



## **Recovering from Toxic and Dysfunctional Relationships, Breakups and Divorce**





Dear Reader:

Almost no one would choose to be in a toxic, dysfunctional relationship. Yet 70%-80% of people say they are part of a dysfunctional family. Given that the divorce rate is 50%, and another 25% of couples stay together in spite of the dysfunction, it's clear that many more of us suffer through painful relationships than enjoy extraordinary relationships – *married or not*.

***The good news: feeling heard, supported, and joyful again is possible!*** We've written this e-book to help you discover what you can do now to recover from a toxic relationship, breakup and/or divorce – so that you do not repeat the past. We first lead you to recognize the patterns of dysfunctional relationships. These are patterns that landed you in a hurtful or unsatisfying relationship to begin with - in business or personal life. Then, the book lays out **nine recovery steps** to a self-loving, confident, and fulfilling life.

Despite the pain of toxic relationships, we know that leaving a dysfunctional relationship is hard! Feelings of hurt, emptiness, confusion, anger, regret, worthlessness, shame, guilt, etc., have likely drained your energy and left you feeling anxious, frustrated, and emotionally stuck. **There is a better way – *Breakup Recovery!*** No matter where you are in the process, we know you have been through a lot, emotionally and physically. We understand because we've had first-hand experience of toxic relationship breakup - and we also have worked with thousands of people who have struggled through their need for changes after or during a breakup. In fact, 96% of our learners reported sustainable positive change.

***What does this mean for you?*** Once you break through your feelings of falling apart or unworthiness or guilt, a more promising future awaits. Start liberating yourself today by exploring the contents of this e-book. Learn how you can apply yourself to building your more joyful future – with healthy relationships if you so choose. Journey forward with us for an enlightening view of the process ahead. Begin reading this e-book and, if you need more help, please reach out and ask us about personal and group coaching programs, or our self-study program, to help you through this challenging time. We're here for you!

With love,

***Donna and Dr. Diane***

Donna Anselmo, M.S. | Diane Kramer, Ph.D.  
Co-founders, **Extraordinary Self Programs, Inc.**

## Introduction

Almost no one would choose to be in a toxic, dysfunctional relationship. Yet 70%-80% of people say they are part of a dysfunctional family, according to an article by Soulaima Gourani in Forbes magazine. Given the divorce rate is 50%, while another 25% stay together in spite of the dysfunction, it's clear that many more of us suffer than enjoy a great relationship.

A great or *extraordinary relationship* is easy to define. Mutual love, respect, trust, support and need satisfaction through time; ability to deal with differences in a cooperative, negotiating way; partners who are open and available for sharing at a deep level; and superb listening and understanding.

If you are reading this e-book, you are most likely *not* in an extraordinary relationship; More likely, you are struggling through or in the aftermath of a dysfunctional relationship.

By dysfunctional relationship, we mean one which is mainly filled with pain and challenges, rather than joy and support. The dysfunctional relationship is missing enough love and affection, power sharing, respect, and trust. It is a relationship without “*mutual need satisfaction through time*” That is the phrase famous psychologist Harry Stack Sullivan used to describe *the extraordinary marriage*.



## Relationship, Breakup, and Divorce Recovery

Leaving that dysfunctional relationship is hard! You might be left with feelings of hurt, anxiety, emptiness, confusion, anger, regret, worthlessness, shame, guilt, etc. It might be hard to sleep, or you might be sleep too much. Many in toxic relationships drown their sorrows in self-pity, blame, food, substance abuse, or sexual overindulgence. There is another way – *Breakup Recovery!*

The first step in Breakup Recovery is finding support and being heard in all your pain while moving away from as much of the negative emotional space as you can. In learning to detach from painful emotions, you will clear mental space from which you can more easily notice the part you play in your dysfunctional relationship(s) – so that you don't repeat the past. To do this, it helps to work with a breakup recovery coach or marital therapist. Or, to ask a trusted friend to listen without judging while you voice your pain and concerns. Accepting responsibility for your part is freeing! It gives you the insight and wisdom to notice similar patterns in the future – and run for the hills! How many times have you gotten caught in a dysfunctional relationship? *Is it time to find a new way? Yes!*

# Identifying Types of Dysfunctional Relationships (and Insight to Changing Them)

**Note:** Read each type of Dysfunctional Relationship below and notice your own type(s).

Awareness will help you avoid dysfunctional relationships in the future.

Also, below, learn the 9 Steps of Breakup Recovery!

## Caught in the “Vicious Cycle”

This happens when one or both of you are not getting your important needs met! Instead of working it out, high levels of conflict and lack of need satisfaction lead to repeated patterns of attacking each other and/or withdrawing or avoiding. And, critical issues never get worked out. Over time, the Vicious Cycle becomes more and more predictable and disturbing.

**An Example:** Lynn and Barry engaged in a Vicious Cycle of attacking and avoiding for 22 years - until Lynn had had enough. That’s when she began to address the underlying issues between them with a therapist. Barry refused to enter into the change process. A divorce soon occurred.

