

# FIRST STEPS FOR HIM & HER

## in Creating a “Sextraordinary” Marriage

(HER - Embracing/Developing; HIM - Bridling/Self-Mastery)

Laura M. Brotherson, LMFT, CST – StrengtheningMarriage.com/”The Marital Intimacy Institute” (updated - Apr 2021)

### EMBRACING YOUR SEXUALITY -- Keys for Women

1. **Decide if you are ready and/or willing to work on embracing and developing your sexuality.** For women the principle of agency is paramount in any efforts to move from a “duty sex” type relationship to an “I want you” sexual relationship in their marriage. So, women need to first decide for themselves if they want to work on this before any other efforts here will be helpful.
2. **Clean out anger, frustration, resentments.** Because sex starts in the mind and women often have some accumulated anger, frustration and/or resentment about sex, they generally need to clear out their mental clutter before they can move forward sexually. Write out at least 50 things you hate or are frustrated about regarding sex then shred it with the intention of letting it go. This is the first step most women need to be able to create a *sextraordinary* marriage. This can be repeated as often as necessary until the negative thoughts and feelings about sex or their spouse are significantly diminished. This is the stage where most women get stuck if they don’t do this processing enough to be free of the past experiences and beliefs that are keeping them stuck. (See [Process Writing & Benefits Worksheet](#) or [Processing - Releasing - Surrendering – 10 Point Process Writing Exercise.](#))
3. **Listen to chapters 1-2 of *Knowing HER Intimately*.** Listening to the *audio* version of these chapters over and over specifically provides: 1) positive mental reprogramming about sex (especially about embracing one’s sexuality), and 2) a way to feed affirming sexual thoughts into the mind so they aren’t so foreign. It’s a parallel for the testosterone-driven “elevator music” men (higher-desire husbands) have playing in the background of their minds much of the time. Casually listening to this book for even a few minutes each day helps women: 1) develop a more positive mindset about sex; 2) identify and work though any mental inhibitors they have; and 3) learn to embrace and develop their sexuality as a good and godly part of their wholeness.
4. **Develop your flirtiness.** When a woman works on being more sexually flirty and playful with her husband it provides an opportunity to practice stepping into and getting more comfortable with her sexuality. It’s an invaluable way to own, develop, embrace and come to enjoy your sexuality in an easier and safer even if indirect way. Many wives will need to “preface” their flirty efforts with their husbands by saying like that they will be “working on being more flirty” but that it doesn’t mean it’s a green light for sex. Women also need to let their husbands know that it’s not helpful when they get overly excited or respond too enthusiastically to her attempts to work on being flirty...especially in the beginning.

### BRIDLE & SURRENDER -- Keys for Men

1. **Restore her freedom to choose sexually.** Work on bridling, surrender, and self-mastery to remove the psychological pressure your wife may feel and restore her the ability to freely choose. This is definitely a tough step! To truly surrender, husbands will need to develop a mindset of being okay **as if** they might never get the sexual relationship they desire, while still being emotionally accessible and responsive to their wives. This is how husbands offer genuine agency to their wives in the sexual dimension. This will likely require God’s help to bridle and master man’s God-given sex drive. The following resources can help with the difficult work of surrender, self-mastery and giving sexual agency back to your wife:
  - [7 Steps of Spiritual Surrender](#) - It may help to read this handout every day, if necessary, to get into a mindset of surrender recognizing where you don’t have power to change things while maintaining faith and trust in the Lord and His purposes throughout the journey toward a “sextraordinary” marriage.

- [Personal Wholeness, Self-Differentiation, and God](#) - Review this handout to work on self-differentiation, self-mastery and self-regulation to manage your own thoughts and emotions around sex versus letting her behavior dictate your “okayness.” As you develop a more solid sense of self, become less spouse-dependent to sooth your anxieties and emotions you free your wife to choose for herself to step into her sexuality freely, which is the only place from which “I want you” sex can occur.
  - [Agency, Change & Sex](#) – This information can help you better understand and address the concepts of agency, change, entitlement, neediness, bridling and surrender within the sexual relationship. If women don’t feel like they can freely choose sex (or not) then couples can’t ever get out of “duty sex” mode and into “I want you” mode.
  - [Keys to Develop a More Personal and Profound Relationship with God](#) – Husbands will often have to access a power great than themselves to master their appetites and passions sufficient to allow wives to freely choose in (or not) to embrace and develop their sexuality. Husbands may need to partner with God more personally and profoundly than they ever have before and the tools in this resource can help.
  - [Sexy Challenge – Say “No” to Duty Sex](#) – This Sexy Challenge for men may provide some additional insights of what it might look like to bridle and live in surrender to help change the dynamics of the sexual relationship while still staying connected emotionally. Remember the 3 S’s – 1) Say “no” to duty sex; 2) Self-regulate; 3) Stay emotionally connected.
  - [Bridling and Spiritual Surrender - \(Sexual Self-Mastery for Men\)](#) – This handout goes into more depth on specific actions husbands can take in their journey of bridling their appetites and getting into a more spiritually surrendered state of mind.
2. **Clean out anger, frustration, resentments.** Men too will have a lot of accumulated frustration and/or resentment about their sexual relationship that will impede their ability to surrender and bridle their sexuality. Write out at least 50 things you hate or are angry or frustrated about regarding your wife and/or your sexual relationship. You will simply shred these process writings setting an intention to release and let it all go. This is needed to be able to interact with your wife in genuinely loving and connected ways giving her the motivation (emotional connection) needed for her to want to work on something that initially feels like it’s mostly for him (sex). Writing out these frustrations and doing other things like meditation, mindfulness and partnering with God more fully will be needed to develop a new surrendered, calm mindset about sex staying emotionally connected to your wife despite whatever she chooses to do. (See [Process Writing & Benefits Worksheet](#) or [Processing - Releasing - Surrendering – 10 Point Process Writing Exercise](#).)
  3. **Stay out of “deficit” thinking and into “gratitude” thinking.** To train your brain to stay in grateful mode, and to give husbands something to focus on while distracting themselves from over focusing on the sexual relationship—keep a list of 5 things (every day or however often it’s needed) that you like, love and/or appreciate about your wife...especially intimately and sexually. It is important to focus on the positives and the progress your wife makes (no matter how small) while you’re learning your new sexually surrendered mindset. Just keep this list for yourself to fuel your healthier, positive mindset. One husband found that as he began to write out 5 things it turned into 105 as he realized all the little efforts she had been making to improve their sexual relationship. You might also work to do the [specific things that make her feel loved](#), or put more love, time and effort toward your children or other healthy outlets—again to help you stay focused on others instead of deficit thinking (what isn’t yet occurring in your sexual relationship).
  4. **Work on being calm, cool and collected as your wife works on being more flirty.** As your wife works on being more flirty, it will be counterproductive if husbands make a big deal about any of her efforts to be flirty. Drawing too much attention to her flirtiness actually makes it more likely that she will simply shut down her efforts to develop herself sexually.