

Relationships

BY DEREK O'NEILL



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Dedication

To all who read this book, I salute you for wanting to change the way you live for the better and for having the courage to be who you are as fully as possible.

To all who encourage me everyday to keep going and sharing their lives with me, family small and large. But most of all the little angel who came to teach me – Alexa, my granddaughter.

“Everybody hurts sometimes, and when we do it is nice to have Derek O’Neill around. His excellent little books on the things that get us, (fear, anger, depression, victimhood, mental blocks) allow us to find our way safely through our psychological minefields and arrive safely at the other side. Read them when you need them.”

- Paul Perry, Author of the New York Times Bestseller Evidence of the Afterlife

Table Of Contents

[Introduction](#)

[Author's Preface](#)

[It All Begins With You...](#)

[You Are Complete On Your Own](#)

[What Is Your Relationship To Life?](#)

[Mirror, Mirror On The Wall, Am I Not The Fairest One Of All!](#)

[Intention and Projection - The Dating Merry-Go-Round](#)

[The Tangle Between Us – Let Go and Let Love](#)

[The Foundation Of A Relationship – Be Separate, Together](#)

[Are We There Yet – How Do I Know This Is “It?”](#)

[A Broken Heart Has Wisdom and Strength](#)

[Navigating Relationships – Love Is A Great Adventure](#)

Introduction

You Have Hundreds Of Relationships!

When we hear the word “relationships,” we’re inclined to think of the romantic connection between two people. Before exploring that fascinating, timeless dynamic of human existence, let’s open up the definition of the word “relationships” to a wider, and very important way of thinking.

Relationships with other people are just one piece of the puzzle. If we come to see that ALL of the relationships in our lives - to family, friends, your community, the world, your emotions, your belief systems, food, addictions, and even the family pet – are barometers of how we coexist in an intimate relationship, we will expand our minds and have a better understanding of what connection means. You can’t separate the elements of your life into compartments, hoping that it will all fall together in some haphazard order. The way you move through your entire life creates a whole and complete picture. If you approach all your relationships with a sense of who you genuinely are, knowledge of a greater good, and a positive outlook, you’ll see how you can thrive in a deeply satisfying, truly loving relationship.

Author's Preface

Thank you for purchasing *Relationships - Would you want to date you?* This book has not come about as a result of my training as a therapist, but through some hard-learned lessons that I have experienced myself. This is how I know the path out of limiting beliefs and behaviors that hinder our growth. The tools that I offer in this book have worked not only for me, but also for hundreds, if not thousands, of people. I have shared these ideas in workshops, one-on-one sessions, and on my website. Through observation of myself and others, I have learned to identify the triggers and root causes of disharmony. Most of all, I have come to understand and utilize the best methods to achieve peace and balance again in life; not perfection, but real transformation and harmony that comes with learning who we are and what makes us tick. My 35 years of martial arts study has given me a refined sense of timing for when to strike with the sword to cut away old patterns and beliefs, and when to use the brush to paint the picture in my mind of the life we deserve and can have.

These 'Get a Grip' series of books offer tangible, authentic wisdom that will transform not only your life, but create a system for you that can help with all aspects of your life. You've made a great choice to invest in yourself by buying this book, or series of books. Let's change who we are together.

Derek

It All Begins With You...

Though most people feel the longing to find a soul mate, it often feels perplexing, out of reach, or seemingly futile to connect with “The One.” Will they arrive on that white horse? Is the next person you chat with online going to be your true love? Are they just around the corner, or are you destined to forever be “alone”? You might get on that dating treadmill, but after all those dinners and movies, no one seems to be a good match. Or maybe you thought you had found your prince or princess, only to wake up one day asking yourself how you could have been so blind to that disgusting habit, bad temper, or general incompatibility with your partner. Was it all a big mistake? We’ve all been through the experience of high expectation followed by major disappointment. And I think we can all agree that it’s not exactly a joyous ride.

Does it feel as if you’re repeating a pattern that just takes you back to where you started? If you keep searching for love and fulfillment, without an understanding about why it keeps eluding you, you’ll be in a cycle of defeat. What’s keeping you from a truly satisfying romantic life and partnership? Are the other relationships in your life balanced and healthy? How does everything you connect with in your life - people, places and things – and the interaction you have with them, reflect in your quest for that soul mate?

