

Back From the Edge:  
Creating Everlasting Love

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# Foreword: The Art of Giving

The art of giving. No extraordinary relationship can survive without it. If you've experienced the film and/or audio program, you'll probably have a sense of the importance of understanding and meeting your partner's needs. If you get this, your relationship will blossom. And if you don't get this, or aren't willing to do this for your partner, then most of the effort you put into your relationship will be wasted. Topics we'll cover here include:

- How are needs being met/not being met in your relationship now?
- Steps for understanding your partner's needs.
- How to deal with extended family issues.
- How to get yourself to truly commit to your partner.

Giving is truly the core skill of the **ULTIMATE RELATIONSHIP PROGRAM**. Win this one, and it's hard not to win overall. We wish you the best.

Warmly,

Mark Peysha

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Mark Peysha". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Director and Coauthor

Cloé Madanes

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cloé Madanes". The signature is written in dark ink on a light-colored background.

Narrator and Coauthor

## Introduction

This is a story of a very nice couple, two people who cared for each other deeply. The problem was that they were making each other miserable, and they didn't know why. Sound familiar? The fact is that often nice people, in nice relationships, are doing terrible things to each other. How does that happen?

Many couples break up and divorce because they are so miserable that they feel incompatible. However, in many cases the breakup is unnecessary – by understanding a few important points about your partner, it is often possible to do what Paul and Jenn did in the film – turn around a relationship that was practically dead, infuse it with commitment and life, and find themselves enjoying life with the partner of their dreams. The key is understanding the specifics of your partner's relationship needs. Every successful relationship is successful because the partners have mastered the skill of meeting each others' needs. No one ever wants to leave a relationship that meets all Six Human Needs. So for all intents and purposes, the skill of meeting a partner's relationship needs is the foremost skill of a relationship.

## Fundamentals: The Six Human Needs

The concept of the Six Human Needs is at the core of Human Needs Psychology. We believe that human motivation is driven by the need to fulfill six basic human needs. These needs are our constant, and in some ways, our closest companions. They never stop and never go away. You cannot simply resolve a need – it will be back tomorrow, or even in five minutes. Our needs are the primal forces that shape all of our choices. The good news is that there are only six needs. They don't cost any money, and they are always available. There are millions of ways of meeting your needs, and by understanding how they work, you can set yourself up for lasting fulfillment in life.

### The First Human Need: Certainty/Comfort

The first need is for certainty that we can be comfortable – to have pleasure and to avoid pain. For some of us, this means a secure environment and consistency in our relationships. You can also get certainty through physical habits: eating, for instance, can make you feel comfortable and certain. You can also get certain by holding certain beliefs, for instance, by having faith that your problems will be resolved. Our need for certainty is a fundamental survival instinct, common to all animals as well – if you feel that your survival is at stake, you will focus on surviving. For some people, “survival mode” is a rare experience, and they can't even remember what it's like. Other people go into “survival mode” on a regular basis. Survival, the need for certainty, however, is common to all of us.

Code words for certainty: comfort, security, safety, stability, groundedness, predictability, protection. When things get rough, what are some things that you do to feel certain?

## The Second Human Need: Uncertainty/Variety

Once you feel certain, however, our second need is for uncertainty – for variety and challenges that will exercise our emotional and physical range. Our bodies, our minds, our emotional being all require uncertainty, exercise, suspense, variety, surprise. Even if you are the happiest person in the world, your moods will shift. Even if you have a lifetime supply of your favorite food, at some point you will want to eat something else. Your emotional and physical states will change. We all value uncertainty/variety to different degrees, but we all need it. You may get variety in a straightforward way – by pursuing changes, diversions, pleasures, or by undergoing risky projects or taking on challenging commitments. You may also get variety in paradoxical ways – by being uncertain, depressed, and fearful. Both examples exercise your emotional and physical range, and both give you uncertainty. And don't forget a major source of variety for all of us: problems. When things don't go as planned, when expectations are foiled and things go in a different direction, that's uncertainty/variety as well. What kind of uncertainty/variety do you experience on a regular basis?

Code words for uncertainty: fear, instability, change, variety, chaos, refreshment, craving, release, suspense, exertion, surprise, problem, crisis. Are there ways in which the feeling of uncertainty actually serves to give you variety?

## The Third Human Need: Significance

The third need is for significance. Every person needs to feel important, needed, wanted. When we were babies, we all needed to feel that we were number one. If you had siblings, you competed with them for love and attention – you found your niche, whether as the smart one or the scrappy one or the loving one or the obedient one. This need is still with us: needing to feel special and important in some way has helped shape who you are today. You can feel significant by building or achieving something, or you can feel significant by tearing something or somebody down. In all cases, significance comes from comparing yourself to others – hierarchical pecking orders and superiority /inferiority. In its positive sense, significance leads you to “raise” your standards. If you overfocus on significance, you will have trouble feeling connected with people, because the comparison game marks out differences. And you may be focused on significance in the other way – focusing on low self-esteem, always waiting to see whether you're good enough, expecting others to raise you or to demonstrate something to you. How do you get significance?

Code words for significance: pride, importance, standards, achievement, performance, perfection, evaluation, discipline, competition, any talk of being “rejected” or being “good enough.”

## The Fourth Human Need: Love/Connection

The fourth need is for love and connection. Everyone needs connection with other human beings, and everyone strives for and hopes for love. If you are alive today, you were loved. You needed to feel loved and be touched in order to survive, and those needs are still at your core. In this sense, love is the ultimate survival instinct, and comes before the baby can take care of its own basic bodily needs. So love is a big part of who you already are, no matter who you are. The obstacles lie only in your belief system in how to get the feeling of love, your rules about how to recognize and appreciate love, and your ability to learn to give love as well as to receive it. Some people rarely experience love, but they have many ways of feeling connection with others – in the community or in the workplace. Do you experience love in your life – or do you focus on connection with others, a less threatening form of love? When in your life have you felt really loved?

