

NEVER BREAK THE THREAD OF SEX

We had been making love for almost an hour. A sweet and bright cocoon of love surrounded us. And then, I hurt her.

I didn't mean to. My penis went in a little too far, at the wrong angle. Or something. Whatever I did, I hurt her. She flinched. For a fraction of a second I couldn't tell that her flinch was from pain and not pleasure. So I continued moving within her. And hurt her again.

Then, she really closed down. She pushed me away, held her hands up over her face, and began crying. She seemed more emotionally wounded than physically hurt.

My accidental movements couldn't have lasted more than a second or two all together. It was as if her memory of the previous hour of deep loving had been totally erased. She was acting like I was an abusive man, rather than a man who loved her, who had been loving her with real empathy and sensitivity, and who accidentally hurt her for a moment.

Consciousness and love must be transmitted through every thrust, moan, and gaze. A single dissociated movement or sound can break the heart-threads connecting you and your

lover, triggering an emotional collapse. The feminine partner, especially, is very sensitive to this thread. Even a moment of the masculine partner's drifting can collapse the love, energy, and connection that had been established up to that point.

Trust can evaporate in just a moment of emotional dissociation or heart disconnection, especially during times of deep sexual vulnerability. The deeper you and your lover have relaxed into love, the more sensitive your hearts are to disturbance by subtle disconnection. The wind blows, the window creaks, you remember an important paper you left in your car; your attention wanders or drifts, for a moment your movements are mechanical or automatic, and your lover feels your distraction, acutely. The flow of desire drops to zero.

Hopefully, such moments can be felt, understood, and laughed about. Everyone drifts occasionally. Everyone, man and woman alike, has moments of distraction, forgetfulness, and sexual automaticity. Yes, these moments may cause hurt. They may break the thread of exquisite loving that has developed over a long and heart-opening sexual occasion. The best thing to do is to recognize what has happened without blaming either partner. Find the humor in the bumbling. Return awareness fully to the present moment of breath and smile. And wash the residues of forgetfulness away in the remembrance of love.

FOR HIM

Sometimes you want to kick back and let your woman do you right. You don't want to be responsible for guiding the sexual occasion. You want her to initiate it. You want her to be lusty and wild, a whore, a nympho, hungry for your sex. If, instead, your woman always requires that you remain super-sensitive and aware of her subtle needs, then sex begins to feel like a burden.

Many men feel burdened by life. They don't feel at home in life. For them, life is something either to master or to escape. Rather than relaxing as a lover of life, most men attempt to "win" and be victorious in life or "retreat" and escape from its demands. To most men, life is something "out there," and it has to be dealt with. Especially women.

Women are raw life. They are life in your face. They give you life's sweetest fruits and most bitter fruits.

Very little in life is more delightful or burdensome to you than a woman. Most men can handle financial calamity, creative struggles, and natural catastrophes with greater aplomb than they can handle their woman's moods, needs, desires, and energy. Women are as good and bad as life gets, for most men.

Sometimes woman and life are good, sometimes not so good, but almost always you are waiting for more, that imaginary time in the future, "one day." You probably suffer from the masculine delusion that if you work hard enough now, *one day* things will be different. You may not be living your life exactly how you want to right now, but *one day* you will. Maybe even *one day* your woman won't be quite so bothersome.

The masculine error is to live life as if it is going somewhere fundamentally different from this very moment. It is not. Life in this moment is as deeply fulfilling, blissful, and free as you are willing to *be*, right now. And the same is true of every moment.

Your capacity to relax as the openness of the moment does change over time—and not always for the better—but the things that you *do* in your life never amount to a fundamental change in how fulfilled or free you *are* in any particular moment. And neither do changes in your woman.

No matter how much your life or woman changes, you will not be satisfied as long as you are *waiting* to be satisfied, waiting for things to

be different. To not be fully relaxed as consciousness, coincident with the pleasures and struggles of this very moment, is to postpone that for which you are waiting. And this is why your woman reacts so strongly to your lack of presence—even for a moment—during sex.

