

Introduction

For most of us, living without true love is not an option. What that true love looks like is ultimately up to us, but anyone can create a close, loving relationship, no matter what their past history or current situation is, if they understand certain key principles and learn a few skills. In fact, most people in the course of their day-to-day lives meet more than enough potential relationship candidates. The fact that they do not find that genuinely loving relationship indicates that there is another problem. Some blame it on the busy and fragmented lives they lead. Others point the finger at television, sports, and the image-obsessed institutions of society such as fashion and advertising. The wiser ones have grown weary of finger-pointing and know that the real problem resides within.

Whether you are single, divorced, or even currently in an intimate relationship, you are probably tired of making the same relationship mistakes over and over again. Kathlyn and I feel a

great deal of empathy for anyone in this situation, because we have been there ourselves. Before we found each other, we had begun to sink into that same kind of despair. We were afraid we would never attract the kind of love we really wanted. Until we discovered the tools and insights you will learn in this book, we would get out of one painful entanglement only to find ourselves bogged down in a similar version of it a few days later.

Fortunately we found a way to make the changes necessary to move from the intense pain of unconscious relationships to twenty-nine years of the most blissful and creative relationship we could have imagined. In this program, we will show you exactly how to make those inner shifts yourself so that you can draw genuine, lasting love into your life. Kathlyn and I use everything you will learn in this book in our own relationship, and although we have been together for a long time now, every year has been richer and better than the one before because of what you will learn here.

What we discovered, in our own lives and through research with thousands of others, is that there are several principles and techniques that people must learn before they can create the kind of relationship that they truly desire. In fact, without realizing it at the time, Kathlyn and I used the very same principles to make important shifts in how we related to ourselves and others that became the foundation on which we created our own relationship. We had to learn those principles “the hard way,” by making a lot of relationship mistakes in our twenties and early thirties. Once we figured out these principles and techniques, it only took a month

to meet each other. That was more than thirty years ago, and since then we have had the pleasure of teaching these skills to more than twenty thousand people around the world. It has been very satisfying, because almost every day of our lives we get letters and emails from people who have mastered these skills and gone out and created a brand-new conscious relationship—one that satisfies their deepest desires for genuine love.

After all is said and done, it is really genuine love that makes all the difference in the quality of our lives. Without genuine love, human beings feel constant longing. In *Attracting Genuine Love*, we have created a program that gives very specific answers to the question, “How can I attract genuine love into my life?” It is a program that has been carefully refined in working with thousands of people over the past decade. Our program includes eight guided practices on the enclosed CD that are the most powerful techniques we have found for creating the kind of real change in your life that will erase even a lifetime of unsatisfying relationships. If you follow these steps, you will discover what has been holding you back from getting the kind of love you really want and need. You will know exactly how to bring genuine love into your life—and how to keep it.

The Power of Commitment

Here is the bottom-line truth about how to begin the process of creating a conscious relationship: nobody has the slightest chance of creating and sustaining a healthy relationship until he or she makes a conscious commitment to it. Up until the moment you consciously commit to attracting and keeping genuine love, your unconscious programming will run your love live (and usually ruin it). And once you make a conscious decision to change your unconscious programming, you have already taken the hardest step to attracting genuine love.

Whether you realize it or not, you are already demonstrating incredible power to create what you want—in fact, your current life is an example of the incredible power you possess to create, consciously or unconsciously. You might not like all that you have created. You might even refuse to accept that you have created your life through your choices and believe instead that it is something that has been “done to you.” It is true that you may not have

consciously chosen many of the elements of your current life; nevertheless, it is your power that has manifested them. You were able to do this because of the power of commitment. The power of commitment has given you all the things that you now have.

TAKING FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF YOUR LIFE

In the late 1970s, during an argument with my lover of five years, I suddenly realized that it was not our several-hundredth argument. It was our several-hundredth run-through of the same argument. A light bulb came on and a moment of awareness shined down upon me, and I clearly saw that our arguments always followed the same pattern of misery-producing moves.

I stepped back from the process and wondered, “Why would I engage in a pattern like this? Given all the experiences I could be having as a human being, why do I keep repeating the pattern of lying and being lied to, being criticized and criticizing, blaming and being blamed, thinking of myself as a victim?”

Then, in a rush of eye-opening realization, I got the answer: These things kept happening because I was committed to being criticized, committed to being betrayed, committed to arguing and lying. I was more committed to them than I was to being close. If I was lonely, it was because I was more committed to being lonely than I was to being connected. The moment I realized what my commitment was, I felt a shift.

I did not like this idea very much when I first realized it—in fact, it actually made me angry—but I soon discovered that I

was surrounded by the results of my real commitments, and that the circumstances of my life were direct evidence of my real commitments.

It is important not to overestimate the level of your responsibility for the circumstances of your life. Although the present circumstances of your life are direct evidence of your real commitments, you certainly did not cause the situations of your birth, diseases such as cancer or heart disease, or the global conditions of war and poverty. Taking responsibility for the present circumstances of your life in the sense I am using it can never be assigned, it can only be claimed, and the reason it is claimed is that taking responsibility for the circumstances of your life is the key to creating what you really want. Once you take responsibility for the circumstances of your life, you also release the energy you have tied up in old commitments of blame and resentment to fuel your commitment to a new kind of relationship.

