

# MWB S03 E04 for review rough edit

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[00:00:00] **Brian Goins:** From the Podcast Network at FamilyLife, this is Brian Goins, host of Married With Benefits, where we're committed to helping you love the one you're with and discover the real benefits of saying "I do." Welcome back to Married With Benefits. I am your host, Brian Goins, alongside Shaunti Feldhahn.

And Shaunti, I don't know if you remember this or not. Season two, I was surprised by our executive producer...

[00:00:25] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Oh, I totally remember this. Absolutely.

[00:00:26] **Brian Goins:** Remember that? Like I was sitting, I was sitting in the studio and Jim was like, "Hey, I got a special guest for this episode." I had no idea, no prep, no nothing. And then my wife walks in the door, I'm like, "Oh, great. I gotta be truthful now. I can't..."

[00:00:42] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** That was awesome.

[00:00:44] **Brian Goins:** And so we decided to bring my lovely wife, Jen Goins is on, on with us. Hey Jen.

[00:00:51] **Jen Goins:** Hey. Hey everyone. Great to be with you. Thanks for including me. It's always an honor.

[00:00:55] **Brian Goins:** So I thought turnabout would be fair play. It's time for us not just to have my spouse on Married With Benefits.

[00:01:01] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Oh dear.

[00:01:02] **Brian Goins:** It's about time we bring Jeff Feldhahn, you are joining us. Thanks so much for stepping into the hot seat and being with us today.

[00:01:11] **Jeff Feldhahn:** It's gonna be a blast. Thanks for having me, Brian.

[00:01:12] **Brian Goins:** We really appreciate it. And I was reading your book, The Secrets of Sex and Marriage: Eight Surprises That Make All the Difference.

And you said Jeff was the silent partner.

[00:01:23] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Yes, totally.

[00:01:24] **Brian Goins:** But I know Jeff, he's not silent about much of anything. And so my guess is he contributed a ton to the book itself.

[00:01:30] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Well, actually, in all seriousness, he was there for every single meeting, every single draft, every single research, bit of the research, every interview, like it's just, we couldn't really have three co-authors on the book.

And we already had me and Dr. Michael Seitzman, who obviously we've heard from in previous and in later episodes. And so, um, Jeff was like, "I am totally fine being the voice behind the scenes."

[00:01:59] **Brian Goins:** So he was really the wizard behind the curtain is, is who Jeff is.

[00:02:03] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** He was. Actually, Jeff hates it when I say this, but I'm gonna say this anyway, which is that he really, truly, his presence is a secret sauce in every one of our research projects, cuz his brain is the one that goes, "You know, I've heard this like 127 times. I think there's a pattern here." And I go, "Oh..."

[00:02:25] **Jeff Feldhahn:** Shaunti's being actually really kind there. What I bring to the table truly, Brian, is I'm just the normal, average guy who I can honestly say that three years of this project, I sat there numerous times, too many to count...

[00:02:43] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Like when we would be in the meeting with my...

[00:02:45] **Jeff Feldhahn:** when I think to myself, "Yeah, how possibly have I gotten to be 50 something years old?"

And they had no idea about any of this. They just didn't understand it. I didn't know it. I thought by now, I mean I should have...

[00:03:01] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** We've been married for a few years here...

[00:03:02] **Jeff Feldhahn:** you know, come to these conclusions, but it was all an amazing mystery salt.

[00:03:07] **Brian Goins:** Well, we're all on this journey, especially about sexual intimacy. That's what this whole season's about.

And I just, Jen, I just heard of a, a new compliment that I want you to somehow weave in when I'm least expecting it. At some point in time, I need to be called in public, the secret sauce of whatever we're talking.

[00:03:25] **Jen Goins:** That is the high compliment. I caught that too, and that was really special. So, that's neat.

[00:03:29] **Brian Goins:** Yeah. So I, I just wanna be known as a secret sauce.

So from here on out, I'm gonna call Jeff the secret sauce of this episode. He's gonna be it. Hey, when you're not interviewing people about the most intimate details of their sexual life, what do you do? What keeps you occupied?

[00:03:42] **Jeff Feldhahn:** The research, writing, all of that. The speaking that we do takes up a, a fair bit of my, my daytime.

But, uh, other than that, I'm a lawyer by training, so I, I still do legal work here and there, and I have a tech startup that has been um I don't know how long I can keep something in startup mode, but I think until it actually makes money, it's a startup so...

[00:04:02] **Brian Goins:** Okay. Keep it going, it'll get there. So he's just a tech startup, lawyer, researcher.

I mean, nothing big, nothing big in that resume at all. He is the secret sauce. So, Jeff, as you were, and you, you were a setting in all, most of these interviews and hearing from all these couples. I gotta tell, I gotta ask, was there a favorite story? Because I, I've read through the book and there were some really cool stories of couples and just their real life and just being real with each other.

So was there one that stood out to you that said, I'll never forget this?

[00:04:31] **Jeff Feldhahn:** Yeah, no, there, there really was, and it actually meant so much to me and to Shaunti that we actually realized that it had to be included in the book. Um, and it's, I think it's how we open up the book.

[00:04:42] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** I think it, yeah, it's actually how we opened the book because it cracked us up.

[00:04:44] **Jeff Feldhahn:** So, can I share the, share the story?

[00:04:47] **Brian Goins:** Yeah, go right ahead.

[00:04:48] **Jeff Feldhahn:** So there was this woman and she was talking about how, uh, you know, her and her husband and their kind of intimate life and when they were, uh, in high school, both of them, you know, 16 years old...

[00:04:59] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** They were in high school together

[00:05:00] **Jeff Feldhahn:** and they dated long, long times, you know, and they were, they were committed to their faith.

