You Are the One You've Been Waiting For

Bringing Courageous Love to Intimate Relationships

Richard C. Schwartz

Lovingly dedicated to my parents

Gen and Ted Schwartz

my biggest mentors and tor-mentors

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Other books authored or coauthored by Richard C. Schwartz

Internal Family Systems Therapy
Guilford Press

Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model
Trailheads Publications

Family Therapy: Concepts and Methods
Allyn and Bacon

The Mosaic Mind: Empowering the Tormented Selves of Child Abuse Survivors
Trailheads Publications

Metaframeworks: Transcending the Models of Family Therapy
Jossey-Bass

Handbook of Family Therapy Training and Supervision
Guilford Press

Internal Family Systems Therapy

Internal Family Systems Therapy[SM] is one of the fastest growing approaches to psychotherapy. It has developed over the past twenty years into a way of understanding and treating human problems that is empowering, effective, and nonpathologizing. Internal Family Systems[SM] (IFS) involves helping people heal by listening inside themselves in a new way to different "parts"—feelings or thoughts—and, in the process, unburdening themselves of extreme beliefs, emotions, sensations, and urges that constrain their lives. As they unburden, people have more access to Self, our most precious human resource, and are better able to lead their lives from that centered, confident, compassionate place.

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Introduction

The time will come
when, with elation,
you will greet yourself arriving
at your own door, in your own mirror,
and each will smile at the other's welcome
and say, sit here. Eat.
You will love again the stranger who was your self.
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you
all your life, whom you have ignored
for another . . .

—Derek Walcott, *Collected Poems*

It's my first session with Ken and Linda. Linda breaks the early tension by stating that they are desperate and I may be their last hope. They have been miserable for four years and have gone through three other marital therapists, as well as several weekend retreats for couples. Religiously they practice the communication skills they have been taught and sometimes find them helpful in the moment, but the structure falls apart once either of them touches a sore spot in the other. In therapy, they have even found livable compromises to several chronic issues, but their overall dissatisfaction with each other hasn't really changed.

Ken concurs, adding that he feels helpless and despairing. He'd had many relationships but waited to marry until he felt totally sure that he'd found the right partner. He says, "We were so in love, have so much in common, and are both intelligent. Why isn't this working? I've always succeeded in my life. When I find something I want and work hard to get it, I succeed. When I face a problem head-on, I can solve it. This marriage thing is my one big failure."

There are many couples like Ken and Linda. Earnestly battling the demons that our culture and its relationship experts implicate, such as poor communication and lack of empathy, they feel bloodied and beaten by their inability to make it work. They alternate between blaming each other and themselves for not being able to bring harmony into their homes and satisfaction to the most important relationship in their lives.

What if the premise itself is to blame? What if there were

no way that Ken and Linda could succeed, no matter how perfect their communication or how much they compromised and empathized? Couples are told that if they could just accommodate each other enough, they would be happy. Each partner is asked what he or she needs from the other, and therapy is designed to find ways that each can change to meet the other's needs. What if there is an essential flaw in this accommodation premise that sets up couples to fail?

I believe that there is. Conditions exist within each partner and in the context of their lives that, if left unchanged, will preclude finding the intimate, mutually supportive, and respectful connection they crave. This book will describe those conditions and offer a clear path to changing them. It will help couples replace the controlling, dependent, possessive, or distant relating they have come to expect and dread with something I call *courageous love.*

When each partner has courageous love for the other, many of the chronic struggles most couples face melt away because each partner is released from being primarily responsible for making the other feel good. Instead, each knows how to care for his or her own vulnerability, so neither has to force the other into a preconceived mold or control the other's journey.

Courageous love involves accepting all parts of the other because there is no longer a need to keep the other in the confining roles of parent/redeemer/ego booster/protector. The other senses that acceptance and freedom, which feel wonderful and unusual

to her. She comes to trust that she doesn't have to protect herself from you and can keep her heart open.

Thus, this ability to care for yourself emotionally permits the intimacy you seek because you have the courage to allow your partner to come close or get distant without overreacting. With less fear of losing or being hurt by your partner, you can embrace him fully and delight in his love for you.

Is this a far cry from your experience of relationship? Are you thinking, "That sounds nice, but where am I going to find someone who is evolved enough to treat me that way?" You may not have to look as far as you think. If you and your partner can take what I call a *U-turn* (you-turn) in your focus and begin to relate differently inside yourselves, you will each find that courageous love becomes a spontaneous way of life rather than something you must strive to achieve. You will also find that your partner doesn't have to take care of you because there is so much support you can get from yourself.

In our second session, I proposed to Ken and Linda that they take that U-turn, and they reacted the way most couples do initially. Linda said, "I'm willing to look at my part in this, but what about the way Ken digs at my self-esteem? It's a rare day when he doesn't find something to criticize." Ken was equally resistant. "Am I supposed to work on myself so I just accept Linda's lack of interest in sex? Do you expect me to be okay with a sexless marriage?"

What I propose in this book is a hard sell in our culture.

We are primarily oriented toward getting from our partners what we need to feel good and don't believe we can get much from ourselves. We want to transform the source of pain in the outside world rather than the source within us. That external focus—and the therapies of accommodation that subscribe to it—will only provide temporary relief at best from the inner and outer storms that gradually erode the fertile topsoil of our relationships. There is another way, and we will explore it in this book. Before we do, however, let's further examine the problems with this accommodation premise.

The Three Projects

For reasons that will be discussed at length in the pages to come, your partner cannot succeed in making you feel good in a lasting way. For example, if you have had a hard life filled with rejection and loneliness, his love can only temporarily lift the cloud of worthlessness and self-loathing that will return whenever he is away or in another mood. If you enter the relationship expecting him to be that kind of redeemer, inevitably you will be disappointed at some point.

Our culture, and many of the relationship experts in it, have issued us faulty maps and improper tools. We've been told that the love we need is a buried treasure hidden in the heart of a special intimate partner. Once we find that partner, the love we crave should flow elixir-like, filling our empty spaces and healing our pain.

When that love stops flowing, even momentarily, we get scared and go to work on one of three projects. The first two of these are designed to get our partner back into that loving redeemer role. The third project is to give up on that endeavor and find alternatives.

The first, and most common, project involves directly trying to force our partner to change back. We get out the blunt saws, scalpels, or dynamite in an attempt to break through the crust surrounding her heart. We plead, criticize, demand, negotiate, seduce, withhold, and shame—all in an effort to get her to change. Most partners resist our crude attempts to perform open-heart surgery on them. They sense the implicit criticism or manipulation behind these change attempts and become defensive.

