

A MODEL FOR COUPLES

How Two Can Grow Together

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“Hello, I understand you’re a marriage counselor. Well . . . you see . . . I’m really confused and upset right now. I’m not exactly sure why, but I think it began about a year ago when my husband and I first came here. Fred was enrolled as a graduate student. We had been dating and even lived together for a year before we both graduated from college. Those were really fun times. We used to spend a lot of time together. My husband treated me like I was someone very special and I thought he was just great. We had a lot of friends. Something was always happening. It was one of the happiest times of my life. Then we came to graduate school. The first week or so we were here Fred spent quite a few nights at the lab or at the library, but I didn’t think much about it. In fact, I thought, ‘Well I guess that’s what it means to be a grad student’. But then, it got worse and worse. I mean nothing changed, and after a semester and a half, he still spends five or six nights a week at the lab. The only time I see him is when we eat breakfast and when he occasionally blows through for supper, because now he frequently eats supper at the lab. I don’t know what to do. When I try to talk to him about it, he says, *‘Dear, you don’t understand. Everyone has to play by the same rules as everyone else and that’s the way it is. Things will be different later—but now it’s seven days a week, 24 hours a day or else people say you’re not committed, and people who aren’t committed simply*

don't get Ph.D.'s. This is just a highly competitive situation. As soon as I get my Ph.D., things will be better. You'll see—everything will be the way it used to be!" I understand the pressure he is under and I believe him when he says things will be better, but I've had it! I don't know what to do. I still love him. I've thought about leaving. I just can't keep on this way. What can I do?"

Does Linda's story sound familiar? Anyone who has done any counseling or who has been a good neighbor or a good listener can write a similar scenario. Two people are attracted to each other, fall in love, get married, and somewhere in the first year or so of marriage things go sour. It seems almost inevitable that the realities of marital living do not meet our expectations. Most people who report this kind of experience are not emotionally disturbed; they are emotionally healthy people. They have not had any severe crisis in their lives. They simply live together as husband and wife and trouble seems to materialize out of nowhere. In recent years various experts have pointed to several rising indices, such as divorce rates, births outside of marriage, and adoptions by singles, and have raised questions about the viability of the institution of marriage as we have known it in this culture. We do not want to address that issue here, but what is clear to us is that what happens in a marriage today is no longer simply two people attempting to fulfill expectations established for them by others—e.g., society, parents, or *Good Housekeeping*. A marriage is more than ever a consequence of the dynamic interplay of the unique and changing needs, expectations, and *skills* of the two parties themselves.

We have a set of concepts that have proven useful in helping people like Linda and Fred understand how they got where they are—and more importantly—how to change their relationship so that it is more responsive to their changing needs. These concepts are put together in the form of a theoretical model, which we call "preventive maintenance for couples." Couples find when they begin using the model to view their relationship, they develop a new awareness about what

happens between people when they live or work together. In addition, the model suggests new skills that help them “clean the slates” and maintain healthier, livelier, more expansive growing relationships.

Persons using the model learn (once again) that there is nothing as practical as a good theory (Lewin, 1951).

THE MODEL: PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE FOR COUPLES

The model describes how relations between persons are established and become stabilized so there is continuity over time and how change can enter the system. The model is cyclical and it includes several phases:

(1) Sharing information and negotiating expectations.

Every relationship, even the most casual one, begins with gathering data or information (the word, dating, itself sounds suspiciously like collecting data). As two people get to know each other, they learn things about the other's likes and dislikes, attitudes and opinions, and their characteristic behaviors. Furthermore, each learns a little about the other's view of himself or herself and something of his or her world view. While this data collection process is never formalized, our hunch is that even after a first date it would be possible for each party to make a rather lengthy list of things they learned about the other in the course of the initial encounter. In fact, they are not likely to have subsequent dates unless each is satisfied that the other possesses certain attributes which are important to him or to her (or unless the probabilities of that are sufficiently high).

