



Dr. Chalmer's Newsletter - Issue #10

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 #10!

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

I haven't mentioned my musical life in this newsletter before, but I want to give a shout out to my old friends Steven and Kathy Light and Ellie Hayes, with whom I performed in a group called the Fyre and Lightning Consort for many years.

I was one of the founding members of Fyre and Lightning in 1974, and had left the group when I moved to South Burlington in 2004. Steven and Kathy are moving to the mid-west to be near their kids and grandkids, so Fyre and Lightning gave a farewell concert in Plainfield, VT on May 6. And they invited me to sit in on the last piece they performed, "Big Green Tree" by former F&L member Dennis Murphy, who died in 2010. It was a sentimental journey for me!

If you'd like to hear some of my music, check out the recording Fyre and Lightning did of my work [Berakhot: A Midrash Cantata](#). You can also hear some of my songs on [my YouTube channel](#)--the same channel where our "Couples Therapy in Seven Words" podcast episodes get posted. Let me know what you think.

I also want to mention that [Temple Sinai](#), the synagogue where Judy (Alexander, my wife and general co-conspirator) was the education director for 23 years until her retirement a couple years ago, will be honoring us. (Well, really honoring Judy, but they kindly decided to include me as an honoree too.) It's happening the weekend of June 23-24.

At the Friday evening service on June 23, we'll be performing the premiere of a piece I wrote for string quartet, flute, and SATB voices called "Awake North Wind." It's a setting of some verses from Song of Songs, and I dedicated it to Judy. We have a wonderful ensemble of talented musicians--I'm psyched!

Then on Saturday night June 24, [they're throwing us a party.](#)

So if you're around South Burlington on either of those dates, I'd love to see you there!



Today's Relationship Tip

If You Find Out Your Partner is Into Kink, and You're Not, Don't Panic!

Okay, so you discovered that your partner has been checking out porn sites devoted to BDSM, or has been cross-dressing, or is into actirasty (huh? Google it!). Or even weirder stuff. And you're strictly vanilla. What do you do?

I've worked with many couples dealing with differences of this sort. By the time they get to my office, they're often locked in a cycle of blame and shame: the vanilla partner is offended and appalled by the kinky partner's activity, which they've usually kept secret, and the kinky partner feels guilty for keeping secrets and ashamed for having the desires they have.

If you're stuck in this cycle, there's hope! As usual (says the couples therapist) the path to healing starts with being willing to talk about it. And that means tolerating the anxiety of having the conversation! (If you're playing the drinking game of taking a shot every time I say "tolerate anxiety," there's your cue.)

We're working on scheduling a podcast with an expert on this very subject, so stay tuned. In the meantime, don't panic!



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:

Don't Believe Everything You Think! Redux

In issue #9 I talked about the slogan "Don't believe everything you think." I mentioned that I didn't know where it originated. That brought a response from my colleague Carol Heffer, who filled me in on where it came from. And she also had a great story to tell related to my relationship tip from that issue.

So, with Carol's permission (thanks, Carol!), here's what she wrote:

My understanding, from clients, is that "Don't believe everything you think" came out of the rooms, the AA program. In fact, a client brought me a placard that I hang in my kitchen saying don't believe everything you think that she bought for me at an AA convention. Wherever it came from, It was a good tool in therapy.

Secondly, I do have a funny story about what you were writing. It brought to mind a camping trip when I was resting at my site as a young couple walked by in a slight state of agitation. In a very whiny, but sincere voice, he was saying, "I do care, I just wasn't listening!" I literally burst out laughing, it took me by surprise, including the intensity of his sincerity. I hoped he didn't hear me.

Thanks, Carol! I love that story. So often I'll hear someone (usually the woman in a hetero couple) saying their partner doesn't listen to them, with the implication that they think their partner doesn't care. And, as I mentioned, that usually turns out to be inaccurate, or at least incomplete.

Let me know what you think!

Send me a message!



News & Schmooze

Book news: I've been messing with the formats and covers of my latest booklets, [Seven Words to Jump-Start Your Love Life](#) and [My Husband Complains About My Cleaning! What Do I Do?](#) Please check them out and let me know what you think. They're both now available in all three formats: eBook, paperback, and audiobook. I redid the covers to present a more consistent "brand" (as all the gurus seem to recommend).

Incidentally, I've redone the format of the pdf of *Seven Words*. As you might recall, that's the freebie you got access to for signing up for this list. If you'd like to see the new format (or if you didn't take advantage of the freebie before), [here's the link](#) to check it out. And here's the new cover design:

Seven Words to Jump-Start Your Love Life

What You Need to Know,
in One Sentence

Dr. Bruce Chalmer



Feel free to give a review on Amazon, even if you've just seen the freebie. Just go to the page (you can find links to my other books toward the end of this email), scroll down to the "Write a customer review" button, and give a rating. Thanks!

Podcast news: Here are some of the topics and guests Judy and I have covered on our "Couples Therapy in Seven Words" podcast since my last newsletter:

[*You're Gaslighting Me!*](#)

[*Genocide, Optimism, and Belly Dancing: An Interview with Dr. Emily Bashah and the Honorable Paul Johnson*](#)

[*Okay, I Had an Affair. Why Isn't Saying Sorry Enough? An Interview with Dr. Deborah Miller*](#)

[*I'm Pregnant and Engaged, But I Have Doubts About Both!*](#)

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

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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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