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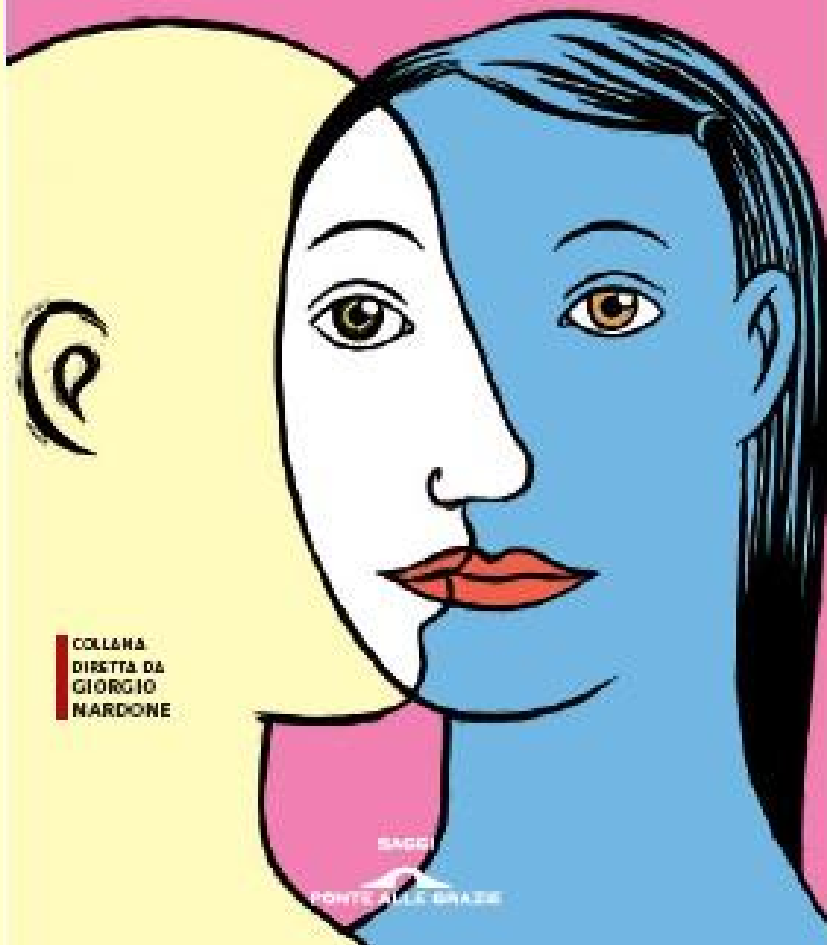
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CENTRO DI TERAPIA STRATEGICA DI UDINE

Emanuela Muriana Tiziana Verbitz

Psicopatologia
della vita amorosa



COLLENA
DIRETTA DA
GIORGIO
MARDONE

SAGE

PONTE AILE GRASSE

Tiziana Verbitz:

PSYCHOPATHOLOGY OF AMOROUS LIFE

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"More is known of love through the misery that it brings than through the mysterious happiness, which diffuses into the lives of men".

Emilie du Chatelet



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The misery.....