While this information is being collected and shared another important and very subtle event takes place. The two people exchange and negotiate expectations each has for their relationship. (Others, such as Goffman, 1956: 162;

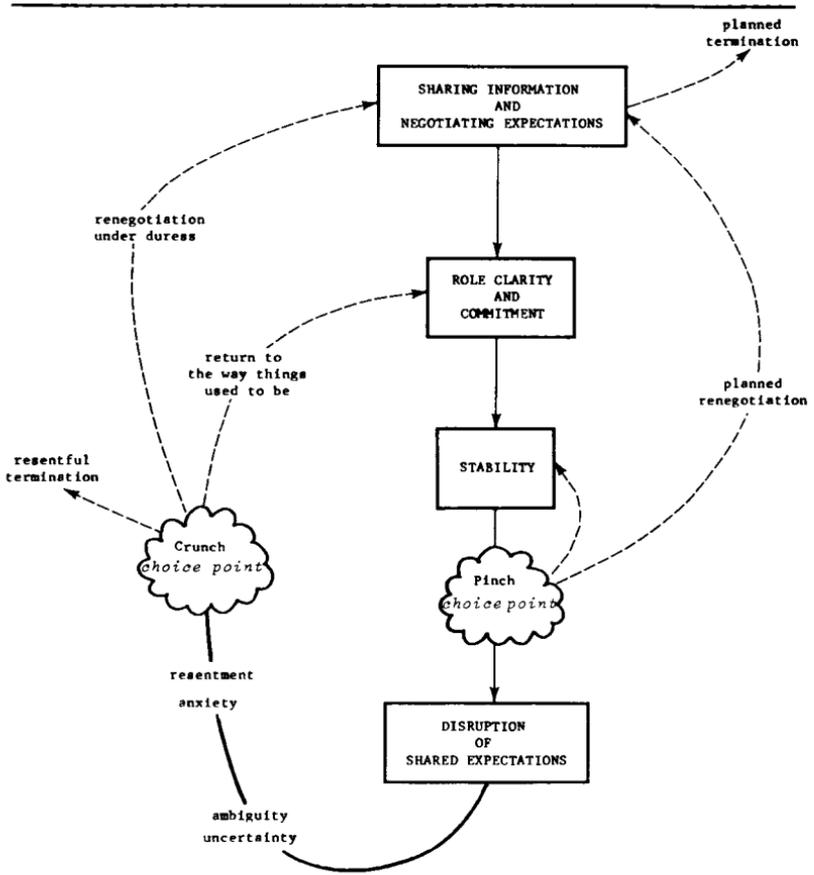


Figure 1: PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE MODEL FOR COUPLES

1961: 105-132; Thibaut and Kelley, 1959: 21-25; and Blau, 1960, have written extensively on this process.) "I can expect her to be serious when we are alone and to kid around a lot when we're with her sister." "As for myself, I am a little hesitant to disagree with her, because she won't stop arguing until I admit she has a good point." While these expectations which each has for the other (and about oneself) are usually implicit and unspecified, the more information which is shared, the more likely the expectations will also be discussed and become mutual.

A useful illustration of what this is all about is found in comparing Greek and Hebrew concepts of knowing. In the Greek perspective, you “know” something only insofar as you are detached from it. Your task is to gather information about the person or object as it exists apart from you. The worst possible thing you could do would be to get attached or involved emotionally with the thing that is being known, as this only contaminates your knowledge and distorts your ever knowing it. The Hebrew concept of knowing is quite different. It is impossible to know anything without having a relationship with it. This method of knowing, then, is to move toward an intense involvement with the thing or person. So, what we often have in early dating is a shift from an initial Greek way of knowing (e.g., “Man, look at that bod!” or “Gee, I really like the way he smiles.”) to more of a Hebrew perspective (e.g., “I like the way I feel when I am with him. I am comfortable and at peace with myself.”).

What building a relationship really means is exchanging sufficient information so that the behaviors of both parties are more or less predictable, and uncertainty is reduced to an acceptable level.

