

***"We have a huge hole in us - what is it?"***

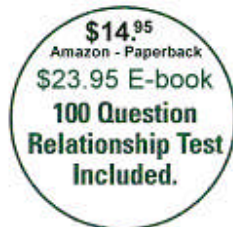
What is missing in our lives? We have a huge hole in us, and we can't seem to find out what it is. We are involved in relationships. Developing one. Enjoying one. Coping with one. Leaving one. We ask questions. "How do I develop a deep, loving relationship? How do I maintain the relationship that I already have? What in the world went wrong with the one I'm now leaving?" This book, and its relationship tests, can help you recognize symptoms of a bad relationship, and help you develop better relationships - maybe even fill that void."

**- John C. Tyler**

***"Tyler deals with subjects many of us prefer to avoid".***

John Tyler is a man who takes seriously the obligation a citizen in a democracy has to other people, and this book is one example of that. By being completely honest about subjects which many of us prefer to avoid, he enriches our dialogue about basic human needs and emotions in a very valuable way. Indeed, his honesty about what he genuinely thinks on these intimate but important subjects is a sign of the faith he has in the essential goodness of people and their ability to grow."

**- Barney Frank  
U.S. Congress**



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## **Friendships – Lovers, Huggers & Others**

This book is dedicated to those of you who want to ensure that your relationships with lovers and soul-mates are on solid ground. You may discover the reasons why your relationships are so stressful, and what you can do to improve them.

I have developed three "Relationship Tests" that will revolutionize the way you relate to others, and the way they relate to you.

Read the book to get a complete understanding of what love is. Get to know if happiness is attainable – on a long-term basis. Find out if you and your lover, soul mate, spouse...or friends-to-be are compatible. Then, take (or administer to others) the relationship tests at the end of this book.

Don't believe for a moment that you can change someone AFTER you marry him or her. Discover if you are compatible with your new lover or soul mate BEFORE you decide to marry. Take the tests to discover where your weaknesses are...and where their weaknesses are in your relationship – and fix them if you can - walk away if you can't.

I was married to a woman that I knew for roughly two weeks. It ended some thirty years later because I chose to do everything wrong. I had no idea of what love truly is. I searched for some sort of bliss that a relationship should have...at least in my opinion. I learned about what love is...what happiness is...and what I should have done early on in the relationship to avoid the pitfalls that will come with any relationship, whether lover, spouse, children, parents or friends.

Relationships are difficult, but they can be blessings to you if you learn how to cultivate them.

John Tyler, Author

## **Introduction**

We are all involved in relationships. Developing one. Enjoying one. Coping with one. Leaving one. And we ask questions. *"How do I develop a deep, loving relationship? How do I maintain the relationships that I already have? What in the world went wrong with the one I am now leaving?"*

This book was written because I believe we all share common problems regarding relationships with lovers, relatives or friends. I want this book to be sort of a personal chat between us, so when I refer to "you" in this book, I'm talking to those of you who, like me, want solutions to problems concerning our relationships. These problems won't go away until we get some concrete answers to questions that have continued to nag us.

Those of us who are called "baby boomers" continue to wonder how (or even if) we can improve our relationships with others. We have acquired a lot of material possessions because we have considered ourselves to be smarter than the average person, but there is a huge hole in us. Something is missing in our lives, but we can't seem to nail down what it is. Some of us have come to realize that we have screwed up our relationships with our spouses, or lovers, family members and friends...and we don't know how to fix it.

I needed to write this book for me first. I had my own business. I had three Mercedes-Benz automobiles in one year. I built fabulous houses. I made real estate deals happen that earned millions of dollars over the years.

I have known riches...and I have known poverty. I have learned that relationships cannot be bought.

I have learned that relationships must be developed, and I have learned that most of the things that I bought or owned were misused, and they never really belonged to me in the first place.

I can say that I have truly learned about relationships, and how valuable good ones are.

Early on, I could not borrow money from banks because I had not built up any meaningful credit. I had to go out and get money by using my God-given brains and talents.

I researched the field of real estate, and discovered that I could earn a fortune buying it and selling it. I also started a retail TV and electronics business while in my thirties.

I had a lot of success over the course of my life, but it was not until after almost dying on an operating table on July 22, 1993, that I had to think about what was really important to me.

I took advantage of my relationships. I can honestly say that I had no idea of what love was supposed to be until after nearly dying. I had plenty of "stuff", but my relationships were horrible. It seemed that researching things concerning relationships would become my life's work.

Today, I don't have the millions of dollars that I once had. I'm divorced, but happy as anyone could be. Does that sound strange? Stay tuned.

As you read through this book, you will begin to see, from my point of view, what happiness really is, and you will (hopefully) learn from the research that I have done. You will see the changes that took place in my life, and know what I have done to "fill that void".

The research that I have done, and the information that I have gleaned, will help me all the days of my life, and it is my hope that this book will also help you.

I had to explore...to dig deep into what relationships are supposed to look like and "feel" like because this had become personal. I had to get answers because I was dealing with ME now...not some thing...or someone else...this was MY LIFE.

I went to every bookstore within 50 miles of my house and bought every book that I could find on friendships and relationships. I needed to find out if I was incapable of loving someone or incapable of developing deep, personal friendships. Some of the authors gave me bits and pieces that would help me to arrive at conclusions found in this book. No author could answer my questions fully and satisfactorily.

I wanted to know the meaning of love and what all the components are that make love what it is. I wanted to know what women's emotions are all about so that I could understand them better. I wanted to know who I was (the real me) so that I could understand myself better. I wanted to know what "true friends" (I call them soul-mates in this book) are supposed to be.

Were my friendships shallow? I had no way to evaluate my relationships. There were no "love tests"; no "friendship tests" or standards to compare with what I thought were right answers.

I wanted to know what happiness was even supposed to be! Is happiness something that should last a lifetime? If not, why are we here on earth? Why do we exist? What is our purpose? Is it just to amass a bunch of "stuff"? My research and experience have provided the answers that I needed.

I now know the answers, but I could not find them in any particular book that I read.

Church leaders are wondering why the divorce rate is skyrocketing among their congregations. This book will, I hope, cause clergy to think about providing people with training in developing and maintaining healthy relationships. Congregation members are asking, "*What's missing in my life?*"

Divorced men and women are asking, "*What must I do to make the next relationship count?*" This book provides information to help you to get off on the right foot BEFORE you contemplate becoming involved in a serious love relationship.

Parents have told me that they regret not having spent more quality time with their children. And now, it's too late to do anything about it...or is it?

Our senior citizens, many of them widowed, have expressed a desire to have friends and companions, but they are afraid to do anything about it. "*What if he or she doesn't want me for a friend?*", they ask.

I believe that YOU want to find answers to many questions that you are asking or that I have mentioned in this introduction.

It is my belief that you will discover those answers in this book. It is my pleasure to share the information with you. *Friendships – Lovers, Huggers & Others* – can help you to improve your relationships and fill that "hole in your heart".

One thing is for certain...you didn't spend money to buy this book unless you are asking a lot of the same questions that I was asking. You want solutions to your problems and you want to change. That's the first step...WANTING TO CHANGE.

## **CHAPTER ONE – We all need love.**

This book is based on the foundational truth that every human being on the planet must love and be loved, or, to quote the words of a beautiful song, "Nature Boy", *The greatest thing you'll ever know is just to love and be loved in return.*" We each must search for this thing called love, and can find it only in relating to another human being. (There is, of course, the realm of spiritual love that extends beyond the human-to-human type – the ultimate love between humankind and the Creator).

A parallel truth must then be that a lack of love produces a state of unrest, isolation and loneliness. Loneliness and isolation are very painful, even worse than death for many. Truly, some feel that death is easier; for in death, the pain of loneliness is over.

I will speak later of this death issue, and you will know that you don't have to fear death at all...if you can know where you are going afterwards.

Some people are lonely in a marriage where the flame of love, trust or friendship has died. In these marriages, I can assure you that, like a plant, if it is not nourished on a regular basis, it shall surely wither first...then die.

Single adults, the widowed, children, the elderly who have lost a mate – all need to, and want to, reach out to someone who can fill the void of loneliness with love.