Code words for love/connection: feeling together, unified, connected, passionate, “on the same page.”

These first four human needs are the needs of the personality and must be met at some level by everyone. The last two needs are the needs of the spirit, which are essential to human fulfillment.

## The Fifth and Sixth Human Needs: Growth and Contribution

**Growth:** When we stop growing, we die. We need to constantly develop emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. There is a universal law about growth: everything is either growing or dying – there is no middle ground. Anything that you want to remain in your life – your money, your body, your relationship, your happiness, or love – must be cultivated, developed, expanded. Otherwise, it will degenerate. What does this mean for us? There is no “retirement,” a terminal point where we simply get to keep and enjoy what we have. If your body, your finances, or your relationship are in a good state, be prepared to continue to care for and expand them. If you let them “flatline,” they will degenerate.

**Contribution:** To go beyond your own needs and give to others.

Everything in the universe contributes beyond itself or it is eliminated. This is true of layoffs at work, and it's true of the animal kingdom. Most emotional problems and sources of pain disappear when you focus on serving beyond yourself. Therefore, contribution is the human need that effectively regulates your other five needs. If you are focused on contribution,

you have the certainty of being able to contribute (there is always a way); you have variety in the number of things that can go right and wrong (contribution is highly interactive); you have significance, because the commitment to contribution is rare and is the sign of an extraordinary person; you have connection, because there is a spiritual connection in helping others; and you have the necessity to grow, since contribution requires going beyond your own needs. From this perspective, the purpose of Human Needs Psychology is not only to take care of your own needs but also to expand to serve others in an attitude of leadership and contribution. If you are focused on contribution and growth, it is difficult to get bored or depressed.

## Model of the World

Everyone creates their own system of beliefs and actions for satisfying their needs. We call this system their “model of the world.” One person may give themselves the feeling of certainty by always controlling their environment, a second person may feel certain by not trusting anyone, and a third person may give themselves the feeling of certainty by holding a spiritual belief. One can meet one's needs in sustainable ways, which serve the greater good of oneself and others, or one can meet one's needs in ways that sooner or later harm oneself or others.

When someone loses their habitual ways of meeting their needs, they experience a crisis. For instance, when financial failure comes to a businessman who gets the feeling of significance from being financially successful, he will experience a loss of significance. When someone who gets the feeling of importance from taking care of others suddenly becomes unable to help others, he or she will also experience a loss of significance. When people lose their usual ability to meet their needs, they react by trying to find other ways of regaining their sense of significance, at least temporarily. Sometimes these temporary solutions lead to long-term solutions; other times they lead to harm. The purpose of Human Needs Psychology is to understand a person's model of the world, to bring about a conscious understanding of one's choices, and to assist the person in finding new ways to meet his or her needs in ways that will serve himself or herself and others in the long term.

## How do you meet your partner's needs?

Meeting your partner's relationship needs requires some observation, experimentation, and proactive commitment, but the process is actually quite simple. It consists of three steps:

1. **Discover your partner's top three needs in order of priority.** Everyone has three needs that they value above all else. These three needs are the key to how your partner is wired to experience pleasure and pain. We all have patterns deep in our consciousness and our nervous systems

that form our receptiveness to different styles of giving. If you value significance above all else, then you will not be as receptive to the same gifts and communications as someone who values contribution above all else. There's no better or worse here – it's only the facts about what is going to “score points” in your world.

So the first step is to order your partner's top three needs in order of priority.

- 2. Discover your partner's preferences** – what has to happen for him or her to experience these top needs? Everyone has rules, standards, and thresholds that govern their experience. One person who values connection might be more receptive to kind words, love letters, or a massage. Another person who values connection may favor a walk on the beach together. Once you understand your partner's basic preferences in a general sense, focus in and learn how he or she likes to experience them. If it's a hug, is it a tight hug or loose and warm? If it's a walk on the beach, is it an amble or is it a power walk? The more specific you can get about your partner's needs, the closer you are to possessing the real key to his or her happiness – and it's amazing how specific people's preferences can be! And here's a bonus: the more specific you get, and the more you **want** to get specific the deeper and more rewarding your relationship will be. You'll simply feel better, be more skillful, and feel closer to who your partner actually is. If you go through life without understanding your partner, then who have you been in relationship with? In the skill of giving, Heaven is in the details – these specifics about your partner will be deep triggers for you for feelings of love, attraction, and understanding.
- 3. Give and evaluate.** What does your partner look like when he or she is meeting his or her needs? Is it a blush or a change in breathing or rhythm? Do they get an upward curl in the corner of their lips? Get closer to these particulars, feel them, and appreciate them. By the way, intention is everything here – don't let this part stress you out, and don't overfocus on failure or success. Effective, skillful giving is something you want to cultivate on a regular basis until it becomes an unconscious reaction. Just give on a regular basis, and observe gently and with pleasure when it works. Make a mental note, and do it again. There are probably a half dozen areas of your life where you follow a gentle process of experimenting and evaluating – looking for a new restaurant in your neighborhood, seeing what you like on your burrito, mulling over what movies would be good to see. Just bring that skill into your relationship, and focus it on your partner's needs instead of your own. If you can do this regularly for several weeks, you'll get so good at it that it will become easy – and it will be the thing that transforms your life.

## What Problem?

So with the skill of giving in mind, let's go to Tony's conversation with Paul and Jenn. Paul had just stood up, feeling desperate about his relationship.

