

MARRIAGE RE•CALL

REMEMBER | REPAIR | RELOVE

52 WEEKLY REMINDERS
on how to love during
the everyday of life



CHUCK FALLON

WORDS ABOUT *MARRIAGE RECALL*

“What a great book! It’s filled with so much valuable information that, although it’s divided into weekly sections, you’ll be tempted to read the whole book at once. You won’t want to wait for next week’s installment. Whether you want to repair a broken marriage or revitalize a fairly solid one, this book will lead the way.”

Michele Weiner-Davis

Director of The Divorce Busting Center, marriage therapist, professional speaker and best-selling author

“We all need skills to chart an easier course in our marriage relationships. Chuck provides these coaching resources by giving real-life stories and concrete methods to help maneuver through relationship challenges. If your relationship is stagnant and needs a re-boot or is good, but you want to make it better, I recommend this book. You and your marriage are worth the weekly focus provided.”

Stephen Arterburn

Founder and chairman of New Life Ministries, host of Christian radio show *New Life Live!* and best-selling author

“*Marriage Recall* is an exquisite book! Throughout this much-needed compilation, my friend and colleague Chuck Fallon deftly equips couples with practical tools and essential skills which will help marriages thrive. I knew *Marriage Recall* was a winner when I emailed my wife entire sections, asking that we read them together.”

Michael John Cusick

Licensed Professional Counselor, speaker and author of *Surfing for God*

“I consider Chuck a good friend on the journey of life. His wit and depth have brightened my soul and will be sure to brighten yours as well.”

Ben Wilson

Counselor and co-founder, Marriages Restored
and co-author of *Betrayed and Betrayer*

“Chuck Fallon has a solid grip on proven principals for a great marriage, and at the same time offers lighthearted and refreshing counsel. According to Chuck, “the secret of marriage is... there is no secret!” What does exist are dozens and dozens of golden nuggets that will lift your spirits and carry you toward that golden wedding band of success.”

Rev. Jim Walters

Retired Senior Pastor, Bear Valley Church
and author of *When Faith Takes Flight*

“*Marriage Recall* is insightful, funny, engaging and very practical. Read this book as a couple to measure where you are now and how you can move toward a more engaged and fulfilling married life. Like the book says, “You can do this!” This book is chock-full of practical resources and working examples.”

Frank Walker, MA

Marriage Counselor and author from
Chapel Grace, Coalinga, CA

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

INTRODUCTION

SECTION ONE - REMEMBER

WEEK 1 - BE INTENTIONAL

WEEK 2 - COMPLAIN WITHOUT BLAME

WEEK 3 - BATTLESHIP

WEEK 4 - WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?

WEEK 5 - UNLOAD

WEEK 6 - DEFINING FORGIVENESS

WEEK 7 - DIG A LITTLE DEEPER

WEEK 8 - DON'T DRIBBLE THE FOOTBALL

WEEK 9 - RESPECTING THE WALL

WEEK 10 - WHERE'S YOUR HEART?

WEEK 11 - TRANSFORMATION

WEEK 12 - TURN AROUND

WEEK 13 - MR. NICE GUY

WEEK 14 - DO NOT RUN!

WEEK 15 - LAUGH

WEEK 16 - ME OVERREACT? NEVER!

WEEK 17 - CAPICHE?

WEEK 18 - DEAFENING SILENCE

WEEK 19 - DON'T BLAME ME!

WEEK 20 - MINDREADING (IS) FOR DUMMIES

WEEK 21 - HOW TO BE NAKED IN MARRIAGE

WEEK 22 - DISAGREE (WITHOUT BEING DISAGREEABLE)

WEEK 23 - OH NO! I'M HUNGRY!

WEEK 24 - THIS IS MY EXIT

SECTION TWO - REPAIR

WEEK 25 - FOCUS ON THE VALUE

WEEK 26 - IDENTIFY THE TEST

WEEK 27 - PASSING THE TEST
WEEK 28 - RESPECT YOURSELF!
WEEK 29 - COMING ALIVE!
WEEK 30 - THE OPPOSITE ATTRACTION
WEEK 31 - THE GOOD STUFF
WEEK 32 - THE HUNT
WEEK 33 - DISQUALIFIERS
WEEK 34 - GETTING PAID
WEEK 35 - WRONG FOOT
WEEK 36 - THOSE WE DO NOT SPEAK OF
WEEK 37 - DON'T SAY IT, DO IT!
WEEK 38 - ASK ME AGAIN!
WEEK 39 - YAY FOR THE 10K!
WEEK 40 - DON'T GIVE UP
WEEK 41 - BETWEEN MAGICAL AND MISERABLE
WEEK 42 - OKAY, GIVE UP!
WEEK 43 - DROP THE ROPE
WEEK 44 - MOLEHILLS OUT OF MOUNTAINS
WEEK 45 - THE RED HERRING
WEEK 46 - OVERCOME THE ODDS
WEEK 47 - THAT IS THE QUESTION

