

How to do *I Love You*



A Couples Workbook

by D. Jeff and Marlene Burton

Artwork by Dave Burton

Dedicated to our children and their partners.

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**D. Jeff Burton
IVE Press, Inc
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Table of Contents

Preface

1. Introduction	1
2. Commitments and Promises	4
3. Emotions and Feelings	10
4. Expectations and Wanting	16
5. Care and Concern	19
6. Affection and Sexuality	22
7. Kindness and Patience	25
8. Forgiveness and Forgetting	27
9. Communication and Talking	30
10. Understanding and Empathy	37
11. Respect and Goodwill	41
12. Equality and Sharing	43
13. Problem Solving	46
14. Friendship and Nurturing	48
15. Trust and Faith	51
16. Compromise and Sacrifice	53
17. Fun and Humor	56
18. If Things Go Bad	58
19. To Begin	60
More Reading	60
Activities [A]	61
Activities [B]	72
The Caring Contract	83

Preface

Why? We wrote this book to help couples establish strong and loving methods of dealing with the challenges, conflicts and changes that inevitably visit every couple. For example, suppose one partner's outlook on their previously shared religious beliefs should change and that partner wants to modify their religious activities? Unless good techniques are available for handling such challenges, even loving couples can stumble badly.

Approach. You can read this workbook in an hour or two. We suggest you read it once through quickly. But then reread it slowly and methodically with your partner, and complete the assigned activities.

Two Activities Sections are provided beginning on page 61, one Section for each of you. Some activities you will perform yourself, some together.



Mock Dialogue. Examples of dialogue presented in each section of the workbook are short, simplified, abbreviated and in some cases, stereotypical. Such dialogues would likely be more complex and continue beyond that shown in the book. You might imagine how it might go if it was you or your partner speaking (and about some other issue).

Workbook Activities. A loving relationship between a man and a woman is complex. This book's suggestions and Activities may not fit every couple's needs. Don't feel guilty if something doesn't work for you—use that which helps; skip that which doesn't.

Copies. Copies of this Workbook are available free at:
www.forthosewhowonder.com

1. Introduction

It comes as a great surprise to younger people that a husband and wife must work at marriage all the days of their lives. — M.E. Markewich

All the beautiful sentiments in the world weigh less than a single loving action — James Russell Lowell

On their honeymoon a friend of ours told his wife, "I love you terribly." She smiled and said, "That's okay—we have the rest of our lives to work on it."



Love between two people begins high above the timberline: clear, new, and turbulent—bubbling with excitement as it splashes toward the distant valley. Gradually the stream of love widens and deepens, its banks alternating between silent forests and teeming human activity. In its quiet maturity, the river becomes the buoyant force for much human commerce and pleasure.

Couples traveling the river are expected to *love* one another. They should chart a safe course, dredge a deep channel for their love, and work to keep the banks of their relationship from becoming polluted.

In this workbook we will explore different ways your love can be infused with life--and your life with love--and expressed in action and behavior.

We express love with our words and by our actions.

Accommodating changes in our partners and in ourselves is sometimes hard. Similarly, changing lifetime habits and styles is not easy. It takes time—months and years sometimes. At first, *expressing* love in new ways may seem stilted, formal, even phony. But after a little practice, and after you become accustomed to new ways of thinking and acting, it will seem like you've always done it that way.

Traits

General traits of successful “friends and lovers” are shown on the next page. We will explore many of these traits and attitudes in the next eighteen sections.

***“I love you” implies something to do,
not just something to say.***

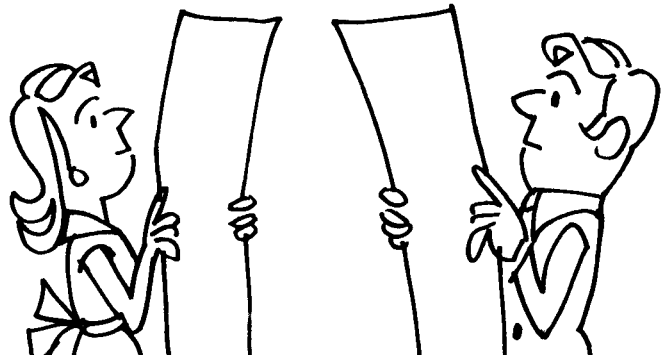
Activities

In each Section we ask you to do things to improve your relationship—*love-enhancing activities*. These are found at the back of the book—one set for you and one for your partner, Part A and Part B.

You will have a much better outcome if you both actually do these activities.

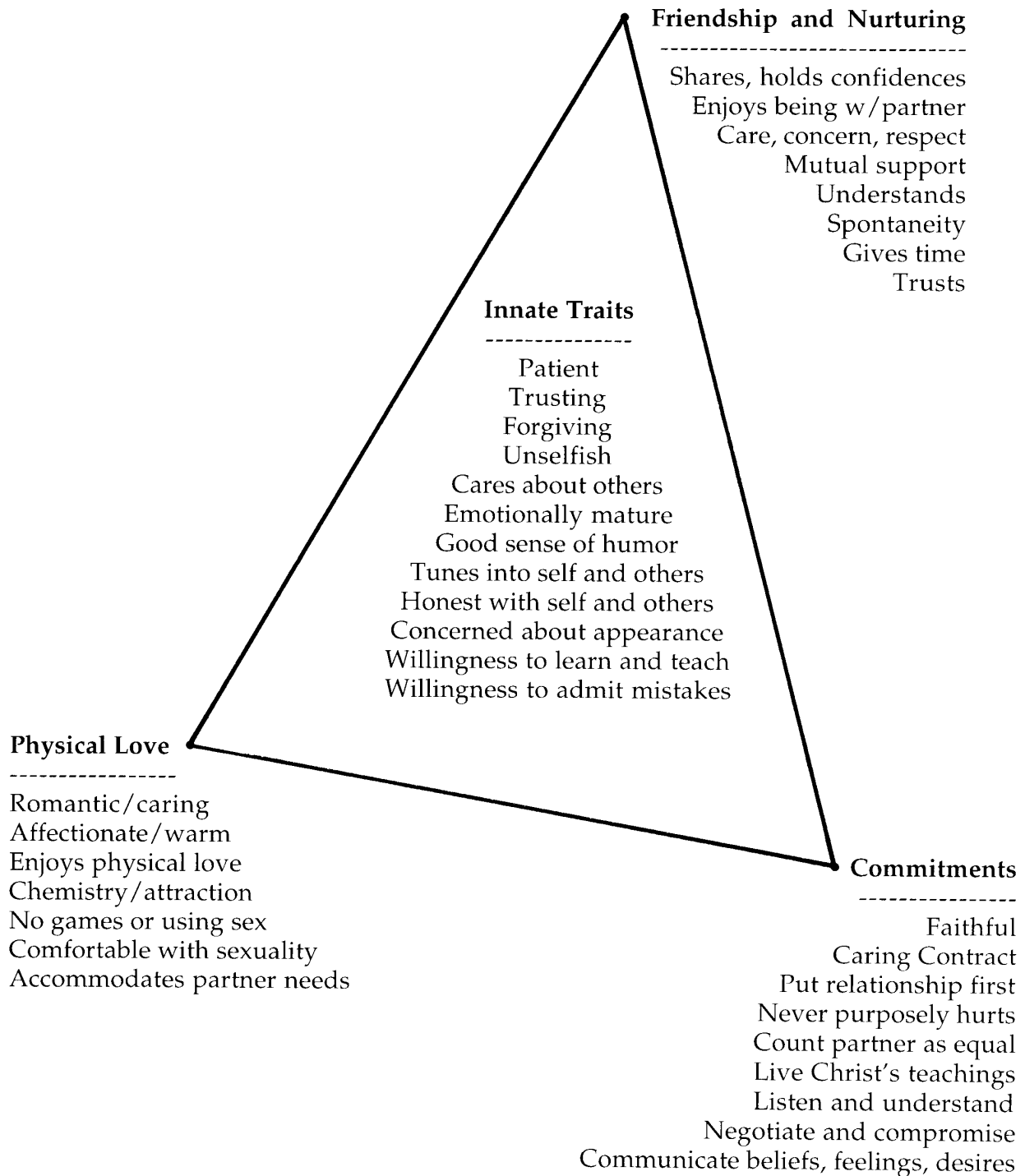
Please complete Activities 1-3 at this time.
(See **Activities** pages at the back of the book.)

Notes:



The Good Relationship

Committed Friends and Lovers



2. Commitments and Promises

Your capacity to keep your vows will depend on the purity of your life. — Mahatma Gandhi

Vows made in storms are forgotten in calm — Thomas Fuller

A man or woman who says, “I love you,” is making commitments, preferably positive and unconditional in nature.



For example:

*I will care for you.
I promise not to hurt you.
I will support you.*



Unfortunately, some commitments become (in actual practice) negative and conditional:

*I will care for you (if you live up to my expectations).
I promise to not to hurt you (when I'm feeling good).
I will support you (if you do what I ask).*

Conditional pledges sow seeds of mistrust which inevitably bear fruits of pain and anger.

Positive Commitments

Those of us who are married have taken the vows of the marriage ceremony. Unfortunately, the excitement of the moment kept many of us from hearing, much less actually translating into real terms, the strong commitments spoken.

Marriage vows are the golden threads that bind two people together, the glue that keeps the relationship from crumbling.

Each person in a loving, lasting relationship must actually make firm, positive, and feasible commitments to his or her loved one.

While broad general commitments are made at the marriage ceremony, more detailed commitments should follow the marriage vows and may be tailored to the specific promissory needs of the relationship. Some examples (for a man) include:

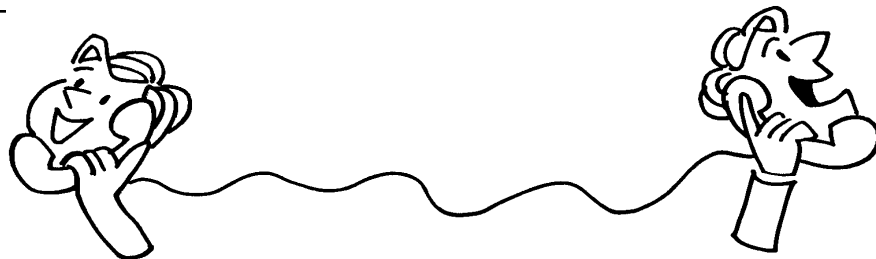
- I will care about you.
- I won't hurt you intentionally.
- I won't sleep with anyone else.
- I'll treat you as my equal.

- I'll respect your faith and your religious beliefs.
- I'll respect your ideas.
- I'll let you talk.
- I'll listen.
- I'll nurture you during your times of need.
- I'll include you in my life.
- I'll apologize when I'm wrong.
- I'll share financial matters with you.
- I'll help you get your education.
- I'll eat without criticism of your cooking.
- I'll pick up your socks.

Such commitments don't require giving up individuality or freedom. Paradoxically, they allow greater individuality and freedom by defining the bounds of mutually-acceptable behavior.

Remember, make commitments and promises which are feasible. And recognize that commitments are often idealistic—mistakes and slips will be made.

Examples



John: Sal, I've been thinking about our marriage vows and what I've committed to do for you.

Sally: Wow! This sounds almost serious.

John: Well, maybe it is. Those marriage vows were pretty general—love, honoring, cherishing. More specifically, I want you to know that I'm committed to not ever knowingly hurting you. If you feel hurt it's probably because I blew it. Please let me know so we can talk it out.

Sally: Thanks. When you say things like that it builds my faith in our love.

• • • • •

Marcia: Every time I come home with a new hairdo, you make some crazy comment like, "Look at the Martian."

Len: Are you going to be upset?

Marcia: Not right now, but it disturbs me. Why do you say things like that?

Len: I don't know. Maybe I'm embarrassed.

Marcia: At what?

Len: I think you look nice, but I'm afraid...or embarrassed...to say it.

Marcia: Aren't you also mad because I spent some of our money on my hair again?

Len: Sometimes. I don't want us overdrawn at the bank. And maybe I want the money for stuff I'd like to buy.

Marcia: That's being honest. Look, let's make a deal. I'll let you know when I'm going to the hairdresser's, if you'll hold the negative comments.

Len: Okay. I'll commit to that.

Negative and Conditional Commitments

If commitments-to-hurt or conditional commitments are allowed to become entrenched in a relationship, heartache and pain are sure to follow.

Most of us do not announce (much less understand) our negative promises. They may creep up like storms in the night often unspoken, leaving our partner confused and hurt.

