



## Broadcast Transcript

**Broadcast:** Everyday Heroes Who Are Helping Couples Take Their Marriages to New Heights – Part 2

**Guest(s):** Mark and Jan Yokers

**Air Date:** October 3, 2025

- Dr. James Dobson: Hello everyone. You're listening to Family Talk, the radio broadcasting ministry of the James Dobson Family Institute. I'm Dr. James Dobson, and thank you for joining us for this program.
- Roger Marsh: Well welcome to Family Talk. I'm Roger Marsh. Today we are joined once again by Mark and Jan Yokers, two everyday heroes who are helping couples take their marriages to new heights. Like many of us, the Yokers faced their share of challenges through the years, but rather than settling for an ordinary marriage, Mark and Jan actively sought out resources, attended seminars, and discovered principles that transformed their relationship in profound ways. And of course, one of the men who had a huge impact on their marriage was our own Dr. James Dobson. What makes their insights so especially compelling is their practical and down to earth approach. So let's join our own Gary Bauer, senior vice president of public policy here at the James Dobson Family Institute and host of the Defending Faith, Family, and Freedom podcast for this inspiring conversation with Mark and Jan Yokers on today's edition of Family Talk.
- Gary Bauer: We're pleased today on Family Talk to have another show with our everyday heroes, Mark and Jan Yokers, who have been talking to us about their own marriage, but also about all the resources out there and all the things they've learned over the years so that your marriage can thrive and grow just as their marriage has over the decades. Let's get right into it, Mark and Jan.
- Mark Yokers: Absolutely. That would be awesome.
- Jan Yokers: Yes, we'd love to share what God has done because it's been remarkable.
- Mark Yokers: After struggling with Scriptures, pro and con, I was thinking and the heartache of everything going on around us, the Lord came to me and totally broke me down with His truth and His love, and He told me three things, Gary. He said, number one, "Go back to your family" because it was just crazy. The love between people, the adults across marriage lines had become an important factor and the kids were left behind. Number two, He told me, He said, "Get out of the ministry." And so I left the ministry and haven't been back then, although we minister a lot. I left the ministry and number three, He said, "I'm going to grind this system to powder and scatter the people to other churches to get healed." To give you an idea of how screwed up I was in my own mind at that

point when He said that, I thought, "But wait a minute, we're the best church". And I thought, "Oh God, am I ever messed up? Help me. Help me." And it has happened. People that have gone to other churches have found great healing, and that's what happened to us. So we were asked to leave because I was exposing what was happening as a great deception from Satan and these wonderful people that were being hurt and destroyed trying to help. And so we left and we lost our church. I lost my job; I was a teacher. We lost friends.

Jan Yokers: Lost Sunday school, lost our Christian school.

Mark Yokers: So we were for about a year or two, just crying every Sunday. And I couldn't hardly read my Bible. I thought, I can't trust myself. We couldn't go to other churches because we were just kind of shattered and didn't know what to do. And we ended up going to a lot of different churches and enjoying them all.

I have to tell you that a foundation for us at this time was Dr. Dobson because he brought us in touch with the body of Christ. And there's a humility in his life and ministry that fed us so deeply. So we are lovers and appreciative followers and supporters of Dr. James Dobson. Everything he does, he's such a unique man with such great love and humility. We are so grateful. We have fed from his fountain for these many decades. When I was teaching, I was part-time window cleaner. And when we left the church, that was 1988, I wondered, what am I going to do? And so I thought about selling insurance. I thought about selling maybe automobiles. I'd wondered what...

Jan Yokers: Other financial manager or...

Mark Yokers: Financial management or something getting to something like that. And I looked a little bit into it and it just wasn't a good fit. And just being before the Lord kind reminded me of what the Lord said to Moses. Moses said, "Well, how are they going to know that you sent me?" And He said, "Well, what's in your hand?" And He said, "A staff." And so God used that staff as a sign. Well, He was asking me, what's in your hand? Well, it was a squeegee. So I went full-time window cleaning. I just hit the streets. I went out to buildings downtown. I loved being on ropes. I love heights. I love the challenge of it. It's very physical. God blessed me with so many buildings at that point. And many of 'em I still do today. We still clean them. So that's back in 1988.

Gary Bauer: All these years later. That's amazing.

Mark Yokers: Now when you do a good job and you give 'em a good price and you're always there and dependable. I mean, why a leave, right? So we've got a lot of accounts that we've had for many, many decades. And so I just started that. I never planned on having employees, and our kids were starting to go to college, so paying for college, and I was able to do that. And I just worked by myself. I did a little bit of work for others, but soon I had all the work I could do myself. And then after a while, I started hiring subcontractors to help me out. And during

that time, the kids went to college, paid for that, and finally I felt like I really need to get an employee. But that wasn't until 2001. And so 2001, 2002, we hired one guy and he was with me for 14 years. Wonderful brother. And he left after 14 years because he wanted to help his wife homeschool their kids, and he wanted to be at home with 'em. Wonderful brother.