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## To Break the Vicious Cycle of Attack / Avoid

What couples need to break the attack/avoid cycle is the ability of at least one person to step back emotionally from this Vicious Cycle with an attitude of compassion. If possible, the couple then must develop good Win/Win communication and conflict management skills.



## Power Imbalances

*Power Imbalance* happens when one person is making most of the decisions, while ignoring the other and offering no negotiations. Often, the other person in the relationship fears honest communication, has little influence, and stays pretty much withdrawn.

**When power and control take priority over love and respect,** of course there will be dysfunction.

**An Example:** Connie was a pleaser and gave up many of her choices to keep Alan happy. He had all the power in their relationship.

After Connie’s daughter graduated college, Connie began to grow stronger with professional help. Their relationship survived, but not without a lot of adjustment on both their parts.



## To Break Power Imbalances

The person in control first must learn to *step into the other person's shoes* and see his/her perspective and needs. And/or the other must learn to stand up to his or her mate. Both also must learn how to *negotiate* to Win/Win outcomes. That learnable skill takes willingness and practice. Once learned, it makes a world of difference.

## Emotional Distance

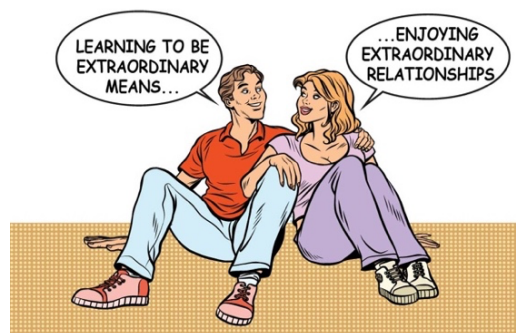
Most of us need a relationship of listening and sharing in order to feel secure and intimate. Unfortunately, stress and over-full schedules pull couples apart and create emotional distance. When one partner is hurting and stressed - and the other ignores his or her painful emotions - that promotes more distance and detachment. **Instead, emotional openness, active listening, and compassion for each other lead to functional, healthy relationships.**

**An Example:** Phyllis married Mark who was emotionally unavailable. Her mother had been like that, too. Thus, this type of cold, detached relationship was familiar to Phyllis and in her comfort zone. She accepted Mark's behavior as a normal part of relationships.

It took Phyllis years to see how much love, communication, and intimacy she was missing because she accepted what was. She eventually came to realize that she deserved more. Phyllis finally divorced Mark and found someone who was more emotionally open and able to satisfy her needs.

## Are you involved with an emotional distancer?

It is a hard pattern to break if the other is not willing to change habits.



## To Heal Emotional Distance

Couples - or at least one member in the relationship - must first realize that routinely ignoring another's feelings is a dysfunctional pattern. This pattern often started by observing and modeling a parent who ignored his/her partner's needs, or by developing an inner defense against feeling vulnerable.

**To break this pattern of emotional distance,** the distancer must learn to tune in to what is happening and be willing to face painful and confusing negative emotions that arise when engaging with the other. With practice and the help - and support of a coach or therapist who creates a safe container for exploring and changing feelings - the emotionally distant person can learn to open up. And the partner who was held at a distance can learn to take responsibility for his/her part in the painful pattern - probably anger or frustration. Instead, he or she can learn to speak up about how the relationship is dysfunctional - from a calm and compassionate space.

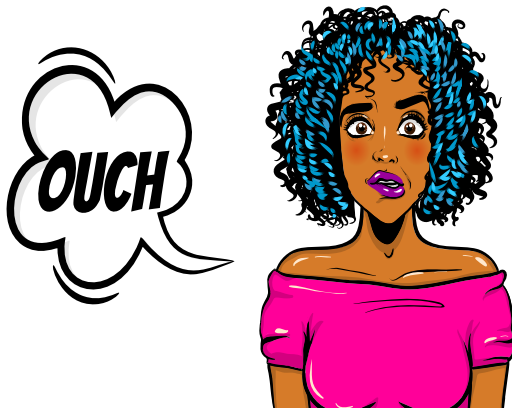


## Blame and Shame

Couples who blame and shame each other for the dysfunction in their relationship are the most unhappy. In contrast, those who take personal responsibility for solving their part in problems say they are far more satisfied in the relationship.

### *An example:*

Another relationship that did not work out – June and Charles each blamed the other for different things. Charles blamed June for spending too much money. June blamed Charles for not being affectionate. Neither took responsibility for their own part in the relationship. Fifteen years later, the marriage floundered once too often and ended.



## To Eliminate Blame and Shame

**Taking personal responsibility is key to happy relationships.** That means if your partner upsets you, instead of blaming yourself or your partner, take responsibility for changing your part. First deal with your part in the upset (manage your own beliefs, feelings, thoughts, and actions), and then figure out how to deal with your partner – with compassion and caring.

In addition to taking personal responsibility, you both must value the same goal – *an extraordinarily good relationship*. When you both want it, a shared goal can become the driving force for problem-solving.