She *is* life. She feels your lack of presence immediately. She wants your fullest surrender in love, your deepest relaxation in consciousness, *now*. The fact that for the previous three hours you have been very present with her makes no difference if *now* you are in your head, drifting into thoughts of what you have to do tomorrow. A moment's loss of presence with your woman—or while mountain climbing, car racing, or boxing—results in immediate feedback, regardless of how present you have been up to that point.

Most moments of life seem more lax. We can drift for a moment without serious suffering. Life seems to give us plenty of room to be unconscious, distracted, wandering in thought and reverie, without killing us in response to our lack of presence. When we feel up to it, we enjoy a good challenge. But most of us are pretty slack, even though we may keep ourselves busy. We may occupy our attention with things to do, but we rarely commit ourselves to relaxing as the total presence of deep being in the present moment. Therefore, in the midst of our projects and our sex, we remain somewhat shallow and dissatisfied.

Most men tolerate a sense of chronic dissatisfaction while they wait for *one day* when things will be different. This masculine laziness—postponing your full presence and the deepest giving of your gift for a future moment—is intolerable to the feminine.

Your woman suffers your postponement, even if in the meantime you are working hard to “get there.” She intuitively knows there is no “there” to “get.” If you are not present now, if you are reinforcing a lack of depth now, how will this enhance your capacity to be more deeply present in the future?

Even if there is work to be done—as there always is—true growth means cultivating the capacity to remain free and present in the midst of action, not only when it is done. Focus is fine; a rigid collapse of love—being an asshole until your work is completed—is not. Neither is postponing authentic bliss for the sake of drifting in the mediocrity of functional attention, trivializing the depth of your being for the sake of achieving shallow goals.

The burdens you make of life and woman never seem to end. Yet, there is no need to look forward to *one day* because, even now, your life's tasks and your woman's moods do not actually limit your freedom in any way. In this moment, you are as free, deep, and relaxed as open being as you allow yourself to be.

You have probably made a habit out of paying attention to “things” and “doings” *as opposed to* opening as the freedom of deep being. Habits are hard to break. It takes effort to relax as deep being even *while* you are doing things because you have established a strong momentum of superficial attention. It is this superficiality, this lack of deep presence, that disturbs your woman, not your need to work—or your need to kick back and rest without being bothered.

Everybody needs to rest. Everybody needs “time off.” Restoration or rejuvenation is an essential part of life. But your woman is rather sensitive to your self-deception. She is probably more than happy to support your need for rest. But resting and being superficial are two different things. When you feel trapped, constrained, or burdened by life, you can be sure you are being superficial, attending merely to the unending tasks and decisions that arise as life. When you are not sourced in the depth of open being, then you begin to hate life.

Your woman can feel when you hate life. She feels it as a “hate” of her, even if you don't mean it that way. The feminine *is* life. When you've “had it up to here” with life, your woman suffers

your masculine error rather than simply feeling your need to rest. She feels your lack of depth and awareness, your lack of love, and she cannot trust you.

In most relationships, this dynamic may be quite subtle. Most men are almost constantly postponing their depth of presence for the sake of accomplishing a task or project, and so a woman learns to acclimate to her man's shallowness and his associated moods of dissatisfaction: burden, frustration, unfulfillment, or anger. In response, she collapses her radiance by shutting her body down so as not to feel her own pain, disappointment, and the lack of trust in her heart. Her closure and lack of radiance make her man feel even more burdened. And so on. Without knowing exactly why, mutual resentment and subtle tension begin to pervade the relationship.

Your woman can't fully open sexually unless she trusts you fully. She can't trust you fully unless you are clear in your deep purpose, have aligned your life so you are able to give your gifts, and are always doing your best to relax as who you really are, as deep presence, even while you "do things." Your woman wants to open herself to your deep presence, not to a self-deluded man who doesn't even know his awareness is absorbed in a stream of duties that leads nowhere but to more duties until death.

This moment is divine bliss. This moment is as deep and free as you are willing to be. But even if you are willing, it takes practice, because you have spent so many moments attending to the ripples of events rather than the ocean of deep being in which they arise.