## CHAPTER TWO – Filling Voids

Many of us have felt “voids” or emptiness – “holes in our hearts”: Something is missing that we can’t put our finger on. We think it may be a lack of happiness. We do things to fill the void – like buying a new car, a bigger boat, and a diamond ring, only to find out that we still have that empty feeling.

We think, “If only I could get a better job, a younger wife, a newer house, more money – then the void will be filled and I will be happy. We try to fill voids by doing things, by keeping busy.

Some of my female friends try to fill voids by giving of themselves to everyone else. They give a little of themselves to their children, a little to their parents, a little to their church, a little to their jobs. They give so much to others that they have little or nothing left for themselves. One female friend has reached this point of no return. She feels drained of emotion and endurance. She says, “*If I stay married, so what? If I run away, so what?*” She has tried so hard to fill voids by giving and doing for others that she created one huge void. She needs to learn how to take, how to ask for and receive emotional support from others. Many women I know have this problem.

They don’t know how to take without feeling guilty. The danger such women face is that they will “bond” with the first male who pays attention to them.

These men and women could connect emotionally, become friends and, if attracted to each other physically, another marriage could be destroyed. This is not to say that married people cannot have friendships with people other than their spouses...more on this later.

Failed marriages could possibly be prevented if couples would learn to talk with each other, not only about things that make them happy, but things that exasperate them, too. All too many female friends tell me there is a lack of communication in their marriage. Their relationship is in jeopardy because they haven't learned to talk to each other about any subject - whether sex, what makes them happy or what irritates them. There is no subject under the sun that couples cannot talk about.

My personal experience, having been married and divorced after thirty years, has helped me enormously to not only write this book, but to work on my weaknesses in relationships and to improve the friendships that I now enjoy. I was there. I felt that "black hole" or void that makes you feel lonely, isolated, and constantly "blue" or depressed.

If you feel that something is missing in your life, read on; the pages ahead may help you to develop and enjoy friendships that will last a lifetime.

After my operation and near-death experience in 1993, I had something called "post traumatic stress syndrome". I cried like a baby while taking a shower ...I rode my motorcycle doing 80 miles per hour...not caring if I hit a bridge abutment or a truck. What a horrible, hopeless feeling being "electric blue" felt like.

Thank God, I reached a point a year later, where I came out of depression, and felt my old happy, positive self again, but that depressed spirit that I had cost me my marriage...it cost me to suffer a poor relationship with my three sons and one daughter, and it caused me to isolate myself so that nobody wanted to be around me. I can't blame them...I hated being near myself!

### **CHAPTER THREE – What is really important in life?**

On July 22, 1993, the surgeon promised that I'd be out of the hospital in four hours. "*Just a simple, minor gallbladder removal*", he said.

When I woke up, the minister was standing in front of me holding a Bible in one hand and a tulip in the other! Friends and relatives whom I hadn't seen in years were gathered around my bedside. Something had gone terribly wrong.



I later found out that I had been at death's door...literally, when the surgeon's trocar instrument had severed my aorta...a large artery that went from my heart through the abdomen and down to my right leg.

There I had lain, bleeding to death while the emergency team tried to pump someone else's blood into me faster than mine was gushing through the accidental incision. In an effort to find the source of the bleeding, I was cut quickly from pelvis to sternum, and with the damage now apparent, they clamped the aorta, repaired the artery and saved my life.



**10" entry wound after emergency surgery**

Six days later, they fed me but the food wouldn't pass. More bad news. The incision would have to be reopened to allow the surgeon to reassess. The second look revealed that he had torn open one of the bowels in three places during the initial surgery! Eighteen days and two surgeries later, I went home. It was then that I became fully aware of how close to death I had come. Later, after my divorce, I asked myself, "*Why didn't God just kill me...my wife would never have had to suffer the pain of a divorce?*"

The answer would come later....much later. I would discover that God had a plan and purpose for my life, and the relationship with Him would be the one that I truly would discover how we are to relate to others – to make our relationships work out perfectly.

Right after the stay in the hospital, I was home...trying to walk a few feet without getting tired. One day, I tried walking about a thousand feet to a bridge that crossed my driveway on my property. I recall asking, "*What is important in life anyway?*"

For the first time, it became clear to me that relationships...not things, are what should be of paramount importance to us. Relationships can last a lifetime...things may not. So simple, yet it took a tightrope walk between life and death for me to see it.

And then my emotions exploded into a thousand fragments. I had flashes of my relationship with my wife, my children, family, friends, and saw them for what they truly were. They could only be flashes – there was nothing solid in them to grasp onto.

I hadn't really known what the word "friend" or "love" meant. I saw people as types or groups rather than as individuals. I saw myself relating to the Smiths or the Joneses or to my bowling team or church fellowship group.

But people are as individual and unique as snowflakes. They are to be known as individuals.

For the first time in my life, I realized that not knowing people for who they are – how they think independently, what their individual needs are, what their inner emotions and feelings are – was robbing me (and them) of having real relationships – real friendships.

I needed to find answers to help me face the pain and confusion of not knowing whether I was capable of having a friendship or love relationship with anyone. I was determined to discover for myself what love is and how I could salvage the lost years wading in shallow relationships.

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## **CHAPTER FOUR – Is something seriously wrong with me?**

When I began to search for answers to the myriad of questions, I thought I was heading for a nervous breakdown. A friend of mine had actually suffered a breakdown...but recovered after months in the hospital. My wife thought I was heading for a breakdown as well. She sought the help of others to find out if that's where I was heading. I wasn't my normal self. I was in this electric blue funk all the time...totally depressed. It was as a result of that surgery that had gone bad. It had to be a horrible thing to witness from my wife's perspective. She didn't know then what was about to hit her like a tornado. This was about a year before I asked her for a divorce...and it would devastate her – and me.

When I found myself crying like a baby in the shower, it bothered me because "*men don't cry*". At least, that is what I was told for most of my manhood by my father, or by military commanders...even by many of my pastors.

I don't know why I was so overwhelmed and in despair most of the first year, but it was something I had never experienced. I was always the upbeat, positive guy...always.

I am told that depression frequently occurs right after a traumatic surgery, and that some women go through it right after childbirth. Seeing some of those same kids in their teen years, I can see how depression could set in!

Nearly dying could certainly overwhelm some people, or so I was told. The mental picture that I had of the surgeon slicing me open and removing all of my intestines to make an inspection of my abdomen haunted me for several weeks.

I remember waking up in a cold sweat. The crying continued almost nightly during a long period of time after surgery and release from the hospital. I had to deal with my nightmares all alone because my wife, a registered nurse, worked nights....something that I don't recommend. It keeps couples apart, emotionally, for much of the day and night. She would roll into bed while I rolled out to o to work.

Although I knew I could talk to Barbara about the nightmares and the terror that I felt, and she would have been eager to listen, I didn't want to give her even more to worry about.

Crying had never been part of my life. It was definitely a new experience for me. I grew up in Roxbury, Massachusetts - part of Boston's inner city, in what would probably be classified as a ghetto. We used to have a saying when we'd meet people in the country. I'd say, "*I grew up in Roxbury where you'd have to be tough or die*". That wasn't far from the truth.

My family lived in a three-story brick apartment building on Ziglar Street. I learned how to smoke cigarettes at the tender age of five! I have my brother, Verne, to thank for that. He was six!

I once watched a thirteen-year old boy cut two fingers off the left hand of another younger boy because he wouldn't help the older burn down a house with two old people inside it!

On another occasion, I witnessed several boys holding the head of another while one of them shot a hole in his ear lobe with a B.B. gun. Today, their pierce ears differently, I hear!

Then, there was the time I was waling on a sidewalk – heading home from school, and was met by the neighborhood bully. For no apparent reason, the bully picked up an empty five-gallon bleach bottle, broke it on an iron fence rail, and hurled it across the street – hitting me in the forehead. I ran home – blood streaming down my face. My mother panicked. I soaked three towels with blood on my way to Boston City Hospital. I still bear the memory in the form of a scar on my forehead.

