

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.