Tony *What are you afraid of?*

Paul *A lot of things.*

Tony *Okay, what you are most afraid of?*

Paul *That if I leave my wife I'll lose my identity, my self-worth and I'll lose her love and love for myself.*

Tony *You probably will. In fact it will be worse than that.*

Paul *What do you mean?*

Tony *You will feel that you failed. Do you have kids?*

Paul *Yes.*

Tony *You'll feel them hating you at times. You're going to lose a lot of money – more than you think. You're going to have another guy bring up your kids.*

What Tony is doing here is reminding Paul of the stakes of his decision. When we are in pain, especially in relationship pain, it is very tempting to say “forget this!” and head for the exit door. There are few circumstances in life that can cause pain the way relationships can. In most of our life, we protect ourselves from the risk of loss or disappointment from others. A boss can yell at us, and we shrug it off. Our financial circumstances can change, and we can find a way not to take it personally. But in intimate relationships, we get more and more sensitive. Quite simply, in affairs of the heart, the sense of emotional risk goes up, meaning that we are more afraid. Therefore, in relationships, it is easy to go straight to blaming, helplessness, or even throwing up our hands and leaving the relationship behind. Very often, you won't even have a moment to think before you start feeling angry, frustrated, or disappointed! In these moments it is critical that you remember what is at stake and that you resist the temptation to “make it all go away” too quickly.

Tony *And, so, do you love this woman?*

Paul *I love her deeply, yes.*

Tony *How, how deeply? You really need to be honest right now to be fair to her, and you, and everybody else in this room. So I'm*

*going to ask you to not give me the answer that just shows up right away. I want you to really feel in your soul what's real. I do believe you love her; by the way. But I just want you to really answer honestly. Is that fair?*

**Paul** *I don't feel that she was the person I was meant to be with for the rest of my life.*

Does this sound like a relationship that has a lot of potential? Probably not. However, if this couple is to change the way they meet each other's needs, then brutal honesty is an important step. In relationship, it doesn't work to hold back your genuine feelings and thoughts. On the other hand, when you choose to be honest, it is essential that you phrase things in a way that will bring progress. You cannot build on failure; you can build only on success. At this point, Paul is so sad and desperate that his views of his relationship and of his wife are not balanced. In order to help him gain perspective, Tony asks Paul to talk about what he finds beautiful in his wife. Here's Paul's response.

**Paul** *She keeps loving, regardless. It shows what a quality person she is. I was attracted to how quality she was. I've never seen anyone love and support more people than she loves – than she overdoes.*

**Tony** *Why is it that she overdoes?*

**Paul** *She tries to sacrifice what's important to her just so someone else can experience something good. So I guess her generosity.*

**Tony** *Okay.*

Tony asked Paul to reflect on what is beautiful in his wife, and Paul has no problem admiring her. It's puzzling that Paul would consider leaving a woman he would praise this highly. However, if you're paying attention, you may have detected already at this point that Paul seems to feel jealous and left out of Jenn's other supportive relationships. If she “overdoes” it in her other relationships – at least in Paul's perception – it is possible that she is “underdoing” it for him. At one point, his compliments for Jenn have an unmistakable sadness:

**Paul** *Can I add one thing? She's got balls. I, I love that she's got balls. I love that she's strong...*

## Use It Now: Exercises

Have you ever felt less than happy about the strengths or virtues of someone you love? When does that happen?

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When you are upset with your partner, where are you getting significance and certainty?

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For some reason, Paul sees his wife's strength, but he doesn't share in the joy and pride of that strength. And for some reason, Paul feels that his wife is excessively generous – what does that mean? Does he feel that his wife is stronger than him? Does he feel left out of his wife's attention – and feel therefore that she is too independent of him? One thing is clear: something in this couple is not being shared.

### Question One: Who is taking certainty and significance at the other's expense?

When a couple has trust, they believe in each other's ability to meet their needs – and each partner feels confident about his or her ability to meet his or her partner's needs. When a couple is in conflict or when they are pulling back from each other, they are often in the process of losing trust in their partner. For example, if Paul feels less and less significant as a man in the relationship, he can choose to tell Jenn about this (a scary conversation, but the honest thing to do), he may continue to feel deprived (which can't last over the long term – he will meet his needs again in another way), or he may seek other ways, outside of the relationship, to feel significant as a man. Whenever Paul chooses the third option – of seeking ways to feel significant outside the relationship – he sends a message to Jenn, directly or indirectly, that she has been replaced.

When both partners take the option of seeking to meet their needs outside of the relationship, instead of honestly addressing their own and each others' needs, they will continue to lose trust in each other until at some point they find themselves in outright conflict. The partners may even begin to flaunt their ability to meet their needs outside of the relationship: at this point, needs become weapons: my ways of meeting my needs away from you can become my way of showing that you don't matter much. This is what has happened in Paul and Jenn's relationship. Jenn derives so much of her certainty from her family and children that Paul feels insignificant to her. Therefore, Paul derives significance from the threat of leaving the marriage. These resources – these ways that they meet their needs away from each other – become weapons they use against each other. Tony must get them to lay down their weapons.

## Use It Now: Exercises

What are some ways that you get certainty and significance?

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When you get certainty and significance, does your partner share this, or does this come at your partner's expense?

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How does your partner get certainty and significance?

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Is there an area of your relationship where your or your partner's certainty and significance become a point of contention? Something that you like or dislike, or something that one of you wants to do that the other doesn't want to do?

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## Question Two: How will you lay down your weapons?

Tony *Did you guys talk during the break?*

Paul *Yes.*

Jenn *Until he went to pee. [crowd laughs]*

Jenn has just revealed one of her weapons, her biting sense of humor. By mentioning Paul's bodily functions in public, she puts him down. This is also her way of telling Tony that it was Paul who broke off the conversation between them.

