

Connections

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(Please Note: The following is a minimally edited piece that we received from somewhere. We don't remember where we got it. The author is unknown to us. We do, however appreciate his/her thoughtfulness and felt it worthwhile to include it in "Connections" as a 'Guest Article').

How to Mess Up a Relationship (Part II)

5. **Push.** This is an art, albeit a crude one. When augmented with strategy 6, pushing can achieve spectacular negative results in even a short time. Remember, when pushing, only *your* satisfaction counts! It's a dog eat dog world, and you're a pit bull. Emotional and mental bullying can be as satisfying as old-fashioned physical coercion, and not nearly as prosecutable.
6. **Play on insecurity.** This is an old favorite. Using sexual insecurity as a weapon and combining it with strategy 5 is a four-star winner. Attempting to control one's partner(s) by manipulating him or her through your partner's insecurities is a sure-fire mess up tactic. It's so much more delicate than simply beating your partner up, too, though the resultant emotional damage can be remarkably similar.
7. **Avoid intimacy.** The trick of avoiding intimacy can be performed in several ways, but the easiest is to confuse intimacy with sex. Substitute the words "sex" and "love" for each other often in conversations. Repeat the mantra, "If you loved me, you'd know what I want." Practice strategy 8 assiduously, supplementing it with strategy 2. According to needs of the moment, figure out whether action or words are more likely to be ambiguous or misconstrued, and go with what gives you the most plausible deniability later. Some exceptionally talented individuals manage to give the impression of being intimate while successfully remaining stone-cold. Study sales techniques for pointers. People with good "lines" fall into this category, especially if the lines include explanations of how they truly **value** the other person.
8. **Don't talk.** Talking has been known to lead to communication if practiced carelessly. Communication will seriously impair your mess-up progress, and in certain cases will halt or reverse it entirely. If you **must** talk, use cliches and quotations from popular songs as much as possible, or fall back on strategy # 1.
9. **If all else fails,** make a safer-sex agreement with your partner(s) and then break it, contracting a communicable disease about which you do not tell them. Double points for avoiding all discussion or negotiation of sexual matters entirely so that the "agreement" is wishful thinking and completely deniable. For a coup de grace, add strategy 6 and tell them it wouldn't have happened if they had been satisfying you like they were supposed to.
10. **For the ultimate mess up,** remain technically faithful to your partner while breaking the spirit of whatever agreement you have whenever possible, keeping this knowledge bottled up to ensure maximum fear, shame and resentment. Some people win the grand prize with the fickle-and-stinging-nettle cluster for self-inflicted suffering and wasted potential by

managing to keep this strategy up until death do them part, concealing them from their spouse the fact that they have been shamming happiness all these years.

SUGGESTED READING

John Gottman, *Why Marriages Succeed or Fail, .And How You Can Make Yours Work*

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