

Section 1: Introduction

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Personal Message

Hello. I'm [Al Turtle](#), and welcome to a presentation of my Map of Relationships. Today, I want to share with you the whole picture of intimate relationships... – what is really going on.... So many people over the years have asked for this. They wanted a great partnership and didn't know why things went wrong. Everything they did seemed at best a partial fix.

When I found the answers to their questions, I could see how easy it was for people to get lost. I want to stop this waste of time and effort. I hope to help you understand what is going on for you, where you are in this world of intimate relationships, what are your options, and I want to inspire you to go ahead and to realistically seek your dreams.

This material is the result of over 35 years of work, research, many thousands of hours with couples and individuals, and many more thousands of hours of detailed explorations with my wife.

Before we start, I want to thank you, each and every of you for listening. I want people to get along well. I want partnerships to be great. I want to nurture fantastic marriages. When I see you, I believe that you want better relationships for yourself and for others. I believe that you also care deeply about how people get along with each other.

[Need a Map](#)

Why do we need a map of relationships? Because in my experience the vast majority of people are lost. I see them in my office, and I see them as I walk down the street. People who see me tell me about them: their friends, their neighbors, their parents, their children.

Most people seem to be just going in circles, following the same blind alleys that I did. But now that I've been there, to the goal, I can look back. It was all a matter of finding the path ahead of me. I think that at no time in my life have I seen more distress about the way we are relating to each other. The "institution" of marriage seems confusing and outdated. While fewer people are choosing it, they are still trying to live together with poor results. Domestic Violence is a major problem in all our cities and towns. Our politics seem a disaster area. People argue at the drop of a hat. Radio and TV talk shows are full of anger. Rather than doing the work that needs doing, people seem to prefer to yell at each other. Our kids watch and learn from all this. Teenagers and school children are fighting each other and their teachers. Discourse between people seems to be getting ruder and ruder.

While many people believe we are in the middle of a great cultural change, and that at this point, everything seems to be falling apart, I don't believe it. I am very optimistic. As I was building the Map of Relationships, I came to see the hand of a higher power.

These days many people are coming forward, and telling us what to do. There are lots of books, lectures, TV shows. Experts say "read the Bible", "have values", "use active listening", "come from your planet", "turn toward your partner," "have a covenant marriage," "renew." Many are giving you answers to problems you haven't even thought up yet.

If a great relationship is so tricky that it takes a rocket-scientist or a university professor, then I think the good Lord would have made us all rocket-scientists or university professors.

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We are not. Is a great relationship, a great marriage so difficult? If you need to do all that, if it is so hard to have a good relationship what are you doing? Maybe it's better to go fishing!

Now I believe it is not that hard. I like to say that Sandra, my partner, and I are putting 10% as much effort into our relationship now, as we did 10 years ago. And yet we are getting 50 times more out of it. I think it is all about following paths that work. Learning new ways to do things can be challenging. But, looking back from where I am now, the hard part was mostly wasted energy – doing things over and over again that were getting me nowhere. Like trying to start a lawnmower with no gasoline in the tank.

Thus I think we all need a good map – a tool that shows the landscape, marks the many roads, and that clearly points the way to our destination.

Personal Background

Now... let me take a moment....To tell you about me. I was born in the suburbs of Boston, Massachusetts. My father was a doctor, a Pediatrician, and my mother, who stayed home with my sister, brother and myself, was the daughter of a lawyer. I loved math, science and especially loved finding out how things worked. I went to the Viet Nam War on a Navy destroyer, the U.S.S. Edson, as an Electronics Technician. I went to college, studied Math and Physics, took a degree for teaching those subjects in High School, and then discovered my deep interest in Psychology. I have a Masters degree in Counseling.

I was married for 17 years and had 3 kids: two boys and a girl. I divorced, and was single for 5 years. My teenage kids lived with me. It was a hard time. I remarried, and soon found I was now in just as much trouble as I had been in my first marriage. Frantically, I began to really study how to make my relationship work. One result of my learning was that 15 years ago I began to offer Marriage Therapy in my private counseling practice.

Now after 20 years of this marriage, and perhaps having seen 2000 couples in my office, and all the work of discovering and learning I've done, I believe I can say, "I've got it. I understand."

Why listen to me

Why, you may ask, should you listen to me, Al Turtle? Here are some of my traits. I am a deep and exact person, who has been there. I was the kind of kid who took everything apart. My curiosity seemed endless. I wanted to understand everything. The unknown attracted me. I am stubborn. If people told me to take something for granted, I would ignore them and dig in till I had figured it out. I loved and do love structure. My parents and teachers told me I was bright, but lazy. However, I learned that I just love efficiency. In physics I would rather learn the underlying concepts than memorize a bunch of formulas. I am thorough. As a technician I like to fix things so that they don't need fixing ever again.

As a petty officer in the Navy, I also learned to get other people to do my work. And so I became a teacher. One thing I learned was to do it first myself, before asking anyone else to do it. Besides, it is easier to teach by modeling, by example. That is true to this day. I never ask my clients to do anything I haven't done myself many times. I am practical. I don't want to do it, if it doesn't work.

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Eventually I became focused on the problem of “people not getting along with each other.” I might owe this to my Dad. As a pediatrician, he felt he knew what to do for children under the age of 4, to prevent illness. He thought we should be able to prevent the social troubles parents have with teenagers. But he didn’t know what to do, himself.

I don’t believe in complicated explanations. I believe the big questions must really be so simple, that any of us can grab the answers. God’s messages must not require a PhD.

I didn’t develop the Map of Relationships for scholars. I wanted it for me and for you. I am, like you, a person who badly wanted the kind of relationship that I dreamed of as a kid. I have stubbornly pursued it. Eventually I figured it out, and my partner and I did it. And now I want to share with you what it takes.

What is a Marriage?

Oh. One thing before I go on. I will be using the word “marriage” often. I want you to be clear how I use this word. I believe that two people, living together in intimacy, make a marriage. Whether they are legally or sacramentally married or even of the same gender, it does not seem to make any difference as far as this Map is concerned. If you have moved in together, I think you might as well consider yourself married.

What will a Map do for you?

And so, what can this Map of Relationships do for you? Like all maps, it will help you make sense of where you are, help you make good choices about where you want to go, and especially how to get there. If you are single, never married, it will let you understand better what is ahead of you. If you are divorced, it will probably give you some encouragement and direct your steps. If you are In Love, this may not do much for you. You are already enjoying life a lot anyway. Still, this Map will let you plan ahead. If you are married, unhappy, struggling or fighting, this Map will probably restore hope, make you feel better about where you are, will point the way to the choices ahead of you and will shorten the way forward to a great relationship.

If you are long-time married, but feeling a bit dissatisfied, this Map may help you start on your way back toward a really great, joy-filled marriage. If you are in a relationship, but on the point of considering whether to leave it or not, this Map will definitely help with that decision. If you are married and frantically trying to do better, reading books, taking workshops, etc. this Map may help you in choosing what courses to take.

My Goals

So, what are my goals in sharing this Map of Relationship? First, I want to give you the data and then stand back and let you make your decisions. I have learned to do this with my clients. When they ask me, “What should I do?” I give them my best guess and then let them make their own choices. I refuse to make decisions for other people. I don’t think I am qualified to make decisions for others.

My personal Bias

Second, my personal Bias is that I want you all to move toward what I call Vintage Love. I dream of a world where everywhere you go you meet with couples who are happy, who are raising happy children, who are contributing to a healthy community. I’ve learned that it

takes a whole village to raise one child. I've also heard that it takes a whole village to keep parents sane while they are raising that child. I want a village, a community, a country, a world where we all live peacefully. That is a big wish? I just want people to get along.

Section Two: Blind Alleys

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1972 Attempts

Before we move into the Map of Relationship, I would like to share some of the dead ends I have tried and witnessed. I think sharing what I found doesn't work... may help you.

So here is the background of the Map of Relationships.

I first took courses in marriage counseling in 1972, during my University graduate years. In those days, the divorce rate was soaring. Well past 35% of first marriages ended in divorce, and it looked like that rate would continue upward. Marriage Counselors were using what they called "Conflict Resolution". It didn't seem to be helping, and they were frantically trying to find out what would help – what would stop the rising divorce rate.

I remember the biggest clue they had was the oft repeated statement by divorcing people, "I married the wrong person! I thought they were Mr. or Miss Right, but they turned out to be Mr. or Mrs. Wrong! I was misled!"

Now as I recall it, Marriage Counselors and academicians tried three major solutions. First, they worked with legislators to make divorce easier – to make it simpler to get away from Mr. or Mrs. Wrong. We now have "No Fault Divorce" or "Divorce due to Irreconcilable Differences." Looking back, I think making divorce easy proved to be a serious mistake, but it seemed the right thing at the time.)

Second, professionals created many tests, questionnaires, and lists to help people pick the "right" person - the compatible person. These appeared in the popular magazines and gave rise to thousands of dating and match-making services. People happily take your money to help you "Find your perfect match!"

And Third, to save existing marriages, the psychologists offered counseling to the partner who was distressed, to help them feel more relaxed, and give them support in making good decisions.

1978 Results

It only took 6 years to discover that these were three dead ends. By 1978 we had the following answers.

First, we found that when people divorce easily, they tend to remarry quickly. And they will remarry someone more or less as difficult as their first partner. A woman, who marries an abusive husband, will marry another the second time around. A man, who marries a cold, shrewish wife, will marry another one. This tendency to repeatedly marry Mr. or Ms. Wrong is highly predictable and has been seen over and over. Domestic Violence shelters who help a victimized partner to get away, only to wring their hands when their clients proceed to marry another abusive person. The sad conclusion was that people tend to fall in love with the "wrong person" over and over.

Secondly, we found that when people are put together with "their perfect match," they are, almost always, not interested. Very few "perfect matches" will produce that spark that people are seeking. Generally, you won't fall in love with the person a dating service selects for you. The conclusion was that whatever makes for a perfect match, it is not compatibility.

