



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** The Powerful Influence of a Wife- Part 1

**Guest(s):** Cindi and Hugh McMenammin

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- Dr. James Dobson: Welcome everyone to Family Talk. It's a ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute supported by listeners, just like you. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and I'm thrilled that you've joined us.
- Roger Marsh: Well, welcome back to Family Talk, the radio ministry of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh and today Dr. Dobson will be joined in studio by husband and wife team Hugh and Cindi McMenammin. He and Cindy had been married for more than 30 years. They spent much of their marriage serving together in ministry. He is a pastor and Bible teacher, and she is a pastor's wife, national speaker, and the author of several books. On today's broadcast, Dr. Dobson and the McMenammins will be discussing Cindy's book *When a Woman Inspires Her Husband*. Now this classic broadcast was recorded a few years ago and features special ministry friend and former cohost, Dr. Meg Meeker. Dr. Meeker has practiced pediatric and adolescent medicine for over 30 years now. She's a best-selling author, a speaker, and a dedicated mother to her four children. Meg and her husband, Walt, actually celebrated their 40th wedding anniversary this year. So congratulations to them. Let's go now to Dr. Dobson's conversation with Hugh, Cindi and Dr. Meg on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.
- Dr. James Dobson: Hello everyone. I'm James Dobson, and this is Family Talk with another absolutely scintillating discussion of a family related issue. This time, we're going to talk about marriage, and people seem to enjoy that topic. And so I welcome our listeners and I'm going to be joined by Dr. Meg Meeker on the telephone. Dr. Meeker, thank you for joining us today. You have a medical practice in Travers City, Michigan where you are today, right? Are you at home?
- Dr. Meg Meeker: That's where I am. I wish I were in the studio because I'm really excited about our guests today and this topic on marriage and specifically what wives can do to encourage their husbands. And so I'm really excited to talk about this and I hope our listeners get a lot out of our discussion.
- Dr. James Dobson: Well, I have their book in front of me and I tell you, she is really saying good things here, and I'm really honored to have her on the program. And her husband is here with her. Hugh, glad you could join us today.

Hugh McMEnamin: Thanks for having me, Dr. Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: You went to Biola and then got a master's degree from Moody.

Hugh McMEnamin: From Moody Graduate School. Great experience, great school. Highly recommend it.

Dr. James Dobson: I've known you for about 30 minutes and I like you already.

Hugh McMEnamin: That says a lot.

Dr. James Dobson: Also with us is his wife, Cindi, Cindi McMEnamin. And they have been married for 25 years.

Cindi McMEnamin: 25 years now.

Dr. James Dobson: You think it's going to work?

Cindi McMEnamin: Oh yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: Does some of what you write about come out of your own relationship?

Cindi McMEnamin: Oh, most of what I write about in all my books are lessons I've learned, things I haven't done well that now I know to do better, some things that have worked, and then of course I take stories from other marriages and advice from other wives, advice from other husbands. But a lot of this is us too.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. You went to Cal State University in Fresno.

Cindi McMEnamin: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: And majored in journalism.

Cindi McMEnamin: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: So, how'd you get interested in the subject of women and what they need as wives and mothers?

Cindi McMEnamin: Well, I've always wanted to write books, but I figured you can't just write books and make a living. So I majored in journalism so I could write for a newspaper and make a living. But then when my daughter was born, I thought, well, "Maybe this is my chance now to stay home with little Dana and maybe I can write books in all my free time," with the baby.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, you've done it. And I told you and I told Dr. Meeker in the last 30 minutes that I think you're really onto something. I have a list in front of me, of the books that you've written. And I want to share them with our listeners. You can

see where she's going with what she's writing here. *God Whispers to a Woman's Heart*.

Cindi McMenamin: It's a devotional. *God's Whispers to a Woman's Heart*, yeah.

Dr. James Dobson: And *When a Mom Inspires Her Daughter*, that ought to be interesting. *When a Woman Overcomes Life's Hurts*, discovering the healing and wholeness that God has for you. Another is *When Women Walk Alone*. That's been your best-selling book, hasn't it?

