

INSIGHTS THAT MY CLIENTS HAVE TAUGHT ME

THE LOVE PROCESS A GUARANTEE OF LOVE

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*We are really in love; it is wonderful,
I've never felt this way before.
It is like walking on clouds.
Tell me our love will last forever.*

Everybody wants a guarantee of love, but despite their intensity, the feelings of love are a guarantee of nothing. Over 95% of people getting married are truly in love and yet, almost 50% of these love birds will end up with a divorce.

One problem is that most people view love as an accident over which they have no power. "I fell in love." Was it like slipping on a banana peel? If you can fall in love, then you can just as easily fall out of love.

The feelings of love are not the result of an accident, Cupid's arrow or animal magnetism. **It is a process** and since it is a process, you can reproduce that process whenever you want to. If you have "fallen out of love" or want to stay in love with your sweetie, knowing how you two created the feelings of love can be your guarantee of lasting intimacy.

There are several steps you will need to be aware of in the love process and they all consist of making decisions. You see a person across a crowded room and you make a decision. For the women, she has to decide to drop her "handkerchief." For the guy, he has to decide to pick it up.

She has seen many men that she would not drop her handkerchief for on a bet for but, this one, she decides to drop it. The guy, on the other hand, has had many women drop their handkerchiefs for him. Some, he has been too dumb to even notice, with others he has decided to walk on by.

Once the decision to pickup the handkerchief has been done, it does not mean that you are in love. You cannot be in love with someone that you see for the first time across the room. You may be in lust, but lust is not love. There is

no such thing as love at first sight. You may be in love with an image, but that is not the person.

The next step in the Love Process is the decision to **spend Time Together**. Being in the same house, sitting on the same couch and watching the same TV program is NOT being together! When I talk about spending time together, I'm talking about a special type of time. There is an old joke that you can walk into any restaurant and tell who is married and who isn't. The two people whose eyes never seem to leave each other, who are talking and listening intently, who are totally absorbed in each other – they're not married. That is what I mean by spending time together.

The decision **to be Honest** is the next step towards being in love. Some people see honesty in black and white terms. "You are either honest or dishonest." For these people, there is no gray area. I believe that honesty is a little more complicated than that. "Good morning, looks like it is going to be a beautiful day?" Is that statement honest or dishonest? Yes, it is honest but it is pretty superficial; it is something you might say to a stranger that you met on the elevator. Honesty is like an onion; there are layers or degrees of honesty.

A deeper level of honesty would be the historical report: "and he said. . . then she said. . . and then the cops came and grandma ran out the back door." This historical report may have happened last night, last week or last year. It will have little or none of your emotional content included in the story.

Going deeper and being more honest is where you tell personal but non-threatening, non-blackmailable information about yourself. "Uncle Joe had an alcohol problem and ended up in the nut house. Mom told her sister that she should have never married him, but she would not listen." This piece of information is safe and will never be brought up in a fight and used against you. It is at this level that most people stop the Love Process and their walls go up.

The fear of emotional pain stops most couples from sharing personal and "blackmailable" information. "I ran into my old girlfriend at work; she is going to work for the company." This is the level where most couples substitute sexual intimacy for emotional intimacy. It is safer to be sexually intimate than to be emotionally intimate.

Honesty has to start with being honest with yourself, then sharing that honesty with another. For a couple to be in love, they first have to know themselves and then share their center with the other person. For many couples, they allow the other to know them up to a point but then everything stops and they remain acquaintances. Sometimes, you will start calling your acquaintances your love. The failure to share to this vulnerable level will result in you never feeling truly loved, for there is this little voice in the back of your head that keeps telling you, "If he/she really knew the things that I never share, he/she would not love me. How can someone love me when I can't love myself?" It is only when you are not afraid to share to your centers that you will find true love.

The next big decision is **Acceptance**. Once you have been open and vulnerable to your center, it is out of your hands. Now it is up to the other person

to accept or reject your feelings. Once your feelings have been accepted by the other person, then it is up to you to let that acceptance in. You could question their acceptance, "They are just saying that. They do not mean it. How could they accept that about me?" Of course this acceptance has to be going both ways. Both of you need to giving and getting acceptance.

It is at this point that you will feel the feelings of love; you will have "fallen in love."

Erich Fromm, in his book THE ART OF LOVE, talks about the three fallacies of love. The first is that intensity of the love feelings is a proof that our love is real and will last. In fact, the feelings of love are a guarantee of nothing. Fromm says that the intensity of the love feelings are in direct proportion to how lonely and/or isolated you have been before you let your guard down and let someone in. The feeling of love is a function of opening up, being honest and getting acceptance. Therefore, it is true that being in love is no reason to ever get married because it is going to take a lot more than feelings of love to make a relationship work.

