

# THE MARRIAGE MANUAL



*Helping couples increase self-awareness and self-acceptance, strengthen coping skills, face problems with a positive attitude, and reach their full potential.*

**BY  
LEE COBLEIGH**

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## A JOURNEY OF PERSONAL DISCOVERY

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*Marriage is the foundation of the family, and the family is the foundation of society. If we strengthen marriage, we strengthen the family, we strengthen our children, and we strengthen the community. If your goal is to help improve the world, marriage is a good place to start.*

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## THE MARRIAGE MANUAL



**The Marriage Manual** is designed to provide a personal perspective to couples or individuals considering marriage.

**The Marriage Manual** will encourage and help couples to build a better understanding and foundation for their married life. The decision to marry and to maintain a loving relationship require understanding the dynamics of marriage and how your choices will affect your marriage.

**The Marriage Manual** is based upon the reality that it's important to strengthen your relationship and to prepare constructively for future challenges and conflicts which every couple will inevitably face at some point in their marriage.

**The Marriage Manual** provides couples with the necessary time to learn, discover, and discuss specific matters. The earlier a couple begins spending time and energy on their relationship, the better their chances are of having a happy, fulfilling, and successful marriage.

**The Marriage Manual** offers special reading and homework activities, which are designed to encourage couples and help assist the couple by building a better understanding and foundation for their married life.

**It is never too late to talk about your expectations of marriage and of the understanding you have of yourself and each other.** Just a little effort can make your odds a whole lot better for success over the long run. You want to do everything you can to ensure that your dreams of a great marriage, and a great life are realized.

# **THE MARRIAGE MANUAL**

## **PART ONE**

### **THE MARRIAGE CONNECTION**



HAPPINESS IN MARRIAGE IS NOT SOMETHING THAT JUST HAPPENS. A GOOD MARRIAGE MUST BE CREATED. IT IS NOT ONLY MARRYING THE RIGHT PARTNER; IT IS BEING THE RIGHT PARTNER.

## **MARRIAGE**

Marriage results inevitably from there being two sexes of opposite polarities, strongly attracted to one another. Marriage is the basis of social evolution without which society cannot progress. Marriage created the home, the crowning glory of social evolution. The family is where the child learns most of what that individual will ever know about life.

## **FINDING THE RIGHT PARTNER**

WHO YOU ARE AS A SINGLE PERSON, YOU WILL BE AS A MARRIED PERSON, ONLY TO A GREATER DEGREE. ANY POSITIVE CHARACTER TRAIT WILL BE INTENSIFIED IN A MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP, AS WILL ALL THE NEGATIVE ONES.

If you are looking for your right partner, the important thing to remember is that common underlying feelings and ideals will always draw like-minded people together.

While searching for your life partner it is important to recognize that the person you are with is supportive of your efforts to grow and evolve, and is willing to support each other in accomplishing your common goals.

The purpose of a relationship is not for two incomplete people to become one, but rather for two complete people to join together for the greater good.

A marriage must be a whole relationship, one that is based on the wholeness of each person, not just on their personalities. It must be based on mutual respect, understanding, and acceptance of each other.

It is very romantic to say that once your special other has entered your life you feel complete. However, the purpose of a relationship is not to have another who might complete you, but to have another with whom you might share your completeness.

## **NEED FULFILLMENT**

Some people still enter relationships for the wrong reasons, to end loneliness, or have someone to love. This kind of mutual meeting of needs is what the world usually calls love. In truth, however, such a special love relationship is founded on our perception of the other person's capacity to give us what we believe to be lacking in ourselves. **I'll trade you what you need, if you'll give me what I need.**

When human love relationships fail, it is often because the couple entered the relationship for the wrong reason. Most people enter relationships with an eye toward what they can get out of the relationship, rather than what they can put into it.

We become attracted to someone who seems to meet our needs best and they in turn are attracted to us for the same reason. Lust brings men and women together, but only parental instinct and the social mores keep them together.

Couples now face more demands and have fewer support systems than ever before. The typical complex marriage involves managing two careers while rearing children, and requires that couples have very strong, well-established abilities to communicate, resolve issues, maintain mutuality, and set goals.

**HAPPINESS IN MARRIAGE IS NOT SOMETHING THAT JUST HAPPENS; A GOOD MARRIAGE MUST BE CREATED. IT IS NOT ONLY MARRYING THE RIGHT PARTNER; IT IS *BEING* THE RIGHT PARTNER.**

**In the family life that goes with marriage, one must learn to adjust one's own temperament to that of others, who live intimately with you. This is growth in spirit.**

## **PRE- MARRIAGE PREPARATION**

### **SELF- EVALUATION**

IT IS NATURAL TO HAVE SOME ANXIETIES ABOUT MARRIAGE. COUPLES WILL HAVE MUCH MORE FULFILLING MARRIAGES WHEN THEY BEGIN TO REALIZE WHAT FACTORS INFLUENCE A HAPPY MARRIAGE. EACH FACTOR INVOLVES MANY ISSUES THAT AFFECT THE WELL-BEING OF ANY MARRIAGE.

Pre-marriage preparation is based upon the reality that it's important to strengthen your relationship and prepare constructively for future challenges and conflicts that everyone will inevitably face at some point in their marriage.

