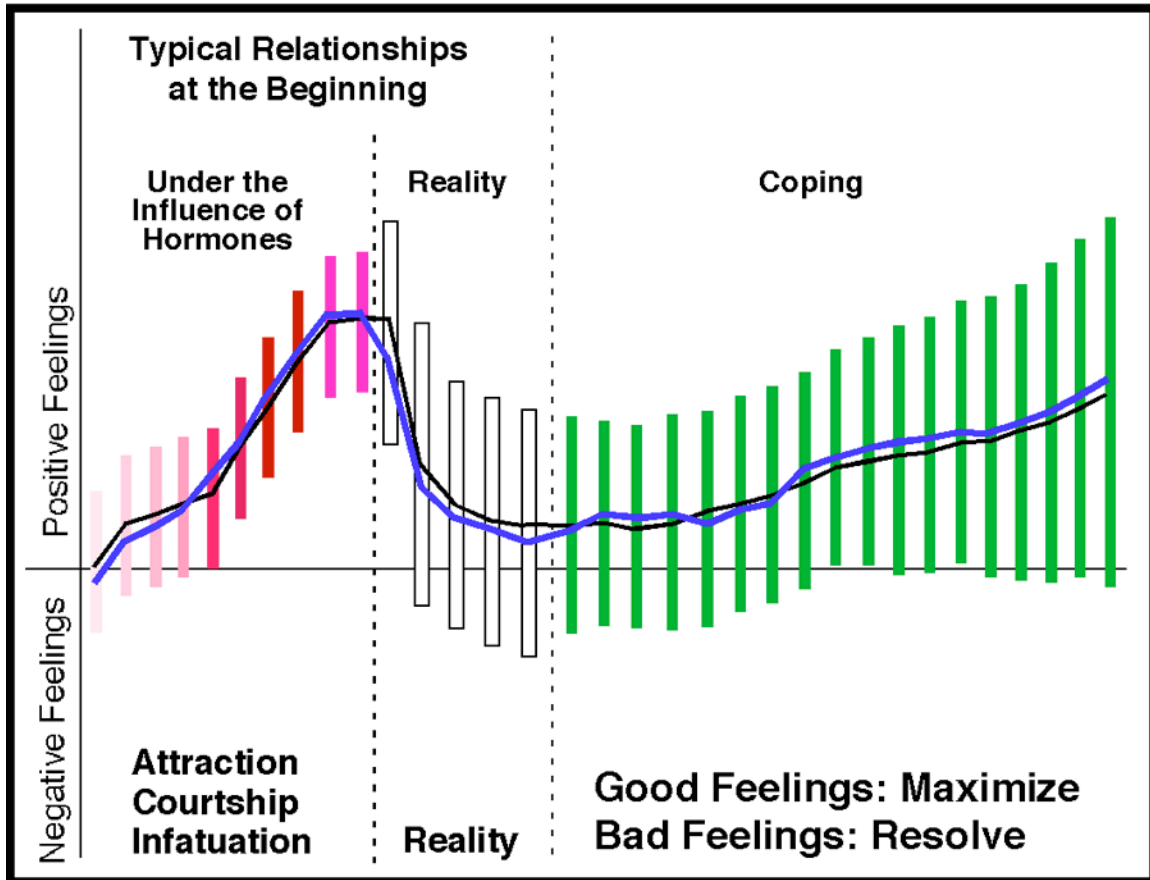


METAMATING SERIES

For A Couple: A Happier and Happier Relationship



Book One

Beginning the Relationship

Metamating Series: Book One — *Beginning the Relationship*

<http://www.HappierRelationships.com/>

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(Nobody likes to read this kind of stuff. We wish we didn't have to do it.)

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ISBN 1-59770-028-2

You will notice a number of strange words throughout this book. I use these words to describe functions that occur in your mind. These functions have not been given names by science or other students of the mind, so, I created words to use, and often I used words that suggest the meaning. For example I use the names "Importancizer" (giving importance to something) and "Comparator" (comparing one thing with another).

Sometimes I used acronyms, such as "TWIPI" (The Way I Perceive It) and "TWISB" (The Way It Should Be" according to at least one part of my mind).

Until real scientists name these functions, I guess you and I will have to be stuck with this odd vocabulary. I'm sorry that you are put to the task of using and recalling this rather unusual set of words.

See also: www.Sagery.com

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Forward

From the author, Ken Johnston:

I recently received the following e-mail from a young person who was asked to read the pre-publication manuscript for this book.

Dear Ken,

You are an absolutely brilliant idiot.

You have written a magnificent book that will change my life. But, I almost didn't read it. It was so boring that I skimmed the text and didn't do any of the exercises. Then I got to Chapter 13 of Book Two. You waited until the end of the book to give me the punch line. Only at the end, did I find out why I should even read the book.

As soon as I read chapter 13, I immediately went back to page one and studied it again. I think the problem is that you are an "old" person, who grew up in the era of written literacy and from what I've read, people in your generation read, think, and write in a linear fashion.

I grew up with TV, video games, and the Internet. I need the punch line before I want to hear the story. I'm non-linear, and so are virtually all the people who will read your book. You've written a book for young people. It isn't people your age who are building relationships; it's people my age. If you want to reach them, you need to put chapter 13 of Book Two at the beginning of the book. Tell them the punch line. Let them decide if they want to hear the story. I know it's non-linear, and probably sounds foreign to you, but try it. You'll get more people to read the book, and they'll read every word.

Other than that, I can only tell you that the book will change the rest of my life. Thank you for writing it.

(Name withheld by request of the writer)

He said he didn't want to be known as the guy who called me a "brilliant idiot," or called me an "old" person from a linear era.

But, I want to recognize him, because I think he was absolutely right. I am an old person from a linear era, and I thought I should write the book, and then summarize what I'd written. Chapter 13 of Book Two is written that way.

Now, dear reader, the reason I tell you this story is that my young friend did me (and maybe you) a really big favor. If you are a young person read the “Summary and Conclusions,” which is repeated as Chapter 13, Book Two.

If you, like me, are an “old person, and want to hear the story before the punch line, skip over the pages that follow and begin with the Introduction, starting on page xi.

Ken Johnston

PS. You will notice a number of strange words throughout these books. I use these words to describe functions that occur in your mind. These functions have not been given names by science or other students of the mind, so, I created words to use, and often I used words that suggest the meaning. For example I use the names “Importancizer” (giving importance to something) and “Comparator” (comparing one thing with another).

Sometimes I used acronyms, such as “TWIPI” (The Way I Perceive It) and “TWISB” (The Way It Should Be" according to at least one part of my mind).

Until real scientists name these functions, I guess you and I will have to be stuck with this odd vocabulary. I'm sorry that you are put to the task of using and recalling this rather unusual set of words.

Summary and Conclusions

If you prefer the “linear” method, skip this section and go right to the Introduction. If you do read this, notice that the phrase “you have learned” will be scattered throughout, since this is a summary of skills taught throughout Books One and Two. If you are confused at all when you read this chapter, skip it and go on the Introduction on page xi.

Psychological principles well established in 2004 include the following.

Happiness

There is a great deal of research that supports the finding that a person will judge their life to be happy if they:

- Have lots of strong, long-lasting good feelings
- Have few mild, short bad feelings
- Have a positive opinion of how happy and fulfilling life has been
- Feel optimistic about life in the future

A happy person is happier by nature, because he or she has more positive and optimistic “self-talk” (what goes on in your head as you talk to yourself).

Self-talk

An unhappy person can be taught to be happier by managing his or her “self-talk.” For example, unhappy people can argue with themselves against their overly harsh assessments. They can replace these negative thoughts with more positive thoughts. By changing internal conversations, a pessimist can be *taught* to be more optimistic.

Each person creates his or her own experience of the world, events, and people, by the unique thoughts the person uses. Each person has a choice of seeing the world, events, and people in a positive way or a negative way, or anything in between. Experience of life depends on what a person thinks about.

Many in the helping fields follow the principle that thoughts produce feelings and feelings produce behaviors. So, a change in behavior for miserable and unhappy people means helping them change their “self-talk.”

Individuals find many sources for creating positive self-talk. Millions, for example, depend on inputs from Oprah, or Dr. Phil, on television. Religions offer comforting thoughts that reduce the pain caused by an individual’s negative self-talk. Thousands of self-help books and courses offer positive thoughts that people can use to make themselves happier, e.g. “the power of positive thinking.”

If you are naturally a positive, optimistic person, who is fulfilled by what you are doing, you are having a happy life.

Pessimists

If you are naturally a negative, pessimistic person, who does not find fulfillment in what you do, you are having an unhappy life. If you are having an unhappy life, you can learn to be happier. To become happier, you must change your self-talk.

You are being offered pre-packaged self-talk from every imaginable source. If you are a negative, pessimistic person, having an unhappy life, you will likely doubt the value of what others suggest. So, it's likely you are still unhappy.

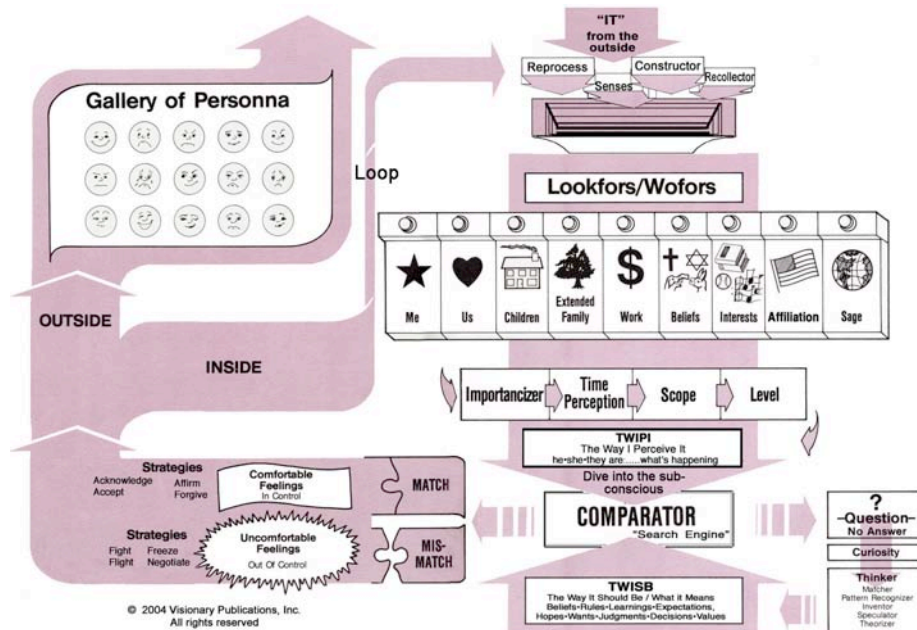
Some counselors teach people how to argue against their own negative self-talk so they don't have to adopt other people's pre-packaged ideas. But, again, you're likely to be doubtful or pessimistic about using a different strategy than the one you find comfortable. As a result, you may not adopt the recommended strategy.

