



**NOW  
FIX YOUR  
RELATIONSHIP**

**STOP BEING AT THE MERCY OF YOUR  
CODEPENDENT BRAIN**

**BY ANNE DRANITSARIS, PH.D.**

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CODEPENDENT BRAIN

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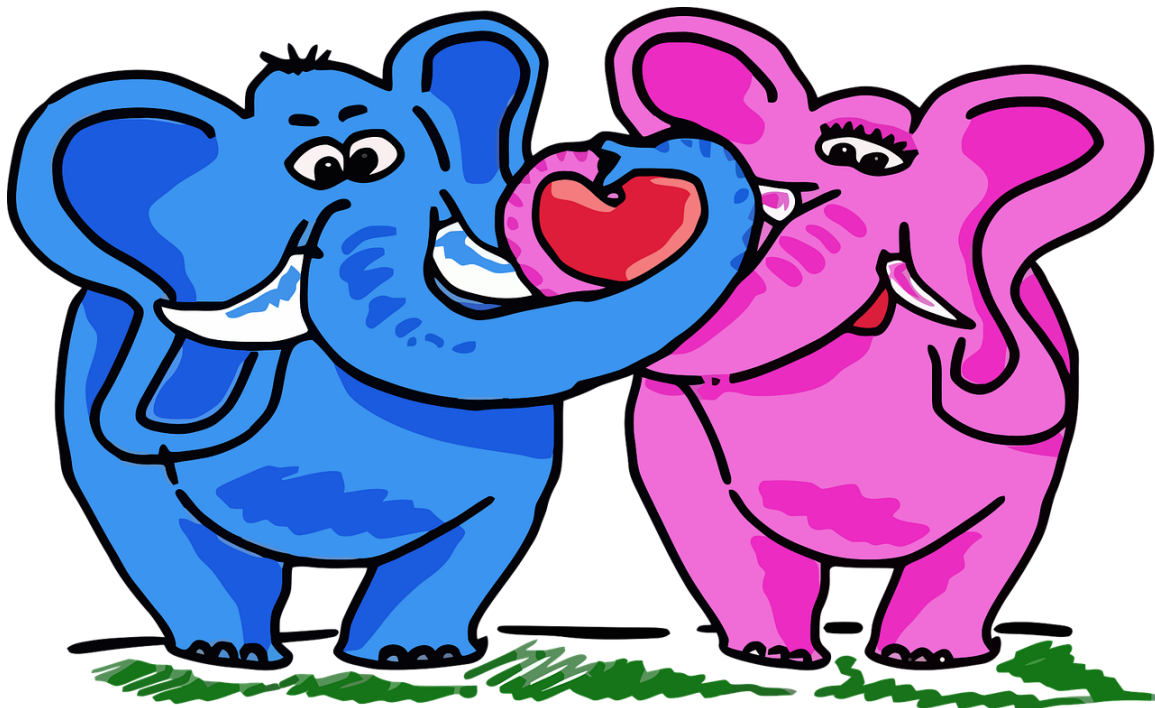
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# Part 1: INTRODUCTION



**D**espite doing all you can to hold your relationship together, and everything you've sacrificed to make it work, it's still dysfunctional and you're still miserable. In fact, the more you try to "fix" your partner, or figure out new ways of approaching him to change his behavior or get your needs met, the worse it seems to get.

Frustrating isn't it? That's because while you are busily trying to fix him and fix the relationship, you should be fixing what's broken in your brain. We call it YOUR RELATIONSHIP APPARATUS.

This book will explain to you, in the most simple terms possible for a complex subject, **what's broken, why you're codependent, and what the fix is.** You'll also learn about the other resources we have available to support you as you FIX YOUR RELATIONSHIP APPARATUS.

## INTRODUCTION

Most people buy this book because they are unhappy in their relationships. They want to know why they keep ending up being treated the same way, and why they tolerate it.

*We know why and Therapeutic Relationship Coaching can help!*

This book can help you understand why you choose the type of person you do, and why you let yourself be devalued and used. It's not that you start out this way. In fact, you've probably given yourself a number of stern talkings-to, only to surrender again to that sweet possibility that he could be "the one." This is also right about the time you start to figure out the kind of woman he wants, and try to become her.

Does this sound familiar? You find yourself a great guy and everything is going smoothly. After a few months, you notice he seems a little moody and a bit short with you. The next thing you know, you're feeling anxious about what you might have done, or that something about you that isn't right. You wonder if you are good enough, smart enough, pretty enough. He gets irritated when you ask him about what's going on.

Soon you're worrying about what you can and can't say or ask. You look for ways of being helpful to him and encourage him to monopolize the conversation. He

*The NOW Fix Your Relationship Ebook is about fixing the Relationship Apparatus of the **codependent female**. Men may relate to the patterns of behavior, as many men have their dial set to codependent on their Relationship Apparatus. We'll be writing about them in our next book.*



## INTRODUCTION

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complains about money, problems at work and other issues, letting you swoop in to rescue him so he will think you are ever so helpful and wonderful. He's doesn't seem to notice, but you tell yourself that it's okay. "He'll come around." Your needs can wait.

But no one can live without getting their needs met. Deep down you know the relationship is only okay as long as you are doing all the giving and him all the taking. Whatever story you are making up in your head about how he loves you or how it's just a phase he's going through, or that he doesn't mean to be so nasty, *is just that; a story*. Truth is, as long as you focus on fixing him, you don't look inside yourself to fix your own broken Relationship Apparatus.



### WE ARE RELATIONAL BEINGS

Most of us want and need a relationship where we can bond and have someone to build a life with. Our partner needs to be able to make us feel safe, valued, validated and loved. That's what we're looking for and expect to find. Nothing wrong with that!

