A Healthy Love

Sometimes when we grow up in chaotic homes with alcoholic or addicted parents, parents with mental illness or parents who are operating out of the dysfunction from their own family of origin, we struggle to know what a healthy love is and how a healthy love should flesh itself out in our relationships.

As a result, we end up in relationships with men and women who do not know how to communicate effectively, who do not know how to share responsibilities, who do not know how to say “I’m sorry”, “I love you” or “Forgive me” and who do not know how to be honest and transparent with their inner thoughts and feelings.

In a sense, we actually recreate the family that we grew up in unknowingly because the family of origin dysfunction is all that we know about how to love and that same dysfunction is our mental and emotional picture of what love looks like. Many times, when we are growing up we say to ourselves, “I will never act like my mother” or “I am going to be a better man than my father”, but all too often we end up behaving exactly like the one that we swore we would not model ourselves after.

I encourage you not to blame yourself entirely for the behaviors, thoughts and attitudes that you acquired from your parents, as self-blame and shame can keep you bound. However, now that you are an adult and you have an awareness of your behaviors, thoughts and attitudes and where they stem from, it is now time to take responsibility for your own unhealthy behavior and work towards a change, work towards a more healthy love.

In light of the information above, compare your mate to your parent(s) and note the similarities. Are they more alike than different? Make note of how the family that you created functions mentally, emotionally and behaviorally. Do your children look and act as you did when you were a child growing up in a dysfunctional home?

If you are alarmed by your answers, now is the time to take control of your own behaviors, thoughts and attitudes. Don’t waste another minute giving and receiving unhealthy love. Change is possible!