



JULY 2026- Newsletter

Mantra of Hope Counselling — July 2026

When the Camera Becomes the Bridge: Integrating Imago Therapy and Photography-Based Art Therapy for South Asian Immigrant Couples

Editor's Note

Welcome to the July 2026 issue of **Mantra of Hope Counselling**, a space dedicated to healing relationships with cultural wisdom, therapeutic depth, and practical compassion.

This month, we bring you a special integrated approach: **Imago Relationship Therapy paired with photography-based art therapy** — a powerful combination couples navigating the silent distance that can settle over a marriage when two people are processing displacement, cultural change, and unmet emotional needs at different speeds.

You'll find five practical therapy modules designed to move couples from silence toward sight, a detailed follow-up protocol, the **DESC communication model** for difficult conversations, and an exploration of **growth mindset versus goal orientation** — why the most transformative relationships are those without a finish line.

Whether you are a therapist, a couple in crisis, or simply someone curious about how beauty and structure can heal, we hope this issue meets you where you are.



Perspectives: See [Fred's.. Father' Day 2026](#)

The Five Modules: A Roadmap from Silence to Seeing

Module 1: Safety Building Through Shared Seeing

Imago Tool: Dialogue Structure Introduction

Photography Exercise: "What I See That You Don't Know I See"

Therapeutic Goal: Reduce defensiveness; build curiosity

The couple begins not with words, but with images. Each partner spends one week photographing three things in their shared home that bring quiet comfort, one image representing how they feel right now, and one photograph that reminds them why they chose each other. No captions. No explanations yet. Just images.

In the therapy room, using the **Imago Dialogue** structure, the couple responds to these photographs together:

- **Mirror:** "What I see in your image is..."
- **Validate:** "It makes sense that you'd photograph that, because..."
- **Empathize:** "I imagine you might be feeling..."

This triangulation — two people looking at an image together instead of facing each other with wounds — shifts the entire emotional dynamic. The photograph holds the feeling at a safe distance, allowing both partners to approach it with curiosity rather than defensiveness.

Why it works: For South Asian couples, particularly those where emotional expression has been discouraged, the camera offers permission to feel without announcement. You are not confessing vulnerability — you are simply showing what you noticed, what caught your eye, what mattered enough to frame.

Module 2: Emotional Mapping Using the Zone System

Imago Tool: Validation and Mirroring

Photography Exercise: Zone System Emotional Mapping

Therapeutic Goal: Create shared emotional vocabulary

Ansel Adams' Zone System — a framework for understanding the full tonal range of a photograph from pure black (Zone 0) to pure white (Zone X) — becomes a non-clinical language for emotional experience.

The therapist introduces the zones visually, using actual photographic prints or grey scale cards:

JULY 2026- Newsletter

- **Zones 0–II:** Complete emotional shutdown; stonewalling; surface-level interaction
- **Zone V:** The middle ground — functional coexistence; neutral balance
- **Zones VI–IX:** Moments of warmth; genuine intimacy; deep vulnerability
- **Zone X:** Emotional flooding; dysregulation

Each partner is asked: *"If you had to photograph your experience in this marriage right now, what zone would that image live in?"*

He might say: *"Zone III. You can see there's something there, but it's mostly dark."*

She might say: *"Zone II. I feel like I'm almost invisible."*

The therapist then asks gently: *"What would it take to move one zone toward the light? Not all the way to Zone VIII — just one zone. What would that look like in your daily life together?"*

This small, specific, visually-framed question becomes the **Behaviour Change Request** of Imago Therapy — but it feels less like homework and more like a collaborative puzzle to solve.

Why it works: For partners who resist purely emotional language, the Zone System provides a cognitive anchor — a technical framework that feels purposeful and non-threatening. You are not being asked to feel; you are being asked to think visually about where you are and where one small shift might take you.

