

DATING



A QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE

ANNA MANNING, M.S.

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Dedication

To

All those who have had painful relationships
and who are now ready for a change.

It does get better . . . when *we* do.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To Gemini, The Angel of Loving Relationships,
for her inspiration in writing this book.

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and for her truly inspiring words of encouragement.

INTRODUCTION

One mythological story says that in the beginning of time, before life had different sexes, we were all perfect and whole living creatures. We were human balls: perfect, round and happy.

We spent our days rolling around, basking in the sun, frolicking in the rain, without a care in the world. Life was so very pleasant. But something terrible happened!

Some of us got bored with a perfect life, and so we began to look for ways to entertain ourselves. We decided to compete with each other to see who could roll up a hill the highest before having to roll down again. And thus the games began.

Little did we know that the gods who created us lived high on the largest mountain. They had been watching us compete amongst ourselves and were quite amused by our antics. Amused, that is, until we set our sites on their mountain.

The gods began to murmur to each other. "I'm quite concerned that these humans we created are getting out of control. How dare they think they are worthy of living up here with us! I think we should eliminate them from the land! They are no longer amusing to me!"

One compassionate god spoke up, "Nay, the lives of the humans should not be harmed. They have provided us with immeasurable entertainment for hundreds of years. What would we do for entertainment, I ask of all of you? I believe I have a plan," she mused. "Why don't we simply cut each of them in half? That would eliminate any further striving to be up here with us, and they would continue to entertain us for many more years to come."

It was a good plan, and in less than a second it was done. But the worst was yet to come! One god decided that in order to prevent us

from finding our other half, he ordered that we be made to forget who we were looking for and why. This decision presented quite a dilemma for us humans, but it was very entertaining for the gods.

The moral of this story is, of course, that we've been searching for our other half ever since. Some of us find our other half, but many of us don't. Why? Because we don't know who we are looking for.

Too many times we get into relationships without understanding why. We simply don't think about it, and then we don't understand why it didn't last!

So, for those of us who have yet to find our other half, I have discovered some simple guidelines to help us on our quest, and I have put these guidelines in an easy to read book.

* * *

This book is a collection of thoughts about intimate relationships. Although I wrote it for those of us who long for a deeper understanding about ourselves, about our roles in relationships with others, and about those others with whom we enter into relationships, my main purpose was to provide a quick reference guide to keep us on the right track in our pursuit of the "right one." Without an awareness of ourselves, our patterns, and the behaviors of others, we will continue to struggle with our relationships. This book makes it easy to maintain our awareness, because it is quick and easy to read, and it can be read over and over, until it finally sinks in!

Remember, the gods made us forget. It will take time for us to remember who we are looking for.

Some of the thoughts in the pages to follow are about accepting responsibility for our own happiness. Some are about loving ourselves first and then loving others. And some will ask us to examine behaviors, both our partner's and ours, and to examine and trust our own feelings.

This is not a How-To book. I don't give step-by-step instructions on how to get a date or how to determine if a relationship is right; instead, I present ideas for us to think about, so that each of us can determine a relationship's rightness on our own. Only you can know who your other half is!

The fundamental instructions on relationships can be found in many books already on the bookshelves. These books present

very important ideas and information about relationships, but they should be only our beginning. The rest of the journey to having and maintaining healthy relationships is up to us.

The thoughts contained in this book will help remind us of all we have learned about our search for the perfect relationship and then take us one step further. It will help *us* determine for ourselves what is right for us as individuals rather than tell us what is right for us as a group. Our continued attempts to standardize or intellectualize relationships merely devalue our responsibility to make our own decisions. What this really means is that another's idea of a good relationship may not be a good relationship for YOU.

The information presented in the following pages is quite condensed. And it is so for several reasons. First and foremost, these ideas are meant to be thought provoking. My wish is not to give you answers: You already have them, somewhere, although they may be buried very deeply. My wish is merely to provide the catalyst for recall of those answers that you have temporarily buried. For I believe that if the answers you seek come from within your own mind, and you trust yourself, you will listen.

Secondly, it is condensed so that you can read it again and again. Some of what is written may be confusing, initially. You may not as of yet have experienced what these thoughts attempt to convey, or you may not be ready to absorb what has been written. However, each time you read this book, new insights will begin to emerge within you. And, finally, these thoughts are presented succinctly for ease in absorbing them as quickly or as slowly as you wish.

Dating: A Quick Reference Guide is organized into six sections. Each section provides thoughts on different aspects of a relationship.

The first section covers the relationship itself: how it can take many forms, what its ideal form could be, and that it *is* what *we* want it to be. The next section contains insights on the behaviors of the other person in the relationship: what to look for and what certain behaviors may mean. The third section addresses *our* behaviors and shows how those behaviors will affect the degree of happiness we can achieve in a relationship.

The fourth section offers insight into some of the common but destructive emotions exhibited in relationships. And the fifth and sixth sections follow up with some questions to ask of ourselves and of our partners and then some final thoughts on intimacy.

Although most of these thoughts are presented without gender bias, there are some that are written with the man in mind and some with the woman in mind. Please, let me offer an explanation and apologize in advance if this offends anyone.

