

**Shrink Rap Radio #368**  
**12<sup>th</sup> September, 2013**

**“Psychoanalytic and Jungian Perspectives on Couples at the Crossroads”**

**Dr. David Van Nuys Ph.D., aka ‘Dr. Dave’ interviews Daniela Roher PhD and Susan E Schwartz PhD**

(Transcribed from <http://www.shrinkrapradio.com> by Gloria Oelman)

**Introduction:**

My guests today are psychoanalytic therapist Dr. Daniela Roher and Jungian analyst Dr. Susan E. Schwartz and we'll be discussing the inevitable challenges that arise in maintaining a long-term relationship. Daniela Roher Ph.D. has spent nearly forty years in a career that has spanned three countries in two continents. Dr. Roher's passion for her work stems from a deep interest in human interactions and connections and keeps her at the forefront of the new science of relationships. She continuously studies and applies treatment models that best help couples identify, understand, address and resolve interpersonal issues, in order to bring intimacy and deeper connection back into their love relationships. Born in Italy, Dr. Roher attended the Universities of Torino in Italy, Cambridge in England, Wayne State University in the US and the Michigan Psychoanalytic Institute. The experiences she gained from her studies in different countries nurtured her discipline and love of knowledge and her appreciation of the many ways in which different cultures affect and shape the human mind. From her many years of studying and practicing as a psychoanalytic psychotherapist, she brings an ever-deepening understanding of the human journey, with all its challenges and rewards.

Dr. Roher lives in Arizona where she has a private practice. When not in her office, her love for the desert keeps her outdoors, not wanting to miss any opportunity to be in touch with nature and observe the miracles that constantly unfold. She is also an avid blogger on various psychological topics, with a special focus on couples' areas of conflict. To learn more about Dr. Roher's practice and to read her blogs, visit [www.drroherphd.com](http://www.drroherphd.com)

Susan E. Schwartz, PhD is a Jungian analyst trained in Zürich, Switzerland, as well as a licensed clinical psychologist with a private practice in Paradise Valley, Arizona. With Daniela Roher, Ph.D. she co-authored the book, *Couples at the Crossroads: Five Steps to Finding Your Way Back to Love*. Their website for the book is [www.couplesatthecrossroads.com](http://www.couplesatthecrossroads.com).

For many years Susan has enjoyed giving workshops and presentations at various venues, and has lectured worldwide on Jungian analytical psychology. She is the author of several journal articles on daughters and fathers, the puella archetype, Sylvia Plath in the online journal *Plath Profiles*, a chapter in the four editions of *Counseling and Psychotherapy* textbook and a chapter in *Perpetual Adolescence: Jungian Analyses of American Media, Literature, and Pop Culture*. She is a member of the New Mexico Society of Jungian Analysts, the International Association of Analytical Psychology and the American Psychological Association. Her website is [www.susanschwarzphd.com](http://www.susanschwarzphd.com)

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Now here's the interview.

**Dr. Dave:** Doctors Daniela Roher and Susan E. Schwartz, welcome to Shrink Rap Radio.

**Both:** Thank you very much.

**Dr. Dave:** You're welcome. Congratulations by the way on your book, *Couples at the Crossroads*. We'll dig into the book itself as we go along but I'd like to start with more of a focus on your backgrounds as therapists and the writing process for the two of you. So, Daniela why don't you kick it off, talk a little about your background as a therapist.

**Daniela Roher:** Okay. I have been a therapist for over thirty years both in Europe and in the United States. I'm originally from Europe as you can guess from my accent and ten years ago I met Susan. I am a psychoanalytic psychotherapist which means I go beyond the surface and try to get to deeper issues and emotions in the unconscious. I met Susan about fifteen years ago and we've been friends since then and we started talking about writing a book together just about that time. It took about the best part of ten years, maybe even longer than that. Susan, what do you think?

**Susan Schwartz:** I think it was about ten, partly because we came to our own crossroads as well.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah and I'll be getting into that in just a moment. Susan tell us a little bit about you and how it was that the two of you met.

**Susan Schwartz:** Well, I'm a Jungian analyst and I was trained at the Jung Institute in Zurich where I lived in Europe for a few years and we met at a seminar at which we were both bored. So we started talking to each other.

