



25 Relationship Principals Audiobook

Transcript Workbook



 Pairfection.us

Because love is not enough and your relationship is priceless!

This booklet is a transcription of our audiobook, **25 Relationship Principals** created so you may listen to your audio program and follow along as a working document.

Compose your thoughts, make notes, use a highlighter, and score the specific areas relating to you and your relationship.



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Opening

Welcome to Listen, the beginning of your new Pairfection.us sequence called Listen, Learn and Talk. We suggest listening repeatedly, experiencing this audio book by yourself and together sharing with your special someone, making notes, and enjoying these nuggets of reflective anecdotes that just about every couple can all relate to. Now introducing your 25 Relationship Principles by internationally best-selling author and speaker, Tim Connor.

Author, introduction

Every relationship passes through seasons just like the seasons of the year. Let me explain. First there is spring. Spring is about new growth, new opportunities, and hope for the future. It represents a vision for what can be. Gardeners know that every spring what has laid dormant for a few months will soon sprout into a wondrous display of color and life. Relationships, when they are new, are filled with possibilities and hope for a positive future. There is no room for doubt or negative feelings or attitudes. Everything is fresh and exciting. They are filled with passion, laughter, and the wonder of discovery. It is a wonderful time, this springtime of relationships.

And then there is summer. Summer is a playful time filled with adventure, activity, long hot days and warm nights. Summer is a time when nature spreads its wings and shows off its diversity and uniqueness. There can also be thunderous storms that appear in an instant, rearing their ugly head as people run for cover against the wind and rain. In relationships summer is a time of fun, new understanding, and a willingness to compromise. It is when people learn what they can and cannot expect. Summers when a person's guard comes down and they learn the reality of their partner's dreams, hopes, frustrations, doubts, and, yes, all of their idiosyncrasies and inner struggles. It can be a time of adjustment and acceptance or rejection and stress, a continuation of the beauty of spring or the realization and disappointment of settling for less than you had hoped for.

Fall always follows summer. The trees share their splendor and the flowers begin their retreat in preparation for the long, cold winter ahead. The days grow shorter and the nights are cooler. The air is crisp and clean. Long gone are the humid days of summer. The fall in relationships is when there is a realization that it is time to accept that you will never find

the perfect partner, that you must learn to live with, love, and accept who is in your life now. The excitement and passion of spring can still peek through the fallen leaves and the joy and love can grow into a new dimension, but only if there has been growth and learning during the summer. Fall can be a time of resentment and frustration where the days are filled with longing and unfulfilled desires. There is beauty in the fall, but there can also be uncertainty, fear, and a realization that winter, the end of the beauty and excitement, will soon be a distant memory.

And finally, winter comes. The days are short and the bitter cold penetrates your essence regardless of the thickness of your garments. The trees are bare and the blue skies of fall are now covered with a blue-gray shield that keeps the sun hidden from your view. Winters in relationships come to everyone. There are lonesome nights and fearful days. There is adversity and sickness, abandonment and bitterness. These days seem to cut to the core of our life, leaving us afraid and uncertain of our future and what it might bring.

But remember, if you can weather the winter, spring is just around the corner where new beginnings, once again, share themselves in the hopes that you'll be ready to embrace once again the joy, the passion, and the love that you once felt. Seasons in relationships are as predictable as the seasons of the calendar. You can't keep spring around forever, and winter comes whether you like it or want it or not.

So why not just relax and enjoy the passing seasons in your relationships as you do, watching spring fade into summer and summer into fall?

01 — Are you looking at your relationship through a microscope or a telescope?

When girl meets boy and they begin a new relationship with each other, they tend to look at their partner through a telescope. They only see the qualities, traits, habits and behavior that they want to see. For whatever reason, they fail to observe early signals regarding those qualities and behaviors that they either don't like or don't want to see.

When love is failing, the same boy and girl tend to see each other through a microscope, micromanaging every trait, attitude, quality or behavior. It's almost as if they're looking for stuff not to like. This simple illustration, both in relationships that are beginning and those that are failing, will repeat themselves thousands of times today.

Why do people fail to see the other person clearly in a relationship and why do we lose tolerance of even the simplest behavior in a relationship that is in trouble? There are three simple concepts that impact all relationships. They are people only change when they feel a need to do so, people are always changing and relationships are dynamic and evolving. Most people in a new relationship put their best foot forward. They want to make a favorable impression on the other person.

However, sooner or later the masks come off and the real person will show themselves. This often happens early in a relationship, giving the other person a quick glimpse into who the other person really is. In order not to feel that you've been broadsided by a new behavior of the other person, it is critical that you observe carefully both what is said and what is not said. What the person does, as well as what they don't do and how they behave, as well as how they don't behave. There are always clues. Not to see them or to see them in hope that they're only temporary is to be naive. To believe that your partner will change them with time is to live in fantasy land.

One of the best recommendations I can make in any new relationship is to pay attention to early signals, both the ones given and the ones that are there that you, for whatever reason, don't want to see or fail to see. We are all capable of changing behavior, but we don't do it because our partner wants us to or thinks we should. We change when we are ready and not before. To believe that your partner will change according to your wishes is to assume that your behavior, attitudes, life outlook or whatever is either right or better than theirs. There is no such thing as right or wrong behavior. There is only different behavior, attitudes and feelings.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) **RANK** how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

02 — Do I really know you?

There are millions of people raising strangers, married to strangers, and working with strangers. They know little about the dreams, hopes, frustrations, fears, goals, likes, and dislikes of these people. Here are a few questions to consider about each of the needs, goals or desires of your partner. See if you can answer the following about your partner. They are happiest when They get upset when They wished you could talk more about ... They are afraid when ... They like you best when you ... They wish you could ... And their biggest fears are ...

These are just a few of the basic ideas to get you started. Why not expand the list to interests, likes, dislikes, and so on? This process takes a safe relationship interest in the other person and a willingness to put time and energy into getting to know the other person. I believe over the term of the relationship that this investment will prove positive and highly beneficial. Remember, getting to know the other person means getting to know yourself better as well.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) RANK how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

03 — You are responsible to people, not for them

There is a significant difference between being responsible to people and for them. Being responsible for people is when you feel responsible for another's outcomes, pain, feelings, failure, problems, struggle, adversity, and need satisfaction, as well as their success, joy, achievement, and growth. Being responsible to people means that you know what they are experiencing in life, whether struggle or victory, pain or success, growth or stagnation, is what they have brought into their life to move to a higher plane. You are there, you care, and you are interested, but it is their stuff, not yours.

A great line I recently came across is, seeing yourself as a victim is to wish that your circumstances would continue. Everyone moves through life with their own personal baggage, stuff, and personal lessons to learn. To be responsible to people is to not attempt to interfere with what they need to learn so that they can move on. To be responsible for people keeps them stuck. Women and mothers tend to take the responsibility for their children and their issues, while fathers tend to take the responsibility to them.

I recall a recent conversation with my folks a few years back. I was having a difficult year. While on a routine call to say hi, when my mom asked how I was doing, I said that business was really tough and I didn't know how I would survive. Her response, "Where did I go wrong?" Taking responsibility for me and my stuff. When I asked to speak with my dad and he asked me the same question, I gave him a similar response and he said, "Better get your butt out there and hustle." Responsible to me.

