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LGBT

Together Forever: The Gay Man's Guide to Lifelong Love
Martin Kantor
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“There is no way around the simple fact that before a new soul can emerge the old soul first has to go through a few nasty little birth pangs,” says the author. He’s talking about forming gay marriages that work. He means that to make a marriage that lasts, the partners must work more on changing themselves than changing each other. He also says to put divorce out of the equation. No more can gay partners think of the ease with which they can call it quits. No more is one partner to make divorce a romantic and dramatic—even a magnificent—personal tragedy. Gay partners who enter a relationship for the long haul must realize they are giving up some of the advantages of being single.

In the first chapter, Kantor lists nine danger zones for gay marriage that must be overcome in a committed relationship, among which are fear of closeness and commitment, self-absorption, and excessive dependency. In the chapter on Myths and Facts, he says that those who make their marriage work must overcome the myth that long-term gay relationships don’t work. “When it comes to gay marriage,” says Kantor, “pessimism is the operative word and breaking up the predictable outcome.”

In fact, the author turns conventional thinking on how marriages are made to work on its head. Unlike the notion that all problems should be discussed, Kantor maintains that the partner who is angry should realize that the problem lies within himself and, rather than discussing it with his partner, should get over it.

In later chapters, Kantor returns to the danger zones, offering details on how each one should be approached. For example, in the chapter, “Danger Zone 8: Overcoming Excessive Dependency,” he offers a checklist to help spot unhealthy dependency: like always trying to determine if the other partner loves him, comparing his love to some ideal, the fear of being isolated from him (“The slightest distance between the two of us makes me feel completely abandoned.”). Perhaps an opposite but equally destructive danger is excessive competitiveness.

Kantor devotes another chapter to this zone—again with a checklist. Kantor's approach is one of teaching each partner to focus on changing himself, rather than his partner.

The author holds a Ph.D. in psychology as well as an MD. He practices psychiatry in New Jersey and New York and specializes in gay men's issues. He is the author of *My Guy* and lives with his partner of twenty-two years in rural New Jersey.

In the end, he says, marriage is for gay men who feel it is right for them. Those already involved in relationships, even rocky ones, will benefit from a thorough reading of this book.