



Healthy self-love as the basis for a good life

The development of the ability to love

In our feelings of love, we distinguish between blind, childlike love (love based on neediness and attachment) and mature, adult love (love based on knowledge), which goes hand in hand with self-love and the ability to love. The blind, childlike love based on attachment is the foundation. On this foundation, the mature, adult ability to love can unfold throughout our development from the core of the "I"-consciousness.

Love based on attachment

As human beings we cannot "non-bind" ourselves, this is as impossible as not wanting hunger and thirst anymore.

We are born with our childlike need for love. It is the unconscious, instinctive urge. It has its seat in the brain stem and "forces" us to love our parents unconditionally: In order to survive, we must bind ourselves to our parents with all our being - no matter how they treat us and how we are doing!

So unconditional love is not free love, it is purposeful and has served the survival of humanity (and all mammals) for thousands of years.

It is "blind" because at this stage of our development we have no decision-making ability: Blind love does not recognize the other in his being.

Love based on knowledge

Love based on knowledge, on the other hand, is a free love that builds on the love based on attachment when all needs for security, belonging and comfort have been satisfied. The more we mature from the childhood, the more autonomous we want to become, and the more we can gradually detach ourselves from the attachment relationship. Over the years, we develop the mature, adult cognitive love.

Both together then form a healthy, powerful capacity for love, which can give and receive a healthy bond as well as recognizing and loving others in their individuality.

Development of the basic human qualities

While our instincts (such as the instinct of self-preservation) are innate, all human qualities need development time.

As a new earth child, we depend on our environment to be sensitive, mindful, gentle, considerate and tender with us. Human attention and the immediate fulfilment of our needs are absolutely necessary for us to develop in a healthy way - physically, emotionally and mentally.

Our ability to love and thus our self-love are inherent in us as a possibility. In order to be able to unfold this, we need a mother who herself possesses the ability to love. She must address these predispositions in us, awaken them and stimulate their development.

Only the stream of love between mother and child in receiving and giving gives



us the full human development because as babies we are very vulnerable and need the careful and sensitive response through her

If we are lovingly bound to our mother, then we have the chance to build up the basic human qualities throughout our development: The ability to love, the willingness to love, trust in ourselves and others, hope, healthy gratitude and fundamental joy of life.

In order to develop these living qualities within us, we need time and continuity in our attachment relationships. They are the prerequisite for us to possess a fundamental joy of existence, to live fulfilled love relationships and to feel individual meaning in our lives.

Instinctive love based on attachment

One of the characteristics of adulthood is that we can cope with loneliness and feelings of loneliness and that we can "support ourselves".

If our childlike-blind love based on attachment has not been reciprocated and our needs ignored or even deeply hurt, we are always inwardly in search of the satisfaction of our basic needs by through other people. Then it is not possible to love ourselves or to recognize the other in their individuality. We cannot go beyond instinctive, dependant loving. Our striving is (unconsciously) directed only on satisfying our own basic childhood needs. We do not become "adults": The childlike love based on neediness wants to possess the other, to have it all to itself and to take possession of it. In this way, we try not to feel the childlike basic feeling of loneliness and being lost. We cannot recognize the other in their unique nature. Instead, we want them to recognize our needs and expectations and satisfy them immediately.

Dependant love based on attachment and autonomous self-love

As babies, we are born with an open love channel that is primarily directed towards the mother. If she also has an open love channel for her child, then both meet "halfway" and gradually connect to form a solid bond of love. In this way, the child can direct their love to the mother, who receives it joyfully and lovingly, mixes it with her adult mature love, based on knowledge and sends it back to the child. Through this love, the child feels, understands and experiences deep security and comfort. This resonant, interactive stream of love between mother and child increases from day to day and gets stronger. The small being feels recognized in their individuality, safely accepted and deeply loved. In this way, a healthy self-love grows in the course of development, which expresses itself in compassion for oneself, for the partner, other people, animals, nature and the environment.

Self-love and compassion

The ability to love can only develop when, as babies and toddlers, we have been able to grow up with a mother who has had good contact with her own life story and feelings, and who has fulfilled our need for symbiosis and autonomy in (an



adult) a mature, compassionate and devoted way. Then we can also be in good contact with ourselves because we feel loved and the world is a safe place and experience other people as pleasant.

