

SAVE MY MARRIAGE TODAY!



12 Part Premium Home Study Guide





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Part I:

Introduction to Save My Marriage Today! Premium Home Study Course



Andrew: Hello, and welcome to *Save My Marriage Today*. My name is Andrew Rusbach, and along with my co-host Amy Waterman and our special guest Richard Wheeler, we'll be taking you through some valuable ideas and concepts and thoughts in order to help you save your marriage.

Firstly, a little bit about myself. I've co-authored the 2005 edition of *Save My Marriage Today* with Amy Waterman and have been working along side helping couples with thoughts, concepts, and practical examples to help you through your marriage crisis.

How about you, Amy?

Amy: Yes, I co-wrote the book with you, and, since then, I've been dedicating myself more towards the female side of achieving love. So my goal is to help women find the love that they're looking for, whether that's through relationship or through being single.

Andrew: Last but not least, Richard Wheeler is our guest clinical psychologist. I was just wondering if you'd like to share some thoughts and insights about how you hope to help these couples?

Richard: My name's Richard Wheeler, and I'm a registered clinical psychologist. I've been counseling for now for over 35 years, and I've been married for over 36. I've got two grown children, and I paint and do a little writing, and I hike in my holidays.

What I want you to remember from today on, as you watch this program, is that you are not going to be alone. You've got three wonderful coaches that are going to be with you, and that this is a journey of discovery. We invite you to take this journey with us.

Andrew: That's quite right. Being in the midst of a marriage crisis can be a very scary and a very lonely time in your relationship, as you come to terms with the fact that the honeymoon is over and that you're making a transition. Like Richard said, it's an important thing to realize that you aren't alone. Not only in the fact that there are so many couples who make this transition from being *in love* to being *in real love*, but also the fact that we have three wonderful people here that are going to offer you insights and alternative ways of looking at things in order to assist you.

One of the most important things I want you to get from this course is to recognize, firstly, what's motivated you to come here, and that's that you want to save your marriage. I think that's great.

The second thing is that quite likely you've already been motivated by an event or something happening that has made you think, "Gosh, first of all, I have a marriage problem, and secondly, I need to help fix it." Awareness of the fact that there is a marriage problem is great, too.

What I also want you to do is to open your mind to the possibilities: open



your mind to the fact that we may do or say things that you don't agree with or you don't quite follow, but you have faith in the fact that this is a different way of looking at things and that, perhaps, a different way of looking at things can yield the greatest reward. What we want you to do is open your ideas, open your mind to higher awareness.

You want to examine the consequences of your behaviors and the things that have led to your marriage problem or marriage crisis at the moment and identify alternative actions or reactions in order to change those negative patterns of behavior in your marriage.

In each part, we have a workbook working alongside the material that you're getting through this video series. I want you to have this workbook with you every time you're watching this video, because the thoughts and ideas are going to be expanded out, and we're going to go into more detail in the workbook. We also have access to exclusive Member's Personal Consultations either through myself or a member of the team and all sorts of valuable material and resources on our site.

Like Richard and Amy have both identified, the important thing is that you've made the positive first step.

Richard: I want to remind you that this crisis is an opportunity for both the relationship and for your own personal healing, and what I'm going to be emphasizing a lot during these twelve sessions is **the importance of presence**.

What do I mean by "presence"? I mean the quality of the relationship that you're bringing and the way that you're contributing to the relationship.

If I said to you, "Over the last week, who was the person you enjoyed being with the most?" [who would you say]? Andrew was chatting with us before off air and was saying that he liked being with his dog at times the most. Well, if in actual fact he liked being with his dog the most, what could he bring from that relationship into the relationship with a special partner?

Because if I'm in a situation where I'm actually enjoying more powerfully a new relationship [or] a new encounter, and that new encounter has more vitality than my present partnership, I either leave the present partnership or bring back into the partnership an opportunity for that quality of presence. You know what I mean. You can remember what it was like to be in romantic love.

We're going to be talking about the *phases of relationships*. We're going to be talking about the fact that we have a period in the relationship where we're romantically engaged, and we love being romantically engaged. Unfortunately, the next stage in the relationship is that we move into what we call *chaos*. In chaos, which is probably where you are now, chaos is pretty hard going, but chaos actually invites us to make changes.



Somebody once said to me, "I want to have a marriage like my mother." If you're 30 and you have a marriage like your mother, my comment would be, "God help you," because if you're going to have the next 35 years nothing's going to change. You really want a relationship where nothing changes? I don't. I love change. I love excitement. I love new things, and so I guess you're going to be getting something of my personal perspective here.

How do you two resonate with what I'm saying?

Andrew: I agree with you completely, Richard. Some of the material in here is going to challenge you on a level that you mightn't have been challenged before and you might think, "Well, this doesn't apply to me," but I equally say, "It does." I look at my own relationship, and you should look at yours as well. In the midst of all of this, take a step back and see how you've grown as a person since you've met your partner.

In my own relationship, I look that I'm challenged on several levels. I have a fear of making decisions sometimes, but having someone alongside me enables me or gives me power to do things that I haven't been able to do before, and that's a wonderful thing.

I imagine if you're looking through your relationship, you can identify areas in your life where you have received power, where you've received support from your partner, which has enabled you to achieve things that you mightn't have otherwise done on your own.

So, in thinking of that, Amy, what are your thoughts about sharing perhaps some of the credit for your personal achievements as a person with your partner? How do you feel that empowers you as a person?

Amy: Of course, I always would say look at Harville Hendrix's book *Getting the Love You Want*, where he talks about our major vehicle for growth, which he believes is our relationship. For Harville Hendrix, the only way we're going to achieve our maximum growth as human beings is through marriage. That's an amazing thing. It means that if your marriage is in crisis, this is your chance to become the human being that you always wanted to be. But we're tested in times of crisis. If things were always easy, they'd get boring, so this is your chance.

Richard: I'm going to bring up again and again the story of a couple and the partner who comes to me and tells me that her partner spat in her face the other day.

If something like that is happening to you, this is a relationship which really has problems. The point is that when he spits, you can't go back and fight, because if you fight at that moment, things will escalate. Things will get even worse. In a sense, at that point you have to back off. Sooner or later the two of you are going to need to reassess how the relationship is. Where is this relationship going? You will have to do a reassessment.



He'll be apologetic about spitting. You will need now to talk about where this relationship is going, and the two of you will need to have an action plan.

Again, this is where we will help, because we will offer you that action plan. Remember you will need to challenge both yourself and the partner in terms of what is happening.

Andrew: That's what we're doing. This course is going to be difficult. It's not a walk in the park. If you want something that's going to be a walk in the park, please understand that it's not going to be something that's going to change your life all that much, and it's certainly not going to change your marriage problems.

These things are going to challenge you on a level that you may not have experienced before but what motivates you is your desire for your partner and your desire for change, most importantly for your desire to achieve.



Part II:
The Life Cycle of a Real Relationship



Andrew: Hi, and welcome back to *Save My Marriage Today*. You're talking with Andrew, Amy and Richard. The title of this lesson is "The Life Cycle of a Real Relationship."

Richard: Andrew, I have talked quite a lot about the life cycles, so perhaps I can take over for a moment and just remind you we basically as psychologists talk about three aspects to the life cycle to a relationship.

Stage 1. We talk about romance. *Pretty Woman. Notting Hill.* Hollywood does that very well, and, unfortunately, most of us like to think that that's what relationships are about. What I want to say today is that that's not just what relationships are about. That's where relationships start. And that phase of the romantic marriage or the romantic relationship can last for a day or two – or a one-night stand if you like – through up to perhaps two years if you're lucky.

Stage 2. The next phase is chaos, and chaos is probably why you're now watching this program. Chaos is inevitable, and that's, I think, the thing I want you to hear: that *chaos is a natural part of the evolution of relationships*. That's what always does occur.

Stage 3. The third stage is what we call resolution. In resolution you can either exit a relationship, or you can commit to a deeper relationship.

The other thing that I want to remind you is that we're also talking about a deeper commitment, also, to yourself.

Amy: One of the things I think might be good to talk a little bit more on is: you say "chaos," but what is chaos? That's sort of an abstract word. What does chaos entail?

Richard: In the "romantic phase," she knows – I'm speaking for myself of course – she knows that I love her. I think about her all the time. I want to call her. I want to be with her. I'm happy when I'm with her, and I'm sad when I'm not.

"Chaos" is when, quite frankly, I wouldn't care if she wasn't alive anymore. Chaos is when I no longer care. Chaos is when I'm quite happy getting angry with you, telling you that I dislike you, and I guess this is where your favorite book, Harville Hendrix, comes in.

What we're saying is: in chaos, all the issues from the past, from your family, from unresolved times in your past, they're coming up now. They actually need to be dealt with.

Finally, with good luck and with a commitment to work on what is happening to you, you can move to the deeper level of "resolution" where, in actual fact, you're really communicating and swinging again.

Andrew: That's really great, Richard. I think perhaps in order to understand the



nature of the chaos that you're in, we need to put it in perspective, and I feel one person who puts it in perspective very well is a man called Gary Chapman. He wrote the book *The Five Love Languages*. It's one that I would recommend you read, even memorize parts of it. It's a fantastic book, and what it does is, it helps you understand where your relationship is coming from. I'm just going to read a very brief piece out of it to help you understand the very clear differences between the "in love process" and where that breaks down into starting to embrace chaos.

"At its peak, the in love experience is euphoric. We are emotionally obsessed with each other. We go to sleep thinking of one another. When we rise, that person is the first thought on our minds and we long to be together. Spending time together is like playing in the anteroom of heaven."
—Gary Chapman, *The Five Love Languages*

So what Gary's saying here is this is a fantastic stage of our relationship. And this perhaps is the end of romantic love that Hollywood does such a good job of glamorizing.

Richard: Now, remember it's always morish. This is the phase that we all want. It's like opium or some wonderful addiction. We want to go back there.

What I want to remind you about is there is another book besides Gary's book, and that is a book by M. Scott Peck called *The Road Less Traveled*. Why that's important is that Peck writes for people who are going through a crisis. I do strongly recommend that you also have a look at that. It will not talk so well about where you're at in your relationship, but it will talk a lot and invite you to think more about yourself.

We would be saying, "Remember, chaos is just one of the factors of what it's like to be in a relationship." Can either of you two think of a time when you had felt this being chaos in your relationships?

Andrew: Absolutely. I know in my own relationship, I told myself at the beginning I was stronger than all of that and that I wasn't going to fall for all that romantic rubbish that Hollywood espouses to us, but it was intoxicating, and I found myself doing things, wanting to do things, that I hadn't wanted to do before.

And it is perhaps an all-consuming thought. I get people writing to me saying, "Andrew, I miss this. I want this back. She drives me crazy, but I love her."

Richard: Okay, but now can you remember when you felt chaotic, and can you remember when you felt as if the relationship was falling apart? Because I can.



Andrew: I did. I think I did, perhaps, after about six months. So I had six months of heady bliss, and then I crashed back down to Earth, realizing my partner's not perfect. Some little things would annoy me. I found those little things that annoyed me became a little more frequent. At that stage, when someone else pointed out to me, "Andrew, the honeymoon is over," I'm like, "Gosh, this has happened to me," but up until that stage I didn't know what chaos was, and I didn't know to call it.

Richard: One of my clients describes that phase as, "The Sensitive New Age Guy becomes an asshole." I hope I'm allowed to say words like that. But that's what she said. She said, "Why did that happen? "

What I want to say is *it is inevitable in a relationship that you will get to that point*. I really want to stress that. I'm sorry if I'm harping on about that, but I think that we think that that's all that's left, and it's not all that's left. To get to the next stage is going to need you to follow us through on some of the later sections. How are we going?

Andrew: I think that one of the scary things is that people don't know how to react to the chaos. I know certainly Amy and myself get women write to us who feel deceived at the end of the romantic love process....

Richard: I want to say this is normal. If he spat on your face, this is where you're going to need to say to him in a quiet moment – not after he's so riled that he has to do something terrible like that – "We need to talk." So this is an issue of, "How then do I invite my partner into starting to communicate?" And, of course, remember most of us blokes are not very good at that ... or are you two going to disagree with me?

