Looking for Trouble, Part 1: Motive

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Writers are always looking for trouble, no matter what genre we prefer. Conflict drives the plot for storytellers. Problem-solving organizes the argument for nonfiction writers. Poets focus on tensions, complexities, and levels of paradox that duller souls pass by: poets have an exceedingly fine eye for trouble.

But the trouble with trouble, from the writers' point of view, is that we have to settle the conflicts we generate. We have to solve the problems that intrigue us, and we have to do so in some richly satisfactory, dramatically engaging way. That's hard. It's easy enough to find trouble to talk about: the world is full of predicaments; plenty of interesting people are trapped inside these difficulties. But how do we get out of the mess we imagine--or the mess we find through all our diligent research? If we tame down the trouble too much, we're boring. But if the trouble is too tough or too complicated, then we can find ourselves in a hopeless muddle. That's not convincing. In our writing, as in our lives, solving problems is no easy matter.

I have discovered that there's intriguing help available from professional mediators. One eminent organization in that field is the Harvard Negotiation Project. These folks know trouble first hand--for instance, they are the ones who negotiated a peaceful end to apartheid. These days they are working quietly, behind the scenes, with Sunni and Shia tribal leaders in southern Iraq. Members of this nonprofit organization have written several books offering advice to ordinary citizens about how we too might manage conflict more wisely in our own lives.

It's only somewhat perverse, I think, for writers to read these books for insight into how to create a realistic conflict--and then how to resolve it convincingly. At least that's what I've been doing lately. Once I had mastered at least some of their thinking, I started fitting in other pieces, like what sociologists of marriage say about how to sabotage a

relationship. Or what linguists have to say about how to gender differences and cultural differences can sabotage a conversation. Neuro-psychologists have a lot to say as well: they contend that men and women react to stress hormones so very differently that when trouble erupts we are almost guaranteed to drive one another crazy.

If we are willing to hold this research upside down and shake it firmly, what falls out can be reassembled into intriguing advice about how to make real trouble--how to make genuine trouble, engaging trouble, and then (by golly) solve the mess we have made. This advice has two major dimensions. First, the complexity of human motivation. Second, the complexity of human interaction: how we behave and how we misbehave; how we can persuade one another successfully, and how such efforts can be derailed. I've also had great fun lately trying to stage the development and resolution of a conflict using a classic five-part definition of plot structure and a classic five-part definition of persuasive argument. I'll get to that in the second half of this essay.

The Five Layers of Motive

Human motivation is complex: we have many reasons for anything that we do, for anything that we forget or fail or refuse to do. All of these reasons are operative simultaneously, and many of them are inevitably unconscious.[1] No analytical scheme of human motivation can be definitive--but even a very simple tool has its uses. But if we are cautious, we can shed at least some light on the opacity of human motive by pretending--for the sake of argument--that motivation exists in five "layers."

1. from positions to interests

The first and most visible layer of motive is the position one takes on an issue. For instance, imagine that I take the position "I want to go out to dinner." And let's say my husband does not want to go out to dinner. That's his position.

Behind or beneath the position I have taken, I have a key interest at stake. That's the second layer of my motive. That is, I'm taking the position "I want to go out to dinner," for a reason, or in order to meet a need that I have or to see to something that matters to me. All of those reasons get lumped together under the label "interest." I have an

interest in the position I'm taking. Maybe I take my position because I am too tired to cook. Or maybe I'm just bored to death with my own cooking. Or, hey, maybe I have something important I need to discuss with my husband during a long quiet dinner in a nice restaurant. When I take the position, "I want to go out to dinner," my husband doesn't know why I am taking that position. Maybe I don't exactly know why either. But initially he disagrees. There are many possible reasons for his taking his position, just as there are many possible reasons for my taking mine.

In their best-seller *Getting to Yes,* Roger Fischer and William Ury argue at length that compromise is much easier to find when people negotiate from key interests rather than from rigid positions.[2] For instance, my husband's interests and mine might both be satisfied if we called out for pizza. Such gracious compromise sounds so very reasonable!