Module 3: Collaborative Creation — Making Something Together

Imago Tool: Behaviour Change Request; Attunement

Photography Exercise: The Collaborative Photograph

Therapeutic Goal: Practice negotiation and attunement in real time

As the couple moves deeper into the therapeutic work — as old Imago patterns surface, childhood wounds emerge, and the grief of feeling perpetually unseen begins to soften into something more workable — the therapist introduces the most powerful assignment in this integrated approach.

Both partners go out together to a meaningful place: a park, a market, a familiar neighbourhood, a spot that once held joy. They have a single camera between them, and they must:



JULY 2026- Newsletter

1. Agree on the subject
2. Agree on the framing
3. One holds the camera; the other adjusts the angle or offers direction
4. They take one final photograph together

This seemingly simple exercise contains extraordinary therapeutic depth. It requires:

- **Negotiation** — the foundation of healthy relationship
- **Attunement** — paying attention to what the other person sees as beautiful
- **Mutual creative authority** — neither person's vision dominates
- **A shared product** — something they made together that did not exist before

When they bring this image to the next session, the therapist asks not about the photograph itself, but about **the process of making it**:

- Who noticed the subject first?
- How did you decide on the frame?
- Was there a moment of disagreement? How did you resolve it?
- What did it feel like when you finally took the shot?

The conversation about the photograph is almost always also a conversation about the marriage. The patterns that emerge in thirty minutes of collaborative photography are the same patterns playing out across years of dinner tables and long silences. But here, they are observable, nameable, and — crucially — **changeable in real time**.

Why it works: For couples accustomed to parallel living or conflict avoidance, the collaborative photograph forces them to practice the very skills therapy is trying to teach: listening, compromising, creating something that honours both perspectives. And they get to *succeed* at it — they get to come home with a real image, a tangible proof that they can make something beautiful together.

Module 4: Archive Work — Recovering the Visual History of Love

Imago Tool: Childhood Wound Surfacing; Grief Work

Photography Exercise: Revisiting Shared Photographs from the Past

Therapeutic Goal: Connect present conflict to past joy; reclaim what has been lost

JULY 2026- Newsletter

The therapist invites the couple to bring photographs from their shared past — wedding images, travel photos, pictures from their first home, moments celebrating festivals together, images from the early years before silence descended.

Using the Imago Dialogue, each partner responds to a shared photograph:

- *"When you look at this image, what do you remember feeling?"*
- *"What did you believe about us then that you're not sure you believe now?"*
- *"What do you miss?"*
- *"What was beautiful that we've lost sight of?"*

This is grief work, tenderly done. It is also **hope work** — because the fact that the photograph exists means the warmth existed too. It was real. It was captured. It has not been destroyed. It has only been waiting — like a negative in a drawer — to be developed in the light of the present moment.

For many South Asian couples, this archive exercise carries a profound additional layer. Wedding photographs were often taken in ceremonial contexts saturated with **collective beauty** — families gathered, colors vivid, rituals alive with meaning. These images connect them not only to each other but to a whole world that immigration may have placed at a geographic and emotional distance.

Revisiting these photographs in therapy becomes an act of **cultural reclamation** — a reminder that beauty, community, and belonging are not lost but *waiting to be carried forward into the life they are building here*.

Why it works: For couples stuck in the present moment of conflict, the archive offers perspective. It says: *You were not always like this. You did love each other. That capacity is still there*. The photograph becomes a bridge between the self they have become and the self they remember being.

Module 5: Beauty Reclamation — "One with Beauty"

Imago Tool: Conscious Relationship Vision

Photography Exercise: "One with Beauty" — Visual Love Letter

Therapeutic Goal: Renew intentional seeing and gratitude



JULY 2026- Newsletter

Ansel Adams closed his autobiography with a Gaelic mantra given to him fifty years earlier by the poet Ella Young:

*I know that I am one with beauty
And that my comrades are one
Let our souls be mountains,
Let our spirits be stars,
Let our hearts be worlds.*

In the final phase of the integrated program, the therapist offers the couple a transformative assignment rooted in this vision:

Each partner creates a small collection of **five photographs** — images that answer this question:

"What is beautiful about us? Not about what we were, not about what we wish we were — but about what still exists between us, right now, in this ordinary life we share."

