

JILLIAN TURECKI

HOST OF THE JILLIAN ON LOVE PODCAST

IT BEGINS

WITH

YOU

**THE 9 HARD TRUTHS
ABOUT LOVE THAT WILL
CHANGE YOUR LIFE**

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THAT WILL CHANGE YOUR LIFE

JILLIAN TURECKI



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Dedication

To my mom: Thank you for understanding me. I love you.

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Introduction

The Death of a Relationship

On June 2, 2014, my life fell apart. My mother had recently been diagnosed with terminal cancer and given three months to live. And that morning, I suffered my third miscarriage, and my husband left me. He broke up with me over the phone.

First, he texted me. I was outside our building, sitting on a bench with my dog. I already knew something was very wrong. I hadn't heard from him all day, even though that morning I had woken up to what my gynecologist confirmed was a miscarriage. I had an uneasy gut feeling that I was going to be abandoned. When my husband finally texted me at about 5 p.m., all he wrote was, "I'm staying at my parents for a few days."

Panicked, I called him. Thankfully, he picked up. The twenty minutes that followed were some of the worst moments of my life. "We're just on two different paths, Jillian," I remember him saying.

"*What!?* What the fuck are you saying? You're just not going to come home? I'm bleeding uncontrollably because *I am no longer pregnant*, and you're just going to leave?" At this point I was pacing up and down the street and felt—and probably looked—like a complete madwoman.

I knew my ex and I were struggling—really struggling. I'd spent the past two years working my ass off trying to convince him I was lovable. A part of me knew, deep in my bones, that he was capable of leaving me abruptly. And a bigger part of me, deep in my soul, wished for the ordeal of our marriage to be over. Walking away, however, was never an option. I was way too afraid to be without him.

He never came home.

My life had officially fallen apart. June 2 marked not only the end of my life as I knew it but also the beginning of my journey to figure out what the hell it takes to have a healthy and lasting relationship. What I learned surprised me. It has very little to do with luck, the universe, age, or even being a good person. Instead, it has everything to do with the relationship we have with ourselves. I learned that if we want a meaningful relationship filled with connection, security, and intimacy, we have to take responsibility. I learned that a relationship is like a mirror: it will reflect to us the relationship we have with ourselves.

This is not about shame or blaming ourselves. I want you to feel powerful and to know that you hold the key to the change you want to see in your love life. Yes, even if you consider yourself anxiously attached or avoidant or have faced some other problem within yourself. You *can* be in a healthy relationship. You're not broken, or doomed to be alone forever, or forever unhappy in your love life. You don't have to let your attachment style or your past limit you. This is about creating change.

When I met my ex-husband, I thought I was mature and ready for a truly loving and conscious partnership. I had been a yogi for twelve years and had taught yoga for eight. I'd been in several relationships, and the relationship roadkill of my past included an abusive relationship, which I had processed and overcome. I had been in therapy before. I did have a thorn in my side about my father and our relationship (more on that later), but that was a thorn I believed would never go away, so I had adapted to living with it. I had a blueprint of what I believed a relationship should be: find the person who gives you butterflies, make sure they treat you well, and when you get married, you'll have a companion for life.

My marriage lasted two painful years. Turns out that being an intelligent, intuitive, and kind yoga teacher who had been in therapy before was not enough to make a marriage work. I had major blind spots, and despite all my study of the mind-body connection, as well as the *awareness* that I had a history of daddy issues, my love life had become a total mess. That mess is what motivated me to plunge deep into the parts of myself I had never considered before—including my emotions, my beliefs, my fears, and my behavior.

Missing from my relationship blueprint was this reality: the relationship we have with ourselves is the most important relationship we will ever have, and we will have to continuously work on that relationship to break through the barriers that prevent us from true emotional intimacy with another

person. The most valuable lesson I learned about relationships from my marriage was that no relationship has a chance if we don't look within and do the necessary self-examination required to make it work. When we improve the relationship we have with ourselves, we improve our relationship with others. This is an absolute truth.

For more than twenty years, I've been helping people heal their relationships with themselves and others. My path to becoming a relationship coach started in perhaps an unexpected place: on the yoga mat. I began my journey as a yoga teacher in New York City, working at one of the most popular studios in the city. I taught group classes there, and I also worked one-on-one with individuals, couples, and families. I helped people heal their pain. For some, it was shoulder pain, while for others it was back pain or pulled hamstring muscles. But for all of them, it was emotional pain, too.