Losing the thread of awareness while having sex with your woman is a miniature version of what you do most of the day. You'd think it wouldn't be such a big deal to your woman. You may feel, "Hey, what's wrong? I just remembered something I had to do at work, and so I wasn't totally present with you for a few seconds. It's

not a big deal.” But to her, the initial moment of feeling hurt may cascade into a primary lack of trust.

Fortunately, she will forget your lack of presence—if it is an exception, rather than the rule—as quickly as she forgot the three hours of total presence that preceded your infraction. Just come back to presence as soon as you are able. Be open, honest, and humorous about your drifting, and deepen the both of you in love.

If you recognize that you are chronically absorbed in superficial doings, then have compassion for your woman and yourself. She has suffered untold days or years of your lack of depth and presence, as you have suffered them yourself. Lack of depth *is* suffering. *The masculine error is to believe that this suffering can come to an end through activities and accomplishment.* Your woman reminds you that depth—love—is now or never.

Depth is your nature. You are inherently open and loving. You *are* openness and love. Relax as who you are, which includes woman and world. You will never master them nor escape from them. They *are* you. The light of your consciousness appears as woman and world. The moment you drift into assumed separation, as if you could surmount or escape them, they will bite you—that’s how the universe reminds itself who it is: consciousness appearing as its own radiance alive as love.

Even when you are fully present and alive as love, woman and world may *still* bite you—just for the heck of it. “Mommy” may *not* take care of you if you are good; “she” has her own momentum. In this world, your love is as likely to be met with crucifixion as exultation.

Your idea of where things are going has very little to do with where things are going. If you haven’t noticed, woman and world are far beyond your control. *One day* it may *not* all work out. But in any moment of utter surrender as the depth of who you really are,

everything doesn't have to work out in order for love to be true. Just as things are, you *are*, alive as love, open as consciousness, appearing to itself as all forms. Your actions and true gifts, your need for victory or escape, your woman and the entire world, bloom spontaneously from—and dissolve in—this blissful ocean of open being.

FOR HER

Without a woman's strong influence, men tend to become divorced from the flow of life. Men like to pursue "ultimates"—ultimate spiritual attainment, ultimate athletic victories, ultimate scientific theories. Men use their bodies as vehicles for achievement, pushing themselves to finish projects, eating whatever is in front of them, having sex to relieve tension so they can rest and get back to work.

For men devoid of feminine influence, the world becomes a problem to solve rather than a flow of living energy. They no longer feel plants and animals, but study them. They no longer respond to the moods of nature, but try to analyze weather in order to plan properly. Often, they are barely aware of the natural, sensual world, so caught up are they in offices, computers screens, books, magazines, newspapers, television, meditation, and projects.

Without strong feminine influence (from their inner feminine, a woman, or an external feminine source like nature), men lose touch with loving relationship, sensuality, pleasure, and the flow of life itself.

What happens when a woman lacks strong masculine influence (from her own inner masculine, a man, or another external source)? She becomes *embroiled* in relationship, sensuality, and the flows of nature. Her life becomes like the weather, moved mostly by forces of mood and relational circumstance.

She never quite seems able to accomplish what she plans to do when she plans to do it. The phone rings, and she talks to her friend

for an hour instead of working on her taxes. Her mood swings, and she spends a few days tangled in shades of crimson, bereft of humor and perspective. Her disposition is colored by the way her body, emotion, and intimate relationship feel today, rather than by the bloom of love that always beats her heart.

Men, by themselves, tend to neglect the fullness of life and relationship for the sake of possible goals; women, by themselves, tend to neglect life's possible depth for the sake of their current emotions and relationships. Many women, for instance, find it difficult to leave a bad relationship for the sake of a possibly better one that has yet to appear.

Most people are born with either a significantly more masculine or more feminine sexual essence. About 80% of all women are born with a more *feminine* sexual essence, and so prefer flowing to going. While shopping, they would rather browse and take their time than dart in, get what they need, and dart out. While eating, they would rather enjoy flavors and textures than eat just what is necessary to accomplish their goals. While talking, they would rather enjoy the flow of energy than make a point, conclude the exchange, and get on to something "more important."

