



# Keeping Desire Alive Through Personal Growth

Self-Reflection, Self-Confrontation and Self-Soothing

# What Does it Mean to “Grow?”

Movement from “Me” to “Not Me”

“This is so “Not Me!”

“This Doesn’t feel Natural. This Doesn’t feel Like Me.”

We can Either be Pushed and Pulled Forward or  
We can Find the Value and Sign on to Ride the  
Wave.

# Short-Term Relationships

Image/Presentation of Self

Other-Validation

Reflected Sense of Self / Borrowed Functioning

Anxiety Reduction

Bonding/Fusion/Emotional Regulation

Completion / Merging

# Three “Normal” Solutions

Dominate (Eliminate) Your Partner!

Submit (Eliminate Your Self) to Your Partner!

Withdraw Physically or Emotionally

Be numb, “present” but not present, avoid personal growth using work, activities, kids, alcohol, drugs, secret behaviors outside the marriage, etc.

Choose to Strengthen Your Core

# Two “Non-Normal” Solutions

1. Make the choice (Find the Value) to manage your personal anxiety and discomfort.

Look Only Within Your Own Hula-Hoop for the Solution to your “Problem.”

2. Make a decision to lean into your less-developed, non-normal side so as to love your spouse.

Find the value in growth for your self and love for your spouse.

# Interlocking Growth Issues

Since masculinity is defined through separation while femininity is defined through attachment, male gender identity is threatened by intimacy while female gender identity is threatened by separation.

Thus males tend to have difficulty with relationships, while females tend to have problems with separateness.

# The Redemptive Goal

**Males**

Separation



Connection

**Females**

Connection



Separation

# Polarity Management

Example:

A Saturday Morning in the Life of Dave & Lisa

“What’s Going On?”



# A Challenge for Men

Non-Personal, Indirect Relationships

Inability to Feel and Put Words to Emotions (Alexithymia)

Increased Anxiety in Relationships with Women. Exotic  
becomes Erotic

Competition and Success Driven

Goal Oriented / Linear Thinking

Isolation – Physical and Emotional

# Non-Relational Sex

Pornography - A Passive, Powerful, Disconnected,  
Masculine “Quick Hit.”

Strip-Clubs and Internet Sites - An Altered Reality

*Sex: A Way to Feel Close without Being Close*

Women Become Sexual Objects for a Man’s Arousal -  
Both Physically and Emotionally

The Exclusive Goal of Sexual Arousal becomes Orgasm

Performance Anxiety - A Natural By-Product

# A Challenge for Women

Very Direct Personal Relationships / Knows Self Through  
Others

Able to Put Words to Emotions / More Subjective than  
Objective

Increased Anxiety when Developing a Self / When Facing  
“Separateness”

Cooperation / Community Oriented Process

# A Complex Sexuality

A Non-Linear Approach to Sexuality

Receptive Desire

Greater Challenge to Develop an Erotic Self

Less “Spontaneous Desire”

Physiological Arousal and Subjective Desire Do Not  
Necessarily Coincide

# Two-Choice Dilemmas

Wanting and Not Wanting to Want

# Desire is a “Capacity”

The growth of a person is the progressive liberation of desire. It is the process whereby desire finds ever more deeply its subject, whereby desire comes to be in one who can say, ever more deeply and wholly, “I want.”

Sabastian Moore, *Jesus: The Liberator of Desire*.

**Desire is Looking for a New Subject; Not a New Object**

# Desire can be Developed

Desire is a capacity you can develop. It is developed by increasing your capability – your inner core. Strengthening your inner core also changes the nature of your desire. Strengthening your inner core helps you to want more deeply.

Desire makes you get up and do difficult things! What we “want” involves becoming more than we are. Desire is a tremendous motivation. It mobilizes us.

But wanting takes energy, effort and courage to “get what you want.” You have to “want” first – before you know how things will turn out.

# Two-Choice Dilemmas

A Two-Choice Dilemma is when you want two choices, but life only gives you one at a time, in a sequence – not at the same time.

You want the choice to do or not do whatever it is you want to do, but you also don't want the consequences (natural results) that come with your decision. You want to stall this – hedge this – by trying to keep others from exercising their own choices.



# Two-Choice Dilemmas

The way to accomplish this is to “steal your partner’s choice.” That is, to rob them of the opportunity to exercise their choices.

Result: You get your two choices, but your partner gets none of their choices. You robbed them of the opportunity to make a choice.

Some people steal out of spite, but most do it for more practical reasons: It’s the easiest way around two choices you don’t want to face. It’s not about “intent.” It’s a natural result of not facing personal responsibility.

# Two-Choice Dilemmas

Choices are finite in love relationships. There is not an infinite number of moves in a finite relationship.

Desire fades when we feel like we do not have choices. But when we could choose to shape our destiny, but decide to avoid, desire fades as well.

Partners would rather confront their spouse than confront themselves. They would rather argue with their spouse, than with themselves. They would rather fight with the other person than with themselves.