

MODULE THREE - THE FUTURE

STAGE – RE-BUILDING ELEVEN

TRUST: The Foundation of Healthy Relationships

If you say you can't trust a man or woman in a relationship then you are saying more about yourself than about the man or woman. Many relationships at this stage are attempts to heal wounds and many are transitional or short-term. So at this stage by building a basic level of trust within yourself, you can experience satisfying emotionally closer and intimate relationships.

I was doing fine and enjoying myself. Then he said 'I love you.'
I panicked and told him to get up, put on his clothes, and go home. Ann

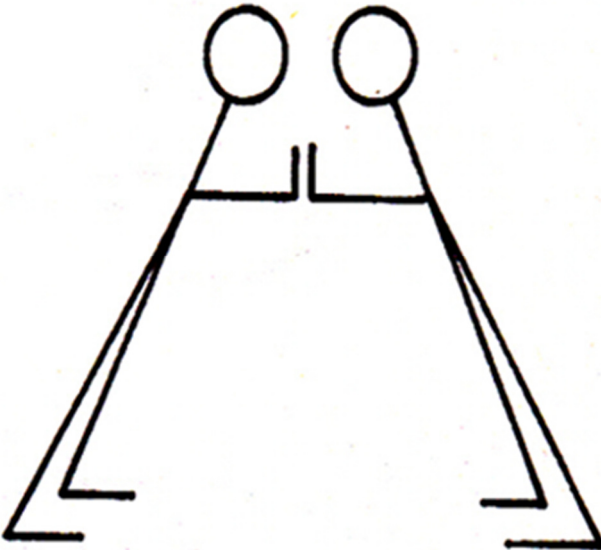
At this stage in the recovery process you may see people walk a distance from potential partners. They are like a wild animal that come close, hoping to get some food, yet run for cover the minute you move toward them. These people talk about relationships a great deal of the time, and they seem to want to date and to be with potential partners. But as soon as someone makes a move toward them, they run and shout 'stay away!' They are still severely wounded by 'love'.

The idea for some that another relationship will 'prove you are okay' leads many people to start immediately to find a new one and only person in their life. You have probably seen the poster 'you have to kiss a lot of frogs before you find a prince'. It seems healthier to conclude: 'You have to kiss a lot of frogs before you become a prinz (with prinz being a non-sexist word for princess and prince)'.

The divorce process can be viewed in two major steps. The first is learning to be a single person again ready to face life alone with the rubble of the past cleared away. The second step is learning to love again after you have rebuilt your strength to carry the burden of a long term committed relationship. So if you complete the first step then step two will be easier.

Here is an exercise that I have carried out at this stage with seminar groups for over twenty years and it derived from the work of family therapist Virginia Satir which she terms body sculpting. I divide the group into pairs but you might like to do this with a good friend to help. The diagrams illustrate different body positions which show various types of relationships that people have. Let's look at the body sculptures and consider the feelings beneath each of these 'styles' of relating.

1. A-Frame Dependency Relationship



In the dependency relationship, two people lean on each other. Dependency upon another person sometimes feels good, but it is somewhat confining. When one person wants to move, change, or grow, it upsets the other who is leaning on them. Try this sculpture with another person and then put into words some of the feelings that you have while you are assuming this position.

PAGE 3

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2. Smothering Relationship



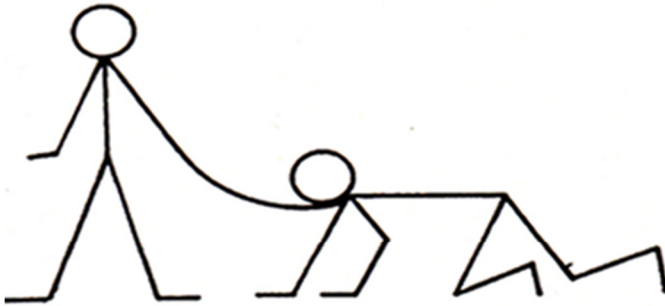
Here is a position quite frequently seen in teenage relationships. The vocabulary of this relationship is, 'I can't live without you. I want to spend the rest of my life with you. I will devote myself completely to make you happy. It feels so good to be close to you.' Many lovers start out by smothering, then gradually release the strangle hold on each other to allow more room for growth. This smothering pattern may be particularly significant during the 'honeymoon' stage of new love. The smothering relationship feels good for a while, but eventually the partners begin to feel trapped.

3. Pedestal relationship



This 'worshipful' relationship says, 'I love you not for who you are, but for who I think you are. I have an idealized image of you and I'd like to have you live up to that image.' It is very precarious on top of the pedestal because there are so many expectations to live up to. You can see the problems of communication here. In love with the person's idealised image, the worshipper is looking up to and trying to communicate with that image instead of the real person. There is a great deal of emotional distancing inherent in this relationship, and it is difficult for the two people to become close.

4. Master / Slave Relationship

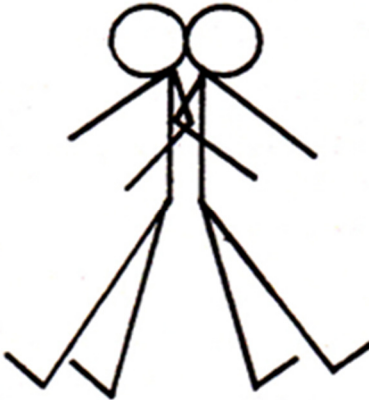


The master acts and is treated according to these ideas: 'I'm the head of the family. I'm the boss. I'll make the decisions around here.' Do not assume that this relationship necessarily places the males as the boss and heard of the family. There are females who are masters, making all the decision for their families.

In most relationships one of the partners has a personality which is at least a little stronger than the other, and that is not necessarily bad. It is when the relationship becomes rigid and inflexible, and one person is set up to make virtually all of the decisions, emotional distancing and inequality take place. Maintaining one person as master and the other as

slave tends to take a great deal of emotional energy, and often results in a power struggle that interferes with the communication and intimacy of the relationship.

5. Boarding House: Back to Back Relationship.



Linked by their elbows, these two have some sort of contact or agreement that they are going to live together. There is no communication in this relationship. The typical thing is for people to come home and sit down and watch TV while they are eating, then retire to their own living habits for the remainder of the evening. There is no expression of love toward each other. Notice as you try this position, that when one person moves forward, changes (i.e. grows and matures); the other person is linked to that change. Back to back is a

very confining relationship. Many people recognise this as the pattern that existed just before their relationship ended.