Year 2012: 157

Year 2013: 179 more 14%

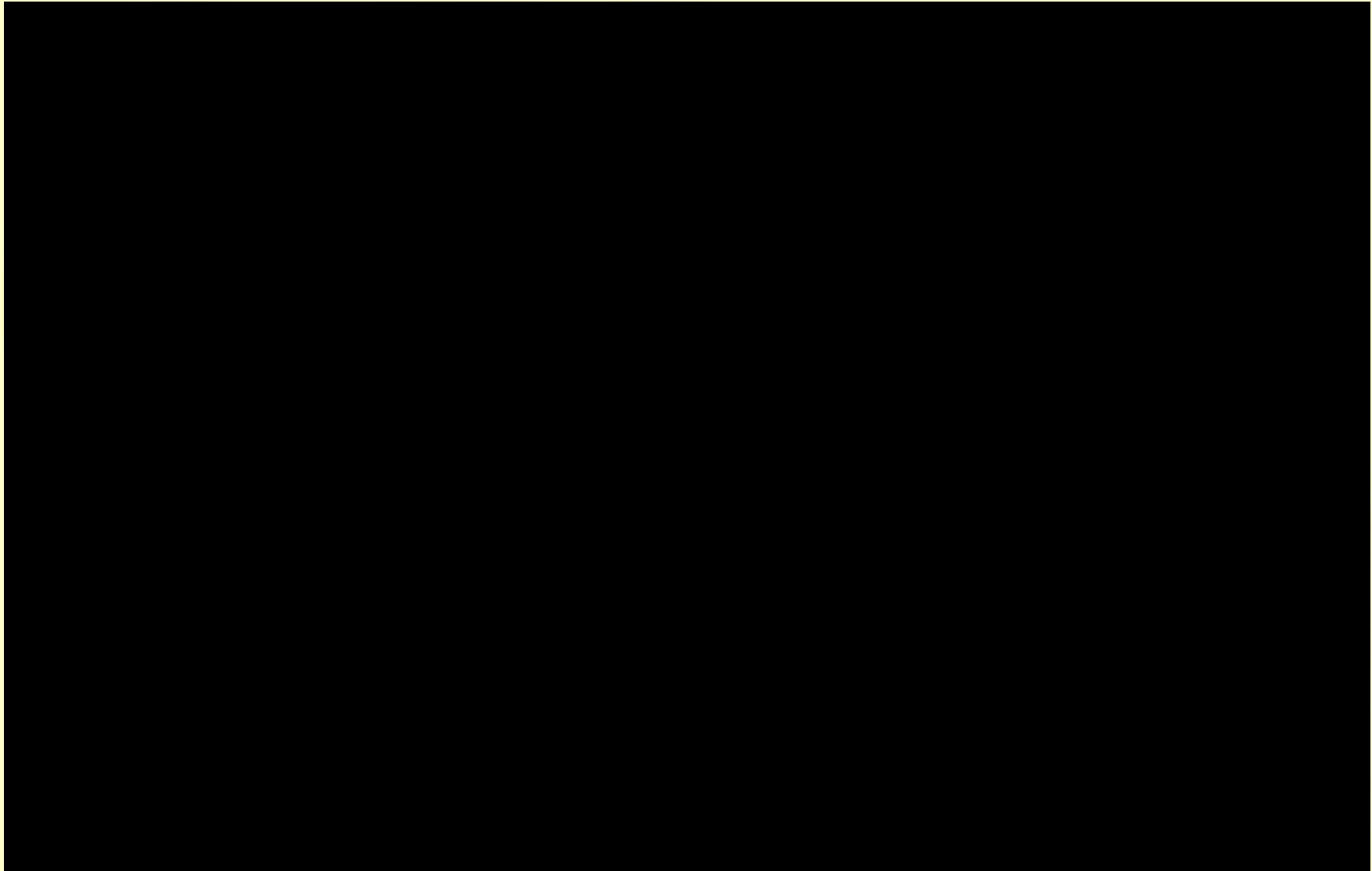
Year 2014: one every 3 days



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We will not talk about LOVE, but we will deal with the way people construct their own dysfunctional vision of a state of inevitable dysfunctionality: falling in love and love relationships.



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Ingredients of Lovesickness:

- *Desire*
- *Sense of helplessness*
- *Frustration*
- *Rage*
- *Pain, grief*



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Theoretical construct of
how the relationship should be,
i.e. the very personal perception
of love experience, conjugated in
different ways with the individual
needs.

All this leads to.....



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SELF-DECEPTION



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“Saying that Man is a rational and free being, seems to me a statement very close to falsity.”

J. Ortega y Gasset



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SELF-DECEPTION

BELIEF

PARADOX

CONTRADICTION





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Love is the most
sublime or the most
painful result of our self-
deception.



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	Not at all true	A little true	Moderately true	Mostly true	Definitely true
I would feel deep despair if my partner left me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes I feel I can't control my thoughts; they are obsessively on my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I feel happy when I'm doing something to make my partner happy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I would rather be with my partner than anyone else.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'd get jealous if I thought my partner were falling in love with someone else.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I yearn to know all about my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want my partner physically, emotionally and mentally.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
	Not at all true	A little true	Moderately true	Mostly true	Definitely true
I have an endless appetite for affection from my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
For me, my partner is the perfect romantic partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sense my body responding when my partner touches me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My partner always seems to be on my mind.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I want my partner to know me -- my thoughts, my fears, and my hopes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I eagerly look for signs indicating my partner's desire for me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I possess a powerful attraction for my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I get extremely depressed when things don't go right in my relationship with my partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>



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Self-deception is a real and continuous process of illusion and disillusion: we are constantly victim and persecutor.