Amos: (Thinking and angry: I'm never again going to go shopping with her.)

• • • • •

Brea Ann: (Thinking and frustrated: You're going to pay the next time you want to make love.)

• • • • •

Mike: (Thinking and upset: The next time she's overdrawn I'm going to take her name off the account.)

• • • • •

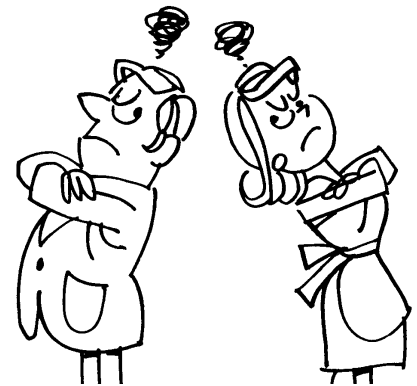
Sharon: (Thinking and mad: If he's late again tonight, I'm never going to fix a decent dinner again.)

Negative and conditional commitments can become threats when spoken. Fortunately, such negative commitments can be evaluated and eliminated as they are perceived.

Joy: You told me you wouldn't embarrass me in Church!

Ross: My, you're angry. And maybe exaggerating?

Joy: Why do you insist on asking those crazy questions about the Godhead? Everyone will know that you're not a true believer! What are people going to think about us?



Ross: Who cares what people think! They're idiots if they think there's some kind of "holy" ghost out there watching over them.

Joy: If you do that again I'm not going to go to Sunday School with you again. I'll just stay at home or in the library. You can make a fool of yourself without me.

Ross: Look, this seems to be getting out of hand. What do you want me to do?

Joy: Yeah, well...couldn't you just not bring up all your doubts at Church? It makes me and others uncomfortable. Our friends there are starting to distance themselves.

Ross: Let's commit ourselves to some positive things. I'll keep quiet if you'll talk with me here at home about my doubts and questions. Trust me, I don't like it either.

Joy: Okay, and sorry I made a threat about not attending Church with you.

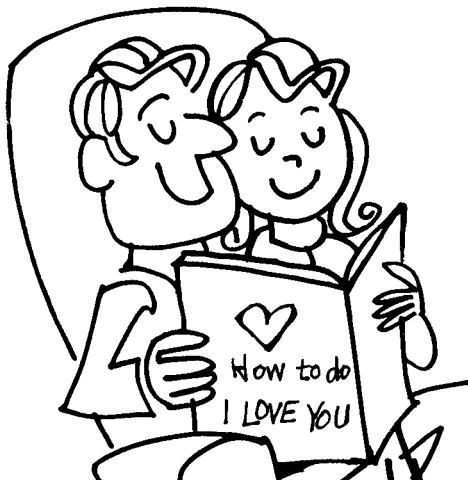
In summary, we are free to make decisions about how we will act, how we will behave, and how we will treat our partner.

We need to make appropriate commitments and promises.

And finally, it helps to let our partner know our expectations and the promises we desire.

Please perform Activities 4-8. (See Activities pages at the back of the book.)

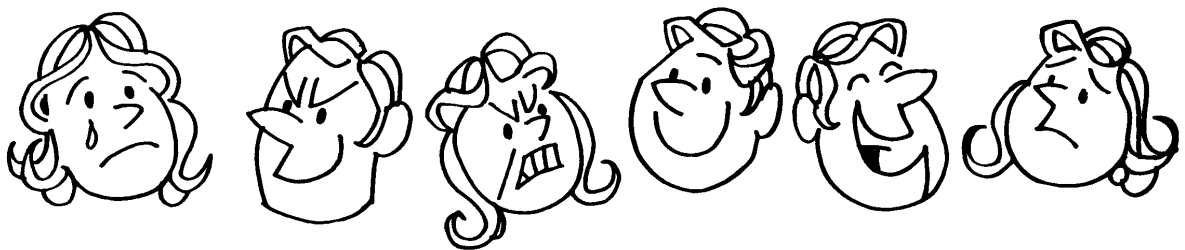
Discussion:



3. Emotions and Feelings

By starving emotions we become humorless, rigid, and stereotyped; by repressing them we become literal, reformatory, and holier-than-thou; encouraged, they perfume life; discouraged, they poison it. — Joseph Collins

Love contains life's strongest feelings: joy, comforted, lonely, sensuous, jealous, frustration, anger, elation and many other welcome and unwelcome emotions.



All life is infused with emotions and feelings.

All life has emotional attributes, but the *feelings of love* run deepest and, paradoxically, they are also sometimes hard to describe.

Who, for example, can do justice to that special skip of the heart when love first weaves its web? And who can adequately describe that sinking, awful feeling as love unravels?

Understanding feelings, your own and your partner's, is difficult but rewarding. It takes effort and practice to “tune in” to the emotions you both broadcast.

Life's experiences might be thought of as being stored in the brain in interconnected memory cells—one cell reserved for intellectual aspects, another for emotional aspects, and so forth:

Cell B13a — “Ate roast beef at Alicia's house on Sunday afternoon.”

Cell B13b — “Feelings of gratitude for Alicia's friendship; feelings of comfort in her house; feelings of frustration at not being able to communicate.”

To remember something is to simultaneously search and retrieve data stored in adjacent cells. Remembering a vacation will retrieve pleasant emotions of relaxation, fun, and joy. Recalling a fight may dredge up feelings of anger, frustration, or hate.

Nanci: I thought about the fight I had with Fred and feelings of hate, anguish, and frustration came back.

Fred: As I recalled Nanci's sarcasm, feelings of anger returned.

A list of love-related emotions could consume many pages, but a sampler of emotions from A to Z are shown in Table 1.



Emotions occur daily, hourly, and by the minute, and in bunches. Even though we cannot always dictate our basic emotions, we can manage our responses to them. When hurt, we have choices of response—we can hurt back, we can turn away, we can cry, we can talk about it, we can forgive, and so forth. We can plan ahead as to how we will respond to specific emotions.

Table 1. Common Emotions of a Loving Relationship

The basic six: *I feel...* ...glad. ...sad. ...mad. ...scared. ...sexy. ...curious.

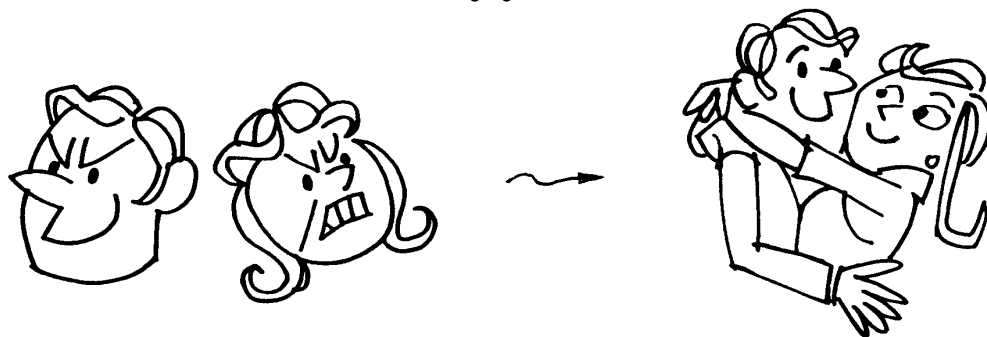
Some others. “*I feel...*”

abandoned	able	agitated	alone	amused
accepted	adoring	appreciated	admired	amazed
angry	anxious	appreciative	apprehensive	astounded
attracted	bad	belittled	betrayed	bewildered
bitter	blaaah	bored	bothered	bugged
blissful	beloved	blessed	buoyant	burdened
burned out	calm	cheered	comfortable	compassionate
concerned	confused	content	crushed	curious
defensive	deflated	delighted	dependant	depressed
disappointed	disarmed	distracted	distressed	disturbed
doubtful	dreadful	eager	embarrassed	empty
enjoy	enraged	enraptured	envious	enhanced
enriched	esteemed	exuberant	exasperated	excited
failure	fearful	fond	familiar	fortunate
free	favored	foolish	frantic	friendly
frightened	frustrated	furios	glad	good
grateful	grieved	guilty	happy	heard
heartbroken	helpful	helpless	hopeful	hostile
humble	humiliated	hurt	impatient	important
impressed	impulsive	inadequate	incompetent	independent
insecure	indifferent	infatuated	inhibited	injured
invigorated	improved	included	intense	inspired
interested	irritated	isolated	jealous	joyous
jovial	left-out	let-down	little	lonely
lost	lovable	lovely	low	meek
melancholy	miserable	misused	misunderstood	mortified
moved	naive	neglected	nervous	optimistic
overwhelmed	pain	panic	paralyzed	peaceful
peeved	perplexed	persecuted	pessimistic	pity
powerful	protective	proud	pleasure	prized
pleased	precious	provoked	puzzled	rejected
relaxed	relieved	repentant	resentful	restless
revengeful	ridiculous	riled	sad	satisfied
scared	seething	selfish	sensitive	sentimental
serene	serious	shocked	sick	silly
slow	sore	sorrow	sorry	stumped
stunned	stupid	submissive	superior	tense
thrilled	ticked-off	tired	tolerant	unappreciated
understood	uneasy	unhappy	unimportant	unkind
unloved	unmoved	unprepared	unsure	untrusted
unworthy	uptight	used	useless	venturesome
wanted	weary	warm	wonderful	worried

Allen: Right now I'm feeling bad that you're crying...but I also feel frustrated and angry because you refused to attend church with us.

Elaine: Why didn't you tell me you spent our Christmas money on sports equipment? Now I'm feeling angry and betrayed. And I'm also feeling revengeful...I can't help it.

Emotions are mostly unavoidable. We can often avoid events and activities that result in unpleasant emotions. But if circumstances warrant negative emotions (anger, hate, or jealousy), little can be done to avoid them. As they arise they must be managed. On the other hand, pleasant emotions can be generated by creating events and activities that result in emotions we enjoy.



Susan: I'm feeling kind of melancholy. How about a night of music over at the club? That would make me feel better.

Andy: Sounds fine, but I'd rather not dance any western dances—I feel embarrassed and silly when we do those.

• • • • •

Ray: Debra, do you have a moment to talk about something?

Debra: Looks serious. Sure, I'll put away my knitting.... Okay, what is it?

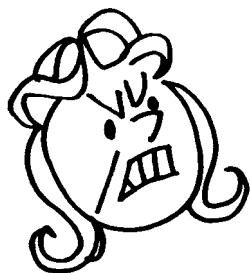
Ray: You remember last night when you said that you wished I'd get on a diet?

Debra: Yes.

Ray: Well, I didn't say much then, but I was hurt, and angry, and I wanted to hurt you. I've been fighting this weight problem for so long that I'm sensitive to any comment...even to a look that says "You're heavy."

Debra: I noticed you didn't lash back at me. I immediately knew it wasn't the right time to bring it up. Anyway, thanks...I'm afraid I was in no mood for an argument. We both could have been hurt badly. And I felt anguish for you and really felt sorry for not using more tact. It's just that I'm so frustrated at that closet-full of clothes you can't wear.

Ray: I feel proud of myself for having controlled my anger. I counted to 20, just as we planned. By then I could tell it wasn't time to talk, so I decided to wait 'till this morning.



Finally, denial or repression of feelings can lead to emotional distress, emotional illness, and explosions.

James: All I said was "your mother drinks"—and you hit the ceiling like I had a contract out on her, or something.

Jennifer: I don't know...that comment on my mother's drinking was the last straw. I've been feeling angry and disappointed ever since last summer when you didn't come down to the airport to see her off!

James: Last summer? I think I was working then. And I said goodbye to her at home.

Jennifer: You could have gotten off work. I'm upset that you don't like her.

James: Don't like her? I do like her. It's just that I don't like her to drink around the kids.

Jennifer: Well, these feelings have been lying inside of me festering and building all these months. I just exploded.

James: I was wondering what was on your mind.

Jennifer: Why didn't you ask me?

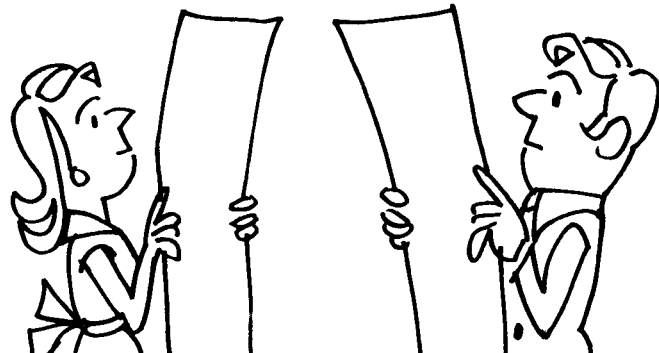
James: I don't know. Why didn't you tell me?