The quality of our lives is largely determined by our daily habits and patterns. We have habits that keep us stable and healthy, such as brushing our teeth, bathing, going to bed and waking up at certain times, drinking water throughout the day, eating well, and going to the gym. We also have relational habits, such as having dinner with our family every week, giving our partner or spouse a good-morning hug and kiss, seeing our friends on certain days of the week, daily texts to loved ones, and giving back to our local community. Our habits are mostly structured to meet our needs for stability, connection, and—for some more than others—fun.

In addition to our daily and weekly routines, we all have physical habits that impact our physiology. Commonly I see people with their shoulders rounded and their heads and necks extending forward and down. This is caused by excessive thinking and worry (which is epidemic in Western culture) and from always being on our phones. It's also a common sign of depression, anxiety, or fatigue. Students of yoga learn that not only is the body a window into our emotional state, but it is also through the body that we can change our emotional state. This means that with specific movement, coupled with breath, we can train our bodies and minds to find more balance, strength, and peace.

As a yoga teacher, I had three gifts: (1) I could identify someone's physical pattern almost immediately; (2) I could find its emotional counterpart (such as stress or worry); and (3) I could teach my students clearly how to break their pattern and replace it with a new one that would bring more ease to their bodies and, therefore, their lives.

Teaching yoga to couples was particularly illuminating. Often, within the first ten minutes of a couple's session, I could see and feel their stress. Their minds would be scattered and unfocused. Sometimes, they would even bicker in front of me. Yet without fail, after the hour was finished, they would lie down beside each other in the final restful yoga pose called Savasana, deeply relaxed and holding hands. Teaching and practicing yoga taught me that when we feel better, our relationships get better, including the one we have with ourselves. Little did I know that teaching people how to ease their pain and feel more at home in their bodies was slowly preparing me for a journey I never, ever thought would be mine to take.

I started relationship coaching inside the same yoga community where I taught. I knew that mastering a new skill takes thousands of hours of practice, and I didn't want to waste a single moment. I wanted to become masterful at this. I wanted to see how I could become an expert as quickly as possible, and I knew that the only way to do so was to work with as many people as I possibly could.

My own experience going to couples therapy with my ex-husband was not helpful, mostly because we were not asked to take accountability for our contribution to the breakdown of our connection. We were not encouraged to share openly and honestly with each other about our deepest fears and needs. Going through this experience made me think there had to be a better way to help people with their love lives.

Because of my deep knowledge as a yoga teacher, I understand the relationship between the mind and the body. I understand that how we feel physically will affect our emotions and how we feel emotionally will affect our bodies. I also know that the breath is a gateway to either calming or uplifting our systems.

I know when someone is holding their breath; I can tell when I'm on the phone with them. I know when someone is clenching their jaw. I know when someone is grinding their teeth. I can read tension. A tense body is a tense mind. A tense mind is a tense body. That tension that we feel in our bodies is a sign of some sort of imbalance, because tension is the body's response to feeling unsafe and out of control.

I'll often tell my clients, "Take a deep breath in; take a long breath out." Sometimes I tell them, "Take a moment and relax right now. Stand up, step outside, get a glass of water." Those small actions change your body; you'll find yourself in a different emotional state. Or I'll lighten up the mood a little bit and make clients laugh, because laughter is such a great release of tension. And then they're able to look at their circumstances differently.

Sometimes I'll talk to my individual clients while we're on a walk together, because taking a walk with someone is a powerful coregulating activity. A lot of people think more clearly when they're moving their body. It's good for blood flow and makes people more alert and relaxed at the same time.

Before I became a relationship coach, I spent almost twenty years studying how the mind and body are one. My ability to prescribe certain movement or breath work—to help clients feel stronger, clearer, and more grounded—makes me unique as a relationship coach.

I believe that the teacher-student relationship is sacred. The iconic film *The Karate Kid* is a beautiful demonstration of the power of mentorship and how important it is to have at least one person in our lives who can teach us how to master a skill. I've been blessed to have incredible mentors, ranging from my yoga teachers to the mentors who helped me transform my life and who continue to guide me toward deeper mastery in my teaching and coaching. I truly believe that when the student is ready, the teacher will appear. If you're reading this book, I'm lucky and honored to be given the opportunity to be your mentor, so I can guide you toward your own mastery and transformation.

I believe everyone should work on themselves at some point in their lives. What is the inner work we must do for an amazing love life? Well, it's not what a lot of people think it is.

