



how to  
avoid  
falling for  
a **JERK**  
(or jerkette)

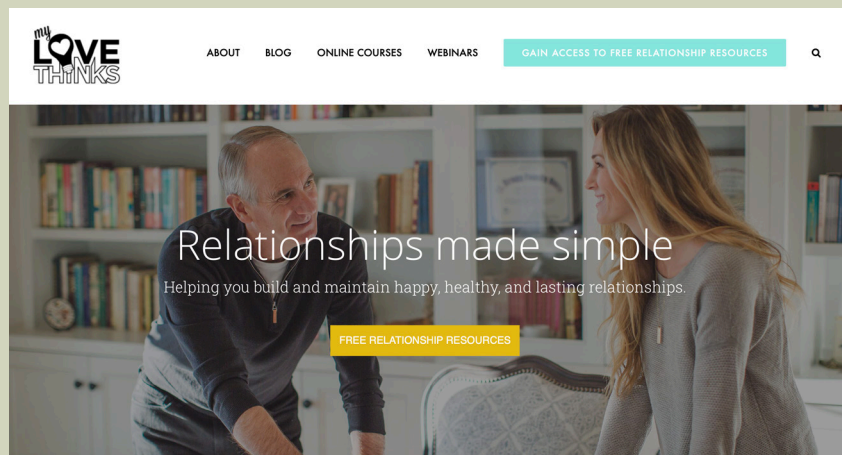




# Additional Resources

Don't stop after this course! We have so many free resources to continue to support you and your relationships.

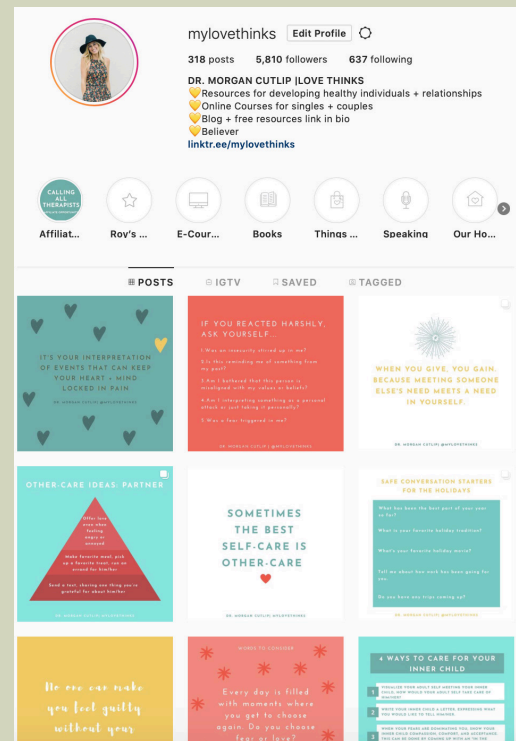
Check out the blog at [www.MyLoveThinks.com](http://www.MyLoveThinks.com) for regular relationship content and a FREE relationship library.



Visit Dr. Morgan Cutlip's instagram [@MyLoveThinks](https://www.instagram.com/MyLoveThinks) for daily relationship tips and advice.

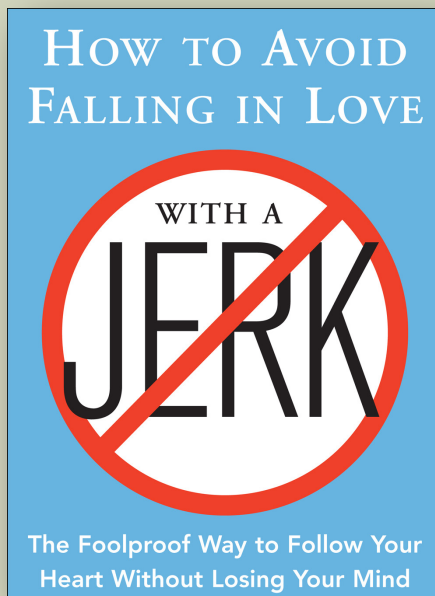
**Did you know we have online courses?**

If you'd love to share what you learned here with someone else but there isn't another live course, tell your friends about our online courses available at [www.Online.MyLoveThinks.com](http://www.Online.MyLoveThinks.com).



