

# CHARLYNE GELT, PH.D.

Encouraging Self-Discovery and Empowerment



**Once I Needed to be Needed.  
Now I Just Need to be Loved.**

**by Charlyne Gelt, Ph.D.**



Relationship issues figure prominently in a large segment of the general population. The song, “Love me Tender” reflects a longing to fill one’s emptiness with love. Those fortunate enough to have found healthy relationships know that “love and security” isn’t a *place*, it is the realization of some of the wonderful things that can come from of a loving bond — including the respect and emotional intimacy that comes from psychological and emotional work.



Unfortunately, half of all American marriages end in divorce. The happier first half, the courtship, falling in love, is generally not the problem. What begins as a loving relationship for couples with a lot in common, can turn into a heartbreaking and exhausting journey through the various stages of marital dissolution, emotional and legal. Sometimes, two people whose lives have become intertwined now need to evolve as individuals. Can this new chapter occur within the marital relationship?

Bitter fighting reflects the hurt and pain of separation, rejection and abandonment. And there is no relief once the lawyers get involved. Partners are soon reacting in crisis mode: rejected, paralyzed with fear, and grieving the lost love. From a therapeutic perspective, a couple’s dynamic is best understood by looking at each partner’s unconscious role in a relationship.

The family is a system. Disregard for the needs of the other, or control by one family member built on an either-or win-lose dynamic causes the intensity of a loving feeling that binds a couple through real life stressors to emotionally shut down, then drift apart. The repressed feelings and a couple's lack of communication result in angry, harsh fractures. The unconscious co-creating of a marital bond that progressively devours the other's potential and autonomy results in an emotional divorce, if not legal. Lack of recognition of the "other's" autonomy, career goals and life choices take a toll on even loving relationships.

So often, even good people with an understanding of what they love about each other can't discuss difficult issues like, emotional dependency, or come to reasonable terms or communicate openly and honestly about their unmet needs for validation, approval, recognition. When one partner recognizes a need to grow, life throws the relationship a curve. The couples' dynamic often reacts from positions of control, fear, and rejection that manifest in yelling matches of blame, disrespect, and rage. Challenges and differences of opinion need to get met head on with respect for the needs of the other and get resolved from a responsible, caring adult emotional position.

Couples can acquire good communication to address difficult relationship challenges. Healthy relationships need to open communication about the silent agreements, the unspoken expectations Where does love fit in? "Do I have to give up me?" Today, when one partner pursues their own talent or dream what assumptions, accommodations or sacrifices are made? Must one dream be sacrificed to ensure the other's need for achievement and success? Today, in healthy adult relationships, we are more likely to ask, where is the reciprocity?  $1+1=3$ .

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