



How To Go From

ORDINARY TO EXTRAORDINARY LOVE

*10 Ways to Upgrade Your Relationship
& Embody Your Ideal Love Life*

with JENNIFER RUSSELL & BRYAN FRANKLIN

FROM ORDINARY TO EXTRAORDINARY LOVE

Commonplace, ordinary views lead to having commonplace, ordinary relationships. We found 10 such beliefs that seem like they make sense on the surface, but actually strangle the magic out of what could otherwise be epic and lasting love affairs, and then offer a new, broader context for each that can serve as the pillars of an extraordinary love relationship. For each pair, notice the part of you that wants to agree with the “ordinary” view, and then let yourself be expanded by the way extraordinary relationships are held.

ORDINARY LOVE

- #1 Having a Fixed Self
- #2 Relationship Is Work!”
- #3 Evaluate Your Partner
- #4 Committing To Each Other
- #5 Love Certain Parts
- #6 *Who loves who more?*
- #7 The Good Outweighs the Bad
- #8 Asking ‘Am I Happy?’
- #9 Being Caretaker For Their Wounded Child
- #10 Wanting A Partner to Help Soften My Fears

VS. EXTRAORDINARY LOVE

- #1 I Having A Fixed Commitment
- #2 Relationship Is “Privilege and Play”
- #3 Evolve Yourself
- #4 Committing To A Shared Context
- #5 Love All Parts
- #6 *How does giving my love impact my partner*
- #7 The ‘Bad’ Is Access To More Good
- #8 Asking ‘Am I Extraordinary?’
- #9 Being a Playmate For Their Healthy Child
- #10 Wanting A Partner Who Helps Me Face My Fears

#1

In an Ordinary Relationship...

HAVING A FIXED SELF

We relate to ourselves as a mostly fixed identity, with certain wants, needs and preferences and often have a flexible commitment - we'll stay together as long as it feels good to us and will leave if it doesn't. We look for a partner that can "fit into" that picture and meet as many of the needs, wants, and preferences as possible without obstructing our freedom and self-expression too much.

In an Extraordinary Relationship...

HAVING A FIXED COMMITMENT

In an 'Extraordinary Relationship', we reverse what is fixed and what is flexible. We have a flexible identity but a fixed commitment. We realize the exhilaration and growth available when we are willing to melt the ice around our identity allowing ourselves to be expanded and changed by our circumstances, by our partner, and by the environment around us. To do that we realize we need a point of stability which is our commitment to each other to form a solid point of love and connection to allow us to grow and soar. As the relationship grows, its needs, wants and preferences change. As it changes, so do we. We don't try to fit the relationship and our partners into a fixed view. We instead view our commitment as fixed, and allow that fact to inform who we must become moment to moment. This is one of the keys to true longevity in your relationships.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: *In your relationships do you tend to have a fixed identity and a flexible commitment, going from one relationship to the next? Or a flexible identity and a fixed commitment staying together and changing who you are day by day?*

#2

In an Ordinary relationship...

RELATIONSHIP IS WORK!

Anyone who's had a serious relationship knows that relationships are hard work. If you don't "do the work" of staying connected and navigating each other's triggers and shortcomings, your relationship will atrophy and eventually fall apart. They are hard work because we tend to attract the people as partners who know how to push our buttons the best, and over time, even the smallest flaws in our partners can become difficult to be with because of repeating patterns.

In an Extraordinary Relationship...

RELATIONSHIP IS PRIVILEGE & PLAY!

If you relate to relationship as work, you are bringing in the associations of burden, obligations, and all manner of heavy and unpleasant things. In an extraordinary relationship, you realize the privilege that it is to have someone walking down the same path with you. You get to be together and play together as you learn to develop yourself. You can either do this development alone, with no companion, or you can do the same development in the context of loving and being loved. It's a context that allows you to see relationship as an infinite game, where you get to experiment and play, and experience the preciousness of a having a partner in answering your deepest and most important questions.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: *It can be rewarding to notice what happens when you hold your relationships this way. How does the relationship feel? How do you feel? How does your partner feel to you? In your relationships do you tend to view them as WORK or as PRIVILEGE AND PLAY?*

#3

In an Ordinary Relationship...

EVALUATE YOUR PARTNER

When you are trying to figure out if an ordinary relationship is going to work out, look at how well your partner meets your needs in the important areas of your life. Are they successful enough? Sensitive enough? Caring enough? Sexy enough? Spiritual enough? Making sure that your partner measures up is an important prerequisite to a fulfilling relationship.