The second project is to use many of those same crude tools on ourselves. First we strive to figure out what our partner doesn't like about us and then try to sculpt ourselves into what we think he wants, even if that is a far cry from our true nature. We use self-criticism and shame to cut out parts of our personalities or pounds off our bodies, hoping that if we please him, he will love us. Because this self-transformation project isn't authentic—and instead is focused on manipulating our partner—it usually backfires, too.

The final project kicks in once we give up on getting the love we crave from our partner. At that point, we begin to close our heart to him and: (1) search for a different partner, (2) numb

or distract from the pain and emptiness enough to stay with the original one, or (3) numb and distract enough to live alone.

All of these are exiling projects. In the first, we try to get our partner to exile the parts of him that threaten us. In the second, we work to exile the parts of us that we think he doesn't like. In the third, we exile the parts of us that are attached to him. As I will discuss later, whenever a relationship creates exiles, it will pay a price.

Although couples enter therapy complaining of all kinds of issues, usually it isn't hard to discern some combination of these three projects behind their dysfunctional patterns of interaction. This is because virtually all of us carry inner vaults full of pain, shame, and emptiness, and none of us know how to deal with these emotions other than to numb or distract from them until we finally get the love of that special other person.

Romantic Rescue: Debbie's Story

Best-selling author Debbie Ford (2002) describes her own struggle with her inner worthlessness in this way. "By the time I was five years old, I was all too familiar with the voice in my head telling me that I wasn't good enough, that I wasn't wanted, and that I didn't belong. . . . Deep inside I believed there was something wrong with me, and I went to great lengths to conceal my flaws." This statement could have been made by any number of my clients or by me. Each of us then must find ways to manage all that inner angst until we find the person whose love, we have been taught, will make it disappear.

As a child, Debbie's angst-managing strategy was to use charm and good grades to keep a steady stream of approval flowing into her to drown out the negative voice, until that no longer worked. "When I couldn't find someone to validate me or tell me I was okay, I would sneak across the street to the nearby 7-Eleven and buy a package of Sara Lee brownies and a bottle of Coca-Cola. That dose of sugar really seemed to do the trick." When she was twelve, however, Debbie's parents decided to divorce, and the pain and shame of that sudden event ignited all the burning emotions she had been containing. Through her tears, she found herself wondering: "Why doesn't anyone love me? What's wrong with me? Please, won't someone come and help me?"

A version of that plaintive question, "Won't that special someone come and love me?" dwells in all of us and drives our treasure hunts and crude attempts at open-heart surgery. In those dark moments we feel so bereft, so despairing, so alone, that some kind of romantic rescue seems like the only real solution. Every message we get from friends, family, and the media reinforces our attachment to that elusive solution.

Debbie continued to use achievement and perfect appearance to keep her head out of the inner morass of self-loathing but found that they weren't enough. "I began trying to quiet the constant internal noise by drowning myself in drugs. I was hypnotized by the continuous internal dialogue, by the story I told myself over and over again about how I would never make it, how I would never have the love, security, and inner peace I so

desperately desired."

Predictably, her frantic search for respite led her on a series of treasure hunts. "In my twenties, I added men to my prescription for pain relief. Unfortunately, my relationships with men always seemed to backfire. They began with a high that held the promise of salvation and ended with a low that left me deeper in the hole than when I began."

That last sentence summarizes the experience of most of us. We feel intense elation when we find our designated redeemer who will love us and prove that we aren't worthless after all—who will provide the salvation we've been seeking.

The problem we will explore in this book is that our partner can no more cleanse our sense of unworthiness than can food, drugs, achievement, or perfect appearance. Consequently, he will disappoint those desperate parts of us, leaving us deeper in the hole of hopelessness and despair, at which point we will initiate one of the three projects discussed earlier.

Becoming the Primary Caretaker of Your Parts

Fortunately, there is a way to unload the pain and shame that drive these patterns. The first step toward that goal is to shift your focus. Like Debbie, most of us scramble to avoid our inner lives and keep our attention fixed on external solutions that include finding or changing a designated redeemer. I try to get couples to do a complete U-turn in their focus, moving them toward, rather than away from, the inner worlds in which they fear to tread.

When people listen deeply inside, they encounter a host of different feelings, fantasies, thoughts, impulses, and sensations that comprise the background noise of our everyday experience of being in the world. When people remain focused on and ask questions of one of those inner experiences, they find that it is more than merely a transient thought or emotion. Within each of us is a complex family of subpersonalities, which I call *parts* (Schwartz, 1995; Schwartz, 2001). These parts are the reasons we can simultaneously have so many contradictory and confusing needs. American poet Walt Whitman got it right in "Song of Myself": "Do I contradict myself? Very well then I contradict myself. (I am large, I contain multitudes)." So do we all contain multitudes. Thus, the Oracle of Delphi's admonition to "know thyself" should really be to "know thyselves."

I call these often-quarrelling subpersonalities *parts* because when I first started doing this kind of work, that is how my clients referred to them. "Part of me wants to stay married and faithful, but another part wants to be free to get laid every night of the week with a different woman," a client might say. Another would report, "I know I'm successful at my job, but there's a part of me that says it's only a matter of time until my wife finds out how stupid and incompetent I really am." The critical voice that harangued Debbie Ford with so much self-loathing is an example of one common type of part called a *protector,* which tried to keep her from taking risks by running down her confidence. The more vulnerable inner childlike part that believed her critic and, as a

consequence, felt worthless and empty is an example of a type of part I call an *exile.*

When I first started doing this kind of work, I was amazed to find that if I could establish a safe, accepting atmosphere in our sessions, clients could have inner discussions with their parts. In a powerful state of internal focus, they could dialogue with their parts about what motivated them to react in such irrational or self-defeating ways. As they listened to their parts' stories, what at first seemed irrational suddenly began to make sense as many parts let the clients know that they were stuck at points in the past when the behaviors or beliefs were understandable and even necessary.

You can become your own healer—the special person your vulnerable parts have been waiting for. When that happens, your partner will be released from the redeemer trap and its accompanying projects, and true intimacy will be possible.

In the past, this wasn't necessarily good news. It meant logging countless hours in a therapist's office, with the two of you speculating together about how you were hurt during your childhoods. Through those insights, you expected to feel less vulnerable but often didn't make much progress toward that goal. Fortunately, those days are over because it is now possible to quickly discover the source of your pain and shame, and to pump it out of the parts of you that carry it. In the process, those parts come to trust and welcome you as their healer. Then they can love being with your partner.

