

THE COMPULSION TO RE-CREATE AND OVERCOME CHILDHOOD HURTS

A child desires to be loved exclusively and without limit. Thus, a child's desire to be loved is unrealistic as no human love is without limit. Yet, it is also true that the child would be very satisfied with real mature love. In fact, if mature love were given, the unrealistic demand for exclusive love would be diminished considerably. However, the capacity for tendering genuine mature love is rare indeed.

Since children so seldom receive sufficient mature love and warmth, they continue to hunger for it throughout life unless this lack and hurt are recognised and properly dealt with. If not, they go through life unconsciously crying out for what they missed in childhood. This in turn causes in them an inability to love maturely as adults. So, this is passed on from generation to generation.

The remedy cannot be sought by wishing that it was different, and that people would learn to practice mature love. The remedy lies solely in you. True, if you had received this love from your parents, you would not have this unconscious problem - a problem of which you are not really and fully aware. But this lack need not trouble you or your life if you see it, if you become aware of it, and if you rearrange your former unconscious wishes, your regrets, your thoughts, and your concepts about love. As a consequence, you will not only become a happier person, but you will also be able to extend mature love to others - to your children, if you have any, or to other people in your environment - so that a benign chain reaction can start. This is very contrary to your present inner behaviour, which we shall now consider.

This factor is greatly overlooked, even by the few who have started to explore their own unconscious mind and emotions. Very few people realise and personally

experience - theoretical knowledge notwithstanding - the strong link between the child's longing and unfulfillment and their own present difficulties and problems as adults. It is very important to become aware of this link.

There may be isolated, exceptional cases where one parent is somewhat capable of mature love. But even if one parent loves maturely to some degree, very likely the other does not. And since mature love on this earth can only be found to a degree, the child will suffer from those manifestations wherein the loving parent is bound to fall short.

More often, however, both parents are emotionally immature and cannot give the love the child craves for - or they can give it only to a limited degree. During childhood this need is rarely conscious. Children have no way of putting their need into thought. They have no point of reference; they cannot compare. They do not know that something else might exist. They believe that this is the way it should be, or, in extreme cases, the child feels especially isolated, believing that he or she is the only one who feels that way. Neither attitude is according to truth. In both cases, the true emotion is not conscious, and therefore it is not properly evaluated and recognised. Thus, children grow up neither understanding why they are unhappy nor even quite realising that they are unhappy. Many of you look back to your childhood convinced that you had all the love you wanted just because you actually did have some love, but rarely did you have all the love you wanted.

There are a number of parents who give great demonstrations of love. They may spoil or pamper their children. This very act of spoiling and pampering may be overcompensation and a sort of 'apology' for a deeply suspected inability to love

maturely. Children feel the truth very acutely. They may not think it, they may not consciously observe it, but inwardly children keenly feel the difference between mature, genuine love and the immature over-demonstration offered instead of it.

Security and proper guidance are parents' responsibilities, and they call for authority on their part. There are parents who never dare to punish or to exert their healthy authority. This is due to guilt that really giving, warming, comforting love is absent in their own immature personality. Other parents may be too severe, too strict. They thereby exert a distortion of authority by bullying and not allowing the individuality of the child to unfold. Both groups fall short as parents, and their wrong attitudes will be absorbed by their children and will result in hurt and unfulfillment.

In the case of strict parents, the resentment and rebellion will be open and therefore more easily traced. In the case of lenient parents, the rebellion is just as strong, but it is hidden and therefore infinitely harder to trace. If you have a parent who smothered you with affection, or pseudo-affection, yet lacked in genuine warmth; or if you have a parent who conscientiously did everything right by you, but also was lacking in real warmth, unconsciously you knew it when you were a child and you resented it. Consciously you may not be aware of it at all, because as a child, you really could not pinpoint the lack of warmth. You were outwardly given everything you wanted and needed. How could you differentiate in your intellect the subtle, fine-borderline distinction between real affection and pseudo-affection? The fact that something bothered you without you being able to explain it reasonably made you feel guilty and uncomfortable. Therefore, you pushed it out of sight as much as possible.

As long as this hurt, this disappointment and unfulfilled need from your early years, in unconscious, you cannot

come to terms with it. No matter how much you may love your parent, you harbour unconscious resentment, and therefore you cannot forgive for the hurt. You can only forgive and let go if you recognise this deeply hidden hurt and resentment. As an adult human being, you will see that your parents too are just human beings. They will not be as faultless and perfect as the child thought and hoped they were. Nor are they to be rejected because they had their own conflicts and immaturities. The light of conscious reasoning has to be applied to these very emotions you never allowed yourself to be aware of to their full extent.

As long as you are unaware of this conflict, of your longing for perfect love from your parents, you are bound to try to remedy the situation in your later years. This may manifest in various aspects of your life. You run into problems and repeated patterns that have their origin in your attempt to reproduce the childhood situation so as to correct it. This unconscious compulsion is very strong, but it is very deeply hidden from your conscious understanding.