But people are not always reasonable. Shifting an actual conflict from positions to interests can be difficult. As Fischer and Ury explain in some detail, there are plenty of reasons why people get locked down into positions they have taken: stubbornness; pride; fear; competitiveness. Even ignorance: people can fail to recognize what their key interests <u>are</u>. They think they know <u>what</u> they want; they don't exactly know <u>why</u>. They have not thought that far ahead. Meanwhile, they are both blind and bullheaded. *Getting to Yes* is a fascinating little book, especially for those of us who are by nature both opinionated and stubborn.

2. from interests to values

The mess of human motivation gets thicker yet. In a subsequent book, *The Power of a Positive No,* William Ury argues that behind our key interests are the overarching values that we have at stake in any specific conflict.[3] Values are the third layer of human motives. These values can be moral norms. They can be ethical standards. They can be interpersonal commitments--our sense of honor in relationships. To return to the dinner example--assume for a moment that my interest in going out to dinner is that I want to have my husband's undivided attention for a while. That's one basis for

compromise. But there's a deeper level yet: behind my key interest in having his attention is how much I value his judgment: I need his advice about some situation I'm facing. Behind his position of wanting to stay home, behind his interest in that position, there is also something he values. At the moment of disagreement, neither of us know any of this about one another's motives.

Knowing what values are at stake provides an even richer and more satisfying basis for compromise. He and I might compromise very easily on the basis of some strongly shared value, even though initially we took different positions and we had different key interests at stake. But of course, whatever makes for richer, more satisfying compromise can also make for deeper, darker, more virulent conflict. Perhaps for him, frugality means safety. Perhaps for me, eating out together affirms intimacy. If those are the core values at stake for each of us, this conflict goes far beyond dinner. But who knows? Who knows what values are at stake here?

And that's the point: how often do any of us stop to consider the wide array of good reasons someone might have for opposing us? A storyteller can open out a rich dimension of characterization by paying attention to the values that motivate the interests that lead to the positions that a character takes. *The Power of a Positive No* delineates a graceful, thought-provoking analytical process for reaching agreements based on values. But run it backwards, so to speak, and you have a model for constructing a wonderfully complicated three-dimensional character and an intensely dramatic conflict. And--better yet!--resolving this conflict realistically.

3. from values to identity issues

Compromise can be complicated because compromise demands both objectivity and honesty from both parties--plus the energy and the willingness to communicate nondefensively when disagreements erupt. Compromise is particularly difficult when the conflict at hand elicits strong emotional responses or engages core issues of personal identity. Identity issues are the fourth layer, after positions, interests, and values. If my husband were to blow up instantaneously when I said, "Let's go out to

dinner," then chances are that my position has hit one of his personal hot buttons. We all have them. According to *Difficult Conversations,* yet another book from the Harvard Negotiation Project, the most commonly troublesome identity issues are these three: Am I a good person? Am I competent? Am I worthy of love? Such questions matter to everyone--and behind these issues, as the authors insist repeatedly, there is *always* a story. *Difficult Conversations* offers case study after case study describing real situations in which surface conflicts were stand-ins for complex identity issues on all sides.[4]

One good source for help in sketching identity issues realistically is a branch of psychology called personality theory. According to psychologists, a "personality trait" is an aspect of behavior and disposition that persists over time. Classically, there are five such traits: extraversion (with its opposite, introversion); neuroticism (the frequency with which one is moody and negative); conscientiousness (dutifulness); agreeableness (the willingness or perhaps the ability to get along with others); and openness to experience (willingness to learn, to try something new, or to consider a new angle on an issue). Some conflicts between individuals are situational or situation-specific; in other settings or at other moments, these two individuals might get along just fine. But some conflicts arise from the clash of two structurally incompatible personalities.