Cindi McMenamin: It has. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah. *When Couples Walk Together: 31 Days to a Closer Connection*, and you wrote that with your husband, Hugh, the two of you wrote together. That'll destroy a marriage, just trying to do...

Hugh McMenamin: I'll tell you what, I was scared going into that one, but God pulled us through.

Dr. James Dobson: *Women on The Edge: Turning Desperate Times into Desire for God*. And I liked this one *When You're Running on Empty: Hope and Help for the Over-Scheduled Woman*. Now you've written some others, but the one we're going to talk about today is *When a Woman Inspires Her Husband*, understanding and affirming the man in your life, how did you come up with this? And in fact, it came out of one of your other books, didn't it?

Cindi McMenamin: Yes. 10 years ago, I wrote *When Women Walk Alone* and one of the chapters in there talked about feeling alone in marriage. And I got a lot of emails and letters from wives saying, "What can I do to make my husband want to walk alongside me?" Okay. "He's an introvert. I'm an extrovert." Okay. "He's different." Okay. "He doesn't connect with me at an emotional level, but is there something I can be doing?" And I thought that was a really good question. And at the time I remember thinking, "Well, if I knew what it was, I'd write the book."

But I realized I had spent several years saying, "God, would you change my husband and make him more verbally expressive in how he feels? Would you make him more communicative with me? Would you make him more sensitive to my needs? Would you change him in this way?" Basically, "God, would you make him a little bit more like me?" And I don't know, I was on a plane one time. And it was as if God just spoke to the depths of my heart and said, "Cindi, do you think it was all about you?" And I remembered that story in Genesis. Eve was made to be a helper to Adam. And I don't know why, but I guess for so long, I was thinking God brought my husband into my life for how it could make my life so much better. And then I realized maybe God brought me into his life to make his life better.

Dr. James Dobson: And so, you began studying your husband and trying to figure it out how he's different from you.

Cindi McMEnamin: Yes.

Dr. James Dobson: Not how to change him, but how he's different and that's okay.

Cindi McMEnamin: Yes. And I said, "God, okay. Start with me, change me. What do I need to do to draw his heart closer to me? What do I need to do to just be his helper and to encourage and inspire him?" And when I began to ask him, "What do you need from me? What kind of wife do you really need me to be? And I won't get defensive at anything you say." And as we talked about it, those became the chapter titles to this book. And as I began to interview other husbands, who've been married at least 10 years or longer and ask them, "What really resonates with your heart? How does your wife encourage you and affirm you?" I began to see there was a common thread running through.

Dr. James Dobson: Dr. Meeker, you have a copy of the book. We talked about it a few minutes ago. You liked this book like I did, didn't you?

Dr. Meg Meeker: I loved this book. What Cindi is writing really resonates with me. I have a fabulous husband, been married 32 years. And I listen to a lot of women because I'm a pediatrician, a lot of moms, and they talk about their loneliness and they talk about feeling disconnected and they talk about feeling tired at home. And one of the things that they're constantly talking about is this sense of disconnect from their husband. "How can I get my needs met? I feel so lonely."

And I found personally in my own marriage, that when you take the focus off of your needs and you focus on serving someone, even though you're exhausted, and encouraging your husband, something happens in the marriage. My husband started to come to life. So I have been trying to do what you're talking about here. And I think that's one of the things I'd love for you to address, Cindi, is many women may be listening out there thinking, "Wait a minute, inspire my husband. I'm lonely in this marriage. I'm empty. And now you come along and you want me to give something to him?" Can you elaborate a bit on how you can get your needs met by inspiring your husband?

Dr. James Dobson: That's a great question.

Cindi McMEnamin: It is. I'm glad you asked that, Meg, because again, there was some initial resistance from some wives. "Well, why can't you write a book about how my husband can inspire me? Because I'm the one that's doing the work, because what can he give me?" And that's usually when I said, "You know what? You are right there where you need to read this and apply these principles." Because once we get our focus off of us, and like Dr. Dobson was saying, once we begin to minister and serve other people, that's when we change and our marriage changes. And I often tell wives when I began applying the principles in this book, when I began to look at how can I respect my husband more? How can I encourage him more? How can I be his cheerleader more? How can I be for him

everything that he needs me to be, either God secretly changed him, like you said, the mysterious thing happened, or God completely changed my perspective to where I don't notice those things about him that I used to think made me feel incomplete or needy.