Andrew: I totally agree. Coming back to the idea of deceived, some women don't understand if they were being tricked or manipulated by their partner through the romantic love process or whether they just fell in love with the whole romantic notion of love.

How do you feel that women identify to you, Amy, how much they've either been manipulated by men or falling in love with the romantic notion of Hollywood love?

Amy: Right. Well, the thing is: we don't want to work at relationships. We want to find Mr. Perfect, and Mr. Perfect is going to be the guy, and it's him.

Richard: Yes.

Amy: Of course, it's not. [We think] he's going to be the guy that's going give us the perfect relationship with no conflict. And what we don't realize is: we *bring the conflict with us*. We can choose any partner, and we'll still hit conflicts, because that's us.



Richard: Us blokey blokes ... there's a very good book if you want to read a book about us blokey blokes. It's David Deida's book *The Way of the Superior Man*.

Blokey blokes are doers. They're "doers" in the sense that they love being with you when they love being with you. They're also going to go and want to go off and want to fix the motorbike. And that's just what blokey blokes like doing. You can't change that. But what is important is that he does go and fix the motorbike, and then he only wants to watch TV and ignore you.

Andrew: So for people who are looking at this session, who are looking at the life cycle of the real relationship or their marriage, what we've identified in this session is that chaos which you're in right now most inevitably is a part of the cycle. No matter what length of time your Hollywood idea of romantic love has lasted for, chaos is normal, and chaos is okay. It's through the rest of this course that we're going to enable you to use tools and ideas to work your way through this chaos.

Richard: I want to remind you that we're still here with you, and we'll be with you through this course, and we're available on email.

Andrew: Absolutely. So for just a taste of what we're having in the next session, we're going to be identifying expectations of marriage and where, perhaps, that leads to some of the chaos.



Part III:
Examining Our Expectations of Marriage



Andrew: Hi, and welcome back to *Save My Marriage Today*. You're talking with Andrew and Amy and Richard. The title of this lesson is "Examining Our Expectations of Marriage."

Richard, what are your thoughts on what should be right in a marriage and why things aren't going right in yours?

Richard: I want to hammer the "*Notting Hill, Pretty Woman*" notion first. I want to suggest to you that Hollywood does – and most movies do – present a romantic aspect of our relationships beautifully. That's not to knock it.

From memory, Elizabeth Taylor – I'm probably showing my age a little more here, because I remember her more than some of the younger film stars and other people in the industry – but Elizabeth Taylor, from memory, had something like fifteen relationships or marriages, because she is a good Catholic. She had to marry each of these people. Really what was happening is: Elizabeth Taylor was *addicted to romance*.

There's nothing wrong with being addicted to romance, but it is important to realize that that's just the start, and that we do move through these phases.

I want to constantly plug that *the phases are inevitable*. The invitation – if I may almost wax on being a little focused on spiritual ideas – is that we're being invited by the universe to move into growth, and a relationship is a very good place to invite us to do some growing.

Andrew: Quite right. So, when we're looking back at our relationships, there is often the temptation to compare them to relationships of people we know, and perhaps the most obvious is that of our parents. When we're looking at divorce statistics reaching nearly 50% of marriages, we're tempted to look back at our parents' marriages and think, "Well, gosh, they stayed together for forty or fifty years or whatever the case may be. Their marriage must have been perfect, and in what ways is my marriage not like theirs?"

That's one area that we need to take a look at, because *perfection is a dangerous illusion*. Even looking back at my own parents' marriage, I understand, while they've had a very good marriage for forty years, by no means has it been perfect.

Richard: My parents are dead, and I don't mind mentioning that my mother, if she had had a choice, would have left. But, of course, I'm talking about 1948, which may seem a hundred years ago now. My mother didn't have in New Zealand the possibility of women moving out and any kind of government or social agency availability of any form of financing.

So I think, if you go back, you'll find that women stayed because there wasn't a system available for women to be able to leave and successfully



leave. Even if you like alimony, probably the legal system has changed sufficiently now for it to be viable and possible for us to leave.

But we're really talking now about the flexibility of what a relationship may be about, different gender mixtures in terms of relationship, different lengths. We are saying now that over 60% of relationships will break up within the first five years, and those are just the statistics.

Andrew: I get some questions from people a lot about this, and I got one two or three weeks ago from someone who said to me, "Well, why isn't my marriage like my mother's? She appears to have it right. She's got a wonderful husband."

This woman's father is fantastic. He's a genuine, warm, loving type of person. What I said to her is, "Your parents have taken forty, fifty years to develop that type of love, and it's simply not realistic for you to have that type of love right now." This woman had only been married for three years.

Richard: Andrew, what I would want to say is that if she finishes up in a marriage at, what, 30? If she finishes up in the marriage at 30, and the perfect marriage – the "perfect" marriage – she's got the next 30 years or 40 years, and *nothing's going to change*. Now, she, of course, is saying, "That's wonderful," but the universe and life is about change. One of the ways we're invited into change and understanding about change is that things come up which challenge us, and please understand that *the challenges that are coming to you at the moment are not necessarily a bad thing*.

Is this making sense?

Andrew: Yes. Often, you get people that have the idea that men fall in love for the woman that they like, and women fall in love with a man they can create into something they like. What are your thoughts on that from a women's perspective, Amy?

Amy: We women always fall in love with our dream more than we fall in love with a particular man in front of us. When he starts annoying us we think, "Oh my goodness, I've chosen wrong, because he isn't that dream." It's so hard for us to accept men as they are and learn to celebrate a man's idiosyncrasies. We are going to discuss later the masculine and the feminine energies, and it's very, very hard for women to accept that a man's a bloke and that he's not her best girlfriend.

Richard: No, no. Susan Jeffers deals with this very well in *Lasting Love*, and what she's saying is that what the partner is doing is acting as a mirror.

Now, if you can allow yourself to understand what she means – and I do recommend the book to you – what this means is, like a mirror, the partner



is showing you something about yourself. *How do you feel about what you're seeing?*

I think it is very important to understand what Jeffers is saying here. In other words, what is happening in the relationship is telling you something really significant about what is going on inside of you.

Andrew: I have submissions from people like this, [including] one the other day of a woman who's actually just engaged to be married; I think they're due to be married towards the middle of next year. The problem there is that the man who was writing to me was talking about the pressure he feels to live up to those expectations that his fiancé has. She plans on marrying next year. She wants to have three children before she turns thirty. He feels enormous pressure, both as a man and as a person, to live up to that, because that's not his dream. What I said to him is that we need to look past him reacting to that pressure and look at her expectations and say, "Are they realistic, firstly, and secondly, are they reasonable?" So what we mean is the difference between *realistic* and *reasonable*. Sure, if she wants to get married and have three children by thirty, first of all is that a viable proposition?

Richard: I think what I would want to say to that man – and was it the man who wrote to you?

Andrew: Yes.

Richard: ...is, "Please read David Deida's book *The Way of the Superior Man*, because it's all right to be blokey." It's all right to want to do things, and I was referring, I think, in an earlier phase about the bloke wanting to go fix his motorbike or play with some of the tools in the workshop. It's all right for a guy to be like that. Not all of us are going to be what I'm going to call a "balanced person" who balances both the feminine and the masculine energy. I'm glad that we're not all balanced. Would you guys like everybody to be totally balanced?

Amy: There's no sexual chemistry if a man was like a woman.

Richard: That's right.

Amy: So that's one thing that women really have to realize: is when he goes off to his workshop, that's actually why you like him so much, because if he was in the kitchen cooking with you – now that isn't necessarily *always* the case – but you may not find him as attractive.

Richard: One of the things is that ... see, my pushiness may not always appear to be an attractive thing, but also it'll be that same pushiness which will be attractive, initially, in the relationship. Later on, all that we can see is that I'm being pushy, but that pushiness is part of what it is to be a male, I'm



sorry

Now, if you want to reduce that, by all means, reduce it, but quite often *unhappiness in a marriage is because the male is not feeling he's allowed to be male anymore.*

Andrew: I think that was coming back to where I was counseling this man: he didn't feel as though he was allowed to be a man and fulfill his dreams in the marriage, because he was flat-out trying to live up to her expectations. So not only were perhaps her expectations not realistic, but they weren't reasonable.

Richard: But his expectations weren't reasonable. You see, what I would say is, if he is a bloke and he wants to be a bloke and he also wants to have passionate sex, he better start identifying again that he's the guy, he's the bloke in the relationship, and it's all right for him to be a blokey bloke. If he gets too sensitive and changes the nappies and does the cooking – not that there's anything wrong with that – there are some problems. We need to allow a man also to be men, or if you like, the men need to be comfortable. So, ladies go and buy your blokes *The Way of the Superior Man*.

Andrew: The wonderful thing that we get from that, the thing that's coming through this, is that we don't want to marry a carbon copy of ourselves. We don't want someone who's going to roll over and play dead and fulfill our expectations within our relationships, and that it's okay for two people to be different, to have the masculine energy and the feminine energy.

Richard: We don't want lap dogs, do we?



Part IV:
**Examining Beliefs about Yourself and Your
Marriage**



Andrew: Hi, and welcome back to *Save My Marriage Today*. Today you're talking with myself, Amy and Richard. Picking up from where we left off from, when we were talking about examining expectations of marriage from the previous session, this session we're going to be talking about examining beliefs both about yourself and your marriage.

What I want to talk about to start off with is the idea about *partner bashing*.

I have a sister whom I love dearly, and she's the person I confide in most outside of my relationship. Every so often, I'll say "Oh, gosh, my partner frustrates me so much," and I will tell her about what's been happening and that it just drives me nuts. We were able to laugh about it, and it brought me to the idea of partner bashing and having a look at how much is healthy and how much is too much.

What are your thoughts, Richard?

Richard: I think I'm a little uneasy if it occurs too much, and what's actually happening is that you're going out of the relationship and bleeding issues that should be discussed in the relationship outside. I'm not saying it shouldn't happen, but it might be a warning that there are some changes that are necessary.

This time in this session, I want to talk about Susan Jeffers' book *Lasting Love*. I think this is an important book to read, because what it's emphasizing all the time is the importance of you in the relationship. The fact is that you're the one who needs to take responsibility for what is happening, not to say that the other person may not be making mistakes or at fault or whatever else. Susan Jeffers is inviting you to put yourself center stage in terms of what is going on and for you to own what is going on, and I think that is incredibly important.

If you're starting to talk about the partner, one of the things I want to suggest to you is: you're probably moving into chaos. It may be a gentle move into chaos, because I'm not implying that you should be walking away from your relationship, but what I would be saying is, "Okay, so the fantasy romance phase is probably coming to an end, and what do you guys now want to do about it?"

Hopefully, for you and your relationship, in the quiet moments that the relationship has – and there will be some – so even the man who spits can be very apologetic later, and it's when he's in his apologetic phase, that's the time to talk with him.

Amy, what about you? If you're in a situation where things are not going well, would you do any partner bashing?

Amy: No, but the one problem is: you don't want to bring it up with your partner,



because you're worried about hearing the truth. That's one big reason that most of us avoid conflict. When conflict happens, it's easier to yell at the partner than be apologetic and then bury it back under the carpet rather than actually asking the harder question of, "Why did that happen? How do you really feel?" Because he's going to tell us something about ourselves that we don't want to hear, and then we're going to start having doubts that we're meant to be together and it's all going to go to pieces, simply because we wanted to face the facts.

The question is, then, how can we start these sorts of conversations without worrying that we're opening the can of worms that's never going to be put back in its place?

Richard: Now, you see, you're talking to a psychologist. So what I'm going to say is, "Tell me more about it."

You see, if this was happening in a relationship, I would want you to start by saying to me, "I'm feeling very vulnerable about talking about this." I'm being a Sensitive New Age Guy now, I guess, but saying, "I'm being very vulnerable about talking about this. I'm not sure," and, "I'm frightened that you're going to be critical of me," or, "I'm frightened that you might tell me the truth" ... that's how I'd start. How would that feel?

Amy: I don't know, because how would the man react? Because, of course, what don't men like? Men don't like to talk.

