

Transforming Relationships

Rusty Stewart, Ph.D.

Table of Contents

Introduction		Page 3
Chapter 1 -	Authentic Communication and Feedback, an Unwavering Foundation	Page 4
Chapter 2 -	Mirror Mirror on the Wall, Who's the Most Effective Listener of All?	Page 5
Chapter 3 -	Understanding the Three Stages in Intimate Relationships	Page 7
Chapter 4 -	Creating Sacred Relationships by Being and Speaking your Truth	Page 8
Chapter 5 -	Please be Careful of that Co-Dependency Trap!	Page 10
Chapter 6 -	The Power of Neutrality: How to <i>Be</i> with Another	Page 11
Chapter 7 -	Do You Want To Be A Superior Man? Then Ravish Your Goddess With Your Open Heart!	Page 12
Chapter 8 -	The Power of Releasing Withholds!	Page 14
Conclusion		Page 16

Introduction

Relationships, can't live with them, can't live without them. Sound familiar? Well it's a crock of shit! Bad modeling and mentorship, that's all it is. We've been hoodwinked to think that relationships with the opposite or same gender are difficult. Have you ever attempted to cut something with dull scissors or use a flat head screwdriver with a Phillips head screw? The task is much harder without the right tools and sharpened blades. Most of us do not have the proper tools when it comes to relationships, and when we do, we need to practice them over and over again so our skills are as sharp as a new razor blade.

This EBook is designed to give you some powerful basic tools when it comes to cultivating healthy relationships, ALL relationships! Authentic communication and feedback are the crucial foundation for successful and mutually satisfying relationships. That's just chapter 1. Then you'll learn how to mirror and get clear on listening to what someone is really saying in chapter 2. Chapter 3 views physically intimate relationships from a whole new perspective. Exciting and just the beginning! The power of speaking our truth sets the stage for sacred relationships where supporting and coaching one another in our excellence sets the stage for creating an extraordinary life! Wow, chapter 4! Okay, that's just one half of the EBook. Are you curious yet?

Before we get too carried away with ourselves let's get clear on what co-dependency is and what it isn't. Co-dependency is disempowering to all parties in relationship. Chapter 5 describes this all too common trap that sinks relationships. Now we are ready to take communication to a whole new level beyond skills training. Communication as a way of being vs. doing will open your eyes to everyday miracles. Chapter 6 describes this way of being through the power of neutrality. In chapter 7 we expand on chapter 3 and really get into physically intimate relationships again. The emphasis is on masculine and feminine energies and how to be Goddesses and Gods ravishing our partner with conscious presence and open hearts! Ooolala! The last chapter is life changing for those of you who are committed to living your courage through the release of withholds. Withholds are those communications from our past, recent and not so recent, that contain unfinished business, incompleteness, or still hold a charge for us. Delivering these withholds frees our energies up which starts to attract new and amazing people and things into our lives. Chapter 8 in essence lightens our load and in many ways rebirths us while teaching us the power of authentic, open, and honest communication from a space of neutrality. Rusty, is that it?

This is the beginning. There is much more. Enjoy reading the EBook and practice being awesome in your relationships ALL THE TIME! Please contact me with your comments whatever they may be. And, if you want a coach to speed your process up, contact me NOW! Many blessings to you and all the people you Love. We are all teachers and students. We are either growing or we are dying. I choose growth.
Shungo!

Gratitude and Humility,

Rusty Stewart, Ph.D.

Chapter One

Authentic Communication and Feedback, an Unwavering Foundation

Authentic, respectful communication is the cornerstone in all relationships. This includes family, friends, partners, lovers, people at work, etc. The more open and vulnerable we are in relationships, the deeper the connection, and the safer it is for others to open up and share on a real and authentic level. The result is cleaner relationships with less baggage and increased presence in the moment. Personally, I have found that being totally present and authentic with another human being enhances trust and facilitates healthier requests of one another. In addition, practicing and integrating the skill of giving and receiving feedback in all of our relationships creates an unwavering foundation of healthy and respectful communications. And, it is through effective objective feedback that we grow by uncovering hidden aspects of ourselves and others. Now, let's explore some criteria for powerful feedback.

The first rule of thumb to remember is feedback is best received when solicited, rather than imposed. Make sure to ask permission before proceeding with your feedback. Typically people do not like advice, especially when they haven't asked for it. I usually say something like this, "Are you open to receiving some feedback?" This way if they say yes, they are welcoming me. If they say no, I leave it alone for another time, as they may not be in the space to receive it. Gain agreement all the time!

