



THE GLENDON  
ASSOCIATION

& PSYCHALIVE

# Real Love or a Fantasy Bond



with Lisa Firestone, Ph.D.



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ASSOCIATION & PSYCHALIVE



Lisa Firestone, Ph.D.

Director of Research and Education – The Glendon Association

Senior Editor – PsychAlive.org

[www.glendon.org](http://www.glendon.org)

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**"Regret that we had Siamese Attachment Surgery? Never!"**



# Poll #1:

## Are you in a relationship?

Yes, and I am happy.

Yes, but we have problems.

Yes, but I don't think it will work out.

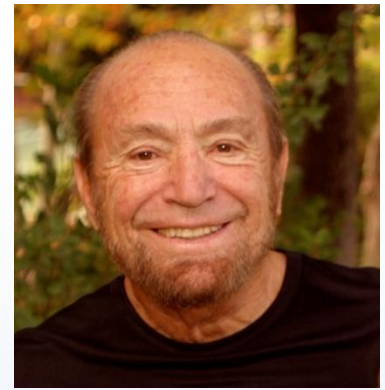
No, but I would like to be.

No, and I am not looking.



# Separation Theory

Robert W. Firestone, Ph.D.



- ❖ Integrates psychoanalytic and existential systems of thought
- ❖ Two kinds of emotional pain:
  - Interpersonal
  - Existential
- ❖ The core conflict
- ❖ Defended versus undefended lifestyles
- ❖ The concept of the **Fantasy Bond**
- ❖ The concept of the **Critical Inner Voice**



# Separation Experience Throughout the Lifespan

- Birth
- Toddlerhood
- Going to School
- Moving
- Dating
- Marriage
- Becoming a parent
- Potential divorce
- Loss of parent
- Becoming a grandparent
- Loss of spouse
- Death



# Dr. Robert Firestone on The Fantasy Bond



# 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.





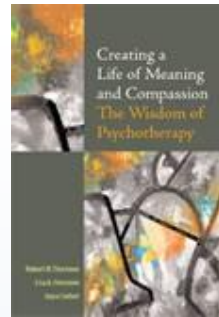


## Poll #2:

Do you think you've had a Fantasy Bond with your partner or with a past partner?

- Not at all
- Unsure
- To some degree
- Yes, completely

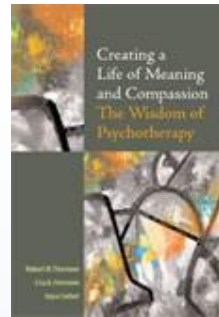
# Three States of Fantasy Involvement



- 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



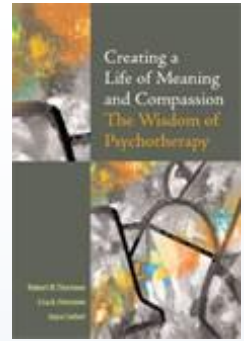


## Poll #3: Have you:

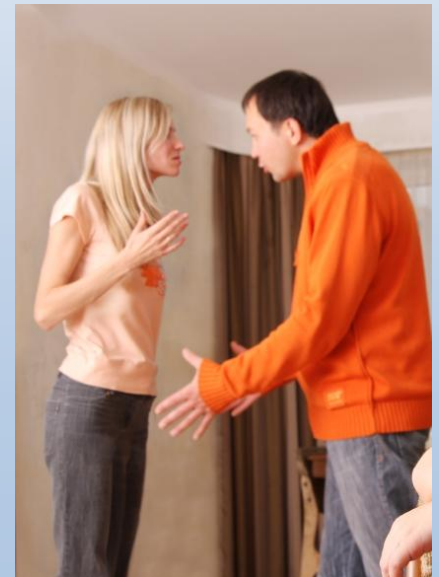
- Been withholding?
- Acted like a parent or a child in your relationship?
- Idealized or denigrated your partner?
- Lost your independence?
- Paid more attention to the form than the substance in your relationship?



# Ways People Get Stuck



- Idealization of parents and family
- Maintenance of a negative self-image
- Projection of negative parental qualities and behaviors onto others







# Poll #4:

## Where do you get stuck?

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 #5:

Have you experienced these voices?

