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From: FreeBookSummaries <info@freebooksummaries.com>
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Subject: Book Summary -- Relationship Rescue

This month Free Book Summaries brings you a summary of Relationship Rescue by Phillip C. McGraw. This is an excellent book, which I highly recommend to anyone wanting to improve a relationship no matter what state it's currently in. Phillip McGraw will tell you things that you may not have heard anywhere else, but which nevertheless make a whole lot of incredible sense. This book has made a difference to my life and probably will to yours as well.

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RELATIONSHIP RESCUE

Don't Make Excuses! Start Repairing Your Relationship Today.

Dr Phillip C. McGraw

GET REAL: RECONNECTING WITH YOUR CORE

In order to fix your relationship you'll need to get real about yourself first. The journey towards a better relationship begins with you. You may be in a relationship that has gone off the rails, you feel disappointed and disillusioned but now is the time to change all of that.

IT'S YOUR TIME: IT'S YOUR TURN

I am going to give you the means to turn any relationship around. You see, it might be hard to believe but you have set this relationship up to be the way it is. Everything in our life is a reflection somehow of who and what we are on the inside. We support everything that is happening in our life. Just as someone who is overweight has a very different lifestyle to someone who is fit and healthy, your relationship (good or bad) is supported by lifestyle choices you have chosen to make.

You might wonder when I am going to get to the part about how to deal with your partner, but I'm not going to. You are going to change this relationship primarily through changing what you do within it. Your partner will not be able to help but respond in a positive manner.

DEFINING THE PROBLEM

A lot of people know that there might be a problem with their relationship but they find it hard to articulate it is. We need to get very clear on what is causing problems in our relationship. Diagnosing a relationship problem is like diagnosing a medical problem. If you make the wrong diagnosis you could give the wrong treatment. In the Relationship Rescue book there are a number of exercises to help you accurately diagnose what is going on in

your relationship for you.

BLOWING UP THE MYTHS

There are a number of myths about relationships that I'm going to clear up right now.

Myth 1. A meeting of minds

Many people (including therapists) believe that the way to have a great relationship depends on being able to see everything from your partner's point of view. But this is near impossible to do. Even if you could do it, it probably wouldn't help much because it doesn't change the natural differences you and your partner have with each other.

Myth 2. Romance is everything

A great relationship doesn't depend on romance. By romance I mean the dizzy ecstasy you feel at the beginning of a relationship. There is nothing wrong with being romantic, such as having a candlelit dinner. But don't expect early those feelings of infatuation to last throughout the entire relationship. Your feelings will change into something different, usually deeper and more rewarding.

Myth 3. Develop Problem-solving skills

Many people, including some therapists, think that having a great relationship means learning conflict resolution skills. Let me tell you right now that there are some things in your relationship that you will never resolve. Maybe it's about sex, money or your children. The thing that makes disagreement damaging if one partner takes the matter personally and feels rejected by the other person's stance on the issue. Healthier couples can respect each other's differences and find some sort of emotional closure to the problem.

Myth 4. Finding common interests is good

Some people think a great relationship requires common interests that bond you together forever. If you and your partner both happen to like fly fishing that's fine. But don't try and create mutual interests for the benefit of your relationship. The fact is that you already share much more than you think, such as your bed, kids, house, holidays etc.

Myth 5. Always aim for peace

Relationships where couples fight can last as long and be just as rewarding as relationships where there is no fighting, as long as you fight in a constructive way (see what this means below). Fighting is destructive in a relationship where one or both partners stop arguing about the issue and start making personal attacks. Equally destructive is if you let your feelings simmer inside only to have them come bubbling out later.

Myth 6. You should be able to vent your feelings

Venting your feelings may feel good at the time, but it doesn't take long to see the pain you have inflicted on your relationship. I have seen many relationships break up because one partner could not forgive what the other said in the heat of the moment. Before you say something you might later regret, stop and think about it.

Myth 7. Sex is not important

Sex is a very important part of the relationship we have with our partner. It allows you and your partner to be close in a way you are not with other people. To do away with sexuality in your relationship robs it of intimacy and uniqueness.

Myth 8. Flawed partners make flawed relationships

Some people think that if one person in the relationship is a little crazy that means the relationship is doomed. We all have our little nuances that others might consider abnormal. This doesn't stop you from having a great relationship. I once counseled a schizophrenic woman who had a great relationship with her partner despite constantly hearing voices.

