



Newsletter

February/March 2010

In previous Newsletters I talked about how you can use feedback, both when giving it and receiving it, to benefit your relationships with *others*.

This month I want to discuss how you can use your internal feedback system to benefit your relationship with *yourself*.

Feedback: The Gift That Keeps On Giving

Self-love articles abound these days and we have all heard the saying, “you must love yourself first before you can love someone else”. What we know though is that it doesn’t happen this way, or at least not very often. If we had to wait until we were fully evolved, self-loving individuals before experiencing an intimate relationship, we would all be single for a very long time!

In fact, what Dr. Harville Hendrix believes (author of the New York Times bestseller “Getting the Love You Want”) is that only through engaging in an intimate partnership in the first place are we given the opportunity to reach our fullest potential for self love.

The way most of us experience this self-love in an intimate relationship is through loving our partner. In other words, when the love we are giving to our partner gets reflected back through their loving behaviours toward us, then we feel increased love for ourselves.

But what happens if our partner is not reflecting back our love or if they are not acting in ways that generate loving feelings in us? What happens if we are experiencing feelings of disappointment, anger and resentment toward our partner?

As any relationship takes its normal course through the romantic love phase and into power struggle, it is inevitable that unloving feelings arise. If we are not able to understand the root of these emotions and see how we can use them to our benefit, then they can easily set up camp in our hearts and wreck havoc in our lives.

Although not an easy thing to do, it is during times of conflict when it is most important that we use the information our relationship is providing us to understand and enhance our relationship with ourselves. An understanding of why our partner is triggering unloving feelings will help us to improve our chances of sustaining our love of Self and other no matter what is occurring in our intimate relationship down the road.





In order to best understand how we can use the feedback from our relationship, we decided to visit with Roger and Elaine and see how they are fairing with this difficult relationship concept.

Elaine explained it nicely: “Let’s say Roger is making me angry because I perceive him to be acting lazy. How I have learned to deal with this since working with a relationship coach, is by applying the saying, ‘what I spot, I got’ and going from there.

Overall, I have come to learn that we all hold in each of us every possible character trait, including both the positive and negative qualities of those traits. As a result, we all have the ability to act out any one or more of these character traits at any given time should the right circumstances arise.

So if I am feeling disappointed with Roger because I think he’s being lazy, then I am either being lazy myself and projecting my dislike of how I am being onto him; or, if it’s not that I’m actually acting lazy at the time, then I am denying the *potential* for laziness within myself. No matter which scenario is true, how this occurs is that somewhere along the line, in my own development, I have told myself that being lazy is not a good thing. Given that I don’t accept it in me, I don’t accept it in Roger.

However, if at the moment my feelings arise I examine the perceived character flaw and determine what its benefits are then I can develop a greater appreciation of that trait. For example, by acknowledging that being lazy myself would allow me to take some downtime to enjoy a good book and a cup of tea without guilt, I might see that acting this way, at least some of the time, is not such a bad thing! If I take the time to evaluate and embrace all the positive attributes to being lazy (for example, having the ability to be more present to life, to self-nurture, to reduce stress) then I have access to greater compassion and respect, not just for Roger when he is being lazy, but for the aspect of laziness that is within me as well.

Basically, if I pay attention to what’s happening in my relationship I can create an opportunity to better know and accept, not just my partner, but myself as well.”

Elaine has touched on a something very important. The fact is that by using the feedback system provided by our relationship, instead of moving further away from our centre (which is what is occurring when we are blaming or judging our partner for their character flaws) we can move closer to what is in our hearts and at our core.

We can come to know that by rejecting any aspect of another person we are also rejecting some aspect of ourselves. And by doing so, we are sending the wrong message; a message that says, “I am not okay with the way I am”.

Alternatively, if we choose to embrace all aspects of ourselves (both good and bad), we acknowledge that we are whole and that we are no different from anyone else. We can remain in a state of self-love no matter what our partner is feeling or what emotion is being expressed in us. And when we are in a state of self-love we cannot help but be in a state of loving others.

This feedback system can be easily accessed and utilized by anyone. The only thing you need to do is find a place of stillness within and take the time to reflect on the feedback you are receiving from your relationship. Although it is not always easy to remember that this system is available to us, the steps are simple.

- Take any negative feelings you are harbouring about the people in your life;
- Accept that the traits you see in them are shared by you;
- Explore and embrace the value of those traits; then
- Transform the feedback into a precious gift you give back to your Self.

For more information on working with this concept, I invite you to read “Dark Side of the Light Chasers” by Debbie Ford.

With Love and Light,

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