



THE GLENDON
ASSOCIATION & PSYCHALIVE

Overcoming the Fear of Intimacy



with Lisa Firestone, Ph.D.



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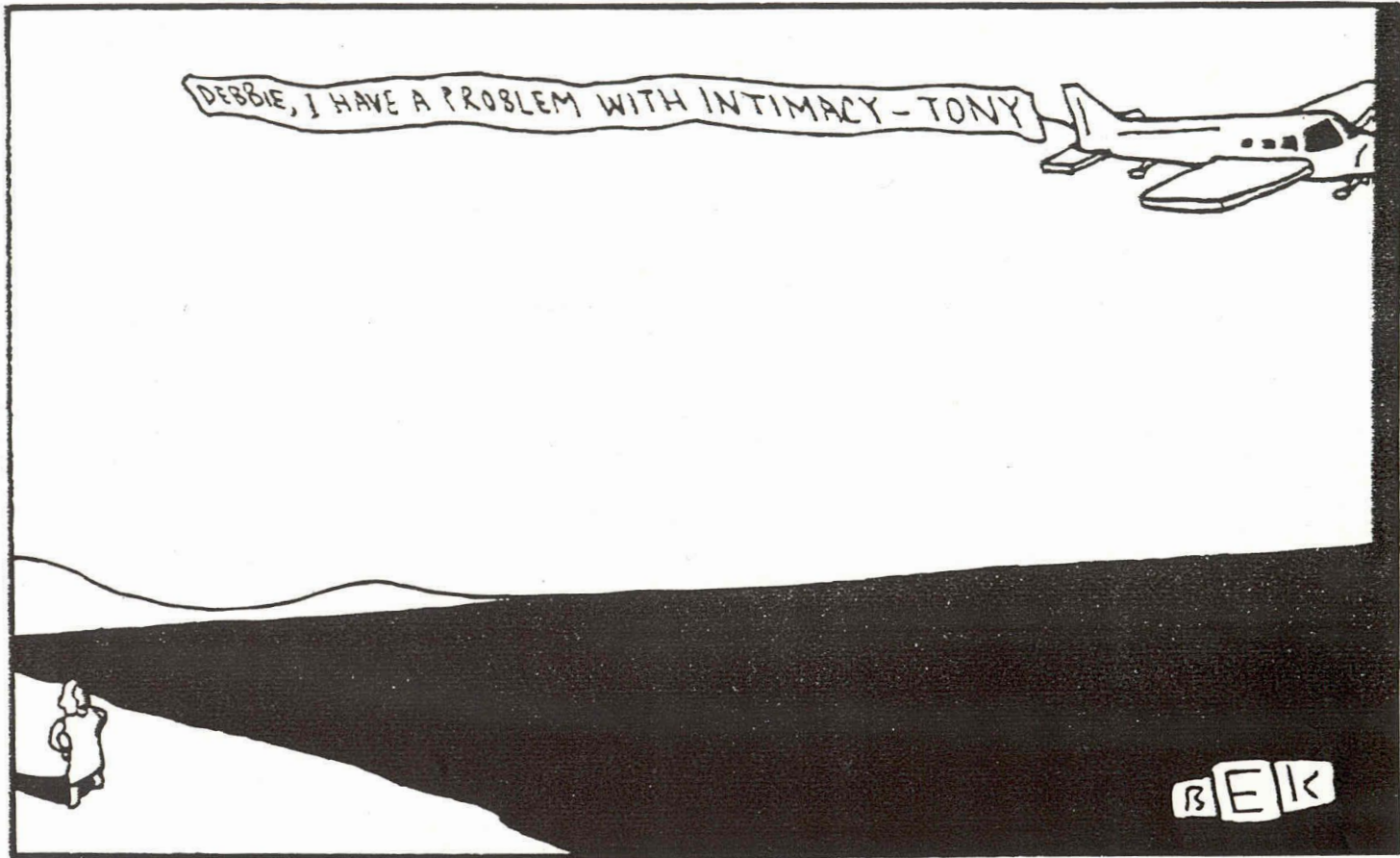


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Three Parts to This Webinar:

- Theory
- Identification/ Assessment
- Treatment

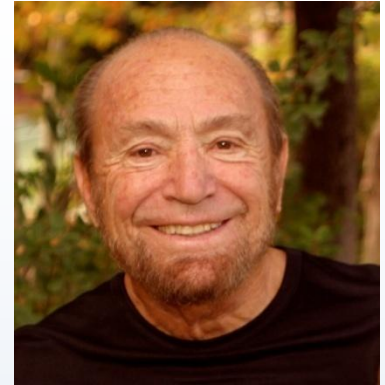


"Before you chop off my head, don't you think we should see a counsellor?"



Separation Theory

Robert W. Firestone, Ph.D.



- ❖ The concept of the **Fantasy Bond**
- ❖ The concept of the **Critical Inner Voice**





Separation Theory

- Integrates psychoanalytic and existential systems of thought
- Two kinds of emotional pain
 - Interpersonal
 - Existential
- The core conflict
- Formation of defenses in childhood
- Defended versus undefended lifestyles
- The Fantasy Bond and the Critical Inner Voice



Definition of the Fantasy Bond

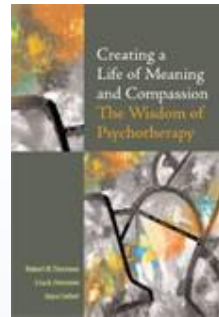
The Fantasy Bond:

A Fantasy Bond is an illusion of connection, originally an imaginary fusion or joining with the mother. It is used here to describe both the original imaginary connection formed during childhood and the repetitive efforts of the adult to continue to make connections in intimate associations.





Three States of Fantasy Involvement

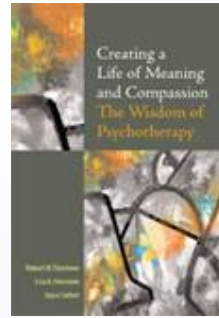


- The individual with extreme propensities for fantasy and imagined fusion who moves toward increased isolation and withdrawal from other people
- The individual who, to varying degrees, uses elements reality to reinforce and support an ongoing fantasy process rather than really investing in relationships and career
- The individual who lives a realistic committed life, whose actions correspond to his or her aspirations and abilities





Manifestations of a Fantasy Bond



- Withholding
- Polarization of parent-child ego states
- Idealization/denigration of the other
- Loss of independence
- Form versus substance





Poll #1:

Which of these manifestations
do you see in your patients?

Idealization of parents and family

Maintenance of a negative self-image

Projection of negative parental qualities and
behaviors onto others



Definition of the Voice Process

Voice Process:

The critical inner voice refers to a well-integrated pattern of destructive thoughts toward our selves and others. The “voices” that make up this internalized dialogue are at the root of much of our maladaptive behavior. This internal enemy fosters inwardness, distrust, self-criticism, self-denial, addictions and a retreat from goal-directed activities. The critical inner voice effects every aspect of our lives: our self-esteem and confidence, and most importantly, our personal and intimate relationships.





