

Be Comfortable with Awkward

No More Perfect Date Night

[music]

Mark Savage: So many of us think that it's information that will change us. If we just learn more, we'll have the marriage we want, but that's not how it works.

Jill Savage: The formula for change is information plus application equals transformation. And today, we wanna talk to you about one beatitude of change, that is a part of that application process. And that is, be comfortable with awkward.

MS: But that is so hard.

JS: It's so awkward.

MS: It is.

[laughter]

MS: It is. It's so awkward.

JS: So we recently shared that we need to be open to learning new skills, and we talked about how learning new skills may cause us to feel inept, but that's a part of learning new skills, so let's take it a little further today to actually being comfortable with being awkward, and that's hard. But when we want something different in a relationship, we have to stop doing the same things we've been doing. What do they say? Like, "If you keep doing the same things that you've been doing and getting the same results, that's insanity."

MS: Yeah.

JS: And that's what happens in marriage, we say we don't like the results we're getting, but we don't do anything differently.

MS: Right, we keep falling back into old ruts, old patterns, and it's almost like they have a stronghold on us, and we say we don't like it, but we just slide easily into it.

JS: Right. And so, what we wanna do is we wanna create a new normal. That's what our goal is, is to create a new normal, and when we use different strategies, especially ones that don't come naturally, it will feel very uncomfortable.

MS: It'll feel awkward.

JS: Even embarrassing at times, because remember we're riding that bike with some training wheels again. So we hear this a lot, especially when we teach couples how to have safe conversations, we do that in our No More Perfect Marriages seminars. We do that in No More Perfect Date Night. We talk about it in our coaching, and oftentimes people will say, "This feels really awkward," 'cause we're asking them to talk to their spouse in a way that's very different, and it felt awkward to us...

MS: It totally did.

JS: When we first started it.

MS: It was very foreign.

JS: It felt very stiff. Even I'll go as far as to say insincere, because we were learning a new skill. Go back to the bike analogy that we used last month, you jump onto a bike and you start riding and you are very, very comfortable. Okay? But if you're just learning to ride that bike, it doesn't flow so easily.

MS: No. Just recently, we were out on a walk/bike ride with our granddaughter, and what was it? Just this past spring?

JS: Yeah. So just probably four months ago, she had actually just learned how to ride her bike, and now she's just like...

MS: She gets on the bike and takes off and she's riding all around, and it's just incredible, but it's the same way in marriage that when we learn a new skill, we have to get through that awkward, we have to push through the awkward to create that new normal.

JS: So we had to learn to slow down our communication, really slow it down, and that felt awkward, it felt foreign, it felt inefficient, let's be really honest.

MS: It did. Let's get it done, come on. Let's get it going. Let's move on.

JS: Yeah. Another thing that we had to learn how to do is we had to stop trying to solve too many issues in one conversation, and so now we resolve one issue in one conversation. So let's just say that we're having a dialogue about something, I don't know, I'm struggling with something. In the past, Mark would add his struggle into that conversation. Now, we keep it focused on my struggle, even if my struggle is something to do with him, we keep it focused on that, and then you wait another day to put your struggle on the table, or later in the day or a completely different conversation.

JS: Again, it feels so awkward to walk away. So there's a different sense of accomplishment, because what we're used to doing is we're gonna resolve this problem, okay, we're gonna solve it, or we're gonna get all of our issues out on the table, but now our sense of accomplishment, we walk away like if I... Let's just say you put something on the table, and I am responding to it, I'm using reflective listening, I'm hearing you well, I'm letting you know that I've heard you well. And I'm

going to walk away with a sense of accomplishment that I just affirmed you, heard you well, listened to your heart and responded appropriately to it.

MS: Right. And I've learned to do the same and, gosh, that has just been so powerful.

JS: Right. But it feels really awkward to walk away and to have not put my issue on the table at the same time.

MS: Right. Well, and it feels very awkward that it's not totally resolved, but our old way of just dumping it all on the table, it's like we made this huge mess, everybody was hurt and ticked and beside ourselves, and we got nowhere.

JS: Exactly. So that was a place that we had to learn to be okay with awkward. I mentioned reflective listening, we had to learn to reflect what the other person was saying rather than respond to what they were saying, and this allows our spouse to be heard, but it feels so awkward and so inefficient, that is reality. So here's another one, we've had to learn how to push information that we often felt like in the past, the other person should just know or even shouldn't need to know. Like, "Why should I have to tell my spouse that? They don't have to know every single thing." So it really, what this has done is it's challenged our assumptions and our incorrect thinking, and honestly, it doesn't feel good to have our assumptions challenged or our incorrect thinking challenged, it feels awkward.

MS: Yeah.

JS: So we have to, if we want to have transformation in our relationship, if we wanna have transformation on our marriage, we need to start with information, we need to understand how we need to grow, how we need to change. We need to understand the ruts we're in, and what a different direction looks like, but we have to be willing to apply it in real time, in real life. So applying what we learn is necessary for us to make the changes that we know we need to make and in order to do that, you'll need to take your information and apply it by learning to be comfortable with awkward. After all, you'll need to push through awkward to get to that new normal.