

Studios with relationship therapist Dr Stan Tatkin and Melissa Ferrari, who is also a relationship therapist and co-host of the 2GB Talking Lifestyle radio show.

We had some serious technical problems at the last minute before our live cross that had the main host Jono Coleman in the Sydney studio having to ad lib while we tried to get our microphones to work. In the end we all ended up with a serious case of the giggles and none of us could speak by the time we got our microphones working. Thankfully, Dr Tatkin was able to get on top of his laughing fit sooner than the rest of us and we eventually got the show under way. I think anyone listening would have been wondering what was going on!

What has been the most difficult aspect of delivering your podcasts?

The most difficult aspect of delivering our podcasts over the years has been the enormous time investment. Thankfully, we got some more administrative help over the years but, when I first started podcasting, I did all the thankless tasks that took hours and hours a week.

What has been a highlight of your career so far?

When I was able to go into full-time private practice was a highlight for me. Running my own practice was something I had wanted to achieve for many years, so it was a thrill when it happened.

What is the most challenging aspect of your role in working with couples?

There's no doubt that working with couples is enormously challenging for many therapists. I used to find working with couples very difficult and exhausting until I got some great couples therapy training called PACT, which is an acronym for *Psychobiological Approach to Couples Therapy*. It's an approach that was created by couples therapist Dr Stan Tatkin. I've found PACT has transformed the way I work with couples. Since I've learned his approach, I love working with couples more than ever.

You are a specialist in therapy for LGBTI couples. Does your approach

differ much when working with heterosexual relationships?

No, my approach doesn't change when working with LGBTI couples. The great thing about PACT is it works with all types of couples – straight, gay, mixed orientation, polyamorous, or open relationships.

What is the best advice you've ever received about relationships and who did it come from?

I learned from Dr Tatkin that the most successful couples still fight and have disagreements, but what sets them apart from other couples is they repair quickly to get their relationship back on track. I often tell this to the couples I work with.

Technology continues to entertain and challenge couples. Have you noticed any other testing trends as we surge on into 2018?

One of the things I've seen a lot more couples dealing with lately is "virtual infidelity". This usually involves one partner secretly flirting or sexting with someone outside of the relationship on social media. I think social media has enormous benefits as well as huge pitfalls when it comes to relationships. It's definitely not going away but I see it continuing to be an issue in many relationships in the future.

I find that flourishing, successful couples seem to feature two very unscientific words, being respect and kindness. Would you add any additional key words?

I think they are great behaviours in any relationship. I also think the regular expression of appreciation and gratitude in a relationship makes a big difference in the long run.

As a fellow relationship therapist, we have the sacred honour of listening to some often heart-wrenching and confronting stories. How do you unwind and separate work from your personal life?

The things that keep me sane in this profession are my regular swimming, yoga and meditation. As a therapist, regular



Clinton interviewed on the Conversation Arena.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED



Clinton with Melissa Ferrari and Jono Coleman on Talking Lifestyle radio.

PHOTO: CONTRIBUTED

with my colleague Juliet Austin. However, an ongoing goal for me is to try and have some good downtime in between the busy periods of my work life. I don't believe in a work-life balance but I think, when you're not working, it's important to seriously relax!

Having just celebrated Valentine's Day this week and, in a few words, what is your favourite romantic:

Destination: Spain

Food: Tapas

Gesture: Hugs

Date idea: A picnic on the beach

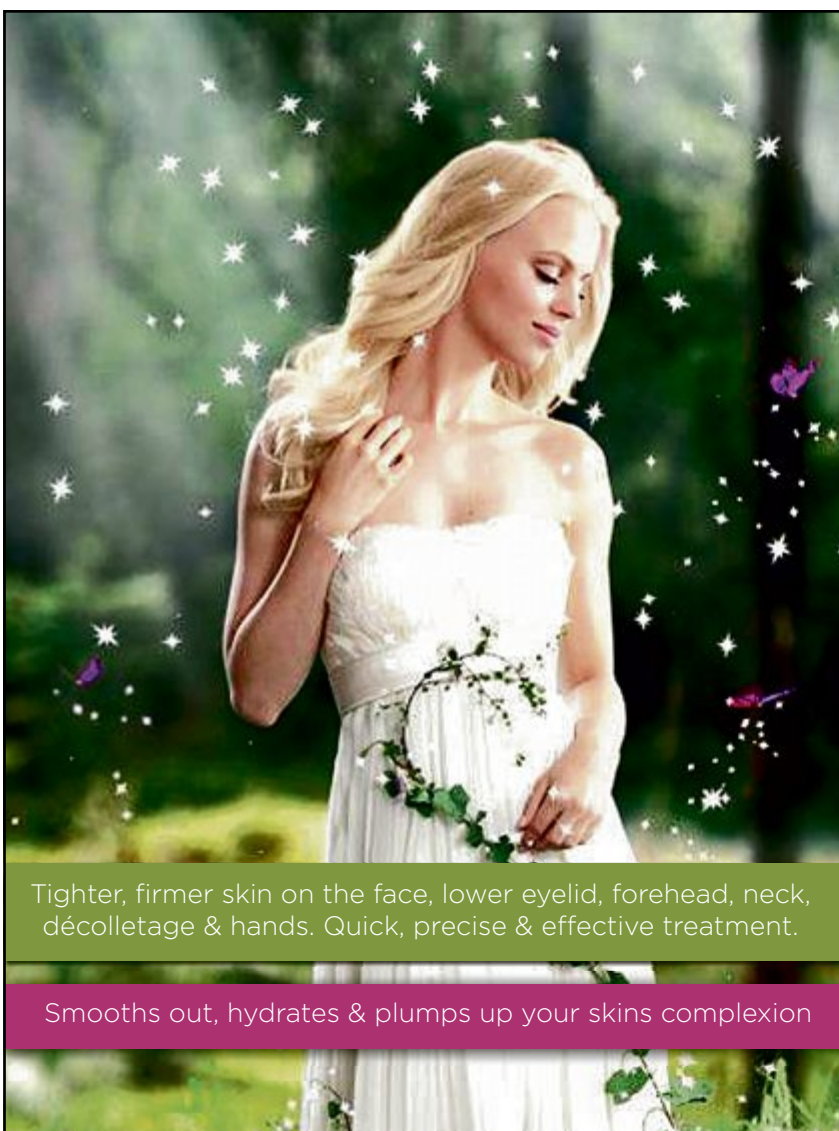
Isn't it a relief to know that couples who have disagreements can still be called successful if you do it right?

self-care is essential for doing the best possible work at all times.

I've just contributed to a series of articles in the theme of New Year New You. What are your goals for this year?

I always work hard in my counselling business and in the Mind Body Training Institute where I create courses for therapists

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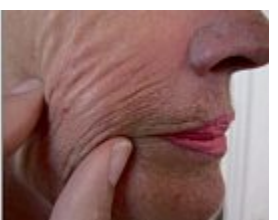


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