

**I'd Trade My Husband for a Housekeeper:
Loving Your Marriage After the Baby Carriage**

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Before launching into a discussion about the book, we recommend laying down a few ground rules. It's important to create an atmosphere that gives moms permission to truly be themselves, and talk about their marriages in an authentic way. Once we are all honest with ourselves and others, then we can begin to live happier lives in motherhood and marriage. And in order to be 100% honest, there has to be a no judgment rule. It's important not to judge yourself or others in the group, no matter what is said. And supporting each other is vital—if we can learn from each other, we'll all be better off.

These questions are meant to be thought starters. Our hope is that moms can support each other by offering advice and solutions to each other throughout the discussion. If you want to delve deeper into these issues, as well as get tangible solutions that can provide help and relief, please refer to the book.

- Σ Ask yourself: do you feel you can talk openly and honestly about your marriage?
- Σ Did you have an unrealistic vision of what your marriage/marriage with kids would look like?

Remember, every single marriage needs to be re-defined after kids. Talking about these issues will help you re-invent it for yourself.

EXPECTATIONS

- Σ Do you ever look at other marriages and compare them to yours, or wish you had 'that guy'?
- Σ Do you think that the expectations to be a 'good mom' supercede those of a 'good wife'?
- Σ How do your expectations of yourself as a mother impact your role as a wife?
- Σ Have you ever sat down with your spouse and talked about the expectations you have of each other?
- Σ Have you considered how your role models growing up have positively or negatively affected your expectations of yourself? Of your spouse?
- Σ Are your expectations of your marriage realistic? Do you feel like you are living up to what your marriage *should* look like, as opposed to what it actually looks like?

MAKE THE CHOICE TO BE HAPPY

- Σ Were you happier with yourself and in your marriage before kids? As one mom said, "I liked me more before kids, so I liked him more."
- Σ Do you feel like happiness IS a choice? Where are you getting your happiness from? Are you expecting that someone or something else will provide it for you?
- Σ In interviews, when we asked who in the marriage would 'jump ship,' 99% of the time it was the woman. What would be a 'dealbreaker' in your marriage?
- Σ To have a happy marriage, you have to be happy yourself. Are you nurturing your own personal happiness? What have you sacrificed?
- Σ What could you do TODAY, big or small, that you know would make your spouse happy?

COMMUNICATION

- Σ Do you expect your husband to chat with you like he's your 'girlfriend'?
- Σ Do you expect him to read your mind? Is it tough for you to ask your husband for what you need?
- Σ Do you feel like the communication in your marriage has become more 'business-like'? Some women & men said that, after kids, they mostly talked about the nitty gritty/what needs to get done stuff more than the deeper issues.
- Σ Most women told us that they feel they do more around the house and with the kids than their husbands, and don't always feel like they hear 'thank you' enough. Do you feel that way? Conversely, men feel that they do a lot that goes unnoticed. Do you recognize and tell your husband that you appreciate these 'invisible' things?

PRIORITIZING YOUR MARRIAGE

- Σ Do you put your marriage on a 'to do' list?
- Σ Where does your marriage rank in your life (against you, your kids, your career, your house)?
- Σ Do you think of you & your partner as a team? Is this for the short-term or is this a long-term vision?
- Σ Are you making it a priority to spend time alone together? What does a 'date night' look like for you? Do you need to re-think or re-invent your date nights?
- Σ Do you give up date night because you feel guilty for leaving the kids?

SEX

- Σ Do you have it? Do you compare your sex life to others'?
- Σ Are you & your spouse satisfied/on the same page with your needs?
- Σ Do you ever talk about sex? Have you each talked about your expectations? So much of the time we think we know what they expect and the reality doesn't match.
- Σ What could your husband do to make you want more sex? The dishes? Laundry?