

MAINTAINING TRUST AFTER REBUILDING IT

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[00:00:00]

Ryan: If you've experienced a breach in trust or some sort of betrayal in marriage or just in your life, in any sort of friendship or relationship, you're not naturally going to gravitate toward trusting your spouse. Am I wrong in saying that? What do you think?

Selena: I don't know. Because I think sometimes I want to trust you. I want that. I think we do desire to trust our spouses. We marry them thinking that I'm going to be able to trust you on so many levels. And so when the trust is broken, I think the hardest part is learning how to trust again and being able to say, "I can put my foot on this bridge of trusting you again." I might close my eyes. And I might be gripping on hoping it doesn't break because I don't know. But you want to trust it. You want to get to the other side anyways.

Ryan: Well, that's why I'm saying by God's grace, we've not had the sort of catastrophic failure or betrayal or breach of trust in our own relationships. I don't want to project that onto others.

Selena: No. I think even in the day-to-day, can I trust you to hear me and respect me and leave me in a way when I am in the mood to be led. *[Ryan chuckles]* Can I trust that?

Ryan: Where we happens. *[Selena chuckles]*

Selena: I want to trust you. And I do think that there's a part of us that wants to trust our spouse. And when it's breached and broken, the hardest part is getting back to that trust. I don't know if it's a natural gravitation. I can't call it that. I think I would gravitate more towards "I just wish we could go back to where we were to where I trusted you and this wasn't broken."

Ryan: All right. So today, that's what we're talking about. If you're not naturally inclined to maintaining trust and drifting toward more deeper, stronger trust in your relationship... And it takes active maintenance. And maintenance is a process. It sounds kind of dry when you say it like that, but in a relationship, it just means being really intentional about building and maintaining your trust. So we're tackling that topic today. We'll see you on the other side.

[00:02:03] <Intro>

Selena: Welcome to the Fierce Marriage podcast where we believe that marriage takes a fierce tenacity that never gives up and refuses to give in.

Ryan: Here, we'll share openly and honestly about all things marriage—

Selena: Sex—

Ryan: Communication—

Selena: Finances—

Ryan: Priorities—

Selena: Purpose—

Ryan: And everything in between.

Selena: Laugh, ponder, and join in our candid, gospel-centered conversations. This is Fierce Marriage.

[00:02:36] <podcast begins>

Selena: You didn't really expect my answer there, were you?

Ryan: No, I wasn't. *[Selena laughs]*

Selena: I wasn't trying to get you off the cuff. I just was-

Ryan: No, you're fine.

Selena: ...thinking about... I think that I would-

Ryan: But you have to think through the lens of somebody who's had trust betrayed, right?

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Like if someone's an alcoholic and they're a recovered alcoholic, you can't really trust them in a room full of alcohol. *[laughs]* You would say, like, "I love you but in this, I don't trust you." So there's a difference there. So there has to be an active maintenance of trust.

Or if someone shows up late one night and you're like, "Where were you gone?" Like, "Oh, I just, you know, traffic," or "I got a flat tire," and they've had

the past of being late because they're out at a bar or whatever, then you'd question that.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: And so you'd have to have a way to maintain and verify. Not in the spirit of suspicion or in the spirit of like policing. But in some of these cases, you have to be really... open eye. You have to open eyes.

Selena: Yeah, there's a way to rebuild trust, which we talked a lot about last week. And this week we're talking about how to kind of maintain that trust. You're stepping out of that breach of trust, you've gone through triage, you're in the hospital, wounds have been sewn up, now you're learning... I feel like it's like PT almost, physical therapy. You're learning how to reuse the muscles, and now you're getting stronger and stronger. And so how do we keep that strength up? How do we continue to fix areas that... and even see areas where we're not trusting each other and trusting the Lord in the way that He's called us to?

Ryan: So we're using tangible ways today to actively maintain and bolster and strengthen and flourish in your trust with one another. As we're going to find, it's very biblical, it's good, but it's not without hard work. It's not without just being aware of it.

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Secondly, if you want to partner with us, this podcast is almost [00:05:00] exclusively funded, I'll say, by our amazing patrons.

Selena: Nice. Praise God!

Ryan: Yeah, they're awesome. We've actually turned down quite a few ad inquiries. And they're not like a pittance, I'll say that. And the reason is because we really do value this biblical idea that it's almost like the church is allowing us to do this by the support we receive. And I love that because we minister and it's like a very Pauline idea that we minister and the people that are beneficiaries of this ministry. Have locked arms with us.

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Then finally, you also get access to our online learning platform. It's called Gospel Centered Marriage. That's growing every week and every month. So make sure you become a patron. [Patreon.com/fiercemarriage](https://patreon.com/fiercemarriage). There's links everywhere.

Okay, so I wanted to start with this bridge analogy because we talked about it last week. I find it so helpful. To refresh your memory, the analogy is this: in your marriage, you have a bridge between that. And we'll say the bridge represents trust. If ever that trust is broken, that's as if the bridge has been demolished.

There's different things that could happen to the bridge that might not demolish the bridge, but they might make it untrustworthy-

Selena: Unstructurally sound.

Ryan: Unsound. And so you wouldn't want to put your weight on it. You wouldn't want to drive that-

Selena: Structurally unsound. That's what I meant. There it is. Sorry, guys. Words are coming. They're coming.

Ryan: You could have gotten away with that.

Selena: I know, but I don't want to. *[both laughs]*

Ryan: Okay. All right. So you don't want to put your weight on a bridge, even if it's just showing signs of deterioration. You want to make sure that's really strong. But sometimes that bridge falls down. And so the question is, how do we rebuild the bridge? We talked about that last week. You're dealing with this catastrophic loss? How do you begin rebuilding trust or rebuilding this bridge?

