

A romantic couple embracing in front of a rustic wooden barn door. The man is wearing a light blue shirt and white pants, and the woman is wearing a peach-colored dress. The background is a warm, textured wooden wall with diagonal beams.

# Course Workbook

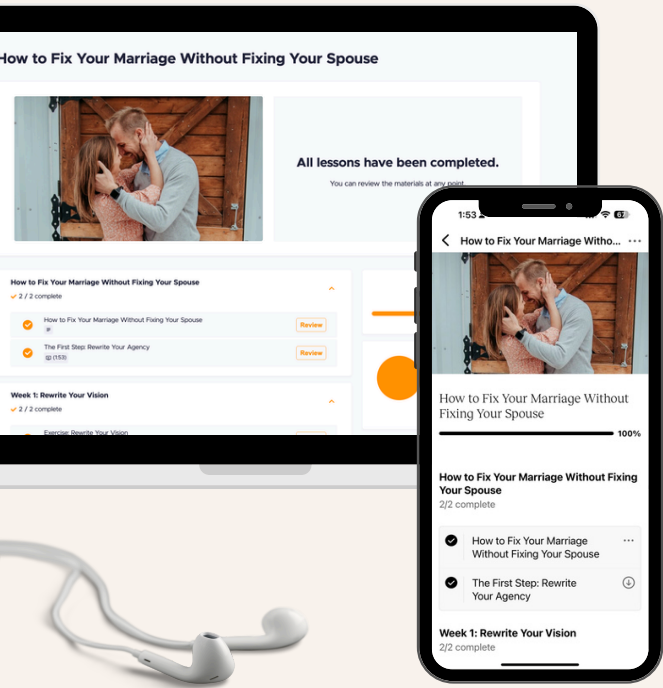
**FIX YOUR MARRIAGE**

By JR and Jules

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# Welcome to the Course



## Welcome to Fix Your Marriage Without Fixing Your Spouse!

We know what it feels like to be stuck—loving your spouse, wanting things to change, but feeling like nothing ever does.

This course is our way of walking alongside you. We have poured our experience, research, and our own journey into these lessons, so you have practical tools to shift your thoughts, words, and actions—and start feeling peace, connection, and hope in your marriage again.

You don't have to wait for your spouse to change. You can start creating the relationship you've been dreaming of, right now!

JR and Jules

Marriage Coaches

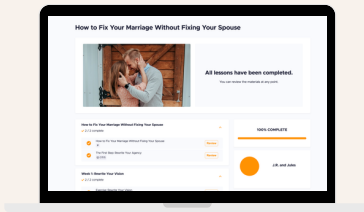
[jr andjules.teachable.com](http://jr andjules.teachable.com)



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# Access the Course

We're so glad you're here! The next few days and weeks can change everything—if you show up for yourself daily. Take a few minutes each day to watch a video, listen to an audio, or complete an exercise.



## Computer

1. Go to: [jrandjules.teachable.com](http://jrandjules.teachable.com)
2. Log in to your account to access all your lessons.

*This is the best way to view and download your PDF exercises and work through the videos in full-screen mode.*



## Mobile App

1. Download the **Teachable App** (iOS and Android)
2. Log in to access your lessons.

*You can listen to your daily audio exercises, watch the deep dives, and keep your progress moving—anytime, anywhere.*



## Workbook

Print your workbook and keep it nearby. Writing by hand helps your brain process ideas on a deeper level and reinforces your new thoughts and goals.

*Each exercise is designed to help you think, feel, and show up differently in your marriage—so write freely and honestly.*



01

# Module 1

YOUR OLD MARRIAGE STORY

# Your Old Marriage Story



“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”

— Viktor Frankl

Every marriage has a story.

It’s the story you tell yourself about who your spouse is, what your relationship means, and what you can expect from each other.

And here’s the most important thing to understand as you begin this course:

**Your experience of your marriage is created by the story you’re telling about it.**

Not by your spouse’s intentions.

Not even by their behavior.

But by the meaning you assign to what happens.

Two people can live in the same marriage and experience it completely differently—because they are living in different stories.

# The Gap Between What Happens and How You Feel

There is always a space between the moment something happens and the way you experience it.

- **Moment** - Something happens.
- **Story** - You have a thought about it.
- **Emotion** - That story creates an feeling.
- **Reaction** - That feeling drives how you show up.
- **Reality** - How you show up creates your experience.

