



THE GLENDON
ASSOCIATION

& PSYCHALIVE

How to Improve Your Relationship



with Lisa Firestone, Ph.D.



THE GLENDON
ASSOCIATION & PSYCHALIVE



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www.glendon.org

www.psychalive.org

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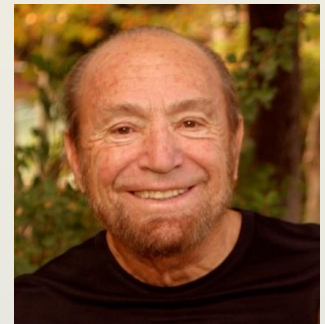
Poll #1:

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**



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.





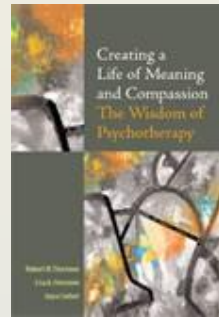
"Regret that we had Siamese Attachment Surgery? Never!"

Poll #2:

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

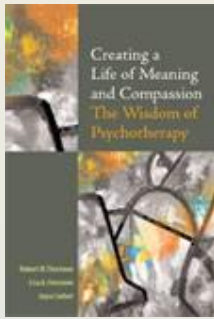
- Not at all
- Unsure
- To some degree
- Yes, completely

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

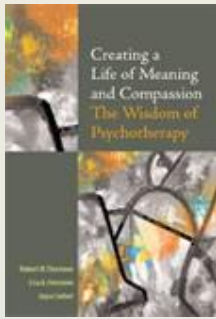
- Withholding
- Polarization of parent-child ego states
- Idealization/denigration of the other
- Loss of independence
- Form versus substance



Poll #3:

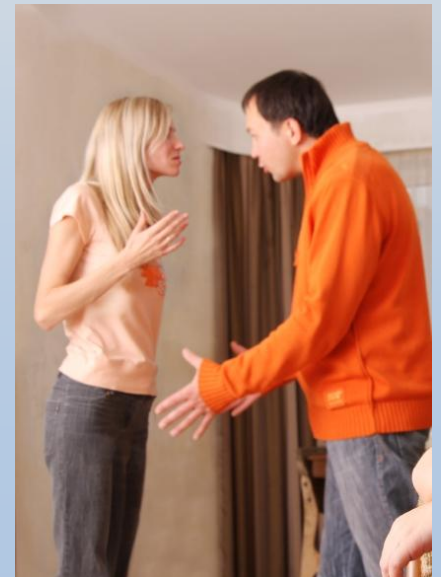
Have you:

- 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:

- ❖ Don't get too hooked on her.
- ❖ He doesn't really care about you.
- ❖ She is too good for you.
- ❖ 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:

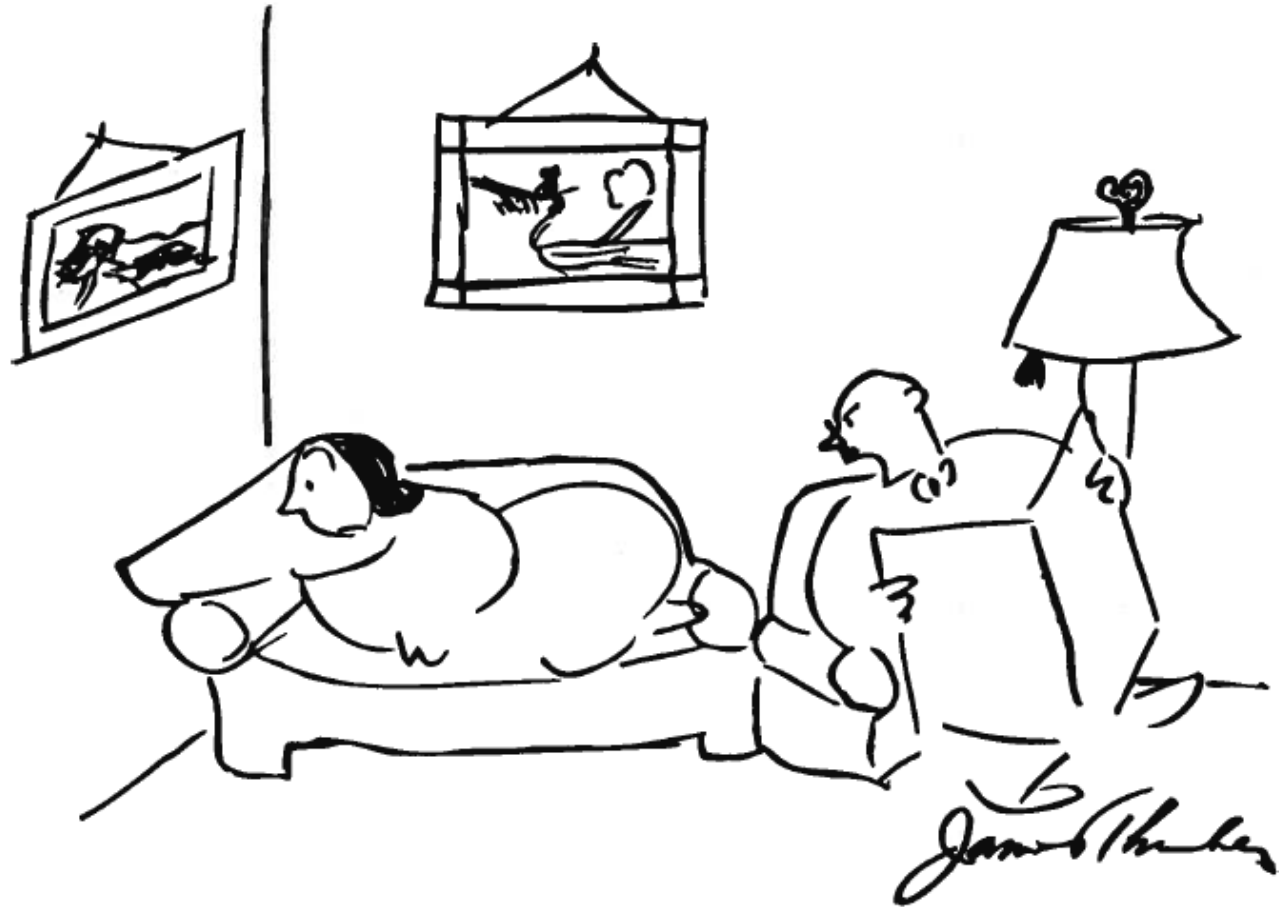
EXAMPLE:

“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?"



Factors That Contribute to Relationship Distress

- Selection
- Distortion
- Provocation



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New Webinar Series from PsychAlive's Dr. Lisa Firestone



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VIDEO



Dr James Gilligan on Love and the

0:00 / 1:33

In this exclusive video series, Dr. James Gilligan talks about what triggers violent behavior and how to treat violent individuals. See more here