Lots of us say things like "I would never fall for anyone who didn't treat me well." Or "I'll never be one of those women who let a man use me." And then, it happens! Along comes relationship after relationship where you morph into the opposite of the strong, powerful female you imagine yourself to be. That's because we make the mistake of

## INTRODUCTION

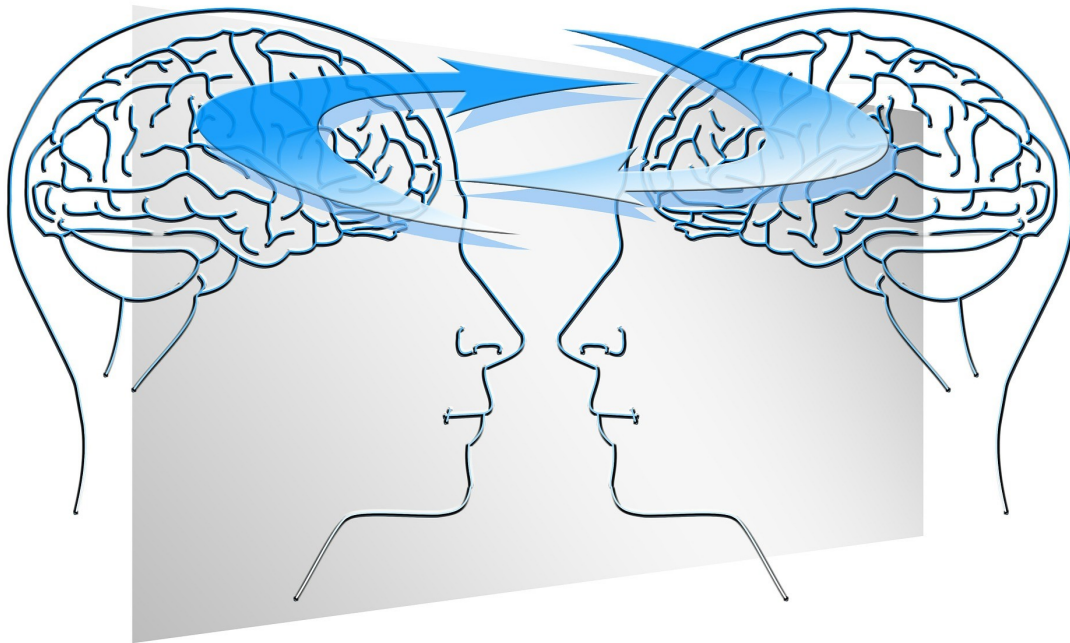
believing we aren't vulnerable to the same disappointments, betrayals and diminishment that other women are.

Once we've bonded with someone, it's as though they become part of us physically. That's why it's so painful to separate. After all, we've been using him to regulate our emotions and our self-esteem. It's too painful to leave.

So now you feel like you're stuck with this man who became a little boy right before your eyes. He's gone from wanting to love and cherish you to asking if you'll fetch a beer before you start making him dinner. Your expectations of him are so low that you feel special if he asks you how your day was.

## WE'VE SOLVED THE MYSTERY OF WHY WE DO THIS.

Believe it or not, we're codependent because of something that happened when we were infants. This is when our Relationship Apparatus got broken and stuck in a Codependent Relationship Position. It stopped the development of the AUTHENTIC SELF.



# INTRODUCTION



*A broken Relationship Apparatus causes us to behave in ways that are foreign to our authentic self. As women, we can be ambitious, accomplished and assertive in our careers, yet act like wimps with our partners.*



If your Relationship Apparatus broke during that critical time in your infant child development, it needs to be fixed to have fulfilling relationships.

The adaptive behaviors we used to get our needs met during our childhood are the behaviors we are still using now. We're stuck in survival, adapting, doing work-arounds and patch-jobs to make sure our relationship works. That's what makes us so unhappy!

## **4 CODEPENDENT RELATIONSHIP POSITIONS**

When our Relationship Apparatus is broken, we form relationships from a Codependent Relationship Position.

*There are 4 Codependent Positions - Submissive, Avoidant, Adaptive or Dominant.*

We are able to shift to any of the Positions, but we have one that works best for us based on the way our brain is organized. We usually have relationships with someone who is in the opposite codependent position to us. What holds the relationship together is mutual need. That's right: the submissive codependent needs someone to serve and take care of, and the dominant needs someone to serve them. **A perfect dysfunctional whole!**

## INTRODUCTION

### 4 CODEPENDENT RELATIONSHIP POSITIONS

The four Codependent Relationship Positions are patterns of self-protective behavior. These behaviors were adopted to help cope with childhood trauma, neglect and other forms of parental misattunement to a child's needs. Each of us has one or two that we use the most to get our needs met in relationships. We need to learn to have relationships from our Authentic Self. Which one do you use the most?



*What position is your Relationship Apparatus set to? Take the What's Your Relationship Position Quiz and find out.*

## Part 2:

# OUR RELATIONSHIP APPARATUS

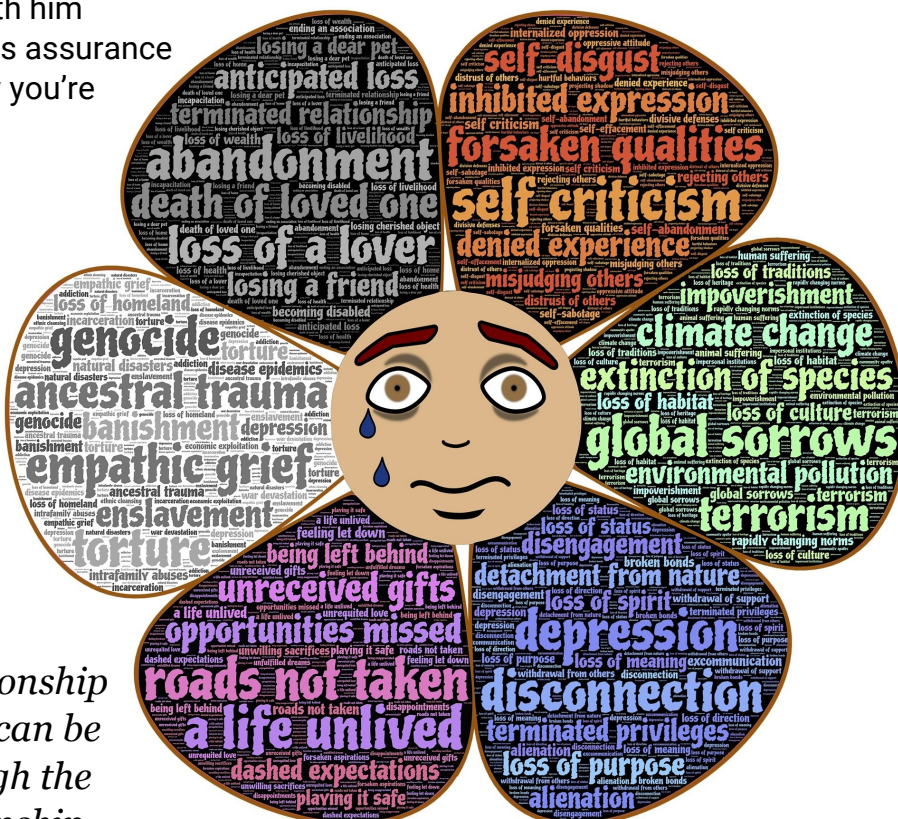


**S**o where is this mysterious Relationship Apparatus, responsible for all of the heartache in our lives? **It's located in the right emotional quadrant of the brain.** With lots of neural connections to our nervous system, it makes our heart skip a beat and our bellies tense up with fear. We use this brain to bond and to form attachments. It is experiential, and seeks to feel valued, safe, secure, admired and needed in the relationship.

