareness of your family, a consciousness, and then of course vibrant health for all.

Speaker 3: [00:29:53](#) A couple of times every month our members hop on a video chat. We have active conversations on the most important subjects relating to family life. Guys share their best ideas. They ask their most pressing questions. We cover all the ideas that help guys that are new families and guys that have teenagers that may be finishing high school. The conversations are real and raw. We challenge each other to grow. We have challenges throughout the year for our community. In fact, as I record this, we're just in the middle of one where we're doing something amazing for our wives every day for the month of September and we've created a space to have conversations that aren't happening anywhere else in our lives. You know, many of us have business masterminds that were a part of, but only a few have family masterminds that they're a part of. We even have a membership area where we host all the replays from our calls, which is accessible from an app so you can listen on the go while you're working out on a walk in the car, whatever you're doing.

Speaker 3: [00:30:44](#) We have small groups within the brotherhood called bands, usually four-ish guys per band, and we also have two retreats per year that are around 40 or 50 guys. You can see a few of the videos on our retreats and what a band is about. You can read about all of that [@frontrowdads.com](#) the brotherhood is

designed for men who wants to be family, men with businesses, not businessmen who happen to have families. It's designed for men with wisdom who are also wise enough to know that there is more to learn. And you know, one of the things we say in our brotherhood is it's not always about new, it's about true. It's about reminding yourself and others about the core principles that make it all work. This is for men who value the benefits of working on their business versus in their business and they understand that the same rules apply to our family.

Speaker 3: [00:31:32](#) Like I said, the next open enrollment is November 1st through the 15th. We'll be posting about this in our open Facebook group, which you can get to by going to [front row dads.com/facebook](https://frontrowdads.com/facebook) connect you right to the group and also we'll send out notifications through our weekly insights email. If you're not getting that, you can sign up for [that@frontrowdads.com](mailto:that@frontrowdads.com) guys, I just want to say this group isn't for everyone. We know that this is for high-performing hard charging entrepreneurial men who want to invest in their families like they would anything that's important in their lives. This is a unique community. There's nothing like it anywhere in the world. And uh, if it feels like it's the right brotherhood for you, then join us in November and I'll look forward to talking with you on a future call or meeting you at a future retreat.

Speaker 3: [00:32:13](#) My friend Chris hunt has a mantra everyday, which is used me and amazed me and uh, he's very faith based in his life and use me and amaze me somehow some way, right? Like put me to work today. He's a servant leader at the highest level, which is really cool. I love having him around in the front row family. Alright, so I run it a few tangents, but I just want to keep this, you know, I want to keep this interesting for everybody, including you and me and all the listeners. But let's get to a question that I've debated

Speaker 1: [00:32:39](#) and I'd be shocked if this was a common question, but maybe it is. I've really been wrestling with how much, I don't know what words to use, arguing pain, trouble. Like how much bad stuff in a home or in a marriage, in a marriage. [inaudible] okay. Because it's just normal life. It's like, Hey, things can be bad. No, marriage is perfect. You hear this all the time, right? No, marriage is perfect. People argue. People fight. People make up. That's actually good because if you're, I've even heard people say like, I grew up in a home where my parents never fought, and then all of a sudden I turned 18 and they got divorced and I was like, what happened? It was like they weren't even being real with me or that I never learned how to forgive because nobody ever fought and forgave in front of me.

Speaker 1: [00:33:22](#) I've heard these arguments, right? Even like if you take it to a health point of view, if a kid's never exposed to bacteria, right, then he'd can't strengthen his immune system. So eat a little dirt. So when my wife and I argue, or I fly off the handle, or I say something stupid, or I'm just acting like an idiot as a dad, which happens probably more often than I'd like, and I feel like I'm really working hard on myself. I feel like I'm a pretty grounded person. I'm a pretty good dude like at my heart. Right? But I still make mistakes. I still say and do dumb things and I look back and go, Oh man, like did I just ruin my kid's life? And I question in our marriage, how much of our fighting is a normal amount of fighting for a couple to have or are we just really out of whack? Like are we at the point where we're like, this is unhealthy. We're arguing way too much. I don't even know if he can answer that question cause you might say, I don't know what it's like to be in there. I don't know how much you're fighting. I don't know the answer, but it's, it's a genuine struggle. It's a question that I look at and ask is our level of arguing or pain or where we don't communicate well, normal and okay for our kids.

