

Chapter 2 The Wonders Of Therapy

To provide an explanation on the latest remark about our couple's therapist, it's important to understand something about my girlfriend. She likes to turn our entire life into one never-ending therapy session. For example, once a week, she likes to do a "complaint session" between us. The way this works is, we begin a 5-minute timer clock, then we immediately find things with each other to complain about. Once the 5 minutes is up, or whenever one of us throws a pillow across the room, whichever comes first, we stop arguing, then go on about our day. By doing this, our couple's therapist says, it allows for a few moments to let the other person know that it's ok to be angry about something. Since we are being forced into expressing our complaints about the other, there is supposed to be a sense of freedom we experience when being in a relationship that encourages healthy communication. So, on this day, my girlfriend and I started the 5-minute timer and expressed ourselves without reservation. I don't remember the exact words that were spoken, however, the conversation went something like this.

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"Ok, so, what's your complaint?"

"It's your waffle cone perfume and your bubble gum scented perfume also. Why do you have to wear a perfume with the scent of waffle cones and bubble gum? Why can't you just wear regular perfume scents like all grown-ups do? Why do you have to be so immature?"

"Oh, you're calling me immature? What about you? What about your dinosaur socks?"

"So, I have socks with images of dinosaurs on them. So what. Dinosaurs are awesome."

"Dinosaurs are not awesome. They are scary lizards, and if that's not bad enough, you can't even put your socks in the hamper when you take them off. You just throw them on the floor. Who exactly is the immature one here?"

"Not all dinosaurs are scary. You're probably talking about T-Rex. Some dinosaurs were actually very gentle animals. Didn't you ever watch the Flintstones? Remember Dino?"

"Very funny mister smart guy. See, this is what I'm talking about. You and your nerdy replies to things. You always like to change the subject, then ramble on about stuff that doesn't matter. Nobody cares about dinosaurs or silly Flintstone's jokes."

"Well, dinosaurs are definitely better than your favorite animal."

"What, you think that dinosaurs are better than rabbits?"

"Obviously. Dinosaurs are way more interesting than silly little rabbits."

"Ok, that's it!"

"Please put that spatula down!"

"Why, what are you afraid of?"

"I don't want to be treated like a pancake and get smacked around. Is there such thing as MeToo for men?"

"Well, you should be treated like a pancake with responses like that."

"I don't deserve this kind of treatment. Simply because I think dinosaurs are awesome and rabbits are silly, it doesn't mean that you can threaten me with a spatula. I deserve an apology."

"What? You know what you deserve?"

"Go ahead, miss relationship expert. Go ahead and tell me what it is that you think I deserve. You know what though? You know what I really deserve? More clothes with images of dinosaurs on them. That's what I deserve."

"Nope. That is the wrong answer. So, I will tell you what the correct answer is. You deserve to be treated to another session of therapy this weekend with our couple's therapist."

"What? No. I won't go."

"Oh, yes you will."

"Oh, no I won't."

"Oh, you want to bet?"

"Why, what makes you think I will go?"

"Because I'm texting her right now, and telling her that you're being difficult."

"Oh, I'm being difficult?"

"Yes, you're rebelling against our love."

"Oh, so you're tattling on me now? See who's immature? I should tell on you instead. I'm going to tell her that you threatened me with a spatula."

"What, are you scared of a little spatula?"

"No, I just don't appreciate being threatened with spatulas and other kitchen utensils."

"How much time on the therapy clock is there?"

"One minute."

"Do you want to use the remaining time for some last-minute name calling?"

“Sure.”

“You go first.”

“Ok, sometimes you behave like a little brat.”

“Little brat huh? Sometimes you behave like a wannabe intellectual, mister know-it-all!”

“How dare you.”

“Is the five minutes up?”

“There’s thirty seconds left.”

“Oh good, that gives me enough time to do this.”

“Don’t you stomp on my foot little lady!”

“Why not? It’s not hard to miss it, you skinny little sasquatch!”

“Oh god, that hurts.”

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Needless to say, my girlfriend and I have some issues that we need to sort out. Our hearts might be together in the right place, however, our minds can sometimes be miles apart. So, naturally I was feeling terrible about our latest argument. I thought I would try and say a few romantic words to patch things up. I don’t remember the exact words that were spoken, however, the conversation went something like this.

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“Ya know, I was thinking that maybe I should apologize for our last argument.”

“Oh?”

“Yeah, maybe I said some things I shouldn’t have.”

“Oh, ok.”

“Yeah, I think that maybe I was just taking some frustration out on you, because I’m just upset about other things.”

“Other things?”

“Yeah, I’m still frustrated about the way my writing career is going.”

“Oh, ok.”

“There are no paying fans of my work, my patreon account has a balance of zero dollars, and the lonesome life of a struggling writer forces me to wake up to thoughts of contemplating my very existence. Regardless, I just want you to know that I shouldn’t be letting my frustrations interfere with our relationship. You should know that it’s sometimes just the thought of you that keeps me going.”

