

The
**RELATIONSHIP
SAVING**
SKILL BOOK



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Chapter 1: Introduction

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Why do we choose to love?

Being in a loving and nurturing relationship is one of the most fundamental needs of both men and women.

The idea of being loved and being in love with a special someone is ever present in all cultures, across all of written history. There's something about being loved and being in a committed relationship that makes us feel secure and happy.

Every person on this planet knows how it feels to love and be loved.

When two people fall in love, both individuals have these ideal dreams about what the future holds for them. There is always this desire for more happiness and stability as you continue loving and living with the person that truly matters to you.

What causes relationships to collapse?

As time wears down the thin veil of idealism, couples often find out that loving someone and staying in love takes a lot more work and energy than expected.

Troubled couples discover that personal dreams for the future can clash frequently and even the smallest personal differences can spark raging flames of discontent and anger.

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Sadly, many couples allow themselves to be consumed by these flames and soon enough, what was once a rosy garden of a relationship suddenly becomes a smoldering field of ash.

“How can people keep their relationships alive?”

This is actually **one of the oldest questions in the book** and after many, many decades of debate, relationship experts have finally come to the conclusion that relationship troubles arise not because people are fundamentally incompatible but rather, they lack fundamental skills needed to keep a committed relationship alive.

Fundamental skills, such as active listening, act as the powerful building blocks that will help build a stable and intimate relationship.

When a relationship is based solely on physical attraction and “pleasure-seeking” activities, almost nothing will bind the relationship together. If nothing is done to remedy this type of situation, the relationship dissolves into thin air and what was once cherished is fractured, sometimes beyond repair.

Is there a magic bullet for relationship problems?

This book was not designed to be a “cure all” for all known relationship issues.

Such a book cannot logically exist because human relationships are extremely complex due to the sheer number of factors that contribute to their development.

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No, this book will give you something much better than a “love prescription.” It will give you the essential tools that you can use to improve your marriage or repair it before it completely dissolves.

Why is change important?

It is my personal belief that only a very small number of people are incapable of change. A person *needs to change* if what he’s doing is not producing intended results.

This book is an open invitation for positive change. If you really want to make a relationship work again, you must be willing to expend just a little more energy to fix it *the right way*.

You cannot “fix” a relationship by trying to dominate the other person or by giving in at all times, just to keep the peace. Both extreme practices are unhealthy for intimate relationships because they are unsustainable and, at the core, unfair.

A healthy, intimate relationship should always provide a balance of give and take. You can gradually achieve this state of balance and happiness by using the skills outlined in this volume.

It is my sincere hope that this book reaches everyone on time and that it provides a bright ray of hope for those who still want to make their marriage to work.

Generally, intimate relationships can be extremely rewarding but they aren’t easy to sustain. Like a living, breathing organism, an intimate relationship needs to be nurtured and taken care of on a daily basis.

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The volume you are reading now marks day one of your new lease on your marriage.

Remember: there is always hope because we create hope ourselves. Hope is a subjective expression of a person's willingness to attain something. Things might not work out overnight but if you have hope and you are willing to change and work for a better marriage, you definitely deserve a second chance at happiness.

Assumptions

This eBook assumes the following:

1. That you are seeking relationship advice because you are presently encountering difficulties with your present intimate relationship and/or marriage.
2. That you will be using this book as a general reference only and not as a form of therapy or professional advice (e.g. as a substitute for marriage counseling)
3. That you will approach these new skills with an open and positive mind so you can make the most of your new knowledge.

Chapter 2: The Power of Active Listening

What is active listening?

Active listening is a powerful antidote for miscommunication and a potent “cure” for those endless dialogues that only succeed in making both of you depressed or angry.

The goals of active listening are simple:

- 1. Eliminate the common barriers to communication.*
- 2. Understand what your significant other is trying tell you.*
- 3. Provide and receive meaningful feedback.*

Who can benefit from active listening?

Active listening is recommended for couples that never seem to understand each other’s views and opinions.

If you feel that your spouse has “closed off” part of himself and you could never truly reach him anymore, it’s time to apply the principle of active listening *not to win arguments*, but to give your spouse the time and venue for genuine self-expression.

