

Affair-Proof Your Marriage with Dr. Willard Harley

Dr. Harley [00:00:00]:

Have a problem of empathy. In other words, what what is really important to you as a man is not as important to your wife as a woman. Now, you know, sure, she likes it, but she doesn't love it. And and so I began thinking, okay. How does this work in practice? And so when I counseling, a lot of frustration. People were terribly frustrated with the fact that whatever they expected to get, and when they were married, they weren't getting, and they were asking for something that the other person didn't think was that important. And, so I started training people to meet the emotional needs of the of

Ryan Latham [00:00:49]:

the day. Well, welcome to another episode of the Pastor's Roundtable podcast. I'm your host, Ryan Latham. This is the podcast we help Rising leaders thrive in life and in ministry. Today is a really special episode for me because I've got my wife Sarah joining us today, And we're talking about a book, his needs, her needs written by doctor Harley, and this is a book that we used early in our marriage. In fact, even before we got married, we married, we started reading it, and, we've picked it back up multiple times throughout our marriage, And so we're really excited about this interview. It's packed full of practical information that's gonna help you in your marriage. So let me introduce you guys to doctor Harley.

Ryan Latham [00:01:34]:

He is a nationally acclaimed clinical psychologist, a marriage counselor still to this day, And he's the best selling author of multiple books, including His Needs, Her Needs, Surviving an Affair, He Wins, She Wins, And has a website marriagebuilders.com, which is just full of practical resources to help you in your marriage, I wanna encourage you guys to get hold of this book. I wanna encourage you guys to check out the website, and please listen to this episode because it is packed Full of practical information for you today. Doctor Holly, we're super excited for you to be on the podcast today. Would love for you to just, For those that aren't familiar with you, just to tell us a little about yourself and a little bit how you got to where you are today. Well,

Dr. Harley [00:02:32]:

I started out in anticipating that I would become a pastor of a church. And, so I had a philosophy major in college, and I was enrolled in seminary after I graduated, but I also had a major in mathematics. And, so I had a double major. And 2 weeks before my seminary experience was to begin and I had just been married, Joyce let me know that that was not the direction that she wanted to go. And, so I said, okay. That was my plan, but I guess I can change plans. Let's do it together. Let's plan together.

Dr. Harley [00:03:16]:

And so for 2 years, I enrolled at the University of California without a major. Had graduated, but no graduate degree in mind. And I developed, some material, I did some research, published some articles on artificial intelligence. And, that got the attention of the psychology department, and they wanted me to get a PhD in psychology. They they they eliminated all the requirements, and they enrolled me without a master's degree, without a single course in

psychology, and I got my PhD in psychology. So, with artificial intelligence as my background, I'm a psychologist. In the very early years, I was a teacher. So I taught psychology.

Dr. Harley [00:04:10]:

And, but my basic interest was clinical psychology. So I was interested in counseling. I was interested in therapy, and the top interest in that field was marriage. And I became aware of the fact that by helping people with their marriages, I was able to help people with their mental health. So a couple would come a person would come into me with mental health problems, terrible depression, anxiety problems. And many of these people were married and very unhappy in their marriage. And what I found is that if I could help them solve their marital problems, their mental health problems were solved along with it. And this was especially true for women.

Dr. Harley [00:05:06]:

So little by little, I developed more and more of an interest in in marriage. And, I, in the preface to my book, His Needs, Her Needs, I talk about the fact that I became very disillusioned with what was available in marriage therapy, developed my own approach. It became very successful. Eventually, I started writing books about it. The book that you have is the first one I wrote. So the basic idea is that I know how to save marriages. I know how to do it. People have to do what I tell them to do, of course.

Dr. Harley [00:05:44]:

Motivation is one of the biggest problems in in marriage counseling. I mean, you can't if you can't get people to do what you tell them to do, there's no hope. I mean, you know, they're not gonna succeed. But if they do it, what you tell them to do and you know what to tell them, you know what works, you get you get a lot of success all over the place, and that's what I've experienced throughout life. And Joyce and I are happily married. We've been married for 60 years, celebrate our 60th anniversary this year. And, Joyce is the love of my life. It would've been kind of fun to have her along.

