
“Oh, Rhett, I just run and run and hunt and I can’t ever find what it is I’m hunting for. . . It’s always hidden in the mist. . .”

Gone With the Wind, Margaret Mitchell

Chapter Thirteen

The Four Joys of Togetherness

Insight #13 Healthy love relationships begin with emotionally and spiritually healthy individuals.

After my husband and I married, our relationship limped along for years, neither of us was quite sure what was wrong, but we both knew that *something* was wrong. By the time I turned thirty, illnesses kept occurring; what my conscious mind refused to see, my body could not ignore. Eventually the pressure began to seep out here and there--failing health, flash temper, and depression. I was into denial, denying that there could be bad parts to an otherwise good relationship.

In her book to help women overcome destructive love relationships Robin Norwood noted, “All of us unconsciously employ defense mechanisms such as denial throughout our lives, sometimes about rather trivial matters and at other times about major issues and events. Otherwise, we would have to face facts about who we are and what we think and feel that do not fit with our idealized image of ourselves or others and our circumstances.”

(Women Who Love Too Much, p. 139-141)

The “idealized image of ourselves and others” described my attitude--I wanted to believe that I had the perfect marriage, the perfect family. Little did I realize then, that facing problems and progressing *is* the perfect state for individuals, marriages and families.

Our heater problems included my inclination to practice Idolatry--my love for my husband bordered, even slipped over the edge into--worship. It took years for me to realize that humans aren’t meant to be worshipped--only loved. Gradually, I learned that love means giving

one's heart to another--but our souls belong only to God. I learned that the greatest contribution I could make to our marriage was not to become him, but to become *me*. I learned that he needed me to help him overcome his weaknesses--not to slide into them, too. I learned that my ability to love in a healthy way was directly connected with self-respect. I learned that leaning too much on my husband caused both of us to stumble.

Changing the Dance

When I began my quest to heal, I found help everywhere. It seemed that I was somehow guided to read certain books, to realize certain insights that would bring freedom and release, and to listen to other's stories--one belonged to Patty. I met Patty when she arranged a community women's conference and asked me to be the keynote speaker. One word described her: alive. She talked fast, moved fast, and told me that the last conference she organized had over five hundred women in attendance--with only one month's preparation. I was impressed; obviously she was a woman who gets things done.

After the meetings, we went out for a frozen yogurt and she shared some of the struggles in her marriage, "I used to have a real problem with my husband trying to control me. He would call me several times a day to see what I was doing; I hated feeling like I was being spied on constantly. His former wife had an affair on him, and I guess, he hasn't gotten over it. We had to change the dance of the relationship; now we've worked it through, and we're happier than we've ever been."

I loved the phrase "changing the dance." Unhealthy people bond together because needs attract, but as one heals, both can heal--if there's a sincere desire to change the dance. Changing the "dance" in relationships--becoming more in harmony, more respectful of one another, more loving is the glorious quest of all healthy loves, and can heal heater-problem relationships.

Marriage is filled with life and life is filled with highs and lows, but when there's commitment, and a willingness to work through, to wait, to reason, to try, to pray, to go on all things are possible. "Marriages are not made in heaven; they come in a kit and you have to put them together yourselves." For my husband and I, the "putting together" process still goes on; we keep falling in love all over again and again.

It has taken years to understand the difference: healthy love means giving one's heart, and obsessive love means giving one's soul--or expecting it from one's mate. The healing process has not been easy.

In surgery, and in relationships, cutting away the bad while leaving the good is not a simple matter. Too often, with the slap of realization, there's a jump from denial to destruction. I've watched this in myself and others. A once submissive soul turns assertive overnight and destroys the relationship that could possibly be saved with a gentler touch.

While healing my own relationship, and getting the dance right--or at least more right--I learned insights that helped me and I believe could help others overcome heater problems, *prevent* masquerades and *prepare* for healthy love relationships. Healing in these areas can make all the difference, and can enrich life--whether single or married. Some put their life in a holding pattern till they are "together" with a Beloved, but this attitude leads to unhealthy bonding because they become too wanting, too desperate--like Sadie. There are other joys of being together--here they are.

The Four Joys of Togetherness

One: The joy of being together with the Higher Power--or God.

