

# INSIGHTS THAT MY CLIENTS HAVE TAUGHT ME

## FOUR PRINCIPLES THAT DESTROY RELATIONSHIPS

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**OWNERSHIP** or possession concept. This is one of the things that can destroy a relationship. Many couples like the ownership concept because they believe that it gives them a sense of security. If you own something or it is your possession, then it is yours to keep as long as you want and you can do with it as you will. You can even mistreat or miss use what belongs to you and you will not lose it because it is yours. Saying “my wife,” “my husband,” may be a clue to a person’s belief system. Believing in the ownership concept of your relationship is destructive.

Most spousal abuse stems from the ownership concept. “I have a right to throw a tool of mine against the wall, it is my tool it is my wall!” “I have a right to break my dishes if I’m angry; they are my dishes!” “If I have a mate that does not do what he/she is supposed to do, then I have a right to kick that person around because he/she is mine.” “If my mate is not doing what I think he/she should be doing or treating me the way I think he/she should be treating me, then I have every right to go and borrow (use) someone else!”

You only keep that which you set free.

The problem with seeing your mate as your possession is that you will never know for sure if someone really loves you or are with you because they belong to you. Often, the mate does not hold this ownership belief. As a result, many forms of manipulation can be found where this belief flourishes. “If you leave me, no one else will have you. Who would want you with three kids.” “If you leave me, don’t ever expect to come back.” “If I can’t have you, no one else will ever have you.” “If you leave me, I will kill myself.” Of course, with more manipulation comes more insecurity and manipulation.

**ROLES** couples play. Roles tell you what you should do and allows your mate to be angry with you when you are not fulfilling your role! It also allows you to be depressed because you are not living up to your own role expectations. You are

the woman, so you have to do this, this and this. You are the man and therefore you should do this, this and this. "It is the man's job to work, it is my job to stay home and take care of the family." "It is woman's work to take care of the children, cook and clean the house (to my standards)." For many men, women's work is doing what they don't want to do.

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Rather than looking at what men and women's jobs are, a couple needs to look at their individual strengths and then look at what needs to be done and who is best at providing that skill. It is really important that you do not put these role expectations onto each other. Such as, the man always handles the money... (He could be a disaster at finances.) The jobs that neither person enjoys doing nor is good at, these jobs need to be shared.

**Missed expectations are the major sources of conflict in relationships.** It is all your "You Should's" that you have for your mate and it is your belief that if they loved you they would do what you expect of them. The conflict is your attempt at making another person live up to your expectation.

There are two types of love. In Object Love, you will look for the right person/object that will make you happy. Like a beautiful diamond, you love to show off your object of love and, like a beautiful object, love never changes. Here lies the rub. What does not change, no matter how beautiful, becomes boring. But, if it does try to change, the pressure is to force it back. "What happened to the person I married?"

The problem is not finding the right person to love; it is loving the person you've found.

As long as object love remains the same, it is predictable, safe and boring. When it changes, it becomes threatening and scary. No wonder there are so many divorces with this type of love, because there are so many mixed messages to change or don't change.

Kaleidoscope Love is very different. Kaleidoscope Love is always changing, it is always new. It is exciting, unexpected and beautiful because it is never the same. It is not predictable or safe and certainly it is not boring. Kaleidoscope Love is like watching an unknown grow. "Won't it be interesting to see what it becomes?"

**JEALOUSLY is a lie word. Jealously is nothing but your insecurity that you are putting onto someone else and it will destroy relationships.** It is your belief that it is someone else's responsibility to make you feel secure that results

in your controlling behaviors, “Who was on the phone? What did they want?” “Where were you when I called at 2 PM?” “No, I don’t want you working or going to school (where you will meet other men).”

