

## **Dive Deep with Jill Rosenau**

**Jill Savage:** Welcome to this month's Dive Deep Interview. We're Mark and Jill Savage with our friend Jill Rosenau. Jill is here to share with us about some of the things that she has learned about taking your thoughts captive. And we are super excited for our conversation with her. Welcome Jill, to No More Perfect Date Night.

**Jill Rosenau:** Thank you.

**Jill Savage:** Yeah. And we have to tell you that our friendship with Jill goes way back, like way back, like your son and one of our sons grew up together.

**Jill Rosenau:** 20 years.

**Jill Savage:** Has it been that long?

**Jill Rosenau:** Yeah.

**Mark Savage:** Wow!

**Jill Rosenau:** Adam was 10 when we met you guys.

**Jill Savage:** Yeah. That's so crazy.

**Mark Savage:** Yeah.

**Jill Rosenau:** Isn't it crazy? Yeah.

**Jill Savage:** So yeah. Adam and Cola were good friends and... Good, bad and ugly.

**Mark Savage:** Right.

**Jill Savage:** We've been through it all, haven't we, Jill? [laughter] We can tell you some stories, but we won't go there today. [chuckle]

**Mark Savage:** Right.

**Jill Rosenau:** We won't go there. Another topic.

**Mark Savage:** Yeah.

[laughter]

**Jill Savage:** If we ever do a parenting membership, we'll save those stories for that.

[laughter]

**Jill Rosenau:** Oh my gosh.

**Jill Savage:** They were good.

**Jill Rosenau:** Right.

**Jill Savage:** But anyway, the reason we invited Jill today is because over the last year, Jill has lost over 100 pounds.

**Jill Rosenau:** Two years, two years.

**Jill Savage:** In two years.

**Jill Rosenau:** It's just two years in January, so...

**Jill Savage:** So in the last two years. And the first year, you lost how much?

**Jill Rosenau:** I lost the first 100 in nine months.

**Jill Savage:** Okay, that's what I was thinking.

**Jill Rosenau:** And then now it's like 150-something. Yeah.

**Jill Savage:** That is so cool and...

**Mark Savage:** Yeah, so amazing.

**Jill Savage:** So exciting. And as we talked with Jill, one of the things that she talked about is the impact that her thinking had upon that weight loss, and really many other areas of life. And with that being our theme this year, that's really where we want to go with this conversation is the impact of our thinking and how that... We're going to talk about how it has affected her life, but we're going to transition to, how can that affect our marriage? Jill, tell us just a little bit... Tell our members a little bit about your family and a little bit about your journey.

**Jill Rosenau:** Okay. Well, I am 54 this year. Well, this year I'll be 55, I guess. And I've been married... Mike and I've been married... I'm at the point now where I have to stop. [chuckle] I guess I'm there. 32 years in May. And we have one son. We are the only-child family. He is 24, Adam, and lives in Nashville, and he's been there now four years, it'll be four years in March. So that's kind of crazy too. So yeah. So that is me. I work part-time for my church as the business manager, and then I've just started my coaching practice, coaching weight loss and life coaching. Yeah, just launched that new career this year, just got certified as a life and weight coach in 2019.

**Jill Savage:** That's exciting.

**Mark Savage:** Yeah. I know when we met with you, boy, there's just a lot of wisdom that came out of you as you talked about life coaching and weight loss.

**Jill Savage:** Yeah. And so tell us a little bit about that journey of weight loss and... Because Jill, you had tried lots of things. And the reason I want you to talk for a minute about weight loss is then I want... Because there are some of our members who have tried lots of things to make their marriage

better. Just like you tried lots of things to lose weight. And so talk about that journey where you had tried lots of things, but this thing, this process made a difference.

