

## What Makes a Relationship Work Well?

by Terrence Real

1. **Being able to hold the relationship in warmer care in the face of its imperfection.** Each of you as partners has imperfections as well as the relationship.
2. **Being able to speak relationally.**
3. **Being able to listen to your partner relationally.** This means being able to hold onto yourself (your feelings, thoughts, perceptions, etc.) HALE stretching to see and experience your partner's reality as valid for them as well. It's both/and, not just my way.
4. **Being able to negotiate rationally.**
5. **Being able to hold onto your skill and immaturity even when your partner isn't able to do that.** You must be able to stay on track when your partner isn't.

## Precursors for Intimacy

1. **Is there a reasonable time and space to be intimate friends?**
2. **Sobriety is a must. Any addictive behavior must be addressed and eliminated.**
3. **All exits closed.** Terry refers to "exits" as "outriggers", the small craft attached to a boat that serve to stabilize the larger boat. He says you must rid the relationship of any "outriggers", anything that stabilizes the misery in the relationship.

## What is Important for the Relationship to Thrive?

1. **You must get to the point in the relationship where you have a self-enforcing loop.**
2. **All couples need a recovery sub-culture --, a grouping of friends, family, support group or networks, etc. that are "relational cherishing" sub-cultures.** He mentions that no one recovers relationally all by oneself.
3. **Men need to become "vulnerability cherishing" instead of "vulnerability despising".**
4. **Women need to reclaim their "voice" and learn how to express themselves without shaming or blaming.**

*Carole Kirby, LMSW*

therapy4couples.com ♥ 734.904.4345 ♥ 212.600.5777 ♥ carole.kirby777@gmail.com