Speaker 2: [00:34:28](#) Yeah. So let's just, let's start, if you don't mind by sort of analyzing your question. Yeah. Because your question is a relative one. In other words, the way you're asking it is these are the level of arguing in our home normal. So normal is a function of everybody else. If normally half the population is getting divorced, it's probably not a good metric anyway. Exactly. That was part of my point is I think, I think it would be helpful. I mean I know, I know what you're getting at. Yeah. There's just an element to your question, which is the relativity that I think we could put aside and it would be, it would be just as good if not a better question. Yes. Let's, let's make it a better question. More healthy level of disagreement in hope. Yeah. So I think, so putting the relative piece aside, like in other words, who cares what's happening in everybody else's home?

Speaker 2: [00:35:16](#) Uh, what we care about is what's happening in your home. And um, and I would say two simple things. Number one is nobody's perfect. Everybody makes mistakes. Every relationship has stress and conflict. Um, in a sense, the closer you are to somebody, the more likely you are to step on their, and that's why conflict and argument is, is common in, you know, in close good relationships. You mentioned your friend who said, you know, my, my parents never argued. I never saw them argue. Well that's a real red flag for me when I'm speaking to somebody and they tell me, you know what, I don't know what happens. Like, you know, he, she just decided they were done. Doesn't make sense to me. We never argued for 20 years. Right.

They're interpreting that very differently than I do. My interpretation of that is you never argued for 20 years that that's why you're getting divorced.

- Speaker 2: [00:36:13](#) That there's a bigger story there. So exactly to connect all those debts, but let's not go there for right now. But anyway, the point is that, you know, conflict, uh, arguments, um, it's normal. Uh, it's going to happen. There is going to be an element of it and that's an important thing to appreciate and realize because if you have these expectations that your relationship is going to be always like it was on your first date, so those expectations are going to destroy your marriage. Cause that's just completely unrealistic. Right? Um, so that's on the one hand. And then on the other hand, no matter how much, uh, arguments or conflict we have, no matter how normal or unavoidable it might be, we always want to be introspective. We always want to be looking at whatever negativity might exist in our relationship and asking ourselves, well, it's my part of this.
- Speaker 2: [00:37:14](#) How am I responsible here? What could I do to improve our relationship and myself so that we have less arguments and less conflict and my wife feels more taken care of. So it's a, it's canny, right? You're probably familiar with canny constant and never ending improvement. Yeah, of course. You know, and you and you, you're never gonna get there. You never get to a place in a good marriage where there's no conflict and no argument. But you always want to look at the conflict and argument that does exist, even though it might be somewhat normal and find out, you know, what's my contribution to this and how can there be less? Yeah.
- Speaker 1: [00:37:49](#) You have any advice for a couple where one of them wants to go to counseling and the other one doesn't. And whether it's man or a woman on either side, but one of them totally buys in and the other one's like, that's a waste of money and time.
- Speaker 2: [00:37:59](#) Well, who am I giving the advice to? The one who wants to counselors, the one who doesn't,
- Speaker 1: [00:38:05](#) well, either could be listening. So why don't you give advice to either side?
- Speaker 2: [00:38:09](#) So first of all, to the couple I would say, and I do say this to couples, sometimes people come to me premarital li, uh, my son actually got married just a year ago. Okay. And before he got married, I sat down with him and his fiance, uh, had a few sessions with them and discuss some sort of fundamental, you know, principles that I thought could help them. And one of the

things that I facilitated between the two of them was a discussion about how, if either of you ever request of the other, that you go see a professional for the benefit of your family. That I want you to agree here and now I'd like you to consider agreeing here. Now that you are, you, you, you are ready to go. There's no such thing as saying no to that you, you have to, you have to agree.

Speaker 2: [00:39:06](#) And of course, my son had heard this for many, many years. Uh, so he was, you know, on board, uh, and she was on board to, you know, they agreed. Okay. If anytime in the future, either of us ever request the other, we'll comply. I want you to know that if she heads had hesitated or disagreed with it, I would have encouraged him to call off the wedding. Not that he ever would have, not that she met. I had no doubt that she would agree. She's an amazing woman. But, um, but I think to couples that are in the process of getting married, ask that question to your fiancé. Get a commitment now then if you ever need, want to speak to somebody in the future that they will go and if they hesitate or don't agree, run, don't talk. Run. Because that's a sign of arrogance. Yeah. And arrogance destroys relationships. And for those who've already said yes, those that said, yes, I'll go to counseling.

