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**ROMANTIC AND
FAMILY
RELATIONSHIPS**

The Nature of Intimate Relationships

- » Intimate relationships require deep commitment and a sense of intimacy.
 - **Commitment** is the desire to stay in a relationship no matter what happens
 - **Intimacy** is the significant emotional closeness that we experience in a relationship. To be intimate does not always mean the relationship is a romantic one.

The Nature of Intimate Relationships

» They foster interdependence

- What happens to one person affects everyone else in the relationship
- Intimate relationships usually have high interdependence, but there are also degrees of this interdependence. For example, you may love your best friend, but you might not sell your house and move if they were to get a job in another city. But if you are in a romantic relationship, you might follow.

The Nature of Intimate Relationships

» They require continuous investment

- Investment is the commitment of resources we put into a relationship and people in an intimate relationships are often aware of how much they invest.
- For example, if you drift apart from your siblings as you get older, you still have your memories, and cannot retrieve that time, attention, or resources that we invested.
- In a romantic relationship, if you believe you are putting in more time or resources, you often feel resentful.

The Nature of Intimate Relationships

» Exclusivity

- One expectation when in a romantic relationship is that you are exclusive to one another. Another word is monogamy, which means being in one romantic relationship at a time. Exclusivity is an expression of commitment and faithfulness.
- However, not ALL partners expect their relationships to be exclusive.

The Nature of Intimate Relationships

» Voluntary

- People can choose whether or not they want to be romantically involved. If a person chooses to be in a relationship, they then begin the process of choosing a romantic partner. We are not talking about arranged marriages, but rather being active in finding a partner. This also means we are able to leave a relationship if we choose.
- What are you doing to meet a potential partner?

Knapp's Five-stage Model

- **Initiating:** The development phase when people meet and interact for the first time.
- **Experimenting:** The decision to learn more about one another.
- **Intensifying:** The move to friendship
- **Integrating:** Commitment has formed and there is a strong sense that the relationship now has an identity.
- **Bonding:** Commitment is announced

» Romantic relationships vary in how they handle conflict

- Conflict is a common characteristic of many relationships. Partners have conflicts on issues such as work, time, money, children, and sex. Conflict isn't bad for a relationships, but how you handle it can be a problem. How you handle conflict, influences the success of a relationship.
 - » **Validating** - Cooperative
 - » **Volatile** - Competitive
 - » **Avoidance** – indirect conversation
 - » **Hostile** –Intense and has negative impact

Romantic relationships vary in how they handle privacy

- Partners in a couple jointly own the information about their relationship and therefore should decide together what they consider to be private. Together it is essential to form and manage privacy boundaries.
- An example is when there is conflict, one partner might believe it is no one's business, while the other might lean on relatives and friends for support.

Romantic relationships vary in how they handle emotional communication

- Happy partners share more positive emotion and less negative emotion than do unhappy partners
- Unhappy partners are more likely than happy partners to reciprocate expressions of negative emotion