If this childlike love based on attachment, which goes hand in hand with the satisfaction of needs, is lovingly welcomed and joyfully answered by our mother, then a healthy self-love gradually develops with the growing healthy development of the “I”, which is based on compassion. The parents who are capable of this kind of (adult) mature free love become an inner agency for self-love in the soul of the child. This love based on attachment is the foundation and the strength for the ability, in connection with the love for oneself, also to develop the love for other people in a healthy form. Thus a mature adult love based on knowledge grows slowly and gradually in the child, which is always accompanied by self-love and compassion. This love recognizes itself and other beings as unique, individual and self-determined. It has no false ideas about another person and can accept them as they are. If this love was able to develop in the growing human being, they will later be able to recognize and love their child as a unique “I”-gifted individual as well.

Incarnation

As I already explained above, the powerful love based on attachment and the spiritually clear love based on knowledge goes hand in hand in an “I”-conscious person. Both together result in our ability to love. The love based on attachment forms the basis for the love based on knowledge and both complement and (fertilize) stimulate each other. Through the love based on knowledge, blind love awakens from its unconscious being and becomes seeing and recognizing. The originally blind instinctive love based on attachment receives orientation, support and human guidance through the spiritual love based on knowledge. The love based on attachment becomes spiritual and the (love of) knowledge (of love) physical. Only through the harmonious interplay of both types of love does man become deeply human.

Our original individual essence

Our original essence, with which we arrive here on earth as babies, has the primary qualities of tenderness, gentleness, delicacy, sensitivity, vulnerability, openness of heart, silence, strength, clarity, liveliness, joy of life, friendliness, curiosity, creativity and These essential sensitivities are the source of our human existence: They are what make (being) us human, they are (at) the centre of our individual essence. They normally accompany us through our whole life, and especially as babies, we are still permeable to these qualities of our original being, although they are still undifferentiated and immature. We experience our greatest sensitivity in this extremely important phase because we are completely open, sociable, willing to commit, loving and deeply vulnerable. Our nervous system is still immature (embryonic) and absolutely in need of the mother's



protection, who is at our disposal with her mature, adjustable and organized nervous system. What happens if this protection is not given? The contact to these basic human qualities of being gets more and more lost with every traumatising, with every adaptation strategy and with every injury in our human existence. A hostile environment, rough treatment, rejection or unloving behaviour lead to a complete inner withdrawal, up to the contraction of our body. The painful, traumatizing experiences are repressed and split off. We are forced to leave contact with ourselves, and at the same time, we lose not only our physical self-perception but also our contact with these sensitive primal qualities. Our original, unique “I” being is no longer (so easily) attainable for us.

In order for physical survival to be possible in a profoundly rough, hurtful and manipulative environment, the original subtlety of our senses and the tenderness of our soul must retreat deep into our subconscious. With these adjustment mechanisms we manage to survive our childhood physically, but the qualities of our original essence can no longer or only with difficulty be realized by us.

The abandonment and the loss of our individual essence is a deeply traumatic and painful process, through which we have to go (back) if we want to find ourselves in our individuality and uniqueness. When we, as adults, go through this repressed and split pain again by encountering our early childhood injuries, we find the door to these original qualities of our human existence again on the basis of pain. As soon as these delicate feelings feel invited by us again, a space can develop within us in which our “I” individuality can unfold. Then we gradually experience who we are in our source and what we want to realize in our life and existence. Our own meaning in life becomes recognizable. We experience ourselves in a present quality of existence that is open to the future, that feels powerful, confident, persistent and capable to accept the challenges and tasks of life. Then we are able to go our way powerfully and yet remain loving and sensitive. The realization of one's own truth and the awareness of our reality, which becomes noticeable with every self-encounter, is an important orientation.

