

5 Common Problems in Relationships and How *Surviving the First Five* helped.

by: Kelli H. Smith

1. "I'm an independent woman. I don't need a man."

"I was so caught up in maintaining my own identity, my money, my lifestyle, that I lost sight of what mattered the most to me. I pushed my husband away and got angry at him for not giving me what I needed. I sought gratification in my work, my friends, my schooling, instead of in God and my husband. After all, I got here on my own, I didn't need him for anything. It wasn't until someone else came along that I realized how underappreciated my husband was and how much my 'single life' independence played a part in it. After a lot of prayer and meditation, soul searching and reading *Surviving the First Five*, I was finally able to see the gift that God had given me. I am learning that my being dependent on my husband is not me giving up my identity. It means I am creating a new life and a new definition of independence with the man God created for me to share my life with." - Anonymous Reader, 4 years

2. "I can't talk to you when you shut down. You always yelling and treating me like a child."

"Every time I try to talk to my husband he just shuts down and walks off. When we do talk, she's yelling and screaming at me. I come home tired and hungry from a long hot day of work and all she can do is criticize me for not taking the trash out before I left in the morning. He just doesn't love me. He doesn't pay attention to me, so I yell. I don't like being treated like one of the children. I'm the bread winner in the family and all she does is sit around the house all day. I take care of the children all day and maintain this house. I'm tired. I'm tired too.

We could never get through a conversation without slamming doors or screaming at the top of our lungs. Our kids were seeing us argue practically every day and it was affecting their behavior. Our youngest son started wetting the bed again and the oldest daughter started rebelling against my husband. A friend of ours told us about Kelli's book and the communication exercises. We thought they were silly at first. When our oldest daughter asked us if we were going to get a divorce like her friend's parents, we realized we needed help. We sat down one evening and worked the exercises and the reflection questions. It took a while, but we are finally at a place where we can have a conversation without wanting to storm out of the room or raise our voices. The book even gave us the strength to face our fears and fight for our marriage." - Marriage in progress, 14 years.

3. "I'm tired of your mother always criticizing me. Stop telling your family about our problems."

"My wife has a habit of running to her mother every time we have an argument. I can't stand it. It's like she can't make a decision or stand on her own two feet without her mother. Even after we've made up, her mother still looks at me sideways and her family leaves threatening messages on my Facebook page. What am I supposed to do? We got into an argument because my family had a reunion coming up and she wanted to go away with her girlfriends that weekend. I tried to compromise and have us go to my folks for a day and then she meet up with her girls, but she just criticized me for not being sensitive to her needs. Instead of us finishing the conversation, she gets on the phone and starts crying to her mother. Next thing I know, her cousins are riding around town saying I'm no good.

A co-worker had *Surviving the First Five* out at lunch what day. The fireworks on the cover caught my eye and I asked him about it. He said he got it from the author's husband as a gift for his wife, but he hadn't been able to put it down. I glanced at a few pages and the chapter "Keeping Others Out of your Business" immediately got my attention. I spent the rest of the lunch break reading the chapter and

couldn't wait to get home to order it. It was as if she knew what I had been dealing with. I shared the book with my wife and we started having long conversations about not running to her mom or my friends every time we had a fight. We still argue, but everything we talk about isn't shared with everyone we know. Each time I feel resentment or anger, I pick up this book and there is something I can learn or a prayer to help me work on bettering my marriage. - Trying to make it through, 1 1/2 years.

4. "I can't be with someone I don't trust."

"Let's be honest. My husband is a flirt. He always has been. I've had to fight girls. Girls look at me sideways when we go to the mall. I find myself doubting my husband and not trusting him. He's never admitted to cheating on me, but what am I supposed to think when he has girl's numbers in his phone or he's texting late at night. How am I supposed to trust him? We are having a baby soon and I don't know if I need to confront him or just go on living like we are. I mean he's a good provider and he's not out in the clubs, but I still doubt that he hasn't thought about being with someone. I question whether or not I'm good enough for him or if I'm still attractive to him. I feel disgusted with my looks because I don't look pregnant yet, just fat. I just can't be with someone that I can't trust.

That was me a few months ago. I was the wife who tracked her husband's phone, checked his voice mail, email, phone log, etc. You name it, I snooped. There were just so many girls, I didn't know who to believe. I felt disrespected and neglected for a long time. I came across *Surviving the First Five* after seeing Kelli on the News a few months ago. I looked up her book on Amazon and previewed a few of the chapters. I had never met her, but she seemed to get it. She shared her story of not trusting her husband and I realized that that was me. *Surviving the First Five* also helped me to see that my trust issues weren't because of my husband, but from my own insecurities. I cried for many nights because I didn't want to face my demons. The scared little girl inside of me was desperately clinging to the one relationship that I was finding any excuse to pull away from. While reading her book, I started seeing a counselor. Just recently, my husband started coming to sessions with me and we've been able to work on my trust issues and his flirtation. If it weren't for *Surviving the First Five*, I don't think I would have had the courage to face my demons and work at saving my marriage instead of tearing it down." - Thankful, 3 years

5. "I'm just not happy anymore"

"I love my husband, but lately I've just felt so alone and confused. He comes home every night and goes straight to bed. He ignores me and our son. We haven't been intimate in over two months. I'm worried that he's seeing someone else. I don't know what I would do if he left me. I only work part-time. That's not enough to take of the mortgage and our son. I'm just not happy. I want him to change and be more involved with us. I pray and pray for God to move in our lives, but where is He? I know I don't look like I did when we got married, but I try. I feel like I am my husband's roommate rather than his soul mate. Every time we talk, he's rushing me off the phone or walking away. He gets so angry when I ask a question, like I'm bothering him. He's never hit me or our son, but sometimes I feel like he wants to. Is there something I'm not doing? I want my marriage to work, but what else can I do? I'm just so tired. I cry every night, in hopes that my husband will show some sign of sympathy and hold me. I have no one to talk to. My friend's marriages seem so perfect. When we go out in public he puts on a big show and that irritates me even more. I don't know how to be happy anymore. It's been so long since I've felt good about myself and my marriage. I live in constant fear that my husband is going to snap or ask for a divorce. I grew up in a single parent home. I don't want that for my son. I'm just not happy anymore.

Like many women, I didn't know where to turn. Did anyone really get it or was I the only one struggling to figure out what happiness was? I actually, just got *Surviving the First Five*, so I haven't read much of it yet. A friend of mine liked a post from Kelli's Facebook page and I clicked the link. I started reading some of Kelli's blog posts and decided to order the book. It was nice to hear that someone else gets it. I just want something that will make me happy again or at least show me how to get it." - Desperately seeking help, 8 years.