

LL15- The Lies We Tell Ourselves

I'm Alvean Lyons
and I'm Doug Weiss and welcome to Love Life

OK Douglas, So we have some interesting topics that we're going to talk about today and in the spirit of equality I think it's totally appropriate for me to open the door for you to speak first.

So our first topic is about the lies that we tell ourselves and really being able to play with that in the sense of the things that we tell ourselves, that we find ourselves pursuing but are just robbing us of love, life, happiness, fulfillment, those kinds of things. If I said to you what do you think are some of the most common lies that we tell ourselves, that are standing in the way of our true happiness, what would you say you've heard over the years?

Oh gosh that's a long list, but I think at the top of my list probably the number one is this notion of a tension point between self reliance and complete dependence. The way that that comes out often is: I don't need....fill in the blank here.... I don't need your advice, I don't need your help, I don't need anyone in my life, I don't need this, some issue, some challenge, some problem. But if you really boil those things down, underneath the surface what's really going on here is a tension, as I said earlier, between the notion of Transcendentalism, this notion of self-reliance, I can take care of myself, and our inner sense that we're all dependent upon each other and, in my view dependent upon a higher being. We're not expected to be, and can't be completely alone and completely independent. At a certain point when we reach that degree of separation between human beings, that's the breakdown of what we know of society, that's the breakdown of relationship and that's the breakdown of any potential for durable love.

So for me, the Paramount lie that we tell ourselves aboutwell before I answer that question, let me ask you a follow up to what you just said. Where do you think that lie originates? Because most lies are really just the fruit of some seed. Is fear feeding that?

I have an opinion that at the bottom of that lie of... I don't need anyone, I don't need anything, I don't need, well to me it's fairly straightforward. I think that's the fruit of hurt, that's the fruit of some deep wound. Somebody who's been let down, somebody who's been disappointed or never received something that they're yearning for.... Affection, approbation, respect, whatever it may be, or all of those things. And so they become hardened and tell themselves I don't need that, I'm fine without it. In fact whenever I hear people say I'm fine, I'm fine.....there's a difference between I'm fine because I'm resting in God's love for me, I'm fine because I know I have great friends and family, and support in this community, that's an affirming statement. But sometimes when people assert I'm fine what they're really saying is: I'm not fine, but I'm not going to let you see the fact that I'm hurting inside.

I'm afraid to hear because when he said that, the first thing that went through my head is the fear of rejection and the fear of disappointment yet again. I believe, for something that you never get. The realisation of that belief that you will never get the fulfillment of that want makes it easier for me to say I don't need, so that I don't allow myself to be able to feel the need and then have that need go unfulfilled. And the pain of that unfulfillment is what's at the root of my rejection of this exchange that leaves me.....there's that big word we always talk about, vulnerable. I don't want to be vulnerable. I don't want someone else to have the power to hurt me, to make me feel less than in some way, so it's easier to just keep you at arm's length, to keep my hopes at a distance. It's just easier, at least people think it's easier. Unfortunately it does the very thing that we spend so much of our time talking about, it robs us of love and it robs us of life. When we do that push away, that shot of, that stay way over there, because we are created for connection, and hurt is part of the process. We will heal despite the fact that sometimes it feels like it's never going to happen, we do heal and if we heal well we end up being better as a result of it.

I think the memories of pain are different than memories of happiness. I think we can forget pain at times but not on a substantive level. We push it down and away, but it's always present. Whereas happiness is something that tends to linger and we can conjure it up but it doesn't persist in the same way I think people actually learn a lot more from pain than they do from happiness. What's so interesting is you can experience one bit of pain and you can literally restructure your entire life to avoid feeling that pain ever again, but you can have incredible happiness and tomorrow you're looking for a higher high. It's so interesting in the human condition how short term our memory is around

good things that are done to or for and with us and how long term our memory can be about the things that hurt or bruise us.

Exactly. So what lies to do you hear often?

Well what's so interesting typically I don't reference gender related things because I think our human experience is so much more common than it being about gender or anything else. But one of the ones that I heard for several years is the you can have it all. I'm going to welcome it into my gender box for the sake of this conversation but, the notion of being as I am, a wife and a mother and a professional is an incredible juggling act. What I realized very early on, and I am so grateful for the revelation so that I didn't drive myself crazy, is that the answer is yes, you can have it all, but not at the same time. I remember watching an interview with Barbara Walters several years ago and she said of those three things that I referenced, mom, wife, career, choose two because you can only do two of those things really well at the same time. If you're going to be an incredible mom, an incredible wife, your career is going to take a backseat. If you're going to have an incredible career, and be a credible mom, your spouse is going to take a backseat. But if we just keep mixing those things up you're not going to be able to do all three of those things at the top of your game at the same time. So I think that unfortunately and generationally we women in particular have watched so many of these lovely movies and shows where women appear to be able to do all these things, have the most amazing beautiful sensual partner, have these flawless kids, that roll out of bed and look like a they are perfect, and the food is homemade and ready and hot at six o'clock in the evening, and you're making six figures simultaneously in this wonderfully fulfilling career that you are actively pursuing and it's just not true right. It's just not true, but we imagine that perfection and there's no question that in the movies and television in media in general we get a good deal of the packaged experience that points us in the direction perfection. And I think that's the root issue for me.

On that topic is perfection either something desirable or attainable? My answer to both is no. Not because there is anything wrong with wanting to be the best person that you can be. There is nothing wrong with wanting to do something exceedingly well, to be as good at it as you can be. These are all wonderful aspirations, absolutely but to do that without allowing yourself the realistic perspective to understand that you cannot achieve on a consistent basis this ideal of absolute perfection. And quite frankly I think if human beings were capable of it we'd be bored to tears. If we didn't invent problems just to relieve ourselves. My grandfather was a man who sought perfection in everything he did. I have a mental image of him when he was quite elderly and could no longer kneel or bend over, lying down on his side in his yard picking pieces of weed out of the lawn. And that was one form of his obsession. The other was that my grandmother was a superb cook, but he would come home and because he was attracted to the novelty of T.V. dinners.....and the house just everything smelled wonderful.... you'd walk in and there was my grandmother in the kitchen making these magnificent meals, and he would walk downstairs to the cellar to where he had a freezer chest and he would get himself a T.V. dinner, and make it. My grandmother, who is not from this country, was raised in a convent in Europe and never learned to speak English very well called him that man. He was a perfectionist and he drove himself and the people around him absolutely crazy trying to achieve something that was unattainable and it was a great lesson for me growing up to watch this dynamic because at heart he was a very wonderful man but his pursuit of perfection alienated everyone.

I think that there are probably this could be a very long story that we're telling if we're to cover every single lie that we tell ourselves. But I think that we should probably end on the note of saying that: look around you in life, look at other people and understand that your story is probably not that different from other people's stories. If we get below the surface and we get into a relationship we find that we all have more in common than not. That's our podcast for this week we hope you enjoyed it and want to thank our engineer Todd Washburn, and our producer Barbara Ham Lee. Write to us tell us your stories at Alvean@lovelife.digital or doug@lovelife.digital and we'll see you next week.