

We first saw Chris and Carmen for couples counseling in the beginning of 2021. At that time, we were at a crossroads, counseling or divorce. Our relationship had become toxic and destructive after years of neglect. I greatly feared how divorce would impact my children but feared what staying in a toxic situation would do to them more. I was mentally preparing for this eventuality and after months of careful consideration did one of the most difficult things I've ever had to do and asked my husband for a divorce. At first his response was cold but once the preparations began reality sank in for him. We were really on the path to divorce. Then one morning he came to me with tears in his eyes asking me to talk. I could tell he was up all night. I was on my way out the door for work, but something told me stay and hear him out. The most miraculous thing happened. He apologized for how things had been in the marriage. A genuine, heart-felt apology. Intrigued but still feeling reserved, I agreed to talk to him more about it that night. We later agreed to put divorce plans on hold and give couples counseling another try. We had gone before without the desired outcome, but I had the sense that things were going to be different this time. My husband found Chris and Carmen's website online and contacted them. He had a good feeling, so I agreed meet them the following week.

Chris and Carmen greeted us at their home with such warmth that my discomfort about airing our dirty laundry with strangers was greatly eased. They listened to our story with compassion and empathy. It was clear that they had a genuine passion for their work. They offered their workbook as a resource and invited us to join them for a weekly group study. I was completely taken aback when they offered their personal phone numbers and made themselves totally available for anything that came up. I didn't want to abuse the privilege so I used it sparingly, but it was a comfort to know that I could.

The workbook was intimidatingly thick. Slowly but surely, we made our way through the studies, gaining insight from the weekly meetings. Our readiness to end the misery of a bad a relationship combined with diligently putting what we were learning into practice made for a dramatic shift in our marriage. Our relationship isn't perfect. We still get off track, but now we have tools to put things right. We've developed an understanding of what it takes to create a satisfying marriage and we are committed to doing what we need to do to make that happen. Chris and Carmen played an integral role in making this possible and for that I will be forever grateful.