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# Faulty Belief: We Must Have or Recapture the Romance in Our Marriage

**Groundhog  
Process**



## Step #1

### Identify the Problem

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Almost daily I encounter those entangled in a kind of extramarital affair I describe as "I Fell Out of Love...and just love being in love."

The cheating or "offending" spouse has encountered someone where there are "sparks!"

Here are common phrases: (to the spouse) "I love you but am not 'in love' with you. The romance in our marriage is gone. I found someone who really loves me." (self thoughts) "I don't want to settle. I have a lot of love to give. He/she treats me like no one else. I feel special with the other person."

The "offended spouse" often responds with increased or new romantic gestures. They fall flat.

At the core of this kind of affair is a deeply engrained belief that "romance" is the savior and benchmark of a great marriage or intimate relationship.

Here are some reflections on romance:

1. "Romance" is subtly touted in our culture (USA) as the ultimate experience in an intimate relationship. Romance is idealized in movies and books as the ecstasy of being "in love." We can't get enough (hugely profitable grocery counter tabloids) of which "stars" are currently "in love" with whom. And, it often does not matter (really) if they are married. Oh gosh, to be like that, to experience that. Wouldn't that be wonderful?
2. Romantic movies are often called "romantic comedies." Ever wonder why they are so funny or why they should be? Or, at the other end, romantic movies are tragedies (Romeo and Juliet). How about the smaltzie "Bridges of Madison County" where the woman and man (Clint Eastwood) never get at the huge "emptiness" in their lives? Ever see a "real" romantic movie?
3. The search for romance whether through an affair or within our marriage often belies powerful personal needs. It has little to do with love and more to do with getting our personal needs met. Most of us have strong needs such as to be acknowledged, adored, cared for or perhaps cherished. Another powerful need is to feel "special." This is often the pattern for a man overindulged by his mother (forgive me for bringing in Freud) or a woman who was the "apple of her father's eye," yet was emotionally deprived in that relationship.

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Romance becomes the vehicle through which these needs are supposedly met without needing to name those needs or talk about them. (Gosh, he/she knows what I want before I do - he/she can read my mind. He/she/we are special!)

Don't get me wrong. Personal needs are ok. We all have them. Personal needs drive, often powerfully, what we go after. But, and this is a huge but, if we do not consciously name them and get them met once and for all (and that can be done!) they continue to drive us and we live perpetually in frustration, always wanting more.

Once we move beyond the merry-go-round of personal need meeting we discover our personal passion, our purpose and reach down and touch the essence of real joy and peace.

4. Romance is for mating. Sex (sexual union) is often the bottom line. The "chemistry" described in "romantic love" we are finding, is truly that - raw chemistry. Studies now show (just read this last week) that those "in love" have a high concentration of specific dorphins (chemicals) in their bodies. These are the chemicals found when animals are in "heat."

I also believe that we run into 2-3 people in our life-time where we experience this "chemistry." I have no idea why this happens. There appears to be some attraction, based on a huge number of factors that stir our juices - literally. Interesting. But, doesn't mean that I must jump into bed with this person. Maybe some animals do, however.

5. A person seeking romance is often someone looking for a high. They want to feel good. They expect they should feel good. They believe they should jump on something that feels good. They want the pill, the drug, the retreat, the experience that will take away their pain, their emptiness, their loneliness and make them feel good. Of course, it is only temporary. The nagging pain continually emerges and their eternal search for quelling the storm within seeks a new substance.

So, should I forget the cards, the notes, the special events I plan secretly for him/her, the I love you's and be cold, frigid and distant?

Of course not. Please understand the temporary place of "romance" and the fact that your relationship longs for moments, days, weeks and years in which you declare yourself more and more fully and welcome (sometimes with trepidation) the declarations of the other and together explore the depths of acceptance and heightened awareness (love) that moves beyond romance and knows no end.

Take a couple minutes to reflect on or write out your responses to these questions:

1. To what degree do you believe you must talk to rebuild your marriage or relationship?

We must					Not that important
<input type="checkbox"/>					

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2. What images or thoughts come to mind when you think of talking to your spouse, especially about feelings?

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3. What type of feeling do you get when you think of talking to your spouse?

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4. What does it mean for you that you must talk, especially about your feelings, to rebuild your marriage?

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5. What is your level of comfort when you think of talking, especially about your feelings:

Comfortable						Uncomfortable
<input type="checkbox"/>						

Another trap for couples attempting to rebuild a hurting marriage is to believe they must “talk” through their problems or “talk” about solutions and in that process find their way to a new relationship.

Let’s take a closer look at this perceived need to talk through marital problems or the concept that a couple must “get feelings out” and talk about them for healing and health to exist.

