



CORE WELLNESS

# Groundbreaking Couples Counseling: 10 Modalities

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6 CE Training



[corewellceu.com](http://corewellceu.com)

Joseph Tropper, MS, LCPC, CCTP



*i love you*

**Hello**  
my name is

**What is your:**

Name?

Education?

License?

City?

Work setting?

***What specifically brought you to this training?***



**CORE WELLNESS**

## About Core Wellness

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Core Wellness is a dynamic training group offering evidence-based, practical workshops via live, webinar and home study delivery. Our passionate and knowledgeable trainers bring engaging and inspiring CE trainings that stimulate the heart and mind for client care and effective clinical skills.

Core Wellness LLC is authorized by the Board of Social Work Examiners in **MARYLAND** to sponsor social work CE programs (for LMSW, LCSW, LCSW-Cs) and maintains full responsibility for all content. The trainings qualify for Category 1 continuing education units (whether taken in person or via live interactive webinar). Our credits are also accepted by the Board of Professional Counselors of Maryland (LGPC, LCPC and MFTs) and Board of Psychologists of Maryland. Additionally, Core Wellness, LLC is recognized by the **NEW YORK** State Education Department's State Board for Social Workers #SW-0569 and the **NEW YORK** State Board for Mental Health Practitioners, #MHC-0167. For **other states**, contact your board & let us know if we can help!

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## About the Presenter

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**Joseph Tropper, MS, LCPC** holds a Master's degree in mental health counseling and is a highly sought-after trauma therapist, trainer & business consultant. As a Certified EMDR Therapist and Certified Clinical Trauma Professional (IATP) Joseph brings the art ad skills of trauma counseling and client motivation to life in his unique upbeat, hands-on approach that will engage, inspire and empower you as a therapist. Joseph is a full-time clinical supervisor and director and sees clients part time.



# Course Schedule

## Groundbreaking Couples Counseling: 10 Modalities

Part 1: Introduction to couples counseling and 5 challenges

Part 2: Overview, Five Love Languages, CBT, Communication Skills, Gottman & Imago

**Break**

Part 3: Family Systems, EFT, Divorce Busting, IFS and Trauma.

Part 4: Misc issues, Special cases; Q & A



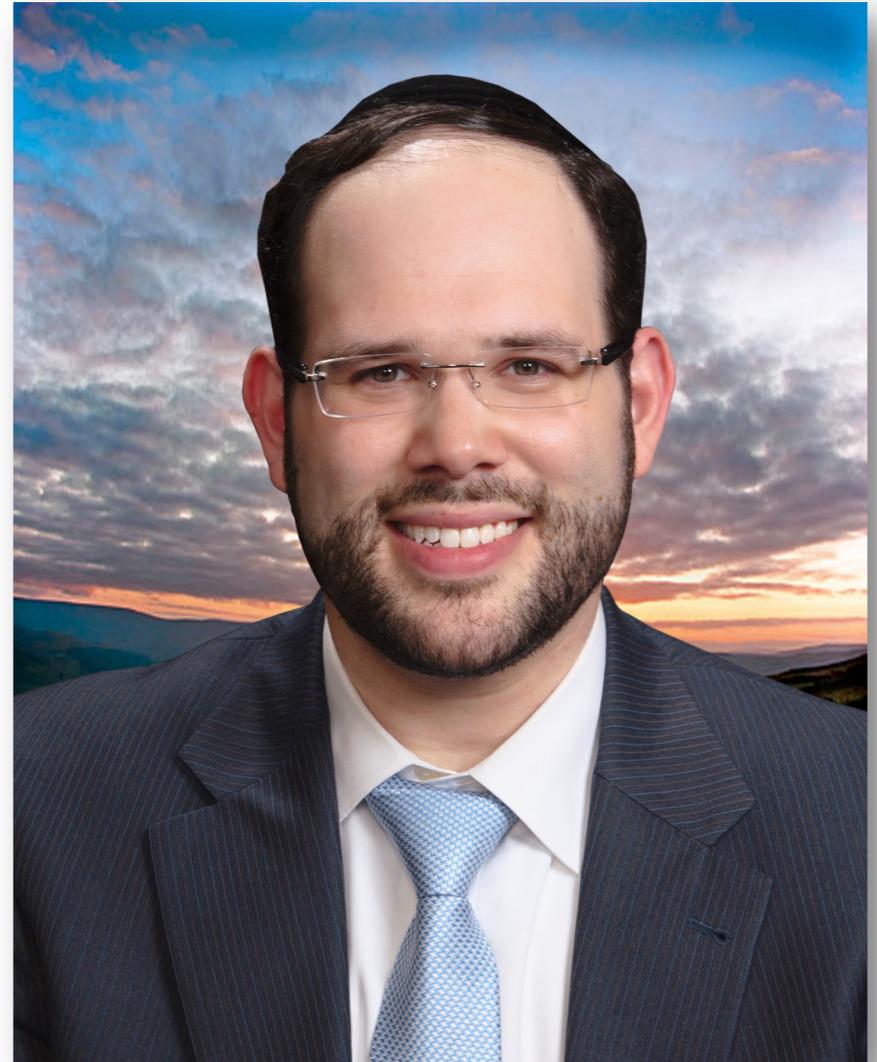
## **Think and Share**

Take a moment to consider your experiences and kindly share them with us.

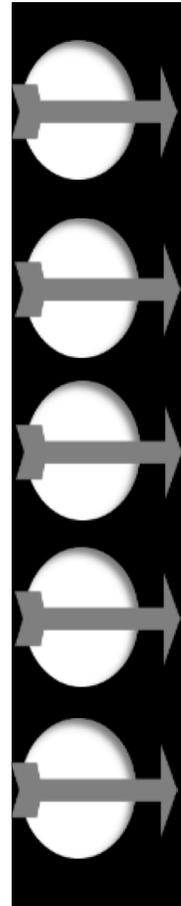
## About the Presenter

### ***Joseph Tropper, MS, LCPC, CCTP***

- *Master's degree in mental health counseling*
- *LCPC Clinician and Supervisor*
- *Director of Operations of RCC and Core Wellness*
- *Sought-after trauma therapist and trainer*
- *Certified EMDR Therapist (EMDRIA)*
- *Certified Clinical Trauma Professional (IATP)*
- *Certified Hypnotherapist and Professional Coach*
- *Training in Somatic Experiencing, Sensorimotor Psychotherapy*
- *Training in Gottman, EFT, Imago and IFS modalities*
- *Director of Operations of Group Practice*



# 5 Goals for Today



Learn and practice implementing evidence-based couples counseling interventions.

Learn 5 challenges and 10 interventions for couples counseling.

Learn 13 ingredients of healthy relationships and how to assist clients.

Learn an evidence-based structure for couples counseling that includes assessment, individual and collective treatment plans, interventions and more.

Learn troubleshooting and follow up

Lack of framework for teaching couples counseling skills

Richman, J. M. (1992). The Place and Relevancy of Practice with Couples in Graduate Social Work Education. *Journal of Social Work Education, 28*(3), 322–329



# Course Schedule

## Groundbreaking Couples Counseling: 10 Modalities

Part 1: Introduction to couples  
counseling and 5 challenges

The image features two hands, rendered in a solid orange color, holding each other in a firm grip. The hands are positioned in the center of the frame, with the fingers interlaced. The background is a soft, blurred gradient of warm colors, transitioning from a pale yellow at the top to a deeper orange at the bottom, suggesting a sunset or sunrise. The overall mood is warm and intimate.

Define “a couple”

The background of the slide features a warm, orange-toned sunset or sunrise sky. Two hands are shown in silhouette, holding each other in a supportive grip. The hand on the left is positioned lower and appears to be supporting the hand on the right, which is held higher. The overall mood is one of connection and partnership.

# Define “a couple”

1. Backgrounds
2. Goals
3. Shared meaning
4. Length
5. Location
6. Living arrangement
7. Child(ren)
8. Sexuality
9. Spirituality

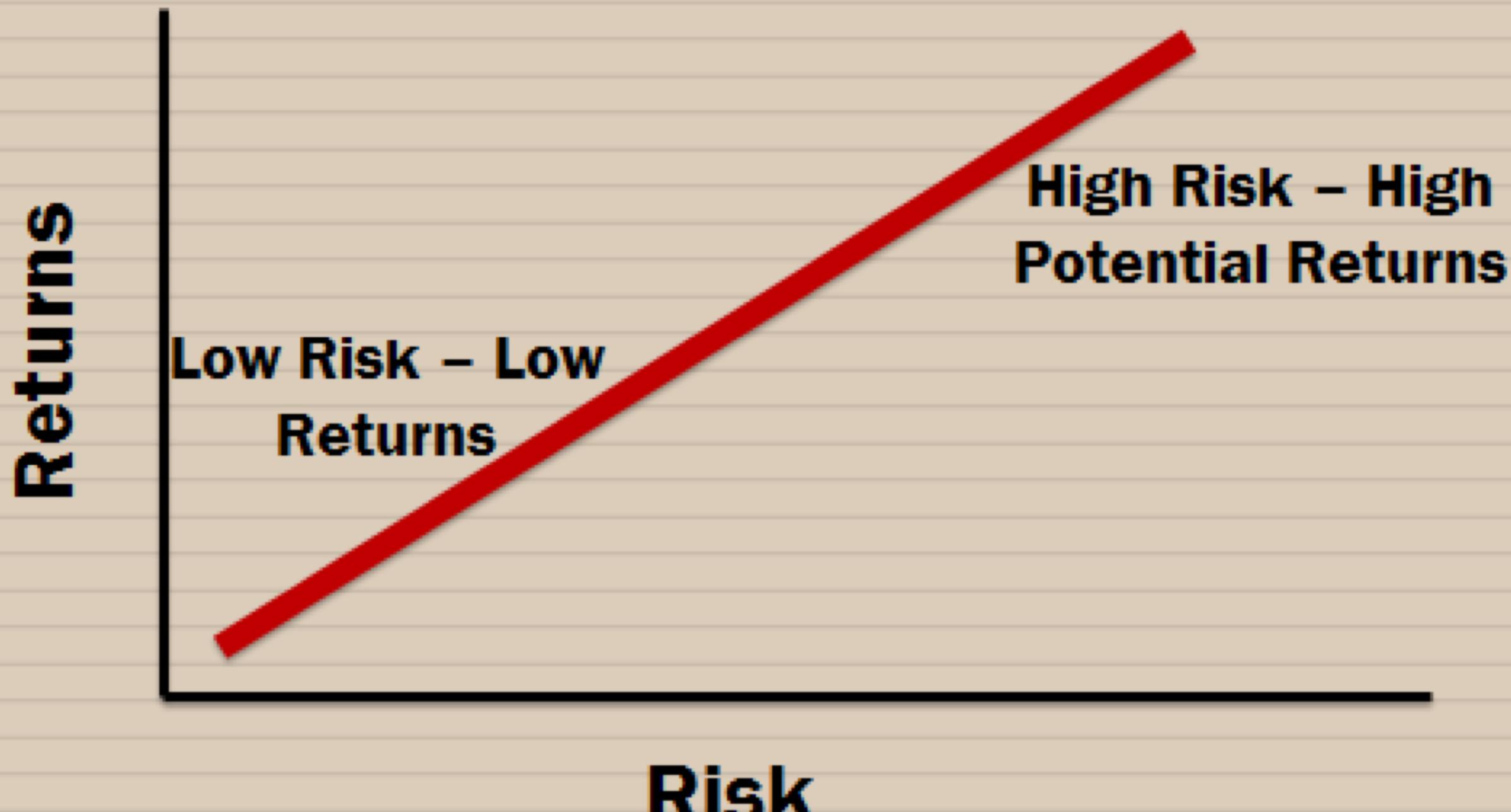
Level of Conflict/Issues



Investment Risk vs. Reward



# Standard Risk/Reward Graph



## What Couples Fight About

Money  
Family  
Communication  
Children  
Intimacy  
Time  
Trust  
Priorities  
Jealousy  
Religion  
Quality Time  
Romance  
Chores  
Pet Peeves



*Are you suffering from your spouse's blind-spots?*

**WARNING**

**YOU MAY BE  
IN A  
BLIND SPOT**



# COUPLES COUNSELING JOURNEY

Joseph Tropper, MS, LCPC



## TWO INDIVIDUALS

- Family of origin
- Parent's relationship
- Traumatic events
- Self-image
- Education / occupation
- Friends
- Relationship history
- Medical / mental health issues
- Legal



## THE BATTLES

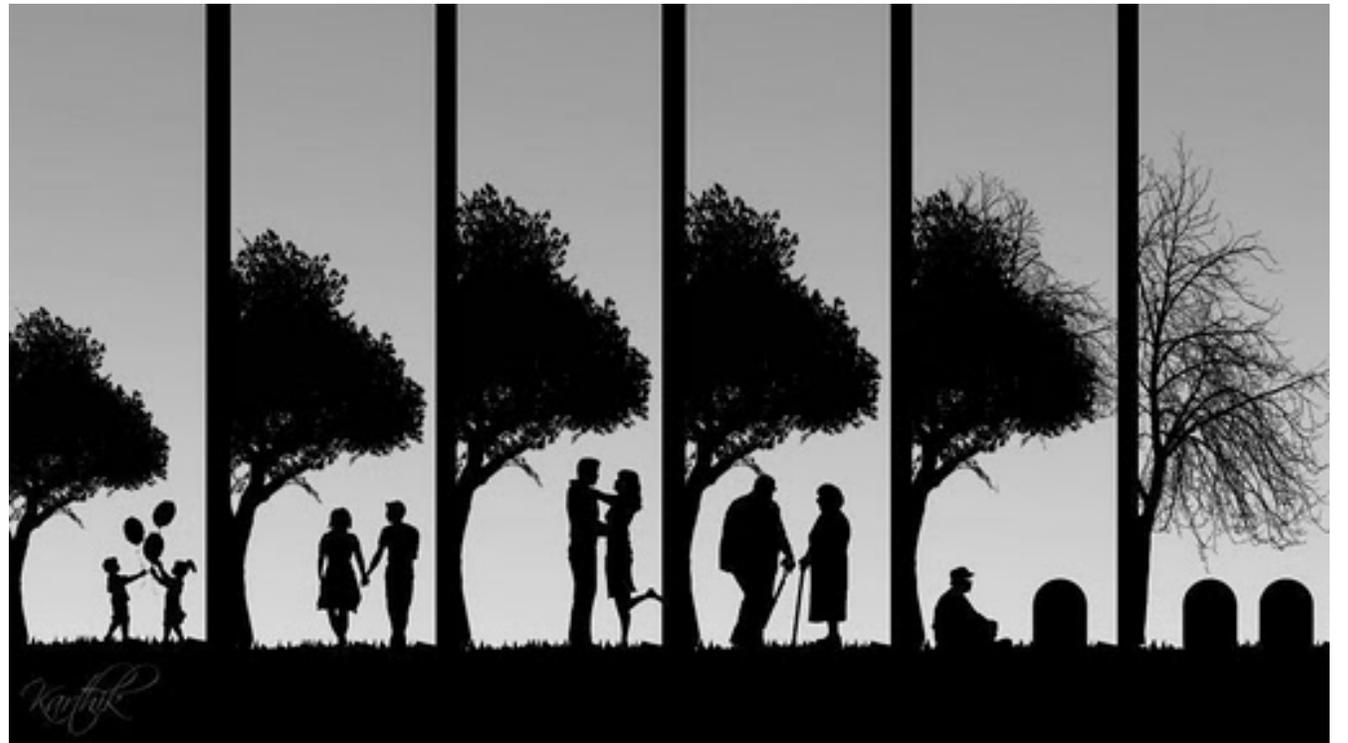
- Life challenges
- Work
- Money
- Family obligations
- Home responsibilities
- Health issues
- Intimacy
- Trust
- Attachment injuries
- Communication



## COUNSELING SKILLS TO REVIVE AND HEAL

- Fun and intimacy
- Resiliency
- Self-care
- Recognizing attachment needs
- Advocating and measuring success
- Commitment to improve relationship
- Engagement/shared tender moments
- New behaviors into habits
- Mutual Love and Respect
- Vulnerability and trust

Couples 0 – 65 Years







## **Think and Share**

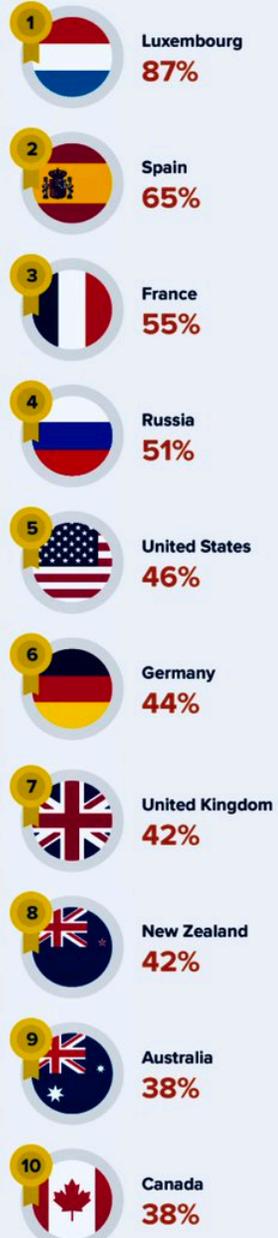
Take a moment to consider your experiences and kindly share them with us.



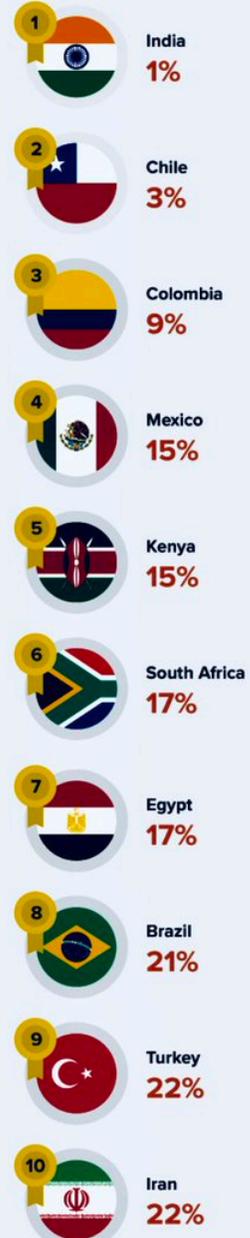
# Divorce Stats

# Divorce Rate by Country

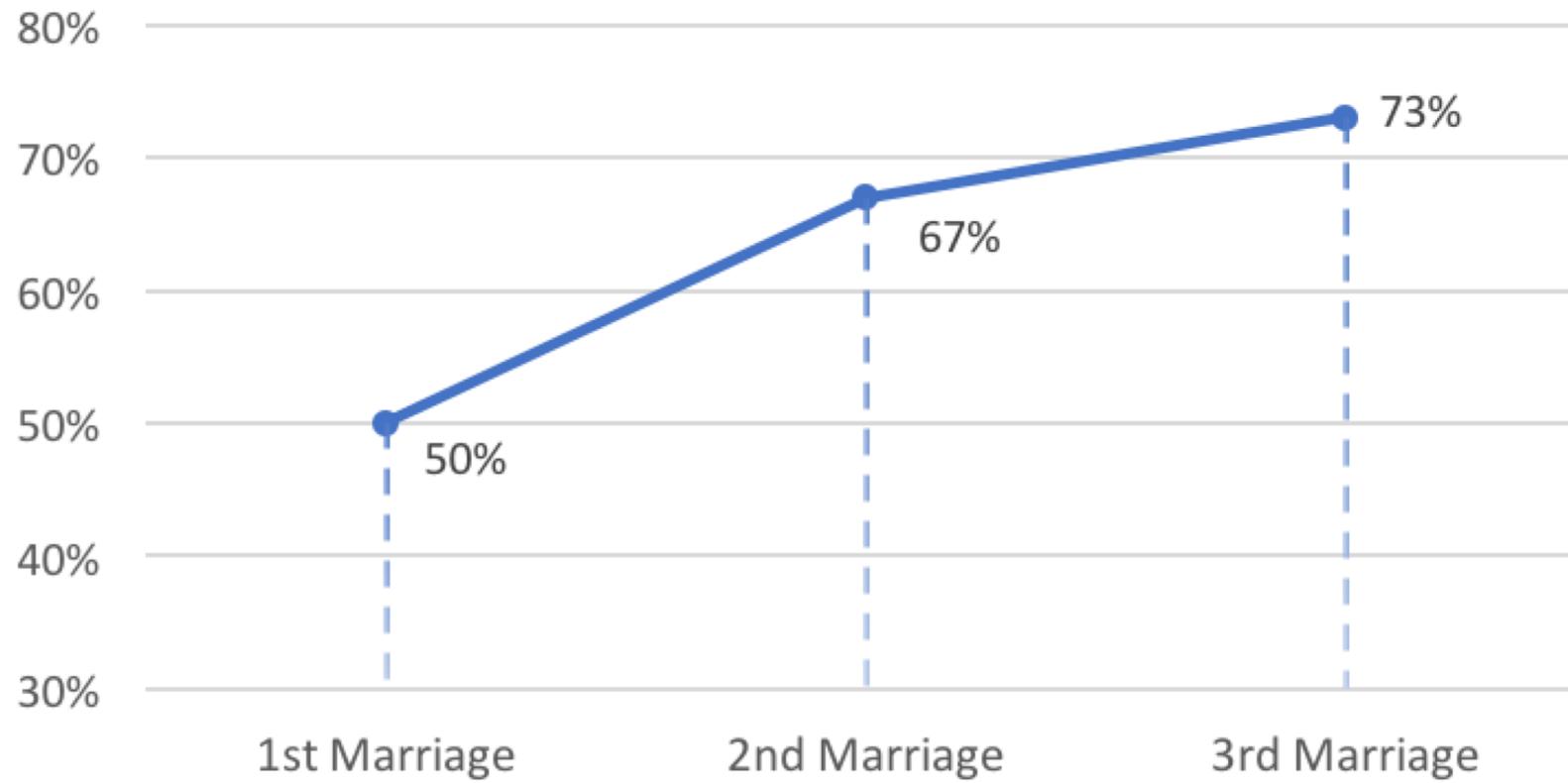
## 10 HIGHEST

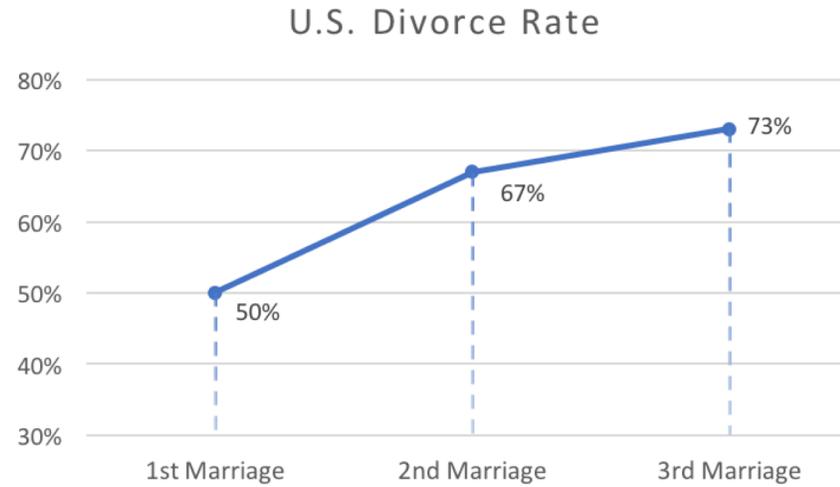


## 10 LOWEST



## U.S. Divorce Rate





Why is this the case?

