

What Others Have Said

“Chad doesn’t just teach great things, he also lives them. He lives such an honoring and influential life. I love his principles because of what they make him and what they make me want to be.” *A. Creek*

“Chad has helped me find myself and my place in this world.” *I. Brown*

“Chad has been such a huge part of so many lives. I know my family wouldn’t be the same without his help. He is 100% awesome.” *M. Nichols*

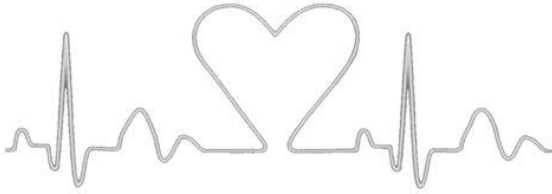
“Chad's teaching has definitely changed my life... for the better... thought I should clarify that.” *H. Sandford*

“Because of Chad I have learned so much about myself and how to be a better person and how to have better relationships.” *M. Chmielecki*

“The counselors I saw at the hospital were typical pill pushers, but Chad provided practical ways for me to better know what is wrong in my life and what I can do to change.” *A. Bishop*



EMOTIONAL SEX



Making Good Relationships

GREAT

Chad David

cover design by Colleen O'Malley Weber, J C Weber & Associates

This book is dedicated to my parents. Thanks for putting up with me and my journey.

I would also like to say thanks to everyone I consider family for being so wonderful and supporting me through this project... and the many other ones.

Finally, I say thank you to everyone who has really hurt me; you know who you are... you're the ones *not* reading this. You helped teach me compassion, forgiveness and understanding, and inspired me to develop a lot of the ideas and lessons I used in this book.

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Introduction Section

*****Warning*****

This book contains humor... or at least the attempt of humor. My apologies to anyone who is a prude; bless you and your prudishness. Please know that all joking comes from a loving heart, and is meant to help the learning process be more enjoyable... that, and I can't stand being boring.

Part A) The Introduction to The Introduction

What you have in your hands is more than just a book; it is the answer to all of life's problems... okay, maybe not, but unlike most relationship books that take several hundred pages to say one point, this book is different... you're welcome. This book has been designed to be easy to follow with activities to work on together and/or by yourself in order to help *you* discover things about *yourself*, *your* partner and *your* relationship. Thus, this book will help clear up any miscommunications or unfair assumptions: "But honey, I thought you liked it when I Dutch-oven you in bed." I should note that as brilliant and amazing as I may be... in my own mind... every relationship is unique and has certain qualities necessary for functionality. All I can do is present a model for proper behavior and help you reflect on things that need to be addressed: "You mean hitting your partner with a frying pan is a bad solution?" Yes, unless you're playing spouse baseball, which I hear is a lot more fun for the person playing the batter rather than the person playing the ball. This book is meant to help you have a better relationship and, ultimately, better life. It's not metaphoric superglue that will keep your relationship together, but it will help you find ways to strengthen your bond through facilitating your understanding of yourself, your partner and your own relationship.

For anyone who doubts the relevance or truth I am presenting in this book, I know these ideas work because they have helped a very broken person find self esteem and emotional health... at least for the most part. Yes, I'm referring to myself, and no, I won't keep referring to myself this way; Chad doesn't like talking in the third person. And even though I am continually relearning the lessons I discuss in this book, I am far happier and content today than I've ever

been. I still have bad moments, but I've overcome my overarching struggle with negativity and self criticism, and replaced them with openness, peace and joy. I'm definitely a much better catch than I used to be... less disease-y and more mmm nice.

After years of research and trying new techniques, the one thing I've found is that all the good ideas tend to relate to each other; they're just packaged differently. Therefore, anything I've created, or thought I created, can be related to things others have already found or may find in the future.

Fortunately, this means that I'm not crazy or completely off in my own little demented world. Plus, if there are other ideas like mine out there that means there are more socially and emotionally healthy people who want to help others, which is awesome... that's my newly found positive side coming out. And of course, even if they have similar ideas to mine, in some way, I know mine are still better... that's my pride coming out; that's been there for awhile. In all honesty, the goal of this book is to help people and make this a better world... and hopefully I'll make some good money off of it... I'm not a saint... yet. That's still on my to-do list.

Part B) A Note Before The Introduction, but After The Introduction to The Introduction

This book is called *Emotional Sex* because it is about creating a deep connection between two people. It's not called *Emotional One Night Stand* because it's about love and creating a relationship that will be filled with meaningful physical sex instead of a simple hormone release. This book will ultimately help you get more sex... gentlemen, you're welcome. And ladies, you're welcome because this book will help you be in the mindset where you'll want to have physical sex since you'll have the kind of relationship for which you've been hoping.

I originally wanted to call my book *Emotional Viagra*, but unfortunately, our country has these things called laws. I even tried to make a deal with the Viagra company; to use the name in my title. I offered to let them use my name in their ads: "Use Viagra, be awesome like Chad," "Viagra, helping you be as manly as..." I think you get the point... point get it? Although I probably wouldn't be thrilled if they used my name in the negative sense: "Don't be pathetic like Chad is with women," "Don't be a bad Chad; be a great mate."

Although, I guess even being in the negative sense would have its benefits since men would want their women to meet me so they could say: “See I could be worse. Next time you complain about me think about Chad and be grateful for what you have.” Plus, single women would want to hook up with me because they’d wonder: “Can he really be as bad as they say? Ehn, who cares he’s famous,” which of course are the words that mark the beginning of a healthy, lifelong relationship... that was sarcasm... hopefully you could tell. Ultimately, I liked this title because it helps to convey how it can raise your relationship to a higher level and improve its performance... did you catch the innuendo there? I’m so clever.

Part C) The Introduction

The best way to read this book is to treat it like a massage. Massages are wonderful... sometimes. If you’ve ever had a therapeutic massage, you’ll know that they’re not always fun. I once dated a young lady who started going to massage therapy school; yeah, at first I thought this sounded awesome too. The first couple practice massages were great... emphasis on the *first* couple. As her knowledge and skill developed, however, so did her love for painful, deep tissue massages where she would be digging her elbows into knots and putting pressure in places and ways that left football players in tears. Guess what it did to me? I’m far from being a football player. I don’t even enjoy watching it on TV or snapping towels on naked guys’ butts. I mention this, not just to reinforce my heterosexual nature despite my disinterest in football and men in tights, but to point out the important fact that sometimes we need to go through painful experiences in order to grow and develop. Massages can be very necessary for healthy bodies, but they can hurt and leave us tender for a short while after. In the end, however, they leave us stronger and healthier as we let go of the ‘knots’. Like a massage, this book can be very beneficial, but there may be times when you’re challenged and pushed to levels of honesty with which you don’t feel comfortable. Perhaps it will cause you to remember things you don’t necessarily want to think about but need to in order to improve yourself and your relationships. Please be courageous and push through some of the harder activities because this can be the beginning of a whole new life for you; one that is happier and much more enjoyable. If there is something that is too difficult for you or your partner to handle on your own,

please seek the appropriate help. Counselors can be wonderful... and often covered through insurance.

Like a good massage, don't rush this. Enjoy it, and appreciate the strength it is encouraging. Ultimately, use this book as a way to learn how to understand and love yourself and each other better: "Don't be a bad Chad; be a great mate."

Part D) How this Book is Divided

The first chapter of this book will help get you into the basic format of it with some teaching and some exercises and then the rest of the book has been broken down into two main parts based on two diagrams. The first diagram will help give a general overview of what you want in a marriage, and the other is a breakdown of what *Love* entails.

Part E) The Intended Audience

This book is for anyone and can be read solo, as a couple or as a group study. It was originally written for all serious relationships, whether getting married or living together, but it has become much more than that. This book is also great for singles who want to have a better idea of what they want in a future partner, how to have a great relationship, and to find ways in which to grow in order to be the best catch they can be.

Part F) Who is This Guy?

If you're wondering what authority I have in writing this book, I'm not just the writer; I am also a client... of places like Indigo and the library and other sources of great knowledge like romantic comedies with Tom Hanks. I'm currently working on my third Masters' degree, and for over five years I have been studying counseling as a hobby... yeah, I know how to party; woo reading. Part of my interest in counseling is founded in my position as a youth pastor who does weddings and pre-marriage counseling. Believe me, when you're doing pre-marriage counseling and you've never been married, you make sure you do your research because people are quick to second guess you until you can shoot them down with how smart you are and rub it in their faces!... Or you could do what I do and lovingly show them you know what

you're talking about in order to help them rather than satisfy a personal vendetta. The latter is definitely the preferred choice.

I have also used a lot of the information in this book to teach my youth group kids how to become better people. Oddly enough, a lot of the lessons were inspired by them as I needed to find ways to better handle their misadventures typically spawned by being hopped up on hormones and desperate for love. Ultimately, I need to know what I am doing in order to help them rather than scar them for life. This is, of course, why working with young people is more dangerous than with seniors; if I screw up with my young people, there will be stories of my mistakes being circulated for several generations. With seniors, they may not even remember... my apologies to any seniors reading this; I'm not making fun of you... but hopefully you won't remember this in a minute or two anyway.

Ultimately, in this book are many of the things I've used to better understand myself and my own relationships. These lessons and the love of close family and friends have helped to convert me from a negative minded, workaholic, perfectionist to a much more open minded, accepting and assertive man. I still have a lot of ways in which to grow, but I'm now able to love life even in darker times and people in their stupidest moments.

Part G) A Final Thought Before We Get Started

I hope you actually do go through this book... if you're reading this, you probably will since it means you're not just flipping through the pages like what I typically do because most books have way too much to say without anything of real value coming out... boo to those books. If you do choose to skim sections, you should at least try to do the activities included in the chapters. If you're like me, information is likely to be forgotten, but self discovery tends to be remembered. Hopefully that's a good thing and you don't have anything to hide. If you do, to your partner I say: "You're welcome, and I hear good things about online dating."

Chapter 1: Let's Get It Started

Part A) You and the Relationship

You are not perfect. I'm sorry if that hurts to hear. I know I had a hard time hearing this the first time I was told I wasn't. I came to accept this point, however, mid swing: "Huhn, I guess I'm not perfect, but I'm about to throw a pretty good punch." Or, to be honest, it'd be more like mid whining: "Ow, that hurt my feelings; if I knew how to punch, I would so think about hitting you right now." To expand on this point that you are not perfect, neither is your partner. Now, when you read that I hope you didn't laugh out loud: "Perfect? Yeah, right." I also hope you didn't respond: "No, my partner is perfect; we're both perfect. We're perfect together and always will be super duper happy because we're perfect." Have fun with that. Regardless, both you and your partner have flaws and issues that leave you with the potential to cause others to say: "Huhn, they're messed up."

Tip: The title of Mr. or Ms. Right and Mr. or Ms. Mistake is all a matter of timing. In every serious relationship, both of these titles will be at least considered at some point by you and your partner.

Here in lies the problem: we, who are not perfect, are all trying to develop intimate relationships with people who are also not perfect. We are, therefore, setting ourselves up for a monumental task. How do you get along with someone who can misunderstand you as a person, misinterpret something you've done or said, or mess up catering to your every desire even those unspoken? This last one is my sarcasm coming out. It took me two years to convince my one girlfriend that I couldn't read her mind... and another year to convince her to not to yell at me for that so-called "flaw". No wonder love is such a tricky thing and even the most happily married people are at some point left saying: "What was I thinking?" Ultimately, the wisest thing we can do is to try to become the best persons we can and to find someone with a similar goal who is willing to embark on this adventure together. This thinking follows the idea that two emotionally unhealthy people may stick to each other like two broken pieces of Lego, but they won't hold together as well as two whole pieces. Ultimately, the healthier you and your partner become as individuals, the better the chance of your relationship sticking together because you'll grow in your capacity for things like compassion, understanding, patience, forgiveness and the most important ingredient in a relationship, love.

Tip: If you really love your partner, you will want to make yourself as easy to love as possible in order to make his or her life easier and more enjoyable. If you can both have this as a goal, you're on your way to a great relationship.

This book is meant to keep things simple. In order to demonstrate this, I have created a series of diagrams to help illustrate how simple I like to make things. These diagrams illustrate what leads relationships to breaking up. Yes, I went to art college... I'm not sure how they let me in either.

Tip: Keeping things "simple" is wise; calling your partner "simple"... you should already know this answer. If not, try it sometime; it'll be a good learning experience.

Fig. 1:1 **Building the Relationship**
Two people begin to work together on the relationship.

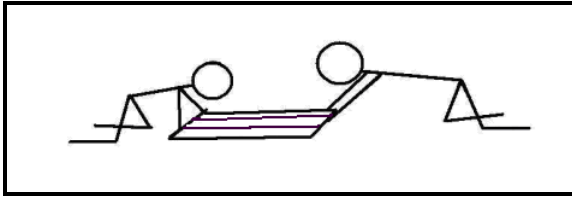


Fig. 1:2 **The Relationship is Going Well**
*As you probably guessed, the couple is building a "ship", a "relationship".
Yes, this is my attempt at being clever.*

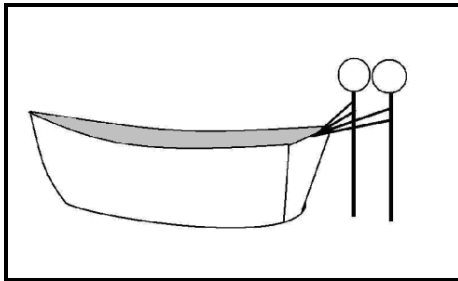


Fig. 1:3a Something has Gone Wrong
There are many ways to damage your relation-ship.

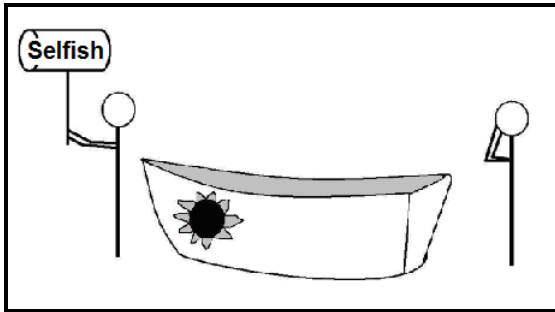


Fig. 1.3b Other Weapon Choices

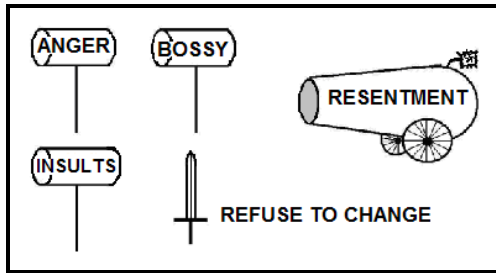
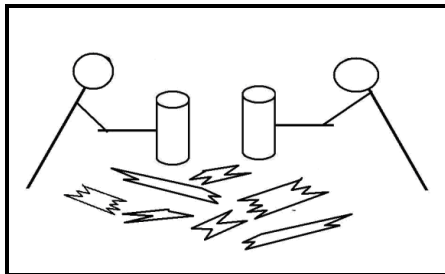


Fig. 1:4 The Relationship is Breaking Up
Both people are attacking the other because they are more worried about protecting themselves than the relationship.



As these diagrams illustrate, we need to be careful in the building of our relationship because it can be very easy to damage with things like anger and resentment. Thus, we need to learn to be people who know how to love and be loved in order to prevent such negative feelings from damaging our relationships. It should also be noted that the more solid we make the ‘ship’, the more attacks it can endure. Thus, we want to make sure we don’t build it poorly like a relationship based on power and sex, which is why most

Hollywood relationships are so tenuous... although probably a lot of fun for a bit. That probably should've been kept as a personal thought; sorry. Ultimately, we need to build our 'ships' on love, which will be defined in *Chapter 3: Love*; makes sense doesn't it? See, I'm simple... I mean, I keep things simple... huhn, I guess both are a little true... as in I'm not complicated.

Part B) Gender Differences

To add to the relationship complications, I firmly believe that men and women have inherent gender differences. These aren't one hundred percent true for everyone... I can be pretty girly at times... but there are stereotypical differences; hence, I can say I can be "girly" and you'll know what I mean. For some people, however, these stereotypical differences are *more* true than for others. For instance, not every girl likes to shop and not every guy cares about sports, but generally these are true because of underlying tendencies. For instance, women tend to want to have things that impress others whereas guys tend to want to be the "best", or connected to it somehow, in order to impress others. There's a compliment in there for the ladies. If a guy is with you it means you're the best... or at least the best he can get... oops, I just shattered that compliment, sorry.

Whatever stereotypical behaviors either of you follow or don't follow, the challenge in relationships is to learn how to handle any present differences, to use them to see diverse perspectives and, ultimately, as ways to grow.

After listening and reading about relationships, watching a plethora of romantic comedies... there's my girly side... watching a lot of sitcoms and stand up comedy... that's my intellectual side... I have concluded that one of these differences between men and women is that *men are stupid* and *women are crazy*. Don't believe me? Who's likely laughing and saying: "That's so true"? The men. Who likely wants to hurt me in some maniacal manner? The women. Who would be stupid enough to write something like this? Me, a guy. I think the first part that *men are stupid* is easy to accept because it doesn't matter what age, at some point you'll look at a guy and have to say: "Really? Why would you do that?" Pick up any of the *Darwin Awards* books and you'll find that all of the stories are about men who have had a so-called good idea go horribly wrong. For instance, there was the one man who tried cutting his hedge with a lawn mower – his surgeon told the story

(Northcutt, 2009) – or the fifty-six year old man who had a throat problem and couldn't drink alcohol anymore. In order to still have fun with his drinking buddies, he funneled booze in the “backdoor” and died of alcohol poisoning because our bodies aren't designed to prevent alcohol poisoning from that end – his coroner told that story (Northcutt, 2009).

Ultimately, guys are so stupid we *need* women to help tame us, and only someone crazy would be willing to do that. If men didn't have women around, we'd all end up killing ourselves: “It seemed like a good idea at the time.” On the other hand, if women didn't have men around, they'd end up killing each other; they need someone around they can make a project in order to fix. Ladies, please don't get angry when I say that *women are crazy*... although that helps to prove my point... the truth is, you're crazy because men are so stupid we make you that way... or at least that's what I'll say here... I'm not always 100% stupid... just sometimes. Ultimately, I think that women will accept this truth... at least about other women... since I keep meeting ladies who say they have a hard time being friends with other women because, simply put, they think they're crazy. Thus, I'm merely *listening* to women share their feelings and repeating what they're telling me... of course repeating what they've said is further evidence that I'm stupid (aka a guy) because only women are allowed to say things about other women without getting in trouble. At least I know not to repeat physical attributes women say about themselves: “Wow, those jeans really do make your thighs look like trapped watermelons,” or “Hey, you're right; in the dark your skin doesn't look like a shriveled, three day old balloon. It just feels that way.” Thus, listening is safer than talking.

Tip for Guys: When women have something negative to say about their physical appearance, this is the only time guys are allowed to disagree with them without getting in trouble... well, sometimes. Actually, I don't even want to make a claim on this one because it's too risky. You're on your own with this. See? I'm only *sometimes* stupid... although I guess if I was smart I would've cut this part out instead of rambling on like I am... and I wrote that instead of... actually, I guess if you're still reading this that could mean that you're even more stupid...endous than me... it's too early to insult you... I save that until later in our relationship. We're still in the honeymoon stage so I have to behave. Again I'm only *sometimes*... I'm sure you get the point... hopefully... pretty sad if you don't... I'll stop now... moving on...

In all seriousness, at least as serious as I can be... it's one of my few weaknesses... at least according to my girlfriend... ex-girlfriend... I think this crazy side in women is God given. I believe this because my mother who is half saint and half angel... this should help explain why I'm so great... if this were an email I'd put in a smiley face there because that's a joke... kind of... but even my mother who is so angelic, has a crazy side. If someone were to hurt one of her kids, this crazy momma-bear rage would unleash with a fury that would scare every UFC fighter and the vilest of murderers. This crazy side is the instinctual reaction that is supposed to help women protect their children. The problem starts to develop, however, when protective rage is misused for selfish gain or is an overreaction to something small. Of course, this is just a theory I have to understand this whole phenomenon, and I am a guy so you know what that means.

Note: Fortunately, my inherent “male stupidity” doesn't affect the wisdom of the book... or is that my maleness coming out? (Said with raised eyebrow... I don't have a unibrow; I just raised the one for affect).

Part C) A Warm Up Activity

To get things rolling, here is a short activity to do together... if your partner is still awake. If he's not, maybe a round of spouse baseball will wake him up... just kidding... kind of... I don't like when people fall asleep during my book.

Heads Up: These activities will be done again at the end of this book in order to see how far you've grown together. Please don't be worried if you struggle with this right now. It's like the *Before* and *After* pictures you see with people who lost weight and the end picture is the focus... it's funny to me that no matter how good I am at losing things like my keys and wallet, I can never seem to lose any weight; that's the most dedicated thing I've about me. My girlfriend complains about the same thing except the weight she wants to lose is her ball and chain, which I'm assuming is her ankle bracelet... that's a joke; she loves her bracelet.

Two Activities to Try <i>You can do these individually or together</i>
<i>Design a symbol for your relationship or a family crest</i>
<i>(suggestion: don't use a ball and chain)</i>

2. Create a Mission Statement for your marriage (A Mission Statement is something businesses create in order to know their goal and purpose). This would essentially be the basis for your marriage vows.

Examples:

1. *Our marriage is based on...*
2. *For our marriage we will...*
3. *Sex will not be the foundation for our marriage, but it will be the building blocks... (hopefully yours won't sound like this. Remember I'm a guy and have stupid moments)*

Part D) How I See It... *Every Relationship Can be Great*

I believe that every couple has the potential to be great. Unfortunately, very few relationships live up to this. Too often people in relationships become complacent and stop trying to grow as a couple and, more importantly, as individuals. If we're not careful the mentality of: "Ehn, they're stuck with me so who cares?" can develop. We may not be perfect, but we should be continually striving to become better people because we have been given a lifetime to become the best people we can become.

If you're wondering if your relationship has serious problems, here are a few suggestions to indicate that you are in trouble:

If you find excuses to stay late at work.

If mentioning your partner's name makes you nauseated or you twitch in anger.

If you have a little party in your head whenever your partner leaves the house.

If you hate running, but start doing marathons to avoid being around him or her.

If you always pretend you're asleep when your partner is looking at you to avoid a conversation even while you're driving.

If you sign your partner up for an online dating service.

If you pick up a bottle of cyanide and wonder what it'd taste like... in your partner's salad

Unfortunately, when we stop growing as individuals and as a couple, we end up bored and confused. Many couples eventually end up saying: “Remember the good old days when we cared about each other? Now we don’t connect anymore... Hey! I said, ‘remember the good...’ ah forget it.” Some couples try counseling, which can be great if you have the right counselor otherwise you could end up even more frustrated than ever. There are even statistics that suggest going to marriage counseling is more detrimental to your marriage because it tends to do one of two very bad things. First, as described by Dr. Laura Schlessinger, many counselors are guilty of placing all of the blame on the man in the relationship. They then try to effeminize him in order to fix the misconstrued problem: “You need to stop being a man and get in touch with your inner Oprah.” This, unfortunately, doesn’t deal with the actual root problem in the relationship and sends the guy into a tailspin of confusion, guilt and frustration while increasing the woman’s sense of superiority. Ultimately, feeling like the sole cause of the relationship’s breakdown, drives the man further away from his partner. The biggest problem with this is a relationship’s breakdown is rarely the fault of just one person; both people have to actively participate in a conflict in order for there to be one. Therefore, both parties need to take responsibility for their own contribution to the problems and find a healthy way to reconnect to the original attraction they had for each other. Making a man more of a woman is never the solution... unless you like transvestites, but that’s a whole other issue.

Tip: It takes two people to make a relationship work properly. It also takes two people to make a relationship work *improperly*. Therefore, if your relationship isn’t what you want, you’re half of the problem.

The second danger of seeing a poor counselor is it often promotes the *individual’s* happiness instead of the collective happiness of the couple. Therefore, many marriages break up in order for the couple to find their *individual* happiness and fulfillment. Unfortunately, this breaks the vows of the marriage; thus, it is not the proper way for a couple to find what they think they’re looking for in life.

Tip: A good counselor will help the couple discover that they are *both* important and their differences can be used to build up their relationship. They will also help the couple maintain their marriage vows and stop living a life that’s in the “For worse” category and get back into the “For better”.

For Christians

In his book *The Five Love Languages*, Gary Chapman maintains that Christians are called to love their enemies and, unfortunately, this sometimes includes our family. But as the Apostle Paul writes, real love: “endures through all circumstances.” (1 Cor. 13:7b, NLT) Therefore, no matter what happens and no matter who is involved, we are called to forgive and to love. Thus, the question becomes what is the most loving response? Please know that if there is abuse, the most loving thing to do is to leave and seek professional help.

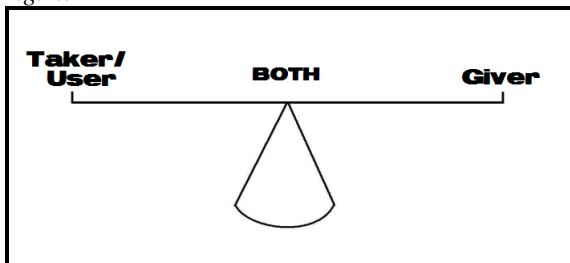
Part E) How Relationships Function... and Malfunction:

A Simple, But Great Explanation

Every relationship falls somewhere on the following diagram whether the relationship is with your partner, your family, your job, associations or teams, and the like.

How Relationships Work

Fig.1.5



Tip: The *Taker/User* and *Giver* can be considered to be like the roles of the *Master* and *Servant* where the one uses the other.

Taker/User: Take and use people... I'm sure you guessed that.

Both: Know how to both give and receive in a healthy balance... I'm sure you could've guessed that too. See how simple I make things?

Giver: Only takes and uses people... kidding. I was just seeing if you were paying attention: “Givers take? That’s odd.” Nope, they give. It should be noted that every *Giver* ends up being more of a *Taker* in some relationship in order to have the strength to give to others. For instance, I know a guy who is known as a *Giver* by most people, but in order to be able to give to them,

he has worn out different members of his family because he can also be a very strong *Taker*.

When you are involved with someone or something, your relationship naturally tries to remain balanced because otherwise it feels awkward. This is why someone who is a *Giver* is naturally drawn to someone who is a *Taker/User*. This follows that the more of a *Giver* you are, the more you will be naturally drawn and will draw the equivalent in the *Taker/User* personality because this makes the balance easier to maintain. For instance, if you're only slightly a *Giver*, you will more naturally draw someone and be drawn to someone who is only slightly a *Taker*; if you're an extreme *Giver*, you will more naturally draw someone and be drawn to someone who is an extreme *Taker*. Unfortunately, just because it's a functioning relationship *doesn't* mean that it's a healthy relationship; it just means that it's functioning. Therefore, the more extreme your relationship is or feels on the *Taker/User* and *Giver* scale, the unhealthier it is. This can also be expressed as: the closer you are to the middle the better off your relationships will be since it is easier to maintain the balance.

Example: Ever wonder why a nice guy will go for a witch? Ever be confused by a sweet and/or successful woman going for a louse? These relationships may function, but they are far from healthy.

Tip: The goal of healthy people is to be able to both give and receive in order to be in the middle of the balance scale. In this position, they are more likely to be drawn to and have happier and healthier relationships. The only concern is to be careful not to be sucked into the *Giver* roll by a *Taker*. Similarly, slight *Givers* need to be careful not to let extreme *Takers* convert them into extreme *Givers*. Pretty people and mean parents are dangerous for this because they can have unfair power over normal people.

Functioning Relationship: (Not necessarily healthy) There is a balance of a *Giver* and a *Taker/User*, or the two people are *Both* and in the middle.

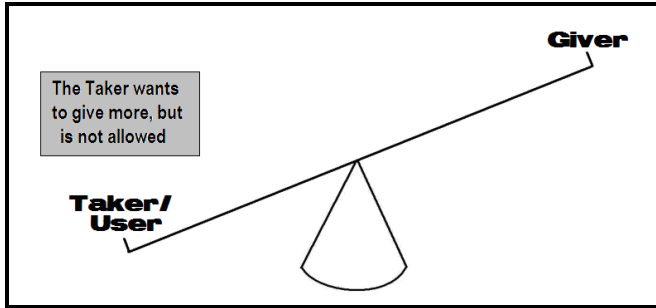
Unhealthy Relationship: When the relationship is functioning, but the parties involved are a balance of *Giver* and *Taker/User*.

Healthy Relationship: *Both* parties are able to give and receive equally.

Being Unbalanced: Being out of balance leads to a fight.

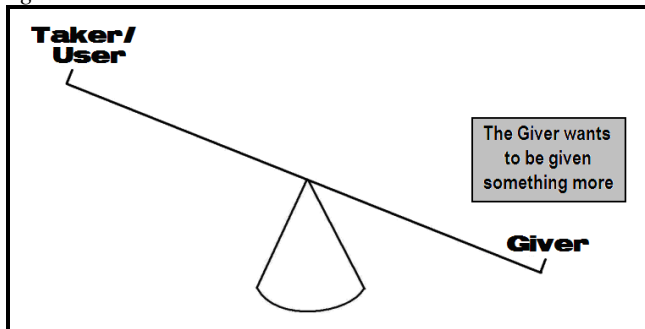
The One Fight

Fig. 1.6



The More Common Fight

Fig. 1.7



The Fight: Fights develop when the scale is out of balance as illustrated in the above diagrams. This can be caused by two things: the *Taker* wants to give more or the *Giver* wants to receive more. The latter is the more common since eventually a *Giver* gets tired of giving and wants something more in return. They like to give, but they will eventually need something to rejuvenate their ability to keep giving even if it's appreciation.

Unfortunately, it is uncommon for a *Taker* to be aware that they need to give more to the *Giver*; hence, they're *Takers*. Sometimes a *Taker* wants to give more because they have been forced into this position, but anything they try to give back is rejected or put down. For example, an overbearing parent may not let their child give anything back to him or her even when the child wants to do something nice.

Tip: Sometimes it's better to accept something even if you don't want it and to act grateful in order to help the person wanting to give feel valued. I actually know someone who ended up breaking up because she wasn't allowed to

give to her partner as she had wanted. The guy squelched her ability to give thereby making her feel unvalued and leading to further complications.

The Forced Giver: Being forced into a relationship you feel is always taking from you; it leaves you drained and resentful. For instance, ***if you can't stand someone***, it is likely because you feel like a *Forced Giver*. They annoy you so much, it's a "gift" to be polite and not hurt them in some way. Or, ***if you hate your job***, it is likely because it feels like you are constantly giving and not receiving enough in return whether money or fulfillment; thus, you feel like a *Forced Giver* and resent it. As a *Forced Giver* you, ultimately, have three options. The first is to lower your expectations for what the *Taker* does for you; for instance, in regards to work, this means simply accepting the job as a means to paying for the things that matter to you. The second option is to find ways to feel like you're receiving what you're owed for what you do. For instance, at work you would find ways to feel like work is giving back to you... please find a legal way to receive more; don't start stealing office supplies, toilet paper or a janitor; although the latter would be really handy at home. The best things to receive from work are social connections and friendships, satisfaction in the work you do and feeling fulfillment as a productive and responsible person. Your third option is to find another job that will help you feel like you're in a healthier relationship where you are both giving and receiving in a healthy balance.

The Forced Taker: People can be forced into taking whether it's because of an illness, a need or the nature of the relationship. This can be really frustrating because you can feel guilty for receiving so much without giving "enough" in return. A good example of this is someone who suddenly needs to wear diapers and rely on someone else to change them... this would kill me... hopefully it'd actually kill me so I wouldn't have to let someone change me... Ultimately, being forced to be a *Taker* leads a person to feeling incompetent and dependent; this can make the receiver very defensive and snappy, which is behavior that can be very confusing to the *Giver*. In this situation the *Giver* can feel unappreciated and resent the person they're helping; thus, what started off as trying to be nice leads to a blow up.

When a Taker/User has a Relationship with another Taker/User: *Takers* can never have a good relationship with another *Taker* because neither party wants to give. It can only work if the one *Taker* assumes the role of the

Giver for that relationship, but this is a *Forced Giver* situation and, therefore, it is not very stable.

When a Giver has a Relationship with another Giver: *Givers* can make great friends with other *Givers*, but they can end up having battles of giving to each other, which is definitely the preferred kind of battle. For instance: “Thank you for the cookies you brought. Here, take some cupcakes home with you.” This kind of relationship typically forces the *Givers* to be more *Both*. Unfortunately, most extreme *Givers* are attracted to extreme *Takers* because they feel awkward receiving anything. Thus, being with a *Taker* makes things easier for the extreme *Giver*, but eventually these relationships fall apart because the *Giver* gets fed up of always giving even though that’s what originally attracted him or her to the relationship.

Warning: Some people may think they’re a *Giver*, but they’re really a *Taker*. I once dated a girl who thought she was the *Giver*, which caused her to continually fight to be given more. Fortunately, when we looked at this balance she realized that she was actually the *Taker* in our relationship. This helped reduce a lot of our fighting because she no longer felt like she needed to be given more from me and she began to be more appreciative for what she was receiving. On the other hand, I learned not to be so sulky and secretly bitter about giving when I should’ve been better at communicating my feelings. This ultimately helped both of us to grow and to be in more of the *Both* category, which helped us have a more stable relationship that was much healthier and happier. Yea for growth... and proof this works.

Broken Relationships: Broken relationships are typically the result of *Takers* wearing out the *Giver* since *Givers* can only give so much without being given something in return.

Typical Hurt: A *Giver* feels rejection when he or she is unable to give. A *Taker* feels rejection when he or she is not given what he or she feels is owed.

Goal: Our ultimate goal is to pursue being in the *Both* category in all of our relationships in order to encourage healthy, long lasting relationships that build and encourage us and others.

Tip: Sometimes being a *Taker/User*, *Giver* or *Both* can be as simple to fix as a mindset. Perhaps you only feel like a *Giver* because you don’t appreciate

what you've been given by the other party. I know I have become frustrated with God because it feels like I'm doing all of the work, but if... and I mean 'if'... I stop and think about things... I'm a little slow in this way... I realize that I'm not as much of a *Giver* as I thought. Therefore, to make things better, I need to readjust *my* thinking. It might also be that the person is giving to you in a manner that is not the way you prefer or necessarily appreciate (this will be addressed with the section on *Love Languages* in Chapter 3). Similarly, you might feel like you're giving to someone like crazy when, in fact, the person has no idea since it is not in the way he or she prefers. Therefore, we need to be careful not to assume that *we're* the saint because we may appear to be quite the opposite to other people. This, of course, leads to the importance of communication and trying to understand what people like and think.

Questions About the Taker/User & Giver Concept		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What would a perfectly healthy marriage relationship look like for you with both people Giving and Receiving equally and happily?		
Are you more naturally a Taker/User or Giver with (insert) and is this okay? 1. Parents/Guardians 2. Close friends and family 3. Random people 4. Work 5. Partner		
Are you ever a <i>Forced Giver</i> ? Can this be fixed?		
In what relationship(s) are you more of a Taker/User? (e.g. <i>everyone tends to be a Taker/User at some point even if it's with a parent, teacher, doctor or God.</i>)		
Why or why aren't you good at receiving things like compliments or physical gifts?		
When does the Giving and Receiving with your partner feel at its worst?		
When does the Giving and Receiving with your partner feel at its easiest and best?		

How can you improve this balance? Does someone have to give or receive more at a certain time or with a certain thing?		
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Part F) The Way I See Relationships

Dating Couples: When things are going poorly, you have the *choice* to either *Fix* or *Dissolve* it. You are not locked into this relationship.

Marriage Couples: If there’s a problem, you need to *Fix* it. There is no longer the same kind of *choice* like when you were dating. I believe “sexual immorality” (Mat 5:32 NIV) is the only time fixing can involve divorce. It was good enough for Jesus, so it’s good enough for me. I’m not saying that I’m Jesus or that I’m better than Jesus... oh wait, that’s plagiarism; sorry Mr. Lennon. Oh well, I guess that further proves I’m not as good as Jesus.

When you get married, to borrow the name of a social justice group, you are turning the “Me” to a “We”. You are essentially ending the mindset of: “It’s about me” and beginning to focus on: “It’s about *us*.” For marriage, you are making a vow to be united with your partner as long as you both shall live; you become one spirit although you are two bodies. If one hurts, you are both affected. For instance, I have two working legs, but when I sprained my ankle recently my other leg had to help compensate for the injury. Similarly, in marriage, when one person is hurting, it affects both of the people in the relationship, especially if the injured party isn’t as manly as I was with my injury... or as my girlfriend put it, “stubborn”.

Committed relationships are about learning how to grow together as a couple in order to overcome obstacles and flourish. They are meant to challenge us to grow to our full potentials and experience feeling committed love. Hopefully, you will find this book helps to facilitate greater understanding of yourself, your partner and your relationship together.

For Your Anniversary: You should make your anniversary a time to take a relationship inventory. Take a few of the activities in this book or from somewhere else and see how well you two are doing as individuals and as a couple. You’ll want to address issues like what’s working, and what can be improved for next year? We do this to grow businesses so we should also take the time to do this with our important relationships.

Part 1

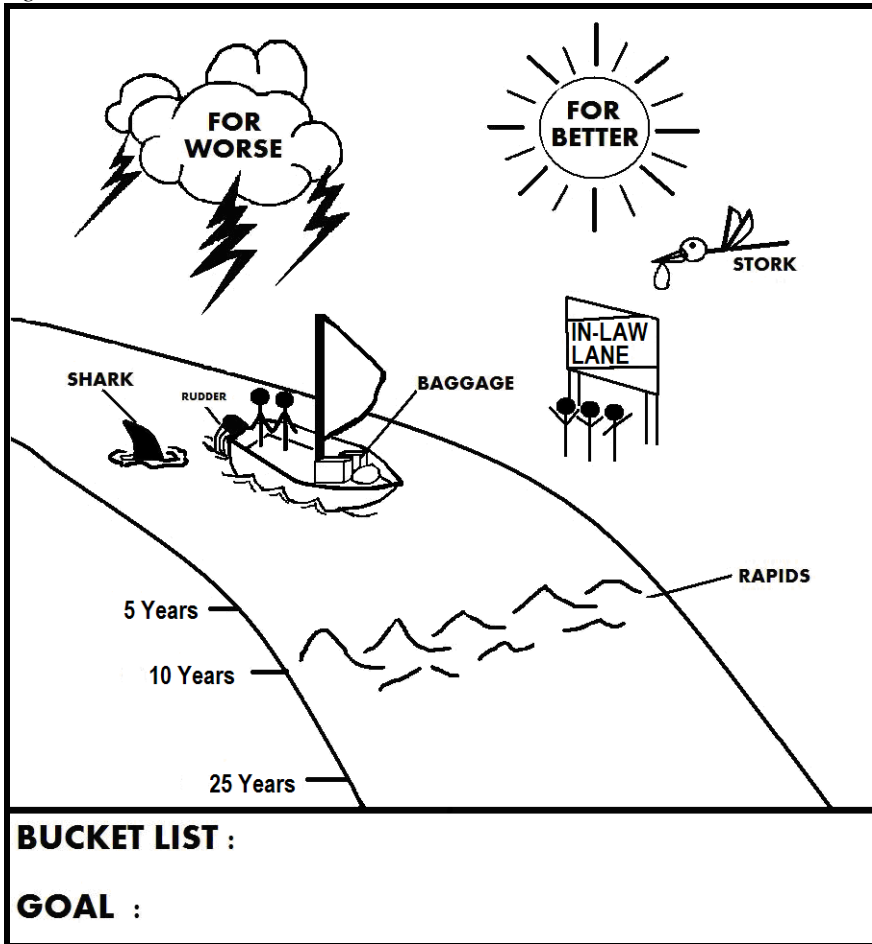
The first major part of this book... besides the introduction section... and the first chapter... will be based on the following diagram. Each part of the picture helps to point out something that should be addressed by people in serious relationships. This chapter is more activity oriented, which is a great way to get things started... after the introduction... and the first chapter.

Tip: This section can be done by yourself or with your partner.

The Path of the Relation-Ship

This is the happy ending referred to in the first chapter

Fig. 2.1



Chapter 2: Brains Activated

Part A) Beginning to Look at the Drawing

Note: The information addressed in this chapter is not meant to cause either one of you to attack the other or his or her families. All of your answers should be expressed in a loving and compassionate way. Similarly, the listener should receive this information in a comparable fashion because honesty about things this personal can be very difficult to express. Ultimately, these activities are meant to bring out the truth about how you think in order to prevent any misconceptions or surprises in the future. For instance, either of you saying: “I thought I was supposed to be the bride,” is not what you want to hear on your wedding day... or any day really.

Beginning with the happy couple on the ship, let’s begin with something a little more fun and easy to answer without much fear of upsetting anyone.

The Happy Couple <i>Answers can be either drawn, written or a combination</i>		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What does a “ <i>Happily Married</i> ” couple look like?		
What does an “ <i>Unhappily Married</i> ” couple look like?		
What does a <i>good</i> typical day look like?		
What does a <i>bad</i> typical day look like?		
How can you have more <i>good</i> typical days and remain the “ <i>Happily Married</i> ” couple”?		

This next chart will help dig a little deeper in order to find ways to strengthen this relationship.

Strengthening the Ship		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What strengths does your partner bring to your relationship?		
What strengths do you bring to your relationship?		
<i>The bags on the ship</i> What “baggage” do you bring to your relationship? <i>(e.g. debt, ex’s, children, bad job, friend problems, bad family, criminal record, abusive childhood, etc)</i>		

Your Religious and Cultural Backgrounds <i>Questions About the Rudder of the Ship</i>		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
How big a role do religion and/or culture play in your relationship?		
What benefits do your religion and/or culture bring to your relationship?		
What drawbacks do your religion and/or culture bring to your relationship?		
What can your partner do to reduce the negative impact of these drawbacks?		
What can you do to reduce the negative impact of these drawbacks?		

Part B) For Better or For Worse: Defining the Grades of a Relationship

The following grading system is to help you determine what you are promising in your wedding vows when you agree to: “For better or for worse.” Too often people say this without realizing what this could entail. For me, a “for worse” includes everything from “I’m bored,” to “We don’t connect anymore,” to “Guess what, I’m gay.” All of these things are a “for worse” because they can be worked out in a marriage. I have actually heard a story where the husband told his wife he was gay, which led to her immediately divorcing him. For me, he didn’t cheat on her so she should be saying something like: “That sucks... on the bright side that means you’ll actually want to go shoe shopping with me for 5 hours and not complain. I’m sure we can work this out. Maybe I can wear a football uniform in the bedroom or something.” Ultimately, at weddings we make a vow to be united: “For better or for worse;” therefore, we need to start taking this vow seriously.

You’ll notice there is a section in the grading system below for “Deal Breakers,” which is represented by the shark in the drawing, because you should know what behavior would lead to separation or divorce in order to *not* do them. Hopefully, these columns will be things you won’t ever have to worry about even being tempted to do like having an affair, money laundering, doing business with the mafia, forcing your husband to watch the Sex in the City movies, etc.

Fig. 2.2

The Marriage Grading System												
Deal Breakers		For Worse			For Tolerable				For Better			
-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	**10**
<i>Divorce Separate</i>		<i>The Marriage Stays Together →</i>										

The For Better or For Worse Activity		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
Why do you think couples get divorced?		

<i>The Shark</i> Define what a “Deal Breaker” is for you. What would make you think separation? Divorce?		
<i>The Rain Storm</i> Define what a 0 or “For Worse” looks like for you (<i>i.e. worse case scenarios you hope you’ll never have to face like illness</i>).		
Define what a 5 or “For Tolerable” would look like for you. (<i>i.e. a dull relationship</i>).		
<i>The Sun</i> Define what a 10 or “For Better” looks like for you. (<i>i.e. the “perfect” relationship. Have fun with this idea</i>).		

Getting More Specific		
Define what a “For Worse Husband” looks like for you.		
Define what a “For Better Husband” looks like for you.		
Define what a “For Worse Wife” looks like for you.		
Define what a “For Better Wife” looks like for you.		
What can your partner do to be closer to be the perfect 10?		
<p>Note: <i>No one is or can be a perfect 10; we all have areas in which we need to grow. Therefore, please don’t say: “You’re perfect; don’t ever change.” This is actually a sign that you don’t know your partner very well or you’re afraid to be honest.</i></p>		

Tip: Be especially careful with how you present and receive thoughts in the following activity in order to prevent any hurt feelings and defensive behavior.