You should definitely do away with the combative mentality or the desire to win at every argument.

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First of all, your goal as a responsible and loving spouse is to have a dialogue, not to argue. Arguing will just create complication and it's generally hurtful to get into an argument. If you want your spouse to support your views, do it properly - through a dialogue.

What's the difference between plain listening and active listening?

When I tell people in troubled marriages about active listening, they often laugh and tell me: *"He/she is always talking; I can't help but hear it!"*

See, the problem with this mindset is the person's intention. When you feel that you don't have a choice but to hear someone's words, your main intention is to not listen or pay attention to the other's person's input or feedback.

People are very good in determining other people's intentions.

If you have been actively ignoring your spouse's feedback all these years then I'm fairly certain that your spouse feels hurt and abandoned. Even if you're physically present in front of your spouse and you hear your spouse's words, it doesn't mean that you are actually listening.

Look at it this way: a tape recorder can record hours of audio at a push of a button. Does it make the device a good listener? No. The capability makes the device a good recorder.

If you can create a litany of what your spouse has been telling you repeatedly over the years, then you're simply recording, not *listening* in the most active and meaningful sense of the word.

Are you ready to put the past behind and start the dialogue anew?

Follow these 3 steps and you'll be on your way to marital bliss.

STEP 1: Avoid Common Communication Barriers At All Cost

What is a communication barrier?

In the context of a marital dialogue, a communication barrier is a **state of mind** that prevents you from understanding what your spouse is trying to communicate to you.

Remember: hearing the words and listening are two very different things.

Below are some common barriers that have been observed in married couples:

- a.) **"Psychic" Reading** – You have an innate distrust of what your spouse is telling you and so you make assumptions about what he/she is really saying at all times.

- b.) **Over-practicing Responses** – You spend so much time formulating your objections to what is being said that you end up missing the point of the dialogue.

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c.) **Selective Hearing** - To put it simply: you only hear what you want to hear. Negative issues and opinions are completely ignored because they stress you.

What results is a massive miscommunication that can have consequences years later.

Another version of selective hearing is that you are only responsive when your spouse sounds hostile or depressed. When you think your spouse is "okay," you stop paying attention to what he/she is saying.

d.) **Judging** - Instead of trying to understand where your spouse is coming from, you're more interested in assigning labels to what you're hearing, or worse, your spouse. This greatly diminishes a person's good judgment and blocks any meaningful dialogue from taking place.

e.) **Fantasy Escape** - You pretend you're listening and you mutter infrequent responses, but mentally you're someplace else.

You'd rather be outside or on Neptune than to listen to what is being said. You space out but you try your best to hide it, but it shows in how you respond to your spouse's input during an interaction.

f.) **Over-advicing** - When you hear your spouse complain about something, you immediately formulate a logical solution to the problem, with the intention of ending the problem for good.

What "over-advicing" does is it stifles your spouse's desire to simply share his/her bad day with you. The solutions you're recommending may be technically sound, but your approach is emotionless and cold.

g.) **Combat-ready** - You listen carefully to what your spouse is saying so you can create the perfect rebuttal. You live to debate and win every argument.

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You need to feel right and dominant all the time, because you believe that you're either entitled to it or you're simply better at doing things than your spouse.

h.) **Perfectionism** - You try to listen to what your spouse is saying, but if you hear something that hints at an inadequacy (whether real or imagined), you become defensive and you lose sight of the original intention of the dialogue.

i.) **Misdirection** - Instead of facing problems and issues head on, you have a tendency to joke about serious things or you bring up unrelated issues to misdirect the conversation.

For example, if your spouse is bringing up issues about your monthly cash flow, you may suddenly feel the urge to talk about your son's day at school or your day at work.

j.) **Over-agreement** - This is a most common problem for spouses who want to avoid any type of conflict.

Instead of actually listening, some people simply agree to what their spouse is saying at the first hint that something is wrong. The problem with this approach is that you're agreeing but you're not actually hearing what your spouse is trying to tell you.

STEP 2: Employ Active Listening Strategies

What is feedback?

In a nutshell, active listening is consciously focusing on the subject or the other person in the dialogue.

He/she should be the star of the conversation because that is the only way that you will receive feedback or input that you can use to formulate reasonable responses.