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Self-deception not only, for its nature, **isn't** something wrong, but it is the **necessary process** to move on, toward a possible partner.



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Self-deception has an
“operative”
valence.



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A belief (“she is the right one!”)

+

a need to satisfy

=

Self-deception

(but only when we meet the other one)



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Falling in love is an
INVENTED REALITY,
that can become a self-
fulfilling prophecy.



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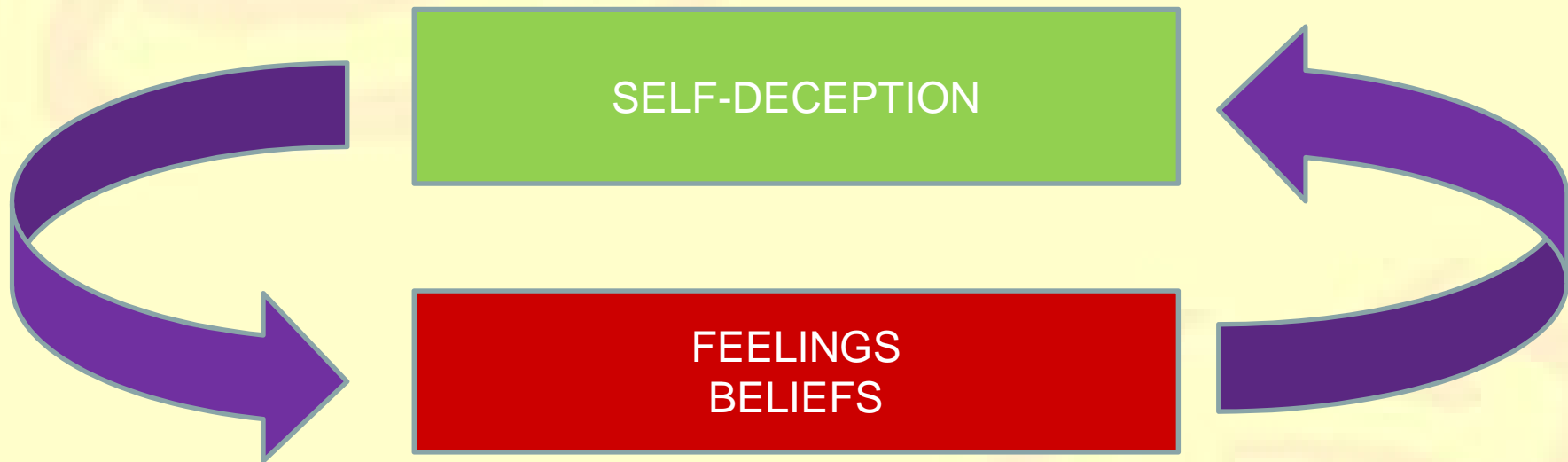
**Self-deception
leads us to move our
attention to
what is working.**