When we played “Cowboys and Indians”, we played for real. I vividly remember coming around the corner of a building and getting cracked over the head with the butt end of another kid’s six-gun...just like we learned on TV. We were a “sissy” if we cried, so I did not cry. The only times I remember crying were when my father died from a heart attack in 1968, and when my grandmother died...then once again on March 18m, 2007, when my mother died. I was happy in one way to see her go. She was a born-again Christian who loved the Lord, so I knew that *“to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord.”* She had that inscribed on my father’s headstone. I knew that my mother had found the place that I wrote about in 2005 in another book entitled – *Heaven – How Do I Get There.*

Later in life, I had ridden motorcycles (one doesn’t drive a motorcycle...one rides them) for several years when I first got married. Then, when the children came along, I decided it was time to minimize my risks, so I sold the motorcycle. Once they were grown, I reverted back to that passion and bought a great big Honda Gold wing...1500 cc motorcycle.

One night, after my surgical fiasco in 1993, I decided to take a ride on it. I rode down a long, deserted road. I remember thinking again how shallow my friendships were.

At least, I thought they were pretty shallow, and tears began to well up in my eyes once again.

All of a sudden, I started laughing hysterically! "*Why am I going through these stupid emotions that only women are supposed to have?*", I thought. I then became afraid to come face-to-face with my emotions because...perhaps like you, I have a fear of the unknown. I had no idea where this confrontation with emotions would lead me.



**My "favorite toy"!**

I didn't know it then, but this was the beginning of my desperate search to discover the real me.

Ross Perot's presidential running mate, Admiral Stockdale, expressed my feelings best when he said, "*Who am I and what am I doing here?*" I have had to ask myself, "*Who am I and what is my purpose on earth. What am I doing here?*"

Have you confronted that question yet? It's got to be answered because, until you know who you are...and what you are capable of...right and wrong, you can never get to a peaceful place in your life where you can build and develop relationships.

I can tell you this much: I was a born-again believer since I was eleven-years old. I knew who God was, but I had a picture of Him as a father. My father was never around, and was the authority figure. He was the disciplinarian in the household. He worked hard, and provided for his family...just the image that I was always taught to have for myself. Provider, disciplinarian, father, husband...yet I never knew how to develop the proper relationships with my wife...my three sons and daughter, with friends. I never fully understood how relationships are supposed to work...until the beginning of 2008. That story is found in another book – *Satan's Games*, but I will tell you that I have discovered - by fate, what true and good and healthy relationships are supposed to look like. We'll touch on that later.

I had to do a word study on the word "purpose" before I could continue in my quest for understanding how relationships are supposed to work. Webster defines "purpose" as: *The reason for which something exists.*"

To be "purposeful", according to Webster, I would have to be "*full of meaning, significant.*" It is my belief that our main purpose on Earth is to love and be loved. Even the Bible lists the two great commandments. Jesus said, "*Love God and love your neighbor as you love yourself.*"

I didn't get to fully understand that concept and how it would not only give us full satisfaction in our relationships, but it would also be the formula for success. I will elaborate on what being a success is later in this book.

Pat Benatar exclaimed that. "*Love is a battlefield.*" I was to learn firsthand on that battlefield. I would now begin to learn about (and even understand) emotions foreign to me as a man. But...it was necessary in my quest for self to be able to understand those emotions. This is where my research had to start.

## **CHAPTER FIVE - Our psychological profiles**

I was sick of being what I called "a plastic person" (described in more detail later). I looked inward to identify character flaws and strengths that I thought I possessed. I finally had to look at myself, evaluate myself, and deal honestly with myself about those strengths and weaknesses. You will have to do the same.

I was a selfish individual. I would come home at night after work and, without regard to anyone who was watching television; I would grab the remote and watch what I wanted to watch. What a miserable man!

I didn't seem to care that my wife had cleaned the house, washed the clothes (for her, me and four children), made the supper and still had to go to work and put in eight hours as a night nurse. My kids must have hated to see me come home. As soon as I walked in the door, they scattered like cockroaches in the light.

Quite honestly, they must have felt like cockroaches...but I was no light.

I couldn't go on doing these things anymore. I had deprived my family (and myself) of a loving relationship. Like most couples that have been married for any length of time, we were simply existing. Does any of this sound familiar?

Love was as near to dead as it could get...at the very least, terminally ill. That "empty void" was always there...nagging at me.

I wanted to change. Wanting to change is the first key toward building and rebuilding relationships. If patience is the second, my ex-wife should be nominated for sainthood!

Can love relationships be developed? If mind was dead, could it be resurrected? If not, will I have the courage to move on? These are questions I had to deal with on a regular basis.

My psychological profile may help you understand who I really was. I am all of the following: I am determined, independent, persuasive, a leader, self-assured, optimistic...all great character strengths.

Unfortunately, I was also quick to anger, oppressive, arrogant, judgmental, and somewhat heartless when it came to dealing with others. Unfortunately, I felt emotionless before my search for the truth. I felt like a failure...like someone who could never know what love is and what happiness is all about. I guess you could say that I was a man most miserable.

It was all about me. Later, I would learn that it should be all about others.

I wanted to begin to work on my character traits to improve on what I thought were the good qualities, and I wanted to be able to control the negative traits. My wife and friends will agree that I have improved, but not until I went through a trial or test of major proportions in 2008.

Since then, many of my negative character traits have been replaced with their opposite counterparts.

I no longer thought that some sins were greater or worse than others. As time unfolded, I began to see how I am as capable of committing any sin known to mankind...something I used to deny, and this realization caused me to recognize that I was not some self-righteous person, but a human being...capable of anything. Once I became "human", I could then begin to deal with issues that prevented me from learning how to let down some of the walls that I had built up over the course of my lifetime.

Once I did that, I learned that crying isn't a bad thing - it's a good thing.

I was a church member...a born-again believer, I knew I was going to go to heaven when I die. I was a deacon in my church. I taught 6<sup>th</sup> grade Sunday school students and later...I taught adults all about how to live right according to the Bible. I was all things to all people. I was a fraud! How can I teach others anything when I am as capable of committing any sin in the book? Of course, back then, I did not head down the road leading to sins that I viewed as taboo. I was, in my own view, a Bible-believing Christian man. Yet, I had been taught a lot of really stupid things ...deemed to be lawful in the eyes of my religious mentors and my father, but dead wrong on relationship building.

I learned, since then, how to be sensitive toward the feelings of others. I learned largely from female friends whom I sought out to clarify how they felt about issues. They were all (five of them) very willing to share their feelings with me because they genuinely believed I was sincere in trying to find out how they thought.

These female friends of mine are still friends to this day because of it.

Although we don't talk on a regular basis, I take one to coffee every few months to talk about her life and share stories. Another has gotten married (for the second time), and still shares time on the phone or e-mails with me, and whenever she is in Massachusetts, she calls me to have coffee. Her husband is fine with that...as a true, trusting relationship should be.

I learned from them that I must become sensitive to the emotions of others...especially those of my wife. I decided to see if I could resurrect the dead marriage that I had...and for a time, it seemed to work.

I can now "sense" situations in which couples are having marital problems and have had some success in helping them work things out. One such case happened in 2008, but after reading this book, the couple have decided to work things out, and it's been about a year and a half since then...and they seem to be doing well. They had a communication failure...and this is an area that men and women need to address on a daily basis if they are to keep their relationship healthy.

I will tell you this: I do NOT recommend that couples seek a divorce if there is any way possible for them to rectify their marriage. If I had to do it all over again, I would work through the difficulties that a marriage presents as time moves on, and the relationship seems to become "stale".

If there are children involved (any age), it is devastating for them to see mom and dad split. The consequences of a divorce are going to be forever...I repeat...forever. Don't do it!

There are ways to rebuild a failed marriage. I cover some of those in later chapters of this book. They CAN WORK...if you are willing to try them.

I can provide help for saving your marriage toward the end of this book when I tell you all that I learned concerning relationships as a result of my "time of testing" from January 2008 until around June of 2009.



Plastic?  
Selfish?  
Flaws?  
Strengths?

Is this you, too?

You may wish to invest in a book entitled, "*Spirit Controlled Temperaments*" by Tim LaHaye (Tyndale House Publishers – revised 1994 – over a million copies sold).

What stands out most about this book is it so clearly defined my psychological profile that I thought the author must have written that book exclusively for my benefit.

Another great book that I have read, and will continue to find refreshment in, is "*Men are from Mars – Women are From Venus*" by John Gray, Ph.D. Published by Harper Collins; Hardcover; 304 pages; released on 4/24/92. I **strongly** recommend that you and your significant other read this book. I have handed copies of it to my children.