**Jill Rosenau:** Right, yes, and lots of things to make our marriage better too... [laughter]

**Mark Savage:** Right.

[laughter]

**Jill Rosenau:** Over 32 years, oh my gosh. So yeah, on the weight journey, the shorter list is what I haven't tried. I couldn't even name... If it's out there, I tried it... Calories, you name it, name the program. The only probably thing I didn't go as extreme as was surgery. Although it had been presented to me as an option. I just couldn't pull that trigger. But yeah, two years ago, I weighed 400 pounds. Probably wasn't my highest. I probably was a little higher than that at some point. But that's the number I was when I started on this journey and... I don't know how much do you wanna get into, but the short story was I had a doctor who is now a dear friend. I have a disability which has now been corrected with ankle reconstruction, but at the time, I was limited in my mobility, weighing 400 pounds. And my doctor sat down with me and had kind of a come-to-Jesus conversation about this disability that I have potentially leading to amputation. And that is how this condition goes a lot of times, not all the time, but I was aware of that, but no one had ever put that in my lap as a possibility.

**Jill Rosenau:** And her thing was, "At 400 pounds, if that happens, you're not going to be able to manage your life. You don't have the mobility, you don't have the strength to manage as an amputee." So I went home from that and obviously at 400 pounds, you know you need to lose weight. But I had gotten to a place of just completely giving up on it as an option because I didn't know what to do. I tried everything, and in my mind, it just wasn't going to happen. I knew that weight loss is mental, from going through all these programs, I had gotten to that part and knowing it's all about... It's not so much about the food, it's more about the mental part of it, but I didn't know what to do with that. So I had just gotten to hopelessness, like it's not... I don't know what to do. And she had that talk with me and I came home, and about 24 hours later, got up and thought, "Okay, I don't know what to do, but I know what I'm not going to do," and that is live in a rehab. [chuckle] That's not an option. I've got a son in Nashville, I hopefully will have grandkids one day. I mean I have a life to live, right?

**Jill Rosenau:** I didn't really know what to do, but I knew what I wasn't going to do and that was stay in that condition. So, that talk that I had with my doctor was fairly motivational and got me started on a journey to do something. Shortly after, that, that was in January, and about February, the end of February, I was introduced to life coaching, and I didn't even know it was a thing, I didn't know what it was, but there was someone out there, her name is Corinne, who was teaching weight loss and has a podcast, and I started listening to her and I was like, "She makes sense." I don't know who this crazy woman is, but what she's saying about thinking and weight made so much sense to me that I just jumped into her program. I didn't even really know anything about it, but I was so motivated and what she said made so much sense to me that I didn't care, I was just like, "I'm doing this."

**Jill Rosenau:** So, I started learning how to use my thinking to create results in my life, and that being weight loss, but along with it has totally changed the rest of my life too. Once you change one

area, it just snowballs. That's kind of the short story of how I got there.

**Jill Savage:** You know Jill, as you were sharing that story, I was just thinking of... It's really a direct analogy of what happens in a lot of marriages. Because one or both spouses have the come-to-Jesus conversation with each other. And say, "This can't go on like this. This is not okay. This is not healthy. We're not going to make it unless we do something different."

**Mark Savage:** Yeah. So divorce, in a sense, becomes the amputation discussion, which doesn't fix anything, it just perpetuates the problem without really bringing resolution.

**Jill Savage:** Yeah, because one of the things we say is... Like Mark even talks about when he was so hopeless and he made the decision to leave, and he often says, "The problem is, I took somebody with me and that was me." So, it didn't solve the problem, it would have just continued it in another relationship because of the things he needed to change and the things I needed to change.

**Jill Rosenau:** Yeah, yeah, amputation would have changed my situation, sort of, but it wouldn't have fixed anything. It wouldn't have taught me how to change my mind or change the 400 pounds situation. It would've just put in a different location or whatever. But yeah, that's a really good analogy, I wrote that down. [laughter]

**Jill Savage:** Well, it is. I can just really see that. So, let's talk about what actually changed in your thinking. Can you help us to understand how you actually turned that corner? Because I believe the change in thinking you had for the weight loss, if we do that change of thinking in our marriages, in relationships that are hard or difficult or challenging at times, in just our life, it'll make a huge difference. So help us to better understand that.

**Jill Rosenau:** Sure. So I was under the thinking originally that, and I think it's really pervasive, I see it in a lot of my clients and I just hear it so much and it really bothers me, that thought that we're broken. And I don't believe that. I believe that God created us in his image, that we are not broken, we are inherently whole. And that broken thinking, I had to realize that there was nothing broken about me. There was nothing wrong with me. The first thing my life coach taught me was that, "There's nothing wrong with you. It's your thinking That is off." So that is the only thing we have control over, right? We don't have control over things in our lives that happen or whatever. The only thing we can control is ourselves.

