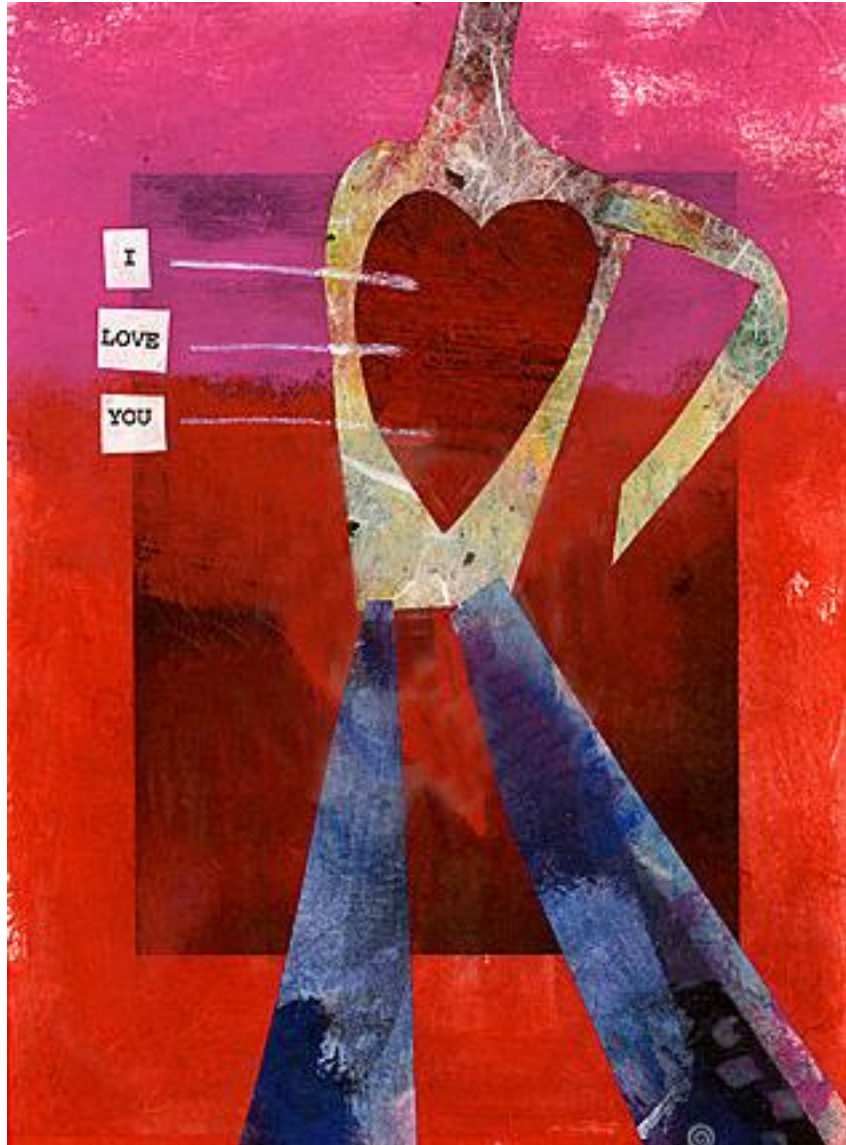


# THE SECRET TO *A HAPPY RELATIONSHIP*



*by Amy Waterman*

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## Table of Contents

MYTH: Relationships are about Making Your Partner Happy .....	6
The Secret to a Happy Relationship .....	9
Practicing Gratitude.....	12
Not Taking Your Partner for Granted.....	13
But I've Already Thanked Him Once.....	14
Learning to Appreciate Your Relationship .....	15
The Evolution of a Relationship .....	17
Love's Magic Spell.....	20
Putting Your Words into Practice.....	22
Want to Know MORE Relationship Secrets? .....	223

**“When you fall in love with someone,  
you want to stay together, right?”**

**But what do you *do* to make sure you stay together?**

Do you try to *make your partner happy*? Maybe you buy your partner presents, or cook a fancy meal, or plan a surprise birthday party. Guys might do some DIY project around the house or tune up her car. Gals might buy fancy lingerie and “seduce” their man.

