

## Book Review

# A Small, Secret Guide to Relationships and Love

C. Suzanne Clark, PhD\*

Licensed Professional Counselor at Village Psychological Services, LLC, Georgia, USA

\*Corresponding author

C. Suzanne Clark, PhD

Psychologist, Licensed Professional Counselor at Village Psychological Services, LLC, Georgia, USA; E-mail: [suzaunna7@gmail.com](mailto:suzaunna7@gmail.com)

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## INTRODUCTION

Relationships are hard. At times, we don't know what to do when our relationship fails; sometimes we don't even know why they fail. The only blueprint we have is the one we grew up with; watching our parents; grandparents, older siblings, or even friends manage their relationships and try to follow their lead. We imitate their mannerisms, behaviors, and attitudes trying to avoid the parts that feel bad and focusing on the parts that feel right. Even then, when things go wrong in our relationship, we question whether we will ever understand it well enough to get it right.

Relationships are confusing and rewarding at the same time. And you must develop resilience to be successful in your own. It seemed so much easier to engage in relationship connections when we were kids. When we argued, no one cared who was right or who was wrong. At the end of the day, all that mattered was the friendship. What happened? What changed? Life! Happened; you changed. It's easy to be friends with someone you don't live with every day. A smile from a friend who doesn't know your secrets is refreshing. Let's face it. When Life! Happens, we get upset when other people know what we are going through. On the contrary, friends don't know anything until you tell them.

An interesting irony, however, is that relationships are supposed to be a lot like friendship; with the added value of commitment that is much more up-close- and- personal than a social buddy. The major difference between friendship and being in a relationship is the latter requires commitment, where a lot of time is spent together under very personal circumstances. Interpersonal bonds are formed that go beyond the casual moments of friendship. Relationships require extensive personal transparency; friendships do not.

Relationships will challenge your determination to be resilient; because on your journey to being successful, you will be

forced into an uncomfortable spotlight where all of our insecurities are exposed, and another person is asking us to trust them with our vulnerability. In relationships, it becomes mandatory that we understand each other or fail at being committed to each other. Relationships have a way of showing us parts of ourselves that we were unaware existed, like emotional and psychological triggers from childhood; and put on full display, parts of ourselves we did not want to be exposed. Relationships are about being transparent when it's scary and humble when you're angry; and so much more.

A little black book is generally known for its helpful contents. It is famous for containing easy access information for seeking help getting through some interesting moments. This version of a little black book however, is a resource for recalling important details of what it means to effectively utilize the energy of love and become actively engaged in a relationship whether it involves your spouse, significant other, parents, your pet, a friend or co-worker, a relative in the military, or even your children. The goal is to provide summaries, references and quality interactive points for understanding love and maintaining healthy loving relationships.

All of us want to be in a good relationship. We want to be actively involved in a relationship that is rewarding, nurturing, loving, long-standing and prosperous. Whether your commitment is with a pet or another person, relationships are a necessary part of human life. No one is an island. We need each other. Because there are many different types of relationships with its own unique style of interacting, it is important to recognize and value the specific ways of relating that is inherent in each type of relationship.

Several different types of relationships are discussed in this book and each one has its own unique quality of cohesion and set of dynamics. Although it is impossible to include everything concerning relationships, this book attempts to highlight important details of several types of relationships. Much is discussed in

this book that may generate more questions that can be answered in this one book. More information is coming in future publications.

Some of the difficult relationship issues highlighted in this book involve moments of reflections such as bringing home the new baby and the struggle against the misunderstood psychological stressors that often follows. The symptoms of postpartum depression (PPD), after giving birth are real and so intense; they can make a new mom question her genuine love for her child. There isn't enough cuteness in that little bundle to prevent those hormonal symptoms from creating irritating personal feelings, unexplained reactions and confusing frustrations towards the infant and life in general.

In the relationship trials of life, sometimes commitment is not enough. How does one manage, much less get past the painful reality of an unfaithful partner or spouse? Or deal with a relationship steeped in chronic triggers that creates cracks in the foundations of security and punches a gigantic hole in the sacredness of mutual trust? How do you maintain footing when the delicate fibers that holds families together gets snapped by toxic blended relationships, obsessively controlling adults or an out-of-control adolescent? Relationships with children, if not well-understood, can result in adults unwittingly destroying innocence and stifling the natural wonderment of our most vulnerable souls.

Co-worker relationships offer unique opportunities to bond with new people establish life-long relationships and strengthen support systems. However, the old phrase that "one should not taste the honey, where you make your money" can unfold into an

employment nightmare. Attitudes, personality conflicts and petty offenses, if left unresolved, can create toxic workplace environments. Your relationship with your God speaks volumes about you, especially when you interact with other people of other faiths that are different from your own. How do you navigate through the religious differences and still feel connected to one Universal God?

Holding on to unique life moments shared with furry, four-footed friends can also form relationship bonds that lasts a lifetime; at the same time, this type of relationship offers us a glimpse into the connections we rarely pay attention to. It is one of the few genuine connections in which we feel safe being vulnerable. There is our military family; our country's defense warriors who can teach all of us a thing or two about staying together while managing the ultimate long-term relationship; and mentoring relationships, the type that often gets overlooked because there is an assumption that mentors are naturally good at creating supportive networks for those in need. They too, have their breaking points.

There is much more to relationships than can be written in one book and this one publication cannot cover every type of relationship. Therefore, this book is designed to be a go-to resource that provides pointers on how to engage and navigate effectively through several different types of relationships. Your success depends on many different factors; but the information is designed to give you a type of blueprint on what successful loving interactions and relationships look like. This little black book will attempt to not only answer tough questions concerning relationships, but also provide some answers for what it means to be successful in love and relationships.