Take a moment now to experience what it might be like to claim full responsibility for the circumstances of your life. For just a moment, imagine that if you are unlucky in love, it is because on some level (usually unconscious) you are committed to being unlucky in love. If you are overweight, it is because you are more committed to being overweight than you are to being slender. If you are unhappy with your job, it is because you are more committed to being unhappy in your job than you are to searching for a job that makes you happy.

LISTEN TO TRACK **1**
*The Commitment
Meditation*

The purpose of our first guided process—the Commitment Meditation—is to assist you in discovering your present level of commitment to attracting genuine love into your life.

UNCOVERING YOUR UNCONSCIOUS COMMITMENTS

We have talked about the power of conscious commitments and the power of getting clear on what you really want. Of equal power is your ability to reclaim and re-channel the power of your unconscious commitments.

An unconscious commitment is an interpretation of reality that is often created in the first few years of life. Whatever we experience in our early years becomes very deeply ingrained in our personalities, and we tend to seek out—or attempt to re-create—similar situations in our future relationships. This can be very problematic when our unconscious commitments concern aspects of relationship such as fear of abandonment or fear of being smothered.

It takes a lot of courage to acknowledge these unconscious commitments. It is much easier to blame everything on forces outside of us. When bad things happen to us repeatedly, it is even more tempting to blame outside forces. Some morning when your toaster sputters and dies, your car will not start, and the cat will not touch its food, it is much easier to think that it has something to do with the position of the planets than it is to take responsibility for the choice to buy that particular toaster, that model car, that brand of cat food. When life gets rough, our tendency to project the blame on outside forces gets even more pronounced. When

bad things happen, it takes a leap of courage to acknowledge that we may be committed to those particular bad things happening. We close our eyes to the obvious truth, and then—lo and behold—we repeat the same patterns over again.

It is also much easier to complain than it is to explore our unconscious commitments. Do a quick scan of your lifetime of social interactions. How many complaints do you think you have uttered or heard? Probably thousands. Now, ask yourself how many times you have heard someone say, “Things are not going well for me. I am looking into how I may be sabotaging myself.”

Usually those unconscious commitments come out of early life experiences, and in my case, my mother and several other important women in my family either distanced themselves from me or actually left the family. This created an unconscious commitment in me to expect abandonment, which I then used as a self-fulfilling prophecy in my close relationships.

Throughout my teens and twenties, I found myself in one relationship after another where there was emotional distance, betrayal, and abandonment. For a long time, I just complained that “women are all the same.” After I saw the same patterns in half a dozen different relationships, I finally woke up and realized it was I who was “all the same.” I realized I was committed to getting involved with women who were distant and who would eventually abandon me. Seeing that I created my painful dramas out of my unconscious commitments was a big wake-up moment for me.

Next I found myself wondering, “Why would I be committed to this kind of pain?” Where would the unconscious commitments be

coming from that propelled me into these sickeningly repetitive soap operas? Immediately the answer came through from some part of me: I was engaged in this drama from the moment of my conception! The drama started before I did.

The drama of my conception involved my father's betrayal of my mother, and her shame and fury and hatred of her pregnancy (and lying about its very existence). In a sense, my existence ruined my mother's life, and I do not think she ever forgave herself, my father, and, by extension, me for getting her into the mess. Shortly after I was conceived, and well before my mother realized she was pregnant with me, my father died suddenly at age thirty-two. To this day the details are obscure, although the likelihood is that he committed suicide. His death left my mother with \$300 and my older brother to raise. Then she found out she was pregnant. From family stories I've heard, my mother refused to leave the house during her pregnancy with me. In sorting through her papers after her death, I came across a letter from one of her friends, dated when my mother would have been about seven months pregnant, begging her to return to church or at least to let friends visit her.

After my birth, my grandmother took charge of me while my mother went away to heal herself. Abandonment was written into my script almost before the curtain went up. In fact, all of the elements of the drama were there when I walked on stage. By the time I could think for myself (or even walk by myself), I had already been immersed in this drama for years.

This story has a happy ending, though—in fact, it was a major turning point in my life. I eventually realized that the whole thing

was someone else's drama. It was not my problem! It was a problem between my mother and father. I had gotten caught up in it because I happened to be in the neighborhood. In that remarkable moment of clarity, I realized I did not need to take the problem personally, since it would have happened to anyone who happened to be in that particular womb at that time.

In this case, to take responsibility for my situation was a two-fold process. The first step was to take responsibility for my unhappy relationships. The second part of the process was to realize that I had inherited elements from someone else's script, and that I could consciously choose a different script for the rest of my life.

Think about it: how many of your painful dramas actually started before your conception? If you look at each of them closely enough, you may find that a great many of them are really somebody else's drama. You just soaked them up by osmosis by being around them at an early age.

Take a moment and see if you can sense how much of the situation surrounding and preceding your birth determined your early and formative years. Can you see any patterns in your life—especially surrounding your romantic relationships—that seem to be more something you inherited rather than something you chose? Can you find any echoes of your parents' or even your grandparents' life themes in your romantic relationships?

At first this might seem at odds with the instructions to take responsibility for your life and your behaviors, but part of the process of untangling your unconscious patterns is first to become