



## Love, Heartbreak and Healing: Towards the Inner Marriage

*The minute I heard my first love story  
I started looking for you  
Not knowing how blind that was  
Lovers don't finally meet somewhere  
They're in each other all along*  
—Rumi

As a therapist with 20 years of listening to and bearing witness to heartbreak, it wasn't until I experienced it most profoundly myself that I understood its beauty, its depth and its ability to thrust us into a spiritual journey. It was this experience that propelled me into writing my last book, *Love in a Time of Broken Heart: Healing From Within*. In it I shared my life experience both as a woman and therapist. Using myths and stories, I've charted the inner journey to healing after heartbreak as well as outlined the influence our early lives have on our love relationships—and much more. More importantly, writing this book led me to a deeper understanding of the very essence of the Inner Marriage. I learnt that for many of us, our love relationships reflect our spiritual journey, and how experiencing heartbreak can bring us to unconditional love. Losing love can take us to experience our own hearts and our soul's longings, and connects us with our deep need for inner wholeness or spiritual fulfilment.

In a time of increasing emotional isolation and fractured relationships, our sense of separation is so acute that we still seek love outside of ourselves and we are crying out for the touch of the divine, for a higher force that can help us heal. Love, with its ability to take us into the transcendent, can do

this. The Inner Marriage is the ultimate archetype of wholeness, and at the core of every love affair is a vision of wholeness. When we love, we feel whole. But this wholeness often evaporates when the one we love leaves us, leaving us heartbroken and not only bereft of him or her, but also of love. And the Inner Marriage, our sense of wholeness, becomes even more elusive.

At the basis of our human relationship experience lie three fundamental truths, as I see it:

- Our impulse to love another soul is part of our spiritual journey and our inner search for wholeness and balance.
- Our adult relationships bear the mark of our first relationship with our parents and our early life experience impacts on the way we relate.
- A broken heart is a sacred initiation with opportunities for soul growth.

Fundamentally, the Inner Marriage is about the balancing of the masculine and feminine within oneself. Jung's belief that every human being has contra-sexual components; in other words, that all of us have masculine and feminine energies, and that what every individual seeks is a balance between the two in order to feel complete is reflected in outer union with a partner. Or, to put it another way, the drive to relate in love is merely the outer manifestation of the universal drive for wholeness and union within. Love has a transcendent quality that draws us.

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Of the Inner Marriage, the poets say: *“When two souls have finally found each other there is established between them a union which begins on earth and continues forever in Heaven.”*

—Victor Hugo

The mystics say: *“If you want to make progress on the path and ascend to the places you have longed for, the important thing is not to think much but to love much, and so do whatever best awakens you to love.”*

— St Theresa of Avila

**R**elationships offer us an unrivalled opportunity for soul growth. In some deep part of our soul we all have a memory of wholeness, and of belonging. We also have a sense of having lost this wholeness, and this further fuels our search. Psychologists would tell us that what we are searching for is to return to the nirvana that we thought we experienced when we were in our mother’s wombs. My own belief is that while the birth experience is most definitely our first great experience of physical separation, it is merely a reminder of an earlier separation, and causes us to search endlessly for the person who will give us the desired sense of completion. Often this is a nameless yearning we feel in our hearts and we imagine it will be healed through meeting the perfect partner, our soul mate.

Love has a great power to heal us. Soul mates come into our lives so that we can learn about love, about healing, and about compassion. The consciousness of relating to another being opens us to union and wholeness that is not possible any other way. It is only through the constant chaffing of differences that we learn to deal with “otherness.” Through this acceptance we move to inner wholeness. Outer love brings us to inner love and vice versa.

#### ARCHITECTS OF LOVE: ANIMA & ANIMUS<sup>1</sup>

**T**wo archetypes, the anima and the animus, are particularly involved in intimate relationships, acting as architects of love. The anima in the man and the animus in the woman will act as guides in their choice of partner, and also determine how they will relate. For all of us, our first relationships create the template for later relationships—particularly relationships involving love and intimacy. Also, since our mothers and fathers are generally the first male and female in our lives, they make up our inner images of male and female. Both men and women are greatly influenced by parental imagery, and it is true that we unconsciously seek out our parents or more accurately what we may have missed in our parents, in our partners. A man’s anima will be made up of his earliest experiences of the feminine, usually his mother, and a woman’s animus will be greatly influenced by how she has experienced the first man in her life, generally her father. The animus or inner masculine is responsible for our creativity, and more specifically, our ability to bring that creativity to life. The anima or inner feminine represents everything to do with relationship. Anima is so intimately connected with love and relating that generally speaking, if we have had an

emotionally stark or difficult early childhood our wounded anima will be reflected in our relationships along with the animus. In straight language, we generally love because we want to heal.

We do not love by accident! There is always a greater plan at work in our lives and relationships. As well as having the power to heal us, our soul mates act as mirrors in which we can see ourselves. Nothing constellates shadow more than relating! Of course the shadow is not only that part of us we repress, but also that we have in potential. In other words, our shadow represents unconscious aspects of our personalities, and includes our latent qualities. When we relate, particularly in intimate relationships, we usually project these aspects onto our partners. When we project unwanted qualities or patterns we consider unacceptable, we will be irritated by these very things in our partner. The same process applies in the positive. When we fall in love, we project positive, beautiful qualities onto our lovers, so they embody all the beauty our soul desires. The process of mutual projection means there are always inner forces at play in our relationships, making for exciting and sometimes challenging times!

#### HOW CAN HEARTBREAK & SOUL PAIN BE BEAUTIFUL?

**H**earthbreak will catapult you into a great depth. It will move you, sear you and change you. Because it propels us deep into our inner selves, a terrain often left undiscovered in our hurried lifestyles, experiencing heartbreak is hugely soulful. Heartbreak, like love, demands more from us. To fully harness the healing power of love and heartbreak we have to be willing to fully engage with it. I believe that at a profound spiritual level, we are meant to have our hearts broken wide open, so that we can love more, so that we can know compassion, and experience unconditional love. Compassion is where our heart pain is meant to lead us. Period.

To heal a broken heart, we have to go through a journey. We have to be prepared to go through the dark night of the soul, immortalised by John of Cross and others. Healing from within means travelling into the profound terrain of our souls. It means exploring the older wisdom in our *“Deep living hearts,”* and surrendering to something far greater than the narrow focus of our ego-driven minds. To truly touch this place within we must *“lose sight”* of ourselves, and move beyond, to the tide of life that stirs in the *“depths, out of sight, in the deep living heart<sup>2</sup>.”* Healing from within means that we do not blame others for what they did, or did not do, to make us unhappy. True healing involves taking responsibility for the choices we make and the relationships we have.

When we lose love, we empower ourselves through a journey of healing which includes self-examination and evaluation. And since we have learned that love can bring us back to ourselves and reveal our souls in a way not possible otherwise, our journey to healing after heartbreak will result in a stronger, more beautiful and resilient soul, and an open heart.

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<sup>1</sup> Mauger, B. *Love in a Time of Broken Heart-Healing From Within* p.154

<sup>2</sup> From Lawrence, D.H, *Know Thyself*