Together with God we love ourselves and fellow human beings more--not too much, and not too little. Together with God, love flows through us like an electrical current, and creates a resistance to the emotional starvation called poor self-esteem--which can lead to the masquerades. Together with God, our souls fill with the spiritual strength of peace, love, confidence and goodwill that prevent the craving to be loved--on any basis, at any price. Together with God, and true to ourselves, we create a climate of self-trust, and other-trust, that frees friendliness and goodwill, but also warns against relationships that would prove harmful. Being true to oneself comes before knowing who is right and true for us. Together with God, we naturally lose the inclination to worship his children.

A scene from C.S. Lewis', Great Divorce, illustrates this insight. It is a fictional scene in the afterlife when two lovers meet again. The woman died first, so the scene takes place as her husband greets her following his death. Evidently their old love was a *need* love--now she has healed. She tells him that she has been very happy without him; he becomes angry, and asks, "Do you mean to say. . . do you mean to say you've been happy? . . . Love! Do you know the meaning of the word?"

She answers, "How should I not? I am in love. In love, do you understand? Yes, now I love truly."

"You mean, you mean you did not love me truly in the old days?"

he asks.

“Only in a poor sort of way. . .What we called love down there was mostly the *craving to be loved*. In the main I loved you for my own sake: because I needed you.”

“And now!” he screams, “Now you need me no more?”

“But of course not. What needs could I have now that I have all? I am full now, not empty. . . Strong, not weak. You shall be the same. Come and see. We shall have no need for one another now: we can begin to love truly.” (C.S. Lewis, The Great Divorce, p.113)

Notice the line, “What we called loved down there was mostly the *craving to be loved*.” Masquerades--unhealthy relationships masquerading as love--begin with unhealthy motives and unmet needs and, once again, the “craving to be loved” is at the top of the unhealthy motives. Those starving for food are not very discriminatory in what they eat; those starving for love are also not very discriminatory. In their longing to be loved, indeed, craving to be loved, they accept scraps from the possible banquet of love.

It is well documented that children whose need for love is never satisfied have a longing that can lead to the masquerades. This is often the case when young women of tender post-puberty age, bond with older men. They want the masculine touch that they never knew as a little girl. This emptiness can be filled by Divine love.

It was never better said than by Shakespeare’s Sonnet XXIX:

When in disgrace with fortune and men’s eyes,
I all alone bewep my outcast state,
And trouble deaf Heaven with my bootless cries,
And look upon myself, and curse my fate,
Wishing me like to one more rich in hope,
Featur’d like him, like him with friends possess’d,
Desiring this man’s art, and that man’s scope,
With what I most enjoy contented least;
Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
Haply I think on thee,--and then my state
(Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth) sings hymns at heaven’s gate;
For thy sweet love remember’d such wealth brings,
That then I scorn to change my state with kings.”

I have experienced the clear difference--the craving to be loved--emotional poverty--and the emotional richness satisfied by Divine Love. Basking in the warmth of God’s love, true love and marriages can bette

prosper.

Terry, a classic blond, was the mother of two children. She was busily making a home for her family, and her life was going well, when her husband of fourteen years decided he wanted a divorce. I met her shortly after she returned to her home town to be near her parents. She seemed strung out--nervous. I sensed the divorce had been extremely difficult for her. Months later, she said, "I had a dream in which I was getting married again--to a very dark man." Several months later she married an African American, a wonderful, kind man.

One day we had a few minutes to talk. She began talking of her new marriage. "It has been a real struggle," she said. "We're so different. Our backgrounds are different, our race is different, and so we've really had to struggle. But every day it's getting better and better. I don't think we create a marriage; God does. It's like this: there's me and Aron, and we're two separate persons, but when we invite the powers of God into our lives, He creates the marriage."

"You make it sound like the marriage is a third person," I said.

"In a way it is," she answered, "it's the relationship that is formed when a husband and wife unite with God. You can see this in chemicals. Oxygen is one chemical, and hydrogen is another, but when they combine in a molecule a new identity is created: water."

