



HOW DID I GET HERE?

INTRO

Before we can move toward a solution
We need to properly diagnose the problem

Gandhi said:
“A correct diagnosis is three-fourths the remedy.”

We have to answer the question ...
How did I get here?

- How did I push my wife so far away?
- How did I become the guy she wants nothing to do with?
- Why was I caught off guard by her decision to separate?
- *How did this happen?!*

Our diagnosis has multiple layers ...

1. THE SILENT, INVISIBLE KILLER

Let's start with Layer 1
All the little things you weren't consciously aware of
All the little things that were — in actuality — big things

- You made time for others but not for her
- You went to bat for others but not for her
- You gave your best at work but mailed it in at home
- You went out of your way to help people — even strangers (*That was me. Saint Jeff*) — but grumbled and complained when *she* asked for help
- In family squabbles, you sided against her
- You dismissed her when she got emotional
- You avoided her
- You ignored her pain
- You left her to fend for herself

- You made decisions without her
- You gave her one-word answers or grunts
- You stopped planning date nights
- You stopped noticing her
- You stopped appreciating her
- When you *did* move in her direction, it was for sex

They all add up to this ...

Neglect

The silent, invisible killer

- You neglected your marriage
- You neglected your wife
- You neglected her heart

One of my clients said this about his wife:

“She tells me she was neglected for so long that she’s empty now.”

Like you, I learned the hard way ...

There’s something worse than a husband with anger issues

There’s something worse than a husband who drinks too much

There’s something worse than a husband who struggles with porn

And that’s a husband who neglects his wife

A husband who dismisses and ignores his wife

A woman will weather any storm

A woman will stand by her man and face any hardship with him

But she won’t tolerate neglect

Early in their marriage ...

Lisa Thomas — wife of well-known author, Gary Thomas — asked her husband:

“What’s the use of getting married if I see you less now than when we were engaged?”

She’s really asking ...

- “Where did you go?”

- “What happened to love and cherish?”
- “What happened to *us*?”

Oh, I know ...

You had plenty of “legitimate” reasons and excuses
I did, too!

- She knows I love her
- I’m slammed right now
- Things at the office will slow down *next* month
- I’m *tired* after work
- I can’t take her emotional outbursts
- We don’t have enough money for fancy date nights

What she heard was:
“I have more important things to do”

More importantly ...
What she *felt* was neglected
What she *felt* was pushed aside
What she *felt* was unimportant
The worst things a married woman could *ever* feel

I forced my wife to live in that hell ...
Not for a week
Even that would be debilitating
Not for a month
Not for a year
But for a decade
I neglected her heart for a decade

Here are a few snippets from my journal ...
On the heels of my wife’s exit
On the heels of my wake-up call

“Who can blame her for leaving? No one wants to stay in a bad marriage. I neglected her heart! I WAS A FOOL! I was blind. I couldn’t see. I could only shrug my shoulders and tell myself that she was the unreasonable one, not me. She was the broken one, not me. I was trapped in my own prison. Walls I had erected as a child so no one could hurt me the way my father did. Safe inside, but a robot to the woman I promised to go

deep with. A robot whenever there was conflict. I retreated. I disengaged when she needed me to engage.

"I walked into the life of a woman whose greatest fear is abandonment and promised to never leave her. I wept when it dawned on me that my inattentiveness was THE SAME AS LEAVING HER. Giving my best time and energy to work was the same as leaving her. Not taking her side in a conflict was the same as leaving her. Avoiding her when she was emotional was the same as leaving her. I abandoned the woman I promised to love and never leave.

"My pride kept me from seeing the truth. If someone had asked me to rank myself as a husband on a scale of 1-10, I would have given myself a solid 8. Hard to believe. Like being "nice" and helping around the house made me a great husband. LAME! I neglected the one woman I promised to cherish. Cherish...I didn't know what that word meant until now...to hold her heart in my hands and treat it like the most precious treasure in all the world. I will never make that mistake again. I'm not a robot anymore. I'm awake now."

