

Playing Together and Staying Together

By Elizabeth Starr Miller



Two Relationship Experts Answer Questions on Love, Sex, Individuality and More

Husband and wife, Diane and Robert McCann-Mathews of Adelaide, South Australia, take their relationship workshops around the globe, including Singapore, Malaysia and India. In 1999, after eight years of hard work, they'll take on the U.S. and the U.K. Along with their popular relationship courses, Diane and Robert also teach The Goddess Within and Men's Inner Journey workshops. They visit Singapore twice a year.

BE.: *You hold workshops as a couple on relationships. What is unique to your message? What do you have to offer to other couples?*

Diane: Most people get into relationships with someone without being clear about who they are as individuals. Our work assists people to clear themselves and heal the past in order for the relationship to be based on present time.

Robert: Our message is not necessarily unique. However our success over the past 10 years comes from our belief that people always do the best they can with what they have. Unfortunately people don't learn about relationships, they simply stumble from one to the other looking for some idealised myth. Relationships involve work. From a man's point of view, I believe that men don't have to be Brad Pitt or Julio Iglesias in order to be an ideal partner. All men have to do is learn to go into their heart—unknown territory for many men.

BE.: *What is the strength of your own relationship? How can you help others?*

R: I am the down-to-earth, practical one. Diane is the metaphysical one. We balance each other out without discrediting the other's belief systems. I have also learned to listen to Diane. Our relationship is based on trust, communication, integrity and love. Intimacy is a priority. We have assisted other couples in finding intimacy because we know where to find it in ourselves. We live what we teach and it works.

D: I spent a long time not in a relationship. I thought seriously about why I wanted to be in one because I thought I could give myself everything a man could. I realised my only reason to be in a relationship was because two of us could do more together for the planet than me alone. Our relationship's strength is that we are friends and we have the same goals. Robert is my teacher, my student, my lover, my husband. We recognise the gift that the other

brings to our life. While we don't always agree, we always honour the learnings that come with our relationship. We are both committed to making a difference in the lives of people with whom we come into contact.

BE.: *Tantric sex is an important part of your relationship course. What is it and why?*

D: This is not specifically true. We teach a five-and-a-half-day tantra course (in Bali and Adelaide) and we do a three-hour relationship course in which we mention tantra but the two are not the same.

We consider tantra the highest level of relationship. It's an ancient art form that transforms the sexual and spiritual in a couple by uniting them, turning the sexual into the sacred. The tantric exchange is considered holy. We bless each other physically, mentally, spiritually and energetically. It brings the spiritual aspect of love into daily life and turns lovemaking into a loving meditation. It's the fuel of relationships that allows women to access the deep well of their feminine essence and allows men to recognise and access the healer that lies within them. This creates a union of sexual wholeness woven into a tapestry of intimacy and heart connection, something normal sex never gives.

R: I'll add that no one gets a diploma in sex. Sex is one of the first areas to go when a relationship breaks down, which is why we teach it. Personally, tantra has taught me that I am Diane's healer. It has completely changed the way I view our relationship and taken it to places I never dreamt possible. I wish I had known what I learned from tantra when I was in my 20s, because I had no idea what women wanted sexually. I thought I knew all about the subject. Turns out, I knew nothing. Practising tantra takes a lifetime.

BE.: *We often hear that you have to love yourself to love others. Do you agree with this and why?*

D: Absolutely. If you cannot love yourself, how can you expect anyone else to be able to love you? If you only

love yourself 10 percent, that is all the love you will be able to let in. We are like prisoners behind walls of fear about love. When we love ourselves 100 percent, we can allow 100 percent of love in, because we are not coming from scarcity.

R: Many people fall in love because they recognise something in the other person that they don't have. That's where the saying: "opposites attract," comes from. One person feels incomplete and recognises something in another they would like. Unfortunately, whenever you come to a relationship from lack, there will be challenge. You can only come into a relationship from wholeness.

BE.: Many people believe that individuality and personal strength in a relationship can do more harm than good. What are your thoughts?

R: This could be true if taken in the wrong context. If taken in the context of a harmonious relationship, then one partner can assist the other partner in their dreams and desires. I find that most couples balance out in the end. Diane is dominant and asserts her individuality in one aspect of our life while I am dominant in another. I think two strong individuals can achieve a great deal more than one strong person and one scared little rabbit.

D: All belief systems work for the people who hold those thoughts. If that is someone's belief then they are entitled to hold that thought. However, I believe not wanting your partner to be an individual and have their own personal strength is a tribal belief system from long ago when thinking about the self was considered to be selfish and we did nothing without the approval from our tribe. The world is changing and I think we have to learn to see things differently. Individuality and personal strength are virtues, not vices, and can enhance a relationship.

BE.: People tend to think holding relationships together is a woman's responsibility. Why is it important for men to play an equal role?

R: A relationship is about taking two people and creating one. To expect one person to hold a relationship together is reason for divorce. Men in particular need to learn more about putting into relationships—love, sharing, intimacy, and continuing flowers, cards and I-love-you's. Women are naturally good at these things and as men, we can continue to upgrade our skills.

D: Men need to play an equal role in relationships because without their input women get bored, dissatisfied, unfulfilled and then become part of the statistics that say 72

percent of women in relationships are there in body but not emotionally. Women are such emotional beings that if they feel used or taken advantage of—like the couple who works full time and she still does all the housework—then they shut down sexually. Then communication breaks down and often that is the beginning of the end.

BE.: What are some common relationship problems that you've helped others overcome? What advice have you given?

R: The main thing that people come to for is lack of communication and then the disappearance of their sex life. I am a Master Practitioner of Neuro Linguistic Programming, so it's a simple thing to get them to see and understand the differences in their language. We give them a series of steps to follow which work. Sexually, as I have said before, men must learn to be intimate and be with their beloved from their heart and then sexual energy will flow. We teach men how to feel safe with their heart energy and how to access it.

D: We also work with individuals on a one on one basis because more often than not, whatever is happening in the relationship is the result of something from the past. It's never about the lid of the toothpaste being off! By unraveling some of their history, each individual becomes clearer, more open and more willing to be in relationship.

BE.: Men and women's roles have evolved a great deal, from the 50s to the 90s. What is your vision for relationships of the future?

D & R: The trend is that more and more people are having serial rather than long-term relationships. Women are getting in touch with what they want from life. Men are getting in touch with their feelings through men's programs. The evolving roles of men and women continue to change. Our vision for the future is a time when men and women will recognise their differences, honour similarities and learn to walk in harmony with each other in order to break the chains of the past and create relationships that work and speak of integrity and trust and truth and peace.

* Contact Omegapoint Seminars (tel: 733-2544) for more on Diane and Robert's workshops in Singapore.