Know and understand there will be challenges and difficult times. Cultivate the technique of seeing problems as opportunities. Don't try to avoid them; see them as opportunities to GROW the relationship.

When we encounter issues that are difficult for us to deal with prior to marriage, we have a tendency to think that love will take care of the problems for us: it will be different after we get married, or I can change him or her. That doesn't usually happen. It is better to deal with issues before you get married, rather than after you're married.

Problems can intrude much more easily than most couples realize. Each factor involves many issues that affect the well-being of any marriage. A marriage is a relationship where both people must listen, compromise, and respect one another.

In a marriage relationship, individuals need to be aware of who they are and the degree to which they will commit themselves to their partner. If these factors are mutually realized and discussed by both partners, it will help ensure the success of soulmates becoming solemates for life.

## **UNDERSTANDING WHAT IS IMPORTANT (VALUED) IN A RELATIONSHIP**

Most couples believe the purpose of relationships is to make them happy, and the way to do that is to get others to adopt their value systems and act accordingly.

There are two things that other people can't and won't live up to: your values and your fantasies. **Anytime you expect someone to live outside of his or her own value system, you create a false expectation.**

The moment you project onto other people and expect them to live according to your values instead of their own, you start believing that they need to be changed, and you're just the one to do it.

Every individual has a set of values. We each have something we think is most important, second most important, third most important, and so on. The only assurance you have about whether your expectations are reasonable is to know your values and your mate's values.

During the infatuation phase, you see mostly one side of the coin, the attraction, positive traits, and potential for happily ever after- but that's delusional. Once you've lived through the infatuation stage, and the other person doesn't live up to the fantasy, you can start to resent him or her.

Your values (what you feel is important) will tend to express themselves in some or all of seven areas of life, spiritual, mental, vocational, financial, familial, social, and physical.

**What you value or what is important to you individually and as a couple will become evident later as you answer some basic questions.**



## **UNDERSTANDING YOUR RELATIONSHIP**

The test of a relationship does not have to do with how well the other person lives up to your ideals, or how you see yourself living up to his or hers. The only true test has to do with how well you live up to *your own ideals*.

There can be only one purpose for a relationship - to be and to decide - Who You Really Are. You must first learn to honor and cherish and love yourself. If you cannot love yourself, you cannot love another. You must first see yourself as worthy before you can see another as worthy.

WHEN YOU LOSE SIGHT OF EACH OTHER AS SACRED SOULS ON A SACRED JOURNEY, THEN YOU CANNOT SEE THE PURPOSE OR THE REASON BEHIND YOUR RELATIONSHIP.

Two people join in a partnership hoping that the whole will be greater than the sum of the parts, only to find that it's less. They've sometimes given up most of who they are in order to be part of and to stay in their relationship.

## **TWO HEARTS - TWO SOULS - TWO LIVES - ONE LOVE**

**Marriage is...patience and forgiveness. It's being open and honest, thoughtful and kind. Marriage means talking things out, making necessary changes, and forgiving each other. It's unconditional love - love that supports, comforts, and is determined to triumph over every challenge and adversity.**

Your wedding is more than a long-awaited day; it is a beautiful beginning of all the days of your life together. Vows are more than solemn words; they are promises made and kept within your hearts.

Most couples have approached marriage as though a single partner were responsible for fulfilling all of their emotional and physical needs. Couples often look to each other to fulfill all of their individual needs, which could be one of the reasons there are so many divorces.

Traditionally, husbands are supposed to perform certain designated acts designed to fulfill all his wife's needs, and the wife is supposed to fulfill the whole range, if not all, of her husband's needs.

Partners who project their guilt onto their partners, blame them for not fulfilling their needs, usually ends up creating an exclusive co-dependency. By expecting a particular person to be responsible for one's happiness and fulfillment, one creates a relationship that is doomed to fail.

Our marriage partner may be our soulmate, may be the one who nurtures us, may represent our best friend, and may be the channel through which our intimate needs are fulfilled. However, when the scope of a marriage is broadened, it allows for some of the needs of each partner to be fulfilled in ways their marriage partner cannot meet. This creates a (whole) marriage, and not one based on one person alone.

## **WEDDING VOWS**

**I promise to protect you... care for you... comfort you... I promise... to stand by you... when times get tough... to have faith and strength as a couple, and to never give up on us. I love you... I want to spend the rest of my life with you... and be there for you.**

**WHEN TWO PEOPLE PROMISE FAITHFULLY, LIVE HOPEFULLY, AND GIVE LOVINGLY, THEY SHARE THE GREATEST JOY IN LIFE.**

To find real happiness in life, we must develop ourselves emotionally and spiritually. We can make commitments even though plans fall through. We can maintain our compassion and understanding no matter how unjust the world may be to us and not give up.

The fact that there is much in life we cannot control means we may need a deeper spiritual understanding, a source beyond ourselves that grants us the gift of transcending our ordinary limits. A spiritual grace that we are not alone; we are always accompanied by a divine presence.

Life is not perfect. You will make mistakes, but each time you meet life's challenges together; you will grow wiser, stronger and surer of your love.

