

# Marriage Minute

May 2018

## Get Rid of the ANTs!

Did you know that your body reacts to every thought you have? That's right, when you think negative thoughts such as mad, mean, sad, and cranky thoughts, your brain releases chemicals into your body that that makes your mind and body feel bad. Ouch! However, it is also part of God's blessing for how He created us, because when we think happy, kind, good, and hopeful thoughts, our brain releases chemicals that actually help our bodies feel good. Dr. Daniel G. Amen coined the term ANTs (Automatic Negative Thoughts) in his studies on how to conquer anxiety, depression, and negative thinking to lead persons towards more vitalized and healthy life. Applied to marriage, these destructive ANTs happen when one person develops a habit of assuming the worst about the motivations of the other, and this tares down trust and happiness in relationships. We can learn to have more control over how we feel by taking more control over our thought life, and we can inject more positive feelings into our marriages by getting rid of the ANTs. Instead of responding with, "you always," "you never," and predicting the bad about a situation, start to look for more positive explanations for your spouse's behavior. Instead of assuming the worst, choose to believe the best, and you will soon experience how that transforms into more positive feelings about the situation and your mate. Philippians 4:8 encourages us by saying, "...whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, dwell on these things." That also provides a recipe for more peace in your life and in your relationships. So, protect, enhance, and vitalize your relationship by choosing to get rid of those ANTs!

**Challenge:** Pick one situation that is a routine source of friction in your relationship, and look for more positive explanations about your spouse for why it is happening. Then, discuss this situation and choose to believe the best about your spouse. Your spouse married you because they love you, so choose to believe the best about them!