It’s a familiar scene – You see a man, or a woman, and there’s a fantastic spark at the first “hello.” Everything feels brilliant. There’s flowers, chocolates, fine dining, lots of charming behavior and impeccable manners on display. Well, I’ve often told people that they would be better off going on a date, sitting down at the table at the restaurant, taking off their shoe and sock, and then start picking at their toenails! Strange as it may sound, it’s something interesting to think about. If your date accepted you, just like this, you’ll have found your soul mate! It’s a symbolic example of how you shouldn’t have to hide who you really are to a potential mate. You need to be 100% true to yourself before you can bond with another person. This is the kind of relationship you should strive for. It’s the type I found in my life, and it’s the kind of relationship that we’ll look at in this book. The answer to finding a wonderful, loving connection with someone else is having that union with yourself. The greatest relationship you have, from the beginning of your life until the end, should be with YOU.

When you embrace who you are, and stop thinking you’ll never find that soul mate, love will find you. Your mind is very powerful. If you get to a stage in your personal development where there is true self-acceptance, compassion, and understanding, your mind will create the prince or the princess. It can also - depending on how you see yourself and the world around you - create the frog or the troll! Your mind conjures the kind of life you have. It is that powerful. We are all creating our own reality. How would you like yours to play out? Clear the way from negative thinking and embrace who you are.

There are no “mistakes,” just a path to getting where you need to be, no matter what road you take to get there. You can make wise decisions for yourself. We all have choices. Sometimes it seems we have too many. We keep looking outside ourselves. If you think

there's an absolutely perfect person out there, that will make you feel complete and happy, you need to rewind and look at yourself.

You cannot make an informed and healthy choice about love and relationships if you've been hurt, traumatized or you're holding onto old patterns. It is my hope that the following pages will help you take an honest look at your feelings and past experiences, with self-awareness and compassion. We'll also delve into what makes for a successful, truly loving relationship with another person, and examine the way you relate to all else in your life - people, things, behaviors and ways of thinking.

Are your expectations misguided? Do you project desires on to others? Are you self-protective and shutting down? Are you in love with the idea of love, but not the person in front of you? Do you thrive on imbalance and drama in your life because you lacked good role models for healthy giving and receiving of love and affection?

Once you have an authentic and confident view of who you are - and understand what is keeping you back - your relationships, with everything, will change. You'll have the kind of fulfilling relationship we all deserve, each and every one of us.

You Are Complete On Your Own

Human nature tends to pull us toward the idea of looking outside of ourselves for something to make us happier. Relationships are a prime example of that. What seems like a quest for love is very often a search for someone we think will change the way we feel about ourselves. We believe our soul mate will transform our low self-esteem. He or she will adore us and make up for all the past hurts, feelings of inadequacy and poor self-image. We fear being alone and think we will seem like a failure if we don't have a partner. A relationship based on these things is destined to fall apart. No one can make up for a lack of self-love and no one can heal the parts of you that you need to work on yourself. Of course, we all have varying degrees of confidence at any one point in our lives. It would be unrealistic to think that you should have a constant love-festival going on within your own mind! Life just isn't like that...

Let's start by having you ask yourself "how much do I love myself?" This question makes many people uncomfortable. They think "self-love" sounds selfish or narcissistic, but it is really just the opposite. If you don't think as highly of yourself as you would want a potential mate to think about you, that's a hurdle that will be very difficult to jump over! So, on a scale from one to ten, how much do you love yourself? If you gave yourself a one, then you're saying to the world, "I don't love myself at all." If you gave yourself a ten, well, you're a giant ice cream and you're going to lick yourself to death!

Think about where you are on that scale. What's behind that number? What things first came to mind when you chose it? Are those qualities based in reality? Is it easier to put yourself down, and be critical, than to say "I love myself, just the way I am."

If you gave yourself somewhere between a one and a four on our self-love scale, it's time to reach out and get some help with your mindset. You need to dig deeper and investigate the triggers and emotions that are behind low self-esteem. When you do, you can begin to effect the change you want in your life, including having a satisfying relationship. If you're between a five and a seven on the scale, you are in the majority. This is the range where you experience the ups and downs of self-confidence and self-love. You're in a good place to start feeling even better about yourself and begin to embrace the idea that you are worthy of love. If you gave yourself a seven to nine, you're on fire – in a great way – and having very positive feelings about yourself. If you gave yourself a ten, well, your ego may need to be shifted down a couple of gears! Self-love isn't about having a gigantic ego, or being smug or superior.

