



# **Broccoli Soup**

*For Nurturing Relationships*

*Exciting articles that will  
nourish your relationships like  
broccoli does to the body.*

By Barrington H. Brennen

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Broccoli Soup for Nurturing Relationships is an abbreviated edition of the upcoming full volume.

Published by Sounds of Encouragement Association  
Nassau, The Bahamas  
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Broccoli is excellent source of calcium.

## Habits Used by Successful Couples

Several years ago, I attended a professional seminar conducted by one of the world’s leading experts in marriage relationships and emotional intelligence, psychologist Brent J. Atkinson. The seminar was entitled: **“Habits of People Who Know How to Get Their Partners to Treat Them Well: Dealing with Differences.”** Dr. Atkinson presented six habits that successful couples use when dealing with differences. These are habits “that are characteristic of people who are skilled at eliciting respect, caring and cooperation from their partners.” These habits were uncovered while conducting a scientific study of thousands of couples over a several years.

What are these habits? These are habits couples use when they are having potentially heated arguments and serious differences in points of views. Dr. Atkinson says: “Studies suggest that the ability to react effectively when feeling upset is not optional—it is a must for anyone who hopes to have a satisfying intimate relationship.” I will provide several direct quotes from Dr. Atkinson’s report to help us clearly understand these habits.



### Habit #1: Avoiding A Judgmental Attitude

For almost two decades, I have been sharing with my couples in therapy that having a non-judgmental attitude is one of the key ingredients for having a healthy relationship. I have observed that when couples have false assumptions about each other, it results

in serious discord. Dr Atkinson states: “A hallmark of people who are good at getting their partners to treat them well is that they know that when they get upset with their partners, it doesn’t necessarily mean that their partners have done anything wrong. It’s normal to be upset when you’re at cross-purposes. Nobody has to be right or wrong. . . . Studies suggest that concluding that one’s partner is wrong when he’s really not, is a mistake you do not want to make. It’s one of the most damaging things that people do in relationships. If you make this mistake, it will lower the odds that your partner will be able to see your needs or expectations as legitimate, will care about how you feel, and will be willing to make changes. Your accusation will arouse his natural defenses and make it very hard for him to keep an open mind. You’ll breed ill will in him unnecessarily. There’s nothing more demoralizing than being falsely accused.”

## **Habit #2: Finding The Understandable Part**



I’ve found this habit most special, as it will work miracles in a relationship. Here’s how Dr. Atkinson describes this habit: “When disagreements arise, most of us tend to think of our own position as reasonable and the other person’s as unreasonable. However, at some point in the argument, those who know how to get their partners to treat them well manage to find something understandable about what their partners are saying or wanting, even if they can’t agree overall. They seem to understand an important principle: If you want to receive understanding, first give understanding.

If you fail to acknowledge anything about your partner’s viewpoint as reasonable, it will be very difficult for him to truly care about your viewpoint, regardless of how legitimate it is. If you want to make it as difficult as possible for your partner to see and acknowledge the legitimate reasons why you feel the way you do, just counter or criticize each and every point he makes during a discussion. . . Many people are hesitant to acknowledge anything understandable about their partners’ points of view, thinking that if they give an inch, their partners will take a mile. People destined to succeed in their relationships don’t worry about this, because they know that they can always stand up for their own points of view later. There’s no rush.

They know that just because they acknowledge something legitimate about their partners' viewpoints doesn't mean that their own viewpoints aren't legitimate too. They are able to do two things in succession: acknowledge the understandable part of their partners' opinions, and hold on to the legitimacy of their own opinions, if needed. . . People who know how to get their partners to treat them well are good at finding reasons for their partners' viewpoints and actions—reasons that are sometimes difficult to see at first.”

### **Habit #3: Identify The Underlying Needs, Values, And Worries**

” Many times, people find that when they're motivated to keep open minds and they try to understand the logic behind their partners' viewpoints or actions, they no longer have problems with what their partners want. However, there are other times when they still find that they see things differently than their partners, or that they have different priorities or expectations. In these situations, skillful people try to dig beneath the surface and explain to their partners the important things that drive their priorities, preferences or expectations.

