
—

“Sexual desire can be stimulated by the anxiety of aloneness, by the wish to conquer or to be conquered, by vanity, by the wish to hurt and even to destroy, as much as it can be stimulated by love . . . (but) if the desire for physical union is not stimulated by love, if erotic love is not also brotherly love, it never leads to union in more than an orgiastic, transitory sense.” The Art of Loving, Erich Fromm.

—

Chapter Twelve

The Motives That Lead To Masquerades

Insight #12 Masquerades, unhealthy relationships masquerading as love, begin with unhealthy motives. Just as we are attracted to individuals with complimentary interests, so are we attracted to those with complimentary weaknesses.

It has become popular to advertise for companionship. I have decided that this is a great way to show--in a concise and clear way--the contrast between healthy and unhealthy motives. Keep in mind, though, that this is all in enlightening fun. In other words, don't take it too seriously. The hope here is that we'll be better able to see through the smokescreen of the masquerades.

Healthy Motives

HONEST and FRIENDLY, seeking companion to love, honor and cherish, to share life, dreams, ambition. Permanent position.

Unhealthy Motives

OWNER/OPERATOR: looking for someone to own and operate. Must be docile.

PRETTY ONE: seeking someone to compliment my good looks, must be attractive and in excellent condition.

PARASITE: shy, insecure, and confused seeks someone to escape in. Must be domineering and controlling.

OUT-TO-LUNCH: in love with fantasy love and looking for a romance like in the cheap novels. Extremely temporary position.

SWINGER: sexy buffed male looking for a warm body for the

night. Must be female, no other requirements. Temporary help only. Advancement not possible.

PARTNER-IN-CRIME: looking for someone to join me in a fantasy love affair--preferably married. High risk; high adventure. Temporary.

EXTREMELY SWEET AND SUBMISSIVE IDOLATER: desperately craving an addictive and obsessive relationship--someone to put on pedestal. No possibility of advancement.

FIX-R-UPPER: seeking father substitute; hoping to resolve the unresolvables of childhood. Must have same dysfunctional behavior.

LIFEGUARD: anxious to save someone's life--addicts, alcoholics, drug abusers please apply. No job too difficult.

Extremely Unhealthy Motives

THE GREAT AND ALMIGHTY ONE: looking for someone who will center their life, their thoughts, their desires, their heart, might, mind and strength on ME, ONLY ME AND ME ALONE!

PREDATOR: seeking another trophy to add to my collection; must make it interesting, challenging; temporary position.

POWERFUL BRUTE: interested in someone to release pent-up aggression and hostilities upon. Must be submissive and silent. No other requirements necessary.

BRUISED AND BATTERED: but willing to take more. Looking for someone to punish me for past mistakes. Must be abusive. Whip provided.

Interlocking Motives

This is just a sampling of the unhealthy motives that lead to unhealthy relationships--either friendships or romance. Some are based on the craving to be loved. Some are founded upon the desire to control, others the desire to be controlled. Some are based upon the need to hurt, others on the need to be hurt. Some motives are uncomplicated: simple sex. Notice the motives interlock--like a puzzle--with each other; the unhealthy needs of one are attracted to the unhealthy needs of another.

"I need someone to escape myself," matches with, "I need someone who wants to be controlled."

"I need love, but I'll accept sex," goes with, "I need sex, but I'm willing to fake love."

“I need someone who will punish me,” interlocks with, “I need someone to punish.”

“I am looking for someone I can save,” goes with, “I’m looking for someone who will save me, and then I won’t have to take responsibility for my own life.”

“I am looking for someone who will treat me coldly and indifferently like my father did; I didn’t solve the problem with him, but maybe I’ll succeed with someone else,” naturally fits with, “I am cold and indifferent: I am looking for someone who will try to change me.”

“I want someone who will compliment my good looks,” matches up with the motives of someone looking for a beautiful trophy to impress friends with.

Like two pieces of a puzzle, they fit together because they fit each other’s wants. Just as we are attracted to individuals with complementary interests, so are we attracted to those with complementary weaknesses.

Now let’s discuss a sampling of these motives.

Parasite: Escaping Oneself

Some years ago, I had this conversation; the young woman was bright, beautiful but without purpose. “So, are you interested in going to college?”

“No,” she said, “I don’t have any desire to go to college. I just want to get married and have children.”

“Well,” I responded, “you might like to take some classes in the homemaking arts--like sewing and cooking.”

“No,” she said, “I don’t care about that either; I just want to get married and have a family.”