The Self

As clients learn to separate from their extreme emotions and thoughts (their parts) in this way, I find that they spontaneously tap into a calm, centered state, which I call their *Self*. I can sense when this happens in a session because it feels as though the very molecules in the atmosphere have shifted radically. My clients' faces and voices change, growing softer and more tranquil, and they become more open and tender, able to explore their parts without anger, defensiveness, or disdain. In accessing this state of Self, clients are tapping into something deeper and more foundational than all these conflicting inner warriors—something that spiritual traditions often call *soul* or *essence*. One aspect of this state is what many therapies call *mindfulness*. In this state of Self, clients realize that they already know how to take care of their inner exiles on their own and that those parts don't need salvation because they were never bad to begin with. I refer to this state of Self as *Self-leadership*.

Self-to-Self Interaction

I found that when I helped each partner access this state of Self, a dramatic shift occurred in their interactions with each other about problems in their relationship. Their dialogues would be completely different from their usual ones, which were so protective and parts-dominated. Even when discussing emotion-laden content, partners could hold a respectful and compassionate tone and were able to listen without defending themselves.

Creative solutions, which were so elusive in previous attempts, would emerge spontaneously and without intervention from me.

Speaking for Parts

It wasn't that the feelings of clients' parts were absent from the exchanges—oftentimes they were talking about very strong emotions. It's that, because they remained a little separated from their parts, they could speak *for* those powerful feelings rather than being flooded by them and speaking *from* them. For example, in the past, Michael would have said to Marcia, "I hate the way you interrupt me when I'm trying to make a point" in a charged, judgmental voice. When I was able to help him hold Self-leadership, he said, "When you interrupted me, it triggered an angry part of me that thinks you don't care about my feelings." Michael's tone remained compassionate, and he was able to stay curious about what was happening to Marcia that made her interrupt.

This book is designed to help you do two things that will make a remarkable difference in all your relationships, particularly your intimate ones. The first is that you—your Self—will become the primary caretaker of your exiles so that your partner can be their secondary caretaker. When that is the case, your protectors can abandon all their projects and you can enjoy your partner for who she is, not what you need her to be. Ironically, in turn, your partner will be better able to drop her guard enough to give you the open-hearted love you seek.

The second thing you will gain from this book is that, increasingly, you will be able to interact with your partner from your Self, which will not only resolve, or make far less potent, the longstanding issues between you, but will also foster the sense of intimacy and deep connectedness that is sustaining to both of you.

I don't want to imply that achieving these goals will be easy. Many beliefs and forces in our culture run counter to them, and we each carry personal baggage that makes it harder. It will take work, some of which may need to be done with a therapist. This book is designed to reorient that work—to help you work smarter instead of harder.

Let's begin by examining some of the cultural factors that make intimate relationships so challenging.

Chapter One

Cultural Constraints to Intimacy

Sustaining intimacy wouldn't be such a big problem if you had been encouraged by your family or culture to take care of your exiles. Unfortunately, however, few people know about this secret to relationship success. It is likely that your family taught you the opposite—to lock away your parts when they felt hurt, needy, ashamed, or otherwise in pain. Then our culture bombarded you with messages about how great it would be when you finally found your "soulmate."

Isolation

That message about the romance, relief, and redemption to be found in intimate relationships may be required to convince us to enter the extraordinary institution that is American marriage. As Margaret Mead said, "The American marriage . . . is one of the most difficult marriage forms that the human race has ever attempted." Couples were once surrounded by communities of relatives and friends, by people who shared their values and helped them out. Today, couples are isolated, mobile units that are expected to survive on their own. Not only is the couple isolated from its community, but each partner is often cut off from the other by the outrageous requirements of work or by the excessive demands of raising children far from the help of kin networks. Indeed, children are one of the biggest obstacles to intimacy that couples face. Virtually every study of marital satisfaction has shown that it drops precipitously with the birth of the first child and doesn't recover until the last one leaves.

Finally, partners are cut off from their Selves by being raised in a society that is so concerned with external appearances that authentic inner desires are ignored and feared. Into this nearly impossible arrangement is poured the expectation that your partner should make you happy and that if she doesn't, something is very wrong.

Cultural Pressure for the Romantic Rescue

These messages about your partner play into your exiles' dreams, keeping the focus of their yearning on an external relationship rather than on you. Thus, our culture's view of romantic love as the ultimate salvation exacerbates an already difficult arrangement. Many writers have blamed the unrealistic expectations our culture heaps on marriage as a significant reason for its high rate of collapse. I agree with that indictment to the extent that those expectations perpetuate the partner-as-healer/redeemer syndrome.

In this society, we leave our parents and our children leave us; the only person who is supposed to be with us forever is our partner. As long as we remain such a highly mobile, appearance-obsessed, work- and consumption-addicted culture, our isolated couples *do* need to find a high degree of satisfaction with each other, especially if we want to spare their children the pain of divorce or a sense of responsibility for their parents' well-being.

If we had been taught how to heal our own parts, I believe we would be able to meet many of our needs in an intimate

relationship because we wouldn't be as needy. Many expectations of intimate relationships are not unrealistic per se. You *can* get a great deal from your partner if you are willing to share the responsibility of taking care of your parts rather than placing the onus totally on him or her. When your partner is freed from the extreme pressures to both caretake your parts and deal with your rage or pouting when he or she doesn't, your partner can be the lover, companion, and co-adventurer that you want. Once you heal your own exiles, you can drop the drawbridge of your castle and allow your partner enough access to you to create an enjoyable relationship.

George complains that he never seems to be able to please his wife, Ann, anymore. He works hard all day and spends most weekday evenings watching their son's soccer games or their daughter's field hockey games. Ann, an accountant, says she also works hard and comes home to a second shift of cleaning the house. She resents George's long hours at work and feels that their lives revolve around career and kids. On weekends they occasionally socialize with another couple, but they have stopped going out together because they have come to fear the awkward silences when they run out of domestic details to discuss.

George and Ann are seeing a therapist who tries to help them communicate differently. The therapist helps them stop blaming each other and instead gets them to speak about their more vulnerable feelings—George's sense of being a failure as a husband and Ann's loneliness and belief that George prefers work

to her. The therapist also has them listen carefully to each other without interrupting and demonstrate that they heard each other by repeating back what was said. They are also given assignments to schedule dates together, to share the household chores more equitably, and to find things to praise about one another. These interventions seem to help. They both report that it makes a big difference when their partner really listens and empathizes with their predicament. In addition, George says that it helps to hear something positive from Ann, and she says that seeing George helping more around the house has lifted her chronic resentment.