Who do you feel responsible for in your life? Who do you feel responsible to in your life? Another example is the difference between empathy and sympathy. When you sympathize, you feel sorry for. When you empathize, you understand how the person feels, but you don't get down there in the stuff with them. Empathy helps people grow, while sympathy keeps people stuck. Another way of saying this is that the difference between detachment and disengagement.

Okay, it's your turn. What is the difference between these two concepts to you? Responsible to is love and action. Responsible for is emotional manipulation.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) **RANK** how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1

2

3

4

5

N/A

Thoughts

04 — His needs - Her needs

Each of us has a variety of emotional, physical, psychological, and spiritual needs that we hope our partner will support, satisfy or contribute to their satisfaction in some way. As I see it, there are several issues when it comes to the satisfaction of our wants and needs.

First, many people don't really know what they want, desire or need.

Second, many people who know what they want or need can't verbalize it to their partner for any number of reasons.

Third, some people don't know why they want what they say they want.

Fourth, some people when they get what they say, they want never seem to be satisfied.

Fifth, many people play psychological games with their wants and needs. They want their partner to be mind, readers and aware of their needs and desires, but they don't know how to ask for them.

Sixth, many people when they get what they say they want or need don't even recognize that they've received it. They are too busy looking elsewhere for the satisfaction of these needs, wants and desires.

Seventh, your partner or you knows what the other person wants or needs, but hold out for some reason for punishment, guilt, resentment, anger, blame, and so on.

Any of these strike a chord with you? Have you ever been on either end of one or more of these issues? My guess is that if you have any relationship stress, frustration, anxiety, or problems at all with your partner, that one of the causes will come back to this subject.

Here are a few guidelines for approaching this sensitive issue.

First, set aside some regular time once a week or twice a month, when you are rested, relaxed and not under a great deal of stress. Start a neutral dialogue of your needs, desires, wants as well as those of your partner.

Second, begin the discussion with a contract that you will listen, stay connected and let go of your selfish urges by focusing only on your partner's needs.

Third, keep a his and hers journal with notes of your points of disagreements, suggestions, concerns, and agreements.

Fourth, stay focused in the present during your discussion.

Fifth, do not bring old baggage from a previous relationship or a previous time in your relationship into the conversation.

Sixth, recognize that there are times when your partner wants you to listen, offer guidance, stay neutral, agree, and yes, even sometimes disagree with them. The secret is to know what is expected of you at any given time in your relationship. If you are not sure, all you have to do is ask.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) RANK how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

05 — Givers & takers in relationships

There are typically two types of people in relationships. They are givers and then there are takers. Let me explain. Givers in relationships are always looking for ways to help, support, give and be a benefit to their partners. They give because it is in their nature to be generous, kind, giving or supportive. Takers on the other hand always take stuff, help, support, kind acts and recognition. They take because it is in their nature to do so. Now let's put a taker in a relationship with a giver. Givers need a taker to give to so they tend to attract them, and takers need a giver in their relationship so they tend to attract them as well. This is where the problems begin for both in this type of a relationship. Keep in mind that these relationships can work, they just take a lot of work and a lot of patience. The givers give and give and give and give and the takers take and take and take. So what's the problem?

Well, after a while, the givers begin to resent the takers for never giving anything back. And the takers also begin to resent the givers for always giving. Both parties will deal with their personal agendas in different ways, but the outcomes are the same: anger, resentment, feeling taken advantage of, withdrawal and often guilt. Yes, the giver will feel guilt, but for different reasons than the taker. Are you in a relationship with your opposite? Are you the giver or the taker? What can you do to ensure your relationship doesn't escalate in a negative fashion?

Here are a few pointers. If you are a giver, give to yourself sometimes more than your partner. When you do give, do without an expectation for any type of return, even a thank you. Manage your expectations more honestly. Learn to accept your partner for who they are. Rise above the emotional game playing of who is giving or who is getting more. Learn to handle taking better. Recognize that your taking partner needs you to give to them. If you are a taker, recognize that sooner or later you'll begin to resent your giving partner. Learn to be verbally appreciative of the giving your partner does. Try to give once in a while and don't expect a big brass band when you do. Recognize that your giving partner wants and or needs to be able to give. Try little acts of thoughtfulness or kindness more often. And don't expect anything from your partner, and when they give it, see it as a real gift of themselves that they are sharing. Givers and takers are not right or wrong, it is just the way they are. They can change if they choose to.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) **RANK** how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

06 — Relationship's six T's

I can hear two people beginning a relationship saying that, "Let's keep our relationship, honest, loving, and simple." Easy words, but often difficult to accomplish. Every relationship has demands, expectations, problems, disappointments failures, frustrations, anxieties, as well as happy, fun, joyous, and productive times. There are any number of reasons why relationships fail. Here are just a few of the common ones.

First, a lack of a safe environment where people can share real fears, hopes, dreams, frustrations, and fantasies, without the fear of criticism, judgment or retribution.

Second, poor communication skills or a lack of clarity. Conversations are filled with assumptions, personal perceptions, hidden agendas, misunderstanding, and a lack of congruence between verbal and nonverbal messages.

Third, a lack of understanding, awareness or acceptance of the other person's real wants, needs and desires in the relationship.

Fourth, always thinking that there is or should be someone or something better out there.

Fifth, a lack of acceptance for who the person really is and who they are becoming.

Sixth, the breakdown of trust and or respect in the relationship.

Seven, the desire for the other person to make up for some lack that you feel in yourself.

Eight, an unwillingness to change, or to accept change.

Nine, poor self-esteem in one or both partners.

Ten, constant invalidation of the other person.

Eleven, seeing the other person's behavior that you don't like, can't accept or disagree with as a fault.

Twelve, poor listening skills.

Thirteen, a lack of emotional maturity in one, or both people. Always dealing in blame, guilt, anger, or other emotionally manipulative behaviors. And fourteen, the inability to manage conflict successfully.

What can we do to ensure that relationships last longer, are more nurturing, and each person can become all that they can be without earning the criticism, rejection, emotional manipulation, or scorn from their partner?

There are six Ts in all positive relationships. If these are nourished, you can go a long way to ensure a life filled with love, acceptance, compassion, and harmony. They are trust, time, touch, talk, tenderness and truth. Seems simple enough. Doesn't it? Learn to trust your partner and conduct yourself in such a way as to nurture a higher level of trust. Spend quality time together. Learn the importance of touch. Spend time and intimate dialogue and exchange of feelings, fears, hopes, dreams, wants, needs, and goals. Show the same tenderness for your partner that you do your pet. Always deal in the truth, no matter how painful or difficult it might be.

How is your relationship doing in these six areas? In which area do you need to improve in order to guarantee lasting harmony and success in your relationship?

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) RANK how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

07 — Relationship rituals

With the passage of time, relationships will tend to fall either into negative or positive routines. Many of these contribute to the nurturing of the relationship, while others can undermine its success.

One of the things I have discovered over the years is that developing some rituals that become a routine part of the relationship can ensure that the relationship can stay on a positive track. Although no relationship is perfect or ever will be, all relationships are either getting better or getting worse. They all experience ups and downs at various times. And these rituals can help keep the relationship focused on those attitudes, behaviors, and feelings that you want to see continue, as well as help eliminate those that are no longer contributing to a healthy relationship.

Let me give you a few examples of some of the simple rituals I have come across over the years.

Have a date night on the same day of the week or days of the month. This date night isn't subject to cancellation, regardless of career or other issues. It takes priority, no matter what. Spend one day, or a portion of a day, at least once a month discussing the positives in your relationship, as well as some of the things that you would like to change.