My initial attempt to present these thoughts in a politically correct fashion merely left my words without feeling and without depth. My thoughts lost their power to be provocative and insightful. And for this reason, I followed my heart instead of my head. However, keep in mind that a thought presented in a biased fashion toward the woman does not mean that it cannot apply toward the man as well. Change the nouns and pronouns as appropriate to fit your relationship.

Above all, please remember that relationships are not meant to grow inside the head; they are meant to grow inside the heart. Honest introspection about the thoughts written on the following pages will help you progress further in your search for the loving and rewarding relationships that you so rightly deserve.

Love,
Anna

PART I

Thoughts On:

Fulfilling Relationships

**GENERALLY, THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF SINGLES:
THOSE WHO JUST WANT TO DATE AND
THOSE SEEMINGLY LESS COMMON
ONES WHO WANT TO DEVELOP
A RELATIONSHIP.**

Developing a relationship is a process whereby dates are just a series of events. Someone who is interested in developing a relationship will ask us questions about ourselves and be open to answering questions about him—or herself. Dates, by comparison, are merely single events that occur over a set amount of time. Conversation is usually impersonal and the possibility for interpersonal growth is limited. We must ask ourselves, does this person want to know us better, or are we just someone to have fun with?

**A FULFILLING RELATIONSHIP IS ONE THAT
ENCOMPASSES THE PARALLEL PATH OF TWO
INDIVIDUALS IN PURSUIT OF THEIR
HOPES AND DREAMS TOGETHER.**

When we take walks with our partners, do we want our partners to walk in front of us or behind us, or do we want them to walk along side of us, holding our hands while we hold theirs? Although we each walk our own path, and see things with our own eyes, our path and our discoveries can be shared with others walking with us. When we try to be with someone who does not share the same hopes, aspirations, and dreams, we will either rob ourselves or the other person of the chance to have those dreams come true.

**PHYSICAL ATTRACTION BEGINS THE PROCESS;
INTERPERSONAL GROWTH SUSTAINS IT.**

Many of us are attracted to a person in much the same way we are attracted to a material object, that is, how pleasing to the eye it is. However, some of us will give more thought to the purchase of a material object than we would to entering into a relationship. If we only have a CD player, we probably would not buy music recorded on a cassette no matter how pleasing to the eye the cassette happens to be. But some of us will enter into a relationship with someone without determining whether that person can offer what we want. If there is no common ground for growth, the relationship may not be sustainable.

**LIVES ARE ENHANCED BY RELATIONSHIPS,
NOT MADE WHOLE BY THEM.**

If we feel incomplete without a partner, any partner, we will feel incomplete even with one. We will delude ourselves into thinking that when the relationship begins to sour, it just wasn't with the right person. Or we will begin to believe that the relationship would be perfect if only the other person would change. A relationship will never be right until we are right with ourselves. Once we achieve a sense of wholeness about ourselves, all our relationships will enhance us as never before.

**THE PARADOX OF A GOOD INTIMATE
RELATIONSHIP IS THAT IF YOU
EXPECT NOTHING, YOU
GET EVERYTHING.**

A paradox is defined as a statement or situation that appears contradictory in nature, but that may actually be true. Some people may disagree with my belief that we should expect nothing from our partners that they are not already giving, believing instead that if we don't let a person know what our expectations are, those expectations may not be met. Both are true. However, it is my contention that if both persons can fulfill each other's needs doing what each does naturally, only then can a mutually satisfying relationship exist. Otherwise, it may become little more than a business negotiation.

DO WE EVEN KNOW WHAT WE WANT?

How many of us go through life without an idea of what we really want? Most of us seem to know what kind of car we like, what we want at the grocery store, what kind of clothes we look good in, and even what kind of job we want. Few of us, however, take the time to think about the kind of person we would like to be with in a long-term relationship. How will we ever know if we get what we want if we don't know what that is?

**WOULD YOU BUY A HOUSE WITHOUT WANTING
TO KNOW EVERYTHING ABOUT IT BEFORE
BUYING IT? THEN WHY WAIT MONTHS
INTO A RELATIONSHIP BEFORE
ASKING IMPORTANT QUESTIONS?**

Some may ask, “But what if I only want to rent?” For those who are only interested in short term relationships, long-term questions are not necessary. Problems result when those who only want to rent meet those who are looking to buy. How long should we be in a relationship before we discover that our long-term plans are incompatible with our significant other? Only as long as we want, so ask as soon as it becomes a question.

**A RELATIONSHIP MUST BE NURTURED
IF IT IS TO BE SUSTAINED.**

Love is like any other emotion; it must be nurtured to be sustained. How long can plants last without water? To take a relationship for granted will have much the same effect as forgetting to water a plant; it will soon die. Relationships are very similar to plants in that different plants require different care. Some plants require very little water whereas others require elaborate green house conditions. Don't assume what the relationship needs for growth; know what your needs are as well as his.