## Resentment

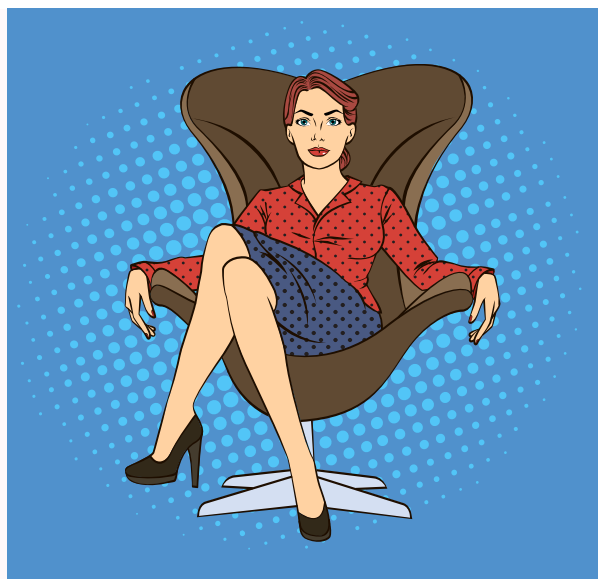
A high level of resentment in a relationship often leads to destructive and harmful attack-and-avoid behaviors. Resentment builds up over time and bleeds into your day-to-day interactions, making your efforts to repair things more difficult. Resentments build like bricks on a wall. As time goes on, the wall gets higher and higher, and the attacks get stronger.

Prolonged resentment sours your view of the relationship. Unfortunately, most people who feel resentment believe they are right and feel justified. Resentment is often tied up with ego, identity, or morals, making it difficult to let go.

### *An example:*

Nancy felt deep resentment toward John as she ran the house and business while he played too many video games. She finally got professional

help and learned to substitute compassion and clear communication for resentment. Finally, John heard her and made enough changes that the relationship stayed intact – though it took a lot of work!



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To attempt to make the relationship work, substitute compassion and communication for dysfunction, then nurture yourself and the other — while showing that you care how your partner is doing.

## To Lessen Resentment

*The good news is you can learn your way out of resentment with the right questions! Ask yourself: What is causing these feelings? How much are they connected to my past? Then, make sure to focus on your own feelings and beliefs, and figure out what they mean to you.*

Next, decide what you can do about the situation, if anything. Resentment solves nothing. Clear communication where you validate the other and then tell your position without blame is a better way. Sometimes, though, it is just time to end the relationship. This is often the case when values are not in sync. *Have you reached this point? Are you about to end yours?*

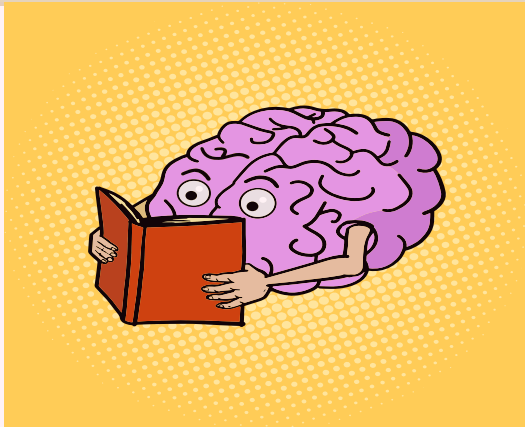
**Of course, we can't completely avoid all dysfunction in relationships. However, we can control most of it through our own mindsets and attitudes. If you want to make your relationship work, replace dysfunction with compassion and communication.** Then, nurture yourself and the other and show an active concern for the well-being of your partner. This goes a long way to building and/or restoring caring, loving relationships.



## Identifying the Causes of Dysfunctional Relationships

We just reviewed the types of Toxic Relationships. And, we hope you identified the type or combination of relationship types causing problems for you. Now let's learn what caused you to end up in a dysfunctional relationship in the first place! Certainly almost no one wants a dysfunctional relationship, but most of us experience them. *Wondering why?*

The answer is simple and sad – *our own childhoods*. For most of us, the observations, and generalizations we made about people and relationships when we were young set us up for our own dysfunctional relationships. **Please read the examples below and think about your own childhood and family.** *What did you observe that did not serve you well? Which beliefs, patterns and models must you have stored in your unconscious mind in order to end up with a toxic relationship? Read the stories below for insight. Then, read the 9 Steps for Toxic Relationship Recovery - coming up in this e-book!*



### *Pam's Story*

Pam had a cold critical mother. She married Paul, a cold critical husband. Initially, Pam glued herself to Paul because his behavior was comfortable and familiar. His personality felt just like home - he fit within her comfort zone. Pam allowed Paul's cold behavior to affirm her unconscious (and longstanding) beliefs that she was not good enough or perfect enough, and that she did not deserve better.

Pam hadn't yet learned that she could empower herself! Eventually she did.

If your pattern is anything like Pam's, the sooner you break it - the sooner you will be better off. That will take recognizing your need to change the core beliefs underlying such patterns – and then developing better patterns. It helps to find good role models to follow. *You can do that! Beliefs are not true though they seem so. They are stories we tell ourselves over and over.*

### *Terry's Story*

Terry grew up taking care of her mother, who was an alcoholic. Years of intensive caretaking gave Terry feelings of purpose and self-worth. *Whom did she marry?* Larry, who became an alcoholic shortly after the birth of their child.



