

*Marriage is for
Growth,
and not only for
Happiness*



Neville Berkowitz

personalempowerment.co

Sonnet 116 (1609 AD)

Let me not to the marriage of true minds

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Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove.
O no! it is an ever-fixed mark
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;
It is the star to every wand'ring bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me prob'd,
I never writ, nor no man ever lov'd.

William Shakespeare

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Johannesburg
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January 2021

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On personalempowerment.co

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Marriage is for Growth, and not only for Happiness

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Marriage is for growth, and not only for happiness

Would you like a marriage like this?

To wake in the morning and feel loved by your partner.

To feel appreciated for who you are.

To not have any expectations imposed upon you from your partner.

To feel accepted fully by your partner.

To be praised and not criticized or judged by your partner.

To share fulfilling physical intimacy and feel loved by your partner.

To share emotional intimacy and feel respected and trusted by your partner.

To be shown kindness, care, and concern by your partner.

To be easily forgiven by your partner for any lapses in your choices or judgements.

To know tolerance and patience from your partner.

To not feel controlled or manipulated in any way by your partner.

To be fully listened to and heard by your partner.

To share a similar sense of humour with your partner, often laugh with them, and have fun with them.

To desire to be with your partner and long for their return when you are apart.

To experience happiness, joy, bliss, and even some form of unconditional love with your partner.

To go to sleep with a prayer for your beloved partner on your lips.

Is this possible?

It is. However, the door for this marital happiness, joy, bliss, and growth has a latch that can only be opened from the inside. It all starts with you. My intention in writing this free book is to explain how to achieve this desired state for you, your partner, and your marriage.

Among other issues, I investigate marital failure causes and clearly mark these hidden rocks that scupper some 50% of love boats set out from the marriage altar and end in the divorce court. "*Forewarned is forearmed*" was first written about in 1592!

Who is this book for?

This book, my 29th free book on personalempowerment.co and guidespeak.com, is, as always, for my sons Michael (31) and Jonathan (27). Michael, and the beautiful Lisa, recently announced their engagement on December 24, 2020. This book is also for all those who visit my two websites above, desiring to have a marriage made in heaven and live-in heaven-like homes.

I wish that someone had written a book like this for me to read before my marriage and subsequent divorce, nearly twenty years later. It is now fifteen years since my divorce. During these last fifteen years, I have been on a high-growth spiritual and personal journey. This is evidenced by my 29 free books written from 2005 to date and published on my two websites, personalempowerment.co and guidespeak.com.

I feel qualified to write this book to assist my sons, future daughters-in-law, and you, the Reader, for the following reasons:

1. Consciously experiencing both the marital and divorce divide, for 20 and 15 years, respectively.
2. Having a spiritual awakening with the ability to channel over the past 16 years.
3. Moving from being a fear-based egoic person to becoming a soul-based Love person during the past 16 years.
4. Having survived, and, subsequently, thrived, after an emotional divorce.
5. Among other 50-year career functions, being a researcher with analytical probing skills.
6. Developing a keen insight into marriages that work and those that don't.

Today, my ex-wife and I are best friends, and our family unit is stronger than ever. Our sons have witnessed how I have applied many of the principles expressed in this book. I have lived with the philosophy: "your children may become what you are; so be what you want them to be."

Both my ex-wife and I are immensely proud of our young men. We believe they will make excellent marriage partners.

Now onto the principles of understanding and applying that marriage is for growth, not only for happiness.

Part 1- Marriage, separation, and divorce under the spotlight

Who is happy in their marriage or relationship?

How many married couples do you know who are happy with each other?

How many people do you know in a long-term living together relationship who are happy with each other?

Now, conversely, how many married couples and couples in a long-term living together relationship do you know who are unhappy with each other?

There are differing degrees of happiness and unhappiness, so asking you to make the above assessments and judgements may be unfair.

Let's boil it down to a measurement of choice. Let's imagine that the people you are assessing and judging in marriages and long-term relationships were given a choice to spend a day with their spouse/ significant other or a day doing what they are passionate about. For example, a day at the Spa being pampered or a day with your husband/partner? A day with your best mates drinking in the pub, playing a sport or hobby, or a day with your wife/ partner?

I have deliberately chosen these extremes as an acid test. Some people may choose to split the day into two halves and enjoy their spouses/partners and their passionate pursuit in each half.

I think it is also relevant that time frames should be introduced into these hypothetical questions. Newlyweds or newly involved couples cannot get enough of each other, whereas couples after seven years suffer from the "seven-year itch." More about that later.

There are ageing couples who have withstood the challenges of married life, or relationship life, who appear to be "joined at the hip" and live for each other with care, concern, and love. Nothing thrills me more than seeing a couple in their seventies and beyond walking hand in hand and having care, concern, kindness, and love for each other. It doesn't happen often, but when it does, I get a chill down my spine. I want to distinguish this from the elderly spouse/ partner who must look after their spouse/partner suffering physically, emotionally, or mentally from some serious ailment.

Wait! I have thought of a better definition of happiness in a marriage or a long-term relationship. How about being best friends? How many couples do you know who are best friends with each other?

What is a best friend, or colloquially known as a "Bestie?" I would say they:

- are totally accepting of each other
- overlook any quirks of the other
- share the intimacy of respect, trust, kindness, care, and concern for each other
- are forgiving of each other
- are patient and tolerant towards each other
- do not control or manipulate each other in any way
- do not judge or criticize the other
- listen to each other
- are supportive of each other
- share a sense of humour and often have fun and laughter together
- long to be with each other and have a passion for doing so
- develop some form of unconditional love for each other.
- know lasting happiness, joy, and bliss together in their marriage or long-term relationship.

We have nailed it now! In this book, let's go forward using the term "best friends continually longing to be with each other" as our definition of happiness in a marriage or long-term relationship.

I grew up in an era where Silver Wedding anniversaries, being married for 25 years, and Golden Wedding anniversaries, celebrating 50 years of marriage, were achievable and celebrated milestones. My parents celebrated their Golden Wedding anniversary, so did my maternal grandparents, various Uncles and Aunts, and my ex-in-Laws. Not all were the loving, elderly, hand-in-hand couples, but they persevered through the times of hardships and smiled together in the good times too. I can't recall many of them qualifying as best friends, but their reliance on each other often developed their marriages further as they got older.

As I age, currently 68, I am beginning to realise that marriage, or long-term relationships' second benefit is the loving care and companionship into their senior years. The first benefit I see is having children, and possibly grandchildren, as they are known as the dividend of having children in the first place! In childless couples, the first benefit may be having the best friendship of unconditional love. Alternatively, having an interdependent relationship allowing each party to fulfill their dreams, whatever they may be, while remaining a loving couple caring for each other's well-being.

Let's revert to our original quest of establishing how many couples we know of who remain happy to be with each other, after, say, seven years of marriage or long-term living together relationships. Let's redefine the term "happy" to be "continually longing to be together as best friends." Once children enter the picture, the relationship between the parents changes to become a family unit. The happiness or longing to be with each other as best friends alter in this expanded family unit. But that for me is what I am looking for in defining the term "happy" as "continually longing to be with each other as best friends." The desire to share each other's lives unconditionally while still dealing with the challenges and opportunities of personal and family life.

From my experiential knowledge, I can sense this happiness or longing for each other through their body language far more accurately than the words they use in public towards each other. As spelled out in my free book *How to be a Great Negotiator* found on personalempowerment.co, body language is over 70 % of all communication. In that book, I identify most of the body language signals from the top of one's head to the soles on one's feet. The body does not lie! Sure, some people are excellent actors and even con- artists in public but maintaining that deception over time is difficult to do.

For me, the defining process is whether each spouse/partner is coming from soul-based Love or fear-based ego. The subtle, sometimes overt, ego-based power play is in their body language more so than in their words expressed. It is difficult to hide the fear one feels when threatened in any way. The spouse/ relationship partner feeling threatened usually gives it away in their face and body posture in public if you know what signals you are looking for. The face alone has over 40 micro-signals, which are reflex reactions. The spouse/relationship partner doing the threatening in subtle or overt ways is also easily identified by their face, body posture, choice of words, tone of voice, and general attitude.

I define real power with the acronym POWER- Present Only When Ego Removed. All other power I refer to as potency. This potency is the ability to influence someone or something or make an impression, using ego-based power. This potency is an imbalance and creates disharmony between those involved, whereas real power maintains balance and harmony for all parties concerned.

When I use the term ego, I use poetic licence to describe what I call the "bad" ego. Later I will use the more technical Freudian term, the Id, to define this "bad ego."

Hopefully, I am assisting you in your refining process of determining how many couples you are aware of who are happy as defined by being "continually longing for each other as best friends."

So, the votes are cast, and the results are in. Would you say 10% of the couples you know who, after seven years or more together in marriage or a long-term relationship, are "continually longing for each other as best friends?" Maybe 10% is a bit generous? More like 5%, let's say.

I get to 12 couples I know or have known, as defined above, as best friends. After 68 years on earth, I have known well over 500 couples as family and friends for some time during my lifetime.

So, my vote is 2% of all qualifying couples who are "continually longing for each other as best friends" after more than seven years of marriage or of a long-term relationship together. However, I can accept 5% of couples but think 10% is "pushing the envelope."

Hopefully, you can prove my numbers wrong, and you know a higher percentage of these couples as "best friends continually longing to be with each other."

How many married and unmarried couples live together?

I have decided to use the USA's country example as their statistics are both reliable and plentiful.

According to the US Census Bureau's latest information, some 15% of adult people over 18 years of age live alone in the USA. These are single people who have never married, divorced people, widows, and widowers.

Growth and happiness in some 15% of US homes do not occur in a marriage or a living together relationship with another person, but is self-induced, if at all.

Amongst these adults, some 52% are married couples, and some 7% are unmarried couples living together in the USA. Some 12 % of adults live with other relatives, and 4% of adults live with non-relatives. Some 10% of adults are still living at home with their parent/s.

Therefore, in some 59% of homes, where either married or unmarried couples reside, there is an opportunity to find happiness and growth through a spouse or partner's relationship.

As this book is focused on marriage, I am excluding the happiness and growth that may, or may not, be found for the balance of 41% of adults in the USA.

Let's begin by finding out what goes wrong in marriage by interrogating divorce causes in the USA as the example country.

Regrettably, in many countries worldwide, the recent divorce rate is between 33%-65% of marriages. In the USA, it is around 50% of recent marriages, as the statistics reflect below. However, in Dallas, Texas, The Southern Methodist University (SMU) states that the US divorce rate is 39%, down from 50% in 1980/1, according to the latest US Census results. I have decided to use the Family Law Practice statistics below due to their comprehensive research information.

What do the divorce statistics tell us about unhappy marriages?

Let's see what the divorce statistics say about happiness, or the lack thereof, in a marriage. The source of this information is from Wilkinson and Feinbeiner, Family Law Practice in San Diego, USA. They have compiled substantial marriage and divorce statistics from Sources throughout the USA. Here is the link:

<https://www.wf-lawyers.com/divorce-statistics-and-facts/>

First, the good news. As of 2016, both marriage and divorce rates in the US are decreasing. Recent studies have shown that Millennials choose to wait longer to get married and stay married longer and are the main driver in decline in both the marriage and divorce rate in the US.

In my small circle, I have witnessed that children who have been through the pain of having parents divorcing are emotionally scarred. They have a more jaundiced view of the rosy coloured eyes of marriage and happiness ever after.

When becoming adults, these children of divorced parents are far more practical, and their eyes are more open to the pitfalls of marriage. They choose to delay getting married and prefer to live together for a few years to ensure they are correct for each other.

The millennials referred to above reflect this opinion in recent times. However, the statistics above belie this opinion. They show that children who have experienced living through a divorce have a much higher likelihood of getting divorced. Regrettably, the experience has provided them with an example, and those children not experiencing a divorce in their first family have not had such an example to follow. Hopefully, the Millennial and subsequent generations can reverse this divorce trend by delaying getting married until after their 25th birthday, as the statistics show this to be a critical age of greater maturity and success when tying the marriage knot.

America has the sixth highest divorce rate in the world. In the US, almost 50% of all marriages will end in divorce or separation. First marriage causalities are 41%, second marriages are 60%, third marriages are 73%.

My reference to the "seven-year itch" is borne out by the fact that first marriages that end in divorce have an average life span of marginally under eight years. This is not a new phenomenon. In 1955 there was a movie called *The Seven Year Itch*, and during that era, divorce was much more of a social stigma. US Divorce rates increased by 130% between 1955 and 1981.

The average age of couples going through their first divorce is 30 years old. Individuals aged 25-39 comprise 60% of all divorces. Wives are the ones who most often file for divorce at an average of 66% in most years, and some years this reaches 75%.

The groups with the most prolific experience of marriages ending in divorce are downscale adults earning less than \$20 000/year (39%), Baby Boomers (38%), those aligned with a non- Christian faith (38%), people who consider themselves to be liberal on social and political matters (37%) and African Americans (36%).

Among the population segments with the lowest likelihood of having been divorced after marriage are Catholics (28%), those who deem themselves to be conservative on social and political matters (28%), evangelicals (26%), upscale adults earning \$75 000/year plus (22%), and Asians (20%).

The reasons why people get divorced are ranked as follows. More than one reason may be cited; therefore, these numbers do not add up to 100%.

1. Lack of commitment- 73%
2. Argue too much- 56%
3. Infidelity- 55%
4. Married too young- 46%
5. Unrealistic expectations- 45%
6. Lack of equality in the marriage- 44%
7. Lack of preparation for marriage- 41%
8. Domestic violence and abuse- 25%

The link to this research source is above for those who want to delve into the many reasons and trends that identify why divorces occur; who is likely to get divorced; and why they are likely to get divorced. If you have an analytical eye, studying these statistics within this link will enable you to predict fairly accurately who is likely to get divorced and why they are likely to do so. The statistical information is quite detailed.

Here are some examples of the statistical topics identified in this research impacting on marriage and long-term relationships:

IQ level

age of getting married

married before

age of losing one's virginity,

the sexual history of the parties

where the couple met,

co-habitations before marriage,

education,

earnings,

occupations,

working parents,

role of the husband in the home

religious and non-religious affiliations,

political or non-political affiliations,

first family marriage and divorce experiences,

childless couples,

children in a marriage,

multiple births such as twins and triplets in a marriage,

family and friends going through a divorce impacting on your mindset,

smoking tobacco

alcohol

addictions- drugs, gambling, other

financial strain

financial impoverishment of divorce, and so on.

For this book's purposes, I believe that the point is well made that most marriages are not only for happiness, immaterial of your definition of happiness. When people are seriously unhappy, they see divorce as an option. I believe that marriages are mainly for growth, and hopefully some level of happiness too. It is this growth that I want to focus on next.

What is growth in a marriage and a divorce?

Everything on earth is involved in a cyclical pattern, and growth is a vital part of that cycle. When we choose to get married or live with someone in a long-term relationship, we step onto a new growth cycle. We are now taking ourselves and blending that with our chosen spouse or partner. We are merging and emerging as a couple. We are deciding whether the synergy of $1+1=3$, or whether $1+1 = 0$. Are we going to grow together and enhance our lives? Alternatively, are we going to grow apart and nullify our union?

There are numerous ways to tackle the concept of growth. I will use the term marriage to denote formal marriage, common law marriage, long-term living together relationships, and shorter-term co-habitation relationships.

I have identified 18 issues below where growth is likely to occur. I introduce them here and will deal with growth in greater later.

People

1. There is growth of individuals pre-marriage, during the marriage, and post possible marriage/separation,
2. growth of those in a marriage without a separation/ divorce,
3. growth of any children in a marriage without a separation/divorce
4. growth of those adults going through a separation/divorce,
5. growth of those adults' post-separation/divorce,
6. growth of any children of the separated marriage/divorce,
7. growth of parent/s of their child, now an adult, going through a separation/divorce, or post-divorce.
8. growth of any siblings and their possible children affected by a family-related separation/divorce,
9. growth of other family and friends affected by a separation/divorce of someone they care about.
10. growth of co-workers of someone going through a divorce or post-divorce.

Relationships

11. There is a relationship between you and your partner pre-marriage, one during the marriage and one, possibly, through a separation/divorce, and post-divorce.
12. There is a relationship during the divorce and post-divorce with your spouse/ex-spouse.

13. There is a relationship during the divorce and post-divorce with any possible child/children of your marriage.

14. Your ex-spouse or you may obtain sole, joint, or partial custody of your child/children. Limited time by any parent with your child/children will require a change in the structure of a relationship from a family unit previously living under one roof.

15. There may be a relationship post the divorce with your ex-spouse's possible new relationship partner/spouse, and possibly any children from their previous marriage/s.

16. There may be a relationship between you and your possible new partner/spouse, their child/children, their first family parents, and possibly their ex-spouse too.

17. There may be a relationship between your child/children and your possible new partner/spouse and any of their children.

18. There may be a relationship between your child/children and your ex-spouse's new partner/spouse and any of their children from a previous marriage.

As can be seen from the examples of relationships above, stresses, pressures, obstacles, challenges, as well as new opportunities are likely to emerge from what is becoming a spider web of interconnectivity of people, most of whom you may not have chosen to be in a relationship with.

As always, you have a choice to either accept and allow these new relationships or resist them. Either way, you will experience growth at various levels of your being.

Let's try a hypothetical experiment. Select one example from the People category and one from the Relationship category above.

Let's use the most extreme example to illustrate. You are divorced, and your children are living with your ex-spouse. Your ex-spouse takes a new Lover. This new Lover moves into your previous home with their children from their previous marriage. Your children are now sharing their bedrooms with the Lover's age and gender appropriate children. Your ex-Spouse and their new Lover are sharing your previous bedroom. To compound this scenario, you are still paying the mortgage payments and the home's upkeep in terms of the divorce agreement. You are living in a one-room rented apartment with faulty heating. Your much-reduced income after your divorce settlement payments leaves you with only \$10/day for food and drink.

Now let's assume that you are as close to unconditionally loving as you can be, and you allow, accept, and embrace all those people now living in your previous home. Imagine how you would behave towards them if you embraced them as your best friends. Imagine how they would react and respond to such soul-based Love from you.

I know how close to impossible this scenario is in practice but please play along to imagine and feel the experience of being unconditionally loving and the growth you would experience.

The next experiment is to reverse that scenario and imagine if you resisted them all as people. You especially despised your ex-Spouse and their new Lover. You have nothing but fear-based ego, hatred, contempt, and hostility, and you spew that at them all the time. How are you likely to feel within you, and how are they likely to react and respond towards you.

Now let's look at your mental health position in both hypothetical scenarios, and after that, your physical health position reacting to either your soul-based Love or ego-based fear. What about your psychological and financial positions? How will the choices you make of either ego/fear or soul/Love impact your relationship with your children? How will they impact your ability to work and make an income to pay for your divorce-related obligations and your new, more impoverished lifestyle?

Can you begin to see that your thoughts create the reality of your mental, physical health, psychological and financial positions through this process? Can you also realise that your opportunity to grow as a human being and as a Spiritual Being is directly linked to whether you are coming from soul-based Love or ego-based fear throughout this process?

Your happiness and growth are in your hands, and more specifically, in your thoughts, words, and actions. Your spouse/ex-spouse, children, and anyone else does not determine your future; only you do through the attitude you adopt and the thought processes after that followed by your chosen words and actions.

This website's name is personalempowerment.co. Personal empowerment is the ability to choose your attitude, attitudinal response, and resulting thoughts, words, and actions to create the reality you will experience.

You are the creator of your life, and you determine its happiness and growth. If you have a spiritual base in your life, you may also know that God within you is the Co-Creator of your life.

Growth through wholeness

I will first explain growth from a spiritual perspective and, after that, a non-spiritual perspective, so I ask for your indulgence if you are not spiritually inclined.

The growth that marriage or marriage and divorce offers is for you to become whole. In terms of Soul Contracts, which I will discuss later, you and your spouse/ex-spouse agreed in Spirit, as Soul Mates, that you both required to fix "holes in your souls" to become whole or complete as eternal souls. You agreed to be married to assist, enable, and allow each of you to experience as much as possible of one of:

1. an unconditionally loving marriage relationship, which I rank around 2%-5% of married couples.
2. a "get -along" with little happiness involved in marriage, around 45% of all marriages, or
3. a divorce, being 50% of marriages.

The desire to become whole or repair some holes in your eternal soul is a major part of your soul contract in this lifetime, but, as always, you have free will and can opt-out of this soul contract. These free will choices create new avenues and usually result in new holes in your soul that will require repairing in this lifetime or a subsequent life on earth. Your soul contract repairs, or your free will choices, will expand your soul's experiences. With such expansion, your soul as a part of God will also expand God's experiences.

If you are not spiritually inclined and the above paragraphs do not connect with you, then the growth you will be trying to understand needs to be assessed from your unique viewpoint. Maybe it's as simple as becoming a better person. Of course, the term better is subjective. Maybe it's to become more understanding and tolerant of others that makes you a better person. See what personal growth occurs within you in the relevant one of three scenarios of marriage and divorce identified above:

(1) loving; (2) get-along, or (3) divorce.

Suppose my assumptions are correct, and loving and mostly happiness are not present in most marriages, which may or may not lead to a divorce. Then seeking ways to grow personally appears to be an option worthy of considering. Personal growth is inherent in our DNA, initially from a survival viewpoint and, after that, to acquire skills and abilities to improve our lives.

Growth is aligned to happiness. When you achieve growth, you are better positioned to determine what makes you happy and what does not. With such growth, you can aspire for greater happiness. This can be done individually or within a marriage.

The choices in selecting a spouse or long-term relationship partner

Aristotle (384 BC- 322 BC) said, *"a man married to the right woman will be happy. A man married to the wrong woman will be a Philosopher."*

Louis Anspacher (1878-1947) stated, "marriage is that relationship between a man and a woman in which the independence is equal, the dependence mutual, and the obligations reciprocal."

I am splitting these choices into two categories, firstly, dependent relationships, and, secondly, interdependent relationships.

Dependent relationships

"The curse which lies upon marriage is that too often the individuals are joined in their weakness rather than in their strength- each asking from the other instead of finding pleasure in giving"- Simon De Beauvoir (1908-1986)

If we feel incomplete, or not whole, in one or more ways, we usually seek a spouse or partner who has the attributes we feel we lack. For example, if we are shy and reserved, we may select someone outgoing and gregarious, the party's life and soul. As a couple, you hope that you are now complete and well rounded.

Many people marry for security: physical, emotional, psychological, spiritual, financial. Most people want to have children and a family unit in a loving home. Nothing is guaranteed, and change is the only constant in life and marriage.

When two people get married or have a long-term relationship and rely on their spouse/partner to supply what they feel is lacking within themselves, they are usually disappointed over time. They have a value system that has been developed for at least two decades before they got married or lived together. Their value system is based on who and what they are. For example, if they are shy and reserved, neat and tidy, or outgoing, or a spendthrift, they will soon find that the complementary spouse or partner's opposite value systems, which initially attracted them, begin to irritate them. Over time, this irritation grows and creates major disharmony in their relationship. What was needed initially to make them feel whole becomes the wedge that divides them apart over time.

Dependent relationships usually have an imbalance and disharmony. Due to fear, one or both parties may not openly discuss their unhappiness but rather let it fester within themselves, creating a continual feeling of being ill-at-ease, and, likely ill-health, and, possibly, disease, in time.

The fears of rejection by their spouse/partner and the possible dissolution of the marriage or relationship become the glue that holds them together. If fear is the glue holding them together, then their marriage or relationship is dying. I have underlined this statement as it's vital to understand.

A relationship that began in love has turned into a fearful relationship. Fear-based ego has replaced soul-based love within the relationship. Unhappiness, separation, or divorce is likely to be on the horizon for them. Couples who remain together due to fear of rejection, separation, or divorce are likely to have an unpleasant life together. This "fear-based glue" will likely poison any children they may have with a belief system that marriages are unpleasant experiences.

I don't want to sugarcoat this and believe this "fear-based glue" to be at the heart of the unhappiness, separation, divorce, and may result in damaged children.

FEAR- False Evidence Appearing Real.

We allow this fear to rule our lives, relationships, and marriages and create unhappiness, despair, anxiety, and possible depression.

Let's bring this cancerous fear out into the open as it affects our relationships and marriages. This airing of our fears would best be done in a neutral setting with a trained professional mediating and counselling.

Providing the purpose is to heal the marriage or relationship and not apportion blame and guilt; this mediation and therapy can succeed. The statistics used above show that 38% of couples who go for marriage counselling end up getting divorced within two years. What about the 62% who don't get divorced within two years after counselling? This number could be much improved if the purpose of the counselling was a healing one to bring one or both parties' fears into the open. Once this airing and transparency are done, see what can be done to remedy situations instead of sweeping them under the carpet. Often merely verbally expressing one's fear in a safe space enables the grip of such fear to be lessened. A well-worn statement is, "a problem shared is a problem halved."

The financial, physical, emotional, mental, and psychological costs of a separation or divorce should be sufficient motivation to get a couple into counselling and to unearth these hidden fears for the intended healing processes to begin.

From the statistics stated above:

Families with children who were not poor before the divorce see their income drop as much as 50%. Almost 50% of the parents with children going through a divorce move into poverty after the divorce. Over 60% of people under poverty guidelines are divorced women and children.