Richard: Yes, but I love it when you're vulnerable. If Amy is being vulnerable and saying, "I don't want you to be angry with me," I'm just going to love her to bits, because when she's talking about that, and she's got good eye contact – and she said she's pretty good at the good eye contact – I just want to disappear into those eyes, and I know that I've got a real feminine lady there with me who's loving me to bits. So I don't mind if she's telling me the hard things, because she's doing that in a sweet and loving way. That's easy.

I think for me the problem would be if I was married to an Amazon... Does everybody know what Amazons are? What's the name of that TV program with the New Zealand girl who swings almost from tree to tree and is incredibly vital and energetic?

Andrew: *Xena: Warrior Princess.*

Richard: Yes, *Xena: Warrior Princess.* Some blokes would love being married to Xena, and possibly partly because of her figure, but, you see, other blokes would be frightened that if they were in a relationship with her, she'd bop them over the head if they got too argumentative or something. But that's not a problem for me.



Andrew: Coming back to partner bashing and identifying how much is healthy and how much is too much, I was offered a perspective that brought it back down to ground for me, and that a certain amount of partner bashing offers us the opportunity to formulate our thoughts, and in the process of verbalizing those thoughts, we're able to actually identify what we're thinking about it.

Richard: Andrew, my concern again about this – we're going to be covering this in a later session when we're talking about what we can do about the relationship – but, again, I want to say: "If this is going on in the relationship, what you may be doing is bleeding it."

Now, not wanting to be critical of what's happening in your relationship, but as much as possible, if you can invite the partner into this and take the risk and say, "I'm not sure how you're going to handle this or I feel vulnerable when I tell you this," you start that way. You take the risk of opening the door into your vulnerability.

I think what I'm suggesting – and I hope that's all right for me to say it rather than me coming on to you, as is it were, Amy – but actually admitting to your vulnerability for me is a big come-on.

Amy: The other thing is that when we feel vulnerable, we don't tell the person we're vulnerable. We get defensive, and that's when we say, "It's you. You're the one, Richard. You're the one making all the mistakes in the relationship, because I'm feeling hurt."

Richard: Okay, so it's me, and I take responsibility, but what do you really want from me right now?

Amy: And what you really want is acknowledging how I feel, that, as a woman, I would want you to say, "I see why you feel that way," and offer me unconditional love without giving me advice.

Because that's the one thing as women – and this is where women and men are different – what I want from you in an argument is: I don't want to know who's right or who's wrong; I just want you to throw it down and love me, and that's it.

But a man or a woman who's on what we call her "high horse," they'll want to decide at the end of the argument who was right and who was wrong. That's all that matters.

Andrew: Right. So perhaps the first step in the process, instead of partner bashing, is to take ownership of the problem and not looking at whose fault this is, but rather saying, "This problem is about me and my partner, and, because I'm part of a partnership, a marriage, I own that problem."



And that's not saying, "It's my fault," or, "It's your fault."

Richard: I guess that's why I'm mentioning *Lasting Love* and Susan Jeffers, because if you're reading Susan Jeffers again and again and again, she is going to emphasize that the partner is a mirror. Now what the mirror means is the partner is reflecting back to something that you need to understand, and so, if there's something happening in the relationship you don't like, then go for intimacy. What's the biggest risk with being intimate with a man?

Andrew: I think the biggest risk is that you're leaving yourself vulnerable. I know in my own relationship, if I'm intimate in that respect and I'm vulnerable, there's the belief, perhaps the fear, that my vulnerability can be used as a weapon against me.

Amy: Or it's a weakness, and because now our man has seen that we're weak, he's going to leave us. Again, once he leaves us, he's going to use that against us and tell everybody how vulnerable and weak we are. It's very dangerous.

Richard: But, you see, I want to be pushy. I want to be the decision maker. I want to be the initiator and, if you tell me you're weak, that's exactly what I love about you as a woman.

Andrew: So what we're getting from this is that it's okay, firstly, to own the problem, but, secondly, to identify our vulnerability to our partners, because they're the people to whom we should be identifying that, and that our vulnerability is not something that we have to fear. In fact, it's something that our partners love about us.

Richard: You see, if you put up a barrier – if you start backing away in the relationship – the partner will know that's happening. They may not be able to vocalize it, because us blokes usually aren't very good at vocalizing it, but they will know something has happened, something really important. They may not be able to vocalize. You may be the one who will need to start owning what is going on and inviting them into it.

Now, if you're not happy or comfortable about this, this, I'm afraid, is where I'm going to start selling you the idea of counseling help so you start learning the skills from a counselor to start moving into owning what is happening.

We need to finish here, so keep listening.

Andrew: Our next session will be expanding on David Deida's idea of masculine and feminine energy, which is going to be quite exciting. Look forward to seeing you then.



Part V:

Masculine and Feminine Energy



Andrew: Hi, and welcome back to *Save My Marriage Today*. You're talking today with Andrew, Amy and Richard. What we're dealing with in this session is the idea of masculine and feminine energy. This idea was particularly brought forth by a man called David Deida in his book *The Way of the Superior Man*.

Richard: Amy tells me it's the only book you should be reading.

Andrew: Before we get on to this, what I want to do is just read a couple of little pieces that I wrote down while I was looking through his book, so we can identify firstly what indeed masculine energy is and what feminine energy is.

For a man, *masculine energy is to know where you are and what you want to be and what needs to be done to reach your goals*. According to David Deida, you need to discover your goal and the way to achieve it by any means necessary. So he explores the idea of the masculine gift being the ability to guide your partner out of their moods and into the openness of loving.

Richard: Now can I read you some one-line words?

Andrew: Sure.

Richard: "Striving, thrusting, ambitious, has a mission, competitive, takes risks, physical, purposeful, confident, traditionally, sexually aggressive." Yum.

Andrew: In very practical terms, bringing this back to your relationship, you need to know what to do – you need to know what your partner needs to do with their life – so they can relax. For a man, in order to do that with their partner, they identify the very practical aspects of it, which may be exercise, meditation, and change of career, dancing more, or spending more time with friends. All of these are practical solutions. This ability to guide your partner may be the wake-up call.

Whereas, in comparison to the masculine energy and those words that Richard and I have used, *the feminine energy is necessary to connect the thoughts, goals, and projects of masculine energy and introduce touch, loving energy, tenderness, and the ability to show affection*.

Richard: Can I use my words again? I've got the feminine "seductive, yielding, giving, open, soft." I've got "juicy, colorful, natural, sensual, desiring intimacy, loving, and enjoys strong male energy."

So they're the two polarities. Now, my sense is this: that if you want to be incredibly balanced in your relationship, if you want a relationship in which you're a very balanced person, so you're balancing a masculine and feminine, the only problem with that is there's not going to be the zing that



comes from a very masculine person on one hand and a very feminine person on the other hand.

If you want the sexual zing in a relationship, what you need for the sexual zing is those two, if you like, very specific roles.

A man is going to be happier as he explores those – at least, most men. There will be men who are in a more balanced phase. What David Deida says, and what the literature that I've read says, is about 10% of men are happy being much more balanced between those two roles.

But, for me, I'm happier when I'm these things: where I'm striving, thrusting, ambitious, I've got a mission, and I'm competitive. That's what I like. That's, in some ways, going to be what I'm going to be like in the bedroom. For instance, if she wants to talk too much, I might be popping off to make a cup of tea.

Andrew: So what you're saying is that you're embracing the polarity of your relationship, where you can embrace your masculine energy and encourage your partner to embrace the feminine side.

Amy and I talk about polarity being attractive. So what are your thoughts on that, Amy?

Amy: Well, it depends. One of those things that you've got to be very cautious about is misunderstanding what we're talking about, because often times a woman will listen to this and she'll say, "But, excuse me, I'm a career woman. I'm ambitious. I have a mission. What are you saying? That I can't be feminine and be those things?"

What would you say to that?

Richard: You see, what I would say to that is that's okay, but in the bedroom and in the relationship one-on-one, how are you going to balance those two things? Because if you're striving and thrusting and he's striving and thrusting, where's the difference? Where's the polarity? It's the polarity that's fun. I have to say to you that it doesn't matter how thrusting and striving and ambitious you are as a woman, but if you're also very feminine in relation to me, then I love that.

What Deida goes on to say – and I loved his comments, because I always used to feel that perhaps I was the only one like that, like I was becoming, as it were, a dirty old man or something – he says that if you're male, you're going to be attracted to all kinds of women. You're going to be attracted to married women. You're going to be attracted to teenagers. He's basically saying as a male, the feminine form and the feminine appearance is going to be attractive to you. If you've got a bloke who's like this and you're in a relationship with him, that's where you start.



Now the trick is to know where you want to be as an individual, but surely as a man, that's what I need to know as well.

Andrew: The weird thing is with this is that women, perhaps, feel that they have to be a feminine woman in order to be attractive to men. That's not what we're saying at all.

Richard: No.

Andrew: We're not saying that women have to sacrifice their masculinity in order to be attractive to men.

Richard: No.

Andrew: Because I think the intuitiveness and the ability to switch and change those roles, the fluidity of changing those roles throughout the day, is much easier for women than it is for men.

Richard: I want to check in with Amy again. Am I going over the top with that emphasis on the male role? Are you comfortable with it?

Amy: I am very uncomfortable with it. Part of it is this is a modern thing. It may have been easier for you in your generation, when the man was the man and the woman stayed home.

Richard: Yes.

Amy: I am not living in those days. Chances are: when I have a relationship, I'm going to have to embrace all of those masculine qualities, because my income's going to be just as important as his income. When I am there in the workplace all day having a mission, being purposeful, focusing my career, it's going to be hugely difficult for me to come home and then be switched back into the role of submissive, loving, giving, because I'm tense. And he's going to be a SNAG, which means he is going to be, perhaps, going to work and having his career, but he's supposed to be a nice guy when he comes home; he's supposed to be my best girlfriend. That's what he *thinks* he's supposed to do. So this is really difficult.

Richard: But what are you doing now? Are you being "striving and thrusting" right at the moment?

Amy: Yes.

Richard: Well, I feel okay about it, but I can't speak as a blokey bloke. I'm okay about you doing that. If I was in an intimate relationship with you, I guess what we'd be doing is we'd be sorting out those roles.



But, you see, what Deida's saying – and I think I agree with him – is that if you are, in a sense, competing with me – and I don't think that has to happen even if you're strong; I have got no problem about having a relationship with a strong woman – but if you're competing with me, that will cut out the sexual vibes.

Andrew: Talking about how Amy comes home and she is still in her sort of “cut and thrust” mode, masculine energy, and while she may feel that she wants a Sensitive New Age Guy who's embracing his feminine energy, is she sexually attracted to the Sensitive New Age Guy?

Amy: That's a personal question. I refuse to answer.

Andrew: And that's the tricky one. That's, I think, where we clash, because I come home and I'm in work mode and I want a nurturer and caregiver, but sexually I may be attracted to someone who is able to dominate me much more. That's where we divide tasks and that sort of thing. It all changes when we go into the bedroom and when we can change the duality of these roles several times throughout the day.

It's not the case of work mode and home mode. It can be a case of I'm in the living room, and now I'm in the bedroom, or I've just walked outside, and we can change these five, six, seven times a day.

I think that's what makes our relationships so challenging, because, firstly, we're not always aware that this is what we want. We're clear in our own minds, but we're not clear in terms of how we communicate that to our partners.

Richard: Yes. I think one of the first things I'm saying is, “*Be unashamedly yourself.*” You see, everything that I've read in this area – and when I think over the years when I've had couples coming to see me and individuals – the first task is, I believe, and Susan Jeffers is saying the same thing, the first thing is to *be ourselves*. Just to be comfortable.

If we're feminine, are we comfortable with our femininity? And how can we explore that in a meaningful way for each one of us?

Then, as a bloke, how do I also explore my masculinity and feel comfortable with that? I've grown through the period, particularly the '60s and '70s, where being a blokey bloke was not terribly acceptable. There was a lot of attack. This is where the rise of feminism comes in.

It is very important – believe you me – in terms of *allowing your man to be the man he is*. I'm talking now to the women who are watching. It's very important for me to say to the men, “Be the man that you are and negotiate these roles. Be very clear. Because that's where the sexual zing is.”



