

A romantic couple embracing on a rocky cliff at sunrise. The man is wearing a maroon t-shirt and jeans, and the woman is wearing a white dress. They are standing on a rocky outcrop overlooking a valley. The sky is filled with many hot air balloons of various colors, including blue, red, and yellow. The overall atmosphere is warm and romantic.

# *Loving Relationships that Work:*



Spiritual Secrets from Couples  
Happily Married for Decades

By Debbie Johnson,  
Best-Selling Author of *Think Yourself Loved*

*Loving Relationships  
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# Chapter One



## Falling Into Love, or Lessons?

### Soul's Yearning for Love

*F*rom the time I was separated from my sisters and brothers and put in a foster home at age seven until became an adult, my life was one of feeling separated from others. The good news is, it drove me to go within and to find a love greater than any human could fulfill: the love of God. That love is beyond anything I ever imagined could exist, bringing me joy and inner peace unknown on earth.

Always, since I was very young, I yearned for God's love, and it took many years of inner research to find out what was holding me back. I'm so grateful for every single relationship in my life, no matter how hard it was or how long it lasted. Each one gave me a pearl of wisdom and helped me peel off many layers—the coverings that kept me from seeing life clearly, from seeing myself clearly, and from accepting the love that is everyone's birthright. That includes you!

The following stories are from many people who learned spiritual

lessons of their own through their loving relationships.

## **Loving Yourself Gets You More Love**

Loving yourself seems to be a common ingredient in successful relationships. One woman succeeded in loving herself when she accepted the challenge to take her life and relationships to the next level, beyond the patterns of her past.

Stacie's story may help those wanting to find a true love:

*Stacie:* Before I met my husband, I had two relationships with men who weren't able to make a commitment to me, but they taught me something important about myself.

The first one wanted to marry me, but he couldn't love me completely. He would love me one day, then criticize my faults the next. He kept flipping back and forth like that until I finally said, "No. That's enough."

He would not have ended it himself, so I had to end the relationship for my own self-respect.

I admired the next man in my life for his great love for God. But he loved God so much that he felt a human relationship would detract from that love. I also had a great spiritual drive and commitment to God. "But," I thought to myself, "Can't you do both?"

It was very painful. I wanted someone who would love me with their whole being, and he couldn't do that.

I realized later that both of those relationships were a mirror for me. I, like the first man, wasn't loving every aspect of myself. Like the second man, I had a great love for God and thought that was

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enough. But then I realized that loving myself was also loving God.

That was when I really began to work on loving myself. It meant looking at everything I wanted to change about myself, like anger and other negative aspects of myself, and still loving those things too. Without those imperfections, there would be nothing to work on spiritually! I knew that I, as Soul—who I believe I really am— needed something from which to learn in order for Spirit to help me unfold and become a greater spiritual being.

After I worked on myself, learning to be good to myself and love myself more, I really thought about what I wanted in a relationship. It was someone who could love me with their whole heart. I needed someone I could love with my whole heart, too. About two weeks later I met my husband!

My husband, Derek, loves me unconditionally. Because I was loving myself completely, I could give of my whole self too. Then I was able to attract and be loved by someone who could love me completely, faults and all!

To date, we've been married fifteen years. It's still most important to me in a marriage to be committed to Spirit. Derek and I help each other along with our spiritual growth. It doesn't detract from our spiritual growth, like my second boyfriend thought it would. When we work together on our weak points with love, instead of nitpicking, and remain humble throughout it, we really help each other.

## **Going for the Spiritual Gold**

What would you really like in a relationship? The next exercise will help you discover that!

### **Dating Exercise #1 – Going for the Gold I**

1. If you are truly committed to finding the next best relationship for you, spiritually and/or otherwise, please consider starting a journal just for that. It will be a special “captain’s log” of your fantastic explorations into your inner spiritual worlds. Have fun finding a beautiful journal or just use any spiral notebook. If you don’t have one yet, just use some paper you can staple together for this exercise:

2. Do you want the spiritual gold? Look closely at the following questions (from paragraph just under the subheading, “Going for the Spiritual Gold.”). Answer each question in your journal.

What would you really like in a relationship?

Imagine you could have the perfect relationship. What does that mean to you?

Will you be happy all the time? Or will you be happy to be moving closer each day to God’s infinite love?

3. Now list the qualities that you want in a relationship. Give yourself lots of room—below what you have written—to add more over the next few weeks. It takes some time to think of everything. I had a list of one hundred things before I met my last husband (I’ve been married twice) and he was exactly perfect for my spiritual unfoldment. We had fun and I was convinced that he had nearly every



quality I wanted. The tough stuff was for my spiritual benefit and more, even though I didn't see it all at the time. You know what they say about hindsight! The good news is that I have much more awareness of myself and more confidence and strength to move forward in God's loving embrace.

4. Look at your list with a new perspective: Since these are qualities you want in someone else, how would you feel about developing more of these qualities in yourself? This way you will happily meet your own reflection!

*For example:* "I want someone with a good sense of humor, so I will work on developing my sense of humor." My last husband was really good about laughing at my jokes. That endeared him to me when I really needed it!

### **How to Go For the Highest and Best**

I'm inspired by my friends who have found lasting love by working with Divine Spirit.

One man I know who we'll call "Mick" was surrendered to God's will and had a wonderful experience in finding his mate. He's a musician and was practicing regularly with a musical group. The singer was very attractive to him and he felt a strong connection, but she was dating someone else. He decided to ask God what to do. Mick kept saying, "I just want the highest and best relationship for me. Please send me the highest and best." Well, finally one day, the woman of his dreams was available. They began to spend time together and just knew one day, both at the same time, they should be married. They were, and have been married ever since, for several decades.

Then there are people like me who have not been able to find a life-long love. So many times I thought that I was in the perfect,

ideal relationship for me. At the beginning, I'd start to feel a magnetic pull, often feeling like I couldn't live without him. I got emotionally involved and made a commitment. Then, over time, there seemed to be little common ground between us and mostly pain. I would feel abandoned. This was a karmic pattern for me. Yet I also realized that if it *is* karma, so what? I'm here to work it out, to learn from my past mistakes, whether from this lifetime or another.

It has worked for me to at least be aware of my patterns in relationships that worked or didn't. If you'd like to create a better relationship model for yourself, you can begin by looking at the patterns in your past relationships. Here's a writing exercise to help you do that:

### **Dating Exercise #2 – Going for the Gold II**

1. List everyone you've had a strong emotional attraction to, and especially if you felt very attached to that person. Leave space to write between each name.
2. Think about what qualities most attracted you to each person and write them.
3. Now write the things that upset you in those relationships.
4. Look for patterns in the things that attracted you, then upset you.
5. This is the tough part: Being as honest with yourself as possible, take a long, but gentle look at how you may be treating yourself the same way you were treated. If you feel like you need to love yourself more, please see my book, *Think Yourself Loved*, which is all about loving yourself as well as accepting God's love, however you know God, into your heart and Soul.

6. Be kind to yourself and allow yourself to process this over time, gently putting your attention on how others treat you in life, then how you can treat yourself better *to allow life to treat you better*. Life just reflects our thoughts, attitudes and feelings about ourselves, built up over many lifetimes.

### **Past Life Karma and Love**

I've learned that we're here to learn and grow spiritually. Karma is simply a spiritual lesson, like a lesson in school. I fell into karma so many times. Everyone knows these days what karma is. What you do comes back to you, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap." But where on earth had I sown such seeds?

I looked for those seeds in my past lives. I found that I hadn't been too virtuous and was a "Don Juan" or Casanova-type of husband. In this lifetime, I have paid that debt from the female side. And I'm grateful for the lessons in compassion. I believe they have made me a more loving person.

This book has several stories of past lives affecting relationships. The following story illustrates a relationship where both people help each other heal from past life karma:

*Leslie:* When Brian and I met, I felt pretty neutral. I had always felt I'd be a much more spiritual person by not being married. We got to know each other better through phone calls and emails. Even though we never formally dated, he asked me to marry him on my first visit, and I said yes. We know now that we've known each other in past lives as well, so it was natural, and I wasn't even thinking, just listening to God's voice within me, which said, "This is it, do this!"

Then, after we were married, an inner strug-

gle began. I felt like I wasn't independent enough when I needed to go to the relationship for comfort. It made me feel guilty when I did that. Later I discovered through a feeling of knowing that the guilt came from a past life. Brian and I had been priest and nun together, and had been in love. We didn't have the discipline to keep from having a physical relationship, and thus felt we had betrayed God.

*Brian:* I felt that was true. Even though I didn't remember the details of that life, my dreams filtered in and entered my thoughts.

My side of our new marriage was different. It was blissful being together after having a long-distance relationship. But then Leslie was often gone when I arrived home. I was starting to feel insecure and abandoned as she started to need more independence. A past life dream explained why:

In the dream, I found myself as a child in ancient Persia. I even saw the clothes we wore, and the mountainous, wooded area in which we lived. I was looking for my mother, but she had disappeared. What came to me was that she had been taken away by marauders. Leslie was my mother in that lifetime, and I was subconsciously afraid of being abandoned again.

*Leslie:* Even though I still wanted to run away at times, I realized I was trying to shift gears spiritually, and it was making noise like a bicycle does when you are shifting gears. I understood that when I thought I needed independence, I'd start getting angry at Brian. I've learned I need to keep my heart open for our relationship to work.

Old Souls like you and I have been on both sides of the karmic

fence in many lifetimes. Now we're here to mend those fences by learning to rise above it all with love. My belief is that love can overcome karma.

So did I avoid relationships that felt like they would be karmic?

No, I wanted to face my lessons head on. However, sometimes, if it felt right, I did ask God if I could work the karma out in my dream state. That often worked, and the attraction went away. If it stayed, I asked for more inner awareness and help. You can, too!

### **An Exercise for Working out Karma in Your Dreams:**

1. Write a note to God in your journal, or on a piece of paper, leaving room to note any dream recall. Ask God to help you work out any karma in the dream state, if possible. You may also ask for guidance from your guardian angel or inner spiritual guide. We all have one! You can ask to meet him or her in your dreams and then make sure to write down anything that comes to you for the next thirty days.