**Jill Rosenau:** The first thing she taught me was this concept, it's called the model, it's called the self-coaching model, and basically it's cognitive behavior therapy put in a model that's useful. So it teaches us that our circumstances in life don't create our feelings. What creates our feelings is our thinking. Our thoughts create what we... What I feel is created by my thinking. So thinking that I'm broken or something's wrong with me just created the feeling of hopelessness, right? So then when we have a feeling, we act out of that; that creates what we do. So when I'm hopeless, what do I do? I do nothing, right? I just sit and I eat, [chuckle] do the things that then create 400 pounds. So I had to learn to see how my thinking was creating the result that I had in my life, and that works in anything, in any relationship, whatever thought we're having is creating whatever we have in our relationships, or in our jobs, or in our parenting, or whatever it is.

**Jill Rosenau:** So, realizing that, "Oh, it's my thoughts that's creating this," was huge. And then realizing, "Wait a minute. I have the power to change that. I can pick what I think. No one has to

ever taught... " I'm like, "Where was this in school?" [chuckle] Why didn't anyone ever teach us this that we can think about what we think about, and then we can change it? You read that Scripture, "Take captive every thought," but that just sounds like... That's impossible. Like what? How do you do that? [chuckle] Right? And it's nice, it's a nice thought, but how do you take captive every thought? And that's what it was missing was the how, and that's what that model that I use now in coaching, in myself, and with people that I help, helps us do is to think about what we're thinking about.

**Jill Savage:** Right, right. So let's talk about some practical ways to do that, so that we do... Like you said, it was missing the how. Because I think many of us do know about that Scripture, "Take your thoughts captive," but how do we do that in the middle of an argument when we're mad at our spouse? Or when we're dealing with a really difficult decision, and...

**Mark Savage:** Mm-hmm. Or we're in a mess and we can't figure out how to get out of it or just there's so much that comes... There's so much power in that Scripture, but it's so confusing as to what to do.

**Jill Savage:** Yeah, so can you give us maybe some practical steps?

**Jill Rosenau:** So the first thing that I learned to do and I still do to this day is what I call a thought download, which is, or a TDL, we call it a TDL for short, but it's basically journaling, or some people call it a "brain dump", but what you're doing is taking what's in your head and putting it on paper. And that's key because people will say to me, "Well do I have to? I don't like to journal. Do I have to write? Can I just put it on my phone? [chuckle] Can I just think about it?" No, because writing it out forces our brain to slow down and process what we're thinking. So every morning, I just take my notebook, my journal, or a scrap piece of paper or whatever is around, if it's in the moment, and I just write down what I'm thinking, write down what I'm thinking. The key is no judgment, right? Because we can think, "Oh, take captive every thought and make it obedient to Christ." So there must be bad thoughts. [chuckle] Those ones that aren't obedient, those are bad. But there's no good or bad. I had to take judgment out. This is what I'm thinking. There's no good or bad thoughts, they're just thoughts, right?

**Jill Rosenau:** And I'm not my thoughts. They just come. They're not... I don't have any control necessarily of what comes into my brain. My control is what I do with it. So, the first step is just to be aware, like we don't even know what we're thinking. I read somewhere we have 60,000 thoughts a day.

**Jill Savage:** Isn't that crazy?

**Jill Rosenau:** There's no possible way. [chuckle]

**Jill Savage:** That you're going to write down 60,000 things...

**Jill Rosenau:** Right, no.

**Jill Savage:** You're just kind of taking maybe a five-minute period.

**Jill Rosenau:** Two to five minutes, just a little bit of time. Sometimes I have longer, whatever, but

it's just in that situation, say I've had an argument with my husband... [chuckle]

**Jill Savage:** I mean, not that you really have, but...

**Jill Rosenau:** Just don't go there, yeah.

[laughter]

**Jill Rosenau:** And taking that and thinking, "What am I thinking right now... "

**Jill Savage:** About him, about us, about the marriage.

**Jill Rosenau:** "About us, about me, about the situation? What are my thoughts?" And just write them down without judgment. And this gets... Once you start to do this process, it kind of goes through phases. At first, it's like sunrise. The sun comes up and you're like, "Oh I can do this. The light bulb goes off, I can control and... " And then as the day goes on, it becomes more natural. And so you get to a point when you practice that you can actually do it in...

