

# **Love gives you wings**

Relationship Advice Tips Tools & Wisdom

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## Foreword

My relationship is a garden in which I have to plant seeds of hope and dreams every day. I have to be vigilant and pull out the weeds before they take root. I have to water it with loving kindness and feed it with understanding and awareness. But most of all, I know I will have to tend to it each day for the rest of my life, and when I do I will surely reap what I sow!



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Love Is a Word](#)

[Waiting for Mr. Right](#)

[What Does It Look Like?](#)

[Who Me!](#)

[Conflict: What's It to Me?](#)

[The Big 'C'](#)

[Ask, Don't Assume](#)

[Expect to Have Expectations](#)

[Speak Your Truth](#)

[Boundaries: Have Them](#)

[I Am Right, You Are Wrong](#)

[Closing the Chapter](#)

[Start Using the 'F' Words](#)

[Online Dating](#)

[Relationship 101](#)

[The Beginning](#)

[About the Author](#)

[Other Books by Robin Roberts](#)



## LOVE IS A WORD

We built our house up from the ground  
each moment, each smile, each knowing look  
shared was cemented in place with  
tenderness and concern and a touch  
which showed how much we cared.

Now our house has many rooms  
the roof is the dreams and the  
hopes we hold dear it keeps out the  
self-doubts and irrational fear.

The house may change, grow older, need  
a coat of tender loving care but my love  
we will always be sheltered  
from the storm there

**Love is but a word until it is accompanied by a  
touch, an intent.**

It is not enough to simply fill the empty space with a body which meets a need but does not fulfil the soul. You deserve more; your partner deserves more.

Love is a journey, not a destination. It's a journey with detours, highways, scenic routes and the occasional dead end. But no matter who you are, everyone seeks the perfect relationship, one which wraps us up in a blanket of love, support and happy-ever-afters.

The media perpetuates 'Gone with the Wind' romances, where all it takes is a look, a touch, a glass slipper and, presto, a fairy tale is born. The reality is that while love gives you wings, you still have to learn how to fly.

**You** have to learn how to be the person you want your partner to be.

**You** have to learn how to communicate, not just talk (there is a big difference).

**You** have to learn how to give but not enable. Ask, don't assume.

**You** have to learn what is healthy behaviour and what is not.

**You** have to learn how to speak your truth and honour your partner at the same time.

Love... deep spiritual love brings with it a lifetime of learning, growing and adapting. People change through circumstances, experiences or simply because of the knowledge they gain with age. To be in love is great; to be able to love is a true blessing.

*“Is love a fluttering heart and long looks across the room? Romantic love may be, but it lasts only until the wet towels get dropped on the floor and the wrong end of the toothpaste is squeezed.”*

Your perfect partner may not be the one you never argue with, but the one whose presence pushes you into growth and understanding.

Your spiritual soul mate is not the one who will agree with everything you say or do everything you want. He/she won't have all the same likes and dislikes you do. Ask the Universe for a soul mate and you are going to get someone who pushes all your buttons, who challenges you on every level, who will stand right in your face and go, “Nah, I don't think

so.”

Some people think love is the icing on the cake; however, this is the romantic Hollywood version. Me, I want the whole cake with all its layers and a rich blend of ingredients. I want the compassion, trust, kindness, respect, support and gentleness a loving relationship brings.

I was once one of those who read the glossy magazines and created a fantasy partner who fulfilled all my needs. The happy-ever-after fantasy leads you to believe things will simply fall into place when you meet ‘the one’, but love is a living thing and, as such, needs to be nurtured and tended or it will die.

I have let go of expectations and fantasies. I have let go of the need for the perfect relationship or the perfect partner. I have grown into a love which supports me and enables me to be more than I ever thought possible. I am no relationship expert; I expect I will be learning and growing until the last breath I take.

*‘Where there is love there is no fear. Where there is fear there is no love. As a master I realize love is the power that heals me and everyone around me. Love is my life and substance.’*

*~ Brahma Kumaris self-mastery affirmations*

## WAITING FOR MR. RIGHT

I have discovered I am human after all!

Sometimes I stumble with

not near enough grace,

I am sometimes vain maybe even a pain.

I can only pray I am honest and true

in all that I say all that I do.

I can't give guarantees I won't make mistakes

it is lessons which in us spirit creates.

I may not listen as well as I could

may not hug you as often as I should.

I am human there are times when I will lose

my way, forget how to hear spirit forget

what to say so forgive me if I don't see that

you are human just like me



We come to love not by finding a perfect person but by learning to see an imperfect person perfectly

~ Sam Keen, To Love and Be Loved

Waiting for Mr./Ms. Right is like putting a pumpkin in the driveway and waiting for the Good Fairy to turn it into a sports car... never going to happen.

When you go after Mr./Ms. Right, you are so full of expectations no one is ever going to be able to measure up. And here is the interesting thing: it is all about them. Will they fit in with my friends? Will they be sporty, intelligent and well read? Can they cook? Do they like dogs? And so on. All valid questions, I might add; however, notice how the person you seek has to be perfect, but not you?

**What would happen if you asked yourself the same questions?**

**Do I** have good intimacy and social skills?

**Am I** a confident, well-adjusted person?

**Am I** capable of committing to a long-term relationship?

Why did my last relationship fail and what was my longest relationship?

**Mr./Ms. Almost There—Needs Some Work**  
**doesn't look so bad now!**

Anyone who thinks they can enter a relationship and live happily ever after without doing the 'work' is living in a fantasy world. Mr. Right and Miss Perfect are the Ken and Barbie of your imagination. They don't exist; let me repeat, they don't exist. Chances are you have blown off Mr. 'Almost There' or Mr. 'Half Right', and they could have been the light of your life.

**Your soul mate doesn't have to be perfect; they just have to...**

respect you

love you

honour you

make you laugh

make you smile

listen to you

## WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Simple thoughts of knowing  
wonder and joy growing  
deepening of respect and caring, opening up  
giving and sharing,  
smiles at words said, pictures and memories  
formed within my head.

Talking, learning, listening to you,  
understanding feeling all you have  
been through. Time passing flying by,  
wanting to know what makes you  
smile, laugh or cry.

Wanting to hear about your dreams,  
hopes and fears.

Wanting to hold you tight

kiss away your tears.

Love growing, deepening, awakening

things never felt before

grateful ever grateful spirit

let you walk through my door.

A lot of us come from dysfunctional families where ‘normal’ is abusive and angry. We don’t know what happy or healthy relationships look like because we have never been around them. We also may have unhealthy beliefs about ourselves. For example, not everyone believes they deserve love, and a lot of people settle for second best because they don’t think they can do any better.

**So if you are in a relationship, here are a few clues it’s not that healthy:**

**You** can't have an opinion and if you do have one it's not respected.

**You** give so much of yourself to the relationship that if you walked away there would be nothing left.

**Decisions** which affect both parties are made by one party.

**Your** needs are second to the needs of the other person.

**Arguments** involve blame, guilt and shame and end when someone gets hurt emotionally or physically.

**You** do not have a separate self; you do not have your own interests and friends.

## **Signs of a healthy relationship**

**You** are respected, your opinions count, and you are heard and listened to.

**Decisions** are made which meet the needs of both of us.

**You** have a separate self; you know who you are apart from your partner and, should it all end tomorrow, you would be okay.

**You** never feel threatened or in danger; you never feel you cannot do or say anything.

**You** feel safe. You know that no matter how angry you both get, you are still loved and that love will not be taken away.

**You** both will do the work necessary to keep the relationship healthy.

I think one of the best indicators of whether a relationship is healthy or unhealthy comes from your body. Your 'gut' will tell you if you are in a situation which is damaging to your soul. We feel our deepest emotions through our bodies. When you are with your partner, you should never feel anxiety, panic or fear.

As a psychic, I have many people come to me wanting to know if they should stay or go. And quite honestly, if you have to ask a psychic this question, you already have the answer to whether your relationship is healthy or not.

If you are asking other people whether you should stay or go, it means you don't want to be there in your heart. That is never a good foundation for a healthy relationship to grow.

When I say 'healthy', I don't mean devoid of conflict, confrontation or disappointments. We are all emotional beings, and life will challenge every relationship at various times.

I refer to the spiritual concept of healthy, where we align ourselves with unconditional love which doesn't envy, invade, judge or put down. We support and encourage, not because we have to, but because we want the other person to succeed and be happy. We respect not only each other but also ourselves by having good boundaries, by not enabling but supporting.

You may want to look back at the blueprint of your life and the people who surrounded you. What was considered 'normal' in your house?