# VISIT THE WEBSITE

- Find out what's new from Love Thinks at [www.LoveThinks.com](http://www.LoveThinks.com)
- Order workbooks, shirts, hats, magnets and other products from the loveThinks store.
- Learn to teach the Love Thinks courses: PICK, LINKS, Our Home Runs, Home Run Dads, Ready and Resilient for the Fight (R&R), and Coaching & Mentoring with the RAM by becoming a certified instructor—just purchase the Instructor Certification Packet at the online store.
- Learn about the Church Series at [www.RAMSeries.com](http://www.RAMSeries.com)



And be sure to check out the McGraw-Hill published book *How to Avoid Falling in Love with a Jerk*—learn even more by reading additional humorous and fascinating stories, clinical cases and studies about building healthy relationships and choosing a marriage partner. This book is great for singles and premarital couples of all ages to use in their personal lives and relationships.

All rights reserved. Any reproduction requires the prior written consent of John Van Epp, Ph.D.  
Copyright © 1997, 2014, 2020 by John Van Epp, Ph.D.

9.0 PnP Edition of the PICK Educational Program

For more information and/or purchasing additional products contact:

John Van Epp, Ph.D.  
[info@lovethinks.com](mailto:info@lovethinks.com)  
[www.lovethinks.com](http://www.lovethinks.com)

Printed in the United States of America



## PICK A PARTNER

### PREMARITAL INTERPERSONAL CHOICES & KNOWLEDGE™

At one time or another, we have heard someone quote the old saying, *love is blind*. It might have been in response to that miserably mismatched couple; or, when your best friend took back that *jerk* or *jerkette* the hundredth time; or, when you finally saw the previously overlooked red flags of your ex!

The accumulation of experiences like these lead you to wonder if it is even possible to follow your heart without losing your mind. Do you have any hope for learning How to Avoid Falling for a Jerk(ette)?™

It was this quest which led to the development of the PICK Program, an educational course used in dating relationships and partner selection. The core of this course revolves around the importance of keeping your head and heart in balance. Singles of all ages would be helped if they had a relationship *GPS* in their dating relationships and ultimately, their crucial, life-changing journey of choosing a partner in marriage.

In the past several decades, there has been an enormous amount of information from self-help books, seminars and research on the subjects of dating, romance and marital satisfaction. However, there was a great need to have this material organized into a practical and easy-to-use plan which portrays the balance between getting to really know the person you are dating while staying healthy in the connections of your growing relationship.

The RAM (Relationship Attachment Model™) conceptualizes the five bonding links which make up the closeness and connection in your relationships. The first bonding link, getting to know someone, includes the five most important areas to explore during a dating relationship. The delicate balance between this dynamic connection and the other four links protect you against the *love is blind* syndrome.

This workbook is designed to assist you with the outline of the PICK course. Each session begins with an outline and overview of the content of that session, there are fill-in-the blanks, graphics, activities and numerous reflective questions that will personalize the material. It is very important to discuss and write responses to these questions—relationships take work, and only with effort will you genuinely benefit from participating in this class.

It is vital to develop a deeper understanding of yourself, the people you date, and the mysterious connections which create the thing we call *love*. Learning how to keep your heart working together with your mind will empower you to build healthier relationships and know what to explore in the exciting journey of picking a partner.