Common “Voices” in Relationships

Voices About Yourself:

- ❖ You’re never going to find another person who understands you.
- ❖ Don’t get too hooked on her.
- ❖ He doesn’t really care about you.
- ❖ She is too good for you.
- ❖ You’ve got to keep him interested.
- ❖ You’re better off on your own.
- ❖ As soon as she gets to know you, she will reject you.
- ❖ You’ve got to be in control.
- ❖ It’s your fault if he gets upset.
- ❖ Don’t be too vulnerable or you’ll just wind up getting hurt.





Common “Voices” in Relationships

Voices About Your Partner:

- ❖ Men are so insensitive, unreliable, selfish.
- ❖ Women are so fragile, needy, indirect.
- ❖ He only cares about being with his friends.
- ❖ Why get so excited? What’s so great about her anyway?
- ❖ He is probably cheating on you.
- ❖ You can’t trust her.
- ❖ He just can’t get anything right.





Poll #2:

How many of you have patients who have experienced any of these “voices?”

Most

Some

Not many



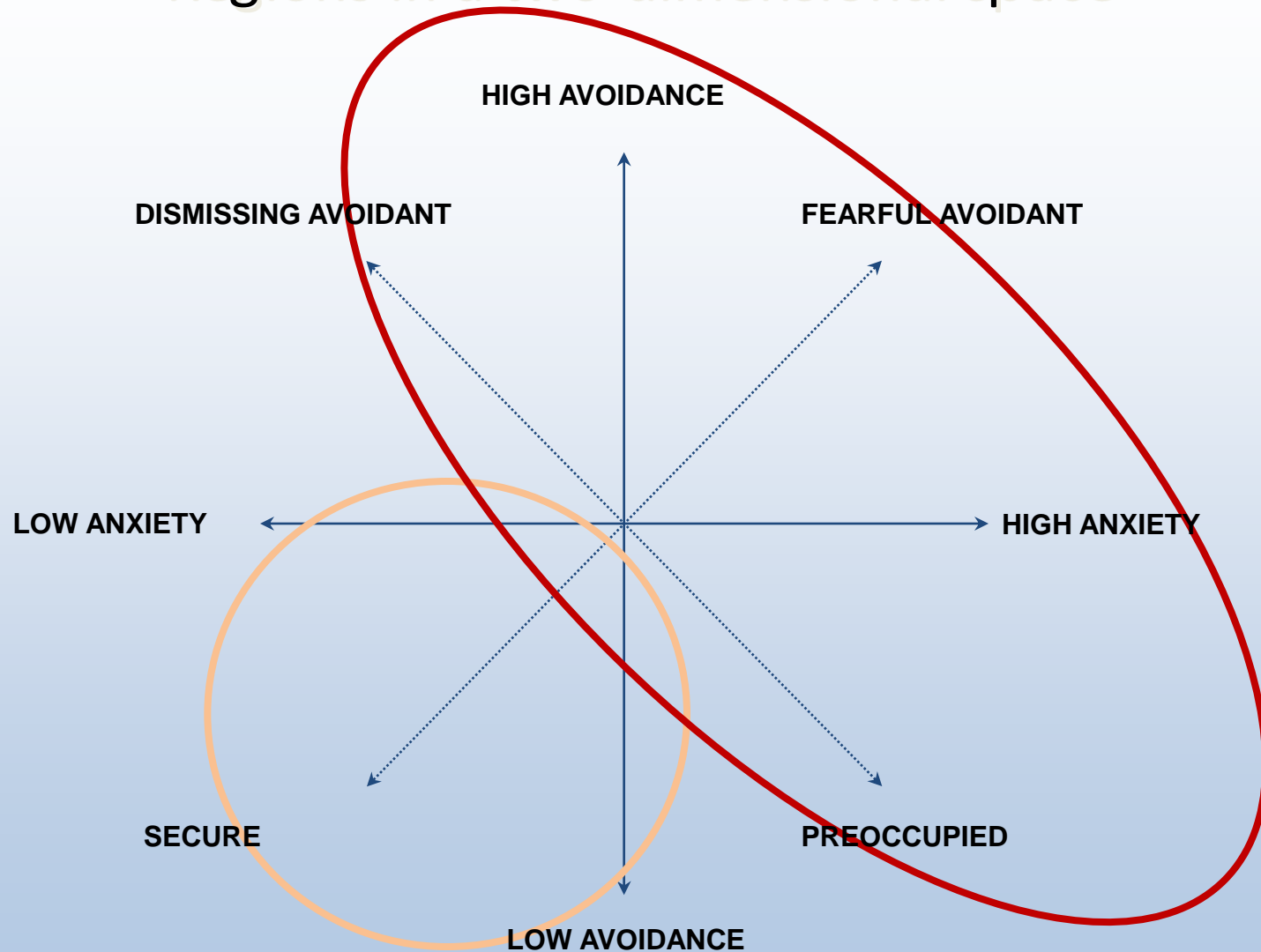
Attachment Theory Distilled

Dr. Phillip Shaver

- Humans rely on attachment figures for protection, support, and emotion regulation
- The attachment behavioral system is an evolved, innate regulator of proximity (hence of safety and safe exploration)
- When threats abate, behavioral systems other than attachment (e.g., exploration, caregiving) can be activated, allowing a person to become more competent/autonomous
- Attachment orientations, or “styles,” develop in relationships, resulting in systematic individual differences in attachment orientation: **secure**, **anxious**, **avoidant**, . . .
- The theory applies from “the cradle to the grave” (Bowlby)

From Dr. Phillip Shaver’s “Secure and Insecure Love: An Attachment Perspective”

Adult attachment 'styles' in social/personality psychology: Regions in a two-dimensional space



*Adapted from Ainsworth et al. (1978), Bartholomew
& Horowitz (1991), Fraley & Shaver (2000)*

Division of the Mind

Parental Ambivalence

Parents both love and hate themselves and extend both reactions to their productions, i.e., their children.

Parental Nurturance



Parental Rejection, Neglect Hostility



Self-System

Parental Nurturance



Unique make-up of the individual (genetic predisposition and temperament); harmonious identification and incorporation of parent's positive attitudes and traits and parents positive behaviors: attunement, affection, control, nurturance; and the effect of other nurturing experience and education on the maturing self-system resulting in a sense of self and a greater degree of differentiation from parents and early caretakers.

Personal Attitudes/Goals/Conscience

Realistic, Positive Attitudes Towards Self

Realistic evaluation of talents, abilities, etc...with generally positive/ compassionate attitude towards self and others.