Romantic relationships vary in how they handle instrumental communication

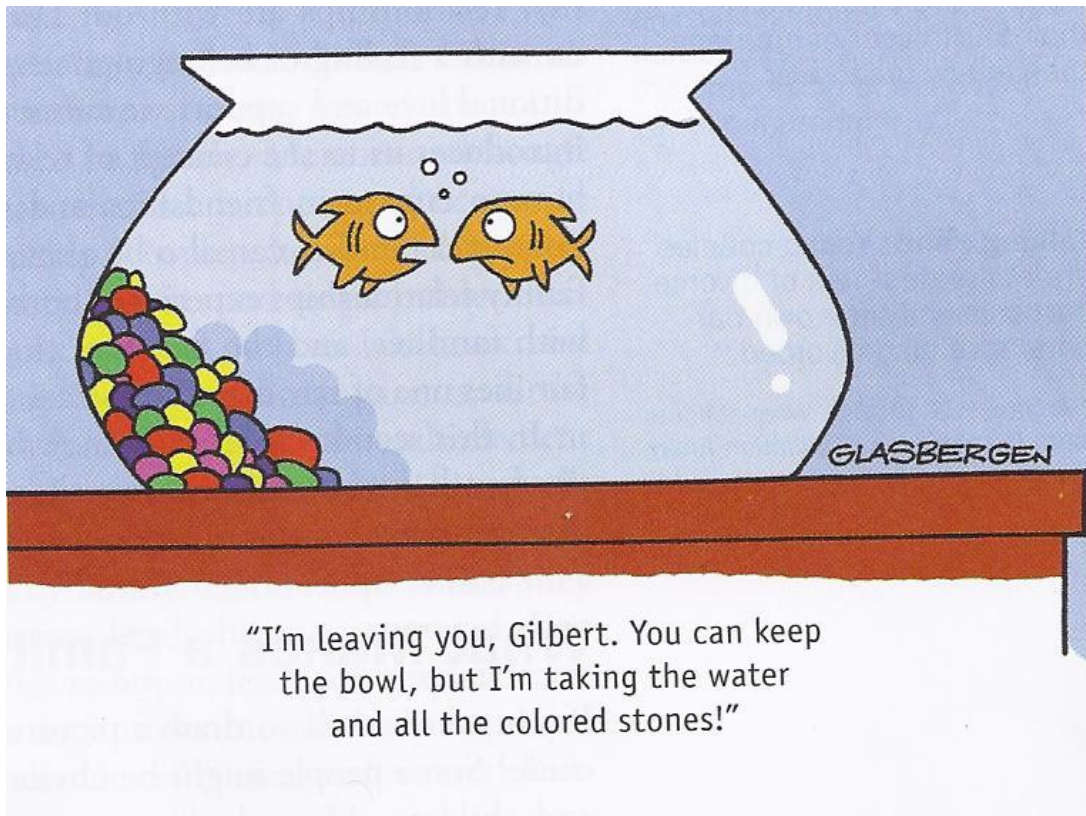
- The way in which partners divide everyday tasks often reflects the balance of power in their relationship

Getting out: Ending Relationships

- **Differentiating:** When you begin to see your difference that were once complimentary and now are undesirable or annoying
- **Circumscribing:** The quality and quantity of communication decreases. You begin to start avoiding conflict and talking about safe issues.
- **Stagnating:** The relationship stops growing and little or no communication is occurring.
- **Avoiding:** When you begin to create physical and emotional distance.

Getting Out ...

- **Terminating:** The relationship is over.



Communicating in Families

» What makes a family?

- **Genetic ties:** Many believe that family is all about genetic ties, but many families are created.
- **Legal obligations:** Many believe that with family comes a legal bond. Parents have legal obligations to their children. In the US there are 1000 + laws that govern the marriage role.
- **Role behaviors:** Many believe that ‘family’ are those individuals that “act” like family.

Communicating in Families

» Families enact roles

- Family roles are the functions people serve in the family system. Four roles commonly emerge during conflict:
 - » **Blamer:** responsible for what goes wrong, but won't take responsibility.
 - » **Placater:** the peacemaker
 - » **Computer:** the logical and reasonable one
 - » **Distracter:** Makes random comments to avoid conflict.

Communicating in Families

» Families enact rituals

- Family rituals are repetitive activities that have special meaning for a family
- Some family rituals are “imported” from families into blended families

Communicating in Families

» Families tell stories

- Family stories give families a sense of their history, their expectations, and their connections
- Family stories are told and retold
- Family stories convey an underlying message about the family

Communicating in Families

» Families share secrets

- Some families have secrets they intentionally keep hidden from others such as religion, legal issues, health issues, family conflicts, or financial information.
- Secrets can also be kept within families

Creating a Positive Communication Climate

- » Provide effective non-evaluative feedback
 - Probe
 - Paraphrase
 - Offer support
- » Provide effective evaluative feedback
 - Provide praise
 - Criticize constructively

Five Love Languages

- There are five basic love languages – ways to express love emotionally. Each person has a primary love language that we must learn to speak if we want that person to feel loved and important.

Five Love Languages

- » Words of Affirmation
 - Spoken praise and appreciation
- » Acts of Service
 - Action speaks louder than words.
- » Receiving Gifts
 - The thought is what counts Little things mean a lot.
- » Quality Time
 - Giving your undivided attention
- » Physical Touch
 - Nothing communicates this more than holding hands, kissing, hugging, or even sex.