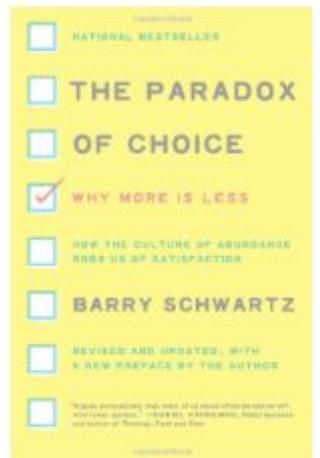
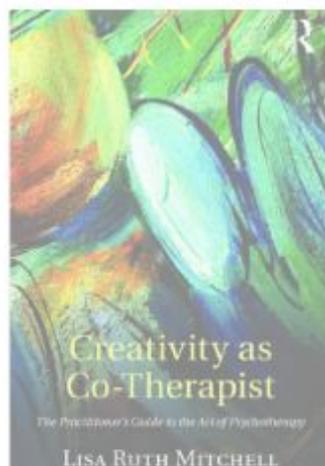
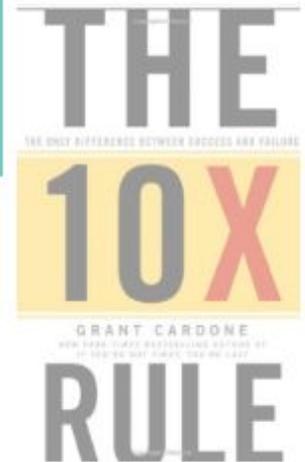
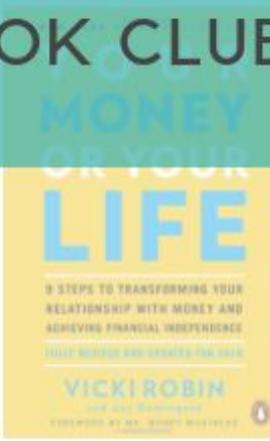
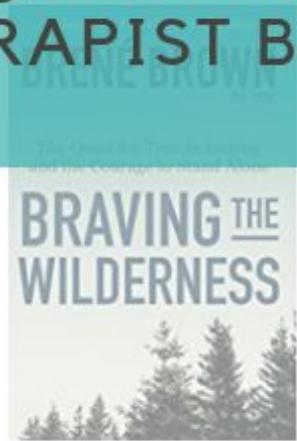
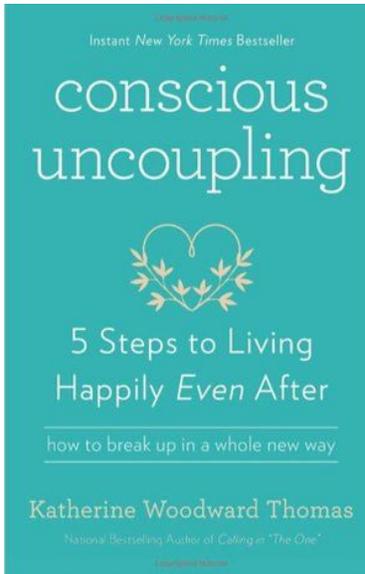


Refreshed

THERAPIST BOOK CLUB





Conscious Uncoupling

Katherine Woodward Thomas

Suggested Reading Schedule

Week 1: Intro - Chapter 3 (pp. 1-61)

Week 2: Chapters 4-Step 2 (pp. 62-136)

Week 3: Step 3 + 4 (pp. 137-209)

Week 4: Steps 5- The Creed (pp. 210-262)

Main theme: "In a world where more people divorce in any given year than buy new cars or eat grapefruit for breakfast, I think it's time that we learned how to do this better" (p. 9).

Overview: "It is my hope that we might begin a conversation that will allow us to expand our capacity to more wisely hold the nuances of modern-day living and modern-day loving, particularly around the end of love" (p.26).

Tip: Take notes!

Big Ideas

- ❖ "I will **challenge you to rethink our collective long-held assumptions** about breakups, divorce, and ask you to reconsider the very common knee-jerk conclusion that a relationship has failed if it ends for any other reason than that one or both people have died" (p.7).