Dr. Harley [00:06:19]:

As long as you had your wife, it would've been fun to have a choice with me. And then we she could've she could've corrected any of my mistakes along the way.

Ryan Latham [00:06:28]:

So good. So good. Well, in the book, you talk about 10 different needs that, are kind of bubbling up to the top, for, guys and the ladies. So I'd love to kinda hear where'd you get these 10? Did you just kinda pull them out of a hat or, kinda, I'm sure there's there's, I mean, a lot of things that you could have talked about, but how'd you get down to these 10 needs, for guys and the ladies?

Dr. Harley [00:07:00]:

Well, my my theory, after I discovered that other theories weren't working out so well, I started with a new theory that was based on the idea that romantic love is a huge factor in marriages. If you are in love, marriages tend to be wonderful. And if you're not in love, marriages tend to be disappointing. And so I spent a lot of time doing research on the topic of romantic love. What is romantic love? How do you develop it? How how does it start? How does it end? And, of course, I had students that I was working with in college that were falling in and out of love all the time. So I had I had a lot of of of people in front of me that I could study? And how is this happening? What are why are they how are they experiencing this, and what are they experiencing? And, so I developed the concept of the love bank. And I said that basically whenever you do something to make people feel good, you make love bank deposits. Whenever you do something to make people feel bad, you make love bank withdrawals in their account.

Dr. Harley [00:08:09]:

And, I came up with the idea that romantic love may be nothing more than the association of really good feelings with a certain person. Now you might look back and say, well, that's kinda common sense, but nobody was doing that at the time that I came up with this idea. They were all talking about communication. They weren't talking about romantic love at all. And, so among the key things I discovered was what I call, emotional needs. And I came up with that term. I called it that. Emotional need is anything that makes you feel really good when somebody meets that need and makes you feel frustrated when it's not being met.

Dr. Harley [00:08:55]:

And, So I didn't know what they were. I didn't know what they would be. And so I just asked a lot of people that I by this time, I was counseling. I was doing marriage counseling, and I would ask people that were married, what could your spouse do that would make you feel the best? You know? In other words, what would your spouse do that would make the most of bank deposits? And, and I would ask my students that too. When you're out on a date, what makes you decide that this guy might work? This guy might be the one. What is he doing? You know? And, So after a period of time, I came up with 10 categories that pretty well covered the waterfront of the things that were the most important in a relationship. And, So, instead of asking people what could your spouse do, I gave them a questionnaire that include the top those 10. That made it easier for them to come up with it, and then I asked them to prioritize it.

Dr. Harley [00:10:03]:

Okay. What which which are the most important? Here are 10 things that if your spouse did it for you, you'd feel better, you'd feel good. Yeah. Yeah. They're all good. But which are the most important? Which makes you the happiest when when your spouse meets them? And what I discovered, which I had not anticipated actually, was that, on average, men would identify 5 of them as their top five, and women would identify the other 5 as their top five. And I began to recognize oh, I begin to see the problem here that you have a problem of empathy. In other words, what what is really important to you as a man is not as important to your wife as a woman.

Dr. Harley [00:10:56]:

Now, you know, sure, she likes it, but she doesn't love it. And and so I began thinking, okay, how does this work in practice? And so when I counseling a lot of frustration, people were terribly frustrated with the fact that whatever they expected to get and when they were married, they weren't getting. And and they were asking for something that the other person didn't think was that important. And, so I started training people to meet the emotional needs of the spouse that they had. Now my questionnaire does not say you've gotta have these if you're a man, you gotta have these 5 emotional needs. I start with every couple afresh. They have to tell me what their emotional needs are, and maybe they're not at all typical. Maybe they're very different.

Dr. Harley [00:11:54]:

Maybe she wants she wants what I expected men to want. He wants what I expect. I don't care. All I know is that the questionnaire needs to tell me what each spouse can do for the other one that makes the most love bank deposits. And what do you think happened? All the couples I was counseling, they fell in love. I had a little test that would measure whether or not they were in love with each other. I still use it today. Call it the love bank inventory, it's just 20 items.

