

Relationship Differentiation

By: William Van Vechten

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If you can achieve a place of total openness, honesty, and trust with your partner, you can have a closer and better relationship. But it's not easy.

If you withhold some of who you are, (even from yourself), it may be easier for a while. But eventually it catches up with you. And when it does, if your partner learns about it... after you've been hiding it... Watch out! Blown trust is VERY difficult to rebuild... Often impossible.

This process of compromising your integrity for peace in your relationship can worsen over a period of years before you finally realize things have to change. Many couples are married by this time, and divorce is much more difficult than saying goodbye early in the relationship.

Plenty of people have been living in unconscious relationships for a long time. They may have been withholding things for a long time. How can you just begin disclosing your most dearly held secrets to your partner? If you were worried that they wouldn't accept it last year, won't it be even harder this year?

OK, good point! I guess before you spill your guts, you might want to think about a couple of things:

1. Are you ready to open up, come clean, and step into your true self? You'd better be willing to say: "That's the truth. I cannot change it. It is part of who I am. I have to accept it, no matter how hard it is. And now I am willing to take the risk of speaking it."

2. Is your partner ready, willing, and able to hear your truths without taking them as personal insults or injuries? Many people don't want to become conscious just because their partner wants to. And some people will express a desire to know the truth that is just a smoke screen so they can lay blame and judgments upon whatever those truths are.

3. If your partner absolutely CANNOT accept what you share, you may lose that partner. There is good news as well as bad news about this. We all know the bad news. The good news is that you really don't want a partner who cannot accept you as you truly are. If you lose your partner this way, you have an opportunity to find a new partner who WILL accept you as you are. It is NEVER too late.

It's up to you. You have to decide. If you are lucky enough to be in the beginning of a relationship, you can make an agreement at the beginning to be open and honest. Then it's a little easier to actually live it.

If you're stuck in an unconscious or secretive relationship, either with yourself or with another, and it works for you, then I'd say STAY WITH IT. Do what works for you. If it DOESN'T work for you, then you have an opportunity to change things.

A great book on this is The Conscious Heart, by Gay and Kathlyn Hendricks. One of the fabulous things about this book is that Gay and Katie share their own true-life experiences. They bare all... including the difficult parts.

Another is Passionate Marriage, by David Schnarch. He describes relationship entanglement and differentiation, and how you can begin to move from one to the other.

OK, so I'm a proponent for the conscious path. That's why I created my practice, this website and my authentic and transparent relationship with my beloved wife Kathryn. But you have to do what works for you. And maybe take baby steps.

With Conscious Love,
William