Emotions are the salad dressings of life. Some are sweet, some some tangy, and a few are bitter. But all add savor and flavor to life's various salads.

Enjoy!

Please perform Activities 9-16.

Discussion:

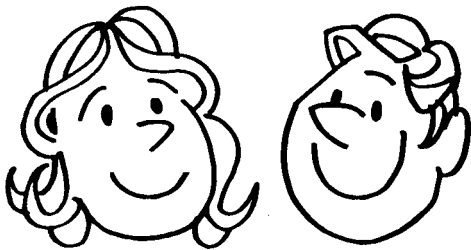


4. Expectations and Wanting

All human activity is prompted by desire. — Bertrand Russell

It is not from nature, but from education and habits, that our wants are chiefly derived. — Henry Fielding

Men and women come together for many reasons and everyone wants something from a relationship: companionship, support, sex, children, a partner, money, friendship, fun, someone to go to church with, and so forth. Some just want a seat on the ship of life.



There is nothing wrong in wanting things from a loving relationship. Problems arise when desires are unreasonable, or unknown to the partner; or, when one person is unable or unwilling to accommodate the needs and wants of the other.

Expectations and wants follow life: They change by the day and as circumstances occur. For example when illness strikes, a man may want comfort and nurturing. When getting a new calling, a woman may need support and time.

In a loving relationship desires and wanting are best handled with this attitude and approach:

“I want to know what your wishes and desires are; I want to negotiate with you how we can fulfill your needs, desires, and wants. At the same time I want you to know my desires and wants, and negotiate with you how to achieve them.”

Sometimes a person's desires and wants cannot be fulfilled, or must be postponed. (See Section 16, Compromise and Sacrifice.)

Tim: Karen, I need to talk to you about the way we talk after we get home from work. We're both tired and irritated and this often creates a negative environment. I usually end up feeling angry and frustrated. I would like to have a half-hour "cooling-off" time when neither of us brings up any heavy issue.



Karen: I know how you feel. I think you're onto something. I want some peace, too. But I also want to share the dinner-making when we get home.

Tim: Okay with me. If you're agreeable, we can satisfy both of our wants starting tomorrow.

Karen: Wow! That was easy! Why don't we talk more often? I like knowing what you want.

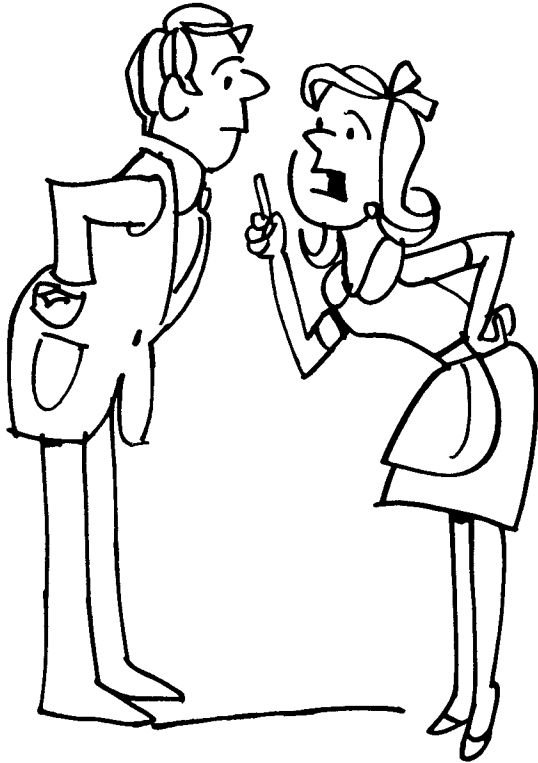
Tim: It's easier than stewing about something, isn't it.

Unfortunately, love can also be twisted to mean: "I want you to serve me and do my bidding." In this sense love really means, "I love what you can do for me; I love what the relationship gives me; I love having someone to fulfill all my desires." In a thankful heart, these meanings might be acceptable. In a selfish, immature heart, these meanings are shallow and brackish. See the following exchange.

Bob: You know I love you, Jane. I tell you all the time. I just wish you would treat me more fairly and let me do things my way more often. I love you and need to know that you care about what I want.

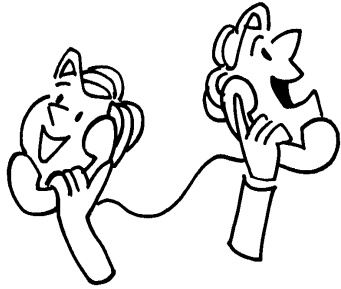
Jane: You do say you love me, yes. And you often show me that you love me by how you treat me. But I am miffed by your suggestion that I don't treat you fairly and that I don't care about your ways of doing things. I'm hurt that you think that.

Bob: I always tell you I love you. And you tell me, too. But you won't fix my lunch every day...and you always spend more money than I do on clothes. And sometimes my laundry isn't done on Monday like I want.



Please perform Activities 17-20.

Discussion:



5. Care and Concern

The greatest sin against mankind is not to hate them—but to be indifferent to them. — George Bernard Shaw

Love suggests, “I care about you. I’m concerned about you.” It becomes active by showing concern, by being caring.

Tom: *I missed you today.*

Ronda: *Really? When?*

Tom: *When you didn't step off the bus, I had all kinds of thoughts and feelings go through my mind.*

Ronda: *Were you afraid I was hurt?*

Tom: *I guess so...and other frightening things.*

•

Sally: *I'm really concerned about you. You seem down.*

Tan: *I'm worried about my sore throat—we might not be able to go on our vacation.*

Sally: *I care about you more than our vacation. Go lay down and I'll fix you some hot soup.*

Every couple should construct the “Caring Contract” described on the following two pages.

Caring

****Caring = thoughtfulness, kindness, gentleness, forgiveness, sharing, giving, generosity, helping, placing the other person equal to you.***

The Caring* Contract Five Steps to a Lasting, Pleasant and Rewarding Relationship

To develop a Caring Contract, each partner should:

Step 1. Understand “committed love” in a relationship.

- *Love, at its core, is a commitment to care for your partner.*
- *It must be mutually accepted, felt, and taken responsibility for.*
- *No relationship can survive if only one person makes the commitment.*

Step 2. Make the following permanent commitment to the other:

“I will treat you as though I care about you.”

- **This is the “caring contract.”**
- **Motives for caring will vary, but actual caring behaviors and attitudes must be foremost.**
- **Each partner will feel secure and trusting when s/he knows the other person is committed to caring for her/him.**
- **Every word and action should pass through the filter of:**

“Does this show that I care?”

- **Mistakes will be made and partners will not show caring at all times. In this case the other partner has choices:**
 - a. **Ignore (with genuine forgiveness and forgetting). Okay.**
 - b. **Ignore (with buildup of resentment and anger). Not okay.**



c. Communicate your “I don’t feel cared for” concerns and disappointments, knowing your partner will:

- Express sorrow and make amends, and/or,
- Express feelings, thoughts and needs and find a mutually acceptable compromise or explanation with you, and/or,
- Change behavior and attitudes to enhance caring.

Note: Communication is a learned skill. See Section 9.

- To succeed, talking must be done at the right time, with the right methods, and with the caring commitment in place
- Being understood is often more important than being right.

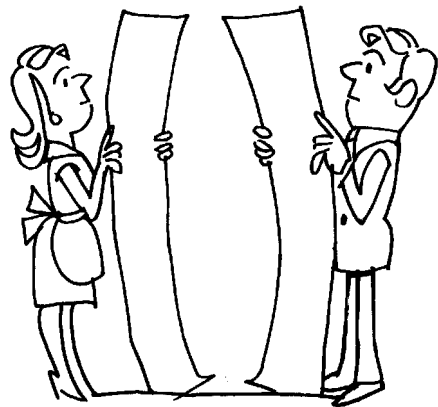
Step 3. Be willing to make personal changes, as necessary and feasible, to become a “caring” partner.

- “People can’t/won’t change” is a myth.

Step 4. Understand that a caring relationship is an asymptotic function: you move towards that ideal as time passes.

Step 5. Outline in writing what s/he expects as part of a caring contract.

- A written contract—developed and acceptable to both partners—will build trust and acceptance.



Please perform Activities 21-24.

6. Affection and Sexuality



Affection can withstand very severe storms of vigor, but not a long polar frost of indifference. — Sir Walter Scott

Talk not of wasted affection; affection never was wasted. — Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Sex is a flame which uncontrolled may scorch; properly guided, it will light the torch of eternity. — Joseph Fetterman

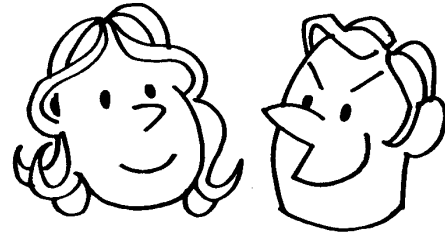
Love must carry a feeling of affection, a feeling of wanting to reach out and hug and be hugged. It's a soft touch on the arm, a caress of the cheek, an arm around the shoulder. Affection can be sitting on the couch with your loved one's head on your shoulder, arms intertwined; it is that tingling awareness of natural forces within us.

Affectionate feelings may mature into physical activities —cuddling, touching, bare skin against bare skin, and the climatic expression of love in the sexual act, appropriately called “making-love.”

Affection can and often does exist without a sexual climax; but affection must exist in a love-based sexual experience. Affection is closeness while physical love is a temporary physical oneness.

Jeri: Jack, I don't feel like making love tonight.

Jack: When we were first married did you say, "I'm oversexed," or was it "I'm over sex"?



Jeri: Ten thousand comedians out of work and you're trying to be funny. Look, I'm tired and I don't think I can get up the energy. But I'd like to cuddle and be affectionate.

Jack: Being physical will work me up.

Jeri: That's okay. We can make love if you want—I like the closeness even when I don't go all the way. I enjoy giving you pleasure.

Jack: But then I feel bad when you don't get the same pleasure.

Jeri: Thanks for your concern, but I'll have pleasure. I know you'd do anything for me. Knowing that, and being close is enough for me.

• • • • •

Joey: You probably feel like cuddling, right?

Edna: I feel more like making love.

Joey: I could get in the mood, too. But give me a little time.

Edna: Okay. Let's just enjoy the mood and the feelings.

• • • • •

Chip: What would help you to have climax? Just what do I need to do?

Barbara: Treat me with tenderness. Be affectionate. Touch me softly. Don't push me. Whisper in my ear. Stuff like that. You know—go slowly, take your time.

Chip: I feel kind of silly doing those things.

Barbara: How come?

Chip: I don't know. They don't seem masculine, or something.

Barbara: I can understand, perhaps. But you can choose to do whatever you want. You know what I want.

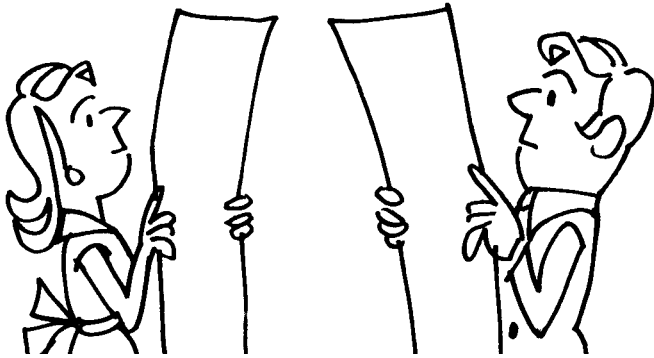
Chip: Hmmm, that's right. So you don't think it's effeminate to be that way?

Barbara: No.

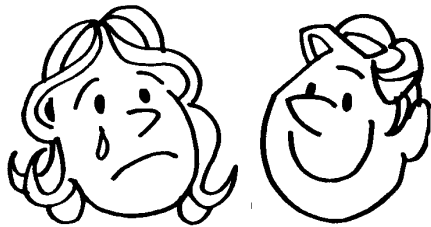
Chip: It's good to talk about it.

Please perform Activities 25-31.