- ❖ "In a nutshell, a breakup is nothing short of a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to have a complete spiritual awakening" (p.9).
- ❖ "Don't celebrate the union of two people who've been married for fifty years until you understand **what that relationship has done to their souls**" (p.17).
- ❖ "The customs of love have always been, and remain, a moving train" (p.25).
- ❖ "... it's now just as common to *not* mate for life. With over 40 percent of first marriages, over 60 percent of second marriages, and over 70 percent of third marriages ending in divorce, maybe we should begin to **consider it normal to change our primary partners?**" (p.25).
- ❖ "Rather than define the value of our relationships with the overly simplistic question 'How long did it last?' **that we begin to ask questions like** 'What wisdom have I gained?' and 'What have I learned about loved that I can now apply moving forward?'" (p.26).
- ❖ "Rather than allow us to do the sensible thing and turn our attention toward starting a new life, our brains are hardwired to increase our desire for the one we are losing, keeping us torturously entangled, . . . in a frenzied and highly focused state of craving, want, and longing" (p.30)
- ❖ "**Love withdrawal perfectly mirrors drug withdrawal**, and is often accompanied by the same reckless and destructive impulses as the ones that land drug addicts, desperate to get high, behind bars" (p.30).
- ❖ "The rage and hatred we can feel for someone who we recently loved with all of our hearts is actually 'an evolutionary relic from the past,' and is simply **nature's way of helping us to separate from that person** and disengage from the relationship" (p.33).
- ❖ "Yet once the pain of staying in the relationship has surpassed the fear of leaving it and the decision to break up has been made, **the brain can still hold on for dear life in a number of ways**" (p.36).
- ❖ "The only way to outrun the sorrow of losing the attentions and affections of the person you have loved is to use the fierce and fiery pain of it to **catalyze your own awakening and propel you to become the person you were born to be**" (p.43).

- ❖ "In a mobile society, where most of us will change jobs, the cities we live in, our professional networks, our circle of friends, and our spiritual communities, . . . **we are constantly uncoupling**" (p.59).
- ❖ "**Nagging and complaining are not to be confused with the initiation of an authentic, serious dialogue**" (p.67).
- ❖ "**The letting go of hope can feel like a funeral dirge**, initiating a cascade of grief just as surely as if you broke up yesterday" (p.72).

Step 1. Find Emotional Freedom (p. 83)

- Transforming dark emotions from destructive impulses to constructive drivers of positive change. (p.83)
- Transform disappointing and destructive patterns in love.
- Create an Inner Sanctuary of Safety to help hold your emotions from a deeper, wiser center that will be able to supply you with strength and stability.
- Initiate wholehearted recovery to make something beautiful out of the sadness of the parting.
- ❖ "In the aftermath of lost love, you may be **experiencing symptoms of trauma** just as surely as if you had been the victim of a crime" (p.85).
- ❖ "**We are relational creatures**, born for bonding and deeply dependent upon the connections we form" (p.85).
- ❖ "In the aftermath of a bad breakup, we've not only lost our safe place in the arms of our beloved . . . but we may also be struggling with scary impulses to hurt ourselves or others, leaving us also **strangely unsafe with ourselves**" (p.91).
- ❖ Creating an Inner Sanctuary of Safety
 - Become still; find a quiet space to sit for a few minutes.
 - Step back from your feelings.
 - Connect with a deeper, wider center within.
 - Extend love to the part of you suffering.
 - Welcome in and mirror your feelings.

- Breathe out a blessing.
- Name and mirror your needs.
- ❖ **"Effective grieving** . . . turns the love you've been giving another toward yourself" (p.97).
- ❖ "It's often best to let your heart be. **Stop pushing to get rid of sorrow too quickly** with a steel will. Rather, make time to cry, pausing to notice how desperately your body needs to sing its sad song without your trying to muscle your way around and beyond it" (p.103).
- ❖ Creating a mentoring mantra (p.107-109)
 - Name your assumptions.
 - Challenge your assumptions.
 - Offer yourself wise lessons of life.
 - Create your mentoring mantra.
- ❖ **Self Care Suggestions (p.113):**
 - Keep a journal that is for your eyes only.
 - Move your body, even if just for a few moments,
 - Listen to music (that mirrors your emotions and sing out loud. Loudly.).
 - Look for opportunities to offer kindness to others.
 - Visit great art.
 - Sit under the stars and turn your face up-ward.