This happens in seconds. Most of us never slow it down long enough to see it. But once you do, everything changes.

## 1. Moment

The moment is neutral. It's simply what happened—what could be captured on video without interpretation.

### Examples:

- Your spouse doesn't respond to your text for several hours.
- They criticize how you handled something with the kids.

The moment itself has no meaning yet.

## 2. Story

This is where things shift.

Your brain immediately assigns meaning to the moment. This meaning is shaped by past experiences, unmet needs, past hurts, assumptions, or fear.

Examples of common marriage stories:

- "They don't care."
- "I'm not a priority."
- "They're so selfish."

### 3. Emotion

Your story creates an emotion.

Not because of what happened—but because of what it meant to you.

Examples:

- The story “I don’t matter” creates sadness or shame.
- The story “They’re disrespecting me” creates anger.

Most couples fight at the emotion level without realizing the story underneath it.

### 4. Reaction

Your emotion drives your reaction.

This is what your spouse actually experiences from you.

Examples:

- You snap, criticize, or attack.
- You withdraw, shut down, or go quiet.

Reactions are often protective. They’re your nervous system trying to keep you safe (but not always in the best way).

### 5. Reality

Over time, repeated reactions create a shared reality:

- “We can’t talk without fighting.”
- “I walk on eggshells.”
- “We’re more like roommates.”

This reality didn’t appear overnight.

It was built moment by moment, story by story.

## Breaking Down the Story

You've seen how quickly a moment turns into a story—and how that story shapes your emotions, reactions, and the reality of your marriage.

Now it's time to slow one moment down.

In this exercise, you'll choose a recent moment that triggered you. Not the biggest or most dramatic—just something real.

You'll use the model to break it apart and see what actually happened versus what you told yourself it meant.

First, you'll map the original experience:

- What happened in the moment
- The thought or story you told yourself
- The emotion that followed
- How you reacted
- The result or reality that was created

Then, keeping the same moment, write a different story that you could have told—one that is honest, grounded, and within your control. Notice how a new story creates a new emotion, a new reaction, and a different outcome.

This isn't about pretending or excusing behavior.  
It's about recognizing where your power actually is.

Take your time. Be specific.

Clarity here sets the foundation for everything that follows.

# REWRITE YOUR STORY

PRINT OUT AS MANY COPIES OF THE WORKSHEET BELOW AS YOU'D LIKE AND USE THEM TO PRACTICE THOUGHT DOWNLOADS.

	OLD STORY	NEW STORY
MOMENT		
STORY		
EMOTION		
REACTION		
REALITY		





# Module 2

MASTER EMOTIONAL RESILIENCE

# Master Emotional Resilience



“You don’t have to agree with someone to be connected to them. You just have to stay emotionally present.” — Jennifer Finlayson-Fife

In Module 1, you learned something that quietly changes everything: Your marriage experience isn’t created by what happens—it’s created by the story you tell about what happens.

That realization alone puts you far ahead of most couples. But knowing this doesn’t magically stop emotional reactions. Awareness is the first step. Regulation is the next.

In this module, we’re going to help you understand **why you react the way you do in the moment**—and what to do when awareness alone isn’t enough.

## **Why You “Lose It” Even When You Know Better**

When you feel emotionally triggered, your brain isn’t trying to sabotage your marriage. It’s trying to protect you.

Your brain's primary job is survival. When it perceives a threat—criticism, rejection, disrespect, loss of control—it shifts resources away from your higher thinking brain (your prefrontal cortex) and into your emotional survival brain (your amygdala).

This is why, in heated moments:

- You say things you don't mean
- You feel justified doing things you later regret
- You “become someone you don't like”

We call this toddler brain—not as an insult, but as a description. In that state, you're reactive, emotional, and short-sighted. And no amount of logic or good intentions can override it in the moment.

## **The Hidden Cost of Losing Strategies**

When your emotions spike, your brain looks for the fastest way to feel regulated again. It reaches for losing strategies.

Here are the most common ones:

### **1. Needing to Be Right**

When being right matters more than staying connected, your partner becomes the problem to defeat instead of the person to understand.

The truth is: most conflict isn't about right vs. wrong. It's about different perspectives. Letting go of the need to be right doesn't mean you're wrong—it means the relationship matters more.