Discussion:



7. Kindness and Patience



Kindness is produced by kindness. — Cicero

*Kindness is loving people more than they deserve.
— Joseph Joubert*

Patience is bitter, but its fruit is sweet. — J.J. Rousseau

***“I love you” says, “I will treat you with kindness.”
“I will be patient when things are not going smoothly.”***

Kindness and patience are conscious acts that often have to be learned. They require advanced planning, the proper attitude, and a commitment to behave that way. For most people kindness and patience are not natural reactions to stressful and hurtful situations.

Jake: *I've got something to tell you.*

Marti: *You look awful. What's happened?*

Jake: *You know those flowers by the swing?*

Marti: *Not the flowers I planted last year?*

Jake: *Yes. Ahh...I ran over them with the lawn mower. I'm very sorry.*

Marti: *What! I feel like screaming!*

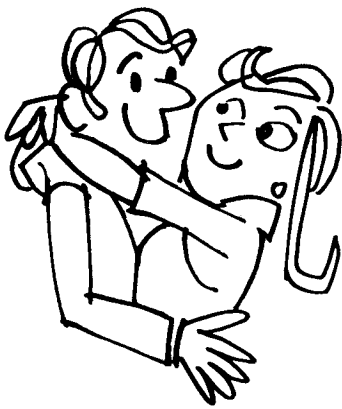
Jake: *Go ahead if it'll make you feel better.*

Marti: No. I've committed myself to trying to be more patient.

Jake: What do you want to do?

Marti: Let me be by myself for a minute to calm down. Then maybe we can talk about how to replace them.

Jake: I want to do whatever is necessary to make things right. In the meantime, I'll go finish the lawn.



Being kind or patient doesn't mean giving up anything—we can and should talk, have and express our emotions, declare our intentions, and so forth. Rather, being kind and patient means we choose to respond in a caring way which will avoid hurting our partner.

Please perform Activities 32-34.

Discussion:

8. Forgiveness and Forgetting

The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong. — Mahatma Gandhi

The most welcomed people are not those who look back upon the trials, the sorrows, the failures, the hurts of yesterday, but those who cast their eyes forward with faith, hope, courage, and happy curiosity. — James Francis Cooke

To forgive and forget past hurts is difficult, sometimes almost impossible. Never-the-less, because we all err, a growing, loving relationship requires forgiveness.

Oscar: Can you forgive me.

Pat: I don't know. Not right now.

Oscar: Will you forgive me if I promise never to do it again.

Pat: I don't know if I can trust you to keep your promises.

Oscar: What would it take to win your forgiveness?

Pat: I'll think about it.





Dialogue like that may not sound like forgiveness, but it is sometimes a necessary precursor. Life is a series of balancing acts. We like things even, on keel, and balanced. Most of us abhor debt. The common response to receiving a favor is to return the favor, or to say sufficient “thank-you’s.” And on the other hand, it is natural for many to want to return hurt for hurt. In either case, people hate to be emotionally “out of balance.”

In order to forgive and forget, the achievement of balance may be required. We sometimes call these activities *repentance* and *recompense* (or, negatively, *retribution* and *revenge*.) The goal in a loving relationship is to achieve such balance without causing additional pain.



Pat (later): Oscar, I've been thinking. I'm ready to forgive you, but it would help if I knew you'd try harder.

Oscar: Let's take a parenting class. That'll give me the skills to do it different next time. A class starts next Monday at the Church.

Pat: Wonderful! I feel much better.

Oscar: Me, too.

While *forgiving* is a conscious behavior, *forgetting* is mostly symbolic. There is some evidence that our experiences and emotions are stored in our permanent memory. Literally forgetting may be impossible. What we can do, then, is to bring up the memory and store it in a more acceptable cell, e.g., in a *forgiveness* experience cell. *Forgetting* is a symbol of not letting the incident interfere with the relationship anymore. One conscious behavior of forgetting might be not mentioning the incident again.

Jed: I sorry I yelled at you in front of the Bishop.

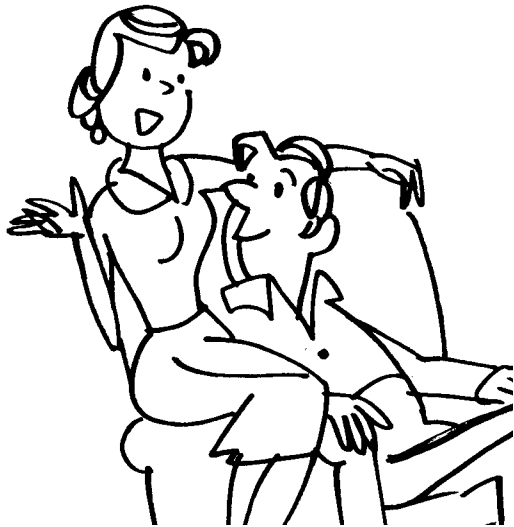
Emily: I know you are. I understand that.

Jed: Are you still angry?

Emily: Not so much anymore. I won't ever forget how the Bishop looked at me, but I think I understand how it happened. And I feel my anger dissipating.

Jed: I feel awful that I put you through that.

Emily: Good. That makes it easier for me to forgive.



Please perform Activities 35-39.

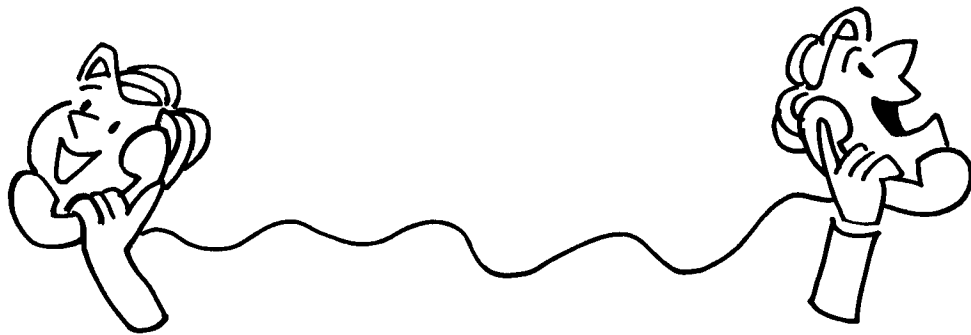
Discussion

9. Communication and Talking

Silence is one great art of conversation. — William Hazlitt

It is a luxury to be understood. — Ralph Waldo Emerson

Love suggests, “I will listen to you, and I want to tell you all that is appropriate and honest, and in a tactful way.” Your partner wants and needs to know what you think, how you feel, and what you want. To communicate these things, you must know yourself, and be willing to be honest in the very deepest regions of your mind.



Frank: Jean, you've been awfully quiet this morning. What's the matter?

Jean: Oh, nothing.

Frank: Your mood worries me. Please tell me what's going on.

Jean: I've got that pain in my side again. I'm worried that my kidney might be acting up...again. I guess I'm feeling depressed and discouraged.

Frank: No wonder you're down! What do you want to do?

Jean: Well, I'd like to lay down for an hour or two. If it doesn't go away, I'd like to call Dr. Nelson.

Frank: Why didn't you tell me sooner?

Jean: I was afraid it might worry you. Plus I didn't want you falling all over yourself trying to fix things.

The sharing of your mind should be tactful, timely and loving. Love should convey: "I want to tell you all about what's going on inside of me, but only when you are ready to hear, and only in ways which will not hurt you."



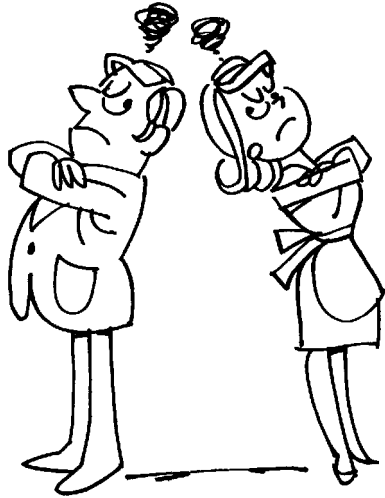
And, on the other hand, love promises, "I will listen without judgement, criticism, or instruction unless invited to, and then only in a caring manner."

Miller, Nunnally, and Wackman in their book *Talking Together* (see *More Good Reading*, Page 60) reported that every loving relationship has issues that crop up constantly:

- Who takes the car?
- Where do we go for vacation?
- Should I take the new job?

When issues are not discussed and a satisfactory outcome is not achieved, problems arise which are more difficult to resolve:

- A person stranded (and angry).
- No vacation (and disappointment).
- Missed opportunities (and frustration).



Left to fester, such problems will weaken and could eventually poison a relationship.

Bob: Sue, I've got an issue to discuss with you.

Sue: What is it?

Bob: It's your mother and her visits here every Thursday.

Sue: Good. That's becoming an issue for me, too.

• • • • •

Revere: The issue of who decides what TV program we watch has never been resolved.

Emma: You always decide.

Revere: Baloney! I always end up leaving.

Emma: You leave so why should I watch your show?

Revere: I won't stay here in all that tension.

Emma: Okay, okay. Enough. What do you want to do about it?

To communicate about issues and problems, we must be aware of how we feel, what we think or believe, and what we want. This means sitting back and

reflecting—searching and studying our minds. And we should talk at the right moment in the right setting.

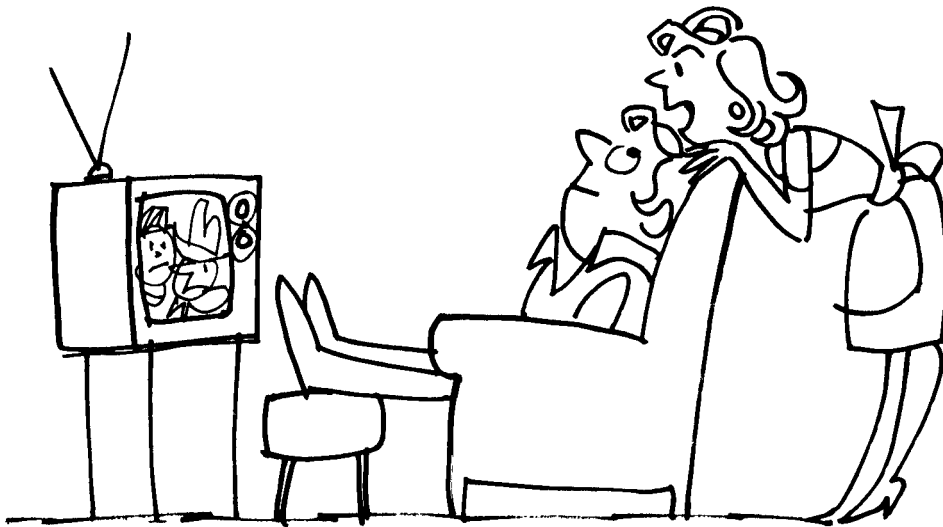
Setting the stage:

Joanie: Ras, I'd like to talk to you about something.

Ras: Sure, okay; I'm free right now.

Joanie: It's important to me that you understand how I feel.

Ras: Let me turn off the television.



Joanie: I've thought a lot about this the last few days. And I've jotted down a few notes. Let's see...oh, yes...here it is. This past few months I've been having a lot of tension and pressure at work.

Ras: I know it. Why don't you change jobs?

Joanie: That might be one option. Right now I just need someone to listen. Could you hold your advice until later?

Ras: I'm just trying to help.

Joanie: This is grating on you, too, isn't it?

Ras: Any time you're down, it effects me, too.

Joanie: I'll make you a deal. You listen while I talk without giving advice or judgement. When I'm finished talking, I'll listen to you.

Ras: That sounds good. Real good! Okay. Only, could we move to the bedroom? I feel more comfortable in there.

Joanie: Sure. Is this a good time for you, too?

Ras: How long will this take?

Joanie: About fifteen minutes, I hope.

Ras: Fine. I don't have to pick up the kids until five.

Telling what we think:

Joanie: I think I'm being shunted aside at work.

Ras: I didn't know that. No wonder you're feeling down.

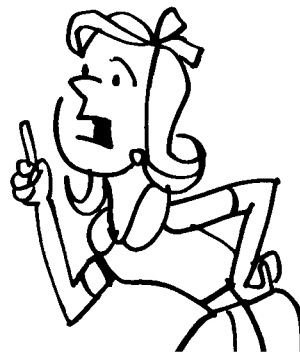
Joanie: Yeah, the boss' son has taken over the south side of town. That's the area I was supposed to get. Not only that, Mr. Jones has not given me that raise he promised.

Ras: Why don't you go talk....

Joanie: Wait! Remember our deal?

Ras: Oh, yeah. Sorry. Go on.

