



Broadcast Transcript

Broadcast: The Powerful Influence of a Wife- Part 2

Guest(s): Cindi and Hugh McMEnamin

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Dr. James Dobson: Well, hello everyone. I'm James Dobson, and you're listening to Family Talk, a listener-supported ministry. In fact, thank you so much for being part of that support for James Dobson Family Institute.

Roger Marsh: Hello, and welcome back to Family Talk, the listener-supported broadcast division of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Roger Marsh, and today you're going to hear the conclusion of a conversation that Dr. Dobson had with Hugh and Cindi McMEnamin about Cindi's book called, *When a Woman Inspires Her Husband*. The first half of the conversation was featured on yesterday's edition of Family Talk, and it was filled with practical tips and encouragement for husbands and wives. If you missed that broadcast, you can find it by visiting drjamesdobson.org/broadcast.

Hugh and Cindi McMEnamin have been married for more than 30 years and spend much of their time serving together in ministry. He was a pastor and Bible teacher on staff at North Coast Calvary Chapel in Carlsbad, California. Cindi is a dedicated pastor's wife, a national speaker, and author. She's written more than a dozen books, including the best seller, *When Women Walk Alone*, which has sold more than 120,000 copies. She's made numerous TV and radio appearances, and is the Director of the women's ministry, Strength for the Soul.

Her mission is to bring women into deeper intimacy with God. Let's listen now as this classic broadcast, which was recorded a few years ago and features our 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, podcaster, and a dedicated wife and mother. To begin today's broadcast, Dr. Dobson asks Cindi McMEnamin what a woman can do to encourage her husband and how she can nurture good communication with him. Let's listen in right now.

Dr. James Dobson: Welcome back to Family Talk.

Cindi McMEnamin: It's great to be back with you.

Hugh McMEnamin: It's good to be back again, Dr. Dobson.

Dr. James Dobson: Cindi, some of the other things that you wrote in the way of suggestions, "Many men will stop communication, if you have let him know he's a failure at communicating."

Cindi McMenamin: Yes. I remember when Hugh came home one evening, and he walked through the door. And I wasn't aware I was doing this, but within the first 15 or 20 minutes, I let him know everything that wasn't working right around here and everything that was wrong with him. And I honestly did not intend to do that. And he told me, he said, "You know, Cindi, in all the counseling that I've done with other men who've come to me," he said, "and in marriages, as well as in our relationship," he said, "I will tell you one thing. A man faces a battle at work, and he doesn't want to have to face a battle when he comes home." He said, "A man will gravitate to where he feels successful. If he feels he's not succeeding at home as a husband, as a father, as somebody that can fix things, if he's not succeeding at home, he will not want to be at home very much."

Dr. James Dobson: You said, "Treat him like a winner at home, and he'll want to be there more often."

Cindi McMenamin: Yes, the whole king of the castle thing. I remember when Dana was a little and dad would come through the door, "Daddy." And she'd go running to him and hug him. Boy, he loved being home. And I even looked at that one day and thought, why am I not running down the stairs saying, "Hugh, you're home," and hugging him? Boy, wouldn't he want to come home to me a little bit sooner.

Dr. James Dobson: Some women are saying right now, "You've got to be kidding. I've got to go running down the hall to meet my husband when he arrives. When I'm waiting for him to come home and tell me I'm doing a good job."

Hugh McMenamin: It really is that sense of the home being a place of peace and that sanctuary that men really need, as Cindi said. They battle traffic getting to work. They're battling their coworker or a client or some deal at work. They're battling their way home in traffic. And then they want to come home and at least get some serenity. And if that home where the wife is involved in that and helping to create that can be that, boy, that's a nice place to come to.

Cindi McMenamin: And if you can feel like a winner when you come home.