I think of this idea often. It reminds me that we're not alone in our marriage journey. Wrenching moments of disappointment and despair have been diluted by calling upon divine power. I have no doubt that just as there is a force that heals up wounds of marital discord, so there is a force that like a raging wind would rip and tear us apart. Recall the last time a simple, platonic disagreement flared into an out and out war of intense bitterness and resentment. Such destructive passion reveals this dark force. Prayer and meditation heals and strengthens the bond: of love.

Healing Idolatry

Being together with God is a protection from the motive of the idolatry--wanting to worship another human being. In his popular book, Seven Habits of Highly Successful People, Stephen Covey explains the negative consequences that occur when loving becomes idolatry:

"Over the years, I have been involved in working with many troubled marriages, and I have observed a certain thread weaving itself through . . .that thread is strong emotional dependence. If our sense of emotional worth comes primarily from our marriage (or

mate) then we become highly dependent upon that relationship. We become vulnerable to the moods and the feelings, the behavior and treatment of our spouse, or to any external event that may impinge on the relationship.” (He calls such unhealthy relationships “Spouse Centered.”)

(In his book, he points out the symptoms:) “Your feelings of security are based on the way your spouse treats you. You are highly vulnerable to the moods and feelings of your spouse. There is deep disappointment resulting in withdrawal or conflict when your spouse disagrees with you or does not meet your expectations. Your direction comes from your own needs and wants and from those of your spouse. Your decision-making criterion is limited to what you think is best for your marriage or your mate, or to the preferences and opinions of your spouse. Your life perspective surrounds things, which may positively or negatively influence your spouse or your relationship. Your power to act is limited by weaknesses in your spouse and in yourself.” (p. 111, 112 and 119)

Healing Spiritual Weakness

Spiritual strength gives the courage and the fortitude to overcome the masquerades. This idea is important; healing from unhealthy motives requires more than just knowing. Is there anyone out there who does not know in their minds that smoking is harmful to one’s health? Yet, millions still smoke.

Healing requires knowing and the strength to put into practice the knowledge. Most of us know what is right--it’s the doing it that’s the problem. We can heal our minds by replacing false or destructive ideas with truth, but the behaviors remain until we muster the strength to live that truth.

We can know our motives are unhealthy and self-destructive, and still not change actions. This was an amazing reality I discovered while reading several books on abusive relationships: men and women can fully realize that they’re caught in a masquerade and yet remain. Many men and women will stay in abusive relationships because they’re convinced, “It’s all I deserve.” Some women will stay with men who physically or sexually abuse the children. Healing includes not only the strength to see things right, but *to correct things right*. One comes from

the mind; the other comes from strength of the soul--or being together with God's power. Again, being together with God we love ourselves and fellow human beings more--not too much, and not too little.

Spiritual strength is an important key--I would say, the most important-- in preventing the motives that lead to the masquerades. Divine love generates peace, confidence and the courage to wait; it lifts our souls to a whole new dimension of loving--one that is free, filled, complete. Divine love helps us to overcome the craving to take control and dominate.

Restoring Love

Divine love increases our ability to love, and can replenish the fountain of love in marriage. The God who created us to love can fill that love again and again--if we but ask. Successful marriages are directly related to attributes of spiritual strength: love, patience, goodwill, understanding, compassion and respect. On the other hand qualities of impatience, ill will, intolerance, coarseness, disrespect--all symptoms of one who is spiritually weak. They erode the tender bonds of marriage.

The love and attraction that bond lovers together cannot be mandated. Husbands need to feel needed, respected, and important. Wives must feel cherished, and loved. Husbands and wives may stay together because of the legal contract, or because of the children, or because they fear divorce, but staying together is not the purpose of marriage. The purpose of marriage is to grow together, to be alive together, to love together, to build together.

Two: The joy of being together with oneself

The next joy came when I realized the need to be together with oneself-- true to conscience, destiny, uniqueness, personality, and pursuits. Individuality is enhanced in true love, and no one can make us happy if we are not first happy with ourselves.

Several years ago I read the book, "Escape From Freedom," and was fascinated with Eric Fromm's idea that the reason people support dictators, or others, who would rob them of their conscience and identity, is because they want their conscience and identity robbed. In their loneliness and fear of freedom they surrender it to someone else.

