



## Dr. Chalmer's Newsletter - Issue #6

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 #6!

If you want to catch up on earlier issues, you can find the archive [here](#).

We're still interested in comments about two questions from previous newsletters:

- Have you heard about the recent trend for couples to "live apart together" (it's trendy enough that it has its own acronym, LAT)? It refers to couples who remain married or otherwise partnered, but choose to live separately. If you're in that kind of relationship, or know people who are, we'd like to hear from you. Has it worked well? What are some of the pluses and minuses?
- Re: the dreaded question, "Do these pants make me look fat?" Have you asked that question, or been asked that question? How have you dealt with it?

[Let me know](#) what you think!

In other news, we're always looking for ratings and reviews for my book *It's Not About Communication!* So I'm asking for a **big favor** (notice how I put that in bold to engage your wonderful kindness):

Even if you aren't able to take the time to write a review, please give the book a rating. (Of course, I'm hoping it's five stars!)

It's easy: Just go to [this link](#), scroll down to "Review this product" and push the "Write a customer review" button. You don't actually need to write anything--just assign a rating. It'll take less than a minute. Thanks!



## Today's Relationship Tip

### Assume Goodwill Even When Your Partner is Pissed

Has your partner ever been annoyed with you? Of course, you've never done anything that could remotely annoy your partner, right? So this this must be purely theoretical.

But on the off chance that you might have been less than delightful to your partner on occasion--or on the off chance that your partner might have been unfairly annoyed by you on occasion--this tip is for you.

(I suppose I could have simply said, "If you and your partner are human beings, this tip is for you.")

When your partner is obviously pissed off at you, before you respond with high dudgeon (has anyone ever responded with low dudgeon?), stop for for a few moments. You have more power in the situation than you might think, if you can just get hold of yourself.

If you respond with your own anger, you know where that goes.

But if you can recognize that (1) your partner's annoyance must have some valid basis, and (2) there's still goodwill between you, your reaction will tend to calm them down rather than escalate their anger.

Of course, to pull that off, you'll have to be clear that your partner isn't crazy or evil. Occasionally irrational? Sometimes unfair? Of course--so are you! But not crazy or evil.

When you recognize that your partner isn't crazy and doesn't mean you ill, your response will shape the interaction in that direction. Sometimes it means taking a couple minutes to calm down--you can let your partner know you're doing that by just saying something like, "Hang on a minute--just need to get my head clear." Anything that isn't about arguing will probably help.

It takes practice. Try it, and let me know how it goes.

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:

#### Ideas Open People Up. Ideologies Shut People Down.

This is one of the three Big Ideas I wrote about in *It's Not About Communication! Why Everything You Know About Couples Therapy is Wrong*.

In fact, the admittedly ridiculous subtitle of the book is actually about this Big Idea.

How? Well, there are a bazillion schools of thought about how to do couples therapy. For that matter, there are a bazillion schools of thought about how to do pretty much anything. And, although I haven't checked out all bazillion, it seems to me that the vast majority of those schools of thought are based on interesting and useful ideas.

Ideas open us up. When I hear someone express an idea I hadn't considered before, I'm offered a chance to explore new possibilities. I may end up not accepting all or part of the idea, but I'm wiser for the experience of exploring it.

But ideas often harden into ideologies. What's the difference? Ideas become ideologies when they become inviolable dogma--in other words, when you *know* the ideology is the only truth, and anything that opposes it is false and must be opposed.

Usually ideologies develop from good ideas. The idea of a loving God, for example, is arguably a good idea (at least, I think it's a good idea). But turn it into an ideology and you get the phenomenon of killing people because they don't believe in the loving God correctly.

And that's what happens with ideologies more generally: Ideologies become caricatures of the good ideas they came from.

In the domain of therapy, ideological thinking can take good ideas about how people communicate when they're doing well, and turn them into rigid rules about how to communicate, which often have the pernicious effect of stifling intimacy rather than fostering it.

As I said, you can read more about it in my book.

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

Send me a message!



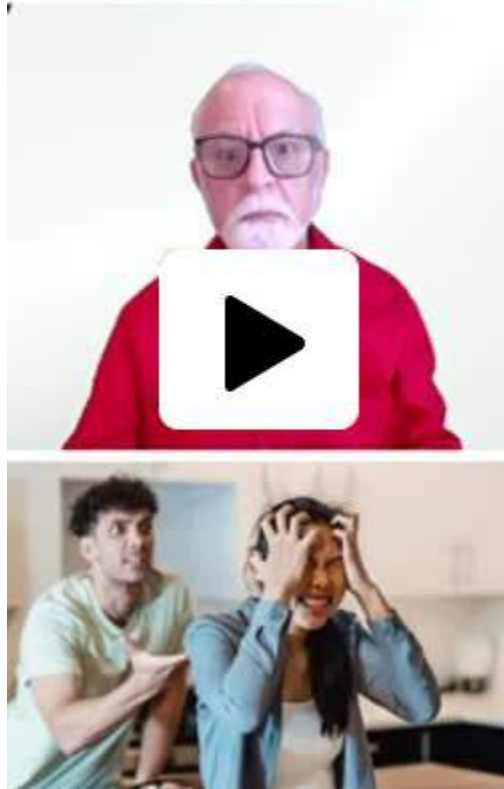
## News & Schmooze

**Book news:** I already put in a plug for ratings and reviews--thanks!

In other book news, I mentioned last time that as a newsletter subscriber, you can get a free pdf of my new booklet, *Seven Words to Jump-Start Your Love Life*. If you haven't downloaded yours yet, [here's the link](#). Please don't send it to anyone else--if they'd like to get a free copy, all they have to do is sign up for this newsletter at [my website](#). Of course, if you'd like to spend \$2.99 and get a copy for your Kindle, [here's the link](#) for that.

**The Ridiculous Announcement:** To promote the new booklet, and this newsletter in general, I've created a TikTok-style video featuring a Seven Words Rap. Here is on YouTube:

Learn more!  
[brucechalmer.com](http://brucechalmer.com)



If you'd like to do your own TikTok video to the rap, [here's the TikTok link](#). Let me know what you've created--I'd love to see the dance craze this will inspire!

**Podcast news:** I suppose this is also book news. I've noticed that a few hundred people per month are getting to a particular [blog post](#) on my website using searches such as "My husband complains about my cleaning." So Judy and I just did a podcast about that--you can find it (and all of our episodes) at <https://ctin7.com>.

The book news part is that I'm writing a short book tentatively entitled *My Husband Complains About My Cleaning! What Should I Do?* I'll let you know when it's ready.

As you might recall, we're always looking for some more listener questions for our podcast guests. So as I did last couple issues, I hereby dangle before you an offer.

**The first three people to write to me with a question for us and our interview guests to handle will receive a code for a free download of the audiobook version of *It's Not About Communication!*, narrated by yours truly.** Such a deal!

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, and you'd like to subscribe yourself, [go to my website](#) and watch the magic box appear that says "Click here to sign up for Dr. Chalmer's Newsletter!" And if I don't already have your email, 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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## Helpful Links



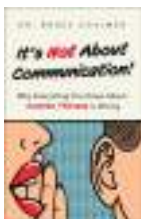
### Podcast

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

**Dr. Bruce Chalmer**

South Burlington  
United States of America



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