Dr. Gray's book will demonstrate that men are surely different from women, and the needs and emotions of both are quite opposite in many cases and situations.

## **CHAPTER SIX – Getting your physical being into shape.**

Once I worked out who I was psychologically, I began to work on the physical man; I believed I was unattractive because I was a “big blob of blubber” in my own mind. In order for me to learn how to feel better about the psychological new me....the one I got to know who is capable of committing any sin known to mankind, I decided to work on the physical aspects.

If you feel too fat...or too thin, it can make you feel badly about yourself. Maybe you even begin to think that others think you are too fat or too thin, too, and this may have a negative effect on your psyche. If you are happy with the way you look, or there is nothing about the way you look, and then by all means...enjoy! I was unhappy with my physical appearance. I bite my nails...my hair is stupid...I have a “beer belly”, but I don’t drink. All of these things I can have control over, so why not engage in practices and diets and self-control that might enhance the way I feel about myself?



When I first wrote this book in 1995, I looked like the handsome gentleman to our left! Now, in 2009, I have turned into the older, white-haired guy on the cover! Time sure has a way of sneaking up on all of us, but we should still try to look and feel as good as we can.

To become the "new me", I would have to try to lose weight and exercise...two things I have tried to do a million times – and failed. Allow me to take a detour here so I can give you a better understanding of who I was and who I am now.

I quit smoking on August 3, 1975. I weighted about 140 pounds at that time. After I quit smoking, I gained a ton of weight. I would bob between 200 and 215 pounds. At 5'-11", 215 pounds is considered to be overweight....okay obese!

I could not get that weight off no matter what I tried to do. Of course, eating huge meals just before bedtime, and then topping things off with snacks consisting of a dozen Popsicles, a peanut butter sandwich, some cupcakes and a pound of green, seedless grapes probably didn't help!

I tried cutting back on food. It didn't work. I tried to exercise. I even did three sit-ups once! Whatever I tried – failed. So, I went out and bought a good-looking jogging suit. "*That should do it*", I thought.

I bought this great looking blue jacket, a pair of matching running pants, and blue sneakers to match. I couldn't wait to get home and slip this new gear on and start running.

I tossed my clothes all over the bedroom, slipped into my new running garb and proceeded to show Barbara how dashing I looked. You have to picture this 205-pound guy with a very round stomach. I was so tired from walking upstairs to change, that by the time I came back downstairs to the living room, I plopped myself down on the sofa for a moment of relaxation...and fell asleep!

I don't think I ever wore those clothes.

In fact, some time later, I found it...still brand new....but it didn't fit anymore because I was now 215 pounds!

After I decided to slim down, for real, the suit didn't fit because this time, I could fit two of my legs into one leg of the pants. At first, I dropped about seven pounds, then two or three more over the course of a week...then I'd stabilize for a while.

Then, like you, I'd cheat a little here and there until I finally binged on junk food again and bloomed past my heaviest weight before the diet.

A pastor friend of mine, Bill Shorey, said, "John, first you have to lose the gut. If you can lose the gut, you will eat less. If you eat less, and exercise regularly, you can get down to the weight you want to get to, but you can keep the weight off."

He looked very fit, so I asked him what his "secret" was. "Slim-Fast peanut butter and chocolate bar in the morning with a glass of milk or coffee", he said. "Another in the afternoon, only I have a diet Coke with it. Then, I eat a full meal for supper...no snacks after that."

As skeptical as I was, I was also desperate and willing to try just about anything, so I gave it a shot. It worked!

The next morning I ate one of those Slim-Fast peanut butter bars with chocolate coating....yum! I had a cup of coffee with it, and was surprised that I wasn't hungry at 1:30 PM...like I generally am. Any other day, my stomach would begin screeching at me at 1:30. Generally, I would go out and wolf down a sub sandwich or a whole pizza, and top it off with a non-diet soda. This time, all I had was the Slim-Fast bar and a diet Coke. I wasn't hungry all afternoon...but I was amazed at not being hungry.

Could losing weight really be as easy as this? The answer is yes. I did this for three months and averaged losing about three pounds per week. My weight got down to a comfortable 175 pounds. I was feeling a whole lot better, too. I wasn't tired anymore. My stomach did shrink and it took a whole lot less food to fill that stretchy bag that God stuck into my abdomen. I ate only about half as much as I normally would. This made sense. The smaller the stomach, the less food it requires to fill it out to its former round shape!

The preacher was right. I must say that nobody in my family...none of my relatives, and no friends of mine work for Slim-Fast or Coke! The diet did actually produce good results.

It's now 2009, and I am going back onto that diet again because I got lazy about exercising and eating right as the years tick off on God's time clock.

I remember eating anything I wanted to eat...cookies, ice cream, cake or pies...anything. I controlled the weight and exercise and the proper food intake. If I approached 180 pounds, I'd do 50 sit-ups and 50 push-ups, and the weight would stabilize.

Obviously, it is caloric intake and exercise that offsets weight gain.

Back in the day, so to speak, when I first undertook this exercise, I got a lot of favorable comments about how I looked. "Geez, John...what's your secret...you look great?" "You look ten years younger", another said. "How'd you do it?"

I can say that when you look good...you begin to feel better - emotionally. Of course, I also asked myself, "If they think I look ten years younger now...I wonder what they really thought before?"

Even today, at age 65, I really don't have a bunch of wrinkles, and I am told, "John, you don't look a day older than 64!"

I was grateful, however, for the comments of others because it's sort of like passing a test. Your grade is good if you get comments. Psychologists agree that if we can feel better about ourselves, physically, it will be easier to deal with our emotional problems.

So, early on – when I first wrote this book, I began putting my psychological profile together while working on the physical aspect of this entity known as John Tyler. The spiritual aspects had been dealt with earlier in my life. I knew that I would go to heaven when I die, so I never had some fear of death or where would I go after death.

That said, it was not until 2008 that God began to speak to me after I asked this prayer: *"God, I am a screw-up. I have done things my way for most of my life, but I am still missing something. I am missing having a close relationship with you, and I am missing out on not knowing what it is that YOU have planned out for me. I want to know what your plan and your purpose for me while I am alive and living on the planet. Please show me...I am ready to learn."*

I will weave that side of my story into the pages of this book as we go along, but there is still much ground to cover. Suffice it to say that one month later, God began to take everything that he gave me away from me. He was about to send me to "God's Training Camp", and I am so happy (now) that he did. He honored my prayer, but it was a rough 18 months that would lie ahead of me.

Unless all three parts of your being are exercised – the physical, the emotional and the spiritual, you (and I) will never be whole. Give this statement some thought.

## **CHAPTER SEVEN – Plastic People**

Before I “found myself”, I had to recognize that I was being fake to a lot of people. I call this being a “plastic person”. Plastic is synthetic...it’s not real.

At the age of 50, I realized I was living a “plastic life”. I wasn’t real to people. I had no genuine character. I was all things to all people. I told them what I thought they wanted to hear. I know people like me...you do, too. They will yes you to death...make you feel great for about four minutes, you will leave thinking they have satisfied your question or problem, and you will later discover that they do not follow through like they promised they would.

Pretending to be someone you are not wasn’t hard for me. I never knew who I really was since childhood. My father was never around to nurture me, and my mother paid attention to the oldest son and the youngest son. I was stuck in the middle.

In fact, my birthday falls on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, so I would get one less present at Christmas. I wondered why! Duh!

I never knew the meaning of love or what happiness was supposed to look and feel like, so I could not give what I never got. I had to appear to others, however, to be the perfect husband, the perfect father, perfect employer, church member and friend. I was truly none of those...I simply adapted to them, discovered what they wanted to hear, and satisfied them with a great answer or remark.

I could never admit to anyone that I wasn’t the man they thought I was...or should be. I knew that I was (and am) a flawed creature...just like every one of us is, but I was also a Christian. I felt I had to live at “life’s surface”.

You see, we all know that the “truly religious” must never have a bad or impure thought or do a wrong deed. I also knew in my heart of hearts, that all of that was...well, let’s just say it...a bunch of bull! So I set out to discover who the real me was. Questions led to more questions, which led to the depths of my soul. What is love? Why do I feel that there are tremendous voids in my life – even when I’m around other people? Of what value are my relationships with others? Are my relationships with others shallow – or are they deep? Where is the “love”? Were my friends just like me – superficial...plastic people?



