

Relationship Stages

(as identified by Dr. Susan Campbell)

ROMANTIC STAGE: (2 mo.-2yrs.)

- You fall in love, feel amazing, and are thrilled to have each other
- Your brain releases a cocktail of bonding/happy chemicals
- You will do anything for each other & want to be together all the time
- Your partner seems to have no flaws and just "gets you"
- The purpose of this stage is to become so into each other that you are ready to face the next phase that will push you to GROW

POWER STRUGGLE STAGE: (a few months-lifetime)

- The illusion that 'romantic love will last forever' falls away
- You focus on your differences and your partner's flaws
- Partners feel angry and try to change or punish each other
- Couples get stuck in unhealthy roles and cycles where one person pulls away, and the other starts to push
- The purpose of this stage is to figure out how to be the most AUTHENTIC YOU, while still being loved by your partner

STABILITY STAGE: (on the other side!)

- The thrill of being in love returns and it feels even deeper & more mature
- You have learned to fight in a way that both of you win and feel respected
- You are OK with your partner being different from you & have boundaries
- You both really UNDERSTAND each other's most important needs
- The purpose of this stage is to REPAIR issues and bring you closer now

COMMITMENT STAGE: (now, get married/or re-married)

- Oops.. most people skip the first three stages and go right to this phase - still hopped up on happy chemicals!
- You have learned to love each other in a way that works for both of you
- You can honestly say to your partner, "I don't need you. I choose you knowing all I know about you, good and bad."
- Your purpose is here is ACCEPTING each other (issues included) and do not need or even want to change your partner (oh yes - it can happen!)

BLISS STAGE: (all the great stuff for a long, joyful time...)

- You become two people who have chosen to be a team
- Some couples in this stage work on a project together - some kind of shared creative work that is intended to contribute to the world in some way e.g. a business, a charity or a family
- The purpose of this stage is to experience a beautiful of balance of LOVE, BELONGING, FUN, & FREEDOM