As stated earlier, dependent relationships begin with the hope that the other person will make them whole and the relationship stronger. This desire may appear to be a solution at the outset but rarely becomes the eventual solution for happiness. Usually, quite the reverse situation occurs- unhappiness, possibly leading to separation or divorce.

The reality is that you cannot rely on someone else to complete you. You must complete yourself, and as a completely independent person, after that, enter a relationship or marriage, strengthened within. As you can well imagine, this completion process will take some inner work measured in years. For this reason, marriages by people under 25 years of age have a high percentage failure rate.

This completion process requires maturity, authenticity, and self-integrity. Face up to what you fear you do not have, which makes you feel incomplete. Take action required to tackle this issue. Do not allow your fear to immobilise you and make you dependent on another to tackle this issue for you. By doing so, you imprison yourself and throw away the key to your cell. Take small steps to gain confidence that you can tackle this fear. Your feeling of achievement and the growth you experience by overcoming this fear will give you even more courage to tackle other fearful issues. This process is the growth you selected in Spirit to come here to experience. Embrace this growth and nullify your fears.

Interdependent relationships

Here we have two people who have completed themselves and do not require anyone else to complement any deficiencies they may have had but now no longer have. These are usually self-empowered or personally empowered people to be the best versions of themselves in all spheres of their lives. Providing they do such inner work on themselves without the Id or "bad" ego being a dominant part of who they have become, they should make the correct partner for another complete independent person.

These two complete and independent people can either be in an interdependent relationship/marriage or on their own. Suppose they chose a relationship/marriage with another complete and independent person. They should be mature and sensible enough to value themselves, their spouse/partner, and the marriage/relationship in similar states of such appreciation and gratitude. An equal balance and harmony should exist in their interdependent relationship/marriage if they are mature and sensible enough.

Regrettably, these interdependent relationships are the exception and not the rule, and most relationships are the dependent type. Interdependent relationships can also be developed from initially dependent relationships due to the parties' conscious effort to become whole within the relationship. Additionally, couples dependent on each other to complete themselves can remain within a marriage or relationship and develop different life interests. Their marriage or relationship usually becomes one of "get-a-long." Their companionship is well developed at that stage, and the care and concern for each other dominate their marriage or long-term relationship. They may miss the heights experienced in some 5% of marriages or relationships, which I term "best friends longing to be with each other," but "get-a-long" is preferable to separation or divorce with all their subsequent issues.

This book focuses on determining and recognising the growth opportunities that a relationship or marriage presents and being pro-active in grasping each opportunity presented and growing from it. This growth should enhance your relationship or marriage. It will be especially powerful if both parties have bought into this concept that marriages are for growth and not only for happiness. However, most often, one party needs to lead by example, and the other party should "see the light" and follow suit in time. The result should be happiness in the marriage/relationship and personal growth, marital/relationship growth, joy, and bliss.

A solution to the completeness

In an ideal world, you don't need someone to complete you. What you need is someone to accept you completely as you are. This acceptance and no resistance are the keys to a life of peace, harmony, Love, joy, and bliss, not only in your marriage/ relationships but in all aspects of your life.

Begin the process in your marriage/ relationship and accept and do not resist anything your partner does. No criticism or judgement of them, only acceptance and appreciation of them. If you can get that right, they are likely to follow your example.

Now you have two people living with total acceptance and no resistance to themselves and within their lives together. These people have become "best friends continually longing to be together." This is heaven on earth.

It is important to know that people don't always need advice in a relationship. Sometimes they need a hand to hold in silence, a listening ear, and a heart that enfolds them with love. Once again, I am defining "best friends continually longing to be together."

Mirrors in a relationship/marriage

Sydney J. Harris (1917-1986) stated, *"It's surprising how many people go through life without ever recognising that their feelings towards other people are largely dependent by their feelings towards themselves, and if you are not comfortable within yourself, you can't be comfortable with others."*

Everything you see is a reflection of how you see yourself. How you see other people and things are mirrors of your inner self. For this reason, choosing someone who completes you in a dependent relationship/marriage is choosing to "fool the mirror within you."

In my youth, we had amusement venues, and often they had "funny mirrors," which were distorted mirrors that made you look fat or thin or taller or shorter. Another example of fooling the mirror is like looking into your bathroom mirror and combing your hair by scratching on the mirror and attempting to comb your hair in that manner. When we choose a dependent relationship, we "fool the mirror" and see ourselves as whole and complete.

A relationship/marriage's happiness can only occur once you are happy within yourself first and foremost. Expecting the other person to be happy within is their task and not yours. When we expect our happiness to occur from another person, we give them the power to control our emotional well-being or unhappiness. We become the puppet, and our emotional strings are held, controlled, and manipulated by our spouse/partner.

Your partner/spouse's selection in a relationship/marriage is the mirror relationship's subconscious choice. Your spouse or partner will reflect the incompleteness of how you feel about yourself and hope that they will complete you where you believe you have shortcomings. This is great when the honeymoon phase is operational but not so great when the "gilt comes off the gingerbread," and the day-to-day of living together begins to mirror the real relationship and no longer "fools the mirror within you."

The real person begins to emerge beyond the fantasy partner/spouse your distorted mirror chose to see. They probably haven't changed at all but what has changed is the mirror's distortions. Your previously chosen distorted mirror has been replaced with the real mirror. This person reflects the fears you harboured of not being good enough and selecting someone to complete you in your relationship. They are not anything but who and what they are, but choosing them has highlighted your deficiency you feel within you. Now that mirror they are holding up is a constant reminder that you are not good enough for you.

This relationship mirror is cancerous as it eats away at your self-image and self-esteem. Your imagined shortcomings are in front of you every time you see your partner/spouse. Your Id or "bad ego" somehow convinces you that you wouldn't have

this deficiency within you if not for them in your life. You are shooting the messenger! The mirror is being distorted now differently as your Id or “bad ego” is pulling your emotional strings, controlling, and manipulating you to show you are not good enough for you.

In time, you may begin to dislike, and then even hate, the other person holding up the mirror, making you feel so inadequate within yourself. Of course, they are perplexed as they have gone from hero to zero in your eyes. Your disappointment and maybe even anger towards them have caught them unawares.

“What did I do wrong?” says the mirror Holder bemused and confused at first. Their Id / “bad ego” now comes into play, and they decide that self-protection is required. Their dismay and disappointment have now turned to anger as well. We now have two angry people, recently in a honeymoon phase, but who have now revealed their Id/ “bad ego” in full flight.

This scenario above is caused by the mirror of personal deficiency being exposed constantly, but there is also the mirror of things you thought were attractive about the other person that is now beginning to irritate you about them.

For example, being a neat freak, you initially secretly admired the other person’s cavalier attitude towards throwing their clothes and possessions around. It was a reprieve from the self-imposed need to control everything in your life. This more out of control person seemed to thrive by taking life as it came without much need to plan and control anything in their life. They threw caution to the wind, and you found that oddly attractive as you were so “anally retentive” in your need to control your life.

Once the honeymoon phase was over, their cavalier attitude was seen by you as irresponsible, and you were irritated about their clothes, towels, and other items being strewn all around your bedroom. You saw it as your bedroom and not our bedroom.

The ways they behaved, which you now considered out of control and damaging to your relationship, was no different from before, but now you had the mirror of discontent within you reflecting who “they” really were, and you didn’t like it, as explained above.

At this early stage in this book, it is important to identify the roles that mirror play out in your relationship/marriage or play out in any relationship you may have in the future.

Various levels of growth

Your being has different compartments of growth. For example, you have experienced your body's natural physical growth until around your late teens/ early twenties. Emotional growth began with your birth and will end with your death. Intellectual growth began during your early years, and you determine when such intellectual stimulation and growth occur throughout your life. Mental/psychological health depends on your ability to make the correct choices in your life as your choices create your life. Personal growth incorporates physical, emotional, intellectual, and mental/psychological health levels. Additionally, religious or spiritual growth may create over-arching support for personal growth.

There are many subsets under each of these five growth levels: physical, emotional, intellectual, mental /psychological, and religious/spiritual.

Hopefully, you can begin to see a pattern emerging between the people, relationships, and personal growth levels within each of these five levels of growth.

We can create a matrix of possible growth opportunities or obstacles to growth by looking at each person involved in a marriage and divorce, their various relationship possibilities, and how they will affect, impact, or improve upon their five personal growth levels. Here is an example:

<u>Person</u>	<u>Physical</u>	<u>Emotional</u>	<u>Intellectual</u>	<u>Mental/Psychological</u>	<u>Religious/Spiritual</u>
Partner 1 strong	highly	below ave.	low self-image	not very	
Partner 2 weak	stable	highly	strong self-image	well developed	

From the above example, Partner 1 will be dependent on Partner 2 for emotional strength, to think for them, bolster their low self-image, and likely impart some religious or spiritual knowledge and wisdom. Partner 2 may require assistance at a physical level from Partner 1.

The mismatch of this couple becomes obvious, and the dependent relationship is self-evident. However, the real question is whether Partner 1 is prepared to attend to develop their intellectual ability, which could improve their self-image and reduce their highly emotional state based on fear of their incapability to attend to their needs? This is the growth they are required to do. If they are successful, they may have the ability to develop their religious or spiritual self.

Whether Partner 1 does this outside or within a relationship will probably change the partner they chose for a relationship after that. They will become more independent

and seek another equally independent partner to create a more balanced and harmonious interdependent relationship or marriage.

If they do this growth work within the relationship with Partner 2, then the dynamics will change from a dependent relationship to an interdependent relationship. This change may not suit the physically weak but otherwise strong Partner 2 who may have enjoyed the dependence on them of the previously weaker, in many respects, Partner 1.

I have observed this changing dynamic when the female partner, or wife, chooses personal growth in various forms once the children are more independent. In younger women, this may be a return to the workforce and the development of new work-related skills, or even self-employment.

In slightly older women, this also usually occurs when they seek meaning in their lives once their children begin to leave home. These slightly older women often begin to develop their religious or spiritual beliefs, while the man in their relationship often chooses not to do so. A gulf appears, and the man often resents this “new fad” of their partner or spouse. However, a developing belief of such a religious or spiritual nature is immeasurable and not capable of being damaged by the partner or husband’s disparaging remarks. Any form of attack usually entrenches the belief further in the partner, or wife, who becomes dismayed at the widening gulf in their relationship or marriage.

Growth by one of the partners in any direction without concomitant growth by the other partner may highlight the mismatch in a relationship or marriage. Respecting and admiring one’s partner or spouse’s new growth path is called for. However, more often, this new growth path often threatens the other partner or spouse, and negative comments abound. If “fear becomes the glue,” holding this relationship or marriage together, difficult relationships or marriage times are ahead.

I recommend that you create a matrix, as above, of your marriage or relationship. Be as unbiased as possible in identifying you and your spouse/partner’s five states of growth levels- physical, emotional, intellectual, mental/psychological, and religious/spiritual. You may wish to include a sixth-state- financial -which is often a major issue in a marriage either as only one party is earning income or due to both parties earning incomes. The wife earns more than the husband; this is often a trigger to a husband's impotence and reflects fearfully in their marital bed.

A quotation from Ovid (42 BC-17 BC) is relevant here:” *if you wish to marry suitably, marry your equal.*”

You can imagine that the decision not to remain married and dissolve a marriage has far-reaching causal consequences. The saying that “you can end a marriage, but you can never end a divorce” is so true.

Making a life-changing decision about your marriage or relationship

“Marriage is not a noun; it’s a verb. It isn’t something you get. It’s something you do. It’s the way you love your partner every day.”- Barbara de Angelis (1951-)

Remaining married and seeking ways to ensure the happiness, joy, and bliss of you and your spouse is invariably the far better option if you are up for it?

The decision to end a marriage usually sees both impoverished physically, emotionally, mentally/psychologically, and financially. For some people, growth opportunities can be found for personal growth through a divorce.

I have gone through the trauma of dissolution and divorce of a near 20- year marriage, the emotionally painful process of going through the separation and divorce proceedings, and our family unit breaking up. I have found this to be the pathway to immense personal and spiritual growth. The result of which is now much stronger friendships and a rebuilt stronger family unit as well. Of course, there are much more pleasant ways to achieve such personal and spiritual growth!

I depict my growth pathway in my 27 spiritually-based free books found on my two websites, guidespeak.com and personalempowerment.co. I moved from an egoic person to a continually evolving, soul-based person. I moved from fear to become Love. Today, my ex-wife and I are the best of friends, and our sons have benefitted greatly from witnessing and living through my transition from ego to soul, from fear to Love. Our family unit is stronger today than ever before, albeit we are divorced. As stated at the outset of this book, I am primarily writing this book for my sons, as they embark on their chosen marital paths and anyone else who visits personalempowerment.co. or guidespeak.com.

To get a grasp of these 26 other free books, please download *A Treasury of Spiritual Knowledge and Wisdom* found on personalempowerment.co. Each book has a synopsis of between 4-9 pages to determine which free books resonate with you for your upcoming personal growth journey of discovery. You are likely to become the best version of yourself as you embrace the growth opportunities presented to you.

There is a story told of the South American Indians who looked out to sea and didn't recognize the Spanish Galleons ships as they anchored offshore. They apparently had no perception of a boat larger than a canoe, and while they saw the large ships, they did not recognize them and did not register in their brains as the real threat they were. For all intents and purposes, those ships did not exist to these Indians. Only when the landing parties came ashore in smaller, more easily recognizable boats did the Indians realise that the enemy was within their midst.

The growth opportunities being presented to you to remain in your marriage/relationship or dissolve such a marriage/relationship can be represented by these previously unrecognizable Spanish Galleons anchored at sea. Your growth opportunities await you, and hopefully, you can recognize them as such.

From a soul growth perspective, I would not have swapped my divorce experience for anything. From the viewpoint of my physical, emotional, psychological, mental, spiritual, and intellectual growth, I could not have achieved these milestones without going through the obstacles, challenges, and emerging opportunities created for me through the dissolution of my marriage and divorce.

I can liken my growth to the creation of a pearl in an oyster shell. The irritation of sand within the shell and the abrasion process creates the pearl.

In hindsight, this was, and remains, an evolving process, much like peeling an onion, layer by layer. Suppose I had the insight and foresight to apply what I know now to the initial situation in mid-2004 when I learned of certain issues in my marriage, through to early 2006 when we eventually got divorced, I am not certain that my growth rate would have been as high. The marriage would have remained intact, and the family living under one roof, but I believe that I needed the separation and time alone created by the divorce to have undergone this personal and spiritual journey of growth from ego to soul, from fear to Love.

I was fortunate to have my sons living with me after a while, and the bond of love we developed is there for all to see. My ex-wife has also grown enormously as a person, and she is now a highly regarded and respected senior university lecturer. I recently assisted her in completing her master's degree a few months shy of her 67th birthday. My ex-wife and our sons have an excellent loving relationship too.

I have been open and vulnerable to you, my dear Reader, explaining parts of my journey to you. My experience may not be your experience. Separation and divorce can be viewed through the lens of failure or the lens of successful growth. We must each make our choice.

I do not want to influence any decision you have to make about your marriage, separation, or divorce, or if you are in a long-term relationship, the breakup of that. We each have our journeys to go on, and whatever choices we make will have causal consequences for our growth as human beings and as Spiritual Beings. I would merely like to present certain information, knowledge, and, hopefully, wisdom to appraise you of what may lie ahead depending on which road you take.

In most marriages, substantial personal and or relationship growth can occur, and happiness restored and enhanced if you could identify and resolve any issues that have arisen between you both, causing the "gilt to come off the gingerbread" and the honeymoon phase to end. Growing through identifying and resolving such issues

cements your relationship, and allows and enables happiness to re-emerge. I would always recommend this approach, but the choice remains yours.

Practical aspects of marriage, separation, divorce/dissolution of a long-term relationship

“What counts in making a happy marriage is not so much how compatible you are, but how you deal with incompatibility” – George Levinger

I would now like to discuss the practical aspects of marriage, separation, divorce, or dissolution of a long-term relationship. I intend to point out scenarios where you may make choices that have causal- (cause and effect)- consequences.

In my view, remaining married and consciously working through any issues replacing your ego's needs with soul-based Love in your relationship and family will enable increased happiness and sizeable growth to occur- personally, within your marriage, and within your family too.

However, if one is hit with the realization that this relationship is over, your mind is in turmoil. You feel like a person swept overboard, and all you can focus on is not drowning. You are most likely not doing clear-minded, unemotional scenario planning in this mental and psychological state.

We are made up of two major components: emotion and logic. Our brain's left hemisphere is logic-based, where we do analysis, logical thinking, computations, and other such functions. The right hemisphere of our brain is the creative, imaginative, emotive side. Depending on our occupation and preference for things or people, we are likely to use our brain's more developed side to resolve all problems or issues. For an analytical person like myself to encounter a life-changing moment, I will use analysis to find a logical solution. I will avoid relying on my emotions as they are too “mushy” and can't be trusted to resolve the issue at hand. I am like most men!

The female gender is more likely to use the right hemisphere of their brain, and their emotions rule their thinking and seek solutions. For this reason, as the statistics identified above reflect, the woman in a dissolution of a marriage or relationship invariably comes off second best financially speaking. Some 60% of recently divorced women with children are under the poverty level in the US. Women are the

majority gender of homeless in the US, and over half of those are African American women; most have children.

Men are geared for conflict, and women are geared to make peace. This is primal as men are hunters and women are gatherers within our respective DNA from thousands of years of surviving on the Savannah Plains.

In the ideal world, we should have an equal balance between both hemispheres of our brain. We should be equally balanced to apply logic and emotion to find a solution to the issue at hand.

Back we go to a relationship of a marriage or long-term relationship. Is it in balance? Does each party have equal rights and obligations?

To see this in joke form, a wife asks her husband if they can change positions. The husband's ears prick up, imagining new sexual positions. The wife says, "let me sit and watch TV and drink beer, and you prepare dinner, get the kids bathed and to bed, and do the washing up!"

What is very disturbing but understandable is where a severe imbalance occurs between working women and their husbands who do "a minimal contribution to housework and childcare." In these instances, the 50% divorce rate climbs to 97% of such imbalanced marriages! These statistics are from the source identified near the beginning of this book.

So, the writing is on the wall for such a severe imbalance in marriage. Divorce and all its causal consequences are waiting around the corner for such uncommitted husbands!

The Id/ "bad ego" shows itself in so many ways, but regrettably, it is usually a male-dominated issue; hence an average of 66%-75% of people suing for divorce are unhappy women. I will be discussing the Id/ "bad ego" next.

Once again, I am going to refer to spirituality, where the search is for inner peace. We need to be in balance and harmony, energetically speaking, to attain, and maintain such inner peace. Spirituality is one way to create a balance of both hemispheres of our brain and to be able to think logically and emotionally simultaneously.

The Id or “bad” ego

Ego is the biggest enemy of humans- Rig Veda, ancient Hindu text (1500 BC- 1200 BC).

O.K. It's time to cut to the chase and tell you the one overriding issue at both a practical level and at a spiritual level, that is the direct cause of bad marriages, divorces, and the irreparable harm done to children in a bad marriage or a divorce.

It's a three-letter word we universally call the EGO. However, in practical terms, according to Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis, there are three components, The Id, the Ego, and the Super Ego. I will deal with the practical side now, and later, I will deal with it at a spiritual level.

We will look at the Ego as the balance between the Id and the Super-Ego for this practical section. The Id is the impulsive child-like desire and demand for what it wants now to satisfy its uncontrollable desire. The Super-Ego is the moral and ethical compass ensuring fair play and the ultimate benefit of society.

Freud described the Id as the horse, and the Ego is described as the rider on the horse, attempting to steer and control the horse correctly in terms of acceptable behaviour and current societal norms. In Freud's terminology, the Ego is the rational, calm mind creating balance and harmony. The Super-Ego is the moral consciousness ensuring that integrity, morals, and concern for everything are considered and implanted in choice making.

The Ego is the fulcrum of the see-saw, keeping both the Id and the Super-Ego in balance to create a satisfactory outcome for all concerned.

So, we need to rephrase the opening statement and replace the word EGO with the word Id. The easiest way to see this Id is a picture of a child emphatically demanding all the toys, candy, cakes, and sodas at the party! This unbalancing is seen in certain marriages, and as explained below, it can lead to an almost certain divorce.

The Id shows itself in so many ways, but regrettably, it is usually a male-dominated issue; hence, as stated earlier, an average of 66% -75% of people suing for divorce are unhappy women.

Maybe it's time to bring a perspective into play and revert to men and women's primal roles as hunters and gatherers, respectively. Man, the hunter, is a focused person, usually operating in silence, to ensure he catches the prey he is after and ensuring he does not become prey for a man or animal prepared to kill him. Man operates at an adrenal level of fight or flight and is continually alert in his hunting

day. His concentration is intense, and his silence is imperative to ensure he brings home the protein for himself and his family and possibly others sharing their cave.

Man arrives home to his cave, and for the first time in many hours, he can let his protective guard down and begin to relax. He does this by eating his food and fire gazing as his focus and concentration begin to relax while he stares aimlessly at the fire's hypnotic flames. After an hour or two, this hunter is prepared to play with his children and discuss the hunt with his fellow hunters around the campfire before it's time to go to sleep. Man's sexual lust is part of his predatory focus, and his wife is the target to satisfy that lust. Exhausted after that, man falls asleep to rise before dawn to begin the hunt all over again.

Women as the gatherers of plants, firewood, nuts, berries, herbs, and the like do this as a communal effort, and they chat away with their children at their heels. These women are multi-tasking, and their brain is wired to do many things simultaneously. In contrast, their men are single focused and can only do one thing at a time in their quest to kill their prey and not be killed in the process.

Women tend to their home, look after their children, collect, and prepare the food, ensure their children are safe from any dangerous animal, insect, and the like, and their eyes are everywhere. They communicate all day verbally with their children, other women, and even the children of other women.

When their man returns from the hunt, the woman wants to communicate with her man, but she knows the rules and allows him to fire gaze, eat his food and be sexually available for his needs, and not necessarily her needs as well. A man reaches sexual orgasm in a relatively short time, whereas a woman requires a lot more caressing and emotional loving before she reaches her orgasmic climax, usually much later than the man does. Sexual frustration can build up for the woman.

Now we can draw parallels to a modern man drinking beer and flipping through channels on the TV as his form of fire gazing, while his wife attends to the home, food preparation, and the children's needs.

However, there is one major difference between our primal male to our modern male. Today our modern female is also working an exhausting full day, usually away from home, and still must come home and do the housework, look after the children's needs and attend to the food in the home, and still be available sexually, possibly without her sexual needs being met.

Suppose that modern man's Id remains in place, and if the man is not pulling his weight with home and children related chores, then the divorce rate shoots up from 50% to 97% of such marriages, as stated earlier from the statistics used in this book!

This is only one example of the Id in operation. There are countless other Id examples done by both males and females in a marriage or relationship, and no doubt in same-sex relationships.

If you referred to the list of reasons for divorce stated above and reproduced below, you could identify the role of the Id for both parties in a marriage or relationship:

Lack of commitment- 73%

Argue too much- 56%

Infidelity- 55%

Married too young- 46%

Unrealistic expectations- 45%

Lack of equality in the marriage- 44%

Lack of preparation for marriage- 41%

Domestic violence and abuse- 25%

Let's now look at each of these Id based reasons for divorce.

Lack of commitment- for 73% of marriages ending in divorce

Most people think that the opposite of love is hate, but it's indifference. Hate still has an emotion attached to it, albeit negative emotion, but it shows a heartbeat in the relationship. Indifference is so relationship choking because if one or both parties have gone beyond any emotional feeling for or towards each other, this relationship heart is no longer beating. One or both Ids' are saying you are dead to me.

Argue too much- for 56% of marriages ending in divorce

This is the continual clashing of one or both Id's.

As Mother Theresa said, "*you can judge someone or love them but not at the same time.*"

Most arguments in marriage are usually not about the subject being argued about. That is the effect being stated of how they feel. The cause is something else entirely. In many cases, it is sexual dissatisfaction, lack of money, lack of commitment, lack of emotional care and concern, poor treatment of the children, not being emotionally available, etc. The list is endless.

Infidelity- for 55% of all marriages ending in divorce

At 55%, this means that one or both parties have been sexually unfaithful to their spouse. I, and many others, believe that you will not cheat on your spouse or partner if you genuinely love them, and they are your “best friend continually longing for each other.” So, the effect is infidelity, but the cause is feeling a lack of genuine love from your partner or spouse. This is not an excuse! First, to receive genuine love from your spouse, you have to give them such genuine love.

The Id is acting like a child wanting all the toys, candies, and sodas at the party, and in the case of infidelity, they want the “forbidden fruit.”

Society’s attitude to promiscuity is warped. Men are encouraged to “sow their wild oats,” but women are expected to be virginal. Their fellow-men laud men as heroes who are sexually active with numerous other women, but a sexually active woman with numerous other men is called a slut, or someone who sleeps around.

I have often wondered how these fellow men would react if their wives were being bedded by these sexually active men they treat as heroes? The double standards applied to sexually active men may not be so forthcoming!

The advent of the contraceptive pill in 1960, the increasing education of women from the 1960s, and the emergence of women in the “white collar” workplace from the early 1970s all contributed to women’s increased emancipation. For many such women, they attained increasing financial independence from their husbands.

