

The New Couple:

The Ten New Laws of Love

Interview with Maurice Taylor & Seana McGee by Raz Ingrassci, edited by Shawn McAndrew



*Maurice Taylor (MT) and Seana McGee (SM) are relationship educators and psychotherapists who specialize in couples. Married and together for twelve years, they've just co-authored *The New Couple: Why the Old Rules Don't Work and What Does*, which is now at stores. Of course, they are also HQP graduates.*

RI: In the Process, people experience their need for unconditional love in childhood. However, it's not so obvious that we really need love as adults, too.

MT: Yes. We identify three 'higher-order' needs. One is the need for true emotional intimacy with another person; two, for raising our self-love; and three, for discovering and fulfilling our missions in life. All of these need to be actively embraced as part of our couple life-style. The Hoffman Process deals deeply with the issue of self-love. And, when we come out of the Process, we still need connection with another - and that's where *The New Couple* comes in.

SM: It's our premise that we've evolved as a species and as love partners, but the traditional model of marriage doesn't acknowledge this. It's mainly concerned with survival. We need a new model of love to satisfy this need for true emotional intimacy with another person, one that incorporates both education and healing - because that's what it takes to keep love alive today.

MT: The old model needs to be unlearned — actually replaced — because it's deeply ingrained, and we can't help but unconsciously

default to it at certain key points in our couple's journey. This shows up as the maddening patterns, and clusters of patterns, that threaten love.

RI: Something must be undermining marriage because if everyone were in love when they got married, why do only 50 percent of marriages last? And probably only one-half of those remaining married are actually happy.

MT: Again, it's the traditional model of relationship. When the intoxication or first stage of a relationship ends, couples move into the power struggle. That's when our unmet childhood needs surface, and we unconsciously look to our partner to meet them. We go into what we call the 'trance of tradition.'

SM: This trance has us convinced that we can get hitched and go off into the sunset on auto-pilot without addressing our higher-order needs or learning even the most basic relationship skills. So many marriages end in divorce today not because we're devolving as a species, but rather because we're evolving, yet the traditional model of relationship is buried within us like an obsolete software program and wreaking havoc.

RI: I can see that. Over the past 40 years, people have rebelled against the traditional marriage model but this rebellion hasn't necessarily brought more happiness because the old model has not yet been replaced with one that's based on love.

MT: It's actually a healthy reactionary swing away from something that doesn't work anymore, but we still haven't gotten the new information or done the healing we need. And deep healing is key; in fact, many of us aren't able to master the three basic relationship skills — emotional literacy, conflict resolution, and deep listening — until we've started deep healing. Old emotions, especially unresolved trauma, get in the way. This is where the Hoffman Process and our work dovetail so beautifully. And we do believe that the Process is the best way to accomplish the deep healing necessary to integrate a new model of love.

RI: I've often thought that when people are falling in love, they're still moving away from their parents. But when they get married, then they're emulating their parents. That's when the old marriage tapes get plugged

in and then we become unconsciously committed to replicating our parent's marriage.

SM: Very often we consider ourselves conscious and very spiritually evolved, even highly individualistic. And yet no sooner do we get hooked up with another person than we find ourselves falling back into the trance of tradition! That's why we need solid new guidelines to hold on to, ones that will help us stay true to ourselves and stay in love, which is where the ten new laws of love come in. They put partners on the same page.

RI: Bob Hoffman said, 'Everyone's guilty and no one's to blame,' and that seems true for relationships as well. We've inherited a model that simply doesn't meet our contemporary needs. And because the model is programmed inside of us, we need to do depth healing as well as education.

MT: Exactly. Depth healing is about removing the charge, dealing with our buttons and blind spots. Any place we are over-reactive, overly sensitive, or out of control is a result of emotional trauma that happened to us as kids. These charges need to be defused so they don't get continually triggered in our love relationships.

SM: There's something we call the 80/20 Principle: Hoffman grads would recognize it as the transference that happens in romantic relationships. We say that 80 percent of the negative emotional juice in any conflict has to do with unhealed, family-of-origin issues, and 20 percent actually has to do with our partner now. Sometimes we get confused, we think, 'The emotional child part of me feels neglected by my mate, but the pain must really be all about my father.' Although we need to address the 80 percent which has to do with the parent, if our partner forgets our birthday that's a real-time issue. That's the 20 percent. We need to look at both.