Part C) Continuing the Course

Parents & Guardians <i>Questions About the People on Shore Waving</i>		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
List behaviors and lifestyle choices you want to copy from <i>His</i> parents or guardians		
List behaviors and lifestyle choices you <i>don't</i> want to copy from <i>His</i> parents or guardians		
List behaviors and lifestyle choices you want to copy from <i>Her</i> parents or guardians		
List behaviors and lifestyle choices you don't want to copy from <i>Her</i> parents or guardians		

Parents (& Guardians) and In-Laws		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What things make you happy about your parents and in-laws?		
What things scare you about your parents and in-laws?		
How involved do you think they should be? (e.g. <i>calling, visiting, baby sitting, etc</i>)		

What do you need to do to make your relationship as <i>healthy</i> as possible with your parents and in-laws? (<i>Note: distance can be a necessary answer</i>)		
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On the left side of the stream there are time frames to help you plan where you hope to be in the future.

Time Line Questions <i>The Years at the Side of the Stream</i>		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
Where do you want to be in 5 years? This includes the state of your relationship.		
Where do you want to be in 10 years? This includes the state of your relationship.		
Where do you want to be in 25 years? This includes the state of your relationship.		
How do you want your relationship to reach its end? <i>(e.g. dying together in a nursing home, dying before needing diapers, etc)</i>		
What is on your <i>Bucket List</i> ? <i>(i.e. things you want to do before you die)</i>		
What is the end <i>Goal</i> of your relationship? <i>(e.g. to have fun for 40 or so years, to see grand children, to travel a lot, to impact others, etc)</i>		

Tip: Remembering your *Goal* will help you know if you’re acting properly in your relationship. For instance, if your *Goal* is to love and be happy, any behavior that doesn’t help you to love and be happy should be stopped including how and how often you fight. Ultimately, any behavior that doesn’t comply with our goals need to be reevaluated and adjusted accordingly.

Tip to the Tip: According to the book *Yes!*, writing down your goal is proven to bring better results. I know in one tough meeting I wrote down: “Shut up Chad” and it really helped me stay focused and not retaliate. Arguably, writing: “Forgive” would’ve been nicer, but... ehn, the tough love helped.

The Inevitable Obstacles <i>Questions About the Rapids</i>		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
How do you overcome obstacles in your own life? <i>(e.g. cry, fearlessly tackle the obstacle, hide, work out, etc)</i>		
How do you overcome obstacles in your relationship? <i>(e.g. yell at each other, encourage one another, etc)</i>		

A Brief Look at Children <i>Questions About the Stork</i>		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
How many children would you prefer? <i>(zero is an option)</i> When would the ideal time be to have them?		
Is the wife giving birth an option? <i>(e.g. health concerns, genetic issues, etc)</i>		
Is adopting an option? If so, any preferences? <i>(e.g. age, background, etc)</i>		
If you have problems conceiving, is there any other way that would be an option?		

Conclusion:

This chapter was meant to provide you with questions to clarify things for yourself and your partner and to help you communicate them. These are the kinds of answers you'll want to know about each other, especially if you're planning on remaining in a committed relationship... or looking for a reason to break up. It should also give you an idea of what kinds of things you will be encountering in this book. Hopefully they helped you further refine your thoughts and see the dynamics of your relationship more clearly.

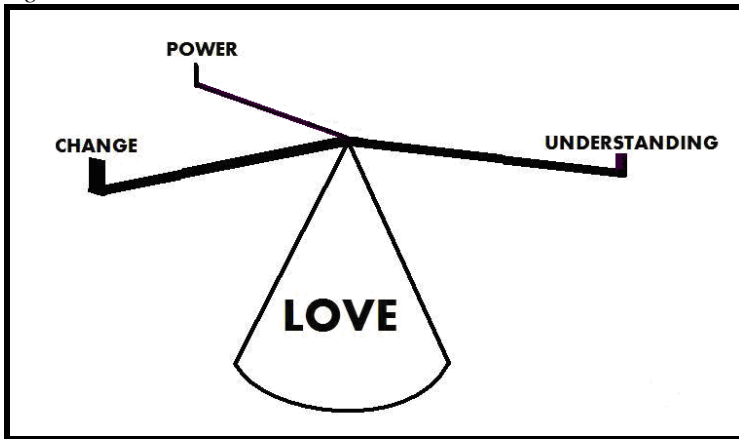
Final Thoughts or Questions You Want to Address?	
<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>

Part 2

The second part of this book – the much longer part – is based on the following diagram. Looking at it, you will notice that it portrays *Love* as a balance of three main categories, which form the titles of the subsequent chapters: *Change*, *Understanding* and *Power*. I put them in this sequence in order for them to form the acronym “CUP”. This acronym can then be used to describe this concept as: “Quench your thirst with a CUP of Love,”... yeah, that’s cheese-y. It can also be used as: “the *CUP* for Love”, which uses CUP as another word for a jock. This follows the idea that a jock protects something fragile and learning about *Change*, *Understanding* and *Power* can help protect your relationship and, therefore, your hearts... yeah, that’s even more cheese-y than the first idea. Don’t worry, that will be the end of the cheese... maybe... okay, there’s no chance of it being done yet. My apologies to anyone who is lactose intolerant... see, the cheese is just natural for me.

The Love Diagram

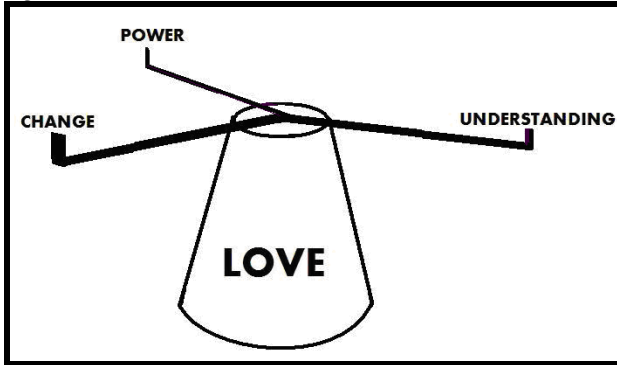
Fig. 3.1



As this diagram illustrates, *Love* is a balance of *Change*, *Understanding* and *Power*. When these three things are in balance, the people involved are in harmony with themselves and each other, which negates the need to fight for greater control or a sense of value because they already feel fully loved. When things are thrown off balance, that’s when the fighting and hurts begin. Fortunately, *Love* can grow and when it does, this balance becomes sturdier and, therefore, less likely to be put off balance.

When the Love Has Grown Diagram

Fig. 3.2



As the above diagram illustrates, as *Love* grows, the balance becomes more solid and easier to maintain. Thus, the better we become at loving ourselves and others, the easier it becomes to maintain relationships.

The following chapters on *Love*, *Change*, *Understanding* and *Power* will focus on how to improve in each of these four categories in order to strengthen your love for yourself and for each other. These chapters are worth going through because they will help you know how to grow and teach you some valuable things for being emotionally healthy. This is significant because as we become emotionally healthier, life ultimately becomes happier and easier for us and, therefore, better for those around us.

Chapter 3: Love

Key Note: If you feel loved, real love, you are less likely to be grumpy, whiney, depressed, controlling or to fight. Thus, if someone is displaying these types of behaviors, this is likely a sign that they need to be loved; physical behavior is typically a sign of the internal need.

To begin, take a few minutes to reflect on what you think about love.

Your Thoughts on Love		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
1. What in general is love? (<i>i.e. beyond romance</i>)		
2. What does it mean to love someone in the marriage sense?		
3. Can love disappear or be lost? Why do you think this?		
4. How can you prevent your love from fading?		

Part A) An Introduction to this New Fangled Thing Called Love

One of the greatest weaknesses in our society is that we have lost our understanding of what it means to really love whether it is love of the divine, others or even ourselves. Instead, we have been taught to be selfish and prideful. Today, it seems that nothing is sacred or respected because it's cheaper and easier for people not to care about each other. In addition, it's considered great marketing if you can make others think they can't be fulfilled if they don't own a certain product. Thus, as a society, we have lost our

understanding of what love is. In this chapter, I hope to help clarify a few things, especially what a *healthy* mindset is in regards to how we view ourselves and our relationships. Fortunately, even with a skewed sense of love, love is such a powerful and innate thing for people that we can always be brought back on track and rediscover what true love is in the most sacred sense. We'll begin with looking at loving other people, loving ourselves and then how we love our partners, which will be concluded with one of my favorite relationship activities.

Part B) Loving Others

One of the most popular readings at weddings is 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 because it defines what real love is:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

This passage was originally written to define how you should treat *everyone* and not just your partner. Therefore, your ability to love is ultimately judged on how you treat *all* people, not just a select one or two.

Tip: Love is a choice; it is not about a feeling or sensation. It is about choosing to act a certain way towards others.

For this exercise, fill out the following chart by grading how well you love other people in general. Each of the different aspects of the above verse has been included with the addition of a few extra components from the “Fruits of the Spirit” (Gal 5:22). The good news is you don’t have to score tens on anything in order to have a great relationship. In fact, if you score a ten you may want to start reevaluating yourself because no one is that perfect. We all have a lot to learn.

(Inspired by: “The Fruit of the Spirit Test”, *It Takes Two*, Andrew & Judith Lester)

The Love Test <i>On a Scale of 1-10, 1 being terrible, 10 being perfect</i>		
What Grade Do You Give Your Ability to...	For Him	For Her
Be patient		
Be kind		
Be content (<i>Does not envy</i>)		
Build up others (<i>Does not boast</i>)		
Be thoughtful (<i>Not rude</i>)		
Care for others’ needs (<i>Not self-seeking</i>)		
Be peaceful and slow to anger (<i>Not easily angered</i>)		
Be faithful at not keeping a record of wrongs (<i>i.e. doesn’t bring up hurts from years ago that have been dealt with already</i>)		
Be joyful in partner’s success (<i>Does not delight in evil</i>)		
Be honest (<i>Rejoices with the truth</i>)		
Be protective		
Always trust (<i>i.e. when appropriate</i>)		
Be positive about others and their intentions (<i>Always hopes</i>)		
Let love persevere (<i>i.e. forgive when we’re hurt, but not set yourself up to be hurt again in the same way by the same person</i>)		
Be generous		
Be self controlled		
Be gentle (<i>e.g. sensitive and tender</i>)		

Tip: Go through this chart again, but this time focus on how well you love your partner and then a third time looking at how well you love yourself. This may lead to an interesting contrast.

Reflecting on the Above Chart		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What areas are my strengths?		
Why am I so good at this/these things?		
In what area(s) do I need to start working harder at improving?		
Why am I so poor at this/these things		
What can I do to start improving?		

For Christians

Take a moment to thank God for helping you be good at certain aspects of love and for showing you what ones need greater attention. Ask for forgiveness for any hurt this has caused others and yourself. Finally, ask for strength to grow in order to be a better representative of God’s love to the world and particularly to your partner.

Love Does Not Mean...

Love does not mean you are each other’s personal garbage container that says “Thank You” on it as you happily accept whatever mistreatment your partner feels like giving. Love does not mean we take the other person for granted and

expect them to deal with us mistreating them because it's easier for us to be mean and rude when we have a bad day. The unfortunate truth is many of us will force ourselves to be nice to someone we don't know very well, but then we'll mistreat those closest to us because we're not feeling our "best". We'll be rude because we're tired, not feeling well or "I'm on my period"... this is in quotes since it's yet to be an excuse I've used; although I have thought about it to see the reaction. These excuses, however, are never reasons to be mean to others. Just because you don't feel well doesn't mean you have the right to hurt someone. You should never say: "If you loved me, you'd deal with the way I treat you because work was rough today." That's acting in the complete opposite of love, and why should you expect someone to treat you with love if you don't treat them with it? On the other hand, it is also acting in the opposite of love to allow someone to abuse you because you are essentially giving them permission to treat you in a way that is hurtful and will lead to you resenting and avoiding them. If you love someone, you will not let them abuse you. This has traditionally been a problem for women, but in today's age of female empowerment the reverse is becoming more frequent. This is a major problem because most men will accept physical and emotional abuse because it's not "manly" to admit a woman is beating them even if it's emotionally. They have also been taught that accepting this abuse is a sign of love. However, we need to remember: love may be patient, but that doesn't mean being a garbage can.

Tip: Allowing someone to abuse you in anyway is not love. Letting others take you for granted and manipulate you is not love. Love is protecting yourself and others from hurt in a healthy way and sharing in the joys life has to offer.

Patience

After almost finishing this book, I discovered that patience is crucial to relationships. You'd think I'd realize this sooner when the Bible puts it first in the definition of love: "Love is patient..." (1 Cor 13:4a). It's at the front for a reason. Patience is the most important aspect of love and yet one of the most misunderstood and overlooked concepts because it's safer and easier to ignore it. Patience is not setting ourselves up to be hurt by others. It is not lazy or passive; being passive means you don't care while being patient means you do. Patience is *actively* waiting, persevering and is rooted in wisdom:

“A person’s wisdom yields patience...” (Proverbs 19:11a)

“Whoever is patient has great understanding, but one who is quick-tempered displays folly.” (Pro 14:29)

Most importantly, being patient is empowering; patience is **POWER**. It means not settling for less or giving into the temptation of anger.

“Better a patient person than a warrior, one with self-control than one who takes a city.” (Pro 16:32)

“The two most powerful warriors are patience and time.” Leo Tolstoy

Ever go to... places? Probably. Have you been out and seen little kids yelling: “I want it, and I want it now.” They have this full body tantrum where they pump their fist, “I want it,” and then they stomp their foot, “now!” Ever see that? Uhg... I love that. For a guy who can’t afford to get married or have kids, this makes me feel so much better. I guess I don’t have it so bad. And then I’ll be proud of how much more mature I am than that kid. But here’s what I figured out: we’re all that kid whenever we’re impatient; we just manifest it differently. For instance, any fight we get into whether with our partner, friends or coworkers; every real fight is based on the idea: “I want it, and I want it now,” accept we’re saying: “I want to be right, and I want to be right, right now.” That’s all a fight is. I want to be right, right now. Therefore, a fight is a lack of patience.

As a heads up, when you’re in a fight, don’t explain this analogy to the other person: “You know when you yell at me you’re being like a bratty kid whining about what you want,” that doesn’t help... trust me.

Ultimately, if you want to love your partner properly, you will learn to be patient with him or her. You don’t have to be right, right now, especially since you could be wrong. Remember, people don’t love you because you’re always right. In fact, if you were, they’d likely leave you because who wants to be around someone who makes you feel stupid? Love your partner enough to not have to be right, right now or even at all. After all there can be many different ways of doing things, and someone else’s way may help you see things in an even better way than before.

Tip: Love people enough to listen; listen well enough to help them feel loved.

The Meeting

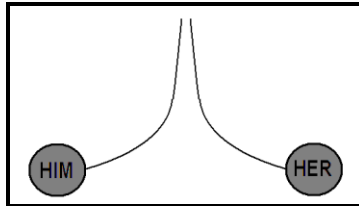
When two people meet, or if two friends become attracted to each other beyond friends, the more intimate relationship begins.

Fig. 3.3a



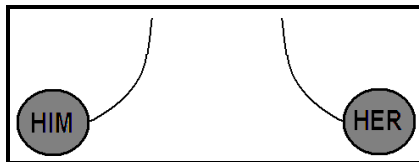
These two people will start to get to know each other better through things like all night conversations and dating. Initially, the two people have a lot to learn, but this learning curve slows down as shown in the following diagram. Notice the lines never touch because they are always two separate people.

Fig. 3.3b



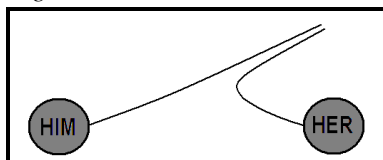
A relationship is in trouble if the two people never really open up and get emotionally very close to each other like in the following.

Fig. 3.3c



In the ideal connection between two people, there is an equal draw between them that brings them close together. Troubles ensue if there is an imbalance with one person being much more drawn than the other. These situations typically cause the one person to pull away, which can unfortunately cause the more aggressive person to be even more socially aggressive.

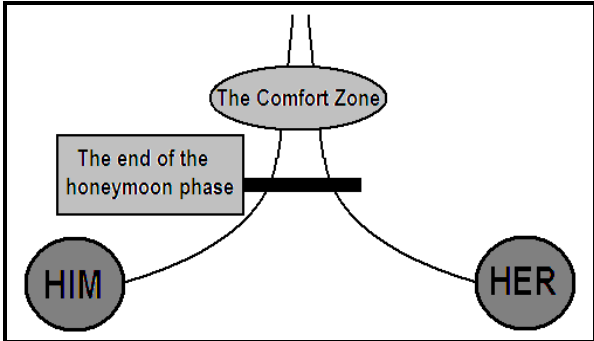
Fig. 3.3d



As the above diagram suggests, you will want to be careful how quickly you share really personal information and how vulnerable you open yourself to be because you don't want to scare the other person away. At the same time, you want to be careful not to be too closed off because it may cause the other person to compensate for your lack of sharing. As always, the goal is balance.

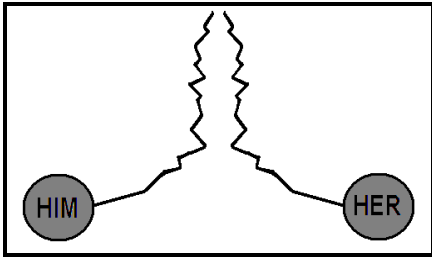
In a long term relationship the honeymoon period will inevitably end. This is a time when the excitement of first meeting begins to fade and is replaced with trust and comfort. This can be scary for some people who are afraid of being too vulnerable or who are addicted to the thrill of the initial stages of dating. On the other hand, some people become addicted to the comfort stage, which can cause them to be afraid of leaving someone they should because the dating phase terrifies them. If these people do end single, they have a tendency to rush things and pretend they're in the comfort stage when they barely know the other person.

Fig. 3.3e



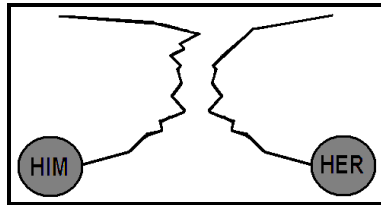
The above illustration is the ideal situation where things flow nicely. Reality, however, is never this simple. There are always complications and questioning, which means the flow of getting to know each other looks more like the following with both people struggling to love and accept the other.

Fig. 3.3f



Of course, not all relationships work out and sometimes in our distancing we end up running away. The following demonstrates how one person pulling away can cause the other to draw closer until he gives up and runs away. This running away may take place sooner or later depending on the relationship.

Fig. 3.3g



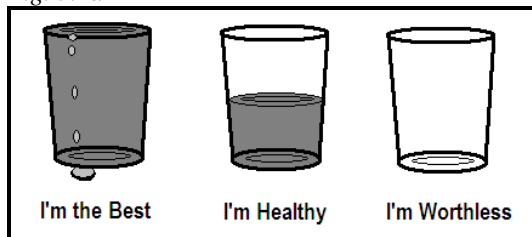
Part C) Loving Yourself (*Please keep your mind out of the gutter*)

Tip: Loving yourself stands in contrast to pride and selfishness. Arrogance is not love; it is hidden pain or glaring ignorance.

The goal of emotionally healthy people is to recognize your strengths and flaws in a realistic fashion that holds together in a balance that allows you to see your true value as a person. Knowing your strengths helps you to see your value in a positive light while knowing your weaknesses keeps you from becoming arrogant and thinking you're better than others. The following diagram illustrates that we want to see ourselves as a cup half full rather than overflowing or empty because this means we can see both the positive and negative aspects of ourselves in a balanced way.

How We View Ourselves

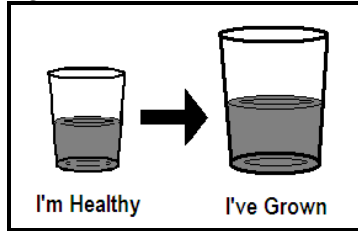
Fig. 3.4a



For the purpose of this diagram, growing as a person doesn't increase the level of the liquid in the cup, it increases the size of the cup as shown in the subsequent diagram. The healthiest person is always a cup half full because that means he or she understands the balance of his or her strengths and weaknesses. Thus, the cup grows with increased self awareness.

How We Look When We Grow

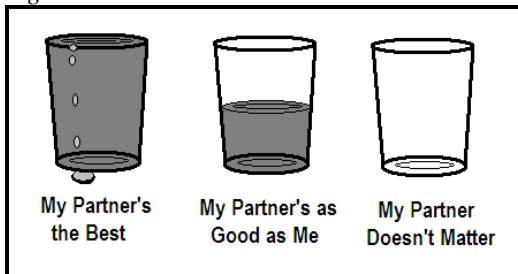
Fig. 3.4b



Since everyone has inherent value, healthy people will understand that everyone has this same set up since we all have both strengths and weaknesses. There are people who are more developed or gifted, or less developed or gifted, but, fundamentally, we all have the same innate value as humans. Thus, we need to look for the value in everyone in order to prevent prejudice and malice because we are all worthy of the same love and respect. This also means that we need to view others as cups half full because they have strengths and areas in which they need improvement just like us.

How We View Others

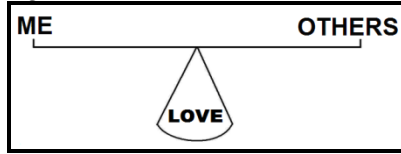
Fig. 3.5



A friend of mine recently said to me: “Love is putting the other person before yourself.” At first I thought this sounded nice, but then it hit me... ouch. That’s wrong. We all have value and need to love others *as* ourselves. This is another one of our society’s tragedies because we need to love our partner at the same level as we love ourselves. A healthy person loves others, including our partners, in balance with how we love ourselves because otherwise it becomes more like a master and servant relationship.

How We Need to Love Others and Ourselves

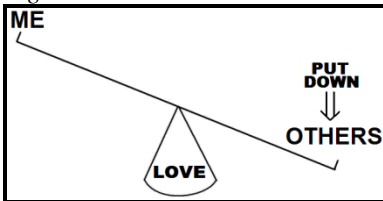
Fig. 3.6



When we love others as we love ourselves, we neither hurt ourselves in order to help them, nor do we look down on them as being of lesser value. Problems arise when this balance is thrown off. The following diagrams demonstrate when we put others or ourselves down we raise the other, thereby throwing off the balance. Therefore, we need to view others and ourselves in a way that appreciates all of our value in a balanced and healthy way.

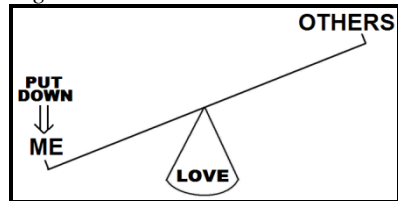
Putting Others Down

Fig. 3.7



Putting Ourselves Down

Fig. 3.8



Tip: Teasing is different than *put downs*; it is not mocking or meant to hurt. Instead, proper teasing is an attempt at connection, affection and trust.

Note: If we put others down, we value ourselves too much
If we put ourselves down, we value others too much

Key: Love is putting your partner at the same level as you; he or she is neither more nor less important than you.

For Marriage: When you get married you are becoming “one” with your partner. You’re a team. What hurts your partner hurts you; what hurts you, hurts your partner. Thus, you need to take care of yourself as best you can. For example, you should be careful with your diet; neither of you should snack on sticks of butter rolled in white sugar, which is referred to as “Shame Sticks” on *According to Jim*. That’s neither loving to eat nor to let someone else eat... ew... although curious.

For Christians

I was always told to put others before myself, which is based on Philippians 2:3-4: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.” This verse, however, isn’t about believing we have less value than others or feeling worthless while others are valuable. It’s about balancing our natural propensity to be selfish and to think of ourselves first. The Apostle Paul, the writer of this passage, is trying to help us think about others, which is not our natural tendency; that’s something we have to train ourselves to do. Thus, I had warped the verse’s original intention. If you’re not sure about what I’m saying because it seems so different than what you’ve been taught in church, look at what Jesus says in the Great Commandment: “Love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus doesn’t say: “Love others *more* than yourself;” He says to love others *as* yourself. This verse presupposes that you love yourself. Ha ha, I’m not crazy after all... or am I and that’s why I wrote: “Ha ha”, which is a weird thing to write?

Part D) Discovering What It Looks Like to be Healthy and Balanced

These next two charts help to distinguish a healthy and balanced mindset versus an unhealthy one. This is very important because many of us have never been shown or told what a healthy mindset or response looks like thereby making it impossible for us to know how we can improve. Thus, this exercise is all the more important because it helps to present what the ideal mindset and response should be. The first two columns are the unhealthy mindsets many of us use and the third is the healthy and balanced responses for which we should be aiming. Put a check in the boxes that sound like you.

(Inspired by Carolyn N. Bushong, *The Seven Dumbest Relationship Mistakes...*)

Unhealthy Responses (Unbalanced)		Healthy Response (Balanced)
<i>Needs Control</i>	<i>Dependent</i>	<i>Balanced</i>

Fake strength His__ Hers__	Believes others are stronger/better His__ Hers__	Understands we all have strengths and weaknesses His__ Hers__
Expresses anger, typically in intimidating ways like yelling in order to prove the point His__ Hers__	Any expression of anger is downplayed and often held in and/or redirected at himself/herself instead of the guilty party. His__ Hers__	Assertive and compassionate in sharing anger in order to resolve rather than further the conflict His__ Hers__
Avoids sharing feelings and weaknesses and focuses attention on “strengths” real or not. Ultimately tries to build himself/herself up at the expense of others. His__ Hers__	Downplays strengths and instead focuses on weaknesses. Ultimately, building others up at his/her own expense. His__ Hers__	Comfortable with sharing both strengths and weaknesses at appropriate times in a way that doesn’t put down others or himself/herself His__ Hers__
Displays a façade while hiding true self. His__ Hers__	Either very shy about feelings or overly open about problems. The true self is hidden behind a mask of disgrace. His__ Hers__	Shares feelings within boundaries and encourages others to do the same. His__ Hers__
Avoids intimacy His__ Hers__	Desperate for intimacy His__ Hers__	Comfortable with himself/herself His__ Hers__
Seeks authoritarian position for control and recognition. His__ Hers__	Passes control and decisions onto others. His__ Hers__	Seeks to participate in the appropriate role for him/her and the groups’ betterment. His__ Hers__
Emotionally blocked His__ Hers__	Overly emotional His__ Hers__	Seeks to respond in the appropriate emotional manner for himself/herself. His__ Hers__
Blames others for problems His__ Hers__	Blames himself/herself for problems His__ Hers__	Understands the need to take responsibility for his/her own actions while recognizing the other party’s role. His__ Hers__

Can't handle teasing or others joking about him/her. Everything feels like an attack.	Needs attention, but struggles with knowing how to tease and how to accept it. Struggles with being defensive.	Tries to have fun with others appropriately teasing them as a way to bond and poking fun at himself/herself.
His__ Hers__	His__ Hers__	His__ Hers__

A Quick Evaluation		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
In which column do you find yourself the most?		
What are your strengths?		
Where can you improve?		

Part E) Bringing Love for Others and Yourself into Check

Note: I went through this activity with a group of young people and the general consensus was everyone claimed they loved others better than themselves. Even those I categorize as rude and self-centered claimed to put others first. All I could think was: “If you love others better, how much do you hate yourself because you treat others like dirt?” Ultimately, this demonstrates that even if you love others more than yourself, this doesn’t mean you’re very good at loving them.

Testing Your Ability to Love Yourself & Others in Balance			
<i>Note:</i> If neither answer fits you, leave it blank			
<i>People who love others more than themselves</i>	<i>His Hers</i>	<i>People who love themselves more than others</i>	<i>His Hers</i>
I am more patient with others than myself	__ __	I am more patient with myself than with others	__ __
I am more generous with others than myself	__ __	I am more generous with myself than with others	__ __
I am quicker to forgive others than myself	__ __	I am quicker to forgive myself than others	__ __
I get more frustrated with myself than with others when one of us makes a mistake	__ __	I get more frustrated with others than myself when one of us makes a mistake	__ __

I am more judgmental and critical of myself than others	___ ___	I am more judgmental and critical of others than myself	___ ___
I am quicker to take care of someone else's need rather than my own	___ ___	I am quicker to take care of my own need rather than someone else's	___ ___
I am quicker to defend someone else when they are attacked than if it was me	___ ___	I am quicker to defend myself if I am attacked than if it was someone else	___ ___
I am quicker to trust someone else than myself	___ ___	I am quicker to trust myself than others	___ ___
I am quicker to be proud of someone else's accomplishments than my own	___ ___	I am quicker to be proud of my own accomplishments than someone else's	___ ___
I am quicker to give praise to someone else than to feel good about my own accomplishments	___ ___	When someone does something better than me I get defensive and/or jealous, which is often shown through mockery, criticism or stewing	___ ___
I am quicker to boast about someone else than mention my own strengths or accomplishments	___ ___	I am quick to brag about myself and tell others what I'm good at or try to one up what other people talk about	___ ___
When I'm around other people, I assume they're better off than me somehow whether they're smarter, happier, etc.	___ ___	When I'm around other people, I assume I'm better off than them somehow whether smarter, happier, more controlled, etc.	___ ___
When someone compliments me, I assume they're being sarcastic, just saying that because they feel they have to or they want something in return	___ ___	When someone compliments me, I know it's because I'm so great.	___ ___
I have way more flaws than strengths	___ ___	I only think about my strengths	___ ___

Note: If you left both columns blank, this is a sign that you're either indecisive or that you love others as yourself at least on some level. Of course, this does not necessarily mean that you are a loving person, but you are at least balanced in some way. Well done.

Reflecting on the Above Chart		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
Am I too hard or easy on myself? Why or why not?		
How can I start to see others and myself in a more balanced way?		
What can my partner do to help me see myself and others in a more balanced way?		

Part F) Loving Your Partner

Tip: A very simple rule for maintaining a happy relationship is to follow the 3 A's: *Appreciate, Apologize and Accommodate*. We need to make our partners feel appreciated; we need to be quick to apologize when we make a mistake and we need to accommodate *both* of our needs.

Now that we've looked at how well you love all people including yourself, the rest of this chapter will focus on how you love your partner and how you can improve. The following *Top 10 Keys to a Healthy Loving Relationship* has been written out as a list and is then followed by a chart that will help you grade yourself out of 10 for how well you're doing.

Tip: Be honest and supportive of each other during this activity because it can be very humbling to discover our weak areas.

(Inspired by “The 16 Essential Elements of a Healthy Relationship”, *The Seven Dumbest Relationship Mistakes Smart People Make*, Carolyn N. Bushong)

Top 10 Keys to a Healthy Loving Relationship
1. Be ready to admit fault, apologize and quick to accept your partner’s
2. Find a way to be comfortable expressing all forms of emotions (eg. healthy anger, hurt, fears, joy etc.)
3. Know how to best express your love, appreciation and respect for both yourself and your partner
4. Develop open, loving and fearless communication (e.g. avoid words like “never” and “always”)
5. Face new challenges and experiences while reminiscing about past accomplishments
6. Develop integrated goals and solution based lifestyles in order to prevent negativity
7. Develop a strong personal understanding and know how to best share this with your partner
8. Develop and respect each other’s boundaries
9. Live so that you are an asset to each other rather than a hindrance. This includes independent and shared hobbies.
10. Know how to meet each other’s intimacy needs including a healthy sex life... with each other
Bonus: Always assume the best in your partner

Rating How Well You Follow the Top 10 Keys to a Healthy Relationship On a Scale of 1-10, with 1 being the <i>Worst</i> and 10 being <i>Perfect</i>		
Keys to a Healthy Relationship	His	Hers
Be ready to admit fault, apologize and quick to accept your partner’s		
Find a way to be comfortable expressing all forms of emotions (<i>e.g. healthy anger, hurt, fears, joy etc.</i>)		
Know how to best express your love, appreciation and respect for both yourself and your partner		
Develop open, loving and fearless communication (<i>e.g. avoid words like “never” and “always”</i>)		

Face new challenges and experiences while reminiscing about past accomplishments		
Develop integrated goals and solution based lifestyles in order to prevent negativity		
Develop a strong personal understanding and know how to best share this with your partner		
Develop and respect each other's boundaries		
Live so that you are an asset to each other rather than a hindrance. This includes independent and shared hobbies.		
Know how to meet each other's intimacy needs including a healthy sex life... with each other		
Bonus: Always assume the best in your partner		

Reflecting on the Above Chart		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What area(s) am I really good at?		
Why am I so good at that this/these things?		
In what area(s) do I need to start working harder at improving?		
Why am I so poor at this/these things		
What can I do to start improving?		

Part G) Uncovering Real Love... Oh, there it is

Tip: We are meant to love everyone, but we're not suited to be in an intimate relationship with all people whether partner or close friend.

My Pet Peeve¹ **“But I Love Him”**

So often I hear the phrase: “But I love him.” If you need to put in a “but” you need to fix things because using a “but” means something stinks and in all likelihood, your relationship is pretty crappy... sorry, you know I can’t resist a little cheese. Saying “But I love him,” usually follows a conversation like: “Yeah, he was hurting me again, but...” Here’s a trick: if your family, friends, a professional counselor or pastor keep telling you there’s something wrong with your relationship or your partner and you have to keep saying: “But I love him,” you are in a *bad* relationship. If you’re not married, you need to get out; don’t waste your time trying to “fix” the person because you’ll only frustrate your partner and end up broken and alone. I knew a young lady whose fiancé beat up her dad at their stag and doe so badly that he was sent to the hospital for twenty-seven stitches. Her exact words after were: “But I love him.” No matter what her family said she ignored them because she was going to make it work even if it meant losing her family. I will note that I am hesitant in writing this example because I know there will be people reading this who’ve had to say “But I love him” and are now feeling good because: “At least my partner’s never done that.” Please know that someone having it worse than you is not permission for you to be with the wrong person. It was simply an example of foolishly staying in a bad situation.

Tip: Just because someone has it worse doesn’t mean you have it right.

If people are saying: “You need to break up,” you need to open your eyes and humbly and soberly see why. “But I love him!” Fine, continue making life miserable for yourself and those around you. That’s your decision; it’s selfish, but it’s your decision. Can you tell I get frustrated with this topic? I truly hope this doesn’t reflect your situation or anyone you care about because it is very volatile and unhealthy.

Tip: You need to love someone enough to be able to leave him or her. You can love someone and not be right for each. A wise person can see the difference and chooses properly; a foolish person doesn’t care... and ends up divorced, resentful and miserable. Not a great option in my opinion.

¹ “Pet peeve” isn’t an actual pet, but an expression. Although, that would make a great name for a dog: “This is my pet, Peeve; he’s surprisingly a lot of fun.”

I should note that I keep saying “But I love *him*” and not “But I love *her*” because I’ve never actually heard a guy use this phrase. I’ve only heard “Girls are crazy,” or “Are all women like this?” Besides, guys are easily blinded from a bad situation by sex, which means as long as they’re getting some, complaining is limited. But what do you expect when *guys are stupid*?

Sex Blinders: When people are being physically intimate, they can easily ignore the relationship warning signs. This is a major reason why slowly growing in physical intimacy is a wise choice because it prevents you from being blind to the red flags: “I don’t like how she hits me, but I’m really horny and need someone to help with that.” These are not the words of a winner, but someone who wants to score.

Four Categories of Love

To help clarify why there is so much confusion about love, here are four categories of “Love” in order to better clarify why “Love” often results in bad pairings.

1. Easy “Love”: Better known as the honeymoon phase, this is the beginning stage of being “in love” with someone when things are more exciting and easy. This is the phase characterized by butterflies and giddiness, and not being able to stop thinking about the other person. This can lead to having the ability to write what seems like an endless number of love poems and songs. Unfortunately, this “high” eventually fades because a person’s flaws start to become more apparent and the dream starts to become reality. This is when a couple really decides if they will *choose* to love each other or whether they’re better off looking for a better suited partner. Unfortunately, some people will get addicted to *Easy “Love”* and avoid being in real relationships because flings feel safer and/or can feel like more fun.

Interesting note: When you first fall in love, the brain responds in a similar way as it would if the person was on cocaine. “Humans are literally ‘high’ on love.” (Henslin, 2010) This explains why some people get addicted to short dating relationships and why you can’t stop thinking about someone when you first start dating.

2. Romantic “Love”: This loves the idea of the person rather than who the person actually is. It follows the hope that: “We’re meant to be together,”

and “We’re soul mates,” which doesn’t have any solid religious or logical backing. Personally, the idea of soul mates, two people who were meant to be together, sounds like a Siamese twin’s thing: “We were meant to be together, but the doctors found a way to separate us,” and therefore, sounds incestuous. Not a good thought... hopefully.

This kind of love follows the idea of *Easy “Love”*, and hopes this is what love is supposed to feel like. The problem is this isn’t *real* love. Real love isn’t easy; it takes work and dedication. It takes commitment and resolve. *Romantic “Love”* is the kind of love that expects the partner to fulfill your every need, which again is a very dangerous mindset to have because you should be healthy enough to succeed on your own. Remember, you want to be a full piece of Lego ready to connect with another full piece of Lego because they stay connected better than one or two broken pieces.

3. Addictive “Love”: This takes *Romantic “Love”* to the next level. The addicted lover is: “certain she can’t survive without the man’s love and that she wouldn’t even want to, because there wouldn’t be anything to live for” (NiCarthy, 2004). These feelings lead to very submissive and clingy behavior, and issues with extreme jealousy, which typically results in some kind of abusive behavior taking place.

Tip: If you’re continually saying: “But I love him,” you’re likely suffering from *Romantic* or *Addictive “Love”*.

4. Nurturing Love: *Nurturing Love* is *real* love, which is why this is the first title that doesn’t have *love* in quotations. *Nurturing Love* is not based on *need*, but because of a *want*. According to Ginny NiCarthy, this kind of love encourages growth in abilities, knowledge and experience. “It sustains life, promotes growth, and increases energy. It is not possessive, and it grows out of a realistic appreciation of the loved one’s attractive qualities without a need to minimize his flaws.” (NiCarthy, 2004). Therefore, this is the kind of love for which we should be striving.

Helping to Clarify “The Truth”

Every relationship is different; some are really different... I’m sure you can think of a couple who fits this description. This does not mean, however, that there isn’t a “right” or “wrong” way to participate in your relationship. For

instance, if a couple likes to play Whack-a-Mole, but instead of the soft paddle they use baseball bats, and instead of the arcade moles they use each other, most people would think something was wrong. Unfortunately, the way we behave in a relationship isn't graded in distinct black and white degrees, but in a blend of varying degrees of dark and light that is affected by the situation and the mood of the recipient. For instance, in some relationships teasing is a form of play and love while others only see it as insulting.

Since there are "shades" of what is right and wrong this means that there are *better* and worse ways to participate in a relationship. The following activity will help clarify how to be better in your relationship by revealing myths that are typically taught to us by our peers and the media. If you are guilty of following any of the myths, please don't feel like a failure; this activity is designed to correct any false thinking and reveal improvement areas. Besides, if anyone believes in one of these myths, it was influenced by watching and/or listening to other people... people not nearly as smart as I am... to read good books. Besides, after reading this you'll be the smart person who knows what's right and can help correct other people who have been misguided.

Tip: Be supportive of each other in this activity. The words: "I told you so," are never a wise choice... trust me... or not, and see why.

(Inspired by Carolyn N. Bushong, *The Seven Dumbest Relationship Mistakes...*)

Clearing Up the Myths in Relationships		
<i>The Myth</i>	<i>Are You Guilty of This?</i> His Hers	<i>The Truth</i>
Love means I have to give up my friends and interests. <i>OR</i> Love means my partner needs to give up his/her friends and interests.	— —	Giving up who you are leads to resentment and causes the other person to lose interest. <i>(Exception: if the "friend" or interest was something dangerous.)</i>
I shouldn't have to say what I want; if he/she loved me he/she would already know.	— —	Most people aren't mind readers (if they were they'd never date). Others need help knowing what you want. This can even require reminding the other person several times.

<p>The more I give, the more love I'll receive.</p>	<p>— —</p>	<p>Giving and receiving needs to remain in balance or this can lead to resentment for the giver who's continually giving, especially if it appears he/she is being taken from granted. It can also lead to resentment for the receiver since he/she may want to give back in return, but he/she can't or doesn't know how.</p>
<p>Showing anger means we have a bad relationship or that I don't love my partner so I should hide it.</p>	<p>— —</p>	<p>Holding in anger builds resentment and can lead to an explosion, which is often something small or unrepresentative of the real problem thereby perpetuating the original issue and adding a new one.</p>
<p>I'm not angry with my partner if I don't yell at him/her.</p>	<p>— —</p>	<p>Not sharing what upsets you in a loving manner shows you don't trust your partner enough to be honest and limits how strong your relationship can become. Thus even silence is unhealthy.</p>
<p>Telling others about my problems with my partner instead of with him/her saves him/her from being hurt.</p>	<p>— —</p>	<p>We need to have confidants in our lives, but sharing our problems should be with the goal of fixing the situation not just a reaffirmation that you're "right" and your partner is "wrong". This is not loving behavior, but a prideful, egocentric act.</p>
<p>If only he/she would change, I'd be happy.</p>	<p>— —</p>	<p>We cannot force or even expect people to change for us. We can only change ourselves. Fortunately, if there's a problem, if <i>we</i> change, it causes the other party to adapt his/her response, which can lead to the resolve for which we're hoping.</p>
<p>It's all his/her fault.</p>	<p>— —</p>	<p>We are always responsible in some way for how things turn out. If there's a disagreement you're an active participant in the fight and have contributed to it somehow. People need to take more responsibility for their lives and not blame parents, media, politicians, the Church etc. for the way he/she acts.</p>
<p>I'm a good person, so life should treat me well.</p>	<p>— —</p>	<p>Life isn't fair; thus, our response should be: "How can we make life great for us despite the current circumstances?"</p>
<p>My life is so hard.</p>	<p>— —</p>	<p>Every situation has positives and negatives. If we focus on the negative we'll always be the</p>

	— —	loser; we shouldn't ignore the negative, but if we focus on the positive we'll feel better and be happier.
Reminding someone of their faults and nagging will help.	— —	Compliments are the best way to receive what we want, especially when it comes to behavior. Compliments can be like doggie treats for people; it reinforces proper behavior by encouraging the person and letting them know what you like in a positive way.
There's a right and wrong way to do things.	— —	Even in math the right answer can have many ways of being found. Thus, we need to listen to our partner's ideas and not be stuck only on our own ideas.
If I don't get what I want I need to nag and/or whine.	— —	Nagging and whining may get you what you want, but it leads to the receiver becoming irritated and annoyed with you. It ultimately huts your relationship.
Romance and sex eventually die off after the honeymoon phase.	— —	Romance and sex are acts of choice. They disappear when a couple drops it on their priority list and/or become neglectful of each other.
If I get married, he/she'll change. <i>OR</i> If I have kids he/she'll love me more	— —	Increasing commitment through living together, marriage or children, rarely, if ever, improve the situation. They, in fact, increase the complications.
I'll never find anyone else.	— —	The world has over 7 billion people. There are many people with whom we could be happily married; it's a matter of <i>timing</i> (i.e. being at the right spot at the right time with someone who is single), <i>searching</i> (i.e. actively looking for suitable partners in suitable places) and <i>patience</i> (i.e. desperation is never attractive).
"But God told me we were meant to be together."	— —	These are the words of someone whose emotions are overpowering his/her logic. They are typically used in a desperate attempt to salvage a broken relationship.
"But I love him/her." (These are the typical words of the abused)	— —	If people are telling you you're not right for each other, they're likely right because they're not blinded by hormones and neediness.

Tip: Take a moment to apologize to your partner for any area that needs fixing and promise to help each other grow past these issues.

Part H) Ways to Improve Your Intimacy

****This is a really great section to go through together**

If you're able to make it this far, you are definitely on the right track in your relationship. You must be very good at supporting each other and accepting "growth opportunity" suggestions... and putting up with the cheese-y comments I throw in... well not literally throw; that'd be gross if my book was covered in actual cheese... I guess my cheese isn't so bad compared to that... yea for me.

For the next activity you will be reaffirming why you love each other. This will likely be a challenging, but worthwhile experience.

Affirmation Exercise		
Questions to Answer	For Him (5 reasons)	For Her (5 reasons)
1. When you first met me, I think you were attracted to me because (3 reasons):		
2. When I first met you, or became attracted to you, these are the reasons why:		
3. Now that you know me better, I think you're attracted to me because:		
4. Now that I know you better, this is why I'm attracted to you		

Bonus Activity: Give 5 solid reasons why you're worth loving

Hopefully, this gave you a chance to feel warm and squishy... please refrain from fat jokes. My partner would've pushed her finger into my stomach and said: "You got the squishy part right." My strength is self control... or is it lying? I guess you'll never know. Anyway... my weakness is staying on

topic. Sorry... This next chart will hopefully give you some inspiration for how you can do things to help improve your intimacy and/or prevent it from going stale if you're already doing well in this department.

