

Relationship Is An Individual Sport

Relationship is an individual sport. It may look like a team sport but it is really an individual sport. It has almost nothing to do with the other person. Yet although what happens in it has almost nothing to do with the other person, you will tend to place much more responsibility and even blame the other for the state of the relationship, especially when you don't like the state of the relationship. Yet it is my contention based on my 30 years as a relationship therapist that it is **your own** truths, issues and dynamics that are determining almost everything.

Now don't get me wrong. If the other person in your relationship were reading this, I would say exactly the same thing to him or her. What I am postulating is that in any relationship, *two people independent of each other, are in their own right, fully and completely accountable for what occurs in it.*

Let me explain this further by postulating two Laws of Love that govern our relationships. These Laws have never failed over time to apply to every couple with whom I have ever worked who have been willing to dig into the often unpleasant but ultimately liberating underbelly of their own inner workings.

THE FIRST LAW OF LOVE

You get back what the other person perceives you are giving.

Children and puppies know this intuitively and holistically. But even we adults know and experience the difference between: 1) being loved and accepted fully for who we are, imperfections and shortcomings included (let's call this love) 2) being "loved" on top of the buried judgments, hurts and projections of the other (let's call this not love) and 3) no longer being loved at all (let's also call this not love). **It is simply human nature to give back to another what we perceive that we are receiving from them.** Therefore, what you are getting back from another i.e. your partner, father, mother, sister, brother, son or daughter, with very rare exceptions, is a perfect, uncompromising reflection of what they are perceiving and experiencing that you are giving them.

...Continued on next page

So what are you getting back from the other at this time? Is it Number 1 from the possibilities listed above? Number 2? Number 3? If you truly want to receive a higher and more consistent love back, you will have to take a good, hard look in the mirror to see the truth about the type of love and not-love you are really extending.

Putting this another way, you have to change first and change deeply and sincerely if you want to receive a higher and more consistent love from the other. To state it in the ways of the spiritual thought system of A Course In Miracles, to transform any relationship from a special relationship into a holy relationship you must see that *the only thing missing from any relationship is what you not giving it*. This is a far more challenging, closer-to-the-bone level of personal responsibility than most of us are willing to take. Yet for those pilgrims willing to stay on this intrepid adventure I have seen many unions marred in conflict and acrimony transform into solid, supportive and lasting shelters of love and peace.

THE SECOND LAW OF LOVE

I am attracted to someone, who, at the time of our union, has approximately the same capacity and incapacity for true and lasting intimacy as I have. And it will almost always look to me as if I have the superior capacity.

Let's examine this second LAW OF LOVE more closely for the many significant challenges that it presents to our privately-held, ego-based belief system and the explanations we give ourselves about the cause of the state of the relationship.

If the second LAW OF LOVE is true, it suggests that your selection process for a mate is not arbitrary or random. You are drawn to someone who cannot be any more intimate with you, in an honest, open, real, vulnerable and *lasting* way as you can or want to be with him or her. So though you might see yourself as ready, willing and able to have a full-fledged mind, heart, body and soul connection with your partner, but are deprived and thwarted by his or her unwillingness or inability to do the same, the second LAW OF LOVE suggests that this is not the case at all. Instead, you are drawn (unconsciously) to someone who represents and keeps you in your comfort zone – that is, their love offering perfectly fits what you experienced love to be in your most impressionable childhood years and/or fits with the quality and depth of self-love that you have for yourself in the present. This powerful and illuminating concept which I call your *Love Code*, for those of you who want to read more about it, can be found as a blog entry on my website.

The barriers and blockages to real and lasting intimacy in yourself and in your chosen partner may not look at all the same. In fact, they might look and show up in dramatically different fashion.

As an example, he may be an alcoholic but you choose partners whom you believe you can fix. This represents the attraction to a human project rather than a human being – a project that is a future-oriented, struggle-against-the odds, dark horse possibility that you believe your love alone can heal.

She may bring wounds from her childhood that show up as a reluctance to fully participate or experiment sexually. But though you prize yourself to be both fully ready and expressive in this area, you may not know the difference between sex as an extension of intimacy and sex as an escape from love and intimacy, and actually prefer it to serve the latter purpose. This would mean that your capacity for real, meaningful intimacy through sex is more or less the same.

Though he might be giving more to his work than he is giving to his relationship with you, you are giving more attention and care to the troubles of your family members and friends than to him.

So, if you are still reading this, and I applaud you if you are, your love life may have a great deal more to do with you than with the other person. Relationship problems and the inner work of healing a relationship is thereby an individual sport and not a team sport. A great deal of self-awareness, self-scrutiny, responsibility and self-forgiveness are needed by the individual who chooses to excel at it. Yet the sky is the limit for those who are prepared to give their all to this rigorous and demanding people-growing training program.

Relationships: The Work of Love

Working Through Our Fears in Matters of Love

This weekend seminar shows us:

- Our fear based, survival orientated patterns of behavior in relationships.
- How and why we sabotage our love relationships.
- How to have more loving relationships in our lives.

