

Healing From Within-Self-Empowerment Series

www.healingfromwithin.com

by Susan Goldman Eller, M.A.

Secrets To Sustaining A Love Relationship

Introduction

When I was a kid my mother would read bedtime stories to me. Many of these had a similar plot; boy and girl meet, fall in love, get married and live happily ever after. This pretty much summed up the view of marriage at that time. At least that was the impression my friends and I received. No one ever told us how to sustain love and nurture a relationship. There was never a word about the possible problems people encounter especially when in love and living together. There was never a hint of any relationship or communication skills.

I am reminded of a line from the TV sitcom *Third Rock From The Sun*. Dick Solomon, played by John Lithgow, is an alien from another planet and says something like “Humans are delicate creatures. They have feelings. These human bodies do not come with a manual.” Living life does not come with a manual. We pretty much have had to figure it out for ourselves. Fortunately much information is available today on how to be in a love relationship and make it work. At least with some helpful tools and knowledge you will have a better chance of creating a healthy, mutually supportive loving relationship.

My husband and I have been together for 22 years. We have had our share of ups and downs that have turned us inside and out. I have spent many years learning how to be myself, express my feelings, handle anger, refine communication and still keep love alive and well.

This booklet contains information, skills and tips that I have gathered along the way. Some of my inspiration comes from relationship experts Harville Hendrix, Barbara D’Angeles, and John Gray as well as other inspirational authors. I have also added insight from my own personal experiences and explorations in marriage. My purpose is to share with you the secrets to creating and sustaining love in an intimate relationship while nurturing and healing yourself.

How do you view love and marriage?

Harville Hendrix author of *Getting the Love you Want*, gives an apt description of how marriage is viewed in western society. He uses the metaphor of a box and says that this is how most people view marriage. You choose a mate and then you climb into a box. After settling in for awhile you then look around and decide if you want to stay or climb out. In other words do you like your box mate or do you now want someone different. Marriage is viewed as an unchanging state. Its success is dependent on whether or not you have chosen a good mate. The solution for nearly 50 percent of couples is to divorce in order to start over again hopefully with a better partner.

What happens to love after people have been living together for awhile? I have found that it is a combination of things. Some of these factors are:

- ❖ Not communicating your wants and needs
- ❖ Having unrealistic expectations
- ❖ Taking your love and each other for granted
- ❖ Not spending enough time on your relationship
- ❖ Forgetting to make room for romantic times together
- ❖ Not knowing how to deal with conflict
- ❖ Expecting the other person to read your mind
- ❖ Judging, criticizing and blaming one another for your problems

Do any of these problems look familiar to you? If you are like me you will probably be able to relate to some of these issues. These are some of the common factors that contribute to the breakdown of a relationship. Now let's look at what you can do to improve your relationship.

Because we have been kept in the dark about this information I am calling these factors relationship secrets. These secrets are the factors that can enhance and sustain a relationship. This first secret is very important because it will help you to view your love relationship from a broader perspective. It will also help you to understand why some of the problems in a relationship arise.