Speaker 2: [00:40:13](#) They said I do. And now they're dealing with a spouse who won't go. Yeah. It goes back to the whole discussion we had about the culture in a marriage and the change that we can make that will influence their change and influence that culture. It can't force somebody to go. Um, unfortunately, it would be a sign that you're dealing with somebody who is arrogance. You're dealing with somebody who is not open to wisdom and information. You're dealing with somebody who's scared to change or who doesn't want to change. It's, it's, it's a problem. Yeah. Your advice would be, I'm guessing you go, like if your partner won't go, then at least you go absolutely. 100% for the reasons we discussed before. And you want to try to, and this by the way, I have in the marriage, students tell the boot camp, I have a duo track for couples to do it together.

Speaker 2: [00:41:04](#) And a lone ranger track for exactly what you're describing. Yeah. I'm on ranger track for people who are dealing with an obstinance spouse that refuses to go. And there we teach principles and practices that you can employ unilaterally without your spouses. Cooperation that will influence them and your marriage. And so, um, what you want your spouse to go to counseling because you want certain change to occur in your marriage and you're thinking you, your spouse, in order for that change to occur now it's true. It would be better if your spouse

were onboard. That change would be more likely to happen and happen faster. But we don't appreciate the impact that we can have on our marriage through our own unilateral effort.

- Speaker 1: [00:41:49](#) Yeah. Yeah. And that's what I would say to the person who is dealing with that option and spouses forget trying to convince them to go do what you can do to influence the marital culture and change the marriage. And there's probably a lot more than you can do than you realize. Yeah. Where do you have a favorite success story? Do you have a story you'd love to tell more than any other as of a couple that you helped and how you got them through and what they did and decisions they made? I love stories. I'm just, and all these years you've got to have a ton of success stories. Ones that you're very, very proud of.
- Speaker 2: [00:42:22](#) I have a tongue. Thank God. I'm proud of every single one. That's they, they keep me going. They always bring a smile to my face, my staff and I share them around and they, they remind us of why we do what we do. Totally. Um, can I share one? Uh, and then there are there hundreds and hundreds and hundreds on my websites.
- Speaker 1: [00:42:44](#) Um, and I'm particularly thankful to those, you know, this is to go through this kind of thing is, is isn't, is embarrassing. Uh, so most people,
- Speaker 2: [00:42:52](#) well that provided the testimonials, you know, are that they're writing to me personally, but they're not so anxious about like putting their name. But thank God a lot of them have, and that's a, I really, I really appreciate it. I really appreciate,
- Speaker 1: [00:43:07](#) I don't have such a good memory for these things. How about this, I'll give you an alternative here about a win in your marriage. And I don't know how openly you talk about, I think you mentioned that you actually perhaps use your own personal life as a guide where you're learning and growing. Do you talk about your personal challenges openly with groups and on air? We didn't talk about this beforehand, so feel free to ask them this. Yeah, I do. But before I get to that, what, when you were asking me a particular example that just popped into my head, so, yeah. All right, well feel free to share both. Yeah, I'll share both. So, um, yeah, there's a couple
- Speaker 2: [00:43:40](#) who is in Atlanta and, um, a very successful couple. You know, he was having an affair and, um, can't remember, I'm trying, remember if he had moved out or he was planning to move out. And, um, he had filed for divorce. They were in the midst of the divorce process. And if you asked him, they were done, done. I

mean, there's nothing to talk about here. And we're, we're beyond help or beyond Mort, you know, and there's, if I'm not mistaken, three little kids and, um, and even though there've been terrible mistakes in the marriage, as I said, in fidelity and just terrible, terrible mistakes, these are not evil people. You know, I mean, that's true. In 99% of, you know, broken marriages, nobody's evil, they're just a lost. So anyway, um, I went down to Atlanta to do a full day intensive with them and um, uh, she had already done the program in the lone ranger track prior to me getting there.

