

## **LOVE PARTNERS: IS THERE REALLY A CHOICE?**

**Lecture by Guy Corneau before The C.G. Jung Society of Montreal, fall 1999**

### **Review by Stephen Morrissey**

A lecture by Guy Corneau is a special event, as those in attendance at Corneau's lecture on "Love Partners: Is there really a choice" recently experienced. Corneau manages to make a room overflowing with strangers a place of intimacy and warmth, a place where it is safe to look deeply inside of oneself. Romantic love, the subject of Corneau's lecture, is a transformative experience, springing from a longing for a deep communion with another person. When we are "in love" there is a feeling of wholeness, of being united with the world, and not at odds with it. We forget that for many people the experience of romantic love is their only experience of identifying with the Self and the universal.

But Corneau goes beyond this view of love, his aim is "to look into the hidden intelligence of what you are." When we fall in love we embrace the perfection the other person sees in us. Love, then, is a mirror of oneself; unfortunately, if love is a mirror of oneself, we may have the other person before us, but all we really want is the mirror. If we are aware of this projection we may also see that this can be a key into who we really are, for many aspects of ourselves are revealed to us. In this way, love is a tool of self-revelation; we see the higher parts but also the shadow aspects of ourselves. As Corneau said, "You may not find a perfect partner, but you may find a perfect attitude to yourself and someone else."

The key to keeping romantic love alive is to become more conscious of ourselves. Couples may separate because they become tired of on-going conflict, finding it too difficult to integrate shadow material. This shadow, of course, is also a replay of childhood experiences; we hang on to what we know, even though it may be painful and manifest in not being able to maintain relationships, but the known is felt to be safer than risking the unknown.

Corneau's advice is to accept your shadow side, become most fully what you already are, which is a self that is plainly human. The universe gives us experiences so that we will learn things about ourselves; we need to love ourselves, to feel compassion for ourselves, without judgement, and without expectations, but just to be with what is there. Indeed, Corneau suggests we consider the effort and energy it takes to avoid opening up to love. The real problem is our attachment to pain, our need to hang on to suffering because our suffering is what is most familiar to us. Life seems to be easier when it doesn't go well because we can hold on to what we know, we can repeat experience that reinforces our entrenched concept of ourselves, rather than risk the new.

True love, Corneau said, is when one comes to have confidence and deep intimacy with one's own self. Love gives you a place where you choose to change. Love partners give us a mirror of who we are; in this we can find love for oneself and completion, but not perfection. We may want to be perfect, but personality involves limitations. Some psychological and emotional wounds cannot be resolved but can only be lived with. For Corneau, love is a context for your own evolution. If we accept Corneau's definition of romantic love, we will have less expectations that the other person will resolve the dilemmas of our life for us; then the possibility of romantic love lasting increases. Romantic love may not be the path for everyone, but for many people it is the

most immediate way to becoming more conscious of ourselves, and in this there is the possibility of transformation.

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