Anyone can be in a relationship, but building a great and healthy relationship with someone is another skill that no one teaches us how to master. No one directly teaches us how to pick our partners. No one teaches us how to love when we're scared, overwhelmed, angry, or stressed. Many of us didn't learn how to love ourselves even when someone stopped loving us. And there are many who never learned that a relationship is meant to support their nervous systems, not wreck them. If we want to get better at relationships, we must face our fears and be willing to make mistakes. There's no way around it. That's "the work." To be clear, though, each of us is a work in progress. Our task is not to become invincible. We do not have to become fearless, free of trauma, and happy all the time to have a healthy and fulfilling relationship. And although awareness is key, we can't stop there. We can have all the awareness in the world and be able to perfectly recite our traumas, but if we don't know how to transcend what has been holding us back from having healthy and loving relationships, we'll feel stuck and unhappy.

That is why I decided to write this book. It doesn't matter if you're single, recently heartbroken, or wanting to improve the relationship you're in. It doesn't matter what your relationship history is—or isn't. I'm going to show

you why you've been struggling in your love life and what you can do about it. You *can* have a healthy and fulfilling relationship, and I'm going to show you how.

In this book, you will find nine truths about love and relationships that will change your life:

- Truth 1: It begins with you.
- Truth 2: The mind is a battlefield.
- Truth 3: Lust is not the same thing as love.
- Truth 4: You have to love yourself.
- Truth 5: You must speak up and tell the truth.
- Truth 6: You need to be your best self (even after the honeymoon).
- Truth 7: You cannot convince someone to love you.
- Truth 8: No one is coming to save you.
- Truth 9: You must make peace with your parents.

I'll share actual case studies of clients who bravely looked in the mirror and worked hard to implement these truths in their lives. In fact, everything I share and teach in this book is exactly what I've taught to my private clients. Although many of my clients have been women, the lessons are for everyone, regardless of gender or sexual orientation. At the end of each chapter, you'll find both journal prompts to wake up your self-awareness and actionable steps so that you can wire yourself for the change you need to make.

I arrived at these nine truths based on my own transformation and ten years of coaching thousands on their love lives. Some truths may sting a little more than others, but if you open your mind and heart to each one's message, it will illuminate your path toward healthy love and, ultimately, self-love.

It begins with you.

Truth 1

It Begins with You

We cannot heal our love lives without healing the relationship we have with ourselves. Every relationship we have ever had has had one thing in common: *us*. I know this can be a tough pill to swallow, but it is a necessary one. Without understanding this truth, we will continue to feel powerless, frustrated, and victimized in relationships. This isn't about blame or shame. It is about empowerment. It's recognizing that instead of being at the mercy of our childhoods and past relationships, we actually hold the key to the change we wish to see in our relationships. It's realizing that every single heartbreak and disappointment we've ever endured was trying to teach us about our fears, patterns, and beliefs that have been sabotaging our chances of having a fulfilling relationship. Understanding this fundamental truth also means that we have much more influence over a relationship than we think we do: by changing ourselves, we have the power to change our relationships. Taking responsibility for our love lives *is* what heals. It completely rearranges how we see ourselves; we go from feeling helpless and powerless to finally having agency and control. By taking responsibility, we choose ourselves.

Everything changed in my life when I recognized that all my past relationships had me in common.

Your life will change, too, when you realize that your relationship struggles are not because "they" all cheat, but because you keep ignoring red flags and choosing the cheaters. The problem is not that "all the good ones are taken"; it's that you keep choosing the unavailable ones. It's not that they didn't choose you; it's that you haven't chosen yourself. And it's not just that they're avoidant; your anxiety may play a role, too.

Sometimes, relationships don't work out. We all have patterns that don't serve us or our partners. We all have our baggage. Truthfully, we all do the best we can with the level of maturity and experience we have. That's what this book will help you with: it will show you how to grow in ways you never thought possible. The tools you'll learn and the insight you'll gain will teach you how to become a master of your romantic life.

