

Practice

Exercise a skill repeatedly to improve one's proficiency



The old saying goes that “practice makes perfect.” But Dr. James Richards writes that; ‘Practice doesn’t make perfect, practice makes permanent.’ Oh, how we have seen this in our marriages! Repeatedly exercising poor relationship skills has made them a permanent part of our marriage relationships and it often seems like there is no end to pain and hurt caused by these unhealthy habits. Changing patterns in our lives *is* difficult, but we *can* do it! It requires exercising positive relationship skills repeatedly until they become a permanent part of our lives and our relationships.

It is making a choice to do whatever it takes to change ourselves and to behave the way the Lord would want us to - by our identity as a son or daughter of our Heavenly Father. I think of the definition of insanity quote; ‘insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results.’ Friends, we *must* step out of what has been the norm and do something different, something positive to see change in our marriage relationships! Paul wrote in 1Corinthians 15:10; “By the grace of God, I am who I am, and His grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them, yet, not I, but the grace of God that was with me.” We can do it, but it requires work on our part.

Improving our proficiency with *positive* relationship skills requires that, *first* we make the decision that we are going to change. *Then* we must find the relationship tools or practices that will help us change. Then we must repeatedly exercise those tools or practices. Write it on a 3X5 card, put post-it notes around the house, memorize a helpful Scripture; do whatever you need to do to begin changing a negative practice into a positive skill. I won’t tell you that ingrained negative habits are easy to change - I will tell you that in Christ, you can do anything and you *can* make the changes needed to improve your marriage relationship. Get an accountability partner; your spouse would be the first choice, but that may not be feasible at first. Find someone who will challenge you, but also will encourage you to make the changes you desire. Practice the new positive skill until it becomes a permanent part of your life.

Helpful Resources:

Fortified Marriages Resource page: www.fortifiedmarriages.com - The Fortified Marriages Manual & Workbook is a great resource to help strengthen your marriage.