

Developing a Million-Dollar Relationship

a man's strategy to a real relationship



James P. Schellman

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I dedicate this book to My Wife – My Rock – and My Love.
Thank you for loving me.

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Contents

INTRODUCTION

Perfect Love Is Not Just For The Perfect Couple vi

CHAPTER ONE:

It's Big Business 1

CHAPTER TWO:

Strategic Planning 11

CHAPTER THREE:

Attitude Determines Outcome 19

CHAPTER FOUR:

Forgiveness – Failure- and Your Future 26

CHAPTER FIVE:

A Woman's Greatest Desire 33

CHAPTER SIX:

Satisfaction 41

CHAPTER SEVEN:

Affection 49

CHAPTER EIGHT:

Communication 57

CHAPTER NINE:

Leadership 63

CHAPTER TEN:

Security 72

CHAPTER ELEVEN;

The Board Room 79

CHAPTER TWELVE:

Team Work 88

CHAPTER THIRTEEN:

Focus 96

CHAPTER FOURTEEN:

Altitude Through Application 103

Notes

INTRODUCTION

Perfect Love Is Not Just For The Perfect Couple

Relationship - sometimes even the mere thought of the word can strike fear into the heart of a man. The reasons for this stereotypical male phenomenon are many: some men are afraid of commitment, others are disillusioned from too many failed attempts, while numerous others lack even a basic understanding of the complex modern female mind. These and any number of unique combinations can often prevent a man from having one of the greatest experiences of human existence.

For some reason, most men become paralyzed when interacting with a woman, and often a simple 'hello' can render a man helpless. However, men and women were hardwired to work hand in hand, both emotionally and physically. Relationships were not meant to be difficult; the key is give and take. Yet relationships are often misunderstood, overestimated, talked about extensively, but still pursued with a passion. What is it that makes relationships so challenging? The answer has been the elusive quest since the dawn of man, yet I believe the solution is actually very simple.

I am just an ordinary guy, like you, working to create the most successful relationship I possibly can with the love of my life, my wife. I am not an expert on how every relationship works, and I am learning right along with you as I grow to be more committed to my girl. The Lord knows I have made my share of mistakes and failures in relationships. Yet it is through these experiences that I have learned to create what I have now with my wife, and I feel I am a better man because of it. It is my desire to share with you what I have learned in my journey, which I hope will enhance your current relationship or provide some tools to finding that special somebody. My journey has not been an easy or short one. I have been through many relationships, a search that only ended when I found the woman with whom I wanted to share the rest of my life. After I had found her, my sole goal was to keep from screwing it up, and doing this required certain actions.

The principles that I offer in this book come from a combination of years of experience and hours spent in self-reflection. I realized that as a man, I am very influential in the direction of the relationship, and as such, an intricate part of building the foundation of a strong relationship. In the palms of our hands we hold the power to build or destroy our relationship. I realize that no relationship is exclusively dependent on one person, and that every successful relationship is the work of both the man and the woman. However, I chose to write this book to speak directly to the heart of a man. I believe now, more than ever, we as men need to re-recognize our responsibilities in our relationships.

In this book, I am going to use business as the model for how a relationship should be run. The same techniques used in the business world are exactly what I have

used and continue to use in order to maintain and grow the wonderful relationship I have with my wife. I specifically like the business model because most men have a general understanding and are familiar with these basic principles. Also, the business world offers a concise model for comparison because both relationships and businesses have striking similarities.

Before I go any further, I would like to define and qualify a few terms that you will see me use throughout this book. This is important, because many words can carry a variety of meanings based on usage or as interpreted by different readers. However, if I qualify the meanings of these potentially controversial terms, then you as the reader will understand what is meant regardless of how it may appear on the printed page. This clarification will help ensure that you are hearing the true meaning of what I am trying to say, regardless of whether you agree with my definition or not.

You will hear me talk about *managing* your relationship. When I use this term, I do not mean “manage” as a boss would do - standing over and ordering their employees about. Not at all. I mean that you must take care of, accept responsibility for, put effort into, have accountability for, be mindful of, and work to improve your relationship on a regular basis. You are the one responsible for the outcome of your relationship, and you must accept that responsibility. Blaming society or your woman for relational or personal problems is just a cop out. You must accept your role, at some level, for everything that happens in your relationship.

Another common theme that you will read throughout this book is *leadership*, being a *leader*, and taking the *lead*. By no means does leadership mean a title or position. It means that, if you want to have perfect love, you must influence the relationship in a positive way. Leadership is about influencing someone else, nothing more and nothing less. Leadership is not about being in charge or having control; it means taking ownership for your own actions. The first person you must lead is you. If you can do that successfully, then others will follow, including the woman in your life. What I have learned is that America’s generalized definition of leadership means the “person in charge.” A true leader is a person who, through his actions and communication, leads himself so well that others cannot help but follow.

Leadership in a relationship is a shared responsibility between both sexes, and this book was written to outline the man’s leadership role(s), so that you can clearly define your ability to influence the relationship.

Life contains so many pressures, career moves, personal dreams, and many other self-imposed goals, that relationships have many times become a solo gig. We have adopted the idea that we can do it alone, and having a relationship is primarily for the benefit of having a family. We expect everything to be equal and for everyone to lead independent lives outside and inside the home. One of the most risky phrases a person can believe is, “In a relationship, each person needs to give *fifty-fifty*.” *Fifty-fifty* has no place in any relationship. Such a concept needs to be erased from our thought processes. All relationships require *One Hundred-One Hundred*. I challenge you to give 100 percent every day regardless of what the woman in your life gives, don’t complain about what she is not giving; make up for it - give 100 percent.

John Wooden, a legendary coach for the UCLA Bruins, used a brilliant philosophy regarding this concept. Wooden claimed that he would tell his under performing players, “Let me tell you something about not practicing hard today. If you

do not give 100 percent today, you cannot make it up tomorrow.”¹ Make today count; give your relationship everything because you can never make up for it later. I am writing this book because men need to understand the power contained within a well-developed relationship, and the opportunity every man has to both find and create the relationship of their dreams. I have a desire to add value to your relationship and help you to become the man every woman is waiting for.

It has always amused me the way that many men try to hide the fact that we are looking for someone to spend the rest of our life with. It’s OK; admit it. You’re probably alone right now anyway. Just go ahead and say out loud, “I want to find someone to love.” (Don’t you feel so much better being honest with yourself?) Every culture is consumed with love, yet no one knows what it looks like or how to find it. Most of us believe that “Love” is just something that happens naturally, and if the right girl finds the right guy then everything will fall into place, so we spend our time searching for the right person rather than becoming the right person.

Luckily for me, I have found that special someone, and ever since then I have been pouring my life into this incredible woman. We were fortunate. We had a great courtship. We dated for exactly four years from the day we met before I finally popped the question. It was during our engagement that we began to examine closely what makes successful relationships work. We started after premarital counseling, when we were encouraged to continue exploring what exactly is the key that keeps couples together.

After my wife and I were married, I spent countless hours reading and learning everything I could about how to satisfy my wife’s desires and needs, so I could build a strong relationship with this wonderful woman. I learned that all relationships require decisive growth, although I will admit that any growth leading up to our engagement was purely accidental. Without such decisive growth, my relationship with my wife would be average. However, as I have grown, my relationship with her has become outstanding. The most exciting thing is how simple the concepts really are.

I believe that men and women were created to complement each another. Society has most often labeled men and women so differently, that they cannot coexist harmoniously, and because we believe such, we find evidence that supports this. We find reasons why we need to be independent, and avoid looking for support from women, believing that it is a sign of weakness if we ask them for help. When a relationship doesn't work out, we make tall claims on how we really didn't need the woman in the first place, instead of recognizing how the unique differences between the sexes are actually imperative to a successful and healthy relationship.

Marriage itself is on the verge of extinction. Many men begin a marriage armed with a lack of commitment, warped expectations, and a bit too casually or “lightly.” I shudder as I watch the success rate of most marriages and committed relationships plummet like a stock market crash. Some researchers suggest that the failure rate is much greater than 50 percent, with each successive marriage narrowing the sliver of success to almost impossibility. We live in a day and age where the very definition of marriage is challenged. Perhaps you don't believe these statistics have any affect on you personally, but think again.

The next great upcoming generation, known as the Echo Boomers or Generation Y, is a group of youngsters between the ages of 10 to 24. This demographic sector has

been studied and researched for years. During a recent discussion group, some Echo Boomer women were asked the question, “How many of you think you will get married?” Only a couple of them raised their hands. The common reaction to marriage was not apprehension, but expendability. One woman explained that while she would like to find the “right” guy, she still planned on having a family alone if she never found him.²

Women everywhere are living this idea. Some have called it the Catch-35. Women are moving ahead, building lives and careers irrespective of a man. Years ago, a girl had to marry to get out of her parent's home, but today many women have lives that are so completely independent from men, they don't even need one to start a family! I do not for a minute believe that this trend is how God created us to be! When He spoke, “It is not good that man should be alone,” He meant that each sex has qualities that compliment and strengthen the other. You are stronger together with the right woman than standing alone. In fact, studies have even shown that couples earn more money and have larger retirement packages, than if they had lived separate lives. Despite this, a Reuters survey revealed that 40 percent of young women believe that if they have not found a husband by their mid-thirties, they still plan on having children and starting a family.³

The cold fact is that women don't feel they need you. They are preparing to have a family without you, holding to the belief that marriage is not even a necessary part of life. Very soon marriage may be only an entry in our history books, a social structure of a civilization long gone. The cold hard message women are subconsciously telling us is that we are not what they are looking for anymore. Women everywhere are quite able and prepared to live their lives completely separated from men, and they don't even seem to care. “I can do it myself,” appears to be the new catch phrase of the 21st century. This is our future if we do not wake up and do something about this growing trend, a direction every man should definitely be concerned about.

The principles that I am going to outline in this book are simple and easy to follow. The benefits, however, will multiply with their continued use. They are easy steps that will both complement the desires of a woman and show her that you are the man she has been looking for and cannot live without. Finding this imperative balance will not only show her she is taken care of, but provide her with the independence she is looking for as well. Those qualities will make you the center of her attention, and *that* will make you irresistible. The key is to keep your focus off yourself and aimed directly at your partner. These principles will take your relationship to heights you never dreamed possible.

What you will discover is that perfect love is not just for the perfect couple. It is a process and a journey that every couple ultimately creates. A relationship can be as good or as bad as you want – it all lies in your *choice*. Here lies the beauty of it: combine your will and ability, and you can have the relationship of your dreams and not of your nightmares.

Let me put it to you this way; imagine that you had spent your entire life saving every penny you could find, just so that you could purchase a broken-down 1969 Shelby Mustang GT 500 that you discovered abandoned at the junkyard. After carefully saving, you finally purchase this fantastic piece of machinery. Then, you begin the process of restoring that vintage car back to its original glory. Picture with me the many

late nights spent sanding and grinding, and the long days of rebuilding the 428ci-V8 motor with 335-horsepower! Finally, the hours of backbreaking labor pay off and you prepare the ol' girl for her first test drive.

You press down hard on the gas; 0-60 in six seconds flat! Truly a dream come true! Just think. If you put even half of the same effort into caring for your relationship as you would on something as magnificent as that Mustang, the rewards would be immeasurable! Improving your relationship is very similar to restoring a deteriorated car. Perhaps it doesn't look as good as it did back when you first started dating, yet with a little bit of time, effort and the right tools, you can restore that relationship to the incredible thing that caught your eye at the beginning. If you use these principles, your relationship will be everything you've ever wanted. It will be fun and spontaneous, and keep you both on the edge of your seats, your eyes focused on each other.

The principles outlined in this book are not only going to strengthen your relationships with women, but may also add a bit of spice to your personal life. Before long, the woman in your life will be so devoted to you that other men are going to be dying to know what your secret is. The only thing that separates you from any other dating loser is that you will have found the keys to a woman's heart.

Do you truly want to change your life? Your search ends here. Hidden within these chapters is the map to change your relationship future forever. You have already taken the first step in improving your love life – you are reading this book. *Reading* this book is not enough; you must *apply* what you have learned to truly be successful. The journey does not end with the last chapter. You must continue to learn and grow. Perfect relationships are built on decisive growth. You can't afford to put this off! You do not want to reflect on your life a few years from today and wish you had done something about it now. Waiting is only the low road to defeat. Now is the time to make a change. So I encourage you to grab something to drink and a pen to take notes. Now, put your feet up and get ready to dig in. Let's begin.

CHAPTER ONE

It's Big Business

Starting your own business can be a daunting endeavor. Many people give up before they even start as the risks loom up like Mt. Everest towering before them. However, for those tenacious individuals who look the risks in the eye and stand up to the challenge, the rewards can be, well, Mt. Everest sized.

Just ask the richest man on earth, Bill Gates. Some people may think the reason for Gates' success lies in his exceptional brilliance, but by studying the history leading up to the development of Microsoft, we see that his success is due to a great deal more than just intelligence.

Gates dropped out of Harvard in 1975 to pursue a business venture with a friend, Paul Allen. As Gates worked on what is now a multi-billion dollar computer software industry, he studied the failures of other programmers, instead of solely focusing on being unique. He allowed others to be creative, while he spent time correcting their mistakes and forging a highly successful new business. Some might say that Gates just had a knack for being in the right place at the right time, but I believe it is a bit more than that.

Microsoft was not created exclusively on luck or a few ideas. Gates did not walk out one day and broker a world-class business in 1975. He began just like everyone else, with a plan that many would say at the time was unrealistic. However, Gates poured his passion into his work and molded a business that is today the benchmark of modern society.¹

The thing to note is that Gates first drew up a *business plan*. All successful businesses start first as dreams, which must be put down on paper before they can ever be implemented. It is through a business plan that men like Gates were able to draft the blue prints that would one day become some of the most admired companies. A business plan is the structure upon which a business is built; a reference to what the goals and objectives are. They help determine how much money it will take to get the business off the ground, who the investor should be, and what the turnaround time for their investments will be. Business plans also note the competition, marketing expenses, operational expenses, potential sales, start up expenses, future products and services. A successful business is always begun with a detailed business plan.

Any successful relationship also begins with a plan, although perhaps not as elaborate or detailed as those structuring Fortune 500 companies. However, the principles are the same. A perfect relationship doesn't just happen – it must be planned for. Relationships are very much like big business, and need to be treated with the same dedication that any entrepreneur would begin a new company with. No relationship can

be neglected or taken for granted; otherwise, the very foundation begins to crumble.

The real value in creating a *relationship plan* is not having a finished product, but in the process of researching and thinking about your relationship in a systematic way. When you are planning, you become more objective; you spend time thinking things through thoroughly. Planning may take time, but it helps avoid costly, perhaps disastrous mistakes later on.

It doesn't matter if you are already in a relationship. A relationship plan is not just for starting a relationship, but for continuing it. Even a "good" relationship can be planned into the future to become a fantastic one. A relationship plan is most likely not going to be a formal document that you will prepare, but more of an aesthetic concept that you will work toward in your mind, and gain valuable direction and structure for your relationship.

Having a great relationship plan can be the catalyst for having a great relationship. It is the foundation you can return to when things become a little shaky or you need to reorganize your goals for the relationship. A solid business plan consists of many clauses, but we are going to focus on four main factors that are vital to all relationships: Your Mission Statement, Goals and Objectives, Theories and Philosophies, and Strengths and Weaknesses. Using these four areas, you can begin to outline the relationship of your dreams. Who knows, one day you may have a Mt. Everest sized account from which to withdraw.

Mission Statement

A mission statement is vital in every business, but I believe that this also applies to every successful relationship. Having a mission statement is not only imperative to the direction of the relationship, but it also guides the relationship through the rocky times. A mission statement consists of a solid statement that sums up your dreams, vision, and your direction in one sentence or phrase. It builds the foundation upon which you create your relational empire. It can be as simple or as complex as you wish, but it is your legacy for your relationship. Think of it as your Excalibur – an heirloom sword secured in solid stone.

One of my favorite authors had a simple mission statement for his life. Ernest Hemingway lived by the statement: *Above all, endure*. And indeed he lived his life to this expectation. From the seas of the Caribbean to the streets of Pamplona; from the battlefields of WWI to the dangers of the deep African wild, Ernest Hemingway lived his life to the fullest. Although Hemingway lived his life completely by his life mission statement, he did not enter his relationships with the same passion. Judging by the failure rate of his relationships and marriages, I doubt he even had a mission statement for his love life.

A mission statement focuses your relationship's purpose and reason for being, while incorporating vision for the future you wish to create. It will serve as a guiding light, while not based on a tangible time frame. A well-written mission statement will also serve as a guide in times of uncertainty and vagueness. An effective mission statement needs to align with your prevailing culture and values. Missions and values go hand in hand, a synergistic cooperation without which ultimate failure will result -

something that companies like Enron and MCI found out.

A wonderful example of a good mission statement comes from the automobile giant, Ford. It contains a very powerful message that conveyed what they were willing to do for their customers, "Quality is Job 1." It states firmly their values, and conveys the depth of dedication they have to each customer. This is what a strong mission statement does.

Your mission statement should explain what you have to offer and the passion that propels you in your relationship. A great mission statement will stand the test of time as well as the test of pressure. It does not have a weakness and will not break down for any reason. Its purpose is to guide you and encourage you when you need renewed strength and direction. Spend ample time constructing your mission statement because you will return to it many times as you grow in your journey toward perfect love.

I crafted my mission statement when I was much younger, and just beginning to look for a woman. I had never been in love, but I had seen it happen many times to those around me. Like a great composer, I borrowed a tune here and there, turning it into my masterpiece. I have no patent or copyright on it, so if you find that it speaks to your heart, by all means use it as your own.

I will do whatever it takes to have a happy and successful relationship, and ensure that she is 100% satisfied no matter what the cost.

A lofty mission statement means nothing if it is not in compliance with the values practiced by the organization, a concept I will explore further later in this book. You must believe in your statement otherwise it is just a lie. Words are only as valuable as the values supporting them. The woman in your life will sense your level of commitment to your mission statement, so there is no sense in adopting a mission if you do not intend to follow it.

Goals and Objectives

"Setting goals is the first step in turning the invisible into visible," said Anthony Robbins, a recognized authority on peak performance and the creator of motivational tapes, seminars and training programs. I think this is one of the most valuable concepts any successful business or relationship can believe. Goals are measurable markers you set to help you define your daily existence, and they are what we use to slowly turn the invisible into visible.

On May 25th, 2001, a team of mountain hikers summited the world's highest mountain, Mt. Everest, at 29,035 ft. That moment was extremely emotional for one man because, for him, he had never seen the world so clearly. More than two years of intensive planning went into turning this dream into an accomplishment for Erik Weihenmayer. From spending nights in winds exceeding 100 miles per hour camped on Longs Peak just outside Denver, CO, to attempting to set up a tent in sub zero temperatures on Mt. McKinley, Alaska's highest mountain, each goal he achieved was another small victory.

On the first day of the Mt. Everest expedition, Weihenmayer, became sick,

dehydrated, and bloody from a climbing accident from Base Camp to Camp 1 at 20,000 ft above sea level. While summiting this mammoth mountain would be an incredible task for any hiker, for Weihenmayer, the goal was even more daunting. Blind since he was 13 from a rare hereditary disease of the retina, Weihenmayer decided to take up mountain climbing, an exciting hobby for a sighted person, but most definitely an intensely challenging sport for a blind person. When Weihenmayer decided to climb Mt. Everest, there was nothing that could make the climb visible, only the faith that achieving each goal would bring him one step closer touching the top. Because of this, Weihenmayer would need to reach specific targets and be part of a team that would aid him in his dream.

The first trip from base camp through the Khumbu Icefall took more than 13 hours. The leader of the expedition, Pasquale Scaturro, had only allotted seven. Doubts began to form, and many in the team, including Weihenmayer, started to wonder if the whole trip had been a colossal mistake. But Weihenmayer, through his determination and mental toughness, cut his time to five hours over the next ten trips through the ice fall, helping to carry up the necessary equipment for the climb.

The expedition team continued to reach new goals daily, and Weihenmayer's dream of summiting Mt. Everest was beginning to take life. The team continued to progress slowly up the mountain's unforgiving terrain. From Camp 1 they tenaciously braved the elements until they reached Camp 4, a location nicknamed "Dante's Inferno" by Weihenmayer. During their climbing, the team faced treacherous ice fields, narrow snow bridges, forced to traverse up ice cliffs, and leap crevasses that with only one false calculation would lead to certain death. Finally, they were only one climb away from the summit. Anticipation mounted as harsh weather prevented the team from attempting to reach the summit. With only seven days left in the climbing season, there would be only one shot at reaching the peak.

Word eventually reached the weary climbers from base camp that the storm was clearing, and the team, with renewed enthusiasm, broke for the top. At 28,750 ft., most climbers turn back as the extreme high altitude and cold prove to be too much for all but the most fit. Nevertheless, the National Federation for the Blind team pressed on another 285 feet upwards. Finally they reached the 39-ft rock face known as Hillary Step, which is the last major obstacle separating the team from the true summit. The weary hikers clambered over the huge rock and fell down, exhausted.

"I celebrated with dry heaves," Weihenmayer joked.

To complete their incredible climb, the team had only a forty-five minute hike to the summit remaining, where the path led up to the summit at a very sharp angle. Upon reaching the top, the team stood in awe at a view that very few people have experienced first-hand. Weihenmayer had no visible evidence to let him know how far he had come, only the weary ache of his muscles and the crisp, cold air whirling around him.

Jeff Evans, one of Weihenmayer's climbing partners still urged him, "Just look around dude. Just take a second to look around."² Perhaps Weihenmayer wasn't able to view his accomplishment with his physical eyes, but establishing and then reaching goals really do make the invisible become visible.

A goal is an inexactly formulated aim that lacks specificity, and is used to help you reach the finish line. Rather than a goal being the end, it is an indication you are achieving what you set out to do. Although I believe everyone needs to set active goals

in their lives, I also believe that many times goals can keep us from achieving our fullest potential when they are used improperly. Most people set goals for themselves and when they reach the goal they tend to plateau. When someone sets a definitive objective, the aims are formulated exactly and quantitatively in reference to time frames and the magnitude of effect. When these goals are reached, they truly are a finish line or a stopping point.

Paul Harvey once said, "You know you are on the road to success when it is all uphill."

For Weihenmayer, reaching the summit of Mt. Everest was not the finish line. It was one goal in a long line of goals that sequence his life, used as a stepping-stone to reach his next BHAG, or what some strategists call a Big Hairy Audacious Goal. Weihenmayer continued to set greater, larger and more exciting goals to accomplish, and standing on the highest place on earth was only the beginning. He had built a goal stairway, which used the previous goal to help him leapfrog his way up to the next. Each achievement, great or small, was a quantitative measure to his growing success. Goals can be thought of as an observable phenomenon that you can use to sustain your realization of active progression.

Brian Tracy, one of America's leading authorities on human potential, said, "Just as your car runs more smoothly and requires less energy to go faster and farther when the wheels are aligned; you perform better when your thoughts, feelings, emotions, goals, and values are in balance." Creating a relationship plan is the first step in reaching your relationship goals. When you sit down to create your relationship plan, it is a good idea to make sure that you align all of these factors to make sure that you have optimum operation. Decide now what it is that you would like to accomplish in your relationship, and what it is going to take on your part to make that wish becomes a reality. Focus your goals among your passions; life has a way of weeding out those things that we truly aren't committed to with a passion.

Focusing your expectations is another factor to look at as you create goals and objectives for your relationship. Great men have the ability to see their lives, careers, and relationships clearly. What do you want out of a relationship? Be realistic. If you fail to set realistic expectations, you may find yourself disappointed at some point.

To help bring this concept a little closer to home I would like to share with you an example. If one of your BHAG's, for instance, is to lose 25lbs then you would start by setting smaller more attainable goals along the way to mark your progress. With each passing pound of weight you lose, you get one step closer to your desired weight. Sometimes, the BHAG itself may be enough to make the dream appear unrealistic. However, setting smaller markers along the way as evidence that you are heading the right direction will help turn the dream into reality. You can apply this same sort of application to your relationship. Begin by setting a BHAG for either yourself or both you and your mate, and then begin taking small steps in that direction. Remember to allow yourself the ability to make changes or corrections, as needed, as you go along.

For Weihenmayer, setting up tents on Mount McKinley or braving the cold of a significantly smaller mountain in Colorado were simply markers that his dream of summiting Mt. Everest was becoming visible. With each new goal, BHAG, or dream there are multiple markers that help it to become visible.

Lastly, what are you as a man willing to do to make sure that you reach these

goals and objectives? Are you willing to pay the price regardless of the costs? Are you willing to continue to grow toward your chosen final objective, or do you think you may waver when things become more challenging? Whatever your objective may be, regardless of the size, make sure that you have the passion and drive to see it through to the end, and make the commitment to do so to the best of your ability.

It's ok if you need to realign your goals; sometimes they need to be changed in order to reach your vision. The creator of the comic strips *The Far Side*, Doug Larson, sums up goals best when he said, "Goals are all right, but do not let them deprive you of interesting detours."

Relational Theories and Philosophies

Theories go hand in hand with your goals and objectives, and at times may even blur the boundary which separates the two categories. Theories and philosophies are closely intertwined with the goals and objectives of a relationship. Theories and philosophies will evolve and may even change as you grow in your relationship and as age and experience bring wisdom.

Bertrand Russell, a brilliant thinker and Nobel Prize winner of the mid 1900's, said, "The point of philosophy is to start with something so simple as not to seem worth stating, and to end with something so paradoxical that no one believes it." Philosophies are discovered by first determining what is important to you in your relationships, and where or what you do to find, build, create, discover, or chart these philosophies.

I had a friend a few years back that I would go grab a cup of coffee with occasionally. Somehow we ended up talking about the same problem every time we got together – his relationships. No matter who he was with at the time, he was unhappy and contemplating his exit plan. I asked him who he felt *he* was, what he wanted out of a relationship, and the type of woman with whom he foresaw himself. I asked him the same questions many times at the eve of numerous relationships, and he always answered the same way.

The problem was that he was looking for Ms. Right in all the wrong places. He had already determined who he was, and who he was looking for, but he was searching for this woman in all the wrong places, and in turn, was always ending up with the wrong girl.

My friend had successfully completed phase one of his relationship plans, but he had misunderstood his personal theories and philosophies about his relationship. His goal was to find a faithful woman to spend his days with, yet he had poor theories on finding this woman. As you create your relationship plan, consider using *Draw, See, Think & Plan* to construct your relationship structure:

Draw – What types of relationship are you looking for, or what would you like your current relationship to become?

See – Where are you currently? How does this differ from your ideal? Why?

Think – What specific actions are needed to move from the current situation to where you'd like to be?

Plan – What is required for you to execute these actions and strategies?

Your theories and philosophies can revolutionize where you are in a relationship by identifying your unquestionable beliefs. Through these beliefs you can discover discontinuities in lifestyle, habits, and geopolitics. It is more a mind set you adopt rather than a formal technique. You will find it is not rule or ritual based, nor is it reactive or autocratic. Through this process, you will paint a clear picture of the woman with whom you want to spend the rest of your life, for whom you are best suited, and where you will find this woman. Think of this exercise as determining your proposed product, your target market, and your advertising strategy.

My friend's goal was to be in a stable relationship with the opportunity for it to develop into something more. The problem – his philosophy on how to make this happen or his Draw, See, Think, Plan was out of sync from his BHAG.

What this looks like, going back to the example of losing weight, is that most people have a desired goal, but how they reach that goal is different for everyone. You may choose to diet, but a friend may choose to simply alter his exercise plan. Neither one of them is better nor worse than the other, it only means that you have differing philosophies on how to approach your weight loss.

In a relationship, if your goal is to retire early what theories and philosophies did you set to assist you in reaching this goal? Your plan may look different than another's, but the outcome reached is the same. Align your theories and philosophies to your goals and objectives.

A diamond hunter will search for this precious stone in a diamond mine where the conditions presented are accurate to create diamonds, and not waste their time or energy searching in a salt mine. Almost all men have a good idea of the woman they want in their life and focus their energies on refining this ideal, instead of spending time looking inward to determine if they are the man for whom such a woman would be searching. Use *Draw, See, Think & Plan* to create the architecture around this ideal.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The last part of your relationship plan is factoring in what your strengths and weaknesses are. These components are what set you apart from all the other men out there, or the competition.

John Wooden, former UCLA basketball coach, was once asked why he never watched any of the taped games of his opponents. He responded saying, "When you focus on your strengths and your game plan the competition will have to adapt to you." Such is a simple philosophy, but one with a powerful impact.

Paul Westphal, one of the greatest NBA players for the Phoenix Suns, once said, "The key to any game is to use your strengths and hide your weaknesses." Life can serve you an extra helping of hard knocks when you are not prepared. It can rush upon you and expose all your weaknesses at once.

In preparation for his famous Mt. Everest climb, Weihenmayer trained extensively on other difficult climbs. While hiking Mt. McKinley in Alaska, Weihenmayer had been assigned by his teammates to set up a tent. Through his thick gloves he desperately attempted to feel along the delicate fabrics for the sleeve holes

where he would place the poles. After minutes without any success, he removed his gloves to increase his ability to feel the fabric. Intense pain shot through his exposed hands from the bitter wind. Weihenmayer's friends attempted to sympathize with him, but Weihenmayer refused their pity, "The pain in my hands was nothing compared with my frustration and embarrassment, like a balloon expanding in my chest."³

Men do not like to admit defeat or weakness in response to anything. Our gender is so ingrained with the feeling of invincibility. Even the smallest man feels the need to live up to a Hercules-sized persona. I've even found myself strangely upset and ashamed after missing a basket at the gym after a half-hearted attempt with a random ball. I know I never played on a basketball team, nor did I even catch a game with friends after school. Still, I should be able to make a basket! Why? Because I am a man and that is what we do! Though life has a way of weeding through the mediocre and the average, men still like to believe they can do it all.