How did you get here?

You got here the same way we *all* get here

You neglected her

You stopped pursuing her

You stopped caring for her heart

You took her for granted

You took her love and loyalty for granted

You!

- The one she took herself off the market for
- The one she wanted to love and be loved by
- The one she wanted to build a life with
- Share her body and soul with
- Share her ups and downs and hurts and dreams with
- Grow old with

You're the one she most wanted to matter to.

I worked with a couple after the wife owned up to an affair

I'm not condoning or excusing what she did

It was wrong

But here's what she said to me through tears one day:

"I just wanted to *matter* to someone. I just wanted to be a priority to someone. I just wanted to be *wanted* by someone."

She was married to a workaholic husband ...
Who couldn't get off the hamster wheel
Who neglected her ... day-in and day-out
Who was emotionally unavailable ... day-in and day-out
Who gave his best time and energy to other people ... day-in and day-out
Who only noticed her when he wanted sex ... day-in and day-out

Helen Rowland famously said:

"When a woman marries, she exchanges the attention of many men for the inattention of one."

Inattention
Neglect
The invisible killer

I call it the invisible killer ...
Because no one sees it
It's not obvious to anyone else
Your neighbors and friends might think you're a great husband
Your family might think you're a great husband
Her family might think you're a great husband
Mine did!
My in-laws LOVED me!
My friendly, considerate, outgoing demeanor ...
Meant people had a very high opinion of me
They didn't see the man I was at home

Layer 1 = Neglect

But there's a second layer
Just under the surface
It's the *reason* you played small in your marriage
It's the *reason* you neglected your wife
And it's the reason ...
You weren't aware of it
Like me ...
You didn't see it

You *couldn't* see it

Let's expose your true enemy
He has a name
And no, it's not Bob or Daryl or Dimitri
It's not her old boyfriend
It's not the guy she's flirting with behind your back
His name ...
Is Autopilot

2. AUTOPILOT

Autopilot is our enemy
True, he helps us accomplish certain tasks more efficiently ...
But he also buries us in routine ...
And, like a giant anaconda ...
Slowly strangles the life out of us

According to cognitive neuroscientists ...
Roughly 95% of our wakened state is directed by our subconscious
We're only conscious — tuned in, awake — 5 percent of the day
We move through life on Autopilot
Guided by values and biases and beliefs we're not even aware of
The subconscious runs the show
Throughout the day ...
While we go about our business ...

- We're filtering
- We're evaluating
- We're judging
- We're reacting
- We're imposing our biases
- We're following predictable patterns
- We're making micro decisions
- We're obeying a set of unwritten rules
- We're complying with cultural expectations
- We're holding others to certain standards ...
- What we think they should do or not do
- How we think they should look or not look

- How we think they should behave or not behave

And ...

We're doing ALL of this ...

Without knowing it

These automatic programs run in the background

Beyond our conscious awareness

We gravitate toward what's familiar ...

Even when what's familiar no longer serves us

Even when what's familiar is toxic and unhealthy

We walk through life on Autopilot

Half-asleep

I didn't *consciously* neglect my marriage

I didn't *consciously* fracture my family

I didn't *consciously* break my son's heart

I was on Autopilot

I was sleepwalking through life

My marriage was not beyond repair

Even toward the very end ...

It was fixable!

Like Marie Forleo says:

"Everything is figure-out-able"

That's true!

But it's only true if ...

We're *aware* that something needs to be fixed or figured out

It's only true if we're awake

My marriage was unfixable because my eyes were still closed

I get the same email every day:

"I wish I had found your book a year ago!"

What are these men really saying?

"I wish I had seen *then* what I see now!"

"I wish my eyes had been open *then* like they are now!"

I do, too ...

But we don't have last year

We don't have last month
We have right now ...
And that's enough!