## HOW TO AVOID FALLING FOR A JERK | TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Session One</b>	1
A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF DATING	
Difficult Partners Come in Both Genders	2
Warning Signs of Difficult Partners	3
Three Changes That Impact Dating	5
Two Purposes of the PICK Program	6
How the RAM Explains Relationships	8
Five Key Areas to Grow to Know	13
Answer Key	15
<b>Session Two</b>	16
YOU CAN'T MARRY JETHRO WITHOUT GETTIN' THE CLAMPETTS	
The Big Lie of Love	17
The Necessary Ingredients for Effective Personal Change	18
Exploring the Family Background	20
Exploring the Attitudes & Actions of the Conscience	27
Resource 2-A Family Relationships	29
Resource 2-B Conscience Check-Up	31
Answer Key	32
<b>Session Three</b>	33
THE INGREDIENTS FOR A LASTING RELATIONSHIP	
Exploring the Compatibility Potential	34
Exploring the Examples of Other Relationship Patterns	39
Exploring the Skills for Relationships	40
Resource 3-A Who Am I?	43
Resource 3-B Attractions	44
Resource 3-C Relationship Health Inventory	45
Answer Key	47
<b>Session Four</b>	48
WHY IS IT THAT EXPECTATIONS LEAD TO DISAPPOINTMENTS	
Interaction between Trust and Reliance	49
Why Do You Keep Making the Same Mistakes in Relationships	51
Eight Characteristics of a Trustworthy Partner	57
Four Steps for How to PACE Trust & Reliance	59
Resource 4-A Tests of Trust	60
Answer Key	61
<b>Session Five</b>	62
PUT THE HORSE BEFORE THE CART	
Defining Commitment	63
How Far Should You Go in Sexual Touch	67
Resource 5-A Relationship Scenarios	71
Answer Key	72
Ninety-Nine Questions	73

# A BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF DATING



## Session Overview

This first session begins with a working definition of a “difficult partner” and a rationale for the necessity of romantic-partner selection education. The Relationship Attachment Model (RAM) is explained and used to describe healthy and unhealthy relationships.

The five key areas to explore in a dating relationship are introduced (FACES). These areas will help predict what this person will be like in a relationship and ultimately as a future spouse in marriage. Because these areas are covered in detail in sessions two and three, just a brief glimpse is given here.

## Session Outline

- 1 *Difficult Partners Come in Both Genders*
- 2 *Warning Signs of Difficult Partners*
- 3 *Three Changes That Impact Dating*
- 4 *Two Purposes of the PICK Program*
- 5 *How the RAM Explains Relationships*
- 6 *Five Key Areas to Grow To Know*

# Difficult Partners Come in Both Genders



## what's a jerk(ette)?

What are some common patterns of a person difficult to be with in a relationship?

---

---

---

---

What is the core difference between acting like a jerk(ette) and being a jerk(ette)?

---

What are the three warning signs of a person difficult to be with in a relationship?

1. 

---
2. 

---
3. 

---

*remember good-  
hearted people are  
the most at risk for  
falling for a JERK*



# Warning Signs of Difficult Partners

## what's a jerk(ette)?

Why is it important to see yourself from another's perspective?

---

---

---

What are the warning signals of somebody who doesn't have this ability?

---

---

---

What are some emotions you want to have healthy control over?

---

---

---





*it is easy to get  
fooled when  
you are feeling  
in love*

**what's a jerk(ette)?**

How would you recognize an emotionally immature person?

---

---

---

How would you recognize an emotionally restricted person?

---

---

---

Why are there sometimes differences between relationship skills used in dating and those used in marriage?

---

---

---

What are some relationship skills essential for a healthy relationship?

---

---

---



## Three Changes that Impact Dating

### 3 social shifts

It wasn't too long ago that society functioned much differently when it came to relationships. We have experienced 3 major social shifts that have impacted dating in a drastic way. Please list the three major social shifts below.

1 \_\_\_\_\_

Lost Belief #1: Families Marry Families  
Lost Belief #2: Singles Need Guidance

2 \_\_\_\_\_

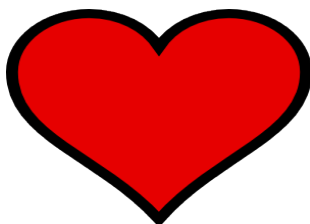
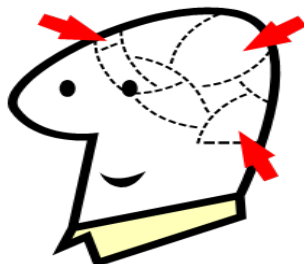
3 \_\_\_\_\_



# Two Purposes of The Program

## 2 purposes of the program

This program is organized around the HEAD and the HEART. Explain below the HEAD and the HEART purposes of the *How to Avoid Falling for a Jerk/Jerkette* program.



