

*Bringing back the*

# **Love**

*How to solve your relationship problems  
and find true and lasting love*

***Free Sample - Chapter 12 - Letting Go***

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## Letting Go

*Moving on from the past so you can find happiness today*

Throughout this book I have shown you that the process of healing, both personally and within a relationship is about identifying and letting go of the barriers that are hiding you from your true, loving and connected self. I have suggested a number of ways that you can raise your awareness and recognise the fears and insecurities that create the negative self-beliefs, resentments and judgments that damage your relationship. By bringing these into the open through mature communication and then finding both self-forgiveness and forgiveness for others, you will have started to dismantle the barriers that are standing in the way of a truly successful relationship.

### **Think of your mind as being made up of many thousands of layers**

Discovering your true loving state of being and your natural connectedness can happen with a flash of inspiration, but for most people it is a slower, step-by-step learning process. Think of your mind as being made of many thousands of layers, many of which are negative and unhelpful to the experience of love and good relationships. As you run through the process I have been describing, you will successively strip off these layers until you find your essence underneath. Thankfully you do not have to wait until all the layers have gone to feel the benefits of your healing work, because the love will begin to shine through as soon as you become *accountable*. This process will inevitably have its ups and downs but you will increasingly reap the rewards in terms of feeling better about yourself and about your relationship. This will then spur you on to tackle the deeper and more profound issues that you may have to face.

Sometimes people find it daunting to think that there are thousands of layers of negativity keeping them from their loving essence, but please do not

become disillusioned by this. You can use exactly the same process to heal every layer of negativity that you unearth. First become aware of a negative issue in your mind, try to understand it, realise it is not true for you to have this feeling or belief, and then set about *letting it go* through a process of acceptance and forgiveness. In the earlier parts of this book I described how traumatic or disturbing experiences in our formative years can easily create negative self-beliefs, and how these can stay with us for our entire lives unless we actively heal them. The process requires us to deliberately let go of the past and all the emotional baggage that we have picked up over the years so we can discover our true state of happiness.

Happiness isn't something we can plan or control - it happens as a consequence of us returning to our natural state of love and connection. We can however live and relate in ways that make this state easier to access - something I have been urging you to do in this book. As we experience more happiness, we begin to realise that it isn't to be found in the past or future - it can only be experienced moment by moment, in the *present*. So given that we all want to be happy, why do we find it so hard to live in the moment? The answer to this question is that to live in every moment we would need to be totally emotionally present - we would need to be willing to feel and experience everything including all the pain that we have stored away during our lives. Rather than do this we will often choose to either dwell on the past, or look to the future where one day we hope that our efforts will make us happy. We can see this strategy reflected in the first two stages of psychological evolution.

If we are very dependent we will spend most of our time trying to gain attention, approval and love from the people around us and regularly *relive the pain* of our early heartbreaks. In other words we live in the past and continually re-run our heartbreaks. If on the other hand, we decide to move on and become independent, we pretend we have *no pain* and deny our emotions. To do this we have to expend large amounts of energy to stop the emotions from appearing. Of course, what we are actually doing by becoming independent is suppressing our dependence because our memory of it is so painful. If we have chosen this independent route (and most of us have at some point in our lives) we will tend to focus more on the future. We will be continually planning things, writing lists and contemplating future success. Our primary tool will be control and we will use this to make sure that we reach our goals, often at the expense of other people. Sadly, we never feel the reward for our successes, because we will have already moved on to the next project.

Clearly dependence and independence can only take us so far in life and that is why I have been describing the 'third way' which is called *interdependence*. This psychological state is very much about living in the present, but to reach it we must be able to let go of dependence and independence - our obsession with the past and the future. For most of us this will begin by letting go of our independence, particularly our need for control.

Control is the hallmark of independence and letting it go can be very difficult because it is our primary tool for keeping our fear and emotional pain at bay. As I have described in the earlier chapters, becoming independent also makes us blind, so we are usually unaware of the extent to which we are using control in our relationships. The first step is therefore to raise our awareness around our own need for and use of control. The next exercise will help you to do this.