You may want to look at ‘all’ of your relationships, including family and friends. Usually there is a common thread. If you let your sister disrespect you, then chances are you will let a partner do the same. If you enable your children by catering to their every whim, chances are you will do the same for your partner. If that’s your ‘normal’—what you have grown up with or witnessed as a child—then you probably won’t recognize those behaviours as unhealthy.

## WHO ME!

Laying my soul upon my sleeve for all to see

hoping the light will shine

in love and honesty.

Daring to be open to all which may come

on any given day.

Looking within for the divine which will

show me the way.

A heart given to another with care.

A hope they will hold it in their hands

tenderly and with it be fair.

Tangled thoughts of you my love

of us.... of now and then....

of a lover, partner, soulmate and friend

One of the big things in a relationship is knowing who you are, what you want and where you want to be. You do not have to give up who you are when you enter a relationship. You may need to work out a way which blends both of your needs together, but you should never have to give up who you are for another person.

Most people who come to psychics are looking to know when the prince is coming to rescue them. They have no idea who they are and what they want or, alternatively, feel powerless to change their situation, so they are looking for someone to come in and FIX everything. Relationships built on this foundation crumble easily when the smoke clears and the illusion is revealed. The reason so many marriages end after seven years is because people wake up and start to discover who they are and realize they do not really know the person they are with.

*“Ah, Grasshopper, to join without knowing who you are is to create a work of fiction.”*

To me it's logical: when you do not know who you are, how on earth can you build anything which will support you as you walk through your life?

**Oscar Wilde once said, “To love oneself is the beginning of a lifelong relationship,” and he was right.**

Get to know yourself—your wants, needs, hopes, wishes, dreams and dislikes—then get to know your partner’s wants, needs, wishes and dreams.

I am not sure there is such a thing as unhappy relationships, just unhappy people in relationships. There are those who consistently moan about their partner: “If only he/she would do this or that, my life would be much happier.”

Most of the time, if we are looking at the other person, we are trying to avoid taking responsibility for our own lives. There are those who would rather take the burnt chop than have no chop at all; they start conversations with, “He/she may not be perfect, but at least he/she doesn’t do this or that.” Better to have some love than no love, which translated means, “I don’t love myself enough to believe I deserve more.”

Unhappy people make unhappy partners, and unhappy partners make unhappy relationships. Happiness is not something someone else can give

you; it comes from within. A lot of people come to me believing it is their partner who is the cause of all their issues. My ex-husband had a classic line: “I don’t have a problem. When you get your problems sorted out, we won’t have a problem.” Which, as it turns out, was true. I sorted my issues out and left; he was right, I didn’t have any problems after that!

The point is, it always has to start with self. If you are unhappy in your relationship, then you have to be very clear about what you are contributing to the situation.

### **Here are ten questions to ask yourself:**

**Am I** an arse? Do I assume instead of ask?

**Am I** talking to my partner in the same way I would like to be talked to?

**Am I** asking him/her to take responsibility for my happiness?

**Am I** co-dependent or interdependent? If my partner walked out tomorrow, would I crumble or rise?

**Do I** tell my best friend, neighbour, sibling all about my relationship woes but never tell my partner the same things?

**Do I** make my partner feel safe? Can they come to me about anything and know they will not be judged?

**Do I** have a separate self; do I have outside interests not connected to my partner?

**Am I** replicating my childhood? Are there things from my past I have not dealt with?

**If I** want praise and encouragement, do I give it? If I want passion and love, do I show and express it? If I want to be heard, do I also listen? And so on.

**Lastly, do I believe** I deserve love and that I am lovable?

Find out where you fit in the relationship before you worry about the other pieces. Because if you don't, even if you leave, you will be bringing the same baggage and the same unhappiness into the next relationship.

The analogy I use with people is this: if you have a white sweater and you dip it in a bucket of colour, it will come out blue. But it's still the same sweater. You might create a relationship which looks different on the outside; however, it will be no different from the last one you ran away from.

I don't know about you, but when I was growing up, if someone was too arrogant and a show-off, we would go, "Oh, doesn't he just love himself." And trust me, it wasn't a compliment... but back then I did not know the difference between arrogance and self-love. I am actually only now stepping into the concept that the greatest love of all is the love of self.

We can look at our partner, friends and family, and we can give them our love in truckloads. But often, when it comes to giving this same unconditional love to ourselves, we fall way short. We are taught to give love and receive love from outside sources, but we are never really given permission to love ourselves in the same way. From my own perspective, if someone had said to me in my 30s, "You need to start loving yourself more," I would not have known where to begin or what that involved.

*I asked my partner what this meant and the response was "Treating yourself as you would treat other people."*

I suppose this means that if you would extend compassion and loving kindness to someone feeling miserable, why would you not do the same when you are feeling down? Extend some kind thoughts to yourself. Again, from my own

perspective, I have a habit of beating myself up when I do something I perceive as stupid or wrong, or when I make a mistake. I will say something like, “God, how stupid am I? I never get anything right.” Maybe if I were to love myself more, the words that would come might be: “It’s okay. You are learning. Everyone makes mistakes; it’s human. You will learn and grow from this.”

Have you ever had people treat you badly but you did not say anything for fear of hurting their feelings or because you felt it was easier to let it slide?

Have you ever given in to someone or something because you did not feel you had the right to speak up? When was the last time you did something just for you which didn’t have guilt attached to it?

**If I love myself,** I will not allow people to step over my boundaries.

**If I love myself,** I will treat myself with respect and expect others to do the same.

**If I love myself,** I will be my own best friend and comfort myself in the tough times, not beat myself up.

**If I love myself**, I will be gentle and understanding when I make mistakes; I will show compassion.

**If I love myself**, I will look after my health; I will nurture my spirit, body and mind.

I always think of my children because I know my love for them is unconditional. I always point out how great they are and accentuate the positive. I never pull them down with negative comments, yet I do this all the time to myself.

I always encouraged my children and told them they could do anything. Yet I repeat to myself all my perceived limitations and things beyond my reach. If I were my own child, I would feel very unloved, unwanted and miserable—and isn't that strange? That's exactly how I feel some days.

So here is an exercise: imagine your inner child is right in front of you. Think about all the things you have said to her/him, all the words spoken inside your head. Now ask yourself: if you were a child spoken to that way, how would you feel? When you have written all of it down, relate it back to your life today. Love has to start within in order to extend outwards. The happiest children are the ones

whose parents are happy and fulfilled.

**I am** a divine child of the Universe. Self-esteem, love—whatever you want to call it—is my human birthright.

**I am** deserving of love.

**I can** show others how I expect to be loved by leading by example and extending unconditional love to myself.

*You are the greatest gift you will ever be given.  
Treasure yourself, your greatness, and learn to love the person  
you are unconditionally, warts and all.*

## CONFLICT: WHAT'S IT TO ME?

There was a middle a beginning and an end  
and somehow somewhere both of our worlds  
needed to be fitted in.

You with your day. Me with my day.

Work drama waiting to be unleashed.

Odd conversations needing to be relayed.

The dance of you tell me yours

I will tell you mine.

The letting off of steam

Stepping off emotional rollercoasters.

Stories which needed telling.

It was never about the last word

it was making the time to listen

to all the in between words which counted!



As much as we would all like to point the finger at the other person and go, “It’s all your fault!”, nine times out of ten we are also contributing to the problem, issue and situation because we are not aware of our own behaviours, words and actions. And when we do become aware, our pride and/or stubbornness prevents us from stepping into our humility and saying, “This is what I need to own.”

Self-enlightenment is often a bitter pill to swallow. We would all like to be childlike and yell, “Wasn’t me, didn’t do it!” But the reality is that often we are contributing as much as, if not more than, the other person involved.

It is so easy to find fault with another, to point out imperfections and be a mirror for others’ bad behaviour, but not so easy to look at ourselves in the same mirror. It’s been my lesson over the years to close my mouth, open my heart and step into my humility.

When you are arguing with your partner, about to describe in great detail all she/he is doing wrong and why it is all her/his fault, at this moment you know you are probably trying to avoid looking at what you are doing wrong.

Nothing will kill a relationship quicker than being arrogant and assuming it's all about what's wrong with the other person.

Nothing will bring two people together quicker than when both are willing to take ownership of their own stuff.

**You have to start asking yourself the tough questions:**

**"What** am I doing that is contributing to this situation?"

**"What** am I not doing which would help resolve the situation quicker?"

**"What** buttons is my partner pushing which are causing me to react this way?"

**"What** is this really about and what did I do or am I doing to keep the drama going?"

Don't be afraid to admit when you got it wrong; humility is very sexy. Don't be afraid to look at yourself and your own imperfections—we all have them. Becoming aware of them is called growth. And lastly, don't be scared of being vulnerable, of showing your true self and taking a chance on the

person in front of you really caring and wanting the same things you do.