Throughout this entire book, you'll be reminded of this simple yet life-changing truth: It begins with you. If you want a loving, healthy, supportive, and exciting relationship, your task is to keep trying to be the bravest and best version of yourself. You have to be the love you wish to amplify. You have to communicate at a level that exceeds your expectations of yourself. If dating, you have to be completely authentic even when your knees are weak with attraction. The truth is, even if you end up with the partner you've always dreamed of, you're still going to have to face your demons. You're going to have to face yourself, all the time. A mature relationship demands that we step up. It requires all of us to mature past our comfort zones and level up our emotional intelligence. It means that instead of diagnosing the other person, we take a breath, step back a little, and see whether our own role in the dynamic is serving the emotional safety of the relationship. Simply put, if you want to transform your love life, you must look within. It is the only way.

“Everyone Cheats”

When Jennifer came to me, she was a successful thirty-seven-year-old with a career in politics and two young sons. Jennifer is extremely intelligent, attractive, and highly self-sufficient. Her struggle was that every man she had been with had cheated on her.

Jennifer was committed to two beliefs: (1) men cheat and therefore cannot be trusted, and (2) she wasn't capable of being in a healthy relationship. She faced a hefty internal conflict: on the one hand, she had convinced herself that she was better off alone, and yet on the other hand, she desperately wanted to be in a lasting, healthy partnership. This was an inner battle Jennifer had been fighting for many years.

Jennifer's desire to be in a relationship often overpowered her fear of being in a relationship, and she started seeing Tony, a kind, supportive,

honest, and responsible man—and a father, too. I paid very close attention to his behavior to see whether it exhibited any signs of dysfunction, but based on Jennifer's detailed reports to me about their courtship, I could not find any.

When they started to spend more time together and officially became a couple, that's when Jennifer, not Tony, started to unravel. Jennifer was a walking trigger ready to implode. She was obsessive and jealous, despite Tony's transparency, and would go into a spiral every time Tony would even speak to a woman. In these states, her mind would distort reality, and she would convince herself that she was justified in telling Tony how to conduct some of his friendships. She would then create an entire script of what she would say to him so that "he could understand" why she wasn't comfortable with him talking to other women.

During a Zoom session, I could see that her nervous system was very dysregulated. Her shoulders were up by her ears, her jaw was clenched, and she was speaking very fast and loudly about how Tony hadn't texted her back yet about plans for that weekend. (It was only Thursday, and he always texted her back.)

As I listened to her, I felt my own body become tense and flooded with anxiety. I had to act fast to regain control of our session. "Okay, hold up, Jennifer," I said. "This has nothing to do with Tony and everything to do with you."

"But—" she replied. Her body became even more rigid and tense.

"No," I interrupted. "You're about to gravely sabotage this, and I know you don't want to. So please take a deep breath," I said, taking a deep breath myself.

I watched as she sucked a big inhalation through her nose. "That's right, now slowly exhale through your mouth," I gently encouraged her.

I watched Jennifer as her body softened, and I felt my own nervous system relax, too.

"Okay, please take out a piece of paper and a pen."

In the hour that followed, I had Jennifer write down in detail every warning sign she ignored in her past relationships with men who betrayed her. Suffice it to say, the list was very long. The red flags on her list included "alcoholic," "cheated on their exes," "didn't talk to their children," "anger management issues," "couldn't keep a job." These were all red flags that she discovered within the first couple months of dating these men.

"The problem is not that all men cheat, Jennifer. You've just been choosing the cheaters. You've been attracted to men who've had a lot of substantial, unaddressed problems, and that is why you have a turbulent

relationship past. Now, please write down how *you* contributed to the dysfunction of these relationships.”

By the end of our session, Jennifer had written down an entire page filled with examples of how she contributed to the problems of her past relationships: from drinking too much and picking fights, to being manipulative, to needing excessive reassurance, to being a doormat, to not communicating any of her needs.

I knew of course that she and I would have to explore why she repeatedly engaged in these unhealthy behaviors, but first I had to wake her up from her self-sabotaging thought process. Without first taking responsibility, Jennifer would never be in the relationship she deserved to be in. Without accountability, nothing would change.

“Wow,” Jennifer said after thoroughly reviewing her notes from our session. “I just realized something. I guess I’ve always been so afraid that I’m not enough—that I would never be enough for a man to stay. That somehow I didn’t deserve a healthy relationship.”

This was the breakthrough that would transform Jennifer’s love life.

Everyone Is Afraid They’re Not Good Enough

When I was eleven years old, my father, a psychiatrist, published a book called *The Difficult Child*. It was quickly touted as one of the more influential books on child psychology of its time and was placed in bookstores next to books by child psychology legends like Dr. Spock. My father was a guest on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* twice: once to promote and discuss his book, and the second time because he had become Oprah’s go-to expert on various issues regarding children.