So they had determined and committed that they would, you know, stay virgins until they got married. But you know, there were a lot of years in between the time that they were dating and the time that they got married. And so what they would do is when they were at a particular place, you know, maybe it was after a football game or whatever high schoolers do, they would say, "You know what, when we are married, we're gonna come back to this park and do it."

Or if they were on spring break together, they'd say, "You know, we're gonna come back to this beach and do it." And there was just these little things that, that they did, that they said. Well they ultimately got married, had three kids and years have passed and they're now in their mid thirties as she's telling us the story.

And they had, um, diligently worked to fulfill some of those, uh, those, uh, statements that they'd made when they were 16, 17, 18, 19 years old. And, uh, on one particular occasion, this is the one that we just love so much, they, uh, had, uh, arranged for their parents to watch their kids and they proceeded, when the parents were there, they left and at somewhere around midnight, one o'clock in morning.

[00:06:18] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** I think it was like one in the morning.

[00:06:19] **Jeff Feldhahn:** Yeah. They, they actually went to a park where they had, you know, he had played in a soccer match, you know, back when he was in high school. The park was closed and so they drove and walked around the,

you know, “park closed” sign and they had a pack full of a blanket. And they proceeded to go out to the field...

[00:06:41] **Brian Goins:** Okay. We can get the picture.

[00:06:43] **Jeff Feldhahn:** And fulfill that promise that they'd made, you know, 15, 16 years ago. And they didn't even hear the police car, um, as it rolled up on them. And what ended up happening was the, the cops, you know, with their loud speaker told them to get over there and she was mortified and they're putting on their clothes and she was kind of perplexed because her husband seemed amused.

And once they got up to the police car, you know, they took his driver's license and they're reading it out and you know, “John Smith, 123 Forest Lane. Age 35.” And then, you know, he hand his, the cop hands, his, you know, license back and they take hers and he starts reading it out and he sees that it's the same last name and he goes, “Wait a minute. You two are married? I thought you were college kids.”

And uh, the guy says, “Hey, yes sir, officer. We’ve been married 12 years.”

[00:07:41] **Brian Goins:** He’s so proud of this moment. He's so proud.

[00:07:44] **Jeff Feldhahn:** And, uh, the officer looks at him and goes, “Respect.” And, uh, at that point, you know, she's still mortified, but the husband is thinking this is okay.

And then the officers obviously let 'em off with a warning, with a, uh, kind of a twinkle in their eye. They drove off. And, uh, that was the story. And it was so fascinating for us as we kept hearing it, because, you know, that's kind of what we want in our marriage. Not, not actually...

[00:08:14] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** I was just gonna say now, hold on. Not necessarily do that.

[00:08:19] **Brian Goins:** Wait. I wanna know from Jen. I gotta a list now, Jen. Are we, are we good with that? Can we, can we model ourselves after that couple?

[00:08:26] **Jen Goins:** I think that would be kind of fun. That's a great idea. You

[00:08:29] **Brian Goins:** You heard it here.

[00:08:30] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Oh my. All right then.

[00:08:32] **Jeff Feldhahn:** Yes, challenge accepted.

[00:08:32] **Jen Goins:** We never really made the list, so it's not, it's not quite the same.

[00:08:36] **Brian Goins:** That's okay. I got some places in my mind right now.

[00:08:39] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** And some people are going, "This is horrifying." But it's the playfulness. It's that connection. Yeah.

[00:08:45] **Brian Goins:** And you were telling me, Shaunti, that um, like this was a normal couple. This wasn't like this, like they both had initiating desire.

This is kind of your normal, average couple.

[00:08:54] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Yeah. This actually is a perfect example of a couple that, you know, we go, "Oh my gosh, I want that kind of connection, that togetherness," and you idealize. You know, so that's a super couple. And no, they have the same issues as everybody else. She has higher desire than he does, and she wants that connection a lot more.

And he's busy at work and works a lot of hours, and so it's like, oh, just normal people. But we can get there to that sense of intimacy.

[00:09:21] **Brian Goins:** Yeah, man, that's, that's exciting. I love that story. That's great. Uh, Jeff, thanks for sharing that. And as you guys have been doing this research, uh, it was interesting to me, you found something that impacts marriages in lots of ways and not just in the, in the bedroom, but it, it's something that was beneath the surface.

And that's why, incidentally that's why we titled this, the question that you're not asking, but you should be.

[00:09:44] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Yes, it's true because there's, it turns out one of the really common dynamics that Jeff and I have found in all the research really is that a lot of the pain, I guess you could say, a lot of the, the conflict or the heartache that's running under the surface actually comes because men and women tend, not always but tend, to have two different sets of like insecurities running under the surface.

And this is a lot of what we talked about in the, in the season one and season two of questions every wife is asking about her husband, or the husband is asking about the wife is like, what is this reaction because of? And some of that ties back to the fact that we kind of have two different raw nerves.

Like, different things are gonna hurt our feelings and in this area, oh man, this, you see it constantly when you're talking about intimacy.

[00:10:40] **Brian Goins:** So how did you guys, uh, you know, discover that? What's the history behind seeing that?

[00:10:43] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** So we over the last, um, I'm looking at, at Jeff, we're on Zoom together as we're doing this in the studio so we can see each other.

I'm looking at Jeff and going, 18 years, 19 years, like almost 20 years of research? Um, over these last, you know, almost 20 years of research, one of the ways that we've done this is we do all these interviews, we do all these focus groups, we talk to people about what's really going on in their hearts, and we find that one of the most common dynamics is that we're going on the surface level.

It's what we said in a, a different episode that we're talking about, like, I want tips and tricks to fix a process in my marriage and like, what's the solution for conflict management? We see that and we, we don't realize so much of the conflict, it's not a tip for managing conflict, it's the what's underneath the conflict.

Why are our feelings getting hurt? What's that about? And dealing with that kind of stuff is actually how you address and solve some of these things that are especially important, it turns out, in the bedroom.