I used to think I was the guru in my relationship and my partner would grow and become more aware as the years went on. Actually, what this really meant was my partner would come around to my way of thinking sooner or later. It was a rude awakening when reality hit me over the head and I realized I was not a guru, not an expert, and pretty much had gotten it all wrong.

Ironically, while I had thought it was all about my partner over the years, it really was all about me—my expectations, my needs, my dysfunctional beliefs and patterns.

The critical spirit which came out and said "You are not good enough" was really saying "I feel inadequate".

The voice of judgement which screamed when things did not turn out exactly as planned was the voice of the wounded child I carried within, saying, "I am scared," or, "I feel like I am losing control."

The expectations, the unwillingness to let go and the lack of acceptance—these were my demons.

It's a struggle to be human, and it is tough to admit you are scared or you don't know what to do next. It is far easier to place those fears on someone else than to deal with them yourself. When arguments linger and resentment builds, when the goal becomes to hang on rather than to let go, then I am pretty sure I have stepped into the 'it's all about me' zone.

That is not an egotistical zone; it is an 'I will do whatever it takes to:'

**Not feel**

**Not think**

**Not deal with** my emotions, feelings or unresolved issues.

Because if I have to get 'real', if I have to look too closely, I might not like what I see. There are a lot of reasons couples fight, but when it becomes a constant pattern, what you are fighting about is rarely the reason the fight started in the first place.

I know I am scared when I feel my world is out of control or when I feel trapped. Then my partner is going to be on the receiving end of all my fear. Why?

Simply because I need a distraction; I need it to be all about what they have done, not done or should be doing. Because I do not want to face what I have not done, what I should have done, or what I could be doing but don't because I lack the courage to take the first step.

So really, it is all about me. It is about the way I deal with my feelings, the life skills I have or do not have, the regrets I carry and the disappointments I hide.

It is all about me. My criticisms of you are a reflection of my disappointment at my own failings. My expectations of you are the ruler by which I measure my own inadequacies, and my unwillingness to accept you as you are is my unwillingness to face myself in the mirror.

*So the next time you are arguing with your partner and utter out loud, "This is not all about you," turn it around and ask, "Is it all about me?"*

## THE BIG 'C'

I just need someone to listen  
and I need to know they are  
listening, hearing  
with every part of their being.

I just want someone to listen  
Lest there be only  
the sound of my own voice  
reaching up to the stars above.

And when you listen  
I am given permission to love myself,  
to embrace my pain to look inside.

And when you listen  
you give me the greatest gift  
you give yourself....



## Communication

What sinks 90% of all relationships? The big ‘C’: communication issues. Most of us—and I will include myself in this equation—are under the illusion we are good communicators. We walk around blissfully unaware that no one understands us at all, nor are we ‘getting’ what others are trying to convey to us.

Some of us are very good at talking but not so great at hearing what’s being said. At times, we have a tendency to hear only what we want to hear, or we twist the words to fit the scenario we already have made up in our own heads.

Come on, admit it: if you are angry or pissed off, chances are you are already thinking about what you are going to say next and paying little attention to what the other person is saying.

Chances are, if you were asked to repeat what the other person just said, you couldn’t. I know this because my partner often says, “Okay, repeat what I just said.” And I will be honest enough to confess that 50% of the time—maybe more if I was truthful—I can’t repeat back what was said to me.

People think communication is about having the gift of the gab, but opening your mouth is only a small part of it. You also have to open your ears and shut off your own thought processes. You have to hear what's being said, not what you think is being said. There are also times when words are perceived differently by two people: what one construes as meaningless, another may consider insulting.

### **So how do we get to a place where we are communicating better?**

It actually isn't as hard as it may appear.

**If you want to be heard**, shut off or turn off outside distractions: mobile phones, BlackBerrys or televisions. Our brains are capable of one thought at a time; this is a fact. You may be able to play with the BlackBerry, have a conversation and whistle Dixie at the same time, but you are not going to be able to hear, comprehend or 'get' what someone else is saying to you.

**Make sure you hear it right.** If it pushes your buttons, ask for clarification: "Is this what you meant?" Then listen without interruption to get the whole story.

**Respect, respect, respect.** If someone is taking the time to talk to you, make the time to listen.

**Look at the person.** Focus on them. Watch their body language. This is the thing about texting, emailing and Twitter: you do not get to see the person. If someone is lying to you, is uncomfortable or is highly emotional, you won't see it in a text message.

I am not perfect, far from it, and I am learning every day how to be a better communicator. Being a better communicator translates into being a better friend, parent, lover, spouse and even workmate.

**The next time you are having a conversation, stop and ask yourself:**

**Could I** repeat back what was just said to me?

**Did I** fully understand what was just said to me?

**Was I** paying attention to what was said to me?

## ASK, DON'T ASSUME

As I sat it occurred to me I had never heard  
your voice. I had listened to you speak the  
words but I had never listened like I should.

As I sat watching the expressions on your  
face I began to see your beauty  
and how you walked in grace,  
why hadn't I heard the compassion empathy  
and spirit surely one as evolved  
as me should be able to hear it  
as I sat silently it occurred to me.

I hear only noise not heart and perhaps  
today would be a good day for me  
to start to open up and listen with all  
that I am to this unheard voice.

So as I sit silently I pray I will learn to see you  
when you talk to me and in this moment  
give you permission to be all you can be.

As we grow into adults, we learn how to make assumptions about all sorts of things. We make assumptions about people based on how they speak, behave and where they live. We make assumptions based on past experiences, what other people tell us, what we read in the media, etc. Assumptions help keep us safe; they help us organize our world so we can make sense of everything in it. But they can be harmful to the relationships we have yet to build and those that already exist.

*When you are in a relationship, whether it be friendship, work or intimate, the only way of being certain about who the other person is and what they are thinking or feeling is to ask outright.*

How many people here have walked into a room and made the assumption, “Oh, they are talking about me,” even though you could not hear the conversation?

How many people have gotten angry at a boyfriend/girlfriend for laughing out loud because you assumed they were laughing at you?

Assumptions sometimes give us a back door so we do not have to confront our fears.

It is easier to assume we are right than to ask and be proven wrong—or worse still, to ask and have our fears realized. But if we look for the truth in all situations, it actually frees us to make wiser choices in regard to our actions. Why?

*Because the truth narrows our vision so we focus on what is rather than what might be, what could be or what may be.*

In the last scenario, if you asked your boyfriend/girlfriend why they were laughing aloud, they may have said a couple of things. Perhaps it was not you at all they were laughing at, but something which came to mind; perhaps they were laughing at the situation, not you; or perhaps they were laughing at you. Either way, now you have concrete information on which to base your choice of action and bring about a desired outcome.

But if you had not asked, you may have stayed mad and dumped them for being insensitive, or they may have had second thoughts about having a relationship with someone who gets angry for no reason.

**Exercise: Consider this situation:**

Your partner comes home, mumbles a hello and then is very distant for the rest of the night.

**Do you:**

**Make** the assumption you did something wrong

**Make** the assumption they are just being a blank

**Make** the assumption they had a bad day at work and keep out of their way

**Ask** what is wrong and work out a plan so both of you are getting your needs met.

**Things to remember:**

*Masters know their fears cannot survive in the light of the truth*

*Masters speak their truth quietly and without judgment and allow others to do the same*

*Masters are not afraid of the truth for through it they will learn and grow*

**Things to ponder:**

An assumption is not the same thing as gut instinct, intuition or a gut reaction. These are what

some people call angel whispers. You make assumptions based on prior knowledge, experiences and beliefs. A gut feeling comes from nowhere, and you do not know why, but something is telling you this is not the truth or this is not safe. Listen to this feeling; it is your soul talking. Take a step back and away until you know the facts.

## **Relationships and Assumptions**

In our arrogance as humans, we often assume many things about the world and the people in it. We do it in relationships, at work, with friends and with our children.

To have a healthy relationship, it is all about becoming aware that you cannot know what someone else is thinking or why they are doing a certain thing unless you ask them. The golden rule is: 'Never assume; ask.'

*The reality is that unless you ask, you know nothing; you are only assuming you know something.*

How many of us have played out a scenario in our minds only to find out we were totally off base? I am sure I am not the only dysfunctional person in the world.

What about walking into the room and thinking everyone is talking about you, or blasting your teenager because they came home late? Or the friend who snaps at you and you automatically think you have done something to offend them and spend the next month avoiding them?

Think about how discounting it is for your partner when you assume you know why she/he does or says certain things and act as if you are an expert on their behaviour.