In healthy relationships, we use other parts of our brain to provide us with facts and honest perceptions about those we are in relationship with. We know ourselves and don't hesitate to ask for what we need. This requires a strong, healthy Relationship Apparatus with our emotional brain and rational brain (prefrontal cortex) working together. This is having relationships from the AUTHENTIC SELF.

# OUR RELATIONSHIP APPARATUS

If your Relationship Apparatus is broken, bonding is an anxious event. You're so focused on whether the guy likes you (Emotional Brain) that you aren't paying attention to what he's really like (Rational Brain). You become obsessed with getting his attention, calling him because you're too anxious to wait to see if he calls. Despite your own values and morals, you jump into bed with him before getting to know him, as assurance that you have value. And now you're hooked.....



*Your Relationship Apparatus can be fixed through the NOW Fix Your Relationship Process we've developed. It teaches you how to relate from your AUTHENTIC SELF and frees you from your dysfunctional patterns of behavior that cause you unhappiness.*

# OUR RELATIONSHIP APPARATUS

## HOW YOUR RELATIONSHIP APPARATUS DEVELOPS

At birth, the infant's brain is far from developed. In fact, the brain lays down and prunes neurons away at such a rate that memories don't get encoded. So if someone tells you they remember lying in their crib at 6 months old, they are either a Phenom or lying through their teeth.

A critical event occurs during the first few years that impacts how the child will have relationships during their life. The event is the **transition from the Dependant Stage to the Codependent Stage of development**. If this transition is not successful, it has a significant negative impact on our development and the way we form relationships as adults.

Instead of growing and thriving because we have a secure base and forming relationships from our AUTHENTIC SELF, our energy goes into the self-protective behaviors of the 4 Relationship Positions.

*Let's look at transition from the Dependent to Codependent Stage and what happens when things go wrong!*



# OUR RELATIONSHIP APPARATUS

## THE DEPENDENT STAGE

The Dependent Stage is sometimes called the 4<sup>th</sup> trimester because it lasts for about 9 months. During this stage, babies have one agenda: their survival. They recognize mom as the part of themselves that meets their needs. Mom has to performing lots of functions for the infant, including self-regulatory functions of the brain's cortex.

During the Dependent Stage, the child doesn't know mom is separate from them. They are as joined as they were when the infant was in the mother's body. To the child, there is no separation. The brain development necessary to understand what "I" and "You" are hasn't happened yet, beyond a primitive level.

Mom has to be able to put the needs of the baby ahead of her own. She also has to listen to her baby, and not to what everyone else will tell her she "should" be doing. The baby grows healthy, safe and psychologically secure when they have few experiences of frustration, stress and fear.

## THE CODEPENDENT STAGE

At around 9 months, the baby becomes more aware of their environment and gets the idea that they are separate from mom. Frustrated needs are a hallmark of the stage. Mom expects them to wait to





## Part 3:

# HOW IT GETS BROKEN



If mom doesn't know how to help the baby transition through the Codependent Stage, by understanding what is going on and the importance of dealing with it well, they will do the following instead with negative consequences. **THIS IS HOW THE RELATIONSHIP APPARATUS IS BROKEN!**

### **SHAMING, BLAMING & JUDGING CREATES "BAD" SELF-IMAGE**

Parents often freak out at their kids when they act out. Of course it's embarrassing to have your precious little one become a terror, right before everyone's eyes. They don't know or forget how important it is to not diminish or punish the child, or shame them in front of others. Parents can also lapse into forcing their kids to share prematurely or tell them they are bad when they sulk, have tantrums or withdraw. It's amazing how many parents take their child's behavior personally, seeing it as a reflection of their parenting skills. They use their emotions to overpower the child or leave them alone in their distress. When this happens frequently, the child's Relationship Apparatus is damaged.

## HOW IT GETS BROKEN

### **MISATUNEMENT TO NEEDS CREATES PROBLEMS WITH IMPULSE CONTROL**

Neglect, or forcing the baby to adhere to a schedule, are both huge stressors. These behaviors teach them “what you feel in your body isn’t important. It’s what momma says that is.” This leads to the failure of the development of neural connections, especially in the areas of the brain dedicated to self-management skills. YES, THIS IS WHY WE HAVE POOR IMPULSE CONTROL AND ADHD. It keeps the Relationship Apparatus dialed to dependence on others for emotional regulation.

### **EXCESSIVE NEGATIVE EMOTIONS CREATES HYPERVIGILANCE**

Parents that yell at each other or get angry at insignificant things create ongoing stress. Now baby’s on high alert, and mom’s all upset because she has a “fussy baby!” all of a sudden. So young to already have a label. Kids adapt and will do what it takes to get their emotional needs met. However, it’s at the cost of the full development of their Relationship Apparatus. Kids need supportive relationships to help calm their sensitive nervous systems.



### **CONDITIONAL LOVE CREATES BELIEF YOU HAVE TO BE GOOD TO BE LOVED**

The child is either the good, praiseworthy child or the bad (not good enough) child. Despite how much the child tries, they are still driven by impulses and emotions and can’t help themselves. While the kid may adapt and

## HOW IT GETS BROKEN



conform behaviorally, they are anxious because they don't really know what to do to make momma happy. They end up believing love is conditional on conforming and being good. If they can never be good enough for their parents to love, they stop trying, often becoming bullies or recluses.

### **MOM'S ANXIETY CREATES ANXIETY & LOW SELF-ESTEEM**

Mom's anxiety over being a "good" mom can go right into the infant's nervous system. The child can grow up anxious about their own capabilities and not trust their instincts, just like mom. They stay dependent on others to regulate their self-esteem and overwhelming anxiety.

When the Relationship Apparatus get's stuck in the Codependent Phase, mom's a threat and they can only depend on themselves for their survival. However, they are still **DEPENDENT** on mom and have to figure out how to manage her to mediate the threat. They focus on how to survive despite the cost to the development of their **AUTHENTIC SELF**.