Goals

Needs, wants, search for meaning in life

Moral Principles

Behavior

Ethical behavior towards self and others

Goal Directed Behavior

Acting with Integrity



Anti-Self System

Unique vulnerability: genetic predisposition and temperament

Destructive parental behavior: misattunement, lack of affection, rejection, neglect, hostility, over permissiveness

Other Factors: accidents, illnesses, traumatic separation, death anxiety



The Fantasy Bond (core defense) is a self-parenting process made up of two elements: the helpless, needy child, and the self-punishing, self-nurturing parent. Either aspect may be extended to relationships. The degree of defense is proportional to the amount of damage sustained while growing up.

Anti-Self System

Self-Punishing Voice Process

Voice Process

1. Critical thoughts toward self



2. Micro-suicidal injunctions



3. Suicidal injunctions –suicidal ideation



Behaviors

Verbal self-attacks – a generally negative attitude toward self and others predisposing alienation.

Addictive patterns. Self-punitive thoughts after indulging.

Actions that jeopardize, such as carelessness with one's body, physical attacks on the self, and actual suicide

Source

Critical parental attitudes, projections, and unreasonable expectations.


Identification with parents defenses

Parents' covert and overt aggression (identification with the aggressor).


Anti-Self System

Self-Soothing Voice Process


Voice Process




1a) Aggrandizing thoughts toward self.



1b) Suspicious paranoid thoughts towards others.



2. Micro-suicidal Injunctions



3. Overtly Violent thoughts

Behaviors

Verbal build up toward self.

Alienation from others, destructive behavior towards others.

Addictive patterns. Thoughts luring the person into indulging.

Aggressive actions, actual violence.

Source

Parental build up

Parental attitudes, child abuse, experienced victimization.

Imitation of parents' defenses.

Parental neglect, parents' overt aggression (identification with the aggressor).

How the Voice Process Impacts Relationships

Self-Punishing Voice Process in Relationships:

EXAMPLE:

“No one will ever love you. He/She will never care about you.
You’ll just wind up alone.”

Self-Soothing Voice Process in Relationships:

EXAMPLE:

“You are just fine on your own. You can take care of yourself.
You don’t need anyone else. Don’t trust him/her.”



Outward vs. Inward Lifestyle

OUTWARD LIFESTYLE

INWARD LIFESTYLE

- | | | |
|--|--------|--|
| • Social involvement | ←————→ | Isolation |
| • Active; assertive | ←————→ | Passivity; victimized orientation |
| • Maintaining a separate identity | ←————→ | Seeking a merged identity and fusion |
| • Feeling state | ←————→ | Cutting off or withdrawal of affect;
impersonal relating |
| • Goal-directed behavior; self-fulfillment; self-affirmation | ←————→ | Seeking gratification in fantasy; self-denial;
self-destructiveness |
| • Lack of self-consciousness; realistic self-appraisal | ←————→ | Hypercritical attitudes toward self |
| • Adaptability | ←————→ | Non-adaptability |
| • Facing up to pain and anxiety with appropriate affect and response | ←————→ | Using substances & routines as painkillers to avoid feeling |
| • Self-fulfillment | ←————→ | Self-denial |
| • Personal sexuality | ←————→ | Impersonal, masturbatory, or addictive sexuality |
| • Searching for meaning and transcending goals | ←————→ | Narrow focus |



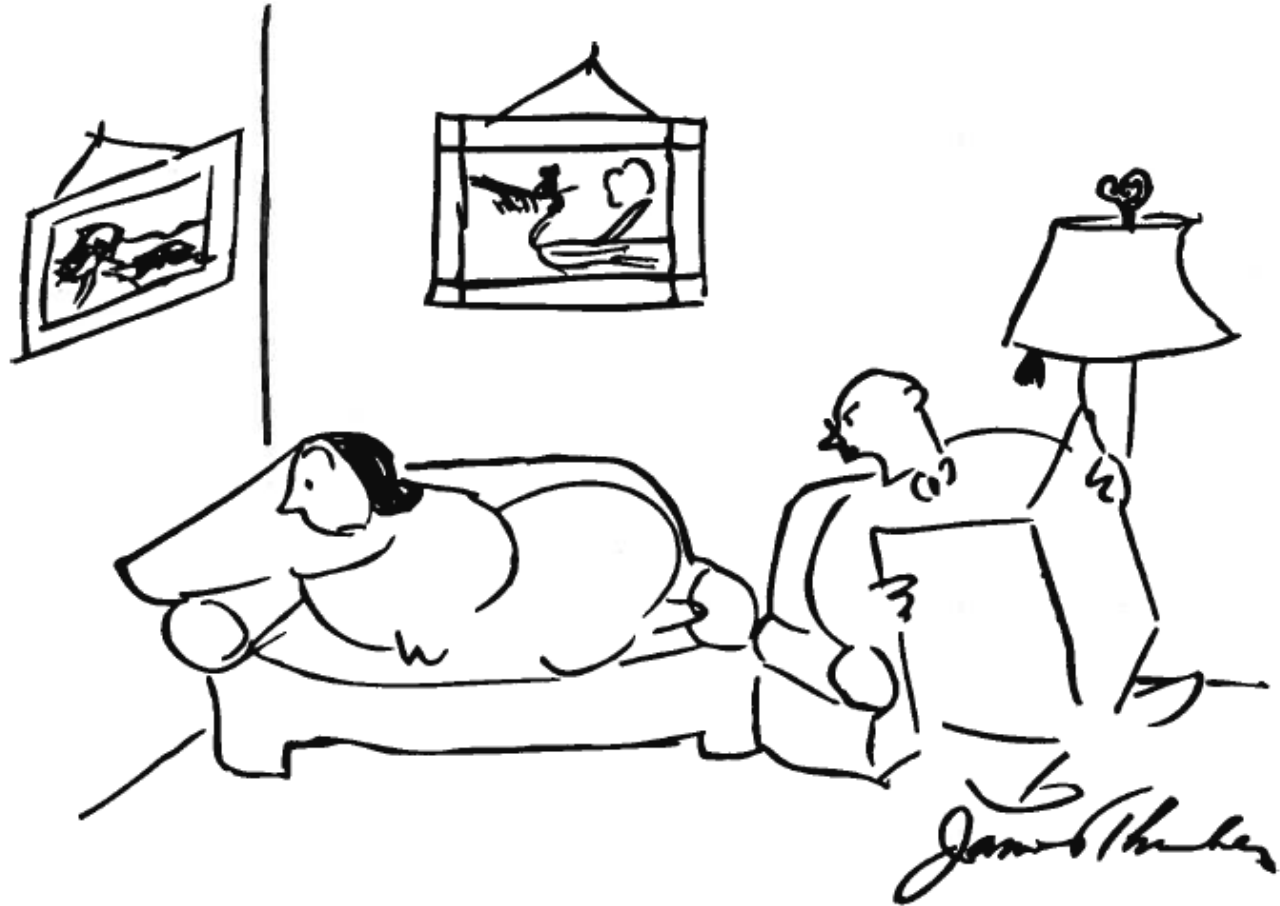
Poll #3

What do your patients believe is getting in the way of them having satisfying intimate relationships?