SECTION THREE - RELOVE

RELOVE INTRODUCTION
WEEK 48 - BOOKS TO READ
WEEK 49 - AUDIO/VIDEO TO ENJOY
WEEK 50 - SURVEYS TO TAKE
WEEK 51 - SITES TO SURF
WEEK 52 - PLACES TO GO
TIN CAN PHONES
CONTACT CHUCK

INTRODUCTION

Marriage Recall is a compilation of 52 weekly reminders on *how to love* during the *everyday* of life. It's a welcome knowledge-base to help keep your marriage on track or a trusty handbook on how to navigate through the tougher seasons—no matter how long you've been married.

It can be used by couples, individuals, or in small groups. The chapters are short and filled with practical advice and humor, covering a specific skill or perspective—with a weekly journal page so you can apply it to your own situation. Read them in any order you would like.

The steps are doable, even simple—but they are not *easy*! They rub against what has become *standard practice* in your marriage. They ask you to do something *different*, if you are in a rut. They invite you to change something that seems insignificant, but *truly isn't*—so that the displaced value of your marriage can be *remembered* and *repaired*.

Section One—Remember, focuses on how to build communication skills and resolve conflict. Section Two—Repair, offers techniques to help with tough issues like infidelity, separation, or divorce. Section Three—Relove, suggests resources to enhance your marriage that often go ignored until getting help is critical.

It's my suggestion that you read the entire book. If you do, you'll be ready to help yourself, your spouse, and other couples be *intentional* about building a successful marriage.

You can do this!

JOURNAL PAGE


Marriage Recall in paperback includes a journal page after every chapter for personal reflection and application.

A PDF version is available on www.chuckfallon.com by clicking MARRIAGE RECALL JOURNAL PAGE in the footer.

MARRIAGE RECALL

Mark what impact this topic is currently having on your marriage:

1 2 3 4 5



NONE NEEDS REMINDER NEEDS REPAIR


Describe a similar experience you have had relating with your spouse:

What can you do differently using the skill outlined in this chapter?

This week, apply your new skill and record your experience:

Make a new mark to track your progress. Don't give up!

1 2 3 4 5



NONE NEEDS REMINDER NEEDS REPAIR

MARRIAGE RECALL

WEEK 1

BE INTENTIONAL

Friends of mine took a couple out for dinner for their 50th wedding anniversary. This older couple was so full of love. He stood tall as he opened the door for her. Her eyes twinkled with delight as she looked at him. My friend commented, “You must have been so in love when you got married for it to last this long!” The couple giggled knowingly as they shared their secret—they met on their wedding day. Their marriage was arranged! It was the decisions they made *after* they married that nurtured their love for five decades.

I asked students in a marriage class I taught to interview a couple that had been successfully married for at least twenty-five years. This is one of my favorite assignments! One interview question asked, “How did you make it through the difficult times?” Paper after paper listed difficult experiences, such as financial failure, the loss of a child, health problems, and infidelity. There wasn’t a “one-size-fits-all” answer to how the couples worked through their challenges. The point is they found a way.

These two stories have a very consistent message. Thriving marriages are intentional—they don’t just happen. They are nurtured, studied, cultivated, maintained, and repaired. They are cared for.

If the grass is greener on the other side of the fence it’s because the neighbors are taking better care of their grass! When it comes to growing your marriage, you can complain about it, or you can learn the basics to make it better.

When my bride came down the aisle on our wedding day, her entrance song included these words:

It's not the morning

Not the easy times that have proven my heart

It's when I see that the darkness can't tear us apart

(After The Sunset by Debbie McNeil)

We didn't know what darkness would come, but we married for better or worse, through sickness and in health, for richer or poorer. When darkness comes, we know we'll go through it together, it can't tear us apart

Here's the secret to a thriving marriage—there is no secret! Learn the basics, practice them until you are exceptionally good at loving your spouse, and then practice them some more. If something doesn't work, give it more time. If it's still not productive, try a different path. Don't let the darkness tear you apart. Find a way. Be intentional.

The steps I've written about for a thriving marriage aren't magical; they're not simple; they're not easy. They're hard work. But they've been rewarding to many of my clients. I hope you find inspiration, hope, and encouragement to intentionally invest in your marriage.

You can do this!

WEEK 2

COMPLAIN WITHOUT BLAME

I read some research a while ago that was not at all surprising. It determined that couples who have little or no conflict in the first year of marriage report being happier. However, if they have not had at least a moderate level of conflict to resolve by year three, the same couples report feeling less connected and less secure in their marriages.