Andrew: Negotiating. I think that's probably a wonderful word to use, because the difference between successful relationships and ones who fall into utter chaos is that there's an ability to negotiate those roles.

I personally, within my own relationship, feel able to negotiate that. I can be at times the nurturer and caregiver, and that doesn't threaten my sense of manliness or any of that type of thing, because there are equally other times where I'm going to say, "No, actually, I'm going to take control, and you're going to nurture and caretaker me."

What are your thoughts on the negotiating side of it, Amy? From a woman's perspective, how do we approach that with a masculine man? How do we say, "Hey I want you to take a back step a little bit and let me hold the wheel?"

Amy: I have no idea. The thing is: there's a difference between, I think, negotiating your life and then the "sexual zing" as you put it. When you're running a household, one person can't say, "I'm in the masculine role; therefore, I'm going to do all the planning. Since you're in the feminine role, just go make me a cup of tea while you're at it." That can't work.

So maybe what you have to do is say, "When we're going out on a date, that's when we're going to play. We're going to play. I'm going to pretend that I'm the girl, and you're going to pretend that you're a guy," and we're actually just going to take on these larger-than-life roles, and that's fun. But maybe a bit different when you go home.

Andrew: Perhaps one of the things to learn here is that when we come home at night, and we're embracing the chaotic nature of our relationship, we can take a step back and think, "What's going on here? What energy am I embracing? What energy is my partner embracing?" An awareness of what masculine and feminine energies are is the first step. The second step is then being able to negotiate those roles in an open and loving manner.

Richard: We'll explore that on our next session, so keep watching.



Part VI:

Gender Roles within Relationships



Andrew: Hi, and welcome back to *Save My Marriage Today*. Today you're talking with Andrew, Amy and Richard. The topic of this session is "Gender Roles within Relationships." What we're going to do here is identify how gender roles within our relationships have changed over time from our grandparents and parents and how this affects the dynamics of your relationship.

Where do you think the changes have happened, Richard, in the last couple of years and how do you feel that that's changed the nature of marriages?

Richard: I was thinking about this before we started talking on camera. When I was born, my father would have been, as it were, smoking the cigar somewhere either out in the hospital foyer or possibly even just pacing around looking at his chickens at home.

Today, and when our children were born, I was present in the birthing unit and was delighted to be there and felt very much involved. I also change nappies. I walked with the children. If they squawked at night, I was the one who usually got up, because it was Margaret – we were breastfeeding – so it was Margaret who was doing the breastfeeding, but I as a psychologist was very committed to the idea of breastfeeding the children. Our oldest child was breastfed, we chuckle, until age five, in which case he just came off the breast one day and said, "I'm not interested, Mum." But so I was the one who got up during the night and brought them to Margaret.

Now, I don't see that as a total threat to my masculinity, and I do feel that this issue of being comfortable about the roles we play is incredibly important and are definitely changing. We're getting different models. We even have Arnold Schwarzenegger playing different roles. It was *Kindergarten Cop*, so we're seeing something of our more softer, gentler side.

Andrew: How that changed over time, perhaps, is a recognition of the partnership or teamwork aspect of both marriage and in child rearing and how both men and women need to have, perhaps, a greater awareness of what's expected of them and in the expectations that they have of their partners.

All too often, I hear from people who haven't discussed their expectations – or we might use a different word, their "intentions" – on the way they picture the partner contributing to the married life until after they've signed the paperwork and got the ring on their finger.

Richard: The problem here is that there's been a forgetting about the stages of marriage. There's been no realization that in a relationship we automatically will move from the romantic phase into the chaotic phase into the resolution, whether it's exit or whether it's committing to a better communication in a relationship. So those stages are inevitable and I'm hoping that we're hearing me particularly pushing that they are a key part.

For me, I am going to want to be in a relationship with a woman where she is acting in a feminine way and I can be my masculine self, but I want her to be intelligent. We both have our careers, so that ours is a modern marriage



in the sense that both of us are working. She can be pushy and ambitious, but, in our intimate times, she's the feminine partner and I'm the male. If she wasn't the feminine partner, I think I would start to wander. I would move away. I would look for another partner. I don't want somebody who climbs Mount Everest as my girlfriend. I'm happy to do those things, as it were, to an extent, but I still want somebody to be feminine and yet, as you said, Amy, earlier in our earlier program, I want somebody who can be ambitious.

Andrew: Mel Gibson brought some of these ideas to our mind in the movie *What Women Want*. Following on from that, men need to identify from their wives and partners what it is indeed that is expected of them. Are they expected to fulfill the traditional role of marriage in terms of the husband being the caretaker, provider, puts bread on the table, that type of thing? Or is it supposed to be a flatter management structure?

Richard: I think here what we're really dealing very strongly with this whole invitation in relationship for each one of these to know we're on a path. I again refer you back to *The Road Less Traveled*. Each one of us needs to know that we're on our journey – and that's not incompatible with being in a relationship – but each one of us are journeying, and we need to have a clear sense of what that journey is about. I put to you that most of the problems are occurring when we're not clear about what our process is. Does this make sense? Amy?

Andrew: I think it does. We talked before we got back into this session about *individual needs* as opposed to the connected *relationship needs* within our relationships, and to an extent we need to try to meet both. But they're not always running along the same lines, and so what best we have is invitation for discussion between partners in a relationship where we're identifying, firstly, what's good for me—

Richard: —I'm sorry I'm butting in here, but off camera Amy was talking about the fact that you and I are booming away and talking in a loud voice, and I wonder if we can do some kind of gender role stuff here by asking you what that feels like when you got these two blokes who are being, if you like, very male and perhaps quite dominant. How does that feel?

Amy: You just get into a different space. You say, "I'm just going to wait and see what happens, because they're engaged, something is happening, and I can enjoy listening to that. I don't have to butt in."

But, as I was also saying, is that if we had several women, like we did an earlier course where we had two women and one man, the energy was very different. It was, "Now it's your turn, and now you're going to talk, and now I'm going to talk."

Richard: Very cooperative.

Amy: We were chatting. We were having a little gossip, whereas the masculine



energy wants to give advice, it wants to lean forward, it wants to get very strong, whereas I love being a girl. We just sort of lean back.

Richard: When you hear me and Andrew, it's kind of as if we're almost doing a male preen, the male show. Our feathers are all flapping. How does that feel for you, as that is going on?

Amy: It definitely puts me in the passive role of somebody watching, because that's, of course, what courtship is. You especially see that in the animal kingdom, don't you? You see the female sitting there watching the show that the men put on.

Richard: If you're one of the viewers watching this – and we're thinking about these gender roles and if you're in a relationship with one of those – would it be all right if we were acting pushy?

Amy: No, because then I would feel silenced, and men feel this way as well. I've heard so many men say, "My wife talks and talks and talks, and she never lets me say anything, so I don't say anything, and then she gets mad at me because I don't talk. Why doesn't she be quiet, and then maybe it'll give me time to collect my thoughts and say something?" So I think it does work both ways.

Richard: Right, so if I was being in my very pushy mode, you would have difficulty talking over me or engaging me?

Amy: I wouldn't butt in, I think. I think there are a lot of women and men like that. If their partner is in that mode, it's pointless to try and say anything, isn't it? That's when, of course, miscommunication and resentment come in.

Richard: That's why I'm asking you about it, because I think that we can look at that even here on the set, as we're going through talking about this, because this is really an important issue, isn't it?

Andrew: Looking at your ideal partner relationship dynamic, Richard, you know you embrace your masculinity as your wife embraces the feminine, but, at the same, time you want a strong and resourceful type of person who has a career and intelligence and that type of thing. In the thirty-six years you've been married, you've been able to make that happen.

Richard: Both of us have been able to make that happen.

Andrew: That's the thing. Amy, perhaps from your perspective, what is your ideal partnership [or] relationship dynamic, and how would you go about dealing with that? How would you go about creating that?

Amy: I'm very much different from Richard, because I don't think I would be happy with a man who liked his masculine role and that's all he wanted, because, due to my lifestyle, I am going to have to be in my masculine



mode quite often, because I need to be quite good at my career. So I need to be pushy and ambitious. To ask me to come home every night and then go into my feminine – that's not going to be satisfying – so I'm going to need a guy who's much more balanced, because my lifestyle forces me to be balanced.

Richard: I think that to the viewers I failed at my job of communicating if I can't get across to Amy even, let alone to the viewers, that in actual fact I have no problem with that.

Amy: It's very hard, because if what we're sexually attracted to is the bad boy, because, of course, the bad boy is the epitome of the masculinity.

Richard: He's going to be even more stroppy.

Amy: But we don't want to marry him, because, if we marry the bad boy, then he's not going to be able to fulfill us in other ways.

Richard: So we have a dilemma and we better follow the dilemma in the next session. So keep watching.



Part VII:
**Creating a Place for Each Other in Our
Marriage**



Andrew: Hi, and welcome back to *Save My Marriage Today*. I'm Andrew. This is Amy and Richard, and we're all talking together this time about creating a place for each other in our marriage.

When we're talking about creating a place for each other in our marriage, we're talking about a balance of "me" time versus "we" time. It's recognition that many of you people out there in "Marriage Chaos Land" have problems, because we don't recognize, perhaps, the importance of having enough "me" time and how this is in fact good for your relationship. It doesn't have to work against it.

Richard: I want you to know that I don't think you're out in "Chaos Land" alone. We're out there with you. I certainly have also been in "Chaos Land," and this issue of me taking time for me – or Margaret my wife taking time for her – quite often became an issue. For instance, now, I go off and I paint, so I'm doing portrait work at the moment, and Margaret goes off to bridge. I found when the relationship was new and I was really loving being in the relationship, I was quite jealous of her time if she was taking time for herself. I think we have to be very careful about that and understand that "we" time and "me" time is important, so that it's all right for her to have her friends. One of the things that I notice often is men can get very possessive, and it really, really is important to claim that time.

Andrew: I have the similar problem in my own relationship. I'll move from the idea of romantic love into that period of chaos where you're identifying all these issues and problems, and one of them came up was jealousy of the time I spend either in my own space when I come home from work and I need to stare vacantly into the horizon for half an hour or I need to walk the dog and I do that on my own. What I had to explain was that at those times it's not that I don't love my partner. It's just that I recognize I have a space in my head where I need to go to in order to be a better person, to be a nicer Andrew. I need to spend some time there on my own, formulating my thoughts, processing what I've been going through throughout the day, or processing just what's going on around me, both within my own relationship and my relationship with others.

I think one of the issues that comes out of that is that too often, when we fall into the whole idea of romantic love, we overlook the idea that before we were in relationships, we were individuals, and that we did have a huge amount of time in our lives for maintaining and fostering relationship with other people and with our friends.

I find a common complaint among people's friends, when you go into a new relationship, is, "Oh, I haven't seen you because you've hibernated with your new girlfriend or wife." Women find that, too, they feel jealous or abandoned by their friend because she's in a new relationship.

So what we need to do when we're going into the period of chaos is to say, "Well before we were in relationships, we were indeed individuals."



Perhaps people react to it in a bad way. I know myself, I did, when I got a phone call when I was in the middle of "Andrew time." I reacted quite sharply, and that wasn't even my intention. I made a mistake there, and I apologized for it, but I think what I was reacting to there was the fact that sometimes I lose the sense of myself.

Richard: That is really important for us to watch out about that. On the other hand, in almost the opposite end of the issue about relationship, we do need to have *quality time* together.

One of the things I was reminding you earlier that we're now your coaches on some of these issues, and you do have access to us.

Even in the first session, I will say to a couple who come and see me, "Please go off after the session and have a cup of coffee together." I ask, "You and your partner, when did you last go and have a cup of coffee? Just the two of you together?" Then they'll say things like, "Well, what about the children?" It's not about the children. It is really important to be aware that the two of you need time together.

I'll say to them, "When did you last go away for a three-night weekend together? When did you last go somewhere special?" The usual answer is, "About two years ago," and that's too long. You do need to be in a situation where you're regularly spending committed "we" time together, so that there's that balance, again, between having the "Andrew time," the "Richard time," the "Amy time" and also having time when you as a couple spending time together. That, in my experience, is one of the major areas that I'm really emphasizing when couples come to see me.