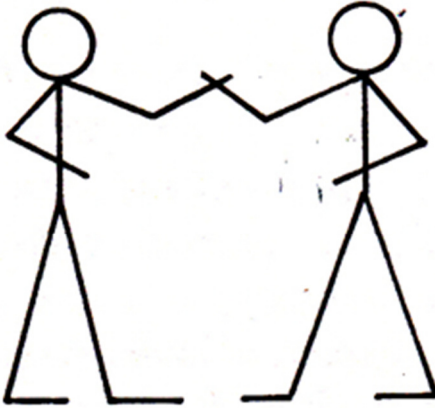
6. Martyr Relationship



Here is the person who completely sacrifices by trying to serve others. Always doing things for other people, never taking time for self, the martyr goes about 'on hands and knees.' But do not let the lowly posture fool you! The martyr position is very controlling. Note that when the person on hands and knees moves, the other person who has a foot on the martyr is thrown off balance. How does the martyr gain control? You guessed it- through guilt. How can you be angry at the person who is doing everything for you, who is taking care of your completely? The

martyr is very efficient at controlling people. It is very difficult to live with a martyr because you feel too guilty to express your own needs and angry feelings. Perhaps you have a martyr parent, and can recognise ways of dealing with that parent by understanding the martyr relationship. PLEASE NOTE The graphic is the one you use not to act out physically this particular relationship structure 😊

7. Healthy Love Relationship



Two people who are whole and complete have happiness within themselves. Standing upright, not leaning on or tangled up with the other person, they are able to live their own lives. They have an abundance of life to share with the other person. They choose to stay together because they are free to be individuals who are sharing their lives together. They can come close together and choose the smothering position temporarily; they can walk hand in hand as they might do in parenting their children; they can move apart and have their own careers, their own lives, and their own friends. Their choice to stay

together is out of love for each other rather than needing to stay together because of some unmet emotional needs. The healthy love relationship gives both people the space to grow and become themselves.

Again let me urge you to try these different positions with a very good friend and see how they feel (save the martyr.). Speak or write about the feelings that you experienced. Which of these positions describes your past relationship? Many people over the years in my seminars stated that they thought their relationships went through almost all of the unhealthy body positions!

Did you discover the cause of your divorce from the body sculpting? These unhealthy relationships seem to suggest a half person looking for another half person. So now as you become more of a whole person your chance of developing a healthy, healing relationship is greatly increased.

We tend to act out our internal feelings in our relationships so if you are angry, you probably express anger in your relationships. If you are lonely, you tend to be possessive in the relationship in order to keep the person from leaving you and making you lonely again. If you are in deep emotional pain, you will likely have a relationship full of pain. If you have a wounded feeling then you distance others to avoid bumping such a wounded heart.

Many of us seek relationships with people who have qualities we are missing in ourselves. If you are introverted and want to be more comfortable around people you often chose an extrovert. Lacking confidence, you chose a person who exudes confidence as a relationship. To meet your need to feel guilty, you develop a relationship with someone who will make you feel guilty.

And of course, the coin also has a positive side. If you are happy, confident, and feel loveable, you enter a relationship with someone with who you can act out those feelings in your relationship. We can learn much about ourselves by looking at our relationships. What feelings are you expressing your relationships? Is there a pattern? i.e. do you always bring home a stray cat? Do your relationships reflect good feelings or do they reflect neediness? Another major factor in our relationship styles is one I've mentioned before; the interaction we had with our parents. Each of us learned how to respond to love, anger, rejection, and intimacy from our parents or adults close to us in our childhood world. If these adults fought, then you are likely to have a very tough time with fights. If these adults were cold and untouching, then you may find it difficult to touch and handle warm emotions. Many a relationship is not satisfactory because the partners are interacting like these adults did.

Jeff told me, 'Relationships may be like a pot of stew. If you don't make it right in the first marriage, you keep doing it over until you get it right. In my first committed relationship, I was acting out the unproductive patterns I learned as a child. I didn't change internally after we parted and ended our relationship, so I continued to act out those patterns in my second relationship!'

After the end of our relationship we often regress and interact the way we did earlier in life. This can be positive: becoming a healthy balanced person emotionally is like climbing the slide in the playground. You progress so far then lose your grip and slide back down. Then the next time you are able to climb to a higher point. In their relationships after separation and end, many people are reworking the patterns of interaction they learned from adults in the childhood world in order to make those patterns more productive.

So the problem of trust is largely internal rather than external and understanding your past is helpful in understanding who you are now. Becoming aware of ourselves, our patterns of interaction, and our methods of dealing with relating to others allows us choices.

So now to rebuilding. 'Where do I meet someone?' is the next question and the answer is right where you are now. People go to bars, singles groups, classes in their attempts to meet people but take care the bar scene for example typically includes many lonely people who cannot relate until they are slightly under the influence. And the bar hoppers are often game players out to practice and improve their games frequently with sex being the goal of the game. Singles groups, too, have a certain amount of desperation and loneliness.

This question 'where do I meet someone' often indicates that you are looking for a committed, long term partner. Perhaps somewhat desperate and sending out desperate vibrations with body language, vocabulary and the look in your eyes which tend to drive people away. A colleague many years ago said that when you are hungry and someone walks up to you they can be left feeling like they might be the main meal.

We are nearing the end of our work now so take care not to rush as this particular building block must be securely in place before you proceed.

1. I can trust men and women to whom I would be attracted to
2. I have begun to understand that men and women are much more alike than different in their responses to feelings such as love, hate, intimacy and fear.
3. I can trust myself with my feelings.
4. I trust my feelings enough to act on them.
5. I am not afraid of becoming emotionally close to a potential partner.
6. I am aware of the ways that I distance people.
7. I am building relationships that will help me to heal.
8. I am building healing and trusting relationships with friends of both sexes.
9. I communicate with others where I am emotionally rather than giving mixed messages.
10. I understand that not everyone is capable of being trusted.
11. I am capable of trusting someone when it is appropriate.
12. I want to heal and experience intimacy again.
13. I am trying to live in the present in my relationships.
14. I realise that many of the early relationships after my divorce may be short term.
15. I am taking risks in my relationships by exposing my true feelings and thoughts.
16. I am truly interested in the friends around me rather than desperately looking for another relationship.