Tony *What did you talk about?*

Jenn *I'm going to talk for him. He basically said that people were saying don't give up, and he said that he wouldn't be standing*

*here if he was giving up.*

Tony *Why did you just talk for him?*

Jenn *Because I have the balls! No, I'm just kidding. I'm just kidding. I'm just kidding!*

Paul *Yeah, because it takes no balls to stand in front of 2,000 people and air your laundry.*

Jenn *It's 4,000. It's 4,000 people.*

Tony *This is not the first time you've spoken for him, is it?*

Paul *No.*

Jenn's humor damages their marriage when it puts Paul down. On the other hand, we have seen that Jenn's jokes also keep them together when her humor interrupts Paul's anger or sadness. Her jokes also serve as an outlet when he will not let her express herself directly. The deeper reason why Jenn uses humor as a weapon against Paul is that she is not getting from him the certainty and comfort that she needs. Not only is he not making her financially secure, but for years he has been threatening to leave. Tony has already confronted both of them about the weapons they use – when Paul first stood up describing the option of leaving, Tony made sure that Paul couldn't take the advantage in the relationship by threatening to leave. When Jenn wisecracked about Paul, Tony made sure that she understood that she was emasculating Paul with her humor. At this point, Paul's challenge will be to commit himself to the relationship so he doesn't have an imaginary “out,” and Jenn's challenge will be to find new ways to interrupt Paul's patterns without making him feel emasculated. Now, in order to make progress with this couple, Tony must show them both what they will gain by laying down their weapons. This is step three, understanding what needs are not being met.

## Use It Now: Exercises

What hurts you in your relationship?

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When you feel hurt, what do you do?

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When you do that, what does your partner feel?

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What could you do to lay down your weapons?

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How could you show your partner that you are laying down your weapons?

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When you lay down your weapons, what will you tell yourself? What is your purpose for doing this?

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### Question Three: What needs are not being met in your relationship?

When relationship problems develop, one thing is clear: one or both partners are not having their needs met. Generally, there are two reasons why needs aren't met in a relationship:

1. Intrapersonal interference. Something within each individual – some meaning that he or she is creating – prevents them from appreciating and experiencing the emotions they want. In other words, they might have rules that make it impossible to experience success, love, togetherness, certainty. Or they may be valuing needs in a way that interferes with the experience of love.
2. Interpersonal interference. A pattern of communication between the couple is preventing the flow of giving, loving, and fulfilling needs. In other words, the partners are expecting to receive without giving first, or they are “measuring” what they get back so that every gift is essentially a trade.

Tony has determined that since Jenn has been more verbally skillful and more dominant in their conversation and interaction, he must start with Jenn's **intrapersonal interference** – needs, beliefs, and rules that are driving her behavior and decisions. If he can understand and change what is causing her to hold back from Paul, then he can approach Paul and ask him to make a greater commitment to the relationship. In order to prevent any further **interpersonal interference**, Tony blocks direct communication between the couple so that each of them can first determine what they really want as individuals.

Tony's first task here is to expose to Jenn and Paul the reality of their relationship. When people are unhappy in a relationship, they often go into a state of helplessness, disappointment, blaming, or distraction. In either state, they cannot be realistic about their role in the relationship – and the fact is that in any unhappy relationship, both partners are failing to meet each other's needs at the highest level. When Tony learns about Jenn's sister, Janet; also in the room, he learns as much as he can about her marital relationship in order to understand what other examples are available to Jenn. When he learns that Janet's marriage is in great shape and a good example of commitment and fulfillment, he questions the standards that Jenn has set in her own marriage.

Tony *Your sister over here looks up to you and loves you, but she doesn't live her life for comfort. She has standards, doesn't she? And there are some musts in her life: a must for herself, a must for her relationship. Honesty is a must. That is not comfortable stuff. And she's not perfect. I'm not, you're not, nobody is, but she's got high standards in those areas, and because she has high standards, she has high rewards. What would you say of the Six Human Needs are the top two for her, because you know her very well?*

Jenn *Love and connection.*

Tony *That's one. And what's number two for her?*

Jenn *Certainty.*

Tony *Okay. And what do you think have been the top two for you, if you were brutally honest with yourself?*

Jenn *Probably the same: love and connection and certainty.*

Tony *In that order?*

Jenn *No, certainty first.*

Tony *That's correct. That little shift. Does that sound like a little*

*shift? That's a shift of a different world. One is a world where love flows, and the way she gets her certainty is the next thing. She has different rules for certainty than you do. What would you say would be different? For her to have certainty, what does she have to do? For you to have certainty and comfort, what do you have to do?*

Jenn *For me to have certainty, I need to know that I'm loved.*

Tony *When you're uncertain, how much love flows out of you? Tell me the truth.*

Jenn *Not a lot.*

Tony *When Janet is uncertain, love still flows out of her, because it's first. Do you agree with that or disagree?*

Jenn *I agree.*

Tony *That's the difference in her relationship and yours. Now, there are other factors. Don't get me wrong. That's the number one, and nothing is more important than that factor. Even though you want love more, you don't allow yourself to feel it unless you're certain. You don't allow it to flow unless there's certainty. When you're uncertain, everything in your world disappears.*

When certainty is valued over all else, it is difficult to focus on other needs that lead to fulfillment such as love, growth, and contribution. Tony points out that when Jenn cannot feel certain, everything else disappears, including her other needs. If Jenn decides to value love over certainty, she will be more capable of keeping her connection with Paul as they work on their financial situation.