Speaker 2: [00:44:51](#) Um, and that had already, you know, moved the momentum, a little bits that had already shifted things and got him open to meeting me, uh, and the possibility of healing. Okay. And, um, the intensive was very, very successful. Um, by the end of the day he had severed the affair and um, has since had zero contact with his ex mistress. Um, they, uh, go on these romantic retreats every quarter now. Just the two of them leaving the kids behind and regularly talk about how the marriage is not only healed from its pain, but healthier and better and more fulfilling than they had ever actually experienced, even in what they considered to be the good days. And they really healed from the hurt and got past the past and you know, have move forward and um, you know, are being great parents and great to each other. They spend time together, they support each other, you know, they have fun together. And um,

Speaker 1: [00:46:09](#) yeah, so that's a story that's awesome and congrats to you and to them for the work that they put in to get that done. Because forgiveness is huge. People often ask me that. There was one word that creates a successful marriage. What would it be? And I'm like, I almost believe the word is forgiveness. Like that's the number one where not even love anymore. Like I believe you got married because you're in love. I believe you love that person. And it's almost like that's there. I guess it's possible to fall out of love, but we're really keeps it going. Is the ability to forgive, to forgive yourself for mistakes that you made, to be able to forgive your partner for the mistakes they've made and to be able to just be forgiving and even forgetful that let's just forget about that. Let's move on. Let's go. Right. We're not forgetting about it per se. We're just choosing not to focus on it as much on a percentage. The person cute can succeed

Speaker 2: [00:46:54](#) in a marriage long term if you can't for you. Cause people will make mistakes and if your expectation is that they won't if you're so, and there are people like this, you know, like they're so exacting and their expectations of how other people behave that nobody could ever meet those expectations. They'll never

be happy long term in their relationship. Right. Order for them to feel fulfilled in a relationship. They basically have to hop from relationship to relationship because it's only the newness of a relationship and get me to their expectations. But then they ended up having a whole series of relationship roadkill and you know, not really a life and a legacy with any one person. Yeah. Yeah. How about your own personal story? What, what about a challenge that you asked? I got, I got, this is all come as you might be able to tell.

Speaker 2: [00:47:41](#)

This is all coming from a very personal place. Yeah. You know, that's how I got into this. Um, my wife and I had our own marital crisis, um, you know, many years ago, the impetus, which is not so relevant, but I'll just mention it, um, the impetus. So we, we, um, had a son who died, I'm sorry to hear that man. Had about 18 months later, we had twin daughters who also died. Oh my gosh. So in a very short period of time, we lost three, uh, three children. It was a very, very difficult time and it really threw our marriage into a crisis, devastating. And we, um, we reached out for help and all the typical ways and all my wife learned about Mars and I learned about Venus and we went to a therapist and we were so horrified at the, at the type of health and the, and the competency of people that we're helping.

Speaker 2: [00:48:33](#)

Um, and we really found that what the direction we were getting was making things worse, not better, because everybody was asking about what was wrong and we were just rehashing the problems and taking the argument from the kitchen table into their office. And the whole thing was just so unhealthy and dysfunctional. Um, and we were just admired in all the negativity of the situation. And in retrospect, we realized that we didn't really start making any progress until we started to temporarily put those issues, the problems and all that negativity aside and just started to, to build Goodwill through healthy positive relationship habits. So in other words, instead of fixing what was wrong, we just started to make new things right. And what I just did what I just, I could have never articulated that back when we were doing it, but what I just did was I just articulated the core methodology of marriage fitness and why it's so distinct from marriage counseling and marriage therapy don't coming out of this experience, we felt like we had it. We had discovered something that we had a responsibility to share with the world. And I spent about nine months writing marriage fitness. I really thought I would, you know, bind a few copies given to my kids and then move on to like something else. Um, but I sent the manuscript around and it, you know, got started to get the attention of some big name people in the

media and that was really the start of me doing the work that I do.

Speaker 1: [00:50:07](#) It's very cool. I really liked this conversation about the positive healthy habits adding them in because sometimes I feel like I'm just avoiding stuff when it's like there's a problem and I'm like, I'm just going to do this thing that is working over here and maybe is that mean I'm just being weak and I'm avoiding it. But I do believe there's a big difference between, Hey, let's choose to focus on what's right in the front factor book. I wrote amplify the good so you can silence what's not because sometimes you do need to do that. That's the way out is to say, all right, what's right here. I mean one of my best friends in the world, jumper Goff is the lead facilitator really in the world for appreciative inquiry, which is a whole process for the last 30 years that focuses on, it's a strengths based system.

Speaker 1: [00:50:47](#) What's working here? How can we do more of that? How can we make the strengths so powerful that the weaknesses become irrelevant? I think that's actually a Peter Drucker quote, so I like that. One of my questions I want to ask you here more is it'd be my final question and then you can say anything you want. We'll give you the final word, but my last question is that in our groups, like in our retreats for front row dads, in our small groups that we have for the men and in our conversations with other men, my question is how much of venting is healthy? How much talking about what's wrong is healthy versus the percentage of how much do we need to be focusing on what's right? Because I can tell you personally, but there've been times when I needed to get something off my chest.