(2) *Role clarity and commitment.* When expectations have been sufficiently shared and clarified, there is a growing clarity about the role each is to play in the relationship. “Oh, I see how I need to be with Fred to make this thing work.” “Now I see what it means to be in a relationship with Linda.” The implication is not that roles are phony. Quite the contrary. We all have many facets, all of which are us. The task of building a relationship is to discover which parts of us are the most comfortable in the particular relationship and then to share the expectations each person has for the other. As roles become clearer, then commitment becomes possible. The parties say, “Yes,” at least tentatively, to the relationship.

As expectations are mutually understood and found acceptable or desirable, the two people find themselves

moving toward some commitment to one another. Each person's role is becoming rather comfortably defined. Each knows for the most part what is expected of him/her, and for the most part each knows what he or she can expect from the other. As two people become more intimately involved, they frequently report feeling comfortable with one another. They also become more aware of the clarity and the predictability that each has about the role they are to play with the other. The strength of each individual's commitment and the range of behavior encompassed by their roles are both measures of the importance of this particular relationship. The more important the relationship, the more evidence of commitment is required and the more behaviors—including attitudes and values—are embraced by the role expectations. With commitment comes stability and continuity.

(3) *Stability.* When there is commitment to a set of shared expectations, these expectations govern the behavior of the two parties and provide stability in their relationship—that is, for the most part you do what I expect of you and for the most part I do what you expect of me. The couple's energies are now available for other things, since their relationship is sufficiently predictable that it no longer requires sustained attention. Therefore, they can also enjoy the satisfaction of being productive in addition to the pleasures their relationship brings them. The couple has a past, and they appear to be headed somewhere. The relationship has momentum, and it can sustain bumps in the road without disintegrating as it might have done at earlier points. Each has the feeling that the other person can be counted on to be there, and to be there even when things get rough.

Commitment to a set of shared expectations then governs behavior during a period of stability and productivity—but invariably, sooner or later, one of the persons is certain to feel pinched by the relationship (Blau, 1967; Homans, 1961).

(4) *Pinch*. A pinch is a sense of loss of freedom within one's current role and is a signal of the possibility of an impending disruption in the relationship. A person feeling a pinch would probably not call it a problem, but rather it is a hunch that something is just not right in his or her relationship with the other. A pinch is often described by a statement such as, "If things keep going this way, if he keeps doing that, I don't know what I'll do."

"What's wrong, Linda? Are you and Fred having problems?" "*Oh no, no, he's been at the lab every night this week, but that's the only way he's going to get his Ph.D.*" "I'll bet that makes you angry." "*No, but if it keeps up, I'll be at my wits end.*"

A pinch is a choice point, since it is a glimmering of awareness of discomfort in one of the parties in the marriage, and it is connected to some specific behavior of the partner. With persons not accustomed to listening to their own feelings, a pinch may go unnoticed. But even if a pinch is noticed, quite frequently trouble often follows. Here is why: we are trained *not* to share our pinches. "Don't say anything to upset him/her." "Whatever you do, don't rock the boat." "If I tell her about this, it will only bother her." "Things have gone so well, I hate to tell him and cause trouble." When a young, married person feels a pinch, the first thing he wants to do with that uncomfortable feeling is pack it away in his own style—either under the rug, in his gunny sack, or whatever other handy way he has learned to distort or deny his own feelings in order to placate others and thereby avoid suspected trouble.

But there is irony here. In the very act of trying to avoid more difficult conflict, the person who hides his pinch often makes a much more serious problem more likely. If the behavior by the other person which led to the pinch continues, the pinch will not go away, and the conflict within the person feeling pinched is heightened and heightened until he is no longer able to cope with the discomfort the

interaction now causes him. This immediately moves the relationship into a critical incident—a disruption of the previously shared expectations about how each is to behave.

(5) *Disruption*. Disruption occurs because of a violation of expectations by one or both of the parties or because of external intrusion into their relationship. Common examples of disruption which are external in origin are: the first child born into your marriage, losing your job, winning a lottery, moving into a new home (especially if one or more parents join you). The first child is a good example of how a new input into a relationship is likely to lead to the violation of previously established expectations—e.g., “What do you mean I should change the baby!”; “How come you’re always so tired!”; “It’s your turn to get up!” Disruptions may also be internal in origin, such as the sharing of information which was not made available earlier when expectations were being negotiated—e.g., “I know I *said* I liked your mushroom omelette, but I’m saying something different *now!*” People also change as a consequence of new experiences and education—“I just learned that Elizabeth’s husband helps with the dishes!”

