

Coaching Works

VOLUME I, NUMBER 3

Greetings! Welcome to this newest edition of our Coaching WORKS! Newsletter. I'm Dr. Marlene Shiple, The Life Coach Dr., and I'm glad that you were able to join us in this endeavor.

I'm hoping that you find many ideas in this Newsletter to use to benefit your life and your love relationships. I encourage you to find one idea that especially appeals to you ... and apply it over and over to help you improve your relationship success.

If you know of someone else who would enjoy this publication, please let me know and I'll include them on our mailing list. Just email me at: coach@thelifecoachdr.com and submit the name and email address for inclusion.

THE 10 BIGGEST MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE IN LOVE RELATIONSHIPS

What is a love relationship? A love relationship can be any relationship with love or strong feelings of caring for one another. The mistakes we make run the gamut of all our relationships, whether with a friend, lover, parent, sibling, co-worker, etc. While the focus of this article is on love (romantic love) relationships, the ideas can be applied to any relationship.

As you read this, try not to be too hard on yourself. We all make these mistakes from time to time, and we can self-correct at any time. The reason we make these mistakes is mostly cultural - that is, how we are raised in a society that actually teaches (often sub-consciously) to be "fixers," "helpers," "co-dependents," rigid, controlling, critical and complaining. Most of us didn't learn great relationship skills in our families of origin, nor did we get this as part of our education. The number one cause of divorce is not money issues, not in-laws, not infidelity, not religious differences - in fact, not differences of any kind. The number one cause of relationship failure is *faulty communication*. All issues can be resolved if you can communicate effectively, negotiate, compromise, get to agreements, and work through conflicts to resolution. The five most important components of good communication are - 1) Staying calm and objective, 2) Listen and understand, 3) Be honest about who you are and what you want, 4) Compromise, and 5) Make and keep agreements.

Many of us believe we are powerless when it comes to relationships - but we are not! Studies show that when one member of the relationship changes, the other changes as well. Picture a mobile over a baby's crib. When one part of the mobile is moved, the other parts move as well, in relation to the first move. The focus of this article is on changing yourself in ways that change your relationships in a positive way. When *you* change, you will necessarily get *some* type of reaction or movement from the other person!

This article is just a beginning point to help you think about the healthiness of your current love relationships and perhaps motivate

Dr. Shiple is a Life Coach and Therapist. She has earned a Ph.D. degree in Counseling Psychology and has been helping clients create successful changes in their lives for over 40 years.

When asked about the duration of this service and the satisfaction she derives from assisting clients to accomplish their goals, Dr. Shiple says simply, "I love what I do!"



Marlene Shiple, Ph.D.

Marlene Shiple, Ph.D., has a broad range of areas of service. She is a Hypnotist. In this capacity, she helps clients with effective removal of blocks and habit change. Would you like to stop smoking or overcome procrastination? These are just a few of the areas in which Dr. Shiple can support you to change. She has written the book, [*Hypnosis Essentials: Power Up Your Life!*](#) on this topic. Available on Amazon.

One of the areas which is dear to her heart is the area of Total Wellness and Healing. After curing herself of a 14-year bout with arthritis, she is passionate to help others to achieve freedom from pain and distress. Her book, [*Arthritis Pain ...Free! Heal Arthritis Naturally – I Did, You Can, Too!*](#) details the exact steps she used to become completely free from arthritis pain. It is available at Amazon.com. Dr. Shiple is pleased to work with you, providing you with personalized support in following these steps yourself!

Dr. Shiple conducts teleseminars and workshops on Stress Reduction, Mindfulness Meditation, Improving Self-Esteem, Goal Accomplishment, and Self-Improvement. Call for more details and scheduling.

For additional information, visit The Life Coach Dr. website at <http://thelifecoachdr.com>. Here you will find free articles and ideas to implement *right away* – plus coaching products to purchase – to help make **Your** Life Better!

