

Grow Your Relationship

Handbooks For Entrepreneurs

“Relationship Improvement”

Xtreme Skills for
Busy People...

By Chris Walker

Xtreme Skills for Busy People Report

Signs of Personal Issues that need resolution before the relationship can be repaired.

- * *Depression and Anger*
- * *Blame and verbal abuse*
- * *Lost libido and sexual intimacy*
- * *Tiredness and immune breakdown*
- * *Stress*
- * *Long work hours away from home*
- * *Lost health and interest in personal wellbeing*
- * *Self help courses*

Signs of Relationship Issues that need to be sorted.

- * *Prefer other people's company to your partner.*
- * *Diminishing laughter*
- * *Communication breakdown.*
- * *Lost investment in home care and long term planning*
- * *More Television*
- * *Arguments*
- * *Family Interference*
- * *Children rule the home*
- * *Lost romance - no common interests*
- * *Lost physical attraction*

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Typical Reactions to Personal Issues that don't work.

- * *Medication*
- * *Holidays*
- * *Health Spa's*
- * *Addictions*
- * *Spiritual Guru's*
- * *Books*
- * *Public Self Help Seminars*
- * *Leaving relationships*
- * *Affairs*
- * *Alcohol*
- * *Work*

Typical Reactions to Relationship Issues that don't work:

- * *Complain and try to change their partner*
- * *Become independent*
- * *Work addiction*
- * *Sport addiction*
- * *Alcohol and substance addiction*
- * *Birth more children*
- * *Turn to religion and spirituality*
- * *Addicted to pharmaceuticals (anti depressants)*
- * *Have affairs*
- * *Spend money*

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So, by this point in the report you will have the capacity to diagnose the opportunities for improvement in your relationship and, in the worst case scenario whether you are holding onto a sinking ship.

It's a most important point to come to in any relationship to understand that to love someone is not to hold onto them. We hear this crazy notion over and over again, as if it's a mantra, "I love you so much, I can't let you go." This is an absolute mythical distortion.

If you love someone, there is absolutely no attachment. There cannot be love and attachment. Emotion is attached. Needs are attached. Feelings and bank accounts, hopes and dreams are attached, but love, no way. Love is completely detached.

If you are really in love with your partner there cannot be jealousy or control or anger. Those are not love. And this is a vital moment of health for a couple to speak this difference to each other.

I love you means, I have no attachment.

I need you means I have all the attachment in the world.

The more I love you, the less attached I am.

The less I love you, the more attached I am.

This is not Desperate Housewives love. This is real, grass roots everyday, roll up your sleeves, get your hands dirty, love. Real nature love and this is what you need in order to be authentic together.

So, with reality we proceed.

Chapter 3. Facing Up to Personal Issues

It's a huge step in the right direction to step up and take the power back by becoming the cause of your own life. If your partner is bored with you, it's because you are too. If your partner is not honest with you, it's because you aren't being honest with yourself.

By taking your power back and being the cause of your happiness in a relationship, you also get to be the cure.

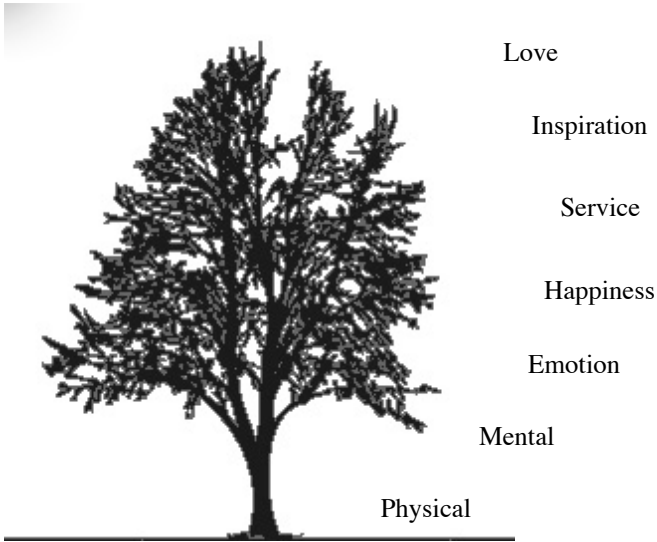
Blaming "the relationship" or your partner for the misdoings of your circumstance means they have to change in order for a great relationship to happen, and the truth is, it'll never happen.

So, the ball is squarely in your court. You can do many thousands of things to improve your relationship but none of them involve changing your partner. That's a great power you have.

We've uncovered some very clever ways people have created in order to avoid the real personal issues their relationship has bought to the surface. These include:

- * *Alcohol each night to numb the senses*
- * *Working long hours - Business travel*
- * *Over commitments to schools, committees and clubs*
- * *Obsession and prioritising of children*
- * *Spiritual meditations and yoga devotions*
- * *Blaming the job, economy or family*
- * *Addictions to family members as surrogate partners (social)*
- * *Obsession with money, material and shopping*

Personal Health - Where are you at?



You can exist in life at any of seven levels of PERSONAL HEALTH Diagram. Your level will affect your relationship, and the healing process radically but it is not caused by your relationship.

Let me explain.

There are seven levels of personal health, as demonstrated on the Personal Health Diagram. But there are also seven areas of life and these are illustrated on the following diagram.

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As you can see from the Self-Leadership diagram above, there are seven areas of life. In the diagram, the person in question has a high satisfaction index on financial, mental and health areas of their life and a lower satisfaction index on their relationship, social, career, and spiritual areas.

