

STAGES OF A DEEPENING RELATIONSHIP

- I. **ONENESS: COURTSHIP/HONEYMOON: "WE" FOCUS**
Personal values, feelings, and thoughts are put in the background.
 "I only have eyes for you."
 "She's all the world to me!"

- II. **SEPARATENESS: MANAGING ANXIETY ABOUT DIFFERENCES**
Disillusionment replaces idealism.
 .dirty diapers/cat box
 .blush is off the rose
 .Marriage Encounter after 2 years

- III. **EXPLORATION: DISTANCING VS. PURSUING**
Redefining your identity is the goal.
 Who am I now?
 Who are we now?

- IV. **RE-CONNECTION:**
Find unity in diversity by respecting differences.
 .agreeing to disagree
 .asking for needs without reactivity
 .accepting resentment as a signal, not a threat

- V. **SYNERGY: VALUING AND SUPPORTING DIFFERENCES**
Cherish creativity: $1 + 1 = 3$
The whole is greater than sum of the parts.

Remember building a close relationship with God, self, or another:

- .takes time
- .takes effort
- .is progressive; relationships evolve
- .is cumulative; each stage builds on the past

Believe in the process. Don't be afraid to seek help along the way.