---

---

---

---

---

---

---



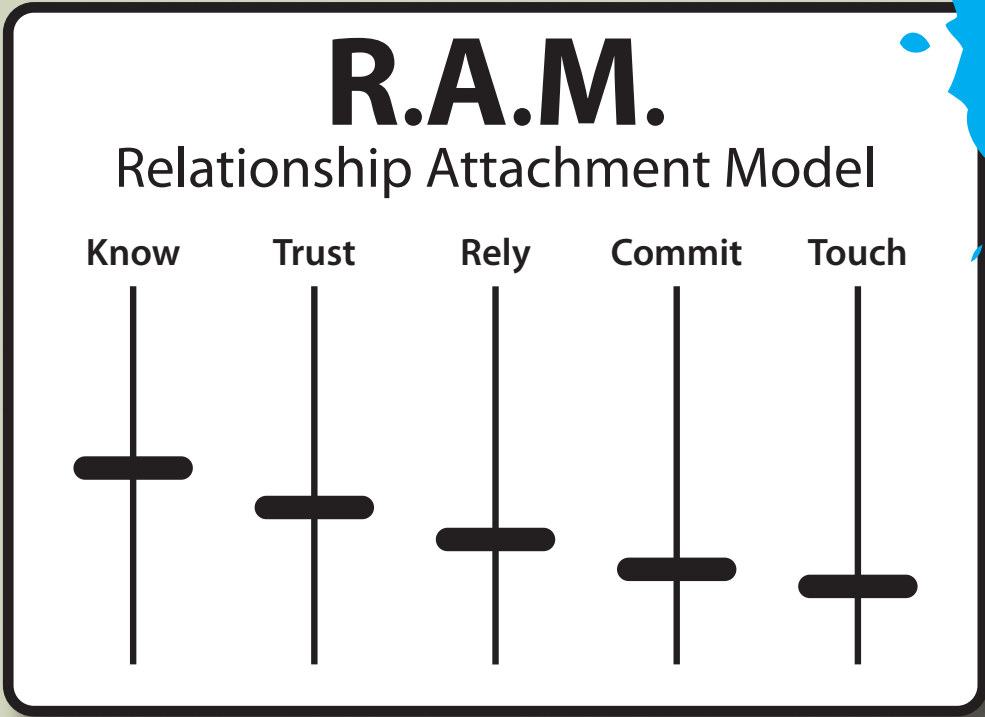
## ...love is BLIND

Scientists have now found evidence to support the old adage that *love is blind*. Through brain-imaging studies, researchers at the University College London found that “feelings of love lead to a suppression of activity in the areas of the brain controlling analytical thinking. It seems that once we get close to a person, there is a reduction in the activity used in the brain. Romantic love *suppresses* neural activity associated with one’s ability to be a good judge of a partner. In addition, massive releases of oxytocin, dopamine and other hormones and neuropeptides in the brain create euphoric feelings that further cloud analytic judgments, masking those repeating offenses that should be obvious warning signals of problems to come.”

Science Proves That Love is Blind. BBC News Report on article from NeuroImage. June 14, 2004.

# How the RAM Explains Relationships

*the RAM exposes jerks, protects you from blinding love, and provides you with a map for pacing your relationship*



The Relationship Attachment Model (RAM) is a picture of the dynamic bonds that interact in a developing relationship. Please explain the five relationship bonds below:

**Know** \_\_\_\_\_

**Trust** \_\_\_\_\_

**Rely** \_\_\_\_\_

**Commit** \_\_\_\_\_

**Touch** \_\_\_\_\_



## features of the RAM

There are 5 features of the RAM. Please list each of the features below.

