

The Wall

SAVE MY MARRIAGE ONLINE COURSE



MarriageHelper

The Wall



“Hi, I’m Joe Beam. It is a pleasure to meet you!”

In this first session, we’re going to be talking about “The Wall”. But just before I do that, I want to introduce the course itself. Tell you just a little bit about me and what’s going on here and then get to that really, really important concept of “The Wall”. As a matter of fact, when I teach “The Wall” to audiences anywhere in the world, people react by saying, You know, I kind of knew that, but now it makes sense and now I can see how I can use this understanding to allow myself to have a deeper, more intimate relationship with another person”. If you choose to do that. And also how you can use the concept of “The Wall” to get the other person to have a deeper and more loving and intimate relationship with you.

Now, I’ve already told you my name is Joe Beam. As you can see in the picture there, I’m the gray-headed guy and then in the middle, the woman next to me is my wife, Alice. We’ve been married to each other twice, oh, nearly thirty years ago at this recording we actually were divorced for three years. We’ve been married fifteen then divorced for three, then re-married and I’ve been re-married ever since. And you might be thinking, well, what does that mean to this course? It means that I’m not just teaching you things I’ve learned from a book or that I’ve learned in my education but also things that we have learned in real life.

Because when I left Alice way back in 1984, yes, I divorced her. I didn’t want to be with her, I didn’t love her. As a matter of fact, in my mind, I had vilified her. But now, now, she is my best friend. I love her dearly. I cannot imagine life without her. So you can see that I am a husband twice over to the same woman, never married to anybody else.

And a father, you can see our three daughters there: Kimberly, Joanna, and Angel. Kimberly's husband, Rob, is with her. Joanna's husband, Lee, is with her and you can see our grandsons, those are Joana's children. That's Jacob and Tyler.

I'm also an author. I've written several books. You can go on Amazon.com or any bookstore and find those books. Most of my books have been published by Howard Books which is a division of Simon and Schuster. I've also been published by other publishers as well. Mostly, I have written about things having to do with relationships.

I'm a teacher, for example, I am adjunct faculty in the Psychology department at Lipscomb University in Nashville Tennessee. I'm also a speaker. I've spoken in many places in the world and last count at somewhere over 2 million people in my audiences. And that doesn't count of the people that I've talked to when I've been interviewed on "The Today Show" for example, or "Good Morning America", or "Focus on the Family", or other programs you may have seen or heard.

Now, if you could have your marriage be anything you wished, what would it be like? When I asked that question in live audiences, I hear people say things like, "we'd be best friends", sometimes people say, "well, we could trust each other", other times people say, "we could laugh and have fun with each other". You hear all kinds of things but it's interesting that very few people say, "well, I have it just like I want it now".

Most of us want something more, and as I said earlier, even if you're marriage is in trouble, we can show you how you can possibly achieve that. We're going to show you the right steps but maybe you need to think to yourself, "What is it that I want? If I could have my marriage be anything, If I could waive the proverbial magic wand, what would my marriage be like?". Now if you get that in mind, then you'll listen more in picking up things that will help you achieve just that goal.

Now "The Wall". You see, from the time we were kids, we learned that people will make fun of you, people will reject you, that they want you to be what they want you to be. And you may have gone through this as a child or a teenager, you may have watched other people do it or most certainly, you've seen other people do it. Where they pretend to be something they're not so they can be accepted into a particular group. So it might be the cool group at school for example, and so your teenager pretends to be one of them and actually in a sense becomes one of them just so he or she can feel accepted.

In marriage, we see it this way. You see, people get married thinking, "Okay we love each other just like we are" but, so much of the time, each person is kind of thinking at least subconsciously if not consciously, "Well, I love you like you are but I think I'd love you more if I could help you become like this."

So from the time we were kids, even before we ever got married, we learned that sometimes, to be accepted, we didn't show people who we really are, what we really feel, what we really think, how we really process things because we discovered that those people don't want us to think like that or feel like that or be like that. And so to be accepted, we just build a wall. We hide our real selves behind the wall. And then on the wall, we paint a picture. We paint a picture of whatever it is we think that person wants us to be or how that person wants us to think or what that person wants us to feel. And we pretend to be that so we can feel accepted. The problem with that is, we know that's not really the way I act, not really the way I think, not really the way I feel. It's a painting, it's not who I really, really am. It's a painting I put on the wall to get you to accept me. But what I crave, and by the way, every person in the planet craves this, what I truly, honestly, genuinely crave is for you to love me, like me and respect me just as I am. The person I am behind the wall, the person that sometimes I hide from you. As a matter of fact, maybe, I'm hiding it from you most of the time.