When we need to create--or, in a memoir, to recount--an intractable situation, a bit of outside reading in this field can be very helpful. Sources here are many and quite rich, but for our purposes I think the most useful work is by Dan McAdams.[5] He contends that a comprehensive theory of personality should complement the classic "big five" personality traits with systematic attention to how personal life-stories reveal the ways in which a person has adapted--or failed to adapt--to the varied pressures of evolutionary survival, a specific culture, and a particular social context. McAdams's sustained emphasis on personal narratives of identity--what writers call "backstory"--makes his work both invaluable and fascinating.

5. From Identity Issues to Backstory

As Dan McAdams has argued for many years, human identity is a story. What I mean by "who I am" is the endlessly updated story I tell about my own experience, and the kind of story I tell is shaped by the identity stories I grew up hearing. As a result, a person's specific identity issues--for good and for ill--are always rooted in or visible in the interplay between his or her personal history and its many layers of cultural context. Personal history is the fifth and final layer of human motive.

For the purposes of conflict management, however, the key influence of personal history is the constrained social roles people can assume in their major intimate relationships, and how they go on to play out these same constraints in other relationships or new relationships. For instance, a woman who grew up trying to appease her critical mother may go through life almost compulsively deferring to the opinions of other people. A man who grew up trying to engage his distant father may go through life endlessly seeking attention. Under the pressure of early experience, people find themselves trapped by interpersonal dynamics that are in fact deeply at odds with their own rational positions, interests, and values. And what happens then?

Such unconscious, unproductive repetition of early experience is played out in countless literary works; it's also a major theme in memoirs. Unearthing and depicting our failure to act in accord with our own best interest is a common persuasive tactic in nonfiction arguments. For instance, both Michael Pollan and Barbara Kingsolver have recently published adeptly persuasive books trying to get all of us to rethink our choices about the food we eat.[6] Both of them repeatedly acknowledge the convenience of "convenience" foods. Both admit how happy their kids are with junk food. These admissions signal to us, their readers, that they understand the lives we lead--and furthermore the hassle we might face in trying to change the eating habits of our families. They understand the myriad pressures explaining why we sometimes make bad choices about food. The depth and wit and grace of how well they understand us, their hapless but goodhearted readers, is crucial to their ability to influence our thinking and our food choices.

What these best-selling authors demonstrate, it seems to me, is that persuasive writers

must spend as much time and energy *studying* the "backstories" of their intended readers as fiction writers do *inventing* the backstories of their characters. Backstory issues inform conflicts of all kinds and at all levels, both in literature and in life. In fact, there's a fairly new field called "behavioral economics" that studies how and why we fail to pursue what is in our best interest. Even economists, it seems, have discovered that we are not the rational actors that economic orthodoxy has always assumed.

For insight into how to think about backstory issues, once again the most useful academic discipline is psychology. The most pragmatically useful source I've come across is Harriet Lerner. She is a therapist who has written several best-selling books across a span of decades. In each of these books she explores the backstory origin of interpersonal conflict. And in each book, she uses the metaphor "dance" to name the habitual patterns in human relationships.[7] She contends that the patterns found in our relationships reflect our own deep-set emotional responses and needs. These patterns usually stem from in our early experience growing up. But her central concern is neither psychodynamic theory nor persuading her readers to rethink their personal past. Quite the contrary! Her interests are more immediate and more pragmatic--and thus more immediately useful to storytellers: what should someone do when faced with an interpersonal conflict that has such roots?

As I have said, the Harvard Negotiation Project books answer that question logically. They offer great advice about how to analyze positions and how to get everyone involved to work back to interests, values, identity issues, and so forth. All that logical analysis and lawyerly investigation can be necessary--but it's never sufficient. It's not sufficient because human motivation has a massive emotional element. The Harvard folks realize that, of course. But they try to cope with emotions logically, or at least systematically--by getting us to think strategically about how best to handle a conflicted situation. I've found Lerner has done more to refine my understanding of the high-energy emotional complexities that shape human motivation.