Amy: One thing that is a common complaint is, "I got bored of my partner," because they're the same person, right? But if you have "me" time, and if you're developing pursuits that your partner doesn't know about, then you go and meet for your cup of coffee and you say, "Well, guess what I did this week?" and you've done all of these wonderful things on your own, then you're bringing them into the couplehood because you're sharing them with your partner. You're not keeping them secret.

Now, this is the other thing. When you have your "me" time, it's not just about your secret private time and what you do and you're not going to share that with your partner. You need to make sure you communicate what you do to your partner and say, "Look at how I'm growing! Look at what I've achieved." Then your partner will never get bored with you.

Richard: Yes, definitely, I think that's true, if you're really sharing quality time and you've got good eye contact and you're enjoying yourselves.

The major problem we have got is when we're losing the "zing" in our relationship. That's when there's a problem, and the only way to recapture that is wait until he or she is ready to talk and then do a bit of what I'm going to call "self-disclosure."



Self-disclosure is going to start something like, "I'm pretty apprehensive about talking about this, but I think that we need to spend some better time together. I'm aware that I'm starting to feel distant from you." Onwards to that effect. And, of course, as Amy was saying in one of the earlier sessions, there involves the risk of me either being attacked or perhaps some argument or discussion following.

How do you feel about that, Amy?

Amy: Definitely, because one of the things that makes a relationship grow is when you tell each other things you never told anyone else.

But the thing is I think, is when we're in the courtship phase, we think we've told our partner everything, but as we grow, we learn more about our self, and if you're not committed to learning more about who you are, you can't disclose that to your partner.

One of the things about self-disclosure involves becoming more aware about who you are, and that's where your "me" time comes in.

Andrew: When you mentioned that, I brought immediately to my own mind my relationship. I think we were six months into it, and I had forgotten to tell my partner I had four sisters, and it came as quite a surprise to him, because it's something I knew was going on in my own mind, but I'd failed to communicate that to someone else.

I think the important thing about developing interests, hobbies outside of the marriage is that you have something interesting to bring back into it. I know myself I'm addicted to homewares at the moment, buying tea sets and things like that. My partner may be interested in painting or gardening or that type of thing, and that makes it interesting.

Think back to your own marriage, the last time your partner walked into the room and said, "Oh, hey, honey, how was your day?" and you look at them and you really can't think of anything interesting to say, so you say, "Oh, well, it was same old same old."

Richard: I've got a book I want to refer to in this stage, and this book is called *The Mastery of Love* and it's by Don Miguel Ruiz. One of the things you can be doing in your "me" time is you can be reading this wonderful book which emphasizes the importance of relationship, emphasizes the importance of each one of us taking responsibility for the wounds and the pain that is inside of us. I think, if you'll give this book a read, it is a lovely book to read, and you can bring that into the relationship talking about some of the new discoveries that you've made. So that's *The Mastery of Love*. I am sorry if I sound like a book commercial.

Amy: That's actually a fantastic thing to point out, and that is *reading books help you understand yourself better and your marriage better*. They provide you with the perfect jumping place to talk about that with your partner,



because sometimes it feels quite difficult to say, “Oh, I’ve been thinking about our relationship.” And the other person says, “Well, what’s wrong with our relationship? Why would you be thinking about it?” But if you say, “Oh, I’ve been reading this book, and this is what the book says. How do you feel about what the book says?” it’s a much more comfortable way to approach some very sticky topics that you may not want to talk about your personal opinion before you know what your partner thinks first.

Richard: He may come back by feeling defensive, but if you’re aware that he’s defensive and you’re happy to stay present – and remember I was talking about presence earlier, in other words, that you’re ready to stay really watching and being responsible for the relationship.... We’ve got to go now, and the next session is going to be on?

Andrew: When your marriage is in crisis, so it’s tips for keeping it together both personally and strategies for staying positive in a negative environment.



Part VIII:
**What to Do When Your Marriage is in
Crisis**



Andrew: Hi, and welcome back to *Save My Marriage Today*. You're talking with myself, Amy and Richard. This lesson is about when your marriage is in crisis. What we're going to do is we're going to cover tips for staying positive in a negative environment and strategies for keeping it together personally. Perhaps this is one of the most important lessons, because we recognize the value that we place on our home and our work environments, and any change in that, particularly in a negative home environment in the midst of a marriage crisis, can have a hugely dramatic impact on other areas of your life. Something seemingly stable – you've been in a marriage for five, ten, fifteen years – all of a sudden is shaken at its foundations. Where you see yourself now and where you see yourself in the future have a huge impact, and this negativity can be quite consuming.

What are your thoughts, Richard, on tips for staying positive in the midst of all this chaos?

Richard: I've been thinking about what you've been saying, and the first thing I want to say – and could be, of course, I'm a psychologist, so I like having customers coming and paying to come and see me – but please don't be apprehensive about getting advice. Please don't be apprehensive about going and talking with somebody. It doesn't have to be a psychologist. It could be your family priest, clergyman. It could be the family doctor. It could be a marriage counselor, preferably, somebody who is a professional. If you're in crisis and you need help, be prepared to go to somebody. If you broke a leg you wouldn't try and limp off in the far off somewhere and fix it yourself. The same goes with a relationship. If there are problems in the relationship, I want to emphasize the important thing is that you go to somebody who knows what they're talking about.

Secondly, make sure that you're talking to each other, not just a third party. If you can talk to each other, make sure that you're letting your partner know that things are getting serious for you and there needs to be something that's done.

Amy: That's one of the things we women often do, is we'll tell our girlfriends how bad the relationship's going, everything's wrong, and then when we get back and we see our partner, we'll be quite angry, but we will have never told him what the problem is.

I think men are the same way to a certain extent. It's much easier to talk to friends sometimes than it is to talk to our partner, but that's not where it needs to go.

Richard: Remember the next step, sometimes, for a man is that of course he'll find a really understanding woman who will just be delighted to talk with him about his problems. Of course, then you've a whole new ball game, and then the important thing to remember is even if an affair develops, that is not the end of the relationship. An affair means that you've got to do some work together if you want to stay together. Any thoughts from the two of



you on that?

Andrew: I think the [problem with the] temptation to reach out to somebody else and receive some assistance is that you leave one of the most important people in your relationship out, which is your partner.

The danger in doing that is that the messages that you receive from your counseling – either through clergymen or parish priests or a counselor – is that in you relaying this information back to your partner, there is the danger that there is misinterpretation. And inflections, semantics, those types of things, I think, are enormously overlooked. It's important that when we're talking about our problems that our partners are included in this, because they have a shareholding in your marriage. They have a shareholding in your life and should equally have a shareholding in trying and helping to work your way out of this.

Richard: I want to put in another commercial for your awareness that there are three stages in a relationship. Three stages. So there's the romantic stage where everything's going well and both of you are really enjoying it. There's the chaotic stage, which you're probably in now, and there's the final stage which either is going to involve you in exiting the relationship or your committing into a committed relationship. But there are these three stages. Don't be frightened about them.

Andrew: I think, perhaps, one of the hardest parts of talking with someone else about your marriage problem is coming to terms yourself with the fact that your life is not a fairytale and that you're not living happily ever after.

Some of this touches on our sense of pride for the fact that, "Marriage problems only happen to other people," and that, "Gosh, that would never happen to us, because we have a perfect relationship."

So reaching out and receiving assistance from someone ... there is an enormous amount of humbleness in doing that. But, as well as that, there's also an enormous amount of stress. I get a lot of feedback from people who don't know how to deal with stress because up until then they had never learned to cope with stress on that level.

What type of strategies would you have for, perhaps, a woman talking to us about how they handle that level of stress, both with their partner and outside of that?

Richard: I want to take a slightly different angle on this in a way. I recently had a couple [come in]. The wife came from a relationship where the mother was very much expecting the husband to be a lap dog. The new husband, the husband to the younger wife, came from what I'm going to call the "Germanic tribe." Now, if you know anything about the Germanic tribe, the Germanic tribe is very authoritarian, very outspoken, very chauvinist. So you have on one hand a relationship that has a background that comes from a very chauvinistic family and on the part of the woman a relationship



where her mother was in charge. There are going to be clashes if they imitate the roles that they learned from their parents, because these two relationships are guaranteed to war with each other.

When I talk about a "tribe," [I mean] what was the family pattern? How did your father and mother talk? Who was the dominate one in the relationship? How did they deal with crisis themselves in their own crisis? And then if you talk with your partner, if you know anything about your partner, how did your partner's parents deal with crisis? Who was the dominate one? Because those are the role models that we've been learning as a child, and this goes back to Harville Hendrix's book, *Getting the Love You Want*, his concept of what we call the "imago," the image of the parent that we have learned and internalized within ourselves.

What are those roles, and are those the roles you want to be playing in your new relationship? Because those will be the roles that you're playing out. How do you feel about that? Do you want to be different to that?

Amy: It's so funny, because, for most people, the first thing they say when they start their own life is an adult is, "I shall not be my parents." It's so funny. As how much as we try to escape it, we can't.

Richard: Sometimes I'll say to people, "Make a list. Go away from the session and list for me what your dad was like. Who took responsibility? When an argument occurred, how did your parents handle it? Then come back to the next session and tell me."

What we'll do is we'll talk for, say, a half an hour about the family communication patterns, because those are the ones that you're going to lapse back and do.

How do you feel about the fact that you'll be imitating, Andrew, either your mom or your father and what's going on?

Andrew: The scary thing is I can see it already, and it infuriates me when my partner turns around to me and says, "You're just like your mother." Obviously, there are some differences, but I can see that the behaviors and patterns that she developed throughout my childhood have in some respects shaped the way I react to things. Sometimes that's a good thing, and sometimes that's an equally destructive thing. Perhaps the most telling part of it is to be aware of how powerful that influence is in your life. As much as I don't want to always be like my mother, I can see it creeping up sometimes, and perhaps that's in my need to stand up for myself or say my piece. But, equally, I feel at times I can pull back and be a little bit more like my father and sort of think, "Well, I got to think about this before I explode and say something and get myself into trouble."

Amy: The other thing is to remember is, "That which resist, persists." That's the idea that if you resist being like your parents, you're much more likely to become like them. So don't fight against it. Awareness is the key: seeing it



but not fighting it.

Richard: Awareness and *presence*. What we're really arguing for is you learning to be able to be almost *historians*. For the two of you as a couple to talk about what it was like to live in your respective families. For the man who spat at his partner – he will only be able to talk apologetically to her when he's lost that bad temperedness that he was in the middle of when he spat. She has to pick a time when he's ready to talk, and she may have to start by saying, "Can we talk?" That's not going to be possible until he can say, "Yes, and I'm sorry," because usually, as you know, if you've been in a relationship where there's been either some psychological or physical violence, there will be a phase when he's apologetic. At the point when he's apologetic, be prepared to talk.

We have to go now. We're going to pursue these issues in the next session, so keep listening.



Part IX: Anger



Andrew: Hi, and welcome back to *Save My Marriage Today* where you're talking with myself, Amy and Richard. What we're talking about in this session is *anger*, which is a very powerful emotion and one that perhaps has manifested itself in the chaos surrounding your marriage crisis. What we're going to look at in this session is the nature or the biology of anger and looking at alternative ways of expressing our anger, what this actually does to our relationship, and why some people may be angrier than others. We're also going to examine the school of thought that says that anger is an emotion like love, like lust, like hate, and therefore it's valid, so we [should] just let it all hang out. We want to look at that idea in terms of how valid that is both within our relationship and our marriage and our relationship with other people.

Richard: I'm thinking about the Flintstones and I'm also thinking about cavemen. If you're angry, then you get out your club, and if there's a fight, you bash your lady over the head – so the story goes anyway – and you drag her back to the cave and you deal with her.

I don't think that's a particularly successful way for us to be in a relationship today. We're wanting to explore a way which is more based around *mutuality*. I don't think we can go back to the caveman role in this. For some reason, some of you are advocates for that. It seems to be we're being called to explore something differently.

For me, *violence is never acceptable in a relationship*.