**Jill Savage:** In your head.

**Jill Rosenau:** The situation. In the heat of an argument, I can now step back and go, "It's my thoughts, it's my thoughts. I'm thinking I need to stop. What am I thinking right now?" And stop and coach myself in the situation. But that takes practice, and the first step is just becoming aware of what we're thinking. It's a process. By putting it on paper, then I can go back and look and say, "Okay, I've got this paragraph, or this bullet list," or however you like to do it, there's no right or wrong way. Sometimes I just make a list of thoughts. Other times, it's more like a journal, whatever. And I can just take a highlighter and go, "Okay, these are the thoughts I'm thinking. This is what... And I can just pick one. Let's just pick one and see what is this thought creating in my life? What is thinking, 'I wish he wouldn't do that,' or 'He's such a blank'?" [laughter]

**Jill Savage:** Yes, absolutely.

**Jill Rosenau:** "How is that thought serving me?" And be able to look at it, thinking why "broken" was not creating anything good in my life. So, then we can start to say, "Okay, I see this thought. I see I don't like what it's creating for me. So now what?" But that first step is just becoming aware, awareness is huge, without judgment, without shame around it, just the thoughts, taking ourselves out and... Not thinking we're bad for thinking things or whatever, because we can't change what we don't see what we're not aware of.

**Jill Savage:** So, the first step is to really do a thought audit. It's what it is, right, you're doing a thought audit and you can get in the practice of doing that daily, but then also paying attention when you're in a difficult situation, "What's going on inside my head as it relates to right now?"

**Jill Rosenau:** Yeah, yeah. Sometimes you don't know really what the thought is, and what I found is, maybe it just depends on the person, maybe that person is more in tune to what they're feeling. Well, I don't know what I'm thinking right now, but I know I am ticked off. You're aware of that feeling, so you can say, "Okay, I'm feeling this. I know that a thought has to be creating it... Alright, what is this thought? What am I thinking right now?" So sometimes we tune into the feeling first.

We're mad, or we're anxious or we're depressed or we're, whatever, is going on. And then we take a step back and go, "Okay, what am I thinking right now?" And we can start writing. Depending on the situation, you know, anger, frustration, those things tend to grab you first, you know, whatever, but... So sometimes it's just I'm feeling something, something's off, I'm feeling something about my husband or whatever. Let's think about that. What is the thought? Cause it's always, our feelings are always generated by a thought. They don't just... Happen.

**Jill Savage:** I think most of us think the feeling happens first, and then the thoughts come next. But really, it's the thoughts that fuel the feelings.

**Jill Rosenau:** Right, and it's because we're more in tune to the feeling we think the feeling comes first, but we have to back it up. If you look at it, it's always a thought, always, always, always, that's creating, it's just a matter of figuring out what that is. Sometimes it could be several, there could be several things. We have a lot of things going on, but the key to really figuring it out is just pick one. There's no right or wrong. Just pick one thought, one sentence and see how that is playing out for you.

**Jill Savage:** Right. So let's just say that you identify that your thought, like you've got a conflict with your spouse, and your thought, is, "He's so blank, or she's so blank... ", not that we've ever had those thoughts. I'm quite sure. Daily, sometimes, right. Come on. This is keeping things real.

**Jill Rosenau:** Mark doesn't think that.

**Mark Savage:** Okay, yeah. [laughter] Moment by moment.

**Jill Savage:** Let's just say we have that thought, and we recognize it, this is what I'm thinking. So then what do I do with that?