Another useful guideline is to make your feedback specific as opposed to being too general. General comments tend to put people on the defensive because they have no point of reference from past behavior that they can recall upon. When we share a specific incident where the behavior occurred and we get agreement that the other person remembers the event, then we are both operating from a specific shared incident. For example, don't say "You're always late!" Instead, be specific and say, "I want to talk with you about missing the first song at the concert we attended last night due to you having been 30 minutes late in picking me up."

A third important rule is to take into account the needs of both the receiver and giver of feedback. This one is pretty self explanatory. Practice mutual respect and boundaries. Make sure you are both in a place where the feedback can be heard, received, and processed without infringing upon one another in any way. Also be sure you are each free of any other distractions in order to facilitate the best talking and listening atmosphere.

Fourthly, make sure your feedback is directed toward behavior which the receiver can do something about. Some of us have deeper perceived shortcomings or fears that are much harder to overcome. Make sure the focus is on some type of behavior the person can change. For example don't say, "You really should do something about your nose." This is not healthy feedback and is not directed toward behavior.

The fifth suggestion is to make sure your feedback is descriptive, rather than evaluative. It's important to leave all judgment out of feedback. For example, rather than telling someone that they yell at you, it may be more effective saying, "I'm not comfortable when you raise your voice." Yelling is evaluative; raising your voice is descriptive.

It's also important for the feedback to be well timed. I usually recommend that we bring up stuff that happens in relationships within one week before the information gets fuzzier or just ignored all together. Most arguments stem from unresolved and incomplete experiences from the past. These start to get stored in our back pocket and are projected later on when something more minor occurs. Keeping relationships clean means sharing our thoughts and feelings in a continuous, timely, and respectful manner, so we are present in relationships, free of baggage.

And lastly, mirroring is a powerful way to check and ensure clear communication. Rephrasing and reflecting back to a person like, "If I understand you correctly, what you are saying is..." will ensure you are both on the same page with the interpretation of the information. I have had innumerable experiences working with couples where one person says something and the other person hears something completely different. There is no right or wrong here. We all have different perceptions and experiences, and they spill over into all of our communications if we are not vigilant with reflective listening. I have witnessed relationships transforming over this one learned skill!

So there you have it; seven useful tools to enhance your communication in relationships, all relationships! As these guidelines become an integrated part of your unwavering foundation, you will witness transformation in your relationships. Authentic and respectful communication starts with taking the charge out of "being right." Do you want to be right or do you want to be happy? We certainly can't have both. To be right means the other has to be wrong. And nobody wants to be wrong, especially with somebody they care about. So, practice these skills and remember, we are all whole, complete, and perfect. Sometimes, we just forget. Incorporate these seven feedback suggestions and we all will experience a humility that reminds us how disempowering it is to be right. It is MORE empowering for all participants in the feedback conversation to have been heard and a common ground to be found on which to stand together as one. Remember, authenticity and vulnerability makes it possible for others to do the same. WOW! Now that's one powerful unwavering foundation for authentic communication and stunningly workable relationships!

Chapter Two

Mirror Mirror on the Wall, Who's the Most Effective Listener of All?

Listening is the most important component in communication. "Seek first to understand before being understood." After 15 years of experience as an educator, psychotherapist, and everyday human being, I can share with you that this is easier said than done. Listening is an art and requires us to get out of our own way and our need to be right. That being said, there are tools we can learn that significantly increase our listening presence. In the first chapter I laid out the seven feedback suggestions for creating an unwavering foundation for authentic communication. In this chapter, I am going to go into more detail about how to mirror and listen more effectively.

Most of us are not present for others when we think we are listening. Here are some telltale signs that we are pretending to be listening while another person is talking: forming a response or rebuttal in our

head, thinking they are wrong with the facts, interrupting the conversation, spacing out and/or thinking about something else, etc., etc., etc. I have found that the most effective way we can truly listen is by following the structure of mirroring that was created by Dr. Harville Hendricks and his Imago system. Let me explain.