I think it helps that Lerner obviously knows the logical approach to conflict mediation. Now and then she repeats some of the kinds of advice that the Harvard folks offer. But

mostly she focuses on the emotional difficulties people are apt to have when they try to follow all the sage strategic advice that the Harvard folks provide. Combining her work with the Harvard Negotiation Project work can help us delineate characters of genuine depth and convincing complexity.

Lerner is also a great storyteller; her case-study vignettes come alive. She offers a treasure trove of examples of how deeply-rooted conflicts play out in real lives. It might be a useful exercise to turn her case studies into short stories or at least into longer, better developed scenes, just to get a good feel for how such tensions play out between people. The same sorts of exercises might be drawn from *Getting to Yes,* from *Difficult Conversations,* or from *The Power of a Positive No*.

How to Detonate a Conflict

So that's the five layers of motives: position, interest, value, identity issues, and backstory. We can get another angle on conflict and conflict resolution if we look at studies of the behaviors that drive conflict--behavior as something separate, at least in theory, from motive. This means looking at what we do rather than why. Once again this means reading sociological and psychological sources a bit perversely at times, looking for ways to make trouble rather than to resolve trouble. How can we detonate a simple, ordinary conversation about whether or not to go out to dinner? How can we escalate a low-key differences of opinion into a flaming crisis?

The most detailed, most authoritative guide to misbehaving is the work of John Gottman, a professor of psychology at the University of Washington.[8] He takes a rigorously empirical approach to the study of marital relationships: he videotapes couples in conversation while he monitors blood pressure and other biological markers of stress. He studies observable behaviors, not motives, and certainly not the dense complexity of identity issues and backstory. He is interested in how people behave, and how their behavior shapes--or destroys--their relationships.

That makes his work a veritable gold mine of strategies for depicting relationships accurately, whether you want two people to work together smoothly despite lots of

colorful surface tension, whether you want a relationship to deteriorate over time, or whether you want to stage an authentic blow-up. Gottman claims 96 percent accuracy in predicting the outcome of a fifteen minute conversation within its first three minutes[9] He has a lot to say about how conversations start and about the trajectories of arguments. His transcripts of actual arguments are fascinating. (His transcripts also demonstrate the considerable difference between real dialogue and literary dialogue--yet more opportunity for entertaining exercises.)

Clues to the strength of a relationship, Gottman argues, include how well two people know one another, how often they express respect and fondness for one another, how deeply they share decision-making, how successfully they can keep small conflicts from escalating, and how regularly they interact in small, comfortable ways that involve shared meaning of some kind.[10] Happy couples can have ferocious arguments, he contends, as long as their core relationship is strong in these other ways. His many specific illustrations map very nicely against what classical rhetoric taught about what a writer must do to be persuasive: know your audience, the ancients said. Know their values. Respect your audience. Share meanings, experiences, commonalities of any kind. Downplay differences by reframing them with similarities. Writers in any genre, in every genre, must know the human heart to be effective.[11]

Gottman's most interesting finding, I think, is his contention that 69 percent of marital conflicts are inescapable.[12] The precision of that number strikes me as a bit silly, but surely there's real truth to his claim that even the best marriages face unsurmountable differences between the needs and personalities of the people involved. As a result, the success of a marriage depends in large measure upon how adeptly the partners accept and navigate around their core incompatibilities. There's considerable drama implicit in that fact, it seems to me. Accepting and coping wisely with core incompatibilities is a measure of anyone's maturity, whether in a marriage, in a friendship, or in a professional relationship with a colleague. Gottman's research is relevant to more than simply marriages.

He also offers an array of intriguing little exercises for building strength in relationships.

Some of these are exercises for couples to do together. Some are questionnaires to fill out about yourself or about your partner. Each set of exercises comes paired with a chapter discussing the behaviors that either strengthens or destroy a relationship. All of them are creatively engaging: this is not the silliness one finds in certain kind of magazines.

