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### GENERAL AGREEMENT

To My New Clients,

First of all, I want to acknowledge how courageous it is for you to begin this personal journey of growth. Even when we are in deep emotional and relational pain, it is often easier to keep the status quo rather than engage in the difficult work that growth requires, so kudos to you for being willing to seek help.

While I wish I could guarantee that our work together will be successful, the truth is, the result of therapy is largely up to you. I have learned that those who experience the most growth are individuals who have a strong desire to grow and are willing to be vulnerable. Often anger, anxiety or depression mask underlying feelings such as grief, insecurity, loneliness, shame etc., and getting to underlying feelings is often a key to growth. For those seeking marital therapy, it is easy to believe that the problem is the other person, but therapy requires that each client is willing to look in the mirror and see, perhaps for the first time, how they contribute to the problems in the marriage.

Growth is hard, uncomfortable work! Often individuals feel worse before they feel better. That's why they call it therapy. Like a physical therapist, who stretches and strengthens damaged muscles, and teaches clients to move in less strenuous ways, as a psychotherapist my aim is to help you become more flexible in your relationships, stronger in your self, and more able to accept and grieve the painful realities of life.

My general philosophy of therapy comes from an attachment perspective. I believe that we are greatly impacted, both positively and negatively, by the quality of relationship we experience with our primary caregivers in our family of origin. These relationships shape us in profound ways; they expose us to how feelings and needs are handled, how conflict is expressed and resolved (or not resolved), how one communicates, what it means to be male and female, and many other aspects of relationship. This learning is embedded into the fabric of our being and determines how we respond in all our future relationships. For this reason, I believe it is imperative to talk about family histories, so that we are dealing with the root of the problem, and not just putting a Band-Aid on the symptoms.

While looking at one's history is a valuable part of therapy, another important part is learning new skills and behaviors that are necessary for successful relationships. It is my passion to help clients learn how to relate to others in healthier ways, while at the same time becoming more whole within themselves. I believe that this can be effectively accomplished in the context of a safe, therapeutic relationship, where you are valued, respected, and truly heard. Occasionally, in spite of our best efforts, progress seems elusive. In such cases, in the best interest of the client, referrals will be given.

Hopefully, this has given you some helpful information about the process of therapy, what is required and how I work. Any questions are welcomed! Michelle Hill, MFTI.

I have read the letter above.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_