#### **Winning shift:**

“I don't need agreement to have connection.”

## 2. Needing to Be in Control

This shows up as micromanaging, correcting, or believing you know what's best for your partner. Control feels powerful—but it's actually rigidity. And rigidity breaks relationships.

You can control yourself and let go of trying to control others.

### Winning shift:

“I lead myself well and allow others their agency.”

## 3. Unbridled Self-Expression

Honesty without regulation isn't honesty—it's emotional dumping. In this state, you're asking your partner to carry emotions you haven't processed yourself.

There is room for hard conversations in marriage—but those feel humble, accountable, and risky... not justified and explosive.

### Winning shift:

“I can feel this without acting it out.”

## 4. Retaliation (Tit for Tat)

“I wouldn't act this way if you didn't start it.”

Retaliation feels justified, but it quietly erodes self-respect. The question that breaks this cycle isn't “Who started it?” but: “Do I respect how I'm showing up right now?”

### Winning shift:

“I act in integrity regardless of what my partner does.”

## 5. Withdrawal

Shutting down, disengaging, or avoiding conflict can feel peaceful—but it freezes growth.

You can't learn from what you won't engage with.

### Winning shift:

“I can pause without disappearing.”

## Regulating Emotion: The Skill That Changes Everything

You cannot choose better stories—or better reactions—until your nervous system is regulated.

Here's a simple four-step process to process emotion without reacting:

1. **Name It** - Label what you're feeling, “I'm angry, anxious, etc.”  
This helps you think clearly and rationally.
2. **Breathe** - Slow, deep breathing signals safety to your nervous system. Like rebooting your system.
3. **Get Into Your Body** - Notice where the emotion/sensation is physically “I feel it in my chest, my stomach, my head...”
4. **Allow It** - Emotions are chemical reactions. When you don't fuel them with stories, they can pass within 60-90 seconds.

**Remember:** You're not broken, you're human.

The goal isn't perfection - it's about catching yourself and pivoting faster.

When your higher goal is a strong, connected marriage, these losing strategies lose their power.

# Catching Losing Strategies

## Part 1: Losing Strategy Awareness

When I feel emotionally triggered, I most often default to **(circle all that apply)**.

Needing to be right // Needing to be in control // Unbridled self-expression // Retaliation // Withdrawal.

**Writing Prompt:** “How, specifically, does this look in my marriage?”

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## Part 2: Winning Strategy Shift

In those moments, what would you like to do instead **(circle all that apply)**.

Letting go of being right // Releasing control // Pausing self-expression // Choosing repair over retaliate // Staying engaged instead of withdrawing.

**Writing Prompt:** “How, specifically, will this look in my marriage?”

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# Module 3

KNOW YOUR ATTACHMENT STYLE

# Know Your Attachment Style



## Understand How You Attach—and How to Move Toward Security

“We are biologically, cognitively, physically, and spiritually wired to love, to be loved, and to belong.” — Brené Brown

By this point in the course, you’ve already done work most couples never do.

- You’ve started noticing your stories.
- You’ve identified losing strategies.
- You’ve seen how much of your experience is happening inside you—not just between you.

That alone can move a marriage from enduring to enjoying.

In this module, we’re adding another powerful lens: **attachment style**.

Not to label yourself.

Not to blame your past.

But to understand how you seek connection when you feel unsafe—and how to grow into something more secure.

## Where Attachment Styles Come From

Attachment styles develop early in life through your relationship with your primary caregiver. As a child, you learned—often unconsciously—how safe it was to:

- Need comfort
- Express emotion
- Rely on someone else

Those early patterns don't disappear when you get married. You bring them with you—and you act them out with your spouse, especially when you're stressed or emotionally flooded.

## The Core Attachment Styles

Most people lean toward one attachment style when they're disregulated. You may recognize yourself in more than one, depending on the situation.

### Anxious Attachment

Anxious attachment seeks connection through reassurance.

Common signs:

- Feeling unsettled when your spouse needs space
- Taking your partner's moods or distance personally
- Wanting to resolve conflict immediately to feel okay
- Looking to your spouse to validate your worth or decisions

At its core, anxious attachment asks:

- “Am I okay? Are we okay?”

On good days, this looks caring and emotionally available. On hard days, it feels clingy, reactive, or overwhelming to a partner.

