

“How Do I Save My Marriage?”

By Sonika Tinker & Christian Pedersen,
Founders of LoveWorks!



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Both are Certified Mediators, relationship experts and the founders of LoveWorks, a relationship training company offering cutting-edge relationship solutions.

They have over 35 years combined experience empowering singles and couples to create passionate, intimate, inspiring lives and relationships through live trainings, online programs, free videos and customized coaching sessions. See more at loveworksforyou.com.

Mark was desperate! His marriage of 16 years had disintegrated. He and his wife, Lana, the mother of their four children, had split up 8 months ago. He moved out. He still loved her, and he never stopped hoping they could fix it somehow, or that she'd love him again. But he didn't have much hope left.

The last few years had been hell. Endless arguments. Screaming at each other in front of the kids. Both he and Lana felt terrible afterwards for what the kids must be experiencing, but they couldn't stop fighting.

They'd tried counseling. He'd gone to men's groups. They both pursued personal growth the best they could. They had talked and talked, and yelled and screamed and argued. But the stark reality was that he was now living somewhere else, not with his family. He was determined to not give up. He kept trying to better himself. He read books on love and relationships. But no matter what options he pursued, no results. No opening with Lana.



In resignation, he'd begun dating other women, and he knew Lana had seen other men, too. He hated the thought of her being with someone else. All he wanted was his wife and children back.

From a friend, he heard about a love and relationship training called 'Give Yourself to Love', which surprisingly took place in an old mining town in the Sierra Foothills of Northern California. He figured, why not? He clearly had much

to learn in the relationship department. At the very least, he was sure he didn't want his next relationship to go the way his marriage had. So he signed up.

At the training, he was in for a surprise. For one, he noticed he was by no means alone. He met couples there trying to repair their marriages and other single men and women like himself who didn't want to keep making the same mistakes when it came to love. Turns out many people were struggling in love, just like he was.

Secondly, he was shocked by what he learned! He discovered that how he and Lana had tried to straighten out their problems had totally backfired, actually made things worse! The facilitators laid out very clearly

how the best efforts of most couples do nothing but dig them deeper into disconnection and despair.



They shared a totally different view on how to go about love and relationship, how to treat and talk to each other, and how go about getting your needs met.

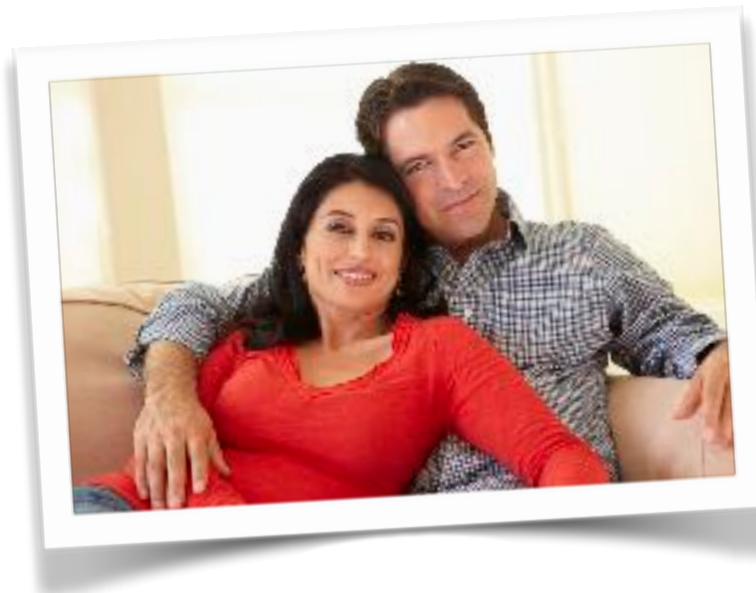
He was blown away when he left the training, head spinning and heart reeling. His spirits were higher than they had been for months. He felt positive and hopeful like he hadn't felt for a very long time. He'd gotten a glimpse of a brand new possibility with Lana, and was eager to try something new. There was one particular tool they taught, called "Going for The Opening" that stuck with him.

With his newfound hope and skills, he went back to talk to Lana, quite carefully. He didn't push her or make demands, just shared little bits and pieces of what he'd learned. For several months, he practiced what he had learned, and approached her with love. She liked what she saw. After a few months, he invited her to come do the same training, Give Yourself to Love. She accepted. They attended Give Yourself to Love together.

