

Once upon a time I was a Psychologist who had been a Rabbi. I divorced one to do the other. I couldn't imagine that the two could be coupled happily. Today I am a [Rabbi↔Psychologist] [Psychologist↔Rabbi] who brings both of these "selves" to working with couples.

Some basics we and the couples we work with need to know.

Each of us is not a Self. Each of us is a relationship between "selves". For me that relationship is grounded in the two creation myths of Genesis; the first (Gen. 1:26-27) has humankind created in the "image" of God; the second (Gen. 2:7) has man given life by being infused with God's breath. In Hebrew that is the [Tzelem↔Neshamah] relationship. In English that might be named the [Breathtaking↔Image] relationship.¹

When the relationship between our inner "selves" is working, we are perceived to be a unified Self. When there is room in the couple relationship for those multiple "selves" to all be present, accounted for valued and blessed, we find ourselves becoming a WE. When those "selves" are wounded, hidden, rejected, despised, the WE disintegrates.

The [Breathtaking↔Image] in each of us is **not** negotiable. It is a given, ever present. The [Breathtaking↔Image] is **not** contingent on our thinking and feeling correctly, behaving one way or another, on accomplishment or the lack thereof, on perceived goodness or experienced badness. Each of us, do what we will or won't, cannot be rid of it. It is our original **essence**.

Often obscured in the fog of compromised living, the [Breathtaking↔Image] is **always** waiting to be seen and heard, attended to and returned to. When we and/or others turn away from the [Breathtaking↔Image] neglecting it in ourselves, ignoring and disregarding it in others, harm is done, commitments broken, intimacies violated, sexual violations happen, children are hurt, trusts betrayed, and great evil perpetrated. Blame and contempt, anger and condemnation, violence of all sorts directed towards our "selves" but even more dangerously at our partner's wounded "selves" destroys the couple, increasing our individual sense of alienation and isolation, turning us ever

¹ The brackets [] indicate the interrelated unity of these two elements. The double arrow ↔ signifies reciprocal relationship.

more away from the [Breathtaking↔Image] with which we are blessed, and blocking any chance of experiencing it in our partner(s).

Repairing the breach by returning to our [Breathtaking↔Image] is a supremely important undertaking. It requires an inner dialog of mutual respect, leading to a loving, personal human (e) relationship between each and all of our "*selves*"; those we value and those we distance; the "positive" and the "negative"; the "acceptable" and "non acceptable". To do this we must value and bless all "*selves*", *and* bring each and all back, particularly those "*selves*" previously rejected, into relationship within the [Breathtaking↔Image], The same is true in the couple relationship where the charge is to search out, tune in to, stay focused on, respect, nourish, sustain and bless the [Breathtaking↔Image], first in all our "*selves*" and then in our partners.

When this happens, the [Breathtaking↔Image] flourishes and atypical couples become a loving We. And I can enjoy being a [Rabbi↔Psychologist] [Psychologist↔Rabbi].