

Working Together to Create Successful Holidays

## COUPLES AT THE HOLIDAYS

**IT IS UP TO YOU TO  
CREATE THE HOLIDAYS  
AS YOU WISH THEY CAN  
BE!**

“The greatest danger for most of us is not that our aim is too high and we miss it, but that it is too low and we reach it”

*Michaelangelo*

For Couples—There is a lot to Manage to make Holidays Successful

- There is a lot of work to manage the couple/family/extended family successfully.
- Can you outline the steps/tasks to get the work done
- Lots of areas for potential conflict
- Can you name the most common

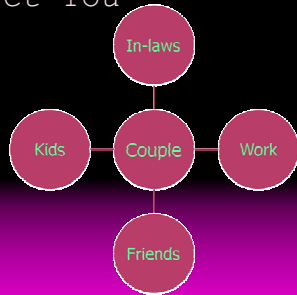
## 4 Pillars of Successful Holidays

- Vision
- Effective Systems to Manage Workload
- Emotional Energy is Available—Good self care
- Early Preparation that takes both Partner's Desires Seriously

## Potential Conflict Areas

- Loyalty and/or Values
- Financial
  - How much do we spend on gifts/food
- Possible religious differences
- Appreciation/Recognition
- Management of Work Load
- Alcohol

## External Forces that Effect You



## To Prepare and Minimize Conflict

- Anticipate your Desires
- Talk about your Vision Early
- Divide up the work
- Identify Conflict Areas
- Prepare to Negotiate
- Negotiate
- Employ different Decision-making Strategies

## Managing Each Other is a DeadEnd Managing the Workload is Essential

- Too many partners try to manage each other rather than managing the work
- This results in:
  - Power Struggles
  - Fights
  - Discounting each other's contribution
  - Despair, Grief and at the worst Violence

## Chart the Workload

Who/By When	Gifts	Meals & Planning	Holiday Cards	Kids-What to do with and for them
	Make List	Plan the Menu	Buy Cards/ Photo	Gifts for Parents
	Buy	Arrange with Other Family Members	Write Xmas Letter	Clothes
	Wrap	Cook	Address and Mail	Church/ Synagogue activities
	Send	Clean-Up	Update Addresses	Interface with Relatives

## Chart the Workload

Who/By When	Gifts	Meals & Planning	Holiday Cards	Kids-What to do with and for them

## What can and can't be negotiated



- **You can not negotiate core values or integrity**  
Core values, Integrity, Spirituality Trust
- **You can negotiate behavior and decisions**  
What someone will do, When they will do it or How it will be done

### Three Common Mistakes Couples Make When Negotiating

- Failing to prepare before the negotiation actually starts with your partner
- Caving in too quickly to avoid tension or to keep the peace
- Stubbornly pushing too hard for your own solution



### Questions to reflect on before the negotiation starts

- What do I want and How important is it to me
- If I get most of what I want what will be the positive and negative effect on my partner?
- What do I anticipate my partner wanting?
- What aspects of my partner's desires can I give joyfully?
- How can I make it easier for my partner to say yes to my wishes?
- If I get most of what I want, the benefit to my partner might be \_\_\_\_\_
- How can I mitigate any negative effects on my partner

### Fears that interfere with effective negotiation

- Fear of reprisal for being assertive
- Fear of offending your partner if too assertive
- Fear of disrupting relationship if you ask and don't get
- Fear of triggering old memories, grief, or disappointments about past holidays



### The Negotiation Process

- Recognize/Identify what you are disagreeing about
- Ask questions to understand what/why your partner wants X
- State the disagreement in the form:
  - "We seem to disagree about \_\_\_\_\_."

### Negotiation Formula



- **Each partner proposes a solution in the following format:**  
 Honey, what I suggest is \_\_\_\_\_  
 This suggestion works for me because \_\_\_\_\_  
 This suggestion might work for you because \_\_\_\_\_
- **The reason for this "formula"**  
 It encourages being a better self advocate.  
 Simultaneously it forces each to think and consider the other's perspective and helps prevent being stubbornly insistent on what only one person wants

### The Negotiation Process cont...

- One partner proposes a solution
- The other partner responds
- Repeat suggestions until agreement is reached.
- Remember the agreement might be an experiment

## Decision-Making Strategies

- **Unilateral Decisions**
- **51-49%**
- **Equilateral**

## Unilateral

- One partner has the power to decide-Saves time
- One partner decides – little input needed or desired from other
- One partner carries the authority and responsibility
- When agreed upon—reduces conflict
- Without consent—increases conflict



