

# Make a Good Love Relationship Better— And Make a Better Relationship the Best!

*How a Little “True LoveStyles” Can Help a Lot—Right Now!*

By Erica Lowry

Throughout a marriage, two people will strive to remain in harmony with one another as best they possibly can. We’ll adjust our actions and attitudes in myriad ways, throughout our relationship. These ways are both conscious, and unconscious.

There’s no doubt that this effort is a wonderful thing. It’s what makes for a lasting, caring relationship. But over time, even when two people are doing their very best, they may in fact experience frustration and loneliness. I have discovered that if a couple is experiencing a sense of loneliness or frustration that they can’t quite sort out or understand, that it is often our own unconscious beliefs and behaviors originating *within ourselves* that create our difficult situation. In our valiant efforts to maintain harmony in our relationship, we often keep our own inner conflicts unconscious, even to ourselves—sometimes, for years. Paradoxically, this unconscious effort, which begins with love, can be what leads to hidden resentment, loneliness, fear, and eventual hurt. Unfortunately, this is all too common in a lifelong relationship. Most marriages end, in fact, due to a sense of loneliness.

Luckily we have True Colors, to understand even our own unconscious beliefs and innermost conflicts—to resolve them, before they can manifest in loneliness, resentment, or hurt.

When you bring your own unconscious conscious, you can experience a huge sense of relief. I’m going to share one of the 20 “Discoveries,” from “True LoveStyles,” that does just this, and share a story of how one couple used this Discovery. This Discovery on its own has made good relationships better, and for all who have experienced it, has created a better foundation for a “Best” relationship.

This is Discovery Nine, called “What Colors We Dim and Brighten for our Partner, in the Twilight of Misunderstanding.”

You’ve heard of “faded<sup>1</sup>” Colors, referring to specific out-of-esteem behaviors for each of the four Colors. . . . This is different. When we “dim” our own Colors, it refers not to outward, negative behaviors, but instead to what we’re doing, when we hide from ourselves and others our own greatest needs, strengths, and values.

In a love relationship, we make compromises. Again, that’s a healthy thing. But over time, most of us unconsciously attempt to “brighten” our Paler Colors, as well as “dim”

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<sup>1</sup> The use of the word “faded” to refer to out-of-esteem behaviors by Color is from “Showing Our True Colors,” by Mary Miscisin.

our Brighter Colors, in order to maintain harmony in a relationship. That's fine to do a little of, now and then—but not too much of, for too long. Too much “dimming” or “false brightening” causes us to be untrue to ourselves, which is the surefire way to create unhappiness, over time. We “dim” or “falsely brighten” our Colors unconsciously because we are unknowingly trying to *protect* something about our relationship—something that we don't even realize we are trying to protect.

We don't naturally want to recognize that we are trying to “protect” anything about our relationship, because we want to feel that our relationship is strong on its own, and that our partner has few, if any, weaknesses that need our “protection.” But we are human, with all kinds of hidden weaknesses that we don't know about, in ourselves and in our partner. Over time, all of our unconscious fears and feelings have a way of showing up in our lives, especially in our love relationship.

Let me give you an example. Susan<sup>2</sup>, who is Blue/Orange/Gold/Green, is married to Michael, who is Green/Gold/Orange/Blue. Within this attraction of complete opposites, Michael causes Susan to philosophize, which is exhilarating for her, because it brightens a Green and Orange side of herself she never knew. Susan causes Michael to maintain his sense of humor, and spontaneity, which is always refreshing for him—it brightens his Orange and his Blue. Their relationship at first is in perfect balance, where each brings out strengths in the other that they didn't even know existed.

After they're married, their two children became part of their family, and with that, there is the need to make much more money, and be more careful with money. There is also much less time spent alone together, of course.

When the babies are young, it seems that Michael's tendency toward being more abstract in child-rearing, and much more involved in his work, causes most of the responsibility of child-rearing to land with Susan, who is a natural care-taker. At first, Michael's tendencies sometimes reminds Susan of her own Green father, who unfortunately was so distant that he seemed almost incapable of tenderness and love—at least, from her own Blue/Orange perspective. But Michael, she knows, is different—she can clearly see the love in his eyes. And so in order to maintain the harmony in their relationship, Susan is very happy to take on the bulk this huge responsibility, of child-rearing. She brightens her Gold, big-time, without being aware of it. After all, her own mother was a dedicated Gold, and what a good mother she was! Susan is also resigned to having less romance, and even less sex—because life is so busy. She dims her own Second Color, Orange, without being aware of it. She is determined to be happy, for her children and her husband. And so after being married for eight years to a man that she loves, with two happy, healthy children, Susan wonders why she often feels depressed.