In an Extraordinary Relationship...

EVOLVE YOURSELF

In an extraordinary relationship, we look at the ways we are not getting what we want as pointing to our own shortcomings. If you don't have enough of a particular experience in your relationship, take on the evolutionary mindset and figure out who you would need to become to inspire what's missing from both you and your partner to add it freely, or become a version of yourself that doesn't have those comparisons to begin with.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: *Our challenge - What if you spent a week, a month, or even a year on a 'no complaint diet' - noticing how often each day you are in the evaluating mindset and shifting into an evolving one. How did that go? What tended to trip you up the most? Could you experience more moments of present perfection? In your relationships do you tend to EVALUATE OTHERS or EVOLVE YOURSELF?*

#4

In an Ordinary Relationship...

COMMITTING TO EACH OTHER

In an ordinary relationship it is important that you be committed to each other. It's natural to prioritize your commitment to each other above all else. Commitment to each other in the relationship is what creates the feeling of safety that allows for deeper intimacy. If one partner is more committed than the other, this lack of balance will be the constant source of irritation and frustration in the relationship. Of course, if you are not committed to each other, then when something better comes along or things get hard, the relationship can simply dissolve.

In an Extraordinary Relationship...

COMMITTING TO A LARGER CONTEXT

In an extraordinary relationship, the polarity between the two people is not maintained through a commitment to each other (from one pole to another) but through each person's commitment to a third pole: A higher sense of purpose for the relationship and both people in it. If you are more committed to the context you have for relationship itself than to the other person, you avoid the common push and pull of compromise and allow each of you to continually evolve toward the relationship's higher purpose. Having a third pole in your relationship helps stabilize and evolve your relationship, transcending the push and pull power struggle as you each become committed to something larger than just getting your needs met.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: *As you reflect on the context for your relationship, what is the larger reason you are in your relationship? What vision is it serving in you? In your relationships do you tend to have two poles, COMMITTING TO EACH...or do you tend to have three, COMMITTING TO YOUR RELATIONSHIP VISION?*

#5

In an Ordinary Relationship...

LOVE CERTAIN PARTS

In an ordinary relationship, you come to realize that your partner has many different faces, some of which you love and the others you can grow to accept. To make your relationship last, downplay the parts you don't care for, and highlight the ones you love, encouraging your partner to become more and more like that all the time.

In an Extraordinary Relationship...

LOVE ALL PARTS

In an extraordinary relationship, you love ALL the parts, not just the loveable ones. You deliberately uncover any unsavory, unhealthy, or unattractive parts of your partner in order to give them love and help them heal - they do the same for you. You each accept and love the parts you've each been unable to love in yourselves - especially the ones without "ribbons and bows" and in loving these parts, both your shadows can become healed, integrated, and whole.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: *What's a part of you you've been unable to love in yourself? How is your partner already helping to love that part more? What's a part of your partner you dislike? What's one way you could accept that part more and love it into more of its wholeness? In your relationships do you tend to love CERTAIN parts or love ALL parts?*

#6

In an Ordinary Relationship...

WHO LOVES WHO MORE?

In an 'Ordinary Relationship' we often ask ourselves 'Who love who more?' We can feel love's tug of war, the push and pull that can often have us feeling insecure. One partner is constantly running away and the other is trying to close the gap, repeating this fear based cycle, never quite feeling connected, liberated, and secure at the same time. There is often an unevenness to the balance of love. In an ordinary relationship you try (though difficult) to find a balance where each partner loves the other the same amount showing more or less love to try to keep the relationship stable.

In an Extraordinary Relationship...

HOW DOES MY LOVE IMPACT MY PARTNER

Instead of looking for evidence of love or unlove, extraordinary partners look at the effect of their own love on their partner, and grow the ways they express their love to have the most beneficial possible effects. Instead of focusing on who moves toward who, you focus on how much you can give. There's no more tit for tat and trying to keep tabs on whose ahead and whose behind. In an extraordinary relationship you forget to measure how much love you are receiving from your partner, or looking for evidence of love or unlove,

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: *What would happen if you realized you are loved and there's nothing more you or your partner needs to do to prove that? What happens when you focus on the impact your love is having vs how much love you are getting (or not getting)? In your relationships do you tend to feel INSECURE or do you undeniably know that YOU ARE LOVED?*

#7

In an Ordinary Relationship...