Finding the love of your life is a journey. It may feel like a difficult one, but with awareness and an open heart, it has great rewards. You need to enjoy and celebrate the journey, not just the destination. If you learn to see it that way, you are welcoming love into your life and you will definitely find it. Look at your quest for a great relationship as a journey into the unison of your own soul. Your soul is complete within itself. When you are busy fulfilling this completeness, the focus is on being a warm, inviting and happy person. The pressure that you or society has placed on you to "win over" a mate no longer distracts you. It's not a game show competition or a beauty contest! This is your

life and you want to live it in a way that honors and celebrates who you are. You want to become someone who can offer the world kindness and compassion. Your inner beauty shines beyond any superficial outward appearance. And when someone comes along who truly appreciates you for who you are, you can offer him or her the abundant gift of love, which you have come to possess.

Most of you have gone about searching for, and starting, a relationship in the wrong way. You have looked outside yourself for love instead of going within. This is what has caused those relationships to fail. First go within, then go out into the world. You will find the love you are looking for, and it is going to be so much better than you could ever have imagined. When you discover the love inside yourself, you have connected to the Source of all love. Once it is completely fulfilled in your own heart, you can manifest it in a partner on this earthly plane through the purest of intent.

What Is Your Relationship To Life?

Whether you are yearning for someone special to come into your life, or you're currently in a relationship, you should never lose sight of this fact - everything that touches your life has a bearing on your relationship with another person. What kind of friendships do you have? Is there a give and take between you and your friends that is nurturing and solid? Are your family ties harmonious? Are those relationships about connection, or competition? Do you have good boundaries with relatives, friends and/or co-workers who may take advantage of you? Do you take the stress of life in stride? Is your relationship to food healthy and mindful? Are your pets a source of love that opens your heart? Do you enjoy your hobbies and free time? Is helping other people a part of your life?

These questions may seem, on the face of it, disconnected to the subject of love relationships, but they are entirely relevant. We are constantly practicing relating to people and things. To be connected to what is going on in our lives, in a conscious, joyful way, is to be aware and present, the very qualities you need in order to be in a relationship that works. It's the kind of connection that should come with ease, where you resist the urge to grasp what you cannot control. There is an ebb and flow to life. Things, people and circumstances will come in, and out, of your life. In a relationship with a soul mate, we may strive for permanence but it's important to know that stability is illusive. Some of us will be with our partner until we die but the transient nature of everything is always with us. Life is gain and loss. And accepting this is the path to self-love, before we move onto loving another. There's no way around it – at some point during your life you will lose your keys, those you love, and everything in-between.

Service to others is always a way to strengthen your relationship to your community and the world. Giving of yourself is key in a person-to-person bond and helping someone in need mirrors the empathy, caring and positive outlook that enables you to connect. If you spend too much energy looking for a love relationship you begin to turn inward and lose your link to the world. Service brings you out and creates a deep relationship to others, whether they are someone standing next to you, or a child in need of clean water, far away.

The relationship that you have with a belief practice also echoes the connection you have with a person. When you study and realize an approach to life that expands your consciousness and gives you a foundation, you are grounded within your own heart and soul. You have a lot to give someone else because you are fulfilled on your own. When you commit to really going deeper, into whatever belief system or mode you choose, you're tapping into your abundant ability to love yourself, and others. If you never take the time to work at these things for your own growth, how can you work on a relationship with another person?

We all have a story. It is the story of our past, our present and the journey we are taking toward our future. The relationship you have to that story is incredibly important. No matter what it is, you have to embrace it. If you judge and reject who you are, where you've been and the person you want to be, you can't connect with another person. They

also have their own story. It's the mutual respect and support for this that makes for a fulfilling and happy relationship.

Mirror, Mirror On The Wall, Am I Not the Fairest One Of All!

When you go within to find love, the first issue that you will have to deal with is self-image. Do you think you are unattractive? Is your appearance something you spend a lot of time obsessing about? If someone asked you what name you would bestow to your body, what would you say? Beautiful? Ugly? Fat? Thin? Whichever it is, you resonate with the feelings behind those words. The truth is, they are just words and you have to choose how to see yourself in reality. It's all about adjusting your vision and viewing yourself from the inside, and then out. You are very beautiful as you are! Our culture has bombarded us with too many advertisements and social pressures. You lack confidence because you have bought into an ideal, an image, and a transient belief. Your truth can be different.

