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MARABEL MORGAN

The Total Woman

1973

In response to the sexual and feminist revolutions, conservative Christian women struggled to define their marital roles in the 1970s. This best-selling advice book by evangelical Marabel Morgan (which she dedicated in part to Anita Bryant) prescribed clear ways in which a wife could simultaneously conform to biblical norms and engage in a fulfilling sex life.

I think in superlatives, so naturally I expected that my marriage to Charlie Morgan would be the world's greatest. Both of us were determined to give our best to each other, but my knowledge of what that entailed was nil. I believed in the all-American Cinderella story; marriage was ruffly curtains at the kitchen window, strawberries for breakfast, and lovin' all the time. . . .

From Marabel Morgan, *The Total Woman* (Old Tappan, N.J.: Revell, 1973), 15, 17, 19, 22-23, 26-27, 57-58, 68-70, 91-95, 183-84.

As the months passed, however, our lives became more complicated, and we gradually changed. . . .

As the years wore on, things got worse. . . .

I didn't like it one bit. . . .

Something drastic had to be done! . . . I made a decision to change the collision course I was on. . . .

The change began with my pursuit of knowledge. I bought all the marriage books I could find. I read until I felt cross-eyed at night. I took self-improvement courses. I studied books on psychology. I studied the Bible. Over and over certain principles emerged and I began to apply them to my marriage. . . .

The results of applying certain principles to my marriage were so revolutionary that I had to pass them on in the four-lesson Total Woman course, and now in this book. . . .

This book is not intended to be the ultimate authority on marriage. Far from it. I don't pretend to have an automatic, ready-to-wear answer for every marriage problem. I do believe it is possible, however, for almost any wife to have her husband absolutely adore her in just a few weeks' time. She can revive romance, reestablish communication, break down barriers, and put sizzle back into her marriage. It really is up to her. She has the power.

If, through reading and applying these principles, you become a Total Woman, with your husband more in love with you than ever before, my efforts in writing this book will have been rewarded.

Psychiatrists tell us that a man's most basic needs, outside of warm sexual love, are approval and admiration. Women need to be loved; men need to be admired. We women would do well to remember this one important difference between us and the other half. . . .

Have you ever wondered why your husband doesn't just melt when you tell him how much you love him? But try saying, "I admire you," and see what happens. If you want to free him to express his thoughts and emotions, begin by filling up his empty cup with admiration. He must be filled first, for he has nothing to give until this need is met. And when his cup runs over, guess who lives in the overflow? Why, the very one who has been filling up the cup—you!

Love your husband and hold him in reverence, it says in the Bible. That means admire him. *Reverence*, according to the dictionary, means "To respect, honor, esteem, adore, praise, enjoy, and admire." . . .

What causes most of the problems in your marriage? I find that the conflict between two separate egos is usually the culprit—your

viewpoint versus his viewpoint. If they happen to be the same, fine. If not, as so often is the case, conflict results. . . .

The biblical remedy for marital conflict is stated, "You wives must submit to your husbands' leadership in the same way you submit to the Lord." . . . God planned for woman to be under her husband's rule.

Now before you scream and throw this book away, hear me out. First of all, no one says you have to get married. If you do not wish to adapt to a man, the negative implication is to stay single. If you are married but not adapting, you probably already know that marriage isn't the glorious experience you anticipated.

Secondly, you may think, "That's not fair. I have my rights. Why shouldn't he adapt to my way first, and then maybe I'll consider doing something to please him?" I have seen many couples try this new arrangement, unsuccessfully. Unless the wife adapts to his way of life, there's no way to avoid the conflict that is certain to occur.

Thirdly, please note that I did not say a woman is inferior to man, or even that a woman should be subservient to all men, but that a wife should be under her own husband's leadership.

Fourthly, another little phrase may cause some consternation: ". . . in the same way you submit to the Lord." Perhaps you are thinking, "I don't submit to the Lord. I don't even know Him. How archaic can you get? Even if you believe in Him, who submits to Him?"

The fact is that God originally ordained marriage. He gave certain ground rules and if they are applied, a marriage will work. Otherwise, the marriage cannot be closely knit because of the inherent conflict between your husband's will and yours. The evidence is all too clearly visible. In some cities there are now more people getting divorced each day than getting married.

Man and woman, although equal in status, are different in function. God ordained man to be the head of the family, its president, and his wife to be the executive vice-president. Every organization has a leader and the family unit is no exception. There is no way you can alter or improve this arrangement. On occasion, families have tried to reverse this and have elected a woman as president. When this order is turned around, the family is upside down. The system usually breaks down within a short period of time. Allowing your husband to be your family president is just good business. . . .

