

Title: Immanuel Approach for Couples

January 31, 2020

Greetings all,

Just a quick note to share my thoughts in response to another conference question. Also, a crazy thought came to me regarding a possible Valentine's Day present and I thought I would share it:

If you want to give your partner a **really** big valentines-Day gift – a gift that will **really** bless them, and produce long-lasting, accumulating benefits for your relationship, get a copy of *Outsmarting Yourself*, read chapters 12, 15-23, and then learn the skill of recognizing when your relational circuits go offline and build the habit of taking responsibility for getting them back online. This will take persistent, regular work over the course of months (so I would recommend also getting something a little more tangible for Feb 14); but if you actually pull this off, your partner will send **me** a “Thank you!” note and a box of chocolates for Valentines-Day 2021.

“Wow! That’s a fantastic idea! But where can I get a copy of *Outsmarting Yourself*?” You might ask. That would be right here: <https://humble-shack.myshopify.com/collections/immanuel-approach-dr-karl-lehman>

Blessings,

Dr. Lehman/Karl

P.S. If you really want to go crazy with the Valentine's-Day gift idea, get the *The Immanuel Lifestyle: Sustaining Joy for a Lifetime* DVD set and apply the teaching from the section where Charlotte and I describe how we have implemented the Immanuel Lifestyle principles and tools in the context of our marriage.

**Seminar Question #21. What about Immanuel Approach for couples?:** I would like to be able to provide a lot more details regarding this very important topic; but for right now, here are some key pieces in my approach to working with couples:

A. *Learn to recognize non-relational mode:* I challenge/inspire/invite/implore/require both partners to read Chapters 15 & 16 in *Outsmarting Yourself*, and then help them to learn the maturity skill of recognizing when their relational circuits go off.

B. *Learn to get relational circuits back online:* I challenge/inspire/invite/implore/require both partners to read Chapters 18 – 22 in *Outsmarting Yourself*, and then help them to build the

habit of using the tools in these Chapters for getting them back on. (Getting one's relational circuits back online *dramatically* decreases the short-term cost of being triggered.)

*C. Understand trauma, triggered implicit memory, and the VLE:* I challenge/inspire/invite/require both partners to read Chapters 1 – 6 in *Outsmarting Yourself*, so that they can understand how trauma, triggered implicit memory, and the Verbal Logical Explainer (VLE) combine to produce LOTS of relationship disruption when one or both of them get triggered. (Implicit memory content from old trauma slides forward and feels true in the present, and their VLE convinces them that the thoughts, emotions, and perceptions from the old trauma are actually being caused by their spouse in the present.)

*D. Immanuel Approach healing work to progressively decrease the trigger burden:* I challenge/inspire/invite/require both partners to do Immanuel Approach healing work in order to shovel away at the traumas that are behind the triggered reactions that are disrupting their marriage. Sometimes they need to do this work separately (if they get too triggered and/or feel too unsafe with both in the room); but sometimes I also do this with both partners in the room. (It has often been a powerfully bonding, trust-building, compassion building experience for each of the spouses to see the other go to the underlying trauma. Seeing their partner in the childhood memory that is underneath the difficult/irritating/painful behavior in the present usually brings compassion and understanding.)

*E. The Immanuel Approach and relational circuits in conflict resolution sessions:* Possibly the biggest reason that many couples' sessions go poorly is that both partners get triggered in the process of trying to work with some point of conflict. They both get triggered as they are talking about the point of conflict, and then they try to resolve the conflict while both are in non-relational mode, while both have "invisible" implicit memory content distorting their perceptions and clouding their discernment, while both have decreased capacity, and while both have impaired maturity skills. They hammer away at each other with relational circuits off line, distorted perceptions, clouded discernment, decreased capacity, and impaired maturity skills. If I am doing a couples session and this scenario unfolds, I call a timeout and describe what I am observing, especially noticing specific indicators that each of their relational circuits are offline. And with the foundation from points A – D above already in place, we then pursue either: 1) I coach each to go to a positive memory, stir up appreciation, and connect with Jesus. And then, with relational circuits back online, we come back to the point of conflict. Or, 2) I coach each partner through a piece of IA healing work, where each can watch the other go with Jesus to the underlying pain that was contributing to the point of conflict. And then we come back to the point of conflict with relational circuits back online, compassion on both sides, and at least one piece of contributing trigger resolved on each side. Option two especially yields consistently good results.

*F. Using the Immanuel Approach to facilitate healing for each other:* This is not always possible (depending on many variables), but some couples are able to learn to facilitate Immanuel Approach healing for each other. Note: Most couples are *not* able to facilitate healing for each other regarding triggers that contribute to conflict between them; but many couples are able to

facilitate regular, beautiful healing for many issues that are not directly involved with conflict between them. This is usually a powerful positive bonding experience, and as they progressively dump out trauma and triggers on both sides, the overall level of joy and health in their marriage and family steadily increases.