PART II

Thoughts On:

**Revealing Behaviors of Others
That Will Help Us Determine
If This Relationship
Would Be Right**

**WORDS ARE MERE WRAPPINGS ON A PERSON:
WATCH FOR BEHAVIORS AND ONLY THEN
WILL YOU KNOW WHAT IS INSIDE.**

Do your partner's words and behaviors conflict? Does he say that he cares deeply for you, but is still seeing other women? Does she say that she does not want to be in a committed relationship, yet she is continually searching for emotional intimacy? Behaviors tell many more things about a person than his or her words. Where there is conflict between these two things, there is dishonesty.

**IF A MAN CANNOT LOOK YOU IN THE EYES WHEN
HE SPEAKS TO YOU, ASK YOURSELF AND HIM:
WHAT IS HE ASHAMED OF?
WHAT IS HE HIDING?**

Have you ever been in a conversation with someone who looked around at everything but you? Did you feel insignificant or that perhaps you were little more than a temporary distraction? It wouldn't be much different being in a relationship with this type of person. His behavior could be showing you how he feels about himself, that he is insignificant and unworthy of your attention.

**THE MORE ELABORATE THE EXTERNAL IMAGE,
THE LESS DEVELOPED THE INTERNAL IMAGE.**

Most of us have met someone with a well-developed external image who does everything he or she can to get others to notice. This external image could include material possessions such as clothing, cars, or jewelry, or it could include knowledge. Knowledgeable people with a well-developed internal image do not have the need to impress others with what or whom they know. Knowledge and material possessions are wonderful things to have, but they should not define who we are.

**THE AMOUNT OF MAKEUP A WOMAN WEARS
COULD BE CORRELATED TO HOW
MUCH SHE HAS TO HIDE.**

All of us want to cover up what we perceive to be our flaws. However, some of us mistakenly perceive that we have many more flaws than others and will do whatever is necessary to hide them. Beautiful clothes, fancy cars, and flawlessly applied makeup, i.e., perfect appearance at all times, could be one way of saying, “I have very little to offer inside, but see how beautifully packaged I am.”

**DRINKING EXCESSIVELY, DOING DRUGS,
AND SMOKING ARE DISTRACTIONS
FROM EMOTIONAL PAIN.**

Denying our emotional pain will not make it go away. It will frequently manifest itself through addictive, compulsive, or obsessive behavior. If someone we are attracted to exhibits such behavior, we must keep in mind that although we cannot fix anyone, we can care about this person and ask him or her to seek professional help. It is okay to love someone who has a problem; it is not okay to enable that person to continue unhealthy behavior or to allow him or her to abuse us in the process.

**IF A WOMAN ASKS FEW QUESTIONS ABOUT YOU,
SHE IS EITHER NOT INTERESTED
OR IS ASHAMED OF HER PAST.**

A woman who talks of nothing but herself is well guarded. Her self-absorption is usually the result of pain, which she will often deny. If she asks few personal questions about her partner, chances are, she is afraid her partner will ask similar questions about her. Her fear of rejection will prevent her from answering. And her behavior indicates a problem with vulnerability.

**IF YOU WANT TO KNOW IF A MAN IS IN TOUCH
WITH HIS FEELINGS, GO TO AN EMOTIONAL
MOVIE WITH HIM AND OBSERVE
HIS BEHAVIOR.**

What kind of man are we looking for? Do we want the strong silent type or do we want a man who is able to communicate his feelings? For a quick insight, invite him to a movie known to touch those with a compassionate heart.

A MAN WHO CAN CRY IS A MAN WHO CAN FEEL.

Big boys may not cry, but emotionally mature grown men do. A man who is afraid to cry is just that: afraid. He is a man who will have trouble with vulnerability, not only his own, but, eventually, yours as well.

**WHAT HE SAYS ABOUT HIS PRIOR RELATIONSHIPS
MAY ALSO APPLY TO HIS FUTURE ONES.**

If there is unfinished business in a prior relationship, we will try to finish it in a future one. Listen to any complaints about prior relationships; look for patterns. If we happen to be a woman whose complaints are about verbal or physical abuse in prior relationships, then our unfinished business may be punishment. If we happen to be a man whose complaint is that there are no warm, loving, women out there, then our unfinished business may be self-love. If your partner takes little responsibility for the breakup of past relationships, he or she has learned nothing, and will take little responsibility in the breakup of yours.

**HAVING THE ABILITY TO SIT QUIETLY AND
MEDITATE IS A SIGN OF A PERSON
WHO IS AT PEACE.**

If we long for a peaceful and loving relationship, we must be peaceful and loving, and the person we choose to be in a relationship with must also be peaceful and loving. Some of us struggle to sit quietly with another person, or even with ourselves, without some form of distraction. It is important to feel comfortable and peaceful with someone, without any distraction, if our relationship with this person is to grow on a deeper level.

**IF A MAN OR WOMAN HAS FEW FRIENDS,
WE MUST ASK OURSELVES WHY.**

Loners are loners for a reason. When people dislike others and keep them at a distance, they are mirroring how they feel about themselves. To be in a relationship with a loner is like being in a relationship all by ourselves. Loners will never let anyone get close until they connect and make friends with themselves.

