

LL02- Who are Our Models

Welcome to LoveLife.

So Douglas, this whole notion of love and relationships takes on various forms, we could be talking about whether it's friendship or whether it's romantic relationship, but you know thinking about what really informs us about what love is supposed to look like what it's supposed to feel like, what is connection is supposed to be like.

I was thinking about something because I work with women all the time and I realize that there are stories we tell ourselves as a byproduct of some of the experiences that we've had, and sometimes we won't let go of that story and if we don't let go of it, it does something to us as we are trying to have adult relationship with unfinished stories from our teen years, our early childhood years, and it made me think about one of the first experiences, one of the first crushes.

It was as a young girl and his first name... because there are so many of us out in the world.. but I just had the biggest crush on this kid who was named Danny. And Danny was just adorable with his blond hair and his blue eyes and where I grew up... you know... that was sort of the epitome of what adorable was, and I just thought he was just a little piece of everything.

I wanted his attention so bad and I would.. you know.. find myself.. you know.. trading my snacks because, because if he said today I could be as girlfriend than I'll give up my snacks .

So it just it made me think about the fact that we're always in this sort of exchange, this willingness to give up something, to sacrifice something for someone that we want.

But sometimes we don't recognize that we're giving more than we're getting back right... and sometimes we don't see ourselves in terms of the kind of value that we should intrinsically have ..how we feel about ourselves and how that should inform the way that we do relationships with other people

You know it strikes me though that we don't really have a very good sense about how to form an opinion about relationships . Back when I was in graduate school I had a professor who said that parenthood was the last of the unskilled occupations and there's some truth to that, but I think that's also true about relationships..... that we have no clear understanding of what the model is? He said that relationship really didn't come with a book.

Right.

And I'm very fond of saying that I have a crystal ball but it came without instructions.

And we don't have any instructions for relationships.. you know we don't understand quite how to go about this

So where do we get those ideas ..you know.. do we look at our parents and their relationship? Is that our model? Do we look at our grandparents? Do we find some group of people that we've met.. you know.. in life and we see that special thing between them and say, aha that's how I want to be?

So where did yours come from?

You know I think that it did come from a particular couple that I met in the course of my life who were so devoted to one another... who reallythere was a sense of I won't say reciprocity because that sounds like it's a transactional thing, right, but there was an unconscious awareness that each had for the other.

How to fit against them, how to delight in what they delighted in, a sense of ...I mean, I think this is what people mean when they talk about wanting unconditional love from a partner ...

Love without conditions suggests a lot of different things, but to my way of thinking and in my experience that

unconditionality is really aboutI want to be accepted for me, I don't want to have to change myself into someone else in order to be loved

Because what you're speaking to is a worthiness right...that as I am already, I am worthy of love. But so many times we are ill informed about the quality of who we are already, and it's not about perfection or imperfection, we're all imperfect, but do we see ourselves as worthy of healthy and good love?

You know I met a young woman the other day, she was actually cutting my hair, and we were talking about Relationships..... I seem to do this a lot... and shock Yeah I know.

And she said I'm still looking for that special person, I'm still looking and I haven't found him and I just think this is a time in my life where God is preparing me. And when he's ready I'm going to find that person.

Well I think you're right, and I think that will happen and I love the idea that you are preparing yourself.. you're not looking at this is a fallow period in your life, you're not looking at this an arid desert in your life lacking relationship , you're looking at this as he's there right and I'm waiting ...he's coming. But I'm waiting actively.

Yes, I'm not waiting passively you know that at some point he'll fall into my life and everything will come together, but rather that I recognize that

You use the word reciprocity, looking at reciprocity. That I'm preparing myself to be a gift to someone else and my hope is that that person also is preparing themselves to be a gift to me, so that there is that intrinsic slow dance that goes back and forth between us that we are both giving and receiving inside of this relationship; not selfishly, not with our own particular agendas, but rather that there just is a natural exchange in this process and I want to be a quality partner which means that I have to go through the preparation period to be able to be that, so that active preparation is a beautiful thing in a relationship because we have to understand that relationships are very much an exchange

But you talked about worthiness earlier, and I was thinking about that in a kind of mildly humorous fashion, which I sometimes do, and I was thinking back to one of the dates that I went on earlier in my internet dating life. I tell a story in the book about going out with a very lovely woman, and I think we were on our second date and we were sitting in a little outdoor cafe and chatting and she suddenly looked at me and she said you know,.....

