

CHARLYNE GELT, PH.D.

Encouraging Self-Discovery and Empowerment



“The most dangerous psychological mistake is the projection of the shadow on to others; this is the root of almost all conflicts.”

Carl Jung

Valentine’s Day

“Is love about a poetic Valentine’s Day card, a love song that tugs at the heart, or a never-ending supply of romance, candy, wine, and red roses?”

“What is a healthy love relationship?” the hungry heart asks. Symbols of romantic love are perfectly delightful and wonderful, but they are not the same as the true love *experience* that takes practice, and courage, and builds a foundation of emotional intimacy.

Is love defined by Hallmark cards, or by the ache of the heart? Why are we seemingly always struggling, searching, or longing for a soul mate to make us feel complete or even safe? Too often the romantic symbols turn out to be illusions, replaced by the pain of a growing awareness of empty commitments and unmet emotional needs that can destroy even the “tightest” of love relationships. Perhaps these contradictory feelings have shown up in your own love relationships.

Joshua no longer wanted to suffer the loneliness and emotional abandonment he’d been feeling in his ten-year marriage. Unconsciously, he’d been relying on his wife to fulfill the role of being his nurturer/provider. “I kept her safe in a pumpkin shell hoping she would give me a few crumbs of what I needed, *love*.” But that didn’t happen. Instead, his marriage turned into a one-way street.

When love is only dreamed of but never felt, it breeds a *longing* for it. Mutual attraction of partners is further based on a common wound, similar needs, and fears. Each partner unconsciously attempts to overcome past trauma and conflict in their adult relationship dynamics. In Joshua’s situation, wanting to feel taken care financially emotionally was his unmet childhood need, so he *became* what he wanted most – a controlling protector. His anxiety about feeling unloved and unprotected left him unable to identify his own needs. Love chipped away!

Lasting Love, the kind that makes one want to grow old with a partner is something we need to work at. Unconscious expectations, like the desire to be cared for or protected, need to be identified and verbalized. We have a choice: patterns can repeat or be changed. When we keep giving *without reciprocity*, I call that being a doormat! It’s not love.



Charlyne Gelt, Ph.D. www.drgelt.com
818.501.4123