

SEPTEMBER 2008 NEWSLETTER

THEME: To Give is to Receive

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SELF TRANSFORMATION
THERAPY

'Thought of the Month': To Give is to Receive



True Intimacy requires the capacity to both give and take love. Giving without believing you are worthy of receiving risks self-neglect. Receiving without giving risks self-serving behaviour. Love requires the capacity for both to occur simultaneously - as you give you receive. That is the only way to love.

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Thought of the Month Article:

There is a saying that you need to love yourself first before you can love others. While there is truth in this, the saying has always been a bit lacking in detail to me. The way I like to view this sentiment, is that when there are defences on the heart, love doesn't flow either way. But when the defences are lowered, love flows both ways. This is the basis of the saying 'as you give you receive' – love is a simultaneous process.

This simultaneous process requires the capacity to give and receive love. Giving without feeling you deserve it back risks self-neglect. Taking, but struggling to give, risks self-centredness. This age old dilemma will play out in all relationships. One tends to have their needs met more often and their opinions affirmed, while the other gives way more often. Both are lessons in love, but from the opposite direction.

The one who risks self-centredness, has a lesson to give love and complements instead of criticism, while the one who risks self-neglect, has a lesson to receive love and compliments.

Self-neglectful people ask for complements, but typically when they get a good word, they deny its validity or divert attention from themselves – they cannot receive the very thing they want!

Self-centred people actually ‘weaken’ their partners through ongoing criticism. They withhold their giving from anger and frustration that the other still needs them to fix their problems, but is not listening to their advice. What the self-neglectful person wants is connection and caring, which challenges the self-centred person to give it.

Someone has to break the cycle, and it can be either one. The answer lies in the other partner’s qualities. The self-neglectful person needs the other’s strength to stand up against criticism and learn to say no in order to look after themselves. The self-centred person needs the others empathy and giving, in order to learn that what is required is not to fix the other’s problems, but to connect and care for them.

This can be simplified in one important principle: if you want something in a relationship, then you need to give it first. That can be so hard amongst the tension of relationship difficulties, but that is the nature of true love. What you give you get back - as long as both partners are capable of change. If you want compliments, give them first. If you want to be treated special, do it first.

Disclaimer: The content of this newsletter is for information purposes only. It does not represent advice for individuals. For individual advice, please see a suitably qualified mental health practitioner.

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