I think you should trim your mustache.

And it was a very odd thing I mean, I was sort of a little taken aback. I thought, literally when I looked at her, and I said so if I looked at you and said I think you should become a redhead, would that bother you? And she said ...Oh it's not the same thing at all ...and I said, Oh but it is. I mean I like the way I look and in fact I just trimmed my mustache before I came to see you yeah so I'm not sure why you want to change me. Don't you like me the way I am?

I think that's what you're talking about, about worthiness. It's loving yourself enough to say I like who I am, I like the way I look. I can take input, I can take criticism, that doesn't bother me but

Am I not enough already? Now, if I'd been patient, if I'd been a better person than I am, sorry to say, I think I probably would have waited a beat and sort of sussed that question out a little bit differently.. and maybe asked why. It turned out that she said I wanted to kiss you and I was afraid that your moustache was going to be ticklish. But I didn't wait you know, I kind of reacted and maybe a little bit bristly because I was so taken aback, because it felt like a criticism of me. We've just met, and you already want to change me ...right... and I thought well, if you know this is the beginning of what's going to be, always going forward.....

I think that suggests to us something about our models and also there can be negative models and when you see couples that are just... I mean this saddens me so much, but when you see couples that that are sniping at each other all the time and kind of lying in wait and there's a pounce you know.

There's some little criticism that's going to be leveled at some point coming right around the corner you start to

become like two cacti.

You know it is very unkind and it's uncomfortable to be around

Oh absolutely, and you wonder how did that come about.. right.. where did they...where did they see what love was supposed to be... and do we ever get to a point where we start to recognize what healthy love looks like versus what unhealthy love is?

We have to find a place for ourselves because ultimately at the end of the day we're going to have to develop that for us personally..you know.. that it's not just what you say, but what are you going to apply.

We've got to look at relationships almost like a buffet ...you know.. everything that's on the buffet doesn't need to be on your plate, but you can see it all and what are you going to take out of the things that you're saying? What are you going to use from the models that you've seen, and sort of inculcate into who you're going to be, and what love is going to look like for you.... but starting first at a place of worthiness, knowing that you are worthy and it is so healthy.

For me.. you know.. I kind of take my prescription from the words love your neighbors as yourselves, so I think about this in the context of how do I want to be treated, how do I want to be loved? That's the way I want to love someone else.. that's the way I want them to receive everything from me.

That I would want, and if I treat them that way, if I treat this person with that kind of gentleness, with that kind of care, with that kind of attention, then how can love not flourish?

What a beautiful way to say that... let me add something to that in that fundamentally what you are saying is that I will fall in love with me first.

Yes

Well I've got to, because we teach people how to treat us so I'm going to love me so that I know how to love you but what I want from you is to be loved fully as well so that there's a mutuality in that but what I want to do for you is I want to love you the way you need to be loved which may be different than the way I need to be loved but what we equally need is someone to be able to love us the way we need to be ...which brings me to my... to my reframe which is this, when we talk about this notion of unconditional love we have a model.

Yes, and it's God's model, that's how he loves us. He expects little of us, in fact he's standing there like a Bridegroom as it says in the Bible, like a bridegroom, you know, ready to shower all of these blessings in our lives, ready to bless us in all these ways and give us his grace and ask nothing in return., even though we are undeserving, because he already sees us as we are.

See he starts out from You Are My Child, you are worthy, and the beauty of that, of being loved like that is, I mean it's just amazing, so if you as a human being can learn how to love like that, to love another person like that, then you're loving them the way God loves us.

Absolutely, that's just such a powerful prescription in my life and I would say that also recognize that in your worthiness when you're not in a relationship with someone who values you, your gift to yourself is to be able to let go of something that is less than what you are worthy of.

Right so loving yourself is about saying yes, and it's also about saying sometimes.

So if you have a story about your first date or a story about your model your role model for love, share it with us at Doug@lovelife.digital or Alvean@lovelife.digital and we'll see you next week.