Dr. Harley [00:12:25]:

Very it's a very good test. If you tell the truth, it it identifies a person in love, very easily. And all the couples that I was counseling, they end up being in love with each other, and I was a

success. And I decided to give up my teaching and go into counseling full time. And I do that to this day to this day. Today, I am still counseling. This day this day that we're talking, I am counseling people. So the basic idea is I do it.

Dr. Harley [00:12:59]:

I've done it all my life. I use the same method. It's very successful.

Sarah Latham [00:13:04]:

That's amazing. Doctor Harley, do you think that our emotional needs change over time, or do they tend to stay the same?

Dr. Harley [00:13:14]:

Yeah, it does. They do change, and so, it's a good idea to fill out the questionnaire every once in a while to see what new emotional needs have popped up. This is especially true after children arrive. And, so I have some people tell me that they fill out the emotional needs questionnaire every year. It's downloadable free of charge on my marriage builder's website, go into questionnaires. You'll see the emotional needs questionnaire. Fill it out every year and just give each other some ideas as to how your emotional needs might be changing. And, So, you know, it is true.

Dr. Harley [00:13:54]:

We are all moving targets. We're not we're not the same. And so the important thing to understand is that, if your spouse says that they need more of one thing this year than they did last year, I suggest that you get to work and learn how to do whatever that is.

Ryan Latham [00:14:14]:

Alright. So for those that, haven't read the book yet, Again, I wanna highly recommend you guys go get the book immediately. But, could you give us just a couple of those, kind of the top of the mind there, of the needs that you feel like are kinda the the top top few.

Dr. Harley [00:14:31]:

Okay. And then and again, caveat. Not everybody not everybody follows this plan, exactly. They have differences. But on average, men have sexual fulfillment is their number one emotional need. Right after that comes recreational companionship. Physical attractiveness is 3rd. The 4th is usually, admiration.

Dr. Harley [00:15:02]:

And, and, the 5th is man. Every once in a while, that happens to me. Let's see

Sarah Latham [00:15:12]:

if we can find it.

Dr. Harley [00:15:14]:

Domestic support. And you know why I forget know why I forgot that? It's because it's not as important anymore. When I came up with this sort of thing, it was among the top fly for men, domestic support. But it isn't so much anymore. As a matter of fact, in most families that have dual career families, domestic the port is shared. And so as an emotional need for men, that's why I forgot it. Okay. For women, I can remember those because they're they remain the same.

Dr. Harley [00:15:47]:

The first is usually affection and intimate conversation, I would put those 1st and 2nd, almost they're tied for 1st. Affection, intimate conversation go together, what they want in a husband who can talk to them in a way that communicates the husband's care for her. And, and so I described that in my book. Okay. You'll you'll notice that there are 2 chapters back to back in

his needs, her needs. Affection, intimate conversation. You learn to do that. That's probably the most important thing your wife will need from you.

Dr. Harley [00:16:24]:

Those 2 things. The third is honesty and openness. Again, most women will tell you why, you know, you gotta have the honesty and openness mixed in with affection in the conversation. So maybe it's tied for 1st. Maybe maybe honesty and openness is tied for 1st. And then you have financial support. And a woman would say, yeah. I mean, really, he needs to support me finance.

Dr. Harley [00:16:50]:

I don't I don't think I could be married to somebody who doesn't have a job. You know, so maybe we have to have those 4 tied for first. Oh my gosh. Family commitment. I couldn't live with a man that wasn't committed to his family if he wasn't a good father. So we have 5 that are tied for We want we want them all. Yeah. That's right.

Dr. Harley [00:17:17]:

That's right. As a matter of fact, many women will say, what else is on your list. I I think I want those too. So

Ryan Latham [00:17:25]:

Alright. So It's an amazing So how do we how do we say, okay. You've read the book. I've read the book. How do we help ourselves protect ourselves from having all these Expectations that okay. You know what they are. You read the book. Now you just you you're just gonna meet all my needs now.

Ryan Latham [00:17:44]:

So how do we protect our what kind of expectations?

Dr. Harley [00:17:47]:

There are different people in this world. There are some people that can grab something and run with it. You know, they see my book. They read the book. Oh my gosh. I can do this, and off they go. And these are usually people that are physically fit, they they have exercise programs, and they eat well, and they're very highly disciplined. Okay? And then you have the people that are not quite so disciplined.

