

## **Carol Ruth Summers, MS, LMFT**

*Licensed Couple Counseling Specialist*

*Certified Gottman Method Couples Therapist*

*Licensed Marriage & Family Therapist*

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### **Introduction**

I'm glad you contacted me and look forward to meeting you. As an introduction, below is information about me, my work and office policies.

### **Philosophy and Approach**

We've had swimming lessons before jumping into deep water; we've had driving lessons before getting behind the wheel of a car, and we've had schooling for years to prepare for adulthood. However, how many lessons did you have in how to relate successfully in an intimate relationship before making a commitment?

"Zero," if you're like almost every other client in my 35+ years of practice. In fact, if you've learned anything about intimate relationships, it's probably come from observing your parents, or you've tried to learn from your mistakes, or you may have read some books. However, if any of these tactics worked, you wouldn't be where you are now.

By the time most couples in a committed relationship make an appointment to see me, partners have a negative perspective of each other and of their relationship. Usually there is gridlocked conflict that, no matter what's been tried, comes up over and over again. Fondness, admiration, romance, lovemaking, and even feeling attracted to one another may have faded or be missing all together. Many partners have begun to question whether they love their partner, ever loved their partner, or perhaps made a mistake to begin with. It's sad to note that couples wait on average 6 years from the time a problem becomes gridlocked before seeking outside professional help.

There is hope! Here's how I can help you.

First, I'll make an in-depth assessment of your relationship that will include: an initial appointment focused on your present situation, your relationship history, and any goals you might have. At the close of this initial appointment I'll email you a detailed questionnaire to complete individually without sharing it with your partner. This questionnaire will give me a very detailed picture of what's not working in your relationship. The next two appointments I'll see you separately to review your questionnaire and discuss your personal background. After I have all this information, I'll develop a treatment plan based upon the Gottman Method which we'll review together. This plan may call us to:

- Learn tested skills to more effectively and skillfully:
  - Communicate
  - Resolve conflict
  - Handle disagreements

- Make repairs when there are hurt feelings or unfulfilled needs or expectations
- Promote harmony, joy, fun and intimacy
- Deal directly with a current crisis (i.e., infidelity, illness, sudden life change, etc.).
- Develop greater empathy and understanding for one another through review of your Enneagram Points of View and your Myers Briggs Types
- Change your thinking, i.e., how you think about yourself, your partner and the problems in your relationship
- Deal with anger, hurt and resentment whether about current or past issues
- Discover how stress pollutes your relationship and what you can do about it
- Uncover and gently heal family of origin issues that influence how you relate to one another
- Recognize patterns of interaction that lead to a dead-end and replace these with patterns that lead to greater intimacy and love
- Awaken and rekindle romance, sensuality, sexuality and passion

### **Method and Counseling Style**

I work exclusively with couples — just about every kind of couple you can think of — working on just about every kind of problem.

I work within the frame of Gottman Method Couples Therapy, a structured, goal-oriented, scientifically-based therapy. Intervention strategies are based upon empirical data from Dr. John Gottman's three decades of research with more than 3,000 couples. I have advanced training and experience working with couples on sexual issues. Other methods that inform my work are Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy, Narrative Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Gestalt Therapy, Mindfulness Practices and 12 Step Work. In addition, I may refer to the Enneagram and the Myers Briggs Type Indicator to support understanding of personality and style differences between partners.

My counseling style has been described as warm and supportive, yet direct and to the point, focused on strengths and solutions rather than on problems. I'm adaptive and flexible, modifying my style and approach in response to the needs of my clients. Clients report that I'm easy to talk to and someone they can trust with their most intimate issues. I truly care and love helping couples solve problems and develop more satisfying relationships.

While I am certified as a Gottman Method Therapist, I want you to know that I am completely independent in providing you with clinical services, and I alone am fully responsible for those services. The Gottman Institute or its agents have no responsibility for the services you receive.