Yes

No





# 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:

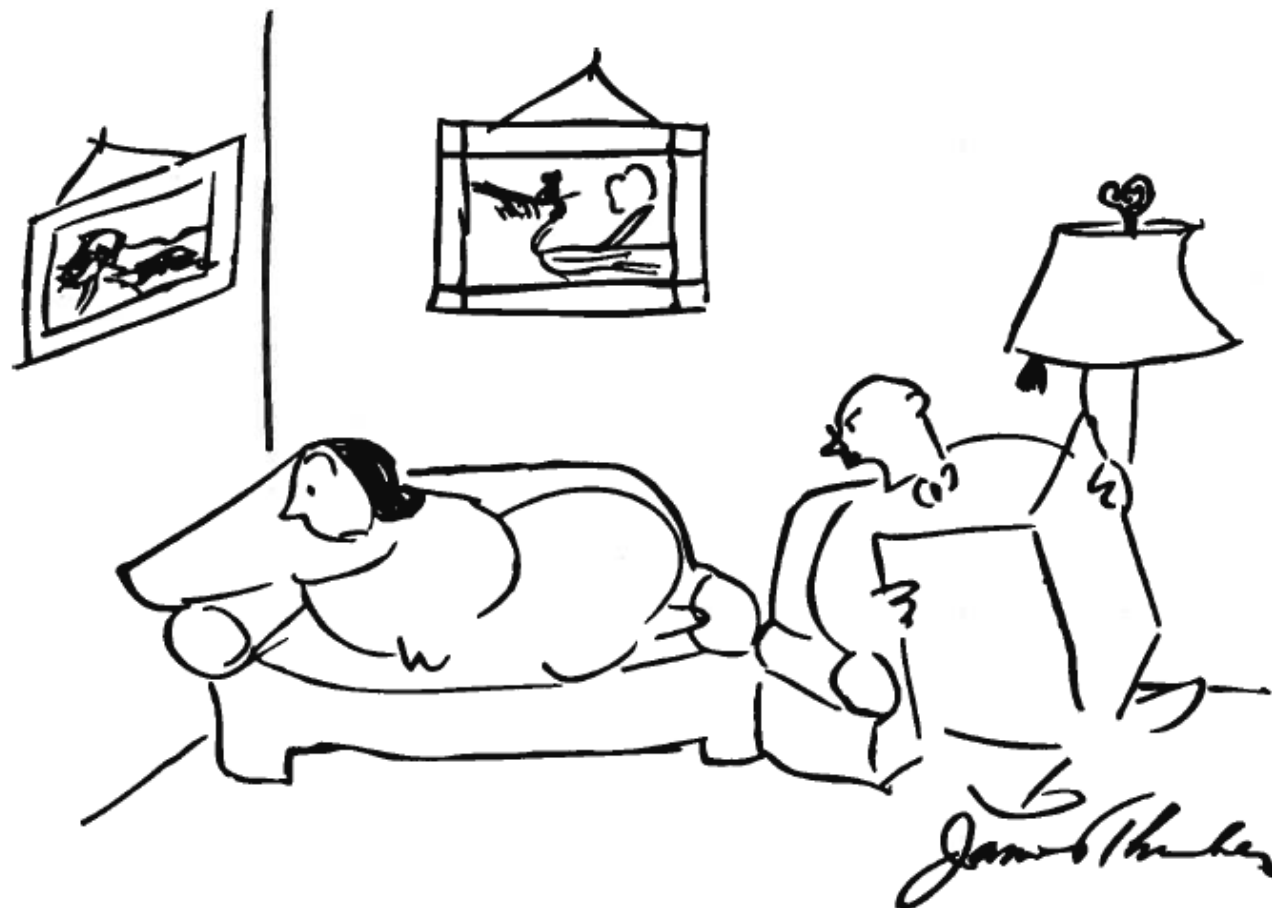
“You are just fine on your own. You can take care of yourself. You don’t need anyone else. Don’t trust him/her.”



## Poll #6:

What do you believe is getting in the way of you having satisfying intimate relationships?