Better to be awake now
Better to pivot now
Than go to the grave a small man

"Yes, it's unfortunate that we wasted much of our life, but it would be UNFORGIVABLE to wait any longer to give our best to our families, our community, and our world." (Seth Godin)

So ...
That's how you got here
NEGLECT + AUTOPILOT
You neglected your wife
And to make matters worse ...
You weren't even aware of it
You were half-asleep

Not anymore
[Lightning Bolt]
You were JOLTED out of sleep ...
You were JOLTED into consciousness ...
By her announcement to leave

Here's the million-dollar question then:

How do we *stay* awake?
How do we *live* this way?
How do we make sure we never go back?

Let me introduce you to your new superpower ...
Your new best friend ...

REFLECTION

His name is "Reflection"
Yes, we're opening a Master Class called "How to Win Your Wife Back" ...
By talking about reflection

Why?

Because without it ... you're doomed!
Without it ... you'll go *back* to being unconscious!
Without it ... you'll lose a whole lot more than your marriage!

Years before my wife left
Years before she filed for divorce
She let me know from time to time:

"This isn't working for me. I'm not happy. We're not close. I don't like being married to you. I'm putting romance and sex on pause until you get your act together. Until you start showing up as an active participant in our marriage. And if you don't ... we should end this relationship."

Sometimes my weak, half-hearted response looked like ...
Letting her drag me to counseling
One time it looked like her giving me a marriage book for men
One that she had read and truly believed could help us
(I know — the irony)
Did I read it?
I read a chapter or two
Just enough to appease her
Just enough for her to un-pause romance and sex

No strength
No leadership
No urgency
As soon as the tension left our marriage
I returned to my old Autopilot ways
I returned to my former head-in-the-sand state
I got back on the hamster wheel

Blaise Pascal — the famous French physicist and philosopher — said:

"All of humanity's problems stem from man's inability to sit quietly in a room alone."

- To reflect
- To think
- To quiet the noise
- To ask the important questions ...
- The ones that go un-asked when we're un-conscious

If Autopilot is our arch enemy ...
And he is ...
Reflection is Autopilot's kryptonite
Developing the reflection habit is the *only* way to defeat him

Reflection isn't a good idea
It's not a sling until your shoulder heals
It must become our new way of life
It must become a habit

"People don't decide their future. They decide their habits and their habits decide their future." (F.M. Alexander)

JOURNAL

In my first book, there's a chapter called "Spice It Up with Leather"
The leather I'm referring to ... is this
My leather journal

I write in a notebook or journal every day
This is before I was "a writer"

I write in it every day
Why?!

I JOURNAL TO PRACTICE BEING CONSCIOUS!
Like my marriage ...
Your marriage is circling the drain ...
Because you've been *un*-conscious most of your adult life

Remember, Autopilot is our enemy
Destroyer of all that is good
That means *this* is your most powerful weapon
This is your most essential weapon
Journaling isn't optional!
Reflection isn't optional!
We *must* carve out time every day to pause ...
To reflect ...
And to be conscious
Must. Must. Must!
We have no other choice

Journaling is what saved me
Journaling is what *keeps* saving me

It only takes a few minutes to watch a video like this ...
But the magic happens when you sit with it for another five or ten
When you pause
Reflect
Write down what resonated
Plan your next hero move

Remember ...
You won't lose your marriage because you mess up
We all mess up
If you lose your marriage ...
It will be for one reason ...
You failed to conquer Autopilot
That's it!
You're still sleepwalking through life
Not in touch with — not conscious of — what really matters

You've been that guy long enough
No more
This is your wake-up call
Answer it

MAKING IT EASY

Now let's get really practical
Let's take the mystery out of journaling

I have two journals ...

Journal #1 ...
This is my legacy journal
This is what I'll pass down to my kids
I've written in many different journals over the years ...
And this one is by far my favorite ...
Size, feel, quality, construction, line spacing
5 stars
It's expensive
I don't write in it every day
But it's where I record ...