STAGE – RE-BUILDING TWELVE

SEXUALITY

When you are just separated it is normal to be extremely fearful of sex. However, during the adjustment process, you can develop your personal morality to express your unique sexuality.

The single subculture emphasise authenticity, responsibility and individuality more than rules. So you can discover what you believe rather than what is expected of you. The great difference in attitudes is that male and female sexuality appears to be a myth. But your adjustment could be complicated by the major changes currently taking place in female, male and same sex identities.

Being separated and Middle aged is:

Not taking the rubbish for fear you'll miss that obscene phone call.

Standing out in the middle of the dark parking lot and shouting "Hey you muggers, the muggee is here."

Telling the guy who frisked you and demanded your money that you have no money but if he'll frisk you again, you will write him a cheque.

Putting a sign on your gate that read 'All trespassers will be violated.'

Looing under the bed and hoping someone *is there*.

Lois group member exercise content.

What was your attitude to those swinging single people when you were in a relationship? Did you wonder if they were sexual athletes that they were rumoured to be? And did you fantasize what it would be like to have a date with a different and exciting person each night of the week?

Now you are single look at the people around you. Many are spending evenings in alone. Many are out pretending to have fun at singles events when in reality they are bored stiff. Many times you spend an evening with a person that makes your ex look attractive and desirable, and you never thought anyone could be worse than your ex. And then everyone is going with someone and then a short time later breaking up and you can't even keep track of who is dating who. The contrast between your fantasy of the wild single life and what it actually is adds to your isolated and lonely feelings.

Take heart this part of the journey can be one of the most difficult but it gets easier as you become accustomed to being single. You have not been out on a date in years and the first person you ask turns you down. You attend various events anxious that someone will not approach and chat you up and equally petrified that someone will. If someone should make a pass at you then the thought is enough to make you stay at home, alone, forever.

There are three stages in this rebuilding block. Each of these three stages of sexuality affects us personally a great deal as we go through the adjustment process.

You had an available sexual relationship for all those years and suddenly the long term committed relationship is not available anymore. You are faced with all of the emotional and social adjustment of ending a relationship including what to do with your sexual desires.

The first step of the process, while you are in deep grief, is lack of sexual interest or maybe a complete inability to perform sexually. Women tend to be completely uninterested in sex, men often are impotent. Just when you are feeling a great deal of emotional pain, the fact that you are uninterested or unable to perform sexually adds to the pain. Many people would come to me saying, 'I was already hurting so much, and now I find that I can't perform sexually. It feels like hitting rock bottom.' When they learn that it is perfectly normal and natural to be uninterested in sex while in deep grief, they feel greatly relieved.

Somewhere along the divorce process, perhaps near the end of the anger rebuilding block, you get through this stage of not being able to perform sexually. No at the next stage, you will probably go to the other extreme and reach the horny stage. Your sexual desires are greater than you have ever known in your whole life. It is almost frightening because you feel almost out of control most of the time. Bobbie described this stage as 'delicious torture.' Because the needs and desires of this stage are so overwhelming, it is important to understand the feelings and attitudes as much as possible.

Among the many feelings present in the horny stage is a need to prove that you are OK, personally and sexually. It is as though you are trying to solve not only your sexual problems but all of the other rebuilding blocks as well, using sex as a method. Your behaviour at the horny stage may be somewhat compulsive because of this. You are trying to overcome loneliness, to feel lovable again, to improve your self concept, to work through some anger, to develop friendships and all of these things are concentrated in the sexual drive. It is as though your body is trying to heal itself through sexual expression alone.

One night stands are a popular way that people try to solve this high sex drive stage. We see this portrayed in books and films about ending of relationships. The need to go out and ‘prove that you are OK’ may be great that you will do something sexually that you had never done before.

Another important understanding about the horny stage is that there is a great need for touching during this stage. As you through the relationship separation process, you will probably experience a heightened need to be physically touched. Touch has remarkable, healing qualities. Depending upon the warmth and closeness of your relationship, you likely received much physical touching when you were together. Suddenly that touching is not there anymore. Many people will try to meet their need for physical touching with sex, not realising that there is a very real difference between physical touching and sexual touching. Although the two are entirely different, you can resolve much of your need for sexual contact by getting the physical touching you need.

You can resolve the needs of the high sex drive stage by methods other than direct sexual contact if you understand that a part of the compulsive drive behind this stage is to prove that you are OK, and to feel good about yourself again, then you can work directly on that. Building your identity and self-confidence, and understanding that you are lovable can overcome the loneliness and take away some of the pressures of the high sex drive stage.

The stereotype about the separated person being sexually an easy mark results from the high sex drive stage. During this period, the separated

person is an easy mark. The sexual drive is tremendous. Many people going through the separation process have sexual relationships somewhat promiscuously.

Eventually you will overcome this stage and enter the third stage of post separation sexuality in which your normal sex drive resumes.

Not everyone going through the ending of a relationship process goes through these three stages of sexuality. Some people do not go into the celibate stage and some do not experience the high sex drive stage however the stages are very common and need to be recognised. During the early stage of sexuality you are doing what you should do, and then you go through a stage of doing what you want to do. Most people going through such a process experience the evolution of becoming free sexually in the sense that they are suddenly aware of who they are and what their sexual nature is. Essentially sexually monogamous in their committed relationship some people when the relationship ends have many sexual relationships before finally deciding on a monogamous relationship because that is what they want.

We have blown sex out of proportion in the western society perhaps because we hid it and denied it for so long. With so much emphasis on sex now, it appears to have lost some of its reality. Advertising is full of sex in order to sell products. We revere youth and the supposed beauty, aliveness and sexuality of youth. With such a daily overdose in the media, it is tough to keep a proper perspective on sexuality when it comes to relationships.

Usually missing from popular presentations is the spiritual dimension of human sexuality. Sex is one way of transcending our normal means of expressing ourselves, and it allows us to show our love and concern for

another person in a very special and positive way. Sex can be a method of transporting oneself to levels beyond the everyday, to become something greater than what one normally is. But this spiritual dimension that is present in sexuality is also present in overcoming anger, in our ability to communicate, in learning to like another person, and in learning to accept and deal with all of the human emotions. Sexuality, when placed in perspective, may be seen as only one of the many amazing things that occur in our expression of connection with other people.

We have covered a lot of ground and there is much we have not explored. Sex is often a stumbling block for the single person so be sure to explore these issues at this all important rebuilding stage. Here are a few pointers for assessing your progress.