2. Note any images or feelings as you awaken. Then write whatever you remember, even if it's only one word! If you want to know more about this, and how to interpret your own dreams, with your own symbols, see my book, *Dreams: Your Window to Heaven*.

Even if you don't remember a thing from your dreams, you may find your emotions have faded away. I know mine often did. But sometimes, I knew I just had to have the experience. After all, that's what we're here for.

As mentioned before, I've learned that Soul comes to earth for

schooling, but more specifically, to learn to give and receive Divine Love. Can you imagine more fertile soil for learning those lessons than in relationships? What better way to learn than to be tested on it daily through the lessons of forgiveness, tolerance, patience, kindness, and all the other qualities that love requires of us?

Since gratitude is key, the following story may help to better understand its power.

### **What Do You Want In a Relationship?**

Carmen has been married to the same man for forty-seven years. She has a wonderful, positive attitude and says they are grateful for each other every single day. She met her husband Antonio after she wrote some specific goals for her ideal relationship. Here's what she did:

*Carmen:* I made a written list of the qualities I wanted in a husband as well as the qualities I did not want. I asked myself, "How do I want to be treated?" I wanted someone who would treat me well around other people as well as in private, giving me total space to be myself. In fact, he would want me to be my own person, have hobbies of my own, and take the time I needed for myself. My future husband would certainly be faithful to me. He would fully support me in every way, not expecting me to go out and make a living. Yet he would completely respect me and I would respect him.

Then I put in a request to God, saying, "Please, God, if there is a man out there for me, please bring him to me."

Antonio turned out to be the man I asked God to send me. And furthermore, we both agree to all of

the things that make our marriage work.

### **How Do You Know it's Right?**

I wish I had a cookie-cutter answer for that question. A perfect formula would be nice, like  $e=mc^2$ . However, there are some very simple, direct tools that my spiritual studies have given me, and I use them regularly. These tools assure me that I'm following the direction of Divine Spirit, following God's plan for me to blossom spiritually. That doesn't mean the relationship to which I'm led will be perfect. It does mean that it will help me grow and unfold as a spiritual being, as Soul.

The first and most important tool for me is my daily spiritual practice. It's the most beautiful, uplifting prayer or meditation technique I've ever encountered. I simply sing an ancient love song to God, HU. HU is pronounced like the word "hue," and is sung in a long drawn-out breath for a few minutes, up to twenty minutes a day. It puts me in tune with the heart of God, and God's mission for me each day. I know that by what happens around me, how I feel, and more and more, simply what I do. If you want to learn more about HU, see [www.huapp.org](http://www.huapp.org).

The second tool is working with my dreams. When I married my second husband, I had known we were supposed to marry because I'd a dream two years previous to our marriage. I had asked to see the man I would marry, so I would know him when I met him:

*In the dream I was at a baseball game. I distinctly remember that my husband was sitting to my right, though I could not see what he looked like. A couple behind us was talking about vitamins. I said to them, "I couldn't help hearing you. If you want some help with that, my husband can help you." Then I turned to my husband and said, "Give me one of your cards, honey," and I handed it to the couple behind me.*

After that dream, I asked my closest girlfriends to keep an eye out for a single health practitioner—chiropractor, naturopath, whatever! Well, I re-met an out-of-touch friend who had just graduated from acupuncture school! Here was the health practitioner. We got married six months later!

Also, he had dreams about things that related to me as well, and we both had signs from God, like fortune cookies that said we would each meet an old friend. We knew because of all the signs, and also, we were magnetically attracted to each other (karma!). Yet, it was good karma too, as we had both set a goal for a relationship to help us toward spiritual self-mastery.

We were married for five years, the longest relationship either of us ever had. We did have a lot of karma to work out, and “self-mastery” lessons to learn, so we feel our marriage was a great success because we did what we needed to do, and we still remain friends. Some people stay together after working out their past-life karma, and some don’t. It’s a choice at that point—more about that later on. We were so different in so many ways and just didn’t feel comfortable enough with each other to stay in a marriage, being together a day to day basis.

Some people just know when a relationship is right. I know of two couples who have each been married for decades, and both of these couples met, fell in love instantly, went home together and have been together ever since! Common sense says to get to know each other. But there are many stories of people *who just* know, and we’ve all heard it, “When it’s right, you will just know!”

Here’s someone who did know, even though he didn’t feel it “at first sight.” And they stayed married for over six decades—it would have been longer, but she died:

*Keith:* I was not impressed with her when I first met Natalia. We were on a committee together, and I had to drive 135 miles each time we had a meeting. After our last meeting she was driving behind me with a friend in her car. At a traffic light she jumped



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out of her car, ran to mine, and jumped in the passenger seat! She had asked the friend to drive her car the rest of the way home, which was also on my way home.

Natalia then said, “You have such a long way to drive, I thought I’d just keep you company until you get to my house.” I knew right then that she cared about me, and I asked her out on a date.

After our first date I knew I would marry her. Most everyone in my family had a knack for knowing who they were going to marry. On our second date I told her I wanted to marry her and that I was certain we would be married, but that she could take all the time she needed to know for herself what was right for her.

A few weeks later Natalia told me she thought it was a good idea for us to marry. However, she had an agreement with her father that required her to wait two years to marry. I let her know I would honor her agreement with her father and wait the two years.

One day I walked into her kitchen where her mother was cleaning vegetables. She stopped what she was doing, looked up at me, and said, “You must really love my daughter to wait all this time for her.” I said, “Yes I do.” Her parents felt very confident in my love and ability to care for their daughter, because I was willing to be patient.

Natalia and I got to know each other very well as friends. We were married sixty-six years until she died three years ago. I miss her every single day. We got along so well because we put each other first. We knew what was important, and that was unconditional love.

*Debbie Johnson*

The next chapter will explore the kind of marriage that expresses that unconditional love of God, bringing into reality here on earth.

## Chapter Two



### **A Marriage of the Heart and Soul**

*W*hat does a “Marriage of the Heart and Soul” mean to you?

It will be different for every single person you meet. What a fun question that would be to ask friends. Even more enlightening, what a great question to ask your spouse!

#### **When You Love Someone, It’s a Service to God**

It was heart-warming to watch Jason very carefully pick up and show me Lissa’s beautiful new jacket. He had taken it to the dry cleaner’s for her while she was traveling. Though he didn’t understand her need for immense amounts of closet space and her love for fashion, he lovingly said, “She’s worth it.” Here is the story of how they found each other to serve God together, even though they are such unique individuals:

*Lissa:* I was feeling disappointed with the relationships I’d had so far in my life. I called them “false alarms,” because they just weren’t right for me. I

wondered if I had done all I could do to find the right person?

I looked within to find spiritual guidance and asked God, “What can I do to be clear about what I want in a mate?”

I’m a very visual person, so I felt the right thing to do was create a collage. I included every quality or characteristic I could think of. I pasted on pictures of the kind of food he would like, even the home we would live in, and added a nice car. I’m vegetarian, so I had a picture of a cornucopia of fruits and vegetables. I also added pictures of every good-looking guy I could find!

I was dreaming big. I thought, “It may never happen, so why not go for it?”

But the most important thing to me was our common spiritual belief. For me, that meant his love for our inner spiritual guide since we studied the same religious spiritual teaching (Eckankar). So I wrote at the bottom of the collage; “Someone who loves the Mahanta (our inner guide) as much as I do or more.” I even put a date on it for which I wanted it to come true. Then I put it away and forgot about it.

When I met Jason two years later, I kept asking God for guidance along the way. I wanted a very clear, visible sign to be sure I was doing the right thing. After all, I would have to make some major changes in my life, like leaving a job I loved, leaving my country, and leaving a community where I was well-respected. I certainly wanted to be married, but it wasn’t coming in the way I had envisioned.

Right about that time, a new book came out by

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our spiritual teacher and inner guide, Harold Klemp, called, *A Modern Prophet Answers Your Key Questions about Life*. Chapter Six (exercise reprinted below with publisher's permission) had a question and answer from him about relationships. His answer had to do with commitment to a first cause (primary goal); to help each other toward spiritual mastery.

As soon as I read that, my heart burst open and I realized what I was trying to say and couldn't. This was my true spiritual goal for a relationship; to help each other toward spiritual mastery.

*Jason:* I was sending Lissa a ring for our engagement, and decided I should wrap it in something special, so I made a copy of a picture from one of the ECK books. It had a quote under it that I liked. It happened to be the same book she had read the quote from.

*Lissa:* When I received that package, I realized then that the inner Master was giving me confirmation to follow through, even though I was afraid of letting go of my wonderful life. I cried because my heart was so open. I called Jason and said, "You're not going to believe this. The picture and quote you sent me was exactly what I had written down and set up as a postulate for what I wanted in a loving relationship!"

I had all this love to give, and I wanted to give it to someone where we'd have a greater capacity for serving God together than individually. And that is how it's come to be. We've been able to do more in service together than we could have on our own.

After we got married I found my collage. I real-

ized that our relationship did not have every detail I had thought of, but the most important things were there, and those were the spiritual qualities.

Here's the question and answer regarding the "first cause" in a marriage that Lissa found in a book by Harold Klemp titled; *A Modern Prophet Answers Your Key Questions about Life*:

Question: "What does the marriage bond signify spiritually?"

Author Harold Klemp's answer:

*The marriage bond can only be sacred if it is sacred to the two individuals who have agreed to this union. If they are one in heart, how can they be divided? At their marriage, one couple made a 'first cause' statement to each other. They each made a vow to help the other become a Master in this lifetime. They would help each other in conscious spiritual evolution, out of love, to reach the heights of God.*

Harold Klemp, *A Modern Prophet Answers Your Key Questions about Life*

## **Soul to Soul in Service to God**

David and Hannah serve God together as well. They both work at a non-profit religious organization, serving God together in their own way. They've been married thirty-six years.

