

The Simplicity of Love.

Love that wonderful thing that we all look for in one form or another. Our myths, stories and cultures drive us toward finding and keeping love. So much so that we are judged on our ability to 'do' life based on our relationship status. Divorced means we've failed at love, single over 25 means we clearly desperate for love. Married, and best of all, married with kids, means we've succeeded at the ultimate love challenge. Multiple marriages are scorned, long-term marriages applauded.

Falling in love, as most of us can attest too, is one of the most magical experiences of life. Feeling your emotions being swept away at the thought of another human being that we hardly know, is literally intoxicating. We make the craziest decisions at this time, because to love truly we have to lose our fear, let down our guard, and become vulnerable. On the positive side it opens you up to a world of tenderness and intimacy that enriches your life beyond measure. You fall onto a bed of feathers, marshmallows, rose petals and kittens. On the negative side, you open yourself up to a potential heartache and betrayal that is beyond comprehension. You fall into an abyss, falling and falling in the cold and dark. In the words of Khalil Gibran "*For even as love crowns you so shall he crucify you. Even as he is for your growth so is he for your pruning*". So 'doing' love right is quite a serious business, no one willingly wants to be crucified.

Love is one of life's most beautiful and awful challenges and no book can give instructions on how to manage the 'heart on fire'. It is such an intrinsic and important part of who we are and our journey through life and yet its rarely discussed. It's not exactly dinner table conversation and it's in no school curricula. Discussions about love remain in the realms of fairytales, poets, jilted lovers and cheesy media and therefore remain an enigma to most of us mere mortals.

Love may never be fully understood, and I'm not sure it should be, as it may take away the magic. But we can take away some of the ambiguity, vulnerability and fear. Knowing ourselves, understanding our authentic vision, our love style and our needs are the some of the most important life skills and funnily enough the ones we seem to avoid the most. We spend so much time searching outside of ourselves, brain-washed into believing that the answers lay there, usually at a fee.

An authentic foundation in self doesn't mean our feelings for others have hardened. It means we know who we are, what we want from life. It forces us question our heart, to understand if the emotions we feel are going to drive our actions toward or away from our vision. This awareness allows us to make tough decisions earlier on or make a conscious choice to re-route, with awareness of the consequences. We are no longer victims; we can love freely, unencumbered by fear. Knowing who you are is not only powerful for you, but is also extremely attractive to people who are of a similar mind-set. We are never completely protected from pain, but we don't have to live our lives in fear of it.

In the mystery of love only one thing is certain, if you do not know yourself, you can never truly know another. Until you know yourself, an element of victimhood will always remain in your life. If you want a fulfilling life, the step of self-awareness simply cannot be avoided. When we miss this step we miss out on developing a foundation for living, and carry on repeating unconscious patterns, continually 'building castles in the sky'. So put away your books, stop asking your friends, stop listening to the experts. The answers are not out there, they never were. The simplicity of love is that the ability to find and keep the love you want is in your hands, it always has been. This Valentines Day make a commitment to yourself, make your growth, your priority.

Diane Simpson

Mind IP

AWARENESS – AUTHENTICITY - ACTION