**THERE IS A LOT TO BE SAID ABOUT A PERSON'S
CHOICE OF HOUSEHOLD PETS AND HIS
OR HER TREATMENT OF THEM.**

Think about the responsibility that each type of pet requires. If the pet requires much responsibility, this person may need to be needed. If it requires very little responsibility, this person may want companionship, but little attachment. If our requirements for attention are compatible with the amount of attention that another wishes to give, conflict over this issue will be minimal. Also, look at how a person treats his or her animal companions. Does he yell at them? Does she keep it penned up taking it out to play only when it is convenient for her? Does he continually forget to feed it and give it water? These behaviors are good indicators of how you may be treated.

**IF A PERSON HAS MANY ANIMALS AS PETS,
CHANCES ARE THAT PERSON RELATES
BETTER TO ANIMALS THAN TO HUMANS.**

It has been my experience that it is much easier to develop a relationship with an animal than it is to develop one with a person, but a relationship with an animal is based on control, not mutual love and respect. Although control is an issue that will surface in any relationship, human or not, control must be replaced with acceptance in a relationship with a human. Someone who has many animal companions may be saying that he or she is unable or unwilling to give up control or cannot find intimacy in any other way. A relationship with an animal is also about unconditional acceptance, and a person with many animal companions may feel unworthy of acceptance from herself or others.

PART III

Thought On:

**Revealing Behaviors of Ourselves
That Will Help Us Determine
If We Are Right for This Relationship**

**IF WE ARE ATTRACTED TO OTHERS WHO NEED
FIXING, THEN IT IS WE WHO NEED FIXING.**

How could we recognize a “problem” in another individual if we did not have some familiarity with it ourselves? If I begin dating someone who has trouble committing to the relationship and, instead of walking away, I try very hard to get this person to do so, I am the one with the commitment problem. If this were not true, why would I be attracted to someone who cannot give me what I supposedly want? I suggest that I did not want it at all (or badly enough to overcome the fear of it), or I would have sought out someone who could commit to me.

**WE ATTRACT PEOPLE INTO OUR LIVES WHO
FEEL ABOUT US THE SAME WAY WE FEEL
ABOUT OURSELVES.**

If we love ourselves, loving people will be drawn to us, but if we dislike ourselves, we will attract others who will abuse us either emotionally or physically. Notice someone who is a positive, warm and caring person. Take a look at how many friends this person has and how similar this person's friends are to him—or herself. If we are lonely and reclusive, we will attract others who are the same way; however, they will not make the effort to reach out because we do not.

**OUR RELATIONSHIPS ARE MIRRORS
OF WHO WE ARE.**

When we look in the mirror, do we see mostly positive qualities or mostly negative ones? Those qualities, positive or negative, that we see in ourselves will be the same ones that we will seek out in others. We do this to validate ourselves. If we consistently see negative qualities in others, this is an indication that we feel negatively toward ourselves. Although we may be repelled by these negative qualities, we will nonetheless attract people with these qualities into our lives.

WE MUST BE WHO WE WANT ANOTHER TO BE.

Whatever we want from another individual, we should also be able to provide that for ourselves so that we do not give our personal power away. If we want someone to love us, we must be able to love ourselves. If we want someone to give us material possessions, we must be able to provide material things for ourselves. If we are unable to provide ourselves with those things that we want from others, we will ultimately sacrifice our self-esteem to get and to keep them.

**IF A RELATIONSHIP BRINGS YOU PAIN,
THEN IT IS YOU WHO MUST CHANGE.**

How often do we tell ourselves that if only he or she would change, everything would be perfect? Have we ever stopped to think that perhaps our partner is thinking the same thought about us? In reality, those behaviors that our partner exhibits that create pain for us do so because they reflect things about ourselves we don't like. If we like ourselves, we will not let anyone into our lives who will hurt us. If we do, we must ask ourselves, "Why?"

**SACRIFICING YOUR SELF-ESTEEM IN A
RELATIONSHIP IS LIKE CUTTING OFF PARTS
OF YOURSELF TO EAT BECAUSE YOU ARE HUNGRY.**

Tolerating criticism, negativity, or abuse to stay in a relationship is an act of desperation. This act implies not only that we do not like ourselves, but also that we deserve to be punished. The danger with this subconscious belief is that until we learn to like ourselves, the punishment that we endure in abusive relationships will never be enough. This seeking out of punishment and abuse will stop only when we realize that we do not deserve it.

**IF YOU ARE CONSERVATIVE, BUT ARE
CONTINUALLY ATTRACTED TO THE CREATIVE,
REBELLIOUS TYPES, YOU ARE MOST LIKELY
DENYING YOUR CREATIVE SIDE.**

If we see a talent or trait in another that we long for, chances are we are denying that talent or trait within ourselves. If we continue to deny that talent or trait within, we will eventually begin to deny it in our partner. That trait that we find most attractive in our partner at the beginning of our relationship will usually be the major source of conflict at the end, unless we become aware of that which we deny within ourselves.