Feedback-centered communication is used in clinical psychotherapy because it helps draw out buried issues that are often the real triggers or causes of problems in people and in relationships.

You may feel a little overwhelmed at first, but as you continue to actively listen you will soon realize that you can solve problems together and there is still hope to live harmoniously with each other.

How can you become an active listener?

Active listening is actually logical and easy to learn.

Below are some basic strategies that you can start using today. Remember: identify and resolve your communication barriers before attempting to “restart the conversation” with your loved one.

Strategy 1: Paraphrase Important Messages

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When your spouse says something important, whether it be negative or positive, restate what you just heard so that your spouse will understand how you understood it.

Don't try to sugarcoat the message, or lie, just to avoid conflict. It would be best to be honest and open during a dialogue so you can resolve problems more quickly.

Strategy 2: Clarify the Message

When your intention is to understand someone, you would want to clarify what you just heard to make sure that you and your spouse are on the same page.

Clarifying questions such as *"how did my actions make you feel?"* will not only improve your listening ability but it will also draw out hidden emotions and objections that your spouse would otherwise keep locked deep inside.

Strategy 3: Give Your Feedback

Active listening is about receiving and giving feedback.

It's the sequence that's important: you cannot give good feedback during a dialogue if you understood *none* of the feedback that was given to you in the first place.

When you provide your feedback, make sure that you:

1. **State things in the positive** (e.g. *"I really want a new car because I'm having difficulties with the old one,"* instead of, *"I don't want our old car anymore."*)

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2. *Say it as soon as possible*, so that your spouse will feel the desired impact.
3. *Say it honestly*, with no intention to sugarcoat or misdirect.
4. *Give constructive and usable responses* with no intention of dominating your spouse (e.g. “I think moving out of the state will cause us financial problems that we can’t solve right away” instead of “You’re so selfish for wanting to sell the house and move back into your old neighborhood!”)

Chapter 3: Emotion Management

Why should you pay attention to your emotions?

Your emotions are an integral part of your consciousness and who you are.

Your emotions reveal your true personal state and are actually reflections of your current mindset. Emotions express what our conscious minds are incapable of coherently conveying through words. Your emotions have the most important function: to convey your genuine feelings, whether they are good or bad.

While it is true that excessive emotions can get in the way of having a meaningful relationship with your spouse, they should not be ignored or suppressed.

Instead of suppressing your emotions, which will only cause an emotional backlash in the future; your best option is to **manage your emotions**.

How can you effectively manage your emotions?

One of the best ways to manage your emotions especially when you're interacting with your spouse is to be very clear about what you feel and why you're feeling that way.

The biggest hurdle for many people is the idea that they have to "justify" the way they feel in front of their spouse.

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Many men and women feel entitled to express their emotions unabated but they don't seem to realize that being married to someone means they have the responsibility and obligation to express their emotions meaningfully, so that the other party would be able to make sense of the situation.

When I try to counsel troubled couples, I often hear one or both parties accusing the other of being "unstable" or "extremely emotional."

I've discovered that the root of this problem is the inability of the majority of married couples to lace together their thoughts and emotions in a meaningful manner.

Here's the good news everyone: this major problem can be solved through a simple process called emotion journaling.

What is emotion journaling?

Emotion journaling is a way of managing your emotions in a non-destructive manner by writing down very specific details about your emotions so you can fully comprehend and express yourself.

Intense and raw emotions can be extremely hard to control and comprehend.

Remember the last time you thought, "*I'm so angry I can't even speak right now?*" That's a really good example of how emotions can have this immense power over us. They tend to overload our conscious thinking and as a result, they can ruin many good dialogues if you let them control the situation.

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How can emotion journaling help with marital issues?

Not many people are aware of this, but one of the main reasons why troubled couples have a tough time resolving their issues is that they can't express themselves properly. When a person cannot express his emotions to his significant other, several things can happen:

1. The message is not understood in its entirety or it is not understood at all.
2. The person feels frustrated that he can't express himself adequately and the feeling is compounded when a dialogue causes more complications.
3. The person tries to stifle or hide his emotions. Eventually, there is a massive build-up of emotions and all these repressed negativities will eventually explode at the most inopportune times.
4. Excess emotions are used to dominate or belittle the other person, leading to more arguments and hostility.
5. The person feels depressed and shuts himself off from meaningful interactions.