Next, play odd and even. Each partner is either odd or even. Not in personality, but the day of the week, the week of the month or the month of the year.

If you are odd, that means you call if you are out of town on odd days. Even days, then your partner calls. Odd years, you get to choose where and when you go on vacation. Even years, it is your partner's choice. You can even have some fun with this. It can include things like who cooks, cleans the house, or walks the dog.

Next, once a quarter, one partner surprise the other with a special weekend retreat. Take turns.

Next, every morning, one partner brings the other coffee and juice while the other sends flowers or some small token that says you are special. I thought of you today and I want you to know I appreciate you.

Next, develop a list of 13 behaviors you would like to work on as a couple. For example, better or more honest communication, more fun or intimacy, better listening or emotional

support. Write each of them on a small, separate piece of paper, then put all 13 pieces in a jar. And once a week, one of you pulls from the jar taking turns each week and that is what you both focus on as a couple that week. Put this piece in a separate jar at the end of the week so you don't pull the same one out again. Now pull out a new piece and work on that for the next week. And so on for 13 weeks. At the end of the 13 weeks, put them all back in the original jar and start all over again. Repeat this four times so that at the end of the year, you will have worked on each of the 13 behaviors for a total of four weeks.

What are some rituals that you have in your relationship that keep it centered, focused and on target?

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) RANK how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

08 — Evolving relationships

First you fall in love. The relationship is filled with passion, newness, interest, hope, intimacy, and togetherness. Then something changes. Children come along. A close relative gets ill. There are changes in one of your careers. There could be a new business or a business failure, relocation to another city, state or country, or one of the partners hits 40 or 50 years of age. There are very few people who can just coast along when a major change comes into their relationship. The intimacy gradually diminishes. The passion dies. The togetherness ends and the conflicts increase. Why? I have been through many of the above and I can tell you that these outside forces can have either a negative or positive influence on the quality of the relationship between you and your partner. What's the difference? Here are just a few.

Relationships don't change. People change in them. Passion or intimacy doesn't leave a relationship. It leaves the people in a relationship. Outside circumstances can add a great deal to the quality of relationship if you will let them, and they can also destroy your relationship again and again if you let them. People tend not to change their basic nature. They can, but they usually don't. So what you see in the early stages if you pay attention is what you'll get later. People don't fall out of love. They just learn to love their partner in different ways.

After the initial newness of a relationship wears off, a relationship doesn't have to begin that steady decline toward nothingness. It can actually get better and become more loving if the basic foundations are there, things like respect, acceptance for who the person is or who they're becoming, and respect and acceptance of yourself. But you must develop ways of dealing with changes, conflicts, differences, disappointments, struggles, and even success.

Next, you can't learn relationship skills when you are not in a relationship. You can read every book, attend every seminar and listen to every expert on the planet, but to get good at relationship issues, challenges, and opportunities, you have to be in one. Why not spend some time looking at your relationships to see how some have changed and see if you can find the source for those changes inside you, rather than blaming some outside element or other person.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) **RANK** how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

09 — Are you living in the past or future?

Every relationship has its unique share of work, disappointments, surprises, accomplishments, and frustrations. No relationship is perfect. No relationship is all bad or all good. Keep in mind that bad and good are both perceptions. What might be perceived as positive by one couple might be seen as negative for another. As we move through the days and years of our relationships, we can choose to live in the past, what was either right or wrong, good or bad, in previous years, or we can live in the future of what we hope will one day evolve into better days, more love, increased satisfaction, and so on.

There are advantages and disadvantages of living either in the past or the future. Focusing on the past often prevents us from believing that our partner will ever be different or better in some area. We feel that tomorrow will be nothing more than more of the same. Focusing on the future can put a tremendous amount of pressure on both people, as well as the relationship, for what may never be or can never be.

Relationships are dynamic. Everyone is always learning and growing. The external as well as internal pressures and distractions that can take their toll on a relationship are always changing. Children, career or business changes, health issues, in-laws, aging parents, the relentless increasing cost of living in general can all make people in relationships feel what's the point anymore.

Your partner will be different tomorrow. You will be different tomorrow. The relationship will be different tomorrow. So why do people in relationships get themselves all worked up into a twit because something is going on that they don't like, they can't control, they wish would be different. There are six reasons for these attitudes or outcomes:

1. expectations
2. personal agendas
3. needs and desires
4. ego needs
5. insecurity
6. stress.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) **RANK** how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

10 — What is the difference between loving someone and being in love?

There are many types of love, love of your children, pets, home, your parents, friends, a spouse, or your career. Some people love their car and others love to play tennis or golf. Many people love to watch sports on TV. To love to ski is not quite the same as to love your children. So, I ask you again, what is the difference between being in love with someone and loving someone? Let's start with a definition from the dictionary. To love is to cherish, to be kind to, to want to spend time with, to respect, to enjoy, to trust, to want to know better. This list is far too lengthy, and I'm sure you can add many of your own characteristics or qualities. Then there's to be in love to be smitten, infatuated, enamored, hooked with and head over heels.

I would like to offer you a few thought-provoking questions to consider regarding this topic. What is the real difference between the two? Can you have one without the other? Can you be in love and not love someone, or can you love someone and not be in love with them? Are both necessary for enduring positive relationships? If one of the people in a relationship says that they are no longer in love with their partner, as in a marriage or engagement, but they still love them, is it time to pack it up and find someone new or work to get the in love back or doesn't it really matter? If you are in a loving relationship with someone and they said to you, "I love you. I adore you, but I am not in love with you anymore." What are they really saying to you? How would you feel? What would you say? What would you do?

To be in love is to share intimate feelings, hopes and dreams, to feel passion and excitement when the love of your life enters a room, to miss them and their touch, to want to be around them and to know and understand their every feeling hurt, joy, fear and frustration. Yes, there are several similarities when you love something or someone and to be in love with someone. For example, you can want to know and understand the emotions and feelings of your friends and your spouse, but there's a difference in the depth of this understanding. You can want to spend time at your job because you love it, but you can never be married to it, although I have known a few people who have tried. I was once told by a spouse that she loved and adored me, but was no longer in love with me. Did this mean that the intimacy of the relationship was now gone? Did this mean that the relationship was now "heading towards winter," as Chapman says in his book, *The Four Seasons of Marriage*?

Let's face it, the two are both important, but are somewhat different. What I am struggling with is are the differences significant enough to consider changing either your attitudes about these two concepts or changing partners? I'm having trouble defining what it means to be in love with someone, so I have done little research and here is what I have discovered. Everyone is as confused as I am. No one was able to give me a definition of being in love that would satisfy the majority of people who say they are in love with someone. I have researched every book in my relationship library, spent more than a few hours browsing the relationship section of a few bookstores and spent far too much time searching the internet for answers and I am as confused as ever. I'll leave you with a thought, "What is your definition of these two concepts to love and to be in love with?"

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) RANK how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

11 — Communication challenges

Communication between two people will never be easy or perfect. Consider the following, trigger words. These are words that people use with spouses, children, customers, fellow employees, their boss or anyone that they interact with that cause the other person to react in either a positive or negative way. Trigger words in and of themselves are not positive or negative. A positive trigger word for one person could be a negative one for someone else. For example, I use the word negative in the following sentence, I thought what you said was negative. What are the potential reactions, depending on whom you say it to? It could cause the person to become defensive. It could cause them to stop and think. It could cause them to get angry. It could cause them to go into denial. These reactions are a function of many things, and it is therefore difficult to predict another person's reaction to what you say and how you say it.