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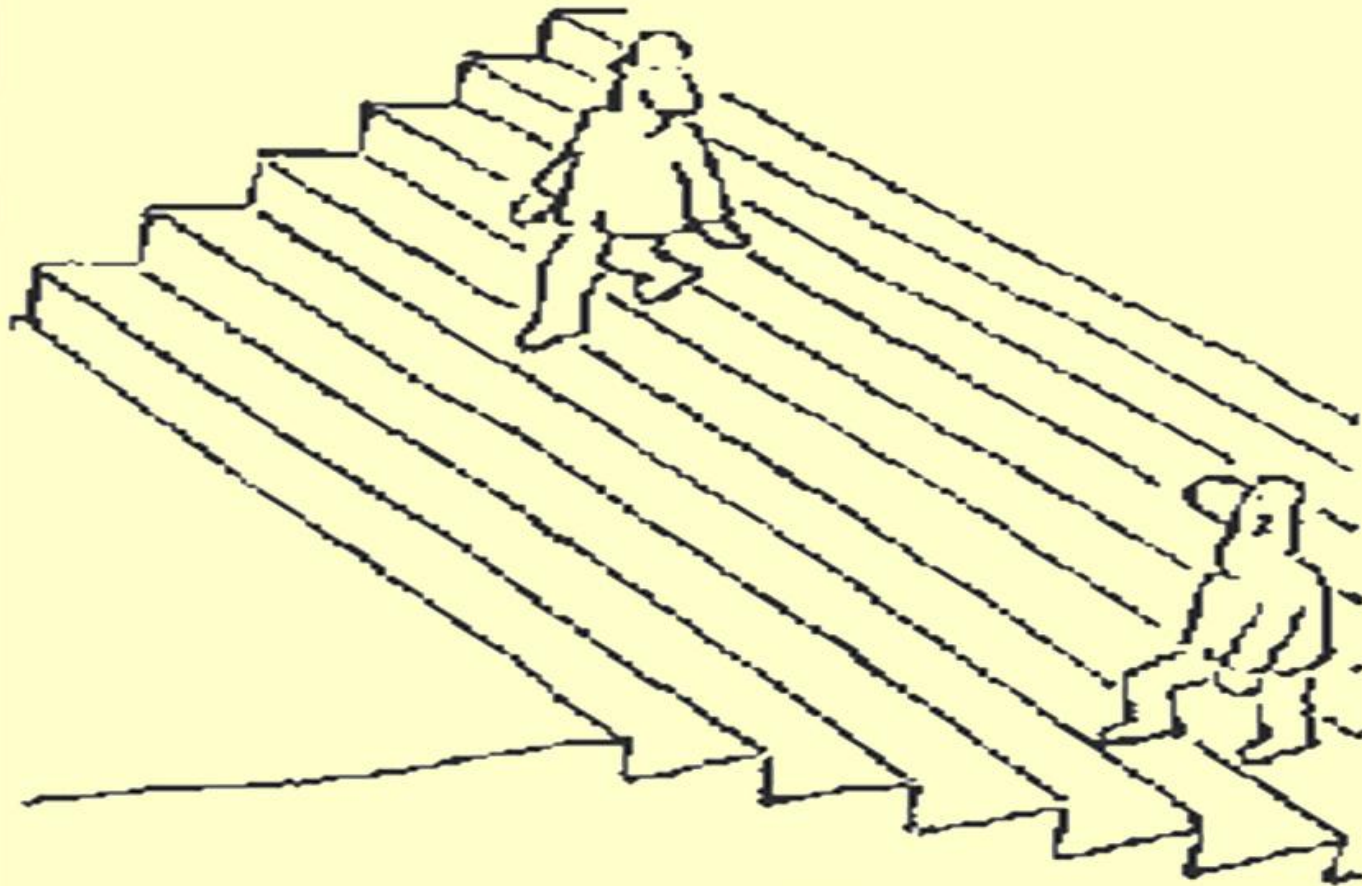




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“We were given a wonderful gift: our perceptive mind, and a useful servant: our associative mind. Unfortunately, along the time, we have forgotten the gift and have transformed the servant into our master”

A. Einstein



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**Self-deception,
once «installed»,
becomes
the referring parameter
for thought and action.**



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**The more self-deception
is flexible, the more it is
functional.**



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It becomes dangerous
when it doesn't fit the
situation or when the
person, incapable to
manage it, clutches at it.



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***"The truth that survives is simply the lie
that is pleasantest to believe."***

H. L. Mencken



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**Self-deception is NOT a stable
frame:**

**At a certain point it can
stagger, crack**

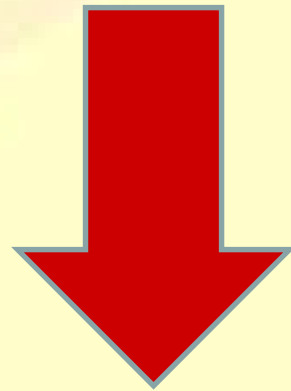


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Self-deception staggers



DISSONANCE

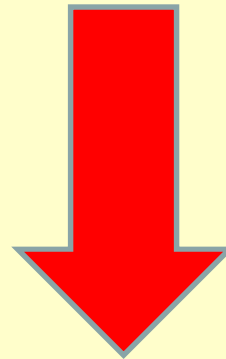


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To reduce dissonance:
acceptance, or



ATTEMPTED SOLUTIONS



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The therapist can operate on 3 different levels:

- The sequence: sensation-emotion-cognition (=replace a dysfunctional self-deception with a functional one).
- Behavior (=change the behavior of the patient in order to convey a new self-deception).
- Environment (=change partner's ideas, feelings, behaviors).