Fast forward six months

Lana & Mark are in love again. Mark is back in the house and happy to be back home with his wife and children. Their sex, communication and intimacy is better than it's ever been. All talk of dating others is silenced. Their love and partnership is restored to a strength greater than before their troubles began. The turning point was doing Give Yourself to Love together.

They were so inspired by what opened for them after learning a new way to do love and relationship, that they took a few more trainings with the same facilitators, Sonika & Christian. They went to a course called the Gift of Conflict and figured out how to deal with their conflicts and problems, how to face the intense emotions, and how to work out real win-wins. Through the Heart of Relating home-study course, they discovered how to offer apologies and forgive each other for past hurts. They went to the Possibilities of Sex training and excitedly revived the fiery passion that had been dulled by arguments and disconnection. Lana said afterwards, "We



have better sex now than when we met!” And they went to the Energy Dance, where they learned how to deal with and appreciate the unique qualities of men and women, and how to keep the electric spark and magnetism between them alive!

Of course, the million-dollar question is ...

How did they do it? How did they turn around a marriage that had all but faltered? How did they make it better and stronger and hotter than ever before?

7 Steps To Save Your Marriage

1. Abandon the “Ways of Old”
2. Learn a new set of relationship skills
3. Revive your love and intimacy
4. Bring out the best in yourself and your partner
5. Restore and revitalize sex and physical affection
6. Understand each other’s differences
7. Move as partners and as a team

We’re going to give you the 7 steps that Lana & Mark went through. It’s of course a process that takes dedication and time (around 4-6 months in their actual case), but in very simple terms, here are the 7 steps to save your marriage.

That was just the bullet list, now let's go into more detail.

Step #1: Abandon the “Ways of Old”. Give up the fight

It's a big step to finally come to the realization that what you've been doing up until this point is no longer working. How long have you been trying to fix it, without the results you're looking for? Months? Years? In many cases, it's several years! Like Mark & Lana, they'd been trying for at least 3 or 4 years to save their marriage! (Which amounted to the real-life version of Einstein's famous definition for insanity: Doing the same thing over and over again, hoping for different results.)

If you knew how to fix your relationship and bring your love and intimacy back, you would have done it already. So the first step is to let go of trying the same-old-same-old, and admit you need new and better options. It's like you're saying to each other, *“OK, we want to make it work, and we clearly don't know how. Let's get some fresh input”*.



For some, it's also a matter of being willing to get help, period! There are two steps to getting successful help, and both need to be fulfilled.

- 1) Admit you need help and seek out support.
- 2) Find the right help that works for you.

Most couples wait far too long before seeking out help. (We heard one estimate that said it's normal for couples to stay an average of 6 years in a state of stress and disconnection before getting help!)

We live in a culture that values Do-It-Yourself independence. Seeking help is often seen as a weakness, especially for men. I can testify to this myself. When I was younger, I did not seek out help about love and relationships before I was so miserably in pain there was no other alternative ... I took pride in handling it myself. Unfortunately, this stance doesn't work, and it is also a lie. It actually takes great courage and strength to get support and learn a new way to do things!

Important note: In a marriage, you don't have to *agree* that you have a problem before you seek help. If ONE of you feels there is something wrong or that you need help, you need help. Don't wait for both of you to agree. One unhappy partner means an unhappy marriage.



Now, once a couple decides to get help, the first step is typically to go to a marriage counselor or therapist. And if that worked out for you, awesome! Chances are it didn't work out as much as you would like since you're reading this e-book. According to the psychologist and relationship counselor, Dr Henry Grayson, "Several studies actually show that only 30-35 % of people

in traditional marriage counseling find it helpful in the long run..." So keep looking till you find the right help for you.

Sonika & I teach a unique, uplifting system and relationship philosophy that we invented ourselves because we weren't satisfied with the efficiency of what was available out there. It is not uncommon for couples who have already pursued traditional routes of support, to find they still need help.

That's what we're here for.

Step #2: Learn a new set of relationship skills.

Marriage, sex, and parenting are the three areas of life where we expect ourselves to be consistently successful with no training whatsoever! In any other endeavor, we expect to have to learn and receive education and mentoring in order to be skilled and effective. What do you do when you want to learn a new trade or a new sport? You figure out how get the education and training you need. Relationship is no different, except we think we don't need training, so we basically wing it year after year.

It's not entirely true that most of us have NO relationship training. In fact, we've all completed three courses in our relationship education.

1) The first course you took was designed and taught by your parents. It started the moment you were born, and continued non-stop for at least 18 years. Today, if you got the chance,



would you sign up for a relationship course designed and taught by your parents? (And don't forget, if you are a parent, your children are currently enrolled in YOUR relationship course).