1 \_\_\_\_\_

2 \_\_\_\_\_

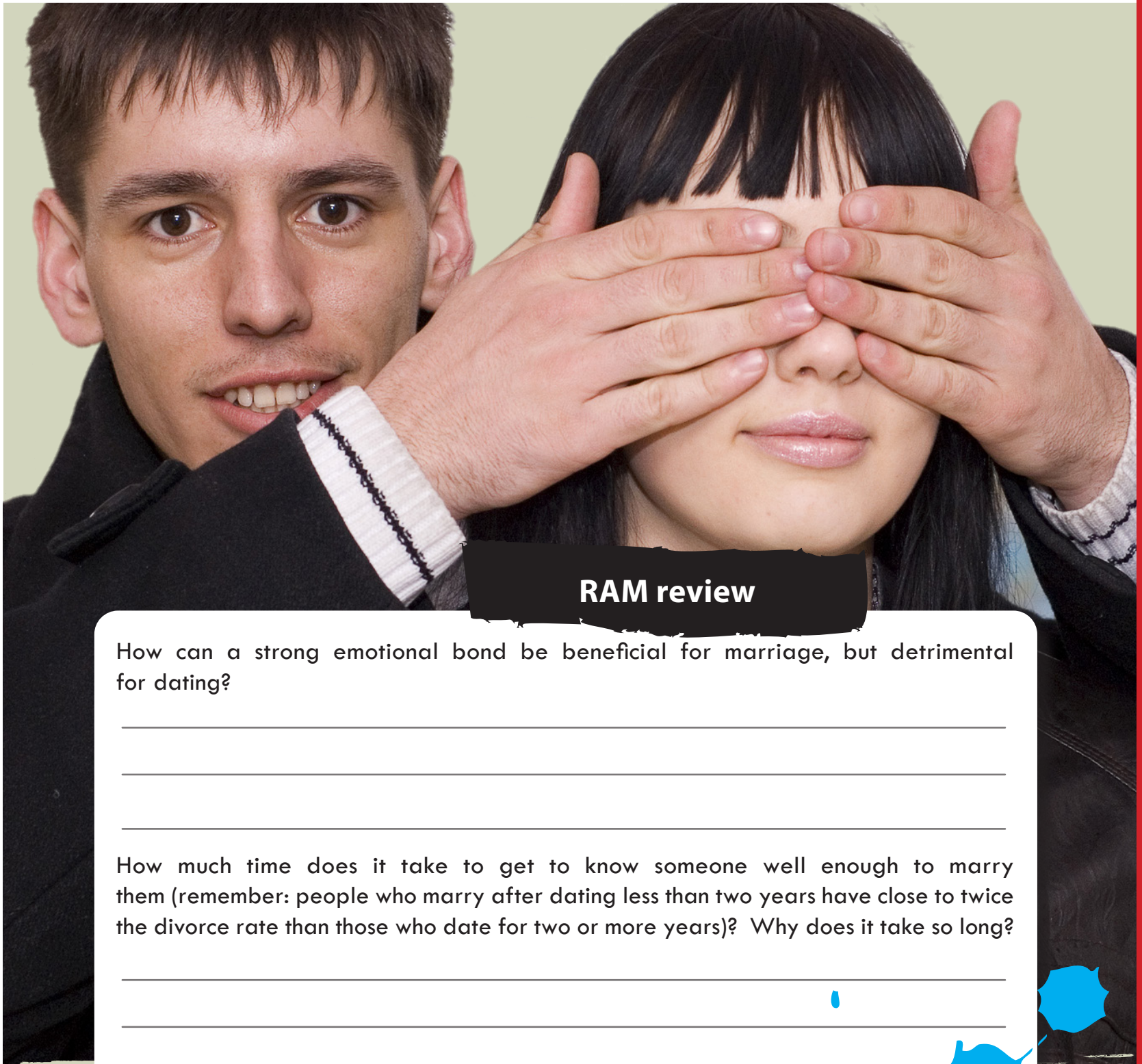
- a) Situational Stage
- b) Relational Stage
- c) Personal Stage

3 \_\_\_\_\_

4 \_\_\_\_\_

5 \_\_\_\_\_





### RAM review

How can a strong emotional bond be beneficial for marriage, but detrimental for dating?

---

---

---

How much time does it take to get to know someone well enough to marry them (remember: people who marry after dating less than two years have close to twice the divorce rate than those who date for two or more years)? Why does it take so long?