Well, the way you do it is you trust in the physics of bridge-building. And so for us as Christians in a Christian marriage, we trust in God's way for forgiveness, repentance. Not in that order. Repentance, forgiveness... maybe

in that order, who knows? Reconciliation. A truer unity because of that. A lot of times that's an act of faith.

And we talked about last week how lion's share... this is life. But specifically in trust, the lion's share of our faith has to be placed in God and Christ. If we try to place our faith in our spouse, we're going to be sorely disappointed often.

Selena: Faith in our spouse for what? Identity-

Ryan: And this goes back to the very first week.

Selena: Right.

Ryan: Cruciform trust. Now, some of our faith can only be placed in God. If I look to Selena for my identity, for my security, that's a form of idolatry. That is expecting Selena to do what only God can do. That's idolatry. Only God can be God.

Selena: And we creep into that. That's not just like, "Oh, I'm just going to trust Him for all of my joy and happiness." It definitely is like a creepy game. You kind of wake up and find yourself, "Why are you trusting me for these things, you shouldn't be looking to God?" That's definitely not how we have *[chuckles]* those conversations. But-

Ryan: Or you can start to look to your spouse to always be the one to solve your problems, or to make you feel better about whatever the thing is that you don't... whether that's some sort of, you know, something temporal or something eternal in that I feel like I'm not worth anything as a person and I lack security or I'm depressed or I'm anxious. Why don't you fix me, Selena? You can't. That's a form of idolatry.

So you have to trust God with those areas, and you work together. That's the vertical piece to the cruciform trust shape. The horizontal is the part you're getting at, in that I should be able to trust you to be faithful. I should be able to trust you to take good care of our kids, to listen well. You should be able to trust me to be faithful, to listen well to take... you know, whatever those things are that as a spouse we're called to fulfill those roles that God has commissioned us. So we trust each other horizontally in that way.

That goes back to the first week. So when you go back to this bridge thing, as you're building the bridge, you're rebuilding that trust, whatever part that horizontal piece was broken. But all the while you're not putting your weight on the bridge. You're just saying, I'm going to invest time and energy into

rebuilding this thing into... I'm going to build the bridge in this shape, knowing that it will hold more weight in the future than it did in the past.

That's an act of faith. You're trusting that the physics of bridge building are going to hold. In the Christian life, the physics of relationship, reconciliation don't always make sense. You won't put your weight on the relationship yet because you don't have the trust yet. But you're going through the steps, saying, "Let's have these hard conversations. Let's go to a counselor. Let's talk to our pastors. Let's talk to our [00:10:00] fiends. Let's live in the open transparently. Let's be known to one another. Let's be intimate even though it's challenging because we don't have the same level of trust in intimacy. But let's give each other ourselves in that way."

So there's all the different kind of expressions of that, but that's acting out the reconciliation piece, trusting that those physics... that's a weird term to use because I don't want to get to new age, like spiritual physics all that kind of stuff. But the physics of kind of God's laws will make the trust strong again. Okay, so I want to use the exact same analogy-

Selena: Maybe the promises of God's law. Just that God's law is...

Ryan: I mean, the Bible in Proverbs 8 talks about how wisdom was there as God was creating the planet. And as He was creating the universe and as He was telling the ocean when to stop, wisdom was there. So there's this transcendent aspect of wisdom. That's what I'm getting at. It's closely intertwined with the character of God is what I'm saying.

So to use that analogy even further, we live in a wonderful part of the country called the Pacific Northwest. And we have this area called the Puget Sound. It's a body of water. Hopefully, you've heard of the Puget Sound. If you hadn't, you need to go to Google and look up the Puget Sound.

Selena: No, everybody knows Puget Sound. It's one of the four big bodies of water in the country that has different islands and things around. It's very unique. It's very unique geographically to the country. I'm pretty sure everybody knows what it is. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: So there's this part of Puget Sound called the Narrows and it's basically where all the water... it's the narrowest piece. There's a bridge across called the Narrows Bridge. It's aptly named. But it's a lot of water flows in and out as the tide ebbs and flow.

Selena: Every day.

Ryan: Every day. I mean, the current is insane. It's very deep. And so there's this bridge there. And the bridge is notorious for having fallen down back in 1948.

Selena: Yeah, historically it did.

Ryan: It used to be called Galloping Gertie because of the way they designed it, it would kind of rock-

Selena: I think you can see videos of it.

Ryan: Oh, absolutely. You can go on YouTube or the internet, go to the interwebs, type this into your search engine: "Galloping Gertie" or "the Narrows Bridge collapse." And I just want to read this account of this guy by the name of Leonard Coatsworth. He was the last person to drive on the bridge before it collapsed. So you can go read all about why it collapsed and everything but this was just so visceral to me. He's describing what it was like.

He says, "Around me I could hear the concrete cracking. I started back to the car to get the dog, but was thrown before I could reach it. The car itself began to slide from side to side on the roadway. I decided the bridge was breaking up and my only hope was to get back to shore. On hands and knees most of the time I crawled 500 yards or more to the towers...

My breath was coming in gasps, my knees were raw and bleeding, my hands bruised and swollen from gripping the concrete curb.... Toward the last, I risked rising to my feet and running a few yards at a time....Safely back at the toll plaza, I saw the bridge in its final collapse and saw my car plunge into the Narrows."

Here's the sad part of that is the only casualty in this entire bridge collapse was Tubby, a dog.

Selena: A cocker spaniel.