The very same ego consciousness that helped us to survive the emotional pain of our childhood and adolescence comes back to haunt and sabotage us in our most significant relationships in the present. If the experience of loving and being loved is associated in the unconscious mind with the experience of trauma, violation, conflict or abandonment, nothing will be scarier than "love" approaching. The ego consciousness will mobilize to protect the inner family from perceived *enemies* like trust, closeness, commitment, vulnerability and honesty, not to mention men or women. The extent to which the adult consciousness has become identified with the ego in this lifetime is the extent to which love in all intimate, committed, monogamous, long-term, primary relationships will become problematic, dysfunctional and even destructive.

In the weekend seminar Relationships: The Work of Love we examine ourselves as the perpetrators of pain. We examine the myriad flight and fight responses that we have employed to keep from our hearts and souls the very people we say we want to love, the very people who have committed the "crime" of loving us. This most certainly could include our love interest but we will also examine our relationship with our father, mother, sister, brother, son, daughter and past loves to discover the ego patterns that have run us and our relationships into the ground. We begin to move from being baffled, righteous, or victimized by our love lives to taking 100% responsibility for the state that our most significant relationships are in. All of our dynamics and imposed barriers to real intimacy, committed love and monogamy are faced.

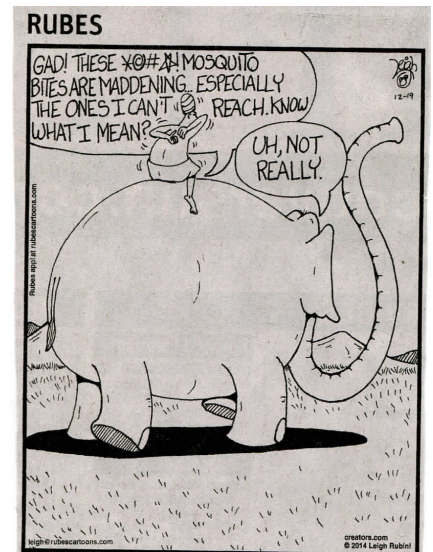
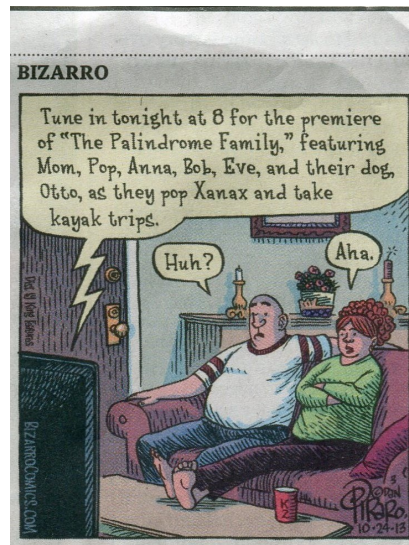
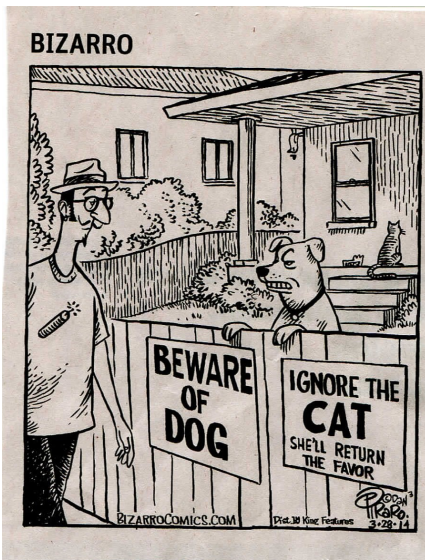
Only then can we discover and examine the components of a healthy, loving and mutually beneficial relationship. Only then can we discover that with courage, vulnerability, honesty and humility, we can begin to experiment with laying down our survival-oriented, fear based ego patterns and return to our connection with the child and spiritual consciousness within as an entirely new base from which to interact with the people of our lives.

**Cost - \$275.00 + GST per person (deferred payment plan available)
bursaries available to those in financial need**

**When: Saturday, May 23rd, 2015
Sunday, May 24th, 2015**

**www.joelbrass.com
info@joelbrass.com**

**If you have further questions or would like to register contact:
Reena Taank (seminar coordinator) at (604) 689-4532 / seminarsjoelbrass@gmail.com
or
Joel at (604) 535-4220 or (604) 732-9091**



Check out Joel's new YouTube series of videos and blog on Relationships at his website: www.joelbrass.com

Most of Joel's professional time is spent in private therapy with individuals, couples and families. To obtain more information or book an appointment contact:

Joel's Vancouver counselling office:

Hycroft Centre
 Suite 117 - 3195 Granville Street
 Vancouver, BC V6H 3K2
 604-732-9091

Joel's White Rock counselling office:

1521 161B Street
 South Surrey, BC V4A 9W3
 604-535-4220

www.joelbrass.com
info@joelbrass.com

To subscribe someone else or unsubscribe to this newsletter, please e-mail me at the above address.