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When self-deception staggers:

anxious and somatic reactions



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When self-deception staggers, there are two possible outcomes:

- Self-deception crashes, breakes up.
- Self-deception stiffens.



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When beliefs downfall:

“For him/her I am no longer what I believed I was!”
(illuded-deluded by himself)

“He/she is no longer what I believed he/she was!”
(illuded-deluded by others)



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In any case the very first reaction –
even before any A.S.- is

INCRECULITY:

“it cannot be true...”

“I never thought this could happen”



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Incredulity can change into **waiting**:

...waiting for things to change...

...for something to happen...

And waiting can become **renunciation.**



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Or incredulity can change in active fight:

the struggle to restore the original belief
and self-deception.



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Disillusion

is a necessary step in order to create
a new, more functional self-deception.



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The new self-deception can evolve
in two different ways:

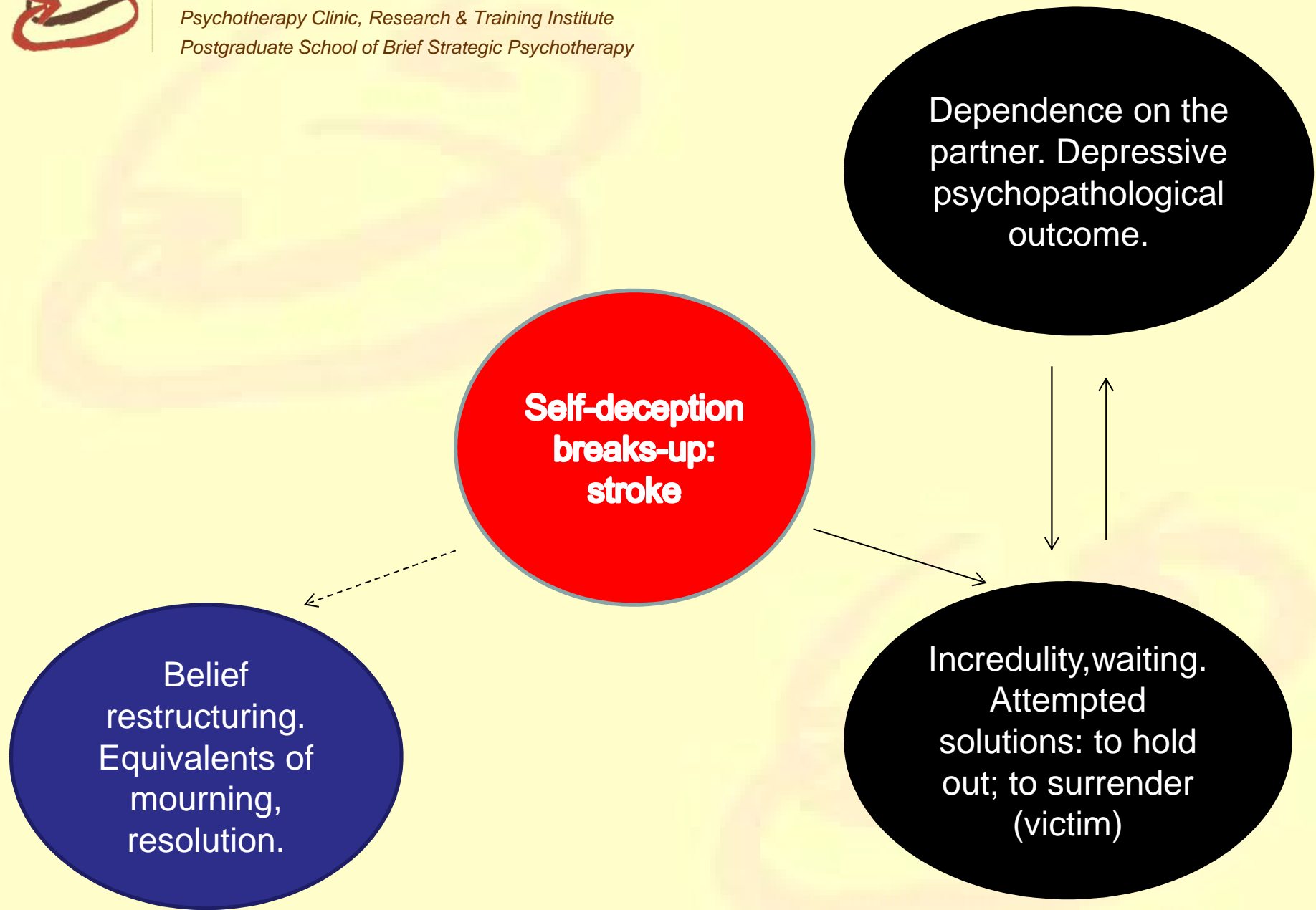
- “You are not the Prince Charming I believed you were....but...”
- An “active” renunciation.