Gary Bauer: That's a pretty good reason.

Mark Yokers: We're still close friends today. I mean, when you work together in high-rise window cleaning on the ropes, you get attached to each other. So yeah, we built, and today, I guess we have around a dozen, and I'm not the CEO anymore. My daughter is. So she's the one that keeps it going. I keep trying to retire, Gary. It just doesn't work. So I actually was doing some work yesterday, and I'm not so much in front of the windows, but I still get on the ropes and fix things or whatever. And I love it. It's really fun.

Gary Bauer: I'm in an office building on the ninth floor, and periodically of course, I look out the window and I see the Washington, D.C. equivalent of you, Mark, cleaning the window. And I'm like in great admiration as they're hanging there. You really do have to have an affinity for it, I mean, to be willing to do that. But so you built a great business out of it. One of the things that Dr. Dobson has advised everybody that cares about marriage and family, we tend to work on our relationships when we're dating. We want to impress each other. And then ultimately we get married and people get so busy and they're doing so many things, they stop working on the relationship. And I remember finding out that you all did this unique thing where you decided that every year you would go to some sort of marriage strengthening event because you wanted to make sustaining your marriage as important as one of the most important things in your lives. Talk to us a little bit about that.

Jan Yokers: Well, I remember after things imploded and we left that church, I said what the goal of the enemy was, was to destroy marriages. And so Mark and I were committed. We weren't going to get a divorce, so many others, but we had struggles. And so I said, let's do something important for our marriage every year. And so we did. We found seminars and we got such wonderful nuggets like Mark mentioned before, that the teaching on marriage and family wasn't...

Mark Yokers: It wasn't healthy.

Jan Yokers: And so we got a lot of good nuggets from all these. We went to 18 different seminars through the years. And so obviously we went more than once a year and grew. We grew tremendously. We felt like we were mentored by these different people, these different seminars that we went to. Always came away with great good. But there was one area in our marriage that how to resolve conflict. We didn't do that very well. We didn't learn in our families of origin. And so we would go around and around and we'd have a rupture, but we wouldn't know how to repair it. And we'd have a situation, and we didn't know how to come to a conclusion. Mark is the sweetest guy, and he would make me

feel really good when we'd talk, and then nothing would happen. Nothing would get solved. We talked over and over again about the same thing, and I thought, oh, we were in such a rut.

Mark Yokers: And the tendency for me would be kind of run and hide. And the tendency for Jan would be to pursue and get this thing resolved. It usually wouldn't happen unless she got angry. And so I grew up without anger. There was no anger in our household. I did not know what to do with anger. And so I just figured it's because she's carnal, right? She's fleshly, right? And so I knew her and I knew she wasn't, but then she'd fall to this. And so I'd usually give a little sermonette or give some guidance or whatever, or try to listen, but I didn't know how to listen. And we'll talk about that in a little bit here. But we'd kind of limp along, I'll say committed, loving each other, had a lot of good times together, but not able to resolve conflict. And so it kind of got pushed under the rug. And we got a lot of help from John and Henry. They're household names, just like Dr. Dobson, household name. John Townsend and Henry Cloud. In several of their books, particularly one that Jan found. Do you want to tell him about that?

Jan Yokers: Oh, right after we left the church, I was in the library with the girls. That was our habit to go to the library, get some books to read, and I found a book on the shelf, and I looked at the title, it said, *When Your World Doesn't Make Sense*. I thought, oh my goodness, my world doesn't make sense right now. I'm reading that book. So I pulled it off the shelf. It's been retitled now *Changes That Heal* by John Townsend, Henry Cloud.

Mark Yokers: That was life changing for us.

Jan Yokers: Yes. That began to turn us around. I didn't grow up with boundaries and I didn't know you could have them. My mom and dad had 'em on me, but I just obeyed them.

Mark Yokers: And I didn't know how to bond. And I also had trouble with boundaries. And the four areas in that book *Changes That Heal*. There's also how you deal with authority, and I was really cloudy on that one. And then the other is how you deal with good and bad. And I mean, when you serve Jesus, everything is good, right? Well, so anyway, that book really kind of put us on a road. We got into some good counseling.