The event that gives rise to a disruption may be something that has happened a hundred times before. To return to our previous example, Fred gets up after supper to leave for the lab as he has for the last semester, and out-of-the-blue Linda angrily shouts: “This is it. I’ve had it. No more of this running off to the lab. This is the last straw.” Fred is puzzled. He looks around and says, “What did I do? What’s going on? I always leave for the lab at 6:30 right after supper.” What had happened for Linda was that an earlier pinch was now becoming painfully clear to her. A significant expectation was not being met in her marriage: the expectation that, “my husband and I will spend a lot of time together.” Once a critical incident and the subsequent disruption have occurred, it immediately throws the relationship over to the left side of

the diagram (see Figure 1). Couples at this point report feelings of uncertainty, ambiguity, and confusion. "Gee, Fred, what's wrong?" "I don't know. I'm not sure, but things are really coming apart. I don't understand what it is." This then gives way to anxiety, sometimes fear, but almost always, resentment—toward the other person and probably toward one's self as well.

Now the two people are at an important choice point in their marriage, for it is at a moment of disruption that creative change can enter their relationship. They have basically three alternatives.

RESPONDING TO DISRUPTION

As shown in the diagram, a couple can respond to disruption in three rather different ways: (1) they can take the disruption into account and change (renegotiation); (2) they choose not to change and attempt to continue doing things the way they always have been by returning to "the way things used to be" (premature reconciliation); or (3) they can terminate their relationship. We will examine each of these options in some detail.

First, they can renegotiate their expectations. New information now enters their marriage, and they can renegotiate their expectations to bring them closer to the realities provided by the newly available information. The paradox is that the very moment the relationship is most open to change there are strong inhibiting forces working to return to "the way things used to be," because of anxiety accompanying the uncertainty which pervades the relationship at the time it is in a state of disruption (Lanzetta, 1955; Korchin et al., 1957).

When a disruption of expectations occurs, uncertainty follows—because I can no longer depend on your doing what I expect of you, and my own role is also unclear to me. With

uncertainty, the parties become anxious. This anxiety is uncomfortable. Furthermore, at least one of the partners is probably angry. The quickest and surest way to reduce that anxiety and avoid that anger is for the relationship to return once again to "the way things used to be." This is the second alternative available to the couple. Fred comes home from the lab. Linda rushes to meet him at the door and says, "Dear, I'm so sorry about what I said earlier. Let's just forget about it. Let bygones be bygones. I know how important your work is to you and I understand. It's okay. Come in, let's have a glass of wine and forget about what happened."

The second alternative, whereby the couple attempts to return to their prior relationship without talking about their expectations for one another, is a popular one. It is often a ritualized commitment to prior expectations, such as an apology, kiss, or embrace, without admitting the new information which gave rise to the disruption in the relationship. This new information could form the basis for discussion and change (renegotiation) of the expectations governing the relationship. However, the marriage remains closed to change when the parties deal with the uncertainty and anxiety produced by disruption by returning to the original level of sharing expectations without renegotiation—for example, the pledge, "it won't happen again," or the admonition, "don't let it happen again," or the reaffirmation of the way things used to be, "I love you" or "I'm sorry, I was wrong, everything is now okay . . . nothing is changed!" (Postman and Bruner, 1948; Hermann, 1963). This is premature reconciliation because it does not permit the new information which is now available to influence the couple's relationship.

It is during the period of disruption, when the parties are uncertain about their roles and the future of their relationship and are therefore anxious, that the system must be held open if change is to enter. If new information is allowed to enter the relationship and is treated in a problem-solving way,

it can provide the basis for renegotiating the expectations governing the relationship. The newly renegotiated expectations are therefore more likely to be in line with the current realities of the situation, and once commitment occurs, the period of stability is likely to be more enduring before the next ensuing disruption.

