

## **On the Discipline of Completing Rather than Competing: For the Complementary Sexes**

"We are always trying to be relieved of our incompleteness and to bridge the gulf between one human being and another. Are we not like those pieces of coins broken in half for keepsakes with each of us forever seeking our missing part? May we be among the happy few to whom it is given to meet our other halves and be made complete."

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### **From Metamorphosis by Ernest Schactel**

Curiosity, the desire for knowledge, the posing of man's eternal questions, 'Who am I' – all these do not develop under the pressure of relentless need or of fear for one's life. They develop when a man can pause to think, when the child is free to wonder and explore. They are not merely detours on the path to gratification of basic biological needs, any more than thought is only a substitute for hallucinatory wish fulfillment. They represent man's distinctive capacity to develop interest – the autonomous interest that alone permits a full encounter with the object.

While need satisfaction is related to tension discharge, both love and object-interest find their fulfillment not in a discharge of tension but, rather, in the maintenance of it, in sustained and ever renewed acts of relating to the beloved person or to the object of interest."

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### **George Santayana**

"What I have yearned for all my life is not so much cosmic unity, but simply completion. If I see a circle half-drawn, I yearn to complete it. The transitoriness of things is essential to their physical being, and not at all sad in itself.... What is truly sad is to have some impulse frustrated in the midst of its career.... The point is to have expressed and discharged all that was latent in us."

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### **From The Primacy of Love, Paul Wadell**

"Morality begins in the awareness of our incompleteness. Humans are seekers of completion. Our lives are strategic endeavors to be united to what we think will bring us to completion, to our ultimate end. It is the one thing we seek for its own sake. We establish ourselves as persons through the purposes we have that shape our actions and who we are. To what are you most consistently turned because you believe it is the best for you? Happiness is the nurturing in us of the best and most promising desires, the richest and noblest love.

What is required for wholeness stands outside of us. Our restoration is not something we can provide ourselves; thus, it is not so much a question of self-development but of being developed by another.

“To say that love is the key to our moral deliverance, and to identify it as a passion, is to know that our perfection comes by receiving a good we not only lack, but by nature are incapable of giving to ourselves. As human beings we stand in absolute need: we come to wholeness only by suffering a good other than our own. We are restored by someone other working on us; we are healed through an agency other than our own. The distance between who we are now and who we are called to be is the work of one whose love provides for us what we could never provide ourselves.”

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### **From Sex and Society, Kenneth Walker and Peter Fletcher**

“The Platonic myth of the severed halves seeking for each other has this great advantage that it emphasizes a fact which is often forgotten, that sexuality is something which enters as a factor into every aspect of the emotional life; it is not concerned with reproduction alone. Love at its best extends far beyond the narrow confines of the reproductive act...the highest function of sexuality is to assist the spiritual growth of the individual.

Berdyaev in *The Destiny of Man*, wrote ‘The meaning and purpose of the union between man and woman is to be found, not in the continuation of the species, or in its social import, but in personality, in its striving for the completeness and fullness of life....’ Sexuality is an impulse, which has spread far beyond its original [lower animal species] boundaries, so that it colors the whole of our emotional life. This explains why the individual who has never managed to come to terms with his own sexuality is usually one who has failed to come to terms with life in general.

Love is an expressive emotion, not a possessive one. It can be satisfied only by an active response, never by a passive one. We speak to an object and it is silent; we speak to a friend and he answers back; and our loving is fulfilled or frustrated according to his response. The need for love is a need, not for strength in the self but for strength in the bond between selves. It is a need to discover our personal reality in the only possible way, by discovering the personal reality of another being of our own kind in a relationship that is reciprocal.

Love is the desire for contact or communication with another being like ourselves who makes his presence felt in a manner that reveals his essential nature to us and by so doing reveals our essential nature to ourselves. So the search for love is a search for recognition and our desire to be loved is a desire to be recognized, not for what we do but for what we are. Love is what remains when desire is satisfied and passion spent: the need to see one’s own reality attested in the reality of another human being.”

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### **From The Art of Loving by Eric Fromm**

"Our deepest need is to overcome our separateness, to leave our prison of aloneness. Humanity has emerged from the animal's instinctive adaptation, from our original oneness with nature. Once torn away from nature, we cannot return to it. We can only go forward by developing our reason, by finding a new harmony, a human one. We are life being aware of itself.

“This awareness of the self as a separate entity, the awareness of our own short life span, of our aloneness and separateness...would drive us insane could we not liberate ourselves from this prison and reach out, unite ourselves with others and the world outside.

Each of us is confronted with the solution of the one and the same question: how to overcome separateness, how to transcend one's own individual life. Our Western culture offers many routines to relieve the anxiety of separateness.

When the routine of work does not succeed...we overcome our despair by the routine of amusement and the satisfaction of buying new things. Our happiness today consists of 'having fun'. But such routines are only partial answers to the problem of existence. The full answer only lies in the achievement of interpersonal union, in love.

Love is an active power which unites the separate person with others; love overcomes the sense of isolation and separateness yet permits us to be ourselves. The male-female polarity is the basis for interpersonal creativity. In the love between man and woman, each of them is reborn. In love the paradox occurs that two beings become one yet remain two.

Love is the active concern for the life and the growth of that which we love. The affirmation of one's own life, happiness, growth, freedom, is rooted in one's capacity to love. Immature love says: 'I love because I am loved. I love you because I need you.' Mature love says: 'I am loved because I love. I need you because I love you.' Love implies care, responsibility, respect and knowledge.

Love is an orientation of character, an activity, not an attachment to an object. People think that to love is simple, but that to find the right object to love - or be loved by - is difficult. Our whole culture is based on the importance of the object...on the appetite for buying or exchanging objects. For the man an attractive girl - and for the woman an attractive man - are the prizes they are after. Two persons thus fall in love when they feel they have found the best object available on the market.

This attitude - that nothing is easier than to love - has continued to be the prevalent idea about love in spite of the overwhelming evidence to the contrary. There is hardly any activity which is started with such tremendous hopes and expectations, and yet, which fails so regularly, as love.

Love is an art - and like any art it must be learned. When you want to paint beautiful pictures you do not wait for just the right object to paint beautifully, you learn the art first. So for love, we must master theory and practice first. Most importantly, the mastery of the art must be a matter of ultimate concern. Yet in spite of the deep-seated craving for love, almost everything else in our culture is considered to be more important than love: success, prestige, money, power - almost all our energy is used to learn how to achieve these aims, and almost none to learn the art of loving."