Joanie: I believe I'm not going to have the best sales opportunities at this company.



Telling how we feel:

Ras: You must be feeling depressed about all this.

Joanie: Yeah. I sat down this morning and searched my mind. And I was surprised

how frustrated I feel...and angry. And I feel betrayed and rejected.

Ras: *Do you feel revengeful?*

Joanie: *Honestly, no. But I do feel apprehensive that you won't be able to understand.*

Ras: *I think I do.*

Telling what we want:

Joanie: *Anyway, here's what I think I can do.*

Ras: *Have you already decided?*

Joanie: *No, I wouldn't decide anything without working it out with you. What I have is a list of options. You can add to it, too.*

Ras: *Okay.*

Joanie: *First, I could leave the company. Second, I could just stay and put up with it. Third, I could talk with Mr. Jones and tell him how I'm feeling. Maybe he'd make things right.*

Ras: *Which of those three do you want to do?*

Joanie: *Right now, I want to leave the company, but I think I should do number three first.*



Issue resolution and problem solving is not easy. Each couple should develop methods of sharing, deciding, and resolving issues. (See Section 13.)

Effective communication requires concern for the feelings, wants, and beliefs of the loved one. As such, communication is a wonderful training arena

for building a loving relationship because it requires the dedication and efforts of both persons. And communication skills can be developed on simple, non-threatening issues and later used productively.

Tad: Mina, I'd like to tell you something.

Mina: "What you think, what you want, and how you feel?" — Right?

Tad: Very funny. Look, I'm getting better at it.

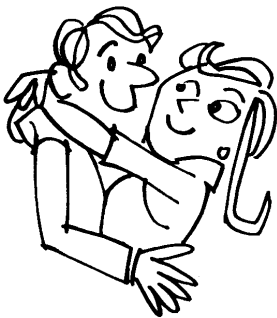
Mina: We both are. Go ahead.

Tad: I want to go on our picnic to City Creek Canyon instead of Antelope Island. I know you like that place but I like City Creek better. And I don't think there will be any bugs up there.

Mina: Well, let me see if I understand. You want to go to City Creek Canyon because there won't be bugs and you have a good feeling about the place.

Tad: Right.

(The conversation would continue.)



Listening is an important part of communication. But silence can convey either consent or the impression that we're not listening. Listen with activity—nod your head, smile, acknowledge your understanding by saying something like, "I see," "Really?", and so forth. Ask questions if you don't understand.

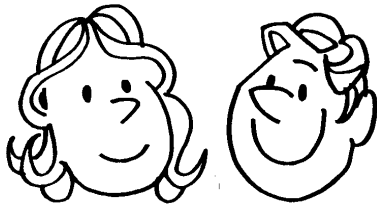
Please perform Activities 40-45.

Discussion:

10. Understanding and Empathy

People are disturbed not by things, but by the view they take of them. — Epictetus, 60 AD

To understand and to be understood makes our happiness on earth. — German Proverb



Effective communication always precedes the loving resolution of issues and problems. Communication requires a speaker and a listener. And effective communication requires listening, understanding, and empathy by both partners.

Empathy is placing yourself in the shoes of the other person; seeing the issue from the other's point of view. This doesn't mean you have to agree, or change your mind. What it does is allows you to become “one” in understanding.

Scott: I had an interesting dream last night.

Sarah: Tell me about it.

Scott: I dreamed you and I lived in a spirit world. We still had our body shapes and we could talk, see, hear, smell—all the normal stuff—but we could also walk through walls, and fly—things like that.

Sarah: *I wish I could have a dream like that.*

Scott: *Anyway, the best part is coming. I was able to actually get inside of you. We merged into one—get it? I actually stepped into your shoes and my spirit was inside of yours.*

Sarah: *Wasn't it a bit crowded?*

Scott: *Actually, no. It was fun, close, sensual. I could feel some new body curves, and right up close.*

Sarah: *“You men all think alike.”*

Scott: *Maybe, but let me tell you the rest. I could understand what you were thinking. It was marvelous to be so close, so in touch with you. I could feel your emotions and tell just exactly what you wanted.*

Sarah: *Now, that is exciting.*

Scott: *That's what “being one” must mean—being really empathetic.*

Sarah: *Maybe we'll be able to do that after we die.*

Scott: *But we can do part of it now—if we try.*

•

Linda: *Could we talk about a problem I'm having.*

John: *Sure. But could we do it after I finish this chapter?*

Linda: *That's fine.*

(Later)

John: *Okay, honey. What's up?*

Linda: *This is important to me...and I want you to understand exactly what I'm thinking and feeling.*

John: Okay.

Linda: So what I want you to do is repeat back to me what I say, as if you were me.

John: What?

Linda: Come on, now. It'll make it easier for me.

John: Alright.

Linda: I've wanted to visit my grandmother in California for a long time. I feel neglectful and...also a little selfish...using up our money on a trip.

John: Linda, you know we don't have....

Linda: Excuse me. You agreed to simply try to understand. Please hold your comments and suggestions until later.

John: Right. I forgot. Aah...Let's see. You want to visit Grandma Florence...and you're feeling sad you haven't been out to see her...and you're feeling guilty about spending our savings to do it.

Linda: Right, but more guilty about Grandma than sad.

John: Hmmmm.

Linda: I'd like to take \$300 from our savings and go with my folks when they drive down next weekend. That would save several hundred dollars, but it would leave you alone with the kids.

John: Hey, if you want to go, its okay....

Linda: Remember our agreement?

John: Oh, yeah. You'd like to go with your folks which would make it easier on our money, but you're afraid of how I might react about being with the kids for a few days, right?

Linda: Yes.

John: I also notice on your face a distressed look...is it concern about how I will react?

Linda: Yes, you've got that right. Now, what do you have to say?



As shown in the dialogue between John and Linda, some communication occurs non-verbally (the distressed look on Linda's face). Non-verbal communicating requires effort, patience, questioning, clarification, and empathy to be effective. Don't be afraid to ask what a particular gesture, look, body position, phrase, or unusual word means.

Please perform Activities 46-49.

Discussion:

11. Respect and Good-Will



I respect the opinions of others even if I disagree. — H. H. Lehman

Good-will is the mightiest practical force in the universe. — C.F. Dole

Love says, “I respect your judgement. I don't want you to tell me what to do, but I do want to hear your opinion and I will gladly enter it into my decision-making process.”

Love also says, “I want to have good-will and benevolence in our relationship—I want to discuss issues knowing that you and I both respect each other's feelings.”

Ron: Mick, I've been thinking about thinking about being released from my Scout Master calling. What thoughts do you have about that?

Michelle: I don't know what to think right now. But...hmmm...several questions come to mind. Do you feel you're not being effective? Do you think you need more free time be with me and the kids? What will the boys think about your leaving? And if you ask to be released from that calling, What calling do you think you'll want?

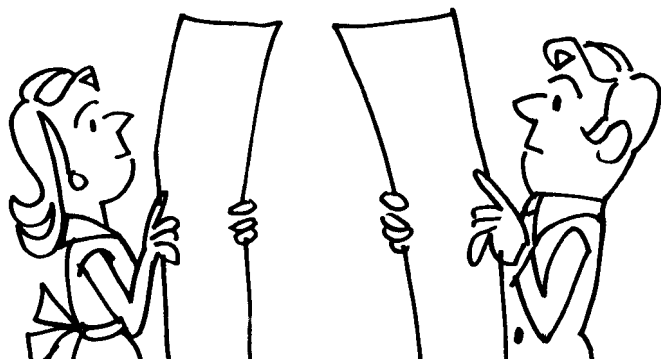
Ron: Good questions. I'm glad I asked you about it.

Reveal

Partners in a loving relationship reveal themselves to each other. They can let the other person know of their fears, shortcomings, and faults because they know their partners respect them. Neither partner will take advantage of the weakness or fears of the other.

Please perform Activities 50-52.

Discussion:



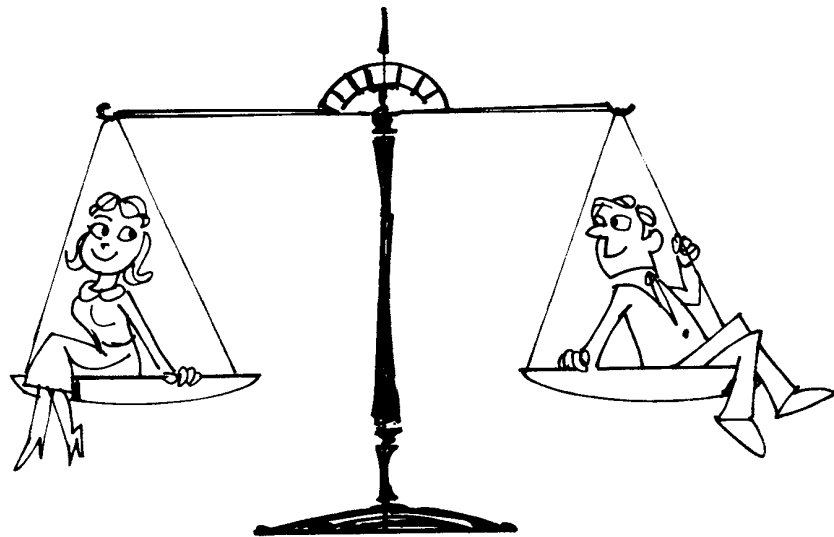
12. Equality and Sharing

Marriage is that relationship in which independence is equal, dependence is mutual, and obligation is reciprocal. — L.K. Anspacher

The deepest urge in human nature is the desire to be important. — John Dewey

A partnership implies sharing and equality. It means weighing the interests of the other person in all of my decisions and activities. Note that this places the responsibility squarely on my shoulders. I must provide the setting for equality and equal treatment.

Love is a suggestion of developing an attitude that says, "You are my equal...and I am your equal. I include your interests and I include my interests in all I do. You are as important as I am. I value you as I value myself; and I value myself highly."



Being equal doesn't remove the option of having areas of responsibility, or the opportunity for one person to make final decisions for the partnership. What it means is that both partners agree to the decision-making procedures.

Tammy: Hi! How come Jacob is crying?

Sam: I gave him a swat on the rear-end for sassing me.

Tammy: Wait. Our agreement was that we would both decide on any punishments before using them. Why did you spank him without talking to me?

Sam: No, I didn't spank him, exactly. That would be against our agreement.

Tammy: Well, it was still physical punishment.

Sam: I guess you're right. I'm sorry.

Tammy: I don't want our kids to think that you are the spanker and I am the protector. And you know I don't like physical punishments unless there is no other way.

Sam: You're right. We need to be seen as sharing all such responsibilities.

Even given the opportunity for equality, some of us are not able to see ourselves as equals. Our feelings of self-esteem and self-worth may not allow us to be equal. A person with a poor self-image feels disapproval and bad. And of course, these feelings can fluctuate with the day, the hour, or the issue being confronted.

Having feelings and managing feelings are different things. Having poor feelings about oneself does not eliminate the possibility of having the right attitude or intention. Attitude, intention, and commitment are all-important in developing a loving relationship.

If you have low self-esteem, use a “counting” attitude. (Literally, “I count myself and I count you, equally in my decision-making process.”) Do this and your feelings of self-worth will improve.

If your partner is experiencing feelings of low self worth, use a similar attitude. (“You are as important as I am. What you think, feel, and want is as important as what I think, feel, and want.”)

Peter: Why don't you buy a new dress for the reunion?

Gail: Oh, no. I couldn't do that. You need a new suit.

Peter: Look, we have \$140 in our clothing budget—just enough to buy a nice dress.

Gail: I can't.

Peter: Can't? What do you mean?

Gail: You earned the money. I don't feel right in spending your money.

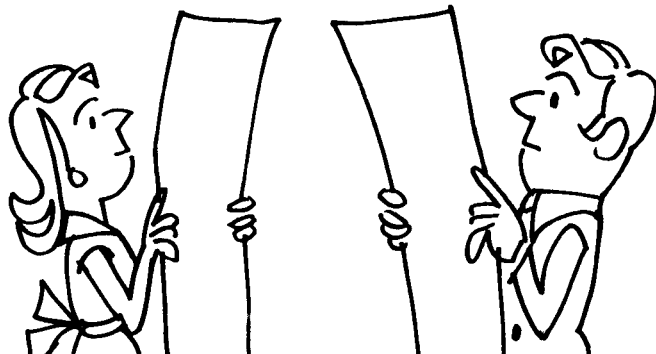
Peter: It's our money.

