

Praise for the *Relationship* Cookbook

"Straightforward and truthful." – Cherise Davis, Senior Editor, Simon & Schuster

"Relationship Cookbook didactically shifts one's way of thinking toward a more harmonic union with one's mate."

– Bruce George, Co-Founder of Def Poetry Jam

"...Ingenious concept. You're taking Dr. Phil's job for sure."

– Samona, Director of Cocoa Singles

"I've never thought about it like that before. . ." – D. Austin, Graphic Designer, Single

"I wish I had this book before I filed for divorce." – Tamika Hayes

Relationship Cookbook

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*This is dedicated to my
lovely & perfect wife.
You are the fulfillment of the highest
relationship & sweetest joy I know.
Being with you is proof
that God loves me.*

*Author's*Note

Greetings, I'm glad that you started this journey with me. The health and well being of relationships are very important to me because they not only shape our personal lives but also the world we live in. I love happiness and love to see people who are happy. Anything I can do to aid and add to this happiness is not only my joy it is my obligation.

Through my life I've watched people subscribe to philosophies and stereotypes about one another that drew us further and further apart. I could never understand how we continued to use ideas and concepts that have never worked for us and probably never will. I longed for other choices. All I could think is

that there has to be a different way to interact with each other that is more beneficial than the way we interact now.

What I found was nothing new. It wasn't an epiphany that was never seen before. What I found was at the heart and root of what and who we are as human beings. I found that the simplicity of loving and being true to oneself and extending that courtesy to others is the foundation of all happiness and fulfilling relationships.

You will not find sections on abuse or infidelity or lying spouses or emotional cruelty or disrespect or neglect. Those acts are not a part of relationships. Just like burning food is not a part of cooking. Besides we know that the best way not to burn food is to create good cooking habits. The aforementioned negative aspects of our lives are dysfunctional acts that we carry out when we are out of balance and integrity, and I think we need to know in depth how to prepare and build great relationships before we can truly understand how to address actions that destroy them. With that in mind make sure to pay close attention to the "special ingredient" boxes and headlines in the various sections, they will contain summaries and explanations of key points to help make the content of the book easier to understand.

This book draws the correlation between cooking and the simplicity of loving. It also offers a perspective

of relationships that you've never considered that provides a clearer understanding of the concept and process of loving wholly and freely. Some may label this a self-help book. I call it a book of advice. In the end we are not helped until we help ourselves. What enlightens us or brings us to a point where we desire to help ourselves, I call good advice. So I offer you my advice. I hope this will inspire us all to create or recreate our relationships into healthy experiences full of flavor and life.

My hope for us all is a world where we experience the best and most wonderful parts of each other each and every day.

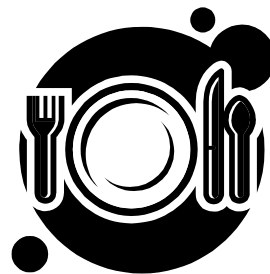


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*Eat for health & taste.
Enjoy life, love freely...*

What is the relationship cookbook? It's really simple. The relationship cookbook is a book of perspectives and associations that I believe will help you better understand, navigate, and nurture relationships. To further clarify that answer though, we need to go back some years.

When I went to college I was introduced to the idea of being the working poor. I was working my behind off and was always broke. I thought of getting a job, but being a computer science major and math major left very little time for me to do so. Like a great deal of working students, I could have made time for a job, sacrificed sleep and peace of mind and struggled through. However, I was always taught to work smarter not harder. So I had to come up with another solution.

I thought about working for UPS. It was only four hours a day, I thought, it couldn't be that hard. There I

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was on my first day of work, in the back of a truck lifting heavy boxes for four hours. After I was done I only had energy enough to find a bed a pillow and hard sleep. At that point I knew there had to be a better way to bring money into my lint filled pockets. The light came on.

Since high school I had helped peers with homework and studying for exams. In college there are the walking-lost; those who have no idea what their professors are talking about and absolutely no idea what to do to secure a decent grade from them. I started making the connection that I made when I used to shovel drive ways and mow lawns; people will pay you to do work that they don't want to do or don't have time to do. CHA-CHING!!

All I had to do was charge for the tutoring I was doing and presto-change-o I go from hungry to full, in the time it takes to solve a math equation, write a paper, or write a computer program. Considering how important college grades are, getting students to pay for them wouldn't be that hard.

I let everyone know that I was no longer a tutor to just friends, now I was a brain for hire. If you had money we were now "friends." The next thing you know I am working with students who are as lost as a cat at a dog show. Alas, a new problem; if customers paid money for help they wanted results. I couldn't just

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say “You’re hopeless. Either cheat or be prepared to bomb.” I found that results from frustrated, broke, overworked, overpartied college students don’t come easy and take a whole lot of time, which took away from the time I needed to do my work and enjoy the benefits of being a single man on a college campus. There were times I hid from the student center because I had so many friends who needed to be tutored that I would have had to skip all of my classes to meet with them.