1. Less tolerance
2. Less fear
3. More issues finances, ex, kids
4. Financial ties less (Hollywood)
5. Unresolved issues



# DIVORCE IN THE U.S.



4% OF THE MILITARY GOES THROUGH A DIVORCE EACH YEAR



EVERY 13 SECONDS, SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE FILES FOR DIVORCE



43% OF CHILDREN ARE LIVING WITHOUT THEIR FATHER'S INVOLVEMENT



50% OF CHILDREN SEE THEIR PARENTS DIVORCE

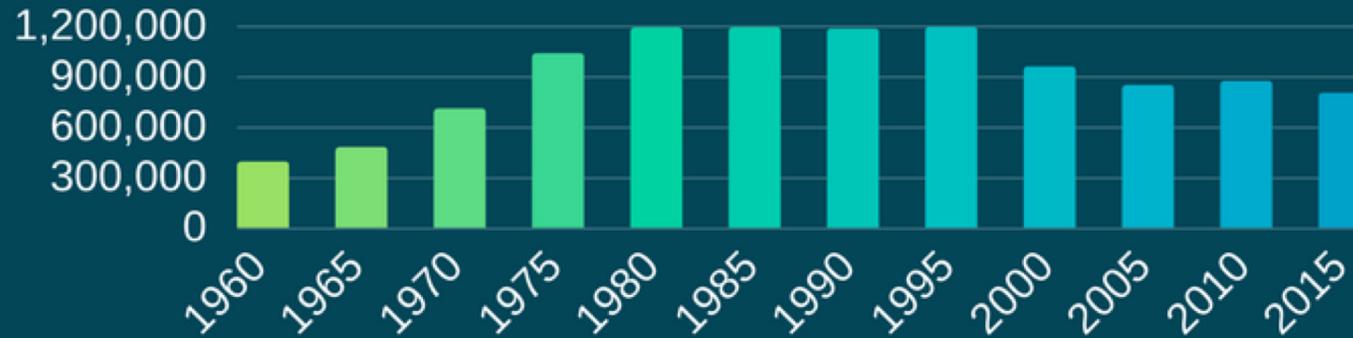


8 YEARS IS THE AVERAGE LENGTH OF A FIRST MARRIAGE



66% OF DIVORCES ARE FILED BY WOMEN

THE TOTAL NUMBER OF DIVORCES IN THE US PEAKED IN THE 1990S AND HAS DECREASED SINCE 2000



NUMBER OF DIVORCES IN THE US 1960-2015

YOU'RE MORE LIKELY TO GET DIVORCED IF YOU:



MARRY BEFORE 25



DIDN'T GRADUATE HIGH SCHOOL



FIGHT ABOUT MONEY



HAVE A FRIEND GETTING DIVORCED

YOU'RE LESS LIKELY TO GET DIVORCED IF YOU:



HAVE A COLLEGE DEGREE



HAD HAPPILY MARRIED PARENTS



ARE VERY RELIGIOUS



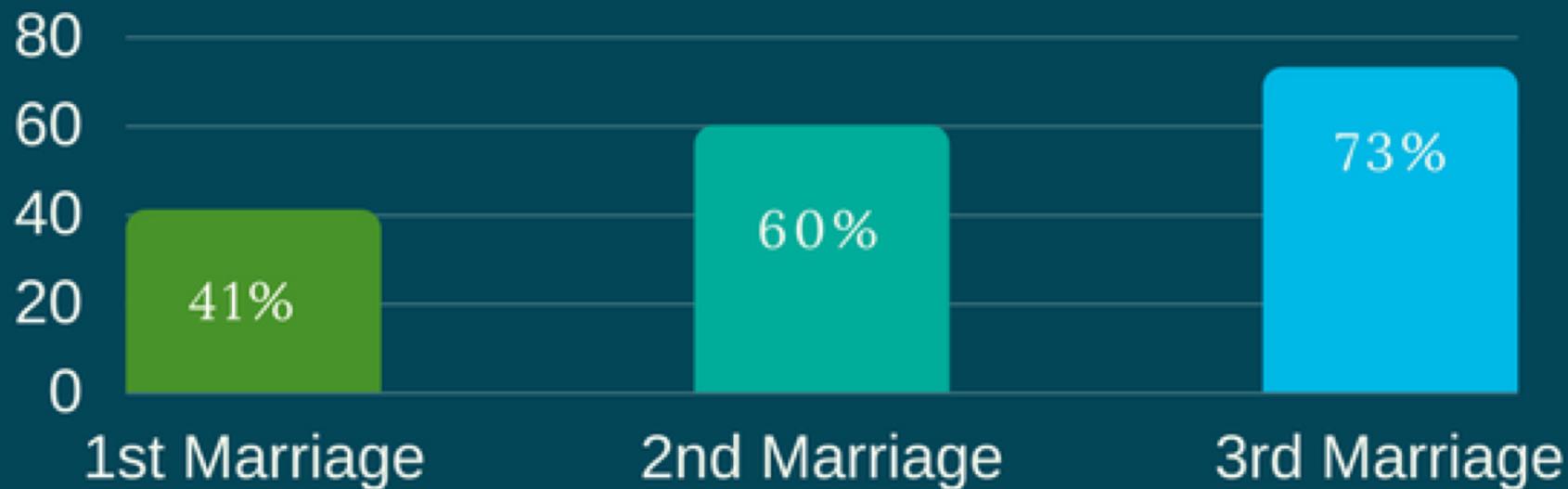
LIVE IN A BLUE STATE

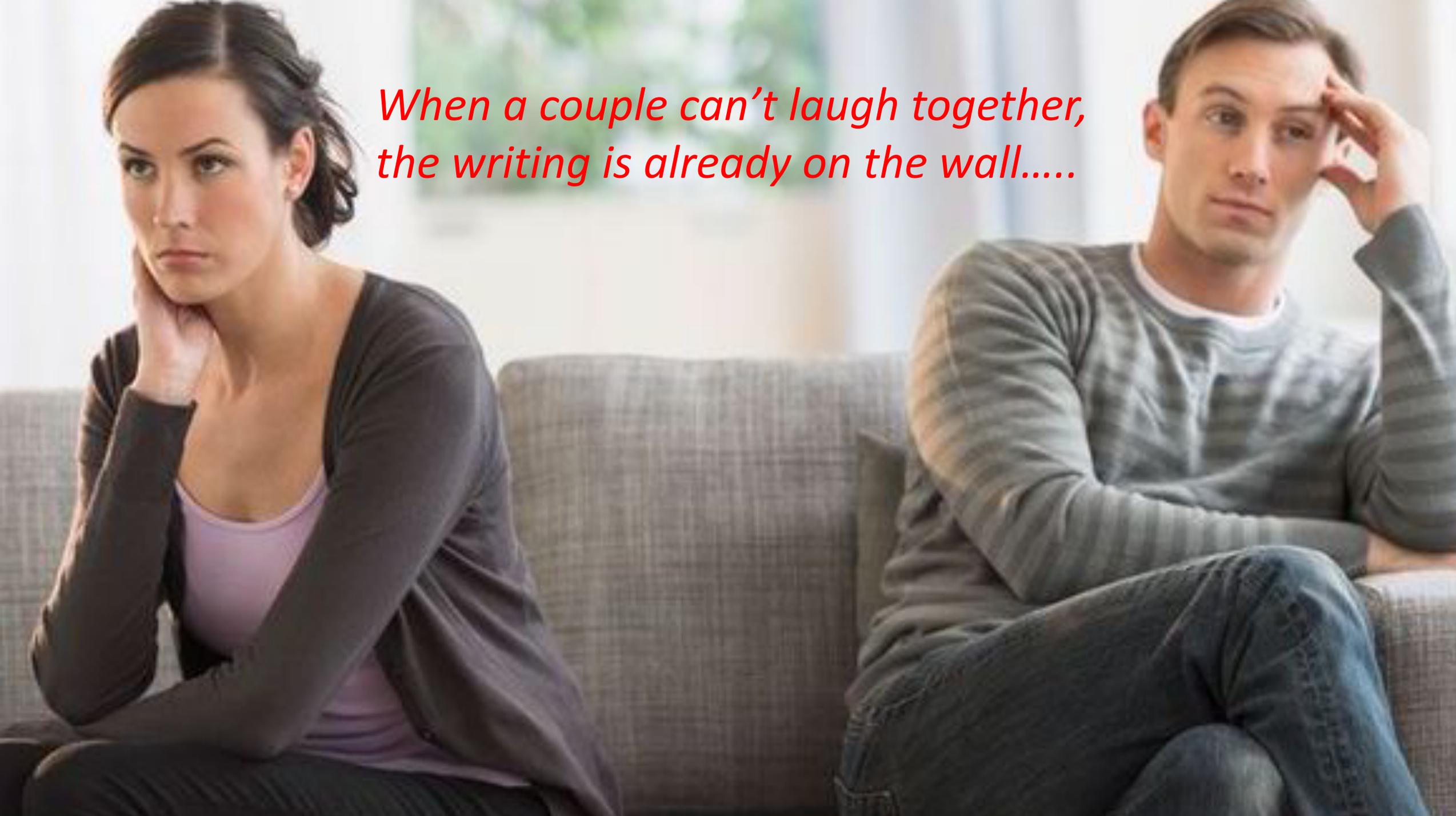
- ✓ HIGH SCHOOL
- ✓ FIGHT ABOUT MONEY
- ✓ HAVE A FRIEND GETTING DIVORCED

- ✓ PARENTS ARE VERY RELIGIOUS
- ✓ LIVE IN A BLUE STATE

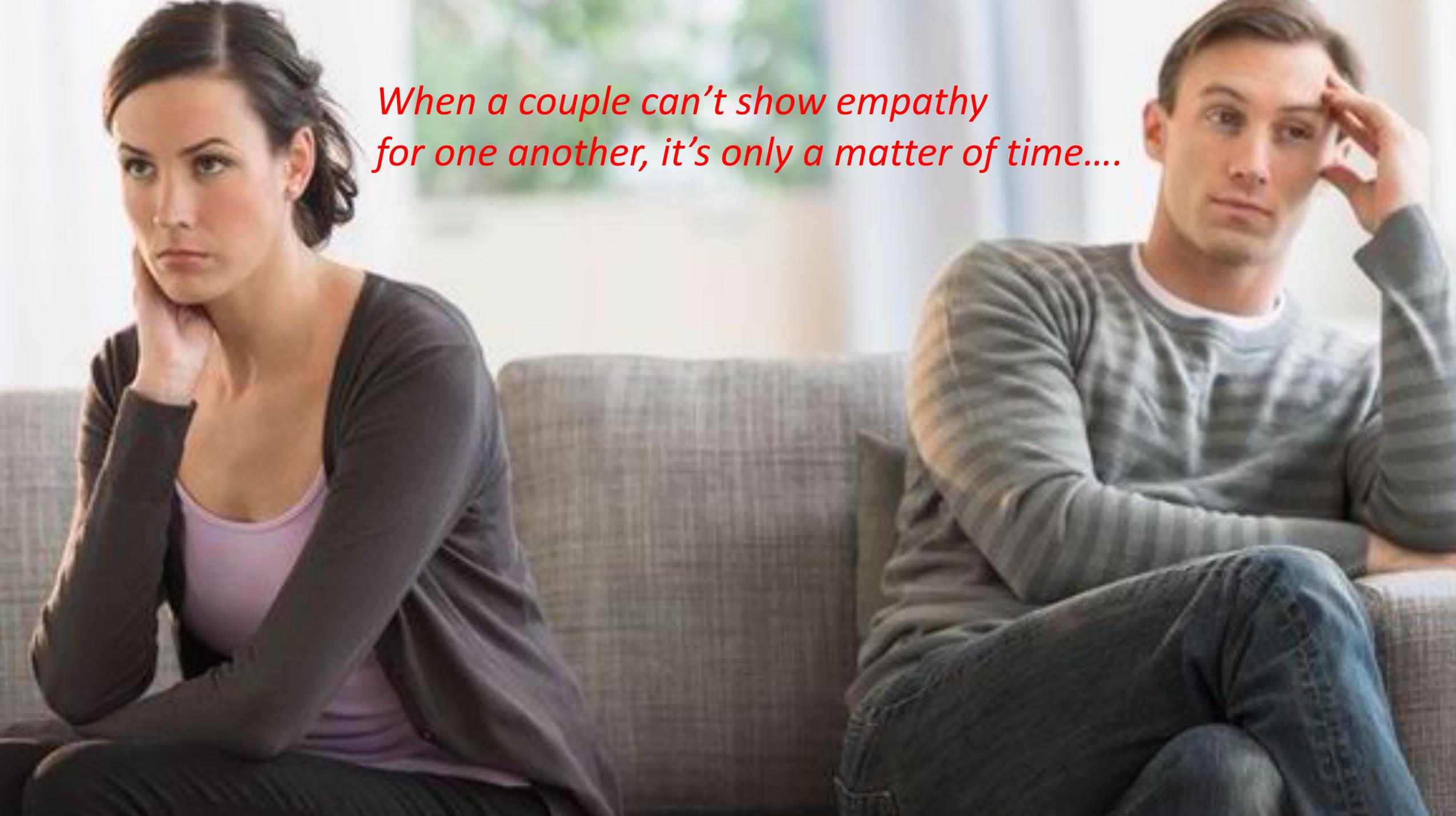
# LIKELIHOOD OF DIVORCE

BASED ON NUMBER OF MARRIAGES



A photograph of a man and a woman sitting on a grey couch. The woman on the left is wearing a dark grey cardigan over a light purple top and has her hand to her chin, looking off to the side with a serious expression. The man on the right is wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and blue jeans, resting his head on his hand and looking towards the camera with a thoughtful or somber expression. The background is a bright, out-of-focus indoor setting.

*When a couple can't laugh together,  
the writing is already on the wall.....*

A man and a woman are sitting on a grey couch in a living room. The woman, on the left, has her hand to her chin and looks thoughtful or sad. The man, on the right, has his hand to his forehead and looks stressed or sad. They are not looking at each other. The background is a bright, out-of-focus window.

*When a couple can't show empathy  
for one another, it's only a matter of time....*

Dr. Stephen Snyder, MD

Love Worth Making

1. Healthy relationships are *reliable*
2. People in a healthy relationship give each other lots of *reassurance*
3. In a healthy relationship, you're both fully *real*
4. A healthy relationship should feel *relaxing*

**There is room to grow in a healthy relationship**

5. A healthy relationship should strike a good balance between “we” and “I.”
6. In a healthy relationship, you should care about each other's feelings ... but not too much
7. In a healthy relationship, you should feel close—but not too close
8. In a healthy relationship, you should share a common vision ... at least some of the time
9. In a healthy relationship, you should feel like best friends ... but not all the time
10. A healthy relationship shouldn't feel like too much work

*Relationships aren't supposed to be a form of suffering.*





## **Think and Share**

Take a moment to consider your experiences and kindly share them with us.

## 5 Challenges

1. Waterbed and triggers
2. Difficulty in navigating due to blind-spots, lack of training
3. Different places and perspectives of each spouse
4. Taking sides and our own biases
5. Complex logistics (3 people's schedules, finances, children)

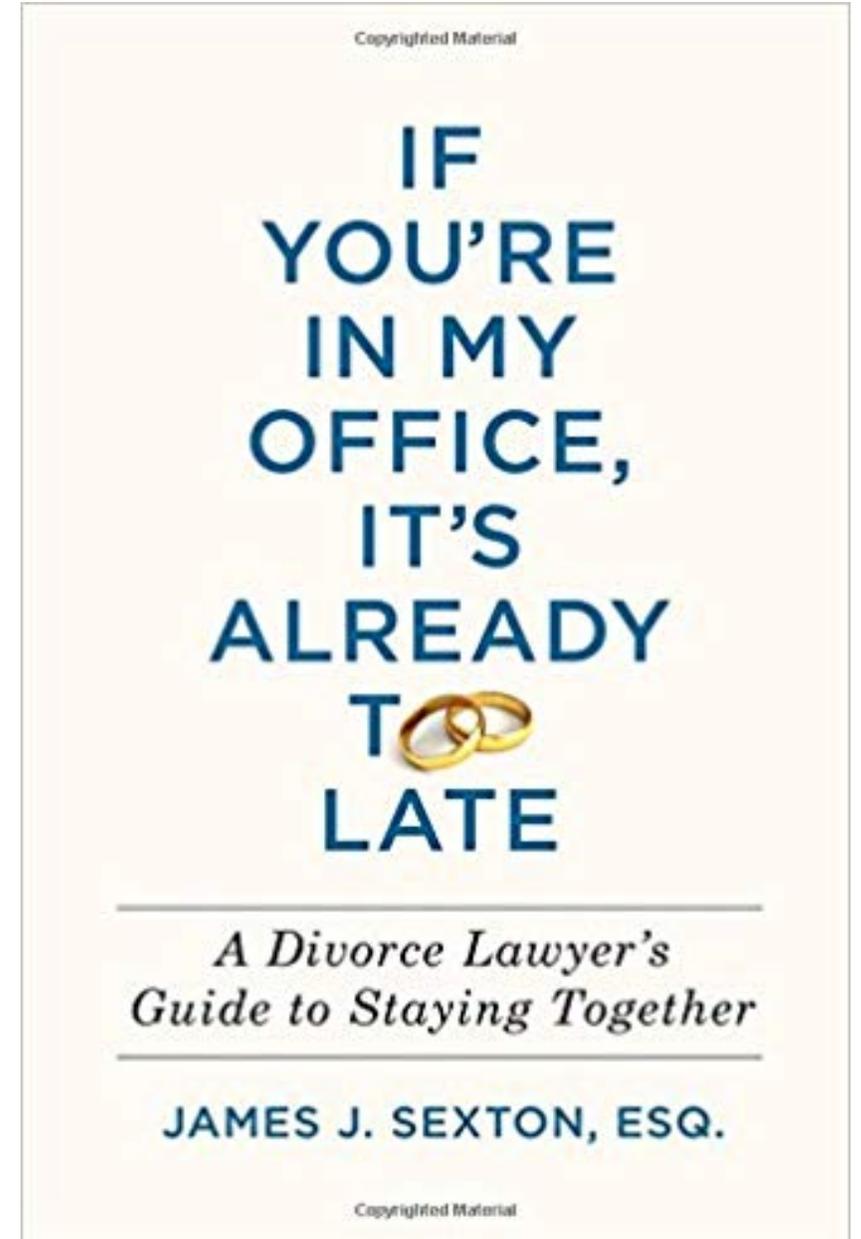


Grounds for Divorce:

1. Abuse
2. Addition that refuses to be addressed
3. Mental health issue(s) that refuses to be addressed
4. Misc items (grown apart, can't put aside issues)



Number 1 Cause of Divorce:



Number 1 Cause of Divorce:

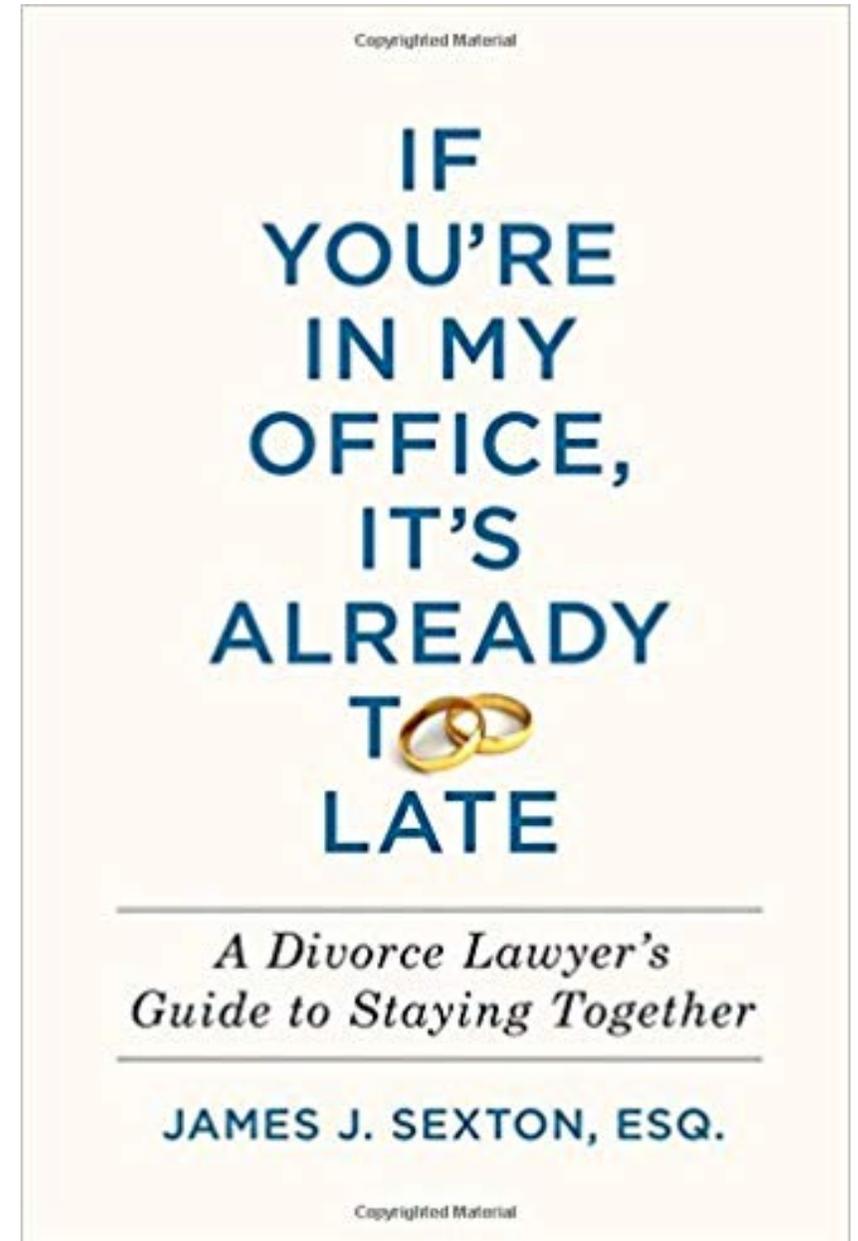
Money

Sex

Infidelity

Communication issues

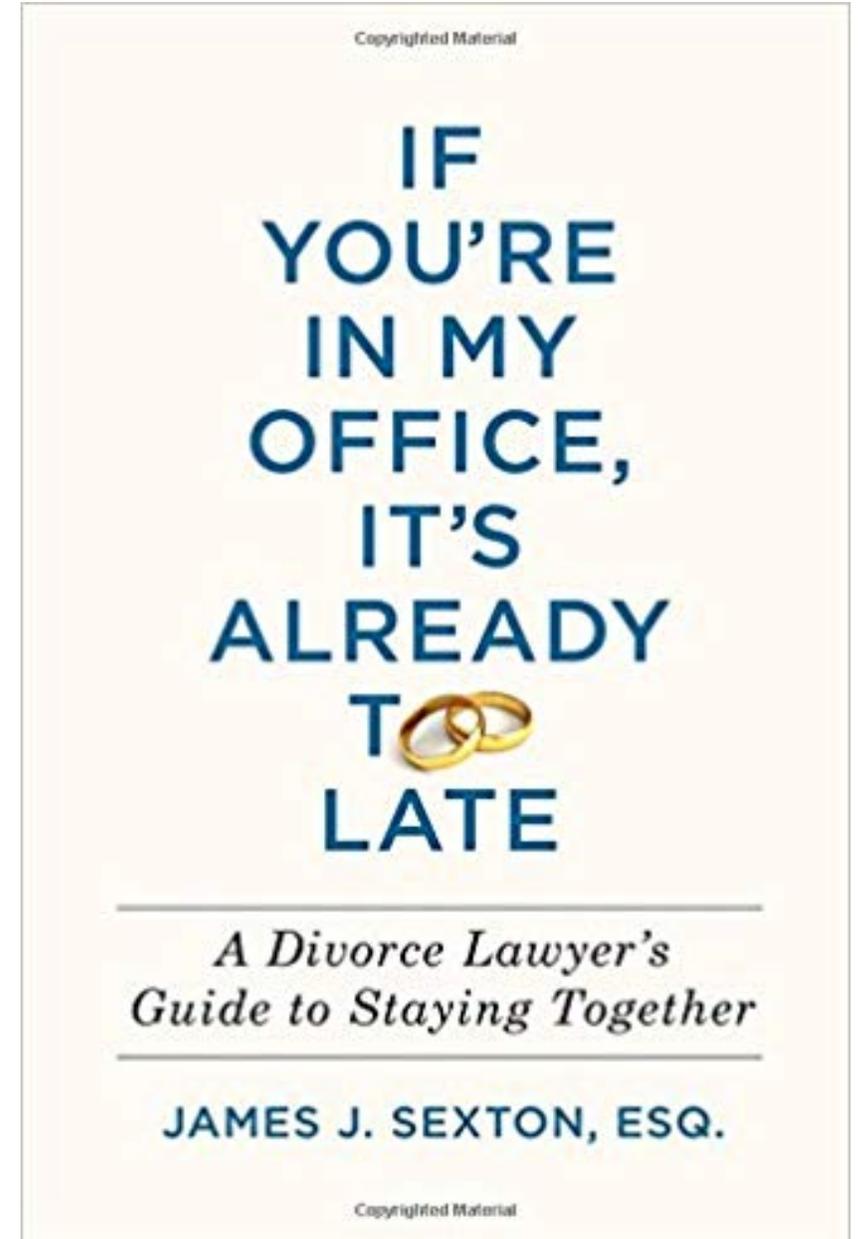
Family issues



Number 1 Cause of Divorce:

New York State Divorce Judge of 40 years  
and thousands of cases:

**One or two human beings refusing to accept  
the humanness of the other.**



# Marriages are made in Heaven...

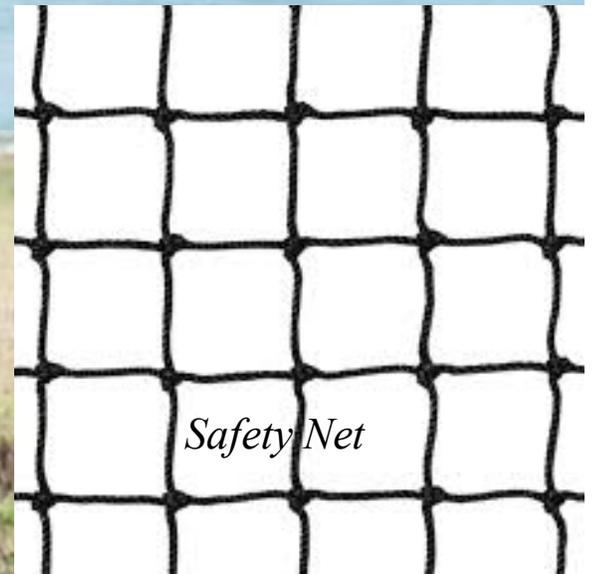
*"He/she's a great, kind and loving person,  
I will connect with that and choose to ignore the imperfections."*

*"He/she's a good person but I will try to change his/her faults as I cannot accept them."*

*"He/she's an okay person, but I cannot enjoy him/her  
because of his/her unacceptable faults."*

*"He/she's an evil and bad person with few good traits."*

**.... and can be destroyed on earth**



Jay Haley  
1923 – 2007



Jay Haley  
1923 – 2007

Haley's strategic therapy focuses on short-term, targeted efforts to solve a specific problem.