There is evidence that pessimists sometimes see the world more clearly than optimists. There is evidence that optimists must sometimes twist their perception of the world, to stay optimistic. Experienced pessimists often rebel at adopting optimists' distortions.

As a result of all of the above, lots of people are living unhappy lives because they cannot or will not adopt the pre-packaged self-talk offered to them, nor adopt a new strategy to fix something they don't see as broken.

How That Relates to Book Two

I'll tell you why the "Sage Model" is such a breakthrough. I would have told you earlier, but I have to use the "Sage Model" to explain its power. (I know it looks complex, but you'll see how easy it is, as we go along.)



The concepts in the "Sage Model" empower you to make any changes in your self-talk that you choose to make. It allows you to be as happy as you choose to be, by deciding *yourself* exactly what changes you want to make. You don't have to adopt someone else's pre-packaged self-talk. Nor do you have to choose a disputation strategy you might find uncomfortable.

For the first time, you gain the power to manage or change any of your perceptions, assessments, feelings, strategies, all by yourself. You suddenly have the power to create your life

exactly the way you want it to be. You have the amazing ability to make yourself as happy as you choose to be.

As you now know, the perceiving section of your mind creates your own personal version of “what’s happening,” based on the Importance, the Time perspective, the Scope and the Level that you attach to any thought. We call it “The Way I Perceive It,” or TWIPI).

Then, your Comparator — looking for sameness or difference — acts like a search engine. It looks through all of your unique stored experiences to make an assessment of what this thought means to you. What comes up for you is “The Way It Should Be,” (TWISB). Your Comparator might find a rule, a learning, an expectation, a hope, or any of a dozen other means of assessing the thought. And, each of the different ways you could assess the thought would produce a different result. So, you produce your own perception (TWIPI) and assessment (TWISB) of “what’s happening.”

This assessment produces a match or a mismatch with the perception and that produces either a good or bad feeling. Example: you meet a new person and observe him or her. Your TWIPI has some thoughts (messy shirt, dirty slacks). Your Comparator looks for ways to understand it. In this case, you make an assessment that the person is badly dressed (TWISB). When you compare TWIPI to TWISB you have a mismatch. That gives you a bad feeling (discomfort).

That feeling leads to a strategy. For bad feelings: fight, flight, freeze, or negotiate. For good feelings you would affirm, acknowledge, accept, or forgive. For the above example you might choose flight (walk away as soon as possible).

Then, the strategy produces a way of being (a personae), and you respond to the outside world with your unique attitude, gestures, voice tone, facial expression, etc. For the above example you might look a little bothered, and hold your arms across your chest.

Review and Summary

You now know that you have over thirty different points in your process that combine to produce your self-talk, your thoughts, and assessments.

If you change any one of them, everything else will change automatically.

Some of them are easy for you to change, modify, or adapt. Others are almost impossible. You’ll quickly learn — if you haven’t already — which are the easiest for you to change, and which are difficult or impossible.

When you have thirty different things you can change, you are sure to find one or two that you’ll change easily to get the outcomes you want, and the happiness you choose to have.

After you find the one, two, or three that are your favorites, you’ll develop automatic responses that you’ll use. If you like, you can ignore all the rest.

The Process Reviewed

First: proceed normally until you have a bad feeling.

Then: using your Sage-part, or your conscious mind, interrupt the bad feeling and use questions and thinking, to ask four questions:

1. What's happening? (Example: I'm creating a bad feeling.)
2. How am I creating the bad feeling? (My perception and assessment don't match.)
3. Is this what I want for my life? (Does this feeling I'm producing fit my life's goals, and my values?)
4. If not: Which of the following Sage choices will I choose?
 - Act — if action helps me get to my desired outcome and my core values. (The action may also be to change my self-talk.)
 - Ask — if asking or negotiating will help me achieve my desired outcome in harmony with my core values.
 - Accept — if acting or asking won't be productive.
 - Forgive— if another person has provoked my distress.

Notice that bad feelings are cut short by immediately moving into question mode.

Notice that bad feelings are always resolved by paying attention to your desired outcomes and core values.

Notice that you — and you alone — make the choices. *You* get to create your own experience of your life, without any other proposed self-talk from the other sources.

Notice that you make every choice in harmony with your core values and the outcomes you desire. So, if you are a confirmed pessimist you won't have to adopt the optimist's distortions to stay positive. You can stay as realistic as you choose.

The Thirty Points (Refer to the Map)

Let's review the thirty points where you can make changes in your mind, and then recap the change strategies from which you can choose.

Four Sources of Inputs to the Mind

Your *senses* (sight, sound, touch, taste, feel) bring you inputs in the present moment. Using these inputs keeps you in the present, and away from imagining the future, or recalling the past, or looping on (re-thinking) thoughts you've already processed.

Your *Constructor* imagines future scenes or even possible past events. It's useful for rehearsing future events so you can foretell and resolve any future difficulties before they come up. More importantly, it helps you gain confidence by imagining outcomes that you desire. It's hurtful if your Constructor imagines future events that you would be helpless to change or unable to handle.

Your *Recollector* brings up events, situations, or memories of the past. It is productive when it recalls good memories, because "confidence is the memory of past successes." And, your happiness depends in part on having lots of good, strong, positive feelings. The Recollector hurts you when it brings up painful memories, unless you are using those memories to use Sage questions and choices to resolve past hurts.

Your *Reprocessor* loops on a thought you've already processed. You use this input for a good purpose when you use it to enlarge a happy feeling. Your happiness depends, in part, on having frequent, strong, good feelings. Looping can expand and extend a good feeling. You may use this input in a hurtful manner when you loop or dwell on a painful or negative thoughts. Your happiness depends on keeping bad feelings short, infrequent, and mild. Looping on bad feelings is a hurtful source of unneeded pain.

As soon as you become aware of a bad feeling, caused by misuse of one of these inputs (senses, Constructor, Recollector, Reprocessor), your conscious mind or your Sage-part can switch immediately into the present, making senses available, and into question mode, asking the Sage questions.

The Nine Parts of You

You learned how to bring all of nine, separate and distinct parts of you into harmony, by using the Sage-part to hold parts meetings, and using win-win resolutions to parts' conflicts. You now can have as much inner harmony and peace of mind as you are willing to have.

You learned to use the optimal part for every situation. This keeps you from using the Me-part in communicating with your significant other, when it would be more productive to use your Us-part.

This book taught you about your Us-part, to make it possible to have a special relationship, to the extent that you choose.

Four Aspects of Perception

The four different aspects of perception are: Importance, Time, Scope, and Level.

You learned that you'd be happier if you give *less Importance* to thoughts that produce bad feelings. You also learned you'll be happier if you give *more Importance* to thoughts that give you good feelings.

You learned that focusing *Time* increases the power of good feelings, and stretching Time takes the sting out of bad feelings.

You learned that a *Scope* of one can focus all the power of bad feelings on you, and that bad feelings are reduced when you choose a larger scope. You learned that a highly focused scope enhances good feelings for you; you diminish the happiness you can get from a positive thought by expanding the scope.

You learned that you could raise the *Level* of a thought, statement, or transaction to avoid fighting and take control of the transaction. You learned that dropping a level further focuses sensations or feelings that make you happier.

The TWIPI (The Way I Perceive It) is so completely modified by the four inputs, the nine parts, and the four aspects of perception that it may bear little or no likeness to the reality of what's happening. We hope you learned not to get 'stuck' on your perception of what's happening, because it may be totally distorted.

The Comparator: A Personal Search Engine

You learned that your Comparator might generally be searching for similarities or differences from your perception. By itself, the Comparator could be the source of much pessimism if it always searches for "what's wrong" with what's happening. You've learned that

it is simple to fix this — if it's troublesome — by asking, “What's right about it?” anytime you get a bad feeling

Your TWISB (The Way It Should Be)

You learned that there are many, many different ways you can assess a perception. You've learned that if you use “rules” to assess a perception, you can become overly rigid. If you use “learnings” as the basis for assessment, you might have made a “wrong learning” if your learning wasn't made at the optimal Scope. You've learned the dangers of judging your perceptions based on what you expect, and that low expectations produce many happy surprises, while high expectations produce many disappointments. It's up to you.

You've learned that if one basis for assessment gives you bad feelings that lead to poor outcomes, you can choose another basis. Or, if you want to be totally happy, you could use a generalized “one size fits all” basis, like: “The way it is, is the way it should be.”

Three Kinds of Feelings

There are thousands of different words for various feelings; however, you've learned that feelings are generally bad, good, or neutral. You've learned that feelings are the key to your happiness, and it is useful to attend to how many of each you have, how strong they are, and how long they last.

Strategies: Fight, Flight, Freeze, Negotiate, Acknowledge, Affirm, Accept Forgive

You've learned that you have a choice over strategies. You can avoid fighting — even if attacked — if it doesn't suit your desired outcomes or your core values.

You've learned that you can even use an affirming strategy on a bad feeling, to avoid fighting and resolve a conflict.

You've learned that until you discovered the Sage Model, you pretty much just grabbed the strategy that you learned while growing up. It was never chosen based on desired outcomes or core values. You've learned you now have more choices.

Two Basic Personae

You've learned that even though there are dozens of personae, they can be categorized as the “real you,” or learned. Some of your personae have been copied from others in hopes of becoming better than your “real” personae would achieve.

You've learned that you'll be happier, and have more loving relationships if you could always use your real personae.

You've learned that personae, like sulking, pouting, whining, and being sensuous, may not get you the outcomes you desire, or be in harmony with your core values.

In Conclusion

Self-talk is the basis of your happiness — with yourself, with your partner, and with your relationship.

One huge benefit of learning the Sage Model is that it makes it possible for you to change any of more than thirty different things in your mind to get the outcomes you desire. And, you don't need to become a psychologist to do it.

For the first time, each person can take responsibility for creating his or her own self-talk. You won't need to search for the answers "out there," and try to guess whose pre-packaged self-talk thoughts would be best for you.

The Sage Model will lead you to define what you want for your life, and identify your core values. Then, the Sage questions will guide you to the answers you need to get your desired outcomes in harmony with your core values.

So, the next time someone asks you, "What's new?" you'll have an answer for them.