About PSYCHALIVE

Our desire to discover who we are — why we feel and act

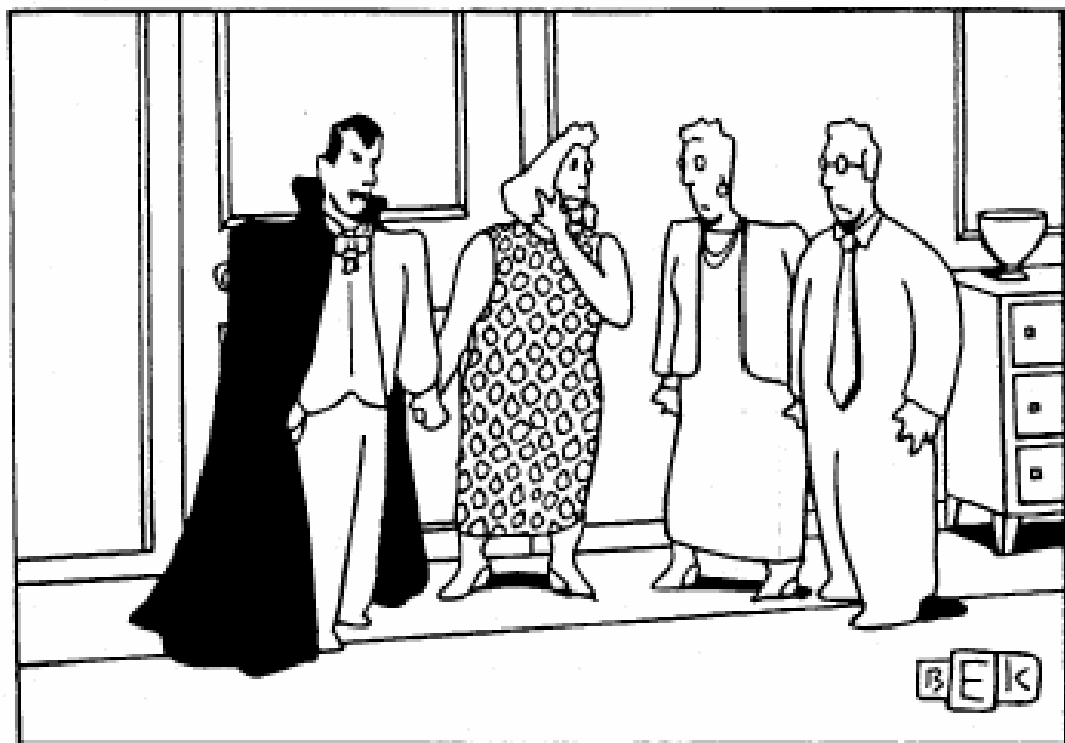


Key Topics

> Addictions

> Anger

Media Center



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





"When I fell in love with you, suddenly your eyes didn't seem close together, now they seem close together again."

Kiss me.

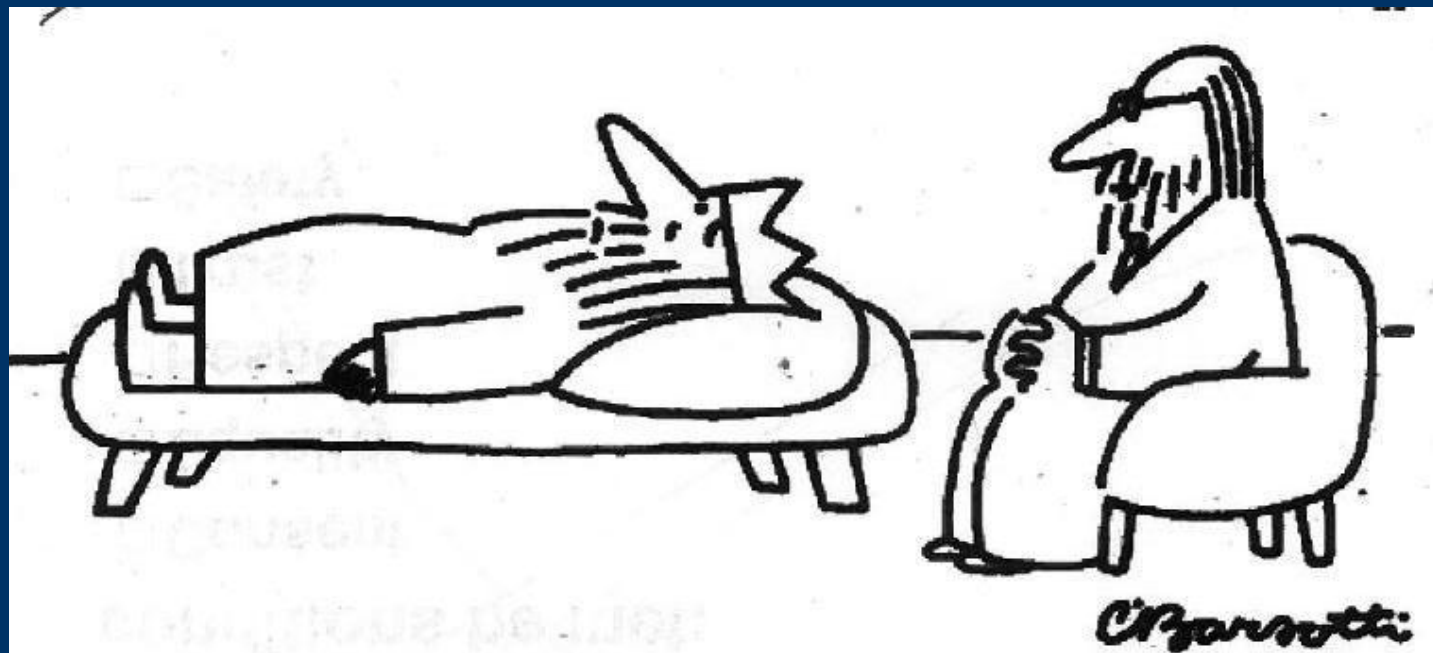
Again? I kissed
you three times
last week.