A therapist employing strategic therapy must:

Identify solvable problems.

Set goals.

Design interventions to achieve those goals.

Examine the responses.

Examine the outcome of the therapy.



# Course Schedule

## Groundbreaking Couples Counseling: 10 Modalities

Part 2: Overview, Five Love Languages, CBT,  
Communication Skills, Gottman & Imago

## OVERVIEW

Intake

Assessment

Rapport

Disclosures

Goals

Observe together

Separate time

Together time

Individual issues

Couple issues

Follow up

Termination

Beyond



Every Modality Has:

- 1) Theoretical Framework
- 2) Assessments
- 3) Interventions
- 4) Process

You must be aware of your:

- 1) Biases
- 2) Belief systems
- 3) Judgements
- 4) Goals
- 5) Pressure
- 6) Emotions
- 7) Thoughts
- 8) Role

A few caveats:

1. Abuse
2. Sex therapy
3. Competency





*Do you have to be in a healthy relationship in order to help clients?*

### **Think and Share**

Take a moment to consider your experiences and kindly share them with us.



Alexis Maas  
m. 1987–2005



Joanne Copeland  
m. 1963–1972



Joanna Holland  
m. 1972–1985



Jody Morrill Wolcott  
m. 1949–1963



"My giving advice on marriage is like the captain of the *Titanic* giving lessons on navigation."  
-Johnny Carson





Larry  
Fortensky  
m. 1991–1996



John Warner  
m. 1976–1982



Richard  
Burton  
m. 1975–1976



Richard  
Burton  
m. 1964–1974



Eddie Fisher  
m. 1959–1964



Mike Todd  
m. 1957–1958



Michael  
Wilding  
m. 1952–1957



Conrad Hilton  
Jr.  
m. 1950–1951



|   |  |
|---|--|
| Gordon Rodgers (divorced 1949),<br>Norman Satir (divorced 1957) |  |
| Children – 2 daughters  |  |

# Advice from MARS



**Glynn Wolfe**, also known as **Scotty Wolfe** (July 25, 1908 – June 10, 1997), was a Baptist minister who resided in [Blythe, California](#). He was famous for holding the record for the largest number of monogamous marriages (29). His shortest marriage lasted 19 days, and his longest lasted eleven years. Three of his marriages were to a woman he had previously divorced: remarried Charlotte Devane in 1936 after divorcing earlier that year; remarried Katherine Archer in 1949 after divorcing the previous year; and Sharon Goodwin in 1960 after divorcing the previous year. Only five of his marriages ended with the death of a spouse, surviving his 1st, 8th, 9th and 23rd wife, before being survived by his 30th wife. His longest marriage was for 11 years, to his 28th wife, Christine Camacho, who was 37 years his junior.

Wolfe's final marriage was to Linda Wolfe (née Essex), who holds the record for the most-married woman (23 times). The marriage was a publicity stunt, and a week after the wedding, Essex went back to her hometown in Indiana, but she kept her married name.

Wolfe died in [Redlands, California](#), 45 days shy of his 89th birthday. He had approximately 40 children. His body went unclaimed. He was eventually buried in [Los Angeles](#). None of the 29 women he legally married, and none but one of his children, attended the funeral service.<sup>[1]</sup>

Some marriages remain unverified. However, according to the [Guinness World Records](#), this list is accurate.

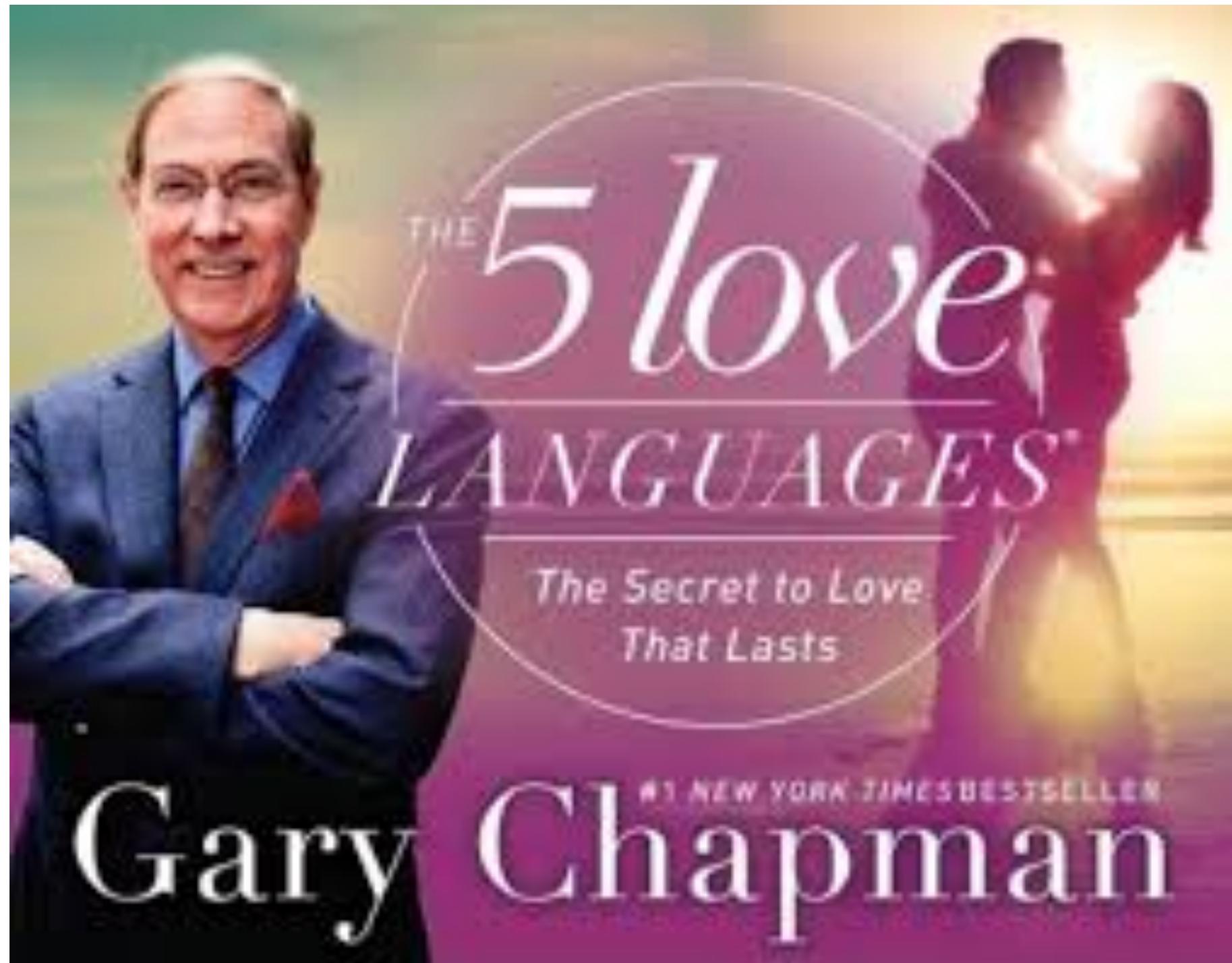
- 1st.** Marcie McDonald (1926–1927; her death)
- 2nd.** Stephanie Delaney (1928–1930; divorced)
- 3rd.** Victoria Ernest (1931; divorced)
- 4th.** Katherine Johnson (1932; divorced)

- 6th.** Charlotte Devane (1935–1936; divorced)
- 7th.** Valerie Harborn (1936; divorced)
- 8th.** Charlotte Devane (1936–1938; her death)
- 9th.** Frances Hunter (1939; her death)
- 10th.** Carol Demmings (1940–1944; divorced)
- 11th.** Priscilla Ralph (1946–1947; divorced)
- 12th.** Katherine Archer (1948; divorced)
- 13th.** Lisa Waters (1948; divorced)
- 14th.** Katherine Archer (1949–1951; divorced)
- 15th.** Nina Morgan-Stuart (1954; divorced)
- 16th.** Chase Jones (1955; divorced)
- 17th.** Kathleen Briggs (1958; divorced)
- 18th.** Sharon Goodwin (1958–1959; divorced)
- 19th.** Sharon Goodwin (1960; divorced)
- 20th.** Demerle Goin-Rankin (1964; divorced)
- 21st.** Julia Santiago (1968; divorced)
- 22nd.** Gloria Mascari (1969; divorced)
- 23rd.** Vivan Alvers (1970–1973; her death)
- 24th.** Maria Velez (1977–1980; divorced)
- 25th.** Guadalupe Chavez (1979; divorced)
- 26th.** Maria Chavez (1979–1982; divorced)
- 27th.** Eileen Shelton (1982–1984; divorced)
- 28th.** Hannah Glenny (1984–1995; divorced)
- 29th.** [Bonnie Lee Bakley](#) (1995; [annulled](#))
- 29th.** Emily Salerno (1996; divorced)
- 30th.** Linda Wolfe (née Essex) (1996 – until his death June 10, 1997)

## **When Counseling Often Doesn't Work:**

- The problems in the marriage are too ingrained and longstanding
- One or both partners have already decided to end the marriage and he/she uses the counseling as a way to announce this to their partner.
- Addiction or mental illness is having a major impact on the marital relationship because it has not been treated prior to attending sessions.
- Verbal or physical abuse is an issue in the marriage and one of the partners is fearful about their safety or well-being so clams up in sessions.
- One or both partners are unwilling to complete homework assignments/changes necessary to reverse negative relational patterns.
- The therapist is not qualified to treat couples due to inadequate training or credentials; or there isn't a good fit between the therapist and the couple.

## 5 Love Languages Intervention



THE *5 love*  
LANGUAGES

*The Secret to Love  
That Lasts*

#1 NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER

Gary Chapman

# LOVE LANGUAGE { }

## WHICH LOVE LANGUAGE?

## HOW TO COMMUNICATE

## ACTIONS TO TAKE

## THINGS TO AVOID

|  |   |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|
|  <p><b>WORDS OF AFFIRMATION</b></p> | <p>Encourage, affirm, appreciate, empathize. Listen actively.</p>                                       | <p>Send an unexpected note, text, or card. Encourage genuinely and often.</p>   | <p>Non-constructive criticism, not recognizing or appreciating effort.</p>                             |
|  <p><b>PHYSICAL TOUCH</b></p>       | <p>Non-verbal - use body language and touch to emphasize love.</p>                                      | <p>Hug, kiss, hold hands, show physical affection regularly. Make intimacy a thoughtful priority.</p>                 | <p>Physical neglect, long stints without intimacy, receiving affection coldly.</p>                     |
|  <p><b>RECEIVING GIFTS</b></p>      | <p>Thoughtfulness, make your spouse a priority, speak purposefully.</p>                                 | <p>Give thoughtful gifts and gestures. Small things matter in a big way. Express gratitude when receiving a gift.</p> | <p>Forgetting special occasions, unenthusiastic gift receiving.</p>                                    |
|  <p><b>QUALITY TIME</b></p>        | <p>Uninterrupted and focused conversations. One-on-one time is critical.</p>                            | <p>Create special moments together, take walks and do small things with your spouse. Weekend getaways are huge.</p>   | <p>Distractions when spending time together. Long stints without one-on-one time.</p>                  |
|  <p><b>ACTS OF SERVICE</b></p>    | <p>Use action phrases like "I'll help...". They want to know you're with them, partnered with them.</p> | <p>Do chores together or make them breakfast in bed. Go out of your way to help alleviate their daily workload.</p>   | <p>Making the requests of others a higher priority, lacking follow-through on tasks big and small.</p> |



The image features two stylized human silhouettes in profile, facing each other and shaking hands. The silhouette on the left is red, and the one on the right is green. They are positioned on either side of the text 'PROS (VS) CONS', which is centered between them. The entire scene is set against a white background with a light blue gradient at the bottom.

PROS (VS) CONS

# What Do You Know About ... Being in Charge of You?

## Change Negative Thoughts

**Negative thought:** "I ALWAYS GET PICKED LAST IN RECESS BECAUSE EVERYONE THINKS I'M BAD AT KICKBALL."

**Make it Positive!**

.....  
.....  
.....

## Impact Inspector

**Situation:** JAKE ALWAYS HAS TUNA FOR LUNCH. I TELL JAKE THAT HE CAN'T SIT WITH ME AT LUNCH. HANNAH TELLS ME THAT I'M BEING MEAN.

**What does Jake think?**

.....  
.....  
.....

**What does Hannah think?**

.....  
.....  
.....

## Fantastic Fix-It

**Situation:** You lost your friend's game. You lie to your friend and they find out you really lost it.

**Now what? What's the best way to fix this?**

.....  
.....  
.....

## Chief Emotions Officer

**Situation:** MATT MISSED THE WINNING GOAL IN SOCCER AND WE AREN'T GOING TO THE PLAYOFFS.

**How do you feel?**

ANGRY EMBARRASSED EXCITED  
FRUSTRATED MAD PROUD  
HAPPY SURPRISED UPSET

**How does Matt feel?**

ANGRY EMBARRASSED EXCITED  
FRUSTRATED MAD PROUD  
HAPPY SURPRISED UPSET

## Coping Captain

**Situation:** JEREMY CALLS YOU A NAME AT RECESS. YOU GET REALLY ANGRY.

**What's a strategy to calm down?**

.....  
.....  
.....

CBT

Common cognitive errors and their associated dysfunctional assumptions include:

**Self-references:** "People always focuses attention on me, especially when I fail."

**Selective abstraction:** "Only my failures matter. I am measured by my failures."

**Overgeneralizing:** "If something is true in one setting, it is true in every setting."

**Excessive responsibility:** "I am responsible for every failure and every bad thing that happens."

**Dichotomous thinking:** Viewing the world in extremes, black or white, with nothing in between.

CBT techniques incorporate many different therapeutic tools. These tools help people in therapy evaluate their emotional patterns and states. CBT therapists may employ common techniques such as:

[Journaling](#)

Challenging beliefs

[Mindfulness](#)

Relaxation

Social, physical, and thinking exercises. These may help someone become aware of their emotional and behavioral patterns.

Homework is completed by the person in treatment. It might include practical exercises, reading, or writing assignments. This helps reinforce the therapy. The homework is done outside of the scheduled time for therapy. Homework is a crucial aspect of many CBT treatment plans. It challenges the person to continue working on their own, even after therapy comes to an end.

Most people who receive cognitive behavioral therapy do so for an average of 16 sessions.

The image features two stylized human silhouettes in profile, facing each other and shaking hands. The silhouette on the left is red, and the one on the right is green. They are positioned on a white background with a blue gradient bar at the bottom. The text 'PROS (VS) CONS' is centered between them in blue. The entire graphic is enclosed in a thin grey border.

PROS (VS) CONS

Communication Skills

The infographic features six illustrations of communication skills arranged in two rows. The top row includes 'LISTENING' (two people talking), 'FRIENDLINESS' (hands clasped in prayer), and 'OPEN MINDEDNESS' (a person with a key in their ear). The bottom row includes 'FEEDBACK' (two people reviewing documents), 'CONFIDENCE' (a person with hands on hips), and 'NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION' (a person with thumbs up). The central text reads 'Essential Communication Skills for Your Career'. The logo 'the balance' is at the bottom left.

LISTENING

FRIENDLINESS

OPEN MINDEDNESS

**Essential Communication Skills for Your Career**

FEEDBACK

CONFIDENCE

NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION

 the balance



## **Think and Share**

Take a moment to consider your experiences and kindly share them with us.

# AFTER THE HONEYMOON

How Conflict Can Improve Your Relationship  
Revised Edition

**Daniel B. Wile, Ph.D.**

"Filled with the uncannily perceptive advice of a brilliant couples' therapist. His insights are simply amazing. I never stop learning from him."

John Gottman,  
author of *The Seven Principles  
for Making Marriage Work*



Gottman Approach





**The Sound  
Relationship  
House**

**Create  
Shared Meaning**

**Make Life Dreams  
Come True**

**Manage Conflict**

- Accept Your Partner's Influence
- Dialogue About Problems
- Practice Self-Soothing

**The Positive Perspective**

**Turn Towards Instead of Away**

**Share Fondness and Admiration**

**Build Love Maps**

- Know One Another's World

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# 7 Relationship Master Skills to Overcome The 4 Disasters



VS



For many, just the association of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, (Death, Famine, War, and Conquest) and relationships can send chills up their spine (1887 painting by Viktor Vasnetsov, above). Dr. John Gottman's 40 plus years of research have pointed him, time and again, to the 4 disastrous aspects that dissolve a relationship and how to repair them.

## 1. Criticism:

Attacking your partner's personality or character, usually with intent of proving they're wrong.

-Generalizations/Nitpicking: "you always..." "you never..." "You call that clean?"

## 2. Contempt:

Attacking your partner's sense of self, looking down on them via giving insult or psychological abuse to put them down. "It's sulfuric acid for love and erodes the immune system (Gottman)."

- Insults and name-calling: "fat, stupid, ugly, slob, lazy, vulgarities..." , sarcasm or mockery, body language & tone of voice: sneering, rolling your eyes...

## 3. Defensiveness:

For many, just the association of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, (Death, Famine, War, and Conquest) and relationships can send chills up their spine (1887 painting by Viktor Vasnetsov, above). Dr. John Gottman's 40 plus years of research have pointed him, time and again, to the 4 disastrous aspects that dissolve a relationship and how to repair them.

### 1. Criticism:

Attacking your partner's personality or character, usually with intent of proving they're wrong.

-Generalizations/Nitpicking: "you always..." "you never..." "You call that clean?"

### 2. Contempt:

Attacking your partner's sense of self, looking down on them via giving insult or psychological abuse to put them down. "It's sulfuric acid for love and erodes the immune system (Gottman)."

- Insults and name-calling: "fat, stupid, ugly, slob, lazy, vulgarities..." , sarcasm or mockery, body language & tone of voice: sneering, rolling your eyes...

### 3. Defensiveness:

Seeing self as the victim, warding off a perceived attack, without addressing their validity.

- Making excuse, cross-complaining, yes-butting

### 4. Stonewalling:

Withdrawing from the relationship or conversation to avoid conflict. Partners often think they're being "neutral" but stonewalling actually conveys disapproval, icy distance, separation, disconnection.

### Solutions

- 1) Share clear hurts and requests (when X happened, I felt Y, I want Z)
- 2) Soft start up, start from place of unarguable truth & listen generously
- 3) Shift to appreciation (5 times as much positive feelings and interactions versus negative)
- 4) Claim responsibility: "What can I learn from this?" and "What can I do about it?"
- 5) Re-write your inner script (replace thoughts of righteous indignation or innocent victimization with thoughts of appreciation, responsibility that are soothing and validating)
- 6) Practice getting undefended (allowing your partner's utterances to be what they really are: just thoughts and puffs of anger) and let go of the stories you're making up.
- 7) Help your partner reach their dreams (great Gottman story)

## Gottman Approach

**Assessment:** A joint session is followed by individual interviews with each partner. Couples complete questionnaires and then receive feedback on their relationship.

**Therapeutic Framework:** The couple and therapist decide on the frequency and duration of the sessions.

**Therapeutic Interventions:** Interventions are designed to help couples strengthen their relationships in three primary areas: friendship, conflict management, and creation of shared meaning. Couples learn to replace negative conflict patterns with positive interactions and to repair past hurts.

### GOALS AND PRINCIPLES OF THE GOTTMAN METHOD

The goals of Gottman Method Couples Therapy are to disarm [conflicting verbal communication](#), increase intimacy, respect, and affection, remove barriers that create a feeling of stagnancy in conflicting situations, and create a heightened sense of [empathy](#) and understanding within the context of the relationship.

Building love maps

Sharing fondness and admiration

Turning towards (as opposed to turning away from each other)

The positive perspective (seeing your partner as a friend, not an adversary)

Managing conflict

Making life dreams come true

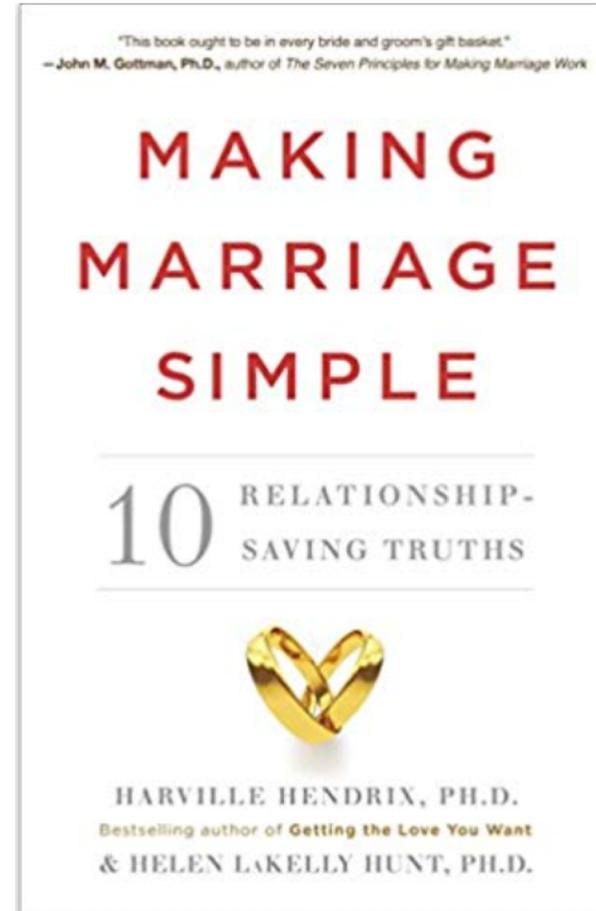
Creating shared meaning

Trust

Commitment



Imago





7

**Truth #1**

Romantic Love Is a Trick

11

**Truth #2**

Incompatibility Is Grounds for Marriage

24

**Truth #3**

Conflict Is Growth Trying to Happen

37

**Truth #4**

Being Present for Each Other Heals the Past

49

**Truth #5**

It's Not WHAT You Say; It's HOW You Say It

60

**Truth #6**

Negativity Is Invisible Abuse

*72*

**Truth #7**

Negativity Is a Wish in Disguise

*87*

**Truth #8**

Your Brain Has a Mind of Its Own

*100*

**Truth #9**

Your Marriage Is a Laughing Matter

*111*

**Truth #10**

Your Marriage Is the Best Life Insurance Plan

*121*

## Goals and Exercises of Imago Couples Therapy

- 1) Becoming present to your partner - This requires a transformation of consciousness in which one discovers the “otherness” of the partner, in which we get that “my partner is not me, ”which promotes progress toward the important developmental leap known as differentiation..
- 2) Learning a new way to talk - that is, turning the conversation from an exchange of parallel monologues into a dialogue. Dialogue creates equality, safety, and connection.
- 3) Replacing judgment—the destroyer of intimacy—with curiosity, which insures safety and deepens connection - This requires eliminating all negativity, since negativity stimulates anxiety, signals danger, and thus activates defensiveness, perhaps the major barrier to intimacy.
- 4) Infusing the relationship with positive feelings - such as liking, appreciation, admiration, acceptance, and similar emotions. These deliberate positive verbal expressions (appreciations) are among the building blocks of authentic love, which is, for Imago, the consummation of intimate partnership and the epitome of a relationship that is both safe and passionate, comfortable and exciting.[\[7\]](#)

We go from building in 3 stages: mirroring, validation and then empathy

## **5 TENETS OF IMAGO THERAPY**

Imago relationship therapy consists of 5 core principles:

*Re-imagining* your mate as a wounded child.

*Re-romanticizing* your relationship via pleasurable surprises, gift-giving, and displays of appreciation.

*Restructuring* your disappointments and frustrations by changing complaints into requests.

*Resolving* feelings of extreme anger.

*Re-visioning* the relationship as a source of happiness, satisfaction, and safety.