Ryan: A cocker spaniel. He was in the car. They couldn't get it out of the car in time. There's actually a monument. We used to live on the other side of the bridge and we used to take our dogs to the dog park.

Selena: A park named Tubby.

Ryan: It's called Tubby's dog park. Anyway, that's where we lived. It's the third... what did you say?

Selena: I think it's the third largest suspension bridge in... I want to say in the country. Probably not the world.

Ryan: Yeah. I think there's the Golden Gate Bridge and then-

Selena: George Washington Bridge.

Ryan: Okay. And then the other Tacoma Narrows Bridge. Anyway, the whole point is people were asking, like, why did this collapse happen? Now, this collapse didn't happen because of neglect or lack of maintenance. That actually happened because of some design flaws in it. I think the deck was not as rigid as it should have been. There was a bunch of wind coming through just whips through there. And this thing just started galloping out of control. If you look at the video, it's unreal. It looks like something out of a sci-fi movie back in the 50s.

The point I'm trying to make is it gives us kind of a way to think about this bridge situation even more when it comes to maintaining our trust. In thinking through that, I actually got to thinking about the Golden Gate Bridge, because, I don't know, growing up, I always heard about the Golden Gate Bridge. They're constantly painting it because by the time they're done painting one side, they have to start on the other side.

Selena: It's just so big. It's so long.

Ryan: It's just so long. So it's takes constant maintenance. And so if you think about that analogy for keeping this bridge strong... And why do they paint a bridge over saltwater? Because it'll rust.

Selena: Saltwater is brutal.

Ryan: It is brutal and it is relentless, especially through there all the moist air. And so that's the analogy we're going to run with today. The phase is, I guess, how does this look in marriage? We'll talk to these at greater length, but you inspect it, you assess it, [00:15:00] you maintain and fix it. And I think the inspection actually start with an observation and put those two together. So it's three different ways that you look at marriage.

But the big thing I want to make sure I address here is, what does the Bible say about this? Selena, what does the Bible say about this? *[Selena chuckles]* Tell me everything.

Selena: Tell you everything. Well, it might take a while. Well, obviously, the Bible instructs us with the whole one another's, right? If you look up all the one

another's of accept one and another, agree with one another, be devoted to one another, it gives us a way...

Ryan: Are you going to read through the entire list? Because there's 30-

Selena: Yes, all 30 of them.

Ryan: Twenty-eight of them. *[Selena chuckles]*

Selena: No, I was just kind of giving a brief overview about how the Bible instructs us to deal with one another, to deal with each other in friendships, in relationships. And even in marriage, and I think even in especially in marriage, when there's a flaw, when something's broken, there's a breach of trust, how do we begin to repair that and how do we maintain that trust?

I think our marriage is a bit unique in that we did get married young. We haven't experienced too much broken trust. But I still feel like we are learning to build and maintain trust in new ways. And God is just faithful I think in those journeys of learning how to trust one another.

So what is the Bible say about, you know, how are we to deal with one another? Which ones do you want to go through? *[laughs]* There's a lot here that we have.

Ryan: I do want to read the list, because I feel like-

Selena: Oh, you do want to read the list?

Ryan: Yes. But I wanted to say some stuff.

Selena: You want to read the list or do you want me to read? *[chuckles]*

Ryan: I just wanted to say some stuff prior to and I thought you're diving into the entire list. This is what I want to draw attention to as we're reading through this. Seemingly irreconcilable differences is a hallmark of Christian relationships more than any other relationship.

Selena: They will know you by your love for one another.

Ryan: By your love. So you think about like, you know, if someone's sick and they're in the church, you would take them a meal or you would somehow... well, if you think about a religion that's outside of the church, they would do that too in most cases.

- Selena:** Sure.
- Ryan:** Or if you see someone crossing the road, and you know, you're not just going to help people who... like an older lady crossing the road. I did that the other day, by the way.
- Selena:** Aaawww, you did?
- Ryan:** And she was like, "Get off of me." *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Was she really?
- Ryan:** Yeah. I was trying to help her and she was pretty cantankerous. *[both laughs]*
- Selena:** Oh, goodness.
- Ryan:** She was crossing in the middle of this massive road. Anyway. *[inaudible]*
- Selena:** Thank you for trying. *[both laughs]*
- Ryan:** Point being is that there's a lot of things that are positive qualities of Christian friendships, Christian relationships that are also positive qualities of any other relationship, of any other worldview. Unless you're a monster, right? If someone needs help, you help them. That's a cultural thing that not many people would argue. Except for reconciliation and pressing into your differences when there's genuine and seemingly irreconcilable differences.
- Think about cancel culture. If you're talking to a good friend, think of somebody at work or somebody you know that maybe doesn't share the worldview that you have because of that they might have different political views-
- Selena:** Oh man.
- Ryan:** ...whatever that powder keg is-
- Selena:** It's hard.
- Ryan:** ...if they found out what you actually thought when they press into that conflict with you or they just leave and be like-
- Selena:** Cancel you out.

Ryan: Or they cancel you. Or they say, "I can't be a friend with somebody who X, Y or Z. I can't be a friend with somebody who disagrees with this... whatever that thing is." I don't want to get derailed by the actual topics. But I'm saying that that's a hallmark of Christian relationships is that we can say we see differently.

Now, there's some things that we think the way we do because of Christ, because of the Bible. In some cases those are non-negotiables, but I can still love you as a person. I'm not going to want to get you out of my life. I'm just going to say like, "I'm going to keep telling you the truth and hope that you come around to the truth. That is the kind of the biblical model for friendships and relationships and reconciliation when there's differences in restoration, when someone is sinned against.