This insight has powerful meaning in all human bonding, and most pointedly in the area of romantic bonding. He writes: "There seems to be the need to. . . give up the independence of one's own individual self and to fuse one's self with somebody or something outside of oneself ir

order to acquire the strength which the individual self is lacking. Love is based on equality and freedom. If it is based on subordination and loss of integrity of one partner, it is masochistic dependence of one partner, regardless of how the relationship is rationalized.” (pgs 141, 161)

Dostoevsky, in The Brothers Karamazov, wrote that some men (and women) have ‘no more pressing need than the one to find somebody to whom he can surrender, as quickly as possible, that gift of freedom which he, the unfortunate creature, was born with.”

Love obviously was never meant to be an escape from oneself. There will never be a way to feel right with someone else until we’re right with and for ourselves. “To be or not to be, that is the question,” said Hamlet, in Shakespeare’s play. “The whole life of the individual,” said Eric Fromm, “is nothing but the process of giving birth to himself.”

If we stop the birth process we begin the stagnation process.

There can be:

No satisfaction without exertion,

No peace without obedience,

No knowledge without learning,

No self-respect without self-sacrifice,

No victory without teeth-gritting perseverance,

No winning without trying,

No mountaintop vistas without enduring the mundane of the valley floor. (Richard L. Evans, An Open Road, p. 169)

Healthy love is two whole and alive persons bonding together in one purpose, combining knowledge, gifts, talents, love and ambition--an important insight to remember before marriage as well as after marriage. Drop-outs make dull traveling companions. The way to healthy, growing relationships is to be healthy and growing. Health is always attracted to health--the intellectually alive are naturally attracted to others intellectually alive. The emotionally alive are attracted to the emotionally alive. Growing is attracted to growing, as if to say, “Hey, I can see we’re on the same journey; let’s journey together.”

Healthy love is bonding with a soul-mate who is about the business of life--of becoming. Healthy love happens when two travelers--who are alive in heart, mind, spirit and body--discover they’re on the same road. Unhealthy bonding occurs when two going nowhere decide to go together. It’s as if to say, “I don’t want to get out of bed. I want to stay under these warm covers and just sleep my life away. Isn’t there someone out there who will join me, so I’m not alone in my sleep?” What a contrast to the travelers who are striving, learning, moving

forward--about the business of life, whether that's playing ping-pong, trying out a new recipe, reading to a hospital-bound friend, hiking in the mountains, taking a class in deep sea diving, volunteering at the hospital, or singing in the choir at church. They find joy in giving birth to themselves. Their union is based upon progression, not stagnation. They join forces because they know that they can grow faster together than they could apart--not to escape the challenge of growing.

There's something within each of us that becomes frustrated when we cease to grow. Climbing the soul's mountain of destiny leads to personal exhilaration, and marital exhilaration. There's excitement's in the air when everyone's growing, becoming, learning, aspiring--and sharing that growth with other members of the family. In marriage, family and friends, lives are intertwined; the growth and success of one contributes to the growth and success of all.

The trust and freedom of honorable, virtuous love sets the stage for personal progress. It requires time and space alone--time to exercise, time to think, time to read, time to study, and time to pray. The alone time then brings life to the together time. On the other hand, obsessive relationships can stifle personal growth because everything and everyone outside of the masquerade is threatening. Fear bonds them together and fear keeps them *too* together.

Aaron David, our fourth son, said, "I'm anxious to get married, but I want more than a mannequin. I want a woman I can talk to--someone who keeps learning and reading. A woman who likes to hike and be adventurous."

I said, "In other words, you want a woman who's alive?"

"Right!" he said. Aaron married his "Beloved" Kaia two years ago; they hike together, fish together, study together--they "live" together!

We must create our own personal circle of love and happiness before we can create circles of love with another, and *personal happiness is directly connected with personal growth.*

Letting Go for Growth's Sake

Healthy marriages let go for growth's sake. My husband has always been supportive of my efforts to continue my education. The summers spent away from home studying at the university have not been easy for either of us; the telephone bill cost almost as much as the tuition. During my first summer at the university we had four children ranging from eight months to seven years. They all accompanied me. The summer that we graduated nine children accompanied me and we

were expecting our tenth baby.