Themselves

Their partner or potential partners

Circumstances



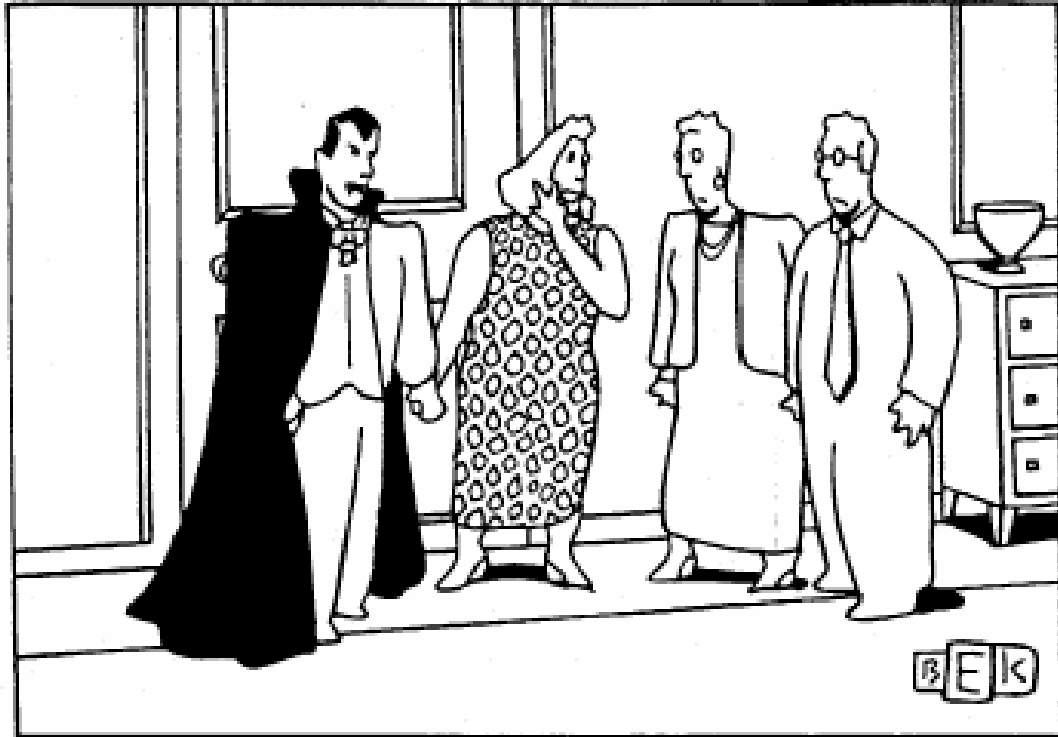
"Well, who made the magic go out of our marriage—you or me?"

Factors That Contribute to Relationship Distress

- Selection
- Distortion
- Provocation







"I know. But I think I can change him."







"You may well be from Mars, but the children and I are still from Westchester."



Our Definition of Love

- “Defining love in behavioral terms is a challenging undertaking.”
- “In our view, actions that fit the description of a loving relationship are expressions of affection, both physical and emotional; a wish to offer pleasure and satisfaction to one’s mate; tenderness, compassion, and sensitivity to the needs of the other; a desire for shared activities and pursuits; an appropriate level of sharing of one’s possessions; an ongoing, honest exchange of personal feelings; and the process of offering concern, comfort, and outward assistance for the loved one’s aspirations.





Our Definition of Love

- “Love includes feeling for the other that goes beyond a selfish or self-centered interest in the loved one. As such, love nurtures and has a positive effect on each person’s self-esteem and sense of well-being. Love is truth and never involves deception, because misleading another person fractures his or her sense of reality and is therefore a serious human rights violation that adversely affects mental health.”





What Love is Not

- Love is not what we mean when one is told by a family member that “Mommy or Daddy really loves you, but he or she just doesn’t know how to show it.”
- Love is not selfish, possessive, or demanding, or a proprietary right over the other.
- Love is never submission or dominance, emotional coercion or manipulation.
- Love is not the desperate attempt to deny aloneness or the search for security that many couples manifest in their desire for a fused identity.





What Love is Not

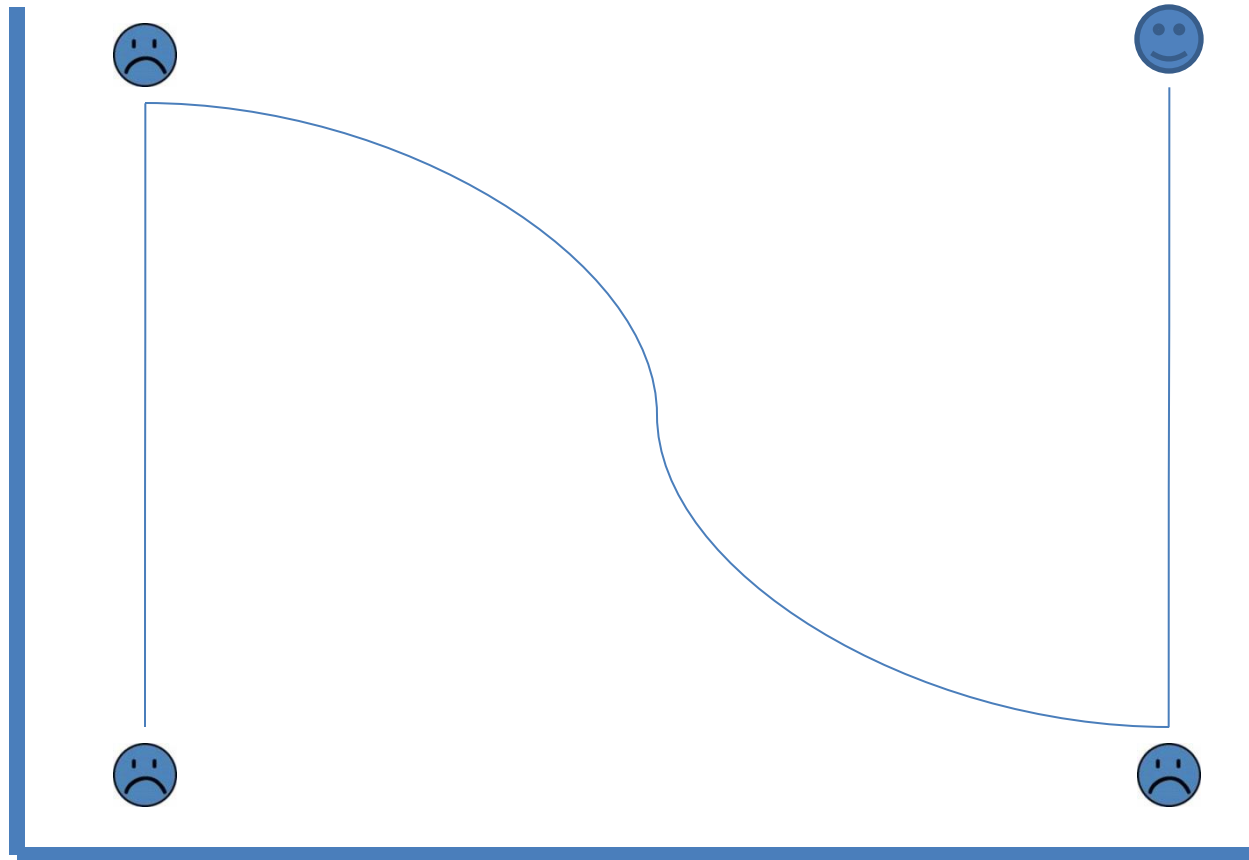
- Love is not to be confused with emotional hunger, that is, a desperate, immature need for dependence on another that drains the other person's vitality.
- Love is not to be confused with a deep longing to find total confirmation of oneself in the other.
- Love is not a word to be bandied about as in a couple's collusive attempt to maintain control of one another
- Love does not relate to an inner state of mind that has no recognizable outward manifestations