Their reactions could be caused by the time of day, their general feeling, are they tired, stressed, or happy? How they feel about themselves when hearing your words, their general self-esteem, their education and vocabulary proficiency, their mood. What has just happened in their life just prior to your words, their perceptual or life outlook, their attitudes about you. There are many more, but it's sufficed to say that no matter what you say, it can be misconstrued. No wonder there is so much conflict, anger, frustration, anxiety, misunderstanding and difficulty in relationships today. What's the answer? You have two choices when communicating with other people. Stop communicating completely with others, not a very practical option. Or learn that no matter what you say, it can be perceived differently from what you intended. Accept the fact that sooner or later you will have to deal with misunderstanding by another person and understand that what is really important is how you handle the conflicts or misunderstandings, not that they exist.

There is no way to prevent them. Here's another one, how about all those little irritating conversational corrections that people feel are necessary or so important? I have been observing couples in their conversations recently, and I've made an interesting discovery. One, I am sure that applies to you and your partner. If it doesn't, your relationship is truly one in a million. I call this tendency the correction syndrome, and it goes like this. He says, "About three weeks ago," she corrects him with, "It was just last week." She says, "That movie was at least two hours long," he corrects her with, "It was only an hour and a half." Today, there are millions of conversations that will mimic this conversational tendency. Consider two thoughts. Does this trivia really matter in the end, no matter what is being

discussed? And what are the long-term consequences of this need to correct others in the mundane and unimportant conversational details of life? Well, in the end, I don't think that most of these mild corrections really matter. In the grand scheme of things, what difference does it really make whether the movie was 90 or 120 minutes long?

During a recent social dinner outing with another couple, I decided to count. During this two-hour meal, each partner corrected the other a total of 35 times. We are not talking about rocket science stuff here, where the need for accuracy is critical. We are talking about simple and often unimportant life details that in the end really don't matter one way or the other. I started thinking, why was this necessary? Why do people feel the need to correct their partner? Is it ego, the need to be right or control or some other hidden psychological motive? Since I don't have a degree in psychology, I can't answer that, but I can tell you as the recipient of many of these relentless corrections during my life that I soon arrived at the point that I wanted to be around my partner as little as possible.

I can hear some of you now, "Tim, you are making a big deal out of nothing. It's just life's trivia." Maybe yes and maybe no. All I can tell you is how this persistent behavior makes me feel. Why contribute? Why talk? Why engage when sooner or later, the need for correction from the other person will emerge? As an interesting sidebar, I've also noticed that when a group of guys or gals get together, this same conversational tendency isn't followed. There is no need for her to correct one of her friends nor he one of his. It seems that this tends to only happen when two spouses are sharing either in private or when they're among friends at a social gathering. I'm not an expert on anything, but I do know a little bit about a number of subjects, and one of my expertise on a simple point of detail on one of these is corrected by someone with less knowledge on the subject that is being discussed, I do tend to get somewhat annoyed.

Do I fight back, make a stand? Do I let them have their way? Do I pick my battles? Do I just shut up and forget it? Do I suck it in and smile? Do I make a big deal out of nothing? I know I'm not being much help here. All I can tell you is that over time, this consistent need to correct will take its toll on the intimacy, respect, openness and vulnerability in the relationship. From personal experience, I can tell you that if every time you open your mouth, your partner interrupts, invalidates, criticizes, corrects or doesn't listen to you, the communication in your relationship will tend to be either very superficial or non-existent.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) **RANK** how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

12 — It's the little things that matter

As relationships mature, grow and develop, people can sometimes forget that it's the little things that can have the greatest positive as well as negative impact on the overall quality of the relationship.

I put these in four categories. Little courtesies, little pleasures, little words and little invalidators. Let's look at each of these in a little more depth. Little courtesies, these are the common courtesies that many people fail to do after a relationship has reached the taking you for granted stage, such as saying thank you and please and opening doors. Remembering special dates, events, needs, wants desires and dreams. Doing what you say you are going to do whether it is a telephone call or being on time for anything. Being late says what I was doing is more important than you are. One of my pet peeves is people are always late. What an insult. I know, I know there is traffic, last minute somethings, but let's let these be the exceptions and not the rule.

Little pleasures such as sending flowers, greeting cards, giving inexpensive gifts for no reason than to say you are special. I was thinking about you. Warming up your spouse's car on a cold winter morning before they head off to work. A back rub and a foot massage. There are a million ways you can say you are special. Get creative, get outside of yourself for once and put the other person in your life first.

Little words, saying I'm sorry, I forgive you. It will be okay. I know how you feel. I believe in you. I have confidence in you. You can do it. I'm there for you. This list is endless. Little invalidators. Things like forgetting to say thank you when your partner goes out of their way for you. Feeling like it is unnecessary to use the word please when asking them for something. Interrupting them while they answer a question you have just asked them or being late for a simple event like a lunch.

How often do you go out of your way for that special person in your life? Why not call someone today and thank them for something? Tell them you care. They are special. You are thinking about them. Why not send a small gift, anything, a greeting card? These acts do not guarantee successful relationships, but they can go a long way in improving them and maintaining them on a positive basis.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) **RANK** how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

13 — Don't be an Invalidator

What is an invalidator? It is a person who puts other people down, insults them in public, disregards their opinions, does not listen. Letting their own ego try to control the other person, is emotionally manipulative or negates their feelings. Not a pretty picture.

Invalidators are everywhere, in homes, the classroom, the board room, on the golf course, and the bedroom. Being with an invalidator isn't fun, but they tend to give you several options when they come into your life. You can hide under a rock, lock yourself in the closet, fight back, give up, or run away from them.

How do you know if you work with, live with, or just hang out with an invalidator? Here are a few clues to consider. They interrupt you a lot. They ignore or don't really care about your feelings. They say things like "You should, you never, you always, you don't, You owe me." They say, "Don't you," rather than, "Do you?"

They don't listen to you. They are so wrapped up in themselves that you really don't exist. They're only concerned about their own needs and don't give a rip about yours. They communicate things to you like, "What will people think when you act like that? You make me angry when you say dumb things in front of my friends. Are you really going to wear that?"

They also can be heard saying, "How could you do that to me? See what you made me do? It's your fault. If you really loved me, you would. Why can't you be more like I expect you to?" There is a lot more, but I am sure you can now identify if you are an invalidator or if you have one in your life.

Here are a few things you can do if you have one in your life. Change them. Good luck, accept their behavior, it most likely will never change. Leave.

Get yourself, them, or both of you into therapy. Record your conversations and play them back. Not to blame or criticize, but so that each of you can see where you may be invalidating each other. Read my book, Nit Pickers, Naggars, and Tyrants. Have a signal you can use every time the other person invalidates you.

For example, whenever they interrupt you, you can tap their forehead and I just made that up. Ask a third party to act as an observer. Whenever the other person invalidates you, the observer can tell the other person. Develop some rules of behavior in the relationship. You

can respond to their statements with things like, "I am sorry you feel I should have acted differently. It might not be acceptable to you, but I have chosen to do it."