---

---

---

---

*the most common  
way you become set  
up to get involved  
with a JERK is by  
accelerating the pace  
of your relationship*



## ...the 90-day PROBATION PERIOD

Whether you are fifteen or fifty, growing to know someone intimately requires certain amounts of time. Some of you have been in a relationship where you shared everything imaginable, trusted this person with your life, felt completely in sync, and even talked about marriage only to have a rude awakening around the *third month*. This is the “magic number” —90 days. It is not until around three months that deep-seated patterns *start* to become evident. In a study conducted by researchers who have been studying dating relationships for over twenty years, it was found that about half of all dating attraction is significantly altered by some newly found characteristic within a three-month period; significant enough to cause a breakup of half of all relationships. Therefore, many initially hidden patterns seem to become evident within the first 90 days. By definition, a pattern is a behavior that repeats in a sequence of time. Without time, there is no such thing as a pattern. Therefore, if you are always living in the moment you are seriously disadvantaged when it comes to understanding what a dating partner is really like. The 90-day probation period states that “it takes three months for many subtle but serious patterns to *begin* to surface.”

Fletcher, G.J.O., Simpson, J.A., & Thomas, G. (2000). Ideals, perceptions and evaluations in early relationship development. *Journal of personality and social psychology*, 79, 933-940.



## the safe zone

What is the SAFE ZONE for relationships?

---

Describe what happens when your trust level greatly exceeds what you know about a person...or when your reliance or commitment greatly exceeds what you know about someone.

---

---

---

What are the risks of going farther in your touch than what you truly know about someone?

---

---

Imagine a relationship where one of the bonds on the RAM is much lower than the other links. What are some healthy and unhealthy reasons someone sets limits on how far to go in any of the five areas of the RAM?

---

---



# 5 KEY AREAS TO Grow to Know

## get to know FACES

There are five areas to get to know in a developing relationship. We refer to what to get to know by using the acronym FACES. So, in a new relationship you are getting to know the different faces of your partner. Complete the acronym below with the important areas to get to know.

F \_\_\_\_\_

A \_\_\_\_\_

C \_\_\_\_\_

E \_\_\_\_\_

S \_\_\_\_\_





Summarize the main points of the first session. Discuss or write about how the model of relationship attachment (RAM) applies to you. If you are presently in a romantic relationship, write about this relationship. If not, then write about either a previous romantic relationship or even a friendship. Pay attention to the ways you paced this relationship, and if any of the five bonds became imbalanced as it developed. Is there anything that you would have done (or would now do) differently to improve this relationship? What are some practical ideas to help you keep a relationship growing in the safe zone?

*remember: the bulk of research on what someone will be like*

**remember: the bulk of research on what someone will be like in marriage boils down to FIVE key areas you need to get to know**

# Answer Key

## Session One



### **DIFFICULT PARTNERS COME IN BOTH GENDERS**

1. Little insight
2. Poor emotional controls
3. Inadequate relationship skills

### **WARNING SIGNS OF DIFFICULT PARTNERS**

### **THREE CHANGES THAT IMPACT DATING**

1. Family guidance has shifted to individual choice
2. Segmented societies have shifted to diversified cultures
3. Established dating norms have shifted to personal values

### **TWO PURPOSES OF THE PICK PROGRAM**

1. The HEAD: to learn about the five areas to get to know and explore in a dating relationship
2. The HEART: to learn about the five bonding dynamics in a relationship

### **HOW THE RAM EXPLAINS RELATIONSHIPS**

- Feature 1: the RAM portrays sources of love and closeness
- Feature 2: the RAM measures closeness in a relationship
- Feature 3: Know= Talk+Togetherness+Time
- Feature 4: The RAM explains the logic of love
- Feature 5: Safe Zone: Each level should not exceed the level(s) to the left

### **5 KEY AREAS TO GROW TO KNOW (A GLANCE AT FACES)**

- Family Background
- Attitudes & Actions of the Conscience
- Compatibility Potential
- Examples of Other Relationship Patterns (Scripts)
- Skills for Building & Maintaining Relationships