

**8 Critical Keys to Saving Your Marriage
with the EASY LOVE Laws**

By: Dr. Bob Huizenga



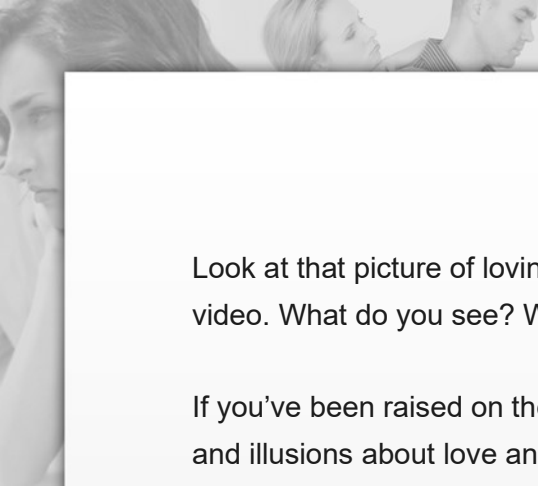
I've observed thousands of people over my near 30 years of clinical practice as a Marriage and Family Therapist caught in the clutches of marital anxiety, tension and worry.

The tension and anxiety that results from the "Force it/Fix it" model you were taught can be paralyzing. And, over time, it becomes more and more difficult to escape the worry and dread. So, how do you begin to eliminate the worry and tension? How do you calm your mind and spirit? How do you arrest your worries?

Over the years of clinical practice, I've discovered 8 keys to making the shift from "making" love happen to allowing EASY LOVE to capture your hearts.

Key #1: You must reframe the picture you were given of love, marriage and intimate relationships.

You have in your mind a picture, image or idea of what love and a loving relationship should be. This picture was developed over time as you observed others, were exposed to the different forms from media and encountered your significant others.



Look at that picture of loving now. Place a frame around it. It can be a still picture or a streaming video. What do you see? What does your picture of love and marriage look and feel like?

If you've been raised on the "Force it/Fix it" model you will necessarily have some distortions and illusions about love and loving.

We need to create a new picture to you, a new streaming video of what love truly is and how it emerges; of what it will feel like and look like for you.

We will reframe some of your ideas and images to fall more closely in line with EASY LOVE.

Key #2: You Must Feel Safe with Your Spouse and her/him with You

A feeling of personal safety is paramount to initiate the rebuilding of a marriage and developing a love that is EASY and you can trust. A safe environment allows the natural unfolding of each other and the relationship to emerge.

Without a safe space, a couple encounters fear. Fear gets in the way. Fear perpetuates the cycle of negativity and reactivity. Fear grinds to a halt the warmth, understanding and commitment to embrace self and each other.

Fear is a natural outcome of the "Force it/Fix it" model.

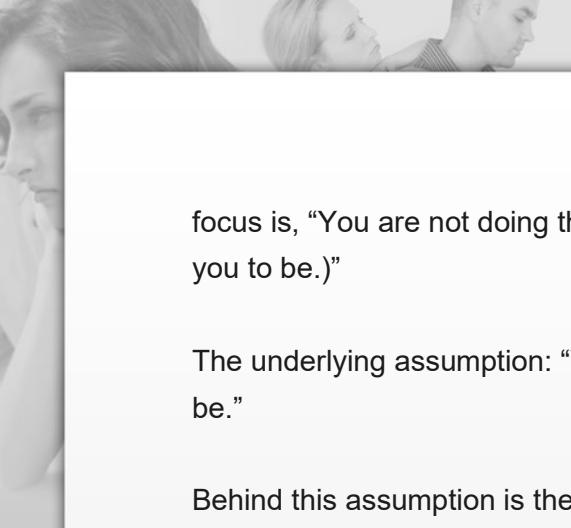
As you shift your focal point away from your spouse and toward yourself and your internal personal power, your comfort level of safety will increase.

