



Dr. Chalmer's Newsletter - Issue #3

Everything about relationships! Be kind, don't panic, and have faith.



Please tell your email app to display images--if you're not seeing my smiling face, your email isn't cooperating!

Welcome to Issue #3!

Flash! If you get this before 11:00am EST on Friday 1/27, you can still get my new book for 99 cents! [Here's the link](#)--hurry!

I suppose I should put this in the News & Shmooze section, but I just can't wait. As of this writing, my new book, *It's Not About Communication! Why Everything You Know About Couples Therapy is Wrong*, is a #1 Bestseller in the Couples and Family Therapy category on Amazon! And it's #2 in Divorce, and #3 in Clinical Psychology.

The other big ask about the book is:

Please submit a review!

Of course, I'm hoping you'll submit a five-star review. It's easy--just go to [this page](#), scroll down to "Write a customer review", and go for it.

Here's a link to my [Media page](#) for the book, which will help you write your review.

Thanks to all!

Wow--a bestseller. Yes, I know. That and \$2.50 will get you a cup of coffee. (Hey, I remember when that and 15 cents would get you a cup of coffee.) As I mentioned to one

of the people who emailed me telling me they got the book, I expect to make tens and tens of dollars from this venture. (Turns out you can be a bestselling author for a day or two, and still not make much money!)

But Judy said to me yesterday, "Wow--I'm having dinner with a bestselling author!" And after I finished looking around to see what bestselling author had joined us for dinner, and realized who she meant, I realized she wasn't being ironic.

If you're reading this after 11:00am on Friday, the promotion price will have gone up to \$1.99--still a bargain! So if you're so inclined, [here's the link again](#). And if you'd rather not get it from Amazon (cue the [Darth Vader theme](#) here), you can get the paperback [here](#), or anywhere books are sold.



Today's Relationship Tip

Neither of You is Nuts

Okay, I hope that's not news to you. And when I've mentioned this to the couples I work with--"Hey, we're old buddies now because I've known you for a good ten minutes, but one thing is pretty clear: Neither of you is nuts."--one or the other will often say, "You haven't seen us when we really get going."

I'm not trying to be flippant about mental illness, which can be serious. What I'm observing is that nearly all the time, the people I see having difficulty with their partners aren't dealing with untreated schizophrenia or having a bipolar manic episode. Yes, there have been some couples I've worked with where some sort of psychosis was indeed central to the relationship problems they were having. But those couples already knew that.

No, the reason I point out the obvious to people who clearly aren't psychotic, and the reason I think it's a good tip to keep in mind for your own relationship, is that a lot of the folks I work with are convinced that their partner *is* crazy. And, they think, if only they'd stop being crazy, they'd stop misunderstanding/over-reacting/generally being impossible.

And even worse, some of the folks I work with are worried that they're crazy themselves, and their partner reinforces this view.

Notice I didn't say "Neither of you is unreasonable." On the contrary, both of you are incorrigibly unreasonable--as am I, and everyone else! As Jill Bolte Taylor points out (remember her from [Issue #2?](#)), we humans aren't thinking creatures who feel; we're feeling creatures who think. Reason comes along to give us a good story for how we feel. And I don't mean that cynically. Reason is important, and helpful. But we don't lead with it, especially in intimate relationships.

So when either or both of you get into a panic, you can certainly act in ways that might *seem* crazy to the other--meaning, incomprehensible, somehow indicative of a disease process. And, oddly enough, pointing that out to your partner doesn't seem to calm them down, does it?

So next time you find yourself wanting to tell your partner, "You're crazy!" consider another possibility. Maybe they're not crazy, and you're not either. Instead, maybe they're acting in a panic, based on fears that you could both understand if you calm down enough to think about it and actually hear each other.

Want to comment? Got some tips of your own to share?

Send me a message!



What's the Big Idea?

In this section, I tell you about one of my favorite Big Ideas—at least, / think they're Big Ideas. These are the ideas that guide me in my work, and get me all excited. Of course, I'm a recovering nerd with frequent relapses, so what I find exciting might be, well, less so for you. But I know a lot of the folks I've worked with have found these ideas helpful, so maybe you will too.