**IF YOU CANNOT LET GO OF OLD PAIN,
THEN YOU HAVE NOT LEARNED THE LESSON.**

People come into our lives to teach us or to be taught by us, and many of these lessons are painful. Some of us learn the lesson the first time; most of us will repeat the lesson many times. Those of us who do not learn our lessons about painful relationships will continue to seek out the same pain with others or will stay in the same painful relationships. When we learn the lesson, the pain will stop; the lesson will be over.

**THE HARDER WE TRY TO HANG ON TO A
RELATIONSHIP, THE MORE LIKELY
IT WILL SLIP FROM OUR GRASP.**

Most people do not like to be controlled or possessed. And conflict will usually occur when one person tries to control another. Our attempt to control another person shows our lack of faith in that person's judgment.

**CLINGING TO A RELATIONSHIP IS AN
ACT OF DESPERATION.**

Clinging to a person in a relationship for fear of losing him is a desperate act that will choke the life out of the relationship; much the same way a clinging vine can strangle a tree or a bush. A relationship should be as two trees living along side of each other with enough space in between so that both have ample room to grow.

**UNCONDITIONAL LOVE MUST COME
FIRST FROM THE SELF.**

Unconditional love for the self is something that is felt; it cannot be intellectualized. However, there are certain behaviors that are associated with unconditional love of the self that can be described. If we unconditionally love ourselves, our self-talk is positive and nurturing, our relationships are never abusive, our physical selves are healthy, our environment is safe and clean, and we attract loving people into our lives.

**IF YOU DO NOT LOVE YOURSELF, YOU WILL
NEVER ALLOW ANYONE ELSE TO DO SO, EITHER.**

If you do not love yourself, then you must believe that there is something about you that is unlovable. If someone does happen to enter your life and see the true goodness in you, you will attempt to sabotage that person's good feelings toward you. You will never believe that this person could be sincere. Instead, you will feel that there must be something wrong with this person and will attempt to discard him or her quickly. Your self-image will be threatened.

**WHAT YOU SEEK FROM ANOTHER IS WHAT YOU
MUST LEARN TO GIVE YOURSELF FIRST.**

When we seek out another to give us things that we are unwilling to give ourselves, we are telling ourselves that we are undeserving. And if this is true, how will we ever be able to accept that which we feel we do not deserve from another?

**IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO TAKE
CARE OF YOU, ARE YOU LOOKING FOR
A PARTNER OR A PARENT?**

Those of us who had unmet needs during childhood may have never learned to parent ourselves and may constantly seek out others to fulfill those unmet needs. The danger in this action is that in abdicating our responsibility to ourselves, we may find that the person we choose to fulfill those needs is a controller and an abuser. When we give away our power to parent ourselves, we also give away our autonomy.

**IF YOU ARE LOOKING FOR SOMEONE TO TAKE
CARE OF, ARE YOU LOOKING FOR A
PARTNER OR A CHILD?**

Those of us who were over-parented as children may begin to emulate our parents' behavior when in close relationships. That is, we may have a strong sense of obligation to run everyone else's lives as ours had been run as children. We may feel that most people are too incompetent to run their own lives, much the same way our parents felt about us. Living for everyone but you is an exhausting way to live. The key to releasing this draining behavior is to realize that as we know what is best for us, others know what is best for them. The need to control others is a trust issue.

**AN UNTRAINED PERSON TRYING TO HELP
SOMEONE WITH EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS ONLY
PROLONGS AND EXACERBATES
THOSE PROBLEMS.**

People who play amateur or part-time psychologist are usually attracted to people who exhibit their own emotional issues. They will attempt to fix themselves, albeit unconsciously, by attempting to fix another person. Additionally, free therapy is worth what it costs. If an individual does not invest something of value in the advice that is received, he or she will ignore it. If someone wants help, he or she will seek out a professional. If we find that we are one of those who continually try to be someone else's therapist, perhaps we should look inside to find out what is wrong with us.

**PROJECTING OUR WANTS AND DESIRES ONTO
ANOTHER PERSON ROBS US OF OUR OWN
INTERPERSONAL GROWTH.**

Oftentimes we project our wants and desires onto another in hopes of having our dreams come true; yet, for us, those dreams will never become a reality. Living our lives vicariously through another robs us of the experiences and interpersonal growth we long for. Additionally, our projections may place expectations on another that may not be what is right for that person. We must all live our lives for ourselves; no one else can do it for us.

**LOVING HER MORE WHEN SHE TREATS YOU
BADLY DOES NOT PROVE TO HER THAT
YOU LOVE HER; IT MERELY REWARDS
HER FOR TREATING YOU BADLY.**

If we have the misguided notion that if we love someone enough they will change, it is just that, a misguided notion. Allowing someone to treat us badly is not a loving act; it is an act of abuse, self-abuse.

CRITICISM AND NEGATIVISM ARE BEST LEFT TO PROFESSIONAL CRITICS, FOR THESE BEHAVIORS ARE DESTROYERS OF RELATIONSHIPS.

Constant criticism and negativism are the result of misdirected self-loathing. We can beat up on ourselves only so much before our self-loathing spills out on to the people around us. Perhaps the reason some of us allow ourselves to be in a relationship with someone who continually criticizes us is because of the sense of familiarity with the childhood home front that the verbal abuse creates.

**YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS
CREATE YOUR REALITY ABOUT RELATIONSHIPS.**

What are your very deep thoughts about relationships? If you are not sure, take a look around at your friends, the people you associate with socially, your past love relationships. Do these people treat you with kindness and compassion? Do they share with you? How do you feel about these people? Remember, you attract people into your life who feel about you the way you feel about yourself. Did I write that already? Yes, of course I did: It was worth repeating!

PART IV

Thoughts On:

**Certain Emotions Connected
To Relationships**

**OUR EMOTIONS BELONG TO US, THEIR OWNER;
NO ONE CAN MAKE US FEEL HAPPY,
SAD, OR ANGRY.**

If my friend does something that “makes me mad,” but that same action elicits no anger from a third person, then my friend did not have the power to make me mad. I chose to feel angry, and possibly rightly so, but it was my choice. It was not forced upon me. No one can force us to feel anger or sadness anymore than they can force us to feel love.

**UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS ARE USUALLY
BASED ON FANTASY: THAT IS, WHAT NEEDS
COULD BE MET, NOT WHAT
NEEDS ARE BEING MET.**

If you have ever been in a relationship that left you mostly in a state of longing, that incredibly intense feeling that something was missing, not quite right, yet you were unable to end it, then that relationship was probably based on a fantasy or longing to get deep emotional needs fulfilled. Unfortunately, those deep emotional needs are usually the ones that can be met only by ourselves, the ones that we refuse to acknowledge, such as unconditional love and acceptance.

**THE DESTRUCTION OF THE FANTASY OF WHAT
COULD HAVE BEEN IS INTENSELY MORE PAINFUL
THAN THE ENDING OF WHAT IS.**

The breakup of a relationship that had been based on the attempted fulfillment of unmet core emotional needs is tantamount to the destruction of a fantasy of what could have been, and it is much more painful than a breakup that merely results in the ending of what once was. The pain comes from the belief that if we cannot get that core emotional need to be unconditionally loved fulfilled by someone else then we are unlovable. We will project another person's feelings onto ourselves and accept it as the truth. That is, we will allow one person's actions to destroy all our hopes, dreams and lifelong desires. Recognition of the futility of a relationship based on this fantasy can be the first step on the road back home to ourselves.

**ANGER IN A RELATIONSHIP IS MOST OFTEN
NOTHING MORE THAN MISDIRECTED FEAR.**

Anytime we feel angry about a situation in a relationship, we must ask ourselves, “Why?” If we are angry at our partner for being late, could it be because we were afraid he or she had been hurt in an accident? Or could it be because we are afraid that this person is taking us for granted? The key here is to recognize and admit, at least to ourselves, that when we are angry at someone we care about, there is an underlying fear. Recognition of this fear will help us understand ourselves better and will also help prevent the destruction that misunderstood anger can cause in a relationship.

JUST WHAT ARE WE AFRAID OF?

Why are so many men afraid to commit? Why are so many women afraid to be alone? Do those women want to abdicate their responsibility to take care of themselves; are they looking for a parent figure? And do those men feel that commitment is entrapment; do they remember their father's anger over having to shoulder most of the responsibility in the family structure? We must acknowledge our fears and be allowed to discuss them openly with our partners without judgment. Acknowledgment of our fears reduces their power over us. Being afraid to discuss our fears with our partners indicates an imbalance or lack in the relationship.

WE ARE BETRAYED ONLY BY OURSELVES.

Many of us enter relationships blindfolded. We see only what we want to see. We do this because of our longing to have our unmet needs taken care of. We become willing to close our eyes to behaviors that indicate a conflict for fear of being alone again. Ignoring problem behaviors in a relationship will not correct them; however, an honest open discussion about them may.

**HOW LOVE WAS SHOWN IN YOUR CHILDHOOD
HOME IS HOW YOU WILL DEFINE
LOVE IN YOUR ADULT LIFE.**

Take a moment to ponder your childhood. Was your childhood home full of activities, perhaps a little yelling and a few over dramatized events? Or was it quiet, with little emotion? Did you feel shameful when you acted out being a child? Or were you allowed to be a normal, vivacious and energetic child? Whatever drama you had in that home, you grew up comfortable with that environment—even if it was violent! Your subconscious mind will seek out that environment again. You will attract a partner who will help you recreate that environment, or you will try to change your partner to fit within your comfort zone. Until we consciously recognize that we do this, we will continue to do this over and over. If you want to change your patterns, simply redefine what love means to you. It really is that easy. Write down your definition of love, and put that where you can read it everyday. When you are faced with a behavior from a potential love interest that triggers stressful memories of your childhood environment, say to yourself: This is NO longer my definition of love!

PART V

Thoughts On:

**What We Should Ask,
Look For, and Expect**

**THE FIRST QUESTION YOU ASK YOURSELF ABOUT
A NEW PERSON SHOULD BE, “WHAT ARE
HIS OR HER VALUES?” NOT, “WHAT
IS HIS OR HER NAME?”**

Values are our core beliefs about how the world should be, and common values are fundamental to any healthy relationship. If we do not agree with our partners on how the world should be, we will end up in constant battle trying to change each other's viewpoints. However, if we consistently find ourselves in relationships with others who have different values, we should ask ourselves, “Why?” Often it will stem from a rebellious side that struggles against the values that we have attempted to establish, or that have been established for us.