*Think about your relationship (or one from the past) and consider how much control you like to have. How do you expect your partner to behave? How do you react when they don't do what you want? How much control do you use in your work, or with your children, if you have them? Imagine yourself relinquishing control in your relationship, or in your life? What sort of fears or feelings come up? Also think about your partner - how do they control you? How does this make you feel?*

Nobody wants to think of themselves as controlling, so this exercise may have made you feel a bit uncomfortable. Don't let these feelings distract you. All of us use control in our relationships at some point so it's not a big crime! Although some of our control is obvious, there are many ways in which we subtly control our partners, and other people in our lives. I hope that you have been able to identify at least some situations in which you use control to try to make things happen in the way that you want. How did it feel when you thought about letting go of the control? You probably felt some anxiety or fear. If you found it hard to identify any situations where you use control in your relationships, be aware that if you are not experiencing happiness at any particular moment in your life, then there will be an element of control at play. Be really honest and look more deeply at these situations and you will be able to see the places where you want things to turn out *your* way.

To let go of control you will have to be willing to experience all your feelings, including any negative emotions that you might have been defending from earlier in your life. Whilst this is not an easy thing to do, once you start opening up your mind to these things, they are never as painful or difficult as you had imagined. The opposite of control is a 'lack of control' or an 'absence of control' and not surprisingly this can feel very frightening. Of course you still need elements of physical control in your life to keep you safe and maintain some order, but this is not useful when you extend it to your emotions and relationships. As you let go of control you will need to learn to *trust* that everything will turn out fine and that nobody, including you will get hurt. What you are doing in letting go of control, is opening your heart and allowing inspiration to direct you and help you make decisions that

bring more love to any situation that you find yourself in. It is only through practicing letting go of control, trusting and then seeing the benefits appear, that the fear will fall away and you can gain confidence in this process. In the next exercise you will have a chance to start doing this in one area of your relationship.



*From the previous exercise, take one of the examples of where you are controlling your partner, or another person in your life. In your notebook describe how you are controlling them. What is the control intended to achieve? For instance, let's say that your partner never helps around the house with domestic chores. In the past you have nagged them to help and got upset and cross when they don't. In this case the control is intended to coerce them into helping. Deeper down however, your control is intended to stop you feeling let down by them - probably because it reminds you of being let down in the past by somebody significant. The trouble with the control is that even if you manage to make them do something, later on they will let you down again. It also makes you feel guilty that you have controlled them.*

*Take your own example and identify the deeper reasons for controlling them or the situation - what don't you like feeling and are hoping the control will keep at bay? Feel this emotion as much as you can, then let it go and trust that there is a better way to handle your partner or the person you have been controlling. Work to understand why the person you are controlling behaves as they do. See through their bad behaviour and personality to the loving person underneath. Determine that you will no longer use control in this situation, and that you will trust in more inspired solutions.*

How did you get on? It can be very difficult to relinquish control and just trust that you and the people around you will be inspired to find a solution to a problem. Did a thought run through your mind that this is a ridiculous way to proceed and doomed to failure? At first, letting go of the need to control a situation or person is a real challenge, but in doing so you unlock the problem so it can be solved. Although it won't be obvious to you, your control is cementing the problem in place. Your resentment, frustration and desire to make the other person behave in the way you want, breaks your bond with them. This means that you cannot communicate with them and they are more likely to ignore you, or deliberately do the opposite to what you want.

The letting go of control and then trusting that all will come good in the end, is an act of love. If you really can achieve this, in a wholehearted way, then your partner will respond accordingly. Their behaviour will improve, your need for control will fall away, and the problem will solve itself as you tap into the natural creative flow that is all around you.

## **Letting go of control and trusting is an act of love**

Trusting in the way I have just described is not easy because control keeps a huge amount of fear and pain suppressed in our minds. We are afraid to loosen the control in case we have to experience fear and this makes it impossible to take some risks. The only way forward is to find the *courage* to open our hearts and face the negative emotions that lie within us. It takes courage to allow our emotions to flow, and it takes more courage to trust and wait for a solution to our problems to appear. All too often we will let go of some control, but then lose our nerve and return to it again because we just cannot believe that the inspired solutions will appear. It is very important to appreciate that in trusting you aren't doing *nothing* - you are doing the all-important *heart-opening* that is required to get your emotions and the love flowing again. It is your re-connection to love that will automatically solve your relationship problems, because it was your falling away from that state that created them in the first place.