If magazines, television, billboards and people around you are telling you that you have to have a certain body shape to be happy, you are setting yourself up to only experience rejection and abandonment – because YOU have rejected and abandoned yourself. That is your issue. It has nothing to do with your body. What you need to do is go out there and smile at every person you walk by. There is someone out there for you, but until you see the people who aren't interested in you as a pathway to someone who recognizes and cherishes you, you will continue to feel bad about yourself and your prospects for love. The flipside of rejection is that it's a weeding out. How else could you see that great partner through all those weeds!

There are plenty of people that society deems “attractive” who lack the self-love and confidence to find the right relationship. Self-assurance and a positive, open heart are qualities that don't only belong to one kind of person but not another. It is truly a democracy when it comes to how people feel about themselves! You may assume the outwardly attractive person you see across the room has an easy time, plenty of prospects and a great self-image. There's a good chance you're wrong. You have no idea what the internal life of that person looks like and what their challenges and struggles are. Envy is just a distraction, and a misguided one at that, for not taking on the responsibility for your own journey to the happiness and serenity that you seek.

Your outlook on inviting a great relationship into your life isn't about the outside, external image. It's about what's going on under the surface. Beauty is truly only skin deep. If what's beneath the skin is hurt, in fear and despair, there's no covering that. Outer attractiveness is just an illusion. If you find yourself thinking, “if only I could look a certain way (be taller, thinner, afford cosmetic surgery, or have a better wardrobe) I would have a fabulous, loving partner,” you are deluding yourself. As long as you hold on to those kinds of thoughts, your mind creates an impossible and unrealistic scenario. When you reinforce these ideas by obsessing about them - even though they have no connection to who you truly are – thought patterns becomes habits, and habits become what we hang on to. It feels safe. No one can get past your inner gatekeeper that has such unkind things to say about you. Your mind designs this situation, and you live it out.

Whatever you don't have within yourself, you draw from the outside world. If you think

you need love, you draw it from another being. But here is the truth: You are your own soul mate. You are your own twin flame. You have to find yourself to find your soul mate. You have to love yourself to find love. You think you are looking for a certain kind of person, but what you are really looking for is love. It is your ego that convinces you that you have to have love in a particular kind of package.

Relationships, especially after we've been involved in more than a few, can leave us feeling confused. Though we are always learning, and hoping to grow from our experiences, after many less-than-successful attempts to find lasting joy with another person, we may begin to doubt ourselves. We might find that we keep blaming other people. Over-analyzing the relationship, rehashing it, criticizing your own role in it, or your partner's, leads to the closing down of your heart. No matter how hard it is to meet people, or how ugly a divorce may have been, badly your heart was broken, or wrong you were about something you believed in, there is no one person or event that can shut love out of your life. If you tend to your hurts and heal the pain within yourself, you remain whole. You can love with as much joy as anyone. You can experience a happy and healthy relationship, no matter how elusive it seems to you today.

Everything can change, and it always does. It just takes your mind's unlimited power to set things in a new direction. Part of the journey is being willing to be surprised, to let go of ideals and experience life on a different plane of expectation than our society encourages. You can't control exactly who comes into your life, or order that person up as if they were on a menu, but you *can* open the door for the *right* partner to walk through.

Intention and Projection - The Dating Merry-Go-Round

Is there a secret to meeting the right person? A certain club to join, a particular group of friends to spend time with, or an online dating website that has some sort of magic potion for gauging compatibility? You work on having the intention to find someone, perhaps repeating a daily mantra to send the perfect guy or gal your way. You make a list of the qualities you want in a mate. Maybe you put it under your pillow, or read it to your best pal for feedback. Even when all that intention doesn't produce Mr. or Ms. Right, you keep looking - at the gym, on the computer, across the room. Perhaps they are under that rock over there! You search for the lover that will be perfect for you. You even may be in an unsatisfying relationship or marriage, looking intently for someone else to set out on a new adventure on the sea of love.

Have you ever stopped to calculate how much of your energy you spend looking for your soul mate? You probably devote more than fifty percent of your time and energy fantasizing, searching, and sizing up potential candidates. Sometimes almost unconsciously looking at the faces of the crowds, the people at events, or at work. You devote much of your life on the hunt for that person who is perfect for you.

The reason soul mates don't arrive has nothing to do with intention, nor an open or closed heart. It has to do with you limiting possibilities. People usually say something to the effect of, "I am looking for my soul mate... He has to be 6ft 2, blonde hair, blue eyes, big hands, preferably rich, and if possible, with no baggage." They've essentially shut the door to attracting exactly what they need, which is not measured in the appearance or circumstances of a partner. You really want something much deeper and much more satisfying.