**Jill Rosenau:** What you do with that is, you can then decide. You see what you're thinking, how that's creating frustration or anger, whatever the feeling is, then I think, "Okay, well what am I doing because of that?" Like when I feel frustrated, I feel angry, then I do this. In my marriage, I yell back. I might slam a door. I'm a door slammer. I might just shut down and go to another room, just walk away, whatever. So our feelings will always produce actions, they're either going to be reactions to things, they're going to be things we say, things we do, in response to that feeling. Just becoming aware of, "When I feel this way, this is how I act," and then those actions create what? Distance, they create more tension, they create all the things that I don't want in my relationship, the things. And then I can see, "Okay, it's not him, it's my thinking that's creating so... " In my weight loss journey, in my marriage, the first part of this was taking ownership, taking responsibility that it's not the marriage, it's not him, it's not all these other things, it's my own thinking, it's my own self. And taking ownership that I am creating this and I can also change it, and I choose to do things differently. Does that make sense?

**Jill Savage:** Yeah, it does and that can... One of the things when I first started being intentional about taking thoughts captive, for me, let's just say it's a moment like that. And I can say, I don't know, "He's so clueless, he just, he doesn't pay attention, he doesn't use his brain, whatever." I can have those thoughts and then when I would back that up... [laughter]

**Jill Rosenau:** Sorry, Mark. [laughter]

**Jill Savage:** And then when I would back up...

**Mark Savage:** I'm going to just step out of this moment now. [laughter]

**Jill Savage:** Then I would back that up and then I have to change my thinking, would have to go back to, "What does God say about my husband?" What's the truth? He's not clueless. He has a good brain. His brain doesn't work the same way my brain works. So, he's going to do things differently than I'm going to do things, but what I'm saying to myself about him is a lie, and that's not true. But then if I don't grab hold of that, I begin to disrespect him, I begin... You talk about the actions... And he feels that animosity. And then, ultimately, that doesn't connect us, that puts... Pulls us apart.

**Mark Savage:** Distance between us, yeah.

**Jill Rosenau:** Yeah, there's a funny example of Mark doesn't know this, but he is in it... [chuckle] So, yeah, so Mark, just to go back, he's done a little handy work around our house when you had your business. Mike, my husband Mike has this habit of leaving the cabinets open, he'll go through the kitchen and make his coffee or whatever, and the cabinet doors are open and I'm like, "What? Can you not see that? Can you not shut?" And I would just get so annoyed with that and I'd be like "Dude, shut." He'd be like, "Well, is it that big a deal?" And it would inevitably cause a conflict, right? Every morning I'd come out, so I thought, "Okay," when I started doing this work, I thought, "Alright, here's the thing that really helped me, and that my marriage was realizing that he gets to do whatever he wants to do." He's an adult, he is him, he can be, he can act, he can do anything he wants. As adults, we get to do that, right? We get to do whatever we want to do. But it's up to me to decide how I'm going to handle that. So I come out in the kitchen, and I look at this, I'm thinking, "Okay, we can have a fight because I'm annoyed with this right now, or I can handle it differently and think something different." So, I just choose now to think that it's funny. [chuckle]

**Jill Rosenau:** Now we have this joke, and I'll go. "Oh, honey, do I need to call Mark? This cabinet is broken." [laughter]

**Mark Savage:** It won't close itself.

**Jill Rosenau:** And he'll come out. The first time I did it, he came out here, he was like, "What?" I'm like, "Look," he's like... He shuts it and then we start laughing. I'm like completely different results. So now it's become this joke. Well, now most of the time, he shuts it. Then the joke became, "Do I need to call Mark again? The cabinet is busted again," every morning. He'd be like, well now when it does happen, I'll be like, "That cabin is broken again." He'd be like, "Alright." But it's completely changed and taken just from thinking about it differently and deciding, "Alright, I'm not going to create an issue over this anymore. Is it really that big a deal?" Like, I can change from annoyed and frustrated and creating a problem [chuckle] to just take it out, not make it an issue anymore.

**Jill Savage:** Well, and you know what that makes me think of? We talk in our No More Perfect Marriages book about the eight God tools and the eight God tools are the things that we get to choose to respond to things in our marriage. And we talk about forgiveness and grace and that we need to use the God tool of forgiveness when something hurts us, but we need to use the God tool of grace when something irritates us. And those cabinets irritate you. It irritates you that he doesn't



close it but really, without probably labeling that, you're choosing... Like you said, "I'm choosing to look at it, it's funny, instead of frustrating," using humor instead. As long as that humor isn't like a passive aggressive way.

