IDENTITY TRAINING

LESSON TEN

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Freedom Steps for Relationships

The sum of all that has preceded in terms of Identity is this: When two or more people are cooperating, the model must be Identity-in-Relationship. That term emphasizes that each person remains an individual and drives toward moments of tremendous cooperation. Total symbiosis would be unhealthy because one would eventually atrophy. With both remaining full and powerful, the only solution happens in that magical word moments.

"Shoot for moments." That is a key phrase in therapy, and, once it is deeply learned, it seems to encourage each person to help create those moments. They know that there will never be total intimacy, total harmony, or total anything. The wish that two will form "a perfect union" where happiness will be forever, as the fairy tales have it, immediately causes problems due to an inaccurate picture of what is possible. Deep heartfelt intimacy comes because two people work for moments. They understand that all kinds of extenuating circumstances keep happily ever-after from occurring all the time. It is rather miraculous that intimacy can be accomplished at all. Intimacy occurs when two people transform time into moments and feelings into ecstasy, joining together as two innocent children playing in life together.

I.

Sharing Feelings

Those who have learned the Liberation Psychology system and made it a commonplace thing to openly admit their feelings find it difficult to recall relationships when that did not happen. Now they openly confess each feeling as it courses through: sadness with its losses, anger with its intrusions, scare with its threat, happiness as it encounters nature and pleasures, excitement about new options, and tenderness as love is shared. Feelings have become just normal fare. The way things are. This is the way two humans relate on the most private plane.

Others do not know how to share feelings. They stare, wait, talk about inanities, exchange data, deny background scare with obsessive rituals and generally avoid each other. Despair grows as each realizes, deep down, that something is missing. It is. But was it missing when they first met? Probably not. During their courtship, they likely talked about and shared every human feeling. The hope blossomed that, finally,

this person would be a partner with whom to share life. They could hold hands and cry together about the pain of the world. They would share anger about injustices and scare about close calls with tragedy. They would have someone with whom to walk, mindlessly happy, through nature, noting first this and then that bit of life clinging to stone and tree. There was hope that, with this person, you could be as excited as a child on a merry-go round and that tenderness between the two of you would be almost devotional in spirit.

Then something happened. One stopped sharing. Which one? The truth is that both stopped sharing their feelings, and those who loved them watched in horror. They stopped SASHET-ing together. Perhaps a friend became the one with whom real feelings were shared. The spouse got the Racket, the Reflexion, or the Ricochet. Maybe one manipulated an anger Racket to get their way. Then a Reflexion from one piece of behavior led back to something of pain from long ago and far away. Of course, each spouse got treated to a full treatment of the Ricochets of the other's mom and dad.

Those who learn to honestly share feelings forget all of that after a while. It seems so dead and meaningless to spend one's time avoiding the other. The very thought of it seems weird now.

Those who have not learned to share feelings experience a stage of hesitancy and real vulnerability when they first do so or even contemplate it. Here’s the thing: You simply force yourself to do it. One day, you begin. Wham. You admit a feeling. If the other says, "Don't feel that" in some way or another, you say: "No. It's okay. This is an honest feeling. I'm not asking you to do anything. I just wanted to share it with you." That process is practiced over and over again until it becomes daily fare, the way people live, the way of the deep soul. It’s the path to intimacy one person chooses who wants to be close to another person and refuses to go off on other tangents to prove some irrational point from childhood.

No matter what is learned in other parts of Liberation Psychology, the importance of simply sharing honest feelings bears repeating over and over again. When we learn to do that, mental health blooms, and when two people do it, deep speaks to deep. We will never compromise this point because we have witnessed the beauty of it in people for too long. Share SASHET. There is no better pathway to the heart of your partner.

II

Sharing Values

As we said earlier, values provide the context around which the process of feelings can be shared. If a person witnesses a documentary on living conditions in a South American country and is appalled by the pain of it all, feelings provide the way in which they can share the information with a spouse who did not

see the show. Seeing a beautiful painting is shared with feelings. BTJGL and SASHET go together. SASHET gives the how and BTJGL gives the what of that which we can share.