If you are in this majority of women, you probably feel a need for external masculine influence in order not to become chronically embedded in your flow of emotions and relationships (just as the majority of men need external feminine influence in order not to become heart-dissociated robots of achievement and ideas). These needs are natural. Your emotional and sexual health depend on taking these needs into account. Furthermore, to grow spiritually without creating gaps in development, everybody must understand their true emotional and sexual needs in relationship.

There is a big difference between being *needy* and having a simple, honest *need*. If you hide chocolates in your purse and secretly pig-out

on ice cream—only to feel guilty and bloated later—then this behavior can be called *needy*. Everybody, however, has a healthy and honest *need* to eat sweets occasionally, without complication or excess. In the same way, most women need external masculine influence, usually in the form of an intimate partner. But having this need doesn't mean you have to be needy.

If your life is not going where you want it to go—if you are not even sure where you want it to go—then you need more masculine influence in your life. If you feel stuck in a relationship that doesn't feel right, or if you tend to be swamped in emotions of hurt, self-loathing, or “numbness,” then you need more masculine influence in your life.

We have already discussed the feminine practice of fully incarnating an emotional energy in order to unveil the heart's depth of love. Now we are talking about the gifts of practice that can be given *between* partners.

Masculine influence creates spaciousness and perspective in your life. You feel the big picture rather than feeling stuck in today's moods, feelings, and flows of relationship. There is obviously nothing *wrong* with moods, feelings, and relationships—just as there is nothing wrong with pursuing ultimate attainment of perfection—but it is only one side of the whole. The feminine tends to reduce life to “Do you love me?” in its many forms, and the masculine tends to reduce life to “How can I be ultimately free or successful?”

Feminine and masculine—love and freedom, embrace and letting go, radiance and presence—are not separable. For instance, the more you are concerned with love, the more you will be attracted to—and attract to you—a partner concerned with freedom. Your desires and your partner's will tend to be of the same depth: If you want to be appreciated for your body, your partner will probably want to be appreciated for his money. If you want to be appreciated for a deeper

form of your feminine radiance, your partner will probably want to be appreciated for a deeper form of his masculine presence.

Feminine and masculine attract each other, creating a whole. Furthermore, each relationship grows through different levels of feminine love and masculine freedom. At the lower levels, a relationship is rife with neediness. If you have a feminine essence, you are needy for constant reassurance that you are loved, desired, and attractive, and your masculine partner is needy for your admiration of his success and attainments.

The next step of growth often involves throwing out the baby of need along with the bathwater of neediness. You realize that you don't like to feel needy (which is a sign of growth), and you think that you can develop your own inner masculine enough so that you don't need a masculine partner.

Some women—the 10% born with a neutral sexual essence or those old enough to have already “rounded out” their born disposition—can achieve this self-contained wholeness. Many women cannot. Many women—including the 80% with a feminine sexual essence in early and middle age—need appropriate masculine influence, whether it comes from a lover, teacher, therapist, or friend. You might like the idea of being an “independent woman,” but the fact is that all of us are linked interdependently, and our health is based on the appropriately balanced give and take of air, food, ideas, money, love, *and* sexual energy.

Without proper and sufficient masculine influence in your life, you become depressed. If you do not rectify this sexual imbalance, you become needy. You develop excessive cravings for Mr. Right. You hunger for a man who can somehow enter your life—emotionally or physically—and bloom you into happiness. You seek a savior in the form of a lover, teacher, therapist, movement, or even a career. Eventually, if you can't find a source of masculine influence that you trust

enough, you may resign yourself to a life of aching empty-hearted but self-directed independence.

However, if you can honestly own your natural need for the masculine to enter your life, then you can get it without becoming needy and therefore playing the victim role. The sexual truth is uncomplicated: You need your moods opened by masculine humor, perspective, and spaciousness. Your man needs his rigid thoughts and doings softened in the body of your love and brightened by the radiance of your heart. For most women and men, it's as simple as that.