*Hannah:* The party-school consciousness of the university I attended was hardly the climate for two shy girls like my friend Jessica and me. We wanted to cultivate meaningful relationships. But all we could do in that atmosphere was support each other with observations or arguments about others. Yet, it was camaraderie, so when Jessica transferred to another

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college, I was very lonely that second semester of my sophomore year.

The transformation that followed wasn't easy, but absolutely necessary in order for me to receive love.

It started one weekend when my friend Carrie took me to her hometown for a visit. On the way, we stopped at a Christian commune. Both of us were on a search for God. Even though I had only loose Christian roots, I felt a deep connection there with something. I felt that we were all a part of God and God's creation.

When I returned to my lonely dorm room, I once again thought about love, and how I had so much to give, but no one to give it to. My friend Carrie was so cute and trim and so bright. All the guys were attracted to her. A part of me was thinking *I'm like that. How will I ever find love?*

I was lying on my bed sobbing, when finally, it hit me. I looked up at my artwork on the wall and realized that I had a place to give my love! I saw the love and care and sheer joy in its creation. I knew in that moment that as long as I had a connection with God's love, I would always have whatever I needed.

I suddenly let go of my previous notions. I began seeing myself as a distributor of love through my art. I knew that in the realm of love, whatever would be, would be.

Then my friend Carrie asked if I wanted to meet someone.

*David:* From the time I was little, I had always wanted to be a minister. I felt very close to God and

wanted to serve in some way. After being a divinity student for a while, I had a change of consciousness. I felt my spiritual search needed to expand.

I began to study Eastern thought and meditation. This was during a time of spiritual awakening (yes, I was a hippie!) and everyone was talking about God in a different way. I studied Theosophy, and also joined the Self-Realization Fellowship, following my mother's example.

As far as love was concerned, I didn't know whether or not it could be a lifetime thing. My first love had broken up with me a year before. As far as I was concerned, she was the love of my life. I thought if you loved like that once, that was it! How could love like that ever come again?

Later I realized that she just loved falling in love. It wasn't God-based, and that's what I wanted.

*Hannah:* On my way to meet David, I bounded down the steps from my dorm feeling new and transformed. Love and romance didn't enter my mind, because my preconceived notions had been washed out of me a few days before.

Then when I first met David, I was not impressed. But I did notice in him an ease of being and a familiarity.

*David:* We walked along the street with our friends after we first met. I didn't feel anything special at first. But then we stopped at a corner, and the way she stood struck me. Then we looked into each other's eyes. The best way I can describe what I felt is: I saw God in her eyes. That was love at first sight, because I saw God's love.



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*Hannah:* I saw the same thing in David's eyes.

*David:* Later, we sat across the room from each other, talking about God a lot. It was like no one else was in the room. It was incredible. By the end of the visit, I was filled with the most incredible love I'd ever experienced. It was more than I'd ever known about God before, because now God's love was a part of it.

This was the first time I had consciously felt a Soul-to-Soul connection.

*Hannah:* I felt exactly the same way. He would mention a book, art, music, or spiritual quest, and I had read or heard or done the same thing! And he loved his family. He's the first man I met that had such love and compassion for his family.

Since then, we've had our disagreements and rough spots, of course, but because our relationship is God-based, we get through it. One of us has always been able to remain a beacon of light when the other is ranting. When my world becomes totally unglued, I remember; this is the best relationship I've ever had. This is who I am, because I see myself in him.

*David:* We know, love, and recognize each other as Soul. We recognize our oneness. Yet, we also respect each other as individuals and give ourselves space to grow.

We know we need to learn and grow spiritually and keep in sync.

*Hannah:* It's always a continuation. When one of us wonders, "Am I still in love?" we know we have a choice of how to answer that question. The answer is always yes.

*David:* When I go back to the source, God, and to when we first met, I can feel the same waves of love I felt in the early days.

*Hannah:* Me too!

## **Is a Marriage of the Heart and Soul Always Perfect?**

Even though Jen and Thom loved each other from the start, they have faced many challenges that threatened the security of their nest. One such challenge actually brought them closer:

*Jen:* I knew in an instant that I would marry Thom and that we'd be married for life. It was so real, watching him gaze at me over the lights where we both worked. And we both had motorcycles! Over the years we had a good marriage and several wonderful children.

However, things got tough financially and Thom had to take a night job that would pay better than he'd get elsewhere. I understood why he took the job, but I did not have a good feeling about it.

*Thom:* It was something I knew how to do, but I also had an inner feeling that it wasn't a good idea. I really wanted to go back to school, and could have done so with some financial help that was available. As it was, I ended up working seventy to eighty hours a week. I didn't have time to give our marriage justice, or our children.

*Jen:* So that job hurt our marriage because we never saw each other. We were talking about a divorce. But something happened that turned everything around. I had a major car accident that broke both my legs. I was completely dependent on Thom. He had to take constant care of me, the household and

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everything for several months. I'm still not able to do all I was before.

It's so hard for me to receive, and it has been very humbling. And when Thom took such good care of me, I realized the love was still there between us. We couldn't walk away from it.

*Thom:* And I realized how much I cared for her. When I heard about the accident, I was so scared that I had lost her. Jen had to let everything go just to survive. And I didn't know how I was going to take care of her, work, and take care of the household. But we all pulled together as a family. Everyone grew up really fast. I learned how good it felt to give as a caregiver, and expect nothing in return.

The accident was a blessing from God because it has taught us so much spiritually and also cemented our future together. And even though we still fight sometimes, we have gotten so much closer.

Our communication is much better. Plus, we both realized we don't want to be apart, and there's no one else we want to be with.

*Jen:* I learned a lot of patience. I learned that in a relationship, if you know in your heart that something is real, it will still be there. That's true even if something changes, like our moods—and that happens a lot in our relationship! I have to look past that and know that it's only temporary. Today is different than yesterday or tomorrow where moods are concerned, but I have to trust and believe that the love is still there through thick and thin; that no matter what happens, we have to be a team; we have to be one.

What kind of wonderful spiritual exercise must it be to find a marriage of the heart and Soul? And then, to keep it that way must also be an exercise of the greatest service to God and each other. The following chapter reveals more secrets of long-married happy couples.

## Chapter Three



### Spiritual Secrets of Loving Relationships

*N*ow we get to roll up our sleeves and practice what long-married couples all know: it's about the energy and effort put forth. But I imagine it to be a labor of love when someone really knows gratitude for the precious gift of their loved one's presence in their life.

#### **Resting in God's Love, Not on Your Laurels**

One long-married couple of thirty-eight years may not have stayed together if they had rested on their laurels. They worked from the very beginning to build a solid foundation for their marriage. They are happy with what they've accomplished, with the children they've raised and the life they share. Here's what happened:

*Rutger:* When I was young, I had an idea of the ideal marriage, how I thought it was supposed to be.

*Bella:* We both had the idea that marriage is forever. We were determined to make it work. However, we

had come from very different backgrounds.

My parents are Italian and Swedish. Silence was not golden. Conversation was kept going at any cost. And the Italians in my family just get louder and louder—with arms flying!

*Rutger:* I grew up on a farm with German parents. My mom told us that God holds us responsible for every word we utter. So I didn't say much, having learned that idle chatter was not appreciated.

The open flow of communication with Bella's family amazed me, and that they actually wanted to have a conversation with me! I felt accepted.

However, after our marriage I realized that what I was attracted to in Bella and her family were a bit much day in and day out. With the constant cheer and banter, I felt like I was on stage all the time.

Communication was definitely an issue. In the first few months, I could see that things weren't all smooth sailing.

*Bella:* He wanted some quiet time, I wanted lively conversation.

*Rutger:* I wanted earmuffs! Really, what I had to do was toss out all my preconceived ideas about marriage. I realized that there were two of us; two individuals who were very different.

To make the marriage work, there was give and take, compromise and respect.

*Bella:* When we married, I had moved from my parent's house to Rutger's. He'd been living alone for several years. I was less set in my ways coming from a family where I had to be more flexible. I realized

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eventually that Rutger thinks out what he's going to say before he says it, and in my family you are two or three subjects past it by then!

*Rutger:* From my point of view; I do like to think out what I'm going to say. I try to find the flow of the conversation of the group. I'm looking for a connection of the heart.

*Bella:* We recognize that we're both individuals. He's probably always going to be more quiet, and I will always be more of a jabbermouth.

*Rutger:* We had to recognize that we each had shortcomings and strengths. When we got married our commitment was, "This is forever." It's helped us to understand the supreme principle in our spiritual teaching, "Soul exists because of God's love for it." Because of the spiritual laws and principles I've learned in my religion, I have a better grasp of this Divine Love; that if God loves me with all my faults, and God loves you as much, how can I not love you as well?

And I do love my life with Bella.

### **On Solid Ground**

Brian and Leslie, whose past life story is in Chapter One, found a way to solidify their relationship even more after healing from their past life challenges:

*Brian:* Leslie and I decided to write a mission statement together for our marriage. But first we did a spiritual contemplation together and asked for guidance from God. As we wrote, it just flowed out, the words we needed just came to us.

*Leslie:* Brian wrote one part, and I wrote the other. Then we helped each other polish and edit them. Here's a portion of the result:

“As partners in marriage, our relationship’s purpose is to broaden our base of loving service to the world. It is not just about fulfilling our personal desires, but using our talents and abilities to help others see their own divine nature. We are committed to truth, spiritual freedom and service.

“Everything we do in life reflects our dedication, love and commitment to all of life, ourselves and helping each other by being in tune with God to reach our highest spiritual potential.”

“We are vehicles for Divine Love and, when necessary, beacons for each other to come back to that center of divine love.”

### **Rising Above With Love**

Some couples I interviewed had wonderful, uplifting spiritual practices to make their marriage a spiritual experience in itself. Michelle and Greg had such a marriage. This is Michelle’s story, so it will be just from her:

*Michelle:* I couldn’t have made it without God’s Love. Sometimes my partner seemed unfeeling and insensitive. Greg and I were both very independent and strong-willed with a great need to be heard. Both of us can reach a flash-point of anger very quickly. What was I supposed to be learning?