Dr. Harley [00:18:17]:

They need a little bit of help. And so when your spouse says, you know, these are what doctor Harley says is true. This is what I need. You're if you do this, you're gonna make me happy. And then and then the guy says, yeah. But I I'm not I don't know. I don't think I'm I don't think I'm made for that. I don't think I'm the right guy for that.

Dr. Harley [00:18:35]:

Then you might need a coach. You might need somebody to help you get through this. Now coaches don't necessarily cost anything. Sometimes you can find a coach with in your church. You know, you can have a you can have a lot of the churches that I have worked with have marriage programs in them, and they they train people. They have I I have a, a video, series that you may have seen, succession series that gets people started on the process of of of learning how to meet your spouse's emotional needs. And then, generally, a church will follow that up with, additional classes that that have to do with training. But my feeling is that meeting an emotional need is a skill set, and anybody can learn to do it.

Dr. Harley [00:19:26]:

So when somebody tells me I'm just not good at this kind of thing, you know, I would tell them that I'm not good at running marathons either. But I could probably do it if it was that important. And the idea is that anything in life that's worth doing can probably be trained how to do it. So you can learn how to do it. So I do a lot of training. I think it's not marriage counseling. It's marriage education. It's marriage education.

Dr. Harley [00:19:57]:

You're you're teaching people how to be married, how to be a good spouse. So when you're a husband, you need to know how to be affectionate. You need to know how to engage in intimate conversation. You need to know how to be honest and open. You need to know how to be a good father, know how to be a good family man. You need to know how to earn a living. You know, these are things you need to learn to do, and everybody can learn to do it. And when you learn to do it, you make your you make your wife very happy, and she's in love with you.

Dr. Harley [00:20:35]:

Just that simple.

Sarah Latham [00:20:37]:

That's very true. Now as couples have children and grow their families, how does that change The way that spouses meet each other's emotional needs or even as the children grow older.

Dr. Harley [00:20:51]:

I think it affects women and men in in different ways, many of the men that I counsel find that having their first child creates a crisis for them. They're not emotionally prepared for having a child interrupt their golf game or their their, friends, they they freedom that they had before, now they get up at the middle of the night. They don't like that. And, I've counseled a lot of men that just check out. And and, of course, it infuriates their wives, and the 2nd most common year of divorce, 1st 1st year of marriage is the 1st most common year of divorce. But the 2nd most common year is the year of the 1st child, and it's largely because men check out. So when it comes to being a good father, children have a an effect on men that can often be negative. And instead of being a good father, he checks out.

Dr. Harley [00:22:06]:

Women, on the other hand, develop a attitude that this baby that I've got is the most important thing in life, and they come to ignore their husbands. And, that is a tragic mistake because what she needs to be able to do is bring her husband in on the business of raising this child. And to ignore him and ignore his emotional needs, many women will tell a husband, you know, we don't have time for each other anymore, because we now have children. They need us more than we need each other, and and that is, simply wrong. So where women become more committed to their children, men become less committed to their children. I think that that to me and so my my book, His Knees, Hurting for Parents is designed to help a husband and wife understand that the best thing you can do for your children is to love each other as a husband and wife and to be each other's companion, be each other's partner, live life with each other and and not abandon each other at the time that your children are being raised. So that's that's my take on children and the effect that it has on marriage. By the way, the more children you have, the higher risk for divorce.

Dr. Harley [00:23:45]:

Isn't that a tragic statistic? What a tragic what a tragic statistic. The more children you have, the more likely it is that the divorce will fail.

Ryan Latham [00:23:55]:

Do you unpack that a little bit. I'd love to hear your thoughts on that. I mean, is it just the more demand, the more separation between the 2?

Dr. Harley [00:24:03]:

Yeah. Yeah. Basically, the the the my attitude is, I have a basic rule called the policy of undivided attention. And during that, the policy says, spend a minimum of 15 hours a week giving your spouse your undivided attention. No friends, no children, you're alone, you're dating 15 hours a week. Okay, now when you're before you're married, you wouldn't have gotten married if you didn't spend 15 hours a week. And during the 1st year of marriage, you have a great marriage because you're spending a lot of time 15 hours a week. What do you do during the 15 hours a week? It's affection, intimate conversation, recreational companionship, sexual fulfillment.