### **Credentials and Experience**

I've been a practicing Marriage and Family Therapist since 1978, the year I graduated from St. Thomas University in Miami, Florida, with an MS in Marriage and Family Therapy. I am a Washington State Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist (1555) as well as a Certified Gottman Method Couples Therapist. Other credentials include: Clinical Member of the American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy (AAMFT); EMDR/R Level II Practitioner (1994); Certified Enneagram Teacher; graduate of The Gestalt Institute of Miami; and BFA in Theater from Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. As a perpetual student, I continue to seek more effective skills. Among the hundreds of hours of continuing education I've received, I have advanced training in Emotionally Focused Couples Therapy, Sex Therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Narrative Therapy and hypnosis. I'm well-versed in 12 Step Work and ACOA issues.

## **Our Work - My Skills and Your Commitment**

Our work is a journey of discovery, of learning and growing. I will guide you to become more skillful at loving and trusting one another and, hopefully, more able to reach the deepest, most tender aspects of intimacy.

I've got the skills and know-how to help you. However, you need to be fully committed to the process. This means you need to show up for your appointments, spend quality time with your partner on a regular basis, and do the homework I will assign.

Instead of sessions that end abruptly when "your time is up," hopefully sessions end gently, with a sense of completion. For this reason, I ask that you set aside at least one and a half hours of time and, if possible, even more so that you have time to reflect on what you've learned.

I encourage you to remain steadfast in your commitment. Couples that persevere learn and grow. Gridlock can transform into wonderful possibilities.

## **Fees**

Your first 50-minute meeting with me is free. Afterwards, I have a different fee schedule for daytime and evening/weekend appointments:

Weekdays, From Noon to 6 PM  
\$180 for 60 minutes or less

Evenings from 6 PM to 9 PM and weekends  
\$250 for 60 minutes

Additional Charge: \$250 for Treatment Plan

You are welcome to pay by check, cash, or credit card. If you choose to use a credit card an additional fee may be attached to each hour of our work together. Payment is due at the end of each session. You are responsible for payment of all billed services.

Health insurance companies rarely cover couples counseling because a relationship problem is not considered a diagnosable mental disorder. If, however, you decide you want to try billing your insurance anyway, I'm happy to provide a billing statement for you.

PLEASE NOTE: When we make an appointment, I am committing to hold that time for you. If you are unable to keep your scheduled appointment for any reason, please give me as much advance notice as possible. Appointments cancelled with less than 48 hours notice will be charged the full amount for the time reserved for you.

## **Legal Protection and Confidentiality**

Anything you discuss with me is confidential and will not be revealed to any other person or agency without your written permission. The law mandates exceptions to this policy when there is suspected child or elder abuse or neglect, potential suicidal behavior, threatened harm to self or another, or if the court subpoenas records. As an ongoing part of providing you with the best care, I may consult with a

colleague about our work together. If this happens, you will not be named, nor will I share any details of your life that might identify you.

State regulation requires all counselors practicing counseling for a fee be licensed through the Department of Health for the protection of public health and safety. This state credential does not include recognition of any practice standards, nor does it necessarily imply the effectiveness of any treatment. The purpose of the law regulating counselors is to provide a complaint process against those counselors who would commit acts of unprofessional conduct. If you wish, you can contact the Department of Health Counselor Programs Division to request a copy of this law. Their phone number is (360) 236-4700.

### **Contact by Telephone, Cell Phone and E-Mail**

The quickest and surest way to reach me is to call or send a text message to my cell phone (206) 715-5039. I will do my best to get back to you within a few hours. You may also choose to contact me by e-mail (seasummers@gmail.com).

If you are experiencing an emergency and are unable to contact me, please call 911 or the King County Crisis Clinic at (206) 461-3222, or go to your nearest hospital emergency room. If I have not responded to your phone call or email within 48 hours, please contact me again.

### **Serving Your Needs**

In order to work with you effectively, I need to be deeply “tuned in” or “in sync” with you and your relationship. I encourage you to be courageous in expressing your thoughts, feelings, needs, likes and dislikes. If you feel that we are not connecting, or you are not getting what you need, or if you have any reservations whatsoever, please let me know. The more feedback you give me, the easier it will be for me to support your process. Your satisfaction is of utmost importance to me.

Thank you for the honor and privilege of serving you.