

Freedom:

The power to act, speak, or think without hindrance.



The dictionary definition of freedom fits with how marriage *should* be - the power to act, speak, or think without hindrance. It fits with God's original design of marriage as we see in Genesis 2:25; "Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame." They both were able to act and speak freely, without hindrance. Most couples do not have this freedom with each other as I experienced some time ago when my wife and I presented a seminar at a church. A man approached me later and said, "The transparency you and your wife have speaking to this group, I wish I had with my wife." He had been married for more than 40 years!

There are two aspects to having this freedom in our marriages; first, that we must be able to act, speak, or think without fear of judgment, put down, or being invalidated. Too often when one spouse shares thoughts or feelings, the other will say something like, 'you shouldn't feel that way.' Or, 'that's dumb.' Or the spouse will get defensive or argue that their thoughts or feelings are wrong. They are not validated and will feel disrespected and discredited. It tears down the relationship rather than builds it up. We need to validate our spouses; communicating that their thoughts and feelings are *legitimate* for them.

The second aspect is that we must be *willing* to share our thoughts and feelings. Often, one spouse or the other will say something to the effect of, 'I'm just a quiet person, I don't like to talk a lot.' They will often withdraw into themselves and not communicate with their spouse, especially, if conflict might take place. The two becoming one, *requires* that we move out of our comfort zone and seek to connect with our spouse by openly speaking about what is on our heart and mind.

It can be a challenge to build this kind of freedom into a marriage relationship. My wife and I have worked very hard to develop this in our marriage. I have to push myself to open up with her and both of us have had to stop judging and truly hear what the other person has to say. Do you have this freedom in your marriage? Can you act, speak, or think without hindrance? Without fear of judgment or being put down? Do you take time to truly connect with your spouse, speaking from your heart? It may require the help of a Christian counselor, but *you* can have this freedom!

Helpful Resources: *Fortified Marriages Resource page:* www.fortifiedmarriages.com

The *Fortified Marriages Manual and Workbook* is a great tool to help couples connect with each other and develop *freedom* in their marriage relationship.

Other resources:

How to Be Transparent in Your Marriage by Andrew Linder - www.allprodad.com

Living a High Definition, Transparent Marriage by Lynne Thompson - www.focusonthefamily.com