

all about love



“To truly love we must learn to mix various ingredients—care, affection, recognition, respect, commitment and trust, as well as honest and open communication.”

Punishment

Excerpts

“Love was always and only about good feelings. In early adolescence when we were whipped and told that these punishments were for our own good” or “I’m doing this because I love you,” my siblings and I were confused. Why was harsh punishment a gesture of love?” p. 17

“..a vast majority of the scars covering the bodies of fellow inmates (not all of whom were on death row) were not, as some might think, the result of violent adult interactions. These men were covered in scars from childhood beatings inflicted by parenting adults.” p. 24

“When parents start out disciplining children by using punishment, this becomes the pattern children respond to... Since the vast majority of us were raised in households where punishment was deemed the primary, if not the only, way to teach discipline, the fact that discipline can be taught without punishment surprises many people.” p. 26

Reflections

- What did we learn about love in our childhood?
- How have childhood love lessons played a role in our adult ideas about love?
- How does a culture of punishment show up in our adult lives?

- How are discipline and punishment different?

Patriarchy

Excerpts

“Patriarchy tells us daily through movies, television and magazines that men of power can do whatever they want, that it’s this freedom that makes them men. The message given males is that to be honest is to be ‘soft.’” p. 38

“Estrangement from feelings makes it easier for men to lie because they are often in a trance state, utilizing survival strategies of asserting manhood that they learned as boys...To embrace patriarchy, they must actively surrender the longing to love.” p. 39

“The wounded child inside many males is a boy who, when he first spoke his truths, was silenced by paternal sadism, by a patriarchal world that did not want him to claim his true feelings. The wounded child inside many females is a girl who was taught from early childhood that she must become something other than herself, deny her true feelings, in order to attract and please others.” p. 49

Reflections

- How do gender expectations impact our ability to love?
- How does patriarchy hurt men? Hurt women? How is this different depending on gender?
- How are we disrupting gender expectations in our love lives (romantic and non romantic)?

Community

Excerpts

“Cultures of domination rely on the cultivation of fear as a way to ensure obedience. In our society we make much of love and say little about fear. Yet we are all terribly afraid most of the time. As a culture we are obsessed with the notion of safety. Yet we do not question why we live in states of extreme anxiety and dread. Fear is the primary force upholding structures of domination. It promotes the desire for separation, the desire to not be known. When we are taught that safety lies always with sameness, then difference, of any kind, will appear as a threat. When we choose to love we choose to move against fear—against alienation and separation. The choice to love is a choice to connect—to find ourselves in the other.” p. 93

“Giving up something is one way we sustain a commitment to the collective well-being. Our willingness to make sacrifices reflects our awareness of interdependency.” p. 143

Reflections

- How can we practice love in our communities?
- How does lack of love impact our ability to connect with others?