- An aha! moment
- An important insight
- A dream I had the night before
- A quote that speaks to me
- A big idea
- A life lesson
- A meaningful moment (or event) I want to look back on

The weighty stuff

The passage I read to you a few minutes ago?

That's from this

One of my legacy journals

It's made by Gallery Leather in Maine

I've linked it below

Journal #2 ...

This is my everyday journal

It's cheap

I buy these in bulk on Amazon for about a buck fifty each

I write in this one every day

Here's what I do ...

You'll love how easy this is ...

I end each day ...

By writing down 5-10 things — from that day ...

I'm grateful for

They're not earth-shattering

Just simple, everyday things we typically overlook on Autopilot

Here are a few from this week ...

[READ EXAMPLES]

Next ...

I answer these three simple prompts

My coach calls it “putting the day up for review”

1. What went well?
2. What needs work?

3. What will I do differently tomorrow?

It's a simple exercise ...
With a *profound* impact!

Putting my day up for review pries me free from Autopilot ...
And pulls me back into my conscious mind.

Do I have a written answer for each question every single night?
Not always ...
But that's not the point
What am I doing?

- I'm sitting quietly in a room alone
- I'm thinking critically about my day
- I'm developing the reflection habit
- I'm keeping Autopilot at bay

Journaling isn't how we "fix" everything that needs to be fixed
It's how we get our reps in
It's how we stay strong
It's how we stay conscious!

The next morning ...
I begin my day by reading what I wrote in my journal the night before
Instead of running blindly into my day ...
At the mercy of its whims and distractions ...
A victim ...
I'm marching into my day ...
Awake!
Grounded!
With a clear vision
Bent toward growth and improvement

I'm marching into my day as leader instead of follower
As strong instead of weak

10 MAGICAL MINUTES

We have to make time for reflection
Carve out time for reflection

It won't magically appear
We have to schedule it!
10 minutes a day
Set it in stone
This is a promise you make to yourself

The great John Maxwell didn't mince words when he said:

"You will never change your life until you change something you do *daily*."

Do not go to bed without spending 10 minutes in reflection!

Otherwise — please hear me ...
Otherwise ...

- This course is worthless!
- You will not change!
- Your mindset will not change!
- Your life will not change!
- Autopilot will continue its reign

Someone said ...
You can put lipstick on a pig ...
But it's still a pig

You can invest in yourself
You can read all the books
You can take a course like this one
But without developing the reflection habit ...
You'll remain weak
You'll remain brain dead

Remember what I said ...
Journaling — reflection — saved me ...
And it's what *keeps* saving me

Here's ...
YOUR FIRST ASSIGNMENT
It's also your *most important* assignment
Starting now ...
I want you to ...

- End each day with reflection
- 10 minutes a day
- Set it in stone

You're worth it
Your family is worth it
Your future is worth it

Greatness is your birthright
Autopilot is your enemy
Only one of you is getting out alive

PUT IT TO WORK

1. Buy a legacy journal if you don't have one. [Here's the one](#) I use.
2. Schedule 10 minutes a day for you and your marriage. This is nonnegotiable. You're in a war and this is your first battle. You *must* win it!
3. Set a "10 Magical Minutes" alarm in your phone.
4. Write down 5-10 things you're grateful for. Then put your day up for review. Using our three prompts, answer: What went well? What needs work? What will I do differently tomorrow?
5. Develop a consistent rhythm. Track your progress. I used a wall calendar in the beginning. String together two days. Then three. Do it for a week. Then another. Tell yourself, "This is what greatness feels like! This is what beast mode feels like!"
6. Start today, you beast.

ONLINE COURSE

This is the first lesson inside my online course — *How to Win Your Wife Back*. There are 37 more lessons (plus a private community, daily posts, and group coaching calls) for the man whose wife is pulling away from him.

[Find the entire course here.](#)