It is OK to be human; to not be able to truly do it all. Not every man has the capability of Superman. Men and women were all created with different gifts and talents. Some of us are teachers; some are communicators, while others are great sports athletes. It is through our weaknesses that we are each unique, and given the ability to excel in our strengths. Could you imagine if everyone on a basketball team was exactly like Michael Jordan? You would immediately have a great defense team with the height advantage, and your scoring average would probably go up. But would this help the team? You would lose the smaller, quicker players that excel at additional disciplines, as well as a variety of other basketball abilities. What makes Michael Jordan so special was that he learned what his strengths were, and then operated solely in his abilities. He allowed his teammates to make up for his weaknesses with their strengths.

Weihenmayer accepted this brutal fact while setting up his tent in the freezing cold of Mt. McKinley. If he was going to be climbing mountains with the best of them, he did not want to be the weak link. He promised himself that day, "The things I could not do, I would let go; but the things I could do, I would learn to do well." Weihenmayer wanted his teammates to be able to rely on him as a peer to help them complete their common mission, and not as a handicap.

In your relationship, there are bound to be things that you will be better at than others, and things you will be terrible at. Give yourself space to be human; let the weaknesses go. Think of the woman in your life as your teammate. Learn to rely on her to help you, and together your team strengthens. If you spend all your energy struggling with your weaknesses, you will not be able to focus on the things you are truly good at, which will only weaken your team.

I have learned through trial and error that I can do three things very well. I can communicate, I can create, and I can follow through. No matter how much I'd love to pitch a 3-point shot and hit only net, I must focus on my strengths. Because of this, I try to operate within these boundaries in order to get the fullest out of my relationship with my wife. These are my core competencies, and I focus on them to strengthen and grow my relationship.

What strengths do you have that you can contribute to the success of your relationship? Use the relationship planning period to discover your strengths and how they can help reach your goals and objectives, and be incorporated into your theories and philosophies. Armed with these tools, you can reach the summit of that perfect

relationship.

Executive Summary

Pat yourself on the back - you have completed some of the most crucial steps in preparing the foundation for that perfect love. You have discovered four steps in creating a relationship plan. You have created a mission statement from which you will build the foundation of your relationship, and to which you can return when you need encouragement. You have set your goals and objectives, by which you will be able to change the invisible into the visible. You have set up your relational theories and philosophies to help guide you in making great decisions. And finally you have discovered what your strengths and weaknesses are in order to operate at your full potential.

In this final reflection period of your relationship plan; known as the *executive summary*, you will tie all four aspects of the plan together. Your completed plan should explain your core foundation and aspirations in a five-minute speech. Relax; you don't need to worry about actually presenting this speech to any lady who has you already tongue tied and sweaty. Rather, it exists to help you define the boundaries by which you can build a sound relationship.

When you start a relationship, you are transitioning from operating a sole proprietorship to engaging in a partnership. Things are going to change, and there will be an adaptation period in order to maintain a functional business. Too many people try to live and operate in a partnership while they continue to run a sole proprietorship.

Included in your executive summary will be your proposed plan for financial support from your investors. In a relationship, your investors will be your family and friends. Use them as both your advising committee and cheering squad in your search for that perfect love. You won't always want to listen to them, especially if they are telling you something *may not work*. However, it is important to at least listen to them, as they are only looking out for your best interest.

I have heard some men rationalize that those closest to them don't really know what is going on because they aren't in the situation. Exactly. And this is why you should listen to outside advice – you may know the detailed picture, but those around you see the big picture. Both views together will be the most complete picture. No entrepreneur can operate effectively without their investors, and no investor can launch a business without the entrepreneur.

A relationship is not something you find, it is something you create. Through the geniuses of partnership, you will be able to accomplish much greater feats and cross many finish lines. Relationships are big business, and as such take lots of sweat and hard work in order to bring them to fruition. Just like your relationship, all great businesses started out as simply an idea which was developed.

Today, business experts like Bill Gates are able to reap the benefits that hard work has created simply because they were dedicated to that process. If you are willing to devote yourself to your relationship, expect to reap the same benefits as any corporate giant.

Put it in Practice: Start working on a relationship plan of your own whether or not you are in a relationship. Your plan will consist of four areas:

1. Your Mission Statement
2. Your Goals and Objectives
3. Your Relational Theories and Objectives
4. Your Strengths and Weaknesses

Once you have determined the answers to these four areas, you will want to tie it all together in your Executive Summary. Enjoy the process. Great accomplishments always take hard work and effort.

Quick Bite: Want to get ahead? If you want to have tomorrow what others do not have, you have to be willing to do today what others will not.

CHAPTER TWO

Strategic Planning

In 1981 Jack Welch was selected as the next CEO of General Electric (GE). At the tender age of forty-five, he certainly had big shoes to fill. GE had been in existence since the late 1800s, and his predecessor, Reg Jones, left a considerable legacy. After all, he had led the company to 26 consecutive quarters of improved earnings, which spanned two economic recessions. And if that were not enough, Jones had also been CEO of the Year and the Most Admired Business Leader in America.

Jones had left GE in such pristine condition, many people would've thought that Welch would've been able to just coast as the new CEO. However, Welch believed that although things were quite good at GE, massive changes were needed. Not long after accepting his new position, Welch unveiled his new strategic plan for GE and began to implement it. He began by removing layers of the management staff, resulting in more than 100,000 lay offs. Welch then followed with billions of dollars in liquidation of company assets. He believed that every GE business unit had to be numbered one or two in its market. Those units not achieving these standards were either fixed, sold, or closed. Welch also took the time to personally make sure that the right people were in the right positions to help achieve his vision. His mission was, "We want to make our quality so special, so valuable to our customers, so important to their success, that our products become their only real value of choice."¹

When Welch retired from GE in 2001, one would've thought that GE could never have weathered his reign. But behind the chaos, Welch had been strategizing. Placing his own mark on "the house that Jack Built," he left the company the greatest it had been since its conception by Thomas Edison in 1892.

Envision that you are the CEO of your own brand – Anybody, INC., and by now you have been running a sole proprietorship for possibly more than 20 years, and you would like to open a new division made up of a partnership. Now you have found an amazingly beautiful woman. She has your emotions swimming, your hormones raging, and you cannot think. She is a great candidate for your open position. Before you know it, you are at the glass counter shelling out half your salary in favor of spending the rest of your life with her. She is perfect, and you cannot imagine your life without her beside you always. Hold on... did you ever design your game plan? Did you ever take time to figure out if you are compatible?

Success was a trademark for Welch. During his tenure, GE outperformed 93 percent of the Fortune 500 companies in total return on investment (ROI). But the most

enduring legacy was how Welch did CEO Work, as this was highly strategic. Strategy is what is done consistently to increase the long-term profitability and long-term competitive advantage. Profitability is determined by value and the competitive advantage is determined by what sets you apart from the competition. By these standards, I believe Welch and his legacy are solid candidates for the CEO'S hall of fame.

Life is going to throw lots of unpredictable curves at you. It is going to adapt to your game plan and try to expose your weaknesses. Are you going to be able to counter and overcome the obstacles? If you create a strategic relationship plan that is based on your values and expectations, you will build a safety net for your relationship that will help you weather the storms of life. If you overlook your values and beliefs during the courtship stage of a relationship, these unsuspecting variables can crop up later as nasty disagreements and cause frustration.

Men have proved time and again that we are driven by the left side of our brains. We are susceptible to losing our heads and falling in love with the first attractive woman we meet. It can be quite embarrassing sometimes, but it is just the way we were hardwired. We sometimes forget to find out if the woman of our immediate dreams is going to be compatible with us long term. As time progresses and the early relationship romance begins to fade, conflicts begin to surface when you have not prepared. Luckily for most couples, they already have many similar beliefs.

Imagine you are hanging out with a couple of your buddies at your favorite sports bar, when in walks a gorgeous woman. Most likely your attention will immediately become focused on her and everything else in the room, visual or verbal, becomes nonexistent for a good long moment. Nothing to be ashamed of; this is just your left brain kicking in. The down side to this is that not every woman you find yourself suddenly attracted to is going to reciprocate those same emotions. Somehow you will need to show the woman that you are worth her time and provide adequate evidence to back this up.

Men and women approach relationships differently, and are often motivated by different factors. Men often place a woman's looks as a trump card of qualifying traits, or at least initially. Women tend to rate a man based on traits and assets that will be important long-term. They seem to have an uncanny sixth sense for guys who are just searching for the first one who calls him "stud" like Olivia Newton-John in *Grease*.

Before you find yourself being driven by your left brain again, prepare now how you are going to use your right brain to respond. Women are naturally more capable at this, but men can learn how to exercise the right sides of their brains to give them a more balanced thought process. If you are prepared, you will be able to respond appropriately when you are in the face of a gorgeous face. If you wait until your next encounter with beauty, you will respond just like any other guy – a glazed stare a little too south of where it should be, with a hint of drool. The woman of your dreams is looking to see what you have to offer, and second place is not even in the running as far as she is concerned.

The following is a two-part formula for establishing your strategic relationship plan. It is based on what I call the *Compatibility Principle* or the *75/25 Rule*. Take the values you have and the values that you would like her to have. Together these two areas make up 75 percent of what you want in the relationship. The remaining 25

percent is made up of other qualities you may include like activities, age, social enjoyments or perhaps physical attractiveness.

If you find someone who complements your core values, you have 75 percent compatibility. The remaining 25 percent is still important, but usually can be worked through if she already meets your values. The reverse is also true – if somebody is compatible in your 25 percent categories, but not with your core values, she may make a great tennis partner, but not a partner you will be compatible with for life.

Phase One – Believe in What You Stand for and Stand for What You Believe.

As the world entered the year 2000, companies all over America were going out of business. Ironically it wasn't the local *Piggly Wiggly* that went out of business or even the infamous carnage of short-lived Dot-Bombs that had tanked; nobody believed the mammoth Fortune 500 companies that would lock the doors for the last time. Companies like Enron and WorldCom are perfect examples of solid companies that were forced to close their doors as they faced bankruptcy. As the world sought faces at which to point the finger of blame, top executives and CEOs took the hit, but why? The answer is simple; these men compromised their values. For some it may have been the first time in their lives, but nevertheless they set aside their values and ethics in favor of a temporary gratification, and the cost was devastating.

If compromising your values even one time can do this to international super-companies, what can it do to a relationship? The success of any relationship is the sum total of the quality of decisions you make before and during your time together. Back when I was a young boy, my father told me many times, “Son, you have to treat a woman like a lady. Never treat her with any harm, provide for her always, you are the head of the house and responsible for her protection.” My father wanted me to understand that it is my responsibility to be first firmly grounded in my values, and then stand by those values regardless of whatever life threw at me.

Think of your life as a custom sailboat, built solely by your choices. Without values acting as your anchor and rudder in life, you will be tossed about by every storm or current, and ultimately driven to places you didn't want to go. Our world is full of change - seasons change, goals change, people change, but values do not. If you build a relationship with a woman who doesn't have values similar to yours, you will be pressured to drift away from what you really want in life, and perhaps to lower your standards. Just like gravity pulling every object down to itself, so do people with lower values become a constant pressure to compromise.

To avoid this, it is imperative to establish your values before you even begin a new relationship. You need to determine what you believe and then hold onto those beliefs no matter what. All successful relationships are created by making the right choices at the beginning, and then sticking to those decisions daily. For example, if you make the decision to always be faithful, and reaffirm that choice daily, when you are tempted with an opportunity to cheat, you will be able to avoid temptation. If you have no values, you will act on impulse, and like any warm-blooded male who has not made

the decision to be faithful, you will fold under the impulse of the moment. You have complete control over your life – it is found in your daily choices.

Temptation is a constant companion, but set values, like hardened cement, will be able to withstand the pressure. Everybody makes mistakes, but it is up to you to determine the level of regret. If you exhibit discipline in your relationship, the reward much outweighs the perceived minor temporary inconvenience. We live in a world of instant gratification; a race to get through life even faster. Self-control may go against our nature, but when you look back at your decisions, you will have more peace when you have made the right decision instead of taking the easy route.

Before I even started dating, I set up a list of “Relationship Values.” This is my list of convictions I felt were valuable to establish a relationship and on which I was unwilling to waver. Over the years as I have grown in my relationship with my wife, I have found that these values are also highly appreciated by women and help build that long term potential for which they are searching.

- * 100% Faithfulness
- * Never Harm Her
- * She is #1 Priority
- * Respect Her
- * Honor Her
- * Protect Her
- * Care for Her
- * Be Responsible
- * Respect Her Family & Friends
- * 100% Honesty
- * Hold the Highest Standards of Integrity
- * Be There

Strategic Relationship Planning is the way you define the future of your relationships. You need to set up a game plan today, so that you will be in the best possible position to succeed. The choices you make now will help build character, and show her you are a man worthy of her affection.

Jeff Immelt, CEO of General Electric and successor to Welch, said, “Understanding his work as a CEO is a marathon not a sprint. You have to have a plan. You have to stick with it. You have to modify it at times, but every day you have to get up and plan hard.”

Most guys focus too much on their reputation in a relationship rather than their values, which make up your character. This is a grave compromise. Character is your backbone and what people can define you as. If you focus solely on your reputation, rather than your character, when you arrive at where you are going you will have nothing to stand on.

John Wooden, the legendary coach from UCLA, spoke one of my favorite quotes and one of the most important lessons I have ever heard, “Be more concerned with your character than your reputation, because your character is what you really are, while your reputation is merely what others think you are.”

In this portion of the strategic relationship plan, you are focusing on your

personal values. They are the values that define your character, and ultimately who you are as a person. They are going to give you that long-term competitive advantage; the extra edge that sets you apart from the competition. Your values are your strengths. Only choose values which you will never compromise. If they are variable, either fix it, sell it, or close it.

Phase Two – Making the Grade

We have been told all our lives that opposites attract, and have believed such for centuries. Often this is very true. One person may be the talker of the two, while the other is a bit more reserved. Or perhaps one likes to handle the money, while the other can't stand balancing a checkbook. We see couples with different personalities all the time, but what about beliefs? And while many people with different values may be attracted to one another, are they marriage material? The University of Iowa analyzed 263 newlyweds, and found that men marry wives who are very similar to them.² Coincidence? I think not.

You will need to ask yourself a few questions about the woman of your dreams or the one with whom you are currently involved. What is her make up? What defines her? And, what defines your relationship?

In 1992, the Los Angeles Dodgers began what would be the only time a team in history has had five “Rookie of the Year” players. So? You might say. They were each named “Rookie of the Year” five consecutive years. How did the Dodgers manage such an almost impossible feat? The organization first defined the *make up* of each of these great players. Of course some of the *make up* was concerned with the player’s physical skills: running, throwing, hitting with power, hitting, and fielding. But the Dodgers looked further at the general makeup of potential players. If a player lacked the strength of mind and character, no matter how much of an athlete he was, he did not make the team. Using these guidelines, the Dodger scouts were able to locate the best players in the country, and give the team as a whole the best chances of a championship.³

Relationships are very similar to finding star players for a baseball team. Your goal is the championship, or in this case, a successful, healthy, rewarding relationship. It is imperative that each player has the right *make up*. Otherwise, the relationship is doomed from the beginning.

Researchers have found that couples who are compatible with religious beliefs, politics and other topics that are generally avoided while dating, had a better success rate long-term than those couples who were not as compatible.

If you are still not convinced that compatible values are important, then let me give you a small piece of advice: Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned! This is especially frustrating when you are clueless about what you may have done. Jeff Foxworthy, a famous comedian, sums it up best through humor:

“Early on in our marriage when my wife hadn’t said a word to me in thirty minutes I would make the mistake of saying ‘what’s wrong?’ Hoping it was something other than me. Now if she has not spoken to me in thirty minutes I just go up to her and say, ‘baby, I realize I have done

or said something stupid or insensitive, and while I don't yet know what it is, I would like the chance to go up to my room and think about it for a little bit.'

Rule #1 – If she ain't happy, you ain't happy.'⁴

Although this bit is funny, the truth is no laughing matter when it comes to the success of your relationship.

While a couple's differences initially attract them to each other, these "differences" may ultimately drive them apart. While you are dating, having differing ideas about raising the kids in faith, beliefs in the domestic policy, or future retirement planning, may not seem as interesting conversation starters. However, as you grow closer, when you are sharing your deepest, most personal beliefs with someone, it exposes you and can bring you closer together. But when opposition to those beliefs arises, it can generate intense dislike, and her nagging about you leaving the toilet seat up will pale in comparison to potential future arguments. Here is a list of areas I believe couples should "for the most part" agree on:

- * Faith
- * Political Values
- * Divorce is NOT an Option
- * Commitment to Personal Growth
- * Finances
- * Put the Other #1
- * Family Values

John Maxwell, leadership trainer and motivational speaker, tells how you can define someone who is a catalyst, or somebody who will add to your life instead of detracting from it. You know you have found a catalyst for your life when she fits your list "and then some." When the Dodgers found a potential player with the right *make up*, and signed him to play on their team, they called this process, "The Dodger Way." When you find a woman with the right *make up* and then some, you could call it a "perfect match." A woman like this can catapult your career, your family, and your life to legendary status. Having complimentary values can make your relationship so much simpler, because you can focus on your similarities rather than conforming to your differences.

When you find that woman that fits your description, you will clearly understand why it is that you adore her. You have something tangible that will give value to your relationship. Instead of drawing a blank when you are asked why you love her, or attempting to explain how she is the hottest girl you ever saw, you can truly have a factual answer that will be the envy of many men. You have a connection that will help carry you through the tough times of your relationship. Let's face it, what is going to keep you loving her when she grows old, and her beauty begins to fade?

Most couples are not planning on divorcing when they say their wedding vows. However, over half of these once happy couples will divorce. Much of this "incompatibility" could have been prevented if the couple had studied their compatible

values. Many men often fall into the trap of thinking that an “almost good enough” girlfriend can be changed to a perfect one after they marry her. These men invest countless hours of time and energy into a relationship with “potential.” Of course these men say all kinds of things they don't 100 percent mean; “Of course your perfect, honey!” It's almost as if they should say to her face, “I love you, contingent on your conforming to my long-term plan.”

These men usually mean well, but they waste both their time and hers under the misconception that they are going to be able to change or even slightly alter another human being. This never happens! If they do not fit the *make up* you desire prior to committing your life together; then they never will. Somebody I know once told me, “If divorce was not an option, then I would have never gotten married. My husband had too many things he needed to change. If he was unwilling to change after we got married, I wanted out.” Sadly, she was never able to focus on the beauty of her marriage, because she was too busy trying to change her husband and work out their differences. Once you have found that perfect woman who already has the right qualities, then charge forward with all your soul.

The Bottom Line

Have you ever spent a substantial length of time with someone who had the exact opposite values as you? Maybe it was a high school friend, co-worker, or sibling. Regardless who it is, most people have experienced this at least once in their life, and many times it can lead to some very uncomfortable situations. “Let's just agree to disagree,” is the truce many of these encounters end up with. But does such an attitude really work long-term? It seems to me that most of these agreeable disagreeers are passive one moment, and as soon as I let down my guard, they are lunging at my throat with their fingers spread wide while they attempt to shut off all air flow to my lungs. I'm sure I'm not alone in this.

Think of one of your closest male friends, somebody you have spent a great deal of time with. Are they different from you? Probably not. Most likely they are similar to you in values, principles, activities, and other social enjoyments. You were drawn together as friends because you are similar. Your similarities make it enjoyable to go places and hang out; you like spending time with him because you understand each other's likes and dislikes, because they are just like you. Finding a mate is similar. Opposites may attract, but similarities stay together. Your future wife is never going to be your female clone, but having the same core values and ethics is a solid beginning.

What is the ultimate goal when looking for a woman? Keep in mind that you are going to spend more time with this woman than anybody else, and should you choose to get married, you are going to spend the rest of your life with her. I believe that the ultimate goal is to find your best friend, I know I have found mine and I couldn't be happier. Studies show that of the top *needs* of men, friendship comes in at number three. Therefore it should come as no surprise that companionship is one of the driving forces in our relationships.

Finding a mate for life is much like a job interview. Imagine you're the CEO of

We're-A-Couple, Corp., and you are looking for a partner. When searching for this perfect woman, you will want to find a best friend that you will want to spend much of your time with. Like the strategy of CEO Work, increasing long-term profitability and long-term competitive advantage, your strategy in a relationship is to increase long-term *compatibility* and a long-term *competitive* advantage as well. What separates you from your competition? If she asked, would you even know?

Building your strategy and brand will maximize your return of happiness (ROH) and offer you the greatest return for your investment (ROI). Focus on the most important areas of your relationship formula, build your relationship strategy, and you will position yourself to be “the only real *man* of choice” and allow yourself to be worthy of the woman of your dreams.

Put it in Practice: Understanding that a relationship built on friendship is the number one goal, it is easy to see why having compatible values and beliefs can make that a reality.

Sit down with a piece of paper and pen and form two columns. On the top left write “Values,” on the top right write “Beliefs.” In the values columns write down all the values you have, every one of them. Consider a *value* something that would be ethical or moral to you. Then do the same for beliefs – an opinion or conviction you hold. Now begin to narrow that list down to the entries that are important enough that:

1. You will not bend or compromise . . . NEVER.
2. She will share the responsibility for the same value or belief.

These lists make up 75 percent of your relationship. Remember the list does not include things like looks, activities, social enjoyments, etc. Those traits are bendable and fall into the 25 percent realm, which are things you can learn to like or accept as unique differences.

Quick Bite: Having compatible values and beliefs is one of the keys to making your relationship successful. Now you can focus on your similarities, and not conform to your differences.

CHAPTER THREE

Attitude Determines Outcome

The sign read, “Welcome to the Happiest Place on Earth!” At first glance everything appeared to be so. Kids were running around with smiles so big you thought there was no such thing as a frown. Even the adults appeared as if they had won the lottery. Impossible? No, this is exactly how this place was designed to be.

Walt Disney’s mission statement can be summed up in three simple words, “We Create Happiness.” And this is exactly what they do. From the moment you step a foot into any of the Disney theme parks, they remove you from your world of the hectic day-to-day transactions of life into a world of fantasy. This is a place where all of your worries are forgotten, and all of your wildest dreams come true.

This fantasy was created for the sole purpose of altering your perception, no matter how unbelievable it may be, into a place that you can feel welcome and comfortable, forget about your troubles, and become that person you have always wanted to be. From the incredible parades and shows, to the beloved Disney characters, down to even the ride operators, everyone is standing by to ensure your happiness. This is the product that Disney sells. All of this comes to life when you see the face of a young child as Mickey or Minnie swoops them up for a Disney-sized hug.¹

The “secret ingredient” that Disney is using on their customers at their theme parks is accessible to us as well - attitude. Great customer service can be that extra something that creates a memorable experience instead of one gladly forgotten. Disney doesn't just strive to have satisfied customers; I believe they are looking to create raving fans.

I have often thought of myself as an amusement park for my wife. No, I am not thinking of sex. I am talking about how through my actions, attitude, and disposition I am capable of not just keeping her happy, but making her ecstatic. I can have the same adrenaline effect as would a wild rollercoaster. The tool is my attitude.

Sometimes I like to reflect on my day, and I have found that when I stop focusing on myself and start focusing on my wife, my problems seem to take a back seat to what is really important and they take care of themselves. When I focus solely on me and my problems, it seems as if nothing is ever good enough.

Women are brilliant at spotting a good attitude in a man. Kathleen Turner, actress and model once said, “Being a sex symbol has to do more with attitude, not looks. Most men think it is looks; most women know otherwise.” You will never get a second chance to make the first impression. What impression are you going to offer when you first meet a woman? Confidence and an inviting attitude are a potent

combination to leave a positive and lasting first impression. Your attitude toward those around you determines their attitude toward you. The concept is really simple: if you want to be liked, be likable. If you want to be loved, be lovable.

I have always enjoyed watching people, especially guys, who are players. They are easy to spot. Their shirt is unbuttoned low, they reek of cheap body spray, and they position themselves as if they were a leopard stalking his prey. Pathetic? Maybe. Still, no matter how much society ridicules these men, they continue to act this way. Would Kathleen Turner's definition of attitude define these men as sexy? Most likely not, unless she was looking for a one night stand or was impaired in some way. Most women develop radar for this type of man and blow them off before they can even try to charm them with their cheesy pick-up lines. Many men tend to think *it is all about me*, a concept embedded within our nature. However, a woman wants a man with charisma, and she knows it when she sees it. When you walk into a room do you say by your attitude, "Here I am" or "There *you* are?"

Attitude is one of the most important components of a first impression. It is important to be charismatic, fun, and charming. But also focus on being genuinely interested in her and sincere, and most of all - be generous. Your attitude alone has the power to draw or repel a woman. Therefore, you want to develop an attitude that will attract. Women have a knack for watching a man even when he thinks she doesn't even know he exists. Your first impression may happen long before you ever meet her or have your first conversation. Like Disney, when you have a positive attitude, it sets you apart from the competition and gives you a brand.

Why Me?

In life, it is easy to have a bad attitude. Life throws you all kinds of great excuses for ruining your outlook on life. People cut you off on your way to work, or perhaps the coffee shop clerk was rude. Then, when you finally get to work, your boss is already at your desk pushing the day's tasks in your face and demanding everything be done... NOW! It is easy to fall into the trap of feeling sorry for yourself. You find yourself asking, Why me? Why now? Maintaining a positive attitude through this can be almost impossible, unless you begin each day choosing to have a positive attitude regardless of your situation.

What makes a positive attitude so hard to keep? I believe it is our innate desire to be selfish. Me first! We exercise this feeling from early childhood. What about me? When is it my turn? These thoughts flood our minds from day to day and lead us to poor choices. We push and shove toward the head of the line. We scream obscenities at those who do something to make us angry. We make fun of those less fortunate than ourselves in an attempt to boost our egos. We criticize those who are successful in an effort to tear them down. Like a mental game of King of the Hill, we constantly attempt to one up the next guy. In a romantic relationship, selfishness will not keep you on top. In fact, a selfish attitude will always backfire, and you will find yourself at the bottom of the pile, your cries muffled as the "dirt" fills your mouth.

This concept of selfishness was described perfectly in an unknown author's words. I call it the children's rule of sharing:

If it is mine, it is mine.
If it looks like mine, it is mine.
If it is within arms reach, it is mine.
If you have it and I want it, it is mine.
If I have it and you want it, it is mine.

It is no wonder that we carry this attitude into our romantic relationships. We justify our actions because of our perceived daily pressures. No one has to teach us to be selfish. It comes naturally. From our earliest childhood days, our impulse is to focus on ourselves, disregarding even the smallest needs of others. With selfishness such an embedded part of our nature, how do we suppress this drive from our characters? We have to daily work at ignoring our selfish desires and learn to sacrifice ourselves for the good of others. Only by daily effort will we be able to break the chain of selfishness and materialism. Winston Churchill once said, “We make a living by what we get. We make a life by what we give.”

In a relationship having an attitude of generosity turns your focus outward toward your partner. We have all seen adults who have the selfishness of a young child. They seem blind to anything and anybody that doesn't benefit them. We often expect such behavior from a child, and overlook it as a passing phase, but when an adult cannot overcome their selfish natures, we feel sorry for them. Professionals have sometimes termed this process as, “getting the big picture,” or the ability to see beyond yourself. When you have a selfish attitude, it will cause you to focus inward, stripping you of the ability to see the big picture. Great men of history are almost never remembered fondly as achieving great things for themselves, but almost always remembered for achieving great things for others. One of the best feelings is doing something for someone who can never return the favor.

The Big Picture

Are you able to see beyond yourself? Do you have that winning attitude that women are looking for? Are you confident enough with yourself to give generously *to* and more importantly *for* others? Only the attitude of a winner is going to make the big difference in becoming the man she is looking for or perceived as just another jerk looking to get inside her pants. Your attitude will always precede you and will define your character. It is the driving force behind you.

Think of the last time you were at a restaurant after an especially tough day. Imagine now that the waiter or waitress comes to your table with an especially foul attitude. Before they even open their mouth, you can see their mood written all over their face and body language. No matter how well they served you, you probably couldn't wait to finish your food and go somewhere else to unwind. Just the unspoken body language of another person can affect us more than the words they speak.

Studies have shown that body language accounts for over half of communication. What are you saying to those around you by your attitude? Your

character is measured by your actions and not your words. Think like a man of action, and act like a man of character. Be optimistic. It is much easier to maintain the proper attitude than to regain it after it has been lost. Spend time with people who have positive attitudes and it will be easier to maintain a great one, or give a small boost to a failing one.

In 1976, the Special Olympics were held in Seattle, Washington. In one event, nine athletes were preparing to run the 100-meter race. As they gathered around the starting line, they assumed sprinting positions. As the starter raised the pistol into the air, the runner's muscles tensed in eager anticipation. Then the sound of the gun shattered the silence, the runners pressed forward. Not everyone was running, but all were participating and yearning to win. They all lived by the Special Olympics' motto: *Let me win. But if I cannot win, let me be brave in the attempt.*

As the runners pressed forward, pushing their bodies as hard as they possibly could, one boy fell down, did a few somersaults and began to cry. Not all of the contestants noticed, or even heard his cries, but a few of them did. These stopped in their tracks, and taking their eyes off the finish line, turned them toward their fallen brother. They rushed to his side, picked him up and dusted him off. Then together, they all crossed the finish line as one.² That is the essence of a winning attitude.

During my informal research for this book, every woman I spoke with agreed that her greatest desire was to be loved; nothing more, nothing less. So what is it that makes loving a woman so difficult? Some extremists may like to argue that men and woman are simply incompatible. Or just maybe, I believe, we are running too fast toward our own goals to worry about anybody else.

I like to think that men and women were created as corresponding puzzle pieces. Each has to find the person with whom they will match up perfectly. Perfect matches may not be exact when initially pressed together, but unlike a 2000 piece puzzle, you do not have fixed dimensions. Our selfish natures may have affected our intended shape. But each person is able to mold and shape themselves into the perfect piece for their mate through their choices. It is not necessary to simply find the perfect mate, but become the perfect mate.