ASK YOUR POTENTIAL LOVE INTEREST “HOW DO YOU DEFINE LOVE?” THE ANSWER LIES IN HOW LOVE WAS PORTRAYED DURING HIS OR HER CHILDHOOD.

Love was defined for us when we were children. For this reason, it is important to look back at how love was portrayed in our childhood homes. If our parents argued much, we will look for a partner who will argue with us. If our parents were cold and distant, we will look for a partner who is cold and distant. We will seek out familiarity, for that is what we know. If we redefine love, we will redefine our relationships.

**IF YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU WANT IN A
RELATIONSHIP, HOW WILL YOU EVER
KNOW IF YOU GET IT?**

When I went shopping for a car, I wasn't sure what kind of car I wanted or what options I wanted. I spent several months looking and test drove many cars, but I spent little time thinking about the cars that weren't right for me. But what if I had bought the first one, thinking that I'd just keep looking until I found something better. How much money and time spent in the negotiation process would I have wasted for something that I really didn't want, but just settled for? Relationships should be given at least the same amount of time and effort that we give to our material purchases.

**ASK FOR WHAT YOU WANT IN A RELATIONSHIP,
AND BE PREPARED TO GIVE THE SAME.**

Make a list of everything you want in a relationship, and then give you everything on that list. If you want to be loved, then love yourself, and you will attract others into your life who will also love you. You have the ability to give yourself everything that you need or want; you do not have to wait for someone else to give it to you. Once you are able to fulfill your own emotional needs, the tension and friction usually present in needy relationships will disappear.

**MAKE A LIST OF THOSE CHARACTERISTICS
THAT YOU WANT IN A PARTNER AND
READ IT EVERYDAY.**

Follow your heart and trust your intuition when writing your list. Make it as long or as short as you like, but keep your focus on values and goals, for material possessions and attractiveness can be fleeting. If you know what you want, you have a much better chance of finding it.

**THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PARADOX OF
“IF I WANT, THEN I MUST GIVE” AND
CO-DEPENDENCY IS THE LACK
OF EXPECTATION.**

A paradox is a seemingly contradictory statement, but that is true in fact. The statement “If I want, then I must give” seems contradictory, but I believe most of us understand its truth. If we want a friend, we must be a friend. If we want a lover, we must be a lover. However, if we give to receive, then our actions become co-dependent and unhealthy for we soon enter into a constant state of expectation. Score keeping then emerges because these expectations are rarely met.

GIVING ONLY WITH THE EXPECTATION OF RECEIVING IS NOT GIVING; IT IS NEGOTIATING.

Giving from the heart means expecting nothing in return. If expectations arise, unmet needs may have surfaced. Until those needs are understood and met, our giving will become a disguised form of negotiation, with unfortunate results. Our partners and loved ones will eventually see the price tag that we have attached to our giving and will either begin to refuse our giving or begin to take advantage of us.

PART VI

Some Final Thoughts On Intimacy

**IF BY FOLLOWING YOUR HEART YOU MEET
SOMEONE FOLLOWING HERS, AND IF YOUR
PATHS ARE PARALLEL, THEN YOU HAVE
JUST DISCOVERED THE SECRET TO
HOW SOULMATES ARE FOUND.**

Visualize yourself walking down a path with another, each holding the other's hand, and both of you come to a fork in that path. One of you wishes to follow the path to the left, while the other wishes to follow the path to the right. Assume that these paths represent dreams, aspirations, and goals. Which one of you should give up your dreams for the other? The answer is neither of you. It would be wrong for either of you to give up your future for the other. It would be right for both of you, though, if those dreams, hopes, and goal were the same. Ask early in a relationship; it could be one of the most important questions you will ever have.

**TAKE OFF YOUR ARMOR; LAY DOWN YOUR
WEAPONS. ONLY THEN WILL TRUE LOVE
FIND ITS WAY TO YOU.**

Angry people attract angry people. Loving people attract loving people. Relationships should not be a battleground used to fight our fears and past hurts. If we want a loving person in our lives, we must wear the appropriate emotional attire.

**SEX IS A PHYSICAL FORM OF COMMUNICATION;
IT IS A WAY TO FEEL WHAT YOUR PARTNER
IS SAYING TO YOU ABOUT
YOUR RELATIONSHIP.**

Sex without true caring is an addiction, and having sex in hopes of receiving love is nothing more than emotional prostitution. Although sex is meant to be an emotional act made physical, it is not meant to place chains around our hearts or the hearts of others. It is not a power tool. Sex between two whole individuals who share an emotional attraction is one of the deepest forms of emotional intimacy. However, sex often means different things to different people. Therefore, it is extremely important that you and your partner become aware of the meaning that each of you associates with sex. Although it is not crucial to the relationship that the meanings be the same, as is often the case between men and women, it is crucial that each of you understands and accepts the meaning of the other.