The images might be humble and domestic:

- Morning light on a shared coffee cup
- A coat hanging next to another coat by the door
- Two pairs of shoes left together at the entrance
- The particular way one partner has arranged the kitchen spices
- A moment of quiet in the kitchen — the other person visible in the background
- A plant they have cared for together
- A corner of the home that has become a shared sanctuary

These small, specific images are the visual equivalent of the **Imago Dialogue's empathy step**. They say without words: *I have been paying attention. I have seen you. I have found beauty in the ordinary fact of your existence in my life.*

When these collections are shared in the therapy room, something that has been locked behind years of silence often releases — not dramatically, but quietly, the way light comes into a room as the day shifts.

Why it works: This module shifts the couple from *fixing what is broken* to *noticing what is still alive*. It is a practice of gratitude, of attunement, of deliberately choosing to see. It aligns with

growth mindset — not "I need to change" but "I choose to see differently." And in that shift, often, everything changes.

The Follow-Up Protocol: Sustaining Change Beyond the Therapy Room

Therapy is not a destination with a finish line. It is the beginning of a new way of being together. The follow-up protocol ensures that the insights and practices from the modules continue to deepen and integrate over time.

Recommended Session Cadence

Months 1–3 (Active Module Work):

- Weekly 60-minute sessions
- Photography homework assigned each week
- Imago Dialogue practice at home (2–3 times per week, 10–15 minutes)

Months 4–6 (Integration and Deepening):

- Bi-weekly sessions
- Shift toward more complex Imago work (childhood wounds, Imago formation)
- Photography assignments become more self-directed; couples choose their own subjects
- Introduction of the DESC communication model (see below)

Months 7–12 (Maintenance and Expansion):

- Monthly sessions initially, then quarterly check-ins
- Photography practice becomes a self-directed, ongoing practice (not assigned, but encouraged)
- Couples begin leading their own dialogue sessions at home with minimal therapist guidance
- Attention shifts to growth mindset practices and "no finish line" activities



JULY 2026- Newsletter

Homework Check-Ins: Making It Stick

The bridge between therapy sessions and daily life is **consistent, compassionate accountability**. Here's how to maintain it:

Weekly Photography Check-In (5 minutes):

At the start of each session, before diving into deeper work, ask: *"Did you take any photographs this week? What did you notice?"* This normalizes the practice and keeps it front-of-mind.

The Imago Dialogue Log (Optional):

Some couples benefit from a simple written record of their dialogue practice:

- Date
- Topic discussed
- Who mirrored first
- What surprised you about hearing your partner mirror back your words?
- Any shifts in how you felt?

This log need not be lengthy — a few sentences suffice. Its purpose is to create a record of change, which can be deeply motivating.

Photo Walk Check-In (Bi-weekly):

In months 4–6, encourage couples to take a "photo walk" together once or twice weekly — 20 minutes, no agenda, just noticing and photographing what catches their eye. Discuss it briefly: *"What did you see? What surprised you? Did you notice the same things or different things?"*

This practice is both grounding and relational. It quiets the mind, invites presence, and builds attunement.

Photographic Homework Tips

For Reluctant Partners (Often the Husband):

- Frame it as exploration, not performance: *"I'm curious what you'll notice"* rather than *"You have to take good photos"*
- Start with just **one photograph per week** — manageable, low-pressure



JULY 2026- Newsletter

- Use the phone camera — no fancy equipment required
- Ask him to photograph something *he* cares about, not what you think he should care about
- Celebrate whatever he brings: *"I didn't expect you to photograph that. Tell me why it mattered to you?"*

For Partners Who Engage Readily:

- Encourage depth over quantity: *"Rather than ten photos, can you choose two that really capture something?"*
- Introduce constraints to deepen attention: *"Photograph something blue," "Photograph texture," "Photograph what hope looks like to you"*
- Invite narrative: *"These three images tell a story — what is it?"*

Storage and Reflection:

- Create a shared Google Photos album or Dropbox folder where both partners upload their images
- Review together monthly — no judgment, just noticing: *"What themes appear across your photographs? What does that tell us about how we're seeing each other and our life right now?"*

Re-Assessment Checkpoints

At three key junctures, pause to assess progress:

3-Month Check-In:

- Are the Imago Dialogue sessions happening regularly, with increasing ease?
- What zone do you inhabit now? (Has there been movement from Zones I–III toward Zone V or beyond?)
- What surprised you most about the photography practice?
- What resistance or challenge has emerged? (This is normal and valuable information.)

