

When two people fall in love, something profound is happening that goes far beyond physical attraction, desire for companionship and even similarity of values and interests. There is an activation of an unconscious agenda that began years ago, rooted in childhood hurts and unmet needs. That agenda stated simply is this: We are all unconsciously looking for a particular someone who will help us finish childhood, heal childhood wounds and regain wholeness. We believe this is Nature's plan for emotional healing.

There seems to be built into the natural order that nature consistently tries to heal itself. When there is a forest fire, nature immediately begins healing the scar and replenishing the forest. When there is an oil spill, nature begins a process that will eventually clean up the spill, though it may take 50 or more years. And where there are emotional wounds, nature also begins a process of healing. Just as surely as when you scratch your arm and a scab forms, infection is fought and new skin is created, so where there are emotional wounds in childhood (damaged egos, fears of rejection or abandonment, fears of being smothered or controlled, doubts about competency, neglect etc.), there is set in motion an unrelenting drive for healing. But since emotional wounds are invariably relationship wounds, emotional wounds can only be healed in relationship--and in a particular kind of relationship.

We can only be healed by the one who wounds us or a very reasonable facsimile.

We seem to be created so that the human psyche will only accept emotional healing from someone similar to the one who does the wounding. There is in all of us an innate striving for wholeness and completion that requires the selection of a mate that has the greatest potential for the healing of any childhood wounds and the fulfilling of any unmet childhood needs. To accomplish this, each person needs to be connected with someone who activates one's needs at the deepest level and who is similar enough to the wounding parents to make healing possible.

To accomplish this agenda of healing, we have to be connected to someone similar to the wounding parents.

But no one in their right mind would ever choose someone that had similar negative traits of their wounding parents. Who would consciously look for a life partner who is depressed, unavailable, distant and critical? It's as though Nature had to find a way to get us connected and bonded to a person who would eventually be painfully incompatible in very specific areas. As a solution, Nature created *romantic love*.

Romantic love puts us temporarily on drugs, suppresses our awareness of the negative traits of our partner (love really is blind) and creates a great expectation of the fulfilling of unmet needs and the healing of old wounds. We remain in this state until we are bonded and hopefully married or committed. Romantic Love is the way we get connected with someone who will eventually be incompatible in very specific and significant ways...because that is the kind of person we need for healing. Then after the wedding (or just being together for a time), the drugs wear off, the bandages are ripped from our eyes and we see our partners as they really are, depressed, critical, not available, unreliable, neglectful--remarkably similar to negative traits in our parents. This is where most people bail out. They mistakenly conclude that they have made a major selection error, failing to see that this is indeed part of a natural plan for emotional healing. Almost half of all married couples get a divorce somewhere in this power struggle phase. And singles decide they have made a bad choice and move on to another relationship where the cycle begins again. These are indeed tragic, and for the most part, unnecessary choices.

There appears to be another factor in the selection process that makes this plan of nature even more remarkable. Not only are we connected with someone who could be the most powerful healer for us, we are also put with someone who will require us to grow in areas we are deficient in so that we can be a healer for them. What one partner needs the most for healing, the other is least able to give--until a part of the self that was repressed is activated and character defenses are softened.

As one partner stretches to heal the other, he or she becomes more whole in the process.

- If we learned to protect ourselves as children by suppressing the emotional side of our self-functions, we will be put with someone who will require that we share our feelings at a significant level for their own healing.
- If we learned to be diffuse and emotional, we will be put with someone who will implore us to become more rational or thoughtful.
- If we found it was dangerous to reach out for contact or emotional closeness and became quiet and distant, we will be attracted to someone who will need us to reach out for emotional closeness in order for them to be healed, someone who will beg and demand us to initiate contact.
- If we learned as a child to be overly clinging or needy, we will be attracted to someone who will ask us to give them space, respect their separateness and enjoy their freedom.

The good news is that when couples recognize what is happening in their selection of a mate, decide to cooperate with the healing agenda, and enter into a process to accomplish this, wonderful things begin happening. Wise therapists are now teaching couples how to become healers of each other, and in so doing are helping them to regain their own wholeness.

What is needed is a major reeducating of the American public so that singles and couples do not circumvent the very plan for healing and wholeness that brought them together in the first place.

This web site is to helping couples understand and cooperate with this healing agenda. This site was designed to be a place where couples can go to actually work on their relationship and get very real and practical help on their relationship journey.

If this article seems relevant to your experience, be sure to explore the Couple's Fun-Love-Work Station membership (under the Couples Workstation tab).

Recommended reading for couples is Dr. Harville Hendrix's "*Getting the Love You Want.*" This is the first public presentation of Imago Relationship Therapy.

Recommended reading for singles is Dr. Harville Hendrix's "*Keeping the Love You Find.*" This book represents one of the first in-depth preparation programs available for singles.