We are actually very arrogant as a human race; we walk around making all kinds of assumptions, never doubting for a moment that we could be totally wrong.

**The bottom line is if you don't ask you risk looking like an arse.**

It is the unknown which creates fear and doubts, no matter what the situation. Open and honest communication allows each person to feel they are heard and valued. It is like, "Wow, she/he really does care what I think or feel." It also prevents misunderstandings and gives you the opportunity to work towards solutions. So respect the person, no matter what your relationship. Don't assume; ask.



## EXPECT TO HAVE EXPECTATIONS

I only wish to understand you.

I promise not only to listen to  
your words but to hear them as well.

I promise to be there for  
you in body and mind.

I don't know everything so teach me

I can't hear everything so tell me.

I won't see everything so show me  
together we will grow!

*Expecting the world to treat you fairly because you are a good person is a little like expecting the bull not to attack you because you are a vegetarian.*

*- Dennis Whole*

## **Expectations**

While an assumption is something we assume to be true, an expectation is when we assume something will come true. Sometimes we have unrealistic expectations about how our families should be.

**You can spot an expectation because it is usually accompanied by anticipation and often followed by disappointment.**

It leaves you with a ‘what now?’ taste in your mouth. Sometimes expectations are the result of how we want the world and people to be—our little girl/boy inner-child fantasy. Sometimes we have played out the scenario in our heads, already know the outcome and start planning our acceptance speech. Sometimes our ego prevents us from seeing any other possibility but that which we believe we deserve.

It is easy to get hung up on expectations or to get defensive, angry and disappointed when they are not met.

**For example:**

Your birthday is coming up and you have been giving your partner hints for weeks that you want a friendship ring / season football tickets. You are already telling people how great it will be to get the above items. You have formed an expectation: I will get a ring / season football tickets. But what would happen if you opened up your gift to discover a tacky pair of boxer shorts with love hearts all over them / a sweater that looked like something your grandmother would wear?

**Exercises:**

**Write down** how you would feel if these things really did happen. Would you be angry, sad, frustrated or defeated?

**Write down** what you might think about the person who did not deliver what you thought was headed your way.

**Would you** be resentful towards them, angry or would you try and get back at them?

**What steps** can you take to increase the chances of your expectations being met?

**What positive steps** can be taken if and when your expectations are not met?

**The best advice is:**

**Let go** of outcomes.

**Speak your mind** because very few people can read it; this helps avoid unmet expectations about your needs.

**Be flexible** and open to change; this helps avoid rigid expectations about situations.

**Be happy with who you are.** Never look to another person to fill your cup; that is your responsibility. This helps avoid unrealistic expectations of people.

**Expect to Have Expectations**

**Exercise: Ask Yourself**

What is your definition of family?

What is it you expect from yours?

And what will you do when your expectations are not met?

Are your expectations unrealistic?

There are going to be times when even careful planning and honest, clear communication are not going to be enough to stop people and situations from falling short of your expectations. There will be times when you will have to accept things as they are.

A Buddhist may say, “This is the nature of things; nothing is permanent.”

A Christian may say, “God, grant you the serenity to accept the things you cannot change, the courage to change the things you can and the wisdom to know the difference.”

A Spiritualist may say, “These are the lessons the Universe is providing so you can learn and grow.”

An atheist may say, “It sucks, but you only have one life and you have to keep moving through it.”

Whatever stream of thought you go with, it is true that life at times will not meet your expectations, and there will also be times when you will not meet the expectations of others. How you cope when these moments occur will determine the way your world is shaped.

## **Expectations and Relationships**

Isn't it funny how we have a long list of expectations in regard to what we think the other person should be doing in terms of actions and behaviours, but we never tend to ask ourselves how we measure up to those same expectations?

People have a long list of requirements perfect partners are meant to meet, but again they never turn it around and ask, “Would I meet all of these things?”

Because really it's not very fair to expect things

of others and not be prepared to do them yourself.

It's not fair to expect your partner to be loving and kind if all we do is criticize and find fault with them. It's not fair to expect our children to show respect if we yell and scream at them without finding out the 'why' before jumping to conclusions.

There is some merit to those words, 'Do unto others'; it's kind of saying, walk your talk. Don't shove a whole heap of expectations on other people if you are not prepared to measure up to them yourself.

I mean, aren't I the one who is being a fake if I say to you, "You must act and behave in this way," then I go and do the total opposite? I really can't expect other people to take my words seriously if I am not walking my own talk. So remember, next time you are looking for Mr./Mrs. Right, to ask, "Would I measure up to all these things I want in a partner?"

*And the next time you accuse your partner of not being loving enough, ask, "When was the last time I sat down and said, 'How was your day?' or 'What can I do for you?'"*

When we have an expectation, we are projecting into the future. But given the future is created in the present moment, would it not be more productive to concentrate on the events that are unfolding in the now?

## Acceptance

People do the best they can with the tools they have. It's taken me a long time to 'get' the concept: some people aren't capable of being what you want them to be. Some people just aren't equipped with the life tools needed to be more than they are. There has to be a level of acceptance when confronted with a person unable to see past their belief systems and own life experiences.

It's like I say: "You can tell people what the view at the top of the mountain looks like, but they won't really 'get it' until they see it for themselves." Sometimes we have to accept people are doing the best they can. Sometimes we have to cut them a bit of slack and allow them time to reach the top of the mountain. You cannot push them any further than they are willing to go.

What I have learnt is not to assume the worst of people because they cannot see the same view I can. Change—stepping out of the familiar into the unknown—is scary and requires a certain degree of courage and trust. You cannot expect people to throw aside years of beliefs and behaviour patterns in a single day. I know because I have struggled with dysfunctional childhood messages all my life. It doesn't happen overnight.

## **So when you drop a ‘bombshell’ on someone:**

*“Guess what? I am pregnant.”*

*“Sorry, I lost all our money gambling.”*

*“You know that favourite sweater of yours? Turns out you aren’t meant to tumble-dry it.”*

You might want to let go of any expectations of how they should react. Chances are you are going to have to be patient, give them time to digest the information, or you might just have to accept they aren’t going to see your side... ever. But this doesn’t mean they are bad people. They may be misguided, lacking the life tools, have been given the wrong information or simply be too afraid of change to hear you.

Generally, people are doing the best they can. Some things are tough to digest, and people need time to adjust to changes. So the next time you spring something on someone, bear in mind they are doing the best they can with what they have.

Sometimes you have to come to a place of peace with things, such as the “I love you” you have waited for all your life. It may never come because your partner might not be capable of showing their emotions. Or the bond you were hoping to have with your partner might be a little bit of a TV fantasy, so

you have to ask yourself: can I accept this person for who they are, and even more importantly, can this relationship we have be enough?

It is a balance between having healthy boundaries, speaking your truth and being able to accept people as they are, warts and all. This does not mean allowing yourself to be treated with anything less than respect and dignity, but having a little bit of give in terms of expectations.

## SPEAK YOUR TRUTH

I just want someone to listen  
with all that they are,  
to be completely with me  
for one moment in time,  
a single moment I can claim as mine.

When I reach towards you  
will you step backwards  
afraid I will become a mirror  
of our own doubts.

Will you step sideways to  
avoid making a commitment  
to listen to hear my words and reflect them  
back to me or will you step  
forward and allow me to trust.

I do not ask you to give  
me answers to my questions.

I ask only that you  
listen to listen unconditionally  
I need to know you care enough to hear only  
the sounds of my fears and feelings without  
the noise of the outside world.  
I just want someone to listen to  
put aside their selfishness  
for a moment to indulge me mine....

A man came to me for a reading once. At the end of the session, he spoke of all his fears and hopes for his marriage. When I asked if he had told all of this to his wife, he said, “No.” I queried whether that might be a good first step—to learn to open up to his wife rather than a psychic.

**So what is it about speaking our truth that scares us?**

**Is it** a cultural thing?

**Is it** impolite to be open and honest about what we are feeling?

**Is it** fear of being laughed at?

**Is it** some gender issue like real men don’t discuss their feelings and real women just put up and shut up?

I don’t know; for me, it was a self-esteem thing. I did not believe I deserved to be happy or to have abundance. So if someone disagreed with me, you would see me backing down, retreating, saying, “Yes, you must be right. How stupid of me to believe my needs were important.”

I still struggle with this. For example, when I suggest a movie I want to watch and my partner says, “No, I do not want to watch that movie,” I give in and

go, “Alright then, we will watch your movie.”

Then I get defensive and resent the fact we are not watching the movie I wanted to watch. It may sound small and trivial, but the majority of issues with couples are seen through the little things that happen.

**In a relationship, it's important to feel safe enough to speak your truth and know the other person will love you no matter what.**

So how do you speak your truth in a divine loving way?