Arguments often fail because partners argue about the wrong things. People who are destined to succeed in their relationships realize that the reasons they are upset or have trouble doing what their partner wants sometimes run deeper than the present situation. Often, there is something bigger at stake. Your ability to explain the underlying reasons for being upset will help your partner become more cooperative and understanding.

At some point during an argument people destined for success pause and take the conversation to a different level, saying something like, ‘OK, I think I just figured out why this bothers me so much... I'm worried that...’ Unless you are able to identify the bigger issues that lie beneath your reactions in the present situation, you may end up arguing over superficial things and leave the real issues unaddressed. People who are destined to succeed in their relationships look for the bigger needs, dreams and fears at stake in any given situation.”



## Habit #4: Giving And Asking For Equal Regard

Many of my couples talk about the lack of respect in the relationship. The following habit will speak directly to that. “Regard” is more than the superficial understanding of the word “respect.” It is deep concern, care, sympathy. This is how Dr. Atkinson explains it: “The most successful intimate partnerships operate like democracies: one person, one vote. In a democratic society, when people go to cast their votes, there is no obligation to prove that their reasoning is good enough for their votes to count. Their opinions count as much as anyone else’s, regardless of what anyone thinks of their reasoning.

The same is true in successful intimate relationships. Successful partners are willing to give and take, regardless of whether they agree with each other or not. The willingness to give equal regard doesn’t necessarily come at the front end of an argument. In fact, sometimes when researchers looked at the arguing style of partners destined to succeed, they couldn’t distinguish them from partners destined to fail. The differences only became clear later, after each partner had exhausted his or her efforts to convince the other. Both successful and unsuccessful partners often argued vigorously for their own points of view and showed little regard for their partners’ viewpoints during the argument.



However, in the end, successful partners were willing to count their companions’ opinions and preferences as much as their own. Relationship studies clearly suggest that if you want the kind of love and respect from your partner that most of us would like to have from our partners, when you disagree, you won’t try to trump your partner’s feelings or priorities with your own. Studies suggest that there’s a line you simply can’t cross in relationships and get away with it, and that line involves winning at the expense of your partner.

The bottom line is, if you want your partner to treat you well, you need to be willing to count his feelings as much as your own, even—actually, especially—in situations where the stakes are high and you feel strongly about your positions. . . . Willingness to give equal

regard is a fundamental requirement for having a satisfying relationship. If you aren't willing to compromise with your partner in areas where you disagree, you'll be putting yourself squarely in the company of people who rarely get the kind of love and respect from their partners that they would like to have. Studies suggest that if you're not willing to give equal regard, any attempts to get more respectful treatment from your partner will be fatally flawed."

### **Habit #5: Offering Assurance**

You need to read this one carefully. Dr. Atkinson skillfully addresses this habit. "One thing is clear from research on intimate relationships: Arguments don't have to be pretty in order to be



productive. In fact, they can be downright ugly without causing lasting negative consequences. Studies reveal that partners destined to succeed are often defensive, bull-headed, and unresponsive to their partners. The difference is that, after a failed argument, partners who succeed in their relationships are effective at repairing the damage, whereas partners destined to fail are far less successful at repair. This finding is of vast importance, because it means that partners who want to succeed don't necessarily need to do better in the first round of arguments.

It is more important to be good at repairing than to avoid getting off track in the first place. Researchers have found that there is a wide variety of methods that people can use to repair the damage of previous arguments, yet it is difficult to find any single method that works all the time. A self-deprecating comment might work well on one occasion, but the same sort of comment in another situation might make things worse.

Even apologies are surprisingly unreliable in their reparative effect. That said, over the years one method has emerged as more reliable than others in successfully repairing damage done during previous arguments: the offering of specific forms of assurance. After a failed argument, people who possess this skill begin by asking themselves: 'Did my partner think I was saying that he was wrong, or out of line in some way?' or 'Did my partner think I was saying that my opinion or preferences should count more than his?' When

arguments have gone poorly, the answer to these questions is almost always ‘yes.’ The most powerful thing that can be done at this point is to simply offer one or two kinds of assurance.”