Greg and I had both been married before. We’d both felt hurt, controlled, and misunderstood in these former relationships. We noticed that the issues we had now had always cropped up before in



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every relationship we'd been in. Could it be that if we changed relationships again, the same problems would reappear?

Surely the problems lay within ourselves, we thought, and not the relationship or the other person. We decided we had an incredible opportunity to work through those problems, concerns and limitations by shifting our attitudes.

One day I had a really tough time with Greg's viewpoint on a very sensitive issues for me. Even though he had been very kind to my son Sam, this time he didn't want to help him. Sam had been in a very bad accident not long ago and he was almost killed. I wanted to give him some money for Christmas. Sam never asks for money, but I knew he needed it. Greg said, "No, he needs to have his own spiritual experience."

This was so unlike Greg, I couldn't believe it. I was really hurt and upset. I thought; *where is the love?* Just because someone has an accident, it doesn't mean they are flunking as Soul! My mind was churning, trying to figure it out. I was grieving deeply and thought, to God, *Please don't ask me to choose between my husband and my son!* I wanted to respect my husband and his viewpoint, but I also love my son very deeply, and wanted to help him.

I decided to take it to my spiritual teacher within, the voice of God. First I re-read our Wedding Ceremony. Then I went into contemplation, a kind of spiritual practice. I shared my angst and how deeply I loved Greg and also my child, but not just because he was my child. I loved him dearly as Soul. I received, inwardly, this phrase, "There is enough of

God's love for all." And I received a beautiful spiritual exercise that would help Greg and I re-connect and resolve this issues. It worked!

I realized I had to step back from my point of view, then step back again, and then once again. I was able to make some concessions because he needed to be heard and I owed it to him to listen from a neutral space because what I do affects him, too.

From that experience, I saw how precious and fragile our relationships are, and how quickly they can be destroyed in the heat of the moment. A thunderbolt of unleashed anger can do it. The spiritual exercise I did helped me to step out of my mind into the greater world of Soul, to see the bigger picture.

I explained to Greg the exercise I got inwardly. We now do this exercise every single day and when we don't, we become more irritated with each other. When we do it regularly, our relationship goes more smoothly. Here's the exercise we do every morning before we leave for work:

### **Loving Exercise for Re-Connecting Daily:**

1. We put our right hands on each other's hearts, and our left hands over the other person's right hand.

2. Looking deeply into each other's eyes, we say something like this (changing it as we feel inspired, to keep it fresh):

"You are my friend and I love you." Then he says that, or something like it.

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Then, “You are Divine Soul, a beautiful spark of God.” The other person repeats this.

“You are my beloved and I love you deeply.” Always, at the end, the other person repeats it.

So as not to become ritualistic, I may say other things like, “I trust you, love, admire, respect or appreciate you.” Or I might say, “I’m grateful for your patience.”

4. We like to sing to each other, “You are the light of my life, and I will always love you.”

Michelle and Greg have now been married more than twenty years!

In a wonderful little book by Harold Klemp, *Spiritual Wisdom on Relationships*, he recommends that couples reconnect daily by looking into each other’s eyes as you did when your relationship was new. The proof of the inner spiritual guidance is that Michelle got this part of her exercise from her Inner Master many years before it was ever in print!

Here’s the quote from the booklet I mentioned, reprinted with the publisher’s permission:

*During courtship when two people are looking at each other very directly, there’s the power of love in the gaze of one human being upon his beloved. They can actually feel the power in it.*

*But later when the partners become distracted and put their attention a foot above each other’s head, the power of love, or the ECK (another word for Holy Spirit), doesn’t come through to nurture each other. This is often when their relationship begins to die a slow death that can take many years.*

*If you love someone or something, nurture it.*

*That means, at least once during the day, give the object of your attention of the person of your heart your full love....*

*...take time just to listen, and put your full attention on them, face to face. It's directly looking at the person you love, even after you are married. This is when the nurturing occurs and when the relationship is strengthened.*

Harold Klemp, *Spiritual Wisdom on Relationships*

## **Clear and Compassionate Communication**

Countless books have been written on the importance of clear communication between partners in every kind of relationship. It seems to be the most challenging piece of any partnership. This next story reveals some simple tools that keep the stockpiles of emotion low. Corey and Kayla have learned to communicate clearly with each other through daily practice:

*Kayla:* From the very beginning of our relationship we chose never to let anything fester, so it didn't build up. On an almost daily basis we may say something like, "That hurt. What did you really mean?" Then we'll be totally open to what the other person meant.

*Corey:* Here's an example: I have to get up early because of my routine with our cats. One day, when Kayla was still asleep in the back of the house, my phone rang. She was calling to me, trying to get me to come back in the bedroom, where my phone was, to answer it. I didn't hear her, so she got up and came out looking a little disturbed. So, the first thing I said was, "You look upset, what's going on?" (That's our routine – to check in when something

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seems off with the other person).

*Kayla:* I told him about the phone call. I always ask Corey to take his phone with him wherever he goes at home.

*Corey:* I just forgot! It's just for my business and we don't expect it to ring on weekends, but I do need to leave it on in case I get a business call. So we worked it out. That's just illustrating the fact that we don't let things go by.

Sometimes there is anger that builds up when little things pile up, and Kayla has been very insightful.

*Kayla:* I've learned it's important not to ignore those little things, that action is the key. There's no way for me to know what the other person is feeling, unless I take the initiative and ask. One of the greatest lessons I've learned spiritually is the idea of the golden moment. There is this moment in time between what we hear and reacting to what we hear. So we take the moment to ask.

If someone acts a different way than I expect them to, it may be my responsibility. My spiritual studies have really reinforced that. But life itself will teach you, eventually. I have to have my eyes and heart open in order to learn what I have to for spiritual growth. That's what we're here for. As I've learned, life's a school, like it or not! So we might as well like it.

What helps me to keep my eyes and heart open to learning are the daily dedications I do. Here's one:

## **Kayla's Exercise in Daily Dedication to Spirit:**

I say, "I am a co-worker with God and a vehicle for Divine Spirit." This way I get to be more aware, because I'm claiming it. Then I can be more conscious of what Spirit is trying to teach me through my marriage.

## **The Family That Prays Together**

Some couples make sure they share spiritual time together. Some people do daily spiritual practices or prayer to keep their connection open to God and to inner spiritual guidance. That, in turn, helps them stay the course, and stay calm, whether it be stormy or sunny.

One couple found out just how effective doing a simple spiritual practice together can be. But first, here's an example of a Spiritual practice that has been done for many centuries around the world. It involves singing a love song to God that has been practiced by the Native American Indians, East Indians, Africans, and so on for various spiritual rituals or purposes. It's highly effective in bringing inner peace and even harmony between people who practice it together, as in a couple.

## **An Exercise for Inner Peace and Harmony Within**

Sitting or lying down, relaxed in a quiet place, putting your attention lightly on the screen of your mind with your eyes closed. Sing HU (sounds like the word hue) in a long drawn out breath (HUuuuuuuuu) several times, for up to twenty minutes. Feel the connection with God as it opens your heart to divine love and protection, as well as inner peace to overcome unwanted fears.

Katrina's simple story illustrates the power of the HU:

*Katrina:* When important discussions became dif-

difficult with my partner and I was frustrated, I suggested we sing HU together for a few minutes. Then our hearts would open, and we'd be able to address the issue from a new or higher point of view.

### **Gratitude and Grace – An Exercise in Love**

Alicia worked through her frustrations with her husband Shawn by serving herself generous helpings of gratitude! They have a strong marriage and even give workshops together on relationship issues and other spiritual topics.

*Alicia:* On occasion Shawn gets on my nerves. But I learned a technique that works very well when I am willing to get past my resistance and use it, even through gritted teeth! I'll share the technique, then how it works when I'm frustrated.

Here's the technique: Every dinner we have together, Shawn says something he's grateful for. I do the same and it spills over into our day, touching the other people in our lives as well. It makes me a more appreciative person. Shawn always thanks me for little things as well, like doing the dishes and even my presence, and it's heartfelt! It really makes a difference.

So when we are driving in the car and something irritates me, I get an inner nudge from God to start talking about my gratitude. Even if I have to do this through my gritted teeth, I start saying things like, "I'm grateful you are driving" or "I'm grateful you have a good job."

Eventually I start softening and say things like, "I do love you."

Even when I'm resistant, I do this exercise any-

way, and it begins to open my heart. We keep each other on our toes spiritually, and our relationship stays on course.

Would you like to try more adventuresome techniques and exercises to strengthen your marriage in Spirit? The following three chapters will show you ancient methods used for many centuries by cultures long-gone. Our modern-day culture is just beginning to catch up with these methods. Many people are ecstatic to find answers from God in the most surprising ways!



## Chapter Four



### **What is God Trying to Tell Me?**

*Have* you ever noticed how the people around you tend to be hard on you in the same way you are hard on yourself? If not, go back to the “Dating Exercise # 2” in Chapter One. If you’ve done that exercise, it will give you more insight into this chapter.

#### **Accepting Responsibility for the Mirror Image**

Jody takes responsibility in listening to God and looking at herself to see what God is reflecting. It’s heartwarming to see how easily she can laugh at herself:

*Jody:* So much in married life is about giving each other more freedom. I’ve learned this after three marriages of experience!

Some of the same things started happening in my current marriage that happened in my other marriages. Then I realized the problems were not about my former husbands, but about me needing

to learn certain lessons, and one such lesson is giving my mate more freedom.

It may be helpful for you to know about our two different personalities. My husband is really big on giving others personal space. So much that I actually wished he would tell me to do or not do something. But I learn much through his gentleness. He has always treated everyone so nicely, and he's so much more giving than I am. It's teaching me a lot about how to treat those closest to me more kindly.

I, on the other hand, have a tendency to give advice without being asked. I'll say, "I know how to fix that" or "Here's how to do that." I thought people appreciated it. At least they seemed to! But I read an article that said people feel they have a flaw when someone gives them advice, as if they couldn't think of it themselves. But I don't think that way. If Carl offers advice, I feel like I'll learn something new.

