

The Challenge of Intimate Bonding

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Research shows that more than 80 percent of life's satisfactions that contribute to one's happiness are derived from meaningful and intimately close relationships with loved ones. Still, a question remains: If one's most important aspirations in life are to bond, love, and be loved, why are so many of us not attempting to make our relationships all they can be? What is holding most of humanity from fulfilling what seems to be the single most important purpose of our being? Ironically, in reality, many people in intimate relationships experience the opposite pulling forces of a wish and fear of a relationship. It causes them to delay experiencing true intimacy with their present mates, by either giving up or passively awaiting a miracle that would rejuvenate their stale or combative relationship. Too many people live a lonely and loveless existence. Many dream of finding their destined soul mate, but in reality their love is delayed or fails to show up.

We rationalize and tell ourselves that as soon as we finish the pressing tasks that consume us, we will devote more time to our intimate relationships whether with our mate, our parents, our children, or other significant others. We tell our mate that we will be more passionate and romantic when things slow down. We promise ourselves that at some point in the future, as soon as we find more time, we will listen from the heart, be more mindful and accepting, compassionate, and intimate with our relationships. We convince ourselves that our true love will emerge if we wait for it long enough, or if we don't rock the shaky boat of our present relationship. We tell ourselves that soon we will find an opportunity to express love to our partner, our parents, or our children, but we never do it or it rarely happens.

We postpone intimate closeness, when deep within we know that there will never be a better time to take a leap and risk being vulnerable enough to make that long-awaited positive change. We experience an uphill challenge just thinking of the shift we could make in our dysfunctional ways of relating, and become more truthful to ourselves and loving from a heartfelt place. We are reluctant to reach out to the most precious, most delicate, and most painfully deprived area in our being that of intimate love. Though we wish and crave love, we, paradoxically, hesitate to take the step to embrace love because fear of rejection, humiliation, and hurt continue to dominate our emotions, even if we know that tomorrow may never come.

When we postpone intimate love, days slip into weeks, weeks slip into months, and months slip into years. Before we know it, we realize that we spent many precious years of our life avoiding the chance to claim the dearest of our birth right gifts: love! The love bond we give birth to in our dreams transcends us to a higher ground as beings, connecting us to our highest potential. But we tend to fear love's magnitude since in the process of intimate bonding, our mate becomes our mirror. The joy of our deepening intimate [love relationship](#) brings us face to face with our human shadows and imperfections. Thus, even though we wish to fulfill love's magical promise and reignite our present intimate relationship, we remain stagnated, fearing love.

According to Zimmerman & McCandless, when partners risk going beyond self-involvement and are able to authentically see, hear, and feel each other and the relationship with heightened intuitive awareness, they enter a state of *Third Presence* (the voice of the relationship). It is an entity, a pure witness that allows a more soulful, spontaneous communication between the two. It helps partners become increasingly aware of their infinite capacity to love beyond ordinary secular connectedness. Thus, intimate bonding increasingly deepens as it opens the couple to the mystery of wholeness and the divine. It is then, in a safer and increasingly supportive intimate bond, that partners can break

away from past dysfunctional patterns and overcome their fears. It is through this experience that they have the opportunity to transform their shadows into lights that shade a healthier, more in the moment way of being.

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