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relationship news & more...

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## Checking In for the New Year

I had some quiet, relaxing time off during the holidays. You can see Neesa, my dog, hanging out in front of the fireplace. I joined her from time to time. I had planned to go through my file cabinets and toss some things that I have been collecting over the years to make room for some new articles, workshop materials, etc. Well, that didn't happen, but I did do some other things that needed to be done and I felt good about those accomplishments. I am back in the office now.

In February my daughter, granddaughter, and my partner, Lori and I are going to Costa Rica. We are leaving the 14<sup>th</sup> and returning the 22<sup>nd</sup>, so I will be away from the office for this period of time. My daughter has worked with a travel agency in Costa Rica planning out the trip for the four of us which includes zip lining through the rain forest and many other interesting and exciting things. I am really looking forward to this adventure, plus it will be nice to be in warmer weather. I will share a picture or two in my next newsletter.

I have several FREE Sunday afternoon workshops scheduled at Crazy Wisdom Bookstore in the next few months. The first one is **"Our Amazing Brain"** which is coming up Sunday, January 13<sup>th</sup>. I am very interested in neuroscience's new discoveries about our brains and will share what I am learning. There is also an Intro to Imago relationship therapy which I call **Discover A New Way to Love** on February 3<sup>rd</sup>. See announcements below. Please let others know about these offerings and come yourself.

I am including some YouTube educational links and excerpts from two books that I encourage you to add to your relationship library.



## Two Free Workshops Coming Up!

Our Amazing Brain - January 13

Discover a New Way to Love - February 3

Sunday Afternoon 2-4:30 pm

Crazy Wisdom Bookstore

## Food for Heart and Mind

In the last newsletter, I shared a **You Tube** piece that I came upon about frolicking goats. I hope you smiled as much as I did. In this newsletter I want to share some links to short presentations that I believe you will find interesting. With technology we are very fortunate to be able to have easy access to new information and ideas that otherwise would take several years to become available to the general public. I hope you will check out each link.

The three links I suggest are all from **TED**. **TED** is an amazing phenomenon which first started as an invitation only conference in Monterey, California in 1984. **TED** stands for technology, entertainment, and design. It attracts remarkable presenters from many different disciplines united by their curiosity, open-mindedness, and a desire to think outside the box. There are several formats, but **TED Talks** offers an audio/video podcast series in which the best **TED** content is released **free** online. What is so special about **TED** is the breadth of content and their commitment to seek out the most interesting people on earth and let them communicate what they are passionate about, untainted by corporate influence. Another interesting feature is that each speaker in **TED Talks** has only 18 minutes to present their most cogent ideas. For more general information, check out [TED Talks](#) on the web.

### *Some Suggested TED Talks of Interest*

[Brene Brown: Listening to Shame](#)

[Hedy Schleifer: The Power of Connection](#)

[Paul Zak - Trust, Morality and Oxytocin](#)

## Books I Recommend for Your Relationship Library

Every couple should apprise themselves of helpful information and encouragement to help them navigate one of the most challenging and worthwhile aspects of our life, creating a safe, loving relationship. Reading relationship self-help books isn't always enough. Sometimes you need to reach out for support and guidance. I hope you will do that sooner rather than later.

My first book recommendation, of course, is ***Getting the Love You Want, A Guide for Couples*** by Harville Hendrix, Ph.D. If you haven't read this foundational book, I suggest that you do so as soon as possible. This is the book that spells out the theory and practice that I use in the work that I do with the couples that I see in my office. It can help you better understand the growth and healing that is trying to happen in your relationship.

Below are two other books that can be very helpful for your coupleship, if used. The first is ***Marriage Rules, A Manual for the Married and The Coupled Up*** by Harriet Lerner, Ph.D. Below is an example of one of the 100 concise rules that can make a relationship work, or at least give it the best chance of succeeding. She was reminded by Michael Pollan that keeping things simple often is the best way to teach the most complicated things.

# MARRIAGE RULES

A MANUAL FOR  
THE MARRIED AND  
THE COUPLED UP



**HARRIET  
LERNER, PH.D.**

Author of the New York Times  
Bestseller *The Dance of Anger*

"Required reading for anyone hoping to interact  
successfully with any other human."  
—Martha Beck, columnist, *O, The Oprah Magazine*

OVERCOME YOUR L.D.D.

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## Rule #28

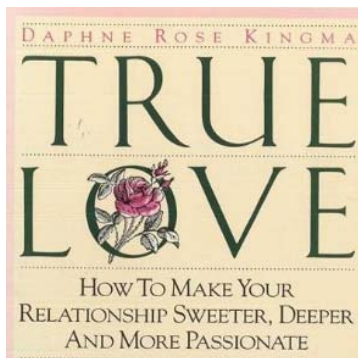
### DEFINE YOUR DIFFERENCES

Listening well to criticism does not mean that you're an overly accommodating, peace-at-any-price kind of person who doesn't speak up. A joke among men maintains that the husband should always have the last word in any confrontation—and that the last word should be "You're right, honey. I'm wrong. I'm really sorry and I'll never do it again."

After you have truly listened and considered your partner's point of view, you need to tell her how you see things differently. For instance, you might say "I thought about our conversation, and I'm really sorry I ignored you at the party. But I don't agree that I made you drink too much. I'm responsible for my behavior, but I'm not responsible for yours."

Defining your differences (and allowing your partner to do the same) is at the heart of having both a self and a relationship. Remember that a critical partner will listen better to your different point of view if you save it for a future conversation, or at least until after your partner feels fully heard and understood. Even if your partner isn't able to consider your point of view, you need to hear the sound of your own voice saying what you really think.

Another book that I call to your attention is ***True Love, How to Make Your Relationship Sweeter, Deeper, and More Passionate*** by Daphne Rose Kingma. Below is an example of one of many short 2-page entries about a particular topic. Read together and discuss one entry every day or a couple times a week, either from front to back or just open a page and use it for sharing and discussion. I think you will find it useful and inspiring.



## ASK IF YOU CAN HELP

We are all sufficiently occupied with the things we do for ourselves and the things we have no choice about doing for our jobs, spouses, and/or children, that we don't necessarily have the time or inclination to do anything

additional. Without helping anyone else, we have more than enough to keep us busy. That's why offering to help is a form of emotional graciousness that can add a lovely patina to your relationship.

Offering to help is more than just being willing to divide up the burden of the chores. It is a way of saying that, for no reason other than love, you are willing to enter into your sweetheart's undertakings. "Honey, I see you've been up all night doing the taxes; is there any way I can help you this morning?" "Do you need some help with the groceries"; "Your cold's getting worse; would you like me to get you some cough medicine"; "You sound really blue; would you like to talk to me about it?"

Help can come in many forms. It can be verbal solace (telling your honey everything is going to be all right), physical deliverance (lending a hand with the dishes), emotional comfort, (listening to your sweetheart's woes), and a kind of jack-of-all trades willingness to do whatever is needed (is there anything at all that I can do for you?).

Offering to help says that we want our beloved's life to be comfortable and gracious and we're willing to expend some energy to make it so. More than that, by offering to help, we acknowledge we that we're not living in a vacuum, that we're not just born into the world to sit around and be waited on like Old King Cole. The world is not our oyster; our sweetheart is not our slave.

Offering to help is also an act of loving awareness. It says that, minute by minute, we specifically notice what's going on with the person we love and that we are willing to participate in his or her circumstances even at a very mundane level. This endears you to your love because, in a multitude of tiny, subliminal ways, he knows you're paying attention, she knows that you care. It's another way of affirming your connection, of saying you see yourself not as an island, but as part of the mainland created by your love.