Fifteen years ago, a Lady Attorney who acts as a Family Law Mediator told me that she had been practicing Family Law for twenty years. In 1985 when she started, it was usually the unfaithful man; twenty years later, she said that it is 50:50, and she saw the trend of unfaithful wives increasing beyond 50%.

I am afraid to say that the old joke of “a woman needs to have a reason to have sex, whereas a man simply needs a place” may be becoming untrue. However, deep in my heart, I would like to believe that a man or woman treated correctly in all respects and who feels loved will not be unfaithful to their spouse. Maybe I am naïve?

Married too young – for 46% of all marriages ending in divorce.

Depending on the religious or social *mores* of the time, especially where bridal virginity is required in certain cultures and religions, young people choose to get married or are pressured to do so by their parents, family, community, etc.

According to the statistics above, 48% of those who marry before 18 are likely to be divorced within ten years. This is compared to 25% of those who marry after 25. Getting married between the ages of 20 and 25 will see a 60% divorce rate, whereas getting married once over 25 years old is 35% less likely to get divorced than the 20-25 age cohort. (Calculation: 60% -25% for over 25 year old's = 35% less likely to get divorced)

An interesting statistic is that if you met your spouse at high school, college, or grad school, you are 48% less likely to get divorced than meeting your spouse after that. From my experiential knowledge of certain of these couples meeting early on in their lives through their educational processes, a vulnerability and intimacy of trust are built up as they emerge through these learning institutions together. The commonality of learning and passing exams together develops a strong bond. Real friendships are forged in some of these instances as they grow side by side through these formative educational learning years.

In certain cultures and religions, the sexual taboo in place, especially on young girls, prevents them from experimenting with sex and finding out what they like and don't like. In extreme forms of this sexual taboo in certain cultures and religions, female genitalia is crudely operated on to reduce any sexual pleasure they may have.

In global terms, arranged marriages are more commonplace than free will choice marriages. More concerning is the prevalence of arranged marriages to family members, usually cousins and the like, in certain cultures and communities. This may create children with mental health issues due to the parents, as cousins, having similar blood types. A study in Iran identified that such children are 30% more likely to suffer from mental health issues than non-familial child-bearing marriages.

The divorce rate among arranged marriages is substantially lower than free will marriages. This could be attributable to extended family and community pressure, an outcast status for divorced women, and fear for their lives of some women who may be unhappy and would prefer being divorced but are forced to stay in their unhappy marriages.

For the readers of this book, free will marriage choices should be the norm.

Unrealistic expectations – for 45% of marriages ending in divorce

The modern concept of marriage is shaped by Hollywood, Bollywood, and the like. The “happily ever after” scenes of marital bliss and little girls learning to play “house” with their dolls having fanciful tea parties is Disney-like in their fantasies.

Historically, marriages occurred to bolster and foster the economic needs of families. The Silversmith and the Goldsmith children were marrying for cementing economic

growth for both families. In Royal households, marriages were arranged to create alliances and forge military might and were based on the Royal family's self-preservation.

In the past, many marriages were not for love-based and starry-eyed couples; they were practical and necessity based.

The fairy tale marriage of Prince Charles and Lady Diana of the UK in 1981 turned into a terrible marriage, and the eventual divorce of a most unhappy couple was witnessed globally by billions of TV viewers. Nearly 23 years after the tragic death of Lady Diana in 1997, Netflix has recently produced "The Crown" Season 4, once again depicting this unhappy marriage and divorce to billions of viewers globally. In this TV series, what comes through is how unprepared both Prince Charles and Lady Diana were for their marriage. Both had unrealistic expectations that were fairly quickly exposed within the Royal household and soon after that to the world.

Once the "gilt has come off the gingerbread" and a marriage deals with day-to-day issues, many marriages revert to being practical and necessity based. Those with unrealistic expectations of marriage being the solution to all their previous problems face a rude awakening in most marriages. Whatever personal problems and issues one brings into a marriage will be magnified within an average marriage.

My advice for couples wanting to get married is to seek out married and divorced couples unrelated to you and do market research. Ask them pertinent questions and sit at the knee of many types of married and divorced people to get a realistic expectation of what is ahead of you both. This interview process may take more than one visit per couple or divorced person to get them to open up and allow their true feelings full vent. It takes courage to do this interview process, but it should reduce marriage failures when you are better prepared for a more realistic marriage expectation.

Lack of equality- for 44% of marriages that end in divorce

This has been dealt with above in some detail already.

Lack of preparation – for 41% of marriages that end in divorce

In addition to the advice given under "unrealistic expectations" above, there are many ways to be better prepared for marriage. Learning practical skills from cooking classes to financial skills, emotional skills training, and the like should be pursued. For those who require it, sex education within a marriage will be beneficial too. There are numerous books and other forms of communication where a willing future bride or groom can learn from others' experiences.

Of course, living together before marriage is a route many people are taking today. From the statistics above, 60% of cohabiting couples will eventually marry. However, living together before marriage can increase the chance of getting divorced by 40%, according to the statistics referred to above. If you are a female serial cohabiter- a woman who has lived with more than one partner before your first marriage- then you are 40% more likely to get divorced than a woman who has never done so.

My analytical observations identify that sexual promiscuity and serial cohabitators of either gender dampen a marital relationship's ardor. This is "old hat" for these sexually experienced people. The uniqueness and sacred space that a loving marital relationship should have been trampled over in the past by possibly many other people. This could lead to sexual indifference by one or both parties towards each other and bring up feelings of preferable past experiences. If the sexual commitment is diminished in a marriage, then seeking sexual attention from other people outside the marriage may result.

Domestic violence and abuse – for 25% of marriages ending in divorce

The National Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCADV) in the USA informs us about domestic violence and abuse:

What is domestic violence?

Domestic violence is the willful intimidation, physical assault, battery, sexual assault, and/or other abusive behavior as part of a systematic pattern of power and control perpetrated by one intimate partner against another. It includes physical violence, sexual violence, threats, economic and emotional/psychological abuse.

In the United States, more than 10 million adults experience domestic violence annually. 1 in 4 women and 1 in 10 men experience sexual violence, physical violence, and/or stalking by an intimate partner during their lifetime with 'IPV-related impact' such as being concerned for their safety, PTSD symptoms, injury, or needing victim services.

Approximately 1 in 5 female victims and 1 in 20 male victims need medical care. Female victims sustain injuries three times more often than male victims.

23.2% of women and 13.9% of men have experienced severe physical violence by an intimate partner during their lifetime.

From 2016 through 2018, the number of intimate partner violence (IPV) victimizations in the United States increased 42%.⁷ In 2018, partner violence accounted for 20% of all violent crime. Intimate partner violence is most common

against women between the ages of 18-24. 19% of intimate partner violence involves a weapon.

Impact Domestic Violence is prevalent in every community and affects all people regardless of age, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, gender, race, religion, or nationality. Physical violence is often accompanied by emotionally abusive and controlling behavior as part of a much larger, systematic pattern of dominance and control. Domestic violence can result in physical injury, psychological trauma, and even death. The devastating consequences of domestic violence can cross generations and last a lifetime.

As you can see from the above, this is a serious issue and is stated as 25% of the cause of divorce by respondents to the research used in this book.

I believe that alcohol and drug abuse could be the catalyst behind much of this domestic violence, but that is my supposition.

Personally, this domestic violence and abuse are so foreign to me and so abhorrent that it turns my stomach! The inability to control oneself and verbally and or physically strike someone you once professed in your marriage vows to "love, honour, cherish and obey until death do you part" is an anathema to me.

Once again, I am probably naive, but the irreparable damage to a relationship and the emotional scarring of any children witnessing or aware of such abuse will damage them, their future marriages, and their future children.

My advice is not to put yourself in a position where you cannot control your emotions, voice, or physical actions. In the causal world, we live in practically and spiritually, we have Newton's *Third Law of Motion* operating- "for every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction." In spiritual terms, we have the *Law of Cause and Effect, or Karma*, as an inevitable consequence and the *Law of Attraction* where Like attracts Like.

You will reap what you sow, so ensure every choice you make has this awareness behind it.

EGO= Failure - learning to become more egoless and humble

I have written a free book found on personalempowerment.co with the above title. This reference to Ego is the “bad” ego, known as the Id by Sigmund Freud, in practical terms.

I recommend that you read this book, which has both practical and spiritual sections and applications.

Suppose you cannot control and reduce your Id or your "bad" ego; any relationship you have, including marriage or a long-term living together, is doomed to fail. Failure does not always mean divorce or separation. Failure is also the imbalance within a relationship, usually causing one party to feel victimized in some way or form. Depending on the victimised party's damage and their need for revenge, the Id party will have to sleep with one eye open for the rest of their relationship.

I know many egoic people who have health issues, and some of their spouses or partners also have health issues. The fear and resulting stress caused by Ids in full flight begin with the parties feeling ill-at-ease, which progresses to disease and worsens.

The impact upon children of an Id parent can be traumatic. My experiential knowledge of this in observing these parents and their children sees powerful Id fathers often negatively affect their son/s who become wimpish, and, in certain instances, their daughter/s rise and become their Father's favoured child. These daughters emulate their fathers and set- in motion a chain of events that perpetuates this bullying approach to life. An Id parent is usually an arrogant bully to their own spouse and child/children and their entire wider family. This is accentuated when the Id parent is financially powerful.

In instances where an Id parent, usually a father, creates a son who follows in his footsteps as an Id person, this is usually a fearsome person who causes serious damage to personal relationships and many other things he touches.

As the term Id is not often used, I will use the term Id/ “bad” ego.

I have decided to use the example of US President Donald Trump as such an Id /”bad” ego person with an Id /”bad” ego father. I see him as the Poster Child for such an Id/ “bad” ego father/son relationship.

Fred Trump, Donald’s father, was an authoritarian father, a member of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK), and was arrested for a KKK march and not dispersing on Memorial Day in 1927. Each night he required his wife to report on each of their five children’s

activities and behaviour. He emotionally demoralized his eldest son Fred Jnr. who eventually died from alcohol-related complications at age 42. Trump Snr. was investigated numerous times through three decades for illegally profiting from Government housing subsidies. He built over 27 000 low-income housing apartments and row houses in New York and many more expensive homes. He elevated his son Donald to be his successor, and according to Wikipedia, he “taught him to be a killer” and told him, “you are a King.” Fred Trump was an Id/ “bad” ego person and lay the foundation for his successor son to follow in his footsteps.

Donald Trump’s Id/ “bad” ego was evident to all who witnessed his business dealings, TV shows, and the six filings for bankruptcy of his hotels and casinos from 1991-2009. His political campaigning for the presidency in 2016 and his role as the US President in January 2017- January 2021 saw this Id/ “bad” ego psychosis reach new heights, which may have made his father proud!

As I write this in mid-January 2021, we witness the spectacular fall of US President Donald Trump. He is reaping what he sowed as a major divisive person inciting riotous behaviour such as the Capital Building storming when Congress confirmed President-Elect Biden's appointment as President. This bully in the schoolyard got a seriously bloody nose a few days ago. Political allies have dumped him, and certain business associates have distanced themselves from him. As I write this in mid-January 2021, with one week to go until his term as President expires, he has been impeached for the second time in four years. Should this impeachment succeed, he will be ineligible to run for office again. Twitter has permanently banned him from communicating with some 90 million followers due to his potential to incite people to riot.

Donald Trump’s blatant disrespectful comments about treating women in terms of their anatomy, which have been well-publicized, are beyond disgusting, let alone when said by a sitting US President.

Donald Trump’s dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic from early 2020 was abysmal. With his eyes firmly fixed on being re-elected President in November 2020, he downplayed the virus’s impact and encouraged people not to wear masks. Trump also endorsed medical remedies that were proven to have serious side effects. He saw his role as Cheerleader-in-Chief of keeping Americans buoyed with optimism that this virus was a non-event. When the certainty of the serious impact the virus was having on Americans became overwhelming, he changed tactics, but the damage was done. By mid-January 2021, 23 million cases of Covid-19 had been recorded in the USA, with 381 000 deaths attributable to this virus.

At President Donald Trump’s inauguration in January 2017, I was carefully watching his beautiful, elegant wife on TV. It was obvious to me from her body language that she was a “bird in a gilded cage” trapped in a marriage where she appeared unhappy.

I have written judgmentally about Donald Trump in previous books, referring to him as a narcissist, ego-maniacal, and possibly suffering from a psychosis. His bullying tactics as the world's most powerful man was Id/ "bad" ego in full flight. However, I acknowledge that he did many positive things for America and parts of the world throughout his presidency. However, his legacy will be the two impeachment processes and inciting the Capitol Buildings' storming during Biden's presidential election confirmation process. His presidency is likely to be seen as a failure. Talk in the media and from respected politicians is that he is now seen as the worst President in American history.

His id/ "bad" ego father's influence on Donald Trump's self-belief and behaviour makes his words and actions more understandable. Donald Trump was set up to fail as the ego comes before a fall. Proverbs 16:18 says, "*Pride goes before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall.*"

I trust my criticism and judgment of Donald Trump and observations about his wife are not offensive to you, the Reader. I wanted to use this very public global figure as an example to illustrate the damage done by one's Id/ "bad" ego in any relationship, but especially in a marriage.

Reverting to where this Id/ "bad" ego bullying spouse or parent is unusually nasty, in addition to an Id/ "bad ego" driven man, are instances where the wife inherits her family's wealth, and a subservient husband is treated like a lackey or, worse, a servant. The child/children learn that it is alright to dehumanize a spouse through apparent financial power.

I used to consult wealthy families on their real estate investments and developments and was privy to some ugly Id/ "bad" ego scenes both from an Id/ "bad" ego husband or wife. Worst of all was when the money and so-called power went to both of their heads, and they thought they were omnipotent and could treat everyone like their slaves. Their child/children were either spoilt rotten and had superiority ego-based attitudes, or had major resentment of their parent/s and gained independence as soon as possible, enabling them to distance themselves from this Id/ "bad" ego behaviour of their parent/s.

Many an Id/ "bad" ego person thinks that their wealth and so-called power elevates their status without realizing that it has imprisoned them. They become the wealth and so-called power without allowing the authentic soul-based person to emerge. Not only do they worship false gods, but they become one too. Invariably, their soul's position is diminished or hardly noticeable at all, and they become their Id- as a person full of "bad" ego.

I have been in business joint ventures with several Id/ "bad" ego people for over four decades. From a business perspective, combining my soul approach to life/business and their egoic approach to life/business works well sometimes. I do not have the "chutzpah" to demand things like they do, as I always attempt to ensure a win: win for all parties. Regrettably, business sometimes requires a win: lose to occur, and

the Id partner thrives in such Id/ "bad" ego competitive times. Ideally, I prefer business partners who are also soul-based, and we usually create something together for the benefit of society while also benefitting financially for the risks we have taken. My personal friends are, in the main, soul-based people.

Other such Id/ "bad" ego people are also seen in the medical field, especially among Medical Specialists dealing with hospital staff and patients. The "god" complex is well known in these fields. In the world of law practice, such Id/" bad" ego is also evident among certain judges. In political circles, certain elected officials become infused with a potency of such Id/ "bad" ego power. They tend to act in dictatorial ways and consider themselves to be above the rule of law. Dictators, of course, are the epitome of the Id/ "bad" ego. Robert Mugabe managed to dictatorially rule Zimbabwe for forty years bringing the country to its near-death bed. Saddam Hussein was another recent despotic dictator. History is littered with them.

I am not commenting on the military as Id/ "bad" ego infiltrates all ranks other than the lowest rank. The suicide rate in the military is invariably much higher than the general population's suicide rate.

The unacknowledged Psychosis

Id/ "bad" people are tiring to be with. They require a continual listening ear, appreciation, applause, and recognition for their achievements. Their Id/ "bad" ego is a bottomless pit of much-needed gratification. Most of their considerable energy is used to ensure they are recognized, acknowledged, and often feared. They must have the shiniest objects, the most admired people, and possessions, the latest and the greatest of everything. They require to bask in the admiration of others prostrating themselves at the feet of the Id/ "bad" ego person, many of whom are fearful of this person's potency over their lives or livelihoods.

Having such Id/ "bad" ego is a psychological illness or disease. It is likely that they were deprived of love and attention as a child or told they were not good enough, or they were told and shown how uniquely special they are above all others. One or more of these distortions, among other such distortions, have influenced them to seek the limelight at any cost. They have a bottomless pit within their mind that cannot be filled no matter how hard they try to do so.

This is a psychosis, as these Id/ "bad" ego people have a distorted view of their self-importance, which is devoid of reality. If we weren't a society that worships apparent material success and achievements, we would see this psychosis for what it is- a fear-based paranoia devoid of objective reality-that requires continual attention, applause, admiration, and often having others fear them. We would treat it as a mental illness or mental disease. We would pity the Id/ "bad" ego and have compassion for them. Praise for them would be absent in such a society that sees the "Light."

If you are an Id/ "bad" ego person in a marriage already or intend to enter a marriage, please seek psychological assistance now. To ensure your marriage's success or intended marriage, you will have to learn how to move from an egoic person to a person who is soul-based Love. If you are married to such an Id/ "bad" ego person or intend to marry such a person, I recommend seeking professional psychological assistance in this regard.

If you would prefer, many of my previous 26 free books found on guidespeak.com and personalempowerment.co can assist you. I suggest you start with *A Treasury of Spiritual Knowledge and Wisdom* found on personalempowerment.co. It provides a synopsis of each book to find which one or more books can help move from an Id/ "bad" ego person to a more soul-based loving person.

For those Id/ "bad" ego people who do not take a remedial step in this direction, you may become part of the 50%-97% of failed marriages spoken about above.

I have decided to include below the Contents page of my free book *EGO= Failure-learning to become more humble and egoless*, found on personalempowerment.co

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Selected critical factors for growth in a marriage or relationship

I have identified twelve critical factors or attributes essential to employ and embody to ensure marriage or relationship growth.

I have noticed that many of these factors or attributes are employed in the honeymoon phase of a relationship or marriage, but they tend to fall into the ever-widening cracks evident in a marriage post the honeymoon phase.

I hope by highlighting them, they can be re-employed in existing relationships and marriages. In new relationships and marriages, they can be implemented and, hopefully, sustained indefinitely.

Respect

My acronym for respect is: Recognising Each Soul Politely Ensuring Correct Tribute

I would like you to play a game of building blocks with me. We are going to see how high we can place one same size block on top of another. Each block has a word on it that is meaningful for a successful relationship. I would like you to think of these words. Let's begin with respect, trust, faithful, honesty, integrity, vulnerability, passion, like, love, enthusiasm, fun, joy, and so on. You can add to these words if you would like to.

The first block is respect. The other blocks put on top of respect can be in any order of your choosing. You may prefer to have the most meaningful word as the next block or maybe the least meaningful word as the next block.

Build that pile of blocks as high as you can without it falling over.

Now I would like you to remove the block marked, respect, at the pile's base. Without you touching the other blocks above, no matter how carefully you attempt to remove the block marked, respect, the other blocks will fall.

What are respect concerning you, your relationship partner/spouse, and the relationship itself? The *Golden Rule* of life is “*to do unto others as you would like done unto you.*” This *Golden Rule* is the definition of respect, as I discuss below.

Respect, in the form of self-respect, is having inner integrity. Unless you are psychopathic, you will have a conscience within you that knows the difference between what is right and what is wrong in terms of common decency and acceptable human behavior. When you act with self-respect, you reinforce that conscience and feel good within you. In spiritual terms, we say that “feelings are the language of your soul.” However, when you act with a lack of inner integrity, you disrespect yourself and feel bad. Unfortunately, most people can learn to live with themselves, on the surface, even if they feel bad within themselves for their lack of inner integrity. Regrettably, the more these people act with a lack of inner integrity, the more they adjust their internal moral compass to become an immoral compass of acceptability of things they know to be wrong.

Respect for another, in this instance, your relationship partner/spouse, is non-negotiable if you want to have a successful relationship/marriage. You need to understand that there are no lower levels of respect that become acceptable concerning your relationship partner/spouse and yourself. You don't become 75% respectful or 50% or 25%. It is 100% respectful or nothing. I would like to repeat that 100 times, underlining it each time and putting it in bold capitals too!

If you are not 100% respectful, you open the door to a non-respectful relationship to enter. In 50% of marriages, these consequences see you end up in the divorce court. Your Id or “bad” ego gains the upper hand, and your soul-based Love is silenced and diminished.

You may think I am exaggerating and blowing this out of all proportion. Remember, there is never only one cockroach in the kitchen! Even harmless teasing of your relationship partner/spouse about something negative about them, which could become a few barbed comments over time, can escalate into words that can never be taken back. The tongue is the strongest and sharpest weapon you possess; use it wisely and respectfully.

Respecting your relationship is equally important. There are three parties in a relationship. There is you, your significant other, and the relationship itself. You may be fine from an Id / “bad” ego-based perspective, your Id/ “bad” ego-based partner may be fine too, but the relationship may be dying due to too much Id/ “bad” ego from the two of you and not enough soul-based Love to keep the relationship alive. This is often seen where two high-powered people are in a relationship/marriage. Too much Id/ “bad” ego and too little soul-based Love. Divorce court, here we come!

The relationship is a breathing reality and needs to be respected 100% as well. Both parties' inner integrity is needed to be at maximum levels for the deep breathing of the relationship, in all respects. This deep breathing is needed for the relationship to be calm, relaxed, and enjoyable.

Any sexual or intimate issues also require such inner integrity of both parties too. If there are issues of sexual dissatisfaction, be vulnerable, trusting, and respectfully discuss these intimate issues with your partner or spouse. If need be, seek professional advice to find a remedy. With as much unconditional love and as little fear as possible, identify and resolve these one or more issues. Do not allow silent resentment to build up as it will become evident in other ways within the relationship/marriage.

Throughout all verbal and non-verbal communications, always be respectful in “doing unto your partner/spouse, what you would like done unto yourself.”

I hope that I have made the point as clearly as possible that without 100% respect for yourself, your relationship partner, and the relationship itself, you do not have a relationship; you have an arrangement. You have traded the possibility of finding as much unconditional love as possible for your Id/ “bad” ego's expediency to achieve and attain what it wants from the other person. This is not a love relationship but a trade arrangement. I will give you this, and I expect that in exchange.

The choice to be respectful is yours to make in every moment of now.

Am I choosing:

- to be 100% respectful to me, my partner, and our relationship,
- to create a loving relationship,
- or to have an Id/ “bad” ego-based trade arrangement for now?

I must bring in the cancer of lack of respect in a relationship, which is that ‘familiarity breeds contempt.’ Geoffrey Chaucer first used this statement in the 1300s in his work, *Tale of Melibee*. The statement refers to the lack of respect that occurs the more familiar you become with another.

At our initial meeting with someone, we are usually ultra-polite and respectful. Perhaps this has its roots in our primal DNA when we had to immediately discover whether this stranger in our midst was a friend or a foe. We opened the door to a

friendship first through being ultra-polite and respectful. If the stranger intended to harm us, we hoped that by showing our friendliness, he/she might not harm us?

Once we established that this was a friend and not a foe, we spent more time together and relaxed our protective guard. Over time, we noticed a few unusual quirks that they exhibited, which we felt needed to be commented on. We chose to show a subtle form of intolerance in the form of teasing them about these quirks. If they reacted vehemently, we knew we had overstepped the mark, and we didn't push that button again. If they didn't react, we took it as a free licence to carry on commenting on their quirks. We felt we had some potency over them by commenting about them without verbal or physical reaction.

We felt encouraged to drive home the point about their quirks, which we now read as unacceptable behavior by them. The subtle comments changed to become more direct, negative comments which our Id/ "bad" ego-based self-thought needed to be expressed by us about them. Their differences to us became more visible, and we believed that we were right and they were wrong. We intended to point out these issues to express our dissatisfaction with them. Somehow, we felt that the more time we spent with them, the more right we had to comment negatively about them. We were threatened by their different ways and somehow hoping that they will change and become more like us through our negative comments.

Yeah right! How did that work out for you?

World Wars have started from such lack of respect attitudes.

We must guard against familiarity breeding contempt in our desire to be 100% respectful to ourselves, our partners, and the relationship itself. Possibly the way to do this is to see the fragility of our relationship as an egg held between our raised hand and their raised hand. Each of our hands in an upright praying position with a fragile egg between our hand and theirs. Both party's hand is required to be in place to protect the egg of respectfulness from falling and breaking on the ground.

This may be too hard to accomplish for many people, and they may revert to making snide comments about their partner. There is a saying that states, "*people may forget what you said, but they will never forget how you made them feel.*" Its source is Carl W. Buehner (1898-1974) and, incorrectly ascribed more recently to Maya Angelou.

If you want to ensure 100% total respect, you will need to be self-honest and search for why you find the need to proffer negative comments to the one you profess to love. The effect is the snide comment, but the cause may be something unrelated that is disturbing you about them. Or, more likely, disturbing you about you, as we will see later when discussing mirrors in a relationship.

Here are an example and a solution regarding familiarity breeding contempt.

Your spouse may be putting on weight, and you would prefer that they didn't. You may be afraid to tell them, so you proffer snide comments or downright rude comments about how much they are eating or the size of their backside or their beer belly. Negative comments will draw negative reactive comments, and the 'fat is in the fire,' if you will excuse the pun! As a solution, suggesting that you both exercise together and opt for a healthy diet in the future is a more positive, respectful, and proactive way to deal with the issue.