Will the real John Tyler step forward?

## **CHAPTER EIGHT – Types of friendships**

After much soul searching and research, I narrowed friendships to basically two types. First, there is the true or very close friend...the "soul-mate" (discussed in depth later). This type of friendship can be experienced by lovers (referring to those who are deeply in love with their partner), spouses, family members and "true friends".

I have also concluded that soul-mate friendships are essentially the same between lovers, spouses, family members and "true friends". The exception, of course, is the level of intimacy involved. You miss the person when he or she is not with you, and you demonstrate your love for him or her when they are with you.

Then, there is the casual or shallow friendship that generally occur only between acquaintances, yet which sadly ends up characterizing relationships that ought to have gone deeper.

This is not to say that casual friendships are poor ones. We cannot develop deep friendships with everyone, and casual friendships fill the gaps, maintaining goodwill and balance.

I am reminded of a casual friendship that I had when I was a young executive working for Gray Line Bus Company in Boston. I had just finished my hitch in the United States Air Force in 1967 and got a job as a dispatcher for the bus company.

I was good at my job and the owner promoted me to fill the function of Operations Manager within a couple of years. It was then that I had met this person who was our sales manager.

Many times, I had to work 16-hour days. I'd start a Boston Evening Tour at 10:00 P.M., and arrange to have the tour group take a sightseeing tour of Boston. I would make sure that they enjoyed dinner at a fine restaurant and then see that they reached their hotel safely. The group would arrive back at the hotel at about 1:00 A.M., and I would drive back home to West Bridgewater and crawl into bed around 2:00 A.M...only to return to work in Boston again for a 7:00 A.M. meeting.

I can only imagine what my wife, Barbara, thought when she would hear me on the phone calling her from Gray Line: *"I have to go to Gloucester with our sales manager, Don Amaya to arrange a tour."* Barbara misunderstood, thinking I was saying I was going to be gone somewhere with Donna Meyer!

Barbara would ask when I planned to be home for supper. *"I won't be home for supper Donna Meyer and I are eating out tonight"*, is what she heard.

This went on for quite a long time. *"Honey, I'll be late again, but don't worry, Donna Meyer and I are working at the Sheraton Boston Hotel and we'll eat there."*

But Barbara did worry! Initially, she didn't ask. She would ask herself, *"Who is this Donna Meyer, and what is SHE doing out with my husband until the wee hours of the morning?"*

Finally, my wife could not take it anymore. She blurted out, *"Who is this Donna Meyer, and why are you always going out to dinner with her?"*

*"Her?"* I laughed out loud. *"Honey, Don Amaya is a guy. He is our sales manager, and I assure you...HE is nothing to worry about...he's not my type!"* Then, we both laughed. Barbara was very relieved – very quickly!

Our marriage ultimately did end up in divorce in 1997 from a posttraumatic stress syndrome that happened after my surgery in 1993, and due to my character flaws, but before that, we always had trust in our relationship.

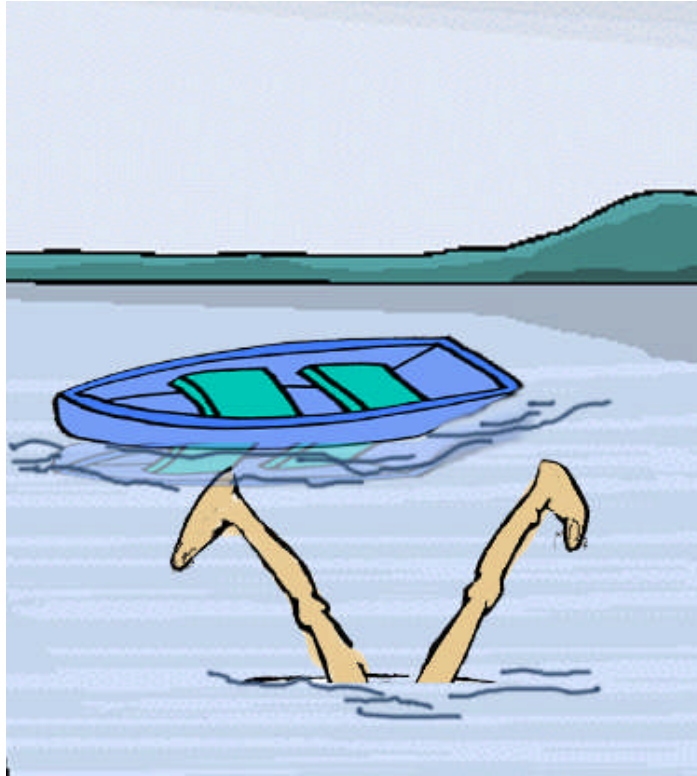
Once our friendship was established, Don and his wife would get together with Barbara and me on many weekends. We would go boating or swimming and sometimes we would go out to one of the islands in Boston Harbor. We would enjoy a clambake and lobster fest on the island. Don would dive into the bay and scoop up any lobsters and we'd cook them right there on the island in a big old boiling pot of water.

Don was a man. No question about it...he was a water sports nut. He was a strong swimmer, a great water skier, scuba diver and boating enthusiast. He and I would compete with each other at work all week long. Nothing serious - just fun. If he landed the biggest charter contract, I'd have to buy his lunch and vice-versa. Of course, I also had to put up with his bragging all week!

One time, we were out on the Neponset Reservoir in Foxboro, Massachusetts. Don was going to demonstrate his superior diving skills. He stood proudly on the edge of the rear deck of my boat...toes balanced ever so carefully.

He was poised for his great dive. His intent was to spring from the end of the boat, do a jackknife and cut into the water without causing a splash on the surface. So, he sprang gracefully skyward off the end of the boat...up....up...body arching perfectly into position. Down he came...ever so slowly. Palms close together...arms taut. The water broke like butter at the touch of a smoking hot soldering iron. Moments later, it seemed, he had not yet completed his dive. It was like a freeze frame from a Saturday morning cartoon!

There he was, old Donnie boy...legs sticking straight up out of the water. Toes pointing skyward. Don was stuck...head first in the muck at the bottom of the lake. The lake was only about four feet deep! Don was better than six feet tall! I can vividly recall the sucking sound as we extricated him from the floor of the lake!



**Don Amaya's Dive into Neponset Lake!**

He didn't brag too much about this dive! I was laughing hysterically, but maybe I shouldn't have. The poor guys' life was actually in danger. I was also about to discover the Biblical law of sowing and reaping.

Now it was my turn to do something brave. Don was a man...I had to prove I was a man, too!

I was going to attempt to water ski. Sounded easy enough! Just strap two sticks of wood to your feet, sit in the water and get yanked up by a boat doing 40 m.p.h. How hard could that be?

Besides, how could I "chicken out"? Don was Mr. Water sport. Our wives were there. Would I wimp out? Nooooooooooooo...not macho Johnny boy! I strapped those skis onto my feet. I strapped the flotation jacket around my waist.

I gripped the towrope in my sweating palms. There I was...crouched low in the water...looking straight ahead at don. Don - the guy who I just humiliated by roaring hilariously at his diving debacle....Don...the same guy who was now in charge of all that horsepower! He was raring to go. I wasn't.

I heard a thunderous roar and I remember being jolted sharply up out of the water.

Snappppppppppp! Up I go, straight out of the water. I began to fall forward...then backwards. Here I am, desperately trying to clutch the towrope in my left hand while trying to break the fall backwards with my right.

I'm screaming, "*Whoaaaaaaaaaaaaa!*" Don thinks I'm motioning to him with my right hand to speed up! He thought I was screaming, "*Wahoo...go for it.*" He kicked the boat into turbo supercharger mode and off he goes. He's running full throttle...reaching that 40 M.P.H. mark....but I'm up!

I began to feel a little comfortable. I leaned forward a little. Whoops...a little too far forward!

I fell so far that I went under. Do you think I would have the common sense to let go of that towrope?

Not me! I saw only water at this point....then fish were starting to swim by me ...oh, at about 40 M.P.H.!

It was then that I discovered the law of physics! I learned never to scream under water! When a scream is exiting your mouth at 30 miles per hour, and you are traveling at 40 miles per hour, the pressure of the scream is overpowered by the pressure of the water.