Emotion journaling has two main goals:

1. To allow you to understand all of your emotions and why you are experiencing them in the first place.

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2. To allow you to express yourself meaningfully with the intention of being understood and to genuinely interact with your spouse so you can solve the issue at hand or simply, be heard.

How can you apply the concepts of emotion journaling?

Emotion journaling can be accomplished in a few easy steps!

Step 1: Capture and Visualize Your Emotions

Emotions can be difficult to get a hold of, especially if you're used to letting them rampage through your mind whenever they surface. Those days are done!

The first step in emotion journaling is to identify all of the emotions that are bursting to be expressed. However, in their current raw form, you can't express them yet. You still have to consciously process them so that you can comprehend and identify their causes.

Below are the guiding questions that will help give shape and form to all the emotions that you want to understand and express.

1. *How did the event affect you?*
2. *Was the experience good, bad, depressing, etc.?*
3. *What does the emotion look like and where is it in your body? (Visualizing emotions can help create meaning where there used to be just raw emotions. Try to identify where your emotion is "glowing" from within your body and what it looks like. Descriptions such as shape, size, color, brightness and length are all valid.)*

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4. *What is your emotion trying to tell you?* (Again, this is a form of visualization. Close your eyes and try to talk to your emotions after locating them in your body and giving them form. Don't judge anything at this point and just let the exchange happen. Write down what you hear your emotions say.)

5. *What do you feel is the best recourse right now?* (We're talking about the immediate action that you think is the best solution for the perceived problem. Negative emotions arise because your mind perceives a problem, an incongruity that needs to be straightened out. Your mind always generates immediate responses to these incongruities. Identify the action that your mind thinks is the logical next step.)

6. *Is your emotion linked to a similar experience or emotion in the past?*

7. *Describe your emotions and use as many words as possible.*

Step 2: Write on Your Emotion Journal

What should you write on your journal?

Simply write every bit of insight that you learned in the first step. Write on several pages if you have to. Also, it would be a good idea to repeat this process whenever you feel a strong emotion such as sadness, anger, anxiety, fright, etc.

When you write down your findings, make sure that you also write down the date, the person involved, the details of the event and a summary of your emotions.

This journaling style will help you see cyclical events in your everyday life that give rise to specific emotions. You can use this information in a variety of ways. Think of the possibilities!

Step 3: Express Them

After spending a considerable amount of time studying your emotions, it's time to express them. However, we must not fall into the trap of using single-word qualifiers to describe how we feel.

You must make an effort to weave together the vital details so that your spouse will fully understand the true nature, cause and depth of your emotions.

Before interacting with your spouse so that you can express what you really feel, it would be useful to structure your feedback/input using these important points:

- 1. Define your emotions using several, related words to fully express what you feel.** (*"I'm stressed out right now, irritated and angry that people seem to be so insensitive of my simple needs."*)
- 2. Assign a proper intensifier to your emotions so that your spouse will understand the level of emotion you're experiencing at the moment.** (*"I'm a little angry that you forgot our anniversary while I cooked a special surprise dinner for you."*)
- 3. Think of how long you have been feeling the emotion/s.** (*"I've been angry since last week, when you forgot our anniversary."*)
- 4. Describe the root cause or trigger of your emotions.** Do not describe your spouse as the root cause because people don't trigger emotions;

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events, actions and situations do. (i.e. *"I feel depressed and alone because I lost my job, the job that I loved for almost 12 years."*)

If you describe your spouse as the root cause of all your negative emotions, your spouse will feel like he's being pushed into a corner.

5. Associate the emotion you're feeling presently with a similar emotion from a past event in your life. This will give your spouse a bit more context as to how your emotional drive works. (*"I felt the same way when I lost my mother when I was 15."*)

6. Create a concrete statement using all of the above details. (*"I feel alone, depressed and isolated because I lost my friend. It's been two months since my best friend died but I still feel like it was yesterday. I feel so bad about what happened that I cry every night before going to sleep. The last time I felt this bad was when I lost my brother to an accident in 3rd grade, I was so devastated and I felt like it was my fault, though I know it wasn't."*)

Chapter 4: Positive Reinforcements

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Let's face it: after a while, married life becomes difficult because routines get old and the small things that didn't bother you before become big issues that annoy or irritate you for months, or even years.