Everybody has their own experience and perceptions of the world. So the first requirement in listening, even before we begin a mirroring process, is to realize there is no right or wrong. There's just perception and experience. Do you want to be right or be happy? Remember from the last chapter you can't be both. Nobody likes to be made wrong. People that make others wrong have very few true friends and usually have a very poor relationship history. My suggestion is to approach every listening opportunity as if you know absolutely nothing and the other person is just reporting in on their own unique world of interpretation.

When mirroring, one person (A) is speaking and the other person (B) is listening. B does not interrupt or say anything other than "If I understand you correctly you said" It doesn't matter what B thinks about what A says. B is only reflecting back what A says. A's job is to tell their story and own their experience without blaming B or anyone else. The use of I statements helps facilitate the process. When speaking about B, A must make sure to address the behavior of B and not person themselves. An example of good communication is, "Last Friday when we went to the concert I experienced that you picked me up 30 minutes after our agreed upon time and we missed the first three songs. I felt frustrated, unimportant, and angry when we arrived late." It may also be useful for person B to stop person A at times before mirroring back the information, as it may become too long for person B to remember.

After the conversation of person A is complete, person B is then to validate person A. This is not agreeing. It might sound like this "I can understand how frustrating it was for you to miss the first three songs of the concert due to my being late." That's it. Keep your validation short and sweet. And make sure your response is real.

The final part of the mirroring process is for person B to empathize with person A. It may go something like this, "That must make you feel frustrated, angry, and unimportant to me." This feeling piece is important. When B gets it, A feels heard and understood. In addition, B understands that it is their behavior that triggered A, and that it is not personal. When we can truly empathize with the other we are less likely to want to trigger them in the future. This creates more safety in relationships and allows us to go deeper and become more authentic with the other person. It's a no brainer. Who would want to consciously trigger someone they love and care about? For that matter, why would we want to do that to anyone?

There are many different versions of this process, Couples Dialogue, Mirroring, and Reflective Listening to name a few. This process is much more difficult than it seems. Once feelings and emotions are present, mirroring becomes quite challenging unless it has been in practice over time. Practice makes perfect. This is a very structured process that may seem too canned at times. However, I can assure you that through repetition, the process can be adapted smoothly to your style and be just as effective and powerful! I also recommend you take a workshop or find a therapist, educator, or coach that can

objectively guide you and another through the process. Once again, this model works in ALL relationships. I guarantee that if you incorporate giving and receiving feedback with mirroring, you will start to be known as the communicator guru. And that is because great communicators know that God gave us two ears and one mouth for a reason!

Chapter Three

Understanding the Three Stages in Intimate Relationships

After previously discussing a foundation for communication in relationships, it's time to go deeper into understanding physically intimate relationships. I love the work of David Deida and how he describes the role of masculine and feminine energies in relationships. Men and women have both masculine and feminine energies. Thus in gay and lesbian relationships, one partner will typically have more masculine and/or feminine energy than the other. Only about 20% of the population of intimate partners has what Deida refers to as balanced masculine and feminine energies. I will go into more detail of the energies in chapter seven. For the purpose of this chapter, just know that his relationship work addresses all lifestyles by acknowledging masculine and feminine energies in both men and women. He also does a great job of describing intimate relationships by utilizing a simple three stage model. He addresses these stages in his book "Intimate Communion" (Deida, 1995). The three stages I will elaborate on are, Dependence Relationship, 50/50 Relationship, and Intimate Communion.

The Dependence Relationship usually involves some sort of more traditional type of relationship where power and control are present. "In a Dependence Relationship, one partner often needs to feel in control; while the other partner often gives up his or her authentic power in order to feel loved and accepted. Partners typically become dependent on each other for money, emotional support, parenting or sex. Although the sex is sometimes good (especially during the making-up period after a fight), partners often end up feeling limited by old-style gender roles or by an imbalance of financial or physical power" (Deida, 1995). Many people at this point attempt to transition to a healthier style of relationship where they create personal boundaries and focus on taking care of themselves instead of always focusing on their mates needs.

This brings us to the next stage, the 50/50 Relationship. Most of us who have been in therapy and done significant personal growth work are familiar with this safer and more equal type of relationship where independence and healthier communication is firmly established. Typically, parenting, household chores, finances, and all the other responsibilities are split 50/50 right down the middle. These couples "attempt to strike their own inner balance between Masculine and Feminine qualities, both at home and in the workplace" (Deida, 1995). In fact both partners are usually engaged in careers and bringing in their own paycheck. This relationship tends to be more peaceful, respectful, and calm than Dependence Relationships. However, many times the equality of the 50/50 relationship cancels out the passionate nature of the Masculine and Feminine and thus neutralizes the sexual energy. "For some of us, a cooperative partnership that emphasizes communication and shared responsibilities is sufficient. Others in this situation eventually suffer a feeling of incompleteness and develop a yearning to touch and be

touched far more deeply and more passionately—both sexually and spiritually—than a 50/50 Relationship often allows” (Deida, 1995).