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If you do not reside in the Phoenix-area, you can still consult with Dr. Shiple. She provides Distance Coaching services via telephone, email, and/or chat sessions. To schedule coaching services, call (602) 266 – 6662.

you toward improvement. If you find you are struggling with any of the mistakes in this article, it would be a great time to get some relationship coaching.

Mistake #1 –

Failing to make, create, and stick to your standards

What are standards? They are those things you will accept and not accept in your love relationship. What should your standards be? Standards are your top values, priorities, needs, and desires. Perhaps you feel you aren't worthy of having high standards. Perhaps you feel needy for a relationship and *any* relationship is better than *none*. A good coach can assist you with determining your top values and/or self-esteem issues so you can start asking for what you want.

Having high standards conveys *confidence*. People tend to be more attracted to confident people, and it is the second most powerful attractor (appearance, confidence, and personality are the top three). Having high standards keeps your relationship consistent. People need and want structure and rules. Of course you need to do this in a way that doesn't come across as controlling. When your standards are communicated clearly, others can make a conscious choice regarding whether or not they want to participate. When the standards are left up in the air, people tend to push your limits. Even those who usually treat you very well will sometimes get a bit lazy. Most people will not treat you the way you want to be treated unless you *expect* it. Also, high standards are a compliment to your mate. After all, you have high standards and have chosen to spend your time with him/her. This will make your partner feel very fortunate and special.

Mistake #2 –

Wasting time with those you don't really want or who you know aren't right for you

Research shows that we often get involved with the wrong people for two main reasons. We are attracted to opposites and we are attracted to uncertainty. These are the very two qualities that make poor mate material. Research also shows that relationships last longer when there is a high degree of compatibility. We do better with those who share our values, likes, interests, communication, and intimacy needs.

We tend to like challenge, but sometimes the challenge is so great that it only leaves us emotionally exhausted. In choosing a mate it is important to know what you want. It's also important to know what you *don't* want. One of the main problems with staying with someone who isn't right for you is that it can erode your self-esteem and cause you to lower your standards. You need to think about what's best for you in the *long run* with people you choose to spend time with. Ask yourself if this person brings out the best in you, if you feel comfortable with him/her, and if you feel you can be yourself with him/her - and be accepted, liked, and loved for who you are.

Mistake #3 –

Not being honest and straight up about who you are and what you want

Communication is a form of intimacy. Everyone has a comfort level with emotional and verbal intimacy. You need to find out what your mate's comfort level is so you do not go past it too soon. One way to keep your relationship fresh and alive through

the years is to share a little more about yourself each time you are together. Going deeper with communication must be done slowly, but it must be done if you want true intimacy.

It is *extremely* important to be straight and honest about who you are, what you want, and what you expect. You need to be able to let your mate know what your needs, desires, thoughts, and feelings are. The main reason it is important for you to be clear and honest is that it gives both of you an opportunity to assess whether or not you are going to be a good match. You need to know this as soon as possible. Another reason is that people respect bold, honest, straight talk. Be careful not to go on and on explaining why you want what you want. Keep it light and simple.

The problem with suppressing your thoughts and feelings is that it is like a pressure cooker - eventually it explodes, and the result usually isn't pretty. People may not like what you have to say, but they would much prefer that you come out with what you want, rather than withhold it and have it come out in a negative way. Don't expect your mate to be a mind-reader. So don't be afraid to say who you are and what you want - just do it slowly, calmly, and matter-of-factly.

Mistake #4 –

Responding too quickly or emotionally

Patience is your greatest ally in love relationships. Confucius say, "When seem urgent to act, consider non-action." Always think before you react. Impulsive verbal responses are usually destructive. One "zinger" can destroy 50 positive actions. Before you respond, make sure you understand what your mate is saying. Ask questions to be sure you are hearing them correctly. For example, say, "This is what I hear you saying - is that correct?" Then pause before you respond. If you aren't sure how to respond, or you aren't in the mood to respond respectfully and calmly, ask if you can discuss it at a later time. In all your responses you need to think about how this will affect the *long run* rather than the *short run*. Spouting off may make you feel better in the moment, but you may regret it in the long run.