By the time Don and our wives had figured out that I was in serious trouble, I was already floating gently on the surface of the water. They pulled me over to the side of the boat and dragged my choking, thrashing body up into the boat. I can remember trying desperately to breathe, but I couldn't. Barbara was white....I was blue!

I've heard people say that your whole life flashes before you just before you die. Mine did. Instead of those slow scenes depicted in the movies, I saw myself as a baby, then graduating high school, walking down the wedding aisle...Barbara on my right arm, and I was wearing a graduation cap and a diaper! That's how quick my life flashed before me!

Kidding aside, I was dying and I knew it. I found myself giving up and just hoping I could go quickly because I could not breathe.

My friend Don saved my life that day. Somehow, all of the water in my lungs came out and I was revived to live another day. I was just 27 years old at the time. I haven't seen Don or his wife Carol since the old Gray Line days, but I think of them often. Time and distance separate, but memories live until the day you die. Don was a casual friend...but an important one.

Friendships, like ocean waves, will vary between being shallow and deep. All relationships start out shallow or at low tide.

To measure your friendship with someone, try completing the "Quick Test" located at the back of this book. Take the test AFTER YOU READ THE BOOK because you will then understand the meaning of love and friendships better at that point.

When you finish the test, you may be challenged to work on improving some of your friendships. If you want a more specific assessment, take the "long test" found in chapter 38...the "100 Question Compatibility Test".

You may find that your friendship with someone is deeper than that person's friendship with you...or vice-versa. It may be lopsided in your marriage. Others may allow the friendship to get deep or personal or they may choose to stay on the surface. In either case, you should accept the friendship tight where it is.

Either party has control over whether they want to be shallow or deep. Some friendships will be allowed to mature over time, depending on the level of comfort and trust granted and received.

Some friendships deteriorate from deep to shallow, over time, if that level of trust, confidence and comfort weakens.

Sometimes, friendships become shallower due to extended periods of absence from each other. Just a thought here - Not many of us use the telephone as often as we should to contact our friends. Do yourself a favor...even if you are into texting or instant messaging your friends...or doing Facebook, or "tweeting"...call them. Nothing can replace the warm, friendly voice heard in person...but the phone is the next best, personal way to stay in touch.

## **CHAPTER NINE – Love in the friendship**

Love is the most important ingredient in any friendship. Even if trust is violated, if love permeates the friendship, trust can be restored. On the other hand, if love is dead in a relationship, everything else, including trust is out the window.

I want to state that again in BOLD PRINT so that you can really grasp this truth:

***“IF LOVE IS DEAD  
IN A RELATIONSHIP,  
EVERYTHING ELSE,  
INCLUDING TRUST,  
IS OUT THE WINDOW.”***

True love is not supposed to fail – EVER. If love fails, one has to ask whether it was really love to begin with. However, it is difficult, at best, to restore love. Sad to say, I could neither restore nor develop a love relationship in my own marriage.

Once I got past the “electric blue funk” of deep depression, I attempted to work on the marriage. Had I not had self-pity, and had I not felt rejected so many times, and had I been a stronger man, I might have been able to work out the problems. I did try – as we’ll see in another chapter, but it still failed. In hindsight, I would never contemplate a divorce...it should always be worked on and worked out. Love is a two-way street.

I have had to learn that love is a choice. Sometimes, you have to choose to at least try to love your spouse, in-law or friend all over again. Sometimes it works. Sometimes it doesn’t. My wife and I tried to build a love relationship from scratch. It simply did not work. Some do –some don’t.

*"If love is dead in a relationship, everything else – including trust, is out the window."*

I think I've made my point in this critical issue.

The world's best selling book, the Bible, tells us to *"Love the Lord thy God with all your heart, and to love your neighbor as you would love yourself, and Jesus told us that "There is no greater commandments than these."* Do you love others as you love and care for yourself?

That was actually the lesson I was confronted with when I went through God's Boot Camp from January, 2008 until summer of 2009. I passed the test, because the answer to that question for me was yes.

The Bible also tells us, *"A new commandment I give to you; that you love one another as I have loved you."* When Jesus declared this statement, He meant to say that we need to look at others the same way He looks at them – and us. Do we look down our noses at others? Do we esteem ourselves greater than them? We should not.

The love spoken of here is unconditional and without reservation. "Charity" – meaning "love" in the Bible never fails. Once you determine to love someone...truly love him or her, it should never fail. You should never walk out on them, or vice-versa...not if it is true love. We will discover what "love" means a bit later.

*"I love you. I really love you."* Something magic happens to you when you hear these words spoken. They make hearts melt. They comfort the sick or dying...they soothe the lonely soul. A feeling springs up within you: *"I'm glad to be alive today because somebody loves me."* You usually want to reciprocate. *"And I love you very much."*

What does the word "love" mean to you? I thought I knew what it meant. It was some sort of sticky sweet thing that happens to men and women when they begin to strongly like one another.

I met Barbara when I was only about eleven years old. Her family and mine used to go to the same church in Brookline, Massachusetts. When Barbara was about thirteen, she became my brother's girlfriend. (She told me years after we were married that she always liked me, though). Back then, I couldn't stand her.

Years passed. In 1963, when I was twenty, I joined the Air Force. Three summers later, I returned home on a two-week leave. My girlfriend, Mary-Ellen (whom I was getting ready to propose to) had gone to Florida during those same two weeks. Bored out of my mind, I decided to visit a former co-worker of mine, but a wrong turn landed me in the town of Foxboro...home of the New England Patriots football team. I drove around Foxboro for a while, then thought to drive to Barbara's house to say hello to her and her parents who still lived there.

After all, I used to be pretty chummy with all of the family, which included four other sisters and one brother.

I knocked on the door and an attractive young lady appeared. "*Barbara?*", I asked. But she identified herself as Sandy, Barbara's sister.

I entered the kitchen dressed in my Air Force uniform...looking sharp. I was greeted by Barbara's parents...nice Polish people.

They had this really-funny-sort-of-weird yet happy look on their faces. (Later, I found out they were praying for Barbara not to marry the man she was actually engaged to).

Barbara's parents didn't like her boyfriend for several reasons: He used to pick her up for a date and, instead of going to the door, he would sit out in his car honking the horn a dozen times. This irritated her father...as it would me if some boy was courting my daughter. Barbara's dad also hated it when he would catch "Charlie" standing in front of a mirror admiring his muscles. He was a body builder. Drove them nuts!

When "Charlie" would call, Barbara's father would answer the telephone and, without cupping the mouthpiece with his hands, would yell up the stairs, "*Barbara....it's the "goon"*".

Barbara was due home around 10:00 PM and it was nearly 9:00 when I arrived. Her fiancé had been called into active duty in the National Guard for – you guessed it – two weeks! (Maybe it was some sort of divine appointment!)



John- The "stud-muffin" 1966

When Barbara arrived home, and entered the kitchen, and our eyes met, it was a mutual instant attraction.

I could not believe that this was the same annoying teenager of some ten years earlier. She was (and still is) a babe! We talked until 4:00 AM...and her father didn't even care. Leaving was difficult. We spent most of my two weeks leave time together. I was with her for as much as time would allow...and her father and mother didn't care.

We "bonded" or connected over the two-week period and we felt that we would probably marry. During that summer, I gracefully broke off with my girlfriend, and Barbara had to tell her fiancé goodbye as well.

Breaking up is hard to do. Barbara and I wrote to each other all of that summer. In October, she flew out to see me at my Air Force base in Midwest City, Oklahoma. She stayed at the Plaza Inn that was just across the street from the base.

I worked on the flight line fixing jet aircraft from 4:00 P.M. until midnight. I would go to my barracks until about 7:00 A.M., and as soon as I showered and dressed, I went to see her.

We'd spend the entire day together. We talked, laughed, shopped, and thoroughly enjoyed each other's company. Infatuation was in full bloom!

When Barbara was about to leave, we foolishly decided to get married. Technically, we only knew each other for those two weeks that I was on leave and for the week spent with each other in October. Before that, we were kids, but didn't hang out together. We got married by a Justice of the Peace in Oklahoma in October...while she was visiting me, but her parents didn't know it. Oops!