Keeping 100% respect for yourself, your partner/spouse, and your relationship/marriage is a soul-based Love approach, and happy families result.

Trust

In five letters, we have the basis of any worthwhile relationship - trust.

Trust is the oil that greases the wheel of a relationship. Without trust, the wheel stops working, and the relationship grinds to a halt.

A few times in my life, people have lied to me or about me advancing their interests. Twice a day, while on my knees, I am consciously answerable to my perception of God. My faith and trust guide me, and I have no fear of the lies talked about me. In time, usually a few weeks or months, I am visited by the person who told me of the lies or told the lies, and I am told that the lies were just that. I never hold it against the other party as I have witnessed how much they have suffered when caught out. That is enough punishment that they have brought upon themselves. I do not benefit by adding to their woes. I understand and forgive them for their lapse in judgement. Heaven knows, I have made such lapses in judgement too, and paid a high price.

I admit to being very trusting and sometimes too naive in believing that people are inherently good and morally law-abiding. I often wonder if that acts as a magnet for certain immoral people who have crossed my path. However, they are more than counterbalanced by other people I have trusted implicitly, and they have repaid this trust with their impeccability of words and actions, justifying my trust in them.

The statistics used above reflect that 55% of people in a divorce are sexually unfaithful to their spouse through infidelity. Those people have been either caught out or confessed to such infidelity. But what of the ones who committed infidelity and were not caught out or have not confessed? Could that number increase from 55% to say 75%? This means that if 50% of marriages will end in a divorce, per the statistics above, and that in 55% of these divorces, infidelity is confirmed, then 27.5% of all marriages have at least one-party committing adultery. If we bumped the number up to 75% instead of 55%, this would take infidelity by at least one party within all marriages to 37.5%. Somehow that figure is starting to seem realistic now.

So, assume that trust is broken in 1 out of every 2.7 marriages through infidelity, then we have a serious epidemic of lack of trust in both marriages and long-term relationships.

In the statistics referred to above, addiction to porn sites was ranked as a 56% contributor to divorce. Well, in my prim way, I am not seeing much of a difference in a marriage to having sex with another person in the flesh or being addicted to porn sites.

Whatever my opinion, it's irrelevant as the spouse suing for divorce has found it necessary to state that this addictive habit of visiting porn sites has been a serious enough threat to a marriage to include it in the divorce papers submitted to a court or a mediator. No doubt, the divorce claimant considers it to be a breach of trust within the marriage.

So, if we now bump those breach of trust numbers up by 28%, being 50% of marriages/divorces having 56% porn addiction, we get to over 65% of all marriages suffering from a breach of trust. In my view, that's a pandemic!

Of course, my computations are purely guidelines and could be proved to be inaccurate, but the point is that a lack of trust in marriage is a serious issue.

We all have a choice to make whether we can be trusted in our relationship by our so-called beloved partner or not. This trust can only be earned by behavior and not in any other way. Such trust can take years to build up and can be shattered in one instance of inappropriate behavior.

I have listened to people proffer numerous excuses for such infidelity and breach of trust through the years. The craziest one I once heard stated, "I did it to keep my marriage!" I didn't know whether to laugh or cry?

Growing in being more trustworthy is an important goal for remaining in a loving marriage.

Tolerance

Growing in tolerance is a major step toward finding more happiness, even bliss, in a marriage.

I am going to reproduce the topic- *“Tolerance is understanding with a capital T!”* from my free book *EGO = Failure- learning to become more egoless and humble*

Tolerance is understanding with a capital T!

“Seek first to understand then be understood” another Steven Covey classic statement.

What a simple instruction and how powerful it is first to seek to understand the other party and only then strive to be understood by the other party.

We are all guilty of having little tolerance and wanting to ram our idea or concept down someone’s throat and for them to convert to our belief system on the matter at hand.

Our world of both ego- based conceit that we are always right and of needing instant gratification forces us to be intolerant and to initially ram our opinion into the conversation expecting the other party to simply agree with us and condescend that we are right. Such intolerance is ego-based and puts up a barrier that is unlikely to be taken down even though we may be proved incorrect.

The problem of erecting barriers is that instead of building bridges of understanding, we build walls of defence and defiance. Whether we can dismantle these barriers and admit our mistake is the real question to be asked? How many times have you erected such barriers, and of those times, how often have you willingly taken them down and apologised for being wrong?

Having tolerance implies that you are open-minded and are prepared to consider another’s viewpoint. This is already pointing you in the direction of being egoless. If you hear their viewpoint, are you simply hearing, or are you listening and understanding? At that point, are you prepared to consider their viewpoint, or are you preparing your counter-argument? If the former, then are you prepared to amend your viewpoint to incorporate some or all of their views and inputs into your previous viewpoint?

If you have done so, then you are both tolerant and wise. It is not possible to know everything, and there are always likely to be cleverer people in the room with you, or else you are in the wrong room! If you want to be a person among intellectual pygmies, then stay in the same room, but if you want to learn and grow, move to a room where you can look up to cleverer people than you.

Tolerance is a starting point to become more egoless than you currently are at present because you acknowledge that you have more to learn from others.

Intolerance is the reverse. Probably you are limited in intelligence, pig-headed, insecure, and easily threatened by other people's viewpoints. An intolerant person will dig their heels in and refuse to budge. Conflict is inevitable, and co-operation is off the table.

Intolerance is the wall builder, whereas tolerance is the bridge builder in life. Intolerance is a foundation stone of failure as a human being.

If you are an Id/ "bad" ego person or your spouse or relationship partner are, then reading *Ego= Failure- learning to become more egoless and humble*, is non-negotiable. By doing so, you will find the growth you need and the happiness and bliss you could enjoy in your marriage.

I admit to being intolerant in the above statement!!

Non controlling

The need to control someone in a relationship is based on fear of losing something and, most likely, several things. This Id/ "bad" ego-based fear becomes the glue holding a relationship together, and it's precarious, to say the least!

If you have respect and trust in a relationship, then control is not only unnecessary but cancerous to the relationship.

Non- manipulation

Non-manipulation is similar to non-controlling, but any manipulation is usually more underhand and subtle in its approach than overt control. If another in a relationship experience that they are being manipulated, this will destroy respect and trust, and the building blocks of the relationship will fall.

Acceptance

There are two ways to go through life and a meaningful marriage: acceptance or resistance. Acceptance is allowing flow to occur, and resistance is damming up this flow.

As explained in my free book, *Understanding and Elevating your Vibrational Energy*, found on personalempowerment.co, all we are is vibrational energy. When you allow energy to flow through acceptance, it energises a relationship. When you resist this flow of energy, it depletes a relationship of its energy.

Accept your partner for anything and everything they say or do. By allowing them full and free expression, you are showing them respect and trust. Either they will rise to the occasion and perform correctly in the best interests of your relationship, or they will fall and prove to be untrustworthy and disrespectful to the relationship's best interests.

Listening

I have written a free book found on personalempowerment.co, *Listening- the relationship builder*. To paraphrase the book, 'ego talks and soul listens.' Listen and silent has the same letters, and no one ever tires of a good listener. Another statement from the book is that 'knowledge talks, but wisdom listens.'

This book deals with, among other things, sixty ways of using listening in various types of relationships you have in your life. Men and women listen and hear differently. Know how to address each gender to ensure that they hear and listen effectively to what is said. This process is paramount in a heterosexual relationship.

Children at different age levels hear and listen differently. Knowing how to get them to listen effectively with the resulting necessary action, you may require makes for a more tolerant and respectful relationship with them.

This *Listening* book is essential reading if you desire to have a great marriage full of happiness, joy, and bliss.

I have decided to share three topics from this book with you as they directly relate to understanding that marriage is for growth and not only for happiness.

Listening by males

Now we visit Venus and Mars!

Man, the hunter, has thousands of years of DNA ingrained within him to be focused, determined, persistent and silent to ensure that the pointed stick he carries is driven into an animal of prey while making sure that he is not the prey. He has to be fast on his feet and solve problems instantly as the animal picks up his scent and looks to bolt to safety. For a man, any movements by his prey in trying to escape has to be resolved with a telling blow so that he can feed himself, his family, and those around his campfire.

The time for discussions, sympathy, empathy, emotions, and resolving issues is not within man's DNA based on "eat or get eaten" fast action and instant solutions to problems. Action, not words, makes the difference in whether he and his family and campfire dwellers eat berries or necessary protein that night.

Now this male in the 21st Century is expected to change tens of thousands of years of ingrained DNA and learn to ask soft and endearing questions, to be patient and understanding, empathetic and sympathetic, to listen ad nauseam to words being spoken when his DNA is crying out for silence and stillness so he can hear, sense, see and smell the prey he wants to touch and taste.

So, my lady readers, are you getting the picture that your man is not a listener to much else other than "what's for dinner"? Either he will catch/buy it and eat it, or you will, but that's what's on his mind now, and later his primordial sexual urge will have another thing on his mind! That's what man is listening for – food, drink, and sex. It's so simple and not very complicated at all. Merely attend to his stomach and then lower down, and the world is your oyster!

I certainly don't mean to be sexist and demeaning to the fairer sex, and I apologise if anyone is offended by my words. Being a keen observer of human nature for over 66 years, I see this played out in relationship after relationship. Sure, man will camouflage his true intentions until he gets what he wants. After all, he had to hide in the bush as camouflage when capturing his prey in the wild, and today the bush/camouflage has merely changed its protective ways but achieves the same result.

The man in your life has a pointed stick and seeks prey. He is not a multi-tasker, damaging his single-minded focus and task to be a successful hunter. He is not up for much talking and even much listening beyond the fire gaze of old. His focused attention has merely changed from unwinding in front of the fire to the TV or video game or computer or cell phone screen.

The same man is mostly ego-driven to be the fastest, most intelligent, and so on, to get the prey. He doesn't want someone else telling him what to do, as this threatens his manhood. As you well know, he will never ask another man for directions because that shows him to be vulnerable and weak. You think you have a 21st Century man next to you, but you have a primordial man dressed in 21st Century clothing.

Please don't shoot the messenger!

Ladies, the bottom line (you can see a man is writing this!) is that expecting a man to listen to you, or anyone else for instructions, is the exception and not the rule. Man will hear and feign attention as if he is listening to get what he wants and needs to fulfil his cravings and urges. Your best girlfriend or female friends should be where you seek attentive and active listening with all the "touchy-feely" stuff. Certain gay men also fulfil a supportive role here for you too.

So now I have managed to offend females and gay men with the truth as I see it after many years of observation and analysis of man's inability to be effective, and supportive listeners!

That is why for man, peacetime is merely the interlude between wars. Additionally, men are highly efficient at organising war as it is focus-based. The enemy is there to be killed. However, man is ineffective in organising peace because there are too many moving parts to focus on. It requires sensitive and emotive feelings to finesse getting all the warring parties to the peace table and implementing the peace.

We are dealing with tens of thousands of years of ingrained DNA, as I stated at the outset, and a book like this may convert the occasional man, but I am not hopeful of the prospects.

So, ladies, it's up to you to save humankind because man is more likely to launch a nuclear bomb than be prepared to really listen attentively and with real understanding to another man's point of view. History has shown us this time and time again.

The sooner we can get women running the world in a matriarchal society, the sooner we will have a better prospect for greater love and understanding, and peace may then have a chance of succeeding and sustaining itself.

And there endeth the lesson!

Listening by females

Women have been the gatherers and nurturers for tens of thousands of years. While the men were out hunting protein for their next meal, the women gathered the berries, fruits, nuts, and other edibles. While they were doing this, they were close to their cave or home, and they chatted away and assisted each other in identifying the poisoned vegetation. The older children may have been with them while the younger ones were at home playing with sticks and stones around the cave.

The women's role as gatherers and nurturers developed them emotionally, sensitively, caringly, supportively, and empathetically. They developed their ability to understand the nuances and feelings of others and themselves. These women were multi-taskers, taking care of their home, children, food collection and preparation, and the multitude of thankless tasks she had to do daily.

These women learned the art and skill of effective listening to hear the words and also be acutely aware of what is not being said. Additionally, they learned the undercurrents of emotions and feelings of the other person who is speaking.

Women automatically support others, being nurturers of hearts, souls, and minds, and can be counted on to be there in times of need and at other times. To women, the trust of friendship is a foundation stone of life, and any disloyalty which would see a man attack another man to resolve the conflict is dealt with very differently by a woman who takes the disloyalty into her heart and soul. A man's pride may be offended by disloyalty and resolved physically, but for women, this is an inner wound at the core of her being, which words, words, and more words are required to begin the healing process.

At that point, she turns to her single-focused man, and all he wants to do to help her is via a physical assault on her attacker, who proved disloyal. This becomes far more complicated if the same man is the culprit.

The man's ability to listen effectively and supportively is a bridge too far, as I will explain below.

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Listening between males and females in a relationship

Listening is the first act of love. Regrettably, most people believe talking is!

Relationships between a man and a woman need to be a two-way street in all respects and be conducted with respect too. Men and women need to talk and listen to each other, but there is a fundamental difference in how they are wired to do so.

Most people do not listen to understand. They listen to interrupt with their opinions, judgements, and conclusions, which is why a book like this is essential for healthy relationships.

People who listen to interrupt are ego-based people coming from fear and hope, while those who listen to understand are more soul-based people coming from love. Of course, all my comments are generalisations, and there are always exceptions to the rule.

Having a conversation implies the readiness to exchange ideas and opinions, but how this is done is how men's and women's emotional makeup differs. Emotions do not always drive men, as they have that metaphorical pointed stick in their hand, and

they seek a solution now. A man usually needs a beginning, middle, and end of the story as his emotions are geared to solve problems. He cannot decipher the nuances of subtle emotional undercurrents. First and foremost, women are emotional beings, and they prefer to gather and nurture by expressing their emotions and feelings. Men are like a focused river seeking the sea in the fastest way possible. Women are like a river that overflows its banks, and the water covers a lot of territories.

While men are direct with their words and often blunt and hurtful, women need to rationalise, express, and process through words as if they need to spill their hopes and fears out to sort through them and find an emotional solution without hurting anyone in the process. Women are moved emotionally by how others feel; men merely want the solution now.

A man will impress his woman how primordial men did with achievements such as hunting the protein for the campfire. Man's macho approach of competitiveness, providing for their woman and family, and protecting them is how they see their role in a relationship. Women understand that providing and protecting are the only two things a man does while she does numerous things every day for the relationship and the family. In a woman's mind, her contributions are far more than her man's contribution and the inequality, as she sees it, lies as a burning thorn in her side and the relationship.

The eternal question asked by a man of "what does a woman want?" can be answered by 'effective listening to a woman.'

Man is emotionally insecure because, unlike a woman, he doesn't know how to process his sensitive emotions and feelings. They are foreign objects to him, and such emotions and feelings threaten him. He prefers not to show weakness and vulnerability, so he shuts down his sensitive side, which he doesn't know how to deal with. When a man can truly listen to a woman express her feelings without getting irritated, short-tempered, frustrated, and angry at how long it is taking to say so many words when the answer is so apparent to him, then Aladdin's Cave opens for their relationship. This happens when that man gives his woman the time, attention, and focus she craves so that she can feel safe and protected by him in her uncertainty and emotional turmoil of needing to be heard fully by him. The woman then feels safe and protected in expressing herself fully and being heard and understood by her man.

This is the trust she is seeking, and when she feels that trust, her emotional insecurities diminish. This trust, which a woman wants from her man, enables her to feel emotionally comfortable giving her man what he needs from her. This is invariably being appreciated and admired. He craves these compliments in a primal way to bring home the protein and protect her and their family. He sees this validation of himself as the hero receiving acceptance and approval of who he is to her. That is all the encouragement he needs to go out the next day and do it all again for her.

By making him feel appreciated and admired by his woman, he feels like the hero, and his sensitive, emotional insecurity disappears for that moment. He feels at peace within as he feels loved and trusted by her.

So here we have an intertwining of the roots of the relationship. Man, attentively listens to his woman and removes the emotional insecurities in her life and in her relationship with him. After that, a woman admires and approves of her man, thereby feeding his emotional needs to be the relationship hero. The more emotionally mature man also begins to understand the sensitive, emotional insecurity he feels about himself. Suppose he allows himself the opportunity to explore these emotions in a safe space, such as in his relationship with his woman. In that case, their relationship will blossom forth like never before.

This is a delicate and extremely respectful and trusting requirement, and the man must feel entirely safe to let his defensive guard down and express his emotional insecurities, especially to the one person who sees him as a hero. Man doesn't realise that a hero's concept in his woman's eyes is not to be the strongest but the most vulnerable, intimate, and trusting. If a man allows and trusts his woman to be his best friend in all respects of the word, then both the hero and heroine will emerge.

This combination is synergistically so powerful in a relationship that it is an unshakeable bedrock of friendship, respect, intimacy, and trust. If they can feel entirely emotionally safe with each other, then nothing else matters.

For years now, I have told my sons to find their best friend and marry that person. I don't care who they are, where they have come from, or any other personal details. Merely be emotionally vulnerable enough to trust them with every fibre of your being and for them to do the same to you.

It seems so simple that it's ludicrous to believe so much mayhem has occurred over tens of thousands of years between men and women. Angry men go to war to vent their insecure, emotional frustrations because most men are like the person with only a hammer who sees every problem as a nail.

I am now going to show you the importance of the intertwining of roots in Nature and how the intertwining solution above of effective listening by men to women and the subsequent removal of each other's emotional insecurities builds healthy, happy, stable, and loving relationships.

The giant redwood trees in California, USA, grow to 350 feet and have been around for thousands of years. The secret is in their root system, which is very shallow, only some six-foot deep, but they extend outwards and intertwine with nearby redwood trees' roots. This underground root support system of the intertwining of thousands of roots creates an unbreakable foundation for the ongoing health and growth of these magnificent trees. The same can happen in your relationship, and it all begins with effective listening by men to their partners, as outlined above.

Let me inject some humour here and give you ten words or phrases that women say, and men hear but do not understand the meaning of:

Fine: when she says fine or, more likely, FINE, it's not fine at all!

5 Minutes: if she is getting ready to go out for the evening, 5 minutes means 30 minutes, but if you are watching the ball game on TV, 5 minutes is 5 minutes.

Nothing: is very far from nothing! NOTHING is pure exasperation that you just don't get it, and everything is the matter with you.

Go-ahead: This is not permission, it's a dare, and if you do it, then the next word you hear will be FINE!

A loud sigh: although not a word, it speaks much louder than any word could. She thinks you are an idiot for not understanding, and if you ask what's wrong, she will say NOTHING!

That's OK: if you take that literally, then beware of the pain that lies ahead for you because it's definitely not OK, and it's not FINE, and it's not NOTHING!

Thanks: if said politely, then do not question and merely say, "my pleasure," but if she says THANKS, she means THANKS A LOT, which means FINE and NOTHING!

Whatever: this is not showing indifference, it's showing irritation, and she is planning your punishment!

Don't worry; I've got it: This means I am eventually doing what I have repeatedly asked you to do.

Let's change positions: it doesn't mean some new acrobatics in bed. It means let me watch TV and drink beer, and you do the cooking and the washing up!

I hope and trust that explaining the need to listen in a relationship is seen as a major growth process in keeping a marriage intact, beneficial, and enjoyable for both spouses.

Kindness

The current Dalai Lama states that his religion is kindness. We all know what kindness is, what it feels like when we are kind to another, or they are kind to us. Kindness blends understanding, compassion, empathy, and Love and showers a glow that seems to come from Heaven on both the person giving and those receiving such kindness.

Expressing kindness costs nothing, and the rewards are countless beyond earthly measure.

If you are in a marriage and are kind to yourself and your significant other, such kindness is likely to be reciprocated. Those relationships are likely to be healthy and growing.

Focus on being kind at every available opportunity to both yourself and your significant other.

As Helen Keller stated, "kindness is something the deaf can hear, and the blind can see."

Judgement

Ayn Rand, the author of *Atlas Shrugged*, stated, "*within the extent of your knowledge, ... you are right.*"

And that is the real issue with judging someone or something. We don't know what we don't know! Expectations are the basis of judgment, but who gave us the right to have any expectations about another person with whom we are in a relationship?

In a marriage, judging the other party is a sure-fire way to quell the fire of passion and to cause mistrust to take root. The mistrust is not one of fidelity but is far more damaging as it is one of closing off vulnerability, surrender, emotions, respect, trust, and openness – the constituents of real intimacy.

You are encouraged and welcome to judge yourself to ensure you are the best version of yourself in every circumstance. All judgement is self-judgement, after all. When we judge ourselves or others, we use the benchmark we set or accept from society. Our knowledge is limited. Even Socrates, the wisest of his era and a man still quoted today, some 2500 years after his death, stated that "all I know is that I know nothing."

We judge from a position of what we know currently and assume that to be the truth. Truth is time-sensitive. For example, Galileo proved that the earth revolved around the sun some 400 years ago and was placed under house arrest for the rest of his days by the Pope at the time. The Catholic Church was convinced that the sun revolved around the earth, and the earth was the dominant planet or star in the sky. It took the Church some 300 years to finally admit and exonerate Galileo.

Judgement is, in reality, laziness. When we judge, we admit that we have decided to stop searching to understand either the cause or the effect any more thoroughly. We are implying that we have all the facts and truths about that which we are judging. We believe that we have the right to judge someone or something but the Universe/God/Creator/Source, or whatever name you give to the Nameless and Formless, does not judge anyone or anything.

There is no judgment in Spirit, merely cause and effect consequences. When you drop a stone into a still pond, the water displaced by the stone creates concentric ripples to spread outwards until the kinetic energy is dissipated or the lessening ripples reach the edge of the pond. The ripples cannot be judged as good or bad ripples; they are merely ripples, as a causal consequence of the stone's action being dropped in the water.

The causal nature of any free will thought, word or action is played out on earth and in Spirit. Why would a Higher Power want to sit in judgement of anyone, let alone the current nearly 8 billion people on earth, as well as the estimated 108 billion people who have ever lived on the earth? What would it profit such a Higher Power to judge someone for what they have thought, said, or done?

Well, if our perception of a Higher Power does not judge anyone or anything, what gives us the right to do so? The answer to that is our Id or “bad” ego requiring to have potency over another. To somehow feel better than someone else who they want to see admonished or punished for their thoughts, words, or actions, the Id/ “bad” ego person requires such admonishment or punishment as their justification.

There are more subtle ways to correct a perceived imbalance caused by a spouse's thoughts, words, or actions. Leading by example, is always the way to influence others. Finding how you can bring the ‘light of awareness’ to the situation rather than the ‘heat of judgement or recrimination.’ Simply stating, “have you ever thought about doing it this way” is far more subtle than berating someone with “you fool, now look what you have done!”

It’s easier to catch a fly with a teaspoon of honey than a gallon of water.

Often in a relationship, we make snap judgements when we are emotionally overwrought, exhausted, or frustrated. We invariably live to regret them, and most often, we pay a high price in our relationship for these snap judgements.

We need to take ownership of our intention to judge before we make the judgement, if at all. We need to ask why, why, why, why, and why of the person involved. Each why unwraps another layer of understanding as to the real motivation behind your spouse's thoughts, words, or actions. Most times, what we want to judge is unlikely to be the real cause behind our spouse's thoughts, words, and actions. When we hit ‘pay dirt’ and unearth our spouse’s real reason behind what we want to judge so quickly, we must stop and reassess the entire situation.

As stated earlier, at this point of reassessment, it's time to see if we can bring the 'light of awareness' to the situation rather than the 'heat of judgement.'

Forgiveness

Robert Quillen (1887-1948) stated: *"a happy marriage is the union of two forgivers."*

There are various approaches to forgiveness when you move from an egoic person to become a soul-based Love person. This topic has a strong spiritual tone as understanding forgiveness from purely an Id/ "bad" ego practical perspective is limiting.

Practical perspective

From an Id/ "bad" ego practical perspective, requiring an apology or restitution from another is a power-play within a relationship. Such a request for an apology or restitution and the resulting forgiveness will further imbalance the relationship. Disharmony will remain as bruised and damaged Id / "bad" egos are seldom healed and restored to balance and harmony within the relationship.

The lingering threat of 'I will forgive you but never forget how bad you made me feel' hovers like a Sword of Damocles over the adverse party and the damaged relationship. Respect and trust are damaged, and the past relationship is likely to move into the territory of an Id/ "bad" ego-based exchange trade arrangement, which is far from ideal in a marital/long-term relationship situation.

Whatever the issue was that required an apology and forgiveness has already happened and is not likely happening now. No matter how hard you try, you cannot change the past. It is history! However, there is a way to change the present and possibly likely future, too. That is to allow no longer the past situation to affect your current situation.

There two ways to do this.

Firstly, learn to press the reset button today. If it rained yesterday and the sun is shining today, gladly accept today and do not live in yesterday's miserable weather. If something upset you in your past, do not allow it to affect you now negatively. Your attitudinal mindset now is what is important. It will influence your thoughts, words, and actions taken now. Ensure you do not self-sabotage yourself now by allowing the past to influence your present and likely future.

Secondly, another solution is to be emotionally detached from the outcome of the past through non-judgement. Do not allow the past outcome to influence any decision you make now or in the future.