GOOD OUTWEIGHS THE BAD

There are good parts of the relationship and bad parts. Maybe the sex is great, but the conversation isn't very stimulating. Maybe you feel loved and supported, but not stretched and challenged to be the best version of yourself. Focus as much as possible on the extending the good, and do what you can to make the bad parts tolerable, so you can move on as quickly as possible back to what's good. In a good relationship, the good outweighs the bad.

In an Extraordinary Relationship...

BAD IS ACCESS TO MORE GOOD

In an 'Extraordinary Relationship', the 'bad' gives you more access to the good. What's in the way IS the way as we realize that any aspect of the relationship that brings out the "bad" allows both you and your partner to see and heal your blind spots. Every time a supposedly negative interaction occurs, extraordinary partners look forward to those moments where they can use the loving container of their relationship to unlock those patterns and heal each others wounds, creating more access to our wholeness, our truest selves and entirely new ways of being.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: *What if you could look forward to moments of difficulty and challenge? What happens when you frame those moments as the most exciting opportunity to grow and heal? Does this mindset bring more resource, lightness, and creativity? In your relationships does the GOOD OUTWEIGH THE BAD or is your mindset that the BAD IS ACCESS TO MORE GOOD?*

In an Ordinary Relationship...

YOU ASK, 'AM I HAPPY?'

In an ordinary relationship, you evaluate your relationship (and your partner) by asking yourself "Am I happy?" If the answer is "Yes!", then the relationship is working. If the answer is "No", then you look for the problem with the relationship that is causing your unhappiness. If the answer is "No" too often, then the relationship is probably not working out.

In an Extraordinary Relationship...

YOU ASK, 'AM I EXTRAORDINARY?'

In an extraordinary relationship, you evaluate your relationship (and yourself) by asking, "Is my life and relationship extraordinary?" If the answer is "Yes!", then praise your partner for helping to create the environment that is allowing you to flourish. If the answer is "No", you are willing to give up a day of happiness, comfort, or safety in exchange for growth. Your partner's extraordinary love might not always look like kind words of encouragement, but you can trust that their motivation is to facilitate you being extraordinary, and they are willing to give up even their own comfort and safety to be in service to your development.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: *In your relationships what questions are you asking yourself to determine whether your relationship is working and thriving? What are you using as a measure?*

In an Ordinary Relationship...

CARETAKER FOR MY WOUNDED CHILD

In an ordinary relationship, you expect your partner to learn your triggers and sensitivities and stay clear of them, effectively caretaking your wounded inner child. While no one wants their partner to play “mommy” or “daddy” all the time, one way you know that you are loved is that your partner takes care not to do the things that they know bother you or make you uncomfortable.

In an Extraordinary Relationship...

PLAYMATE FOR MY HEALTHY CHILD

In an extraordinary relationship, the joy and wonder of your healthy inner child gets to play. The innocent, open-hearted, pre-wounded child in you that hasn't learned so many limiting beliefs gains a playmate to be silly with, to explore new worlds with, and to feel idealistic again in a field of love and acceptance. If there is historical pain or trauma that comes up, each partner helps the other to re-parent themselves, and sits as a witness and supporter for the internal job of remembering that you are whole, complete, and enough. In the face of that wounding your partner helps you feel more empowered vs less, and reminds you of your own knowing.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: *In your relationships when things are challenging do you tend to parent your partner or do you tend to encourage your partner to re-parent themselves? When things are challenging, does your partner tend to parent you or do they encourage you to parent yourselves?*

#1

0 *In an Ordinary Relationship...*

PARTNER SOFTENS MY FEARS

In an ordinary relationship, you seek your partner out to console you and protect you from the things that scare you most in life. Your relationship is a safe haven for you to fade, or even hide from your worst fears about yourself, the world, life, and death. If your partner doesn't share these fears, they can protect you by standing out front and helping to handle them for you.

In an Extraordinary Relationship...

PARTNER HELPS YOU FACE YOUR FEARS

In an extraordinary relationship, your partner stands beside you, helping you to lean in to your fears. An extraordinary partner feels the discomfort with you, and sees the courage in you to face the fears you never thought you could. This expands the sandbox of what you can play with in your life to include the things that you were formerly afraid of, and therefore expands and helps you evolve your identity seeing you as capable.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS: *How do you handle fear when it comes up in your relationships? What has you feel the courage to lean in and face your face? What has you feel too afraid to face them? What does your partner tend to do in those moments? What would support you even more?*