

Jean MacKenzie



Fortunately, our marriage fared pretty well. We were doing lots of things right, but we needed to become more aware of what those things were and capitalize on them. We also needed to become aware of the influences and behaviours that were harming our relationship and guard against those.

Eventually, we came to realize that we had it within our power to make our relationship exceptional by increasing our ability to implement the skills that contribute to a successful relationship. We have since come to treat our marriage as our most important endeavour and this attitude has helped us to overcome many challenges, including military postings and deployments, the loss of loved ones, and the logistics of managing a large family while both working full time.

Ultimately, what I learned is that it's not the differences between spouses that cause a marriage to fail but how these differences are handled. As my husband and I learned the most effective ways to deal with our differences our relationship became one where we strive to build each other up rather than one where we inadvertently tear each other down.

We still have our differences, and even moments when we don't handle our differences well. Every couple has disagreements about issues such as money, communication, housework, and sex. My husband and I are no exception, and arguing with the person I am closest to can really hurt. However, my husband and I have learned skills to ease the damage done by hurtful words and actions. When we utilize the strategies we've learned we grow in our love for each other.

I entered into marriage unarmed with all the necessary knowledge to make it the best marriage it could possibly be. After discovering what a difference a better understanding of marriage can make, I decided to use my knowledge and experience to help others in their relationships by teaching couples how to solve their own problems so they can keep their love - and their marriage - alive forever.

I live with my husband and seven children in Edmonton, AB. While I am kept very busy with my faith, family, and private practice, I still find some time for my love of music. I play the flute with the Loyal Edmonton Regiment Band and play piano on occasion. I wouldn't be able to accomplish all the things I do without the support of those who love me. It is my aim to support others in their relationships, thus strengthening the foundations of our society.

I have a Master of Arts in Counselling from the Franciscan University of Steubenville and have trained in marriage and family therapy. I also published a book, [To Know, Love, and Serve: A Path to Marital Fulfillment](#), with my colleague, Melissa Guzik and I am a member of the College of Alberta Psychologists (CAP) and the Psychologists Association of Alberta (PAA).