[00:12:02] **Brian Goins:** Yeah. And, and Jeff, how about you? Have you, how have you seen that work out?

Have you seen that play out?

[00:12:06] **Jeff Feldhahn:** Over the years, I mean, as we were unpacking and learning about all of this stuff, Shaunti, at least initially would say, "Why didn't you just tell me kind of what you needed? I could have changed, I could have learned how to communicate with you."



And the, the fact of the matter is, I didn't know. I didn't know what was going on inside of me. I couldn't find words to, to articulate it. All I knew was that I was upset when that raw nerve would sort of get hit by Shaunti. Inadvertently, but it got hit nonetheless, and I just didn't realize how, how to communicate what I was feeling inside. And then I thought it was just unique to me.

And it wasn't until we started doing all of the research and talking with all of the men that I realized that they're just like me and they don't know how to explain it either. And that was the brilliance in my mind, um, of the Four Women Only book that Shanti wrote, she actually gave words to what was going on inside us guys that we couldn't find the words to say ourselves.

[00:13:21] **Brian Goins:** Yeah. So in, in saying that, just feeling those feelings that I don't even know how to bring up the things running underneath the surface, the question that I should be asking, you know? If I'm a husband or if I'm a wife, what, what's the question they want to ask, but they don't know how to ask?

[00:13:34] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Or that they don't even know that they need to ask? Like, it just doesn't even come up. Probably the, the one that a wife would ask would be something like, now this is by the way, assuming a stereotype, it's not always gonna be the case, but the stereotype of that the husband is higher desire than the wife, which we know is not the case in one out of four marriages, but like, let's just deal with the majority.

Probably the question would be, "Why does my husband take it so personally when I'm , I'm saying no, or I'm just not as interested?" You know, we talked about some of the reasons for that in a previous episode, but you said, you know, "Sometimes I can become like a child," you know? Like shut down and pout.

Like, why? What's underneath that? That's just dumb.

[00:14:23] **Brian Goins:** Jen, you find pouting sexy, don't you?

[00:14:24] **Jen Goins:** Yes I can, I mean, I definitely know when you're not, when you are pouting, when you've been hurt or, uh, feeling rejected.

[00:14:31] **Brian Goins:** Yeah. Yeah. None of us like that, but there's probably that question, you know, "Why? I'm just saying, yeah, I'm just saying no, what's the big deal?"



[00:14:38] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Yeah. And so that's probably, if we could put words to it, that's probably a key question a wife would, would ask, I think probably for a husband, again, if he was thinking about it this way, which, you know, he may not be, but is like, "Why does she want or need so much attention outside the bedroom in order to wanna be close inside the bedroom?"

Like, surely jumping into bed solves that problem.

[00:15:02] **Brian Goins:** I mean that was my childish thought is that well, well, she's gonna think about sex the way I think about sex, and she's just gonna want to be in the mood, you know, when I'm...

[00:15:09] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** All the time...

[00:15:10] **Brian Goins:** all the time when I'm in the mood, it'll just happen. And then you get married and you realize, that isn't the case.

And what you're saying is, and what you're discovering is, there's emotional reasons behind that. Behind both of those questions. You know, why does he take it so personally? There's an emotional need that is being raised or an insecurity that's being raised. Why does she want so much attention outside the bedroom?

There's an insecurity, a need that's needing to be met. What are those things? What are the emotional implications of this that often tend to be gender related?

[00:15:35] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** So let me give you kind of the overall, and this is gonna be a, a refresh for people who've heard season one and two, but the refresh basically is that we found for about, now it depends on the survey, but somewhere between 75 to 85% of men, 75 to 85% of women, these tend to be the way that we think.

There are obviously exceptions to that, right. If 80% said this way, 20% didn't. Um, but in general, women, the, the question, the insecurity that nerve under the surface is basically like, am I lovable? Right? Like, am I special? Am I worthy of being loved for who I am on the inside?

And that doesn't go away just because I happen to get married. Like, it just morphs to does he really love me? Is he glad he married me?

[00:16:29] **Brian Goins:** Which for most guys is like, well, that's why we gotta have this wedding. We had this wedding to show that.

[00:16:35] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Right. I literally had a woman in, we were doing an event, Jeff and I were doing a marriage event in Pennsylvania and had a woman who came up to me and said, “My husband literally told me on my wedding day, I'm telling you right now that I love you. If anything changes, I'll let you know.”

[00:16:53] **Brian Goins:** She did not say that.

[00:16:55] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** He, he, this guy literally said that to his wife. Like, “I'm just telling you right now. I'm setting the stage.” And the, the issue is this deep question, it's not like just telling us once solves it, Right It's always gonna be there to some degree.

Maybe that's because of the Fall. I don't, you know, I don't know all the reasons, but it's in there and so there's a question like, does he really love me? And so that is a sort of a need to feel that every day, inside and outside the bedroom, in order to kind of speak to that and a guy's, you know we as women don't realize that for men it tends to be a pretty different insecurity.

Now to some degree, we're all insecure about everything, right? We all need everything. But we're talking about that heartbeat stuff here. And the guy's question isn't really, am I lovable? It's am I able, am I adequate? Do I measure up? Am I any good at what I do on the outside, rather, am I worthy of being loved on the inside?

And so that insecurity, that self-doubt, that's the raw nerve for a guy. And so that's why, uh, sort of an implication of inadequacy hurts his feelings.

[00:18:13] **Brian Goins:** So when she says no...

[00:18:15] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** There you go...

[00:18:16] **Brian Goins:** When she says no, it means she's saying something about me she doesn't like, she doesn't want, she, that I don't matter enough for her to want me.

[00:18:21] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Correct. And so that's, and that's where this gets hard because we need to acknowledge right up front that some of this could be heard as, so therefore, you have to always give your spouse what they want, regardless of what you want.