Staying Out of the Dark Sea

George and Ann are typical of many middle-class American couples, and the therapy they received is state of the art. It is the kind of therapy I did with couples for years until I came to realize that, in most cases, the improvements didn't last.

Without a constant stream of affirmation from an intimate partner, most of us will experience these feelings to some degree: worthless, empty, like a loser, lonely, rejected, desperate, ugly, boring, insecure, and afraid. These are unbearable emotions that we will do anything to avoid. What we call happiness is often relief about not being in those states. Too often our partner becomes a life preserver, keeping our head above water in the dark sea of pain, shame, and fear in which we float. No wonder we feel so threatened and jealous if it looks as though our partner might leave us. And when, for one reason or another, he or she no longer

keeps us out of that sea or even pushes us into it, it's no wonder that we begin to dream of finding a better partner and then go looking for one.

This kind of head-above-water happiness is unstable and easily disturbed. Our partner will buckle under the strain of holding us up, and big waves (such as failures at work or criticism from parents) will wash over us no matter how hard our partner works to save us.

Our culture offers many other life preservers—television, Internet, shopping, working, smoking, legal and illegal drugs, alcohol, pornography, prostitution, plastic surgery, diets and exercise, fatty and sweet foods—all the common addictions. As John Updike said, "America is a vast conspiracy to make you happy." But these life preservers are flimsy—poor substitutes for human connection. Although they don't keep us afloat for long, these addictive distractions can prevent us from jettisoning intimate relationships by numbing the disappointment we feel when the relationships lose their buoyancy. Or they can opiate our pain when we're between periods of intimate contact. We become convinced that happiness is as close as the next stock market upswing, nose job, or European vacation.

These distractions themselves become part of a vicious cycle that keeps us addicted to the search for head-above-water happiness and away from a more sustaining happiness. The more we pursue them, the more isolated we become from one another—and ourselves—and the more afraid of the waves around us, so the

more desperately we pursue them. To shift metaphors briefly, it's as though we're stuck in a hole and the only tools our culture throws us are an assortment of shovels. As Leonard Cohen sings, "You are locked into your suffering, and your pleasures are the seal."

Exercise

Take a few minutes to reflect on the following questions. Write your answers in a journal that you can keep as you read this book.

1. Are you aware of feelings of emptiness or unlovability inside you that you fear?
2. To what extent in your life have you expected your lover to make those feelings disappear?
3. How much do you also rely on the distractions our culture offers, and which of those do you use?
4. Do you have any faith that you might help those parts of you yourself?

The Empty Self

Many reasons exist why most of us in this country contain a secret dark sea of lonely emptiness and quiet desperation. Later in the book we will discuss the psychological roots of this condition, but it is also important to consider the sociological development of what historian Phillip Cushman (1995) calls the "empty self" that arose in this country after World War II. For

Cushman, American individualism lost its soul at that point to the huge pressures of industrial capitalism. Whereas before the war our individualism was tempered by a strong ethic of community service, afterward that changed. The American Dream of ever-upward mobility, fueled by memories of the Great Depression and by increasingly pervasive national advertising, infected that war generation with a more selfish individualism. Their baby-boomer children inherited that virus and, in addition, experienced little of the extended family and community-focused upbringing that their parents enjoyed. Instead, many of us boomers grew up in anonymous suburbs and drew our values from television commercials.

The result is the empty self, "a self that experiences a significant absence of community, tradition, and shared meaning. . . . a self that embodies the absences, loneliness, and disappointments of life as a chronic, undifferentiated emotional hunger" (p. 79). Our empty selves have been conditioned to sate that hunger with material possessions, which has created a powerful economy that gives us the illusion that we are doing well. But our inner lives are not doing well.

It also hasn't helped that political changes in recent decades have made it harder for people in this country to survive financially, while simultaneously we have been bombarded with television images of happy, wealthy, consuming people. The consequent striving for money and exhausting workweeks, whether motivated by the need to stay alive financially or to join

the wealthy, leave an ever larger emotional gulf between ourselves and our families and friends. The fear of falling through the widening holes in our social networks into that dark and lonely sea makes us easy prey for the version of happiness found in the ubiquitous advertisements, so we become more materialistic and have to work even harder to support those materialistic habits. The not-unrealistic fear of sudden financial impoverishment also drives the anxiety and work pace of most people in the United States since the social safety nets have been shredded by years of conservative governing.

To all of us drowning in this empty, striving, isolated, and anxious American lifestyle, the media throws the biggest life preserver of all. From watching movies or TV, or listening to songs on the radio, you'll be convinced that everyone, sooner or later, will find their one, true, happily-ever-after relationship. The person who will heal you, complete you, and keep you afloat is out there. If the person you're with isn't doing that, either he or she is the wrong person altogether or you need to change him or her into the right one.

This is an impossible load for intimate relationships to handle. The striving for money and the isolation from a circle of caring people are enough to do in many marriages—not only because both partners are depleted by the pace of life and absence of nurturing contact, but also because to work and compete so hard, they each must become dominated by striving parts that don't lend themselves to intimate vulnerability. To deal with

the stress of this lifestyle, we reach for the many distractions that our culture offers, which are also obstacles to, and surrogates for, intimacy.

Recently the United States overtook Japan as the developed country with the workforce that puts in the longest hours. We're spending all our time in cubicles, removed from nature and from family, friends, and spiritual connectedness. We eat poorly and are out of shape and sleep deprived. We're anxious about money and about our appearance. Add to all that the burden of keeping each other's heads above polluted water, and it's no wonder so many marriages go under. Stress, depletion, and isolation make it harder to control our inner demons, consequently increasing the pressure on our one intimate relationship to keep the waves of self-loathing and insecurity at bay. This is an impossible task, but we still expect it to work, and we feel like abject failures when it doesn't.

Exercise

1. How much does your lifestyle allow time and space for intimate exchanges with your partner?
2. How isolated are you and your partner from a network of nurturing relationships?
3. How much does fear of poverty or competition with others drive your lifestyle?

Another Kind of Happiness

Another kind of happiness exists that you can feel steadily whether you are in a relationship or not. It comes from the sense of connectedness that happens when all your parts love one another and trust and feel accepted by your Self. When you have that kind of love swirling around inside you, it spills out to people around you, and those people become part of your circle of love and support. You don't need intimate others to keep you out of the inner dark sea because that sea has been drained of its pain, shame, and fear. In your inner world, your parts are on dry, solid land and are well housed and nourished. They trust you to be their primary caretaker, which allows your partner the freedom and delight that come with being their secondary caretaker.