You become more adept at speaking your voice, setting boundaries and managing the flow of healing and health. Love becomes EASY.

Key #3: You Must have Something to Give

Out of personal pain and desperation a person in a marriage of reactivity, negativity, worry and tension attempts to get something from the spouse or other person. The focal point is on the other person or spouse.

One person, or often both, attempt to change or suggest changes to the other person to fit his/her illusions with the hope for outcome of his/her personal needs being met. And so the



focus is, “You are not doing this (for me.) You are not being this kind of person (whom I want you to be.)”

The underlying assumption: “You can make my world much better by being whom I want you to be.”

Behind this assumption is the thinking, “I don’t have much to give; I feel helpless; I feel victimized; I think of myself as powerless; without you, I’m not much.”

This may not appear to be the reality, since someone who believes s/he is powerless, often acts as if powerful. (In most marriages of reactivity and negativity, each sees him/herself as powerless and the other as powerful.)

The remedy is for each to focus on who s/he is, what s/he has to offer to the relationship and how that can enhance self esteem for self, regardless of how it is accepted by the other.

The bottom line: “What do I have to uniquely offer, without expecting anything in return?”

This is the beginning of a new relationship and building a foundation that will stand the test of time and trials.

Reactivity and negativity is the cry of an empty person.

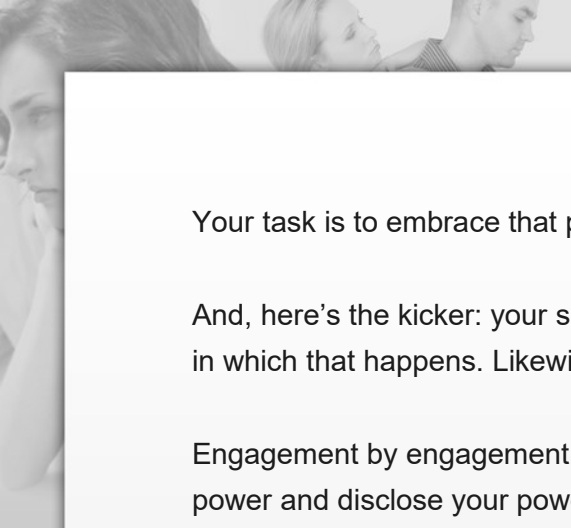
External focus is subtly pervasive in most marriages and carries with it the seeds of frustration and resentment.

Again, I will help you move toward discovering what you truly can offer your spouse or significant other.

Key #4: You Must Speak Your “Voice”

A core element of allowing EASY LOVE is to express your personal power. Note, I did not say you must develop it. Your personal power is there! It may be covered at this moment.

You may focus so extensively on the negative and worry that you miss your power. But, your power is within you. Your power is YOU!



Your task is to embrace that power and to embrace you.

And, here's the kicker: your spouse or significant other is given to you to create an environment in which that happens. Likewise you were given to him/her for that purpose as well.

Engagement by engagement (I use this term rather than "talking") you more fully embrace that power and disclose your power and your uniqueness with finer and finer distinctions.

Your voice is your power. Your voice is YOU. Your voice is what makes you exceedingly attractive.

Key #5: You Must Make Distinctions

I emphasize the power of making distinctions.

Distinctions give communication depth and clarity which makes loving much EASIER. Making distinctions is like peeling the layer of the onion, discovering deeper and deeper meaning and understanding.

You obtain a wealth of words and concepts to choose from that you lacked before. And when you have more options to verbalize, you have more power to create and achieve what you desire.

Love continues. Love builds stronger and stronger over time. Love is coming to know the other in deeper and more profound, exciting and happy ways.

Creating distinctions about love, self, the other and marriage is a key ingredient. Here's an example: Let's peel back possible layers of the onion when your significant other says "I Love You." Here are possible underlying meanings:

- I accept who you are.
- I think you are hot.
- I need you. Please reciprocate.
- I have good memories of us.
- I forgive you.
- I want sex.