When you choose to have a generous outlook, you have already begun to form yourself into the man the woman of your dreams is looking for. She is already searching for a man who is brave enough to make sure that she will always be safe and well cared for. You can only succeed in this if you are willing to place her and her concerns before yourself. You can alter the outcome of the situation by simply altering your attitude. James Allen, author of, *As a Man Thinketh*, said, "Good thoughts and actions can never produce bad results."

Let's test the power of this idea. For the next seven days, I want you to be as *selfish* and genuinely uncaring toward every girl – especially the ones you would like to date. No faking or cover-ups. In fact, take it a step farther and include all of your friends and co-workers as well. Don't forget your boss. Wait a minute; I think you just realized how insane that idea just might be. So before you lose all your friends and blow potential dating possibilities, maybe we should put that test on hold. Instead, put everyone ahead of yourself for the next week. Open the door for complete strangers, buy the person ahead of you a coffee, be kind and helpful to everyone around you, and to the girl you are interested in - make her number one. At the end of the week, you will

not need to tally the results. They will be obvious. Not only will you see how your actions affected other people's lives, but you will fulfill the fantasy of women everywhere: a real, live prince charming. In a relationship, this positive attitude will create actions that will build your lady's positive image. She will also gain a deeper insight into your character by your caring actions.

My wife likes to tell people an age-old joke, "Sometimes I wake up grumpy, and sometimes I just let him sleep." I regret to admit that there are times when this is a very true statement. However, it is my choice to get up with either a good or bad attitude. Choosing a positive attitude always makes the difference between a bad day and a fantastic one. There have been times in my life when I spent an entire day with a rotten mood toward my wife, and I know I wasted the entire day. Sometimes I wish there was a way to travel back in time and relive those hours, but I only have the present to mold into memories – good or bad. At the end of my life, I want to be able to look back on my life as full of wonderful memories with my wife, not as an entire life wasted by my negative attitude.

Cavett Robert, the late founder of *National Speakers Association*, once said, "If you do not think every day is a good day, just try missing one." Sometimes we get so wrapped up in all the negatives happening in our lives, the missed opportunities, and our failures, that we put on blinders to all the wonderful things happening. In essence, having the wrong attitude can create the same effect as missing a day of your life. I know I don't want that to happen, do you?

Pay the Price

There is no magical potion for a perfect relationship. Nor is true love created with the push of some button. Some days I wish it was easy, but as everything else in this world, to truly appreciate something, you must work to earn it. Just as Disney has the reputation as "The Most Magical Place on Earth," you too have the ability to make your relationship with your woman a dream come true and fulfill her deepest fantasies. You must be willing to sacrifice at times, and pay the full price to have a successful relationship.

How much are you willing to pay for that perfect woman and relationship? What price are you willing to pay to meet this woman? How much is your future worth to you? Nothing in life is free, either by cost or by effort. Like any other acquisition, a price is required, and if you put it off, it will compound. Think of a credit card – if you do not pay the balance at the end of the month, the credit card company adds interest. In a relationship the price must be paid all the time; it does not end when the balance reaches zero. In regards to attitude, a person will rarely receive back more effort than they exhibit. However, a generous attitude offers the highest return possible. What you give to your woman and invest in her life will be sure to multiply back to you.

When you plant a seed of giving, there is something in the seed that can change the environment. The environment around the seed acts as an incubator that releases the seed's potential. Similarly, when you give to others more than they expect, you cease to worry about your own needs. The environment around you will release the potential to

take care of your needs.

Measure your day by the seeds of unselfish actions and attitude you have planted, not only by what advances you have made in your life. Financial advisors advise their clients to continually invest their money, so that they will be able to collect at all times. Many people never invest in their mate, but always want to collect. This problem is at the root of almost all failed relationships around the world. Think about it - the best way to find a helping hand for your relationship may be by looking at the end of your own arm.

Building a Brand

Women have a knack for spotting “Mr. Right.” out of a crowd. Most of them have had lots of practice learning what they aren't looking for, and when they see it, they just seem to know. The modern woman is not dependent on men anymore. Today you can find woman holding high offices in business, government, education, media and having a great influence as social icons. Women are more independent today than they ever have been. They are not looking for a man to just support them financially, but one who can support them also in their careers, goals and who is not intimidated by their accomplishments and passions.

Society no longer looks down on single women as “old maids” or “spinsters,” and single women no longer have a reason to settle for the average Joe. If a man they are seeing doesn't fulfill the qualities they are looking for, they are very likely to move on. If they never find that special somebody, most will continue to lead successful, happy lives. We as men are no longer a given, we are an option.

Companies spend millions of dollars a year developing a brand for their consumers. A brand is much more than just a product, but a reputation that precedes a product or product line. The merger between at&t and SBC is a perfect example of the lengths companies will go to build such a brand. SBC spent an immense amount of money to purchase nothing more than the *brand* of at&t, because of their reputation in the communications industry.

What brand are you portraying to women? If your product, and ultimately your reputation isn't something they can't live without, they will. You need to evaluate your brand, and if necessary rebuild it. This is of utmost importance when finding and ultimately winning a woman's heart. You must be the man she is looking for. She won't even notice all your accomplishments and abilities if your attitude turns her off. Remember, your attitude is your first impression.

Analyze your brand; what does it look like to the common viewer? Does it stand out above the rest, or just blend in somewhere on the middle shelf? Are you unforgettable or are you easily forgotten? A generous attitude will move you straight to the front display and leave a lasting impression.

Men and women were never designed to lead separate lives. We were designed to compliment each other's qualities as a team. By attempting to work independently, we are working in direct opposition to how we are created.

Today many couples are only “married singles,” barely sharing a home and a bed. Such separation is a trend that is matched with rising divorce rates. When you

work together as a team, you will reach your goals, both personal and as a couple, much sooner. Two individuals are always stronger than one – a strength based on joint positive attitudes. If you put your problems aside and help lift her up, she will then return the favor and help you reach the next level. But to do this, you must place her ahead of yourself. This is how you can precede your reputation, and just like the brand of a Multi-billion dollar corporation, you can be the man that women are searching for. Simply through your attitude.

Customer Service

Welcome to the Happiest Place on Earth! Walt Disney knew exactly what was needed to make people happy. It was with this understanding that he was able to build a thriving enterprise, and thus leave a lasting legacy. His belief in attitude and customer service was the fuel that still runs his theme parks. No matter who you are or where you go, your attitude always goes before you. If you have a positive attitude, you will have the best chance of succeeding.

When you find that perfect woman, or if you have already found her, your attitude will make her feel as if she had won the lottery - you. But what will make her the happiest is that she has someone to share this joy with.

With your attitude you have the power to transform her hectic day-to-day tasks into a world of fantasy. You can make her wildest dreams come true. You will become that special place where she can relax and feel comfortable, and who she will *want* to spend time with. You have become like Disneyland, an escape instead of part of the problem, and a place where she can feel comfortable to be whom she has always wanted to be. You are the customer service of your relationship.

Walt Disney wasn't able to witness all the things his simple mission statement created, but he certainly left a legacy and standard for others to follow. "I Create Happiness," can be the motto you can use for your life. You can wake up tomorrow and begin the rest of your life with a new brand that will set a standard for other men to follow. The choice is up to you.

Put it in Practice: Listen to the silent conversations in your head. Pay attention to your self-talk; notice when you tell yourself: *I can't, I never, I always*. Many times a poor attitude is the direct result of unrealistic expectations. We overestimate what we can accomplish in a day and underestimate what we can accomplish in a year. Determine if your thoughts are negative and reverse them by turning them into positive thoughts. Then go out and do one unselfish act for the woman in your life or somebody you would like to get to know better. Your attitude is contagious.

If you would like to know how important your attitude can be, just ask one of the 94 percent of executives that, according to a Fortune 500 study, said their attitude was the number one factor in their success. Attitude counts!

Quick bite: You will never know the pleasures in life until you do something for someone who can never repay you.

CHAPTER FOUR

Failure, Forgiveness, and Your Future

Have you ever made a mistake at work? Perhaps you sent the wrong report to an executive, forgot to lock the door at night, or miscounted the cash drawer? No matter what it is, we have all at some point in our lives done the wrong thing unintentionally. What if your boss wasn't understanding, and held that error against you? You could be fired, or even worse, be reminded of what an imbecile you were every day. How do you think this would affect your productivity? Would it affect your ambition? Now, think if your boss forgave you for your mistake, and never spoke of it again, how would that make you feel?

One afternoon, during a meeting with an executive friend of mine, I was fortunate to witness business forgiveness in action. The gentleman I was meeting with is a leadership mentor of mine. We were having a casual conversation when he received a call from an employee. After apologizing for the interruption, he answered it – on speaker phone.

“Hello, this is Pete.”

“Hi, Pete. I need to talk to you about something . . .” The voice on the other end of the line faltered.

“No problem, what's up?” asked Pete.

“Well it is about that account I, uh, met with the other day. Uh, I, um . . . I really dropped the ball. I'm so sorry.” The man's voice trailed off.

“Yes I know,” replied Pete. “I already heard about it. I wish you had called me sooner, though.”

The person on the other end of the line cleared his throat as Pete continued, “Did you learn anything from it?”

“Absolutely!” exclaimed the employee as he went on to explain how.

As the conversation drew to a close, Pete reassured him, “Learning from your mistakes is the most important thing. I know you won't make that mistake again. I'm counting on you. I forgive you – don't worry about it. Good luck with the next one.” And, as he leaned toward the desk to end the call, he added, “Don't be afraid to call me for any reason – I'm here for you.”

The lesson I learned in those two short minutes was more valuable to me than the entire afternoon I spent with Pete. After he hung up, Pete explained to me just how much the employee had cost the company. More important than the amount of money the employee had cost the company, was the valuable lesson he had learned and the fact he was forgiven. When Pete verbally expressed his forgiveness and encouraged the employee, it affected not only him, but also everybody else in the business. To this day,

this example stands out in my mind as one of the greatest expressions of leadership and forgiveness I had seen in the workplace.

Alexander Pope, the great English poet of the 17th century, once stated, “To err is human, to forgive is divine.” How important is forgiveness and encouragement in a relationship? Have you ever made a mistake with a woman? Maybe you forgot to call when you said you would, overlooked an anniversary, or worst of all were unfaithful? Have you ever broken a promise to yourself or a woman? Everyone is guilty of making a mistake; it is part of our human nature. I have made my share of mistakes in both business and in my relationships. If you can learn from your mistake, you can make it a stepping-stone instead of a stumbling stone. Mistakes can make you a stronger person if you are willing to learn from them.

When I originally started to write this chapter, I wanted to use an example of a funny relationship mistake that I had made in order to form a lesson about forgiveness. However, when it came to remembering a story where I failed miserably, my mind was a complete blank. Not only could I not recall anything *funny*, but I couldn't think of *anything* I had ever done wrong.

Since I knew this was impossible, I asked my wife if she could recall any great instances of pure stupidity on my part. I felt confident she would have a long list of my past wrongs to jolt my memory. Women are known for their ability to remember all kinds of grievances, right? I had girls in my past who would remember all kinds of wrongs I had committed during an argument. But surprisingly my wife just sat there, quietly thinking. Little lines of concentration began to form on her forehead as we both sat, searching our memories for even the smallest incident, but we couldn't think of anything, except for occasional forgetting to take out the trash or something. Then, it dawned on me why our minds were drawing complete blanks. Years previously, my wife and I created in the foundation of our relationship a promise to forgive one another when we have done something wrong. Once we had given forgiveness, the mistake was forgotten and we moved on. We didn't move on because we promised to, but we moved on because we were moving forward.

I share this story not in a boastful way, but because it completely illustrates true forgiveness, and it is truly better than any great mistake I may have committed in the past. I know I have failed many times in my relationship with my wife, and I have done things that could've jeopardized the entire relationship with any other woman. I am a very fortunate man to have found a woman that was patient and caring enough to help me through the mistake, allowing me to learn from it, and then completely forgiving me for them all.

David and Bruce McArthur, authors of *Intelligent Heart*, said it best. “Many people are afraid to forgive because they feel they must remember the wrong or they will not learn from it. The opposite is true. Through Forgiveness, the wrong is released from its emotional stronghold on us so that we can learn from it. Through the power of intelligence of the heart, the release of forgiveness brings expanded intelligence to work the situation more effectively.” We must take the time to learn from the mistake in order that we don't commit the same error in the future. However, after the lesson is learned, we must let go of that failure in both memory and emotion.

Forgiving someone does not mean you condone that persons' actions or mistake.

It doesn't magically make the wrong suddenly right, but it does help clear away that black cloud of the mistake in order for you to proceed into the future.

Forgiveness has several steps which must be completed to truly move past a wrong. First we must accept responsibility for our actions. We cannot place blame on another person for our attitude or actions. Secondly, there must be understanding. You cannot truly forgive a person without understanding both why they made the mistake in the first place and their feelings of remorse. Lastly, true forgiveness is given.

True forgiveness is dealing with the problem and then allowing it to fade away. It does not mean filing it away as evidence to back up a trend when a similar argument arises, but truly eliminating it from the records. When this happens, you can allow "expanded intelligence" to begin its work. If you do not forgive, you will harbor bitterness, and it will begin to erode at the very roots of the relationship until a deep separation has been created that will be difficult to repair. True forgiveness means making that mistake as if it had never happened.

Men are traditionally considered much better than women at letting things go. We may get into an argument with a friend, co-worker, or girlfriend, and, after doing something else for fifteen minutes, be completely over it. Even so, I don't believe that men are experts in forgiveness. Pride has a tendency to overrule the forgiving spirit in our natures, and inhibit our ability to forgive somebody completely. Even after we have gotten over some grievance, we still like to keep a watchful eye on that person, looking to capitalize on them when they are weak, thus restoring our alpha male position. If we honestly took an 'eye for an eye and tooth for a tooth' mentality, our world would soon be blind and toothless.

Mahatma Gandhi, an Indian philosopher of the early 20th century, summed it up best: "No one ever wins when forgiveness is not freely given."

Personal Failure

Think back upon your life – is there something in your past buried in a shallow grave? We all have a bad memory or mistake that continues to haunt us, replayed over and over in our heads like a worn-out recording. Perhaps there is something you are desperately trying to forget, push so far into your subconscious; it is as if it never happened. The ironic thing is you can't run away or hide from your memories. Such actions cause the reverse effect – the effort you put into eradicating them is only making them harder and harder to forget.

As hard as it may seem, the only way to move past a painful memory or mistake is to look it straight in the eye and deal with it head-on. You must do it to end the string of pain by confronting the thing that is torturing you. Look straightforward, accept responsibility, and then forgive – either yourself or another person. Let it go.

I like to call this process the L A F principle. Look straightforward, Acept responsibility and Forgive – Just LAF. Apart from the meaning of this acronym, laughter is a great way to start moving forward from a negative situation. It is a great high that has no side effects.

"You can turn painful situations around through laughter," says Bill Cosby,

comedian and actor, “If you can find humor in anything, even poverty, you can survive it.” Once you have forgiven yourself, you can experience true freedom. You alone have the key to unlock the chains of guilt that bind you.

Forgiveness restores, but revenge destroys. Frederick Buechner, author of critically acclaimed novel *Godric*, wrote:

Of the Seven Deadly Sins, anger is possibly the most fun. To lick your wounds, to smack your lips over grievances long past, to roll your tongue over the prospect of bitter confrontations still to come, to savor to the last toothsome morsel both the pain you are given and the pain you are giving back--in many ways it is a feast fit for a king. The chief drawback is that what you are wolfing down is yourself. The skeleton at the feast is you.

Unresolved anger and revenge are quite possibly the worst curse you could bring upon yourself. A group of doctors was once asked what emotions caused the most physical illness. These doctors unanimously agreed that anger and unforgiveness were the most deadly to the body because of the powerful toxins released into the body when these emotions are felt. Making a mistake or failing in an attempt is punishment enough. We don't need to compound the mistake even further by throwing on a serving of unresolved anger as well. If we have truly learned from our shortcomings, we do not need to serve a life sentence for that mistake.

Guilt causes that person to withdraw. If you allow the guilt of your past to enslave you, you will withdraw from activities you love and the people you love to do them with. You will never overcome the real issues behind the mistake, but simply cover it over as it grows in size and power. The burden of guilt becomes so heavy that you are held hostage to the past, and unable to live in the present. It can drag you down and turn living into merely existing. In a relationship this can be devastating and ultimately destroying. An anonymous author summed it up best, “To forgive is to set a prisoner free and discover the prisoner was you.”

Forgiveness

Only a naive person believes that they will never make a mistake. Even in the most perfect relationship, you will fail your woman and she will fail you. Every person in the world will fail at some time or another. When you have an argument with your significant other, the first one who says, “I’m sorry I hurt your feelings; please forgive me,” is the winner. If you want forgiveness, be willing to ask for it. Be willing to apologize when you have done something wrong. Men have a hard time asking forgiveness for something in which they feel justified.

Women are much more emotional than men, and sometimes even a touch ‘hormonal’. Even if you do not feel guilty, you can apologize for what it is that offended her. It may not be wrong to you, but it was wrong to her and it is her that you are asking for forgiveness. Being sympathetic to a woman's emotions can eliminate future arguments and reap a bountiful harvest of love and devotion.

If you live in fear of not being forgiven, you will limit yourself because you will only attempt those things you know you can accomplish. By doing so, you will only reiterate your doubts in your abilities, and this lack of confidence will ultimately control your life. Without failure there are no risks, and without risks there is no growth. Failure is just as much a part of the process as success. If failure is part of the process, then forgiveness must be as well. If I know that I will be forgiven, I can focus on doing my best, instead of looking for all the areas I may make a mistake. It gives me the confidence that if I am human, I will be forgiven in love. When you are quick to forgive your mate when she makes a mistake, it allows her to do her best and give you her best.

You will be judged in the same way you judge others. Be quick to forgive and slow to anger.¹ Genuine forgiveness means not keeping records of past wrongs. This decision is why my wife and I could not think of anything that I did wrong. We had genuinely forgiven one another for our mistakes and had forgotten them. One of the best ways to practice forgiveness is to forgive the woman in your life the way you would like to be forgiven.

Stop judging others, and you will not be judged.
Stop criticizing others, or it will come back on you.
If you forgive others, you will be forgiven.²

It is difficult for me to place levels of importance on the different principles that help build a successful relationship. Yet, forgiveness may be one of the most delicate, as it carries with it some of the most severe consequences. If we fail to understand mistakes, then we fail to understand history. If we forget where we have come from, we are bound to repeat the same mistakes over and over again.

If you harbor anger and carry around with you the memory of each wrong that was ever committed against you, not only will you have a terrible attitude, but it is a very heavy burden to bear.

I have seen individuals burdened with painful memories, a future eroded away by the past. It is our choice to leave our past in the past, or carry it into the future. If we choose to go through life weighted down with guilt, we have only ourselves to blame. We have the power to face our guilt, ask for forgiveness, and live the rest of our lives in freedom.

Forgiveness is the glue that binds your relationship together; it is the thread that sews you back together; it is what keeps the relationship alive when you think it is over. Forgiveness is the greatest healer; it mends and restores your relationship when it has been ripped apart. It can strengthen your relationship; it fills the canyon that separates you, and bonds you even closer together.

Forgiveness can be given freely, but can never be taken by force or be demanded. Without forgiveness, every relationship will slowly disintegrate.

Your Future

Yesterday ended at midnight last night. That day is over, history has been written, and there is nothing anybody can do to change it. The past cannot be erased or revised, but the future is a blank page, waiting to be written. The past is on display, to be learned from, so that the future can be even better. Every day is brand new, with no mistakes in it. Though you can't go back and start anew, you can start now and have something brand new.

Making mistakes is part of being human. It is how we respond to those mistakes that determine the effect they have on us. We must learn from each mistake and failure no matter how small or seemingly unnecessary; only by this process can we truly build our character.

I am very passionate about snowboarding and love to take a day off to enjoy some fresh powder as often as I am able. I know I'm not the most talented boarder in the world, but sometimes I like to pretend.

One afternoon I was attempting to rail slide a 40-foot rail with one of my buddies. I had no trouble mounting the metal ledge, but found it impossible to get farther than about five feet without my board drawn magically to the snow below me. After about 30 minutes of unsuccessful attempts, including some particularly embarrassing dismounts and trips up the mountain, I was about to give up. It was then that my friend asked me where my eyes were looking as I attempted to slide down the rail. I thought for a moment and then answered that I focused on the tip of the board and slightly off to the left. My friend smiled knowingly as he suggested, "You will never reach the end until you stop looking at what is directly in front of you, and look up to see what is coming ahead. You will end up in the direction you are looking."

That was all it took. From then on, I slid down the rail with the ease of Shaun White, an X-Games champion snowboarder, well maybe not, but at least I successfully slid down the length of that slider. That day I learned a simple, but important lesson. You will never get where you would like to go until you stop looking at where you are, and focus on where you want to go.

William Durant, founder of General Motors, said, "Forget past mistakes. Forget failures. Forget everything except what you are going to do and do it." I love that quote! To grow, we need to forget where we have failed, and focus our eyes on the future. You can overcome your limitations. We are attacked daily by obstacles that may seem impossible to conquer and move past, and failure may seem like the only option.

The impossibility is often only a small delay for many great men of history. When John Elway was nearing the end of his career in football, he was considered by many to be a failure. This was based in part because his team, the Denver Broncos, was unable to win the Super Bowl in 1986, 1987, and 1989. Still Elway refused to allow defeat to distract him from his mission; he kept his eyes fixed firmly on the next game. As the years ticked by and the Broncos still had yet to win the Super Bowl, Elway's time in the league was drawing to a close. It appeared to many that Elway may become the only *certain to be* Hall of Fame quarterback to never win a Super Bowl. Such a potential reputation would have seemingly overshadowed his otherwise illustrious career, but not to Elway.

In 1997 Elway, with the help of Terrell Davis, faced defending champion and heavily favored Green Bay Packers in a fourth try for the Super Bowl win. Many fans couldn't help but wonder if Elway and the Broncos would lose the Super Bowl for the fourth time. But Elway knew what he needed to do; he didn't allow the past failures haunt him. That game turned out to be one of the greatest ever, and the Broncos went on to their first NFL Super Bowl victory!

If Elway had allowed past failures to overshadow his thoughts, the Broncos would never have won the Super Bowl. Elway knew the importance of focusing on the present and future goals, and by doing this was able to achieve them. He never let the limitations of his losses overcome him.

John Maxwell said, "When you are focused on the past you are repairing, and when you focus on the future you are preparing." Why would you want to waste your time repairing your life? Wouldn't it be easier to prepare for it? We are all given the ability to learn from our mistakes. During my reading, I came upon some "Rules for being Human." Although the author is unknown, these "rules" sum up this chapter perfectly:

Rule #1: You will learn lessons

Rule #2: There are no mistakes - only lessons

Rule #3: A lesson is repeated until it is learned

Rule #4: If you do not learn lessons while they're easy, they will get harder

Rule #5: You know you have learned a lesson when your actions change

Life is full of pitfalls and potential mistakes. They can be a hang-up you keep repeating over and over, or a lesson that you learn; it is all in your response to them. Face life's tough obstacles head on, and don't allow yourself to focus on mistakes you are bound to make. Keep trying, keep learning, keep failing and most of all, keep forgiving. Take the time to remember the smallest victories, and use them as stepping-stones toward your ultimate goal – a great relationship.

Put it in Practice: The first person you need to forgive is yourself. Put the past to rest, and focus on the future. Then you will need to forgive your mate, if you have one, or practice offering forgiveness to those around you. Use the words *I forgive you*, so that there can be no doubt that you mean it. Mistakes are part of life and relationships. Take time to learn from them and move on. If you don't learn from them, you will most likely repeat them. Focus on your future, for that is where you are heading. If you focus on the past, you can never progress.

Quick Bite: Unforgiveness can be like imprisoning yourself, but forgiveness is the key that opens the lock and sets you free.

CHAPTER FIVE

A Woman's Greatest Desire

In 1879, a young man of only 16 years walked more than eight miles of rutted wagon trails to his first job. Little did he know that just 28 years later he would revolutionize the American business world, and change the socioeconomic class of millions. This growing nation held hope for a bright future, but the majority of its citizens hailed from agricultural backgrounds and relatively poor families.

At the turn of the century, the United States embraced the industrial revolution, propelling the country into massive growth. Henry Ford, the young man who had walked to work, recognized America's need for shorter transportation time. He believed that the ability to travel greater distances in a shorter amount of time would raise the nation's level of living. His vision was to produce an affordable car for the average person, and pay factory workers a higher wage. Though there were many who criticized Ford's dream, he believed that if a factory produced cars in less time and for less money, then more people would be able to purchase them. This in turn would allow Ford to pay his factory workers a wage they could actually live on. These employees were then able to purchase a Ford automobile, and enjoy the amenities of the wealthy, thus raising the national economic levels.

Ford was an eccentric genius. In 1905, Ford Motor Company initial investors' vision was to build a car for America's wealthy as a way of maximizing profits. Because they did not share Ford's dream, he bought them out. He paid his workers \$5.00 a day, when the auto industry's standard was \$2.34 a day. He also lowered the workday from nine hours to only eight. Auto industry experts at the time considered Ford a lunatic, but they were soon quieted by Ford's amazing success. When the *Model T* production was halted in 1927, more than 15,000,000 cars had been sold, a truly great accomplishment.

When Ford released the *Model T* as the common American's car in 1908, he had not only identified, but had fulfilled the American need of moving the auto industry into mass production and ultimately mass consumption. This genius business venture made Ford the largest automaker in the world, and afforded him extended room to grow. Ford focused on the desires of the people, which showed him this amazing untapped opportunity. His ultimate reward was enormous wealth. As early as the late 1920s, his corporate empire exploded to more than 100,000 workers as well as numerous businesses.

Imagine the relationship riches you would be awarded if you would only capitalize on the simple desires of the woman in your life? Although Ford was not the first to invent the automobile, he was the first to understand that his primary focus

needed to be on his customers' desire to purchase an affordable means of transportation. A man's focus in a relationship should be directed at filling the desire of his woman. Coincidentally if a man takes the time to acknowledge and act upon a woman's desire to be loved, the rewards are infinite.

Fortunately for us men, women are good at identifying their needs and desires. If men would only listen, women are constantly telling us that they desire love more than anything else, and this love needs to come from her man. The problem is that the majority of men aren't even listening. I honestly believe that most often we are not only deaf, but we are apparently illiterate as well; numerous articles are consistently being published about communication, but the relationship trend seems to be caught in a downward spiral, women may be telling us what they want and need, but the message is being grossly misunderstood.

Women see love as an aphrodisiac. When a man is able to fulfill her desire to be loved, he reaches that most important place in her heart. Like a caffeine habit early in the morning, she will find this extra boost the separation between *a* relationship and *the* relationship. She becomes dependent on it, but she won't play Russian roulette with it either. A woman's heart is fragile, and she will go to great lengths to protect it.

Think back in your relationship history, have you ever felt like you are taking a test, but you never studied? You are not alone. Men all over the world are daily put through various relationship tests by their woman as they make sure this is a man with whom they can trust their hearts. Only after a man has adequately gained her trust will she freely give away her heart. Once a woman has given you her heart, most likely she won't have any trouble expressing her emotions to you. The question you need to ask yourself is, can you give her the type of love she requires?

Surprisingly, men naturally have the ability to impart perfect love, but we just don't know how to use it. *Love* is a renewable resource. Each person has an unlimited supply to share, and the more they give, the more they receive in return. When a person attempts to withhold it inside himself, his supply will eventually shrink and rot.

Christopher Morley, author of more than 50 volumes of poetry and fiction, described our natural disposition to express feelings. He said, "If we discovered we only had five minutes left to say all we wanted to say, every phone booth would be occupied by people calling to stammer that they love them." If this were to happen in our life time, the method of communication might be cell phones or a future piece of technology, possibly a holographic projection mobile phone. Regardless of the tool used to convey our emotions, the truth is that we wait until it is too late to say what we really mean.

Do You Love Me?

Romantic relationships require the greatest of care. In order to understand how to care and manage your relationship, you need to understand how to communicate your feelings in a manner she can understand. Relationship miscommunication happens not because someone isn't expressing their emotions, but rather they are expressing their emotions in the wrong way. In this chapter I am going to share with you the most

interesting tools you can have in your relationship toolbox. After reading this chapter, it is my hope that you will have a more solid foundation of how to validate your feelings in a way that they will be perfectly understood.

Think of how many ways a person can show love to another, and then consider how many times you have heard, “do you love me” from a woman? In the beginning months of my relationship with my wife, I heard that statement all too frequently. I didn't take it too well – of course I loved her! Every time I heard it, I felt as if she had grabbed a baseball bat and started swinging like Babe Ruth did when the bases were loaded. Luckily, I was able to dive out the pet door in time.

My problem was that I wasn't communicating my feelings toward her in a way she could understand. It wasn't because I wasn't trying, but my words and actions were not painting a clear picture. All she wanted was for me to learn her love language and clearly tell her, “I love you.” If you learn how to communicate to a woman in both your words and actions that you love her, you may never again hear, “Do you love me?”

If you open any magazine that has a high percentage of male readers, most likely you will also find a “How To” section fashioned somewhat like a car guide about women. I have seen humorous titles like, “How will your Relationship Handle in *this* Road Test?” Most men have read numerous bits of advice like this, and even the so called “ladies man,” may secretly read such information to help them pick up women, make a girl like them, show sensitivity and seriousness, where to find women, what to wear to drive girls wild, etc. Articles like these never seem to end. Surprisingly, most express the common theme of the importance of showing a woman how you feel about her and ultimately reminding you that a woman desires love. What is the focus of your relationship? Is it your woman? The articles I enjoy most are the ones that provide you with tangible ways to express affection for her. Here is a list of ways I have compiled over the years:

- * Hold her hand
- * Pay her a compliment
- * Say something original
- * Be chivalrous
- * Learn to do something for her
- * Invite her out with your friends
- * Complement her beauty
- * Take a trip together

The old adage holds true: “If you don't succeed at first, then try, try again.” The key is to try the first suggestion, and if it does not work, try the second, and if that doesn't work, try the third. You get the picture. Sooner or later she will respond. Relationships can be complicated and some days it seems like a struggle for air when you're working so hard to get a positive response. Yet, sooner or later, you will find the right combination that works for your woman.