Terry then spent many years taking care of Larry. While she felt needed and important, she was missing the emotionally connected, loving and respectful relationship she really wanted.

Many years later, with therapy, Terry learned to value and put herself first. She found new ways to feel worthy. She ended up divorcing Larry.



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Blair had learned to become her own good inner mother. She learned responsibility for herself and her feelings. She also took care of herself in a much kinder way than her ex-husband did.

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### *Blair's Story*

Blair's mother did everything for her, even finding her a man to marry. This left Blair with a dependent personality and crippled self-worth. Is it any wonder that Blair ended up marrying Marcus - who did everything for her, too? Sounds wonderful, except that while Marcus did many things for her, he also was nasty, angry, and resentful a great deal of the time.

As she had with her mother, Blair had become totally dependent on Marcus and felt that she could not survive on her own. So, she put up with her husband's nastiness and angry outbursts for many years.

After her children had grown and left home, Blair entered our coaching program and “*found herself.*” With new strength, purpose, vision, and goals, she decided to pursue a divorce. Blair had learned to become her own “good inner mother.” She learned responsibility for herself and her feelings. She then took care of herself in a much kinder way than her ex-husband had.

*These three stories demonstrate a single truth ....*

While we may want a healthy, loving relationship, most of us will gravitate toward what feels familiar - even if it is dysfunctional.

**Is there a better way? *Yes!***

## What's Needed to Break Out of a Dysfunctional Relationship?

**Self-Reflection is key.** Think back on your patterns in choosing partners and look for any similarities in your choices.

Examine your underlying beliefs and consider how your original family patterns and role models led to your own choices. Remember — you are most likely to repeat the patterns of the past unless you become introspective *and learn what is driving your choices.*

Almost always, our patterns from the past served a purpose. Initially, they gave you something you needed – like the safe feeling of familiarity: your comfort-zone. *Even if you were abused, you knew what to expect - while your negative self-concept was reinforced.*

Unfortunately, these familiar, repeating patterns strengthen our own negative beliefs and expectations about ourselves - including shame and lack of deservedness.

Sometimes, they confirm your feelings of being better-than or worse-than others. Such confirmation keeps you stuck in the familiar = which perpetuates a *Vicious Cycle.*

Once those hidden determinants of your choices come to light, it is easier to change them. You may need professional help to do this. You also will need to learn to love yourself more and keep yourself feeling secure. Start by learning to *self-soothe* and then from a place of calm, you can begin learning to manage your feelings in new and effective ways – with 100% responsibility for your thoughts, feelings, goals, and actions.

To support changing old patterns, you will need to develop some new beliefs, such as “*I deserve*” and “I can learn how to do what is needed.” You will also need to find good role models, develop new communication patterns, and work at making better choices - even if leaving your comfort zone raises some anxiety.



## Patterns of Dysfunctional Attraction You'll Need to Change

Let's examine a few of these possible dysfunctional attraction patterns that keep you stuck. Maybe you will recognize yourself below. At the least, reading this will get you curious.

### Attracting Narcissists

The narcissist charms you into putting them on a pedestal and satisfying their needs above yours. Can *you* change so that you pick better partners? *Yes, but!* First, you need to put the work into becoming aware of your pattern of attraction, your underlying beliefs and experiences that led to the narcissist choice, and what such a choice does for you. Such a choice may make you feel special for a while, but that feeling doesn't last. **You need to learn to notice that pattern of partner selection, detach from it, create a new one and practice it, over and over.**

### Attracting Gaslighters

Or, maybe you attract *Gaslighters*. Gaslighters use an abusive form of psychological manipulation that attempts to sow confusion and self-doubt in your mind. Gaslighters gain power over you by distorting your own sense of reality - forcing you to question your own judgment and intuition. Your self-worth then plummets, and you do not feel worthy.

*So why would you choose a Gaslighter?*

Typically, because the relationship gives you something else you need. Often, co-dependence is involved.



### Co-Dependent Relationships

Co-dependence is a relationship style in which there is significant emotional or psychological reliance on another person for need satisfaction. If your pattern is co-dependence, you believe you cannot exist without the other. You feel pulled toward and focused on the other. And, you will do whatever it takes to stay attached.

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"In a codependent relationship, you tend to rely on the other person for happiness and approval," says [Dale Atkins, PhD](#), co-author of *The Kindness Advantage*, and psychologist. "You become so wrapped up in the other, you lose yourself. Your needs are then determined by your partner."



### ***The Way Out of Co-Dependence***

You can break out of co-dependence by learning to love yourself, have compassion for your wounded inner child, and give yourself the approval and happiness you used to need from the outside. The struggle is difficult - but conquering the pattern is immensely rewarding.

To avoid the Gaslighter choice in the future, work on upping your self-worth. Build strong boundaries and be prepared to hold a strong “I” position. This means holding onto your own power to say “no” and to decide what you will and will not tolerate.

Practice owning your own needs, wants and feelings - and communicating your perspective. Our Extraordinary Self e-Course “*Extraordinary Relationships and Win/Win Communication*” teaches how to stand up for yourself, negotiate, and work toward a Win/Win whenever possible.