These Big Ideas are pretty much what I write about in my books and talk about in my videos, so [check them out](#) if you want to explore these in more depth.

Today's Big Idea:

Faith is what heals people.

Remember way back a section ago, in today's relationship tip? (Ah, the old days...) Well, that idea from up there, that neither of you is nuts, is actually a statement of faith. And faith, say I, is what heals people.

Huh? Oh great--Chalmer has turned into a Bible-thumping preacher.

No, wait! Don't touch that dial! I can explain! (Sure, that's what they all say.)

Faith, as I use the term, isn't necessarily about religion. It's *certainly* not about any *particular* religion. I define it in my own quirky way not to be contrarian (well, maybe

there's some of that), but because I think the way I define it captures a lot of why faith actually helps people.*

Here's what I mean by faith:

Faith is when you accept that reality is right to be what it is.

Faith, as I define it, is a mindset, not a set of beliefs. Faith isn't something you can prove or disprove. Faith doesn't tell you what reality *is*. What reality *is* is the domain of science.

No, faith doesn't give you the facts. Rather, faith shapes what you do with them. It's the difference between dreary resignation and active engagement. The situation might suck, but people who have faith accept that they have to deal with it--and then deal with it courageously.

Remember my famous (infamous?) seven-word formula? I first came up with it decades ago when a colleague asked me, "How do you do couples therapy, anyway?" The answer--I basically tell people, "Be kind, don't panic, and have faith"--summarizes what helps people.

And faith is the keystone. Faith is the antidote to panic, which lets you be kind.

I go into these ideas in a lot more depth in [Reigniting the Spark](#) and [It's Not About Communication!](#), as well as several of my videos on [my website](#), so feel free to check them out.

*If you've got a better word, try to convince me! The fact that I've written two books in which my definition of faith is a central concept won't get in the way of my considering your argument at all. Hmmm...

Do you have a Big Idea? Or a Big Question? (Or even little ideas or questions?)

Send me a message!



News & Schmooze

Book news: Well, I already trumpeted the news about *It's Not About Communication!* being a #1 bestseller in its category on Amazon at the beginning of this issue. (I just like typing that.) If you haven't already bought it, by the time you read this the 99-cent promo might be over. But the next few days will feature a \$1.99 promo--still cheap!

And don't forget the [paperback](#) and [audiobook](#) versions, already available. Tell your friends!

Podcast news: Last week's [interview with Emerald Aueyong](#), a sex therapist in West Los Angeles, was wildly popular. Emerald specializes in helping couples work on sex across differences, be they racial, cultural, or physical. Judy and I had a great time interviewing her.

And then a couple days ago, we were interviewed on the Head Over Heels podcast, hosted by Roger Guertin and Nina Kako. The episode will probably drop in a week or so. Watch [my blog](#) for an announcement.

As a matter of fact, watch [my blog](#) for all sorts of announcements, including a post for each new podcast episode.

As always, if you have ideas for guests (including yourself) or topics you'd like us to include, [drop me a line](#).

That's all for now—bye!

--Bruce

[Send me a message!](#)

P.S. If someone forwarded you this message (feel free, by the way), and you'd like to subscribe yourself, [go to my website](#) and watch the magic box appear that says "Click here to subscribe to Dr. Chalmer's Newsletter!" And don't forget to look for the confirmation email--that's an anti-spam thing, which is why I do it. I'd love to welcome you on board!

Please take a moment to make sure these emails actually make it into your inbox! The easiest way (at least for those of us in Google-land) is just to add me to your contacts.

[Here's a link](#) that tells you how to do it for various email services. Please let me in--it's lonely in the Spam or Promotions folder!

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Podcast

Couples Therapy in Seven Words



Website

Dr. Chalmer's website:
Books, couples therapy practice, blog



It's Not About Communication!

Why Everything You Know About Couples Therapy is Wrong



Reigniting the Spark

Why Stable Relationships Lose Intimacy, and How to Get It Back

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