Later, in December, I flew back to Massachusetts and we got married in a church because Barbara (and her parents) wanted a big church wedding.

In October, however, Barbara went home sporting only the engagement ring. I kept the wedding band for the big, official wedding.

During the first ten months of marriage (actually, the honeymoon period), we loved each other intensely. We didn't argue or raise our voices. We also had no kids! In November of 1967, our first-born son appeared.

Pretty soon, all those little smiles and baby talk that I used to get were now being shared with this tiny creature living in our house!

During that year, "turf wars" erupted. Barbara had to take a stand as to what she would do and contribute to the marriage...and I had to assert my manly contribution....as provider. That's when we discovered that we both had dominant personalities. Oh oh!

Once we figured out who would do what, we entered into the "*We don't make enough money*" period of our lives. We then argued about money problems. Through it all, however, I will say that we still deeply loved each other.

Next came the, "*You had better let go of your mommy's apron strings, John*". This was a rough period of time. I tell you this so that you might identify with these "marriage breakdown symptoms" early enough to head them off.

My mother and Barbara didn't get along well at all. Actually, my mother didn't like any of her children's spouses...all four of them. Perhaps the chemistry was missing between my mother and the spouses of her children.

To this day, I have no idea why the chemistry between my mother and her children's spouse was missing. I want to point it out, however, because if you find yourself in a similar situation, you must support your spouse over your mother – or father. This is a biblical doctrine, so if God instructs us to "cleave unto our spouse" once we leave the nest, then that's all we need to know.

I finally told my mother that I would always side with my wife and support her if it came to arguments between them. The handwriting was on the wall anyway, because my mother was opposed to any spouse. It became clear to me that it was my mother who had the problem...not the spouses.

My mom had a tough life. My father drove tour busses for a living and was always gone on road trips, so my mother had to be lonely. Some of his trips took him away from his family for weeks at a time.

My mother had to work, too...as a waitress – while trying to raise four children. Because neither parent saw each other that much, communication was scarce between them...and their marriage became like many others – stagnant. Remember, *"If you fail to water and nurture a plant, it will wither...then die."*

Because I worked all day, and Barbara worked all night, we rarely saw each other. When this goes on for ten years straight, how can a relationship stay intact? This type of situation will be the downfall of marriages, so try to arrange your work schedules to coincide, and be with each other for the remaining sixteen hours and on weekends.

Sleeping with each other is huge in my book...now that I know what's up. To be able to hold your spouse for much of the night is intimate time that should never be neglected.

By the way, I always tip waitresses with at least 20% of the bill because my mother was a waitress, and because I know how hard they work.

Although my parents stayed together until my father's death in 1968, there was never a time that I can recall where I witnessed any love being displayed between dad and mom. In turn, my mother did display nurturing to all four children, but she would be out of balance with resentment and anger that she was both mother and father to us for much of the time. I suspect that attitude of resentment and anger stayed with her for much of the 86 years of her life.

Maybe Barbara resented the fact that I would spend a lot of hours on my job; and then, during my free time, I would work on building my mother's house.

Barbara needed me. I wasn't there. I even missed the birth of one of our children because I was "too busy helping mommy". It became very clear...I had to grow up and cut the apron strings and spend more time with Barbara...so I decided to do just that.

We had our share of marital difficulties over the years, but we made it through about twenty-five of the thirty we were together. The last five years were years where I constantly felt rejected. Fact is, Barbara and I hardly saw each other, and when we did...there wasn't much to say. When it came time for "intimacy", it lacked, to say the least. Guys and women have two different versions of "intimacy". Women want to be held and loved....guys just want sex!

Let me say here and now....to the men...that's the wrong attitude to have if you want to stay married!

Over the years, we had the stresses that beset many families. Money was, by far, the biggest stress factor.

For four years, we had to undergo a lawsuit by the finance company that held mortgages on my stock in my company, and they made us sign over the mortgage to our home as well. They sued all 625 franchised dealers in home electronics when the founder of the franchise died in a plane crash toward 1990. From then until I actually won the case in 1994, we suffered through letters of litigation, threats, court appearances...and it took its toll.

Later in this book, I will share with you how I could have avoided all of this and the financial difficulties, because I learned – in 2008...finally, how to be successful in life, and in finances. I'll caution you now that I'll be talking in the spiritual realm of our three parts of a whole life – physical, emotional and spiritual, so if you want to avoid that chapter...skip the last chapter of this book! If, however, you would like to save yourself, your marriage, your finances, and know where you are going after you die...read it.

A good marriage ought to be able to survive the turmoil that life brings into it. It can survive, however, only if it is built on a solid foundation of love. Without love in a relationship...the marriage is destined to die.

Many of us bandy the word love about and yet few of us can define its meaning. None of the books I read expressed the essence of what love is. I needed to have the word "love" clearly defined if I intended to enhance my relationships with family, friends and my next soul mate.

When we say, "I love my friend or my spouse, parent or child," what are we really saying?

We have a short "LOVE TEST" coming up in Chapter ten...and it might give you some perspective on how your relationships are doing.

The word "love", as it pertains to a deep friendship, has the following meanings according to *Webster's Encyclopedic Unabridged Dictionary*:

Noun – Commitment, strong liking, goodwill, affection, affinity, compassion, concern. Devotion, fondness, kinship, warm attachment to.

Verb – To adore, show affection for, admire, cherish, dote on, respect, trust and revere.

Many of us have never taken the time to analyze the components that make up love. I did. I observed and interviewed lovers, married couples, divorcees, widows, parents, children and friends. I found that the components of love could be demonstrated in many ways. However, I was surprised to find that real love was lacking in many relationships. People sort of "got along" or existed. That was not going to be enough for me. Is it enough for you?


The following experiment may help you to determine if you deeply love an individual. I created the questions by using definitions from the dictionary and from the Bible.

Knowing that my own definition of love or friendship was flawed, at the very least...and inaccurate, and that my conception of love would be wrong because I never saw any of it growing up as a child, I had to learn the correct definitions in order to build love from a foundation of knowledge.

Therefore, I went to the two sources that would give me correct guidelines. The Biblical source is found in 1 Corinthians, chapter 13. I found that I lacked in 13 of the 15 essential ingredients! No wonder I was set for failure in relationship building.

According to 1 Corinthians, Chapter 13

## LOVE IS . . . .

- 
1. Patient
  2. Kind
  3. Does not envy
  4. Does not boast
  5. Is not proud
  6. Is not rude
  7. Is not self-seeking
  8. Is not easily angered
  9. Keeps no records of wrongs
  10. Does not delight in evil,  
but rejoices with the truth
  11. Always protects
  12. Always trusts
  13. Always hopes
  14. Always perseveres
  15. NEVER FAILS

Read all of these attributes of TRUE LOVE over a few times and let them sink in. Are we patient and kind toward our relationships? Do we hold past grievances against them? Husbands, do we protect our spouse? Do we truly trust one another in our relationships, or do we have doubts about their love for us? We have a lot to learn about this word "LOVE", and hopefully, we can begin to work on our relationships before it gets to the point where it fails. True love NEVER FAILS. God said it, so it has to be true. If failure is involved, we have chosen that route on our own.

## CHAPTER TEN – “Love Test”

Take a few minutes to place a particular person’s name in the blanks below. Using the same name in each sentence will help you to concentrate on that individual, and in doing this; it will force you not to generalize how you feel about that person.

When you finish the test for a particular person, place the name of another person in the sentences until you go through an entire list of those who you wish to build or enhance your relationship with. Do this using the name of your spouse, relative, a child or friend. When you have completed your list, you can begin to work toward improving your relationships where you can’t answer “yes”.

Answer each question with a yes or a no in the margins next to the question.