This indicates that conflict is needed to secure a healthy bond with your spouse.

The presence of conflict doesn't guarantee a healthy marriage. It's important to learn conflict resolution skills. How conflict begins can determine whether it will be resolved successfully. I encourage you to learn what marriage expert Dr. John Gottman calls the soft start-up using the acronym **DEAR**.

Describe the situation in a factual and neutral way. "Yesterday when I picked out those sunglasses for you at the store, you immediately turned your back to me, and modeled them for our friends."

Express your feelings using "I" statements without passing blame. "I was stunned and hurt. I know you didn't mean anything by it, but you know that I sometimes feel invisible. When you turned away from me, I was surprised how sharp it felt." If you're the listener, allow yourself to be curious about what you're hearing as your spouse moves to the next step.

Assert what you want. "I wish you had shown the glasses to me first, before showing our friends. Can you include me next

time?” This sounds obvious, but it’s more difficult than it seems. Communication is goal-oriented. You want something every time you communicate. It may be acknowledgment, an apology, or a hug. It could be something deeper that you’re not aware of until you verbally explore your complaint. When you assert what you want, you have a higher chance of getting what you need.

Repeat as needed. This process can take some practice. You’re asking your spouse to do something that doesn’t come naturally, which requires learning a new skill. Don’t take it personally if your spouse needs a reminder. Use the soft start-up each time, by defining, expressing, asserting and repeating your complaint without blame.

And remember to express gratitude when your spouse gets it right!

You can do this!

WEEK 3

BATTLESHIP

Remember when you had the itch in the middle of your back; that one area that you can't reach with either hand to scratch? You asked your spouse to scratch it, and inevitably their first attempt missed. Did you tell your spouse that they hit the spot by saying something like, "Oh sweet, you got it! Thanks!" No, of course not—you gave directions. Move up a little, now left, scratch a bit harder, and move down a smidge.

This is like the game *Battleship*. You keep trying until you hit the mark.

Why didn't you pretend? Because you had a legitimate need, a willing partner, and you anticipated the moment of success.

A legitimate need. Recognize that you have legitimate needs. If you're too busy attending to everyone else's needs, take the time to identify your own needs, then ask for them to be met. Are you working very hard to deny that you have any needs at all? Admit it, some needs *are* legitimate, and every person has them, even *you*!

A willing partner. Are you assuming your spouse isn't willing to fulfill your need, so you don't bother to ask? You could be completely wrong! The Bible states in Matthew 7:7 to, "Ask and it will be given to you." How would you act if you believed your spouse was willing? You'd hopefully invite rather than demand, give information only you could provide—with incremental instructions until...

The moment of success! Ahhhhh, oh YEAH, you got it!

That moment when your spouse meets your physical, emotional, spiritual, or relational need bringing comfort, connection, resolution, satisfaction, joy, and relief! It's so good that you won't hesitate to ask again.

Many of my clients have me so delighted because they are learning to ask skillfully and respond artfully—and enjoying deep connection because of it!

Why not incorporate a game of *Battleship* into your next alone time or discussion, using simple nudges to help your spouse understand what you need, and visa-versa. It could be a fun way to communicate with each other until the target is hit.

You can do this!

WEEK 4

WHAT DO YOU EXPECT?

We tend to see what we expect to see. More than that, we actually help to promote what we expect to see.

For example, if I think my wife is in a bad mood because of a difficult day at work and I hear her car pull up in the driveway I might tell myself, “Now would be a good time to take the dog for a walk!” So I quickly grab the leash and hustle my dog out the back door. My wife comes in the house, she’s had an average day—not great or terrible, but she wants to tell me something. She can’t find me, the house is unlocked and there’s no note. By the time I get back from my walk, she’s irritated and has a scowl on her face. What do I tell myself? “Aha! I knew she was in a bad mood.”

You see the problem; she wasn’t in a bad mood. I helped to promote what I expected to see. Now let’s be clear. I’m not saying that you and I are responsible for other people’s behaviors. But we do have *influence*.

How are you influencing your spouse? The problem is that you may be promoting what you expect to see, rather than what you want to see. If you expect a positive outcome, you interact differently, more positively. It doesn’t guarantee success, but greatly increases its likelihood. Michele Weiner-Davis, author of *Divorce Busting*, calls this technique “Act As If.”

When a marriage struggles and your guard is up, what are you promoting? You can promote affection, kindness, playfulness—the good things you and your spouse signed up for when you said, “I do.” You can change how you engage with your spouse by expecting warmth and cheerfulness, instead of promoting