That summer we rented two apartments with three bedrooms apiece--one for the boys, and one for the girls. The children still comment that those summers were filled with some of the happiest memories of their childhood. We actually learned together--gathering bugs for a biology class, hiking mountains for a geology paper, attending concerts for a music class, etc.

While I am away, my husband usually plans a welcome home surprise. One summer, he said he would be unable to drive the family to the university because he had too much work at the office. I was hurt, but realized that there really was no need for him to drive us, after all I was a big girl and could drive the seven hundred miles. He came to visit the family once but was so busy he wasn't able to drive out again.

When I returned home I found out why he was so busy; he had completely remodeled our master bedroom, changing the design of the room, the carpet, the drapes--everything! He had purchased new bedroom furniture, and a huge old oak desk, which he refinished for my writing projects. Even pots of yellow daisies were placed around the room. I was in such shock that for days I kept running back to the bedroom just to make sure it wasn't a dream.

These homecoming surprises have been sacrifices and signs of his supportive love: a remodeled library, a new playhouse for the little girls, complete with window boxes with cascades of pink impatiens, play equipment for the children, a redecorated kitchen, etc.

Sometimes, my husband says to me, "Do you know what my business is?"

"What?" I answer.

"Making my wife happy," he answers with a mischievous grin.

Three: The joy of being together with the family of God

The third joy is experienced when we are *together* with the family of God--not divided from them with envy, ill will, competition, exploitation, or a masquerade. Together with the family of God, we see ourselves not higher than or lower than--just one of them. There's a glorious social freedom, a spontaneity, a confidence that comes in no other way. This is one of the spiritual gifts that naturally come through being connected with God.

Warm-hearted, personable human beings draw others who are also warm-hearted, personable human beings. All love surrounds the lovable--friendship love, family love, associate love, and romantic love. Those who are waiting only for romantic love miss out on life and the

opportunity to be in love every day of their lives. The greatest treasures on this earth are not things, but people--people with unique personalities, treasure chests of stories and experiences.

There's a joy that comes only through being together with friends--male and female--who love what we love, who cherish what we cherish--be that music, or movies, or the arts, or gardening, or caring for children, or work with the homeless. This is a joy that is open to anyone seeking a friend, anyone who is about the business of life.

Four: The joy of being together with those who leave a legacy of love.

Everywhere we look, we see the legacies that others have left so that our lives can be easier, or more beautiful, or more free. Lives have been lost so that we can live in a free society. Time and energy have been spent so that we can enjoy inventions that were not a part of our grandparents' lives. We live, and because we live we owe something. Striving to be faithful to ourselves--to the best that is within ourselves--we enrich our own lives and complement the lives of our loved ones.

"We have a moral obligation to exercise our personal capabilities of mind, muscle, and spirit in a way that will return to the Lord, our families, and our society the fruits of our best efforts. To do less is to live our lives unfulfilled. It is to deny ourselves and those dependent upon us opportunity and advantage." J. Richard Clark

The business of life is to move forward--and to leave to the world a legacy of love. We owe it to all those who have lived and sacrificed before, and all those who will come after us to enhance the quality of their lives. Our contribution does not need to be great, but it needs to be. Each one of us owes the world and humanity the gift of our unique selves, our talents, our strength. Our individual lives can make a difference--and in rolling up our sleeves to help others we gain peace within our own hearts.

"It makes people smile; I like that."

Several years ago, an elderly man in a nearby rest home shuffled outside to the corner intersection, and for several hours a day, waved and smiled to the people in every passing car. Some thought he was crazy, but this simple act of kindness brought a smile and a feeling of

warmth every time I encountered his greeting.

I was, at the time, a writer for the local elementary school newsletter and I thought his story would make an interesting addition. The rest home had obviously been a private residence once. It stood suspended in time near a busy intersection. I approached the huge wood door, rang the doorbell and a man peeked out a small window and asked what I wanted. I told him I wanted to meet the man who stands out waving every day. He then opened the door, and said matter-of factly, "Follow me. His name is Emery Butcher."

