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## Customer Review

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★★★★★ **Opposites Chafe One Another, Lose Integrity, and Become Best Friends After Divorce,**  
September 19, 2007

By [Donald Mitchell "a Practical Optimist"](#)

In these days of reality television, I thought I was immune to shock. Wrong. This book about how divorces happen and how to respond to them shocked and surprised me in so many ways that I had to step back and think about what I had read before having any idea of how to review this book. This reaction occurred despite having gone through a divorce many years ago. In fact, if the personal story parts of this book had been portrayed as a novel, I would probably have complained that the book was unrealistic.

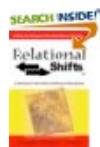
The book's format is an unusual one that I can only characterize for you as "She felt and said; He felt and said; Their Daughter felt and said; and Lessons drawn heavily from Buddhist thought." The level of candor is extraordinary. There doesn't seem to be much that happened to these three people that they won't relate to you.

What's the basic point? I would paraphrase the book's advice as being to approach marriage as a way to live with personal integrity while adapting the relationship to match the needs of the moment and the long term.

Julie Rappaport and Lee Liberman got into trouble with their marriage because they didn't know each other very well before marrying. They also didn't spend enough time discussing what kind of a marriage they wanted. Julie wanted to try her wings and Lee wanted a traditional wife. The couple also experienced sexual issues that are

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apparently more common than I was aware of. They both ended up feeling like they were giving away parts of their personal identities to be in the marriage, yet they loved the other person. Becoming parents was similarly haphazard, although they are both devoted parents. Unlike many people who divorce, they clearly did their best to put their daughter's interests first.

Even though Julie soon remarried, the three continued to function as a family after divorce . . . celebrating family events, taking vacations, and covering for each other. I thought this aspect of the book was potentially the most valuable for those who are considering divorce: You can divorce and still have a good relationship with your former spouse.

Where the book is weakest is as a guide for planning for marriage and building a strong marriage. While the questions are certainly good ones, they aren't nearly enough to help those who are in the throes of passion and a new marriage to think through what needs to be thought through. As I read the material about how each spouse felt like they couldn't be themselves in the marriage, I was reminded of a neighbor whose husband left her after 30 years of marriage commenting that he was tired of not being able to be himself. I suspect that complaint is fairly common. I know that my favorite compliment about my wife is that she lets me be myself.

But independent of the book's advice, it's riveting reading. I couldn't put it down.

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**Initial post:** Oct 5, 2007 11:54 AM PDT

[Julie Rappaport](#) says:

Thank you, Donald, for your thoughtful review. It is our raw accounts that most people thank us for when they are going through things they feel they can't even discuss with their best friends... we were there and understand that,

which is why we've offered our story out there, to help others know there is light at the end of the tunnel...  
many blessings and much gratitude for your time and consideration,  
jules

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