### **Habit #6: Standing Up For Yourself Without Making A Big Deal About The Fact That You Had To**

This habit is really a great one. Many of us could never fully articulate this in clear words but when reading what Dr. Atkinson says there is a “Ah that’s it!” response. “The five habits discussed thus far are all important predictors of relationship success, but unless a person also has the sixth habit, it’s unlikely that he or she will be able to continue implementing the first five over time. . . .On any given day it’s possible that, in spite of one’s efforts to have a good attitude and willingness to work cooperatively, one’s partner may not return the same kind of generosity and cooperativeness. Studies suggest that this happens in most relationships at times, and the ability to react effectively when it happens is not optional.

It’s one of the core requirements for having a successful relationship. People who are effective at these moments require that their partners make some adjustments in their attitudes and actions, but they do it in a way that makes it easy for their partners to make the adjustments. They know how to stand up for themselves without putting their partners down.” Dr. Atkinson explains that “Standing up for yourself involves asking (and requiring, if necessary) that your partner give your priorities, viewpoints or preferences equal regard.” He says: The first situation that requires standing up for oneself skillfully happens if one’s partner criticizes harshly. There are situations where a partner uses accusatory words such as ‘stupid,’ ‘dumb,’ ‘selfish,’ or ‘thoughtless’ to describe his/her mate’s viewpoints or actions. When their partners criticize them harshly, skillful people temporarily skip over the first five habits and begin the process of standing up for themselves without making a big deal of it (the sixth habit). They return to the first five habits when their partners show at least a minimal level of regard for their explanations or viewpoints.



Skillful people realize that it does no good to persist in attempts to be reasonable with someone who isn't willing or able to be reasonable with them. The second situation happens when people approach their partners using the first five habits—they avoid criticizing their partners and instead ask their partners to give and take—but their partners won't! In spite of sincere attempts to keep open-minded and flexible attitudes, explain their viewpoints without criticism, recognize and acknowledge the reasonable parts of their partners' arguments, listen non-defensively, and assure their partners that they are willing to be flexible, their partners aren't willing to do the same.

In these situations, people who know how to get their partners to treat them well begin the standing up process and return to the first five habits only when their partners show at least a minimal level of regard for their explanations or viewpoints. . . People who are skilled in standing up for themselves begin with the attitude that it's normal for their partners to be biased toward their own viewpoints and to want to have things go their way, and they don't expect their partners to necessarily volunteer to give up ground when disagreements occur.

They don't see it as a crime when, in the beginning, their partners are critical or inflexible. When this happens, they avoid making a big deal of their partners' temporary uncooperativeness and simply make it clear that they're going to need their partners to become more open-minded and flexible. They assure their partners that they are willing to do the same. If their partners don't respond, they express distress and reiterate that they don't expect their partners to adopt their priorities or to do things their way, but they do expect their partners to be respectful, flexible and willing to "give and take."

**“If you want to receive  
understanding first  
give understanding.”**

Dr. Brent J. Atkinson



A cup (156-gram) of cooked broccoli contains 1 mg of iron, which is 6% of the daily value.

## The Duet of Marriage

**M**arriage is not a solo, it is a "duet" between a man and a woman singing together around the piano of unconditional love and acceptance. Each spouse produces a distinct tone. A healthy marriage occurs when these two individuals, over time, have learned how to blend sweetly their individual "tones" (differences, likes, dislikes, attitudes and behaviors) to form another unique and special harmonious sound—the marriage harmony.

### The Harmony

A duet is only made possible because each individual comes to the piano of marriage with the ability to stand alone with his or her own sound. Many have agreed to "sing the duet" of marriage, but they have not been able to form harmony. Although forming the duet of marriage is instant, having occurred on the wedding day, the harmony of marriage, though, is not by default. It does not occur at the altar. It does not occur on the honeymoon. It is not automatic. A harmonious marriage is the result of years of practice, patience, growing, adjusting, and performing. It usually takes between five and ten years for a couple to learn how to blend harmoniously.