Making someone a little jealous does not prove that he/she loves you. That is like saying that if you make someone insecure that proves that they love you. A few years ago, I had a client whose boyfriend gave her a pager and told her that when he paged, she needed to find a phone and call him within five minutes of receiving the page. At first, this made her feel loved. “He is concerned about me; he loves me.” It was not long before this feeling of being loved turned into feeling smothered and not trusted and so she started to withdraw a little and he became more insecure. He became more verbally forceful, with some slaps from time to time “to help you remember.” Finally, one day when she was working noon shift at a local restaurant, he came in with a 32 revolver and shot her five times. She ran towards the back, still alive and collapsed, bleeding in front of the walk-in refrigerator, he walked up to put the gun to her temple to finish her off—but the gun miss fired and she survived.

Jealously, or insecurity, is something that no one else can fix for you.

As an attempt to fix nagging insecurity, many couples use “Echo Love.” When a little reassurance is sought, you will often hear, “Honey I love you. . . . .” If the desired, reassuring response is not echoed back, then there is the question. “Don’t you love me?” Echo Love is not a statement of love for another person; it is a request for reassurance! If you are looking for reassurance, it would be better to ask for it directly. “Honey, I’m not feeling very secure. I could use a hug right about now.”

Nobody can make you feel secure. The truth is that you feel what you feel. You do not have a button that you can push and feel secure. Therefore, what is left is to accept that what you feel is what you feel until you can feel something else.

**Sarcasm**, or negative high school humor, may start out with both people seeing it as humor but, by the seventh year of the relationship, it will be turning deadly. What starts out as “You have such cute love handles” and “For a fat girl you don’t sweat much,” then before you know it, the little zingers have escalated to the Bitch and F words. Research by Scott Stanley Ph.D., says that couples who use negative put down humor at the start of their relationship have a 70 to 80% chance of getting a divorce!

This one is not that hard to fix. If I were to walk into the room where you are beating your head against a concrete wall, and you were starting to bleed, what psychological piece of information would I need to teach you so that you would not do it?

Nothing! Just don't do it! Negative humor that is directed at another person has never improved a relationship.

People who do not have the skills to be able to express their anger directly often become passive-aggressive. This is best captured in the bumper sticker; I don't get angry, I get even. These people often play the role of Dr. Heckle and Mr. Snide, smiling all the time they are putting you down and then justifying their behavior by saying, "You're the one who always get angry; I never get angry!"

Each one of these Four Elements that Destroy Relationships, you and only you can change. Do not even try to lay it on someone else to make you OK. For if you were to do that, you have made yourself powerless and now you are dependent on others for what you feel. And, others will not live up to your expectations!

**Fighting style** that couples use. It is one of the predictors of divorce. Did you know that by the style of fighting you and your mate use it is possible predict divorce at a rate of 85 to 90 percent. Let me suggest three examples of negative fighting styles.

1. One is where one person becomes emotional and the other person shuts down and leaves either emotionally or physically.
2. The next one that is equally damaging. It is where neither person gets upset, there is no fight. "In this family we don't raise our voices."
3. The third negative style of fighting would be where both stand toe-to-toe screaming at each other. Here occasionally someone may hear something and some information gets through. However, this still falls into the 85-90 percent category of divorce. It's still not a good one.

The reason there is such a high likely hood of divorce with these three fighting styles is nothing is getting solved. Any fighting style where problem are not resolved without any one feeling that they have lost is a negative fighting style. The whole purpose of fighting is to eventually get to a problem-solving method where neither one loses. With those three that we have been discussing, someone usually loses. The way it actually works is that if one person loses, both lose.

The fourth negative style of fighting is the putdowns, sarcasm and judgements, which is the indirect way of expressing things, and the other one that goes with it is the looking for evidence. I used to separate these two, but I am starting to put these two together. Because I may feel putdown when someone did not mean to put me down – and maybe I am really looking for evidence that you don't love me. He states, "In fifteen years of marriage, I have never seen anyone that I would rather be married to than you." She responds with "Well, you don't love me." The question is well did he hurt her feelings or was she looking for evidence. So you need to be clear with this method of communicating. "Well,

my mother cooks better than that.” Well, my mother keeps that cloud cleaner than that.” Statements like this get made, and what is said can get pretty nasty.

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