

## Initiating Relationships

If we're conscious, aware of who we are, and how we are, in relationship, we can learn a great deal – not only about the "other," but as much, if not more, about ourselves.

There's a saying in psycho-spiritual circles – everyone is wounded in childhood; we heal in relationship.

One of the ways we heal is by looking deeper into the relationship – far deeper, far below the surface attraction or the "packaging."

What self-awareness and a higher level of consciousness tell us is that we can no longer form relationships *solely* on the basis of attraction. We learn to become patient, reflective and intentional about processing "information" about the other. Meaning?

While we are interested in the attraction (it is the human condition), we are interested in a healthy attraction. We intentionally and consciously allow ourselves to be attracted to people – just as they are, right here and right now - not to their potential, or to a person we hope they are, or will become.

Because we bring our biology and biography to most every relationship, we allow our family issues to interfere (again, the human condition.) If we proactively spend time and energy working through (healing) our family of origin issues, we'll spend less time and energy working through these issues with the people to whom we are attracted. Completing our unfinished business from the past will support us to form new and healthier relationships as we move forward.

For example, if we were raised to play the role of the excessive caretaker, and work on this issue, the less we will find ourselves attracted to people who are needy, who need to be constantly taken care of.

As we learn to love and respect ourselves, the greater our tendency to become attracted to people who will love and respect us as well, and whom we can safely love and respect.

Healing is a slow (but necessary and worthwhile) process. The types of people to whom we find ourselves attracted probably won't change by 9 a.m. tomorrow morning. But, the truth is, we will initiate and maintain healthy and unhealthy relationships with people we need to be with until we learn what we need to learn.

We can learn to take care of ourselves, consciously, while we create and form relationships. We can learn to take things slowly. We can learn to be self-aware and attentive. We can allow ourselves to trip up and make mistakes. And, we can learn to enjoy the healthy relationships, while removing ourselves more quickly and intentionally from the dysfunctional ones.

Some questions for self-reflection:

Would you describe your relationship(s) as "conscious?" How so?

What childhood issues do you experience arising in your current relationship(s)?

Do other people in your life – at work, at home, at play and elsewhere - remind you of family members and relatives from your childhood? Can you see these individuals as "fresh," as not as reflections of those in your past?

Men marry their mothers; women marry their fathers. Does this ring true for you? How so?

Do you ever use others to create your happiness or stop your pain? How so?

Do you allow toxic people to permeate your life? If so, why? What do these toxic people get you?

How would you describe the ideal love/like relationship?

How would you describe your history of (love, long-term...) relationships?

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