There are five essential qualities of genuine love. **Attention, acceptance, appreciation, affection, and allowing our mate to be who they are,** become difficult when we become a **Critic, Interpreter, and Advisor.** Eliminating these three behaviors with your partner makes your communication much more loving and respectful.

**In a marriage, you must understand the importance of patience, the art of compromise, the healing power of forgiveness. Marriage takes effort and giving with your whole hearts. It is a rare gift to be loved for who you are.**

**The goal of a complete relationship is the development of a fully integrated human being.**

**LOVE NEVER GIVES UP, NEVER LOSES FAITH, IS ALWAYS HOPEFUL AND ENDURES THROUGH EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE.**

**Your love is more than a wonderful feeling; it is a bond that deepens with time, grows stronger and surer from this day forward.** Every step along the way should lead us to go beyond “having love” to “being Love.” It is impossible to “Love” as long as they are just words. We need to go beyond love being just a concept. When we become so filled with love that we can love each other and not be reactive, we will have gone beyond loving into being LOVE.

Marriage is a partnership of two unique people who bring out the very best in each other and who know that even though they are wonderful as individuals...they are even better together.

A marriage is a union in which two people learn from their mistakes, except each other's faults, and willingly adjust behaviors that need to be changed. It's caring enough about each other to work through disappointing and hurtful times, and believing in the love that brought you together in the first place. A marriage is a relationship where two people must listen, compromise, and respect one another.

Marriage is truly a journey through life, with the one you love, as an equal partner, sharing both the commitment, and the responsibilities, of your union together.

Marriage is the closest kind of friendship. It is between two souls with similar designs. What greater thing is there, than two human beings who feel that they are joined for life – to strengthen each other every day, to be with each other in all sorrow, and to be there for each other no matter what happens.

**The process of two becoming one requires a lot of adjustments and a great deal of growing and maturing on the part of both parties. Marriage can only succeed when both parties see the very best in one another.**

## **FOUR ASPECTS OF LOVE**

There are four different meanings of our English word for LOVE.

**Storge Love** is the love of parents and siblings.

**Phileo Love** is the love between special friends.

**AGAPE Love** is the unconditional, unchanging, and permanent love of GOD. It is a forgiving, nurturing, and supportive way of relating to each other. It makes it possible for two to become one, for there are no longer any barriers.

**Eros Love** is the love between two people who want to spend the rest of their lives together, love between husband and wife.

**ALL FOUR ASPECTS OF LOVE MUST BE SHARED IN A MARRIAGE RELATIONSHIP.**

**Marriage is more than the expression of love. Marriage is a life-time commitment. You promise to cherish your spouse as long as you live.**

Love is experienced differently by each of us, but for most of us, five characteristics of love stand out. We feel loved when we receive attention, acceptance, appreciation, and affection, and when we are allowed the freedom to be who we are.

In childhood, we need these five essentials to develop self-esteem and a healthy self-image. They are building blocks of identity, of a coherent human personality. What we need in the building as a self is also precisely what we need for happiness in our adult love relationships. Intimacy, at its best, means giving and receiving these five elements.

A marriage is remembering how lucky both of you are to have found just the right person to love, and just the right person to love you. And you get to spend the rest of your life with that one special someone.

## THE FIVE STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT IN A RELATIONSHIP

**Sensuality** is the physical desire that attracts us to each other. It's what we call chemistry.

**Personality** is getting to know the human side of each other, the social makeup.

**Actuality** is accepting one on a human level and the reality of things you cannot change.

**Individuality** is when you desire to live up to your full potential.

**Spirituality** is the recognition of the soul in one another. It is the key to a successful marriage.

### SENSUALITY

Sensuality is the physical appearances and emotional arousal that make couples first take notice to each other.

### PERSONALITY

The word personality is from the Greek word "persona" which means mask. On our personality level, we wear many masks. We display a different face to people according to what we think they expect us to be, or what will make a favorable impression. We all wear a mask. It's part of our personality.

Most of us have developed a persona or social mask which is often the opposite of what we feel inside. We sometimes develop this mask to protect ourselves from the outer world. Our social mask may help us present our best face to others, but as part of a couple, we must uncover what is beneath the mask. The problem is that we think our personality is our "true self," who we are. **Couples are usually on their best behavior when they are dating. (they are actors, putting on a persona)**

## ACTUALITY

**Our self-esteem determines how we see ourselves and others. Your self-esteem reflects what you think and feel about yourself.** You acquire your self-image over time by constantly receiving messages about yourself from the people closest to you and from your environment. Your self-esteem is a reflection of your image, of who you think you are. Your family is the earliest source of information about yourself. As a result, your subconscious mind gradually develops a picture of yourself that you come to believe as real.

Over time, we all discover parts of ourselves we tucked away in childhood. Breaking the hold of the past of our lives is an essential step in our self-discovery process. Despite their best intentions, married couples unknowingly repeat what their parents taught them and bring it into a marriage. When we clear our past of outdated beliefs and unresolved issues, we advance our personal transformation, which results in a marriage that will endure.

**The first basic step is to accept responsibility for one's self** and to be honest with ourselves regardless of what we uncover, and to accept responsibility for fulfilling our own part of the marriage relationship.

