

INTRODUCTION



Welcome to the **Relationship Enrichment Guide**.

In the past 15 years I have been privileged to work with many people who were brave enough to share with me what was not working in their relationship at the time. This enabled us to find the solutions they were looking for.

Sometimes the biggest challenge is to acknowledge one's problems. The most successful individuals I have worked with met and overcame this challenge. They shared their problems with me and focused on finding solutions and getting on with them.

The reality is that life involves constant change. The secret to ongoing success is to find a counsellor who will guide you through the blind spots that we all have, and will help you to win in your relationship.

The Relationship Enrichment Guide is a practical guide written in a direct, unambiguous, and effective style, filled with fun, anecdotes and vital information. There are tips on love, dating again, keeping the spark alive and how to harness your communication skills effectively in a relationship. It's designed to assist you on the road to relationship enrichment and success.

It's not the issue but how you sort it out that's important.

I trust the Relationship Enrichment Guide will help you find a richer life and more fulfilling relationships.

Warm regards
Ali Murray

RELATIONSHIP ENRICHMENT

At various ages and stages of our lives and relationships we may require **different types** of assistance and input. You might be seeking the perfect partner before you hit your “sell-by date”, or you could be married and making the most of it, or recently divorced and back on the dating scene for the first time in many years. Whichever it is, the reality for most of us is that we would all like to be in a relationship that is happy and successful.

Many of us have been brought up on the **fairytale** belief that we are going to get married, have a perfect, picket-fence life with two children and live happily ever after. So how do we cope with life when it doesn't work out this way?

We may land up judging ourselves and feeling bad. We may even feel like failures. Women especially, may try to overcorrect feelings of inadequacy by trying to **multi-task**, to try to be the best mother, the most liked person at the book club or on the PTA. All you land up doing is exhausting yourself!

How and why do things go wrong, and how do we fix these things?

The reality is that life happens. As individuals we are maturing, developing and growing and/or recovering from childhood/spousal abuse or trauma. Relationships, like life, are **dynamic** and ever changing. The only guarantee in life is that we are going to die. There are no relationship guarantees. We all get into relationships because they initially make us feel good. So try to keep them that way! Focus on Relationship Enrichment and build FUN into your life and relationship.

Relationships are dynamic and complicated, but after years of working with and counselling couples and individuals in their relationships, I've seen that there are a few key, **instinctive** habits of happy couples. These habits appear time and time again.

Over the years, I have asked many happy couples what their secret to relationship success is. The response is normally, “I don't know, I think that maybe we were just lucky to have found each other!”

On further enquiry and deeper questioning I started to realise that their relationship success was not based on luck. They were succeeding because instinctively or by default they had found the key to **relationship success**.

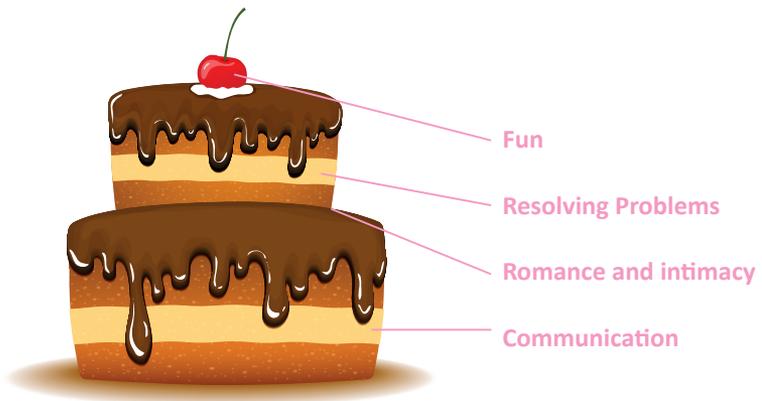
It is this key to relationship success that I am going to be sharing with you in the Relationship Enrichment Guide. I'll share practical tips and tools for choosing the right partner, maintaining a happy relationship and building on the fun and romance, so that you too can reap the rewards and benefits of being in a happy, successful relationship.

I'll share four key areas that you can work on. Choosing the right partner; communication; problem-solving; and romance and intimacy.

"Come on," you ask, "This just seems so simple. Is it for real?"

I have people asking me all the time if they can come in for a consultation, as they're not having as much fun in their relationships as they used to. They just want to learn a few practical skills to pep up their romance and sex lives.

The first sign that your relationship needs support is when you start noticing that you're just not having that much fun any longer. You're not "feeling" your partner.



A simple analogy on communication, intimacy and fun in relationships:

Fun is like a rich, succulent Maraschino cherry on top of a decadent chocolate cake.

Communication is the base of the cake, the foundation for a rich and rewarding relationship.

Resolving problems is the second layer of the cake. **Romance and intimacy** are represented by the rich chocolate ganache that hold the cake together. **Fun** is represented by the cherries on top of the cake. They help to fill the relationship with happiness, laughter, delight and a memory bank full of happy times together.

When a relationship starts to take strain, the top layer of the cake starts to slide off and you notice that you're no longer having that much fun.

It is always easier and more fun just to fast-track to the romantic, fun part of the relationship, in order to bypass the hard conversations you may need to have to resolve issues. But it is vital for you to work on the **whole cake** and not just the cherries on top if you wish to sustain your relationship in the long term.

If the issues are not at a make-or-break point in the relationship, it is possible to work **simultaneously** on communication and on both problem-solving and fun in the relationship.

In the Relationship Enrichment Guide we are going to look into **Four Key Relationship Success Secrets** common to successful couples.

- 1. Choosing The Right Partner For You:** We all work in three ways: the way we want the world to see us; the way the world does see us; and how we really feel about ourselves. These three aspects of our personalities can make finding the right partner challenging. In the romance/marketing phase of a relationship, it is easy for both of you to “put your best foot forward” and to project an image that the other person wants to see, not necessarily the person you really are. Once you get past this phase you may begin to realise that the other person is actually not right for you. Yip, you may find you have to kiss a few frogs or even leap away from a toad or two before you find your prince or princess. Don’t beat yourself up about having found a toad. The secret to your long-term relationship success is in how quickly you can let them go and **move on!**
- 2. Communication:** Successful couples communicate effectively. They feel safe and comfortable communicating, even on difficult issues. They handle each other with kindness, consideration and respect in both the good and the bad times.
- 3. Problem-Solving:** Successful couples are able to put down the “battle axes” and effectively resolve the problems and issues they experience as they come up.
- 4. Romance And Intimacy:** It is crucial to pro-actively build romance and intimacy into your relationship.

In life, all we have is **time**. Time to build on what we have, or time to tread water. So let’s get started.