1. I am comfortable going out with potential partners
2. I know and can explain my present moral attitudes and values
3. I feel capable of having a deep and meaningful sexual relationship if it were appropriate
4. I would feel comfortable being intimate with another partner
5. My sexual behaviour is consistent with my morality
6. I am satisfied with my present dating situation
7. I believe that my personal sexuality expresses my individual and unique morality
8. I feel satisfied with the way I am meeting my sexual needs
9. I take responsibility for my interaction with others
10. I have learned that male and female sexual attitudes and value may be more alike than different
11. I feel comfortable being with a person I am attracted to

12. I am secure enough to behave the way I want even if it does not conform to the expectations of others
13. I am not letting the compulsive needs of high sexual drive control my behaviour
14. I am solving the neediness of my stages of high sexual drive in a manner that is acceptable to me
15. I understand and accept that many people will have no desire and may be unable to perform sexually while grieving for a lost relationship
16. I am receiving my quota of hugs each week

STAGE – RE-BUILDING THIRTEEN

RESPONSIBILITY - Relating as Adult to Adult

Most committed relationships that end in separation where out of balance in terms of responsibility. One partner was over-responsible and the other was under-responsible. When couples try to change this system of interaction, it is often the beginning of the end of the relationship for some people.

Feelings and attitudes within us keep us operating in the under-responsible or over responsible style; one may have to make some major changes to come from an adult flourishing relationship view. Equal responsibility relationships are more flexible and able to adjust to stress and change and therefore are more likely to last.

In my first marriage I took care of him.

In my second marriage I let my partner take care of me.

Maybe next time I will be able to have an adult relationship.

Have you noticed how there are some people who seem to like to carry others, fuss over them, and help them make lunch? They seem more interested in taking care of others in contrast to looking after and caring for their own needs in equal balance. Of course it takes both kinds of people to make this work for there are others who are always wanting someone to take care of them. They do not seem able to make it and 'need help' from someone else.

Notice also the 'Sergeants' ordering everyone around and acting as though they know how things should be done. They are heard saying 'You should...' or 'You ought...,' and are critical of people in life. The people they order around and criticize tend to be either helpless and obedient or rebellious and disobedient.

Experience has shown that 99 per cent of people attending seminars discover that they had an imbalance of responsibility in their relationships. This appears to be a major cause of marital breakdown because the responsibility is not equal; the relationship is not flexible enough to adjust to stress and change.

Take moment to look back at your relationship. Were you the over-responsible helper, the dominating person? Or perhaps you were the under responsible, 'helpless' or rebellious partner? If either of you tried to change this pattern, the relationship became troubled –and that was maybe the beginning of the end and the person who tried to change this rigid structure of responsibility into a more flexible adult relationship is often looked upon as the bad person who upset the apple cart. I hope you can start simply describing what happened instead of needing to label people as good and bad people. Life is a process of changing and the person who instigates change may simply be a part of the life process.

Using my work from transactional analysis what I am talking about is similar to the terms parent and child ego states. The parent ego state is the over responsible part of the personality, and the child ego state is the under responsible part of the personality. Sigmund Freud also used similar terms when he talked about the super-ego (the potentially over

responsible aspect of personality) and the id (the under-responsible part of personality).

The under and over responsible parts of personality not only come into play when we interact with others, but are important within ourselves and how we dialogue with these aspects of self.

Most of my clients over the past thirty five years who have worked with me were having an internal war between the over and under responsible parts of their personalities. This internal strife was consuming much of their emotional energy. They were looking for the internal peace of mind. Either the over responsible part of the personality is winning the war leaving them to feel guilty, drained, inhibited, controlled and driven; or the under responsible part was winning and they were impulsive, violent, irresponsible, helpless. Whichever side is winning, the losing side is continually striking back and the war goes on. Some participants in my seminars report the major emotional issues were not in their relationship and between their partner and then but within themselves, and their partner was the spectator and not the participant.

Not resolving this inner conflict can have serious consequences for one's relationships. In one seminar, Charlie began to introduce himself to the group. 'My name is Charlie and I have been married for 31 years...' At this point, he broke down and cried. Later during the discussion session at the end of the evening seminar Charlie asked if he had been the over responsible helper in his marriage. When one of the group said they felt he had been, Charlie asked 'Does my being over responsible have anything to do with her dumping me?' A woman in the group stated profoundly, 'Kids grow up and leave home, Charlie.' This

graphic description allowed Charlie to see beyond the blaming and guilt.

The vast majority of participants in my seminars call themselves over responsible. I was puzzled by this: shouldn't there be an equal number of over or under responsible people taking this seminar? To find the answer, I went to work to better understand these over responsible people.

A close look at the two types of over responsible people shows that they are not just giving others a hand when it is needed to make it through a difficult time. They seem to be busy finding people to rescue so that neither the rescuer nor the person being rescued makes good progress. They seem to enjoy looking after the other person rather than being responsible for themselves. It seems obvious that they need to get on with their own lives.

These people are great at giving to others, but have difficulty taking gifts, compliments, help from others. They learned at an early age to get their emotional kicks and rewards by taking care of others.

Frank was ten when his father was seriously injured. Frank took over the responsibility for running the home and not only did the physical work but he also made the decisions. He became an over responsible young man, receiving recognition for how grown up he acted. Unfortunately, even in his relationship he never was able to develop the fun loving 'irresponsible child' part of his personality. After his separation he was able to go through his teenage development and to become a more complete whole person. Many over responsible helping people are nurturing others because they need to be nurtured. They learned to take care of others to compensate for their feelings of

loneliness, lack of emotional nurturing, and feelings of rejection. Simply, how can you reject someone who is taking care of you?.....

In her relationship, Mary was always very responsible with the money. She decided how to spend the money, even though many times Carl would criticize how much money she was spending. She usually also set the alarm clock before they went to bed, would shut it off in the morning, and always made sure Carl got up on time to make it to work. One day Mary realised she had three other children and she was tired of being married to a child.

She began to change things so Carl had to take more responsibility, such as sorting out the money and getting himself to work in the morning. Shortly after that he began an affair with another woman.

As another example Karen was reluctant to take the seminar because she wanted a course that would help her children. After we discussed how the over responsible person is a good giver but poor taker, I asked if I could give her a hug. She jumped at the opportunity, came rushing over to me and gave me a hug. I backed off and pointed out that I would give her a hug. 'I'll try to take a hug,' she said, and stood there stiff as a board, stiff and uncomfortable. After about two seconds she said, 'I can't stand it anymore!' and grabbed me again. Since the homework for that week was for the nurturing person to take, I emphasised to Karen that she needed to work on her homework.