## Groundhog Process



## Step #2

### Seek out new information

#### The Top 10 Reasons Why Talking Can Be Woefully Inadequate in Rebuilding the Love You Can Trust

Please consider these assumptions and misconceptions about “talking” as a road to healing:

1. “Talking” is often perceived as a means to an end. The ultimate desired end is not merely talking but effective communication. Further down the need scale is the desire to be deeply emotionally connected to someone. “Let’s talk about this” means, in essence, I want you to know me and I want to know you better. I want to feel closer to you. I want to experience that emotional connection, that closeness.
2. That emotional connection or closeness can happen WITHOUT talking. A look, a facial expression, a glance, a touch or a warm movement of the body may “connect.” I prefer to use the word engage rather than talk. I want to engage you.
3. One spouse is always more of a “talker” than the other. One most often relies upon verbal acumen to get what s/he wants, make a point or move the relationship or other person in a specific direction. The “non-talker” may feel inadequate verbally which often leads to a one-down position in the relationship which precludes the development of intimacy or a desired emotional connection. The non-talker may also control with his/her non-talking.
4. The one who wants to talk often is the pursuer. S/he is attempting to cope with and move toward getting a specific set of personal needs met. S/he may feel more desperate in getting his/her her personal needs met or may be more fearful of impending pain in the relationship (or lack of it.)
5. Talking often serves as a fertile ground for triggering upset. If words can’t kill, they can certainly trigger negative thoughts and feelings. What one says, how one constructs his/her words, the tinge of judgment or accusation in a word, although not intended, may quickly and powerfully destroy any positive momentum and good feelings in the relationship. Words are a powerful trigger.
6. The “talker” often comes from his/her personal need system or neediness, looking to take or receive and not give. The other spouse quickly picks up on this and usually withdraws, attacks, explains or defends.
7. “Talking” may have the purpose of persuading. The “talker” may have a rigid expectations of what a marriage and whom his/her spouse should be and the “talking” is an effort to persuade the spouse to meet those expectations and create a marriage or relationship according to the “talkers” ideas. This may seem reasonable (since most

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talkers are reasonable) to the other spouse, but that spouse out of confusion or reluctance, doesn't buy in.

8. We need to "talk" may mean, "I need to tell you how you must change, what is wrong with you or how you are not acting appropriately in this marriage. It's scolding time. "Talking" is often focused on the other person; what s/he is or is not doing, feeling, thinking, etc.
9. "Talking" may be used to maintain distance. A couple "talking" does not necessarily mean they are engaging at a meaning and significantly intimate level.
10. Some process, grow and learn better through thinking and silence. Silence may be more powerful in generating healing than "talking."

I hope it is obvious that "talking" is not always a panacea. I've discovered over and over again in my private practice and coaching that a reluctant partner who talks, and thereby acquiesces to the desire of the other person to get it out, does so in ways that continue to avoid the truth of the relationship and self.

Sometimes it is best NOT to talk. And effective talking or what I call engagement can happen only under particular circumstances and when other business is first addressed.

**Reflection:**

Which of the above distinctions speaks most powerfully to what your experience in working on the marriage?

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What has this been like for you?

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## Groundhog Process



## Step #3

### Shifts to Implement

In the next step of the Ground Hog Process you begin to make the mental shifts that you will place you on a more productive and effective path to marriage and love construction or reconstruction.

The constructive belief may not make full sense to you at this point. However as you proceed through the rebuilding steps you will see and experience the validity and power of each constructive belief.

Take a couple moments to place a checkmark in the box that most closely fit where you are now relative to the two opposing beliefs.

Destructive Belief	Check what you believe now			Constructive Belief	
We need to talk.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I want to engage my spouse.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Talking will produce the result I want.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometimes I can connect with a touch, look or even silence.	<input type="checkbox"/>
We must talk about our feelings.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I desire an emotional connection.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I must talk to get my point across.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I can express my position, maybe without talking.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Talking gets me into trouble.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I can constructively express myself without judgment or criticism.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I must talk to get him/her to understand me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I want to understand him/her.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I've always talked to get what I want.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I can explore different ways of getting my personal needs met.	<input type="checkbox"/>
I've always got what I wanted by not talking.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	I can explore different ways of getting my personal needs met.	<input type="checkbox"/>

I can't help the way I respond  
when we talk.

I can control myself.

I MUST talk. I can't keep quiet.

I can listen.

Our talking goes in circles.

It's possible to emotionally  
connect.

If you want to take this a little further:

List other shifts you would like to make:

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**Groundhog  
Process**



**Step #4**

**Engage Self**

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I do not want you at this point to share your findings and thoughts with your spouse or partner.

You engage you. You don't engage the other.

Engage yourself means spending some time in the next day or two consciously and intentionally thinking about the above exercise; specifically the distinctions and shifts you desire.

Shift your focal point away from him/her to a degree. This, in itself, may be a significant shift. (Be aware that s/he will probably notice and may react. If able, plan your response if s/he reacts.)

Choose one shift and give that shift your full attention. What would that shift feel like? What would you be doing as you make that shift? What would that shift bring to you?

**Reflect on and Answer these questions:**

I will be most aware of these new distinctions and/or shifts at this time and place during the next day.

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I will use this trigger (mantra: I will do this, word: power, feel good, etc., rubber band around wrist, etc.) to keep me on track.

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**Groundhog  
Process**



**Step #5**

**How did I enhance my personal  
power and/or voice?**

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**Reflect on and Answer these Questions:**

Evaluate what it was like to spend a day or two focusing on your desired shift and the distinctions you are beginning to make.

Notice any changes you experience in terms of your personal power, feelings and thoughts about yourself.

Remember, you are just beginning. Don't be upset or alarmed if you find it difficult to pinpoint change and shifts.

Employing the Ground Hog Process for most takes a number of attempts. It gradually will become part of you. And, when it becomes part of you, you will have it for life.

These questions will help you evaluate your experience:

On a scale of 1-10 (10 being as bad as it can get) I now rate my bad feelings as \_\_\_\_\_.

I notice this new thought coming to mind after the engagement.

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I notice this new image coming to mind after the engagement.

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I notice this feeling \_\_\_\_\_ located in this part of my body  
\_\_\_\_\_ emerging after the engagement.

I now think this of myself after the engagement.

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