

Loving More, Demanding Less

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Abstract

Unrealistic demands create stress and suffering in our lives. This paper will help you to learn to deal with your stress constructively by loving more.

How do we go about loving more and demanding less? Ken Keyes, Jr wrote a book called *Your Life Is A Gift*. In it he states that when you are given a gift, it often comes with directions. A stereo comes with an instruction book, a car with an operator's manual, etc. But your gift of life comes with no instructions. So how can we make the best use of this precious gift.

Do you think it is possible to cut out anxiety, anger, fear, jealousy, irritation, resentment, boredom, suffering, unhappiness? I say, "Yes!!" It's just because you were never given the instructions on how to do it. Learning to love ourselves is the key to our growth and empowerment. How many of us have heard the expression "It is selfish to think of yourself first, to love yourself"? How many of us really love ourselves?

Each of us has our own conscious and unconscious definitions of what "Love" is. As a child, you learned to love yourself as your parents loved you. And if you took on their ways of loving you to be your ways of loving you, chances are you have made some misinterpretation of what love might be. For example, if parents shouted a lot when you were a child, you might emotionally and subconsciously believe that love includes shouting. You might have carried that subconscious belief into your adult relationships and find yourself shouting a lot, or hitting a lot, or worrying a lot as one of your ways of showing love. Maybe you grew up with a lot of negativity in the household. So as an adult we might have a tendency to put people down, and think bad things about people or have a tendency to criticize people.

This mental programming started when we were small children. At that time we were well programmed by our parents, our teachers, our playmates, and by our own interpretation of our own experience. Now we act as robots. Our programming is on automatic, and we are

frequently not even aware of our programming. This programming has often been handed down generation after generation, and it is this addictive programming that is running our lives. We are victims of this programming. So what we have to do to free ourselves from suffering is change our addictive programming to non-addictive programming.

Think about your parents. How did they show their "love"?

Were they overly protective, overly critical, wanting you to be perfect, punishing you if not perfect, pitying, worrisome (worrying about you to show they love you), argumentative?

Did their ways of loving become your ways of self loving (self parenting)?

One of the ways we can find the love we want is to be **AWARE** that we have this negative programming. Say for instance your parents did a lot of shouting and you find that you do a lot of shouting to get what you want. Become aware that you are shouting and change the behavior. That is not who you are. That is not your desired programming. You don't have to play out your parents programming time and time again.

A man came to me to complain that other people didn't behave correctly toward him. People were inconsiderate, they didn't keep their word, they took advantage of his good nature, and so on. I asked him, "Why do you demand that others behave the way you prefer? The truth is, people always behave the way they are, but not according to how you wish them to behave. Do you see that the problem lies in your unrealistic expectations?"

That man did a very intelligent thing. He went to work on his own mental demands toward people. Instead of trying to change their behavior, he altered his viewpoints about their behavior. He simply let people behave as they wished, without wanting or expecting them to be any different. In

that healthy state he found peace, LOVING MORE, DEMANDING LESS.

A Simple Method

Now I want to give you a valuable viewpoint to use in all your human relations. It is really a miracle method for handling people, especially those who make things difficult for you.

The method is simplicity itself: Whenever encountering a troublesome person, do not identify him as being cruel or stupid or rude or anything else like that. Instead see him as a frightened person. This is exactly what a cruel or rude person is. All negative emotions have a foundation of fear. An individual displays these negativities to the degree that he is afraid. His angry aggressiveness is the only method he presently knows for releasing the tension of fear.

Now let's see how switching your viewpoint changes things.

Suppose that, when first meeting this difficult person, you do take the wrong viewpoint of seeing him as cruel or hateful. This will have a definite effect on the way you try to handle him. It will make you afraid of him, for negativity in one person arouses negativity in another. But, if you turn negative toward this other person, you cannot handle him wisely and tactfully.

Now see what happens when you really understand that he acts as he does because he is afraid. This will not make you negative in turn. It does not make you angry or defensive. You remain emotionally free of him; so you are able to proceed calmly and wisely. Not only that, but your calmness impresses him; your strength is transferred to him. The process is reversed. Instead of his negativity transferring itself to you, you transfer your positiveness to him! It is much like offering a new kind of candy to a child; he may not understand it at first, but he senses that you are his friend. In time, he may taste that candy—your understanding of him—and the relationship is magically transformed.

UNDERSTANDING THE OTHER PERSON
ACCEPT THE UNACCEPTABLE.

You are successful when you really enjoy your life.

Suppose you are playing tennis. You don't expect the ball to come from this direction or that.

You don't assume the other player will hit the ball for your convenience. To play with such fixed assumptions would cost you the game. Instead, you let the ball come as it will, then meet it in whatever way is best. This flexibility supplies skill for returning each and every ball. Be just as flexible toward everything that happens to you in the future, large events or small. That is how to win the game.

REAL LOVE FLOWS FROM THE UNCONDITIONAL
ACCEPTANCE OF YOURSELF AND
ALSO OF ANOTHER PERSON.

Ken Keyes states in the *Handbook to Higher Consciousness* that "addictions" are the only cause of suffering. An addiction is something you want and, when you do not get it, you create suffering in some form or other, from a howling rage to mild anxiety. Ken states that to find the road to happiness uplevel all addictions to preferences. A preference is something you might want or desire very keenly, but, if you do not get it, you do not create suffering because it was just a preference.