So with that said, we have this list and I'm not sure if this is exhaustive. This is actually given to us by our good friends, Jeff and Ashley Potts. They are pastors north of here. We did a mini session with them in Gospel Centered Marriage.

Selena: Plug. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: Plug, yeah. We did a whole mini-course on the importance of community in marriage. It was awesome. If you're a part of Gospel Centered Marriage, go ahead check that out. The course is available as of last week. If you're not part of Gospel Centered Marriage, sign up. You can watch it.

But he gave me this list, and I just love it. So I'm going to read through it. And as we're reading [00:20:00] through it, listener, think about how this could apply to you and your spouse in this area of trust. And then we're going to end with the perennial 1 Corinthians 13 talking about that just a little bit. Let's go! I'll do five and then you'll do five.

Selena: Okay.

Ryan: And we'll go through more. Let's use the references too that way. If our lovely listeners want to look them up, they can. So accept one another. And they're in alphabetical order, by the way.

Selena: Thanks, Jeff and Ash.

Ryan: Accept one another. That's Romans 15:7. Agree with one another: 1 Corinthians 1:10. Side note. I wonder what that means? Maybe we should look that up. So I wonder what the context is there. Because sometimes we disagree and it's good. Number three, be devoted to one another. That's

Romans 12:1. Be humble toward one another: 1 Peter 5:5. Be kind and compassionate to one another. That's Ephesians 4:32. You're next.

Selena: I was looking up 1 Corinthians 1:10.

Ryan: Okay. We're not going to look it up now. Be patient with one another: Ephesians 4:2. Build up one another: 1 Thessalonians 5:11. Why don't you take over number eight there?

Selena: Confess to one another: James 5:16. Don't grumble against one another: James 5:9. I need to write that one out. Don't provoke one another: Galatians 5:26.

Ryan: You can write that one down.

Selena: Our kids need to. *[both laughs]* Copy work. Do not slander one another: James 4:11. Encourage one another daily: Hebrews 13:3. I wish you'd write that one.

Ryan: Pause real fast. Do not slander one another. How can that apply in your marriage? We've talked about this finding advocates. Like when you're upset with your spouse, it's really easy to slander them. Is that an accurate state? I feel like you'd go to your friends and be like, "he did this and he is the worst because of it."

Selena: Yeah, I think that's definitely a struggle for some people.

Ryan: I know you don't do that. Right? You read James and you say, "I will not slander..." *[Selena laughs]*

Selena: No, I do not. I sit and stew which is just as bad. *[laughs]*

Ryan: Because I'm going to say when this comes up again-

Selena: Exactly.

Ryan: ...I'm going to sit and *[inaudible]*.

Selena: Sometimes you paint yourself in a better light than your spouse. Not necessarily like upfront slander, but like, "I really tried to do this."

Ryan: So I am faultless and you need to change.

Selena: And I am perfect and without fault.

- Ryan:** It's interesting. Encourage one another daily: Hebrews 13:3. Have equal concern for one another: 1 Corinthians 12. That is huge. Because think about if you see your kids as co-heirs with Christ, even though they're younger, even though they're obviously your children, spiritually speaking they're brothers or sisters in Christ. So we can oftentimes prioritize our kids over our spouse. And some of that's necessary because kids are very needy.
- Selena:** They suck everything out.
- Ryan:** But we don't have equal concern for our spouse. That's convicting. Equal concern. Or I can be in a gathering and sometimes we don't have regard for each other in that gathering because we're looking out for our friends more or talking to our friends more. Now, that may be something that only I relate with, but-
- Selena:** I was like, "You deal with me?" Because I think I get a little more preoccupied. So I'm like, "You're good." You're like, "Can we just still be married with everybody, be connecting in the group?" And I'm like, "Yeah."
- Ryan:** "But you're the one though. *[Selena laughs]* You're the one."
- Selena:** You want some special attention.
- Ryan:** *[singing]* You're the only one I want." *[Selena laughing]* Is that a song? Nailed it! I should have committed. I should have committed.
- Selena:** You're halfway there. You're halfway there.
- Ryan:** I don't know the lyrics. Anyway. You're the one I... That's Shania Twain. Isn't that Shania Twain?
- Selena:** *[singing]* You're the only one I live for.
- Ryan:** Sing girl! *[Selena laughs]*
- Selena:** No.
- Ryan:** I got you to sing. *[laughs]*
- Selena:** Forgive one another... Where are we at? Oh, fellowship with one another: 1 John 1:7. Forgive one another: Ephesians 4:30. Greet one another: Romans 16:16. Honor one another: Romans 5:10. Instruct one another: Romans 15:14. Live in harmony with one another: Romans 12:16. Live in peace with one another: 1 Thessalonians 5:13. Do you want to finish up the list?

Ryan: Love one another: John 13:34. Love one another deeply: 1 Peter 1:22. To offer hospitality to one another: 1 Peter 2:9. Pray for one another: James 5:16. Serve one another: Galatians 5:13. Spur one another on: Hebrews 10:24. Stop judging one another: Romans 13:14. Submit to one another: Ephesians 5:21. Now, that's the last one.

Here's the big thing, guys. These are clearly just ripped from their context. The point is, they get you thinking. Okay, so I would never build an entire podcast episode based on number 27. Stop judging one another without knowing the context there or any of these statements really. But they get you thinking in certain ways and hopefully [00:25:00] ways that you can begin seeing one another in terms of the interplay between love, affection, honoring, regarding, seeking reconciliation, being humble alongside a fellow sinner saved by grace. I think that can be really transformational.

Selena: Building trust and maintaining trust I think in your marriage is important because the more that you go through this act of... not act, but you engage in it, and you repent and you receive forgiveness, and you begin building that trust again, we can so easily forget that we are going to be in a different place then. We're not going to be in the same place of this lack of forgiveness, this chaos.