Myth 9. There is a right or wrong way

Don't have any rigid ideas about how your relationship should be. Similarly, don't be too judgmental about the way your partner expresses his love. We all do it in different ways. So try to discover how your partner is expressing their love to you.

Myth 10. Fix your partner

Many people think that if they could just fix their partner then they'll have a happy and healthy relationship. This is not true. You are at least partially responsible for the relationship. Unless you find what you're doing to keep the relationship in the state it's in then you won't be able to change it.

YOUR BAD SPIRIT

We all have a dark side to our personalities and this bad spirit can be equally, if not more destructive as believing in certain relationship myths. The bad spirit is the destructive side to our personalities. It is the immature, selfish, controlling part of us that surfaces during relationship interactions. Most people will explain away or deny their bad spirit but you need to face up to it if your relationship is going to have any chance of survival.

Let's take a look at how some of these bad spirits manifest themselves.

1. Scorekeeping.

In a healthy relationship, you and your partner will act as a team, each supporting the other. Keeping points means you are engaging in a competition with your partner. The two of you will try to get the better of the other. If you win then your partner loses. When one of you is losing at the expense of the other you'll never be able to cooperate or be loving towards the other.

2. Fault Finding.

You constantly criticize your partner, never letting anything slide by that violates your standard. Occasional constructive criticism is OK, but you seem to take some sort of sick pleasure in focusing on the negative side of your partner. Remember, when you're criticizing you're not loving or connecting with your partner and this is vitally important for your relationship.

3. It's Your Way or the Highway

You are the person who wants to decide what's done and when. You want your partner to go along with your ideas without questioning them. Your behavior says to your partner that you think you're better than they are. This is a very destructive attitude.

4. The Attack Dog

You viciously sling attacks and personal insults at your partner out of all proportion to the issue at hand. You attack your partner's weak and vulnerable spots and tear apart their self worth. When this kind of behavior escalates it turns into physical abuse.

5. The Passive Warmonger

Passive aggression can be just as damaging to a relationship as outright aggression. Rather than outwardly rejecting something you work against it in covert or indirect ways, perhaps saying it can't be done or finding excuse or reason why the suggestion wouldn't work. You make subtle complaints, play the victim and deny responsibility.

6. Smoke and Mirrors

Like the passive warmonger, you hide the truth, camouflaging issues that are the most important while hiding behind issues that for you are insignificant. Important things become trivial and visa versa. For example you might get very upset about your partner's interpretation of a film you both saw in order to release your frustration

about your lagging sex life.

7. Unforgiving

You stay angry or resentful towards your for a long time after any misdemeanor. You want recrimination. Sometimes there does need to be consequences to wrongdoings, but even so, you still must forgive and get over it. Otherwise you are trapping yourself in a pit of bitterness and anger destroying your life and your relationship with it.

8. The Bottomless Pit

Your life is plagued with need and insecurity. You think you are not fit for all the good things you deserve. You want your partner to fill your but this is an impossible feat. This creates a weight on the relationship. Your partner is worn out by your constant demands for attention and reassurance.

9. Too Comfortable

You get so comfortable that you don't want to take any risks or try anything new. Like the rest of your life your relationship is boring and unchallenging. It's not what you really want but you take it because you couldn't be bothered doing anything about it. Your stuck in your comfort zone and it's a very small zone indeed. If your not careful before you know it it'll be all over.

10. You've Given Up

You believe that there is nothing you can do to ever change your circumstances. You've completely given up. You're just going through the motions, so mentally and emotionally dead that you'll fail to see any obvious changes to your situation. You need to realize that people do change and so can you. You can make a difference and rejuvenate your life.

RECLAIMING YOUR CORE: PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP VALUES.

Now you've learnt how to stop destroying your relationship you need to know how to have a positive impact on it.

1. Ownership

You are accountable for everything that goes on in your relationship. When there is something unsatisfying about the relationship, you must take a careful look at what you are doing to contribute to the situation. Say, for example, that your partner is chronically late. You need to think about what you are doing to enable the situation. Are you giving your partner some sort of payoff for being late, accepting the behavior or somehow eliciting it? Remember your partner reacts to you and what you bring to the relationship, your thoughts feelings, and behavior. If you can change these things then your partner will respond differently and your relationship improves.

2. Vulnerability

If you've been hurt in a relationship before you're going to have to take some level of risk in order to reconnect with your partner and re-establish a new relationship. You might be wondering 'What happens if I get hurt again?' Well, the truth is that you can get over it and get on with it. Without taking some risk nothing will change.