When you seek to define yourself beyond the personality, you move into a realm in which you will come to know and understand more of whom you are and who you choose to be.

The process of two becoming one requires a lot of adjustments and a great deal of growing and maturing on the part of both partners. You both must understand that as a married couple you must become as one, accepting your differences at the human level.

## INDIVIDUALITY

To find fulfillment, we need to live in a place of understanding and self-acceptance. To work with the inner world of our being, we need to recognize and confront all of our underlying issues that may originate from our past and early childhood. We need to focus on how we really feel about ourselves. In the process, we may uncover many feelings about ourselves that have been tucked away, such as a lack of self-confidence or low self-esteem. Such negative emotions are what we refer to as our shortcomings.

The underlying and most important questions to ask in a marriage is: **what are my core values? What are the core values of my partner? Do we share the same core values?**

If your marriage is truly to succeed, you and your partner will have to work from this awareness of your inner self-identity and self-worth. The only way you can bring about wholeness in a marriage relationship is through true self-awareness. This process is designed to help you function from the awareness that you are a part of something, and the two of you are greater together.

The strongest desire of any human being is to fulfill his or her full potential. Our life perspective is our fundamental attitude toward life itself. It is the motivating force that determines how a person perceives his or her relationship to self and to others. It embraces certain values, ideals, and aspects of life. It, thus, directs our behavior.

Individualization is a process whereby the innate elements of personality, the different experiences of a person's life and the different aspects and components of the immature psyche become integrated over time into a well-functioning whole being.



## THE IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING PERSONALITY TRAITS

When you better understand yourself and your mate's personality traits, you will be better able to understand how to deal with communication and conflict, become a whole and integrated partner, and no longer a house divided.

### **Objective / Subjective**

The conflict between the two approaches has mistakenly continued to be dealt with as a competition. Both are necessary, and no one should be judged for taking one approach or the other, because each person is naturally drawn to and able to understand life more succinctly via one than the other. It need not matter either or however; if we find, which approach predominates, we can consciously try to understand and incorporate the virtues of the other approach in our lives.

Both are equally relevant and equally important. Each has virtues and each when followed exclusively and not understanding the other, has its faults.

### **Introvert / Extrovert**

**Extroverts** focus their attention and energy on the world outside of themselves. They seek out other people and enjoy lots of interactions, whether one-on-one or in groups.

They are constantly (and naturally) pulled to the outer world of people and things. Because **Extroverts** need to experience the world to understand it, they tend to like a lot of activity. **Extroverts** get their "batteries charged up" by being with others and usually know a lot of people.

**Extroverts** are most comfortable doing their thinking out loud. In fact, **Extroverts** often need to talk to think.

**Introverts** focus their attention and energy on the world inside of themselves. They enjoy spending time alone and need this time to “recharge their batteries.” **Introverts** try to understand the world before they experience it, which means a one-on-one or in small groups. **Introverts** avoid being the center of attention and are generally more reserved than Extroverts. They prefer to get to know new people slowly. **Introverts** are more comfortable thinking silently.

### **Thinkers / Feelers**

**Thinkers** prefer decisions that make sense logically. They pride themselves on their ability to be objective and analytical in the decision-making process. They make decisions by analyzing and weighing the evidence, even if that means coming to unpleasant conclusions. Thinkers can be analytical to the point of seeming cold.

**Feeling** refers to making decisions based upon personal values. It simply means making decisions based upon what is important to you and others. **Feelers** make decisions based upon the ability to be empathetic and compassionate. **Feelers** can be personally involved to the point of seeming over emotional.

√ Check off the ones that most fit your personality traits.

Subjective\_\_\_\_\_Objective\_\_\_\_\_

Introvert \_\_\_\_\_Extrovert \_\_\_\_\_Thinker \_\_\_\_Feeler\_\_\_\_\_

Choose the ones that fit your mate’s personality traits.

Subjective\_\_\_\_\_Objective\_\_\_\_\_

Introvert \_\_\_\_\_Extrovert \_\_\_\_\_Thinker \_\_\_\_Feeler\_\_\_\_\_

## **SOUL MATE = SOLE MATE**

Spirituality is an “inside job” and leads to a desire for deeper communion. Unity and wholeness are found at the core of, and this discovery can overcome all sense of difference and distinction allowing for a common understanding and mutual respect and toleration.

When a person is moving away from mere personality consciousness and growing into spiritual consciousness, he/she begins to exercise deeper and larger powers and intentions. The goal is the awakening of the conscious mind through spiritual awareness, where before our awareness was only on the personality level, now we begin to expand and work in the universal or spiritual level.

## **GROWING IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP**

Many common marriage problems involve the way a husband and wife manage their conflicts. If you and your spouse can learn to argue in a way that avoids certain "deadly toxins" that can poison your communication, you can avoid some of the most common marriage problems.

WHEN WE ARE WILLING TO ACCEPT UNCONDITIONALLY THE THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE, OUR CHOICES ARE TWO. WE CAN BREAK UP, OR WE CAN FASHION A MORE MATURE LOVE BASED COMMITMENT.

