

# Comments

From: dhshapir <[dhshapir@uci.edu](mailto:dhshapir@uci.edu)>  
Sent: Monday, December 7, 2020 3:58 PM  
To: joie <[jfshapir@uci.edu](mailto:jfshapir@uci.edu)>  
Subject: any thoughts at 50 years!!!

We looked back at this article nearly 40 years after we'd written it (Phew, still around☺ and still married in in love (celebrated our 52<sup>nd</sup> anniversary) We've done subsequent writing on relationship that "fills out" some of the themes here (see Relationship writing related to sex roles and control and also Jewish perspective on relationship). Here are our observations about this article looking back:

Johanna:

Hey sweetie, finally got around to reading this, 50 years later - and really enjoyed it. I think the first pages make the excellent point that positive wellbeing is often defined in individual rather than relational terms; and that there is ambivalence of the value of relationship on the spiritual path (better to serve the many impartially). This section also provides a defense of relationship and how it grows out of individual psychological health. The next section acknowledges the differences between reality and aspiration. The Naciketas story is very sweet - the wise master does not live "alone" as he warmly welcomes all who wish to "be" with him. Still, I find it a little paradoxical that the wise man is alone, and the seeker learns all the lessons of relationship alone (it reminds me of the Pope or Catholic priests giving marital advice!). If I were rewriting the story, I'd say all the insights are beautiful, but they are best learned through rather than about relationship - so I'd marry the wise man and the seeker (maybe to each other ☺). We can talk at coffee about ☺ Love, J

DEANE'S COMMENT

From: dhshapir <[dhshapir@uci.edu](mailto:dhshapir@uci.edu)>

From: dhshapir <[dhshapir@uci.edu](mailto:dhshapir@uci.edu)>

Sent: Saturday, December 26, 2020 9:09 AM

To: joie <[jfshapir@uci.edu](mailto:jfshapir@uci.edu)>Subject: relationship bhn: thanks and a comment

Hi doll face, glad you would want to marry the seeker (and teacher) all in one!:

I think your comments are great. Yea us that we made it from 11 years (when we wrote it to 50!)) I also thought the article itself held up well, and also Naciketas. But there was one line that stuck out to me; would you agree with this line ; if yes, why; if noish, how would you rewrite?

***Love requires the precision of a scientist, and the endurance of an ascetic who can patiently travel miles through a desert, bare souls on hot sand.***

love love!:)

Johanna's comment

Wow, that is kinda harsh and grim! I'd change it to "the love of a best friend, the precision of a scientist, the open-eyed wonder of a little kid, the endurance of a marathon runner, the nonjudgmental affection of a dog, the humor of the best comedian." Something more balanced! It's not as rough as Naciketas makes out. Yikes☺ See what happens when you try to figure out relationship in a cave ☺  
Love, J

Deane's comments.

I agree. I think there are further "flowerings" in our thinking which build from this, and aided by her Jewish exploration : e.g. Relationship as way to divine; Buber's I-Thou; The Song of Songs: I am my beloved I am beloved and my beloved is mine. . The connection between : marital relationship and transpersonal; spiritual; The Jewish Indian Fairy tale of the: golden tree—from that love comes children dancing around the divine.

Also the lessons we've learned from "tai chi" both our individual practice, but also "tai chi dancing! Finding a way in dialogue of sharing from a place of "xujing" centeredness and connectedness; and donjing, a wonderful Chinese word which means finding the beset t balance of yin and yang for a given situation. A dialogue from a place of centeredness as part of a team (minimizing "defensiveness" and escalation); the dance of the feminine and masculine energy

The word precision now seems not quite poetic—can it be?! The intent is: a way of caringly knowing oneself, one's beloved, how to care for them, honor them, honor self each's limits weaknesses strength, with kindness; while also able to share information to make each the best person they can become, feedback and honestly seeing "dust on the mirror" within a loving context of love and acceptance. Sharing together in developing selfless service, to each other, our children, grandchildren and the world.. Love is the only power...watch our circle grow!:

We have been an evolving process—with quite a bit of chutzpah (I think of the workshop/workbooks we created after we were married over two years: one for young couples and one on parent child relationship!) And now looking back after over 50 years at what we wrote having been married eleven years. Courage, facing the fears; seeing our dust, continuing to polish, all the while singing together, playing music, writing poetry and evolving into the unfolding mystery of love;

Johanna's comment (March 20, 2023):

Hi sweetie, I did read carefully our comments on relationship, and thought they provided the wisdom of gentleness and humor that we, thankfully, acquired with experience and age. I think initially we theorized relationship a bit too much as a discipline (although I think we lived it more joyfully and more embodied); and these qualities of generosity and kindness and sweetness come forth in the 2020 commentary. I we've managed to create an incredibly intimate, soul-to-soul connection, that is open, honest, loyal and loving. Yay us! Love, love, J