**Mark Savage:** Right, now wait a minute buddy.

**Jill Savage:** It reminds me of the humor of the time when I shared with you shortly after you came back home and we'd had a rough time and I said, "I had a rough day today." We were rebuilding trust, and I remember saying that I was struggling and particularly thinking a lot about the infidelity that had happened, and Mark was so compassionate, and he was like, "I'm so sorry, I know that this is difficult and I'm so sorry that I hurt you that way, but I want you to know that was your old husband, and we shot him and buried him out back. [chuckle] And this is your new husband and he will never do that to you again." And when I think about what he was really at a Y in the road in that moment because his thinking could have been...

**Mark Savage:** "We've talked about this a hundred times. When are you going to stop?"

**Jill Savage:** Exactly.

**Mark Savage:** And I never did that.

**Jill Savage:** And that was huge. And so, you really took those thoughts captive and you owned what you needed to own, but you chose to think of it in a different way and you threw some humor in there as well.

**Mark Savage:** Yeah, as you were talking, Jill, one of the things that I thought myself in the past regarding my thinking is, "Why do I have to keep wrestling with this, it's a one... I took care of this so it should be done." But it's not, is it? It's sometimes a daily or a moment by moment battle.

**Mark Savage:** Yeah, it would be nice if we could just be done with a thought. It just doesn't work that way. I think it becomes over time, it can become easier and those things can become less often, but our brains are such that those neural pathways are there. So, we can rewrite them, overwrite them and start thinking new things, and believing new things, and stuff but it's still gonna come in from time to time. But the good thing is that you're aware of it and then you can make that choice, and deal with it, and it becomes easier and less intense over time with that work. Yeah, it just doesn't ever go away, necessarily, so yeah, it would be nice.

**Jill Savage:** Yeah, well, it's part of the battle of being human is when our flesh gets in there and just wants to default.

**Mark Savage:** Make war. Yeah, wants to create something.

**Jill Savage:** So that's really powerful. Good, oh, this has been so helpful, and I love your example because really, here you are talking about something that just really frustrates you in your marriage. I love that. [chuckle]

**Mark Savage:** Well, because it's real.

**Jill Savage:** It's real. I mean, I'm going to bet that half the people watching this can think of something that their spouse does like leaving cabinet doors open. Because, and honestly, that's the stuff that also fuels judgment in our heart. I've heard you say that many times as it related to yourself and your own thoughts, no judgment, no judgment, no judgment. But also that can make a difference in recognizing how much judgment is in our head and our heart towards others.

**Jill Rosenau:** Yeah, and for me it was really internalizing and having that new belief that Mike gets to be him, like God created him to be him, and God created me, to be me, and it's all okay, and we're different, but it's fine. And he can be him and I don't have to expect him to be me. [chuckle] I don't have to expect him to react like I would, or do things, shut cabinet doors like I would or whatever. And it just takes... It just, I don't know, it just brings the volume down in the whole relationship. It just lets us be who we are and figure out who we are and lets God work and grow us individually, and it's all good. One time, Mike and I were out to eat and one of those other annoyance things is he eats kind of like a toddler, like he has stuff everywhere and napkins and forks and crumbs and I'm like all neat. And I said to him one day, I'm like, "Making a kind of a mess over there aren't you?" [chuckle] He goes, "How about you let me do me and you do you?" I was like, "Okay, well, there it is."

[laughter]

**Jill Rosenau:** Right there. No answer to that. "Okay, honey, you got it." I don't have to have expectations of him. He can be him, and it's okay. It's just brought so much more peace into our relationship and into our home, just letting us be who we are and who God created us to be. And not that we don't ever have issues. It's not about sweeping things under the rug and avoiding things. It's about we come at it now with a discussion and it's just helping each other just to understand. It's not finger-pointing. It's not whatever. So it's just creating a completely different atmosphere in relationship.

