

Love, Heartbreak and Healing

Give sorrow words;
The grief that cannot speak
Whispers the o'er fraught heart
And bids it break.

Macbeth IV.111: William Shakespeare

As a therapist with 20 years of listening to and bearing witness to heartbreak, it wasn't until I experienced it most profoundly myself that I understood its beauty, its depth and its ability to thrust us into a spiritual journey. It was this experience that propelled me into writing my last book, *'Love in a Time of Broken Heart-Healing From Within'*. In it I have shared my life experience both as a woman and therapist. Using myths and stories, I've charted the inner journey to healing after heartbreak as well as outlined the influence our early lives have on our love relationships-and much more. More importantly, writing this book, which for me was a spiritual journey, led me to a deeper understanding of the essence of the inner marriage, as well as the nature of love and our search for it. I learnt that for many of us, our love relationships reflect our spiritual journey, and how experiencing heartbreak can bring us to unconditional love. Losing love can take us to experience our own hearts and our soul's longings, perhaps for the first time, and connects us with our deep need for inner wholeness or spiritual fulfilment.

How can heartbreak and soul pain be beautiful? Because it propels us deep into our inner selves, a terrain often left undiscovered in our hurried lifestyles. A terrain of such richness we ignore it at our peril-because if we continue to look outside of ourselves for everything, we will never heal, and we will never find love.

Why do we search for love? Because when we love, we feel whole. In a time of increasing emotional isolation and fractured relationships our search for love has become urgent. Our sense of separation is so acute, we are crying out for the touch of the divine, for a higher force that can help us heal. Love, with its ability to take us into the transcendent, can do this. But despite knowing that love lies within we still seek it outside of ourselves. This means that when the one we love leaves us, we are heartbroken, leaving us not only bereft of him or her, but also of love. And the inner marriage, our sense of wholeness, becomes even more elusive.

At the basis of our human relationship experience lie three fundamental truths, as I see it:

- Our impulse to love another soul is part of our spiritual journey and our inner search for wholeness and balance.
- Our adult relationships bear the mark of our first relationship with our parents and our early life experience impacts on the way we relate.
- A broken heart is a sacred initiation with opportunities for soul growth.

What is the Inner Marriage?

Fundamentally, the inner marriage is about the balancing of the masculine and feminine within oneself. Swiss psychologist Carl Jung believed that every human being has contra-sexual components; in other words, all of us have masculine and feminine energies, and what every individual seeks is a balance between the two in order to feel complete. In this respect, outer union with a partner is merely a reflection of our need for inner union. Or, to put it another way, the drive to relate in love is merely the outer manifestation of the universal drive for wholeness and union within.

That is the reason why, for so many of us, the urge to love another soul and have a partner is so strong. Love has a transcendent quality that draws us. Of the Inner Marriage the poets say: *'When two souls have finally found each other there is established between them a union which begins on earth and continues forever in Heaven.'* -Victor Hugo

The mystics say: *'If you want to make progress on the path and ascend to the places you have longed for, the important thing is not to think much but to love much, and so do whatever best awakens you to love.'* -St Theresa of Avila

Love has a great power to heal us. Relationships offer us an unrivalled opportunity for soul growth. In some deep part of our soul we all have a memory of wholeness, and of belonging. We also have a sense of having lost this wholeness, and this further fuel our search. Psychologists would tell us that what we are searching for is to return to the nirvana that we thought we experienced when we were in our mother's wombs. My own belief is that while the birth experience is most definitely our first great experience of physical separation, it is merely a reminder of an earlier separation, and causes us to search endlessly for the person who will give us the desired sense of completion. Often this is a nameless yearning we feel in our hearts and we imagine it will be healed through meeting the perfect partner, our soul mate.¹

*The minute I heard my first love story
I started looking for you, not knowing
How blind that was.
Lovers don't finally meet somewhere
They're in each other all along* -Rumi

Learning about 'Otherness'

Soul mates come into our lives so that we can learn about love, about healing, and about compassion. The consciousness of relating to another being opens us to union and wholeness that is not possible any other way. It is only through the constant chaffing of differences that we learn to deal with otherness. Through this acceptance we move to inner wholeness. Outer love brings us to inner love and vice versa. Once we connect with and change our inner lives it reflects outside in our outer lives.

So, we need our soul mates. On an archetypal level, we are primed to have certain experiences and meet certain people as part of our soul journey. Additionally, our psychic inheritance and cultural and family heritage informs our life and the choices we make. Spiritually, our sacred contracts ensure that we meet with and relate to those souls we have agreed to work with to learn certain lessons. In this sense, our emotional wounds and difficult life experiences are in fact spiritual tasks of empowerment. So, though it may be a hard lesson to accept, when our soul mate and lover leaves us, he or she could be doing us a favour. Indeed, as the stories in *Love in a Time of Broken Heart* tell us over and over, our heartbreak and sense of abandonment may be just what we need to lead us to connect with our soul's purpose, to uncover and heal emotional wounds that are holding us back and to lead us to eventual inner (and perhaps outer) union-the inner marriage.