# Course Schedule

## Groundbreaking Couples Counseling: 10 Modalities

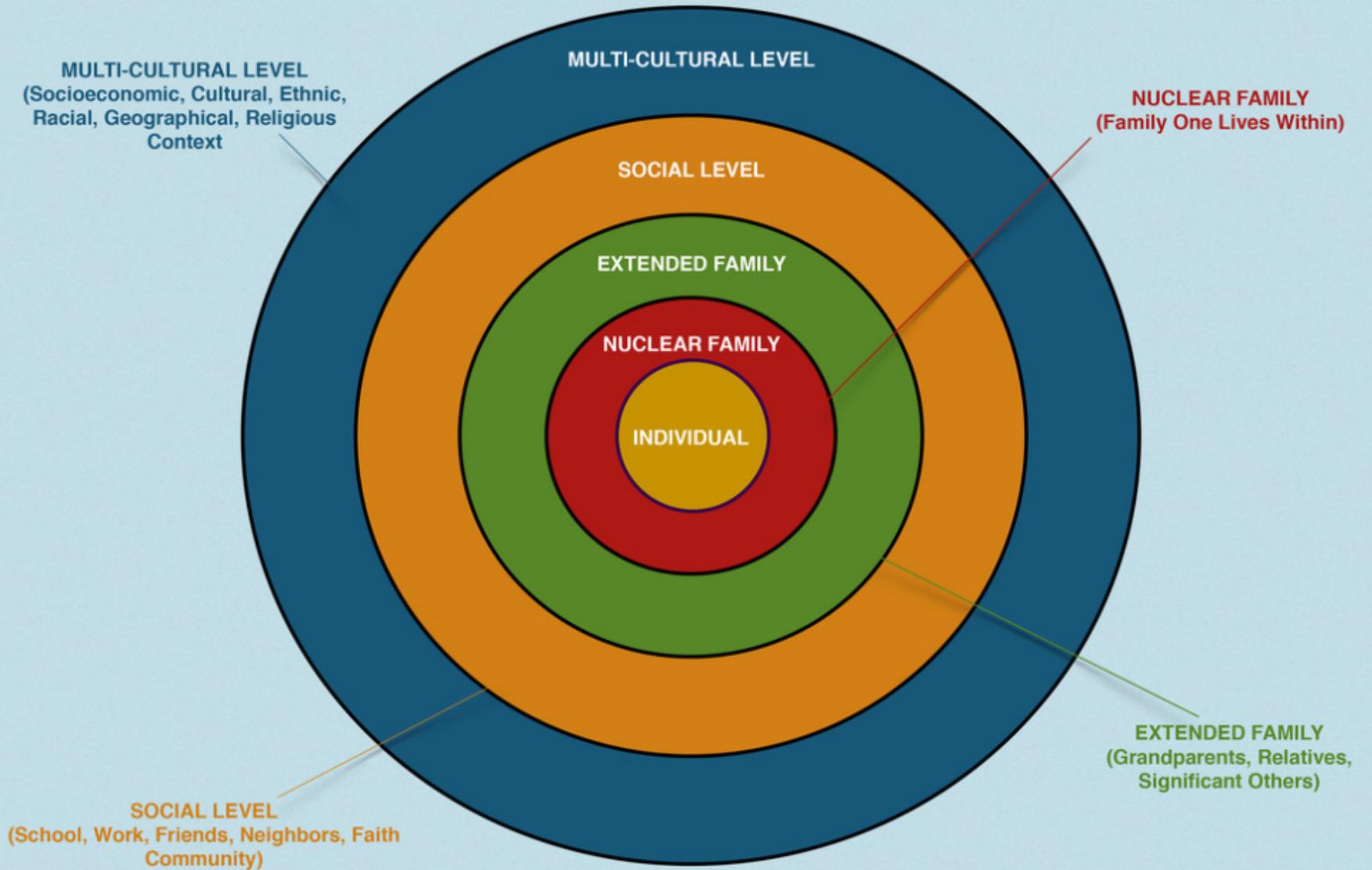
Break

# Course Schedule

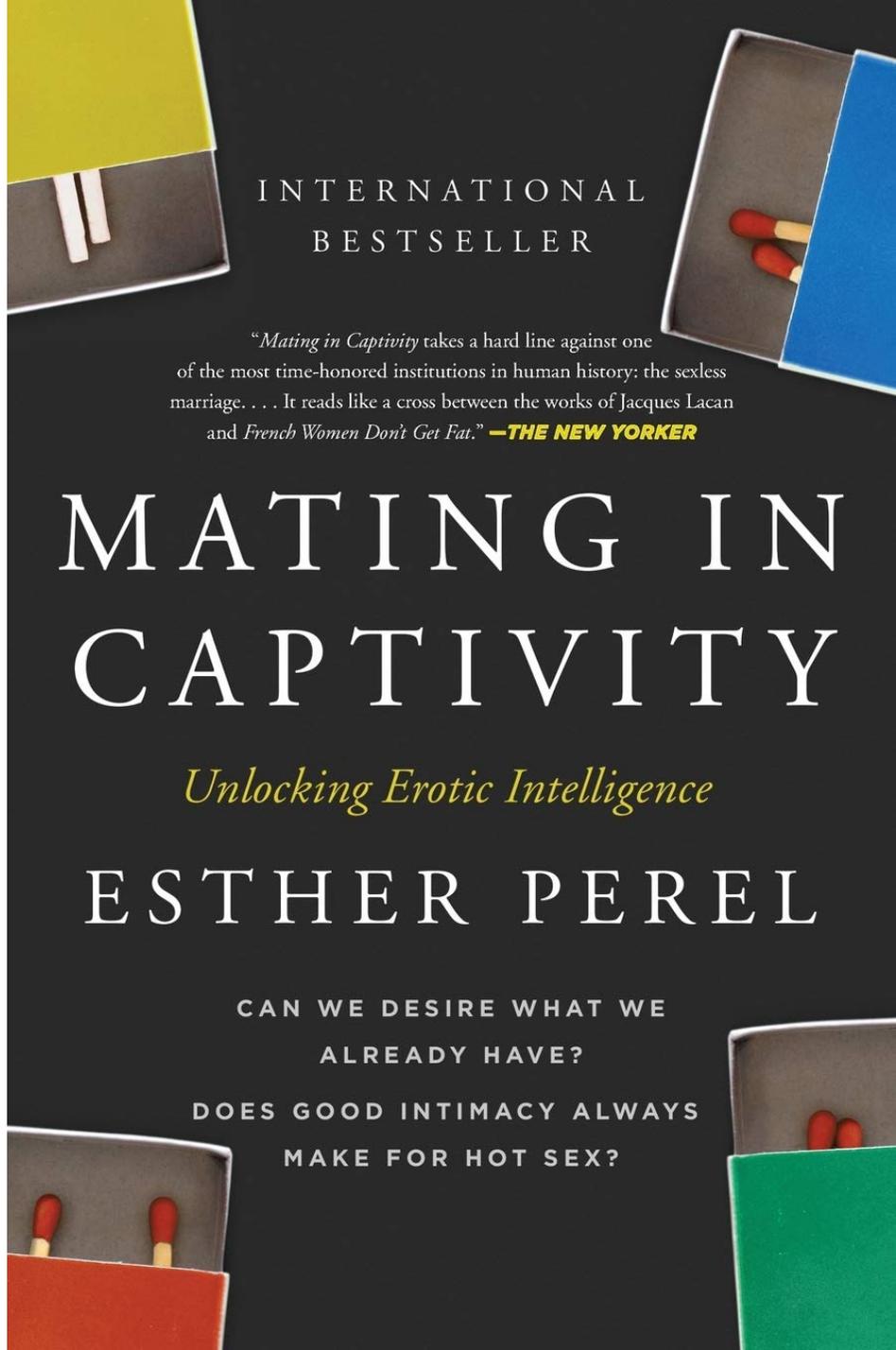
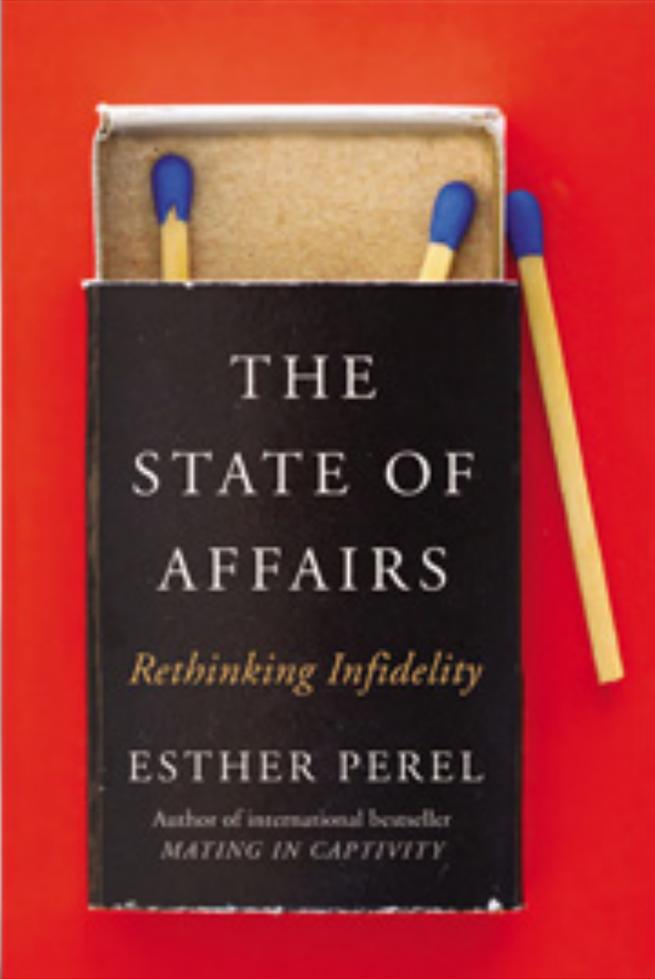
## Groundbreaking Couples Counseling: 10 Modalities

Part 3: Family Systems, EFT,  
Divorce Busting, IFS and Trauma.

# FAMILY SYSTEMS THEORY



Family Systems



INTERNATIONAL  
BESTSELLER

*"Mating in Captivity takes a hard line against one of the most time-honored institutions in human history: the sexless marriage. . . . It reads like a cross between the works of Jacques Lacan and French Women Don't Get Fat."* —**THE NEW YORKER**

# MATING IN CAPTIVITY

*Unlocking Erotic Intelligence*

ESTHER PEREL

CAN WE DESIRE WHAT WE  
ALREADY HAVE?

DOES GOOD INTIMACY ALWAYS  
MAKE FOR HOT SEX?



## **Think and Share**

Take a moment to consider your experiences and kindly share them with us.

**Structural family therapy**, designed by [Salvador Minuchin](#), looks at family relationships, behaviors, and patterns as they are exhibited within the therapy session in order to evaluate the structure of the family. Employing activities such as role play in session, therapists also examine subsystems within the family structure, such as parental or sibling subsystems.

**Strategic family therapy**, developed by [Jay Haley](#), [Milton Erickson](#), and [Cloe Madanes](#), among others, examines family processes and functions, such as communication or problem-solving patterns, by evaluating family behavior outside the therapy session. Therapeutic techniques may include reframing or redefining a problem scenario or using paradoxical interventions (for example, suggesting the family take action seemingly in opposition to their therapeutic goals) in order to create the desired change. Strategic family therapists believe change can occur rapidly, without intensive analysis of the source of the problem.

**Intergenerational family therapy** acknowledges generational influences on family and individual behavior. Identifying multigenerational behavioral patterns, such as management of [anxiety](#), can help people see how their current problems may be rooted in previous generations. Murray Bowen designed this approach to family therapy, using it in treatment for individuals and couples as well as families. Bowen employed techniques such as normalizing a family's challenges by discussing similar scenarios in other families, describing the reactions of individual family members instead of acting them out, and encouraging family members to respond with ["I" statements](#) rather than accusatory statements.

Pros

Cons



EFT

Dr. Sue Johnson

Professor, Researcher, Clinical Psychologist



EFT Framework:

### **Stage One: Cycle De-escalation**

Step 1: Identify key issues of concern.

Step 2: Identify ways negative patterns of interaction increase conflict when key issues arise.

Step 3: The therapist assists in the identification of unacknowledged [fears](#) and negative emotions related to attachment underlying negative interaction patterns.

Step 4: The therapist reframes key issues for the couple in terms of negative patterns of interaction, underlying emotions and fears, and each individual's attachment needs.

### **Stage Two: Changing Interaction Patterns**

Step 5: Individuals are assisted in voicing both their attachment needs and deep emotions.

Step 6: Partners are coached in ways to express acceptance and compassion for a partner's attachment needs and deep emotions.

Step 7: Partners are coached in the expression of attachment needs and emotions while also learning ways to discuss those issues likely to cause conflict.

### **Stage Three: Consolidation and Integration**

Step 8: The therapist coaches the couple in the use of new [communication](#) styles to talk about old problems and develop new solutions.

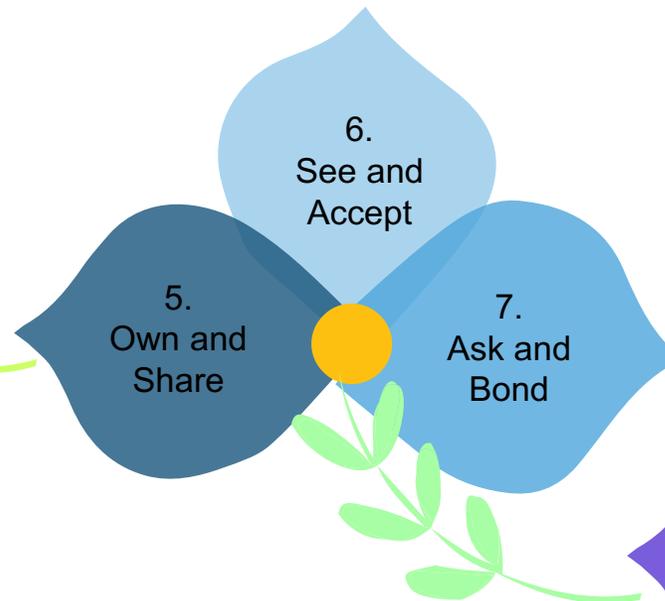
Step 9: The couple learns ways to use skills practiced in therapy outside of session and develops a plan to make new interaction patterns a consistent part of life after therapy.

# 3 Stages and 9 Steps of the EFT Map

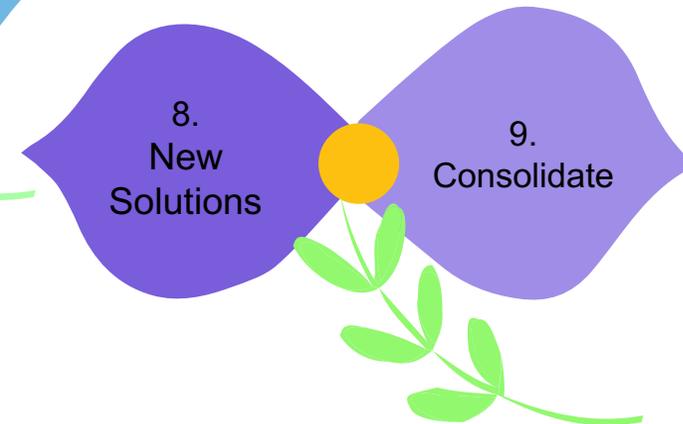
## Stage 1 Cycle De-escalation

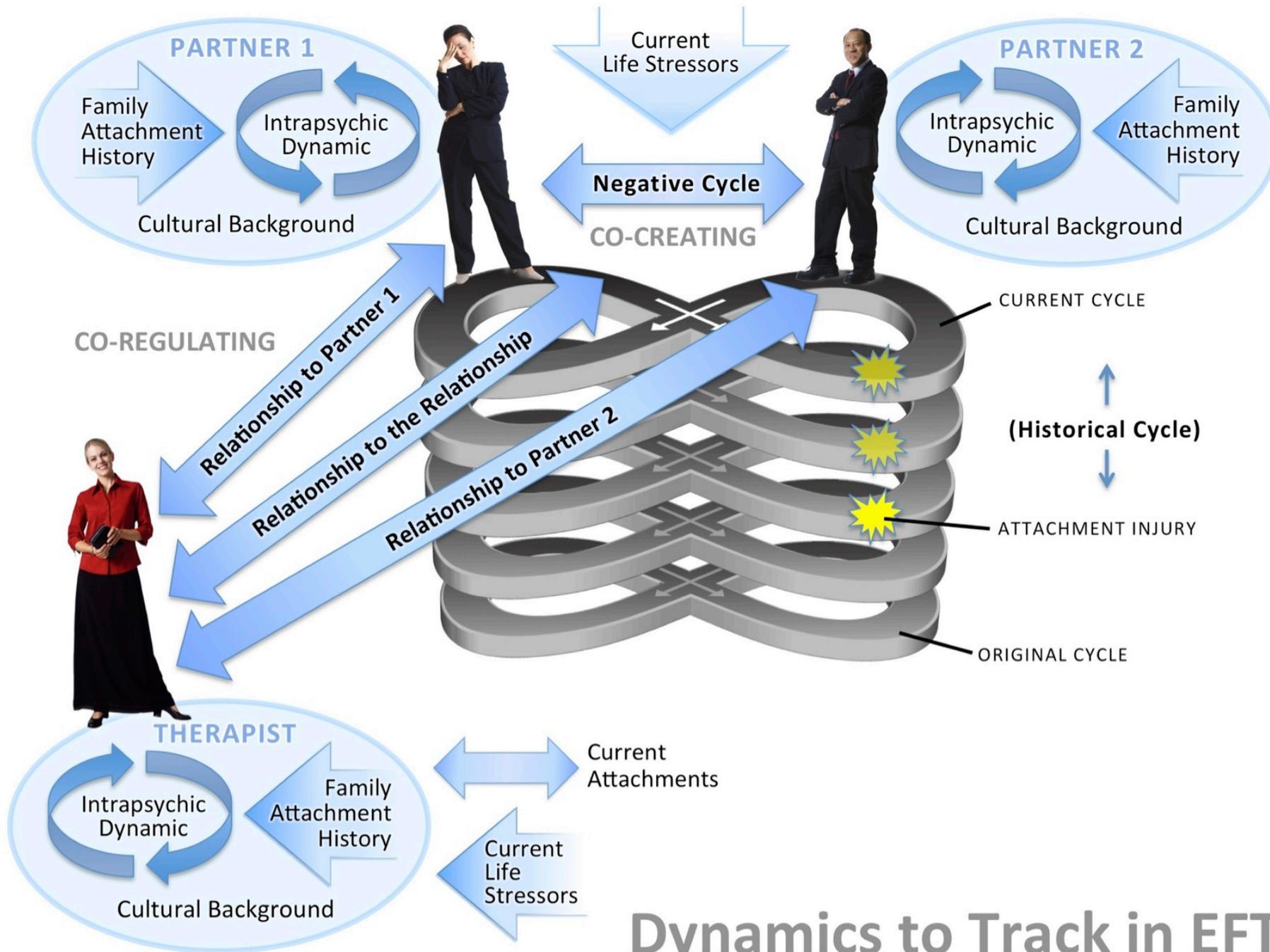


## Stage 2: Restructuring the Bond

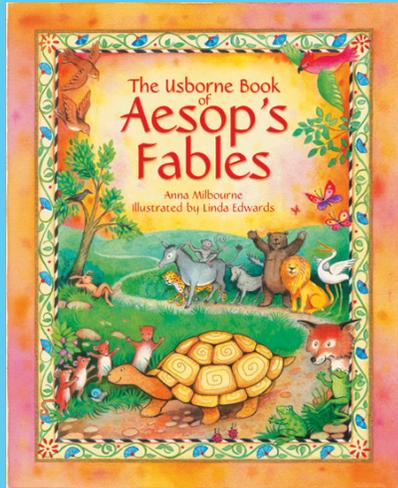


## Stage 3: Consolidation

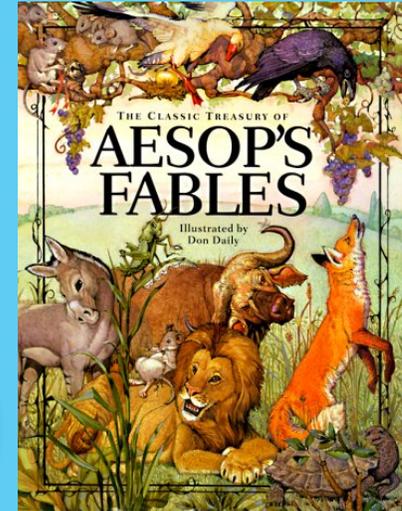




# Dynamics to Track in EFT



# EFT in Aesop Language



17 Key Concepts of EFT in Fables

Joseph Tropper

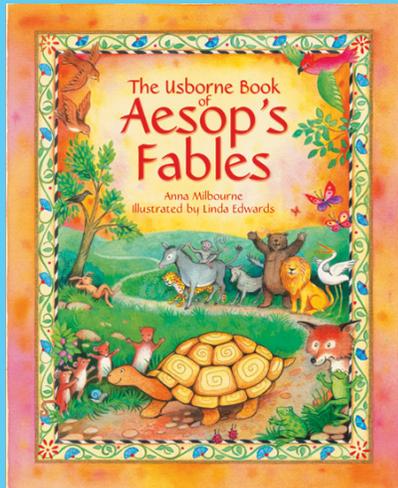
# Who Was Aesop?

**Aesop** was a slave and storyteller believed to have lived in ancient Greece between 620 and 560 BCE.

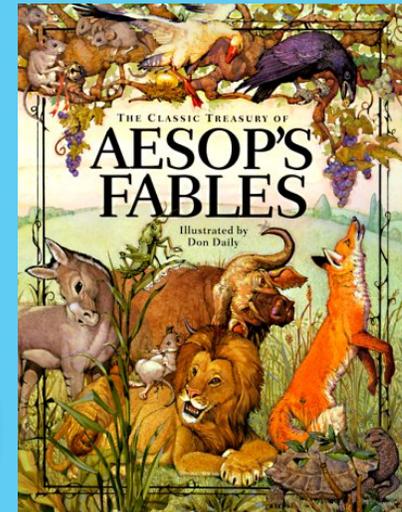
His fables are said to contain:

- Moral values
- Universal truths
- Deep insights about human condition and psyche





# EFT in Aesop Language



17 Key Concepts of EFT in Fables

## 17 EFT Principles based on Aesop

A HARE one day ridiculed the short feet and slow pace of the Tortoise. The latter, laughing, said: Though you be swift as the wind, I will beat you in a race. The Hare, deeming her assertion to be simply impossible, assented to the proposal; and they agreed that the Fox should choose the course, and fix the goal.

On the day appointed for the race, they started together. The Tortoise never for a moment stopped, but went on with a slow but steady pace straight to the end of the course. The Hare, trusting to his native swiftness, cared little about the race, and lying down by the wayside, fell fast asleep. At last waking up, and moving as fast as he could, he saw the Tortoise had reached the goal, and was comfortably dozing after her fatigue.

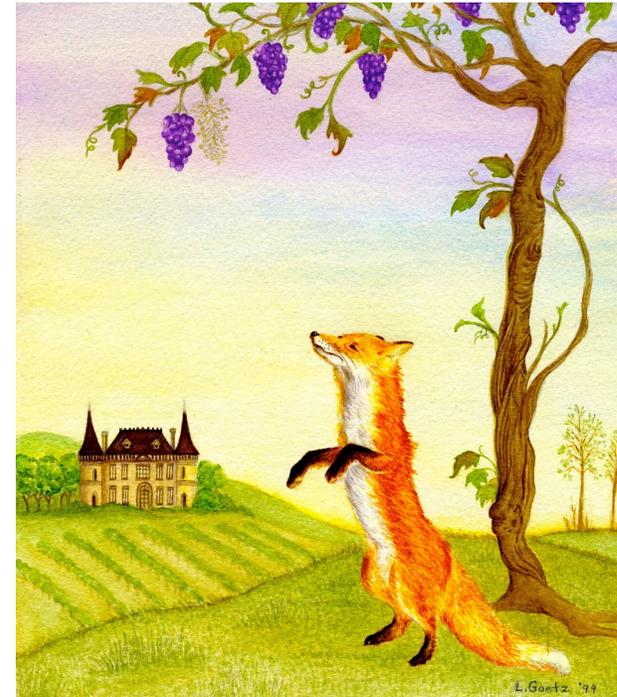
- 1) The Tortoise and the Hare**  
Keep it Slow and Steady!



## 17 EFT Principles based on Aesop

Driven by hunger, a fox tried to reach some grapes hanging high on the vine but was unable to, although he leaped with all his strength. As he went away, the fox remarked 'Oh, you aren't even ripe yet! I don't need any sour grapes.'

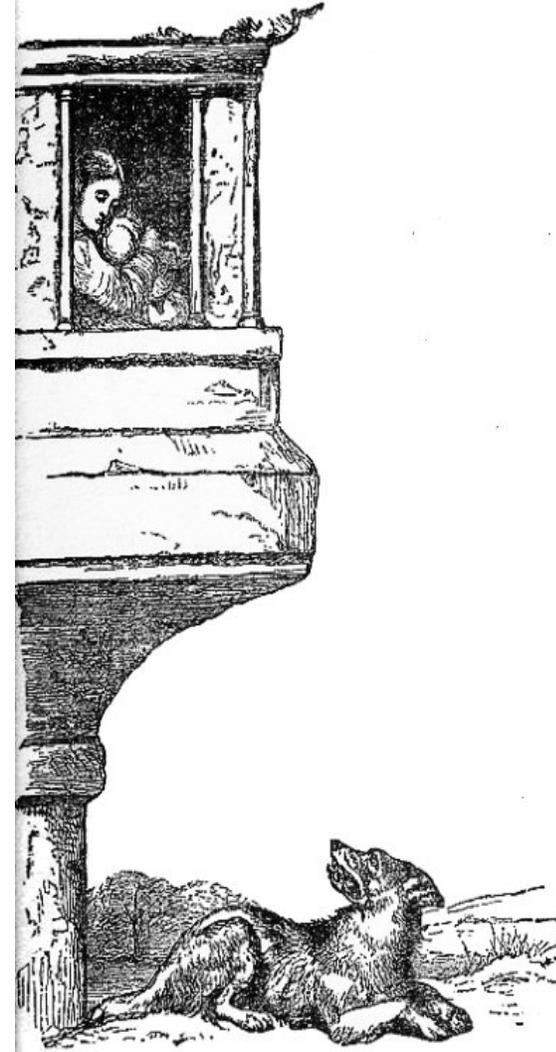
**2) The Fox and The Grapes**  
We blame our partner for being defective  
when we can't reach them



## 17 EFT Principles based on Aesop

A FAMISHED WOLF was prowling about in the morning in search of food. As he passed the door of a cottage built in the forest, he heard a Mother say to her child: Be quiet, or I will throw you out of the window, and the Wolf shall eat you. The Wolf sat all day waiting at the door. In the evening he heard the same woman fondling her child and saying: He is quiet now, and if the Wolf should come, we will kill him. The Wolf, hearing these words, went home, gaping with cold and hunger.