“Oh?”

"Yeah, I've really been thinking more about us lately."

"Oh, ok, what are you thinking about?"

"Everything."

"Everything?"

"Yeah, I don't know where to start. So, instead of giving you a long speech about what we have going on between us, I thought I would just come up with some Thanksgiving holiday poetry for you."

"Thanksgiving poetry?"

"Yeah, since the holidays are coming up, it seems like the appropriate time for some romantic holiday poetry."

"Oh, ok."

"Yeah, the holidays can be a good time of year to help writers find the right words to better express ourselves in our writing."

"Oh, ok."

"Yeah, sometimes writers like to focus on the festive spirit of the holidays as a way to inspire us to write material that is more romantic."

"Oh, ok."

"Yeah, for example, earlier I was thinking about all the good food that is served on Thanksgiving, and I naturally started thinking about you."

"Oh really?"

"Yeah, you know what I found out when I was thinking of the perfect Thanksgiving food that best describes you?"

"What?"

"I found out that there is nothing that reminds me more of you, than a plate full of delicious yams."

"You're comparing me to yams?"

"Yes. Now, go ahead and ask me."

"Ask you what?"

"Ask me, why am I like yams?"

"Ok, why am I like yams?"

"It's because yams are actually sweet potatoes, and just like you, they have just enough sugar in them to make a man smile."

"Very creative. I can tell when you're in the comedy writing mood."

"No, really. There's even more holiday food that reminds me of you."

"Oh really, like what?"

"Like those tasty cinnamon buns you always make."

"You like my cinnamon buns?"

"Of course. I'm a big fan of your cinnamon buns. They're the best."

"Did you like those I made yesterday?"

"Yeah, now go ahead and ask me if I liked the cinnamon buns that you made yesterday."

"Oh my god. Ian, did you like the cinnamon buns I made yesterday?"

"They were good. However, the cinnamon mix that you sprinkle on them was a little off."

"What?"

"Yeah, usually, for the mix, you put a ratio of one part sugar to two parts cinnamon."

"I did. I made it with that ratio."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes."

"Oh, because it seemed like there was more sugar in the mix than usual."

"I don't know. I don't understand."

"Oh wait, I think maybe I understand what happened."

"What?"

"Yeah, it's probably because your personality just naturally adds a little more sweetness to everything you make."

"Huh? Did you just make that up?"

"Yes."

"That's so nice."

"I know. Thank you."

"I don't know what to say."

"You don't have to say anything."

"It's just so."

"Why are you crying?"

"Because you're getting better at expressing your affection for me. I'm going to call our couple's therapist and tell her that you're making progress with expressing your emotions. I'll just cancel our next appointment."

"You're going to cancel our next therapy session?"

"Yes, we've made some progress, so I'll just cancel it."

"Hmm. So, a little poetry from me results in canceling our therapy appointments? Maybe I should summon my inner Hemmingway more often."

"We still need to go to our appointments so that we can sort out our issues."

"Yeah, well, one of my issues with our relationship is having to sit and talk about the details of our."

"Our what?"

"Um."

"What?"

"Those things."

"What things?"

"Those things that our therapist always says to consider about each other."

"You mean, feelings?"

"Ah, yes. Those. Feelings. Why do we have to sit and talk about the details of our feelings?"

"Because it leads to a stronger and healthier relationship together, that's why. Why, do you have better things to do?"

"Yes."

"Like what?"

"I could be out fishing or something."

"Fishing? You think that catching a fish is more important than our relationship?"

"We've talked about this. Fishing is my Zen. Every man has a Zen. For some, its sports. For others, its watching movies. For us fishermen, its catching fish."

"Hmm. Well, my Zen is a stable relationship. So, if you can have your Zen, then I can have mine too. So, you have to show up for our therapist appointments mister poetic fisherman."

"Look, I don't need to go to therapy. I already know this stuff. I don't know if you know this about me, but I have authored some work, and in the process of my research and writing, I have come to learn some things about this love and feelings stuff you always like to talk about."

"Oh, ok. What have you learned?"

"I have learned that for us to define love, we have to understand it as having a commitment for the happiness of another person."

"I'm listening."

"Ok, so, if you truly loved me, you would truly want to make me happy by not forcing me to sit in front of a therapist and explore our emotions. Instead, you would want me to be happy by letting me spend the day fishing."

"Not fair."

"Why?"

"Because, if you loved me, you would also want me to be happy by attending our therapy appointments and exploring our emotions. Why is your happiness more important than mine?"

"Are you calling me selfish?"

"Uh, yes, perhaps I am."

"I don't like where this is going."

"Why, because you are wrong and I am right?"

"No, because you are saying that it is more important to spend the day at therapy than go fishing."

"That does not make your argument right. It just means that you don't like not being correct."

"Oh my god. Is this always the result of couple's therapy? To demonstrate that men are always unknowingly insensitive to the happiness of women?"

"Yes, mister smarty pants. Yes it is."