If the values a partner thinks about are the banal ones of things, pleasure, power, and social caste, it gets a bit difficult to authentically share feelings. After all, gaining prestige is finally just another delusion, so how can one be excited about it? As the body ages, it's tough to be happy just counting coins or expensive items unless one maintains an infantile mind. What humans truly desire is to exercise their full creativity as they engage in something expressing lasting value. One attempts to develop something of beauty, for instance. Imagine a person working on a marble statue. This is something to feel about, to struggle with, and for a partner to share in. One could be scared that a strike of the chisel might knock off a chip that would destroy the piece, or angry that others are not willing to pay the amount the sculpture is worth, thus abusing the integrity of the sculptor, or sad that such a thing of beauty is not sufficiently honored, or excited when someone buys it and cherishes it.

There is always something to talk about with those who choose the paths of the Creator of Beauty, the Good Soul, the Person of Justice, the Representative of Truth, or the Proponent of Love. Those who are alive, want to grow and become, are searching for better ways, and seek to help fellow humans who always have something to share with others. One of the difficulties of poor relationships is that some do not have the vision of a better and more loving world and thus concentrate on survival and momentary items that are not vital.

For those who want the promise of intimate moments that an Identity-in-Relationship model provides, it is necessary to continually vote for love, creativity, and appreciation of this world we have and are developing. When a person is involved in the forces that make this world a better place to live, they are sharing the dynamic areas of growth around which feelings can flow. Any other option is a pale representation of what can be and what cannot be accepted by a person of Identity.

III

Asking and Initiating

The greatest secret remnant from childhood happens to be a form of passivity whereby others figure out your main needs and wants. During childhood, parents provide this. The fooler for adults happens to be a latent belief-structure that the partner should also be so aware. "More games are played, Horatio, around avoidance of straight asking for what is wanted than this world dreams of." While that quote cannot be ascribed to either Shakespeare or Eric Beme, it is nevertheless true. "If he really cared, he would know what I want before I ask." "If she really cared, she would touch me without my having to beg." These are the

comments therapists hear week after week. When they inquire of their clients what is wrong with just asking for hugs, touches, talking, and all the rest, the responses are of this nature:

"If I ask and hear "No," rage pours through me; so I won't give my spouse the satisfaction."

Repeatedly the reasons given for not asking are fear of vulnerability and actually being in touch with what is needed by the natural Life Child within. The greatest intimacy comes when two people are as innocent and as childlike as two young babies playing in a crib. There is no scare, no territorial anger, no historical avoidances. Just two people playing. As one client put it, "Love is wanting to play with someone."

Partners can be harsh around requests, to be sure. "I am not your father!" "I am not your mother!" are comments that are heard. It is much wiser to realize that a partner is actually cast in many roles: friend, lover, mother, father, business partner, debater, child, and on and on. It's not a problem unless one gets continually cast in only one role. If a loop occurs, then it is time for therapy to work on that one part. There is something better than asking. It is initiating. Asking can be still another passive remnant from childhood where one remains passive. It is far more grown-up to initiate. If you want conversation, share about BTJGL with SASHET feelings. That is like providing water, soil, sun, and seed for the other to come alive. If you want touch, touch. If you want to go to movies, set up a schedule.

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Eight Tips

1) <u>Presuppose the good.</u> There is still nothing more powerful in a relationship than presuppositions. This means that in every nonverbal anticipation and verbal comment, you anticipate only the best out of your partner. When this basic premise changes, the relationship suffers an enormous blow. To achieve this, a person needs to make an internal declaration: "This is it. I will cease yearning for the perfect spouse. I am here. I make my stand. I will do all in my power to have my partner be my life partner." This does not unleash pleasing, being perfect for, or scared adaptations of any kind. It does not mean wishing, waiting, or any other form of passive imaginings. It means that every word and deed from your person emanates that this is the most wonderful person in the world with whom you share life.

   Nothing in human speech touches the power of presuppositions, which happens to be one of the four cardinal emphases of Liberation Psychology. To assume that something is, creates the is-ness. This is a secret for all relationships. Parenting cannot be done well without excellent presuppositioning.

Management without good presuppositioning is doomed for failure. The fact is that we are always presupposing another into being a certain kind of person. Taking charge of the presuppositions is what wise people do.