When you are in stage three of intimacy with your lover, everything is organic. Trust is established. Uninhibited lovemaking is safe, gentle, wild and animalistic depending on the energies of the masculine and feminine between partners in the present moment. There is no need to explain anything. “Therefore, in Intimate Communion we learn to practice loving even when we feel hurt, rejected or resistant. First we practice love, and then our native sexual essence blooms naturally, inevitably, because we are learning to give from our core, which includes the root of our sexuality” (Deida, 1995).

In stage three, Intimate Communion, we are freely and spontaneously giving our love and trust to our mate. In this space of love and trust the feminine has a wide open heart and the masculine is totally present for the other. “At certain moments we might beg and whimper; at other moments we might aggressively ravish our partner in love. Still at other times our loving is serene and sweet. But whether shouting, screaming, pleading, pushing, pulling, biting, or hugging, we are gifting our partner with our uninhibited and free love, flowing directly from our sexual essence without fear or doubt.” (Deida, 1995). The “difference between rape and ravishment is simple: LOVE. Is love the motive of every squeeze, shriek and nibble, regardless of how forceful, aggressive or passionate? Or is it a motive of need—the need for sex, the need for power, the need for control” (Deida, 1995)? The big distinguishing factor in stage three is we are always loving our partner and then extending that love out into the world in everything we do. We are not falling in or out of love, but rather being and practicing love. “If you are waiting to feel love, in passionate sex or safe conversation, you are making a mistake. Love is an action that you do—and when you do it, you feel it. When you are loving, others find you lovable. Love is an action you can practice” (Deida, 1995).

Practice love, be love, and miracles happen. In relationships, regardless of the stage you identify with, love is the answer. Love will guide you. Sometimes it means leaving a relationship as we learn to love ourselves. Other times our partner desires to explore personal growth and the relationship stages with us. Moving from stage one to stage three, or from stage one to stage two takes work, commitment, and time. I’m here to tell you that being, loving, and playing with your partner in stage three is total freedom and pure bliss. I welcome you to embark on this love adventure if you dare. It’s not easy, and, I wouldn’t have it any other way!

Chapter Four

Creating Sacred Relationships by Being and Speaking your Truth

Creating Sacred Relationships requires a tremendous amount of courage. The first three chapters provide us with a foundation to create the possibility of healthy relationships. Continuous growth is absolutely necessary in any relationship. Growth occurs through being and speaking our truth in healthy ways and supporting one another through changes in life. It is important to be proactive and not reactive if we want fulfilling partnerships, friendships, work

relationships, etc. The bottom line is this; we either grow together or we grow apart. Don't take anything for granted. Complacency and withholding will damage any relationship.

I have learned the value of speaking my truth in all relationships, especially our partner/significant other relationships. I highly recommend the book The Magdalen Manuscript by Tom Kenyon and Judi Sion for anybody who is interested in Sacred Relationship and speaking our truth. We grow through healthy conflict. Most of us grew up in environments that modeled unhealthy conflict. By using the communication techniques of mirroring, and giving and receiving feedback, you can learn to harvest the benefits of healthy conflict and fulfilling resolution. "You can actually think you love someone so much that you never call them on their stuff, thinking it would hurt them too much. I'll tell you what hurts—not calling someone on his or her stuff. That's what kills and creates disease and compliance to non-growth and disillusionment" (Kenyon and Sion, 2002).

The bottom line is this; we cannot grow and learn unless we challenge each other—with open minds and humility—to be in our excellence. In order to do this we have to be vigilant and present to communicate, with one another, everything that goes on in our relationships. Otherwise "those little things, those little annoyances, those little niggings, the little truths, when not shared between people in Sacred Relationship build brick walls, over which there is eventually no assault. When you do not share your truth, one morning you wake up and find yourself living with a stranger, a roommate" (Kenyon and Sion, 2002).

