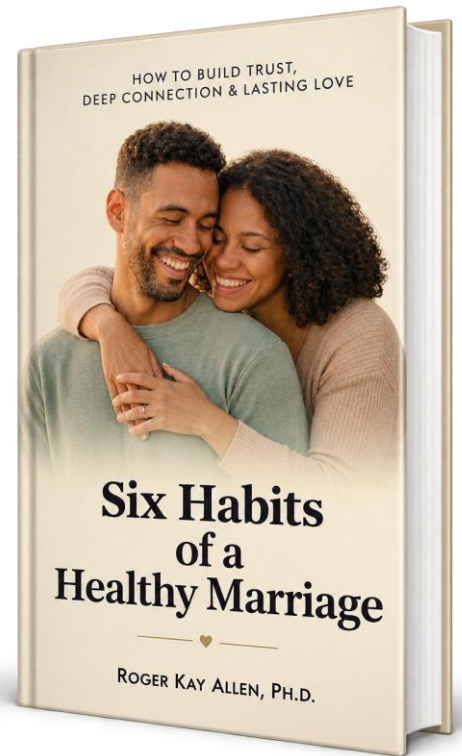


Six Habits of a Healthy Marriage

How to Build Trust, Deep Connection,
and Lasting Love

Roger K. Allen, Ph.D.

Book Overview



“ Lasting love is not luck.
It is built through strengthening choices and intentional habits.

Most couples enter marriage with love, hope, and good intentions. But few are taught the practical relational skills that sustain love over time.

As stress, differences, disappointments, and misunderstandings arise, even caring partners can fall into recurring patterns of criticism, defensiveness, control, accommodation, or withdrawal. They may begin to wonder whether something is wrong with the relationship—or with each other.

Often, the problem is not a lack of love. It is a lack of tools. Couples may love each other deeply and still not know how to respond when they feel hurt, misunderstood, disappointed, or emotionally threatened.

In *Six Habits of a Healthy Marriage*, psychologist and relationship educator Roger K. Allen draws on more than four decades of experience to offer a comprehensive and hopeful path toward trust, deep connection, and lasting love. Through memorable models, engaging stories, self-reflection, and practical exercises, he helps couples translate good intentions into strengthening patterns they can practice every day.

The quality of a marriage is shaped in key moments—when partners choose to turn toward or away, listen or defend, take responsibility or blame, repair or withdraw. These moments do not require perfection. They invite awareness, practice, and more intentional choices.

“ Love brings people together. Healthy habits help love mature.

What Readers Will Learn

- Understand the predictable stages of marital growth.
 - Recognize recurring patterns that weaken emotional connection.
 - Take responsibility for personal needs, emotions, and choices.
 - Replace criticism and control with acceptance, respect, and honor.
- Deepen friendship, affection, intimacy, and shared enjoyment.
 - Communicate honestly, listen empathically, and create emotional safety.
 - Navigate conflict constructively and repair inevitable hurts.
 - Create a shared vision shaped by mutual values and dreams.

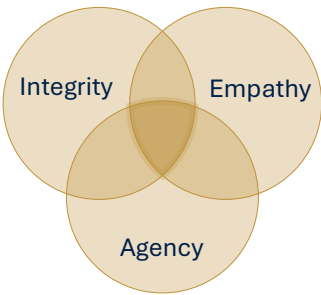
Three Fundamental Frameworks for a Healthy Marriage

1. THE JOURNEY: FIVE STAGES OF MARITAL SATISFACTION

Five stages of marital satisfaction offer a developmental roadmap. The stages are not rigid labels, nor does every couple move through them in exactly the same way. They help couples understand where they are, normalize predictable challenges, and see the direction of growth.

ENCHANTMENT <i>Love feels effortless</i> Idealize • merge • delight	DISILLUSIONMENT <i>Differences become visible</i> React • blame • struggle	STABILITY <i>Life becomes functional</i> Coexist • manage • settle	FRIENDSHIP <i>Partners turn toward each other</i> Know • enjoy • support	MATURE LOVE <i>Love becomes intentional</i> Choose • honor • cherish
--	---	---	---	---

2. THE DESTINATION: MATURE LOVE MODEL



*The integration of Integrity, Empathy, and Agency.**

MATURE LOVE

- Integrity :** Living from a strong sense of self.
- Empathy :** Honoring your partner's experience.
- Agency :** Owning responsibility for your choice-making.