The important thing to note here is that “satisfaction index” has no external barometer against which an individual is comparing their score. This is simply a measure of how a person feels in relation to a perfect contentment - totally satisfied score on the outside circle and a complete bummer on the inside circle.

The most valuable lesson we can take from this Self-Leadership Satisfaction Index is: None of this score has anything to do with your relationship.

Not even your relationship score has anything to do with your partner.

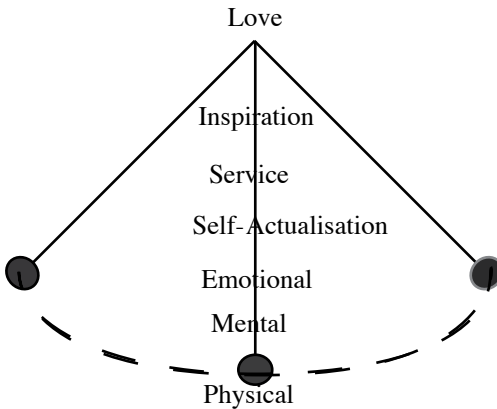
We are not leaves, blown about in the wind. We are given, as our unique birthright, the chance to think whatever we want. Free will

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to think. And those “Satisfaction Indexes reflect the quality of your choices in thought.

Crappy thinking means you set extremely high standards and have an extremely Low Satisfaction Index. This turns you into a miserable, depressed and dissatisfied person even if, you are beautiful inside your heart, this thinking process will sabotage that beauty.

A monk, the Dalai Lama, a priest of high order, a saint, a great inspired artist on the other hand may have no possessions, no relationship, the poorest of health and the least spirituality of all the people you know, but their thinking will lead them to a perfect score. They remain content, through hell or high water. Nothing can change it.



Now I have presented for you a MIND MAP of Emotion. Here the map is the same as the tree. The roots in the physical spread far and wide. The taller the tree, the deeper the roots.

A person who is thinking in the physical is always extremely low on the “Satisfaction Index Map.” Why? Because the physical can never be satisfied.

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At the physical level, pleasure is insatiable. We will eat and eat and eat because we can never be complete.

I would also like to draw your attention to the pendulum. This is the Quality of Life Marker - or as we've labelled it, Qi To Life marker.

Each day you have a certain amount of energy to give to life.

At the physical level, the pendulum swings to and fro, energy is spent physically in the form of nervous tension, exercise, buying things and creating things. It is what you could call a very physical life.

At the mental level, much of that physical energy is converted to thinking. As much as it is not recognised by most people as an energy consuming activity, thinking demands huge energy resources, and those resources are far more refined than physical energy resources, and so, the digestive system needs to do a far greater processing job on food and nutrition to feed this lifestyle. Worry, anxiety, study and concentration even driving the car in heavy traffic can consume massive energy.

At the emotional level an individual can spend their day either fulfilling their own or others emotional needs. Seeking approval, looking for acceptance, being elated, depressed, infatuated, resentful and any of the other 3,000 emotions can consume this energy. An entertainer or performer may even draw energy into emotion to perform for payment, they are reimbursed for emotional expenditure but the average person who celebrates their up and down emotion, gets very little other than self-satisfaction in energy terms.

At the happiness level the individual will spend their day getting, feeling, giving and doing what they want. They may want the world

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to change, or their health to change, so, the want level is considered the “heart level.” When we say, “I love you with all my heart, what we are actually saying is “you give me everything I want in a relationship.” This is as high an achievement in self-gratification as we can achieve. It is the ultimate realisation of self-actualisation to say, I get, I give and I have, what I want.

Now, before we continue, consider the question carefully. If life is moving in a direction, which in this case is bottom to top, what would be the most effective use of the energy of that pendulum, the Qi to Life arm? Would it be best expressed physically in big side to side swings or would it be better in little swings side to side and more of that energy focussed on the direction of life?

The answers to this vary from person to person.

At the service level an individual is reconnecting to nature and at this level the focus is shifting to a different motivation. Where the individual was focussed on Me, my, our, your and I, up until the Self-actualisation level, now they can focus on some sense of contribution to others, even at their own cost.

The higher a person goes on this MIND MAP, the higher their score on the Personal Satisfaction Index and the higher we go on that index, the greater our Personal Health will be.

Ultimately it all comes down to what we consider a priority and how we choose to think about life.

The more thankful you become for what you’ve got, the higher your contentment index. The higher this index the more effective your energy expenditure will be.

At the physical, mental and emotional levels of Personal Satisfaction words such as GOT To, SHOULD, and NEED To drive our

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life. They reflect a level of thinking that is still not very productive. What is even more significant is that these lower levels of thinking generate many of the personal issues that sabotage relationships.

These include: depression, anger, jealousy and greed.

Moving to Healthier Personal Ground -

Are you hoping to be treated better than you treat yourself?

To learn about being happy, sustainable happiness within yourself is the first step in a happy relationship. It is a whole science. You get to know yourself, and eventually to love yourself.

This means that any unhappiness you are having right now, has nothing to do with your partner. You might blame your partner and say, “you don’t behave like I demand,” or “you broke my heart,” but this is so disempowered, and worse, it make the situation you are in totally frustrating.

You can’t change the past. You can become happy. Happy is not a “if you do this” situation. It’s a quality of life decision. And you are the only person in the entire universe that can cause it.