I'm going to say that again. *Violence is never acceptable in a relationship*.

There is no excuse that can justify violence. No blaming. No saying, "It was your fault." Violence is never acceptable, and psychological violence I don't think is acceptable, either.

We need to ask ourselves why we're exploding. This, again, is this idea of Hendrix's, that we are moving back into earlier memories and we need to be prepared to acknowledge them.

One of the things I'm going to be suggesting is we need help, and we'll need to get help with anger.

Andrew: It's interesting. We're talking about violence not being acceptable. Perhaps an important thing to remember in our relationships is that while it's an emotion, and we say, "You make me angry," or, "You made me do this. You make me feel like..." we need to take a step back from that statement that "you make." There is no such thing as that. We need to remember that the reaction, which anger perhaps is, is still owned by you. Part of that journey we take is that *we take ownership of that feeling*. It's not a case of, "My wife makes me angry," or, "My husband makes me angry." [Instead] saying, "My husband is the way he is, and the reaction I have to that is my choice. I own that choice to make that angry reaction." I think that's perhaps the first step to dealing with that.



Richard: We did a case analysis of why the young men spat at his partner. I said, "What did you say? What was the background to it?" The background to it was that he was going to baby-sit the little girl, and instead some mates came around, and they started to drink. He was rather enjoying having the mates around and the drinking. He didn't want to baby-sit the girl. The only way that the situation with the spitting could have been avoided is when he rang up and said, "Could you come around and pick up our daughter?" that she went round and picked the daughter up without any attempt to be blaming at that stage, because can you blame him? He's already feeling guilty, because he's changed the rules and then the spitting follows that.

So, on an analysis of what went on and how it developed, it's quite obvious that if she is going to have that situation – and I'm saying to her, "It'll happen again, it'll happen again" – and when it happens next time, how are you going to act differently? Because you need to be calm when you're dealing with it. The only way of dealing with it differently is going around to the house, picking the child up, no angry comments, and just leaving and saying, "Thanks, and we'll see you again."

As soon as you go into angry mode, then you get this very outrageous and offensive behavior coming back. So really we're saying, "Be aware. Take responsibility for the processes going on."

I'm going back to the level where I'm saying, "Be aware that there is a process here that is inviting you to understand about what this relationship is about." Now, am I getting too airy fairy?

Amy: I think what you're saying is that if we respond to anger with anger, it just grows.

Richard: Yes.

Amy: So what does that mean for our relationships, then? It seems to me you're asking people to be awfully superhuman if, every time their partner does something, to not feel annoyed and to not feel angry and not feel mad. These are normal emotions that we're encouraged to express. Is it really possible for us to be that calm?

Richard: She only has two choices, in my opinion. The two choices are that she stays in the relationship and acts calm, or she opts out of the relationship, and eventually we may even talking about no access to the child.

Amy: But there's never the choice to get angry and to fight back.

Richard: If she fights back, she will get spit at again. This is a man who is going to react that way, because he's part of warrior tribe.

For those of you Americans, I don't know if you saw a movie that we made in New Zealand called *Once Were Warriors*. If you see the movie, you'd



understand what I'm referring to. This is a tribe. That is a way of thinking that traditionally has seen anger as an acceptable part of the culture.

Now, I'm not knocking that, and I'm not saying it's not acceptable for a culture to have anger as part of its repertoire, but if anger is part of the wrong repertoire within the particular community, then the way of handling it would have to be a little more sensitive and a little more politic.

Andrew: So, going back to that man's anger and his motivation to spit at his wife, the trigger for his anger was his feelings of guilt. I think that's a particularly important area to touch on when we're talking about owning that feeling. For that gentleman, owning that feeling was having guilt that was the trigger which motivated him to spit at his wife or partner.

When we're in a situation where our partner does something to us or somehow interacts with us that evokes a reaction or action such as anger, we need to identify what the trigger is. Hindsight is a very powerful thing. What it does is it enables us to examine what our triggers are, and it may be guilt, it may be independence, it may be a sense of loyalty, either to a family or to a group of friends, or something like that. So the way we learn from our own anger as well as our partner's anger is to identify triggers. Too often I see couple using those triggers as weapons, because we know what gets our partner going. There's often the temptation to use those triggers, because once our partner has lost control, we have won.

Richard: Three rules. **(1) Violence and rage will destroy love.** It will always destroy love. **(2) Don't pretend that anger's not happening.** If it's happening, you have got a problem that needs to be dealt with much more subtlety and taken responsibility for. And, remember, **(3) anger is always destructive in the relationship.** So acknowledge, but seek to share what is going on between you. Those are the three points that I really want to emphasize at this point.

Amy: One of the ways that anger can manifest itself where it's not always visible is through tears. It tends to be a weapon of many women to say, "You've acted so horribly, you've made me cry." And they will cry, but their cry isn't sorrow. It's actually angry tears. Just for women: recognize you're not being safe and calm and neutral if you're crying out of rage.

Richard: I want you refer you to my favorite book at the moment, which is Wayne Dyer's *Your Sacred Self*. The reason for that is, again, like Susan Jeffers book on *Lasting Love*, it's emphasizing the utter importance of accepting that you're on a journey and growth and understanding here.

Andrew: In wrapping up, one important thing to take from this, firstly, is the three rules that Richard identified. Also, from those, identifying our triggers for anger, and in terms of looking at your own personal anger, look at what part of yourself your partner touches when they spark off that emotion. That's one area where we learn from our emotions, and learning appropriate avenues or ways of dealing with our anger as firstly to identify what's sparks



it, whether it's feelings of guilt, in the case of the man who spat in his partner's face, or in terms of feelings of loyalty or feelings of manliness, e.g., "If you threaten my manliness, I'll get angry with you." "If you threaten my sense of self by closing me into the relationship and not letting me spend time with my friends, I'll get angry." What we need to do is look at those triggers – loyalty, trust, manliness, masculinity, all of these things – and learn from those triggers. I think that's one of the parts to dealing with and taking ownership of this and curbing the destructive pattern of anger and violence.



Part X: Managing Anger



Andrew: Hi, and welcome back to *Save My Marriage Today*. Today you're talking with myself, Amy, and Richard. The topic of this session is "Managing Anger," following on from what we were discussing about the nature and the biology of anger in our previous session.

This session is the next step up where anger manifests itself as physical or verbal violence. It's important at this stage to note what we identified in the previous session: that *violence is never acceptable*. What we need to do is look at ways of identifying, firstly, that this is unacceptable *and* that it's happening to you, because I think all too often people in these situations aren't aware that it has escalated to that level. Secondly, we need to identify avenues for you to go down in terms of ways of managing this anger.

You must see some very angry people, Richard, what are your thoughts?

Richard: I see both some very angry women and some very angry men. In my opinion, there is a process that you need to go through.

1. You need to be aware of ranking anger levels from 1 to 10. You just simply have a simple subjective range from 1 to 10.

2. Always remove yourself out of a situation where there's anger as soon as it gets above about a 5. Don't allow the anger to go above a 5. If it goes above a 5, that's where you're going to be back into the situation where you got the spitting occurring where the partner is out of control and there's a problem.

3. The rule is violence is never acceptable.

4. Don't make excuses or blame the other person.

5. Do a course. The course may be simply a course on communication rather than anger management, but do a course – in other words, accept that you have some responsibility for what is going on.

Amy: It sounds good to have the steps, but one thing that I worry about is: of course we've all seen movies like *Anger Management*, and we think, "Hah, hah, hah, that's so funny, but that's for Adam Sandler or whoever. That isn't for me."

What could I say if I felt that I was having problems and getting really angry at my spouse? How could I understand an anger management course? Isn't that just for "bad" people?

Richard: I guess the question, if you're asking that, is the first thing I would be saying is that I'd be wanting to work with you on a one-on-one basis, so that we were looking at what was happening if you were in a relationship and if the anger was there and you were managing it. I'm just simply saying that *hopefully* there are courses around that do not cost very much. For instance, in our country here in New Zealand, it costs no more than, in



actual fact, \$0.00. There's a free service available. I can't comment about other countries, so I wouldn't know.

There are services around. Often, you will find that they are very low cost in terms of anger management courses, but in terms of one-on-one, probably church agencies will offer pretty cheap courses.

Really do get some help on a one-on-one basis, where you can talk about how you're feeling, so that, with me, you can explore, and hopefully I'm going to be a benign and safe person for you talk to. How would that feel, if you would have been having a problem with anger, and you came and talked with me?

Amy: One of the things I think is going to be the most difficult point is to be able to say, "I have a problem with anger."

Richard: Right.

Amy: What are some ways that people can really analyze whether or not their anger's a "problem." or whether or not it's "normal"? Because, of course, everybody gets angry. When has it crossed the line?

Richard: Well, for me, it's crossed the line when somebody spits at me. When things are getting to the point that it's getting violent, that's certainly crossed the line at that point. But I guess I need some feedback from you, too, because the thing is that people vary in what they are tolerant about.

Andrew: I know, looking at my own experience in dealing with other people, that one man came to me and said, "The only way I get heard is when I shout, because she doesn't listen to me." He feels that getting angry with her and verbalizing his violence in the form of shouting and abusing her is the only way that she's going to listen to him.

Richard: When we sit down and talk with this man who was saying this, and we analyze what he had done before he started to have to shout, what he'd been doing is [maybe] he'd been advising her. He was getting upset, because she was having to do shift work, and he was telling her how she could have done it differently. He was suggesting that she got the wrong job. She was feeling more and more frustrated, because he wasn't listening to her. So she started to get agitated and then he took control, shouted at her. So as we follow the process, it was obviously for him that he needed to stop doing the advice and he needed to actually listen to what was going on.

Andrew: "Listening" is a very powerful word to pick up on, because I think so often, when we get consumed in our own anger or by the anger of someone else, that acts as a filter, and it stops us actively listening to our partner, because instead of listening to what they're actually saying and taking those comments on board, we're looking at, perhaps, a justification for the way we act, or we're looking for an answer in our own mind. In the midst



of doing this, in terms of finding excuses and having this monologue going on inside your mind, we're not actively listening to our partners. Perhaps this is an area where we exacerbate the cycle of violence that manifests itself in anger.

Richard: I think what we do is we do a lot of analysis. One on one, looking at what people have done to get into the situation. It's like going to the scene of the crime and reliving and reworking what the crime was.

What we're suggesting that you do is that you start really analyzing with somebody, preferably a counselor – it may not be with a partner, either a counselor or really, really trusted friend – what is actually going on. What were the conditions that provide in this situation where the anger occurred?

Because, as a counselor, that's what I do a lot of. I'm looking at the situation, whether you're the woman or the man, [and asking], "What were the preceding events that led up to this explosion?"

In this case, the bloke was advising the partner. She didn't want to be advised. She was distressed about having to do shift work. He needed to hear that she was distressed, and he was ignoring that. That's when she got upset and then he yelled to talk over her.

Amy: The other thing to never forget is that anger takes a lot of forms. There's also passive aggressive anger, where it can be just as violent when you're closing down as when you're exploding.

We use the word "explosion" a lot, but I don't think that's always accurate as an explosion of anger. If you're a person who gets absolutely furious and then you do stuff to your partner in sort of insidious ways to humiliate them without actually exploding – but you've controlled yourself, right? because you're not shouting – that's still not a good thing.

Richard: Well, you could be in a shitty for the next two days.

Amy: Silent treatment.

Richard: Silent treatment. Two days, I would argue, is too long.

Andrew: But, equally, I get a lot of people who come to us and say, "Well, it was a one-off thing, so I don't have an anger problem."

The answer to it is, perhaps, making a diary of these incidents and seeing if we can identify patterns and we can identify a cycle of violence.

Richard: Again, what we're inviting you to do is to understand about *presence*, to understand that these things are happening in the relationship. You are in this chaotic phase, because this is an opportunity for you to learn both about your relationship and about yourself. So, yes, a diary could be



useful, but what we're really talking about is you being more conscious. If you're making excuses, what you may be doing is you may be saying, "I don't want to learn."

Andrew: So the anger is inhibiting us from growth, from learning something, from using that as an opportunity for growth.