Introduction

The goal of this book is to teach you how to create a happier and happier relationship. The concepts work for you if you already have a partner. It will help you find and attract a partner, if you do not yet have one.

If You Don't Have a Partner (if you do, skip on)

Here is what the book offers you:

1. Learn the Relationship Process

The first step is to learn the relationship process. You'll discover a new way to look at the process of starting and growing a relationship. You may find that you hold some attitudes, thoughts, or perceptions that keep you from finding what you're seeking. You'll learn and understand the roles that attraction, courting, infatuation, bonding, and coping play in creating the kind of relationship you want.

2. Choose Realistic and Useful Expectations

One of the major problems that people have in creating the relationship they seek is the problem of unrealistic or unproductive expectations. Throughout our lives we see a lot of unrealistic relationships. We see them on television, in movies, in novels. Sometimes we see other couples acting them out. By the time we're adults, we're often confused as to how relationships really work. You'll learn the basic processes at work and see the role that each plays.

3. Troubleshoot Any Blocks or Stuck Points

Book Three is a guide to help you discover any blocks or stuck points that may give you difficulty. It will help you find any unrealistic expectations you may have. It helps you choose ones that are more realistic and productive.

4. Learn and Practice an Effective Coping Strategy

You'll learn that the key to a happier and happier relationship lies in how you cope. You'll learn powerful and useful strategies that will give you the tools you need to build a happier and happier relationship. You'll understand how important it is — in your relationship — to maximize the good feelings and to resolve the bad feelings.

You'll learn powerful techniques that will allow you to resolve bad feelings, and maximize good feelings.

5. Become a Really Good partner

Using the tools you'll get from this book, you'll become a really good partner. You'll know how to be the kind of person who will be a really great catch for the partner you're seeking.

6. Practice on Everyone You Meet

You can practice the skills you learn from these books on everyone you meet. This practice will give you the skill you need to be ready when you find your partner.

7. Become Irresistibly Attractive

As you learn the process, you'll understand how a person who learns it becomes very attractive. As you learn and practice the coping strategies, you'll become more and more attractive to others who seek a partner.

If You Already Have a Partner (if not, skip to last paragraph)

You have everything you need to create the kind of relationship that you want. Here is what this book will teach you.

1. Learn the Relationship Process

First, you'll learn the relationship process. You'll discover the roles that attraction, courting, infatuation, bonding, and coping play in building a relationship.

2. Choose Realistic and Productive Expectations

You'll learn how to choose realistic and useful expectations about your relationship. It is unfortunate, but true, that many people allow unrealistic expectations to rob them of much of the joy that's available in their relationship.

3. Learn and Practice an Effective Coping Strategy

You'll discover that the secret to a happier and happier relationship lies in the coping strategies that you use. You'll learn to maximize positive feelings, and to resolve bad feelings. You'll learn how important these strategies are and the payoff they will have for you in your relationship.

4. Become a Really Good partner

Most people who seek a happier and happier relationship think that the answer lies with their partner. They often think that the partner must change, or there is no hope for the relationship. This book shows you that the secret lies within *you*. *You* are the key to your relationship. As you become a really good partner, you'll discover the magical effect that this will have on your partner.

5. Practice on Your partner

You already have a partner with whom to practice the skills you'll learn. As you develop your skill at coping with the normal and ordinary difficulties of sharing a relationship, you'll find that your relationship gets better and better. If you're fortunate enough to have a partner who also learns and masters the skills taught here, you'll discover the incredible joy that is possible in a mutually warm and loving relationship.

6. Create a Happier and happier Relationship

As you practice the strategies in this book, you'll gradually build something very special. Your feelings toward your partner will evolve to new levels. With time, love, and patience, you'll discover that you have created a happier and happier relationship.

Install an Automatic Process for Change

Book Two includes a special process that makes it unique — an “automatic change” process. Most self-development programs require that you use effort and hard work to make changes in yourself. They require lots of practice and self-discipline. This book offers another alternative.

The Sage Model, which is taught in Book Two, offers a process for change that requires much less work and effort. It has been described as a sort of “autopilot” that gradually takes over and does the work for you. You'll find that this “autopilot” makes learning and practicing the strategies taught here, simpler than you might ever imagine.



Chapter 1: What You Do With Feelings

You may wonder why so many relationships turn sour. Some figures show that more than half of all marriages will end in divorce. The odds are even worse for relationships that don't reach marriage.

There are some patterns to be found in broken relationships. The success of a relationship is often shaped by the way partners handle their feelings about each other. How *do* people handle their feelings?

Patterns for Good Feelings

There are three major patterns that you'll use with good feelings. You can:

- *Maximize* them
- *Take them for granted*, and do nothing special about them
- *Discount* them.

Discounting means you'll find a way to make them go away or give them no importance. Let's examine these choices one at a time.

Maximize Them

The best thing you can do is to maximize good feelings. In order to do that you can: *notice them* when you get them, *store them up*, and *review them* again and again. You can allow them to build into a collection of loving bonds that bind you to your partner.

Take Them for Granted

The most common thing you might do with good feelings is to simply *take them for granted*. That is, you feel them when they come, but make no effort to mark them or notice them. They are not carefully stored and nurtured. No time is spent on re-experiencing them or reviewing them in your mind. Time passes and they fade away.

Discount Them

The most destructive thing you can do with good feelings is to discount them. There is a variety of ways you can do that.

- a. You can *fail to feel them* when you get them, i.e. don't allow them to come into your mind; it is as though they never happened.
- b. You can *think a negative thought* as soon as you have a good feeling, and thereby make it go away. For example, Joe might get a good feeling and right away hear an internal message that says, "This won't last," or "I don't know why I am feeling this; she is really a turkey."

Here are some things we know about bad feelings.

Patterns for Bad Feelings

There are three things you can do with bad feelings:

- *Maximize them* so they get worse, or stay the same
- *Take them for granted*; do nothing special about them
- *Resolve them* so they lessen, or go away

Maximize Them

The most harmful manner for handling bad feelings is to maximize them. You can do this in a variety of ways.

- *Don't take any action* on a bad feeling except to store it up and add it to an ever-growing list of bad feelings about a person, or your relationship.
- *Actively distort* your perceptions of the situation (or the person who stimulated the bad feeling), and make it much worse than it really is.
- *Regularly review your storehouse of hurts* that you collect, and feel really, really bad about them.

Take Them for Granted

You might simply *take bad feelings for granted*. That is, you feel them when they come, but make no effort to mark them or notice them. No time is spent on re-experiencing them or reviewing them in your mind.

Resolve Them

The most positive thing you can do with bad feelings is to resolve them when they come up. There are five ways you can do this.

- You can *take some action*, i.e. you can do something positive about whatever gave you the bad feeling.
- You can *ask for what you want*. This is one form of action you can take to resolve the situation that you feel bad about.
- You can *accept the situation or behavior* that created the bad feeling.
- You can *forgive* the other person for something that you can't accept. Forgiveness is a powerful tool for resolving bad feelings.
- You can *discount* bad feelings by simply failing to feel them. This is not a recommended practice because it is generally accepted that feelings are best dealt with rather than discounted, since discounting doesn't make them go away. However, discounting bad feelings is far less harmful than storing them up and harboring them.



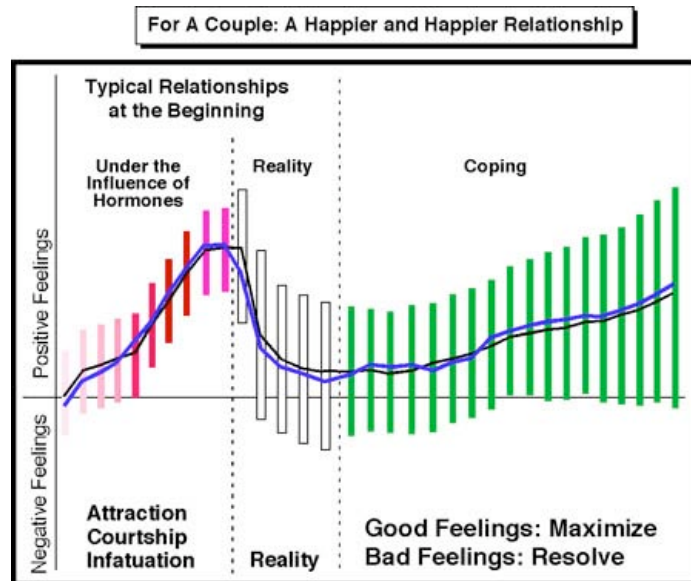
Chapter 2: Patterns for Handling Feelings

There are nine possible combinations of patterns for handling feelings. Each combination results in a different outcome for the person and the relationship.

The nine diagrams that follow show how each combination works. Each diagram has two parts. It shows the formation of the relationship, and it shows the coping patterns (how feelings are handled). The formation of the relationship is the same in each of the following diagrams. This may not demonstrate reality for everyone, but they show the most common pattern. Here's the first diagram, so you can see how it works.

A Happier and Happier Relationship

Each line going up and down represents positive and negative *feelings* you might have for someone. The top part of the line reflects the most positive feeling you have for the person. The bottom of the line shows the most negative feeling you have for a person. The trend line is simply a line connecting the midpoints of the feeling line.



Each relationship starts with *attraction*. You find something that attracts you to the other person. You have some good feelings and typically also have some negative feelings.

The next step is *courting*. As courting proceeds, you create more positive feelings about the person and you tend to be less negative about them.

The next lines represent the beginning of *infatuation*. As infatuation grows, the most negative feelings you have for the person are still in the positive range. This is what people mean when they say, "Love is blind." When you are infatuated, even the person's faults are lovable.

As infatuation peaks out, *reality* sets in and you begin to see the other person more true to life. The flaws you see again create some bad feelings. Still, your overall feelings are mostly

positive, and they outweigh the negative feelings. As reality is established, the forming of the relationship is complete.

No matter how good or bad a relationship will become, it goes through some version of this pattern. The key to whether it will be loving and satisfying lies in the *coping* patterns of how feelings are handled.

Coping Patterns

In the above diagram the individuals are maximizing good feelings and resolving bad feelings. This will produce a Happier and Happier relationship.

In the following eight diagrams, the early pattern is always the same (Attraction, Courting, Infatuation, Reality). However, each shows a different coping pattern for handling feelings. Notice the effect of each of the other patterns. Some will result in long-term relationships; some will result in divorce or alienation.