Ways to Help Increase Intimacy and/or Prevent Complacency

1. Reminisce and reflect on the good times of your history together
Good Examples: "I remember when we first started dating..."
"Do you remember our first trip together?"
"I used to really love how..."

Bad Idea: "Remember when you treated me like you loved me? I miss that."
"Remember when you cared about what you looked like around me? I miss finding you attractive."
"Remember when you could fit in your jeans and you weren't so fat?"
2. Randomly contact each other in different ways
Examples: Emails, random phone calls, flowers dropped off at work, love note or sexy picture in your partner's lunch or briefcase, etc.
3. Surprises, which can be as simple as doing one of your partner's chores
4. Be spontaneous and break routine somehow
Examples: Surprise your partner with a picnic lunch at work
Instead of sitting watching TV, preorder tickets to a show he/she wants to see
5. Find out what turns your partner on and surprise them with it somehow
Examples: Rose peddles that lead to the bedroom
Have candles lit for when your partner comes home
Striptease for them... preferably in the privacy of your home
6. Randomly start to massage a part of your partner
Examples: While your partner's driving rub his or her neck or head
While watching TV, start to rub your partner's feet or back
7. Surprise your partner with his or her favorite food... this a much better choice than your partner's favorite enema
8. Surprise your partner with a heroic and/or strong initiative for being intimate. I know for myself, a woman taking initiative to want to be with me makes me feel super attractive. Guys typically have to be a little more creative for being "heroic".
9. Go somewhere or do something that will make you laugh
Examples: Go to a good comedy club or watch a comedian on TV.
Watch a movie with people who laugh easily, so their laughter will encourage yours.

Play a game like charades or another role playing game where you can laugh at yourself.
Go to a library or bookstore and read a joke book together.
Look up funny videos on sites like Youtube.

10. Try something new together and be ready to laugh at yourselves
Examples: Try a dance class you've never done before
Try a new sport or recreation like curling or ladder ball

Suggestion: Pay close attention to the activities in this book, especially in Chapter 5: Understanding. In this chapter, you'll learn a number of things that will help you score serious brownie points, which, for a guy, usually means "sex points" because woman typically need a little more effort or prelude to start their engines... unless you're Hugh Jackman or Ryan Phillips. I know, as a guy, I wish I could simply start to take off my clothes to turn my partner on because that's all I need... sometimes not even that. Unfortunately, this idea of an easy trigger is rarely the case for women... if it is for your female partner, I'm very jealous.

Other ideas relevant for you

For Him

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

For Her

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

****One of My Favorite Activities****

The 6 Love Languages

I wanted to save this until the end because it's one of my favorite activities... hence the title and stars. For a more in depth look at this idea you can read the book that inspired this, *The Five Love Languages*, by Gary Chapman. You should know, however, that I've adapted the five to the six since they make more sense to me and the people with whom I've shared this. I'm not saying that I'm smarter than him... you can though; please do. I'm also not saying he's "wrong"; he's made a lot of money with this idea, so it's definitely working for him. The changes originated since for myself and my girlfriend the definitions for *Physical Touch* really didn't work and my number one love language was completely left out; hence, I created a new category altogether, *Fun*. Thus, I present:

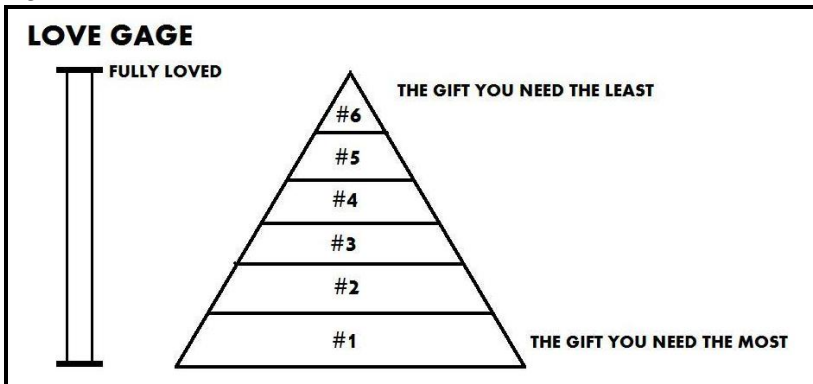
The SIX Love Languages

1. Quality Time (slightly reworked)
2. Physical Presence (changed)
3. Words of Affirmation
4. Acts of Service
5. Gifts (changed)
6. Fun (added category)

Why Knowing Your 6 Love Languages is Important

1. Everyone needs to experience all 6 of the Love Languages in their proper amounts in order to feel *completely* loved. What this means is that every one of us needs to experience all 6 of the Love Languages in a different order and in different proportions. For instance, some people need *Quality Time* a lot more than being given a *Gift* or vice versa, but they still need to experience both of these. This is best demonstrated through the following diagram.

Fig. 3.9



Looking at the *Love Gage*, you'll notice you have to have all 6 of the Love Languages to reach "Fully Loved". The triangle shape helps to show that we need more of certain Love Languages than others.

2. Not receiving your top love languages are the most hurtful. For instance, *Physical Presence* is my #2 Love Language. I never knew why I took people not coming to events I organized so personally until I discovered this. I found people could say they loved or cared about me, but if they didn't hang out with me, it didn't register in my mind that they cared. Thus, knowing this has helped me not feel the same level of rejection I used to feel.

3. Unless you're doing your partner's top Love Languages, he or she will never feel completely loved by you. For instance, if your partner's least Love Language is *Gifts*, you can show up everyday with flowers or candy and he or she will still feel that somehow you don't love him or her. No matter what you give, your partner will still feel partly unloved. This can be really frustrating to someone who is continually giving and not feeling appreciated. Thus, this helps point out how to best make your partner feel loved.
4. Knowing the 6 Love Languages gives you the ability to gage whether you're hitting all 6 of your partner's Love Languages. For instance, perhaps you're very good at hitting your partner's top Love Languages, but if you never do his or her lower registers, he or she will still feel unloved at some level.
5. The better you can cover all 6 of the Love Languages in their proper proportions, the less fighting you'll likely have to face.
6. Understanding the 6 Love Languages can help you interact with others better as well whether your parents, friends, co-workers, etc. If you struggle making someone happy, try to figure out their top Love Languages. For instance, perhaps you buy a cookie for your boss everyday, but they're never appreciative; this is likely a sign that *Gifts* doesn't matter very much to him or her... or he or she's a jerk. Try to figure out people's Love Languages and you'll know how to better connect with them.

Hint: For guessing which ones are the most important to other people, especially your partner:

- a) Think about what the person does the most for you because that can be a sign of what he or she wants in return
- b) Think about what the person complains about the most.

The Six Love Languages Defined

1. *Quality Time:* Complete and undivided attention is given to and from your partner even if it's only for 15 minutes a day. Cuddling and massaging can enhance this experience, but may not be necessary. This means all distractions are turned off including the TV, computers and phones.
Sign: "You're always busy doing work; do you even know that I exist?"

2. *Physical Presence*: Knowing the person is around you is more important than actually connecting on a deeper level. This can include watching a movie together or reading a book in the same room or even the same house sometimes. This can also be as simple as leaving little notes to say hi. Ultimately, comfort is found in knowing the other person is there and love is experienced because the person “cares” enough to be near you.
Sign: “You’re never around and you don’t call to tell me what’s going on.”
3. *Words of Affirmation*: These are words that say I love you whether directly or through compliments and praise; this can be anything from “I love you,” to: “I’m so proud of you,” to: “You’re really good at that,” to: “You did a great job there,” and to: “You look great today.”
Sign: “You’re never happy. Do I do anything right? You only complain.”
4. *Acts of Service*: This involves *doing* something to prove your love to your partner. This can be anything from doing a job around the house for him or her, to rubbing your partner’s back at the end of the day. You are ultimately, *doing* something for the person you love, which is like putting an action to your words.
Sign: “You never do anything around the house.”
5. *Gifts*: This includes random, unexpected offerings like a love note or buying flowers without there being a reason as well as giving presents at formal occasions. Gifts ultimately prove that you thought about the other person while you were apart and are, therefore, not about being superficial: “Look, I have proof that I thought about you while you were away from me for a short or extended period of time depending on your definitions because time is relative.” What you give can also show how well you appear to know a person, and why the right gift can make all the difference on a holiday.
Sign: “You bought me a toaster? Do you even know me?” Or: “Do you ever think about me when I’m away?”
6. *Fun* (the added category): Fun is about doing what *you* feel is fun with your partner. It’s deeper than *Physical Presence* and different than *Quality Time*. For me, this can be laughing together or having a deep conversation. This may vary depending on what you enjoy doing together, but the affect is the same.
Example: “We always do the same thing. We never do anything fun and different anymore.”

For this Activity...

1. Look at the 6 Love Languages and fill out the two sections of the chart below without telling your partner your answers.
2. When both of you are finished, compare your answers. Discuss any differences that may arise. Your responses might surprise you. I know for my partner and I we found we could figure out each other's better than our own.

For Him What is the Order of Your Love Languages? <i>Quality Time, Physical Presence, Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Gifts, Fun</i>	
Yours	Guess Your Partners
1. _____ (most important)	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____
6. _____ (least important)	6. _____

For Her What is the Order of Your Love Languages? <i>Quality Time, Physical Presence, Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Gifts, Fun</i>	
Yours	Guess Your Partners
1. _____ (most important)	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____
4. _____	4. _____
5. _____	5. _____
6. _____ (least important)	6. _____

After Comparing Your Answers		
<i>Questions to Answer</i>	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
1. Were there any surprises in your responses?		
2. Why did you have differences?		
3. Knowing your partner's list, what can you do differently to help your partner feel loved?		

An Important Activity to Sustain a Happy Relationship

Activity: Everyday find something you are thankful about in your partner. This will help you remember how lucky you are to have this person in your life, which is valuable because: “When we perceive a good as a gift, we are more likely to protect it.” (Emmons, 2007) *Thankfulness is the key to happiness.*

The Next Level: Continually tell your partner what it is you're thankful for in order to be reaffirming of your love for him or her.

Important Tip: To be someone who enjoys life and someone others want to be around, practice being thankful in all situations. Instead of just finding the negative, look for the positive in order to enjoy life more and not be a poop.

Conclusion

Developing our ability to love is a lifelong learning experience. No matter where we are in life, we will have areas in our ability to love on which we need to work. This journey is meant to be most apparent in our marriage. The person we marry is the one person who is guaranteed to challenge us, which can make us want to kill him or her at times... please don't follow through with these feelings if you ever have them. Our partner is also the one person who has promised to support our continual growth to become a healthier person. Thus, it becomes all the more important for marriage vows to remain sacred. Remember, it's “For better or for worse,” and at some point it'll likely feel like the “For worse”... sorry about that. At least there's always hope for the “For Better” and we can be grateful the marriage vows aren't: “I promise to be with you for worse and for even worse.” That definitely lacks the romantic appeal.

Chapter 4: Change

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishments the scroll.
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.
(“Invictus” by William Ernest Henley)

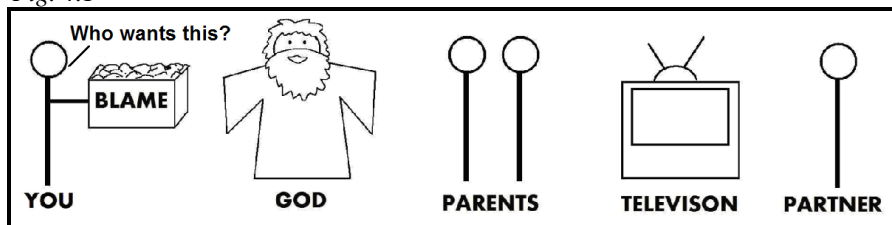
The Exciting Thing: We have been blessed with the power to change and overcome bad habits; therefore, it is up to us to make the most out of our lives.

Part A) We Are Responsible

The most important lesson you can learn is that you are responsible for your own life. You are responsible for the kind of person you are and the way you choose to live your life. Fortunately, this means that no matter your past and what others have done to you, *the present is open to how you choose to live it.*

The “Gift” of Blame

Fig. 4.1



As this cartoon illustrates, too often in our society we try to pass the blame onto others whether God, our parents or other things like television and the media. Some people are very gifted at finding excuses for everything that goes wrong in their lives whether it is to prevent retribution or from feeling any guilt or shame. Sometimes we can even be amazing at making excuses for other people: “He’s like that because his parents didn’t hug him enough.” “She’s not doing well in school because of her teacher.” “He only hits me when I deserve it.” Typically, we make excuses because it’s easier than fixing the problem. In the movie *The Rock*, Sean Connery’s character makes a profound statement to Nicholas Cage’s who made a mistake, but claims he tried his best: “Your best? Losers always complain about their best while the winner is at home [doing] the prom queen.” Ultimately, if you find you’re making an excuse, this is a sign that something’s wrong. *Excuses mean something needs to be changed.*

The biggest excuses are always rooted in our past. The thing is the past can't be changed; thus, we need to let it go. We need to learn from where we've been, but not let it hurt where we're going. The past can't be changed, but the present is about possibilities. *Letting your past hold you back is the worst choice you can make.* No matter what has happened, no matter what is said, no matter how badly you've been hurt, the truth remains: *you are responsible for how you choose to live your life.*

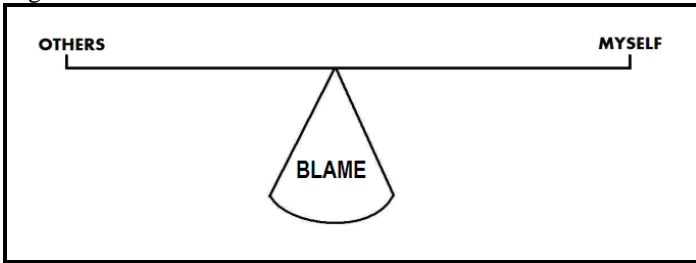
The Key to Change: Stop passing the blame, focusing on the past and making excuses; accept that you are responsible for your own life and make it better.

Another problem when it comes to blame is some people want to keep this "gift" all to themselves. They don't want to share it with those who also deserve it. The problem with this is guilt and shame are emotions that need to be appropriately shared with all of the guilty parties (see *Chapter 6: Power* for a further discussion on guilt). The statement: "It's all my fault" is never true. When assessing responsibility, taking all of the blame and being the martyr is not healthy for anyone involved. For instance, if a leader accepts all of the blame then the followers will not be held responsible for their participation. In the case of Adolf Hitler, he wasn't the only one pulling the trigger. Thus, the followers need to accept their share of the blame as well. Guilt is a necessary feeling when we do something wrong because it helps teach us how to be better in the future; therefore, we need to be willing to appropriately share it. Ultimately, we need to be careful not to give too much or too little; blame is meant to be in balance... if you haven't noticed, I'm all about balance.

As the following diagram illustrates, we need to balance the blame, accepting and sharing it appropriately. It takes at least two to fight, two to divorce and two to cheat... although normally there's a third party in this last scenario. Remember, even cheating involves both you and your partner because something must not be right in the relationship if one of you cheats, which maybe as simple as: "I didn't realize being too busy for sex for ten months would be a problem," or: "I guess I shouldn't have married a want-to-be hooker."

The Blame Balance

Fig. 4.2



Passing the Blame		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
Are you more likely to pass the blame? To whom or to what? Or are you more likely to accept all of the blame? Why?		
What thing(s) do you typically use from your past as your excuse for why you are the way you are or why you do what you do?		
Is there anything from your past that is holding you back from being all you can be in the present? How can you limit or eliminate its effect?		

Tip: If you have anything from your past holding you back then you need to look at the section on *Forgiveness* in *Chapter 6: Power*

If you look at all of the problems you face in life, you are at the common denominator in all of them. It was you who chose your job, your partner, your lifestyle and everything else *currently* going on. Even if you had a poor childhood, as an adult you have the freedom to choose for yourself how you will now live. *You may be starting at the end of the rat race, but you're still in the race and how you finish is up to you.* Circumstances may limit your options, but you still have the ability to choose. I remember being encouraged

to date a certain young lady and we ended up having an avalanche of problems. I would blame her and the people who encouraged the relationship; I would blame hormones and bad habits, but it always came back to the fact that I chose to be with her. Every fight we had could've been avoided if we simply called off the relationship earlier or when we had first known things were tough. We stayed together, however, because there were always excuses for why we fought: it's that time of the month, it's that time of the day, and it's that time of hour when I say something stupid. In the end, it was our choice to be in that position. This is no different for us choosing to be in other situations like what community we live in, what relationships we develop and maintain, what opportunities we accept or reject, or what kind of opportunities we generate by our lifestyles.

Part B) Saying 'Yes' or 'No' to Change and Temptation

When opportunities to change present themselves, we ultimately have two potential responses: 'Yes' or 'No' ('Maybe' is a procrastinator's way of saying 'No'). Every one of us has a natural bent towards saying one or the other. The type of mindset you have is best seen in your response to Facebook invites by friends to special events. Some people naturally say 'Yes' even if they have no intention of going... I hate when people do that because that's simply a means of avoiding temporary guilt and, in the end, hurts the event organizer even more than an initial rejection. Other people quickly say 'No' to everything without even thinking about it and this can be by saying 'No', 'Maybe' or not responding at all because they don't want to seem rude. Ultimately, we need to be honest and, at a deeper level, we need to find the courage to say 'Yes' or 'No' to that which we need to be saying 'Yes' or 'No' in order to live properly. For instance, sometimes the very things we should be saying 'No' to can be the hardest things to which we can say 'No'. Whether it's sleeping in when we should be getting up, not eating that last piece of chocolate cake when we're full or on a diet, or even saying 'No' to a promotion that will likely damage our marriage, saying 'No' can be very difficult, but very necessary.

Note: Some people have more addictive personalities than others. If you have a family history of things like alcoholism, you will need to be extra careful to avoid paths that will put you into situations where it'll be harder to say 'No'. For instance, why go to an ice cream shop when you're lactose intolerant, but love ice cream (and, of course, not have a lactose pill) or, if you're married,

why walk into a brothel? This is accentuating the temptation and, ultimately, makes life harder on yourself.

Temptation is a funny thing and not in a “Ha ha that’s hilarious” kind of way. It’s funny in the “I know that’ll hurt me in the long run, but it looks so good now” kind of way. When it comes to temptation, the quicker you can say ‘No’ to it the easier it is. The more you toy with the idea the more tempting it becomes. For instance, when I was in university I had *the* most beautiful young lady in one of my classes. I was dating someone at the time, but I was curious so I just happened to bump into her and start a conversation. This made the initial temptation much greater because it turned out she was also a really great person. Suddenly, we were talking more and more, which caused me to think about her more and more. At the time I had brutally low self-esteem and figured she would never go for me so it was safe to toy with the idea, but suddenly she was confessing her feelings for me in an email... which of course my girlfriend found... not a good day. Fortunately, when this young lady found out that I had a girlfriend... after two weeks of talking where I had been conveniently avoiding the word and topic... yeah, I was a jerk... she stopped talking to me thereby squelching my chances to be with her. Ultimately, this experience helped me realize the danger of pursuing a temptation no matter how “safe” it may seem at first. I ended up hurting this young lady, my girlfriend at the time who was really wonderful about the whole thing – she was a great example of someone who knew how to really love – and it made my life really confusing and painful. All of this happened because I didn’t say ‘No’ to the initial temptation. All I had to do was *not* talk to her and then she would’ve been just another pretty face in the crowd. Instead, this temptation nearly ruined a relationship that was one of the best things I had going for me at the time... emphasis on “at the time” so my current girlfriend doesn’t kill me... see? I’m only partially stupid now (reference to earlier comment about men being stupid and women being... something else).

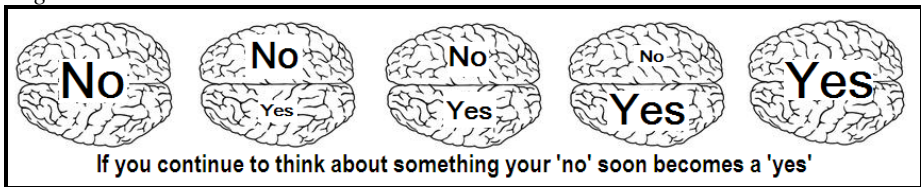
Aside: This experience also helped me realize that it’s very dangerous to underestimate how attractive we are because it can put us and others into really painful situations. Thinking: “She’ll never go for me,” was the worst thing I could’ve thought... especially when I’m so charming and smooth. My one friend says I’m smooth like chunky peanut butter, which is great

because that means I'm smooth... or at least I have moments of smoothness... or at least, I could be worse. I'm not a complete nut... more of a partially crushed nut... crushed nuts is definitely not a good image to have as a guy... sorry about that.

This experience with temptation can be better explained through the following illustration.

Temptation: The Path to Saying 'Yes'

Fig. 4.3



As seen in this illustration, at the beginning it is easier to say 'No', but the more the person thinks about something and toys with the idea, the more difficult it becomes to keep saying 'No'. If we don't stop flirting with the idea, we start creeping down the path where we will inevitably say 'Yes'. No matter how easy it can be to say 'No' at the beginning, if we don't stay away from it, we might be setting ourselves up to fail because eventually we start second guess our original thoughts. Soon we could be thinking: "Maybe it's not so bad." In my situation with the incredibly hot... I mean "the semi-attractive" young lady, the more time I spent with her, the less I wanted to say 'No' to the desire to be with her, which was at the expense of my girlfriend. This situation taught me a valuable lesson; it's a lot easier to say 'No' at the beginning, especially since our minds... or I guess hormones in this case... can play tricks on us. I was eventually thinking: "What should I do? This girl is so awesome... I love my girlfriend and she's awesome too... but what if this other girl is better? What if I'm missing out on something?" Soon my mind was consumed with these thoughts and they prevented me from realizing how great I already had it. If I had appreciated my partner the way I should have and if I had said 'No' to the temptation at the beginning it would've made my life a lot easier. Not saying 'No' to something we should is the very dangerous trap we can all fall into whether with other people or things like vacations or material objects. Thus, knowing how to initially say 'No' *and* not set ourselves up to eventually cave into the desire is very important.

Tip: Being aware of when it's hard for you to say 'No' helps protect yourself from being put into situations that are very tempting.

Note: Temptation is not normally an obvious: "I'm being tempted should I say yes or no to it?" Instead, temptation is usually subtle and often better seen in retrospect. To make matters worse, temptation becomes harder and harder to detect as it becomes a habit and appears normal. Many times we need an experience and/or person to wake us up from our habit whether it's our tendency to be rude to a server when he or she makes a mistake, to yell at our partner, to ignore someone in need, to gossip or to criticize someone.

On the positive side of this pattern of temptation, this can be an effective way of getting ourselves to do the right thing as well. For instance, we can use this pattern to train ourselves to eat better, love the right people, exercise and so on. It can also be a great way to get others to do something we know is right... emphasis on "right" and not being manipulative for what we want. Many times putting the idea into someone's head is much better than nagging or begging for what we want whether in business or personal life. This allows time for the other person to adjust to an idea and make it feel like their own thereby empowering them and giving them a better sense of passion for it. This form of agreement is much more sustainable than forcing someone to abide by your wishes like a parent has to do with a young child sometimes.

Just like saying 'No' is important, it is up to us to know when and how to say 'Yes' to the things to which we should be saying 'Yes.' We need to say 'Yes' to things that will help us be healthier and happier like exercise, reading, socializing with good people, properly prioritizing, patience and perseverance and forgiving.

Tip: Knowing when and how to say 'Yes' and 'No' separates the wise from the foolish, the successful from those who crash and burn (e.g. Charlie Sheen and Lindsay Lohan).

Choosing Yes or No?		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What kinds of things should you be willing to say 'Yes' to in regards to changing?		

<i>(e.g. forgiving, growing emotionally, making your partner happy, holding your tongue in a fight, etc.)</i>		
<p>What kinds of things should you be saying 'No' to in regards to changing? <i>(e.g. cheating, addictions, putting other people before you partner, selfish desires, acting 15 when you're 30, downplaying possible sexual attraction, etc.)</i></p> <p>Tip: We need to say 'No' to anything that doesn't help us reach our goals.</p>		

For Christians:
 Jesus said: "Simply let your 'Yes' be 'Yes,' and your 'No,' 'No'." (Mat 5:37a) This verse implies that we are allowed and supposed to say both 'Yes' and 'No' at the appropriate times. I know for myself, growing up in the church I always felt that saying 'No' was negligent of others and should be avoided at all costs. Fortunately, I've recently discovered the benefits of saying both 'Yes' and "No' in order to prioritize who and what is important in my life.

Part C) Facing Change

When things are not the way we want, the best response is: *what can I do differently to make things better?* Nagging, whining, stewing silently and yelling are all things that lead to the same responses: defensiveness and hurt. You will, therefore, want to find better ways to get what you want.

Remember, *you* are responsible.

- If you're unhappy
- If you don't feel loved
- If you hate your job
- If you're in a bad relationship
- If you "fall" out of love in your marriage
- You are responsible; therefore, it is up to you to fix the situation.

Tip: Relationships are meant to build us up and help us feel valued and loved; therefore, we should be continually striving to find ways to grow ourselves and to be ready to support our partners as they do the same.

Facing Potential Changes		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What <i>are</i> you willing to change about yourself?		
What <i>aren't</i> you willing to change about yourself? (e.g. <i>I go to church</i>)		
What things about your partner do you want to remain the same?		

Dr. Grant Mullen maintains that there are two kinds of change:

1. Change we choose
2. Change we don't choose, but with which we are forced to comply

Being forced to change is unpleasant; therefore, we need to find healthy ways to change on our own before we are forced to by outside factors.

Part D) How to Change

How we can choose to change can be simplified into a simple acronym.

How to Change: ACTED

A ~ Accept responsibility

C ~ Create a goal

T ~ Try things that will help you attain your goal

E ~ Evaluate how well these things work

D ~ Do what works

Note: Beating yourself up for “failure” is the worst thing you can do because it discourages you from trying again. Try to view failure as a successful way of finding what doesn’t work or reinforcement for why you need to change.

The acronym ACTED is an easy concept in writing, but it can be brutally challenging. Here are a couple examples beginning with a more obvious one.

Example 1: Changing Your Body Weight

A ~ Accept the weight as your responsibility; don’t blame poor genes, McDonalds, bad parents etc.

C ~ Create a goal for your desired size.

T ~ Try things that can help you lose weight (e.g. getting a personal trainer and/or nutritionist, jogging, eating better, be around healthy people, join a support group, try a workout DVD, etc.).

E ~ Evaluate what works and what doesn’t in order to not waste your time and energy (e.g. if your personal trainer is terrible, try a different one)

D ~ Do the things that work.

Example 2: Gaining Self-Control over Anger

A ~ Accept that you are in control of whether you will be angry or not and how you handle it.

C ~ Create a goal for your desired attitude and how to handle things. For instance, I want to respond like this to things that make me a little angry and like this for things that make me really angry.

T ~ Try things that will likely help you gain or keep control. For instance, you can try to reduce things that anger you, accept certain things are out of your

control and not worth getting angry over; you can try fleeing from bad situations, look for positive reinforcement, have certain people around you that help you stay calm, or be around children so you won't go off on a swearing tirade.

E ~ Evaluate what works and what doesn't.

D ~ Do the things that work.

****Example 3: Changing Your Attitude**

One of the most important things we can change is our attitudes. Ultimately, if we have a negative mindset we need to learn to be more positive. This was the trickiest thing I've had to work on, especially since I didn't even originally know it was a problem. Up until several years ago, I assumed being negative was the way everyone thought, but it turned out I was wrong... which I believe was the first time for me. A lot of how we view life starts with how we *want* to view life. If you're a "the glass is half empty" kind of person, life will never be as joyful, peaceful and exciting compared to those who are: "I have a glass; that's awesome. It's half full? I'm so blessed." If you're like me and have a natural tendency towards a negative mindset... sorry about your luck... you need to continually fight this in order to have more friends and enjoy life more. Fortunately, this is one battle that makes a big difference even with a small change.

This will be further discussed in *Chapter 5: Understanding* under the section on *Life Scripts* and in *Chapter 6: Power* under *Forgiveness*

Tip: Negative mindsets perpetuate more and more negative thoughts in a downward spiral effect increasing anxiety, chance of sickness, anger and depression.

Changing This Negative Mindset

A ~ Accept responsibility for your negative mindset.

C ~ Create a goal (e.g. I want to be happier).

T ~ Try things that will help you attain your goal. For instance, tell yourself positive messages like: "I am a worthy person who deserves to be happy and to be loved," "If God is for me, who can be against me?" or you can do the Stuart Smalley character's mantra: "I'm good enough, I'm smart

enough and dog gone it, people like me.” Another trick is to look for the positive. If you don’t like something, which is bound to happen, find the positive side in the experience: “That was a good learning experience. I won’t do that again, but now I know what it’s like.” The best way to be more positive is to practice being thankful, which becomes easier if you can surround yourself with people with good attitudes towards life.

E ~ Evaluate what works and what doesn’t

D ~ Do what works.

Part E) Coming Up With Ways to Change for the Better

Be the person with whom you want to be friends
OR

Be the person to whom you want to be married.

The above phrases are my rules for people who want to make friends, date or marry because it gives us an idea of what we should be like. For instance, if you want to be friends or marry a loving and happy person, be a loving and happy person. If you want someone who likes sports or does certain kinds of hobbies, do them yourself. If you want to be with an insecure, manipulative person who no one else can like, be an insecure, manipulative person who no one else can like. Hopefully this last one won’t be your goal. It’s easy, but not worth trying.

Here are two different charts that provide ways to discover options for how you can change yourself, which will be followed with what *not* to change.

Chart1 Ways to Generate Ideas for How to Change		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
List the things you look for in people with whom you want to be friends.		
List the things you look for in the person to whom you want to be married.		

Rewrite these lists as: “things I will do”	<i>Things I will do:</i>	<i>Things I will do:</i>
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Chart 2 Another Way to Generate Ideas for How to Change		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
List the things you want your partner to do or be like whether they’re doing it already or not		
Rewrite this list: “Things I will do”	<i>Things I will do and be like:</i>	<i>Things I will do and be like:</i>

What Not to Change		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What are some things about your partner you want to remain the same?		
What things about yourself do you <i>not</i> want to change?		
What things are different about you now that you want to get back? (<i>e.g. as a child we’re often more hopeful and innocent</i>) Tip: saying “Being single” would be a bad answer here		

Part F) Reasons Why People Don’t Change

People don’t change for three very simple reasons: *Ignorance, Laziness, and Fear*. Ignorance can be as simple as: “I didn’t know I was doing anything wrong,” to a refusal to accept any responsibility for a problem: “It’s all their

fault.” The former is easy to fix because clarification can lead to the necessary change: “Oh, I’m sorry; I didn’t know you didn’t like having a tongue put in your ear.” The scary thing is that’s from a real experience I had. Fortunately that was an easier fix: “Hey, uh that’s not really my thing,” which makes sense because I’m not a fan of wet willies or whatever you call it when someone puts his or her tongue in your ear... and I’m not sure why anyone thought that was sexy, but apparently someone did, ew. The one problem with clarifying an issue is it is typically met with defensiveness and excuses: “But... but... but...” Fortunately, if you are gentle and not condemning, this can be overcome.

The second reason for not changing, laziness, is a word I use for lack of a better term for someone who is unmotivated or is yet to have the passion necessary for making the change: “So I’m a little heavy, who cares? I’m wearing a winter coat... I have to wear a bathing suit on vacation? Oh shoot! I’d better start exercising.” Thus, in order to overcome this problem, the trick is to find that right motivation.

The final reason, fear, is the biggest challenge many of us will face when it comes to change. I know I often get afraid of what will happen or having to deal with giving up something like chocolate chip cookies because I love them more than six-pack abs. Unfortunately, fear causes us to procrastinate and will even prevent us from breaking a habit or leaving someone we shouldn’t be with whether dating, friend or work because we’re afraid of the unknown. Fortunately, any fears we may have can be overcome with the right help and encouragement and, therefore, not a reason to hold ourselves back from making our lives better.

Discuss: a) What’s your biggest hindrance to change?
b) How can you help each other with this?

Part G) What Can’t Be Changed About Men

*****An Important Note, Especially For the Ladies***

There seems to be a big problem nowadays where women are continually telling their partner to change and to be different in some way. It’s like they’re trying to train a dog: “No... no... good boy.” What women need to understand is men want one thing, one thing. *Men want to make their partner happy;* that’s it. It’s such a simple goal. It’s three words: “Make partner happy.” I’m

sure a few of you are wondering: “I thought guys only cared about sex,” but here’s how this fits. Guys want to make their partner happy because we know this can lead to sex. If we’re successful at making our partner happy, we know we should be rewarded in some way, which we hope is sex... at least in the case of our partners. Emphasis on partners; that could definitely lead to some issues in the work place: “That was an excellent presentation you made today Jerry,” said the overweight, pungent, poorly groomed, overzealous manager. “Time for your reward...”

Tip: To make your man feel good, smile at him and/or look like you want to have sex with him once in awhile. Ultimately, the best thing you can do is make him feel like he’s making you happy.

Unfortunately, this goal of making our partners happy can feel impossible to attain; thus, a major problem develops. You see, the greater the task of making the female partner happy, the greater the chance of the guy giving up trying. This is a huge problem because when a guy gives up trying to make his partner happy, this leads to the relationship becoming increasingly frustrating for both people. For instance, he might end up sitting at the computer or the TV watching sports and playing video games to distract himself from his wife and the life that he’s given up trying to make better: “I tried to be tough and I wasn’t sensitive enough. Then I tried being sensitive and I wasn’t manly enough. What’s the point in trying when nothing makes her happy?” “I clean the house, but then she redoes it, or yells at me for not being good enough. She might as well do it herself.” Unfortunately, if he gives up trying to make his partner happy, she will become increasingly irritated, which will cause the man to be even more distant and distracted from her; thus, perpetuating this negative downward spiral.

Even if a guy hates his job, I would argue that he can continue moving along quite comfortably through life as long as he’s able to make his partner happy because he’s still a success in some way. If his wife is miserable, he’ll either try to work more or find other ways to distract himself from both her and work. These are the men you frequently see lined up in bars drinking with their buddies or even by themselves. They work to drink, and drink to get through work and deal with their marriage because it’s the only escape from their misery. Therefore, women, if you are unhappy with your man, the worst thing you can do is make him feel like a failure. If you want to see positive changes,

you need to make him feel good as a man and husband. The more he thinks he's able to make you happy, the more willing he'll be to do things to make you as such. If your man has already given up on you, or was severely damaged in a previous relationship by a demanding woman, this will take more work, but it's not impossible to help. Start the compliments and see his confidence return and his desire and ability to make you happy will follow.

Tip: Having an unhappy wife makes a man feel like a failure. A happy wife makes a happy man, and a happy man is better at making his wife happy. Thus, women need to be quicker to make their man feel appreciated in order to be treated the way they want.

Unfortunately, present day, Western cultured women have made this task of making them happy increasingly difficult in two main ways (this is definitely not helping the high divorce rates):

1. Many women don't know what they want thereby making it impossible for a guy to know how to act. This can be an obvious: "I don't know," or it can be: "I want this," so the guy changes to suit the want, but then she changes her mind: "No, I change my mind; I want this... no wait; I want this... no, this... no, wait I don't know..."
2. Some women want the impossible: "I want a rugged bad boy who is also instantly sensitive and gentle when I need him to be that way. Plus, he has to know exactly what I want without me telling him because then I'll know he loves me and understands me. I really just want a guy who can do telepathy because that's real love when he just knows what I want when I think it. I complain that he doesn't communicate enough, but I want to be able to just think what I want because I deserve this."

Note: Women typically bond through the sharing of their struggle; thus, on some level, they like drama. They want to be happy, but many women would rather have something to complain about in order to "bond". The problem is men would rather be happy and resolve the conflict than "bond" through complaining. Hence, women become angry that their partner doesn't "listen" and the men become frustrated since they're not able to help resolve the problem. Women need to realize men don't bond through struggle; if a man's partner is struggling in some way, he feels inadequate to

make her happy. Thus, men and women need to find a healthy way to bond and be happy in a way they can both appreciate.

Tip: Men typically need to hear more praise and encouraging words than women. We're more sensitive than we let on. There's a reason most men are mama's boys. Mother's are quick to praise, which is the way to a man's heart. When a man loses this sense of "I'm impressive," they often become closed off, rigid and/or resentful.

Guys may be stupid, but we're not incompetent; sometimes we just need guidance and help to not appear this way... or at least as much. To do this, women need to have attainable expectations and encourage us with positive support. For instance, if a man changes the toilet paper roll, but puts the roll on backwards, you have three ways of approaching this. The first is to say nothing and get angrier and angrier every time he does this until you snap. The second is to snap right away: "Why would you put it on backwards? What's wrong with you? Haven't you seen how it's supposed to be everyday of your life?" Unfortunately, both of these methods will typically lead to the man giving up changing empty rolls. The best way is to approach it with something like this: "Thank you for being so thoughtful to change the toilet paper roll," and maybe complete this praise with a hug. Then, after he knows he did something right and made you happy you can ask for a favor: "Could you do me a favor? I have this weird need..." Bringing the issue back to being *your* issue will help: "For some reason I really like it to be put in so it has an over-under roll rather than an under-over roll." This leaves it open for him to say something like: "Oh, I'm sorry, I meant to," or "Oh yeah, that makes sense," or "Sorry, I thought it was the other way." If he says something like: "Yeah, that is weird," don't take it as an offense, he is simply trying to brush off his guilt or feeling like he didn't make you happy. Ultimately, this method offers praise for something he did right even if it is as simple as having a good intention and doesn't demean his intelligence or make you look like you're his superior. The best part is he feels like he made his partner happy and knows how to make her even happier next time, which is the underlying goal. It'd be very surprising if his intention from the beginning was: "Screw her; I want to be a jerk." Although this could be the case if he felt attacked and wants to feel a sense of power through revenge... as lame as that may sound: revenge through toilet paper, ooh scary. In all honesty, if a man feels like you've attacked him, the next time the roll needs changing he'll at least think about not

doing it or he'll change it thinking: "Huhn, I think I'll put the roll on backwards because I know it'll bug her. I can't make her happy so I might as well have some fun with it." Guys want to make their partner happy, but if they can't do that, they'll make themselves laugh.

Tip: A guy who's given up trying to make his partner happy, even temporarily, will often purposely do things to upset his partner. Like a student labeled as the "bad kid", he'll live up to the reputation: "She thinks I'm a screw up; I'll show her how much of a screw up I can be."

Note: A happy woman has sex, which in turn makes the man happy; therefore, a happy woman makes a happy man... if he's the one with whom she's having sex. This is a major reason why a man wants to please his partner; he benefits. Unfortunately, there comes a breaking point where the guy gives up trying to make his partner happy because it seems like an impossible task. Thus, the quicker the woman is to find happiness, which is ultimately a personal choice, the better off the relationship will be.

Ladies, if you want a happy relationship, please learn how to be happy and to help your men know how to make you happier. Men are easy to please. Magazines always have articles like "How to wow your man in bed." I can answer that in one word: orgasm. If you want to make your man happy, orgasm and let it be known. The happier you are, the more you enjoy yourself, the more your man will think: "I'm the man; listen to her scream. I'm awesome." Help your man be and feel like the king of your world, and he'll make you feel like a queen. Men like porn because they imagine they're the ones making the girl so happy. It's definitely not because a man wants to see another man pleasure a woman better than him.

Tip: Whether sex or life in general, the best way to make your man happy is to be appreciative; say thank you and compliment him and he'll do more good things for you. The better he feels, the better he'll treat you.

Valuable Tool: One of the best things a woman can do is make a sex video with or by herself for her husband. Include saying things like: "I love you," and words and actions that turn him on. In addition, look at him and/or the camera in a loving manner. This will be a continual reminder that you love him, and is amazing for helping overcome porn addictions (being more

personal will make other images second rate), and encourage him to want to make up with you in order to be with you again; thus, you both win.

Here's an unfair reality: men are not allowed to be happy when their partner isn't because we come across as uncaring. Women, on the other hand, are allowed to be happy if their man isn't because he's supposed to be strong enough to deal with it. If my partner has a bad day, I have a bad day; if I have a bad day, I'm told to suck it up. Most guys will agree this is fine because all a guy really wants is to make his partner happy; if he can't, "Screw this and screw you." Therefore, ladies to prevent and counteract this attitude, be quick to praise your man and find ways to be happy.

Part H) What Can't Be Changed About Women

*****An Important Note, Especially For the Men***

Men want one thing, *to make their partner happy*, and women want one thing as well, *a project*. Women need projects. This becomes particularly noticeable with young girls who are all about boys and flirting. Their project is to find a guy. This is why teenage girls are so crazy over guys in a way that completely disappears some time in the future when the guy is left saying: "Why don't you get excited about me like you used to or like those teenage girls who are all happy to see their boyfriends?" Essentially, the guy is no longer her main project because she's moved onto other things that make her excited and challenge her. When a girl is focused on finding a guy this is her project. After finding him, the next project for most women is to change him... every man's dream come true: "Why are you with me if all you want to do is change me?" That's an easy answer; you're her project, which sometimes lasts a lifetime...or feels like one. For many women, projects usually follow the sequence of date, prep the man, get married, have a family, and nowadays, it often includes get divorced and become a cougar for awhile until they want to start a new family. For women who stay married, their new projects usually involve their kids, charities or certain hobbies... the lucky guys are with women whose hobby is baking while the unlucky face the dreaded 'r' word for men: redecorating. For some reason, out of nowhere many women need to overhaul something like the bedroom or bathroom... or you again. Whatever the makeover, this translates to being a big job for you; or, if they are the ones who need the overhaul, that means time at the spa or nail and hair salon and a

new wardrobe, which is a big expense for you. This behavior leads to several important conclusions:

1. Men, don't be surprised if your woman stops paying very much attention to you when you've been together for awhile; you're an old project. Either you're good enough to make her content... congratulations... or she's just completely given up on you. If the latter is true, she'll make it very clear (e.g. "You're hopeless," "Why do I bother?" "Here's a fast new car without seatbelts or brakes.")
2. Expect her to randomly have projects that typically involve you doing a lot of work. On the plus side, this is a way to make her happy.
3. Since a woman needs a project, try to help and encourage her to find ones that you like, or that at least keep you out of a position where you get really frustrated or used.
4. To make her happy, be very complimentary and encouraging of what she does... unless her project is to find a new partner.

Part I) The Two Extreme Personalities a Woman Can Want in a Man

There are currently two extreme kinds of men women can want: the knight in shining armor and the effeminized man. To help clarify any confusion, here is a breakdown of the positives and negatives for these two personality types in order for the women reading this to have a better idea of what they want if they don't already know.

Tip: There are positives and negatives to all things (e.g. fire is hot enough to cook things, but also hot enough to burn you). You can't look at these lists and say you want the two positive columns; it doesn't work that way. You can't have the positives without the negatives.

The Two Extreme Male Personalities			
The Knight in Shining Armor		The Effeminized Male	
<i>The Positives</i>	<i>The Negatives</i>	<i>The Positives</i>	<i>The Negatives</i>
In control, protective	May seem closed off	Shares feelings	Lacks protective or "manly" feel

Will perform and do what's needed	Faces pressure to perform that causes stress	Listens and expresses feelings	Feels like being with girlfriend and therefore loses sexual appeal
Ready to help you	May refuse help or be slow to ask	Empathetic	Can feel like a girlfriend
Ready to help others	Gets distracted from you	Connects to women well	Can lead to jealousy
Saving abilities	Quick to try to fix rather than to listen	Connection to female side	May lead to women needing other male friends who are more masculine
Task oriented	Ignore or downplay feelings in others and themselves; struggle to express or empathize	Connected to relationship	May feel too dependent or needy
Competitive	Doesn't appreciate being told what to do	Understands the need to cry	A man crying can be a sign of weakness
"Manly"	Defensive of masculinity	Good at shopping and connecting to "feminine things"	Confused about Masculinity and may struggle with feeling inadequate

Tip: If we love someone, we shouldn't be with them to make them someone or something else. We should be happy with them even if they never end up changing because we love them for who they are, not for what we think they can become.

