

Getting the Love You Want



Call today about workshops and other help for
your relationship

Imago Center for Relationships
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Hello Friends,

Though summer just hasn't yet wanted to go away in these parts, we have definitely moved our swimming indoors and grown accustomed to being up and out in shorter days. Our new office has greeted quite a few clients and our "therapy dog" Andre (5 year-old standard poodle) is very much part of the scene at 12 Leigh St. However, rest assured we are not yet at the point of handing over our practice to his non-verbal approach to connection!

We're looking forward to our couples workshop beginning this evening in Westborough, MA (information about workshops below or at www.betsyandbruce.com). As long time former New Englanders (Bruce is a native), we always have a special affinity for the participants there and greet each new event as a chance to grow and learn ourselves. We keep reminding ourselves that this work is a journey not a destination and are grateful for the chance to keep on sharing what we know and are passionate about!



To hear from us live about these couples workshop, consider joining a free teleclass such as the next one upcoming on October 23 as described below.



Our feature article this issue is **How to Ruin a Perfectly Good Relationship**. As with many of our articles, this one carries a homework assignment (not to see how thoroughly you can ruin your relationship!) which should be fun and maybe challenging. If you're the one in your relationship who reads these articles, it might be interesting to show this one to your partner as well.

Until next time, best wishes for an exciting journey toward the relationship of your dreams.

Betsy + Bruce

How to Ruin a Perfectly Good Relationship:

(with homework assignment)

Want to Ruin a Perfectly Good Relationship?

We're guessing that your immediate assignment (no, the assignment answer to this question is probably, "Of course not! Why would anyone want to set out to do that?")

Well, it's entirely possible you may be doing just that without even realizing it!

Consider this: The basis of a good relationship is often found not in global affirmations or perfunctory "I love

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you", but in the everyday actions and behaviors you engage in to show your care or awareness of how important your partner is, actions and behaviors such as **expressing appreciations, giving surprise gifts, or doing playful, spontaneous, and affectionate things.**

However, when these crucial day-to-day gestures or behaviors are missing, or even worse when you are doing just the opposite (consciously or not), you are slowly but surely unraveling the fabric of your relationship.

Several years ago Pat Love Ed.D. and Sunny Shulkin Ph.D., two of our professional colleagues, published a book entitled *How to Ruin a Perfectly Good Relationship*. We sometimes leave this book on a table in our waiting room and get lots of laughs and nods from clients. No wonder why. **There's a familiar ring for lots of folks!**

Below is part of their list of some seemingly insignificant behaviors Pat and Sunny identify, each of which over time serves not just to make a relationship stale, but to actually erode the love between two people.

We invite you to take a look at this list and see where the shoe might fit, and then we have a short homework assignment.

Behaviors and practices that wreck and ruin relationships:

- Controlling everything and everyone
- Never taking the blame yourself; instead, make your partner wrong
- Making it a habit to spend more money than you have
- Winning every fight, even the ones you couldn't care less about
- Keeping score
- Using threat often
- Finding your partner's weak spot and using it against him/her
- When your partner tries to please you, finding fault with their efforts
- Holding fast to the belief: "If you loved me you would know what I want"
- Demanding your partner remain faithful but refusing to meet his or her sexual needs
- Using silence as a weapon
- Pretending that you don't hear
- When your partner tries to apologize, bringing up more complaints
- Refusing to give information
- When you realize you haven't given your partner some important info, insisting that you did
- Claiming to be the only one interested in the relationship
- Never asking for help
- Confiding only in friends

- Taking it personally when your partner wants time alone
- Discounting your partner's physical complaints
- Giving advice where it isn't welcome
- Never picking up after yourself
- Refusing to seek help for your depression
- Refusing to talk
- Focusing on changing your partner
- Focusing all your needs on sex
- Taking all problems as further proof that the relationship will not work
- Putting your friends before your partner
- Keeping romantic gestures to a minimum
- Focusing on your partner's faults and deny your own
- Letting days go by without a kind word or loving gesture
- Practicing deliberate verbal putdowns
- Not listening to your partner's ideas or suggestions
- Asking your partner to share feelings and when s/he does, EXPLODE
- Starting conversations when your partner is busy, or better yet, exhausted
- Letting disagreements fester
- Saying what you think your partner wants to hear, then doing as you please

May we assume that at least one of these could apply to you?!

If so, here's a **three-part growth assignment** for you:

First, select just one of the above items with which you identify (surely you can find one, no?), then tell your partner you have just read this article and noted that it's something you do, and tell **your partner that it's something that you would like to give it up.**

Second, (you can actually do this at the same time you do the first part) consciously **do something that contradicts what you are wanting to give up.** You can make this as simple or complex as you like - anything from a hug to booking a surprise cruise!

And third: experience your own satisfaction at having done something to break the pattern and consciously and also - and this is crucial - **avoid expecting your partner to even notice!** She or he may or may not notice. If she or he does, of course that's a big plus, but this is not a setup for disappointment or something negative or for telling your partner how unobservant he or she may be!

If you find this homework interesting or perhaps challenging or even frustrating, please consider what we offer and which are described below. Besides the **Getting the Love You Want© weekends coming up November 9-11 and November 3-December 2**, we are offering on **Saturday November 3 a one-day workshop on the topic of Closing Your Relationship Exits**. It will be an introduction to some of the main processes we teach in the weekend workshop. This is an excellent chance to learn some basics of **restructuring your frustrations with one another** in a safe and reliable way.

This one day workshop would also be an **appropriate follow up for workshop grads looking for review** as well as newcomers to Imago.