First of all, have a practice run. Write down what you want to say, then look in the mirror and say it out loud to yourself. Would you be offended if someone said those words to you? Would you get defensive or angry?

Take blame, shame, grudges and ‘get back at you’ statements out of it. Make sure you are speaking to the issue, not attacking the person.

There are ways of coming to your partner and sharing information which is helpful. Start by waiting until there is a quiet space in which you are both balanced emotionally and where words can be heard.

Trust me, you do not want to go all Yoda-like when your partner has had a bad day at the office, is

hormonally challenged, has 100 things to do or is in the midst of quitting smoking. Timing is everything.

And you also have to bear in mind that sometimes people are not ready to hear the words or may simply not want to hear them. And here's a way-out-there thought: they could actually know themselves better than you do, and maybe your advice is not helpful.

Be clear about your intentions at the beginning: "I would like to talk about how I have been feeling lately," or "I would like to talk about some issues which have come up for me." Ask for some time to talk without interruption and give your partner a chance to respond without interruption.

Be respectful of your partner. Be open to looking at things from their point of view and understand they also have their truth.

When you speak your truth, be prepared for the fact your partner may not be in a place where they can hear it. Then you will need to decide: is this a healthy relationship or an unhealthy one? Everyone has the right to be heard and to have their feelings respected.

But again, go back to step one and make sure you have used your words in a way which honours and respects your partner.

## BOUNDARIES: HAVE THEM

*Setting boundaries is not a more sophisticated way of manipulating—although some people will say they are setting boundaries when, in fact, they are attempting to manipulate. The difference between setting a boundary in a healthy way and manipulating is this: when we set a boundary, we let go of the outcome.*

~ Robert Burney

Healthy boundaries say, “This is how I expect to be treated, and this is the behaviour I will and will not put up with.” Not everyone is going to like it. You are not always going to be the good guy, but then not everyone likes the Pope either.

*In healthy relationships people are able to put in place boundaries and not feel guilty about it.*

Why is it we have so much trouble when it comes to putting healthy boundaries in place, and why is there always an element of guilt attached? Don’t tell me you haven’t had the occasional visitor who, despite the fact the lights are turned off and you have changed into your PJs, is still sitting on your sofa, oblivious to the not-so-subtle hints being thrown out.

Why can’t we simply say, “You know what? I am really

tired, so if you don't mind, how about we call it a night?" It is because the moment the not-so-charitable thoughts enter our head—"My God, if I have to listen to one more word I will run screaming from the house"—guilt creeps in and sits on our shoulder. "Oh, you horrible person," it will whisper, and visions of the pearly gates being closed in your face appear.

It is true: good fences make good neighbours, and healthy boundaries make good relationships. Here's a little hint: people with low self-esteem who need validation from others to feel good about themselves aren't going to want to be perceived as the 'bad' guy.

I know because I spent a lifetime being 'nice'. I was the person who never said 'no', never questioned and never put myself first. But there comes a time when the light bulb goes off and it becomes glaringly obvious that, because you believed you did not matter, you have taught everyone else to treat you in exactly that way... like you do not matter.

In healthy relationships, people are able to put boundaries in place and not feel guilty about it. It is not about being liked. No matter how much you give in or give out to people, it is not going to change who you are or make you nicer.

Who you are is a core truth, an independent truth not connected to any other person. You do not buy, beg or borrow humility or grace; it is something within, not outside of you.

## **What Causes Unhealthy Boundaries**

There are many cases of people whose sense of identity comes from their relationship.

In these cases, people will do anything to keep the relationship alive, including putting up with physical and emotional abuse. It's the 'Who am I without them?' syndrome.

Then you have those who would rather have second best than nothing at all, so they will give in to another's demands just to keep the relationship intact. A classic line is, "I am so lucky he wants me," rather than, "He is so lucky to have me."

Dysfunctional behaviours and beliefs handed down from the family of origin also cause unhealthy boundaries. We may have been taught to feel guilty if we don't succumb to the needs of others. We may have learnt to take responsibility for other people's choices. When our partner turns to us and says, "It's all your fault. If you had been... then this wouldn't have happened," we automatically assume we must have done something wrong.

When you come from a dysfunctional family, you often don't have any idea of what's normal and what's not. And you tend to believe certain truths about the behaviours happening around you. A lot of people don't know what healthy love is, so how would they know what healthy boundaries look like? Have you ever heard of the woman who goes to her mother and says, "My husband beats me," only to receive the response, "What did you do to provoke him?" So the daughter learns it's her fault her husband beats her and doesn't recognize physical abuse as a violation of personal boundaries.

## Relationships and Boundaries

Sometimes we overstep relationship boundaries. Our intentions are good, but our awareness is lacking. Sometimes we assume our way is the best way and cannot see how anyone could possibly not want our advice. We know, being the gurus we are, it is in their best interest to have our wisdom showered upon them.

But sometimes we forget... forget what it is like on the other end. We forget how annoying it is to be patronized and made to feel that we are stupid. We forget what it is like to be treated like a child rather than an adult capable of making our own decisions. We forget that people don't like to be pushed but rather encouraged. We simply forget.

We all have the "I was only acting out of love" card to pull out when our partners start screaming they do not want or need our well-meaning advice. Love is caring, but it is also patience because some lessons take a while to learn. Love is acknowledging your partner's ability to make adult decisions, and love is supporting those decisions.

We are all going to have moments when we see things with greater clarity than our partners, but that doesn't mean the Yoda in you has to come out. A better solution would be to sit your partner down and ask them to express how they are feeling. Then ask what challenges they feel they are facing and what plans they have for overcoming those challenges. It's all about listening, drawing your partner out and being a sounding board rather than an expert on what they should do.



# I AM RIGHT, YOU ARE WRONG

You can't blame someone else  
they didn't utter the words  
they didn't walk your talk.

You said it now you have to own it  
Good Bad Ugly it's all yours.

You can't make a statement throw it out there  
hang it on someone else  
when it all goes South.

You can't play pin the consequence  
on the closest person.

You can't light the fire then  
hand the matches to someone else

If you say it own it!

Ever been so tied up in an argument and so stuck on being right that any resolution seems impossible? When we have experienced a feeling of being powerless in our own childhood, we tend not to want to let go—of our opinions, our position or our rights. When we have been hurt by someone's anger, we tend not to want to be seen as giving in because giving in means showing weakness.

We are so afraid of losing ground, losing the battle or losing face that we completely forget about the things to be gained by taking a step back. What happens is we lose anyway: we lose moments when we could have been doing something else, we lose the respect of the other person and we probably lose their trust.

So how do we create a shift when our ego mind is telling us that to move a toe would be capitulating and handing over our souls?

We take a breath, a step back, a step away from what we are thinking and a step towards understanding what the other person is thinking.

**We close our mouths and open our hearts and ears.**

We choose not to look for the agenda in everything which is said but instead to hear the intent in everything which is said. We remind ourselves that one hour is not worth an empty lifetime, and we ask ourselves what we can give up in order to gain something else.

**Can I** give up being right in order to shift into doing what feels right?

**Can I** let go of anger in order to step into compassion?

**Can I** move away from what I assume to be true and ask the other person what their truth actually is?

Don't be stubborn. Don't let pride or the past become the lock in the door to a better future. It only takes a moment, a small shift, to create a huge change. Better to shift than be left standing alone. You have to come to recognize a belief which no longer serves you but which was difficult to uncover because it sits in your subconscious mind.

The belief I am talking about is the one which prevents you from shifting your position and giving an inch in confrontations and situations where opinions differ.

*It might be a leftover from my childhood or a generational thing but either way it has to go.*

There will be times when you become so 'right' you are not going to admit there might be an ounce of truth in what your partner, friend or sibling is saying. Come on, admit it: sometimes we stand our ground simply because shifting an inch would mean losing, which is the generational thing I talked about. We pin on our pride badge and are determined the other person is not going to get the satisfaction of knowing they are right.

Just an update: this is called the lose-lose position for a reason. Oh, I admit to having moments when I am so tied up in my own thoughts, opinions and assumptions that I barely hear what my partner is saying, let alone grasp the idea that I am not doing myself any favours by being so tied up in being

‘right’. I have figured out that getting more of what I want means being able to step away from my stuff long enough to hear the other person’s stuff.

It’s damn hard to be mindful and aware when you have a whole heap of old stuff (which usually has nothing to do with the other person) being triggered.

It is hard to let go of the notion that it has to be a winner-take-all battle. Most of us have no idea how to compromise and how to do it in a way in which everyone’s needs are met without resentment settling in.