## Avoidant Attachment

Avoidant attachment seeks safety through independence.

Common signs:

- Pulling inward when emotions feel intense
- Valuing productivity and self-reliance
- Minimizing your own needs or feelings

At its core, avoidant attachment asks:

“Can I handle this on my own?”

On good days, this style looks calm and capable.

On hard days, it can feel distant, closed off, or unavailable to a partner.

## Disorganized Attachment

Disorganized attachment often develops from trauma or inconsistent caregiving. It can look like swinging between anxious and avoidant behaviors—craving closeness, then pulling away suddenly.

## Secure Attachment: The Goal

Secure attachment means:

- You have a solid relationship with yourself
- You can tolerate both closeness and space
- You don't need your spouse to regulate your emotions
- You can be vulnerable without losing yourself

Secure attachment isn't something you're born with—it's something you build. And here's the most important part:

**Security does not come from your spouse, but from within you.**

When one partner moves toward security, the relationship naturally begins to rebalance.

# Mapping Your Attachment

## Part 1: Self-Reflection

When I feel emotionally disconnected or stressed in my marriage, I tend to:

- Seek reassurance or closeness
- Pull inward or shut down
- Swing between both
- Self-regulate and stay grounded

Describe what that looks like for you:

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## Part 2: Triggers

What situations tend to activate this response? (conflict, lack of communication, stress, etc.)

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## Part 3: Growth Edge

When I notice this pattern, a more secure response would be:

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## Part 4: One Small Shift

This week, one way I will move into secure attachment is to:

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# Module 4

TURN CONFLICT INTO CONNECTION

# Turn Conflict into Connection



Conflict isn't a sign that something is wrong with your marriage. It's a sign that two real humans are in it.

Most couples are taught—explicitly or implicitly—that a “good” marriage is one where conflict is rare. But that belief quietly creates fear, avoidance, and resentment.

In reality, conflict is not the enemy of connection.

Escalation is.

Think of your marriage like a rough stone rolling down a hill. Each bump, each collision, knocks off a sharp edge. It doesn't feel smooth while it's happening—but over time, the stone becomes more refined.

That's what healthy conflict does. It reveals blind spots, invites self-reflection, and creates deeper intimacy when handled well.

The goal is not to eliminate conflict.

**The goal is to use conflict as a pathway to connection instead of contention.**

## Conflict vs. Contention

Before we go further, we need to separate two things that often get confused:

- **Conflict** is a difference of opinion, perspective, or desire.
- **Contention** is escalation—defensiveness, blame, winning, withdrawing, or attacking.

Conflict is inevitable and healthy.

Contention is optional—and damaging.

You should expect conflict in marriage. If you're conflict-avoidant, that's understandable. Agreement feels validating. Harmony feels safe. But growth does not happen without friction. Avoiding conflict doesn't preserve closeness—it quietly erodes it.

## Two Types of Conflict in Marriage

### 1. Toe-Stepping Conflict (low-stakes)

This is the everyday irritation that comes from sharing life with another human:

- The trash doesn't get taken out
- Shoes are left in the hallway
- Someone forgot something you asked for

Often, these moments feel bigger than they actually are—not because of what's happening, but because of what you make it mean.

Your emotions in these moments are information—not facts. They tell you something is happening in your nervous system, not necessarily something about your partner's character.

Sometimes conflict has very little to do with your spouse at all and much more to do with:

- Hunger
- Exhaustion
- Stress
- Overstimulation
- Environment

Early in our marriage, we noticed how much more we argued in a beat-up car with no A/C in the middle of summer. The heat, discomfort, and stress made everything feel personal. Once we named it—“We’re not mad at each other; we’re overheated”—the conflict lost its charge.

Awareness and self-soothing eliminated many unnecessary fights.

## **2. Decision-Based Conflict (high-stakes)**

This is when there’s a real decision to be made and you genuinely see it differently:

- Where to live
- How to raise kids
- Finances
- Religion
- Family boundaries
- Big life choices—and even small ones like where to eat

These moments matter. They require tools—not avoidance, and not power struggles.

# The 4-S's of Healthy Conflict

When conflict arises,, use these four principles to turn it into connection.

## 1. Keep it Subjective

Most conflict escalates when someone tries to be right.

In marriage, you are not in a courtroom. There is rarely a single “correct” answer—just two people with different histories, nervous systems, values, and experiences. Your job in conflict is not to prove your perspective—it’s to understand your partner’s.

