

# q renovate: RELATIONSHIPS

## The 80/20 Rule of Relationships – why 20% of issues cause 80% of the problems

Out of all the rooms in the house, where do you spend most of your time? From your wardrobe, which items get the most wear? Of all the apps on your phone how many do you use the most? How many of your customers account for most of the profit? 80% of results will come from 20% of the action! From where I sit, the 80/20 rule reigns even in the Counselling room! 20% of relationship issues account for 80% of the angst.

As a relationship specialist, I have the honour of journeying with individuals and couples at their most major and toughest junctures in their life. I have noticed it is the same few difficulties that have them ill-equipped to enjoy the dynamic and flourishing relationship they deserve. Many clients consistently report their relationship is 80% amazing except for the hefty weight of 20% of the bad times that have them often defeatedly slumped in my office.

### What is the root cause of the 20%?

- Some of us can blame our parents or grandparents for ill-equipping us! Whilst we can't directly 'sock it to them', our ancestors were less likely to require wisdom on how to collaborate with their spouse in areas such as finances and how to raise the children. They didn't need to check in with each other as their relationships featured more clearly defined, traditional roles that didn't overlap so much. This is in comparison to today's common tag team situation—symptomatic of both parents working outside the home where we collide on work, home duties and parenting decisions.

- We can also unconsciously repeat the same approach to relationships as our parents or caregivers. We become stuck in patterns of disconnection over the same bad habits such as passive silence or angry aggression that can grow in momentum.

- We forget that we can default to being selfish, inward focussed with fallible memory recall and easily compare ourselves and our partner to others!

### What comprises the 20%? The 3 Corrosive C's:

1. Crushed Confidence: It never fails to amaze me how much damage we do to our intimate connections because we are too busy slamming ourselves on the head with a metaphorical hammer. Poor self-worth is a silent killer of relationships. An uncontrolled thought life can have us succumb to fear of what "I can't" and "I'm not". We ruminate on key moments in life that have us caught in toxic self-deprecating. It is frustrating to watch the countless incredulous and gifted clients who initially cannot see how beautiful and talented they are. How can you contribute to your relationship when exhausting your partner with your reliance on them to boost you up and inhibiting that united force you were destined to enjoy?

2. Communication: I like to think that as a therapist, an author and frequent media commentator, I'm quite the communicator. Pop me in a situation where I'm emotionally invested and the harsh reality is, I am not as clever as I think I am. I easily compare to others, can be stubborn and threatened when things don't go my way. I have learnt to turn the finger back on myself and consciously realise when I'm emotionally triggered. This includes realising fatigue can have me a lot less rational. We are also not the best versions of ourselves when unfit, fallen into poor eating and drinking habits, stressed and assume we are easily understood.

3. Conflict: Have you ever considered that we are frequently misunderstanding each other a lot of the time? Our memories are incredibly unreliable particularly when our raw emotions are triggered, and reality is skewed. How also can we naturally navigate our way through our differences when the person you're disagreeing with was initially likely incredibly attractive because they were different and complemented you with features and approaches you don't have? It has syntax error flashing all over it!

Have hope that the "3 Corrosive C's" can be overcome and do not need to dominate a large percentage of your relationship. Why not take a step back and look at your thoughts about yourself to yourself, how you communicate with your partner and if you approach your differences in a healthy manner?

I have all the tools you'll ever need in Renovate Your Relationship which focusses on these three major inhibitors to avoid fast-tracking to expensive 'Splitsville'. Through being consciously aware where your relationship habits came from, know you can renovate your relationship to happily ever after!

*Joanne Wilson is the Relationship Rejuvenator and author of Renovate Your Relationship – All The DIY Tools For Your Most Important Project (\$29.99). She is a neuropsychologist inspiring the community for thriving and dynamic relationships that impact generations for mental well-being. Find out more at [www.relationshiprejuvenator.com](http://www.relationshiprejuvenator.com)*

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