If the parties share this model as a part of their language and their mutual expectations, these concepts are likely to help them by increasing their tolerance for the uncertainty and the accompanying anxiety which surround their relationship while expectations are held open during renegotiation. Through continued use of these concepts, the behavioral skills of the parties also increase, thereby facilitating the renegotiation process.

Understanding the renegotiation process and building the skills to help move through such trying times is essential both to maintain a satisfying marriage and to permit the two parties to grow. This is because it is assumed that disruption is inevitable, only the period of stability and our coping styles vary, because (a) information about ourselves and our actual reactions to the other person are never completely shared during the initial period when expectations are negotiated; and (b) people change with time and experience, and they learn from contacts with others outside the marriage. Where couples accept the inevitability of change and disruption and understand that their relationship is never "settled and worked out once and for all," while disruptions will remain uncomfortable and anxious they are no longer viewed as signs of imminent disaster. Just as Bach and Wyden (1969) suggest that fighting can be viewed as a source of new information, and therefore one can learn to fight productively and to recognize destructive fighting, so it is with disruptions of expectations. People can learn to treat disruptions as opportunities for new information to enter their relationship, and therefore, as times for change.

The theory predicts that disruption without renegotiation leads to an increasing frequency and intensity of disruptions. When each disruption is not treated as a new source of information and a new opportunity for adjustment of expectations and change, but rather as a disagreeable state that cannot be tolerated due to the urgency to return to "the way the things used to be," then the source of the disruption is never satisfactorily remedied, improved, or even ameliorated. If the difficulty in the relationship is never addressed directly, it is likely to persist and add to the intensity of future disruptions precipitated by new problems entering the relationship. The more inflexible the marriage, the more likely a final disruptive event will be explosive and destructive. Such a relationship is likely to have a resentful termination, which is destructive to all the parties involved.

The third alternative is, of course, to terminate the relationship. It is a popular option, because there are several ways to terminate a relationship. One can depart physically, get a legal separation, or a divorce. There are other ways to terminate while still continuing to be physically present. Drugs, like alcohol and marijuana, are used by some persons to avoid the painful, authentic encounter with the other person required to work on their relationship. Others use prescription drugs. It would be difficult to prove, but our hunch is that part of the high rate of alcoholism and drug abuse among middle-aged, married men and women may be an avoidance of the difficulties of dealing openly with the conflicts of marriage.

Another way to terminate the relationship, while remaining legally married, is to become involved with another person. This is a choice to shift your commitment elsewhere by transferring energy away from a relationship filled with pain to one where you are more comfortable. One's lover is especially attractive in contrast to the ways things are at home. As was said earlier, the theory predicts that disruption without renegotiation leads to an increasing frequency and

intensity of disruptions, however, the intensity of future disruptions is not likely to be increased when difficulties in the marriage are handled by reducing commitment to the relationship. In this case, an apparent return to "the way things used to be" is actually a withdrawal of commitment. Over time such a strategy leads to an atrophied relationship. To use Ingmar Bergman's phrase, the marriage becomes a "comfortable disaster."

Whenever disruption occurs, the possibility of terminating the relationship is always an alternative solution. Termination is more likely to be a constructive, problem-solving solution based on new information when it is a consequence of renegotiation (see the planned termination option illustrated in Figure 1). Termination is more likely to be destructive to one or both of the parties, when one or more of the following are present: (1) the disruption is unexpected and explosive, (2) the relationship is rigid and inflexible, or (3) the parties have little or no prior experience in renegotiating adjustments to changing conditions.

Let's go back to the pinch again.

PLANNED RENEGOTIATION

The model states that relationships cycle through (1) the sharing of information and negotiation of expectations, through (2) role clarity and commitment, to (3) stability and productivity, to (4) disruption and the possibility of renegotiation and therefore change. It has also been shown that it is difficult to hold things open for renegotiation because of the uncertainty and anxiety that prevails at that time. These concepts then provide a way to introduce controlled change by anticipating disruption and renegotiating expectations in advance of disruption. This is known as planned renegotiation, and it is based on learning to act on a pinch.