Development of the ability to love through compassion

Compassion is an ability that we have as mammals and has a strong relation to our social nervous system (Polyvagal Theory according to Stephen Porges). It is the ability to recognize the inner state of another person and to feel it within oneself. Compassion is the ability to perceive our own pain and that of others. In order to feel safe and protected as new citizens of our planet in our absolute dependence and defencelessness, we need loving affection and constant physical contact with our mother or father during the first months of life. Compassion



communicates emotionally and physically:

The fundamental basis of our ability to love is the feeling of compassion! As infants and babies, we absolutely need a mother who has been able to develop a healthy ability to love in her life, so that she is emotionally able to empathize with our inner experience. If we feel the mother with her compassion in us, we can feel safe, secure and understood. Being touched is one of the basic needs of a child and is crucial to the feeling of being welcome. It is the physical confirmation of our existence. Since our skin as the largest contact organ also represents our outer border, we need a lot of tender caressing. If we feel the mother with her compassion in us, we can feel safe, protected and understood. To be touched is one of the basic needs of a child and is crucial for the feeling of being welcome. It is the physical confirmation of our existence. Since our skin, as the largest contact organ, also represents our outer border, we need a lot of loving tenderness. Thus we experience on the one hand our physical border and on the other hand, enough oxytocin receptors (receptors for binding and love hormone) develop, so that we can relax. By the tender and gentle touches, we experience ourselves as body beings loved, accepted and confirmed in our physical existence. We feel comfortable in our body, we value and respect ourselves in it, and it serves us as a good home. We always have the opportunity to relax in our body and find peace in ourselves. It is the place of our well-being and here we experience ourselves safe and protected. We can perceive our needs at any time, answer them appropriately and thus have a healthy physical self-care at our disposal. If our mother has enough sensitivity and compassion, she is able to recognize immediately how we are emotionally and physically. She feels the deep desire to calm our condition at any time and to satisfy our needs. She recognizes her baby as an independent and separate being. She also knows that her child has a very individual essence that wants to develop, unfold and express itself here in the world! She will not burden and over-strain the child with her own ideas of their existence and their essence. A mother capable of love gives them space, love and encouragement so that they can recognize themselves and their needs in the course of their development. Her task as a mother is to support this little person in developing and expressing the potential of their unique presence. She is the benevolent and wise companion of her child on the way to becoming an individual human being.

The father as a secondary binding partner is always at the mother's disposal for the care of the child, providing support and security. He becomes an important partner for the child on the way to discovering themselves and the world. The father challenges and promotes his child and stands by him with wise advice and action. If as a child we experience only insufficient or no compassion and empathy at all from our mother and other persons with whom we are connected, we do not learn to perceive our own needs. We are also not empowered to



empathize with other people in a healthy way. If we were not touched and loved enough as a child, we experience this emotionally as being abandoned, even if we are sufficiently materially provided.

Compassion, childhood imprint and self-love

The development of the ability to love described above is an ideal and there will probably be only a few people who have had such a humane childlike initial experience. Often our love was not adequately answered or we met a mother (a father, a caregiver) who closed her feelings behind thick walls because of her own traumatization's. The love channel, which was wide open at the beginning, gradually dried up and narrowed more and more, until it finally ceased its function of giving completely. Since we ourselves did not receive love and were not allowed to experience compassion for our pain and despair, even as adults we are not able to feel a healthy compassion.

The roughness, hardness and rejection that we experienced as children then becomes an inner orientation for ourselves and for others. Many people try to compensate their lack of self-love through external love (that comes from outside). In the love relationship, we now expect the partner to constantly show us and prove that we are lovable. However, the love that flows towards us from the other simply cannot reach us because we cannot endure ourselves. We are then a bottomless pit and need constant confirmation. As a result, we expect the partner and the environment to change in such a way that we feel well and can be happy and content. We expect that our inner emptiness will be filled by another person, that we will be released from loneliness, that we will get a meaning in life and that we will be valued where we reject ourselves deeply. We expect to be given happiness and contentment from outside. This is a great burden for the people with whom we are connected.

If we want to become receptive to our original essence again, it is necessary to develop compassion for ourselves. This is easier said than done. By splitting off, we have successfully locked away all early childhood wounds and thus come to terms with our intolerable situation. For attachment protection reasons, we have made our childhood reality bearable through various survival strategies. These childhood survival strategies now block the path to the pain of our early injuries, fears and helplessness. These are our deeply stored early childhood imprints. We continue to fulfil the expectations of others, devalue ourselves if we do not function well, and make high demands on ourselves in the hope of still being lovable for our partner, friends, colleagues and society.