When you find yourself thinking, "If I could meet somebody who loved me, and I loved them back, my life would be wonderful and complete," you use your mind to manifest that thought, but what happens? In walks that prince or princess and you go "ahhhh!" They give you some attention, that you haven't given yourself, and you quiver and you have willy dillies in your belly. All sorts of things happen to your head and your body. In time you're convinced it's love. Everything is grand until you come home one day and discover that your partner has some habits you find disgusting, or character traits you failed to see - perhaps subconsciously, on purpose - and you are shocked. The person you thought was so perfect for you has a big pimple on his bum. You didn't notice that before because you were projecting all of your desires onto that person. You didn't see the pimple, the snoring, the clothes strewn on the floor. Then you start to notice other things that you don't like. The more time you spend with someone, the more their truth starts to replace your projections.

You may go into doubt about this person you had on a pedestal. What happened to the love? Where's the happiness you thought finally walked through the door? Well, this is what happened, and will always happen - Happiness always walks in the door with disappointment, for that's its twin. First it's great and then it's not. Right? Or disappointment walks in the door and happiness sneaks in behind it, ready to reveal itself

at the right time. The two never stay around all the time. This happiness is not a permanent thing, is it? It seems to constantly come and go, but disappointment also clocks in and out. This is the balance and pendulum that you have to accept to start a relationship and discover what having a soul mate really means. It's experiencing the ups and downs, as both an individual, and a couple.

Your ego has a long checklist of qualities and quantities that reflect your personal definition of a mate. You are always holding this checklist up to people to see if they match it or not, and then you project these things onto another person, then lo and behold, you think you have found "The One." Just like you, any potential mate has their quirks, their beliefs, their past experiences, and their own path for self-realization. When you don't see someone for who they really are, and idealize or romanticize them, you might as well be dating anyone off the street! People will be interchangeable to you and you will be quick to start over and over again, thinking it's just that you have not found the right fit.

Though the only way you will find out if someone is meant to be with you, long-term, is by getting to slowly know them and all their qualities and flaws, if you don't accept that they have their own truth, heart and soul, and that they, like you, need to preserve that, you can't make a relationship – with anyone – work. There are plenty of perfectly nice people who may or may not be your match, but you won't find your soul mate if your intention distracts you from taking care of yourself. Similarly, you will only be disappointed, in the long-run, if you project your desires on to every man or woman you sit down for a first meal with.

The Tangle Between Us – Let Go and Let Love

When a relationship goes through a rough patch, we are often too mired-down in thinking about who's right, who's wrong, or how someone has to change (usually you believe it's the other person!) in order to make things work. Imagine that your boyfriend or girlfriend says they're unhappy and they may want to end the relationship. You feel hurt and confused, even if you saw it coming on some level. A hook has developed on both ends of the relationship, and it hasn't served either of you very well. You are two anglers who both think you've caught a fish, but in fact, you have only caught each other. There is a tangle out in the middle of the line between you and them.

The majority of the people have that tangle between the two boats and neither can see it. The tangle sends frustration, anger, jealousy, or misunderstanding up the line to whoever is holding the fishing rod. Then both people act out of their issues. And when a split happens, they are not necessarily angry about it not working out, but they are actually angry about feeling that pattern of rejection again. They begin to blame the other person instead of following the line to the tangle to find out how the knots can be loosened. Ultimately, they may be too tangled to continue the relationship, but when you understand this concept, you can avoid the anger and finger pointing.

You will never see the tangle unless one or the other of you gives way. When that happens, the other person reels in the line and has to face the tangle, which are the issues that they think made them unhappy. If you let go of your resistance and desperation to "fix" everything and make it all better in your mind, you allow healing to happen. The other person in the relationship is the one reeling, but not in the sense of "I won," but "Now that we can see the tangle, we can start to unthread it." Let them start to look at it and think about it, then you can free the lines, for whatever resolution is best, together.

If you are in pain because you can't see the tangle, let me tell you, just let it go. Let the other person reel in, you'll be the one who is able to release, but the other person may not be ready. If you let go, the tangle lies in the others' domain, and it is there that the work must be done. Think about that as a way to see the reality of a relationship that needs time and contemplation.