Use subjective language:

- “Here’s how I’m experiencing this...”
- “This is what I made this mean...”
- “This is how I feel—can you tell me if I’m understanding you correctly?”

Subjectivity disarms defensiveness and invites empathy.

## 2. Keep it Specific

Your brain loves to stack. One missed trash night turns into, “you never listen... you don’t care about me... this always happens!”

Micro issues become macro. Suddenly, your not arguing about trash, you’re arguing about the entire relationship.

Keep the story small:

- What happened this time?
- What’s the specific behavior?
- What are you feeling right now?

When the story stays micro, emotions stay manageable.

Your brain is wired to notice the negatives. Stacking positive events takes conscious effort.

### **3. Self-Soothe**

When emotions spike, your amygdala takes over and your prefrontal cortex goes offline. You literally cannot think clearly.

Self-soothing is not avoidance—it's regulation.

1. Pause.
2. Breathe.
3. Notice the sensation in your body.
4. Let the emotion pass before you speak.

You are not wrong for having triggers. There's always a reason they exist. But you are responsible for how you respond to them.

Sometimes the most powerful move is stepping away briefly and returning grounded.

### **4. Hold Space**

There is room in a healthy marriage for both partners to be human—just not at the same time. When your partner is escalated, you don't need to mirror it. You can stay steady.

A powerful question from therapist Terry Real:

“ What do you need from me right now?”

This shifts the dynamic from opposition to care.

Holding space doesn't mean agreeing.  
It means staying connected.

# Conflict to Connection

*The 10-Minute Reset*

## 1: The Moment (Keep it Specific)

What just happened? (Facts, not interpretation)

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## 2: My Story (Keep it Subjective)

The story I told myself: \_\_\_\_\_

How I felt: \_\_\_\_\_

What I made it mean about my partner: \_\_\_\_\_

## 3: Regulate (Self-Soothe Before Speaking)

Escalation level (1-10) \_\_\_\_\_

If above 6 → Pause, Breathe. Relax your body.

What do I actually need right now? \_\_\_\_\_

## 4. Say the Whole Truth (No Blame)

When \_\_\_\_\_ happened, I felt \_\_\_\_\_. I made it mean \_\_\_\_\_. What I really need is \_\_\_\_\_. Would you be willing to \_\_\_\_\_?

## 5: Hold Space & Decide

Take a step back and ask: What do we ultimately want for our marriage right now?

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# Module 5

YOUR NEW MARRIAGE STORY

# Your New Marriage Story



“The past does not equal the future.” - Tony Robbins

You’ve rewritten your old stories.

You’ve learned to regulate emotion and turn conflict into connection.

Now it’s time to build the story you actually want to live.

In the early days of your relationship—dating, engaged, newly married—there was energy. Vision. A sense of building something together. Conflict didn’t feel threatening because your eyes were on the future.

You weren’t just managing problems.

You were moving toward something.

Over time, life happens. Stress accumulates. Hurt stacks. Responsibilities increase. Slowly, the past can begin to feel bigger than the future. And when that happens, hope shrinks.

But here’s what’s important to understand: **Your brain is wired to scan for problems.** It tracks what went wrong. It replays what hurt. Left unchecked, it will keep orienting your marriage around what you don’t want.

And what you repeatedly focus on shapes your direction.

If you stare at the ditch while driving, you drift toward the ditch.

The same is true in marriage.

A thriving marriage is not built by avoiding what you fear.  
It's built by moving toward what you intentionally desire.

## **Why Your Past Feels So Heavy**

Your brain uses the past as data. That's helpful—until it becomes dominant.

When unresolved hurt becomes emotionally “large,” your mind begins filtering the present through it:

“It didn't work before.”

“They've hurt me.”

“This is just how we are.”

When the past becomes bigger than the future, you stop imagining transformation. You settle for managing disappointment.

The goal isn't to erase the past.  
It's to right-size it.

Keep the lessons.

Release the emotional charge.

Refuse to let history dictate possibility.

Viktor Frankl observed that even in the darkest circumstances, people who held a compelling future-oriented meaning endured differently.  
Purpose changes stamina.

Marriage is no different.

When you have a shared direction, conflict becomes refinement  
—not proof of failure.