Differentiation and Linkage

Linkage
(emotional closeness)



Differentiation
(individuation as an individual)



Couple Interactions Chart

Interactions in an Ideal Relationship	Interactions in a Relationship Characterized by a Fantasy Bond
Nondefensiveness and openness.	Angry reactions to feedback. Closed to new experiences.
Honesty and integrity	Deception and duplicity
Respect for the other's boundaries, priorities and goals, separate from self.	Overstepping boundaries. Other seen only in relation to self.
Physical affection and personal sexuality.	Lack of affection; inadequate or impersonal, routine sexuality.
Understanding--lack of distortion of the other.	Misunderstanding--distortion of the other.
Noncontrolling, nonmanipulative, and nonthreatening.	Manipulations of dominance and submission.



Poll #4

Do you use assessments
when treating couples?

Yes

No



Behavioral Checklist for Partners

Describe yourself and your partner along these dimensions on a scale of 1 to 5:

1. Does not describe me/does not describe partner at this time.
2. Describes me on infrequent occasions/describes partner on infrequent occasions.
3. Describes how I am some of the time/describes how my partner is some of the time.
4. Describes how I frequently am/describes how my partner frequently is.
5. Describes me most or all of the time/describes my partner most or all of the time.

non-defensive and open (able to listen to feedback without overreacting/open to new experiences):

Self: 1 2 3 4 5 / Partner: 1 2 3 4 5

respect for other's boundaries:

Self: 1 2 3 4 5 / Partner: 1 2 3 4 5

vulnerable (willing to feel sad, acknowledge hurt feelings, etc.):

Self: 1 2 3 4 5 / Partner: 1 2 3 4 5

honest (straightforward, non-deceptive):

Self: 1 2 3 4 5 / Partner: 1 2 3 4 5

physically affectionate:

Self: 1 2 3 4 5 / Partner: 1 2 3 4 5

sexuality (satisfied with sexual relationship):

Self: 1 2 3 4 5 / Partner: 1 2 3 4 5

empathic and understanding (lack of distortion of the other):

Self: 1 2 3 4 5 / Partner: 1 2 3 4 5

communication (sense of shared meaning, feel understood):

Self: 1 2 3 4 5 / Partner: 1 2 3 4 5

non-controlling, non-manipulative, and non-threatening:

Self: 1 2 3 4 5 / Partner: 1 2 3 4 5

How would you rate yourself along these dimensions?

sense of well-being:

1 2 3 4 5

self-confidence:

1 2 3 4 5

optimism:

1 2 3 4 5



Behavioral Checklist for Therapists

Describe each partner along these dimensions on a scale of 1 to 5:

1. Does not describe this person at this time.
2. Describes me on infrequent occasions/describes partner on infrequent occasions.
3. Describes how this person is some of the time.
4. Describes how this person frequently is.
5. Describes this person most or all of the time.

non-defensive and open (able to listen to feedback without overreacting/open to new experiences):

First Partner 1 2 3 4 5 / Second Partner: 1 2 3 4 5

respect for other's boundaries:

First Partner 1 2 3 4 5 / Second Partner: 1 2 3 4 5 vulnerable

(willing to feel sad, acknowledge hurt feelings, etc.):

First Partner 1 2 3 4 5 / Second Partner: 1 2 3 4 5

honest (straightforward, non-deceptive):

First Partner 1 2 3 4 5 / Second Partner: 1 2 3 4 5

physically affectionate:

First Partner 1 2 3 4 5 / Second Partner: 1 2 3 4 5 sexuality

(satisfied with sexual relationship):

First Partner 1 2 3 4 5 / Second Partner: 1 2 3 4 5 empathic and

understanding (lack of distortion of the other):

First Partner 1 2 3 4 5 / Second Partner: 1 2 3 4 5 communication

(sense of shared meaning, feel understood):

First Partner 1 2 3 4 5 / Second Partner: 1 2 3 4 5

non-controlling, non-manipulative, and non-threatening:

First Partner 1 2 3 4 5 / Second Partner: 1 2 3 4 5

sense of well-being:

First Partner 1 2 3 4 5 / Second Partner: 1 2 3 4 5

self-confidence:

First Partner 1 2 3 4 5 / Second Partner: 1 2 3 4 5

optimism:

First Partner 1 2 3 4 5 / Second Partner: 1 2 3 4 5



The Firestone Voice Scale for Couples

FVSC

Instructions

All people experience thoughts that are critical towards themselves and others. For example, when a person is worried about his (her) relationship, he (she) might think:
"You'd better hang onto him (her). This may be your last chance. You may never get anybody again."

Or a person might have critical thoughts about a potential partner:
"Don't get involved. You might get hurt because he (she) is so unreliable."

Negative thoughts are a part of everyone's thinking process. Please indicate the frequency with which you experience the following thoughts by circling the corresponding number.

1 – NEVER 2 – RARELY 3 – ONCE IN A WHILE 4 – FREQUENTLY 5 – MOST OF THE TIME

Fore example, you think or say to yourself:

1 2 **3** 4 5 **"You're unattractive. Why should she (he) want to go out with you?"**

- | | | | | | | |
|----|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | You'd better put on a good front. Put your best foot forward or he (she) won't be interested. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 2. | You'd be better off on your own. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 3. | He (She) doesn't give a damn about you. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 4. | He (She) never spends time with you. He (She) is always with his (her) friends/family. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 5. | He (She) doesn't want to hear your opinions, so keep them to yourself. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |



Poll #5

Do you use exercises or homework assignments when treating couples?

