Resnicks’ Twelve Biases About Coupling

1. Relationships and marriage are difficult, rhythmic and not for the faint of heart. Importantly, ongoing primary relationships are worth the effort.

2. The basic human dilemma is: How to be connected to another and maintain a self...? People need to be both separate and connected.

3. In order to be connected, there must also be separateness. “Connectedness” without separateness is fusion.

4. Current models and templates of marriage are anachronistic and obsolete. They are static, formulaic and clearly do not work well (observe both divorce rates and unhappy marriages).

5. Managed and postured relationships, while “working” temporarily, are fundamentally flawed and lead either to explosions and subsequent withdrawal, or collapse into quiet desperation.

6. If a primary relationship or marriage only works when I’m not me, then it rather defeats the purpose.

7. For too long we have pathologized and blamed the individuals in the couple for all relationship problems. If primary relationships are so difficult for so many, perhaps it is time to also question our models of relationships.

8. We encourage a process model of relationship and marriage that supports movement within a range.

9. This model suggests that couples find their degree of overlapping range (compatibility) by being who they are rather than what they and/or others think they should be.

10. A very special part of a primary relationship is the safety to be who you are without having to monitor yourself or the other – true intimacy.

11. Most Couples deal poorly with difference: Confluence: (deferring to the other and losing self), Withdrawal: (isolation and losing the other) or Conflict: (an attempt to erase difference by making the other like me) leading to escalation, explosion and then to withdrawal and anger.

12. Differences in dealing (how) are almost always more important than dealing with differences (what). We propose a new collaborative model of dealing with difference.