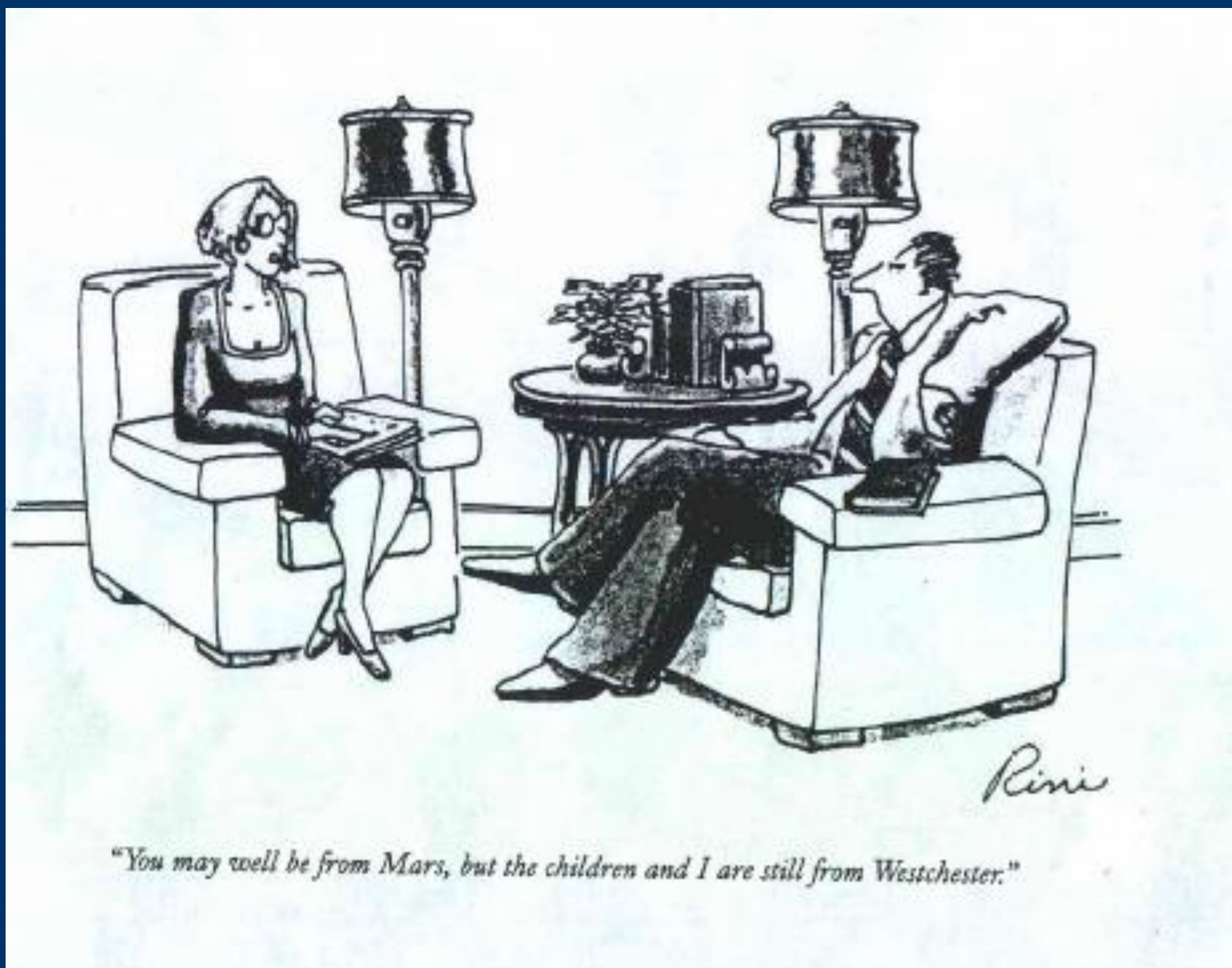
*But I said "yes"!
What's wrong?*

*It's the sudden change.
I'm accustomed to
being rejected.*





"Enemies, yes, but doesn't your moat also keep out love?"



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

Some Definitions of Love

- Love is patient and is kind; love doesn't envy. Love doesn't brag, is not proud, doesn't behave itself inappropriately, doesn't seek its own way, is not provoked, takes no account of evil; doesn't rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

(I Corinthians 13:4-13)

- We still know so little about this madness of the gods... But of one thing I am convinced: no matter how well scientists map the brain and uncover the biology of romantic love, they will never destroy the mystery or ecstasy of this passion. I say this from my own experience.

Helen Fisher, *Why We Love*



Some Definitions of Love

- Love makes us who we are, and who we can become.
Lewis, Amini, & Lannon, *A General Theory of Love*, 2000
- There is only one proof for the presence of love: the depth of the relationship, and the aliveness and strength in each person concerned; this is the fruit by which love is recognized.
Erich Fromm, *The Art of Loving*, 1956