**THE ONLY WAY TO WORK THROUGH
RELATIONSHIP PROBLEMS IS TO
BE IN A RELATIONSHIP.**

If we continually struggle with the same emotional issues in every relationship that we enter, it is important for us to understand that changing the relationship will not change the issues. We must give ourselves the opportunity to work through those issues that we keep running away from. It is time to face and work through our fears.

**THE ONLY WAY TO GET A PARTNER TO CHANGE
IS TO ACCEPT HIM THE WAY HE IS AND TO
MOVE ON IF HE IS NOT RIGHT FOR YOU.**

How many times have we heard that we cannot change another person, yet we continue to attempt to do just that with each intimate relationship we encounter. Recognition that those things we want to change about our partners are the same things that we unconsciously want to change about ourselves will reduce the conflict in any relationship. This recognition will place the responsibility of change where it belongs, with the unhappy party.

WE ARE WHAT WE ATTRACT INTO OUR LIVES.

If we attract loving, gentle, and nurturing people into our lives, then we are loving, gentle and nurturing not only to others, but to ourselves as well. We will attract people into our lives who treat us the way we treat ourselves and feel about us the way we feel about ourselves.

**THE PERFECT RELATIONSHIP BEGINS
AND ENDS WITH THE INNER-SELF.**

When we learn how to love ourselves, then, *and only then*, are we able to love another. When we learn how to take care of ourselves, then, *and only then*, are we capable of taking care of another. When we learn how to trust ourselves, then, *and only then*, will we ever be able to trust another.

**THE DEFINITION OF STUPID: DOING
SOMETHING OVER AND OVER AGAIN AND
EXPECTING DIFFERENT RESULTS.**

How many times have we sought out a new partner with the same traits as the previous one, thinking: Oh, but this time it will be different! One possible reason is guilt. When we feel guilty about something, we will try to recreate the event that caused the guilt, so we can fix it. This does not work! We cannot fix an old relationship by finding someone similar. The hardest question to answer is: What are we feeling guilty about? Answer this question, work on forgiving ourselves, and the lesson will be over.

**CHILDREN FROM PAST RELATIONSHIPS ARE
PART OF ALL FUTURE RELATIONSHIPS.
CONSIDER THIS CAREFULLY.**

For me to assume that I am in a relationship with just you without considering the interconnectedness that you have with your children, your siblings, your parents, your friends, and even your past love relationships shows a lack of insight on my part. Each one of your relationships, past, present, and even future ones is or will be a part of you and will, therefore, be a part of me. For this reason, I must embrace your family relationships, especially your children, the same way you embrace them, and as you will embrace mine.

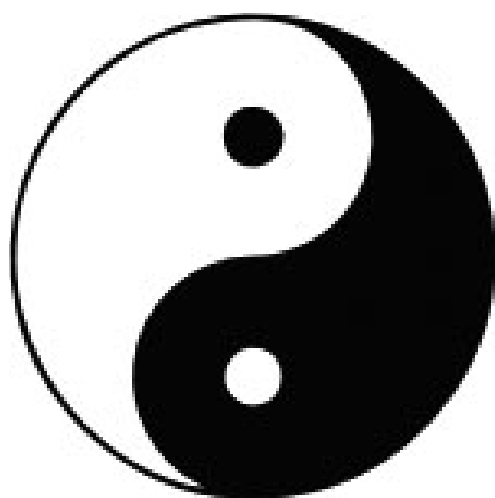
NOT ALL OF LIFE'S ANSWERS COME FROM A BOOK

IN FACT, MOST DO NOT

ANSWERS COME FROM THE HEART.

BE STILL
BE QUIET
BE PEACEFUL

LISTEN TO YOUR HEART



RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

Alessandra, Tony, Michael J. O'Connor, and Janice Alessandra. *People Smart*. (La Jolla, CA: Keynote Publishing Company, 1990).

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Lerner, Harriet Goldhor. *The Dance of Anger*. (New York: Harper & Row, 1985).

Price, John Randolph. *The Angels Within Us*. (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1993).

Tannen, Deborah. *You Just Don't Understand*. (New York: Ballantine Books, 1990).

Wetzler, Scott. *Living With The Passive Aggressive Man*. (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1992).

If you are recently divorced and need something comforting and easy to read that will provide guidance in the pursuit of your next relationship, or if you have discovered a pattern in your relationships that you wish you could change, *Dating: A Quick Reference Guide* can help you. Even if you have read numerous books on relationships and you still remain unable to attract the right person *Dating: A Quick Reference Guide* can help.

Think of *Dating: A Quick Reference Guide* as your pocket psychologist: a quick read full of reminders to help you in your search for your ideal mate.



ANNA MANNING was once addicted to painful relationships. Her childhood taught her that love was cruel, violent and undependable. Knowing life should be different, she became a self-help book junkie, but changing old scripts and patterns was overwhelmingly difficult. Desperately exhausted by old patterns, she finally realized why change was so difficult. She needed a different approach. She needed reminders, something she could read every day, something to help her break old patterns. She found nothing, so the idea for this book was born, and it works!

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