This conversation went along like this for awhile, then I got the point: she didn’t want to talk about life’s options. For her, marriage was the only option. It was life. Parasitic love occurs when one attempts to escape oneself in another. The parasite is likely to say things like, “I feel so insignificant; I need someone to make me somebody. . . I don’t want to go to college; isn’t there someone around here to take care of me? . I’m just an old-fashioned girl; you know the kid who just wants to give herself totally to someone. . . .Life’s just too hard; I hate making all these decisions. Isn’t there someone who will tell me what to think and what to do? . I don’t want to grow up.”

The desire to escape into another may just be a hangover of

false traditions. Women, throughout history, were not considered whole--or even a member of society--without a man. The Biblical definition that man and wife become one flesh and the head of the flesh is the man has influenced some women to believe that without a man they are incomplete. Society has upheld this view of women by depriving them of the right to vote (women only received the right to vote in 1920), not allowing them to own property or conduct a business, etc. These attitudes carry over through the generations, even though the laws themselves have changed. I recall when we first saw a female newscaster on television, and it seemed so strange. We're still working through all this.

The way to avoid the parasite motive is to accept the challenge of giving birth to oneself. More on this in the next chapter.

Idolater: Looking for the Almighty One

Parasites form passive, lethargic, and stagnant relationships, but Idolaters take a leap into more compulsive/obsessive relationships. The Idolater wants more than just someone to escape into, the Idolater wants someone to worship. They sacrifice mind, heart, body and soul for their love. The Idolater and the Almighty One, who is craving to be worshipped, form an unbreakable bond. Notice the interlocking motives: craving to worship, craving to be worshipped; craving to be controlled, craving to dominate.

Watching young women at rock concerts, we see this principle in action. They are screaming, crying, waving their arms in a display of "worshipping" their "Gods." Young women who give their all to their boyfriends--in the name of love--are the Idolaters seeking what only God can provide for his children.

The fury of the Idolater is portrayed in the anguish of Anna for her lover Vronsky in the classic novel Anna Karenina by Leo Tolstoy. Actually, Anna displays characteristics of both--the Idolater, craving to worship, and The Almighty One, in her craving to be worshipped. She wants to both engulf and be engulfed by her lover.

"My love keeps growing more passionate and egoistic, while his is waning and waning, and that's why we're drifting apart. . .and there's no hope for it. He is everything for me, and I want him more and more to give himself up to me entirely. And he wants more and more to get away from me. We walked to meet each other up to the time of our

love, and then we have been irresistibly drifting in different directions. And there's no altering that. He tells me I'm insanely jealous, and I have told myself that I am insanely jealous; but it's not true. I'm not jealous, but I'm unsatisfied. . .if I could be anything but a mistress, passionately caring for nothing but his caresses; but I can't and I don't care to be anything else. . . And by that desire I rouse aversion in him, and he rouses fury in me, and it cannot be different." (p. 1240)

Realizing "how miserably she loved and hated him" she resolves, "I will punish him and escape from everyone and from myself," and she throws herself in front of a train. She dies in the insanity of a masquerade.

The Sadie Syndrome--Craving to be Loved

One woman said, "I know a few women who think that when a man's pawing them they're loved. It never occurs to them that these guys are just looking for a good time." They are like Sadie, our family beagle. Sadie acts so desperate for love that she makes herself a pest to everyone who would love her if she were not so desperate. She is not allowed in the house, but she runs in whenever a door is left open, and then attacks the first person she finds with her wet licks and cold nose. Her obnoxious behavior and insatiable craving for love make it impossible to love her.

If, in a moment of pity, you pat her or acknowledge her with, "Hi, Sadie," she translates it--in desperate dog language--to mean, "I love you, Sadie, come and jump all over me and lick my face forever and ever." (We are mere mortals, and all this adoration and face licking just doesn't seem right--whether from dogs or people.)

Everyone has learned that the best way to deal with Sadie is to keep their distance. Those who display the behavior of Sadie would likely say, "I feel so lonely and weak, I need to be loved even if it isn't the real thing. I know it isn't love, but it resembles it just a little. Well, not at all, but, hey, it beats coming home to an empty house. . .Sure, he's married, but he really loves me. She doesn't understand him like I do. . .She's controlling, sure, but that's the way women are who are madly in love with a guy. . .Why do I dress like this? Cause, the guys like it. They look at me and I love to get their attention."

"(Those individuals with) ravenous love," said

C.S. Lewis, “. . . work to their own misery and everyone else’s. The situation becomes suffocating. If people are already unlovable, a continual demand on their part to be loved--their manifest sense of injury, their reproaches, whether loud and clamorous or merely implicit in every look and gesture of resentful self-pity--produce in us a sense of guilt (they are intended to do so) for a fault we could not have avoided and cannot cease to commit.