As I was guided through the large, dark living room and down a hall, I attempted to greet the elderly men and women who were sitting about. Most of them did not look up to see me, but just sat motionless not seeming to notice my passing. Showing no emotion whatsoever, they sat staring into space, like they were watching television, but there were no televisions. Some looked at me when I greeted them, but did not answer. I wondered what they were thinking, what memories of pair had them so suspended in such a transitory state between life and death.

I sensed that some--if they had the strength and the inclination--would answer my, "Good morning," with, "No, it's not good and it's not morning--it's night--always night." Their despair radiated about them and weighed them down.

When I reached Emery's room, he was sitting at a desk reading. He immediately jumped to his feet like a high school athlete and said, "Good morning; my name is Emery," and held out his hand. After I introduced myself and the purpose for my visit, he quickly snatched the clothes off the desk chair and invited me to sit down. He then sat on the edge of the bed, obviously happy to have a visitor. He was an old man--he later told me eighty-one--but had the spirit of a new groom. He smiled a lot and spoke fast.

"I've come to interview you, Emery," I said. "Have you ever been interviewed before?"

"No," he said smiling.

"I write for the local elementary school's newsletter and I know the children would love to know why you stand out there for hours every day and wave to the people in the passing cars."

He grinned, looked down like a ten year-year-old boy that was just caught with his hand in the cookie jar and said, "People like it; I like it. It passes the day. It could get pretty boring around here; besides the old people here are not much to talk with. When I wave at the people it makes them smile. Well, some of them. The children always smile and

return the wave, but some of their parents look at me like I'm crazy. Maybe I am. I just want to make a few people smile before I die. It feels good."

He continued, "When you get to be my age, you look back over your life and wonder if you did anything that made any difference to anyone. Your body gives out, but your mind just keeps going back over the memories. Some of them are good, but most of them are painful to remember. That's why you see most of the people here staring into space; they're dealing with the painful memories of their lives. I used to do that, too. I was married to the sweetest girl in the world, but she died when she was only thirty-nine. We were never able to have any children, and I never remarried. Oh, I've got a brother some-where, but I don't know what ever happened to him. I used to sit the day away and hurt, but then one day I realized there's still time. I'm not in a pine box yet. It's not a big thing--standing out there like a fool and waving to everyone, but it does put a smile on people's faces, and that makes me happy. Now, it's like my job. Like I go to work every day and wave to the people. I probably am just a crazy old fool, but it's made me want to get out of bed in the morning."

He looked amused, chuckled to himself, then said, "I get a kick out of the little kids waving to me. They look for me to be there; I don't like to disappoint them."

Emery became famous throughout Napa Valley for his smile and wave. His mission lasted about three years, then one day he was gone. Emery was a modern day Don Quixote who grieved over life's sufferings and determined to "add a measure of grace to the world" with his simple gesture of goodwill. Like Quixote, Emery was considered an eccentric, a fanatic who had lost his marbles. But who were really the fools--those in the dark house sinking into death with despair or Emery, outside in the sun attempting to make a difference with a wave?

An Egyptian myth says that we will be asked two simple questions when our souls enter the afterlife, "Did you find joy?" and "Did you share joy?" And that all judgments will be based on the answer. Emery found a way to add joy to the lives of others. His contribution will never be mentioned in history books, but it will live in the hearts of those whose lives were brightened--by a wave.

"To surrender dreams--this may be madness."

In the popular play, Man of La Mancha, based on the book, "Don Quixote" by Miguel de Cervantes y Saavedra, we see a dramatic scene that could have taken place over and over in the life of Emery--different

words, but the same idea.

Remember that Cervantes--main character of the play--despairs over "life as it is" and resolves to begin a quest to right wrongs. He puts on the attire of a knight and sallies forth to help those in need. He is accused of being a madman, a lunatic. He is told that he "turns his back on life" and that he must "come to terms with life as it is!"

He answers, "I have lived nearly fifty years, and I have seen life as it is. Pain, misery, hunger. . .cruelty beyond belief. I have heard the singing from taverns and the moans from bundles of filth on the streets I have been a soldier and seen my comrades fall in battle. . . or die more slowly under the lash in Africa. I have held them in my arms at the final moment. These were men who saw life as it is, yet they died despairing. No glory, no gallant last words. . .only their eyes filled with confusion, whimpering the question: "Why?" I do not think they asked why they were dying, but why they had lived. When life itself seems lunatic, who knows where madness lies? Perhaps to be too practical is madness. To surrender dreams--this may be madness. To seek treasure where there is only trash. Too much sanity may be madness. And maddest of all, to see life as it is and not as it should be."