Sacred Relationships are not for everyone. It takes effort, courage, vulnerability and trust, however, the rewards are tremendous! Relationships are much more workable when kept current. Do not let things build up over time for fear that the truth will destroy what you have. "Understand that you are in alchemical process when you are in Sacred Relationship; and you search for pictures, and sometimes when the pictures don't match, you get scared. You are in alchemical process. As this heat gets turned up and you can't take the heat, go to another place where the heat is not so strong. Pause and let the world stop; and take each other's hands, though the last thing you want to do is touch each other in these times; and speak the truth about what face is showing itself. Understand that telling the truth is not going to break apart anything" (Kenyon and Sion, 2002).

In my 22 years of personal growth work and 11 years as a relationship counselor I have learned that the above quote is absolutely true. Most couples come to me after it is too late. There has been too much stuff that has accumulated between the two of them for too long. The clean up process of all the resentments is overwhelming. Be proactive in your relationships. Do not wait. Take action now before you wake up next to a stranger. Use the communication skills from my first two chapters as a start. Find a good Imago couples counselor. Do what you need to do to enhance your relationship. It will take work, and, it will not be easy. "Relationships are rather

like poker games, with everyone bluffing about who has the higher cards. When you go into Sacred Relationship, all the cards are laid out on the table for each to see. Whatever arises, it is simply put on the table; because the clarity of two people looking at all the cards allows for the possibility of transformation. Always stay in truth. It's going to get hot. Don't give up. Buy a clutch pedal cover and put it on your altar. Hold hands and walk across the burning coals. And I promise you—you will think you are going to die. And you won't" (Kenyon and Sion, 2002).

Chapter Five

Please be Careful of that Co-Dependency Trap!

Co-dependency is a term that has been used in the addictions field for years. As much as I dislike labels, it is important to recognize unhealthy relationships and accompanying behavior. Co-dependency means - making the relationship more important to you than you are to yourself. Or living your life through another person and putting yourself second. This is done in an addictive fashion with most of a person's energy going into trying to make the relationship work with a partner that doesn't care to do their personal work. In other words, the co-dependent's world revolves around their partner. This is an extremely unhealthy attachment that creates stress, tension, and disillusionment in the relationship.

Many people who choose co-dependent relationships do so because they need to feel in control of their partner. This need for control is usually played out by the co-dependent by trying to fix or save their partner from some type of compulsive behavior (ex, alcohol, drugs, sex addict, etc.). This "fixing" fulfills some extreme need inside the person to be helpful and caring. Unfortunately, most times the co-dependent focuses on the dependent at the expense of oneself. The dependent person has no desire to change and often chastises the co-dependent person for trying to help them. Many co-dependent people would not know what to do with themselves if they were not in a relationship. Thus, the co-dependent person typically has low self-esteem and a very poor view of the self. And, without outside help, co-dependents usually stay in their relationship as unhappy as they may be.

Obviously, it takes two to tango. The dependent gets his/her needs met by being enabled so they don't have to look at their shortcomings either. When something is always being done by one's partner, it sets up an unequal needy relationship. The dependent partner expects to be taken care of and though he/she will typically become critical of the co-dependent, their expectation none the less remains. The bottom line is that both partners are engaging in an equally unhealthy dynamic that fosters dependency upon one another. The best way to learn more about co-dependency is to Google it and read books about it. There are plenty of resources out there that are readily available.

The reason I'm writing about co-dependency is because it is all too easy to get wrapped up in a relationship and not see it for what it is. None of us are immune to falling heavily for someone and missing the flags and warning signs. Many of our relationships start off with good intentions only to find later that we don't have a life without our partner. And, in fact, feel totally lost, abandoned, and lonely without the other. This is all preventable and many times requires putting up boundaries early on in the

relationship so that we keep our separate sense of self. Relationships built on dependency and co-dependency are unhealthy. Relationships built on independence are also unhealthy. Healthy relationships are interdependent. Each person has their own life and they come together to celebrate with one another and share their lives. Relationships are impermanent. And, the best way to give them a shot of lasting longer is to honor each other as both separate and together.

Ask yourself these questions:

- 1) Is my relationship more important than me?
- 2) Am I paying a high price by being with this person?
- 3) Am I the only one putting energy into this relationship?
- 4) Am I taking responsibility for the behavior of this person?
- 5) Is there underlying anger about the relationship?
- 6) Am I trying to change my partner?