Forgiveness and rebuilding trust brings order to the chaos. If you think of all the pieces of a bridge, you're really bringing order to that. God is instructing us to bring some order to the chaos that's in our hearts. And so to see in front of us these loving one another and live in harmony with one another, be hospitable to one another, not just people that are visiting your house, it gets... Sorry, what I'm saying is it gets harder.

There's more chance for wounding to happen the closer you get to someone, and the more you're engaging with them. So your spouse and building trust is probably one of the hardest areas. Like we've said the last month, in marriage, it's one of the most, I think, tender parts of where we can get hurt more deeply.

And so we have to understand that the closer we get, yes, the more risk there is for deep wounds, but also, I think the more opportunity there is for us to have strength and harmony and peace and unity, because we are able to say, "I'm sorry I broke your trust in this area. I want let's rebuild it." How can we do that in a way that we will both be mutually beneficial and feel solid? And it's the way God is instructing us.

Ryan: A few things you said that really jumped out at me is that it's almost like because of the nature of a marriage relationship, not only do these statements apply but they're magnified because of the closeness, the vulnerability, the intimacy. So that's the first thing that jumped out at me. So all the more reason to press into these in terms of how they apply to you as a couple.

The other thing that jumped out at me is what you said around bringing chaos or bringing order to the chaos. I mean, that's true. And that takes vision. So you're looking at an expanse that is bare. In the northwest where we live, we just described some of it to you, but it's fairly wild. In fact, the Narrows Bridge is kind of the gateway into the Olympic Peninsula, which is one of some of the wildest country remaining in the United States, at least in the Northwest.

Selena: There's lots of rainforests.

Ryan: It's a rainforest. It's a rainforest. It's very densely forested. You can't even get to go summit Mount Olympus, which I'd love to do. I don't want to over exaggerate. I'll say it's a 10-mile approach, because there's not a road to get close. Just to get to the beginning of the trail, it's 10 miles or 15 miles. The point is it's wild.

And so to look across the span like the Narrows and it's you have no bridge there, and that sometimes you feel like that's what your marriage is like. You have to have vision to be able to bring order to chaos, to cultivate in a sense.

Selena: Well, that vision, as you know, it has to be God's vision for this. It's not me saying, okay, we're going to have all these check-ins, we're going to do all these things. It's us humbly going on our knees before the Lord and seeking His face and asking God, "We want to honor you with our lives with our marriage in this area. How do we rebuild trust? What are the tools? How can we start doing this?"

And obviously not on our own. We need to constantly be in the Bible and God's word. I mean, daily, daily chunks and chunks of Scripture.

Ryan: That's the faith piece. You have the vision. Again, you're building a bridge across the span, on the other side of that is my spouse. I want access to you. I want access to the intimacy with you. It takes faith to look at the wildness, the brokenness, the chaos and say, "I'm going to take the steps toward creating order in this space, trusting in the good God that can use our sin somehow and redeem it." That's kind of the big piece.

So again, as you go through this list, just rewind. We're not going to read through it. There's 28 of these. Maybe I'll put these somewhere. They'll

definitely be in the show notes somewhere. I'll make sure that they get there.
[00:30:00] As you think through this list, be reminded that they are amplified in a marriage relationship. So how does this look that? Did you want to say something before I jump into next part?

Selena: No. How does this...? What is this?

Ryan: How does maintaining this bridge, maintaining trust look in a marriage? So we're going to use this and just go step by step through what the maintenance process might look like. And I'll say this, it starts with an observation. So you're looking at your trust or your relationship, and you're saying, "Something is off." Okay. And that could be... For us, the red flags are always like, are we bickering? Are we not being-

Selena: Are you grumbling against me? That's what you usually do.

Ryan: I don't really grumble ever.

Selena: You always grumble.

Ryan: I'm not a grumbler. You're a grumbler.

Selena: No. It's me. *[Ryan laughs]* It's definitely me.

Ryan: I do grumble my own share. But that's not what you're getting at.

Selena: Nobody hears it. Nobody cares.

Ryan: I grumble in my head. *[both laughs]* I mumble a lot, though apparently.

Selena: You do. It's not my hearing.

Ryan: I'm supposed be tired. Just try to keep up. But for us, it's are we grumbling? Are we nagging one another? Are we being terse or sharp in our tones with one another?

Selena: I wish you'd submit. *[both chuckles]*

Ryan: Am I getting after the kids? I'm being really impatient with the kids? What are those red flags? If we haven't been intimate in too long of a time, that's a red flag, because that...

Selena: Mama gets grumpy. *[laughs]*

Ryan: Mama gets grumpy. *[both laughs]* The point is you observe something. So then I'll say, "Clearly, there's this dysfunction here. There's a crack in the concrete."

Selena: Yeah, it's a tension point.

Ryan: Right. One of the cables of the suspension bridge is starting to snap. Okay, I need to go maintain that. So I observe it. And now you can inspect. This is the second step. You observe, you look, see, you talk, you listen, now you inspect. Now I'm going to ask questions.

And this is hard, because if you're angry or you're not connected, it's going to be really hard to ask questions. Maybe you ask questions of yourself. Or maybe you ask questions of the Lord and you pray about it. But the point is you're inspecting it. You're saying, "Something is up. We're not connecting. What is going on?" Ask questions. To me, one of the most valuable things you can do is look at your habits.

Selena: Yeah. I mean, there's always these exercises of like look at your day, write down every 15 minutes what you've done that last 15 minutes. I don't know I can do that. I definitely could recall my day in chunks and I can recall the in-betweens. And if you want to look at my phone to see when I was on my phone, you can do that too.