**3) The Mother and the Wolf**  
Don't take things said in anger too seriously



## 17 EFT Principles based on Aesop

A BOY bathing in a river was in danger of being drowned. He called out to a traveler passing by, for help. The traveler, instead of holding out a helping hand, stood up unconcernedly, and scolded the boy for his imprudence. Oh, sir! cried the youth, pray help me now, and scold me afterwards.

**4) The Boy Bathing**  
Don't rebuke, lend supportive action



## 17 EFT Principles based on Aesop

A GARDENER, who lived alone, became discontented, and set out, one day, to seek a friend who would be a suitable companion. He had not gone far when he met a Bear, whom he invited to come and live with him. The Bear was a very silly one, who was also discontented with living alone, so he went home with the gardener very willingly.

The gardener provided all the food, and the only service he required of the Bear was to keep the flies off his face while he slept in the shade. One day, a fly insisted upon lighting on the Gardener's face, although he was brushed off again and again. The silly Bear finally became so enraged that he threw a heavy stone upon it. He killed the fly, but alas! he also killed his friend.

**5) The Bear and the Gardener**  
Was that a help or punch in the face?



## 17 EFT Principles based on Aesop

A SNAKE, having made his hole close to the porch of a cottage, inflicted a severe bite on the cottager's infant son, of which he died, to the great grief of his parents. The father resolved to kill the snake, and the next day, on its coming out of its hole for food, took up his axe; but, making too much haste to hit him as he wriggled away, missed his head, and cut off only the end of his tail.

After some time, the Cottager, afraid lest the snake should bite him also, endeavored to make peace, and placed some bread and salt in the hole. The Snake said: There can henceforth be no peace between us; for whenever I see you I shall remember the loss of my tail, and whenever you see me you will be thinking of the death of your son.

**6) The Laborer and the Snake**  
It's hard to forget trauma in the presence of that which caused it.



## 17 EFT Principles based on Aesop

A CRAB said to her son: "Why do you walk so one-sided, my child? It is far more becoming to go straight forward. " The young Crab replied: "Quite true, dear Mother; and if you will show me the straight way, I will promise to walk in it." The Mother tried in vain, and submitted without remonstrance to the reproof of her child.

**7) The Crab and Its Mother**  
Sometimes we triggered  
the exact thing we criticize



## 17 EFT Principles based on Aesop

Now you must know that a town mouse once upon a time went on a visit to his cousin in the country. He was rough and ready, this cousin, but he loved his town friend and made him heartily welcome. Beans and bacon, cheese and bread, were all he had to offer, but he offered them freely. The town mouse rather turned up his long nose at this country fare, and said, "I cannot understand, cousin, how you can put up with such poor food as this, but of course you cannot expect anything better in the country; come you with me and I will show you how to live. When you have been in town a week you will wonder how you could ever have stood a country life." No sooner said than done: The two mice set off for the town and arrived at the town mouse's residence late at night.

"You will want some refreshment after our long journey," said the polite town mouse, and took his friend into the grand dining room. There they found the remains of a fine feast, and soon the two mice were eating up jellies and cakes and all that was nice. Suddenly they heard growling and barking.

"What is that?" said the country mouse.

"It is only the dogs of the house," answered the other.

"Only," said the country mouse, "I do not like that music at my dinner!"

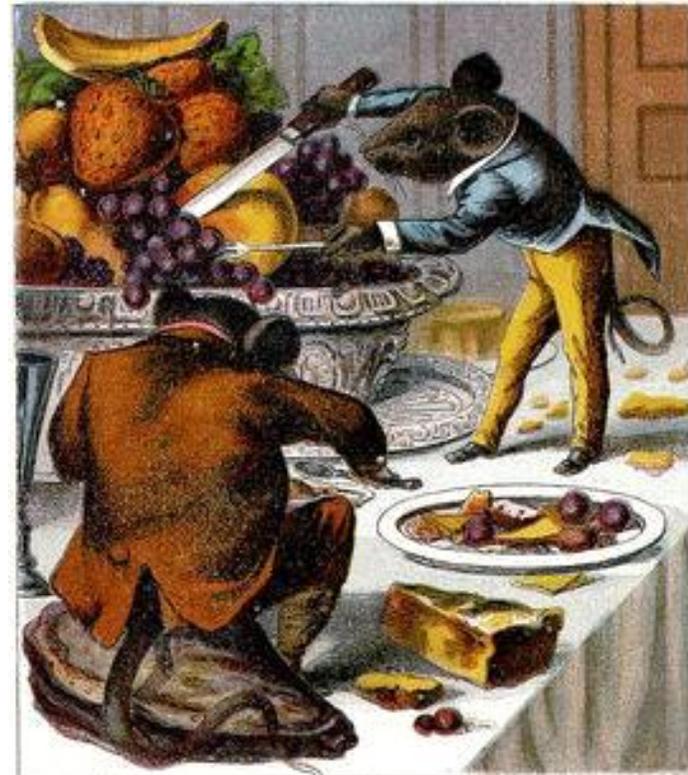
Just at that moment the door flew open; in came two huge mastiffs; and the two mice had to scamper down and run off.

"Good-bye, cousin," said the country mouse.

"What! Going so soon?" said the other.

"Yes," he replied. "Better beans and bacon in peace than cakes and ale in fear."

**8) The Town Mouse and the Country Mouse**  
Better a little in safety than abundance in danger



## 17 EFT Principles based on Aesop

A TRUMPETER, bravely leading on the soldiers, was captured by the enemy. He cried out to his captors: Pray spare me, and do not take my life without cause or without inquiry. I have not slain a single man of your troop. I have no arms, and carry nothing but this one brass trumpet. That is the very reason for which you should be put to death, they said; for while you do not fight yourself, your loud trumpet stirs up all the other soldiers to battle.

**9) The Trumpeter Taken Prisoner**  
He who incites strife is responsible



## 17 EFT Principles based on Aesop

THE HORSE had the plain entirely to himself. A Stag intruded into his domain and shared his pasture. The Horse, desiring to revenge himself on the stranger, requested a man, if he were willing to help him in punishing the Stag. The man replied, that if the Horse would receive a bit in his mouth and agree to carry him, he would contrive very effectual weapons against the Stag. The Horse consented, and allowed the man to mount him. From that hour he found that, instead of obtaining revenge on the Stag, he had enslaved himself to the service of man.

**10) The Horse and the Stag**  
He who tries to injure others  
only hurts himself



## 17 EFT Principles based on Aesop

A RAVEN saw a Swan, and desired to secure for himself a like beauty of plumage. Supposing that the his splendid white color arose from his washing in the water in which he swam, the Raven left the altars in the neighborhood of which he picked up his living, and took up his abode in the lakes and pools. But cleansing his feathers as often as he would, he could not change their color, while through want of food he perished.



**11) The Raven and the Swan**  
Only internal changes last

## 17 EFT Principles based on Aesop

A HORSE SOLDIER took great pains with his charger. As long as the war lasted, he looked upon him as his fellow-helper in all emergencies, and fed him carefully with hay and corn. But when the war was over, he only allowed him chaff to eat and made him carry heavy loads of wood, and subjected him to much slavish drudgery and ill-treatment.

War, however, being again proclaimed, the Soldier put on his charger its military trappings, and mounted, being clad in his heavy coat of mail. The Horse fell down straightway under the weight, no longer equal to the burden, and said to his master: You must now e'en go to the war on foot, for you have transformed me from a Horse into an Ass.

**12) The Horse and His Rider**  
Slighting others when they are “not needed” renders them incapable in your time of need

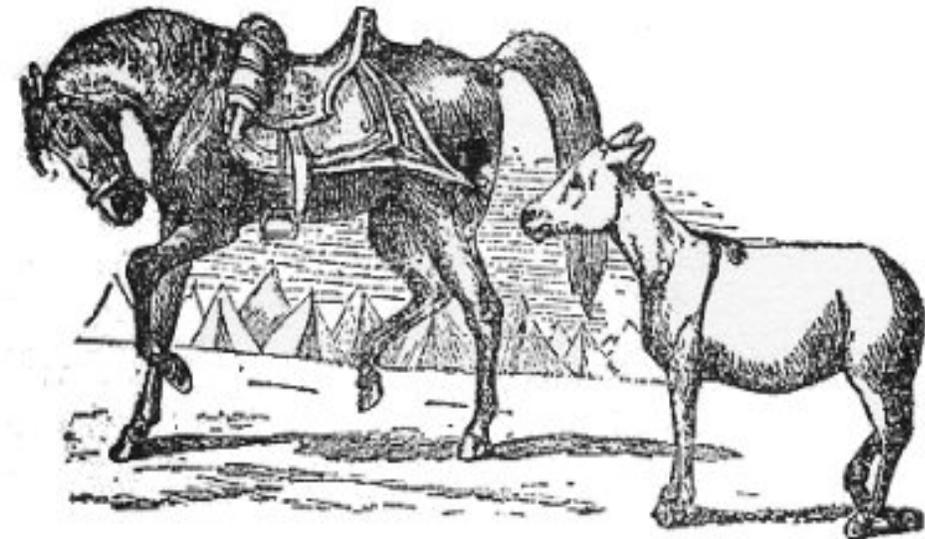


## 17 EFT Principles based on Aesop

AN ASS congratulated a Horse on being so ungrudgingly and carefully provided for, while he himself had scarcely enough to eat, nor even that without hard work. But when war broke out, a heavily armed soldier mounted the Horse, and rushed into the very midst of the enemy, and the Horse, being wounded, fell dead on the battle-field.

Then the Ass, seeing all these things, changed his mind, and commiserated the Horse, saying: How much more fortunate am I than a charger. I can remain at home in safety while he is exposed to all the perils of war.

**13) The Ass and The Charger**  
Do not envy the position of others  
Withdrawer/ Pursuer



## 17 EFT Principles based on Aesop

TWO MEN were traveling together, when a Bear suddenly met them on their path. One of them climbed up quickly into a tree, and concealed himself in the branches. The other, seeing that he must be attacked, fell flat on the ground, and when the Bear came up and felt him with his snout, and smelt him all over, he held his breath, and feigned the appearance of death as much as he could. The Bear soon left him, for it is said he will not touch a dead body.

When he was quite gone, the other traveler descended from the tree, and, accosting his friend, jocularly inquired what it was the Bear had whispered in his ear? His friend replied: He gave me this advice: Never travel with a friend who deserts you at the approach of danger.

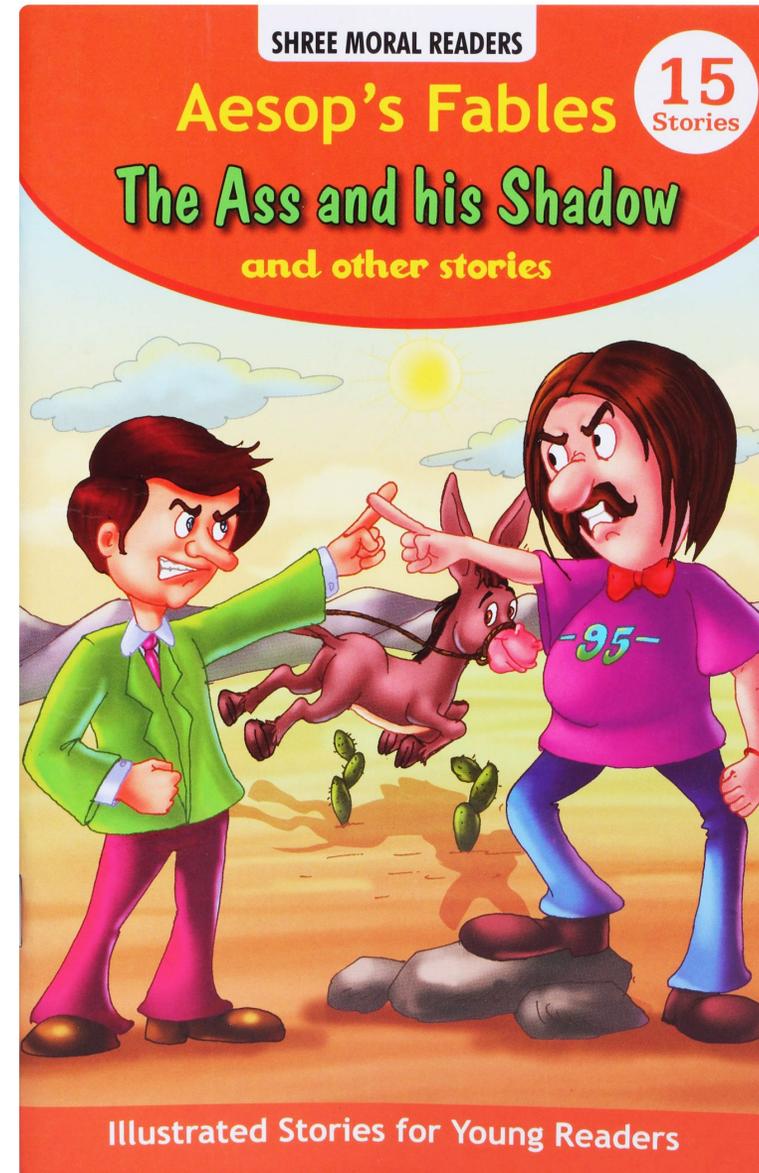
**14) The Bear and the Two Travelers**  
Misfortune tests the sincerity of friends



## 17 EFT Principles based on Aesop

A TRAVELER hired an Ass to convey him to a distant place. The day being intensely hot, and the sun shining in its strength, the Traveler stopped to rest, and sought shelter from the heat under the Shadow of the Ass. As this afforded only protection for one, and as the Traveler and the owner of the Ass both claimed it, a violent dispute arose between them as to which of them had the right to it. The owner maintained that he had let the Ass only, and not his Shadow. The Traveler asserted that he had, with the hire of the Ass, hired his Shadow also. The quarrel proceeded from words to blows, and while the men fought, the Ass galloped off.

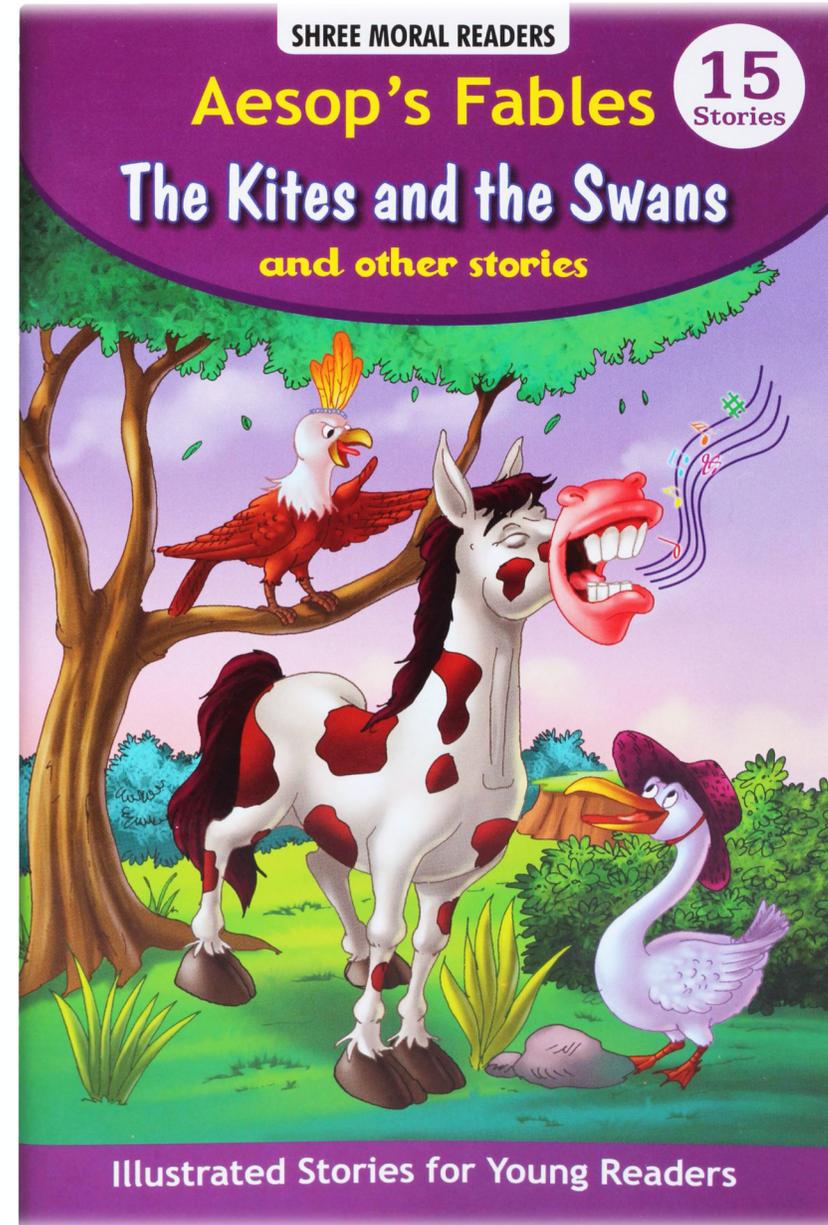
**15) The Ass and His Shadow**  
Fights take us away from our true goals



## 17 EFT Principles based on Aesop

THE KITES of old time had, equally with the swans, the privilege of song. But having heard the neigh of the horse, they were so enchanted with the sound, that they tried to imitate it; and, in trying to neigh, they forgot how to sing.

**16) The Kites and the Swans**  
Be yourself and be genuine so your beauty and greatness shine forth



## 17 EFT Principles based on Aesop

THE SWALLOW and the Crow had a contention about their plumage. The Crow put an end to the dispute by saying: Your feathers are all very well in the spring, but mine protect me against the winter.

### 17) The Swallow and the Crow

Beauty means being there for me  
even in the dark of winter  
Fine weather friends are not worth  
too much

ARE you there for me?



## Stop The Fight!

an illustrated guide for couples

by: Dr. Michelle Brody, PhD

Dr. Brody encapsulates the 12 most common arguments that couples have and explains where the fight goes wrong and how to repair before, during and even after. The book uses catchy and perceptive comics to bring out its points.

The Partner Improvement Fight

The Proving Your Point Fight

The Nagging-Tuning Out Fight

The Escalating Fight

The Household Responsibility Fight

The Birthday Fight

The Bad Reputation Fight

The “You Don’t Care About Me” Fight

The Parenting Differences Fight

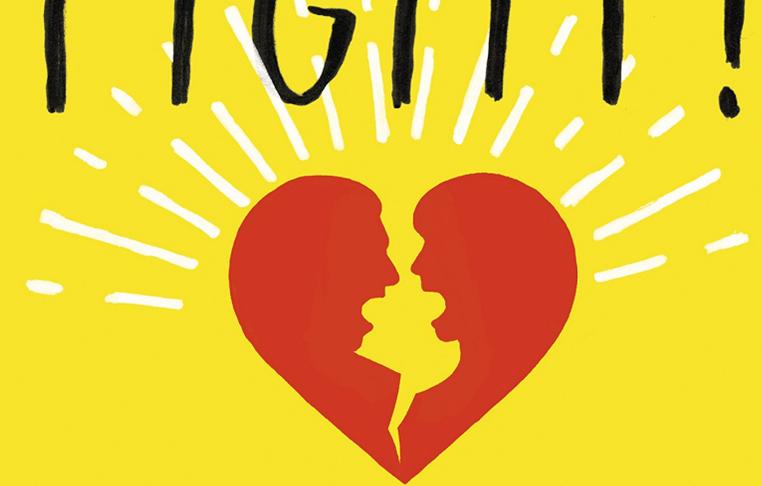
The Money Fight

The Sex Fight

The Difficult Relatives Fight

AN ILLUSTRATED GUIDE FOR COUPLES

# STOP THE FIGHT!



HOW TO BREAK FREE FROM  
**THE 12 MOST COMMON ARGUMENTS**  
AND BUILD A RELATIONSHIP THAT LASTS

MICHELLE BRODY, PhD

Jeanette and Maxine each try to solve the problems that pain them: Jeanette wants to change things to be more even, and Maxine wants to defend herself against Jeanette's unjust accusations. The fight becomes circular.



Separating intent from impact allows Charles and Teresa to recognize that *unintentional* bad impacts are causing all the trouble. They both have good intentions that are justified and reasonable, but they're also responsible for the bad impact their words have on one another.

In this kind of fight, partners are often able to easily talk about their own good intent and their partner's bad impact. And they're both "right"—they *do* have good intent, and their partner's action *does* have bad impact.



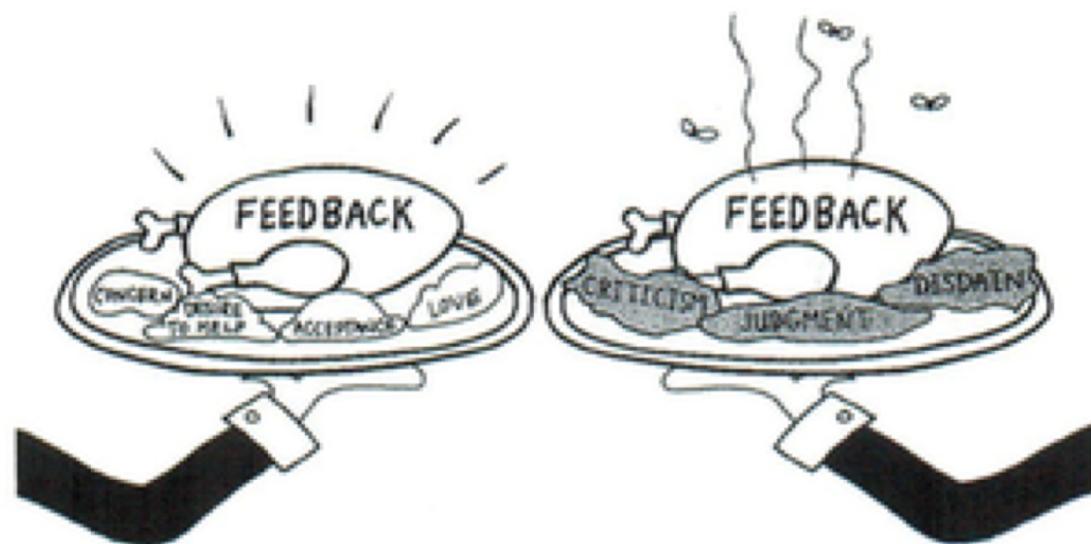
Doing the opposite is much harder but much more useful. Focusing on your own bad impact and recognizing your partner's good intent does a lot to stop the fight.

