

Listen to the Heart of What Your Spouse is Saying

No More Perfect Date Night

Jill Savage: We'd been married maybe three years. And it was the holiday season.

Mark Savage: Yes.

JS: And there was this big gift underneath the Christmas tree.

MS: And I was so excited. I could not wait for Jill to open it.

JS: It was heavy. Super heavy. And I just couldn't even imagine what it was. So Christmas morning rolls around and I open up this package that's been sitting there for a month. And inside was a bowling ball.

MS: Her favorite color.

JS: Purple. And it had my name engraved on it.

MS: In gold.

[laughter]

JS: Here's a problem, folks. We'd never bowled a day in our life.

MS: Or since.

[laughter]

JS: Mark was so proud.

MS: And I was so excited, and I said, "Just wait." And I ran into the other room and I brought my own bowling ball that was my favorite color, and it had my name on it.

JS: It did.

MS: I was so excited.

JS: And he said, "I thought it would be fun for us to do something together." Well, bowling wasn't

my idea of doing something fun together. Fast forward a few years. Those bowling balls are sitting in a closet collecting dust, eventually to be sold in a garage sale, I'm quite sure. And Mark has taken up racquetball. He's playing with some guys at church, and he's saying, "Jill, you gotta come play racquetball with me." And I'm like, "Mark, I don't wanna play racquetball." And he's like, "Oh, it's so much fun. We gotta play racquetball." And then a few years later, it's golf. "You gotta come play golf with me." I'm like, "Mark, I don't wanna play golf. It doesn't interest me to play golf." Well, it was about that time, about that golf time, when we read a book, it was called "His Needs, Her Needs" by Willard Harley. And he talked about the 10 needs of a marriage, but five of those needs tend to be more higher for men, and five tend to be higher for women. And one of them that tends to be higher for men is recreational companionship. The bottom line guys really just want their wives to come out and play with them.

MS: Yeah. Before you're married, most often you do some playing together, and then life happens after marriage, kids come along, jobs get busy and we stop playing. But that inner boy inside of your husband still has that desire that you would play together.

JS: And so, what I realized is, it wasn't about bowling. And it wasn't about racquetball. And it wasn't about golf. It was actually about my husband requesting me to come out and play with him. And so what's important is that oftentimes we get caught up in the literal request. And we're missing the heart request. Okay? So the literal request was, let's play, let's go bowling and let's...

[overlapping conversation]

MS: Play racquetball.

[overlapping conversation]

JS: Racquetball and golf and that was the literal request. But the truth is, he would have been happy for us to go out and play anything, because the heart request was that we would spend time doing something fun together.

MS: Right.

JS: And you know, this can work out the other direction. Maybe your spouse makes statements like, "We always go out with groups of people, never just the two of us." And you immediately can come up and go, "Well, I can think of this time and this time and this time." And so there you're addressing the literal request and missing the heart request.

MS: Right. And the heart request is, "I just wanna spend time with you."

JS: "And I wanna spend time with us alone. I wanna do things with us without other people." So today, I just ask that you think about the things that your spouse has said to you, that maybe you've been responding to in a literal sense, that you need to reframe and look at, "What are they communicating from a heart perspective?" And when you do that, you'll be on your way to not having a perfect marriage, but you'll be allowing God to perfect you, to be a better spouse that listens deeper.