These exercises might prove quite useful for working up the backstory of any kind of relationship between two characters, not simply marriages. Having this kind of backstory *on a relationship*--not simply on each character--can be useful both for resolving conflict and for creating conflict. It's also a way to construct complex, three-dimensional relationships--which is a major way to define complex, three-dimensional characters.

Gottman has a lot to say about creating conflict.[13] If you want to torpedo a conversation--and possibly a relationship as well--here's how to do it:

1. Criticism. Don't just object to something specific someone has done. Don't simply point out a problem. Attack! As Gottman explains, "A complaint focuses on a specific behavior, but a criticism ups the ante by throwing in blame and general character assassination. Here's a recipe: To turn any complaint into a criticism, just add my favorite line: 'What's wrong with you?' "[14] A complaint might be something like "you left the garage door standing open." The garage door problem turned into an attack might be, "You really don't care whether someone steals my new bike, do you?" Adding or subtracting elements of attack can escalate or de-escalate the tension of any scene. It's also a quick way to signal the pre-existing relationship between two characters.

2. Contempt. One can put a further edge on an attack by adding contempt: sneering, sarcasm, name-calling, eye-rolling, mockery, and hostile humor. A little belligerence makes matters even worse. Gottman argues that contempt reflects pre-established hostility toward the other person, which is an important point to keep in mind. Of course, some people are chronically hostile and contemptuous to just about

everyone. And they are for that reason unlikely to have healthy relationships of any kind. Whatever the origins of contempt, it's deeply destructive. Or so Gottman's empirical data suggests

3. Defensiveness. When someone is attacked, and especially when someone is attacked contemptuously, he is apt to defend himself: "this is not my fault." Gottman contends that defensiveness does not defuse a conflict: it's an attempt to shift blame, often to shift blame back onto the person attacking. If you need to escalate a conflict, everyone involved might be attacking, contemptuous, and defensive by turns. Gottman says that's classic.

4. Stonewalling. When conflict builds to a physically intolerable level, people shut down. They stop listening; they walk out; they turn away. That's one way to end an argument--or to close a scene--but it's a serious danger sign. Conflict in a relationship has to be deep-seated and probably of long duration before serious stonewalling sets in. It's a tactic more often used by men than by women, Gottman says, perhaps because men react to conflict with a much deeper, more enduring physiological response than women do. Conflict upsets men more deeply at a physical level--blood pressure, heart rate, stress hormones, etc. Men also stay upset much longer than women do. That's why men are much more likely to stonewall than women are--especially when they are in conflict with a woman.

Which brings up gender differences as a basis for conflict. Both linguists and neuropsychologists have weighed in on that topic in recent years. Let's start with the psychologists. Shelley Taylor contends that men and women respond very differently to the hormones released by stress.[15] For men, the response is fight-or-flight. For women, she argues, the response is tend-and-befriend. Taylor sees these differences as complementary strategies for evolutionary survival: the males attack predators or run away, getting the predator to chase them. Females groom the young to get them to calm down and stay still, so that the nest escapes detection.

Taylor's book on all this was released in 2002, and it prompted some talk in the media

about how men and women across the country responded in the hours and days following the terrorist attacks of 9/11. All of us, men and women alike, were struggling with grief, rage, and fear. None of us could concentrate on the work we were supposed to be doing. So on the afternoon of 9/11, like millions of other women nationwide, I cleaned the house and made cookies. The weekend following the attacks, millions of households nationwide were fragrant with furniture polish and home cooking. Taylor argues that the nesting behavior of these millions of women very dramatically helped our families, and especially the men in our lives, to ramp down from their own biologically dangerous stress responses.

So imagine a couple under stress from something outside their own immediate relationship. She wants to cuddle, or to cook, or to clean up the living room. At the very least, she wants to talk about how she feels about the problem, because such conversation is part of womanly befriending behavior. It's as built in a response as fight-or-flight. The goal of such conversation is not figuring out what to do. The goal is social bonding through shared sympathy. The goal is calming down together and encouraging one another. The goal is heart-soothing, not problem-solving.