The key here is to not take personal ownership of the other person's opinions, values, criticisms, or judgements.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) RANK how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

14 — Intent vs. behavior

Everyone is doing the best they can at any given moment, given their awareness, skills, experience and knowledge. If this is true, why do some people's apparent negative behavior sometimes affect us the way it does? There are any number of reasons. First, we have unclear or unrealistic expectations of them. Two, we have our own stuff, psychological and emotional issues that we are dealing with. Three, we have more or less of a history with that person. Some of it positive and some of it negative. Four, we have erroneous definition of faults. Five, we are masters at projection and mirroring. Six, we don't take the responsibility for our contribution to the problem or issue. Seven, we have personal blind spots. Eight, we are insecure or have low self-esteem. Nine, we have put these people on a pedestal. And Ten, we lack tolerance, acceptance or patience.

If there is an inconsistency between a person's behavior and their words, the behavior will always be a more accurate reflection of where they are in consciousness than the words they may use. The reason for this is that the words are a conscious activity and behavior is generally an unconscious activity. Note I said generally. Many people consciously behave in certain ways because they are trying to send a certain message to the other person. They may say, "I love you" for example, but their behavior or actions are totally contradictory to the words they're choosing to use. How can you know what a person's real intent is? You must pay close attention to all of the subtle, as well as more evident, nonverbal signals. Sometimes it does no good whatsoever to ask them how they feel or what they want. You can assume that if they wanted you to know, they would be telling you the truth in the first place.

I'm not much of a television watcher, but a few years ago while flipping through the channels, I stopped for a few minutes to an evening sitcom. The wife was saying, "What are you thinking?" The husband responded, "If I wanted you to know what I was thinking, I would be talking." This is not necessarily true. Real intent is the crux of all behavior. We may do our best to mask our real feelings, attitudes, or issues, but sooner or later, our behavior will give us away.

The other side of this complicated issue is when a person sends you mixed or incorrect signals hoping the person will catch your meaning or intent. The problem is that most people pay more accurate attention to the words that are used and less to the emotions, feelings and other various nonverbal clues that are sent. It takes a very open, vulnerable,

safe and honest relationship that is free of judgment, criticism and validation and retribution to always know what the other person's real intent is. Learn to stay focused in the present, resist the tendency to look for what you want to see, hope is there or even worse, pretend isn't there. Responding to nonverbal clues when your partner needs support, acceptance, or just a kind word is far better than requiring them to verbalize their wants or needs. The ability to respond to these needs without the need for words speaks volumes about your connection to the other person and your willingness to be supportive and understanding.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) RANK how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

15 — Listening and understanding

Hearing and listening are two different things. Hearing is a physical act, listening is a mental one. The ears collect sound waves and send them to the brain for interpretation. If you don't have a hearing problem, it doesn't necessarily mean that you are a good listener. One of the biggest complaints many women have about the men in their lives is that they don't listen. I have not done any formal research on the different listening abilities between men and women but I believe women are better listeners than men. Children tend to be selective listeners, their attention span is less than 30 seconds. Employees often don't listen and have their own agendas. Parents don't listen to their children, they are too busy, distracted or just not interested, and politicians don't listen.

Why don't people listen? First, they don't care about the other person. Second, they are more concerned with their own ideas or thoughts. Third, it takes too much work to listen so they just fake it. Fourth, they don't know how to listen. Fifth, they think they are listening. Sixth, they have no interest in the subject being discussed. Seventh, their ego or the need to manipulate, control or look good gets in the way of their listening. Eighth, the other person's nonverbal communication style gets in the way. Ninth, they don't respect, like or trust the other person. Ten, they think they know more about the subject than the person doing the talking. Eleven they don't believe the other person. And Twelve, they are preoccupied with their own concerns, issues, problems or circumstances.

Here are a few simple listening tips to consider. First, look for the main theme of the other person's message and don't get hung up on the trivial words, ideas or their behaviors. Second, offer feedback comments to show you are listening, things like I see, uh-huh. Third, ask clarifying questions to show you are both listening and interested. Fourth, don't judge the person. When you judge another person, your judgements are really defining yourself and not the other person. Fifth, stay focused in the present. Sixth, use a talking stick.

What is a talking stick, you ask? Well, there are a number of Native American traditions that I have been interested in for several years, one of them is the use of the talking stick. By now, I'm sure many of you are wondering what in the world is a talking stick? I don't have this time here to go into the origination of the tradition, I only want to illustrate its use. By the way, you can use any symbol for a talking stick. One of the problems in

relationships is the issue of communication, specifically people interrupting others while they are talking.

When you interrupt someone, you are saying, "You don't matter, your ideas are not important. I am not listening to you. I don't care about what you are saying." None of these contribute to open, honest communication and relationships. Enter the talking stick. Let's say two people are having a discussion of some kind, pleasant or otherwise. She begins by sharing her thoughts or ideas and she has the talking stick. He cannot say a word, not a single word until she surrenders the stick to him. He can't grab it away from her, steal it or ask for it, he can't do anything.

He waits and listens. When she is finished with her opinion, idea or thought, she then passes the stick to him. The same rules apply for her that were applicable to him. She cannot talk, not a word until he surrenders the stick voluntarily to her. What is the point of the stick anyway? Well, use your imagination for just a minute. What would the use of the stick do to a person's willingness to listen, to the quality of the communication, the validation of the other person by sending the message that I care about you, what you feel, believe or think? If you want to improve the quality of your listening, communication, and relationships, I recommend you consider using this wonderful little device.

A talking stick can be a toy, stick from a tree in your yard, one you just made up, even a spoon. Do you have someone in your life that doesn't listen? If you do, I'll bet you live with a great deal of frustration. One of the greatest compliments we can pay another human being is to be willing to listen to them, to give them the gift of our time, attention, energy, and interest. Are you a good listener? One way to find out is to observe how often you interrupt others, make assumptions about what they said or when misunderstanding happens after a conversation.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) **RANK** how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

16 — Express your feelings

Generally speaking, women live longer than men. One of the reasons is that they openly share their feelings more often. Men tend to stuff their feelings. This is a good practice to continue if you want an early trip to the grave. The concept I want to discuss is the topic of self-disclosure. Women have more women friends because of it. Women have better relationships with their male friends because of it. What is self-disclosure? It is a willingness and ability to share your honest feelings, pain, grief, fears, frustrations, and anything that, if stuffed, will contribute to greater stress and less than satisfying relationships with others.

Men were raised to be tough, competitive, to win, and not to show emotional weakness. I have never considered sharing your true feelings of weakness, although there have been many times in my life when I have resisted for fear of rejection, embarrassment, and to be perceived as weak by others. I am learning that managed self-disclosure builds bridges in relationships and more satisfying outcomes than sharing too little or too much. Sharing too much of yourself invites pity, scorn, ridicule, and a variety of other adverse reactions from others. Sharing too little of yourself keeps others in your life at a safe yet unhealthy distance.

We are all in this life together, doing the best we can with what we have at any given moment. Why not let more people into your inner circle of shared feelings? You might be surprised at their support, love, and acceptance. Balanced self-disclosure builds bridges with others. Too much or too little builds barriers. This is true just as much in business as it is in your personal relationships. There is no sin in crying in public, sharing your innermost fears with those you trust and respect, and hugging those that cross your path. On a speaking trip to Buenos Aires, I couldn't help but notice how everyone kisses everyone when they meet or before they depart. It's a shame that in many parts of the world, kissing and hugging is seen as unnecessary or taboo.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) **RANK** how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

17 — Closeness vs. Distance

You can be a million miles apart in the same bed and as close as the next heartbeat, even though you were separated by hundreds of miles. Have you ever had the experience of feeling really separated or far apart from your partner, even though you were within touching distance? Have you ever felt really close to someone that you see infrequently?