Thirdly, we found that the divorce rate goes up, if counseling is applied to married individuals. I recall one study, in Michigan I think, where they found that the divorce rate doubled for those receiving individual therapy. The conclusion that individual counseling increases the likelihood of divorce, frightened professionals.

In 1978, Marriage Therapists, themselves, found a big surprise. They, Marriage Therapists, got divorced at a much higher rate than the general public. I recall a conference of 200 or so, therapists. The leader asked for a show of hands of how many were currently divorced. Then he stopped and asked, "How many are married?" I think about 20 hands rose. The conclusion was that "marriage therapists didn't know any better what do to about making a happy marriage."

And now, for my biggest surprise! In that same year, my wife of 17 years, mother of our three teenagers, announced that she was divorcing me.

Divorce Lessons

Divorce hurts. Separating hurts. I had never felt so much pain before or since. I visualize this pain as a large shark bite in the stomach, except only you can see the blood. You'll survive, but it takes a long time to get back on your feet. Divorced people know this and are sympathetic. The "un-divorced" may not be very helpful at times like these.

In my pain, I went to find a book – an "instruction manual" on divorce and I found a pretty good one. Here's what I learned. Pain is normal - splitting up hurts. The pain may last for several years. Both partners feel the pain, though when you are in pain you may not be able to see the other's pain. The active one, the divorcer, may feel a bit less pain – perhaps 5% less. Breaking up hurts whether you're officially married or not. Living together intimately, sets up the pain. The longer you live together, the more the pain, but it only takes about six months of living together to reach its maximum.

Could you avoid the pain? The book said that only those who remarried at once, avoided the pain altogether. But there was a catch. If you reconnect right away, the chance that you will have the same kind of trouble with the second person is almost 100%. Now this interested me. (I was certainly very aware, as my divorce moved along, of the troubles I had been in.) The book spoke of patterns of troubles. Ah hah! "Selecting the wrong person," I thought. Not just the wrong person, but a unique type of wrong person. "Remarry quickly, and marry the wrong person again, right away." Was there a line of wrong persons out there waiting for me?

So I read on. The book said that the longer you wait before forming a new relationship, the better chance of avoiding the same troubles. Statistically women should wait for 3 years or more to avoid the same trouble. Men, the book said, were slower, and needed to wait at least 5 years to avoid that wrong person.

I set my watch for 5 years.

Didn't work

And so, for a long time I waited, studied, and read self-help books. I went to marriage seminars. Since they all said relationships involve skills, I practiced. I dated often. I was terribly lonely. As a single father with three teenagers at home I was a wreck, but I survived. My kids survived too, but not with much help from me, I fear. This was a tough, sad time.

At last my watch went off – 5 years were up. Now I understood what I had done in my first marriage that had contributed to the trouble. I believed I had changed my ways. I was ready! I told a friend that I was looking for a mate. She arranged a blind date with --- Sandra. We met and talked forever. We married a year later. One month after our wedding, a friend of mine came to visit, and to meet my new wife. Now, he'd known my first wife well. After meeting Sandra, he took me aside. Says he, "She's the same woman again, Al!" My heart sank. And let me share with you, that in about five years, Sandra and I were fighting in exactly the same pattern that I had fought in my first marriage.

Five years of waiting, of studying, of learning, and here I was back at the same place again. Was I facing divorce again? Was I facing that pain again? This then was my personal experience of the Blind Alley of divorce.

Our Journey

But rather than divorce this time, I began a stubborn effort to find out what was going on, and what I needed to do about it. I wanted a great relationship, and I was going to get it – but how? It was during this time, around 1990, that I first read *Getting The Love You Want* by [Harville Hendrix](#). That one book provided me the clues that directed me out of the Blind Alley of divorce and helped me begin the next part of my journey. I'd like to thank Harville and the Imago trainers throughout the world, who helped me over the next several years. Some of them are my colleagues and friends. This was an amazing period of learning.

Over the next decade, with great effort and with great support, I think Sandra and I made it – to the relationship of our dreams. And now that I can look back, and see the paths we followed, I am able to share them with you.

Outcome Study

So, let's begin now to start looking at the actual landscape of the Map of Relationships.

I have said many times that I believe that Sandra and I have made it. But...you may ask.... where did we make it to? What is meant by the "Relationship of your Dreams?" The first answer to this question came from a wonderful Outcome Study done during the early 1980s. In this kind of study, researchers first find the goal they want, and then find out how people got it. Since this was a study about relationships and marriage, the researchers first had to define the "marriage that everyone wanted" – the goal.

And so they asked a large number of college age people what they wanted in a marriage relationship. The thousands of answers were collected, analyzed, and using a process called Factor Analysis, a simple word picture of The Relationship of Everyone's Dream was created. I have shared this word picture with several thousand couples in my office. It works. I'll share it with you, now.

The Goal

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This ideal marriage relationship had four traits. Three, form a triangle showing that each trait is equally important, and that each is valuable only if the other two are present. One trait is important - above all. The three equal value traits are Intimacy, Passion, and Commitment. The stand alone trait is Safety. I've heard many thousand people share their definitions of these terms. Here are mine.

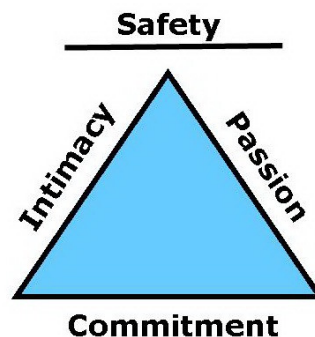
Intimacy means being buddies and not being strangers. People want to feel understood and close. I think the phrase In-to-me-see catches this term. I think the song for the TV show Cheers "A place where everybody knows my name" also does the term justice. People want freedom from loneliness. People want a connection.

Passion seems to mean excitement and energy. People want to be close, but not bored. They want to feel fully alive.

Commitment means stick-to-it-iveness. People want to keep going when things get tough. Not easy quitters. Stubborn is a good word - stubborn for the intimacy and passion. I think reliable is another good word for commitment.

Now, those three terms go together. But Safety stands alone.

My favorite definition of Safety is that your blood pressure lowers when you see your partner, or your muscles start to relax. Safety means that wonderful word "at Peace" – a place were you can scratch where it itches, where you can say anything and be ok.



Try this four-trait goal on for size: Intimacy, Passion, Commitment, but above all Safety. I've found it fits pretty well for almost everyone.

Successful Couples

Now, let's get back to that Outcome Study. Having the Goal in hand, the researchers next interviewed a large number of couples where one was aged 60-65. They asked them about their relationship and compared their answers with the four-trait goal.

There was good news, and there was bad news.

The good news was that some couples had it all: Intimacy, Passion, Commitment, and above all Safety. Some had managed to achieve what all the young people wanted.

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The bad news was that it was only 4%. Only one in twenty got it. 19 out of twenty had become lost along the way. This was staggering, and didn't say much for the quality of marriages in our country.

I remember when I heard of the study, that I determined to get myself into that 4% come hell or high water.

The 4%

Next, in that Outcome Study, the researchers interviewed the "successful 4%" to find out what they had done in order to "make it." Two results came out immediately. Every couple in "The 4%" had started their relationship by "falling in love". And after some time, every couple had begun to fight.

The first result may not surprise you, but perhaps it should. In the world, falling in love is not the normal way to start a marriage. Most marriages around the world are arranged marriages and before you scoff, the divorce rate in such arranged marriages is about 7% or less. In cultures where "falling in love" has become the selection criteria, the divorce rate is as much as 50%. And one of the major exports of our country is Hollywood, which promotes "romance" and preaches "falling in love." Even so, in the Outcome Study, every couple who reached that successful 4% had started their relationship by some level of falling-in-love. I think this important.

The second result, that all successful couples had begun to struggle, surprised everyone. Until then, fighting was considered a sign of a troubled marriage. I recall the articles that were now published in magazines about how "fighting is normal."

About Maps

And so... now.. with these principles in place we can begin to explore the Map of Relationships.

Oh, just one last thing. I am limiting the amount of detail on the Map so that you can grasp the whole. I think all good maps are simplifications of the territory they represent. I have created many charts or maps over the years to help couples and clients understand themselves and what is going on. My charts are designed to be seen first as a picture representing the whole, then as a chart with just enough words to remind you of the details. I will give you many more of those details as I take you through the map.

The Map of Relationship is a picture, (the best I can make) of how relationships really work, of what is really going on in them, and which you can use to plan efficiently and accurately what you want to do. You can also use it to understand what is going on for those around you, your parents, your friends, your neighbors, your children.

Section 3: Part One of the Map

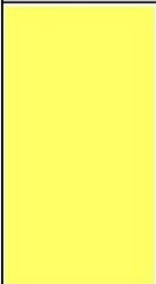


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Romantic Love and Vintage Love

Relationships begin with Romantic Love and end, if they are successful, in a region I call Vintage Love. Vintage lovers are the 4% from that Outcome Study that reached the relationship of their dreams. I like the term Vintage Love, as it both captures a sense of wisdom and experience.

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Romantic Love has been written about so much that I just want to hit the highlights that contrast with Vintage Love. Let's put the two regions side by side.

Romantic Stage		Vintage Love
 		

Feel Good

Both Romantic Love and Vintage Love feel really good. These are both wonderful times.

In Romantic Love much of the "feel good" is caused by a drug, PEA, phenylethylamine. This amphetamine like drug, sometimes called the drug of infatuation, is secreted in a person's brain. PEA raises your energy level so that you can work all day and be up all night. PEA makes depressed people feel better and anxious people relax. PEA raises the sex drive and thus "turns people on." Sexually passive people are suddenly very active.

And PEA is what I call a proximity drug, meaning that when the loved one is near or when you think of the loved one, PEA increases. When the "loved one" leaves, the level of PEA drops. You can easily get the idea that "they turn you on," when it is really your own body that determines these things. The effect of PEA is to make you want to be with your partner all the time. The experience is a bit like a roller-coaster.