If you have answered yes to any of these questions you may have some co-dependent characteristics. Seek help from a therapist, relationship counselor, read books, or search on the internet. The first step is getting information and getting feedback from healthy people in your life. Then you can decide what feels right for you to do. Whatever you do, do it for you, because, nobody will do it for you.

Chapter Six

The Power of Neutrality: How to Be with Another

Now that we've learned how to give and receive feedback, and mirror one another, it's time to look at the way we are *being* in communication. Communication skills and our careful choice of language give us part of the equation in successful relations with others. But, the way we are *being* in communication takes our interactions to a whole new level. At this point you may ask, what do you mean how I'm *being*? So here's the deal, there is no truth in communication, only individual interpretation and perception. That being said it is important to approach every interaction with a **blank slate** and **no judgement**. This means *being* present with no expectations, no history, and no resentments. Essentially, we hold a space with an open heart and still mind, no matter what has happened in the past. Let's explore this further.

No expectation means that we drop any outcome we are seeking from the conversation. No history in this case is defined by letting go of anything from the past including resentments, blame, being right, knowing what the person is going to say, etc. This is a letting go process that allows us to truly listen and be present with an open heart and still mind. As a student at Landmark Education we ask ourselves what we are willing to give up in our past "experiences" and "knowing" so that our communication in relationships can be transformed and the power of *being* neutral is present. You can check Landmark Education out at <http://www.landmarkeducation.com>.

What are some of the ways of *being* we can “give up” in transforming our communication in relationships? Here’s a partial list of ways of *being* that are inauthentic and not neutral from my communication class at Landmark: protecting, controlling, avoiding, defending, forcing an outcome, resisting, manipulating, convincing, and withholding. I’m sure you can find one or two primary forms of communication from the above list that don’t work for you in enhancing your relationships. We all use these mechanisms of expression. There is no right or wrong or good and bad. The question I have is, how’s that working for you? In my experience, when somebody is protecting, controlling, manipulating, resisting, convincing, or forcing an outcome with me I’m really not interested in being in a conversation with them. It’s the same when I’m defending, avoiding, or withholding in my interactions. It just doesn’t work. The way I’m *being* is defensive and inauthentic. In other words, I am living in my past and not *being* honest about what is truly going on with me. In short, I am not owning my shit. It’s important to *be* fully expressed **authentically**. Explanations will get you nowhere with people when it comes to communication (Landmark, September 2011)! It becomes a power struggle with both people hiding behind their crap because they’re afraid of confrontation, looking bad, being wrong, or being vulnerable.

Everything is possible when we let go of our past and start again from nothing. This allows us to be in a place of neutrality. What do you want your relationships to look like (family, friends, lovers, business, marriage, etc)? What would you like to be different? It’s truly up to you and nobody else. The only way people really change is if we change. That means we’re *being* authentic and neutral. It also means we are taking full responsibility for the ways we’ve been inauthentic and hiding in our relationships. Wow! Is that freeing or what? You mean all I have to do is give up my inauthentic or false way of being and clean up my own crap? Yes it’s that simple. And it is not easy as we are creatures of habit. It takes practice, courage, and vigilance. Be grateful that you are the author of your life and the quality of your relationships. You deserve the best! Now *BE* in authentic communication with the power of neutrality and help us all in transforming the world!

Chapter Seven

Do You Want To Be A Superior Man?

Then Ravish Your Goddess With Your Open Heart!

Are you ready to choose mastery in all areas of your life? If so, I promise you that your relationship with your companion, your lover, your partner, your Goddess and God, will mirror every other aspect of your life and vice versa. This goes for the masculine and feminine energy in all physically intimate relationships, including heterosexual, gay, lesbian, transsexual, non-gender specific, etc. For the purpose of this eBook, I am using man and Goddess/woman, but any sex or lifestyle can be inserted into the energies of the masculine and feminine.

Living life fully with limitless fervor requires an open heart and mastering the energies of Who You Are! Now I'm not talking about the macho man (closed heart) nor am I describing the new age wimp (who gives his heart away). I'm describing and witnessing the powerful masculine man who opens his heart fully and ravishes his Goddess with his deepest truth through Love. I'm speaking of Love so expansive that your Goddess is filled and overflowing with your gifts of the masculine. Now this, my friends means that you must fully understand the feminine and what they really want. And, what Goddesses really want is a superior man, rather than a mediocre man.