Dr. Meg Meeker: Cindi, what do you say to women who are working outside the home? And they're coming home at 5:00 at the same time their husband is coming home at 5:00 and say, "Well, that sounds wonderful. I'd love to have a..." And I know you talk about creating a lovely, peaceful environment, having things picked up, and I completely agree with you. But they say, "You know, I'm as tired as he is at the end of the day. So why should I have to be the one to compliment him and cheer him on? Shouldn't he be doing that for me?" Can you speak to exhausted women who are working inside, but mostly outside the home?

Cindi McMenamin: Yes. I kept those women in mind as I wrote this and interviewed several of those wives that work full-time, even situations where the wives worked and the husbands were unemployed or disabled, and they were the ones that were home. And I had wives tell me, "Yeah, you know, I get home and I'm tired. But I try to use that drive home to just kind of decompress and say, 'Okay, God, I have these certain needs and I'm tired. But, God, would you just fuel me up with that energy? Help me to extend grace and to just be the person that I want him to be toward me.'"

I find that we can diffuse a lot of arguments. We can diffuse a lot of tension by not just reacting, by not escalating the situation, and just having that peaceful mode. And hopefully that will be contagious. As well as being able to talk at a good time with our husbands about some of those things, what we need when we come home. I found it's never a good time to tell our husband what we need when he's hungry.

Dr. Meg Meeker: No, no, I've heard that, too-

Cindi McMenamin: Or when the football games on or...

Dr. James Dobson: You talk in your book about being a cheerleader for your husband, and you use the word C-H-E-E-R, with those letters representing a suggestion. Tell us what they are.

Cindi McMenamin: Yes. C is come alongside him. Be that partner that we were created to. Be his helper. A lot of times when Hugh and I are just working on a project or I just come along in support and let him know, "You know, I believe that you can do this," that's huge to him. Even if he doesn't physically want my help in something that he's doing, just to know that I'm in his corner helps him. The H in CHEER is help him look good all the time. It is so easy for us to cut our husbands down without even realizing it. Because again, we can come across as critical. And one way is just to not correct them in front of other people. I found myself in a situation at one time when he was telling a story and he goes, "You know, and it was a Wednesday night." And I'll say, "No, it was a Thursday."

Does it really matter? Do I need to point out things like that? But I need to always make him look good, especially in front of others.

Dr. James Dobson: Okay. That's C-H.

Cindi McMenamin: Yeah. Here's an E, encourage him personally. Maybe sometimes it's simply saying, "You know what? You're an awesome man," or "I am such a lucky woman to have you," or "I looked around the room, and you're still the one that I would pick in a heartbeat. Thank you for what you do for me and for our family. Thank you for being a good provider." And then another E is elevate him in front of others. Not just make him look good and help him avoid looking bad, but actually lifting him up. I have seen men just come alive when their wives will

brag on them in public. And they'll think, wow, I'm her hero, and she's letting everyone know.

Dr. James Dobson: We got an R coming.

Cindi McMenamin: Now we got an R, respond to him enthusiastically. Even if you don't like his idea, let him know, "You know what? Let's think about that. I'm glad you brought that up. I'm glad you thought of that. Let's talk about that more. I really want to hear more from you." If we are not enthusiastic when we respond to what our husbands suggest, to what they want to do, they're going to quit suggesting. Again, men can end up going passive and going silent if we're not responding enthusiastically like that cheerleader in their life.

Dr. James Dobson: I've said this a number of times and some of our listeners will have heard it, but I want to say it again. That when I first married Shirley, I had not yet done anything. I was in graduate school, and I hadn't accomplished a lot. But she let me know that she believed in me, and she really believed in me. And she built something within me that allowed me to go out and to compete in the marketplace of ideas and to take a chance, reaching for a doctorate with a lot of competition and the other things. I have said, I would not be doing what I am today and what I've done for these 53 years that we'd been married if she did not just say those things mechanically, but she believed it. She believed. She would say to me, "I can't wait to see what God's going to do with our lives because of you." She wasn't feeling put upon by building me up like that. She believed it, and it made a big difference in my life.