I recall one time sitting in my office in a company and looking across the entry way to the elevators as a female co-worker got off. It was a Monday morning and, I swear, her feet never touched the floor as she radiantly and dreamily crossed the hall. I said, "Who did you fall in love with?" She whispered, "Don't tell anyone!"

Now, over in Vintage Love the primary drug of that makes people "feel good" is endorphins. This hormone is a much steadier supply of good feeling. And with it you feel good whether you are with your partner or they are away. In Vintage Love you feel good to see your partner and good to go to work, knowing your partner is around. Endorphins are in babies in the womb – lucky them.

Sandra, my partner, says these two periods have different tones. Romantic love sounds like a puppy, panting with excitement. Vintage love sounds like a cat purring.

Thus we can say that along the path from Romantic to Vintage Love, people lose that high excitement passion and replace it with more comfortable feelings.

Data

The second big difference between Romantic Love and Vintage Love has to do with data – how much do you know about your partner.

In Romantic Love people have almost no data. I sometimes call them “dumb as posts.” Teenagers can fall in love with someone in the hallway at school. Millions fall in love with movies stars. Data is not a necessary or perhaps even a desirable attribute of Romantic Love.

I heard once that “People actually fall in love with the ‘person’ they dream of ... when they look at their partner and not with the person they are physically looking at.” They don’t even know their partner. I like this phrase.

If you ask Romantic Lovers about each other, you tend to get very inaccurate, but optimistic answers. “She really likes that, I think.” “He’s always done that, I am sure.” And even though Lovers seem to talk a lot, there seem to be many undisclosed “secrets.”

Because they think they know a lot, and don’t, their lives are fully of surprises.

Now in Vintage Love, people have “tons of data”. They know almost everything about each other. They typically have no secrets. They have shared it all, and thus no big surprises.

In Vintage Love, they are also remarkably self-aware. It is as if they have figured themselves out. They seem to know not only what they like, but why they like it.

Thus we can expect that along the path from Romantic to Vintage Love, couples do a lot of self-discovery, self-disclosure, sharing, listening and learning.

Agreement

Another trait that we can point to is Agreement. Romantic Lovers put a high priority on Agreement. They speak of agreeing on almost everything as though disagreeing is somehow a bad thing. They talk of having the same values, same experiences, his/her towels, past-lives, etc. They are soul-mates. If I hear a couple saying, “We agree on most everything.” I know they are in Romantic Love.

Nothing could be so different as how Vintage Lovers handle agreement. Vintage Lovers actually avoid agreement and don’t trust it.

Here is what that first Vintage Lover couple I interviewed said to the question of “How do you deal with agreement?” The woman said, ever so properly, “Mr. Turtle. We believe that it is impossible for two people to agree on anything.” Then the man, after he stopped chuckling at the question, said, “Yup, yup. If two people are agreeing, you know one thing for sure. At least one of ‘em is lying.” That was the first time I had heard the real version of “agree to disagree.”

Vintage Lovers seem to value data very highly, and thus don’t like agreement. They believe that at some level of depth everyone sees things differently and this difference is important data to them.

Romantic Lovers seem to value agreement very highly and thus don't get much data. They seem to prefer "shallow agreement."

And so we can say that along the path between Romantic Love and Vintage Love, people must give up the need to agree and replace it with a love for differences.

Consumption – Production

Another trait that differs between the Romantic Period and Vintage Lovers has to do with Consumption vs Production. Romantic Lovers tend to be consumers. They frequent the mall. They buy things for each other. They collect. They party.... and when they are done partying have nothing to show for it. They appear needy.

Vintage Lovers tend to be producers and contributors. I've met several who describe themselves as "professional volunteers." They tend to be involved in their community. They tend to be making and giving things away to others. We expect this in grandparents, but I am convinced it is really more a result of getting more generous as people become more satisfied with life.

Thus, along the path between Romantic Love and Vintage Love, couples become filled up, more complete and at last, more generous.

Self-Responsibility

The last trait I want to compare is Self-responsibility. Romantic Lovers tend to be remarkably passive, waiting for the other to lead or to do it. It is fun to hear them saying, "No, you go first. No, you go first." Or "What do you want to do for lunch?" or "I'll do whatever you want." It almost seems as if they are waiting for the other to speak, to take the lead, so that the other can follow.

But also this "waiting" seems to have a tone of anticipating someone else to take care of them. This can show up as simply as sitting at the dinner table and waiting for the other person to start clearing the dishes. It can show up in one person always holding the door for the other – a kind of compulsive one sidedness. This trait often emerges later in complaints about unfairness or feeling used.

It often shows up in the way Romantic Lovers speak. "You make my life so great!" "You turn me on." This tends to sound as if one (active) person causes the other's (passive) feelings. This trait becomes a powerful problem in the next territory of the map and surfaces as blame and finger pointing.

Vintage Lovers tend to be quite self-responsible. They often speak their opinion first, but in a way that invites alternative points of view. They seem to be taking care of themselves in front of their partner. This self-responsibility shows in a lot of what I call "turn-taking". "I'll do the dishes tonight and you tomorrow." It also shows in the distinct lack of blaming.

What we can say is that along the way from Romantic Love to Vintage Love, people tend to become more responsible for themselves.

Romantic Love Ends

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The Romantic Love period always ends. It has to. I like to say it lasts for 9 minutes up through 9 months. But it always ends.

If there was one thing I could change in this country, it would be to get Hollywood and all those Romance novel writers to teach that Romantic Love is a period, not a forever. People fraudulently tell you that if you find the right person, it will be happiness 'forever after'. It isn't. Perhaps we could make a class action suit against all the perpetrators of this lie. I have seen so much pain when the normal process of ending of the romance happens. "I don't love him any more." "She just doesn't turn me on."

Yet Hollywood, romance novels, and soap operas, repeat the lie, "And they lived happily ever after."

And yet, I truly believe that falling-in-love, romantic love as a basis for partner selection, is a wonderful and positive force. It just has to end and no one wants it to end.

It must

The first reason Romantic Love must end is that PEA, phenylethylamine, the chemical basis for the "feel good," is a short term effect. It stops. One day your partner will walk into the room, and you won't be turned on. And it will never come back with that person again. It seems to be part of the mating process in mammals and after a while just stops.

When the PEA stops, the heightened sex drive stops. Since one partner or both partners' sex drive will decrease unexpectedly, there is a lot of pain, and a sense of betrayal. "You lied to me that you liked it!" "What is the matter with me?" Yet this is normal.

(By the way, many people get a kind of addiction to the "rush" of Romantic Love. They go from partner to partner trying to keep up the "feel good" and causing lots of pain. Better they should take a break and think about it.)

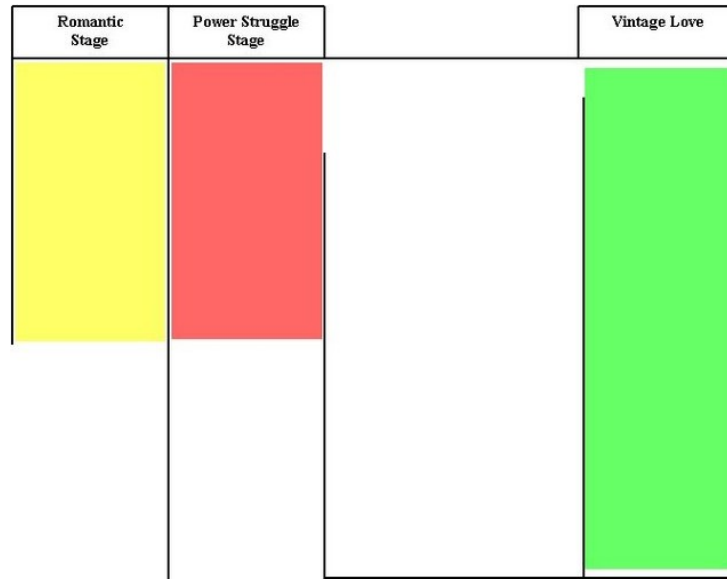
The second reason romantic love must end is that you cannot live together long and have no data. Living together produces data, and data is "terminal." Once you've got it, you can't get rid of it. As data begins to accumulate, the wonderful dreams, the fantasies, begin to be replaced by hard "facts". You can't stay naive forever.

The third reason romantic love must end is that holes begin to appear in the agreements. Over time you learn more and more that your partner doesn't see things your way. Different values begin to surface. Time together brings this on.

The fourth reason is that buying things costs a lot and doesn't fill the empty hole in selves. The two of you end up sitting there with lots of things, lots of charges on your credit cards and still feel empty.

And lastly the passivity emerges as blaming. And if I think you "turn me on", then when I don't feel turned on, I will think, "You turn me off." It's your fault.

MAP OF RELATIONSHIPS by Al Turtle



The Power Struggle

When Romance ends, quickly or slowly, people move into the next stage that is typically called the Power Struggle. This stage lasts a few years. Almost all couples who come into my office are in the Power Struggle.

Since so much is written about this stage, I will be brief.

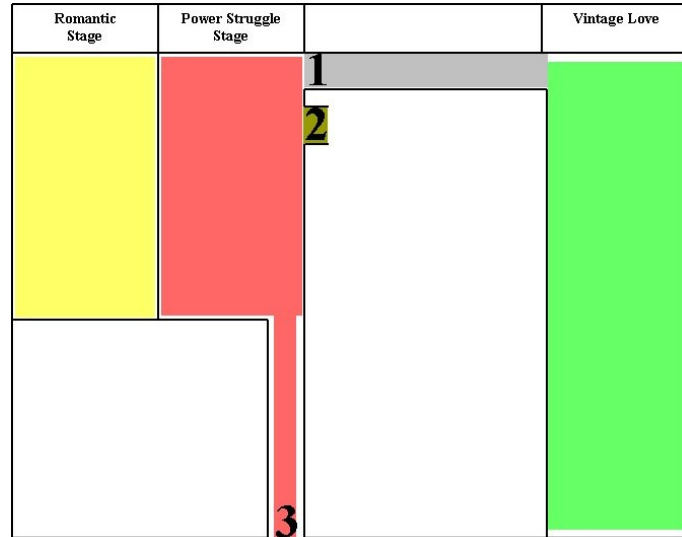
This stage is characterized by a single, simple principle. "Hurt 'em til they love you." You complain, criticize, lecture, blame, judge, shame, argue, humiliate, avoid, stonewall, be silent, yell, and even hit. And all of this is done with the purpose of making things better. "I just want to get back to the way it was." The Power Struggle is a lengthy and fruitless attempt to get back to romantic love. In my office, when I invite people to go deeper into why they did that "mean thing," what will surface is an attempt to "make things better" and get love.