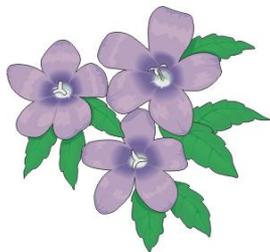
### A Pleasing Effect

The dictionary defines harmony as "the combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions having a pleasing effect." It is

similar in marriage. Harmony in marriage is a description of a sweet, pleasing effectiveness, brought on by a willingness and openness on the part of both performers.

As a little boy, I was fascinated with the music of one of the world's oldest quartets—the Kings Heralds. I grew up listening to them, and in particular, admiring the deep rich bass voice of Jim McClintock. The quartet had a smooth blend that penetrated the coldest heart. After 15 years of singing with the quartet, my favorite bass singer, Jim McClintock, retired and a new bass joined the group: Jim Ayers. Jim has an extremely rich, deep bass.

When he talks, your toes tinkle. Although he is a great soloist and has a beautiful voice, it took him at least one entire year to learn how to sing harmoniously with the quartet. At first, his voice was distinctly heard above the others'. However, when listening to the quartet today, you can hear all four parts clearly; but neither voice is standing out as a sore thumb. They have learned how to blend. So should marriage partners.



### **Cohabiting Couple**

As stated earlier, many married couples have not learned how to create harmony in marriage. They have agreed to "sing" together (get married) but have never taken the time to create harmony. There is no togetherness or mutuality. They are legally married but emotionally and spiritually distant. They are no better than cohabiting couples who refuse to cross each other's boundaries. They thought that knowing how to perform "sheet music" would keep them close. Soon they find out that the music under the sheets (sex) was not sufficient to create or keep harmony in marriage. But they continue to focus on their own performances (needs), thus, they create disharmony.

### **Take Time To Practice**

Creating harmony calls for intentional and determined effort on the part of each singer. They must set aside systematic time for practice. When alone, they are to do physical exercises to tone the mind and body and to enhance their breathing techniques and build self-confidence.

The duet spends countless hours practicing together; listening intently to the other's tone; making adjustment to volume, power, and quality of voice. The two individuals realize that although individually they can perform well and perhaps be popular for their singing, yet, singing together is vastly different and requires different skills.

Are you a harmonious couple? Are you taking the time for each other and the marriage? Are you spending time around the piano of marriage listening to the "heavenly pianist" as he works through your imperfections and weaknesses day and night, hours upon hours, to bring out the best harmony in your marriage? Have you been willing to soften your tone, breathe deeper, and study the music of marriage?

Are you singing (loving) so you can hear your duet partner at the same time? If you are doing these things, then you are on the road to creating harmony in marriage. On the other hand, if you are "singing" so loudly you cannot hear your partner's voice, you are either a controller, an abuser, stubborn, selfish, or arrogant.

Are you doing your best to create harmony in your relationship? Here are a few questions to test the harmony in your relationship. Answer yes or no to each one. Do you reach out for each other's hands when walking together? Do you break into smiles spontaneously when you see each other at the end of the workday? Do you enjoy eating meals together at least three times a week? Do you enjoy referring to each other by first or pet name? Are you considerate of each other's feelings, fears, and joys? Are you excited to go to bed together at least three times a week? Do you enjoy working together financially to build the family budget? Do you enjoy talking about each other to your friends and colleagues? How did you measure up?

**“Marriage is not a solo, it is a ‘duet’ between a man and a woman singing together around the piano of unconditional love and acceptance.”**



Broccoli also boasts more protein than most other vegetables.

## Dating Ideas

**E**njoy a popcorn pillow fight (not in the bedroom). Take a trip on the ferry. During the Christmas season, spend two hours together at the carnival or circus. Create your very own Christmas comedy drama on video. Visit Baha Mar (West Bay) and Atlantis Resorts (Paradise Island) fun areas.

Pretend you are a five-year-old again and play on the swings. Have a Christmas sing-along at your home with friends. Visit the Botanical Garden on a sunny day.