Gail: But I don't feel like I should have a new dress. I think I spend too much already.

Peter: Look, you're just as important as I am. And I got a new pair of shoes last month. It's your turn. This is partnership, remember? You count just like I do. You're important.

Please do Activities 53-55.

Discussion:



13. Problem Solving

Either I will find a way, or I will make one. — Philip Sidney

A problem well-stated is a problem half-solved. — Charles F. Kettering

Love means communicating about issues and finding solutions to problems before hurt results. Love finds a way to resolve issues in such a way that each lover can flourish, or at the very least, survive until things get better.

Occasionally, issues cannot be completely resolved, sometime for life. In these cases, it may be appropriate simply to agree not to agree and find some compromise to live with the disagreement.

There are no definitive formulas for problem solving. Life is not a math exercise. Never-the-less, ways can be developed which will help find solutions to problems, and in ways which will be acceptable to both partners in a loving relationship.

Raymond: Look, we're at an impasse. Tell you what, you can have your way this time if I can have my way next time.

Sherri: Maybe we always could take turns getting our way.

Raymond: If we do that, we better categorize our issues into classes and take turns within the class.

Sherri: Right, it wouldn't be fair if it was my turn came when it was time to choose where we live, and then your turn came up on "which church meeting to attend."

• • • • •

Thomas: May, this arguing is getting us no where. Were both pretty set on getting our own way.

May: But your way is ridiculous.

Thomas: Maybe to you. It's seems very logical to me. It's important to me that you see my point of view.

May: I'll tell you what. I'll admit you're right if you'll let me have my way.

Thomas: Hmmmm. That just might be worth it.

.....

Audrey: I want to do it your way.

.....

Ben: Let's flip a coin.

.....



Cathy: Let's call the Bishop. If you agree to his arbitration, I'll do whatever the bishop thinks is right.

.....

Donald: How about placing all the options in a hat and drawing out one?

.....

Earl: Let's get some expert opinion on this before we make our choice.

.....

Please perform Activities 56-57.

Discussion:

14. Friendship and Nurturing

Friendship is always a sweet responsibility, never an opportunity. — **Kahlil Gibran**

A home-made friend wears longer than one you buy in the market. — **Austin O'Malley**

What do we live for if it is not to make life less difficult for each other? — **George Elliot**

Love says, "You are my friend." That sounds simple and obvious, but many relationships are lacking in friendliness. George Jean Nathan once said sarcastically that most "loving relationships demand less than friendship."

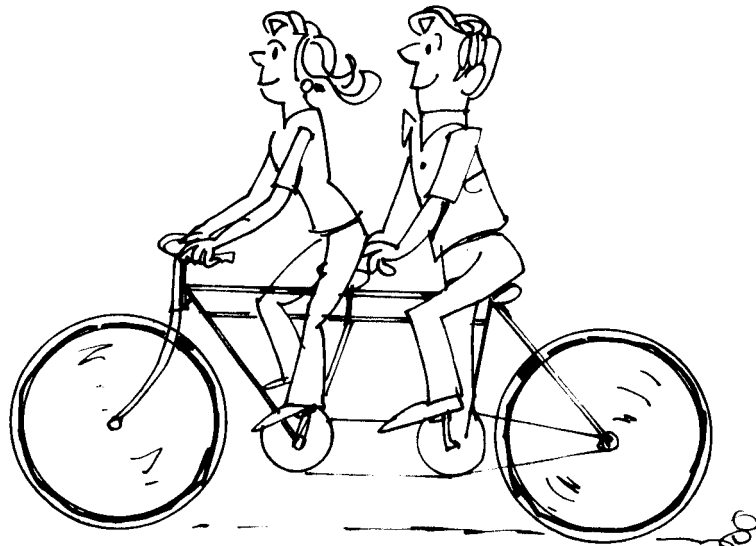


Table 2. The following active qualities are associated with friendship

- A mutual enjoyment of being together.
 - Accepting each other and avoiding trying to change the other person.
 - Trusting that one person will do what's in the other's best interests.
 - Concern, and respect for the other's judgement.
 - Mutual support and assistance.
 - Accepting suggestions and differences of opinions in a loving way.
 - Understanding each others' likes, wants, needs, and unusual traits.
 - Spontaneity in the relationship.
 - Honesty so that no one must play roles or put on masks.
 - Tactful sharing of confidences, experiences, and feelings.
 - A willingness to discuss individual and mutual issues.
-

We might hear the following conversation when friendship is lacking:

James: I want to go and be with my friends.

Joan: You are with a friend.

James: I know, but it's not the same.

Joan: In what ways?

James: Aah, come on. You know...when I'm with the guys I can let my hair down...be myself...joke around...goof off...stuff like that.

Joan: And you don't feel that way around me?

James: Sometimes. But most of the time you don't like me acting that way.

Joan: But what you call goofing around ends up hurting me. That's not friendship.

James: Look, husbands and wives can't be friends. It's different...sex...responsibility...serious stuff. You can't be friends with all that hanging over your heads.

Joan: We can be friends part of the time, anyway.

James: Right...see you tonight. Bye.

• • • • •

Or, we could hear this conversation when things are going well:

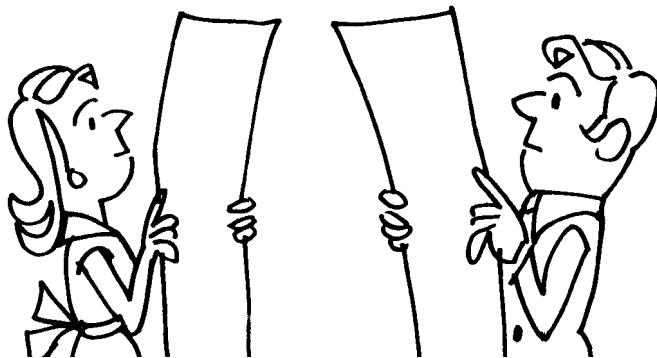
Fred: You've become my best friend.

Sarah: Me, too.

Fred: It hasn't always been that way. It's taken a lot of time and effort.

Sarah: It's worth the effort.

Please perform Activities 58-62.



15. Trust and Faith

I think we may safely trust a good deal more than we do. — Henry David Thoreau

Sweet is the look when hearts are of each other sure. — John Keble

Confidence is a subtle thing. It is built slowly and can be easily shaken. — George Humphrey

Love extends confidence in our partner, and says, “I trust you. I have faith in you and your judgement. I know that you will not purposely hurt me. I can rely on you. I trust what you say and do.”

Faith and trust are emotional analogues to thinking and believing. We may *think* our relationship is in trouble, but have *faith* that things will work out. We may *believe* that our partner is angry, but *trust* that our love will provide a way out of the anger.

It has been said that to be trusted is greater than to be loved. Actually, to be *loved* means to be *trusted*.

Ray: *Where are you going tonight?*

Sharon: *To my class at the university.*

Ray: *Oh, yeah. I forgot. By the way, that guy Steve from your class called this morning.*

Sharon: *Oh? Did he leave a message?*

Ray: No, but he said he'd see you tonight at class.

Sharon: He's helping me with a book report.

Ray: There's nothing going on there, is there?

Sharon: No.

Ray: I didn't really think there was, but I worry sometimes...about the other guys...

Sharon: You can trust me.

Ray: I know. It makes me feel comfortable.

Please perform Activities 63-66.



Blind Trust

16. Compromise and Sacrifice

Better bend than break. — Scottish Proverb

One-half of knowing what you want is knowing what you must give up before you get it. — Sidney Howard

Wants, needs, and desires are as normal as the rising sun. Unfortunately, not all our wants and desires are healthy, timely, or possible to achieve—a thick milkshake every night just before bed, for example. And our wants are often incompatible with our partner's, or they may not be feasible, realistic, or affordable.

In a loving relationship, we are often called upon to sacrifice, compromise, or postpone our wants and desires.

Love says, “I won't take more than my share; I will manage my wants and make them compatible with what is best for both of us; I will compromise; and I will accommodate your wants as well as my own.”

Lynn: I'd like to get into a house.

Rodney: Yeah, and I'd like to have ridden on the space-shuttle.

Lynn: Come on, I'm serious.

Rodney: We can squeeze a house payment out of our budget about as easily as I could get that ride.

Lynn: You're right. How about next year?

Rodney: Maybe, if we get our raises, okay?

• • • • •

Rhonda: Jack, I'd like to go back to the school this fall and finish up.

Jack: Well, that sounds good, but what about paying off the car? You were going to work until we got it paid for. Going to school will require you to quit your job.

Rhonda: Yeah, I know, but I only need two more quarters to finish. I really want to do it. It's on my mind all the time.

Jack: I understand. Let's compromise. You go to school and in the meantime I'll get the credit union to extend our loan six months. Then you get another job and help pay off the loan.

Rhonda: That's good. I could get a better job then, and we can pay off the car quickly.

• • • • •

Dennis: I want that shotgun. You know I've wanted it for a long time.

Kris: But, we need a new dryer. I'm tired of the laundromat.

Dennis: But I've had my heart set on that shotgun!

Kris: You don't care about me, do you?

Dennis: Look who's talking. If you loved me you'd let me...

Kris: Shut up! You selfish jerk!

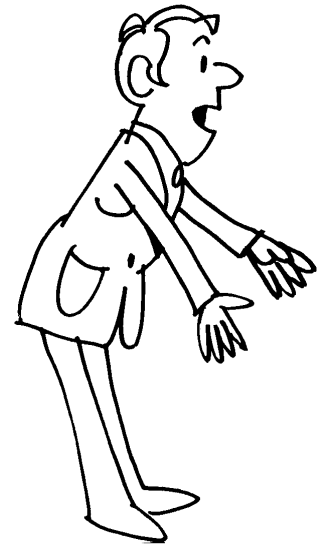
Dennis: Wait...we're slipping back into talk we don't like.

Kris: I'm sorry. Let's try it again.

Dennis: Right. Aahh...lets look at the options. Is there anyway we could compromise?

Kris: I'll make you a deal—Let's rent a dryer and buy the shotgun, then agree that the very next purchase will be our very own dryer.

Dennis: Hey, that just might work! Let's check our budget.



.....

Claudia: Kyle, I've thought a lot about what you said about my yelling around the house.

Kyle: It tears me up.

Claudia: I need some form of outlet when I'm emotionally uptight. You know those kids and my job—it's just too much some times.

Kyle: Well, what did you have in mind?

Claudia: I'm going to try to change the way I respond. If you're willing to help.

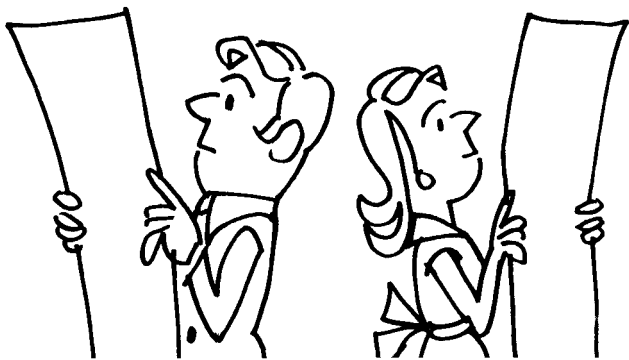
Kyle: How?

Claudia: I'd like to get into the car and go over to Jerri's place for a while when I get uptight. But you'll have to take charge of the house while I'm gone.

Kyle: Sounds like a workable arrangement. Lets give it a try.

Please perform Activities 67-69.

Discussion:



17. Fun and Humor

Good humor isn't a trait of character, it is an art which requires practice. — David Seabury

A good laugh is sunshine in a house — W.M. Thackeray

A loving relationship is serious business, but it shouldn't be that way all the time! In fact, a pleasant and relaxed spirit should dominate the majority of your time together.

As you put loving activities into practice you will find the serious side of the relationship taking care of itself faster and easier, leaving more time for fun, pleasure, and relaxation.

Wendy: What do you think of this health food restaurant?

Peter: I think I know why they call it health food—to survive you gotta be in perfect health.

Wendy: But everything looks so healthy here. I just saw a cockroach with a tan.

Peter: Yeah, and they claim they don't use anything artificial here, but have you looked at the prices?

Wendy: You're fun to be with.

Peter: We have a lot of fun together.

• • • • •

Jenny: We've got to get a new car! Most people worry about nails on the road. Our tires are so bad we have to worry about mosquitos.