6-Month Check-In:

- How has your communication shifted outside the therapy room?
- Can you identify specific moments where you used the Imago Dialogue without the therapist's prompting?



JULY 2026- Newsletter

- What do the photographs reveal about how you are seeing each other differently?
- Are there relationships or friendships that have been positively affected by your growth?

12-Month Check-In (or Transition to Maintenance):

- Do you feel you have moved from "therapy" toward a new way of being together?
 - What practices do you want to continue after we reduce session frequency?
 - How has immigration stress affected you differently in the past 12 months?
 - What are you learning about growth that wasn't visible a year ago?
-

The DESC Model: Speaking Difficult Truths with Compassion

As the couple moves into deeper Imago work, they inevitably encounter moments where they need to address a specific behaviour or need — but in a way that does not escalate into conflict. The **DESC model** offers a structured, non-blaming framework for these conversations.

DESC stands for:

- **Describe**
- **Emote**
- **Specify**
- **Consequences**

Breaking Down Each Step

Step 1: Describe

What it is: A factual, non-judgmental description of the behaviour you have observed.

What it is NOT: Interpretation, criticism, or assumption about intent.

The trap: Using language that blames or exaggerates.

Example (The Phone at Dinner Issue):

✗ *"You're always on your phone. You don't care about me."*

✓ *"Over the past few weeks, I've noticed that when we sit down for dinner, you take out your phone within the first few minutes and look at it for most of the meal."*

Notice the difference: The second statement is specific, observable, and free of judgment. It does not assume *why* he is doing this — it simply names what is happening.

Step 2: Emote

What it is: An honest statement of how this behaviour makes you *feel* — using "I" language, not accusations.

What it is NOT: A list of character flaws in your partner.

The trap: Confusing feelings with thoughts. ("I feel like you don't care" is actually a thought; "I feel lonely" is a feeling.)

Example:

✗ *"I feel like you're disrespecting me and our marriage."*

✓ *"When this happens, I feel invisible and lonely. It brings up a worry that I've brought you to this country and now you don't want to be with me."*

The second statement is vulnerable, specific, and rooted in actual emotion rather than judgment. It also begins to reveal the **Imago connection** — the deeper wound being triggered.

Step 3: Specify

What it is: A clear, concrete request for a specific behaviour change.

What it is NOT: Vague, overwhelming, or punitive.

The trap: Asking for transformation instead of one manageable step.

Example:

✗ *"I need you to be more present in this relationship."*

JULY 2026- Newsletter

✓ *"I would like it if, on Tuesday and Friday nights when we eat dinner together, we both left our phones in the other room. Just those two nights to start — to see how it feels."*

The second request is:

- Specific (Tuesday and Friday, not "always")
- Achievable (phones in another room, not "never look at your phone again")
- Time-bound in a reasonable way (we can revisit after a few weeks)
- Collaborative ("to start," "to see how it feels")

Step 4: Consequences

What it is: A statement of what will happen if the behaviour change occurs — or what the cost will be if it does not.

Important: This is NOT a threat. It is a statement of reality and values.

What it is NOT: Punishment, ultimatum, or manipulation.

The trap: Confusing consequences with leverage.

