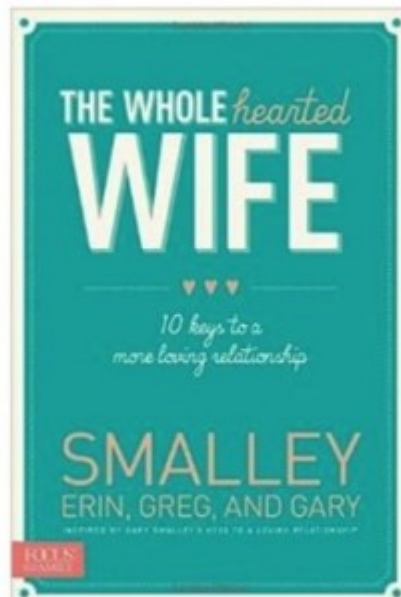


# Be the Best Partner You Can Be with 'The Wholehearted Wife'



By [Sarah](#)

[Batcheller](#) and Laura Seaman

Looking at yourself and making changes to your habits and perspectives can do a world of good to your marriage. In *The Wholehearted Wife: 10 Keys to a More Loving Relationship*, husband-and-wife duo Erin and Greg Smalley, along with Greg's father Gary, teach readers how to be a better wife and how to have a better marriage. Whether you're newlyweds or celebrating your 30th anniversary, this book will help your relationship thrive and stand the test of time. The Smalley clan teaches you how to rekindle passion, pursue your dreams,

bring vitality back into the relationship, and more! CupidsPulse.com recently interviewed the three authors about their book, which was released on June 20th.

**We love the sense of empowerment and positivity you give to women. Why did you choose to focus on the wife's role for this book?**

**Erin:** I loved the thought of encouraging women to focus on what they can control – only themselves – and use that to influence their marriage. As wives, we can learn new skills, paradigms, and behaviors and apply them to ourselves, our husbands, and our marriages.

Often, it's easier to remain stuck and frustrated by focusing only on what our husband is or isn't doing. Believe me, I did this for years, and it got me nowhere! *The Wholehearted Wife* is based on my own journey of becoming the woman and wife God is calling me to be, regardless of what my spouse is doing. I'm a work in progress...and hope to continue learning the rest of my life.

**Are there any messages that you think husbands can gather from this book?**

**Greg:** A husband can learn the same thing a wife is learning: that he cannot control or change his wife—although I have given a valiant effort over the years! Focusing on her will only keep me stuck as well. Instead, he can focus on who God is calling him to be as a man and as a husband.

In many ways, it's like a game of ping pong. If one person suddenly changes how they hit the ball, the other player will also have to change how they hit the ball back. The same is true in marriage: When one person makes a change, it *will* cause a change of some sort for the other person. Although sometimes it isn't the change you were hoping for, a change will occur – it's a dynamic system. As a husband or

wife models the behaviors they hope to see, it gives the relationship a better chance of a positive change.

**Related Link:** ['Cake Boss' Star Buddy Valastro on His Marriage: "I'm a Lucky Man Because the Show Hasn't Changed Us"](#)

**What are some specific, practical things that couples can do to be on the same page more often?**

**Erin:** After Greg and I got married, it didn't take us long to see that we had different likes, dislikes, opinions, and personalities. This set us into conflict pretty quickly—even on our honeymoon! One difference that we quickly discovered was that I was a staunch "rule follower" and Greg saw rules as "suggestions...for other people!" I didn't have any idea how to handle arguments in a healthy way, and Greg liked to avoid them.

The great news is that there are simple tools that I learned to handle conflict in a healthy way: First, take a "time out" when things began to escalate. This allows both spouses to calm down and begin to get their hearts back open. Second, I learned to name what I was feeling in the moment. This is part of de-escalating and gaining perspective of what was happening for me – again, the only person I can control. Third, ask The Lord for His truth about the situation. Your spouse is not the source of truth. Although God will use them to speak truth into your life, they come with their own issues.

Next, approach issues as a team! Just simply seeing your spouse as your teammate is a powerful perspective that can be added into marriage. Commit to each other that you will find win/win solutions to problems – in essence, things that feel good to both of you.

All of these steps allowed me to stop responding in anger and with "what came to mind first"...which never worked. Conflict is inevitable in marriage because of the differences between you and your spouse; however, combat is optional. If I can learn a

healthier way to deal with conflict, anyone can!

**Related Link:** [Create Lasting Love with 'Marriage Meetings'](#)

**What core principles do you think should be important to every couple that wants a strong and happy marriage?**

**Gary:** After 50 years of marriage, we have found that what worked best for my wife and I was to make sure that we highly VALUED each other every day. We both have made a long list of valued qualities and characteristics about each other. We highly value marriage and family, and we're eternally committed to having a relationship that reflects importance and significance.

Neither of us ever thinks of divorce, no matter how difficult our marriage becomes, because we always know that God brings life and hope to our marriage. And we know that somewhere in all of the information that is available to married couples, there is an answer to our specific relationship problems. Plus, Greg and Erin are amazing marriage counselors. There's no way that we could ever divorce!

We also keep a very short list of hurts and discouraging offenses toward each other. Everyday, we "download" our offenses toward each other and either seek forgiveness from our mate or readily forgive. Every new day is a fresh start for us, and we have no "stored up" resentment toward each other. Low hidden anger levels keep our hearts open toward each other, and seeing each other as extremely important keeps our affection for each other at the maximum levels.