But until I started really taking a step back, looking at my day-to-day, minute-to-minute schedule, and then looking at that over a week, there's definitely some things to be examined. Some habits. You know, like, well, we're not connecting, and I feel like I can't trust you in these areas. Whoa, those are some big things. Why are we feeling like we're not connecting? Well, first step, let's ask some questions about our schedule. Let's ask some questions about why we are not feeling like we're connecting.

I know that Ryan likes words of encouragement and that really speaks to him. He knows that I like quality time. If neither of us have engaged in any of that, because of x, y, and z, looking at our schedules and priorities, mmh, there's some red flags there. We're not connecting. It is not building trust. It's actually destroying trust. I'm braving to say that if you're not building trust, it might just be like saltwater breaking down the trust.

Ryan: It doesn't just naturally get better.

Selena: No. The default is never to get better.

- Ryan:** Interesting. It might not feel catastrophic, but it's just a matter of time. I'm belaboring the analogy, but those cables, they rust out. You don't know because it's rusting under the paint sometimes-
- Selena:** Yeah, you can't.
- Ryan:** ...and suddenly it snaps under the weight of some situations. *[chuckles]*
- Selena:** What are you trying to say? *[laughs]*
- Ryan:** Selena snapped. *[laughs]*
- Selena:** I'm resting.
- Ryan:** "Mom is going to snap. Dad is going to take the girls out." Daughters anyway. So looking at your habits, looking at how you're spending your time. How we spend our time and our money is usually an indication of a disordered affection in our hearts or even just the lack of self-discipline of spiritual maturity. I mean-
- Selena:** So much at our fingertips. It's ridiculous. Like engaging in self-control and spiritual disciplines.
- Ryan:** Listen, if you're spending a lot of time on a certain app, like typically it's Instagram or Facebook or some social media-
- Selena:** Young people are doing Tik Tok.
- Ryan:** You're on Tik Tok just tiking and toking *[Selena laughs]* your like away. Tik Tok!
- Selena:** I love you. You're going to be great old man. You're going to be great old man.
- Ryan:** Yeah, well, I'm getting there...
- Selena:** I love it.
- Ryan:** ...the fastest I can. The point is you have to have the wherewithal and the spiritual discipline to say, listen, I don't need to spend two hours a day on social media. I don't. [00:35:00] That is not a healthy thing. Objectively, we can say that. There's data for that. Our friends Nathan and Anna talk all about tech use, unwise tech use, and wise tech use. And anyway, we can go on and on.

The point is you have to look at the habit and assess and actually inspect. Okay, what's happening with this part of our relationship? We're not spending time we have not connecting, because I am...

Selena: We so easily just gloss over and be like, "It's fine. I was on my phone for 20 minutes. It's not a big deal." Well, what could you have used that 20 minutes for?

Ryan: Based on the fact that you guys are arguing and you're not connecting, it's not fine. That's the thing we're trying to say is you have to look at it objectively.

Selena: How dare you!

Ryan: The other piece of inspecting, this is the last part of inspection, is you live transparently. It's harder. It's easier said than done. It's really hard to execute well. But Selena, if you notice that I'm having a bad attitude towards you, not being loving, whatever that thing is, it rarely happens almost always unloving toward you. *[Selena chuckles]* And perfectly so. But if it happens... you're just laughing. *[both laughs]* ...I would hope that you would find a way and I would be open to this and you say, "Can I just look..."

Selena: I would have *[inaudible]* *[laughs]* Sorry.

Ryan: I feel like you're turning a lot of time on your phone.

Selena: You can't say that, though. You can't but I can.

Ryan: This is the radical transparency.

Selena: Because you get defensive. *[chuckles]*

Ryan: I do not. *[laughs]* Did you not hear what I said? *[Selena laughing]* Folks-

Selena: Go ahead. *[both laughs]*

Ryan: My wife is smudge. There it is! I said it. Pray for me. *[laughs]* I'm sorry. Okay, get back on topic. But I would hope that you could look at me and say... She's laughing because there's no hope in this. But you can look at me and say, "Listen, I feel like you're on your phone too much, your email or whatever..." Honestly, for me to email is like the biggest thing. Can I see your phone usage? And look at the little app in there?

Selena: But see, I don't care about the usage. I care...

- Ryan:** But that would help diagnose...
- Selena:** You wouldn't feel like I'm placing you?
- Ryan:** I'd be like, "That's weird. You've never ask me though. *[laughs]* It's Like, "Bring it on." *[Selena laughing]*
- Selena:** As you're plotting your next move. *[laughing]*
- Ryan:** And we need to have an honest talk about whatever you find. That's living transparently.
- Selena:** Sorry, I'm really not trying to laugh. I just do. *[chuckles]*
- Ryan:** Here we are. Here we are. *[both laughs]* Finally, the third step. So we've started with an observation, something's going wrong. Now you're inspecting to find out why that thing is going wrong. And now we're assessing. Okay, excuse me, you're inspecting to find out what is actually going wrong. Assessing as the why.
- So you have to look at it objectively. So that's getting again below the surface. So why is this cable failing all the time? Why is this deck cracking? The deck of the bridge. Why is this part of our relationship always a struggle? Is it because of the habits or is there some underlying thing that's feeding it?
- Selena:** Some underlying trust issues.
- Ryan:** Is the design poor. Are the storms too strong for the design?
- Selena:** Have we been building on something that isn't actually strong and we've ignored it and we have just shoved it into the corner under the rug? We want this bridge to be holding big stuff but yet we're not inspecting and we haven't assessed the why behind the what.
- Ryan:** A really clear example that comes to mind on this is a husband that maybe he's overworked for whatever reason. His boss is requiring it of him or he just wants to earn that bonus or he's business owner and you're gone too much. Whatever that number is, you know it. It's too much. And that's causing all these what issues of like, we're not connecting, we're not communicating, we're not being intimate, I'm never here. That's the what. So you're at work too much. That's the "what." The "why" is why are you at work so much? What are you trying to satisfy?