Learning to trust and follow the natural flow of our lives is an act of *leadership* because it sends out a powerful message to the people around us. If just one person in a difficult situation can keep calm and wait for an inspired solution, rather than reacting negatively, then the people around them are more likely to become inspired and remember their natural state of love. Leadership of this kind is just one of the gifts that appear when we remember our true state of love and connection. All of us are hugely *gifted*, but for much of the time this is hidden from us because our minds are clouded by such things as fear, guilt and anger, or we are suffering with feelings of sadness, grief or hopelessness. Our gifts and talents to help others also become hidden behind our independent defences, especially if we think that they caused us pain, or got us into trouble in the past. Take for example creativity.

If we were creative as a child, we would have probably been quite unconventional in the way that we approached life. This is likely to have been interpreted as naughtiness or rebelliousness, and got us into trouble with adults. We might then have decided that expressing our creative gifts was risky, and shut them down. Forgetting we had done this, we would then go around in life believing that we were uncreative. Most of us are holding back our gifts in this way because when we were young something happened that made us decide that they were too dangerous, or too powerful. We end up being afraid of our greatest gifts, and so we fail to use them to help ourselves or the people around us.

## **Most of us are holding back our gifts**

I chose the example of creativity deliberately because it is a gift that we often think is given to a few lucky people. But this is simply not the case.

Everybody is creative, but not everyone has reached a place where they are aware of their own creativity, or have the confidence to express it. Creativity doesn't have to be about painting pictures, writing books or inventing gadgets. The very fact that you are reading this book today means you have made countless creative decisions in your life to get to this point successfully. Life itself and the workings of your body and mind are creative miracles in themselves, and yet we still tend to think of ourselves as uncreative and *powerless* to change things.

The belief that we are powerless comes directly from the assumption that we are independent and separated from other people and things. However, when we know ourselves as connected, we come to the astonishing realisation that we have been creating *all* of our experiences. Our hearts and minds are creating all the time, and the outcome is positive or negative depending on whether we are in a state of love or fear. This is the basis for becoming a leader in your relationship because it means that you can create the solutions to all your problems simply by opening your heart to love. Whenever you come up against a difficulty in your relationship, the first thing to say to yourself is - 'I know there is a solution to this problem and I know that I can be part of it'. Building confidence in your personal creative power and its ability to bring about beneficial change, will prevent you from becoming disillusioned and downhearted when you meet difficulties in your relationship. It will also make it much easier to find the inspiration to bring back the intimacy.

Believing that there is a positive future for your relationship, and that you have the power to bring it about, is part of *visionary* leadership. This involves being able to visualise successful outcomes even when you are facing seemingly impossible situations. Many relationship problems fall into this category and it takes considerable vision and determination to inspire yourself and your partner when you are, for instance, caught up in an angry argument. Again, it is tempting to think that only a few lucky people have visionary leadership skills, but we all have them once we have let go of our negative self-concepts and revealed the love that is available to us from within. Ultimately it all comes down to how much *faith* we have in the power of love to make our lives better.

We have seen how our beliefs determine the quality of life that we experience. What makes things feel impossible or without hope in a relationship is the belief that we are powerless to change things. In long-term relationships it can seem that the habits of a lifetime are impossible to break, and that it is easier to carry on without rocking the boat. But this will just take us into the dead zone where, as we have seen, there is very little joy or vitality. If you find yourself feeling stuck or have no faith that things can change, you will need to start by looking at your beliefs about yourself, your partner and your relationship. These beliefs will hark back to similar beliefs that you first took on during a period of trauma or heartbreak in the past. If you feel stuck, powerless and unhappy in your current relationship, then there is *somebody significant* you have not let go of from your past. In other

words your mind is still subconsciously focused on that person and you cannot move forward because you have not brought emotional closure to that relationship. The next exercise will help you to identify if you have such a person in your life.



*To find out how much you are holding on to somebody significant in your life, ask yourself on a scale of 0-100 how good your relationship is (100 is total connection and true love). Take the first number you thought of when I asked that question - even if it seems silly. If you came up with 60%, then 40% of you is still holding on to somebody significant from your past. It could be a parent, an old partner, or somebody who you were very close to when you were young? You might already know who that person is, but if not, ask your intuition to tell you. If you still can't think of somebody, remain curious about who this person might be.*

This simple exercise can tell you so much about your romantic relationships. The success of your relationship today is largely controlled by how much your heart is *available* to your partner. If you are still invested in another person, either positively or negatively, then part of you is not available to your partner. You may have found that the person you are still holding on to is one of your parents. This can happen if your relationship with them has some unhealed traumas or misunderstandings from the past. It does not matter if your parents are still alive, or if they have passed away - the unfinished emotional 'business' will still be affecting you today, even if it is driven from your subconscious mind.