Dr. Harley [00:24:52]:

We talked about the needs of women in a conversation and affection, and then the needs of men, the top 2 are sexual fulfillment, recreational companionship. You put those together in a date. That's what you do when you date. 15 hours a week of that. Now what happens after you have 4 kids? It gets harder and harder and harder to spend 15 hours a week giving each other undivided attention. And so my argument is, well, you can do it. You can do it with 10 kids. I'm counseling a couple right now.

Dr. Harley [00:25:31]:

That have 9 children, and they are spending 15 hours a week giving each other undivided attention because that is my requirement for my counseling with them. They have to do that. And little by little, the marriage is gonna come together. They were ready to get a divorce with 9 children? And he's a pastor of a church. Okay? So 15 hours a week of undivided attention. And they're both telling me, we just don't have the time for that. I said, yes. You do.

Dr. Harley [00:26:02]:

You have the time. It's just you're doing something else during that time then I want you to spend with each other. And so we have 2 weeks now, 2 weeks together where they have done that. Wow. And, they have never done so much dancing in their life. So so here you go. Alright.

Ryan Latham [00:26:20]:

So you talked about

Dr. Harley [00:26:21]:

So anyways you talked

Ryan Latham [00:26:22]:

about how those, The needs, it's not always the same people need the same one, the same level, and maybe even change over time. So do you have some practical tips for us on how to communicate to your spouse, what your needs are, and even how to meet those needs.

Dr. Harley [00:26:43]:

Well, first of all, I think the emotional needs questionnaire helps you do that. Basically, not only does it tell your spouse what your emotional needs are, but it also there's a section in there that tells your spouse, how he or she could meet those needs. It offers suggestions on how that could be done. Now, of course, all the books in all the chapters in my book, his attorneys, go to more explanation there. And then the workbook, 5 Steps to Romantic Love, actually follows that up with, alright, are you doing it? But the basic the basic problem of communication is how do I tell my spouse that they need to step their program up a bit. They need to do better. And I think that by filling the questionnaire out occasionally, it helps you do that. Nobody likes to be told that they're not doing a good job.

Dr. Harley [00:27:47]:

And so you have to be sure that when you're communicating, I need I need more than I'm getting from you. It has to be done tactfully along with you are doing a lot of things that I do like. Don't get me wrong. I think you're you're a great guy and all, but here's something I'd like you to do that's more. Now the the common complaint is, look. I'm already doing all these things for you. Isn't that enough? And, apparently, the answer is no. It's not enough.

Dr. Harley [00:28:16]:

There's more. You know, and, will there ever be an end to all of this? And the answer is not really. If you care about somebody, you're always gonna be alert is something that they might need more. And, if you're in love with that person, it makes it easy to do. So mutual love makes the whole business of meeting emotional needs much more instinctive and much easier to achieve.

Sarah Latham [00:28:44]:

Absolutely. Now for those of us who are balancing marriage, family, ministry, unfortunately, we've seen A lot of times, pastors who are so committed to their ministry and their work that they can sometimes neglect their spouse. So what kind of tips can you give us for that whole dance of balancing that Marriage, family, ministry, work life.

Dr. Harley [00:29:14]:

Well, I think that, again, my policy of undivided attention is a very good rule, and, it applies to people in ministry as well as people that are not in ministry. And that is give your spouse your undivided attention, a minimum of 15 hours a week, scheduling the time in advance, making sure that you are meeting each other's needs for affection, intimate conversation, recreational companionship, and sexual fulfillment when you're out on dates. I've written a series called dating the one you married that's in the article section of the website that describes the obstacles to doing all of that. And, the greatest obstacle is not ministry. The greatest obstacle is not liking your spouse. And so I go to a great deal of trouble to show people that don't like each other how to start scheduling time to meet each other's emotional needs. Because if you don't like your spouse, you're you're headed for a negative feedback loop where you're you're gonna spend less and less time together. You're gonna do more and more arguing.