Next week she came back and shared with the group how she had worked at letting her children give back to her. It was such an important change in her behaviour and she shed some tears while talking to the group. I again asked if I could give her a hug and she said 'yes', whilst waiting for me to come to her. I hugged her and she broke into

uncontrollable sobbing and shared with the group that this was the first time she had really been able to emotionally take since she was a child.

If you scratch the surface of an over responsible helping person, you usually find a child part of that person that needs to be loved unconditionally.

Are you one of these over responsible helping people? If so, do you realise how easy it is for you to continue in that role when you enter another relationship? Remember the example earlier of Margaret liked to bring home stray cats and nurse them to good health. She grew up, brought home another stray cat and married him. She knew he drank a little while they were 'courting' but she had no idea he was an alcoholic. She was able to leave and divorce him, but she found, after several more relationships, that she was continuing the pattern. If you don't change yourself internally, you will probably find yourself continuing self-defeating patterns. You too could be 'bringing home stray cats!'

Now to some suggestions for you to explore in creating change. Here is the homework that we use in the seminars to help people begin to change this pattern of giving and never taking.

The first is to say 'no' next time a person asks you to do something. The over responsible style which transactional analysis calls 'nurturing parent behaviour' is to always say 'yes' to anything anyone asks of you. 'You can always depend on old Mary to do a responsible job.' But saying 'no' is only part of the homework. The second part of this assignment is to ask someone to do something for you. Do not pay for it, do not promise to do something in return. Don't cheat and explain that it was suggested as part of your homework. Just ask.

Are you now aware of your fear of being rejected? Most of you learned to be the helping person to compensate for feelings of rejection, so this homework not only attempts to change the giving and never taking style that drained you emotionally, but it also forces you to deal with the possibility of rejection.

The more extreme you are in this helping role, the more difficult this homework will be for you. I can almost hear some of you exclaim, 'I can't ask anyone to do something for me!' I have had many people over the past twenty years in my seminars who said this. My response is: 'Some of you may not be strong enough to change at this time. Maybe you'll be able to even if you think you can't. Give it a try, maybe it will be easier than you think.'

Some people hold the sexist view that it is only females that become over responsible helping people. I believe that our society does encourage women to play the helping role saying in many ways that a 'woman's role is to help and support her husband.' But in my seminars males are just as often over responsible helps, so it appears that development of the over responsible helping personality has to do with other factors than whether you were born male or female.

Let's look again at why so many participants in my seminars are helping people. One answer is that they are continuing the pattern of being over responsible; they take the seminar because that would be a responsible thing to do. But underneath I believe there is another need operating. Because the seminar is emotionally warm and supportive, people take the seminar to get the nurturing they need.

The past pattern of interaction leaves them feeling emotionally drained and hungry for nurturing. It appears that one step toward overcoming

the pattern of parental, over responsible helper is to become an under responsible taking child for a time. Filling our own needs helps us to become balanced, which lead to adulthood and to equal responsibility in our next relationship.

What is the difference between over responsible helping people and those spiritually concerned people who are caring and concerned about others? I use the classic 'fish story' to illustrate the difference. One way to help a hungry person is for the rescuer to give him or her a fish. The next day the hungry person comes again and the rescuer gives another fish. Pretty soon the hungry one is 'hooked' (the person not the fish). An adult helper teaches the hungry person to fish. The rescuer has need to take care of others so giving the fish meets his or her needs more than it does the hungry person. The adult becomes the teacher and finds the satisfaction from seeing the other person learn to meet his or her own needs.

Let's switch now to the other type of over responsible person the critical and domineering 'Sergeant'. Barbara told the seminar that she always felt little and helpless with her husband. When she started to stick up for herself and not give in to Sam's domination, the marriage began to crumble. Barbara felt guilty 'like the bad person' but the group helped her to see that it is better to simply describe change and how it affects the relationship, rather than labelling people as good or bad.

Barbara has trouble understanding why Sam is having such a difficult time adjusting to single life. He keeps coming back to her like a lost puppy does searching for his master. 'He dominated me all the time and so why does he appear to be so lost and needy?' can you imagine,

Barbara, said how this was how the Sergeant would feel if the platoon of recruits that he has been ordering around were all suddenly gone.

Over responsible people, whether the helping or dominating type, need someone to take care of as part of their identity. It is as though they have to be carried on the shoulders of another person in order to be tall. When it happens that submissive peoples leave their old relationship, either physically or emotionally, the dominating partners crumble like a house of playing cards. They easily become vulnerable because they are so fragile.

Have you thought how difficult it is to be perfect? How hard you strive to please? How hard you are on yourself? Those years of criticism in childhood are bound to result in some insecure, anxious, fearful feelings. Many people compensate for these feelings by striving to be perfect in order to feel loved. Others push those close to them to 'do better' through criticism and by creating demands that can never be satisfied.

The alcoholic personality has a large part that is self-critical. Drinking first diminishes the power of the parental and critical part of the personality, then the rational, adult part, and then sadly the fun loving child part, and the process finally results in unconsciousness. Many alcoholics drink enough to diminish the critical part of the personality; that is an important cause of their drinking; allowing the 'child inside' to have fun but then the child is no longer present. Wouldn't it be nice to learn to have fun and be ourselves without having to drink to do it?

Here is some homework that has proven to be effective for people in my seminars. If what you are really trying to do is to become perfect,

realise that no one can be perfect, and stop trying. Next week, stop all compulsive behaviour that you feel you MUST do.

A good example for most critical people; stop making your bed every morning. 'Oh, I can't do that. I can't leave that room without making the bed. The room looks so messy. I'd sooner be late for work than leave the room messy.' Think about what your compulsive behaviour is. What is it that you think you have to do every day? Is it really 'critically' important to your life?

George, who attended a talk about relationship rebuilding, started thinking about that and he adopted a new motto for life whilst adjusting to his ending of his relationship 'it doesn't matter.' In letting go of the parental and critical part of our personalities, we have to become somewhat irresponsible in an almost childlike way. Many people have to go through a 'childish' stage in order to leave the parental position and reach adulthood.