During my courtship with my wife, there were times that I felt like I was striking out time after time, but ultimately I did find the key that made *her* feel loved. It was after this revelation that I found what truly made her feel loved, and then I was able use

this new knowledge in the future. Think of a woman's love language as a Rubix Cube - if you do the right combination, you will ultimately have all the colors lined up. But, if you just twist the squares around and around, you will be frustrated and ultimately completely confused.

For a long time I figured that these magazines really knew what they were talking about, and I would go buy every men's interest magazine I could find and experiment with all of the ideas suggested. In fact, as I am almost ashamed to admit, I would also buy women's magazines in an attempt to figure out where I was supposed to be, what I was supposed to look like, and how I was supposed to act.

A woman doesn't expect you will know exactly how to make her feel loved first try, but she does expect the effort. She is looking for a man who is willing to explore and discover the precise approach that will help her feel loved. As I quickly learned, every woman is unique, which destroys any notions of a one-size-fits-all solution to the "love" problem. However, putting forth the effort will demonstrate that you are involved in her emotions and this effort will actually convey how much you really care for her. Studies have been compiled over the years to help narrow and classify how each and every one of us expresses and experiences love.

I discovered the genuine way to show my wife my affection for her on an especially long road trip. We were several hours in when she popped in a book-on-tape by Gary Chapman, *The Five Love Languages*. There was no stopping her, for with one swift motion she snapped it in and pressed "Play." I immediately wished that I could put the car into warp speed so that I could get home immediately, and would've given my last penny to that end. Yet, I was stuck, somewhere in the middle of nowhere with nothing in sight but wheat, corn, and blue skies.

My wife had previously read the book, and had even tried to get me to read it for months. Somehow, like most men, I was always able to put it off or sneak away, but not this time. (If there is one thing I have learned about women, is that they are much better at achieving their desired outcome than we are. Accept it.) Yet on this balmy summer day as the miles clicked by on my odometer, I was trapped in a car listening to what I thought was a painfully long book on tape about relationships. Surprisingly, I soon became very interested.

I soon learned that I had squandered countless dollars on magazines that generalized a very simplistic approach. Instead of learning "How to," I had only learned "What to." This seemingly boring tape had unknowingly unlocked that big unknown about women in my mind. According to Chapman, preferred expressions of *love* for men and women, fall into these five categories:

- * Words of Affirmation
- * Quality Time
- * Receiving Gifts
- * Acts of Service
- * Physical Touch²

These categories define the ways that a man or woman feels and experiences love from a relationship. Each one of us has a primary category (or two) that we feel the greatest amount of love. Therefore it should come as no surprise that the most effective way we will experience love by our mate is through our primary category. These channels are the foundation of how each person receives and declares love.

Likewise, when we express our love for one another, we tend to devote most of our energies in the same category as we feel affection and love. However, this may not be the same category that makes her feel loved, and such can lead to, “Do you love me?” You must first explore and discover which of the categories her primary love language is and then adapt your expressions of love to coincide with that category.

For example, if you feel the most loved when your girl showers you with *words of affirmation*, you are most likely to express your love via compliments. Yet, if her love language is actually *acts of service*, she may feel you don't love her because you never do anything for her.² This is where my stash of “How-to” articles came in handy as they provided fresh ideas of *what to do* when I ran out of ways to show *how* I loved my wife.

Let's look back at some of the “What to do” dating suggestions that I listed earlier from various articles, and match them with the categories of affection: “What To” and “How To.”

- * Hold her hand – *Physical Touch*
- * Pay her a compliment – *Words of Affirmation*
- * Be chivalrous – *Receiving Gifts*
- * Say something original – *Words of Affirmation*
- * Learn to do something for her – *Acts of Service*
- * Invite her out with your friends – *Quality Time*
- * Take a trip together – *Quality Time*

After I learned the various love languages, I felt like I had discovered something truly genius. This was the reason why some of my attempts were fantastic successes and others complete failures. My list of “What to” appealed to different channels of love, and some of my best attempts were hardly even recognized as “love.” Don't get me wrong, there are still times when I hear the age old question, “Do you love me?” And, when I hear that, I know immediately that I am not communicating to my wife my adoration through her primary way of feeling loved. Instead of feeling hopeless, I know now what to do instead.

Most likely it will be almost impossible to discover a woman's love language in the initial days of a new relationship. To approach a woman with, “Hi, what's your love language? I need to know so I can express love to you appropriately,” may be one of the all-time worst pickup lines ever spoken. Give yourself time to truly discover how your woman feels love, and as the relationship progresses, you will have opportunities for more personal questions as you both learn to love each other in the ways each of you both need.

The early phase of any new romantic relationship is sometimes termed as "Puppy Love" where the couple is starry-eyed, showering their love and affection constantly upon one another. I'm sure you've heard a buddy or two describe his new girlfriend as "nothing like he's ever met before," or "amazing." Yet, when the initial romance has worn off, it appears sometimes as if each have completely forgotten how to love each other at all! This is where it is important to understand the five love categories.

Early in a courtship, most men tend to do all five acts of love all at once. Yet, as the months and years go by, it is important to know "How to" love your woman in a way that maximizes the investment of your love expression.

You Really Love Me!

Eureka! I felt as if I had struck gold; all I had to do now was discover my wife's love language and use it to prove my affections. Before I knew it, the tape clicked off and silence filled the car, with my wife starring over at me with eager anticipation. I masked the excitement that I felt, and thought with amusement, "Now all I have to do is ask my wife which category she feels love from the most, and I am all set!"

I looked lovingly at my wife and sweetly asked her, "Honey, what is *your* love language?" She flashed me a devilish grin and as a twinkle darkened across her big brown eyes, she smiled back, "Why all of them sweetheart!" My breath barely had time to catch in my throat before I realized she was teasing, and then she shared the ways she felt love.

That hot summer day I learned something that I had never discovered in the previous five years of knowing my wife. She shared that she experienced love when I paid her *words of affirmation* followed closely by *quality time*. Since I felt love most by *acts of service*, I had unconsciously believed that this is how she felt love as well. I learned that my efforts of "loving her" were effective in making her feel valued, but fell short of truly expressing my love for her.

Within days of my newfound knowledge, conversations with my wife changed from, "Do you love me?" to "Wow – you really love me!" followed up with, "How come you love me so much? I don't deserve it!" My love for her hadn't changed, but now for the first time, I truly knew how to show her in the way she understood best. The added bonus was she in turn made an effort to reciprocate the love she was receiving by satisfying my desires.

This knowledge gave me an edge in that seemingly complex path to a woman's heart. Now when I want to express my love for my wife, perhaps after a brief separation, I immediately shower her with *words of affirmation*. Then, I try to find a way to spend some *quality time* with her. Understanding her primary way of feeling loved, does not mean that I ignore all the others now, but as different forms of currency, they do not hold the same weight as her primary channels. I know how to speak *her* love language, and as such I can clearly convey to her my emotions.

If men would simply realize they may not be "expressing" in the right language, they would avoid years of confusion about these complex creatures, women. When you

know how to speak a woman's love language, you will be able to communicate your feelings unmistakably, and your girl will be able to understand your intentions through your actions.

Instead of your words simply being words and your actions only actions, they will be interpreted as expressions of your love for her, her greatest need. Even if you are currently in a relationship and feel that your expressions are being overlooked, by simply learning her love language and using it, you can transform a frustrating relationship back to the loving companionship you experienced when you first met her.

Being in love for a lifetime will be fantastic. What I remind myself of this that it will take effort on my part, as well as, hers. The process is one that both parties have to remain involved in constantly. The important thing to remember is that falling in love is not a one-time occurrence; it is a constant experience of falling in love over and over again with the same person for the rest of your life.

All She Wants is Love

Most modern equipment comes paired with an owner's manual, and when I was younger I wished the same were true for women, a feeling I'm sure I shared with many other men. Imagine that a woman came with an owner's manual. You eagerly open the pages looking perhaps for a way to turn her on, turn the volume down, or other such male fantasies. I like to think that it would have only one page stating:

To keep strong and healthy she requires:

Food – three times daily.

Water – no less than 64 ounces daily

Love – All the time.

That's it. I can hear you thinking, is it really that simple? I honestly believe for the most part it is.

Women can provide food and water for themselves, but love comes from an external source – you. The problem is most men only attempt to fill this requirement when her emotional gauge flips to “empty” instead of keeping it filled all the time. Loving a woman is simple, but when she doesn't feel loved, that is when we need a 1000 page manual.

All a woman desires is to be and feel loved. We, as men, are capable of this challenge, the only question is: are we willing? After all, we were designed as the source that a woman needs to fill this desire. The unfortunate thing is that over the years women have adapted to fill this need from other sources when we are not fulfilling it.

The five love categories are a wonderful tool to use in showing the woman in your life how you feel about her. Simply by learning what ways she feels your love for her, you can change her perception from feeling unloved to the feeling of complete

love. Within mere minutes you can provide her with concrete evidence of your love for her.

Now just because you understand how she feels love, does not mean you should not even bother with the other expressions of love. These are secondary expressions to confirm that you value and adore her. They also help show your affection for her and keep the morale of the relationship up.

Loving a woman is the most influential key I have ever learned about relationships. Believe me when I say that a woman will want nothing less than your best when it comes to loving her. When you truly fill this desire, you will have filled her greatest need.

Put It in Practice: Would you like to pump up the passion in your relationship? Simply let your woman know that you are interested in learning how to love her better. Let her know your feelings for her, and that you need her assistance to discover how you can best demonstrate your love for her. Take time to find out what category of love she responds to best, and then show her your affection by doing things for her in *her* love language.

Wouldn't it be simpler to shower her with the methods of affection to which she responds the most? Not only would this prove your devotion to the relationship, but it will also put you on the right track to having a healthy and successful relationship.

Quick Bite: Women desire love more than anything else, and women are going to test you before they give away their heart. There are five ways to express your affection, discover the best one. Need help expressing your emotions? Ask, "I have feelings for you. Is that OK?"

CHAPTER SIX

Satisfaction

When Ford Motor Company released the 1st Model T in 1908, production exploded and the popularity of this new automobile quickly rose. But, like any other new industry, there was no initial support structure for this product outside of the automobile manufacturers. As the telecommunications industries of the 1990's had to lay the network before they could offer their high-speed services, Ford understood that for his dream to survive and flourish, he would need to develop industries outside of his company.

Ford immediately made plans for the general public to be able to purchase one of his popular vehicles. He then began to develop a way for mass purchase of his Model T automobile. Before anybody had considered a chain of franchised retailers, Ford created the dealer franchise system to sell and service the Model T, and by 1912 there were more than 7,000 Ford dealers nationwide.

The support for Ford's booming new business did not stop with the dealers. He continued to lobby for and ultimately constructed a complex network around his automotive empire. His next goal was to build gasoline filling stations for the infamous Sunday Drive. As the auto industry continued to grow, gas stations soon became a cornerstone of modern commerce, which in turn pushed the economy forward.

Ford ventured outside of the Ford Motor Company to expand his dream through other venues. A little known, but incredibly important accomplishment was Ford's instrumental role in the construction of a national interstate system. This remarkable design included an intricate system of highways and byways that allowed people to travel to and fro with ease instead of the bumpy wagon trails they were accustomed to.¹

America's desire for affordable transportation was not enough. Ford realized it was also important to play vital roles in developing an infrastructure around the automotive industry. This effort propelled his vision from solely a product into a bona fide reality. Ford realized that his newly constructed business would not survive without his complex infrastructure around it; similarly your relationship will not survive unless you construct a complex infrastructure around it in order to sustain the relationship.

To satisfy a woman's great desire, *to be loved*, should be the focus of a man's energies. Yet, there is a network of four additional conditions that surround and support this main desire: Leadership, Security, Affection, and Communication, and if these are met, you will have the most content and happy woman in your life. Though they may appear as four straightforward responsibilities, they are also the four areas a woman will test you in before she will be willing to make a long-term commitment to you. And these tests most likely are not going to be easy.

Have you ever wondered why women swoon over movie stars, singers, or anyone of power and importance? Perhaps your woman gushes that she is in love with Brad Pitt, and you find yourself thinking, “What does he have over me?” Then you get that familiar nauseating feeling to your stomach. Wipe that jealous look off your face – she is in love with an image; she can envision him satisfying these four areas of her life effortlessly. It is not because he is better looking than you or stronger than you. It is merely that he represents the qualities she is searching for to fulfill her long-term needs; an image carefully polished by his PR directors. What you need to do is show her that you are qualified to fill these four important areas of her life, so that her devotion and future will be formed around you.

For example, have you ever observed a mismatched relationship between a man and woman? Perhaps the man has a bit of a belly and is slightly balding, while she resembles the long, suave perfection that adorns fashion magazines. You probably can't help but think, “I'm better than *that*, she should be with me.” But she is sitting stubbornly next to him, madly in love with this dork. I have found myself in such a situation more than once in my single days.

One afternoon, as I sat, confused, trying to figure out what one such woman saw in such a man, it finally came to me. Not only does it prove that not all women are interested in looks, but it also gives me hope that when I finally lose my hair, or put on several extra pounds, my wife will continue to love me. As I analyzed this couple, I couldn't help but notice that he completely satisfied these four areas of her life and then some. He was a catalyst in her life.

Around this woman walked many men much better looking or better dressed, but she didn't see them. This woman had an impenetrable wall around herself and her love for her man. Stars like Brad Pitt had lost all their appeal, and for her, this man was the only one in her world. He made her feel amazing, and as such he exceeded the many better-looking, richer men in the world. You can be this person when you satisfy these four areas. Your relationship will become encased with an impenetrable wall of her love for only you.

Without *One* It Cannot Survive

Growing up with an agricultural background, I loved the outdoors and learned to have a strong respect for nature. My dad and I would spend time in the rugged Rocky Mountains to go hunting, and my grandma and grandpa taught me how to fish. More important, I learned how to take care of myself in the event I ever get lost, alone in the woods. Survival guides will tell you that if you are ever lost or stranded, you have four areas to focus on in order to survive: shelter, water, food, and navigation. These areas make up the fundamental needs of survival, and if you go too long without any one, there may not be any fireside stories to tell your grandkids.

The trouble is, most men are extremely obstinate and often refuse to follow directions for survival. This may account for the fact that most rescuers find it more difficult to locate a lost man than a woman. We believe we can do most anything on our own; a belief hardwired into our psyche. If for some reason we fail in our perceived

power, we feel we aren't a true man. Such a belief propels a man, deeper and deeper into the forest as he becomes wet, cold, tired and hungry. As they fight their disoriented senses, they become even more lost, until it becomes more and more impossible to find them. One of the toughest lessons I have ever learned is that sometimes I *do* need help, and this need does not detract from my manliness.

All humans have the subconscious desire to live, and because of this crave water, food, air, and shelter – the ingredients that make and sustain life. These necessities together form the specific balance that gives the body energy and life. While it is possible to survive short periods of time without one or more of them, sooner or later your body's natural reserves will give out and you will die unless you provide the body with that missing element.

Just like the basic human needs for survival, men and women both have basic genetic relationship needs. If these needs are met, they will provide you and your relationship with energy and life. However, just like being lost in the woods, men often tend to deviate from what they know they need to do, and become even more lost. If you find that you are becoming completely lost about what you need to fulfill your woman's needs, just ask her. Women are great at redirection. If you ignore the needs of a relationship, it will only be a matter of time before the relationship's reserves give out and the relationship ultimately dies.

The Scoreboard

Last summer, I was watching the Home Run Derby during the all-star break. As I watched, I couldn't help but wonder, "What would the game be like if the players didn't know how many home runs they hit, the distance it traveled, or who won?" Most likely, complete boredom. Fans worldwide enjoy the rush of gazing at the scoreboard hoping to see their favorite player at the top. Not only does a player become truly able to appreciate his or her performance, but the competition challenges them to drive for more. Sometimes an athlete's greatest opponent is their own record.

Successful corporations drive their companies with a similar method as a sport scoreboard. They compile a company's success in the form of quarterly results, shareholder numbers, and market share and compare them against their competitors. You cannot know where you are going or where you have been until you know where you stand.

My wife and I have a scoreboard of our own. While it may actually exist only in our minds, it does serve a real purpose. About once a week, either at breakfast or somewhere we are alone; we ask each other, "Do you feel that I am doing a good job at meeting your needs?" If the answer is *yes*, we move on; however, if the answer is *no* it is very essential to listen with an open mind. Instead of feeling like my wife is complaining, I think of her as just giving me her score. Just because the answer was *yes* last week, doesn't mean that it will be so all the upcoming weeks as well. Relationships are about constant growth. Sometimes *I* feel that I have done a great job, but my wife is the judge. I have learned to view her score as a challenge to improve, and a compliment that she cares enough to let me improve. I have occasionally used a 1 - 10 scale to

quantify more delicate issues and determine the level of need.

Early in my marriage my wife and I didn't check our "scoreboards," and unfortunately these unresolved issues began to build tension in our marriage. On one particularly stress-filled day, I decided that it would be a good idea for the two of us to get out and go on a date. Friday night arrived, and we found ourselves particularly irritated with one another, and were hardly in the mood for a date. Regardless, we put on our best clothes, jumped in the car, and headed downtown. Perhaps a little dancing and romancing would break up the tension and get us back on track.

We hadn't been in the car long when the conversation turned to our underlying frustrations with one another. My wife snapped, "Why haven't you spoken to me all week?" Indignantly I replied, "Because you have been disrespectful to me." Suddenly all the pent-up emotions we had been ignoring for months exploded. Hiroshima and Chernobyl only barely surpassed the explosion of anger set off in that car. Almost immediately we both began yelling as loud as we could at the same time, saying the same thing over and over and over again.

"No! You're not listening to me..."

"No, no! You're not listening to *me*..."

Silence.

I was furious, "This is crazy! Am I six again?" I thought to myself.

The next few moments I will remember for the rest of my life. Perhaps the absurdity of the situation hit me, but I began to laugh, louder and heavier with each breath. Physicians say that one of the best methods to relieve tension is laughter, but they could not have been more dead wrong. Never, ever laugh at an angry woman. The glare I received from my normally happy wife chilled my inner core.

An old proverb says, "When you find yourself in a hole – stop digging." I realized that if I would have just let go of my arrogance of always being right and *listened* to what my wife was trying to tell me, our conversation would have lasted a lot less time. In the end I would have *earned* her respect, and we would have shared a wonderful evening of both our needs being filled.

I had become selfish. I was not fulfilling her needs because I was so consumed with trying to get her to fulfill *my* needs. I justified selfishness because I felt she was in the wrong too. I *had* resorted back to being "six again." Looking back, I cannot believe how immature I acted that infamous evening in the car. If I had been a leader, I would have focused on her needs and averted a now embarrassing memory.

After our big fight that Friday night, I realized it was time to make major adjustments to my attitude so that our relationship could grow and improve. I had lost sight of the *Big Picture*, or "*the mission is more important than my mission.*" I had allowed my ego to get so big that I had forgotten what the really important principle was – putting my wife's needs before my own.

Since that terrible evening, I have learned to keep a regular check on my scoreboard, and make the proper adjustments to my offensive strategy, if necessary. Even in the game of life, it is no fun if you have no idea where you stand or where you need to make improvements. Ignorance is not bliss when it comes to relationships. If you make the effort to actively discover where you can improve, you will reap fantastic rewards.

The Wheel Goes Full Circle

What goes around comes around. Almost everybody has heard that statement, usually used as a sympathetic statement to imply future justice when somebody has wronged you. However, the same is true when somebody has done something good for you. In a relationship, I like to think of it as a wheel - one half of it is the man's needs, and the other half is the woman's. When all the needs of both parties are being met, the wheel has precise air pressure, well balanced, and turns unhindered for the life of the tire. If a need isn't being met, this imperfection will cause the wheel to lose air, but it will continue to support the vehicle for a time. Remove additional needs and the wheel loses air faster, and eventually the tire becomes flat. Those that have had any experience with flat tires know that driving too long on a flat will quickly destroy the tire and rim and ultimately render the vehicle motionless.

When you remove your own ego from the equation, and focus only on what the woman in your life needs, it offers you a few facets: First, it will give you a challenge, and men love a good challenge. Second, it gives you a scoreboard to let you know where you stand. Lastly, as long as you focus on her needs first, she will eventually reciprocate and focus on your needs. If your woman stops filling one of your needs, and you retaliate in a negative way, the wheel stops turning. However, if she overlooks one of your needs, but you respond by continuing to be the best you can be to her, the wheel may need some alignment, but at least it will keep moving.

Albert Einstein once said, "Gravitation is not responsible for people falling in love." I believe that meeting another's needs is the push that makes another human being fall for another. The four needs I mentioned earlier are especially important for a woman because they comprise what she believes is her fantasy man; or what she sometimes imagines that certain movie stars are like. These needs are based on her right brain thinking and her rationale. As you search or work on your perfect relationship, remember the following four needs in order of importance, so you can be aware of how you are doing: Security, Affection, Communication, and Leadership.²

Men sometimes have the worst logic. If we really want our needs to be met, we must first fill the needs of our woman. We desire respect, but we are not respectful. We desire intimacy, but do not create romance. We desire a best friend, but we are barely a friend. We desire domestic and professional support, but we treat a woman with inferiority. It is no wonder why women are moving on without us. According to studies, one in five Americans won't marry, while more than 50 percent of marriages will end in divorce. The American lifestyle screams temporary and we wonder why the world sometimes doesn't take us seriously. When the going becomes tough, we give up instead of trying harder.

When you take the time to discover and meet the needs of the woman in your life, it will motivate her more than anything else to meet yours. It really is that simple. It is better to give than to receive, but it is better yet to work for what you get. Don't allow yourself to become discouraged when you think of what you have to accomplish. Men are naturally equipped with the ability to be the man a woman needs, but we just have to muster enough tenacity for the job.

Working on a relationship may seem like hard work, but it is meant to be

enjoyed – it will give your life purpose and in the end you will gain more than you could ever see in your mind's eye.

Cost Vs. Benefits

Cost versus benefits is the measuring scale for each important decision in a business. If a new product will cost more than it benefits the company, it will not be purchased. However, if something will benefit the company, but in comparison cost much less, it is considered a wise investment.

Henry Ford spent a great deal of time and money to engineer his dealer franchise system, develop gas stations, and create the interstate system, but because the benefits of his investments greatly outweighed the costs, he considered it money well spent.

Let's take a moment to look at the costs and benefits of choosing to meet the needs of women. For example, if you do not fulfill the needs of women, most likely it will eventually lead to a very unhappy and stagnant relationship. There will be no growth or forward progress, and most likely it will lead to the relationship ending, or the neglected woman finding romance with a third party. The costs of not fulfilling your woman's needs are high.

Surprisingly, it is women, not men, who are having affairs more often these days. The reasons may be numerous and complicated, but one of the main reasons that a woman finds herself in the arms of another man is that her significant other is not filling one or more of her needs, an emptiness that she has met with another.

Studies try to quantify the reasons why a woman feels the need to cheat, and the statistics are quite interesting. More than 22 percent of women say that the reason they cheat is because they are lonely. Another surprise is that women initiate 75 percent of all divorces.

Just as humans sustain life with food, water, air and shelter; your relationship has needs that only you can fill. If she finds that the source has dried up, the unfortunate truth is that a new temporary or permanent source exists when you are not doing your job. If you are not the source for all four of her needs all the time, she will eventually find another source. If men truly understood how much better they could make their relationships with only a bit of effort and some simple changes, the national divorce statistics would plummet and our world would be a much better place.

The benefits of paying attention to her needs definitely outweigh the costs. Your woman will feel valued, respected, adored, needed, understood, and appreciated. When you are the source of her needs, she will remain intimately close to home and no man, not even Brad Pitt, can take her away from you.

Ralph Waldo Emerson once said, "Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." Take pride in satisfying your girl. Sometimes it may seem childish to focus on these areas, but many happy, successful men with great marriages agree that these areas are proven to actually simplify your relationship.

Don't look at these suggestions as extra work, but consider them clues to taking the guesswork out of making her happy. When you take care of her and make her feel like no other man could, she will take care of you and certainly make you feel like no

other woman could.

To Whom Much ...

I watched Mike as he nervously made his way toward the boss's office. The meeting was scheduled for 10:00 that morning, but he had been pacing outside his office for the last hour. In fact, he was going to be late if he did not pick up the pace. As he approached the Division's office, he paused for a moment, cinched up his tie and straightened his jacket. He stood for a moment staring at the door and then straightened up his broad shoulders and walked into the office with confidence. The door shut behind him.

Mike had been obsessing about this new District position for years, and ever since it opened, he had thought of nothing else. I had even talked to him several months previously at lunch when he declared to me,

"I'm going to get the District's job when it opens up."

"How can you be so sure?" I asked, wary of his rock solid confidence.

Mike's answer surprised me, "Because I have been wanting this for the last year, and am willing to do whatever it takes to get there."

His commitment impressed me, so I pushed further, "If you get the position, what do you think your biggest challenge will be?"

Without hesitation he responded, "Responsibility."

Mike then went on to explain his philosophy, stating that to whom much is given, much will be required. This new position was going to require some serious dependability.

"Responsibility in this position is not a choice." Mike told me. If he was offered the position and ultimately accepted it, he would acquire all the responsibility that came with it. In a position like this, the only way to avoid the responsibility was to pass on the position. His future responsibilities would be numerous; he was not only going to have to accept the companies imposed tasks, but levels of achievement he creates for himself in his goal of doing the best he could for himself and the company.

I admired Mike's enthusiasm and his determination. But most of all I admired his maturity. Mike had more wisdom than anyone I had met at his young age, and I knew he would make a fantastic associate in the District.

I thought about our conversation we had at lunch for the next several days. One statement stuck out in my mind, "To whom much is given, much will be required." He had applied this to his life through business, but as my passion for relationships has grown, I understood this quote applies to a man's personal life as well as to the corporate world.

Relationships are big business, and if you want to be successful, you have to be committed to it with your whole heart. You must be willing to put in long hours and do things that some men may refuse to do.

Responsibility in a relationship means shouldering the responsibility of doing what is right even when you don't feel like it. As leader of your relationship, you must be willing to be the 1st on the battlefield and the last one off. You must fight for her and

your relationship when your entire body feels like quitting.

When you choose the responsibility of holding the heart of another, these are the responsibilities that come with it. It is not a choice you can make or ignore given your current feelings. True responsibility means having the maturity to understand the silent responsibilities of a relationship, and show commitment to it. The silent responsibilities that come with a relationship are the fulfillment of her needs above your own.

More than anything else, she desires to have your love and be loved. In order to commit to your woman and fulfill that desire, you must nurture and care for the supporting conditions for love - security, leadership, communication, and affection. All must be fulfilled all the time, because neglecting even one; your relationship may not survive.

Put it in Practice: Create a scoreboard for your relationship. Write down the four needs on a postcard and post it somewhere you will see it, like on your fridge. Rate yourself on each from 1 – 10. Select the area where you scored lowest and make steps to improve that with your woman during the next week. At the end of the week, ask her to rate you. Repeat for the second, third, and fourth week. Once you are comfortable with this exercise, try to improve on more than one area in the upcoming week and keep adding until all four areas are second nature to you.

Quick Bite: Have a scoreboard in your relationship. Don't become lazy; always keep your eyes on the score. If you are not the source for her needs, something or someone else will replace you.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Affection

At first glance, the Injoy Corporation headquarters, located in Atlanta, Georgia, may appear like any other business corporation. However as you walk the halls of the building, it would be difficult to find an unhappy employee. John Maxwell, the founder and CEO of Injoy, knows how to motivate his employees. During his early years, Maxwell spent his time as a pastor of various churches throughout America, and learned the importance of valuing others and bringing out the very best in those he leads.

Part of the reason that Maxwell is able to do such an impressive job of building morale, is because his company is an international powerhouse on teaching the importance of leadership. John and his team travel the world sharing their knowledge about leadership and business, which they have gathered from years of studies and personal experience.¹

It should come as no surprise that companies who maintain a high morale outperform companies who do little to build up their employees. Yet companies whose customer base is weak, and whose quarterly numbers are staggeringly low continue to falter. Why? These companies have not discovered the importance of having high morale in the workplace.

Ask an average couple who has been together for years and you will find that most relationships pursue a similar fate after time. When an entrepreneur begins a new business, there is a great deal of excitement, zeal, and heavy involvement in developing the initial beginning. The same is true for a new relationship. Yet, once things begin to calm down, life settles and the things that had once made the relationship great tend to take a backseat to ordinary life.

Maxwell's technique for empowering his employees is no secret; he uses simple, effective tools that have been used for centuries. He understands how to satisfy and value his employees, and this outlook remains of utmost importance in all of his companies. For years, scholars have taught *Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs*, a pyramid of needs that each lay the foundation for the ultimate achievement of self-fulfillment. Plainly stated, it shows that people need to feel significant in their day-to-day lives. Studies have shown that employees who feel valued at the company they work for perform 20 percent higher and tend to be more loyal than the employees of other companies.

When the excitement of a newfound love begins to wear thin, and the romance fades, does this signal the end of the relationship? Not necessarily. Any relationship will ultimately dissolve without any effort. Hormones have a way of adding an extra initial boost to the beginning, but effort is the key to a successful long-term relationship.

Men find it easy to forget their active role in a relationship and subconsciously

place their girl in the back seat to other things in their life. A job, poker night, an addition to the garage, rebuilding a vintage car, or a variety of other seemingly important things capture a man's attention while his woman begins feeling more and more unimportant. If we really were to think about it, there is nothing more important than your relationship with your mate. The effort that it takes to really keep your woman's morale running at a high level is very little, and with it, your relationship will be far more productive and your woman will be much more loyal both emotionally and physically. In fact, it is entirely possible to keep that newfound *love* emotion lasting for years to come.