Dr. Harley [00:30:30]:

Your your relationship is gonna fall apart somehow or other. You gotta turn the corner. You gotta reverse that that that pattern of behavior. And so in that series that I have, dating the one you're married focuses on couples that have not been dating and have have strayed far apart from each other, and, even they can learn how to do it. Now if you're still liking each other, of course, then it's just a matter of doing it. It's just a matter of putting it in your schedule. And and if you have a a meeting on a certain night, you know, you then then you basically schedule your time, a greater length of time, some other night. The the the questions of who do you get to watch your kids, is an issue.

Dr. Harley [00:31:21]:

I have a whole chapter on that. So, basically, whatever the obstacles are, I've covered them. And so it's just a matter of it's just a matter of deciding, are we gonna do it or aren't we? And, do we are we gonna enjoy our time together? And I deal with how to enjoy your time with somebody you don't like as a, as one of the obstacles. Hopefully, you guys like each other a whole lot, so spending the time together shouldn't be that much of a challenge.

Ryan Latham [00:31:50]:

Yeah. So, you know, the I think that, you know, I speak for you, but it seems like that is common for people to maybe start there, and then it kinda moves into, especially, I mean, it's

not pastors aren't, you know, it's it's it's available for pastors too to begin to have conversations with somebody else. Right. And that moves into, them spending more time with that person, and it moves into even, unfortunately, having an affair at some point. So what would you say might be some boundaries that we can put in place, within our marriage, within our ministries to help us avoid that from even beginning.

Dr. Harley [00:32:36]:

Yeah. I gave a a year year years ago, I was always on the docket for the graduating class of the Bethel Seminary in Saint Paul. And my talk was how to avoid an affair as a as a minister, as a pastor, because an affair will destroy your entire career. Everything you have tried to do, everything you have worked for will go down the drain. It'll you'll ruin your life. And affairs take place usually by mistake. What I mean by that is that you happen to get into a relationship with somebody that's making a love enough love bank deposits to create romantic love. Anybody can do it.

Dr. Harley [00:33:31]:

If an if if anybody meets your emotional needs for the things that are important to you, you're gonna breach the romantic love threshold, and you're gonna be in love with that person. And when you be when you're in love with somebody, I say that you enter the fog. You no longer are able to see things for what they are. I've had pastors tell me that it was God's will that they had this affair because God would not God is a God of love, and they love this other woman, and so it must be God's will. This is the kind of thing that can happen to people when they are in love with somebody. They can come up with all kinds of ridiculous reasons why that's a good idea. So I tell this graduating group. I say, don't counsel a woman.

Dr. Harley [00:34:29]:

And if you're a woman, don't counsel a man. Counsel same sex. There are many, many churches all over the United States, big churches, megachurches. We have 1 in the Twin Cities, where the pastor of that church is about 25,000 people that attend, has followed that rule from the beginning based on my advice. And, all of the people in this church, all of the counseling is done in this church, the same sex counsel. So the basic idea that, that's one thing to avoid, because a lot of counsel a lot of pastors fall in love with their clients from their their parishioners that come in for counseling. If you go out with a person for lunch that is of the opposite sex, bring your wife with you. Basically, do not develop a friendship with somebody of the opposite sex.

Dr. Harley [00:35:39]:

Why? Because a friendship is a relationship where you are trying to make the person happy. You support that person. You encourage that person, you you tell the person you want the person to share their their deepest feelings. It's all intimate conversation. So a lot of people think, doctor Harley, you just be you're just not with it. You're just not modern. I mean, we all have relationships with the opposite sex. The employees that I have in my in my, company are women.

Dr. Harley [00:36:18]:

I've I I hire women, but they're not my friends. They are my employees. Now they think of me as a nice guy I'm used to get along with, but we don't have dinner together, and we don't go camping together. Are basically, it's an arms length relationship and Joyce is the same way. So that's my advice to to anybody in ministry. I am so aware of how many ministries have been completely destroyed. From the time I was 21, the pastor of my church lost his job, not because he had an affair, but because his wife had an affair. And he never went back into ministry again.

Dr. Harley [00:37:02]:

So it applies to the wives of pastors as well as the pastor himself.