Since over responsible people need to learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour instead of that of others, they find this homework assignment helpful: when you notice someone close to you is acting in a rebellious manner, monitor your own behaviour and determine if you are setting this up with your style of interaction.

I mentioned earlier that there are relatively few of the under responsible types of people in my seminars. Usually these people learned at an early age that all they had to do was play helpless and someone would take care of them. Typically their vocabulary is 'I don't know how', 'I need someone to teach me' 'I feel so frightened that I can't do it.' These people have trouble balancing their bank statement, seldom if ever make their beds, always leave decisions up to the over responsible person. Some of

them, those who really believe they are helpless, have so little confidence in their capacities that they are unwilling to try to be self-sufficient. The rebellious ones, on the other hand, go through life intentionally irresponsible and carefree, and if something goes wrong they take no responsibility: 'It's your fault!' Embarking on self-work is the last thing in their lives that they would ever consider.

It is easy for me to give under responsible people some homework, but they either comply, which leaves the responsibility upon me, or are under responsible and do not do the homework rationalising that it was far too hard. So my suggestion for you under responsible people is to figure out your own homework. If you really want to change, you will find ways of becoming more responsible. And I will listen to your behaviour rather than your words. I have heard the words many, many times.

Isn't it interesting. To change any behaviour, the person first has to become responsible for her or his own behaviour. It is often believed that the over responsible person, with a more parental behaviour style, is somehow more mature. Under and over responsible behaviour are both immature, and there is little difference between the two in this respect. Maturity is a process of becoming more responsible for one's own behaviour; adulthood is a state of assuming responsibility in a mature manner.

Incidentally, an important goal is to allow ourselves flexibility in taking responsibility. When we come home tired from a difficult day at work, it is appropriate to allow ourselves the luxury of being cared for. (The over responsible person becomes more so when tired; and the under responsible person becomes more that way when tired.) So allow

someone to bring you a drink, to hold you, to listen to you share your troubles of the day. On the other hand you may become over responsible when another is sick, when one has a need to 'play little,' to be cared for. With flexibility you can adjust and function at an appropriate level of responsibility. This flexibility is adulthood; you choose the type of interaction rather than allowing it to choose you. You are flexible within yourself as to how responsible you are in a situation, and you are also flexible in your interactions with others. This flexibility allows the adult relationship to adjust to change and stress that occurs as a part of the process of life and living it.

Here is a brief exercise which may help you to more fully understand these different types of interactions, so that you may monitor your own growth. As you read through the six situations, note that each has three different responses; illustrating over and under responsible, and adult behaviour. There is no 'score' for this exercise; simply note the way each style shows itself in everyday situations.

1. The single mother is leaving on a date. Her oldest daughter's farewell comment is:

A: 'be sure to get home early tonight, Mum'

B: 'I'd like a phone number where I can reach you if I need to'

C: 'Wow, kids, will we have fun tonight while Mum is gone!'

2. The wife makes these comments after she has been informed by her husband that he wants a divorce:

A: 'I never was good enough for you'

B: 'Maybe we should discuss our problem with a marriage counsellor'

C: 'You should learn to take responsibility for your life instead of running away like a child'

3. Your son, aged 13, says, 'You're without doubt the worst parent a kid like me could ever have.' You respond:

A: 'I can see that you're angry with me and wish that I would act differently'

B: 'I've don't everything I could possible do for you; about time you grew up!'

C: 'So - big deal! Who care?'

4. The woman asks for an unreasonable property settlement, and the man's response is:

A: 'I'm going to hire the meanest solicitor in town to teach you a lesson'

B: 'I think we should talk to a third party to help mediate this dispute'

C: 'I'm tired of fighting. You have everything you want'

5. A noncustodial father has taken the children to visit him while a new girlfriend is present, and the mother's response is:

A: 'You chose to be with that woman instead of me, so my children are never going to be around while she is there'

B: 'Do you think I want my children seeing their father acting like a teenager?'

C: 'Our children will need a lot of time and attention from you while they're visiting you. Will you be able to give them the quality time they need while your girlfriend is present?'

Many times in ending your relationship you did not respond at an adult level with your former partner. While you are ending the relationship, I strongly suggest that you try to remain as adult as possible when talking and communicating with your ex. Otherwise it will be easy them to hook you into being under or over responsible, with resulting arguments and bad feelings. Communication between the two of you is enhanced if you can have adult interactions, and it is valuable practice for other relationships as well.

Awareness, understanding, and knowledge lead us to more adulthood both in our behaviour with others and within ourselves. What you have explored can help you to become more adult. Here is a check list for you to evaluate your development of more adult behaviour.

1. I can identify my behaviour as to over or under responsibility, and adulthood.
2. I can see the over and under responsible behaviour in my past relationship, both in myself and my partner
3. I believe that past patterns of interaction can be changed
4. I am doing the homework suggested to change my behaviour toward more adulthood
5. I am building adult relationships at this time
6. I am allowing myself flexibility, to behave with whatever responsibility is appropriate
7. I expect to continue to build adult relationships in the future

STAGE – RE-BUILDING FOURTEEN

SINGLENES: It's OK

Here you emphasize investment in your own personal growth rather than in relationships. A period of singleness enables you to build confidence in yourself so you can experience and enjoy being single as an acceptable alternative lifestyle and not as a time to be lonely.. It is easy to become stuck in this rebuilding block as a means of avoiding another intimate relationship.

I've become aware that living as a single person is an affirmation of strength and self - not embarrassing admission of failure.

I'm more relaxed in the company of others - I no longer am wasting emotional energy being a social chameleon.

Post-marital guilt, self-doubts, and questions like 'Will I ever love again' are greatly diminished.

I am happy as a single person- something I had not thought possible before.

Larry

Many people never learned to be single people before they entered a committed relationship. They went from parental homes to sharing a home with their partner, never even considering that one could be happy living as a single person, and never questioned the myth that once in a committed relationship they would live happy ever after life.

Carol lived with her parents until she married Joe. She went from pleasing one man, her father, to pleasing another man, her husband. So, when Joe talked about leaving, she clung to him because the thought of living alone as terrifying. She had never learned to please herself. She had always been a dependent person; and now the thought of being independent, although challenging, was frightening. She was embarrassed because it really sounded silly to her that a woman of 25 did not know her own mind, or know what to do with her life.