In wrapping up here, what we have are some important points to take out from this, the first of which we identified is that we should rate our scale of violence or our scale of anger from 1 to 10. What this does is it puts it in perspective, so [answering the question], "How angry am I?" because we don't often know that until we stop and give it a number.

After giving it a number where we're aware of how angry we're making ourselves, the second thing is to remove ourselves from the situation when it's above 5. We remove ourselves from that situation. We can always come back, and we can discuss these things when we're calm or we're feeling more relaxed.

The other important thing is to employ active listening. That's equally important for us to actively listen to our partner as well as it is for our partner to be present when we're expressing our feeling, so we're being heard.

We also need to look at the whole passive aggressive way of violence. Are we doing something that's to manipulate our partner into sparking a reaction?

What we have from this in terms of managing anger is recognizing both within ourselves and our partners that it's gone to the next level. Give it a name. Give it a rank. Remove ourselves from it, and identify positive strategies either through taking ourselves away and coming back later or receiving professional help.



Part XI: The Big Picture



Andrew: Hi, and welcome back to *Save My Marriage Today*. You're talking today with myself, Amy, and Richard. The title of this session is "The Big Picture," and talking about it leading up to when we started the filming for this is that we needed to identify some key issues surrounding your marital problems, these being money, work, children, that sort of thing. This elicited quite a strong reaction from Richard, because he believes these issues, while they're important to you in how they apply to your marriage, they're symptomatic of something bigger than that. So let's have a talk about that, Richard. What are your thoughts?

Richard: If a couple comes and sees me, they will come up with specific issues. They will perhaps talk about money. Money is often a big issue in a relationship. Money, if not carefully managed because two people are loving and listening to each other, can really get out of all proportion and really destroy a relationship. But if it's doing that, it's doing that because there is an even bigger issue that you're both facing without fully understanding it. I really would like you to think about that.

This is what I'm saying. Firstly, more importantly, **you're being asked by life to make personal changes**, and I refer to Susan Jeffers on that issue.

Secondly, I believe these **difficulties are always here for a reason**. If you'll accept that there is a process going on, you're involved in the process, you will find that changes can be made. They're more than dealing with money issues. They're more with dealing with work or even affairs or the children or alcohol. There's a process here that you're being invited to commit to. If you can find a way of committing to it, we're going to suggest that the changes then become possible. Is this making sense?

Amy: Definitely. Because we always want to focus on the symptom. When we get sick, we think the problem is the cough, the problem's the runny nose, but, as we know with medical things, the problem is something invisible in your body that needs to be treated. And only then the symptoms will clear up.

Richard: Yep.

Amy: What you're saying is, there is something inside the way you relate to other people that creates these conflicts as symptoms. But if you treat the symptoms, it's still not going to treat the root problem.

Richard: No. I can't see my way around not having to deal with this, that you're needing at this point to really talk with somebody. So one of the things that I'm saying is go and talk with a priest. Go and talk with a counselor. Start examining what is happening for yourself and you'll find that the process will quite rapidly move into you needing to do some personal work.

Now, from that position, you'll move back into the relationship, and you'll



find you have some new skills. One of the hopes that I have is that when he could become – or she could become – angry or violent, you’ve got some way of diffusing that, because you’re now being wisely present with the other person.

Andrew: Looking at the deeper issues surrounding money or work or children and those types of things I’m writing these things down as we go, and I’m identifying from my own experience in receiving submissions from people like you out there, is that one of the ones with money is either a clash of intentions or priorities in terms of the way they want to have money in their life and also in the way they use it. In some respects, it’s a change of priorities, or perhaps there always was a clash of priorities. There were a way of looking at things for some people, perhaps an imbalance in income where one partner earns money and the other one stays at home and raises children, or whatever the case may be. There is, perhaps, an imbalance of power, which leads to a power struggle.

I was dealing with a customer who had a power imbalance where the woman stayed at home and she raised the couple’s children. It initially started off as a money issue, because she was annoyed with the way he prioritized their spending. He gave her an allowance, and she felt that demeaned her or diminished her capacity to make choices in the relationship. What it came down to was not so much about the money but her need to be heard or her need to be validated in her relationship. I think perhaps that’s indicative of other problems as well. What are your thoughts on that, Amy?

Amy: We need to know what we need to be able to ask for it. She was asking for an allowance or a larger allowance, but that’s not what she wanted.

The wonderful thing is that it’s never about our partner. It’s always about us.

That’s the most important thing to remember in a marriage situation. It’s not about what he’s doing. It’s not about what he’s withholding. It’s not about what he’s doing to make you feel a certain way. It’s always about you. It’s always about you.

So that’s the fantastic thing. If she had recognized that she needed to be heard and that she needed her contribution recognized, she could have asked for it. He could have given it to her. There you go. So much simpler, isn’t it?

Richard: Yes. This series could be driven by questions that clients will ask, but if we’re driven by your questions and we’re not inviting you to look at a deeper level of what is going on, you’ll actually find that you’ll always be trying to work with solutions with problems that you’re identifying but not being able to see the big picture.



I'm really inviting you to look at the big picture. Chaos is present. Chaos is present. You need help.

Now the other thing I want to talk about – and Andrew hadn't intended for us to talk about this but I want to bring it up briefly – is I want to say to you, "Sometimes, you're going to need to leave."

That pushes buttons. When do you need to leave? When is too much pain if you're going to stay? When does too much of a history with problems? When does too much resentment? When does no willingness by the spouse to change and to stop their violence?

In other words, if that spiting is going to carry on, if that punching is going to carry on, something really does need to change. I'm sorry. That's really where it's at. All the focus on money, all the focus on affairs or work isn't going to change the fact that you may be dealing with a major crisis, and this relationship needs to face this crisis.

Sometimes even leaving can shake things around enough for the two of you then to be prepared to talk, because talk is always the key. If you said to me, "Richard, what is the one thing you want me to learn from this course?" I'd be saying, "Learn how to communicate. Learn how to listen. Learn how to be present with a partner in some new ways."

Andrew: Yes.

Amy: They're not the enemy.

Richard: They're not the enemy.

Amy: That's the number one thing I would say that couples need to learn. He or she is not your enemy. But it's sure going to feel like it, because love and hate are so closely intertwined.

Richard: Well, if this is Afghanistan, if this is Iran, or if this is Iraq, if this is Israel dealing with its neighbors, we have got very little hope. The hope for the nation is that we can find new ways of communicating. We need Condoleezza Rice. We need somebody who can go into the situation and mediate. Are we brave enough to admit we need mediation help? If we can do this as a couple, we can actually help heal our nation.

Andrew: That's powerful stuff. I look back on another submission that I received from somebody. They were telling me that they were almost like the Hollywood couples, like Peg and Al Bundy is one that springs to mind. They really get off on winding each other up, and she said to me, "He makes me so angry. I just get so wild. I have such a reaction in me." I said to her, "Well, that anger is so closely connected to love." And she said, "But I don't. I don't



feel love. I just feel anger.”

And I said, “No, no. That’s not the case at all, because you realize you no longer love someone that you no longer are motivated to be with when you look at them and you feel nothing, because you only feel anger when you still feel love with someone.”

Richard: When you feel engaged.

Andrew: When you still care about what they think. That’s a very powerful realization to come to. So many people say, “My marriage problem has gone too far. There’s no turning back from this.” But so long as both of you either have feelings about it at all, anger or love, then there’s hope. That’s an important thing for you.

Richard: I want to refer here to some studies down in America about the future of a relationship. What they showed clearly is, **if there were more negative interchanges going on between a couple than positive, then the marriage or the relationship was in severe trouble.**

Repeating that, if there were more negative – like anger, abuse, blaming – if there’s more of that going than loving gestures, loving responses, then the relationship’s in serious trouble.

If I sent you home tonight and I said to you, “When you walk downstairs, when your partner comes in tonight, and he talks with you can, you rate what is going on? Can you rate how often he is affectionate and respectful? Can you rate how often he is being negative and you’re being negative?” Because that’s the key, apparently, from what the research is showing at the moment.

Andrew: So, in wrapping up, one of the powerful things we get out of this –which isn’t perhaps the way we thought this was going at the start of the session – is that these individual struggles we have, these issues we tie our problems down to, money, work, children, all of these sorts of things, what, in fact, they do is they ask us to make personal changes in our life. We also have to identify that it’s not just these difficulties; they’re here for a reason and that they’re symptomatic of something much bigger. And in the midst of your crisis, in the midst of your stress and your anger and your frustration, there’s something down there, whether there is anger or love or whatever that is. Having an emotion is a healthy thing to have. The moment, perhaps, you stop feeling something is when it’s time to walk away.



Part XII: Crossroads



Andrew: Hi, and welcome back to *Save My Marriage Today*. You're talking today with myself, Amy and Richard. In this journey we've been through in these twelve lessons, we've got to a crossroads at this stage in our relationship where we've identified our issues, and we have the opportunity to put the past behind us and move forward together, because that's ultimately where we want to be.

In doing so, we've been through lots of different areas in the 12-Part Series. We've been through a life cycle of a real marriage, identifying crisis in terms of identifying that chaos is a normal part of the life cycle, examining our expectations of marriage and the sight of role models that are introduced by films such as *Pretty Woman* and *Notting Hill*. We've looked at examining beliefs about our self and our marriage. We've looked at David Deida's concepts behind masculine and feminine energy. We've looked at the changing nature of gender roles in relationships. We've talked about creating a place for each other in our marriage, in terms of balancing out "me" time and "we" time and resisting expectations. We've talked about when your marriage is in crisis, talking about strategies for staying positive in the midst of the negativity. We've looked at anger both in terms of the fact that violence is not acceptable, but also looking at alternative ways of identifying triggers and healthy ways to process in general these feelings. We've also looked at the big picture in terms of tying ourselves down to issues, and what they're doing there is asking us to make some personal changes.

Where we've got to now is we have these issues and we've identified them. Where do we choose to go from here?

One of those which I get a lot through submissions is that people, after they've been through all of this and they've had all this negative context in their marriage and the recent future, is, "How do I put this behind me and love my partner?"

What are your thoughts, Amy, on putting all of this anger and this poison and this negative feeling and patterns of behavior behind us and moving forward? Is it as easy as it sounds?

Amy: There's a fantastic book that you and I both read. Was it *Habits of Highly Successful People*?

Andrew: Yes, Stephen Covey. A very old book.

Amy: There's one fantastic phrase that you and I both loved in there. The man comes to him and says, "I don't love my wife anymore. What should I do?" He says, "Love her."

What he's saying is love isn't a feeling, it's an action.

It's fantastic, because what that means is no matter what happened – doesn't matter what happened – love your partner. Read Gary Chapman's *The Five*



Love Languages, and every single day start acting in a loving way to your partner. The love will come back because love comes from actions, the feelings comes from the actions, not the other way around.

Richard: What I want to say is that if it doesn't come back, that's all right, too, because what I'm suggesting from a much broader perspective is that sometimes relationships are going to end. Sometimes, whatever we do, the relationship is in a crisis, and that's just a tough break. That's where it's at.

I want to refer, of course, to my favorite book, which probably, when it comes to relationships in trouble, would still be Susan Jeffers *Lasting Love*. The reason for that is Susan constantly suggests that the relationship is mirroring back to you the crisis that you need to personally face for yourself. It's not just simply about something that the other person is to blame, or there is a problem in terms of the relationship. It's that there are some changes that you need to make.

The other comment I want to make here and remind you of is: don't be proud if you've never had an argument in a relationship. Quite often I hear people saying, "We never argue." I'm actually worried when I hear that. It's all right to argue. If you're at a crossroads, one of the directions is to, in actual fact, go even deeper into what is happening. Remember: take the risk.

Remember what you were saying in an earlier session when you were feeling as if I was really fired up, and I was saying to you, "What the hell is going on here?" and one of your positions might be to back away or to go silent. The other one is to say, "Okay, I'm going to go for broke." There are risks for going for broke, aren't there?

Amy: Definitely. Especially when you say something you didn't mean to divulge, because, of course, we still keep secrets from our partners.

Richard: Yes.

Amy: We always do. There are parts of ourselves that are so precious and secret to us that we're not going to share them, and there is always the fear that in the heat of the moment we'll let something slip out, and then they'll use it against us.