- I like this moment together.
- Thank you for doing what you just did.

And many more, depending on the context of the statement.

As well, it is helpful to make distinctions between these concepts: love, infatuation, closeness, intimacy, caring, respect and attraction.

Key #6: You Must Make Shifts

Shifts happen.

An awareness of shifts and the capacity to guide and create shifts are core elements to building EASY LOVE.

Here are Key Points on shifts:

A shift is any movement or change you make in the way you think, act or feel. A different thought may lead to a different action or different feeling. Or a different action may lead to a different thought and/or feeling.

Shifts happen all the time. Change is a constant. Change will never end.

You want to have an awareness of the change process so you can modify and control the shifts in your life. Making distinctions leads to shifts. The process of intentionally making shifts can be extremely freeing and exhilarating. Finally, I have my power. I have my voice.

Shifts can result from a conscious decision to initiate a change in the way you think or what you do.

Shifts can emerge serendipitously. They JUST happen and it's difficult to pinpoint the cause. You can trust that an unconscious part of you is also redesigning and rearranging your life in ways you want!

Shifts can be dramatic and instantaneously life changing. Although this is rare, it does happen. Shifts often happen more slowly and methodically. These are usually the shifts you can trust and have staying power.



Key #7: You Must be able to Meta Comment

Do you ever talk to yourself?

Most of us do. Probably ALL of us do. A “conversation” often emerges in our mind as we consider something; something usually significant.

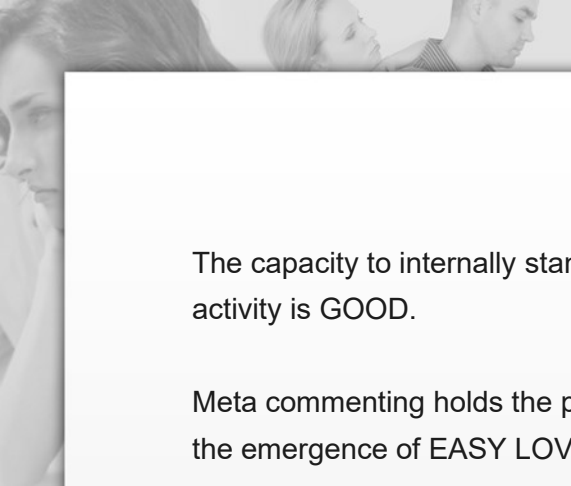
A meta comment is a thought that emerges as we reflect on that conversation or train of thought.

In other words, we internally stand back and make a comment to ourselves about what just happened, or what we just thought.

Here are some examples of meta comments:

- This is important.
- That's a new option.
- There must be a place that knows.
- I realize I need to decide which way to go.
- God knows.
- No, that's not what I meant. [self correcting]
- Do I want to go there?
- That's a hard question.
- Oh look, there's no green in the rainbow.
- Does that make sense?
- I know I shouldn't say this but ...
- ... so anyway ...
- It's obvious that
- It just occurred to me ...
- I can't believe I just said that.
- Now let me see ...

The therapeutic community acknowledges that the ability to meta comment is THE most important indicator of emotional health.



The capacity to internally stand back, observe what we just said or did and acknowledge that activity is GOOD.

Meta commenting holds the promise of curtailing the anxiety and tension. AND, this is crucial in the emergence of EASY LOVE.

Do you talk to yourself? I hope so.

I will help you bring awareness to that process and use it constructively.

Key #8: You Must have a process that keeps you focused

Making shifts and distinctions that stick and propel you to move toward EASY LOVE requires focus.

Experts say it takes 21 days to create a new habit. That depends on the habit you attempt to create.

To be consciously aware of your movement toward EASY LOVE demands focus. And, it is so easy to lose focus with the external demands of family, friends, work, children, errands and a host of other activities that cry for our attention.

As well, it's extremely easy to slide back to the "Force it/Fix it" ways that the world around you values and encourages you to follow.

You need support, encouragement and a system to keep you on track.