How do you wish it away through emotional detachment? The secret is to take a twenty-year view and project yourself to say 2040. Will the past event that recently caused the furor make any difference to your life in 2040? Probably not, so why should it make a difference now? Only your Id/ "bad" ego keeps it alive in your mind as it provides more potency for you in your relationship. You feel that you are now owed something "big time"!

Well, if that is the case, then your relationship has changed from a marriage to an Id / "bad" ego-based trade exchange arrangement potentially pending separation or even a divorce. Was it so important that you want to go down this road?

Take the twenty-year view, shrug it off, and move on with your marriage. Through such understanding, tolerance, and patience, you do not need to worry about forgiveness. You have moved from an egoic approach requiring forgiveness and retribution to one based on an allowance, acceptance, non-judgment, and soul-based Love for your partner/spouse.

Spiritual perspective

Now I will introduce a spiritual perspective to your marriage, which is the topic of soul contracts. To keep it brief, I am going to refer you to my free book found on personalempowerment.co- *The Purpose and Meaning of your Life in terms of your Soul Contracts*.

In a nutshell, we are all eternal Souls who mainly live in Spirit in our Soul Groups or Soul Family. Each Soul is a splinter part of its Higher Self/Soul, which always remains in Spirit as a part of God/Higher Power/Creator/Love and Light/ Universe and so on.

As a Soul, we chose to occupy a specific physical body on this visit to the earth plane of existence. We chose to come to earth to fix certain "holes in our souls" and elevate our Souls and our Higher Self/Soul to become more Godlike. We do this by making intricate Soul Contracts with our Soul Group/Soul Family members for each participating Soul to fix their selected "holes in their souls" on their visit to earth.

As a Soul Mate, our marriage partner is part of these intricate soul contract arrangements. The growth we require in 'fixing the holes in our soul' is primarily usually with, and through, our spouse. They have chosen to fulfill certain roles as our spouse, enabling this growth process to occur. In turn, we have also agreed to play our chosen role as their spouse in their soul contract's growth objectives.

Awareness of this concept of soul contracts is integral to realizing that an apology and forgiveness for our, and our spouse's, actions are not required. We should be appreciative and grateful for them for fulfilling their soul contracts with us enabling our growth to occur. (I am referring to soul contracts here, and not free will choices any soul within a body makes outside of these soul contracts.)

The Archangels referred to in the channeled book, *The Soul's Journey and how it affects your life* by Judith Farley and the Four Archangels, call this "Advancement Awareness." Our appreciation and gratitude to our Soul Mates for advancing the growth of our Soul's journey towards our Higher Power.

With this understanding of soul contracts being played out, appreciation and gratitude, and not forgiveness, are the correct responses. Later, in Part 3, I provide two real-life examples of this.

Moving further along this spiritual road of understanding where there is no need for apologies and forgiveness to be given or received, I want to briefly introduce Oneness's concept. We are all souls, and ultimately, we are all part of our Higher Power/God/Source/Oneness and other names we use for the Nameless and Formless Creator of All That Is.

As a part of Oneness, we are all part of the Whole, and, as such, there is no separate part to be forgiven or to make an apology. It would be like asking one panel of a soccer ball to apologise to or forgive another ball panel. To whom would they be talking to as they are all One. And so, this is the case for your spouses - we are all One as Oneness.

Unconditional Love

Now that we have certain of the foundation stones in place of the Id/ "bad" ego and the remaining good ego, we need to discuss the concept of unconditional Love.

I am trying to keep this book practical for now, but I need to explain unconditional Love from a spiritual perspective. My belief system states that God is Love and that Love is God. I will use the word Love in preference to God to explain unconditional Love, but the terms are interchangeable.

My belief system also states that we are a part of God/Love, and, at our essence, we are Love. Our eternal Soul is part of God/ Love.

When you know and understand that Love is a state of Being, you can really Be in Love. Such Love is a verb and not a noun. Therefore, we are first and foremost Love as our state of Being as a Soul who comes to the earth plane of existence to inhabit a chosen body.

On earth, in our chosen body, we also incorporate Id/ “bad ego,” as well as good Ego, and Super-Ego to use Freudian terms.

Whenever we make a choice, which I define by an acronym- CHOICE- Can Help Overcome I Change Energy- we decide whether we are coming from soul-based Love or fear-based Id/ “bad ego.” (Good Ego and Super- Ego fall into the Love category.)

We decide whether we are Love /Godlike in our thoughts, words, and actions or Id / “bad” ego-based fear in a protective or threatening way.

As you can imagine, the choice we make between Love and fear as it affects our spouse, children, family, friends, and others, directly impacts our relationship with ourselves, everyone, and everything else.

This is the fork in the road of our journey in this lifetime, and the choice we make now between coming from Love or fear will create the reality we experience.

By choosing the Love road now at this fork in the road, there is a simple way to do so. Simply ask yourself, “what would Love do now?” and do it.

No lengthy thesis, discourse, discussion, or Id/ “bad” ego-based argument, follow this dictum- “what would Love do now?- and do it!

Any resistance you may think about is a choice you are making to come from Id/ “bad ego.” The correct decision never has to be contemplated and discussed; only the incorrect decision does. Such an incorrect decision often requires justification. A correct decision never has to be justified; it is inherently correct by decent human standards.

Any resistance-based retribution you want to be visited upon a spouse, or ex-spouse, has three Universally accepted Laws prepped to visit such retribution upon you. These Laws are Newton’s *Third Law of Motion*, the *Law of Cause and Effect or Karma*, and *The Law of Attraction* of Like attracting Like. These Laws operate without judgement. You can call them Boomerang Laws if you like. Love brings Love; fear brings fear.

Ideally, you should use “what would Love do now?”- and do it while you are still to be married or currently married. Your next opportunity will be when you go through a separation and potentially a divorce if you don't use and apply this maxim. If you miss that opportunity, then post the separation, divorce is your last opportunity to use “what would Love do now?”- and do it.

Failing this, you have chosen to experience a reality of Id / “bad” ego-based fear in which to live. This fear experience is likely to be felt by your ex-spouse and any of your children too. Negativity, fear, and anger rule all your familial and ex-familial relationships. Disharmony, imbalance, ill-at-ease, and possibly disease are all waiting in the wings of the play of your life to make their appearances.

Regrettably, fear-based Id / “bad “ego is the choice most people make. The misery they experience is the effect, whereas the cause was choosing fear instead of Love.

Now that you have this increased awareness, what choice are you going to make?

You cannot be in love, or Be Love, with your partner if you have chosen fear. Choosing fear will see you agreeing to trade what you have with what they have. You may feel giddy and infatuated with the promise you believe your togetherness will bring as you affect these trades, but this is not Love or even love in a relationship. This is a trade exchange, not a blending or melting together in Oneness through choosing Love. Choosing fear will always create division through non-acceptance and resistance in any form whatsoever.

The only real choice to make is coming from Love. Ask yourself now and in every successive moment of now. “what would Love do now?”- and do it.

Laughter, humour, and fun

In addition to the above more serious attributes, it is important for a relationship couple to share a similar sense of humour, to be able to make each other laugh, and to have fun together.

My acronym for FUN is Find Upliftment Now. The fun I am referring to is the elevation of your vibrational energy together in unison. That fun could be in a variety of ways from entertainment, to creating something together, to playing a game or hobby together, to being with your child, or having a puppy lick your faces, and so

on. Fun is usually a spontaneous connection of your minds, bodies, and souls. Such fun is Love-based.

Laughter is said to be the best medicine. None of us are getting out of here alive, so we don't have to be so serious about life. Finding humour, laughter, and fun together greases a relationship's wheels, especially when tough times come around in their various guises in a relationship and life.

For those who are interested, I have compiled a free spiritual joke book, *Spiritual Laughter*, found under the heading *Laughter* on the Home Page of personalempowerment.co.

Building together or building apart

We are creators in our life. We create the reality we experience through our attitude, thoughts, words, and actions. We are also capable of being procreators and creating life from a fertilized egg. We are powerful beyond measure.

I am going to let Marianne Williamson, a spiritual author, explain how powerful you really are:

"Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us. We ask ourselves, 'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God. Your playing small does not serve the world. There is nothing enlightened about shrinking so that other people won't feel insecure around you. We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It's not just in some of us; it's in everyone. And as we let our own light shine, we unconsciously give other people permission to do the same. As we are liberated from our own fear, our presence automatically liberates others."

Now we face another choice. Do we want to take this immense power beyond measure and synergistically blend it with our spouse in our marriage so that $1+1=3$, or do we not want to?

Do we want to build something together, or do we want to do it singularly apart?

We can see the power of joining forces through procreation. We can see both spouses working together to grow a marriage, raise a child, develop a venture, or even create something else they will be proud of.

We can also see one spouse choosing to work alone, excluding their significant other from their creative process. In some instances, the significant other can play a supportive role in the marriage or relationship, enabling and allowing the other's creative process to blossom forth with as little interference as possible from daily responsibilities and the outside world.

We can also see one party choosing to work alone, excluding their spouse from their life's mission. The spouse usually feels isolated and builds up resentment, which are the likely effects of such a cause.

Building a life together requires all the foundation stones we have discussed above to come into play – respect, trust, tolerance, non-controlling, non-manipulative, acceptance, listening, kindness, non-judgement, forgiveness, unconditional Love and laughter, humour, and fun.

Much needed growth will occur through the synergistic efforts of building together.

Needing space apart

While building together is a critical and indispensable part of building a healthy and growing relationship, it is also necessary to have some time and space apart.

When seeds are planted in a field, there is always a space left between them to allow the soil's nutrients to be watered and give the fledgling foodstuffs expansion space.

Kahlil Gibran in *The Prophet* talks about the need to have space between two people in a marriage:

Then Almitra spoke again and said, And what of Marriage master?

And he answered saying:

You were born together, and together you shall be forevermore.

You shall be together when the white wings of death scatter your days.

Aye, you shall be together even in the silent memory of God.

*But let there be spaces in your togetherness,
And let the winds of the heavens dance between you*

*Love one another, but make not a bond of love:
Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.
Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.
Give one another of your bread but eat not from the same loaf.*

*Sing and dance together and be joyous, but let each one of you be alone,
Even as the strings of a lute are alone though they quiver with the same music*

*Give your hearts, but not into each other's keeping.
For only the Hand of Life can contain your hearts.
And stand together yet not too near together:
For the pillars of the temple stand apart,
And the oak tree and the cypress grow not in each other's shadow.*

You may be interested in learning that there are 46 million Anglers who fish at least once a year in the USA, most of whom are men. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Services, there are some 29 million licenced anglers. There are 101 million men over the age of 18 years in the US. So, between 29%- 46% of men in the USA go fishing, mostly for time alone or to be with their friends.

Henry David Thoreau, a well-known isolationist, stated, "*Many men go fishing all of their lives without knowing that it is not fish they are after.*"

In the USA, there are some 30 million golfers, of which 77% are males. This implies that some 23% of adult males in the USA play golf to be alone or be with their friends.

I have used these two popular pastimes as male examples of the need for space in marriage, as stated above by Kahlil Gibran, *But let there be spaces in your togetherness*. I could not think of a typical pastime for most married women where they would prefer to be alone or with friends. Most women in a marriage have very little alone time, and I believe this needs to be addressed and rectified within a marriage.

As a couple, you should decide what constitutes having time and space apart. It should be like a vacation when you separate from work to rejuvenate yourself. Upon returning to work, or each other, you both bring a renewed invigoration to propel your love to even greater heights. This is a balance you both need to agree upon.

Additionally, your relationship will be strengthened if you can arrange and organise some time together in a beautiful setting away from the responsibilities of child-rearing, homemaking, and work.

Time management

The need

A marriage or long-term relationship is usually a juggling act of priorities and acute time management.

Through over 50 years of working, I have witnessed many people have great success and great failures. Many of these people's successes have gone to their heads, and first spouses and families have been dumped for young, attractive “gold diggers” as ego-booster for the so-called successful person. In great failures, I have seen beaten down people lose everything and turn to their families as the only support they have.

Many people consider their vocation to be more important than their spouse and family. For these people, the divorce statistics are usually higher than average. For example, Navy SEALs in the USA have a 90% divorce rate. Most vocations that interact with the public, especially in entertainment, sales, marketing, law enforcement, and the like, have higher than average divorce rates.

Most employees must juggle their work times and their responsibilities at home. There is often pressure at work to prioritise work, and home life becomes a distant second. Self-employed people are virtually always working even while at home. The same can be said for people in upper and senior management and the professions.

There was an old joke about the Tech Boom of the 1990s when people were told to keep working through the night and that management would buy them another family!

It requires a strong discipline to have strict work hours and specific hours in a day for spouse and family time. The old saying that “no one on their deathbed ever wished they had spent more time at work” should be remembered.

For a successful marriage/relationship to work, the strong discipline of time management is essential for ensuring that your spouse, and any children, have sufficient quality time with you daily. Weekend time and vacation time also requires proper time management to water and fertilise the relationship with your spouse and any children you have. This is non-negotiable!

Leaving home in the morning

This time management discipline begins each weekday morning. We all require time to get ready for work, school, and any other activity we do.

Whatever transpires in your marriage and home before you leaving home is likely to influence your morning, if not your entire day and night too. The well-being of your spouse and any children living with you are also likely to be adversely influenced during those harried mornings possibly. Everyone is trying to get out of the home and not to be late.

Ever thought about getting up earlier and going to bed earlier to ensure you have the correct amount of sleep? After dinner, family life's rhythm is a lot more relaxed than those harried hours in the morning. Borrow some time from the night and give it to an earlier morning routine.

Early mornings going for a family walk, or watching the sunrise together, or praying and meditating together, or exercising together are great ways to begin the day and ensure there is time to get ready for the day ahead without being harried and uptight.

Such a simple change has such an amazing impact on your marriage and any children involved.

I had a favourite uncle, Uncle Mike, who lived in a home on top of a hill. He woke each morning and watched the sunrise over the harbour. When my cousins were old enough, they joined him too. It's one of the best memories they have of their childhood some 65 years later.

Calling during the day

Depending on interrupting your spouse or not, a phone call or text, or similar message to your significant other during the day expressing your feelings towards them will go a long way in keeping your marriage healthy, growing, and happy.

Coming home after work

Coming home to a heaven or a hell is usually the presage to remaining in your marriage or separating or divorce. Close your eyes and imagine coming through your front door. Are you excited to be home enveloped in loving arms? Are you dreading coming home to more stress and tension than at work?

When we are tired and exhausted, our defences are low, and our energy levels are depleted. Your spouse has most likely also been working a full day or has been home with the children. Their nerves are probably also frazzled, and low energy levels abound.

Caution is the watchword now as any incorrect comment or action could spark a damaging fire.

I recommend that you change your work clothes into something more comfortable for your leisure time ahead. This change in clothing aids and abets a psychological mind shift from work to home life. I highly recommend that, if possible, you spend ten minutes in solitude sitting and breathing deeply. This will help rid your body of toxins accumulated during the day. Drinking a glass of water after that will also help rid your body of toxins. If possible, have some form of exercise to replenish your depleted energy levels. Get oxygen deep into your lungs and your bloodstream.

Now you can present yourself to your spouse and children, if any, and ask about their day. Listen attentively and allow them to speak uninterrupted unless they ask you a question. If they then ask about your day, be succinct, and respond. Wherever possible, be upbeat, positive, and enthusiastic in your response.

At this stage, you can all begin to prepare dinner and make it a family affair. After dinner, ensure that the necessary tasks are shared and have some family relaxation time. Most of us usually slump down in front of the TV to switch off from the day. See if you can change that by doing a jigsaw puzzle together or any similar family activity.

I remember my neighbours when we were kids. Their father would read to them each evening from books such as Gulliver's Travels and the like. A few days ago, I talked

to this neighbour with whom I have shared a friendship for 66 years. He recalled his father's reading to him and his siblings each evening as a highlight of his youth.

With your early morning routine set up, at the appropriate time, prepare for bed and some intimate time with your spouse.

Heaven in your home should be evident!

Children's needs

Depending on their ages, children may require one-on-one time with you for a variety of reasons. Try and establish that in advance with them to ensure that their needs are met and you still have time for your spouse at night. Quality time is preferable to quantity time with children; however, sometimes, simply lying-in their bed with them or sitting on their bed and allowing them to talk is the most valuable time to develop your loving relationship.

Sleep time

I am not going to intrude on any intimacy issues with you. However, I would like to recount a story about a couple I knew who had been happily married for 63 years.

Each night, they went to bed and fell asleep holding hands. No matter what had transpired during the day in their lives, individually or as a couple, this was their nightly routine.

I have recounted the complete story in one of my books. I discovered this fact from the Rabbi giving the eulogy at the funeral of the 90-year-old husband. The weather was unseasonably cold that day in mid-summer, and I walked back from the graveside with my friend and her mother, the deceased man's wife. I remarked about the unseasonably cold weather, and the nearly 90-year-old wife said, "I hope he is not too cold in that grave." Her concern, care, and love for him survived his passing on into Spirit. We should all be blessed with such unconditional Love.

Family time

Depending on one's interests, hobbies, sports, leisure time activities, and those of your spouse and your children, if any, it is imperative to plan some family time together regularly. If you have children, they are only lent to you for a limited period and, at age-appropriate levels, they will want to spend free time with their friends and not with their parents.

In the ideal world, having, say, Friday night together or Sunday lunch together, no matter the children's ages and stages of their lives, this special mealtime could become a tradition embraced by their friends too. In time, the young adult boyfriends and girlfriends, relationship partners, spouses, and grandchildren can be included in this tradition.

Such a tradition can create a feeling of family, community, friendship, and trust that can grow between all present. Such a family-centred tradition can enable issues to be discussed on an equal and fair basis, allowing, and respecting all present to have their say. Any potential problematical personal issues can be detected early on and, hopefully, nipped in the bud, especially where growing children are concerned. Support, care, concern, and love can be felt and expressed as all the family members develop trust regularly.

Other family time together can be arranged such as religious or spiritual activities, playing a sport, or exercising together, cookery classes, and any other hobbies and so on should be done as a family together wherever possible.

Vacations are ideal for family bonding time, and these should be planned to ensure all family members' needs are catered for. My experience is that children usually don't remember their vacations much before the age of 10, so expensive and exotic holidays should be substituted for family bonding vacations such as camping, time at the beach together, etc. I have recently seen a grandnephew aged five, spending day after day at the beach, patrolling the water's edge collecting shells being brought onto the beach by the waves. All the usual beach activities were ignored as this "hunter" single-mindedly collected seashells and brought them home each evening to inspect each one in minute detail.

Older parents know only too well, time flies, and before you look around, your children are leaving home, and you are known as empty nesters. Value each moment with your children and with your spouse. Tomorrow is promised to no one.

Time management is critical throughout your marriage and especially with your children, if any.

Financial matters

With such a high divorce rate of around 50%, I approach this issue with trepidation. In many places around the world, there is an equal distribution of wealth generated by either party during the marriage. There are prenuptial agreements in place in certain marriages. This is a legal agreement to circumvent the equal distribution of assets generated during a marriage or even brought into the marriage in the event of a divorce.

When a loving couple decides to get married, the last thing on their mind is separation or divorce. However, with a 50% divorce rate, being financially prudent is a requirement for many factors contributing to separation or divorce.

I will not discuss this at any length as this is the role of a lawyer and financial advisor. However, please take off your rosy coloured glasses and face the likelihood that 50% of marriages will end in divorce, on average, after eight years, and that only 38% of long-term cohabitation arrangements make it beyond ten years.

When married or living together, financial planning is imperative to ensure you remain within your monthly budget, and that provision is made for savings and wealth building. All parties should be involved in such financial planning because ignorance is not bliss where the money is concerned! Regrettably, money is at the root of many an unhappy marriage, mostly the lack of money or one spouse tightly controlling the purse strings. Forward financial planning and equality of knowledge and information about the family's finances are vital for a successful marriage. Financial fortunes can change overnight due to usually unforeseen circumstances. The current COVID-19 pandemic is an example of this, as jobs and businesses are lost due to people's lockdowns at home, impacting economic growth and family finances worldwide.

Next, we will explore some growth issues affecting people and relationships in Part 2 of this book.

Part 2- Some growth issues affecting people and relationships

Introduction and refresher

For ease of simplicity, I am going to continue to refer to both a marriage and a long-term living together relationship with the term marriage.

Most people embarking on marriage are not seeing the growth aspects ahead of them and are usually wearing rose coloured glasses and focusing on their happiness.

Growth is inevitable, but, alas, happiness may not be sustainable, as reflected in the statistics and observations covered in Part 1.

I am reproducing the information on people and relationships I used near this book's beginning to refresh your memory. There are 18 examples listed of where growth is likely to occur.

People

1. There is growth of individuals pre-marriage, during the marriage, and post possible marriage/separation,
2. growth of those in a marriage without a separation/ divorce,
3. growth of any children in a marriage without a separation/divorce
4. growth of those adults going through a separation/divorce,
5. growth of those adults' post-separation/divorce,
6. growth of any children of the separated marriage/divorce,
7. growth of parent/s of their child, now an adult, going through a separation/divorce, or post-divorce.
8. growth of any siblings and their possible children affected by a family-related separation/divorce,
9. growth of other family and friends affected by a separation/divorce of someone they care about.
10. growth of co-workers of someone going through a divorce or post-divorce.

Relationships

11. There is a relationship between you and your partner pre-marriage, one during the marriage and one, possibly, through a separation/divorce, and post-divorce.
12. There is a relationship during the divorce and post-divorce with your spouse/ex-spouse.
13. There is a relationship during the divorce and post-divorce with any possible child/children of your marriage.

14. Your ex-spouse or you may obtain sole, joint, or partial custody of your child/children. Limited time by any parent with your child/children will require a change in the structure of a relationship from a family unit living under one roof.

15. There may be a relationship post the divorce with your ex-spouse's possible new relationship partner/spouse, and possibly any children from their previous marriage/s.

16. There may be a relationship between you and your possible new partner/spouse, their child/children, their first family parents, and possibly their ex-spouse too.

17. There may be a relationship between your child/children and your possible new partner/spouse and any of their children.

18. There may be a relationship between your child/children and your ex-spouse's new partner/spouse and any of their children from a previous marriage.

All these relationships will present opportunities for growth for the people involved. Most people may not recognise the growth opportunities inherent in these relationships. For many, it will be "grin and bear it" as they negotiate and navigate the choppy relationship waters ahead. For a select few, including you, my valued Reader, the growth opportunities to become the best version of yourself awaits! Your eternal soul knows how invaluable these existing and new relationships are for elevating your vibrational energy towards the Source of Love and Light some of us call God.

For those interested, I have written a free book found on personalempowerment.co entitled, *Nothing matters, except Love and Light*.

Choice determines your future

As can be seen from the examples of people and relationships above, stresses, pressures, obstacles, challenges, and new opportunities are likely to emerge. What will be created is a spider web of interconnectivity of people, most of whom you may not have chosen to be in a relationship with. Growth will occur as you willingly, or unwillingly, deal with these people now thrust into your life.

As always, you have a choice to allow and embrace these new relationships for your growth or to resist them and be dragged kicking and screaming along a new growth path. Either way, you will experience growth at various levels of your being. This growth will be as a human being and a spiritual being, which we will discuss in the next section of this book. This growth is in becoming a better, or worse, human being. Negative growth of becoming a worse human being is still classified as growth, but not the desired growth of most people.

Why do we desire positive growth on earth? Humankind continues to expand. Humans continue to seek to improve themselves and enhance the quality of their lives. This is a never-ending quest from creating fire to creating the wheel, and daily new inventions are evolving. Our growth as a species is dependent on such an evolution of imagination, creativity, ideas, and development. We seek growth as the seed buried deep in the dark ground unerringly knows to seek the sunlight above ground level.

When we choose to grow positively, we seek to improve our mental, physical, emotional, psychological, financial, and spiritual states. Such growth is inherent within us.

CHOICE- Can Help Overcome | Change Energy

CHOICE- Courageously Helping Oneself In Choosing Evolvment

Experiment time

Let's try a hypothetical experiment. Select one example from the People category and one from the Relationship category above.

Now let's assume that you are as close to unconditionally loving as you can be, and you allow and embrace those people and relationships you may not have intentionally chosen but which have been thrust upon you. Imagine how you would behave towards them if you embraced them as your best friend. Imagine how you would feel within you and how they would react to such soul-based Love from you.

The next experiment is to reverse that and imagine if you resisted them as people and resisted the relationship you may not have selected. Imagine if you dealt with them with as much fear-based ego, hatred, and enmity you could spew at them. How are you likely to feel within you, and how are they likely to react towards you?

Now let's look at your mental health position in both hypothetical scenarios, and after that, your physical health position reacting to either soul-based Love or ego-based fear. What are your emotional states feeling through these two hypothetical scenarios? If you are spiritual, how do you think your soul is responding in these two

hypothetical scenarios? What about your psychological state and your ability to earn a living impacting your financial state when coming from either Love or fear?

The consequences you choose

Can you begin to see that your thoughts create the reality of your mental, emotional, psychological, financial, spiritual, and physical health positions through this process? Can you also realise that your opportunity to grow as a human being and as a Spiritual Being is directly linked to whether you are coming from soul-based Love or ego-based fear throughout this process?