Relationships and people in them do not cause stress. Your reactions to your partner might cause stress.

When you are happy it shows. In your eyes, your face, the way you walk, the way you sit, everything will show it, because you are not the same person when you are truly happy. You have been touched. The desiring mind is not there. You look younger, feel younger and hold life in the palm of your hand.

So what are you going to do? Make your relationship or your children the prime source of your happiness? What crazy notion is

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that? Are you going to make the condition of profit in your work the prime source of your happiness? It's ridiculous. Life goes up and down, support and challenge, but that doesn't mean you have to go with it.

Addictions and drug dependence all come about because people hook their happiness to something that fluctuates. That's like building a house at the top of a tree and complaining that you feel unsettled.

If your relationship - life has dropped in quality, the most important thing is to not push that stress onto your partner. What it's revealing is that you've lost yourself in a relationship and you need to go get it back. (It being your happiness and independence.)

If you are only happy when you find a partner to fall in love with, your life and relationship will be a mess. When your partner is up you'll be down and when they are down you'll be up. It's a reactive silly existence.

The key to all this is to be able to separate emotion from reality. The person who loses touch with reality, nature, loses all sense of separation between their emotion and their love.

Even before you met your partner if you were happy because of one thing and sad because of another, and your real inner inspiration fluctuated with the wind like that, then transferring that to a relationship has just exacerbated a preexisting issue. I'm going to show you how to get around it.

If you can become connected to nature, I mean really embrace it you will not have these emotional dependencies that make people one person before they fall in love, and then somebody else after they fall in love,

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To become “in love” without someone to love means you create a good attitude to life, to trees and children and sunsets; in love with a movie, and in love life itself. To be ready to fall in love, we must be at peace with ourselves and inspired by life.

The harmony of your relationship is no accident. It is the consequence of your approach to life.

Being connected to nature doesn't mean climbing Mount Everest with one hand tied behind your back. What it means is a dire and all pervading love for flowers, insects, trees, birds, animals, the beach, water and the sky.

It's just a higher priority that puts relationship down the list a bit, instead of on top of it.

There is a lot of depression around at the moment. Most of it is caused by a disconnection from nature. When we disconnect from nature, we, our children or our relationship becomes our top priority, and that's a disaster.

Especially if, in raising those elements to the top, we become so attached to those elements of life that our happiness becomes conditional on the good behaviour of others.

Consider it like this. You can watch a yacht sail past, nice yacht right. Now, put someone you know on the yacht and now you'll realise there's more at stake in that yacht being safe. Now put someone you are totally attached to for your happiness on that yacht, and your emotions will go up and down with the weather.

Can you see that at some level you and your emotional reactions need to be separated. While you go up and down with your emotions

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watching that yacht, where's your happiness, inspiration, love for life? One the boat is the answer and that's tough.

The way to reconnect to nature and create this individuality that stands the breeze of life is to be alone each day in nature. This might simply mean bringing a flower into your private space and giving that flower 100% of your undivided attention for a few minutes.

By being alone, we mean connecting with nature AND feeling good about it. That good feeling simply comes through one single act of thought. Appreciation.

Nature is filled with fascinating things and just for short periods you can go there and seek out things to be thankful for.

Start with a few minutes each hour, then make it five minutes and eventually ten. Don't rush the journey, just go, take a breath of air, look for something precious to admire - a texture or a drop of water - and return to your day.

This process can even be done indoors. You can collect a beautiful flower arrangement and use this as the focus of your appreciation exercise.

At first, you might start with one of your senses, simply looking, then, after time start to smell, hear, feel and taste with appreciation. This is nature's greatest antidote to stress, depression, sadness and anxiety. It awakens the spirit and is considered one of the shortest and most powerful process for inner peace.

There is no need to think about your problems or pains. They will come to a clarity if you can dutifully follow this process. And this is what you can honestly recognise. The more we reconnect with nature and appreciation for it, the better and stronger our mental health will become.

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Out in nature away from the claustrophobia of air-conditioned offices and television sets, let even your jealousy and suspicions fall away, become more and more connected to something inconceivably beautiful. There is no need for regret and pain or personal drama if you can just get humble to the beauty and majesty of nature.

Let the sky become your roof, the earth your floor, the plants, trees, birds and insects your walls. Eventually you and your new home will merge and there will be a greater sense of life.

If you feel rejected and not desired by our partner this exercise alone will regenerate interest in you. As you develop humility with a sense of connection to nature you are returning to a most powerful state of your own being.

If you feel guilty or angry, being appreciative and connected to nature will transform your emotions and give you peace. This is beyond the realms of your mind and intellectual process which, ultimately sabotage your relationships.

Come alive in the reality of what is, this is the world of nature. This is your home beyond the mind.

Learn to appreciate nature rather than wanting to change it. Finding contentment within yourself will be illusive until you can anchor it in appreciation for nature and her process. She is managing the pollution, the forestation, the supply of nourishment. See if you can grasp a greater appreciation for nature by understanding how nature adapts - evolves - in times of challenge.

Look into the heart of nature, and see how support and challenge are nature's constant companions. Challenge - storms, deforestation, over fishing, predators, insects, disease cause nature and her specie

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to adapt and grow stronger. Learn how support in nature is a time for consolidation and regeneration. See your life in this context.

Just for now, in these moments in nature, these little minutes of connection, forget those questions and take your mind to healthier places.

