

YES, YOU CAN!

by Darien B. Cooper with Craig B. Cooper

Ziinnngggg!

It was so close that Roger could hear it. His hair stood on end as the bullet flew by his head and lodged in the wall behind him. He deftly moved to his right and shot back at his opponent with the intention of maiming. His shot went wide of its target. Roger then swung around and instead of escaping the shoot out, he unwittingly walked into his opponent's line of sight. As soon as he realized what happened it was too late. A bullet caught him in the left shoulder. He looked at down and saw the bullet's effect on his coat where a small, insignificant hole appeared. A bystander would not have noticed the hole unless they saw the black gunpowder ring around it. But the bullet had found its target.

Roger fell to the floor and in his fall landed on his wounded shoulder. The pain was excruciating. Every nerve in his body cried out for relief. He felt like a red hot iron had been stuck into his body.

There was no time for "licking his wounds". He was on the defensive and needed to turn the tables to survive. Another direct hit and his life would be over. He rolled over on the floor several times to get out of the line of fire. Somehow he found the strength to rise to his feet and emptied his pistol's cartridge in the direction of his adversary. He quickly hid behind a wall to avoid return fire.

After a few seconds Roger knew he now had the advantage. No return fire came, only human groans that indicated his enemy was in severe pain. With the upper hand, Roger pressed in to make the most of his advantage. In a full frontal attack, with screams and yelling, he rounded the corner and finished off his assailant.

He would live, but his opponent was dead. As Roger soothed his pains, his heart grew despondent and desperate. He realized he had just killed his wife.

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The battle that was just described happened in Roger's living room. There were not real bullets flying but they felt like ones. Roger and his wife had been shooting hurtful words at each other hoping to destroy the other. Roger did not physically kill his wife but he did kill her spirit and soul.

The battle that Roger and his wife took part in happens every day as marriage partners who were once intimate lovers wound each other with their words. The words go deep and can cause more damage than physical bullets. The words we speak can burn others souls.

Ever been in a deadly battle like this?

Often the battle of words elevate into yelling as each partner becomes determined to deliver the last bullet. Insults and emotional jabs continue until one person gets the upper hand. No matter who gets the last word, both sides end up in emotional and spiritual intensive care, with the losing partner going down for the final count.

How do we stop the massacre? When one person stops shooting.

If one partner will return a soft answer, or even nothing at all, instead of shooting words, the way of peace can begin (Proverbs 15:1).

Hard? Absolutely!

Impossible? Close to it, but not impossible. YES, YOU CAN! There is a way.

When you receive a cutting remark, don't fire back. If you do the skirmish will turn into full-blown war.

At first it's fun shooting back, but in the end you will both die if you do. Instead, quietly and inwardly, talk to Jesus and give Him your pain. Ask Him to soothe it and not let the word stick. Ask Him for His love in knowing how to respond.

Also ask Jesus to help you put your gun back in the holster.

Your goal is to not only redeem your soul and fulfill your destiny, but to also give your mate an opportunity to do the same. Marriage is designed by God to be the most intimate of all earthly relationships and to mirror our intimacy with Him. As our conflicts are used in His hand allowing "iron to sharpen iron" (Proverbs 27:17), we are transformed into His image. However, the narrow-road-tensions in marital struggle require us to:

- Not only develop an intimate love walk with Jesus, but also to learn who we are apart from our mate's identity.
- Learn to fulfill our marital role without performance based living.
- Be our self and let our mate be their self without threatening or being threatened. We learn to trust and honor the god within us and allow God to care for our mate.
- Learn to see our mate from God's perspective thereby encouraging them in their gifts and calling.
- Return good for evil without being an accomplice in abusive behavior.
- Not take personally a mate's weaknesses even though the bullets are flying. This is easier said than done. However, YES YOU CAN! It may help to realize that their turmoil, worry, fear and anger are coming from an inward unhealed wound or entanglement. How?
 1. Take Mary's advice concerning Jesus in John 2:5, "Whatever he says to you, do it."
 2. Sometimes you will pierce the darkness with your Spirit based response firmly challenging negative, disrespectful or barbed words. It means being firm but kind.
 3. Some situations will call for you to look firmly, but not harshly at the one spewing hurtful words.
 4. Still others will call for you to evacuate, pray silently or give a blessing either silently or verbally. Jesus knows what the other one needs. His resources are unlimited.
- Remember you are not to become polluted or lose your peace to sustain the life of another. That is God's job! Your job is to stay in His presence.

Whatever your marital situation is, whether is easy or difficult, as you walk intimately with Jesus, you will be changed into His image, your soul will be redeemed and your destiny fulfilled. Your mate will have had the opportunity to do the same. It is a win=win situation. YES, YOU CAN!

This article is written to honor the newly released book, *You Can Be the Wife of a Happy Husband*, which has been revised and updated after 36 years. It describes a wife's role in the marital

relationship, but the principles are genderless and can be applied to the man as well. Check out the author's web site for more details and other materials – www.darienbcooper.com