

Why Love Stops, How Love Stays

*An Interactive Workbook
to Make Your Relationship Last*

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Introduction

Why do marriages and relationships sometimes go askew? What causes us to have conflict over the same issues time and time again? How can we better understand our own part in these situations, and use this insight to grow closer to our romantic partner and relate better to others in our lives? That's what this book is all about. *Why Love Stops, How Love Stays* offers you an opportunity to gain insight into your own behavior and reactions so you can maintain happier relationships in your life.

During my twenty-seven years in private practice, I have seen many individuals and couples successfully navigate their way through relationship difficulties. Some who come to see me are dating, others seek premarital therapy, while many are married. The common thread that links them is difficulty in their romantic relationship. All couples need to learn the reasons behind their relationship troubles and how to successfully work through them.

If you and your partner are having relationship struggles of any kind, I invite you to use this book as your guide to a new level of love, understanding, and commitment. *Why Love Stops, How Love Stays* provides couples with the type of assistance I give my clients, offering you personal insights that can strengthen your bond and reinvigorate your relationship.

If you are not currently in a relationship, but would like to improve future romantic connections as well as your interactions with friends and colleagues, you will also find the work and self-discoveries generated by this book to be very productive and enlightening.

TRANSFERENCE: A POWERFUL PSYCHOLOGICAL CONCEPT

I specialize in healing troubled relationships, and I pride myself in being able to get squarely to the roots of my client's issues. To help clients quickly discover the underlying causes of their relationship conflicts, the psychotherapy I practice focuses extensively on the concept of *transference*. The term was coined by Freud and refers to a now well-accepted psychological process in which, under certain circumstances, you relive feelings from your childhood and unconsciously "transfer" them into a present situation.

When you enter into a transference, you interpret and distort today's events as if you were back in your childhood, experiencing the same feelings you had in relating to your parents, siblings, or other significant persons in your life. Though everyone experiences transference, how much trouble it creates in your relationships depends on your personal history.

Transferences can happen with anyone with whom you associate: friends, colleagues, bosses, and of course, your spouse, relationship partner, or date. However, my focus in this book is on how transferences can affect your romantic relationship.

To quickly assess if transferences might be a factor that cause you to misinterpret your partner's actions/comments/behavior and thus become the leading factor to your relationship difficulties, I invite you to ask yourself the following questions:

- ◆ Do you and your partner sometimes misinterpret each other's comments, actions, or motivations and then become upset with one another?
 - ◆ Do you or your mate avoid certain topics of conversation, or hesitate to discuss issues even though that would make your relationship better?
 - ◆ Do you fear that if you do communicate with your partner that the repercussions might outweigh any benefit you may receive?
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- ◆ Do you and your partner sometimes feel disconnected, distant, and not in the same space, yet you're not sure why?
- ◆ Do you love your partner but believe your relationship might be on shaky ground, leaving you feeling uneasy or anxious much of the time?
- ◆ Do you distrust your partner and wonder if he or she could be having an affair?

If any of the above questions applies to your situation, you might want to consider transference as an underlying factor in your relationship troubles. When a transference is present, a general conditioning from childhood seeps into the current relationship. Without your conscious awareness, a transference can blur reality and become a significant contributor to how you interpret your partner's responses and create difficulties in your relationship.

This book will help you discover your transferences, whether they are having a negative impact on your relationship, and if so, how to take control of them. As I have witnessed many times in my psychotherapy practice, a new understanding of transferences, where they come from, and how to overcome them can go a long way toward improving relationships and removing unseen forces to help people move beyond those moments when love stops.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

I wrote this book in a straightforward manner, in order to speak directly to you about how transference works and what effect it has on relationships. To help you understand the process clearly, I use everyday language as much as possible rather than formal psychological terminology.

The first two chapters of the book contain my explanation of transference and how its unconscious presence can control your present life. Several real-life examples will illustrate how it affected various couples I have worked with. (Of course, the names

and pertinent information about the people have been modified to maintain their privacy.)

Chapters 3 through 5 are the heart of this book. They offer you, the reader, an opportunity to delve into your personal history and tap into unconscious unresolved issues that you didn't know were there. Chapter 3 contains a personal survey in which you are guided in exploring the events in your life that might contain the seeds of transferences. Chapter 4 then analyzes the information you recall in Chapter 3, allowing you to see the correlation between your life experiences and your behavior and attitudes today. Finally, Chapter 5 presents a seven-step method that will help you learn to recognize and manage those moments when you might act out a transference with your partner or others.

As you go through the chapters, I invite you to do the work as honestly and forthrightly as you can. You will be exploring many past events in your life. As a result, you will gain tremendous insights into yourself and be able to answer the question—why do you act the way you do with those you love?

GETTING YOUR PARTNER INVOLVED

While reading the chapters and working through the exercises, it's important that your focus be on understanding yourself and your feelings, not those of your partner. This book is about exploring your own past issues, motivations, and feelings so that you can understand what you bring to your relationship today. If you find yourself resisting a self-focus and wanting to lay blame on your partner, simply turn your attention back to you. Realize that you play an important role in making your relationship a success or adding to its distress.

If a transference is negatively impacting your relationship, you now have an opportunity to make great progress in understanding and taking responsibility for

your own feelings and motivations. You will be surprised at how your personal growth can strengthen your bond with your partner, even without effort on their part.

If after reading this book, you believe it can be of equal benefit to your partner as it was for you, I encourage you to share it with them. You might begin by showing the book to your partner and indicating that it was useful for you.

If your partner agrees to read the book and do the exercises, allow him or her to work through the book on their own, just as you did. Then when the process is finished, the two of you can share your thoughts and feelings. The more the two of you are able to share the feelings and emotions surrounding your transferences, the more you will collectively be able to avoid those moments that make love stop because you will both understand how love stays.

SETTING OFF ON THE JOURNEY

Now let's begin this positive journey with Chapter 1 which provides some basic information about transference. I promise you that after reading this book, you will feel more enlightened about yourself and have new skills to strengthen and enliven your relationship with your partner and others.

ON USING THIS BOOK WITH THERAPY

As you're reading this book, you may feel things that you've never acknowledged before. This is actually a good sign because it means that you're tapping into feelings that you didn't realize were there. It also indicates that you may have some unresolved issues. If you find yourself feeling very sensitive about exploring your past and these new feelings cause too much distress for you, you may want to seek the assistance of a professional therapist to assist you with this deep work.

If you are already in individual or couple's therapy, this book can greatly enhance your personal work in getting to and exploring forgotten feelings about your childhood and the various people populating it.

Or after reading through the book and possibly sharing it with your partner, you may wish to continue the good work you have started by seeing a professional therapist alone or with your loved one.
