

Be Willing to Ask for What You Need and the Respond that You need

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Jill Savage: So we're focusing on what we call the beatitudes of change. These are the application principles that help us move from information to transformation, but in between information and transformation, we need application.

Mark Savage: So far, we've talked about being willing to do what you need to do and owning your part, rather than pointing a finger at your spouse, to blame them or to accuse them.

JS: We've also talked about being willing to learn new skills. I mean, there's always new skills that we can learn. New skills in listening, new skills in communication, conflict resolution, so we have to be willing to learn new skills. May we be life-long learners for forever.

MS: Yeah, and we've also talked about being comfortable with awkward. So if we learn a new skill, it's gonna seem awkward while we're learning this new practice.

JS: It will. And so we've got to push through that awkward to get to a new normal. But today, we're gonna talk about being willing to ask for what you need, and the response that you need. Now, this one is so very important. It's a pattern that we see in our marriage coaching that so many couples struggle with. Is that we hint, we assume, we hope, but we don't all in out ask, specifically for what we need. And so we stew in the kitchen because our spouse isn't helping us with making dinner.

MS: Right.

JS: But we don't come right out and say, "Honey, would you come in here and cut the vegetables up?" We don't specifically ask for what we need.

MS: And I think that's critical, that we ask for what we need. And for many of us we're hesitant to ask, we're hesitant, and we hope that our spouse will just figure it out, but reality is they won't.

JS: Well, they don't see the same needs that we see. They don't see the same tasks that need to be done, and so we can't assume that they're going to see them. And you might say, "Well, don't they know that dinner needs to be ready?" Yes, but they have other things on their mind. And so that's at the top of your mind, is the top of your list and if you need help with it, ask.

MS: Ask. Yeah.

JS: Yeah. And one of the things that sometimes we can also do, is ask for the response that we need. And it might even be that we say, "Hey babe, in five minutes would it be possible that you could say yes to me to come and cut the vegetables and help me with dinner?" That is helping them to know the response that you need, it's requesting it in a kind way, but it's also not going into it. You know, a lot of times I think we ask by saying something like, "I know you probably don't want to, but would you come in here and cut these vegetables?" And then that doesn't set us up for success.

MS: No, it kind of sets us up for defensive responses, and that's not what we want at all. And so it's important that we ask for what we need, but we ask for the response that we need.

JS: So a way that we might even do that, is if I need to bring an idea to you I might say, "Hey, I've been thinking about something, you don't really have to respond right now, but I've been thinking about the possibility of X. And I know it takes a while for you to kinda think things through, so don't feel like the need to respond, but I want to put that out there so that you know what I'm thinking." So I'm making a communication, but I'm also letting you know that you don't have to respond right away. I'm not looking for an answer, or I'm not even looking for your initial thoughts, 'cause maybe you need time to think about that.

MS: I think it's valuable, or invaluable, for us to communicate directly what we need, but also the response that we need. Sometimes arguments are actually fostered or ignited because one spouse doesn't know what response you're looking for, and then will respond differently, and then before long we're arguing about something that really didn't need to be argued about.

JS: Well, a perfect example of that is when maybe you just need to express some frustration, maybe not even about anything between the two of you, maybe something happened in the neighborhood, or something happened at work, and you wanna express that frustration. So you can simply say, "I need to share with you something that happened at work, but I don't want you to fix it. I want you to just hear me and understand the dynamics that I've been dealing with today. So please just feel it with me, don't try to fix it."

MS: Right.

JS: That is asking for the response that you need.

MS: And sometimes we think that, "Well, shouldn't they just know how to respond." No, they don't know how to respond. And that is an unrealistic expectation. And so you're given a beautiful gift of not only communicating exactly what you need, but the response that you need.

JS: And you know what? This is a beautiful way that we help each other too, because we all can default to defensiveness, we all can default to, even an angry response. Sometimes we make something about us that isn't even about us. So if we can push and help our partner to know what it is that we need from them as far as a response, then it helps them to not go in those directions that their tendency might be to go normally.

MS: Right. And what you were talking about reminds me of a principle that we've learned, is to stop assuming and start asking. So often we can assume our way into a frustration, and if we would just ask our thoughts, and if we would stop the assumptions, we would change so many of our

conversations, so many of our arguments.

JS: Yeah. They would go away.

MS: Right. Yeah.

[laughter]

MS: Which is a beautiful thing. When you agree.

JS: Yes. So if you want to transform your relationship, we certainly start with information, but we move to application. And one of the ways that we apply information, is that we have to be willing to ask for what we need, and the response that we need as well.

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