*Mom goes from feeling safe to creating anxiety for the baby.*

## Part 4:

# BROKEN RELATIONSHIP CODE

**W**hen the Relationship Apparatus stalls in the Codependent Stage, a **survival code** gets imprinted into our brain that drives behavior in relationships. **We call this the Relationship Code.** Through trial and error, the child learns that in order to survive, certain behaviors work and others cause pain and suffering. This forms the code they form relationships with throughout their life.

### CODEPENDENT RELATIONSHIP CODE

1. Never let anyone close.
2. You must be submissive (nice) to be loved.
3. You must put others first to survive.
4. No one will love you if you're selfish.
5. Certain people are frightening and you have to accommodate them.
6. You must try to be understanding.
7. You must let others be right, even when they are wrong.
8. You must never upset anyone.
9. You are an imposter waiting to be found out.
10. Love is conditional on you being good.
11. People don't want to listen to what you have to say.
12. You don't need anyone.
13. You must help others.



*Your Relationship Code **MUST** be rewritten in order for you to have the kind of relationships that will meet your needs.*

# BROKEN RELATIONSHIP CODE



## CODEPENDENCE IS NOT A DISEASE

Codependence is a developmental issue, and not something that we can get over by reading a book or by knowing we are codependent. You have to choose to behave differently in relationships and then do it. By looking at yourself, your behavior and your potential, you will begin to repair your Relationship Apparatus.

If your Relationship Apparatus is broken, with an ineffective Codependent Code written into its programming, this is how you do relationships. Despite your rational brain telling you to behave differently, the embedded code overrides your best intentions.

Stuck in this codependent pattern of behavior means that to feel safe, you have to adapt and put the needs of others ahead of your own. It doesn't work for you long term, but it's what your brain is programmed to do. That's why your responses feel so automatic. This gets in the way of having relationships from your AUTHENTIC SELF.



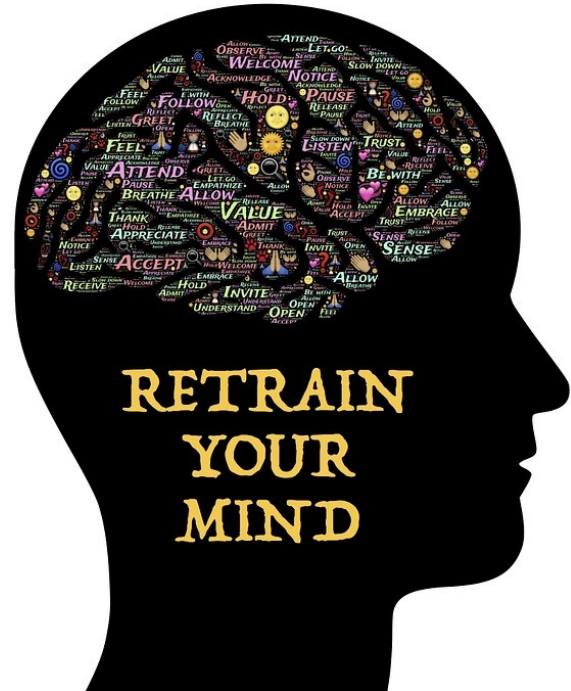
*We have to forget everything we've read about codependence. We need to think of it as a stage we got stuck at rather than a disease, an addiction or a psychopathology. This empowers us to grow and develop our AUTHENTIC SELF. To stop surviving and start thriving!*

# BROKEN RELATIONSHIP CODE

## Rewrite Your Relationship Code

Here are a few things you need to stop doing to repair your Relationship Apparatus:

- Stop looking outside yourself for validation.
- Stop blaming others for not treating you the way you want to be treated.
- Stop waiting for the relationships you long for. You're stuck on automatic pilot in your relationships, and in a constant state of self-protection and self-loathing.
- Stop hoping that by meeting the needs of others you will get your needs met. You don't need anyone to feel whole, to "complete" them you.
- Stop using submissive or dominant behaviors to maintain psychological



*Time to rewrite your Relationship Code and get on with your life.*

## Part 5:

# 10 STEP RELATIONSHIP FIX

**A**re you ready? It only takes a moment to decide to take the first step. That's easy-peasy. It's the next couple of years of working to fix your Relationship Apparatus that's the challenge.

We won't tell you that this program will happen overnight, but we will tell you that it works. We will be with you every step of the way, offering tips, tools and Relationship Coaching to help you get through the steps.

As you embark on this developmental journey, make sure you give yourself enough time to go through the steps. Spend time thinking about yourself. Resist the impulse to think about how you can use this to help your partner. This program is for you and works best when you build tolerance to focusing on your own needs and skill development.





# CREATE A RELATIONSHIP CODE

*In this step, you'll learn about the Relationship Code and why you need one to fix your Relationship Apparatus.*

**Y**our Relationship Code has been written to ensure your survival. It doesn't really work for you if you want to thrive and get your needs met. You no longer need another person for survival. It might feel like it but FEELINGS AREN'T FACTS. You don't have to adapt or submit to be loved. If you don't rewrite your Relationship Code, you'll have problems honoring your commitment to yourself. You'll keep procrastinating and won't do things that are important to you for fear your partner will be upset. Or you'll ignore your physical needs by eating poorly, not exercising, working too much, etc.

Without a Relationship Code you're at the mercy of your feelings. Fear or anxiety make you behave codependently, which we already know isn't in your best interest. Because your Relationship Code triggers anxiety when you are thinking about you, it can trick you to believe things that just aren't true. IT DOESN'T MEAN YOUR SELFISH! Putting him first means you're going to disconnect from your own needs and emotions.



*Creating a Relationship Code builds the foundation for your Authentic Self. It helps you to be in the relationship in a different way, setting expectations for getting your needs met.*





# CREATE A RELATIONSHIP CODE

***STEP 1 PRACTICE:***  
*Write a Relationship Code based on your values, beliefs and principles.*



Writing your Relationship Code gives you a set operating principles that you manage your behavior around and hold yourself accountable to. This makes it easier to manage your emotions, behavior and impulses and to say “no” without feeling guilty. It also supports you staying focused on yourself and your goals.

Here are some examples of elements of a Relationship Code.

- I live with integrity. I honor my commitments to myself. While I have compassion for lapses, I hold fast to honoring my relationship code.
- I value myself, my body, my competence and my intelligence. I don't question whether I am good enough or let others devalue me. I don't stay in relationships where I am devalued.
- I don't let the emotionally driven behavior of others dictate my behavior. I confront emotional manipulation and bullying. I don't stay in a relationship where I don't feel emotionally safe.
- I consider the needs of others equal to my own. I negotiate to get my needs met. I don't stay in relationships where my needs are overlooked, ignored or ridiculed.