Concretely, this means that you do, in reality, shape your partner. We were always amazed how a person could prove a Script with any person present. If a person anticipated someone hitting them, it was wild to discover that they could almost pull blows from a saint. We pondered that more and more until we realized that every human is always in the act of presupposing what comes forth from others. This is a revolutionary understanding, and, with close relationships, nothing approaches it in power. One gains what is presupposed. (An exception is when the person is in such a heavy loop from childhood, replete with such transference that they win with their presuppositions over yours. Here a bit of inevitability helps. If that doesn't do the trick, the partner must work on the Script remnant that is destroying the love.)

2) Humor, fun, and a sense of plav with each other is difficult to compromise. You have business partners at work. What is wanted in private is someone with whom to share the tragedy and comedy of human existence. Life is funny. Woody Allen once remarked that the more tragedy one is aware of the more a sense of comedy emerges. That is true, but it must not be a substitute for tears. Still, a couple can laugh uproariously, giggle at the slightest thing, and approach much of their private time with the attitude of two happy playing children. There is nothing wrong with it; it's free, and it builds intimacy wonderfully.

   Some complain about being caught with the social chairperson role. "Why doesn't he ever come up with some fun suggestion other than sex!?" "Why do I always have to figure out vacations and entertainment options?" Each situation varies, of course, but we suggest that this may be one area where one simply goes ahead and sets up the plan. Then discuss it. If there gets to be a passive battle waiting for the other, one is simply returning to the solutions of childhood. Adults act. Adults create. Adults plan. Adults set up fun times because they know them to be the yeast of a relationship.

3) Care without Rescuing. Transactional Analysis was wise to point out the phenomenon of Rescuing where one caretaker-type does something for another, mistakenly thinking that it is love, when the other person was perfectly capable. Pleasers gush in and gush out always playing a game called 'Happy to Help."

   T. A. talked so much about Rescuing that it almost became the tendency to refuse to initiate care because "I don't want to Rescue."

   It would be a rather poor world without the continual initiation of care, kindness, and actions that

reveal love. The test of Rescuing is to see if the other is conning or if you are still engaged in some kind of scared giving out of a fear of abandonment True care simply means that you give because you give because you give. You love, so you give freely. That's all there is to it. The idea, however, is rather profound in that it means daily reaching out from tenderness and being thoughtful.

4) Equal Energy. The last paragraph needs to be followed with the understanding that a relationship exists when two people give energy. While we don't keep score in a competitive manner, it is wise to discern if each is contributing the same amount of drive to make love happen. Getting into a dynamic where you are the main contributor to love is simply not smart. It gives the other an invitation to go into childlike passivity where some kind of specialness is assumed.

   Equal energy means that love results from two people wanting to have it happen and using their energies to accomplish that. Each initiates. Each comes forth with personal power. Each uses energy around the home and contributes. Each shows love for the other. Each goes out of their way to make love happen. Each forgives. Each approaches the other. Each starts a new day fresh. Each seeks to get out of dead patterns. Each takes responsibility. That list continues 'til life's end.

   While equal energy should never be taken in a literal, competitive manner, it is critical that both know that love's joy emerges out of the vital contributions both make.

5) The Art of Compromise. Sometimes it is tough to find out which battles are worth fighting in life. Certainly it's not necessary to obsess around some need to have everything go perfectly. Two people have different bodies, histories, needs, wants, and plans for life. There is no way that both can always agree. There is the old Indiana shibboleth said by the grandmother: " We always compromised. He got to make the major decisions and I made all the minor ones. Of course, in sixty years of marriage we never had to make a major decision." The humor of that comment may hide a symbiosis, but it does point out the need to figure out some way to compromise.

   On the way to that compromise, integrity is never surrendered. Little-bitty, day-to-day decisions can add up, but most of the time it really makes little difference what is decided. When you disagree about what movie to see, one compromises or goes to their own movie. Having an Identity-in-Relationship means keeping your identity. If you disagree about major things, it is okay to think for several days or weeks about it. The trick is not arguing about minutiae. Maybe the grandmother is right: few major decisions rarely come along in life. In the meantime, however, lovers cannot anticipate that their partner has the same picture about what is best in daily life. There will simply be differences leading to minor decisions. And each has to compromise occasionally for balance.