## **LISTENING**

You may have to alter the entire way you relate to your mate. You can begin by working hard to understand by earnestly seeking to know how the other person is feeling. The next time you are with your mate, try to gauge what he or she is feeling. Don't just listen to their words, look deep inside to see if you can get a handle on what they are feeling. Look *past* the words.

## PRACTICE ACTIVE LISTENING

This is a form of listening in which you tune into the communication with the soul rather than of the mind of the person before you. You can often understand a person's feelings a lot faster than you can understand their words.

During an argument a person who listens to words rather than feelings will often throw another's words back in their face, reciting perfectly what they've just said word-for-word in order to make them feel like they are making no sense at all. Right about then is when the other person says, "Why don't you understand anything at all about how I am *FEELING?*" That is when you know that you have been listening to their words and have not been trying to understand how they are feeling. Feelings are the language of the soul. **If you don't take the time to understand how a person feels, you won't be able to get to the bottom of the problem.**

If that other person thinks that he or she is your "soul partner," this can be a devastating experience. They will wonder why you cannot hear them at the level of soul, but insist only on taking their *words* apart, one by one, and analyzing them to show them how silly they are being. A few experiences such as this can change a relationship forever.

The fastest way to let someone know that you and they are one is to feed back to them exactly what they are feeling. Someone who was once very close to you can decide that it is not safe to remain that close, because you have no idea at all how they are truly feeling.

This means giving up defense in all verbal exchanges even arguments and realizing that if the two of you are one, there is no one to defend against. This means honestly looking at your own feelings and opening up to their feelings.

## **NEGATIVE THOUGHTS**

If you allow yourself to dwell on pessimistic thoughts or attitudes, you can expect to exhibit negative, self-destructive behaviors in your marriage. Our thoughts are the seeds from which our actions germinate. You are responsible for what you think, particularly as part of a marriage. It is at this level that you exercise choice, knowing that what you think is what you will experience and so will your marriage.

## **PROJECTION**

We repress what we don't want to know, and project it out on to someone else. If you don't want to admit that these thoughts are your own and exist in your mind, then you hide them and see them in others. The thought is denied, and the cause of the thought is the fault of someone else, namely your marriage partner. What we see in others may only be the result of our projections, and are not necessarily the truth about them.

## **ANGER**

When we are afraid of looking at something within ourselves, or our marriage, something for which we don't want to accept responsibility, we become angry.

## **DEFENSES**

We use defenses to avoid the very belief against which we are defending. Defense mechanisms may be unconscious, but we utilize them to hide from the truth.

## **SELF-ESTEEM**

Your self-esteem reflects what you think and feel about yourself. You acquire your image of yourself over time by receiving messages about yourself from the people. Your self-esteem is a reflection of your image, of who you think you are. Your family is the earliest source of information about yourself. As a result, your subconscious mind gradually develops a picture of yourself that you come to believe as real.

## LIFE LESSONS

The fact that there is much in life we cannot control means we may need a deeper spiritual understanding, a source beyond our ordinary limits.

- Although **everything changes and nothing remains the same**, things renew themselves and move through cycles that further evolution.
- Although **things do not always go according to plan**, we sometimes sense a larger plan at work that opens startling possibilities.
- Although **life is not always fair**, something in us remains committed to fairness and refuses to be unjust or retaliatory.
- Although **suffering is part of life**, we have ways of dealing with it, and thereby we expand our powers to handle future pain and help others in their pain.
- Although **people are not loving and loyal all the time**, nothing has to get into the way of our acting with lovingkindness and giving up on others.

Know and understand that there will be challenges and difficult times. Cultivate the technique of seeing all problems as opportunities. Don't try to avoid them, welcome them and see them as opportunities to fulfill what you came into the relationship to do, believing in the love that brought you together in the first place.

A true union is about the connection of two beings living through all moments, both good and bad, and never leaving the other's side no matter what. **A marriage is two people who have lived through pain, been transformed by it, and use it to help each other.**

## **Better Sex for a Better Marriage – Tips**

Better sex in your marriage can lead to a better marriage. While everyone knows that “it’s not just about the sex,” sex is still a very important part of most marriages. But how can you have better sex in your marriage? How can you and your spouse talk about sex? And how do you know what’s okay as far as sex goes in your marriage?

### **Better sex within a marriage starts with communication.**

It takes constant open communication to understand what your spouse desires. Unfortunately, many couples never talk about sex, either out of fear or embarrassment. Just talking starts a good habit of open discussion, which leads to a better marriage through better sex in your marriage. It is important to discuss sex because men and women have fundamentally different sexual needs. These needs, if left unaddressed, can lead to disagreements, frustration, and alienation.

### **Better Sex in Marriage – What Women Want**

Women do not separate sex from the emotional aspects in the relationship. They want a sense of connection and intimacy that starts well before sex is initiated. Therefore, it’s critically important for **better sex in your marriage** that you light the spark outside the bedroom to make sure you have fireworks inside the bedroom.

### **Better Sex in Marriage – What Men Want**

Men often view making love as a primary way to connect with their mates. Men are more prone to visual stimulation and instant gratification. Seize the moment with your husband – he may get turned on while watching you get ready to go out, and won’t be satisfied with just a simple kiss. Remember, **better sex in your marriage** doesn’t have to follow a schedule, but it should be a regular part of a marriage.