## PLAN TO SUCCEED

*In this step, you'll learn why you need to set goals and plan for your success.*

**S**eems like every time you break up with someone, you swear you'll never behave the same way or let yourself be treated so badly. Next time it will be different, right? And then you find yourself doing the same things all over again. That's because you didn't focus on your own relationship goals and plan to have a successful relationship.

Goals let you focus on your own priorities, shifting the focus away from him. Your goals should have nothing to do with him, but should focus on the behavior you want to master. If your only goal is to find a man, you can always do that. Finding one to love you the way you need to be loved is a different thing.





# PLAN TO SUCCEED

Start by thinking about what you have written in your Relationship Code and set some goals for achieving new behaviors. The goals shouldn't be about the kind of guy you want, or how you want to feel, but should be about what you need to achieve to fix your Relationship Apparatus.

Make a list of the behaviors you want to change and set goals to make sure you know how you are going to make it happen. The biggest problem that most people have with planning and setting goals is that they don't do it correctly.

There is a process that you need to go through in order to define goals that will motivate you and you're able to deliver on. The process is known as "SMART goals."



*Until you plan to fix your Relationship Apparatus, every new guy you meet will be different, wonderful and amazing. Then you go down that slippery slope, using codependent behavior to make the*





# PLAN TO SUCCEED

***STEP 2 PRACTICE:***  
*Set 5 SMART goals  
that you want to work  
on this month.*



## SET SMART GOALS

**Specific:** Goals need to be clear, objective and factual. Not feelings or states.

**Measurable/Meaningful:** You can quantify & track progress. Meaningful to you. Not because your partner told you to.

**Achievable:** Goals must be achievable but not too easy. Know you can achieve it with attention and effort.

**Relevant:** The goal is worthwhile and will meet your needs. Supports your vision.

**Timely:** Goals need a firm date to build commitment, or it's not likely to happen. Creates sense of urgency.

**Here are a few examples:**

- To take an assertiveness training course by December 31st, 2016
- To find a therapist for counselling by 10/1/2016.
- To deal directly with issues without using avoidance behaviors 70% of the time by 12/12/2016.

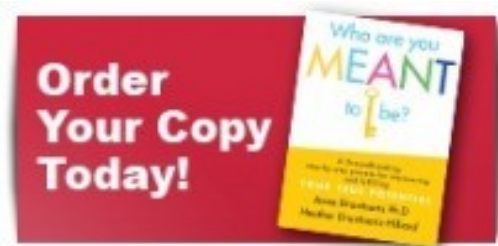
To stay on track, review you goals daily and keep them where you can see them. Spend some time journaling about how you are doing relative to your goals at the end of the day. Make a note of your successes and challenges.



# GET TO KNOW YOUR BRAIN

*In this step, you'll learn about how you can build self-awareness using the Striving Styles® Personality System.*

**B**y taking the **Striving Styles Personality Assessment** you'll get powerful insight into what quadrant of your brain dominates, the emotional need that must be met for you to feel psychologically secure, and what Relationship Position you bond from codependently.



Once you know the emotional drivers of your behavior and what happens when you're needs don't get met, you can do something about it. Its so easy to get your needs met once you know what they are!

For example, if your Striving Style is Performer, with a predominant need to be recognized, you need your partner to make you feel special, compliment you and let you be center stage. Too often, Performers find themselves with men who are stingy with complements, going to great lengths to get attention, only to end up putting on weight because they are so unhappy and blame themselves for their unhappiness.



# 3

## GET TO KNOW YOUR BRAIN

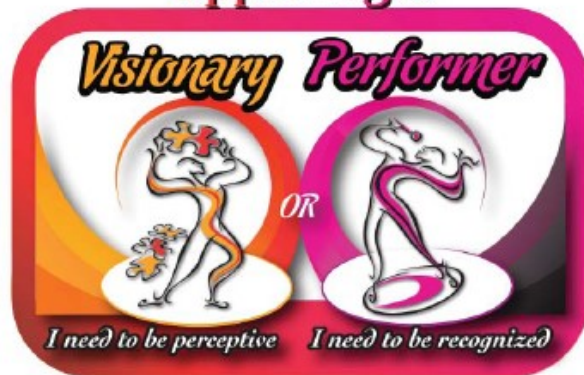
Passive aggressive behavior, power struggles, and emotional acting out happen when you don't get your predominant need met. Because you aren't feeling loved, you go into "fight or flight", which isn't a great place to have a relationship from. If you're accusing him of not loving you because he watches sports or doesn't pick up after himself, it's a sign your need is being frustrated. The failure to recognize this usually leads to emotionally charged discussions about "who did what to whom."

*Knowing your predominant need is empowering, as it allows you to take responsibility for getting it met. You need to ask your partner to meet it and to let him know when he's frustrating it.*

### Upper Left



### Upper Right



### Lower Left



### Lower Right



# GET TO KNOW YOUR BRAIN

***STEP 3 PRACTICE:***  
*Find out your how  
your brain is  
organized with the  
Striving Styles  
Personality System.*

Lots of women say they don't know what they need emotionally because they are so used to thinking about their partner. Knowing what your need satisfiers and dissatisfiers in relationships will be, and how you are most likely to communicate, handle conflict, and approach romance and intimacy is empowering. It gives you an objective language to use with your partner and takes the guesswork out of "knowing" each other.

It also targets shows where gaps in understanding and communication are likely to exist and lead to conflict. It gives you the tools you need to reduce conflict and to negotiate for what you need.



*Receive 50% off Striving Styles Personality Assessment. Learn your Striving Style, your MBTI 4-letter code and how your brain is organized in a 26 page report. Includes a free Striving Styles Workbook.*

# 4

## KNOW YOUR FEARS

*In this step, you'll learn how your fears get in the way of you having the relationship you want.*

"I won't say that to him because it's too scary." Have you ever said this? Many women withhold their thoughts for fear of upsetting their partner. You may not recognize it, but all that power your partner has is because you're giving it away. It's called enabling.

Fear causes us to act in ways that make us angry at ourselves because it goes against our own values. We shame ourselves with our self-talk, telling saying things like "you're such a coward," "you're stupid, stupid, stupid." or "You're such a loser, your going to wreck everything by being so selfish." No wonder you have trouble asserting yourself.

So, the first thing you need to do is admit you're afraid of your partner. You'll want to deny it, of course. As long as your fear stops you from speaking up, you aren't on solid ground in your relationship. Secondly, you have to admit you don't have the skills to manage conflict, assert yourself or negotiate. Then you have to get out of your own way by learning and practicing new behavior.