I am not perfect, far from it. My life lessons could be turned into a series as long as Harry Potter and probably ten times as hard to believe. But I am learning that to get more of what I need and want, a couple of things have to happen:

**I have** to open my ears wider than I open my mouth

**I have** to understand the other person's needs are as important to them as mine are to me

**I have** to be willing to let go of what I think should happen and be willing to work together to make things happen

The next time your chest is puffed out, your foot put down and you are fighting for the need to be right, consider the fact that being right isn’t always the same as being fair, loving and compassionate.

**Button pushers**

We all have people in our lives who push our buttons. Mainly because most of us have 'stuff' we haven't dealt with.

It would be easy to pin the blame on the bully, but realistically people only have as much power over us as we allow them to have.

Words are simply words until we attach meaning to them. Ever been in an argument with your partner and yelled, "You are just like my mother/father/last partner"? Most of us don't recognize that it is not what our partners are saying which is making us angry, but the fact they are triggering emotions from an unresolved issue from our past.

If your reaction is over the top, then buttons have been pushed. It doesn't have to be family; co-workers, people on the street—anyone has the capacity to push our buttons and get us reacting in ways we normally wouldn't.

Why do you think teenagers walk into schools and shoot people? Because they do not have the awareness to see when they are being triggered or the tools to deal with the emotions attached to such an overreaction.

Before you can fix the problem, you have to acknowledge it exists in the first place. You have to start trying to recognize when your buttons are being pushed and when the reaction doesn't match the situation. Then you need to ask yourself a very simple question: "Why?" What emotion am I feeling, and why?

What other situation in my past has evoked the same reaction? Who have I heard these words from before?

When you start to ask these questions, you will begin to see patterns of behaviour. For example: when this is said to me, I get upset because it reminds me of when my mother did this to me.

Once you start to see the pattern, you can begin to work on what triggers you rather than focusing on the person who is triggering you. And hopefully, eventually, these things will stop being triggers for you, and those words and actions will not push your buttons and cause the overreaction they once did.

As with any type of 'self' work, these things don't happen overnight. Changing patterns and behaviours takes a while, so don't beat yourself up if you slip back into old ways of doing things. The more aware you become in the moment, the easier it will be to pick up on your reactions and the causes of those reactions.

## **Soapboxes and Relationships**

Have you ever become so entrenched in a position that even if a Higher Power lit up a burning bush under you... it would not make you shift?

I have, quite often actually, and usually when I am arguing with my spouse.

I have a soapbox I pull out and step up on. For some reason, doing this gives me the illusion of power. The reality is it simply takes me further away from being able to see the other person's side of the story.

I can be very stubborn, and it doesn't help living in a

culture where shifting an inch is a sign of giving in or weakness.

We are conditioned to react and behave in a manner deemed appropriate by the society which surrounds us. Unfortunately, beliefs which should have been left back in the Dark Ages have been dragged up into the 21st century. For example, in the midst of a standoff with my partner, I can have a thought, “God, I just want to hold them,” but for some reason I ignore the voice of my Soul and listen to my ego voice go, “You cannot do it because then they will have won.”

*Ironically, if I had shifted that inch, I could have created a moment for understanding, compassion and growth to occur.*

We have such useless thought processes passed on to us that do not serve us in any way, yet we keep conforming to what our ego mind tells us.

We refuse to step into our greatness and try a different way, a road less travelled; we refuse to listen to the voice within.

I am working on this. It’s a daily practice: recognizing when I need to give an inch, shift my position or let go of it entirely to allow things to flow better.

Shifting a little, giving a little, creates space—room for the other person to maybe shift a little, give a little. It’s a give-and-take process, like life: a breath in, a breath out.

I am always blown away by the fact that people refuse to do everything they can to create an authentic and abundant

life for themselves—and that includes me.

If giving an inch will help put us in a position to get both our needs met and will help my partner step into their greatness and hear me better, why, for goodness' sake, would I give a rat's whatever if it appeared to look like I was giving in? Who cares? Truly, who cares? It matters not what the world thinks because the world will turn regardless of the decisions you make. I need to make authentic choices that reflect what, in that moment, will bring me closer to my higher self, not what will appease my ego self.

**Think about it: a soapbox can be a lonely place when the crowd leaves.**

## CLOSING THE CHAPTER

You thought I couldn't see  
the subtle ways you tried  
to change me.

Tried to change the way things were done  
but really you weren't fooling anyone.

The smile was pasted on your face  
the kind words were out of place

Behind the eyes always lies the truth  
you can play the games

and be star of the play

but little lies will catch up with you  
at the end of the day.

Power is an illusion; manipulation, a fool's tool.

There is no glory in  
getting what you didn't earn  
it never lasts and one day  
you will meet a reflection of

yourself and then it will be your turn!

One day I went to my now ex-husband and said, “We need to get help. This isn’t working,” to which he replied, “I don’t have a problem. You have a problem. When you get that sorted out, we won’t have a problem.” So I went to therapy by myself, discovered he was my problem, left, and he was right—I didn’t have a problem after that!

This perhaps isn’t fair because there was a lot more to it than that; however, it does bring up the question of relationship responsibility.

I know a lot of New Age thought goes along the lines of: if you be the change you want to see, the other person will suddenly blossom into the perfect partner.

Not always, and I say this for a number of reasons. Firstly, sometimes we enter into relationships for reasons which are not obvious at the time. Some of us are looking for father figures, safety or security, or our self-esteem is in the toilet, so to speak, and we will take whatever comes our way and be grateful for it. Sometimes we get that, “I am so lucky he/she wants plain old me,” instead of, “Gee, he/she is lucky to have someone like me.”

When we are in a relationship because we fear no one will ever want us, we tend to give all of ourselves to the other person. We become martyrs, slaves to their needs. Which, by the way, is not their fault because we always have a choice.

So we give and give, and they take and take, and a little seed of resentment starts to grow within us. We get angry at them, we get frustrated at ourselves, and we stay exactly where we are because we do not believe anyone else would

want us—at least this is the message we got growing up.

### **So what happens if you suddenly wake up and start the process of change?**

Chances are, in such a co-dependent relationship, things are going to get a lot worse before they get any better. Change brings resistance. People try to pull you back to where they think you belong because if you change, they are forced to look at themselves. So will the other person change with you? Maybe... maybe not.

And what do you do when you become the aware, awake, enlightened soul and the person lying beside you still thinks monks are New Age hippies with attitude? What then?

Do you stay? Do you go? Do you confront? Do you keep doing what you are doing and pray for a miracle?

If the responsibility for the relationship lies with both parties, and you can only change your actions and words, and the other person shows little or no interest in doing the work, what then?

### **When do you let go and let God?**

I know in today's society walking out the door when things get tough is a regular thing. Most people don't want to do the work; they want to step straight into the perfect relationship and not have to change a thing, because more often than not they truly believe they are not the problem when things go wrong.

It has to be a two-way street: I will work on my stuff,

you work on yours, and we will work together on our stuff. I am not the expert on you or what your relationships should look like, nor do I know what you want from them. But I do know from personal experience there is only so much ‘work’ you can do before you have to put down the tools and go, “I can’t build this by myself.”

There is never one side to any story. Despite my issues with my ex-husband, I can clearly see my part in any problems we had. And after recognizing things were not working, I spent a year trying to resurrect the relationship. In hindsight, it would not have worked regardless of anything I did, but I walked away knowing I had done everything I could have.

When we walk into a relationship not knowing who we are, we create an illusion, not a partnership. So I might suggest that finding out who you are at the core of your being is a wise move before starting a relationship. If you are okay with who you are, where you are and what you are doing, chances are you will attract someone who doesn’t need you but wants you in their life. So many people go from relationship to relationship wondering why they keep ending up with the same sort of people, just in different wrapping. It never occurs to them that they attract people who are a reflection of everything they are running from.

So perhaps the responsibility lies firstly with self, before the relationship even begins. Maybe we owe it to ourselves to gather the tools we need to build what we want. In my first relationship, I had no intimacy or conflict-resolution skills—simple things, but extremely necessary. I

truly believe you do not give yourself to a relationship; you bring yourself to it. My partner and I tend the garden of our souls together, but we are under no illusions: we each need to do our part if we are to grow and flourish.

Is it time to let go and let God for you? I don't know, but I do know life is too short to simply hang on to the end.

## START USING THE 'F' WORDS

Where would I begin or start  
Do I tell you how my toes curl  
when I see you smile  
Do I tell you how content I am  
when we just sit and talk a while  
There are no words that can describe  
this feeling of a thousand butterflies  
I have inside  
There are no words how could there be  
to describe the person who  
reaches into the very soul of me  
Words I have none but take  
my hand my love because from this moment  
on we became one....