I discovered from this that we treat others as we want to be treated. In my marriage that means Carl needs a lot of space, because he gives a lot of space. He's treating me the way he wants to be treated. He keeps saying to me, "You don't have to fix everything. You can just leave it alone!" He's hesitant to even say what's wrong at times because he doesn't want me to fix it.

I'm learning to live and let live, to let people be. I'm learning about emotional and physical freedom, which can also lead to spiritual freedom. And I'm certainly learning more about karma!

Here's an example: All through this marriage (thirteen years!) my husband, Carl, has been getting speeding tickets. I've been pretty critical of his driv-

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ing with a “lead foot.” When he would get a ticket, I would complain and deride him. Then I would get a speeding ticket next!

I feel like Carl gets speeding tickets just as a test for me! It got to the point that our friends would laugh about it.

Of course our auto insurance rates kept going up. It takes five years for the ticket to drop off the insurance record. So we were glad when the five years was up. But the very next year, Carl got another speeding ticket. I tried to bite my tongue and didn't say too much. But I let it simmer.

One and a half years later he got another ticket and I started saying, “What's going on with all these tickets? What's going to happen to our insurance?”

Then I went to visit my mom who lives in the state next door. The speed limit was sixty-five mph and I was doing seventy-five. As I drove into a town, the momentum of freeway driving continued and I didn't notice the speed limit sign. A policeman pulled me over. He clocked me at forty-six mph in a twenty-five mph zone

As the officer took my license, I thought, “Pay-back time.”

I learned a deeper level of the phrase, “What goes around, comes around.”

If I had not been willing to learn these lessons I might have gone the way of my former marriages: divorce, dating again, then getting married. Because I've been willing to be patient through the lessons (and look in the mirror), I've had the most wonderful result of all. I am able to hold onto a marriage with

a really good man

## Facing the Spiritual Challenge

Before Max was married, he had expectations of a perfect, loving, harmonious, TV-like marriage. Now we're talking about the nineteen-sixties, where television marriages were often ideal. Here's what really happened:

*Max:* Living by myself was easy. I just went along with life and I got along with myself perfectly. Before Morgan and I were married, we both had expectations of a "perfect," harmonious marriage. When it wasn't perfect, I thought, "Something must be wrong with her. It couldn't be me," I got along fine with me! But the religion I study tells us to look at what we may need to learn spiritually. So I would think to myself, "It's probably her, but just in case, I ought to check with myself."

After I got married, little things would come up that made me realize I had to face myself. It was the perfect way for me to gain greater spiritual insight.

For example, one day I felt like Morgan was criticizing me. So I left the room and started thinking, "How could she criticize me after all the wonderful things I've done for her. I don't deserve to be criticized." And other thoughts like those. My mind went on and on.

I got to the middle of the hallway and stopped myself. I noticed my body felt tense. I felt angry and unhappy. I've learned to become aware that when my physical body is distressed, that there's something emotional going on. When I was younger, I made myself sick with anger. So I started looking at

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what was really going on with me. Because it's not about her, I thought, it's about me.

I went within and asked for help from God. At that moment, the dark clouds of anger and stress parted and the light came in. The small, still voice of God asked me, "What are you doing?" That's when I realized that I was criticizing *her*.

As soon as I had that realization, the anger and stress went away. I felt enlightened and lighter. It actually got me laughing at myself. I'd been criticizing her for criticizing me! Waves of love for Morgan, myself, and all life flowed through me.

I remember reading in one of our spiritual books to first realize that if you can see it in that person, the same trait exists in you.

Kurt faced a challenge of a different sort, looking at himself in the mirror of God and seeing a new person:

*Kurt:* Six months after we were married my wife, Julie, decided to take a job she had really wanted. However, it was in a city so far away that she had to move there. I started looking for a job in that city, too, but felt I needed the security of my old job until I found a new one. I mailed hundreds of resumes, but couldn't seem to find a job in Julie's new town.

One weekend I went up to see her. There was a company picnic and someone asked me if I wanted a job with them! Of course I accepted and moved.

Two weeks after I started, I was laid off! I felt as though the rug was yanked out from under me. The spiritual lesson was clear to me. I had not followed my inner guidance, which had told me to simply move to the area to look for work. I learned humility

when Julie had to become the main bread winner for one year as I continued to search. It was hard on my masculine ego. I had to learn that it was okay to depend on my wife. Julie learned, on the other hand, that it was okay for a wife to support a husband.

Eventually, I got an opportunity to start my own business. I worked very long hours building it. I felt I had to succeed so I could be worthy of Julie. We have been married many, many years now and look back with much laughter and joy.

### **Giving a Little Gets a Lot**

Wendy noticed a small shift and a dose of self-responsibility could make a big difference in her relationship:

*Wendy:* I had been asking for spiritual guidance on how to improve my relationship with my husband. After an exercise class, I overheard an older woman talking with other women in the class about relationships. Then she turned to me, looked me right in the eye and said, “The key to a good relationship is to be generous. Don’t hold back anything.”

When my husband comes home from work, he often wants to talk and connect, but I don’t always want to, because I’m ready to chill. It seems like he comes into the house wondering how I’m going to respond to him. After hearing what the older woman had to say, I decided to make the extra effort to be more loving. When I try giving just a little bit, he responds. It comes back more than I expect, in a positive way.

I’m learning to let his comments and stress from

the day roll off my back. I'd rather own it and make the change than wait for someone else to change.

That's what love is about, it seems, and helping us let go of ego, too, as you'll see in the next section.

### **Learning to Let Go of Ego**

Megan and Trey were living in a very small apartment due to financial difficulty. Megan was not happy, to say the least, in their tight quarters, adding to the stress level of their lowered income. She learned more love, understanding, and compassion one day due to her circumstances:

*Megan:* I felt really frustrated that I couldn't find my shoes, even though I had searched everywhere. What really upset me was that I knew I had not put my shoes anywhere else but their normal spot in the bathroom.

In my frustration, I went into the bathroom again to look, put down the toilet seat, and sat on it, because our home was so small and loaded with stuff that I didn't have any place else to sit.

I had my head in my hands, rubbing my eyes. Then I opened them and there were my shoes! They were in a shoe holder that hangs on the back of the door. Now you would think that would be the logical place to store shoes, but I was using it to store bathroom things, since there was no storage room in our tiny bathroom, only a sink!

*Trey:* I must have put them there because they were in my way. I was thinking that a shoe holder was the logical place.

*Megan:* Even though Trey wasn't home at the time, I knew that he probably thought that. But I wasn't ready to let go of my frustration yet. I went on for about two minutes thinking things like, "I never would have found them there!" and "I can't believe he would put them here instead of the closet."

All the while I was thinking these things, Spirit was telling me why he put them there. One part of me was holding that understanding state of consciousness, while the brat part of me was arguing against it. That was because I wanted to be validated in my frustration.

As I sat there looking at my shoes, the greater part of me, Soul, took over and said, "But I did find them, didn't I? And they were in a perfectly logical place. I have nothing to gripe about, do I?"

That's when I realized that I never again wanted to let ego, the little self, or the "brat" self, stand between me and anyone else. Now I try to laugh, let go of my ego, and let divine love rule.

### **Do I Stay or Go?**

Emotional turmoil struck and Darcy had to hold on to herself and her Spiritual Connection. Because she did so, miracles occurred!

*Darcy:* God never lets me down. That was proven out when my husband, Gio, and I were navigating a particularly rough patch in our relationship. Old patterns of excess emotional baggage were cropping up. We had both had been married before and had run into the same problems we faced today. He felt that when he had a different opinion from mine, it wasn't right. He also felt that he could never do any-



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thing right, even when it came to grocery shopping! If he forgot to buy something, it meant that he was not good enough.

I, on the other hand, felt that my actions were always criticized by Gio. For example, in the grocery store, someone bumped into me, hard, without even a word of apology. It hurt, and I told him.

Gio said, “Well, you’re blocking the aisle. Move to the side to make room for other people.” Actually, I *was* standing to the side! I could not read the labels on the cans without being really close to them, so I know I was not blocking the aisle.

Things like that began to pile up and really hurt me. I was so distraught one day that I sat down and started talking to God. “I just don’t know what to do. I’m feeling like this is a dead end. I need to know if it is still for the highest good for us to be together. I feel like I need to make a decision soon.”

I’ve learned to ask for signs from God, and it has really helped to validate my inner guidance. When I’m very distraught and can’t focus as well on my inner guidance, “postcards from God” help give me direction. I know these signs are a gift from God.

Then I wrote on a slip of paper, “Please, if it’s in our highest spiritual good to stay married at this time, then I need to see this symbol within forty-eight hours: by Tuesday night at 9:30 pm. If I do not see this symbol—that means it’s time to end the marriage.” I then drew a picture of a heart with a ring on it. The heart, to me, meant love and the ring meant marriage. I wanted to see a ring on a heart.

The next morning I needed to mail something.

For the first time, I went into a locally-owned mail station that was also a gift store. As I walked through the store I felt drawn to the cute little curios. I mailed my package and started to leave. My eye caught a very small white box shaped like a heart. On top of it were two red roses and two wedding rings, entwined. I thought it was pretty, but started to walk out, thinking nothing more of it. But the inner voice of God said, "Wait. What about the heart and the ring?"

I froze. I was stunned and speechless. This whole incident took place because I was just doing an errand! Of course I went back and bought the heart box.

I hadn't been looking for a box shaped like a heart, but it was so much more than what I had asked for. Not only was shaped like a heart, it had not one, but two wedding rings. The fact that they were intertwined meant to me we should stay together. I felt that the red roses meant true love. We have been happily married for many years since then.

I still keep that slip of paper in my little heart box to remember God's love and how it's always present and available to me.

### **Shifting Gears with Love**

When I married for the second time, I knew there would be a lot to work out. My husband and I both came from very difficult emotional family situations and had a lot of excess baggage to get rid of. We happily dumped it on each other at times! But we both knew we were being spiritually refined, and were eventually grateful for it.