Steve: Most cars come with a warrantee. Our's came with a tow truck.

Jenny: But our car does have a lot of nice touches.

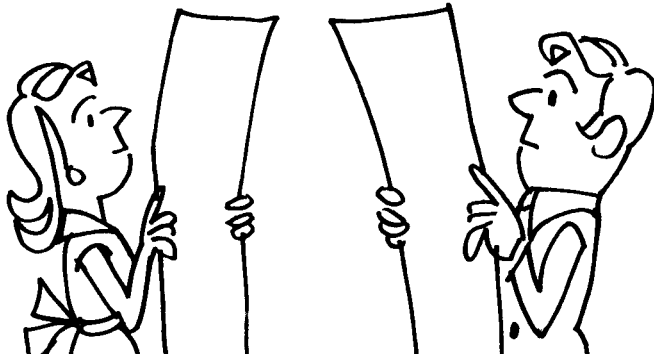
Steve: Dents, you mean?

Jenny: Owning our car wouldn't be so bad if it weren't for two things: parts and labor.

A mature marriage is fun, exciting, and filled with good humor, even playful and loving teasing. But not mean teasing...not biting sarcasm...not laughs at the expense of your partner's feelings—but joyful, smiling, warming humor.

Please perform Activities 70-72.

Discussion:



18. If Things Go Bad

All men kill the thing they hate, unless of course, it kills them first.— James Thurber

I never hated a man enough to give him his diamonds back. — Zsa Zsa Gabor

When a relationship is smothering, when it is demanding or threatening, when it expects unreasonable favors, when it imprisons or enslaves, when it mimics hate, or where it produces evil and unresolvable unhappiness, then it is not love and, as such, should be “abandoned.”

The abandonment could be changes in behavior and attitudes, or (as a last, desperate resort) it may be an unselfish act of letting-go.

Have you determined that no love exists between you and your partner? Are you considering a divorce or separation? Before you take any drastic steps, consider this: One of the most common statements a counselor hears is, “I don't love him/her anymore,” or “There's no love between us anymore.”

Any yet a large percentage of such couples stay together and flourish through counseling, behavior changes, and mutual good-will.

Love can be rekindled!

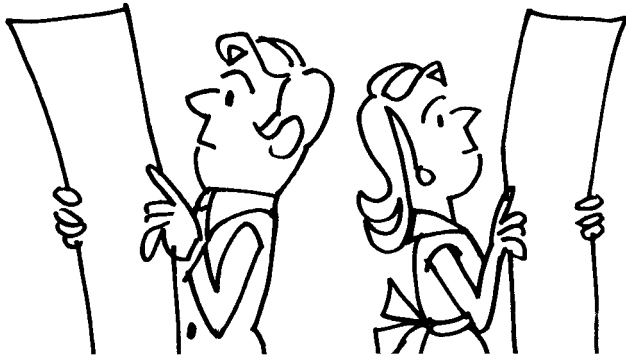
Pleasant and loving moments can return. The love you once knew can be reestablished.

The methods given in this book provide loving activities which, when applied, cannot help but bring back those loving feelings you've all but forgotten.

The ideals of this book might take months or years to complete. If you've almost drowned in past swims, shoving off again and paddling into the river of love takes faith and hope. It may be difficult at times to keep your head up and your lungs clear. But you can do it if both partners are swimming together.

Please perform Activities 73-77.

Discussion:



19. To Begin

We are most of us very lonely in this world; you who have any who love you, cling to them and thank God. — Author Unknown

*It will take,
I think,
A long time
To learn how.
Should we not
Start now? —Carol Lynn Pearson*

A loving relationship may be the greatest reward a man or woman can receive in this life.

Let's get going!

Some (older but still available at Amazon.com) Good Reading

Couples, LDS Author Carlfred Broderick, Simon and Schuster, New York, NY, 1981.

Love, Buscaglia, Leo, Fawcett Crest Books, New York, 1996.

Talking Together, Miller, Sherod, et.al., Interpersonal Communication Programs, Inc., Minn. MN, 1991.

Activities Section [A] Name _____

There are two sets of activities sheets, A and B (page 72)—one for each partner. Use the reverse side of the page as necessary.

Activity A1. Make a list of some personal qualities and good traits you recognize in your partner. Be liberal, generous, and honest in your appraisal. (When in doubt, write it down.)

Activity A2. Make a list of some personal qualities you possess. Again, be honest and generous.

Activity A3. Are there any qualities you listed in Activity A2 which you don't make available to your partner on a routine basis?

Activity A4. Write below some commitments you feel you have made to your partner.

Activity A5. Write some additional commitments you think might be useful and important.

Activity A6. Write what your partner would say are *your* commitments, and what he/she would think would be useful new promises.

Activity A7. Write those commitments you would like your partner to make for you.

Activity A8. Share the findings of the above exercises with your partner.

Activity A9. Close your eyes (after reading these instructions.) *Relax.* Take a deep breath. Now look inside your mind. What emotions are you feeling right now? After about five minutes, catalogue them in your mind. This exercise should take about five minutes.

Activity A10. Think back to the last time you had a fight with your partner. Close your eyes and relive the fight. Now examine the memory of your emotions. Search them, study them.

Activity A11. Re-do exercise 2 with a pleasant experience you have had recently with your partner.

Activity A12. During the coming day, frequently stop and think about the emotions you are experiencing at that moment. If someone cuts you off on the freeway, for example, step aside (in your mind) and study the emotions you are feeling (e.g., anger, frustration, hate, jealousy, revenge, pity, and so forth.) If you receive a compliment, step aside and study your emotional responses (e.g., gratitude, pride, happiness, victory, and so forth). Try to understand and actually savor the emotions you are feeling. Make notes below of your experiences.

Activity A13. Go to the Table of Emotions. Identify ten emotions you have felt in your relationship. Recall the circumstances. Share these memories with your partner.

Activity A14. Can you control your behavior when you're really angry? Most of us would say its pretty difficult—and it is. But have you ever had this experience? You're angry (letting off steam, yelling, pacing the room, and so forth) when suddenly the phone rings. You pick up the receiver with a very pleasant, “Hello?” and proceed to talk amicably for several minutes.

This experience demonstrates that our behavior is learned, it is chosen, and it is controllable in all but the tightest situations. Summarize below the behaviors you engage in when angry. Are there any other things you could do that would less trying on your partner?

Activity A15. Please list six emotions you consider to be “bad” and six you consider are “good” emotions.

“Bad” Emotions Good Emotions

- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |
| 4. | 4. |
| 5. | 5. |
| 6. | 6. |

Some think that feelings of love are “good” and feelings of anger are “bad”, and so forth. If you also believe there are “bad” emotions, you are setting yourself up for unwarranted guilt, worry, and heartache. Actually, “bad” emotions are as natural as rain, and just as unavoidable. It is better to think of them as *emotions requiring management*.

Cross out the words “Bad Emotions” in the column above and write in the words: “Unpleasant emotions that Must be Managed.”

Activity A16. Take one of the “unpleasant emotions” from the above column and suggest some ways you can manage the emotion the next time you experience it.

Activity A17. List several things you think your partner wants from you.

Activity A18. List some things you think your partner thinks *you* want.

Activity A19. List some things you want from your partner.

Activity A20. Discuss the outcomes these last three exercises with your partner.

Activity A21. Recall a time when you were genuinely concerned about something your partner was doing, thinking, feeling, or wanting. What motivated you to be concerned and caring? What did you do about it?

Activity A22. Review with your partner his or her recollection of the incident of Activity A21. Discuss how you might have done it differently.

Activity A23. Construct the draft of a Caring Contract. Share it with your partner. Use the reverse of this page.

Activity A24. Search your mind and find something about your partner that you wish you cared more about. Write below those things you could do to be more caring.

Activity A25. Review in your mind the steps leading up to the last time you made sexual love. Was affection an integral part of the activity?

Activity A26. Consider this—some people find making love on a schedule beneficial and rewarding. Schedules give each partner a chance to prepare and think about what is going to happen. This helps defuse seductive game playing. It enables each partner to mentally and emotionally prepare to be affectionate and loving. Scheduling can help alleviate frustrations.

Discuss with your partner the possibility of scheduling your love making. What are the positive and negative aspects for you?

Activity A27. If you have had positive thoughts about scheduling your love making, try it for two weeks. Set the days, the time of the day, the location, and even the methods you might want to try. Be sure to include affection as part of your plans.

Activity A28. Do you have a difficult time discussing sex with your partner? If so, set a time (“every Sunday at ten”, or whatever) in which you can discuss your previous week's love-making activities. This exercise will require a large measure of good-will, acceptance, and non-judgmental listening.

Activity A29. Ask your partner what he or she likes before and during love-making. Tell your partner what types of affection you like.

[Optional] **Activity A30.** Is sex a seductive and frustrating game in your relationship? Read the excellent discussion on sex in Carlfred Broderick's book *Couples*. (See *More Good Reading*.)

Activity A31. List several things you enjoy about being affectionate. Share these things with your partner.

Activity A32. Think about your own kindness and patience thresholds. What does it take to make you react adversely to your anger?

Activity A33. Select a situation in your relationship that you have a difficulty with, something that makes you lose your patience, or that makes you act unkindly toward your partner. What would it take to make a commitment to try to control your hurtful responses to that situation during the coming week?

Activity A34. Share your responses to the above exercises with your partner.

Activity A35. Recall an incident in which you did something that might have hurt or upset your partner. Make notes below. Did you ask for forgiveness? Was it given? Have you “forgotten?” Has your partner “forgotten?”

Activity A36. Close your eyes (after reading the exercise). Imagine that you are approaching your partner and expressing forgiveness for something he/she did that hurt or upset you. In your mind, how does your partner respond?

Activity A37. With your partner, talk about a difficult situation in which one or both of you felt hurt. After some discussion, ask for forgiveness, and grant forgiveness to each other.

Activity A38. How has the action of Activity A37 effected your memory of the hurt?

Activity A39. With your partner, plan in advance how you will handle the next time you feel hurt.

Activity A40. Search your mind and select a non-threatening issue. (For example: What shall we do Saturday night? Who gets up with the kids on Sunday? Where shall we go for dinner?) Write your thoughts, feelings, and desires about the issue below.

Activity A41. Share what you have written (Activity A40) with your partner.

Activity A42. Choose an issue and discuss it with your partner. Do this exercise with the goal of achieving understanding, not resolving the issue. (See the section on Problem Solving for issue resolution techniques.)

Activity A43. Ask your partner what it is, or what you do, that makes it easier for him/her to talk to you, i.e., “When is it easier for you to talk to me about important issues?” or “What do I do that makes it easier for you to talk to me?”

Activity A44. There is an old maxim, “Know thyself.” H. F. Henrich has added, “And don't tell anyone!” Why would such an attitude be detrimental to a loving relationship? Are there exceptions? Make notes below and share your thoughts with your partner.

Activity A45. It could take a lifetime to know yourself and be able to communicate well. Can you commit yourself to striving for that ideal? Discuss it.

Activity A46. Ask your partner to explain something to you. (“How do you think we should discipline our child?”)

Now, try to put yourself in his/her shoes. After he/she has finished a few sentences, repeat back the dialogue in your own words, as if you were that other person. Continue in this manner until the explanation is complete.

Activity A47. With your partner, choose an issue that is confronting both of you. Trade places and speak as if you were the other person. If you find yourself misunderstanding the other person, or yourself being misunderstood, return momentarily to your true identity to explain what you really think and feel.

Activity A48. Explore with your partner ways you have developed to communicate non-verbally. For example, you might search out how you communicate your desire to engage in sexual love making. (It rarely begins with, “I've got an idea—lets go make love.”) Or explore the ways you touch, the facial expressions you use, and so forth.

Activity A49. Discuss a financial issue with your partner. Tell him or her what happened to create the issue, what you think, what you're feeling, and what you want to do about the issue.

Activity A50. Write a half-dozen things you respect about your partner. Then write a half-dozen things you think your partner respects about you.

Activity A51. What does it mean to have goodwill? Write ten things you could do which would demonstrate your goodwill toward your partner.

Activity A52. Discuss the outcomes of the first two exercises with your partner.

Activity A53. When it comes to managing emotions, or developing attitudes, we can make choices. (We get to choose how we want to behave and how we want to respond.) Discuss with your partner how you both could behave when one of you is feeling less equal.

Activity A54. With your partner, discuss the last few day's activities and the issues that came up. See if both of you felt equal in the decisions that were made.