Jenn *I have so much uncertainty in my life, in every aspect of my life, that I feel like I just am looking for certainty somewhere.*

Tony *I understand, but there are people that live with equal levels of uncertainty or more, and certainty is still not their most valuable piece. It's not based on your life conditions. It's based on the way you've wired yourself up until now.*

In order to get a well-rounded picture of Jenn's life, Tony will ask her to assess how she meets all of her six needs. This kind of assessment is one of the most important strategies in Human Needs Psychology and can be used in nearly any context.

Tony *So, if I asked you on a scale of 0 to 10, how much certainty you're really feeling in your life right now – 10 being absolute*

*total certainty, and there are minus categories – where would you say you, you are right now in your life, honestly?*

Jenn *Maybe a 2.*

Tony *What do you need to at least be comfortable even on a 0 to 10 scale?*

Jenn *Probably a 7.*

Tony *So you're light-years from where you need to be.*

Jenn *Yes. I mean, there are certain things in my life that I'm absolutely certain about.*

Tony *I'm sure, and you go to those things when you need to get stable datum, don't you?*

Jenn *Right.*

Tony *And one of those is that your kids will love you.*

Jenn *Absolutely.*

Since Jenn values certainty so highly, it is difficult for her to wait for Paul to take the initiative to meet this crucial need for her. Since she requires certainty in order to experience and give love, she rarely gets enough certainty to be proactive in her loving. This pattern is very typical of troubled relationships – both members of the couple are waiting to feel secure before giving each other their love. As a result, there's a “transactional” feeling to the relationship: they are giving to get. Therefore, Jenn is constantly returning to other sources of certainty and love that she believes to be unconditional – her children and her family. She gets her fix of certainty and love there, but Paul feels shut out. Since we know that Paul is starving for love and significance from Jenn, Tony is reasonably certain that if he can get both partners to put their best commitment forward, some giving and love will flow in the relationship. Tony continues to ask Jenn about how her family meets her needs.

Tony *How much growth comes from interacting with your family?*

Jenn *It depends on who I'm interacting with.*

Tony *Okay, I understand. You're talking about your father?*

Jenn *No, I lost my father a year ago this week. [starting to cry]*

Tony *More uncertainty, huh? Were you closer to your father or your mother?*

Jenn *Definitely my father.*

Tony *You were his little baby girl.*

Jenn *Definitely.*

Tony *Talked about it a lot.*

Jenn *All the time.*

Tony *What did he say about you?*

Jenn *That I was perfect.*

Tony *That bastard told her she was perfect! But she was perfect because she played the perfect role as the man, and now she's in the midst of wondering why she's losing her husband and having to get all her love from her kids and her family... By the way, when she shared that, how many saw a little girl come out for a few moments? And what happened the minute the little girl came out? Who saw what the man next to her did? He reached over and grabbed her and pulled her close. If you watched his face, he didn't do it because he's supposed to. He did it because he felt her needing him.*

Now that Jenn has laid down her weapons and showed honesty, openness, and vulnerability about her needs, Paul naturally comes to help her. So far, we have learned that Paul is not providing Jenn with her number one need for certainty. Jenn is not providing Paul with the significance and connection that comes from being valued as a husband. Because they were not meeting these needs through each other, they had to find other ways of meeting them. Jenn gets certainty from her family, her kids, and her family's money. Paul gets significance from being slim, whereas she is not, from burying himself in work, and from flaunting his threat of leaving the marriage. The question is when both partners are getting their needs met externally, who are they to each other? It is very difficult to sustain love for your spouse when your basic needs are met elsewhere. In order to save the marriage, Tony will block Jenn from her usual sources of certainty and Paul from his usual sources of significance, and he will lead them both to where they will be satisfying each other's most important needs.

## Use It Now: Exercises

Rate the way your partner meets your needs, on a scale of 1 to 10 (10 is highest):

Certainty/Comfort \_\_\_\_\_

Uncertainty/Variety \_\_\_\_\_

Significance \_\_\_\_\_

Love/Connection \_\_\_\_\_

Growth \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

What is your other major vehicle for meeting your needs? Is it your career, your friends, your family? Rate how this vehicle meets your needs, on a scale of 1 to 10.

Certainty/Comfort \_\_\_\_\_

Uncertainty/Variety \_\_\_\_\_

Significance \_\_\_\_\_

Love/Connection \_\_\_\_\_

Growth \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

Which meets your needs at a higher level, your partner or the other major vehicle in your life (work, family, friends)?

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Rate the way you meet your partner's needs. Be honest! (If you don't know, give yourself a zero score.)

Certainty/Comfort \_\_\_\_\_

Uncertainty/Variety \_\_\_\_\_

Significance \_\_\_\_\_

Love/Connection \_\_\_\_\_

Growth \_\_\_\_\_

Contribution \_\_\_\_\_

What have you learned from this evaluation?

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How skilled are you and your partner at meeting each other's needs?

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What needs to be done about this?

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## Question Four: How can you give to each other?

In any successful relationship, it is essential to understand clearly what has to happen for your partner to feel loved. Everyone has an individual love strategy that they respond to – some combination of a look, touch, words, and gifts or gestures. When you discover your partner's love strategy, it's like finding the keys to the kingdom – you will be able to touch them deeply on a regular basis. That can't be bad! In the case of Jenn and Paul, Tony pressed Jenn to understand what her father did to make her feel loved and whether Paul had ways to make her feel loved.

**Tony** *Does Paul have any nicknames he uses?*

**Jenn** *He calls me Jenn or Hon.*

**Tony** *When he calls you Jenn, how do you feel?*

**Jenn** *Um, good.*

**Tony** *Which one do you like better, Jenn or Hon? Which one is more endearing to you?*

**Jenn** *Hon. And every once in a while he'll call me sweetie, which is what my dad used to call me. So I take that as a part of my father.*

**Tony** *No, you take it deeper than that. You take it as being loved.*

How valuable is it for Paul is it to hear this? How will this knowledge help their relationship? You can be certain that there is a form of communication that your partner will accept readily as an expression of love. Learn it, and you will have much greater effectiveness and enjoyment.

