Love and Trauma

How to overcome the difficulties in order to love oneself

London 12th February 2010

www.franz-ruppert.de

Prof. Franz Ruppert
The wife’s constellation (beginning)

Issue: Why do I feel like there is a pane of glass between him and me?
The wife’s constellation (ending)

Issue: Feeling frightened to be beaten from behind

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the husband’s constellation (beginning)

Issue: What is my part in making the relationship with her so difficult?

wife  husband
the husband’s constellation (ending)

Issue: How can I become independent from outside influences and get access to the other part of me?

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the child’s constellation (beginning)

Issue: What is the background of my rheumatism?

boy

husband/father

wife/mother

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the child‘s constellation (ending)

husband/father

boy

wife/mother

Issue: Feeling as a desperately sad part of the mother

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Love is

- A bodily sensation
- A very positive feeling
- A longing for another person
- A capacity
- An idea
- An attitude
- ...

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Different forms of Love
(Erich Fromm 1900-1980)

- Love for others
- Love of a mother
- Love between couples
- Love of oneself
- Love of god

Falling in love  Being in love

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More types of Love

- mother-child
- father-child
- child-mother
- child-father
- between siblings
- Of one’s family
- to one’s tribe or football club
- for one’s country
- of pets
- of mankind
- …

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Love can go beyond boundaries and limits.

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The first love experience of human beings is symbiotic.
What are symbiotic needs?

- Being hold
- Being feded
- Kept warm
- Being supported
- Belonging to someone
- Belonging together
Symbiotically every child is doubly bonded to her mother:

passively: the emotional qualities of the mother are imprinted in the child’s soul

actively: the child tries to support the mother

The symbiotic love of a child towards her mother is one of the most powerful emotional forces.

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Love

- of a child for his mother always exists.
- of mother for her child only happens, if the mother is not traumatised.
A trauma is

- a situation (including big physical or mechanical forces, violence, death, lack of any contact ...)
- a reaction of an individual and/or a group of persons to the situation (feelings of helplessness)
- the multiplicity of short and long term consequences of the attempt to survive the situation

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General consequences of a trauma

- hyperarousal and hypervigilance
- extreme anxiety and panic
- permanent feelings of helplessness, hopelessness, sadness
- numbing of all feelings
- intrusions of the traumatic situation into the mind
General consequences of a trauma

- Avoidance behaviour
- Feelings of unreality
- Depersonalisation
- Dissociation
- Somatization
- Hallucinations
- Aggressions or submission

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When traumatised we freeze, dissociate and split the personality in order to survive.

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Splits in the personality structure after a traumatic experience

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Trauma and parental love

• Traumatic experiences destroy the capability of parents to love,
• because their surviving mechanisms avoid deeper emotional contact with the child.
“Symbiotic trauma”

A child is continuously frustrated in his attempts to get a stable and safe emotional contact with his mother.

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Characteristics of the traumatised part in a symbiotic trauma

- deep loneliness
- fear of dying
- suppressed anger
- suppressed sadness
- despair that there is no love from the mother
Characteristics of the surviving parts in symbiotic trauma

- idealising the mother (the “good mother”)
- repressing and denying one’s own symbiotic trauma (“something is wrong with me”)
- identification with the surviving mechanisms of the mother (“I am her sunshine!”)
- melding with the traumatised parts within the mother
Consequences of a symbiotic trauma for a child

- no capacity to distinguish between own feelings and those of the mother
- not living one’s own identity
- mental illnesses like hyperactivity, depressions, psychotic states
- repeating symbiotic entanglement in other relationships

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Characteristics of a symbiotic entanglement

- clinging and adhering
- not respecting the boundaries of others
- anger, hate and violence in relationships
- no real self esteem, feelings of worthlessness
- always looking to others
- trying to rescue others
- hiding one’s own vulnerability love illusions and love delusions

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Characteristics of love in healthy parts of the personality

- knowing that love can be developed by oneself
- clearly saying “Yes” or “No” in relationships
- respecting boundaries and limits
- taking responsibility only as far as necessary
- supporting the autonomy of the other
- ability to distinguish between reality and illusions
- willingness to free oneself from symbiotic entanglements
- no sex without love
- no sex with children
- no lying
- loving oneself

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Ultimate trauma constellation

client

Issue: to love oneself

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Literature