

On Love*

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Gradually, we have become more free in expressing ourselves both emotionally and verbally. However, since we have not had a corresponding change in our structure, our articulation is far from healthy. Currently, favorite verbal expressions include all the four letter words. They are used with no more concern than speaking of the weather. We have grown so accustomed to hearing them that no longer is there any shock whether they come from the lips of a man or a sophisticated lady. They are used because they are expressive and, with them, we try to make up for our inability to express our feelings.

Today, I am going to discuss one of the choicest and most frequently used four letter words, which is bandied about with no thought or understanding of its true meaning. It is used indiscriminately by both men and women who say it without feeling or commitment. If its meaning were really felt, this word would be rarely used and then only in the strictest privacy. This four letter word is "love."

The true existence of love is rare. One must ask, "What is love?" We use the word many times a day, "I love this," "I love that," "Don't you just love such and such?" Of course, this has nothing to do with love anymore than to say "I hit the fucking lamp-post" has to do with sex.

Love is an illumination of the organism felt primarily in the genital when in the presence of a loved one or even from mere thoughts of the loved one. When this is felt between lovers, the loved one becomes all important, more important even than life itself. One wishes only to bask in the warmth of the loved one's presence and to protect her from all harm and to hold and caress her. At first, this is not a sexual desire but rather an adoration. However, as love develops, one gradually becomes aware of an overpowering need to express this love sexually.

*As president of the American College of Orgonomy, Dr. Baker delivered this address at the eleventh annual meeting of the college in July of 1979. Only his words of welcome to the members and guests of the college have been deleted.

Sex is and should be an expression of love. In our society, how we have defiled it! Unfortunately, society does not distinguish healthy sexual expression from pornographic sexual degradation, so all sexuality is frowned upon and becomes dirty except the routine function of sex for procreation.

The sexual expression of love is a total reaching out for another, a merging with that person and total surrender to her. Energy is literally reaching out, the skin becomes warm, the pulse full and slow, vision is acute, the genitals are filled with blood and acutely sensitive, while streamings flow through the body. It is a state of great tension and must be relieved through the sexual embrace, after which the organism can relax with a feeling of great gratitude.

In healthy love, one seeks a specific mate. This is probably to a large extent based on harmonious organotic pulse rates, but certainly our training and environment help to determine our selection. We tend to select one whose background is similar to ours. Selection in adolescence is not as rigid. That is a time of getting acquainted and testing out possible mates, preparing for a permanent selection; but in the adult, selection is quite specific. Even if everyone were healthy, not everyone would do, although there would be a wider choice. We must remember that healthy people are not all alike and so would not be equally desirable.

When we speak of health, we are inclined to conjure up the ideal person. One may be healthy but be far from ideal. And here, again, we are inclined to place a rigid separation between one who is healthy and one who is neurotic, believing the healthy one could not be interested in the neurotic. The neurotic is simply one who has exaggerated certain traits of his healthy core, which gives rise to a specific character in accord with the traits that have been used as defenses and thus have become over-emphasized. The neurotic contains nothing that does not exist in health except that his important defenses would not assume so much importance if he had a healthy structure. Thus, a healthy person could love one who was neurotic, provided she was not too obviously neurotic, and would, of course, have to adjust to the more restricted capacity of the neurotic. He would need to maintain a great deal of patience and understanding. Occasionally, this can draw the neurotic to health. A component always present in the neurotic pursuit of love is anxiety. He is not accustomed to the expansion that is a prerequisite of love.

The love of a healthy person is unselfish and nonrestricting. It wishes what is best for the loved one and allows complete freedom, not trying to tie the loved one down to the relationship, as the neurotic does. On the other hand, the love of the neurotic is selfish, wishing to hold the loved one at all costs because of his own insecurity and desperate needs. Stewart Emery has described healthy love correctly as: "I will not harm you, I accept and do not judge you, I support and appreciate your essence, I love you."

It is often asked whether jealousy would exist in the healthy love relationship. We have not had sufficient experience with health to be dogmatic about it, but I think it would. Not the overpowering, uncontrollable jealousy of the paranoid, but certainly an awareness when the mate seems to favor a rival. If the mate chooses the rival, then intense sadness and loss is felt. One remembers the mate is under no obligation to love or even continue the relationship, and that, therefore, anger and resentment are not appropriate. There are three avenues open to the rejected one, all of which are equally healthy: 1) He may compete and try to win her back; 2) he may accept the situation, or 3) he may break any remaining ties himself and seek a new mate. In any event, he will not allow his loss to overpower or incapacitate him, as the neurotic would.

Love may last from one day to a lifetime, depending on several component factors in the relationship. To like the loved one's body is necessary. To develop a mutually satisfying sexual relationship is also necessary, but this must be backed by enjoying each other's company and having many interests in common. Also present should be the ability to satisfactorily solve all major problems that interfere with the relationship and develop a mutual trust. The more each can complement the other, the longer the relationship can last. I have known many to doubt that a love for one day could be healthy. They say, "If it is healthy, why would it end?" Suppose, for example, a man and a woman are on vacation (rest increases sexual tension and the circumstance lowers the required specificity) in an exotic place, attending a formal grand ball. They see each other at their best, in glamorous attire and in a romantic setting. They meet and talk and illuminate with all the feelings of love. They spend the night in ecstasy, but, when morning dawns, they may see two different people, wholly unsuited to each other.

In marriage, when one mate ceases to excite the other, this is usually permanent unless it is due to correctable factors. In the latter case, a brief affair may restore the marriage and bring the two closer together. In the first instance, the marriage may be dissolved or it may be continued as a companionship where this is very satisfying.

In the latter case, one or both may seek sexual satisfaction outside of the marriage. This should be done with the utmost discretion. I do not understand why one may cease to be excited by the mate while the other continues to be excited and is still deeply in love.

It is not always possible to find a mate who can adequately satisfy both companionship and sexual needs. Two may be necessary if this situation can be accepted. Healthy couples remain together and are faithful as long as the relationship is satisfying. When it ceases to be so, a new mate is sought.

Promiscuity-that is, having more than one sexual partner at a time, as is found in open marriages and among the so-called swingers-is never healthy. Such behavior is grossly neurotic. Those who seek sex without love, indulging in the physical expression alone, find it is never fully satisfying.

The neurotic invariably chooses a mate whom he identifies with his mother (she with her father), and this in itself precludes a satisfactory relationship because the incest taboo is ever present. The healthy person is inclined to choose a mate who may be like his parent but is not identified with the parent. There is no incest taboo present.

So far, we have discussed love that requires a sexual expression. There is another love, similar in all respects except that sex is not only not desired but would be distasteful. This is the love one feels for a parent, a child, or a friend of the same or opposite sex. Love is still felt in the genital, the individual thrills in the presence of the other, but sex is not an object. It seems obvious that this should be so, but why it is I cannot say. Where sex does become an object in such instances, we find a grossly neurotic background.