One day, while she is folding laundry, her husband makes the kind offer of helping her fold the children's clothes. While they fold the laundry together, Susan has a sudden, silent feeling of utter peace, of lightness, play, and joy. It almost shocks her, because it feels just like the feeling that she had, when she and her husband first fell in love. She

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<sup>2</sup> These names have been changed to protect the privacy of these individuals.

turns to her husband and smiles, with tears in her eyes. All she can say is, “Michael, what happened?”

What happened was, Susan was doing the very best that she could, in her relationship with her husband, without having any language to talk about the alterations that she had been making within herself, or even why she was making those alterations. She’d lost track of herself. She didn’t know that she was earnestly trying to protect something that she was afraid of harming, and losing, in their relationship. In fact, Susan was unconsciously assuming that Michael might actually be *incapable* of dedicating more time and attention to the children, and that if she’d brought that terrible fear out into the open, and discovered that in fact Michael *was* incapable, that this recognition—for her, might even end their marriage.

And in fact, Michael had no idea what Susan had done within herself, and he had no idea of her need for help. To him, she was always the same happy, bright, and funny Susan that he adored. He knew his kids loved him, and he knew that he loved them. He had always worked very hard to ensure their safety and happiness. Susan knew this, and appreciated this—which was why she never was able to bring to consciousness her own hidden fear, of having to “protect” her marriage because her husband might not be capable of the kind of love and help that she needed. By dimming her Orange, and brightening her Gold to an unnatural degree, Susan kept her unconscious fears at bay.

While experiencing True LoveStyles, Susan learned that her husband had assumed that she was perfectly happy, even in becoming much more Gold, and much less Orange. She, in turn, learned that her own assumptions were wrong, about Michael. Susan realized that she was trying to protect her husband’s ego, in his possible inability of being a loving and affectionate father. But she was simply incorrect, about his desires and abilities.

Michael shared with Susan that he had been constantly brightening his Gold, overall, in order to provide a stable financial future for the whole family. His own family had been somewhat impoverished, and he certainly wasn’t going to have that. In fact, because of Michael’s vigilance, the family was well-off. But his constant “false brightening” of Gold caused him to dim his Blue and his Orange, as well as his Green—his own Primary Color. He missed his love of philosophy, and of intellectual expansion in general, with Susan. He missed the fun they used to have just “exploring” life, together. He, too, had lost track of himself.

With this Discovery, Michael and Susan vowed to help each other become their truest selves, again.

Michael vowed to help Susan to be her brightest Blue/Orange/Gold/Green, by devoting more of his time and energy with the children, to “protect” what Susan was so afraid of losing, which was actually their whole relationship. Also, he promised to remember how much his wife loved and needed those important, frequent Blue romantic gestures, which made for such a wonderful sex life.

Susan vowed to consciously encourage Michael's interest in philosophy, and to re-open herself to sharing all of the Green exploration that he so loved, while injecting her own natural sense of humor.

With the understanding that we must *strive to help each other* be most true to ourselves, and with the language of "dimming" and "false brightening," Susan and Michael have ironed out the major issues in their marriage.

Here's how to share this Discovery, with your partner. First, ask yourself what Colors you are dimming or falsely brightening in yourself, in your relationship. Explore within yourself, just how you are manifesting those tendencies, in your behavior. Write this down. Remember, that this part is just about you.

. . . Then, ask yourself *what it is you are trying to protect*. Is it your partner's ego? Is it your finances? Is it a fear you've carried over from childhood? Is it your-mother-in-law? Perhaps it's the relationship, itself. Be very specific, about understanding what it is you are trying to protect. Write this down, too.

The next step is to tell your partner exactly what you are doing. Tell him or her what Colors you are "dimming" or "falsely brightening," and describe how this manifests in your own behavior. There is no accusation, here. It's all about you.

Then, tell your partner just *what it is*, that you are trying to protect. Your partner is likely to be surprised, but certainly not threatened, because this language of your own "dimming" and "brightening" is only about you, and what you are doing. There is no accusation, whatsoever.

The last step—the one that changes everything, is to ask your partner what he or she can *do*, to help protect what it is you are afraid of harming, or losing. Let him or her know that you need help, in order to keep your own True Colors shining bright—and that he or she can help you most—more than anyone, to help you become most true to yourself.

. . . What more can love ask?

The activity sheets for this Discovery (True LoveStyles Discovery Nine) are available on the True Colors Association website. This Discovery is such a huge help for couples, that I want you to be able to experience it for yourself, and to share it with your clients. I invite you to become licensed in delivering True LoveStyles, to help people have happier love relationships, and more fulfilling lives. Go to [truelovestyles.com](http://truelovestyles.com) to learn more!

“The True LoveStyles ‘Discovery Album’ by Erica Lowry is jam-packed with thought-provoking activities and insights that can keep any couple exploring and enhancing their relationship for years.”

--Mary Miscisin  
Author, “Showing Our True Colors”

*This article is excerpted from Erica Lowry’s upcoming book, “True LoveStyles—The Bridge to Love” and was published in the International True Colors Association Newsletter, February 2007.*