Your growth is in your hands, and more specifically, in your attitudinal thoughts, words, and actions. Your spouse, ex-spouse, children, and anyone else, do not determine your future; only you do through the attitude you adopt and the thought processes after that followed by your chosen words and actions.

This website's name is personalempowerment.co. This is what personal empowerment is- the ability to choose your attitude, your attitudinal response, and your resulting thoughts, words, and action to create the reality you will experience. It is unerringly accurate in its causality. The effect will follow the cause. Love will draw Love into your world, and fear will draw fear into your world.

You are the creator of your life. If you have a spiritual base in your life, you may also know that God within you is the Co-Creator of your life.

Time for some perspective

Sometimes a perspective is required to understand and grasp a situation fully. I will focus on the marriages that are either "get-along", some 45% of all marriages, and those that end in divorce, some 50% of all marriages.

At the outset of a divorce process, initially loving emotions at the marriage altar have turned to become raw and ugly at the prospect of the marriage's failure now ending in divorce, or which has already ended in divorce. Id/ "bad" egos are in full flight, and each party is spewing out blame upon the other. Battlelines are drawn, and

supportive families and other people are usually behind their estranged family member or friend. The previous wide nuptial bed has become a razor's edge, unable to accommodate anyone.

When the emotions are rawest, and tempers are flaring, it would be wise to take a longer-term view. Picture yourself twenty years down the line. The divorce is well behind you. You are single or remarried or living with someone else. You have a new life without your ex-spouse of twenty years ago. Your thoughts of your ex-spouse have reduced in intensity, and they hardly figure daily any longer. You are in a new space, and it's a place of freedom from what was the tyranny of a failed marriage some twenty years ago.

You are likely to get to this place in, say, twenty years. So why not accelerate that process and get there now? Why not realise that it's only your wounded Id/ "bad" ego that is keeping you in the fire of anger and hatred now. You are imprisoning yourself in a cell with the bad memories of your soon to be ex-spouse or already ex-spouse. Your emotional hurt, anger, and hatred poison you emotionally, physically, spiritually, financially, and most definitely, psychologically. You may imagine the worst things you would like your soon to be ex-spouse, or already ex-spouse, to suffer. You relish in the harm and damage done to them through your imagination.

But hold on a minute. You forgot about *The Law of Attraction*, where Like is attracted to Like, in spiritual terms. What you do unto others will be visited upon you. It's a revision of the *Golden Rule* found in the bible, *do unto others as you would like done unto you*.

If you are not religious or spiritually inclined, then *Newton's Third Law of Motion* governs physics, infers that *there is an equal and opposite reaction for every action*.

The bottom line is that you will benefit or suffer, according to your attitudinal thoughts, words, and actions you make or take, concerning your soon to be ex-spouse or your already ex-spouse. As stated often, giving Love will bring Love to you, and giving fear will bring you fear.

Reverting to the perspective of now taking a twenty-year view, you can avoid all that anger and pain being brought about by giving and experiencing fear. Decide now to release your soon to be ex-spouse, or your already ex-spouse, in Love and pray for their well-being. You will find that doing so will lift your vibrational energy. You will experience a much more frictionless life devoid of negativity and emotional pain. You will achieve happiness and growth through this simple approach of releasing them in Love and praying for their well-being.

If you can pray daily for their well-being, this will accelerate your well-being in all areas of your life. In such prayers, remember the person you initially fell in love with when you were first married. Focus on your feelings for them during the honeymoon phase of your marriage. Remember the happiness you felt being with them and

release them in that love you felt for them. Release yourself in unconditional Love too.

If you choose to do the above, you will develop the twenty-year perspective now and be able to move on with your life at a much higher vibrational energy level knowing Love and no longer fear.

The implications of your future road map

Now, please work through each of the relevant 18 examples above, identifying the implications likely to result for you, depending on whether you come from the acceptance of Love and increased inner peace or fear-based resistance and anger.

We don't often have a road map of our future, but working through the relevant 18 examples, as identified above, a causal road map of your likely future will emerge. Whether Love-based or fear-based, you choose your reaction or response, and the cause-and-effect consequences will become self-evident.

This is not some theoretical example, but it is based on my experiential knowledge of many of these 18 examples above. Fortunately, I chose a spiritual pathway in my marriage dissolution, but I chose not to deal with the emotional issues at that time with a trained therapist. In retrospect, I suffered a major emotional shock when certain revelations were presented to me in mid-2004. At that time, I turned to my spiritual knowledge and wisdom base for understanding, solace, and growth but didn't allow my emotions the time and healing space they needed to absorb what was happening and eventually grow. A business setback a few years later brought these buried marital dissolution emotions to the surface. I was diagnosed with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which resulted in anxiety and depression. It was not a pleasant time in my life!

By sharing my personal journey with you and the information, knowledge, and, hopefully, wisdom contained in this book, I would like to empower you personally. It is possible to resolve your mental, physical, emotional, spiritual, financial, and psychological issues regarding your marital issues, leading to divorce issues. Hopefully, the practical steps outlined in this book will make you more consciously aware of what you may be facing in the future. It all boils down to making a choice. Making the correct choice of coming from Love and not from fear, and choosing to now take a 20-year perspective, will see you experience both happiness and growth in your life.

Part 3- Spiritual aspects of marriage for growth and increased happiness

Now I will deal with some spiritual issues to increase your understanding of the “Bigger Picture” as seen from Spirit of what your marriage and possible divorce is really about.

Understanding the Spirit World

If you have read any of my previous 26 spiritually related books, you will know what I perceive the Spirit World to be. My perception is based on research from various sources and channelled information also from a variety of Channelled Entities accounts of what life in Spirit is like.

I will summarise my understanding as follows:

From my free book- *Understanding and Elevating your Vibrational Energy-*

In truth, all we ever are is points of vibrational energetic Beings of Love and Light in an infinite and eternal stream of Consciousness of Unconditional Love and Light. We choose to call this infinite and eternal stream of Consciousness our Higher Power/Source Energy/God and many other names. We are All One and far from ever being alone. You are me, and I am you, as we are all the same infinite Unconditional Love and Light at our eternal essence. We are Oneness. We are God.

As a soul, we exist as this vibrational energy in Spirit. In the early stages of our passing over back into Spirit, we experience life much as we did on earth. The forms and shapes remain similar until we can readjust to this vibrational reality, where we spend most of our eternal lives.

We are part of a Soul Group or Soul Family, and our souls' growth is usually done in tandem with these Souls in our Soul Group. We can also call them Soul Mates.

In Spirit, we continue learning and growing with our ultimate quest to be as Godlike as possible. While in Spirit, we plan our next visit to the earth plane of existence or other planes of existence. To date, I have not been able to find out much information on these other planes of existence, but, among others, Edgar Cayce and Emanuel Swedenborg are two reference sources who speak of these other planes of existence.

Earth is a favourite place to visit for souls as they inhabit specifically chosen bodies with specifically chosen parents and family. The Soul requires to fix one or more “holes in their souls,” and the choice of their body, parents, family, environment, and so on is all part of an intricate web of Soul Contracts we will discuss under the next heading.

Souls can experience the sensual delights of sight, sound, touch, taste, and hearing on earth. Additionally, the duality of the earth plane allows the experience of the contrasts of opposites. In Spirit, there is no Id or ego-based fear, so choosing to experience the highs and the lows of the range of emotions on earth is looked upon eagerly as we would anticipate going to an amusement park with all its extreme fun rides. Fear does not exist in Spirit as only Love and Light exist there.

Souls know that it takes courage to come to the earth plane, and often Spiritual Guides will reference this courage in their channelling. The earth is possibly the harshest and most rewarding place for the growth of one’s soul. It is called “the leading edge of Creation” by Abraham, channelled by Ester Hicks of Abraham-Hicks.com. However, because of this harshness, it also affords a fast-tracking of spiritual growth in repairing the “holes in one’s soul” that need fixing. From what I understand, the growth of souls in Spirit is slower due to the sameness of being bathed in differing Love and Light levels. Only earth has the contrasts of duality, or opposites, to expand the soul’s experience substantially. The more diverse one’s experiences, the higher the growth.

From what I understand, there are hierarchical levels in Spirit and what we call God, to give us a clearer picture of the Unknowable, who is Nameless and Formless, is at the pinnacle of these levels. The closer we as souls elevate in vibrational energy towards this pinnacle, the stronger the Love and Light we are bathed in. This is the soul’s eternal growth journey to reach this pinnacle.

Once certain levels within this hierarchy have been attained, there is no longer a need to return to earth as a soul within a chosen body. However, certain elevated Souls choose this visit to earth to assist other souls as their Guide for some of their earth’s journey.

In Spirit, there is much talk of the *Halls of Learning* where Souls learn and apply solutions to issues and problems experienced on earth and other planes of existence. I have read certain channeled books where Einstein, Faraday, Tesla, and the like, as Souls, develop solutions that are somehow fed through to the “Inventors” on earth.

I hope that this quick explanatory tour of Spirit, as I perceive it to be, helps you with a better understanding of what awaits all of us upon our passing over into Spirit. The growth we experience on earth, in soul terms, accompanies us when we pass over into Spirit.

Soul Contracts

Here I need to reference my free book found on personalempowerment.co- *The Purpose and Meaning of your Life in terms of your Soul Contracts*. If you genuinely want to understand Soul Contracts, then this book is a must-read.

When we are in Spirit with our Soul Group, and we decide that there are “holes in our Souls” that need repairing for the eternal soul’s growth to become more Godlike, we begin to create an intricate game plan of the interconnectivity of soul contracts. Each Soul Mate has their selected “holes in their souls” that need repairing, and an intricate web of soul contracts are created to give effect to each participating Soul Mate’s needs.

The easiest way to explain this is to imagine a movie where various actors and actresses play specific roles. There are the good guys, the bad guys, the prostitutes, the victims, the winners, the losers, the heroes, the “zeroes,” every type of person you can think of. The role-playing is merely that. When the movie shoot is completed, and the film is “in the can,” the actors and actresses take off their costumes, wash off their make-up, and go home to their families.

As I understand it, as souls within bodies, we experience countless visits to the earth plane of existence. I have seen references in books like the global bestseller, *Conversations With God* that the author Neale Donald Walsh was told by “God” that he has had nearly 800 lives on earth to date.

I am also informed that we will experience all walks of life in all types of bodies of all skin colours and all religious or non-religious beliefs. We will be either gender in different lifetimes unless there is an ongoing issue, and the soul needs to remain one gender for the growth process involved through many lifetimes. We will experience being a “rich man, poor man, beggar, thief.” We will be at the top of the tree in all spheres in one lifetime and what is perceived to be at various tree levels, even down to the tree's bottom. Finding ourselves at these different levels may occur in one lifetime or various lifetimes.

In a channeled book, *The Soul’s journey and how it affects your life* by Judith Farley and the Four Archangels, there is a reference to souls also inhabiting certain animals. Many of us have experienced unconditional Love from a pet. However, I don’t want to digress at this point. I have written a free book found on guidespeak.com- *The Book of Understanding Animal Spirits* for those interested.

Reverting to the topic at hand, we chose the manner of our so-called death, or more accurately, passing on into Spirit, for this lifetime. We usually experience all manners of our such passing on through our various lifetimes on earth. Archangel Michael, being channelled by Judith Farley as recorded in *The Soul's journey and how it affects your life by Judith Farley and the Four Archangels*, states that we choose the time and manner of our death in Spirit before coming to earth. I was surprised to see him include suicide as a choice we make while in Spirit, and it changed my whole perspective and understanding about suicide. These choices are made with our Soul Mates in Spirit's full agreement, who are part of the intricate web of soul contracts played out on earth.

It may be interesting to note that according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), there are some 800 000 suicides globally, annually. WHO estimates that there are some 16 million attempted suicides globally, annually. Global crime statistics from the United Nations reflect some 475 000 intentional homicides annually, excluding deaths in wars or armed conflicts. Road deaths globally are some 1.35 million, according to WHO. In terms of Soul Contract understanding, all such forms of deaths are selected and timed to occur when they do while the Souls are in Spirit before coming to earth.

All Souls in Spirit are complete, and there is no differentiation, such as being a child or adult at Soul Level. The choice to be born as a child to chosen parents does not mean that the child's soul is any less, in any way than the parent's soul. We choose to be children for the amazing growth we will experience over our lifetime on the earth plane. For example, parents often forget that their child's soul could have been their own parent's soul, reincarnated as their child in this lifetime.

Each Soul Mate plays out different roles in each lifetime. Fathers today could have been daughters before or in the future. Mothers, sons, daughters, uncles, aunts, cousins, best friends, worst enemies, debtors, creditors, judges, criminals, and so on are all interchangeable roles lifetime after lifetime. The Soul Contracts may require specific roles so that, for example, the victim must experience suffering in this lifetime while the persecutor, having been jailed, may require to know about the limitation of freedom. Abused children in this lifetime may have been Abuser parents in another lifetime. These abused children are required to experience the causal effect of their previous free will choices as an abusive parent in a previous lifetime. I know that sounds very insensitive, but when looking from Spirit, all is perfectly in balance. The combinations of all relationships are endless.

We see Trust Fund playboys and playgirls on yachts in Cannes, not realising they may have been living on the garbage dumps in India in another lifetime.

For this reason, among others, judgements made on earth are usually incorrect. As seen in Spirit, everything is working out perfectly as planned in terms of Soul Contracts.

Where Soul Contracts are in play, and if they are done according to plan, there is no recrimination at the soul level for any actions performed. For example, a murderer or rapist playing out their agreed to role goes back into Spirit unaffected by their agreed-upon actions on earth. However, should the soul go 'off script' and use free will choices, then I believe there may be soul related consequences in Spirit. If the free will choice was to be more kind, compassionate, loving to one or more people, then they may be elevated in vibrational energy in Spirit. Conversely, a murderer or rapist, for example, using free will on earth, may see a drop in their vibrational energy in Spirit upon their return. I must admit to not being certain of these assumptions, but they sound logical to me at this stage of my spiritual evolution.

In my Soul Contract book referred to above, I have identified six soul contract markers that could signify that you have a soul contract issue that needs repairing. You may experience one or more of these six soul contract markers. These are:

1. Repetitive patterns in your life
2. Fears in your life
3. Blockages as obstacles to overcome
4. Challenges that force you to leave your comfort zone
5. Hardships causing you onslaughts to your survival
6. Mirrors to yourself of people or issues that annoy you substantially

No accidents or coincidences

There are no accidents or coincidences in God's world and what may appear to be either of those two incidents are Soul Contracts coming into play or being reinforced. This was stated, among others, by one of the Archangels in the channeled book I referenced above.

I know that this may be hard to believe, especially in large-scale incidents like the loss of over 3000 people in the 9/11 Twin Towers attacks or the crash of an airliner with 400 people on board. I can't offer you explanations for these large-scale incidents, but in all the channelled works I have read or listened to, the same statements are made over and over. There are no accidents in God's world, and that coincidences are God's way of remaining anonymous.

Perhaps the following two case studies will help you understand the workings of Soul Contracts in terms of marriage, and maybe even the above statements about no accidents and no coincidences in God's world.

Case studies for Soul Contract growth in marriage

I have written about Soul Contracts being played out in various books on both guidespeak.com and personalempowerment.co. Here are two examples from guidespeak.com, my, mainly channelled, spiritual website. They both concern marriages and show how they are for growth and not only for happiness:

The Book of Evolving Relationships- Lesson 19- Was that an Angel?

Most people have preconceptions about what an Angel should look like. Wings are a must! Rosy cheeks, sweet face, smiling, beautiful eyes. Makes me feel wonderful. Yup, it must be an Angel.

Would you like to see another angle on an Angel?

Well, you just saw one – angle / Angel – things are not always what they seem.

It was a dark and stormy night (We love that intro!), and the housewife was in the kitchen preparing her 18th wedding anniversary dinner. Table set for two. Candles, wine glasses, romance in the air.

Pity, we never had children, mused the housewife. Just the two of us, always. I hope he hasn't been drinking again. I don't know how much longer I can take this physical abuse when he is drunk. My excuses at the hospital are wearing thin. Tripped down the stairs, slipped on a wet tile in the bathroom, the dog attacked me, and so on.

Here he comes; I hear his key in the door. I'm in the kitchen.

Happy Anniversary!

He reels into the kitchen, drunk, belligerent, swearing, cursing. He raises his huge ham-like fist. She grabs the knife she was cutting the frozen steak with and stabs him as his fist strikes her cheek for the hundredth time. The knife thrust upwards enters between his ribs and ruptures an artery in his heart. He slumps to the floor, his outstretched right hand still clenched in a fist.

Shaking like a leaf, she realizes that in 18 years, this is the first time she has fought back. She calms herself down, checks his pulse – no pulse – hers races to 150, pounding in her temples.

Oh my God, what have I done? She screams.

After a few minutes, she phones the police.

When the police arrive, she confesses to telling the whole story.

In court, the Judge is sympathetic, understanding. However, the most lenient sentence is five years, with three years off for good behavior. All alone in the world,

she gets bundled off to prison. Placed in a cell with many other women, she cries herself into an uneasy, fitful sleep.

The next day she attempts to befriend the other criminals she has to spend the next five years with – locked up like animals in an overcrowded jail cell.

One cellmate, looking like she has not known a pleasant day in her life, aggressively approaches our ex-housewife and says, can you read?

Yes, I can, stammers the frightened new cellmate sensing all eyes in the cell on her.

Then read this to me, demands the tough-looking female cellmate as she thrusts an envelope at her.

With fingers shaking, she manages to prize out a single sheet of paper, which has been torn from a school exercise book.

Nervously she reads: "Dear Mommy, I miss you so much. When are you coming home to look after me? I had my 7th birthday, and still, you weren't there. What does 25 to life mean? The other children say I must find another mommy, but I love you, mommy. Come home soon. I love you, Mommy. Suzie xxxxx."

The ex-housewife looked up and saw tears streaming down the face of the tough cellmate. She heard sniffles, then noses being blown, and she saw all the women in the cell crying and trying to hold back their emotions. They all felt for the hardened cellmate, and they all thought about their own families and how much they missed them.

After that, other letters were fished out of uniforms, from under mattresses and from other hiding places. The housewife spent her first morning in prison reading letters and the next few days answering letters on behalf of her cellmates. When she had time to absorb all that was happening, she realized these poor women were all illiterate – they could not read or write!

She asked their permission to teach them to read and write. They all grasped the opportunity and became eager students. The ex-housewife fell exhausted onto her bed every night and woke up eagerly, full of enthusiasm, the following morning to teach her "students," her cellmates, who were like sponges absorbing every bit of instruction.

After quite some time, some of the brighter students wrote their first letters home, full of excitement and hope. When the replies came back, the excitement was intense. Mom, when did you learn to write?

The ex-housewife could not believe how she felt. For the first time in her life, she was doing something useful, purposeful, for other people but benefiting herself.

The ex-housewife had found her mission in life, her purpose in life – in a prison cell!

She went on to teach literacy to other women prisoners. Upon her early release from prison, this has remained her life's goal and life's blessing, to teach prisoners to read and write.

(This is a true story recounted by a Guide, Kurt, to his Channel "Aaron"-(Lionel Berman, my initial spiritual teacher)]

Who are the Angels here?

Firstly, there is the ex-housewife. Then the hardened cellmate, but also the abusive husband.

What! The abusive husband – how?

Well, in the bigger picture, We can see, the abusive husband had a Soul Contract with the housewife to assist her in reaching her healing and growth – by teaching literacy to prisoners.

In another lifetime, this ex-housewife abused prisoners of war through atrocities. Obviously, in that lifetime, she was not a housewife but a frighteningly sadistic brute of a man.

This was a karmic debt she asked to repay in this lifetime – as a housewife who killed her abusive husband and was sent to jail – to find her freedom!

The abusive husband had to play his Angelic role in their Soul Contract so she could be sent to jail. So, you see, Angels – in the bigger picture that We can see – come in all shapes, sizes, and types, not just the ones on Christmas gift wrapping.

If you look around you in your daily life, you will start to recognize everyone as an Angel. After all, they have all come from the Spirit World, entered their bodies on earth as Souls. No one was born a murderer, a rapist, an adulterer, a charitable person, a wonderful, giving person. They become what they become because of Soul Contracts with others in their Soul Groups.

We have always said. We do not judge, We do not control, and We do not manipulate. Everyone has free will, and every action has consequences. This true story should encourage you to stop judging people in your life. Abusers are Angels, do-gooders are Angels, hardened criminals are Angels, and you are an Angel.

You are surrounded by Angels in your daily life; treat them accordingly, and you will be surprised what emerges in front of you. You will see a transformation of yourself beyond belief. You will see a transformation of others that will be called miraculous.

MIRACLE – May I Recognize A Conscious Light Evolving

Now you can ask, “Was that an Angel?” and the answer you now know will be “Yes.”

The Book of Evolving Relationships- Lesson 32- Is your Spouse a Devil or an Angel?

(This was a consultation I had with a lady introduced to me by a friend. My Guides came through with a most amazing explanation.)

Oh, what an usual tale is about to unfold before you with an unusual ending.

A wife, in her late thirties, is bereft. Her husband is pushing 40, has found a younger lover, and left her and her children to live with this younger woman.

The wife is angry and resentful. "I gave him the best years of my life, and now who is going to look after me, who wants a tired-looking, almost forty-year-old woman? I gave up my promising career to have his children and to make a home for him. I have been out of work for ten years; I'm not trained for anything. I have been dumped emotionally, physically, and financially. It's just not fair!"

I'm going to the best lawyer there is. I'm going to make him suffer. He thinks he can do this to me; just wait and see what I do to him! I'm going to bring him to his knees. I'm going to ruin him. Let him beg me to come back and then watch where I'm going to kick him!"

Wow, that's some anger there!

"Of course, why shouldn't I be angry, he is a devil, and he is going to get it from me!"

Would you ease up a bit so We can show you the "Bigger Picture" here?

"Well, I've read some of your other lessons, so I am prepared to listen."

Thank you, it pleases Us that you are prepared to listen because, if you give Us the time, We will show you how your attitude can change and your husband, the devil, can become your ex-husband, the Angel.

"That I would love to see – You obviously don't know him like I do!"

Oh, We know him a lot better than you think because We have been with him since he was born, as We have with you.

Let us start with your intention to damage him financially. Why would you want to do to him what he is already going to do to himself? According to the [Law of Cause and Effect](#) and the [Law of Karma](#), your husband has dropped a pebble into the water through his actions. This will cause a ripple that will build into a wave, which will develop into a tidal wave. That tidal wave of consequences following his actions, in this case, "negative and destructive" actions, will do more damage to him than you could ever possibly do to him yourself.

Of course, if you decided to do "negative and destructive" actions to him, you would also precipitate the Law of Cause and Effect and the Law of Karma against you, with similar consequences.

Let us show you the unfolding picture here. Your soon to be ex-husband has to provide financially for you and your children. Also, his new girlfriend now wants what you have got. Maybe working a full day, she can't be at her best for him. But working half-day, her income is reduced, and she has more leisure time to pamper herself for him, but that all costs money. So, he now has two houses to run. His business partner is not happy because he is drawing more from the business than his partner to afford the extra expenditure, and the business can't afford all this additional expenditure. The business needs cash to buy stock to stay profitable. While this is taking place, the customers notice that your husband is not so easy-going and friendly as he was before. His need for money starts to impact his relationships and friendships in his business. He becomes difficult with his customers, and they start to go elsewhere for their needs. Business drops off, personal drawings increase, bank overdraft levels are cut, his partner wants out of the business.

Of course, all this financial pressure is making him pretty difficult to be around. His new girlfriend can't understand why this fun-loving man is suddenly so difficult. He

snaps at her, can't afford to take her out, and his sexual performance has dived with all this financial pressure.

Now, what did you want to do to him to make him suffer and bring him to his knees?

If you had, you would also have created a tidal wave for yourself. Why bother? He looks like he is doing enough damage to himself. His health is suffering, his love life is about as exciting as that of a celibate monk, his finances are in the toilet, his emotions are stretched to breaking point, spiritually, he has lost the plot completely, and his new girlfriend is irritating him. His married friends have disowned him. His single friends find him difficult to be with. His girlfriend's friends listen to "strange" music and speak a "different" language. His kids have lost respect for him.

So, as you can see, by choosing consciously to let him be, by detaching yourself from him, you can let him self-destruct through the consequences of his actions. This is his self-journey; you must respect that and let him be.

However, We can't understand why you are so upset? It must be that you had forgotten that your soon to be ex-husband and you had a Soul contract made in Spirit before you came to the earth plane.

The contract was – you needed to find your own path, not being dependent on male energy to protect you. You chose an overbearing, protective father, a brother who brought you down because you were an "inferior" woman, and you chose a husband who abused you by depriving you of your independence, damaged you financially and mentally, and then broke your heart emotionally. These male energy soul contract partners have all played their part to bring you to the place you now find yourself in.

Now you are given the opportunity to develop the masculine energy inside of you without affecting your innate femininity so that you can develop your self-worthiness. You do not need a man in your life to protect and provide for you. You can develop those skills for yourself. You can learn to wire a plug. You can learn to mow the lawn or organize for someone to do it for you. You can learn to protect yourself, to take responsibility for yourself. You can learn a skill, get a proper well-paid job, and provide financially for yourself. Your children can look up to you with respect, honour, and pride for being their mother and their "father."