Selena: Well, I mean, they could feel like justified good reasons. I want to provide for my family.

Ryan: That's always where husband starts. "No one else can provide. You're not doing it. I'm going to do it." A husband will feel defensive and start justifying. Don't look at me like that. *[both laughs]*

Selena: I'm not looking at you. I'm looking at...

Ryan: Yes, you are. *[laughs]*

Selena: No. It's because your outline is just funny. Because I'm like, "Well, he's outlining the whole conversations that we have sometimes." I mean transparently. I mean, I respond the same. I think I definitely get defensive. It's hard to have hard conversations. It just is.

Sometimes we respond out of defense instead of humbly trying to hear what is actually being said. Why? We're digging, it stinks, I don't want to dig but we're going to assess why are things weak in this area. Why are you trying to work so hard? Why are we enduring this suffering... not suffering, but enduring this hardship right now? Is it one that we have to do or and walk through or is it one that we can...? [00:40:00] It's like we're not supposed to be here, we're not supposed to be struggling with this.

Ryan: Let's gets into the tactics of it quite a bit. And tactics meaning you can know you need to have a hard conversation but you haven't the faintest clue on how to have it.

Selena: Did we do an episode on that?

Ryan: We've done a lot on... Go back two months. We talked about communication, having hard conversations. A lot of that has to do with timing. A lot of it has to do with accurately assessing yourself and being humble and having the emotional spiritual maturity.

I want to look at this from another angle, because we might have gotten off the rails a little bit. If you've broken trust because of some betrayal, the worst thing could be causing maybe you don't trust that I'm going to communicate well with you, you don't trust I'm going to listen well, you don't trust I'm going to be emotionally available to you.

Selena: I don't trust you're going to respond and say you're going to be home a certain time and you're not.

Ryan: Right. So we've talked about this, that trust was broken, I'm wanting to earn it back. And now this is how we maintain it. Again, this is the space when we're maintaining the trust. Or a wife catches her husband or husband catching his wife looking at pornography. It happens. And you've addressed it, there's broken trust, you've done all the triage, all the other episodes we've talked about, and now you're trying to maintain the trust.

Again, you're assessing, "Okay, I see that there's a symptom that was happening back before our trust was broken. That symptom is seeming like it's coming back. Now, why is that symptom there? Why are you doing whatever the thing is that we know is going to bleed down this dark path or down this...?"

Selena: And breaking trust.

Ryan: And that's the assessing. So looking at the why. And you have to do that objectively. And sometimes that just means you need to ask tough questions and just give it time to breathe, to think, and pray. And that takes humility. If you remember, that goes all the way back to - what was it? The second week? We talked about how one of the ways we deal with broken trust is we have to deal with it with honesty, humility, and get help. Again, go back and revisit that.

Selena: Right. And one piece I just was thinking about while you were talking, discussing briefly is a lot of times when you see repairs happening somewhere there is support beams or things put in place so that the whole structure doesn't crumble. So when I say support beams I'm thinking of community, Christian community around you saying, "Hey, I think we're struggling with this-

Ryan: Scaffolding.

Selena: Yeah, like scaffolding. So there's support that is around you while you're kind of dealing with this issue that you've been assessing. And it's not going to cause everything to crumble. But you're, again, you're in this place of we've been maintaining, I'm seeing these red flags, I'm a little bit nervous about this. Get those scaffolding, get the support beams, get those people around you to help you guys. The fall is not as far I guess.

Ryan: Yeah. Well, otherwise, it's going to be a lot harder to rebuild if you don't have the levers.

Selena: It's hard to hold things up and build at the same time.

Ryan: I love that analogy. Good call on that. So we've talked about you start with an observation, then you inspect, that's the what. You're asking questions, what's going on? Assessing is, okay, why is this problem happening? Why is this degradation happening?

And then the fourth one is maintain. So that's the actually saying, "Okay, this is where we've gone wrong. Now, how can we fix this problem?" Now, maintenance is about cleaning, fixing, painting in a bridge sense, protecting. I mean, protective things. So that would be making time to actually have these hard conversations regularly, proactively. You call these peacetime strategies.

So you're not in the middle of a crisis, but you know that you're human. You know that you don't gravitate toward health. So you create peacetime rhythm. That's why we say, go on dates. It's not about getting dinner. It's not about even doing new novel things. It's about having an excuse to actually connect. That's what dates are all about. It's connecting. That's why it doesn't matter if you go across town or you stay in. You're connecting. That's a date.

And so you create the rhythms knowing that that's what maintenance is. And it's important to do that in all the areas where you tend to fail. So maintenance could look like creating rhythms to have check-ins, hard conversations.

Selena, earlier on in our marriage, you were my accountability person because I wanted to know that you could ask me any question anytime. And I needed that level of transparency, accountability. My promise to you was I'll never lie to you. That led to some really hard conversations. It also led to some really strong trust being built. But you have to make that a priority and you had to make time to ask it. For a long time, us being intimate was a trigger for you to ask those questions.

Selena: It's not over text, people. We got to do this face to face.