The feelings of love only prove that you have gone through the Love Process. If you want a guarantee that the feelings of love will remain in your relationship, you will need to keep repeating the Love Process of ***spending time together, being honest with yourself, sharing that honesty with your mate, then getting and giving acceptance of each others feelings***. Therein lies your guarantee that our love will last forever.

To be in love is no reason to ever get married;
To be out of love is no reason to ever get a divorce.

The second fallacy Fromm mentions is the belief that it depends on finding the right person to love. "I had to kiss a lot of frogs to find Mr. Right." The search for Mr./Ms. Right puts all the responsibility for your relationship outside of you. "It is luck; the draw of the cards." Zaza Gabor, who has been married at least eight times, says she just has bad luck!

The problem is not finding the right person to love; it is loving the person you have found. In the Love Process, it is the problem of acceptance that sinks many relationships.

There are two types of love. One is Object Love, "If I could only find the right person (object), then I would be happy." Object Love is like looking for a specific marble statue for your home entry way. You know what you are looking for and are sure you will know it when you see it. Finally, after traveling all over the world, you find the perfect piece. You invite all your friends over to admire it; you polish it everyday. Within six months, the new is starting to wear off and you will polish it once a week now. Within two years you can walk through the house blind folded and never bump into it!

It is because Object Love is safe, predictable and boring that you will start looking at other beautiful pieces. Nah, you are not going to get rid of it, at least not yet, but wouldn't life be more interesting if it would change, just a little? No one every remains the same, everyone changes. The problem is that either the

ones we love are not changing and we are outgrowing them or they are changing but not in the ways we want them to change. “Where is the girl that I married?”

No one, including you, is the same person you were ten years ago. Each of us is a dynamic, changing human being. Acceptance requires accepting yourself and well as accepting and embracing the changes in others. The problem is not finding the right person to love, it is are you an accepting person that can love the person you have found?

Kaleidoscope love is the alternative to object love. You expect a kaleidoscope to always be different. Each time you look, you see something different, interesting and beautiful. Kaleidoscope love is NOT predictable, boring or safe. Your ability to be flexible and accept this type of love is paramount in this type of relationship. It is not all that hard to do if you think about this type of love as you would a child who is growing, changing and learning new things everyday.

Fromm speaks of a third fallacy of love which is the belief that you have to be the right person to be lovable. For women, this is smiling a lot (nice girls don’t get angry), being slender enough, having the right hairdo and wearing the right Cross-Your-Heart bra. For men, it is having a buffed body, a good job and a great sports car. Men and women both work at making a good first impression, putting their best foot forward in order to attract the opposite sex. It is a cross between having the right (fishing) lure and keeping a mystery about the real you. The emphasis here is not on being honest, open and vulnerable. Just enough honesty to keep the mystery alive, but not too much or you will scare off the other person.

The problem is NOT being the right person in order to be loveable; it is are you willing to be open and honest to your very center?

The Love Process requires these three steps to create the feelings of love, Time Together, Honesty, and acceptance. Once both of you have gone through these three steps, you will experience the feelings of love. Once you stop spending time together, stop being honest to your centers and stop giving and getting acceptance, the feelings of love will fade away until they die out completely.

The love process can be between a man and a woman, a woman and a woman or between you and God. You may have noticed that sex is not a part of the Love Process. Love and sex are two different entities. You can have sex without love or you can love someone without ever having sex with them.

The concept of the Love Process is not new; it has been around for years. Shree Rajneesh, an Indian mystic, had an interesting way of viewing the love process.

THE MYSTERY OF RELATIONSHIP

Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh 1931 – 1990

Two persons meet,
that means two worlds meet.
It is not a simple thing—very complex, the most complex.

Each person is a world unto himself or herself--
a complex mystery with a long past and with eternal future.

In the beginning, only peripheries meet.
But if the relationship grows intimate,
Becomes closer, becomes deeper,
then, by and by, centres start meeting.
When centres meet, it is called love.

Love is very rare.
To meet a person at his centre
is to pass through a revolution yourself,
because if you want to meet a person at his centre,
You will have to allow that person
to reach your centre also.
You will have to become vulnerable,
absolutely vulnerable, open.

So the first thing to be understood is:
Don't take acquaintance as love.
you may be making love,
you may be sexually related,
but sex is also peripheral.
Unless centres meet, sex is just the meeting of two bodies.
And a meeting of two bodies is not your meeting.
Sex also remains acquaintance—
physical, bodily, but still acquaintance.

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