And we need to say, that is not what we're saying. What we're saying though is just understand what may be going on emotionally underneath the surface so we can speak to that because that question that's in a guy's heart, again, not everybody, but most, that leads to a sense of wanting to know that I am admired, that I'm desirable. That, that you trust me, that you respect me, you appreciate me. And so that comes out in all these ways, but especially in the bedroom.

[00:19:12] **Jeff Feldhahn:** One of the things that I think is so crucial, In this understanding, these ways that we respond in this intimate area, uh, is to really have to, we have to believe the best about our spouse.

So for me, and I know this with other guys, those voices are awfully loud inside our head of looking to see evidence of rejection. And it's easy to see and it's painful and it feels awful. And we know how awful that feels, and we don't want our wives to feel that also. So somehow in our mind that translates when she's, you know, interested in being intimate with us, that somehow makes those voices a little less.

So we translate that to be, then the same thing must also work for her.

[00:20:13] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** I'm doing her a favor.

[00:20:15] **Jeff Feldhahn:** And it's not that it's the physical side of it, there is that component, but it is, for most of us guys, we are thinking that this works for me, it must work for her, and when it doesn't, then we're just confused.

[00:20:29] **Brian Goins:** Yeah. Jen, what were you gonna say on that?

[00:20:32] **Jen Goins:** Well, I was just gonna say, and I think this is, actually, Shaunti has said this before, I take a lot of what Shanti says, but, uh, just the idea of thinking, like with Brian asking am I able, or me kind of asking if I'm lovable and just realizing that, I don't know if I can put this right, but just the idea of when we consistently deny the other person, it's denying kind of their love language of what they, how they feel loved.

And so if Brian always denied talking to me or taking me out on dates that would like really hurt my heart. And so if I'm always denying him and the, I know that sexual intimacy is very important to him, then that would be the same as he if he was like, "Well, I don't really wanna go on dates with you and I don't really wanna talk with you."

And, and it would just, that just hurts my heart. And so I, I'm just more sensitive in knowing when there is a maybe in on my part being like, oh, this is something I have to do, or something like that. And again, we've said that those are valid feelings, but it definitely switches my heart towards him to be more loving and more sacrificial and more caring and realizing that that's something that is super important to him. And so I wanna make it important to me as well.

[00:21:46] **Brian Goins:** Yeah, I mean, what's so helpful is just to know that those insecurities exist. And so when they, we just know that they're there. That when you, when you reject, is there a way that I can, you know, we talk about this later, but it's like, are there great ways to, to give a rejection?

You know, and but just recognizing that when I'm saying no, a typical man is like, "Man, you really touch my heart when we have intimacy." But a wife is going, "But you can have intimacy once you touch my heart." So it's like these, these two things that come against each other. And what is that, what is that emotional impact? You know?

[00:22:18] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Well, the thing, see, here's the thing. The starting point is what you said earlier, like we don't even know this is happening, like we don't even know this is running under the surface, so we don't recognize that we need to even think about it. I love what Jen said because what she's talking about is literally just the light bulb goes on.

And you're thinking about something that you didn't think about before. And you know, when Jeff said, you know, you have to believe the best of your spouse. It really is going, I am going to believe that you really truly care about me, even if you don't always show me in the way that I wanted that to be shown.

Just because we're different humans, right? And so we work differently. But to believe that you really care, now, again, another caveat, there are going to be some smalls percentage of marriages where there is not that caring, unfortunately, where there is abuse and you can try all day long to speak to that inner person to speak to that inner security and it's not gonna fix things because you really truly have somebody who doesn't care.

Or is abusive or has just has really bad skill in being able to show that and you need other help in that way, but for the vast majority, it makes a difference if you are just aware that this, this deep like nerve is there under the surface and it's coming out in the bedroom where, as you summarized it, the wife might say,

“We can do that once you touch my heart,” and the guy's like, “Yeah, but you touch my heart by doing that.” Like, how do you have that conversation?

[00:24:04] **Brian Goins:** Right. So you're in this catch 22. So what are some little ways that we can encourage each other in those areas? You know, what are some things that we can do?

I mean, I can hear most guys, Jeff's probably going, “Well just have sex,” like that seems to be the easy answer. But that's not exactly what you're getting at, right?

[00:24:18] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Well, it's not just, so, okay, so let's talk about, for example, uh, for the, uh, wife. One of the things that a lot of men don't realize, it's kind of like what Jen was saying, like it would be just as hard if you did just stop talking to me.

You just didn't listen to me anymore. And so a lot of guys are like, what? You know, cuz like, you know, I love you, but no, remember, she doesn't. I mean, one of the things Jeff says in our events, he, he, you know, he stands up and we do marriage events where we're talking to the men and the women in the same room and he tells the guys like, “You know, that she needs to feel loved.”

Well, Jeff here, you, you say it rather than me. Tell them what, what you say.

[00:25:05] **Jeff Feldhahn:** I tell the guys. You know how, you know, important it is that she feels that you love her. What you don't realize is how easy it is for her to not feel loved. And for us guys just kind of, we don't have a grid for that. We think, well, of course I know Shaunti loves me and you know, we got married and she does things that that indicate that every day.

And as Shaunti often points out, you know, women don't have a “permanently love” switch that we can just hit, and then they're good. They're looking at all of these things throughout the course of their day with you that indicate that you're happy you're married to her, that you're, you'd choose her all over again.

[00:25:52] **Brian Goins:** I'm looking at Jen right now, even as you're saying that, Jeff, and I'm like, “So Jen...” and I, it's funny that I, I'm asking myself the question that I know you think, well, this is what everybody, this is what everybody should know, but they don't know. Like, Jen, do you wake up in the morning. . I wonder if Brian loves me.