Why would we hurt someone to get love from them? Back in the 80s we figured out why people would do something so silly as this. This behavior is the instinct that babies are born with. If a baby doesn't get fed, it causes distress for the people around it. It cries at just the right, annoying pitch. The Power Struggle seems, on the surface, to be an attempt to use that baby instinct to make things better. Each person seems to treat the other as a parent who owes them better things. This, of course shows itself in the common complaint that "he's just a demanding baby", or "she just thinks everyone is there for her needs."

Doesn't work

Needless to say, what works for needy babies surrounded by adult caretakers, doesn't work for needy adults with equally needy adults. Couple uses progressively more and more frantic efforts, yelling louder, complaining more quickly, withdrawing more and more completely. All this time, the hope of that dreamed relationship gets thinner and thinner. Finally, at least for one partner, the hope ends.

MAP OF RELATIONSHIPS by Al Turtle



The Choice Point: Door #1, Door #2, Door #3

When hope of the relationship getting better reaches zero, I think we arrive at the great fork in the road. I call this the Choice Point: Door #1, Door #2 and Door #3. All couples get here.

Door #1 leads to Vintage Love and a small group of couples choose this door. I want everyone to choose Door #1. I'll talk more of this later.

Let me also leave Door #2 for later.

Door #3 is the Divorce door and is currently chosen by most first married couples. Unmarried couples choose this door by walking away. Either way, I'll call it divorce.

Door #3 – Divorce

So let us look at Divorce. People choose this door since the pain of their being together has gotten very great and the hope of things getting better has finally reached zero. To get away from the problem seems the best choice. But is it? Let's look at the news that comes from multiple divorces.

Running Around in Circles

Divorce #1 happens about 50% of the time, probably much more. What happens next to these people? They wander around for a while,--- however long it takes. Sometimes they say they will never marry again. But eventually they get lonely enough, and start again by falling in love.

Of course they have to find "a second right partner" to enter the Romantic Stage. They have been here before and remember the way. Sometimes they do this faster. They enter the Power Struggle again, now for a second time. And as they remember the way, they often also move through this region faster. They try the old "hurt 'em till they love you" routine harder and quicker. Hope wanes faster. Before they know, it, they are back at the Choice Point: Door#1, Door#2, Door#3.

Second marriages/relationships end in divorce at a much higher rate. Divorce #2 is chosen as much as 85% of the time. These 2nd divorced people wander around, saying they will never marry again. But it is just a matter of time before that old loneliness hits them. And there they are, available and looking. They find another "right person" again and slide into the Romantic Period. This time they make a prenuptial agreement. This time they have separate houses, separate bank accounts. And again the Power Struggle inevitably arrives, struggle begins, hope diminishes. Here they are again at the Choice Point: Door #1, Door#2, and Door#3.

But a funny thing happens on the way to Divorce #3. The rate drops drastically. The statistics show that people choose divorce, the third time, less than 25% of the time. Of course, for those who do choose divorce, the pattern is the same of waiting a time and then starting again.

Two trends in Divorce

Why does the divorce rate go up and then go down? Here is the story.

It seems quite clear to me that there are two trends that affect these divorce rates.

One trend is upward and one is downward. The upward trend is a learning effect. First divorces are harder to do. Lots of people came to the first wedding. Couples want their marriage to last forever, and have a dream of a white picket fence. If they have children, they really don't want to create a split home for them to grow up in. First married couples gather lots of jointly owned stuff: a house, a family picture album, etc. And they have many fears about the cost of a divorce process and of divorce lawyers. Second divorces are much easier. No one came to the wedding. People have already given up the white picket-fence dream. Couples keep their property less mingled. And most couples have in their wallet or pocket book, the business card of a good divorce lawyer. Thus the 2nd divorce rate goes up.

You would think the 3rd divorce rate would be even higher, but it isn't. Here's why. As a person is heading toward divorce #1, they are saying, "I married the wrong person." It may be hard to get that first divorce, but eventually they do it. As a person heads toward divorce #2, they realize they have "married the wrong person again." Well, it is easier to get away from them. This leads to the high 2nd divorce rate. As a person is considering divorce #3, they say, one more time, "I married the wrong person. Hey! What am I doing." This shift from simply blaming the other to beginning to look at one's self as part of the problem is critical. "Divorcing does not guarantee getting a better partner. Maybe I'd better look at myself." Self-examination is one of the traits needed for entry into Door #1. I call this effect, "shifting the marriage."

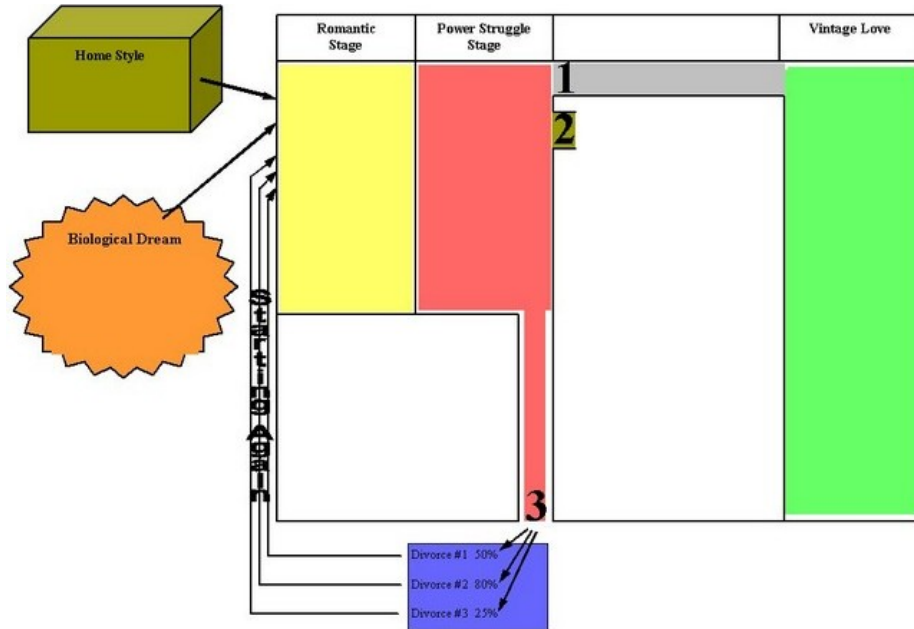
Most couples come into my office as if I ran a car repair center. They have a problem and "it is sitting in the other chair." Shifting from "blaming" to "self-examination" leads to a decrease in the divorce rate. I try to get couples to "shift."

Before we look at what people do if they reject divorce, (that's 50% of first marriages, 15% of second marriages, and perhaps 70-80% of third marriages) I need to give you some more background.

Section 4: Relationship Framework
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The Traditional Family

I want to focus now on what people know before they fall in love – what they bring with them to Romantic Love. I have already mentioned that after divorcing, people start a new Romantic Love with the experience of previous romance and power struggles. Previous knowledge and disappointment doesn't stop them from trying again, but it does give them some direction – some idea of paths to chose or avoid.



But there is much more. Even before the first experience of falling in love, I believe there exists in all of us two great collections of information – two great guides along the way.

The first I call the Traditional Family. This is all the knowledge a person collects internally about relationships, during their childhood. Much of this is concentrated before age 8. These experiences come from caretakers and the society they live in. The Traditional Family includes many theories and ideals. There are gender roles, responsibilities, rules of obedience, and often a lot about control. Also included are lots of skills and habits. Kids learn a lot about emotional reactions, expressions of anger and sadness, proper ways of holding back expressions, when to keep quiet and when to speak out. Home often includes details of punishment systems, how to denigrate and shame people, and how to dismiss them. The theories, rules, and skills of the Traditional Family become a background to getting married. Some people want a marriage just like Mom and Dad's. Some people want a relationship nothing like mom and dad's. And some want a little of what they knew and a little of something else.

Whichever it is, people enter the Romantic Period with many internal ideas, principles, and goals learned at home.

Biological Dream

I believe there is something else in all of us before Romance begins. I call it the Biological Dream, for it is based on the design of our nervous systems – our neurobiological self. This material took me 15 years to discover, collect, synthesize, and test. I've been teaching it in this latest form since 2000, and haven't found a flaw. Remember the 4-traits goal from that outcome study: intimacy, passion, commitment and above all safety. I think the Biological Dream is a better way to look at what we are all looking for when we fall in love. It seems to describe the best guide, or directions, for seeking our goal. And I believe this is pretty universal, lying in the "hearts" of all of us.

I offer it as a solution to the great mystery. How do people fall in love and dream of a great relationship when they've never seen one? How do they look at the only marital relationship they have seen, their parents, and know that it is somehow wrong. Where does this perspective come from? I think the answer to both questions is found in the basic underlying structure of the human brain. It is in our DNA, our biology. The goal of the "relationship of our dreams" is hardwired into our bodies. I think it can be described by a set of needs and expectations.

Let us explore the Biological Dream and its five components: Safety, Reliable Membership, Diversity, Autonomy, and Purpose.