Most frequently the compulsion to remedy the situation manifests in your choice of significant others you look to for love, authority figures, and 'problematic others'. Unconsciously, you will know how to choose in the significant other or community, certain aspects of the parent who has most fallen short in real and genuine affection and love. But you also seek in your significant other or community, aspects of the other parent who has come closer to gratifying your demands. Important as it is to find both parents represented in your choice of individuals or community, it is even more important and more difficult to find in them those aspects that represent the parent who has particularly disappointed and hurt you, the one more resented or despised and for whom you had little or no love. So, you seek the parents again - in a subtle way that is not always easy to detect by outer similarities - in marital partners or your

religious congregation, in your friendships, or in other human relationships. The following reactions take place in your unconscious: Since the child in you cannot let go of the past because it is identified with it, cannot come to terms with it, cannot forgive, cannot understand and accept, this very child in you always creates a condition somewhat similar to the original situation in a desperate attempt to win out in the end, to finally feel fulfilled. What the child in you sets out to accomplish can never come to realisation.

This entire procedure is utterly destructive. In the first place, it is an illusion that you were defeated. Therefore, it is an illusion that you can be victorious. As sad as the lack of love may have been when you were a child, the tragedy lies in the fact that you obstruct your future happiness by continuing to reproduce and then attempting to master the situation. It goes without, that this process is very unconscious. Of course, nothing is further from your mind in your conscious aims and wishes. It will take a great deal of digging to uncover the emotions that lead you, again and again, into situations in which you wish to remedy childhood woes.

In trying to reproduce the childhood situation, you unconsciously choose others to love you with aspects similar to those of the parent. And these very aspects will make it as impossible to receive the mature love you long for now. Blindly you believe that by willing this love more strongly and more forcefully, the parent-other will now yield, whereas, in reality, love cannot come that way. Free of this ever-continuing repetition, you will no longer cry to be loved by the parent. Instead, you will look for a partner - or other human relationships - with the aim of finding the maturity you really need and want. In not demanding to be loved as a child, you will be equally willing to love. However, the child in you finds this impossible; no matter how much you may otherwise be capable of love due to development and progress, this hidden

conflict eclipses your otherwise growing soul.

The fact that one continually chooses a person or a love object who has exactly the same negative trends that one or the other parent had, can mean this particular person may have or may not have these trends, most of the time it is a combination of these possibilities. Certain aspects are unconsciously looked for and found, and they are actually, and in reality, similarities. But the person exaggerates these existing similarities. They are not projected - that is, qualities 'seen' that are not really there - but they are qualities that are latent to some degree but are unmanifested. These are encouraged and strongly brought to the fore by the attitude of the person who has an inner problem that is unrecognised and therefore unchecked. In other words, a person will foster something in the other person by provoking them to react that way. In this scenario the provocation, which, of course, is entirely unconscious, is a very strong factor.

The sum total of a human personality consists of many factors. Out of these many factors let us say that three or four are actually similar. The most outstanding factor would be a similar kind of immaturity and incapacity to love as in the parent in question. That alone is sufficient and potent enough in essence to reproduce the same situation.

The same person would not react with others as he or she reacts with you, because it is you who provokes the other you want to love you into constantly reproducing similar conditions for you to correct. Your fear, your self-punishment, your frustration, your 'anger, your hostility, your withdrawal from giving out love and affection, all these trends of the child in you constantly provoke the other person and enhance in him or her that which is weak and immature. A more mature person, however, will affect others differently and will bring out in them whatever is mature and whole, for there is

no person who does not have some mature aspects.

If you already have a relationship or love focus of some kind, the uncovering of this hidden conflict may show immaturities and similarities to your parents. But since you know that there is hardly a really mature person, the immaturities of your relationship partner or other love focus, will no longer be the tragedy they were when you constantly sought to find your parents again, seeking to fulfil the childish demand that this time around you will be loved exclusively and completely. This, of course, can never come to pass. By coming face to face with your existing immaturities and inabilities, you will see yourself in reality and you will be able to build a more mature relationship, free of the childish compulsion we are talking about here.

You have no idea how preoccupied your unconscious is with the process of re-enacting the play, so to speak, only hoping that 'now it will be different'. And it never is! As time goes on, each disappointment weighs more heavily, and your soul becomes more discouraged.

For those of you who have not yet reached deep into their unconscious, this may sound quite preposterous and contrived. But those of you who have come to see the power of your hidden tendencies, your compulsions, and your images, will not only readily believe it, but will experience the truth of these words in your own personal life. You already know from other findings how potent is the working of your unconscious.