I strongly recommend that you read David Deida's book "The Way Of The Superior Man: A Spiritual Guide to Mastering the Challenges Women, Work, and Sexual Desire." I'm talking to you men. I already know that the Goddesses will read this, because Love, intimacy and relationship speaks to them. "Every moment of your life is either a test or a celebration. The same is true about every moment with your woman, only doubly so. Not only is her simple existence a test for you, but one of her deepest pleasures in intimacy is testing you, and then feeling you are not moved off course by her challenge. The most erotic moment for a woman is feeling that you are Shiva, the divine masculine: imperturbable, totally loving, fully present, and all pervading. She cannot move you, because you already are what you are, with or without her. She cannot scare you away, because you already penetrate her in fearless love, pervading her heart and body. She cannot distract you, because your one-pointed commitment to truth will not bend to her wiles. Feeling this hugeness of love and freedom in you, utterly, and surrender her testing in celebration of love. Until she wants to feel you as Shiva again. And then the testing will begin anew. In fact, it is precisely when you are most Shiva-like that she will most test you. If you remain full and strong, humorous and happy, your truth unperturbed by her testing, then you pass the test" (Deida, 2004).

Am I serious about this? Yes I am! Are you up for Who You Really Are? Do you really want to be in a passionate Loving sacred relationship with your Goddess, yourself, and life? I'm here to tell you that there is only one way to be. Be Who You Really Are and access the archetype of Shiva. Get over your bullshit and open your heart and be the warrior that you are! "If you are willing to discover and embrace your truth, lean through your fears, and give everything you've got, you can penetrate the world and your woman from the core of your being and bloom them into love without limit. You can ravish your woman so deeply that her surrender breaks your heart into light. You can press yourself into the world with such enduring love that the world opens and receives your deepest gifts. There is no essential difference between entering your woman's feminine heart and entering fully into the world. Both forms of intercourse, sexual and worldly, require sensitivity, spontaneity, and a strong connection to deep truth in order to penetrate chaos and closure in a way that love prevails. Neither woman nor world are predictable. They will often seem to resist your gifts and test your capacity to persist. And, just as surely, they will tenderly respond to the authenticity of your relaxed ministrations, the freedom expressed in your humor, and the invasion of your adamant love. They will open in love and receive you fully—only to resist and test you again moments or days later. Neither woman nor world can be second guessed, or fooled. They know when you are just dicking around. They want to receive you for real" (Deida, 2004).

Trust is at the core of the masculine and the feminine. And your work as a man is being sure of who you are! You must be so sure that you stand in the middle of the rapids of life unscathed, and so self-assured

that the only validation you need is through yourself. Then and only then can she “relax and trust your Shiva core. She can surrender the tensions around her heart. You are trustable. You don’t need her validation in order for you to be loving. You simply are loving. The truth of you is love. Your fullness is independent of mommy. You are not only a man, you are a superior man: a man who does his best to live as love in the world and in his intimacy, a man whose heart remains open and whose truth remains strong even when his woman criticizes him, a man who can find the humor in forgetting to pick up the milk on a day he made a million dollars. This is the kind of man your woman can trust. Now, the moment is a moment of celebration. Now she can relax and truly join in your jubilation, knowing you are not dependent on her praise for your happiness” (Deida, 2004).

Men, are you empowered yet? Are you clear about Who You Really Are? Are you clear about Who Your Goddess Is? Do you have clarity around what the oneness of Love is? Do you understand that your wholeness in interdependence is what ignites the dance of the feminine and masculine in blissful union? Are you ready to let go of what you think a relationship is and embrace the Love that you are? Everything your Goddess does and is is both Love and a call for Love. Are you ready to answer your calling? Reflect and remember that “it never ends. This is the secret. You can’t get out of it. Finding a different woman won’t get you out of it. Therapy won’t get you out of it. Financial or sexual mastery won’t get you out of it. Your woman is testing you because she loves you. She wants to feel your truth. She wants to feel your love. And she wants to feel that your truth and love are stronger than the barbs she can throw at you. Then she can relax and surrender into the polarity of man and woman. Then she can trust you” (Deida, 2004).