Example:

✓ *"If we can do this, I think we'll feel more connected. And honestly, I think it will help us both feel less stressed about our marriage. But if this doesn't change, I'm worried the distance between us will keep growing, and I'm not sure I can stay in a relationship that feels this lonely."*

This statement:

- Names the positive outcome of the behaviour change
- Expresses genuine concern about the consequence of no change
- Does not blame or shame
- Is honest about what matters and what is at stake

A Full DESC Conversation: Start to Finish

She initiates (using DESC):

"I want to talk about something that's been on my mind. Over the past few weeks, I've noticed that when we sit down for dinner, you usually take out your phone within

JULY 2026- Newsletter

the first few minutes and look at it for most of the meal. When this happens, I feel invisible and lonely. It brings up a worry that I've brought you to this country and now you don't want to be with me. I would like it if, on Tuesday and Friday nights, we both left our phones in the other room — just those two nights to start, to see how it feels. If we can do this, I think we'll feel more connected. But if this doesn't change, I'm worried the distance between us will keep growing, and I'm not sure I can stay in a relationship that feels this lonely."

He responds (using Imago Dialogue to mirror first):

"So what I'm hearing is... when I look at my phone during dinner, you feel invisible and lonely, and it brings up a worry that I don't want to be with you. And you're asking if we could try leaving our phones away on Tuesday and Friday nights. Did I get that?"

She confirms: "Yes, that's it."

He validates:

"It makes sense that you'd feel that way. You came all the way here, you're building a life in a new country, and you probably want to feel like we're in this together. That makes total sense."

He empathizes:

"I imagine you feel pretty scared sometimes — like maybe coming here was a mistake, or like I'm pulling away. Is that right?"

She nods, perhaps with tears.

He then responds to her request:

"I hear you. Honestly, I didn't realize the phone thing was affecting you this way. I think I use it to... I don't know, decompress after a long day. But I get what you're saying. I can try Tuesday and Friday. Let's start there."

This conversation — structured, compassionate, and grounded in both listening and honest need — has moved the couple toward each other rather than away. The DESC model provided the architecture. The Imago Dialogue provided the attunement.

When to Use DESC

Good times to use DESC:

- When a specific behaviour is bothering you
- When you want to request a change
- When emotions are elevated but not at crisis point
- When you want to be heard without immediately fighting
- When you're raising something for the first time (a gentle entry point)

Not the right tool for:

- Active crisis or safety issues (seek immediate professional help)
- When you're too dysregulated to speak calmly (take a break first)
- Situations requiring immediate consequences (those need therapist guidance)

Growth Mindset Versus Goal Orientation: The Relationship Without a Finish Line

One of the most subtle — and most important — shifts a couple can make in therapy is from **goal-oriented thinking** to **growth-oriented thinking**.

Most of us approach relationships the way we approach projects: Define the goal, create a timeline, achieve it, move on. *By three months, we want to stop fighting. By six months, we want to feel connected again. By a year, we want to be "fixed."*

But this linear, outcome-focused approach often fails relationships precisely because relationships are not linear. They are alive, dynamic, always becoming. A marriage is not a problem to solve; it is a practice to deepen.

The Difference: A Quick Comparison

Goal-Oriented	Growth-Oriented
Focus on endpoint ("stop arguing")	Focus on process ("learn to listen differently")

JULY 2026- Newsletter

Completion brings relief	Completion reveals new depths
Success = achieving the goal by the deadline	Success = becoming more skilled, aware, loving
"Are we done yet?"	"What are we becoming?"
Motivation decreases as goal approaches	Motivation deepens as practice deepens
Vulnerability is a step toward the goal	Vulnerability is the practice itself
The relationship is a means to happiness	The practice of relating <i>is</i> happiness

Why Growth Mindset Heals Relationships

When a couple shifts from goal orientation to growth orientation, several profound things happen:

1. Pressure decreases. If the goal is "stop being angry by month three," then month three becomes a deadline — and if you're still angry, you have failed. But if the goal is "become more curious about anger," then every moment of anger becomes data, becomes practice, becomes opportunity.

2. Setbacks become information, not failure. A couple using goal orientation might argue in month four and think, *"We've failed. We're back where we started."* A growth-oriented couple might argue and think, *"Interesting. What does this reveal about what we still haven't understood about each other?"*

3. Small moments become profound. A growth-oriented couple notices a morning when they make coffee together in comfortable silence — not because it's a milestone toward a goal, but because it reveals something about the quality of presence they are developing. These small moments are the practice itself, not steps toward something else.

