



I Do Again: How We Found a Second Chance at Our Marriage--and You Can Too

By Cheryl Scruggs, Jeff Scruggs



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Ten disappointing years of marriage. Seven painful years of divorce. One remarkable, true-life story of a love rescued by God.

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I Do Again reveals the hidden secrets that slowly destroyed this marriage and the spiritual awakening that opened the way to healing. A riveting account of the power of prayer and redemption, this remarkable book offers renewed hope for even the most troubled marriages—and reveals why the rewards of restoration are well worth the wait.

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Editorial Review

Review

"I can't tell you all the life change that has occurred at The Village because of what our great God and King has done in the lives of Jeff and Cheryl Scruggs. The ripple effect is still roaring through our people.

Adultery has

been confessed, restoration sought, and healing attained by so many who heard their words. Their story needs to be heard. It is the gospel in action!"

--Matt Chandler, lead pastor, The Village Church, Highland Village, TX

"Every once in a while a story comes along that makes a pastor's heart beat faster. Could it be that marriages that have failed miserably still get healed, survive, and flourish? The answer is a resounding "Yes! "We have seen it happen thanks to Cheryl and Jeff Scruggs. I simply could not recommend them any higher."

--Pete Briscoe, senior pastor, Bent Tree Bible Fellowship, Carrollton, TX

"Jeff and Cheryl Scruggs's personal journey of discovering God's principles of forgiveness and healing is now being used to transform marriages that seem beyond repair. They have been providentially prepared for this. When you read this story of a dead marriage resurrected, you will find hope that any marriage can be brought back to life."

--Steve and Mary Farrar, best-selling authors and popular couples' counselors and speakers

"What this couple has to say truly will provide hope for marriages in ways that worldly solutions can't begin to offer. Applying God's truth in a unique and powerful way is the core of the Scruggses' prevailing ministry."

--Linda Paulk, president and CEO of Sky Ranch Camps, Tyler, Texas

"Have you felt your marriage is beyond hope? Jeff and Cheryl allow the reader to see and experience what this elusive thing called hope looks and feels like in a couple's life. It is their hearts' desire to comfort and encourage

others as they have been comforted and encouraged. What a gift!"

--Steve Fischer, MS, MA, counselor, pastor, Stonebriar Community Church, Frisco, Texas

"We have been thrilled to see God using Jeff and Cheryl to reach out to broken and struggling marriages. Their humility and servants' hearts allow others to feel safe, and as a result, they're reaching couples with God's message of hope and reconciliation."

--Frank and Judy Waterer, FamilyLife, Campus Crusade

About the Author

Jeff & Cheryl Scruggs are the authors of *I Do Again*, as well as speakers and counselors. Their remarkable and life-changing story has been featured on *The Today Show*, *I Am Second*, *Focus on the Family*, *Family Life with Dennis Rainey*, *Life Today*, and more. Jeff & Cheryl are also the founders of Hope Matters Marriage Ministries. Their ministry includes sharing God's heart for marriage and as they passionately seek to help make marriages whole in His power. Jeff & Cheryl are intimately familiar with a marriage focused on the principles of the world and the heartbreak and pain from a divorce, and the deep rooted hope and joy of a fully restored marriage centered on God. Visit their ministry website at www.hopeformarriages.com.

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Cheryl

October 1999

"Do you, Jeff, take Cheryl to be your wife, to love her, honor her, and cherish her, in sickness and in health, for richer or poorer, for as long as you both shall live?"

I looked into Jeff's eyes and held both of his trembling hands. He looked back at me, but neither of us could see very well for the tears—mine boldly streaming down my cheeks.

“I do.” Jeff's voice was low but strong. The words echoed in my mind. *I do. I do.*

The minister repeated the words, this time to me, and it was my turn to say it.

I do.

I meant it with every fiber of my being. I wanted to shout it to everyone within hearing distance, scrawl it on the walls, write it in the sky.

“I do!”

I glanced around me. The tiny chapel nestled in the Colorado mountains was awash with rainbow-hued sunlight streaming through stainedglass windows, as if God was personally pouring down his blessings on our little ceremony. I felt a chill run down my spine.