You don't have to be on the same page to be on the same team.  
But you do need the same direction.

## **Make Your Future Bigger Than Your Past**

When you genuinely want something—emotionally want it—you  
become resourceful.

Think of a time you pursued a meaningful goal. You learned skills. You  
adjusted. You endured discomfort. Not because it was easy—but  
because it mattered.

Clarity creates resilience.

If your vision for your marriage is vague, you'll drift.  
If it's compelling, you'll grow toward it.

### **1. Aim For “Too Good to Be True”**

If your vision feels small, it won't pull you forward.

Don't base your future on what your marriage has been.  
Base it on what it could become.

Borrowed goals won't sustain you.  
Comparison won't inspire you.  
This must feel personal and meaningful.

Ask yourself:

**If it were “too good to be true”...**

What would that look like?

## 2. It's Got to Be Emotional - or It Won't Happen

A compelling future is not a checklist of achievements.  
It's an emotional experience.

How do you feel in that marriage?

Calm? Playful? Connected? Respected? Desired? Peaceful?

Your nervous system moves toward emotional reward. The clearer the emotional payoff, the more motivated you become.

## 3. Focus on What You Want

Your brain does not process negatives well.

If you say, "I don't want constant fighting," your brain highlights fighting. Instead ask: **What do I want instead?**

Understanding. Ease. Partnership. Warmth. Shared purpose.

## Creating Your "Too Good to Be True" Vision





# Mindset Quiz

# Mindset Quiz

**Instructions:** Choose the option that **feels the most true for you right now** - not what you “should” say. There are no right or wrong answers, only awareness.

1. When my spouse frustrates me, I usually...

- A Try to change them
- B Withdraw or shut down
- C Reflect on what I can control and choose peace
- D Respond calmly and focus on solutions

2. How clear is my vision for the kind of marriage I want?

- A I've never really thought about it
- B I have a few hopes, but no vivid vision
- C I can describe it clearly and emotionally
- D I revisit and refine it regularly; my vision guides my daily actions

3. When negative thoughts about my spouse appear, I...

- A Believe my thoughts instantly
- B Notice them but still spiral emotionally
- C Pause and reframe them with compassion
- D Recognize them and quickly shift to a constructive perspective

4. The words I speak about my spouse are usually...

- A Critical or defensive
- B Polite but emotionally flat
- C Encouraging and sincere
- D Uplifting, affirming, and solution-focused

5. How often do I intentionally speak love or appreciation to my spouse?

- A Almost never
- B Occasionally, when I remember
- C At least once daily
- D Naturally and frequently; it's part of my daily rhythm

6. My daily actions mostly...

- A React to my circumstances
- B Keep the peace, but lack connection
- C Reflect my values and intentions
- D Lead to meaningful connections, alignment, and growth

7. When I think of my current marriage story, I feel...

- A Resigned or hopeless
- B Confused but willing
- C Hopeful and empowered
- D Grateful, peaceful, and inspired to grow together

8. How often do I reflect on my own emotional responsibility (versus my spouse's)?

- A Rarely - they're the main issue
- B Sometimes, but I still wish they'd change first
- C Often - I see my part clearly
- D Always - I focus on my growth regardless of circumstances

9. When I think about God's role in my marriage, I feel...

- A Distant or unsure
- B Hopeful but inconsistent
- C Strengthened and guided
- D Deeply connected, guided, and at peace

10. If my spouse never changed, I believe I could still

- A Be stuck in the same patterns
- B Learn to cope but not thrive
- C Grow personally and find more peace
- D Build a joyful, resilient, spirit-led marriage

# Scoring

Add your points (A = 1, B = 2, C = 3, D = 4)

Max: 40, Min: 10

## Interpretation

- **10-16 points:** Your mindset is closed and reactive to your circumstances. The good news? Small, positive changes can create significant shifts in your experience.
- **17-24 points:** Your mindset is emerging and becoming more aware. Developing consistent habits of reflection and choice will expand your influence and joy.
- **25-32 points:** Your mindset is growth-oriented. You are actively shaping your experience, and continued intentionality will deepen connection and peace.
- **33-40 points:** Your mindset is transformative. You consistently respond with awareness, empowerment, and spirit-led action, creating a thriving marriage experience.

**\*Remember:** Your mindset is something that can be developed and improved over time, and this quiz is a helpful tool for self-reflection and growth.