Go skateboarding on a single board made for two. Go to a restaurant with other couples. Go parasailing together. Walk a mile together. Play basketball. Have a pizza, yogurt and laugh-me-to-death party. Read the Book of Solomon together. Play Monopoly. Go swimming with family or friends on a sunny day. Go on a butterfly discovery walk or visit one of our nature parks.

Visit the Water Tower together. Go canoeing on a Bahamian lake. Enjoy a game of Pictorama. Assemble a puzzle. Spend a few hours at Adastral Gardens and Zoo. Enjoy the Dolphin Encounter at the Blue Lagoon. Swing with the dolphins. Play toothpick-pass with other couples. Make your own Junkanoo artwork using the real stuff. Have a date at a couple's painting restaurant.

Visit a hospital or nursing home. Go to Paint and Sip Studio. Listen to Christian love music together. Read the Book of Ruth. Go diving in the pool. Learn a new indoor game each month. Attend a concert together. Go duck hunting. Go bird watching. Enjoy caroling during the Christmas season. Visit each other's parents or take

them on a date with you. Pray together. Draw pictures of each other. Play Pictionary. Plan your own special Olympic day. Play catch-me-if-you-can. Play the "tell me what's on my mind" game. Visit our national museums and parks together—Clifton Heritage, Bahamas National Trust, Pompey Museum, Historical Society, National Art Gallery or Junkanoo Museum. Visit the Jetline Simulation or other game rooms. Play pool together.

Smile at everyone you see. Have a Sunday morning breakfast by the lake. Write a song together. Go biking on a nature trail. Go on a flower hunt. Read Elizabeth and Robert Browning poems to each other. Go sky diving. Go wind surfing. Go bird watching. Take a one-day ride to Andros. Go window shopping in a mall. Read a favorite magazine or newspaper together. Collect shells on a beach. Take turn writing a story. Learn to play the guitar together. Cook a gourmet meal together in one of your parents' home. Play "what's your favorite . . ."

Hug a tree. Go jogging together. Make surprises for each other. Modify a card game with your own special rules. Invent a secret code romantic language. Go riding, rolling, jumping and walking on the beaches. Play arm wrestling for couples. Play Scrabble, chess, or tic-tac-toe together. Talk about God together. Water ski together. Make hand crafts together. Watch a wholesome movie together.

Jump off the roof of a twenty-story building with parachutes on, of course. Read epitaphs together. Go scuba diving. Play football, volleyball, table tennis together. Sit and look in each other's face. On a clear night, count the stars. Go butterfly catching. Study the effects of the moon on romantic relationships. Pretend Subway, Menchies, or TCBY are fancy restaurants. On a wet day, walk in the rain together. Remember to kiss romantically in small doses. No petting of body parts. SIT AND BE STILL. Have fun. Remember, you want to know each other well long before you ignite the fire.

**“Have fun. Remember, you want to know each other well long before you ignite the fire.”**





Broccoli is high in many nutrients, including fiber, vitamin C, vitamin K, and potassium.

## The Marriage Ceremony

**F**ar too many people have little or no idea what is legally required in a marriage ceremony in The Bahamas. A greater number of people do not know that many of the items in our wedding ceremonies are only traditions not required by law nor demanded in Christian tradition.

To maintain order in a civil society, marriage between two consenting male and female adults must be legally regulated by the Government. This is done to protect the family unit, future offspring, civil and property rights.

### With Open Doors

To begin, who can attend a wedding ceremony? The correct answer is anybody. No wedding ceremony can be performed secretly. However, it can be a “private” ceremony, which means that only a few really know about the ceremony and attend it; but it is not a secret. A wedding ceremony is legally and spiritually a public affair. According to The Marriage Act of The Bahamas, the ceremony must take place “with open doors.” You cannot legally prevent anyone from attending your wedding ceremony. The only exception will be if there is a protection order or restraining order against a specific person or persons.

Usually most couples announce plans for the wedding in a public forum or a church. This is sufficient knowledge and invitation to

attend any wedding ceremony. However, the wedding reception, which is not required by law, can be, and is usually restricted. Many years ago, couples would announce their engagement to marry and wedding date in the newspaper. This is a wonderful thing to do. It protects the integrity of the relationship itself and the marriage.