- You
- Your partner or potential partners
- Circumstances



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



# Couple Interactions Chart

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



# 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





# Exercise 4.1: The Firestone Voice Scale for Couples

**Circle the frequency with which you experience the following critical inner voices:**

0 = Never      1 = Rarely      2 = Once in a While  
3 = Frequently      4 = Most of the Time

- |   |   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | It's a man's job to take care of a woman.   |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | You're never going to find another person who understands you.  |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Men are so insensitive. They're so opinionated. They don't want you to have your own views about anything . |
| 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | Don't get too hooked on him (her).  |



# 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**

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---

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

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# 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**

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---

---

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

---

---

---

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# 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**

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# PsychAlive Workshop & Journal

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

The screenshot shows the PsychAlive homepage. At the top is a navigation bar with links for Home, About PsychAlive, Blog, Subscribe, and My Profile. Below this is a large banner featuring a woman holding a baby, with text for 'Alive to SELF', 'Alive to INTIMACY', and 'Alive to PARENTING'. A section titled 'Most Popular on PSYCHALIVE' includes a 'FREE WEBINAR' and several article thumbnails. A 'VIDEO' section is also visible.

The screenshot shows the 'PsychAlive Workshop' journal entry form. It has a navigation bar similar to the homepage. Below the banner, there are links for 'My Profile', 'My Workshop', 'Journal Exercises', and 'My Journal', along with a 'New Entry' button. The form itself has a 'Title / Subject' field, a 'Text' area, and two buttons at the bottom: 'Write Journal' and 'Cancel, back'.

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New Entry

Title / Subject

Text

Write Journal Cancel, back



## Exercise 4.5: Goals for Your Relationship

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





# Poll #7

Do you think you could use these exercises?

Yes

No



# An Imaginary Conversation About Your Relationship

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

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





# Steps in Voice Therapy 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

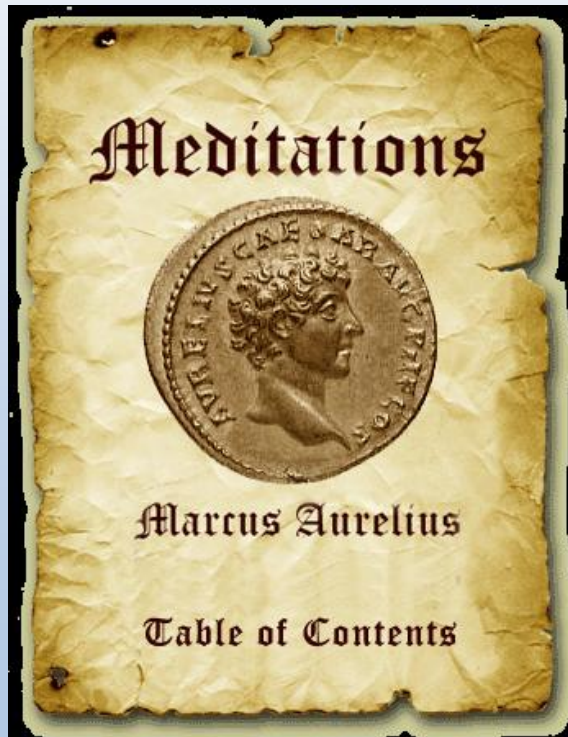


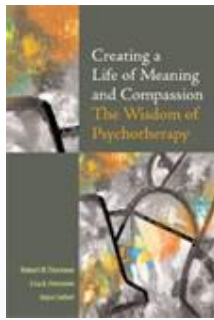
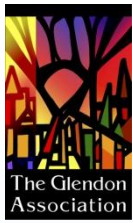


# Coping with Anger, Avoid Passivity, and a Victimized Point of View

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

- Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*





# Don't Play the Victim

## Be An Active Participant in Your Relationship

- Assume responsibility for your relationship
- 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.





# 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.





# Poll #8

Do you or your partner use destructive power in your relationship?

Yes

No

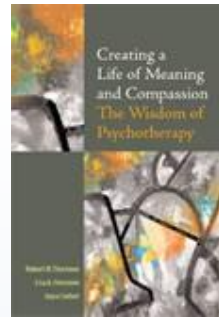
# Withholding

What does it look like?