To recap the choices for coping with good or bad feelings:

Good Feelings

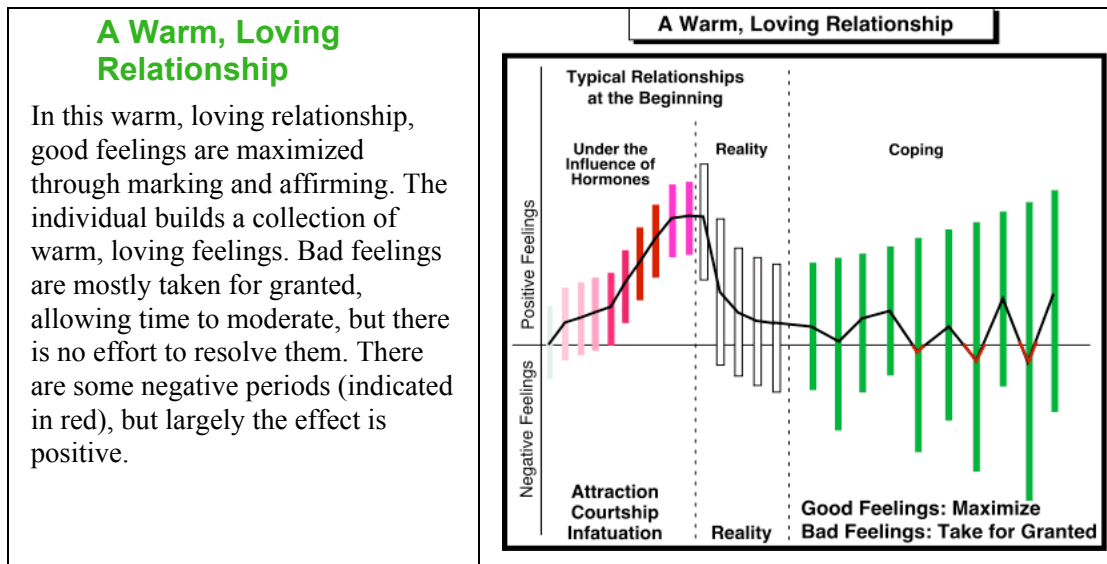
- Maximize good feelings
- Take good feelings for granted
- Discount good feelings

Bad Feelings

- Resolve bad feelings
- Take bad feelings for granted
- Maximize bad feelings

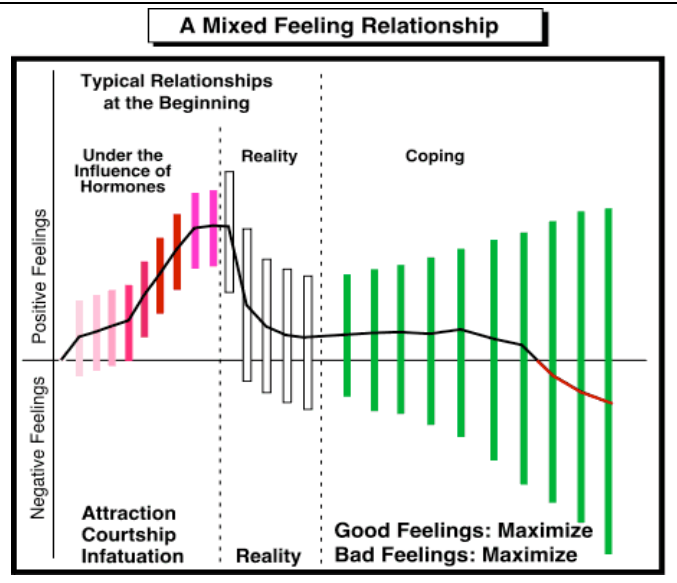
Feelings Maximized or Taken for Granted

In the next two diagrams good feelings are maximized, but bad feelings are either taken for granted or maximized, producing differing kinds of relationships.



A Mixed Feeling Relationship

In this relationship there are ups and downs, as both good and bad feelings are maximized. They mark (pay attention to and remember) both negative and positive feelings. The result is a relationship with moderated, mixed, overall feelings.

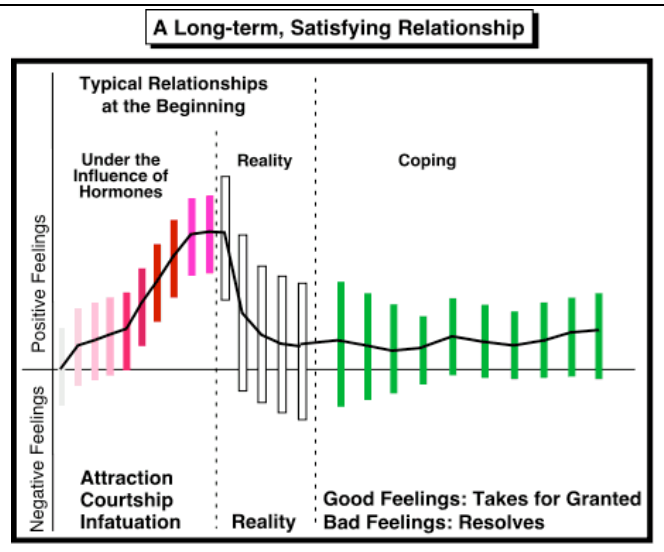


Taking Feelings for Granted

In the next three diagrams, good feelings are taken for granted, however, bad feelings may be resolved, taken for granted, or maximized.

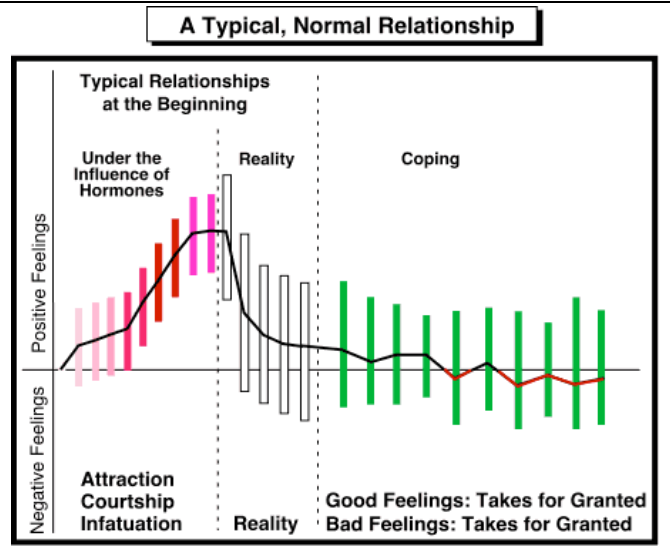
A Long-term, Satisfying Relationship

In this kind of relationship, the individual actively works at resolving bad feelings, but mostly takes good feelings for granted, making no effort to mark them (notice or remember), or loop on them (replay in the mind).



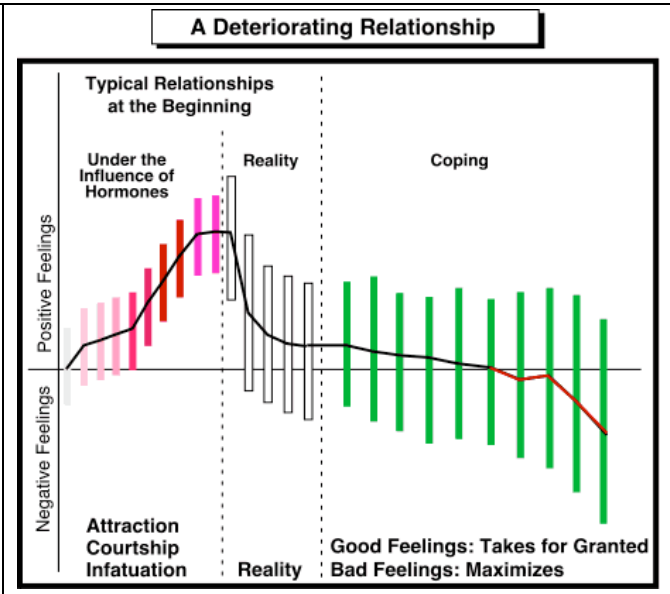
A Typical, Normal Relationship

The typical, normal relationship may take both the good and bad feelings for granted. The most recent feelings will stand out, whatever they are. However, there is a gradual, downward trend on the overall relationship. This is due to the human tendency to give more weight to bad feelings than to good feelings.



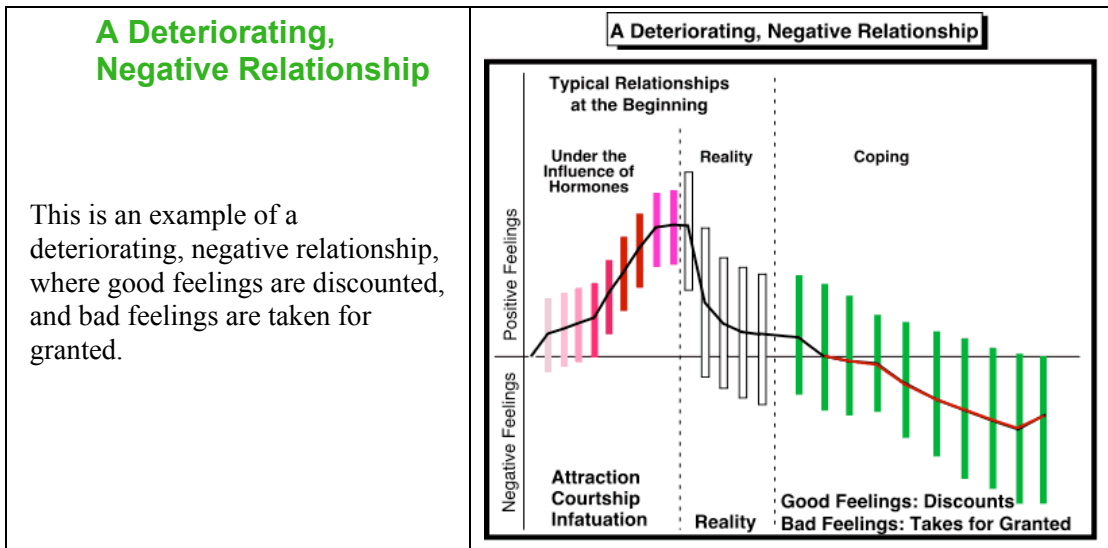
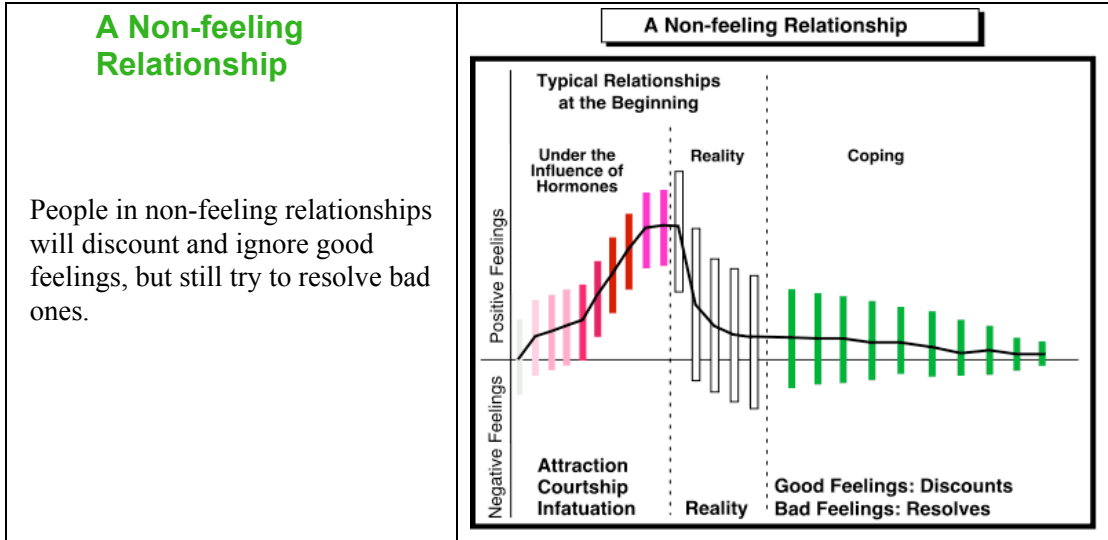
A Deteriorating Relationship