Activity A55. With your partner, discuss the following problems, as if they were your problems. Role-play using the attitudes of partnership and equality.

- a. Dinner is not on the table, the house is a mess, and dad's got a meeting to go to in 30 minutes.
- b. Your oldest son is having problems at school. Someone must go and speak to the principal.
- c. Dad lost his job two months ago and mom's income just barely pays for food and rent. Bills are piling up and the phone was just disconnected.
- d. Partner #1 is feeling the need to have a more affectionate relationship, but Partner #2 feels things are fine the way they are.

Activity A56. With your partner, list a number of problem solving techniques that would be acceptable to both of you.

Activity A57. With your partner, select a current issue (or problem) and try finding a solution that is acceptable to both of you.

Activity A58. Make a list of some of the friends you have had during the past ten years. Rank each of them on a scale of 1-10, where higher numbers indicate more intimacy, more trust, and so forth. Think about each person and why you have felt the bonds of friendship with that person.

(Optional) **Activity A59.** Place your partner on the list and assign a ranking (1-10).

(Optional) **Activity A60.** Discuss with your partner your list of friends and his/her place on it.

Activity A61. Ask you partner what you could do to make it easier for him/her to think of you as a friend.

Activity A62. List qualities you like in your friends. Compare your list to your partner's list.

Activity A63. Suppose your partner took a long trip—a month away in another city. What types of mistrust or uneasiness would you feel? What kinds of things could he or she do to make you feel more trusting?

Activity A64. Make a list of things you have faith in (e.g., existence of God, your ability to solve problems, your partner's love for you, and so forth.) Try to distinguish between what you “think” and what you “have faith in.”

Activity A65. Ask your partner what types of things stand in the way of having a more trusting relationship.

Activity A66. Ask your partner to suggest things that make it easier to have faith in you.

Activity A67. With your partner, select a problem you were experiencing some years (months?) ago. Go over the problem and write down the compromises you each made (or could have made.)

Activity A68. Write a list of the sacrifices your partner has made for you or for your relationship.

Activity A69. Write a list of the sacrifices you have made for your partner, or for your relationship. In what ways did your sacrifice benefit your relationship? Would you do anything different, given the same opportunity again?

Activity A70. Think back to the first weeks or months of your relationship when fun was the primary objective of your being together. What were you doing? What made your times together fun? What did you like to do then? Write these things down and discuss them with your partner.

Activity A71. With your partner, plan to re-create one of the fun times you had in the past. It won't be the same of course, and it needn't be. Just get the ball rolling.

Activity A72. For the next month, at least once a week, plan and carry out one of the following fun activities (or something similar of your own choosing):

- a. Go on a picnic.
- b. Go on a long ride.
- c. Get a sitter and go stay in a motel over night.
- d. Go to a funny movie or play.
- e. Read the funny papers together every night for a week.
- f. Learn a new joke every day, and tell it to your partner.
- g. Visit some friends you both enjoy being with.
- h. Go on a long walk together.
- i. Go to an ice cream store.

During these fun activities do not bring up any heavy issues or problems. Make each experience strictly one of fun, relaxation, and enjoyment.

Activity A73. Have you considered leaving your partner (divorce or separation)? If you have, write below what would it take to keep you together.

Activity A74. If you did separate, what qualities would you seek in your next partner? Write them below.

Activity A75. Have you been physically or sexually abused by your partner? If so, you need help. Contact your clergyman, or look in the telephone directory for a local county mental health agency. Give them a call and arrange for a meeting. Someone will be able to help you evaluate your situation and suggest further action.

Activity A76. Is your partner unloving and absolutely unwilling to engage in the types of activities suggested in this book? If this is the case, you need help.

Activity A77. Compare the qualities you listed in Activity A74 to the qualities you listed in Activity A1, Section 1. If you're like most people these two lists will be reasonably similar, even if you expect to separate from your partner. What can you infer from this remarkable outcome?

Activities Section [B] Name _____

There are two sets of activities sheets, A (page 61) and B—one for each partner. Use the reverse side of the page as necessary.

Activity B1. Make a list of some personal qualities and good traits you recognize in your partner. Be liberal, generous, and honest in your appraisal. (When in doubt, write it down.)

Activity B2. Make a list of some personal qualities you possess. Again, be honest and generous.

Activity B3. Are there any qualities you listed in Activity B2 which you don't make available to your partner on a routine basis?

Activity B4. Write below some commitments you feel you have made to your partner.

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Activity B8. Share the findings of the above exercises with your partner.

Activity B9. Close your eyes (after reading these instructions.) *Relax.* Take a deep breath. Now look inside your mind. What emotions are you feeling right now? After about five minutes, catalogue them in your mind. This exercise should take about five minutes.

Activity B10. Think back to the last time you had a fight with your partner. Close your eyes and relive the fight. Now examine the memory of your emotions. Search them, study them.

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Activity B12. During the coming day, frequently stop and think about the emotions you are experiencing at that moment. If someone cuts you off on the freeway, for example, step aside (in your mind) and study the emotions you are feeling (e.g., anger, frustration, hate, jealousy, revenge, pity, and so forth.) If you receive a compliment, step aside and study your emotional responses (e.g., gratitude, pride, happiness, victory, and so forth). Try to understand and actually savor the emotions you are feeling. Make notes below of your experiences.

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Activity B15. Please list six emotions you consider to be “bad” and six you consider are “good” emotions.

<u>“Bad” Emotions</u>	<u>Good Emotions</u>
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- | | |
|----|----|
| 1. | 1. |
| 2. | 2. |
| 3. | 3. |
| 4. | 4. |
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| 6. | 6. |

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Activity B19. List some things you want from your partner.

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Activity B47. With your partner, choose an issue that is confronting both of you. Trade places and speak as if you were the other person. If you find yourself misunderstanding the other person, or yourself being misunderstood, return momentarily to your true identity to explain what you really think and feel.

Activity B48. Explore with your partner ways you have developed to communicate non-verbally. For example, you might search out how you communicate your desire to engage in sexual love making. (It rarely begins with, “I've got an idea—lets go make love.”) Or explore the ways you touch, the facial expressions you use, and so forth.

Activity B49. Discuss a financial issue with your partner. Tell him or her what happened to create the issue, what you think, what you're feeling, and what you want to do about the issue.

Activity B50. Write a half-dozen things you respect about your partner. Then write a half-dozen things you think your partner respects about you.

Activity B51. What does it mean to have goodwill? Write ten things you could do which would demonstrate your goodwill toward your partner.

Activity B52. Discuss the outcomes of the first two exercises with your partner.

Activity B53. When it comes to managing emotions, or developing attitudes, we can make choices. (We get to choose how we want to behave and how we want to respond.) Discuss with your partner how you both could behave when one of you is feeling less equal.

Activity B54. With your partner, discuss the last few day's activities and the issues that came up. See if both of you felt equal in the decisions that were made.

Activity B55. With your partner, discuss the following problems, as if they were your problems. Role-play using the attitudes of partnership and equality.

- a. Dinner is not on the table, the house is a mess, and dad's got a meeting to go to in 30 minutes.
- b. Your oldest son is having problems at school. Someone must go and speak to the principal.
- c. Dad lost his job two months ago and mom's income just barely pays for food and rent. Bills are piling up and the phone was just disconnected.
- d. Partner #1 is feeling the need to have a more affectionate relationship, but Partner #2 feels things are fine the way they are.

Activity B56. With your partner, list a number of problem solving techniques that would be acceptable to both of you.

Activity B57. With your partner, select a current issue (or problem) and try finding a solution that is acceptable to both of you.

Activity B58. Make a list of some of the friends you have had during the past ten years. Rank each of them on a scale of 1-10, where higher numbers indicate more intimacy, more trust, and so forth. Think about each person and why you have felt the bonds of friendship with that person.

(Optional) **Activity B59.** Place your partner on the list and assign a ranking (1-10).

(Optional) **Activity B60.** Discuss with your partner your list of friends and his/her place on it.

Activity B61. Ask you partner what you could do to make it easier for him/her to think of you as a friend.

Activity B62. List qualities you like in your friends. Compare your list to your partner's list.

Activity B63. Suppose your partner took a long trip—a month away in another city. What types of mistrust or uneasiness would you feel? What kinds of things could he or she do to make you feel more trusting?

Activity B64. Make a list of things you have faith in (e.g., existence of God, your ability to solve problems, your partner's love for you, and so forth.) Try to distinguish between what you “think” and what you “have faith in.”

Activity B65. Ask your partner what types of things stand in the way of having a more trusting relationship.

Activity B66. Ask your partner to suggest things that make it easier to have faith in you.

Activity B67. With your partner, select a problem you were experiencing some years (months?) ago. Go over the problem and write down the compromises you each made (or could have made.)

Activity B68. Write a list of the sacrifices your partner has made for you or for your relationship.

Activity B69. Write a list of the sacrifices you have made for your partner, or for your relationship. In what ways did your sacrifice benefit your relationship? Would you do anything different, given the same opportunity again?

Activity B70. Think back to the first weeks or months of your relationship when fun was the primary objective of your being together. What were you doing? What made your times together fun? What did you like to do then? Write these things down and discuss them with your partner.

Activity B71. With your partner, plan to re-create one of the fun times you had in the past. It won't be the same of course, and it needn't be. Just get the ball rolling.

Activity B72. For the next month, at least once a week, plan and carry out one of the following fun activities (or something similar of your own choosing):

- a. Go on a picnic.
- b. Go on a long ride.
- c. Get a sitter and go stay in a motel over night.
- d. Go to a funny movie or play.
- e. Read the funny papers together every night for a week.
- f. Learn a new joke every day, and tell it to your partner.
- g. Visit some friends you both enjoy being with.
- h. Go on a long walk together.
- i. Go to an ice cream store.

During these fun activities do not bring up any heavy issues or problems. Make each experience strictly one of fun, relaxation, and enjoyment.

Activity B73. Have you considered leaving your partner (divorce or separation)? If you have, write below what would it take to keep you together.

Activity B74. If you did separate, what qualities would you seek in your next partner? Write them below.

Activity B75. Have you been physically or sexually abused by your partner? If so, you need help. Contact your clergyman, or look in the telephone directory for a local county mental health agency. Give them a call and arrange for a meeting. Someone will be able to help you evaluate your situation and suggest further action.

Activity B76. Is your partner unloving and absolutely unwilling to engage in the types of activities suggested in this book? If this is the case, you need help.

Activity B77. Compare the qualities you listed in Activity B74 to the qualities you listed in Activity B1, Section 1. If you're like most people these two lists will be reasonably similar, even if you expect to separate from your partner. What can you infer from this remarkable outcome ?

The Caring* Contract: Five Steps to a Lasting, Pleasant and Committed Partnership

Each partner must:

Step 1. Understand “committed love” in a partnership.

- “Love,” at its core, is a *commitment to care* for the partner.
- It must be mutually accepted, felt, and taken responsibility for.
- No relationship can survive if only one person makes the commitment.

Step 2. Make the following permanent commitment to the other:

“I will treat you as though I care about you.”

- This is the “caring contract.”
- Motives for caring will vary, but actual caring behaviors and attitudes must be foremost.
- Each partner will feel secure and trusting when s/he knows the other person is committed to caring for her/him.
- Every word and action should pass through the filter of: *“Does this show that I care?”*
- Mistakes will be made and partners will not show caring at all times. In this case the other partner has choices:
 - a. Ignore (with genuine forgiveness and forgetting). *Okay.*
 - b. Ignore (with buildup of resentment and anger). *Not okay.*

c. Communicate “I don’t feel cared for” concerns and disappointments, knowing the partner will:

- Express sorrow and make amends, and/or,
- Express feelings, thoughts and needs and find a mutually acceptable compromise, and/or,
- Change behavior and attitudes to enhance caring.

Note: Communication is a learned skill.

- To succeed, talking must be done at the right time, with the right methods, and with the caring commitment in place
- Being understood is often more important than being right.

Step 3. Be willing to make personal changes, as necessary and feasible, to become a “caring” partner.

- “People can’t/won’t change” is a myth.

Step 4. Understand that a caring relationship is an asymptotic function: you move towards that ideal as time passes.

Step 5. Outline in writing what s/he expects as part of a caring contract.

- A written contract—developed and acceptable to both partners—will build trust and acceptance.

*Caring = thoughtfulness, kindness, gentleness, forgiveness, sharing, giving, generosity, helping, meeting the other’s needs, making the other person equal with oneself.