Now, if you think about that, it's really pretty sad because if the other person is looking at that painting and says, "I love you". We're thinking, "No, you don't really love me. You love what you think I am, or you love what you think you want me to be, you're not loving who I really am". And one of the reasons we're really afraid to let people see us behind the wall is that we know we are flawed. You see, there are days when I don't like me. So how can I expect other people to like me? There are days when I don't know if I actually love myself or not, so how can I expect other people to love me? And there are days when sometimes I don't feel respect for myself at all and how can I feel that other people will respect me if they knew the real me? Because we are all flawed, we had done things we wish we hadn't done. We have felt things that make us feel guilty, we have thought things that also make us feel guilty. I actually bought a book a few years ago for the title. I never read the book. I bet it was good but I bought it just for the title. It said, "Bad Men Do What Good Men Dream". The idea being that even the best person in the planet sometimes thinks about or wants to do things that are in great contradiction to their belief and value system. So, bad men do what good men dream.

As I am behind the wall, knowing that I'm flawed and knowing some days I'm not real crazy about me, but I want you to love me, it's very difficult for me to be transparent and let you see who I really am. Now if I try, then this is basically how I do it. I'll take a brick off the wall and hand it to you. In other words, I've just made myself vulnerable to you in some fashion, I've told you something about me that maybe is not what you're expecting to hear or what you want me to be or want me to feel or want to think. And when I hand that brick to you, I've just made myself very vulnerable because in my illustration, I didn't put the brick in some pile. I actually handed it to you by giving you some information that made vulnerable by saying, okay, I can be rejected by this, I can be hurt because of this. Then in essence in my illustration, I've handed you the brick. Now, whatever you do with that brick determines whether I'm going to take another brick off at all.

If you cherish that brick, if you protect that brick. You now know that about me but rather than hurting me with it, and you can hurt me with it at least in two ways, maybe more. One is you can throw the brick back at me at some point. Well, and then boom! You blast me because you know something about my vulnerability. You know something about me that I didn't want the world to know and you hit me back with it, boom! You beat me up verbally and emotionally with it. Another is, you can hand it to somebody else to hit me with it. In other words, I've told you one of my secrets. I've shared something about me that's transparent and vulnerable and what do you do? You tell it to somebody else. But when you tell it to somebody else, you just handed that person the brick. Now that person can hurt me with that brick or that person may hand that brick to somebody else.

Now, interestingly, in my illustration, it kind of have a little bit of a not clear distinction here. Because you don't really give the whole brick away. You get a part of the brick away. And so every person that gets a part of that brick is somebody else that can hurt me. The person I first shared it with, the next person that we shared it with, the next person, the next then the next. Everybody now has a brick they can hurt me with just because I took it off and shared it with somebody that I wanted to trust.

Now, if that person cherishes that brick, if he or she takes care of that brick, I'm going to take off another at some point. Now, some people do it very rapidly like, 5 minutes later, oh, that felt so good I'll hand you another brick. Others are a little bit more skeptical and tend to hold back more onto it, maybe more like five days, for some people it can even be five weeks or five months. It's all according to how much trouble they have trusting other people. If you cherish that brick, eventually, I will take off another and then if you cherish that one, eventually, another. Now, the more bricks I take off, the more you see who I really am. Now, if you continue to like me, continue to love me, continue to respect me, in other words, if you continue to accept me even though I'm no longer being the painting and now letting you see the real me, the flawed me that sometimes I have trouble liking, respecting and loving, if you continue to accept that person, like, love and respect me as you see the real me, the flawed me that I'm revealing, then I feel very, very much loved by you. And reciprocally, I feel much more love for you particularly if you're also taking bricks off your wall. And so, if we continue to take bricks, both of us taking bricks off the wall there can come a time when we can have a level of intimacy that's amazing. Because we can let our souls go necked with each other. And that level of intimacy very few people ever reach but the ones that do have an amazing relationship with each other.

So, the goal is to take more bricks off. Now after just taking off a foot of bricks and I still have 10 feet of bricks left up there and you say, "I love you", I'll believe in about one foot's worth. I still may doubt it 10 feet worth because it's like, well, I've let you see a little bit of me but not all of me and so, yeah, you love what you're seeing so far but I'm not sure that you'd keep loving me you see more.

If I take out 5 feet of bricks and you say, "I love you, I accept you, I respect you" then I feel loved 5 feet worth if you will. But those other 5 feet that are still remaining, I'm going, "but I wonder if you would love me if you knew that". So the goal is to finally get as many bricks off the wall as possible. I don't think that happens all at once. As a matter of fact, it can take years and even decades to get it where you're bound pretty low. And I'm not sure if anybody can take every last brick off but what you're trying to do is to make yourself more vulnerable so that the other person can see who you are, how you think, how you feel and can love you anyway. And I said earlier, if both of you can do that, you'll reach an amazing level of relationship and intimacy that most people don't have, particularly if you pronounce the word "intimacy" a little differently like "into me see".