### **Time Of The Ceremony**

In The Bahamas, what time of the day can a wedding ceremony take place? According to The Marriage Act of The Bahamas, a wedding ceremony is to take place between the hours of 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. Many think that a marriage ceremony cannot take place at night. If sun sets at 5:30 p.m., then according to the Marriage Act, 8 p.m. is truly in the night. Hence, having a wedding at 6 p.m. or so is appropriate, as long as the ceremony is completed before 8 p.m.



### **Two Witnesses**

It is a tradition in The Bahamas for the maid of honor and groomsman to serve as legal witnesses in the wedding ceremony. This is not legally required. The witnesses can be any one present. In fact, neither the law nor Christian tradition require a couple to have bridesmaids or groomsmen in a wedding ceremony. These are only societal traditions. Far too many couples outdo themselves by having too many bridesmaids and groomsmen knowing that the budget is tight. Our weddings have become too elaborate and expensive. The cost of the wedding does not guarantee the health of the marriage. It is my view that a couple should not be paying for a giant loan long after the wedding ceremony.

At many wedding ceremonies, the bridal party stands throughout the wedding. This is not required by law. This is only tradition. The position of the bridal party in the sanctuary, whether it sits or not, has nothing to do with the importance or legality of the wedding ceremony. Some of these ceremonies are so long, the parties should sit. I have seen young participants and adults cry and even faint because they were standing too long.

## What Makes The Marriage Legal?

In addition to having two witnesses and an open door, the person doing the wedding ceremony is to be an appointed marriage officer in the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. A minister of the gospel or clergy is not by default a marriage officer. Marriage officers are approved by the Government after taking a special exam. The Government will not approve many marriage officers for a single congregation. While it is true that some justices of the peace are marriage officers, this is not the role of a justice of the peace. A marriage officer and a justice of the peace have two different legal roles.

In a marriage ceremony, marriage officers use all kinds of statements, most of which are only traditions. According to the Marriage Act, the only legal statements to be used by a marriage officer in a marriage ceremony itself are: (1) "I do solemnly declare that I know not of any lawful impediment why I, \_\_\_\_\_ may not be joined in matrimony to \_\_\_\_\_." (2) "I call upon these persons here present to witness that I, \_\_\_\_\_ do take (or have now taken) \_\_\_\_\_ to be my lawful wife/husband."





Broccoli can reduce inflammation, improve blood sugar control, boost immunity and promote heart health.

## Honey, Please Come to Bed

**E**very night, thousands of spouses go to bed alone while their partners are at work, watching television, playing games, or doing chores. Is that such a big deal? Sometimes the already in-bed-spouse is so desperate for companionship that he or she would cry out in great agony: “Honey, please come to bed.” One of the cardinal rules for happy relationships is spouses ought to go to bed together at least three nights a week.

Many couples do go to bed every night at the same time and this is to be the goal for all couples. However, due to work schedules, household chores, school assignments or even personality differences, it is not always possible for all spouses to go to bed together. Therefore, couples are to intentionally plan, no matter the schedules or personality quirks, that at least three nights a week they will turn in for the night together. I’ve noted that three nights a week can do the trick of keeping the marriage strong if during the other nights it is understood that individuals are not just being selfish to do his or her thing or “killing” time to keep awake.

### **Warning!**

Here’s the warning. It does not matter your circumstance, work schedule or personality; if you are not going to bed at the same time with your spouse at least three nights a week, then your marriage is in big, big, trouble. It is a serious missing or weak link in the chain of love. There is absolutely no excuse not to be in bed with your partner at the same time at least three nights a week.

This is so serious to the health of a relationship that one might need to change jobs to save a marriage.

Here is the dangerous reality. One or both spouses may not even be aware that this simple behavior is having a serious impact on the marriage. They might have been raised in a family where mom and dad never went to bed together and they did not recognize that their parents had a problem. In very traditional relationships, usually one spouse believes (usually the wife) that it is “normal” or “okay” for a husband to go to bed when he wants to even though she is unhappy with it. They might even stay together until death, but they do not enjoy maximized romance and passion in the relationship. It is as though they have had a life-long “common cold” and “stuffy nose” and do nothing about it since they are still able to breathe. They are unaware that insufficient “oxygen” is going to the brain and lungs to provide optimum health. Thus, they live with a potentially debilitating disease, thinking it is okay. This is not what marriage is all about.