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The dysfunctionality
is closely tied to
the rigidity
of ***self-deception***



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*“What people usually call
Destiny, is mostly only the totality
of the foolish things they have
done”*

A. Shopenhauer



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When self-deception
staggers, it doesn't
necessarily break:
instead of breaking up, it
can **stiffen** .



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Self-deception is preserved,
despite the facts: it is
impossible to take –
emotionally- note of the facts,
even if they are very clear to
the reason.



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The person tries to
realize a **change 1**,
because incapable to
realize a **change 2**.
(P. Watzlawick)



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Possible Attempted Solutions:

- To wait
- To remember
(in order to maintain one's
own belief unchanged)



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When these A.S. don't work:



sense of helplessness



renunciation



depression



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But the solution of a
dysfunctional self-deception
can rely only on the
recognition of one's error of
judgement.



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Sometimes self-deception
doesn't break up because
the person is **not disillusioned
enough.**



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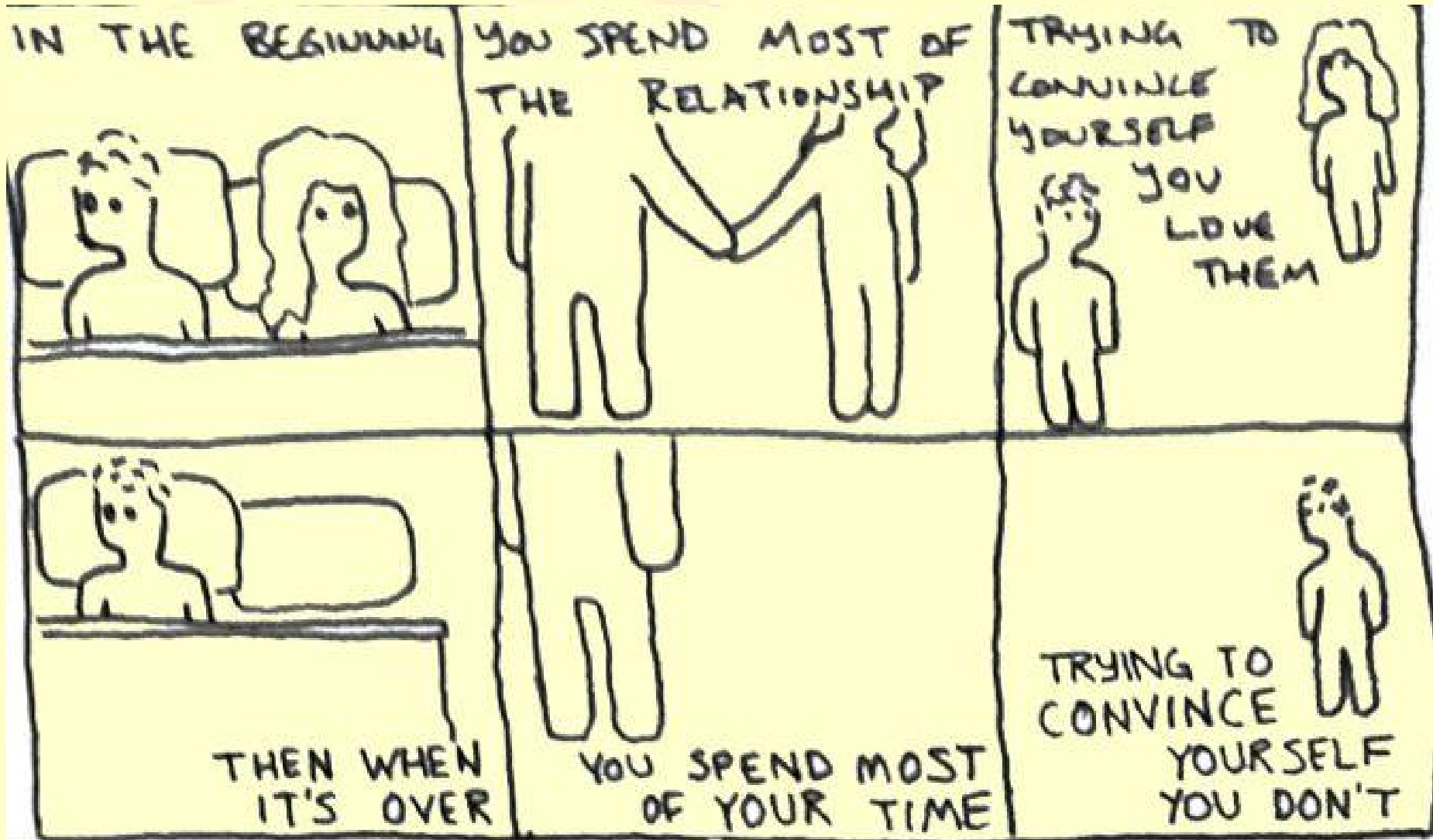
Disillusion is necessary in order to break the disfunctional ideation in favour of a new -this time functional- self-deception.