“They seal up the very fountain for which they are thirsty. If ever, at some favored moment, any germ of affection for them stirs in us, their demand for more and still more petrifies us again.” (Four Loves, p. 65)

Notice that we are not talking about loving too much, but rather craving to be loved--at any price. It’s a matter of self-consciousness, a stumbling block to becoming other-conscious.

The Owner/Operator--Looking For Someone To Own And Operate

My friend and I were visiting in the living room of her home when her husband came through the door, returning after a day at the dental office. She did not say “hello” but--like a sergeant--began yelling orders: “First I want you to bathe the boys, then you need to go out and look what they did to the flower garden. And be sure and get dinner started.” He did not say a word, showed no emotion, but turned and walked away. Two years later, he left. She cried, “How could he do this to me? After all I did for him?”

Loyalty and faithfulness is promised at the altar--not ownership. Love is fragile; it cannot be forced or mandated. Love is won by tender courtship and recaptured in the same way. When we attempt to reign and rule in a relationship it backfires. Love is founded upon those ever-eternal principles of all solid relationships: respect, loyalty, patience, freedom, kindness, and love.

One spring I labored with the decision whether to attend the university or stay home. My husband said, “You have always enjoyed your summer studies; it’s important for you, and I want you to go.” Later one of my husband’s friends said, “I don’t know why

you put up with that: I wouldn't let my wife do that for a second--let alone a whole summer." My husband answered, "Let? We don't do that in our marriage." Our reunion is always sweet; he's anxious to show off his gift of love in decorating our home, and I'm always anxious to share the knowledge I've gained. It's a "Win-Win" situation.

Such comments always amaze me; I've heard wives say something like, "I won't let George go fishing this weekend." And I've heard husbands say something like, "Martha wanted to take a class out at the college, but I put my foot down on the whole idea. Who's going to get my dinner if she's off taking classes?"

"Wishing that it would crash."

A young, fairly attractive woman, but worn-looking after two divorces, told me her story of being married to an Owner/Operator. "He was so tight. I had to sneak money to the children because he did not want them to have more than a few dollars a week. We lived under stress knowing that he would hold us accountable for every penny. One time I had to buy a poster board for Tommy's science class project. My husband told me to go clear across town to a store where I could buy it cheaper. We got into an argument because I tried to reason that while we would save fifty cents, we would burn more than that in gas. But he wouldn't listen, so I did it. Also, he wouldn't let anyone disagree with his opinion; he seemed to feel that since he was head of the house, he was to do the thinking for all of us. It was a nightmare. At first I tried to fight it, but eventually I gave in and let him have his way on every issue.

"Then last year, while flying home in a commercial airline, I found myself wishing that it would crash so that I would die. It was only then that I realized how horrible the situation was. I knew that I had to get out. As soon as I got home from the airport, I told him I wanted a divorce."

Her spirit was not longing to die; it was longing for freedom. I found myself wondering, however, if the relationship could have been changed and the marriage saved. Our spouses need to know what we stand for and what we will not stand for. To leap from co-dependency to total independence seems hardly fair to either one.

"I will serve as will and conscience both to you."

In the classic play A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen we see a case of the Owner/Operator. To Helmer, his wife Nora is little more than a

beloved pet. He gives her everything except equality and respect.

Helmer says to Nora, "Try to calm yourself, and make your mind easy again, my frightened little singing-bird. Be at rest and feel secure. I have broad wings to shelter you under. How warm and cozy our home is, Nora. Here is shelter for you; here I will protect you like a hunted dove that I have saved. . ."

"There is something so indescribably sweet and satisfying, to a man, in the knowledge that he has forgiven his wife--forgiven her freely and with all his heart. It seems as if that had made her, as it were, doubly his own. She has in a way become both wife and child to him. So you shall be for me after this, my little sacred helpless darling. Have no anxiety about anything, Nora; only be frank and open with me, and I will serve as will and conscience both to you."

Nora explains to Helmer that she is tired of not being consulted in the serious matters of their marriage. Helmer wonders why she would be concerned with such matters. When she tells him that she plans to leave, he asks, "It's shocking. This is how you would neglect your most sacred duties?"

Nora answers, "What do you consider my most sacred duties?"

He answers, "Do I need to tell you that? Are they not your duties to your husband and your children?"

She replies, "I have other duties just as sacred."

Helmer retorts, "That you have not. What duties could those be?"

Nora's answer was not only shocking to Helmer, and audiences, but sent ripples of change throughout America.

She answers firmly, "Duties to myself."

Helmer commands, "Before all else, you are a wife and a mother."