**Jill Savage:** Sounds like it has increased safety.

**Jill Rosenau:** Completely, yes.

**Mark Savage:** Well and I could see too where we think that if we keep hitting people over the head with what we want or we keep things stirred up, eventually they're going to change and conform to our way of thinking. [chuckle]

**Jill Rosenau:** Wouldn't that be really nice?

**Mark Savage:** Oh, yeah.

**Jill Rosenau:** If we could make people do things, I'm all in for that. If I can make him do... Yeah, it just doesn't work. It doesn't work. We can't pound them into it. We can't badger them, belittle them, lecture, it doesn't work with our kids. And it doesn't work with our husbands or our spouses either. It just doesn't.

**Mark Savage:** No. It doesn't.

**Jill Rosenau:** I'd be all over that if it did.

**Jill Savage:** But it does work for you to make changes. It does work for you to pay attention.

**Jill Rosenau:** That's the only thing.

**Jill Savage:** It's it, to what's going... That's why our theme this year is "Change your mind to change your marriage." Really looking at how much, because when I look back, when I think about Mark and Jill 1.0 and Mark and Jill 2.0, and that's how we describe ourselves with our crisis, our nine-year ago crisis in the middle there. And I would say that Mark and Jill 2.0 is really changed the way that we think about each other, the way we think about conflict, the way we think about marriage, the way we think about expectations. I'd say we've greatly decreased judgment. We talk about in our book, "The Slow Fade of Minimizing," and that's judgment. You're either minimizing yourself meaning judging yourself or you're minimizing your spouse meaning you're judging your spouse. You talked about expectations. I mean, gosh, expectations are honestly killing marriages.

**Mark Savage:** Oh my gosh, yeah.

**Jill Savage:** They're killing marriages. And if we can just change our expectations and recognize where it is that we are stifling and strangling our spouse with them.

**Jill Rosenau:** We call that our set of expectations that we have for any relationship? We use for ourselves. I call that a manual. It's like an owner's manual. It's my set of directions of how you should act so it makes me happy. If you would just act this way, then we would be good. What? So what's the problem? [chuckle] The problem is they don't do it. Right? That's my expectations of how... And that really is... It's emotional childhood to be in that frame of mind to just expect people to act the way you want them to so that you can feel good. It's like a toddler having a tantrum. If they don't get what they want, they're going to throw themselves. Well, we don't throw ourselves on the floor anymore, we just get passive-aggressive, and we just do all those games that we play to try and manipulate. So that recognizing those manuals that we have for other people, tuning into that, becoming aware of that. Oh there, that's an expectation I have that you know what, they don't have to do that. They don't have to meet that.

**Jill Savage:** Well, and even I think that the manuals, yes, I love that picture and you can almost visually see that.

**Mark Savage:** Oh, you can.

**Jill Savage:** Like you just broke this rule. It's on page 23 of my manual. [chuckle] I think we also get manuals in like, "ell, a Christian husband wouldn't do this. Or a Christian wife, or as a Christian, you should." And I like to sometimes say, "We should all over each other." We really do. And so is that a lofty goal? Is that something that maybe God wants for us? Possibly, but they're on their own journey, and you're on your own journey. And it's like we leave out the fact that we're on that journey and giving our spouse the space and the grace to learn things at a different time than we learn them.

**Mark Savage:** To let God lead instead of us trying to force, I think is huge. Yeah. When you were talking earlier, Jill, I was thinking that when we... Or even with what you were saying, Jill, about the shoulds, what happens is we get so frustrated because people aren't doing as we are demanding

or expecting, then we... We fall into destructive behavior. Whether it's eating or pornography, or relationships, or hobbies, just all these things that we try to hide behind, because people aren't doing what we want them to.

**Jill Rosenau:** Yeah, yeah, yeah. Our emotions that we don't like, our frustration, our criticalness, our whatever, we don't like what we're feeling, so we turn to other things to drown that out, to give us that... We just buffer away those feelings instead of just learning how to feel them and deal with them in a healthy way, in an adult, in an emotionally adulthood kind of a way. Yeah, definitely.

**Jill Savage:** And to push them in a different direction. I think we don't understand how much power we really have over our thoughts and the ability to push them in a different direction.