[00:26:07] **Jen Goins:** Um, not necessarily, but I definitely there are moments, okay, I think one of the big things for me is watching so many people in the world just have affairs, make a different choice. Families are falling apart everywhere and there are times where I'm like, "Are you committed to this still? Am I fulfilling you and your needs?"

And I need to, do need to know that because stuff like that comes into my heart and my mind all the time. I think you may have not noticed, but there are times where I've asked you, "Do you still love me? Am I still the only one?" I think that's a big one. "Am I still the only one?" And uh, and that definitely happens when you see what's happening in the world and the unfaithfulness that's out there.

And I just wanna know that I'm your girl.

[00:26:52] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** That's a perfect way of kind of articulating that insecurity under the surface, and that's what needs to be solved and addressed kind of every day before most women are gonna be interested in jumping into bed. There's a Kevin Leman book called, Sex Begins in the Kitchen.

Right, and that's basically what it's saying is it's you're setting the stage in how you talk and how you care every day and sending the message, "I would choose you all over again today." And it's, it can be the littlest things. You know, literally when you text Jen in the middle of the day to say, you know, "This has been a long day. I've been in studio with this really obnoxious person all day..."

[00:27:36] **Brian Goins:** That's not true at all.

[00:27:38] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** And you, and you text her and say something like, you know, "I love you so much. I can't wait to see you tonight." Like Jen, like a lot of wives, she probably screenshots that text message, right? Like to, to just go, wow, that is so powerful.

And a guy may not realize it's the, the accumulation of those things that builds security, that makes her want to engage sexually.

[00:28:02] **Brian Goins:** Yeah. And so I'd just be curious to know Jen, um, and Shaunti and, uh, as just what are the, what are those little things? Just give us a little list of those things. Cause I think guys really want more instruction in this area.

Like, cuz we're not thinking, cuz if our, if our natural thinking is, well they probably know I love 'em. But if what you're saying is the insecurity is, "I don't know if I'm loved or I don't always know if I'm the one or does he still think I'm the one?" If that's latent insecurity, just rattle off just some, some rapid fire stuff of when you feel most loved or when do you feel most cherished? What are some small things we can do?

[00:28:32] **Jen Goins:** I love the text during the day is really fun and sometimes a surprise, more of a surprise, maybe not every day, not over the top. Also, I would say ask me what I want and what encourages me. I do, even though sometimes it annoys me in private when you like, you know, slap my rear or grab other areas that it's like, I know what I look like and sometimes I'm insecure, but to think that you still find that attractive. And you know, sometimes I, I act like I don't like it, but inwardly I really do.

[00:29:02] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Aw, that's awesome...

[00:29:04] **Jen Goins:** I'll swat your hand away and say, leave me alone in a joking way, you know?

[00:29:07] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** But keep doing it is what I'm hearing.

[00:29:11] **Jen Goins:** I'm thinking, "Am I still desirable to him?" as a 50 year old woman who's had three kids and who's, you know, whatever, all the things that we women go through and struggle with. Um, so that's a good one. Okay. Another, uh, I think a great tip is to go back to what you did at the beginning. I mean, that's almost scriptural is to go back into the beginning.

It's like when our relationship was romantic and fun to kind of bring up some of those things again. That sometimes we can just get into the mundaneness of life of going out on a special date or planning something or, uh, a special note like even Brian's a great writer but, you know, it's been a while since you've written me a note, hint, hint, you know.

[00:29:52] **Brian Goins:** Uh oh, guess what I gotta do tonight?

[00:29:53] **Jen Goins:** Not that, not that I've been thinking about that, but just if you can, uh, be creative and, and surprise and all those things can be amazing in a relationship.



[00:30:01] **Brian Goins:** Yeah. You think about the husband has this privilege to what Paul says in Ephesians 5 to nourish and cherish, and, and both of those things are in the present tense. It's an ongoing...

[00:30:12] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** That's a great way of putting it.

[00:30:13] **Brian Goins:** How do I continue to nourish their soul, nourish their heart, and I think as men we're sitting there, I want you to help me with my insecurity. God puts you in my life to help me through my insecurity. That insecurity hasn't changed in 26 years of marriage. I still wake up insecure.

I still wake up wondering if I matter and God's provided somebody to help me in that area. Not to fix it, but to help me.

[00:30:33] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Yeah. You know, it's interesting, I've always kind of wrestled because, you know, people get mad at me sometimes for saying, "It's not my job to fix him, it's not my job to fix her."

Yeah. Of course. It's, it's not, and actually Dr. Mike, Michael Sytsma, who, you know, we've heard from before, he actually said something that to me went, okay, ding, I get it. Where he said, it's not just about not fixing, but he said, we have been put into each other's lives and it's not our responsibility to make somebody feel better about themselves, right?

Like they have to be able to stand before God and be secure in who they are because of who God made them to be. However, we do all have these insecurities and he said, it's like the analogy is they have to go out and fight that battle, they have to do that on their own, basically.

They're fighting that battle with the world, with themselves, with whatever, but you are providing them ammunition. You are giving them ammunition to fight that battle or you are standing back and going, "No, I'm not gonna give you any ammunition. In fact, I'm gonna drop an anvil on your head."

You know, like, make it harder for you to fight that battle. And I thought that was a really good analogy um, that takes it off, it's no longer our responsibility to make somebody feel better about themselves, but God has put us here so that I can either support you or tear you down without realizing it.

And you know, the little things, if I could just go back to that, Brian. A guy is listening to Jen and taking notes, right? Like, here's all these things. Maybe I should slap her rear or whatever.

[00:32:15] **Brian Goins:** And we're not encouraging abuse, by the way. That's not where we're going.

[00:32:18] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** And, you know, taking notes. And the thing is, guys, as you're listening this, it's not any one set of little things, right?