An example of a pinch which raises the possibility of renegotiation is found in Mary's statement, "When Bob told

me how happy he was that hunting season is almost here, I felt annoyed." Bob was confused at Mary's annoyance, answering "But you knew I love to hunt when we got married!" The stage is now set. Mary and Bob can further explore this source of potential difficulty in their relationship by sharing additional information, and perhaps, by renegotiating the expectations each has for the other; or (2) they can allow this opportunity (Mary's pinch) to pass by smoothing over Mary's annoyance and Bob's surprise by assuming that "things will work themselves out." Just as Mary had two choices, to share her annoyance with Bob or to let it pass; so the couple has two options, to talk further and explore this potential source of difficulty or to let it pass. Since a pinch is not a disruption—even when it is shared with the other party—it is easy for the couple to allow Mary's annoyance to pass relatively unnoticed.

Should Mary and Bob choose to pursue the hunch that there is something of importance to Mary's pinch, the surest way for them to make progress in beginning to renegotiate some of their expectations for each other is for them to understand and share what each wants from the other and what each fears from the other. As long as their conversation is about issues, such as hunting, a shootout is more likely to develop, which then often requires a winner and a loser. When both parties can share their wants and fears, they can see where they are apart and where they hold expectations in common. This makes renegotiation a more likely event.

BOB

"I want to be free to hunt whenever I wish, but I also want to be close to you and to be loved by you. When you get angry about my hunting, I feel you moving away from me."

"I fear that you will lose interest in me, or even leave me all alone,

MARY

"I want to be around you more to feel as if I count with you. I feel like I am nothing to you when you choose hunting over me. I want to have some influence with you."

"My fears are that I don't really count with you, that you don't

and that if you ever get control, love me, and that there is no
 you'll stop me from hunting way for me to influence you."
 altogether."

Bob and Mary are talking about their expectations—what they want and what they fear. A new set of relationship dynamics is now possible. Mary and Bob need to be able to work out how much hunting is too much (for Mary) and enough (for Bob), and perhaps, how Bob can signal Mary's importance to him even when he chooses to go hunting. While Mary may never like it when Bob is away hunting, once she realizes that she has some influence over Bob and that she is important to him, she may get angry less often and withdraw her love less frequently—and this may make it easier for Bob to indicate how much he cares for her, even while choosing to go hunting.

What would have happened if Mary had chosen not to share her annoyance with Bob? Quite frequently, the answer is that not much would have happened at that point in time. The couple would be setting the stage for a disruption sometime in the future. Sometimes people are able to treat their pinches as new information, and therefore, as opportunities to renegotiate aspects of their relationship. Sometimes a pinch gives rise to blaming the other: then this is experienced as an attack, which leads to defensive responses. For instance, Bob might experience Mary's concern about the amount of time he spends hunting as a charge against him; if so, he might respond defensively and tell her that she simply does not understand. The couple would then begin moving toward a disruption in the future. But, we have found when couples have this model explained to them along with the following strategy that they are able to share their pinches and work with them in ways that can be beneficial to their relationship.

The basic rules are these: (1) When one person feels a pinch, the other person also has a pinch. That is to say, when one member of a marriage is uncomfortable with the

relationship, the relationship needs some immediate attention. The maintenance required may simply be sharing the pinch itself. This new information may be all that it takes. Once a pinch is shared, there needs to be (2) a *mutual* choice whether or not to work on this new information. If a couple then decides to work on the pinch, it is (3) discussed in terms of a problem to be solved (rather than a case to be prosecuted or a fight to be won) by changing expectations to take into account the new information which is now available to both parties. It is helpful to use the following kinds of statements in sharing, clarifying, and renegotiating expectations: "I want . . ."; "I wish you would . . ."; "I am afraid that . . ."; rather than charges, attacks, or accusations, such as "The trouble with you is . . ." or "If it wasn't for you . . .," which raise defenses and bring on counterattack, distortion, or denial.