In his book, *Good to Great*, Jim Collins explains how a company can go from an average good to an above-average great. When comparing all the companies who are considered “great,” Collins found they all had one thing in common – great leadership.²

While reading Collin’s book, I read a concept that completely challenged my original way of thinking. Great leadership is not responsible for motivating its employees. At that time, I was working for a Fortune 50 company, and I had always thought how important it is for a corporation of that size to focus on motivation, especially when certain employees may not be reaching their potential. As I tried to wrap my mind around such a radical concept, I continued reading, “it is the job of management not to de-motivate employees.”² The concept hit me like a ton of bricks. If a company's leadership was not so focused on using motivation as a damage control, they could spend their time challenging and leading their employees to above average success.

Think of your relationship in the same light, but instead, both you *and* your girl are the leadership team. When either of you sit back and attempt to put the relationship in cruise control you are effectively de-motivating the relationship altogether. Consider it your responsibility to take time to make sure both you and your woman are motivated. It's simple. Just remember that everyone wants to feel significant, and this takes more than just relaxing and letting life's cruise control pull you into the mundane.

Nothing can make a woman feel more significant than affection. Her greatest desire is to be loved. She wants to feel that she is doing great things in your life, and that you appreciate her offerings of affection as well. Yet we somehow manage to forget; men figure that somehow just being there is enough. After all, just being there for your buddies has always worked in the past, right? Somehow men can coexist around each other without even really interacting with each other and feel they have spent some quality time together, but the same is not true for a woman. In your romantic life you must learn to “give a little” so that the woman in your life *feels* it. Who knows you may find that you like it and it keeps *your* morale up as well.

A woman wants to feel valued in a relationship just as much as any employee wishes to feel significant at a job. To achieve this, all you need to do is share your affection with your mate. Affection is an aphrodisiac to a woman, and creates an intense desire within her to be around you. You need to meet this need, because if you don't, she will be drawn to wherever she finds it being met.

The Morale Model

The morale model is a three-part model that I have found helps me remember to extend affection to my wife in a simplistic and easy to remember way. I call it KIP.

The first part of the model, K, stands for *Knowing Your User*, and it involves getting to know what makes your woman tick. As soon as a couple first meets and spends a few dates together, they quickly learn some of the other person's likes and dislikes. Often additional time together solidifies or repels the initial attraction – perhaps the selling point is their wacky personality, or suave sophistication. As you learn about the other person, you strive to repeat their likes and avoid their dislikes.

Ethel Percy Andrus, founder of the *National Retired Teacher's Association*, said once, “The human contribution is the essential ingredient. It is only in the giving of oneself to others that we truly live.” The second part or “I” of the model stands for her *Involvement and Contribution* to the relationship. Let her be involved in your life! Often as time passes, men tend to distance themselves from the relationship, and block out a woman's involvement in their lives. We perceive her grievance about anything as annoying or nagging. Instead of feeling nagged, most likely her deep need to be involved in your personal life rises from her deep love for you. Go ahead and let her be in love with you. When you allow your woman to be part of your life, you show her that your relationship with her is also an important part of your life. It makes her feel valuable. She wants to contribute to the relationship, whether it is through ideas, finances, gifts, or time spent together.

The last part of the model stands for *Passion*. This substance, passion, is the boundless enthusiasm in and for the relationship, and can be expressed as an overpowering feeling of emotion. True happiness requires that you have passion for what you do in life. To have a successful relationship, you must cultivate and maintain the passion for your relationship. The woman in your life needs to feel your passion for her and to know that she is the most important woman in your life. When you wake up every day, you can continue to do what it is you are passionate about – being together.

If you were to rate the people in your life into levels of importance, it should look something like this: your significant other, others, and finally yourself. When you are your own passion, it is close to impossible to have passion for anybody else. If you want to have a successful relationship, you must make sure your passions are focused toward that relationship.

Building Morale In Your Relationship

When I first met my wife, I tried everything I could think of to make her fall in love with me. Unfortunately, we were living in separate cities during this time, and I was only able to see her on the weekends. Often we would find ourselves out on some slope of Colorado spending the entire day snowboarding together. One particular weekend, the traffic was horrendous. We had spent more than three hours driving to the resort, and after a long day of boarding, we found ourselves once again stuck in traffic on the trip home.

Before long, traffic had all but completely stopped moving. A man a few cars ahead of us was making the best of the situation and attempting to sell the stranded travelers pizza by the slice. Here we were, far from any radio signal and only had one tape, the Dave Mathews Band, for musical entertainment.

As the hours ticked by, poor old Dave was becoming very old, but we stubbornly continued to listen. As one of my favorite songs began to play again for the fortieth time, I did what any self-respecting guy would do; I grabbed the banana sitting on the seat next to me and began to sing into it. We both laughed obnoxiously, and it broke any stress the driving had taken on us. To this day my wife and I still laugh about that historic day of me making a complete idiot of myself in front of the woman that I desperately wanted to impress. My wife finds it an amusing story to tell guests when she wants to embarrass me.

The point of this story is not to make fun of myself, but to illustrate the importance of always having fun in your relationship. Perhaps your talent may not be banana singing, but everybody has their own little way they like to have fun. Fun-loving people bring out a magical emotion in others - affection. Think about a person that you feel naturally drawn to, and most likely he or she is a charismatic person, with a happy disposition. A cheerful heart will bring a smile to the face, while a sad heart makes it very difficult to get through the day.

Dale Carnegie, founder of a training corporation to help people meet businesses' objectives, teaches that if you want to arouse an emotion of "likeability" in a person just smile at them. Smiling is one of the simplest things you can do to anybody to make them feel good.

The same thing applies to dating; do things that make her smile, do things that make her happy, and do things that she likes to do. True leaders often will help those under them before they even ask for help. Use the same technique for making the woman in your life happy. Instead of waiting to cheer her up when she is down, find ways to make her life a little bit better while the going is great. Find out what her passions are. For many guys this can sometimes be a tough proposition; what girls like to do may be something we'd rather die before being seen doing. For example, if your woman loves the symphony or ballet, you don't have to love it as much as she does, but learn to tolerate it. If you truly want to make her a part of your life, you will need to share some of the same forms of entertainment. If you share her passions, you can't help but become one of them.

So many couples today find themselves living independent lives after only a couple years. In many ways they wind up acting more like roommates than a romantic couple. Make it a point to play together; make time for fun activities. Most couples share at least one common activity that they both enjoy. For my wife and I, our mutual passion is snowboarding. In fact, snowboarding is the activity that originally brought us together, and because of this, we even got married at the base of the mountain where we met. We share a joint passion for it, so naturally we continue to enjoy it together as often as we can. Snowboarding is one of many common bonding activities we enjoy doing together, and we try to spend as much time as possible pursuing our common interests.

My wife and I both have a passion for the outdoors and by spending time

together in an environment we both enjoy, we are drawn closer together. My wife feels loved and adored by me, because not only are we together, but we are both passionate about what we are doing. Every couple needs to find a common interest they are both passionate about and incorporate that interest into their lives.

Think of every moment of your relationship as a memory. Every day you are creating memories, so why not create great ones? When most of your life memories are shared with that special someone in your life, you will form an incredible and enviable bond. Later in life, you will be able to recall good times in your life, and these memories will be the same for both of you.

Victor Borge, entertainer and world-class pianist, once said, "Laughter is the closest distance between two people." It is important to keep humor alive in your relationship. It is hard to have a bad day when you find things to laugh about. Most great memories include laughter.

When my wife and I started dating, I had a calendar hanging in my kitchen and one day she wrote down what we did that day. It was a simple log, but nonetheless we were able to look at that calendar and recall exactly what we did. It stuck, and she continued to do this over the rest of the year. At the end of that year, we took a moment to go over each month, and recalled the great activities and memories we did over the past year. Today, we continue this tradition, and file the old calendars away to pull out when we need a little pick-me-up, or as a great nostalgic trip down memory lane.

Isabel Urbano, a famous quotationist, once stated, "Though our memories of today will soon be yesterdays, they will forever live in our tomorrows." When stress levels rise and negative feelings develop, good memories can be that little extra boost that helps put your bad mood in perspective. A disagreement may not seem so catastrophic when you recall how many great times the two of you have had together, or how many ways she has made your life truly fantastic.

We are always creating memories whether we want to or not, the goal is therefore to create good memories. When the good memories outweigh the bad ones, it shows your appreciation for her and your love of being with her. Good memories don't always just happen, they are often made. If you dedicate time to a woman, why not make that time memorable? Keep a log of your memories, either mental or written; to help you remember the wonderful times you have shared.

Show excitement for your relationship by celebrating achievements and accomplishments. When I got my first raise at my first job, my wife and I celebrated. When I bought my first house, we celebrated. When she started her business, we celebrated. When this book was published, we celebrated. We engraved these important milestones in our lives with such great memories that we now have fantastic memories to look back upon. Celebrations don't have to cost a lot of money. Some of the best memories in my life hardly cost me a cent. A great memory only needs your time, effort, and good attitude. Great memories will linger in the muscle and nerve of the relationship forever.

Christian Nevell Bovee, American author and lawyer, said, "It is the passion of a kiss that gives to its sweetness; it is the affection in a kiss that sanctifies it." One of the most important ways of showing affection to a woman is not *that* you are physical but *how* you are physical with her. Men tend to be more aggressive than women. Even as

young children, we played rougher than our little girl playmates. Because of this, we naturally tend to overlook tenderness in our physical actions. Sometimes it is because we are young and new to relationships, but somehow we equate aggression with passion. Men are intensely motivated by intimacy, and often end up being a little forceful and unflattering to a woman when we are attempting to be affectionate.

A simple touch can be the most effective way to show your affection to a woman. You hold in your fingertips the power of the most dramatic physical feeling; a feeling that can sometimes surpass the strongest of sexual feelings. A woman can sense a man's intentions with just a simple touch. If she feels that you only touch her in sexual ways, your physical advances may soon be received with a touch of frustration. Women need touch, but not always in a sexual way.

Imagine that you are sitting down with your woman to watch a movie with a bowl of popcorn. You carefully slide your arm around her shoulders, but within minutes you find that your hand has slipped below her shoulders and you are honking her breasts as if they were Blinky the Clown's nose. There is no greater turnoff to a woman. Women want to be both admired and respected. No woman wants to be a human sex toy. Find ways and excuses to hug her, kiss her and hold her often in a non-aggressive and non-sexual manner. A woman wants to feel that you feel attraction to *her*, not just her body. Women love physical expressions of a man's love for them, but resent a constant barrage of barbaric sexual passes.

Leo Buscaglia, Times best-selling author, said, "Too often we underestimate the power of touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, and honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around." Treat your woman like a lady, but respect her like your most esteemed colleague. When most guys are dating, they forget that their girlfriend is first and foremost their *friend*. As soon as your relationship becomes more focused on her body, it is ultimately doomed.

Some men may feel that their woman is a bit cold when it comes to physical relations, but most likely it is not that they don't like their man's touch, but that they don't like how he touches them. Men somehow have a belief that if their woman doesn't respond, they must try harder and more aggressively, and are genuinely surprised when their advances are met with negativity. When I learn something new, I can't wait to try it out. When I first learned how I needed to be physically sensitive to my wife's needs, I tested it out. My wife immediately noticed, and our physical relationship improved significantly.

When you have mastered the physical affection your woman needs, she won't help but be able to feel it. Instead of annoying advances, your touch will become an offer of affirmation and gratitude for her. It will build her self-esteem, and she will respond with greater physical enthusiasm.

I have watched a woman attempt to get affirmation and inspiration for self-esteem from her boyfriend, only to have him completely ignore her. When a woman has a high self-esteem that is rooted in your affirmation for her, she will always be drawn to you.

Humans are rooted with the desire for affection; everybody needs honest appreciation. To give the gift of true intimacy through your physical attention, all you need to offer is your undivided attention.

Charles Schwab, financial investment genius, once said, "I consider my ability to arouse enthusiasm among men the greatest asset I possess. The way to develop the best that is in a man is by appreciation and encouragement." Think of some of the people you work with; what person doesn't like to hear how you appreciate their effort? Affirmation is not limited to women alone, it is something we all look for and crave. Studies have shown that it takes twelve compliments to negate one criticism. Therefore, focus on being affirmative to your girl as much as possible.

Alexander Pope, famous English poet, once said, "A single dream is worth more than a thousand realities." The last way to build great morale in your relationship is to give it direction. Plan a future together. Even if you are not ready to ask the big question, you can plan for the future, if only two weeks ahead.

When my wife and I were dating, we would write down all the things we wanted to do together over the next three months. Some of our ideas included: going to the zoo, laying out and watching the stars, etc. We would set dates to do them, and cross them off our list when we did them. As the relationship got more serious, the length of time between each goal became greater. These little plans gave us hope and something to always look forward to.

Now that my wife and I are married, we have larger, more committed dreams, like a savings account with a desired goal. We plan feats that can only be accomplished by the teamwork and effort of us both. Our future draws us together under the guise of one common goal, and we look forward to and have a passion for this dream together.

Regardless of what is going on in our relationship, we have something to look forward to that draws us through the hardship. It creates morale, because morale gives hope for the future.

Through these five ways of building morale in our relationship, I am able to continually show my wife how much I love her and how much affection I have for her. I don't consider this effort a chore. In fact, I see them as simple ways to showing my adoration. If you use your imagination, building morale in your relationship can be one of the most fun ways to show a woman that you love her.

What Morale Does

Morale helps a woman to feel valued, and allows her to contribute to the relationship. She feels loved and wanted when she spends time with you, and that gives her a sense of usefulness and purpose. Everybody searches for all of these qualities, but to a woman, they are the sweetest emotions in the entire world. Use these morale builders to reveal your emotions, and show your gratitude for her. Remember to laugh often, have fun, create great memories, touch her affectionately, and express your appreciation for all she is.

As in business, low morale in a relationship equals low productivity. When your relationship gets stuck in a rut, or seems to take a back seat to all the other activities in your lives, you may need a morale boost. Most likely you have removed the focus from your relationship and created a de-motivating factor in your relationship.

Maxwell writes, "High morale is the great exaggerator." How true. Have you

ever noticed that when you have a high morale, negative experiences seem to barely affect your relationship? However when the morale has dipped, even the pettiest arguments appear like life-changing fights. High morale can magnify your life at that very moment.

Maxwell goes on to say, “High morale is the great energizer.” It can breathe life back into a dull relationship, and remind you why you got together in the first place. Sometimes the best place to go at the seeming end of a relationship is back to the beginning. The reason many relationships come to an end is that the couple stops doing what they did in the beginning.

Maxwell also says, “High Morale is the great emancipator.” When you feel good about yourself, you can give true forgiveness. Sometimes the hardest person to forgive is yourself. If you have good self-esteem, you will have that little bit extra that will give you the strength to truly say, “I’m sorry” and mean it.

Lastly Maxwell says, “High morale is the great eliminator.”³ It can eliminate the pain and boredom of any relationship, and replace it with happiness. Morale will release you from the day-to-day burdens that can creep up on your relationship. Don't allow life to get in the way of your life or your love. Look at the big picture before becoming completely consumed with the present.

If you are already in a relationship, most of these techniques you have done at least in the beginning of the relationship. Realistically, true love means never forgetting the “puppy love.” Life becomes difficult, and has a way of separating you from the person you love most. When you find yourselves drifting apart, all is not lost; it just means you need to rekindle the things that first brought you together and do them all over again. Falling in love is a lifetime privilege.

Put it in Practice: Discover what activities you both like to do, and make plans to do them together. Create memories to remind you of why you got together in the first place, and create logs that help you keep track of your fun times together.

Women love to hear how much you like them or what you think of them. Provide a great deal of affirmation that shows her how much you think of her. Touch her, in non-sexual ways, often. She will reciprocate your touch and you will be drawn closer together.

Quick Bite: Laughter, memories, and a good friend to share them with can erase the pain and stress of life, and leave you feeling fresh and new.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Communication

She has amassed a fortune over the last twenty years by mastering the art of one of men's greatest fears: communicating with women. Oprah Winfrey has devoted her life to becoming one of America's leading experts on a variety of topics, but most importantly has found a tangible way to connect to women around the world. Communication alone won't bring you fortunes, but with it, your relationship will become much richer. All Winfrey does is simply connect with women in the most effective way – friendship. She discusses important topics with her female guests in the back and forth conversation that is the basis of female friendship. Over the years, she has achieved the most successful and highest rated talk show in global history. Her success is linked to her ability to connect with her audience, and create friends.

One of men's greatest needs from women is friendship. Male communication often is a myriad of grunts and broken English, saying the least possible in the shortest amount of time. I call this locker room talk, and it has made shows such as the *Man Show* popular. Perhaps they could learn something from Winfrey.

Women communicate much differently than men. Their sentences are much more complete, and contain much more information. Women's relationships are built on trading secrets and opening up to one another, something that is sometimes difficult for a man to do. If you want to have a fulfilling relationship and build a lasting friendship with your woman, you will need to learn to adapt your style to a more self-revealing method when communicating to her.

Winfrey has a gift for connecting with viewers through the effective use of communication. As a man, I know I have shortcomings in my interpersonal communications skills, and it is only through the bitter bit of reality and the loving help of my wife that I have improved over the years. Winfrey uses three ingredients in her communication with her female guests that have made her an international sensation over the years: she is immediate, confessional, and personal.¹

As a student of life and of human interpersonal actions, I have come to realize that the correct interaction can stimulate action. Somebody once told me that interaction stimulates action, but interaction alone can't deliver action. It is only by interacting in the right way that positive action is created.

When we participate in good communication, it touches us deep within and causes a reaction. Think of it as a scientific equation: *Action* equals *Reaction*. Sometimes our reaction is calling us to action, sometimes it delivers an emotional

reaction, and sometimes it does both.

Winston Churchill connected with the hearts and minds of men through his inspirational speeches, and as a result was able to inspire them to do great things in WWII. His interaction even inspired the World to great things during his tenure as Prime Minister. Good communication paints a clear picture in the hearts and minds of the listener, and opens a window into yours. This creates a personal connection. A woman is looking for a one-on-one emotional connection from her man. I call this, “authentic communication,” and while the principle is simple, the communication is not the “locker room” approach that some men take.

Winfrey's back and forth interaction is what helps her successfully reach her audience, and provides the model of female conversation. A woman is looking to have her own personal window into your soul through authentic communication. I have learned, usually the hard way, that there is life and death in the power of the tongue. Your relationship survives not only on what you do or do not say, but also on how you say it. I believe that we sometimes take communication for granted because we were born with it.

Communication in a relationship is a little thing that goes a long way, and ultimately makes a big difference. Most women won't rank communication the most important in their lives, but I believe that it is the most crucial need because it centralizes all of the needs. Miscommunication is what starts wars and ends friendships; it is what destroys corporations and ruins reputations. I once heard the reputation of a thousand years can be determined by the conduct of one hour. Communication can ultimately make or break any relationship.

Studies have shown that most marriages end primarily on the basis of disagreements over money. Most likely the disagreements started much earlier than just financial reasons, and relationships in general most often end because of miscommunication or lack of communication. Most people will tell you that communication is one of the cornerstones of any lasting relationship, and luckily for us men, it is also one of a woman's four most important needs.

Epictetus the philosopher said, “We have been given two ears and one mouth so we can listen twice as much as we speak.” Just opening up and becoming transparent to a woman is not enough. You must also have good listening skills. Communication is not a one-way transmission, and women expect a 50/50 in both listening and sharing. Ask your woman questions about herself, her day, and her life. Then be prepared to listen effectively. You can gain wisdom, instruction, and insight into your women simply from listening.

Women expect open and clear interaction with their men. The benefits are numerous. Communication leads to community. Community occurs when two or more people work together for unification. Though the open channels of communication, you will satisfy your woman, and draw her closer to you. In turn you will also be drawn to her.

To create this community appeal, you must be willing to become transparent. You cannot create a community without transparency. Open up to your woman and allow her into your life. Tell her your hopes and dreams, your goals and your emotions. Is she part of them? Men desire friendship, and this is how we need to create and

maintain this friendship with our woman. Through the use of authentic communication and community, you will connect to your mate deeply.

The most effective way for me to improve my channels of communication is to remain teachable and always be open to instruction. I believe that you can always learn something from someone else. Keep your eyes up and your ears open. Be flexible to change and adapt your communication technique to meet your mate. Sometimes the most important journey of your life will be meeting her half way.

Communication – The Difference Maker

Your actions and communication tells those around you who you are, and what you want to accomplish in a relationship. Effective communication with your woman doesn't mean you have to act like a girl. Your woman doesn't expect you to be a girlfriend, but she expects you to be her friend.

Communication is the avenue by which the other three love needs of a woman are portrayed. Through open, confessional and personal communication, you can communicate your *Leadership* by touching her heart and mind. Leaders are honest about their emotions. You can communicate *Security* through your hopes, aspirations, and dreams. Security is found in the consistency of your vision and messages. And lastly, you can communicate *Affection* through affectionate words and actions. Expressing your gratitude and adoration for your girlfriend communicates your love. Communication may be one of four needs, but ultimately it is the one by which the other three are able to operate.

John Powell, internationally acclaimed movie producer, says, “Communication works for those who work at it.” You are not going to be suddenly perfect in the field of communication, but through practice you can constantly improve.

Payton Manning and Marvin Harrison did not set the NFL record for the most receptions between a quarterback and wide receiver simply because they were put on the same team or because they are pros. Their feats would not have been accomplished without excellent communication between these two NFL greats. They work at learning to read and communicate with each other to become an effective team.

Winning pass patterns may not be what is on the line for you, but solid communication can improve your life game with your woman. Let's take a closer look at Winfrey's successful communication model.

Be *Immediate*. You need to be available for your woman whenever she needs you. Sometimes all she needs is a shoulder to lean on. What better person to fill this need than you, her best friend. She needs to talk every day, she needs the community it builds, and she needs personal time with you every day. Set aside time to communicate with her each day. Turn off the TV and the computer, and set down your magazine. Focus only on her. Communication can be as easy as having a one-on-one dinner through which you can create community.

Secondly, be *Confessional* or *Transparent*. Open up to her. As your best friend, you can trust her completely with your secrets. She wants to know your inner thoughts and desires. This helps both of you to connect with one another. She learns what

motivates you and this brings you closer together. You are closest to those you trust and those that trust you will follow you. Good communication will create a team-based relationship. It is through being transparent that you are able to communicate what your needs are and how she can be involved in filling them. Business professionals will tell you that companies succeed and fail based on communication. Express your feelings for her and where you would like to see the relationship grow in the confessional stage.

The final stage of the model is be *Personal*. Let her know that you appreciate her and that you are proud of her successes, no matter how insignificant. Let her be a part of your life, and ask her to help you achieve your dreams, and then allow her to become part of your team in achieving them. Communication is more than just transmitting and receiving messages. It is the art of effectively transmitting information through the means of ideas, attitudes, emotions, or objective behaviors.

Listen

While it is important to effectively communicate, it is just as important to actively listen. Winfrey learned her model for communication by first *listening* to her audience and thinking reflectively on what they needed.

If you want to be the influential leader and friend in your woman's life, you must first earn the right to be heard. Listen first. Listen to learn how she feels. Listen to learn what makes her smile. Listen for her dreams, her goals and desires in life and incorporate them into your life; make her success personal to you. Tell her that you understand how she is feeling and be empathetic to her needs. Help her to achieve her goals and fulfill her desires. If she feels that you are truly listening to her, she will be more than happy to listen to what you have to say.

Listening is more than just hearing verbal sounds; you must actually hear what she is saying. Not only look at her and nod your head, but actively listen to what she is saying and learn from it. No relationship is going to always be perfect. When miscommunication happens, communicate. It is only when you stop communicating with each other that your relationship is doomed.

Ask your woman what she is feeling or what she needs, and be open and sympathetic to hear what she has to say. Be willing to listen even when you feel she is not being fair, or when your ego is bruised.

I learned early on in my relationship with my wife that some sentences are code-words. When my wife said, "Can we talk?" or "We need to talk," I quickly learned that means, "I need to talk!" Instead of worrying that your woman is not listening to your needs, realize that if you listen to her, your relationship will last long enough for her to listen to you too. Listening is the most important piece of communication you can learn.

Her Expectations

Studies have said that a woman speaks an average of 25,000 words daily, drastically exceeding men who speak an average of 10,000 words daily. Many of us use

up about 9,990 of those words on our co-workers and bosses, which leave approximately ten words for our women - three of which are used up on “Honey I’m Home!” Trust me, seven words, and a series of grunts and scratches are not going to pass as authentic communication.

As hard as it may seem, you must somehow increase your word count. It isn’t always about the word count but how to make those words count. There are two distinct ways to make this happen: the action of your words, and her reaction to your words.

It is no secret that women like to talk. They love to communicate. It is here they receive affirmation about life, relationships, etc. This affirmation should be coming from you. To make your words count, offer her authentic communication, no “locker room” talk. You must become vulnerable to her, yet this perceived weakness will strengthen not only you, but also your relationship. Strong communication actually builds unity through the community connection you receive from it.

Secondly, making words count is determined also on her reaction. Women want to be part of your life; they want to help you be a man of significance. By allowing her to do so, she becomes affirmed, and she will have an emotional reaction to your words and actions.

Communication is much more than just words; it involves using the senses through speech, signals, writing, and behavior. From true communication women receive intimacy. When you articulate the way she makes you feel, she will do it again. Communication is an aphrodisiac to a woman. It gives her an intense desire to be around you. Let her know how much you appreciate her and she will perceive adoration. Her greatest desire is to be loved, so tell her. Your communication and interaction will stimulate action from her.

Your Responsibility

Nothing says *I love you* to a woman more than showing her a committed effort to improve. Communication is more than just words and your effort to improve will show her how much you care. With each small step you take to show her that you are trying, you will be able to build trust, community, and understand clearly what her expectations are or the boundaries. Don’t look at this as a chore but as just an action plan to having a rock solid relationship.

Women want to see that you put an effort into the relationship. Increase your community with consistent efforts to listen to her. Tune into her feelings and make relationship more personal. Pay attention to your thoughts - they can have a real impact on your actions toward her. Make time to share with her often; don’t assume that she can read your mind. Remain teachable. Learn from your communication with her and you can say *I love you* better than any other way.

Put it in Practice: Start small. Spend 20 minutes a day in authentic communication with your woman, and then increase it slowly. Focus on being open and transparent to her. Let her know all your thoughts and emotions. Let her know what

Communication

happened at work and how it affects you. Let her be a part of your life and invite her to be part of it. This will create community between the two of you and draw you closer.

Quick Bite: For women the best aphrodisiacs are words. Intimacy can be found in her ears. If you look for it below there, you are wasting your time.

CHAPTER NINE

Leadership

The world had little comprehension how powerful an impact one leader could have, yet it will be eternally grateful for this one man's influence. Winston Churchill is a well-known name in most modern history books, but to the people of England, he was more than just a leader, he was a hero.

Europe had been at odds with Germany, as Adolf Hitler had repeatedly tested the strength of the country's leadership. Hitler marched his troops across the Rhine bridges, and into the demilitarized zone. He then increased his military force from 100,000 to 300,000 men, and added to the recently created German Navy and Air Force. By doing so, Hitler had successfully broken the back of Europe's leaders. Cries for military assistance were ignored in favor of pacifying the German chancellor. England's Prime Minister, Neville Chamberlain, is one of the most scorned Prime Ministers of the 20th Century, largely in part to his political appeasement of Nazi Germany and refusal to defend Europe.

Hitler was a mastermind of political manipulation, and had little resistance pursuing his personal agendas. After invading Austria and Czechoslovakia, he eagerly signed the Munich Agreement, which plainly stated that he would not conquer any more countries. He knew that this agreement would satisfy his enemies, and buy him additional time to plot his next move.

September 1, 1939 dawned the beginning of World War II, and by the year 1940, Hitler had conquered all of Europe. England alone stood in the way of Hitler's goal, yet the leadership was no match for Hitler's rising power. The brewing disillusionment with the government finally led to Chamberlain resigning in May of 1940, and Winston Churchill was appointed Prime Minister.¹

Prior to his selection, Winston had been a fierce adversary of Hitler, but the British parliament limited his leadership, knowing that he had more power than all the Houses of Parliament combined. The night after he was appointed, Churchill wrote in his memoirs, "...I was conscious of a profound sense of relief. At last I had the authority to give direction over the whole scene. I felt as if I were walking with a destiny, and that all my past life had been in preparation for this hour and for this trial.... Therefore, although impatient for the morning, I slept soundly..."²

The impending struggle was not an easy one, but Churchill refused to give up. Instead of hiding from the real issues, afraid of defeat, Churchill identified Hitler's dangerous regime, and fought against it. In March 1945, US and British Forces launched constant attacks and the German Army was pushed back. On May 8, less than two months later, Germany surrendered all of its forces facing the allied powers. Churchill had succeeded.

Life can be a lot like Adolf Hitler, attacking our lives from all angles, and appearing to be more than we are able to handle. Yet, when a leader steps in with a tangible, organized plan, success is sure to follow. When a man is able to present positive reinforcement in a woman's life, he is just as heroic to her as Sir Winston Churchill defeating Nazi Germany. With a man like that by her side, she will be able to sleep like a newborn babe, content with the knowledge that her knight is protecting her.

Women want a man who will be a strong leader in her life. You may be surprised just how many women wish that their man provided them with more leadership. They yearn to have a man who is willing to stand up for their relationship. They need a man to provide positive direction for the relationship through his influence.

Don't let the idea of leadership mislead you. Some women mistake leadership for an authority to which they must be submissive, a concept most find very repulsive. True leadership is never domination; it is quite the opposite. For you to be a leader, you must adopt certain principles that permit you to become a man of influence in a woman's life. If you are a true leader, a woman will be drawn to you instead of repulsed.

Before we cover what leadership is in a relationship, it is important to define what leadership is *not* in a relationship.

Relational Leadership is *Not* Positional Thinking

Patriarchal social structures have been a common thread in social history for countless cultures. Over the years, men have held positions of power and authority simply by their gender. However, with the advent of feminism during the mid to late 20th century, there has been a shift to a blended society, combining the matriarchal and patriarchal responsibilities. No longer is the man solely responsible as breadwinner and leader of his household. With the release of traditional roles comes the opportunity to build a stronger teamwork-oriented relationship by merging each other's strengths.