Mistake #5 –

Allowing disrespectful or controlling behavior

A wise person once said, "That which you are willing to tolerate is exactly what you will get." Control can be demonstrated in many ways, i.e., criticism, demanding, not asking what you'd like before doing it, asking what you want then doing the opposite (passive-aggressive), asking you to change something about yourself, asking or telling you not to do something, being critical or disapproving, disregarding your feelings, asking you to go out of your way to make his/her life easier, etc. People will usually "test" you in the beginning to see if you will tolerate controlling behavior. If you allow it, even once, you will get it *more*.

If your mate does something disrespectful, you need to confront it immediately but in a nice and respectful manner. Keep it short and sweet, clear and succinct. You must teach your mate how to treat you. Sometimes they do have a point, and of course you would want to consider that before you respond. When they do something that feels like a minor form of control, say, "Hmmm

that doesn't feel right to me ... I'm wondering if we could do it differently ... " Then say what you'd like instead. When they do something that feels like a major form of control, you need to be more clear and direct. Say something like, "This feels like control to me and I don't do well with that." If it's really bad, you may need to simply tell him/her to stop it! Then take a break from your partner until he/she sincerely apologizes and commits to not doing it again. Of course you would never tolerate any kind of verbal, emotional or physical abuse. Abuse only gets worse with time. People in love need to show it by treating each other with honor, integrity and respect.

Mistake #6 -

Complaining, criticizing, and talking too much

The most important things to remember in communicating is to keep it sweet, short and simple. Stay calm, cool, and collected. Say what you need to say and then wait for a response. Allow the other person time to process what you've said, and make sure they really understand what you meant.

John Gottman, Ph.D., has researched why some marriages succeed and others fail. He found that the critical elements that eventually cause the demise of marriage are: 1) Criticism, 2) Defensiveness, 3) Withdrawal, and 4) Contempt. The corruption starts with criticism, then goes down the line until there is no love left. So if you want to make sure your relationship lasts, you cannot ever start criticizing!

There are ways to ask for change or correction without criticizing. First, ask your mate if this is a good time to talk (do *not* say "We need to talk"). If he/she says yes, go ahead. If he/she says no, ask when you could schedule a time. Second, tell your partner something you appreciate and respect about him/her. This will put your mate in a good space. Third, tell him/her what behavior you would like (this works better than saying what you *don't* like). For example, "I would like more affection from you," or "I would like to see you more than once a week," or "I would like to hear how you feel about me once in a while." Then wait. Let there be silence. Give your partner time to process it and respond.

What if a your mate criticizes *you*? This could be a control issue, explained earlier. However, there is usually an element of truth in every criticism. So try your best to stay calm, listen, ask questions, and make sure you understand before you respond. If you're not sure how to respond, ask for a few days to think about it. If you feel that your partner has a legitimate point, let him/her know you will work on this (don't commit to change unless you're sure you can follow through). If this is something you don't want to change or don't feel you should change, be honest about it. See if there is a workable compromise.

Mistake #7 -

Harping on the past

This is probably the number one relationship weapon of mass destruction. Once you have discussed a problem and resolved it, do not bring it up again. If it happens again, obviously you must discuss it again. If the same problem keeps coming up over and over, this means it really was never resolved or one of you did not keep your prior agreement. As mentioned before, keeping agreements is one of the most important factors in good communication. In this case you might want to try an "I" statement such as, "I feel disrespected (disappointed, disregarded, etc.) when you don't keep your agreements. Let's figure out what we can do to

resolve this so it doesn't keep coming up." If your mate is unable or unwilling to keep his/her agreements, relationship counseling or coaching would be very helpful.