Yes

No



Exercise 4.2:

You in Your Relationship: Your Critical Inner Voice/The Real You

- **What my critical inner voice says about me in my relationship**

- **What I realistically think about myself in my relationship**



Exercise 4.3:

Your Partner in Your Relationship: Your Critical Inner Voice/The Real You

- **What my critical inner voice says about my partner in my relationship**

- **What I realistically think about my partner in my relationship**



Exercise 4.4: Relationships: Your Critical Inner Voice/The Real You

- **What my critical inner voice says about relationships**

- **What I realistically think about relationships**



PsychAlive Workshop & Journal

Journal on PsychAlive at <http://www.psychalive.org/category/psychalive-workshop/>

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Write Journal Cancel, back



Exercise 4.5: Goals for Your Relationship

- Goals I have for my relationship
- Actions to take to achieve my goals





Exercise 10.3

An Imaginary Conversation About Your Sexuality

What would your mother/father say about your sexuality, your partner and your sexual relationship?

- What would my mother/father say?
- What would I say back to my mother/father?





*"And do you, Rebecca, promise to make love only to Richard, month after month,
year after year, and decade after decade, until one of you is dead?"*



Steps in the Therapeutic Process with Couples

1. Formulating the problem
2. Verbalizing the voice and releasing affect
3. Developing insight about the source of the voice
4. Answering back to the voice
5. Developing insight about how voices are influencing behaviors
6. Planning corrective suggestions for changing behavior

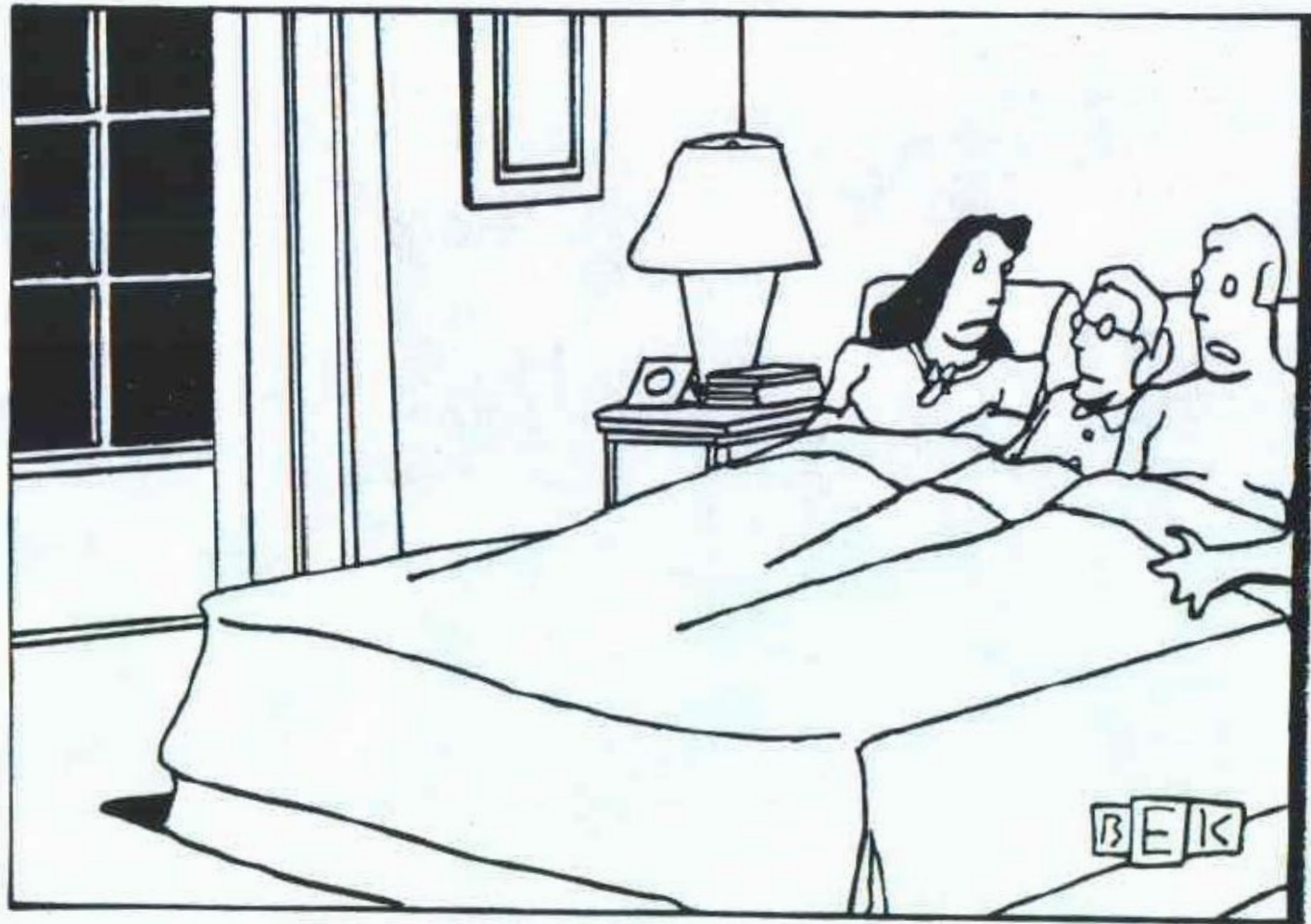




Steps in the Therapeutic Process with Couples

7. Between sessions, couples are encouraged to reveal their negative thoughts to each other when they occur during the sex act
 - They are encouraged to maintain physical contact while “giving away” self attacks and critical thoughts
 - Results of these experiences are discussed in subsequent sessions





"For heaven's sake, Melissa, she's my mother. I can't tell her to leave."