3. THE PATH: THE SIX HABITS

- 1. Self-Responsibility** - Own your inner experience, choices, and contribution.
- 2. Acceptance and Honor** - Replace judgment and control with respect and appreciation.
- 3. Friendship and Intimacy** - Build companionship, affection, enjoyment, service, and intimacy.
- 4. Communication and Collaboration** - Create emotional safety through honesty, empathy, and listening.
- 5. Healthy Conflict and Repair** - Navigate differences constructively and repair inevitable hurts.
- 6. Shared Vision** - Build a life guided by shared values, priorities, dreams, and purpose.

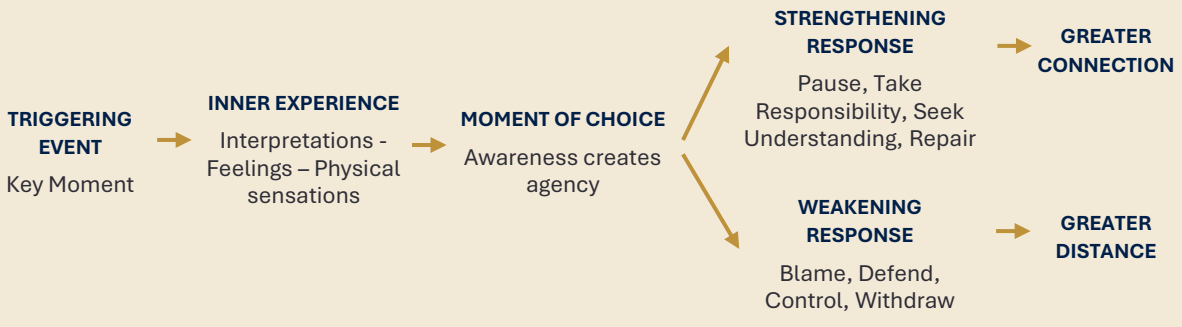
A Small Sampling of Practical Tools

Key Moments: Where Marriages Grow

A marriage is shaped in key moments—when we feel hurt, disappointed, misunderstood, threatened, or pulled toward an automatic reaction. These moments are not merely problems to manage. They are among our greatest opportunities to pause, practice mature love, and make choices that strengthen the relationship.

The Conflict Model

What happens between an event and our response matters. When couples become aware of the thoughts, interpretations, emotions, and physical sensations triggered within them, they discover a moment of choice. They can react automatically in ways that weaken the relationship—or respond intentionally in ways that build understanding, repair, and connection.



The Clearing Letter

A Clearing Letter is a guided writing exercise that helps you work through strong emotions and release judgments, resentments, and unmet expectations—whether arising from real or perceived wrongs. At heart, it is an exercise in forgiveness that helps you reclaim openness, goodwill, and love for your spouse.



A Marital Coat of Arms



A Marital Coat of Arms helps couples identify and visually represent the values, strengths, traditions, and experiences that define their relationship. The completed crest becomes a meaningful expression of their shared identity, purpose, and vision.

From Insight to Practice

These are just a few of the practical tools that help couples turn insight into action. Each chapter concludes with a Self-Reflection and Challenge, inviting readers to apply what they are learning in the key moments of their own marriage.

LEARN » REFLECT » PRACTICE » GROW

Table of Contents

EMOTIONAL CONNECTION

1. The Five Stages of Marital Satisfaction
 2. Expanding on Mature Love
 3. Toxic Patterns that Kill Love
 4. Establishing a Positive Emotional Connection
-

HABIT ONE: SELF-RESPONSIBILITY

5. Self-Responsibility in Marriage
 6. Playing the Victim
 7. Strategies for Claiming Ownership
 8. Emotional Self-Regulation
 9. The Key Moment Model: Challenging Your Story
-

HABIT TWO: ACCEPTANCE AND HONOR

10. The Gift of Acceptance and Honor
 11. Two Ways of Being
 12. Differences Couples Often Misread
 13. The Clearing Letter: An Exercise in Forgiveness
-

HABIT THREE: FRIENDSHIP AND INTIMACY

14. Friendship in Marriage
 15. Cultivating Positive Feelings
 16. Fun and Recreation
 17. Serving One Another
 18. How to Improve Your Sexual Relationship
 19. How to Talk about Sex
-

HABIT FOUR: COMMUNICATION AND COLLABORATION

20. Four Styles of Communication
 21. Seven Patterns of Communicating
 22. Becoming Vulnerable in Your Communication
 23. Vulnerable Listening
 24. The Feedback Wheel: A Structured Skill in Vulnerable Communication
-

