

LEADER'S GUIDE

WEEK 4

Us In



Mind

by Ted Lowe

HOW CHANGING YOUR THOUGHTS
CAN CHANGE YOUR MARRIAGE

Intentional Thought: Choose Empathy

IF THE HOME RENOVATION TV SHOW CRAZE

has taught us anything, it's that no matter how big a disaster the house may be, in one hour, it can be beautiful enough to be featured in *Architectural Digest*. We like quick fixes and tied-up bows. We enjoy resolution and happy endings—and the faster we can get there? The better. And while that may work in television, it turns out, real life is much more complicated. It isn't that things *can't* be fixed. It's that sometimes the "fix" isn't the end we should be aiming for.

When it comes to marriage, this can be one of the easiest temptations we fall into. We think making things better is the worthiest objective. But sometimes, more than anything, our spouse needs a listening ear, a sympathetic conversation partner, and a compassionate presence. Not a fixer. A friend—who strives to understand.

This week, guide your group to see the benefit of being a listener, in being present rather than trying to make things better for their spouse. As you lead, keep the same principle in mind—that you aren't there to fix, but be a sympathetic and listening ear to the people in your group.

IN CLOSING

This week, review the ideas of "I see you," "I get you," and "I got you." Take some time, just the two of you, to share how you would like your spouse to express that they see you, get you, and got you. Is there a particular way you would like them to empathize? What would empathy look like to you?

Response

Ice Breaker

Everyone share what their biggest surprise about marriage was

Discuss

1. Why do you think fixing is so much easier than empathizing?
2. What benefits does fixing offer that empathy doesn't? What benefits does empathy offer that fixing doesn't?
3. How have you seen empathizing lead to a greater connection between you?
4. What are some practical ways you can demonstrate empathy?
5. Share a time when someone has "seen you", or "gotten you". What did that look like? What made that experience memorable?
6. What is one way you can communicate in actions or words that you have each other's back?