“What token of your love do you offer?” Jeff and I watched as our twin daughters, eleven years old and sparkling in off-white dresses with matching shoes and tights, stepped forward to offer the minister our wedding bands. Brand-new rings, simple and elegant, perfect for our brand-new life.

“With this ring, I thee wed.” We repeated the words, mindful that we'd said them before but knowing this time it was different. I could barely remember the ceremony seventeen years earlier when I'd first promised to love, honor, and cherish Jeff. I didn't keep my promise. But this time I would. As Jeff's eyes locked on to mine, I knew he was thinking the same thing.

“I now pronounce you husband and wife.”

Such simple words: *Now. Husband. Wife.*

So familiar, yet so...unbelievable. How long had I anticipated this moment? Seven years, for sure. Or was it more like eighteen? My entire life?

Jeff and I shared a kiss and then pulled our daughters into the embrace. A family hug. We squeezed each other tightly while our tears flowed, and it was all I could do to keep my knees from buckling.

We stood there, embracing, wiping each other's tears, and laughing together. I smiled at my incredible husband, my heart overflowing with gratitude.

So much gratitude. A whole new life together. It couldn't possibly be real. We were a family again. Who would have thought? Who in the world could ever have thought this would happen?

Cheryl

2007

"I don't love him anymore."

Amy has barely gotten herself settled on the couch in my office when she blurts out her opening line. She is brunette, petite, and cute, wearing fashionable jeans and just a touch of makeup. She's the picture of a suburban, got-it-all-together mom—every hair in place, her haircut the latest in chic. Only her expression gives her away. She stares at me, defiant. I recognize the anger. Been there, done that.

"Your husband." Who else would she be talking about?

"Actually, I don't know if I ever loved him."

Here we go again, I think, my stomach clenching. How many times have I heard the grief, seen the desperation, felt the rage? How many times has my heart broken for a despairing woman who's come for counseling because she's lost all hope of her marriage ever working? There are so many hurting couples, so many troubled souls.

"Okay. Let's talk about it." I open my notepad and prepare to hear the familiar words. She has no feelings left. She is numb. Wants out of the marriage. Never should have married him in the first place. What was she thinking? Picked the wrong guy.

Amy takes a breath and hardly veers from the speech I'd anticipated.

"We're separated right now. John doesn't love me—he doesn't even know me. It feels like he never wanted to know me. We don't talk—we never have. He doesn't care who I am." She pauses. "I know this is wrong. I feel bad about the kids and everything, but I can't take it anymore. I don't feel like I can do this one more day." She looks away. There is more, but she's suddenly clammed up.

"Sounds like you're in a lot of pain."

She fidgets. Her stony glare has departed, and now her eyes flit around the edges of the room. I try again.

“Can you tell me why you don’t love him anymore?”

“I told you—he doesn’t love me. It’s dead. There’s nothing *there*. This isn’t a *marriage*. I’m done.”

“Why did you want to talk to me?”

“I just... I didn’t know what to do. I want out. But I know I’m supposed to...you know, try. Everyone says get counseling. So here I am.”

“Are you looking for a way out, or are you hoping we might find a way to make your marriage work?”

The defiant stare is back. She looks at me, her eyes steely. “No, I... I can’t do it.” She is suddenly looking at her lap.

I consider her eyes, her body language. I try to listen to the words she hasn’t spoken. She’s clearly battered, beaten up emotionally. She feels unloved and worthless. And I wonder, *Has she met someone who makes her feel loved again?*

I’ve never met Amy before, but I’ve seen her countless times, sitting here on my office couch...or sobbing to me over coffee. Other Amys. Other women who find themselves at the same terrible crossroads.

I was Amy once. And while my heart breaks for her, it simultaneously surges with hope. If only...

Oh, God... My silent words are a prayer, both for Amy and for me.

Cheryl

1992

August 21, 1992. The worst day of my life.

Ten years after walking down the aisle as a young, hope-filled bride, I walked into a courtroom to claim a different kind of hope: liberation from my awful marriage. This was the day I’d obtain the freedom to be with my new love, the soul mate I thought I’d finally found. Today I’d hold in my hands the piece of paper I’d been coveting, the ticket to a whole new and *much better* life. I stood in front of the judge and told him I wanted a divorce.