**Forgiveness:** Make sure you keep some in your pocket. Cut your partner some slack every now and then. We all make mistakes and errors of judgement, but most of the time our partner is not deliberately going out of their way to ruin our day.

**Flexible:** Be willing to work at solutions which honour both of you so everyone's needs are met. Maybe today you have to accommodate your partner's needs; maybe tomorrow he/she will have to do the same for you.

**Friendship:** Become best friends. Share your dreams, hopes and fears. Encourage and support each other. Go for coffee, talk about your day, ring each other up just to say, "Hello, I missed you."

**Fun:** Laugh, be silly, enjoy each other's company without the need for restraint. Play in the puddles; let the ice cream melt down your chin. It's okay to let your inner child out every now and then!

**Faith:** Have faith in each other and your love. Trust the bond between you; trust your ability to solve any problem and walk through the toughest of days.

**Finances:** Make sure you BOTH know what is happening with your money. Nothing sinks a relationship faster than money worries. Both parties should know what is going into and what is coming out of the bank account. Talk. Have a plan in place. Set agreed-upon spending limits, but don't police... trust your partner to honour those agreements.

**Focus:** Focus on what is important. Make your relationship a priority. Do the little things which show your partner they are important to you. Make time, take time, spend time.

**Fight fair:** Don't name-call, blame or shame. Don't belittle. Use 'I' statements instead of 'you' ones. Don't bring up unrelated things which happened six months ago; stay focused on the issue in question.

**Foundation:** Build one. Make sure each moment is like a brick cemented into place with trust, unconditional love, respect and a commitment to make it work.

## ONLINE DATING

A face upon a computer screen  
A smile words which touched my heart  
Even though we were many miles apart  
It seemed we were destined to be  
The truth seemed to slip through the gaps  
In our conversations  
Yes, I loved dogs Yes I was adventurous  
You assured me I would like your family  
I assured my family they would like you  
Cyber partners trusting without knowing  
Would we be as brave when faced with the  
reality of each other only time would tell

I met my partner online. We have been together 11 years, so I kind of have a little insight around cyber relationships. I am a psychic, so that gives me a little bit of an edge, you would think. But you know what? Even though I believe I met my soul mate, even though we talked honestly and openly about everything, it still wasn't all peaches and cream. Some things you cannot know about someone by chatting are:

**How they** interact in social settings. Being alone in a room with a computer is vastly different from being in a crowded pub.

**Their reactions to certain situations.** Watching your dog on webcam is not the same as having to pick up its poop every day.

**How they interact with your family and friends or children.** Maybe you might forget to tell him/her Auntie likes to refill her brandy often, and it is a family rule that no one notices.

**Quirks—like it or not, we all have quirks** or traits we are not aware of. Wet towels left on the floor or toothpaste tubes squeezed in the middle.

It is very easy to be brave in the cyber world, to leave your anxieties, fears and phobias behind and step into a different persona. Words come quicker when they are typed rather than spoken. Intimacy is not as intimidating when you are 1,000 miles away and can say you hear the doorbell ring even when it hasn't. But when you eventually meet face to face, there is not going to be anywhere to hide the real you.

I was lucky. I met someone with the same commitment, the same desire to work hard at making the relationship work and the same belief systems. Being psychic didn't give either one of us an edge; it simply meant we got to see the real us sooner rather than later down the road. We still have to work every day on our 'stuff'; that is an endless journey. Being soul mates does not guarantee a relationship; the foundation you build your relationship on does.

So next time you plug in and turn on the webcam, be aware that what you see on the other end may not be what you will get when it arrives on your doorstep. The wrapping may be fancy, but when you get to look inside, the parcel may be empty. Travel safely along the Cyber Highway, and always remember: if you have embellished the truth a little, chances are so have they.

## RELATIONSHIP 101

The silence sits between us challenges us  
To talk without words, the comfort zone of  
the familiar stripped from us  
We look at each other  
building bridges with each touch  
It would be easy to fall back into the words  
which hid the distance between us.  
The younger us without care is no longer there  
There are rules now boundaries  
wounds scars from the past  
The silence sits between us but this time there is no  
struggle to fill the empty spaces with words  
There is comfort to be found in simply being....

## Ask for What You Want

Truly, how hard is it to come straight out and ask for what you want? Why do we play power and mind games instead of stepping into the greatness of our existence and being honest to begin with?

Relationships are hard enough as it is; why complicate them more with hidden agendas and motives? And the reality is, no one can read your mind, and assumptions only create more confusion.

We aren't honest about our needs mainly because we are taught not to be upfront and to the point.

We are taught to manipulate people into doing what we want rather than simply asking for what we want.

Try it just once. Say, "This is what I need to see happen, or what I want to happen." And if the response isn't what you want, then don't go back to game-playing and avoidance tactics. Negotiate, communicate and be prepared to give an inch.

Think of it this way: honesty will get you more time for happiness, joy and all those good things in life. Power plays and games just take up valuable time which could be better spent!

So here is what happens when you do not address issues in the moment they occur.

**You** start to make assumptions which are usually not true. By the time you do get the courage to do something about

things, you have already decided what should happen, when it should happen and who should be doing it. The trouble with this is that the other party involved has probably done the same thing.

**You** go off determined to simply ignore what happened, but because you are so pissed off by now, the longer you leave resolving it, the more it plays on your mind. And the more it plays on your mind, the bigger it gets, until often it becomes about all the bad things ever done to you rather than the single issue it was to begin with.

**You** go and vent to anyone who will listen, so now everyone is involved and even more misinformation is being shared. Even though it didn't involve these people, they are now part of the drama whether they like it or not.

Common sense dictates dealing with things as they occur, then letting them go and moving on to more important things.

*So ask yourself, "What's the issue? Is there anything I can do now to solve it?"*

*"What do I want to see happen? What does the other person want to see happen?"*

Then move on. Don't put it into your pocket as a grudge or a resentment, which is the tendency when things are not resolved.

## **Be Willing to Be Wrong**

We all have moments when new facts emerge or old

beliefs are proven incorrect, yet not a lot of us are capable of letting go of our viewpoint and adjusting our beliefs to incorporate new information.

Fools stand still when the ground is shifting; the wise become flexible and therefore have less chance of falling flat on their face. It really is about outcomes, not egos.

If someone gives me reasons to question what I believed to be true, then I will question it, and one of three things will happen:

**I will** adopt the new way of looking and thinking; or

**I will** incorporate some of the concepts and fashion a different way of thinking or looking based on old and new; or

**I will** stay with what I thought or saw in the beginning.

I think you have to be prepared to let go and look at things differently, but this doesn't mean you will change your opinion every time. It's all about having a willingness to listen and an openness to hear without judgement.

Nothing deflates a conflict quicker than when someone goes, "I can see some merit in what you are saying," or, "I have never looked at it that way before." I don't beat myself up if I discover I got it wrong; you can only work with what you know to be true. Relationships would last longer if people could get over being right. There is no room for ego and pride.

## **Peel Back the Layers**

We tend to see only the surface, never the underlying life layers. In relationships, we see the first layer: the partner who is grumpy at us, not the partner who may be having problems at work; the child who throws a tantrum, not the child who is missing you because you work so much; the mother who rings you constantly, not the mother who is facing the empty nest.

It takes a little bit of effort to dig through the layers to find out what may lie underneath. It takes the ability to step out of ego and into understanding. This is your life lesson: do not fall into the trap of making assumptions without knowing the facts.

To be a master of your thoughts is to have the patience to wait for the other layer to be peeled back. So the next time your partner comes home grumpy, don't assume it is about you... ask... peel back the first layer because you might be surprised what you find underneath.

## **Don't Compare Your Relationship with Other Relationships**

This is a biggie because sometimes, while the Joneses down the street may seem to have the perfect relationship, chances are good they are simply living in denial and projecting the 'Perfect Family' to keep up appearances. You have to create your own relationship based on who you and your partner are, what your beliefs are and what you both want for the future.

It doesn't matter what anyone else is doing. It only matters that you are building a healthy, strong relationship

which enhances your quality of life and is authentic.

Write your own story; do not borrow one from someone else.

## **Your Perfect Partner**

Your perfect partner may not be the one you never argue with, but the one whose presence pushes you into growth and understanding.

Your spiritual soul mate is not the one who will agree with everything you say or do everything you want. He/she won't have all the same likes and dislikes you do. Ask the Universe for a soul mate and you are going to get someone who pushes all your buttons, who challenges you on every level, who will stand right in your face and go, "Nah, I don't think so."