When you don't fear drowning because there's no longer a dark body of water threatening to swallow you up, and when your inner world is one of abiding love, you don't grasp for the life preservers our culture constantly throws at you. Your material needs are simple, and you value relaxed human connection over nonhuman escape. You have time and energy to nurture an intimate network that extends well beyond your partner, so he or she isn't the only target of your parts' desires. As author John Schumaker (2006) writes:

> I never knew how measly my own happiness was until one day when I found myself stranded in a remote western Tanzanian village. I saw real happiness for the first time—since then I have learned that it has vastly more to do with cultural factors than genetics

> or the trendy notion of personal "choice." So it didn't surprise me that an African nation, Nigeria, was found recently to be the world's happiest country. The study of "happy societies" is awakening us to the importance of social connectedness, spirituality, simplicity, modesty of expectations, gratitude, patience, touch, music, movement, play, and "down time."

If you don't believe that caring social networks are important, consider the decades of studies on schizophrenia by the World Health Organization. This research has conclusively shown that people with schizophrenia do far better in poorer countries like India, Nigeria, and Columbia than in the United States and England. For example, almost twice as many schizophrenics in the poorer countries became symptom-free as compared to the wealthy ones. The only explanation researchers could find for this shocking discovery is that stronger family ties in poorer nations profoundly affected recovery rates.

In our American culture of empty, isolated, and depleted selves, it's extremely difficult for even the most psychologically healthy couples to create truly intimate and nourishing relationships. Those of us who carry additional baggage from our personal histories and gender socialization might as well not even try. Nonetheless try we do, over and over, oblivious to the impossibility of the task and filled with self-blame each time we fail.

The Cruel Joke

So we've all been set up—victims of a cruel joke. First we are loaded with emotional burdens by our family and peers, and then taught to exile the parts carrying them. Then we are told to go out into the world and find that special person who can make us finally like ourselves. Together we and our partner enter the striving, frenetic whirlpool American lifestyle that precludes time together, isolates us from community, depletes and stresses us out, and offers innumerable addictive distractions that further isolate us. When we can't make this impossible situation work, we feel like total failures—as though something is wrong with us. We don't realize that we never had a prayer.

Most self-help books and couples therapy approaches collude with this cruel joke. They try to help you fix something that isn't fixable, which makes you feel more like a failure when it doesn't work. Shifting the deck chairs around won't avoid disaster when you're on the *Titanic*. Instead, your relation-ship needs to make a U-turn.

Using structured communication packages, your therapist may convince you both to drop your defenses and open to each other once again. This approach identifies the problem as you and your partner not meeting each other's needs well enough, and it aims to help you negotiate better ways of taking care of each other. Such therapists don't understand that as long as you each contain desperate, orphaned exiles looking to the other for redemption and are caught up in the American whirlwind, that enterprise is

futile. Both of you are too depleted, vulnerable, and needy, and too focused on the other for any improvements to last.

After taking a brief history, I frequently tell couples not to feel bad about their failures. Given the baggage with which they entered the relationship and their frantic lifestyle, they never had a chance to sustain real intimacy. Just learning about the cruel joke of which they have been victims often helps couples begin to reverse the vicious cycles it has caused.

The good news is that as you each become more Self-led and experience more inner and outer intimacy, you have less need for material distractions and become more interested in creating community—connecting with the Selves of others around you. During the course of our therapy together, many couples spontaneously find creative ways to downshift their lives and increase their time with each other and with friends and family.

Exercise

1. How much do you feel like a failure in your relationship?
2. Given all the constraints to intimacy discussed so far, do you think your relationship ever had a real chance?

Gender Socialization

This kind of downshifting is particularly difficult for men, which brings up another cultural influence that cannot be

ignored: gender socialization. This is a huge and controversial topic to which I can't do justice in this space. Nor can I discuss it without making gross generalizations that won't apply to many readers. Yet from years of journeying inside with men and women to the source of their protectiveness and pain, several patterns are worth mentioning. In general, boys are taught to value and lead with certain parts of them and to exile others. Girls are socialized to do the same, but with different sets of parts. These differences can create problems in and of themselves, and they challenge the common assumption that women are better equipped to be intimate than men.

A traditional, patriarchal form of childrearing, dominant in our culture for many decades, was clear in its effects on the inner lives of boys and girls. In that pattern, boys were nurtured by their caretaker (usually their mother) until a certain young age—perhaps four or five—when, out of fear of their being sissified, they were wrenched away and often brutally shamed by their father or by peers for expressions of weakness or any emotions other than aggressiveness and anger—anything considered feminine.

This pattern left many of the men I've treated with extremely needy and fearful exiles which were so thoroughly locked away that most of the time the men had no access to those vulnerable feelings. The term *alexithymia* has been used to describe such men because they are so cut off from those emotions that they don't have words to describe them.

Terrence Real (1997), author of a valuable book on the wounding of men titled *I Don't Want to Talk About It,* describes his life in a way that applies to my own experience and that of many of the men I work with.

> There is a blackness that has lain inside the center of my being. When I have closed my eyes, it has been there. When I have been left alone for more than a few hours, I have returned to it. This jagged, empty, frightening feeling has been a part of my internal atmosphere for as long as I can remember. It has been my baseline, my steady state—the me I spent a good many years running from. I have come to understand that dark, piercing unease at my center as my experience of emotional abandonment and fear of growing up in a dangerous household. It's a little boy's loneliness, which I brought with me out into the world for the next thirty years. (p. 328)

To keep their dark fear and loneliness at bay, men become dominated by rational, aggressive, competitive, never-let-'em-see-you-sweat protectors that serve them well in the business world and are determined to never again allow them to be hurt or humiliated. Men are also taught to bolster their fragile self-esteem by objectifying and pursuing trophy women.

Before the sixties, when marriages were expected to be more traditional, many men could get through relationships without major challenges to this rigid and limiting inner structure. They weren't interested in being open and emotionally close to

their wives, and their wives had been taught not to count on that kind of intimacy from men.

Instead, traditionally raised girls were supposed to be caretakers. They weren't as abruptly abandoned as men by their early source of nurturance nor shamed for being soft, so they remained more connected to their vulnerability and to relationships with their children and female friends. On the other hand, the focus on caretaking others left them little ability to nurture their own vulnerable parts. Whereas men tried to abandon those exiles, women learned to find comfort for them in relationships.