The Foundation of a Relationship – Be Separate, Together

I don't wear a wedding ring. My late wife Linda and I came to feel we had entered into a contract between us that said, "If you look after me, I will look after you, and if you don't look after me, I won't look after you." We decided to take the rings and throw them away. We went to India and re-engaged as two souls. What does it mean to join souls? It's when two people come together, not to look at each other, but to look in the same direction. If they look at each other, they will suffer. They will forget that they are distinct individuals, with their own needs and their own path. If you look only at each other, the world slips away and perspective goes with it. A relationship must be expansive and connected to the world.

When partners or spouses look in the same direction, they are also walking down their own paths, again in the same direction, wanting the same goal. You or your mate's path may hit a curve or come upon an arduous hill, but when you are in a good relationship, you see your partner, over on that other path, and you encourage and support them. You also accept that they are on their own path and they must be the one to walk it. Marriage and partnership is about that kind of support. Often when one is down, the other is up, and vice versa. Husbands and wives don't belong to each other, but they are compassionate and accepting of each other. People in relationships need to be out of the way of each other's existence. No matter what is happening in their lives – individually or together, they remain anchored in the relationship, while acknowledging that their partner has to experience their own truths. This is the journey of being a couple. You don't take on the other person's struggle or try to repair their psyches. You just learn to "be" in the relationship. Just be...

Relationships are complicated. There are times when some people want to throw in the towel and close the door to having an emotional, romantic relationship, but by and large, we are drawn to coupling and companionship. Having someone there to share life's ups and downs is great. Your partner may come in any shape or size. You may marry that person, and you may not. It's not the legal connection that is the barometer of a successful relationship, and plenty of unmarried people stay together just as long (or short!) as married couples.

All you have to do is be awake. And what do I mean by that? You have to be aware of who you are, independent of that relationship, and know what it means to be looking in the same direction as your partner. Through experience, and seeking out wisdom, you'll get the message of what a good union looks and feels like. Bad relationships cannot happen again if you shift your view of what a relationship is and how you can thrive in one. If you are still in a bad relationship, it is because you didn't get the message. Don't be hard on yourself; you will get there when you are meant to, no matter how many missteps you take.

Love somebody because you love that person, not because you have to. You will know you have the right partner when you stop questioning what they are doing. Your partner gives you a lift to somewhere you are going, and doesn't come in to check up on you.

That is both a literal and symbolic example for gauging when it's "right."

Are We There Yet – How do I know this is “it?”

You're in a relationship – or hope to be – and because of the route you had to take to get here, you're not sure just exactly sure what a “good relationship” is. If there wasn't a loving partnership between your parents, or you have suffered a lot of hurt and frustration in your attempts at love, being in a healthy relationship for the long run could seem out of your range of experience. It's easy to doubt yourself, just as it is to be convinced that something is right when it's not, so let's look at some of the most important components of strong, joyful, lasting unions.

You and your partner communicate in an effective, productive and loving way. You talk about life, interests, and goals, both in terms of things you share, and your separate endeavors. You feel comfortable talking about your pasts', the dynamic between you, sex, kids, and well, just about everything! Disagreements are also a vital part of this communication. If you can't speak to each other about what you are feeling, these emotions will be repressed and worsen, causing an unspoken divide between you. Even a healthy fight (one that doesn't take on a life of its own) can be beneficial to a relationship.

You don't try to control one another. When you think, whether consciously or subconsciously, that you can control another human being, especially one you are in a relationship with, you are headed for trouble. We are all responsible for ourselves. When you get as close to someone as you do in a love relationship, the lines tend to blur about where you stop and the other person starts. Change is always happening, but it's not something you have power over. If you can't accept your partner just the way they are, it's going to be difficult to be truly happy with them, or yourself. You find that the work you do on the relationship is really directed at controlling or changing the other person, instead of improving the relationship while upholding good boundaries. You are two very distinct people, and you have to always respect that fact.

There is trust. If you feel the bond between you and your partner is flimsy and dependent on outside forces, you don't have trust. When a relationship is good, the connection feels strong and unwavering. You are there for your mate, as they are for you. If you go out into the world, to do what you need to do, you don't worry that they are going to vanish in the meantime! If you've been betrayed in the past, it's hard to let go of suspicion and fear. Work on this, for living with distrust is a horrible way to exist and very straining on a relationship.

There is time for one another. No matter how busy you are, you always carve out some time together. You participate in something fun, discuss what needs to be talked about, spend time with your children together, do something important for both of you. There are couples that spend so much time apart, they begin to lose a sense of who the other person is. Then there are partners who may look like they're filling a lot of time together, but because they've lost their connection, they might as well be alone. Pursue the things in your life that are just about you as an individual, but also ways to truly be together.