In a deteriorating relationship, good feelings are taken for granted and bad feelings are actively maximized. People harbor, nurse, and loop on (replay) the bad feelings, which results in a relationship that becomes gradually more and more negative.



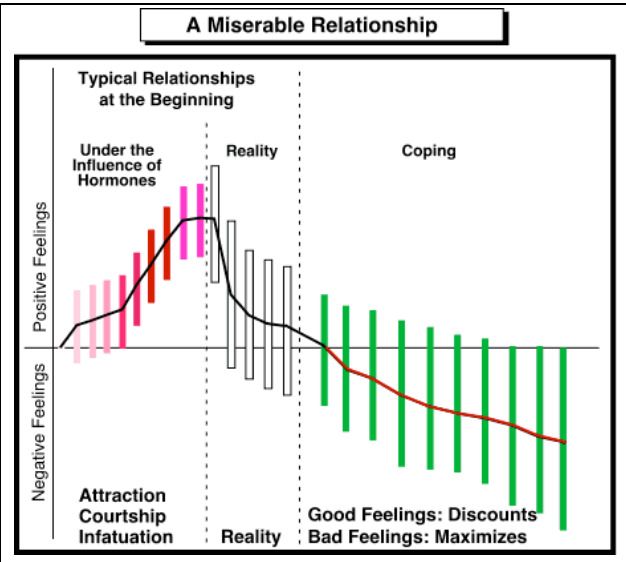
Discounting Good Feelings

In the next three examples, good feelings are discounted, and bad feelings are resolved, taken for granted, or maximized.



A Miserable Relationship

A miserable relationship is created when good feelings are discounted, and bad feelings are maximized. As you can see from the diagram, the relationship is heading steadily downhill, probably ending in some kind of end.



Conclusion

As you look through the charts, you may be able to see yourself in several of them. In fact, as relationships change over time, and people choose to “work on them,” the relationship may move from one of the examples, to another. However, you can see the importance of the skill of dealing with feelings, in terms of how long the relationship will last.



Chapter 3: The Phases in the Relationship Process

The process of pairing is a combination of what our genes tell us to do, mixed in with what thousands of years of civilizing have taught us to do. In the most basic way, we're very similar to many kinds of animals and birds that do the same things. We seem to be designed to pair up in twos; we remain relatively true to one partner; and we stay bonded until our offspring are grown (or even longer).



Pairing

Genetic by Nature — Civilized by Custom

Modern Americans and native tribes from the most remote jungles are identical in the basic steps. The tribal culture and the modern American culture each vary widely, and in many ways they appear quite different. Yet, the basic steps are the same.

One thing that's important to note is the difference between the physical and cultural windows involved in pairing. A window is a period of time. For example, in launching rockets to the moon, we speak of a "window" of time within which we can launch. If we launch before the window opens, or after it closes, we will miss the target.

In pairing, we have a physical window, which seems to range from about twelve years (on the early side), to about seventeen years (on the late side). We seem to be genetically set to want to pair up and bond during this window of time. We, in the developed world, have cultural windows during which it is thought to be proper to pair up and bond. In the United States, the cultural norm seems to be about twenty years (early side), to thirty or older (on the late side).

The difference between these two windows means that we're physically very interested in attracting and finding a mate during a time period when our culture pressures us to hold off and be patient.

The difference between these two different windows is the root cause for so much difficulty during our teens, and for the vast numbers of teenage pregnancies without marriage.



Five Stages

The pairing process has five stages. They typically follow each other in sequence, although the time each takes is different from person to person. One person may go from attraction to infatuation in a matter of days, while another person may require many months, or even years.

Attraction

Attraction is the beginning stage. Attraction is a physical sensation. It can be very mild and pleasant, or it can be an incredible WOW!!!!!! sensation. Attraction can happen right away, or it can grow gradually with time. It doesn't seem to matter what form it takes. Even the mildest attraction, which took a long time to develop, can work to begin the process.

Attraction can be so powerful that people get it confused with love. Young people especially have difficulty know what is happening to them. When the physical window first opens and a young person feels attraction, the feeling is new and it feels so good. It is easy to understand how they think it must be love. As the years pass, and they find the experience repeated again and again, they grow to understand that the feeling is attraction, and that is *all* it is.

Courting

Attraction leads to courting. Courting tends to look very different from one culture to another, but the basics are always the same. Courting is composed of behaviors that one person takes toward another. If the attraction is mutual, then courting replies are given in return.

Courting actions normally begin with an indication of attraction. Somehow, one attracted person takes an action that conveys the feeling of attraction to the other person. In a very reserved culture, this might be a little more than eye movements or a tilt of the head. In a very emotional culture, courting may begin with a pinch or a touch.

It is common for attraction to be one sided, and when that happens, courting gestures may not be returned. This is quite frustrating, but very normal. When attraction is mutual, then a gesture from one person leads to a response from the other person.

A returned gesture of attraction generally leads to another. The tendency is to keep making each gesture or action slightly stronger and more direct as a way of verifying that the attraction is still mutual, even at the higher level.

When courting actions are met with responses that are positive, then finally both parties are out in the open. Their attraction is understood to be mutual and at such a high level that there is no longer any risk of misunderstanding.

When courting reaches this level, the couple begins to become a pair. At this stage, each looks for signs for becoming exclusive. In the teen-age world, this stage may be known as “going together.” It is this stage that our culture starts to get in the way of the natural process. Parents seek to limit the young twosome from being exclusive. Our culture teaches young people that they will get more experience by dating a wide variety of people. Even so, the process continues if either or both limit their interests to just each other.

If the twosome does become exclusive, then the process continues with more courting behaviors. These lead to solving dominance issues, and to testing the limits of the attraction. In the teen world we see actions like teasing and testing. The teasing is a process of testing the bond to see how strong it is. It is also the way of solving the dominance issue. Other tests may also be employed to see how strong the attraction is, and to find its limits.

Testing will typically include sexual advances. Young people often think that sexual advances stem from powerful sexual needs. Yet, the reality is they are part of the testing process within courting, and serve as much to advance the relationship, as to actually achieve sexual union.

Infatuation

Mutual attraction, and mutual courting lead to infatuation. Infatuation is a truly incredible experience, marked by highly intense feelings. It is normal for a person experiencing infatuation for the first time to conclude that, finally “This must be love.”

Infatuation is not love — not in the mature sense of a bond, which will keep a twosome together. Infatuation is infatuation, and love is love. Love will come with bonding, and bonding is different from infatuation.

Infatuation isn’t love, but that doesn’t mean it isn’t wonderful. The incredible outpouring of songs and poems that celebrate infatuation tell the story of its power. Infatuation must be the single most powerful feeling that human beings have. It is WONDERFUL!!!!!!

It is during infatuation that the physical window for sexual union opens. Our genes are set to stop resisting sexual advances, and to throw caution to the wind. Sex seems “right.” Sex seems to be “natural” and natural it is. Unfortunately, in many cases, especially concerning young twosomes, the cultural window is still firmly shut. Culture, parents, and all forces say “No!!” The body, nature, and infatuation say, “YES!!!!!!”

Infatuation is both beautiful and sad. It is beautiful because it feels so incredibly fantastic. It is sad, because it cannot last. The intensity of the feelings, the incredible hormonal rushes, the exclusivity of its focus all will go away. It cannot last, because people cannot go through their lives and do all that must be done, while in a state of infatuation.

Infatuation creates intense bonds that are the cornerstone of future bonding.

Bonding and Love

Bonding is a force that binds two people together through the results of shared experiences. When any two people share an intense experience, a bond results. When two people share many intense experiences, they have a strong bond. The more intense experiences shared, the stronger the bond.

If Sally and Tom share many intense experiences, and the experiences are positive, then the bond formed is one of love.

So, with this definition, “love” is the name for the feeling produced by the bonds which result from many shared intense positive experiences.

If Agnes and Harold share many intense experiences, and all of them are painful and negative, they too will form a bond. We call that kind of bond “aversion.” Each time they see one another they will get in touch with the feeling produced by the negative bonds and will be repelled by the negative feelings.

Infatuation is by itself an intense experience. During infatuation couples normally share many experiences, made intense by the intensity of the infatuation. So, infatuation provides a fertile window during which ordinary experiences are made intense and positive by the effects of infatuation. Those intense, positive experiences shared while under the influence of infatuation — and retained long after it fades — provide the bonds that produce the feeling of love.

Coping

Coping is a process for handling difficulties, and making difficulties into positive, bonding experiences. Without coping, difficulties can become negative, tense experiences. Negative, intense experiences do not produce love, and if they happen often, they can become a force larger than the bonds that form the basis of love — or worse, they can produce aversion.

“What difficulties?” the infatuated couple asks. “We don’t have difficulties. Everything with us is wonderful, and even if we quarrel, we have a wonderful time making up.” That’s what happens during infatuation. That is part of the wonder and beauty of infatuation. But remember, it must and will fade. Then there will be difficulties (see Book Three, Section Three to read about the difficulties when infatuation ends). It is those difficulties, plus the normal, ongoing difficulties of life that create the need for coping.

When coping successfully resolves a difficulty, a positive bond is created that will unite the couple more firmly. If a difficulty is *not* successfully coped with, an intense, negative experience is shared that moves the couple further apart.