How can you explain this paradox? I have had both experiences in my life, and I have tried to determine the root cause of these feelings regardless of the distance that separated me from my loved ones. I can't give you a definitive answer, but I think I am getting a lot closer to the heart of this issue.

There are several types of closeness or distance. There is physical, emotional, sexual, spiritual, and psychological. You can feel really close emotionally to someone, yet a million miles apart physically. You can feel like a great valley separates you and your spouse spiritually, yet a closeness in family or financial agendas.

If you are in a relationship and do not feel intimately close to your significant other in any of the above positive ways, I suggest you consider why you may be experiencing this distance.

The real problem here is to be close in some ways and distant in others. For example, if you have a greater need for more affection, emotional closeness, or romance, and your significant other has a greater need for more sex or physical closeness, you will never bridge this gap focusing on a totally unrelated common area in your relationship such as money, career, or children. You will tend to bring the unresolved resentments, baggage, expectations, and guilt into the other areas of your relationship. You may not do this consciously, but you will certainly do it unconsciously.

There are a number of causes to these feelings of distance and or closeness, and they can be summarized in just three. First, expectations. You want or expect a certain type of attitude, response, action, word, or feedback from your partner, and it seldom comes. You have an expectation and are constantly disappointed. These unfulfilled expectations can lead to a variety of resentments, then anger, and finally, apathy.

Number two, needs and or desires. Your significant other has no interest in knowing, understanding, or satisfying some or any of your basic emotional or physical needs or wants.

And third, your needs, wants, or expectations are unrealistic, and you therefore set yourself up for disappointment wherever you go and whomever you're with. Remember, your responses to anything are not the responsibility of another person, just as their reactions are not your responsibility.

During a break, in one of my recent seminars, I recently overheard a conversation between two female friends. One person said, "The passion is gone in our relationship." This simple concept caused me to think for a few minutes. Passion is not in a relationship any more than fun is in a job. If there is no more passion in the relationship, it is because there is no more passion in the two people in the relationship. A relationship doesn't have feelings or emotions. People in them have these things. So if there's distance or closeness in your relationship, it is not because these are in the relationship, but because they are in one of you.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) RANK how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

18 — Creating a safe environment

The ability to share fears, hopes, dreams, frustrations, needs and wants in a relationship requires a safe environment. If a person feels that by sharing their fears and concerns or whatever, they will be invalidated, judged, or that these will be used against them in the future in some way, they will tend to keep things to themselves.

I have often been accused by people in my life of shutting down or going into my cave, as John Gray would say in his great book *Men Are From Mars, Women Are From Venus*. Although at times I've been guilty, most of the time it was nothing more than a protection device to preserve my self-esteem.

Let me give you a brief illustration. If every time you have an opinion about something your partner challenges it, and invalidates it or judges it in some way, they just can't listen without having to put their own two cents in, eventually you'll get to the point where you won't volunteer your opinion when asked. It's safer that way.

Now, I could be wrong here, but I believe a person can only take so much criticism before they will take evasive action. Some people lash out and defend themselves, others withdraw. Neither way is right or wrong. It's just how we have learned to protect ourselves and our emotions and feelings. In a sense, we build walls around ourselves to protect us from the continued onslaught of negative or critical words.

A safe environment in a relationship is one that permits the honest sharing of anything without fear or condemnation, retribution or criticism. I have observed hundreds of couples in my life and I believe that few relationships have this kind of safety. A safe environment is possible, but it requires secure and mature individuals, loving and kind individuals. Full acceptance of the other person, who they are, what they believe and how they feel, and a method or strategy for sharing information that can be perceived as threatening.

So, if you are in a relationship that is not safe, you have four options and these are in no particular order. You can leave the relationship. You can try and get your partner to see how their remarks or criticism affect you, and that you want to share your feelings, pain, needs and goals, but you don't want them to invalidate them. They don't have to agree with them or even like them, but they don't have to judge them either. Defend yourself or fight back. And lastly, learn to overlook these slights and hurtful comments.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) **RANK** how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

19 — Time together

A while back, I read a study that stated that the average couple spends less than 30 minutes a week in one-on-one personal intimate dialogue. If this is anywhere near accurate, it is a sad commentary on the quality of today's relationships. Keep in mind that this time was quiet time when not having sex, having dinner with the kids, shopping, working, or in the yard or whatever. It was dedicated let's talk time.

You can't build a positive nurturing, loving, and lasting relationship on 26 hours of shared time a year. It is even hard to build a real solid and long lasting friendship in that amount of time. How are you doing? Are you spending more than one hour a week in personal intimate, real, and vulnerable sharing with your significant other? If not, why not?

Here are some of the common reasons why not. You have no time. You are too busy. One or both of you travel too much. You don't like your partner. It's not a safe environment to be vulnerable. The other person doesn't care about your feelings, needs, interests or concerns. One or both of you don't listen. There is an ego battle going on. There are too many kids. One or both of you have too many friends. One or both of you have too many outside interests. Work is too demanding for one or both of you. And you are suppressing emotions like anger, resentment, or jealousy.

Are your reasons listed? If so, why not take some time and evaluate them in more detail. If you can't do it with your significant other, then at least do it alone and come up with your own reasons or causes. Relationships that work have shared understanding, expressed feelings, unconditional acceptance and a genuine desire for the other person to become all that they can be.

Relationships that tend to not work have any number of psychological games, manipulation, ego control, emotionally immaturity and selfishness. There are couples who spend very little time together and have wonderful relationships. For them, it isn't the amount of time they have together, but what they put into the time they have together. These relationships are also uncommon. Time is a factor for most of us. We need time to understand, learn, grow, accept and love. These don't come easily or quickly.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) **RANK** how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

20 — Unconditional acceptance

One of the biggest challenges in relationships is the unconditional acceptance of another person's beliefs, attitudes and behavior. Having had a number of relationships with a variety of people, friends, employees, clients, children and supervisors, I can tell you that some people are easy to accept while others can bring us over the top of the emotional barometer when it comes to stress, anger and their ability to push our buttons. What is unconditional acceptance? Love and acceptance can go hand in hand, but each of us can have a variety of relationships where there is no romantic love, but we need to find within ourselves the ability to have unconditional acceptance. My definition might differ from some professionals but here it is.

Unconditional acceptance means to me a lack of judgements, a lack of unrealistic expectations and awareness that everyone is doing the best they can with what they have at any given time in their life. And understanding that everyone is on their own path, learning what they need to learn as they pass from one day to the next. Knowing that I don't have to agree with them about everything or anything. Accepting that my ways, attitudes or opinions do not have to be shared by anyone. Recognizing that the human experience is more or less difficult for each of us. Understanding that everyone has a unique, emotional outlook. Accepting that everyone has a life story or experiences that is uniquely theirs. That there is no right or wrong. That perceptions are a major part of how each of us sees the world. Seeing the positives in the other person, knowing that everyone has their personal dramas, demons, angels, dreams, hopes, fears and frustrations.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) **RANK** how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

21 — Conflict is either positive or negative

Every relationship experiences conflict sooner or later. Some relationships have some form of conflict on a regular basis. Conflict in and of itself is not negative, nor does it have to contribute to relationship stress or the termination of the relationship. The reasons why conflict seems to cause people stress is for one of several of the following reasons. People are stuck in their own opinions, interpretations, or perceptions. People have unrealistic expectations of others. People project their own issues, needs, desires onto the other person. They expect the other person to change. Their attitude is the other person is wrong or needs behavior modification. They're insecure within themselves. One or both of them has low self-esteem. There is an ego battle going on. Either or both of the parties wants control.