Or maybe you think that the secret to staying together is *staying connected*. So you make sure you spend a lot of time talking and listening to your partner. You try to do as much as you can together. When you spend time away from your partner, you worry about the effect of that distance on your relationship.

Or maybe the secret to staying together is something else altogether. Maybe it’s having the same values, faith or religion. Maybe the secret is creating a home and raising a family together. Or maybe the secret is knowing how to commit. Who knows?

**Although everyone has a different opinion** on what it takes to make a relationship last, almost no one practices what they preach.

How many of those friends who give you relationship advice actually have their own relationships sorted?

Do you feel confident in following your parents’ advice, when you saw what their marriage was like?

For that matter, how many marriage counselors struggle in their own marriages? How many pastors have long-suffering, disempowered spouses?

Most of us women enjoy talking about how relationships “ought” to be, but it’s important to realize that *knowing* what to do in relationships (or thinking you know) is not the same thing as actually *doing* it.

The proof is in walking your talk.

## **MYTH: Relationships are about Making Your Partner Happy**

From what I've seen in the dating world, there seems to be a common myth about relationships.

That myth is that *relationships are about making your partner happy*.

If you succeed in making your partner happy, you stay together. If you don't succeed in making him or her happy, you split.

A lot of people believe this myth, and it causes problems every time.

It is *not* your responsibility to make your partner happy.

Nor is it your partner's responsibility to make YOU happy.

*Needing* another person to feel happy is very different from simply feeling happy when you're with your beloved. It is never healthy to depend on another person to make you feel good.

Neediness can feel suffocating to the person you love. Men, especially, can feel trapped by a woman's emotional dependence. They love hearing a woman say:

*"You make me happy."*

But they're frightened of hearing the words:

*"I can't be happy without you."*

The truth is this:

***You cannot put your happiness in the hands of another person.***

Your happiness is yours to keep, tend and nurture. (Don Miguel Ruiz offers a beautiful allegory to illustrate this principle in his book *The Mastery of Love*.)

NOR can you take responsibility for another person's moods. Their happiness is theirs to keep, tend and nurture. You can influence it, but you cannot shoulder their burden.

You will struggle in relationships as long as you continue to believe that your goal is to make your partner happy—*rather than be responsible for your own happiness.*

So what should our role be in relationships, if it's not to make our partners happy?

Here's a place to start:

***Relationships are about being happy.***

When YOU are happy, everything goes well in your relationship. Your partner—and everyone else—feels that you are a delight to be around. You naturally radiate love, affection, pleasure, and warmth. You're not "hard work," or a "diva," or a "drama queen." You're just a happy person who's enjoying life.

In order to succeed in your relationships, it's important to prioritize *making yourself happy.*

Because if you rely on your partner to make you happy, you're going to have a rough time of it.

Too many of us allow our partners' moods to dictate our own.

We think that it's disrespectful to feel happy if our partner isn't happy. If they're sad, we try to tone ourselves down so that we can share their sadness.

But where's the logic behind that?

What if your partner had a bad day at work? Wouldn't they prefer that you lighten the mood rather than add to its heaviness?

What if your partner is feeling stressed or anxious about something? If you commiserate by feeling stressed or anxious, too, you'll just make the situation worse.

***It doesn't help anyone to share their negative feelings.***

It *does* help to remain strong in your own love, faith, optimism, and understanding ... and communicate that.

So don't ever wait for your partner to be happy before you allow yourself to be happy. You are not the guardian of your partner's mood. Your job is to do what it takes for YOU to be happy in the relationship.

You may think you "need" your partner to be happy for you to feel happy, but I can promise you that you don't.

***It's silly to place conditions on your happiness.***

It's silly because, the more you think you "need" to be happy, the less happy you'll end up being.



## The Secret to a Happy Relationship

So what *does* it take to be happy in your relationship?

It's not easy to be happy all the time. Life throws a lot of irritations, annoyances, and crises at us. It's hard to keep a smile on your face when you're getting hit from every direction.

So I'm going to give you a secret that will make it easy for you to feel happy in an instant.

Even better, if you practice this technique faithfully, you will deepen the love you share with your partner and strengthen your relationship beyond imagining.

Ready for it?

The secret to happiness—which is also the secret to a happy relationship—is...