Cindi McMenamin: I noticed that when I worry about things or stress about things and ask Hugh, "How are we going to do this," that wears on him because he's already thinking about those things. He's already wanting to be the provider. But when I say, "You know what? You can do this, and we can do this together," like you said, "I'm excited to see this," his whole countenance changes. So I can see that in him too as his eyes light up. "My wife does believe in me. Maybe I can do this."

Dr. James Dobson: Did you do it also, Meg?

Dr. Meg Meeker: I did. And I found that sometimes you can start encouraging your husband or saying things to build them up, and you might say it with a half heart at the beginning. But one of the amazing things to me was, the more I encouraged and applauded Walt and told him... I remember just the other day, we were sitting, talking. And he said, "Boy, I'm one lucky man." And I said, "Yes, you are because you will never-

Cindi McMenamin: That's cute.

Dr. Meg Meeker: ... find a woman. Who's going to think you're more wonderful than I do."

Dr. James Dobson: Oh, I like that.

Dr. Meg Meeker: And I meant it with all of my heart. But 20, maybe 25 years ago, I couldn't have said it with that much enthusiasm. But I mean it from the bottom of my soul, and that draws you closer together, because then he feels better and I feel better. But during those rough years, when you have small kids and you're not feeling very affectionate or very adoring of your husband, that can be hard to do. And that's one of the things I was going to ask you, Cindi, as I was listening to you go through the mnemonic C-H-E-E-R. If there are women out there who are having a really rough time in their marriage right now, do you think it's smart for them to try this, even though they may not be feeling it? Or should they wait until they feel positive about their husbands to give them that encouragement?

Cindi McMEnamin: What I've seen in my own life is sometimes we start something out of obligation, and eventually it becomes something we do out of inspiration. It's never good to say something that's insincere. But again, going back to that place where in my life there have been some times when I didn't feel like encouraging Hugh when he came home, just events in my life or something that I felt that he should have given me. And I had to come back to, "God, put in my heart the way I need to feel toward him. Change my heart toward him. Help me to extend grace. Help me to treat him today the way I really, really want him to treat me." And sometimes we have to call upon that supernaturally, but God's always faithful. And he gives us that heart.

Dr. James Dobson: Hugh, weigh in here. How do you see the things that are written in this book?

Hugh McMEnamin: Yeah. We were talking a little bit earlier about that trust factor and cheering your husband on. And I just want to say also that a marriage also needs to be a place where there's freedom to fail, because guys are going to make mistakes. And they're going to have grand ideas, and they're going to suggest something, and it's not always going to work out right. And I think, men and women and husbands and wives, they need to be able to just say to each other, "That didn't work out okay, but I trust you. You know what? It didn't everything, and let's just recover from that and move on."

So, I think with that honesty and that transparency, that's so huge for a marriage. And Cindi talking about the feelings, I find out that sometimes, if I'm obedient and following what God wants me to do, the feelings sometimes come later. Sometimes I don't feel like studying the Word right now. I don't feel like being in a mode of worship, but I know it's what God is wanting me to do. And then all of a sudden I find out, hey, I'm enjoying this. And really, I'm liking what's happening here. And so sometimes the feelings, the emotions will follow to enforce the fact that I did the right thing.

Dr. James Dobson: Cindi, what do you say to the woman out there who says, "Yeah, but you don't know my husband"? There are some men that are not good husbands. Some of them are alcoholics, and some of them are workaholics. And some of them have no clue as to what a woman wants or needs, the need to talk, the need to be affirmed, all of that. You run into those kinds of women, don't you?

