



Conscious Relationships Part II

Keeping it Real

Human Relationship Coach, **Cyntha Gonzalez** analyses what makes relationships fresh and dynamic. An essential component is the practice of radical honesty achieved when each partner dares to speak truth and dares to hear truth – no matter what.



Such full transparency in an intimate relationship is outright scary and risky. Likened to epic initiations, it provides each partner with an opportunity to face overwhelming fears and evolve into a mature, courageous being. It is radical because, like in any grand rite of passage, the stakes are high. The risk is to lose all and the reward - to gain love of the highest order.

Psychologist David Schnarch, in *Passionate Marriage*, shares the analogy of seeing a long-married couple in a restaurant eating in silence. He claims that often it is not that they have nothing to say after so many years, but that they have so much to say to each other yet are terrified to do so. For instance, when a wife complains to her girlfriends of boredom in her marriage, the first element to check whether radical honesty is present as a couple. Or when a husband is spending longer time at the office and avoiding going home, this becomes an opportunity for him to ask if candid emotional intimacy exists or not, with his wife.

Given that there is no easy way to reach honesty, it helps to have pointers in getting there

APPRECIATION 'Does my partner actually like me?' 'Does he/she respect me?' 'Do I appreciate who he/she is? If not, a closing down and a build-up of protective walls ensues.

If lack of appreciation is pervasive, the couple is probably mired in the 'Dance of Projection', which inevitably comes with the territory of intimate partnership. The invitation is to bring these unconscious projections into the light of consciousness. Therefore, start by asking 'Is this familiar?' 'Did my father not appreciate me and am I using my partner as a means to vent my anger at my father by replaying out this dynamic?' 'Have I taken on my mother's lack of appreciation of me, that I only attract partners who cannot value me because I still believe in my fundamental lack of worth?' Once such essential self-inquiry begins, there can be a restoration of love and trust leading to dynamic, honest relating.

SAFETY 'Am I guaranteed that physical violence would not be used against me if I speak my truth?' 'Will I be shamed personally or publically if I dare to share my feelings?' 'Will the laws of the land not be used against me if I dare to divulge my feelings or my deeds?'

If there is the slightest hint of danger, your partner will close down and avoid sharing their true self. Deeper questions then must be pondered: 'What am I getting out of being in an unsafe situation?' 'Am I replaying out an old childhood situation where I was unsafe?' 'How can I progress from being a victim in my current situation to feeling empowered?' 'Can I risk naming this lack of safety and invite my partner and myself to heal this consciously?'

To the degree there is safety, is the degree that the true self is able to risk and express itself. To the degree there is not, a false self develops, leading to an inner life of discontent and hiding.

COMMITMENT 'Am I willing to bring awareness to what is triggered within when my partner or I speak candidly, even if it is uncomfortable and not run away?' 'Can I see my partner with compassion and go

beyond victimization to heal the recurrent unfinished business of the past?' 'Am I open to viewing my partner as an agent for healing?' This implies setting limits or extending kindness with the realisation that we are in this journey together.

TIME-OUT If you have heard a truth that is making you reactive, it is useful to take time alone to integrate it. You may also need to give your partner space after revealing his/her truth and not expect immediate reassurance from them that all is well. During this time, write in a journal, read, exercise, remain alone - do anything to get back to your centre and TRUST.

HIGHER POWER We withhold truth or are outright dishonest because of fear. Terror that love will be withheld if we reveal who we truly are. I may even fear for my wellbeing. In this case, the invitation is to trust oneself and one's greater good. The 12-Step programme refers to turning one's life over to a Higher Power, believing in something bigger than oneself. This can be to a religious deity, or to one's 'Wise Self.' It implies that no matter how long the couple has been together that there is something greater than one's spouse that holds and loves me.

TRUST THE BODY In a committed partnership, physical intimacy is compromised if honesty is lacking, as the physical body never lies. Highly tuned in to the subtlest shifts of energy, if truth is held back, so is the vital life force lying at the foundation of one's sexuality. Life force energy is then diverted to maintaining resentments, hiding and deception. Once honesty is risked, energy flow resumes and the vulnerable nakedness of the physical is euphorically 'matched' with the 'nudity' of tender, emotional revealing.

WHAT DO I REALLY WANT? What about secrets? Is it acceptable to maintain a few? The quandary ultimately becomes, 'How far do I want to go with our relationship?'

A stark reality is this: We always attract our reciprocal. To the degree I am willing to speak truth, is the degree I will attract a partner willing to hear it. 'Do I want something more pragmatic, as found in some arranged or complacent marriages? Or is seeking real, cutting edge emotional intimacy the goal? Many love marriages start off emotionally intimate, but evolve to a state of resigned practicality. The choice is yours.

EGO DEATH If you opt for fulfilling emotional intimacy that often leads to deep, physical intimacy, then be aware that an 'Ego Death' is guaranteed. Your ego (I, me and mine) will be bruised over and over again. It is unavoidable as ego attachments die, a self forged from integrity, self-responsibility and open-heartedness is born.

Psychologist, Karlfried Durckheim wrote that "only to the extent that a person exposes himself over and over again to annihilation, can that which is indestructible be found." Are you willing to brave the treacherous waters of radical truth-telling in your intimate partnership?

Do you have the guts to let go of that which is inauthentic, outdated, outgrown and dishonest? Hopefully the promises of freedom, inner peace and real love are decidedly worth the effort.



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