



February

Year 1 Topic 1

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Summary For Newly Weds

KNOWING THE REAL ME

What is REAL?

There was once a Velveteen Rabbit and in the beginning he was really splendid. He was fat and bunched as a rabbit should be: his coat was spotted brown and white, he had real thread whiskers, and his ears were lined with pink satin. On Christmas morning, when he sat wedged in the top of the boy's stocking, with a sprig of holly between his paws, the effect was charming.

For at least two hours the Boy loved him, then, in the excitement of looking at all the new presents, the Velveteen Rabbit was forgotten. For a long time he lived in the toy cupboard, or on the nursery floor, and no one thought very much about him. He was naturally shy, and being only made of velveteen, some of the more expensive toys quite snubbed him. The mechanical toys were very superior, and looked down on everyone else; they were full of modern ideas, and pretended they were real.

Between them all, the poor little Rabbit was made to feel himself very insignificant and commonplace, and the only person who was kind to him was the Skin Horse. The Skin Horse had lived longer in the nursery than any of the others. He was wise, for he had seen a long succession of mechanical toys arrive to boast and swagger, and by-and-by break their mainsprings and pass away, and he knew that they were only toys, and would never turn into anything else.

"What is REAL?" asked the Rabbit one day, when they were lying side by side near the nursery fender, before Nana came to tidy the room. Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?

"Real isn't how you are made" said the Skin Horse. "Its a thing that happens to you. When a child loves you for a long, long time, not just to play with, but REALLY loves you, then you become Real."

"Does it hurt?" asked the Rabbit.

"Sometimes" said the Skin Horse, for he was always truthful. "When you are Real you don't mind being hurt."

"Does it happen all at once like being wound up?" he asked, "or bit by bit?"

"It doesn't happen all at once" said the Skin Horse. "You become. It takes a long time. That's why it doesn't often happen to people who break easily, or have sharp edges, or who have to be carefully kept. Generally, by the time you are Real, most of your hair has been loved off, and your eyes drop out and you get loose in the joints and very shabby. But these things don't matter at all, because once you are Real you can't be ugly, except to people who don't understand."

An excerpt from *The Velveteen Rabbit* by Margery Williams

We are beginning to realize that marriage is a task of great complexity requiring as much knowledge, skill and effort as achieving success in a high-level career. The basic adjustments in marriage come at predictable times and they can be expected and planned for.

The first of these is "The Launching Experience" which covers the first years of marriage, the critical times when your interaction patterns are established. The adjustments of this period are very complex and important, because they settle the basic pattern of the relationship. The way you establish these basic adjustments in the launching period can be changed later, but only with hard work and effort. Doing it right from the start can make an enormous difference to the years that follow.

From David and Vera Mace, pioneers of the modern marriage enrichment movement.

Recommended reading:

Personality Plus by Florence Littauer.

Personality Plus looks at each one of us as an individual blend of the four basic temperaments and encourages us to get acquainted with the real me underneath before trying to change what shows on the surface.

The Temperament God Gave You by Art & Laraine Bennett.

A Catholic understanding of the 4 temperaments and what they mean for you and your family.