Mistake #8 -

Expecting everything to be 50/50

Relationships have a natural ebb and flow. Sometimes you will be giving more, and sometimes your mate will be giving more. Many couples keep score in their heads regarding who they feel is giving more and hold on to resentment if they feel they are the ones giving more.

The important thing to remember here is that everyone has a different way of giving and showing love. There are many "love languages." Your mate may not say "I love you" often, but may show it through actions, i.e., doing things for you, being affectionate, buying you things, fixing things for you, cooking for you, etc. Don't expect your mate to show love in the exact way you show love. Appreciate his/her efforts at showing and giving love the way they can. It's okay to want to give and see your mate happy!

Try letting go of keeping score and give because it makes you happy. If you honestly feel you have been giving more than your fair share, either stop giving so much or ask your mate to give more. Be careful in communicating this so you do not come across as critical.

Mistake #9 -

Becoming a fixer, caretaker

(or any other form of trying to "change" your mate)

It's human nature to want to "fix" other people's problems. Wanting to help others is a good thing, but when "helping" is disguised as "controlling," "criticizing," or "changing," it is not a good thing. Many people constantly complain about their mate's behavior, but what they don't realize is it is *they themselves* who must change. You can only change yourself. When you change, the other person automatically has to change (or readjust). When we try to change, fix or heal our mate, we can get caught up in an emotional roller-coaster. The more we try to "help," the more emotionally invested we get, and the more potential we have to be hurt and disappointed.

Most people will not change because of anything you do or say - they will only change when they become miserable enough within themselves and make a *committed decision* to change. Change takes time. You need to decide if your mate's "problem" is something you can live with or you can't.

In the 1980's Melody Beattie coined the term "co-dependence." The definition of co-dependency is enabling a person to remain a child (or stuck in a problem) by doing things for them that they could and should do for themselves. The reason we do this is because we have a deep seated fear of rejection and abandonment. We think (unconsciously) that if this person needs me enough, he won't ever leave me. We over-caretake and over-function. We equate love with caretaking and pleasing.

The problem with this is that eventually we complain, resent and rebel. We get tired of doing so much and not seeing positive change. We get angry when they don't appreciate our efforts or don't take our advice or tell us to back off.

People who have overly high expectations and are rigid will have problems in their relationships. Perhaps you need to take an inventory of yourself and determine if you could be more accepting and easy going. We cannot expect our mate to make us happy and complete. We cannot expect our mate to meet all our emotional needs. They can contribute to our happiness and sense of peace, but happiness is a process that you create for yourself.

Mistake #10 –

Failing to set appropriate limits and boundaries

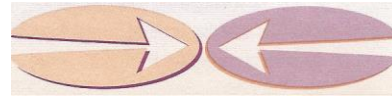
You need to take care of yourself first. You can't truly love anyone else unless you truly love yourself. This is not being selfish - it's being self-ful. There is a big difference. When the flight attendant on a plane tells you to put on your face mask before assisting others, it is because you cannot help others unless you help yourself first. Your first priority needs to be your own safety, health and well-being.

Boundaries are what protect you from harm. Limits are your building blocks of boundaries. You need to be clear about what you will accept and not accept. For example if your mate asks

you to go camping and you hate camping, simply say, "I'm not the camping type. Maybe we could compromise by finding a log cabin with electricity and running water out in the woods somewhere?"

When someone requests something of you it *will* be a drain on your time, energy, and, probably, money (even if it sounds enjoyable!). Time, energy and money are your main resources and they are finite. You can't get them back once you give them away. It's always a good idea to wait and give some thought to your answer before you say "yes" to anything. *You* can simply say, "That sounds nice, let me check my schedule and get back to you." This gives you time to think about whether or not that activity is something you want to do, or if there is a compromise you could propose.

Setting limits with others will help you take care of yourself, have a balanced life, and keep your peace, happiness, health, and sanity. Give some thought to ways you could set more limits in your life so everyone, including you, will be happier!



RESOURCES

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