## **COMMON PROBLEMS IN MARRIAGE**

### **Common Marriage Problem #1: Criticism**

Common marriage problem #1, criticism, involves attacking someone's personality rather than their behavior. Everyone has the right to complain. Criticism, on the other hand, entails blaming, makes a personal attack or an accusation. Whereas complaints usually begin with the word, *I*, criticisms begin with *you*. For example, "I wish we went out more than we do" is a complaint. "You never take me anywhere," is a criticism.

### **Common Marriage Problem #2: Contempt**

Some of the most common expressions of contempt are name calling, hostile humor, and mockery. These are all examples of the second common marriage problem, and once they've entered a home; the marriage goes from bad to worse.

**Common Marriage Problem #3: Defensiveness** Common marriage problem #3, defensiveness, causes both spouses to feel victimized by the other, so that neither is willing to take responsibility for setting things right. Every time they make excuses and deny responsibility, they add to their marital problems.

### **Common Marriage Problem #4: Finances**

Many people find the concept of money a difficult one to discuss, even with their spouse. A couple may have a number of financial goals they wish to reach, but not have a clear plan of how they will reach those goals. If one spouse makes most of the financial decisions, then the other partner may feel resentful. Differing styles with regard to managing the family's financial resource can also be considered one of the causes of divorce. If one partner spends freely, and the other one is more cautious with his or her spending habits, this can cause conflict within the marriage.



## **DIVORCE - WHEN IT IS TOO LATE**

The divorce rate in America is 50% percent of first marriages, 67% of second marriages, and 74% of third marriages.

## **COMMON CAUSES FOR DIVORCE**

Divorce rates are higher today than compared to rates just 15 years ago. The causes of divorce vary from couple to couple, but most commonly stem from one specific issue that is compounded by a lack of commitment to the marriage. The most common causes of divorce include money, infidelity, and career choices.

### **Cause of Divorce #1:**

#### **Unwillingness to communicate lovingly**

Cause of Divorce #1 has to do with the ways you talk and listen to each other. Loving communication means that you are willing to share and talk about your lives together. It means that you do so with respect and kindness. This doesn't mean you won't get angry or argue, but that you make an effort to talk and listen in ways that highlight the fact that you love your partner and want what's best for them. That kind of attitude can help you avoid many causes of divorce.

### **Cause of Divorce #2:**

#### **Unwillingness to commit**

The second cause of divorce relates to how fully you're willing to stand by your vows to love, honor, and respect each other. This can apply to common causes of divorce like infidelity and abuse, but it's also about the basic ways you treat each other.

### **Cause of Divorce #3:**

#### **Unwillingness to compromise**

An overarching cause of divorce is one or both spouses' unwillingness to compromise. Flexibility is the key in any relationship, especially when you're dealing with contentious issues like finances, childrearing, career decisions, etc.

**Cause of Divorce #4:**

**Unwillingness to put down weapons**

One thing that can cause divorce is a constant battle in which partners consistently wound each other. Marital growth begins with your *being willing* to develop and strengthen your relationship skills like communication, commitment, compromise, and kindness. Pay attention to your willingness to love your partner in all these ways, and see where it takes your marriage.

**A NOTE ON THE MEANING OF FORGIVENESS**

The word forgiveness comes from the prefix fore; *before; in front*. True forgiveness is when **we** decide ahead of time that we have already made a decision to forgive no matter what our mate has done. Just a thought, isn't for-give-ness the purest form of love?

**Looking at the above causes of divorce, what is holding me back from making this relationship work?**

#1. \_\_\_\_\_ #2. \_\_\_\_\_ #3. \_\_\_\_\_ #4. \_\_\_\_\_

Enter any other causes that you would like to examine and perhaps change.

**Cause/s:**

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## **STEP TWO ON THE JOURNEY**

What do you like about yourself?

What don't you like about yourself?

When your mate thinks of you what would he/she say are your most outstanding characteristics?

What are your strongest natural abilities?

What do you do well?

What are your areas of weakness?

What would your mate like to see you change?

What do I want to change or re-create for myself?

What do you need to do to make these changes?

What was the first thing that attracted you to your mate?

What do you like about your mate?

When you think of your mate, what are your mate's most outstanding characteristics?

When you think of your mate, what are your mate's areas of weakness? What would you like to see changed?

## **STEP THREE ON THE JOURNEY**

### **Questions to Consider in Your Relationship**

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Your reality is forever being molded and created from your thoughts and beliefs. Your possible future together is being formed by what you think and believe today. The present is the womb by which the future will be born. You hold within you your own destiny the outcome of your relationship together. Change your thoughts and beliefs where necessary, and you will change your future.

Once you fully recognize the power and influence beliefs have in your life, and in your relationship, the next step becomes obvious. Change the beliefs that are limiting and holding you back, and create powerful new beliefs that serve and uplift you, beliefs that will take you and your relationship wherever it needs to go.

When you act upon your life, it takes place in the present, but will affect your future together. In fact, nothing you can do will ever happen outside of the present. So choosing in the present to re-frame your past, and determine your future is incredibly powerful. The sooner you begin to act upon the new beliefs and whatever changes that you are willing to see take place, you are creating your relationship for the better.