Happiness in life that is built on the temporary art of emotional gratification is unsustainable. Upper emotions and sweets take you up and so, downer emotions and bitters take you down. This is more like a leaf that's lost contact with the branch on which it grew.

Your life is the tree. Appreciation for nature are the roots. Learn to appreciate nature and you learn to appreciate life.

I have studied Zen and Yoga extensively. I have researched the ancient mysteries and psychology. I have attended self-help workshops, therapy sessions, meditations in Himalayan caves and danced with First Nation people all over the world. Simply by sitting and appreciating nature, you will get all the gifts those mastery experiences provide, in days instead of years.

No drug can substitute for the natural connection human beings have to nature. But there is still a necessity to be disciplined in this practice. Too many people consider running through nature or protecting nature or fighting for the rights of nature as their process of connection. This must be separated from this current practice of reconnecting with nature.

Appreciation for nature will bring you home to happiness. Then, whether you are running, talking, reading, working and taking responsibility for the problems of the world, having dinner or taking a bath whatever you are doing, appreciation for nature, is going to shine through.

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Nature never changes and so, this appreciation for nature can be an anchor point for your heart. Whether you are in or out of a relationship you are solid in a connection to nature. It is beyond your intellect, has no amplifications of moral judgements or ethical religious values. Nature is, after all the most perfect mirror of the mind of creation that is possible.

Whoever created life created nature. Simply bypassing all the translations of what nature presents, you will find in nature a connection to your deepest being. There are no need for labels in nature, some people say Soul, but in nature those labels become secondary, what is important in nature is experience.

Appreciating the path of an ant in nature is as important as the appreciation for the vast magnificence of the Amazon or the depths and beauty of an ocean.

Avoid the temptation to try to conquer nature by pitting your mind and body against it. Many people choose to go into nature to reinforce their list of achievements and this is stimulating. But it is temporary. We are building here a permanent, sustainable and non intellectual basis for happiness. This is a separate thing.

1/ Go to nature or bring things into your space and spend short periods of time in deep appreciation for nature.

2/ Go out to nature and spend short periods of time there looking for interesting things that seem beautiful to you.

3/ Go to nature and spend longer periods of time looking and appreciating nature, the beauty, the cycles of nature, seasons, day and night.

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4/ Go to nature and try to see with all your senses - your whole being. Feel the beauty, touch it smell it, listen and become absorbed in it. The whole point here is to lose yourself and just have so much appreciation for nature that you feel connected to it.

5/ Go to nature and just be. Use the awareness of step 4, to bring yourself totally into the moment and then be very still, try to just be there without movement. Now repeat the Peace Mantra:

I need nothing,

I want nothing,

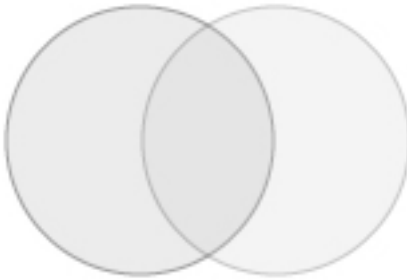
And therefore,

I have Everything.

This is the ultimate happiness. This is the mastery of happiness.

Chapter 4. Facing Up to Relationship Issues

It takes two to tango but one person can do a lot to improve a relationship. Assuming your Personal Issues are in process, then we can turn our attention to the remaining huge chunk of life we call our relationship.



A massive 33.333% of your life is affected by your relationship. That's one third and an incredibly important one third. This model is taken from the studies of all bodies in nature and represented on the above diagram - the Vesica Piscis.

If something is not right in that huge part of your life, the rest can easily become bruised by it.

So, it becomes more than just the desire to have a great relationship that motivates us to improve our relationship. This is really the most significant single factor in our quality of life.

In this effort, we need to spare no compromise.

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Inside this 33.3333% of life we call relationship there are five absolutely essential ingredients to great relationship. If one or more are missing, then the cause of a relationship problem is revealed.

(it is important to point out to single people that this 333.333 is never empty. Most single people have filled this space with children, work addiction or self obsession) it is never empty.'

The five key ingredients of health in relationships are:

Love - the Ability to Accept

Love means really turning up in your relationship non verbally. When love is missing we feel it. We feel it long before our partner speaks it. Sometimes we don't trust our intuition on this, but our intuition is always 100% accurate. If we don't feel the love then it's probably gone. If love is gone, or clouded by stress, this is a very important cause of relationship issues. We need to recognise and solve this.

Trust - the Ability to Grow

Love is trust and trust is love. To trust your partner is the gateway to loving your partner. Jealousy, anger, control, fear and guilt block trust. Those are personal issues, nothing to do with the relationship or your partner. No one can betray your trust more than you do to yourself.

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Admiration - the Ability to Adapt

Respect plays a big part in great relationships. It begins with self-respect and extends, almost automatically into respect for and by others. To admire your partner is very important. It means they are, in your eyes a super special person. If admiration turns to complacency or even disrespect, then this is a cause of relationship breakdown that needs to be addressed.

Appreciation - the Ability to Nourish

What we appreciate grows. What we depreciate gets worse, fails and breaks down. People become as we treat them. If we stop appreciating the gift of our partner in our relationship then we automatically sabotage our relationship. This is a prime cause of mundane and unloving relationship.

Vision - Sunshine

All human eyes are turned to the future. People merge in relationship to create the future. When there's hope, there's relationship; when it's gone there's survival. Energy comes from hope, and sometimes reality in a relationship destroys it. When the future is not positive or trustable, energy drops and relationships fail.