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Self-deception can rely on:

- the idea of how Love **must** be;
- the experience of a satisfactory relationship, in which pleasure has been of primary importance.



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When disillusion is not enough to turn pleasure in rage or fear, the original self-deception keeps unchanged.


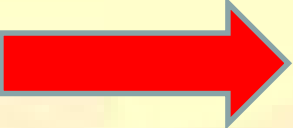


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Possible outcomes when pleasure turns into rage, but the basic belief keeps unchanged:

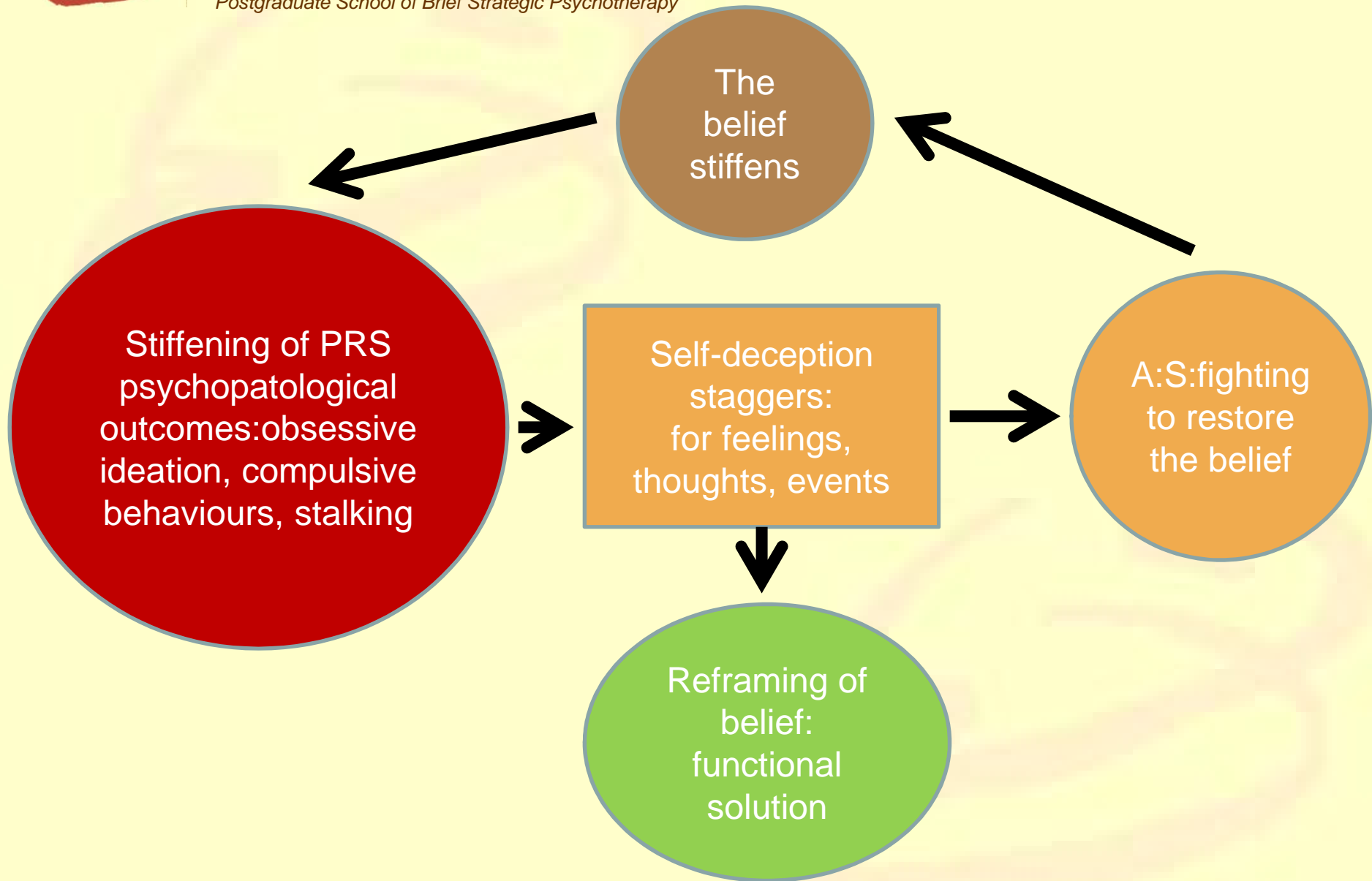
- Rage against the other one 
compulsive behaviour/stalking/
criminal acts.
- Rage against oneself 
depression/possible suicide.