There are many reasons why you might hold on to somebody from the past. The most common are failed relationships, open-ended affairs, and the death of somebody close to you. The feelings of *emptiness* and *grief* that come from a loss can dominate your life for many years and make it impossible to commit fully to your current partner. I know that some of you who are reading this book will have found it hard to build or sustain a relationship after such a painful experience. Others of you may have come out of traumatic separations or divorces and are finding it difficult to pick yourself up and start a new life.

I can remember how hard it was to let go of my wife after she decided that she could not go on with our marriage. All sorts of painful feelings came up for me. There was the immediate loss of somebody for whom I still felt enormous love. Then there was the fear of being on my own again and having to go out and date other women. For a long time I didn't believe that anybody would want to spend their life with me, or that I could ever find somebody to replace my wife. Then there was the terrible thought of never being together with the children as a family. This was made much worse at times of birthdays, Christmas and holidays. Everything seemed to tell me that it was

wrong to split up and go our separate ways. You will probably recognise these painful feelings if you have suffered the loss of a partner or gone through separation or divorce.

It can take several years to overcome the ending of relationship, especially if there has been an element of betrayal, or we have lost a partner through illness or tragedy. While all of us need time to mourn, we might also hold onto the feelings of loss as a way of getting back at our ex-partners. I can remember becoming aware of the way I was doing this with my ex-wife. For a couple of years after our split I felt desperately sad and didn't hide this from her. Although I didn't attack her verbally, I'm sure she was aware that I was unhappy and suffering. I was effectively saying to her, "*Look how miserable you have made me - it's your fault that I am so unhappy*". In retrospect I can see that I hadn't come to terms with my loss and was trying to punish her for my suffering. At a deeper level however, my behaviour was a cry for help. I suppose I hoped that she might come back to me or that another woman would take pity on me if my heart bled enough.

Clearly I had much letting go to do after my marriage failed. I was missing all the positive things about my wife and family and I had to somehow let these things go when we went our separate ways. This I gradually did, but I was also holding on to the negative aspects of my marriage, and I had to let these go as well. For many of us, a separation leaves us with feelings of resentment, bitterness and a sense of betrayal. We may carry on fighting or complaining about our ex's long after the relationship has ended. In the worst cases, the fall-out from a broken relationship can last an entire lifetime, with a disastrous effect on future relationships and any children of the partnership. It is therefore just as important to let the hurt and negative feelings go after a failed relationship, as it is to let go of the positive things that we miss about our partners and family. If you find yourself in a continuing battle with an ex-partner, you need to let them go for your own sake, and the sake of any children that you might have.

A failure to let go is really a *refusal* to move on with our lives when something has gone wrong. Our expectations about how our life should have turned out have been dashed, and our plan for happiness has been shattered. Instead we camp out with our feelings of hurt and loss, and find many good reasons why we can't change our lives. If you think that you have spent long enough feeling sorry for yourself, and for what happened after the ending of relationship, it is important that you take a firm hand with yourself and remember that your natural state is to be happy, not sad. It is time to complete the letting go process so you can find your true self again.

There are however a few challenges along the way. When we are trying to let go it can seem that the only way forward is to *end* our feelings of love for our ex-partner, but this is the worst thing we can do. It isn't love that we struggle to let go of, it is *guilt*. When a relationship ends, we might feel an immediate relief because the fighting or deadness has come to end, but we may have ignored the huge amount of guilt that we have stored up. If you look underneath all the sadness and recrimination that happens with

separation, you will always find this layer of guilt. It comes originally from our state of dependence and childhood heartbreaks, is reinforced by any relationship difficulties, and finally it is compounded by the separation. Given that our natural state is one of loving connection, every time we fail to connect with our partner we feel some guilt and add this to whatever is already there. It is the presence of guilt, mostly stored in our subconscious mind, which forces us apart in our relationships and will remain with us even if we separate or divorce, unless we actively heal it. Until we let go of the guilt, we will either fight with our ex-partners or pine after them forever.