If you learn to look at your problems and unfulfillments from this point of view and by the usual process, you will allow your emotions to come to the fore, and you will gain much further insight. But it will be necessary to re-experience the longing and the hurt of the crying child that you once were, even though you were also a happy one. Your happiness may have been valid

and without self-deception at all. For it is possible to be both happy and unhappy. You may be perfectly aware of the happy aspects of your childhood, but that which hurt deeply and that certain something you greatly longed for - you did not even quite know what - you were not aware of. You took everything for granted. You did not know what was missing or even that there was something missing. This basic unhappiness has to come to awareness now if you really want to proceed in inner growth. You have to re-experience the acute pain you once suffered but pushed out of sight. Now this pain has to be looked at with this new understanding you have gained, in mind. Only by doing this will you see the reality value of your current problems in their true light.

Now, how can you manage to re-experience the hurts of so long ago?

There is only one way. Take a current problem and strip it of all superimposed layers of your re-act-ions. The first and most handy layer is that of rationalisation, that of 'proving' that others or situations are at fault and not your innermost conflicts, which make you adopt the wrong attitude to the actual problem that confronts you. The next layer might be anger, resentment, anxiety, and frustration. Behind all these reactions, you will find the hurt of not being loved. When you experience the hurt of not being loved in your current problem, it will serve to reawaken the childhood hurt. With the present hurt, think back, try to re-evaluate the situation with your parents in mind. What did they give you, how did you really feel about them? You will become aware that in many ways you lacked something you never clearly saw before you did not want to see it. You will find that this must have hurt you when you were a child, but you may have consciously forgotten this hurt. Yet, it is not forgotten at all. The hurt of your current problem is the very same hurt. Now re-evaluate your present hurt, comparing it with the childhood hurt. Finally, you will clearly see how it is one and the same. No

matter how true and understandable your present pain is, it is nevertheless the same childhood pain. A little later you will see how you contributed to bringing about the present pain because of your desire to correct the childhood hurt. But, first, you only have to feel the similarity of the pain. This requires considerable effort, for there are so many overlaying emotions that cover the present pain, as well as the past one. Before you have succeeded in crystallising the pain, you cannot understand anything further in this respect.

Once you can synchronise these two pains and can realise that they are one and the same, the next step will be much easier. By reviewing the repetitious pattern in your various problems, you will learn to recognise the similarities between your parents and the people who have caused you hurt or are causing you pain now. When you experience these similarities emotionally, you will have taken a step further on the particular road of dissolving this basic problem. Mere intellectual evaluation will not yield any benefit. When you feel the similarities, while at the same time experiencing the pain of now and the pain of then, you will slowly come to understand how you thought you had to choose the current situation because deep inside you could not possibly accept unfulfillment as a viable option.

It goes without saying that many people are not even aware of any pain, past or present. They are busily pushing it out of sight. Their problems appear not as 'pain'. For them, the very first step is to become aware that this pain is present and that it hurts infinitely more, so long as they have not become aware of it. Yet, many people are afraid of this pain and like to believe that if they ignore it, it is not there. They choose such a path only because their conflicts become too great for them. How much more wonderful it is for a person to choose this path in the wisdom and conviction that a hidden conflict, in the long run, does as much damage as a manifest one. Such a person will not fear uncovering the real emotion and will

feel, even in the temporary experience of acute pain, that in that moment it turns into a healthy growing pain, free of bitterness, tension, anxiety, and frustration.

There are also those who tolerate the pain, but in a negative way, always expecting it to be remedied from the outside. In a way, such people are nearer the solution, because for them it will be quite easy to see how the childish process still operates. 'The outside' is the parent, or both parents, projected onto other human beings. They have only to redirect their attention from the outside, the offender, the parent, to the inside - themselves. They do not have to find their pain.

Only after experiencing all these emotions and synchronising the 'now' and the 'then' will you become aware of how you tried to correct the situation. You will see further, the folly of this unconscious desire, the frustrating uselessness of it. You will survey all your actions and reactions with this new understanding and insight. Whereupon you will release your parents, you will truly leave your childhood behind, and you will start a new inner behaviour pattern that will be infinitely more constructive and rewarding for you and for others. You will no longer seek to master the situation that you could not master as a child. You will go on from where you are, forgetting and forgiving, truly inside of you, without self-deceptively thinking that you have done so. You will no longer need to be loved as you needed to be loved when you were a child. First, you become aware that this is what you still wish, and then you no longer seek this type of love. Since you are no longer a child, you will seek love in a different way, by giving it instead of by expecting it. But it must always be emphasised that many people are not aware that they do expect it. Since the childish, unconscious expectation was so often disappointing, they made themselves give up all expectations and all desires for love. Needless to say, this is neither genuine nor healthy, for it is a wrong extreme.

To be fruitful and bring real results, this knowledge must go beyond mere intellectual understanding. You have to allow yourself to feel the pain of certain unfulfillments now and also the pain of the unfulfillment of your childhood. Then

compare the two until, like two separate photographic slides, they gradually fade into each other, move into focus, and become one. The insight that you gain, once you feel this experience as described here, will enable you to take the further steps you need.