Part J) A New Type of Woman

Another reason men are giving up trying to make women happy is because there is a tendency for postmodern women to want to try to do it all themselves. This follows our culture's mentality that to be "overworked" is something to brag about because it makes the person feel more important. Dr. Laura Schlessinger maintains that there is a growing problem of women who

suffer from *Hurried Woman Syndrome*, which refers to the feeling that women should be able to do everything themselves including work, take care of the family, run a household, etc. This is essentially removing the stereotypical male role from the equation (i.e. husband and father) and having the woman do everything because she is independent and in control. She doesn't need a man because she is a strong, capable woman. Unfortunately, just because you can do something yourself, doesn't mean you should. I think God gives us a good example of this with sex. We can have sex by ourselves, but it's not nearly as enjoyable as when we share it with someone we love.

Here is a breakdown of the positives and negatives of this type of mindset.

Miss Independent	
<i>The Positives</i>	<i>The Negatives</i>
Independent	Doesn't want to have to "rely" on a partner. Wants to do everything herself, which can lead to her feeling closed off
Hardworking	Working hard can become more important than enjoying life
Has a very high standard	Doesn't allow a partner to help her, which can make a man feel useless and inadequate
Wants to be self sufficient, capable of doing things herself	Can become resentful of partner who is not working as hard
Can tell you what she wants	Can be very over-controlling and demanding
Accomplishes many things	Often pushed by fear; fear of not being good enough, strong enough, not accomplishing enough etc.
Always has something interesting going on	May have a hard time relaxing or be too busy to spend time with her partner, which leads to a greater chance of him leaving or cheating on her

If this sounds like you, then you need to start finding ways to relinquish control and allow your partner to be more involved in your life. If you're a man and this sounds like you, it's time to trade in the purse and find a fanny pack... or I

guess something more manly and less dorky. Ultimately, we need to find a way to create and maintain a healthy balance of shared responsibilities with our partner.

Tip: If you love someone, you should want to share all parts of your life with him or her and not try to prove something to others by doing it all yourself. A marriage is meant to be a “partnership”, not an “ownership” or like a subordinate relationship similar to a captain and first mate.

Part K) What Men and Women Want

What Men Want: Men want a woman who is quick to forgive and who does not hold the stupid things he is guaranteed to say and do against him while encouraging him to keep trying to do what’s right. His arch nemesis is the *Nag*.

Tip: Men need a woman to “ooh” and “ah”. If you find your man’s lazy, start to praise him more for what he does do right and he’ll eventually be happy to do whatever since it makes you happy and gives him praise.

What Women Want: A woman wants a man to do what she wants without her having to nag and who works at not doing things that require her forgiveness. “You did what? What were you thinking?” are not things she wants to say to her man. Her arch nemesis is the *Nag Causer*, which is a guy who requires her to continually tell him the same things over and over because he keeps forgetting or ignoring her wishes. Women don’t naturally want to be a nag, but resort to this when they don’t feel heard or cared about.

Part L) Commitment Issues

It is often thought that guys struggle with commitment, but this is actually far from the truth; guys are great at commitment. For instance, when it comes to sports teams, guys will typically remain faithful to their team for their whole lives no matter how terrible the team might be because they have hope that things will get better. Guys even play dress up; putting on the outfits of their favorite players; talk about commitment... hopefully he won’t put on his partner’s clothes to show he loves her; that’d be awkward. Guys typically apply this level of faithfulness to other relationships as demonstrated with most remaining friends with old childhood pals and remaining protective and helpful

to their mothers. Thus, guys are great at commitment... we just get distracted by bikinis and yoga pants. Guys can even get excited with panties that aren't being worn. What woman sees a pair of boxers on the floor and thinks: "Oh baby, that's hot"? More likely the response is: "He left his underwear on the floor? I'm going to kill him." For a guy, looking at another woman is like watching another team play. We still love our team, but we enjoy the game so much we like to check out other teams once in awhile. The problem is when guys cross boundaries that hurt their partner by making them feel like they're not good enough. This can be because they're overzealous in their looking or they're not being attentive or complimentary enough to their partner to balance things out and keep their partner feeling like number one. Or, simply put, the guy's a turd and trying to find his manhood through conquering women because he's struggling with childhood damage; either way, avoid these types of men.

Note: Men crave having someone to care for and to care about to the point they will stick around with someone everyone else tells them they should leave. For the guy, it may be rough, but rough is better than loneliness. Therefore, guys typically don't break up, they leave for someone else. This is why many men are caught looking for a new partner while still dating. They want out, but they need to have someone to whom they can leave.

Women can also be overzealous in their looking at men, but this is typically considered acceptable because of the great hypocrisy between men and women. There is a double standard because it is assumed men should be able to be strong enough to put up with it. The truth is, however, *both* men and women need to be sensitive to their partners' feelings and to be careful to make them feel important and a top priority.

Society has unfortunately allowed this hypocrisy to fester. For instance, women are often allowed to tell their partner to change whereas if a man says something: "How can you be so insensitive?" For example, what guy can tell his partner: "You should lose a few pounds," and not be attacked by his partner, family, friends, strangers who overhear the comment, intelligent dogs, etc? Women, on the other hand, can get away with this because guys are supposed to be able to handle it. Regardless of this being right or wrong, ultimately, if we love our partner, it makes sense that we would want them to be at their best as we should want to be at our best for them; thus, there should

be some room for *appropriate encouragement* for this end. We should want to know how to please our partner; we should want to know what they like and dislike. This, of course, can be tricky and needs to be handled delicately.

Time Out: Take a moment to create your own ground rules for how you can encourage each other to look or be your best without any hurt being caused.

Here's the big difference between men and women: men like to look at *all* good looking women whereas women typically focus their attention on one or two *specific* men. For instance, teen girls splatter pictures of their dream guy all over their lockers, bedroom walls and available surfaces, which is why guys like Justin Bieber and Zac Efron become so huge. This mentality continues into adulthood with women helping guys like Brad Pitt, George Clooney and Johnny Depp become major stars. In fact, even a woman who makes it big is indebted to women. It definitely wasn't Britney Spears or Lady Gaga's male listening audience who made them millionaires. This fervent female dedication, however, is often tenuous and fleeting unlike a guys' faithfulness, which is often more subtle and long lasting. Ultimately, both men and women's natural tendencies have their benefits and drawbacks, and should never be used to make someone feel inferior. We need to respect our partner and try to understand their way of thinking: "Oh, so you don't love him more even though you have pictures of him everywhere and one of me. And no, my neck is sore from hockey." Remember, your partner is your priority.

Tip: Be careful not to stop doing what your partner found attractive when you first got together. For instance, "I used to be independent, but now I'm clingy;" "I used to be fun, but now I'm uptight and controlling;" "I used to be adventurous, but now I just watch TV." This is important because it's typically not changes to your physical appearance that really turn your partner off as much as it is the changes to your attitude.

A Dangerous Truth

When a man screws up, and this does happen... daily, he has to apologize and try to make it up to his partner by being extra nice and/or possibly buying flowers or chocolate. When a girl screws up, and this happens... more often than guys are allowed to say because we get in trouble if we complain... but when a girl screws up, she ends up being given flowers and treated extra well by her man because he wants her to feel better. Or in the worst cases, she'll get

counter angry to the man's anger and hurt thereby forcing him into submission and leaving him apologizing to her for being hurt. This is such a horrible feeling: "I'm sorry for upsetting you when you hurt me... Wait, I'm apologizing for you hurting me? How'd this just happen? You were the one who hurt me. What's wrong with... me... mmm boobs. What was I saying?" (The sad truth is that conversation is based on a true story). Either way, if someone screws up, the man is left expected to make the woman feel better whether it's because of his own fear and guilt for messing up or his desire to remove his partner's guilt for her mistake. Thus, when someone screws up, the guy typically gets screwed and not the way he wants. Actually it's the hope of getting screwed in the way he wants that pushes him to try to make the woman feel better. The truth is, women are the Gate Keepers (yes, that's a *Ghostbusters* reference) because they control when you as a couple have sex. Guys want sex, girls want sex, but not as much and not in the same way. I know some women will argue this, but ladies, trust me on this. You don't want sex the way a man does. We need hormonal release or we wet the bed and not in the: "Uh oh, I need to wear diapers to bed," kind of way. It's more like the: "Did I just hit puberty again? This is awesome and terrible at the same time." Hormones make men do stupid, stupid things with an emphasis on stupid, which includes bowing down to a woman in order to make her happy enough to have sex. This is the dangerous aspect of a man and woman relationship: it's very easy for a woman to use sex as a tool for control over her man, which is a very cruel thing to do. Even worse, this causes a serious imbalance in the relationship. Men know we're at a disadvantage and are constantly trying to fix this. For instance, a woman can wear a cleavage baring shirt and guys will be like: "Oh man, you're hot. I want you so bad." A guy can't do this. All he can do is wear... a mask? I'm George Clooney or whoever you find hot depending on your age and psychological make up. Because of this imbalance, guys will join rock bands, try to make more money, work out too much etc. Ultimately, ladies, please, be kind to your man. Understand this natural imbalance and try to reduce it by not using sex as control. Be quick to apologize and not expect your man to suck up to you when you make a mistake; he already has to when he makes a mistake, which is often enough. As a man, it hurts to have to apologize and be reminded of our mistakes over and over, especially when you can get away with not even apologizing for your mistakes because you know no matter what you do, all you have to do is show

some cleavage (or whatever turns your man on) and all will be momentarily forgotten. I say momentarily because deep down every non-apologetic experience adds to this list in the guy's mind that he uses to justify wanting to hurt you in some way. Guys don't fully forget; they bury it like a bone to use later whether on the field, driving, in an argument or as an excuse for cheating on you. Imbalance can only last so long before the "weak" fight back.

Of course in saying this, I know there are women who are in relationships where this is reversed, and you're left bowing down to your partner. My heart goes out to you because I know how much this hurts... hence my venting. No one should act superior, especially in a relationship like this.

In light of all of this, save your relationship: both of you need to learn to apologize to each other and not expect one person to have to do all the making up. Both men and women need to feel important in their relationship because you are. Being a gatekeeper is a great responsibility, and one that should be treated with much respect because you are ultimately a partner not a boss.

Part M) An Encouraging Story About Change

Years ago I was visiting a church and the priest told this story, which I believe best captures the truth about change. This is not the original story, but it is based on how I remember it, which, if you know my memory, is a pretty scary thing on which to rely.

One day, a father took his son into a field that was overrun with weeds. Standing at the threshold of the field, the father turned to the son and said: "I'm going to leave you here to work on the field. I want you to remove all of the weeds and prepare it for growing crops. I will send you your food and water, but I'm going to leave you here to work until it's finished." After the father left, the son looked at the field in great dismay. He exclaimed: "I can't do this. There's way to much work to do."

Days passed by. Food was regularly being sent to the son in the field as the father promised, but everyday the son would get up, look at the field and say: "I can't do this. There's way to much work to do." Because of this, instead of working on the field, the son found ways to distract himself. This continued for many weeks. Until one day the father came to the fields and saw that nothing had been done. The father looking at the field was very

disappointed. He exclaimed: “You haven’t done anything. You’ve been here for weeks and nothings been done.”

The son responded: “But father, I can’t do this. There’s way to much work to do.” The father looked at the son with compassion and said: “I know it looks like a large task, but even if you had cleared a small patch everyday to sleep in, you would have the field completely cleared by now. Besides, if you were really in trouble and felt overwhelmed, you could have asked the person bringing you your food for some help. Not doing anything was the worst possible choice to make.”

The point of this story is to teach us that even though the changes we need to make may seem overwhelming, if we change a little everyday, we can experience astounding results in the long run. Eventually, every little change we make will culminate into making a great difference.

Tip: You have the power to change even if it’s only a small thing every day, week, month or year. You have the power to grow.

Things I Need to Change		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What things should I consider changing? <i>(This is meant to be an ongoing list of things you discover, especially throughout this book)</i>	<i>An Ongoing List</i>	<i>An Ongoing List</i>
What things should I change right now?		
What things should I consider changing soon?		
Who and/or what can help me do what I need to do?		

Conclusion:

Society teaches people to find excuses and to pass the blame to others, but we need to take responsibility for our own lives and start pursuing ways to become the people we are meant to become. One of the benefits of being married is you have a partner who’s made a promise to be ready to encourage and support

you in these changes... and most likely to be ready to point out what you need to change.

In the following two chapters, you will likely find many ideas for how you can grow as a person. Hopefully, you will be inspired and not discouraged... if you're discouraged, start by trying to be a more positive person. *Positive people receive criticism as a means to know how to grow; negative people receive criticism as a reason to give up.*

****A Bonus Chart for People Getting Married or Moving In Together**

Taking a Big Step in Your Relationship		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What do you think your partner will say will be the greatest challenges you'll both face being married and/or living together?		
What do you think will be the greatest challenges you'll both face being married and/or living together?		
What can you do to help reduce these fears?		
What can your partner do to help reduce these fears?		
What can you do if your fears come true?		

In the following two chapters, you will likely find many ideas for how you can grow as a person. Hopefully, you will be inspired and encouraged.

Chapter 5: Understanding

Yes, as you guessed it by this chapter's title, "Understanding," this chapter is about *understanding*. I like things simple... hopefully you're not thinking: "Sounds like his girlfriend does too..." she does, but that's irrelevant to her dating life... I think. Hopefully neither you nor your partner is the type of person who would twist this kind of thing into an attack: "You like simple things and you like me. Are you saying that I'm simple?" If you're in a relationship with someone who's gifted at distorting everything into an attack, you should think twice about being with them even if she's as beautiful as Jennifer Aniston in season eight of *Friends*; that was a great season. Sorry, I digress... and now taking a moment to pause and reflect on Jennifer Aniston... Anyway, this chapter is primarily going to focus on helping you uncover a deeper understanding of yourself, your partner and your relationship. Unfortunately, many people know more about the personality of their favorite celebrities or sports heroes than they know about themselves because it's safer, easier and more enjoyable. I know for myself, digging into the real me can uncover character flaws and behavioral mistakes I don't want to be reminded of or for which I don't want to feel guilty. Thinking about these things and working through them, however, is the only way to find freedom from our emotional baggage and to know how to grow.

The big caution here... which is why I improperly made a new paragraph... is that you won't be completely honest because you want to hide something. Please, be brave enough to be honest with yourself and your partner. Share things delicately – don't accuse or ridicule – and show compassion to yourself and your partner because admitting flaws or struggles with anyone, let alone someone we want to impress, can be very challenging. Remember, you're doing this because you love each other and want to make this the healthiest relationship possible.

Please be aware that these activities are best to be thought about and not forced. If you cannot come up with what you really think on the spot or if you need time to reflect on something a little longer, do it. It's better to take your time and really find what you think rather than to rush through this. Let this be like eating a giant Toblerone bar; enjoy it one piece at a time. Savoring this chapter and not rushing through it will help prevent you from feeling bloated like you would after eating 400g of chocolate in one sitting. Although, being bloated

after reading would be a weird side effect: “Uh, this guy’s writing gives me gas.” I know I have caused many people headaches, but this would be a new one. Yes, as you guessed it, one of my flaws is I have bizarre side thoughts... I’m sure you’ve noticed. Fortunately, I’m aware of this and I try to control it... sometimes.

My hope is that you’ll be as comfortable with your flaws as I am with them... or I guess my own flaws, but I guess that works too because I’m definitely comfortable with your flaws since they don’t affect me... unless, of course, you’re a kleptomaniac and stole this book than I guess it does. Remember, no matter what our flaws are there is always a positive side to them as well. More importantly, the person doing this with you loves you regardless of your flaws; if someone else can love you then you should be able to love yourself as well.

Part A) Understanding You as a Couple

Your 6 Love Languages
A Reminder Activity (from ‘Chapter 3: Love’):

This activity will help remind you of each other’s love languages. Plus, I’ve added extra categories to bring further understanding about each other.

What is the Order of Your Love Languages? <i>Quality Time, Physical Presence, Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Gifts, Fun</i>	
His	Hers
1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____	1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____
<i>Why do you think your list is in this order?</i>	<i>Why do you think your list is in this order?</i>
<i>How did your partner fulfill these needs for you before you did this exercise?</i>	<i>How did your partner fulfill these needs for you before you did this exercise?</i>

<i>How will you meet your partner's needs now that you know this order?</i>	<i>How will you meet your partner's needs now that you know this order?</i>
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Your Similarities

The following chart is meant to acknowledge ten similarities the two of you have. You can even make this a competition with other couples to see who can come up with the most similarities in a certain amount of time. These similarities can be anything from preferred styles of music, to morning routines, to things that tick you off, and to people you like.

Similarities Between the Two of You
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

Benefits of These Similarities
1.
2.
3.
Bonus Box:

Your Differences

Knowing your individual differences is valuable because it helps point out how you are unique from your partner thereby adding to your value in the relationship. For instance, I'm terrible at applying make-up... for obvious reasons... but my girlfriend is great at it while I'm great at using a urinal... at least I assume she's not great at using one... I hope she's not. I've included 4 suggestions in the chart to help you get started. Other thoughts include hobbies, problem solving styles, and certain tastes and styles.

Differences Between You	
<i>His</i>	<i>Hers</i>
1. <i>Your Most Prized Possession</i>	1. <i>Your Most Prized Possession</i>
2. <i>Your Proudest Accomplishment</i>	2. <i>Your Proudest Accomplishment</i>
3. <i>Your Hero(es)</i>	3. <i>Your Hero(es)</i>
4. <i>Most Admired Qualities in People</i>	4. <i>Most Admired Qualities in People</i>
5.	5.
6.	6.
7.	7.
8.	8.
9.	9.
10.	10.

Benefits of These Differences:
1.
2.
3.
Bonus Box:

Your Best and Worst Moments Together

Your Top 5 Best Moments Together	
<i>His</i>	<i>Hers</i>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.
<i>How can you do these or similar things, more in the future?</i>	<i>How can you do these or similar things, more in the future?</i>

Your Top 3 Worst Moments Together	
<i>His</i>	<i>Hers</i>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
<i>How can similar experiences be prevented in the future?</i>	<i>How can similar experiences be prevented in the future?</i>

Part B) Understanding You as an Individual

This section will be divided as follows:

- i. Looking at the “Perfect” You and Your “Perfect” Partner
- ii. Your Strengths & Accomplishments
- iii. A Quick Personality Test
- iv. The 3 Basic Levels of You
- v. A Deeper Look at the Personal Level: *Your Life Script*
- vi. Understanding Your Personality and Behaviors
- vii. Digging Further into Your Personality for “Areas of Growth”
- viii. 5 Personalities Affected By the Brain
- ix. A Fun Recap of Who You Are

i. Looking at the “Perfect” You and Your “Perfect” Partner

To get you thinking about who you are and what you want to become, here is a chart to help uncover what you think would be the “perfect” you.

What You Would Look Like If You Were Perfect (write and/or draw your response)	
<i>His</i>	<i>Hers</i>
<i>If you were perfect, what would you look like intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and physically? What are you doing?</i>	<i>If you were perfect, what would you look like intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and physically? What are you doing?</i>
<i>What can you do to become more like this?</i>	<i>What can you do to become more like this?</i>
<i>What can your partner do to help you become more like this?</i>	<i>What can your partner do to help you become more like this?</i>

Now that you’ve recorded what you think the ideal *you* is, we are going to take a look at what your ideal *partner* looks like. Before you started your current relationship, you likely had an image of what the “perfect” partner looked like. Dr. Phil maintains that we should look for Mr. or Miss 80% because no one can be exactly what we want unless we have some pretty minimal expectations: “I’d like a man with man parts; preferably man parts that aren’t glued on. Actually, I’d just like him to be human or at least resemble a human enough to make my friends think he is, but whatever, I’m not superficial like other people.” If this is your standard, I definitely hope you can achieve it 100%, but a *healthy* person will have a set list of positive, realistic qualities he or she is looking for in a partner even if they’re more vague like: “I want a loving person, with a good work ethic, who thinks I’m beautiful.” Knowing what you want, allows you to be grateful for what you have and put up with other less than ideal issues.

Reflecting back before you were dating, what kind of person did you want? How funny? What kind of humor? How much of a leader or follower? How serious? How intellectual? How emotional? How social or home oriented? How sensual or romantic? How organized? How clean? How spontaneous? How responsible? How protective? How talkative? How much of a listener? How sensitive? How much of a spender or saver? How much of temper? How family oriented? How many and what kind of friends? How much of an entertainer (i.e. how often does he or she like people over)? How much of an early morning or late night person? How much of a philanthropist, gamer, movie watcher or athlete and sports fan?

Whether we realize it or not, we all had attributes we were looking for in a partner. If you have never thought about this, now's a good time to begin because knowing your ideal person will help your partner know what he or she is doing right and what he or she can strive towards.

Tip: To be emotionally healthy, we need to be honest and realistic about our strengths *and* weaknesses as well as our likes *and* dislikes.

****Key:** This activity is *not* meant to point out what you and your partner *are not*; it's about what you can *become*. Please be open to each others' ideas and not be defensive because no matter what your partner says, he or she loves you for who you are *now*.

What Your Partner Would Look Like if He/She Were Perfect (write and/or draw your response)	
<i>Note: No one is perfect; please don't just draw your partner as he/she is now; be honest of what your ideal looks like.</i>	
<i>His</i>	<i>Hers</i>
<i>If your partner was perfect, what would she look like intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and physically? What is she doing?</i>	<i>If your partner was perfect, what would he look like intellectually, emotionally, spiritually and physically? What is he doing?</i>
<i>What can your partner do to become more like this?</i>	<i>What can your partner do to become more like this?</i>

<i>What can you do to help your partner become more like this?</i>	<i>What can you do to help your partner become more like this?</i>
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ii. Your Strengths & Accomplishments

Since you’ve just spent time looking at what each others’ ideal partners would look like, this would be a good time to remind each other of what your current strengths and your accomplishments are as a way to reaffirm yourselves and each other. The following chart is beneficial because it divides your strengths into the two categories of Character and Achievement Strengths. Many people struggle to realize what their strengths are because they compare themselves to professionals; for instance, someone good at making people laugh could look at Robin Williams who can fill a stadium for his stand up shows and downplay his or her ability. Fortunately, just because someone else is better than you at something doesn’t mean you’re not good at it too. Strengths can include anything from certain personality strengths like being positive, logical, moral, sensitive or caring, to physical attributes and accomplishments.

Tip: We don’t have to be the “best” in order to be good at something. There will always be people better than us. Similarly, there will always be people worse than us. What we have to do is appreciate everyone’s talents and be open to learning from them and to remember those worse off in order to appreciate our own abilities.

What Are Your Strengths?			
For Him: <i>What are your...</i>		For Her: <i>What are your...</i>	
<i>Character Strengths (who you are)</i>	<i>Achievement Strengths (what you do)</i>	<i>Character Strengths (who you are)</i>	<i>Achievement Strengths (what you do)</i>

Tip: Your accomplishments can be anything from things you’ve conquered, things you’ve tried, fears you’ve overcome, relationships you’ve made, to awards you’ve won or praise you’ve received.

Your 5 Greatest Accomplishments <i>List and Describe Your Top 5 Proudest Accomplishments</i>	
His	Hers
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

iii. A Quick Personality Test

A quick way to see what kind of personality you have is to think about how you treat mosquito bites. For instance, some people are impulsive and scratch until it bleeds while others are self controlled and force themselves to ignore it. Some people whine about them over and over again while others look for a solution whether water or After Bite (note, this also determines whether you’re a spender or not because someone frugal like me won’t spend money on After Bite; I’ll suck it up). Some people will get hysterical over the fear of having contacted a disease because of the bite and think about the worst case scenarios. Other people will bathe in bug spray to prevent any bug bites from happening because they’re either smart and/or suffer from paranoid reasoning: “I know it’s snowing, but better safe than sorry.”

The Bite Test		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
How do you handle mosquito bites?		
What do you think this says about you?		
Is there another way you’d want to handle bug bites?		

iv. The 3 Basic Levels of You:

In Public, In Private and In Your Head

This section is based on one of my favorite books, Bob Biehl's *Why We Do What We Do*; he's a really smart guy. In this book, he mentions that people consist of 3 levels:

Public: How people behave in "public." The person people see when they don't know us very well like coworkers, acquaintances and strangers.

Private: The person those closest to us see like family and best friends.

Personal: The heart or core of the person, which consists of personal thoughts and feelings.

The 3 Levels of a Person

Fig. 5.1a

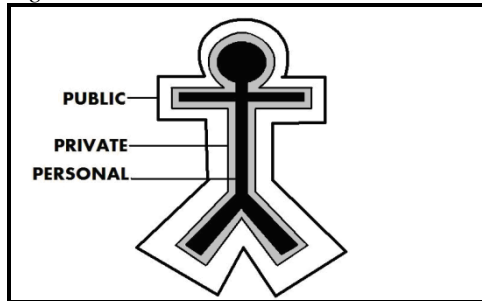
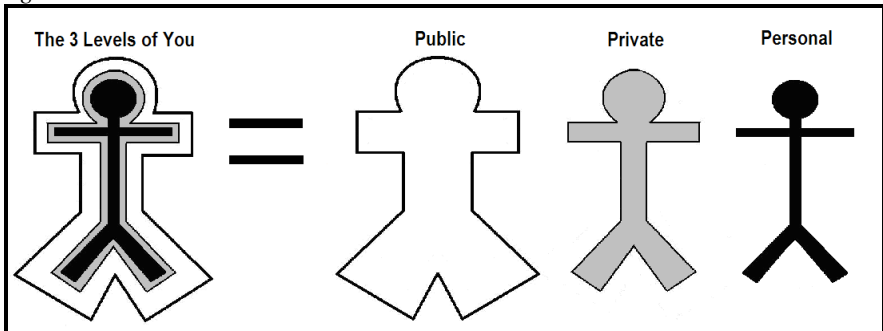
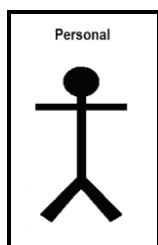


Fig. 5.1b



These three levels help explain why people can seem so different in various settings. For instance, have you ever met someone who won't talk? You try to engage him in different ways, but he won't respond so you're like: "Why won't you talk?" But then you see him with friends and he won't shut up so then

you're like: "Why won't you shut up?" I've never met anyone like this... cough... but what is happening is this person has a very different *Public Self* than *Private Self*. Between these 3 levels there should be some differences. For example, I won't spill my heart to the Walmart greeter: "How am I? Well...", but ultimately a healthy person will have a consistent loving personality throughout the levels. Essentially, if your heart is good then you'll be a good person at all of the levels. If your heart is bad, then you'll only be able to *fake* being good at the other levels. The unfortunate truth is people don't look like this:



We look broken like this:



In some way, at the personal level we're all broken by past hurts and have things that make us insecure. These are the things that we need to let go of and find emotional resolution through *Forgiveness* (in the next chapter). The trouble is many of us have learned to fake being fine at the Personal and/or Public levels. For instance, awhile ago I became friends with a guy who was pretty awesome. He was the "perfect" guy. He was hard working, friendly, smart and really attractive... I kind of hated him actually; he totally showed me up. He was perfect, or so I thought. I eventually saw him with his family and suddenly Mr. Perfect was Mr. Jerk. It was like the Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde thing where he completely switched. He was rude and whiney, he would yell and the only thing he shared was his gas... very unpleasant. Thus, his Public Self and Private Self were polar opposites. It turned out he was so great in public because he was so miserable in his personal and private lives. He was

overly nice in public because he was desperate for approval from others. He was trying to convince himself he was worthy of love by earning approval from others. On some level he thought that if enough people thought he was a good person then that would convince him that he was. The problem with this was he wasn't a good person. He was putting on an act in order to make others love him, which he knew and why he didn't feel any better about himself no matter what others thought. Under the Public view, he was a mess. To make matters worse, this is the opposite of how we're supposed to think. We're supposed to love and accept ourselves for who we are. We're supposed to love ourselves first and then add other people's opinions. Starting with other people's opinions is dangerous because it is impossible to please everyone, especially since their opinions are so flippant and easily manipulated by envy, gossip and misperceptions. For instance, I've met some great people who are not liked because they are so great. I've also seen someone's good intentions be misinterpreted and get him in a lot of trouble. This is why we have to love and accept ourselves first without the need for everyone else's approval. We need to love and accept ourselves because that allows us to accept when others don't.

Tip: Having a people pleasing addiction is very dangerous because it leads to anxiety, excessive guilt, exhaustion, confusion, depression, fear and never really loving yourself and enjoying life. Ultimately, you are a slave to what *you* think others think of you, which is not an easy way to live.

Key: *Learn to love yourself* and not because of achievements or for any reason besides the fact that you are a person worth loving. If this seems too difficult for you, think about the people who really love you; people who love you for who you are, not because of a character trait or strength. If these people can love you, you can love yourself too. This is different from people pleasing because these are not people from whom you have to "earn" love. If you don't have anyone who fits this description, your mission is to find someone who will love you unconditionally; someone you don't have to earn his or her acceptance. And hopefully you can be this person for someone else.

Note: If you've ever wondered why Christians can sometimes be the worst people you meet when they're supposed to love others, it's because, although they're Christians, they're still severely broken at the Personal level. These Christians may either still be in the process of healing or they use the

Christian title as a tool to deny their weakness and emotional damage thereby becoming all the more dangerous.

One of the most dangerous things we can do is compare ourselves, our partners and our families to other people because we can only see a limited scope. It can be very difficult to know what is an act and what is genuine or simply a limited perspective. Typically, someone or a family who seems too good to be true really is. Be weary for the trap of: “The grass is greener on the other side.” This becomes particularly dangerous when a married couple sees single people or another couple getting a divorce. These things can become tempting when we don’t appreciate what we have and only see the positives of that other lifestyle.

For Christians:
 God’s perfect and He loves you; thus, we need to love ourselves as well. If it was wrong to love us, God couldn’t be perfect. If we say: “I’m not worthy of love,” we’re trying to tell a perfect Being: “You’re wrong.” If I was going to copy an answer for a test, I’d go with the person’s answer who always got perfect... unless I wanted to fail, but if that was the case, why would I be copying? I can fail on my own and do ‘good’ at it.

For Him A Chart To Describe What Your 3 Levels Look Like <i>(Write or Draw what you think you’re like at these 3 levels)</i>		
Public	Private	Personal
<i>Differences Your Partner Sees (if any):</i>		
<i>What do you want to look like at these levels?</i>		

For Her A Chart To Describe What Your 3 Levels Look Like <i>(Write or Draw what you think you're like at these 3 levels)</i>		
Public	Private	Personal
<i>Differences Your Partner Sees (if any):</i>		
<i>What do you want to look like at these levels?</i>		

v. A Deeper Look at the Personal Level:
Your Life Script

Your ‘Life Script’ determines how you view life². It is a saying that captures the essence of how we see things whether it is with joy or trepidation, peace or anxiety. It is the same thing as Dr Phil’s “Your Personal Truth,” which is also the same as your “Life Motto,” or your “Personal Mantra.” One of the most famous Life Scripts would be from the children’s book, *The Little Engine That Could* because the Little Engine’s *Life Script* was “I think I can. I think I can.” When I was younger, I followed the *Life Script*: “Expect the worst; hope for the best,” which left me frequently thinking negatively and living in fear. My counseling teacher who taught me this activity followed the *Life Script*: “Something good is going to happen today so it might as well be to me.” This isn’t perfect, but it is a lot more positive than mine used to be. I know someone who barely did anything because he would always say: “But what if I

² This was touched upon in the previous chapter on *Change* in the section *How to Change, Example 3: Changing Your Attitude*

get hurt?” On the other hand, I have a friend who is a professional busker who taught himself how to juggle swords blindfolded on a ten foot unicycle. He follows the simple *Life Script*: “I can do it.” A very positive *Life Script* for Christians is found in Romans 8:31, “If God is for us, who can be against us?” and Matthew 19:6b, “With God all things are possible.” Ultimately, creating a healthy *Life Script* is the foundation for a life that is full of enjoyment and happiness.

In this activity, try to come up with the statement that best describes how you view your everyday thinking. Be honest how you see things. If you’re someone who wakes up dreading the day or scared to try things, it won’t be very positive and that’s okay. It’s better to know where you are at in order to know where you can go.

Life Script Exercise		
	<i>His</i>	<i>Hers</i>
What’s your life script?		
On a scale of -5 to +5, how negative or positive is it?		
Can it be improved? How or why not?		

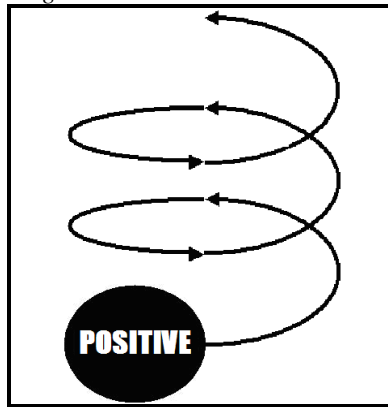
Tip: How you experience life is largely determined by how you look at it. If you look at it positively, life will be better. Hopefully this will be the start of a happier mindset and life or, even better, this will reiterate the fact that you already have a very positive and healthy outlook on life and are on the right track.

Having a positive *Life Script* is important because it sets us up for a very positive life experience because if we want to find the positive side we can. There is always a positive side. For instance, I was recently walking on a sidewalk and had a carload of teenage boys drive by and throw a water balloon at me. This wasn’t the best experience I’ve had... I wish I could’ve shot one of their tires in a return gesture... but I could still find the positive in this. For

instance, I was glad it was in fact a water balloon and not a prophylactic and that it was in fact filled with water and not something gross like urine. That definitely would've been worse. I was also glad it was me instead of someone else who may not have been able to handle this treatment very well physically or emotionally. In addition, I was glad it happened while I was in a better mood and not after a bad day. Thus, there were positives in a not so great experience. As I've found, a positive mindset leads to feeling happier and having a more productive lifestyle. When we look for the positive, we can find it. When we find the positive, we're able to be more appreciative and happy with how life is going. Thus, the following positive growth experience results.

The Positive Mindset Growth Pattern

Fig.5.2



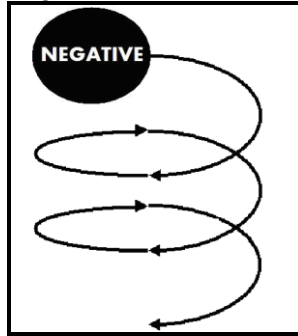
For Christians:

As Christians, we're called to look for the positive because as Romans 8:28 states: "And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them." (NLT) Therefore, we should take courage in knowing that God can bring good out of every situation.

Unfortunately, even with a positive Life Script, we can fall into the trap of a negative mindset, especially after a particularly difficult time like dealing with rejection or death. The problem with this is that the *negative* grows in the same way as the *positive*, but in a different direction.

The Negative Mindset Growth Pattern

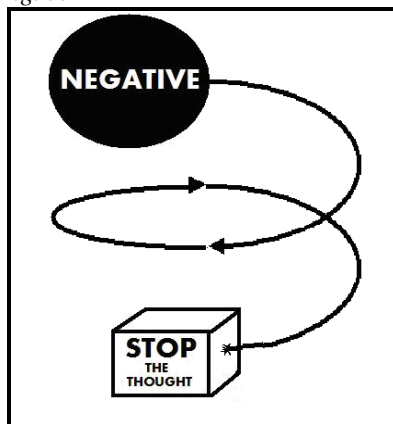
Fig.5.3



As this diagram demonstrates, it is very easy to get into a cycle of negativity that fuels more negativity. Ultimately, these cycles can't be completely avoided because outside circumstances can put us into a negative mindset (e.g. a loved one passes away, we get into a car accident, etc). The trick is to know how to break this cycle. Unfortunately, the only real way to break the cycle is by deciding to say 'No' to any negative thoughts that try to infest our minds. Fortunately, we can stop this downward spiral by choosing to STOP THE THOUGHT.³ By choosing to STOP THE THOUGHT, we are choosing to prevent this negative spiral from growing anymore; we force ourselves to think of the positive or even something else.

STOP THE THOUGHT

Fig. 5.4



³ This was looked at in *Chapter 4: Change in Ex 3: Changing Your Attitude*

This will be further looked at in *Chapter 6: Power* in the section on *Forgiveness*. For now, it is important to remember that we need to try to stop negative thinking before it consumes our minds and puts us into a negative funk. Like any temptation, the sooner we can stop it, the easier it is. The longer we leave it, the harder it'll be to stop. It should be noted that this is not about denying that certain things happened or to ignore them; it is simply a means to prevent unhealthy negative thoughts from consuming us. We need to be careful *when* and *how* we deal with hurts when we seek healing. Sometimes a safe location or a trusted person being present can help.

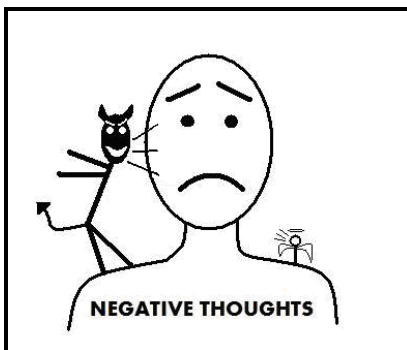
This technique, STOP THE THOUGHT, is typically more necessary the fresher something is in our minds. The problem is, there is this negative voice that continually tries to tell us we're not good enough or we should be upset about something we've experienced. For some people this negative voice is screaming very loud thereby making them more negative and fearful or this voice can be subtle whispers to try to ruin our positive feelings. This is best represented with the Little Devil and Angel.

The Little Devil & Angel: Cartoons portray a devil on one shoulder and an angel on the other. This idea isn't far from the truth. Everyone has a negative and positive voice in their head. Unfortunately, many people let their negative voice overpower their positive voice thereby making them a slave to fear, resentment, hurt, anger, envy and the like.

Dangerous Situation

Devil is screaming really loud

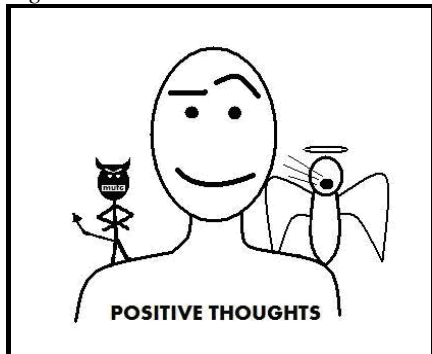
Fig. 5.5



Healthy Situation

Angel is talking with the devil muzzled

Fig. 5.6



The ultimate goal of the Life Script is to help the *Positive Thoughts* overpower the negative little devil screaming or whispering negative ideas into our minds. Unfortunately, the only answer to overcoming negativity is self control and perseverance; we can't just pull out duct tape or our credit cards to buy something to fix the problem.

vi. Understanding Your Personality and Behaviors

The following table is based on the main theory presented in Biehl's book, which maintains that something happened to us when we were around eight years old that has helped mold our adult personalities. I would also include any traumatic events you experience at any age because these can have a life changing effect. For instance, going through a divorce or death of a loved one can put you into a category like number one "Conditionally Loved" or number six "Insecure, Unsafe, or Vulnerable", at least until proper healing can take place.

To read this table, there are titles across the top that tell you what each column means. This chart is meant to be read in rows... you may have already guessed that since that's how you would typically read a table. At the top left, there is a column called "Dominant Childhood Feeling", which is the childhood feeling that may be traced back to a moment or lesson that has formed our adult fear and emotional need. For instance, as a child I was taught: "The more God has given you, the more He expects." Therefore, since I had a great childhood situation with a wonderful family and friends, I've grown up to be someone who felt *Destined* and needing to feel *Significant*; I felt I needed to live up to the so-called expectations placed on me because I've been given so much. The great thing about this table is it helps to bring out our underlying thinking that affects our daily choices.

It should be noted that you may find traces of yourself in different columns because, for instance, everyone wants to be "Respected," but some people crave this like a drug; therefore, it becomes more helpful to find rows rather than elements of things that match up with the way you think and act. Biehl maintains that it is healthy and normal to have several rows stand out as fitting your personality, but if you have five or more rows match you really well, you have some serious childhood baggage that needs to be addressed by a professional to help you deal with it properly.

Ultimately, this chart helps you better understand yourself and your partner as individuals and ‘why you do what you do’. More specifically it points out how to best talk with your partner because it helps distinguish what kinds of words make you feel more loved and what words are more damaging to you. These can be things like: “You’re a failure,” “You’re worthless” “You’re stupid,” “Is that supposed to be green and fuzzy?” This chart also acts as a warning since using our “Back Up Style” is a sign that we don’t feel loved or comfortable in that moment. In addition, it acts as a warning because it points out how we need to be careful not to let our “Dominant Adult Phobia” hold us back from being the people we can become. Fortunately, it also identifies our “Single Greatest Strength”, which can help us know how to be more productive and feel better about ourselves because we are all naturally good at something.

To help prepare you for this activity... which is an awesome activity if I may say so myself... here is a simple chart meant to help you brainstorm some significant moments in your life. This will help you connect with a few key stories that have actually had a significant impact on who you are as a person and how you respond as an adult. After doing this chart, use the information in the table inspired by Bob Biehl to fill out the subsequent charts, which are based on your responses. These activities will hopefully bring clarity as to how to best meet each other’s needs and even understand why people in your life act the way they do.

A Warm Up to Help with the Chart		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
List <i>positive</i> experiences that stand out as being particularly significant to you from your childhood		
List <i>negative</i> experiences that stand out as being particularly significant to you from your childhood		

List <i>positive</i> experiences that stand out as being particularly significant to you from your teenage years		
List <i>negative</i> experiences that stand out as being particularly significant to you from your teenage years		
List <i>positive</i> experiences that stand out as being particularly significant to you from your twenties		
List negative experiences that stand out as being particularly significant to you from your twenties		
List any other important moments in your life if you're like me and have a few more years experience than this.		

Why You Do What You Do by Bobb Biehl (cont'd to next pg)

A. Dominant Childhood Feeling	B. Dominant Adult Phobia	C. Dominant Emotional Need
1. Conditionally loved inconsistently loved or feel unloved (people pleasing, performance driven, fear of criticism and scolding)	Rejection not good enough or worthy of love, fear of love and revealing self & being rejected	Loved Unconditionally , just as I am & for who I am, not what I do, not just needed but wanted, loved even when I fail
2. Destined Chosen, special, or loved (accepted, confident, gifted, told you were blessed, loved)	Insignificance Not having a legacy or living up to potential or expectations	Significant make a lasting impact, respected for major contribution
3. Favored by adults or peers (admired, adored, a princess)	Failure Disappointing others, fear of losing status	Admired... as "hero" honored above peers, praised by peers
4. Ignored Emotionally , unimportant, unneeded, unnoticed (lonesome, fought for attention or affection)	Invisibility Fear of being ignored, unneeded, lonely, not being taken seriously	Recognized feels needed, heard, spotlighted, important
5. Inadequate to meet expectations (now the "mommy", protect siblings, others always win if compared, feel stupid or ugly)	Failure Fear of being dumb, incompetent, not meeting expectations, being picked on	Appreciated... for a job well done Appreciated & rewarded, with words like "Great job" and "Thank you"
6. Insecure, Unsafe, or Vulnerable (felt abandoned through death or divorce, an abusive home, alcoholism, instability, poverty, trauma)	Dependence Fear of being abandoned or let down, controlled trapped emotionally, losing control	Security, Control Financially secure, powerful, protected, safe not needing to depend on others, seniority
7. Intimidated or Dominated by a Person (family or peers)	Failure to be seen as Adult , fear of dominant people, being 2 nd string, not being seen as "real," not listened to as adult	Respected as an adult, competent, has ability and expertise, trusted
8. Unacceptable Socially to Peers (something of family embarrassing, moved a lot, never fit in, loner, never learned sports)	Rejection (social) Fear of rejection by peers, feeling disapproval of others, not being accepted socially or being well liked	Accepted Socially , Free to be real, liked by everyone and loved by a few, accepted by the group, invited to join

Why You Do What You Do by Bobb Biehl (the cont'd part)

D. Surest, Safest Style	E. Single Greatest Strength	F. Backup Style
Enabler: earn love by serving, make excuses for people who hurt you or others	Facilitating help projects run smooth, helping others get the job done, work behind the scenes	Perfectionism , fear of failure, use guilt to control, refuse to forgive oneself, see people and situations as all good or all bad
Leader... towards goal or dream, dream big, offer valuable perspective	Visualizing... the future, anticipate the future, see new options, dream new ideas	Manipulating, & intimidating people emotionally, mind games, hurtful comments, pouting, silent treatment
Promoter , motivator, risk taker	Persuading people, convincing, motivating, seller	Cutting Corners , cheaters, likes short cuts lying, stealing ideas
Entertainer life of the party, be showy, non traditional, shock people	Entertaining (performer, competitor, center stage) center of attention	Extreme Behavior , demand attention by action or appearance, show off, clown, in your face
Rescuer , protector and defender, puts others first, server	Rescuing... the needy, fight for justice, serving the poor, counseling, listening, cares for the rejected	Work-a-holism , checklists, work harder and longer, sacrifice life for work, task oriented
Controller , powerful but safe, need clear limits and boundaries, maybe hire security	Controlling... a situation, managing money or people, like clearly structured settings	Over-controlling , rigid and demanding, bullying, win at all costs, overeat for security, intimidate to get people in line
Specialist , super good at one thing, rely on this when scared of others	Specializing , being the best at something, overcome the impossible	Withdrawing or Avoiding Situations settling for less, accept 2 nd place, depression, substance abuse, quitting, escapism
People Pleaser , being liked by everyone, can't say no, spend or give too much to fit in, fashionable	Socializing , helps others have fun, accepting, listens, encourages, likes being social, responsible Peacemaker	Withdrawing from People before they can reject me, shut people out decrease someone's importance

For Him Which Categories are You?					
Dominant Childhood Feeling	Dominant Adult Phobia	Dominant Emotional Need	Surest, Safest Style	Single Greatest Strength	Backup Style
<i>Example: 2. Destined</i>	<i>Insignificant</i>	<i>Significant</i>	<i>Leader</i>	<i>Visualizing</i>	<i>Manipulating</i>

For Her Which Categories are You?					
Dominant Childhood Feeling	Dominant Adult Phobia	Dominant Emotional Need	Surest, Safest Style	Single Greatest Strength	Backup Style
<i>Example: 3. Favored</i>	<i>Failure</i>	<i>Admired</i>	<i>Promoter</i>	<i>Persuading</i>	<i>Cutting Corners</i>

Questions About the Chart		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
Any surprises?		
Any “ah ha” moments? (<i>i.e. A moment where you say: “oh yeah, that makes complete sense!”</i>)		
Knowing that everyone fits into this chart set up, how can you treat people differently?		
Knowing you can reduce the negative “Backup Style” by meeting the “Dominant Emotional Need”, how can you treat and/or handle your partner better?		

