



Manoeuvring Through the Thorns in a Bed of Roses

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1. The Expectations of Great Roses
2. In Growth Reality Bites
3. Reaching Past the Thorns & Enjoying the Blooms

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1. The Expectations of Great Roses

All Roses, Great Smells,
No Thorns, & Little Work

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Holding Onto Myths



- ♥ Good communication leads to greater intimacy
- ♥ Our main problem is poor communication
- ♥ Intimacy improves with safety and the right kind of feelings
- ♥ Intimacy, passion & eroticism is something that happens only in the bedroom

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- ♥ The perception/view of marriage that I learnt from my family of origin is the right one
- ♥ **If** my spouse did... **Then** all would be OK
- ♥ It is my spouse's responsibility to make me happy therefore if I am disappointed (or have resentment) it is their fault and they need to fix it

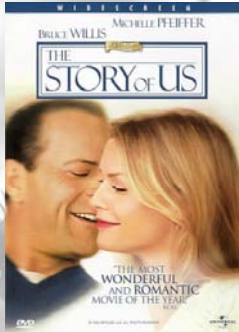


- ♥ Our relationship should be harmonious all (or nearly all) the time
- ♥ Successful marriages have no conflict or at least less conflict
- ♥ Successful marriages solve all their conflicts

2. Reality Bites

Thorns, Aphids, & Hard Work



High Risk Times

5-7 yrs - high conflict



10-12 yrs - the loss of intimacy & connection




Did I pick the right person?

This question inverts the starting and ending points. We do not pick our perfect match because we ourselves are not perfect. The universe hands us a flawless diamond-in the rough. Only if we are willing to polish off every part of *ourselves* that cannot join do we end up with a soul mate.

(Prather & Prather, 1990, p.10)



Professor
Archibald
Hart

Marriage involves two imperfect people in an impossible situation - it is a miracle that it works



3. Reaching Past the Thorns & Enjoying the Blooms

Thorns & Great Fragrance go Hand in Hand



Key #1 - Marriage is about My Growth

Key #2 - Accepting the Disappointment of Imperfection

Key #3 - Learning to Manage Conflict Well!

Key #4 - Cultivate Positives Over Negatives



Key #1

What if God designed marriage to make us holy more than to make us happy?

(Gary Thomas 2000)

A great marriage is not when the 'perfect couple' comes together. It is when an imperfect couple learns to enjoy their differences.

(Dave Meurer, "Daze of Our Wives")




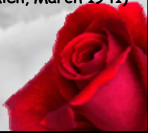
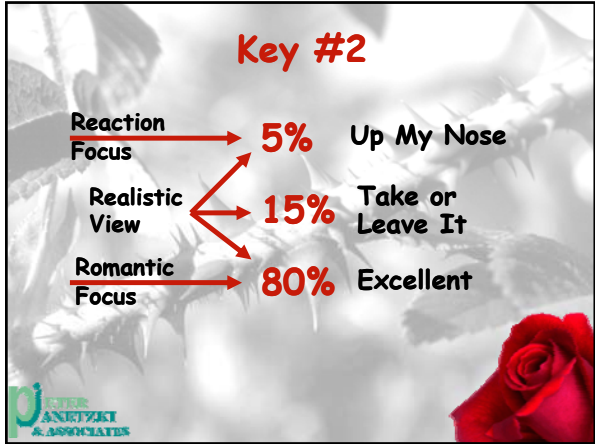
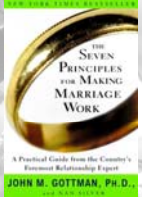
That is what marriage really means: helping one another to reach the full status of being persons, responsible and autonomous beings who do not run away from life.

(Paul Tournier)





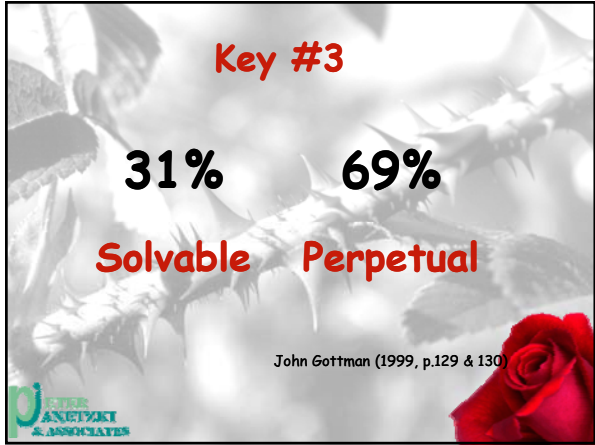
Nearly all marriages, even happy ones, are mistakes: in the sense that almost certainly (in a more perfect world, or even with a little more care in this very imperfect one) both partners might be found more suitable mates. But the real soul-mate is the one you are actually married to.

(J. R. R. Tolkien (1892 - 1973), Letter to Michael Tolkien, March 1941)


when choosing a long term partner . . . you will inevitably be choosing a particular set of unsolvable problems **that you'll be grappling with for the next ten, twenty or fifty years!**

(Dan Wile Cited in Gottman 1999, p.131)

Because **no relationship is perfect**, we need to work at making our relationship successful by developing ways to cope with conflicts and keep moving forward

(Gottman 1999, p.131)





Key #1 - Marriage is about My Growth



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Reaching Past the Thorns & Seeing the Rose in My Spouse



Nothing is more beautiful than the love that has weathered the storms of life.

[Jerome K Jerome]



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