Differentiation

Child Self



Real Self



Parent Self

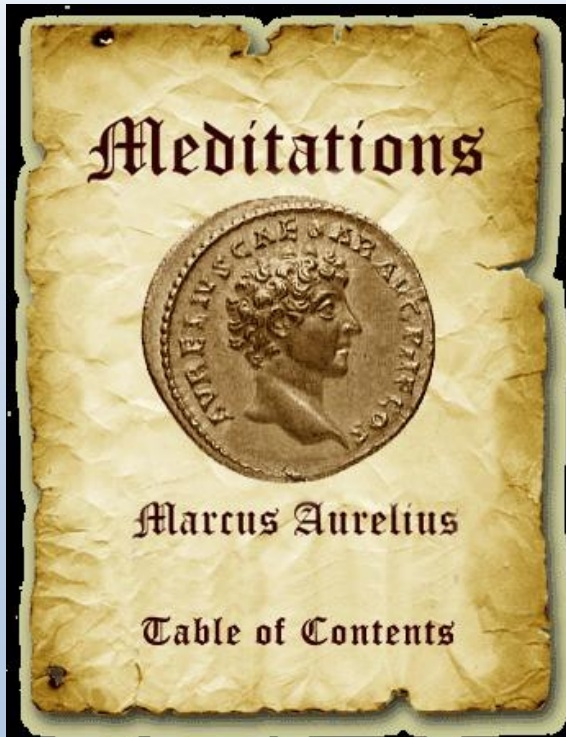




Coping with Anger, Avoid Passivity, and a Victimized Point of View

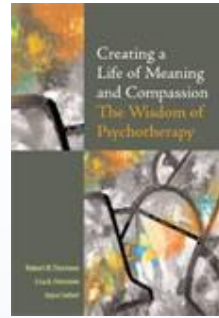
“Reject your sense of injury and the injury itself disappears”

- Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*





Don't Play the Victim Be An Active Participant in Your Life



- Assume responsibility for your life
- Give up victimized language and thinking
- Avoid the use of passive aggression to get what you want





Three Types of Power

Overt Negative Power:

characterized by aggressive tendencies and is exercised through the use of force and/or coercion to control others. It can be manifested within a relationship or become a significant part of a political or social movement.





Three Types of Power

Covert Negative Power: based on passive-aggression and expressed in behaviors indicating weakness, incompetence and self-destructive tendencies that manipulate others in the interpersonal world by arousing their feelings of fear, guilt and anger. The exercise of covert negative power through subtle manipulations may be even more destructive in interpersonal relationships than direct force as a means of controlling others.





Three Types of Power

Personal Power: based on strength, confidence, and competence that individuals gradually acquire in the course of their development. Personal power represents a movement toward self-realization and transcendent goals in life; its primary aim is mastery of self, not others.





Withholding

What does it look like?

- Holding back positive qualities
- Feeling victimized or consumed by others





Poll #6:

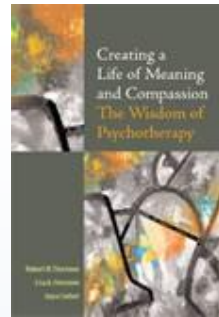
Do you notice ways that your patients are withholding with their partners?

Yes

No



Generosity



1. Giving something that is sensitive to the person. It's not about material things. It's about being giving of yourself.
2. Be open to the person expressing appreciation.
3. Be open to receiving the generosity of others. It's important to let others do things for you.
4. Showing appreciation for the generosity directed toward you.





Unilateral Disarmament

- Defuse escalating arguments by dropping your stake in winning
- Say something warm and understanding
- Stress that it doesn't really matter who's right
- Express physical affection



The technique of Unilateral Disarmament does not imply that you are surrendering your point of view or deferring to your partner's opinion. It simply indicates that you value being close to your partner more than winning your point.



From Parenting from the Inside Out Knowing Minds

Dr. Daniel Siegel



Compassion: The ability to feel with another; to be sympathetic, tenderhearted.

Compassion is a caring stance toward the distressful emotional experience of another person. Compassion may depend on mirror neuron systems, which evoke an emotional state in us that mirrors that of another person, enabling us to feel another person's pain.

Empathy: Understanding the internal experience of another person; the imaginative projection of one's consciousness into the feelings of another person or object; sympathetic understanding. This is a cognitively complex process that involves mental capacities to imagine the mind of another. Empathy may depend on the capacity for mind sight, mediated by the integrated right hemisphere and prefrontal regions of the brain.





Interpersonal Neurobiology



Curious

Open

Accepting

Loving





From Parenting from the Inside Out Knowing Minds

Mindsight: The capacity to “see,” or imagine, the mind of oneself or another, enabling an understanding of behavior in terms of mental processes. Other synonyms for this process are “mentalizing,” “theory of the mind,” “mind reading,” and “reflective function.”



Monitor to Modify



From Parenting from the Inside Out

Practices of Integrative Communication

- **Awareness.** Be mindful of your own feelings and bodily responses and others' nonverbal signals.
- **Attunement.** Allow your own state of mind to align with that of another.
- **Empathy.** Open your mind to sense another's experience and point of view.
- **Expression.** Communicate your internal responses with respect; make the internal external.
- **Joining.** Share openly in the give-and-take of communication, both verbally and nonverbally.
- **Clarification.** Help make sense of the experience of another.
- **Sovereignty.** Respect the dignity and separateness of each individual's mind.





Poll #7:

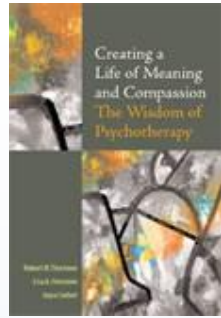
Do you feel you can now use these practices of integrative communication with your patients?

Yes

No



Ways to Help Relationships



- Reveal destructive thought processes to each other
- Utilize journaling to understand the voice process in couple relationships
- Set goals for the relationship
- The strategy of “unilateral disarmament”



