



Southern Ontario
Counselling Centre

Why Marriage is Not 50/50

By Mavis Kerr, M.D.

Anna Gold

M.S.W., R.S.W.

As a Marriage and Family Therapist, I frequently work with couples in conflict. Often, each partner believes that he or she is giving more to the relationship than the other half of the couple. One often complains that the relationship does not “feel” like it is 50/50. I am usually met with surprise when I declare that, actually, most stable relationships are more like 70/70.

Lee Horton-Carter

M.A.

What do I mean by that? Imagine my husband is working to a stressful deadline. He enters the house with dirt on his feet and tracks across a newly washed floor. My first inclination is to remind him of his error (in no uncertain terms), but instead, I might decide just to clean up quietly and let it go this time, since he is under fire. When I am in a relationship, I am acutely aware of every time I give that little extra effort, or when I hold back from the hurtful comment on the tip of my tongue. My other half is totally unaware of these quiet gifts of kindness or restraint .

Dr. Mavis Kerr

M.D.

Neil Lackey

M.Th.

He, on the other hand, also knows each time he bit his tongue, saved the last of my favourite cookies for me, or cleaned up after the cat, unbeknownst to me.

Susan Rosenblum

M.S.W., R.S.W.

Thus the perception of each of us is that “I am giving more than 50%”. When you realize this inevitable distortion, it somehow makes it easier to let in the possibility that your spouse is more giving than you thought.

Some couples, upon learning this, will begin a playful routine of checking in at the end of the day to get a hug for each of their “silent saintlies”. No cheating!

Teresa Wiebe

B.Ed., M.T.S.

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