3. Acceptance

Everyone needs to feel accepted but when relationships start to go wrong we often begin to send out messages of rejection to our partner. We need to act in a more benevolent way. No one is ever completely perfect so we need to let them know that we accept them for who they are, even if we disagree with them about a particular issue. If we spend time focusing on all of the positive things in our partner rather than the negative then our relationship will be so much better of.

4. Friendship

Quite often one of the first things to go when a relationship starts to go wrong is friendship. You get yourself too bogged down in the serious stuff, the house, mortgage, etc. Remember when the two of you were friends? When you used to hang out together, talk or just catch a movie. Well, if that doesn't happen now, it needs to.

5. Self-esteem

You need to do things to help your partner increase their sense of self-esteem - to help them feel good about themselves. This isn't about being responsible for your partner's feelings as that's their job. But, you can interact with your partner that does empower them and enhance their self worth. You do this by reflecting upon their good qualities. Even if your partner is behaving badly you can still act assertively and enhance their self-esteem by saying 'I know that you are better than this'. When you work to enhance your partners self esteem your partner will be drawn closer to you, and a much more trusting relationship will emerge.

6. Frustrations

We all get frustrated at times from various things that happen in our life or work. The problem often our partners cop it even when they didn't have anything to do with it. We need to make sure that we are clear about what is causing our frustrations and try to resolve it without taking it out on our partner.

7. Honesty

Be honest about your emotions and what is going on for you. If you need time to sort out your feelings then say so. Don't be emotionally dishonest by, for example, withdrawing and saying nothing's wrong.

8. Happiness first

Don't think about whether you are right. Think about what's working and what's not. I remember counseling a father and his 16-year-old son. The son couldn't do anything 'right'; his hair was too long, clothes too baggy, grades too low. About two weeks after starting therapy the son dropped dead from an undiagnosed heart condition. The father wishes he could have spent at least some time being happy with his son rather than right.

9. Transcend turmoil

Don't threaten the relationship when you get upset such as 'If you don't like it, just leave'. Disagree, but don't put your relationship on the line, even if you don't really mean it. You're knocking imperceptible cracks into the relationship that one day might come back to haunt you.

10. Be your best.

Once we get into a relationship we often let our personal standards slip and start finding ourselves getting closer to an emotional quagmire. Always be the best you can be and you will not only be able to feel proud about who you are but you'll be able to raise the relationship to a new level.

THE FORMULA FOR SUCCESS

The quality of your relationship is going to depend on how well you and your partner are meeting each other's needs. It is entirely possible that one person in a relationship might rate the relationship highly while the other one low. This means that one of the partners is getting his/her needs met and not the other. The first thing you need to do is to make your needs known. Articulating your needs can be very difficult. You also must find out the needs of your partner. There are a number of exercises in the book, Relationship Rescue aim to help you uncover and articulate your emotional, physical, social, spiritual and security needs and those of your partner.

The next thing you'll need to do is start the reconnection process with your partner. I will assume that only one of you has read the book. The first thing you'll need to do is to sit down with your partner and describe to them what you have been learning in the book.

Now is the time for decisive action. I call it Fourteen days of Loving with Honesty. This is a structured program aimed to enhance your relationship.

There are morning and evening activities. The morning activity is always the same. Choose something to do during the day that will either meet one of your partners needs or introduce something positive into the relationship. It might be calling your partner during the day or giving them a hug.

The evening part of the program consists of 30 uninterrupted minutes of structured time with your partner. For each day I will give you 3 different topics to discuss and work through. You will find these activities in the Relationship Rescue book.

THE DOCTOR IS 'IN'

You talk about constructive fighting. How do you do this?

If you are going to fight there are a number rules of engagement.

- 1) Don't fight in front of children. This is abusive to the child and can emotionally scar them.
- 2) Always keep your fight on the topic. If you are fighting about your partner's mother then keep the fight on that and don't move it onto any of the other mad in-laws.
- 3) Be honest about what the real issue is. Don't fight over the symptoms of what is really at stake.
- 4) Don't make personal attacks on your partner, become sarcastic, criticize them as a person or question their self worth.
- 5) Think about what from the fight. It helps to have some sort of ending in mind.
- 6) Give your partner room to retreat with dignity.
- 7) Keep the intensity of the fight in proportion to the issue. You don't have to make everything a big deal. It's OK to overlook some of your partner's imperfections every now and again.

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