People think that this is a sign of "falling out of love" but what is really happening is that the level of pleasure and enjoyment within the marriage has dissipated.

The solution is very simple: positive reinforcement.

What is positive reinforcement and why is it important?

Positive reinforcement in the context of repairing a marriage is the process of identifying the things that make you and your spouse happy and actively giving these things to make the relationship happier and more satisfying.

This type of effort has to be reciprocated in order to work.

Both parties need to accept the need for this process and make an effort to make each other happy. If only one party is interested in positive reinforcement and he/she receives *no reciprocation* then he/she might become even more resentful and hostile. Why? Because it's simply not fair for someone to feel that his/her efforts are not being valued by another person.

Since this is a joint effort, things have to be planned and mapped out in advance.

Here's a blueprint to guide your journey to renewed happiness in married life:

1. Identify What Makes Your Spouse Happy

What makes your spouse happy?

Create a list of things that will make your spouse happy or pleased.

Focus on the simple things and don't resort to expensive vacations or diamond rings (though these are nice, they aren't necessary and sometimes, they can be misread as, "I just did something horrible and I'm guilty, so have a diamond ring.")

The majority of married couples are relatively easy to please and the things that they are seeking within the marriage are also easy to produce like taking care of the baby on some days or being more conscientious about your appearance when you go out on a date.

List as many as you can so you have multiple options when it's time to put things into action.

2. Use Your List and Make Your Spouse Happy Again

After a week of observing and talking to your spouse about what makes him/her the happiest, it's time to please your spouse. Select as many things on your list as possible and start doing or providing them. To remain motivated, take note of the things that you have been doing for your spouse and note the reactions and how you felt when you did it for him/her.

3. Create a List of What Pleases You

Since you started this process, it's fine if you inform your spouse as to what would make you the happiest guy/girl in the world. Do not list down things that have been causing severe friction in your relationship because this may send the wrong message to your spouse.

Big problems should be solved collaboratively, just not right now. Give your list to your spouse and talk to him/her about the things that matter to you the most.

Now would be a good time to be really honest about your thoughts and how you feel about the things you have listed down. Don't hold back - be honest *but* you still have to be supportive and positive. Also, don't forget to use the active listening strategies we discussed before.

4. Receive and Appreciate Your Spouse's Efforts

When your spouse reciprocates, show your happiness and appreciation. Remember, before this process, you and your spouse were probably ignoring your individual issues and there's already cold air between the two of you already. This is a vast improvement so let the momentum flow between you and your spouse.

It's time to let love reign supreme again!

Make your man wake up to the amazing woman you are... and reignite your sparkling relationship that you thought was gone forever (or “never meant to be”)

Without even knowing it, you, me, and every other woman that has been, or wants to be in a loving relationship, is sabotaging our chance of happiness with “behavioral dances” that interrupt the natural way that men fall - and stay - in love with us.

After 25 years of successful relationship counseling, one relationship expert has finally figured out why men fall out of love with women, and more importantly, the simple things women can do to save, nurture and protect their loving relationships, no matter how bad things have become.

Right now, it might seem like all hope is lost, or that you’re just not “meant to be” ... but countless case studies prove otherwise.

Take Sally, who, like millions of other women, is watching her man slip away from her. She tries everything to get his attention and reignite the flame, but it feels like he’s on a different planet.

No matter what she says, nothing seems to change his feelings towards her.

She’s upset, lost, and worried that the end of her relationship is just around the corner... and if the relationship is already broken apart, she’s terrified he’ll never come back.

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What Sally doesn't realize is, everything she's doing to desperately win back his love, is actually driving him further away.

Based on countless years of research, one counseling expert has discovered seven common signs of self-sabotaging behavior that drives men into the arms of other women, plus a proven, step-by-step process that will finally open his heart to you, and have him running back into your arms, sooner than you think.

[To find out how, visit HERE!!](#)