

LOVING TAKES PRACTICE

Love is the key to happiness. We all know that. What is less clear to most people is that in order to be loved, one must be lovable.

When the orientation of a man's life is centered on himself and the satisfaction of his own needs, he is self-centered. When he goes out among his peers and exploits them and manipulates them in order to gain some form of acceptance and love, he is self-centered.

When he can think only of himself and neglects the well-being of other, he is self-centered. We may pity him, feel for him and try to help him, but the fact remains that he is self-centered. And being self-centered, he is not at all being lovable. His is concentrated on himself. And for as long as things remain thus, he will remain self-centered and unlovable.

He should expect to be alone and unwanted most of the time. And surely, his maturity and emotional growth will be stunted. He will forever remain an emotional child.

If, however, a man learns to go out of himself, turn himself away from his self-interests and, in a generous way, involve himself in the lives of others with a sincere desire to do them good, this man will surely be loved.

A psychologist put it very clearly; "If a person seeks not to receive love, but rather to give it, he will become lovable and he will most certainly be loved in the end. This is the unmistakable law under which we live: concern for ourselves and convergence upon self can isolate the self and induce and even deeper and more torturous loneliness

"It is a vicious and terrible cycle that closes in on us when loneliness, seeking to be relieved through the love of others, only increases.

"The only way we can break this cycle formed by our lusting ego is to stop being concerned with ourselves and to begin to be concerned with others."

This, of course, is a lot easier said than done. Even the most generous and the strongest men find it difficult to turn the focus away from themselves and on to others. This usually calls for a lifetime of continuous effort at training one's self to be people-oriented; it means fighting against inner forces that cry out for satisfaction; it calls for a noble spirit than men must mold.

This strength of character and firmness of conviction comes about only after long years of persistent efforts. In other words, in order to get used to being good and kind to others, there is only one way: practice.