Jan Yokers: And Mark wasn't drawn to counseling like I was. And we took a two and a half month trip around the United States, and we camped almost the whole way. It was so stressful. I felt like I couldn't even walk into the hotel at South Dakota somewhere. I felt like I was just practically crawling. I was so exhausted. And that night I told him, I said, "I don't know how we're going to make it through the years if we don't get some counseling." And he thought about it as we drove the miles and he thought, "Yeah, let's do it." So we got some counseling. Although that wasn't easy to find a counselor because we went through three of them before we found one that we thought he gets it. One was more abusive than the church that we were in. And one, they gave some good advice, but it

wasn't hitting the spot that we needed. And when we went to Dan Hartman, we thought, oh, he gets it. And he really brought us out of... I couldn't speak for myself very easily. And so he taught me that my needs were good and I could ask for my needs to be met. And not always that Mark would meet them, but he would listen.

Gary Bauer: Well, now this is the second time this word listen has come up. And Mark, I know that every woman listening to this conversation is saying to themselves, get back to that listen point because this is probably one of the biggest complaints I hear from their wives and their daughters or the women in their lives that we somehow give the impression that we're not listening, Mark, I don't know why that comes out sometimes, but it does, doesn't it?

Mark Yokers: They've got it all wrong, right? I mean, honestly, learning how to listen, and because I started to listen, it brought transformation. And we'll get into what has helped us do that. *That's How We Love* is a curriculum that was developed by Milan and Kay Yerkovich and was transformative to us. But to be able to sit down and actually listen to Jan, and it took time to develop, but the initial impact totally transformed us.

Jan Yokers: Yes. My three words would be with my relationship with Mark before we started to learn how to communicate in a healthy way where Mark would listen and I could talk in a normal tone and not be upset. I felt invisible and unimportant and unheard. And that would be, I mean, Mark has said that he felt like he never listened to me. And that was really true.

Mark Yokers: At the 42 year marriage line. And we'd already done *Love After Marriage*. We'd done *Love and Respect* with Eggeriches.

Jan Yokers: Love for a Lifetime. In fact, when Eggeriches were on Dr. Dobson's show, I listened to him three times that day. I listened in the morning, I called, Mark said, listen to this. I listened to the afternoon, I listened at night. And then we went on the cruise with them, with Dr. Dobson's Cruise.

Mark Yokers: Yeah, our only two cruises were with Dr. Dobson.

Jan Yokers: That so impacted me that.

Mark Yokers: Yep. And many others, Gary Smalley and the Love Languages, Laughy Your Way to a Good Marriage, the Weekend to Remember by Family Life and all of those. I mean, we've been feeding from all of these ministries and going to all these events.

Jan Yokers: Gotten wonderful things from them.

Gary Bauer: And over the years, guys, Dr. Dobson has not only of course done his own work on family and strengthening families, but he regularly highlights many of these

family ministries and counseling ministries, which is one of the reasons that there are so many couples in America that can point back to Dr. Dobson in his work as being one of the things that kept their marriage together. Guys, this story is a wonderful story, and I think it's so timely. Today, we have a marriage crisis in America. Marriages still break up too often. And today there's the additional problem, which we could probably spend hours talking about that we don't have that so many young people can't find the strength and faith to take that leap of faith and tell that person that they've fallen in love with, let's get married. And if more families don't form, it's not going to matter who's president or who's on the Supreme Court. America will be in deep trouble if we don't have God's institution of marriage and family at the center of our country.

Mark Yokers:

And one part that a real practical part of this that happened to us is after 42 years of marriage, we were invited to a Bible study. Actually, it was a class and it was taking the book *How We Love* by Milan and Kay Yerkovich and taking couples through it and giving them tools in order to resolve conflict. A big part of it that has been so revolutionary for us is that they have studied and know, and it's in psychology literature about attachment theory, that what you grew up with is what you tend to use in responding to conflict. So whatever you grew up with. And so the pain of your childhood, you try to find relief. And so whatever you do to find relief, you tend to do that when there's pain and conflict in your marriage. Why? In order to learn how to love.

In order to learn how to give understanding and patience and love to somebody who's so different from you and looks at things differently than you, but how are you going to know what's going on inside of them unless you can really listen and understand their past? And so Milan and Kay have said that you want to get a Ph.D. in your spouse's childhood, and that's to find out what they grew up in and what types of responses that they have to conflict, to pain, because that's what'll happen in your marriage. They say that your marriage problems didn't start in your marriage. And this is so true. So that first class, actually, we went through that and I found a memory of when I was a child that was really painful and it caused me to kind of withdraw and kind of be a little bit hopeless, right? And so that's a reason why I would withdraw and feel a little hopeless with Jan. And we asked the Lord to come into that memory, and He came in and He healed me in such a way. All of a sudden, a passive kind of a pleaser mentality that I had was getting healed to where I could have boundaries and I could move forward in bonding. And then that is one major issue, learning about your past and how you respond in conflict. And you too, right, Jan?

