

Can Mere Thoughts Ruin a Marriage?

by Brad Miller

If you have been married for more than a few years, then you already know each of you has some brokenness from your past. Most of the time, you need outsiders, or trusted individuals, who know you to speak truth, wisdom, and healing into your lives. If you have allowed others this privilege in your life, then you are already aware of some things you should be working to improve.

One of the ways in which many of us can improve ourselves and our marriage is to understand and reign in our private thoughts. The thoughts and ideas that you allow to take up space in your head, will impact the way you relate to others and especially the way you treat your spouse. After all, ideas have consequences, and bad ideas have victims. At this point, it is almost too obvious to talk about the **17 million people who were killed** under the Nazi Germany regime, and how this all started with an idea that somebody believed to be true. Let that sink in for a moment.

| “Ideas have consequences, and bad ideas have victims.”

Let's get back to how this all applies to you. If you have had trouble your entire life believing that you are unloveable, for example, you will convince yourself that the people around you do not and cannot truly love you. You will reason that they are trying to get something out of you or use you. Their best attempts at sincerely loving you will start to feel to them that they are never enough for you since you won't receive them as the genuine love these other people are intending. And when one or more of these well-intentioned people who was trying to love you starts to back away because they can feel the walls you have put up, you will say to yourself, “I was right all along. I am unloveable.” Tami and I have personally seen this in our work with couples and it is painful to watch as well as painful to recall even now.

What about you? Are you allowing yourself to believe lies about yourself or your spouse? There is a good chance that you are, and if so, it is hurting your relationship more than you realize.

Below is a list of some common lies that people believe, followed by a healthy reframe of that thought. A “reframe” is when you are intentional to take that thought captive (2 Corinthians 10:5) and re-word it in such a way that it draws you into a relationship (your marriage, in this case) instead of pushing you away or causing you to isolate.

THE LIE: “Our kids would be better off if we were divorced.”

REFRAME: Not true, your kids will be better off when you learn how to forgive and love in better ways than you currently do. This is possible!

THE LIE: “My spouse shows whether they love me or not when they behave/act in the ways I expect them to.”

REFRAME: This view is too controlling and full of unrealistic expectations.

THE LIE: “My spouse should be able to handle whatever I say to them as long as I believe it is true.”

REFRAME: Words are powerful and can breathe life into a person or destroy them. Ephesians 4:49 [NLT] says it this way, “Don’t use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them.”

THE LIE: “I am only valued for producing children or for sex.”

REFRAME: God places profound value in the worth of a person. Believing anything less is a lie.

THE LIE: “When my spouse is angry or frustrated, it is because I am unloveable.”

REFRAME: If your spouse gets angry or frustrated, then they either have a trigger they need to manage, or a concern to share with you. Both of these can be done without berating the other.

THE LIE: “It is my spouse’s responsibility to help me resist porn and sexual sin.”

REFRAME: God will hold each of us to be accountable for our own actions, what we did and did not decide to do.

THE LIE: “I am only loved when I do certain things.”

REFRAME: You may have convinced yourself that this feels true, but it is very unhealthy thinking. Does another person determine if you can be loved, or do you?

THE LIE: “It is my spouse’s responsibility to _____, so I am not triggered.”

REFRAME: A person who cannot control their own triggers and the thoughts that come from those triggers will resort to trying to control the behavior of others as a way to minimize their own pain. This is unhealthy for everyone involved.

THE LIE: “I am only asking for a few hours of peace and rest each night in my home. Is that too much to ask?”

REFRAME: Be the peace that walks in the door. Be the grace in your home. Be the calm in your home.

THE LIE: “All I am asking for from my spouse/kids is _____.”

REFRAME: This thinking implies that what you are requiring/expecting is not too much to ask; that you deserve _____. This is a set up for frustration and anger.

Controlling your own thoughts and whether you choose to believe what feels true in the moment, but may not be, may be your biggest challenge. Work on understating the thoughts/beliefs in your own head. Write them down and reframe them in a way that promotes oneness in marriage (God’s intent), instead of letting them become a wedge. One way to learn how to reframe messages is by believing the best about yourself or others. Can you do that? Do you know how to do that?

If you have a negative thought that you cannot reframe, send it to us using our contact form and we will try to help you reframe it. Would we really do that for you? Yes, we would.

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