You accept the other people in your partner's life. You may not be a big fan of his Aunt

Sally, or want to spend time with her best friend, Lisa, but your partner's circle of family and friends must be respected and supported. There are people you share, then there are those you don't – this is a healthy and constructive combination. When someone in a relationship feels pressure to give up a friendship or drop a relative, the stress and strain of that kind of control is taxing to your bond. Compatibility in all areas of the relationship is best when you have things that you share, and things that are just your own. You and your partner should have a wonderful combination of being the same in many ways, but different in just as many forms.

You aren't keeping secrets from one another. If you think you need to hide something from a partner, there's something wrong with the relationship. When you first meet someone it isn't necessary to tell him or her your whole life's story, but as you get to know them, and feel that they are going to be an important person in your life, there isn't anything that you should be afraid to reveal. This person is with you because of who you are, not because of what happened to you, or some other circumstance. If they judge you for that, that is not true partnership!

There is both giving and receiving from both sides in the relationship. Though there may be times where one of you needs more or less in the partnership, the ability to express love and give of yourself, and to receive it, is so important. Sometimes people who are good at giving don't feel confident about receiving. Some people take (and take, and take!) but cannot reciprocate without a lot of discomfort or resentment. Chances are there are things in your past that created the model for this imbalance. A relationship can hobble along for a while with this kind of inequality, but ultimately it throws happiness off kilter. So many people have emotional walls. They don't want to be hurt. They don't want to be judged. Some are self-absorbed and aren't even aware that they've got themselves in check, and are missing out on what it means to have that kind of wonderful balance of giving and receiving in a relationship. When you're with the right person, you can feel the scale of giving and receiving remain fairly stable. It becomes the dynamic between the two of you. There is gratitude, generosity of the heart and equity. When it exists, you may not even notice it, but you feel the serenity it offers.

You don't depend on him or her to make you happy and feel complete. It's got to come from within you. You must focus on taking responsibility for your own happiness, even when you're feeling absolute bliss with someone! It's a tricky balance, but one you can put into practice if you are aware of it and making the effort to maintain it. Remember, you will be able to love someone else more than you ever thought – and be loved in return – when you love yourself and feel 100% whole on your own.

You don't try to change and reconfigure yourself into what you think your partner wants in a person. If you attempt to shape who you are into some idea of what a perfect fit for the other person is, not only are you probably wrong about their expectation, but you are suppressing your identity. This will only backfire since you're going to lose yourself in the relationship. Your two separate identities are the most important anchors for a successful bond. If you don't maintain your own individuality, a destructive chain of co-dependence is set off. A good relationship doesn't include unhealthy dependency. You and your partner support one another, but if either of you lean too heavily on the other, you are both going to topple over! You're actually able to be closer and more connected, in a positive way, when dependence isn't part of the deal. We should feel inspired and

lifted by our mate, not dragged down.

You are risking your heart. As much as it may seem like something to avoid, you cannot have a great relationship, and genuine love, without putting your heart out on the line. No matter how traumatic past hurts may be, when you let those experiences shut down your ability to love, you are cheating yourself out of a tremendous life force. It's completely valid if you don't want to throw yourself into the arena of relationships, but if you desire a soul mate, you've got to take the chance that you could be crushed. It's the price for joy, and the balance of life. There's no happiness without sorrow, there's no union without harsh separation. When you are with the one you are meant to be with, you put it all out there. Your heart is courageous.

A Broken Heart Has Wisdom and Strength

No person or event from your past can stand in the way of love. Love is much, much stronger. When you are fresh from heartbreak, it may be hard to see what lies in the future. It may seem impossible to think you can trust again. Love is vulnerability, there's no way around that. The safety we will seek can be thrown when we experience the loss of a relationship, but there is something happening on a much higher level when life delivers us these events that seem so shattering. It's at those times that we stand at a crossroads. Are we going to keep our hearts open? Are we going to trust that life is not just the light, but the dark, also? Will we see the continuum of experience and move through it with self-love and grace?