Healing time

In order to jump over the option of dragging out the discomfort of a challenged relationship for months or even years, it's wise to devote some high quality healing time to your relationship.

The best therapy, is nature.

When two people who care for each other and really want their relationship to work they need to get away from the city and really immerse themselves in nature, they fall back in step with each other, naturally.

Life in the city has become strangely cut off from nature; man-made buildings have taken the place of valleys and mountains, and the roar of traffic has been substituted for that of boisterous streams. Something definitely happens to us city-dwellers; we get brittle and polished, we have churches and museums, drinks and theatres, beautiful clothes and endless shops. There are people everywhere, on the streets, in the buildings, in the rooms. It's so easy to lose connection with nature, and then we become emotionally spun out with all the hustle and bustle. There is rush and turmoil, emotion, ambition, desire, so little time for real, natural connection.

So, depending on the level of challenge you are both experiencing in your relationship, a good few days in nature, not too far from the comforts of home in a beautiful rustic environment would make a huge difference.

Isolation is the key, getting away from bell captains and registration desks, fancy linen and television. Away from concrete swimming pools and bus tours. The exploration that comes from just a walk in nature, in a park can be enough.

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What you are searching for in this experience in nature is something to take your mind off relationships. You want to be walking in the bush with such and intensity that you need to focus on it. Or playing at the beach exploring the undersea world. This nature time is not a time to be taking courses in skuba or learning to face your fears skydiving. Being in nature means being in a place where beauty overwhelms your small sense of life.

For me, the ideal walk is in Nepal. Magnificent mountains, plenty of alone time, miles from fancy hotels, but no need to be roughing it. It's got physical and emotional challenge but not enough to overwhelm the beauty of the walk.

Not all people can afford the cost or the time to spend a few weeks in Nepal. Here are some other ideas I've tried and enjoyed.

Sailing - we hired a yacht and sailed around the Whitsunday Islands.

- * *Snorkling*
- * *Kayaking*
- * *Surfing*
- * *Photography journeys*
- * *Throwing a ball*
- * *Horse riding*

To really make an impact on your relationship you need to spend time alone together. This means no guide, teacher, doorman, dry cleaner, cook, instructor. Alone means alone and dependent on each other.

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When a couple is willing to make this commitment to their relationship, meaning both people want to try, then the what you do, becomes less important.

What hasn't worked are:

- * *Staying in five star hotels for a week*
- * *Health resorts*
- * *Road trips with the children*
- * *Boat cruises*
- * *Health Spa's*
- * *Meditation retreats.*
- * *Holidays in far off lands*

To be together in nature uninterrupted and focussed on nature is a very precious healing. This is when you forget each other and just enjoy the time, let nature do the match making. The key is alone, because a third or fourth or one thousandth person distracts you both from what is really important in this time.

The other important element of this healing time is that it's not an opportunity to drag your partner into something you love to do and they don't. One client described taking his wife scuba diving to get her qualified. She hated every minute while he loved it. This is not the time for that. This is a time for doing relatively easy, low risk partnering minus all the usual distractions. (including children).

And last but not least, quality relationship time is not a time for wild sexual gymnastics, romantic dinners or extended sleep. This is not pampering time, it's reconnecting to nature time, a whole different thing.

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Healing time means focused time. However, try to avoid talking about your problems. They don't resolve themselves by talking, they resolve by healing. Just learning whether you still enjoy each other's company is going to be a huge step for you.

In nature, you can just stop trying. Stop trying to impress, reject, accept, change, fix or sort out your problems. Just go and enjoy whatever you are doing in nature.

One client took her partner on a photography day, just shooting anything they could find in nature that was beautiful. They used point and shoot cameras so there wasn't a big time delay in taking shots. When they came home they put the photos in an album and went through them sharing their insights. It was, according to them, a whole new level of experience.

Your Stress is Not My Stress.

Sometimes the challenge in a relationship belongs only to one person. Then there's a stress that either you or your partner can't do much about. So, in relationship challenge, if your heart is open, your mind is soft, you're not feeling fearful, guilty or angry then you are at peace and the stress is not your stress.

During this time, it is vital that you don't start reacting to your partner. They might be experiencing all sorts of crappy feelings, blaming you and being hard on themselves but you must remain clear, focussed and with integrity.

A stressed and dizzy person is subconsciously pushing you away with one hand and pulling you close with the other. So, when your

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partner is in stress, it's best to give them space to have that spin, and not get caught in it.

When you feel that your partner is stressed and projecting that stress onto you, simply affirm, **“Your Stress is Not My Stress.”**

When is it time to implement the “Your stress is not my Stress policy?”

At first you might try to intervene, to reach out a helping hand, try to calm them, ground them, but really, changing somebody else to fit your mould of who and how they should be is narcissistic at best.

Sometimes by caring we become a part of the problem instead of the solution. It is hard to stand back and watch our partner struggle, but this is a part of their life process too.

Once there was a child decided to help a chicken hatch. As the shell started to crack, the child used a pin to pry open the egg shell so the chick didn't have to struggle so much to get out. The chick died because the struggle was an important part of it's own development. Sometimes helping people, hurts them.

Can you stand still enough to let your partner's stress be their stress? You achieve this by learning to love people rather than wanting to change or fix them.

Osmosis is a legitimate form of communication. By staying open hearted and with love, by not buying into the emotion and drama, and by keeping your head in a healthy space, you are actually helping, rather than projecting onto your partner.