Cindi McMenamin: I do. And I often say, "I don't know your husband, but I do know your God and what he's like. And God knows your heart and your husband's heart." And when we have a heart to do the right thing, when we have a heart to show that unconditional love, to extend grace even when it's not deserved, to love our husbands the way God loves us, again God always changes something. He changes our heart, and he transforms us as wives, and that in turn transforms a marriage. In the last chapter of *When a Woman Inspires Her Husband*, it's called "Loving Him as God Does." And I use those examples of how God loves us, and I ask wives to imitate those ways that God loves us toward their husbands. And I know as I've done that in my marriage, as I've counseled other women to do that in their marriages, it's huge. Even with a husband who is not open and receptive to the things of God, he begins to see unconditional love and grace that his wife shows him. And that gives him a glimpse of God's love for him.

Dr. James Dobson: You're speaking all over the country, and the Lord has really opened a tremendous ministry to you here. I mentioned in the first program the other books that you've written. You're really making a contribution. But what do you feel when you're out there and you're looking in the eyes of the women that are there? What do you hear from them? And how do you feel when you see them getting it and understanding? Do you have that sense of accomplishment?

Cindi McMenamin: You know what? It's always humbling to me to think that anything in my life or my marriage can actually help somebody else. That's the power of God, and I'm amazed by that. It's so encouraging to me to see women truly do want their marriages to work. They really do want to make the effort. Again, I thought a lot of women would be closed off to *When a Woman Inspires Her Husband*. And every once in a while, I'll hear someone say, "Well, when are you going to write about how my husband can inspire me?" But for the most part, they're picking it up and they're saying, "I want to read it. And I want to do one more thing that I need to, to grow." So it's very exciting to see them get it. And like I said, it's humbling, too, that God can use any of us to impact anyone's life.

Dr. James Dobson: You have one daughter-

Cindi McMenamin: That's right.

Dr. James Dobson: ... one child.

Cindi McMenamin: Mm-hmm (affirmative), Dana.

Dr. James Dobson: Yeah, Dana, and she's now 21?

Cindi McMenamin: She's 21 years old.

Dr. James Dobson: And graduating from college?

Cindi McMenamin: About to graduate from Cal Baptist in Riverside, California.

Dr. James Dobson: And she has a role in the church?

Cindi McMEnamin: Yes. She's our worship director at church. She's very musically talented. She can write. She can speak. I think she got the best of both of us.

Dr. James Dobson: You have a great relationship with her, Hugh?

Hugh McMEnamin: I do. I enjoy times with my daughter. I have two older sisters, and there's three kids in our family. And I didn't have any brothers around or anything growing up. But for some reason, God just allowed me and my daughter to have a great friendship. We went to a concert the other night together and just had fun. And this camping trip, like we said we did years and years ago, just for some reason God has just allowed us to really enjoy each other as people. And I just have loved to watch her, the way she's growing up and like Cindi said, getting the best from both of us. And I hope, I think, and I'm pretty sure we're laying a good foundation for her for how God's going to use her in his kingdom for ministry and his glory.

Cindi McMEnamin: Dana knows our marriage is real. She knows at times, there's days when she's like, "Why are you guys talking on the radio about marriage?" She sees a lot of it, but she also knows what we've tried to instill in her. And that even when situations might look impossible or frustrating, that we know the God of the impossible, and he's always come through for us.

Hugh McMEnamin: And one other thing too is that, our daughter, she hasn't seen a perfect marriage. But she's seeing two parents that, when things get a little stressed, they're willing to work it out. And they've found a solution. I think that's maybe the biggest lesson she's learned is that mom and dad had a little spat, but you know what? They stuck in until they got it worked out. I think that's a great lesson for her to observe.

Dr. James Dobson: I wish every child could say that.