**When it comes to parenting, what would you suggest parents do to teach their kids about successful marriages?**

**Gary:** I am in the middle of writing about my wish for my grandchildren for the next five generations. I have seven main pillars that my wife and I used in raising our own kids, and they turned out amazing but not perfect. When I see my adult

children today, I know it was worth every hour that we spent in raising them. Here is a summary:

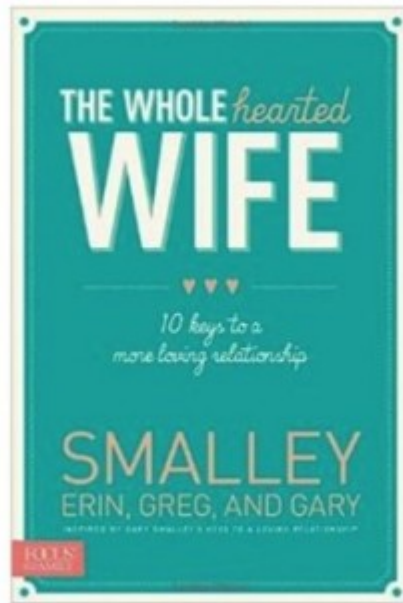
- They grew up hearing that “we honor God and His creation above all else.”
- We never keep anger inside of us. Forgiveness is key.
- We found blessings, benefits, and “pearls” within all offenses towards us. In essence, “God causes all things to work together for good. “
- We keep Jesus’s commends and learn from His teachings.
- We learned the 5 M’s: Master, Mission, Methods, Maintain, and Mate.
- We have continued to stay bonded as a family.

*Pick up a copy The Wholehearted Wife today!*

---

## **Dr. Greg Smalley Reveals How to Fight Your Way to a Better Marriage**





By Jennifer Ross

Dr. Greg Smalley was fortunate to be raised in a loving family who believed in the sanctity of marriage. From a very young age, he attended marriage conferences held by his father, Dr. Gary Smalley. This foundation ultimately led to his own passion and to the marriage counselor and author that he is today. In his latest book *Fight Your Way to a Better Marriage: How Conflict Can Take You to Deeper Levels of Intimacy*, Dr. Smalley explains what it means for a relationship to benefit from the opportunities that fighting presents and how a marriage can succeed because of disagreement. We had the chance to interview Dr. Smalley and hear what he had to say about his upbringing and how it influenced his life.

**When watching your father's conferences, what principles did he speak about that really struck a chord with you?**

I think one thing that stuck with me was my father's passion for doing something that made a difference. And I never forgot that. Something else that I saw from my dad is that he was the

same person at home as he was up on stage. He worked to implement the things that he was teaching.

He also taught us the concept of honor, the importance of viewing your wife, your kids, your loved ones, as priceless treasures. I want my heart in my marriage. I want my heart with my kids.

**Let's talk about that concept of honor. Do you think that's the main principle that most adults are misunderstanding or misinterpreting in their marriages?**

When we become comfortable with someone, it's easy to lose sight of honor. When we lose sight of someone's value, we are likely to treat them in hurtful ways. If I don't value myself, then it's pretty hard to value other people as well. If we just did those two things every day – cherish our loved ones and value them – then we would also be nourishing them. If that's all we did, can you imagine how strong our marriages would be in this country? But again, it's hard to do that because we've got all this other stuff going on.

**Can you briefly explain how fighting can improve a marriage? It sounds so counterintuitive.**

The problem is that, culturally, we tend to perpetuate that myth that conflict is a bad thing. We see fighting as a sign that your marriage isn't that strong. There's amazing benefits if we are willing to walk through the doorway of conflict. Some of the greatest things that I've learned about my wife have happened on the other side of conflict.

I hate the words "conflict resolution," and I never use that term. Sometimes it's not about an issue to resolve. It's about how to manage the situation when we bump into a difference. Every relationship will have conflict. It's a normal part of life. So really, my book focuses on how to find success in these times of arguments.

**Related Link:** [Elisha Cuthbert Proves Patience Can Pay Off](#)

**You state that fights are really about fear and not about money, kids, etc. If that's the case, then why do we focus so much of our energy on fighting about money or kids?**

I think that's what we are taught to do. We see it on TV and in movies. Conflict is driven by something deeper than the surface level issue. I call it an emotional button. It's like an iceberg. The topic is what we see, so we spend all our time worrying about that. But man, there's a lot going on down deep, and that's the stuff that we have to learn how to handle. I need to learn what my buttons are because ultimately to break out of conflict, I've got to learn to deal with me first.

**You talk about the unproductive fights between you and your wife. Considering the amount of experience you have with understanding marriages, how did you find yourself falling into this common trap?**

I have my bad days, and I'm no different than anybody else. I may know more things, but I'm still gonna get my buttons pushed. There's only two types of reactions: when we fight or when we flight. What this does is create a reactive cycle. My button gets pushed, and I react. The way I react pushes my wife's button, and she reacts, and we just keep spinning around. It's what we all do.

**And finally, what is the one thing that you want readers to take away from your book?**

What I like is the sequence for breaking this cycle; I show a very simple way to figure out how to solve things as a team. We're usually taught that we need to talk through our arguments – and that's really the worst advice you can give someone. It really does need to go in order. I gotta deal with me first, get my heart open, and then I can go after my spouse and care for her heart. Together, we can solve whatever needs



to be solved.

*You can purchase a copy of 'Fight Your Way to a Better Marriage' in bookstores and online nationwide beginning November 6, 2012. For more information about Dr. Smalley, you can visit his website at [smalleymarriage.com](http://smalleymarriage.com).*