Still, some men today assume a patriarchal role in their relationships. They feel that because they are the man in the equation that they have most of the responsibility and all of the power. Unfortunately for these misguided souls, it is like trying to pound a square peg in a round hole. They may be able to force it to work for a time, but the functionality of the relationship is almost always damaged. Positional leadership will almost never work in a successful relationship. Position has never made someone a leader; instead, a leader has always made the position.

In a positional relationship, the male creates a hierarchal chain of command in which the woman takes a submissive role to her mate. This power chain will ultimately create dissension and separation between the couple, but more important, the relationship will suffer from a lack of teamwork. In the end, positional leaders usually betray the trust of their followers (one of the key foundations upon which leadership is built), destroying their confidence in his abilities. When you put on the guise of a positional leader, you have effectively removed all hopes of being a true leader. Leadership is *not* positional thinking.

Relational Leadership is *Not* Dominance

He was known as Henry the Horrible, England's cruelest king. King Henry VIII might well have deserved every word of his reputation. Henry VIII was responsible for the executions of numerous citizens with diminutive justification, as well as the domination and cruel treatment of his ministers, whom he forced to pay severe penalties for his own mistakes. For the most part, Henry VIII was a demeaning egotist, who advanced his own personal desires under the guise of public or moral policy.

His private life even exceeded his public reputation. His wives were the first to feel the effects of his complete lack of conscience both privately and publicly. Besides his innumerable concubines, he had six wives. Two of his wives were lucky enough to be served with divorces. The other four all died while married to Henry VIII - two of whom were met with cruel executions. Suffice it to say, Henry VIII was a tyrant at home.

Henry VIII's second wife, Anne Boleyn, is well known today as falsely accused of an extramarital affair in order to end the marriage, and then casually beheaded. Additional historical sources describe Boleyn as unable to birth a male heir to the throne, as well as a being a strong willed, vocal female in the court who expressed herself dynamically in political matters. She is quoted as saying, "I hearsay the executioner is very good, and I have a little neck," shortly before her death.³

Oswald Chambers, a famous Christian author, once said, "Beware of anything that puts you in the place of the superior person." While Henry VIII is an extreme case of domination in a relationship, he is a prime example. Displays of male dominance, possibly by force, are not the way to become a leader in a relationship. Psychologists today define aggressive control in a relationship as a form of abuse. A controlling man can wreck a woman's self-confidence, and belittle her self worth. When one person holds complete control in a relationship, it severely limits the ability of the couple to accomplish great things, as one person is not allowed to contribute to the relationship. A tyrannical man can never understand the power, joy, and reward that can be found in a well-teamed relationship. Leadership is *not* dominance.

Modern relationships have taken on a new definition. Women are still in need of leadership, yet they have become more independent and are more equipped to make good decisions for both themselves and their families. A woman can make a wonderful leader in many areas of the relationship. In fact, leadership becomes more effective when it is combined with teamwork that acknowledges the strengths and weaknesses of both sides in order to create a harmonious relationship. The man's role might be well termed as administration – knowing what strengths each of you have, and how you can best work together to create the best possible relationship.

Leadership means focusing on adding value to both your lives and creating a dynamic relationship. Business provides a perfect model for how leadership functions, and relationships can easily reproduce these qualities. The architecture of leadership can be drawn up in the following six principles: Vision, Visibility, Trust, Touching, Teachability, and Empowerment.

Relational Leadership is Vision

Chinese Philosopher, Lao Tzu, said, “The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step.” To arrive at a destination, you must first travel. For some that journey is perfectly mapped and executed; for others, the journey is marred with retraced steps from dead-end roads or by painful travels. To get an idea of where you are going, you have to have a clear vision of where and how you would like to arrive. Vision is what allows you to achieve these aspirations, and a well-developed vision will provide your relationship with the direction and navigation to arrive safely.

All visions must start with a plan. Such a plan will incorporate four fundamental rules that will ensure you make it to your destination. First, your vision must be precise and simple, yet complete enough to provide a firm path to follow. A good vision will also incorporate the wants and needs of those who are affected by it; it is never singular, as it involves you both.

Secondly, to arrive somewhere, you must first choose a destination different from where you currently are. A vision’s attention must be focused toward the future; it is only there that it will offer intelligent foresight. Your destination must be somewhere that is worth the effort, and the person you are traveling with must be someone worth going with.

Thirdly, a vision must be bigger than the relationship. True happiness is found when you devote yourself to a vision that is larger than yourself or your personal interests. Set lofty goals to strive for and then work to accomplish them.

Lastly, if no one is following, you are not leading. If you want your woman to follow you, your vision must speak to her needs and passions as well. As your relationship grows and matures, you can adapt and change your vision.

Once you have designed a vision for your relationship, and she has bought into it, set it in motion. Embrace your vision; be passionate for it. A true vision is something that is worth fighting for. Make your vision unique. Most people take pride in creating a one of a kind item, and your vision is no exception. A good vision will add gratification to your relationship, and become the very energy that keeps it moving forward. A vision combines both your hopes and dreams, and you will be bound together through this common connection. Through your vision, you will discover a purpose in your relationship.

Great achievements are a direct result of partnership and teamwork. The hard work and effort that you pour into to your relationship will contribute to its overall success. It is only together that you will find true purpose. When a woman feels the relationship has a sense of *direction* it will give her *hope* for a rewarding future.

Relational Leadership is Visual

A young man looking to advance in his career walked into his boss’s office. He eagerly announced that he wanted to be a leader in that corporation, and asked his boss who he should begin leading. His boss glanced up from his oversized mahogany desk with a surprised look, and smiled, “Perfect! You can begin immediately. The first

person I would like you to start leading is yourself.” Though it is hard not to laugh at the poor corporate wannabe, this humorous story contains a valuable lesson. In every case, the first person you should ever lead is yourself.

She is watching. Every little move you make will tell women everywhere the caliber of a man you are. Women are very observant, and you would be surprised how many things your woman may already know about you simply by observation. According to a Stanford study, 89 percent of what we learn is visual. You must not only *talk* the *talk* and *walk* the *walk*, but you must *walk* the *talk*. Leaders who *walk* the *talk* are V.I.P's. They are Visible, Influential and have Principle.

How do you lead visibly? Prioritize. People who set priorities properly will accomplish their goals with much more accuracy than those who simply go with the flow. Most people spend the majority of their time working on second things first. Grow and develop your skills as a leader.

Over the years I have learned that you have to develop your leadership skills. They cannot simply be discovered. You must take time to grow. Your woman will notice this change and her perception of you will grow as well.

A visible leader always fulfills his promises and recognizes the needs of the relationship and works to improve the relationship. You must believe in yourself and your abilities as a leader and it will give you credibility. Credibility is built when your actions align with your words.

Leadership is defined as influencing others. If you are a successful relationship leader, you will be able to influence her and make an impact in her life that no other man has been able to make. A woman is searching for a man who will help her grow, not someone who will hold her back. When you effectively do this, you will earn her respect and honor, man's number one need. You can fulfill your own requirement by simply being a positive influence in her life.

A man of principle is a powerful relationship leader and these principles guide him daily. Leaders must guide their relationship by principles and values worthy of influence. Your woman will notice your commitment, and appreciate the effort. A leader models behavior, so make sure your actions are worth repeating.

A true leader must be willing to do the things that others don't want to do. When you have lofty principles, they will shine through in your actions and character. Show your principles by remaining consistent in both your words and actions. Nothing will reduce your VIP status faster than inconsistencies.

Relational Leadership is Trust

The cornerstone of any relationship is built on trust. If she cannot trust you, she will not follow you. In every leadership position, you will have to earn the trust of those who follow you. Whether you are leading in a large corporation or in your home, trust must be earned. It can never be forced. What does your character say about your trustworthiness?

At the beginning of every relationship, most women will test your trustworthiness. At first she might test if you can be trusted with small matters, but they

will soon build in significance. She most likely believes that if you can be trusted with a little matter, you most likely can be trusted with a lot, like her heart. The more she can trust you, the more your leadership will impact her. Through tests, no matter how subconscious, she is discovering your long-term qualities. You can give her security through trust and long-term capacity to fill her needs.

Your visible actions are also going to build her trust in you, and they are developed through a series of character traits. Ask yourself, do I have solid ethics? Do I communicate to her what I am thinking? Am I consistent and accountable? Am I developing? Do I spend time developing my abilities as a leader and in personal growth? Am I competent enough to be trusted? And most important, do I add value to her life? Your answers to these questions will make or break your ability to earn her trust.

When trust is broken, your ability to lead will be jeopardized. Where there is no leadership, there is no expansion. To reestablish her trust, be quick to admit your mistakes, and ask for her forgiveness. This will allow you to restore and slowly begin to rebuild her confidence in both you and the relationship. Like me, you may have a tendency to rush trust, but rebuilding trust can take time. In the end, the best way to build your potential as a mate is by developing her trust in your character.

Relational Leadership is Touching Her Heart and Soul

All great leaders had a following because they served the ones they led. Mother Theresa was one of the most influential leaders this world has ever seen. Her secret to power wasn't her ability to force people to do things. Her frail body was much too weak to force anybody, but her heart was filled with compassion. She won over those she served with love and devotion.

You will quickly learn that a woman does not care how much you know or what you have done, until she knows how much you care. Do you encourage her to be her best? Encouragement is like oxygen for the soul, and it will draw her to you. Everybody wants to be somebody, and as a leader you have the skill to encourage your woman to become somebody. When a woman knows she can lean on you for strength, your value increases. Sometimes you may be behind her, sometimes you may be in front of her, but most often you will be beside her, strengthening her. Your role is to show her how much you care.

Do not try to be perfect. It's impossible. The closest any man will ever come to perfection most likely will be on the first date. Give yourself room to be human, but do your best to show her that you are there for her, both in the good and bad times. Love the ones you lead.

Relational Leadership is Remaining Teachable

Men do not know everything, yet we somehow have this vicious desire to pretend like we do. A know-it-all attitude is one of the quickest ways to stunt your

relationship's growth. As your relationship matures, your greatest area of influence is in your ability to remain teachable. When you have a high capacity to learn, it increases your leadership.

Oliver Wendell Holmes, poet and author, stated, "One's mind once stretched by a new idea can never regain its original dimension." Being teachable will increase your capacity to be a strong leader, and help you to remain adaptable to the needs of your relationship. The depth of your leadership is only confined by your capacity to gain knowledge and wisdom. For example, if you are only willing to learn so much, your relationship cannot grow beyond that amount of knowledge. If you continue to learn, your capacity will expand with it.

To remain teachable, you must be a good listener. You are equipped with two ears and only one mouth for a good reason. Put your ears to use. Listen to your woman, your friends, and even to yourself. The woman in your life will be happy to tell you what she needs from you as leader and you will then be able to adapt your style to fit her needs.

Think of your friends as your extended network. They can often see the bigger picture and tell you how you are doing as a leader. Lastly, listening to yourself can be a valuable tool to growing. Most people would live their lives much differently and better if they would only listen to their hearts.

Find a mentor. This person may be somebody with significant life experience, or a couple who has a thriving, successful relationship. Ask them what the secrets are for their success in life. Some simple questions may include, "What keeps you together," and "If you had to give me one piece of advice about relationships, what would you tell me?" Listen. Use them as a model and aspiration for what you want to accomplish. As you continue to learn and grow, update your vision to reflect this change.

John Wooden, former UCLA basketball coach, once said, "It is what you learn after you know it all that counts." Don't stop learning. Use your leisure time to grow. If you like reading, read relationship and leadership books. Absorb as much information as you can handle. Don't limit your capacity to grow. Remain teachable and you will be taught. The minute you stop learning, you will stop growing. When you stop growing, you stop developing your potential to lead.

Relational Leadership is Empowerment

You may think that I have asked a lot of you up to this point; however, perhaps one of the hardest tasks is still to come. In our professional lives, men spend massive amounts of energy working to become leaders. If you truly want to be a leader in your job, home, and relationship, you must be willing to give it all up.

"Leaders become more powerful when they give power away," claimed the Michigan Institute of Social Research. When a leader gives his power to his mate, he is empowering her to do her best. By relinquishing your power, you are fostering competence in your relationship, and move closer to reaching your vision. This technique is not unique to romantic relationships. True leaders never engage in power struggles no matter if their leadership is professional, social, or at home. When you

move the relationship from me to we, you are empowering it.

Empowering releases you from a domination or positional leadership role and brings you down to a human level. This leadership step will be one of the most noticed by women. You are the strongest when you are being supportive of your woman's dreams, and help enable her to reach those goals. You are a team, but contributing to her success, you also contribute to your own.

A relationship is a partnership. When you accept the responsibility of a leader, it is important to allow her to be a part of all decisions, and at times, allow her to take the lead. You are not expected to know or accomplish everything on your own. This is one of the common misconceptions of leaders. In your relationship plan, you already have determined what your weaknesses are. These areas of weakness may be appropriate areas for her to either lead or strengthen your potential. Your role is to use her expertise to complete the goal. A woman has a lot to offer in a relationship, allow her to contribute. There is no reason why a man has to do everything.

John Maxwell, business leadership and training expert, explains, "When you are successful, you are adding value to yourself, but you can become *significant* by adding value to others." By empowering and enabling her, you will add value to her life and give her significance. Everyone wants to be with someone significant! Be supportive and encourage her to follow her dreams. Add value and significance to her life, and you will see your power as a leader multiply.

Modern relationship leadership is subtle. No longer is leadership a birthright of your gender, but an honor you earn by proving you are capable of handling the responsibility. Leadership is an art and is natural when done successfully.

Leadership may not be the most important need of a woman but it is one of the areas I am most passionate about in my life. If you are a proficient leader, you will be able to effectively address her other three needs effortlessly. Leaders provide security. Leaders provide communication. Leaders build morale, which provides her the affection she so passionately deserves. Being a well-rounded leader will boost your ability to satisfy her other needs, because you are capable of understanding what she needs. A good leader will notice where he or the relationship needs to improve and he will listen and initiate the actions needed to reach these goals. He will always do what is required; he will be the first into battle, and the last off the field.

Most people do not lead their lives; they wait for it to happen. If you wish for your relationship to reach its full potential, you must never ever wait for it to happen. Create the relationship you desire by becoming a leader of your own destiny. Real relational leadership provides four elements: *Influence* to add significance to her life. *Direction* to accomplish the common vision. *Trust* as the cornerstone of your relationship. And the final ingredient is *Hope* for a prosperous and breathtaking future together.

Put it in Practice: Leadership can be a touchy subject in a new relationship, and demands a confident leader. Show your woman that you respect her by establishing boundaries to help you both feel comfortable. As the relationship grows and trust is built, you can reestablish the boundaries.

Come up with a code word that either of you can use when you are uncomfortable with the tone or level of authority expressed. When this word is said, immediately stop and communicate what made you uncomfortable in a respectable manner.

The most effective way to be a true leader is to understand the six principles of leadership as well as your woman's needs. Learn everything you can about leadership and her needs by incorporating them into your life. Leadership is about influencing the one you love, and the best way to influence her is by adding value to her life.

Quick Bite: Leadership is *not* dominance. Leadership is *not* position. If you lead by either of these ways, you will lose your leadership. You lead by putting her first.

CHAPTER TEN

Security

Security. It is one of the most thought about concepts in modern society. It drives and directs our decisions on just about everything we do. In the days following the tragic terrorist attack on the world trade center, the government created what is now known as *Homeland Security* to help the American people feel more secure. The government felt that in order for our nation to recover from such a tragic shock, the citizens had to regain their sense of security. Airport security tightened safety checkpoints, and those that were brave enough to fly paid a little more attention to the flight attendants reciting their well-rehearsed speeches, “In the event of an evacuation, floor lighting will become illuminated . . .”

No matter if you are a nation, a corporation, or an individual, *security* drives every decision you make. During the most recent preparations for the winter Olympics, I turned on the news or picked up a paper almost every day, and one of the top stories that continually kept catching my eye was how they were tightening the security during the games in order to allow the participants and the spectators to feel more secure. If they could make their patronages more secure, they would make more money from the added visitors.

Corporations spend millions of dollars annually in order to secure their networks and, in turn, market themselves to customers as the “most secure.” Individuals purchase products based on how safe they are or the security features they supposedly offer. Our entertainment is based on what we feel the most comfortable doing.

Safety and security drive our everyday lives; it is inescapable. One of the biggest decisions in life is who we will spend it with. Naturally, marriage should be a safe decision. A woman *needs* to feel secure. It is essential that a man make his woman feel secure; otherwise the relationship is hopeless from the beginning. Security may be the last in the list of needs, but only because it is found through the proper fulfillment of the other needs.

At first, men are already in the negative with this need; women are naturally leery of any man who approaches them, and usually this is for good reason. Men are naturally aggressive and often approach their next victim with a cheesy pick up line, followed up with a conversation revolving around their over-inflated egos, all the while thinking about what drove them toward her in the first place – sex. Naturally when a man approaches a woman, her defense shield immediately goes up. She may be enticed to interrogate him or perhaps humor him, but most of the time she is looking for the nearest exit in case of an emergency.

Relationships are all about risk management, and when we feel safe, we tend to

take larger risks. Think of your relationship summed up into the stock market. Imagine you are on the floor trading wildly. If you aren't careful, or you make too risky an investment, you may end up penniless after the market crashes down around your ears.

The years following 1929 are immortalized in history as the Great Depression. In the days leading up to the infamous Black Tuesday, the overly inflated market suddenly crashed, changing millionaires into paupers and leaving millions destitute. In November of 1999, the market had again experienced years of exceptional gains. Suddenly, the tech bubble began to inflate rapidly and many companies' portfolios did not reflect their true stock values. As a result, the tech market crashed, and those with money tied up in this market lost everything. Years later, people are still leery about the security of their money. Everybody wants the ability to receive huge returns on their investments, but at minimum risk. A person's investments are often their security blanket for retirement.

The similarities of the stock market and relationships are countless. Men tend to over inflate their numbers, and women believe them, giving themselves a false sense of security. Eventually, the fanciful bubble crashes, and the perceived security the woman felt is suddenly gone, leaving her feeling deceived. As each relationship has taught her, each man has to breach an even thicker wall with which she has surrounded herself. Most women are skeptical of you, and quite possibly may invest less into each new relationship in fear of a poor return or the recurrence of an inflationary crash. You can thank your fellow men for this added challenge when it comes to finding a woman.

Maxwell says, "When there is no faith for the future there is no power for the present." A woman is looking for a man who can offer her a true sense of security, and back this up with a guarantee. You can leave a powerful impression on a woman who feels she can trust you.

The number one way to satisfy a woman's desire to be loved is to provide her with a secure surrounding. This will allow her to take the greatest amount of risk, and ultimately invest the highest amount into the relationship. She is willing to invest a great deal of emotions into your life, and by doing this; she will increase your ability to reach your desired dreams. All you have to do is be a reliable investment.

Often women use their right brain to study a relationship. This side of the brain gives them the ability to reason and focus on the long-term potential of a man. How secure is she going to be with you? If this question were posed to you would you even know?

There are three ways to secure and test investments: Growth, diversity, and return. Through these three areas of investment, you can best reveal your potential to provide a secure environment for your relationship.

Growth

Investment is the one word that flawlessly depicts every aspect of a relationship. It is an investment physically and emotionally into one of the most important decisions of your life, a decision that should never be taken lightly. A good relationship can transform your life, and a bad one can destroy it. Women learn this over the years

starting as little girls from the day they begin to plan their wedding. My wife once told me she started envisioning and planning for her perfect husband from a very young age. I often joke with her, saying, “Instead you settled for me”.

Relationship investment is the commitment of two lives looking to minimize risk, safeguard their futures, and the expectation of a heavy personal return. It shouldn't be a surprise that most women look at the same factors that a capital investor would look for in a stock or bond in which they were considering investing.

Women are so interested in safeguarding their future and minimizing risk that they are going to analyze the security of the investment heavily, before they devote such an inconceivable amount of emotion into it.

Imagine that you are a new enterprise and are preparing to introduce yourself as a new Initial Public Offering (IPO) on the open market. Your mission would be to inform investors of your potential, so that they would be interested in your capacity to grow. Your depth or potential is confined by your capacity to grow. What is your potential? The greater your growth potential, the safer the investor feels. Investors are willing to invest in something they believe will make them money, not lose it. The greater the potential for return the more they are willing to invest. Have you been consistent in your growth? Investment managers say that in order for a company to be growth based, it has to be willing to change and adapt with varying economies.

Your job is to demonstrate to your woman through your actions that you are a worthy investment and you're going to offer her the greatest personal return in the long term. People don't usually come with a financial report that can be reviewed before investment. Therefore, you are going to have to demonstrate your potential to provide your woman with the greatest model of security. Most likely a woman will seek input from among her advisers – her girlfriends. Therefore, it is important to be completely honest and bring your best to the table at the very beginning.

Think of what your prospectus looks like. Growth gives you potential to have a meaningful life; it makes each day worthwhile. It gives you potential to provide for your mate, and bring happiness to those around you. Growth gives you potential to reach new heights that you never imagined possible. It gives you the opportunity to take risks because growth necessitates margins. Then new growth comes from taking risks and creating new opportunities for the relationship to stretch its boundaries.

When a woman looks at a growing, ambitious man, she sees potential, not only for him but also for her. If he puts effort into his daily routine, he is likely to also put effort into a lasting relationship and continue to expand their future together. He shows that he is not a man who easily gives up and walks away. He is willing to go the distance. Living without the fear of abandonment brings a feeling of self-assurance to anyone.

Don't misunderstand the meaning of growth. The growth a woman is looking for is not dependent on your bank account, but rather on your ability to grow into the character of the man that every woman craves. Growth means the ability to get up every morning willing to challenge new opportunities. It means being able to accomplish what you set out to do in a day.

So many modern men are complacent about their future. They are unwilling to change and they allow their life to just happen, rather than taking charge of it daily.

They always think they will begin their lives tomorrow or that someday their big break will come. Sound familiar? You must be willing to be uncomfortable. You must become comfortable with being uncomfortable. What you put off till tomorrow will only pile up until those responsibilities become either too much to handle or they don't matter anymore. You will never get all the work completed that you put off because tomorrow is always one day away. Many people believe that relationship success is a life event so they attempt to plan for its arrival, but somehow it never comes. Relationship success is a journey that you must complete one step at a time.

You can never change your life or your relationship until you change something in your daily life. When you invest in yourself and your relationship, you cannot help but grow. This growth offers further security to a woman. Your potential is always increasing because you are a dedicated student of life. The more you grow, the more your potential compounds. You will never become disappointed when you are able to withdraw from this account.

Progress does not mean that you never fail; it may mean you will fail a lot. Ted Williams, one of the greatest Major League batters of all time, held a career batting average of .344. Yet, he failed to connect with the ball more than 60 percent of the time. Even if he struck out ten times in a row, he still walked confidently up to the plate with the goal of knocking the ball out of the park. He was a committed student of batting principles. He never stopped learning how to be a better hitter, so his potential was always increasing. Growth happens the same for everybody: step-by-step, little by little, one day at a time. Don't try to rush growth. Take it slow and eventually the compounding effects will be obvious.

Stability through Diversity

Most investment managers will explain to you the best way to have a more stable and secure portfolio is by diversifying. By doing so, you prevent a meltdown in one portfolio, because you spread the risk across several different markets. The more diversified you are, the less any single issue can harm your relationship or lower your bottom line. For example, having financial security can offer you and your girl a nice lifestyle, but your money can be lost just as fast as it was made. If it is your only form of security in the relationship, then rough times lie ahead. Instead, you should diversify your ability to offer a woman security over a multitude of areas. Having diverse areas of security will also add stability in your personal life, and will help you to be steady and remain growth focused.

Slumps won't last forever. The security area that is lagging will soon pick up and become as strong as your other areas, as long as you provide effort. For Williams, hitting slumps never lasted the entire season only because he kept trying. If you happen to fall upon tough times in one area of your life, you can rely on the other areas to keep your relationship together. If you continue to grow and improve in that area, soon you will once again regain balance in your life and be able to move forward.

Stability is trust. Can your woman trust you? When you wrote down your list of "Relationship Values," one of them should have included faithfulness. Temptation is a

constant companion, lurking only a step behind you. It is normal for any guy to be tempted by other women. We are visually oriented, and naturally attracted to women. You may work closely with an attractive woman at your office, yet, if your girl cannot trust that you will walk away from the temptation, she will never be secure with that. A moment of satisfaction will always be regretted when the relationship you have worked so hard on is sacrificed. What she doesn't know can and will hurt her. If you think you can get away with it, know that someday, somehow she will find out. Be a man of character; walk away before you are tempted to do something you know you will regret. Let her know that you are a man of trust.

Stability is how you take care of yourself. Do you take the time to care for your body and mind? Do you nurture it with healthy foods and spend time exercising? Your woman wants to spend a lifetime with you, not years crying over your gravestone. How you treat your body says a lot about your character. You don't have to be on the cover of *Men's Health* magazine for her to respect your attitude toward your body. All a woman wants is a man who will care for his body so they will be around when the kids are grown up and the house begins to empty.

Stability is finances. You do not have to have a big bank account or flashy possessions to be considered financially stable. Stability in your finances means that you handle your finances in a mature manner. Do you blow your paycheck each week on fruitless items? Make sure that you are handling your finances with reserve. Money may not make you happy, but avoiding significant debt will. Studies say the number one fight couples have in a relationship is over money. Furthermore, it is the number one reason for divorce. Take time to set up a savings account and place a small amount of each paycheck into it no matter what. It may be difficult, but even the smallest amount will add up over time, and show that you have your priorities in the right place.

Stability is a solid work ethic. How long can you keep a job? Do you quit because you would rather go to the beach on a warm summer day or get fired because you cannot be counted on as a competent worker? Having a stable job is very important. A woman is not going to feel comfortable with you if she thinks that she will have to be the sole breadwinner for the household. Take pride in finding and securing a good job, and then do your best for your employer. Work at what you enjoy and enjoy working. Studies show that those who love their jobs make more money than those who chose their positions based solely on salary. What you do for a living or how much money you make is less important than having a steady job that can be counted on to support the home.

Stability is protection. Women sometimes need protection, even if it is only feeling safe. Protection doesn't always mean impressive kung-fu fighting techniques in dark alleys. It may simply be intervening positively when someone is agitating your woman or supporting her when she feels completely alone. Protection can be as simple as offering her a hug at the end of a hard day, grabbing her hand as she walks down a crowded street, or making sure she safely reaches her destination. When she knows that you are her security blanket, she will feel at ease in your presence.

Stability is right priorities. Priorities give your life strength and direction. Without them, you are too easily distracted and accomplish very little. When you have set priorities, you are able to achieve your goals. She wants to be the first thing on your

mind in the morning. When a woman knows she is your number one priority, nothing makes her feel more secure. Her well-being should be foremost in your mind the second you have committed yourself to her. Priorities help you choose wisely by focusing on what demands the most attention. They help you organize your tasks. When your woman is your number one priority, you will make her and her happiness your focus. If you find yourself distracted, your priorities will reorganize you because they act as your compass, pointing you home.

Stability is commitment. What is your level of commitment in a relationship? Are you just looking for a good time, while juggling a few other girls on the side? A committed man will place a high value on his relationship, and take the necessary steps to insure its success.

Most women, especially those who are in their late twenties and older, are not looking to be someone's sideshow. They are looking for a man who can commit to the relationship. They need a man who can be counted on to provide a devoted home, constant environment, complete faithfulness, and somebody that will be there when they need him.

To a woman, these qualities exhibit stability more than a large home and lots of diamonds shining on her arm because she knows that you are going to be there when she needs you.

Return

“What's in it for me?” I can hear you asking. Satisfying a woman's desire to feel secure brings huge rewards. When you are able to make a woman feel secure, she will feel completely comfortable around you. She will be able to let down her guard and connect with you in a way you never thought possible. She won't be wondering if you can be counted on or if you can provide for her. She won't have to guess where you are headed in life. When you satisfy these desires, she will be able to feel secure by her man.

Don't think that security is freedom from risk. Security in your relationship is actually freedom *to* risk. The more comfortable you are with someone, the more risk you are willing to take and as a result, the greater expansion. A secure relationship offers you freedom from doubt, anxiety and fear. It provides a woman with supreme confidence in you. Through this confidence, she will invest into your life and dreams and help them to become reality for you both.

There are three basic phases of security in a relationship, each building on the last phase. The *Intro Phase*, where you demonstrate your ability to provide the woman of your dreams with security. You have to prove that you are different from all the other men who may have misled her or let her down. But remember to keep it real – don't over inflate your numbers in an effort to gain her trust or you will someday have an emotional crash.

The second phase of security is the *Performance Phase*. During this phase you have already established that you are capable of providing a woman with security. Your job is to continue to perform, as well as adapt to change as necessary.

The last phase is the *Return Phase*. This is the phase when you enjoy the fruits of your labor. You can relax and be comfortable with each other with the knowledge that no matter what comes your way, you will be able to handle it with confidence. You both trust one another to be committed. This is also the phase that will allow her to encourage you to continue to reach new heights.

By definition, security is synonymous with “collateral” used to guarantee debt. In a relationship, your collateral is the protection and benefits you offer to a woman’s life. By securing her needs, you are showing her that you are the right man for her and that she does not need to look for this security anywhere else.

Put it in Practice: Humans generally have two needs: the need to feel significant and the need for security. Men tend to need significance more, while women tend to need more security. Where a woman finds her security is not in possessions or features as a man might, but in the love of her mate. If you want to make your woman feel secure, shower her with love. Love is shown through your potential to be a long-term mate. Love is shown through your maturity to diversify your life and place value on important priorities. Love is shown through the high return that feeling secure brings.