Dr. Meg Meeker: Yeah. Absolutely. And as she moves forward into her dating relationships, into her marriage, you have freed her up to really respect and love her husband, rather than growing up hearing her dad constantly criticized and put down. I think women often forget the effect that it has on our kids, which is we're really harming, particularly daughters, their future relationships with their husbands, and our sons, their future relationships with their wives, because kids will repeat what they see and what they know. So I just want to put a plug in how positive and wonderful this work could be on children in the marriage.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, Cindi and Hugh, I'd like to wrap up the second program by talking about your book itself. *When a Woman Inspires Her Husband* is the title of it, Understanding and Affirming the Man in Your Life. And on the back cover, it says, "How can you become your husband's number one fan?" And that's the cheerleader idea. And let me read, "God created your man with a unique set of

qualities and talents. There's no one else like him in the whole world. And God brought you alongside him in marriage to love and support him as only a wife can. Discover how you can be an encourager and a motivator, the inspiration and admiration behind your husband, the wind beneath his wings, as you understand his world, become his cheerleader, appreciate his differences, ease his burdens, and encourage him to dream." And another book... Hugh, maybe this is yours... can be "When a Man Inspires His Wife..."

Cindi McMEnamin: There have been requests.

Dr. James Dobson: ... Because there are two sides to this. And I bet you've heard it, haven't you?

Hugh McMEnamin: I think the other side needs to come out, too.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, the book is filled with practical information coming right out of life, and I really enjoyed having you as our guests today. And, Meg, you want to close it out here?

Dr. Meg Meeker: Absolutely. Hugh and Cindi, I'm just so encouraged by the work that you're doing. And I just feel so honored to be able to talk with you today and ask these wonderful questions and learn myself about what we wives can do to really encourage our husbands and put our whole families back on track. And I can testify that what you write about really does work, because I've lived it for 32 years with my husband and... Well, most of the 32 years, 28 out of 32, whatever. But it really does work. And I'd encourage all our listeners out there to buy a copy of the book, to read the book, and to give it a go because it really is good stuff. And it really allows God to work in wonderful ways in a marriage.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, our guests have been Cindi and Hugh McMEnamin. And once again, Cindi is the author of a number of books that our listeners are going want to find in the bookstores because the titles are fascinating. Want to move to Colorado Springs?

Hugh McMEnamin: I love it here.

Cindi McMEnamin: We love it here.

Hugh McMEnamin: It's beautiful. You're having some great weather here.

Dr. James Dobson: Well, it's been good to have you. And, Dr. Meeker, thank you for joining us today.

Cindi McMEnamin: Yes, thank you.

Dr. Meg Meeker: Thank you.

Hugh McMEnamin: Thank you, Dr. Meeker.

Dr. James Dobson: ... Well, our listeners can go to drjamesdobson.org and find out more about the book and find out where they can also get the other books that you've written. God's blessings to you all. You love the Lord, don't you?

Cindi McMEnamin: Oh, we do.

Hugh McMEnamin: Yeah, that's right.

Dr. James Dobson: It shows in what you've said.

Cindi McMEnamin: Thank you.

Hugh McMEnamin: Thank you, Dr. Dobson.

Roger Marsh: Well, our guests on Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk have been husband and wife team, Hugh and Cindi McMEnamin. Like Dr. Dobson said, you can visit our broadcast page on our website to learn more about the McMEnamins, their ministries, and Cindi's books, including *When a Woman Inspires Her Husband*. Just go to drjamesdobson.org/broadcast for more information. That's drjamesdobson.org/broadcast. And by the way, while you're there, you can also learn more about Dr. Meg Meeker and her ministry, Meeker Parenting.

As always, feel free to give us a call at (877) 732-6825. We're happy to answer your questions about the broadcast, the ministry of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute. We can suggest a resource for you or pray with you. Again, that number is (877) 732-6825.

Roger Marsh: Now, before we go, Dr. Dobson would like to share some exciting news with our listeners. Doctor?

Dr. 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 drjamesdobson.org or call (877) 732-6825. That's (877) 732-6825.

Roger Marsh: That's right, Dr. Dobson. And, friend, remember you can also send your tax deductible gift by mail. Just address your check to the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, P.O. Box 39000 Colorado Springs, Colorado, the zip code 80949. Again, that address is the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, P.O. Box 39000, Colorado Springs, Colorado, 80949.

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