The attachment protection

As children, we were for better or for worse dependent on the bond quality offered to us by our mother/parents. We had to adapt to the relationship situation in order to survive. We had no choice but to leave the system. Attachment



protection is part of our unconscious brain stem. This is also the reason why, paradoxically, the "love" of parents must be maintained at all costs and no matter what they do to us, as long as we are existentially dependent on them! Within ourselves, however, we still maintain these unhealthy bonding strategies today, since many of the childhood parts frozen in those days must maintain this bond at all costs. They do not know that this time is over and they are still experiencing the old attachment relationship with their parents. For them, there is no present here and now with a safe environment. They still live and feel in the old attachment relationship, even if the parents have already died. So we constantly hurt ourselves by treating ourselves and looking at ourselves the way we were treated and looked at by the parents.

Natural autonomy impulses and self-activations that emerged from our individual essence had to be suppressed in order not to lose the vital belonging to the system. The unconscious attachment protection forces us to deny the truth of our childhood reality: The false or non-existent love of the parents must be absolutely protected for survival reasons. This is what we call attachment protection. Therefore, it is important for us at present that we create an inner safe, benevolent and supporting environment for ourselves through a new bonding experience with a healthy self. Only when we feel safe, loved and held within ourselves and with ourselves, we have the courage, on a deep level, to confidently turn to our inner self and thus to face our past. Then, from an adult here-and-now position, we can compassionately look upon ourselves as a child. Just as the first attachment relationship enables the child to develop, the new bonding experiences with the "I" - and ever-widening healthy parts of inner states - open up the possibility for us to change. In the resonant self-encounters, we catch up, so to speak, with the early childhood bonding processes in the secure here and now with close "I" parts of the self (states!) Through the loving interaction with the "I", we can now experience as adults that we are recognized, understood and felt. On the basis of compassion, it comes to a mutual inner recognition and thus to a self-connection.

The "I"-conscious person

Naturally, it is part of being human that we live together with others in a friendly, loving and harmonious way and want to connect in love. But only when I love myself I am able to really receive love from other people, to perceive it, to absorb it in me and to let it flow back. Only a person with "I"consciousness recognizes himself and other people in their individuality, can accept himself and ultimately develop healthy self-love. Then the healthy love flows from the I-self to the you-self and continuously increases to an interactive love cycle that promotes development. The more we recognize each other in our individual unique "I" being, the more self-love adequately increases in our own



heart. In the “I” encounter processes; it is now a matter of allowing again these deep pains of our sore, "lovesick" heart and being able to hold them in us. The adult present-minded person offers himself through his compassion, for the traumatized inner past-children, as a new orientation and an I-conscious connection becomes possible. The task is to become "warm-hearted" and compassionate again for our deeply injured child parts so that our original qualities can show themselves again and we come into contact with them. Loving friendliness is our deepest general human nature, which can reach us again through our compassion. We can become friendly in a very loving way without giving ourselves up. It is important for us to be able to encounter the real truth of our childlike situation, to recognize it and to integrate it lovingly and compassionately as adults in the here and now. Our injuries and vulnerabilities show us the way to our deeply repressed wounds. It is about freeing ourselves from the deepest pain so that the qualities of our original essence can flow through us again and we can develop compassionate capacity for love. What we have never received from our traumatized mothers must now be developed for ourselves. The love channel of our blind love based on attachment must be reopened through self-compassion with our traumatized babies and children which are deeply split off and repressed in the soul. In the compassionate loving encounter with our “I”, this original love is enabled to flow again. Self-compassion helps us to confront the truth of our childhood and to hold the pain. The more we become able to develop compassion for ourselves, the more our hard shells soften and we become gentler, more sensitive and more permeable to our original qualities. Through self-compassion, the gates to our real-feeling inner space open and we regain access to our unique original essence. In this way, we gradually learn to recognize and love each other more and more. That is how true humanity can become possible within us.