Speaker 1: [00:51:24](#) I needed to talk about what was broken. I needed to talk about the pain and I needed to voice it to get it out, to even just articulate how I even felt by saying the words out loud, right. Sometimes talking it out helped me figure out what I was actually feeling or what was going on. And it gave people a little context, but I don't think guys should sit around and bitch about their problems or bitch about their wives or Hey, my life would be great if my wife was better or whatever, Hey, stop blaming it on your kids. Stop blaming it on your wife. Right. Take some responsibility. But I think it is okay. My take on it is this and you tell me, my take is it's okay to vent. It's okay to share the problem, but you've got to move quickly into what are the solutions and what can you do and what are you in control of.

Speaker 1: [00:52:05](#) And maybe if there was even a percentage of a conversation, I would say 10% needs to be on venting and 90% on the solution. If I was to actually try to give it up. And I realize that's not the

case. Or even if you're having a series of 10 conversations, let conversation one be about the venting and then every other conversation be about what you're going to do. But there has to be a limit to it, I think. What's your take? Yeah. I don't know if there's a simple formula that we can apply to this. I think it's a judgment call. Um, I'll mention a couple of things that I think one should consider in trying to make the judgement. So first of all is who are we venting to? [inaudible] um, that requires some wisdom. Like, am I venting to my friends and my venting to a professional and my venting to my wife? Like who am I venting to? Um, venting to my wife. That venting is so unfiltered that it's just laced with all of this negative. It could be very destructive. I might be better off for framing from that kind of venting or venting that kind to her. Also, let me say that it gives me an opportunity to bring out an important principle, I think.

Speaker 2: [00:53:26](#)

And, and this is terribly violated in today's world. Um, and as you know, the opposite of this has become part of the norm and part of our culture. But I think one of the most important qualities in a marriage is the quality of privacy. We spoke a little bit earlier about the relationship between exclusivity and intimacy. It's related to that idea, privacy. And I think we're responsible for a lot of our relationship being completely private between us. It's not appropriate in my opinion, to speak to anybody about our spouse or our marriage other than a professional. Uh, it's a violation of my spouse's privacy. Uh, I can't speak to you about my marriage without speaking to you about my wife's marriage because it's the same marriage and who said I have permission from her to do that. It could very well interfere with her relationship with you because it's going to impact how you view her.

Speaker 2: [00:54:30](#)

Um, and there's another reason also, which I won't go into right now, but so there's a few reasons why I don't think. I think we should be working very hard to protect the privacy in our marriage. Of course, we can speak, always speak to a professional, um, you know about it. That's different. But friends and family to be speaking to them about our spouse or our marriage. I don't, I don't think it's a, it's wise. So my point is that the first question is, you know, and this requires real judgment is who we venting to. And then the second thing is when we're venting, you know, how are we doing that? If it's this completely unfiltered grant [inaudible] it's pretty rare that that's productive. You know, it's probably wiser to be more deliberate with what are we thinking? What are we feeling? What are we trying to accomplish by articulating it and how can we articulate it in a way that is therapeutic for us maybe, but also productive for the relationship.

Speaker 2: [00:55:37](#) Yup. Um, you know, uh, words have a lot of power, a lot of power, and we need to be really, really careful with them. Um, in, in so many cases that in marriage we're much better off not saying what we're thinking or at least saying it tomorrow, tomorrow comes. I might not feel the need to say it anymore. Or maybe I'll say it with a little bit more intelligence, more wisdom, better judgment. Can you just hit me that I've never had this thought, but I just had it now for the first time of in my life. The thing that's hurting me the most has been words more than anything else, more than anything on the planet. The thing that's hurt me, the worst in my life has been words. Yeah. I don't think you're alone alone in that. I think experience, you know, I'll share with you a great myth.

Speaker 2: [00:56:35](#) It's a common myth. Everybody knows it, but people just don't know it as a myth. They know, they think, and you hear people say it all the time. If I can't tell you what I think, then there's something wrong with our relationship. Yeah, and basically that's a way for people to say, I want to say what I want to say, how I want to say it, when I want to say it, and I don't want to have to think, and that's not a good relationship. That's stupidity. It's absolute stupidity. A smart person in a good healthy relationship is deliberate about what they say when they say it and how they say it because they realize that the words are powerful. Another myth, sticks and stones can break your bones, but words can never hurt. You. Hurt me. Right. We learned that in elementary school. Yeah.