**Dr. Dave:** (laughs) I know how that goes, being at a seminar and being bored.

**Susan Schwartz:** Yes.

**Daniela Roher:** We found something in common.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, yeah. So you two come from somewhat different theoretical backgrounds, theoretical orientations as therapists and so I'm wondering maybe you can say something about your background training and how that theoretical orientation shows up in your own clinical work with couples.

**Daniela Roher:** Well, I tend to work more, I focus more on relationships and early attachment relationships that children develop, with their parents usually, or whoever takes care of them and the kind of attachment styles they develop, which carries through life and affects the way we relate to our romantic partners when we are adults. That's my approach.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, and Susan?

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**Susan Schwartz:** Well, I wouldn't say that I don't use some of that but I also incorporate the use of dreams and unconscious material that is going between the partners, when I work with couples, which is what happens when you work individually as well. So I think we both work at an in-depth approach a little bit differently to the way we approach the in-depth approach but we really are focused on going beyond the presenting problem into deeper issues.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, so that's something that you two have in common. I want to go into this because many of my listeners are either therapists or therapists in training, so just to dig a little deeper, if I were a fly on the wall as you're working with a couple what would I see and what would I see, if anything, that would tell me that you're a Freudian, or you're a Jungian? Daniela, you want to kick that off?

**Daniela Roher:** Yes. That's a huge question, I mean we could have three hours talking about that (laughter). Well, I don't consider myself Freudian per se, nobody could consider themselves Freudian these days. My approach, as I said, is psychoanalytic but I do a lot of work with attachment and also neuroscience, so when I have a couple, what I focus on primarily is how they respond to stress. Couples come to therapy because they are very stressed and so how they manage that stress is absolutely important and at times they are dysregulated, meaning they yell at each other, they are angry, they use rage with each other, they stonewall each other because they don't know how to address the stress in the relationship in a healthier way. So I have them, at the beginning of therapy, downregulate their emotional state so that they can become calmer and therefore better able to look at what their issues are and work with me. And because of that I work at providing a feeling and an environment of safety with me so that they can bring up the issues that they want to discuss without fear of retaliation, or argument confrontation.

**Dr. Dave:** How do you get them to down regulate their emotional arousal?

**Daniela Roher:** At the beginning of therapy particularly it's all through right brain to right brain communication, meaning I lower my tone of voice, I speak calmly, I look at them in the eyes, I give them the message 'I'm not afraid of your emotions.' I try to center myself so that they see me being calm and they can calm down as well, then they're not afraid that their dysregulation is going to dysregulate me because that's what they do with one another, they dysregulate each other and so then they escalate and then they are not able to communicate with one another in an effective way any more.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes and that escalation can happen very, very quickly like gasoline on a fire (laughs).

**Daniela Roher:** Oh, absolutely. They can become... one of them has just to say the wrong word or the wrong comment and they can escalate from one to one hundred right away. But that's why I said you know trying to explain things to them and speak in a rational way is really kind of a waste of time when they are so aroused and so it's through body language that you can really communicate, 'it's okay, you are safe, you are okay here, you can calm down.'

**Dr. Dave:** Okay and Susan, I'm a fly on the wall, I'm wondering what might be distinctive that would suggest that you are a Jungian or a neo Jungian, however you want to characterize it?

**Susan Schwartz:** Right, right I think I'm more a Jungian rather than neo but on the other hand I want to add a bit to what Daniela was saying, in that you could tell that it would be a Jungian approach, one by the use of dreams, so I actually encourage people to bring their dreams into the sessions. They don't tell each other, they bring them into the session and they all talk about it, which actually helps people understand each other and brings the emotion into a place where everyone can hear each other. Not right away, but over time and I think one of the things that Daniela was saying as well with the disregulation would relate also to the word transference and counter transference so how I am reacting to each of the people and the couple – so there's a lot of people in the room actually – gives them a modeling of how to accept each other, how to explain themselves, how to communicate clearer. So there's where I think that the transference and counter transference is very important.

**Dr. Dave:** Now when you say there're a lot of people in the room, I assume you're suggesting that not only are there the three objective bodies in the room but their various unconscious components of projections and counter transferences?

**Susan Schwartz:** Yes, yes and I actually say that. I say, 'you know there's more than just the three of us in the room, there are all of the unconscious parts that we have hanging around that are participating as well.' So, I think a little explanation, kind of normalizing in a way, what has gone off and bringing it back to something not to be intellectual but to be humane about what is going on psychologically.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm. One of the things I really like about your book is that in the preface, you share that this joint writing project has had many of the qualities of the couples relationship that you're writing about, including initial excitement or infatuation and eventual difficulties and then finding resolution and I really love the way that that becomes kind of the backdrop for the book.

**Daniela Roher:** Yes, because if you look at it, every relationship goes through these stages more or less and you mentioned earlier in this interview that Susan and I have a different background, theoretical background, which we do, so we had to deal with it. There were times when one of us would get very attached to a different way of seeing things, so a different ways of explaining things and the other person would be attached to her way of doing and so we would have to sort it out. We would have to come to some middle ground, we would have to talk about the issues and so it was like going through a relationship because as we said it was about ten years. We didn't write this book for ten years but on and off at different times, so it became a long-term relationship with all the excitement and disappointments that come with relationships.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah that's what I found really fascinating. How did the idea for the book come about? Susan, I heard you take a breath.

**Susan Schwartz:** Yes, yes, I was going to respond. In addition to the process that Daniela and I went through because I think the process of us and all that we struggled

with together, was really enlightening and educative for me as well as an analyst. It made me think about and feel into what I wanted in the book and why I did and what was going on and what our personalities were like and how we were dealing with things and how we were communicating. So I think that that was something that was a very special kind of offshoot that I didn't realize was going to happen, as well as really coming to the crossroads, which is a very serious thing. You don't come to the crossroads with someone that you don't love and care about.

**Dr. Dave:** Now the crossroads – say a little bit about what you mean by the crossroads. I assume you're talking about a point of crisis.

**Susan Schwartz:** Daniela, do you want to say something?

**Daniela Roher:** No, you go ahead and I will comment on what you say.

**Susan Schwartz:** Okay, well the crossroads are small and big crises at the same time. You know it can be something very tiny that sets things off and you have to grapple with the fact of 'is this worth staying with? Should I keep going? What am I getting out of it? What am I giving? How is this relationship going to work?' And so the crossroads themselves could be quite deceptive. They could be a little something but the psychological work around them is the thing that's incredibly important and of course that's what happens in couples therapy as well. People come in at crossroads usually.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Daniela Roher:** I would like to comment on that that when we reach a crossroads in any relationship, we question the value of the relationship as Susan said and any situation, any conversation, any observation, any comment can be seen through the lens of 'do I want to stay here, should I go?' Because the premises that we had created about the relationship are no longer clear. We have to find a new way of seeing the relationship and so the crossroads are a transition between what was there before that no longer is and what is not there yet and like any transition it creates a lot of uneasiness, a lot of discomfort because we are not centered. We're not on solid ground.

**Susan Schwartz:** I would just add one thing to that as well, which is that the crossroads are like the death and rebirth cycle. In many of the myths and the fairy tales and the stories of the world, they're part of our journey and so that's why Daniela and I inevitably would have gone into a crossroads, as well as couples have to, in order to grow. They're like essential for the growth and viability of any relationship.

**Daniela Roher:** And because of that they create great opportunity. There are issues that couples have – both people may be aware what their issues are but they don't want to address them and they can push them aside and go on and do what they do normally and avoid them for a while but when you get to the crossroads, you can no longer do that. You're forced to face them and because you are in pain, you are much more motivated to work hard at addressing the issues. So we work on them because it gives us an opportunity to move to the next level.

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**Dr. Dave:** So in terms of this book, I assume you came to... there were many minor crossroads, as you said, maybe there was a big crossroads? How did you resolve that, how did you get past that?

**Susan Schwartz:** You know one of the helpful things probably and maybe it was harmful as well, I don't know but because we are both serious, in depth people and we had an excellent bond with each other and so we were willing to take the risk to say a good amount of the feelings that we had and express our emotions. It's very risky and yet it is incredibly rewarding and we both had to... I'll speak for myself, really stretch beyond my ways and really open and really learn and hear Daniela. I mean I had to do that, I do that all day long but I had to, with her who we were writing the book and it wasn't a have to, it was that I knew it would be helpful to my own personal and deeper self to listen to what she had to offer.

**Daniela Roher:** And I would say the same is true for me of course. It is very difficult to address the issue, very difficult but you know, couples usually don't separate and break up because they argue, they separate because they avoid addressing the issues and those issues get bigger and bigger and bigger and they reach a point where they say 'I can't take it any more' and they're gone, they're out.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, you know this metaphor of the crossroads... and by the way I salute you both for hanging in there and providing such excellent modeling for all of us who are listening. You're sort of modeling navigating a relationship over a long period of time in some ways as you pointed out in this preface, it's a model for the marital couples therapy relationship that you write about. It made me think of the Robert Johnson blues song, I don't know if you're familiar with this country blues song from years ago, where he tells about how he went down to the crossroads to make a deal with the devil so that he could become a really superior guitar player. Well, maybe I'm stretching a point here but at some point our marital partner, or lover, starts out as an angel and at some point we find ourselves at the crossroads, where we see them more clearly and that halo that we had put on them is starting to look pretty tarnished (laughter).

**Susan Schwartz:** Well, I think you're right. What you're talking about is taking back the projections that we put onto somebody else and that we must own inside of ourselves. So that in the work with couples – and we talk about this quite a lot in the book as well – but in the actual therapeutic work people need to take back, not need to but they need to, take back what they've put onto the other person because you can't live projecting yourself out onto somebody else. There's the bargain with the devil. That's why it has to fall down.

**Daniela Roher:** Yes and you know the initial infatuation is what gets people together so they have to have this rosy view of each other which is a total fantasy, has very little to do with reality and we all know and actually Freud talked about being in love as being temporary insanity, which is true because we lose our ability to have good sound judgment when we are in love but that is what gets people together. It's the glue, that's been put together and it lasts for about twelve months, eighteen months and then after that attachment starts to develop and attachment is a completely different relationship altogether. We feel safe with one another, we feel we have each

other's back, we share a lot of things in common, we have common goals, common directions – that's much deeper than being in love. But the being in love is so exciting and it's such a high that people really struggle when they lose it and so a lot of couples when we see them, you know 'I don't feel in love with you any more, I want out.' And so what happens is that if you marry today for the first time you have fifty-fifty chance of getting divorced. If you marry for the second time, your chances of getting divorced go up. The third time go up even more and the message is, if you keep pursuing that initial excitement and when it goes away, you are out, you will have to continue to do it all the time because it's what Susan was saying, is that getting to the crossroads and surviving them and being able to get to the other side that allows us to grow together.

**Susan Schwartz:** I would also add as well that we hopefully get to the other side but we are not going to be the same way we were when we began and we will be changed and that is what makes people quite afraid. So they go, like what Daniela said 'I'm out of here, this is not as exciting as it was in the beginning.' Well it isn't because the projections have to be taken back, the work and the love really growing and developing, is going to be a very different kind than from the beginning flash of things and the deepening and the honoring of each other takes something else and it teaches us to expand our personality in ways that we, of course, would never have known at the beginning.

**Daniela Roher:** And I would add to that, if I may, that when we are in very close intimate relationships, as I had mentioned earlier on when we were talking we tend to repeat similar patterns of connecting and attaching that we had as children. So when we are in adult relationships... adult relationships give us an opportunity to revisit those relationships and if they were not healthy for us, to be able to heal them because we can see our part and not as the parent who neglected us, or abused us, or who was inconsistent and unreliable but someone with whom we can develop a different relationship because now as adults, we have power in the relationship and we can contribute to how the relationship is going to go, whereas as children we didn't have that power.

(discussion ensued to resolve fan noise interfering with the sound quality)

**Daniela Roher:** You know David, we are in Arizona (laughs).

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, it's hot here too in California but it's probably a lot hotter in Arizona. Now speaking of metaphors, you used the metaphor of an automobile journey throughout, so every chapter, the titles and all are kind of guided quite a bit by this metaphor of an automobile trip. How did that come about?

**Susan Schwartz:** You know I don't remember. I think Daniela it was your idea and we both thought that it was just... well, one, it's very American is it not? And also it is a vehicle that contains people on amazing journeys, so I think it had to do also with journey and the journey that a relationship takes us on.

**Daniela Roher:** And you know I don't remember either if it was my idea or yours, Susan but I love the fact that neither of us remembers.

**Susan Schwartz:** Yeah. Perfect. (laughter) Well, it's become both of ours, you see.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah, oh that's a good sign, yeah.

**Daniela Roher:** Exactly, it has become both of ours now, so it's no longer mine or yours, it's ours.

**Dr. Dave:** That's great.

**Susan Schwartz:** And actually that would be the point of couples therapy in a certain way. Nobody remembers when x, y or z, or whose it was but that it's really both now.

**Dr. Dave:** Yeah.

**Daniela Roher:** And it has created a third entity, which is the relationship.

**Susan Schwartz:** Yeah.

**Dr. Dave:** Right. The sub title of the book is *Five Steps for Finding Your Way Back to Love*, so what are the five steps? Maybe you can give us the five steps and we can go through them each a bit.

**Susan Schwartz:** Well, I have them right here do you want me to just read them out?

**Dr. Dave:** Sure.

**Susan Schwartz:** Okay. So, step one is survey the road; step two is unearth what is causing the damage; three, unpack and sort your baggage; four, rebuild trust for the journey ahead and five, access the emotions that fuel your relationship.

**Dr. Dave:** Huh, I have a different list in front of me.

**Susan Schwartz:** Do you really?

**Dr. Dave:** Well, it probably has the same meaning but I took these out of the Table of Contents. So, I've got number one, turn in the right direction; number two, identify shadow emotions; number three, let go of excess baggage; number four, rebuild trust and achieve resiliency and number five, create connecting bridges.

**Daniela Roher:** Yes, you're right Dave, these are the titles in the book, these are the exact titles of the chapters.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay, well let's go through those. Let's start with 'turn in the right direction.' Somebody take us through that.

**Daniela Roher:** Okay. At the beginning of therapy, if a couple comes to us for therapy, the main emotions that are visible are what we call distancing emotions. They argue with one another, they're frustrated, they're disappointed, they don't want to engage, they keep their distance so we encourage them to turn in the right direction, meaning 'is there anything else beside being angry with one another or being so

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disappointed with one another, are there still some positive feelings left that we can use to create a foundation upon which to build our... how we're going to rebuild the relationship?' And we suggest that couples start with kind of neutral areas. Areas that are not likely to start arguments, like 'would you like to go to a movie tonight, would you like to... shall we have dinner together, shall we go for a walk. Something that is an attempt to connect, a bid for connection but at the same time is not going to talk about anything that could create problems, or hurt feelings, or anything like this. And it's important for people to realize that they still have some good feelings for one another and we encourage each person to take the first step. Don't wait for your partner to do it because if your partner is waiting for you and you're waiting for your partner you'll go on forever, right? So be the first one who reaches out.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay, now what about step two, identify shadow emotions? As a Jungian, Susan, the shadow is in your ballpark.

**Susan Schwartz:** It's in my ballpark. Well, you know, the shadow is really one of the hardest thing to acknowledge and here's where we tend to project onto our partners 'cause we don't want to own what we are about and it reaches into what is going on unconsciously with us. It also relates to something Daniela was saying earlier, which is how we were raised. So what we have experienced and what we have put underneath and covered over and the shadow also is not always negative. It can be positive qualities that we are not using. So there's a lot that's going on under the surface, which when people are just mad, they never can figure out and so the wealth of material that is there could tend to get lost unless people learn how and this is what they do in therapy, learn to access what's going on underneath.

**Daniela Roher:** And I would add that there is also another meaning to the shadow emotions and that is when we are, angry, frustrated or disappointed with one another, those may not be the real emotions that we feel. Underneath those emotions that are other, there are other emotions there we call shadow emotions and they're usually fear, hurt, shame and we don't express those emotions because it's not safe to express them at that point and so it's easier to be angry, right?

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Susan Schwartz:** And I would also add that this is a time as well where, when people pay attention to their dreams, it tells them how they see themselves and how they are seeing their partner. So in a way it reveals the shadow that might be underneath in the relationship.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm.

**Daniela Roher:** Being able to identify the shadow emotions, begins the process of shifting couples from blaming each other to starting to examine together. So at this stage they are no longer making each other responsible for their problems but their starting to see each other as 'well maybe we are on the same side here and we have the same goal to try and understand what's going on because if we do, it would benefit both of us.'

**Dr. Dave:** Okay. Step three is let go of excess baggage. What baggage are we referring to here?

**Daniela Roher:** Well I mentioned earlier how earlier relationships affect the way we related to people throughout life and so if I say for instance, I grew up in an environment where nobody was really there for me, I couldn't count on anybody to be available when I needed them. I most probably learned to rely on myself and so in a relationship I may be detached, somewhat disconnected, not reach out to my partner for help when I need help, kind of be dismissive of my emotions because emotions can get me in trouble, so it's much better if I use my left side of my brain and be logical all of the time. And so all of that could prevent intimacy from developing because if we don't deal with our emotions, we cannot be intimate and so understanding what the baggage from the past is, allows us to change patterns of interacting.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm.

**Susan Schwartz:** It also, once people share that they both have got baggage it cuts down on 'you did, she did, he did' whatever was going on and it causes one to have to own their own self, really, their total self. Jung refers to this in a way where the sins of the parents go to the third and the fourth generation and we're all subject to that. What did we inherit, what is going on inside, what have we expected that is realistic or unrealistic and by sharing all these things it unites people, makes them come together.

**Dr. Dave:** I would think that excess baggage might also include past grievances that one is holding on to, the long list of sins that one can recount about their partner.

**Susan Schwartz:** Yes.

**Daniela Roher:** You're right and it also refers to having to let go of all the fantasies that we had about this relationship – what we thought would be and didn't develop.

**Dr. Dave:** Yes.

**Susan Schwartz:** One of the strengths of a relationship is living in reality and that is one of the hardest things to do.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm, (laughs) okay, step four – rebuild trust and achieve resiliency. Well it sounds ideal, how does one get there?

**Susan Schwartz:** Well actually this is one part that related to something that Daniela brought very much forward into the book and that was the concept of empathy. So trust is not just in oneself, it also helps to build a bridge to the other person but you can only do that if you have empathy, not only for yourself but for the other. It's an ability to imagine where the other person is and have feeling about it and bring it out.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay.

**Daniela Roher:** It's also the step where we address the issues of sexuality because usually sexuality is like a microcosm of what goes on in the relationship, so if couples have had problems, usually their sexual relationships have been affected. They tend to maybe be distant, to disconnect and not be interested in being close to one another and so in this step, couples are encouraged to address their sexuality, learn to be physically close and sexually close to one another.

**Dr. Dave:** Okay and then the last step is create connecting bridges. What do we have in mind there, what would be some connecting bridges?

**Susan Schwartz:** Well, you know the connecting bridges are sometimes in the smallest way, it's something that we have mentioned earlier as well. It's just the... making coffee for someone is a connecting bridge, communicating, spending time that is agreed upon; 'couple of times a week we are going to sit down together at our favorite place and talk about what is going on and we'll keep our relationship viable.' It is actually something that creates consciousness between people, so that they're aware of what is really going on between themselves and each other. But it's like building your life together, rebuilding it.

**Daniela Roher:** Yeah. In the book we mention ten bridges and they are: build a joint history of your relationship; it's very important for couples to be able to talk about their history together and what they did and the experiences they had together, because that bonds them to one another. Share connecting emotions to foster intimacy; talk about how they feel, not only what they're doing, or facts, or situations like this. Create a place for friendship and more. Reinforce shared values; it's important to have common ways, shared ways of looking at life and similar philosophies about life and the future. Be grateful to one another and show gratitude to one another. Affirm each other's significance; Susan said have special places, remember each other's birthday, remember things that are very special to one another. Make a new commitment to each other. Build sacred places and again had Susan mentioned that earlier; create the extraordinary in the ordinary. We don't have to go to Paris to show that we love our partner, we can go to a favorite place that may be ten minutes from our home but it becomes special. And then ten, moving from feeling secure with one another to increase our ability to reflect both on the relationship, on each other and on ourselves.

**Dr. Dave:** Well thanks for taking us through those. Now clearly this book is meant as a self-help guide. How do envision couples using it?

**Susan Schwartz:** You know one of the things that we had talked about was that we wanted to bring in information. So we didn't want to just say, do this, this, this and this but we wanted to inform people about the aspects of a relationship, which we found to be helpful. So we also hoped that people would read a chapter, make a time to talk about it, share their ideas. So the book would be something in between the two, kind of like a dream in a way, in between so that they could discuss and talk about it and share, share is the word, share their ideas.

**Daniela Roher:** We also would say the book can become the space, like our therapy office is the space, where people can explore together and we raise some issues, we encourage them to think about something and maybe think about something in a

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different way for them, so that it raises some interest in pursuing that more and understanding more and talking more about it, you know searching. And that's what we do in therapy and we hope the book would do the same for couples.

**Susan Schwartz:** We also give examples of people from our therapy practices, a short vignette of how this one was and how that one was and how they interacted with each other, what they learned. As an example, of 'this is how some people have done it, you choose how would you like to do it.' It's good to have a model sometimes.

**Daniela Roher:** And I want to add that none of the vignettes that we use are from real people we see, they are composite. So we put information together to create examples.

**Dr. Dave:** Sure. At what point should a couple conclude that maybe a book isn't enough and that they need outside help from a therapist?

**Susan Schwartz:** Well, I would say that a book isn't enough to begin with and I think that people can learn deeper communication skills when they're... I think it's helpful, I think it's helpful for a lot of people. So the book itself would not be the end product, hopefully it will encourage people to want to know more.

**Daniela Roher:** Yes, I agree with Susan. The book should stimulate people to understand that unless they go beyond the surface they are not going to solve the issues at hand and so the sad part is that of people who get divorced, over two thirds never go to therapy and of the people who go to therapy, couples I'm talking about, who go to therapy, usually they make the decision to go to therapy six years after the problem first started. So it's very sad that people don't acknowledge 'we have an issue here, we need to address it and we won't be able to do it on our own, we need somebody to guide us.' And they try to resolve issues, there is embarrassment, there is discomfort at times there is shame with talking about your problems to a stranger but the problem is that unless we are with somebody who is impartial and who has experience in this area and who doesn't take sides, to whom we can say anything we want to say without worrying about 'are they going to talk to some of our friends, or family, or whatever?' Unless we do it we don't really give our relationship a good chance to survive.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm. Do you think your book would have utility for therapists and if so, how?

**Susan Schwartz:** I think it does. I like the combination of Daniela and I as psychoanalytic, psychodynamically orientated and Jungian. I think we bring in, we make it a journey like with the automobile, we bring in the world of symbols. We combine our languages, we talk about the brain and attachment, so I think it's like, to me it's like a story that can be read and understood with technicalities in it and professionalism for sure and also a humane touch, which makes you want to keep reading.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm.

**Daniela Roher:** And also we tried to write a book in ways that is not partial towards one approach or another clinical approach, so that if therapists come from a different background, they can relate to some of the things we say. You don't have to be a psychoanalyst to understand the book. We try to be all inclusive and accept the contributions from different areas, which we think are important because we are so complex as individuals. And at times to look at things from different perspectives can actually increase our understanding of what's going on.

**Susan Schwartz:** And actually that's what a couple needs to do anyway, increase their envelopes and increase their understanding so the book, just by its being, promotes that, as well as all the examples in it as well.

**Dr. Dave:** Well this is probably a good place to wrap it up and that could have been a good closing statement there Susan but I'll give you a chance if you have any other final thought you'd like to leave our listeners with.

**Daniela Roher:** I would like to say that everybody goes through the crossroads and at times in a long relationship we go through crossroads many, many, many times, so I would like for all your listeners who think that if they are in a bad place in their relationship, it's not because they failed, it's because that's life.

**Dr. Dave:** Hm, hm.

**Susan Schwartz:** And I would add to that, that all the stories of the world, *all* the stories of the world, speak about the journey that it takes to become a partner, to become a person and accentuate with what Daniela said, that the crossroads are our challenges and it's the place that we really do learn from.

**Dr. Dave:** Right. Well okay, Doctors Daniela Roher and Susan E. Schwartz, I want to thank you for being my guest today on Shrink Rap Radio.

**Susan Schwartz:** Thank you.

**Daniela Roher:** Thank you for inviting us it was a pleasure.

#### **WRAP UP:**

I agree with Doctors Roher and Schwartz that their book would be an excellent conversation starter for any couples that are in distress and as they point out, there are plenty of such couples out there. If you fall into that group, this book might help you and your partner get off the dime and start dealing with the underlying issues. As you heard in the interview both Daniela and Susan take a very non blaming, positive view of the process, seeing it as a journey that will lead to stronger personalities and a more satisfying union. Part of the reason I began the interview pressing them to describe what might distinguish them as either a psychoanalytically oriented psychotherapist or a Jungian analyst during marital therapy sessions, is that they're so successful in their goal in writing a non technical book that would not do violence to the other's theoretical orientation. What I'm saying is that the book is written in such a down to earth, common sense, jargon free way that the underlying theoretical orientations are not all that apparent except to the practiced eye, such as mine of course. As a

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consequence their approach is likely to appeal to both lay and professional readers of any stripe. The book is available in very affordable paperback and Kindle editions in the <http://www.amazon.com> store and as always you are encouraged to order your copy through the Amazon widget in our right hand side bar.

Thanks again to today's guests Doctors Daniela Roher and Susan Schwartz for their insights on working with couples at the crossroads.