He wants none of it. He's struggling manfully to control his biologically-driven mandate either to violent confrontation or to headlong flight: neither cookies nor vacuuming are on his agenda--and certainly not conversation. That is, not unless you can propose a definite action to be taken or a solution to be implemented. Just *talking* about the situation makes him more anxious and stressed-out, not less. He's apt to jump up, walk out, and sequester himself out in the garage, or under the hood of the car, or maybe up on a ladder somewhere. Call it male "nesting," if you will. Male castle-maintenance, maybe. Biologically, it's the same stress response as my cookie-making and long phone calls with my daughter.

These sharp gender differences in stress response may have aided our survival back in the Paleolithic, when we were living in small hunter-gatherer bands in a world of large predators and tribal marauding. Life is different now, but our biology has changed very little. Gender differences in biological response to stress are a set up for

misunderstanding.

Another set-up for gender conflict is the different ways in which men and women manage conversation. These differences have been mapped in detail by Deborah Tannen, a linguist at Georgetown who studies conversation. Her work is fascinating and at times hilarious as well.[16] I'll highlight just a few points that strike me as the very most potent.

The first has to do with posture. For a man, or among men, direct eye contact and physical proximity are either flat-out confrontational or a sexual come-on. That's not true for women. Among women, direct eye contact signals both empathy and attunement. So picture a man and a woman arguing. She want to signal to him that she is listening carefully, that she cares about him and about the position he is trying to explain. So she moves closer. She faces him more and more squarely. She makes more eye contact. And he reads all of that, every bit of it, as confrontational, as a deliberate escalation of tension. He gets even more upset. She moves even closer.

Or this: how does a man signal he is paying attention, that he cares about what he is hearing? He interrupts, questions, and contradicts. He sees that as engagement, as active listening, as taking seriously what is being said. She is apt to feel--interrupted and contradicted.

Such literal-minded misunderstandings work in both directions. For instance: how does a woman make a polite request? By asking a question: "do you want to go out to dinner?" A man hears that question *as a question*, and furthermore as a question *about what he wants*. For the man, what the woman intends as a polite request can feel manipulative or dishonest. It feels like a baffling refusal to take responsibility for her own wishes.

Deborah Tannen has also done some wonderful work on regional and cultural differences in conversational style, like how much and how vehemently one gestures, and how close together people stand when they are talking. The most intriguing, most subtle of these differences, I think, is how long a pause is required before the second

person can speak without having interrupted the first speaker. This interval is a function of how rapidly a language is spoken--how many syllables per minutes. Swedish, for instance, is spoken very slowly, and Americans of Swedish descent are apt to speak English rather more slowly than other Americans. Irish and Welsh are spoken very quickly indeed, and Americans of Welsh or Irish descent speak English much more rapidly than other Americans. Picture, then, a Swedish-American and an Irish-American couple in conversation: the Swede is apt to feel overwhelmed, interrupted, and not-listened-to, and the Irish person won't have a clue about what's wrong. The same reaction is likely when someone who grew up in New York City tries to talk to someone from small-town Minnesota. The New York can come across as rude; the Minnesotan as a dolt. It's all bias, pure and simple--but it can be remarkably invisible bias if we fail to understand massive differences in conversational style in different cultural locations and among different cultural subgroups.

Garrison Keillor has great fun playing with Minnesotan speech patterns that go back to Norway and to Sweden. Tony Hillerman makes great use of Navajo conversational practice, which demands a significant pause after someone speaks before anyone else is free to reply. He opens out that space with nonverbal responses, with interior self-talk, and with carefully chosen details of physical setting. Henry James and Edith Wharton make great use of the contrast between the classically British devotion to diffidence and indirection and American habits of absolute directness and self-assertion. All such differences open out space both for conflict and, potentially, for the *resolution* of conflict--once people get past the misunderstandings these differences foster.