Speaker 2: [00:57:23](#) Oh, it's a Y. It's a lie. Words are incredibly hurtful, right? They're incredibly destructive and we have to be very careful with them. Yeah. Yeah. King David said silence is offense to wisdom. Hm. Well more. This has been awesome. I wish we had another hour, but maybe we can at some point. Maybe we can handle, we're out of time. I do want to give you a chance to wrap this up. So final words to you, anything you want to say to the guys, any call to action, any summary, any whatever, and also please include in that where can they find more of you? Sure. So in terms of where you can find more of me, you can go to my website more for tel.com actually have a special page for front row dads, listeners more for tele.com/font pro debts. Uh, and you can get my free report.

Speaker 2: [00:58:12](#) There are seven secrets to fixing your marriage totally free. There's lots of other free information also. And if you're interested in learning more about the services that I provide as well as the marriage fit and style bootcamp, of course you can get information there. And in terms of what I'd like to say, just that, you know, like I said, I checked, checked you out before I

agreed to come on and I so admire, um, I mean I'll address your audience cause I already said this to you, but I admire you that being you, the listener, the audience. I admire all of you for being part of this community and for putting your, your marriage and your family and your fatherhood first. I was just so moved by that, that there's a whole group of people in a whole community that sees the, the, the value in that and, and the, um, and the priority in their life being, uh, that, that, that, you know, they should be a front row dead.

Speaker 2: [00:59:03](#) You know, when I do these full day intensives, I don't usually do them in Baltimore. I usually fly to wherever, you know, I'm going to this couple that's in crisis. And, um, you know, to be Frank, it's not cheap, uh, to have me Friday. Uh, and um, so I walk into these, these houses there, they're astonishing. I mean, the houses are just astonishing, but there's no home and it's the saddest thing in the world, you know, and you all are focused on not only building a beautiful house, but having a beautiful home. And I commend you for that. That's, that's, that's right on. Wow.

Speaker 1: [00:59:44](#) More, I gotta tell you, man, this is one of my favorite interviews that I've done on this podcast since it started. And I really mean that man, this has been really, this exceeded my expectations and I didn't come in with a lot actually. I came in wanting to learn about you and your world and really just free flow. I like that sometimes not knowing a ton about my guests because it puts me in the mindset of a listener. I really enjoy that. I'm kind of learning with our listeners. I knew enough about you to know you're a badass before you got on here, but this is just really an outstanding conversation. There was so much wisdom in here and I think you couldn't have ended it with a better thought about the house can be astonishing, but it can be missing the home. You know, it's not a home and I love that concept. Like I don't want an astonishing house. I want a home that allows people to thrive. And uh, I'm excited about that. You gave me a new lens and a new perspective that I didn't have before this hour started. So thank you my friend. I hope everybody goes and checks out your work and uh, we'll link everything also to the page that you created. We'll link that over at front row dads where we'll host the show and more. Thank you again for being with us and I look forward to building our friendship in the years ahead.

Speaker 2: [01:00:50](#) Thank you so much for having me.

Speaker 3: [01:00:54](#) Hey guys, if you haven't already done so, go right now to front row dads.com/facebook and join the conversation that's

happening right now on line. We designed this group for guys who are entrepreneurial in their thinking that are high performing guys with low egos. We're looking for the dads that believe in teaching their kids how to think, solve problems and be real leaders. We're looking for guys who believe in being family, men with businesses, not businessmen with families. We're looking for the fathers who have great knowledge but also believe that they have so much more to learn and we're looking for men who want to add value by sharing their wisdom and those that are willing to ask the questions that we all need and want answers to. That's [front row dads.com/facebook](http://frontrowdads.com/facebook) or simply go to Facebook, type in front row dads and you'll get to our group and what we put in there, links to all the podcasts and videos and other resources that you can't get access to anywhere else except for in this group. We want to give you the best ideas to help you with your marriage, balancing work and family life communication strategies with your spouse and also your children, travel ideas and even suggestions on the latest gear that would save you time and help you be more effective. We've got updates on upcoming events and so much more. Go right now to [front row dads.com/facebook](http://frontrowdads.com/facebook) and join the conversation. I'll look forward to connecting with you there. [inaudible].