At that point I decided I needed a process of tutoring that would cut time and still be effective. The only problem was I didn’t have one. Until one day one of my friends opened my eyes to what I needed to do.

He was in calculus and couldn’t catch the concepts of anything. Derivatives, integrals, series, everything seemed to float into the land of “blah, blah, blah” when it went into his ears. But he loved to eat, I mean loved to eat. So playing around I asked him what his favorite foods were. Then I began to call all the different components by the foods he liked. Exponents became doughnuts, variables became bacon, derivatives became shopping. Pretty soon calculus was a meal. When it came to the different symbols and theories I created a sort of math-to-English dictionary to help him translate them. When you see this say that, when you read that say this. A perfect match if there ever was one.

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By the time we were finished he was getting problems right that he hadn't figured out in weeks. I wasn't sure how or why this worked but I liked it. It exponentially increased his understanding and retention and cut the amount of time I needed to tutor him. The perfect combination needed to ensure that I make enough money to eat, retain business, and make it to classes.

The trick now was to figure out what I had done so I could do it again for all the other subjects I tutored. After some careful contemplation I came to the conclusion that most of us are intimidated by subject matter they don't know, but if you can dress them in something familiar and easy to recognize, it would take away their apprehension and alleviate a large amount of their fear. And if by some chance they started to have fun it would improve their learning curve. The challenge became finding a way to properly associate what they were familiar with to the subjects they were struggling through. Doughnuts and bacon will only take you so far. In my journey, I've used everything from love, to houses, to lawns, to CDs, to boyfriends and girlfriends, all depending on the frame of reference most comfortable to whomever I was dealing with.

A strange trend began happening. Everybody I tutored improved their grades. Not some, not a few, not a lot, every one improved to a B or better. I then ran into the same problem I had before-more students who

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wanted tutoring than I could handle. Because of my success, I now faced a different problem. How do I teach others to do what I do to take some of the pressure off of me? I began to formulate a philosophy and process to what I was doing. It was necessary to develop some form of methodology to this system if I was going to teach it to someone else; however, it never manifested. I just considered myself some sort of freak of nature doomed to hiding from confused students forever, which is exactly what I did for most of my college career.

Oddly enough, after college my understanding began to become clearer. It happened in the form of a friend. You know the friend everyone has who seems to know everything and more about you than you. That's him! In one of our many conversations we began talking about methods of teaching, western vs. eastern philosophies, and how that related to our "teaching" methods. He then gave me the basis of my own understanding. It wasn't so much that I dealt with subject matter that was familiar to them. It was that I dealt with tangible concrete everyday happenings that were easier to understand and process. After all, math and science are full of concepts. Concepts are abstract and harder to grasp, so by taking everyday happenings and relating them to complex ideas the ideas became easier to

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understand. BINGO! That's it! It's about a million years too late to use but nevertheless its here.

It all made sense. He said, "Yeah, we teach backwards. We need to teach about things we can touch before we teach about things we can't. It makes learning easier." I know it worked for me. He was preaching to the choir. Almost prophetically he followed with, "You ought to write a book about how to teach math, it would kill." I, sad to say, was all mathed-out. I tutored so much in my life that I wanted nothing else to do with it. I then realized that there's more to life than math.

What I was most interested in was our relationships to one another. If I wrote a book about anything, I would want it to be about that. But who am I to be writing a book about relationships? I've given advice to friends and received great advice from married couples who are twenty, thirty, and fifty years married, in love and happy, but does that qualify me to write a book on relationships? And if I do write a book what will I use as a point of reference?

The first revelation I came to was that relationships are not an exact science or else we wouldn't have such problems with them. The second was that people who are considered "experts" weren't right all the time, just right more than most. Thirdly, it was evident that if experts had all the answers we wouldn't still be looking for them, the answers that is. The conclusion then came

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kind of easy; the help I've extended to family and friends I could extend to everybody else and they can take it for what it's worth. The knowledge I've acquired has done me well and therefore might do the same for others. I've been the person friends have come to for years for advice about a little of everything. The only difference now is that I would be dealing with a bigger audience. Thinking of it like that made it look "not so big" and very doable. It was decided, I was going to write a book on relationships. Now the question became, how do I do it?

Let's not rebuild the wheel, was my first thought. *What have I used to give advice in the past?*, was the second. That was simple, food! No matter what the topic food always found a way to make sense. Why not? Everybody eats food. Everybody likes food. I'll write a book about relationships and call it "The Relationship Cookbook." Now the answer to my very first question is clear. The relationship cookbook is a book of perspectives and associations that I believe will help you better understand, navigate, and nurture relationships.