<p>Knowing you can reduce the negative “Backup Style” by meeting the “Dominant Emotional Need”, how can you improve yourself? (e.g. knowing you’re a “perfectionist” may help you allow yourself to make mistakes.)</p>		
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vii. Digging Further into Your Personality for “Areas of Growth”

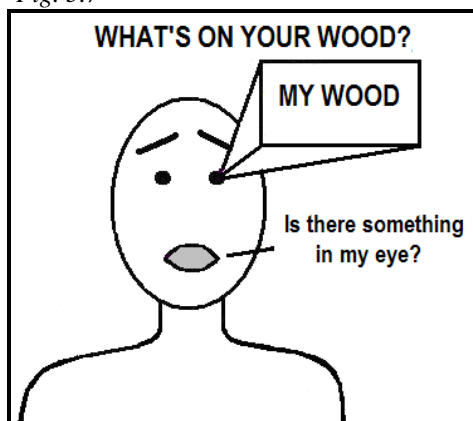
The following information is inspired by *Dealing with People You Can’t Stand*, which describes... you guessed it... dealing with people you can’t stand and how to better handle them. In this activity, I’ve included most of the personalities and added some of my own. Read through them and note which ones sound like you.

Aside: I originally used this to help teach young people that we shouldn’t be quick to judge others when we have so many flaws of our own. When we acknowledge our own weaknesses, we can be better at accepting other people’s flaws. This is based on one of my favorite lessons given by Jesus:

Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother's eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye.”
(Luke 6:41-42)

Thus, the question that begs is what’s on your wood?

Fig. 5.7



Personality Issues

(Brinkman, R. Dr., & Kirschner, R. Dr., *Dealing With People You Can't Stand*)

The Tank: Tanks typically have good intentions, but use very aggressive behavior to achieve their goals with little consideration for other people and their feelings because the end justifies the means.

The Sniper: Snipers use comments and body gestures like rolling their eyes to jab at others. Snipers are typically too afraid to confront someone they are unhappy with, but their feelings shine through in their demeaning behavior.

The Grenade: Grenades bottle up their feelings until suddenly they explode with little warning or reason. Their explosion doesn't normally have anything to do with the present situation, but it is a culmination of hurts over a period of time. After the explosion they'll be fine again, at least until their next breaking point.

The Know-It-All: Know-It-Alls try to give the impression they have all the answers and use exaggeration and bragging as a ploy to distract others from their insecurity and need for attention. Depending how "smart" the Know-It-All actually is there can be a small to large number of people who can see through this and see the insecurity behind all the talk. Know-It-Alls also tend to be poor listeners and quick to pass the blame.

The Yes Person: Yes People say 'Yes' to everything in an attempt to please everyone. Unfortunately, this leads to over scheduling and neglecting their real priorities. They tend to be late, forgetful and make a lot of people unhappy because of broken promises. Eventually, they become resentful of how busy they are and may try to hide. An example of this is found in Jim Carrey's movie, *Yes Man*.

The No Person: No People always say 'No' because they are stuck in a trap of hopelessness and despair. These people tend to suck the life out of everything fun and are very discouraging saying things like: "You can't do that," and "That'll never work." This is also demonstrated in *Yes Man*.

The Maybe Person: The Maybe Person is afraid of making a decision and committing. This can be because they're waiting for a better offer or because they are afraid to say 'No' when they want to. Typically, the Maybe Person procrastinates making a decision until it's too late and the decision makes itself.

The Whiner: Simply put, Whiners whine. Nothing is ever good enough for them, which can be a result of being a perfectionist or having no hope for something better. In the end, they just want to whine and don't want to fix the problem; they don't want a solution, only attention for their woes, but hey, negative attention is better than no attention right?

MY personality additions

The Love Earner: Love Earners are purely motivated by pleasing others in the eventual hope of pleasing themselves. They spend their time trying to make people happy, which can be seen in perfectionist behavior, workoholism, entertaining and being overly courteous. For instance, if two Love Earners meet at a door one will say: “You go first” and the other will respond “No, you go,” which is met with a continual response of “No, you go,” “No, you go,” “No, you go,” “No, you go,” etc.

The Rebel: The rebel is someone who sees a green light when someone says “Don’t” or “No.” They are quick to disagree with people not necessarily because they do, but because they don’t want to be “typical.” They struggle with authority and aspire to have their own business to avoid having a boss or people directly controlling or criticizing them. (Inspired by *12 Habits Holding Good People Back*).

The Spock: All logic and no emotion (Inspired by *12 Habits Holding Good People Back*)

Bizarro Spock (aka The Cry Baby): All emotion and no logic.

The Victim: The victim is more intense than the whiner. To the victim, they are stuck in a perpetual negative funk based on the idea that life’s not fair and “I’m not good enough.” They are quick to attack and hide because everything you say or do is turned around to be negative; even compliments are warped into insults.

The Excuse-r: Excuse-rs always have an excuse and never take responsibility when things go wrong. Instead, they pass the blame like a waiter serving appetizers.

The Commander: Commanders are really bossy people who are always demanding and never listen or share their feelings. They put up a front of “I’m tough”.

King Compensator: Is typically seen as the guy with the expensive car and toys or the lady with all of the fancy outfits and shoes to show off to others. They buy things to look like something special, which is typically an act to hide their insecurity from others and often themselves.

The Double D: Distracted and distant, the Double D has a hard time letting go of work or other ideas preventing them from being fully engaged with those around them and being fully present in the moment.

Safe Seeker: Safe Seekers hide through humor, give into others to avoid conflict or they simply hide. They avoid having an opinion or are at least afraid of sharing it in fear of upsetting others.

King Judge: The King Judge is the person who is forever judging others and complaining when others are judging them. They rule with a double standard because they hate being judged when that’s what they do. They often don’t realize their hypocrisy because they’re too worried about being in control and judging.

Mr. or Miss. Doomsday: Mr. or Miss. Doomsday is always proclaiming how the world is in ruins and everything is getting worse and worse. They come up with conspiracy theories for things that haven’t even happened yet like “China is going to start a world war because they have too many people.”

The Vampire: Vampires are overly dependent on others. Another name for them is Draining People. Like offering food to a stray cat, once you offer help they’re suddenly your best friend and whether they mean to or not, they suck away your energy and joy for life; perhaps, not immediately, but eventually it catches up to you. They will typically leech off someone until they wear him or her out and then move on to the next victim.

What’s On Your Wood?

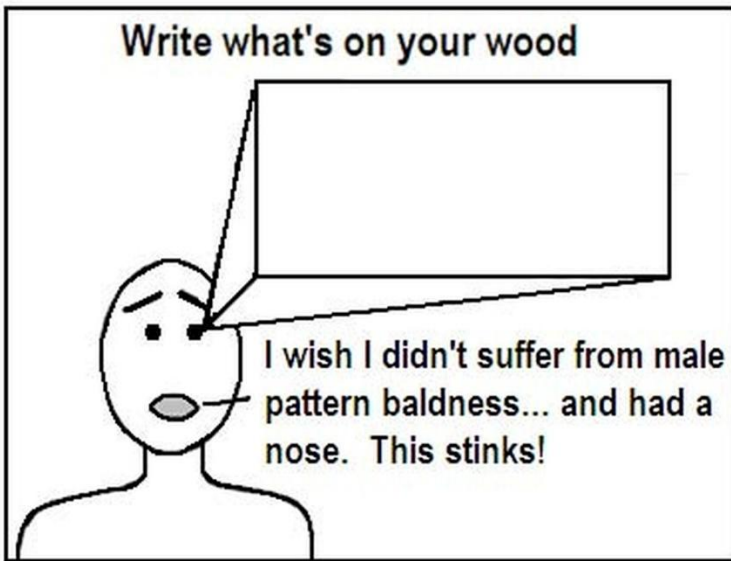
Here is a chart and a couple drawings to fill out in order to help better understand the negative personality traits you struggle with or should be struggling with to overcome.

Looking at the Above Personality Problems		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
The personality type(s) I hate the most. Why?		
My response to it/them (e.g. <i>I hate The Tank; my response is to avoid and hide from them</i>)		
The personality types I have to be careful not to be:		
Why do you think you act like this?		

What I can do to prevent acting like this.		
What my partner can do to help me not act like this.		
How to respond when I do act like this.		

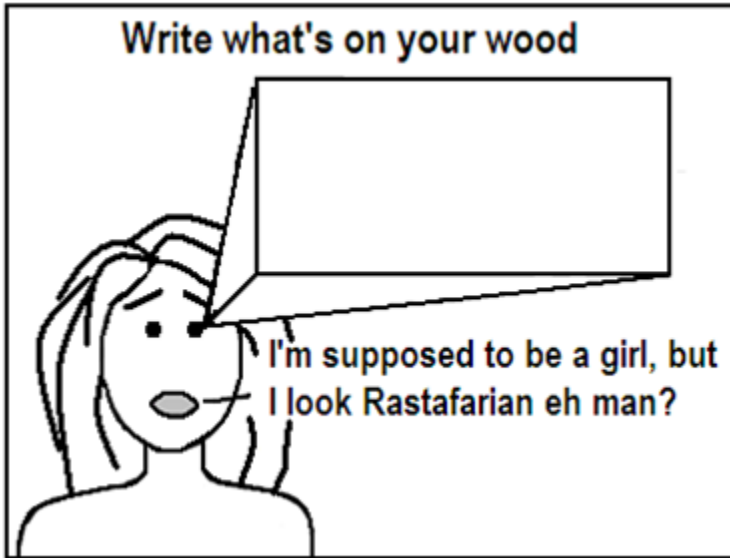
For the following cartoons, write the negative personality types you fit on the piece of wood sticking out of the corresponding person's eye.

Fig. 5.8



Looking at What's on Your Wood		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
How can you reduce this type of behavior for the man?		

Fig. 5.9



Looking at What's on Your Wood		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
How can you reduce this type of behavior for the woman?		

***Bonus Round**

Your Personality Type as a Couple

As bad as we can be by ourselves, we can have even more negative personality traits when partnered with someone. Together, we may take on the above personality traits or one of the following.

Your Personality Issues as a Couple:

The Never Social Couple: This couple never goes out or calls you back because they think they only need each other or feel too busy or tired to be social.

The Only Spend Time with Couples Couple: This couple only hangs out with those also in relationships similar to theirs. This could mean ditching people who are single, other couples who don't have a similar kid situation or are going through similar life experiences.

The Super Competitive Couple: Always trying to prove why they're better.

The Way Too Happy Couple: Trapped in a state of ecstasy, all you can think is "this couple is way too happy." This can be exhibited through extreme touching in front of others or having the dreamland look in their eyes.

The Fake Couple: Very good at pretending everything's right and perfect in their lives when it's clear they aren't to those who know them well.

The Angry Couple: Obviously have something wrong between them and do what they can to one up each other with eye rolling, verbal jabs, sarcasm, and/or yelling.

The Need to Break Up Couple: Anger and resentment has made a home between them and it's uncomfortable to be around them because you can feel the negative vibe between them. They need to break up or get serious help.

The Unbalanced Couple: Watching this couple interact, it's clear who the boss is and who is unbelievably whipped.

The Unsuitable Couple: On the physical scale, she's a 10 and he's a 2, the princess and a redneck or vice versa. This is the couple you look at for awhile and can't help but think: how'd that person get them? This can also be someone using the other for their money or status.

The Desperate Couple: Are only together because they are desperate to be with someone. They don't really care about each other or may not even have that much in common besides they were both single. The precursor mindset to this is: "Hey, if we're both single at 40, maybe we should hook up."

Looking at the Above Personality Problems as a Couple		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
The personality type(s) of couples I hate the most. Why?		
My response to it/them (e.g. gagging or avoiding).		
The personality type(s) we have to be careful not to be as a couple. Why?		
What we can do to prevent acting like this:		

What kind of couple do you want to be?		
<p>For Christians: Take a look at this list and pray for forgiveness for the negative personality types you have exhibited in the past and ask for strength to help overcome these tendencies in the future. You should also pray for your partner and the strength to help each other grow.</p>		

viii. Five Personalities Caused By the Brain

According to Dr. Earl Henslin in *This is Your Brain in Love*, which is an awesome book, there are five parts of the brain that can greatly affect our personality if one of them under or over functions. The following is a short description of these personalities. If any of these connect really well with you or your partner, this book has a great chapter on each of these issues describing in detail how to alleviate and better handle them.

Note: These five personality problems are more common than you might expect. For instance, I used the tests from this book with a group of twenty young people and only one person did not test positive to having at least one of these issues.

Benefit: When you discover someone you're closed to fits one or more of these categories, it's easier to accept their behavior and know how to better respond.

1. **The Scattered Lover** (affected area = Prefrontal Cortex)

The Scattered Lover is one of two types of people, someone with ADD/ADHD or someone often described as flakey or a space cadet. The latter is typically sweet tempered, but very frustrating because they can be easily caught up in the moment watching random things like flowers swaying in a breeze or fish swimming. This usually leads them to being perpetually late, which can lead to panicking and anger bursts.

In general, the Scattered Lover is easily distracted doing routine work, which causes them to have a hard time finishing things and to pay attention to details. They struggle to listen attentively and are often forgetful because they are busy daydreaming or fidgeting with something. They have poor

organizational skills with material things and time, which can cause them to easily lose things, be late and struggle to make clear goals. Scattered Lovers can get into moods where they are easily bored and unmotivated or they can be restless and talk excessively, which can sometimes cause them to interrupt others. It should be noted that this is more about not being able to filter their ideas or holding back their impulses than actually being rude.

2. ***The Overfocused Lover*** (affected area = Cingulate Gyrus)

The Overfocused Lover is someone who sees things as black and white and has a hard time seeing other people's opinions; this may cause them to seem oppositional and argumentative, or very disproving. This problem is accentuated by the fact that they dislike change, which even includes letting go of past hurts and grudges. The bigger problem with this is they have a problem with storing up hurts and resentments that replay over and over in their heads, which makes forgiving and letting go very difficult for them. These people have a particularly hard time with negative thinking and the downward spiral effect consuming their minds described earlier in this chapter. This typically results in them being afraid of getting hurt, and often results in some level of controlling behavior in order to feel safer. This overall problem with change often results in the person having a hard time moving from one task to another and doing things differently. This type of person has a tendency to have certain rituals and habits that can be the result of, or lead to, obsessive compulsive behaviors and being told: "You worry too much."

3. ***The Blue Mood Lover*** (affected area = Deep Limbic System)

Certain words follow the Blue Mood Lover: sadness, moodiness, negativity, irritability, hopelessness, dissatisfaction, crying and really low self-esteem. This person has a lack of interest in other people and doing things others think are fun. They can suffer from sleeping and eating problems, whether too much or too little; they often wrestle with guilt and sometimes even suicidal thoughts.

4. ***The Agitated Lover*** (affected area = Temporal Lobes)

As expected, Agitated Lovers are known for being easily irritated because of their temper and short fuse, which can lead to them exploding without warning. They typically have a negative mindset that causes them to misinterpret comments and assume others are attacking them in some way.

Agitated Lovers can have frequent feelings of déjà vu and moments of confusion, which may be the result of forgetfulness or memory problems, and fear; this can lead to sensitivity or mild paranoia or even to times where such dark thoughts as suicide or homicide cross their minds. They can also suffer from headaches or random abdominal pain, which may be connected to head injury or a family history of violence and/or explosiveness. This is the most toxic issue for a relationship, but also the easiest to fix.

5. ***The Anxious Lover*** (affected area = Basal Ganglia)

The Anxious Lover, more than the others, are heavily affected both emotionally and physically. Emotionally, they have frequent feelings of nervousness sometimes to the point of panic attacks. They tend to predict the worst, which leads them to avoid certain places and potential conflicts. They tend to have an excessive fear of others judging them, which is connected to their sensitivity to criticism and being easily embarrassed. They struggle with self confidence and being shy. Anxious Lovers can have nervous tics like biting fingernails and picking their skin. They tend to struggle with phobias and having either really low or excessive motivation. Physically, Anxious Lovers can suffer from headaches, sore muscles, rapid heart rate and hand tremors. They may have sweating issues with periods of hot and cold flashes and/or periods of nausea. Moments of panic may involve having trouble breathing or feeling like they're being smothered.

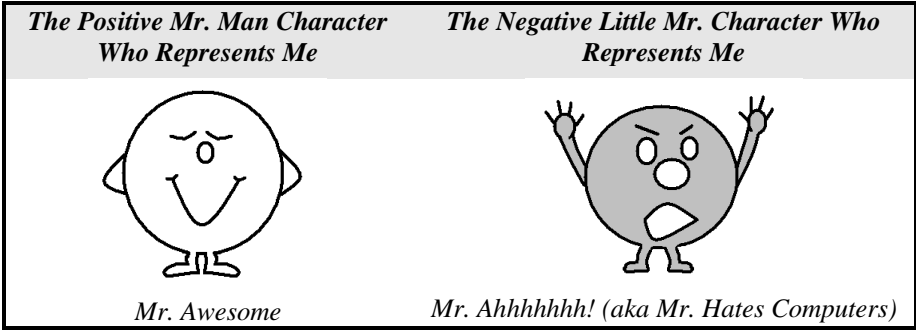
Note: If you or your partner connects to one or more of these categories, you should check out the book to see how to help each other prevent any of these behaviors from ruining your relationship.

ix. *In light of what you've discovered so far...*
A Fun Recap of Who You Are

Before I throw anymore information at you, it's time for a review. Looking back at what you've learned about yourself, let's do a recap of who you think you are as described in the manner of the Mr. Man book series. You're likely familiar with the Mr. Men and Little Miss children's books, which were titled after the characters like *Mr. Messy* and *Little Miss Busy*. Essentially, the author takes a personality issue and personifies it to make a character. This is what you'll be doing for this next activity; you'll be taking what you know about yourself and designing your own Mr. Man or Little Miss characters. Examples include Mr. Neglectful, Little Miss Opinionated, Mr. Blind to Animal Puke on

the Carpet, Little Miss Too Open About Her Female Issues, etc. Below are a positive and negative example I designed for myself:

Fig. 5.10



For Him Your Mr. Man and Little Miss Characters	
<i>Draw...</i>	
<i>The Positive Mr. Man Character Who Represents You (Feel free to draw several)</i>	<i>The Positive Little Miss Character Who Represents Your Partner (Feel free to draw several)</i>
<i>The Negative Mr. Man Character Who Represents You at Your Worst</i>	<i>The Negative Little Miss Character Who Represents Your Partner at Her Worst</i>
	<i>(Remember, be honest, but not hurtful)</i>
<i>The Mr. Man Character You Want to Be</i>	<i>The Little Miss Character You Think Your Partner Wants to Be</i>

For Her		Your Mr. Man and Little Miss Characters	
Draw...			
<i>The Positive Mr. Man Character Who Represents You (Feel free to draw several)</i>		<i>The Positive Little Miss Character Who Represents Your Partner (Feel free to draw several)</i>	
<i>The Negative Mr. Man Character Who Represents You at Your Worst</i>		<i>The Negative Little Miss Character Who Represents Your Partner at Her Worst</i>	
		<i>(Remember, be honest, but not hurtful)</i>	
<i>The Mr. Man Character You Want to Be</i>		<i>The Little Miss Character You Think Your Partner Wants to Be</i>	

The Mr. Man and Little Miss Couple Who Represents the Both of You		
Draw...	For Him	For Her
The <i>positive</i> Mr. Man and Little Miss who represents you both as a couple.		
The <i>negative</i> Mr. Man and Little Miss who represents you both as a couple (<i>i.e. the couple you need to be careful not to be</i>).		
The couple you want to be.		

Part C) Understanding Expectations

The following section is divided into five parts:

- i. Expectations: the Basics,
- ii. Expectations for Boundaries
- iii. Expectations about Communication
- iv. Expectations for Your Sex Lives
- v. Expectations for the Distribution of Chores

i. Expectations: the Basics

‘Expectations’ is one of the most powerful yet underrated words. They have a major role in every aspect of our lives whether with other people, work, church, shopping, driving and especially close relationships. It’s a word that can bring delight or great disappointment. It can make a relationship easy to handle or tragically frustrating. Whether we realize it or not, we all have a plethora of expectations no matter where we go or who we are around. They cause us to dread the dentist and look forward to vacations. They can be as simple as you expecting to wake up in the morning and not find your roof has blown off in a tornado or you taking a bite into an apple expecting it to taste like an apple and not an orange... I personally hate biting into an apple to find, instead of it being firm and crisp, it’s soft and flakey, ew. I know for my first kiss with a girl... not that I kissed anything before this... or after this... well, that’s a different story; I’ve kissed a dog. It wasn’t intentional or something I wanted to experience. I had bent over to pet the dog, but he jumped up and got his tongue into my mouth before I could close it. So yup, I’ve French kissed a dog. Needless to say, I’m much more cautious around animals who like to lick. Thus, my expectations have adapted to protect me. Anyway, back to my first kiss... with a girl... I expected it to go very differently. I grew up watching shows like *Growing Pains* and *Saved by the Bell*, so I thought that when you kiss the right person you’re supposed to hear people cheering for you with an “awww” or “yea!” When I kissed this young lady, however, there was nothing. There was no cheering; there weren’t even crickets to show it was a bad kiss... although I think a neighbor may have yelled “You suck!”... hopefully that was a neighbor and not the girl I kissed. Thus, my first kiss was definitely not what I expected... that and I was overanxious and accidentally bashed her teeth with mine. And because it fell short of my expectations, it was disappointing... it was definitely disappointing for the girl. Apparently

girls don't like to taste their own blood after kissing someone... or I guess tasting anyone's blood. Fortunately, I soon adjusted my expectations to not include cheering fans, which allowed me to enjoy it more, and I learned not to bash teeth so she could enjoy it more. Apparently, that's not a good move...that's a bonus tip from me; don't bash teeth when being romantic... I'm so smart.

Another great thing about expectations is if they are surpassed, we can experience great delight. For instance, I have a cat that will make the: "I'm puking up a hairball noise," but he rarely ever brings one up because he has a problem referred to as "dry hairballs" where he only makes the noise. This is unlike my other cat who offers the full package; definitely not pleasant. When I hear this gagging cat noise, I dread the thought of having to clean up the saliva soaked log of hair ... or at least feeling guilty for leaving it for someone else to clean up. Fortunately, I feel delight if it is my cat with the dry hairballs because then there isn't a mess to be cleaned... by someone else.

Expectations are also important for humor and pranks since these are often created by manipulating the expected. For instance, if you were about to sit on a toilet, but someone popped his or her head out to say hello that would likely leave you screaming and/or laughing. Thus, expectations can be a really great thing to have because it can lead to funny situations.

Unfortunately, like all things, there is balance of both positive and negative. When expectations are not met, we experience disappointment and maybe even horror. For instance, I'm sure at your wedding you expect the pastor not to say anything like: "You're in for a treat on your honeymoon; your partner is a fantastic lover. Don't worry; I gave her a few tips after to make it even better for you." That's definitely not living up to your healthy expectations. My personal pet peeve is people who don't flush public toilets like what they've done is a great accomplishment they want to share with others... ew. Ultimately, unmet expectations can destroy relationships because they can either be so huge we can't get past them (e.g. your partner cheating on you and telling you on Jerry Springer) or there is a continual build up of unmet expectations that leaves one or both of you miserably disappointed.

The following diagrams help illustrate how expectations work: we're content when our expectations are met, excited when we experience more, and disappointed when we experience less.

Fig. 5.11 **Content**



Fig. 5.12 **Excited**



Fig. 5.13 **Disappointed**



As these diagrams help illustrate, when we're able to have our expectations met, we're content. If we're able to receive more than we expect, we're excited, and if we don't have our expectations met, we feel disappointment. This leads to an important conclusion: we need to make sure we have healthy expectations. If we have too many expectations, or those that are impossible to attain, we'll always end up disappointed. Essentially what this means is instead of a nice, normal sized box, we have this giant one that can never be full.

Too many and/or Unfair Expectations

Fig.5.14



If this is how we live, we will be miserable. We can all be guilty of this, but I'm sure you can think of someone who's frequently guilty of having unfair expectations. They are always stressed or upset about something. They live very sad and lonely lives because this kind of behavior drives others away.

It's also important to make sure that our expectations aren't too few, which would mean we have a box that's too small. This can end up causing us to live a life that's second rate since we don't expect or want anything better. It can also leave us with a whole gamut of undesirable things like neglectful partners, limited jobs and lives that don't challenge and inspire us.

A Lack of Expectations

Fig.5.15



From a personal experience, I once did a stand up routine that I thought tanked hard, but other people there came up to me after and said they really enjoyed it. The problem was I had made unfair expectations that were impossible to achieve: “They’ll nonstop laugh.” I had essentially set myself up to fail; thus, instead of enjoying the moment on stage, I thought the experience was terrible. The opposite can also be true. I’ve seen comics get booed, but afterwards thought that it was a great set. I think we’d all benefit from these comics having higher expectations. Ultimately, we need to make sure that we have proper expectations. Using the box illustration, we need to have a healthy sized box; if it’s too big or too small, we need to fix it.

Tip: Healthy expectations are vital to a happy and fulfilled life.

The best way to prevent poor or unfulfilled expectations is to continually be aware of what it is we want and to properly communicate this. Many times, we are disappointed because someone hasn’t lived up to our expectations when the other party wasn’t even aware of what was expected of them. Ultimately, we can’t be angry for someone not living up to our expectations when they had no idea what it was we expected.

The Expectations Checklist When We’re Hurt

- 1. Is my expectation fair?*
- 2. Did I communicate what I expected properly so the other person wasn’t left guessing?* For example, most guys need more than simple hints to know what a woman wants: “But I hinted I wanted the blue shirt by looking at it longer than the other shirts.” Guys typically need clear communication, which may have to be *repeated* to get into our thick heads.
- 3. How do I appropriately respond based on the above information?*
For instance, if we are at fault of having unfair or poorly communicated expectations, we need to learn from our mistakes. If the other person was at fault, we should lovingly communicate our disappointment in order to help prevent this from happening again. Emphasis on ‘lovingly’.

Expectations have strong ties with the earlier exercise we did, *Life Scripts*, because people often see what they expect to see. For instance, if we do something with the attitude: “This is going to suck,” it typically does. I know in my experience, the one person who is the most afraid of doing something even if it’s not that big a deal, ends up being the one who gets hurt. This doesn’t mean we should ignore fear or apprehensions, but it does mean that we need to be careful not to ignore the positives or set ourselves up to fail. Ultimately, in any situation, if you’re looking for something positive you can find it, but, unfortunately, if you’re expecting something negative, you’ll be able to find that as well.

A Brief Look at Your Expectations		
**Adding your own questions to the different sections can increase relevance		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
Religion 1. Attendance at church, temple, mosque, etc. 2. Other Religious needs (e.g. <i>praying together, kosher lifestyle, etc</i>)		
Family 1. How often do you expect to visit family? 2. How will you divide up the holidays? 3. How “intrusive” will you allow your families to be?		
Children 1. How many? (0 is fine) 2. What scares you about having them? 3. What makes you excited having about them? 4. Stay home or daycare?		
Chores 1. How often should the house be cleaned? 2. What does “clean” mean to you? **Chore expectation form to follow		

<p>Mealtime</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How should mealtime look? (<i>e.g. TV? Sitting at a table? Manners?</i>) 2. Frequency of dinner out? 3. Cell phones at the table? 		
<p>Bedtime</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Sleeping arrangement 2. What time to go to bed and rise in the morning on work nights and weekends? 3. Get up at the same time? 4. Job distribution in the morning? (<i>e.g. turn on coffee, set up breakfast, etc</i>) 5. TV in the bedroom? (<i>a TV in the bedroom often reduces frequency of sex... yea, I don't want one</i>) 		
<p>Career</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who works? 2. How much overtime is okay? 3. Would you move for a better job? 4. What do you do if one of you is laid off? 		
<p>Other: <i>Note: boundaries, communication and sex will be discussed later</i></p>		

The following sections are designed to make sure you have a chance to discover hidden or taken for granted expectations and to be able to communicate them properly with your partner. Taken for granted expectations are things we think are normal ideas and behaviors we assume others follow as well. This may include expecting other drivers to not cut you off or bump you around like a bumper car while on the highway. This next activity is something you will want to continually practice in order to maintain healthy and well communicated expectations for you and your partner. Remember,

even things you think are “normal” should be mentioned because what you think is “normal” maybe different than what your partner thinks.

ii. Expectations for Boundaries

Tip: Knowing boundaries can help prevent fights because these are lines we don’t want crossed: “Oh no, you did-ent.” This follows the idea of what’s in our *Expectations Box*, which we looked at earlier.

Boundaries allow you to have something that is all your own. In relationships, we want to be open and share things with our partners, but, at some level, we all need something that is our own in order to have a sense of identity and to feel safe.

What are Your Personal Boundaries (i.e. my personal space)?		
<i>Examples: (For me)</i>	<i>His List</i>	<i>Her List</i>
1. Don’t read my journal 2. Don’t treat me like a child 3. Don’t pick on me after a hard day 4. Don’t oogle other guys or say: “I wish you were like him” 5. Don’t hack into my email account, tap the phone lines, or spy on me 6. Be honest with me and don’t hide important info like big purchases 7. Don’t be mean to my family 8. Don’t <i>secretly</i> video tape me or us 9. Don’t publish our sex lives on a blog or tell random people 10. Keep our fights semi-private (<i>i.e. you can talk to close friends for guidance, but not random people</i>) 11. Don’t develop intimate relationships with other guys even online		
Define Personal Time: <i>What does it look like?</i> <i>How much do you need?</i>		

Define Guy Time & Girl Time <i>What does it look like?</i> <i>How much do you need?</i>		
Define Vacation Time <i>What does it look like?</i> <i>How much do you need?</i>		
Define how important it is for you to have something that is your own (i.e. object, hobby etc). What would fulfill this need?		

iii. Expectations for Communication

Good communication includes *both* listening and talking. It is one of the most important things in a relationship, but can also be one of the most neglected aspects when schedules don't coincide very well and/or effort isn't made.

Ultimately, behind every broken family is bad communication because communicating, verbal and nonverbal, is an essential tool for expressing love and acceptance. One of the main reasons why communication is so poor in families is people either don't bother or don't know how to properly listen. In an age of increasing distraction and technology, this problem is only going to be accentuated until we take the time to properly listen to people again.

On the plus side, if we display good listening skills, we will likely be offered a listening ear in return, which is why people who say: "You never listen to me" are typically those who are poor at listening to others. Thus, if you're in relationships where you don't feel heard, try listening to the other person more, ask questions and show an interest in them, and see if this helps.

Helping others feel heard is the best way to prevent or reduce fighting. Typically a fight involves two people trying to be heard and understood: "You're not hearing me so I'm going to scream!" "You're not listening to me so I'll use gestures and insults to get your attention, you moron!" "You're still not hearing me, so I'm going to break something!"

There are some key ways to be a good listener beyond eye contact, looking interested and not interrupting. Here are five great suggestions for becoming a better listener. Remember, if you're nudging your partner and saying

something like: “Maybe now you’ll be able to listen to me,” you’re probably in need of this list just as much as him or her.

Tips for Listening:

1. Ask questions to start or carry a conversation, and show you’re interested.
2. Summarize and repeat what’s said: “So what you’re saying is…”
3. Clarify to show you’re listening (e.g. “Correct me if I’m wrong, but it sounds like you’re saying…” or “Are you saying…?”)
4. Try to agree about something the person says and expand or redirect the conversation to something else, especially if you feel uncomfortable (e.g. “I agree with that point. You know what else I was thinking…”).
5. Avoid saying any variation of: “You’re wrong” and “That’s stupid” because this will likely lead to confrontation. Better options include:
 - “I never thought of it that way. I always thought…”
 - “I see what you’re saying, but what I don’t understand is…”

What You Look for in Communication

To further help your communication skills, let’s do some communicating.

Communication Expectations Chart		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What kinds of communication do you want? (e.g. In person, call, text, email, Facebook) & When do you want it?		
How often do you need it per day? & When do you need it?		
What do you need to be or feel fully engaged? (e.g. Not be in the middle of something, distracted by TV, etc.)		
What do you need from your partner? (e.g. No cell phone distractions)		
What does good communication look like? (e.g. Eye contact, affirming nods or sounds, questions)		

What are your communication fears? (e.g. <i>Being misinterpreted, having things held against me, etc</i>)		
When do you feel you've been heard (e.g. <i>"uh huhn," "I agree," etc.</i>)?		
When is your partner at his or her best for listening (e.g. <i>no TV or book in front of him/her, at night, etc.</i>)?		
What makes it terrible?		
What makes it great?		

Your Communication Style

One of the things we're not told growing up is that people have different ways of communicating. By filling out the following chart, you'll see where you two differ.

(Based on information from *It Takes Two* by Andrew and Judith Lester)

Understanding Your Conversation Style (<i>Check the column that sounds <u>more</u> like you</i>)			
	His	Hers	
Are you more interested in being independent and in control?	__	__	Are you more interested in creating interdependent discussions?
Is conversation a tool to determine rank and status?	__	__	Is conversation a way to develop equality?
Does conversation become a source of competition?	__	__	Is conversation used to build connections?
Support is offered through finding solutions and/or finding the humor in the situation	__	__	Support is offered simply through listening and identifying with the person's struggle
Talking is more statement oriented preventing critique	__	__	Talking is done in a way that invites further participation from others.

Prefer to share facts and knowledge	__ __	Prefer to share emotions and feelings	__ __
Do you use humor or aggression to hide your feelings even with those closest to you?	__ __	Are you able to express your feelings openly?	__ __
Crying in front of people is a major faux pas.	__ __	Crying is acceptable and used to build the intensity of the conversation	__ __
Conversations are shorter.	__ __	Conversations can go on for long periods of time.	__ __
Do you connect better with people by doing things rather than just talking?	__ __	Do you connect better with people by just talking?	__ __
When asked “What’s wrong?” and you respond “Nothing”, that’s a sign to leave you alone.	__ __	When asked “What’s wrong?” and you respond “Nothing” that’s a sign to keep asking.	__ __
Asking for help is a sign of weakness.	__ __	Asking for help is a way to bond.	__ __
Listening to the story, you only want the important facts related to the point.	__ __	Listening to the story, you want as many details as possible.	__ __
Being asked to do something feels like you’re being bossed around unless it’s something hard like lifting.	__ __	Being asked to do something is empowering and allows you to be helpful.	__ __
Asking for your partner’s opinion can feel like you’re not competent enough to make your own decisions.	__ __	Consensus in making decisions makes both parties happy, which is the preferred outcome.	__ __
Are you more likely to say something like: “I don’t know what you want?”	__ __	Are you more likely to say something like: “Why are you so insensitive?”	__ __

Note: There is no right or wrong answers to the above chart, but the left column are more stereotypical male responses and the right are the more stereotypical female responses. If you match more with the opposite gender this isn’t a bad sign... if it was a physical, then being more like the opposite gender would definitely be more of a problem. This just means your conversation style has been influenced more by the opposite gender. Thus,

you shouldn't judge your masculinity or femininity on how you like to connect with others.

****Read the list again and try to better understand yourself and your partner.**

Questions About the Chart		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
1. How does being sick change your typical conversation style? For instance, some people hide their feelings more while others, typically "tough" guys, become really whiney.		
2. Why do you think both sides are a valuable way of looking at conversation?		
3. What are the dangers of having one partner being one extreme and the other partner being the other?		
4. What dangers exist if you're the same?		
5. Looking at your results, what can you do to communicate better with your partner?		
6. What can your partner do for you to help you two communicate better?		

Tip: Causing someone to be defensive leads to fighting and/or resentment. If we want someone to listen to what we have to say, we need to make our approach as loving as possible without coming across as attacking, which can be especially difficult when dealing with people who are more sensitive and have a negative *Life Script*.

Better Ways to Communicate

The following chart will help you rate how well you think you communicate.

Rating Communication Styles		
On a Scale of 1-10 with 1 being the <i>Worst</i> and 10 being <i>Perfect</i>		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What does a rating of 5 out of 10 look like for communication?		
What does a 10 out of 10 look like?		
What rating do you give yourself in general with communication (<i>i.e. with friends, at work, etc.</i>)?		
What rating do you give your communication with your partner?		
How can you improve?		

Knowing How to Improve Our Communication

The following is a great chart for looking at how we should be talking to others. Unfortunately, most of us are predisposed to the *Unhealthy Communication Style* because it's the easier style to resort to and it's also what most of us are used to seeing from our parents and mentors, friends and the media. Fortunately, knowing the healthier response gives us an idea of how we can improve and strive to show a more *Loving Communication Style*. Following this will reduce being misunderstood and help our partners feel more loved, which is hopefully one of our goals.

Don't be ashamed if you find yourself in the *What Not to Say* column; simply adapt your responses in the future so you won't be there if you do this again. You have learned this negative behavior from somewhere; therefore, the great thing is you can relearn a better, healthier style that will help your relationship grow stronger. This is based on:

How We Should be Trying to Communicate

Unhealthy Communication Style	What <i>NOT</i> to say (examples)	Is this you? <i>His Hers</i>	Loving Communication Style	Suggestions for What <i>TO</i> Say
Demanding	"You should be nicer to my family!"	__ __	Supportive	"I've noticed you struggled with my family. Is there something I can do to help it be easier for you to be more tolerant of them?"
Slandering	"You're so clumsy!"	__ __	Supportive	"Are you okay?"
Controlling	"Be careful!"	__ __	Encouraging	"Watch out for the bad guys." "I love you."
Attacking	"You're wrong." "No, it's this way." OR "Why would you do it that way? That's stupid."	__ __	Solution oriented	"Sorry, I'm confused by this. Can you explain to me how that will work?" OR "Have you thought about this?"
Bossy	"Stop playing video games and talk to me."	__ __	Request	"I really would like to talk to you right now; would you mind pausing your game?"
Silence	"..."	__ __	Trusting	"I know you love me so I want to share with you how I feel..."
Exaggeration	"You never listen to me!"	__ __	Solution oriented	"When you (action) I don't feel you're listening to me and that hurts. Can you please (suggestion)." "Are you angry with me? Is there a reason you don't care about what I have to say?"
Advisory	"You need to tell that person..."	__ __	Encouraging	"I don't know how you stand that. Want to know what I would want to do if I were you...?"
Defensive	"Don't yell at me."	__ __	Supportive	"I know this isn't your normal behavior. Can I ask what's really bothering you?"

Critical	"You did a terrible job cleaning." "I have to redo this"	— —	Supportive	"Thanks for cleaning. I always have trouble with the (thing). Did you?" "Thanks for cleaning; guess we have a different idea of clean (ha ha). Can I ask a favor? ..."
Degrading	"What were you thinking?"	— —	Supportive	"So what will you do differently next time?"
Fearful	"We better ask for directions because we'll never get there."	— —	Supportive	"I'm not saying you don't know what you're doing, but would you mind stopping for directions. It would help me feel better."

Rating Communication Styles, Another Look		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
Any changes to your rating of 5 out of 10?		
Any changes to your rating of 10 out of 10?		
Any changes to the rating to your communication with people in general?		
Any changes to the rating to your communication with your partner?		
Any new ideas on how can you improve?		

iv. Expectations for Your Sex Lives

Note: I was once told: "Men show love in order to have sex; women give sex in order to feel loved." There are exceptions to this idea, but there is definitely an element of truth to this as well. I know as a man, if I show love to my partner by cuddling and being intimate I want it the time together to conclude with something sexual.

a) Sex Described

Sex is a gift from God. As a Christian, I believe sex is supposed to symbolize a couple becoming “one” in marriage and continually reminds them that they are part of something special. Regardless of your background, I hope you respect and appreciate sex because when we don’t, we enjoy it less, demean the experience with our partner and have a greater capacity for cheating because: “It’s only sex.”

Tip: I believe pre-marital sex is like looking at your presents before Xmas morning. We all want a peek and it’s exciting either way, but it’s more satisfying to wait... and it saves us a lot of drama... *a lot of drama.*

Sex is meant to be enjoyed by *both* parties and used to strengthen the bonds between the couple. Masturbation should never replace sex with your partner and should be avoided as much as possible when you’re married. Even if you travel a lot for work, needing to frequently “please yourself” is a sign that something isn’t right in your relationship. One rabbi said: “If you’re having that kind of struggle, isn’t that God’s way of telling you that you’re away from home too long?” (Henslin, 2010) I believe “finishing” yourself has its benefits for understanding your body and can help prevent single people from hooking up with people they shouldn’t. In marriage, however, this can, in fact, reduce a couple’s desire to be together, especially after a fight when they need a reason to make up and reunite emotionally and physically. In today’s society, marriages are being torn apart because men are choosing to watch porn over being with their spouse. The problem is if a guy can watch porn and get off, why would he bother trying to make things right with a woman he feels is being irrational and unfair? As a guy, women in porn are awesome because they don’t require any work; I don’t have to do chores for them, listen to them, encourage them or please them in anyway; it’s easy. Unfortunately, anything that comes easy is always second rate to something that requires effort and care. Married couples need to address this temptation and learn how to properly resolve conflict and enjoy reuniting both emotionally and physically.

Tip: In marriage, people need to focus on helping each other rather than just themselves. One of the best ways to demonstrate this is by meeting each other’s sexual need rather than just “finishing” yourself or abstaining when your partner also has needs that are best addressed together.

Another Tip: Any reliance to porn, including erotic novels, is a struggle both the user and the partner need to investigate and resolve. *Both* parties need to address the sexual need that is not being met and/or discover the wound that is causing this behavior.

I love what Chris Rock says about sex for men. He claims that sex is medicine, which essentially helps prevent men from doing something stupid: “Sometimes you have to save your man from himself. You know what happens when he don’t get his medicine.” In regards to the Clinton affair, he continues to say: “Hillary was the First Lady. She should’ve been the first lady to get on her knees and...” I’m sure you can guess how that sentence ends. Hint: it’s not “scrub the floors.” Ultimately, we have a responsibility to our partners, ourselves and our relationship. Things need to be good at home to prevent things from going very bad outside.

This follows one of my favorite marriage passages in the Bible:

Sexual drives are strong, but marriage is strong enough to contain them and provide for a balanced and fulfilling sexual life in a world of sexual disorder. The marriage bed must be a place of mutuality—the husband seeking to satisfy his wife, the wife seeking to satisfy her husband. Marriage is not a place to ‘stand up for your rights.’ Marriage is a decision to serve the other, whether in bed or out. (1 Cor 7: 3-4, *The Message*)

Whether you’re a Christian or not, this is a fantastic couple verses because it describes how both the male and female are meant to enjoy sex and be satisfied. Really, what person doesn’t want to enjoy sex and be satisfied?