What was the book about? Me.

As a baby, I cried all the time and wouldn’t adhere to a steady circadian rhythm. As a toddler, I needed a ton of structure, hated the way certain fabrics felt on my skin, and would eat only bologna sandwiches for lunch and spaghetti with meat sauce for dinner for months on end. I also had tantrums all the time. My sisters, in contrast, were more “normal”; one was much older, and the other sister, also older than me, had a much quieter nature. My father, being a child psychiatrist, wanted to understand *why* I behaved this way—why I was the child at the park who with “no apparent trigger”

would go ballistic, screaming, crying, and sending my mom into a panic as she tried to console me. (She was always successful, eventually.) So, he put me under a microscope, studied me, and diagnosed me as a “difficult child.”

My father wrote that “difficult children” are born that way, thereby reassuring parents that they are not failures. He gave parents tools on how to deal with “difficult children,” which included structure, specific communication, and more. And finally, he wrote that I had other qualities: I was funny, imaginative, and smart, and socialized well with other children (so not all was lost!). He then added that by the time I was eleven, I actually got over being “difficult” and was a well-adjusted “normal” kid, which gave the readers something to look forward to with their own difficult children.

But even though I outgrew being “difficult,” the identity was a tough one to shake. I was referred to that way for my whole childhood, and even into my young adulthood, I would meet parents who, after learning my name, would flip out with a gleeful “OMG, I read your dad’s book!”

I wasn’t Jillian. I was *difficult*.

This is how I came to feel I was not enough.

In order to heal our love lives and learn how to cocreate a healthy relationship with someone, we must first understand that *everyone* is afraid that they are not good enough in some way: not pretty enough, not smart enough, not skinny enough, not cool enough, not rich enough, not sexy enough, not successful enough, not easy enough, not funny enough. And we’re especially afraid of not being enough for the person we’re in a relationship with or even simply dating. It doesn’t matter what your attachment style is—*no one* wants to be rejected or abandoned, and we will do almost anything to prevent it from happening to us. We’ll cling, lie, please, avoid, yell, cry, shut down, pretend to be someone we’re not, strategize, manipulate, isolate, or end things first just so we don’t have to feel the immense pain of someone losing interest in us or falling out of love with us.

As we continued to work together, my client Jennifer did decide to end her relationship with Tony because, as much as she cared about him—and in spite of the fact that he didn’t cheat or exhibit the toxic behaviors of Jennifer’s previous partners—the two weren’t aligned on some key goals. He wanted more children; she did not. He wanted to move to another town; she did not. But unlike with her toxic past relationships, she exited this one clear-minded and grounded. Instead of clinging to a relationship that wasn’t right for her because she was too afraid to be alone, she decided that being alone was far better and healthier than remaining in a relationship that wasn’t the right fit.

It's true that Tony represented a better partner than her previous few, since he wasn't deeply dysfunctional, but he still wasn't right for her. The important thing was that Jennifer now understood she deserved a healthy relationship with the right partner. This was huge growth for Jennifer. For the first time, she ended a relationship and embraced being alone until it was time to get back out there again and meet the right person—for her. For the first time in her love life, she was choosing herself.

I helped Jennifer to find meaningful ways to meet her needs and nurture her relationship with herself instead of obsessing about finding a man (I'll give you much more detail in [Truth 4](#)). She started new projects, worked on her garden, and spent more quality time with her children. Historically quite reactive, Jennifer practiced mindfulness by taking deep breaths before she reacted to triggers. She learned that peace, communication, and honesty were now her most important values, and she committed herself to remaining single until she met someone who shared those values. Jennifer's greatest strength was her personal responsibility. She was always willing to look in the mirror, self-reflect, and be impressively honest with me and, most important, with herself. This strength led her to change the way she chose men and transform how she showed up in her relationships. In the past, she would easily commit to the first guy she had some connection with. When she started dating again during our work together, she made a promise to herself to get involved with someone only if he shared her values of peace, open communication, and honesty. I'll never forget when she said to me, "Jillian, I'll wait for however many weeks, months, or years it takes to meet a good man who shares my values. In the meantime, I'll focus on my kids, work, and my amazing girlfriends." My eyes welled up with tears. This was a huge victory for a woman who once believed all men cheated and who also feared being single. By taking ownership of her choices and her behavior, Jennifer learned how to choose herself. Turns out it took only a few months for her to meet the man she continues to build a healthy, secure relationship with today.