Our karma was done, and since we were so different, I felt like

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I needed to split up with him, but stay friends. When it was time to let go, I knew I had to do it with love. I asked for inner guidance. I was told inwardly by my spiritual teacher and guide that I must wait until my husband was ready, so that it wouldn't hurt him so much. I felt like I was supposed to do everything with love. Even though I was desperate to be on my own, to be free, waiting made it all worth it. We are still good friends. We still help each other, listen to each other's problems, and sometimes even work together.

Girard was purposeful in examining his dreams, aware they were full of meaning. When he had a significant dream with Amber, the love of his life, he knew it was time for a change:

*Girard:* I had a relationship with Amber, who I loved very much. I had asked her to marry me, but she needed time to think about it. I actually had an inner experience where I realized we had gone so far back in lifetimes that I saw us as horses together.

My first date with Amber was like a romantic novel. We kissed and she said, "Oh, Girard, there you are!" and I said, "I've been waiting all my life for you." And I felt it with all my heart.

I had this inner spiritual experience where I saw Amber and myself in the lifetime where we horses together, running free through a field. It was beautiful! I knew we had been together in other lifetimes as well.

We started a relationship, and I loved her very much. Eventually, I asked Amber to marry me, but she needed time to think about it, because she didn't feel ready for the commitment.

Then I had a dream: *In the dream I was at the airport sitting by myself. There were about a dozen*

*bags of empty black luggage of different shapes and sizes scattered around me. I also noticed a daily planner there with the luggage. I knew it was filled with plans and appointments, all the normal things you would put in a pocket calendar.*

*I had a feeling this was a good thing while still dreaming. I'd been sitting there for a while by myself and knew I needed help with the luggage. Finally, Amber walked up. I said, "Aren't you going to help me with all this luggage?" She slowly looked over everything and without saying a word, just walked away.*

When I woke up, I realized the empty luggage was now-resolved lifetimes of karma, but I knew there was just a little bit left, as represented by the day planner. My next thought was: *I love her. And now that we've got this baggage out of the way, we have an opportunity to stay together out of love.*

The dream meant to me that we were done with our relationship karma. Black luggage was a positive sign that our karma was "in the black," meaning to me: "profitable." The luggage was our karmic "baggage" that was empty; the day planner meant all of the things we still might do together. The feeling I had sitting by myself was one of abandonment.

I told Amber about my dream and my interpretation, which was "We're done!" meaning we had completed our karma, except for a little bit that's left in this "day timer."

Then I got excited. "Now," I said, "we have a choice here to stay together out of love for each other."

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Amber got this look on her face, it brightened up! She said, “We’re done?”

And I reaffirmed, “Yes.”

Just like in the dream, she didn’t say anything, she just walked away. The writing was on the wall. I knew that the dream was accurate, and I felt the loss in my heart because I knew it was over. That’s why I’d felt abandoned in the dream.

She broke up with me not long after. Looking back, I am very glad she did, because she did me a favor. We had been trying to get back to the feeling of the horse lifetime all during that relationship, but you can never go back.

We often go around and around lifetime after lifetime with each other. What’s interesting is sometimes there’s something to finish or complete. But just because we have, doesn’t mean we have to repeat it. It doesn’t matter how many times we’ve been together, because ultimately we have to turn to God.

It’s great to come to the end and know it and feel it. What a long journey this was; that’s why there was so much luggage. What’s important to me is greater clarity about life around me, and what it took in terms of lifetimes to get there. Even though Amber and I had challenges being humans together (being horses was a lot easier!) I learned it’s true that love never dies.

### **When God Speaks, Am I Listening?**

I try to listen to God in all areas of my life, but it’s challenging when it comes to relationships. So I sometimes do a spiritual exercise like the

one below, asking God what to do. I ask my inner guide, the Mahanta, and the answer is always there, as long as I am truly listening. Here's a spiritual exercise you can try to deepen your spiritual relationship with God, used with permission from the publisher, Eckankar:

*Go somewhere quiet. Sit or lie down in a comfortable place. Put your attention on your Spiritual Eye, a point just above and behind your eyebrows. With eyes lightly shut, begin to sing a holy word or phrase, such as HU, God, Holy Spirit, or "Show me thy ways, O Lord." But fill your heart with love before you approach the altar of God, because only the pure may come.*

*Be patient. Do this exercise for several weeks, for a limit of twenty minutes each time. Sit, sing, and wait. God speaks to you only when you are able to listen.*

Harold Klemp, *Spiritual Wisdom on Relationships*

## Chapter Five



### Fun Spiritual Tools That Work!

Spiritual tools in this and previous chapters have been used for centuries and are often referred to in the Bible, as well as many other holy books. Dreams have been used for eons for prophecy, decision-making and problem-solving.

#### Waking Dreams

“Waking Dreams” are those fully-aware experiences during waking hours where we feel God is speaking to us through some sign, symbol, or word. Justin and Alexa were both sincere about finding true love. They did so with the help of a waking dream:

*Justin: I was in a relationship that wasn’t working and I wanted true love, so I asked for spiritual guidance. Before my spiritual exercise every day, I would write in my journal, God, please teach me about love.*

The answer I got while doing my spiritual exercise was this: *Seek out those in whose company you*

*are more.*

It took another year and a half for that non-working relationship to be done.

*Alexa:* Before I met Justin, I had put together a collage of what I wanted: a mate and family. I also wanted to know true love. I ended up in the hospital with an illness they couldn't diagnose immediately and they weren't sure I'd live! So I said to God, inwardly, *I want to live so I may know what love is.* I was willing to go to any length to learn about love.

After that I took better care of myself and appreciated myself more. Before, I would get involved too fast. I never asked God, *Is this someone who is truly aligned for me spiritually?* I had been choosing from my lower self; now I would follow Soul's call. I was told inwardly not to pursue someone at single's events, but just to *live your life*, and when I met someone, to *just be friends*. I started making friends with the men I met and thought, *This is a nice change.*

At one point, I was doing a spiritual contemplation and my guardian angel asked me inwardly, *Would you mind someone who's about the same height as you?*

I answered inwardly, *Of course not. I don't need a prescribed society standard.* Now I knew what to look for!

*Justin:* After I was on my own for some time, I became aware of Alexa. We saw each other at church and we both felt warm feelings toward each other, but neither of us said anything. Afterwards, we stood in the parking lot talking. As we spoke, I saw



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a big blue balloon bounce along the wall and up to the church. Then it bounced right over to us and up to our feet! I thought it would bounce away, but it just stayed there. So I picked it up and said to Alexa, “This must be for you.” I thought so because we were standing by her car.

*Alexa:* I had a feeling this “waking dream” or sign from God was more than just for me.

*Justin:* But we both knew it wasn’t time to say anything about it. We became friends and kept it that way on purpose, since we’d both jumped into relationships too fast in the past, and they didn’t work out well.

As I spent more time around Alexa I noticed that my sense of humor came back. I shared things that were of interest to me, and my whole world lightened up—just like a balloon! In her company, I was *more*—just what God had said I needed! This was a critical marker for me, because in other relationships, issues had gotten squirreled away. I shut down when I was hurting too much.

*Alexa:* On the day I was to meet Justin’s parents, he proposed to me “out of the blue” in the morning. I asked my guardian angel, *Is this in my best spiritual interest?*

His answer was *Yes*.

Justin asked me why I paused before answering him. I told him that after all, I’d always asked God or my angel about the little things, why not the big ones?

We went to lunch in the dining room of his parent’s retirement community, where there were

rainbows decorating the walls and *blue balloons* all across the ceiling! There had never been any balloons in the dining room before. This waking dream was my confirmation; this was my inner master saying this is right, this is good.

## **Life Is But a Dream**

How would you like to try a technique that will connect you with answers to relationship questions in a new way? The following exercise is from my book, *Dreams, Your Window to Heaven*, reprinted with permission from the publisher, Eckankar:

### **Waking Dream Technique:**

1. Look for unusual happenings in your daily life. If you see them more than once, they may have some significance for you. Write them in your dream journal, right along with your dreams, and see if you can find a pattern.

2. If you would like an answer, write the question in your journal. Then ask for guidance and keep your eyes open for a symbol.

3. You may set up your own symbol for ease of perception. Anything will do, but it helps if it is something you do not often see.

Examples of some waking dream symbols I have set up: Purple elephants, blue hearts, a dozen fresh red roses, or a single white rose. I set up a waking dream symbol to see blue hearts to know whether or not to move to a town where my boyfriend lived. I saw the blue hearts almost daily until I moved and then again whenever I doubted the move!

## **Exploring Past Lives to Heal the Present**

Reincarnation is an ancient truth, found in nearly all religions. Even the Bible refers to it lightly. For more information on this, and ways to heal your relationships and more, see my book, *Exploring Past Lives to Heal the Present*.

Ben and Emily were dating when they got past-life validation for the road they were traveling toward marriage:

*Ben:* I was doing a spiritual exercise when I found myself being a woman and completely felt what it was like to be in a woman's body!

Inwardly, I saw myself sitting on my heels in a dusty road in Northern Mexico. I looked down and in my lap was my lover's drunken head. He had three or four days' worth of beard. His hair was matted and he looked awful, but all I experienced was this very sweet love for him. Then I realized he'd been shot and was dying.

My experience of what I believed was a past life ended there. The key value I got out of that inner vision was to understand how different a woman's love feels from what I've experienced as a male. As a woman, I didn't really care about what he looked like. There was a different timbre—I don't really know how to describe it.

That understanding has helped me in my relationships now, especially to know that there's a fundamental difference between how men and women love. The woman's love felt to me profoundly nurturing, whereas my love as a man feels like giving service.

To confirm the validity of Ben's experience, here's what happened to Emily:

*Emily:* When Ben and I were dating, I had an inner experience when we were sitting in the car kissing. All of a sudden, the face of a woman appeared to me inwardly. It looked like she was from Northern Mexico. I asked God *Why now?*

The very next day I was on the phone with Ben, and he told me of his past life recall. I asked him if I could call him back in a few minutes. I did a brief spiritual exercise where I checked in with Holy Spirit to see if the other person was me. I had a special sense of knowing that I was the man who had died in his lap.