2) The second course in your relationship education was developed by Hollywood. It started the first time you got planted in front of a TV, and most likely it's continuing to this day. How much time did you spend in front of a TV, age one



to 18? Thousands of hours? There are many wonderful things you can praise Hollywood for, but their relationship skills and teachings are not among them. For example, have you ever noticed, that in romantic movies, the movie ENDS where the relationship BEGINS?

3) The third relationship course you took was the one taught by your high school peers. Who, as a general rule, are just as confused and tripped-out on hormones as you were at that age. Sonika & I have teenagers. Their parents are relationship specialists. Who do you think they want to learn their relationship lessons from? You guessed it:-)

When you consider that we all share this relationship education, it is perhaps not so strange that all couples run into problems sooner or later.

The good news is that the skills required to save a marriage, and to keep a marriage alive and loving, are entirely learnable. Some key skills we teach and which you must learn in order to repair or maintain your relationship:

- ❖ How to identify what you truly want in your relationship, and to go for it without producing resistance in your partner
- ❖ How to diagnose precisely what is upsetting you and quickly resolve problems at their source
- ❖ How to connect with your Love for each other, anytime, anywhere
- ❖ How to create true win-wins from your differing wants and needs
- ❖ How to talk so you'll be heard, and how to listen so you'll be included
- ❖ How to use your conflicts and challenges to make you stronger instead of tearing you apart

Our Give Yourself to Love event, which turned it around for Lana & Mark, will teach you most of these skills, and a lot more we haven't talked about. You are going to know what to do the next time you run into a relationship upset. How great is that? Truth is, you'll be in relationship forever, so why not get good at it now? Let every relationship benefit from here on out!

Step #3: Revive your love and intimacy

Love is what brought you together. Love is what's kept you together, through ups and downs. You may not feel very loved when you're in crisis, but it is still there, under the surface, waiting to be rekindled.



Think of the moments where you do feel love. Big calendar-worthy moments like when you got married, or when your first child was born, or when you bought your first home. Or the everyday moments that will never make it to your calendar, but are equally filled with sweet love.

When he surprised you with breakfast in bed. When she told you she still loved you, even though you made a mistake. When you see her in the kitchen, bustling about, and your heart is full. Or when you see him taking your child's hand in a move of fatherly love and protection.

And then there's intimacy. Too often, your intimacy gets less, not more, over time. If you've gotten to the point where you wonder if your marriage will last, chances are your intimacy is suffering severely. Do you tell each other how you really feel? Do you hold hands and look in each other's eyes? Are you on the same team with your challenges?

When love and intimacy suffer, everything suffers. Your marriage goes downhill fast. So it is imperative that you find a way to reconnect with that love, and to revitalize your intimacy, especially in times of hardship, because that's when you really need it! And when you can connect in love, even when you have disagreements, then your chances of successfully dealing with your legitimate problems are a thousand times better! (Often, traditional marriage counseling focuses on fixing your problems so that you can get back to your love. We take the approach of connecting you to love first. From there, half of your problems fall away by themselves, and the other half can actually be dealt with).

For Mark & Lana, one of the first turning points came when they both attended our Give Yourself to Love workshop together (remember, Mark had attended on his own first). They got to bust through



the wall of their separation and connect in love again. And make note that this was before they had “solved” all their problems. We put them back in love FIRST, and from there, they all of a sudden saw hope and possibility. From this new vantage point of connection and love, Mark & Lana could take on their problems together as partners.

Step #4: Bring out the best in yourself and your partner

Remember when you first fell in love, how your partner looked like a superstar to you? So beautiful, so handsome, so lively, so wise, so kind, so generous, so sexy, so attractive, so attentive, so Remember?

In the beginning, we tend to default to seeing the best in our partner, and our partner brings out the best in us. But years down the line, couples often default to bringing out and seeing the WORST in each other. What is up with that?

There are many reasons for this change, but a good question to ask yourself is this: Did my partner really change? Or did I change how I see my partner?

After working with thousands of couples, our answer is unequivocally YES! You did change how you see your partner! That’s not to say your partner didn’t also change, they surely did (we all change), but more than that, YOU changed how you see your partner over time.

In the beginning, we feel so loved and adored by our partner. All our needs are met, so it’s easy to look at him/her with loving eyes. But as time goes on, we

begin to feel our needs aren't met, so we get more critical in our view. After we've heard a few, "Do you HAVE to do that?", or "I wish you would just ...", it becomes easier and easier to see that our partner is unsupportive or critical or aggressive.