PEOPLE'S NEED FOR CONCEPTS

Where this simple model of how roles are established between two people and how they change is available to the couple and where they have skills in sharing their reactions to one another's behavior, talking about their feelings, and describing their relationship, change can be introduced in a controlled and fairly systematic way. Pinches are treated as sources of new information from which the couple can planfully renegotiate some of the expectations of their relationship.

Of course, the model also serves the purpose of making it clearly legitimate to talk about my expectations of you and my understanding of your expectations of me. Furthermore, the model shows the couple that the future is filled with change and that they must gear themselves to learn to incorporate change into their marriage. Disruptions are on the horizon. What varies is their timing and the skills we have

to treat them as sources of new information upon which to build a more satisfying relationship with one another.

Renegotiation, of course, also takes place at times of disruption. These times are however more stressful, because of the uncertainty, anxiety, and anger, and also because concern with preserving the relationship becomes central. Couples often rightfully choose to seek counseling to help them through some of the more difficult disruptions in their marriage. Whereas for couples who learn to plan renegotiation around the new information that pinches produce for them, not only are emotions likely to be less intense and the pressure lower, but it is working on a problem, rather than preserving the relationship, which becomes central. It is the question: "What's going on?" versus "We'd better find a remedy or else . . ."

Both the model and the concept of planned renegotiation can thus become parts of the relationship—so that whenever I feel a pinch, that pinch is shared as a signal, and the question of renegotiation of expectations is raised. The parties thereby have more choice and more control over change. They are subject to fewer negotiations under fire, and they are less often victims of crises and pressures to return to "the way things used to be."

We believe people need concepts to guide their behavior. The theory underlying the concept of planned renegotiation is clear, simple, and straightforward. It is intended that the concepts become part of the language of a marriage. Persons can train themselves in the skills of planned renegotiation. It is important that people learn to detect pinches before disruptions develop.

One couple with whom we have used this model nicknamed it, "Pay me now or pay me later," after an advertisement which asserts that a small amount of time and money spent on maintenance at the first sign of car trouble saves a lot of time and money later when a major overhaul would be necessary.

Another illustration of the principle of preventive maintenance comes from experience on a destroyer in the navy. As the boilers work to move the ship through the water, carbon deposits occasionally build up inside the tubes, shrinking the size of the opening. To make sure the tubes do not close entirely thus putting the ship dead in the water, once every four hours or so a small portion of the steam used to drive the turbines and propel the ship is redirected through the tubes. The carbon is thereby removed and the tubes are cleared for effective work. Every relationship needs to pause regularly to "blow the tubes" or stand by to go dead in the water with a critical incident.

A pinch is felt by an individual, whereas a disruption is experienced by all parties involved in the relationship. It is therefore incumbent upon an individual who feels a pinch also to take responsibility for raising the question of renegotiation with the partner, rather than asserting that it is someone else's problem or responsibility. At the same time, it is important for people to understand that when they experience a pinch, this is going to make them anxious. When a pinch is shared and renegotiation considered, then others become anxious as well. People get anxious both because of the uncertainty which is introduced into the relationship, and because they are never sure whether they will personally be better off after the renegotiation is completed than they were before. When people work with this model, they learn that anxiety becomes controlled and tolerable when there is a commitment to problem-solving. There remains nevertheless a risk each time the relationship is opened for examination and change.

Can a relationship survive the growth of the partners? Can marriages survive women's liberation or other changes in roles or persons? Our answer is yes—with awareness, skill, and the guts to try to understand where you are and what changes will bring both partners into a more satisfying relationship with one another.

In the first few attempts at renegotiation within the model, people are simultaneously working on two problems: (1) trying out a problem-solving model and developing skills and procedures for its use, and (2) working on the pinch that gave rise to the renegotiation. Over time both skills and procedures develop, as does confirmation of the model and its usefulness to the parties involved (or its lack of usefulness).

In using the concepts of preventative maintenance for couples, people have more choice in their lives and are less likely to be victims of the way things used to be.

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