## **Life can feel so unfair when somebody you love is taken away**

If you have lost your partner, family member or close friend through bereavement, it is not surprising that you might find it hard to let them go. All your hopes and dreams will have been dashed, and you may have been left, not just with sadness and grief, but also with feelings of anger, resentment or confusion because the person has departed. Life can feel so unfair when somebody you love is taken away. If you are finding it hard to move on after bereavement, ask yourself if there could be any guilt remaining from your relationship. You might feel that you let your partner or loved one down in not helping them enough, or not loving them enough when they were alive. Did you struggle to support them fully, either physically, emotionally or spiritually as they were dying? Or did they leave so fast that you did not have time to make amends and say good-bye properly? No matter what your experience of bereavement has been, it is time to forgive your partner or loved one, and to forgive yourself if there are any lingering feelings of guilt. I'm sure they would not want you to keep suffering today.

The most effective way to get over a loss, whether it is through a failed relationship or bereavement, is to feel your pain without judging it or suppressing it, and at the same time deal with any guilt that comes up. That is why *mourning* is so effective - the pain is brought to the surface where it will naturally heal. It is important to feel your pain because otherwise it will become buried and continue to damage your life subconsciously. If you are aware of some guilt, try to identify where and when it started in your life, and who was present, in the way that I have been describing in this book. You will need to reach a point of *acceptance* for what was happening in those past heartbreaks and traumas by understanding that everybody was doing their best in their given circumstances. Then you will need to *forgive* everybody concerned. As you do this you will feel a sense of relief and renewed energy.

For many people the loss of somebody close to them such as a partner, child or parent is such a shock that their life loses all meaning, and they find it hard to function. They may end up obsessing about their loss until it dominates every aspect of their lives. Their friends will tell them that 'time will heal', but although the immediate pain does subside, they are left with what feels like a gaping hole inside - as if part of them is missing. If you are

experiencing such a loss, or feel that your life is on hold due to a death or relationship loss in the past, the next exercise is a powerful way of letting this painful episode go and moving forward into a new life.



*Find somewhere you can do this exercise without being disturbed. Write a letter to the person you would like to let go of. In it say everything that needs to be said. Do not hold back on anything. Describe what was good about your relationship with them, but also what didn't work so well. Be really honest. Feel all your emotions as you write and describe your feelings to them. Imagine them standing or sitting in front of you as you write and tell them how much you loved and appreciated them. Try to describe what you understand about their challenges and also explain why, at times, your own behaviour may not have been everything you would have wanted it to be. Ask for any forgiveness you need from them and offer your forgiveness to them if there were aspects of their behaviour that you found challenging.*

Writing a letter like the one in this exercise can bring up painful emotions, but the process has an important function. It is these suppressed feelings that are preventing you from letting go of the person in question. That is why it is so important to feel into any pain, anger, sadness or guilt that you still associate with the relationship in question. As you do so, you will be dissolving the guilt and actively healing the issues that have been holding you back in life. The process allows you not only to forgive the person you are letting go, but also to forgive yourself for any of your shortcomings. In writing the letter and experiencing the feelings that were left over after somebody's death, you are completing the mourning process and allowing yourself and the person you have lost to move on. Although you will be bringing *closure* to this relationship, you are not cutting them out of your life. The feelings of love and connection you have with them will continue, even without their physical presence. This is the wonderful thing about love - it carries on beyond death. Send the person love, forgiveness and blessings, wherever you believe them to be now, and receive these things in return from them. This process of communication and bringing closure to the painful episodes in the past will free you to have a much happier life in the future.

The letter writing technique is also a powerful way of letting go of a partner who has been unfaithful or behaved badly. Forgiving somebody who has hurt you a great deal is a very difficult thing to do, but it is the quickest and best way to let them go. As you write the letter, remember that you are not intending to send it to them in person. Removing the need for them to read it allows you to be totally honest about your feelings towards them. Write to them from the heart and tell them everything that needs to be said. You can express the hurt and sadness and any feelings of betrayal, but also describe any guilt that you are feeling. Also tell them all the things you loved about them. Really feel into this with your heart as you write. Then, and only

if you feel it truly, write the words that forgive them and ask for their forgiveness for anything you may have done. This will bring you some relief from your suffering. Then put the letter away and look forward positively to the rest of your life.

## **Do I love my ex-partner enough to let them go?**

If you are still struggling to let an ex-partner go, particularly if it feels that this will leave you bereft and empty, ask yourself the question, "*Do I love them enough to let them go?*" This is not a stupid question - it contains the key to letting go. When you hold on to somebody after a relationship has finished and sacrifice your life as a result you are subconsciously attacking them and making them responsible for your problems. Although it's not at all pleasant to think of it in this way, you are using them as an *excuse* for not moving on.