### **GRATITUDE.**

"You mean ... that's it?" you might be thinking. "Being grateful? Give me a break, sure I'm grateful. Maybe not every day, but in general, yeah...."

But I'm not talking about a fuzzy feeling of gratitude in general.

I'm talking about a *conscious, daily practice of gratitude*.

For example, when was the last time you told your partner that you appreciated them?

When was the last time you let your partner know how much joy you feel in your life together?

When was the last time you admired your partner's appearance and told them how attractive they are?

When you do those things, not only do you make your partner feel good, but you also make *yourself* feel good.

There's something about conscious expressions of gratitude that makes us realize just how good we've got it.

Sure, life isn't perfect, we're not perfect, and our partners aren't perfect, either...

But do you *really* need everything to be perfect before you start appreciating what you've got?

Every day you wake up with food on the table, a warm house, clean clothes to wear, your family around you, and a job to go to is a *good day*.

Sure, your partner may be grumpy, the kids might be rebellious, and the weather outside might make you want to stick your head back under the covers ... but isn't that just part of life?

Wouldn't you rather have a grumpy partner than no partner? Rebellious kids than no kids? An annoying life than no life?

When you think like that, it's easy to feel happy.

So try it.

Tell yourself:

**"I am grateful for my life."**

Say it out loud. Really *mean* it.

Say it again. Say it five times in a row.

What else are you grateful for?

Say, "I am grateful for my loving relationship."

Say, "I am grateful for my comfortable home."

Say, "I am grateful for my job that provides me with a comfortable lifestyle."

Really play with it!

Keep going until you can't think of anything else to be grateful for.

Are you feeling better?

You can go wild with this. Get a gratitude notebook where you write down ten things you're grateful for every night before you go to bed.

Or you can lie in bed for a few minutes every morning after you wake up, thinking about ten things to be grateful for about the upcoming day.

When self-help author Louise Hay wakes up every morning, she lays in bed for a few minutes thinking of everything she has to be grateful for: a good night's sleep, her lovely bed, etc. She says that by the time she gets up, she's already thanked 80 to 100 people in her head.

No wonder she's so happy and healthy in her 80s!

## Practicing Gratitude

Now that you know how good gratitude makes you feel, it's time to apply that technique on your relationships.

Make a regular practice of telling people when you're grateful for something they did or said.

People who know a thing or two about relationships try to make a habit of saying, "Thank you."

But a "thank you" delivered as a matter of rote, in a flat voice, out of a sense of obligation than emotion, doesn't win you any brownie points.

For a "thank you" to be effective, you need to:

- 1. Stop what you're doing.**
- 2. Make eye contact with your partner.**
- 3. Feel an emotion of gratitude, and**
- 4. Tell your partner *exactly* what you appreciate, e.g., "Thank you for doing the dishes," or, "I really appreciated you driving today."**

It may seem obvious, but if you don't actually *feel* any gratitude, don't say, "Thank you." One genuine word of thanks is worth a hundred hypocritical ones.

## Not Taking Your Partner for Granted

I don't think I need to tell you that way too many people feel that their partner takes them for granted.

For example, in a traditional household, a woman may feel that all the work she puts into cooking, cleaning, childcare and organizing the household isn't acknowledged by her husband. He, on the other hand, thinks that his wife doesn't respect how much effort it takes to perform all day at work and then come home to chaos and chores rather than much-needed space to unwind.

Unfortunately, communicating those feelings doesn't often end up in the appreciation that both parties desire. More often, it leads to an argument about who's contributing the most to the relationship.

Ever had or heard this argument?

*"You never appreciate anything I do for you!"*

*"I do! Didn't I just say, 'Thank you'? Don't I always say, 'Thank you'?"*

*"Yeah, and then you go and criticize what I just did."*

*"I'm appreciative! I just like things done right. What's the point of doing it for me if you do it wrong?"*

*"See, there you go again!"*

Just saying "thank you" is not good enough.

You have to take the time to *make eye contact, feel gratitude, and tell your partner exactly what you're thankful for.*

## **But I've Already Thanked Him Once...**

It's easy to thank our partner for the "big gestures," like being there for us in a crisis. It's not so easy to remember to thank our partner for the "small gestures."