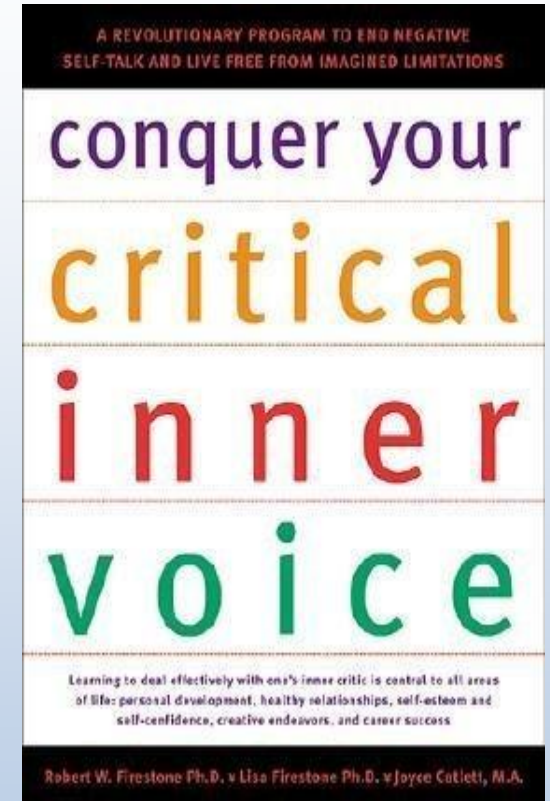
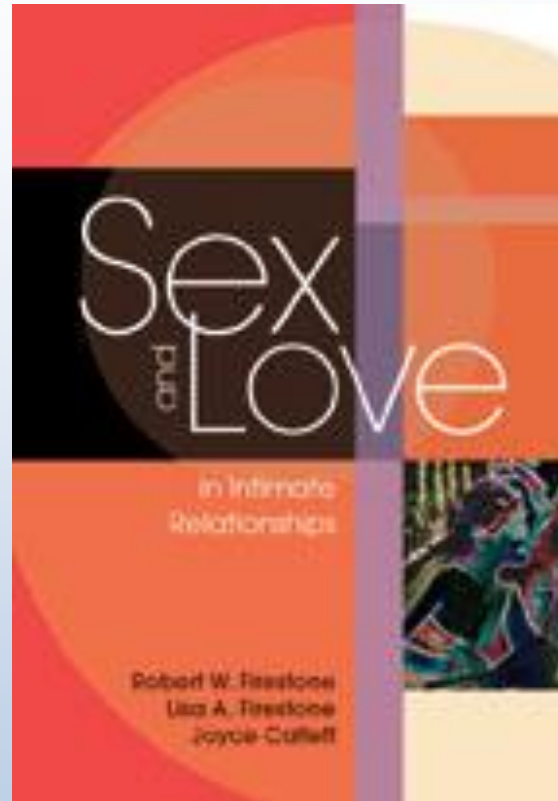
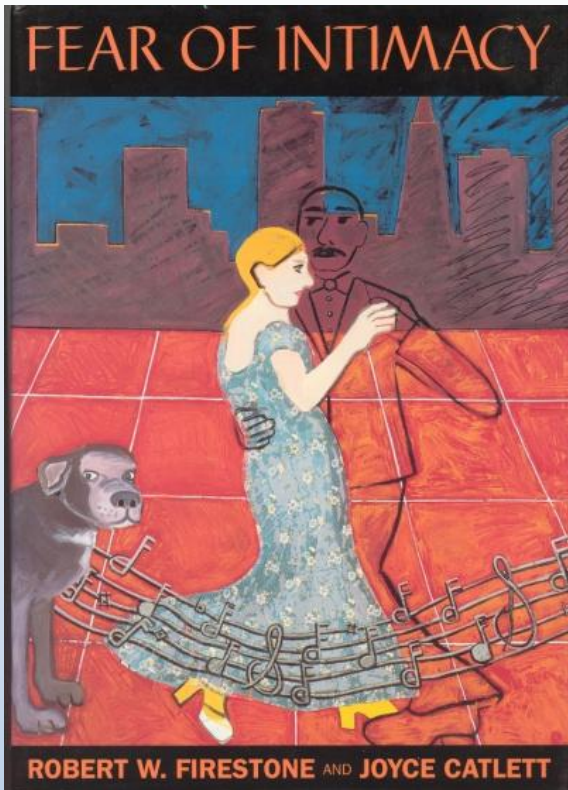
Guidelines for Continued Personal Development in Your Relationship

Six Qualities to Look for in the “Ideal” Partner and to Develop Yourself:

- ❖ Nondefensiveness and openness
- ❖ Honesty and integrity
- ❖ Respect for the other’s boundaries, priorities, and goals that are separate from yourself
- ❖ Physical affection and personal sexuality
- ❖ Understanding – lack of distortion of the other
- ❖ Noncontrolling, nonmanipulative, and nonthreatening attitudes and behaviors



Resources: Books

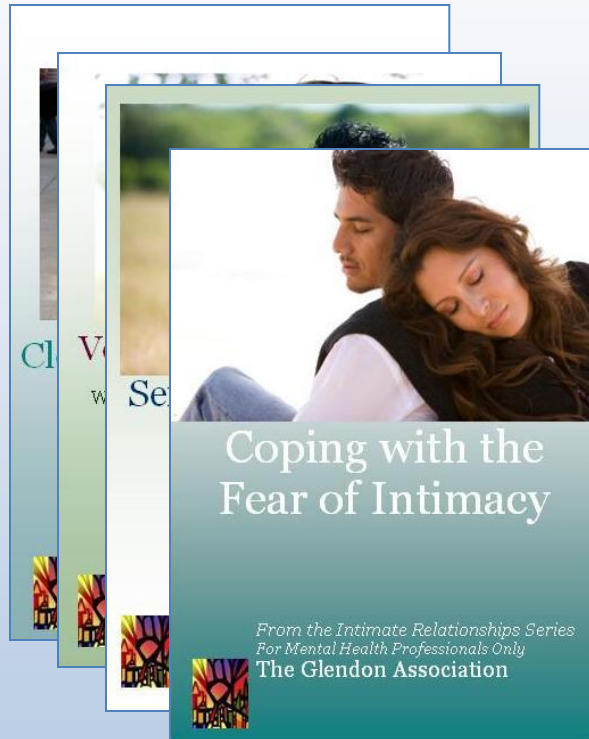


Visit www.psychalive.org for resource links

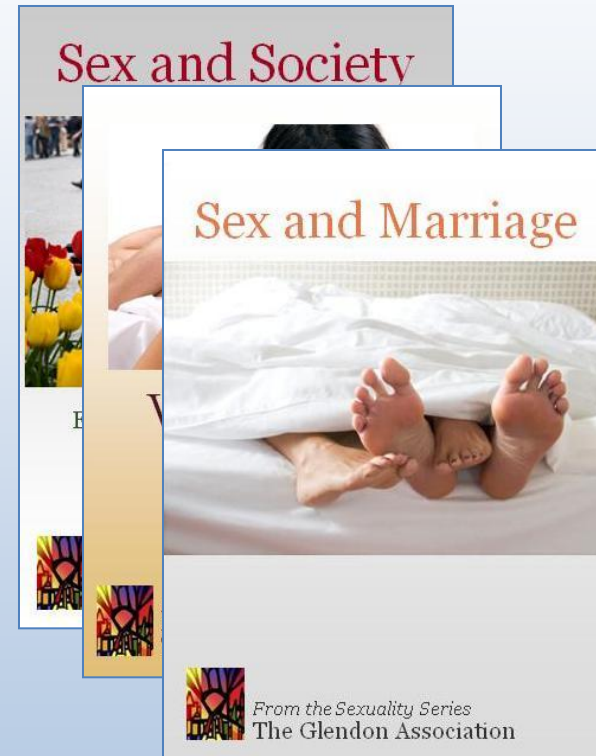


Resources: Films

Intimate Relationships Series



Sexuality Series



Visit www.psychalive.org for resource links



PsychAlive eCourse Creating Your Ideal Relationship:

How to Find and Achieve the Love You Say You Want



**A six-week eCourse with Dr.
Lisa Firestone starting March 3.**

Sign up at

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Conquer Your Critical Inner Voice Workshop at Esalen Institute, Big Sur, California



Weekend of January 24-26, 2014

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