### **Bed-Time Intimacy**

In 2009 I wrote: The spouses that sleep together, understand, heal, grow, and stay together.” This is true because many couples grow apart and are not aware of it until it is too late. Not going to bed together is often one of the signs that they are growing apart. Research by the Gottman Institute “shows that many marriages end due to loss of intimacy and connection, especially 10 to 12 years into the relationship. But a ‘silent drift apart’ typically starts much earlier: One person starts to feel unhappy with the lack of closeness in the relationship—less connection, less intimacy, less conversation, less time spent together, less appreciation, etc.” This may be manifested by not going to bed together.” The research indicates that “about three-and-half years into a relationship, couples also tend to stop going to bed at the same time.” Things begin to get stale and they refuse to recognize it.

Research Jeffery Laron states: "Couples whose wake and sleep patterns were mismatched (e.g., an evening person married to a morning person) reported significantly less marital adjustment, more marital conflict, less time spent in serious conversation, less time spent in shared activities and less frequent sexual intercourse than matched couples."

There is certainly something special about going to bed at the same time or what I call turning in for the night the at the same time. You enjoy more intimacy. You learn that it is okay just being close without sex on the agenda. You learn to understand each other better. Here is what the research indicates about another reason to go to bed at the same time. “It makes female partners view daytime interactions more positively the next day. It’s pretty amazing that such a simple, easy gesture of togetherness provides a female partner with rose-colored glasses for the following day’s interactions. For male partners, simply getting a good night’s sleep makes them feel more positive about interactions with their partners the next day.”

Here’s another important point. Going to bed the same time also means falling asleep close to each other. Research tells us the couples who fall asleep within one inch from each other are more content than those who are thirty inches apart. The night’s pillow talks or chatting are also key to connecting in the relationship. Making sure the cell phone is not in the room or the land phone is unplugged is key in respecting and honoring the relationship.



Here is another big mistake. Far too many couples have a child sleeping with them in the conjugal bed. It is not healthy. It inhibits intimacy—not just sexual intimacy, but intellectual and emotional intimacy. Some couples really do not know how to handle long hours together alone. The child becomes an excuse for going to bed long after the other spouse does to minimize conversation. Thus, sex, when it does happen, becomes mechanical and less romantic.

My request is that couples reexamine their marriages. If partners are not going to bed at the same time, make an intentional, deliberate effort to do so. You will never regret it. You may need counseling to help remove the “debris” that’s causing the divide. Spouses, do not ignore the pleas to “come to bed, honey.” If you do, your marriage will be in trouble. If you must change job and even get less money to save you marriage, then do so. Your relationship is priceless. This simple act will work miracles in your relationship. “Honey, please come to bed.”

## About the Author

**Barrington H. Brennen** is a marriage and family therapist, counseling psychologist for 25 years. He also has special training in critical incident/disaster response, anger management, intimate partner abuse, family violence, anger management, and preparing couples for marriage. He provides psychotherapy for individuals, couples, families, teens, and young children. He conducts seminars for families, couples, singles, corporations, schools, churches, etc. He also provides trauma response for those who have experienced national disasters, personal and family trauma.



He is a nationally certified psychologist and board-certified clinical psychotherapist (USA); a justice of the peace and marriage officer for the Commonwealth of The Bahamas. He is a musician, writer, amateur graphic artist, handyman who loves carpentry, inspirational speaker. He is Annick's faithful husband for more than 42 years. He is the proud father of two adult children, father-in-law to their spouses, grandfather of four, and a lover of people. His goal in life is to "help people smile again."

In addition to having private practice in psychotherapy, Barrington is a much sought-after motivational speaker. He conducts personal development and relationship seminars and has done so in The Bahamas, Cayman Islands, Belize, Saint Maarten, Puerto Rico, Jamaica, United Kingdom, and Florida, USA.



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