## Equal Decisions – 50/50

- Both partners decide
- Nothing is implemented until both agree
- Takes more time to decide
- More opportunity for conflict initially
- Both buy into the decision
- Less likely to have lingering conflict

## 51–49%

- One partner has the authority to make final decision
- This partner has authority and responsibility to do the work
- One partner makes the decision, but it is understood and trusted that the 49% wishes of the other will be taken into account in a significant way
- Reduces potential conflict substantially and takes less time
- Requires significant trust



## Negotiation is an ongoing process, not a one-time event

- There is no such thing as a perfect solution. Every solution sets the stage for learning and refining.
- The more complex the problem, the more trial and error solutions need to be attempted



## Time to get clear about you!

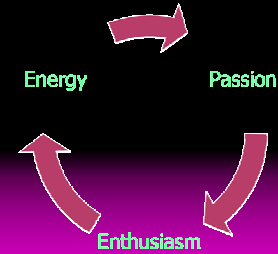
- What is the value you bring to making the holidays go well?
- What is the value your partner brings to making the holidays go well?
- What strokes and appreciations can you give to your partner?
- What appreciation matters most to you?

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- There is no such thing as a perfect solution. Every solution sets the stage for new learning and evolution.
- The more complex the problem, the more trial and error solutions need to be attempted
- The more complex the situation, the higher the stakes, the more your core values are involved, the longer it will take.

Pursuing your Vision with effective collaboration leads to



## Four Major Roles in Relationship

### The Doer

- Gets things done
- Chores and projects are taken care of
- Relies a lot on self
- "Why pay someone, when I can do it better"
- It will be better if I do it myself

### The Manager

- Develops systems who is the best person to do X
- Develops predictability and stability
- Integrates and coordinates the actions of others
- Determines best resources to use

## Four Major Roles in Relationship

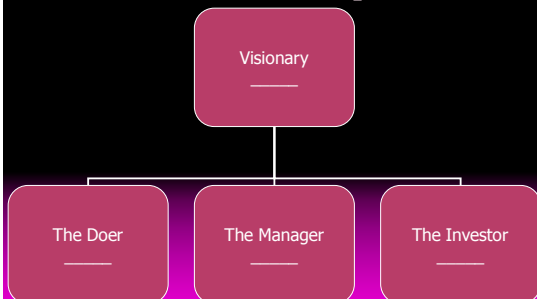
### Visionary

- Sees what is possible
- Keeps a long term perspective
- Emphasizes core values
- Does strategic planning-short-term and long-term

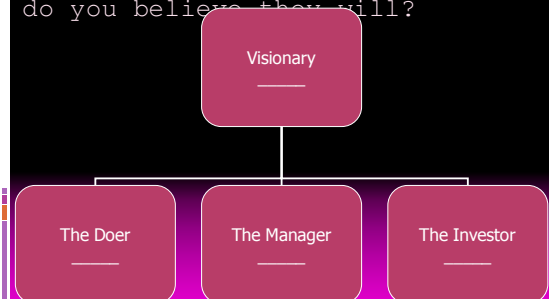
### Investor

- Views the relationship as an asset that is worth nurturing
- Pays attention to what they are giving
- Recognizes emotional challenges, prepares for them and gives lots of positive feedback

Put in the box how much time you want to spend in each role for the holidays



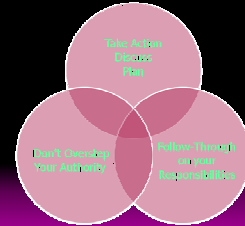
Put in the box how much time you want your partner to spend in each role for the holidays and do you believe they will?



## Avoiding Unnecessary Conflict

- Stay in the lines
- Do what you said you will do
- Be honest when you don't know how to do it-or when you need help
- Stick to budgets and timelines
- Call for help when falling behind schedule
- Don't expand the boundaries without consulting with your partner

## Avoiding Unproductive Conflict



As you go through the holidays this year, will you

- Glorify, Stroke, Be thankful for your partner's management of projects?
- Will you be crabby and discount the amount of effort that is involved?
- Will you allow yourself to learn about yourself and your partner? Will you learn from each discussion or thwart learning from each project?
- Will you lay a stronger foundation for next year?

## And give lots of Core Strokes

- Give unconditional love-"you are wonderful"
- Giving conditional praise-"Thanks for doing X"
- You can never give too much appreciation!