Quick Bite: Security is a very important supporting need for a woman. You can offer it through your potential, diversity of secure emotions, and ability to create margins to allow for more security. The more secure you are, the stronger your love can become.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The Board Room

One is such a lonely number. One alone cannot do anything of significance. Still, many men attempt to live their lives as one, even in a committed relationship. They refuse to look for help and avoid counsel. In the business world, men naturally seem to be able to accomplish their goals and slowly climb the corporate ladder, but not so in relationships. When it comes to love, most men are completely clueless. Perhaps this is one reason why I like to compare a relationship to business. Not only are men interested in business, but they naturally seem to grasp business concepts easily. Business really does model the same concepts that are necessary to have a successful relationship.

Most men wouldn't think of starting a new business without the help of business analysts, investors and at least some staff. Those who succeed in business ask for the advice of those who have succeeded in the business world. You need a support structure of those who can help you reach your goal. When you try to take on the world alone, you will ultimately find yourself alone.

Running a business takes the expertise of many different talents. One man does not have all the talents necessary, let alone time, to run an entire enterprise alone. Even small corporations contain many different departments including legal, accounting, human resources, and sales. Famous men and women like Donald Trump, Estee Lauder, Henry Ford, Princess Diana, Winston Churchill, and many more can attribute their success in part to those who offered support, counsel, and wisdom. A powerful man or woman realizes he or she did not become powerful because of extraordinary talents or abilities, but by the benefit of an inner circle of support. Great leaders surround themselves with those who can provide them with wise counsel; they don't try to accomplish everything alone.

Take the example of Bob Hartman. When Hartman purchased Universal Technical Institute (UTI) in 1990, it was just an average technical training school with three campuses nationally. Competition was heating up, and the local community colleges were adding technical-training courses that were being subsidized by the manufacturers at tuition that severely undercut UTI.

Hartman knew that he was going to have to change UTI's infrastructure drastically if he was going to survive this now highly cutthroat arena. He was committed to his new investment and was hungry for fresh ideas and direction. In the attempts of turning his new school around, Hartman decided to develop a board of advisors that would give a fresh injection of talents, ideas, and direction for UTI's future. He then began the extensive search for individuals to add to this board that

would be willing to devote their time to his mission for a minimal commission. Hartman decided to keep the board small with representatives focused on four areas he felt he needed to include in his new board: a strategic planner, a marketing expert, an industry veteran, and a human resources specialist.

By putting his new board members to use, Hartman was able to successfully lower costs and increase revenue. The success of the board also extended into other areas; UTI's thirteen additional staff members were able to benefit by streamlining the day-to-day operations, which saved UTI both cost and time, while still being able to focus on their jobs. The board had added both focus and direction to not only UTI's future, but its internal infrastructure. Hartman had not only completed his goal of competing with the local community colleges, but with the help of his all-star advisors had succeeded in creating what is now the leading source for specialized technical education programs.¹

How many men try to run an entire relationship alone? Very few men, if any, admit that they need help, let alone actively search out advice. If more men would approach their relationships with the same gusto and passion that they give to their careers or businesses, the divorce rate of the entire nation would plummet. Most men seek outside help only when their relationship is on the verge of extinction, and even then, they enlist the counsel of superficial outside influences. How many times has a man with a broken relationship found himself at a local bar, spilling his guts to the other alcohol induced patrons who can offer no other advice other than half-hearted grunts and slurs? As he feels more and more at a loss about his life, his emotions become a complete train wreck of disconnected thoughts, and nothing is accomplished. Relationships that end up in this fix are usually already riddled with trouble and are in deep need of positive influences.

People today view marriages as a disposable asset, a concept mirrored by the rising divorce rates of today's society. Who can afford not to surround themselves with a great inner circle? Of course one can always turn to an expensive relationship counselor, an alternative that can be very costly and most likely slanted toward a specific discipline. Still, your counselor won't be there to congratulate you when you succeed or be by your side to comfort you, if your relationship takes a turn for the worse. However, a circle of inner friends can not only help you prevent a disaster in your relationship, but also help you maintain it in such a way that it grows into a very successful one.

It can be extremely frightening to invite even your closest friends into your personal life. Most of us like to at least put on a facade of a successful life and relationship and it attacks us at our most sensitive area, our pride, when we are brutally honest with those who know us best. However, if we can put aside our self-image, and allow such a support team into our life, the rewards can be quite rewarding. These advisors will be there to help you when you are confused, or perhaps feel that your relationship has hit an impasse and you don't know where to turn. When you take the time (and effort) to choose a board of advisors, you are setting your relationship up for success.

Finding the right board members can be tricky. A board should have balance, so choose members who know you best and from different areas of your life. A balanced

board should include those who have known you a long time and those who currently know you very well. It should include men and women, those your age, and those older with life experience. I will suggest that you do not include any ex-girlfriends, as they are almost always biased. Each of these friends may even have a specific role or talent that would help you through a tough time as counselors, protectors, realists, or encouragers.

Once you have chosen your inner circle, there are roles and responsibilities that must be laid out for a team to succeed. You should have multiple responsibilities and roles that will give you the maximum connections. True leaders not only accept but actively look for suggestions and advice from those they trust. With such a team behind you, it is almost impossible to completely fail.

Choosing a Board – The Search

In the business world, choosing a board of advisors can be a daunting task. Choosing a similar board for your personal life may be lighter on the pocketbook but should be done with the same caution and thought as if it was for a multi billion-dollar company. You will want to choose men and women who care about you very much and want to witness your success and happiness. Choose people that are willing to actively help you reach your full potential and want to do what is necessary to help you reach such a goal.

I have often watched as many of my colleagues have consulted the advice of mere strangers, only to find their relationship in complete ruins. There are a few key factors to look for when you are choosing your advisors. Look for those individuals who are close to you. Choose men or women of integrity and character. You need advisors who are strong enough to be completely honest with you but still able to encourage you as well. You need those who can help silence the pathological critic inside each one of us. You need someone who is willing to help you when you are completely at fault and be able to do so without judging and discouraging you. You need someone with the tenacity to be there regardless how blind you may be, how long it may take, or how hard the situation. The members of your board will keep you from getting complacent and direct you toward what is truly important. They will keep you focused.

In my search for finding members for my own personal board, I have found three guidelines that have helped me choose those who will be useful members and not just random friends or acquaintances.

Never Accept a *Yes Man*

When we need somebody to talk to, or advice, most often we turn to the easiest and closest person to us. It may be easy to go to your best friend or someone whose proximity makes them more available. However, these people may be too close to the situation to actually see the big picture. You may find that they will simply tell you what you want to hear in an effort to maintain your friendship. They are merely *Yes*

men.

You need someone who can be completely honest, even when honesty may be the last thing you want to hear. You need a support system that is more than just a shoulder to cry on, you need those individuals who will both challenge and encourage you.

Diversity

Your board needs diversity; choose your members both vertically and horizontally. A successful board doesn't always need numerous members, but it does need high levels of quality in those members.

When the owners of NetMarquee chose a board for their small online direct marketing agency, they focused on filling their "holes" in four key areas: a CFO, a strategic planner, an entrepreneur professor, and a family marketing expert. They settled for nothing less than the best experts that they could locate in these disciplines. Their success lay in the quality of their members, not the quantity.²

By focusing on the quality of your members rather than how many you have, you can have the same success for your relationship as NetMarquee, a company that has weathered the rapid storms of the business world. The members you choose for your own personal board should be individuals who complement your weaknesses. Choose those who have a wide array of life experiences or are experts in a certain area that you would like to grow in. Choose colleagues, friends, or family members. Your members may be older than you, younger, single, married, or divorced. Find those members who can offer the greatest diversity of collective knowledge. Find those who are strong where you may be weak, and can therefore help you grow.

Go For The Best

When I say go for the best, I mean go for the best. Think of how important a successful relationship is to you, and then choose those advisors based on that. This support system is more than merely a relationship dictionary; these individuals will be strong pillars to lean on when you are going through tough times. They may learn about personal areas of your life that you may never share with anyone else but they will be able to provide you with the greatest insight. As you share and grow with your board, they may learn things about your girl or you, which could make it easy to pass judgment and/or become emotionally involved. Yet, this is not their role. They need to be strong enough to understand that you are confiding in them and keep silent about some of your deepest secrets. Furthermore, they must be strong enough to be objective where they could be critical. Their job is to offer you a shoulder and an honest assessment.

Your board must be tough. Sometimes they may challenge you and your ways of thinking. They may not always agree with you. They must be able to know the times to act as your advisor and when they should play the part of a cheerleader. They will commend you for how far you have come, and challenge you to go even further. To truly be the best advisors, they need to be knowledgeable, mature, and wise.

Roles of the Board – Pieces of Advice

Just choosing a board is not enough. You need to structure the board in such a way that each member has clear roles. By giving your members roles in your life, your board will be more effective. These individuals make up your close inner circle and they will offer you a wide range of advice. A wise inner circle will provide you with stability in your relationship and personal life. They will contribute great insights and they will foster competence. You will find that they will endorse and legitimize your goals. They will act as a sounding board for you to bounce ideas off. Most of all, you will find that they will add productivity to a stagnant relationship, durability to a frail relationship, and challenge to improve.

Since your board's role is so important, they will need to understand what you are asking of them. They need to understand their boundaries, and you will need to take the time to explain what role you want each of them to play. Communication is the key. Tell them what you are expecting from them, regardless of how foolish or embarrassed you may feel.

My inner circle is a close group of men and women. They understand that their role is to help keep me in line; they help me be a man of honor for my wife. They are wise enough to recognize where I may be lacking and strong enough to help me improve in that area. They understand their role because I have asked them to provide it.

By providing guidelines to your board members, they will be able to contribute to your relationship in three key ways:

Problem Avoidance – Most people know that the best way to get out of a problem is to never get into it in the first place. If your board can help you miss even one major problem area, they are serving their purpose.

Problem Solving – Everybody makes mistakes. Your board will provide guidance and experience - two powerful quotients to helping solve any problem. No problem is new. No matter how unique your experience may feel to you, someone has experienced the same thing. When you have a diversified group of advisors in your inner circle, you may find that one of your members has experienced similar problems that you may be facing. They can help you by providing personal experience, thus avoiding the old trial and error method.

Strategic Planning – Wisdom has been defined as knowledge that is put to good use. The wisdom that your board will provide will give perspective and long-term vision; it will help prevent mistakes that many quick decisions can bring. They will provide direction when you don't know which way to go, and have no where to turn. They will provide you with honest feedback about your personal vision and agenda.

Your role is chairman of your board, and as such you need to be honest with

yourself. Honesty is the key ingredient to tapping into your board's potential; without it, you are only role-playing. If you are not willing to accept the hard facts that your board may give you, the entire benefit of having such an inner circle is lost. To achieve this, you must be willing to spend time in reflection before and after you have sought advice.

Hans Margolius, author and philosopher, offers this advice, "Only in quiet waters do things mirror themselves undistorted. Only in a quiet mind is adequate perception of the world." Find a place that you can truly think. It should be somewhere with no outside distractions, so you can clearly focus on what you need to sort out or decide. It should be the first place you go when you need this time. I find that it helps to make an outline of my perceived problems and the potential causes and solutions that may exist. Then I allow myself a few moments of complete quiet. What I have discovered is that perspective comes only when we take the opportunity to be still and think. Sometimes there is no better advice than that which comes from your own mind.

Once I have spent some time alone to reflect and outline my problem, I take it to someone on my board. It is unreasonable to have regular board meetings as in the corporate world, and a relationship board is more of an aesthetic description. Some of your board members may never meet each other. Most of your meetings will be called impromptu when you need advice on a particular situation, and most often, with only one or two members. Sometimes I find myself asking advice from several members of my board in order to get a diverse range of suggestions. Then, once I have received the advice, I return to my thinking place to go over my problem again, except now I am armed with the advice of those closest to me. Your thinking place should be the first and last place that you go.

One of the biggest mistakes I feel many men make in their relationships is to whom they go for advice. I see so many men who get caught up in relationship bashing or seek counsel from people who know nothing about them or their problems.

Early in my marriage, I found myself very frustrated with my wife and I sought the advice of a complete stranger. Looking back, I just needed to blow off a little steam. I spent the better part of an hour explaining a lopsided story to someone who didn't even know my wife. Before this person had a chance to even offer any advice, I knew I should've kept my mouth shut. What they said next solidified my mistake, "Sounds like you married the wrong girl." I was shocked. How dare this person even suggest something like that! They didn't even know my wife. But then it struck me; they didn't know my wife and were only responding to the description I had told them in my ill-advised rant. I was the one who had embellished the story and because they only knew what I had told them. I deserved such an answer.

Mentorship

Sweat poured off Kent Sutherland's neck as he nervously waited for the man he both wanted and feared to meet. Sutherland was a vendor for a healthcare products supplier and was attempting to make a sale at Wal-Mart's headquarters in Bentonville, Arkansas, when the man everybody hoped to meet, but never expected to, walked out.

Sam Walton had a habit of sauntering sporadically to the front of the building

where he could greet would be vendors. It took Sutherland three visits until he was finally able to meet Walton. Over the next seven years, Walton would pull Sutherland aside and the two would talk business. Sutherland soaked up everything he could because he had been given the impossible: a close personal mentorship with one of the greatest retail giants.

Today, Sutherland has created his own small business empire. Although his business does not come close to rivaling that of Walton's, he still attributes much of his success to Walton.³

Mentors give you motivation to fight for your goals and to stretch your limits. Many people rely on their parents as a model for relationships. By the time most people are ready to have a serious relationship, their parents may have been together for more than twenty years. Unfortunately for some, divorce or death has broken that model and these men and women have nowhere to find a solid relationship model.

Several years ago, I was talking with a friend when he confided that he had finally found a girl that he could see himself going the distance with. However, neither he nor his girlfriend had a successful model of what marriage should look like as both their parents had divorced early. Not surprisingly, this had contributed to his apprehension of commitment and now that he had found the love of his life, he had no good mentor on which to place his focus.

Thankfully, parents are not the only good models of marriage. Most of us have grandparents, pastors, teachers, aunts, uncles, and many more who would be more than happy to offer their secrets of a happy relationship if you were only to ask. These people already want to see you succeed and are willing to make the effort to help you.

Mentors often carry with them knowledge and advice that only time and experience can bring. They are more than willing to pass on this knowledge if we are only willing to listen. Many people get advice, but those who are truly successful actually take the time to learn from it. The most beneficial role a mentor will play is that of a counselor. They will tell you stories of times when they thought their relationship could go no further, but by determination and effort, they were able to move past their problems. They will tell you that true love means you fall in love with the same person over and over again, and they will challenge your thinking in ways you never thought possible.

Having a mentor can provide a positive role model. Your advisors may be able to offer their opinions but a mentor can offer solid advice because they have experienced the same things you may be going through. You can observe your mentor, either from their past or present, and learn valuable lessons.

A good mentor can also be a goal to strive toward. When you set a goal, you will have something to work toward. When you look at your mentor, perhaps a man or woman who has been married ten, twenty, or forty years of marriage, their relationship may be your goal.

One summer I was looking to lose a little weight, but lacked the motivation necessary to do so. I found myself flipping through a magazine, when I saw a picture of a guy I wished I looked like. I quickly tore the page out and taped it to my refrigerator. Every time I approached my fridge, I was motivated by that photo. I started to eat better and work out more. Of course it is no surprise that I lost the weight, and reached my

goal. Goals are a great way to measure progress, especially when you feel that your relationship is at a standstill or when you are completely tired and frustrated. Focus on how far you have come, and these small indicators can give you the motivation you need to press forward. Your mentor can act as a picture taped to your life's wall that will keep you motivated to create a truly perfect relationship.

Finding a mentor is a start, but your ultimate goal is to be a mentor as well. Perhaps you think you aren't mentorship material or you don't have enough experience. You may doubt that anybody would even want to listen to you. As I mentioned earlier, 89 percent of what we learn is through our eyes. The best way for you to be a mentor is to live what you learn around your friends and family.

Somebody once said that a person is a sum total of their passions. I have found personally that what I spend most of my time with has a huge impact on my actions. For example, if you consume your time with being angry at your partner, this emotion will quickly affect not only your attitude toward your woman but also your actions. Likewise, if you spend most of your time thinking about your woman in a positive manner, your attitude and actions will reflect these emotions.

Soon after my ill-advised rant about my wife with that stranger, I made a deal with myself. I decided that I would never again speak negatively about my wife in public or discuss my personal life with anybody who was not on my board of advisors. Imagine that you own your dream vintage car. Of course you would never go to anyone and say, "Yeah, she sure is running like junk. Smokes all the time, and she needs a new carburetor. She may do the quarter mile in just less than five minutes, but I am not sure if she will ever run like new." Of course not! You brag to complete strangers and those closest to you about the wonderful piece of machinery you own. You would talk about the car with the respect it deserves and the potential it has. If you truly have found the girl of your dreams, treat her with the love and respect she deserves; talk about her potential, not her weaknesses.

Any good goal will be challenged. Only a few days after I decided to only speak highly of my wife, I found myself put on the spot in a major way. I was riding my dirt bike at the track with a group of guys and we got to talking between motos. Some of the guys started talking about their wives or girlfriends, and whatever particular annoyance was on their mind at the moment.

There were so many of us, I thought that the conversation would die before it got to me. No such luck. Like a two-headed dragon that breathed fire and nerve gas, the conversation only got more heated as the guys around me vented their grievances. As the dreaded moment arrived, and all eyes looked at me, I remembered my pledge. My head felt light and I thought for sure that I would drop my 250 lb. bike on myself. Yet, I took a deep breath, and started telling the guys how wonderful my wife was. I can't remember what I said, but when I was finished, there was silence. I stared at the dirt, trying to avoid the gazes I knew were coming. Then, all at once, each guy started to say great things about their wives and girlfriends as well.

About a week later, I was at an NBA basketball game with some of the same guys from the track. A couple of them went to get some hot dogs, and while they were gone, one of the guys said that what I had said had convicted him that day on the track. He realized that he needed to be more sensitive to his wife. Maybe I'm not the greatest

mentor in the world, but at that moment I felt great. I had completed my first task as a role model and my actions were reflecting where I wanted my heart to be.

Managing a relationship is big business and nobody can handle big business alone. Some people think they are not “happy ever afters,” but I disagree. Your relationship can be anything you want it to be and you can reach your goal with an inner circle of advisors and mentors. Your advisory board should be the people you trust the most and can count on to be completely honest when you need it. Sometimes you are going to be the one who needs correction, even though there is the myth that women are just hard to live with. Use your advisory board for growth and when you need advice.

An advisory board differs from a mentor. You look to your board when you need help through something but you turn to your mentor when you need help reaching something. Your mentor is your role model. Listen to them and question their expertise. Give yourself a high example to work toward. Live what you learn and you will be a role model to those around you. Knowledge is not just what you know, but also the sources that you can go to find information.

Put it in Practice: Find the best! Those who are closest to you will decide your future. Determine what your weaknesses are. Now find those that can help you with those weaknesses. Narrow your choices by those who can be trusted, have integrity, and who will challenge you the most. Ask them into your inner circle of advisors. Set your boundaries by telling them what you need, and utilize their skills.

Find a mentor in someone who has a relationship you admire. Ask them to be a mentor to you, because you want a similar relationship. Listen and learn from them. Live what you have learned through your actions and words and become a mentor as well

Quick Bite: “He who can take advice is sometimes superior to him who can give it.” Erica Jong, author.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Team Work

The 1980's heralded an economic recession for the United States, and for many families, money was tight and the future looked very dim. In the midst of despair and discouragement, an old hockey coach began to work with a group of young American hockey players in the hope of turning them into champions. As the 1980 Winter Olympics rolled around, nobody thought the United States even had a chance at a medal, let alone the gold medal. Still, Coach Herb Brooks was not to be discouraged, and in Lake Placid, New York, his team of ordinary skaters made Olympic history in what would later be known as the “miracle on ice.”

For one team of skaters, their futures were changed forever. Yet, corporate America continued on as it had always been; the recession continuing to cling to the life force of the American economy. Perhaps many businesses could have learned a lot from Brooks' ideology. His secret was teamwork. He believed that his team would win through the effort of the entire team, not solely on an individual achiever. He chose skaters that would work together as a team, rather than try to be the hero. He wanted each skater's strengths to compliment one another and contribute to the team collectively. Some of the athletes on Brooks' team were not the nation's best collegiate players; a flaw the Olympic committee had a hard time overlooking. Yet, Brooks saw many of them for their potential in his team, not for what they were currently.

The 1980 Olympics held a dominating hero mentality, a mentality mirrored by much of the rest of the world as well. Most business owners and managers felt the most comfortable when everything stayed the same in their companies. “If it ain't broke; don't fix it!” was their motto, and the American economy matched it; it went nowhere. Many companies were content with where they were, rather than taking the chance to find potential solutions that would move their corporation to the next level. Ironically, instead of businesses staying in a comfortable pattern, they found themselves plummeting economically.

As the first gulf war drew to a close, the country was in an upswing. Business was picking up, and times were changing rapidly. During the nineties, America adopted the belief that everything would naturally transform for the better and began to prepare for this change. The idea of a Super CEO emerged, and the concept of one man or woman, leading the team to greatness took charge. These preparations spurred the American economy out of an almost decade of recession.

As the nineties drew to a close, again the nagging fear of another recession continued to eat away at many people's subconscious. The technological bubble of the stock market was threatening to crash and businesses everywhere realized that they

must come up with a new strategy if they wanted to survive. They came up with the revolutionary notion that when the leadership becomes team oriented, the entire corporation could experience purposeful growth. These executives came up with a new acronym, TEAM: Together Everyone Achieves More. This relatively new concept was the catalyst that pulled many businesses from the grips of a recession, as well as a contributor to the success of the Internet, technology, and many of the modern super companies we see today.

Businesses realized that in order to sustain their company's growth, they needed to combine two elements. The first concept was to come to the realization that nobody knows everything and that all people have weaknesses. The idea of a super CEO running the company gave way to the idea of the team. As the administration and the employees functioned together as a team, the individual strengths contributed to the strength of the team. This combined effort of the team revolutionized corporate America and brought prosperity that before was only dreamed about.

The second concept that was introduced to the business world was the idea of purposeful growth. When a business is always changing, the team can prepare for these changes. This concept protects against falling into a rut. Take for example the centerfielder in a baseball game. When he stays limber and mobile before the pitch is even thrown, he is much more likely to move quickly and greatly increase his chances of catching the ball.

Relationships seem to have followed a reverse progression in comparison to the past 30 years of business history. Hundreds of years ago, a relationship's success was largely due to the teamwork between a man and woman. These early ancestors operated as one, with each member contributing his or her strengths to the team, regardless of the desire to expand individually. This teamwork was a necessity to maintain and sustain life.

However, as modern technology made life easier, and the definition of gender roles and relationships shifted, a single leadership oriented family evolved. Many relied on the "Super Dad" mentality where a relationship's success was largely based on what the man could accomplish for the family.

Most recently, relationships have morphed into a very similar situation as corporate America found themselves in the 1980s. Society favors individualism and competition between the sexes. Each person attempts to control the other as each vies for the power in the relationship. Ultimately they feel most comfortable when nothing changes as they avoid fierce confrontation. These relationships are based on divided leadership and appear to function best when they have reached a period of immobility.

Relationships were never meant to be this hard. I believe that we have become so obsessed with our own personal goals and personal power struggle, that we have forged a deep canyon between the sexes. Our modern society desperately needs to build a bridge over this crevasse. Instead of fighting for our individual rights and glory, we need to work at bringing the genders together. We need to look at our differences as complimentary rather than what divides us. We need to return to our team mentality.

To understand how we have reached such a division, let's first look at a few misconceptions about relationships. Many people believe that relationships will ultimately take care of themselves. They have the subconscious notion that relationships

are much like fairy tales and they wait patiently in their tall towers or lying on glass-covered beds, waiting for their love to rescue them from singleness. Nothing could be farther from the truth. You have to make the opportunity to have a good relationship and capitalize on it when it does arrive.

Just like the business world of the new millennium, we need to look at two important concepts that need to be adopted in order for our relationship recession to end. Successful relationships need to be *team driven* and they require *purposeful growth*.

John Wooden, all-star coach for UCLA, said, “When opportunity does come, most people will not even recognize it.” Most people already have a fairytale relationship, but they just are not aware of it. Women are waiting for their Prince Charming and men are looking for Ms. Right. Time passes and when their fairytale does not miraculously happen, the couple breaks up or files for divorce. Their mistake is that they do not lead their relationship toward a happy ever after; they simply sit around and wait for it to happen. If you want such a relationship, you must prepare for the change that needs to occur.

“To improve is to change, to be perfect is to change often,” said Winston Churchill. Change is the necessary ingredient that separates a stagnant or dead relationship from a thriving one. Each individual needs to be willing to change if the relationship is going to be able to move forward.

Bob Buford became CEO of a small television company in Texas when he inherited it from his mother, the original founder. Over the next three decades, Buford Television, Inc., expanded from a single TV station to multiple cable entities encompassing several states. Their rate of growth was an almost unbelievable 25 percent a year.

In an attempt to explain such incredible growth, management expert Peter Drucker said, “The leaders of the company were either crazy, crooked, or open to change based on the company’s growth and opportunities and challenges that expansion poses for them.”¹ Change is the biggest factor between a company that stays the same year after year, and one that grows at an exploding rate. If you want your relationship to grow, you need to not only expect, but embrace change.

“Teamwork makes the dream work.” This Maxwell quote made such an impression on me that I began to think of ways to improve my relationship with those five simple words. Though Maxwell was talking about teamwork in the corporate world, I couldn't help but think how this concept could revolutionize the relationship world.

Society has long perpetuated the idea that women are inferior to men, a concept known as the Neanderthal mentality. Such a concept is the death sentence to any healthy relationship. In no way are women inferior to men; men and women offer different talents to the relationship. These combined talents increase the strength of the relationship. I like to think of relationship as being a synonym for *unity*, and singleness a synonym for individuality. There is no limit to how perfect a relationship can become when two people are working toward the common goal of the relationship, instead of their individual needs or wants.

When you work together as a team, you can't help but grow together as a couple.

Together you will advance faster than by yourself. Your wife or girlfriend will be able to complement the areas where you may have weaknesses and vice versa. Together you make a more efficient couple.

People usually change only under four circumstances: *Maintenance Motivated Change* is motivated by an attempt to keep the status quo, and such growth only continues until the status quo is regained. *Educationally Motivated Change* happens when you steadily decide to grow and be prepared for change. *Pain Motivated Change* occurs when you have been hurt either physically or emotionally enough that you change to avoid this pain. And lastly, the most significant change is *Love Motivated Change*, a change that occurs when you care enough for the other person that you want to change. That is where you will see the effects of teamwork helping mold your relationship.

What does teamwork in a relationship look like? How will it function? My wife and I have taken the idea that we are better together than separately. Individualism has no place in our relationship model. We both have abilities in places where the other lacks significantly. When we operate our relationship under this understanding, the benefits are fantastic. When we view each other as half of our relationship team, we are there to encourage each other's failures and congratulate the other's successes. When I think of my wife as my teammate, I lose the desire to fight to be number one.

My wife and I have come to understand that if we want to achieve anything in our relationship, we can only do so together. As a unified team, we can accomplish feats that we could only dream about alone. Together we will reach the goals we have set for the relationship, and ultimately for our personal lives. A relationship requires both of its team members to survive. Just as in the business world, great achievements are a direct result of teamwork and partnership, not of individual ability. I have also found that when I allow my wife to be my partner, she helps save me from many stupid mistakes I may have made on my own. Teamwork oriented relationships are the bridge that can cover the canyon that generations of myths have created about the different sexes.

Embrace Change

"I love you, you are perfect, now change!" Such a statement seems to be the underlying message of most modern relationships. Most people believe that change needs to happen in their relationship, but ironically it is usually directed at the other person. They believe themselves flawless, or at least their flaws aren't affecting the relationship negatively. Most of us honestly believe that if our woman would change a few key areas in her life, *our* relationship would be perfect. How selfish!

Over the years, I have met many people who actually believe that they can ultimately change the person they are with into the person they want. How many times have I heard, "Well, he may not be perfect now, but that will change when we get married." And then there is the somewhat frustrated young man who states, "She doesn't do what I want her to do, but when we get married she won't have a choice." Sound familiar? Everyone can find flaws in another person, but somehow we are unwilling to even consider that we are the ones that need to change or adapt.

No relationship was built in a day. Instead they develop gradually over time, and only with effort and the willingness to improve yourself. A relationship requires daily care, daily growth, and daily change. Most of the time, the individual who needs to change is you.

Trying to control another person never works. The only person you can be responsible for and control is yourself. Some men (and women) may be able to control their partner for a time, but sooner or later it always ends in disaster. We have enough trouble trying to control our own universe; why do we try so hard to control another's? If you spend most of your time trying to control your woman, you will inevitably drive yourself crazy and ruin the relationship. Stop treating your woman like a child. Focus on taking care of yourself and your woman will be fine doing the same for herself.

We cannot control what happens but we can only control how we respond to it. Our responsibility is to control our responses, reactions, and actions. We can control ourselves through our attitudes and perceptions of our surroundings. When we have complete control over our actions, our surroundings will be taken care of.

A story is told of a man who was thrown in prison although he was completely innocent. During his time in prison, he spent his time writing letters. One stated that he had learned to be content with plenty and content with little. He controlled his surroundings by controlling himself.

Your future is in your hands. When you decide to change and take a step toward your goals, you are literally declaring your future. Embrace change; it will be your steady companion as long as you continue to grow. If you and your woman decided that your vision is to take your relationship to the greatest possible limits, you will both make that effort together. Each step you take will bring you closer to your goal. Never let what happened yesterday, good or bad, take up too much of today. If the past consumes your present, you are stunting your potential growth. Your only future must be built upon growth and change, if you want to reach your goals.

Miracle Growth – It is not just for flowers

If you wake up in the morning, you are naturally growing, right? Unfortunately, most of us stop growing in our late teens and from that point on, the only way for growth to occur is through purposeful personal growth.

Successful businesses implement the idea of purposeful growth into their business models. Most businesses expect growth at start-up, but as they mature, business growth tends to plateau. If a business is constantly growing, even if it is to be prepared for change, they are in the best position to become and stay successful.