The parts of girls, however, that were bright and assertive, lively and competent, were exiled, and they became dominated by self-critical protectors that kept them obsessed with the needs of others and with appearing attractive to men. Because of being raised in families where males were more highly valued, these girls also had exiles that felt worthless and focused on the approval of a father who was increasingly threatened by them and who distanced from them as they developed physically.

Since the sixties, the traditional ways of being men and women have been challenged, creating confusing contradictions for both genders. Now men are still expected to be strong and high achieving in the outside world, but within their relationship they should be emotionally intelligent—in touch with and open about their feelings and nurturing of their partner's feelings. The protectors they were raised to count on—rational, impatient,

action-oriented problem solvers and entitled, macho objectifiers—are no longer welcome at home.

In this way, men are expected to perform a total reversal of their entrenched inner systems. Suddenly they are supposed to access the very same vulnerable, sensitive, and caring parts that they spent their lives trying to keep locked up. Simultaneously, they are expected to exile some of their most trusted protectors. To further confuse things, they need to remain close to the striving, competitive protectors that help them succeed and make lots of money, but not bring those parts into the relationship.

It's no wonder that many of the men I treat have shut down. They feel humiliated by their failures in the emotional intelligence department, and humiliation is something they swore early on would never happen to them again (which is why they don't ask for directions). "I feel like I can never satisfy her" is a common male utterance in my office. Since in their relationship they can't rely on aggressiveness or rationality anymore, many men just give up and hide behind stony walls of indifference and passivity, which only further enrages their partners. These men's protectors opt for the third project of becoming resigned to a life of non-intimacy and to finding distractions.

Women, on the other hand, faced their own quandaries as gender expectations shifted. In the post-sixties world, they were expected to shed their subservient and self-sacrificing selves and find their power—the assertive and ambitious parts they had exiled earlier. Within their marriages, this often meant letting

their husbands know of their needs for emotional connection and nourishment, and expecting more equity in decision making and greater access to resources.

The problem is that, similar to men, women were trying to achieve a reversal of entrenched inner systems without knowing how. Consciously or not, their caretaker parts still had a powerful influence, which led them to do more than their share at home (in full collusion with their husbands' entitled parts) while also working outside the home. Those imbalances become combustible when mixed with the chronic disappointment in their husbands' emotional limitations. The inner battles between women's caretakers and their assertive parts often built over time until, seemingly out of the blue, their assertive protectors would explode with an intensity that left their husbands stunned.

The work of marriage researcher John Gottman (1994) is relevant here. Gottman has done his homework, studying over seven hundred couples of all kinds in a laboratory setting and following them over time. Despite differences in how he and I interpret his findings, I will frequently refer to his work in this book because it represents the best data we have on the way couples operate.

He found that men and women are very different in how they handle conflict. For example, in terms of blood pressure and heart-rate changes, men react much more strongly than women when they begin to get into marital conflict and stay activated much longer. They may seem rational and calm on the outside, but

inside they are going crazy in reaction to their wives' criticisms.

Men are also more likely to keep angry, vengeful thoughts running through their heads even after the fight is over. Gottman writes, "If you could read their minds, you might hear phrases like, 'I don't have to take this crap,' or 'It's all her fault,' or 'I'll get her back for this'" (p. 147).

In addition, he found that as the tension builds in couples' fights, men are much more likely than women to shut down emotionally and become what he calls stonewallers—people who turn away from and completely ignore their partners in the face of criticism. Indeed, the men were the stonewallers eighty-five percent of the time during conflict in the relationship.

Women are more likely to bring up issues that lead to arguments and to be critical of their husbands. When he then begins to stonewall, she feels unheard and escalates the argument, leading to a common vicious cycle in which he shuts down more and she gets increasingly angry as she tries to blast through the stone wall.

Let's review Gottman's findings on gender differences in light of the earlier discussion of men's and women's parts. Given that men have highly vulnerable exiles that they try to keep locked up at all costs, it makes sense that criticism from their wives would trigger the shame those exiles carry, which would account for men's extreme physiological reactions. In addition, men would experience the activation of all their protectors, including defensiveness and even anger or rage. On the playground, boys

learned to view criticism as a challenge to their masculinity and to lash out in response. As we've discussed, men's angry parts aren't welcome in many marriages and, also, many men fear what they might do to their partner if they let rage take over. So they are left with few alternatives. They are loathe to expose and don't have words to describe the intense vulnerability they feel, and their customary protectors are taboo. Shutting down externally seems like the safest choice, while, as Gottman found, internally their stifled angry protectors continue to roil beneath the surface and keep them stirred up.

Far more than men, women are socialized to take care of their exiles through relationships. Therefore, when their exiles are upset, women want to change things in their marriages so that their distressed exiles get from their husbands the love and comfort those parts need to feel secure. Hence women are more often the initiators of change-oriented discussions and are frustrated and critical when those discussions are aborted by their husbands' stonewalling. In addition, because of the collusion between women's caretaker parts and men's entitled ones, real imbalances often exist in the lifestyles of each spouse—the wife has more responsibility and fewer resources—that fuel her rage and his reluctance to talk.

In terms of the three projects, mentioned earlier, that protective parts take up in relationships once exiles have been hurt, it seems that women are more likely to keep plugging away with the first two, while men more quickly retreat to the third.

That is, because women want a relational solution to their pain, their inner critics take aim at their husband and, when that doesn't work, at themselves, in an effort to open his heart. Men, partly in response to what feels like intolerable criticism, will give up sooner on the intimacy-generating projects and will focus instead on distractions that make them feel good, such as work, sports, and drinking alcohol.

Many men's exiles are so well insulated from them that it often seems that they don't need intimacy. The fallacy of that myth is exposed when, for example, their partner decides she has finally had enough and threatens seriously to abandon them. At that point, many men's protective fortresses crack open, and their raw, needy exiles break through and take over. I've seen husbands who a day earlier had seemed aloof, totally in control and independent, transform into desperate, pleading little boys when facing abandonment from their wives. Despite being extremely isolated inside, these childlike parts of the husbands were addicted to the little affection from their wives that was allowed to trickle down to these exiles through the walls of protection. The exiles knew that this trickle was all that kept them from a return to utter love-starvation and worthlessness. This phenomenon also explains why some men who seem so detached from their spouses are simultaneously so possessive and jealous, to the point of stalking and threatening them when they try to leave.