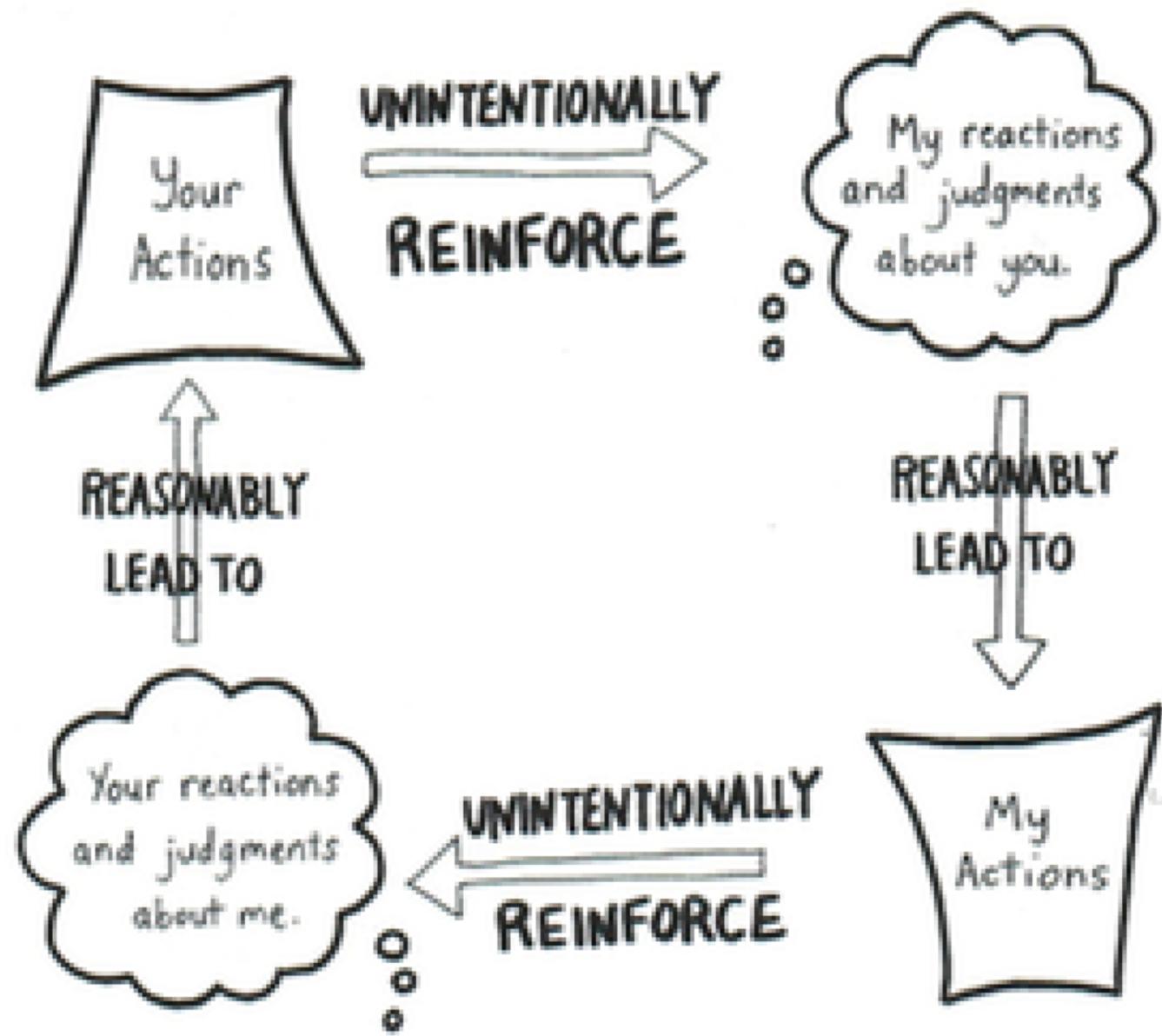


## FEEDBACK WITHOUT JUDGMENT

While it's human nature to dislike being judged by others, we're also hardwired to want to learn and grow, at least when we have good motivation to do so. And partners who help each other grow will strengthen their bond with each other. So how can you help your partner learn without landing in the Partner Improvement Fight? It's all in how you offer your feedback.

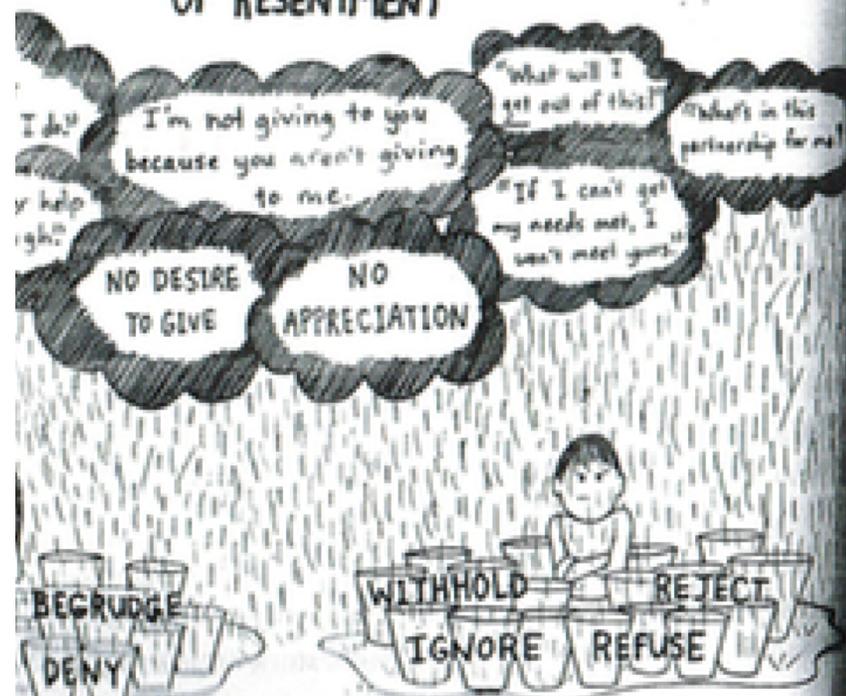
Feedback served on a platter of true caring and consideration is palatable; feedback served with judgment and criticism turns your stomach.





or someone who feels burdened to complain, ask for appreciation and solicit help. But those requests inevitably lead to more of the same, since trying to get your partner to be more generous by asking for it, by laying out or hinting at specific expectations, doesn't actually make them more generous. In fact, it hampers generosity. Instead, then, household responsibilities become a battleground of expectations, and resentment. Everyone feels like they're doing too much and getting nothing back. At that point, the generosity, the offers to help, the expressions of appreciation begin to dry up. After enough time around the cycle of expectation and disappointment, it can feel like you're in a land of chronic bad weather—a Climate of Resentment.

## CLIMATE OF RESENTMENT



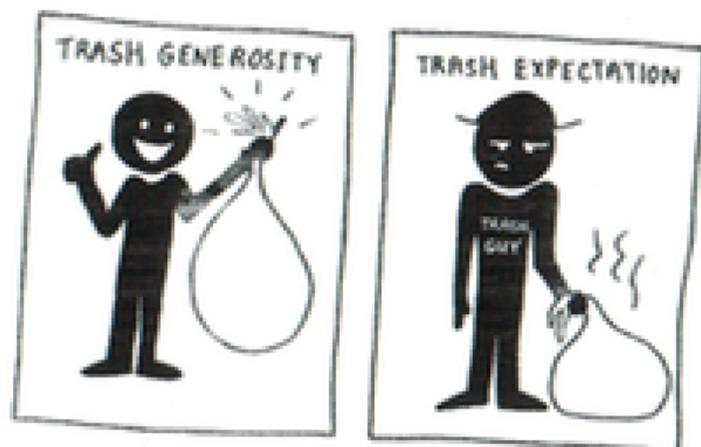
## CLIMATE OF GENEROSITY



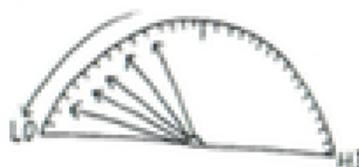
In a Climate of Generosity, there's a lot of giving and a lot of appreciation. It's all about showing your love and care, offering to your partner before you receive for yourself. It's the climate many couples remember fondly from the beginning of their relationship. As you fell in love, you would do anything for your partner. It was easy to freely express your appreciation, too.

So how can you get back to that? How do you change a Climate of Resentment into a Climate of Generosity? How do you reverse the tide to make yourself generous again? We all know that you can't change the weather outside, but "bad weather" in a relationship is cocreated, and it can be reversed.

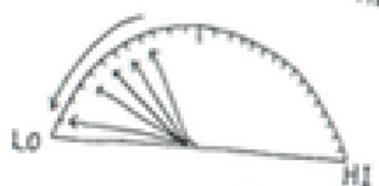
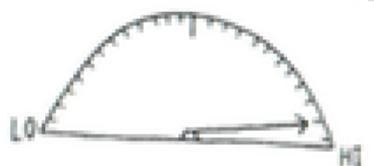
First, it takes recognition.



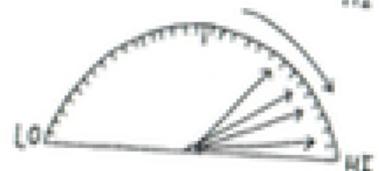
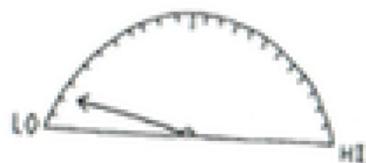
APPRECIATION  
METER



MOTIVATION  
METER



RESENT-  
-O-  
METER



Since trash is Ron's "job" and Lucy expects him to do it, Lucy isn't likely to show appreciation for his effort. He's just doing his job, after all. It's become an

We all know it's not just about trash, though. This process of household responsibility—whether in the home or out. What you're doing for your relationship has purpose and does what you want to keep doing it. This goes not only for doing chores but also for money in the partnership. When you feel that no one notices your effort and takes it for granted, or expects you to do your "job" without appreciation, it's harder to just keep doing it. The more partners speak in terms of expectations, the more generosity fades away.



**EXPECTATION**

**KILLS**

**GENEROSITY**

It's ironic, really, because setting expectations is the most common thing people tend to do when they feel a partner isn't being generous.

"Here's what I need you to do. . . ."

## KIND REQUESTS

Can you give me some space?

Please don't interrupt me.

Please try to be neater.

## DEMANDS

Stop shouting at me!

You can't make plans with your family on weekends!

You have to call me if you're running late!

## TEACHABLE MOMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, & ADVICE

It's usually a good idea to gas up the car before you get home.

You need to be more careful with money.

Why don't you just tell your brother?

## THREATS

If you do that again, I will leave.

If you don't stop spending I will open a separate bank account.

If you drink like that again, I won't sleep with you for a month.

## COMPLAINTS

Why don't you ever initiate sex?

You don't pay enough attention to me; all you do is play online games.

I've told you that really bothers me. Why have you done it again?

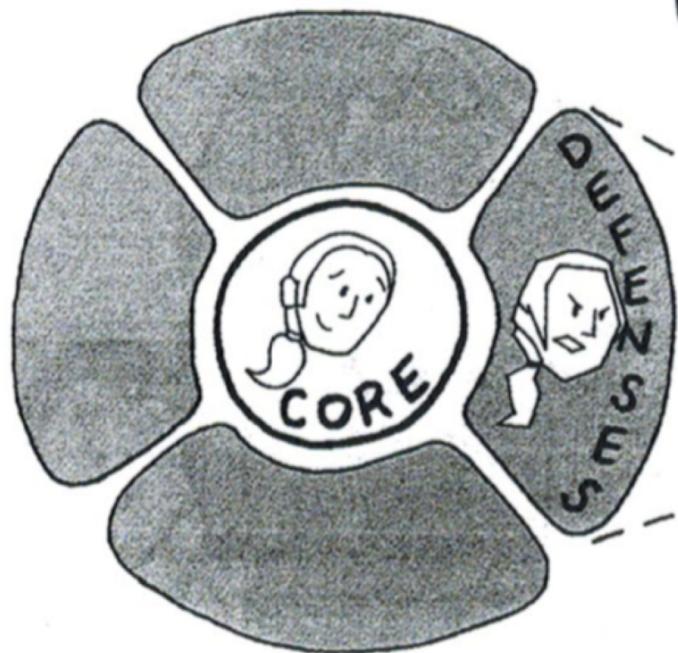
## OUTRIGHT CRITICISM

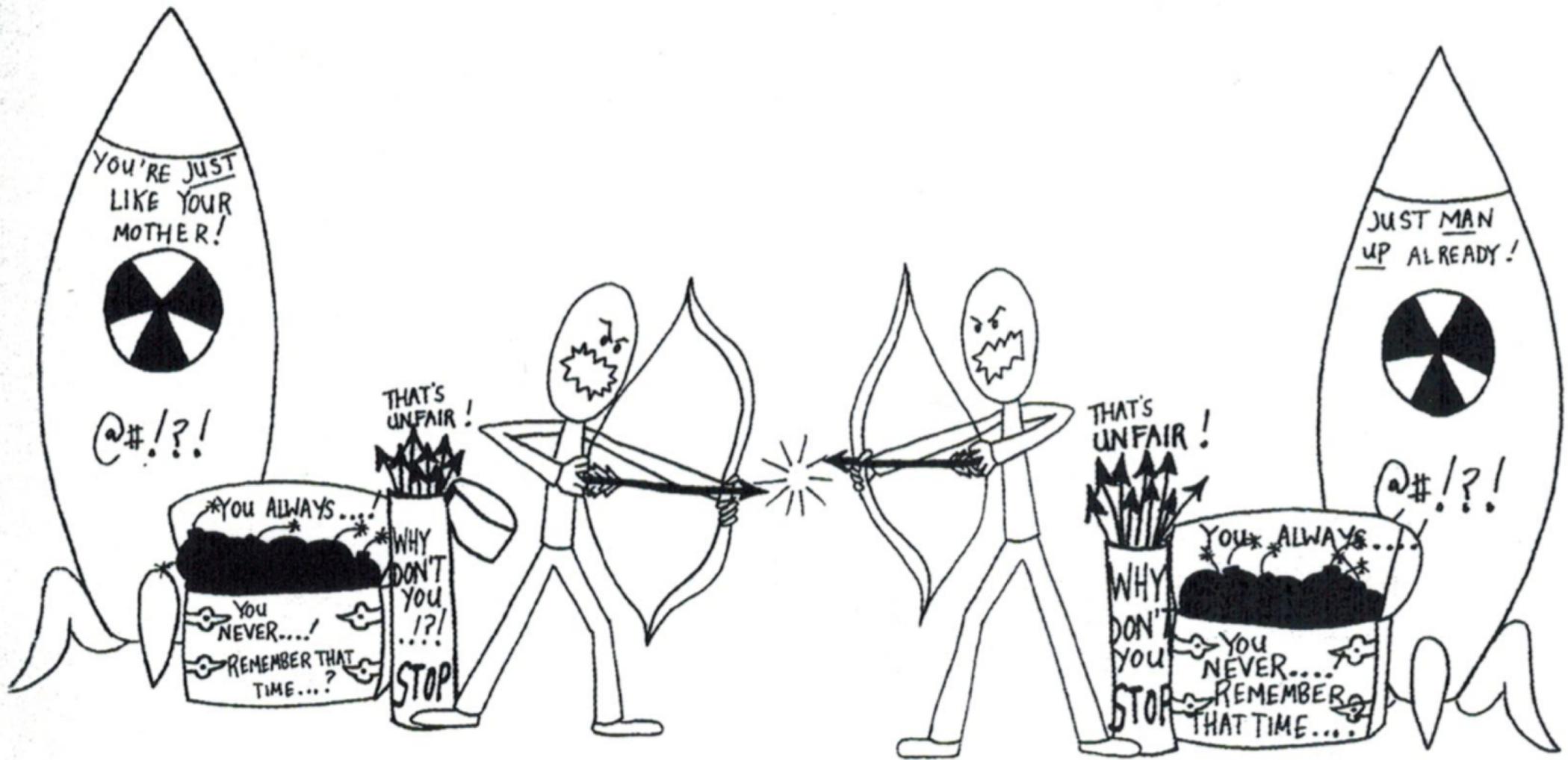
You are wasting your time doing that.

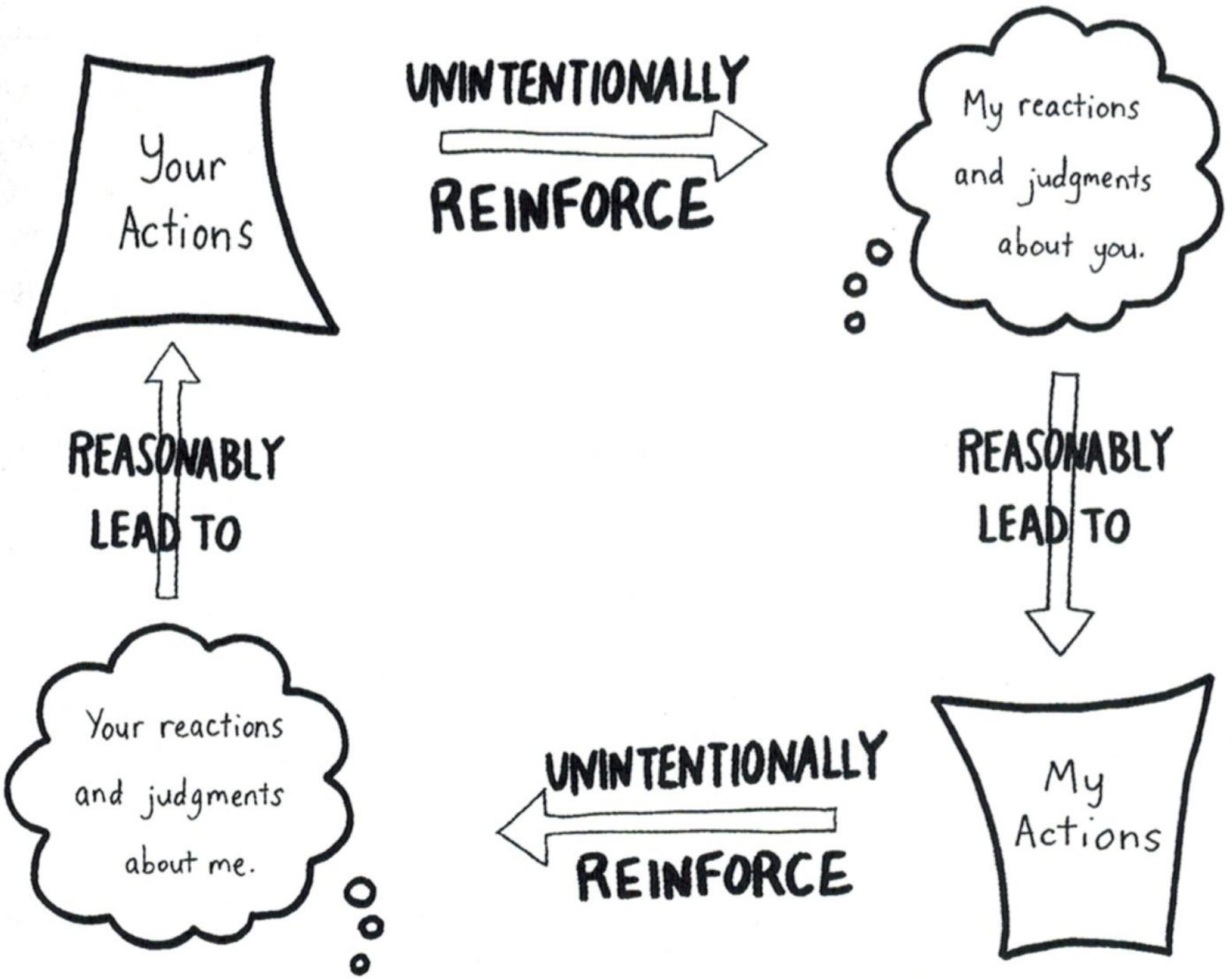
What kind of person does that?

I've never seen someone as spoiled as you.

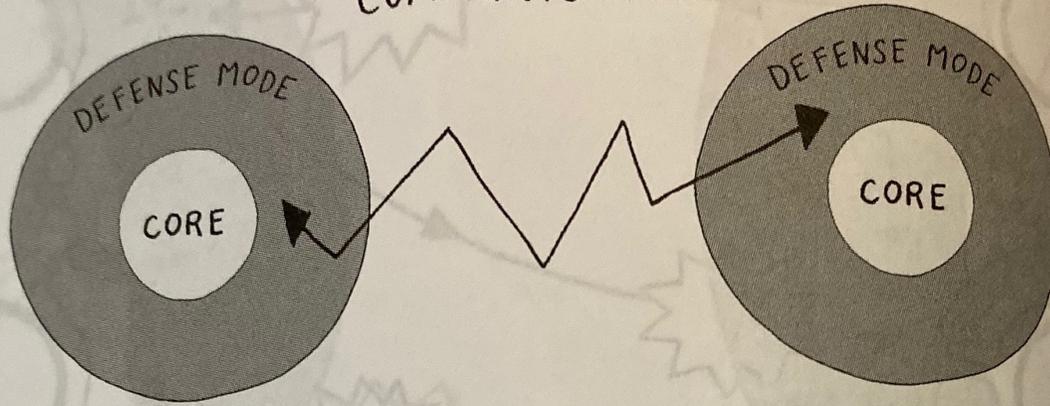
# DEFENSE - CORE ERROR





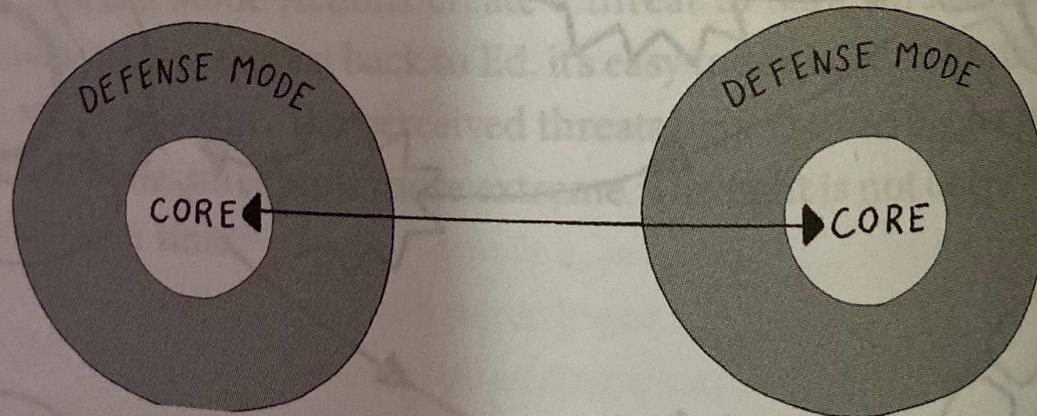


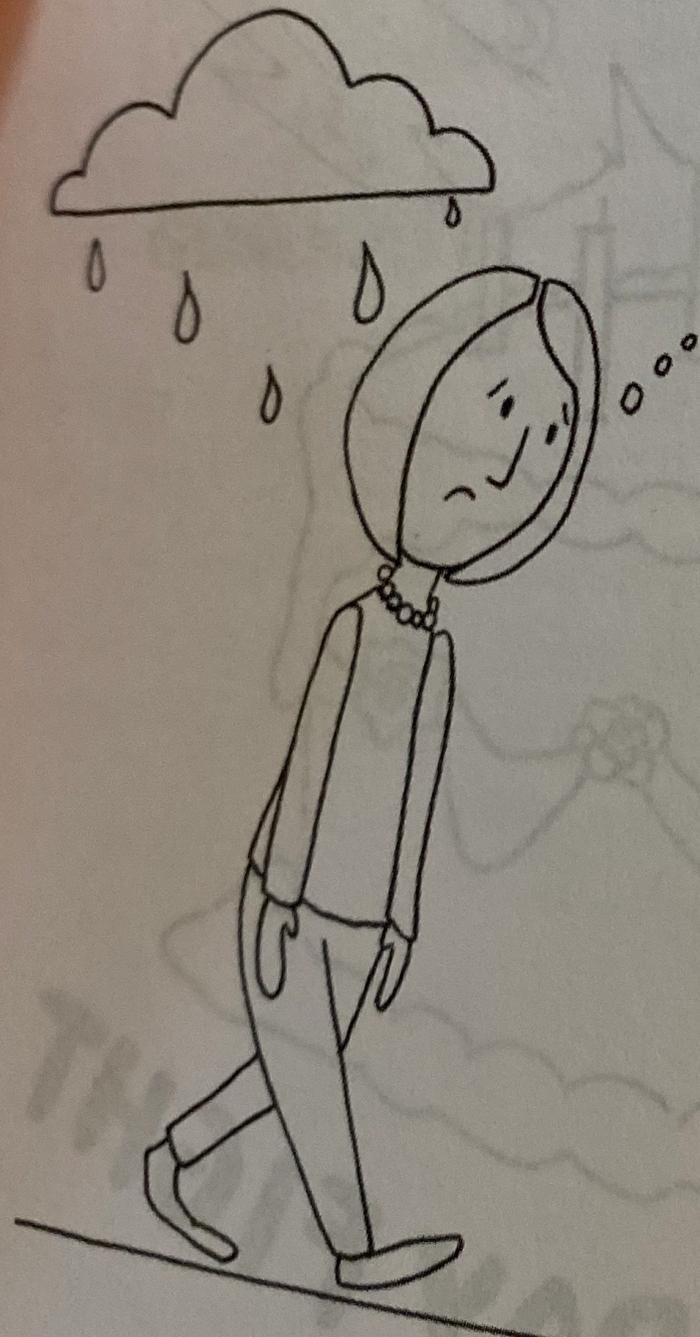
## DEFENSE-MODE COMMUNICATION



They understand, too, that the fix is to figure out how to go back to communicating Core-to-Core.