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



# 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

Dr. Daniel Siegel



## 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.







# Interpersonal Neurobiology



C urious

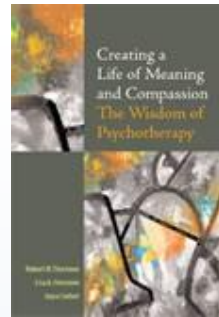
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# Ways to Help Relationships



- **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”**





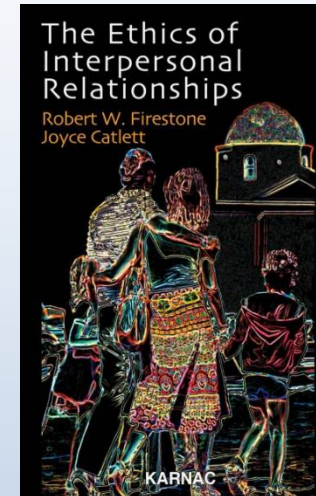
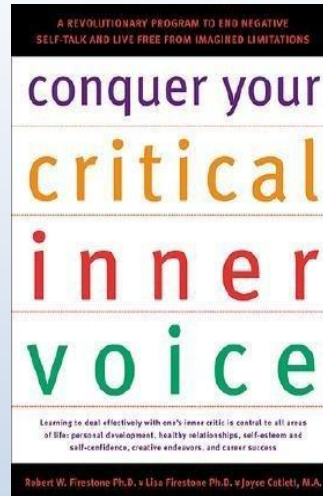
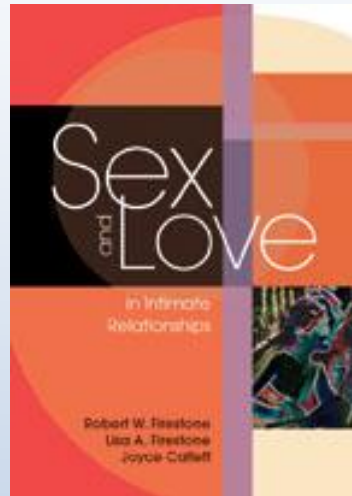
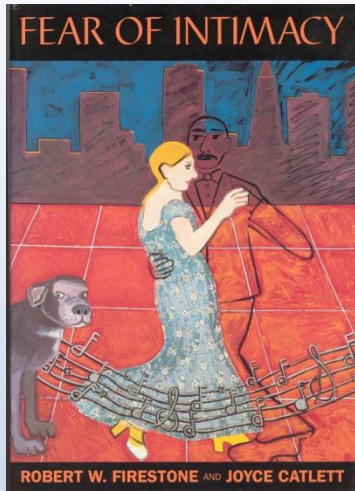
# Guidelines for Continued Personal Development in Your Relationship

## 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](http://www.psychalive.org) for resource links





# Upcoming Webinars with Dr. Lisa Firestone

## For Professionals:

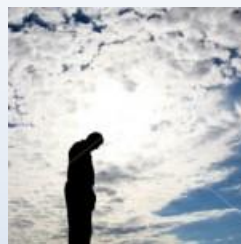


### **Suicide: What Every Mental Health Professional Needs to Know**

Sep. 25

4pm – 5:30pm PDT

## For the Public:



### **Understanding & Preventing Suicide**

Sep. 18

11am – 12pm PDT



### **How to Raise an Emotionally Healthy Child**

Dec. 4

12pm – 1pm PST

Learn more or register at <http://www.psychalive.org/2012/01/upcoming-webinars-2/>

# Upcoming Webinars with Special Guest Presenters



**Dr. Sheldon Solomon**



**Dr. James Gilligan**



**Grave Matters:  
On the Role of Death in Life**  
May 22  
4pm – 5:30pm PDT



**Understanding & Effectively  
Treating Violence**  
Oct. 16  
4pm – 5:30pm PDT



**Self-Esteem and the Role of  
Death Awareness in Your Life**  
June 12  
11am- 12pm PDT



**Why Does Violence Occur &  
How Can We Prevent It?**  
Nov. 13  
11am- 12pm PST

Learn more or register at <http://www.psychalive.org/2012/01/upcoming-webinars-2/>



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