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Shefali Tsabary on Conscious Relationships

by Sandra Yeyati



Offering innovative approaches to mindful living, Shefali Tsabary, Ph.D., is a clinical psychologist, international keynote speaker and bestselling author of *The Conscious Parent*, *Out of Control* and her latest, *The Awakened Family*.

She has presented talks at TEDx, the Kellogg Business School, The Dalai Lama Center for Peace and Education, and SuperSoul Sessions with Oprah Winfrey, who has endorsed her work as revolutionary and life-changing.

Why do we have so much trouble with our romantic relationships?

Because we enter relationships without having entered a relationship with ourselves. We look to the other person and the relationship to fill us up, to give us what we are missing from within, and what we don't realize is that the other person is there for the same reason. After the initial chemical, hormonal lust phase, we realize that the other person cannot be our parent figure and that they cannot fulfill our unfulfilled inner child needs. The disappointment is so great and the anger so livid that we spiral into hurt, disappointment and unmet expectations without realizing that the other hasn't done anything. We typically attract people who are going to

be mirrors that show us how we need to repair ourselves and force us to repeat childhood patterns. If we have an issue of unworthiness, that's going to show up. If we have fear of rejection, that's going to show up, and all fingers point to the imperative that we do

our own inner work.

What does that inner work look like?

The first step is realizing that what's happening in the relationship is really a reflection of the inner state of being, and therefore isn't the other person's fault that I'm feeling rejected, hurt or unworthy. We stop trying to change, fix or blame the other. We then hire a therapist or join a self-development course and begin to understand our inner wounds from childhood that are being repeated in this current dynamic. We have to do the work. It's not easy. It's not going to happen just because we made an intellectual decision. It's a quest, a constant unfolding, un-layering, evolving and becoming more. The goal is your arrival into your most authentic self, into your whole, free self.

How do we remain in a relationship while doing this work?

We become more honest, more up front, more candid and ready to meet the other

at our new place of growth. If the other doesn't want to grow and cannot do this inner work because of their own inner demons and resistance, then maybe you won't be able to continue on, but you will be conscious enough to be able to release the other of the expectation to continue on. A healthy relationship is a relationship where each person takes responsibility for their own inner growth and their own inner wounds, doesn't project their needs on the other, parents themselves into a state of wholeness and then releases the other to be free.

How do you define love?

Most of us love egoically, which is loving the other because they make us feel good about ourselves, and the moment they stop making us feel good about ourselves, we actually leave them. That's why there's so much divorce. That's not love. Egoic love is possession, ownership and control. Most of us are mired in those kinds of relationships; the institution of marriage actually supports ownership, possession and control. True, or high love, is the understanding that the other is with you and you are with them to encourage each other's growth and to see each other be their most authentic, free selves. If that includes being with us, we're happy. If that includes not being with us, we're as happy. That's true love, because you're in love with the other person's essence and you're more invested in the other person's whole self rather than the self that you want to own and possess.

What is conscious intimacy?

Conscious intimacy starts with how intimate and honest you are with yourself—how sexually connected you are with your needs and your desires. The more unabashed, bare, spontaneous and transparent you can be with yourself, the more you will seek and be around partners who can hold that space with you.

*For more information including on online courses, visit DrShefali.com. Her *Free to Be* course specifically addresses conscious relationship issues.*

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