

Relationship Reality

One of my aims in life is to break down any sense that we are alone, that our challenges are in any way unique or special. It's all just stuff that gets in the way of us being our best, but just like gum on your shoe, it can be scraped off.

Every relationship you get into is going to move through three nicely predictable stages. Romance is first up, being of course the absolute best bit. It's like the cherry on your cake, knowing you've met Mr. or Mrs. Right and loving everything about them. The next stage, unless you're taking some delusional narcotics, is the inevitable power struggle. This is the time when we start to establish whose needs come first in the relationship. Trust me, this is where it gets messy. Do you know that according to Barbara De Angelis there are four stages a relationship moves through as it hits this struggle? These are resistance, resentment, rejection and repression. The power struggle is a nasty, painful phase and potentially we squabble in ways we're not proud of.

The bad news is that using the examples we grow up with the best most of us ever reach is the stage of repression. We look around and realize there are no better options, we love the home we've built together, we've got mutual friends, and we're more comfortable than we've ever been. We then settle for what we've got using the tired refrain, "you just can't have everything" and "Oh well, it's really not that important". Well at this point I think it's really important to ask yourself who's the it you are referring to?

Potentially, we now have a relationship where we endure each other and live as roommates rather than lovers. It's the norm, most of the people around you exist in it so it's not surprising people feel a little guilty when they begin to want more. Fortunately for those brave souls willing to ask for more we've got the potential for co-creativity, a phrase coined by Seana McGee and Maurice Taylor in "The New Couple". This is where the relationship manages to evolve beyond the power struggle into adulthood and we get back to the place where we can ask ourselves what we can give to our partner rather than getting stuck in trying to get our needs met.

It's not a big deal and the skills you need are in no way complicated. Most of us don't need therapy; we just need strategies that lead to happiness. Take a look at my top tips for some easy to implement solutions. Let me know which one's work for you, I'd love to hear from you.

<http://www.thegreatrelationshipcoach.com/download/relationship.pdf>

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