



Partnering: A New Kind of Relationship

by Hal Stone, PhD & Sidra Stone, PhD

from "Holistic Health Journal" • Volume 7 - Number 2 - May 2000

Partnering is the next step in the evolution of relationship. It is the vital, exciting, and challenging linkage of two energy systems so they can work together harmoniously to create something new and sacred.

Partnering is cooperative and replaces the classic hierarchical, patriarchal relationship where dominance was the main theme. Partnering means many things, but most of all we see it as a joint venture in the exciting business of life. It means that you move from a life in which you were the "sole proprietor" to one in which you are a full and equal partner with someone else.

As in a business, each partner has something important to contribute, each partner's contribution gets equal respect, and each partner has a voice in all decisions that affect the relationship. This may not sound very romantic, but we can assure you that romance not only survives, but thrives in a partnering relationship that takes this as a model because life is a business and a complicated one at that. Just like any other business, partnering requires work so that it stays vital and exciting. This includes working with (1) the emotional connection between partners, (2) the energetic connection between the partners, and (3) with the actual business details of life. We have observed that when these areas are working in the relationship, most couples find that they develop and maintain an exciting sexual contact that lasts over time.

Let us begin by looking at a new way of dealing with the emotional or psychological connection between partners. Since all of us are made up of many selves, or subpersonalities, each relationship is between not just two people, but two groups of people. It is important to know something about these selves when you are involved in a relationship. You are not always dealing with the same person. Neither is your partner.

We all grow up in family systems that require us to think and behave in certain ways. These represent our primary patterns of behavior in the world. Your particular pattern will depend on your physical body and your genetic makeup. It will also depend upon the world in which you grew up including family, friends, neighborhood, schools and churches, and anything else that might have influenced you. These patterns are automatic and are akin to the default setting on the computer. If you want the computer to work differently, you have to re-program it. If you want to have real choices in life, you have to separate from your automatic patterns.

For instance, you might be the oldest daughter with busy parents who had no time or energy for you. You learned not to expect anything from anyone else. Instead, you learned to take care of others. You gave to your parents and your younger siblings. As you grew older, you gave to your friends. Giving became your default position in the world. When you enter a new relationship, giving will again be your default position. What you never learned was how to take from others. Learning how to take -as well as knowing how to give - would give you a richer, fuller life. You would be able to choose and would no longer live by the automatic settings in your life

How do you learn about your own automatic patterns? One of the ways you learn is by looking at what it is that you judge in others. As a giver, you judge the takers of the world. You feel morally superior to those who take. Your relationships will bring the takers of the world into your life. The basic law of the psyche is that you will attract whatever it is that you need to learn. "The teacher appears when you are ready" and your relationship is that teacher.

Perhaps the most exciting work that we have done is in the second area, our exploration of the energetic connection between partners. You are probably aware of the physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual connections that exist. There is a purely energetic connection as well. Peoples' energy fields interact, or link. When this linkage is missing, you feel alone even in the presence of someone else. You will not truly "hear" protestations of love or devotion if you cannot "feel" the energetic presence of your partner. This energetic connection is the most important component in a relationship. Without it, there is no intimacy.

Become aware of this energy field between yourself and others. See where you have linkage and where it is missing. With some people you feel “met”; they are truly present with you. There is contact or a warmth that passes between you. Play with this connection and make it warmer and cooler. It is important to learn about this energetic connection and to gain mastery over it. This energetic linkage is the food we all crave and it is what nourishes us deeply in a partnering relationship that works!

Lastly, for romance to stay alive, we recommend regularly scheduled business meetings. Weekly meetings are a must. More frequent meetings should be scheduled if (1) there is too much going on to handle productively in a single meeting, or (2) if matters are moving quickly and follow-up meetings are required sooner than a week apart. All the business details of life are to be brought to these meetings from the question of who is going to pick up the laundry to who is going to return which phone calls to questions regarding financial planning or summer vacations. Everything is important, everything should be dealt with jointly and consciously.

Why, you might well ask, is this necessary? There are two reasons for this. First, we have found that life has become exceedingly complicated and, if they are not attended to, business details will invade every aspect of life. We can find ourselves thinking about them at the most inappropriate times. This restricts business to scheduled business meetings and keeps it out of the bedroom. Second, if they do not take care of these business details as a team, partners will fall into default patterns, with one partner in charge and the other dependent.

Each relationship, even one that ends, is a spiritual teacher and can provide us with a true spiritual path. An evolving partnering relationship leads us forward on our individual journeys of consciousness and makes space for the infusion of sacred energies into our lives.

In the early 1970's, Hal and Sidra had developed Voice Dialogue as a method for working with sub-personalities. Through both their personal relationship and their professional collaboration, their work evolved over the next quarter of a century into a complex methodology for working with selves and a complete theoretical system which they now call the Psychology of the Aware Ego. They are the authors of numerous books and teaching cd's which are listed on their website www.delos-inc.com