# KNOW YOUR FEARS

In relationships, our behavior changes when our innate need is not being met and it's associated fear triggered. Fear pushes us into the emotional part of our brain, leaving us at the mercy of our impulses and codependent behaviors that are hardwired into our broken Relationship Apparatus.

## STRIVING STYLES & ASSOCIATED FEARS

The following are the 8 Striving Styles, their needs and fears. Which one are you?

**Leader Innate Need:** To Be In Control

~ *Associated Fear: Helpless/Powerless*

**Intellectual Innate Need:** To Be Knowledgeable

~ *Associated Fear: Being Inferior*

**Performers Innate Need:** To Be Recognized

~ *Associated Fear: Shame*

**Visionary's Innate Need:** To Be Perceptive

~ *Associated Fear: Disconnection*

**Socializer's Innate Need:** To Be Connected

~ *Associated Fear: Abandonment*

**Artist's Innate Need:** To Be Creative

~ *Associated Fear: Being Invisible*

**Adventurer's Innate Need:** To Be Spontaneous

~ *Associated Fear: Loss of Freedom*

**Stabilizer's Innate Need:** To Be Secure

~ *Associated Fear: The Unknown*

## STEP 4 PRACTICE:

*Make a list of your fears. Then list everything you DON'T do because of them. See what you're missing out on.*

# 5

## COMMUNICATE NEEDS & EXPECTATIONS

*In this step, you'll learn the importance of communicating your needs and expectations as well as being accountable!*

**H**e's not a mind reader so you are going to have to tell him what you need and expect of him. You can set the relationship up for failure by believing he should know what you need without you having to tell him. You also need to know what you expect of him so you can communicate this upfront. If you expect him to talk to you at dinner, don't sit and fume while he's on his phone.

Communicating your expectations doesn't mean he automatically has to do it. You have to be prepared to negotiate in a non-emotional way. If he won't negotiate or refuses to acknowledge your expectations, better accept that this is as good as it gets and get out of the relationship. It ain't going to get any better.

It's important that you don't blame your partner for your feelings because that's going to start a fight and get you nowhere. If he is on his phone during dinner, he's breaking a rule. It's not an emotional issue and it's not about whether he loves you or not.



# 5

## COMMUNICATE NEEDS & EXPECTATIONS

The more you take his behavior personally, the worse things become. Contrary to popular myth, fighting and make-up sex are not great for resolving underlying issues and coming to agreements. If neither one of you has a developed cortex, you will struggle with managing emotions and impulses.

Often women believe they are going to kill the romance by agreeing to some realistic expectations. You aren't trying to make him conform or make him settle down. (We sure say some silly things, don't we!) Expectations are like "rules of the game" for each of you. If we want them and think about them, why not ask for them. Realistic, is the key word.





# COMMUNICATE NEEDS & EXPECTATIONS

***STEP 5 PRACTICE:***  
*Set 5 expectations for how you want to be treated. Set 3 expectations for meeting your predominant need.*

Here are some sample general expectations for the relationship:

- We expect each other when running late, to call or text.
- We've agreed to be monogamous. We expect each other to honor this.
- We expect each other to be open and forgiving.
- We try not to react to the other when they are in a bad mood.
- Each of us will take care of each other in a respectful, adult fashion.

Here are some sample expectations for meeting each others needs:

- As a Performer, I expect you to help meet my need to be recognized by remembering to make me feel special.
- As a Stabilizer, I expect you to help meet my need to be secure by participating in traditions.
- As a Leader, I expect you to help meet my need to be in control by planning and scheduling activities in advance.

While we can't meet our partners need all of the time, communicating expectations and discussing needs go a long way in building relationships.



## FOCUS ON ISSUES, NOT EMOTIONS

*In this step, you'll learn the value of resolving issues instead of talking about your feelings.*

**M**any women try to stop their partners dysfunctional behavior by telling him how they feel. (You're always watching sports. I feel like you don't love me.) What's he going to say? Probably "Of course I love you honey. But this is an important game!" If you tell him you're feeling devalued or ignored, he could say something deep and insightful like "So what do you want me to do about it?" Then what do you do?

Just because your partner looks at you in a funny way, or is short with you, doesn't mean he's mad at you. Telling yourself stories with you as the victim stops you from identifying the actual issue.

Fights can happen in the blink of an eye. You start fighting and accusing each other, making things worse. You are both on the defensive, fighting to win rather than to resolve whatever the issue is.





# FOCUS ON ISSUES, NOT EMOTIONS

*Jane's husband Paul is an avid sports fan. From the time he comes home from work to the time they go to bed, he's watching sports. Early in the relationship, Jane watched with him, trying to show she was a supportive wife who tried to like the same things as he did. Now, 2 years into the relationship, she's a mess. She thinks she isn't interesting enough to hold his attention. She's complains to friends that she's tried everything -- inviting friends over, cooking special meals, going out for dinner, and somehow he finds a way to insert watching sports or at least talking about them.*

*She tells him he's watching too much TV and he ignores her. She does all the housework, makes lunches and cooks dinner. She believes he cruel and hurtful and decides to tell him just that. He felt blindsided and attacked because he had no idea she was so unhappy. The conversation didn't go well.*



*Here's the issue. Paul has absented himself from the relationship and household responsibilities and they need to problem solve how he can watch his sports, take care of Jane and do his share of the housework. If he doesn't there have to be consequences. Rule of thumb: No consequences, no behavioral change. Because Jane taught him it was okay to behave the way he did, nothing happened. These two are doing well in counselling, although Jane struggles to identify and raise issues and Paul tries to minimize her upset to manage his embarrassment.*



# FOCUS ON ISSUES, NOT EMOTIONS

## RESOLVING ISSUES

Here are some steps to depersonalizing so you can resolve the issue:

1. **Stop self-referring.** Everything is not about you. If you are upset at something he did, talk about the action, not your feelings.
2. **Assess the situation.** Think about what is actually going on, not whose to blame for it.
3. **Don't make your feelings the priority.** Yes, your feelings are important and need to be acknowledged. Focusing on how horrid he is for making you feel the way you do isn't useful.
4. **Resist being dramatic.** Avoid exaggerating the situation to make him feel guilty.
5. **Make sure you have the facts.** Ask for clarification about what happened. Don't make accusations without information.
6. **Give the benefit of doubt.** If you've accused him of doing something on purpose and he said he didn't, don't call him a liar. If it happens again, it's time to deal with the issue.
7. **Know your buttons.** We are responsible for how quickly we react emotionally, not our partner. Know what you're sensitive about and manage your emotions.
8. **Identify the issue and problem solve.** Make sure you know what the issue is so you can resolve it.  
**YOU CAN'T FIX FEELINGS, ONLY ISSUES.**

***STEP 6 PRACTICE:***  
*Write down 2–3 conflicts that aren't resolved. Determine what the issue is and how you believe it is best resolved.*





# PRACTICE ASSERTIVENESS

*In this step, you'll learn what assertiveness is and some ways to practice self-assertion.*

If your Relationship Apparatus is broken, you'll have difficulty with self-assertion. You're afraid asserting yourself will cause problems in your relationship causing you to be rejected, devalued or abandoned. But to really thrive and be satisfied in a relationship, we have to be able to ask for what we need and give boundaries for the behavior of others.