4. The relationship becomes a source of self-knowledge. Instead of *"Why does my partner do this to me?"* the question becomes *"Why does my partner trigger this in me? What am I learning about myself?"* This shift, from blaming to curious, transforms conflict into depth.

Activities with No Finish Line: Practices for Growth-Oriented Couples

JULY 2026- Newsletter

A growth-oriented couple practices things not to complete them, but to deepen their skill and awareness. Here are several practices worth beginning — not to finish, but to continue:

The Daily Noticing Practice

The practice: Each morning or evening, each partner notices one small thing about the other person or the day together that they appreciated or found beautiful.

Why it's a "no finish line" practice:

This is not a project that will ever be "complete." You will never reach a point where you have noticed everything. The practice trains the eye to look for beauty and connection in ordinary moments. Over years, it fundamentally rewires how you perceive each other.

How to begin:

- Set a time: perhaps over morning coffee or before bed
- Keep it brief: one sentence, one image, one observation
- Share it or write it down — the form matters less than the practice of noticing

Example: "I noticed how carefully you arranged the vegetables in the salad today — like you were making something beautiful instead of just a meal."

The Monthly Photo Walk

The practice: Once a month, take 20–30 minutes to walk together in a place that matters to you — a park, your neighbourhood, along a river — with a camera or phone. Photograph what catches your eye. No agenda. No competition. Just noticing together.

Why it's a "no finish line" practice:

A photo walk is not about accumulating beautiful images. It's about the practice of seeing together, of slowing down, of discovering what your partner notices that you don't, and vice versa. After a year, you'll have walked the same route twelve times — and seen it completely differently each time. The practice deepens attention.

How to begin:

- Choose a place that has some meaning to you (not just a random location)
- Set a time: perhaps the first Sunday of each month

JULY 2026- Newsletter

- Go with no expectations about what you'll photograph
- When you return, spend five minutes looking at the images together

The Imago Dialogue as Ongoing Practice (Not a Homework Assignment)

The practice: Once a week, at a time that feels natural, use the Imago Dialogue structure to talk about something real — not a crisis, just something on your mind.

Why it's a "no finish line" practice:

Most couples approach the Imago Dialogue as something to learn, master, and then graduate from. But the truth is, the dialogue *is* the relationship. It is not a tool you use to fix the relationship; it is the practice of being in relationship consciously. A couple can do this for fifty years and still discover new depths.

How to begin:

- Schedule it casually: "Can we have a dialogue after dinner?"
- Choose something real but not the most charged topic: *"I've been thinking about how we used to travel more. I miss that. What do you remember about those trips?"*
- Use the three steps: mirror, validate, empathize
- Let the conversation unfold naturally — you don't have to "solve" anything

The Gratitude Project (No End Date)

The practice: Create a shared notebook, note-taking app, or photo album where you both add, regularly, things you're grateful for about your relationship.

Why it's a "no finish line" practice:

Gratitude is not a project to complete; it's a muscle to strengthen. Over years, you'll accumulate a record of small, ordinary moments that reveal the texture and beauty of your marriage — not the highlight moments, but the Wednesday nights, the quiet mornings, the small kindnesses that add up to a life together.

How to begin:

- Choose your medium: shared Google Doc, a physical notebook, a Pinterest board, a shared Notes app — whatever feels easiest
- Add when something touches you: no schedule, just as it happens



JULY 2026- Newsletter

- Review it occasionally — not for judgment, but for wonder
- Watch how, over time, themes emerge

The Seasonal Reflection Practice

The practice: Four times a year (at the solstices and equinoxes, or simply at the start of each season), sit down together for 20–30 minutes and reflect on the season that has passed:

- What was difficult?
- What brought you joy?
- How did we navigate conflict?
- What did we learn about each other?
- How did we grow?