I VERY DEEPLY LOVE \_\_\_\_\_

1. My love for \_\_\_\_\_ is unconditional and without reservation. I love him/her regardless of the state of being that he/she is in. YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
2. I have a strong liking for \_\_\_\_\_  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
3. I have a very deep affection for \_\_\_\_\_  
Think about how you manifest or show that affection for him/her. Do you keep it a secret from him/her? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
4. I have great compassion for \_\_\_\_\_  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

5. I have a deep sense of devotion to \_\_\_\_\_  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
6. I absolutely trust \_\_\_\_\_  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
7. I am deeply committed to \_\_\_\_\_ and will  
See him/her through any problem that comes  
along. YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
8. I can openly, honestly talk with \_\_\_\_\_  
About any subject whatsoever YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
9. Because I do have a warm attachment to  
\_\_\_\_\_, I think about him/her when  
he/she is not in my presence YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
10. My love for \_\_\_\_\_ endures. I am  
patient with him/her because of my deep love.  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
11. My love allows me to be kind to \_\_\_\_\_  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
12. My love for \_\_\_\_\_ does not erupt into  
jealousy due to envy on my part for him/her  
YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
13. My love for \_\_\_\_\_ does not insist on  
my own rights or my own way. It is not self-  
seeking YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
14. My love for \_\_\_\_\_ is not arrogant or  
inflated with pride YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
15. My love for \_\_\_\_\_ is not fretful or  
resentful YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

16. My love for \_\_\_\_\_ takes no account of any wrongs done to me by him/her. I do not hold a grudge or have resentment for any wrong done to me YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
17. When I am convinced that my love is right and true, I am happy when right and truth prevail. I am not happy when I am doing an injustice to \_\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_
18. My love for \_\_\_\_\_ allows me to accept what I am being told by him/her as true. Because of this, I can trust him/her completely and I have developed confidence in him/her. YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

If I have all of the above, my love for \_\_\_\_\_  
My love will not fail.

If I lack in ANY of the above in my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_, I will endeavor to fix it.

Write your list of names here and how many YES answers or NO answers next to them. This will help you to view all of your relationships...and see which are healthy and which need work.

_____	YES _____	NO _____
_____	YES _____	NO _____
_____	YES _____	NO _____
_____	YES _____	NO _____
_____	YES _____	NO _____
_____	YES _____	NO _____
_____	YES _____	NO _____
_____	YES _____	NO _____

Good luck. Don't "fudge" any of the answers because this is to fix YOUR relationship with them.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN – Huggers

In the test you just took, question three asked, “Do I have a very deep affection for\_\_\_\_\_? How do you show that affection? Do you keep it a secret from him/her?”

How does one show affection or fondness, warm attachment, a soul-mate kinship for a friend? Conversely, we also have to ask, “Do I hide this affection?” If so, your friend, soul mate, spouse is kept in the dark. They have to keep guessing about the relationship, and that’s not fair. Wives and sweethearts are always asking, “*Do you love me?*” They need assurance or reaffirmation of your love.

One of the warmest greetings that I have ever observed was when a family friend invited my family to a party. My then twenty-three year old son Erik had grown very close to this couple. The woman was more open and honest in her communication with him than was her husband. Of course, we all understand that most men tend to be less affectionate than women. When we arrived, she greeted us all with a hug. But she walked up to Erik, put her arms around him, looked hi squarely in the eyes and said, “*I love you, Erik.*” No doubt, when Erik was greeted, some in the crowd said, under their breath, “*Wonder what those two have going on.*” Others might have said, “Hey, that stuff is to be shared only between the husband and the wife.” She doesn’t know it, but at that moment of honest, deep, warm, loving affection for him changed my life. That is exactly the type of deep, committed friendship that I want to develop.

I saw this same thing when I went to a college and career social as an invited guest of the same musically gifted son. There, I witnessed similar things going on, and it was great.

About thirty young people (ages 25-30) were part of this group where Erik attended church. They usually got together twice a week or so to socialize. They would go out for pizza or attend ski weekends somewhere in New Hampshire, and they were under the guidance and leadership of two directors – a husband and wife team.

I had the occasion to observe the directors relating to their group of young adults during a pizza blast held in our home. When the directors spoke to the young people, they always made direct eye contact. They hugged, talked and said, "I love you" to one another. Real love is powerful! If we can grasp onto the fullness of love, we can change things in our own corner of the world, making our lives so much better. Sadly, everyone from the media and entertainment industry to church leaders and parents has twisted the concept of love.

Now, you could offer that love can be demonstrated in many ways. True. But I would challenge anyone who told me that you can truly love another human being without reaching out and touching them in some way, or at least wanting to.

Football players pat each other on the backsides when their team makes a great play. Others touch when they greet one another by shaking or clasping hands.

Constant reassurance is needed in friendships and we should actively demonstrate our love for true friends often. Sometimes, a simple hug will do that. I empathize with those who do not find the concept of a hug simple.

A hug is not only an outward manifestation of affection for your friend; it is sometimes a barometer of the depth of the relationship.

Observing those who hug each other reveals much about relationships.

I have observed husbands who say they can't stand "huggy-touchy-feely people". Most often, I find that they lack a deep love-friendship relationship with their own wives. I find, often, that this type of person never received that "hug stuff" as a child and perhaps can't break the cycle and learn how to offer it to his own family.

How do you feel about touch in a friendship? How close are you to your spouse or in-laws or friends?

Advice from non-hugger turned hugger: Take all the hugs you can get! If you find that you cannot hug or be hugged, ask yourself why that is. It is worth considering that touch therapy is being used in hospitals today because it has been determined to have healing qualities of both the body and the psyche.

At the risk of sounding clinical, let's break down the hug for better understanding. I refer to the "hugger" as the one who first offers the hug and the "huggee" as the one who will receive the hug. The definition of what a hug is is included next so that you can identify which type of hugger or huggee you are.

Hug – *"A tight clasp with the arms; to embrace, to keep close."*

Embrace – *"To take or receive others gladly or eagerly; accept willingly; to encircle; to include or contain a hug."*

Do you take or receive hugs from others gladly? Do you accept them willingly? Do you let your friend into your space? I do – now!

Touch is a connection of love. It is a reaffirmation of your love for another. It says, "I know what you are going through right now and I want you to know that I love you and care for you very deeply." It says, "I missed you while you were away from me." It says, "I'm not angry at you." It says, "Everything is okay between us." It says so many good things all at once.

I never used to want to hug or be hugged. I was brought up believing that men don't hug men unless they are gay; and men don't hug women unless they are "on the make". This notion caused me not to hug my own boys! How ridiculous – as I look back to those days of child rearing.

Until recently, this ridiculous way of thinking robbed me of the joys of having true, deep friendships with either gender. I'll admit, it is still difficult for me to hug another male, but I've learned that it's okay to do it.

I have observed people when they hug and have found that, although most huggers will open their arms wide to greet a huggee, many times the huggee will reach out and grab the hugger by the upper arms or shoulders to prevent a full, encircling hug. Huggees may also stand to one side of the hugger, allowing only one arm to touch them. Sometimes, the receiver stiffens up because this is all new to them. Years of enjoying deeper relationships are missed by failing to show affection toward friends or by failing to allow friends (or spouses) into personal space.

The body language suggests that the huggee doesn't want the hugger to come completely into her or his private space. A lack of trust on the part of the huggee could be at root. This person does not feel that the friendship is strong enough to allow the hugger fully into his or her life.

If you are a hugger, don't take it as personal rejection when people seem unreceptive. See it as an opportunity to talk through obstacles so that you can get to a deeper friendship if you are both willing to go there from shallow.

Speaking of intimacy, we seem to lose some of our ability to communicate with the advent of social networking sites like Facebook, Twitter and the like. We now text each other, rather than simply picking up the phone to actually speak words of encouragement or to just talk about nothing for an hour. Lovers used to talk for hours about absolutely nothing.

Jerry Seinfeld built a sitcom around absolutely nothing and made untold millions of dollars for the shows..and untold millions from the re-runs (that I still watch faithfully!). Go Kramer!

E-mail is impersonal. Instant messaging is impersonal. I have discovered that many of the younger generation use texting to simply send a message in hopes that long-winded chatter won't bother them. My daughter tells me that she texts some of her friends just to leave a message, but hopes they will just send a short answer. I equate this practice with hugging. Hugging is the warm embrace in the friendship. Texting is the cold shoulder approach. It suggests that the one who is texting does not want the other party encroaching into their personal space for very long.

The networking sites are used to replace the old-fashioned e-mailing practices of yesterday. Now, the "hugger" can simply send out a blanket message to an entire group of so-called "friends"... who simply butted into the site by request.

Honestly, would you rather have a nice warm hug...or would you opt for a text message? Would you rather hear the words whispered in your ear, "*I love you*"...or would you opt for "I love you" from a text message?

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