Assertiveness means you stand up for your personal rights and express thoughts, feelings and beliefs honestly and appropriately - without violating the rights of another person. Expressing 'who you are' without dominating, humiliating or degrading the other person and saying no when its being done to you. Assertive behavior is showing respect for yourself, your rights and your needs, as well as those of your partner.



# PRACTICE

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# ASSERTIVENESS

Having your Relationship Code defined provides you with guidelines for behavior to follow and advocate for what you need. Knowing your Striving Style and predominant need gives you a tangible way of asking for what you need. Using these two as your criterion for self-assertion, you'll start shifting the balance of power in your relationship where you get to keep yours and not give it all away.

On a final note, you probably over apologize. **You need to stop apologizing for everything.** You might say "I'm sorry I forgot to remind you." when your partner forgets your birthday to make him feel better.

The overuse of sorry is self-protective. It helps avoid conflict and negative feelings. There is definitely a time and place to say that you're sorry about something. But if you're in the habit of saying you're sorry for raising issues that make him uncomfortable, stop it.

*Challenge yourself to go a full day without saying it (unless you really mess up) or have a SORRY jar where you pay a quarter every time you use it in a self-depreciating way.*





# PRACTICE ASSERTIVENESS

There are lots of opportunities in our daily life to practice. If you ask what others want first, practice saying what you want first. Ask for the biggest piece of the pie, the one you really want. You don't have to get angry or be apologetic. You simply have to assert what you want, respectfully and directly.

## Assertiveness Bill of Rights

I have the right to .....

- express all my feelings.
- ask for what I want.
- determine my own priorities.
- not be responsible for other people's behaviours, actions, feelings, or problems.
- say "no" without feeling guilty.
- take time to slow down and think.
- say, "I don't know".
- make decisions based on my feelings.
- make mistakes.
- be valued for who I am.
- put myself first.
- dignity and respect.
- say what I think without fear of reprisal.
- my own personal space and time.
- protest if I am treated unfairly.
- earn and control my own money.
- change, including changing my mind.

***STEP 7 PRACTICE:***  
*Review the Assertiveness Bill of Rights. Select 3 things you want to work on each week. Record your progress.*



# PRACTICE TOUGH LOVE

*In this step, you'll learn how important it is for you practice TOUGH LOVE and hang in, despite the difficulty.*

**T**his Process is not a quick fix, cause it takes a lot of consistent effort and discipline to FIX YOUR RELATIONSHIP APPARATUS. The hardest thing is to not give in to feelings and impulses that cause you to act from your favorite Relationship Position. Complaining how hard it is won't help. Getting support and having people who use TOUGH LOVE with you is crucial.

It's not easy to tolerate the anxiety you feel when you practice new behaviors and struggle to resolve issues. Or when you have to say "No more." and mean it. This discipline requires you be FIRM with yourself and not betray yourself for the sake of the relationship.

You can be confident that this Process will change your life. Imagine. Having a relationship on your own terms. Being loved and cherished and doing the same in return. Dealing with issues without being berated or diminished. Being a partner, rather than a mother, child, therapist, cleaning woman, etc. **Expect to struggle.**





# PRACTICE TOUGH LOVE

You'll have to manage your impulse to give up if you experience frustration or you get scared. He might make you feel guilty for hurting him or accuse you of expecting too much. Remember your Relationship Code and the commitment you made to yourself and stay the course.

You also have to struggle to stay in reality, even when your optimism and hopeful nature kicks in. Thinking he will change and everything will be okay with no supporting evidence is just magical thinking.

You'll need to PRACTICE, PRACTICE, PRACTICE. Assertiveness, mindfulness, discipline and honoring your Relationship Code. Just keep working the plan and work steadily toward your goals. Don't pick up the phone and complain about how hard it is! Call and ask for support for your new behavior.

You have to truly accept and believe that if you want to change your behavior, you have to change your brain. Repetition and reinforcement is the only way to do this so expect to struggle and recognize resist the impulse to simply give up on yourself.



*It's okay to be firm and assertive. You need to be to make sure you stay with your commitment to yourself. You know you're doing it for you out of love. Tough love is simply refusing to enable yourself to practice unhealthy or codependent behavior.*





# PRACTICE TOUGH LOVE

***STEP 8 PRACTICE:***  
*Practice tough love with yourself and with your partner. Hold yourself accountable to the behavior you want to change.*

Remember, you're the one who taught him that it was okay to treat you the way he does. By being nice, accommodating, passive, admiring, etc. you've taught him that he really doesn't have to do a whole lot for you to believe he's amazing. Changing this means you have to struggle. Don't focus on how hard it is. Focus on the power you have to get what you want in life and in your relationship.

The practice of TOUGH LOVE means you need to be the person who pushes you, the person who challenges you, the person who holds you accountable so that you can live up to your Relationship Code. Challenge yourself to be bigger and stronger and more capable than you ever thought was possible.

**ARE YOU UP FOR  
THE CHALLENGE?**



# PRACTICE MINDFULNESS

*In this step, you'll learn about how you can change your brain and strengthen the cortex by practicing mindfulness.*

**Y**ou have to practice mindfulness to fix your Relationship Apparatus. Studies show that the ongoing practice of mindfulness builds the “functional connectivity” between the emotional and rational brains. It also increases the frequency of how often they work together. The connections to the emotional panic button and the rest of the brain gets weaker, while the connections to areas associated with self-management get stronger. It strengthens your ability to adhere to your Relationship Code and act assertively in your life.

Your rational brain manages impulses, identifies reality, and observes the thoughts that are making our anxiety go through the roof! Like the impulse that says you should keep trying to make things work when you know nothing's going to change. Or the impulse to say yes to his demands despite how sick, tired, or overwhelmed you are. It helps you stay in reality, make appropriate decisions and stick with them.