Why it's a "no finish line" practice:

This practice allows a couple to step back from daily life and notice patterns, changes, and growth that might otherwise be invisible. Over years, these seasonal reflections create a map of how a marriage evolves — not in months or years, but across seasons and decades.

How to begin:

- Choose a quiet time and place
- Use prompts like those above, or simply ask: *"How did this season feel to you?"*
- Take notes or record it (you may want to look back)
- Celebrate the fact that you've made it through another season together

Micro-Practices to Start This Week

If you are reading this as a couple, or if you are a therapist sharing this with clients, here are small, concrete practices to begin right now — not in some distant "when we're ready" future, but this week:

For This Week:

JULY 2026- Newsletter

Monday or Tuesday: Take one photograph together of something you both find beautiful in your shared space. Just one. Spend two minutes looking at it together. That's it.

Wednesday or Thursday: Have one Imago Dialogue. Choose something small — not a fight, not a heavy topic. Something like: *"What did you notice about me this week that made you smile?"* Or: *"How are you feeling about how we're doing?"* Mirror, validate, empathize. Ten minutes. You're building a muscle.

Friday or Saturday: During a meal or quiet moment, each share one thing you noticed about the other person that week. Not big things. Small things. How they made tea. How they listened to someone on the phone. How they arranged something. Just one small observation of care.

Sunday: Take a walk together — anywhere. Twenty minutes. No phones. No agenda. Just be there. You don't need to talk much. Just notice that you're in the world together.

For This Month:

- Continue the practices above
- At the end of the week, ask each other: *"What was different about this week? Did noticing change how you felt?"*
- Take your monthly photo walk (or schedule it for next month if this month is already full)
- Add one thing to your gratitude project if you're starting one

A Final Word: On Being a Comrade of Beauty

The integrated approach we've outlined in this issue — Imago Therapy plus photography-based art therapy, structured communication through DESC, the shift from goal orientation to growth mindset — is not a path toward a perfect marriage.

It is a path toward a **conscious marriage**. A marriage where two people have chosen, repeatedly, to see each other. To be seen by each other. To grow, not toward some endpoint, but deeper into the practice of loving.

Ansel Adams closed his autobiography with words that feel like a benediction for couples undertaking this work:

*I know that I am one with beauty
And that my comrades are one
Let our souls be mountains,
Let our spirits be stars,
Let our hearts be worlds.*

A marriage, understood through this lens, is not two separate people trying to make it work. It is two people recognizing that they are already part of the same beauty — the beauty of being alive, of being seen, of being willing to look.

The camera does not create this beauty. The Imago Dialogue does not create it. Growth mindset does not create it.

But all of these practices — all of them — are ways of **waking up to the beauty that is already there, waiting to be noticed.**

Resources for the Journey

- **Imago Relationship Therapy:** Official website and certified therapist directory: www.imagorelationships.org
- **On Ansel Adams:** *Ansel Adams: An Autobiography* — read his own words on beauty, art, and the conservation of meaning
- **Photography Practice:** Start with any camera (your phone is fine). Read about the Zone System if you're curious. But mostly, just look.
- **Growth Mindset:** Carol Dweck's *Mindset: The New Psychology of Success* offers a full exploration of why growth orientation matters
- **South Asian Cultural Considerations in Therapy:** Look for therapists trained in culturally sensitive couple therapy, particularly those familiar with immigration stress and acculturation

About Mantra of Hope Counselling



JULY 2026- Newsletter

Mantra of Hope Counselling is a practice dedicated to healing relationships with cultural wisdom, psychological depth, and compassionate presence. We work with couples — particularly those navigating cultural change, immigration, and the quiet ruptures that can occur when two people stop seeing each other.

If this issue resonated with you, we invite you to reach out. Whether you are a couple ready to begin this work, a therapist curious about integrating photography into your practice, or simply someone thinking about what it means to see and be seen — there is space for you here.

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Mantra of Hope Counselling — July 2026

When silence grows, the camera remembers. When words fail, beauty calls us back to each other.

EARLIER PERSPECTIVES

See [Oral Histories- 2011-Arab Spring](#)



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JULY 2026- Newsletter