And there's an interesting phenomenon that happens in our brains. As soon as you've seen one instance of, say, your partner criticizing you, it becomes ten times easier to see it the next time. And the next time. And the next ...

Try an experiment right now ...

Look around. Just take in your surroundings with your eyes.

Okay, now look around again. Only this time, look specifically for the color red. Pick out any red color you can see.

Did you notice all the red the first time? Did you notice as much red the first time?

Chances are on the second look, you noticed a lot more red. The reason you saw more red the second time is you told your brain to find all the red. So it did.

And this is what happens in our brains with our partner. Once you've seen that "annoying behavior" once or twice, your brain looks for it again, and finds it, too.

The truth is we all have it in us to be kind and beautiful and powerful, and we all have it in us to be angry, petty, and unreasonable. Which



parts you see more of in your marriage depends of which parts you individually, and as a couple, bring out in each other.

It's essential to find a way to see the best in each other. Because if you don't, you both feel "boxed up" into a negative, unbecoming "box" that you can't get out of. Did you ever have the feeling that no matter what you do, your partner still sees you a certain way?

At our Give Yourself to Love weekend, we teach a powerful technique for identifying and connecting with your own and your partner's "Full Potential". This strategy allows you to literally start over fresh, so you can move forward towards creating a new relationship together, unburdened by the hurts and regrets of your past.

When you start to see the best in one another, you will begin to have real hope for your future again. This is a major step in the "recovery" process for any marriage on the rocks and will put you back on the right track again.

Step #5: Restore and revitalize sex and physical affection

Dr. Kerner, PhD, international sex expert, therapist and best-selling author of several books on sex, says:

"In my experience, when couples stop having sex their relationships become vulnerable to anger, detachment, infidelity and, ultimately, divorce. Without it [sex], couples become 'good friends' at best, or 'bickering roommates' at worst."

The problem with sex getting scarce or robotic is not just that you miss out on the benefits and pleasures directly associated with sex. It's much worse than that. It spills over to every area of your marriage, which becomes more likely to end in "anger, detachment, infidelity and, ultimately, divorce".

Dr Kerner adds, and this is completely in line with our experience, that "***sex is the glue that keeps the relationship together***".

We don't need sex just because it's wonderful and sensual. The physical act of sex and affection connects us in a way that hardly anything else can. Where else are we literally and metaphorically so naked and close to one another? Sex creates a bond stronger than any spoken words. There have even been studies to suggest that when a couple has sex, partners bond hormonally to each other (with varying strength and length for men and women). Many couples say that sex is like a re-set button for their relationship, returning both to connection and love.



We sometimes say, humorously, but also with a grain of seriousness ...

"Unless you've taken a vow of celibacy, a lack of good, frequent sex in your relationship is a problem for your marriage."

When we use the word “sex”, we don’t just mean intercourse. The fact that many couples, and particularly men, see sex as intercourse only is one of the culprits for sex going downhill. Sex is physical affection. Sex is touching each other. Sex is giving and receiving pleasure, in any number of ways, to your partner and to yourself. Sex is lying naked together, looking into each other’s eyes while you have an intimate conversation, and much much more. (This is why we have devoted a whole weekend training just to sex!)

Even if you haven’t had sex for ten years, your sex and affection can be restarted! We know, because we’ve helped many couples do just that - couples who hadn’t slept in the same bedroom for ten years and thought sex was dead, and couples who said, “Sex is not important to us. We love each other, but we just don’t have chemistry together”. You can revive and spice up your sex life from wherever you are. It’s just a matter of gaining new understandings, skills and starting from a place that feels safe and manageable to you.

Step #6: Understanding each other’s differences



Does your partner drive you nuts with his/her personality and habits? Does the opposite gender puzzle you to no end? When you hear your wife talking at length about a social situation, which to you, the man, has no meaning whatsoever, do you ever think, “What’s the point?” Or when you, the woman, sees

your partner watching sports for hours, seemingly oblivious to you, do you ever think, *“Is there ANYTHING going on in there?”*

Even if experts and science had never uttered a single word about the differences between men and women, we all know they exist. We are not the same. Unfortunately, men expect women to be like men, and women expect men to be like women, and both are extremely disappointed that this is not the case. How can we be aware of these differences and use them to create connection and compassion instead of separation and judgment?