### **Attracting the Unavailable Partner**

Perhaps your pattern has been to choose the emotionally unavailable partner. In this case, your partner may seem remote, unwilling to feel, share or discuss their own feelings, or to really listen to and validate you.

Sometimes criticism and resentment arise, as that partner does not satisfy your needs over time. You might become the critical one, after getting no satisfaction from talking to your partner. Or he/she might be the critical one, dumping on you when he or she feels stressed or negative.

To avoid this pattern, you need to build up your core beliefs - that you deserve to have a loving, emotionally available partner even if your own childhood did not provide it. That means saying yes to yourself and your own needs, and also watching for the signs that a prospective partner can be open and emotionally present with you. It takes work but is certainly worth it!

Perhaps you have different dysfunctional pattern. The list can go on and on – dependency, overpleasing, anger, jealousy, lack of emotional connection, perfectionism, and denial, etc.

***The key is to lasting change is to identify those patterns and learn how to change them – and then practice, practice, practice! *Extraordinary Self Programs* teach you to do just that.***



## Nine Steps toward a Healthy Relationship

To get out of your existing relationship - or to make sure you don't repeat the same bad experience in the future – you need to uncover and change the pattern that led to your dysfunctional or toxic relationship(s) to begin with. But there is more. Below are *The Nine Steps for Breakup Recovery*. Follow them and jumpstart living and loving at a whole new level!



### 1. Take Control of You, Only!

Remember, you can only change your part in a relationship. Often, when one partner changes for the better, the other partner takes note. Sometimes, that partner will be motivated to move with you in a positive direction. By taking charge of you, you will then be acting and responding differently - which may or may not have a positive impact on the other person. But, sometimes it does.

It's really important to realize that you can't control the other. The only one you can control is *you*. So, focus only on those changes that can be made in and by *you*. *Change You!*

**Remember** — You can only change *your part* in any relationship.

Changing your part means taking 100% responsibility for knowing your part. You need to know yourself at a deep level - at the level of your core beliefs, accompanying feelings, your role models, and the experiences that have shaped you. Knowing who you are helps stop your reactivity and lets you take control of better choices and ways to respond to your partner.

#### ***How do you come to this inner knowledge?***

Quiet reflection — asking yourself questions like: *What am I thinking and feeling on the inside? What am I seeing in my mind's eye?*

**Learning to notice inward may take time, and you may need a coach, but it is truly worth it.**



## 2. Build Your Self-Awareness

Self-Awareness starts within by noticing and getting curious about what is happening inside you. To get started, please answer the following:

- Do you want to build more awareness so you can create more helpful thoughts, feelings, and beliefs?
- Do you know what you are feeling, thinking, and believing – right now?
- Do you recognize your self-talk, inner movies, and mental images?
- Do you hear what they are telling you?
- Do you know what sets of thoughts, beliefs, or feelings trigger dysfunctional behavior?
- Can you identify patterns that have repeated since childhood?
- What beliefs are you holding that created the dysfunctional relationship(s) you have experienced?

## *Nancy's Story*

When deep in reflection, Nancy began to notice her *self-talk*. She realized her inner language had been convincing her that she *was bad and did not deserve better* whenever her husband criticized her. She came to believe that about herself at a deep level. Over time, her own accompanying guilt and shame pushed her to want to please him more and more.

With more inner reflection, Nancy saw that (1) her needs were not being met and (2) she was *not bad*. She gave herself permission to learn to change her self-talk and negative beliefs.

## 3. Permit Yourself to Change!

Once you discover the patterns, beliefs, and role models that have shaped your dysfunction, you can learn to challenge them and change them at a deep level. You don't have to be a victim of your past! And you don't have to have been given enough nurturing, compassion, and love as a child. *You can learn to give a lot of that to yourself now!*

**FYI:** You don't have to wait to be perfect in order to love and accept yourself. Start now because learning to love yourself takes time - and is a necessary and essential part of change. Self-love helps you to not repeat the mistakes of the past.



#### 4. Build Self-Love

People who deeply love and accept themselves attract similar people - *like likes like* – and treat each other with kindness and respect, working out issues as they go. With self-love, people quickly recognize dysfunction and move away from it. Do you have that deep love and compassion and acceptance for yourself?



#### Angie's Story

Angie, one of our clients, kept picking men who were manipulative, emotionally unavailable and cruel - *until she learned to really love herself*. Then, she quickly recognized and turned away from anyone who had those characteristics. Angie finally met Phil, who had his act together.

Phil came to love, respect, and cherish Angie. He also knew healthy ways to deal with conflict in a relationship and help resolve it. Once Angie came to value herself more, she was able to choose wisely, and she picked Phil - a winner!

#### 5. Change Your Beliefs

Learning to love and accept yourself needs to be paired with believing you deserve the best for you. Deep down many people who attract dysfunctional relationships hold a belief that they are not deserving and are not good enough. These *limiting beliefs* must be recognized, challenged, and changed. You may need some coaching help to get to that deep level. *Charisse did*. She had crippling anxiety at times, and she never seemed to find the loving relationship she craved. **Little did she know that her anxiety was being caused by a hidden inner conflict between what she wanted and what she believed she deserved.** She was always holding herself back from what she really wanted because she thought she didn't deserve, until she finally challenged and changed her beliefs.