Coping is a skill that can be learned. A person who is skilled at coping can turn any difficulty — no matter how painful and intense — into a positive bonding experience that brings the couple closer together. Without coping, bonding is an up and down matter. Infatuation often

brings many positive bonding experiences. Then, as it fades, unsuccessful coping will create intense, negative experiences that move the couple further and further apart. Thus is written the story of too many unfortunate couples.

To Sum it Up

“Pairing” is the process of building a warm, satisfying relationship where both partners fall in love and stay in love, through bonding and coping.

Infatuation is an aid to positive bonding, but it is not required. Courting is an aid to infatuation, but it is not required. Attraction is an aid to courting and infatuation, but it is not required. What *is* required — for a couple to fall in love and stay in love — is bonding and coping.



Chapter 4: The Phases in Detail — Attraction

The following chapters provide a more detailed description of each of the phases. This may assist you in determining where you are. If you already know (or don't care for more detail), skip to the next chapter: "Courting."

Attraction

Attraction is a physical response. You feel it. You look at someone, or hear his or her voice, and the reaction is immediate. In one case it can be mild. In another, it can be quite strong, and in yet another it can be *intense*.

Somehow (and nobody quite knows how), we're each "imprinted" at an early age — possible as young as three and possibly as old as eight or nine — with the imprint that lead to attraction later in life. You seem to have a mental picture of the person who is just "right" for you. Not only is there a picture, but also there is an imprint for the "right" sound of the voice, the tone, and the pace. You're imprinted not only with picture and sound, but odor, taste, and feel.



Early Imprinting

Your senses are on the lookout for matches with your "right" person. Your internal screen automatically scans each person (of the right sex for you), and you are alerted when you see, hear, or meet (or smell, touch, or taste), someone who matches some of the features for which you are imprinted. The closer that person comes to matching your imprint, the more intense the feeling you get.

A complete match is not necessary for attraction. Just one or two key variables may be enough to give you the feeling of being attracted. That is quite enough to start the process toward courting, infatuation, bonding, and coping.

But what a wonderful, delightful, and exciting event it is to discover someone who matches many of the variables — especially important ones. (You probably have one or two key variables in your imprint that are extra important to you.)

How wonderful it is to discover such a person when you are without a partner, and your cultural window is open. How great the disappointment to find that this marvelous person is already taken, or is not attracted to you. That, however, is the way the game often goes. It seems that such people are easy to find when you already have a partner, or when you are too young.

The frustration comes from finally being available — with an open window — and not immediately finding a person who "rings your bell." The frustration can even be greater if you

do find the person, and he or she is not available, or is not attracted to you. That simply means that you do not have the characteristics with which that person was imprinted.

Attraction Variables

Here are some of the variables that are important to different people. A few of these may be critical variables to you, but each is critical to someone.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Hair: length, type (curly, straight, long, short), color, texture▪ Facial features: shape, width, length▪ Skin color: texture and feel▪ Body shape: sexual features, legs, neck, lip tension, taste▪ Feel of the skin and flesh: hardness, softness▪ Voice tone: timbre, pace, softness, hardness, high or low▪ Sense of humor: laugh, giggle▪ Smell: skin, hair, breath	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Gestures: head, hands, and arm movements▪ Posture: carriage, roundness, straightness▪ Tension level of the body: relaxed, tense▪ Height: tall, short, medium▪ Weight: light, heavy▪ Energy level: calm, intense, easy-going, hard driving▪ Gait: walking, running▪ Confidence level: cocky, shy, confident, hesitant, timid
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Now for some fun. Take a few minutes to find out what you are imprinted for. Bring to mind two different people to whom you have felt attraction. Go over the list above and see which items were similar between the two. Then take a third person and go over the list again. If you have items that match on three people, the odds are good that those items are part of your imprinting. If there is a resounding “yes” for you on any one item, then that item is important to you.

Good news and bad news about attraction: the good news is that you’ll be attractive to some people — for one or another of *your* characteristics — no matter how attractive or unattractive you think you are. Your vote doesn’t count. People will be attracted to you (or not) regardless of what you think about your attractiveness. The bad news is that you’ll find yourself attracted to some people who match your imprint, but you’ll not match theirs. You can’t help it. They can’t help it. That’s just the way it is.



Chapter 5: The Phases in Detail — Courting

If you already know about courting (or don't care for more detail), skip to the next chapter: "Infatuation."

What is courting and how do you do it? Courting is a set of actions or behaviors that drive the feelings of attraction into infatuation. Courting is what you do to express your feelings of attraction. The goal of courting is to create a special kind of relationship: the pairing relationship.

The key issues to be dealt with in courting are these:

- Exclusivity — being a twosome, not involved with others
- Intimacy — trust and openness
- Dominance/submission — who decides, and about what?
- Physical intimacy — sex
- Commitment — promises and intentions
- Declaration — communicating your commitment

Courting Behavior

You have two different kinds of courting behaviors: natural and culture-based. Natural behaviors are those that seem to be in our genes, and they are the same no matter what culture you examine. Culture-based behaviors are those that have arisen over many generations of "your people." You're a part of some culture. It may contain elements of your nationality, your religion, your language, your socio-economic level, and your region.

Differences

This means that an American from New England will have some courting behaviors identical with those of a person from Sweden, China, or India. That same American from New England will also have some courting behaviors that are *different* from those of an American from Georgia. This book will not attempt to cover the different cultural courting behaviors. They are too diverse and too wide-ranging. The important thing for you to know is that there are cultural differences in courting rituals. So, if you find a possible partner whom you like, and the possible partner is from a different culture (religion, ethnic groups region, country, social level, etc.), you can expect that person to court differently than those from your own culture.

We will speak mostly about the kinds of courting behaviors that seem to be part of our genes. All birds, fish, and animals that mate have courting rituals. A few rituals may be learned by observation. For the most part each animal, fish, and bird has a genetic program for how to court. The courting rituals have a place in the pairing process. The rituals determine whether or not mating will take place, and prepare both parties for the process.

Example

Let's illustrate the two levels of courting behaviors. Imagine a shipwreck, a desert island, an American man of twenty-five from Des Moines, Iowa, and a native girl of eighteen, from the depths of the jungles in the Amazon. The two do not speak the same language, and have no experience of any kind with the culture, life style, religions, ethics, mores, politics, beliefs, or expectations of the other.

Advance the situation a few weeks. The two have joined to find shelter, food, and safety. After working to solve a number of jointly faced problems, the two have formed many bonds. The bonds they have forged provide the basis for attraction, and they both feel the stirrings of attraction. Courting behaviors can now be expected.



So, the boy sends a signal. He draws a heart with an arrow in it, on the sand. She doesn't get it. The message was a cultural message. It would mean something to a fellow American, but means nothing to this girl from the Amazon jungles. She sends a signal. She takes two palm fronds and entwines them, and gives them to him. He draws a blank. The message was cultural. It would mean something to a boy from her jungle lands but means nothing to a boy from Des Moines.

He watches her, and when she notices, he tilts his head and his eyes catch hers. She gets the message. She blushes, giggles, and averts her eyes. He gets the message and his pulse quickens. He stands up, lifts his head high, picks up a stone and throws it far into the distance. She claps and throws a stone a shorter distance. He laughs, makes signs like swimming, and beckons her to follow him to the water. In the water, he splashes her. She splashes back. He splashes more vigorously. She dives under the water. He follows, and when she emerges he ducks her under the water. She shrieks and pushes him away. He swims a little distance away and studies the clouds. Soon, she swims underneath and pulls him under. He laughs and chases her again.

You don't need words or agreed upon customs to court. This same set of courting activities would be understood regardless of custom or language.

Purposes for Courting

Courting behaviors serve a variety of purposes:

- To communicate feelings of attraction
- To communicate interest in the other person as a possible partner
- To provoke from the other person a response equal to or greater than that communicated
- (Male) To demonstrate strengths speed, power (capability to dominate)
- (Male) To demonstrate problem solving ability, crisis-handling capability (capability to defend and protect)
- (Female) To demonstrate willingness to defer (sometimes)
- (Female) To demonstrate willingness to be defended and protected (when desired)
- (Female) To demonstrate willingness to nurture and please

Notice that the genetic programming is not in tune with the popular trend in the United States towards equality between the sexes. This difference between genetic and cultural programming can cause difficulties in modern American couples working toward an egalitarian relationship. Their left-brain reasoning and cultural beliefs move them in one direction, and their genetic programming takes them in another.

This presents no real problem to the thoughtful couple. The thoughtful couple will allow the process to proceed as modified by their beliefs, and moderated by their goals. We do many things socially that oppose our genetic programming, and we have no real problems with it. For example, we restrain our basic urges to take what we want, fight if frustrated, and touch what pleases us. Let those who want egalitarian relationships understand that the courting process isn't quite built that way, and let them see that it is one more hurdle to overcome.

Testing and Provoking Responses

One other important element needs to be explained: the idea of testing and provoking responses. It helps to imagine a series of different levels of feelings. Let's invent a scale of feelings where zero is no interest, one is a little interest, and so on up to ten, which is full infatuation.

Boy sees girl. Boy jumps to level one right away. Boy initiates some courting activity. It might be indirect — he does something to attract her attention. Or it might be more direct — he looks at her and smiles. Girl sees boy and finds him attractive. She jumps to level one also. She then responds to his action. She'll attempt to communicate a response equal to the level of her feelings. She'll send a level one response. Normally, a response from one will increase the feelings of the other. So, let's say that our boy goes to level two. He needs to communicate this new level. So, he'll send a flirt, or attract attention equal to the level he feels. And, so it goes. When one gets ahead of the other, the one ahead will attempt to provoke a response equal to or greater than the level the other individual feels.

On it goes until he reaches level four. Level four might require a touch to express. So, he touches her. Since he has no sign from her that she is at that level, he might make it seem accidental, or part of something else (like a game of tag). Once he gets a touch back, he's ready to escalate again. If she won't touch back, or does not yet want to touch (being at a lower level of feeling), he'll attempt a variety of strategies to get her to respond at his level.

Part of the courting process seems to want to keep the escalation growing and to keep the responses matched. The process gets out of whack when one person gets too far ahead of the other. When one gets too far ahead, the person with the lesser level can feel overwhelmed by the person ahead. The person ahead can feel frustrated and tormented by the apparent resistance or reluctance of the other.