It's gonna be to some degree, what is it that really matters to her that you didn't realize? Now there are some things that keep coming up over and over again. Um, when we actually asked focus groups of women this question we heard over and over again, things like, "He puts his arm around me in church, or we're sitting together on the couch watching the news."

I love that. Like Jeff will put his arm around me and he'll like, kind of play with my hair a little bit. I don't know why, but that says "You're mine." Right. It just, it feels so special. But you know, don't put that on your list until you talk to your wife. Right, like, she may hate that. And so that's an example.

Listening was always a big one. You're busy at the end of the day. She's busy, but, you know, how's the day been? Like...

[00:33:16] **Brian Goins:** And ask you more than just one question. You know, the follow up question, you know, how did that, how did that make you feel? You know, what was the best thing that happened to you in this day?

You know, just asking the, not just how you're doing...

[00:33:26] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** High highs and lows.

[00:33:27] **Brian Goins:** Yeah. Highs and lows. So we've talked about this for women, but what about men? What's the emotional impact for men?

[00:33:33] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** So it's interesting, the flip side of this, obviously, if, if a woman in general statistically wants to feel close outside the bedroom in order to wanna be close inside the bedroom, men often are like, "But I feel close by being with you inside the bedroom."

Like that is one of the things that actually builds a sense of connection often for a man, and we don't realize it's because, again, speaking to that insecurity, that sense of I desire you as my husband, you are desirable. That hits that "Am I able, do I measure up?" in a really, really profound way, where it touches his heart very directly.

[00:34:16] **Brian Goins:** Yeah. And every man can tell when you're just doing it out of obligation. It's more than just a physical act.

[00:34:21] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Yeah. And that's the thing that we as women often, and again not everybody, but that we often kind of miss, like, it, it, it's something that we, certainly, we experience many of the same emotions.

We have the same desire for connection and to feel desirable. We don't realize, though, because it's not our insecurity, just how deep his insecurity is of “Am I able, am I good at what I do?” And how much feeling desired sexually speaks to that. Just because that doesn't tend to be our question.

And it, and we have the other question, right? Am I lovable? And in the bedroom, that is actually one thing that speaks to that for us. It's just, it's a different dynamic.

[00:35:08] **Brian Goins:** Right. It's just like hearing my wife say that she wants a love letter. That may not do that for me, like that may not meet that need, but for her, that need is met when I actually pursue her, when I listen to her, when I write a note.

[00:35:22] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** And just like with women outside the bedroom, there are things that matter to men outside the bedroom. I mean, we've talked about these in the other seasons, obviously, but like just for example, okay, if my husband actually has self-doubt that I don't know is there, and one of the things that builds him up is just looking for something he does and saying thank you for it.

I mean, while I've been here recording, Jeff has been managing the fact that our furnace broke and you know, having to like figure out, okay, that means we gotta get our fireplace started again, like, you know, all these little things like how much I appreciate that he's been doing that and I think it in my head, but I don't think to say it.

Well when I actually say “Thank you so much for managing all that stuff with the furnace and the fireplace and the things with the kids while I was gone.” All that speaks to his heart and I need to do that more. Yeah. And it's not, oh, it's a duty, it's something I have to do. No, it's, it's something I want to do because I care about him.

And so it's that same dynamic inside and outside the bedroom for both of us.

[00:36:32] **Brian Goins:** Yeah. Any other little things that really, uh, you found really helps a man's heart in that, in that regard?

[00:36:37] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Well, certainly, I mean, the whole concept of affirmation, like “You are good at what you do like, and I am so proud of you.”

It's, it's interesting, you know, we talk about the five love languages and the words of affirmation, and I actually showed Dr. Chapman when I, I got the data back. I'm like, “Look at this, that 87% of men said words of affirmation are their like thing.” And it's like, yeah, because oh, I may question that I know how to be a good husband.

I may question that whether I'm desirable at all. I may not know how to feel like I'm a great dad. Am I, am I any good? And so hearing things like, “You are so good with the kids,” or you even things like, “Look, I may disagree with a certain discipline strategy, but oh, you are such a good dad. you know, thank you so much for the ways that you pour into their life,” rather than, “It would be better if, you know, you would be willing to take them to soccer more often.”

You know. Okay. Maybe better. But there are things that he does that you can focus on and bring out, and that's life giving.

[00:37:54] **Brian Goins:** And so it's not just about having sex. There, there are plenty of things outside the bedroom that can help, that can help that insecurity in men.

[00:38:01] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Which then helps inside the bedroom.

[00:38:04] **Brian Goins:** And so what happens when we build each other up? You know, what happens when a man feels cared for? What happens when a, when a wife feels cared for?

[00:38:09] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Well, the good news, is that when we actually feel like we're built up in those areas, one of the things we found is that it actually sort of spills over into kind of the sexual relationship that the other person is longing for.

So like a wife who feels more cared for is more likely, for example, to be sexually playful. Like who knew? Right? Like, guys, take note. You know, if you listen to her and she feels secure outside the bedroom, she's gonna feel safer and more interested inside the bedroom.

And that's exactly the sort of framework that I think a lot of us are missing because we don't realize that those things are actually in play at all. And the, the reverse is true. When a man's heart feels cared for, and it's, it's not just in the built up in, you know, feeling like, you know, "I respect you, I appreciate you" outside the bedroom.

For men, it often very much is, inside the bedroom that that matters emotionally. What I hear from women constantly, constantly, is that when they have been close sexually for the next day or two, he is so much more tender, he's so much more warm, he's so much more affectionate outside the bedroom.

And that is actually truly a thing. Like there are all sorts of hormones, the way that God has wired our bodies that bonding hormone, for example, that makes him feel so much closer to you, which is actually then the reason why one way you touch your husband's heart is often by becoming close inside the bedroom.