Earlier that morning, I lay in bed for a moment after shutting off the alarm, groggy with sleep. *Something’s happening today. What is it?* I tried to clear the fog from my brain, and then my heart lurched as I remembered.

Today's the day!

I waited for the excitement to kick in. *You're free today, Cheryl! You've been waiting for this for so long!* But I felt heavy and unable to move. *What is wrong with me?*

The morning passed in a haze as I readied Brittany and Lauren for preschool and got the three of us out the door. I tried to ignore the dull ache in my stomach. Breakfast was out of the question, and it was all I could do to sip a cup of coffee.

After dropping off the girls, I sat in traffic on my way to the Collin County Courthouse in McKinney, Texas. With a few moments to think, I tried talking some sense into myself. *Buck up, girl! This is what you wanted...the day you've been waiting for! You're finally going to be happy.*

For the tiniest moment, I glimpsed a truth I didn't want to see through a crack in the strong facade I'd built around myself. What if I was making a mistake? What if my traitorous stomach was trying to tell me something?

No. I won't go there. I'm almost to the courthouse; I'm about to get what I wanted. I've always worked so hard, and getting what I want has never come easily. Right now, what I want is freedom, and by gosh, I am going to get it. I can't allow any negative thoughts to distract me.

The cold institutional hallway of the courthouse gave me shivers as I stood waiting for an elevator. Although the hustle and bustle of people surrounded me, I had never felt more alone. But I had on a classy suit, stylish heels, and my best determined smile, and I maintained my composure like a pro. Nobody would know I had the least bit of emotion in me. The reality was that feelings swirled inside my head and my heart, and I just wanted to go home, pull the covers over my head, and pretend my life did not exist.

I met my attorney at the door of the courtroom.

"Good morning." His voice was low and smooth, all business. "Today's the day."

I nodded, uncharacteristically mute.

I don't remember what happened next. I suppose there were other cases before the judge, other lives being turned upside down. All I know for sure is that my internal battle was raging and I fought to keep it quiet, to disregard it altogether, and make sure the cool detached expression remained plastered on my face.

Finally it was my turn, and I stood, trembling visibly, next to my lawyer, facing the judge. Words were spoken; questions were asked. Did I want a divorce? Yes.

But at the moment, I couldn't remember why.

The judge wanted to know why my husband wasn't there. How could I tell him that Jeff had not wanted the divorce? That he'd fought against it? Through tears of anguish he'd pleaded with me to change my mind. He prayed for reconciliation. He hoped for another chance. He yearned for my heart to soften. But he lost.

At that instant, standing in the courtroom, I felt like a horrible person. I wanted to turn to the strangers around me and let them know I was a good person. I really was. I loved being a wife and wanted to be a good one.

I absolutely loved being a mom. Yet I could not go on in the emptiness...or in the dreadful lack of intimacy. I was dedicated and loyal, trustworthy and sweet. But I could not see any other way out of the chronic ache I had felt for years. I had worked it out in my mind and saw no option other than to escape and start over. I knew I would have a label now, even in Jeff's mind, of being an adulterer and a mean person. But the truth was that I was broken and hurting. How could I tell everyone this when my actions seemed to say the opposite?

"Jeff needed to work today," I told the judge, who nodded. I don't think he believed it for a second.

Jeff was at the office, all right. I stood in front of the bench, wondering what was running through his mind as he sat at his desk attempting to work. Would he cry? Was he angry? How was he dealing with the fact that his marriage and family were being ripped apart? How did he feel knowing he would soon officially be a single, divorced dad?

And what right had I to be worried about any of that? I was the cause of it. It was a little late for me to be worried about Jeff's feelings.

"Divorce granted." The gavel went down with an authoritative thud.

Was it my imagination, or did the judge look a little sad? Perhaps disappointed. I wondered what it must be like to preside over the dissolution of families all day long. That word—*dissolution*—so cold and impersonal. I think the judge knew better. I think he knew he was seeing devastation... wreckage... sorrow... and there was nothing he could do but bang his gavel.

The sound of that gavel nearly did me in. My hand went to my chest as I felt my heart explode into palpitations like I'd never felt before. The urge to throw up became overwhelming, and it took every ounce

of willpower to steady myself and walk to the rear of the courtroom.