You are multi-faceted; you can do anything you put your mind, heart, and Soul into. You can find your independence. You can develop your self-worth. You can develop your self-love. You don't need a man to complete you. You can become whole and complete yourself.

Now you have this wonderful opportunity to become the Real You. When you have found this "whole new you," when you know your self-worth, and when you have developed unconditional self-love, then you are ready for real love with a real man.

A real man who desires you for the real, whole, and complete person you have become. A real man who does not have to put you down to feel better about himself, as your ex-husband did in his insecurities. A real man who can express his tender emotions and show you tender love, respect, and honour. In your wholeness, in your new-found light and love, you can find someone worthy of you.

Now is your soon to be ex-husband, that devil who dumped you? As he felt himself getting older in his insecurities, he needed to prove to himself and his shallow friends that he could “get” a younger, prettier woman.

Any woman can open her legs, but only a worthy woman can open her heart and Soul to healing, growth, and evolvment.

Your soon to be ex-husband has given you the opportunity to become a worthy woman. After all, this was your soul contract with him when you were both Angels in Spirit.

Now you are both Angels in physical bodies on the earth plane – don’t forget.

Thank you, my soon to be ex-husband, for being the Angel you contracted to be. To give me my freedom to find my self-worth and find the unconditional self-love inside of me as I journey on my own, and develop the potential I have inside of me.

I now thank you for being my Angel and for propelling me on this exciting, challenging, and somewhat frightening path of self-discovery. I now know that everything I need is inside of me. I now know that I am never alone; I have God, my Guides, and my Angels, on earth and in Spirit, to help me.

My soon to be ex-husband, thank you, you have played your part in our soul contract. I am now detached from you. I no longer need you; I release you in love and light.

Thank you, my Angel, my soon to be ex-husband, for my wings – to fly to discover Who I Really Am – a part of God.

I hope that these two case studies above have opened your eyes to how Soul Contracts made in Spirit are played out on the earth plane of existence for the growth of eternal souls.

The formula for growth and happiness in a marriage

To treat every human being as a shrine of God is to fulfil all religion.

Hazrat Inayat Khan (1882-1927)

In the channelling from *Conversations With God- Book 1* by Neale Donald Walsh, the statement is made:

Most people enter into a relationship with an eye toward what they can get out of them rather than what they can put into them.

The above statement is the essence of marriages that work and those which don't. Do you see marriage as an opportunity for growth, expansion, complete self-expression, for reaching your highest potential as a human being, or as an obligation?

Traditional marriage vows are obligation based. Promising to honour, obey, cherish each other, providing for each other, and so on, all impose obligations. You begin the marriage shackled with obligations, responsibilities, and clipped wings. Little wonder 50% of marriages last, on average, eight years, and long-term living together has a failure rate of 62% by the tenth year.

How different would a marriage be if the vows taken were based on promising to fulfil one's highest potential, firstly, individually, and secondly, jointly?

-To be the best version of oneself and bring that into the marriage, in every moment of now.

-To see any challenges and problems as opportunities to grow together in finding the opportunities presented by such obstacles.

-To embrace change as an opportunity to expand one's horizons and experiences together.

-To acknowledge each one's sacred Soul within, as a part of God,

-To show yourself and your spouse the same respect, praise, and adoration, you would show God.

-To have communion with God through the merging of your physical bodies and your sacred souls.

However, the only person you can influence and improve is yourself. Work on yourself to reach your highest potential as a human being, but do not have any expectations of your spouse. Allow and accept them totally and unreservedly. At best, you can hope that your actions prove to be a stimulus to become their highest and best self. But you may not voice this in verbal or body language.

Samuel Johnson (1709-1784), a well-known writer, stated, *"He who has so little knowledge of human nature, as to seek happiness by changing anything but his own disposition, will waste his life in fruitless efforts."*

This message stated over two hundred years ago remains relevant today.

Let your passion for self-improvement become your highest and best version of yourself, become the energy driver of your life, and, hopefully, your relationship. Any

expectations you have of your spouse or the relationship will likely bring unhappiness to you and your relationship. Expectations are the Id/ "bad" ego's way of ensuring disappointments. We are after growth and happiness and not unhappiness and disappointment. Have no expectations of others and avoid all disappointments. Only have expectations of yourself to become the best version of yourself.

See yourself with a hosepipe in hand, watering the flower beds in your family's garden. Providing you have fertilised the soil correctly and planted the correct seeds, your consistent, correct watering procedure should see the flowers and plants grow in time. Your function is to fertilise the soil, plant the seeds, and water the soil correctly. You cannot force the seeds to grow. You cannot dig the seeds up to determine whether they are growing or not. You cannot rush this process. All you can do now is water and have patience. Having any expectations of the seeds is a useless waste of time. You did not create these seeds, and you have no control over their inherent growth or lack of growth other than fertilise the soil, plant the seeds and correctly water them.

The same applies to your relationship. Providing you have fertilised the ground with good intentions and resulting Love-based thoughts, words, and actions, planted the seeds/spouse with your Love-based soul and given the flower bed your Love-based water at appropriate times, the rest is up to the seeds/spouse to grow and flower. You have done all you can do and having expectations of the seeds/spouse growing and flowering is beyond your abilities to influence. Some seeds/spouses grow and flower, and some do not. That is the nature of seeds/spouses. The only things you do connected to their growth, or lack thereof, are fertilising the soil, planting the seed/spouse, and correctly watering the flower bed/relationship. Having expectations of their growth will not affect what the seeds/spouse does. Your expectations and their growth, or lack thereof, are not connected.

When you show up as your highest and best self and do not intend to obtain anything from your spouse, this should be the purpose of your relationship. Focus on being the best human being you can be, and your relationship should flourish. When you focus on what your spouse is not doing and having any expectations of them, your relationship suffers.

Now I know what you are thinking. This sounds unfair and imbalanced, and why should you be the only one pulling out all the stops, and your spouse can do whatever they like. But let me ask you this. Are you prepared to do it for, say, two weeks or a maximum of a month? Are you prepared to do it without a word to your spouse about what you are doing, but simply implementing this self-perfect process? If there is no improvement in your relationship at the end of one month, perhaps you have a major undiagnosed issue in your marriage? If someone is prepared to let you do all the running towards self-improvement, and they don't react or respond positively, it may be time to visit a trained therapist. There is likely to be another

potentially major issue, or issues in your relationship that you may be unaware of that your spouse is aggrieved about.

It's all very well adopting this spiritual approach to being the best person you can be in your relationship, but none of us are Mother Theresa! The root cause of your spouse's discontent needs to be identified and addressed, preferably with a trained professional experienced in marital issues.

In the ideal world, it may be the growth that you both signed on for as your Soul Contract while in Spirit. However, if your relationship is untenable and you are not prepared to jump through the hoops to solve this root cause issue your spouse may have, after having remained the best version of yourself throughout this process, then maybe it's time to throw in the towel?

Of course, I will tell you that if you are prepared to jump through the hoops, your growth will be enormous, but it's your choice and life. One thing I am sure about is that this issue will resurface again in another relationship, as a repetitive pattern, as it's part of your eternal soul's journey to fix this "hole in your soul."

Although your spouse is evidencing this issue, it is really your issue to deal with now, later, or in another lifetime on earth. Please don't shoot the messenger!

In 2002, my then-wife and I had a "reading" with our spiritual Teacher, a Channel. We were told that we had chosen a most difficult Soul Contract, and if we managed to survive it, our growth would be substantial. Boy, he wasn't kidding on both counts!

Avoiding becoming less than who you were when single

Now it's time to discuss what happens in many relationships. People enter into a relationship, and instead of being the best version of themselves and focusing on themselves, without any expectations of their spouse, they begin to adjust and change and become less of themselves. They make these compromising adjustments and changes to become what they believe the other party wants them to be.

Both parties become less than their best version of themselves to adjust to and maintain their relationship. The losing of part of oneself through such compromise creates resentment and bitterness. When they were single, they were a lot more fun and enjoyed life more. The choice to marry and compromise begins to feel empty inside. You can't go with your mates to the pub, or you can't have a girl's night out becomes a noose that begins to strangle the relationship. $1+1 = 0$ is looming on the horizon.

You either trust your spouse, or you don't. There is no grey area here. Sure, you can go to the pub with your mates; of course, you can have a girls' night out is the correct answer. The ability to know that you can do these things is what you and they really want. The feeling that all freedoms have not been curtailed and trusting each other is usually the correct path to walk down.

What is important to know and appreciate is that you cannot rely on your spouse to give you love to feel love within you. First and foremost, you must love yourself. You cannot find worthiness in another until you feel self-worth within. Finding the unconditional love within you, for yourself, begins with self-worthiness and self-respect. From there flows self-kindness, self-concern, self-like, self-courage to become the best version of yourself. And from there, self-love. Your self-love is the reservoir of love that you can then share with another. Trying to find self-love only once you have received love from another is a dangerous path to walk down. If they withdraw their love for any reason, your so-called self-love will evaporate like the morning mist. Self-love comes from within or not at all.

The same occurs when you look for the sacredness of another's soul. First, you must find the sacredness of your soul within yourself to recognise it in another. It is this self-soul search to be the best version of yourself always, and in all ways, that enables you to see challenges, obstacles, and problems in your life and relationship, as opportunities. These opportunities are to find the essence of the solution of the issue confronting you and to grow meaningfully from this event or issue.

Become self-centred by focusing on being the best version of yourself and bring that into the relationship without expectations about your spouse's performance. You are likely to see a self-induced shift from your spouse and an improvement in the relationship. Your growth is becoming more assured.

Now I will get a bit "preachy" and suggest the following issues to see positive growth and increased happiness within a marriage.

Understanding gender emotional inequalities

Let me begin in what many will call an esoteric way. Imagine if you could see everything around you as Love. When you fall in love with your beloved, you look at all of life through rose-coloured glasses. You are euphoric and elated. You only see the beauty in everything. You have tapped into the Love within you because of the euphoria and joy you feel by finding the Love within your beloved. This is the Love some people refer to as being blinded by love.

Shakespeare (1564- 1616) wrote, "*Love looks not with the eyes, but with the mind, and therefore is winged Cupid painted blind.*"

This Love is really the exact opposite of blindness; it is real sight and real vision. You are seeing, feeling, and experiencing true Love, unconditional Love, probably consciously for the first time in your life. The Love within you is recognising the Love within your beloved. It is the connection of the same Love, the same God within you both. People call this falling in love. I prefer to call it 'rising in Love' as your vibrational energy rises to higher realms where true Love/God is.

For those who have experienced this feeling, it's like walking on air. You allow and enable the Love inside you to manifest as relationship love for your beloved. This is not esoteric but a real sensation.

Lord Byron (1788-1824) stated, "*In her first passion woman loves her lover; in all others all she loves is love.*"

This feeling of being in love usually overrides the men who may become successive lovers of this woman. For women, being in love envelopes their entire world, whereas for a man, it's usually an episode in their life and they do not feel enveloped for long, if at all. This is a fundamental difference between the emotional response to love by each gender. Perhaps, instead of blaming each spouse, as is common, with this misunderstanding of gender response to being in love, each spouse can appreciate why the differences occur of being in love and expressing it, or not expressing it, as the case may be.

We revert to hunter/gatherer attitudes to understand this more fully. Man has been on a conquest to secure a person to love. He will seldom share his emotional feelings of being in love with his fellow hunters for fear of showing vulnerability and, perhaps, emotional weakness. Man must appear strong and invincible. In comparison, his woman gathers all the wonderful emotional feelings of being in love and shares them openly with her fellow female gatherers who encourage and support her emotionally.

Women share their emotions while men shut them down for fear of appearing weak. This has not changed through the millennia of a patriarchal world and must be understood and accepted by both genders.

Interestingly, since the 1960s, with the contraceptive pill giving women the choice of falling pregnant, women's role in society is changing. Better education and better paying job opportunities have begun to level the gender playing fields. In a relationship, especially a marriage or similar, a man's role is becoming an equal footing of childminding and rearing and more domestic-related work in the home. The statistics above showed that where both parents worked full time, and when men did not assist meaningfully in their home with children and domestic chores, the average divorce rate went from 50% to 97%.

Man may be showing more emotions in the past sixty years, but inherently he will revert to being a hunter and protectively hiding his emotions in a more stressful marital situation.

A couple that prays together stays together

For those with a spiritual or religious attitude towards life, have you ever considered saying a morning prayer of gratitude to the God of your understanding? Expressing gratitude for all the blessings in your life, which you can choose to enumerate. Expressing thanks for the challenges, obstacles, problems too. Stating that these so-called negative issues are potential springboards for your growth.

In the evening, before retiring to bed, I suggest that you say your prayers again, but this time identify what transpired during the day that aided and abetted your growth to become a better version of yourself. You can conclude by stating your gratitude for your blessings, which you can enumerate again. When praying to the God of your understanding, your focus must be one of appreciation and gratitude. Perhaps, even the appreciation and gratitude of something or someone, yet to manifest in your life.

By stating your appreciation and gratitude for some future issue, you create its manifestation in Spirit with your Unseen Friends. They can only work on Love-based issues as there is no ego-based fear in Spirit. When the timing is seen to be correct

from the perspective of Spirit, the issue will manifest on earth. Here we must learn to TRUST- To Rely Upon Spirit's Timing.

Now I know I have been stating that you must be self-centred and only focus on becoming the best version of yourself and not having any expectations of your spouse. However, depending on your spouse's religious or spiritual beliefs being similar to yours, may I suggest you broach the subject with them to say these prayers together, one at a time, out loud, every morning and evening. This is true vulnerability and shared non-physical intimacy.

This togetherness in prayer will be great healing and growth for you, your spouse, and your relationship. How could either of you go to bed in a bad mood after saying your prayers together? More likely, this showing of vulnerability and surrender to God's Will together should enhance your intimacy and trust in each other and your relationship. Such surrender is faith that the power of Love will guide your marriage, and you will be devoid of experiencing the Id/ "bad" ego-based love of power in your marriage.

If you are both into meditation and the timing suits you both, then meditating together should further enhance your spiritual experience as both parties, Guides and Guardian Angels could enhance this sacred space you are in.

Another angle on understanding what Love is

We meet someone somewhere, and we feel an attraction towards them. This attraction may be at a physical level or at a soul level where we recognise a Soul Mate. The physical level of attraction usually sparks a relationship, and when people get to know each other, the attraction remains or dissipates in time. When Soul Mates meet each other, the connection is much stronger as a Soul Contract comes into play. This Soul Contract is not about happiness only and is more likely to be about growth in both parties' souls.

What we call love is usually infatuation and lust. We want the other party for our reasons, most of which are ego-based. We tend to look at the other party through rose-coloured glasses seeing only what we want to see and not what we need to see about them. The saying that "love is blind" becomes a reality at this time in the budding relationship.

When we realise what we want from them, we counterbalance what we can offer them in exchange. Both parties may want this relationship to blossom into love and marriage, so they put on their best appearances in all areas of their lives. There is a mental math arrangement taking place in both party's minds. I have this to offer, and they have that to give me. We call this love, but, in reality, it's an exchange of offer and acceptance by both parties. When we say, "I love you," are we not saying, "I offer you?"

Now that may be a bitter pill to swallow for some. But let's do some time travel for around eight years, and 50% of these marriages, so-called based on love, end badly. We arrive at the divorce proceedings where the previously loving couple is only intent on splitting assets, possible payment of alimony, and, possibly, resolving how the children's time is to be shared between the soon-to-be-divorced parents. Once again, the roles of offer and acceptance are at play, and love is absent. Also absent is the Love I define and discuss below.

Let's revert to the opening statements in this book where I questioned how many marriages and long-term living together relationships were truly happy, and the couple was "best friends continually longing to be with each other." I got to 2% but was prepared to concede up to 5% of all marriages/long term relationships were truly happy unions where the couple was "best friends."

So, the love we seek and use to bind our relationships doesn't seem to have a long shelf-life much beyond the honeymoon phase. As the saying goes, "we are looking for love in all the wrong places." We are looking for love when we should be looking for Love!

This distinction is vital to understand. The Love I refer to is 'All That Is,' the Beloved who is Love. The love we thought we were after was an attraction, infatuation, lust, physical intimacy, and maybe even vulnerability of intimacy of trust between the parties. It could also be offer and acceptance of needs and wants of both parties, masquerading as love.

God is Love, and Love is 'All That Is.' As a Soul, we are a part of God, and at the soul level, we are Love too. When we come to earth as a Soul within a chosen body, we encounter the Id/ "bad" ego, Ego, and Super-Ego as defined in this book and enumerated by Sigmund Freud. We are now a combination of Id/ "bad" ego, Ego, Super-Ego, and Love.

In terms of our relationship, we usually ask what is best for me to get out of this relationship? We should be asking our partner what is best for you and our relationship?

Our life's progress is now dependent upon which of these four elements of Id/"bad" ego, Ego, Super-Ego, and Love we allow to dominate our thoughts, words, actions, and attitudes at any time, or more specifically, in every moment of now.

I have underlined this paragraph because therein lies a truth unknown consciously by most people. Living a life based on the Id/ "bad" ego domination will see success as measured in material terms and terms of so-called power over others. The Ego, implying the "good" ego, will see a more balanced life between the Id/ "bad" ego and the Super Ego. The Super-Ego is coming closer to Love and desires goodwill to all.

Love, as in God is Love, and Love is 'All That Is,' determines 'proper success.' I define 'proper success' as real self-satisfaction of our mind, heart, and soul by being the most loving we can be towards ourselves and everything else in this world and beyond this world.

Life is quite simple when the above three paragraphs are fully understood and implemented.

So, the love you seek in your relationship can only come from being Love and not from being Id/ "bad" ego, Ego, or even Super-Ego. You cannot plant Id/ "bad" ego, Ego, or Super-Ego in the ground of a relationship and expect to reap Love. Only Love planted in the ground of a relationship will reap Love. This Love is the absence of fear, as fear is Id/ "bad" ego-based, and fear cannot exist where Love is present as Love is soul-based. Your Soul does not know fear, as Love and Light cannot know darkness.

The only way you can experience true love is via Being Love. Such Love is the best version of yourself that you can be and remain consistent in doing so.

It sounds so simple, doesn't it.?

Now, when you can bring that consistent best version of yourself, being as Godlike as possible, into a relationship, and your partner does the same, then you will experience the Love of your two Souls intertwining within the heart of God, who is within you both. You will both know the Unity of God/Love. You will not only experience Love, but you will Be Love too.

This Love has no limited shelf life; it is immortal and eternal because our Love-based Souls are immortal and eternal. When we return to Spirit after our journey to earth this time around, the Love we experience on earth in this way is the Love we will know in Spirit with all our Soul Mates. In Spirit, we are all bathed in Love and Light

from the Source of such Love and Light. Experiencing this Love on earth by replacing our Id/ “bad” ego, Ego, and Super-Ego with Love, is a real bonus as we can use our bodies, emotions, and sensual attributes to fully experience this Love and Light while on earth. This is Nirvana, both physical and spiritual blending of Love and Light.

While our ego-based self judges success as winning or losing, our soul-based self-assessment of success is based on being Loving. Our soul-based assessment of failure is based on failing to be Loving. In Spirit, where we spend most of our eternity, being Loving on earth elevates our vibrational energy towards the Source of Love and Light. Failing to be Loving on earth sees our vibrational energy lowering, and we find ourselves further away from the Source of Love and Light.

Isn't it funny? On earth, we allow our Id/ “bad” ego full reign, and we accumulate so-called victories and shiny objects, and we believe we have power over others. In terms of perspective, we are like ants in an anthill, believing that what we are building is so vitally important. Fifty yards above ground level, the anthill is not even visible, let alone relevant. For this reason, in Spirit, we are not assessed by what we have done on earth, but **how** we did it. Did we do it with Love towards all, or without Love towards all? Did we do it with fear towards all? That is what many would call Judgement Day in Heaven.

There is a sure-fire way to become such Love. That is to ask, every time we have a choice to make- “What would Love/God do now?”- and do it.

Ancient Egyptians believed that when you arrived as a Soul at the Afterlife portals, you were asked two questions: Did you bring joy to others? Did you receive joy from others?

LOVE- Let Our Vibrations Elevate

CHOICE- Can Help Overcome I Change Energy

CHOICE- Courageously Helping Oneself In Choosing Elevation

Problem-solving in a marriage

The easiest way to resolve a relationship issue problem is to identify where the Id/ "bad" ego is at play and replace it with Love. Now that may sound very "goody-two-shoes," but it's the shortcut to where you are going to end up if your marriage is to be classified as a great marriage, being 2-5% of all marriages.

If you do not replace Id/ "bad" ego with Love, you are both likely to say and do things you will regret and possibly scar the relationship while allowing your Id/ "bad" egos to reign and your souls take a back seat.

As explained earlier, the issue you are dealing with is likely to be the effect and not the cause of this relationship issue. The cause is likely to be the resentment of a deeper issue buried by one or both parties.

As stated above, you can only attend to your issues and not those of your spouse. They must find their way from fear-based Id/ "bad" ego to soul-based Love in resolving this issue currently at hand. You will have to be courageous in Being Love while they may be spewing vitriolic Id/ "bad" ego-based hatred at you.

At a vibrational soul level, you cannot deal with their negativity by being negative yourself. You cannot light the darkness with more darkness, only with light. Any negativity from your side will merely hasten the downward fall as the negative vibrations accelerate disharmony and imbalance within the relationship.

You must align your Soul's vibrational energy with your Higher Self/Soul and with your Higher Power and become Love/Oneness. You must focus your vibrational energy on the solution to the problem and not on the problem itself. By focusing on the problem, you simply expand its negative importance in your relationship. By focusing on the solution, you and your spouse help elevate your vibrational energy levels to become more Love-based.

Although I have stated throughout this book that you must focus on yourself and not have any expectations about your spouse, there is one exception to this rule-positive vibrational expectations.

Focus on your spouse's successful attributes, not on what they or you perceive to be their failures or the failure of your marriage. Silently focus on already seeing and appreciating what you would like your spouse to be, even though they are not currently so. Your silent focus on seeing and appreciating these issues, not currently in vision, will bring them into being. Your spouse will respond to what you appreciate

about them now and the unspoken appreciation of what you would like them to become. This appreciation will be experienced at an unseen vibrational energy level, and the *Law of Attraction* will manifest it in time. Focusing on what works and not on what doesn't work, you will vibrationally attract more of what works and less of what doesn't work. And so, will your spouse.

Albert Einstein stated, "*we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them.*"

The historical pattern of "tit-for-tat" relationship problems poison the well from which you both drink. Become Love and be solutions focused on expanding your horizons and experiences and raising both your vibrational energy levels in the process.

Being happy is a personal issue and not a relationship one

Whether you are happy or not has nothing to do with anyone else but you. If you are not happy within yourself, then no relationship is going to make you happy. If your vibrational energy is focused on what's wrong with your life and not on appreciation and gratitude for what is right in your life, no other person can save you from your negativity. The *Law of Attraction* states that Like will attract Like. Unhappiness will attract unhappiness, and happiness will attract happiness into your life.

Happiness is an inside job. There is a spiritual solution to find happiness within you. It requires you to move from Id/ "bad" ego-based fear towards soul-based Love. When you know that God is Love, that you are part of God, that God is within you, and that you are Love too, then the happiness door is found within you.

By aligning your soul with your Higher Self/Soul and with your Higher Power, you become a much higher vibrational energy Being- you may become Oneness. The way to do this is often repeated in this book and all my writings. At every choice you make, ask yourself, "what would God/Love do now?" and do that. Your inner happiness door will open wide, and you will discover not only happiness but joy and bliss too. Expressing appreciation and gratitude continually for all you have and experience will maintain this happiness within.

Do you think that any person can create happiness, joy, and bliss for you in a relationship? Maybe they can do so during the infatuation phase, possibly even in the honeymoon phase of a relationship, but it's very unlikely after that. If they do, then you are at their mercy. They control your happiness strings and can let go at any time.

It's best for you and your spouse that each party develops and sustains their own happiness within, and both bring that positive and uplifting vibrational energy to the relationship.

Begin the search for happiness within through faith in your Higher Power and with sincere appreciation and gratitude for all you have in your life. This will elevate your vibrational energy as Like will attract Like vibrational energy. Bringing that elevated vibrational energy into a relationship creates fertile ground to allow your inner happiness, joy, and bliss to bless your union.

Children in a marriage and a divorce

Your child is not a child in Soul terms

Most people erroneously think that a child in a physical body is a child in Soul terms. Nothing could be further from the truth. I have already touched on this earlier in this book and will expand upon it here in marriage and divorce.

As stated before, I have written a free book on personalempowerment.co entitled *Unfolding Your Child- A Spiritual Approach to Parenting*. The book's early stages explain selected Soul Mates' roles within your Soul Group to be in specifically chosen bodies born to you or your Soul Mate. In Spirit, in terms of Soul Contracts, these Souls have agreed to be born as your children in their next visit to the earth plane of existence. The Souls could have been playing different roles in your other lifetimes. Perhaps they were your grandparent, sibling, parent, cousin, best friend, worst enemy, and so on.