Sonika & I are very different people. Some of our differences can be attributed to gender, but just as many to us being two different human beings with each our unique set of preferences and desires and oddities.

As an example, Sonika’s personality is accommodating, flexible, and understanding. I am by personality demanding, precise, and stick-to-what-you-said kind of stubborn. We could have used this as evidence that we’re not compatible. But we used our own tools – and still do – to incorporate all these attributes into our union, which is a hundred times stronger because of it.

A note about different vs. equal: We often assume being different is the same as being unequal.

Today, the genders are much closer (even if not there yet) to being equal in terms of power and opportunity – which obviously is a great victory for society – but a side effect of this development is that it’s become



harder to be “different”. When our differences disappear in our marriages, so does much of what made us attracted to each other in the first place.

From our point of view, equality is a matter of course and our differences are a given. So how do we make the best of it? One of the founding tenets of our philosophy is the ability to USE everything that shows up to our advantage. That is true for our conflicts, our partner’s annoying behaviors, the lack of sex, and our differences.

When you get really good at this, and you figure out how to not get annoyed by your partner’s differences, you can even have fun and a good laugh over your differences.

Step #7: Move as partners, as a team

Some couples naturally work together as a team and some don’t. Some couples used to, but don’t anymore. And then there are couples who are great at “taking care of business” together, but have lost all the spark and excitement, and are more like business partners or room mates.

The sense of being on a team where someone has your back and helps carry the burdens of life is one of the qualities we miss most sorely when it’s not there. Being on a team produces a tremendous sense of safety and security and allows you to be so much more confident in the face of hardships.

Unfortunately, the sense of working as a team is also one of the first things to go when your marriage is in trouble. Think about it, this is often what constitutes the

crisis in the first place, that you feel you're NOT on the same page, that you're NOT working as a team. Sometimes you even feel as if you're adversaries.

When your spouse transforms from being your lover and best friend to your adversary, it creates great stress in your body, mind, and soul. Here's the one person in the world you (used to) trust the most, who knows more about you than your mother, and with whom you've shared so much love, intimacy, and sex, and now this person seems to be against you!

For Mark & Lana, losing the sense of being a team was one of the most painful aspects of watching their marriage deteriorate. It was like losing their best friend. On the happy flipside, it was one of the aspects of life they began to be really grateful for once they figured out how to come back together. When



they gained the tools to restore their love, intimacy, and sense of “we're in this together”, their world was right again.

Mark & Lana are not unique in having difficulties that almost killed their marriage. After all, you've probably heard that in America, the divorce rate is hovering around 50%. That's half of everybody! Not even counting couples in long-term relationships who aren't legally married. Something is wrong with that statistic. And that's only for first-time marriages, by the way.

According to Psychology Today in 2012 (and other sources), the divorce rate for second marriages is 67%! For third marriages, it's a mind-boggling 73% (which means we don't get better at it the second or third time, on the contrary)!

What is perhaps unique about Mark & Lana is they didn't totally give up, even though it was close, and they were willing to keep looking till they found a body of work that actually helped them out.

But it wasn't magic. It wasn't luck. It was using a proven way to reconnect in love, and learning an effective and uplifting set of new tools to work out the kinks.

Mark and Lana's starting point was [Give Yourself to Love](#), a 2-day relationship experience like none other. It's our signature mixture of direct love experience and practical tools for reconnecting and dealing with the unpleasant stuff.

If you want to find out more about Give Yourself to Love, go to our dedicated page at www.lovethebest.com/gytl (see if you can recognize yourself in the couples dynamic we demonstrate on the video).

If you would like to see what others have said about their journey with us, check out our Testimonials page at www.lovethebest.com/testimonials.

One more thing

This is true story of a real married couple, by now good friends of ours (although their real names aren't Mark & Lana).

Here's what real-life "Mark" said:

"My wife and I found Christian and Sonika's program at just the right time. We thought we had the tools and resources to get past our sticking points and yet we still struggled.

Christian and Sonika are masterful at creating a super safe environment where my wife and I could be open and vulnerable to do powerful and transformational inner work."

*"In the trainings we attended, my wife and I have come away with applicable communication tools and models that are amazing in deepening our love for each other. The empowering perspective they share allows us to see each other in our full potential and really experience the magnificence of one another. **It's like being inspired newlyweds all over again after 20 years of marriage.**"*

Here's to saving your love and marriage and keeping it strong for years to come!

Sonika & Christian



[Click here to check out](#)
[Give Yourself to Love](#)

P.S. Remember ... Love does work:-)