

MAY

# CHALLENGES & BREAKDOWNS



homeroom

MARRIAGE & FAMILY MENTORING MEMBERSHIP

***This month is all about hunting down and finding the tiny little breakdowns that begin to really take their toll on the marriage or family. So many of let ourselves go around and around without ever actually facing the breakdowns head on, or even seeking them out in order to be able to fix them. This month is hopefully going to give a framework and language and tools to be a able to do that!***

We kept having the same fight over and over again.

For years.

I'd bring some decision to Alyssa for final confirmation and she would pump the brakes and start asking questions that I took personally and got defensive about because 'well, I already thought about that and we can't do that.'

Basically I felt like she didn't trust me to make decisions or have already thought through most of the logistics and details and she felt like she was just probing or getting more information to make an informed decision.

A breakdown was occurring.

Breakdowns are common in marriage and families. It's the places where there isn't some cataclysmic sin or destroying force in the marriage but it's a recurring pattern or behavior that is beginning to eat away in tiny ways at the intimacy and strength of the team and the marriage.

Another example for families would be getting the kids from inside the house into their car seats in a smooth orderly fashion.

Most of us parents just let this happen chaotically and hope it'll happen naturally if we just will it to happen or are stern enough.

But slowly but surely, and consistently, it breaks down. Getting out the door is a breakdown. People get frustrated. We fail more than we succeed. And it's a tiny issue (getting in car) that begins to shape attitudes and frustrations in a way that bleeds into much bigger things!

So what should we do?

Attack the breakdowns, practice them in controlled ways, and make systems and rules.

It took Alyssa and I probably 4 or 5 years to realize this but we now are so much better off because we never will a breakdown to fix itself anymore! We now look for them and instead of stuffing them down and hoping they just don't come up again we note it and focus in on it.

Back to the car seats. How do you get kids in the car in a timely and orderly way?

Our way is to play car seat olympics. Practice a few times with the similar fun spirit of a relay race and some type of funny trophy or crown (and maybe even a treat after) where we race to do it. Where we work as a team.

And guess what? The breakdown starts to dissipate because now we have the language and the system and have been properly walked through how to do it right.

And so that's what this month is for. To not shy away from the small things but actually look for them. Because Song of Solomon says it's the little foxes that eat the vineyard. And our families and marriages are hurt and destroyed one tiny break down at a time. A vineyard doesn't tend to just have a tornado wipe it out. Most often little foxes come in under the fence and slowly eat away the grapes and you don't notice until it's too late.

# QUESTIONS

**1.** Name two or three 'little foxes' in your marriage that are a constant yet small source of frustration and disagreement (loading dishwasher, someone always being late when the other spouse is timely, etc)

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**2.** If you have kids, what would be a few more with them specifically (getting out the door, bed time routine, etc)?

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**3.** If your friend came to you with a similar problem what advice would you probably give them on the issue?

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**4.** If you dig down one layer deeper, what do you think causes this constant recurring breakdown (a communication problem, a preference problem, lack of planning, etc)?

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**5.** How would you rank your spirit or general demeanor towards challenges and small breakdowns (get frustrated easily, try to stuff them away and not address them, etc)?

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**6.** What would be a better or more christ like response to these?

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Now we are only getting started this month and we will dig a lot deeper but hop on the FB group and let us know what stood out to you from the introduction theme primer and maybe what one or two breakdowns you want to use this month to focus in on!