The important fact I am attempting to make is that they are not childlike souls but mature and experienced souls who have lived countless lifetimes on earth, as you have. Hopefully, this will open your eyes to see beyond their physical bodies and

search for their Souls. By recognising their Soul and acknowledging its maturity and experience as your Soul Mate of equal standing, your attitude and approach to your child should change dramatically for the betterment of you and your entire family.

When you have one-on-one time with your child, either when they are awake or asleep, silently ask them, at soul level, what they are here to teach you? If they are sleeping, close your eyes and deeply breathe until you begin to meditate. In this meditation, speak silently to your child's soul and see if you can feel a connection. As repeated often, feelings are the language of your soul. Whether you experience a connection or not, asking them what they are here to teach you will open you up to your Unseen Friends in Spirit and perhaps your child's Guides too.

This process reverses the conventional roles of adult/ child to adult/adult at soul level. The interesting thing you may experience is that your child, at a physical level, becomes calmer, more self-assured, more responsive, and more respectful as a consequence of you treating them as an adult at a soul level. This could occur immaterial of their age in physical terms.

My acronym for AGE is Always Growing Evolving. In spiritual terms, being mindful of AGE, you begin to realise and accept that as souls on earth, and in Spirit, this is our eternal objective- to AGE- Always Growing Evolving.

I often remark in my various free books about how issues on earth are usually the opposite of how they are perceived in Spirit. For example, I have already used the example of success and failure in terms of Spiritual understanding, which is based on giving love, or failing to give love, whereas in earth terms, winning and losing determine success and failure.

Applying AGE to ourselves and our children changes the dynamic, especially when we feel exasperated as parents at our child's behaviour. When we look at our children, we must continually ask what they are here to teach us at this moment. We may feel happy about them at this moment, or we may feel frustrated beyond belief at what they are doing, or not doing, that we asked them to do. Whatever the issue, the real question is, what are you trying to teach me at this moment about myself and for the growth of my eternal Soul? What mirror are you reflecting on me about myself? Frequently, tolerance, patience, respect, and the need to show unconditional love, instead of what I am feeling right now, is the lesson you are teaching me.

This is not a selfish approach to life but a self-centred one. As stated earlier, the only person you can change, and hopefully improve upon, is yourself. Now, you may think that you can change your spouse or your child, but you cannot. You can only provide an example of your behaviour for them to learn from, either positively or negatively. Children may not listen to you, but they will virtually always emulate your behaviour.

And now we come to the real issue of children in your marriage and or your divorce. Children are not to be moulded by you but are to be unfolded by you.

Each child has agreed, via their Soul Contracts, to come to earth as a Soul within a chosen body to specific parents and families. Each child is different and has their reasons for AGE- Always Growing Evolving- for being on earth this time. Within them, and you, are unseen “game plans” of what they have chosen to experience, and to do, to heal the “holes within their souls.” Your Soul Contract with them is for you to AGE as well. In Spirit, when conceiving these game plans of Soul Contracts, you and the Soul Mate, who has become your child in this lifetime, both agreed to assist each other in this quest of AGE.

The above explanation may be difficult to absorb and comprehend if this is the first time you have been exposed to this understanding. If this is the case, I would recommend that you wrap your head around this before reading further. Take as much time as you need to unwrap this amazing gift and to understand it fully. I do not want to sound immodest by describing this understanding as an amazing gift. It is not coming from me to you, but through me to you, aided and abetted by my Spiritual Guides writing through me. Today happens to be Christmas Day in 2020, and that is why I think my Guides have used the term- amazing gift?

Once you can look beyond your child’s physical and mental states and see them as equal Souls, you should then see your parental role as not moulding your child but enabling and allowing them to unfold. You are not likely to attempt to mould someone of your age, in physical terms on earth, so why attempt to do it to your child? Your child is your Spiritual equal in terms of AGE.

Of course, you have certain parental rights and obligations to raise your child. You must protect and provide for them to the best of your ability. You must teach them important and valuable life lessons. You must ensure they receive an education that you can afford to provide for them, and so on.

The real question is whether you teach them with soul-based Love or with ego-based fear? I believe that this is the kernel of your Soul Contract with them. Whether they learn about soul-based Love or ego-based fear, that choice will determine which path they venture in their life.

Understanding your child's evolvment and character development

Here are two views on these points to get a better understanding of your child's evolution and character development. I have included both points of view in *Unfolding Your Child- A Spiritual Approach to Parenting*:

I often quote Kahlil Gibran in *The Prophet*, who said it best:

*Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of Life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you, yet they belong not to you.*

*You may give them your love but not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies but not their souls,
For their souls, dwell in the house of tomorrow,
which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
but seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.*

*You are the bows from which your children
as living arrows are sent forth.
The Archer sees the mark upon the path of the infinite,
and He bends you with His might
that His arrows may go swift and far.
Let your bending in the Archer's hand be for gladness;
For even as He loves the arrow that flies,
so He loves also the bow that is stable.*

I also often quote *Children Learn what they Live* by Dorothy Law Nolte.

Children Learn What They Live

By Dorothy Law Nolte, Ph.D.

*If children live with criticism, they learn to condemn.
If children live with hostility, they learn to fight.
If children live with fear, they learn to be apprehensive.
If children live with pity, they learn to feel sorry for themselves.
If children live with ridicule, they learn to feel shy.
If children live with jealousy, they learn to feel envy.
If children live with shame, they learn to feel guilty.
If children live with encouragement, they learn confidence.*

*If children live with tolerance, they learn patience.
If children live with praise, they learn appreciation.
If children live with acceptance, they learn to love.
If children live with approval, they learn to like themselves.
If children live with recognition, they learn it is good to have a goal.
If children live with sharing, they learn generosity.
If children live with honesty, they learn truthfulness.
If children live with fairness, they learn justice.
If children live with kindness and consideration, they learn respect.
If children live with security, they learn to have faith in themselves and in those about them.
If children live with friendliness, they learn the world is a nice place in which to live.*

Copyright © 1972 by Dorothy Law Nolte

I was fortunate to have found this poem in 1978 and framed and presented it to a recently born nephew. Of course, it was for his parents as a continual reminder. I have long prized these sentiments for over 42 years. As an employer for over four decades, family member, parent, and friend, I have used this poem's words to guide me in dealing with most people who have walked my path with me in this lifetime.

Dorothy Nolte identifies 19 issues in her wonderful contribution to the unfolding of children. The first seven are negative attributes with their repercussions. The remaining twelve are positive attributes and resulting understandings, practices, and beliefs. I see these 19 attributes as the building blocks in the character development of a child.

Can life be so simple?

Suppose one family's children were brought up with criticism, hostility, fear, pity, ridicule, jealousy, and shame? Would they have low self-esteem and a damaged self-image? Would they be apprehensive and fearful of life, feel shy, have self-pity, be a victim, be envious of others, be guilty about their behavior, would they condemn others, would they be angry, aggressive and fight their way through life?

Regrettably, those found guilty of crimes and punished accordingly seem to fit this bill. Others, yet to be caught and punished, also exhibit such character traits. The lack of Love in their lives is obvious as they feel separate from the God of their understanding or non-acceptance of such a Higher Power in their lives.

The major reasons for divorce expounded about in the early part of this book: lack of commitment, argue too much, infidelity, married too young, unrealistic expectations, lack of equality in the marriage, lack of marriage preparation, domestic violence, and abuse may also be laid at the door of one or more of these first seven negative attributes of the above poem.

I would suggest that the estimated 45% of “get-along” marriages identified in the early part of this book are also possibly the fault of one or more of these seven negative attributes negatively affecting their marriage’s happiness and growth.

Certainly, the causes of war and many of the soldiers ever keen to fight, maim and kill other mothers’ children of the opposing forces have their roots embedded in one or more of these seven negative attributes in the above poem.

Does your family have one or more of these seven negative attributes present in your home? Does your family have the 12 positive attributes of this poem ever-present in your home?

The unfolding of your children using these 12 positive attributes is the greatest gift you could ever give them. These are strong character-building foundation stones for them to have as their compass to guide them through their lives.

I reproduce below the Contents page from *Unfolding Your Child- A Spiritual Approach to Parenting*. This will indicate why I believe that if you want to manage your children best in terms of a marriage or a divorce, reading this free book will be invaluable for you and your children.

Unfolding Your Child- A Spiritual Approach to Parenting

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Some of the many ways to damage your child
Treat your child as the miracle that they are
Encourage your child to be a human being, not a human doing
Being present is the solution to every issue or problem you face
Touch is the unspoken word

Are you paying attention to your phone or your child?
Your child's worth is not measured by their achievements
Service with a smile
An abundance mentality
Prejudice, hate, bigotry, and racism are learned initially in the home
There is nothing your child can't-do and be
Let's play think outside the box
Don't rush to solve your child's problem
What do you value about yourself, my child?
Simply be yourself; everyone else is taken
Where does your happiness come from?
It's time to talk to your Higher Power
Saying Grace
Can you invest 30 minutes a day in your child?
Embrace the uncertainty of life
I don't know, why don't we look it up?
Whatever you do, do it with all your heart and soul
Is it a mistake or a retake?
Vulnerability revisited
Discover why and don't focus on what happened
The Third Way of creating solutions
Children learn what they live
What's in a name?
Rules are like railway lines
The behaviour is usually not the underlying issue
There are two relationships we have with our children
From NO to Know
It's only within you
A letter to a mother
Conclusion

As you can infer from these chapter headings above, the process of AGE- Always Growing Evolving- for both you and your child in terms of your relationship with them, as well as in terms of your marriage, separation, or divorce, will be well served by reading this free book found on personalempowerment.co

I have experiential knowledge that this book works wonders with children and parents.

Dealing with a child in emotionally fragile times

I now move onto children going through a separation or divorce. There are also invaluable lessons here for parents in a happy or get-along-marriage. However, the emphasis is on children of parents who will be separated or divorced or already are either separated or divorced.

Statistically speaking, many of your children's friends will either be going through their parent's separation or divorce or already living with one separated or divorced parent. Your children may feel insecure and need reassurance from you at these emotionally fragile times. Additionally, you may be the adult that a child from another marriage, separation, or divorce turns to for guidance and support in these emotionally charged times in their lives.

Forewarned is forearmed.

Give your parent Love

We sometimes forget that children at certain ages do not have the mental ability to process and understand that their parents have marital issues and that a separation or divorce may occur.

Regrettably, many, if not most parents, involve their children in these marital issues that confuse the children and attempt to tear them away from the other parent. Their world is rocked. Their emotions are conflicted as they are exposed to adult issues while being ill-equipped emotionally and mentally to process what this means for them and their world's stability. Witnessing or hearing loud arguments, and maybe even being present through verbal and possibly physical abuse of one or both parents, is emotionally scarring for these children.

Further damage is inflicted upon them as one parent or both try to manipulate these children to support a parent, encouraging the children to think badly about their estranged spouse. These children are likely to have felt love from this parent. Now they are being told how horrible this parent is. Possibly the parent doing the manipulation, even discloses issues and events their spouse has done. Immature minds cannot fully understand these incidents. Additionally, exposure to lurid details being spewed out by the manipulative parent can affect this child now and, in the future, when it's time for them to select a spouse in their lives. This manipulative poisoning of a child's mind is generational and far-reaching.

Every attack is a subconscious call for Love. Every negative incident undertaken is because the person feels separated from God within them and allows and enables their fear-based ego to determine their thoughts, words, and actions.

If God is All That Is, and if God is Love, then Love is All That Is. Whatever is not Love as a thought, word or action must be ego-based fear.

In the case of marital disharmony of any description, I believe that the correct call for a parent to make to their child and themselves about the other parent is to say, “give your father or mother Love.” Nothing more needs to be said about their other parent. By giving the child a message that Love is the only answer and solution, not only are you assisting them in terms of the current marital issue, but you are giving them an invaluable life lesson to give Love as a solution to any issue in their lives.

I adopted this approach and experientially know that it works well.

Telling a child of a pending separation or divorce

When you tell your child or children that you are separating or divorcing, both parents must do it together. It is important that if you have more than one child that all your children are present at this very emotionally fragile time. Having the support of siblings should assist the emotional blows they will feel. No matter the parents' discord, it is essential to show your children some form of a united front at this sensitive, emotional time in their lives. Both parents must use the word “we” to reinforce their child or children's mutual parental support.

Some children will ask questions, and some won't ask at the outset. Prepare your narrative together and stick to generalities and not specifics about the reasons behind your decision.

“We have tried to fix the issues we have, but we haven't been able to.”

“Sometimes, adults grow apart from each other and want more freedom and independence to expand their lives. However, your lives will stay the same, and you will live with Mom or Dad in this home for now.”

“If you want to talk to either of us separately or together, or if you want to talk to another adult, we can arrange that. Maybe you have a favourite uncle or aunt or family friend or a Guidance Teacher at school, or even a trained Therapist dealing with children in a divorce that you want to see. Please let us know, and we will arrange it. We will arrange or organize this at a pace that suits you.”

“We both love you very much and want to ensure you are as little affected by this as possible. Please let us know if you want to talk or you want us to listen either together or separately.”

“Many families go through a divorce of the parents, but no family goes through the divorce of a child or children. This is an adult issue, and we will not allow you to be hurt in any way. We love you and are so thankful to have you in our lives. Whether we live in one home, or two, our love for you will only get even stronger.”

I have experiential knowledge of these approaches and know they work well.

This is not your fault

The lack of emotional and mental maturity of a child, especially when their world revolves around them, often results in them imagining that they are somehow responsible for their parent’s marital disharmony. If this is not corrected immediately, they could be emotionally scarred and develop an unhealthy and damaging self-image. The longer this incorrect perception is allowed to bury within their psyche, the more damage is likely to be done to them by these self-inflicted incorrect thoughts.

In the future, taking such an unhealthy self-image as an adult into their future marital relationship is regrettably likely to self-sabotage their relationship.

Children must be explained to at a level they can comprehend that their parent’s marital issue is not their fault, and both parents love them very much. Because their parents will no longer be living together does not mean that their love, protection, care, and concern for the child will be affected at all. Furthermore, it must be explained that both parents' most important job is to ensure the happiness and love of their child/children.

I will always love you wherever you live

Invariably a couple divorcing with a child or children decides, or a court decides, with whom the children should live as their primary residence. There are various permutations of living arrangements for children and young adults of divorced parents. It can be a hornet’s nest of trouble for the children and the parents, or it can be a civilized arrangement made possible by two loving parents who have the

children's best interests at heart as their primary focus. Usually, the experience is between these two extremes.

What is important for the child/children to know is that their parents love them wherever they live. At least daily verbal communication is essential between the absentee parent and their child or children. Using social media and other digital forms of messaging to children is important too, but nothing can replace the loving sound of an absentee parent's voice. The reassurance that 'out of sight is not out of mind' is very important for a child. The reassuring voice and listening ear of an absentee parent is vital daily.

Equally important is using heart emoticons on digital-related messages. Additionally, telling your child or children every time you speak to them that you love them is also reassuring.

Never be too busy with anyone, or anything, when your child calls you. Usually, those calls are ones requiring reassurance that you care for them and love them. Being unavailable to talk and listen and request them to leave a message is not acceptable. If need be, adjust your phone to enable them to have a unique call tone and accept their call without exception. Nothing is more important for them than knowing you will be available for them, no matter what.

Extended families

A separation or divorce will impact your spouse's extended family and yours. In most cases, the families will close ranks and protect their family members from the hardships involved in a separation or divorce. Relationships are likely to be strained, and family loyalties are likely to take precedence over your previous friendships and relationships with your extended families on both sides.

What is important to know is that your children's relationships with these extended families remain intact. You are required to support these relationships for your children's sake. Sometimes this is a delicate balancing act, especially if the divorce is, or was, acrimonious. However, the children's welfare supersedes your ego's needs. This is a time to "suck it up" and keep a smile on your face. In time, the emotions on all sides simmer down, and the practical issues of life with in-laws and others in your ex-spouses extended family should return to relative normalcy if you excuse the pun!

Wherever possible, encourage your extended family to maintain a healthy relationship with your ex-spouse and their extended family. Ensure that none of your

extended family members 'bad mouth' your spouse, especially not in front of your children. Two adults are getting divorced, not whole clans!

Reduce the casualties of the divorce

Children can easily become collateral damage of a bad separation or divorce and the casualties of such a breakup. Irresponsible parenting during a marital breakup, separation, or divorce can leave children emotionally damaged and emotionally scarred. Suppose one or both parents are irresponsible in their words and actions about their spouse, ex-spouse, extended families, or children. This could do irreparable damage to these impressionable young minds and bodies.

Immaterial of the contractual divorce arrangements, if your children need to see or speak to your ex-spouse for any reason, ensure you enable this to occur. Your week, my week, your weekend, my weekend is all immaterial. Only your child's needs are important to be met and complied with. If your child does not want to go to their other parent, it is important to understand and support them and establish the underlying reason. Often, the cause may be that their other parent has a new relationship partner, and, sometimes, the new partner has children who threaten your child in some way. If this is the case, or for any other reason, you need to discuss this with your ex-spouse as rationally as possible to find a resolution to your child's needs.

Rule no. 1 - give your child or children Love always, and in all ways.

Rule no. 2 – your child or children's needs, welfare, and wellbeing come first, second, and third.

Rule no. 3 - reread and apply Rule no.1 and 2- forever!

Revisiting the 18 specific people and relationships affected by your marriage or separation or divorce

At the outset, I identified 18 specific people and relationships likely to be affected by marriage, a possible separation, or divorce. About halfway through this book, I re-introduced and expanded on this growth potential. Now I re-introduce those people and relationships again with the comments used before, plus some other relevant comments. My intention is for you to review each possible person and relationship and contemplate your approach in the light of all the information you have read to date in this book.

The focus here is on your choices in each likely relationship for enhanced happiness and growth for the people involved in the interconnectivity of a marriage, a possible separation, or divorce.

People

1. There is growth of individuals pre-marriage, during the marriage, and post possible marriage/separation,
2. growth of those in a marriage without a separation/divorce,
3. growth of any children in a marriage without a separation/divorce
4. growth of those adults going through a separation/divorce,
5. growth of those adults post-separation/divorce,
6. growth of any children of the separated marriage/divorce,
7. growth of parent/s of their child, now an adult, going through a separation/divorce, or post-divorce.
8. growth of any siblings and their possible children affected by a family-related separation/divorce,
9. growth of other family and friends affected by a separation/divorce of someone they care about.
10. growth of co-workers of someone going through a divorce or post-divorce

Relationships

11. There is a relationship between you and your partner pre-marriage, one during the marriage and one, possibly, through a separation/divorce, and post-divorce.
12. There is a relationship during the divorce and post-divorce with your spouse/ex-spouse.
13. There is a relationship during the divorce and post-divorce with any possible child/children of your marriage.
14. Your ex-spouse or you may obtain sole, joint, or partial custody of your child/children. Limited time by any parent with your child/children will require a change in the structure of a relationship from a family unit living under one roof.
15. There may be a relationship post the divorce with your ex-spouse's possible new relationship partner/spouse, and possibly any children from their previous marriage/s.
16. There may be a relationship between you and your possible new partner/spouse, their child/children, their first family parents, and possibly their ex-spouse too.
17. There may be a relationship between your child/children and your possible new partner/spouse and any of their children.
18. There may be a relationship between your child/children and your ex-spouse's new partner/spouse and any of their children from a previous marriage.

As can be seen from the examples of relationships above, stresses, pressures, obstacles, challenges, as well as new opportunities are likely to emerge from what is

becoming a spider web of interconnectivity of people, most of whom you may not have chosen to be in a relationship with.

As always, you have a choice to either accept or reject your existing marriage partner, or if you are already separated or divorced, then to accept or reject these new relationships. Either way, you will experience growth at various levels of your being.

As stated before, but to recap:

Let's try a hypothetical experiment. Select one example from the People category and one from the Relationship category above.

Now let's assume that you are as close to unconditionally loving as you can be, and you allow and embrace those people and relationships you have chosen. Imagine how you would behave towards them if you embraced them as your best friend. Imagine how they would react to such soul-based Love from you.

The next experiment is to reverse that and imagine if you resisted them as people, as well as the relationship you have selected, with as much fear-based ego, hatred, and enmity you could spew at them. How are you likely to feel within you, and how are they likely to react towards you?

Now let's look at your mental health position in both hypothetical scenarios, and after that, your physical health position reacting to either soul-based Love or ego-based fear. In the light of this choice, let's look at your relationship with your child/children. Let's also look at your psychological position and your financial position when you choose to come from soul-based Love or ego-based fear.

Can you begin to see that your thoughts create the reality of your mental, physical, health, psychological, and financial positions through this process? Your child/children and their relationship with you are also affected by your choice of coming from soul-based Love or ego-based fear.

Can you also realise that your opportunity to grow and be happy as a human being and as a Spiritual Being is directly linked to whether you are coming from soul-based Love or ego-based fear throughout this process?

Your growth and happiness are in your hands, and more specifically, in your thoughts, words, and actions. Your spouse/ex-spouse, children, and anyone else does not determine your future happiness and growth; only you do through the attitude you adopt and the thought processes after that followed by your chosen words and actions.

This website's name is personalempowerment.co. This is what personal empowerment is- the ability to choose your attitude, your attitudinal response, and your resulting thoughts, words, and action to create the reality you will experience.

You are the creator of your life. If you have a spiritual base in your life, you may also know that God within you is the Co-Creator of your life.

I trust revisiting this earlier section, now at the end of this book, has made you more conscious of the happiness and growth opportunities being presented by your marriage, possible separation, or divorce.

Next, I will revisit what I opened this book with- Would you like a marriage like this?

Revisiting- Would you like a marriage like this?

I began this book by asking if you would like a marriage as spelled out below:

To wake in the morning and feel loved by your partner.

To feel appreciated for who you are.

To not have any expectations imposed upon you from your partner.

To feel accepted fully by your partner.

To be praised and not criticized or judged by your partner.

To share fulfilling physical intimacy and feel loved by your partner.

To share emotional intimacy and feel respected and trusted by your partner.

To be shown kindness, care, and concern by your partner.

To be easily forgiven by your partner for any lapses in your choices or judgements.

To know tolerance and patience from your partner.

To not feel controlled or manipulated in any way by your partner.

To be fully listened to and heard by your partner.

To share a similar sense of humour with your partner, often laugh with them, and have fun with them.

To desire to be with your partner and long for their return when you are apart.

To experience happiness, joy, bliss, and even some form of unconditional love with your partner.

To go to sleep with a prayer for your beloved partner on your lips.

I then asked:

Is this possible?

And then answered:

It is. However, the door for this marital happiness, joy, bliss, and growth has a latch that can only be opened from the inside. It all starts with you. My intention in writing this free book is to explain how to achieve this desired state for you, your partner, and your marriage.

Hopefully, by reading this book, you now have a better understanding that whatever you require within your marriage first must come from you, unconditionally. You must be the best version of yourself in your thoughts, words, and actions.

The easiest way to do this is to ask, “what would Love do now?” and do that.

As simple as this sounds, providing you do it unconditionally, and by that, I mean without any expectations of your spouse’s thoughts, words, and actions, in reaction or response, then you have laid the bedrock for both happiness and growth in your marriage.

Instead of throwing in the towel on your marriage and going through the pain and consequences of separation and divorce by allowing your Id/ “bad” ego to run your life, please try using “what would Love do now?” and applying it.

As stated earlier, if you do this for a month and there is no positive reaction or response from your spouse, there is usually an underlying cause that a trained therapist may be able to identify and resolve with you both in attendance.

If there is a positive reaction or response from your spouse, understand the fragility of this new shoot emerging from your relationship's soil. You need to cultivate this new shoot and encourage it to grow. Keep on coming from “what would Love do now? You may have to woo your spouse as you did at the beginning of your relationship and during its honeymoon phase. Ensure you do not put a foot wrong as you apply all your energy to rebuild your relationship in love and with Love.

You will be tested to see if this “new” you, coming from Love, can be trusted. This is not a competition to see who wins or who loses. Keep coming unconditionally from Love. In time, and each renewing relationship has a different period of readjustment, the Love seeds will flower, and your marriage will be happier and stronger through this period of growth for you, your spouse, and your relationship.

Hopefully, you will both experience the “continual longing to be together that best friends know.”

Conclusion

In terms of AGE- Always Growing Evolving- your relationship and marriage may have begun with happiness but are likely to be focused on the growth you have experienced through the relationship, marriage, possibly having children, possible separation, or divorce.

I recently took part in a digital Memorial Service for an 80-year-old friend of mine’s 78-year-old wife who passed on from COVID-19 complications. They had been very happily married for 52 years. She was not only a wonderful wife, mother, and friend to many, but a deeply religious person and a well-renowned artist as well. Listening to my deeply religious friend eulogizing his beloved wife and knowing him for over 40 years, I heard such pride and unconditional love in his voice. This was a marriage made in heaven, and over 52 years, they experienced being blessed with a marriage and a family home creating heaven on earth.

They knew both happiness and growth, and with their marriage and family, deeply steeped in their religious faith, they had a bedrock to build their heaven on earth.

I trust you have benefitted from reading this book, and hopefully, you will put some of its principles and lessons into practice to increase your happiness and growth, personally and in any relationships you have.

To finish on a lighter note, today is the 21st day of the 21st year of the 21st Century.



In Love and Light

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Johannesburg
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January 21, 2021