Ryan Latham [00:37:08]:

Yeah. Unfortunately, it's common. And so on the flip side, maybe, Wanna talk to those that maybe, are single. A lot of our listeners are, those rising leaders or kinda Up and coming 1st ministry roles, coming into, you know, this this new life. What advice would you say some of those boundaries, those things, or or interacting as a single person in ministry? I mean, you were, You know, we're interacting with people. We're the people business. Right? So what would be some of those tips that you'd have for someone who who is single?

Dr. Harley [00:37:51]:

It's interesting to be in ministry and to be single. Of course, my attitude is get married. Because as a single pastor will say of a church. If you're a single pastor of a church, I mean, how are you going to handle dating? You know, what are you gonna do about dating? And, all I can say is that I would advise pastors not to date their parishioners. It's it's it's an interesting issue from a perspective of of of just I'm in a profession where, I can lose my license if I have an affair with one of my clients. You don't have such a rule for pastors, but it should be. You should have that rule. Basically, a pastor should not have a romantic relationship with any of their parishioners.

Dr. Harley [00:38:57]:

Same thing is true with youth pastors. Youth pastor should not date anybody in the youth group. And, that should be a hard and fast rule because of all the problem, all the trouble you get into. But, if you're if if you're a single pastor, after your dating should be with somebody outside of your church. That's my recommendation.

Ryan Latham [00:39:22]:

That's great. So wanna jump back into, you know, maybe there's been that affair, or there's some a breach of the trust, Someone's crossed the lines a little bit, you know, that love bank has been depleted by their spouse, but maybe it's been filled up by somebody else, what would be some of those first steps to reconnecting, rebuilding that trust, rebuilding that relationship?

Dr. Harley [00:39:53]:

Basically, the path that I recommend for what I call surviving an affair is described in the books that I have surviving an affair. And, there are 3 parts to it. Initially, the process of recovery begins with exposure. Everybody should know about the affair. And this is particularly hard on pastors. If the pastor has had an affair, how do you let everybody know about it? And isn't that gonna ruin his career? And the answer is yes. It might ruin his career, but everybody should know about it anyway. And, remarkably, there are some churches out there where they have accepted the fact that their pastor had an affair and he's still there.

Dr. Harley [00:40:40]:

But if you're not a pastor, if you're not in ministry, the person might lose their job. Maybe it maybe it could draw a lawsuit. And my argument is that it's too important. Exposure is too important. People should know. The janitorial family should know. Friends should know. Why? The for the support of the betrayed spouse.

Dr. Harley [00:41:07]:

The support of the betrayed spouse and to hold them accountable. I think accountability is very important in life. I'm a big believer in honesty and openness. I'm a big believer in letting people know what my deepest and darkest secrets are all about, because that holds me accountable. I am hold to come. I am a very good person when somebody follows me around

with a camera. When when I can't get away with anything. I am not tempted to get away with anything.

Dr. Harley [00:41:41]:

And so I believe the exposure is good. Extraordinary precautions goes along with that, making sure that that so none nothing like this could ever happen again. And, in the book *Surviving in a Fair*, I have a checklist of all the extraordinary precautions that need to be followed. The the 2nd part is transparency, and that is that in marriage, everything you do should be known to your spouse. There should be no secrets. And along with honesty and openness should go what I call the policy of of of, of, the the policy of of enthusiastic agreement, where what you do is agreed upon before you do it. So when you think about honesty and openness and coming to an agreement before you do it, that is total transparency. And, the 2 work well together.

Dr. Harley [00:42:44]:

Because if if everything is agreed upon before you do it, you're more likely to be honest. If you're more likely to be honest, you're more likely to talk about things before you do them. The third part is to create a romantic relationship in your in your marriage. So the third part is coming together to have a very, very successful marriage. Now you think to yourself, can a person have a successful marriage after an affair? And my argument has always been that it's gotta be better than it's ever been. And it can be. If your marriage is better than it's ever been, you will regain the trust that you once had for your spouse. If you have transparency in your marriage, you will regain the trust you had in your spouse.

Dr. Harley [00:43:39]:

If there are extraordinary precautions to make sure that your spouse never gets into the same situation again, you will regain the trust for your spouse, but it comes at the end of the program. A lot of times people say, I want you to trust me now. I I know that I made a terrible mistake, but I don't I don't want you to not trust me. I want you to trust me. I don't want you to have to look at my emails. I don't want you to check the GPS to see where I've been. I want you to trust me. No.