Safety

Down in the base of our necks is a primitive brain – sometimes called the Reptilian Brain. This autonomous part of our nervous system is fully formed several months before birth. It never sleeps and handles all the automatic operations of our bodies: heart pumping, lungs breathing, digestion, skin temperature – all of it.

It also manages our Survival Function. With great speed it moves us toward Safety and away from what it determines is dangerous. Working from well before birth, it does not need instruction. And it just gets better with experience. This is the part of you that causes your rapid reactions. While this part of your brain operates completely automatically, extremely quickly, and you can't stop it, you can easily observe it in operation and learn to cooperate with it. When it determines that it is not safe, it kicks off one of four behaviors: Fleeing, Freezing, Submitting and Fighting.

Fleeing – is visibly running away, like the rabbit in the forest, like the child hiding under the bed, like the man resigning from a bad job, like the woman getting in her car and driving off. Fleeing is all about getting away.

Freezing – is invisibly getting away, like the deer standing still in the headlights, like the child who stands still when slapped, like the man who says nothing, like the woman who says, "I don't know!" all the time. Freezing is all about being invisible.

Submitting – is visibly giving in, so that you can survive to live another day, like the dog that rolls belly up, like a child who goes to bed when they want stay up late, like the man who says, "Yes, dear." all the time, like the woman who meekly serves dinner every night. Submitting is all about surviving now and putting the resentment off till later.

Fighting – is visibly contending for survival, the defending her berry path from other animals, like the child who strikes out at the parent in the store, the man hitting his wife, the woman yelling back. Fighting is all about survival of the fittest.

MAP OF RELATIONSHIPS by Al Turtle

When this part of our brains determines all is safe, it initiates another set of behaviors: Play, Mating, Nurturing, and Creative-Work.

Play – is silly, ridiculous, full of laughter and never competitive, like kittens with a ball of yarn, like the child digging in a sand box, like a man laughing at a comedy show, like a woman dancing in the living room all by her self.

Mating – is an extension of play, is silly, ridiculous, full of laughter, like monkeys at play, like the puppy love of a 5 year-old child, like a man laughing as he chases his laughing wife up the stairs to their bedroom.

Nurturing – is happily investing energy in the well-being of another or of yourself, like a purring mother cat nursing her kittens, like the child feeding the ducks, like a man tending his flower garden, like a woman throwing clay to make pottery.

Creative Work – is the kind of work you do whether there is a reward or not, like the bird collecting bright stones, like the child drawing a picture with crayons, like the man building a sail boat in his back yard, like the woman putting great amounts of extra effort into the beauty of a Christmas Dinner.

By these behaviors one can tell if a person is feels Safe or not -- is free from threat.

The human brain desires a community, a world, where there is safety. And this desire is hard-wired in all humans.

[Reliable Connection / Membership](#)

The next part of the Biological Dream is a hard-wired function of the mid-brain. I call this need, Reliable Membership.

I recall reading about wild-horses on the prairies and how the lead mare would discipline young ones. When the young acted up, the old mare would face and glare at it. That behavior by the older mare makes a young one back up. The mare would continue this staring until the little one was being driven out of the herd. Horses, the book told, sense that being alone means death. The young horse, sensing the threat of being expelled, would lower its head in a sign of submission. The mare would stop the threatening and would allow the now obedient young one back into the herd. This is called joining-up, among horse trainers who use this technique.

This need for connection is a characteristic of mammals – and humans. We are all hard-wired to need to be in a community. Think of the dog on the front porch when you are leaving. The look they give you is the look of abandonment. And it is this drive that makes us seek a family, marry, and re-marry even after a painful divorce - swearing never to marry again. It is the cause of my needing attention. If we get too little connection, we cling, pursue. Stalkers are not born. They are made. If we get too much, we pull away for a time, we avoid, withdraw. Hermits are people who need connection, but whose experience of connection is so painful that they prefer isolation.

Thus the human brain desires a community, a reliable connection with other humans, where there is safety. And this is hard-wired in all humans.

(If you want references for this, seek out one of the many books on Attachment Theory.)

[Diversity](#)

MAP OF RELATIONSHIPS by Al Turtle

The next two parts of the Biological Dream are due to the structure of our wonderful, thinking cortex. The first characteristic of the cortex I call Diversity. All humans experience reality differently. In the scholarly field of General Semantics, they refer to What Is Going On or WIGO. They point out that while we all sense "What Is Going On", each of us values and appreciates it differently from all other humans. Our brains associate what we see, smell, hear, etc with what we remember. Recognition is finding connection between what we sense from outside of us and a collection of memories.

I recall hearing of a person, blind from birth, who was suddenly given eyesight by surgery. He could not recognize a glass of water by sight, until he touched it. One way of saying this, is that 90% of our experiencing is in our heads.

Now, our cortex develops slowly during childhood. Children, very early in life, discover that they experience things differently than those around them. They experience this as something to be explored. They share what they see, and request assurance that their difference is not dangerous.

Depending on how caretakers handle this development, the children may develop quite differently. For example, the children of critical parents may come to experience "being different is being defective." This is the source in adulthood of those phrases, "Do I make sense?" "You know!" or "Ok?" Conformists are not born. They are made.

Our brains dream that, "It is OK to be different, to see things differently, and to share differences."

Now we have three components of this Biological Dream: the human brain desires a community, a reliable connection with other humans who express their differences, and where there is safety. And this is hard-wired in all humans.

(If you want references for this, seek out material on General Semantics – the study of meaning. e.g. The Art of Awareness, Joseph Samuel Bois)

Autonomy

The fourth component of the Biological Dream, I call Autonomy. It turns out that human action is determined inside the brain. While we take input from the outside, we decide what to do about it in a ruminative process. This trait of Autonomy develops through childhood. I think you first see it when a one-year-old says "No," or gets out of your arms and runs off.

Again, depending on how caretakers handle this development, children may become quite different. The children of critical or controlling parents may come to think "if I make an independent decision, I will be punished." In adulthood this fear surfaces as phrases like, "Is this the right way to do this?" "Is this permitted?" "I don't know." Or my favorite, "I'm just trying to do it right!"

The human brain dreams that, "It is OK to make my own decision and to do things differently."

Now we have four components of the Biological Dream: the human brain desires a community, a reliable connection with other humans who express their differences, can act independently, and where there is safety. And this is hard-wired in all humans.

(If you want reference for this, seek out Choice Theory by William Glasser.)

Purpose / Meaning

I am not sure whether the fifth component of the Biological Dream is part of the cortex or part of the soul or both. I just firmly believe it is there.

All humans seem born with a purpose, a reason for being. It seems as if they are designed to do something specific. When doing this thing, people feel meaning in life. When not doing it, they often feel as if they are wasting their lives.

In Western Africa they say that all children are born with the seed of genius - each with a different kind of genius. It is the responsibility of the community to fertilize this seed, to help the child recall and develop their unique gift. In our world, this capacity is often called Self-Actualization, and was considered by the psychologist, Abraham Maslow, to be the highest need of all humans. Joseph Campbell spoke of it when he told us to "follow our bliss." I didn't even know I might have such a purpose until about 15 years ago. With much help and investigation I figured out what I am here for. And part of my personal genius has to do with building and sharing all of this with you.

Yet everyone has a purpose. The human brain/spirit dreams that, "It is OK for me to be me, to be unique, competent and confident at doing my thing."

And so with all five components of the Biological Dream we have: the human brain desires a community, a reliable connection with other humans who express their differences freely, can act independently, can reach their full unique productive potential and where there is safety.

And this, I believe, is hard-wired in all humans. We come into the world with these five needs and expectations: Safety, Reliable Membership, Diversity, Autonomy, Purpose.

Biological Dream vs. the Traditional Family

I'd like now to make two comparisons between the Biological Dream and the Traditional Family – these two pre-cursors to Romantic Love.

First I'd like to look at the content. Many of us are brought up in homes that are more about controlling than about nurturing. Few of us experienced safety, reliable membership, permissible diversity or autonomy, or support at being ourselves. Many homes use fear of pain or the threat of abandonment to get control. Many homes use punishment to suppress individual thinking or initiative. And finally many homes teach the value of fitting into society, rather than developing unique potentials. I believe this is partially due to parental lack of education in how to act in nurturing ways. But a deep root, I believe, is that our culture still has the structure of the military, each family acting like a little platoon of soldiers. Whatever the reason, there are often very large differences between the "average" home and the needs of the Biological Dream.

Next, I want to point out that while the Traditional Families are full of skills, the Biological Dream has none. Here are some examples of Home Style skills:

"interrupting" or "arguing" when a difference of opinion appears,

"keep your opinions to your self, or tell lies to avoid conflict,

"If you can't say anything nice, don't say anything."

"Children are to be seen and not heard."

But the Biological Dream contains no skills.

What are practical ways to be a source of safety to someone?

What are practical ways to deal with too much closeness or too little connection?

What are practical ways to support the expression of differences?

What are practical ways to support shared decision making?

What are practical ways to support people discovering and pursuing their goals in life?

Romantic Love Revisited

It is amazing to me how many things become clear when I understand the Biological Dream. So, let's see what is really going on in the Romantic Period, the Power Struggle and in Divorce. At its bottom, romantic love is fueled by the belief that the negative parts of the Traditional Family are a thing of the past and that the Biological Dream is finally realized. I believe that the bigger the difference between the Biological Dream and what a person experienced growing up, the more powerful the "love attraction." Another way of saying this is, I think that one contributing factor to a passionate romance is a dysfunctional childhood.

Romance is fueled by the beliefs that

- "Now I am going to be safe,
- We'll be together forever,
- I will always be understood,
- No one will order me around,
- I now get to be fully me."

I think this dream goes all the way back to birth when the baby awoke to hope for this kind of caretaking. Now, in romantic love, we all awaken to this hope one more time. That, I think, is why Romance is so powerful. It is a life-awakening event.

The Trouble with Expectation

Notice that the form of the form of the Biological Dream evoked during Romantic Love is often very passive and full of expectation. "I don't have to do anything. This is just going to happen."