## CORE-TO-CORE COMMUNICATION

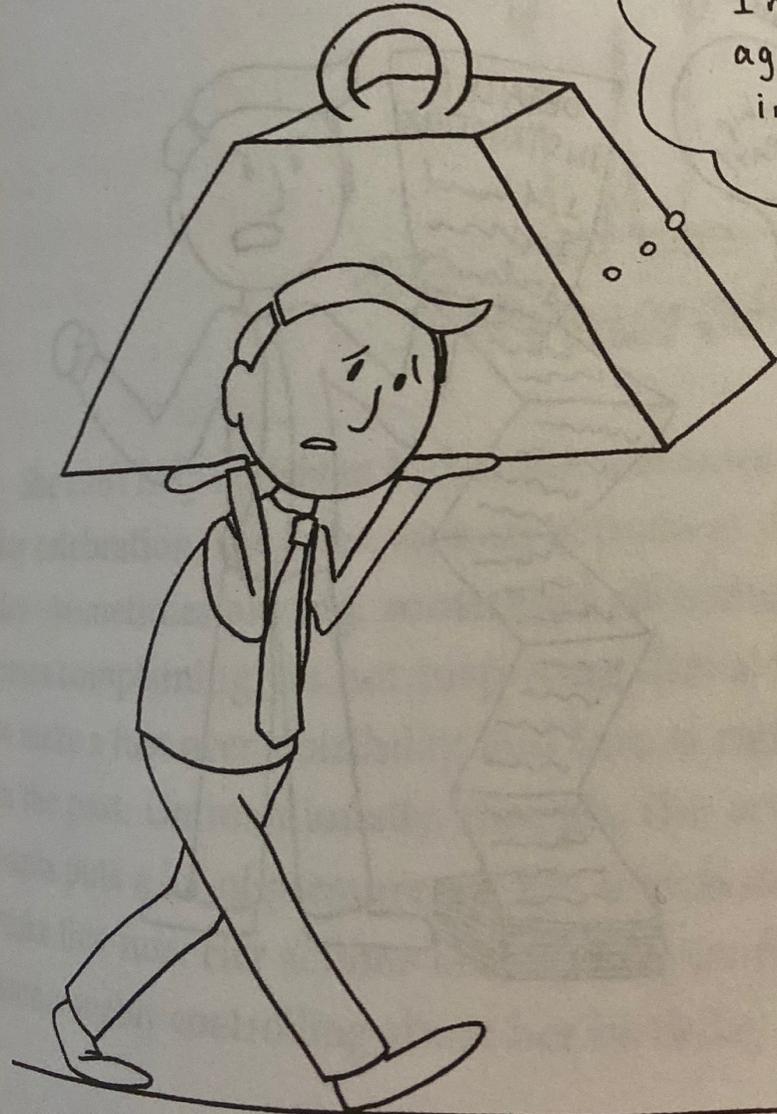




It's my birthday. He should do something special, but he'll probably mess it up again. I should help him... but I still wish he would think of it on his own.

Some  
related way to do

Her birthday is coming  
up... This never goes well.  
I'm probably going to fail  
again... Why is this so  
important to her?



WHAT DOES THIS MEAN ABOUT US?

That was great, but why can't it always be like this?



I guess I'll always be settling for mediocre sex...



That was horrible, maybe I should leave him...



THERE'S SOMETHING WRONG HERE...

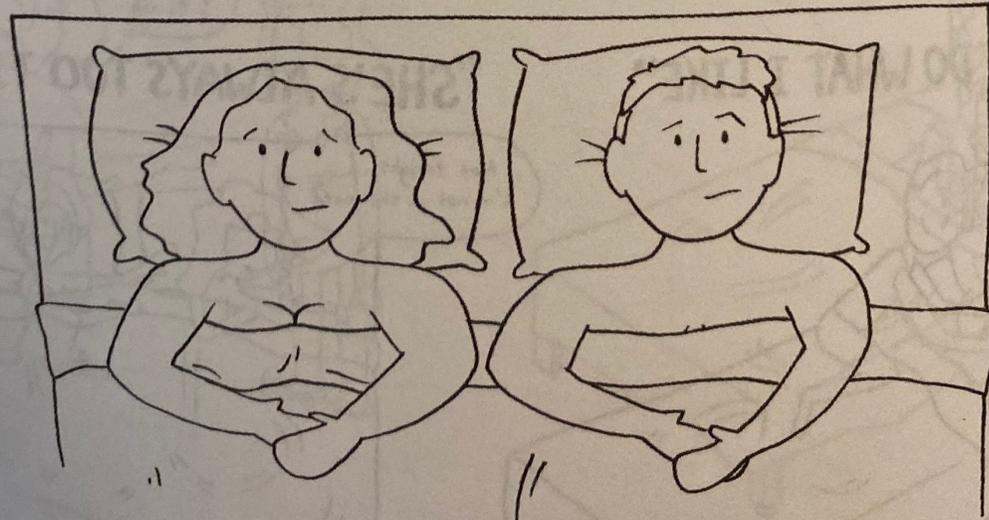
★★★★★★ = My ultimate fantasy

★★★★★☆☆ = What I see in porn

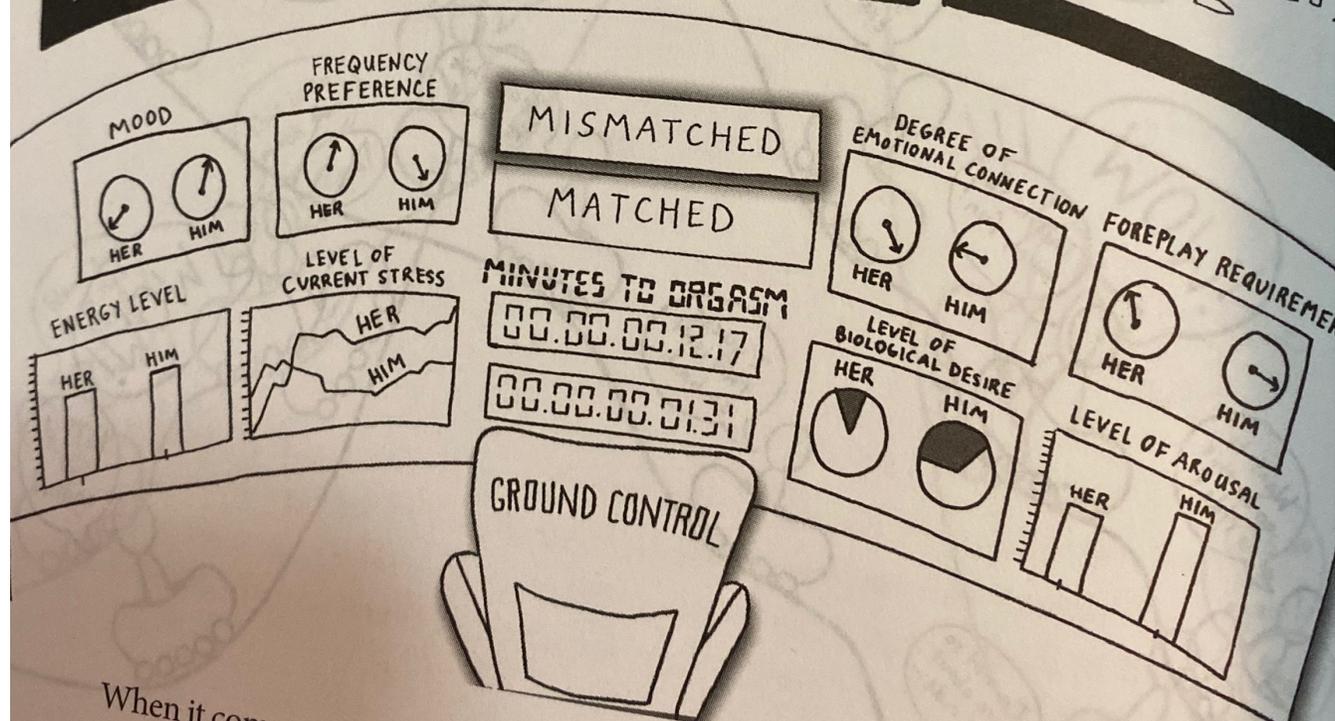
★★★★☆☆☆☆ = What I'd probably have with my ex

★★★☆☆☆☆ = What my friends probably have

★☆☆☆☆ = Us



Often couples aren't on the same ride when it comes to sex, and it's not just the timing that's misaligned. Considering all the factors that can interfere, a "all systems go" alignment is actually pretty miraculous.



When it comes to sex, ...  
norm ...

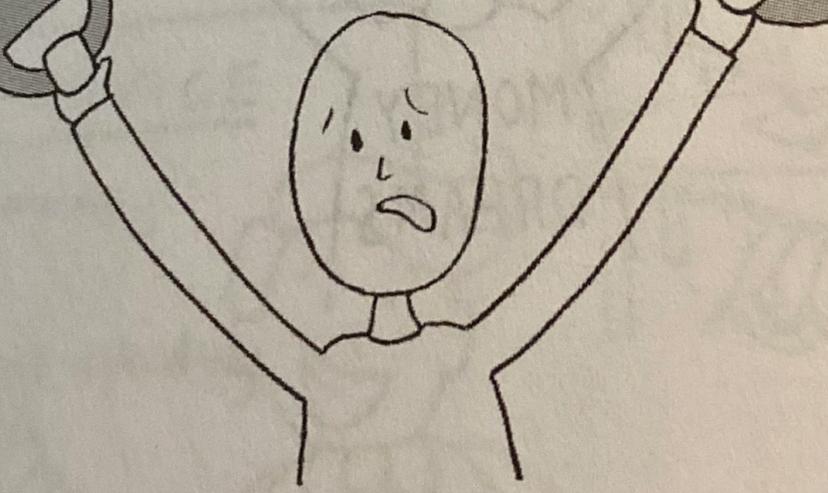
most of us into De...

LIMITS

BURDENS

LOSS OF FREEDOM

FIGHT FOR MORE ENJOYMENT



FIGHT FOR MORE CONTROL

LOSS OF SECURITY

HELPLESSNESS

LOSS OF CONTROL

Divorce Busting

## **Divorce Busting**

**Michele Weiner-Davis, MSW**

Divorce often doesn't solve the problems it was intended to solve.

We tend to blame our spouse for our problems and unhappiness.

Illusions of marriage often lead to severe disappointments

Fixing your relationship is like golf, a small change can make an enormous difference

Steal five minutes and Lamaze class comment

Divorce your Illusions, not your spouse destroy relationships, habits versus personality disorders

Rosenthal effect/ experimenter bias, you create the course outcome

Self-fulfilling prophecy

Too late to change

Spouse can't communicate

She nags me all the time

We've grown apart, spouse changed

Spouse had an affair

I don't live him/her anymore

“In what ways have I been showing and giving more love lately?”

Seesaw effect, the more you focus and verbalize a problem, the longer it persists.

Butterfly effect, small changes make large difference

Describe what it would look like to wake up and be in a healthy relationship, what would you be experiencing.

Set goal actions.

Modeling is when you borrow someone else’s success and do it yourself but

we have modeled our own success in the past, what has worked for you? Get more of it now.

When is the problem not present?

Change anything to break the predictability and fights which are already lost

Identify when/where more of your arguments occur

Do a 180 turn

Make yourself happy for a change

Pitfalls

Backsliding, stopping what you are doing too early

Don’t expect too much too soon

Don’t expect failure

Don’t take change for granted

## **Divorce Remedy**

**Michele Weiner-Davis, MSW (2001)**

### **Seven Steps to Saving Your Relationship**

**Names, ages, length of relationship**

**Children and brief relationship history**

**How you met and progressed**

**Where you are today?**

**Why stay?**

**What leave?**

**What does therapy offer?**

**Your emotions will throw you off from time to time**

**1-Start with the beginner's mind**

**2-Know what you want**

**3-Ask for what you want**

**4-Stop going down cheeseless tunnels**

**5-Experiment and monitor results**

**6-Take stock**

**7-Keep the positive changes going**

**Finale Put it all together**

**Common dilemmas, unique situations**

## Elaboration:

### **START WITH THE BEGINNER'S MIND**

**Preconceived notions cause two huge mistakes about:**

**love and relationships**

**conflict and anger, diverse backgrounds, unresolved fights, definition and desire for love/affection, fall out of love.**

**Stages: passion, what was I thinking, everything would be great if you changed, that's just the way s/he is, together at last.**

**perception of spouse and their problems**

**It takes one to tango. We try changing spouse because:**

**They are wrong and we don't believe we can influence them**

**You don't need to understand why, just find behavioral solution**

**Small changes matter**

### **KNOW WHAT YOU WANT**

**Don't skip! Action.**

**List 3-5 things you want without expressing triggering complaints.**

**Think action and measurable**

**Think small, what would be first step in getting that?**

## **ASK FOR WHAT YOU WANT**

careful timing of conversation

Careful tone of conversation, non-accusatory

## **STOP GOING DOWN CHEESLESS TUNNELS**

Just as rats stop going down tunnels w/o cheese, stop doing the same things that don't work and bring same behavior

Ask yourself, "what's my goal?" "How do I achieve that?"

## **EXPERIMENT AND MONITOR RESULTS**

Solution journal, challenge, action-solution, immediate reaction, long term reaction one week later.

Choose battles, strike with cold iron, cheerleader or critic?, problem free times, act as if positive instead of negative expectation, do something different (seesaw theory), do a 180

(Last resort: Stop the chase, get a life, wait and watch.)

## **TAKE STOCK**

Scale 1-10, where were you before started program? Now? Satisfied? How can you move one half point upward?

Sufficient time, change on your part, ignoring it? Halfhearted?

## **KEEP POSITIVE CHANGES GOING**

Don't stop what you're doing right

Truce triggers, things you do to show reconciliation, flowers, coffee, etc.

Foreseeing challenges and triggers

## **FINALE**

**PUT IT ALL TOGETHER/** Success stories

**COMMON DILEMMAS, UNIQUE SITUATIONS** Affair/internet addiction, extreme resistance, midlife crisis, depression or other mental health concerns, loss of passion.

- Give kids gift of knowing that parents will stay together.
- Love doesn't carry you through issues, you need SKILLS
- Conflict and anger don't equal disaster, in fact, fighting means you want it to work
- Find what you have in common, commonality isn't about similarity
- 60% of all conflicts are not resolved
- Each one must have their own definition of love and share with partner
- EXERCISE: Love Definitions. List top 3 things that will make you feel loved, that your partner can feel loved
- NATURE: People hold back from giving because they don't feel they are getting
- RULE: You don't have to understand or agree with it, you just have to do it!

**Don't Dissect the Problem, dissect the solution**

- New Year's Resolutions focus on self- weight loss, health, career, but in marriage therapy we fail because we focus on our spouse and that leads nowhere!
- DEFINE GOALS: What do you want to change or improve? Focus on solution rather than a problem.

Goals in positive terms. What will your spouse be doing when s/he hits the mark? Not what they will stop. Why didn't you just say so? State what you want specifically and with a request.

Action oriented

Smallest next step

Don't do: "More of the same actions" Be a solution detective

-What is the first sign you will see that shows you that you are on the right track?

3 Things: Define, Positive, Doable within 1-2 weeks

Why We don't say thank you:

Because I don't get thanked

Because these things need to get done anyway

Once you show appreciation, you have an ally.

We don't communicate (in my same style!) Can you tell when your dog or baby wants to go out and what about your spouse?

- Goal (male) vs. Emotions (female). The problem isn't the differences, it's the blaming that goes along with it.**
- Men need sex to be interested in emotion, women need emotion to be interested in physical. This paradox is a death sentence if both people wait.**

Tips for Men and let women hear:

Spend time together

Topic: Stay personal

How: Eye contact, listen, don't fix, ask questions

Work smart: Remember the little things.

Biggest problem that causes divorce, people don't spend time together due to job,  $\frac{2}{3}$  of divorces are filed by women, women spend early lives connecting, marriage caretaker, she pursues, if it doesn't work she complains about everything

Feelings aren't the f word.

Tips for Women

Don't judge him if he's not a talker

Remember: be brief, tell him, don't fix, talk without words. Listen to his actions

Can we talk?

It takes only one to tango, tip the first domino, step out of the same pattern.

Stop doing it "more of the same style"

**People need hugs the most when they deserve them the least**

Forgiveness is a gift you give yourself.

Act as if you get along

## Constructive Conversations

I messages without accusation and judgement

Be concrete

No mind-reading or interpretations

Leave past in past

Stick to the point

Feelings aren't right or wrong

No exaggeration

No name calling

Listen selectively- ignore the zingers, watch for and respond to conciliatory gesture

If become heated, take time out

Your problem solving strategy becomes the problem!

Eat less and exercise more, that's it, simple and only way.

If what you're doing works, continue, if it doesn't work, do something different

EXERCISE: What are you doing when you're not fighting? In the past? We got together more often, were more intimate, etc. This is your blueprint for correction. Take an action and do something to make it different.

Look for the rare exception of when s/he is happy and keep doing it!

YOU STARTED IT! Solution oriented:

Take a look at how your problems END!! Truce Triggers

Our needs often contradict, he wants to be alone and she wants to talk, follow him out.

How Can You Tell the Ice is Breaking?

Truce Triggers- consciously decide to bring these out earlier.

Break unproductive habits

Gregory Bateson, renowned anthropologist- depressed otters in the zoo in San Diego, he started playing with them and they never stopped playing even after he left.

## JT Interventions:

- 1) Each person needs the other to be less judgmental to change, but each is waiting to stop being judgmental until after the other changes.....
- 2) Optimal self vs. actual, Bridge Exercise
- 3) If I let myself feel.... This is what I would feel about past and present....
- 4) If I had these three things, thoughts, memories, people in front of me at all times I would behave differently,
- 5) Accept and Respect
- 6) You see what you want to see, if you don't want to see it
- 7) Two worst things you can do to help him get on track- shake rope or shout! Don't do that to your spouse when you are trying to get back together.

IFS



*The IFS model has 5 basic assumptions:*

- 1- The human mind is subdivided into an unknown number of parts.
- 2- Each person has a Self, and the Self should be the chief agent in coordinating the inner family.
- 3- Parts engaging in non-extreme behavior are beneficial to the individual. There is no such thing as a “bad part.”
- 4- Therapy aims to help parts discover their non-extreme roles.
- 5- Personal growth and development leads to the development of the internal family. Interactions between parts become more complex, allowing for systems theory to be applied to the internal system. Reorganization of the internal system may lead to rapid changes in the roles of parts.

Adjustments made to the internal system will result in changes to the external system and vice versa. Therefore, both the internal and external systems need to be adequately assessed.

*There are three distinct types of parts in the IFS model:*

**Managers** are responsible for maintaining a functioning level of consciousness in daily life by warding off any unwanted or counterproductive interactions, emotions, or experiences resulting from external stimuli.

**Exiles** are most often in a state of pain or trauma, which may result from childhood experiences. Managers and firefighters exile these parts and prevent them from reaching the conscious level so that proper functioning and preservation are maintained.

**Firefighters** serve as a distraction to the mind when exiles break free from suppression. In order to protect the consciousness from feeling the pain of the exiles, firefighters prompt a person to act on impulse and engage in behaviors that are indulgent, addictive, and often times abusive. Firefighters may redirect attention to other areas such as sex, work, food, alcohol, or drugs.

Trauma

## THEORY OF THE DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL

The developmental model of couples therapy is based on the work of [Margaret Mahler](#), who outlined the stages of early childhood development. It incorporates her concept of differentiation as well as certain aspects of [attachment theory](#). Like other developmental models, this theory assumes a predictable sequence of developmental milestones exists.

According to Bader and Pearson, long-term relationships are likely to proceed through the following stages:

**Bonding:** This is the initial honeymoon period during which couples seek closeness, uncover their similarities, and begin falling in love.

**Differentiation:** During this stage, couples begin to acknowledge and address their differences. A central task of this developmental stage is finding ways to resolve conflict.

**Practicing:** During this period, couples explore their independence, nurture outside friendships, and spend time developing their [self-esteem](#) and competence in areas separate from the relationship.

**Rapprochement:** This is a stage during which couples move away from and then return to one another. Often, a couple's sex life will deepen during this phase.

**Synergy:** This phase of development embraces true intimacy, recognizing a couple can come together and be stronger together than each member is alone.

## THE AMYGDALA HIJACK

### The technical definition

The amygdala is an almond shaped mass of nuclei (mass of cells) located deep within the temporal lobes of the brain. The amygdala hijack is an **immediate, overwhelming emotional response** with a later realization that the response was inappropriately strong given the trigger. Daniel Goleman coined the term amygdala hijack based on the work of neuroscientist Joseph LeDoux, which demonstrated that some emotional information travels directly from the thalamus to the amygdala without engaging the neocortex, or higher brain regions. This causes a strong emotional response that precedes more rational thought. The amygdala hijack basically equates to “freaking out” or seriously **overreacting** to an event in your life.



You want to tell your partner how you are feeling, but you are anxious. The prosody of your voice—tone, rhythm, pitch, may communicate annoyance, anger

Your body language may appear to be aggressive, you lean forward, squint, make your hands into fists. You do not mean to be aggressive, but your partner reacts, not to your words, but to what appears to be a threat



You instantly perceive your partner as aggressive. Your immediate, unconscious reaction, by way of the amygdala, is fight, flight or freeze

The amygdala screams danger and the thinking part of your brain goes off-line. You respond with an overwhelming emotional reaction, which triggers your partner's amygdala.

**Congratulations you and your partner are now dancing the primitive, amygdala Tango**

## Encounter Centered Couples Therapy

Essential to EcCT is the use of metaphor, and the guiding metaphor of the approach is that of the three invisible connectors. The approach's theory considers it crucial for each partner to bring their full and authentic presence into the world of the other, as this is what allows them to truly meet each other and have an “encounter” that can then provide the basis for a new or restored relationship that is both nurturing and fulfilling.

Other metaphors emphasized in the approach include:

**The neighborhood**, or a topic or issue between partner

**Survival dances**, or the patterns that couples engage in, which are dissected and explored in session to help couples discover new, more authentic ways to engage with each other in order for their relationship to thrive instead of simply survive

**Being a visitor**, or listening with [compassion](#) to one's partner and learning their particular culture

The specific sequence of events in which EcCT occurs is designed to allow a couple to move from a ruptured relationship to a repaired, connected one.

The couple is initially encouraged to challenge the status quo of the relationship and imagine what it could be like, in an idealized way.

Next, the couple is encouraged to identify and explore their adaptive patterns and then consider new ways of relating to each other.

The members of the couple then, with the guidance of the therapist, explore their “neighborhoods,” both those that inspire and those that frighten. This part of the process might involve exploring one’s [childhood](#), and the past in general, in order to heal past [traumas](#). Throughout this process, partners maintain a journal and engage in rituals in order to express their love and appreciation for each other. The end goal of this sequence is for the partners to become thoroughly connected with each other and to better understand the experiences of the other in the journey they have made together.

# Course Schedule

## Groundbreaking Couples Counseling: 10 Modalities

Part 4: Misc issues,  
Special cases; Q & A

## General Framework

## OVERVIEW

Intake

Assessment

Rapport

Disclosures

Goals

Observe together

Separate time

Together time

Individual issues

Couple issues

Follow up

Termination

Beyond



Every Modality Has:

- 1) Theoretical Framework
- 2) Assessments
- 3) Interventions
- 4) Process

You must be aware of your:

- 1) Biases
- 2) Belief systems
- 3) Judgements
- 4) Goals
- 5) Pressure
- 6) Emotions
- 7) Thoughts
- 8) Role

## **Insurance Billing - CPT Codes**

Always get in touch with insurance to learn about their policies:

90791 – Intake session – psychological evaluation (non-med management)

90837 - 60 min follow up individual session

90834 – 45 min follow up individual session

90832 – 30 min follow up individual session

90847 – follow up family session

90846 – family session without patient present

90853 – Group therapy

## Four C's of Couples' Connection

By: Joseph Tropper, MS, LCPC

When couples fight they have a tendency to disconnect, causing the issues to snowball and become more insurmountable. This acronym teaches you how to calm your storm, reconnect, find creative and clear solutions and stay focused on the family.

### C-enter

Center yourself with mindfulness techniques to calm your inner commotion. Why am I triggered, which raw spot was touched and how can I ensure that my reaction is appropriate and that I am available to connect once again? Connect with your inner essence and being and see your partner's core as well.



### C-onnect

Remind yourself that the focus is on connection. How can I give this message over to my spouse? I want you and I want to repair, I don't want to remain in this hurt state and continue hurting you, I want to be connected to you in a healthy mutual relationship.



### C-orrect

I'm not going to stew in the pot of anger, resentment and blame, I will express to you what clear actions I need in order to repair and I invite you to do the same. This shows that we are both striving for and ready for correction.



### C-hildren

I will not argue in front of the children. No matter what the situation, we can have this conversation privately. We are trying to create a safe and stable home and are committed to do so for us and the children.



## Triggers and Triumphs

Critical comment made. Perceived as threat and brain links to past hurt. Reaction occurs:

**Actual comment: 5% damage** 

**Past comments: 15% damage** 

**Personal past: 80% damage** 

## Fight and Personal Background

Your reaction: 100% attribution to current comment

+

Spouse's reaction: 100% denial of current responsibility

+

Your reaction to that: 150% attribution and more pain =

100% disconnection and defensiveness for both

The amygdala screams 'DANGER!' and produces an instant, overwhelming emotional reaction causing defensiveness and an aggressive tone to be produced. Partner's amygdala reacts to this with fight, flight or freeze. This further triggers your amygdala, which further triggers your partner's...

## ALARM



"It's all your fault! You hurt me so deeply, I can't trust you and it was a mistake marrying you."

Blame: 100%

Responsibility: 0%

"You blame me for everything, I did nothing wrong, it's all you."

Blame: 100%

Responsibility: 0%

Result: Stalemate and much hurt, alone and hopelessness

## Accusations/ Escalation



## The Solution

The amygdala screams 'DANGER!' and produces an instant, overwhelming emotional reaction causing defensiveness and an aggressive tone to be produced. Partner's amygdala reacts to this with fight, flight or freeze. This further triggers your amygdala, which further triggers your partner's...

## ALARM



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Blame: 100%

Responsibility: 0%

Result: Stalemate and much hurt, alone and hopelessness

## Accusations/ Escalation



"I acknowledge that some of my pain is based on my own past. I take responsibility for my actions and I want to share with you how I get triggered so that we can repair and get closer." Vulnerable sharing and repair.