Self-respect comes when we give respect to others, and when we assist in creating heaven here and now. The question is, "Did you find joy, and did you share it?" In choosing beauty, honorable love, goodwill, order, and virtue, our individual lives 'add a measure of grace to the world' and to our own lives.

Summary

Together with God, I have realized the difference between loving someone and worshiping them. Experiencing divine love has stopped the obsessive craving to be loved. Together with myself, I see my husband's image not reflected in mine, but separate--where I can see and admire him better. Together with myself, goals and aspirations, I have been awakened to a whole new realm of togetherness--my husband's talents complimenting mine--as we travel and build life as a couple. I now realize the difference between surrendering my individualism and enhancing that individualism in marriage. Together with the family of God, I have overcome the tendency to use marriage as an escape, a selfish turn-inward grooming like two monkeys at the zoo, primping one another as they look around in suspicion.

The final joy--purposeful living--has set my soul on fire and lifted my view beyond the clatter and confusion of the day. There's excitement in the air when there are plans, goals and aspirations--both

personally and in marriage. Romantic love is more alive when the couple is seen as companions in a cause, rather than simply bed partners. My husband and I have raised eleven children together--his patience complimenting my impatience. We have directed Christmas productions together, his technical skills combined with my writing and directing skills. We have compiled books together (like this one), his story-telling ability combined with my idea-telling ability. We're happier together when we're working side by side. These insights have assisted in the healing process. Our masquerade-love is becoming a majestic-love--one day at a time. The hope is that these same insights will help you.

Notes on chapter thirteen:

1. Do not equate the birth process--caring for needs of oneself--with selfishness. Self-love and nurturing is not selfish; as it is said, "You cannot lift another person up unless you are standing on higher ground." Being true to oneself and the growth process, the emotional, intellectual and most of all the spiritual needs of oneself paves the way to truly love.

A great thought on this comes from the book, Escape From Freedom by Erich Fromm.

"Selfishness is not identical with self-love but with its very opposite. Selfishness is one kind of greediness. Like all greediness, it contains an insatiability, as a consequence of which there is never any real satisfaction. Greed is a bottomless pit, which exhausts the person in an endless effort to satisfy the need without ever reaching satisfaction. Close observation shows that while the selfish person is always anxiously concerned with himself, he is never satisfied and is always restless, always driven by the fear of not getting enough, of missing something, of being deprived of something. He is filled with burning envy of anyone who might have more. If we observe still closer, especially the unconscious dynamics, we find that this type of person is basically not fond of himself, but deeply dislikes himself." (p. 115)

2. "When you set limits, you establish your boundaries. Your boundaries help to protect your integrity as an individual. They help to define you. . . Responding appropriately enforces your limits and reestablishes or confirms your boundaries. . . Awaken your mate to the fact that his behavior is inappropriate and is unacceptable to you. Some people change their behavior when they experience the impact of a strong response. Others are very resistant to change. . . Following are some

questions which may help you to evaluate the quality of your relationship:

Does your mate enrich your life?

Does he bring you joy?

Do you feel a real connection to him?

Do you think in the same way and share the same dreams?

Does he show good will?

Good will in a relationship is a warmth and honesty, which comes from one's deepest sense of truth. It is a concern for the other's well being as well as a strong desire to understand the other. . .if your mate shows good will and you can answer 'yes' to the above questions, there is a good chance he may give up (unhealthy behaviors) when you enforce your limits." (Patricia Evans, The Verbally Abusive Relationship p.128,9)

3. "Studies show that more than half (60%) of the fathers of babies born to teenagers are over age 20. They are not boyfriends or peers. They are predators. They find young girls attractive because the girls are pliant, eager to please and probably free of sexually-transmitted diseases. . .If the girls are poor, and many are, older men can offer them material rewards as simple as a trip to the beauty parlor." (Cynthia Tucker, S.F. Chronicle, Jan 27, 1996)