Responding to your new beliefs is sending a strong signal you are willing to see new realities are beginning to take hold that you are willing to change, that you are cooperating with the process that it is, in fact, already happening.

What areas of your life could be tweaked?

What are you merely tolerating or putting up with in your life?

What do you want more of in your life? (Make a list)

What could your mate begin to work on now that would make the biggest difference in your life?

What are three things your mate is doing regularly that doesn't serve or support you?

What do you love about your mate?

What do you really, really want out of your marriage?

What is one change that you would make that would give more strength to your relationship?

What will happen and what is the cost to your relationship, if you don't do this?

In what way is the current situation/relationship absolutely perfect?

What in your relationship makes you grateful?

What is one way you could bring more fun into your relationship?

What in your relationship do you want to see change?

After a significant disagreement, how long do you and your mate remain angry?

Do you feel that your mate listens to you when you have a disagreement?

Are there any significant religious or ethnic differences between you and your mate?

How is your mates' physical appearance to you? What would you change?

How do you handle disagreements that cannot be resolved?

Are there any issues that you would like to discuss or talk about?



What are the roadblocks to the success of your relationship?  
(Be specific)

**Financial:**

**Spiritual:**

**Personally:**

What are the necessary steps to take to remove the roadblocks?  
(Be specific)

What are the negative habits, beliefs, and conditions in your relationship that need to be changed or be removed?  
(Be specific)

What specific ACTION PLAN should be taken to make these changes?

## STEP FOUR ON THE JOURNEY

Go through the following eight areas in your life and answer each of the questions to see which particular areas need the most work. Rank your current levels of success in each area of your life.

(If the sentence is true give yourself **1 point**, for every other answer put a **0**)

### Happiness

- \_\_\_ I love my life, and I am very happy.
- \_\_\_ I can't wait to get out of bed every morning.
- \_\_\_ I spend my time away from work doing the things I enjoy the most.
- \_\_\_ I spend time on me every day.
- \_\_\_ I love my days off and weekends – they are fun packed.
- \_\_\_ I appreciate the little things in life.
- \_\_\_ I am living the way I want to live at the moment.
- \_\_\_ I don't get stressed out easily and can chill.
- \_\_\_ I laugh a lot. I'm fun to be with.

Happiness score out of 9 \_\_\_\_\_

### Money

- \_\_\_ I have no money worries.
- \_\_\_ I have no credit card debt in excess of \$1000.
- \_\_\_ I have a money plan in place for the future.
- \_\_\_ I always know what I am spending each month.
- \_\_\_ I always know what my bank balance is at any given moment.
- \_\_\_ I am financially knowledgeable; I know about money and investing.
- \_\_\_ I have total control over my finances.

Money score out of 7 \_\_\_\_\_

## **Career**

- \_\_\_ I love my career. I am fulfilled.
- \_\_\_ I look forward to going to work every day.
- \_\_\_ My career stimulates me as a person.
- \_\_\_ I work to live and not live to work.
- \_\_\_ I know where my career is taking me both in advancement and reward.
- \_\_\_ In the main, work does not stress me.
- \_\_\_ The people I work with are great.
- \_\_\_ My work environment is positive.

Career score out of 8 \_\_\_\_\_

## **People/Family/Relationships**

- \_\_\_ I have a lot of friends, and we do things together.
- \_\_\_ I am close to my parents. (Alive or not)
- \_\_\_ I have a best buddy.
- \_\_\_ I am close to my children; there are no differences between us.
- \_\_\_ I do a lot of activities together as a family.
- \_\_\_ The people who matter the most in my life love me.
- \_\_\_ I have a good network of friends.
- \_\_\_ I get along with people in the main and can communicate effectively with anyone.

People score out of 8 \_\_\_\_\_

## **Confidence**

- \_\_\_ I am a confident person.
- \_\_\_ I don't doubt my ability to do a job.
- \_\_\_ I know my strengths and weaknesses.
- \_\_\_ I don't often think that I am not as good as others.
- \_\_\_ I don't worry what others may think of me.
- \_\_\_ I don't expect myself to be perfect all the time.
- \_\_\_ I am a positive person.

Confidence score out of 10 \_\_\_\_\_

### **Looking after yourself**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I lead a healthy lifestyle in terms of the food I eat.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I do not abuse my body with excess alcohol.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am happy with my appearance.
- \_\_\_\_\_ There are no outstanding issues or problems that have not been resolved or working towards being resolved.

Looking after yourself score out of 4 \_\_\_\_\_

### **Growth & Development**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I am constantly learning and growing.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I try out new things and activities all the time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I make plans to improve myself constantly.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I know what my goals are, and I am eagerly and effectively making them a reality.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have all the tools, aids, contacts and resources to make me a success.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I make events happen rather than wait for them to happen to me.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I regularly attend seminars, training courses and conferences to improve.