Letting someone go is an act of love and releases them so that they can live their life freely. Sometimes we have to let them go so that they can discover their own path in life, and this might include them making mistakes and having more problems. The best thing we can do for them in these circumstances is to wish them success, as genuinely as we can. If you can let an ex-partner go in this way, you will still feel love for them, and both of you will feel grateful for the happier times you had together. Unlikely as it might seem at the present, it is possible to become good friends with your ex-partner providing that you can let go of any pain, resentment or guilt that came out of the relationship. If you have had children together, imagine how much they will learn about love and healing when they see their mother and father forgive each other and move on positively with their lives. Remember that the most important thing that any child wants, is for their parents to be *happy*. If your relationship fails, there will inevitably be some pain and suffering around the breakup, but there is no reason why you and your partner cannot heal your differences, and find renewed happiness in subsequent relationships.

The end of a relationship is often full of doubt as to whether you have done the right thing. Have you ever left somebody and then immediately regretted it, or wondered if you have made a mistake? This can lead to a period of pain and confusion as you have second thoughts. In these situations it is still important to *let go* of your ex because only this will reveal the truth of your relationship. When you let go of the need of having them in your life, one of two things happen. You either both move on separately with your lives, or your partner comes back to you in a much *truer* way. I know it sounds paradoxical to let somebody go as a way of bringing them back into your life, but it really does work! The letting go takes away the neediness, which makes you much more attractive to your ex-partner. At the same time it gives you a clearer perspective so you can discover your own personal truth, as well as the truth of the relationship. It also places you in a much better emotional state to heal any issues that still stand between you and your

partner.

For those of you who are currently single, or in the early phases of dating, this letting go technique is also very powerful. I'm sure you are familiar with that anxious period when you have met somebody you like and are wondering if they will ring you back or arrange another date. All relationships are vulnerable in these early stages and any neediness at this time will tend to drive a potential partner away. To remove this anxiety, let go of the need to have a relationship and just *enjoy* the experience of meeting this new person. Be yourself on the date and have fun, but then wait for the truth to be revealed naturally. Let the person know you are keen and interested, but don't chase them, or send them too many texts or phone messages. Try not to obsess about them, or fret when they don't call immediately, as these are all forms of neediness. Your ability to let go and trust in the natural unfolding of the relationship is very attractive, and if you can do this successfully, your date will call you when it is appropriate. Of course, if they still don't call, you will know that they are not the right person for you!

Let's look for a moment at the difficulty some of you might be having in finding a partner or sustaining a relationship over a longer period of time. You may be making all the right practical moves in terms of dating and meeting a potential partner, but a long-term relationship never seems to materialise. If this is happening, it is worth checking to see if you have any subconscious *resistance* to a relationship. On the surface you might be really keen to find a partner and crave the intimacy and tenderness that this can bring, but deeper down you may prefer to be on your own, so you can retain your independence. The next exercise includes a checklist of some of the tell-tale signs of independence that can make it hard to meet and start a new relationship.



*If your dating and new relationship experiences have been less than successful, look through the list below. Do any of these descriptions sound familiar?*

- I like my own company and feel resentful when my freedom is curtailed.*
- When I have been out socialising, I can't wait to get back to the peace and quiet of my house/flat.*
- If somebody comes to stay I look forward to them leaving.*
- I get irritated by potential partners and their silly habits, when I have been with them for a while.*
- I am dedicated to my career and have little time and energy for dating or socialising.*
- I find it easy to meet a partner, but any relationship quickly comes to an end.*

- *I am an incredibly busy person.*
- *I never seem to meet the right people - nobody quite matches up to what I am looking for in a partner.*
- *I really enjoy a night in alone watching TV/DVDs, with a meal and a nice bottle of wine.*
- *I can't imagine anyone wanting to spend their life with me.*
- *I have lots of friends of the opposite sex, but that is all they remain.*
- *I always seem to end up in long-distance relationships.*
- *I am having an affair and long to be with my lover on a more permanent basis, but this never seems to happen.*

All these situations and issues can show reluctance to being in, or committing to, a relationship. If you recognised one or more of these statements, you are probably quite independent, and are perhaps using it to hide from the intimacy of a relationship.