**Jill Rosenau:** Right. And then it makes that Scripture take captive every thought, it's like, "Okay. I can start to see how I can do that." God just didn't say it and then for no reason, right? There's got to be a way. We just don't know how it is. And this has helped me to be able, in a very real way, with the model to be able to become aware of what I'm thinking, and then choose... Take a look at that and say, "Okay." And sometimes it's not all about feeling great, it's not all about feeling happy all the time and just changing all our thoughts. Sometimes we can see that, and think, "Okay, well, then if I just change, I can be happy all the time, and we'll just be happy," and whatever. It's not about that, it's about being intentional. And if someone dies, obviously I want to be sad, I want to be heart-broken, I want to have those thoughts that generate that, that obviously. So it's not about always just being happy, it's about choosing what am I going to think and what is the result I want in my life? What kind of marriage do I want?

**Jill Rosenau:** So part of this process, after being married 32 years, there's a lot of baggage that you bring, and you guys know, Mike and I had a discussion about that. "Do we really need to sit down and hash out every time that you've hurt me, or I've hurt you, or this or that, or the other?" What is that? Can't we just acknowledge that we have a past, that we've been through things, not to negate all of that, but let's look at the future like, "What do we want to create together? What do we want our marriage to look like? What do we want to feel about our relationship? Let's work on that." And that's so much more productive and helps us to create then the future that we want together and not just be focused on the past, whatever.

**Jill Savage:** So true. And I have to say, I have... We're not around you guys a whole lot, but the little bit we've been around you individually as well as together, I've seen a huge difference in you guys. And just the feel of your relationship. So, I know that it's making a difference.

**Jill Rosenau:** Definitely.

**Jill Savage:** Yeah. Well, this has been a fabulous conversation.

**Mark Savage:** It has.

**Jill Savage:** And we could probably talk another hour, but that is not gonna work, so...

**Mark Savage:** Another time.

**Jill Rosenau:** Another time.

**Mark Savage:** Yup, that's right.

**Jill Savage:** Oh, but we always ask those that we interview for No More Perfect Date Nights, that since we're talking about date nights, and we encourage couples to set aside time to work on their marriage, to spend time talking without interruption, just connecting. We love to hear about what different people's favorite date night activities are. So do you, or you and Mike, have a favorite activity that you like to do for date night?

**Jill Rosenau:** We do, actually, and it's really simple. Probably kind of boring, but we like it. And actually we just did this Friday night, and we haven't been able to for 14 weeks, because I've been recovering from surgery. And haven't been able to be out. But we, on Friday nights every week, go to Panera. And we take things to read, we take things to do. And he meets me there after work, and we just have dinner, and most of the time it ends up in some kind of conversation about something. We really love that time to just decompress after the week, just we look forward to that just to sit and chill and have dinner, and just talk and reconnect, and so we'll sit there for a couple hours and just, sometimes we're just reading, or sometimes, we're just together. That time is our time. And then Saturday nights, we might go out with another couple, or do something else, but that's ours. We just go to Panera.

**Jill Savage:** I love that! You know what I love about it though, is we talk about advanced decision making and the importance of advanced decision making, and you guys have just made an advanced decision. You know...

**Mark Savage:** You've got your Friday night.

**Jill Savage:** What Friday night looks like. And so you just do it, it works for you, and it's not like every week you're going, "Well, what are we going to do this week?" You know what you're going to do.

**Jill Rosenau:** Yeah, and as empty nesters, we can do all kinds of things now, but we just, we really missed it. We both said, when we haven't done it now for a few months, we were like, "I miss Panera. So, let's go there Friday night." It was good, getting back into the swing.

**Mark Savage:** Oh, that's so good.

**Jill Savage:** Oh, that's great. Very exciting. Alright, well this has been an excellent conversation. Thank you for sharing your wisdom, your time, your journey. I think it has, it's going to really help lay the foundation for what we're talking about this year.

**Jill Rosenau:** Well, thank you for having me. It's been super fun to hang out with you guys.

**Jill Savage:** Yeah, absolutely. Well, this is Mark and Jill Savage along with Jill Rosenau, and we are signing off with a reminder that a real marriage isn't perfect. A real marriage is two people being perfected. Thanks for joining us.

**Mark Savage:** Yeah. See ya.