I'll end this section on gender differences by reiterating a couple of points. The first challenges a prevalent belief in our

culture and among couples therapists—the assumption that because women are closer to their feelings and are more relational than men, they are better equipped for intimacy. In contrast, I believe that because women's focus is so much on caretaking others and on getting their exiles cared for by a relationship, they are no better at nurturing their own parts than are men.

The second point is that these gender patterns are not exclusively due to biological differences in vulnerability or emotionality. While biological differences exist and should not be minimized, both genders have been socialized to create exiles. Many of the incompatibilities between men and women come from differences in how they were trained to relate to those needy parts inside and outside. When it comes to achieving intimacy, both men and women are expected to reverse various rigid internal systems without an instruction manual. Fortunately, once they learn how to care for their own exiles and lead from their Selves, many of the polarizations resulting from their confusing socializations dissolve.

Exercise

1. (If you are a man) How much have you exiled the softer, more vulnerable, or "feminine" parts of you? How much are you dominated by highly rational, competitive, striving parts? Are you the one who doesn't bring up issues and shuts down when they are brought up? What is conflict like for you?

   How much do you expect your partner to be nurturing and soft?

2. (If you are a woman) Are you dominated by caretaking parts? How much access do you have to your assertiveness—to your ability to ask directly for what you need? How hard is it to feel okay when distance exists in your relationship?

   How much do you expect your partner to be strong and take care of you?

Gays and lesbians are subjected to the same problematic socialization process and, in addition, carry burdens of shame about their sexuality and about being different. In more traditional families, not only are they trained to exile the same parts as straight boys and girls, but are also forced to exile their sexual desires. The shame can produce parts full of self-hate, as well as other parts carrying rage at how they have been treated. These extra burdens can make relationships even more challenging than for those in the straight world.

I have worked with many gay and lesbian clients in individual therapy but not many in couples therapy. The examples in this book are drawn from my clinical experience and, consequently, are of heterosexual couples. I believe, however, that much of the theory and all of the techniques can be applied to same-sex couples as well.

Multiplicity Versus the Myth of the Monolithic Personality

One other cultural influence has a pervasive and toxic effect on intimate relationships. I call it the myth of the monolithic personality—the belief that we have but one mind from which emanate various thoughts and feelings. I believe it is no exaggeration to say that the myth of the monolithic personality is one of the greatest causes of distance in and dissolution of intimate relationships, and that awareness of our natural multiplicity is the greatest antidote. Why is it much easier to stay happily partnered with someone with many personalities than a person you think has just one? For one thing, when your partner says she no longer loves you, things get pretty bleak if you think that's her unitary personality speaking. For another, it is much easier not to write off your partner when you know you have an inner family with lots of different perspectives and desires than when you take as gospel all the crazy feelings about your partner that come up inside you during the dance of intimacy.

While the notion of yourself as containing autonomous multitudes may be disconcerting, the multiplicity perspective offers a great deal of good news for couples. First, during the inevitable dark periods in the relationship when you find your love for him leaking out of your heart like air out of a balloon, and your mind is reminding you of all his faults and wishing he would move out or die so you could finally be free, it is terrifying to believe that those are your most authentic feelings, thoughts, and desires. If you don't love him anymore, why are you still with him?

How can you be so selfish as to want him to die? What's wrong with you that you can't make relationships work? These kinds of panicked and caustic inner questions make sense if you believe that you are a unitary personality. If your love has disappeared and he now disgusts you, it makes sense that you should move on. If you believe that your one mind wishes he were dead, it follows that you must be a terrible person to harbor such a desire.

If, on the other hand, you recognize that your sudden absence of love is caused by the activation of protective parts of you that have blocked out your love in the way that the moon obscures the sun during an eclipse, you can trust that there is no need to panic or do something rash. Instead, you use that numbing experience to signal the need to listen inside to discover why you've become so protective and what needs to change, both internally and externally, to help your protectors trust that it is safe to open your heart again.

Similarly, you will react very differently to daydreams about his death if you realize that you have young, childlike parts that, when frustrated, have a variety of immature and selfish fantasies. Rather than loathing yourself and trying to suppress those thoughts, you can treat yourself with the kind of amused patience and understanding that a mother might bring to her angry two-year-old who just said, "I hate Daddy and I wish he would die!"

Knowledge of our multiplicity also helps when your partner says hurtful things or acts in extreme ways. When, in the

in your communication to your partner, he will sense a tone of respect and caring, even in messages whose content holds a challenge or complaint. While it is a very rare person who can hold total Self-leadership in the middle of a hot conflict with an intimate partner, it is possible for you to avoid becoming so thoroughly blended with your parts that you lose all perspective. I find that if couples can maintain even a small degree of Self-to-Self connection while they fight, the damage from the storm is minimal and the repair comes quickly.

Even during the worst storms, when both of you are totally flooded by extreme protectors, the knowledge that this isn't a permanent condition—that the clouds will part and the sun will shine again; that the protectors on both sides will relax and your two Selves will emerge eventually—is very comforting and can keep panic from setting in. Once your Selves re-emerge, repair and reconnection are possible. People can tolerate a great deal of scary turbulence if they trust that smooth skies are just ahead. As we will discuss later, it's only when protectors come to permanently dominate interactions that relationships are doomed.

Not only does the multiplicity perspective help you through the inevitable storms of couplehood, it can also deepen the intimacy you came together to achieve. One aspect of intimacy is the ability to be highly vulnerable with your partner and, while in that state, to receive love and acceptance from him. It is scary to reveal to anyone, but especially to your intimate other, aspects of your character that you view as weak, unsavory, or shameful. The

fear is that once you expose those parts of you, you will be forever seen by that other as having those character flaws. If you both understand that those are just small parts of you—parts that carry burdens of worthlessness, insecurity, distorted sexual impulses, and so on; parts that simply need empathy and acceptance to heal—it's easier for you to reveal them and for your partner to respond lovingly.

There is something magical about trusting that all of you is welcomed in a relationship. It's as if you are a single parent who feels ashamed of how ugly, stupid, or frail some of your children are and thinks they reflect badly on your genes and parenting. Then you find someone who not only accepts them but who also can see past their apparent deficits to their essential goodness and lovability. You feel an incredible connection to that person, based not only on relief at no longer having to hide your children from the world, but also on seeing how he makes them shine and how attached they are to him.

When this process of vulnerability and acceptance is mutual, couples form such a secure connection that their protectors relax and their young parts know it is safe to pop out at any time. You may know a couple whose relationship seems full of lively spontaneity and creative playfulness. They literally bring out the best in each other because they each know that all their parts are welcome to step into the warm, safe space between them. Their interactions have the feel of an improv ensemble, with a wide variety of characters jumping excitedly onto the stage and playing off each other.