Conflict in relationships is normal due to the following. Different backgrounds and experiences. Different needs, wants and desires. Different opinions, values and beliefs. Different life outlook, whether someone is positive or negative, different personality styles, and a different approach to life. Whether each person is an introvert or an extrovert, positive or negative, an optimist or pessimist. With all of this going on, it is a miracle than anyone ever gets along. One of the keys to relationship success is the ability to manage all of these differences in a positive way, therefore managing how they're handled.

There are five easy steps to better managing conflict. First, remain neutral when you are in a conflict situation. Second, resist the tendency to defend your ego's need to be right. Third, listen between the lines. What is the other person really saying or feeling? Fourth, see conflict as a necessary and positive tool for relationship growth. And fifth, see past the words used and see if you can discover the emotions or feelings that are driving the behavior and words that are being used. Remember that all anger is driven by fear. When your partner expresses anger, you have a choice. You can respond to their anger with defensiveness, ego, or your own anger, or you can respond to what you believe they may be afraid of at that particular moment. This can take some serious and careful understanding, but if you will use this approach, you will dramatically reduce the conflict in your relationship.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) **RANK** how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

22 — Meet people where they are emotionally

One of the biggest mistakes people make in relationships in the area of communication is meeting people where they want to take them emotionally, rather than meeting them where they are emotionally. Let me explain. Let's say your husband walks into the kitchen and says, "I am so upset. I thought Bill would have called me back by now. He is so irresponsible." You respond with, "Don't worry, honey. I am sure he will call soon." Seems like a simple and innocent enough comment, right? Wrong. The wife met her husband where she wanted to take him, which was, it will be okay. He will call. But the husband was in the midst of anger, frustration, disappointment, or confusion. The key rule of communication here is you have to meet a person where they are emotionally, before you can take them where you want to take them emotionally. The wife did not meet her husband where he was, but where she wanted to take him.

What could the wife have said to meet her husband where he was? "Honey, I know you feel frustrated and disappointed," or, "I can feel your frustration or disappointment. You have every right to feel that way," meeting him where he is, "But it will be okay. I am sure Bill will call soon," taking him where she wants to take him. Let me give you one more, quick example. Your teenage son walks into the house after school and says, "Well, I didn't make the baseball team." You respond with, "Don't worry, Tommy. There's always next year. It all works out for the best." Again, innocent enough remark. Encouraging, yes. Hopeful, yes. Positive, yes. But it meets Tommy where you want to take him, into it will be okay in the future. But he is in emotional disappointment now. You can't take a person where you want to take them until you first meet them where they are.

Let's take another look at this one. In response to Tommy's remark, you say, "Tommy, I know how angry and frustrated you are," meeting him where he is. "You worked very hard to make the team, but all your hard work will pay off when you try out again next year. Don't lose faith. It will all work out," taking where they want to take him. This simple yet powerful communication technique can dramatically improve the quality of your communication and your relationships. Remember, you have to meet people where they are, before you can take them where you want to take them.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) **RANK** how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

23 — Forgiveness

One of the most difficult things for people to do is forgive others for their mistakes, transgressions or errors in judgment. Forgiveness is not about letting the other person off the hook for their behavior. Forgiveness doesn't say what you did was okay or acceptable. Forgiveness is about letting yourself off the emotional hook. It is releasing its negative hold on your emotions, feelings, or attitudes. The value of forgiveness is for you, not necessarily the other person. For example, let's say your parents did something to you years ago and you've not been able to forgive them for some reason. Let's also say that they have passed away. How can you forgive them now that they are gone? Isn't it too late? Yes, it's too late to tell them you forgive them. They have died, but it's not too late to send forgiveness to them, thereby releasing the grief, pain, or anxiety that holding on to this lack of forgiveness may be causing you.

Why is it so hard for people to forgive? Do we really need to hold on to any unforgiveness about anything anyone has ever done to us or said to us? When we believe someone needs our forgiveness, we are assuming that they did something to hurt, disappoint us, or cause us pain of some kind. Everyone is just doing the best they can to get through this life with as little stress, heartache and trouble as they can. When someone hurts us or causes us pain, was it because we had too high of an expectation of them? Couldn't this issue really be our issue and not theirs? One of the greatest causes of disappointment in life is the unrealized expectations of another person's behavior. Sooner or later, everyone you know will disappoint you in some way. It is inevitable. Does this mean then that we will always be needing to forgive everyone all of the time, or would a better approach be to understand that most of these people do not mean to hurt you?

They're not setting out on their life to give you grief. Keep in mind now we are talking about most people. To see yourself as a victim is to wish your circumstances would continue. The purpose of forgiveness is not to let the other person off the hook or condone their behavior. The true purpose of forgiveness is for your own benefit. By forgiving others their transgressions, you release the emotional hold that a lack of forgiveness can have on the other areas of your life. By releasing your anger, guilt or pain, you free yourself up to enjoy the positives of life. When you stay stuck in a lack of forgiveness, you doom yourself to a life filled with blame, fear, frustration, anger and resentment. Eventually, these negative emotions will have a significant impact on all the other areas of your life. Who do you need

to forgive and why? Remember, forgiveness is not about the other person. It is about who you are and who you are becoming.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) RANK how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

24 — Anchoring in the positive

What is an anchor? And I'm not referring here to the nautical term. It is a technique you can use for grounding yourself with a memory, either positive or negative, that is designed to remind you of how you felt, what you did, or what you believed when the anchor is thought of, touched, or focused on.

Let me give you a positive and a negative illustration of how an anchor is used. Here's an example of a positive anchor. You were in the courting stage of your current relationship and your significant other held your hand and squeezed it in a certain way whenever they said, I love you. As a result, you began to associate the squeeze with the words I love you.

If this technique is used repetitively after a short time, the anchor will be in place forever. Years later, to experience the words I love you, would not require any words between you, just a simple squeeze of your hand, and you would bring your consciousness back to those same three simple words.

Here's a negative example. You have just had a terrible argument with your spouse as they are screaming at the top of their lungs, berating you for every conceivable offense. They slap your hand to vent their frustration. They are not the violent type and the purpose of the slap is more symbolic than to inflict pain.

If every time your partner yells at you, they slap your hand out of frustration, you will, over time, begin to associate the slap with the argument and the negative feelings and emotions associated with the argument. The argument ends. You are back to being friends once again, but whenever your beloved slaps your hand, even if it was meant to be a loving gesture, would tend to bring you back to the negative feelings you had when you were having your heated argument.

In both cases, you have created a psychological anchor for your consciousness or thinking. The key in positive relationships is to develop as many positive anchors and as few negative anchors as possible.

Here are a few suggestions. Why not look at the behavior of your partner and see if you can determine where and if you have created positive or negative anchors. Discuss them with each other and see if you can determine their cause or origin.

Second, see if you can identify all of your negative anchors and their cause. Can you replace the negative ones with positive ones? In other words, see if you can give the negative anchor a new positive meaning.

Third, see how many new positive anchors you can create to keep you, your partner, and your relationship grounded in the positive rather than the negative. Four, make a game out of creating positive anchors.

