

## **CHECK YOUR MESSAGES ...AND UPGRADE YOUR LIFE**

**By Olga Sheean**

On the outside, Caroline always seemed happy and fulfilled. She loved her partner, Brian, and she had a good job as an accountant downtown. Inside, though, Caroline was full of conflict. Although she was good at her job, she always felt like an imposter, only just managing to sustain the 'illusion' that she knew what she was doing and was worth her substantial salary. Despite her boss's praise, she still felt insecure and on the verge of being 'found out'.

The reason for this had nothing to do with Caroline's expertise as an accountant – and everything to do with the messages she received when she was growing up. Her dad died when she was young and her mother suffered from depression. She wasn't available if Caroline had a problem and she never offered any kind of emotional support or assurance. Although her mother was never nasty to her, Caroline received many indirect negative messages as a result of the lack of love and attention at home: You're not important. Your feelings don't matter. It's not safe to express how you feel. You'll have to take care of yourself. There's something wrong but we're not going to talk about it. This resulted in a deep insecurity, low self-worth and emotional denial, which affected every area of Caroline's life. Although work was where she felt most insecure, her relationship also lacked the depth of feeling and intimacy she'd always craved. She loved Brian, but he wasn't a passionate man. He didn't shower her with gifts, praise or tenderness, but he didn't neglect or mistreat her, either, and she told herself she should be thankful for that.

Caroline is a classic example of the distortion that occurs when we receive negative messages in our formative years. We cannot feel good about ourselves when we're insecure, and we attract partners who match the level of emotional expression at which we've been taught to operate. So, if we're uncomfortable with deeper intimacy and emotional expression, we tend to attract partners who are emotionally distant or unavailable.

The subconscious messages we receive determine the quality of our lives and the degree of success and fulfillment we achieve. Negative messages always create conflict and mixed results, keeping us stuck in unfulfilling cycles. Positively transforming these messages helps to set us free, enhancing our self-expression, our self-worth and our capacity for true intimacy.

Here's an easy three-step process for identifying the negative messages you received as a child:

1. Think about your most fervent wish or goal in life. What would you most like to have, even if you don't think it's possible? Write it down, in the present tense. If you are focussing on relationships, you might say, for example: "I now have a deeply passionate, intimate, dynamic relationship with a loving, honest, drop-dead-gorgeous partner who adores me and treats me with the utmost respect and admiration." If you're thinking more in terms of your ideal lifestyle, you might say: "I now have a beautiful home by the water, in a natural, peaceful setting, with lots of space for my art/music/yoga/dogs, and the perfect sensual environment for me and my lover."

2. Now ask yourself why you don't have these things right now. When you consider having the partner or home of your dreams, what objections spring to mind? You may find yourself thinking, "I never attract nice guys", "Sounds too good to be true", or "There's no way I could ever afford a house by the water". The more complete and colourful you make your dream, the more objections you'll identify (usually 10-15). These objections represent the limitations you were taught about what's possible for you in love and life.

3. Now convert your objections into their positive counterparts, bearing in mind what's really behind them. For example, "I never attract nice guys" really means "I don't deserve someone wonderful because I'm plain/fat/unworthy/not smart enough, etc". Change this to read: "I'm absolutely perfect and gorgeous, and I'm a magnet for exceptional, loving, decent men." When your list is complete, read it out loud morning and night, and repeat these positive affirmations when you're jogging, swimming or doing some form of repetitive aerobic exercise. This will help to positively re-programme body and mind, which always results in more love and fulfillment in life.

Olga Sheean is a personal empowerment coach and therapist who specializes in addressing the subconscious programming that runs our lives. For more info, see [www.olgasheean.com](http://www.olgasheean.com)