
Authentic Relationships: Creating Greatness

(April 06)

What is 'authentic relationship'? How great is your relationship with your partner or spouse? Your communication? Your intimacy? Your sex life?

As in so many areas of our lives, people settle...they settle for going along, they give up parts of themselves, become emotional submissives to 'the relationship', only later to feel the emptiness left by giving up parts of their self?

What kinds of relationship do you imagine when I say the words "Soulful Romance"? What images do you conjure up when I say "radical conversations"?

Both of these terms have to do with the sharing, the conversations, the open communication that I believe leads to the most intimate of relationships, the most soulful connections we can have; interested? Here is a quote from the book: Soulcraft:

"All the little things in life add up to your life. If you don't get it right then nothing else matters."

"James Hollis suggests that both the value and process of soulful romance rest in what he calls radical conversation, in which one intends, continuously, to discover more and ever more about oneself and the other. Through such an exchange between two mysteries, one draws nearer to the central mystery of life. Hollis lists three components to such a soul-to-soul encounter:

1. The partners must assume responsibility for their own psychological well-being.
2. They must commit to sharing the world of their own experience without reproaching the Other for past wounds or future expectations. Similarly, they are to endeavor to hear, without feeling defensive, the experience of the Other.
3. They must commit to sustaining such a dialogue over time...Only radical conversation, the full sharing of what it is like to be me while hearing what it is really like to be you, can fulfill the promise of an intimate relationship. One can only engage in radical conversation if one has taken responsibility for oneself, has some self-awareness, and has the tensile strength to withstand a genuine encounter with the truly Other.

Loving the otherness of the partner is a transcendent event, for one enters the true mystery of relationship in which one is taken to the third place—not you plus me, but we who are more than ourselves with each other. .

Radical conversation has emotional, imaginal, sexual, and spiritual dimensions as well as verbal ones. And the conversation is approached not only with skill and intent but with innocence and wonder. Neither the other nor the self is a fixed thing. The bottom is never reached. One hopes to be forever surprised.”

From: Soulcraft, pages 284-285

I am a proponent of open communication, honest discussions and deep sharing—all of which lead to enhanced intimacy and connection in the relationship. Yes, at times such discussion leads other places, to realizing where there are disagreements, but don't they exist already and are simply not talked about? What is the value of bringing these disagreements or areas of discourse out in the open? There are many who would choose to 'stay quiet' or hide such things from their significant other... I would call this living a lie, living in secret and not honoring your partner or yourself... what do you call it?