Let's begin by going back to that moment when you first saw the man who is now your husband. Specifically, let's consider the first time he saw *you*. Remember how immaculate you were each time he came to call? Remember those long baths and then the powder, perfume, and

pizzazz? You felt so confident, and you were so excited you could hardly wait to see him. Dazzling, you floated out to meet him, knowing he would be pleased just seeing you and being seen with you.

Well, what did you look like last night when he came home? What did you have on this morning when he left for work? Girls, is it any wonder the honeymoon is over, and instead of feeling sought, you both feel caught?

It doesn't have to be that way. . . .

One of your husband's most basic needs is for you to be physically attractive to him. He loves your body; in fact, he literally craves it. The outer shell of yours is what the real estate people call "curb appeal"—how the house looks from the outside. Is your curb appeal this week what it was five years ago?

Many a husband rushes off to work leaving his wife slumped over a cup of coffee in her grubby undies. His once sexy bride is now wrapped in rollers and smells like bacon and eggs. All day long he's surrounded at the office by dazzling secretaries who emit clouds of perfume.

This is all your husband asks from you. He wants the girl of his dreams to be feminine, soft, and touchable when he comes home. That's his need. If you are dumpy, stringy, or exhausted, he's sorry he came. That first look tells him your nerves are shot, his dinner is probably shot, and you'd both like to shoot the kids. It's a bad scene. Is it any wonder so many men come home late, if at all? . . .

Take a few extra moments for that bubble bath tonight. If your husband comes home at 6:00, bathe at 5:00. . . . In preparing for your six o'clock date, lie back and let go of the tensions of the day. Think about that special man who's on his way home to you.

Remove all prickly hairs and be squeaky clean from head to toe. Be touchable and kissable. For a really sparkling mouth, use dental floss after brushing your teeth, then brush again, and close with a good mouthwash. You could greet anyone after that! . . .

Have you ever met your husband at the front door in some outrageously sexy outfit? I can hear you howl, "She's got to be kidding. My husband's not the type, and besides, we've been married twenty-one years!"

Nope, I'm not kidding, *especially* if you've been married twenty-one years. Most women dress to please other women rather than their own husbands. Your husband needs you to fulfill his daydreams. . . .

You can be lots of different women to him. Costumes provide variety without him ever leaving home. I believe that every man needs excitement and high adventure at home. Never let him know what to expect

when he opens the front door; make it like opening a surprise package. You may be a smoldering sexpot, or an all-American fresh beauty. Be a pixie or a pirate—a cowgirl or a show girl. Keep him off guard. . . .

It is impossible to explain Total Woman in a ten-minute conversation, or in a four-week course, or in a how-to-do-it book. Total Woman is a way of life, a new attitude about yourself, your husband, and your children.

Total Woman starts with the premise that every woman can be made whole. Even with the complex facets to her personality and the many roles to play, no woman need go through life fragmented.

A Total Woman is not just a good housekeeper; she is a warm, loving homemaker. She is not merely a submissive sex partner; she is a sizzling lover. She is not just a nanny to her children; she is a woman who inspires them to reach out and up.

A Total Woman is a person in her own right. She has a sense of personal security and self-respect. She is not afraid to be herself. Others may challenge her standards, but she knows who she is and where she is going.

She has the gift of discovering what is worthwhile in another person. She dares her husband to rise higher than he ever dreamed. She makes marriage enjoyable instead of an endurance contest. She has a natural love affair with life and brings life to others.

You can be that Total Woman, with your priorities in order and your responsibilities in perspective. First of all, remember that you are a *person* responsible to God, your power Source. Until you become the kind of woman He wants you to be, you will not be able to fully give yourself to others, for you have little to give. Fill your cup vertically before you attempt to give to others horizontally.

Your second priority is to your husband, your *partner*. Too many husbands get lost in the shuffle after Junior arrives, or are replaced by their wives' other activities. Your husband needs to know he's tops on your list.

Your next priority is as a *parent* to your children. Good mothers are not born; they are made by women who want to be good mothers. In those early years, your children need their mom at home. Their future development is far more important than your sorority ball.

Only after you have met your spiritual needs, the needs of your husband and your children, should you think of your *profession* or the *public*. Civic clubs, parties, and social projects, yes, but only after order is restored at home.

I wish you well.
Marabel