6) A Money Philosophy. Lesson eight spells out a difference between the way kids are taught about money and the way mature adults handle it. We are firm advocates of each handling their own money in a relationship. When one gets married at 22 with a view of total togetherness, the thought of having separate financial structures across the board sounds horrible. "That shows no trust; I wouldn't marry someone with whom I couldn't share finances. Everything will be fine." Maybe. Power struggles around money in the early years are ugly. This seems to be an area where male inadequacy reaches its zenith and female demands for security reach their apex. We have seen men who risk everything in a wild fashion. We have seen women have wisdom in this area that scares typical males. Fights ensue repetitively about money. It is so unnecessary.

   Here's a solution that works for many. The couple agrees on major expenditures and pays those. Then all that is left is divided in half for each to manage as they will. In tw- income homes, frequently they cooperate on major bills, have no credit cards together, and keep their separate monies. When children come, another factor must be mixed in that usually entails going back to the solutions of paying the bills and each getting half. Each saves. Each plans for retirement. Each is responsible for private funds. Neither rescues the other. Each must learn full responsibility. Each couple has unique circumstances. One thing is sure: In order to maintain separate identities, keeping both powerful so that real love can occur, some structure for finances is necessary.

7) Blue Funk Davs. No one is going to be with you beautifully and perfectly every day the rest of your life. If that pronouncement appears harsh to you, it may well be that you have some more work to do on leaving the wishes of childhood. We all experience stresses in the world, and your partner will have them in some form or another and not be understanding, nice, or even rational at times. Fender benders. Bad drivers. Growly customers. Horrible waiters. A tummy ache. Sinus problems. A back ache. A child that cried all night.

   It all adds up to one thing: everyone needs to understand. Intimacy is a matter of moments. Some days go by and there is a scant hug or a warm word. That's the way it is. BUT. If you see each little item as something that ruins your dream of the perfect nest, then you had best go back to square one and work on losing the adolescent wish/dream. It is good to know your partner so well that you do not generalize on these Blue Funk Days. Wise people keep their presuppositions based on the best moments and the best days. Let others slide. Cool it. Go do something for your identity. If your partner is having one of those awful times, go live your life in a different room. Enjoy solitude for a while.

8) Children. Historically, the father has frequently been the one to install structure and emphasize that life has rules. However, in the modern world men and women now have to do it all. Often, one has to be

both mother and father as a result of divorce. In a nuclear family, Identity-in-Relationship would have both parents taking full responsibility for teaching structure and limits as well as providing nurture and guidance. There are so many lessons in this regard that we developed a special seminar, Evervdav Parenting, to address the many issues.

It is tragic to realize that parents usually raise children based on the failures of their own childhood. To have a baby does not mean that you have an identity. When one knows SASHET, follows a life of values, and has dramatically reduced infantile elements, raising a child is almost pure joy. A child gives a couple an opportunity to love, to think, to feel, to share, to be with. To be sure, there are times of pain and misunderstanding, trials and tough times, arguments and rule-setting. Those, however, are simply part of the mix that is incredibly wonderful. To share the raising of a child with a mature other, someone who joins their identity with yours, is something else again. All the work on one's identity is really worth it when your child is saved from the pain of parental Reflexions. Just giving a child SASHET, for instance, is a tremendous heritage. We decided that in a course on Identity two chapters were necessary to show how identity is wounded and expanded in relationships. "No one is an island" wrote John Donne. Special considerations aid in understanding just how much work is involved in staying separate while in a relationship, how to maintain a commitment while keeping counsel with oneself, and how to avoid basic traps that so frequently ensnare honest souls.

When a couple comes to someone trained in Liberation Psychology, the analyst-advisor reflects on whether or not the couple is in their first or second marriage. The first is always stained with the crimson dye of childhood. The second is one in which they are learning how to have an Identity-in-Relationship. The couple is frequently asked, "It appears that your first marriage is over. The question is: Do you want to have your second marriage with this person you have been married to?" That puts the cards on the line. Each then knows that there is work to do, childhood illusions and delusions to discard, and skills to be learned for a mature relationship. It is time to give up the Script and learn to love, or go off into nonsensical blaming. There is a double bind here, though. To blame is to stay infantile.

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"It has been good sharing these thoughts with you.

We hope you have a wonderful SASHET life, side by side."

Frank and Dixie Morris