

# Want a lasting marriage? You need to be 'all in'

Mona-Lee Feehan is convinced that if couples want a marriage to last, they need to be 'all in.'

"That means that when you get challenged and it gets hard – and it will get hard – you're all in, you're going to work at it. And that's what our Church is telling us," said Feehan, author of *And the Two Shall Be Forever One*, an award-winning book on how to have a happy, long-lasting marriage.

"That's what I wanted to convey, that 'And the two shall be one – forever!' You're all in, you're giving everything. That's when we're the happiest, isn't it?"

A professor of human sexuality and marriage at St. Joseph's College at the University of Alberta and author of five books, Feehan's latest publication is a series of reflections gleaned from her four-decade marriage to Kevin Feehan, a judge in the Alberta Court of Queen's Bench.

"One of the greatest gifts that God has ever given me is my relationship with Kevin, and that gift is only a gift if it's shared," she said.



'And the Two Shall Be Forever One' is a new book on marriage and relationships written by Edmonton author Mona-Lee Feehan. Chris Berthelot, Grandin Media

*And the Two Shall Be Forever One* recently tied for a second-place award in the

books category from the Catholic Press Association of the United States and Canada. She was stunned when she first heard the news from Novalis, her Toronto-based publisher which nominated the book.

“I was totally shocked! I had no idea that they had submitted it, and I’m just very honoured that they thought it was worthwhile to send it in. To be recognized is extremely wonderful.”

In the book, Feehan also shares lessons she has learned from years helping couples in Marriage Preparation classes for the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton, with examples taken from real – albeit anonymous – people with whom she has worked.

Though it talks about the importance of communication, conflict resolution, and the Catholic view of intimacy and sexuality, Feehan says her book ultimately shows the Church’s positive view of marriage.

The information that’s coming from society is that people can try out dating, living together and even marriage – and can also get a divorce if it doesn’t work out, said Feehan.

“Because that’s what society is telling you, (that) we’re very disposable. Whereas the message from our Church is ‘You don’t get into anything 50 per cent!’”

The book includes an entire chapter on God and how He relates to people in their marriages, explaining that couples can be ‘the human face of God’ for each other.

“When I am the very best that I can be for Kevin, and when Kevin is the very best that he can be for me, that is the human face of God.”

*And the Two Shall Be Forever One* is, in some ways, a continuation of her previous book on marriage, *What God Has Joined*, also published by Novalis. She first pitched her most recent book in 2016, explaining that she wanted to write a small book on topics relevant to any relationship, but with a special emphasis on marriage.

Novalis accepted, originally giving her a 20,000 word limit, which Feehan sheepishly admits she far surpassed. But what surprised her most was that they accepted the full draft.

To Feehan, it was a sign that she was working on something special.

“I say it’s my heart and my soul, because I lived with it for a year and a half,” said Feehan, adding that she first wrote the book for her family, including her married kids and her young grandchildren.

Most of that time was spent planning and outlining. The actual writing took seven weeks during the summer of 2016, with the result – to Feehan’s surprise – being a slim, 80-page book.

“You would think that in seven weeks, the book would be this thick,” said Feehan, holding her hands wide. “But I fight for every word, because I want the right word in the right place, so it says and conveys what I’m trying to say.”

If the book helps even one person and his or her relationship, the author figures that the work will have been worthwhile.

“I want this book, which is my heart and soul, to become them. I want them to make it theirs, and to take what they need from it to create their own magical, beautiful, spiritual, fulfilling relationship.”