Dr. James Dobson: A lot of women who have identified with the feminist movement in the last 20 years will be a little bit insulted by your statement. I know it's biblical. I know it's right. I know it works. But talk to the women out there that say, "Come on, I've got a life of my own. Why should I kind of subvert everything that I've got and everything I want to accomplish and turn it over to him?"

Cindi McMenamin: Well, I guess I started out that way too. I remember thinking originally, "I'm a confident, independent woman. I'll probably never get married. I'll just be a career woman." I fell in love with a man who loved God with all his heart and I wanted to be with him, but I still kind of kept a little bit of that independence. I kind of don't need you. I kind of have my goals. God has a way of honoring us when we say, "Okay, I don't have to be first." It's not the way the world thinks. It's not natural in us to think that way. But again, in my life, when I began to have that servant mentality, what can I do for him, there is something that changes within us. When we serve others, it's like, what goes around, comes around. And I made my husband want to meet my needs a little bit more when I wasn't complaining about what he was doing wrong, but I was instead affirming him in those ways that he was doing things right.

Dr. Meg Meeker: And honestly, and truly it works. It's biblical. It feels backwards. But I think that you're absolutely onto something, Cindi, and I'm grateful that you're stepping out and you have the boldness to say this because it isn't just in figuring out what we need and helping our husbands figure out what they need, and then learn how to meet each other's needs. It's really about service and that's where the freedom began.

Cindi McMenamin: And I also had to, just to lay some foundation work here, early in our marriage. I was originally looking to my husband to be God in a sense and meet all of my needs. And I had to start looking to God first to be my spiritual husband in a sense, taking my primary emotional needs to God. And when God became my first love, that took a huge expectation off of my husband, made him want to be there for me a little bit more since he wasn't always pressured to. And once I got my priorities straight, God first and then how I can serve my husband, then God began to meet me in the ways that my husband wasn't initially. But then eventually my husband was able to meet me in the ways that he could once he didn't have such a huge weight on him.

Dr. Meg Meeker: Yes. And I think that's very important because I think that a lot of young wives out there and a lot of older ones as well, I think that our expectations of our husband are way too grand. We want them to be our everything, and it really can be idolatry because we want them to step in God's place and be our everything, and that's way too much for any human being to do. So can you speak, Cindi, to the women out there who may be feeling downright ignored in

their marriage? Maybe their husband is very critical of them, not happy with them. He's constantly telling, pushing himself away from them. What would you say to women like that, who may have a difficult time saying, "My husband doesn't even like me. How can I inspire him?" What would you say to that woman out there?

Cindi McMEnamin: I've been talking to that woman for about 10 or 15 years now, telling them first and foremost, "You got to take all of what you need to God and say, 'God, I need you to fill me.'" And God knows that situation with her and her husband. God knows exactly where her husband's heart is. And again, as she begins to look first to God and then begins to pray for her husband, I noticed that during the seasons of my life when I am truly praying, God's best for my husband, God has a way of changing my heart toward him. And again, not expecting so much from him, but wanting to be that person who loves him unconditionally, who extends grace. And that does amazing things in a marriage.

Dr. James Dobson: Hugh, I first of all, appreciate your taking the time to be here. But I want to ask you in your relationship with Cindi, if you saw her change, if you were aware that she was trying hard and that she was also listening to what you had to say, where did you fit into this process?

