



The Challenge of Marriage & Desire

Attraction, Connection and Desire

Our Focus

Keeping Attraction, Connection, Desire Alive in a Long-Term, Emotionally Committed Relationship.

Fact:

The Foundation for Attraction, Connection, and Desire in a Short-Term Relationship is Not the Same as the Foundation in a Long-Term, Emotionally Committed Relationship.

A Shift Must Occur

Away From:

Subject as Passive

Object as Active

Subject as Receiving

Object as Providing

Subject Providing Nothing

Object Providing Everything

Subject Empty Vessel

Object the Satisfying Source

Why Must this Shift Occur?

Time Limited

Saturation Leads to Boredom

Master - Slave / Love - Hate

Increased Emotional Swings / Moodiness / Volatility

Increased Power Struggles - Emotional Gridlock

Why Must this Shift Occur?

The Universe – by its very Design – Stimulate Us Toward
Growth.

Teleos is the Goal

Our Response:

Recognize the Opportunity / Cooperate

Strengthen our Inner Core

Ride the Wave so the Wave Doesn't Ride Us

Foundations for Desire

- Lust - Craving for sexual gratification
- Romantic Love - Infatuation with a specific partner
- Attachment - Desire for a secure union with a long-term partner, with pair-bonding, monogamy and parenthood.
- Developing, Growing and Maintaining a Self - How We See Ourselves and How We Perceive Others See Us Profoundly Affects Desire.

Romantic Attraction

The Precursor to Marriage

Attraction: The Experience

1. Two people meet. They experience a mutual attraction.
2. Their attraction grows. Their positive feelings grow and are ignited whenever they are together. These feelings are ignited simply by thinking of each other.
3. The natural hormones, Phenylethylamine (PEA), Dopamine and Norepinephrine are released. The primal region of the brain lights up. The more it lights up, the more in love they are.

Attraction: The Experience

4. Each feels energized, aroused, elated and focused on the other. Some sense of euphoria is felt. Each enjoy this feeling. This results in a “self-reward system.”
5. Each experience more “oneness” than “separateness.” A “merging” of both occurs.
6. Each selectively present only the good parts of themselves. Selective presentation so as to be found “attractive” is the goal. Each collude in this activity.

Attraction: The Experience

7. Each person becomes idealistically distorted. Each see the other through “rose-colored glasses.” Each selectively use one “part” to define the “whole.”
8. The drive toward romance and attachment **deactivates** the regions of the brain associated with negative emotions, assessing social situations and mapping out other people’s intentions and emotions!
9. Romance and attachment deactivates social judgment and negative emotions to glue you to a partner through a brain self-reward circuitry.

Some Observations

- Falling in Love is not the same as “love” or “loving” another person.
- Falling in Love is, by design, a temporary experience. On the contrary, falling out of love is usually the beginning of the work of love.
- Falling in love is an act of regression (passivity), a collapse of boundaries, resulting in a lack of separateness and a lack of identity.

Some Observations

- Falling in Love is a passive experience: “I love the feelings I feel when I’m with you.” It is “effortless.”
- Falling in Love “gives up the self,” while love requires the “growth of a self.”
- Falling in Love (Romantic Attraction) is dependent upon a Reflected Sense of Self, Borrowed Functioning and is Other-Validated Dependence.

A Reflected Sense of Self

Borrowed Functioning and Mind Monitoring

A Reflected Sense of Self

- A Reflected Sense of Self is the First Self we Develop. We see ourselves through the eyes of those that are important to us. We internalize how others see us and treat us.
- Later, when we get into a relationship, we “Borrow” our sense of self from the person we are attracted to and them to us. Our sense of self is like a balloon the other person inflates. When inflated, we look and act better. Both the donor and the borrow grow weary!

Emotional Fusion

- Emotional Fusion occurs when each person is regulating their emotions and their reflected sense of self through their interactions with their partner, rather than handling them internally, with a solid sense of self.
- Emotional Fusion occurs whenever partners depend upon each other for a positive reflected sense of self.
- Borrowed Functioning and Emotional Fusion are powerful forms of relatedness and are very common.

Emotional Fusion

- Emotional fusion is equal to Siamese twins: Every move one person makes, upsets the other's emotional balance. Because there is a thick connection and emotional entanglement, any move – or lack of – from one partner impacts the other.
- The problem is not that you are “too close,” but that each is too dependent upon the other for their emotional balance. When all you have is a reflected sense of self, you have no choice but to attach to someone else. Emotional fusion becomes a necessity; a way of being!

The Point: Making a Shift

- We bring our Reflected Sense of Self into marriage because it got us there. Marriage is an ecosystem (a pressure cooker) designed to help us become adults, by making our reflected sense of self incredibly vulnerable and finally unsustainable and untenable.
- The foundation of a Reflected Sense of Self begins to fail. Boundaries snap back into place!
- As time passes, the “attraction-glue” which began the relationship cannot sustain the relationship.

The Point: Making a Shift

- Each partner comes in contact with the gap between their own projected image of their partner (their fantasy partner who will “complete” them) and the true image – who their partner really is.
- Power struggles now begin– with each attempting to influence, correct and change the other.
- The foundation for Attraction and Desire begins to crumble.

The Point: Making a Shift

- The roller coaster of up and down emotions eventually motivates us to grow a more solid self!
- We are driven to develop and preserve a sense of self! Preserving and maintaining a sense of self in relationship profoundly impacts sexual desire, emotional functioning and connection with your partner! It's time to make a shift toward Personal Growth!