Jan Yokers:

Yes. Yes. Totally changed our lives.

Mark Yokers:

So we started communicating after that and instead of trying to fix Jan, because obviously she didn't see it, right, because I see it, right? Instead of trying to fix her, I began to listen to her. And the tools in how we love are awesome because you have questions to ask that take you right back into what's really fueling the heat in the conflict, what is really going on inside? So instead of me trying to fix her, I started to listen to understand her. And it was absolutely amazing. In fact,

I remember one time early on, remember that one time? And I said, oh, well, tell me more. Remember how you felt?

Jan Yokers: Oh yeah, he said that in the middle of a conflict, I almost fell over. I could not believe he was asking me that question.

Mark Yokers: I wanted to understand what was going on beside inside of her.

Jan Yokers: It felt so good.

Mark Yokers: And then the pain that she was experiencing went right back to her childhood. And because I was listening to her, it was bringing healing to her from that pain. I say a spouse really is kind of like a good massage therapist, a really good one. And I've had a couple of really good ones, and I'll get knots on my muscles and the hurt and the tension, and if it's a good one for me, what do they do? They find the knot and they go for it, and it's painful, but it relieves the tension and it brings me relief. And a good marriage is like that. We got these knots, we got these problems, and your spouse, God has made them kind of like the canary in the mine, my selfishness and my inability to love, who's it going to affect the most? It's my wife, it's Jan. And so I see in her face the results of my inabilities, and so she's my canary, and so I can find out when I'm being selfish and all of that by the look in her face or what's going on inside of her life. So to understand what's going on inside has been life-changing for her and for me.

Jan had mentioned how I would listen to Dr. Dobson, and I'll say that I don't know how many times, but it was often I'd be listening to Dr. Dobson while I was washing windows. And so here I am in front of this window and tears are streaming down my face because it's really impacting me. Trying to act like I'm not crying, but I'm crying. And that happens so many times window cleaning. But he was my constant companion along with hundreds of tapes that I listened to from different ministries, many of them that he himself had endorsed and encouraged and different pastors, different ministries. It was just awesome. And of course, many of the Dr. Dobson's tapes also. Window washing for me was an avenue of learning in the midst of it all, and it was such a blessing. I'll never forget.

Gary Bauer: Well, the two of you with your story of challenges overcoming these difficulties and the various bumps in the road that you had to endure, anybody that hears this, particularly any young man and woman out there that's wondering whether they have what it takes to get married and what if it doesn't work, you really have a message that if you build your marriage on God's principles and on Jesus Christ, if you listen to each other, if you remember that we're all made in the image of God. He loves us all and He calls us to love each other faithfully in a marriage, you can't do much better than that. So this has been a wonderful conversation. We could go on I think for weeks, but I just want to commend you both. Thank you for being with us on Family Talk and all of you listening to the show, please be back with us again.

Roger Marsh:

It is remarkable how marriages can be transformed when we simply learn to listen. You've been listening to Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk in an eye-opening conversation featuring Mark and Jan Yokers talking about taking marriages to new heights. Now, if you missed any portion of today's broadcast or if you'd like to share it with a friend, go to [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). That's [drjamesdobson.org/familytalk](http://drjamesdobson.org/familytalk). And keep in mind while you're online with us, be sure you also browse through our Dobson Digital Library and the other resources that we have dedicated to marriage. I can think of two resources right off the top of my head, Dr. Dobson's classic books, *Love Must Be Tough* and *What Wives Wish Their Husbands Knew about Women*. If you are looking for assistance on how to make your marriage stronger and healthier, check out those resources at [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org).

In a world that's determined to redefine marriage and undermine traditional family values, the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute is committed to standing firm on biblical truth. We believe that God's design for marriage isn't outdated. It's actually timeless. And when couples embrace His plan, they discover the joy and fulfillment He intended from the beginning. Your prayers and faithful financial support of the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute help us to continue Dr. Dobson's legacy, and that's why we encourage you to send a gift today of any amount to help us continue bringing hope and practical wisdom to families who desperately need to hear God's truth. You can make a secure donation by visiting [drjamesdobson.org](http://drjamesdobson.org). You can also give a gift over the phone. That number is 877-732-6825.

I'm Roger Marsh, and from all of us here at the Dr. James Dobson Family Institute, we are so grateful you joined us here today. Be sure to tune in again next time right here for another edition of Dr. James Dobson's Family Talk.

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