Actually, you may have had trouble thinking of a couple you know like that. Unfortunately, such vibrant relationships are rare because without the multiplicity perspective and the knowledge of how to hold Self-leadership, it is very difficult not to overreact to the extremes of some of your partner's parts. You resent her sloppiness because you think she wants you to do all the housework. She blows up at your nagging about cleanliness, assuming that you are a control freak. Your need to stay out of debt makes her think that you don't trust her judgment about money. Her cavalier attitude about spending leaves you with the impression that she doesn't care how hard you have to work to earn money. When your partner chronically acts in ways that bother you, your tendency is to: (1) assume that behavior represents a core personality trait that you're stuck with, and (2) attribute a selfish or pathological motive to the behavior. Because of these monolithic attributions, you will be critical or contemptuous of your partner, and she will respond in kind.

The result of processes like these is that each partner retreats behind walls of indifference or caution. The playful and loving parts that initially brought them together are bruised and now seem too vulnerable to reveal. The terrorism alert between them shifts from green to amber and, sometimes, even to red. Their interactions become stilted and predictable because only a few members of their respective inner tribes do the interacting, and those members don't trust each other. Many parts of each partner feel most unwelcome. Those parts will leave you with an

underlying sense of emptiness and dissatisfaction and, at some point, will give up hope and begin to sabotage.

The rest of this book is designed to help you avoid becoming an amber or red couple or, if you are already on high alert, help you get back to green. If you ever had a vibrant energy between you, you can get it back. Having a general knowledge about parts and Self can help a great deal, and in the coming pages I will embellish the framework we have developed so far and add exercises and techniques that can lighten the load your relationship carries.

Exercise

1. Are you ashamed of the extreme thoughts and emotions you experience in your relationship? Do you worry that they are your true feelings?
2. Do you take the extreme things your partner says or does as representative of a core personality trait? If so, how does that affect the way you feel about the relationship?
3. What would change in your relationship if you trusted that all of the above came from small, burdened parts of you and your partner?

Good Luck

Like aging, intimate relationships are not for sissies. They require the courage to face what is ugly and scary in yourself and your partner, love fully without possessing, and risk losing that love. That is why intimate relationships are so rare—why so many people settle for protector-dominated lives together or choose to live alone. I have introduced a raft of provocative concepts and suggestions in this book whose unorthodox nature may make your head spin at first. All I can tell you is that they have served my clients and me extremely well. They vastly increase the odds that the risks you take for intimacy will lead to growth and healing. Happy trailheads, and may the Self be with you.

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Richard C. Schwartz, PhD

Psychologist Richard Schwartz began his career as a systemic family therapist and an academic. Author, with Michael Nichols, of *Family Therapy: Concepts and Methods* (the most widely used family therapy text in this country), Dr. Schwartz was Associate Professor in the Department of Psychiatry at the University of Illinois at Chicago's Institute for Juvenile Research and later at The Family Institute at Northwestern University.

Grounded in systemic and psychodynamic theory, Dr. Schwartz developed Internal Family Systems℠ in response to clients' descriptions of experiencing various parts within themselves, which, when feeling safe and their concerns were attended to, acceded to qualities of confidence, openness, and compassion that Dr. Schwartz came to call the Self. In IFS, he moved the idea of a system of parts with characteristic roles, as in systemic family theory, into the inner world of the client, constellating the parts around a coordinating Self.

This approach to psychotherapy suggested alternative ways of understanding psychic functioning and healing, and lent itself to innovative techniques for relieving clients' suffering and symptoms. Locating the source of healing within the client, with the therapist's skills applied to helping the client access that source and unburden obstacles to it, IFS is a nonpathologizing, hopeful framework within which to practice psychotherapy.

In 2000, Dr. Schwartz founded the Center for Self Leadership in Oak Park, Illinois. CSL offers three levels of training in IFS, workshops for professionals and for the general public, a yearly national conference, publications, and videotapes and DVDs of Dr. Schwartz's work through its website at www.selfleadership.org. IFS courses in Germany have drawn psychotherapists and physicians from across Europe.

A featured speaker for national professional organizations, Dr. Schwartz is a fellow of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy and serves on editorial boards of four professional journals. He has published three books and over fifty articles about IFS; his books include *Internal Family Systems Therapy, Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model,* and *The Mosaic Mind* (with Regina Goulding), as well as *Metaframeworks* (with Doug Breunlin and Betty Karrer), about transcending current models of family therapy. Dr. Schwartz maintains a private practice in Oak Park, Illinois.

In this book, Richard Schwartz, the developer of **Internal Family Systems**[SM], applies the IFS Model to the topic of intimate relationships in an engaging, understandable, and personal style. Therapists and lay people alike will find this book to be an insightful exploration of how cultivating a relationship with the Self—the wise center of clarity, calmness, and compassion in each of us—creates the foundation for courageous love and resilient intimacy: the capacity to sustain and nourish a healthy intimate relationship. Self-leadership also allows us to embrace our partner's feedback and use it to discover aspects of ourselves that seek healing. The book includes user-friendly exercises to facilitate learning.

"This profound and readable book provides clear guidelines for therapists and clients alike. In ways that complement my own work, clients learn how to unload the cultural and family burdens that block intimacy by keeping them locked in rigid gender roles. Therapists learn an empowering and practical process for treating couples. I enthusiastically recommend this book to anyone serious about improving relationships in the world today!"

— Terrence Real, author of
I Don't Want to Talk About It, How Can I Get Through to You? and *The New Rules of Marriage*

"It has been said that before you can love another, you have to love yourself. *You Are the One You've Been Waiting For* teaches us how to do that by offering a clear, compelling, intelligent model for loving our inner demons and freeing ourselves to embrace greater intimacy. Thank you, Dick, for this wonderful book."

— Janis Abrahms Spring, PhD, author of
How Can I Forgive You? and *After the Affair*

"This highly original book offers critical new insights into obstacles to the dance of intimacy. Most of us have inner exiled parts that carry burdens of shame and abandonment from our past. These interfere with our capacity for intimacy. Dick Schwartz shows us how to use the exiles our partners trigger in us to find and heal the source—our original attachment injuries. This releases our capacity to be fully alive in relationships."

— Bessel A. van der Kolk, MD, Medical Director, The Trauma Center,
Professor of Psychiatry, Boston University School of Medicine

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