Hugh McMEnamin: Yeah, thanks for asking that, Dr. Dobson. *When a Woman Inspires Her Husband*, one of the things that I immediately recognized where she was inspiring me was simply trying to getting better at understanding me, like Cindi was saying. Just knowing me for who I was, how I was wired as a man, as her husband uniquely bonded to her in marriage. And so that really took off when she began to just intentionally say, "Hugh, what do you need? And how would you respond to this? And what's important to you?" And so those kinds of open-ended discussions where I really saw her really intentionally wanting to know, not just assuming, not having those expectations that were just too high, like Dr. Meeker was saying, but just coming really to the table and saying, "I really want to know what I can do to help you." And seeing that honesty and sincerity really began to unfold through writing this book, and before then, when she was asking me those questions.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, there's a section in your book, Cindi, that offers examples of what wives can do to be aware of in their relationship with their husbands and how to fix a problem if it's there and you have about eight of them here, but let me just name a few. "Many men will give up altogether and go passive when it comes to parenting, if you're insisting that your parenting skills are better and perhaps that is aren't so good."

Cindi McMEnamin: I remember that happening a few times when I would say, "Hugh, you need to be careful about this, or make sure you don't let Dana do that." Or, "What were you thinking when you took them somewhere?" And he would look at me and he would say, "Don't you think that I love and care for our daughter just as much as you? Don't you think that her safety is a priority to me as well?" And he began to explain to me that he was actually insulted when I was implying that I

knew how to care for her better than he did. He even got together with a bunch of dads and they all took their daughters on a camping trip. There were three of them and, three dads and three daughters, and the girls were, what about six or seven at that time?

Hugh McMEnamin: Yeah, I think so.

Cindi McMEnamin: They took them camping overnight. And us wives were asking all sorts of questions and giving all sorts of reminders. And they said, "We're fine." And why don't you tell them the rest of that story?

Hugh McMEnamin: Oh, that was a great story. We're camping and the girls were playing down by the creek and they're out of view, but we can hear their voice. So the dads, we're saying, "They're fine. There are no, have any problems." And yeah, we just, the way we parented them, we were confident in it. It would have scared our wives to death, that they were there with us, I guarantee you, but they were fine. And my daughter still talks about that trip to this day. She's 21 now, and she'll never forget that trip.

Dr. Meg Meeker: That's wonderful. Cindi, I think that we wives communicate in many different ways to our husbands, that they're doing an inadequate job. I think that can come, not just from the words we say, but from our body language, from our tone of voice, our inflection. And I think that if we're honest and we stop and listen to ourselves and watch ourselves a little bit, we can be much more negative towards our husbands when they're parenting, regarding their career, regarding what they do around the house, or don't do. Have you spoken to women about putting checks on their lives and changing some of that behavior?

Cindi McMEnamin: Yes. Primarily because I saw that a lot in my own life as well. When my heart softened, I went back to him and asked him what is a better way to say this. In fact, one example of that, one time when I thought I was expressing care and showing love to him when he received it in the opposite way, was when he was getting ready to go on a backpacking trip, up Mount Rainier. And as a woman, I tend to worry about things. I've heard the broadcasts and seeing the news when hikers go missing on that mountain. And for a few days, I was saying things like, "Are you sure you should go? Are you sure you guys know the route? Well, okay. Be careful, just make sure you're careful."

And he finally came to me and he sat me down and he said, "Cindi, when you say be careful," he said, "I am hearing that you don't think I'm capable of this, that you think I might not have thought this out. I'm not going to go up a mountain if I don't know what the weather conditions are like. I always take experienced climbers with me. I need you to say, have a great time, enjoy the adventure."

Dr. James Dobson: Many women do not realize how important it is to a man to be respected in little things.

Cindi McMenamain: I thought I was saying, "I love you. I don't want to lose you." He thought I was saying, "I don't think you're capable. You're a wimp. You can't do it."

Dr. Meg Meeker: Exactly.

Dr. James Dobson: We bought a house early on and we'd been married about four years and we bought a house and the yards were a mess. And I was out there one day. This will sound really petty to some people, but I was out in the front yard and I was digging up dandelions that were all over the place. But every time I'd dug them up, I left a little plot of ground that didn't have anything green on it. Shirley came out the front door and just threw a fit over that because I was making a mess out of the front yard. That bothered me a lot. And we had a fuss over that. How stupid, how silly to fight over dandelions. But she was showing that she didn't believe that I could go into the yard and make it look good. Only she could supervise that. It's silly, but that's the way men think, and women too, for that matter.

