



# WHAT LIES BENEATH

## Cognitive Therapy for Couples Conflict

Christine A. Padesky, PhD  
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<b>"True Love"</b>	<b>How does "True Love" turn into anger and even hate?</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Purity of Love</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Love is unwavering, unconditional</li> <li>b. Disagreement, criticism are destructive</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. <b>Empathic Altruism</b>            Someone who loves me will show:           <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Mind Reading - "Know what I want"</li> <li>b. Sensitivity -Never do anything to hurt me</li> <li>c. Consideration- Anticipate my needs</li> <li>d. Kindness - Be self-sacrificing</li> <li>e. Support - Understand, be my helper and champion</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. <b>Cooperative Balance</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Fairness in distribution of duties and rewards</li> <li>b. Equity in decision making</li> <li>c. Reasonableness in making/granting requests</li> <li>d. Responsibility, conscientiousness, commitment</li> <li>e. Reciprocity (total giving and getting)</li> </ol> </li> <li>4. <b>Sexual Perfectionism</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Harmonious like a symphony</li> <li>b. Perfect agreement as to mood, timing, setting, satisfaction</li> </ol> </li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;">Attitudes, Expectations, Beliefs            ↓            Critical Incident            (e.g., thwarting, non-fulfillment)            ↓            Negative Perspective of Partner            Negative Attribution of Motive (e.g., "Mean")            Lack of Regard            Catastrophizing ("What if....?")            ↓            Anger / Punishment of Partner            to redress wrong            to prevent recurrence            In form of attack or withdrawal            ↓            Partner Retaliates            ↓            Vicious Cycle of Attack-Counterattack            ↓            Cumulative Negative Interactions            ↓            Framing and Polarization</p>

"True Love" example courtesy of Aaron T. Beck, M.D. from Love Is Never Enough Workshop  
 Reference: AudioCD # LNE: Love is Never Enough (available from [www.Store.Padesky.com](http://www.Store.Padesky.com))

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**A Cognitive Model of Anger**

Pathways	Hurt Leads to Anger	Fear Leads to Anger
<b>Expectations</b>	Positive Expectations e.g., "If someone cares for me, they'll not let me down"	Negative Expectations e.g., "If I get close, I'll be harmed."
<b>Negative Experiences</b>	Thwarting of Positive Expectations e.g., Perception of the other as detached or even intentionally uncaring	Fulfillment of Negative Expectations e.g., Perception of the other as threatening or intentionally hurtful
<b>Coping Response</b>	Withdraw (Self-protection) or Attack (Other punishment)	
<b>Common Interpersonal Consequence</b>	Other person: fights back, withdraws, or denies	
<b>Interpretation of Others' Reaction</b>	Confirmation of Expectation "He/she doesn't care about me and my feelings"	Confirmation of Expectation "This relationship is dangerous"
<b>End Consequence</b>	Anger seems justified; it may intensify	

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**REFERENCES**

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 Dattilio, F. M., & Padesky, C. A. (1990). *Cognitive therapy with couples*. Sarasota, FL: Professional Resource Exchange.



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**Cognitive Therapy With Couples: Stages of Treatment<sup>1</sup>**

1. History & conceptualization of the couples problems/goal setting
2. Anger management (for safety; halt destructive aspects)
3. Increase positives in the relationship
4. Teach the couple to identify, test & respond to key automatic thoughts
5. Teach communication skills
6. Exploration of anger issues
7. Teach problem resolution strategies
8. Identify & change dysfunctional attitudes & core assumptions
9. Relapse prevention

<b>Relationship Problems</b> <i><u>Mind Over Mood</u> Assignments<sup>2</sup></i>	
Prologue Chapter 1	to help identify problems in and outside the relationship
Chapters 2 & 12	for understanding anger and the role thoughts play in emotional reactions
Chapter 3	identify emotions
Chapters 4 - 7	to identify and test thoughts which fuel emotional responses, interfere with communication, and block positive
Chapter 8	to guide behavioral change efforts
Chapter 9	to identify and evaluate core beliefs which fuel problems

1 - Dattilio, F. M., & Padesky, C. A. (1990). *Cognitive therapy with couples*. Sarasota, FL: Professional Resource Exchange.

2 - Padesky, C.A. & Greenberger, D. (1995). *Clinician's guide to mind over mood*. New York: Guilford Press.