"I acknowledge my actions and want to apologize for my actions. I can understand your experiences and how they impact you today, I am open to learning how to make this a safe relationship for you and me."

We can now address the present:

Actual comment: 5% damage

Defensiveness and hurt: 5% damage

Result: vulnerability and shared responsibility = safer environment

## The Solution



# HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP RECIPE

Joseph Tropper, MS, LCPC



|   |   |
|---|---|
| ♥ Share a 1-2 hour weekly date  | ♥ Don't play  |
| ♥ Compliment each other (4:1 for criticism)                                 | ♥ Criticize each other (1: 0.8 compliment)  |
| ♥ Talk 5x/week for 5-20 min to recalibrate                                  | ♥ Avoid talking about misunderstandings   |
| ♥ Call time outs and redo plays softer                                      | ♥ Allow fights to escalate  |
| ♥ Give love and acceptance  | ♥ Give judgment and shame   |
| ♥ Put being HAPPY before being RIGHT  | ♥ Put being RIGHT before being HAPPY  |
| ♥ Laugh often especially during fights                                      | ♥ Don't laugh together  |
| ♥ Validate the 10% they agree with instead of fighting the 90% disagreement | ♥ Fight back against the 90% disagreement instead of validating the 10% agreement |
| ♥ Make time for intimacy 1-2/week   | ♥ Don't have time/interest in intimacy  |
| ♥ Celebrate their partner's success   | ♥ Don't share and don't care to ask   |
| ♥ Encourage individualism and autonomy                                      | ♥ Try to control and suffocate  |
| ♥ Give trust and get trust  | ♥ Distrust and are distrusted   |
| ♥ Seek help when in need  | ♥ Resist learning skills  |

*"Relationships last long when two brave people commit to keep it, to fight for it, to love and play and to work hard to maintain it" – David Wilkerson*

## ABC's of Connection

Our actions and behaviors determine the building blocks of our relationships.

Let's replace the destructive pattern...

**A**nger, Accusations

**B**lame, Belittling

**C**riticism, Contempt, Complaints

**D**isconnection and eventually Divorce

With healthy building blocks instead.

**A**ppreciation, Affection, Acceptance

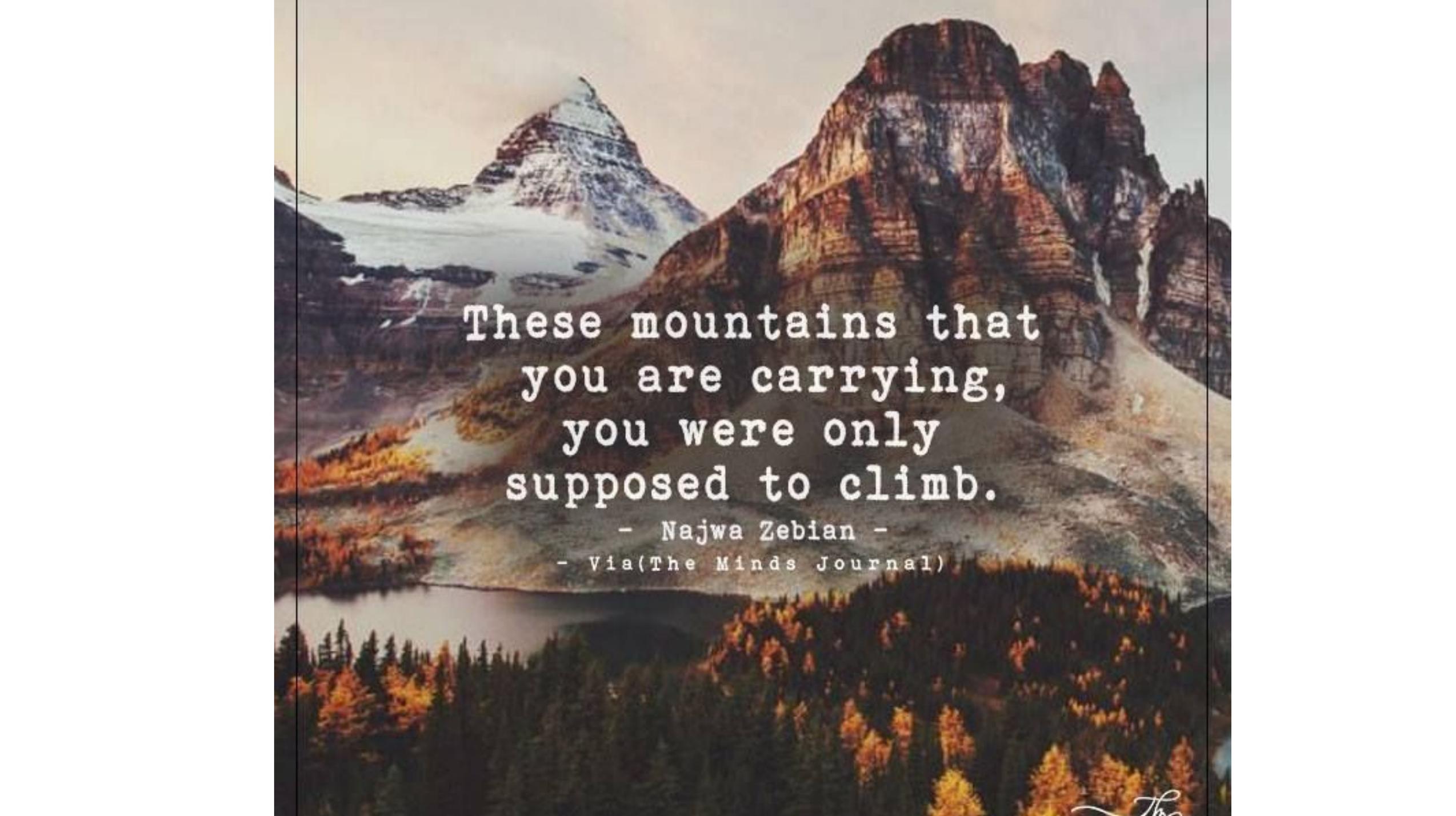
**B**onding, Building Up

**C**loseness, Companion, Comforting

**D**evotion and deep connection

**-Joseph Tropper**

## One-on-one Time Pros Vs. Cons

A scenic view of a mountain range. In the foreground, there is a dense forest of evergreen trees, some with yellow and orange autumn foliage. A calm lake reflects the surrounding landscape. In the background, several rugged mountain peaks are visible, some with patches of snow or ice. The sky is a soft, hazy blue.

These mountains that  
you are carrying,  
you were only  
supposed to climb.

- Najwa Zebian -

- Via (The Minds Journal)

The

Discernment Counseling

vs.

Couples Counseling



# A SHORT TERM, INTENSIVE PROCESS LASTING 1-5 SESSIONS

FOCUSES THE PARTNERS ON

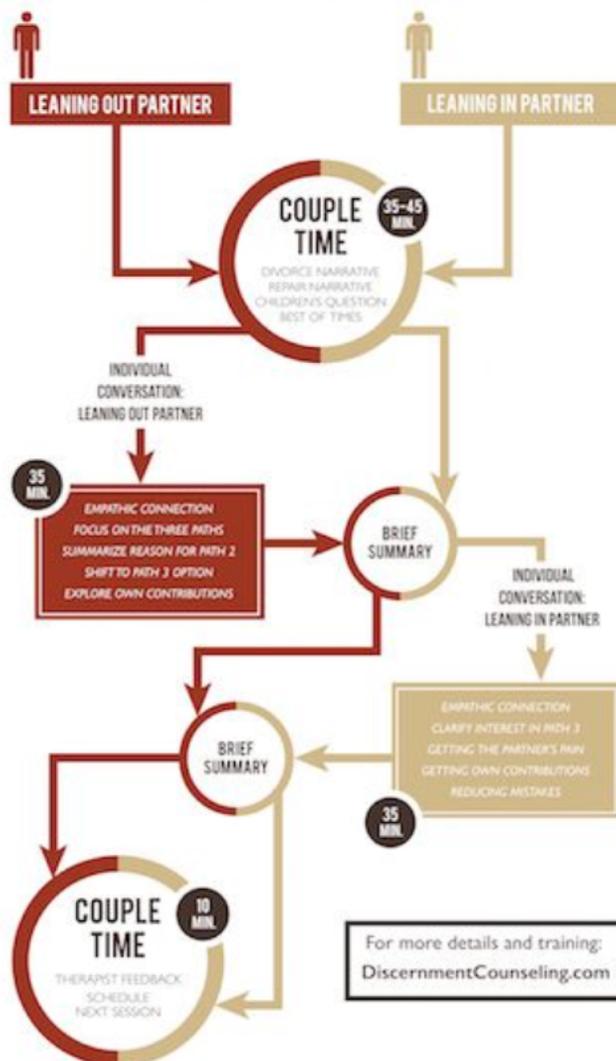
# 3 PATHS

STATUS QUO

SEPARATION/DIVORCE

SIX MONTH COMMITMENT TO COUPLES THERAPY

## FIRST SESSION OUTLINE





Affairs

# COMING CLEAN ABOUT INFIDELITY



Three American studies with representative samples revealed:



M Tu W Th F Sa Su

**25%** OF AFFAIRS LAST  
LESS THAN A WEEK

Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun

**65%** END WITHIN THE  
FIRST 6 MONTHS

## ADULTERY LAWS

- UPWARDS OF A LIFE SENTENCE IN MICHIGAN
- CLASS 1 FELONY IN WISCONSIN
- \$10 FINE IN MARYLAND

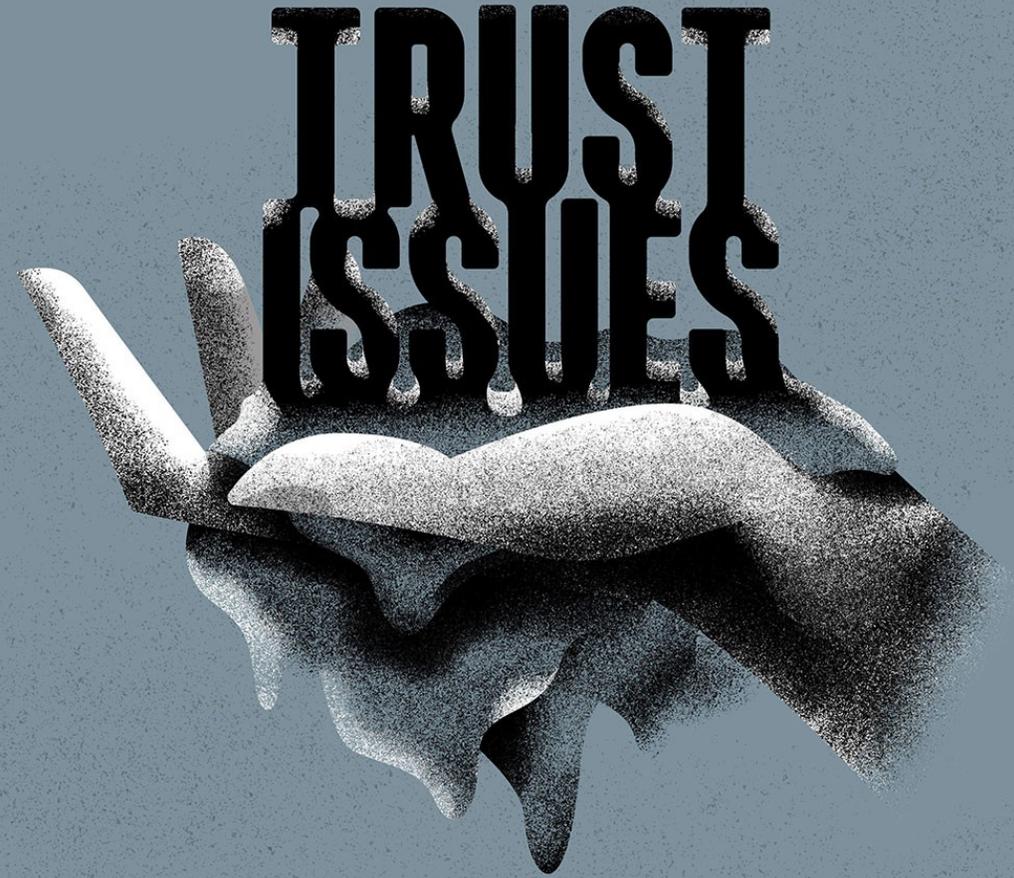
(((audible original)))

*Where Should  
We Begin?*

WITH ESTHER PEREL

GIMLET

Trust is a gift





**LGBT Issues**



## Health and Fertility Challenges



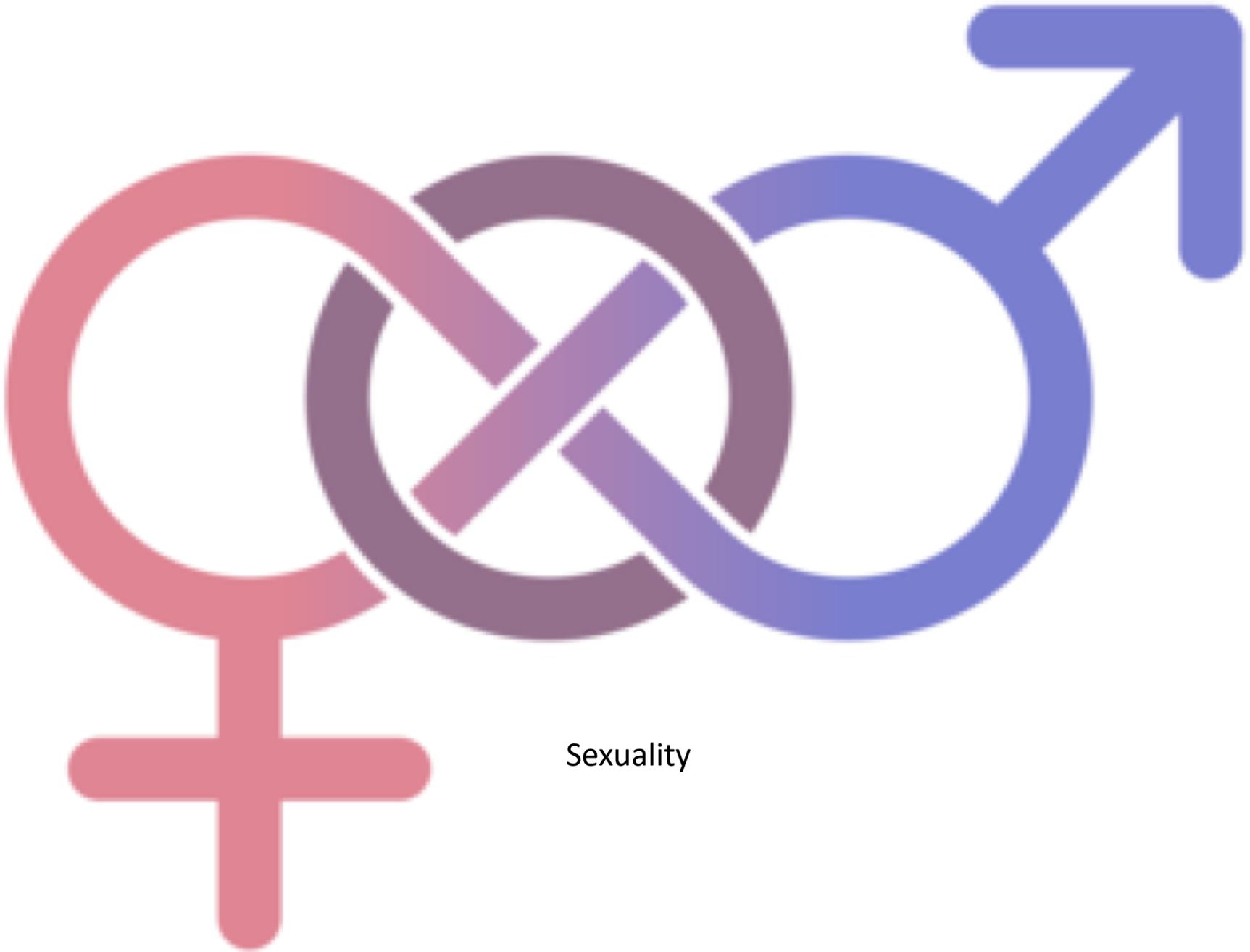
Mental Health



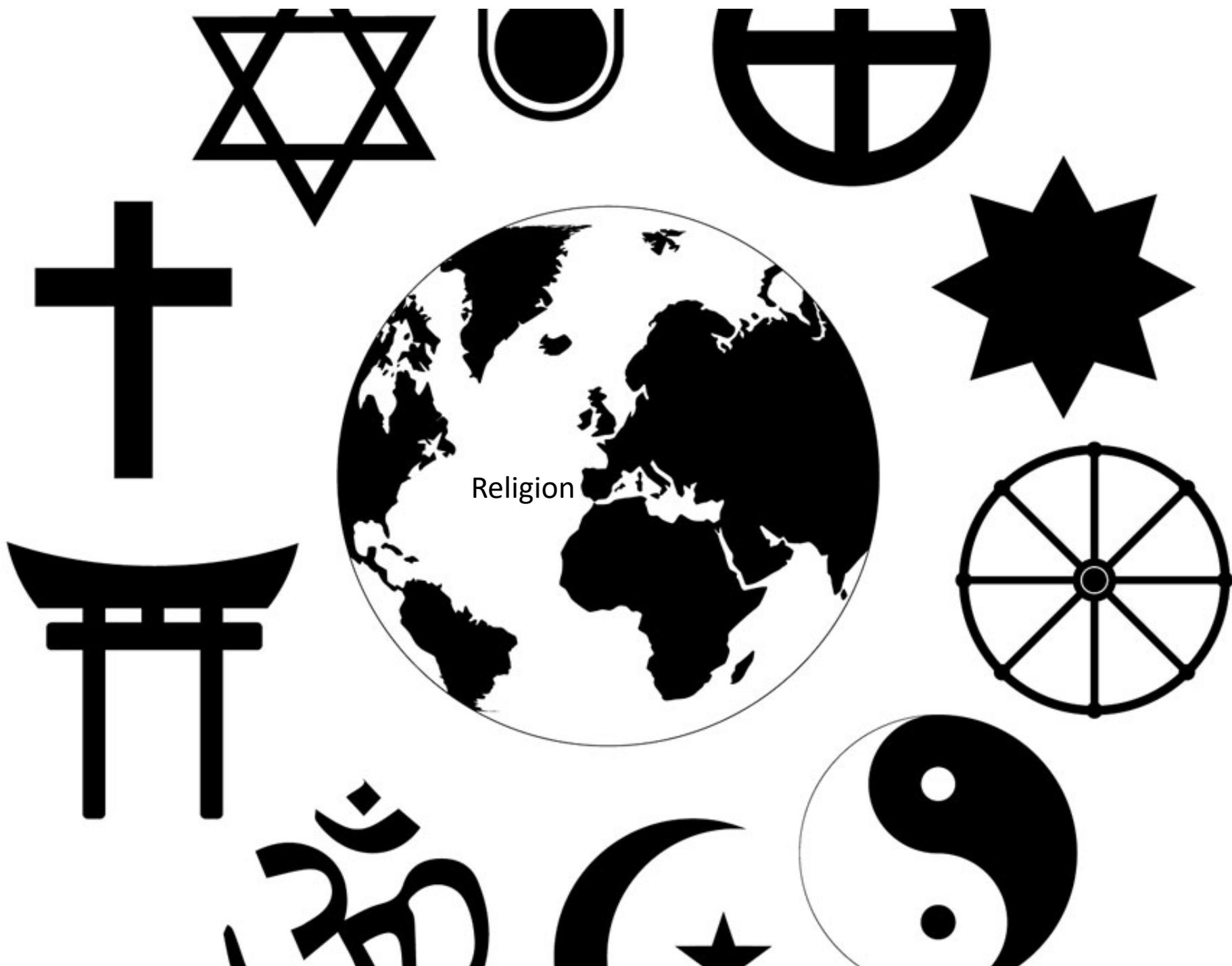
Finnish Study of 96,000 couples found, not surprisingly:

If one spouse suffered from a mental health issue the divorce rate was 2x higher than average and if both suffered from psychiatric issues it was 3x as high.

Metsä-Simola, N., Martikainen, P., & Monden, C. W. (2018). Psychiatric morbidity and subsequent divorce: a couple-level register-based study in Finland. *Social Psychiatry & Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 53(8), 823–831.



Sexuality



Religion



Gray Divorce



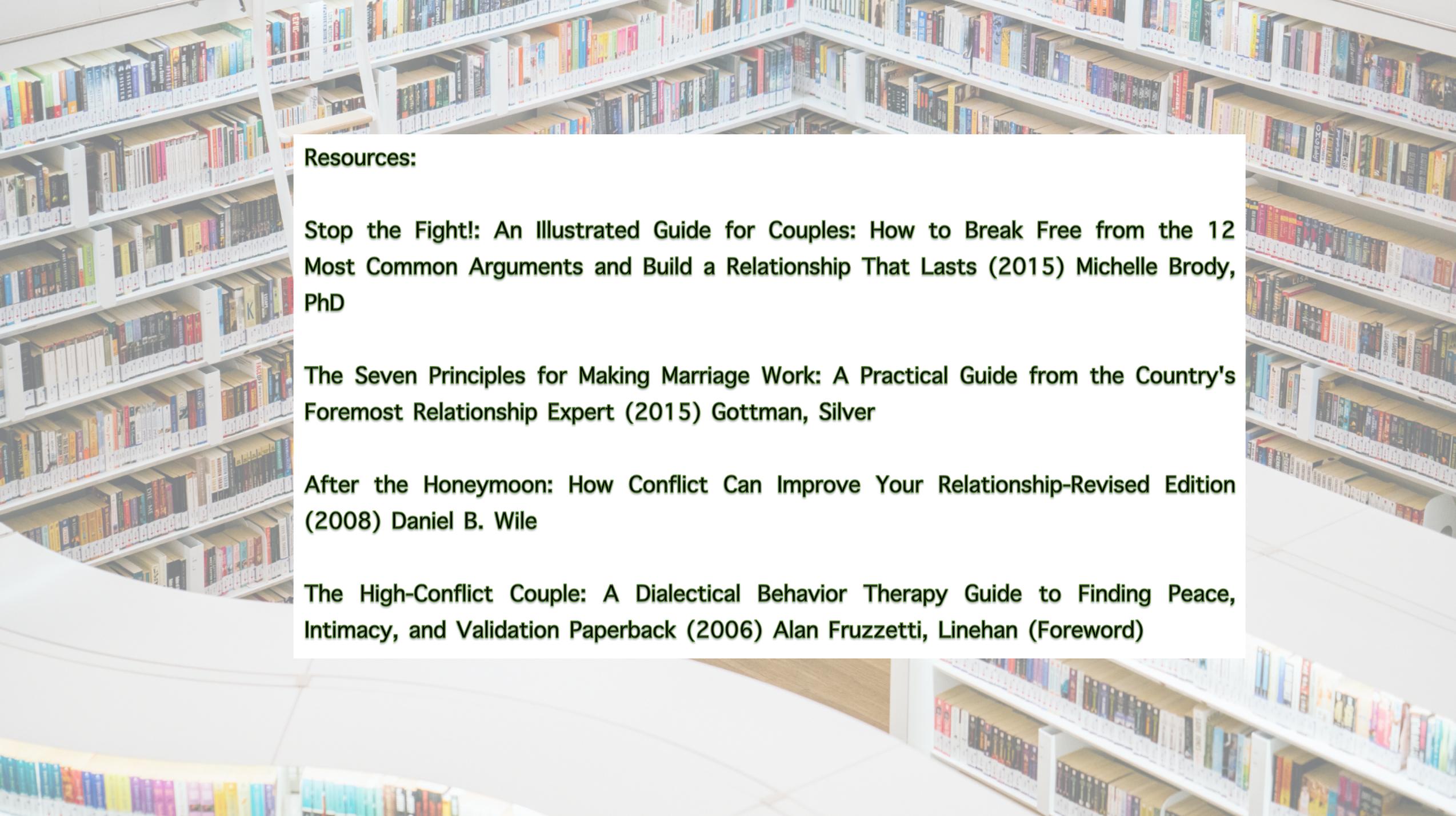
Questions?







**Married: 5.5 Hours**



**Resources:**

**Stop the Fight!: An Illustrated Guide for Couples: How to Break Free from the 12 Most Common Arguments and Build a Relationship That Lasts (2015) Michelle Brody, PhD**

**The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work: A Practical Guide from the Country's Foremost Relationship Expert (2015) Gottman, Silver**

**After the Honeymoon: How Conflict Can Improve Your Relationship-Revised Edition (2008) Daniel B. Wile**

**The High-Conflict Couple: A Dialectical Behavior Therapy Guide to Finding Peace, Intimacy, and Validation Paperback (2006) Alan Fruzzetti, Linehan (Foreword)**



CORE WELLNESS

# Groundbreaking Couples Counseling: 10 Modalities

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6 CE Training



[corewellceu.com](http://corewellceu.com)

Joseph Tropper, MS, LCPC, CCTP

[joseph@corewellceu.com](mailto:joseph@corewellceu.com)

443-929-1801