Gradually she adjusted to being alone. At first she searched for other relationships, something/someone to lean on. As she became more and more confident, she began doing more things for herself and enjoying it. She wallpapered a whole bedroom; sawed the boards and pounded the nails for a new patio fence; went to a film by herself while the children were with Joe; and even enjoyed stumbling alone in the dark trying to find a seat. She invited the whole neighbourhood in for a party. These activities left her feeling exhilarated, knowing that she did not need anyone. She was a good example of a woman being liberated.

Jim represents the male side of this same coin. He had been well cared for by his mother. The clothes were always washed and ironed, meals were on time, and even his room was kept clean. He could devote his time to study and then later his job. When he entered university he lived in student accommodation. Again his meals were provided and he a minimum of housekeeping chores. The he married and Janet who did all the things that his mother had always done. He felt independent and did not realise how dependent he actually was. But he found out when he left Janet.

He was helpless in the kitchen, even in preparing the simplest meal. He had very little understanding of how to wash his clothes and ended up with pink underwear when he put them in the wash, He could pay for car maintenance on his wage, but it is difficult - and very expensive - to hire a full-time cook and housekeeper.

Gradually Jim's self-prepared meals improved. Initially he got brave enough to invite a female friend to his home to eat, and she was delighted with the meal he prepared. His clothes began to look more cared for. He was very pleased and proud when he learned to iron his own shirts. He felt that learning to care for himself was like growing up - each accomplishment left a feeling of success and achievement.

But the singleness I am talking about is much more than learning to do the tasks that someone else has done for you. It is a whole way of life. Dating and relationships are a good example. A typical comment from a recently separated person might help, 'I'll never make it as a single person; I need another relationship.' During the singleness stage, the same person might say, 'Why go into another committed relationship? I can come and go as I please. I can eat whenever I feel like it. I don't have to adjust my daily living habits to another person. Being single really does feel good!'

Before the singleness stage, one may be looking for the 'lost half.' But during this stage one reached the point of comfort in going out alone. No longer is a 'date' necessary to avoid embarrassment or feeling a failure. The quality of relationships improves, since one now chooses who to go out with spending time together sharing rather than needing. Other people may be encountered and enjoyed for who they are, rather than as a potential lifetime companions.

One of the homework assignments in our seminars has to do with developing new interests in the singleness stage. Many have spent their free, recreational times in the past doing what the partner wanted or what they had learned to do with their parents. The assignment is simply to take the time to develop a new interest, or to pursue something that one may have wanted to do for a long time.

In the last session write up I discussed adult responsibility and parent-child behaviour. Perhaps now you see how the singleness stage allows us to change these roles. Because the roles we act out in our relationships are so closely related to our internal attitude and feelings, we change inside as we change our external roles. It is easier to do this in the singleness stage than when we are in a permanent relationships. A neutral environment facilitates both internal and external changes. The singleness stage is a key period to make the internal changes in attitudes and feelings necessary for personal growth.

Parenting is difficult during the singleness stage. In earlier stages parents frequently bend themselves out of shape trying make sure they are lovable, datable, and okay in many other ways. The children suffer; their needs are put on the 'back-burner' in the singleness stage, parents usually are more responsive to the needs of the children. Susan had been volunteering in the seminars because she 'needed' to feel worthwhile by helping others. When she began to reach the singleness stage, she resigned as a volunteer because she wanted to spend more time with her children. Parents in the singleness stage have begun to rise above their own emotional needs.

It often takes a great deal of inner security to handle to the singleness stage successfully. Much of the discussion in this section concerns the

internal feelings present in the singleness stage. As you have worked your way with me through the earlier rebuilding blocks, it is likely that you are able to experience the peacefulness and calmness that occurs in the singleness stage. You may become slightly upset about the attitudes of others, but you will feel strong enough to handle them.

We learn from the external prejudices and use them to become more secure in our own internal feelings and develop some assertive responses for the most common put-downs and discriminatory acts. You can also help to educate others, while maintaining your own integrity, by responding firmly and you will feel better inside, too, rather than going away fuming.

Singleness can be one of the most productive stages you go through the journey, in the sense that the old wounds can really be healed. Dealing with the external discrimination may help you to become stronger inside.

The singleness stage is an easy stage in which to become stuck. If you have not worked through all of the leftovers concerning relationships and intimacy, you may use the singleness stage as a place to hide. It may sound like the singleness when you hear someone say 'I'll never enter another relationship again.' But in many ways that is the opposite of genuine singleness. Fear of intimacy, avoidance of feelings and opposition to future relationships as though it were the worst experience in our society all indicate that the person is stuck. The goal is to be free to choose singleness or to enter another relationship, not to stay single for ever.

Singleness has become acceptable alternative in our society. Earlier a single person was looked upon in communities as somewhat weird, one

who just did not quite make it to the altar. Attitudes have changed and after a talk I gave recently where a woman wanted to know why we had to keep talking about relationships. She said was it not just as valid to talk about remaining single? Did we have to keep looking toward being a relationship as the ideal?

Here are some items to check through at this stage.

1. I am comfortable being single.
2. I can be happy as a single person.
3. I am comfortable going to social events as a single person.
4. I am becoming a whole person rather than a half person looking for my other lost half.
5. I am spending time investing in my own personal growth rather than looking for another relationship.
6. I can look at my friends as people I want to be with rather than as a potential partner.
7. If I have children and family, I can spend time enjoying being with them rather than begrudging the time they take from my personal life.
8. I have found internal peace and contentment as a single person.

STAGE – RE-BUILDING FIFTEEN

FREEDOM And the New Relationship With ME

We are now at the top of the rebuilding journey and we have arrived at FREEDOM.

By working with me through the rebuilding blocks you can now build more meaningful relationships for the future. Why? Because you have the FREEDOM to choose to either be free and happy as a single person or in another relationship. Freedom is being to be fully you.

But before we explore this in our next session think back over the process we have worked through.

- What was the most enjoyable and interesting part for you.
- What was the most difficult and challenging?
- Now, what was the most painful?

As you take some time to write down your thoughts can you now identify the many changes that have taken place within you? Have you reached a place of embracing these shifts emotionally or are these experiences still in our logical conscious mind?

Think about what it now feels like to have reached the end of our work and journey together and all the hard work which has unfolded for you to journey through YOUR personal growth. Please, take as much time as you want before you go on reading.

On the singleness part of the journey I hope you found not only that it feels good to be single, but that it may be the most productive behaviour at this point in your life. Now you need to think about what working

your way through these rebuilding blocks has done to in terms of the way you interact with those around you. The way you react to loneliness, grief, rejection, guilt, anger and love significantly determines how you handle your daily life and your interactions with others.