Step 2 Reclaim Your Power and Your Life (p.115)

- Let go of being a victim.
- Reflect on yourself as the source of your experience.
- Release unconscious and habitual patterns of people pleasing.
- Learn how to make amends to yourself.
- Evolve beyond the person you were when you created your relationship.
- ❖ **Making amends to yourself (p.128)**
 - Who do you resent and for what?
 - What can you take responsibility for in each situation?

- What else has it cost you in your life to give your power away like this?
- What amends do you need to make to yourself in moving forward?
- What new skills and capacities will you now need to develop to live this way consistently?

❖ **"Forgiveness is the end of our journey, not the start"** (p.133)

Step 3: Break The Pattern, Heal Your Heart (p.138)

- Identify those core beliefs that have been sabotaging your love life.
- Discover precisely how you've been unconsciously generating your disempowering patterns in love.
- Be restored to a positive self-sense as someone who is safe, valued, and honored.
- Learn new skills and capacities that will ensure successful relationships in your future.

❖ **Source-fracture story:** The meaning given to original hurt in your heart that became the underlying narrative about you and the possibilities for happy, healthy love. (p.141)

➤ **Identifying your source fracture story (p.146)**

- Become still.
- Become aware of your feeling regarding your breakup.
- Welcome in your feelings.
- Notice the meaning you are making of your breakup.
- Identify your source-fracture story.
- How old is this part of you/How big is the energy held in its center?
- Open your eyes and shake it out!

Step 4 Become A Love Alchemist (p.169-170)

- Protect the love that brought you together.
- Set a conscious intention for a positive future.
- Discover how to dissolve any residual anger or hurt still present.
- Learn to communicate in ways that will empower and create.

- ❖ "Recent studies show that we're prone to recount events not the way they happened but through the interpretive lens of our own pre-existing worldview" (p.183).
- ❖ "Choosing to forgive is not about condoning bad behavior. Nor does it require you to let someone back into your life. In fact, **forgiveness is not about anyone else at all. It's about you**" (p.187).
- ❖ "The latest studies in neurobiology show that a negative conversation will stay with us far longer than a positive one" (p.197).
- ❖ **Clearing the air (p.198)**
 - The sole purpose is to clear the air.
 - Identify the active hurts and disappointments you both are struggling with.
 - Become willing to take responsibility for the impact your behavior has had on your former partner.
 - Let your former partner know that you now see the impact.
 - Offer to make amends by taking wholesome right action.
- ❖ "Odd as it may sound, **it's possible to feel even more loved at the end of a relationship that at the beginning**" (p.203).
- ❖ **Post Breakup Communication Guidelines:**
 - Do your best to communicate from your wise, strong, and resourceful self.
 - Speak in ways that are generative of the future you're committed to creating.
 - Strive to respond rather than react.

Step 5- Create Your Happily-Even-After Life (p.212)

- Complete the old agreements your relationship was founded upon and generate new ones more appropriate to the form it's now taking.
- Create cohesion and alignment with your community at large to ensure a supportive and nourishing environment in which to reinvent your life.
- Learn how you can engage a heartwarming and meaningful Conscious Uncoupling ceremony.

- Discover wholesome, healthy, and cooperative ways to care for the kids, divide property and navigate legal processes that will ensure all involved are set up to win moving forward.
- ❖ "Conscious uncoupling is about mindfully generating well-being for all who may be impacted by your breakup, **carefully creating cohesion and alignment in your extended network of family and friends**, and helping everyone to adjust to the new status of your relationship" (p.219).
- ❖ Advice for creating cohesion and well-being when discussing your breakup (p.221).
 - Maintain your dignity.
 - Show restraint in how you relay your story.
 - Offer clear guidance to others on how they should behave.