Communication

One of the problems we may have in learning to love more and demand less is in communicating. We may say that a person is difficult to get along with because we cannot communicate with them. A person who is difficult is only a person who behaves differently from our model of how they should be behaving. What we have a tendency to say is that we cannot communicate when a person does not behave in the way we desire afterwards.

If a person agrees with you, then you feel that you can communicate. If they don't agree with you, then you cannot communicate, and you label them as a difficult person. If everyone agreed with us, life would be great, but also boring. Remember that from their point of view the "difficult person" may be doing just fine and may be thinking about how difficult you are.

How to Avoid Negative Feelings toward People

1. Do not play judge. We are often not aware of how much we judge. We think that people are not using their heads when they do not think the same way we do.

2. Accept people for what they are, not what you want them to be. Remember that life may be very difficult for them

3. Everybody is our mirror. What we may not like about them reflects something we may not like about ourselves.

4. If someone calls you stupid and you react to it, what you are really saying is, "Maybe I am stupid." If there was no doubt in your mind, this would not bother you. Actions are rarely at fault. It is only our reactions that cause the problem.

5. Every interaction with another person involves a relationship. All that differs is the degree of involvement.

6. Trust is the basis of every working relationship. Evolve outer honesty into ever deeper levels of inner honesty. Take responsibility for how you feel without blaming.

7. When you can love and accept a person only if they are able to act in a fashion that fits your addictive programming, you are treating them as an object to be manipulated.

8. Remember that everyone is doing in their lives exactly what they need to do. What they are doing does not mean anything about you.

Think of life as you would a garden. Each person gets to plant anything they want in their garden. If you didn't like what your neighbor planted, would you go into his garden and pull out every thing you did not like. Of course not! Then why do we try to go into that same neighbor's head and take out all but what we agree with? Everybody is doing what they need to do, and this means nothing about us.

Use your past experiences as a ladder instead of a crutch. You can turn bad experiences into positive learning experiences. Don't look at what went wrong, but what you can do about it now. Turn every disadvantage into a positive potential. Concentrate on figuring out what will work better the next time, on how you can do things differently to achieve a more constructive outcome. It is not the foolishness in taking the wrong turn that counts, but in continuing once you realize you were on the wrong road.

When you become aware of your own feelings, stop running on automatic drive, and start taking control of your own life with positive

feelings, you will be surprised at how much easier it is to

LOVE MORE AND DEMAND LESS.

A Road to Happiness

1. Put out for what you want from a clear mind space (no blaming, no accusing, no demanding).

2. Better yet, feel good about what you want.

3. Accept what you get at the present moment for now. (That doesn't mean you cannot try again at a more auspicious moment.)

4. Delete the need to defend. Merely acknowledge what the other person has said. You do not have to like what is happening. You can even keep your opinion that what is happening is not right.

5. Remember the phrase there are two sides to every coin. The side the other person is viewing may be very different from the side you see.

6. Turn up your love even if you don't get what you want. You do not have to create suffering over something you cannot change. Give the other person permission to see things as they want to see them.

Another Way

Learning to LOVE MORE AND DEMAND LESS is the solution to the following questions. There are no Right or Wrong Answers.

1. What separate feelings am I creating?

2. Do I perceive something in the other person that I don't like?

3. Am I taking responsibility for creating my feelings?

4. Am I trying to justify or explain my position?

5. Am I blaming the outside world for my emotions?

6. Am I trying to get the other person to change?

7. Am I being totally honest about my feelings with the other person?

8. Am I trying to make myself look good?

9. Am I holding on to being right?

10. Am I trying to get the other person to agree with me?

11. Do I want the other person to realize that they are wrong?

12. Am I trying to hide any of my true feelings?
because I'm afraid the other person will reject me.
because I don't want to hurt them.
because I think that they cannot deal with this.

13. Do I understand the model I have of how the other person should be? – or how I should be?

14. Do I really want to feel closer, or am I enjoying my separate feelings?

You may find that you can get what you want another time. Look for a workable compromise. Try to develop win-win situations

Remember "All the world is a stage, and we are merely players acting out our roles." Sit back and enjoy the TV soap opera of your life.

Do not take life too seriously. Look for the humor in it all. Laughter is often the best medicine.

Remember to take responsibility for your own feelings because it is your own programming that creates your actions and also influences the reactions of people around you.

Are You taking These Ideas Home?

Imagine that you are shopping in a large, modern market. First you place a few staple items in your shopping cart, like milk and bread. The idea of fresh fruit appeals, so you add some apples and peaches. Because you like your foods spicy, some cinnamon and ginger pop into the cart. Finally, you think you'd like something sweet, so you add a chocolate cake.

Your shopping cart is now loaded with good things. You wheel it to the checker, pay your money and prepare to take it home.

At this point, suppose you do an incredible thing. Suppose you simply walk out of the market without taking your groceries. Suppose you don't take them home? You wouldn't dream of such an act, of course. After spending both your time and money, you would think it crazy not to bring home the groceries. You would be sure to carry them home to be enjoyed.

As you cover the principles of these pages, let that picture impress you. These principles and truths and techniques are for your health and enjoyment. You need them. Not only that, but you have paid for them with your careful examination.

Do not leave these ideas in the journal. Take them home; that is, apply them in your everyday experience. That is where they can nourish you. Just as the groceries must be taken home, so must these ideas be taken into your mental home.

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