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## Be Open to Learning New Skills

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**Jill Savage:** You know, many of us think that it's information that will change us. If we just learn more, we'll have the marriage that we want. But that's really not how it works.

**Mark Savage:** No, it sure isn't.

**JS:** The formula for change is information plus application equals transformation. So, we're focusing on just little steps that make a difference in our application. We call those the Beatitudes of Change. So today, we wanna talk to you about one Beatitude of Change, and it's this one: Be open to learning new skills.

**MS:** I think of friends that we have, that they talk openly about the ongoing education they receive in the marketplace. And we have some friends who are firefighters, and they are constantly learning skills, but they're not just learning, they're putting them into practice. They're going out to the field and applying what they've learned.

**JS:** Right.

**MS:** And so, it's huge.

**JS:** So the whole concept of continuing education is really accepted in the marketplace, but when it comes to our relationships, when it comes to at home, we don't have that same kind of mindset. So we need to be open to learning new skills, but even more than that, applying those new skills each and every day.

**MS:** Yup. So for me, Mark 1.0, I didn't know how to regulate my emotions.

**JS:** No, you didn't. [chuckle]

**MS:** I didn't. And I was known for a guy who wore his feelings on his sleeve, and I wore my feelings very open. But honestly, I was controlled by my emotions. And my emotions would just lead me around, and most often, they led me to the wrong place. So Mark 2.0, I had to learn some new thinking and coping skills that would regulate my emotions. I had to learn that I could stay steady and stand firm, and I didn't have to react to what was happening around me. And honestly, that felt very foreign, and maybe a little awkward in the beginning, but it was critical for me to put into practice what I was learning.

**JS:** Right, right. And the same way for me. Jill 1.0 didn't know how to find her emotions. [chuckle]

So Mark's were all over the place, and mine were stuffed away, I ignored them. I just bucked up. But Jill 2.0 is learning to embrace her emotions. And this allows me to actually be more compassionate with myself. It helps me to be more compassionate with others. And that's been such an important part of our journey, learning how to do the things that maybe we didn't realize we didn't have the skills for. We got the information, but then, we've had to actually put it into play. But here's one of the things that I think is the key at why so many of us struggle applying new skills, and that is this: It makes us feel inept. It really does.

**MS:** Yeah, yeah.

**JS:** It feels like we're going back to riding a bike with training wheels. Even if the bike that we were riding was taking us in the wrong direction, we liked feeling like we were actually accomplished like you know, "I've got this, I'm an adult."

**MS:** Right, yeah, "I know what I'm doing," yeah, yeah.

**JS:** Yeah, exactly. But when we look at the results, we've been getting from that bike ride, and we realize it's not serving us well, we have to go back, we may need to start learning some new tools, some new skills, and it is like going back with some training wheels. It's the same idea, when somebody graduates from high school, they don't wanna go back to kindergarten. But sometimes, we need to do that when it actually comes to learning new relationship skills. So this is really important, and I think that this is the reason why so many of us want... We want information to lead to transformation, but we forget the application piece because the application piece means that we're going to feel inept, we're going to feel inexperienced. We may even feel embarrassed.

**MS:** Right. I think we also... It's just hard. It's so hard that...

**JS:** It's hard to break old habits.

**MS:** Hard to break old habits. It's hard to break old mindsets. And so, I know for me that when, after our crisis, I really had to get to the place of surrender that said everything that I've thought and known was wrong. And it wasn't entirely true, but I had to really sit there and then virtually hold the hand of my new teacher, which was God, and say, "Show me what to do. Lead me and I'll do it."

**JS:** And when we're talking about that, we're talking about in the everyday stuff of life, like I don't know, maybe I say something to you and it comes across harsh, or...

**MS:** And I would take it personal.

**JS:** In the past.

**MS:** Yep.

**JS:** But the new way, the way where you were applying the information is you were going, "Lord, how do I respond to her in a way that's honoring to you?" So you're slowing things down. And I was doing exactly the same thing. "Lord how do I respond to what just happened in a way that's honoring to you?" Slowing things down and learning the new skills in real-time. And sometimes, we would blow it, and if we'd blow it, we clean that up, back up and try it again.

**MS:** Right. I think, too, in slowing things down, we don't like that. We want it to be quick, to the point, let's get on. And life isn't that way. Relationships aren't that way.

**JS:** No. And think about when a child is learning to ride a bike, we'll just take that analogy a little further, you can't go nearly as fast on a bike that's got training wheels on it. [chuckle]

**MS:** Right, right.

**JS:** You just can't.

**MS:** No.

**JS:** And so, I think that we have to be really careful that our expectations are that this should be an efficient process. No, when you're learning a new skill, you're going to feel a little out of whack on it, it's going to take longer than what you realize.

**MS:** Right. You have to deal with insecurities, unrealistic expectations, all of those things that create that feeling of being inept.

**JS:** Yep. So you wanna transform your relationship? In order to do that, you're gonna have to take your information and apply it by being willing to learn new skills. You can do this.

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