Risks

Courting is risky. Somehow, people find themselves embarrassed to be expressing a level of feeling much higher than has been confirmed between the two. This gives rise to testing and teasing. Harry has kissed Sandy, and Sandy has kissed back. They both feel good about each other. Things are progressing splendidly. Next, Harry puts his hand on her breast. Now, for Sandy, the question is whether this is a genuine escalation for Harry, or is it a test? Harry might well be at a higher level of feeling, ready to advance the relationship, or Harry might simply be testing to see if Sandy is at a higher level.

The issues are too complex to speculate about in text form, so we won't follow all the choices that could ensue between Harry and Sandy. They will serve as an example of the difficulties of courting, i.e. when is a signal a legitimate escalation, and when is it a test?

If Sandy thinks Harry is testing, then she may respond with outrage to Harry's communication. If she responds warmly to Harry, and he is only testing, Sandy could find herself communicating a deeper level of feeling for Harry than Harry really has for Sandy.

Teasing is a test in the pretense of not really meaning it. The pretense allows the test to have no response, without risk of rejection.

Okay, so you have a series of issues to resolve. You have a series of behaviors that are used to resolve them. You have levels of feelings. You have testing and teasing to confuse the whole affair. It seems so difficult that it almost makes you wonder how anyone gets through it. Well don't worry. Everyone works his or her way through it, sometimes many times.

Here are some thoughts that can make courting as smooth and easy as this complex step can get

It Helps to Talk About It

After you and your partner have clearly begun courting, bring it up for discussion. Read through this chapter together, and discuss your reactions. Here's a checklist of things that might be discussed.

1. Is your window open or closed?
2. What are your thoughts on exclusivity? At what stage? Let it evolve, or make a decision?
3. What is intimacy to you? How open are you willing to be? What level of trust do you expect? How slowly shall intimacy evolve? How slowly shall trust evolve? What kinds of things destroy trust? What kinds of things damage intimacy?
4. How fast do you each escalate? How will the slower one ask the faster one to be patient? How will the faster one handle the need to be patient? How does it feel to be ahead? How does it feel to be escalating more slowly?
5. How do you want to handle sex? Can you just let it evolve naturally? At what point will it be too much too soon? Can we reach agreement on how to limit

sexual escalation to a rate both can be comfortable with? Would you prefer an agreement in advance so that sex doesn't become an issue critical to the relationship? Does talking about it take out all the mystery? Would you prefer to ignore it? What might be the consequences of ignoring it? Is it too early to talk about sex?

6. What does it mean to dominate? What does it mean to be submissive? Can we discuss it? How do you want your partner to be? How comfortable could you be in the role your partner described? What kind of relationship do you visualize? A traditional role prescribed relationship? An egalitarian relationship? What does that mean to you?
7. What does commitment mean to you? When do you expect it? What is tied to? Are you resistant to it, or eager for it? What responsibilities come with commitment? Who is responsible for what?
8. How public can you be in declaration? How public do you want to be? How would it be for you? When do we declare that we are a couple? What is good about early? What is good about later?



Chapter 6: The Phases in Detail — Infatuation

If you already know about infatuation (or don't care for more detail), skip to the next chapter: "Bonding."

The courting rituals are behind you now. You've each declared yourselves — at least enough to know that your feelings are being returned. You have put all others in the background and declared yourselves to the world. You are a twosome now, and everyone knows it. (Later, in the troubleshooting section we will deal with the special case of being mutually infatuated, when one or both of you are committed to someone else.)

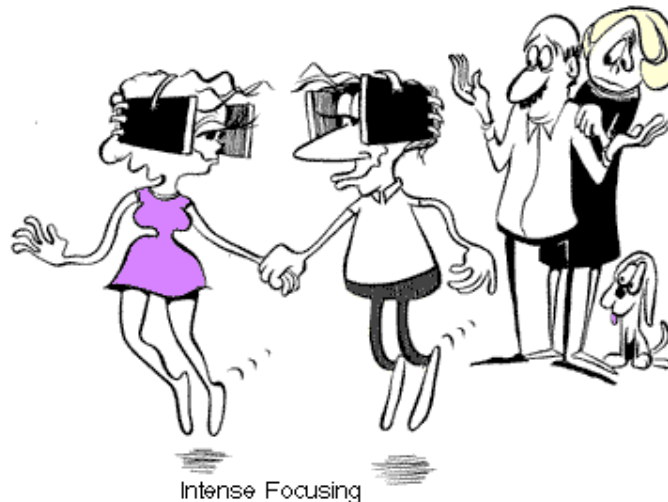
Infatuation

Ah, infatuation! How wonderful. When you enter into mutual infatuation, life is beautiful. This is the stuff that provokes poems and songs. How painful it can be to be there alone, however. If you get there and your partner doesn't follow, you discover the meaning of heartbreak.

What will you experience during infatuation? Depending on your personality makeup and your emotional range, you may experience these things at a high or low level of intensity. For one person, infatuation might be the most intense experience of his or her life. For another, it is all there, but much calmer. No matter whichever you experience, it is still wonderful.

Focusing

You'll experience intense attending. Your partner will attend to you and you will attend to your partner. Whatever your partner does or says is important. Whatever you do or say, your partner finds it compelling.



You'll experience intense focusing. No one else will matter. Friends, family, work, hobbies, and everything else that used to be important suddenly don't seem to be very important any more. Yet, everything your partner does, says, or wants is *incredibly* important. Life seems to narrow down to just you two, and to *right now* — plus your dreams of a blissful future full of more infatuation — until the day you die.

You'll lose more and more of your ability to do reality testing. You may know for certain that it won't last. After all, no one else's infatuation ever seemed to last, and yet, somehow, you imagine that your love will be different.

You'll be willing to take more risks with other relationships and things you used to value. After all, nothing is as important as your partner and you. Money isn't as important as it once was. Your career — your future — is nothing compared to your partner.

Matching

Matching, matching, matching. Everything between you will match, and those things that don't will disappear into nothingness. You like everything your partner likes. Your partner likes everything you like. You believe the same things. You hope for the same things. You agree to the same things. You hate the same things.

Hormones

You may experience incredible hormonal rushes. You may find that you can go on and on without sleep. You can stay awake all night, and work like crazy the next day, only to be ready to do it again.

Time Shifts

You may experience a shift in time perception. Time with your partner will fly like an instant. Time away from your partner will drag like time has stopped.

Bonding

You'll experience event after event that bonds you together. A certain song. A certain place. A certain moonlight. A picture. A tree. A film. A poem. A dress. A bracelet. A ring. A hundred small things, which once you wouldn't have noticed, now become incredibly important. It is the shared intensity of good feelings about these seemingly little things that provide the bonds that collect into love.

You are now in love. No doubt about it. No one could tell you different. And — you are right. That is love. That is what it is all about. Those hundred little shared experiences shared with the intensity of infatuation become the bonds that are true love.

I hate to interrupt this reverie, but I want to point out the distinction between the *infatuation that makes the bonding intense*, and the *love that results from the bonding*. They are different. The infatuation will diminish and normality will return, but the love will still be there. The love is different from the infatuation.

Some Difficulties

Now, there are a few things that happen during infatuation that can become a problem if you aren't aware of them. The process of infatuation unleashes some hormonal reactions that can be quite hard to handle. Along with the bonding comes (in some people) a natural need to act out "bond defenses." Somehow, some people find themselves feeling intense jealousy during this period. Normally, the jealousy is baseless, and without reason. You'll note however, that reason and the application of normal judgment is somewhat impaired by the intensity of the infatuation.

Luckily, in most people, this excessive jealousy diminishes with the fading of the intensity, but for a few, it continues.

Other reactions (stimulated by hormones) that sometimes occur are such things as territorial defense and rejection of all external authority. This means that some people will experience intense feelings about their shared space and will seek to reject other spaces.

Jay and Carol: territorial defense

Example: Jay and Carol were teenagers each living in their own homes. As they became infatuated and fell in love, the one place they could find to be together was in Jay's car. Within that tiny space they had a place that was theirs. A place they could think of as their own. Much of their time was spent there, and they were strongly bonded to the events they shared there.

As their relationship developed, Jay became more and more comfortable being with Carol in his car, and less comfortable being other places. Carol wanted to spend some time in her home with Jay and her family and friends. Jay felt uncomfortable in her home. Carol wanted to expand the places that they went and the people they were with. Jay resisted.

Carol felt trapped and frustrated. She searched for answers to the question, "Why does Jay want to spend all our time in his car?" She might have understood better if she had known about how infatuation sometimes triggers the need for a single-shared space for some people. Jay might have been more flexible if he had known that his compelling need to be in his car was only a side effect of the hormonal rushes stimulated by infatuation. Without understanding the problem, it eventually came between them. Carol couldn't accept Jay's need to be with her in his car, and Jay couldn't understand why Carol always wanted to be someplace else.

Fred and Alice: rejection of external authority

Fred and Alice shared a different problem. Fred and Alice were also young people, each of whom lived with their parents. As they became more and more of a couple, Fred found it more and more difficult to accept the wishes of Alice's parents. Alice's parents were understanding and accepting people, but they had some reasonable ground rules for Alice to follow. They set times when Alice was to be home, and ground rules about how frequently she could go out in the evenings.

As Fred and Alice became infatuated and fell in love, Fred became increasingly upset about Alice following her parents' ground rules. It seemed really important to Fred that Alice should free herself from her parents control and fall more under Fred's influence. Both would have been better able to cope with this difficulty if they had understood that the urge to be free of outside authority was a common and natural byproduct of the hormonal effects that come with infatuation.

Fred's frustration stemmed from not being aware of the differences between the natural window and the cultural window. The body, the mind, and the hormones all prepare young people to be independent and self sufficient as a couple. However, the cultural need for education and preparation toward the adult world often gets in the way.

Understanding the problem does not solve it, but it goes a long way to helping young people accept the normality of the problem. By understanding the forces involved, they can

better accept the realities of the situation and avoid blaming the problem on each other, or on outside forces, such as the authority figures involved.

If you experience any of these side effects of infatuation, accept them and understand them. Do what you can to protect your future relations with authority figures, because when you come back down to earth, you'll have to re-establish relations with them. These side effects are not personality or character flaws. They are products of the same hormones and genetic programming that brought you the wonders of infatuation and the intensity of bonding that produces genuine, mature love.



Chapter 7: The Phases in Detail — Bonding

Let's examine bonding very broadly, and then narrow it down to the special bonding that takes place between two people forming a relationship.

Bonding

Whenever you have a strong feeling of any sort, that feeling is stored away in the part of your mind that's outside of your awareness. All of the components of that experience are stored along with the feeling.

Bonding Experiences

For example, Billy goes to the circus. He feels excited and thrilled when he watches the lion tamer. He stores the entire experience along with the feeling. A bond of good feelings is formed between Billy and his recollection of the circus.