However, the little things in life are just as important as the big things.

For example, think of something that you do on a daily or weekly basis for your partner. Maybe it's cooking dinner, or maybe it's running errands. Wouldn't it be nice to be thanked for it each time you did it? Not as a quickly mumbled, "Thanks for that," but as a genuine smile with eye contact? Of course it would!

Your partner feels the same way.

If there's something that they do on a regular basis—even if it's something minor, something your partner is "supposed to do" —then they would appreciate being thanked for it.

Don't worry that saying thank you for the same thing again and again will devalue its currency.

As long as a "thank you" is said with genuine emotion, it doesn't matter if it's been said it a hundred times before. It feels just as good every time.

## Learning to Appreciate Your Relationship

But appreciating the things your partner does for you is only the beginning.

Appreciating your relationship—*especially* when things aren't perfect—is much harder.

Appreciating your partner when they are being irritating, immature, or obstinate is DOUBLY difficult.

How can we be grateful, when we're not feeling grateful at all?

Back when you were single, you would have probably been grateful to have *any* relationship *at all*, let alone a long-lasting, stable relationship with someone like your partner.

*Do you feel lucky to have a relationship? Be honest. Or do you sometimes wonder if you've been short-changed in the relationship stakes?*

Certainly, it's hard to appreciate being in a relationship when things aren't going well.

Sometimes, we wonder if we'd be better off single. We wonder if other people have it easier than us. We even wonder if there's someone "better" out there who would make us happier than our current partner does.

Those sorts of thoughts are natural, but that doesn't mean they're harmless.

If you're always thinking about an "out" whenever things get hard, then you're not fully committed to your relationship. That's not a criticism; that's just a fact. Maybe you need to act on your gut feelings and leave the relationship, even if it's just a temporary separation.

Another myth about relationships is that *your partner can't know what's going through your head unless you say something.*

You may think that you can hide your feelings from your partner, as long as you think those thoughts in the privacy of your own mind.

Sadly, that's not true. You may not *tell* your partner what you're thinking, but your partner will *know*.

**Each of us has a sixth sense when it comes to relationships.**

Our partner may do and say everything right, but we'll know if they're not sure about us or about staying in the relationship.

We won't know *how* we know, and we may not want to *admit* it to ourselves, but somewhere deep inside us, we'll know the truth.

That's why it's so important that you pay attention to *how you think* about your relationship and your partner.

Do you sometimes wish your partner was someone different to who he or she is?

Do you compare your relationship to other people's and wish that yours could be more like theirs?

Do you ever feel gypped by your partner, because the person you live with is so different from the person you fell in love with?

If you have those thoughts, don't be surprised if your relationship is hard work.



## The Evolution of a Relationship

There's a *reason* that your relationship worked so well back when you were first dating. It has to do with the *thoughts* you had about your partner and the possibility of being in a relationship.

Can you think back that far? Can you remember what was going through your mind when you first started dating?

I can hazard a guess.

You probably thought your partner was the most exciting, attractive, interesting person on Earth. You got thrills down your spine just spending time together. Everything new you learned about your partner delighted you.

When you thought about having a relationship with this person, a yearning awoke inside you. You didn't want to jinx it, but your heart whispered promises of happiness for life if only this could continue forever.

Those are the defining characteristics of romantic love, and *romantic love, by definition, doesn't last.*

After a few months or years, those heady chemicals flooding your brain with ecstasy dwindled, and you started to come back to reality.

This amazing person that you committed your heart to was actually not *that* amazing.

You started to see your lover's flaws. You started to argue. You started to see your differences more clearly. You started to wish you hadn't made the leap so soon.

Guess what?

That's normal, too.

It happens in every relationship. It's called the "Reality Check," and it's a reassuring sign that your relationship is moving to the next stage.

At this point, you have to decide whether or not you want to stay in the relationship.

Don't feel pressured: you don't get extra points for staying. You know yourself and what you want and what you can live with. That self-knowledge will be crucial to making your decision.

If you decide to stay, there will be more conflicts ahead. You'll find yourself in a "Power Struggle." You'll fight over where to spend Christmas, how to spend money, who takes out the garbage, and what to watch on television.