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Once you learn to love yourself and believe that you deserve – and you learn to self-observe and detach from your old patterns – you will be ready to set good boundaries in any new or ongoing relationship.

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## 6. Detach from the Negative

As you learn to be your own good inner parent - giving yourself love and support, you will find the skill of *detaching* invaluable. **Detaching – or self-distancing** – is the ability to stop and step out of a negative experience like a *Vicious Cycle*, then let go of the negative feelings and the troubling thoughts in your head, **and just notice everything about the experience without judging:**

- *What is happening?*
- *Who is saying what?*
- *With what kind of expression – and actions?*
- *What are the sensations and feelings inside?*
- *What am I thinking? Imagining?*

***This will help you short circuit the process and start to change the old pattern.***

***For example:*** Viella learned to be self-aware and realized that she got angry at Charlie whenever she felt bad about herself; she then took out her bad feelings on him. Viella learned to detach from that pattern. In doing so, she saved her next relationship from falling apart.

## 7. Set Boundaries

Once you learn to love yourself and believe you deserve – and you learn to self-observe and detach from old patterns – you are ready to set boundaries in any new or ongoing relationship. Staying calm, you can say what you need to say to protect yourself and get your needs met – *or you can walk away.* ***For example:*** Paula noticed that Dave was very demanding and manipulative. When she noticed herself starting to carry out her old pattern of pleasing and being submissive, she recognized the warning signs within herself. She ended the relationship and made space for a better one.

## 8. Develop Deep Trust in You

As you practice new skills of loving yourself unconditionally, believing you deserve, detaching from toxic situations, and deciding how to handle them in your best interest, you will develop more and more trust in yourself, knowing that next time, it will be different.

***For example:*** Sara met Jordan who told her that he really cared about her. She loved his words but felt something was wrong. Because she came to trust herself so much and was not needy, she now did a little investigating and discovered that Jordan was married. In the past, before changing inside and strengthening herself, she would have been duped into a relationship that could only end in heartbreak.





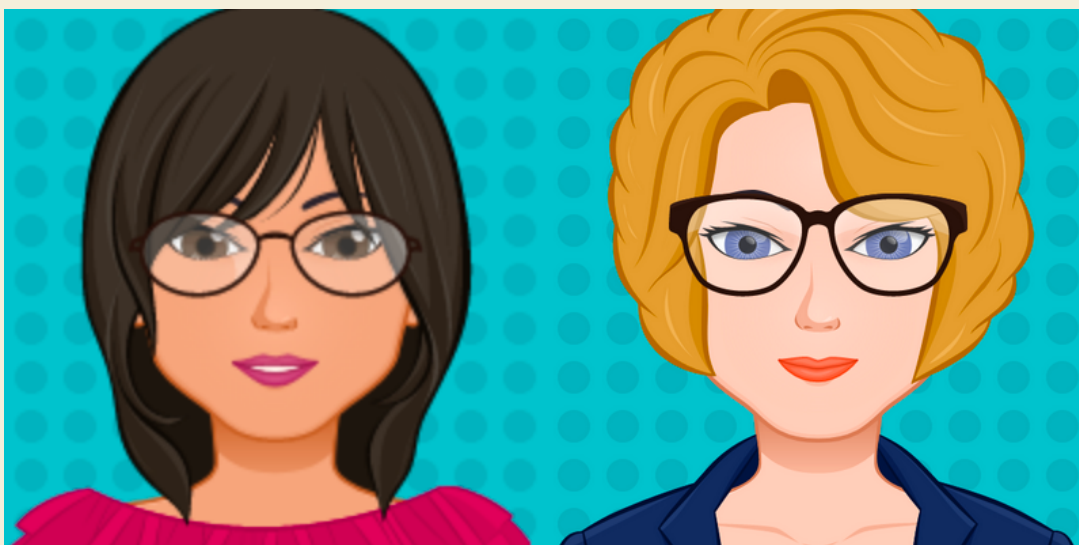
**Rapport** is that sense of flow when communicating that represents openness and trust between two people. It includes really listening and paying attention to the other's needs - and making sure your own needs are being met. To get there, you need the right communication skills. These include *detaching* from any triggered emotional reactions, *calming yourself* and *negotiating* differences while showing *compassion* and *understanding* – and working on your *listening skills*, *empathy*, *validation*, and ability to give helpful *feedback*.

## 9. Improve Your Communication

It is super important to learn some new communication skills to go along with your improved self-image and beliefs. These skills include developing rapport.

***These are easy skills to learn and practice once you recognize the need and commit to mastering them.***





## Recovering from Toxic and Dysfunctional Relationships, Breakups and Divorce

*Follow the 9 Toxic Relationship Recovery Steps!  
Create Your New and More Satisfying Future!*

**Your new and more satisfying future starts with your commitment to not repeat the past.**

Instead, commit to self-exploration and avoiding old, dysfunctional patterns. Learn to fully love and accept yourself. Believe you are deserving of the life you want. Detach when triggered into old patterns and explore what is happening with mindful awareness. Set boundaries that protect your emotions and your interests. ***Change your part in relationships to change the relationship.*** Learn and use new communication and negotiating skills that lead to more Win/Win outcomes. Trust yourself. And - *very important* - refuse to get sucked into toxic relationships!

