

## Building a Sustainable Leadership Life

### Lesson 7: Build a resilient marriage

John Finkelde here. Welcome to Session 7 - build a resilient marriage. We're talking about building a sustainable leadership life in this roadmap. I want you to last the long haul.

As I'm recording this, next month Di and I will celebrate 40 years of married bliss. Well it hasn't been bliss all the time, no doubt about that. In a short session like this I'm not going to be able to cover everything about married life but just a few thoughts about, as a leader the central role of your marriage in your life and especially in your leadership, in modelling to other people the key relationship in your life, but also for your own benefit sustaining a resilient marriage will enable you to sustain your leadership life.

#### Family is your primary relationship

Here's a truth I've learnt as I came out of pastoring and into consulting is that pastoral relationships are for a season. I found that after 30 years of pastoring, as I moved into consulting and coaching that many of the relationships I had pastorally with people just kind of dropped off quite rapidly. I've got some great friends in our church but there are a whole number of pastoral connections that were there because I was their pastor and they were a member of our church.

So I think it's important to acknowledge that your pastoral relationships are going to be for a season as a general rule. The primary people in your world, that's your family. Your family are number 1 because they'll be there when you finish pastoring. I think for a Christian leader it's good to recognise that the people in your Christian world, the people in your leadership world are not the primary people in your life. The primary people are your family.

I discovered that and it really awoke something within me 6 years ago, it reminded me of the importance of your family.

#### 1. Know your spouse

So a few things to strengthen your marriage, make it a resilient marriage is know your spouse. Discover their love language, discover their personality, discover their gifts, their likes, their dislikes, their preferences.

Peter says live with your wife in knowledge. Understand your husband or your wife. What they like, what they don't like. Here's a key thing about knowing your spouse is men crave respect. Ladies do everything you can to bring your husband respect especially publicly.

And men, women want to feel secure in your love for them. They want to know, they want to hear you tell it and display it that you love them. Know your spouse, work out your spouse and work your world around that knowledge.

## 2. Invest in your spouse

I think this is a key thing for husbands. Paul writes in Ephesians 5 that husbands should follow the model of Christ. Christ laid down his life for the church, husbands lay down your life for your wife. If there's one principle that will make a marriage I think become resilient is when husbands sacrifice for the benefit of what their wife wants. So looking after your wife's needs, trust me you'll get paid back in spades of love and respect from your wife if you'll invest in her. Husbands a word for you!

## 3. Have date nights

Go out together and do stuff that's just the two of you. With the phones off or the phones away or left in the house or car. I really kind of grieve when I see couples sitting at a cafe and just on their phones for 10, 15, 20 or 30 minutes not engaging. Di and I put phones away when we're out together unless we're going to do something on the phone together but as a general rule the phones are away. We want to be talking.

## 4. Have holidays

Invest in holidays together. It doesn't have to be always expensive big holidays. Just being away together. Separate holidays as a general rule I'm not in favour of. You might want a two or three day winter break sometimes to go away by yourself for a retreat or whatever, that's fine. But holidays together.

Gifts for each other, a family home - I think it's really helpful for a wife especially to have a home that she has a sense of this is my place in which I can nest and build family life.

## 5. Avoid emotional connections with the opposite gender

A word of warning. Avoid emotional connections with the opposite gender. Now when I say avoid, I'm not saying you'll eradicate them. Because there will be people that you're not married to that you'll like being around, of the opposite gender. There will be people that you just spark with that maybe at an emotional or intellectual level, or maybe at a spiritual level you just feel man I really get on well with this person. You're able to talk to them and so on.

When you feel that emotional connection or that attraction building, put boundaries around how you spend time with that person. Never go out for a meal alone with that person, never spend time alone in a car or in a hotel room with that person. Avoid that aloneness with that person like the plague!

Now I have women that I coach, women ministers and women pastors that I coach. I'll be on Skype meetings with them, I'll be in cafes having coffee with them, coaching them. But here's what I do to boundary my world around this. Every time that's happening I tell Dianne. I'm going to have coffee with so and so today, I've got a meeting over there. She knows it's in a public setting. That woman also tells her husband, if she's married, and it kind of covers you that way.

I'm not a fan of just man I'm never going to have any one on one time with a woman ever. I think that's kind of to extreme but keep it in a public setting. Make sure your spouse knows. I'm talking about my own personal deal here but that works exactly the same for the women listening here about working and coaching with guys as well.

Avoid the iceberg of adultery. It's like oh that's a little iceberg, a little bit on the top but underneath the water it's horrendous and it will sink your ship of leadership. Word of warning, protect yourself from that plague.

## Next steps

### Discuss your love languages

If you don't know your love languages, google it. The 5 love languages - there's acts of service, physical touch, receiving gifts, quality time and words of affirmation. Discuss them with your wife or husband if you've never done that. Talk about it and initiate that conversation about your differences.

### Go on a date

If you haven't had a date for a while go on one.

### Plan a holiday together

It could be a short holiday, a long holiday, a big holiday, a little holiday - plan a holiday together. It's good for your marriage to do that.

### Deal with inappropriate emotional connections

Deal with any inappropriate emotional connections you have at the moment. Any behaviour associated with an emotional connection with someone who is not your spouse, deal with it. Put boundaries around it. Stop it. Remove yourself from that connection if it's getting to the point of being inappropriate.



Build a resilient marriage. Just a few thoughts to stimulate your thinking about sustaining your leadership life.