



Dr. Chalmer's Newsletter - Issue #8

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 #8!

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

Happy Passeastadan! Okay, I've probably managed to insult pretty much everybody who practices one of the big three western religions, but I do mean it sincerely: Happy Easter, Happy Passover, and Happy Ramadan to those who celebrate them!

Judy and I both managed to come down with bad enough colds to mess up our Passover travel plans, but we did get better soon enough to be able to be with some of our kids for a lovely seder.

Not to [kvell](#) (he says, kvelling), but our grandchildren are adorable! And our oldest granddaughter, age 8, managed to stay up all the way through [Chad Gadya](#), which we finished at about 1:00am.

In other news, I've released the book I mentioned in Issue #7. It's called [My Husband Complains About My Cleaning! What Do I Do? Hint: It's Not About the Cleaning](#), and is available for Kindle. You might think that's a rather specific topic for a book (okay, you'd be right), but it's based on searches that have led hundreds of people to my website.

My Husband Complains About My Cleaning! What Do I Do?

Hint: It's Not About the Cleaning

DR. BRUCE CHALMER



You'll recognize some of my favorite themes in the book: the seven-word formula, stability and intimacy, closed captioning, the "Oh, shit!" moment (more on that in today's Big Idea)-a lot of my greatest hits. There's also a chapter on how to get your reluctant guy to try couples therapy, and a chapter specifically for the husband who's been doing the complaining. Of course, as the subtitle says, it's not about cleaning--it's about relationships. Let me know what you think!



Today's Relationship Tip

If You Want to Complain About Something to your Partner, Don't Be a Jerk About It

Deep, right?

"Don't be a jerk" pretty much sums up a lot of relationship advice.

The trouble is, when we're being jerks, we usually don't realize it. Because I'm not being a jerk when I just say what's on my mind, am I?

Well, it all hinges on what we mean by being a jerk. Or more to the point, it all hinges on what effects I'm having.

This would be an apt time to review the concept of "closed captioning" (CC) I talked about in [Issue #4](#). Or even better, read [my new book](#) I mentioned earlier in this email, which talks about closed captioning in depth.

Essentially, what you're conveying when you complain about something to your partner depends more on the CC than it does on the overt message.

Let's say you're complaining about your partner's cleaning (after all, that's what all those searches are about).

The CC you're conveying to your partner could be something like, "I wish you wouldn't leave your dishes in the sink, but my relationship with you is more important than whatever I'm bothered by, and I just want to find a solution that works for both of us." If that's the CC your partner hears, well, you'll be fine.

But what if the CC is more like, "I think you're basically incompetent/stupid/lazy, and I know better than you do about pretty much everything."

That's what I mean by being a jerk. The women searching for advice on how to deal with their husband's complaints aren't looking for cleaning tips. They're trying to figure out how to handle it when their husbands are being jerks about it.

Of course, if you're the one doing the complaining, you probably don't think you're being a jerk. You're just frustrated because it seems like every time you try to bring up something that's bothering you, the conversation goes off the rails, no matter how tactful and understanding you try to be.

And if you're the one receiving the complaints, you're equally frustrated, because it seems like your partner is constantly putting you down and not listening.

To get out of that nasty pattern, you'll both need to understand the CC you're conveying. Which is difficult at first, because you're probably not fully aware of it.

So today's relationship tip pretty much boils down to this: Learn to recognize the CC you're conveying.

Of course, couples therapy might help.



What's the Big Idea?

In this section, I tell you about one of my favorite Big Ideas—at least, I 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:

The "Oh, Shit!" Moment is the Beginning of Healing

I talk about the "Oh, shit!" moment in both of my most recent books ([INAC](#) and [MHCAMC](#)), so if this is an intriguing idea please check out one of those books.

The "Oh, shit!" moment is a developmental stage for a couple in trouble. It's when either member of the couple realizes the validity of both their own and their partner's point of view--even when those points of view are at odds.

It's not the "Oh, shit!" you'd say when you hit your thumb with a hammer. Rather, it's more like "Oh, shit--I see why we're having this problem! And it's not because either of us is crazy--we're not!"

The reason it's "Oh, shit!" rather than "Aha!" is that accepting each other's validity doesn't solve the problem.

So what good is it?

Well, when you get to the "Oh, shit!" moment, you stop squabbling about the situation. And it's not necessary that both partners get there--just one of you is sufficient to change the situation, because your reactions will be different. Of course, it's even more powerful when both parties get there.

As I said, the "Oh, shit!" realization doesn't solve the problem. But it does mean that you can stop wasting energy on trying to get your partner to stop being crazy, and start to view the situation as a joint problem to be solved.

I give some examples of the "Oh, shit!" moment in those books I mentioned, but I'd love to hear more. If you have had the experience, [drop me a line](#) and tell me about it.

Send me a message!



News & Schmooze

Book news: Aside from the new book I mentioned above, here's another appeal for ratings for *INAC*. Just go to [this link](#), scroll down to "Review this product" and click on "Write a customer review." Even just a rating (5 stars, I hope!) is helpful. with or without a written review. And thanks!

Podcast news: [Our interview with Billie Best](#), author of *How I Made A Huge Mess of My Life: Couples Therapy with a Dead Man*, has been a hit! She was a wonderful guest-- check it out.

And we have several fascinating guests lined up to interview in the coming weeks, so watch for that.

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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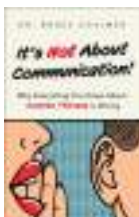
Podcast

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

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