# PRACTICE MINDFULNESS

**Mindfulness is paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally.** This sounds simple, but mindfulness is a skill that takes practice to cultivate and maintain. You will improve the quality of your relationships and repair your Relationship Apparatus by regularly practicing Mindfulness.

There are five simple practices to include in your daily life.

1. Cultivate Non-judgmental Awareness
2. Practice Mindfulness Meditation
3. Slow Yourself Down
4. Practice Focused Communication
5. Cultivate Self-Compassion





# PRACTICE MINDFULNESS

## WHY PRACTICE MINDFULNESS

1. **Cultivate Non-judgemental Awareness.** Judging yourself as “not good enough, stupid” or him as “lazy, self-centered” creates negative emotions. Mindfulness helps you slow down and focus on the issues, not on your judgments. Negative habits of mind that undermine you can be broken.
2. **Slow Yourself Down.** Mindfulness helps your brain to respond, not react to situations. It loosens the grip of automatic responses that cause emotional flare ups.
3. **Practice Focused Communication.** Most of us listen more to our own thoughts than to what others are saying. The practice of mindfulness improves the quality of listening. It allows us to consider what we are saying before hurtful words are spoken.
4. **Practice Mindfulness Meditation.** A daily meditation practice, no matter how brief, allows you to strengthen your ability to focus your attention on what is important. To understand what goes on between ourselves and our partner, we need to become more mindful of how our thoughts and actions affect our relationships. **Self-Compassion Meditation** shows you how to help yourself and receive help from others.

***STEP 9 PRACTICE:*** *Select a mindfulness meditation and start a daily practice.*

# 10 DON'T DO IT ALONE

*In this step, you'll learn why you can't fix your Relationship Apparatus alone.*

One of the greatest barriers to fixing the Relationship Apparatus is changing the dysfunctional belief that "I don't need anyone to help me." Not letting anyone "touch you" emotionally means you are still self protective and operating from your codependent position.

*You must allow yourself to be vulnerable, honest, and authentic and let someone help you.*

Many women come to therapy to get help for their partners, not themselves. If allowed, they'll spend most of their therapy hour talking about him, keeping the focus off themselves. BUT IT'S ONLY WHEN WE LOOK AT OUR PART IN THE PROBLEM, WE ARE ABLE TO FIX IT.



*You aren't broken and don't need to be fixed.  
Reach out to find out how you can fix your  
relationship apparatus today!*

# 10 DON'T DO IT ALONE

Your Relationship Apparatus won't get fixed by complaining to others about your partners behavior. Or holding all your emotions inside while you put on weight.

Our therapists are trained to provide a safe, nonjudgmental environment for building self-awareness and getting in touch with your emotions. You won't be labelled codependent, but seen as someone with a codependent pattern of behavior.

Our therapists help you learn to be yourself in your relationship. They will help you stop betraying yourself by trying to be what someone else wants. They teach you the skills you need for feeling powerful in ALL your relationships. Don't do this alone.

*You've likely heard others say they know how to help you or what you need to do. And you've probably read a lot of self-help books. You may have had therapy or counselling to try to help you with fix your relationships, **without success**. So you're probably curious about why we're different.*

***Here's Why!***





# DON'T DO IT ALONE

**We aren't going to analyze you.** WE WILL TEACH YOU HOW TO FIX YOUR RELATIONSHIP AND YOU ARE GOING TO DO THE HARD STUFF. If you really want to get through the Codependent Stage, YOU have to do the work. That's why the Process works.

**We don't make you dependent on us.** We don't want to be the latest Self-Help Guru. We want you to use this amazing program and get out of self-defeating behaviors that cause so much unhappiness for you. We push you and hold you accountable.

**We won't do it for you,** we will teach you the steps you need to take to have the ability to be YOURSELF, without fear of upsetting others. You might not like what we have to say, but we WON'T BE INAUTHENTIC TO KEEP YOUR BUSINESS. We know people who have been in therapy longer than their childhood because of therapists using excessive empathy and making every childhood experience into a dramatic mini-series with the client as the heroine/victim.

**We provide frank, direct direction** on how to fix your Relationship Apparatus. We won't sugar coat it for you. We will HELP YOU BY DOING WHAT WE EXPECT YOU TO DO.

- Later
- Tomorrow
- Today
- NOW**

*How serious are you about fixing your relationships?*

# Part 6: NOW FIX YOUR RELATIONSHIP

You've learned all the signs of a broken Relationship Apparatus. You've also learned the 10 steps you need to take to fix it.

Now here's the really hard part.

*Are you ready to actually do something about it?*

If you are, it means completing each step in the program to fix your relationship apparatus. It means taking the time to invest in yourself and do the work.

And, it all starts with completing Step 1.

- ✓ **Give yourself a week.** Send me your Relationship Code when you are done so we can share with others and help you hold yourself accountable.
- ✓ **Let us help you** to fix your relationship NOW. Sign up for our 10 week online program that helps you to work through each step.
- ✓ **Fast track your results.** Work with our Relationship Coach via Skype to get the individual support that will accelerate your progress.



**FAST TRACK** >>

# About the Author

## **ANNE DRANITSARIS, PH.D.**

Author, Therapist, Relationship Coach,  
Speaker

Anne Dranitsaris, Ph.D, brings a lifetime of study, “psychological savvy” and hands-on clinical experience to helping people achieve their potential. Her interest in creating mental health coupled with her interest in personality systems and the dynamics of human behavior has influenced the Relationship Fix Process and the development of Striving Styles® Personality System.

Anne is deeply committed to helping people develop self-awareness by understanding their personality structure, needs and behavior and how their conditioning impacts their ability to thrive. She is both influential and inspirational, touching the lives of her clients, friends and family in a profound way. She is generous with her guidance which she delivers directly and pragmatically, so you clearly understand what you need to do. Those closest to her will attest to the fact that she is never wrong with her insights.

She is the author of NOW Fix Your Relationship, the co-author of Who Are You Meant to Be?, Power Past the Imposter Syndrome and author of Who Are You Meant to Be In Your Personal Life and In Your Relationships. Anne works with individual and couples, and is a frequent speaker on codependence to groups and on podcasts.



# Part 8: STAY CONNECTED!

Sign up to receive my newsletter, *The Authentic Edge*, and get the valuable tips on fixing your Relationship Apparatus. Plus, you will never miss out on new tutorials, tips and updates!  
[Sign up here.](#)



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**NOW Fix**  
*Your Relationship*

**STOP**

Being at the Mercy of Your  
**Codependent Brain**

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