Let me stop for a moment on the word "Expectation." As I understand it, babies are born "expecting" to have all the skills of the Biological Dream lavished upon them. Our DNA design is for about 7 years of growth, surrounded by specific nurturing skills: safety, sense of belonging, creative diversity, guidance in self-responsibility, and appreciative interest and attention. Whether we receive this or not, I believe we expect with great eagerness.

After age 7 or 8, things shift. At this point our DNA points the way toward living independently, or perhaps interdependently, in a community and becoming productive. The way I often say it is, "Up thru age 7 you expect and have a right to everything. After age 7, you are lucky to get oxygen. You have to earn everything from then on." This can be a rude awakening." This is what the Aesop's Fable, "Grasshopper and the Ant" was about.

I mention this, because a remarkable number of people reach my office expecting things from their partner without a thought to earning what they get. I think this has a lot to do with the re-awakened baby form of the Biological Dream. It certainly seems a major part of Romance Novels, Movies, etc.

Power Struggle Revisited

And now we can revisit the Power Struggle and see what is really going on. This is a period of time when we use the skills, familiar to us from our Traditional Families in a vain attempt to get the Biological Dream. Ask yourself, "Don't those hurt 'em actions look familiar? Who were your teachers?"

- If you find yourself being critical, who taught you to do that?
- If you find yourself yelling, who taught you that?
- If you find yourself holding your emotions in, who taught you that it was safer to hold back?
- If you find yourself withdrawing to reduce conflict, who taught you that?
- If you find yourself never grieving, who taught you that?
- If you find yourself unable to speak, where did you see this before?
- If you find yourself interrogating your partner, who did this when you were a kid?

I gift you with this idea. "For a while, forgive yourself and acknowledge the teacher. But only for a while. After that, it is your responsibility to change."

Of course... hurt 'em actions never work with adults. Traditional Family skills build a Traditional Families. Day after day, month after month, as you use those skills or are the target of those skills, your hope of the Biological Dream wanes, ----- until.....

Hope reaches zero and there you are at the Choice Point: Door #1, Door #2, and Door #3.

Divorce Revisited

Let's take one last quick look at what is really going on in Divorce. Divorce is a move toward Safety. The pain of the threatening togetherness, of being on the receiving end of all those hurt 'em skills, is over. But breaking the connection with your partner hurts a lot. Why? Separating directly threatens your need for Reliable Membership. Divorced people talk often of the freedom and the peace of living alone. And I think all that is true. Now there are no threats, no arguing, no pushing, no hurting. Ain't it great!

But after a while, loneliness appears. That's the basic need for Reliable Membership which you cannot escape. As that need grows, people begin to think of seeking all this safety and peace with another person. They begin to miss that one component of the Biological Dream that is missing for them – togetherness, belonging. Thus they go out looking for a mate once again --seeking all five traits of the Biological Dream.

To people considering divorce I often share two phrases:

- "Don't divorce your partner. Divorce the way you are trying to get along with you partner."
- "Seek the benefits of being single, while you are together."

Section 5: The Other Doors

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Door #1 – University of Life

And so let me introduce you to Door #1. I think you might be able to guess what is behind this door, for it is the one that leads to Vintage Love. I call this path, the University of Life, because it is all about higher learning, takes years and seems to have many steps: freshman year, etc. This is [where you learn the skills that go along with the Biological Dream](#). Proficiency in these skills leads to Relational Maturity – competence and confidence

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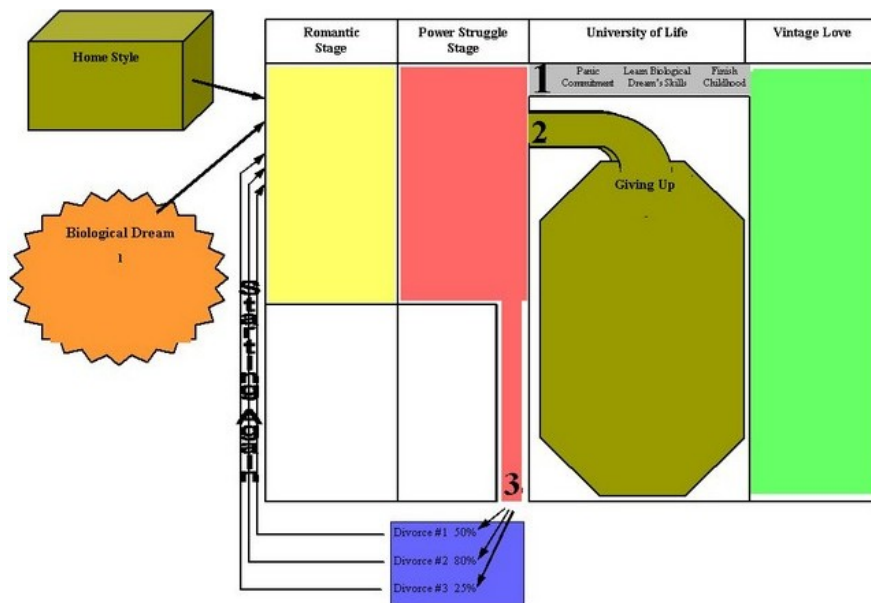
in getting along with anyone. Vintage Lovers understand Technology of Relations and are practitioners of the Biological Dream.

The good news is that this material is relatively easy to learn. It is not rocket science. The easiest way to learn it is during childhood, by watching parents who knew and used these skills, and who helped us practice. Sadly, this didn't happen for most of us. As you learn the skills of the Biological Dream, you have to unlearn the Traditional Family Skills that conflict. You also have to recover from any damage done during your childhood, and get back on track toward fulfilling your purpose in life. And all this is not endless, but a finite task with an end. That's it!

Easier said than done! How long does it take, you ask? In that original Outcome Study, people reported that they made it in 12-28 years. Wow. But they had little help. Now that there is lots of help, I see Vintage Love, the relationship of your dreams, as being achievable in about 3-7 years. Some couples take longer than others, and here are the factors that I have found.

The more the childhood damage, relative to the Biological Dream requirements, the longer it takes. And the more passionate your romance, the longer it takes. (Remember, this is probably the same phenomenon.) The longer you've been together, before starting work on it, the longer it takes. I think this has something to do with the amount of resentment that has been built up between you and your partner. And finally there is a thing I call "degrees of difficulty." It seems that the more college degrees you have, the more difficulty you have. PHDs, MDs, law or divinity degrees, plus Military or police background make it more difficult. In my experience, ex-Marines and drill instructors have the hardest time of all.

I will talk more about the University of Life later.



Door #2 – Giving Up

And I imagine you now know what is behind Door #2. I call this door ... sadly..., "going home." This is where people go who unconsciously give up seeking the Biological Dream, who reproduce a "normal" marriage or relationship – a relationship just like the one their

parents had. This is where most couples end up. As many as 90% of all couples are in a Giving-Up relationship.

Looking back to that original outcome study, these people developed only one of the four traits. They have Commitment, but Give-Up having Intimacy, Passion and especially they do not have Safety. Still these Giving-Up Marriages can last forever. They are all about survival, using all those Traditional Family Skills, and living with fear. Harville Hendrix called this area, The Invisible Divorce.

In a Giving-Up Marriage people tend to Flee from each. They often have quite separate lives – a parallel relationship some call it. Living together, but not close, they often become buried in work, their children, TV, addictions, etc. They just get away from each other a lot. But they don't divorce – which is the ultimate relationship form of fleeing or getting away. In a Giving-Up Marriage couples tend to Fight a lot. They argue or avoid conflict by silence. They often use many forms of passive aggressive fighting. But they don't fight illegally - not as much as would bring the Police. In most states this means no physical bruising. These couples Freeze a lot. Ask them if all is going well and they will say, "It is just FINE!" when it is not. Conflict avoidant, they try to keep each other calm by keeping secrets. They may share a lot with people other than their partner. There is often a lot of evasion and silence between them. "Better quiet than upset." These couples Submit a lot. They say they agree verbally when they don't really, and seek to do what the other wants and never what they want themselves. And of course they build resentment, slowly and steadily over time.

In a Giving-Up Marriage people grieve quietly for the loss of the Biological Dream in their lives, even though they may not know why they are grieving. They often disparage and make fun of lovers – believing that romance is foolish. The sight of romance often hurts them – reminding them of what is lost. Their grieving often shows itself as depression and various illnesses.

Waking Up

In the last 5 years I have seen more and more of these Giving-Up Marriages coming to my office. People married 20 – 35 years are waking up. It seems that "normal marriage" is not as stable as it used to be. I think there are several factors that contribute to this. In my office, the most common trouble for a long term "Giving-up marriage" is brought on by affairs, either sexual or emotional. The driving factor seems to be the loneliness inherent in a relationship that has not solved the Reliable Membership issue of the Biological Dream. Sometime the addictive behavior, that is a result of people trying to cope with the depression or grief of loss, unstabilizes a Giving-Up Marriage. The build up of Resentment, due to all that submitting, often boils over. Resentment never goes away by itself. It must be processed away. Another common contributor to the awakening of people in a Giving-Up Marriage is when the children start leaving home. Very often when the youngest child reaches 11 – 15, the wife begins to look for more in life. She begins to consider what she has given up.

Here is a sad, but quite typical story, from last year. A man called our office on Sunday, saying he wanted to get his wife in to see me. "She is going crazy," he said. "She wants a divorce after 23 happy years. She says she doesn't love me anymore."

He made the appointment and sent her in. And, surprising me, she came. I asked her what the problem was. She said, "I don't love him any more." I asked, "How long since you last loved him?" She predictably responded, "22 years." So much for the "happy 23 years" idea.

Seeking to find out the factor that had kept her from sharing this secret unhappiness with her partner for 22 years, I said, "Perhaps we should tell him." She almost jumped, "No, no! We couldn't do that. It would hurt him too much." And so I gathered his fragility and dramatized pain had kept her quiet all these years.