Key: Remember, sex is never meant to be used as a weapon or a tool for bribing. It is meant to be enjoyed and valued in the marriage. It is meant to keep you united together on a level that is deeper than any other relationship.

A Quick Summary of Sex

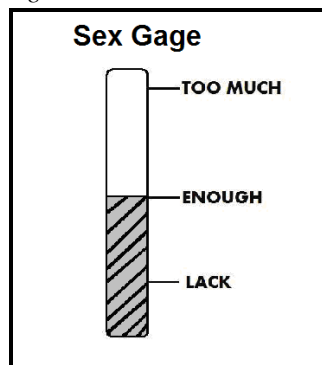
- 1) Whether you believe in God or not, sex is a gift; from whom or what is the question. Sex can give people a purpose (e.g. it’s the motivation for many young rock stars and athletes), a legacy (i.e. provides offspring), a distraction from pain or it can be a way to enhance special occasions. Like any gift, however, it needs to be respected. You don’t open a crystal vase, say thank you and smash it on the floor... hopefully.

- 2) Sex can provide an extreme sense of connection and intimacy with someone, which is why it can drive people crazy with jealousy.
- 3) Sex can be a way to teach and enhance self control instead of our natural inclination for immediate gratification. Sex is meant to be enjoyed for more than a minute... hopefully you already knew that... guys. It also helps our sense of self control when it comes to knowing when to say no to attractions outside of our partnership.
- 4) Sex is a symbol for how a healthy relationship should work. For instance, it promotes healthy communication and trust; it encourages appreciation and consideration of others as well as promoting the need for variety and trying new things. It also symbolizes that too big a dick doesn't get any... that's an innuendo... I shouldn't be as proud of myself as I am for writing that.

Sex on Another Level

On another level, sex is a gage for how well your relationship is going. For instance:

Fig. 5.16



Too much = If a couple is experiencing too much sex... this is definitely the preferred negative situation... the question becomes from what are you hiding? What is the real issue being avoided? Why does it feel like it's too much?

Enough sex = Things are good; needs are met and certain temptations avoided.

Lack of sex = Things need to change whether priorities, how you treat each other, or stress levels or there needs to be an elimination of distractions (e.g. TV, work in the bedroom, being too tired, etc). The danger of not enough sex is it leaves both partners feeling less connection and fulfillment.

Tip: Emotional celibacy is a problem for many couples. If you block yourself off emotionally from your partner, physical celibacy is either at hand or on its way. Emotional intimacy is what helps us feel loved. When you're with someone and yet feel lonely, your emotional intimacy is struggling, and in a partnership becomes imperative to address. You need to figure out what both you and your partner can do differently to fix this problem.

Another Tip: The best way to ruin your sex life is for a woman to use two simple words: "I'm tired." Say this a few times and your man will soon give up trying to impress you. Instead, he'll start looking to video games, porn and more work to fill his void leaving you thinking he's distant and uncaring.

How You and Your Partner Work

Women's magazines are plastered with titles like "60 new sex moves," and "75 ways to turn him on", but that's silly. Here's all the advice you need to know in order to make your man "go wild": a man is like a woman who has been equipped with a Clapper.⁴ In this case, however, you don't have to clap to turn on the man. Actually, clapping is the one thing that won't work: "Honey, why are you clapping?" "I'm turning you on." "Are you sure?" As a guy, women can turn us on by being in the room. That's it. To quote Harrison Ford in the movie *6 Days and 7 Nights*, "All a woman has to do is show up. We're easy." As the relationship develops, other options include being polite or happy, needing us, walking, standing in one place, bending over to tie your shoe, showing a bra strap or thong, hugging us for an extended period of time, hugging another woman for an extended period of time, bouncing on a trampoline, and dressing up or not dressing at all. See how easy it is? Ladies, don't complicate things for yourself or waste your money on these magazines.

⁴ A Clapper is an older gimmick designed to turn things on like your lights by clapping: "Clap on; clap off: the Clapper." It's not a person with the clap or someone who claps too much, although I guess the Clapper is a potential nickname for both: "Beware of the Clapper." "Hey (clap clap); that's not nice."

Men are easy, which is why we get frustrated with you because you're not easy; you're complicated. Comedian David Crowe says: "Men are like Fisher Price toys; pull one lever... Women are all wired like Boeing 747s. Walk on board there's a million buttons... only one of them turns the plane on. Sometimes you find the button and everything works... come back the next day, same airplane, but the buttons moved." Therefore, these magazine articles for better sex will have much more value for men, but we don't read them because, well, we don't read, at least things like that. We read stuff for our hobbies and sex isn't a hobby; we want it part of our daily routine like eating and sleeping. Even if a guy was forced to look at a "How to Have Sex" book or movie we wouldn't be paying attention to the tips; we'd be looking at the girls. Even if we tried to understand the moves, we'd get distracted: "Wow, that's hot." In addition, for women, looking for advice is natural; it follows their communication style, but, for a guy, it can feel like admitting defeat. It's like asking for directions when we're lost or asking for help doing something. It makes us feel weak. Fortunately, in the end, all of that reading is pretty useless because every woman is different and wants different things; thus, we need to *appropriately* tell our partner what we like and dislike and not rely on magazines to solve our problems. This is especially important for women because, after all, guys are used to a Fisher Price toy and being made with a "Clapper": "You mean my plumber's crack doesn't turn you on? But your butt cleavage works for me."

My Belief: I believe men were created more physically driven and women to be more emotionally driven as a way to balance out the relationship. Since women tend to crave emotional intimacy, this helps push men to discover its importance and to appreciate emotional connection. At the same time, it's important for men to be physically driven and to need frequent physical love to prevent physical intimacy from being forgotten. Quite often sex is a great motivation for men to want to end conflict and move past the fighting in order to be physically intimate. There's a reason women can be best friends with someone for awhile and then suddenly hate that person thereby ending the friendship for life; they tend to hold onto the hurt. Since men crave being physical, it pushes them to want to resolve the problems and not let them linger. When this set up fails, however, the relationship is in serious trouble because many times it's left up to the men to suck it up and apologize. This, of course, brings up the point that both partners need to be careful to restore

order and not simply rely on the one person to initiate the apologizing and to be grateful when the other does it.

You, Your Partner and Sex

The following charts are meant to help you understand each other better and your wants in order to improve the ruckus under the sheets, the horizontal ka-pow, the woo-ha delight, the... I think you get the point.

Your Sexual Needs		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
How often do you <i>need</i> to have sex (i.e. to help prevent wandering eyes and hands)? & When do you <i>need</i> sex?		
How often do you <i>want</i> to have sex? & When do you <i>want</i> sex?		
What gets your engine going? (as Ray Romano puts it, "Initiates the launch sequence.")		
What do you need to be fully engaged in intimacy? (e.g. Partner doesn't have one eye on you and the other on the TV)		
What do you need from your partner? Different cultures can have different needs (e.g. Talking or no talking, etc)		
What makes it terrible? What does it look and feel like?		
What are your fears about sex? (e.g. Not being very good, being bored)		
What makes it great? What does it look and feel like?		

(Based on information from *It Takes Two* by Andrew and Judith Lester)

Needs Being Met in Sexual Experience (Rank the top 5 needs that you have met during sex)	His Top 5	Her Top 5
Feeling totally "at one"		
Sense of touch being met		
Hormonal release (i.e. a natural body need)		

Protection from temptation (i.e. prevent wandering eyes)		
Procreation		
Fun, excitement		
Being needed by your partner		
Satisfaction in being able to please your partner		
Affirmation of your love for each other		
Celebrating your relationship		
A deep sense of emotional intimacy		
Confirmation of my sexual identity as a man or woman		
A distraction from the everyday struggles		
Feeling attractive to your partner		

Rating Your Sexual Intimacy		
On a Scale of 1-10 with 1 being the <i>Worst</i> and 10 being <i>Perfect</i>		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
On a scale of 1-10 for sexual intimacy, what does a 5 look like?		
On a scale of 1-10 for sexual intimacy, what does a 10 look like?		
On a scale of 1-10 for sexual intimacy, what does a 1 look like?		
What rating do you give your sexual intimacy as a couple?		
How can you improve?		

v. Expectations for the Distribution of Chores

This activity is meant to help you know how tasks around the house should be divided. This can help alleviate unnecessary fighting about things like who takes out the garbage or does the grocery shopping. Notice that “nagging” isn’t a job requirement. If nagging is a problem, then you need to come up with a better system in order to prevent the one partner from feeling the need to harass the other to do a job he/she wants done.

“Role” Planning

<i>The Task</i>	Always Him	Mostly Him	Both	Mostly Her	Always Her
Cut the lawn					
Care for gardens					
Snow removal					
Decorate outside					
Decorate inside					
Vacuuuming					
Scrub floors					
Dust					
Scrub toilets					
Clean the bathrooms					
Spring clean curtains and cupboards					
Grocery shop					
Barbeque					
Cook meals					
Bake					
Pack lunches					
Clean the dishes					
Organize social get-togethers					
Rodent removal & bug squasher					
Make the bed					
Laundry					
Ironing					
Sewing/Mending					
Minor household repairs					
Bringing in someone for repairs					
Car maintenance					
Banking					
Paying bills					
Financial planning					
Holiday planning (<i>e.g. Talks to family to make plans</i>)					
Remembering Birthdays					

Buying presents for others					
Xmas decorating					
Xmas cooking/baking					
Pets:					
Walk the dog /Clean the litter/ fish tanks					
Feed the pets					
Clean up vomit/messes					
Vet appointments					
Children: (future discussion)					
Extra Jobs:					

The Chore Clarification		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
Examples of jobs that <i>need</i> to be done.		
Examples of jobs I <i>want</i> done for my sanity.		
What's the difference?		
When is a job something I need to let go of because it causes unnecessary stress and in reality it isn't that important?		

Part D) Concluding Exercise: *I Accept This*

Now that you've gone through this chapter and have learned things about yourself and your partner, it would be wise to do a general recap while pushing yourself to acceptance. The truth is we all have issues; the question is can we accept ours and our partners? Acceptance is key to a happy relationship. For

instance, I once dated a girl who struggled with my limited palette for eating because I'm "selective". The problem arose that she'd tell people about my issue in a way that made me sound severely handicapped because she secretly loathed this about me. This resentment wasn't healthy and, ultimately, she had to figure out whether she would accept this about me or move on to another guy who would have other issues. At the same time, she didn't take into account that she had her own issues going on with which I had to contend. For instance, she was a witch. Thus, I too had to figure out if I could accept her issue and not let it bother me or if I should break up because I couldn't.

In this concluding exercise you will be answering this same question. You will be writing down yours and your partner's issues and pushing yourself to acceptance in order to prevent any of these things from wrecking your relationship. Suggestions for issues include: allergies, weird ticks, habits or collections, differing opinions, past, family things, unusual fashion, cleanliness or lack there of and other things you discovered in this chapter. Remember, we all have issues; *therefore, we need to accept our own if we're going to love ourselves, and we need to accept others' if we're going to love them.* For this exercise, make sure if you write in one column that you write in the other. There needs to be a balance. If you can't balance this list then you are either too hard on yourself or your partner, or simply need a little longer to brainstorm or to talk to close friends for ideas.

Tip: Love doesn't demand change, but it encourages it; thus, we need to be ready to accept ourselves and our partners for who we are right now.

Important Note: Some things shouldn't be accepted like feeling taken for granted, or abused and need to be appropriately addressed.

What Are Your Issues?			
For Him:		For Her:	
<i>Your Issues</i>	<i>Her Issues</i>	<i>Your Issues</i>	<i>His Issues</i>

Finally, go through your lists and say: “I accept this,” for each of these issues. If you can’t then you need to find the necessary help or solution.

****Bonus Section**

If you’ve made it this far, you are now ready for the ultimate in challenging questions. This is meant to really make you think, but it could be the best exercise you ever do. Because of how challenging it is, you will want to be as supportive and loving as you can. In fact, take a few moments to reaffirm your love for each other.

Tip: This is pushing your trust of each other to the limits, but it’s meant to bring out your deepest fears. Hopefully all of the real issues have already been addressed in this book so this won’t actually be that bad.

A Hypothetical Question	
<i>It is now some time in the future and you’re looking at getting divorced. Based on your current situation and personalities, why do you think you’d be looking at doing this?</i>	
For Him	For Her
<i>Based on our current situation, I think <u>you</u> would one day consider leaving me because... (e.g. I ignored you too often)</i>	<i>Based on our current situation, I think <u>you</u> would one day consider leaving me because... (e.g. I nagged too much)</i>
<i>Based on our current situation, I think <u>I</u> would one day consider leaving you because...</i>	<i>Based on our current situation, I think <u>I</u> would one day consider leaving you because...</i>

Ending on a Happier Note	
<i>It is now some time in the future, why are you the one couple who still has a happy marriage?</i>	
For Him	For Her

Chapter 6: POWER

This chapter deals with power; yes, I know that's a ground breaking first sentence... So have you noticed that I try to use humor as a preemptive defense against criticism? Whether you realize it or not, we all behave in ways to pursue and/or maintain our sense of power. The problem is some of these methods are actually harmful to us or others, which typically come back and hurt us even more. Don't worry, this concept of power will be explained in this chapter, which will be broken down into several categories:

Part A) Power: *The Basics*

Part B) How We Try to Acquire Power: *The Negative and Positive Ways*

Part C) The Emotions

Part D) Finances: *The "Fun" Part*

Part A) Power: The Basics

Power is the conscious or unconscious sense of feeling important, safe and secure, which is in direct proportion to how well we feel loved in a situation. Thus, the *less* loved we feel, the *less* power we feel while the *more* love we feel, the *more* power we feel. This is important to know because the more love and power we feel, the less likely we are to fight or attack someone in retaliation.

Tip: The best way to receive power is through love and forgiveness and not at the expense of others.

Note: We fight back when our power is threatened. It can be done through rolling our eyes, glaring, gossiping, making snide remarks, insults or verbal jabs, the silent treatment or using physical aggression like pushing or hitting.

People are in constant struggle for power with others and certain things. For instance, when someone buds in line in front of me I feel a sense of decreased power; young children are not nearly as good at hiding their displeasure with this act as most adults... emphasis on *most*. I experience a similar loss of power when my computer acts up without a good reason like it's not working because I've thrown it out the window... computers definitely don't bounce very well. Our sense of power is directly affected by our mindsets whether

positive or negative. This follows that our mindsets project how we think *others* see us.

Tip: We need to be careful not to think that others think the same as us. For example, I dated a girl who had a mean streak when certain people hurt her... namely me... so she assumed others would act maliciously towards her as well... namely me... even though I had no intention of doing that. I'm not that kind of person... and frankly, I was too scared of the repercussions of upsetting her. Unfortunately, her fear of others being malicious caused her to be afraid of what they might do to her if she upset them, which caused her to be an extreme people pleaser... minus me. What she needed to do was change this mean streak in herself and begin to see others in a better light. Most people don't intentionally try to hurt others. However, if you think they do, you will always find ways to feel attacked and threatened, which is a terrible way to live and makes building relationships very difficult.

Another Tip: How much you care about what others think of you is in direct proportion to how critical of others you are and how much you gossip and backstab. Thus, if fear of others' opinions is something with which you wrestle, work at being more accepting and loving of others in order to decrease this problem.

Ultimately, the more positive we are about ourselves, the more likely we'll think *others* are positive about us as well; this in turn makes us feel more positive. Similarly, the more negative we are about ourselves, the more negative we'll think others see us, which further perpetuates our negative mindsets.

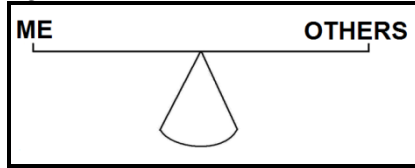
Tip: If you can love yourself without people's approval, you will be a lot happier and healthier. Loving yourself can be because you know God loves you or simply because you know you are a person worthy of love.

Unfortunately, many people base the way they feel about themselves on how they *think* others see them. This leaves them working and worrying to the point of exhaustion trying to please everyone else. The major problem with this is there is no set grading system for pleasing others, which causes the people pleasing attitude to never feel satisfied. This ultimately leaves the people pleaser frustrated and in a never ending cycle of trying to be good enough. At the same time, however, if we don't care about what others think

we can become very hurtful and arrogant. Thus, we need to keep what we think of others and ourselves in balance.

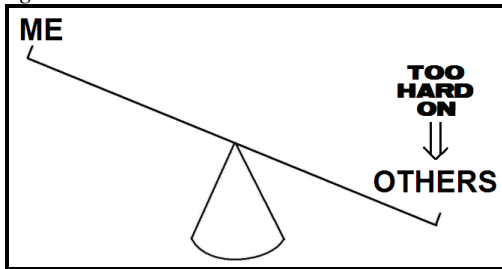
Being Balanced With the Way We See Ourselves and Others

Fig.6.1



Hurting Others Because We're Hard On Them

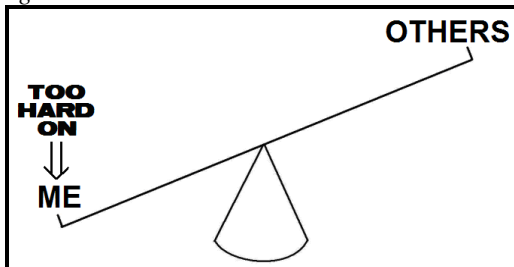
Fig.6.2



As this diagram demonstrates, if we put all of our energy on being “Too Hard On Others” we are out of balance and hurting them. This is the attitude that follows “I’m better than others,” which is a great way to be lonely and not have many friends. But I guess this doesn’t matter because you’re “better” than them anyway... that was sarcasm. One of the biggest problems with this attitude is that the people we hurt often retaliate, which further perpetuates our negativity and isolating behavior.

Feeling Weak Because We're Hard On Ourselves

Fig.6.3



This illustration shows the other side where we are too hard on ourselves. In this set up, we become weak, which leaves us vulnerable to lashing out somewhere for power whether at ourselves or others.

Tip: We should never try to gain power at the *expense* of others. Unfortunately this is what happens when we raise our voices, use insults, use the silent treatment or do any other form of fighting back behavior.

Most people tend to mistreat those closest to them the most. They will bottle up their hurts from random people and lash out at those they love the most. This is very dangerous and unhealthy because it damages our most valuable relationships. This is actually very counterproductive behavior because when we're upset we need to feel love, especially by those closest to us. Since this seems to be our natural tendency, we need to retrain ourselves not to take out our anger on those closest to us and to handle it more appropriately.

Warning: We have a tendency to bottle up hurts from people that don't matter to us and take it out on those who do. This is how we screw up our best relationships and it's all for the hope that random people will think we're a good person when this has little effect on our lives when compared to how those closest to us think.

Important Tip: *How we treat those closest to us proves how well we know how to love while the intention behind how we treat random people is how we determine character.* This means that if you treat others well because you're afraid of them or not being liked, that is poor character. If, however, you treat others well because you see their value as equal people, you have good character.

Prioritizing People in Your Lives After Marriage	
<i>Ideal</i>	<i>Yours</i>
<p><i>*If you're religious, God should be first</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. You/your partner (you are one in marriage) 2. Your children (if you have them) 3. Intimate relationships (closest family & friends) 4. Less connected family 	

<p>5. Friends</p> <p>6. Acquaintances (e.g. people from work, church, clubs, sports teams, old school friends, etc)</p> <p>7. Strangers</p>	
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Key:

1. Knowing our priorities tells us on whom we should be spending the most time and energy.

2. We need to treat those higher up better than those at the bottom. We often take those closest to us for granted and treat those lower on the list better. For instance, we'll yell at family or dress our poorest around our partner because we're "comfortable". However, we should be more concerned with those who love us the most; the ones we go to for help; the ones who help us feel good about ourselves; the ones we need to enjoy life.

Tips: For optimal relationships, we should be looking at how we treat strangers and random people and make that a benchmark for how we will treat those higher up on our list even better.

Remember: How we treat strangers demonstrates our potential character; how we treat those closest to us demonstrates how well we know how to love.

3. Note that "children" come *after* "you/your partner". This does not mean you neglect your children, but it is a reminder that you need to take care of you and your partner in order to be at your best for taking care of your children. Happy and healthy people make better parents. If you two are miserable, you'll be terrible parents. If you get divorced because you haven't taken care of each other, you will drastically affect your child's well being and understanding of love. Besides, parents are naturally drawn to put their children first; thus, trying to keep your partner and yourself first will help keep things in balance and prevent you and your partner from neglecting each other like what usually happens.

Explanations for any differences from the Ideal list:

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In order to prevent hurting those closest to us, it is important to better understand the way our priorities should be set up. This helps explain how power is distributed in our lives. Ultimately, the people we should be treating the best are those closest to us because they offer us the most love and, therefore, power in return.

Tip: Improper priorities will hold you back as a person and damage your more important relationships. They can also lead you to sharing personal information with people with whom you are not very close thereby creating the potential for scaring them away or offering them great gossip to spread about you. Either way it's a losing situation.

Prioritizing Power Structures in Your Life	
<i>Ideal</i>	<i>Yours</i>
<p><i>*If you're religious, God should be first</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yours and Your Partner's Health (e.g. working out, relaxing and recovering, etc) 2. Immediate Family 3. Job (i.e. family <i>emergencies</i> take priority over work) 4. Intimate People (closest family & friends) 5. Hobbies and Volunteering 6. Other people 7. Other activities 	
<p>Note: This is not a perfect science; there is room for movement within this list, especially at the end. It's about knowing where we can compromise and where we shouldn't. For instance, our hobbies shouldn't come at the expense of our family or job and our volunteering and helping others shouldn't be at the expense of our health or family. It should also be noted that loving our family means we'll make sure we work and keep our jobs. If, however, our job is so stressful that it is putting us at a health risk or takes us away from our families for weeks at a time, we need to reevaluate whether we should be looking for a different job in order to be with our families more. Financial comfort should never come at the expense of our loving relationships with our family.</p>	

Tip: When we die, will people celebrate our ability to earn money or our taking time to love?

Another Note: Our health is crucial to being successful and the best people we can be; therefore, it should be kept our number one priority. This does not mean we go to the gym at the expense of family, but we try to integrate it into our schedules because, as someone with heart disease in his family, I need to make sure I stay healthy in order to stay alive for them. If, however, I'm neglectful of them, then I'm being selfish and not giving them a reason to want me to stay healthy and alive. It's a tricky, but necessary balance to maintain.

Explanations for any differences from the Ideal list:

Part B) How We Try to Acquire Power: *The Negative & Positive Ways*

There are both negative and positive ways to try to acquire power. Unfortunately, the negative ways tend to be easier and more natural for us while the positive ways tend to require self discipline and practice. Before we look at these ways, here is a chart to help uncover your prior knowledge.

Building a Foundation		
<i>What Are Your Misery Stabilizers?</i>		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
When you're sad or upset, what do you do to make yourself feel better that is effective and doesn't hurt others?		
When you're sad or upset, what <i>doesn't</i> help you and/or hurts others, but is something you're tempted to do? (e.g. <i>keep thinking about it, drink or eat, scream at someone, etc</i>) Do you do anything different if you're angry?		
Is there anything else you could start doing to make yourself feel better that doesn't hurt others that could be affective and worth trying?		

The Negative Ways We Try to Attain Power

Simply Put: Negative ways to attain power are conscious or unconscious attempts to lower other peoples' value in order to improve or maintain our own.

This section will be divided as follows:

- i. Overview of Some of the Negative Ways
- ii. Using Insults for Power
- iii. Physically Attacking
- iv. Pride
- v. The Victim Response
- vi. Using Control for Power
- vii. Using Retaliation for Power

Note: Fighting, which is a negative way to gain power, has been given its own section after the negative and positive ways of pursuing power.

i. An Overview of Some of the Negative Ways

This is an exercise to uncover your nasty habits for trying to attain power. Be very supportive of each other because this can be very humbling.

Looking for Power in All the Wrong Places: Rating How Guilty You Are On a Scale of 1-10 with 1 being <i>Not Guilty</i> and 10 being <i>Very Guilty</i>		
<i>What Grade Do You Give Yourself for...</i>	<i>Examples of What You Do For Him For Her</i>	
Using your job status for giving you a sense of superiority? (<i>i.e. I'm better</i>)		
Using money and expensive objects as a way to feel better than others?		
Trying to get back at someone when he or she puts you down? (<i>e.g. leave the toilet seat up, tell all your friends what an awful thing your partner did to you, breaking something your partner loves, giving his/her money away, etc</i>)		

Verbally attacking someone when he or she puts you down? (e.g. <i>insults, yelling, name calling, brag about yourself, etc</i>)		
Making your partner jealous? (e.g. <i>flirt with another person, talk about an ex, look at pornography, eat something the other person would want to eat</i>)		
Withholding love? (e.g. <i>not being intimate, doing the little things you know your partner likes, etc</i>)		
Looking to substances for help? (e.g. <i>alcohol, drugs, junk food, internet, pornography, etc</i>)		
<p>Note: Porn has become much more acceptable today than it used to be. All opinions aside, the biggest danger of watching porn or reading erotic novels on your own in marriage is how much easier it is to get some hormone release instead of trying to reconcile with your partner and being intimate with him or her. Whether you think it is okay or not, in a marriage, you need to be careful how you use it because it can become a secret weapon that slowly rips your marriage apart.</p>		
Hiding from people and things instead of facing them?		
Use gossip and backstabbing to regain a sense of control and/or sense of equality or superiority over someone?		
Making your partner “earn” the right to be close to you again?		
Taking your frustration out on a random person? (e.g. <i>employee at a store, restaurant or coffee shop</i>)		
Finding someone you think is of lesser “value” and picking on them? (e.g. <i>employees under you, neighbors you don’t like, children, small animals, etc</i>)		
Looking for others to help you gang up on the person you don’t like? This can be something not done directly to the person like backstabbing (e.g. <i>family, friends who already don’t like your partner, lawyer, counselor, etc</i>)		

Internalizing your feelings, which can lead to deep emotional suffering like depression and even harming yourself (<i>e.g. cutting, punching things, over doing it at the gym, focusing on the negative and not letting it go so you can't sleep or do anything else, etc</i>)		
Becoming extremely controlling, which includes being a perfectionist and having obsessive behaviors (<i>e.g. Obsessive Compulsive Disorder</i>)		
Trying to make yourself seem bigger (<i>e.g. stand straight, puff out chest, smirk, roll eyes, slam doors, etc</i>)		

ii. Using Insults for Power

Insults: Words and actions used to demean someone else. They cry: “I want your power,” or “I want my power back.” Insults are a very natural response to feeling threatened.

The Rule of Insults: The insults people say typically reflect their own fears. For instance, saying: “You’re stupid” usually means they’re afraid people will think they’re stupid. “You’re a failure,” usually means they struggle with feelings of inadequacy. “You’re a piece of poop,” usually means they don’t realize poop is actually very valuable and necessary for good compost... it should be noted, however, that this is a really bad compliment. Saying to someone: “You’re a piece of poop because you’re often underrated and misjudged,” won’t likely receive the response: “Oh, that’s so sweet; thank you for noticing.”

Ultimately, listening to people’s insults, gives us a better idea of how to best compliment them later... of course this means we *reverse* the insult to being a compliment: “You’re a failure,” needs to be some form of “You’re *not* a failure,” which you’ll hopefully put much more eloquently. This also means if someone calls others stupid, try to find ways that show how smart they are; ultimately, the better they feel in this category, the more accepting they’ll eventually become of others because they’ll no longer feel the need to build themselves up at the expense of someone else. Similarly, if someone calls others useless, try to find ways that show how they’re valuable. In the same

way, if they call others ugly, try to find physical compliments for them. It should be noted that you'll want to be careful with this. Hopefully you know that the following are very poor choices to use: "I love how fat your thighs are because it causes them to make a squeaky noise when you walk," or "I like how your cankles (when the ankles disappear because of the fat on them) look like tree trunks; they're so strong and sturdy minus the walking jiggles."

iii. Physically Attacking

Physical Attacks: Desperation for a sense of power that words failed to attain. It's like cornering a raccoon. Its first response is to hiss and make mean noises, but if this isn't a deterrent, the next step is to lash out with teeth and claws. People act in a similar way when they feel words and noises aren't working to deter their perceived attacker.

iv. Using Pride for Power

Pride: Raising yourself up at the expense of others. This distorts what we should be *proud* of into something hurtful.

By looking at this issue it is important to make the distinction between *Pride* and being *Proud* about something in the positive sense:

Proud: Things you've done that you feel good about; they make you feel good to be you. Having things you're proud of are valuable to being a healthy individual. The danger is if pride sets in and distorts this positive mindset into arrogance: "I'm better than you because..."

It is, therefore, necessary to be "proud" of things we've accomplished, but we should never feel good about ourselves at the expense of others: "Ha ha, loser..." is not a good thing to say. We should never puff ourselves up in a way that makes others feel like dirt because this takes away their power thereby damaging our relationship with them.

v. The Victim Response

Victim: Someone who is focused on getting sympathy and the attitude of poor me. This person assumes: "You're out to hurt me and make me feel bad about myself."

There are two types of Victims: the passive and the aggressive. The passive Victim will hide from people or situations, and/or they may become whiney or mope as they seek someone to baby them as a way to regain power. A form of playing the passive victim is to win at the game “Who has it worse.” I knew a couple who competed over who was busier and who had the harder schedule; both were looking for sympathy, yet neither received it from their partner, which led to their relationship’s demise. On the other hand, the aggressive Victim will lash out in desperation for power, which is based on the thinking pattern: “How could you do this to me?” They will typically be or become controlling people who try to use their control to prevent being hurt from others: “If you submit to me, you can’t hurt me.”

Being a victim can be very subtle. I did this for two years without realizing it. Whenever my girlfriend at the time did something that hurt, I’d be quick to tell others about it with the attitude of: “Can you believe she did this to me?” I was looking for sympathy, but it ended up causing others to hate my girlfriend and, after telling me to leave her, they began to resent me and my complaining about a situation I chose to continue. Thus, playing the victim is very dangerous in both direct and indirect relationships.

It should be recognized that some people have a more natural tendency to be this way, which is a result of how they were raised and/or the way their brain functions (refer to *Chapter 5: Understanding* in the section about the book *This Is Your Brain In Love*). Fortunately, both reasons can be overcome and being a Victor can be possible.

This topic will be continued later in the next section: “The Positive Ways We Try to Attain Power, *The Victim vs. the Victor Response*”

vi. Using Control for Power

Everyone needs to feel a sense of *control* in their own lives because this leads to feeling useful and necessary. The problem is this can be warped to become a way to feel power over others. To make matters worse, the need for control can easily become an obsession and addiction. Thus, issues of control need to be continually handled appropriately and the best answer is always love: loving the person who is controlling and searching for the love behind the controlling behavior. If you’re the controlling person then ask your partner to help you discover the trust and sense of love you need to loosen your reigns.

Are you Over Controlling or Under Controlling?		
<i>Questions to Uncover if You Have Over Controlling Behavior</i>	<i>Put a check if you do this</i>	
	<i>His</i>	<i>Hers</i>
Do you give a set detailed description of how something has to be done because any other way is wrong?	___	___
Do you frequently need to redo jobs around the house your partner does?	___	___
Has your partner given up trying to help out because he or she knows you're only going to complain or redo it anyway?	___	___
Do you have to continually check up on your partner's progress?	___	___
Do you get angry when your partner doesn't do things your way?	___	___
Does your partner feel they need to check with you before they make a decision?	___	___
Do you have a hard time seeing another person's opinion as a viable option?	___	___
Do you get upset if your way of doing things is not immediately followed because people want to weigh their options?	___	___
<i>Questions for Under Controlling Behavior</i>	<i>His</i>	<i>Hers</i>
Have you given up trying to make your partner happy because you know you can't?	___	___
Do you need your partner to continually check up on your work in order to know that it is making him/her happy?	___	___
Do you get hesitant to do things your own way for fear of upsetting your partner?	___	___
Have you given up trying to do things your way because you know it only leads to conflict?	___	___
Do you let your partner make all the decisions because you're tired or afraid of conflict?	___	___
Are you afraid to share your opinion because you know it only leads to a fight?	___	___
Do you ever feel like you only get in the way of you partner?	___	___
Do you hide certain thoughts, feelings or ideas for fear of repercussion?	___	___

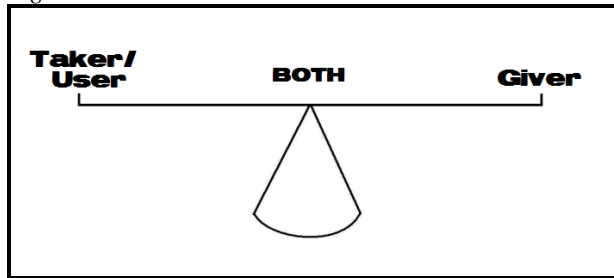
Tip: If either of you were correcting your partner during this activity, you have some control issues.

Note: If either of you checked off these boxes, you need to find a way to begin better sharing control.

This idea of control connects to the explanation on how relationships work in the first chapter with the explanation on the *Taker/User and Giver* concept.

A Reminder for an Explanation in Chapter 1

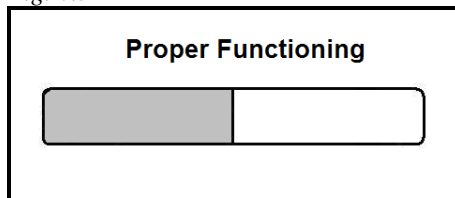
Fig. 6.4



As it was stated earlier with this exercise, all relationships function with a balance of the *Taker* and *Giver*. To take this concept further, in many relationships, there tends to be one person who does more of the work whether because they need that sense of control or they don't trust their partner to do things the way they want. Either way, this is a sign of being over-controlling, which can be better expressed with the following diagram.

A Proper Functioning Relationship

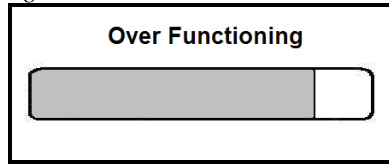
Fig. 6.5



As this diagram helps demonstrate, in a proper functioning relationship there is equally shared responsibility. This allows for both people to feel value and not feel like they're being dumped on. What typically happens, however, whether purposefully or not, is one person assumes more of the responsibility, which causes him or her to be *Over Functioning*.

An Over Functioning Relationship

Fig. 6.6



The problem with having an over functioning relationship is that eventually this arrangement will frustrate one or both of the partners. Just like how the *Giver* eventually gets tired of giving, the person doing more of the work will get tired of this and it doesn't matter whether this was a chosen or forced situation. Similarly, the people who are *Under Functioning* may get frustrated with not being allowed to be more responsible for themselves and their relationship. This is best exemplified by the relationship of a parent and a teenager. As young people get older, they want to feel more and more responsible for their own lives, but some parents have a hard time stepping back and allowing them this freedom. In this situation, the parent is over functioning as a way to retain control, but this leaves the teen frustrated and looking for a different solution.

Solution to Over Controlling and Over Functioning Behavior

Unfortunately, this problem does not have a simple solution. It involves continual communication that includes lots of compliments and affirmation. If people are over controlling and over functioning, they need to be continually reminded that they are loved and their value isn't in their *control*, but their *sharing*; they need to be continually reminded that you need their trust and guidance and not their control. Only through expressively loving the person can this relationship begin to become more balanced in a healthy way. Plus, like any addictive behavior, there will be setbacks and temptations to return to the original state; thus, patience and perseverance will be necessary to maintain the balance you achieve.

Tip: The best way to feel love is through serving others and meeting others' needs in a way that builds you up and doesn't wear you out.

Goal of a Relationship: To be equally "whipped," which means you both serve and receive, and you *Give* and *Take* equally.

vii. Using Retaliation for Power

How We Retaliate

Retaliation is the main way we search for our lost sense of power. Everyone is guilty of retaliation whether it's obvious like planning to punch someone in the face for trying to steal your partner from you... not that I've ever thought this... more than once... or twice... or retaliation can be subtle like snubbing someone instead of being friendly or even saying "Hi," and acknowledging their existence: "They'll know I'm angry by my ignoring them." Retaliation is connected to the way we express anger, which will be discussed later in the chapter. Essentially, anger and retaliation can be either passive or aggressive, which means the person either withdraws or attacks. Both forms are ways to try to regain power at the expense of others and should, therefore, be avoided.

Ultimately, the important questions regarding retaliation are: how *do* you retaliate and how *should* you "retaliate"?

How Do You and How Should You Retaliate?		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What are the three worst things your partner could do to you out of retaliation? (<i>e.g. break or buy something, go to a strip club, go to friends and complain, ignore you, etc.</i>)		
How would you prefer your partner handle feeling weak, neglected or hurt?		
<p>Note: Retaliation can even take the form of hurting yourself or doing something in private as a way to get back at our partner. This can be not doing a chore properly, flirting behind your partners back or using things like porn: "Boss me around will she? Guess I'll take some time to watch some naked women."</p>		
When you've been upset, what are the craziest things you've thought of doing as payback with someone?		
What do you normally do to retaliate or regain your sense of power with others? With your partner?		

What should you try doing to regain your sense of power with others? (<i>i.e. make a new strategy for regaining your lost sense of power</i>) For your partner?		
What should you try doing in order to help yourself feel better in the long run instead?		

Exercise: Take a moment to apologize to your partner for how you retaliate.

Commit to your new strategy for regaining your lost sense of power. Finally, ask your partner to help you stick to your new commitment.

For Christians:

Take a moment and pray together; thank God for pointing out a way to grow and ask for forgiveness and strength to improve.

The Positive Ways We Try to Attain Power

This section will be divided as follows:

- i. The Victim vs. the Victor Response
- ii. The Positive Ways of Finding Power Chart & General Information
- iii. Self Esteem: *A Way to Reduce the Desire to Fight and Retaliate*
- iv. Forgiveness: The Best Way to Find Power

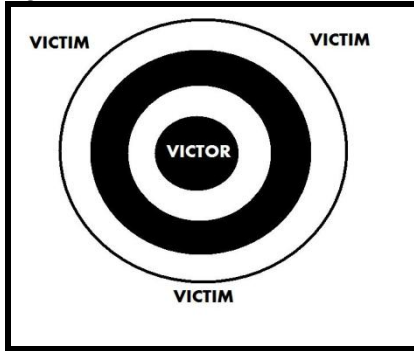
i. The Victim vs. the Victor Response

When people use the above behaviors against you, there are two main responses: Victim or Victor. You can't directly control their behavior, but you can control yours. We already discussed the Victim in the previous section, "The Negative Ways We Try to Attain Power." As a recap, a Victim is someone who looks to attain power through gaining sympathy (passive) and/or is quick to lash out (aggressive). This is a very poor way to attempt to gain power because it ends up damaging your immediate and secondary relationships. Ultimately, we need to seek to be the *Victor*.

Victor: Focus on growing from every situation no matter how difficult. Their attitude is: "I will learn from this and be stronger." They are also concerned about not harming other people out of their own hurt.

Victim vs. Victor

Fig. 6.7



As this diagram helps illustrate, the bulls eye is the response of the Victor and beyond that are really just different degrees of being the *Victim*. This can be anything from refusing to forgive and holding onto a grudge, to being scared of someone or a situation. For instance, if someone falls off a bicycle, he or she could say: “I’m never riding again.” A *Victor*, however, learns from his or her fall and now knows one way that can cause him or her to fall off his or her bike that should be avoided. If the person doesn’t know how to correct the fall, he or she will at least put on padding to prevent being hurt if he or she falls again. Being a *Victor* is about being constructive and persevering.

Are You a Victim or Victor?		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
Would you describe yourself as more of a Victim or a Victor? Why?		
Provide an example of when you played the Victim?		
Describe how a Victor could’ve handled this?		
Provide an example of when you played the Victor?		
Describe how a Victim could’ve handled this?		
Describe how you can be more of a Victor vs. a Victim with your partner.		

ii. The Positive Ways of Finding Power Chart

The following activity helps to clarify how the *Victor* tries to attain Power.

Looking for Power in All the Right Places: Rating How Good You Are On a Scale of 1-10 With 1 being <i>Not</i> Good and 10 being <i>Very</i> Good			
What Grade Do You Give Yourself for...	His Hers	Examples of What You Do:	
		For Him	For Her
Volunteering your time to help someone?	— —		
Being generous to those in need? (<i>i.e. giving in an appropriate way</i>)	— —		
Finding ways to cheer people up?	— —		
Accomplishing and/or creating something in a healthy way and not as workaholic?	— —		
Exercise?	— —		
Look to a close friend to confide in and in whom you can find healthy support?	— —		
Taking personal time to do something you find calming? (<i>e.g. hiking, gardening, yoga, meditation, prayer, etc</i>)	— —		

How Can You Improve If You Need To?		
Basic options for improving	Examples of What You Could Do Differently to Improve	
	For Him	For Her
Volunteering your time to help someone(s)?		
Being generous to those in need?		

Finding ways to cheer people up?		
Accomplishing and/or creating something in a healthy way?		
Exercise?		
Look to a close friend to confide in and find healthy support? Anyone who should be avoided?		
Taking personal time to do something you find calming?		

Tip: The best way to feel empowered is through serving others and meeting others’ needs in a healthy way. For some reason, choosing to help others helps us. It’s a win-win situation. And, ultimately, the best person to serve is your partner.

Goal of a Relationship: To be equally “whipped”.

Tip about Men: Most men feel power through their sex lives, which is one of the reasons they seek it so compulsively. When a man is not having *meaningful* sex, he feels weak and unattractive; therefore, if your man is acting like a little boy, or is distant or sullen... I’m assuming you find this kind of behavior unattractive... this is likely a sign that he needs some “sex medicine”. As usual, the person’s behavior further deters what he really wants and needs because we naturally seem to be drawn to behavior that is very counterproductive to the response we desire.

The following list helps to point out that there is a negative and a positive way of approaching your partner. The first is very damaging while the other is typically empowering and encouraging. We are unfortunately drawn to the negative approaches because they’re easier and/or we’ve watched others act like this.

Two Different Ways to Try to Get the Behavior You Want	
Things That Take Away Power (Negative) <i>Defensive Causing behavior</i>	Things That Can Empower (Positive) <i>The Way a Victor Responds</i>
<i>Demands:</i> are degrading and insulting	<i>Questions:</i> can be empowering (although they can become annoying when there's too many or it's done inappropriately)
<i>Complaints:</i> degrading and insulting	<i>Requests:</i> request nicely for preferred behavior
<i>Whining and Nagging:</i> a sign of anger and frustration	<i>Compliments:</i> be sure to compliment any good behavior, this reinforces proper behavior

To be a loving person, stick to the right column. Unfortunately, we are more naturally drawn to the left column, which is actually very counterproductive behavior. Fortunately, we have the ability to stop approaching people this way and becoming more empowering to both others and ourselves.

Tip: Complimenting people is an amazing way to get what you want because it makes the other person feel validated and appreciated, which in turn encourages love from them towards you.

Another Tip: I've heard someone say: "I'm not complaining, I'm correcting bad behavior." The problem with this is if you complain a lot, even if you have good intentions, you come across negative and unappreciative. This behavior will ultimately result in you wondering why people avoid you.

And Yet Another: Controlling behavior, whining and nagging are as dangerous as complaining. It stems from a lack of trust and insecurity. If you try to control others, it's time to begin looking at your fears and why you do this.

Last One, I promise: One of the key points from Terrence Real's book, *The New Rules of Marriage*, is to turn complaint to request. I would push this further and say that a request after an observation or even an explanation is demeaning. For instance, instead of saying: "You always leave your clothes on the floor; put them away," or "I always trip on your clothes when they're on the floor, put them away." The problem is these phrases have a "you're a

child” feel. Simply make the request: “Could you please put your clothes away.” If the other person asks why then you can explain because now it’s not demeaning, it’s answering their question. *If the behavior continues, gently remind the person of your request because habits are hard to break and memories are often short...* especially for guys

iii. Self Esteem: A Way to Reduce the Desire to Fight and Retaliate

The more we can build up our self esteem, the better functioning we become. This is because the happier we are with ourselves, the more tolerant, patient and accepting we become of other people’s strengths and weaknesses. Our self esteem is encouraged through positive thinking and love and support from those closest to us. Therefore, we can greatly impact our partner’s self-esteem.

According to Terrence Real’s book *The New Rules of Marriage*, self esteem is typically based on two different things for men and women.

Men tend to base their self esteem on their accomplishments.

Women tend to base their self esteem on how others see them.