Cindi McMenamain: And that's not what we mean when we say that, but I guess when we really think about it, yeah. We're checking up and kind of wishing they did things our way.

Dr. Meg Meeker: I think that many times women pass this off in a joking way as well. I'm such a controlling mom and I'm hovering over my kids and I'm constantly intervening and not letting dad say things, because that's just who I am. But I don't think that's honest. I think if we're honest, what we're really trying to do is push dad away. And you know, Hugh, I'd love to hear from you. I've read a number of places that men who have extramarital affairs often don't do so, usually don't do so, because they're looking for somebody beautiful or younger or the physical intimacy. They're looking for affirmation and they're looking for someone to just adore them. Can you speak to that about how we as women can safeguard our marriages and our husbands against extramarital affairs?

Hugh McMenamain: Absolutely, Dr. Meeker. And that's one of the things that happens is the husband really is looking for something from the wife that he's finding somewhere else. He's finding it in the workplace. He's finding that other female coworker who's just complimenting him and saying how great he is, "Oh, you do a great job. Oh, you look great today." And that can cause a husband to drift if he's not receiving an affirmation from his wife, where he should be getting it and should be expecting it from. So that sense of respect is huge to a man. They really want to feel like they're coming through and that I'm your hero and that you're my cheerleader. And if a woman can provide that, honestly and sincerely and regularly, it'll just really build them up. And Cindi, I think, has said in her book, wives, you want to be his cheerleader. Don't let someone else be his cheerleader.

Dr. James Dobson: Boy, that's well said.



Hugh McMEnamin: And also too, about the trust. There's so much trust that goes into our marriages, that there really needs to be laid there as a foundation. We have some men in our church who were in the Armed Forces and one of the gentlemen is a major in the Marine Corps. And the government of our country has trained him and allows him to fly multi-million dollar aircraft. I think he has the ability to pack a lunch for his kids going to school during the day, that kind of thing. I think you can trust me with this one.

Dr. James Dobson: This program has gone by in a big hurry because you've got a lot to say, both of you. And I appreciate so much you being with us. The title of Cindi McMEnamin's book, this one, she's written many others is *When a Woman Inspires Her Husband: Understanding and Affirming the Man in Your Life*. There's a lot of good stuff in this book and I do recommend it to our listeners. So Cindi McMEnamin and Pastor Hugh, thank you for being here. And we're going to pick up right at this point next time.

Cindi McMEnamin: Thank you.

Hugh McMEnamin: Thank you, Dr. Dobson.

Roger Marsh: Well, thanks so much for joining us here on today's edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk, and to learn more about Hugh and Cindi McMEnamin, visit our broadcast page at [drjamesdobson.org/broadcast](http://drjamesdobson.org/broadcast). That's [drjamesdobson.org/broadcast](http://drjamesdobson.org/broadcast). Or you can always give us a call at (877)732-6825. Be sure to join us again tomorrow to hear Hugh and Cindi share some practical advice on how wives can encourage their husbands and empower them to be the godly men they were created to be. Before we go now though, Dr. Dobson has a very special message just for you.

Dr. James Dobson: Hello everyone. I'm James Dobson. Before we end this program, I wanted to remind you that right now is a great time to partner with us at James Dobson Family Institute. Every dollar you give will be doubled thanks to a very generous matching grant. This match will stay in place until we've hit our target. I hope you will stand with us in our fight for marriages and families. If you are able to support us, know that any amount that you give will have a major impact on the people that we're able to reach, learn how you can partner with us and participate by going to [Dr. James dobson.org](http://Dr. James dobson.org) or call (877)732-6825. That's (877)732-6825.

Roger Marsh: You can send your tax deductible gift to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute PO Box 39,000 Colorado Springs, Colorado. The zip code, 80949. Thanks again for listening to Family Talk, be sure to join us again next time for more of the conversation with Hugh and Cindi McMEnamin right here on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

Announcer: This has been a presentation of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute.