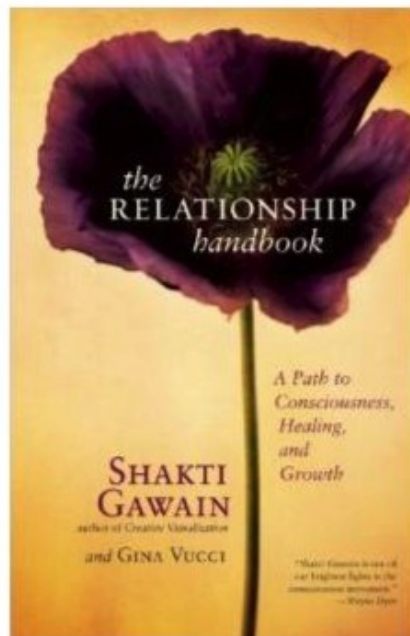


Author Gina Vucci Defines Consciousness and What True Intimacy Is In 'The Relationship Handbook'



By [Sarah Batcheller](#)

Gina Vucci is a “soccer mom” to three kids in the Bay Area. While her day-to-day schedule is stirring with the practical tasks of carpools and parent-teacher conferences, she has found extraordinary ways to add richness and fullness to her life. Vucci took a deeper look at her relationship as a way to better understand her true self. Her new book, *The Relationship Handbook: A Path to Consciousness, Healing, and Growth*, co-written with Shakti Gawain, uncovers the mysteries

of the subconscious in order to shed light on the parts of our selves we may want to nurture a little more. CupidsPulse.com had the pleasure of discussing life and love with the author.

We love that, in the title of the book, consciousness, healing, and growth are grouped together in that order. Can you tell us why consciousness is so important as the first step in finding healing and growth?

The idea of the book is that our relationships provide us with opportunities to become aware of ourselves – who we are, what motivates us, what we're attracted to, and what we reject. In the context of this book, how we describe consciousness is having awareness over all of who we are: the good, the bad, and the ugly. How do we use our relationships to navigate through our lives? How do we use the painful situations to grow from them? And how do we find balance through that consciousness and awareness? That's how consciousness got its placement.

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How can people incorporate consciousness into their daily routines?

In the book, there are a basic set of principles that are from a body of work called the psychology of self. We draw on that, and we sort of lay the foundation for what this work looks like. The basic concept is that we grow up; we develop different aspects of our personalities; and we begin to discern what works for us, what doesn't, in which ways are our needs met, and in which ways we experience rejection.

So on a day-to-day basis, this practice would mean asking yourself, "What aspects of my personality are driving me at this moment?" I could be at a public event, and I could see that there's a part of me that's being super social and

wanting everyone to like me. That's one part of me, but there might be another part of me that's feeling shy, uncomfortable, and awkward. Recognizing that I have a more gregarious side and also a side with more vulnerability allows me to be more conscious and balanced. I can recognize how much I'm putting myself out there or how much I'm holding myself back.

Through this model, you can sort out what was driving it or what you were looking for. You can ask yourself, "What part of me was having this conversation?" and "What part of me was my shadow side?" Your shadow side is what you're not aware of. By having this awareness, I can *use* those opportunities; I don't have to get my feelings hurt, and I can change the shape of the friendship or relationship. I can actually use that to feel more comfortable with myself and with that person.

One of the major themes in the book is the "mirror of relationships." After a breakup, how can someone use that relationship as a lens into their self?

In mirroring, we look at both aspects, so there's admiring and attraction, and there's judgement. A lot of the time it's a lot easier to access judgement! In our workshops, we lead an exercise around judgement, and it's very helpful. It's all about looking at the other person and how you're either admiring or rejecting them. They're mirroring us; they're reflecting back information about who we are and what parts of our personality are dominant versus what we might have shadowed.

Let's say I'm in a relationship, and my partner is really self-centered and judgmental. I could use those reflections as information for me. I need to look at what value that quality in them would have for me. If I'm not very tolerant or accepting of other people's opinion because I think my way is the right way, I may need to be more open-minded about people and their roles in my process.

Can you give an example of a common problem you've seen couples face and how you would advise them to "look in the mirror" in order to better themselves?

Usually, there is one partner who is more outgoing and wants to be more active and social, and there's one who's more of a homebody and wants to have more quiet time. In the book, we break it down more, but in essence, when we're the outsiders, we can see the value of someone who always has a busy schedule being with a partner who prefers a lot of downtime, contemplative time. The benefit of the more outgoing one is that they can tone it down or cut it back to figure out what's driving them to keep their schedule so full. The less outgoing partner could still honor their rhythm, but they could also look at how they're holding their self back. Is there some fear or insecurity there?

Related Link: [How to Prevent Yourself from Rushing into a Relationship](#)

Going off of that, another theme is balancing closeness and independence. How can someone balance these two ideas when they're in a committed relationship?

I think that we value all of the different energies that are within us and that are expressed in relationships. We value each aspect of our personalities because each one makes us whole. So in a relationship where you're trying to balance independence/autonomy with intimacy, you would look at it more like you were holding a balance. Our conscious self has the capacity to be intimate and experience closeness while staying autonomous.

I think that intimacy and closeness means sharing in a safe way, in a safe relationship, and that makes our relationships, friendships, and family connections more rich. A huge part of that, though, is making sure you're able to be vulnerable on your own. Sometimes, what I might do is take the child that's

inside of me and put it on someone's lap and expect them to take care of it. True intimacy is being able to take care of myself but also being able to share those fears and that vulnerability.

You can buy a copy of The Relationship Handbook on Amazon or at your local bookstore. To keep up with Gina, check out her website, <http://soccermomspirituality.com/>.