Memorable quotes

- ❖ "So, it's not really my nature to stay married simply because of current cultural assumptions about what's best for the kids. Assumptions that . . . seem to fundamentally lack the creative effort toward solving the problem of how we can form a balanced, stable, and loving family life in the aftermath of divorce" (p.6).
- ❖ "Expectation has been called 'the root of all heartache,' and certainly, failed expectations are the root of deep confusion and inner chaos, as well" (p.19).
- ❖ "For it seems to be nature's design that hurt people hurt people" (p.32).
- ❖ "Love's opposite is not hatred, it's indifference" (p.34).
- ❖ "Broken hearts, like broken legs, need a lot of tending to in order to properly heal" (p.41).
- ❖ "Fear just makes us plain old stupid" (p.46).
- ❖ "Where there is no light, you have the choice to become it" (p.58).
- ❖ "Good endings, while never easy, are well worth the climb" (p.63).
- ❖ "It's hard to give up on love" (p.72).
- ❖ "Big rage means there's big energy to fuel the determination and drive required to make important life changes" (p.99).

- ❖ "Just because you feel all alone in the world, does not mean that you actually are" (p.105).
- ❖ "There is no better time to take a stand for your life than this very moment" (p.111).
- ❖ "'What the F_____ is wrong with me?' is not a question that will ever lead to positive growth and change" (p.119)
- ❖ "Good relationships are about having the necessary development--both inner and outer--to sustain healthy intimacy and goodwill over time between yourself and another person" (p.160).
- ❖ "While one part of your story may have ended, a new part has only just begun" (p.252).

People Quoted In The Book

- ❖ "You may not control all of the events that happen to you, but you can decide not to be reduced by them." --Maya Angelou (p.2)
- ❖ "If life gives us rocks, it's our choice whether to build a bridge or a wall.." --Anonymous (p.10)
- ❖ "Shame derives its power from being unspeakable." --Brené Brown (p.18)
- ❖ "I've been married three times and each marriage was successful." --Margaret Mead (p.24)
- ❖ "Failure is just another way to learn how to do something right." --Marian Wright Edelman (p.26)
- ❖ "Even divorce might be seen as one kind of fulfillment of love. Love asks many things of us, including actions that seem to be utterly counter to feelings of attachment and loyalty." --Thomas Moore (p.27)
- ❖ "An eye for an eye will only make the whole world blind." --Mahatma Gandhi (p.34)
- ❖ "Nothing inspires forgiveness quite like revenge." --Scott Adams (p.36)
 - ❖ "They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself." --Andy Warhol (p.40)
 - ❖ "Lost love is still love. It takes a different form, that's all." --Mitch Albom (p.53)

- ❖ "Anyone who has lost something they thought was theirs forever finally comes to realize that nothing really belongs to them." --Paulo Coelho (p.75)
- ❖ "Bitterness is like cancer. It eats upon the host. But anger is like fire. It burns it all clean." --Maya Angelou (p.98)
- ❖ "Those who do know know how to weep with their whole heart do not know how to laugh either." --Golda Meir (p.103)
- ❖ "Only when it is dark enough can you see the stars." --Martin Luther King Jr. (p.111)
- ❖ "When you complain, you make yourself into a victim . . . So change the situation . . . leave the situation or accept it. All else is madness." --Eckhart Tolle (p.117)
- ❖ "Blame is the creed of the disempowered." --Steve Maraboli (p.119)
- ❖ "When we are no longer able to change a situation, we are challenged to change ourselves." --Viktor Frankl (p.123)
- ❖ "The antidote to tragedy is learning." --Isabel Gillies (p.133)
- ❖ "While you can't keep your heart from getting broken, you can stop breaking your own heart." --Leigh Newman (p.150)
- ❖ "What makes you vulnerable makes you beautiful." --Brené Brown (p.164)
- ❖ "Keep in mind that the true measure of an individual is how he or she treats a person who can do them absolutely no good." --Ann Landers (p.181)
- ❖ "Although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it." --Helen Keller (p.194)
- ❖ "Relationships that do not end peacefully, do not end at all." --Merrit Malloy (p.198)
- ❖ "Grief does not change you. It reveals you." --John Green (p.202)
- ❖ "The only people you should get even with are those who have helped you." --John El Southard (p.204)
- ❖ "When all else fails, love." --Elizabeth Lesser (p.207)
- ❖ "Divorce becomes a holy moment when you choose to use it as a catalyst for having an extraordinary life." --Debbie Ford (p.248)

Resources

How to Survive Your Childhood Now That You're An Adult: <https://amzn.to/2WzRLob>

Calling In The One: 7 Weeks to Attract the Love of Your Life: <https://amzn.to/2TsJXeE>
katherinewoodwardthomas.com