Those fights will leave you feeling angry and self-righteous. Why can't your partner see sense? Why can't he or she just do things your way?

There *is* a light at the end of the tunnel.

You can make it through the Power Struggle if you learn new ways of arguing, ways that unite you as a team rather than divide you as enemies. You'll have to let go of your pride and give up being right for the sake of being happy, but it's possible. If you want real love, you'll do it.

From this perspective, you can see that *you misled yourself* at the beginning of your relationship.

You wanted to believe that everything would be easy, if only you could be with this person forever. You wanted to believe that you'd found your identical twin, someone who shared so much in common with you that there'd never be anything to argue about.

You *so desperately* wanted to believe you'd live happily ever after.

Relationship counselors know that "happily ever after" can only be reached after riding out the storm of the Reality Check and Power Struggle. You've got to slay a few dragons—heck, a lot of them!—in order to get to your

fantasy kingdom in the sky. It may take a lifetime. But the reward of a deep, unshakeable, committed love based in the unconditional acceptance of one another's imperfections is worth it.

Now that you understand that the Reality Check and Power Struggle are inevitable, you can see why blaming your partner for "not being who you thought they were" isn't fair.

It's not your partner's fault that you're arguing. This is simply what happens to every relationship. You can try dating someone else, but you'll eventually end up right back at the same place.

## Love's Magic Spell

There is a way to get through the rough spots in a relationship.

It's called **LOVE**.

You don't badmouth what you love. You don't heap scorn on what you love. You don't make fun of what you love.

And you love your partner, don't you?

So why not treat your partner with the utmost respect, affection, goodwill, and gentleness possible?

After all, this is the person you fell in love with. This is the person you chose.

Don't you remember that?

You wanted this relationship more than anything back when you first started dating this person.

You saw something in this person that led you to single them out from everyone else.

Back when you were single, you used to dream about being in a gorgeous, imperfect, messy relationship like this one.

Am I right?

So isn't this relationship actually the **perfect** one for you ... even if it's not perfect?

Sometimes, all it takes to feel grateful for each day you have with your partner is to remember back when you were single.

Remember all those terrible people you dated? Remember all those times you fell in love and weren't loved in return? Remember the thrill you felt when you realized that this relationship was going somewhere?

Do you really want to return to those single days again, when you looked so long and hard for someone as amazing as your partner?

I hope you're feeling warm, fuzzy feelings of appreciation, thankfulness and love right now.

***Hold onto those feelings!***

Your partner deserves to know straight from your lips how happy you are that you have a life together.

You're blessed to be in a relationship with someone like them, and you know it.

So tell your partner, right now.

*"I'm so glad we're together."*

*"I'm so happy I met you."*

*"I feel so lucky to have a life with you."*

*"A good day starts by waking up to you."*

*"Thank you for being in my life."*

Those words are like a magic spell, reigniting that sweet love you felt when you met each other so long ago.

## Putting Your Words into Practice

It's time to let you go.

You have much to talk to your partner about, and I don't want to keep you.

Go in love, and I wish you all the best and many blessings in your pursuit of love and happiness.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Amy Waterman". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looped initial "A".

*Amy Waterman*

## Want to Know MORE Relationship Secrets?

Then check out my latest relationships “bible”:

### **[Connect and Commit:](#)**

### **[Taking Things to the Next Level of Commitment \(Without Screwing It Up\)!](#)**

If you’re thinking about getting into a committed relationship, or if you want to nudge the relationship you’re in towards marriage, you CANNOT afford to give this stunning 3-volume set a miss.

It’s packed with over 300 pages of exercises, examples, and easy-to-remember tips that will totally transform the way you understand commitment.

This could easily be sold as three separate books, but I wanted to make sure that NO question was left unanswered.

There’s even an audio book version for listening on the go, read by yours truly!

You’ll learn about the 5 Deadly Commitment Mistakes, the MM Method for fast-tracking a date into a relationship, the 5 Cs of Attraction, and more.

I also include exercises to determine whether or not your man will ever be able to commit like you want him to. Some guys just aren’t the committing type, and it’s best you know before it’s too late!

**[Discover \*Connect & Commit\* for yourself.](#)**