**Tony** *When you've tested Paul, what's happened that's disappointed you?*

Jenn *When I've tested him in what way?*

Tony *You know what way.*

Jenn *For loving me? Sometimes I got love and sometimes I didn't.*

Tony *Right. And when you didn't, it scared you.*

Jenn *Yes.*

Tony *And?*

Jenn *I got defensive.*

Tony *Which you have every right to be. I'm not making that wrong, but let's just see what that does so we know, okay? And then when you got defensive, what'd you do in that state?*

Jenn *Pulled away.*

Tony *Yeah. And then when you pulled away, what happened?*

Jenn *He pulled away too.*

Tony *Even more so.*

This conversation was largely for Paul's benefit. A lesson that needs to be learned by all husbands: it is to be expected that your wife will provoke and test you from time to time, just to check whether you love her. If you give her love and attention during these moments, you will be demonstrating that you love her exactly when she needs it. If you pull away during these moments, you will be demonstrating that you give her love only when it is convenient to you. In Jenn's case, when she tested Paul and he pulled away, she would toughen herself and go to her other sources for love, and both partners would feel isolated and alone. If Paul understands that Jenn's tests are a request for connection, significance, and certainty, he can meet those needs deliberately and strengthen the basis of their relationship. Of course, there were times when Jenn gave love to Paul even when he hadn't done anything to deserve it. Tony clarifies that these moments, where she is giving without any ulterior motive, were the purest demonstration of love to him.

Tony *When you gave love to him, even though he wasn't giving it, you were being who you were made to be – not a mom – a spirit, a soul, the beauty that you are, a sweetie. Because that little sweetie just gave love no matter what, right?*

Jenn *Right.*

**Tony** *She didn't give love because she had a game plan for how much she was getting back with a score card. And she didn't give love to say, "Well, gosh I love that person, and are they going to come back now and do this for me." She just gave love because it's who she was; because she just radiated it.*

This form of love is the staple of a successful relationship. When you give without expecting back, you are making an investment in the relationship and in your partner's happiness. You are not only improving your relationship – you are creating a spiritual practice. Every major spiritual tradition is based on developing love. When you give love unconditionally, you are giving from the very core of your spiritual being. For this reason, it is essential not to get caught up in evaluating yourself, whether your partner deserves it, what you have gotten back, and so forth. Be your greatest, deepest self – give unconditionally. You will be nurturing your lover, improving your relationship, and doing the best thing anyone can do for you as well.

## Use It Now: Exercises

What is your partner's number one need?

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What has to happen for your partner to feel that that need has been met?

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What could you do to meet this need?

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What is your partner's number two need?

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What has to happen for your partner to feel that that need has been met?

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What could you do to meet this need?

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What is your partner's need that you rarely fulfill?

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Is there something that your partner asks you to do from time to time, that doesn't make you enthusiastic?

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What does your partner do when you don't meet this need?

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How could you surprise your partner by meeting this need? If at first you don't succeed, what will you do? How will you discover new ways of meeting this need?

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## Question Five: How are these needs being met elsewhere?

You can bet that whatever needs are not being met inside of the relationship are being met outside of the relationship. Whatever significance Paul didn't get from Jenn, he got from work and from the fantasy of leaving her. What certainty Jenn didn't get from Paul she got from her family and children. When evaluating a relationship where the partners aren't happy, it is essential to discover where else the partners are meeting their needs. In applying this principle to your life, you must focus on yourself: discover where you are meeting your needs outside of the relationship. If you are spending most of your life energy on your career, if you are addicted to TV or the internet for variety instead of finding variety with your partner, if you have close friends or family with whom your partner doesn't feel fully comfortable, then you are blocking your partner from important parts of your life. Does this mean that you can't do anything apart from

your partner? Of course not – you should do everything that you want to do. But if you want your relationship to be everything that it could be, you need to put your partner before these other things. And more importantly, your partner needs to feel that he or she can meet those needs at high levels. This may take time. Human needs are not something you can wish away or intellectualize or get rid of. We are habituated to certain needs, and we must work with our needs, much as you would work with your body if you wanted to succeed at athletics or yoga. As partners, you may need to develop new ways to experience, for example, variety together. One step, for instance, would be to embrace all of variety, not just the variety you usually want. If your partner surprises you in a negative way – if he or she is upset for reasons you don't understand, for instance – embrace that as an experience of variety together. If your partner has an experience of significance – say he or she is honored for something while you are overlooked – focus on that as a source of significance for yourself as well.

If you find that your partner is meeting his or her most important needs outside of your relationship, do not simply try to peel your partner away from their usual ways of meeting their needs. That would not be a very effective way to serve your partner – by trying to control him or her! Instead, focus on yourself. Open your needs to your partner – if your partner does something that touches you, thank him or her immediately, with words and with the kind of gesture they would appreciate. Pay gentle but persistent attention to new ways to meet your partner's needs. Give yourself a solid 30 days of this kind of attention to your partner's needs up front before considering any major decisions or suggestions. The truth is that if you find two new ways of meeting your partner's favored needs at high levels, the relationship will already be shifting dramatically for the better! Now Tony asks Jenn about how she gets her needs met by her sister, versus the way Paul meets her needs.