If we take on other people's stress, then there are two people in spin, sharing the drama, instead of one. One is enough.

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This is an extreme test of your commitment. Maybe you don't love your partner enough to stand still while they spin. Maybe you don't really want the relationship enough to sit by while your partner gets professional help. Your choices around this must not be blamed on your partner's behaviour, challenge in life is a part of life, but you can instead, blame your choices on your own realisations.

Sometimes it takes extraordinary patience and commitment. Some people willingly stick around and work through their own issues in order to be the pillar around which their partner can spin. Others don't. It all depends on the level of love and sense of time a person has that determines these choices.

It is so important to hold this loving stillness in a long term relationship. If you start reacting to your partner who is reacting to somebody else, who is in turn reacting to global warming, you've just made your relationship a complex catastrophe instead of a sanctuary in which your partner must face their stress.

Sometimes you might be faced with a stressed and tense partner who refuses to change, who wants to blame you for everything. This is a real test. Most people find excuses under these circumstances not to come home too much. They either start building things in the garage or get extremely busy at work.

Space is a way of holding love in a relationship. If one partner is stressed and in an unhealthy blame game head space, the other will stand back far enough to sustain their love. Physical distance is just another way of saying, "Your stress is not my stress."

One guy came to me for a Reality Check. He'd been spinning out at work, dizzy with worry and stress. His partner had become more and more removed, taking holidays with friends, doing Yoga

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and basically not being around too much. He was angry at her until I explained that a thorn bush is hard to get near, just like a stressed person, whose thorns are depreciating and negative, is hard to get near.

By implementing the “Your stress is not my Stress” process you also prevent the reacting to reaction, rebound effect. It’s not uncommon for the original problem to become lost in a cloud of reactive problems. One client came to a Reality Check session angry that her partner was negative. When she explored what was going on before he was negative toward her, and before she got angry with him she realised that she had been unavailable for a real intimate relations for a long time before that. She’d had a bad year of health problems and hadn’t been able to sort it out. What happened was that her partner reacted to her lost presence, she’d reacted to his reaction and forgotten the real source of her stress. It’s a great example where, if he’d just stayed, “Your stress is not my stress” the focus would have remained on the real issue.

The more you react, the less loved your partner feels. When you react, they react, which in turn causes you to react, which in turn makes them feel less loved. It’s a cycle that’s best not to start and one that, if there’s children involved in the relationship, they’ll probably feel the need to fix.

Underneath all the stress and struggle there is love. It is there, always, behind the drama, the emotion, the strain.

I need nothing

I want nothing

And therefore

I have everything - Now, I can truly love you.

Grow Your Relationship

Many people think that their role in relationship is tied up with fixing something about their partner by comparing them to some ideal, but there is nothing to change in anyone.

Once you decide that “your stress is not my stress,” you can separate love from your emotion and then begin the journey of acceptance.

Healing demands that you find appreciation of what you already have. If you are single appreciate the friendships you already have, appreciate yourself as you already are. By being thankful for what already is, you close the appetite for “wanting to fix the world”.

The person who wants to fix their partner is hiding from the real source of the problems. Judgement...

Your lover is perfect; you are perfect, as you are. If you are not perfect already then there is no possibility, no way that you can become perfect. The whole situation is totally crazy; you are already that which you want to attain. This is why simple techniques can help. Love is not an attainment, but a discovery. It is hidden beneath expectations, judgements, emotions, ambitions and it is hidden within you. It is not a matter of doing something, that just causes more unsteadiness; it is a matter of not doing, being in love with reality. The person is worthy of love and so are you, right now.

In modern relationships people are taught to change the world in order to create lovable circumstances. It is an approach to life that causes much suffering because it begins with the premise, “I do not

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have something, and now I will go out and get it.” .Or, “I do not love something so now I will go out and change it to make it lovable.”

Automatically, there is a loss because there is a premise of “without,” or “inadequate” and if you change enough to meet my expectations, if you do the right thing “I will be happy and therefore I will give you love.”

Core Values of a Healthy Relationship

In a challenged relationship, there will always be evidence of one of four important values. By focussing on one or all of these, relationships inevitably come back to life.

These four values pervade all great and happy relationships. They are the cornerstones of health, respect and admiration. The four values are: Kindness, Generosity, Compassion, Appreciation.

Kindness

Kindness because it places the heart and mind of others higher than your own. Kindness is a gentle attitude, expressed in the way you think, speak and act. There is limitless scope to show this attitude, and no matter how much attitude is developed in this way, it is never too much. It grows great dignity. One can never do too much.

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Generosity

Generosity because it raises the energy of the moment and allows hearts to open. Generosity will unlock any emotional gate and find its way to any heart. It is the key to progress. It implies abundance for all, but requires some sacrifice at times. All those recognised to have been great in their time have been generous, giving people, but they have never been weak. They have never softened their responsibility towards themselves or depleted themselves for others.

Compassion

Compassion because it keeps us humble. Compassion is care. It begins at home but expands and grows with people in work and social environments. The simplest definition of compassion is the removal of suffering of others. That means, in essence, not causing suffering.

Appreciation

Appreciation because it makes us grow. Appreciation is a great foundation for a loving relationship. Thankfulness, which is appreciation in real life is a wonderful intention. A thankful person can live joyfully, can accept change, will grow with an open heart and will be magnetic in love.

