

## Path to Relationship

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CM Essay October 2018

The year is 1980 and I am teaching in the interior of British Columbia. I have been a bachelor for ten years and am ready for a committed relationship. That spring I make my quarterly visit to Vancouver to take in the culture and cuisine and decide to take a ferry to one of the nearby islands for a bike ride. Standing in line a man with a young boy in tow looks familiar. It took fifteen minutes for us to realize we had graduated the same year from high school in Salt Lake City, with the same mutual friend. His name is Larry and he mentions that he lives in a house with his partner and two other women. I knew intuitively that one of those women would be important to me.

Two trips later I call his house asking for Larry and Susan answers. I ask what she is doing (suave move) and she says she is volunteering at The Hunger Project. What is that I ask? Susan gives an explanation and I honestly don't understand. After a second failed attempt to understand, she suggests I come over to look at some of the material and I accept (surprise).

I step out of my car at exactly noon (the count down by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation struck the time) and walk up to the door *knowing* that she would be my soul mate. When Susan opens the door, my knowing is confirmed. There is no other way to explain it. She later admits she knew as well.

Once inside Susan explains one more time about the concept of the organization. I come to understand that there is enough food on the planet to feed everyone and The Hunger Project focuses on creating the political will of developed countries to see that hunger is abated.

Our attention then shifts and we connect.

I move in with Susan that summer and find out that she is also deeply involved with the est network, a training founded by Werner Erhard that focuses on self-awareness. Early on she encourages me to take the two-weekend workshop. Though I consider myself on a path to becoming more awake, I tell her ‘no way am I going to be involved with a cult.’

Shortly after, we are sitting up in bed and she says in a serious tone, ‘I have something to tell you.’ My heart drops to the pit of my stomach as all the rejections of my life come into consciousness. Sick to my stomach, I brace myself.

‘I really want you to take the est training. If you don’t, I afraid I can’t be with you.’

Relief floods over me and I instantly say, ‘okay’.

A week later I slink into the est center to sign up, embarrassed someone I knew would see me. Turns out the training transforms my life through the experience of taking total responsibility for what shows up in it, and the visceral feeling of love for the 150 people in the room.