Dr. Harley [00:44:09]:

No. I I want people to check up on the unfaithful spouse. Eventually, trust is returned, and, that comes last.

Ryan Latham [00:44:22]:

It's a tough road, but, it's one that's worth fighting for, I believe. So, any last thoughts for us? Anything you'd like to to kinda say as we we wrap up here?

Dr. Harley [00:44:37]:

One of the things that I talked to you about this morning before the show was that lately, I've been, I've been getting a lot of people, a lot of that are coming to me, that are in ministry, where their wives are very needy. Now the question is, how does that happen? Well, you hear you have this guy that has this great empathy and a great understanding and a woman who has a personality where she just needs a lot of attention tends to gravitate to people like that. Okay? So now he's married, and they have 3 children, and, he's in and and and she needs she seems to need every minute of his time. And no matter what he does try to persuade her that he cares about her, she's not sure he really does, because he's not giving her the kind of attention that he used to give her. Okay, that is a type of problem that people in ministry tend to get because they're attractive to people who need a lot of attention. So what do I do with that kind of a thing? What I do is I try to find the middle ground. First of all, I don't want the guy to tell me that she needs therapy so that she doesn't needs so much. Okay? That that is off the table.

Dr. Harley [00:46:07]:

What I tell him is that she married you because you have a skill set that is very important to her. You do give her the impression that she is the only person in the room, and you did that while you were marrying her, while you were dating her, and she fell in love with you because of it. You're gonna have to continue doing that the rest of your life. And I want you to follow the policy of undivided attention, perhaps more than the average, maybe she needs 25 hours a week of undivided attention. And so you married somebody that has this need. Don't tell me that she needs therapy. I want you to learn how to meet that woman's need that she has had when you were dating her through the rest of your life. So it's a combination of me working with her to try to not be so critical of him, which she finds herself very resentful about the fact that he's ignoring her more than, she would like, but then getting him to focus more attention on her.

Dr. Harley [00:47:19]:

So I've tried to find that middle ground. Common problem in ministry, actually.

Ryan Latham [00:47:26]:

I bet. I bet. Well, thank you so much for your time. Our we're coming up on 20 years of marriage, and This book, his needs, her needs, and especially, his needs, her needs for parents have both been, so important in our marriage Over the last 20 years, so we just wanna say thank you so much for your resources that you've provided. I wanna encourage everybody to go to the website. Anywhere else that you'd suggest, for them that that wanna dive in a little bit more?

Dr. Harley [00:48:01]:

Yeah. Basically, marriagevillers.com has, a lot of my articles and, q and a columns that I've had in the past. And, it it the website itself has solved so many people's problems from over the world all over the world. It doesn't cost a dime. You can you can download anything. All the questionnaires are free of charge. So I make it I make it easy for people to figure out what it takes to solve their marital problems.

Ryan Latham [00:48:33]:

Well, I appreciate that. That's a great resource. Wanna encourage all of Guys to jump in there and take advantage of those. And I wanna suggest a couple other episodes. First of all, go to our YouTube channel, But also a couple episodes for you. Episode 68, balancing family and ministry, episode 24 20 sorry, 26 is save your marriage. And episode 17, successfully having tough conversations. Wanna suggest those episodes to you.

Ryan Latham [00:49:02]:

Wanna say thank you for watching on YouTube. Thank you for listening on to the podcast, and I hope to see you guys soon on our next Episode. I hope you enjoyed listening in on our coaching call. Again, that's just a portion of what we do during our coaching calls. We have guest speakers where you get to interact in real time, ask real questions about your ministry context. We get to interact as a group to help each other in our ministries, and also break up into groups where you get to have personal connection with a smaller group Where you get encouragement and, do life together. Wanna encourage you to take a look at it. Go to renewed leadership.org/ network to get more information and to join a group.

Ryan Latham [00:49:47]:

Well, we're gonna be bringing you more episodes, so take a look wherever you're subscribed For the podcast, I can't wait to bring you another episode here soon.