

Persephone Arbour

Conscious Ageing - the grand adventure?

Turning Pages

A collection of comments on, and conundrums of – a well-lived life

8 Meeting & Relating

“Our own life is the instrument with which we experiment with the truth.” Thich Nhat Hanh

This quotation inspires the life I have attempted to live – experimenting with the truth. It took me many years to understand that, of course.

This is part eight of a small collection of my writings, some old, some new. They contain musings on my life and the world within which I live it.

Meeting & Relating

Krishnamurti is quoted as saying that when two people meet, two images meet.

This is a salutary thought. It suggests that we need to look more closely at not only who it is we are meeting, but who it is within each of us that is doing the meeting.

When you walk into a roomful of people, who walks into the room? What persona do you dress yourself in? How do you ensure being noticed (or not)? How do you attract? How do you protect? One of my teachers once told me that on entering a room to greet people I walked ahead, in front of myself, leaving my truth behind. This was the clearest explanation ever given me of the unconscious game that we all can play, the game of editing the honesty of who is there in truth, in favour of who we think we ought to be,

If you are not aware of this phenomenon, what hope do you have of relating to the person standing in front of you? This automatic, unconscious behaviour is safe and predictable. It works to a certain extent, otherwise we would not have created it. However, it makes truthful, deep, worthwhile and meaningful communication less likely.

Here we are, living on a planet that is vastly overcrowded, longing for real contact and relationship with just a few of the billions.

Mostly we find ourselves frozen in this game of editing out the truth, rather than risking who we really are in what ever that moment happens to be.

This editing, combined with some belief that we should all remain as independent as possible, makes true relating almost a lost art. We are all interdependent. We cannot exist healthily without each other, any more than without plants, sun and rain.

Relating becomes categorised, differentiating between friend, acquaintance, workmate, lover, child, parent, etc. These categories become placed in order of their importance to us. Often rated as the most important is Lover – the most difficult, drama-filled and illusory.

Sometimes, in discussion between you and a friend, the words used can be “I have just started a new relationship”. Very rarely do we say “I am in love,” or “I have a new lover”. No, it’s a new Relationship .

What is this mythical state called “A Relationship”? I call it mythical advisedly. The word is used mostly as noun and object. If you try to hold it, grasp it, find it, look at it – it is a myth. It is a myth created to fulfill our sexual longings, needs and loneliness. It does not glory in that special connection that happens between two people when deep love is there. Some even call a sexual one-night stand a relationship!

Where has the poetry and the praise of that wonderful gift, a love affair, gone? Why have we changed it into the bland, blanket statement, a noun that could apply to any form of relating? If we are very blessed, a love affair can grow from, or into – a profound and deep friendship.

Do I relate to my children, friends and acquaintances in the same way that I do with my lover? What are the common threads that sew this vast patchwork quilt of relating together?

Three words come to mind: love, honesty and friendship. These for me are the sewing threads of any relationship, wherever it stands in my personal hierarchy of importance.

I cannot make myself love somebody, but I can attempt to live with an open heart towards anyone who comes my way. That, maybe, is the door that opens into the intimacy of true friendship. I can also remain honest with myself. This is a pre-requisite for enabling honesty to be shared with anyone. Without these basic threads “A Relationship” doesn’t stand a chance.

Some years ago, after meditation, I would go to my computer, writing in a way that was different from my usual, thought-out forms. These computer writings I called Listenings. At that time this process would have been called ‘channeling’ and here is a quote from one of them:

“Human partnership is given as a support, it is not necessary, but in the dimension that you live it helps.

Human love, love for another being, is also one of the greatest teachers. To love without wanting anything in return is probably one of the highest and most difficult lessons to learn. From time to time we give you an opportunity. Human love opens the heart, which can only be for your benefit.

To find another human being with whom you can share love for a while is a gift. So, if the opportunity is there – let your love be honest. It does not matter whether it is for five minutes or five decades; if you love, love honestly.”

Whether for a stranger, lover, child, or an old friend, it makes no difference. Our interconnectedness with all sentient beings is absolute, unarguable. As Teilhard de Chardin so inspiringly said, “Someday, after we have mastered the winds, the waves, the tides and gravity . . . we shall harness the energies of love. Then, for the second time in the history of the world, man will have discovered fire.”

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