So how do you have growth in your relationship? Most likely you aren't running a multi billion-dollar business but would like to have a meaningful relationship. Well, the plan for both is surprisingly similar. Before you can grow, you must know where you would like to grow. Make a tangible plan that you can use to give your relationship direction. All big business experts started with a plan. Donald Trump didn't inherit his empire; neither did Steve Jobs suddenly find himself wealthy. If you want to have a rich relationship with the girl of your dreams, you too can start your daily growth with a

simple plan.

In your relationship there are two types of growth, both of which will benefit your relationship. The first is *individual growth*, where you grow as an individual person. Perhaps this growth is spurred on by your partner, but it is based on your strengths and your future goals. It is the growth that increases who you are and who you want to become in your relationship. It feeds off of your desire to improve yourself, and is encouraged by your partner's enthusiasm as you grow. You may not think she notices, but as you change and become the man you were intended to be, she won't be able to help but notice, and be influenced and affected by your growth.

The second type of growth is *relational growth*. This growth is based upon common interests and goals for your future. Each of you should be focused on the same dreams or visions for your future, your relationship, and your passions. Through relational growth, you will be bonded to one another and create a foundation where you can build your relationship; layer by layer, day by day.

This took me a long time to understand in order for me to change: I was going to have to change something that I did on a day-to-day basis. You initiate change. No matter if you are growing together as a couple or whether you do it individually, it will impact your relationship. When you take the time to grow your knowledge in the relationship, your leadership will impact your mate. If you work toward a teamwork relationship, then her growth will impact you as well.

Over the years, I learned two of the most enduring facts about growth in any relationship. First, all growth occurs the same for everyone. Everybody grows step by step, little by little, one step at a time. I cannot rush my relationship growth nor overload it. I must be patient. As long as I am learning, I will grow. Secondly, being in a relationship will help you gain ground. Most couples start out the same, but as the years pass, you can begin to tell the difference between those couples that have taken the active time to grow together and the couples that are just waiting for the relationship to happen. It separates you from the mundane.

Growth that occurs from teamwork in a relationship is like conquering new land. You are going to go through a lot together, both good and bad, but you will grow and learn from every experience. You will file away memories and begin to build an empire of your past accomplishments together. Each day that passes, you gain more land, and when you look back on what you have gained, you will realize that you have a lot worth fighting for. Then when you reach tough times, you won't give up but will continue to press ahead.

When the University of Southern California won two straight national championships in 2003 and 2004, they had gained a lot of ground. Over a three-year period, they had three Heisman candidates, one Heisman winner, and a Bilitnikoff candidate. As a team, they had invested too much into the program to let any team members destroy their accomplishments. When they brought a new recruit to the team, he too felt the pressure to succeed and fight for what had been built. A culture of winning had been developed, and everyone wanted to be a part of it and protect what had been built. That is what teamwork does for you. You can build a winning culture as well.

“I never worry about action, only inaction,” said Winston Churchill. Life

happens, relationships happen, but when you sit around waiting for them to happen, you will miss them. Take time to set up goals that you want your relationship to reach and then spend the time doing whatever is necessary to reach that target. This process will prepare you for change, and equip you with the tools that you will need when it comes.

What Next?

You may be asking yourself, “What happens after I take the time to grow my relationship?” Simple. You will be making memories and creating bonds that will last you a lifetime. Having a life filled with great memories and an amazing relationship are two things that you will never regret.

“Remember it is a marathon. Ten years – fifteen years. You have got to get up every day with a new idea, a new spin, and you have got to bring it here every day,” said Jack Welch, CEO of General Electric (GE). His successor, Jeff Immelt, added, “His advice was right. It is the sustained ability to change that really counts.” GE is commonly known as one of the most important corporations to ever affect America. The ability to change helped GE accomplish that identity, and change can do the same for you. It will give your relationship an identity of its own.

Does your relationship have an identity? Are you continuing to change? Have you built a culture for both you and your woman? When outsiders look at you, do they see individuality or identity as a couple? Your growth as a couple will not only create a culture for you to be proud of but it will also create an identity for others to see you as.

The University of Southern California has established an identity and a culture through their hard work and determination. Young men from across the nation wanted to be a part of that culture and identify themselves with the team because of it. Likewise, Jack Welch had established an identity for GE in the same manner. You, as well, can establish an identity for your relationship by your growth. If not you may find yourself in an identity crisis – a time when you do not know what your relationship stands for or where it is going.

Antoine de Saint-Exupery, famous French author, said, “Love is not just looking at each other; it is looking in the same direction.” Growth will help you to create the legendary relationship you want. When you are both focused on one common goal of each other’s happiness, insignificant frustrations and annoyances won’t matter anymore. My wife and I make sure that we are doing everything in our power to make sure the other is happy regardless of what we may be feeling at the moment. We are constantly making an effort to learn everything we can to make ourselves better people and improve our relationship. We share our newfound knowledge with each other, because our mission is to keep growing and changing so we can be ready for anything ahead.

Teamwork is like the oil in a vehicle; you never really understand its importance until it is removed. While it is full, it keeps everything well lubricated and running efficiently. However once it is taken out, things begin to heat up, wear out quickly, and eventually seize. The value of a relationship is found in sharing and making memories together. Together you will reach places in your life that can only be enjoyed as a couple.

Take a look at the team trials in the Tour De France. For Seven-time winner, Lance Armstrong, his teammates each take a turn riding in the front of the pack, providing less wind resistance for those behind them. When a rider falls out of this formation, he loses decreased resistance provided by the rest of his team; it is important for each member of the team to stay close. When the lead rider tires, he is replaced by one of the other riders behind who has had a chance to rest. The entire team is working for the betterment of Armstrong, and when they get into dangerous areas they surround and protect him. Each team member encourages each other. When you stand together, both when you are weak and strong, you are sure to succeed as a team.

You will find that growth in a teamwork relationship accomplishes three things. First, growth will mature your relationship. It will prepare you as a couple to face challenges, and benefit you as an individual. Secondly, when you grow as a team, your life will take some of the most amazing adventures, and you will store up awesome memories. Lastly, growing is a lifelong process. Once you allow yourself to grow in your relationship, you will also grow as a person. This growth will continue your whole life, and you won't want to stop. Make *growth*, *teamwork*, and *change* priorities in your life. They are keys to unlocking a relationship's greatest potential.

Put it in Practice: Once you are in a committed relationship, set goals. Once you have established where you want to go together, take the time to work toward these goals. Grow purposefully toward the culture and identity you want your relationship to have. Support your partner in her individual growth and make the effort to help her reach her goals. When you work at growing together, you will have a sense of purpose and community. When you try to grow alone, you will feel isolated. Growth is a slow process, something that is cultivated daily; do not expect significant results immediately.

Quick Bite: You can achieve your goals faster with teamwork.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Focus

I had been staring at the picture for the better part of an hour. I'm sure that the people around me must have wondered what was so incredibly fascinating. A guy to my left joined me and stared at the framed print with an equally confused look on his face. The clerk at the register couldn't muffle her mirth and kept giggling under her breath. After what she believed was a long enough sentence of embarrassment, she approached me and asked me if she could help me find the hidden picture in the magic eye poster that I had been so patiently staring at me. At this point, I had lost all semblance of my usual independence and almost begging said, "Please!"

She took my arm, and led me away from the picture. We walked around the kiosk in the middle of the mall, and then returned to the frustrating picture. She advised me to stand to the left of the place I had been standing, and then explained that the key to seeing the picture was to look at it from a different perspective.

She went on to explain that the lines and squiggles were designed as a distraction, and the key to seeing the hidden picture was to focus beyond the distractions to discover the beauty within. If I concentrated not on the picture, but beyond it, the illusion would become clear. Instead of a jumbled mess of random shapes and colors, it would be a beautiful 3D photo, she promised. The portal into the picture was through this one-dimensional window.

I began to stare at the portrait again, determined to crack the annoying prison of shapes and colors that held this so-called picture captive. I would not let this simple picture get the better of me! I let go of the "distractions" that stalked the foreground, and fought to penetrate into the distance of the illusion. Slowly an image began to appear. At first only a piece of it was uncovered, then an entire outline was revealed. As I continued to focus deeper, the entire image was exposed and became a fantastic 3D image. I couldn't contain my excitement, and let out a howl. The people who had gathered around me began to clap and laugh with elation. For the first time, I was finally able to see the hidden illusion of a sailboat cresting a wave on the ocean.

I thanked the store clerk for her help, and headed to work on the long list of shopping that needed to be completed before the holidays. As I walked away the clerk called after me, "Remember – you must focus beyond the distractions to find the hidden picture." I found it humorous that once I could see the picture, only about 10 percent of the picture was distracting. Most of the picture was consumed by the boat and waves. I thought about what the clerk had told me longer than I care to admit, but her words gripped my thoughts for the next few days. So many times we get caught up in the noise or the distracting gray moments of life and lose focus on what is really important.

Distractions act as noise that diverts your focus from the real beauty of life. Imagine the initial feeling of infatuation you have with a new love in your life; not even a worldwide calamity would make you forget her. But as time passes, other things begin to consume your time, emotions, attitude, or strength. When this happens, little problems block your view and you become frustrated and confused. Perhaps you may wonder what you saw in the person in the first place. The least important things in your relationship become distractions that eventually consume the more important things.

“It is not what you look at that matters, it is what you see,” said author Henry Thoreau. She may leave the cap off the toothpaste, or chew her food with her mouth slightly open. Perhaps she spends too much time with her family or she does her personal errands on Saturdays. Because this distracts you, maybe you begin to remember an ex-girlfriend and all the things she did that you loved. Let go of your past relationships. Something was missing or you would still be together! You cannot move forward with your current relationship if you are still holding onto the successes or failures of past relationships. Whatever the distraction, many couples get caught up in the unimportant details and lose the focus of the big picture beneath.

As a responsible partner in the relationship, it is your duty to recognize when you may be focusing on the ‘noise’ in the picture instead of the picture itself. When you get trapped by the distractions in your life and relationship, change your perspective. You may find that looking at your relationship from another angle is all you need to see the beautiful picture of your woman once again. Focus on one thing that you love about her, then, as you focus on the positive, all the rest of her wonderful characteristics will come into sight. What you see in your relationship is exactly linked to what you are focusing on. If you spend all your time thinking about the negative, your woman will seem like the worst possible catch. But, if you focus on all the things that made you initially fall in love with her, she will always seem like a dream come true. You will always find what you are looking for when you know where to look.

Threshold Moment

On October 15, 2001, Paul Horn, the senior vice president of IBM Research, stood in front of a group of preeminent technicians at the agenda conference and completely changed their world. In the months leading up to this conference, IBM had sensed an urgent need in the I/T field, and had been working to find an answer. But on this crisp fall day, IBM presented what it believed would be the answer.

Up to this point, technology had been looking at the problem with limited perspective. These professionals believed that the information explosion and the integration of technology into everyday life had exploded. In short, they believed that the demand for I/T services would far exceed the supply. They believed that the problem would not only linger but also increase as much as 100 times over the next six years.

Because of this, a mass attempt was made to recruit new applicants into the I/T field in an effort to keep up with the demand. However, the complexity of the modern computer systems was making this task difficult. IBM realized that they were quickly heading toward a threshold moment; a time when the need was so urgent that it required

a new way of conceiving both the definition of the problem and the solution. IBM proposed a revolutionary solution: autonomic computing. They suggested that the industry build computer systems that regulated themselves in a manner similar to the human nervous system that regulates and protects our bodies.¹

This was a brilliant example of the importance of taking a moment to step back to approach the problem from a new dimension. The computer industry changed forever that day when IBM called on everyone to partner, T.E.A.M, as a way of overcoming a seemingly complex problem.

One afternoon, my wife and I reached a threshold moment during our dating relationship. Part of my past had started to greatly interfere with our relationship. We had become so consumed with this noise, that our relationship had become one dimensional. Instead of giving up on our relationship, we decided to look at our relationship from a different angle. We decided that if the problem was still as big as we thought, that would be a sign to go our separate ways.

Our problem was that we had allowed this minor issue to distract us so much that we had lost focus on what we really liked about each other. We were victims to a problem of our own making. As we worked through this seeming impasse, we came up with a brilliant solution, *autonomic focusing*. We forced ourselves to focus on what we *knew* was important instead of what we *felt* was important. We each wrote a letter listing everything we liked about the other person. The result? Our mammoth problem shrank to its true size. What had appeared to be a breaking point element in our relationship, only amounted to about .01 percent of our relationship. More than 99.99 percent were all the things we like about each other. We were focusing on the distraction and once we were able to break through the illusion, we were able to see clearly.

Temporary bad times are bound to happen. You will make mistakes. She may not like your friends or family; you may not like hers. Instead of focusing on the “noise” in your relationship, practice autonomic focusing to put your focus back where it should be. Learn to recognize when you are focusing on the negative and automatically return your focus to the positive. As this technique becomes habit, your subconscious will simply refocus your attention to what matters. Your focus determines the size of any problem. Your relationship will appear exactly where you are looking.

“It is in our darkest moments that we must focus to see the light,” said Aristotle Onassis, a world famous Greek shipping magnate. Unfortunately, no one is immune from breakups or divorce. Sometimes with a person's best efforts, the inevitable happens regardless. One of the saddest divorces I have ever witnessed occurred between two of my closest friends. After only a few years of being married, their focus turned to areas of their lives they thought the other lacked. As each day passed, they found their problem becoming even worse. As circumstantial evidence seemingly proved their positions, the gulf between them grew substantially. They were only focusing on the negative side of their perceived problem; their relationship had become one dimensional.

As the couple continued to drift apart, the wife accepted a new position in sales and soon traveled to the East Coast on a business trip. The time away was thought to be well needed. During her time away, she confided in some of the other women on the trip. The trip turned out to be just what they *did not* need. After receiving superficial

counsel from these women who barely knew her and had no idea about the big picture of her problem, the wife quickly returned to pack her belongings and start a new life. She had been duped to believe that her husband was holding her back. They soon divorced.

People who get divorced do not have bigger problems or more problems. The difference between those couples who stay together and those who end up in a divorce court, is their commitment and focus. Your relationship is as good as your perception of it. For example, take a moment right now to look for something black. You may be thinking of a frame in a room or the words on this page. You will always find what you are looking for when you know where to look.

Imagine that we are observing a newly married couple. The wife focuses on superficial ways that her man is an immature, bad husband. She may complain that he never helps with the dishes or forgets to mow the lawn. She feels he always has time for his friends but never has time for her. Her perspective is that he is a terrible husband because she focuses solely on these things. She fails to see the ways in which he is an amazing husband because she is so wrapped in what he lacks. If she looked beyond the distractions, she would have seen that she wouldn't be able to find a better man than him. Her focus is on the things she did not like about him rather than everything she loves about him. If she allows her dissatisfaction to continue, she may be encouraged by equally negative counsel to destroy her marriage. Focus on the positive. Whatever is lovely, whatever is pure, whatever is praiseworthy, and whatever is of a good report – focus on those things in your relationship.

If you focus on the positive things in your relationship, you will place high value on what is important. There will be times when both of you are human; everybody makes mistakes. When reality hits, refuse to allow yourself to become wrapped up in an aggravated pity-party. Don't focus on the current situation but rather turn your sites to how your woman has been in the past and what she most likely will be again in the future. Great leaders do not see someone as they are but rather how they could be. Everybody has moments; be sympathetic and understanding as you would want your woman to be if you were the one making the mistake.

Progression vs. Regression

By the time IBM decided to reorganize their business structure, the need for trained technicians was greater than anyone had ever thought possible. Realizing this, IBM took drastic measures, taking their company where no other company in the industry had ventured. Their proactive measures entirely redesigned the way that businesses had operated in the past, moving the industry into the future. Instead of focusing on the number of individuals needed to operate and maintain the computers, they worked at eliminating the problem all together, thereby making it possible that important computer operations could run without the need for human intervention. Instead of maintenance, IBM focused on progression.

Consider for a moment what the rest of the industry was attempting to do before IBM revolutionized the industry. Their solutions were only reactive ways they had formulated to contain the growing need. They focused on finding more manpower but

this was only an attempt to repair the problem, not how to correct the problem. With the immediate need so demanding, as well as the rapid increase of the complexity and diversity of the field, the technology industry was actually regressing. The more they tried to contain the problem, the more it continued to grow in size and strength.

Where is your focus? Are you focusing inside the box or outside? Is your focus one-dimensional or do you see all the angles? Many times when we are at a crossroad in our lives, we tend to focus on the past, rather than the present or the future. As the problem begins to grow in size and outside influences become distracting, it is hard to focus elsewhere. Although IBM's solution did little to alleviate the immediate need, it focused on *correcting* the need.

Your relationship can be just as revolutionary as IBM's solution, if you are willing to focus on the future, rather than look for ways to maintain the past. Your focus is what propels your relationship forward or keeps it in a rut. When you direct your eyes to the future, you are preparing for what lies ahead. For example, you may be reading this book in order to either find, create or maintain a successful relationship with that special woman. You are preparing yourself for the future. By making conscious efforts to multiply your growth and ability to adapt to changing needs, you're progressing your relationship.

When you focus on the past, you are only reacting and attempting to repair it. When your focus remains in the past, you stop paying attention to the future. Your ability to grow and adapt regresses. You become stagnant; unable to prepare for the future.

Vince Lombardi, all-star coach for the Green Bay Packers, said, "The harder you work, the harder it is to surrender." The more effort you put into the task, the more likely you are going to complete it successfully. You will continue to discover, uncover, and create new ways for success. Your focus is directly related to your effort.

Most people react to their lives, rather than take the time to control and manage life appropriately. Unfortunately, many talented people find themselves rotting away as they wait for their lives to begin, instead of making it happen.

Paula White, world-class motivational speaker, says, "You can overcome your condition when you know your position." Most people misunderstand the chain of authority in their lives. If you understand the chain of authority in your life, you can be better prepared for the future. For example, a person who finds himself merely reacting to life has an authority chain somewhat like this: life, circumstances, self and/or mate. A couple that seems to have everything in place may have a good reason behind it. Instead of reacting to their circumstances, they are managing the circumstances. These couples have a different chain of authority that looks like this: self and/or mate, relationship, circumstances.

When you see a couple that reacts to their circumstances, most likely they are following the first chain of authority to their lives. Simply reacting to life slows your progression. A person who focuses on progression will put their relationship as the first link in the chain, rather than the last. They don't see their relationship as a victim to their circumstances, but they see circumstances as victims to their relationship. These couples focus on the future so they can be prepared to handle whatever comes their way. They take responsibility for their actions and outcome.

Consider the main reason that breaks up most couples - finances. When money

becomes tight, many couples find this circumstance very distracting. The couple who understands they are the first link of authority will accept this adjustment as temporary and change their spending habits to accommodate. The couple who sees themselves as the last link in the chain will allow the problem to pull them wherever it goes. As the circumstances become complex, they find their relationship becoming more complex. They refuse to adapt to their situation, hoping that the problem will pass with time. They believe they are victims to their problems. With time, this relationship will eventually fall apart. You can change your circumstance when you know your position.

The Importance of Focus

Your focus can determine your happiness, and accelerate your appreciation for your relationship. Couples who spend most of their time repairing their relationship are destined to repeat the past. They can't see beyond the problem because they continue to focus on it and not the solution. Problems are inevitable but try to focus most of your time on the solution, and as little as possible on the problem itself.

“Happiness is not having what you want; it is wanting what you have,” an unknown author once said. Your focus will become blurry if you spend most of your time focusing on what you don't have. It is a choice that sometimes requires effort. Most men find themselves looking elsewhere when their relationship becomes a little boring or their girlfriend or wife starts doing things that annoy them. They find themselves longing for a different life and live vicariously through the lives of others. Their perspective becomes distorted and they start to compare their lives against those they envy. Perhaps they see a guy who is juggling a relationship between three girls or the guy who has a new date every week. They start to compare what they think is their unhappy relationship to these fantasy lives. This kind of thinking will affect your relationship. Do not compare yourselves to others; you will only find yourself always wishing for something more.² The grass on the other side of the fence is never greener; it is only different. Instead, learn to enjoy what you do have and you will not need to compare yourself to anyone else.

I have learned over the years that when I focus on all the things that I love about my wife, they far outweigh anything that I may find negative about her. I find myself not only happy, but craving the woman that I am married to. When I find myself feeling negative about her, or disappointed in something she did, I pull out that letter I wrote of all the things I love about her, and remind myself just how lucky I am to have her in my life. Perspective changes everything. You can complain about the thorns or you can enjoy the roses. Through the depths of your negativity, you can find the positive.

“A fifty-goal scorer sees the back of the net. A five-goal scorer can tell you the brand name of the pads of every goalie in the league,” said Wayne Gretzky, all-star hockey player. A successful relationship relies on perspective. Are you a fifty-goal scorer or a five-goal scorer? You can be satisfied and happy in your relationship as long as you focus on the positive. Happiness is where you focus your attention.

Put it in Practice: Take a piece of paper and write down everything you love

Focus

about the woman in your life. Use as many sheets of paper as you need. When you are finished, sign and date it and show it to your girl. Store it in a safe place. Perhaps you frame it with the inscription, “My circumstances are victims to me and my relationship.” Whenever you begin to focus on the “noise” in your relationship, look at this “Magic Relationship Note,” and focus on it. Appreciate everything you love about her and by doing so you will avoid having a threshold moment.

Quick Bite: You can find evidence for almost anything. Focus on the positive and you will never lose the focus of what is right about your relationship.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

Altitude through Application

I truly admire Winston Churchill. Not only was he a brilliant statesman and leader but he was a man of integrity. One of my favorite quotes from this great man states, “My most brilliant achievement was my ability to persuade my wife to marry me.” This is a man who saved the entire world from the clutches of Adolf Hitler, presented some of the most significant speeches of all time, and led a nation to greatness. Yet he claims his highest achievement was persuading his wife to marry him. Wouldn’t it be nice if we could all say the same?

Throughout this book, I have laid out the business plan, or game plan if you will, to creating a relationship that you can say the same about. Beyond this, only you can make the difference between settling or having a relationship that is the crowning achievement of your life. The most important step is the application of these principles.

Years ago, I set two main goals in my life. First, I wanted to find an occupation I loved and then fight for it. To do this, I had to determine what I am best at, love to do, and then go for the top. Secondly, I wanted to find the most fantastic woman and persuade her to be my wife. I wanted to spend the rest of my life spoiling her absolutely rotten, no matter what it took.

I set these two areas as the highest priorities in my life because they are what most people spend the majority of their time doing. At least eight hours a day is devoted to making a living with the rest of their time devoted to the person with whom they have chosen to spend the rest of their lives. I decided if my life was going to center around these areas, I was going to make certain that they provided me with the greatest amount of happiness. I learned I control my happiness by my actions.

When you decide to commit yourself to the life of another, you have a responsibility to improve their life. This does not occur magically when you say “I do” or when you ask her to be your wife. It begins as soon as you become committed to one another. You must increase what you contribute. You have a responsibility to improve her life, not remove from it that which benefits you. If you make the principles in this book habits in your life, you can release the power intended for your relationship. When you release the power, your relationship will expand.

How do you make these principles a habit? You can start by determining how you would rank yourself in each of the areas mentioned. Begin with *It is Big Business*, and work your way through each chapter. Rank each from what you have done best to worst. Place the list on your refrigerator, where you will see it constantly. Focus on one area a week. Start where your strengths are and begin applying it to you life. Even if you don't have a special somebody, you can find someone or somewhere to apply it.

Then the following week, take the principle that you’re are worst at and apply it to your life. Continue to apply all the previous areas. On the third week, apply another

area where you do well. Keep repeating this process until you have applied each principle. After only a few weeks, you should already see improvement. Research shows that it takes only twenty-one days for something to become a habit. Focus on making these principles habits and soon you won't have to think about it, and you will have achieved autonomic character improvement. Successful people are the only people who do the things that unsuccessful people don't and form a habit of doing so.

Spend some time each day, perhaps right before you go to bed, and reflect a few minutes on how you did with each principle. Think about what actions you did to improve that area in your life. We all make mistakes, so if you had a bad day, don't focus on it; make it a point to do better the next day. Keep a record of even your smallest achievements and work toward larger successes.

No matter what relationship you are in or may soon be in, the odds are against you. Many people will tell you that you are doomed to failure. They could be right. Studies show that more than 50 percent of marriages end in divorce. But, as you begin applying these principles into your relationship, the odds immediately shift to your favor. This proactive effort on your part will separate you from the rest, and you will travel where only successful men have gone, the high road. On this high road, you will find that you can see not only clearly, but much farther ahead. Like a high vantage point, you will be able to foresee problems ahead and prepare for them.

To those who critiqued his dreams, Walt Disney replied, "It is kinda fun to do the impossible." By using these principles, you can accomplish the impossible, defy all odds, and have the type of relationship you want and deserve. Through these principles your relationship can gain altitude with application. Your effort will set you above the rest. If the reference level is the average relationship, then you can gain altitude by the amount of effort you apply to these principles in your relationship. Ultimately she is looking for evidence to justify her love and by applying these principles you will complete just that.

Don't expect that you will have a problem-free relationship by just applying these principles. Sometimes painstaking effort may be required to push past hard times. But by steadily persevering and looking for the light at the end of the tunnel, you will daily be creating a relationship that will become the envy of others, and the exception to the rule. When you apply these principles, you will also be able to see things that others may not see coming. The place you stand in life will determine what you can see.

In the great relationship movie *Hitch*, Will Smith's character, known as the Date Doctor, looks into the camera and admits that when it comes to relationships, "You leap, and hope that you can fly."¹ I would hope that you would never do something like this without first giving yourself the best odds of survival.

When the Wright brothers wrote history with their first human flown airplane in 1903, they did not rely on just a leap. Many of their predecessors had attempted just that, only to crash hundreds of feet to their deaths. Their revolutionary 120-foot flight was the result of much more than luck.

As a pair of self-taught engineers, the Wright brothers had dreams of sweeping the sky. From an early age they were fascinated with flight ever since the day they received a small flying toy from their father. Before the brothers ever attempted to pilot an airplane, they built a model which convinced them they could indeed fly. In the workroom behind their bike shop, they plotted a method with which to defy gravity.

Using science, math, and physics, the brothers began to use these laws to give themselves the best odds of success. They were the first to discover that a long shaped wing was the most ideal for flight. Through many hours of experimentation, they learned that air above that wing must travel faster than the air below it in order to create lift. They crafted a wind tunnel where they built a forward elevator to control the pitch of the craft. They attached a pair of twin rudders on the tail and found they were able to control its tendency to swerve from side to side. Finally, they made the airplane's propellers turn in opposite direction to offset the twisting effect on the machine's structure. By applying the laws of science, math, and physics, they became the first to successfully pilot an aircraft.²

This breakthrough did not come as the result of luck or accident, or even the hopeful leap into thin air. The Wright brothers were propelled into the skies through a high goal and hours of studying and effort. The principles I have outlined in this book can act as the wings, rudder, propellers, and landing gear of your relationship. By applying them successfully, they will keep you and your relationship aloft, and ensure a safe flight. They will give you the wings so you can fly when you do decide to leap.

Perhaps you feel you have given your relationship everything you have and then some, but still something is missing. Sometimes you do everything right and the relationship still doesn't work out. Instead of focusing on the failures, make the commitment today to do all you can for your relationship. Why would you spend so much time gaining ground and building up your relationship just to tear it down and watch it fall? What will hurt more is watching her walk away, knowing you could've offered her so much more.

Ralph Waldo Emerson, American author and poet, once said, "A relationship is something wonderful, something hidden, a gift unique to you. Find it!" If you are going to love her, do it right. Love her unconditionally and without reservation. True love will keep your relationship passionate. It will keep you together when you don't feel like it. All relationships will fade unless the couple takes active measures to prevent it. Unfortunately, many drift from one relationship to another, wondering why each one eventually ends. The initial romance and passion can be cultivated forever. Nature gives us a hormonal boost but we must continue to apply the principles which will keep us in love with one another for a lifetime. They can make your relationship a success story that keeps getting better every day.

Churchill once told his men, "I am easily satisfied with the very best." Relationships are really only simple mathematics. You will only get out of your relationship what you put into it. There is no woman that wouldn't be satisfied with your very best, so offer it to her.

Bell Livingstone, author, wrote, "For a while I looked outside to see what the world could give me, instead of looking inside to see what there was." There is a brilliant and remarkable relationship waiting for you out there. Perhaps it is with somebody you haven't met yet or with a person you already know or maybe someone you are already with. She is just waiting for you to deliver it. Over the years I have learned that my relationship is not based on what could be given to me, but what was there for me to enjoy. Located inside you is the ability to have your best relationship ever – Unleash it! Let go of the selfishness that society promotes and replace it with selflessness. You can live your life anyway you want, but you can only do it once. You

can choose to live with a poor relationship simply because you refuse to take responsibility for it, or you can make the effort to move past the common to the extraordinary.

If I had to sum up this entire book into one sentence of advice, I would tell those around me to take responsibility for their relationship. Too many potentially wonderful relationships end solely because neither the man nor the woman is willing to accept responsibility for it and make the effort to move it in a positive direction. When you do nothing, nothing happens. Every moment you spend not pursuing your dreams, is a bit of your life that you could be enjoying.

“The most important ability is responsibility and nothing else happens until you step forward and say you can count on me,” declares Maxwell. Women everywhere are waiting for men to do just this but if we aren't willing, they are preparing to move on without us. Gone are the days that a woman is dependent on a man and here are the days that they are ready to participate in making this the best relationship ever. They are craving a man who will say to them, “You can count on me”. Nothing will impact a woman's life more than stepping forward and being a catalyst in her life. Together you can make history, one day at a time.

Finally, share what you learn. When you have that special woman, teach her what you learn. Explain to her that you want to impact her life and your relationship together. Ask for her help. Most likely, she will be more than happy to oblige. A relationship is not something for you to wait for, it is something you create. Your relationship is your masterpiece: a fresh piece of clay for you to form. It can be as magnificent as you chose. Enjoy.

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