In closing, I am going to challenge you, men, to take self responsibility and hold yourselves accountable for what you say you want in a relationship. Take action, be in the unknown. Dare to jump off the cliff and grow wings on the way down. There is no other way. And know that all change is uncomfortable, but well worth the investment in yourself. The questions you have to ask yourself are, do I want the results described above in my relationship with my Goddess, and am I willing to jump? This willingness is rare! Greatness is letting go of the normal and joining the few. Just remember, “The most loving women are the women who will test you the most. She wants you to be your fullest, most magnificent self. She won’t settle for anything less. She knows it is true of you. She knows in your deepest heart you are free. And, as you know, she’s quite good at it. Yet if your purpose is to be free, you wouldn’t have it any other way” (Deida, 2004). JUMP!

Chapter Eight

The Power of Releasing Withholds!

If you want to increase your power in all areas of your relationships *and* your life, then listen up! When we hold something inside that begs for expression and/or have been holding in a bunch of smaller things, our health, power, creativity, and peace of mind become threatened. We, as human beings, are not meant to store unexpressed parts of ourselves in our bodies and minds. We become heavy, burdened, overwhelmed, scared, and insecure if we do not express ourselves. There are many reasons

why we may hold back (childhood triggers, fear of others reactions, rejection, hurting another's feelings, etc.). I am here to tell you that when you "get it out" you will feel better all around!

Withholds can be both positive and negative. When we withhold positive feedback from people like praise, acknowledgment or love, this robs people of a potential deeper connection and self worth. When we withhold constructive feedback from another person, such as behaviors that distance us, or sharing that they are speaking so softly you can't hear them, then we dishonor their opportunity to become present to a blind spot and grow. Then there are the many times that we withhold speaking our truth. An example of this is when we walk on eggshells when our partner is agitated or one person agrees with the other just to avoid confrontation. In the long run, withholds deplete our power and our energy. The key is delivering withholds in a manner that reflects self responsibility, love, and compassion. The most effective way to share a withhold is from a space of neutrality, where we are open to the unknown without expectation or assumptions as we share our withhold authentically with an open heart.

So you're probably wondering, "How is this done?" Is it worth all the time and energy to revisit the past with people?" **Absolutely!** Why? Because it is affecting your ability to be present and authentic with others in our relationship when you still have a collection of antique issues gathering dust in your body and psyche. *How* to effectively deliver withholds is a little trickier. The one sharing the withhold must be open minded toward the person on the receiving end of the withhold. This means letting go of all preconceived notions and judgments about the person and how it will turn out. The purpose of the withhold is to free the giver of the withhold while being in authentic communication with the receiver of the withhold. When you can release your withholds, you will find that you become lighter, more joyous and deeply connected, less judgmental, healthier, more expansive, and relieved.

Sometimes, an unexpected bonus shows up. I have experienced that when I share my withholds with another person in my life, it frees them up to do the same with me. Additionally, I have found that the person develops a higher level of respect for me because I have the courage to speak my truth and own my shit. That makes it safe for them to own their crap and share how they have been inauthentic with me. The result is usually a more authentic and deeper connection with the person. Authentic sharing of withholds also affords us the opportunity to look at how we are perceived by others and become aware of our own blind spots. Wow, what an opportunity for growth and change!

In conclusion, I'm confident that sharing all your withholds with people will strengthen and clean up your relationships. This will create a deeper level of trust, support, accountability, and intimacy with people. If it doesn't, then I encourage you take a look at which relationships serve the best interests of you and the other person. We spend but a blink of an eye on this planet. Let's make the most of it and support each other to be in authentic communication so that we may reach our highest relationship potential and get along and accept one another!

Conclusion

I'd like to conclude this EBook by acknowledging you for reading this short book from beginning to end. Thank you! Very few of us are taught how to be in healthy relationships. Most of us are just modeling our caretakers and other influential people from our early childhood. The material in this EBook can be challenging to absorb given where many of us have come from and the belief systems we have adopted. Relationships of all kinds are work, especially in today's high stress environment. I have shared just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to relationships, communication, and Love. And, I am in my own continuous lifelong process of experiencing and learning through relationships. Learning and transformation never ends. Take what works for you and leave the rest behind. Above all, keep an open mind, for we all have blind spots. Be coachable; leave your ego at the door. Always remember, keep it green, embrace beginner's mind, regardless of how much you think you know. It's what I don't know that I don't know, where relationship transformation occurs, ALWAYS! Be humble and start anew, NOW! If you'd like more information on how to transform all of your relationships contact me NOW! Life is short. Give your life and relationships your all. Everyone deserves Love. Especially YOU!