It's important to feel your emotions, totally. If you were deeply in love, the end of a relationship can feel like a death. There is a space for grief, but don't let it consume you. You may also be feeling anger. Let it sink in, then flow out. In the end "you" is all you have, and your mind creates your reality. All else is an illusion, which is not to say that certain twists and turns of life are not painful. What will you do with that pain? Can you help someone else who needs it? Can you remember that capacity to love, and your confidence in it, makes you vulnerable? Those two sides of love are joined at the hip. You have to understand that; there's no avoiding the risk. If you want to live life as fully as we all deserve to, you have to muster the willingness to mend your heart. It might be glued together for quite some time, but you can start to experience happiness, hope and connection with it in that state of repair. And remember, often it is through the cracks that light shines through the most.

When you can look at yourself, and even the person who broke your heart, with compassion, love is available to you, always. It finds you. You don't have to do anything else but enter your heart. Love doesn't function like a train, with some sort of time schedule, or grand track design. You don't ever know exactly who or what will turn up for you, nor how or when. Grasping onto any hurt, expectation or urge to control, will obscure the relationship you are meant to have with your soul mate.

Navigating Relationships – Love Is A Great Adventure

Life isn't easy, and relationships are certainly a reflection of that. There are going to be good times and bad. You cannot be part of the wonderful journey of sharing your life with someone you love without accepting that perfection is an illusion. Happiness within a relationship is based more on the ability to navigate all the sudden and surprising turns – both the positive and negative. That is what a healthy bond with another person encompasses. Living in the present, and adapting to what each moment offers you, is key to how you will fare in a relationship. (That holds true for other kinds of relationships in our lives – with family, friends, and co-workers.) If there is resistance to change, and the urge to control, you will be setting yourself up for misery. You have to embrace your

own identity and heart, and let go of all else, in order to experience the joy of partnership.

Loving unconditionally is one of life's greatest joys and you can experience it, no matter how defeated or doubtful you are about your prospects. You have to embody authenticity, trust, respect and compassion in order to have a loving relationship. You must know who you are and feel whole. You need to strive for balance and remember that the relationships you have to EVERYTHING in your life are connected. They are reflected in your person-to-person dynamics. Just as it is in the natural world, there will always be big waves, strong winds and fierce storms, both before and after periods of calm. If you go deep inside and think about how you can learn to love yourself, stay connected to the world around you, heal your heart and let life unfold on its own terms, you can have a wonderful, lasting relationship with an equally grounded, loving partner.

About The Author



For more than 15 years, Derek O'Neill has been transforming the lives of thousands of people around the world for the better. An internationally acclaimed transformational therapist, motivational speaker, author, martial arts sensei and humanitarian, Derek inspires and uplifts people from all walks of life through his workshops, consultations, speaking engagements, media, and tireless humanitarian work.

Drawing on thirty years of training in martial arts, which earned him the level of Master Black Belt, coupled with his extraordinary intuitive abilities and expertise as a psychotherapist, Derek has pioneered a new psychology, transformational therapy. His signature process, aptly named "The Sword and the Brush," helps clients to seamlessly transmute their struggles into positive outcomes, using the sword to cut away old patterns and the brush to help paint the picture of the new life that they require.

In addition to reaching large audiences through workshops and media, Derek advises individuals, celebrities, business leaders, athletes, artists, and politicians, helping them to find new perspectives on long-standing issues and bringing harmony back to their lives and businesses. Inspired by his worldly travels, he formed [SQ Foundation](#), a not-for-profit organization focused on helping to solve global issues facing humanity today. In 2012, he was honored as Humanitarian of the Year and named International Celebrity Ambassador for Variety International the Children's Charity.



Author of *More Truth Will Set You Free* as well as the “Get a Grip” series and several children’s books, Derek also hosted his own radio show, “The Way With Derek O’Neill,” which enjoyed the most successful launch in VoiceAmerica’s history, quickly garnering 100,000 listeners.

Derek is a master at offering practical wisdom and proven techniques for living a more harmonious and fulfilling life, bringing CEOs to the level of wise yogi and wise yogis to CEO; he has worked with executives from some of the world’s major airlines, and the cast of Spiderman on Broadway to help transform group disharmony and untapped creative potential into productivity and dynamic performance. He has been featured in *Exceptional People Magazine*, *The Irish Independent*, and *The Irish Examiner*.

[Recordings of Derek’s discourses are available for download](#), offering practical wisdom and proven techniques for living a more harmonious and fulfilling life.

To learn more about Derek O’Neill, to attend his next workshops, to order books, downloads, video streaming, or to contact him, please visit his website:

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To discover more about Derek’s SQ Foundation, the global charity that is changing the lives of hundreds of thousands of people around the world, go to:

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