

Week 19 - 4th Quadrant Practice - bring Interdependence to the states and stages of dependency and codependency

Now that you have purified your souls by your obedience to the truth so that you have genuine natural love, love one another deeply from the heart, 1 Peter 1:22

If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, what am I? ~The Talmud

When we live in the lower regions of the mountain, we are only able to perceive the world through a dualistic lens of either/or, you/or, me, black/or, white, male/or, female, right/or wrong. There is not yet enough awakening to consciousness yet to hold the both/and in awareness. I cannot consider both you and me, I cannot find both male and female within, and so on. Life is simple. Morality is simple. Life is a bargain or balancing act in relationships of getting needs met by meeting needs. This is the realm of dependency and codependency, or, when this becomes too painful, independence and isolation. How many times have many of you said, "That's it. I will never get married again!" Interdependency at this stage is an idea unrealized in actual relationships that remain in dependent and co-dependent. It can be no other way until there the higher realms are reached, and life is about giving from the heart and receiving from the heart.

Rene Daumal, the French philosopher and novelist wrote an allegorical novel called **Mount Analogue: A Tale of Non-Euclidian and Symbolically Authentic Mountaineering Adventures**

One of the things he says, that is profoundly true of the evolutionary process, is that you cannot see what is above. You can only see what is below. It is as if there is a glass ceiling that is actually a one-way mirror with the stage above being able to see below, but the stage below not seeing the stage above. This is why all growth is an act of faith, courage, humility and risk. It is why everyone resists at first.

Daumal says, "You cannot always stay on the summits. You have to come down again...."

While climbing, pay very close attention to the difficulties along your path and the way in which you have actually traversed or solved the problem. Have you ever had the experience of working on your computer and miraculously you do something right and then you have no idea how you did and cannot repeat the sequence? It is like that - you must KNOW, what you are doing. You must climb very mindfully. During the descent on the mountain you will no longer see the difficulties you had coming up, but you will know that they are there if you have observed carefully.

Mountain climbing gives the gift of perspective. Daumal says, "There is an art to finding your way in the lower regions by the memory of what you have seen when you were higher up. When you can no longer see you can at least still know.

The late leading scholar of religious studies in the United States, Huston Smith explained this understanding in talking about all the world's religions as being at the bottom of the mountain. Each person desires to climb the mountain to reach god, but each starts the climb from the perspective of their experience at the bottom of the mountain. If you live in the desert, you are going to prepare for the climb in a very different way to an Eskimo in Alaska might prepare for the journey. You will have different beliefs, cultures, rituals, preparation for the journey. But once you reach the top of the mountain you will find that you are all the same and all differences at the bottom levels will have disappeared into the common knowledge of what love and truth are. All the different religions, at the bottom of the mountain are doctrines of morality, higher up the

mountain there is an expansion into true spirituality. In other words, there is an awakening of the heart so that morality does not have to enforce good behavior. Once the heart is in alignment with the Law of Love, all good behavior is now in alignment with love instead of emanating from fear and shame. The law of love is of course, all inclusive, and results in complete interdependence in love.

So, let's consider some of the ways you have realized some small measure of interdependency so that the memory of this can be brought back down to the ways in which you still live in dependency and co-dependency. Can we learn to be interdependent with our dependent and co-dependent selves? There are times when being interdependent, not only in belief, but in action comes quite naturally and authentically and other times where you fall into traps. You must understand the traps you fell into and learned on your way up.

- People that relate interdependently have a sense of autonomy and separateness but are able to share deeply, intimately and meaningfully with people they love and trust. This quality can be recognized in the ability to:
- speak for self with confidence and directly - "I feel, think, want, need ..." in an appropriate way, neither revealing too much nor being overly guarded and superficial. They also speak in a way that is taking full ownership for their own thoughts, feelings and meeting their own needs
- are able to build rapport with others, by finding common ground, using appropriate humor and indicating interest through acknowledgement, reflection and mirroring, questioning, validating and empathizing through finding similarity with self
- relate in a mutual and reciprocal way. They are mutually sharing of self and showing interest in the other
- are able to take initiative in relationship but do not dominate
- listen and track well - listening for deeper meaning, feeling, need and memory
- understand and recognize the difference between over-identification, sympathy and pity, empathy, compassion and love
- make no distinctions between race, gender, ethnicity, class in their relationship to others
- make no distinction in recognizing the intrinsic value and worth of all that lives in the universe
- recognize that each person can find the answer within and so does not communicate in ways that give solve other people's problems for them but empowers them to find them for themselves. Do not do for others what they can do for themselves
- are at ease with pain, suffering, other people's negative feelings etc. and are able to be fully present, engaged and interested in understanding deeply with empathy
- help others feel at ease, liked accepted and connected very quickly
- set limits with hurtful behavior from others immediately, naturally, giving the message that behaviors are being addressed, not the person being criticized for who they are intrinsically
- are able to meet people at any level of the mountain in a way that meets them at the level they are at with tender *and* firm love and acceptance

Add your own observations and knowledge to this by observing yourself keenly.

On the other-hand lower down the mountain folks are squabbling and competing in various combinations of dependency and co-dependency, or superiority and inferiority, or power and control, or playing victim or perpetrator... all the same words actually.