- ...the Buddhist concept of compassion, defined as removing sorrow and bringing happiness to others, gives love substantial meaning... *Yoraku* – the second component of compassion in the Buddhist sense – means the giving of pleasure... It is the joy of living... the ecstasy of life. It includes both material and spiritual pleasure. Without the deep feelings of fulfillment and the ecstasy generated by the emotions of life, pleasure in the truest sense is impossible.
Gage, R.L. (Ed.) *Choose Life: A Dialogue: Arnold Toynbee and Daisaku Ikeda*, 1976

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)

Integration

Linkage of differentiated parts

Becoming a “we” while being yourself



Differentiation

Child Self



Real Self



Parent Self



Four Steps of Differentiation

- Differentiate from self-punishing voices
- Differentiate from undesirable traits in your parents that you see in yourself
- Differentiate from the defensive reactions you had (as a child self) and self-soothing voices
- Formulating and learning to live by your own values – who do you want to be?



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 & 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

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

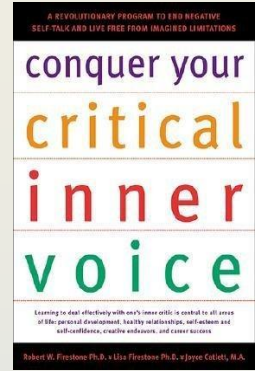
self-confidence:

1 2 3 4 5

optimism:

1 2 3 4 5

Exercise 4.1: The Firestone Voice Scale for Couples



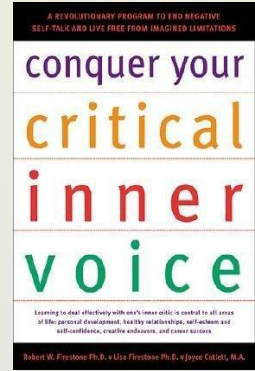
Circle the frequency with which you experience the following critical inner voices:

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). |

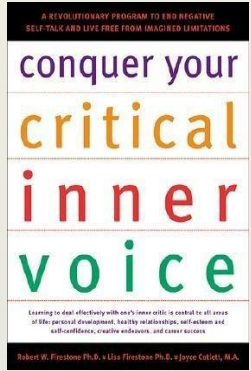
Exercise 4.2:

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



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

- What I realistically think about myself in my relationship

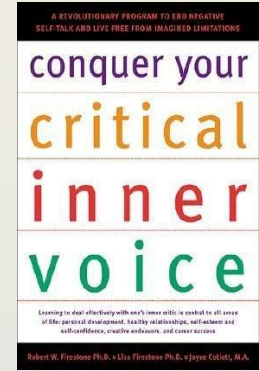


Exercise 4.3:

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

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Workshop & Journal

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

The screenshot shows the PsychAlive Workshop journal entry form. At the top is a navigation bar with links for Home, About PsychAlive, Blog, Subscribe, and My Profile. Below the navigation bar is a banner featuring a woman and a man sitting on the grass, each using a laptop. The banner is divided into three vertical sections: 'Alive to SELF Workshop', 'Alive to PARENTING Workshop', and 'Alive to INTIMACY Workshop'. Below the banner is a section titled 'PSYCHALIVE Workshop' which includes links for 'My Profile', 'My Workshop', 'Journal Exercises', and 'My Journal'. Below these links is a 'New Entry' button. The main form area has a 'Title / Subject' label followed by a text input field. Below this is a 'Text' label followed by a large text area for writing. At the bottom of the form are two buttons: 'Write Journal' and '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

Exercise 10.3

An Imaginary Conversation About Your Relationship

- What would my mother/father say about my relationship?
 - 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



Steps in Voice Therapy with Couples

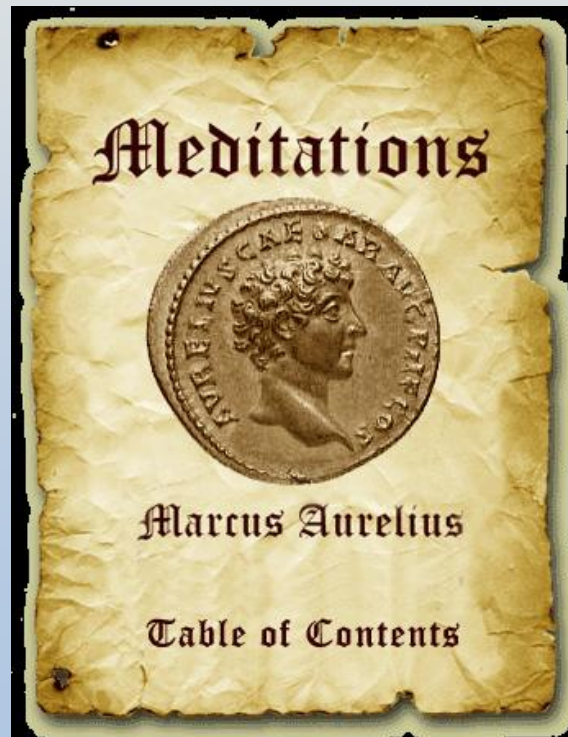
7. Between sessions, couples are encouraged to reveal their negative thoughts to each other when they occur during the sex act
 - They are encouraged to maintain physical contact while “giving away” self attacks and critical thoughts
 - Results of these experiences are discussed in subsequent sessions

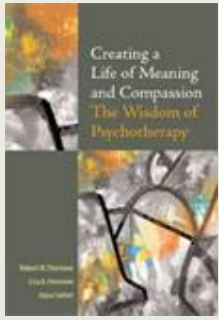


Coping with Anger, Avoid Passivity, and a Victimized Point of View

*“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?

