

A photograph of a man and a woman sitting on a light-colored couch in a modern living room. The woman on the left is looking down with her hand to her face, appearing sad. The man on the right is also looking down, with his hand on his head, appearing stressed. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent purple gradient.

# THINKING DEVELOPMENTALLY: How To Be A Skilled Couples Therapist

**WITH DR. ELLYN BADER**

Co-Founder of The Couples Institute & The Developmental Model of Couples Therapy  
Co-Author of *In Quest of the Mythical Mate*

# THINKING DEVELOPMENTALLY

**WHEN YOU USE DEVELOPMENTAL THINKING, YOU ARE  
FOCUSED ON GROWTH NOT PATHOLOGY.**

Then you fall in love with couples work and make an enormous difference in people's lives.

## COUPLES' RELATIONSHIPS FAIL FROM



Lack of  
Development



Repetitive Re-triggering  
of Emotional Trauma  
without Repair



Lack of Skills

## COUPLES' PROBLEMS ARE ALWAYS PREDICTABLE, BASED ON...

- ✓ How long partners have been together
- ✓ Developmental stage of relationship
- ✓ Arrested development
- ✓ The chronic triggering of trauma that has gone un-repaired

# 5 PRINCIPLES OF DEVELOPMENTAL THINKING

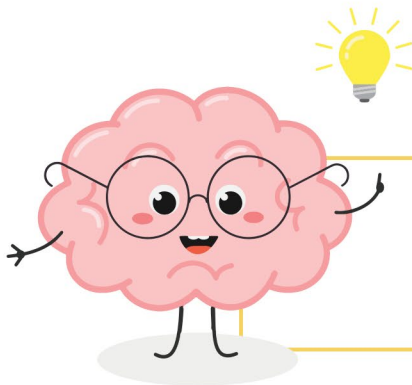
- 1 Strong leadership is essential.**
- 2 Create individual autonomous goals.**
- 3 Set the stage for self-differentiation.**
- 4 Open client to expressing vulnerable thoughts, feelings, wishes, and desires.**
- 5 Get each partner back in their own skin.**

## WHEN YOU THINK DEVELOPMENTALLY...

- You recognize where partners are stuck and why
- Your focus is clear
- You learn to give developmental assists
- You avoid interventions that are too far ahead of your clients and you use targeted ones instead
- You support partners for taking risks and for being accountable for their own growth



# GETTING PARTNERS BACK INTO THEIR OWN SKIN



**Developmental Principle:** Get partners back into their own skin.

## WHEN YOU ASK FOR INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNTABILITY, THEY APPEAL TO...

- You to back off
- The part of you that does not want to be seen as a “bad” therapist
- Your fear of conflict
- Your guilt
- Your desire to be empathic
- Your fear of relationship disruption

Circumscribe what belongs on each side.

## DON'T BE DIVERTED WHEN THEY ASK...

“Why is it always my fault?”

“Why are you always picking on me?”

# TO DISRUPT SYMBIOSIS AND GET EACH PARTNER BACK IN THEIR OWN SKIN

- 1** Describe what you see.
- 2** Expect distraction.
- 3** Describe each partner's role and their usual self-protective response.
- 4** Connect the past with the present.
- 5** Be descriptive, not judgmental.
- 6** Use developmental assists and take opportunities to create change moments in the room with you.
- 7** Remember and keep these moments alive in future sessions.
- 8** Strengthen partners' differentiation so they understand themselves and each other better.

**Then change will be solidly integrated, and it will last!**

# BENEFITS TO YOU OF THINKING DEVELOPMENTALLY



You understand the problem from a developmental perspective.



You can explain it in a way that partners feel motivated to change.



You stay focused and take a strong leadership position.



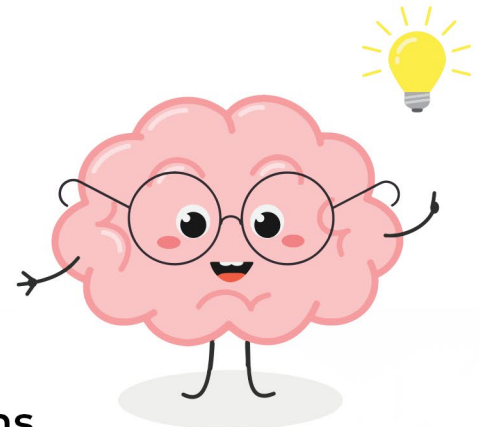
You anchor yourself between sessions and stop dreading a next session.



