

Preview from

*Making Love While Farming:  
A Field Guide to a Life of Passion and Purpose*



**Sample Field Guide from Chapter Six:  
A Love Story in Progress: Marriage and Parenting**

**Questions to Ponder: Relationships and Commitment**

- ⊗ When and how do you create time and space for physical intimacy and other expressions of love with your partner? What are some techniques that work in your relationships (with partners, friends, and other family members) to deepen and express love?
- ⊗ What factors create challenges to living your life from a place of love?
- ⊗ How do you express intimacy in non-romantic relationships?
- ⊗ How do or can you take risks in your relationships that result in growth and deeper love?
- ⊗ If you are a parent or plan to be, how would you describe your approach to parenting? What parenting qualities have you observed that you appreciate? If you partner with another, how do/might you balance each other as parents?
- ⊗ What else do you do personally or in your primary relationship to increase a state of love within? What do you do in your life to magnify love outward to others?

**Down to Earth, Do It Yourself**

*Magnify Your Love*

We utilize this exercise in a weekend workshop that we teach at the Omega Institute called Magnify Your Love: Sharing a Life of Passion and Purpose. The process sparks powerful conversation, and can be done with your primary partner or a close friend, or with a few trusted couples. Create a quiet, comfortable space and allow at least an hour. Individually and quietly, read over the relationship practices below, and consider one that resonates the most. Then, each person (be it a pair or small group of 3 or 4) takes a few minutes to share the one they chose, and why. If you are talking with a small group, it may be helpful to be with those who are not your life/romantic partners. Practice attentive listening. Have each person share without interruption for 4-5 minutes while the others simply listen. After each person has shared one theme, open the discussion. If more prompts are needed to continue and deepen the conversation, repeat, with each person sharing a second theme from the list, or take a few moments to generate additional themes that might be added to this list.

***Relationship Practices/Themes (add to or personalize this list!)***

*Uphold Sacred Boundaries*

around the elements of your life and work. Hold meetings, especially around shared work so that work-related conversation does not invade the sanctity of relationship or family time.

*Embrace and Put Your Differences to Work*

Know your differences and your respective strengths. There is benefit to work both together and separately. Identify your respective domains as part of your shared work.

*Be as Loving and Kind as you Can*

To yourself, your partner, and children, in work, while out in the world in small and large interactions.

*Prioritize Intimacy*

Even with a lot going on in full lives, take the time to connect physically, intimately, sexually. Nourish your relationship in some way each day, as well as with the gift of extended time, such as a retreat together.

*Be Present in Communication*

Listen deeply. Don't bring up old stuff when new things rise. If you start to go down a well-worn [poor] communication road and pull in old stuff, pause and ask 'what is really going on here?' in order to get to the heart of the underlying pattern or pain. Consider: what if nobody has to be right? Find your own techniques-gestures, code words- that playfully remind you that these are but patterns and can lighten tension in the moment. Trust that you can change, that your partner can change, and that patterns in your relationship can change.

*Learn when to Accept and When to Change*

Each of us has learned survival techniques over our lives. Learn what to accept of each other, and what and when to change for the benefit of the relationship and for individual evolution.

*Create Space within your Togetherness*

Friendships: Your partner cannot meet every need and interest. Evolve, create and play together but support your partner in friendships that help them evolve. Spiritual practice: Pursue/maintain both a shared practice and your own practice or teachers/mentors.

*Take Risks for the Things you Believe in.*

Stay awake to the suffering and injustice in the world and find your most authentic way(s) to participate in action and as an ally.

*Be Open to or Seek Wisdom and Guidance*

from other realms: plants, your ancestors, healers or spirit channels as resonates with you. Consider that you can influence outcomes but you cannot control them.

*Live your Life as a Ceremony*

Seek to weave the connecting threads of values that foster harmony among your lifestyle, work, activism, spiritual practice, and relationships. Give pause for and enjoy the simple, daily rituals of life.

## **Awaken the Power: Contemplative Practice**

### *Create a Love Altar*

You may have an altar in your home for religious or spiritual honoring, but what about creating one to celebrate, energize, or help heal aspects of your relationship and love? Like most altars, it can be created with a few simple, sacred objects-- heirloom, crafted, found or bought for this purpose. Initiate it together in a relaxed moment- perhaps on a Sunday afternoon or a special occasion like Valentine's Day or the New Year, or your anniversary. Locate a spot that you see or pass often, such as your bedroom. You might start with a beautiful or significant cloth on a table or windowsill, or piece of wood on a few bricks. Take turns adding something that you have brought or collected for this creation. Quotes, bits of poetry and phrases/affirmations that inspire you or relate to a personal or relationship pattern you are working to shift are wonderful to add. Your altar could be a place you rest your wedding rings if/when you remove them, or add mementos from marriage or anniversary, a trip or a special date. Make it beautiful, make it together, and make it reflect that which is important to you, or you hope for.

Keep your altar fresh with flowers and scent. Always feel free to add to it or change it. If you are in a good place together, your altar is a sweet place to sit and meditate—if you are in a hard place together, to bring you back to what is important.

### **Ten Ways to Increase Intimacy in your Relationship**

- ② Be kind and complimentary most of the time
- ② Dream of what you will do together, be it the weekend or long-term vision
- ② Create time for yourselves that is free of talk of children, money, or life details
- ② Keep candles on hand: they are lovely during meals or in the bedroom
- ② Exercise together (gyms, walks/hiking, yoga, or whatever you like to do)
- ② Have at least one, shared creative pursuit or interest (such as music, dance, artmaking, gardening, cooking, reading poetry)
- ② Ask each other questions about emotional/spirit wellbeing.
- ② Support each other's individuality, interests, and time with friends
- ② Share your relationship challenges and joys together, and with trusted friends
- ② Enjoy a lasting embrace each day, perhaps upon awakening or before sleep.

