

# RELATIONSHIP BLINDSPOTS

3 WAYS COUPLES  
UNKNOWINGLY  
LOSE CONNECTION

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# Relationship Blindspots: 3 Ways Couples Unknowingly Lose Connection.

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Welcome to my first mini e-book: Relationship Blindspots: 3 Ways Couples Unknowingly Lose Connection.

## **About Jonah Richman**

I never imaged that I would be a helping others with their relationships. As a teen, I sought love and happiness the American way: through drinking, drugs, and partying. I wasn't happy, but I didn't know what else to do with myself.

At the age 24, I was a father of baby twin girls, partnered with a women I loved, but didn't know how to connect with. I was depressed, and snorting the drug OxyContin (aka synthetic herion) on a regular basis. That year, my partner and I separated, sending me into a episode of despair and confusion, the likes of which I had never experienced before.

Whenever someone hits rock bottom, that person usually has a choice: He or she can either continue a path of self-destruction, or find something that changes his or her life forever. I choose the second option. Knowing I had to find another way to to live, I quit drugs, made new friends, and found a depth of happiness that I had been missing.

My saving grace was a workshop by a trainer

in the discipline of Nonviolent Communication. This trainer modeled a way of being that deeply affected me. He helped me realize how much I was hiding from the world, and that almost everyone else was doing the same thing. I slowly learned how to stop aggressively blaming others for my problems, and instead better honor my emotions, needs, and desires.

After participating in numerous training programs, I began teaching my own classes in 2012. Not long after, people started asking me for one-on-one coaching and two-on-one conflict mediation.

What started out as a deep desire to grow and build meaningful relationships has now also become my business. I wouldn't want to be doing anything else.

Thank you for reading!

## **What are relationship blindspots?**

Relationship blind spots are ways we unknowingly creating disconnection and discontent in our relationship. Blind spots are particularly harmful because we aren't aware of them. The purpose of discovering our blind spots is to make the unconscious conscious, and ultimately to deepen a couple's bond and love for one another.

Following are three common relationship blind spots.

## **1. Spending time with your friends only when you have relationship problems**

Do you spend all of the your free time with your partner, and then as soon as something goes wrong, you contact your friends?

Only spending time with your friends when you are upset with your partner can initiate what I call the “breakup spiral,” which is a downward spiral towards breaking up that is initiated not because the relationship is actually all that bad (all relationships have struggles) but because of how you talk about it with your friends.

This tendency can give those friends a negative bias toward your relationship. If they only hear the bad stuff, they naturally assume that your relationship is not working.

Here is how the relationship spiral works:

You: “I hate how my partner does xyz.”

Friend: “Hmm, that sounds challenging.”

You (at a later date): “I hate how he does xyz.”

Friend: “Hmm, you said that before. Maybe he/she's not good for you.”

You (at an even later date): “Hmm, maybe he/she's not good for me. All my friends think so.”

If you want to create a lasting relationship is it vital to maintain other friendships. Just be sure to spend time with your friends when your relationship is going well. Celebrate the positive things about your partner. This way your friends can become allies for getting through the challenges, instead of advocates for splitting up when the going gets tough.

I am not saying that it is never a good idea to complain to your friends, or that you should never break up with your partner. The choice to stay in a relationship is always yours to make. I am saying, however, that what you share with your friends, especially if they don't also spend time with your partner, affects their views of them. Be sure to show them the whole picture surrounding your feelings for your partner, including the things that you love and adore.

## **2. You worry about the future too much (fantasize instead)**

Some people spend a lot of time worrying that their relationship is doomed to fail.

There are many causes of worry that have nothing to do with your partner, such as thinking back to past relationships that didn't work out, noticing all your friends who are separating, or observing divorce rate statistics.

There are also many beliefs that can reinforce one's propensity to worry. Some of these include thinking that you are being realistic, or that you are merely helping yourself prepare for all possible outcomes. Although some or all of this may be true, if you are spending all your time dreading the future, you are missing out on the joy your relationship can bring you today.

Here are some steps you can take to stop worrying and increase your bond, connection, and sense of security:

Do joyful activities together (and schedule them regularly, so you actually do them.)

Fantasize. Worry happens in the mind. You can consciously shift your mental focus through the

power of fantasy. Talk openly with your partner about what you'd love to have happen, even if it isn't realistic. In other words, fantasize together.

“When I win the lottery, I'm going to take you on a month-long trip to the Hawaii.”

“When we are 90 years old, I want to still be making love with you like we do now.”

Lastly, take care of yourself. Exercise, meditate, spend time with friends, and do other things that make you happy. (Schedule time for yourself regularly, so you actually do it.)

### 3. Not sharing your personal struggles

Have you heard of oxytocin, also known as the cuddle chemical?

Oxytocin is a hormone produced in the brain that stimulates warm feelings of love and bonding. It can also temporarily alleviate pain and depression.

Oxytocin is released during physical touch, such as cuddling, hugging, breastfeeding, and sexual activity.

Less well known is that oxytocin is also produced during moments of deep sharing. Whenever you share something personal with someone who listens and understands, you both get a bonding dose of oxytocin.

How long has it been since you and your partner deeply shared with each other? When did you last say, “I never told anyone that before. Thank you for listening.”?

If you are not sharing deeply on a regular basis then you are probably avoiding vulnerability. Deep sharing involves talking about things you usually keep hidden, including your pain, struggles, hidden secrets, etc.

Learning how to listen can be instrumental in helping each other feel safe with vulnerability.

If you have ever been to couples counseling, you probably were taught new ways to listen. The problem is that many counselors have you learn to listen at the wrong time; when you are angry with each other. Learning to listen to your partner's anger directed at you is often so gruelingly difficult that one or both partners gives up before any benefits are seen.

Fortunately, there is a better way to learn how to listen. If you practice deep listening while your partner shares experiences that are extremely personal (and not about you) you can create an experience of deep compassion and love, aided by a nice dose of oxytocin.

## Conclusion

You just learned how to perceive and overcome three common relationship blind spots:

- 1. Spending time with your friends only when you have relationship problems**
- 2. Worrying about the future too much (fantasize instead)**
- 3. Not sharing your personal struggles with each other**

Do you notice yourself in any of these? Did this spark your interest in learning more about your own relationship blind spots?

Because relationship blind spots are inherently behaviors we are “blind” to, it is invaluable that you have outside support in discovering them. Couples counselors, relationships coaches, and friends you respect can all be aids in helping you discover where you might be unknowingly losing connection in your relationship.

In the end, never forget that relationships are about love, appreciation, fun, and connection. Every relationship takes work, so get good at doing the work, and remember to also have fun.

Take care!