



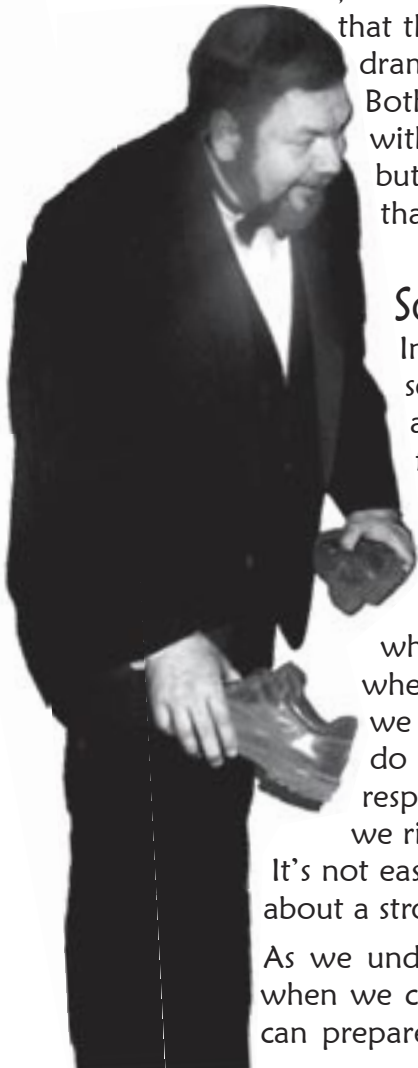
# Loving is an Action Verb

	<p>We already said, "I love you" - what's left to do?</p>	<p>What do I expect from them? Is it reasonable?</p>		<p>Can we improve our home as well as our house?</p>
<p>How will our relationship change in this project?</p>		<p>If they cannot do this, did I pick the right partner?</p>	<p>We can be so happy - But when we get angry - <i>Yikes!</i></p>	
	<p>Will we ever be able to see our family's renovation?</p>		<p>When we are not in harmony - does it mean we're all washed up?</p>	<p>'Maturity' - What does it mean when people talk about that?</p>
<p>Will my partner even want to do any of this stuff too?</p>		<p>My partner won't talk about feelings - Can we still grow?</p>		<p>What will all this feel like?</p>

## ***Loving is an Action Verb***

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**Most of us yearn** for the fairy tale ending – the happily ever after. The contestants win the game show and end up going to the beautiful Bahamas. Cut to commercial. The princess marries, and the prince whisks her off to paradise. The movie ends with a kiss, a sunset, a wide-screen picture of the beautiful land. The end. We are left to imagine that they are ‘all set’ now. All done. They’re fine. That’s great, and I love those stories too. But our stories tell us about our inner journeys and if we think they are over when we declare our love, then we are going to be extremely surprised to learn that the drama has just begun. Really, now the inner drama and interpersonal construction really starts. Both inside and between us, we will learn and grow with our living partner. Love will keep us involved but is not a substitute for the patience and exchanges that will really build a working home.



### **So, what’s in store for me?**

In the formation of a family, we shift from our self-centered focus (which had its good and bad aspects) to a transcended perspective of our family’s needs, goals and situations. We move beyond the day-to-day pursuit of our own needs. We look for ways to please and ways to get cooperation. We may have different emotional states from our partners. We may be subdued when they are energetic. We may be sad or hurt when they might be busy at the same time. How do we learn to span these emotional realities? How do we consider them all relevant and prepare to respond? By nature we are self-absorbed. How do we rise above that? Right, you are thinking – “Me?”

It’s not easy, but it is possible and even necessary, to bring about a strong family.

As we understand that we are not a completed package when we cross the threshold of our first family home, we can prepare ourselves for the lessons ahead. So, prepare

the way! Some of the inner gymnastics you are likely to encounter are described in this chapter. As an athlete myself, I like to think of the process as working out in preparation for a team sport. There are individual workouts with fatigue and muscle aches, challenges when you wonder if you can figure out how the body could possibly cooperate with the demands. There are team drills, one-on-ones, and breakouts; and then -- the sweet spot when things start to glide through! And the puck finally moves down the ice with a coordinated group of players cooperating to pursue the goal. Somehow without realizing it, after lots of little skill drills, you find yourself in a team that moves smoothly through barriers, much to your own surprise. Then on to the next practice and the next challenge. Ever building your game and your teamwork.

## Some of the skills of love that develop with our practice & care:

**Maturing** - You learn about putting your own emotional state and needs aside and placing them within the perspective of the whole family. You see your own feelings as a piece of the bigger picture—among people and within situations.

**Acceptance** - Is the day-to-day caring about each other while seeing beyond the faults. You see the best inside the other person, and forgive them when they do not achieve it. You see their potential, their best smile, their most handsome or beautiful self, even when they are covered with sawdust. You laugh and love through these moments. You help them see their worth even when they are afraid that they fall very, very short of the mark. You let them be human.

**Bad Math** - This is the part of love that does not keep score. You don't allocate mistakes. You talk calmly about any waste – of time or materials that occur due to errors by either one of you. If one is less accurate much of the time, you face it together and perhaps reassign the