Healing From Within

Heartbreak will catapult you into a great depth. It will move you, sear you and change you. Many people think that time is what heals a broken heart but, in fact, this is not true. Time may dull the pain, but we all know people who remain bitter and angry about their relationship break ups and divorces. No, time alone will not do it.

¹ Mauger, B. *Love in a time of Broken Heart* p64

Heartbreak, like love, demands more from us. To fully harness the healing power of love and heartbreak we have to be willing to fully engage with it. At a profound spiritual level, we are meant to have our hearts broken wide open, so that we can love more, so that we can know compassion, and experience unconditional love.

Compassion is where our heart pain is meant to lead us. Period.

To heal a broken heart, we have to go through a journey. We have to be prepared to go through the dark night of the soul, immortalised by John of Cross and others. Healing always comes from within. Healing from within means travelling into the profound terrain of our souls. It means exploring the older wisdom in our 'Deep living hearts', and surrendering to something far greater than the narrow focus of our ego-driven minds. To truly touch this place within we must 'lose sight' of ourselves, and move beyond, to the tide of life that stirs in the 'depths, out of sight, in the deep living heart²'. Healing from within means that we do not blame others for what they did, or did not do, to make us unhappy. True healing involves taking responsibility for the choices we make and the relationships we have.

How do we do this? We have to be willing to enter into our hearts and begin looking at our patterns and exploring our pasts. There are always inner forces at work in our relationships, and it is our inner (psychological) landscapes that determine how we relate and with whom. This means that we each bring into our relationship our emotional baggage, our personality and how we have experienced our past. As well as having the power to heal us, our soul mates act as mirrors in which we can see ourselves. We may not always like what we see, but then, seeing our lovers and partners as a mirror is helpful when trying to understand ourselves as well as the inner dynamics of our intimate relationships. We can ask, what does my partner reflect back to me about myself? What do I see in him or her that I do not see in myself? What pattern am I acting out in my choice of partners and my way of relating? If I am consistently choosing the same kind of man who cannot commit for example, what is this saying about me?

Architects Of Love: Anima & Animus³

Healing from within means exploring our inner landscapes. Are we wounded emotionally? The answer will always be yes, but the 'how' is what we need to find out so that we can learn what we need to heal, what we are likely to project onto our lovers and how. Two archetypes (inner forces), the anima and the animus, are particularly involved in intimate relationships, acting as architects of love. The anima in the man and the animus in the woman will act as guides in their choice of partner, and also determine how they will relate. How so? For all of us, our first relationships (with our parents) create the template for later relationships – particularly relationships involving love and intimacy. Also, since our mothers and fathers are generally the first male and female in our lives, they make up our inner images of male and female. Both men and women are greatly influenced by parental imagery, and yes, I'm afraid it is true that we unconsciously seek out our parents or more accurately what we may have missed in our parents, in our partners. But remember, our archetypal and psychic inheritance together with our early life experience greatly influence us, but need not **determine** how we go on to live our lives. We always have choice, but we generally need to become aware of our unconscious patterns before we can exercise this choice. Love means hurt-to those of us that have travelled that

² From Lawrence, D.H, *Know Thyself*

³ Mauger, B., *Love in a Time of Broken Heart-Healing from Within* p.154

particular road, and that is the mantra we learn and we live by until we learn better, or until we refuse to listen to it.

So, men have an **Anima** and women an **Animus**. A man's anima will be made up of his earliest experiences of the feminine, usually his mother, and a woman's animus will be greatly influenced by how she has experienced the first man in her life, generally her father. The animus or inner masculine is responsible for our creativity, and more specifically, our ability to bring that creativity to life. The anima or inner feminine represents everything to do with relationship, how we relate in general. Anima is so intimately connected with love and relating that generally speaking, if you have had an emotionally stark or difficult early childhood you will have a wounded anima and this will be reflected in your relationships. The animus too can be wounded and women usually project this into the men they love. In straight language, we generally love because we want to heal.

Shadow Love

Healing from within means uncovering and becoming aware of elements in our lives that were formerly unconscious, such as the need to control our partners because we feel emotionally insecure, fear of abandonment and so on. We do not love by accident! There is always a greater plan at work in our lives and relationships. In Jungian psychology we talk of the 'shadow'. The shadow is that part of us we repress, and also that we have in potential. In other words, our shadow represents unconscious aspects of our personalities, and includes our latent qualities. When we relate, particularly in intimate relationships, we usually project these aspects onto our partners. When we project unwanted qualities or patterns we consider unacceptable, we will be irritated by these very things in our partner. The same process applies in the positive. When we fall in love, we project positive, beautiful qualities onto our lovers, so they embody all the beauty our soul desires. The process of mutual projection means there are always inner forces at play in our relationships, making for exciting and sometimes challenging times!

When we lose love, we empower ourselves through a journey of healing which includes honest self-examination and evaluation. And since we have learned that love can bring us back to ourselves and reveal our souls in a way not possible otherwise, our journey to healing after heartbreak will result in a stronger, more beautiful and resilient soul, and an open heart.