2 Conclusions:

1. To make a man feel good about himself, it becomes valuable to praise his accomplishments. Like a mom who praises her son’s every drawing or Lego building, men find this kind of attention very beneficial for growing self esteem, which makes them more tolerant of others.
2. To make a woman feel better about herself, find creative ways to compliment her as a person that reflect reasons why others would like her. The more *specific* you can be, the more this will help build her self esteem. For instance, saying: “You’re beautiful,” is good, but it’s vague and easy to deny: “But what about my (fill in the blank).” Begin with something like “You’re beautiful...” and then follow this with something specific in order to be harder to refute: “...I love your curves,” or “...you have great hair,” or “...you have the coolest gangrene...” this last one is a joke, but I’m sure you knew that.

Tip: Anyone who purposely tries to keep someone’s self esteem down is a cruel person and should be kept at a distance. If you’re dating someone who purposefully tries to keep you insecure, you need to tell him or her that this behavior is unacceptable and you will leave if it continues. If this behavior is

very typical, you simply need to leave and move on to finding someone who builds you up, and please don't say: "But I love him." If you're the cruel person, stop being a jerk, apologize, learn to love yourself and then share that love with others.

Rating Self Esteem		
On a Scale of 1-10 with 1 being the <i>Worst</i> and 10 being <i>Perfect</i>		
<i>For Self Esteem</i>	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What does a rating of 1 out of 10 look like?		
What does a rating of 5 out of 10 look like?		
What does a 10 out of 10 look like?		
What rating do you give yourself? Explain.		
What do others say? Are you harder on yourself than they typically are of you?		
How can you improve? How can your partner help?		

iv. Forgiveness: The Best Way to Find Power
The Choice of the Victor

“Forgiveness liberates the soul; it removes fear. That is why it is such a powerful weapon.” Nelson Mandela

****KEY:** Healing comes by choosing to heal and letting go of the pain. Things are only as damaging as we let them be.

Recall: We have the power to change (*Chapter 4: Change*); therefore, we have the power to forgive.

Tip: Revenge is like going to a buffet while forgiving is like going on a diet. Forgiving others is not our natural response and, therefore, it takes discipline and courage, but it always pays off in the long run while revenge leaves you feeling gross and emotionally empty.

Being able to forgive is the key to keeping relationships together because there are two guarantees when you're with someone: *at some point you'll hurt your partner and your partner will hurt you*. Thus, the only way to maintain this relationship is by learning to *Forgive and Protect* each other.

Forgive and Forget: Boo! Let me hear you say: “Boo *Forgive and Forget*.” I can't hear you... although that'd be pretty scary if I could hear you. You'd either be deafening loud or you tracked me down to say it in person. *Forgive and Forget* is a common phrase that is actually *very dangerous*. When we're hurt by someone, we need to forgive the offender, but not set ourselves up to be hurt again. For instance, someone who has been abused by someone else needs to learn to forgive the attacker, but he or she should never put himself or herself into a situation where he or she could be hurt in the same way again.

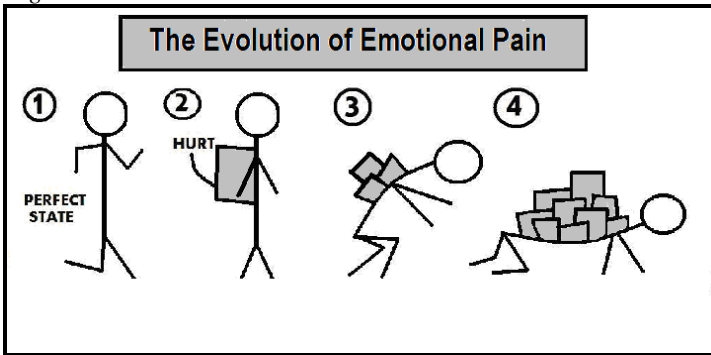
Forgiving (defn): Forgiving means not letting your pain own you; it means letting go of the hurt by saying: “No” to thoughts of pain and thereby discontinuing the cycle of hurt. Forgiving is foremost for you. It releases you of enduring anymore pain. When someone says: “I can't forgive him/her,” it's because they don't understand that forgiving someone is primarily about helping yourself and not the guilty party; it's not about letting the other person get away with something, but letting yourself be free from the wound hurting you anymore. Forgiving is empowering to *you*.

Forgive and Protect: Above all else, forgiving is meant to benefit you. What it is not meant to do is set you up for further pain. When you forgive someone and let go of your hurt, you will want to protect yourself, your partner and your relationship from further damage. This means if someone is very emotionally hurtful, you will try to find ways to prevent yourself from being in a position where he or she can hurt you again. For instance, if you have an abusive parent, you find ways to prevent this from happening again. If you

really love the person, you'll want to protect him or her from hurting you and your relationship.

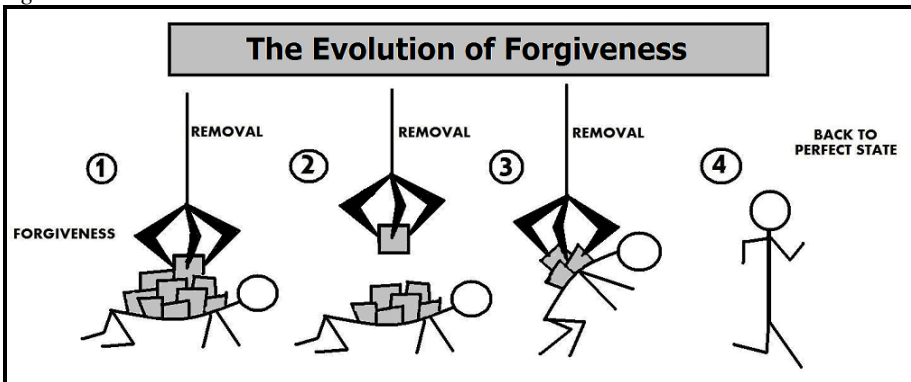
The following diagram helps to demonstrate what happens when we get hurt. Emotional pains slow us down as they continue to gather and collect. As the pains gather, we can become emotionally crippled from all of the pain. Besides it slowing us down, remember that: "hurt people, hurt people," (this will be looked at on page 186) so the more hurt you carry, the greater the chance of you lashing out at someone else and perpetuating the cycle of pain.

Fig. 6.8



Fortunately, there is a solution to this problem and that's *Forgiveness*. This is illustrated in the following diagram. *Forgiving* removes the hurt and allows you to be free from the enslavement of your pain.

Fig. 6.9



Tip: To forgive is to prevent your pain from continuing to hurt you. It's saying 'No' to dwelling on the pain, or letting it be a reason you don't enjoy the rest of your life. To forgive is to liberate your heart and mind.

Defining Forgiveness	
<i>Forgiving...</i>	<i>Forgiving is not...</i>
Recognizes that you have been hurt and takes ownership of it.	Ignoring the offence.
Is more for you than the offender because it prevents your pain from holding you back from enjoying life to its fullest.	About letting the other person off without repercussion. In some cases, discipline is required.
Stops the cycle of hurt (i.e. prevents you from hurting someone else out of your hurt).	Hurting yourself or others more.
Takes continual effort by the forgiver.	Usually easy.
Gets easier over time and the more we do it	Impossible no matter what the offence.
Is about learning and growing as a person.	Setting ourselves up for more hurt.
Can be the hardest when it comes to forgiving ourselves.	Just something we do in regards to others.

Forgiving Things From the Past		
<i>Preventing Grudges</i>		
	<i>Him</i>	<i>Her</i>
Do you have any sensitive spots and/or continually nagging thoughts about you or your partner? If so, what?		
Do you have any shortcomings of which you're yet to reconcile and let go? (e.g. <i>health problems, mistakes, missed opportunities, etc</i>)		
Does your partner have any shortcomings of which you're yet to reconcile and let go? (e.g. <i>health problems, mistakes, missed opportunities, etc</i>)		

Have your parents emotionally hurt you somehow in a way that you're yet to forgive and let go? If so, what?		
Have your partner's parents emotionally hurt you somehow in a way that you're yet to forgive and let go? If so, what?		
Has anyone hurt you in a way that you're yet to forgive and let go? If so, what?		
Has anyone hurt your partner in a way that you're yet to forgive and let go? If so, what?		
Is there anything in your dating or sexual past of which you need to forgive and let go? If so what?		
Is there anything in your partner's dating or sexual past of which you need to forgive and let go? If so what?		

If you've answered yes to any of these questions, you need to start working on the process of forgiving in order to prevent the past from hurting you anymore and freeing yourself from your baggage.

Forgiving Things in the Present <i>On a Scale of 1-10 with 10 being the Best and 1 being the Worst</i>		
	<i>Him</i>	<i>Her</i>
How good are you acknowledging when you have been legitimately hurt?		
How good are you at approaching the offender(s) in a loving manner that is not accusatory?		
How good are you at accepting someone's apology and not using this against them in the future?		

How good are you at accepting someone <i>not</i> apologizing for the hurt he or she has caused you and letting it go?		
How good are you at saying “No” to the nagging thoughts that continue to bug you?		
How good are you at protecting yourself from facing a similar hurt?		
How good are you at apologizing and accepting someone’s forgiveness?		
In Light of This...	For Him	For Her
What are some ways you can improve?		

Interesting Thought: Smart people can make *stupid* decisions
 Stupid people can make *smart* decisions...

Both of these situations are “mistakes” because it’s not normal behavior. Remember, just because you or someone else makes a mistake doesn’t necessarily mean any of you are “stupid”. Ultimately, how you view yourself and others is up to you, but either way, since we are all susceptible to mistakes, we need to be ready to *Forgive and Protect*.

******One of The Most Beneficial Learning Tools for Forgiving******

Making Forgiving Easier:
Learning to Accept Mistakes and to Forgive Others

3 Questions to Grow and Make Forgiving Easier
 When the Offender Isn’t Me:

- Ask:** 1. What did they do wrong?
 2. What should they have done differently?
 3. When have I been guilty of this?

Using the example of the infamous Bill Clinton affair, here is a man who clearly did something wrong; he cheated on his wife and left evidence... not that it would've been better to not get caught... well, it would've been better for his reputation... but either way, cheating is wrong... as you know... hopefully.

1. What Did He Do Wrong?

Like any fall to temptation, Clinton did multiple things wrong. Ultimately, he put himself in a position where he couldn't say 'No' to the temptation. On top of this, he wasn't careful to maintain a healthy sex life with his wife since this would've prevented him from looking elsewhere.

2. What Should He Have Done Differently?

Clinton should have made sure his sex life at home was stronger to prevent there from being wandering hands... or I guess it wasn't so much hands as it was her wandering... uh you know what I mean. He also should have stayed away from her because he was attracted to her, which made her a weak spot for him. According to his biography, he did try to move her away from his office, but obviously he didn't try to keep her away hard enough... "hard" may not have been the best choice of words here; sorry.

3. When Have I Been Guilty of This?

I was told thinking about doing something is as wrong as doing it. I am, therefore, guilty of the same thing many times over; many times, many times over. To be honest, I'd say one of the reasons more people don't cheat in dating or in marriages isn't because they're "better" people; it's because they don't have the "right" option. For instance, if I got to be close with Megan Fox and she wanted to be with me, could I say no? I would like to think I would... kind of. Fortunately for me, I've never been attractive or powerful enough for girls like this to make cheating an option; thus, I'm spared the risk of falling like Bill Clinton. That being said, I certainly have my own weaknesses: cookies, chocolate cake, Kit Kat, etc. I certainly struggle to say 'No' to these things; thus, I shouldn't be so quick to condemn someone else for not saying 'No' to a natural temptation because I do the same thing. The best thing is for me to learn from Bill's mistakes.

By looking at this set of questions and realizing that I'm guilty of similar wrongdoings, it is easier to accept Bill Clinton's inappropriate behavior. I should note that this exercise can help, but it doesn't erase all of the pain. For instance, had this offense been against me and it was my partner who cheated, this exercise would make forgiving easier, but it would still be a brutally painful and a horrible experience to endure. Hilary is a stronger person than I. Ultimately, when anyone's emotionally involved, it takes awhile for the emotions to settle to a point where the person can think logically again... and for me, the guy's car being accidentally hit may seem like the necessary medicine to help calm my emotions down enough to let logic become useful. In all honesty, in this situation, I'm not sure if forgiving would mean I would remain with my cheating partner, but it would at least mean I wouldn't let this pain haunt me for the rest of my life. Either way, STOP THE THOUGHT would be something I'd need to do over and over because being cheated on again is one of my biggest fears. It's up there with diapers... cleaning a baby's and wearing my own. Sooo gross.

Tip: If we are guilty of doing, or being capable of doing something wrong, we need to be quick to forgive an offender because we will at some point need the same response in return. This of course follows one of the most famous Bible verses: "Do to others as you would have them do to you." (Luke 6:31) That's one smart book.

Making Forgiving Easier:
Learning to Accept Mistakes and to Forgive Yourself

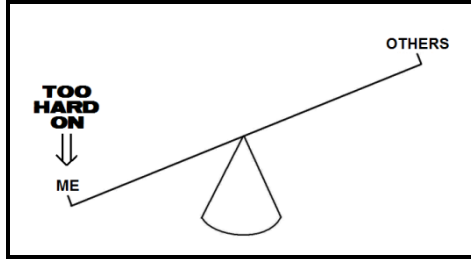
3 Questions to Grow & Make Forgiving Easier
When the Offender Is *Me*

- Ask:**
1. What did I do wrong?
 2. What should I have done differently?
 3. When have others done this to me or someone else?

These questions are basically the same as the previous ones, but with the roles reversed. Sometimes forgiving ourselves can be the hardest thing we can do, especially for people who are hard on themselves.

Recall:

Fig. 6.10



Practice		
	<i>Him</i>	<i>Her</i>
Describe a time you did something wrong		
What did you do wrong?		
What should you have done?		
Recall a time someone else did something similar whether to you or to someone else.		
<p>Tip: Since this is something we all do or are capable of doing, learn from it and force yourself not to beat yourself up for it. Say ‘No’ to the negative voice in your head that tells you you’re worthless and stupid.</p>		

How to Forgive

5 Steps to Forgiving

1. Define the hurt and begin the healing process through healthy means like proper venting with a close friend, prayer and meditation, and exercise (e.g. things like punching bags are amazing for stress release).
2. After *appropriate* healing time has passed, decide to forgive and let go of the pain: “I won’t let this pain own me.” Be careful not to rush this phase because grieving is a necessary process.

If Relevant: Clarify with those who have hurt you what they did in order for them to know not to do it again. This assumes the guilty party is a good

person; do not set yourself up for more hurt by approaching someone you shouldn't. This includes certain leaders and very aggressive people.

4. Decide to let go of the hurt, but remember the lesson(s) this has taught you in order to spare yourself from going through this again and doing it to someone else.
5. Continue saying 'No' to any nagging thoughts of resentment and pain. Remind yourself that you have forgiven this person and force yourself to move on from that thought.

Recall: (from *Chapter 5: Understanding*)

STOP THE THOUGHT is when you simply say 'No' to negative and dangerous thoughts and force yourself to think about something else.

Tip: Forgiving others can be very difficult, but it is necessary. It should, however, never be rushed or involve downplaying a hurtful situation. If you've been hurt, you need to take the appropriate time and procedures for bringing healing. Of course, this should never involve retaliation.

Confronting an Offender:

If it is *appropriate* to confront someone, the key to remember is the *GOAL*, which is to make things better between the two of you and bring healing. This is important because there's a good chance your hurt will cause you to want to be rude or loud, but you need to fight this urge. If your goal is: "I'm going to beat the crap out of him (even emotionally)," then take time to get your feelings under control. Approaching a person with this mindset will only cause more hurt and division.

The second key is you'll want to remember that people don't like being told he or she has hurt someone; this is a criticism that will likely cause the other person to respond in a defensive manner. No matter what happens, however, focus on the *GOAL*. Do not try to regain power through yelling or insults even if the person uses this against you. Only if you remain gentle and reassuring will the other person calm down and listen to you. If he or she doesn't, apologize for interrupting what he or she was doing and walk away. There's no point prolonging the issue if they are that defensive or rude. If you think the other party is capable of responding in kind to you, try again at a different time

with a mediator to help keep you and/or the other person stay calm and open to discussion. Otherwise, move on, and forgive and protect yourself from this person as best you can from future problems.

Tip: Directly accusing the other person with words or tone will cause him or her to be defensive, which will prevent any healing taking place.

Final Thought: Forgiving others can be really tough, but it's always worth it because it frees us from the haunting pain and negativity that can prevent us from enjoying our life to its fullest. Ultimately, the past is supposed to teach and guide us, not hold us back from our future.

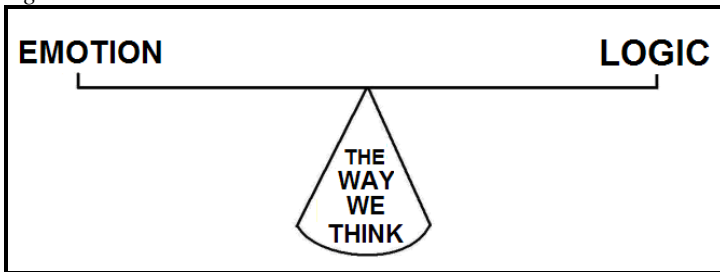
Part C) The Emotions

This next section will be broken down as follows:

- i. Emotions: *The General Breakdown*
- ii. Anger
- iii. Fear
- iv. Jealousy
- v. Guilt
- vi. A Chart to Test How You Handle Your Emotions

i. Emotions: *The General Breakdown*

Fig. 6.12



The way we think is a blend of emotion and logic, which is also sometimes referred to as rational and irrational thinking. Thus, how we think lands somewhere on the above scale. Typically, people tend to think more one way than the other. For instance, women are known for being more emotionally driven whereas men tend to be more logically driven, which is why we sometimes don't understand each other. This is one time that opposites *don't*

attract. For instance, someone who is very emotional will have a hard time handling people who are really logical and vice versa. The key to healthy relationships is not to be with people who think the same or the opposite as you, but to be open to the way others think and to respect their point of view.

An interesting catch to this set up is we can change in our levels of being emotional or logical. For example, if you have a rebellious streak like me, when I'm around someone who is more one extreme, I tend to take on the opposite point of view. For instance, if the person I'm with is more emotional, I become more logical; if the person I'm with is really logical, I tend to be more emotional. For those with a more conformist mindset, if you're around someone who is more emotional, you'll likely be more emotional. Similarly, if you're around someone who is more logical, you'll be more logical.

Ultimately, whether a rebel or conformist, we tend to adapt our thinking patterns in some way according to our environment. Therefore, this leads to two important conclusions:

1. We need to find the value in everyone's thinking. For instance, if someone is more logical than us, we need to appreciate his or her way of thinking because it can help us see things differently and, in some cases, more clearly because we see more than our own perspective.
2. If, in your opinion, your partner is too one sided (e.g. too emotional) this can be adjusted because most conversations look for a balance. For instance, if a guy complains his partner is too emotional, he should try to be more that way than he normally is to see if she'll start to be less emotional as a contrast to this new thinking pattern. This follows the mindset that people will either conform or rebel. If the typical situation is the male is logical and his partner is emotional then by him switching things up and becoming emotional, his partner will have to adjust to the change. Either she'll switch to being logical to balance his adjustment or she'll become super emotional since him being emotional was like an invitation for her to be even more so. If the latter is true, the guy should try being Spock-like logical with no emotion to see how she adjusts in the conversation. Ultimately, adjusting yourself like this will force your partner to adjust the way he or she responds as well.

Rule for Emotions: Your feelings are valid and important. Your emotions or lack thereof are the key to understanding how you perceive reality. There

may be better ways to perceive things, but your feelings are still real and need to be addressed.

If you struggle with having really irrational emotions (e.g. “I’m upset and I don’t know why,”), or a lack there of (e.g. “I’m like a stone with my emotions; I didn’t even cry watching *P.S. I Love You*”) you may want to do further research into this and/or arrange to meet with a *good* counselor or doctor... emphasis on “good”... to help you find the balance for which you desire.

Rating Your Thinking Style On a Scale of 1-10 with 1 being Extreme Emotion and 10 being Extreme Logic		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What does a rating of 1 out of 10 look like? (<i>i.e. extreme emotional</i>)		
What does a rating of 5 out of 10 look like? (<i>i.e. a perfect mix of both emotion and logic</i>)		
What does a 10 out of 10 look like? (<i>i.e. extreme logic</i>)		
What rating do you give yourself? If the way you think becomes more logical or emotional depending on the situation or the people around you, explain when and/or why this happens.		
Can you improve at all? How or why not?		

ii. Anger

Rule for Communication: When someone feels attacked or demeaned in some way, they’ll become defensive and honesty will be skewed in order to preserve and protect whatever dignity remains.

“Hurt people, hurt people.”

This is one of my favorite sayings in regards to relationships because it puts in very simple terms why people have confrontations and do things to others they know they shouldn't. This leads to three logical conclusions:

1. We need healing in our lives in order to reduce the chances of us hurting someone else out of our own hurt.
2. Someone who hurts us is likely acting this way because they have been hurt whether by us or by something else. Hopefully knowing this can help instill a sense of compassion for the offender thereby making it easier to forgive and not retaliate.
3. When we are hurt, we need to be careful not to let this cause us to hurt others in order to stop the 'chain of hurt'. For example, if your partner yells at you for some reason, any act that returns the hurt or passes the hurt onto another innocent party will only lead to more and more hurt until someone else eventually stops this cycle.

Key: You won't fight if you truly feel loved; therefore, we need to look for ways to remember we are loved even in the heat of a bad situation.

Tip: If your partner is often in a bad mood, check how well you're doing at helping him or her feel loved (refer to *The 6 Love Languages*, in chapters 3 or 4). Referring to the *Victim vs Victor* response, a *Victim* will complain about his or her partner whereas a *Victor* will try to find an empowering means to stop this behavior.

Anger (Defn): Simply put, *anger is a response to feeling threatened* in some way; *it is a defense mechanism*. Therefore, anger is a natural and good thing; the problem is when it gets distorted and becomes a reason to hurt someone else.

Looking at the above quotation, it could be rewritten: "*Hurt people, are angry people,*" whether it is external (i.e. aggression at others) or internal (i.e. depression). The key to remember is: "***Hurt people don't have the right to hurt people.***" Just because we've been hurt, doesn't mean we should be lashing out at others or ourselves. Unfortunately, we all do this from time to time. The trick is to try to limit this as much as we can, especially with our partners.

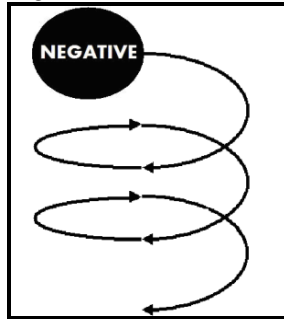
Tip: I was once told: “Control your responses; don’t let your responses control you.” Those are very wise words we need to put into practice.

Note: Anger is the go to in difficult times. It’s the easy emotion; it’s easier than grief or guilt, especially since it can energize and motivate action. Unfortunately, like all things that come easy, we need to be careful with anger and to not let it be a way to hide from the real emotion.

Ultimately, we have all been hurt and have the right to be angry at something, but unless we learn to handle our anger better, we’ll become trapped in an ever growing cycle of negativity.

Recall:

Fig. 6.13



The 3 Basic Forms of Anger:

1. **Real Anger:** There are things that should make us angry like injustice and incompetence.
2. **Unfair Anger:**
 - a) **Misdirected Anger:** Involves being angry with yourself and others not involved in the real issue.
 - b) **Exaggerated Anger:** involves blowing things out of proportion; it is often the result of a deeper issue (e.g. screaming at Tim Horton’s worker for screwing up your order).
3. **Lack of Anger:** The absence of healthy anger for injustice or incompetence (e.g. “My wife verbally abuses me, *but I love her* so it’s okay; I don’t get angry.”)

By looking at the above definitions, when we are angry there are two things we need to check. The first is whether our anger is *Real Anger* and justified or if it's *Misdirected Anger*, which reflects another greater issue that is bothering us. Of course, if it's the latter, we need to be especially careful not to let our feelings add to the hurt that's already present. The second thing we have to check is whether our *Real Anger* is in proper proportion to the offense or if we're guilty of *Exaggerated Anger*. For instance, someone squeezing the toothpaste from the middle instead of the bottom of the tube is not a reason to explode on your partner: "How could you be so stupid?! The world is now going to implode on itself." It's okay to *request* a change in behavior, but this is not something worth starting a confrontation over.

The Anger Check:

1. Is this *real* or *misdirected* anger?
If *misdirected*, find the *real* problem.
2. Am I angry in proportion to the situation whether too much or too little?
If *NO*, force yourself to line it up properly.
3. What can I do to properly fix this situation?

Pick Your Battles: Remember that anger is a defense mechanism. If you're continually harping on your partner over things, he or she will naturally be increasingly defensive and it will lead to retaliation in some form or another. This is especially true if you are repeatedly bugging your partner about the same things. Repeating yourself will annoy both of you; therefore, try to find other ways of encouraging different behavior like complimenting your partner when he or she does something right.

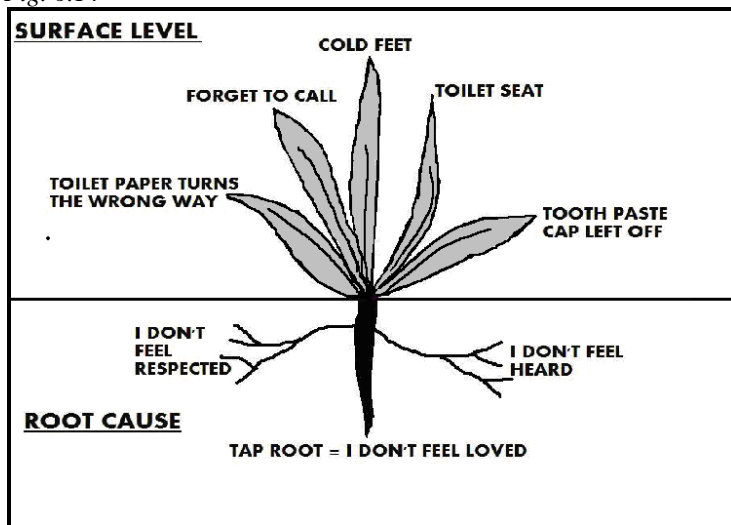
Pick Your Weapons: Sometimes it is more important to pick your weapons than your battles. Finding positive "weapons," which is the same as positive reinforcement, are much better than negative ones. Compliments and encouragement work a lot better with your *partner*⁵ than anything that is used for attacking.

⁵ I have italicized "partner" because positive reinforcement is definitely the best way to teach your partner what you like. However, raising children is a whole other debate that I don't want to get into.

The Real Reason Behind the Anger and Fight

There are two main levels to every fight, the *Surface Level* and the *Root Cause*. Here's a diagram to help illustrate this idea:

Fig. 6.14



This is why the smallest thing can spark a giant fight. For instance, one person simply asking: “What took you so long?” even in a calm way, can spark a three hour fight that leaves the couple sleeping in different rooms: “What do you mean what took me so long? Maybe if you picked up your dirty clothes once in awhile, or actually thought to ask me how you could help, I could be on time. Do you have any idea how hard I work? Etc, etc, etc.” Usually the fight begins with something small, but it can grow into this huge ordeal because underneath the surface of this fight, there is an underlying reason, a root that has dug deep down into the soil of sensitivity. For example, quite a long time ago I was worried that I was starting to lose my hair. My partner at the time tried rubbing my head and out of nowhere this surge of anger came out: “Don’t touch my head!” This was definitely a surprise response for both of us since I never yell. Fortunately, I was quick to apologize and explain myself and she was very understanding of my insecurity. In this situation, the *Surface Level* was “I’m afraid of losing my hair,” which is a big deal for a lot of guys; the *Root Cause*, however, was “I’m afraid you won’t love me anymore,” which was closely attached to: “I think being bald would make me look ugly and I

don't want to be ugly... or uglier"... now, I'm not saying bald people are ugly, but, you see, I have a wonky shaped head I need to hide with hair, especially since I can't even wear hats... well, I *can* wear them and know how to put them on; I'm not that dumb. I just look goofy in them... or, I guess 'goofier' in them. In this situation with my girlfriend, I fell into the trap of counterproductive behavior that would generate the opposite response to what I wanted. What I wanted was for her to find me attractive and love me, but by snapping at her, I was making her want to do the complete opposite. Thus, the importance of self control is raised since it is our so-called natural reactions that often hurt our relationships the most.

Surface Level

Looking at this diagram, the *Surface Level* issues can be grouped into five main categories, which I'll call *The Five Main Reasons We Get Defensive* (aka *Fight Starters*):

1. ***Criticism***: Whether it's:

- i) ***Real*** (e.g. the person is pointing out a mistake)
- ii) ***Perceived*** (e.g. you *think* the person is criticizing you, but isn't. This is more typical of people with low self-esteem: "Why are you angry at me?" "Because you're criticizing me?" "I just asked where'd you get your hair done?" "But you didn't say you liked it, so you hate it.")
- iii) ***Expected*** (e.g. "I'm going to be defensive because I'm waiting for you to be upset with me since I made a mistake!" These aren't likely the exact words a person would say... any normal person wouldn't... but they're the words going through the back of someone's mind when they know they screwed up and ready to be scolded. They're typically ready to lash back or have a pile of excuses.)

2. ***Rejection***: Whether it's *real*, *perceived* or *expected*

3. ***Demands***: Whether they're:

- i) ***Unfair*** (e.g. "You work while I sit here drinking beer.")
- ii) ***Illegitimate*** (e.g. "If you loved me you'd scale the walls like Spider-Man.")
- iii) ***Expected*** (e.g. "I just know you're going to nag at me.")

4. ***Annoyance, Annoyance, Annoyance***: Repetition of something that is increasingly annoying, annoying, annoying, annoying

5. **Controlling:** Everyone likes to feel some level of control even if that sense of control is through knowing someone else is in control. Unfortunately, the desire or lack of desire for control leads to a lot of arguments. In a healthy relationship, we need to share control because control leads to being responsible, which leads to feeling useful and valuable. If you have a problem with control (e.g. Monika from *Friends*), learn to let your partner have a say in things and allow for your opinion to be set aside once in awhile in order to make your partner feel good about his or her contribution.

Root Cause

The *Surface Level* issues can be very legitimate reasons to be angry and defensive, but they are connected to a deeper underlying issue, the *Root Cause*. Looking at the diagram you can hopefully see that the tap root, (i.e. the main root) is always: “I don’t feel loved” and there are secondary reasons that branch off of it. These secondary *Root Causes* include things such as:

- I don’t feel heard
- I don’t feel understood
- I don’t feel like I matter
- I don’t feel appreciated or valued
- I don’t feel respected
- I don’t feel important
- Others: _____

All of these reasons have deep resonating effects on people, which all stem from: “I don’t feel loved.” To begin reducing confrontations or feeling upset, start to address these deeper underlying issues. Just like weeding a garden, unless you pull out the root, you’ll continue having the same weed pop up over and over again. Therefore, whenever you have a confrontation, try to do the following:

Steps to Help Reduce Conflict or at Least Prevent its Escalation

1. Name the *Surface Level* issue(s)
2. Name the *Root Cause* issue(s)

Bonus: Uncover why it is such a sensitive issue and bring healing to the situation (refer to the previous section on *Forgiveness*)

Practice		
	<i>Him</i>	<i>Her</i>
Name a confrontation you helped initiate (e.g. <i>The backseat driver fight</i>)		
<p>Note: Every fight takes two sides; therefore, no one can claim they haven't helped start a fight. No one can completely pass the blame onto the other person; you had to actively participate in it. If your partner is "crazy" and does start all of the fights in your eyes, then you are either blind to your own fault or it's you're fault for being with the wrong person.</p>		
What was the Surface Level?		
What was the Root Cause(s)?		
Why is it such a sensitive issue for you or your partner?		
How was it resolved?		
How could you prevent this fight in the future?		
If you were to redo the fight all over again now, how could you resolve it better?		

Tip: To prevent defensive behavior, present your issue in a *loving* manner, which means your partner will know you love them by the way you present it. This means several things. First, you will wisely choose when to talk to your partner. For example, bringing up a sensitive issue when someone is having a really bad day would be a bad choice. Second, this means you will be careful how you choose to approach the other person. Ultimately, to be loving you don't want to look like the "better" person with accusations of ignorance or incompetence. For instance, "I don't drink from the carton because I was raised better than you," and "I know I'm supposed to use a coaster because I have a mom who loves me" are obviously bad things to say... hopefully you could tell that or boy, do I feel bad for your partner. You'd have me crying all the time... I mean you'd have me... uh going to the gym... yes, that's a much more manly response.

Normal Behavior

We need to be careful not to get angry at “normal” behavior. We need to be careful not to get angry at regular behavior because this leads to regular fights. We need to expect this behavior even if it’s undesired and try to find a better way of handling it besides being annoyed. Ultimately, we need to change *our* behavior to hopefully alter the other person’s and avoid unnecessary fights.

This was one of the hardest lessons for me to learn with my one partner. She was always late and I don’t mean a little late. She would regularly be an hour late getting ready to see me. I used to get sooo frustrated with this. I was angry because I felt her being late (i.e. surface level) meant she didn’t care about me (i.e. root cause); therefore, I would be defensive when I finally saw her. The problem was my *hurt* caused me to *hurt* her (“hurt people, hurt people”), which then caused more hurt on both sides and typically ruined the night. This was a regular pattern until, fortunately, one day it got through to me – yes, I’m a little slow – that this was “normal” behavior for her, so I needed to either break up or change my response because all of the fighting was miserable. After we discussed this at the appropriate time, we agreed that I’d be more patient and she’d try harder to be less late... we didn’t say ‘on time’ because she wasn’t a miracle worker... and if I did say or do something out of anger, she would try to be more accepting of my feelings, apologize and not perpetuate spinning the wheel of negativity... which sounds like the name of a terrible game show.

iii. Fear

A) Fear: *The Basics*

Fear, like anger, can be a healthy and necessary experience. A life without fear would result in people doing all kinds of dangerous things like marrying someone... that’s a little joke... not a good one; my apologies.

The 3 Basic Forms of Fear:

1. **Real Fear:** There are things that should scare us.
2. **Exaggerated Fear:** Fear blown out of proportion (e.g. phobias); often the result of a deeper issue.
3. **Lack of Fear:** The absence of healthy fear necessary for protection (e.g. spending too much money and going into debt, yelling *at* people without fear of repercussion or retaliation)

In every relationship, the people involved will have *Real Fears*, because they want to protect what they have. For instance, my partner has *Real Fear* about my family’s history with heart disease because she doesn’t want to lose me at a younger age. The following chart will help you look at the fears you have in your own relationship in order to prevent any *Exaggerated Fear* from infesting it.

Tip: Healthy fear is what prevents us from taking our partner for granted. This is best evident in hospitals when you see someone taking care of a spouse. Moments like these remind us of how lucky we are to have someone.

Your Fears		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What are your FEARS in regards to furthering this relationship? List everything that comes to mind. (e.g. <i>becoming unattractive, complacency, loss of sex drive, no kids, having kids with certain disabilities, accidents at work or at play, weight gain, etc</i>)		
What can you do to reduce these fears?		
What can your partner do to help reduce these fears?		
What can you do if your fears come true?		

B) How to Reduce Fear

The only way to reduce fear is through logic... my apologies to people who hate using logic. Many people like to use sayings to help reduce fear like: “There’s always tomorrow,” “In the light of eternity, does it matter?” and “Better days are coming,” (this works best if you believe you’re going to heaven). These can be very helpful, but sometimes you need more than a saying. The best way to conquer a fear is to name what it is that you’re afraid of in order to reduce it. For instance, I had to start a new course and for some reason I was really dreading having to go. Fortunately, I took a few moments and looked at “Why am I afraid?” and I realized there wasn’t anything that

logically stood out to being that scary. There was the fear of homework, driving to an unfamiliar area, meeting new people, not liking the class and being bored and maybe looking silly in front of others. Ultimately, there wasn't anything that scary about it. Therefore, by looking at these things, I was able to calm my emotions with my logic; of course, it wasn't like erasing a wrong pencil line. It still took some coaxing: "You've done this before. You'll be fine. Whenever you try something new you enjoy something about it. It's only for a couple months." This isn't the easiest exercise to follow and not 100% perfect, but it is very helpful to name what it is you're afraid of because being specific helps target the issue and allows for similar things from your past that you or someone else has overcome to help you realize it's not so bad.

The Fear Check:

1. Why am I afraid?
2. Am I afraid in proportion to the situation whether too much or too little?
If *NO*, force myself to line it up properly.
3. What can I do to reduce the fear? (e.g doing something to reduce the risk or recall a time I had overcome something similar to reassure myself)

iv. Jealousy

A) Good Jealousy

Jealousy is one of the most misunderstood emotions because it has been associated to envy and the Seven Deadly Sins in Catholicism. Jealousy, however, can be a necessary and good thing. My favorite reason to believe this usually upsets Christians... I receive a sick pleasure in upsetting Christians, which is weird when I'm one... whatever, I'm not perfect... yet. My favorite reason to think that jealousy is okay is because jealousy is an emotion God experiences. In fact, in the Bible God says: "Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God." (Exo. 34:14, NIV) God gets jealous and His name is Jealous, so obviously my being jealous must be okay since I believe I was made in His image. Plus, being jealous is something I should be striving for because I want to be like God... my partner hates that argument because there's no fighting it and she hates when I'm right... which is always... from time to time.

Jealousy is a good thing because it acts as a warning system to prevent us or others from doing something we shouldn't. For instance, the church I grew up in lost its pastor because he had an affair with the secretary. If jealousy was more prevalent in his marriage, perhaps he wouldn't have set himself up to be in a position to be so tempted. This could have been his wife saying something like: "Honey, I'm uncomfortable with your arrangement being alone so much with the non ugly, non annoying secretary." On the other hand, the pastor should have been thinking: "You know, I'd be jealous if another man was in my position with my wife, so I should do something to change this situation." Jealousy is a great protector when we use it properly. God being jealous wasn't Him having an anger or insecurity problem. He is recorded as being jealous when He was ignored and brushed aside because something else seemed more important to His people. We should have the same feelings with our partner. Just like God's people, the Israelites, made a vow to put God first, on your wedding day, you are making the same vow to put your partner first; your partner comes before your family; your partner comes before your work; your partner comes before your favorite sport or hobby. Your partner comes first. If he or she doesn't come first, healthy jealousy will – or at least should – ensue. This is one of those times you shouldn't look at your partner and say: "I told you so," even if you can... and especially if you can't; that'd be weird.

Tip: Healthy jealousy is different than being controlling: jealousy protects you, your partner and your relationship; being controlling hurts your partner in hopes of protecting yourself, which is far from being a loving response.

B) Bad Jealousy

Jealousy, like anger, can be very dangerous if it is warped from its true meaning of being a protector. For instance, in the form of envy of someone else, jealousy is always wrong. Being envious of others acts as a catalyst to initiate a slew of unhealthy mindsets and behaviors like resentment, quarreling and going into unnecessary debt to buy fancy things.

Note: *Necessary Debt* is something like schooling or an investment needed for a better future or it can be used to buy a *reasonable* home in which to live. *Unnecessary Debt* is borrowing money to buy anything that is above what is necessary like a big screen TV, big trips, etc).

Jealousy is also really bad when it is used as a form of retaliation. Trying to make your partner jealous because you're angry is very dangerous and foolish. Jealousy should never be used to hurt someone. I once had a young lady tell me she hated how her boyfriend would get jealous of certain guys; her response was to purposefully hang out with these certain guys because she didn't want to be "controlled" or "told what to do." This was disastrous for their relationship. He kept getting more jealous and she kept bringing in more and more guys. This is very unhealthy and really mean, unloving behavior that should be avoided.

Note: If your partner struggles with being jealousy. There are two things you need to do:

1. Do what you can to help the person feel loved.
2. Try to reduce any jealous causing behaviors whether you agree with them or not.

I've been told that someone being jealous means he or she doesn't "trust" you, which made this person really angry at the thought of her partner being jealous. This person took this personally and was very offended at her partner's jealousy. Unfortunately, if your partner wrestles with jealousy, there are reasons for it and the biggest reason is you. *It's not personal*, but jealousy is a sign that there is something not right in your relationship or lifestyle. I encouraged this young lady to stop taking things personally and start loving her partner better so he would feel more comfortable and trust her more. Trust has to be earned; therefore, jealousy is a sign that something isn't right. In the end, this young lady was angry because she was more worried about her own needs rather than her partner's. She had a very selfish mindset and her partner's jealousy was a sign of this because he often felt second or third place to others.

Tip: If your partner is jealous of someone(s), a loving response is to respect his or her feelings and try to help him or her feel better. Remember, your priority is to please your partner, not some acquaintance at a party.

Another Tip: If you need to flirt to feel better about yourself, your partner isn't helping you feel loved enough and you need to figure out why that is... or in some cases, you're just really immature and need to grow past that kind of high school thrill mentality.

Note: Having close intimate friendships with the opposite sex is very dangerous. There definitely needs to be strong boundaries in place to make

sure your partner does not feel threatened and/or second place because otherwise you're stirring the jealousy pot, which will ultimately lead to disaster. The big problem is you are setting yourself or the other person up for unnecessary temptation. Remember, your priority is your partner and your relationship; friends are lower on your list of priorities. If you mix this up, don't expect a very happy or lasting relationship.

Tip for the Ladies: I knew a girl who was adamant that guys and girls can and should be "close" friends. Here's the thing, guys can't be close friends with girls if they're hot, remotely attractive or even tolerably ugly with a great personality. If a guy wants to be best friends with a girl who is not somehow related to him or have a *special connection* there's a problem. He's either gay, trying to hook up with her, which is normally the case, or he has deep rooted mommy issues in which case he has serious baggage thereby making him a poor choice for a close friend. This girl I knew was very against this idea, but as an attractive young lady in her early twenties, she was yet to find a guy who would want to spend a lot of time with her and *not* eventually ask her out. Ultimately, if a guy or girl is hanging out with someone else and he or she has feelings for that person, that's not a friendship because when you like someone you're "working" and not fully open like a friend is supposed to be; your actions have ulterior motives. For guys, a friendship is void when he willingly sneaks a peak down the woman's top or at her thong when she bends over. This is why to find a guy friend is rare for girls because guys like to look. If a girl bends over and reveals something, a real friend will say: "You may want to fix that," and not: "Oh baby." This is how I respond to my sister, and select female friends who have become like sisters... I mean the: "You may want to fix that," and not the: "Oh baby," because, ew, gross.

C) The 3 Basic Forms of Jealousy:

1. **Real Jealousy:** There are things that should make us jealous (i.e. protects our personal boundaries like: "Please stop touching my wife like that... with your tongue.")
2. **Exaggerated Jealousy:** Blows things out of proportion; often the result of a deeper issue.

3. **Lack of Jealousy:** The absence of healthy jealousy necessary for protection against being made second place.

D) When you experience jealousy, like anger, you need to check it out.

The Jealousy Check:

1. Do I have a right to be jealous in this situation?
If *NO*, figure out how I can fix my attitude and ability to trust my partner.
2. Am I jealous in proportion to the situation whether too much or too little?
If *NO*, force myself to line it up properly.
3. What can my partner and I do to properly fix this situation?

Tip: One of the best lessons I received on jealousy was from the TV show *Chuck*... one of the best shows ever! The one character nicknamed Awesome walks into his bedroom where the woman he's living with has fallen asleep with a geeky guy named Morgan beside her. Morgan's first words when he sees Devin are: "I swear nothing happened." Devin coolly responds: "Yeah, I know." Morgan is aware of the insulting nature of this response and says: "Something could have happened," to which Devin replies: "No, it couldn't." Devin was aware of the situation, the person involved and was so secure that he didn't feel any unnecessary jealousy. I found this a very helpful lesson for me because I've sometimes struggled with being jealous of guys I shouldn't have to worry about. Of course, jealousy would be smart if my partner made me feel second place to these other guys or if the guy was flirting with my partner... which is often the case... I have a hot girlfriend... yea for me.

v. Guilt

Guilt has a very strong connection to anger since guilt gone awry is a strong precursor to depression. In addition, similar to anger, there are three basic forms of guilt.

A) The Three Basic Forms of Guilt (*Are you noticing a trend between the emotions with the real, exaggerated and lack?*)

1. **Real Guilt:** We should feel bad for mistakes in order to correct future behavior.
2. **Exaggerated Guilt:** Involves letting the past haunt us, distort our present mindset, hold us back from growing and not accepting offered forgiveness.
3. **Lack of Guilt:** Not feeling guilty for something we should whether lack of conscious (e.g. sociopath) or simply doing something out of ignorance (i.e. we didn't know it was offensive).