Ryan: Yeah, it takes actual relationship. So that's making time. So maintenance and fixing, I put those two side by side. But fixing is actually [00:45:00] when something is broken, you have to actually fix it. Don't just put a bandaid on it, don't get some coat hanger and try to fix it like jerry-rig it. The point is you have to actually get the tools and the hardware necessary to fix it.

Now, in a marriage, that means like investing. That could look like getting a counselor involved for a period of time to help you fix something proactively, knowing that this is going off the rails, you need to fix it, getting a pastor involved, reading a book. I'm shocked at how few people read books. A lot of people buy books, but I'm shocked at how few people actually read them. So

read a book, invest your heart, your mind and your time into processing things together as a couple's.

Selena: It's good conversation for your heart and your mind. It builds your unity, builds your trust.

Ryan: For me, having good Christian men around me to challenge me, not just in areas where I tend to maybe fail, but in becoming a better man has been one of the most powerful things for my own growth, as a husband, as a father, as a man of God is not just looking at our faults and navel-gazing, but saying, "This is the beautiful picture. This is the compelling vision of what it means to be a disciple of Christ." And that means applying yourself and not just settling for mediocrity in life.

I'm not naturally going to climb out of mediocrity. That's not my personality. I need men that I look up to to sharpen me. And I'm just thankful for that. And God has provided that in our lives.

Selena: So good.

Ryan: Couples conversation challenge. We're going to leave this one kind of open-ended. I'm just going to say, do the things. *[both laughs]* [inaudible]

Selena: Start with an observation, do some inspection, assess, and then learn to maintain.

Ryan: Make a strategy for maintenance plan. So observe, inspect, assess, maintain/fix. That's your challenge. You know the area where this would apply, whether it's communication, whether it's trusting intimately in one another, whether there's been a large breach of trust or something catastrophic. You know that challenge. And we're saying, sit down and go through this list as a couple. What are some observations that we would tend to see? What questions can we ask? How can we live transparently? That's the inspect piece?

Why do we typically go off the rails? And how can we make time for one another to maintain trust and build it actively? So again, the theme of today was, how do we actively walk in and maintain and grow in our trust for one another after some sort of breach? I hope this was helpful to you.

We're going to go ahead and in the show notes, I'll post that list of "one another's". And then, if you haven't yet, go back and listen to the previous three episodes, you'll find a lot more context for some of the stuff we shared today.

Selena: Awesome.

Ryan: All right. You want to pray us out?

Selena: God, thank you for your word, thank you that you have created ideas of trust and ways we can build that with each other and experience unity and strength in relationship through trust. We love you. I pray for couples that are struggling, that are learning what it means to rebuild trust in certain areas. I pray that they would continue to trust you, God, that you would cause the ground to rise to their feet and that it would be strong.

We love you, Lord. And we are so grateful to be able to share about your word, your laws, your goodness. I pray that we would just glorify You in all that we do, and all the marriages that are listening would find hope and peace and confidence in You as they rebuild trust, as they learn to maintain trust. In Your name. Amen.

Ryan: Amen. All right. Folks, thank you for joining us for the Fierce Marriage podcast. Remember, if you haven't yet, go ahead and subscribe to this. Make sure to rate and review. And if you feel like partnering with us, just go to patreon.com/fiercemarriage. We would love to partner with you there and we'd love to kind of meet you on a closer context there. Other than that this episode of the Fierce Marriage Podcast is—

Selena: In the can.

Ryan: And make sure you look out for the next few days. We're going to be doing a Q&A episode on trust and betrayal and all those sorts of stuff. So keep an eye out for that. We might see it in less than seven days. So until then—

Selena: Stay fierce.

[00:49:32] <outro>

Ryan: Thank you for listening to the Fierce Marriage podcast. For more resources for your marriage, please visit FierceMarriage.com, or you can find us with our handle @Fiercemarriage on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. Thank you so much for listening. We hope this has blessed you. Take care.

PODCAST NOTES

- [00:20:30]
 - "One-anothers" list in Scripture.
 - Accept One Another ([Romans 15:7](#))
 - Agree with One Another ([1 Corinthians 1:10](#))
 - Be Devoted to One Another ([Romans 12:10](#))
 - Be Humble Toward One Another ([1 Peter 5:5](#))
 - Be Kind and Compassionate to One Another ([Ephesians 4:32](#))
 - Be Patient with One Another ([Ephesians 4:2](#))
 - Build Up One Another ([1 Thessalonians 5:11](#))
 - Confess to One Another ([James 5:16](#))
 - Don't Grumble Against One Another ([James 5:9](#))
 - Don't Provoke One Another ([Galatians 5:26](#))
 - Do Not Slander One Another ([James 4:11](#))
 - Encourage One Another Daily ([Hebrews 13:3](#))
 - Equal Concern for One Another ([1 Corinthians 12:25-27](#))
 - Fellowship with One Another ([1 John 1:7](#))
 - Forgive One Another ([Ephesians 4:32](#))
 - Greet One Another ([Romans 16:16](#))
 - Honor One Another ([Romans 5:10](#))
 - Instruct One Another ([Romans 15:14](#))
 - Live in Harmony with One Another ([Romans 12:16](#))
 - Live in Peace with One Another ([1 Thessalonians 5:13](#))
 - Love One Another ([John 13:34](#))
 - Love One Another Deeply ([1 Peter 1:22](#))
 - Offer Hospitality to One Another ([1 Peter 4:9](#))
 - Pray for One Another ([James 5:16](#))
 - Serve One Another ([Galatians 5:13](#))
 - Spur One Another On ([Hebrews 10:24](#))
 - Stop Judging One Another ([Romans 13:14](#))
 - Submit to One Another ([Ephesians 5:21](#))

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