### **Are you afraid of having a relationship?**

Most of us want to be in a good relationship, but there can be deeply hidden fears that stop us from finding a partner. Even if we do find someone, these same fears can cause us to sabotage the relationship. If you recall, our independence is about trying to protect ourselves from feeling painful emotions from the past. If you are failing to bring a partner into your life or you keep having short-lived relationships, it suggests that there is a *significant issue* that you are avoiding. Are you afraid of having a relationship because it might trigger feelings that you would find difficult to handle? This is a challenging question, but it is an important one to answer if you are to break through the relationship drought that you are experiencing. To meet and have a successful relationship, you will need to place the values of *partnership* and *interdependence* above those of independence. This means that you will have to find out why you prefer to stay independent. As you become aware of the issues that are holding you back romantically, you can start to work on them in the ways I have been describing in this book. As you do this you will automatically begin to meet suitable partners, and find that you can sustain relationships beyond the first few dates.

The ability to let go is also important in long-term relationships. As I have described in Chapter 7, becoming independent is a major problem for your relationship because it always takes you into the dead zone, where you lose your connection to love. In your attempt to protect yourself from pain you build an emotional fortress around yourself. This stops your emotions from being triggered, but it means that nobody, especially your partner, can reach you. Escaping the dead zone is therefore about dismantling the fortress and surrendering your defences, so you can once again give and receive love

freely.

## **You stopped taking emotional risks with your partner**

Although it might seem obvious to remove the barriers that are standing in the way of love, when you are in the dead zone this can be very difficult because both you and your partner will lack energy and inspiration. Luckily you have a huge advantage on your side - the dead zone is not your natural state and your higher, intuitive mind is just waiting for you to take some emotional risks that will re-open your hearts. The reason you would have fallen into the dead zone was because you stopped taking these risks with your partner, in the belief that this would make you happier. Moving on from the dead zone is therefore about mustering the courage to do something different.

Imagine if I told you that I was going to drive you to a high bridge and ask you to jump off with an elastic cord tied to your ankles. You would probably feel very nervous and have a thumping heart. One thing is for sure - you would start *feeling* your emotions again - life would no longer feel dead! This is exactly what needs to happen in your relationship. You need to fire up your heart by focusing on the things that excite you, inspire you, and fill you with passion.

In the next exercise I am going to ask you to dream for a moment because this is one of the easiest ways of reigniting your emotions.



*Think about the questions below. Don't hold back or judge your ideas - write down in your notebook what you really want from life.*

- *What do you dream of doing?*
- *What do you love doing - and why?*
- *What excites you - what are you passionate about, and why?*
- *What inspires you?*
- *If you had your life again, what would you do or be the next time around?*
- *What do you find easy and are good at?*
- *Is there anywhere you want to visit before you die?*
- *Is there anything you want to do before you die?*
- *What is your vision for your relationship?*
- *What could you and your partner do together if there were no practical constraints?*

*You could ask your partner these same questions and discuss your answers. What is it that inspires and excites them? What would they love to do in their own life?*

How did you get on? Hopefully you didn't hold anything back and wrote down all the things that excite and inspire you, even if they seem impractical and unattainable at this point in your life. I asked you to do this because being in partnership is about being *authentic* - being true to yourself and true to your partner. There are certain things that are natural for you to do in your life and there are *true* ways for you to think, feel and behave. If you live in these ways you will be happy and of course, if you don't, you will soon become unhappy. Whilst you were evolving through the stages of dependence or independence, you would have had to suppress much of your authenticity, and that is why you would have experienced some problems in both. By identifying the aspects of yourself that you suppressed, you can now actively bring them back into your life, and in doing so find much more happiness and fulfillment.

Some of your hopes, dreams and aspirations might seem bizarre and impractical, but don't judge them because they still point towards the 'real you'. In the past you may have imposed all sorts of restrictions and limitations on yourself because you felt you were being idealistic, or because

you were afraid to take risks in your life. This time around, don't discount anything, no matter how crazy it seems. If, for example, you had a dream to start a fashion boutique or own a vineyard in deepest France, then play around with this in your mind. What is it that excites you about your dream? Imagine yourself living the dream - how would you feel? Look beyond the practical or material constraints of your ideas and try to understand why they hold such *meaning* for you. There will be specific values and gifts within your dreams that you need to embrace for you to be happy. The trick will be to build these into your life now, even if you do not carry through the dream in all its practical details.

If it is possible, share your dreams and aspirations with your partner and ask them about theirs. You will probably find that although the practical details differ, the emotional meaning that you would get from implementing your dreams is similar. We generally fall in love with people who have the same core values, hopes and aspirations and who see the world in the same way as us. If you can unearth these core aspects of your individual personalities, you will remember once again why you fell in love with each other.