Our perspectives shape our reality and most of our perspectives are full of generalizations, stereotypes, and prejudices. To be truthful, we have generalized ourselves into nausea and in most cases we think we are dealing with concepts and ideas instead of with people.

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We talk about life, circumstances, infidelity, destiny and true love. What we are really talking about is how we live our lives and how that living affects us. Instead of admitting we're dealing with each other, we've created a gray area that allows us to excuse ourselves from responsibility and truth.

The gray area is where no one is responsible for their actions and no one is held accountable for anything they do. If you allow yourself to be used, it's love's fault. If someone hurts you, you blame it on immaturity and infidelity. If we can't get a date we blame it superficiality, mass media, shallowness, or a shortage of good mates. The aforementioned reasons are all projections to divert responsibility and guilt from the true culprits - us. We are the cause and effect of everything in our lives. You show me where you were victimized by a state of mind, way of thinking, or circumstance of life and I'll show you a person who was responsible; but admitting we mess up our own lives is uncomfortable, unpopular, and painful, so we create the gray area to avoid the discomfort and pain and to live in a mythical space where we are always justified all the time.

In this area we lose track of ourselves and those we love. That's where this book comes in. It offers advice and instruction that is concrete and tangible, as a reference point to how we relate to and with each other.

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Through the art of cooking we will explore this maddening universe of emotion and relationships and make some sense of it.

Relationship Doom?!

Are relationships really complex, hopeless, doomed to failure, and predisposed to conflict? Of course not. Relationships are almost exactly like our vision. If persons or places are too far away we can't tell what we are looking at, but as we get closer we can begin to notice details and specifics and make sense of what we are seeing. If we get too close we lose focus and full view of where we are and what we're looking at. Sounds simple doesn't it. If we are too distant from someone, we really don't know who or what they are. If we're too close, we lose focus on whom and what they are and their purposes in our lives.

It's not a coincidence that principles in our lives overlap, and that our senses and ecosystem can teach us how to better understand ourselves. In an attempt to make us and our situations bigger than they are, we have leveled a measure of importance on certain emotions in regards to relationships. In doing so we have also assumed that different rules, judgments, and processes apply to those emotions than the ones that rule our everyday lives. Living by two separate sets of

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emotional rules is where we have caused ourselves the most pain. Not saying good judgment can totally alleviate pain from our relationships, but it definitely can minimize it and change the nature of it.

In looking at the magnitude and importance of relationships to ourselves, we have not honestly measured the importance of the relationships to our partners/significant others. Just because we value the relationship it doesn't mean our partners do. Just because we are willing to sacrifice everything to salvage the relationship it doesn't mean our partners will. In important situations we act out of balance, assuming this behavior is okay because of the situation. As implied with balance, where there is none, one will fall over. We need to find a balance in distance that allows us to enjoy what we are seeing without losing focus of it. It is our actions that create imbalance that distort our perspectives. Removing these habits and practicing being balanced will help us to habitually keep our relationships in focus.

Is this analogy oversimplified? No it's not and with careful preparation this process will not only be simple, but second nature like breathing. To help facilitate this process we will be using *recipes*. Recipes are instructions on how to prepare successful relationships. Also included in the recipes are solutions to common mistakes we make when we are in

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relationships or seeking a relationship. By using the power of association coupled with everyone's appreciation of good eating, we will illuminate the truth about our nature and how best to address what we consider "problem behavior" in relationships. The difference between this book and other books is I don't suggest any absolutes or commandments (I'll leave those to GOD). I'm not an expert; I don't offer any tricks or magical solutions. I didn't write this book because I think I'm smarter than you, and therefore you need me. I won't sell some well phrased psychological b*s*. I'm not looking for an easy way to increase my market value in the dating stock exchange. I wrote this because what has helped me might help you. Plus, I need a way to get a free trip to Chicago to appear on Oprah, which brings me to the final difference. I like humor and will use it to lighten up the heavy load of our troubled minds. Like an operating room without the cutting and stuff. ☺

Like with any good cookbook you "must" follow the recipes. These recipes will include ingredients, pots & pans, cutlery, utensils, definition of terms (slice, sauté, simmer, etc.), timers, spices, conventional oven vs. microwave, etc. The goal here is to "cook a good relationship." The steps that will help us cook a good relationship are the same steps that will help us cook a great meal. We start with fresh, wholesome ingre-

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dients, a clean cooking area, the proper cooking utensils, knowing how to cook, and knowing when the food is done. You will have to practice and develop your cooking skills on a regular basis. The development will take time and effort. There's no substitute for the work you need to do. Blind guessing is not a part of the process. If you are willing to depend on luck, by all means close this book now and use it for table decoration. If you would like something more reliable, then read on.