Growth & Development score out of 7 \_\_\_\_\_

### **Unfinished Business**

- \_\_\_\_\_ I am in control of my life and my own destiny.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am really optimistic about the future.
- \_\_\_\_\_ There is nothing I am dreading or avoiding.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have a plan in place to succeed in all that I do.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am implementing my plan.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I have the energy and drive to succeed.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am not afraid of making mistakes or failing at things.
- \_\_\_\_\_ I am now ready to give it all that it takes to succeed in our relationship.

Unfinished Business score out of 8 \_\_\_\_\_

**Your overall scores:**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Score</b>
<b>Happiness</b>	
<b>Money</b>	
<b>Career</b>	
<b>Relationships</b>	
<b>Confidence</b>	
<b>Looking After Yourself</b>	
<b>Growth Development</b>	
<b>Unfinished Business</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	

Put your overall scores in the table above and highlight the areas of your life that need the most work.

Write down below the top five activities that you are going to start on immediately.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

How do you spend your leisure time?

What do you enjoy doing in your spare time?

How do you spend your extra money? Where does it all go?

Are you mostly organized, or somewhat disorganized? Explain.

Where are you the least disciplined in your life?

What is the vision you have for your future?

What is your favorite topic when you meet others for the first time?

What are your hobbies? How important are they to you?

What are some of your future goals?

We all want to be loved for who we really are. Do you feel loved for who you are? Please explain.

It is not necessary to attach importance to the same things. Do you agree or disagree? Please explain.

A caring relationship is one where each person seeks to understand and be understood. Do you feel that you are understood? Please explain.

What do you think are three key factors that make for a lasting relationship?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Make a list of the problems that need to be addressed in order to make the relationship work.

## STEP FIVE ON THE JOURNEY

Complete the following exercise. It will help you to examine both the positive and negative thoughts of your relationship.

Make a list of your mate's qualities and shortcomings, ones that you think are positive and the ones that you think are negative.

<b>POSITIVE ONES</b>	<b>NEGATIVE ONES</b>

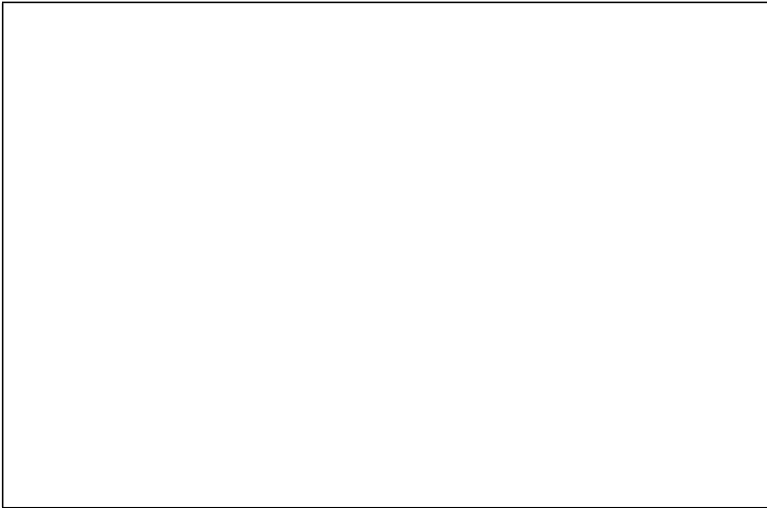


In the box below, write out in your own words and describe why they are positive and negative. **What do they say about your mate?** How do they make you feel?

Next complete another list about yourself and your qualities and shortcomings.

POSITIVE ONES	NEGATIVE ONES

In the box below, write out in your own words and describe why they are positive and negative. **What do they say about you?** How do they make you feel?



Whatever we choose to think, we choose for our lives. The one thing that can bring success or failure in our lives or to the success of a relationship, is our attitude.

DURING LIFE'S JOURNEY, YOU WILL NEED TO KEEP A POSITIVE ATTITUDE IN THE FACE OF OPPOSITION AND FROM ADVERSE SITUATIONS. REMEMBER, IT WILL BE YOUR ATTITUDE THAT WILL DETERMINE YOUR SUCCESS. IT IS SAID THAT ATTITUDE IS A LITTLE THING THAT MAKES A BIG DIFFERENCE.

Discuss with one another positive and negative comments.

**IN SUMMING UP**

What is going through your mind as you sit there in your chair?

In the box below, write out in your own words and describe what you are willing to accept and why - and what you are not willing to accept and why.

I will commit my life to you. I will accept you, as you are, positive and negative - unconditionally.

There are some issues that I feel we need to discuss, before I can make that commitment.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_



**Lee Cobleigh** is a Non-denominational Wedding Officiant and Inspirational Coach.

**The Marriage Manual** is designed to provide a personal perspective for individuals considering marriage, and to help guide and encourage successful marriage relationships.

**The Marriage Manual** is based on the reality that it's important to strengthen your relationship and prepare constructively for future challenges and conflicts that everyone will inevitably face at some point in their marriage.

The decision to marry and to maintain a loving relationship requires understanding the dynamics of marriage and how your choices will affect your marriage.

Before the wedding is the time to talk about your expectations of marriage and of the understanding, you have of yourselves and each other.

In a marriage relationship, individuals need to be aware of who they are and the degree to which they will commit themselves to their partner. If these factors are mutually realized and discussed by both partners, it will help ensure the success of soulmates becoming solemates for life.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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