*Ben:* When Emily called me back and shared her experience, I, too, felt a sudden, deep sense of recognition.

*Emily:* It helped our relationship just knowing we'd been together before. It confirmed that recognition that we had for each other when we first met. And now I appreciate Ben more, knowing what I did then and knowing he loved me anyway.

*Ben:* It helped me too, because it added dimension to my understanding of what love might be like for my wife. Our mutual recall of that past life helped validate for me that pursuing a relationship with her was the right thing.

*Emily:* It also emphasized to me the importance of taking care with what I say!

The previous story illustrates something my church teaches: the value of a woman's love, spoken of in the book, *Stranger by the River*, by Paul Twitchell. In the chapter on Freedom, Rebazar Tarz, an ECK Master from Tibet, is talking to the seeker about love, reprinted with permission from the publisher, Eckankar:

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*“If ye seek love, you will find it truly in the heart of a woman,” he said. “Yea, but it is not within the kisses that you find her greatest love, but within her heart. Her kiss is only the symbol of that which God sends through her heart. For indeed woman is the greatest instrument of God.*

*“So I tell you to seek only the highest in thy beloved. And in finding her true love, then you will find freedom, and in finding this great attribute you find humility. For the greatest freedom of Soul is in humility.*

*“ . . . The degree and nature of a man’s love for God, through a woman, extends to the highest altitudes of Spirit. If he fails to understand her nature, that which is beyond this world, then he has failed in his search for God; for the woman, if she knows her nature, can lead man to God. This is her duty and responsibility in this world.”*

### **Healing Past Lives Can Be Accomplished in Dreams**

A dream of a past life helped Hilda through some difficulty in understanding her present relationship. This story was excerpted from my book, *Exploring Past Lives to Heal the Present*, with permission from the publisher, Eckankar:

Hilda had difficulty trusting that her husband, George, would be there to support her and love her throughout their lives. He was dedicated to her, and Hilda knew that. Why the worry?

Hilda went to see a therapist who told her she must have some childhood issue that caused her to feel this way, as George had never given her a reason. Hilda told the therapist she remembered

a lovely childhood with strict, but loving, parents. They never gave her any reason to feel abandoned. Her parents got along just fine.

The therapist was insistent that something must have happened to cause Hilda to feel as she did. Hilda left the counselor's office feeling confused and disturbed. She later asked her parents and other relatives about her younger years. They all told her the same thing. Her parents were strict disciplinarians but always gave her love. They loved each other very much. There simply wasn't anything else to tell her, except about the small spats every couple has.

Hilda decided to try a dream technique a friend had given her. It might help, she thought. Her dream that night was full, very real, and very emotional:

*Hilda was walking through a park in the early morning, while it was still dark. She was dressed too lightly for the cool weather. She felt afraid and hungry, all at the same time. Talking to herself like someone a little crazy, Hilda said, "If only he hadn't gone, if only he were still here!" Stopping by a bakery, she smelled the bread being baked for the day and almost fainted with hunger from its sweet aroma. She forced herself to walk on. Looking for odd jobs, she seemed unable to find work and decided to walk to the next town, which was very far away.*

*It began to snow, lovely perfect flakes that sparkled in the rising sun. However, Hilda became very cold and, because she was hungry, could simply go no further. She sat under a great oak tree, feeling absolutely no reason to live. She froze to death. She saw her body as she floated away from it and said to herself, "Now I can have peace."*

Hilda was dreaming about her past life with George, in which he had gone off to war. No one in the small European town helped her because she followed a different religion than everyone else in the village. George had married her against his parents' wishes, but they were very much in love, so they simply stayed very much to themselves.

When George was ordered into the service and soon became missing in action, Hilda had no way to earn a living for herself. Now she understood her great fear of George leaving in this life. Hilda knew the lesson for her in this life was to find a way to be independent and responsible for herself. She needed to be able to support herself so that if something did happen to him again, she would feel like she could survive. Hilda realized the spiritual quality of freedom comes with self-responsibility.

### **Confidence through Waking Dreams, Dreams and Past Lives**

Becky discovered a rich blend of dreams, waking dreams, and past life awareness to help her move ahead with confidence:

*Becky:* I made a decision early on in my marriage to subjugate myself to my husband's needs rather than ask him to change. I had given up who I was to stay in the marriage, but it was a lopsided marriage

Then, at age fifty-two my life fell apart, and I finally started searching for God. It became clear to me that I had been in denial about my marriage for thirty years!

I finally decided it was time to leave, but had I made the right decision?

I was on a road trip shortly thereafter, and stopped to visit some friends along the New England coast. They had a beautiful garden where we spent the afternoon, talking about my impending divorce. They wondered why it had taken me so long.

I watched the butterflies dance in the garden the whole time we talked. My friends kept saying they'd never seen so many butterflies there, ever!

After a rain storm and dinner, I was on the road again, driving away from the setting sun. But no matter which way the road curved, the car was heading straight toward the middle of a double rainbow! It lasted at least twenty minutes.

I felt like God was telling me through the rainbow and the dancing butterflies that separation was the right thing to do. I was on the road to a new wonderful life. Those waking dreams gave me a lot of hope and confidence going forward through that difficult time.

But why did I stay in that marriage so long?

I got my answer when I moved to Minnesota and started a new life. I hadn't found a spiritual path that fit me, but then a friend told me about a religion that believed in past lives. Once I started studying the teachings, I had a couple of past life dreams that showed me the karmic condition between my husband and me.

In a past life he had ruled over me. I had taken a subservient role in that lifetime. My lesson in this life was to reassert myself and accept who I was as a person, rather than an object—as he saw me. Then I began to grow spiritually. I couldn't leave before this,



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because we had to work out our karma together.

When I began searching for a connection with God and a spiritual path, I became myself. My husband could not accept the change in me, so I had to leave, but the karma was done.

When the lessons are learned, the karma is usually finished in a relationship, and the couple can either move on or stay together. The couples that stay together tell me they find times where they have to make this decision again, because they are growing spiritually and must constantly work at finding ways to love and respect each other. They make a conscious decision to move to the *next level of love*. The next chapter shows how several couples have done just that.

# Chapter Six



## Taking Love to a New Level

The couples I interviewed for this book get along with each other very well most of the time. I say “most of the time” because no one’s ever heard of a couple who didn’t have some challenges to overcome, who didn’t wonder at some point in their relationship if they would make it. Don’t you feel better now about your own relationship issues?

Here are ways some of these couples were pushed to the next level of love. Divine Spirit brought them gifts disguised as challenges to pick up the pace of love!

Tanna wondered whether she and Cole should stay together after their karma was resolved, and Divine Spirit showed her the answer in a split second on the freeway!

### **Past Life Karma Resolved, Future Uncertain**

*Tanna:* I was majorly frustrated because of a huge financial loss Cole and I were experiencing due to his recent divorce settlement. I wanted to pretend I

was there for no reason at all in this situation with him. But I knew, because of my experiences on my spiritual path, that this was simply a big bushel of old karma that we had built up over a few lifetimes together.

*Cole:* We had several lifetimes together where we took money from other people forcefully. In one lifetime, we were pirates, buddies on different ships and we'd team up!

*Tanna:* Together, in this lifetime, we had to learn not to be angry with each other as we were facing the karmic burdens and debts we had created together.

I've learned that strong emotions in a relationship are there to help us persist in staying together to clean up our karmic debts. We never ran away from anything, no matter how hard. We faced it, talked about it and planned what to do about it. And no matter how hard it was, we played every day and enjoyed each other.

We even made up word games and laughed about our karma!

I'd say something like, "I really did that one didn't I?"

*Cole:* The overall situation with our relationship is: we don't take it for granted. No matter what we're doing, we think about what it's going to be like for the other person.

*Tanna:* There was a point where I knew we had finished our karmic quota, because from one moment to the next, every feeling that I'd called love before was instantly gone! It was as if I was standing as Soul having charity: just goodwill and love for Cole as

Soul. I felt appreciation for who he was, but no feelings of the marriage remained, like I was not in my marriage anymore. When I had that feeling— that it was the end of our karma—I asked my inner spiritual guide, “What does it mean? What should I do? Is this a mandate to separate?”

The answer I got was that we were at a point of being finished with our karma, so we got to choose how we wanted our relationship to be. And we gave each other time to decide. It was unanimous! We just love to be together. We love our marriage, and we absolutely love and adore each other. We are really co-workers.

When we decided this, we were driving on the freeway, and the diamond lane (car-pool lane) was right in front of us, and we could take it since we were together. The message we got from that was that the two of us could get through life together so much faster and easier.

We have so much love now. It’s a different kind of love; it’s actually even better! We just had to learn how it felt. It’s a whole different ball park.

## **New Heights of Love**

Marissa and Steve have been married over twenty years. When they hit a rough patch, Marissa knew it was up to her to discover the way to reach new heights of love:

*Marissa:* We just went through a rough spot recently. Steve wanted to pursue a business venture that was very meaningful to him, but not to me.

He really pushed this idea with me, but I wasn’t comfortable with it. I was scared, because it would

be a big financial investment. I've always gotten behind Steve's ideas and supported him, but financial security was so ingrained in me from very early on.

I had to go back to the memory of my mother's marriage. Its downfall was at a critical point where she fought her husband on something important to him and did not support him.

Steve's very intuitive, so he was following his heart. I know from my spiritual studies that so-called security does not exist here in the physical, lower world. It's really a spiritual thing.

This was a really tough decision for me, so I went back to the time before we were married. I had asked God for a mate. I really wanted to be married, but I wanted someone I could give to. Steve came into my life, and I still had an attitude of not just getting, but *giving* love to someone. I'm talking about a spiritual marriage that is one of service. As soon as I regained that viewpoint, I realized that I was very lucky just to be able to *give love*, and our marriage became very sweet again.

Another couple learned the meaning of just giving:

*Carly:* I'm learning to display more affection. So I was in one of my few tender moments with my head on Daniel's shoulder.