And five, when you feel yourself falling into a behavior or feeling due primarily to the anchor and not what is happening in the present moment, stop and discuss it with your partner.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) RANK how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

25 — Keep the romance alive

So, the courting is over and you have settled into a relaxed and easy state in your relationship. This can happen in the first year of a relationship or it can happen much later depending on the attitudes and agendas of each partner, but it usually doesn't happen like a bolt of lightning. This gradual acceptance sort of creeps up on you week after week until one or both of you one day discovers that the romance is gone.

You know your partner, you can anticipate their needs, wants and desires, and you can push their buttons when and if you choose to. This would appear at first glance to be an ideal place to be in a relationship, one of quiet acceptance, knowing and an unconditional love. However, don't judge too quickly as this can also be a sign of impending trouble ahead.

One of the things I've discovered, both as a participant in relationships and as a speaker doing seminars for couples and singles groups is that many people let the romance die. Notice I said, let the romance die. Believe me, it didn't die all by itself. It had some help along the way, and then they wonder why there isn't the same passion and often intimacy in their relationship.

What is romance, anyway? There are entire books on this subject, lengthy seminars, and the talk show hosts have a field day with this topic and its issues. Let's take a look at what romance isn't. Romance isn't falling in love, acts of kindness, comfort with your partner, a weekend getaway, sending flowers, remembering anything, forgetting nothing, liking your partner, respecting your partner, or any other act. Although these are all worthy aspects of any positive relationship, they won't keep the spark alive unless the romantic spirit in both people is alive and well. Without romance, there will always seem like something is missing.

Romance is an attitude. It is a philosophy. It is not part of your cellular structure, and it can be developed and cultivated by anyone if they have the will, desire and the knowledge. People speak of the romantics. Who are these romantics, anyway? Did they take classes in it? Sure, you could do any or all of these things mentioned previously, but do them without a romantic attitude and they will just be kind, generous, or thoughtful acts. I guess doing these acts is better than doing nothing, but I would rather have them done in the spirit of romance than just as robotic behavior that doesn't come from the heart.

As you have most likely guessed by now, I am avoiding a definition of romance, and the reason is that I can't define it. I could use a dictionary, but I often find its definitions lacking. So I guess I'll leave the definition up to the experts and talk show hosts. I can't describe romance either, so I guess I'll have to leave that up to the counselors. I can only tell you that either you are or you are not romantic, and you know which category you belong in. Look at some elderly couple in their eighties who have been married for over 50 years holding hands. I'll bet they didn't get that out of some book or some seminar. Yes, you can learn to be romantic, but only if you want to.

On a scale of 1-5, (1 being low and 5 being high) RANK how this principal applies to you and your relationship.

(Each person should complete separately and compare later)

1 2 3 4 5 N/A

Thoughts

Summary

What will it take for people to finally get along? Are most people in relationships really getting along, or are many couples just grinning and bearing many of the typical relationship challenges and issues? It is really hard to know for sure, because the public persona of most relationships is almost always different than what goes on behind closed doors. I can recall in a relationship many years ago, where friends and relatives thought we were living in wedded bliss, when in reality behind the scenes was a constant battleground. In Elizabeth Rubin's book written over 30 years ago called *Intimate Strangers*, she shared the premise that boy meets girl, and then that's where the trouble starts. Let me explain.

Her premise was that boys and girls were conditioned and raised differently. Boys were raised to be competitive, tough and to win, and to never show emotions or weaknesses. On the other hand, little girls were raised to be sweet, supportive, nurturing, emotional, and loving. Elizabeth goes on to say, imagine growing up for 20 years or more with these different orientations and then putting this mature boy and girl together both at age 25 in a relationship and expecting them to get along. Since the divorce rate still hovers around the 50% mark, we can only assume that many couples have not yet figured out how to manage and merge these differences in upbringing, behavior, and expectations.

Eric Butterworth, one of my favorite authors says it a little differently. He states that the common premise for people to marry or get involved in a serious relationship is the fact that they have so much in common. He says that if this is true, that differences between the two would mean that the relationship has no chance of survival. He goes on to say that if two people have everything in common and agree on almost everything, I'll show you a boring and stale relationship. Eric contends that differences do not disqualify people for successful relationships. His premise that the ability to successfully manage the differences is what contributes to positive and lasting relationships.

Your Legacy is in Your Hands

Your legacy is in your hands. To me, your legacy is the memories, lessons, values, beliefs, experiences, achievements that you had while you were alive that someone else will benefit from after you are gone. We are all here for only a short time. Actually, it is just a rather short blip on the time clock of the history of the universe. I know that 70-plus years seems like a long time to build a legacy, but the question is, is it built just before we leave or is it developed slowly and gradually one year at a time while we are here?

I remember years ago hearing a speaker say, "You are not ready to live your life until you know what you want written on your tombstone." Another one of my favorite speakers once said, "Be careful who you are around because they are influencing what you believe, what you think, what you are learning, and who you may become."

So, friends, what kind of a legacy are you going to leave after you have passed on? Will it be one of emotional trauma, of such things as blame, guilt, anger, hate, resentment, disappointment, envy, greed, selfishness, jealousy, fear, or some other negative trait or quality? Or will it be one of love, hope, acceptance, generosity, tolerance, and sharing?

What are the outcomes of leaving a positive legacy in all of your relationship? Here are a few to consider. When people think of you after you are gone, it will always bring a smile to their face. Will your lessons of hope and optimism guide them through the future difficulties that they will naturally face as their life moves forward? Will your wisdom and guidance serve as a beacon for them as they learn their own lessons and add to the experiences of their life? Will the positive memories of you be a lasting part of their life that they can pass on to their offspring and friends as well? Will their life have lasting meaning for you as you develop your own beliefs and values?

I have three beautiful and wonderful granddaughters. They are currently 9, 10, and 12 years old. I was thinking the other night, "What would I want them to remember about our relationship after I'm gone?" It was an easy list to write, but the question remains, is that what they will actually remember? I would like them to remember to have courage and faith in times of difficulty; to embrace the adventure of relationships and all their possibilities; to know that successful relationships require a unique combination of work and fun; to always love what they are doing, whether a career or some other life pursuit; to know that they always have choices, and that the consequences of those choices are theirs; to always take full responsibility for their lives' outcomes, whether positive or

negative; to have faith in their God, that he only wants the best for them; to laugh in the face of adversity and problems, that these are learning opportunities. Finally, I would like them always to remember that they were loved not for what they did, but for who they were.

What would you want your children or grandchildren to remember about what your life stood for and how it would impact them or relate to them in their lives' outcomes?

Close

You've been listening to our 25 Relationship Principles audiobook by internationally bestselling author and renowned speaker, Tim Connor. Listening to this collection is preparation for your next segment, called Learn. We help you enjoy the ease of our process to Listen, Learn, and Talk. Perfection, because love is not enough and your relationship is precious.

Using this Workbook

1. Listening to your audiobook is excellent, but following along using your workbook is a perfect application.
2. Hopefully you've listened to the audio several times, personally, as well as, with your special someone.
3. Use a highlighter to mark up your reminders and score each audio track within this workbook?
4. Once you feel that you're ready for your next step, each of you should complete your ProScan behavioral surveys to provide both personal and your Side-by-Side comparisons.
5. Throughout your Side-by-Side process, we suggest saving this as a working document to help track your relational development.

***Take a few minutes to document desired goals, aspirations
and the time line by when you would like to receive your results.***

*My Desired
Results:*

Date:

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