Nora answers, "I don't believe that any longer. I believe that before all else I am a reasonable human being, just as you are--or, at all events, that I must try and become one."

When Helmer asks if there's a possibility that she might change her mind, she tells him that the "most wonderful thing of all would have to happen." When he asks, "What would that be?" she answers, "That our life together would be a real wedlock."

The Lifeguard--Looking for Someone to Save or Control

The Lifeguard is looking to find someone to heal, in order to feel loved and needed. Little boys seem to have a natural inclination to

fix things, and some little girls--and big girls--are inclined to fix people. The Lifeguard would say, "Where is someone I can save? He's a drug addict? Perfect, he'll do. Through my love, my power, I can save him. No one else has been able to do it, but I will." There's pride in this motive, but there is also compassionation, as well.

In her book, Women Who Love Too Much, Robin Norwood describes this situation:

"Since suffering has to be in the picture in order for it to be *love* these women look for a man who is different, mysterious and elusive. The depth of love is measured by the intensity of obsession with the loved one. There is little time or attention for other interests or pursuits, because so much energy is focused on . . .the great obstacles to overcome. . .another indication of the depth of love are the feelings of excitement, rapture, drama, anxiety, tension, mystery, and yearning. . .The woman who loves too much feels for the man who is impossible. Indeed, it is because he is impossible that there is so much passion." (Robin Norwood, Women Who Love Too Much, p. 44)

The Almighty Luv-God Motive

This masquerade may be more dangerous than all the others. Its root lie is that love itself is the great and almighty power that just has its way with us. It can takes us whenever, wherever and with whomever it will. There's nothing we can do but give in, give up and go with it. The Idolater wants a person to worship, now we turn to worshipping the Luv-God itself--the person is not as important as the feeling. This false God has the power to sweep us into a love and marriage, and then to an affair, and then to a divorce, but the attitude is--who can fight it? It's *Almighty Luv*.

The headlines: *He's 14, She's 44, They're Married*. The story, Janet, who is divorced, has five children ranging in age from 7 to 23. She hired John as her babysitter and spent a lot of time talking with him. After they realized that they were in love and decided to get married, they had many problems. First, John's parents would not consent to the marriage, but almighty love prevails.

This is but one of many such articles prevalent today, newsworthy because it's bizarre. The overt message is that a woman and boy thirty years apart are getting married. The underlying message is that "love" struck and there was nothing they

could do but accept it. “They realized that they were in love and decided to get married.” Who can fight it? It’s more powerful than the both of them.

In reality, they choose to enter the smokescreen of a masquerade. They believed the lie: love is the almighty; no mortal can fight it--why try? I found myself wondering why they did not see their relationship as a wonderful and rare friendship? In this sex-saturated society have we forgotten how to love “pure and chaste from afar”?

Those caught into the Luv-God motive might say things like, “Did you hear? I’m in love again. I thought that John and I would last forever, but then I saw Ted. Actually I met him in the laundromat--it was love at first sight. He was loading his washer while I was loading mine. He looked over at me; I looked at him, and that was it. We’re going to be together forever. I can feel it. Well. . .I. . .just. . .wait! Who’s that over there! That man with the blond hair and rippling muscles. It’s him, I can feel it. This is it--the one! See you later.”

Our teenage son, Micah, asked, “What if you fall in love with someone? Then there’s no choice. Is there?”

“You can love many individuals throughout your life,” I answered, “but only your inner compass can guide you to your soul-mate.”

The Creator endowed us with the gift to love and the gift to *choose* whom to love romantically. Throughout life we may find ourselves more attracted to certain people over others--this is natural and normal, but sexual intimacy is reserved only for loving, loyal and legal relationships. The sacred nature and power of sexuality is too great to surrender it to every infatuation that comes along. Romantic love by its very nature, seeks an eternal partnership of intimacy, two becoming one in heart, mind, soul and body. It does not flit from one to another, like bees foraging in the flowers.

However, with the wonderful freedom of chastity there’s always a place for warm platonic friendships. Those whose hearts are filled and overflowing with the wondrous awe of humanity, cannot stop themselves from falling in love--daily.

Sometimes the fascination and mystery of it all isn’t upon a person at all, but a fantasy love that’s impossible to ever obtain.

Fantasy Love--the Mirage

Love is only fascinating and exciting to those in the fantasy mode when it's out there in Never-Never Land. Real life stuff like making oatmeal together or washing the car together doesn't fit into the picture--it's all too dull, too mundane, and too real. They want the mirage, but it disappears the closer it comes to reality. This, though, is the attraction and makes it all even more mysterious, fascinating and exciting.