I asked, "Well, what makes you think of doing something about it now." And the predictable answer was, "Well, I met this guy who makes me feel like a real woman."

By the way, she did tell her husband about being unhappy for 22 years. They did get a divorce. After a short happy 5 months, the woman and her new friend broke up. She found the new guy worse than her ex-husband. She decided to come back and try again. Her ex-husband would have none of it. "You lied to me for 22 years. How can I ever trust you now?"

Different from Vintage Love

Differences really show when Vintage Lovers and Giving-Up couples talk. The Vintage lover clearly recalls all the struggles they went through, and recognizes the troubles of the Giving-Up Couples. Vintage Lovers have a lot of empathy for "normal" couples. But Giving-Up couples don't believe Vintage Lovers exist.

When I share the Map of Relationships it is also quite common for people in a Giving-Up relationship to claim they are in Vintage Love. And so let's look at the difference. Here are some other differences.

- Vintage lovers focus first on both feeling safe and relaxed.
- Vintage lovers are patient.
- Vintage lovers feel understood by their partner.
- Vintage lovers enjoy differences and are comfortably aware of each other's points of view.
- Vintage lovers are firmly and pleasantly opinionated and are eager to hear and learn differing opinions, and do not argue with anyone about anything.
- Vintage lovers are caring and nurturing of others.
- Giving up people are often persuasive, want agreement, rush.
- Giving up people often like to argue, either are abrasively opinionated or try not to hurt people's feelings by being quiet, are quite often competitive.
- Giving up people often feel misunderstood or don't understand their partner.
- Door #2 people sometimes say they are in Vintage Love, but that their partner isn't.

Both Vintage lovers and Giving-up Couples "say" they are happy.

Different from Power Struggle

And while we are looking at distinctions, you may be wondering what are differences between Door #2, Giving-Up, and the Power Struggle. In the Power Struggle, people are still trying to achieve Romantic Love. The motive of the conflicts, or the conflict-avoidance, are to bring about love. In the Power Struggle you see the cycle of violence: a romantic period, a more or less quiet build-up, and then an explosive or implosive confrontation aimed at returning to romance. Remember that principle is "hurt 'em till they love you."

Behind Door #2, people have given up improving the situation and are just trying to survive. Giving-Up couples "hurt 'em to maintain the status quo."

The Last Detail: The Unconscious

While the [Map of Relationships](#) is complete, the story is not complete without this last piece of information. The driving force beneath both Romantic Love and the Power Struggle is in your unconscious mind.

During the Romance our deep minds are focused on two things: Fear and the Biological Dream. In our fear we become neo-phobic, or fearful of the new. This fear-of-the-new drives the entire process of partner selection. Basically people always pick a partner that seems familiar to your unconscious mind. This means that you pick someone who has many of the specific characteristics you met in childhood, in your Traditional Family, those of your caretakers. Harville Hendrix calls this the Imago: the familiar traits of childhood caretakers – both positive and negative. Along with your fear is the hope that the Biological Dream is coming true. Put the Fear and Biological Dream together and I think that people seek the familiar, but hope for change. What I think this sounds like is, “I’ve found someone just as bad as my parents, but who has now turned over a new leaf and is going to be really wonderful.”

Now, during the Power Struggle, at the unconscious level, your partner still appears familiar. In fact, they become more and more familiar over time. “I married someone just as bad as my father/mother, etc.” This, of course, is the source of that common belief that “I married the wrong person.” But now the hope of the Biological Dream seems more and more illusive, decreases bit by bit, until hope reaches zero. Then you are at the Choice Point: Door #1, Door #2, Door #3.

Follow the Relationship Path

So, here is the whole [Map of Relationships](#). Take a look... I want you to get the feel of the whole map, the entire territory of relationships. So let’s trace the life of a client I saw, all the way from birth to the time she came to see me.

She was born (let’s call her Anne), a human with the Biological Dream fully active, but with a body that wasn’t ready to operate on its own. She met her caretakers in her Traditional Family. Dad was ex-military, very firm and frequently absent – a “my way or the highway” fella. Her mom was fairly passive when Dad was home, a bit on the fragile side, while at the same time a model of neatness and correct behavior. Anne learned to survive by figuring out what she needed to do to satisfy these two. She became good at reading their minds in order to determine her best course of action. When she was 16 she fell in love (Romantic Period, 1st time) with a “nice,” strong guy who played sports. He led her into many experiences she might never have ventured into on her own. He became more and more demanding (Power Struggle, 1st time), and she began to withdraw. After he hit her for not answering his phone calls, they broke up (Divorce #1). She swore off boys. It took her a time to get really lonely, but when she was 22, she met a gentle guy and they dated for a while, talked a lot and were married in a colorful ceremony (Romantic Period, 2nd time) with all her family around her. His irresponsibility began to provoke her sharp tongue (Power Struggle 2nd time), but a 1st baby distracted them both. She took care of the family and home, and he buried himself in work (Door #2). Sex became very infrequent and while sharing the same house and bed, they shared little else. They stayed together this way for 18 years. When her youngest child became 12, she went back into the work force. At work, she met a guy who “made her feel important and pretty.” After a brief affair, Anne’s husband found out. In a very unfriendly way they split (Divorce #2). For six years Anne lived alone or with her kids part time. Then, when the loneliness got too much for her, she met a business man who had been recently divorced and dated him for 2 years (Romantic Period 3rd time). They were thinking of marriage (already they lived mostly in

her house), but his moodiness, temper, and his sloppiness bothered her (Power Struggle 3rd time).

She came into my office.

Where are you?

Now let's look at you. What I suggest you do is mentally put a "I am here" sign on the territory where you think you are. I can't tell you where this is, by looking at you. But you can. I know where I am. Now, look at the territory you came from to get here, where you are now. Try drawing a line starting in your Traditional Family and following the path of your life up until today – just like I did with Anne's story. Try putting down the length of time you spent in each area.

Now, stop for a moment. Ask yourself, where do you want to end up? Given where you are now, what is the path that you choose? What is ahead of you?

Section 6: Questions and Answers © Al Turtle 2006

A Visit to the University of Life

Now you have the [Map of Relationships](#) in your hands. Now, the choices are yours. Let me share some answers to questions that many before you have asked.

People ask me about the University of Life, as they often put this right ahead of them. Well, I remember it well. It took a long time. I think it starts with a solid awareness in both partners that what is now going on isn't working for either of them – an awareness that they have to try something new. I believe to keep going you need two things: panic and commitment. You need to feel panic that the Biological Dream is not yet fully alive. And you need the commitment to go forward together. I had to learn a lot that my parents didn't and couldn't teach. No one had taught them. I often say, "My parents, doing the very best they could, did a fairly poor job raising me." I had to become an expert at many things subjects and skills they didn't know.

I tell people who are in the Power Struggle and who want to go after that Biological Dream, "What you are doing is earning you what you have in the way of a relationship. You have to learn to do, I repeat, to do things differently." I learned from many sources. So can you. Remember that original 4% had no help at all. Now there are lots of books, seminars, workshops, and courses out there. I have not reviews all of them. I learned a lot from Harville Hendrix's Imago Relationship Therapy, both the workshops and the in-office therapy. There are hundreds of his therapists and workshop presenters out there willing to help you. I learned a great deal from John Bradshaw, who's books helped me visualize much of the work I had to accomplish.

Now, so many books are self-help books... and are not relational. I like to think that self-help books are about how to live on a desert island - alone. Yet everything about the Biological Dream is about getting along with others, because that is a need of the self. Relational books are about what you need to know when someone else swims ashore and live with you on your desert island. Some of the most critical skills of Relational Maturity aren't being taught anywhere that I can find. As a result, I am putting that material together myself and will make it available.

MAP OF RELATIONSHIPS by Al Turtle

Most of what you have to learn are skills. I think of skills as habits – things you do automatically without thinking. A new skill is hard to do for the first 50 times, only a little difficult for the next 100 times, and simply automatic after that. Since skills are trainable, visible and even measurable, I believe you can measure your success as you advance. I think Relational Maturity is easy to see, and can be objectively measured.

One of the problems facing you is the difference between normal, North Americans and Vintage Lovers. You have to be willing to become a bit abnormal.

Another problem is that there are many people out there who are teaching Home Style skills. I suggest you beware of those who teachers and authors who haven't reached Vintage Love themselves, but are willing to tell you how to do it. If their style and behavior conflicts with the Biological Dream, I suggest you stay away from them. Look for teachers who can show you what it looks like.

Besides, I don't think you need books very much. I think you need direction in what to practice. Most of what I needed were new skills and help at removing old useless or destructive skills. One of the challenges each of us face is that "relationships are not an intellectual, nor a spectator sport." Great relationships involve work, doing things that you are not inclined to do. Practice, practice and more practice.

Five Common Problems to Fix

In my office, I sit right at the entry way to University of Life. I assist couples to get firmly into the courses. I teach them all the freshman classes and share about the advanced classes if I can.

Every couple I've met presents one single common problem. They are using threat in an attempt to get love in their lives. They are threatening their partner, whether they know it or not. They are usually living with threat from their partner, and untrained to do anything about it. As Safety is the first principle of the Biological Dream, threat never works. I've learned that Love and Threat cannot coexist. PERIOD.

The University of Life has many courses, and I think all are necessary. The first line of Leo Tolstoy's wonderful book Anna Karenina is "Happy families are all alike; every unhappy family is unhappy in its own way." I like the quote. It points to a wonderful principle. Vintage Love implies that you've learned all your lessons. Miss one lesson, and it doesn't matter which, you'll be in trouble. This is why so many of all the courses in books, seminars or on TV don't work. They point to the solution of one problem. But you will need to learn all the lessons.

Many people get the feeling that the learning is endless. Fortunately there are a finite number of courses and problems to solve. It is doable. Let's look at the five most common problems people present to me: Being Together, Arguing, Control, Hurt, Lying. These, I believe, must be solved to get to Vintage Love. Remember that each of these paragraphs represent all or part of a course and just a part of the curriculum in achieving Relational Maturity.