[00:39:58] **Brian Goins:** Right, there is something unique I think about the way God even designed that. Again, it's not always true for everyone, but for for most men, for most women, when we give each other and care for each other's heart in those unique ways, it makes us want to care for the other person's heart. And then conversely, Jeff, I'd, I'd, I'd really be curious if we don't, uh, build up or help with those insecurities, what ends up happening to each one of us?

[00:40:19] **Jeff Feldhahn:** The obvious answer is when we don't have full information, we tend to fill in the information oftentimes with the less than a best interpretation. So we think that the motivations or the feelings that my spouse is having are not positive, are negative about me, and that's just, it's the work of the enemy, but it's a battle that we all encounter.

You know, I'm, I'm gonna tell a story real quick if I could that Shaunti's going to hate.

[00:40:51] **Brian Goins:** Oh then definitely tell it.

[00:40:53] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Uh oh. I have no idea what story he's gonna tell right now.

[00:40:56] **Jeff Feldhahn:** So years ago we were, we were just having a conversation. And I was saying, "You know, I think for us guys, we, we so want to solve things. We so wanna fix things. And what we've uncovered in the research are things that a guy can do to make you as a, as a woman, as our wives feel loved and secure and cherished. And we, we do those things and sort

of in our minds, we're thinking that should solve it. You should be able to get to the point where you trust me, where you believe and know beyond a shadow of a doubt that I love you, and it just doesn't come up in your head anymore. And it feels a little frustrating as a guy that that never seems to happen.”

And Shaunti looked at me and said, “Look, you know this stuff. I could tell you that I so respect you, I, I admire you, you did a great job on this, and we could have sex every day for two weeks. Would that fix you to where you didn't have to, to feel the need for these sorts of things? Of course not. You would still have that insecurity still inside of you.”

And I went, “You know, you're right, but I guess in the spirit of research, maybe we should at least try this...”

[00:42:26] **Brian Goins:** So we should just try it for two weeks to find out, every day, if this is true, and then we'll discover “I need another two weeks of research.”

I think is really what we'd end up saying, for most men. You know, I, I think that as what I, what I'm sensing here is that when a, when women's insecurity is hurt, they tend to withdraw it sexually. And then when a man's insecurity is hurt, they tend to withdraw emotionally. And I could see the enemy just playing that against each other.

Cuz the one thing the enemy wants is that he doesn't, for a couple, not to experience oneness because when he damages that oneness, God's reflection on earth is damaged and people can't see or, or, or will fail to see that image of God that, that he wants to shine through every couple. That when we love one another like God loves us it's amazing how people get a glimpse of who God really is.

And that's why this is so important. It's not just about sex, it's about something even deeper, that it's about each other's hearts. And so as we close, I think one of the things that we wanna say is just here, here's what to do. What to do as a result of this episode.

And, and I, Shaunti, I like how you say it, it's just important to turn and ask each other, “Is this true?” When you hear this, and this is what we, we encourage couples, hopefully they're listening to this together or maybe reading the book together, or they're having this conversation, maybe listening to it, and then come back together and, and have this, these times just to have a great conversation about, about intimacy.

Is this true? Is it true of you? Where is it not true? Because it may not be true, right? And does it describe you or how does it describe you? And I think another great question to ask, Jen and I do this a lot with, with couples, is just to ask the question, for the wife, to ask the guy, you know, when do you feel most respected by me? When do you feel like you matter most?

Uh, and then for the husband to ask the wife, when do you feel most cherished? When do you feel most nourished? And I think we should ask that, you know, regularly cuz it changes. You know, it may not be the, you know, putting your arm around me and, and, and, uh...

[00:44:15] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Playing with your hair.

[00:44:16] **Brian Goins:** Playing with you hair, like you said, it may be something else. And, and Jen might need to tell me, "You know what? Stop slapping my butt because I don't like that anymore, I don't feel cherished anymore, write me a letter. You know, that might be nice." And so that's what I'm walking away with, uh, Jen, is that I need to, I need to write that love letter again.

It's been a while. And, uh, to think back to what were those things when we, we were dating and when we meet those needs, it's amazing how um, for each other that we want to do more for the other person.

[00:44:43] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Yeah, exactly. I think that's the key that a lot of us miss, is that it doesn't fix everything, you can't control the other person, but when you put on your kind of learning hat, and you, you're like you said in another episode, you become a detective.

And when you try to figure out the other person, it usually does touch their heart in the way for them to actually feel safe to turn around and go, "Oh, what do you need?" And touch your heart. And it, it doesn't guarantee anything, but often it becomes a great cycle.

[00:45:20] **Brian Goins:** Yeah. Well, we've had Dr. Mike on every episode, and so we wanted to make sure that his voice was heard here as well in this episode, and Dr. Mike, we asked you to listen to this conversation that we had. It was fun having our spouses on and, and I'm sure that there's probably many things you heard that you were like, man, Brian, I need to have you in my, on my couch here.

[00:45:39] **Dr. Michael Sytsma:** Let's do some good therapy then.



[00:45:41] **Brian Goins:** Yeah. I, and so we're not gonna bring that up to the listener right now, but we just might need to talk after this and you can let me know when I need to come in for a session.

But as you were listening to that, I, I would have to imagine you experienced some of that with the couples that come in to your office and I, I wonder what some of your reflections are and how you see this working out with the people that you're seeing on, on a day-to-day basis.

[00:46:04] **Dr. Michael Sytsma:** Yeah I appreciate you guys doing this.

Uh, I so honor what, uh, Shaunti and Jeff have done in the digging into couples and insecurities, and I refer a lot of my clients to read through some of the books where they talk through this as they were real clear to say not every male experiences these insecurities, not every female experiences, these insecurities.

But we do see some pretty dramatic differences in the majority of individuals. When I first started getting passionate about working with marriages, you know, I was coming out of working with addicts and working in patient and falling in love with marriages, and I was trying to figure out what the conflict is.