Conversations about dreams and desires and the feelings that go with them are an excellent way to begin communicating about emotions because most people like to talk about the things that interest them. As soon as your partner becomes excited, their heart will begin to open. This will pave the way for deeper and more meaningful conversations about their emotions and what is happening in your relationship. It is also very satisfying to support a partner in realising a project that they have wanted to do for a while, but have lacked the confidence to tackle. Such cooperation and support is the hallmark of a good relationship.

### **Do something today to make your dreams happen**

The problem with our dreams is that for many of us, that is all they remain. To give them a chance of becoming reality do something today, no matter how small, to *make them happen*. This doesn't have to mean ripping you life apart and starting some grand venture. It could be something more modest. For instance, if you have always wanted to be an artist, enroll on some evening classes and start painting. This will immediately bring creative meaning into your life. In starting the classes you will have taken an emotional risk and probably faced a number of fears about your ability to paint or show your efforts to other people. We are often afraid of our greatest gifts and the things that we have always longed to do. What a tragedy it would be for us, and what a loss for the people around us, if we failed to embrace these gifts.

Moving into and staying in partnership is therefore about being more *true* to yourself, and this can only happen when you let go of all your negative self-beliefs and return to your natural state of love and connection. You will

know you are on track because the more authentic you are, the more ease, peace, joy and all the other wonderful feelings that come with love, will increasingly be part of your life. Following an authentic path is not a selfish thing to do because you will be following the natural *flow* of your life - think of it as following your destiny and living your life's *purpose*. When you do this you will need to be sensitive and empathic to the people around you because they will be used to the 'old' you. Although at first they might be disturbed by your new-found assertiveness and confidence, they will ultimately benefit because you will become a much happier and more loving person.

Although each of us has our specific hopes and dreams, when it comes to authenticity, there is one unifying factor. Our true state is one of love and connection, so everything we do needs to focus on embracing this. If you can always remember that being dependent or independent is not your natural state of existence, then you can continually focus on returning to your true state of relationship that is based on interdependence. Now and again you will slip back into independence or dependence, but with increased emotional awareness you will spend less time in these states, and learn how to quickly get back to interdependence. Eventually you will get into the habit of being in true partnership. Your open-heartedness will not only allow you to solve the problems you meet in your relationship, but you will be much less likely to have problems in the first place, because you will be projecting love instead of fear. You will become naturally creative and have the vision to help others with their own problems. Your relationship will then become a beacon of hope and inspiration to other couples and the people around you.

In this chapter I have shown you how important it is to be able to let go of the past, and look towards the future with a positive and creative intent. This will help you to be fully present in the moment, and yet have the hope and faith that things will be even better in the future. As you heal the past of the needs and insecurities that are associated with your upbringing, education and previous relationships, you will notice that other more pressing questions arise in your mind. Many of these will be about the *bigger* questions of life like, 'who am I', 'why am I here' and 'what happens to me when I die'. In the next chapter I will focus on these questions, because in exploring them you will discover the underlying reason why it is so hard to form and sustain a successful romantic relationship.

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# Contents

**1. Understanding Love - 11**

*Why love is so much more than an emotion*

**2. Holding Back The Tears – 26**

*The importance of emotions*

**3. I'm Not In Love – 51**

*Why we turn away from love and connection*

**4. Hopelessly Dependent – 67**

*How your needs can damage your relationship*

**5. Unworthy Of Love – 89**

*How our childhood heartbreaks create a sense of resentment, failure and guilt*

**6. I'm In Control – 122**

*How a desire for independence will rob you of love*

**7. Where Did The Love Go? – 151**

*Why an independent relationship always ends in deadness and a lack of love*

**8. Troublesome Triangles – 182**

*Why the relationship with your opposite-sex parent is so important to your romantic relationships*

**9. Taking The Lead – 218**

*How to step into leadership in your relationship*

**10. Time To Talk – 243**

*Learning how to communicate effectively with your partner*

**11. Making Love – 267**

*How to make sex a joyous and fulfilling part of your relationship*

**12. Letting Go - 294**

*Moving on from the past so you can  
find happiness today*

**13. Who Am I? - 321**

*How to reveal the real you and discover self-love*

**14. True Love - 345**

*Embracing true love in your relationships  
and in your life*

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