

Love is not Nice

by **Nicholas de Castella**

The knight in his shining armour (protection from being vulnerable, open and real) rides up on his white horse (the 'good' guy image) to rescue the fair princess from the tower of her loneliness, separation and abandonment sadness so that the two of them can escape reality to a magic castle and live happily ever after in their mind-generated fantasy world.

Fairy tale or romantic love presents an image of loving relationships as consisting only of perfect harmony, peace and joy. This ideal however is not only out of touch with the reality of human existence (which includes 'the dark sides' of anger, sadness and fear) but it denies essential ingredients for the creation of really deep, passionate, fulfilling, lucidly alive and loving relationships.

Love is not always 'nice'. Being nice is the way that people who fear their own anger (and that of others) stay safe, they have confused real love with acceptance. They want to be 'liked' and 'accepted' by everyone. Carefully treading around any other peoples toes, always smiling, and outwardly agreeable. Fearing rejection and abandonment they are prepared to trade their own integrity for peace not wanting to hurt others, defending and protecting even those who hurt them by making excuses for being hurt; 'he is in a lot of pain ..., he was abused as a child..., she did the best she could, he loves me and doesn't mean it..., it hurts him... Being nice means always looking happy even if you feel sad or angry or fearful. It is fakeness and prohibits the development of intimate and fulfilling relationships.

Real love is soul connection. It arises when we nakedly expose all that we are: when we come together, lucidly present with our deepest fears, hurts and longings, in a climate of open embrace of all that we are and commit to a journey of sharing, receiving and responding to the passionate and subtle aspects of heart-felt emotion, it includes the open hearted (non-attacking) expression of anger and sadness.

It seems almost intrinsic to our existence on earth that we suffer pain. Our most common response has been to **withhold, withdraw, disconnect and resent.** Either physically, mentally, or emotionally we shut down our hearts. We either put up our armour or just disconnect from our feelings. This leaves us in a state of separation, isolation and abandonment, destined to live lives of emptiness and loneliness. Those who feel sorry for us and be nice allow us to remain 'safely' disconnected.

To awaken us from our safe but lonely slumber we need the loving presence of someone who cares. Someone who is confident enough in themselves to be real and honest with us, being open to **express what they feel (including their lack of feeling at the intensity that they feel it and being willing to stay present to receive and in turn, respond to our response (or lack there of),**

Only when we open our hearts and allow our woundedness to breathe, do we have a chance to heal, to become whole, reconnecting with the wealth of love that lies dormant and disconnected within our hearts.

We need to create environments of trust in which we feel that it is **safe** enough to allow us to stop running away from our darker sides, a space to bring our woundedness out of the closet so that it can be breathed into and healed. Gathering together people who are prepared to stick around, receive and respond to our wildest rage, our deepest pain and our most terrorising fears with open hearted honesty, frankness. **To be fully present with each others woundedness and accept them and the way they feel without wanting to, take it away, fix it, nor console or heal them.** It is then that we are able to move through (not around) our feelings and into deep states of loving connection and soul nurturing.

Real love can be gutsy, passionate, fiery and honest as well as gently, tender, joyous and peaceful. It is an intensity of experience where in two separate beings connect in the furnace of absolute open expression of the truth of our being. Love is not a something that is going to last forever without needing any attention. Loving relationships are living organisms, to grow they need the constant nurturing and feeding provided by open hearted, honest sharing of all our feelings.