I could feel the sadness radiating from Bob every time I saw him at church. I knew that he and his wife had just divorced, but knew nothing of the circumstances. He was grief-stricken, pale and without life. I wanted to comfort him, to say something, anything, but didn't find the opportunity until one day he happened to be shopping at the same store.

We began to talk, and it poured out, "I love my ex-wife with all my heart. We were very happy together until she started reading romance novels. She read them by the hundreds. They were all over the place--in the kitchen cabinets, everywhere. Then one day she said, 'I want a divorce. This isn't what I call love.' Don't get me wrong, we had our share of problems, but we were a very happy family until she started reading those books; we have five children together. I guess I just couldn't compete with the men in the novels."

"I doubt that it's the men in the novels that you're competing with, but the type of love in the novels. Marital love seems dull when compared with the emotional hype in romance novels. It has occurred to me that these books can be dangerous for women in the same way that pornography is for men," I said.

"What do you mean? How could they be?"

"When men become addicted to the type of sex portrayed in pornography, it breaks down their desire for marital sex. When women are addicted to the type of love in romance novels, it dulls their sensitivity to marital love. Both of them present a fantasy world--a sexual fantasy for men, and an emotional fantasy for women. Women don't get why some men go for the raw stuff and men don't get why some women go for the mushy stuff. Pornography strips intimacy down to an animalistic romp--without love, warmth, caring, or conversation. Silly romance novels separate love and passion away from real life: paying bills, cleaning the garage and changing diapers. About a year later, Bob found another love and they've been gloriously married ever since; his ex-wife remains alone with her novels and fantasies.

The escape into the fantasy can prevent the real joys of marital love and intimacy from ever happening.

“Hidden in the Mist”

An example of fantasy love is vividly shown in the great American classic novel, Gone With The Wind, by Margaret Mitchell. The setting is the Grand Old South before, during and after the Civil War. The main character is Scarlett O’Hara, a beautiful southern belle who has everything a woman could ask for, except the man she thinks she wants. Men clamor for her attention, but her heart is fixed upon the man who is beyond her grasp: Ashley Wilkes.

Ashley marries Melanie, his cousin and soul-mate, but Scarlett convinces herself that he has done this horrible thing out of a sense of duty and family tradition. Through the novel, and three husbands, she still longs for Ashley. She is never able to enjoy what *is* because she is focused on what *isn’t*. Rhett Butler, her third husband and match in mind and spirit, tolerates her fantasy love with Ashley until one night:

“Rhett kept her too busy to think of Ashley often. Ashley was hardly ever in her thoughts during the day but at night when she was tired from dancing or her head was spinning from too much champagne--then she thought of Ashley. Frequently when she lay drowsily in Rhett’s arms with the moonlight streaming over the bed, she thought how perfect life would be if it were only Ashley’s arms which held her so closely, if it were only Ashley who drew her black hair across his face and wrapped it about his throat.

Once when she was thinking this, she sighed and turned her head toward the window, and after a moment she felt the heavy arm beneath her neck become like iron, and Rhett’s voice spoke in the stillness: ‘May God damn your cheating little soul for all eternity!’

The next night while Scarlett sleeps she has a nightmare that “something terrifying was pursuing her and she was running, running till her heart was bursting, running in a thick swimming fog, crying out, blindly seeking that nameless, unknown heaven of safety that was somewhere in the mist about her.”

Rhett takes her into his arms and soothes her terrified heart, “his hard muscles comforting, his wordless murmuring soothing, until her sobbing ceased.”

She tells him, “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. . .”

At the novel’s closing, Rhett leaves Scarlett, realizing that he will

never be the one to make her feel safe, or the one to help her overcome her nightmare fantasy with Ashley. Scarlett missed out on the love that she could have for the love that she would never have. She continues to go on running and running toward whatever it is that's "hidden in the mist".

Healthy love is founded upon love, honor and cherish; masquerades are founded on such motives as escaping life's challenges, the craving to be loved, to control, to be controlled, worshipping the Luv-God or to fantasize a love that can never be. In the next chapter, we discuss the five joys of healing unhealthy motives and unhealthy relationships.

Summary

We cannot be right for someone else until we are right for and with ourselves. We cannot be together happily in a romance until we have first learned to be together in honorable friendships--without gossip, without envy, without deception, without manipulation, without bursts of temper tantrums, etc. We cannot expect someone to want to travel with us unless we're going somewhere, doing something, have something to talk about. Love and romance cannot be an escape, a detour, or a dead-end.

Preventing the masquerades begins with avoiding or healing unhealthy motives; in the next chapter, we'll show how.