And this was 30 years ago. And I would sit with couples and I'd look at the husband and just say, "What is it your're, you're asking for what do you want from your wife? And if, if she did that, what would that give you? And if you are receiving that, if it's what that gives you, then what's underneath it?" And I'm trying to dig down to, what's the core ask, what are we really needing from each other? And we're not getting that need met and that's causing the conflict.

And I started to consistently hear the same type of language from women and consistently hear the same type of language from men and, yes, sometimes they would be totally reversed. And, uh, sometimes it would be a little bit different. But the core need that I kept hearing from men was, "I need her to think that I'm all that and more. I know I'm not perfect. I know I'm not the greatest thing in the world, but I need my wife to look at me and just think, I can do this. I am competent. I can..."

So some of what she was talking about insecurities, I, I look at it as a bit of a core need. And then it was fascinating for me. You know, you open up Scripture and Paul says, wives, uh, I like to paraphrase there, "adore your husbands, wives adore your husbands as you would Christ."

And I think, if husbands felt like their wives were looking at them with that type of adoration, now, boy, we all don't deserve that type of adoration. But when I get that, you know, we see pictures in movies where the girl looks up at the guys with these adoring eyes and every, every guy just melts. You know, one of my friends says the reason why we love James Bond is he walks into a room and all the men are intimidated and all the women adore him.

Um, you know that that's what's attractive to us. Plus he has cool toys.

[00:48:32] **Brian Goins:** Yeah, that's true. I've never been mistaken for James Bond up until this point in time, but I have to say, it would be nice if my wife looked at me that way every now and again.

[00:48:40] **Dr. Michael Sytsma:** Yeah. that type of adoration I think is cool and, and I think it's fascinating that Paul calls for that.

Maybe he is understanding a core type of a desire that we as men have. Then you flip that and I'm asking wives, "Well, you know, if he was around more, he was, well, what would that give you? And what's, uh, digging down to the core need?" And it came down to something around the line of security. That a core desire, a core need for women is "I need to feel secure. You know, the finances are more important to me because I need an nest egg to feel secure, or the house is more important because that's security for me. Or knowing that you're not gonna cheat or you're not looking at anybody else that really attends to those core security needs."

And I look and I see where Paul says, husbands and I like to paraphrase again, cherish. "Husbands cherish your wives as Christ cherished the church and gave himself up for it."

And so I look at these wives and say, what, what if your husband set aside what he wanted? Not that that's always the right choice, but what if your husband set aside what he wanted to fight for what you wanted, and you'd see them just kind of relax as they'd say, "well, I would feel safer. I'd feel more secure."

It's like that core kind of need is getting met as we set ourself aside and we fight for her. What's fascinating to me is the next phrase that Paul gives, there is, "for no man hates his own body, but cares for it." And that used to confuse me early on. How is it that I give up myself and then in the next phrase, I'm caring for me?

But I just gave up me. I just died to me and it took me a while in marriage to learn that when I give up a part of self for my wife, I actually gain more. I gain a big part of what I truly, deeply desire, and it starts to work together. Now, that's not a recipe. Just because I do my part doesn't mean she's gonna do her part or just because she does her part doesn't mean I do my part.

But there's something that I love in me when I'm treating her with that kind of cherishing. Uh, that's who I wanna be as a husband. And then both of our needs can be met if we both do each of our individual tasks in that process.

[00:50:59] **Brian Goins:** You know, it'd be a great question, just a daring question for each person to ask the other, you know, what would it feel like for you to feel adored, you know, for a wife to ask a husband or for a husband to ask a wife, what would it feel like for you to feel cherished? Is there anything that I can do that would make you feel more cherished? Is there anything I could do to help you be, feel more adored?

[00:51:19] **Dr. Michael Sytsma:** And just to the question from a wife, uh, to her husband, “Do you believe I adore you?” And I will ask that in session. And wives are often really surprised at the answer their husband gives. “Are you kidding? No.” And she's like, “But I do.” And the question is, how do you send that message? And then do you receive that message?

Because maybe she adores you, but you don't allow her to. You need to see it in a different way. Well, maybe he does cherish. But you don't receive it well, but does your wife even feel cherished? So, yeah, I think those are great questions. The key in all of this is how do we, uh, increase the conversation with each other?

How do we be curious? How do we lean in? How do we understand each other? And these core needs are, as Shaunti and Jeff talk about in insecurities are great places to encourage couples to, to invite each other into that.

[00:52:14] **Brian Goins:** Yeah. Thanks so much Dr. Mike in the, in the Proverbs, I know that, that Solomon says “the heart of a man is like deep waters. It takes a man of understanding to draw it out.”

And one thing I appreciate about you is that our hearts are tangled messes, and you help us untangle some of those needs, some of those insecurities. I can see why so many couples walk outta your office with, with hope. So thanks Dr. Mike. We'll see you on the next episode.

Thanks for joining us in this episode of Married With Benefits. Shaunti, I'm looking forward to this next one.

[00:52:43] **Shaunti Feldhahn:** Yeah, me too.

[00:52:45] **Brian Goins:** Because the question that we're gonna try to answer is, how do I deal with disappointment when I think something's gonna happen and it just doesn't? And having Dr. Mike on to talk about how do I give a no well, when I need to give... because we can't all, I mean, we need to give no's at times, and then how do I receive that? Well, tune in next time on Married With Benefits.

If you want more information about how you can continue to pursue oneness together, you might wanna check out [familylife.com/learn](http://familylife.com/learn). We've got a great collection of e-courses, not just about intimacy, but we have stuff on how you can love like you mean it. Well-blended financial freedom. Just a lot of different information and great courses at your fingertips where you can continue to grow together and pursue the relationships that matter most.