As you do, you will shift into a new comfort zone. And you will step into your power to create the future you desire. It just takes learning and practice.

**Start today by envisioning your happy future!**

Sure, your vision is a fantasy *right now*, but you will gain clarity on how to make it real when you picture and write down what you want. Let your words and mental images guide you to plan your next steps. ***Research shows we are 80% more likely to reach goals when we write them down!*** So, start writing and begin your path to more inner satisfaction and joy today!

## A Few More Steps You Can Take



**Take the time needed to create your own reality in a way that pleases you.** *What do you want your future to look like? What are you envisioning for you?*

Maybe you don't want another intimate relationship right away. Maybe you prefer to focus on a personal goal, project, or your mission? Maybe you want to build a lucrative career? Or a lifestyle of adventure? It's your choice. And you can make it happen – you just need to learn how.

Whatever you choose, make sure your goal or vision is within your control or influence - and go for it. Write a list of action steps toward your goal and move forward - one little step by little step. And if you get stuck, don't give up.

Instead, detach emotionally from any pain or belief that holds you back. As you step back, soothe yourself until you are re-centered in good feelings about you. Then, figure out a tiny next step to take, and ask what you need to learn to take that step. *And remember - you deserve!*

### *Melissa's Story*

After a disastrous marriage to a narcissist who cruelly manipulated her into feeling bad about herself while she endlessly tried to win his approval, Melissa was ready for change. She figured out that she needed to be less needy by learning to give herself more love and approval.

When centered in herself, she created a vision for her future that included ways to build her self-love, set strong boundaries and break her dependence on other's approval. She visioned lots of satisfying activities, including traveling to adventure spots, and enjoying them on her own. Melissa took a garden design course - and wrote a book. Part of her plan also included getting a raise at work and re-developing her network of friends (so it included only those who really cared about and helped satisfy her needs.) Two years later, Melissa was ready to add a new intimate relationship to her goals. She empowered herself to learn and move forward. And, she was happy with herself!

## An Important Message

**Change is possible! And you can and will feel better once you start your changes!**

Many times over, we've seen the wonderful strides that women like you have made once they committed to *changing their part* in relationships, loving themselves more, and working through their inner changes.

**For most, change begins with a vision of the empowered future you want – rather than the unsatisfying relationships of your past. Change takes willingness to learn new ways of being - and to keep learning until you reach your goals.** While you may only be at the starting gate of change now (recognizing your desire for it), we hope you have gained some knowledge, insight, and help while reading our “*Recovering from Toxic and Dysfunctional Relationships, Breakup and Divorce Recovery*” e-book.

If you would like more help, we – Dr. Diane Kramer and Donna Anselmo, M.S., and our certified Extraordinary Self® Program coaches – are available to help you develop new awareness and skills. We will guide you to cultivate the helpful thoughts, positive feelings, and liberating beliefs you need right now – and *the mindset, skill set, and action set that will last you a lifetime.*

Extraordinary Self® Transformation Programs include live private and group **Breakup and Divorce Recovery Coaching Programs as well as a Self-Study Program option** – with personalized, empathetic professional support over the course of an entire year to make sure you integrate change at a deep level. To learn more, please visit the Programs page on our website: [www.extraordinaryself.com/register](http://www.extraordinaryself.com/register)

**Our goal is for you to live the life you want – even if you have not yet realized you deserve it.**

We are here to assure you that you most certainly deserve your heart's desires!

If our work resonates with you, please continue your journey toward change by joining our programs and reading our other publications and blogs and educational Webinars. We provide insight to many self-development concerns. Feel free to contact us at [Coaches@ExtraordinarySelf.com](mailto:Coaches@ExtraordinarySelf.com) for more information, and we will respond quickly. We look forward to hearing from you.



## *Who Are We?*

**Dr. Diane** (Kramer) is a long-time relationship and business coach, psychologist, divorce mediator, author, and marriage counselor. Dr. Diane brings insight, wisdom, warmth, and powerful tools to help her clients recover from toxic and painful relationships with self and/or other in personal life and business. She teaches the mindset, skill set, and action set to feel continually self-loving and powerful while reaching success goals time-after-time in all areas of life.