Richard: A question I have for you is: think today of the nicest relationship you have had. Think of, perhaps, in the last week the person that you're related to most warmly. What's the difference between that relationship and the relationship you have with your partner?

Because if, in actual fact, it's not as good as well as happening in the relationship of your partner, you guys have got some work to do.

If you can be so warm and so imperfect and so loving with this friend



because there isn't this invitation to intimacy, that is the next step for you: to allow that quality of intimacy to be now available to you and your partner. What do you feel about that?

Andrew: The powerful realization I had with that in terms of looking at my most ideal relationship there was, it immediately came to me, was my relationship with my dog. Why is that?

Amy: Read *The Mastery of Love*. That's exactly what they talk about.

Andrew: It's not that I need my partner to greet me at the door on all fours, but it's that, no matter what happens, my dog is so enormously grateful to see me. What is that? That's unconditional love.

It's a powerful realization when we move from being "in love" to having real love. Real love is unconditional. It's not saying, "I'm going to withhold that love from you, because you don't make me feel a certain way. I'm always going to be happy to see you if I'm in real love with you."

You're not always going to be perfect, but that's okay. That's a powerful realization to come to when you are in complete love and real love with someone. You're saying that you're not perfect. "I'm not perfect, but that's okay." Maybe we all need to get a dog.

Richard: I've got two strategies if you're really in trouble. One of them is to read a new book called *Uncoupling* a person by the name of Vaughan. [It's in our reading list at the end of this book.] Vaughan gives you the questions that you need to ask if there really is a major crisis leading towards leaving.

The second thing that I want to say to you at this point in our session is: **please consider the importance of counseling help.** It's not a failure to go and ask somebody else to be involved in it. It can be a diversity of people. I'm just aware I'm getting my last few words in.

Andrew: The important thing to realize here in these 12-Part Series is that there is this workbook that accompanies [the video]. I want you to make sure that at the end of each session – or, in fact, while you're watching each session – that you have this workbook down in front of you, because a lot of the stuff will be covered in the workbook, but we're going to expand on some of these ideas, too.

In addition, to the 12-Part Series, we're going to have this workbook, we're going to have reading lists, we're going to have a members forum. We have all of these things. We also have individual personal consultations.

Are there any final words for those people who are in the midst of their marriage chaos that you'd like to share, or any special insight that you'd like to share in the process of winding up, Amy?

Amy: Have hope.



I tell this to women all the time. Imagine yourself in the perfect relationship a year from now. How are you going to get from where you are to there?

The point is that you need to have hope. You need to take the risk to use your imagination and imagine the possibilities, because you're not stuck.

Richard: I don't want to live like my father. I want to be different I want to learn to live in new ways. Thank you for this program. Keep watching. Keep in touch.

You can contact Andrew, Richard or Amy via the Email Consultation Form in the Members Area.



Recommended Resources

Chapman, Gary. *The Five Love Languages: How to Express Heartfelt Commitment to Your Mate*. Chicago: Northfield Publishing, 2004.

Covey, Stephen R. *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1989.

Deida, David. *The Way of the Superior Man: A Spiritual Guide to Mastering the Challenges of Women, Work, and Sexual Desire*. Boulder, Colorado: Sounds True, 2004.

Dyer, Wayne. *Your Sacred Self: Making the Decision to Be Free*. New York: HarperCollins, 1995.

Hendrix, Harville. *Getting the Love You Want: A Guide for Couples*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1988.

Jeffers, Susan. *The Feel the Fear Guide to Lasting Love*. Santa Monica, California: Jeffers Press, 2005.

Peck, M. Scott. *The Road Less Traveled: A New Psychology of Love, Traditional Values and Spiritual Growth*. New York: Touchstone, 1978.

Ruiz, Miguel Angel. *The Mastery of Love*. San Rafael, California: Amber-Allen Publishing, 1999.

Vaughan, Diane. *Uncoupling: Turning Points in Intimate Relationships*. New York: Vintage Books, 1986.

What Women Want. Dir. Nancy Meyers. Perf. Mel Gibson. Paramount: 2001.



Exercises



Exercise 1: Seasons

Step 1. Make a timeline of your relationship. Include the time you first met and the time you started dating, and think how you felt about each other. Feel free to add in milestones that occurred during this time, such as graduations, the birth of children, milestone birthdays, or anything that sticks out clearly in your mind. Think of the feelings you felt, maybe even songs that you used to sing to, or some of the wonderful dates and things you did together.

This stage is called **Euphoria**.

Stage: *Euphoria*

Date:	Events:	Feelings:



Step 2. Write down when you became aware that Euphoria started to change. This is when your partner stopped being Mr. or Mrs. Perfect. This may be the first time you recognized that your relationship was being tested. It could have followed the two of you moving in together, it could have been around the time of your first real fight, or it could have been when you first noticed the differences between you both. You may have even contemplated your future or thought about leaving the relationship. We call this **Chaos**.

How did you change your perception of your partner? How did you change your perception of the relationship? Write down some events and feelings you remember as you went through that stage. It doesn't matter how big or small the issues were: just write them down.

Stage: Chaos

Date:	Events:	Feelings:



Step 3. The third stage is what we call **Resolution**. Consider when you feel you both reached the stage that you accepted the differences and turned the corner. This was when you both decided that you loved each other enough to work through the issues. This doesn't mean the issues went away, but you both committed to working on them. The choice if you don't? *Exiting the relationship.*

Stage: Resolution

Date:	Events:	Feelings:



Exercise 2: Communication Breakdown!

Here's a quick quiz to help you evaluate the strength of the communication in your relationship. When you and your partner encounter a bump in the road to matrimonial bliss, what's your first reaction?

Take the test and find out.

1. **You are out for dinner with friends and your partner makes a comment that upsets or embarrasses you in front of your friends. You would most likely:**
 - a) *Smile sweetly, laugh, and allow everyone to laugh along, albeit at your expense.*
 - b) *Smile outwardly while thinking, "I'm going to kill him/her in the car on the way home."*
 - c) *Glare at your partner and give them the "look of death." They know they are in trouble as soon as they get home!*
 - d) *Throw your drink at your partner while telling them that they have really upset you this time. They are going to be sleeping on the couch tonight!*

2. **Your partner wants you to spend the weekend with their parents, and it's the last thing you feel like doing. You:**
 - a) *Go along for the weekend anyway. Hey, you could read a book or catch up on your sleep.*
 - b) *Ask your partner nicely if you could go next weekend. Hopefully by that time they will have forgotten.*
 - c) *Tell your partner that it would be nicer for them if they spent some family time with their parents... which doesn't include you.*
 - d) *Tell them the next time you want to see their parents is in an urn on the mantelpiece.*

3. **You and your partner can't come to a decision on what color to paint your home. Do you:**
 - a) *Sit down as a couple and assess the merits of each color and its compatibility with your home furnishings.*
 - b) *Choose a color that is neither yours nor your partner's choice.*
 - c) *Remind them of the fight you had 25 years ago when you were right and they were wrong and use this as justification for your choice of color.*
 - d) *Tell them since you are paying for the paint that you will be choosing the colors.*

4. **You get home from a long day at work and find there's no meal prepared and your partner is sitting in front of the television eating potato chips. Do you:**
 - a) *Let it slide. Call for takeout.*
 - b) *Ask your partner to come and help you prepare a meal.*
 - c) *Growl inwardly and cook your own meal. Hey, they are eating potato chips.*
 - d) *Have a red haze drop over your eyes and start thinking homicidal thoughts.*



5. **You have a silly fight at the end of the evening, and it's almost bedtime. Do you:**
- a) *Back down. You can't sleep on an argument.*
 - b) *Accept that you are both being silly and try and find a way to figure this out before bed.*
 - c) *Roll over and go to sleep. This time they are getting the silent treatment.*
 - d) *Tell your partner to get comfy on the couch. You are sleeping alone tonight!*
6. **You own the car but both of you need to use it one morning. You:**
- a) *Discuss with your partner the best use of the car in terms of the most efficient way of getting things done. After all, you are a team.*
 - b) *Take the car and offer to drop your partner off and pick them up later, even if it's a little inconvenient. Compromise is okay.*
 - c) *Make sure you are up earlier than them and take the car while they are in the shower. That will teach them!*
 - d) *Growl menacingly and remind them that the car belongs to you and what you are doing is far more important. Besides, they aren't allowed to drive it!*
7. **Your partner is feeling down and unhappy. You:**
- a) *Sit down with them, give them a hug and discuss the feeling and find solutions as a couple. A problem shared is a problem halved!*
 - b) *Invite them to share their feelings with you hope it doesn't take long. As nice as it is that they are sharing their feelings, you have other things you would rather be doing.*
 - c) *Tell them about the crappy day you have had. After hearing about your day, they can't possibly compare their experience to yours!*
 - d) *Tell them to harden up. What can you do to make it better? You are their spouse, not their mother!*



Now tally up how many As, Bs, Cs, and Ds you have.

Mostly As: You have a good foundation of communication in your marriage, and are able to put the issues in perspective. In fact, you are a great communicator!

Mostly Bs: You are doing okay, but you know what it is to be human and not always be perfect. Making the transition from individual to couple is difficult for you at times, but that's okay. There is room for improvement, but you are on the right track.

Mostly Cs: The core issue for you is that you are acting as an individual, not as part of a couple. Instead of focusing on how things affect you personally, consider how your reactions are affecting your relationship. This type of behavior is going to damage your relationship in the long-term. Being part of the relationship means giving up the need to always be right.

Mostly Ds: Your relationship is in serious trouble. Your actions are having an incredibly damaging effect on the relationship as well as others around you. Your own feelings are overriding the feelings of your partner and destroying any incentive to communicate in your relationship. Before you criticize your partner's poor communication, consider how your responses are strengthening the negative pattern of behavior. It's time to set a better example, and it starts with you.



Exercise 3: 5 First Dates

If you are seeking help with your relationship, chances are you have reached the end of the honeymoon period. When you look back on the romantic phase of relationships, it's easy to miss the flowers, the infatuation, the lust, the way you were crazy about each other, and the dates.

It doesn't have to end like that. For this exercise, list your five favorite dates, either ones that you had during the romantic phase of your relationship or things that you would really like to do as a couple. It could be a romantic dinner, a weekend away, a trip to a favorite shop, doing something that you both love, a drive in the car, flowers and a walk in the park, feeding the ducks, horse riding or trekking, the possibilities are endless.

List them and make an effort to organize one a month for the next 5 months.

Date 1:

Date 2:

Date 3:

Date 4:

Date 5:



Exercise 4: Ten Things

Part of creating a place for each other in our relationship involves learning how to communicate when things aren't going so well. One of the most important skills you will learn as a couple is the ability to share your feelings about what is happening and to do this in a positive and non-judgmental way.

So how do you do this?

Start by writing down ten things that immediately spring to mind when you think of your partner and your marriage. They can be descriptive words, fragments, or full sentences about something that has happened recently or about how that person makes you feel. Include some positive statements and words as well as the things that frustrate you.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____



Now, looking at this list of ten things, reframe or reword each item on the list and turn it back to you. Make it an "I" statement, such as "I feel..." "I am..." "I can..."

Avoid using words like "He/she does..." "He/she makes me..." "You" "They"

Instead, make the statements about you and your reaction and how you feel.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

It's difficult, isn't it? What you should gain from this exercise is an understanding that you have the power to control yourself and your emotions in this relationship. You may feel frustrated, angry, or powerless, but that is YOUR emotion and YOUR action or feeling. See how this gives you power and makes you think differently? Consider if you have the power to choose your feelings or reactions. How can you change your reactions to create a more positive outcome?



Are any patterns are emerging? Do you argue about the same thing a lot? Is it about being listened to or respected? Is it about keeping the house clean or doing the chores? Do you or your partner work too much? Is this about not spending enough time together? Is this about being tired? Is this about trust?

When couples are in crisis, it can often be hard for them to pin the situation down to some key issues. The object of this exercise is to enable you and your partner to identify common behaviors and deal with those, rather than tackling your marriage crisis on an issue-by-issue basis.

This may also be a useful list to take to couples counseling.