Development of self-love in the “I”-oriented identity constellation with the sentence of intention

As human (mammals), we are always dependent on attachment relationships. We cannot NOT bind, it is as impossible as not wanting hunger and thirst anymore. Attachment is a constant(ly) present human need. It is not a childlike dependency that we have to overcome, but can now as adults satisfy this within ourselves, so that healthy relationships with ourselves and other people can succeed. How can I manage to develop the ability to love as an adult in order to grow in self-love?

If we want to learn to love ourselves, then it is also necessary to give up our constructed self-images that were necessary as a child in order to belong to and survive in the family system. We are often firmly convinced that these self-images are real. They are the result of the attributions, conditioning and



adaptation strategies that our parents forced upon us. To this day, we believe that these constructed self-images, which we had to develop from ourselves in order to survive, are identical with our essence. In our inner being still live the traumatized, deeply mentally repressed, split off and frozen childlike emotional forces. They usually have no consciousness of the adult person we are today. They still live in the past and are frozen in the old attachment relationship to mother and father. They still protect this instinctive love based on attachment living within us and are not willing to let it go. The danger to fall into the abyss, to get lost in the universe, to die of thirst in the desert, ...etc., is simply too great. They still protect the old, but illusionary love for our parents in our psyche today. We cannot just let go of this vital attachment without getting an alternative bonding offer. It is practically impossible to bring these child parts to detachment, without us as adults offering in the here and now a new orientation and, ultimately, bonding. No one outside can replace this orientation towards ourselves - no therapist either. This alternative can only be us ourselves in a healthy manner as adults. If we find ourselves in good, supporting contact with our ego and the self-states, we can move emotionally towards the child from the past with compassion. In this way, it becomes possible to open the injury and the traumatic pain of that time within us and to work through it in a safe environment. Then, as many self-encounter processes in the constellations have shown, these inner injured children feel seen, understood and sensed by the loving adult in the here and now. They now find a new orientation and are ready to let go of the old destructive attachments with their parents. It has been shown in the constellations that we are always in search of sensitive and loving interaction with people. We feel drawn there at the deepest level of our being. Only a new bonding orientation at present makes it possible for the inner traumatized child parts to detach themselves from the old family structures. In this way, through backward integration of the ego, a new inner self-bound, secure environment gradually emerges.

Today we offer our traumatized child parts from back then a developmental and space-promoting counterpart, just as we would have needed it for a healthy development as a child. We become a safe and compassionate partner who recognizes, loves and values us. By tenderly accepting our past child in ourselves, we love ourselves at the same time and are giver and receiver in one person. That is self-love! In order to really love myself, I first have to recognize myself in my individuality. Then I can perceive my own feelings, identify myself and my true essence. Because only if I can consciously love myself, if I know and feel "Yes, that is me" - then love for myself can flow. It is about the psychic birth of the "I"-being and thus ultimately about becoming human in a deeply healthy way!

This has the advantage that I do not need a therapist, parents nor a partner who



fulfils my childlike attachment needs. On the ground of our self-love, we are only then in a healthy way to let love flow to another person, and to be loved by us. Only through self-attachment or reconnection to ourselves is real trauma integration and "I" development possible.

Accompaniment during the constellation process:

The "I"-oriented identity constellation with the sentence of intention offers the possibility to represent our inner psychic dynamics in the 3-dimensional space externally through the resonance-giving representatives and thus to encounter ourselves.

My approach in accompanying the reconnection processes focuses on, contact with the "I" and the self-parts in the sentence of intention! On the basis of the IoPT (according to Franz Ruppert) and elements from various body trauma therapies, I have in recent years, developed my own I-centered, body-oriented, trauma-releasing, reconnection-based and empathic process accompaniment. I support the client in a mindful, open, and inviting way, therein to allow the early childhood injuries of the past to unfold. While the client gradually encounters his inner parts, I am in constant empathic resonance with his inner psychic and neuro-affective condition. I encourage and support clients through verbal feedback, and psychoeducation in reopening their repressed and detached painful emotions through self-compassion. Hence, through gentle therapeutic accompaniment and in contact with healthy self-parts, deep infantile injuries can be encountered and integrated. Thus, through gradual and loving understanding, I-recognition and compassionate self-love develop and one's own life can gradually turn for the better.

*"He who does not love himself the right way,
cannot love others either.*

Self-love is not egoism, but goodness".

Robert Musil

Literature reference:

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