



## Scott Peck The Road Less Travelled

A: Discipline as an indispensable condition for love

- Life presents problems, causing painful feelings. To accept the challenge of facing these problems and attempting to resolve them a number of things are needed:

I. We need to be ready to delay gratification (pages 18-32)

i) To do this we need to learn face painful feelings, rather than indulge in impatient reactions or do nothing, in the hope that problems will go away.

ii) We need to feel secure about the future, because attending to problems means putting off pleasure till the problem is faced.

iii) We need to feel valued as a person. This flows on from being loved, which is partly experienced by the time others choose to spend enjoying us.

2. We need to accept appropriate responsibility (pages 32-44)

- accepting inappropriate responsibility can lead to neurotic self-blaming
- avoiding appropriate responsibility means acting as though the problem is always someone else's.

We must learn to take responsibility for the choices we make

### 3. We need to be dedicated to truth

(= to the way things are) (pages 44-63)

- The truth is essential to self-interest.  
‘The truth will set you free’.
- Being open to the truth means being ready to transcend ways of looking at matters that have proved not to work.
- Being open to the truth means being committed to self-awareness.

4. We need to be committed to discernment and balance = knowing what to let go of and what to hold on to (pages 64-78).

- This includes accepting the sadness of letting go, and trusting to enjoy the journey that results from getting unstuck.
- A list of some major conditions, desires and attitudes that must be given up in the course of a successfully evolving lifetime (see following pages).

- : The state of infancy, in which no external demands need to be responded to.
- : The desire for total possession of one's parents.
- : The dependency of childhood.
- : Distorted images of one's parents
- : The apparently limitless potential of adolescence and the agility of youth.

: The 'freedom' of not being committed.

: The fantasy of immortality.

: Authority over one's children.

: Various forms of temporal power.

: The independence of physical health, and ultimately the self and life itself.



## B: What love is not

### I. Falling in love is not love (pages 84-97)

- Falling in love is 'a genetically determined instinctual component of mating behaviour.'(page 90)
- Falling in love is a partial and temporary collapse of ego boundaries.
  - : the child gradually acquires boundaries, separation, identity (physical and psychic)
  - : This involves a certain loneliness and a giving-up of a baby's total communion

: Falling in love is experienced as re-capturing of this limitless communion.

: But reality intrudes, and we have to face truth that we are not one, but two.

- When we 'fall out of love' we have a choice.  
We may dissolve ties or initiate the work of real loving.

- It is not true that the one person who is meant for me is indicated by ‘falling in love’.
- Nor is it true that ‘falling out of love’ is proof that a mistake has been made, and so one must remain unhappy or search for another.

‘A true acceptance of their own and each other’s individuality and separateness is the only foundation upon which a mature marriage can be based and real love can grow’(page 93).

‘Falling in love is not love, but love does involve being attracted towards, invested in, and committed to, the other, and it does involve the extending of ego boundaries by taking the other into communion.

Falling in love, therefore, ‘gives us a foretaste of the more lasting mystical ecstasy that can be ours after a lifetime of love’(page 97).

## 2. Dependency is not love (pages 98-105)

- Passive dependent personality disorder 'is perhaps the most common of all psychiatric disorders'(page 99).

To the extent that we have this disorder we are unable to experience wholeness or function adequately without the certainty of being actually cared for by another.

Being passive and dependent 'nourishes infantilism rather than growth. It works to trap and constrict rather than to liberate'(page 105).

It can be mutually reinforcing in unliberating relationships where everything is done to secure what the other person will do for me.

### 3. Love that falls short of spiritual growth is not love (pages 106-111)

- ‘The only true end of love is spiritual growth’(page 106)
- only when subsidiary goals are a means to this can they be part of loving.
- affection for pets (and infants and adults treated as ‘pets’) falls short of a self-giving in view of the other's spiritual growth, and makes little demand on judgment which requires more than an instinctual attachment, but ‘requires thoughtful and often painful decision-making’(page 111).

#### 4. Self-sacrifice is not love (pages III-II6)

‘The motives behind injudicious giving and destructive nurturing are many, but such cases invariably have a basic feature in common: the “giver”, under the guise of love, is responding to and meeting his or her own needs without regard to the spiritual needs of the receiver.’

(page III).

- maintaining self-image as “compassionate” etc, so failing to confront.
- seeking to be mal-treated to enjoy feeling superior and to humiliate the other (sado-masichism).



‘Whenever we think of ourselves as doing something for someone else, we are in some way denying our own responsibility.

Whatever we do is done because we choose to do it, and we make that choice because it is the one that satisfies us most.

Whatever we do for someone else we do because it fulfils a need we have.’

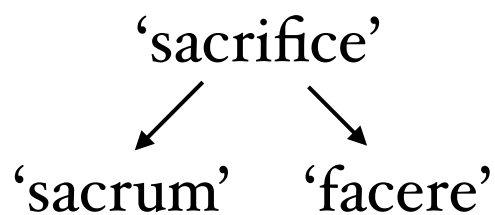
‘It is true that love involves a change in the self, but this is an extension of the self rather than a sacrifice of the self.

Genuine love is self-replenishing activity. Indeed, it is even more; it enlarges rather than diminishes the self; it fills the self, rather than depleting it.’

In a real sense love is as selfish as nonlove. Here again there is a paradox in that love is both selfish and unselfish at the same time.

It is not selfishness and unselfishness that distinguishes love from nonlove; it is the aim of the action. In the case of genuine love the aim is always spiritual growth. In the case of nonlove the aim is always something else'(page 116).

- A deeper paradox allows love to be truly 'self-sacrifice' if by 'sacrifice' is meant "making holy" and "self" means of the self and not by the self.



That is to say, love means allowing Christ to live in me and to draw me into communion with God even when this means allowing much of what I perceive as the self to be diminished.

This is the paradox presented by Jesus: 'If you seek your self, it is your self that you will lose; if you give your self, you will find yourself.'

(Mark 8:35; Matthew 10:39 + 16:25; Luke 9:24 + 17:33; John 12:25)

2. Love involves courage, extending oneself against the resistance of fear.

(i) The fear of non-response

(ii) The fear of losing what one loves

(iii) The fear of change

“It is impossible to truly understand another without making room for that person within yourself. This making room requires an extension of and therefore a changing of the self”(149.6).

(iv) The fear of being left alone [pp.134-139]

## Commitment [pp.140-150]

“Children cannot grow to psychological maturity in an atmosphere of unpredictability, haunted by the spectre of abandonment. Couples cannot resolve in any healthy way the universal issues of marriage - dependence and independency, dominance and submission, freedom and fidelity, for example - without the security of knowing that the act of struggling over these issues will not itself destroy the relationship”<sup>(141.1)</sup>



## Confrontation [pp.150-155]

= exercising power with humility, and involves careful self-criticism and adjusting communication to the capacity of the one loved.

Love is disciplined [pp.155-160]

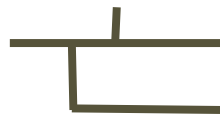
Capacity to love is limited and so must choose.

One important criterion is the capacity of the recipient of love to respond with spiritual growth.

Too busy - Iso gashii



Heart



Destruction



'I will betroth you  
'to myself  
'in tenderness.'

Hosea 2:14