

The 10 Demandments
Ten Rules To Live By To Insure Unhappiness In A Relationship
By Marlene and Bob Neufeld

Many couples who come to see us have faulty ideas about what to expect in relationships. They end up demanding things that are impossible for their partner to fulfill. When these ‘demandments’ are not met, then people increase the level of their demands and/or respond with negative intent. Negative intent is when a person has an intention (sometimes unconscious) to hurt someone because they have been hurt. The following list of the top 10 demandments that couples make is from: www.metrowellnez.com.

1. Thou shall make me happy.
2. Thou shall not have any interests other than me.
3. Thou shall know what I want and what I feel without me having to say.
4. Thou shall return each one of my sacrifices with an equal or greater sacrifice.
5. Thou shall shield me from anxiety, worry, hurt or any pain.
6. Thou shall give me my sense of self-worth and esteem.
7. Thou shall be grateful for everything I do.
8. Thou shall not be critical of me, show anger toward me or otherwise disapprove of anything I do.
9. Thou shall be so caring and loving that I need never take risks or be vulnerable in any way.
10. Thou shall love me with thy whole heart, thy whole soul and thy whole mind, even if I do not love myself.

No one else can make us happy or give us a sense of self-worth and self-esteem. Neither can they shield us from hurt emotions. In fact, others don’t make us feel anything. It is our perceptions about their behaviour that makes us feel certain things. And, if we do not love ourselves deeply, it is difficult for us to recognize love coming from others.

In our work with couples, we often talk about the “law of diminishing returns”. When I give someone affection and or show them gratitude or appreciation, they only get a portion of what I give. This may be due to the way I deliver my positive comments and/or the way they receive them. So let’s say I deliver five positive comments. If the other person only receives four, and if they believe in giving back what they receive, then they will give back four. But I may only receive three of these. So, then, I may say to myself “it’s not fair, I gave five and only got back three – so I’ll only give back three. But the

other person may only receive two of these three. If they then only give two back, and I only receive one of those, we'll soon be down to no positive comments and no appreciation.

On the other hand, research has shown that it takes five positive comments to equal one negative comment. So, if, in addition to reducing the amount of positive comments I give to you, I also throw in a few negative comments, like “you never show me love any more” or “you never listen to me” then I will soon be in a deficit when it comes to the ratio of positives to negatives.

We also may have often picked up beliefs that our partners are the ones that are supposed to meet all of our needs. They should not be interested in anything other than what we are interested in and they should know what we are thinking and feeling without us having to tell them. In reality, it is impossible for our partners to meet all of our needs.

So, when you find yourself thinking any of these ten thoughts, stop yourself and recognize that these ‘demandments’ are guaranteed to insure unhappiness.

Marlene & Bob Neufeld practice body-centered Coaching and Psychotherapy. They are a couple who help couples learn life-changing skills and create closer, more loving relationships with one another. To learn more, see www.marleneandbob.com or call 613-594-9248 to arrange a complimentary 1-hour introductory session. Register now for their July couples retreat.