What we appreciate grows. What we don't appreciate depreciates. If we criticise our partner or offer them advice they don't ask for basically we are saying we don't appreciate them the way that they are, and that depreciates them, their feelings and commitment. The most beautiful gift we can give our partner is appreciation, not only at Christmas or Valentine's Day but everyday.

Check Your Space

The environment in which you share your relationship has a great affect on your feelings about each other. Your home can celebrate love to such a degree that it keeps a relationship together during difficult challenges.

Designing your home to include the essence of romance is a vital part of creating and sustaining love in your life. The environment a person lives in affects their mind, their health, and their heart. So your space is a vital step in creating a healthy relationship.

Create zones in your home where work, television, cooking and sleep are separated from intimacy and romance. Have a parents only area, or put the television in a television room, not the family room.

Be mindful of the energy carried by objects. I have seen stolen property, dead people's ashes, old furniture that carries the suffering of an old relative, and paintings of torture placed in areas where love was meant to thrive. Antiques are wonderful, and some, even the cheap ones, carry such a wonderful charm, but if your love changes after the purchase of a object in your home, or a new painting on the wall, be aware of the fact that those objects can carry very bad energy.

Be aware that visitors and phone calls can carry energy with them that's not good for the home. Even a tradesman can bring in more than muddy boots. Allowing such energy into your home is contagious and detrimental to your love.

Make your home sacred, you can even ask people to take off their shoes as a symbol of respect for the space.

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Be conscious of the effect of dark news, violent television, aggressive music, and bad attitudes on the space you have created for love.

Book shelves are affirmation shelves. On the spine of every book is a message. That book speaks to your subconscious. If you have recovered from alcoholism, then it may not be the best affirmation to have on your wall, "ALCOHOLICS SURVIVAL GUIDE." After you are done healing something, pass the book on. Books on healing keep you healing. That's an important moment when you say, "Ok, I'm fixed, now what?" Surround yourself with great books, whose spine is a testimonial to the aspiration you have in life.

Photographs and paintings on the wall affect a home.

Respect for the cleanliness, order and organisation of your home is a ceremony, a ritual and a vital ingredient for a loving relationship.

An altar is always good: a place where memories of those past, tokens of love, respect for higher powers are placed. Those altars can be a simple box covered with cloth, or, in the case of some I have seen, marble covered rooms with golden statues monitored and maintained by a priest full time. It matters not what the altar cost, it matters what it means and how much respect and devotion is given to its tidiness, maintenance and care.

Food carries the energy of the cook. If a couple is arguing while one of them cooks a meal, anyone who eats that meal will experience the thoughts and feelings of the cook in the food prepared for them. How a meal turns out is not only about the level of skill the cook possesses, or the ingredients, but also what they were experiencing and thinking when they prepared and made it. If the cook's

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mood was irritated, grumbling, or depressed, the final state of the food will express this lack of presence and loving preparation.

The people who help you maintain your home can also have energy that affects the loving space in which you live.

In a home that values love, a daily half hour of sitting quietly would be highly beneficial. Intimacy and love cannot survive in a home where stimulation is continuously keeping emotions running. In fact, that's how people deliberately avoid intimacy.

By focussing on the good news at home you do your bit to strengthen your loved one and your children from the inevitable judgments of others. I think it is best to speak only goodness about the world and not get caught up in all the rag tag rhetoric about global paranoia. It is important to see there are problems, and act responsibly and to care about the environment but there are good things happening too, and it's about balance. It's far too easy to forget that really, nature is in control, there's order in the chaos.

Romance is revealed in your choices. If you walk in the door of your home and you are exhausted from everything you do outside your relationship, then what chance is there for vitality and love? Now we need to be real. In the first months of your relationship, you'd save energy because you wanted to make an impression, be good, and alive. Then for some reason, because we are in a relationship, we think its a done deal and become all self important. A vital time of your day needs to be the time you spend with your lover - when they are not your recuperation machine, they are your focus.

Use this morning time alone to keep your mind healthy. Worry is terrible for a romance. There are some people who cannot control

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their inner thinking, who have excess inner dialogue, worry excessively. In my experience, no sooner do they have the solution figured out to one problem than the next worry is upon them. They affirm some form of necessity to have disturbance in their lives. Use the morning time to search for beauty in your life. Make it a discipline to be your best self at the start of each day.

Leave notes, write emails, SMS like when you first met. Why drop the standard just because you sign some meaningless form.

Good health means staying young and avoiding the collapse of old age, where the lower abdomen protrudes, the shoulders slump, the head drops forward. That is the posture of collapse into old age. Keep the neck muscles strong and your neck long, abdominal muscles firm (inner core muscles as developed in Yoga and Pilates) to support the internal organs. The potbelly on so many men is the true reflection, not of old age, but of collapse of the vitality of youth, the surrender to gravity. To overcome it, is simply a habit of youthfulness.

Compatibility and Growth

The couple who grow together stay together. When one person is working their butt off at home trying to bring children into the world in a healthy way, and the other partner is out running around the world on global business, it can be a really devastating reality how quickly these two people, in spite of their Soul connection and Spiritual bonds, can grow apart.

Compatibility is defined by the ever changing balance between the Public and the Private persona's. For example, somebody might

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go to a weekend retreat and discover that their old movie script for their self-worth, (I call it Inner Wealth), completely changes. Now that's the thread that's woven in compatibility with their partner who, deciding that those workshops, "are rubbish" might go fishing. Here's the dilemma. The Soul bond is there, but now the carpet is coming unravelled.