I said, "Honey, do you love me?"

The answer he gave me really struck home for me. It was another question: "Is it better to love or to be loved?"

I knew that answer wasn't from him, but from the God.

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For me, that spoke volumes about giving love and not just expecting love. I already know he does love me, because he shows it. However, I could be more loving toward him.

### **Training for Service to All Life**

Trey and Marla serve together in their spiritual community and both just moved to another level of service. They had an experience earlier in their marriage that taught them to work together better, both listening to the voice of Spirit:

*Marla:* Early in our marriage we were on vacation and taking some walking tours around the town. I noticed that one of us would say something like, “Why don’t we look down this street?” or “Why don’t we have lunch at that restaurant?”

Each of us, at different times, would find the perfect little restaurant or gift shop.

At first we kind of resisted when the other person had the idea. It was like one person was “in the flow” and the other wasn’t. It was up to us to be aware of who was in it at the time.

*Trey:* We developed this more by trial and error. I thought I had good ideas, and I’d start to get frustrated, bumping my head against the fact that it wasn’t always me.

*Marla:* It was like passing a ball of light back and forth between us. It really taught us humility, because it was not about what we wanted, but what God wanted.

*Trey:* It was being aware enough to accept the gift and not be attached to where it came from.

*Marla:* That was a very practical tool we learned that was a gift we have used throughout our marriage. We've been married twenty-four years.

*Trey:* I think it was a function of the marriage helping us to expand our states of consciousness, too. Now we use this to work together as statewide leaders in our spiritual community. It also added another layer of consciousness to our marriage. Initially, I was aware of God working through me, but because of that experience, I learned how God works through our marriage, too.

*Marla:* When we got married, I was shown that our marriage is a union for God, for Divine Spirit, for us to be co-workers with God. It's bigger than the two of us. We're here to support each other's destiny.

### **What a Wonderful Partner to Work With!**

Shawna and Jared learned to support each other as well, in being of service to their son:

*Shawna:* We had gotten to a point in our marriage where we didn't have many issues to address between us and our communication was pretty good. Then we got a new hardship to face. We had to learn to work together on a higher level to solve a series of problems with our son, Matthew.

He's a very unique person who has had challenges in his learning, expression, and socializing skills. We felt in our hearts that he was incorrectly diagnosed when we searched for help through various experts.

*Jared:* Some couples might accept the diagnosis given, but we decided to seek out other answers.

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We have the model of our religion that teaches us there's always another step to take, and that we have to be the cause in our lives.

Ideas came to us: nutrition, alternative health, and medical doctors, too.

*Shawna:* We had a recognition that together we could do the hard work of raising another human being to his highest potential. It was nice to know that our own gut level intuition was always supported by the other. For example, one of us may have felt a strong draw toward a particular healer and the other did not. Typically, the one who was not drawn was okay with the other spouse pursuing that.

*Jared:* If one of us had the impulse or energy to try a new idea, the other let them, and it was all okay.

We each had active cycles and rest periods, with one person leading, and then the other. We were in accord with each other, almost like ice-skating; two legs moving gently in the same direction, the direction Spirit would give us.

*Shawna:* We both needed rest, but it's not like you can put the problem on a back burner when you have a child with a brain disability and a window of opportunity for recovery as he grows. It's very exciting to move in your own direction, and not be as passive as some parents might be. We were both equally questioning, with the best possible outcome for our son in mind, and God gave us new waves of energy and lifted us up.

So we created this whole program for Matthew, and he is so much better. We found out that with some medication he will grow out of most of his



problems.

This whole experience really brought out the best in us. Some couples may go to a third world country or do some other kind of service together. Whether you seek it out, or it's given to you, you learn to work better as a team.

*Jared:* We've learned to work together over the years, and this was a chance to see the other in action. I was thinking, "What a wonderful partner to work at a really high level with me." Neither one of us could have a puffed-up ego about ownership of our success.

Then we were asked to serve together in our spiritual community in a leadership role together. So, as we learned in the experience with our son, we put everything on the table and said, which part can you handle? Which thing do you want to do? And as before, all worked out.

## **Relation—"Ships" Can Be Fun with the Right Attitude**

Working together in harmony is kind of like being a crew on a boat, coordinating movements perfectly together in order to safely sail, but sometimes it takes a humorous turn of events, or "sailing adjustments" to recognize the other partner's wisdom, as with Sasha and Pedro:

*Sasha:* I'm originally from New York City, always on the go, run, run, run! Pedro is more laid back California-style. It's what drew me to him.

It was Pedro's first time in New York when we went to see the Statue of Liberty.

I was just sure the boat to take us there was

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about to leave, so I was dragging Pedro along, running. Before I knew it, both our feet landed on board, and I heaved a sigh of relief. I was enjoying the fact that we made it as the boat moved ahead.

Meanwhile, we were moving away from the Statue of Liberty, not toward it!

It turns out that it was the Staten Island Ferry, which meant it would take all day for us to do what would have taken a half hour.

*Pedro:* As we were running toward the ferry that morning, it would have been really easy to get upset with Sasha. We had gotten up early that Saturday to avoid heavy crowds of tourists.

Once we realized we were on the Staten Island Ferry, I found out we would have to go to New Jersey and then go back and start all over. I'm very practical about life. I put all my energy and attention into solving a problem. So I told the uniformed police officer on board that we wanted to go to the Statue of Liberty, hoping he could think of something else.

All he kept saying was, "Just stay on the boat." Even when I tried to explain things, he would interrupt me and repeat, "Just stay on the boat." His certainty and matter-of-factness focused me back to having a good time, shifting me out of blame.

The officer was dressed in blue. Because our inner spiritual teacher or guardian angel, as some might think of him, appears to some inwardly as a blue star or a blue light, I felt that what the police officer said was a message from the inner master saying to just stay on the boat, have a good time, and let go of blame. I felt he was saying that blame is a

waste of time. It wouldn't have solved the problem  
After all, I got on the wrong boat, too!

*Sasha:* It was a hard lesson for me to see that Pedro really had the light that time, even though I thought I knew so much. He had the bigger vision and better timing.

It helped our marriage because I had to swallow the reality that Pedro was actually right most of the time

*Pedro:* Relationships are like relation-ships. We want them to be magical and very often they're difficult. It's hard to get the magic back without persistence. When you get into rough weather, you can get off the ship, but there's still rough weather.

Here's a couple who discovered interesting ways to find harmony in stormy seas:

*Adam:* Someone asked me how my relationship works with Vanessa. I told them I thought the bottom line was that we support and even respect each other's illusions. We go through our stuff like anyone else.

*Vanessa:* When we got married, we made a commitment to help each other toward God Realization. We both love God, and that is key.

As we move through our spiritual unfoldment and purification process, we can either support or blame each other. We've learned to just allow the other person to go through whatever they go through, because it's where we're at.

*Adam:* For example, for a while I'd been listening to a certain song in my car. I felt that Divine Spirit

had directed me to listen to it and keep playing it. I thought that the song was talking about going home to God.

One day Vanessa was in my car with me and my CD player came on. She said, "That song is so depressing!"

Of course, I reacted. I had no clue about what she was saying. My reaction was that she was calling me depressing, or at least my choice in songs. But Vanessa said, "No, I'm just talking about the song, not about you."

*Vanessa:* I remember that particular day. I was depressed, so that's how I perceived the song. When I heard that song, I was in a state to take it literally. It spoke about war and death. Several people I love had recently died.

In a month or two, the song may not have made me so sad, but it's where I was at just then, feeling the loss. But on that day, I was really, really sad.

*Adam:* So it burst the bubble for me about how I perceived that song, I then saw that it could be taken two different ways. It could be about death and dying. But for me, it had been about a person who was tired of this world, which was like a war zone to them, and they could see a loved one in heaven.

I learned that spiritual evolution sometimes involves one person seeing a situation from a different perspective, and respecting that perspective.

### **And the Challenges Continue:**

*Vanessa:* We have very busy lives with a lot of re-

sponsibility and we work together to serve God in our lives every day. There's a lot of pressure in our work—and total responsibility. So we lighten things up at home by speaking about a third person, who really doesn't exist.

*Adam:* For example, if something didn't get done, like the dishes, we might say, "Somebody left the dishes in the sink." Or "Somebody forgot to turn the thermostat down before going to bed."

That way, there's no blame.

*Vanessa:* It keeps the balance and harmony in the relationship. I don't want someone constantly showing me all my faults! They are always magnified in the mirror of a relationship. And I don't want that from my mate, to hold that mirror up all the time.

We don't take ourselves too seriously.

*Adam:* You're right, hon!

*Vanessa:* I'm basically a very stubborn person and I'm not proud of it. So, spiritually, I don't want to be a victim. When I found my spiritual teaching I learned that I am responsible for every thought, word and deed. That was very empowering.

I was excited because I knew that if I created what I thought was a complete and utter mess of my life, then I knew I could create even more spectacular beauty going forward. There was no blame.

We don't just get to take compliments, but also responsibility. Then we get to make more conscious decisions on the path.

*Adam:* The idea of blame in a marriage doesn't work. If Vanessa reacts to a two as a ten, I won't blame my-

## *Loving Relationships that Work*

self. I didn't create her reaction, she did.

*Vanessa:* There's a loftiness that comes with the spiritual path, but we're down here in the trenches, and I like being here in this world.

*Adam:* We're on a spiritual path that offers a goal to become a spiritual master. Relationships are a great way to help us achieve that; to learn to grow in love.

And one more spiritual exercise for you to find that love within yourself, fill yourself with it, and offer it in gratitude to your mate:

It's simply this; do one thing for your mate each day just for love! Know also that you are doing this deed for God. Then watch your love grow for your mate . . . and for God.



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Debbie Johnson is the best-selling author of *Think Yourself Thin* and has several self-help books, as well as fiction for teens and kids. She's the award-winning filmmaker of the *Angels-in-Training* series and lives in Victoria, Minnesota, where she continues to write, edit books, and make commercial videos. Her favorite thing is helping others make their dreams come true!