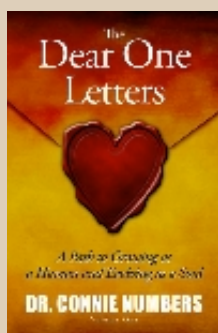




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Monthly Inspirations Newsletter

March 2015



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Hello Dear Ones,

Lately, I've been thinking about long term love relationships and why they last. What is it that keeps people together for decades, not just in terms of length, but in terms of love? **What keeps people in love with each other** year after year after year? According to statistics in America, half of the people getting married today will divorce. Therefore, at least half of us seemingly fall out of love. And still, it doesn't mean that those who don't divorce are truly happy. People stay together for many reasons other than love, as their feelings for each other changes.

As I look back at 30 years of being a psychotherapist, I believe I have the answer to this question of **what keeps love alive in a marriage**. And it may sound a little strange because you may be expecting some wonderful romantic and positive expletive. But instead, my answer is this: Those **couples who are willing to face conflict** head on in their partnership and are willing to take the risk of expressing their feelings of discontent and also willing to listen to their partner's similar feelings, without judgment, are the ones who last.

When couples arrive at my doorstep, it's because their marriage is in trouble and they don't know how to fix it. And the reason they don't know how to fix it is because they have been fearful of communicating with their significant other. "I'm afraid of how he/she will react, so I don't say anything." You, see, Dear Ones, **our suffering is always caused from fear**. We are a 'conflict avoidant' society that believes in "peace at all costs," and it is this manifesto that has created so much havoc in relationships. And the cost is usually the break up of the relationship. (It's too bad our society doesn't believe in 'peace at all costs' when it comes to war.)

In any case, when we hold in our feelings with our partner, and they hold in their feelings about us, the only outcome can be the building of piles. Lots and lots of piles - piles of disappointment; piles of resentment; piles of anger; piles of hurt and piles of rejection. That's a lot of fear. It's ironic that what we want most in our relationships, which is intimacy and closeness, is that which **we fear the most: intimacy and closeness**. So when each person in a relationship refuses to speak up, for fear of losing the other, they end up, in the long run, losing each other.

"I hate confrontation" is one of the most common phrases I hear in my office. And I must say that this word definitely gets a bad rap in our society. Confrontation doesn't have to be yelling and screaming, nor does it have to do with blaming another. The word simply means to face up and deal with a challenge that is currently coming into your life.

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It means you've just got to look at it. Embrace it. Be aware of it. Be honest about it and then **take responsibility and speak your truth.**

But ah! It's the last 3 words that give us the most trouble: speak your truth. If we cannot speak the truth about ourselves, if we cannot look at ourselves without blame instead of compassion, and if we cannot be **honest and love who we are**, warts and all, we can't expect to be able to do that with another. And that is the cause behind the symptom of falling out of love with another. It's because we are constantly **falling out of love with ourselves.** And every time we find fault and blame and beat ourselves up for who we are, instead of trying to understand, accept and feel compassion for who we are, we become afraid of ourselves and then, of course, we become **afraid of letting others see who we are.** So, our next move is to do what most of us do: We shut up, back away, build piles, and pretend that everything is okay in our lives, until we can't do it any longer. After all, something's got to give when the piles get too burdensome.

So, what is my recommendation? It's what it always is: **Know and love thyself.** Work on the long-term love relationship you have with yourself. When you do this, you know that no matter what happens, you will always have you, and when you're no longer afraid of you, you're no longer afraid of anyone else, and it's then you can speak up and tell your truth. It's then the piles begin to disappear. **It's then when you will listen to another with love** and appreciation for who they are, because you already do that with yourself.

The health of every relationship you have in your life is ultimately determined by the relationship you have with yourself. So, **allow yourself to have a voice**, get rid of anything in your mind that says you are expected to be perfect, and enjoy being who you really are. And lastly, let go of any fear you have of being in conflict with yourself or another. Conflict is a part of life and as long as you don't avoid the conflict within yourself, you are less likely to avoid having wonderful confrontations with others you love. And it is this facet alone that will lead you to **staying in love with you and staying in love with your partner for the rest of your life.**

P.S. And staying in love with them long after this lifetime is over as well (I just had to put that in there!)

**Much love to all of you,
Connie**

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