**Tony** *In any relationship, by the way, when somebody believes that their partner believes someone or something else is more important than they are, trouble is ready to brew. Something or someone – work or someone, children, sisters, another woman, business, sport, buddies.*

**Jenn** *I definitely can see how he might think that about my sister because what I haven't gotten from him, she's given to me.*

**Tony** *Right, and what has he given that she hasn't given you?*

**Jenn** *Well, he's been here for me. I believe that he loves me in his soul.*

**Tony** *She loves you in her soul too.*

**Jenn** *Oh, I know. I know. I definitely know that.*

Tony *And she's been there for you. What has he given you that she hasn't? What can he give you that she can never give you?*

Jenn *Love and connection. Certainty.*

Tony *No. She gives that too.*

Jenn *Um, I don't know.*

Tony *How many of you see where the problem is now?*

Jenn *And I, and I see that that's a problem.*

Tony *It's more than a problem. If you could be in his body right now feeling what he's feeling and how long it takes you to figure out what it is that he can give you that she can't, then all it does is reinforce his deepest fear: that he isn't the most important thing in your life. Which is why he'd want to go somewhere else even though he loves you. He loves you! He just can't live feeling like he's not the most important thing to you!*

Jenn *So I need to change that.*

Tony *All he knows is that for years – he's not your father. He's not your sister. He's not the kids. He's not enough financially, which is what you need for your need to be met up here. I am no man. I live in reaction. I'm not enough. I need to go someplace where I'm enough. He doesn't feel important enough with you.*

This is the first time it has been fully clear to Jenn that she has been blocking Paul from expressing his love. Jenn couldn't think of anything that Paul was giving that she didn't already get from her sister. Remember at the beginning of the intervention, when Paul said that physically the relationship wasn't giving him what he needed? Now we know why. Intimate physical togetherness with Paul has been extremely low on Jenn's list. It's interesting, isn't it, how much people want to receive from their partner while they are often so unaware of how little they are doing for the relationship themselves? Don't make that mistake yourself! It's silly! One thing you can know for certain: your partner has a way of meeting his or her Six Human Needs. If you can crack the code, break through, play detective until you understand what really counts for your partner then you will have the keys to making your relationship flourish like it never has before. Now Tony will test Jenn's understanding of how Paul's needs were not getting met.

Tony *What would it be if I asked you how much certainty do you think he had that he could really be your man and that you would love him passionately?*

Jenn *Probably a 2.*

Tony *And how much variety do you think he was feeling with his relationship with you if you were to get into his head? Where would you put it 0 to 10?*

Jenn *Probably a 2 as well.*

Tony *And how significant do you think he felt he was to you?*

Jenn *I would say maybe like a 4.*

Tony *And then how much love do you think he was feeling coming from you?*

Jenn *Probably a 6 or 7.*

Tony *Okay. How much growth do you think he was feeling with you?*

Jenn *None.*

Tony *And when you don't grow you.*

Jenn *Die.*

Tony *And how much contribution do you think he felt you felt he was giving you?*

Jenn *None.*

Tony *And how would he feel like a man that way?*

Jenn *He wouldn't.*

Tony *Can you see why he'd want to leave?*

Jenn *Yes.*

This is the moment of insight in Jenn which turned their relationship around. When you are frustrated with your partner about what you're not getting, it is essential to step fully into your partner's place. As soon as Jenn gives herself a report card as a wife and lover, she understands why the relationship is failing. And more importantly, she understands the position that Paul is in – why he would want to leave someone who was giving him so little. Instead of getting offended or reactive at this point, Jenn is ready to make her commitment to fulfill Paul. At this point, Tony asks Paul to score his expectations from the relationship. You might think

that Paul would be more pessimistic than ever, having just seen Jenn compare their marriage to her relationship with her sister, and having just heard Jenn's Six Human Needs rating. However, the truth is healing. Just hearing and understanding this process of evaluating relationship needs have turned Paul around. Obviously, he is hearing her, because he will give her exactly what she needs in this moment.

**Tony** *So, where's your level of certainty now, Paul, 0 to 10, that you can make this relationship not just work, but one that you would adore and enjoy and you would not even consider something else for?*

**Paul** 8.

On hearing this, Jenn spun around and gave Paul a ferociously passionate hug. If you remember this moment, remember this: this is the energy that is unleashed when you truly meet your partner's needs! Everybody has that kind of drive inside of them. You only need to find and access it to create that kind of energy in your relationship. Tony now asks Paul to brainstorm more ways that he can give to Jenn in the long haul.

**Tony** *What could you do to help her value herself more?*

**Paul** *Show her rather than tell her what I feel.*

**Tony** *You don't do that a lot, do you?*

**Paul** *Not lately.*

**Jenn** *Lately?*

**Tony** *This is a good moment. I'm glad she did that because this is what's going to show up later after this little honeymoon is over. She's going to test you. Right now her hopes are up. She's a little girl. And then a part of her is going, "Okay, I get a feeling this thing is wrapping up. This Tony guy is going to be gone, and we're going to be left with each other, and is he going to still be this way later on? So let me test him." So, she makes a little sarcastic remark just to see if you feel rejected and leave. Now, you're new at this, so the tendency is going to be the little mama's boy. So don't think that she doesn't love you and then pull love away and go run off into some fantasy world where everything is going to be perfect and there's no pain! Because if you're going to be in a relationship, there's going to be pain, but it can be a lot less pain if you start showing up as a man.*

*I'll tell you how to be a man. Put your fear on the shelf and love this woman with every ounce of your soul, where the more she comes at you, the more it makes you laugh!*

A good way to prevent Paul and Jenn from falling into old ways is to predict that they will, and to provide them with alternative ways of behaving when that happens. Tony just gave Paul specific instructions on how to give Jenn certainty and love. Whenever you decide to make a change in your behavior, don't limit yourself to just one new way to change. Any change you want to instill in your behavior needs to have at least five variations, five ways to run against trouble or interference, and five ways to overcome that and win. If Paul is going to start training himself not to withdraw from his wife when she is upset or testing him, then he needs to start practicing, finding ways to overcome resistance, and to strengthen himself as a love partner. Here are Tony's instructions:

**Tony** *Now, here's how it works. When she goes into those modes, just set your clock and think, This is a three hour conversation. Three hours! When she says "Nothing," think "Three hours!" And you have to say, "Nothing? What is it honey?" "Nothing." "Honey, what is it? I know you." "Nothing. Nothing. You're imagining things." "Honey, I worship you. I know you better than anybody on this earth. What is it?" And then be prepared to find out what the "it" is. Okay?*

*And then while it's happening, you have to work – this is the hardest part – not to be hooked, because everything she says you're going to think is your fault, even if she's not making it your fault. And she will sometimes. Cause you'll be beating yourself up, and then when you beat yourself up, you'll be angry and you'll yell at her when you're just angry with yourself because you don't feel like you've really done a good enough job because you didn't make her happy or you didn't anticipate or figure it out. But since emotions are faster than thoughts, you won't even know it. All you'll know is you're angry.*

## Use It Now: Exercises

Which of your needs have you typically met outside of your relationship? Why?

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What does your partner do when you are meeting your needs in this way?

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How could you meet this exact need for your partner?

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What needs has your partner typically met outside of the relationship?  
How? Why?

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What are some other ways that your partner meets this need?

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Think of a way that you have never (or rarely) met this need for your partner but that your partner would appreciate. Are there suggestions or ideas that your partner has had that neither of you have followed up on?

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Think of a time when your partner has lost his or her ability to meet his or her needs. How did he or she feel? What could you have done in that situation to make your partner feel better? What could you do on a regular basis?

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## Question Six: How can you commit to each other?

The final step in the intervention is a ritual of commitment, which is like a renewal of the marital vows. If you want to grow – not just in the relationship but in anything you do – you must first commit. Because a relationship is one of the most challenging areas of human experience, there's always a temptation when things get rough to withdraw, quit, or distract yourself by focusing on something else. When you commit, you commit to being present in the relationship, no matter what kind of pain and challenges present themselves, and no matter how much pain you may feel. In fact, you'll find it less and less tempting to bail out, and this commitment will strengthen you as an individual as well as a couple. When Paul and Jenn made their new vows of commitment to each other,

a new inner strength resonated from them – a strength that became something that they could call upon later, in difficult times.

Of course, it's easy to “talk big” about “commitment.” It's something all of us should be capable of, right? The fact is that commitment has different levels. You can commit to be present in every moment of the relationship, or you can commit merely to not getting divorced. It's also possible to overcommit out of eagerness and then either forget about it or beat yourself up about not being able to deliver on it. When making a commitment to your partner, try to discover what would make the biggest difference to him or her. Maybe he or she has always wanted to go on a vacation with you, to start a new project or business, or to dedicate one day per week to being together. Maybe your partner just wants a surprise from you every week. Be specific about what you commit, when you will do it, and how long your plan will last. Finally, make consequences for yourself in case you do not follow through. This is a very effective way to get yourself to follow through in times that you don't feel like it. For instance, “If I don't follow through and do X (or if I don't see a specific result by time Y) I will donate \$100 to charity instead of using it on myself.” When you make a commitment like that, it doesn't get neglected!

**Tony**    *So now I want to know, Jenn, what do you commit to this man?*

**Jenn**    *I commit to make you know that you're number one in my life.*

**Tony**    *And you, young man...*

**Paul**    *I promise you a strength and a love that you have never seen before!*

**Tony**    *Wow, that's beautiful. Now we can celebrate!*

## Use It Now: Exercises

What do you commit to do for your partner? Which needs will you meet?

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How are you going to do that? Name at least five ways that you can do this.

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What kind of obstacles will you encounter? Name at least five.

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How will you overcome these obstacles? Name at least five solutions, or five ways of meeting needs in another way.

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How long do you commit to doing this on a regular basis – no matter what kind of reaction you get from your partner?

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What are the consequences for you if you do not hold to your commitment? What would this mean for your relationship? What would this say about you as a person?

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How often will you evaluate yourself on the job you are doing? Every evening? Every morning? Three times a week? If you do not evaluate yourself and if you do not reinforce your intention for doing this, you will not be effective.

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Commit to a consequence: If you give up and do not follow through on your commitment, what is your consequence? If you want to leverage yourself to actually succeed, it is useful to give yourself a real, committed, unpleasant consequence. For instance: if I give up, I have to give \$500 to my favorite charity instead of using that money for myself.

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## Conclusion

Paul stood up, desperate about his marriage to Jenn, yet faced with the feeling of loss and despair at leaving her. When Jenn stood up, she presented herself as a strong, resourceful person with a great sense of humor. So what was the problem? Simply this: both partners were frustrated and alienated from each other because neither was meeting the other's human needs. Each partner was waiting for the other to step in and meet his or her needs, but neither was making that first commitment. Instead, Jenn went to her family and her children when she needed love. Paul dealt with his feeling of insignificance in the relationship by telling himself that he would leave. It was time for both of them to grow: Jenn needed to outgrow the certain love of her family and take the risk of making her husband number one in her life. And Paul needed to make the commitment to give his wife the certainty and love that she needed without being put off by her testing, her other relationships, or her sharp wit. As Tony led them through evaluating the way needs were being met, each of them recognized the position they were putting the other in. Jenn saw the way her relationship with her father and her sister had kept Paul at a distance, and Paul saw the way his family's criticism of Jenn had affected his attitude toward her. However, by seeing this clearly and with a fresh understanding of each other's needs, both partners were able to commit to the other what was really needed. Since then, through regular focus, effort, openness, and enjoyment, the relationship has flourished, and they have never been happier. So as we end this chapter, what about you? Are you meeting your partner's human needs?

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