You needn't feel weak or guilty because you have these needs, any more than you feel weak or guilty because you need food. Truly healthy relationships are not based on neediness or fear of neediness, but on a deep understanding of the mutual gifts and blessings of the masculine and feminine sexual forces.

At times you may notice yourself making a demand of your man that you know is unreasonable. This demand may be in words, but you may also express it through your moods. This "unreasonable demand" may be a sign that you are not getting the masculine gifts you need, and so you have begun to develop needy cravings.

The need for masculine gifts grows through stages. In the early stages of growth, a woman might be satisfied with a man who provides her with affection, money, perhaps children, and commitment. In the middle stages of growth, a woman needs a deeper exchange of ideas, shared interests, life-improvement, and a sense that they are growing in comfort and enjoyment together—the "good life."

As growth continues to develop, a woman longs for a man whose deep presence fills her heart with the bliss of love-devotion and surrender. (Notice that this deepest exchange has nothing to do with the external accomplishments or personality of a man. A woman at this stage might choose to open as blissful fullness in devotional relationship

with the deep presence of divine being, without any intimate partner. She may also, at this or any stage, prefer to receive the masculine gifts she needs from another woman.)

You will attract a lover who matches your depth, stage by stage. For instance, if a secure relationship is more important to you than deepening love (which may or may not require a relationship to continue in its current form), then you will attract a man who is more concerned with security than with risking everything for the sake of deep heart-openness.

Because you don't necessarily grow in one piece, you might feel confused or divided inside. A less spiritually mature part of you may crave security in relationship while another part of you may yearn for the bliss of surrender in unbounded heart-openness. If you have chosen a loyal man who is committed to you and your children, earns a good living, and shares interests with you—but whose deep presence is compromised by his needs for external accomplishment and security—then part of you will feel safe while another part of you begins craving more depth. You may eventually feel anger and resentment toward your man even though he is trying to do everything right for you and your family.

Have you resigned yourself to a sexual and emotional life far less full than you know you want? If you have, you will feel frustrated and angry with your man. You will find yourself attacking him energetically, testing him with energies you know he can't handle. And for what? If you chose him from the part of you that wants comfort, mutual interests, and emotional security, then you can't blame him for not taking you to deeper places. A man with the depth to consistently love you into blissful heart-surrender certainly won't give a damn about conventional emotional security—he will have left that neediness behind long ago.

The emotional neediness of your growing identity and the inherent needs of your deep heart-essence are two different things. At some

point in your growth, you will be ready to practice opening as the love that you really are. You will be ready to meet the needs of your deepest heart, which often have little to do with comfortable security in relationships of emotional attachment. At this stage, a man whose needs meet yours will have grown beyond his neediness for financial security and a sense of accomplishment.

This doesn't mean you *reject* relational commitment or financial attainment as you grow. You may enjoy a fully committed relationship and great financial success, but these needs are contextualized by deeper needs. If your relationship must change form or your means of livelihood need to be rearranged in order to better cultivate your heart-fullness and gifts of deep love, so be it.

If you want to help your man learn to be fully present with you—not needily preoccupied with his thoughts, concerns, and projects—then be fully radiant with him—not preoccupied with your emotional neediness to feel desired or valued. If you have attracted a man who lacks full presence, who dissociates during sex and breaks the thread of your heart-connection, then you can be pretty sure that your love-radiance is likewise compromised. You have attracted each other to learn the necessary lessons for continued growth.

You grow by learning to gift each other with what you truly need without catering to neediness. He honestly admits that he sometimes needs your radiant love to help pull him down from his head into deeper heart-connection. You honestly confess—without guilt or feeling weak—that you sometimes need his presence, humor, and perspective to help free you from your emotional closure and confusion into open-hearted joy.

While misguidedly trying to “do it all yourself,” you may fluctuate through cycles of boredom, emotional hysteria, confusion, and the staunch close-heartedness of a falsely independent woman. Before

your unmet needs develop into needy cravings, find a way to receive the masculine influence that your feminine essence might require for its balanced health and continued growth. Although there are many ways to do it, intimate relationship is one of the best ways for the masculine and feminine to share their genuine gifts of freedom and love.