

ness. But we're not obliged to battle negative interpretations of the world with positive interpretations. Only when I turn to God can I see God.

Spirituality isn't an affectation.

It isn't wearing white cotton and talking like a god. We can be spiritual without anyone knowing it. We can heal without anyone knowing it. We can awaken to oneness without anyone knowing it. But if we start talking about our holiness — painting a picture of how holy we are — we block our holiness.

We are not always attracted to

the wrong person. Unless something very unusual is going on, we are always attracted to an ideal healing partner. Do you think it's just bad luck that one of you likes to plan and one of you likes to be spontaneous? That one of you likes to talk it out and one of you likes to let it be? That one of you likes to spend and one of you likes to save? That one of you likes to party and one of you is more a homebody?

Isn't it funny how during the

honeymoon period, understanding each other is seldom a problem? "Communication skills" are highly overrated. We don't *want* to understand; that's the problem. We can't say to our dog or baby, "I want to give you a little feedback on something you've been doing lately," and yet we get along with them just fine. I know two couples who, because of an accident in one case and a stroke in the other, *can't* talk to each other but still are able to move past their problems and grow in love. Work on communicating better, but work also on dwelling in love, the place of true understanding.

If you've got somebody who seems

opposite to you in almost every respect, you've got the right person. In a sense, your partner is the repository of your rejected strengths. For-

give your partner, and, together, you become whole.

The old marriage vows had it right:

we become one body. Our own body has a left side and a right side that cooperate. But it also has a center. Forgiveness gives marriage its center. Yes, at this time the two sides are fighting. But just hold faithfully to each other's innocence, and you will become a complete spiritual body.

You acknowledge your separate

needs, and you meet them. But you help each other with this. Remember, you're married; you're one body now. If the nose itches, the hand scratches. The hand doesn't say, "It's your itch; it's your problem."

The question isn't whether to

have arguments or to take time off to be by ourselves. The question is: What is our *intent* in arguing or withdrawing? I know couples who can strengthen their friendship by screaming at each other and storming around. But that's because they both are clear that the function of the ranting is to bring them closer together.

Today we say, "You can't make

another person happy." But we sure can make our partners *angry*. We intuitively know exactly what to say or do. How is it we can make them upset, jealous, scared, and the like, but not happy? It is because we are in the habit of using our intuition negatively. Practice making your partner happy, and you will become proficient.

Surely it's clear that relationships

— whether with a child, friend, sibling, or spouse — crumble under pressure. If you want to make your partner happy, first you must stop being a source of pressure, demands, and ultimatums.

Many couples have noticed that when they have a day of closeness and peace, the next day is often a disaster. The ego merely is trying to recoup lost ground. We must learn to laugh gently at this. Our true relationship is a light that is replacing our separateness; and, for a time, separateness seems to fight back.

There is a spiritual relationship that has no connection to the ego relationship. Ego love will die. But if we can gently establish ourselves within the spiritual relationship, it will outlast the end of the three and a half years of hormones, the fading of our bodies' blossoming periods, and the withering of age. And once we are in the spiritual relationship, even death can't touch our love. So every day, let us fall more deeply in love with each other's innocence. Within innocence, we are already one.

Our puppy likes me to flip her on her back and scratch her tummy. Gayle wouldn't receive that as love. I must express love in a language that can be understood and appreciated by *that* person.

People with no real connection sometimes have great sex, and people with a deep spiritual bond sometimes have poor sex. Sex simply is not the weather vane of the health of a relationship.

Sex has become a set of competing rights, with the emphasis on "What am I not getting?" The right to have our "needs met" competes with our partner's right not to be coerced. The right to foreplay competes with the right to reach orgasm. The right to experiment competes with the right not to feel vulnerable. The right to quality time afterward competes with the right to get cleaned up or to sleep. Approached this way, we have no need for hell; sex provides it every time the subject comes up.

Please, God, let me remember that human relationships can withstand very little pressure. Yet somehow everyone thinks marriage is different. Because of the impossible expectations we have now that our partner should heal the past and fulfill our needs, marital relationships have become *more* fragile than common friendships.

Make very few demands on your partner. If you can make none at all, that's

best. Set up no tests and ask few questions. Don't try to cheer your partner up. Don't demand even that your partner stop being demanding!

Rush to help your partner, but be intuitive about it. There is a difference between thinking you know what's best for your partner and sensing that your partner would welcome your help. As your oneness grows, your partner's pain will be your pain. You will experience it literally as yours. Then it will be your enormous pleasure to meet your partner's needs. This is the definition of a healer.

But what if your partner is vio-lently insane? What if your partner is abusing your children? Or what if your partner is engaged in criminal activities? Then, of course, you immediately step away from the relationship. But in your mind, *never* lose faith in the seed of innocence God has placed within your partner.

We give each activity the meaning it has for us. If couples were to consider eating great meals their sacred right, food would become a major problem area. But most couples take good, bad, and mediocre meals in stride — because their purpose in sharing a meal is *larger* than private gratification. Consequently, if your spouse is not a particularly good cook, you usually overlook this. If the two of you have an unexpectedly bad meal at a restaurant, the experience can even be amusing. So why make a mere conversation or the simple act of sex so devastatingly important?

Food critics enjoy very few res-taurants; movie critics enjoy very few movies; art critics enjoy very few paintings. Don't become a connoisseur of marriages. Seek instead to be easily pleased.

Pet monkeys tear up the drapes. They swing from light fixtures. They borrow your comb without asking. They eat with their mouths open. They hoot all night. They won't put the toilet seat down. They won't attend the meeting. And they won't turn their socks right side out. Now, if there are people who can love a pet monkey, you can love your spouse.

The world has a picture of what every spiritual concept should look like. But spirituality can't be pictured in the world. You