



Divergent Path Wellness



BE MY PERSON

**A diversity-celebrating relationship workbook
for unconventional couples (etc.)**

Helen Dempsey-Henofer LCSW



Hi, Reader. Before we dive in, before we even get started - I've got a quick question for you. Are you reading this alone or with your partner? Whatever your answer, it's okay. This book is for people in relationships. Basically, everyone. Regardless of who you read with.

That being said, it's important for you to know that if you're reading alone thinking you, by yourself, will find *the solution* to your relationship woes - you are strongly encouraged to consider what is within your scope of control and what isn't. If you're uncertain, let me be clear. **Creating a healthy relationship is not a one-person project.**

Who says? Well, I do. My claims are generally based on science and a career working with people who've long felt like outsiders, are deeply sensitive (even when they struggle to express it) and want more fulfilling relationships. This workbook includes what I wish every one knew - and can't reasonably expect us to. Because, let's be real, where would we learn it?

Whatever I say, though, I encourage you not to take my word for it. What matters to your relationships is not so much about the words on the page. It's about your experience.

I'm glad you're giving it a shot.

Let's see how it goes.

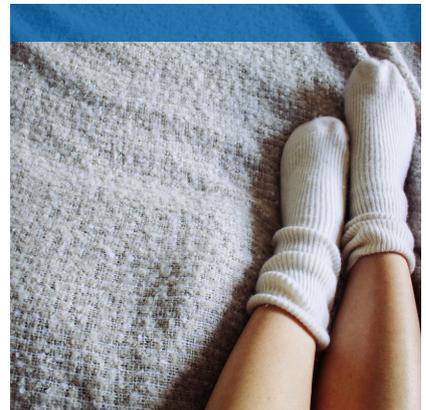
Helen Dempsey-Henofer
Founder - Divergent Path Wellness



Why use this workbook?



BE MY PERSON



is a workbook based on a core idea that the people/person you are in relationship with are different than yourself. You might not always understand them - but at the end of the day, you want them to be your person - and you to be theirs. This idea of “my person” isn’t about exclusivity. It’s about secure attachment (which we’ll get into) and a sense of emotional safety. It’s about relationships that feel like home.

This workbook addresses your **inner experiences** (individual thoughts and feelings that impact your relationship), your **interpersonal dynamics** (what happens between you), and the considerable impact of **the context we live in** - social norms that are unsustainable and if left unaddressed limit our capacity for healthy relationships.



WHAT TO EXPECT

Show that we offer a solution that solves the problems previously described and identified. Make sure that the solutions we offer uphold the values of effectiveness, efficiency, relation and relevant

Getting Oriented

This section is about making it clear where you are, and what factors are impacting your relationship now as you begin this workbook/journey

- Where to Begin?
- Our Relationship Story
- The Invisible Infrastructure

Family Legacies

This section is about patterns in relationships shaped by both inherent traits & family experiences

- Social Emotional Learning
- An Inclusive Frame for Attachment
- Changing Generational Stories



Creating A Home for Hearts & Minds

The section is about co-creating essential space for intimacy, understanding trauma & unmasking

- Neurodiversity Across Relationships
- Threat Response & Our Nervous System
- The Power of Mutual Accommodation

The Bedroom Revolution of Equitable Partnership

This section is about both addressing systems of harm and making space for vulnerability, joy & pleasure

- Relational Empowerment
- Nurturing a New Foundation
- Revolutionary Pleasure, Together

If using this workbook with 3+ partners, a separate notebook is recommended for the exercises



WHERE TO BEGIN?

When relationships aren't going well, it can be disorienting.

What's it mean to be oriented?

If a doctor, or therapist, was determining if you are oriented—it generally means you know who you are, where you are, and when it is. They might ask if you know your name, the year, who the president is.

When we are oriented—we are **locating ourselves in our stories**. So, let's begin there. Where you are. In your story. Because where you are... is where you begin.



OUR RELATIONSHIP STORY

You are encouraged to write out, or tell your partner, your story about your relationship. You can expect your version and your partner's versions to be different. Different people. Different memories. Different perspectives. **Having both stories laid out can help orient you to the big picture.**

01

Create the timeline. Include when/where the relationship started and any major events. Consider what the plot points would be, as though you were making a movie about your relationship. Is this a complex, lengthy story? Zoom out your lens.

02

Describe the characters. What was life like for each of them when they came together? How did they see each other as the story began? How did this change over time?

03

Consider the audience. For the purpose of this exercise, the audience is you and your partner(s). What reactions do you imagine them having to this story? To these characters?

04

Imagine the ending. Suspend any limiting problems or interfering dilemmas and—if this story could go any direction... where do you want it to go? What's a "happy ending" look like before your movie rolls credits?



OUR RELATIONSHIP STORY

Using these prompts, you and your partner(s) will share your perspective on your relationship—what’s happened, where you want it to go, who you’ve been in it. It is important to remember that is completely okay, even normal (whatever that means), for you and your partner to have different perspectives. This isn’t about reaching consensus. **It’s about starting with an understanding of your different perspectives.**

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THE INVISIBLE INFRASTRUCTURE

These systems, whether acknowledged or not, shape our our relationships and impact our lives.

01

Family History

Patterns, expectations and unspoken rules from our families of origin influence how we show up in relationship. Sometimes we carry forward models that don't serve us —or we rebel against them in ways that still leave us entangled.

02

Attachment Style

The ways we learned to seek safety, closeness, or distance early in life often shape how we navigate intimacy, conflict, and vulnerability. Styles include secure, anxious, avoidant, and disorganized (anxious/avoidant).

03

Neuronormativity

The assumption that there's one "right" way to think, communicate, or emotionally regulate can create deep misattunement in relationships —especially for neurodivergent people. These norms often go unspoken but still shape how connection is judged and interpreted.

04

Relationship Trauma

Past experiences of harm, betrayal, neglect, or coercion—especially in formative or intimate relationships—can impact our ability to trust, communicate, or feel safe. Trauma responses aren't character flaws; they're adaptations that deserve care.

05

Gender Stories

From early messages about what's "appropriate" for boys, girls, or anyone else, to cultural scripts about roles in relationships, gendered expectations impact how we express need, power, care, and identity—whether we conform, question, or resist them.

06

Systemic Violence

Ableism (including neuronormativity), Sexism (including gender norms), Body shaming, State and/or religious sanctioned silencing (colonization, white supremacy)



CHECKING FOR UNDERSTANDING

The following is an exercise in empathy and willingness to get things wrong and receive feedback. Considering each piece of **The Invisible Infrastructure**—what is the impact on your partner? The idea here is not that you are the expert on their experience (you don't get to speak for them) but for there to be space to engage in perspective-taking, imagining things from a different position, and being open to feedback from their direct lived experience.

01 Family History: Consider ethnicity, traditions, religious expectations, health concerns, resources, relationships & communication

04 Relationship Trauma: What experiences have impacted their sense of safety & security in personal relationships?

02 Attachment Style: Do you see them as being secure in relationships—or more anxious, avoidant, or anxious-avoidant?

05 Gender Stories: What messages about gender shaped their experiences?

03 Neuronormativity: How does privileging some thinking, sensing, and relationship styles while devaluing others impact them?

06 Systemic Violence: How do systems of harm, invalidation, and discrimination against cultures, identities & bodies impact them?



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