A huge part of the healing process is learning how to accept ourselves in spite of our shortcomings. Healing ourselves relationally means that, even though we are guaranteed to have moments when we feel insecure and not enough, we learn how to respond to our fears differently, so that they no longer overpower and define our relationships. The first step, then, is to understand *how* our personal struggles manifest into patterns that negatively impact our love lives. We have to understand the ways in which we struggle to feel we are enough and how our fear impacts our relationships. If you want to understand your patterns, you need to know

what you habitually do and the choices you make when you feel insecure and afraid that love might be withheld from you or that you might not be chosen by someone you want.

When we're committed to being in a healthy relationship, we don't play games. It's really that simple.

Turn Your Relationship Around

“He wants to separate for a few months to see if being apart is what’s best,” she said, sobbing, within the first ten minutes of our Zoom session.

“Why does he want to separate?” I asked.

“Because he said we’ve been trying for over a year to work on our relationship, but he thinks it’s not working. I keep telling him it’s because he’s not trying.”

Christina is a pretty thirty-four-year-old massage therapist who lives in Brooklyn. She’s stylish, smart, witty, and cool. She loves yoga, art, travel, and long dinners with friends where they talk about love and the meaning of life. I could’ve seen myself being friends with her in the real world—especially when I was a yoga teacher living in Brooklyn. She felt like my kind of people. She came to me anxious and devastated that her husband of four years, Brad, had requested a trial separation. Our first session was her basically venting and me lending a sympathetic ear.

“Jillian,” she said sharply in between tears. “He’s totally avoidant. He won’t communicate. Every time I want to talk about a problem, he just makes some excuse about why he’s too busy to talk about it. I want to fix our marriage. I want to fight for our relationship, but I can’t do it alone.”

I believed what Christina was telling me, and I wanted to say, “Damn straight you can’t do it alone! And fuck him! He’s gotta get over that avoidant bullshit and step up.”

Thankfully, I didn’t say that. Truth is, it’s easy to believe a client’s story, and I’m the kind of coach who will always have her client’s back. But having their back isn’t about agreeing with them, it’s about helping them. And in that moment I had to remember my wise mentor’s teachings: don’t project your personal experience onto your client, always question the story they tell themselves, and remember that there’s always another side to the story (except in cases of violence and abuse). I understood Christina and got her

frustration, but the wise teacher in me knew there must be more to this story. I didn't doubt her husband's issues, but as I dug a little deeper with Christina, I wondered to myself, *Could she be contributing to what's not working here?*

"Tell me about what hasn't been working," I said calmly.

"We first met years ago through friends, but nothing ever happened. Then like five years later, we ran into each other at a dinner with mutual friends. We instantly connected and started dating immediately after that night. We fell in love quickly. I just felt so comfortable around him—so wanted by him. I felt chosen in a way I have never felt chosen before. After a year and a half, we got married, and everything was great for the first two years. We were happy! But then he started to pull away . . ."

"What was happening when he started to pull away?" I interrupted.

"I don't know. I guess this is when we started to fight a lot. He was getting really busy at work—he had started his own business and has an incredible work ethic. I always loved supporting his dreams, but I also started to feel less important as he got busier and had less time for us. I like my work, too, but I prefer more balance in my life."

"I understand how that shift from getting so much attention from him to not as much would make you feel anxious," I reassured her.

"Yeah, I guess I did get anxious about it, but also really angry."

"How so?" I asked.

"I would get annoyed," she quickly replied.

"And then what?" I asked, practically sitting on the edge of my seat. As soon as Christina admitted to her anger and annoyance, I just *knew* I was about to uncover some of her dysfunctional relationship behavior. Being a coach is like being a detective who's trying to crack a big case. Anyone who wants to truly help someone save their relationship has to keep asking questions and digging through their client's emotional states, stories, and biases to get to the truth. Human beings are complicated creatures, which makes every case hard to solve. I had to listen intently to every detail Christina shared.

"Well, when he would call me from work, I wouldn't answer. Not because I was busy, but to . . . I guess, give him a taste of his own medicine?" She gave me a look as though she were a kid who had just been caught with her hand in the cookie jar. "I know that sounds bad, but I was so hurt. He's not a good communicator—he likes things to be easy, and whenever I bring up my grievances, he just ends up pulling away. Which then makes me even more upset. Until eventually, I would explode with frustration every time I would feel him getting distant."