

# BELIEVE THE BEST

## STAYING IN LOVE, PART 4

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### Review of past weeks:

- The first requirement for staying in love is to “Make love a verb!” (i.e. an action), and mutually submit.
- To stay in love, I follow the example Christ set for me by valuing the other above myself and focusing on their interests, not just my own (see Philippians 2:3-8).
- All of that would be a lot easier if we came into the relationship with hearts full of good things... but the reality is, we all have baggage, so we must guard (monitor) our hearts.

### 1 Corinthians 13 (the “love chapter”)

*Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.*

*5 It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.*

*6 Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth.*

*7 It always protects, always trusts [believes all things], always hopes, always perseveres.*

1 Corinthians 13:4-7

In every relationship, there are gaps between

- what we expect our partners to do
- what they actually do.

We have to decide what to place in the gaps.

We can:

1. Believe the \_\_\_\_\_  
or
2. Assume the \_\_\_\_\_

In *The One Thing You Need to Know*, Marcus Buckingham shares the following:

- A study of happy couples that had been together for ten years or more, started with the assumption was that in strong marriages the spouses would have deep understandings of each other and realistic expectations.
- They discovered the opposite. These couples actually had unrealistically positive views of each other.
- In their study, husbands and wives rated their partners more positively in every quality than their partners rated themselves. They saw their spouses in a better light than their spouses saw themselves.
- Conclusion: They were blind to their spouses’ deficiencies (they had a “positive illusion”).

**Observation:** The couple’s positive illusion created an upward spiral of love.

### Their advice for a happy marriage:

Find the most generous explanation for each other’s behavior and \_\_\_\_\_.

To stay in love, you must CHOOSE to believe the best.

A. Give the benefit of the doubt.

B. Recast weaknesses as strengths:

1. “She’s not impatient, she’s intense.”
2. “He’s not insensitive, he’s just focused.”

### QUESTION TO ASK

#### Do you believe the best or assume the worst?

- If you assume the worst, you are undermining your own relationship.
- If you believe the best, you draw the other person toward you in the relationship.