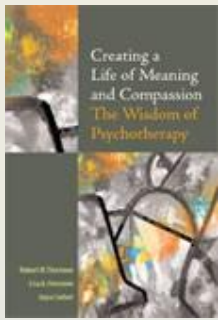
- Yes
- No

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

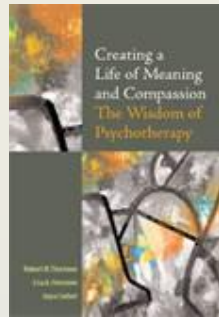


Practices of Integrative Communication

- 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.



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”

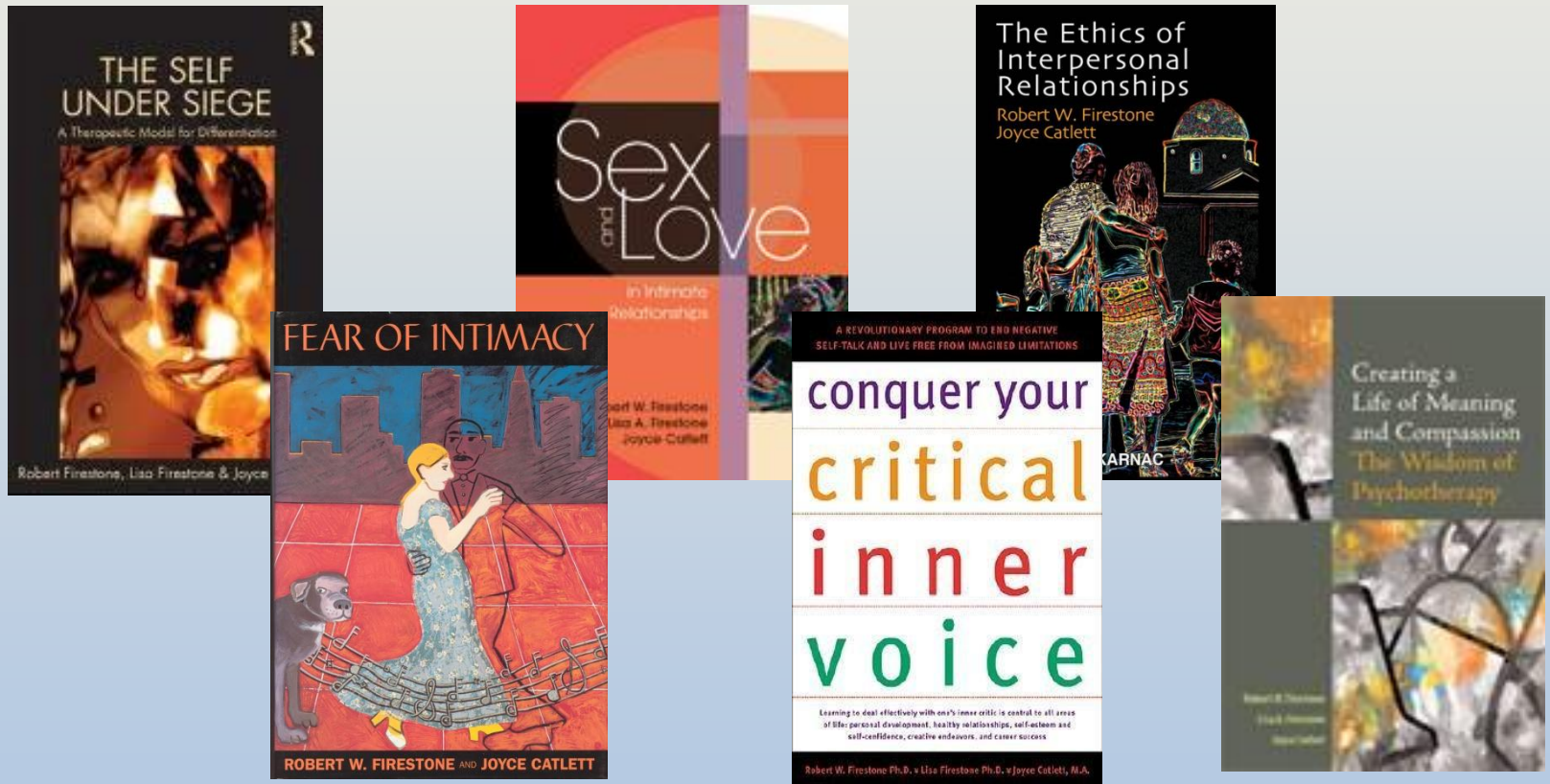


Guidelines for Continued Personal Development in Your Relationship

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

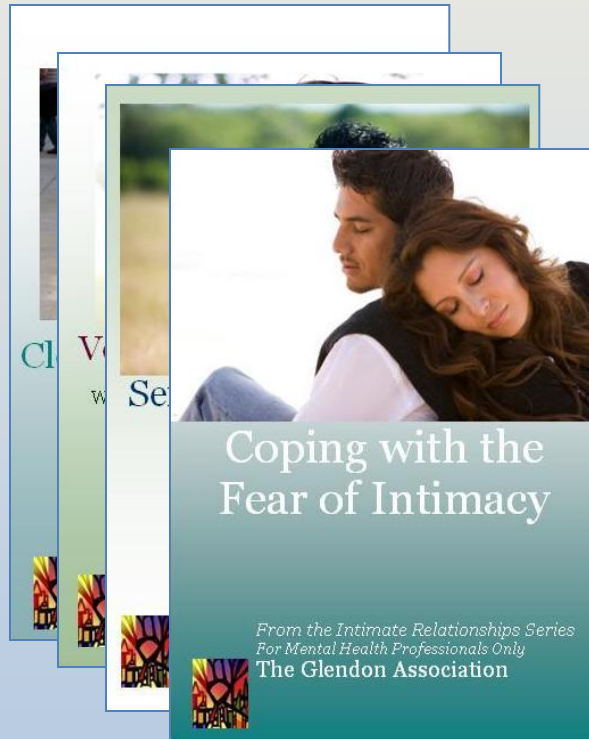


Visit www.psychalive.org for resource links

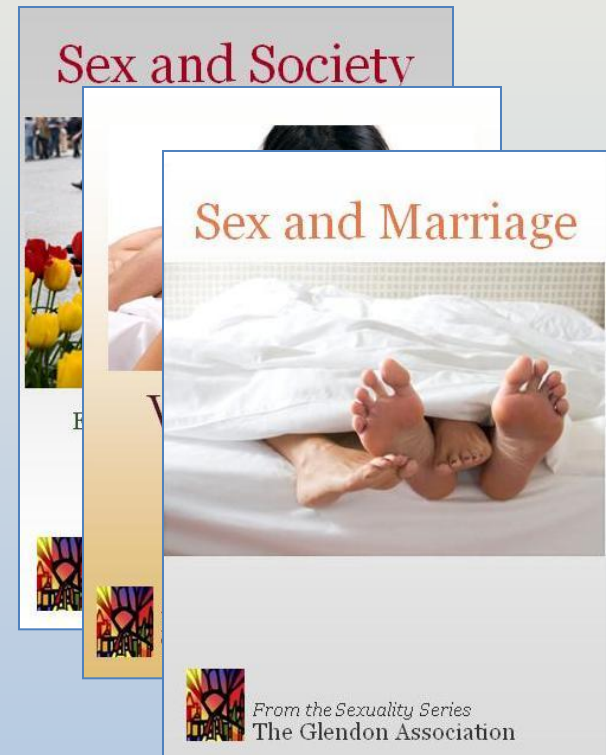
Resources: Films

(for mental health professionals)

Intimate Relationships Series



Sexuality Series



Visit www.psychalive.org for resource links

Upcoming Webinars from PsychAlive.org



March 14

Mindfulness in Everyday Life: Incorporating Mindfulness Techniques into Clinical Practice

CE Webinar

Presenter: Dr. Donna Rockwell

4pm – 5:30pm PST

3 CEs - \$35



Apr. 18

Mindfulness in Everyday Life: The Way to Happiness and Meaning

Free Webinar

Presenter: Dr. Donna Rockwell

11am – 12pm PST

FREE

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