1st: Being Together

Most couples [have a problem with Reliable Membership](#) that simply tears them apart. One of them needs membership or intimacy much more than the other does. The "needy one" pursues, clings, interrogates, and pushes. Their partner, having lower need for intimacy,

feels pursued, clung-onto, pestered, driven, and thus starts to withdraw. But by withdrawing they trigger their partner into pursuing, clinging etc. harder. And the cycle goes on. This problem gets bigger and bigger with more and more passion and panic. One wanting more contact. The other wanting more "space." I'd say this is a problem in about 85% of couples I see.... and it must be solved. I was the needy one. Sandra was the one I used to drive away.

2nd: Argument

Almost all couples who enter my office have [what I call a Type II Communication problem](#). A Type I problem means they can't hear each other. But with a Type II, they listen to each other until a disagreement appears, and then they stop listening and start arguing. Disagreement prevents communication. Since arguing and interrupting are so common, many people don't consider this a kind of fighting. But the effect on the relationship is enormously negative.

I believe firmly that, from the point of view of a relationship, arguing is the verbal form of physical violence. Just as arguing leads to violence, and violence lead to more and more violence, so also some verbal habits lead to arguing. Arguing can and must be replaced by different, quality communication.

3rd: Control

A significant majority of couples present me [with their control problems](#). It seems that a large number of us are, shall I say, brainwashed in youth to believe that there are lots of rights and wrongs in life, and that we can relax if we are doing "right" and need to be tense if we are "wrong". I've found the issue is not what is right or wrong, but that the individual becomes anxious when in the face of "things out of place." Such a person tries to relax themselves by putting things into order, the order they have selected to believe in.

Sandra and I call these rules. She has a large set. I have another set. A rule is a way of doing things which relaxes an individual. Sandra relaxes when cupboard doors are closed. I relax when a computer is turned off methodically. We both relax when a room is picked up and clean. These are our rules. A control problem occurs when I leave cupboard doors open or Sandra turns off a computer at the wall switch. What we do causes our partner to tense and they try to relax by changing us.

One of the major sources of lowered tension or of safety is to have a sense of control. In a couple, this is a special problem where one often tries to relax by taking control away from the other, who then tenses. It is a great learning how keep both partners relaxed with a sense of control for both..... at the same time.

4th: Hurt

An amazing number of people [believe themselves responsible for other people's pain](#). In that story I told you of the couple that divorced after 23 years, the woman kept her unhappiness hidden from her husband for 22 years because she didn't want to hurt him. She lied to him so as to not hurt him. Ask yourself, did it hurt him more for her to keep it a secret or to share it. I've found this belief in protecting people from pain doesn't work.

One of the things I found out was that people learn when they are in pain. When everything is going well, they tend to remain asleep to what they can learn in life. If I look back, most of the great things I have learned have come from a time of pain. Thus I've learned that protecting adults from pain, especially the pain they earn themselves, isn't very useful. It tends to keep them in a state of ignorance.

But it is quite a skill to be available to a partner when they are in pain, and let them feel it fully.

5th: Withholding the Truth

Another major problem is the people [do not tell each other the truth](#) they see. They lie. They say "that which is not so." However, the most common form of lying is what I call the passive lie – not saying the truth, just being silent. I had to develop a definition of lying that would cover both the active and passive. Here it is.

"To knowingly leave someone in a state of misunderstanding about something that you believe is important to them."

I've found that people lie, and that people are silent, for only one reason. I've found that people lie because it is not safe to tell the truth, and people are quiet because they don't think it safe to speak. Learning how to make it safe for your partner to tell the truth or to feel safe to speak leads both of you hearing the truth in a safe way. This is one of the first courses in the University of Life.

Curriculum

I suggest you think of the University of Life as going to college. And everyone is accepted who want to go. There will be Introductory courses and eventually advanced courses. While there are no examinations, clearly you can't move to a sophomore level until you have demonstrated competence at the freshman level.

Here are some examples of Freshman Year courses. I present these as they come to me.

- Safety – Learn the fundamentals of becoming a Source of Safety to your partner.
- Reliable Membership – Learn the fundamentals of establishing a reliable and durable connection. Learn to take breaks in your relationship, while maintaining reliable attachment.
- Diversity – Learn the fundamentals of dealing with multiple views of reality, and enjoying Differences.
- Autonomy – Learn the fundamentals of encouraging partnership and eliminating argument.
- Purpose – Learn the fundamentals of opening to each partner's unique genius and purpose in life.
- Communication – Learn fundamental skills of verbally connecting without interrupting, appreciative listening and durable curiosity.
- Boundaries – Learn the fundamentals of Making and Maintaining the Lines between you and others, maintaining your self and staying relaxed.
- Feelings/Emotions – Learning the fundamentals of having, and expressing healthy emotions, and protecting passion.
- Healing – Learning the fundamentals of dealing with reactivity, taking advantage of frustrations, and healing the wounds they represent.
- And last, but first as far as you are concerned, : Map of Relationships – an Overview and Introduction to the paths that lead to Relational Maturity. This course you are taking now.

Most asked question

My most asked question is, "Can you get to Vintage Love without a dedicated partner?" My answer is "no". Yes, you can learn lots of the theory and concepts without a partner. You

can practice the skills a bit, too. You can audit a course in piano playing and learn a lot. But you have to put your hands on the keyboard. Relational Maturity can only be learned in a relationship.

- You need a selected and dedicated partner to both give you practice and give you a reason to practice.
- You need a dedicated partner to give you the continuity of a good audience to help you develop yourself and your self-esteem fully.
- You need a dedicated partner to create a world separate and distinct from that of "normal" society.
- You need a selected partner to heal the deep wounds you received in Childhood. Wounds are peculiar. I believe all wounds are wounds of relationship, which occurred in a relationship, and can only be healed in a relationship. The ideal person to help you heal is the one who created the wound. However, I believe the mind is able to accept a reasonable facsimile of the original wounding person. Fortunately, you will always fall in love with a reasonable facsimile.
- You need to work as lab partners: sometimes leading and sometimes supporting, taking turns.

I think this is all necessary, if you don't want to live alone on a desert island.

Section 7: Final Points

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Change in my attitude

When I finally figured out the Map of Relationship I experienced a great attitude change. I now really like lovers. I used to make fun of puppy love or infatuation. But now I see young people fully alive to the potential of the Biological Dream. I tend to like the view through their eyes.

I now really like people who are getting a divorce. I used to think of them, and myself, as failures. But now I see them as people who are determined to make it to Vintage Love, and who are refusing to Give-Up. I like those who are learning, taking courses, studying and trying. They are on their way. People like Oprah are a great help. They are my allies.

I'm not too happy with those who've chosen Door #2 – those who Give-Up. Sadly they often discourage those who want Vintage Love. And yet, I see them as potential lovers, temporarily lost. I want them to awaken.

I love children. They are fully alive to the Biological Dream, though they may not know it. Their dreams are most wonderful.

The Three times

The Map of Relationships lets me see the three chances we humans have to reach for the Biological Dream – to become fully alive.

At birth, we all awaken to it as a dream. We expect our caretakers to be people who are Relationally Mature, who will care for us in a Biologically Real way. Most of us are disappointed. Whenever we fall in love, we awaken once more to the hope of living the Biological Dream. And finally, if we persevere, we can learn our way to Vintage Love, where

we live in the Biological Real world. And then we are the kind of people children expect to meet when they are born.

Three Chances

And now I can say what I have always wanted to say. Romantic Love is real and wonderful and.... Possible! The dream within Romantic Love is forever. Realizing that dream, making it real, is doable – just work. Instead of celebrating the romance of marriage so much, I wish we could learn to celebrate the courageous decision to Go For It, and enter Door #1, and to work through the University of Life. And in making the Romantic Dream real, we all make the world a better place. There is the hand of some great genius in this. This I believe. This is my faith.

The Future

I often wonder what the future will be like - where we all are heading.

Many people think the world is kind of falling apart, but I see in this change the rise of fully healthy living in connection. The Biological Dream is attempting to re-emerge all over the world in every committed relationship. I see that movement as much more powerful than politics as it crosses all country and economic lines. The wonderful yearning for Romantic Love, I think carries with it a positive virus, the Biological Dream – a virus that is slowly but surely changing the world for the better.

Right now, I meet Vintage Lovers who are often shy and socially fairly quiet. But their numbers are growing. At some time they will become visible enough to powerfully invite others to join them. Then I think that future will really begin to appear.

- A future where threat is not the basis for relationship or a part of communication.
- A future where there are no outsiders – where everyone belongs.
- A future where different opinions are treasured and preserved as a natural course of things.
- A future where each person participates, responsibly – making decisions that are honored.
- A future where every unique person contributes to each community the unique genius that they are born with.

Wishes for You

In my first comments today I spoke of my wishes for you, the listener. What I wanted for you is that you could see what is going on in our many struggles for intimate relationships. I wanted you to understand how you got where you are, how it makes sense that you are there. I hope you can see more clearly now. What I wanted for you is that you would reawaken that magnificent dream that infuses romantic love. I want you to Go 4 It. I want to you choose wisely which way to go. I want you to stop wasting time. I want you to move efficiently in a direction that works. I want you to see more clearly the options ahead of you. I want you to determinedly Go 4 It.

As you understand where you are and where you are going, I hope that you can reach out and help others along the way. I want you to feel confident that as you Go 4 It for yourself, you are also helping to build a better world, founded on stronger, wiser marriages and relationships that raise healthier, more mature, children. What I want for you is that you feel confident that as you Go 4 It for your self, you are learning to be an example for all people around you of getting along, and thus building a world of peace.

Thank you for contributing to more Relationship Maturity in this weary world. And Thank you so much for joining me on this trip, today. May our shared Biological Dream guide you in every wonderful way.

Map of Relationships