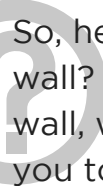
But what happens, what happens when the other person hits you with the brick? Now we have a problem. Because if you hit me with that brick, I'll put it back up. I'll put it back on the wall. As a matter of fact, according to the level of pain I feel when you hit me with that brick, either you hit me with it or you handed it to somebody else to hit me with it, according to the level of pain I feel, I may not just put that brick back up, I may put up several bricks at the same time. And we have seen many couples, who over the years have hurt each other so badly. Or let's just say a particular person that's been hurt so badly by his or her spouse, that wall is now astronomically high, unbelievably wide and then very, very thick. It can get so high, so wide, then so thick that you finally don't care what the other person says or does anymore. I have you so walled off, I don't care what you say, you can't hurt me. I don't care if you die, it won't hurt me. Now, if you're listening to this, and thinking, oh my goodness, that's where I am. That's how I feel. My spouse hurt me so badly that I think my wall is so high and so wide and so thick that we can never have a good relationship again.

Listen to me please. Since 1999, I've been working with marriages in crisis. Not longer than that, working with marriages, but since 1999, doing this intensive 3-day workshop I mentioned earlier for marriages in crisis. We've had people walk in that room that their counselor have already said, "You have no hope, there is no way this marriage is not going to make it". As a matter of fact, sometimes, I feel really good about the fact that knowing that we get couples that other people have totally given up on. Their families have given up. Their friends have given up. If they're part of the church, they've given up. The counselors have given up. Now not everybody's that bad, they come to the workshop, always understand there are different levels but I've seen a number of those couples walk in the door where everybody would say "No, it's done. It's over, there's so much pain, the walls are so thick. There's no way to make this better" and have seen those marriages completely turned around.

So how do you start taking bricks off a wall that's that high and that wide and that thick? Well, you do it one at a time.

You don't bulldoze down the wall, you just take one brick off. In other words, you risk being vulnerable again. Now, at this point, in this course, you might be saying, "If I'm in that situation, why in the world would I risk doing that?". Well, that's a good question and hopefully as we go through the 6 weeks, I'll give you reasons to understand why it would be worth taking that risk. Is it a risk? Yes. If that person hurt you before, that person can hurt you again. But, if indeed, by learning some new skills and techniques and coming at things differently than you have before, the two of you can learn how to cherish the other person's bricks. Then you can begin to take another one again and you can reach the level of tremendous intimacy. I've seen it happen repeatedly so I know that it can.

Now, if you're reading this and saying, "But wait a minute, my spouse is not reading this with me. My spouse is not in this course, can I do it?". Actually, there are some things you can do. Now, you are not having the advantage, of course, of your spouse not reading this with you and going I get this, this makes sense. But, if you can start being a little bit more transparent, if you can trust him or her with the brick and maybe before you do that, you actually either have them read this with you or you try to explain the wall in your own words. This is what I feel, this is what I want, may I trust you with at least one brick? Then, it may start working. Particularly, with some of the skills we're going to teach you over the next several weeks. So, it may be that if you're doing this alone, it's not time to start doing this right now. It may be that even if you're doing this with someone, with your spouse, it may not be time to start doing this yet. Maybe there are some other skills you need to learn as we go along. So if you have any hesitation or reservation, just for now, understand the principle, but don't do anything with it until you learn more skills. But, once you conquer the wall, once you can learn how that both you and the other person can take down those bricks and once you risk it and do so, then you will have an amazing relationship. Does it mean that you'll never hurt each other again? No. People inevitably wind up hurting each other because we're humans, but there's a different kind of pain to be hurt by somebody doing something dumb or stupid than it is for somebody to take something that you've been so vulnerable and transparent about and hurting you with that. So this is the concept of "The Wall".



So, here's the question. Write down your answer to this, Why have you put up your wall? Think about it. What's happened? But just write down why have you put up your wall, where have you been hurt or what is it that you feel like the other person is forcing you to be whether he or she realizes it or not. So write down your answer, why have you put up your wall?

The second question is, What does your wall protect you from? What kind of pain, what kind of misery, what kind of hurt, whatever it might be, what does it do for you? The fact that you have that wall there. Now, if you think about that, what have you learned from this session so far? So what do you think? Remember, we said, you will think differently if you write than if you just were talking or just thinking. So write at least one thing from this section that affects your marriage and how you can use that information to make your marriage better.