What does a person do when they've bonded with a partner in compatibility and soul connectedness, but then, the compatibility breaks down?

First, and foremost, what helped me most in this is to know that the soul bond with another person never - ever - ever, goes away. No matter how dead that person is or how many times they marry or how much they hate you or cheat on you: the soul bond between lovers never leaves.

At least at a spiritual level, a relationship, even one that lasts 30 seconds, lasts forever. Love never dies. A child always loves the parent, no matter what happens. A parent always loves a child no matter what. A lover sustains the love they experienced even in the shortest of relationships. And blocking that love is very dangerous and painful.

Now the question is about compatibility.

Staying immune from growth is impossible unless we hibernated in a cave, didn't have children and shut out all knowledge of the real world around us. (Five years isn't a bad effort at no growth isolation - we just needed to protest about change and be righteous about our beliefs).

How Long Will It Last?

Living in the now, we can love anyone. We can love our worst enemy if we don't have to spend the next thirty seconds with them, so, the whole question of how long will a relationship last depends on how much emphasis we place on the future.

If we have ambitions to create a better future, then there are a whole heap of other variables that come into play. Like, do I want to trust my future with this person? Do I see our future's having similar paths? And what is my priority, happy now or sustaining that happiness for the long term?

When I entered my marriage I was a country boy with one or two teenage relationships under my belt. So the person I brought into my marriage was the result of an escape from my childhood domestic violence, a dead mother, a drunken step mother, a self taught street gang mentality and a survival mechanism that got me into university.

13 years later, I'd worked in London, Korea, Singapore, Nashville, New York, Malaysia, Manilla, Bali, Jakarta, New Zealand, Toronto, Fiji, Hawaii, Hanover, Berlin, Hong Kong, Los Angeles and more.... Was I still Chris? Yes and No. I was still Chris, but what I wanted, needed and could contribute to the world was completely transformed.

The real question is: "Did my relationship grow with me?" And because I got divorced, the answer is an emphatic, No.

Relationships break down for two simple reasons.

1. People fulfil the promises and there's no reason to stay.
2. People break their promises, and there's no trust to stay.

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Dreams are the glue that holds lovers together. After the infatuation dies then it is the future that binds people in a relationship. If we lose interest or hope or trust in a future together then there's no relationship.

There are short term dreams, medium and long term. Short term might be great love making tonight, medium term might be trips and holidays together and long term might family, wealth creations or social contribution.

Once achieved, or even having some reassurance that visions will be achieved, they are no longer motivating. So, let's say, you want to become pregnant but you also want to bring that child up your way, not a shared way, then the relationship might end very soon after the birth of the child. Maybe your dream is to own your own home, then once the home is under construction, the vision is complete. Visions of the future only motivate when they are unsure, need work or require investment.

Another example of dried up relationship is wealth creation. Say you start with \$10,000 in the bank and you build this to \$1,000,000 that was a great journey together. Now, you set your sites on \$2,000,000 but now, the fall back, the worst case is \$1,000,000 - wealth is already created so the extra is no motivation to stick to relationship principles.

This is an important consideration because one of the primary reasons relationships become unhealthy is this loss of trust, motivation or vision of a future together. It doesn't mean love is gone, it just means the reason to be together is gone.

The three things that keep couples together.

Grow Your Relationship

Someone to love.

Something to do.

Something to look forward to.

A Personal Vision Quest For Partners

As life grows your possibility grows but maybe the relationship doesn't. Your partner might say, "No way" and now there's a gap between what's possible and what you've got. You have a possibility for helping others, for more love, or something sacred, but your partner is stuck with their family cooking barbecues.

Your dreams are bigger, because the possibilities are bigger, especially now the kids are growing. But your old buddy is in the garage still doing things in the same old way, in the same old mind space.

What do you do?

The way to guarantee that you are growing is to undertake vision quests each year and write what is in your heart.

A relationship that is built on a constantly evolving sense of responsibility is a relationship that will remain sacred, magnetic and highly sexually charged. Lovers who share an ever expanding dream, are lovers that have a higher cause. At first that cause might be a family and children, but the definition of family might grow to include the broader world, and the definition of children might grow to include all children of the earth. There might be an orphanage or a children's book to help children love.

Shared visions and dreams come from individual dreams and visions. We must try to understand our own truth in order to arrive in

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relationship in a healthy way. We truly know ourselves by knowing our dreams of the future.

You can do this at home:

For the next 21 days you and your partner set aside 20 – 30 minutes to be alone.

Below are a list of questions all culminating in the question “What do you want?” Start on day one, close your eyes and visualise the future, and what you want to BE, DO and HAVE in your future. Write your ideas down

If you get a mental block use this structure:

In the Seven areas of my life, what would I love to BE, DO, HAVE. Spiritual, mental, social, career, health, relationship, financial?

Then ask - do I have any training needs? What are my natural talents? What gifts have I been blessed with? What have I demonstrated talent in? Type of help I need? Who can help me?

After 21 days repeating the same process each day, make the final list of your BE, DO, and HAVE in each of the seven areas of life. Then bring those to your partner and read them out loud.

Then listen to your partner’s list.

Look for areas in common.

Look for areas of potential conflict.

Never diminish a partner’s dream.

List questions like - How can we do that together?

Remember that only 33.3333% of a dream can be co-created.

Make a to do list for the year. Commit to it.

Make a “gee I’d like your help list.” Commit to helping.