

Your Ex-Husband Is In This Book

or

UNDERSTANDING MISTAKES IN LOVE AND MARRIAGE

The most important decision of our lives is the one we are least prepared to make.

The most important decision you make in the course of your life is the person you choose to spend it with. Yet we are content to entrust that decision to our young, inexperienced selves. This book is about the disparity between the gravity of the decision and the wisdom that young people are able to bring to it.

How did you ever wind up with that guy?

I was in love.

That's one answer. Here is a better one:

I don't know. I was young. I didn't know any better.

Both answers are correct because love has a habit of eroding one's good judgment. It doesn't cloud one's thinking, like a drug, although scientists have compared love to addiction. It doesn't unhinge a person's thinking, as if it were just another strong emotion that one is powerless to resist. It is much more forceful than any emotion or drug. It is something that shapes our thinking and our lives. It is an *organizing principle* that governs how we feel and what we do, and most of all how we think. It is also a bit of a mystery.

So we leave this mysterious force in the hands of young people, kids, virtually, whose psychology has been forged by classroom learning of dubious value, the perverse leanings of the public media and the wisdom of other inexperienced and naive young people. With respect to love and marriage, therefore, it is no mystery why so many of them get it terribly wrong. It is a mystery how they ever get it right.

This book is about natural psychology, a way we have of thinking about ourselves and other people and that we are more-or-less born with. Natural psychology is about how we get things right, most of the time. We share it, as you will see, with our little animal friends. It is something the poets know well, but not the philosophers so much. The Saints among us know it very well, but the scientists are just beginning to catch on.

But natural psychology is not perfect, as you know, and sometimes it lets us do bone-headed things. As it happens, the mistakes we natural psychologists make can be understood, if you bother to take the time. And as it happens, we can learn more about our psychology by studying its failures, I think. Hence, a book about mistakes.

I am a scientist by training by a physician by trade, but it has taken me a long time to learn about natural psychology. Now, you could say I give seminars about it. The course is given every day with my patients and their families, with husbands and wives and children. I try to explain why people think, feel and behave as they do. I try to teach them how to make decisions that are right-headed. They, in turn, have taught me about their extraordinary range of experience, about things that never happened even to the wild and crazy cast of characters among my own family and friends. From them I learned the limitations of the science I try to practice, but they learn, in turn, how the insights of science usually complement the intuitions of the poets, the saints and their grandmothers.

This is what I teach them, and what is much more interesting, what I have learned from them.

1. Heuristics
2. Three Principles
3. Control.
4. The Charm of the Psychopath
5. Narcissus
6. Why Smart People Do Stupid Things.
7. Philanderers and the Myth of the Myth of Monogamy
8. Indolent Men
9. Puer Aeternus
10. Men Who Explode
11. Love & Addiction
12. Perversion.
13. Love Itself