Real Guilt is the result of us doing something wrong, which of course is bound to happen. Thus, we need to be ready to take responsibility for our mistakes. Unfortunately, like anger, guilt can become *Exaggerated* and very damaging to us and those around us if not handled properly. As a Christian, I was raised to always feel guilty because “Jesus died for my sins” so the least I could do was feel bad about it. Unfortunately, this has taught me to feel a lot of *Exaggerated Guilt* with which I am now coming to terms. Now I know that I need to go through the following steps:

Steps to Check Guilt Level:

1. Have I actually done something wrong or was there a misperception?
If YES, I have done something wrong, remember the lesson
If NO, there was a misperception, clarify the confusion and/or let it go
2. Have I apologized to those affected including myself and/or tried to appropriately make amends?
If NO, do so.
3. Is there anything else I can do to help the situation that makes sense? (e.g. paying someone \$100 because I didn't say “please” could arguably make the situation better for the other person, but that would definitely not make sense.)
If NO, I will *not* continue to beat myself up for the wrong I've done.
If Yes, I will do what needs to be done and then *stop* beating myself up for the wrong I've done.

Summary: Take responsibility and learn from the situation, apologize, try to make amends and then seek forgiveness in order to move on.

Once I've gone through these steps, I know I need to stop beating myself up for my mistakes, which is the typical habit of people who wrestle with guilt. For people who struggle with being hard on themselves, even though we've apologized and the other person is okay, we'll still beat ourselves up unless we stop ourselves. The fundamental truth, unfortunately, is that hurting others is inevitable. Thus, we need to be ready to fix the situation as best we can, but not let it hold us back from loving ourselves and others as best we can. This means we have to be ready to take responsibility, apologize and do what we can to make things right and then move on. Ultimately, being stuck in guilt leads to depression and being a real bummer to be around, which is even worse for others. Therefore, not letting go of guilt is the first step to having a negative mindset and a mediocre to terrible life. Thus, I want a life of healthy guilt that isn't exaggerated. What about you?

B) Responding to Guilt: *Apologetic* or *Defensive*

When you have done something wrong, there are two main attitudes people typically take: *Apologetic* or *Defensive*. Simply put, one heals and the other divides. Being apologetic takes responsibility for the mistake and is the healthy response. Being defensive, on the other hand, can feel safer and easier, but it is a sign of insecurity and it always makes things worse. Therefore, we all need to strive to be apologetic when we've done something wrong and not be defensive.

Note: Sometimes it's better *not* to directly apologize for something because it could cause greater damage. For instance, if I were to have inappropriate thoughts of a woman, which is a sin in Christianity, it'd be better to apologize to myself and God than to apologize to the woman because that would be more damaging to her... and if she had a boyfriend, then that'd likely be very damaging to me as well.

vi. A Chart to Test How You Handle Your Emotions

<i>A Chart to Test How You Handle Your Emotions</i>		
On a Scale of 1-10, with 1 being <i>Not</i> Good and 10 being <i>Very</i> Good		
<i>What Grade Do You Give Yourself for...</i>	<i>His Hers</i>	<i>Examples of What You Do For Him For Her</i>

Handling <i>Real Anger</i>	— —		
Avoiding <i>Exaggerated and Misdirected Anger</i>	— —		
Not struggling with a <i>Lack of Anger</i>	— —		
Handling <i>Real Fear</i>	— —		
Avoiding <i>Exaggerated Fear</i>	— —		
Not struggling with a <i>Lack of Fear</i>	— —		
Handling <i>Real Jealousy</i>	— —		
Avoiding <i>Exaggerated Jealousy</i>	— —		
Not struggling with a <i>Lack of Jealousy</i>	— —		
Handling <i>Real Guilt</i>	— —		
Avoiding <i>Exaggerated Guilt</i>	— —		
Not struggling with a <i>Lack of Guilt</i>	— —		

Part D) Fighting and Resolving

Tip: How we fight is a learned behavior; therefore, it can be changed with the right desire and effort (Recall: *Chapter 4: Change and ACTED*).

Tip to the Tip: One way to prevent a fight, especially when trying to present a problem to someone who is likely to snap at you, is to change *where* you

present the issue. For instance, it'd be hard to yell at you if you present it in someplace public like a library or while doing something active and requiring energy like jogging... while skeet shooting would be a bad idea. Find the time the person is the most receptive and present it then. For instance, many guys are more receptive after sex or during a massage... guys if this leads to you having sex or being massaged more, you're welcome.

A Proverb: "Avoiding a fight is a mark of honor; only fools insist on quarreling." (Proverbs 20:3 NLT) I thought I'd add this in to show how smart the Bible is... and if you *don't* feel like being smart, you can quote this to the person who gets angry with you. That'd be a great way to make things worse... although I doubt that'd be your goal. At least this can inspire you *not* to be quick to fight back thereby preventing the conflict from escalating.

Why We Fight: Fighting is essentially saying: "I want my way," and "I want to be right." Ultimately, these feelings connect back to "I want to feel loved" because getting your way or being told you're right helps us feel "worthy" of love. The problem with this is we are already "worthy" of love; we just have to accept this idea.

Tip: Knowing how to "suck up" or empower others, especially those who are very defensive and quick to fight will make your life a lot easier. Working for a church and being in leadership has taught me, and continually reminds me, about this important lesson. If I screw up and get too defensive, which happens more than it should since I know this already, I'll be quick to go back to the person and apologize. I'll then try again to empower them because getting people on your side is the only real way to get what you want and be loved at the same time.

Key: You don't have to be "right" for your partner to love you. It's actually easier to love you if you listen and build on what the other person says than if you "correct" and prove you're "right" and he or she is "wrong".

This section will be divided as follows:

- i. Intentions
- ii. Reality vs. Perception

- iii. How Do You Fight?
- iv. Conflict Resolution
- v. Preventing Conflict

i. Intentions

Behind every fight there are intentions, and usually these intentions are good in some way. Unfortunately, insecurity, miscommunication and assumptions can cause the best of intentions to lead to a nasty fight. Every action has two intentions:

1. **Assumed Intention:** A guess for why someone says or does something

Example Statement: “Your hair looks really great.”

Assumed Intention 1. You want something from me

Assumed Intention 2. You want me to say a compliment back

Assumed Intention 3. You’re just trying to start a conversation

Assumed Intention 4. You’re being honest about your feelings

2. **Real Intention:** Why someone is actually saying or doing something whether consciously or subconsciously.

Why This is Important: Many times fights are the result of one or both parties having an incorrect *Assumed Intention*. This can happen in your relationship with each other, family members, friends, coworkers, strangers, etc.

Therefore, we need to be careful not to let our biases lead to *Assumed Intentions* that blind us from the truth.

Before you get too angry at someone or replay the situation over in your head, ask:

Steps to Check Before Getting Upset:

1. What was the *Real Intention* behind the act? Was it really to hurt me or is that a false perception?
2. How can I properly bring clarification to this?
3. Is this person acting out of his or her own hurt? (Recall: “hurt people, hurt people)
4. How can I best handle this without hurting myself or the other person?

“Ouch, Please Rephrase.”

A very important lesson I needed to learn when dealing with people who say things that come across as vindictive is to ask clarifying questions like: “Are you trying to say that I’m a pathetic loser or am I imagining that when you said that I’m a pathetic loser?” Since being logical and not sarcastic in a heated conversation can be difficult, another simpler method is to say: “Please rephrase that.” Ultimately, when we feel attacked or insulted, clarification can help us realize that the other person isn’t actually trying to hurt us. This is especially important since most fights aren’t about hurting the other person as much as *protecting* ourselves. Even little kids who pick on someone are really just trying to avoid being attacked. I was recently in a confrontation because a young lady had said something that came across very malevolent, which sent an already tenuous situation into a much higher echelon of fighting.

Unfortunately, what she said I later found out wasn’t in line with what she was really trying to say. Apparently, “You’re a mean person,” was not what she meant. Had I have said: “Ouch, please rephrase,” we could have avoided a much more intense discussion and two days of awkwardness during a vacation together. This statement, “Please rephrase,” can make the difference between: “Oh that makes better sense,” and: “Screw you.”

“I find that Insulting!”

I once dated a girl who continually said this at what seemed like everything I said whether at random thoughts or even when I tried to make compliments: “What do you mean I look good today? Do you mean I don’t normally look good?” That was awesome, apologizing for giving a compliment. Her *Life Script* was crazy negative: “Everyone wants to hurt me.” She took everything as an attack. She felt powerless and was fighting to gain any sense of *self esteem* she could by people pleasing habits with random people and trying to gain *power* at the expense of those closest to her, which was an obvious sign that her priorities were askew. With her negative mindset, she always felt the *Assumed Intention* was to attack her when the *Real Intention* was typically quite the opposite. This caused her to push a lot of good people away, which ultimately led to her making life a lot harder for herself. I had to explain to her... several times because at first she thought I was attacking her in my calm voice with Norah Jones lightly playing the background. I was really trying to have a non threatening mood; I don’t actually listen to Norah Jones. No

offense to those who do... anyway, I had to explain to her that her *Assumed Intention* that I was attacking her was *insulting to me* because she was assuming that I was someone who wanted to hurt her. If that was my intention, how cruel a person would I be? Fortunately, I was able to help her start to see that she shouldn't assume people were always trying to hurt her... at least most of the time; there were some very jealous girls of her... not because she was dating me... just kidding, I'm just trying to be humble. It was totally over me... at least that's what I told myself. Ultimately, this young lady needed to realize that if she wasn't trying to hurt others, why would they be trying to hurt her? If she was in the army or the mafia then yes, there would be people trying to hurt her, but those are exceptions to the everyday.

Even if people have the intention of hurting someone else, there's a reason like retaliation. When you think about it, even people who break and enter houses are typically not intending to harm the people from whom they're stealing. Their intention is to have an easy way to make money and/or have a thrill. People typically aren't as vicious and conniving as we first think. Selfish and worried about self preservation, yes; cruel for the sake of being cruel, no. Some people will hurt others with the idea of it being for a greater good, but typically people don't do things like walk around randomly stabbing people they don't know with knives or even spoons in order to be annoying rather than murderous. People are typically better than that.

ii. Reality vs. Perception/Perspective

1. **Reality:** What really happened.
2. **Perception/Perspective:** What is "perceived" to have taken place.

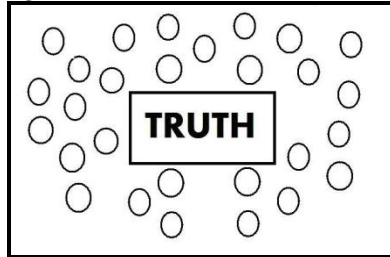
Keys to Remember:

1. Everyone has a different perception/perspective
2. Our perception is affected by our past, especially our baggage.
3. Our perceptions aren't "wrong" per say, but they can be more right or less right depending how badly our past based biases act.
4. We need to try to understand other people's perceptions, especially between men and women.

Different Perspectives of Truth

We can all see the “Truth”, but we all have different circumstances affecting how we see it including different angles and closeness to the situation. Everyone sees things distorted by bias depending on where they’re born, into what culture, what family, level of media exposure, etc. All of these things cause us to have a bias in how we see things.

Fig. 6.15



Biases can be very subtle. For instance, I think burgers make a great dinner, whereas for a vegetarian, this definitely wouldn’t be a good meal. Therefore, since everyone can see things differently, we need to be better at trying to understand why some people see things the way they do and, at least, respect their opinion if we don’t agree.

****A Helpful Question:**

“Why are they fighting and why are they both right?”

This is a common TV sitcom writer’s phrase that helps the writer remember that every fight has to have at least two sides. This is helpful to remember because it reminds you that your partner has a legitimate reason for believing the way he or she does. His or her reasoning is just as legitimate as yours; thus, you need to be respectful and understanding for why he or she feels this way.

The Way You See Things	
<i>Things We Agree About</i>	<i>Things We Disagree About</i>
<i>(Write out as many things as you can think of)</i>	<i>(Write out as many things as you can think of)</i>

<i>These Things are Valuable Because...</i>	<i>These Differences are Okay Because...</i>
<i>Exceptions that are Bad and of which We Have to be Wary... (e.g. both hate certain chores)</i>	<i>Exceptions that are Bad and of which We Have to be Wary... (e.g. guys and girls can be close friends vs. not)</i>

Tip: Knowing your different opinions can prevent fighting since it can help determine sensitive topics. With a little luck, perhaps recognizing the benefits of these differences will make accepting the differences easier.

iii. How Do You Fight?

Tip: If either of you “win” a fight, your relationship loses. As I’ve heard it said: “You can be right or you can be married.” Ultimately, getting your way isn’t the path to a healthy and happy relationship because it demeans your partner and steals power.

Every couple has their own way of fighting, but there are ways to make arguments more productive and less hurtful. Hopefully, this test will help point out some ways to do things in a healthier way.

The How Do You Fight Test On a Scale of 1-10 with 1 being <i>Never</i> and 10 being <i>Always</i>		
Ways We Can Fight <i>When you fight...</i>	<i>His</i>	<i>Hers</i>
You make sure the argument is worth fighting for and are not just being nit picky, which has caused your partner to be defensive?		
You make sure you’re not taking your anger from something else out on your partner (<i>e.g. work, kids, etc</i>)		
You control your temper and think clearly		

You refrain from slandering your partner (<i>e.g. name calling</i>)		
You refrain from bringing up irrelevant issues like old fights that have been resolved		
You don't play the victim, but look for healthy resolution		
You control yourself from saying or doing things you'll regret later		
You control yourself enough to listen and properly understand your partner's side of the argument		
You speak calmly and clearly without yelling or hiding your true feelings with silence		
You don't bottle your feelings and explode on someone or something else later (<i>e.g. pet, coffee barista, etc</i>)		
You consider your partner's feelings		
You don't get caught in the moment and are able to focus on the goal of having a loving, healthy relationship and not just feeling better about yourself in the moment		
You use logical arguments with an understanding of the emotional side of the moment (<i>i.e. not being too logical or emotional</i>)		

Choosing What to Say			
Examples of What to Say:	Do you say things like this? Him Her	Examples of What <u>Not</u> to Say:	Do you say things like this? Him Her
When you do that, it hurts.	__ __	How could you do that?	__ __
I don't feel cared about when you...	__ __	You're a (insult) (<i>e.g. jerkwad, loser</i>).	__ __
I'm sorry, I'm having a hard time trying to figure out what exactly you're trying to tell me	__ __	I'm not listening cuz you're crazy	__ __
Can you correct me if I'm seeing this incorrectly?	__ __	I'm screaming because I'm angry even though it doesn't make any sense!	__ __

You don't seem yourself. Is something wrong?	— —	You're just like you father	— —
I'm sorry, but I'm confused	— —	You don't make any sense.	— —
There seems to be a pattern...	— —	You <i>always</i> ... <i>OR</i> You <i>never</i> ..	— —

Note: If you love your partner, you'll want to train yourself to be on the left side and make any appropriate adjustments to the wording that is preferred by your partner. The chosen phrases are guides and may not be the best choice for your particular situation.

iv. Conflict Resolution

When conflict arises, the options are: Flight, Fight, Freeze, or *Fix*.

My suggestion... hopefully you guessed it... is to focus on finding a way to "Fix" the problem even if this requires a short break so both parties have a chance to calm down and approach the situation with a clearer mind. In *The New Rules of Marriage*, the author, Terrence Real, recommends taking "Time Outs" whenever things get too heated and either of you are at risk of exploding. Ultimately, if you need space, you need to request it and your partner needs to respect your wish until a decided time (e.g. "I need an hour"). You'll want to make sure you set a timeframe because your partner will have a hard enough time leaving you alone without going crazy over: "Are they ready yet? Are they ready yet?" going through their heads. Of course, a loving person will set a time; a jerk won't in order to tick off his or her partner even more. Beware of the jerk.

4 Steps to Healthy Resolution

1. Choose to heal both you and the other party rather than to hurt.
2. Define what you want.
3. Discover and define what the other party wants.
4. Find a mutually beneficial solution (i.e. solve to both win).

Note: "Mutually beneficial" doesn't mean: "He got his way and I got to keep my teeth because he didn't hit me," or "She got her way so I don't have to

sleep on the couch.” It’s about both winning. Not being abused, whether physically or emotionally, isn’t winning; that should be expected.

When trying to bring resolution, defining what you both want clarifies things and keeps it simple without all of the superfluous thoughts and interjections clouding the real issue at hand. It also helps to make sure you both feel heard and understood, which reduces defensive behavior and encourages healing.

Dealing with Aggressive Behavior: “*The Wounded Puppy Dog*”

When dealing with an aggressive personality (e.g. someone who screams), there are two options for how to handle things. You can either go extreme over or under them. The ultimate goal is to bring the situation back into balance. If someone you know tends to be really aggressive in how they approach conflict, trying to match them or to slightly go over them only spurs on the argument and encourages the other party to get even more aggressive and try to overpower you. Therefore, you have to either go so extremely over them in order to scare them into submission, which is rarely the healthiest choice, or you have to go extremely soft. This is my favorite approach to really aggressive behavior; I call it the “wounded puppy dog” technique. This means being overly soft and gentle and to take on the “I’m really sorry and scared of you” look. This will likely really frustrate the aggressor because they’re hoping for a fight of aggression. Instead, you’ll make them feel guilty for hurting you. They may become more aggressive at first to try to lure you into aggression, but if you stay soft, eventually they will tone down their aggression, which will bring the conversation back into a more controlled style. The trick is to keep things in balance with an aggressive person; as they tone down their aggression, tone down your “wounded” expression and demeanor and try to meet in the middle again in order for proper discussion and resolution to take place.

For Christians and Those Interested:

“Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry.” (James 1:19) This verse suggests that some things are supposed to make us angry, but we need to be careful with the *what* and the *why*. It’s a brilliant verse because listening brings understanding, and being slow to respond allows us time to process things better and not just react out of self defense. Thus, these steps help prevent unnecessary fights.

v. Preventing Conflict

7 Tips for Ending Conflict and Fighting

1. Crossbows... that's a joke. Please don't rush off to a Big Bass Pro Shop.
1. Delivery is key to getting your point across (Look at the *Communication* section again in *Chapter 4: Understanding*).
2. Focus on changing yourself rather than changing the other person (Refer to *Chapter 3: Change*).
3. Think the best of the other person unless proven otherwise (Recall *Real and Assumed Intentions* earlier in this chapter).
4. Don't rehash old fights, especially those that have already been resolved.
5. Use *Compliments* instead of *Complaints* to encourage the behavior you want. Being critical causes others to be defensive.
6. Don't be angered by the person's "normal" behavior. Many people get angry with their partners because they do the same things over and over again, but this is their "normal" behavior; thus, it should not come as a surprise. We shouldn't be surprised when they leave their dirty underwear on the floor everyday or leave the milk out. We should never nag; instead, change the situation: "I don't want to nag you so I've decided if you leave your dirty underwear on the floor, I'll put it on your pillow. If it still continues, I'll start to pack it in your lunch."
7. Understand yourself and your partner; know what makes you and your partner feel loved and what makes you two defensive.

Building Understanding to Prevent Fighting

The following charts will help determine sensitive spots and typical behaviors you've developed because of hurtful experiences.

Tip: These will be things you will have to try to forgive and reconcile if you haven't already, and also things to work together on as a couple to prevent from hurting you anymore and fueling fights.

List 3-5 things that your parents or others have done that have had a negative impact on you and the resulting effect?
(e.g. divorce, bullied, ignored, break up, etc.)

Tip: This is basically writing the <i>Cause</i> and <i>Effect</i> of a traumatic experience.	
<i>Him</i>	<i>Her</i>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

When Do You, <i>In General</i>, Feel Inadequate, Bad About Yourself Or Disconnected From Others?	
<i>Him</i>	<i>Her</i>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

When Do You Feel Inadequate Because of Your Partner or Disconnected From Him or Her? (e.g. partner nags, complains, flirts with other people, sarcastic comments etc)	
<i>Him</i>	<i>Her</i>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
<i>Take a few minutes to apologize and reaffirm your love for each other.</i>	

Recall: The more we feel inadequate, the quicker we'll be defensive and fight back. For example, I know a guy who didn't feel attractive enough for his partner. This led him to be very sensitive to any negative comments about his appearance. Fortunately, when she realized this, she was able to better reaffirm her attraction to him, which reduced his defensiveness.

Now that you feel gross from all of the negative questions... sorry about that... it's time to feel better. These next charts are things you will want to remember when you're scared or hurt in order to remind yourself that you are loved, which will help prevent defensive behavior.

List 5 things that your parents, guardians, role models or others have done right to make you feel like someone of worth?	
<i>Him</i>	<i>Her</i>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

When Do You, <i>In General</i>, Feel Good About Yourself Or Connected To Others?	
<i>Him</i>	<i>Her</i>
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

What Makes You Feel Fully Loved and Cared About by Your Partner? (e.g. phone calls, asking: "how was your day?", the other person being happy, laughing together, etc.)	
<i>Him</i>	<i>Her</i>
1.	1.
2.	2.

3.	3.
4.	4.
5.	5.

Summary Questions to Recap

Clarifying Questions		
	His Response	Her Response
How and how often did your parents fight?		
When are you most likely to fight?		
How can you know a fight is coming?		
Why do you fight?		
When are you most likely to fight?		
How do you fight? (you can draw this if you want)		
How can you reduce fighting?		

Part E) Finances: *The Fun Part*

One of the so-called joys of growing up is becoming responsible for our financial lives. This becomes increasingly important when we get married because our names become connected to our partner’s finances as well. I have been told that money issues are one of the biggest reasons for fighting and

divorce. Fortunately, I'm yet to see this in those around me because they have found healthy ways to prevent money from ruining their relationships.

Tip: Plan to spend less than you make. This means paying off all credit cards and other bills with having money to spare in case of emergencies.

The above tip seems so simple a concept, but unfortunately in Western culture where materialism rules most people's lives, this concept is beyond comprehension let alone practice. Ultimately, this should be everyone's goal, especially in light of the Great Depression that started in 1929 and the continual present day economic fluctuations and scares. Hopefully you'll be able to make your financial goal to be to spend less than you make because paying interest is a waste of money and holds you back from fully enjoying the fruits of your labor.

Note: Finances are a crucial part of a marriage. For better help in this area, consult an accountant or financial advisor.

Observation: Debt is a major problem for many people today and has a drastic affect on their relationships. Young people often have school debts while older people tend to have divorce debts. Finding a mutually agreeable way to handle debt can be very difficult, but necessary. There is no easy solution, but it becomes imperative to find a solution that doesn't leave the innocent party resentful or the indebted person feeling inferior. Thus, seeking help in this area may be the best investment a couple can make.

Two Kinds of Debt

Necessary Debt is a necessary investment in order to provide a better future like schooling or certain professional instruments or it can be used to buy a *reasonable* home in which to live.

Unnecessary Debt is going in debt for anything that is above what is necessary like a big screen TV, a fancy new car, decorations, holidays, a house bigger and fancier than necessary, etc.

Tip: Just because you have money, or a credit card, doesn't mean you should use it.

(Inspired by *The Newlywed Handbook* by Carley Roney)

Questions to Consider

	His Response	Her Response
On a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 being a lot and 1 being not at all, how much do you worry about your finances? Why?		
How much cash do you need in the bank to feel secure?		
What are your financial obligations and goals?		
What do you think should be your financial priority?		
How should you allocate a surprise bonus? Do you splurge on something big or put it away for a rainy day?		
Do your money habits scare your partner? Why?		
Should you need to explain every dollar you spend? Why?		
How much credit-card debt can you carry without guilt or worry? Why?		
How much money should you set aside for tithing and/or charities?		
How much money should be put towards retirement?		
Do you want a financial planner and/or should you be looking at one?		

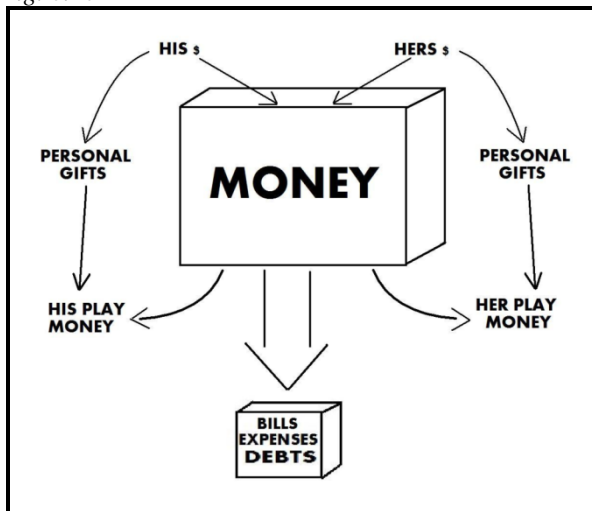
A Possible Money Arrangement

More and more couples are becoming scared of the idea of combining bank accounts, but when you get married, you are uniting as one even with your bankbook. Of course, you shouldn't set yourself up for disaster, especially if your partner has a money problem like gambling or overspending, but why would you marry someone with this problem in the first place? And please don't say: "But I love him."

The following diagram helps explain one way for how a healthy marriage can distribute the money because it eliminates the competition that naturally develops for who makes more and the "you owe me" attitude because one person pays more of the bills or mortgage.

How to Divide Money

Fig. 6.16



Notice how all of the earned money goes into one big account to pay for bills and such, but then each partner is given the *same* little budget for his or her own spending. This is of course is only if there is money beyond expenses and savings, but this should be easy to do if you don't buy beyond your means. This set up is great because it helps prevent you and your partner from being 100% accountable to each other for every dollar you spend. This allows you the freedom to buy things guilt free and to feel a sense of independence many people need to feel in order to maintain sanity in a marriage.

The Budget

The key to financial success is to make a budget plan. Here is an example of an accountant's annual budget sheet for his money. This is helpful for guessing how much money you have coming in and how much you can plan to spend on certain rows and columns. This can be valuable for reducing fear of what you spend your money on and help prevent you from going into unnecessary debt. Ultimately, you want to predict and keep track of all of your spending in order to know how your money is being distributed. This helps keep things under control and prevent unnecessary anxiety from building.

Fig. 6.17

	Jan	Feb →	→ Dec	Reserves	Total
Job (His)					
Overtime (His)					
Profit Sharing (His)					
Job (Hers)					
Overtime (Hers)					
Profit Sharing (Hers)					
Gifts and other					
Donations					
Donations					
RRSP deductions					
Investments					
Cars & Transportation:					
Car payments					
Insurance					
Gas					
Maintenance (e.g. oil change, wash)					
CAA membership					
Parking					
Repairs					
Other Travel (e.g. Bus pass, bike etc)					
House:					
Rent/mortgage					
Property tax					
Telephone/ Cable/ Internet					

Heat					
Hydro					
Gas					
Lawn maintenance					
Gardening					
General repairs					
Upgrades (e.g. redecorating)					
Tools and supplies					
Entertainment:					
Dinner's out					
Movies & Theater					
Hobbies					
Gym memberships					
Sports Teams/ Clubs					
Computer & software					
Special Events (eg. Stag and Does)					
Personal:					
Cell Phone					
Toiletries					
Hair Cuts					
Clothes					
Shoes					
Frivolities (eg. manicures)					
Gifts					
Holidays					
Food:					
Children:					
Pets:					

Tip: Live as far below your means as you can. This means not maxing out your mortgage or falling for the salesman pitch: “You only wanted to spend this, but if you spend a little more, look what you could buy. It’s such a better value. It logically makes sense to buy this model over the other and you’ll want to buy it now because it’s a once in a lifetime sale.” Why is it whenever you buy something there’s a once in a lifetime sale?

Conclusion

Understanding how *Power* works and the different power structures that naturally develop in all relationships can be the difference between a successful life and a frustrating one. Knowing how to appeal to other peoples' sense of *Power* and maintain our own balance can be the factor in becoming successful in business, to have a healthy marriage and family life, develop strong friendships and, ultimately, reduce stress and conflict in our day to day lives. *Power* can liberate or enslave us; it's up to us.

Chapter 7: Wrapping Things Up

Congratulations on making it to this final chapter... unless you're just flipping through the pages and just happened to stop on this spot... unless of course reading a few lines of a book is actually a major accomplishment for you then congratulations to you as well. This final chapter has been divided into several parts: discussion questions to reflect on this overall experience, a summary to remind you of the most helpful points discussed in this book and some final thoughts to help wrap things up properly.

Part A) Discussion Questions

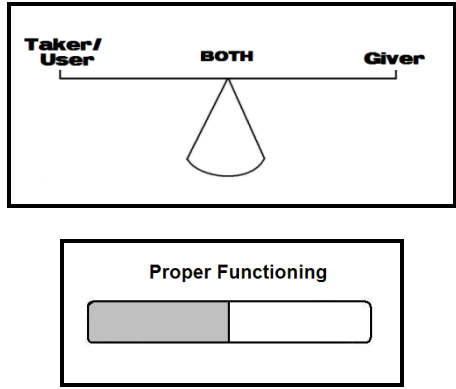
1. How have you grown throughout this book?
2. What things were the most helpful?
3. What things were the least helpful?
4. What things made a lot of sense?
5. What things do you want to remember?

Part B) Summary

In the final pages of this book, I want to do what I find very valuable that some authors do, which is to give reminders of some of the key concepts we've covered... see I am a nice guy... sometimes.

1. Unlike dating where you have the choice of either *Fixing* or *Dissolving* the relationship when things are poor, in marriage, the only option is *Fixing* accept for agreed upon reasons. This is why making a marital commitment is so powerful. It is saying: "For better or worse I'll love you." Therefore, it is important to be aware of what both of these scenarios can look like.
2. Guys are typically different than women in three main ways:
 - i. Guys are stupid and women are crazy
 - ii. Guys have a primary concern of making their partner happy ('happy wife, happy life with sex') while women have a primary need for a project.
 - iii. Guys typically build their self esteem on accomplishments while women tend to base their self esteem on how others see them, which follows their different communication styles where guys are more competitive and women use communication as a way to unify.

3. All relationships are based on the concept of the *User/Taker and Giver* format where we ultimately want our relationships to be a mutual giving and receiving in order to maintain a steadier balance. This is also connected to how a relationship functions where we want to make sure control and responsibility are equally shared for proper functioning.

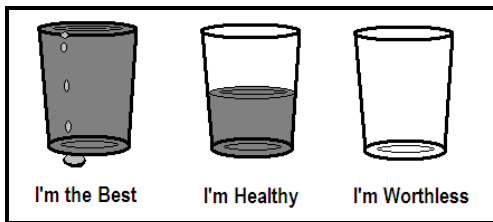


4. The best definition of love is 1 Corinthians 13:4-7:

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. (NIV)

This passage is meant to define our love for everyone, but it is meant to be best expressed through marriage. Unlike popular belief, love is not a feeling or sensation. It is about choosing to act a certain way to others. Love is a choice to act.

In regards to loving ourselves we need to learn to love ourselves regardless of other people’s opinions because they are so flippant. We also need to be careful to find the balance and not think too highly or too lowly of ourselves.



When it comes to loving our partner, we want to make sure we are addressing their six Love Languages in their proper amounts and order: *Quality Time, Physical Presence, Words of Affirmation, Acts of Service, Gifts, Fun*. The other thing we will want to do is aim for the top ten keys to a healthy loving relationship.

Top 10 Keys to a Healthy Loving Relationship

1. Be ready to apologize and admit fault and quick to accept your partner's
2. Find a way to be comfortable expressing all forms of emotions (eg. healthy anger, hurt, fears, joy etc.)
3. Know how to best express your love, appreciation and respect for both yourself and your partner
4. Develop open, loving and fearless communication (e.g. avoid words like "never" and "always")
5. Face new challenges and experiences while reminiscing about past accomplishments
6. Develop integrated goals and solution based lifestyles in order to prevent negativity
7. Develop a strong personal understanding and know how to best share this with your partner
8. Develop and respect each other's boundaries
9. Live so that you are an asset to each other rather than a hindrance. This includes independent and shared hobbies.
10. Know how to meet each other's intimacy needs including a healthy sex life... with each other

Bonus: Always assume the best in your partner

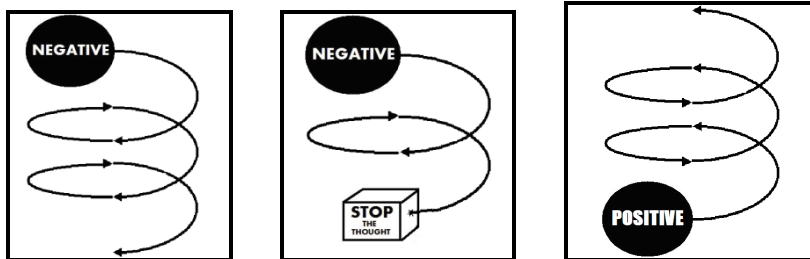
When it comes to love, how we treat those closest to us proves how well we can love while the *intention* for how we treat others is how we determine our character.

5. One of the greatest gifts humanity has is the ability to choose. We have the choice of how to live our lives and how we respond to things. However, with this ability comes the responsibility of how we choose to live our own lives. When we are doing something wrong and need to change, it helps to remember the acronym ACTED.

How to Change

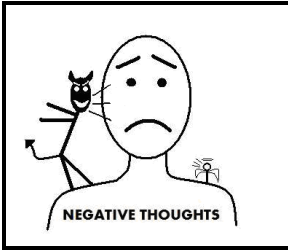
- A ~ Accept responsibility
- C ~ Create a goal
- T ~ Try things that will help you attain your goal
- E ~ Evaluate how well these things work
- D ~ Do what works

6. **Valuable Tool:** One of the best things a woman can do is make a sex video with or by herself for her husband. Include saying things like: “I love you,” and words and actions that turn him on. In addition, look at him and/or the camera in a loving manner. This will be a continual reminder that you love him, and is amazing for helping overcome porn addictions (being more personal will make other images second rate), and encourage him to want to make up with you in order to be with you again; thus, you both win.
7. In our intimate relationships, it is valuable to know our *Similarities and Differences*, and why these are good and how they can be warning signs to conflict. It is also helpful to be aware of both yours and your partner’s *Strengths and Weaknesses* as individuals and as a couple as a way to know how to grow.
8. Everyone can be broken down into three basic levels, the *Public, the Private and the Personal*. At the *Personal* level we want to make sure we have a positive *Life Script* because we can either get on a path of being positive or negative, which both take us further into these mindsets. When we get into the Negative spiral it is important to STOP THE THOUGHT and focus on getting back to the positive.

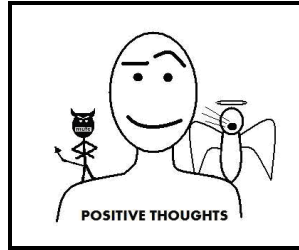


Part of STOP THE THOUGHT is to say: “No” to our negative thoughts and allow for the positive to be heard.

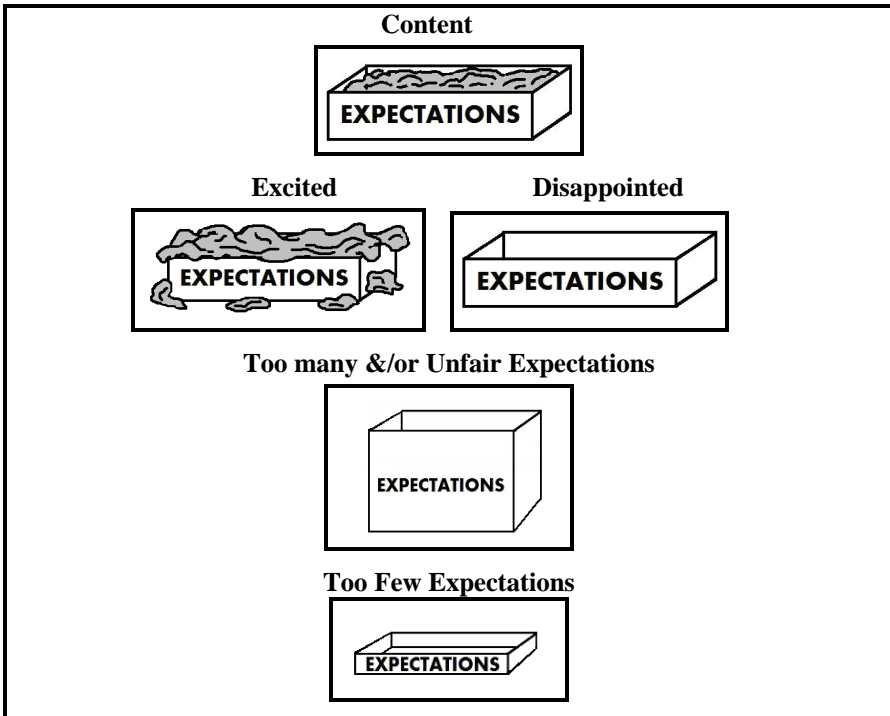
Dangerous Situation



Proper Situation



9. One way to reduce conflict and disappointment is to maintain healthy expectations; we don't want too many or too little. This is our time to be like Goldilocks from the children's story *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, the ones who needed better home security.



10. Understanding that you both have issues and learning to accept them is very important for a healthy relationship. Balance what you write in one column by writing a response in the other. You will have plenty of options for both; you just have to think about them a little.

What Are Your Issues?			
For Him:		For Her:	
<i>Your Issues</i>	<i>Her Issues</i>	<i>Your Issues</i>	<i>His Issues</i>

Now, go through your lists and say: “I accept this,” for each of these issues. If you can’t then you need to find the necessary help or solution.

11. Another way to reduce conflict is to understand how *power* works. We all need to feel power and the best ways to receive power is through love and forgiveness and not at the expense of others, which can be seen through the use of *Insults, Physically Attacking, Acting as a Victim* and *Seeking Control*.

Two Different Ways to Try to Get the Behavior You Want	
Things That Take Away Power (Negative) (i.e. this will lead to defensive behavior)	Things That Can Empower (Positive) The Way a Victor Responds
<i>Demands:</i> are degrading and insulting	<i>Questions:</i> can be empowering (note, they can become annoying when there’s too many or done inappropriately)
<i>Complaints:</i> degrading and insulting	<i>Requests:</i> request nicely for preferred behavior
<i>Whining and Nagging:</i> a sign of anger and frustration	<i>Compliments:</i> be sure to compliment any good behavior, this reinforces proper behavior

The problem is the negative ways of taking power is easier than *forgiving* because forgiving takes discipline, courage and patience since the results are rarely immediate. In order to pursue forgiveness, it is valuable to understand what it is.

Defining Forgiveness	
<i>Forgiving...</i>	<i>Forgiving is not...</i>
Recognizes that you have been hurt and takes ownership of it	Ignoring the offence

Is more for you than the offender because it prevents your pain from holding you back from enjoying life to its fullest	About letting the other person off without repercussion. In some cases, discipline is required
Stops the cycle of hurt (i.e. prevents you from hurting someone else out of your hurt)	Hurting yourself or others more
Takes continual effort by the forgiver	Usually easy
Gets easier over time and the more we do it	Impossible no matter what the offence
Is about learning and growing as a person	Setting ourselves up for more hurt
Can be the hardest when it comes to forgiving ourselves	Just something we do in regards to others.

Knowing how to forgive others is important because in every important relationship there are two guarantees: *at some point you will hurt your partner and your partner will hurt you.* To make forgiving others easier, it also helps to remember these three basic questions:

When Someone Screws Up

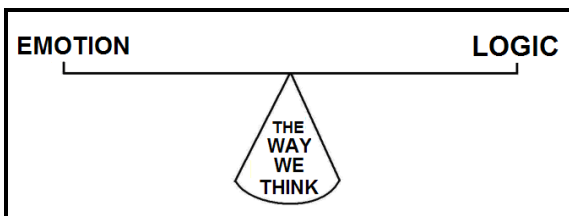
Ask: 1. What did they do wrong?
 2. What should they have done differently?
 3. When have I been guilty of this?

While forgiving ourselves is easier with three similar questions

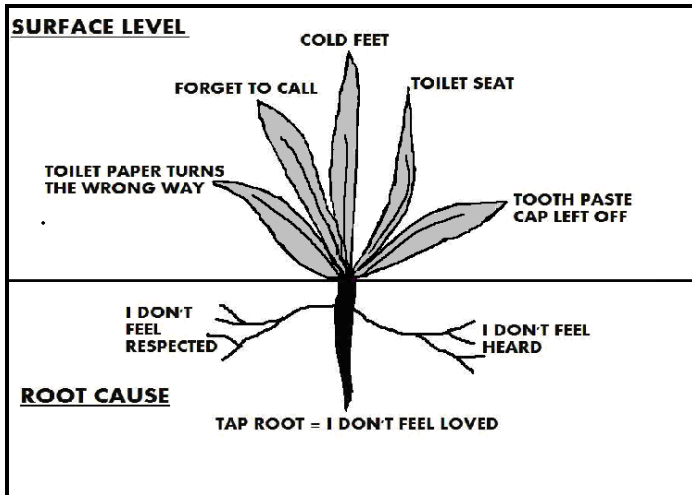
When You Screw Up

Ask: 1. What did I do wrong?
 2. What should I have done differently?
 3. When have others done this to me or someone else?

12. Our brains think somewhere between either of these extremes



13. Most emotions can be reduced to 3 levels: *real*, *exaggerated*, or *lack*
14. When we argue with someone there are two main levels: the *surface* and the *root*.



15. To help prevent getting unnecessarily upset, it is important to check the intentions behind the actions and remember that everyone has different perceptions/perspectives.

Steps to Check Before Getting Upset:

1. What was the *Real Intention* behind the act? Was it really to hurt me or is that a false perception?
2. How can I properly bring clarification to this?
3. Is this person acting out of his or her own hurt? (Recall: "hurt people, hurt people")
4. How can I best handle this without hurting myself or the other person?

Keys to Remember:

1. Everyone has a different perception/perspective
2. Our perception is affected by our past, especially our baggage.
3. Our perceptions aren't "wrong" per say, but they can be more right or less right depending how badly our past based biases act.

4. We need to try to understand other people's perceptions, especially between men and women.

16. To help make resolution easier, it is helpful to remember the following:

4 Steps to Healthy Resolution

1. Choose to heal both you and the other party rather than to hurt.
2. Define what you want.
3. Discover and define what the other party wants.
4. Find a mutually beneficial solution (i.e. solve to both win).

17. We need to be wary of *counterproductive behavior*. For instance, if I feel sad, I need to fight the urge to push people away. If I need to feel love, I need to fight the urge to yell at someone. If I'm having a bad day and need a hug, I need to fight my urge to be critical and snarky of others. If I'm craving intimacy, I need to fight the urge to be sulky or needy because that's very unattractive and reduces my chances of receiving what I need.

18. One of the most important charts in this book is meant to be ongoing. In case you forgot about it or to fill it out earlier, here it is again:

Things I Need to Change		
	<i>For Him</i>	<i>For Her</i>
What things should I consider changing? <i>(This is meant to be an ongoing list of things you discover, especially throughout this book)</i>	<i>An Ongoing List</i>	<i>An Ongoing List</i>
What things should I change right now?		
What things should I consider changing soon?		

Who and/or what can help me do what I need to do?		
---	--	--

Part C) The Final Lap

It was mentioned in the first chapter that we would be revisiting these two activities at the end of the book in order to see how you see things now. Hopefully this will help reaffirm how well you developed during this book and, more importantly, hopefully this will reaffirm the fact that you are able to see life differently now; you're more aware of the positives, less critical of yourself and others and are a few steps better at knowing how to love.

<p>Two Activities to Try <i>You can do these individually or together</i></p>
<p><i>Design a symbol for your relationship or a family crest</i></p>
Empty space for activity
<p>2. Create a Mission Statement for your marriage (A Mission Statement is something businesses create in order to know their goal and purpose). This would essentially be the basis for your marriage vows.</p>
<p><i>Examples:</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Our marriage is based on...</i> 2. <i>For our marriage we will...</i> 3. <i>Sex will not be the foundation for our marriage, but it will be the building blocks... hopefully yours won't sound like this. Remember I'm a guy and have "stupid" moments.</i>

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The Author

Chad David is someone who has been very blessed, and this book is a way for him to pass it on. Armed with a solid relationship with God, his family, partner and great friends, he's attained two Masters degrees and has had over twelve years of experience working with young people. This book demonstrates Chad's ability to make complicated issues much more understandable in a non-boring manner... life's too short to be boring. Over the past five years Chad has learned how to properly love himself, others (including his super hot girlfriend) and life in general, and he wants to help other people experience the same peace and joy that this has brought him. In the end, life is a gift that's meant to be enjoyed.



Interested in having Chad speak at your next event or to help you better understand your relationship on a one on one basis?

Contact through www.emotionalsex.ca or find him on Facebook

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