## **Family Patterns**

Patterns are easier to dismantle if you have the original blueprint. If you went to the end of the book and read the last chapter, you would have a very limited idea of what the story was. The same applies to your parents; they have a history from long before you were born.

Knowledge of this history helps you understand what behaviours and beliefs were handed down from one generation to another.

## **The Power of Words**

*"Every word, thought and deed makes a difference. Every*

*pebble of loving intent dropped into the Universe creates a ripple of kindness.”*

What you may not realize is that when you extend human kindness to one person, it will flow on to another, then another, like the ripples in a pond, gathering energy as it goes.

The truth is, you may never know how many people's lives were changed by an encouraging word you may have spoken, a generous act you may have performed or the silent prayer for healing you may have uttered. What you have to hold onto is this: these things do change lives in small ways that lead to great things.

## **Find Out Who You Are**

When we walk into a relationship not knowing who we are, we create an illusion, not a partnership.

Finding out who you are at the core of your being is a wise move before starting a relationship. If you are okay with who you are, where you are and what you are doing, chances are you will attract someone who doesn't need you but wants you in their life.

So many people go from relationship to relationship, wondering why they keep ending up with the same sort of people, just in different wrapping.

It never occurs to them that they attract people who are a reflection of everything they are running from. You do not give yourself to a relationship; you bring yourself to it.

## **Letting Go and Letting God**

If you give 80% of yourself and the relationship ends, you are going to feel like there is nothing of you left.

There has to come a point where you let go and let God, hand it over and go, “I gave it everything I had, but I am not prepared to lose myself in the process.”

You can still wish the other person well, still love them. It just means that rather than wearing yourself out knocking on their door, you are saying, “My door is always open if you wish to walk through it.”

Leave it unlocked. Shift the responsibility. Instead of building bridges, build your life and invite them to be part of it. If you do this and they say no, then maybe ‘they are just not into you.’

## **Is It All About You?**

The next time you are arguing with your partner and utter out loud, “This is not all about you,” turn it around and ask, “Is it all about me?”

So really, is it all about you? Is it all about the way you deal with your feelings, the life skills you have or do not have, the regrets you carry and the disappointments you hide? It is all about you. Your criticisms of the other are a reflection of your disappointment at your own failings; your expectations of the other are the ruler by which you measure your own inadequacies; and your unwillingness to accept them as they are is your unwillingness to face yourself in the mirror.

## Guide, Don't Preach

Guide, don't lead; teach, don't enable. And when you see your partner, ask them where they are headed before you start dragging them away.

Support and encouragement is saying, "You can do it. I believe in you." It is okay to help someone to their feet, but you do not honour their Spirit if you discount their ability to walk on their own. We can be overcome by our desire to do the 'right' thing, and suddenly it is all about our 'goodness', not their issues.

The buts always enter at this point: "But he doesn't know how to..." Then teach him. "But he doesn't know what to do..." Then guide him. "But he will end up..." No one learns having never made a mistake. A child does not learn to walk by being held up; it learns by falling over, picking itself up and trying again.

## Love: A Fluttering Heart

*"Is love a fluttering heart and long looks across the room?  
Romantic love may be, but it lasts only until the wet towels get dropped  
on the floor and the wrong end of the toothpaste is squeezed."*

It is not only on Valentine's Day that you should share your love with your partner; this should be an everyday gift. At the end of a long, hard day, all of us want someone to wrap an arm around us and go, "Gee, that had to be tough."

When we have a victory, no matter how small, we all want to hear, "I am proud of you. Well done." It truly is the little things we forget to say or do which will make all the

difference. The greatest need we have as humans is to be listened to and heard.

Yet all of us are guilty of not giving our partners a moment where it is all about them, not us. Ironically, we have expectations of what our partner should be doing or saying if they loved us, yet forget to return the favour.

## **Angry Words**

*If you add your angry words to someone else's angry words, you simply get more angry words.*

When you add another log to the fire, you can't expect the flames to do anything but get higher. One of you has to step into your Higher Self and be the bigger person. One of you has to give an inch so a shift can occur, and it might as well be you. Who is going to listen to you, pay attention to you or do what you want if you are yelling, screaming and not listening to them?

## **Think Before Speaking**

*"If you can say it to yourself without being offended, it might be okay to say it to someone else."*

Think before you speak; words have a habit of lasting a lifetime. In conversations, rarely do we consider how our words may sound to the other person. It is not until we take the time to go back over what was said that we recognize how hurtful our words may have been.

When confronted by another about what you have said, don't rush to defend yourself. Take the time to ask yourself,

“Would I have liked it if these words had been said to me?”

## **The People in Your Life**

Ask yourself: are those you are drawing to you a reflection of your own inner world?

We need to look and see who we are drawing to us and why they might be in our lives. We need to bring into our lives people who align with the type of world we would like to live in. This is not to advocate throwing people out of your life, just suggesting you change the dynamics of the relationship.

Are there healthy boundaries? Are you too enmeshed in each other's lives? Are you enabling or empowering? And most importantly, what do you take away from the relationship? Most of us want our friends to have happiness, to be successful in all aspects of their life, to be loved and to love.

So the question I will leave you to answer is:  
“Is how you interact within these relationships creating what you want for each other, or keeping you both where you are?”

## **Time to Grow Up**

*Sandboxes Are for Children*

There are a few telltale signs someone has stepped into the sandbox:

**They usually** become very protective about their opinion.

**They become** defensive reacting to everything which is said as if it is personally directed at them.

**They may** threaten to leave or take something away if their demands are not met.

**Like children** they are not inclined to want to share anything and may try to overtake conversations or drown others out.

You are never going to achieve anything in the sandbox because everyone in there will be intent on themselves and what they want. Sometimes all you can do is take your spade and bucket and go home. Take a breath, take a break, give the others time to—dare I say it—grow up.

### **Never Leave Unsaid Words in a Room**

It may be touching to stand up and tell the world what someone meant to you as the coffin sits nearby. I am sure whoever lies there would rather have heard the words when they were alive.

If you speak from the heart, there will be no wrong words, only loving words. If you take a moment now, you will never regret not taking one later. While it may be embarrassing or intimidating to speak of your gratitude and love now, it will be sad and sorrowful to think of all the things you never got to say later.

So go find your partner or lover, wrap them up in your arms and tell them you love them. Ring up a friend, your sister, mother or brother; tell them how special they are, how appreciated and how loved. Do it now so it becomes a memory rather than a regret.



## THE BEGINNING

You ask what you mean to me  
but that is like asking the moon  
how it would feel if no more  
stars could it see

You ask what you mean to me  
you are my beginning my end  
the person I love endlessly  
you ask what you mean to me  
my love you are my reason to be...

I am not a relationship expert; what I have given you are tools to help you navigate through the challenges being with another soul creates.

Be aware: it's your choices which will determine the longevity of your relationships.

**Are you willing** to do the work, put up the fight, grow and learn through the ups and downs?

**Are you willing** to look at yourself and what you are contributing to whatever issues there are?

**Are you willing** to compromise and find solutions which meet everyone's needs?

**Are you willing** to do what it takes, no matter how hard or uncomfortable, to maintain your bond?

**Are you willing** to listen and hear what is being said to you?

**Are you willing** to show your partner the same considerations you are asking for?

**Are you both** worth it? Don't you both deserve a happy, balanced, peaceful relationship?

### **Start Today**

**Don't wait** to tell your partner how much they mean to you.

**Don't wait** to give them a back rub or a foot massage.

**Don't wait** to share your dreams, hopes and fears.

**Don't wait** to let them know how proud you are of them.

## **Don't wait....**

The perfect relationship does not exist; don't even try to measure up to the Ken and Barbie fantasy. There will be days when you will want to look at your partner and go, "What the hell!" There will be days when you will love them so deeply it hurts.

The man you married with the biceps and killer pecs may turn into a beer-bellied, bald guy in the blink of an eye. The princess with the tiny waist and delicate hands may turn into a tracksuit-wearing mum with no time to do her hair or have a shower.

You have to fall in love each day with your partner to sustain and nourish a love so deep it looks beyond these things.

A moment shared is a memory created; this is the goal: to align your relationship with what you both want for each other and for yourselves.

Finally, if I could leave you with any piece of advice it would be this....

**BE KIND TO ONE ANOTHER ALWAYS**

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Robin Roberts is an Australian Psychic and Medium currently residing on Vancouver Island, off the coast of British Columbia, Canada. Over the last 30 years, she has sought to bring what she terms ‘simple wisdom’ into the lives of the people who come to her. She hopes through her writing to lead people to the corners of their souls so they may rediscover the people they were born to be. As a Psychic, she offers a unique perspective on personal transformation and the challenges facing all of us.

Find out more at [Amazon Author Page](#)

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