HABIT FIVE: HEALTHY CONFLICT AND REPAIR

25. The Conflict Model
 26. Dialogue Step One: Start with Respect
 27. Dialogue Step Two: Create a Pool of Shared Understanding
 28. Dialogue Step Three: Search for Solutions
 29. From Conflict to Clarity
 30. Aligning Expectations
-

HABIT SIX: SHARED VISION

31. Creating a Shared Vision
32. Creating Marriage Enhancing Structures
33. Your Marital Coat of Arms
34. Parting Words

Praise for *Six Habits of a Healthy Marriage*

“After four decades of helping couples on the brink, I can say with confidence that most relationship breakdowns aren’t due to a lack of love—but a lack of skills. This refreshingly practical book gives couples the tools to navigate challenges and build habits that create lasting change.”

Michele Weiner-Davis

*Author of *Healing from Infidelity**

“Roger Allen offers a thoughtful, grounded framework for couples who want more than romance—they want growth. With clarity and respect, he invites partners to approach relationship as a path of intentional practice and personal development.”

Harville Hendrix, Ph.D., and Helen LaKelly Hunt, Ph.D.

*Co-authors of *Getting the Love You Want**

“A clear, practical framework that bridges relationship research and clinical wisdom. One of the most accessible and useful books of its kind. I would happily recommend it to any couple looking to strengthen their relationship.”

Nathan D. Leonhardt, Ph.D.

Assistant Professor of Family Studies, Brigham Young University

“I love the way Dr. Allen makes relationship growth feel practical, hopeful, and actually doable. Couples will recognize themselves in these moments and feel seen rather than judged. This makes it easy to understand what’s happening beneath the surface in common conflicts and the realistic shifts couples can make to feel closer. I’d genuinely recommend this book to any couple.”

Dr. Amber Price

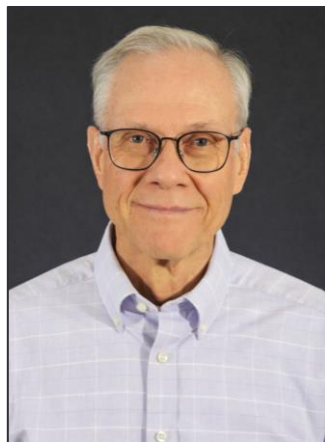
Relationship researcher and educator

“This book is an extremely valuable resource and guide for anyone seeking to better understand and improve their marriage relationship. Dr. Allen’s Six Habits of a Healthy Marriage are truly life and relationship changing principles and practices. I highly recommend this book.”

Randy Hardman, Ph.D.

Co-founder, Center for Change

About the Author



Roger K. Allen, Ph.D.

Roger K. Allen, Ph.D., is a psychologist, relationship educator, speaker, and author who has spent more than four decades helping people develop greater emotional maturity, strengthen their relationships, and take greater responsibility for their lives.

His approach to marriage grows out of his background in psychology, human development, communication, and family relationships. He teaches partners how to combine love and empathy with honesty, personal responsibility, clear expectations, and accountability—creating relationships in which both people can feel known, valued, and free to grow.

Roger began his career as an individual, marriage, and family therapist and later co-founded the Human Development Institute, where he provided therapy and taught principles of personal growth and relationship development to thousands of individuals, couples, parents, and educators. He subsequently co-founded the Center for Organizational Design, a consulting and training firm that helped leaders build high-performing organizations. Through the Center, Roger and his colleagues developed practical methodologies in leadership, teamwork, communication, conflict resolution, and organizational change and certified more than 1,500 professionals to use many of these methodologies in their own organizations and consulting practices.

Roger is also a Udemy Instructor Partner whose highly rated courses have reached more than 150,000 students worldwide. His programs address personal development, emotional maturity, marriage, parenting, communication, listening, and conflict resolution.

He is the author of several books on personal growth and relationships, including *Six Habits of a Healthy Marriage*, *The Art of Dialogue*, and *The Hero's Choice*. His work reflects a lifelong commitment to helping people understand themselves more deeply, build relationships grounded in honesty and empathy, and develop the emotional maturity and practical skills needed to create meaningful and responsible lives.

Roger is married to Judy. They are the parents of four adult children and grandparents of fifteen. They live in Southern Utah.



 www.rogerkallen.com

 rogerkallen1@gmail.com