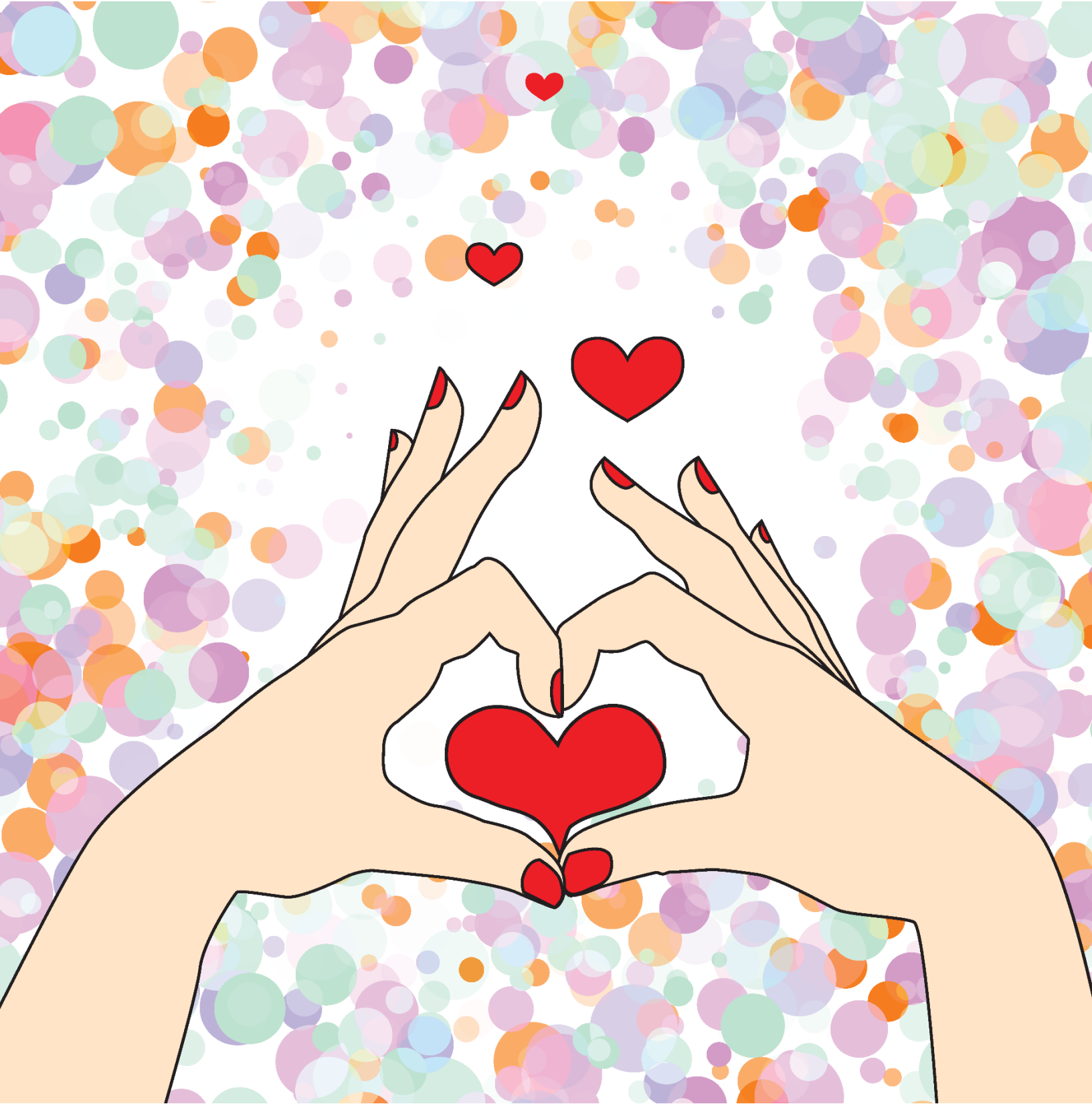
**Donna** (Anselmo) M.S., co-founder of Extraordinary Self Programs, Inc., is a long-time business, relationship and communications coach, author (*Marketing Demystified*), hypnotherapist, radio personality, and branding expert who uses wisdom, compassion, insight, and powerful tools to lead her clients to more inner satisfaction and outer success. As a result, Donna's clients build more rewarding lives, step-by-step, and enjoy more extraordinary relationships, careers, businesses, and personal lives.

Co-founders of the award-winning **Extraordinary Self® Transformation Programs**, Donna and Dr. Diane draw their tools from Psychology, Neurosciences, Neuro-linguistic Programming, and Mindfulness Practices.

**Our Extraordinary Self Relationship, Breakup, and Divorce Recovery Programs** help people uncover and change the patterns that led them to toxic and dysfunctional relationships - then restore themselves with self-love and strategies for healthy lives and relationships going forward. *We deeply believe that when we evolve our relationship with ourselves, we are better prepared to succeed with other relationships.*

**The Extraordinary Self Relationship, Breakup, and Divorce Recovery Program** helps people make foundational changes that enhance and improve life. Program options include **self-study, live group, and private session choices** to fit any budget.

Our additional, **award-winning, and transformational Extraordinary Self Programs** foster lasting inner change and outer success. Programs include *Awaken 8 Key Abilities for Your Extraordinary Future; 7 Steps to Master Stress; Empower Your Self-Talk; Power Up for Self Confidence and Self-Worth*; among others. Each of our Programs cultivates deeper self-love, compassion and understanding – while targeting specific individual goals. To learn more about our Programs, visit: [www.ExtraordinarySelf.com](http://www.ExtraordinarySelf.com)



[www.ExtraordinarySelf.com](http://www.ExtraordinarySelf.com)