My echoing footsteps seemed to pound in my head as I walked down the dreary hallway. Next to me, my attorney was oblivious, moving quickly as always, focused on his dinner plans or his next case. He stopped when we reached the front entrance to the courthouse. At the top of the steps, he offered his hand.

“Congratulations,” he said, giving me a satisfied, *I-just-won-a-case* smile.

“Mmm hmm...” I shook his hand, but could not muster a response.

“Congratulations.” Did I deserve that? Did he? Something told me the answer was no. But this was what I’d wanted, fought for, worked toward.

And here it was.

As I drove away from the courthouse, I finally admitted to myself that I was confused. I had honestly expected to feel elated on this day, ready to break out the champagne and celebrate. I hadn’t allowed myself to doubt

the course I was on. For over two years I had known in my heart that divorce was the right way to go. The *only* way to go. It was the single remedy I could fathom for my despairing hopelessness—the only way to find

happiness. It was the only way to finally be with my new love, who was even now awaiting my phone call. I scolded myself for being so emotional and decided it was just the newness of the situation that was making me feel so desolate. Soon the excitement of freedom would kick in. Besides, I had no time for wallowing. I had to get to the bank.

I stood in the crowded line, tapping my foot, my eyes darting around impatiently at all the people waiting to do their banking. Was anyone else here to divide up a shared existence? It struck me as odd that a relationship—

a life—could be reduced to a few lines on a computer screen and declared finished as the numbers were separated and allocated. One life becomes two, just like that. Visions of my sweet family flashed in my mind—family portraits, candid shots—but I thrust them away, an expert now at doing so.

“How are you today?” the teller asked, as I pushed my paperwork toward her.

“Okay.” I managed a bittersweet smile. As she clicked her keyboard and took care of the details of financial distribution, she must have known better. But she gave me a perky smile right back.

“Let me go print out the checks.” She walked away as I nodded.

Half an hour later I stood hesitantly at Jeff 's office and gave a small knock. He looked up and slowly leaned back in his chair, hands behind his head. His red and swollen eyes spoke volumes. But his face was hard, giving nothing away. If I had to say what I saw in his expression, I would have said disbelief. He truly could not fathom that this was happening.

I inched my way toward his desk and held out the check for his half. I couldn't say anything, and neither could he. Jeff looked at the check, then as he tilted his head, his eyes met mine. His hand did not lift to take the check. Slowly I lowered it to the desk, and Jeff 's eyes followed it. He stared at the piece of paper.

I read his mind and answered silently. *Yes, this is what it comes down to. A number with a dollar sign next to it.*

I turned and walked slowly toward the door. When I got there, I stopped and faced him again, my eyes brimming with tears and my heart aching with sorrow. I wanted to run into his arms but held myself back, briefly wondering at this crazy desire. What was wrong with me?

The look on his face stung. I couldn't believe that after all this time he could still appear so...shocked. I had to ask him a question.

"Did you really think this was going to happen?"

I don't know what I expected him to say. Part of me harbored an irrational hope that Jeff would suddenly be happy about the divorce—that he would confirm that I'd done the right thing. I needed to hear it. I needed absolution.

"Not until this very moment, Cheryl."

For a moment I stood paralyzed as the truth hit me. There is not a more heartbreaking sight in the world than a man whose spirit has been crushed. That was the man I saw in front of me. My *ex*-husband.

I quietly opened the door and walked out of Jeff 's office, out of his life.

For good, I thought. My life and my family's lives were changed forever.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Roseann Flowers:

Do you among people who can't read pleasurable if the sentence chained inside the straightway, hold on guys that aren't like that. This I Do Again: How We Found a Second Chance at Our Marriage--and You Can Too book is readable by you who hate the perfect word style. You will find the details here are arrange for enjoyable reading through experience without leaving even decrease the knowledge that want to give to you. The writer associated with I Do Again: How We Found a Second Chance at Our Marriage--and You Can Too content conveys objective easily to understand by many individuals. The printed and e-book are not different in the written content but it just different in the form of it. So , do you nonetheless thinking I Do Again: How We Found a Second Chance at Our Marriage--and You Can Too is not loveable to be your top list reading book?

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