The challenge, of course, is how do we extract our characters from the unholy mess we have made of their lives? How do we do so convincingly? The best answers to such questions, I've discovered, are available from yet another array of experts: people who study rhetoric, which is the art of persuasive writing and effective argument.

I'll see you back here next week for that.

1 For a recent account of the scope of the unconscious, see Daniel Goleman, *Emotional Intelligence* (New York: Bantam Books, 1995), Guy Claxton, *Hare Brain, Tortoise Mind: Why Intelligence Increases When You Think Less* (Hopewell, NJ: The Ecco Press, 1997), and two books by Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness* (New York: Harcourt, 1999) and *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason, and the Human Brain* (1994, rpt New York: HarperCollins, 2000).

2 Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton, *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In* (2nd ed., New York: Penguin Books, 1995).

3 William Ury, *The Power of a Positive No: Save the Deal, Save the Relationship--and Still Say No* (New York: Bantam, 2007).

4 Douglas Stone, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen, *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most* (New York: Penguin, 1999)

5 For an astute, accessible discussion of the issues, especially as they intersect with cultural differences and with personal backstory ("narrative identity") see Dan P. McAdams and Jennifer L. Pals, "A New Big Five: Fundamental Principles for an Integrative Science of Personality," American Psychologist, Vol. 61, No. 3 (April, 2006): 204-217. McAdams's books on narrative identity are also extraordinarily rich, thought-provoking: *Stories We Live By: Personal Myths and the Making of the Self* (New York: The Guilford Press, 1993) and *The Redemptive Self: Stories Americans Live By* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006). *Stories We Live By* might be

particularly useful reading for someone writing a memoir--or even thinking about doing so.

6 Michal Pollan, The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals (New York: Penguin, 2006); Barbara Kingsolver, Animal, Vegetable, Miracle: A Year of Food Life (New York: HarperCollins, 2007)

7 The relevant books by Harriet Lerner have all been published in New York by HarperCollins. They are The Dance of Anger: A Woman's Guide to Changing the Patterns of Intimate Relationships (1985), The Dance of Intimacy: A Woman's Guide to Courageous Acts of Change in Key Relationships (1989), The Dance of Deception: A Guide to Authenticity and Truth-Telling in Women's Relationships (1994); The Dance of Connection: How to Talk to Someone when You're Mad, Hurt, Scared, Frustrated, Insulted, Betrayed, or Desperate (2002); and most recently The Dance of Fear: Rising above Anxiety, Fear, and Shame to Be Your Best and Truest Self (2005).

8 John M. Gottman, *The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work* (New York: Three Rivers Press, 1999)

9 Gottman, *Seven Principles,* p. 27.

10 Gottman, *Seven Principles,* pp. 19-24

11 On classical rhetoric, see *The Rhetorical Tradition: Readings from Classical Times to the Present*, ed. Patrica Bizzell and Bruce Herzeberg (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1990) and Edward P. J. Corbett, *Classical Rhetoric for the Modern Student*, second edition (London: Oxford University Press, 1971). See also

Joseph Williams and Gregory Colomb, *The Craft of Argument*, second edition (New York: Addison Wesley Longman, 2003), especially chapters one through three.

12 Gottman, *Seven Principles,* p.130

13 Gottman, *Seven Principles,* p. 27-34.

14 Gottman, *Seven Principles,* p. 28.

15 Shelley Taylor, *The Tending Instinct: How Nurturing Is Essential for Who We Are and How We Live* (New York: Times Books, Henry Holt & Co., 2002.

16 Deborah Tannen, *You Just Don't Understand: Women and Men in Conversation* (New York: Ballantine, 1990), *That's Not What I Meant! How Conversational Style Makes or Breaks Relationships* (New York: Ballantine, 1986), *You're Wearing That?: Understanding Mothers and Daughters in Conversation* (New York: Random House, 2006).