RI: Everyone who has done the Hoffman Process has, I think, been humbled by the power of transference. We've seen how it can sweep us along. What you're saying is that the 20 percent which is occurring in real time cannot be dealt with effectively unless we're also willing to deal with the other 80 percent, which is transference?

MT: The deep charge needs to be dealt with. In our book we link the all-important raising of self-love with the withdrawal of transference. They go hand-in-hand. Chapter seven, called self-love, offers a simple way for couples to disconnect transference. Of course, in some cases it does require facilitation; still, we present the method in the book. Learning relationship skills is also essential — that is, how to deeply listen, be emotionally literate and resolve conflict. Unless partners know these, we can't truly resolve transference.

SM: Each chapter represents a new law of love where we ask couples to look at their parents' marriage in light of that law. Be it the law of priority, equality or walking, the questions are the same: 'How did they express this law in their relationship? How did they deny it?' Then, more specifically, 'How did it impact their emotional intimacy? Self love? Mission in life?' In every case, we unconsciously internalize aspects of our parents' marriage and this shows up in our own relationships. These inherited relationship patterns need to be made conscious, just as the Hoffman Process makes conscious our other ones.

RI: How can your book help singles?

MT: We have a big vision for singles. Our first new law of love, "Chemistry" strongly suggests that singles make sure the person they choose is someone with whom they have the full battery of chemistries. That includes not only sexual passion but also something we call best-friendship chemistry. Personalities have to vibrate on multiple levels. This gives us the synergy we need to do the sometimes demanding work of relationship. So, when we find that special person, we can show him or her the book and say: 'This makes a lot of sense to me. What do you think? Are we on the same page?'

SM: And, 'Would you be willing to embrace this as a guideline for our relationship?' The traditional model is so ingrained and unconscious, it's eventually going to sabotage our relationships. But if we embrace the same principles from the get-go, we can avoid many of the traditional dilemmas.

So The New Couple works both as a road map for a new kind of relationship and as a diagnostic tool as well. People can use it to perform

post-mortems on former relationships. So many of us today are 'scared single.' Why? We're afraid of replicating our parent's relationships and the heartbreak we've already experienced in our own. Who can blame some singles for not wanting to get involved again? Bolstered by the ten new laws of love, they can now say, 'Okay, since I know what happened, I'm at far less risk to do it next time.'

RI: The first law is chemistry — and everything proceeds from that. So your book is for people who believe in love and believe that love is their destiny.

MT: Absolutely. We encourage people not to settle for someone with whom they don't have that soul connection. The only reason we would ever accept someone who's not is because of a dearth of self-love.

SM: More and more we think it important that partners choose others with whom they have psycho-spiritual compatibility. There's a recent phenomenon we call the 'new mixed marriage': This is when someone 'on the path' of personal development is married to — or in a relationship with — someone who is not. Sometimes we start out with this imbalance and sometimes one partner 'turns on' as time unfolds. This represents a kind of 'spiritual emergency' within the couple. The 'new mixed marriage' is one of the most daunting problems in modern relationships today. This is why we encourage singles not to settle for someone with whom they don't have psycho-spiritual compatibility. We're going to enjoy life much more if we agree on what is important from the start.

The Ten New Laws of Love

Chemistry: Insisting on passion and best friendship, the raw materials for success

Priority: Committing to the health of your couple by doing the work of relationship and facing self-destructive behaviors

Emotional Integrity: Creating an "emotional safe zone" by taking responsibility for your emotional blind spots, buttons and issues

Deep Listening: Hearing each others words and feelings with compassion

Equality: Insisting on fairness and respect in your couple

Peacemaking: Maintaining your emotional safe zone and giving peace a real chance

Self Love: Falling for You Know Who while healing transferences

Mission in Life: Discovering and fulfilling the purpose you were put here for and supporting your partner to do the same

Walking: Facing down emotional and financial dependencies and developing genuine interdependence

Transformational Education: Having the courage to learn, and heal, in order to stay in love

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