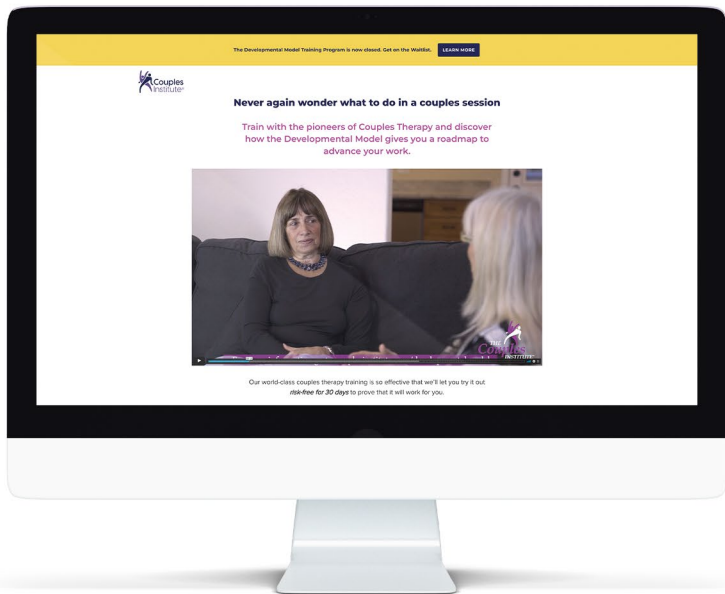
You inspire change.



Your own relationships improve!



# CHECK OUT THESE RESOURCES



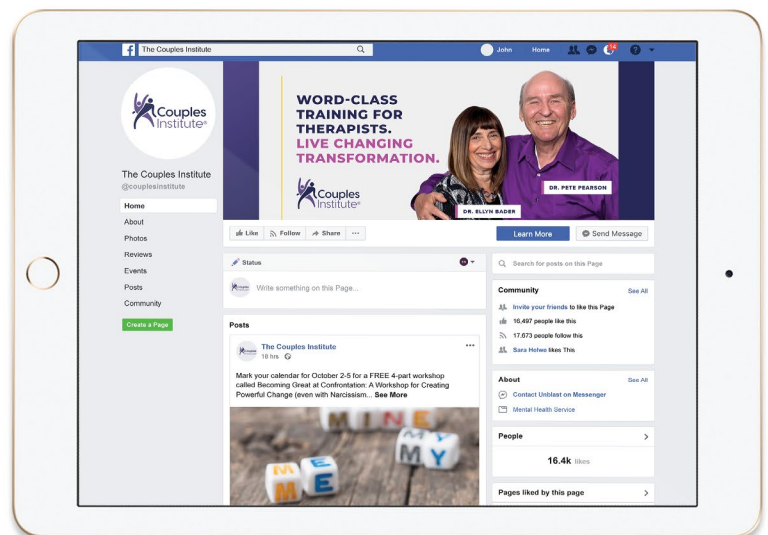
## LEARN ABOUT OUR *WORLD-CLASS DEVELOPMENTAL MODEL TRAINING* PROGRAM.

[www.couplesinstitute.com/developmentalmodel](http://www.couplesinstitute.com/developmentalmodel)

## NEXT STEPS: *LET'S CONNECT!*



## JOIN OUR *FREE GROUP!*





# MENTOR PROGRAM 2023

Join an elite group of therapists and learn from two of the world's foremost couples therapy pioneers, **Dr. Ellyn Bader and Dr. Peter Pearson.**

**The Mentor Program is led by** Dr. Ellyn Bader and Dr. Peter Pearson, who for over 30 years have been on a mission to help stop unnecessary and premature divorces that wreck couples and tear families apart. Ellyn and Pete have worked with couples in the San Francisco Bay Area and have trained thousands of committed, exceptional couples therapists from 55 countries around the world in their own Developmental Model of Couples Therapy.

*Learn more about The Couples Institute Mentor Program [here](#).*

## THE COUPLES INSTITUTE'S MENTOR PROGRAM SUPPORTS 3 AREAS OF YOUR GROWTH:



*You can focus on any (or all) of these areas that matter most to you, or you may focus on different areas at different points throughout the year.*

Any questions? Please email Sally Sachar, COO & Project Director, Mentor Program at [sally@couplesinstitute.com](mailto:sally@couplesinstitute.com)