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“Falling in love is a process of the same nature and kind of political or religious conversion”

Francesco Alberoni



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There is no correlation
between the lasting time
of the relationship and
the rigidity of self-
deception.



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The belief can be built
with the sole ideation,
even without a real
relationship.



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Probably love her

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The “need” is the
generator,
which maintains the
belief.



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«Reframing» is the healthy process which makes possible to break the belief and to stop the process of dysfunctional self-deception.



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4 prevalent types of Attempted Solutions:

- The ones who surrender
- The ones who renounce
- The ones who resist
- The ones who fight



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To surrender

Those who surrender, witness, powerless,
the crash of their own self-deception.

Emotions: fear, sorrow, pain, shame,
humiliation, helplessness.



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= Mourning equivalents.

It is necessary a “logical *saltus*” (“*he/she is not anymore indispensable for my survival*”), otherwise a **depressive pathology** is highly probable.



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To renounce

To be incapable to make the
“logical *saltus*”.

To be incapable to acknowledge
informations from the emotions.

From a clinical point of view, the
A.S. is: renunciation because of
powerlessness, helplessness.



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**Generalization of negative
events**



Radical depression



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Every negative event becomes, dramatically the confirmation of one's inability and therefore of one's unwantedness.

Risk of suicide.



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The aggressive reaction
to frustration
is proportional
to the rigidity
of destroyed certitudes.



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To resist

The A.S. (“to resist”): an
endless wait for things to
change.

Very often supported by a
double bind.



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To fight

To fight in order to restore the original certitude.

Double bind (inside the relationship self-self)

with the original certitude.

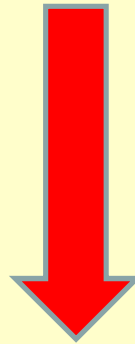


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Often victims who become
persecutors



From suicide threat to stalking.



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If the A.S. (to fight) is repeated
and repeated, self-deception
stiffens even more



Loss of control



Destructive emotions



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Rage out of control



Paranoid ideation



Revenge



Persecution delusion



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“There is no falling in love without illusion, there is no love without a little bit of delusion.”

Emanuela Muriana, Tiziana Verbitz



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But...at the very end.....

What is love?



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Love is.....

**Supporting
each other in
old age.**