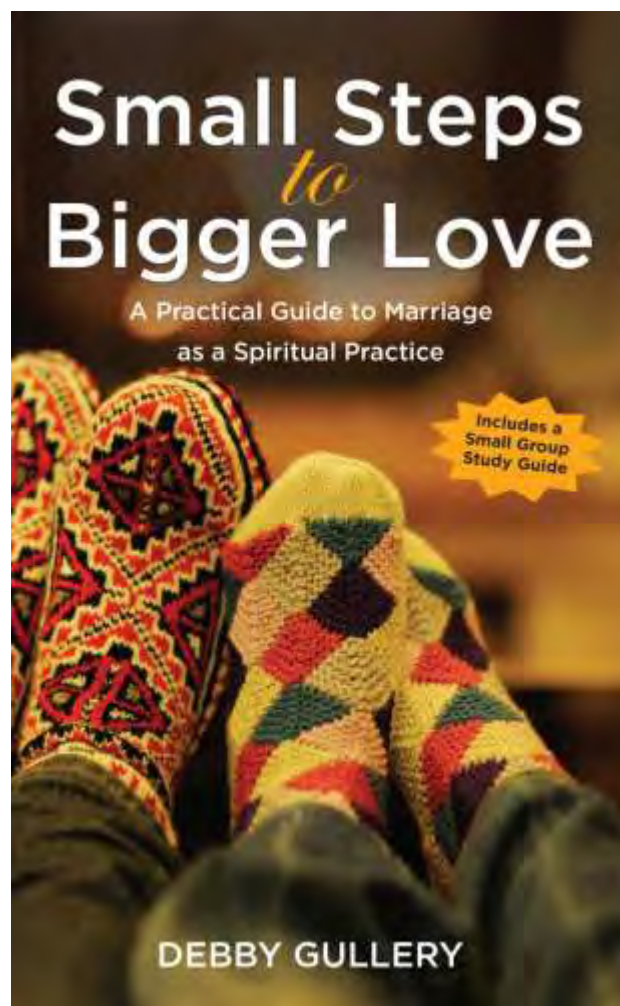


Small Steps to Bigger Love

Debby Gullery
July 22, 2015



Debby Gullery, a relationship and marriage coach for over twenty years, recently published “Small Steps to Bigger Love: A Practical Guide to Marriage as a Spiritual Practice”.

Debby worked with the National Blessing & Family Ministry (BFM) for six years, was instrumental in developing the new Blessing Education Curriculum, and has taught all three levels around the country.

She studied pastoral counselling at the Blanton Peale Institute in NYC, trained with many of the leading marriage educators in the country, and teaches marriage preparation and enrichment workshops throughout America and abroad.

Her book is available through Amazon.com and makes a great gift for anyone who is married or plans to be!

“Spirituality cannot exist separately from our marriages—they are deeply intertwined. As spiritual beings who are married, we strive for intentionality, restraint and appreciation of each other’s perspectives, and we work at providing support, validation and love to our spouses and children. In this very practical and concrete way, our marriages and families naturally become our most authentic spiritual paths.”

– Excerpt from *“Small Steps to Bigger Love: A Practical Guide to Marriage as a Spiritual Practice”*

Why did you write the book?

During my years working at the National Blessed Family Ministry, I had the opportunity to meet brothers and sisters of all ages around the country. I saw firsthand how desperate people were to improve their marriages and grow their hearts and I met with many couples. I was often asked for recommendations for spiritually-based books about marriage, especially ones that included study guides. Over the years I have studied pastoral counseling in NY and trained with many of the best marriage education programs in America, and have had the opportunity to infuse that education with the Divine Principle.

I love teaching relationship skills and marriage education because it feels like I am helping people apply the Divine Principle in their daily lives. I think True Father was so ahead of the game intellectually and spiritually, that he often said things that we didn’t completely understand. As we grow and mature, however, these things become clearer to us and then we can begin to act on them.

When my husband Jonathan and I were Blessed in marriage 33 years ago, True Father told us that we would become each other’s second messiah, and that our children would become our third messiahs. I think it was only after I had been married for quite a while, and began studying marriage education, that I began to understand the depth of what he meant.

I set out to write a practical book that anyone could use to strengthen their marriage, on their own, as a couple, or in a small group. I wanted to share bite-sized nuggets of wisdom and insight and give people a framework they could use to apply them to their own lives. Each chapter stands on its own, with practical steps and spiritual practices to use for each topic presented. And for people who want to use the book in a small group environment, I have included a study guide, complete with questions, discussions topics and extra resources.

What makes it unique as a marriage book?

“Small Steps to Bigger Love” is unique because it offers practical steps to help couples approach their

marriages as a *genuine spiritual practice*. I believe that it is in our most important relationships, such as marriage and parenting, that our most significant internal growth takes place. It makes sense that we would be motivated to persevere and work hard to smooth out any glitches in these two realms of heart because they matter the most to us! Also, the very fact that we are always in each other's lives means that challenges will inevitably come up, and that there will be plenty of opportunities for us to practice loving kindness with each other.

Spiritual practices are meant to help us both grow in our relationship with our Heavenly Parent, and in our capacity to love others. As spiritual people, we already have spiritual practices that we try to incorporate into our daily lives. However, it can be easy to think we are being 'spiritual' when we are in the prayer room, but I think that the real test of our maturity and spiritual development is seen in our relationships. It's easy to love the world with passion, but can we prefer the needs of our spouses when they are not being very loving towards us? Can we choose to be careful with our words and actions even when we are hurt or angry? Rather than interrupting conversations to add our own opinions, can we instead *listen* to our spouses (and children) with respect, and with a sincere desire to understand?

So much about our lives is determined by the way we look at things and people. If we look at our relationships as vehicles for our own growth and transformation, we would be more likely to change the way we act in them! Instead of giving our leftovers to the people we love the most, we might try harder to give them our best. We might focus more on changing ourselves, instead of blaming them for their shortcomings.

If we really take our spiritual lives seriously, then we also need to take our marriages seriously too. We can't simply *say* we believe in the value of marriage and family, yet continue to put those things on the backburner. As citizens of CIG, we can and should invest daily in the relationships we say are most important to us.

Who was it written for?

I know that my book can be a useful tool, not only for brothers and sisters in our movement, but also for those whom we will be meeting in the future, as we develop the Blessing movement in America. Helping members to improve their marriages can empower them to have confidence to do outreach, and helping friends and contacts improve their marriages can be a great stepping stone to introducing them to the Blessing.

One of my good friends has taken to leaving copies of the book in the teacher's room at the school where she teaches. She includes a little note that says the book is free to anyone who might need it or knows someone who might find it useful. The copies keep disappearing, and she gets a lot of satisfaction knowing she is offering something that can really help people, and laying a foundation to introduce them to our movement and the Blessing.

Research tells us that whenever marriages are strengthened, families are strengthened, communities improve, and the very quality of a nation improves. From this perspective, this book is written for anyone who is married or is planning to be! It is for anyone who wants to continue to grow, individually and as a couple, and who want to approach their marriage as a spiritual practice!

For speaking engagements or relationship coaching, contact Debby at her website at www.degreesinlove.org