- People who are dependent unconsciously rely on other people to meet their emotional needs for esteem affirmation, attention, value etc. The other person, unconsciously, meets all these needs to fulfill the same unconscious emotional needs in themselves. Two people locked into this kind of relationship

switch back and forth between these two roles and so may sometimes and in some ways appear to be very independent and strong with the false power of meeting the needs of another.

We can recognize this level of development by behaviors that indicate they:

- confuse feeling responses with thought responses. Eg. "I feel like... or I feel that..."
- have a basic fear of being minimized or disregarded if true feelings are expressed and so either do not know what they are feeling or do not share what they are feeling or give feeling responses that are non-specific - words like fine, good, bad, not so hot.... Etc.
- use "we" or "you" statements more commonly than "I" statements, speaking for others, or including others in their feelings as in "we think/feel that..."
- have discomfort with others' feelings and difficulty empathizing - either over-identifying or sympathizing and pitying (too close or too far in relationship)
- are fearful of people being different from themselves - having different thoughts, opinions, values, feelings... and so conform to those they idealize and try to make others conform to their point of view, when they believe they are right
- have an inability to maintain and sustain mutual, evolving relationships. They tend to be either superficial and pleasant or conflictual and destructive, or a combination of both in a passive-aggressive, superficially nice relationship with underlying hostility
- are engaged in addictive behaviors - over-eating, drinking, working, volunteering, etc.
- engage in caretaking interactions (see caretaking)
- engage in controlling behaviors (see control)
- try hard to be liked, make a good impression. Overly charming. The focus is on what the other person might be thinking, needing, not on building rapport and relationship
- fear other's responses (see external frame of reference)
- overly compliant and submissive
- wanting their needs met by others (see external focus)
- speak for others, do for others, help others, advise others, know all about others...
- use platitudes to keep things going "nicely." Keep the peace, ignore issues by sweeping them under the rug. Do not want to rock the boat.
- use the word overwhelmed a great deal
- ask others what they think they should do, think, feel, what the answer is etc.
- are always living in smug superiority or intolerable inferiority

Seeing this in yourself is so very hopeful - it is just a stage. You can also learn about and see what interdependence could look like. Notice your old patterns of dependency and codependency and make a commitment to consider, every time what an interdependent relationship would look like. What would it require to live in interdependence with yourself so that this too can be your outer reality. Consider every way in which your young wounded soul is the victim of your control, lecturing, fixing, shaming, and judging. Consider in your outer relationships whether it is your young wounded and dependent child begging for love outside of you, or if it is egoic false-self speaking that "always knows better by knowing which defense of power and control to apply to the inner condition and so the outer condition, instead of listening with love and understanding.

"How much of my true self I camouflage and choke in order to commend myself to him, denying the fullness of me ... How I've torn myself down, diluted myself to maintain his approval." ~Sylvia Ashton-Wamer

There are people, who the more you do for them, the less they will do for themselves."

~Jane Austen

People who are always thinking about the feelings of others can be very destructive because they are hiding so much from themselves.
" ~May Sarton

"Ever since people first existed, they have been doing all the things we label "codependent." They have worried themselves sick about other people. They have tried to help in ways that didn't help. They have said yes when they meant no. They have tried to make other people see things their way. They have bent over backwards avoiding hurting people's feelings and, in so doing, have hurt themselves. They have been afraid to trust their feelings. They have believed lies and then felt betrayed. They have wanted to get even and punish others. They have felt so angry they wanted to kill. They have struggled for their rights while other people said they didn't have any. They have worn sackcloth because they didn't believe they deserved silk."

~ Melody Beattie, Codependent No More: How to Stop Controlling Others and Start Caring for Yourself

"The psyche cannot tolerate a vacuum of love. In the severely abused or deprived child, pain, dis-ease, and violence rush in to fill the void. In the average person in our culture, who has been only "normally" deprived of touch, anxiety and an insatiable hunger for possessions replace the missing eros. The child lacking a sense of welcome, joyous belonging, gratuitous security, will learn to hoard the limited supply of affection. According to the law of psychic compensation, not being held leads to holding on, grasping, addiction, possessiveness. Gradually, things replace people as a source of pleasure and security. When the gift of belonging with is denied, the child learns that love means belonging to. To the degree we are arrested at this stage of development, the needy child will dominate our motivations. Other people and things (and there is fundamentally no difference) will be seen as existing solely for the purpose of "my" survival and satisfaction. "Mine" will become the most important word."
~Sam Keen, The Passionate Life: Stages of Loving

Independence

(Extreme)

I do my thing, and you do your thing

I am not in this world to live up to your expectations

And you are not in this world to live up to mine

You are you and I am I

And if by chance we meet, it's beautiful

If not, it can't be helped.

~Fritz Perls

Dependence/Codependence

(Extreme)

We do our thing together

I am here to meet all your needs and expectations

And you are here to meet mine

We had to meet, and it was beautiful

I can't imagine it turning out any other way.

~Jerry Gillies

Interdependence

(Balanced)

Love one another, but make not a bond of love:

Let it rather be a moving sea between the shores of your souls.

Fill each other's cup but drink not from one cup.

Sing and dance together and be joyous,

But let each one of you be alone

Though they quiver with the same music

And stand together yet not too near together;

For the pillars of the temple stand apart,

And the oak tree and the cypress grow

Not in each other's shadow

But let there be spaces in your togetherness

And let the winds of the heavens dance

Between you.

~Kahlil Gibran