Many people have had considerable difficulty with one or more of the rebuilding blocks after a relationship ends. As we have worked through the rebuilding process, overcoming each stumbling blocks, then you are able to enter into another relationship and make it more productive than the last one. You will be able to meet your own needs and the needs of your loved one(s) much better than in the past. Rebuilding not only helps you to survive the crisis, but it also enhances your future relationships.

Perhaps you were widowed and were satisfied with the happiness you felt in your last relationship. Research indicates that people who were widowed have future relationships which are more likely to last. Being widowed is a painful and very difficult adjustment process, and most of the rebuilding blocks are helpful to those who are going through the process. Many widowed people, however, do not have one of the toughest adjustments - that of dealing with the previous unhappy relationship.

For many people who have moved on from such an unhappy relationship, the journey is so difficult that they feel like giving up before they reach this freedom stage. I have heard countless people say, 'I want to stop and rest. I'm tired of growing.' Many people do stop along the way because they are tired, frightened, or feel unable to handle the change. My response is the same I would to someone mountain

climbing: sit and rest; get your energy back; then keep on climbing because the journey for you is worth it and not impossible as many, many people have successfully completed the process. Do you have the self-discipline, desire, courage and stamina to make it?

I will be honest I cannot promise that you will be happier, or wealthier, or more fulfilled if you complete the journey. The hard fact is that you will not necessarily find another, 'just right' person with whom to create a lasting relationship. What you will find is that you like yourself better, you can enjoy being alone and single, and the people who you meet who have completed the journey are pretty special at many levels.

It is true that there are fewer people like yourself who have had the courage to complete this all important, challenging and liberating journey. Many are still playing social games, hiding behind emotional walls and finding excuses not to embark on the life journey. The lack of numbers here may make the process of finding new friends and potential lovers more difficult. But I have found that the relationships with others who have completed this journey have such a higher quality that quantity is not so important.

When you have completed the journey you give off great vibrations and there are many people who are attracted to you. So this is not a lonely place in comparison with those earlier rebuilding blocks you have explored and we have been working through. And if you still feel lonely, maybe you have not reached the end of this journey emotionally but we have created the right foundations for you to continue and explore with.

You may get discouraged at times when you realise that the old patterns have crept back and you really have not changed as much as you

thought. Keep up the determination and you will make it so do not get discouraged as it may come slowly.

You may greatly fear the unknown future. You are not alone. It may be learning to be single; it may be not knowing what to expect or what is expected of you. How do you feel the first time you drive or ride in a new city that is unfamiliar to you? Confused, lost, uncertain? How about the way you feel the first time you go to a singles party? There is a certain amount of comfort in the known.

I have talked at great length about the importance of being single. Let me talk about the importance of relationships. We can become whole by emotionally working hard at becoming whole. But I believe there is a part of each of us that needs another person to help us become completely fulfilled.

When you were in the pits of your crisis, you gave no thought to plans and goals for the future. Part of your grief was concerned with loss of future, since you had to give up the plans and goals you had in that relationship. But when you came out of the pits, you began looking to the future and making plans again.

Ernie, a member of one of my seminars who worked in a hospital, told the group one evening, 'It's like the process in the hospital psych wards. There's a crafts room where the patients spend time. When patients are first admitted, they have no energy to work on crafts, but when they begin to be really interested in crafts, this is a good indication that they're ready to be discharged. I felt ready to be discharged from the divorce pits when I started making plans for the future.'

My research has found that recently separated people, and especially dumpees, are very much 'living in the past,' thinking mostly about how it 'used to be.' Further along the process, people stop living in the past and start living in the present, enjoying their current view of life and living it.

Recently separated people, and again especially dumpees, are very dependent upon others. As people grow further in the process, they gain more independence, and find a good balance between independence and dependence. Have you found a good balance between dependence and independence?

HOW ARE YOU DOING?

1. I am able to put into words what I am feeling
2. I am able to communicate to another person what I am feeling
3. I have at least one close friend of each sex that I can ask for help when I am in need of support
4. I can express my anger in a positive manner that is not destructive to me or to those around me
5. I am keeping a journal of my feelings and attitudes as I adjust to my transitional journey
6. I have made at least one new friend, or renewed an old friendship in the past month
7. I have invested quality time with at least one friend this past week
8. I have identified which of the rebuilding blocks I need to work on, and have made a plan to start my further work

9. I have invested time into a growing experience such as reading a good book, taking an education class, attending an interesting lecture, or watching an educational programme on TV this past week
10. I have seriously considered if I would benefit from a therapy relationship in order to enhance my personal growth to speed up my adjustment process
11. I have received my quota of 'hugs' from my friends this week
12. I have spent time by myself either in prayer, meditation, or solitary thought this past week
13. I have nurtured myself with a kind deed this past week
14. I listen to aches, tensions, and feelings in my body to learn more about myself
15. I exercise regularly be this walking, running or doing some form of physical activity
16. I have made at least one change in my daily living habits that I feel good about this week
17. I nourish my body with adequate diet
18. I have given emotionally to myself to at least one friend this past week
19. I have invested in my spiritual growth this past week
20. I like being the person I am
21. I am making plans for my future
22. I have let the 'natural child' within me have fun the past week
23. I am not carrying around pent up feelings of anger, grief, loneliness, rejection, or guilt but have learned to express them in order to rid myself of them
24. I am much more in control of my life than I was when my past relationship ended

25. I am experiencing the feeling of freedom to be myself
26. I am actively using the concepts learned from this course to help speed up my adjustment process

Well, how are you doing? Are you satisfied with your self evaluation? I am going to summarise some of the important concepts that we have explored.

What is the freedom we all seem to be striving for? Freedom is something you find inside of you. And you find it by becoming free from unmet needs which control you, such as the need to avoid being alone, the need to feel guilty, the need to find a critical parent to please, or the need to get free from your own parent within you.'

The final stage of freedom is about doing what you want for yourself, the life that you choose where you can be free of the bonds that have kept you from being the person you would like to be. The person that you were meant to be; the person you are capable of being. Our worst enemies are those within us, and it is those demons from which we need to free ourselves.

Reaching this stage not only gives us the freedom of choice to seek happiness either alone or in another relationship it also gives us the freedom to be ourselves.

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