Years later, Billy sees an ad for the circus. The memory of the experience flashes back through Billy's awareness. He can see inside his mind the visual images he stored of the lion tamer. He can, if he chooses to be aware of it, smell the smells, hear the sounds, and feel the feelings he felt at the circus. Billy has formed a bond with the circus. The circus is connected with those good feelings of thrills and excitement.

You go through life building a huge collection of experiences, each with a feeling connected to it. You are bonded to the parts of the experience by the feeling.

Bonding to Animals

Sally is bonded to her dog. She feels that she loves her dog. Many times, her dog has demonstrated affection for Sally. Sally stores each of those experiences under both "dog" and the feeling she gets of "being loved."

Sally is bonded with the dog because of all of the times she has felt good when the dog made her feel wanted. Sally is bonded to the dog by the many times that she fed, bathed, and tended to the dog, along with the feelings of being needed that she got.

Bonding to "Things"

Bonding can be trivial, or it can be very deep. Perhaps you have a favorite pair of shoes you're attached to. It may have given you many experiences of comfort. You may have an old torn, worn-out shirt that you still wear. Somehow it is very comfortable to you, and you feel attached to that shirt.


Think of all the things that you have that you value — perhaps not for the value itself, but for its link to the good feelings that are attached to it. We take pictures, because we can use them to bring back good feelings that came from the event in the picture, or the people in the picture.

Missy has an old bracelet that she no longer wears. She won't throw it away because her best friend gave it to her. Every time she sees the bracelet, she feels the good feelings she shared with her friend.

Bonding in Love

A bond is formed with anything that provides us with a feeling. Some feelings are more important to us, and more highly valued. For example, the need to love and be loved is a very important need for most people, and very highly valued. The need to experience a good taste in the soda you drink is far less important, and not highly valued. So, a person who satisfies in you the need to be loved is much more highly valued than a soda that provides you with a good taste when you drink it.

Each experience forms a bond, but of vastly different levels of importance. So, bonds can be formed with anything that provides a good feeling, but the bonds are vastly stronger with the things that satisfy needs that are really important to us.

<p>Positive Bonds</p> <p>The need to find a partner with which to pair, is one of the most important human needs that we have. That need is very acute when we don't have a partner. When we have a partner, and feel love and being loved, then that need is satisfied and other needs come to the surface.</p>	 <p>Posbonding</p>
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The bonding that happens between two people is made up of:

- 1: A very strongly felt *need to find and pair* with a partner.
- 2: The very powerful *feelings of satisfaction* that come with satisfying the need for a partner.
- 3: The incredible *intensity of the feelings* that are magnified by infatuation.
- 4: *Your partner*, the person bonded to you by above components.

So, Infatuation produces powerful bonding. The bonding binds two people in love together, and gives them a huge collection of good feelings with which to begin their long-term relationship. As infatuation diminishes — as they both return to the “real world” — they will experience the normal number of difficulties that any two people have in building a life together. The collection of love and good feelings will be the bond that keeps them together to work through the difficulties that they will face.



Chapter 8: The Phases in Detail — Coping

Coping is the process by which people handle difficulties. It's the most important part of having a satisfying, long-term relationship. With successful coping the bond that's formed during infatuation will be stronger. With poor coping the bond that's formed during infatuation will gradually erode away and be replaced by a larger and larger collection of bad feelings. When the collection of bad feelings is as large or larger than the collection of good feelings, then the sight and the presence of the other person will bring out — not the good feelings — but the bad.

Negative Experiences

Billy, who loves the circus from his one experience, goes again. This time for a variety of reasons he has a terrible time. As time passes the idea of the circus will bring out two sets of feelings, some good, some bad.

The next time the circus comes to town, Billy may or may not go again. Certainly, we can predict that if Billy goes again and is disappointed once more, then his storehouse of experiences of the circus will be heavily weighted in terms of his bad feelings. It is now very unlikely that Billy will go to the circus again, for his own pleasure. (He may very well go as a way of giving a good experience to his children, even though his satisfaction will come from their pleasure, not his own.)

It is that way with relationships. If the two lovers who felt such love for each other during infatuation accumulate a large number of shared experiences that are *negative* and *hurtful*, in time they may not want to share any more experiences.

Coping is the process by which people handle difficulties in such a way that they end up with good feelings, and with a stronger bond. Coping aims at maximizing good feelings and minimizing bad feelings. The goal is to build and nurture a growing collection of good feelings attached to your partner. The larger this collection becomes, the more positive you feel toward your partner and toward your relationship. Anyone who has had a relationship can tell you that coping is not easy, nor does it come without some work and practice.

There will be some situations where your coping skills don't work, and you may require some changes in your way of acting or looking at things. Book Two contains a series of ways that you can install the changes that you need in order to be able to cope effectively.

The one thing this book cannot provide is the incentive and motivation for you to examine your coping strategy and make the changes that you'll need if you are to cope as well as possible. The motivation to learn skillful coping comes best from the part of you that needs to find someone to bond with, and from the need to love and be loved. Allow those needs — which are so powerful — to motivate you to learn coping skills which can help you meet those important needs in a way that is warm, loving, and satisfying.

Many couples have learned to have warm, loving, and satisfying long-term relationships. The secret isn't in the way it starts. The secret is in the process of coping that continues throughout the relationship.



Chapter 9: When It's Working Well

Once more, as a form of summary, let us go through the cycle.

Sam and Edie

Sam and Edie meet and each feels an attraction for each other. They enter the courting process. Over times they test the strength of the attraction. They demonstrate their feelings for each other. They become exclusive. They become a twosome. Outsiders accept them as a twosome.

Their feelings escalate and they experience infatuation. Every shared experience has a new intensity. Everything about the other is just great and they put everything else in the background for a while.

Their shared experiences bond them with a thousand little things that they can laugh about and enjoy together. The enjoyment, the laughing, the intense feelings, their song, their restaurant, their movie, all form the little, intensely felt and joyfully shared experiences that bond them together.

They marry and experience the adjustments of sharing a life together and all the little adjustment that living together requires. They quarrel and laugh about it later, secure in the knowledge that their love is larger than the difficulties. They have problems, but they cope. Each is committed to the goal of making their marriage strong enough to handle anything that can come up. Each crisis is the basis, ultimately, for a stronger bond. Each difficulty is an opportunity for them to overcome it and prove again that their love can bridge any difficulty. They cope successfully and then and only then do they live happily ever after.



Where Does Sex Fit In?

Sex fits in best during infatuation — after you are into it far enough to feel secure that you are twosome — after your relationship is strong enough that you are willing to cope with difficulties.

There are many benefits of waiting until infatuation is secure:

- Sex becomes one of the “special” experiences you share, that form a secure bond. That means that every sexual experience you share after infatuation will bring back the wonderful feelings and memories of the intense experiences you shared during infatuation.
- The intensity of the early sexual experiences is enhanced by the strong mutual feelings brought on by infatuation.
- It feels “right.” Sex is then free to become a normal part of the ongoing relationships rather than something that produces feelings of guilt or frustration.

If you begin sex during the attraction stages sex loses its “special” status. That means that you have a long life together in which sex isn’t as useful for refreshing the bonds that you formed during infatuation. There is not necessarily any damage done to the later relationship if sex is begun too early. The loss comes in missing a lifetime of what sex could have been, had you waited.

The same is true of beginning sex in the courting phase. Every delay possible makes the ultimate experience better, and the long term benefits greater. So, beginning during courting is better than beginning during attraction, but the best overall benefits come from waiting at least until infatuation.

Sometimes it happens that infatuation is begun and finished before the “window” that will allow marriage or permanent commitment, is open. That can mean that the initial sexual sharing will have less intensity than it would have had during infatuation. On the other hand, the prolonged delays for people in love, serves as its own intensifier. This means that when sex is eventually shared, it will have a special intensity that it can never have during the attraction or courting phases.

What happens if you skip stages?

The ultimate example of skipping stages is the “arranged” marriage, which happens in many cultures. Sometimes marriage is arranged between people who’ve barely even met. Excellent marriages can and often do still result.

An arranged marriage puts a lot of stress on coping. Not only do the two newlyweds have to cope with the stresses of a new relationship, but they also have to do it without the bonding that comes from infatuation. Arranged marriages work best in cultures where the relationship rules and methods of coping are fairly fixed and understood by everyone in childhood.

Most couples in the U.S. have the cultural freedom to make any kind of relationship they want. This freedom is a benefit on one hand, and a difficulty on the other. In cultures where everything is already settled, then each partner knows his or her role. They don’t need to do the kind of “working it out” that most couples have to do in the U.S.

In countries throughout the world, arranged marriages have proven for millions that long term successful marriages can be achieved without attraction, without courting, and without infatuation. Bonding will always be available, and coping is the key to long-term success in any case.

Skipped Stages: Tom and Mary

Tom fell for Mary like a ton of bricks. He felt his insides go “flop” every time he saw her. She felt no attraction for Tom, but he didn’t give up. He courted her vigorously. She went through the motions, but she still wasn’t excited. He experienced all of the affects of infatuation. She loved all the attention, and gradually grew to like him more, but was alarmed that she felt much less strongly than he did. He proposed, she accepted but asked for a long engagement. She thought that maybe time would help her to feel something. It didn’t. They were married and three years later began having children. That was 33 years ago. In telling the story, Mary relates that her love for Tom grew gradually greater and greater. She says today that she loves Tom more than anything in the world, and she feels she has had the happiest marriage of any couple she has known.

So, in example after example, there are cases of couples where one or both have skipped some or all of the stages and yet they have successful long-term relationships.

Coping is the key.

There have even been very successful marriages reported where one of the parties felt not only no attraction — but instead aversion. One woman reported that she felt repulsed every time she saw the man that eventually wooed her and married her. She reported that the repulsion gradually gave way to neutral responses and while she never felt attraction she grew to love him greatly.

If everything works smoothly — according to the “natural way” — that’s terrific. If it doesn’t, it can still work out.

Coping is the key, so let’s get to it. Now that you understand the stages of the relationship, it is time to begin focusing on the key phase. Coping holds the key to a happier and happier relationship.

To understand coping, it is first important to understand how the mind works, and where coping fits in.

Remember, the goal of successful coping is learning to:

- *Maximize the good feelings* you have with your partner, and learning to
- *Resolve the bad feelings* you get from and with your partner.

So coping is aiming at building a collection of good feelings that will nurture and satisfy the need you have for a relationship.

To understand about feelings and how they are maximized or resolved, let's examine the Sage model.

Please continue with Book Two, "Coping: 30 Ways to Change Your Self-talk."

