

Love

by Wim Verbeek | Sep 4, 2020

If a failure of love creates the wounding, it is only through love that healing can occur

John Firman & Ann Gila, A Psychotherapy of Love, psychosynthesis in practice, 2010

Psychosynthesis and Love

Although it is sung about, written about and talked about, it is not easy to say something about 'Love'. It is therefore not my intention to explain what love exactly is. I can say something about how psychosynthesis looks at the meaning and effectiveness of love in the relationship between therapist and client. Then what role Love, and in particular the lack thereof, plays in the creation and healing of 'primal wounding'. Primal wounding is a term used in Psychosynthesis to describe the disturbance, injury or lack of this Love.

Agape, Philia, Eros and Storge

Firman & Gila make a distinction in their book, about the efficacy of love in the practice of psychosynthesis, between agape, philia, eros and storge. Agape is related to altruism and is a love that is unselfish. This means that it also takes into account the needs and well-being of the other. Philia is love that is related to friendship, Eros refers to longing, to beauty and physical love, for example the love that attracts and binds partners to each other. And finally Storge which refers to the love between parents, educators and children. So when we talk about love, there are many forms in which it can express itself and it is good to consider what we now mean by love, when we say, for example: 'Love heals' or 'Love conquers everything'

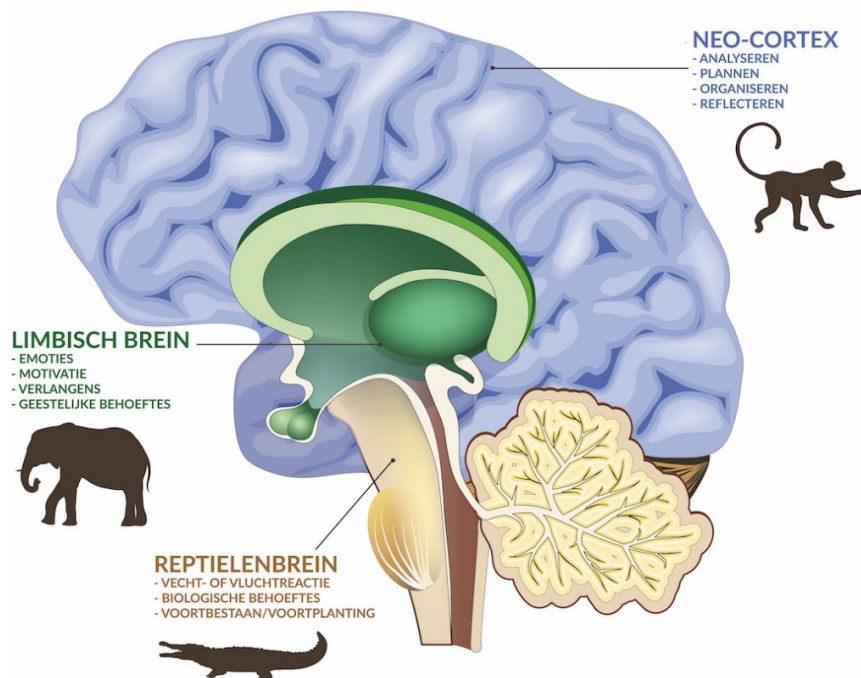
Love as the source of life

The love that Firman & Gila, both psychosynthesis therapists, talk about in psychosynthesis is selfless love. Love that nourishes and is healing. Love that gives life. This source of life energy that we are all connected to through life itself is inexhaustible, selfless and makes no distinction between good and evil, religious or atheist, race or gender. It is the same energy that, after conception, at the origin of life, makes the heart beat, germinates the seed in the soil, makes plants grow and develops humans and animals. Every heartbeat, every breath, every change of the seasons is an expression of

this source of life. The believers among us may connect it to God, others to the power of nature. You are free to follow your own language and meaning in it. Psychosynthesis takes you to the threshold of the mystery but allows you to enter yourself.

Self-awareness

Although this energy is neutral, inexhaustible and selfless, there is something that distinguishes us as humans from other forms of life. We have a consciousness and a brain that has been further developed and evolved compared to other life forms. We are aware of ourselves, of our thoughts, of our feelings, emotions and our own body and have the opportunity to further develop and learn this self-awareness. We are both able to embrace and avoid life. Able to build as well as destroy. And when necessary, we can even repress and displace experiences that threaten us into “the basement of our consciousness” our unconscious, and adjust our relationship with life. These complex processes that are controlled by the different brains have ensured that we have made it this far in evolution as humans. And beware ... we are not just our brain but a composite complex system of complex systems that do not function on their own but all interact mutually.



The three brains

We are a center of pure consciousness, love and will

In psychosynthesis we learn to become aware and experience that we have thoughts, feelings and a body and we are more than that. We are a center of pure consciousness, love and will. In the previous blog article I described a basic exercise in which you can become aware of this inner place from which you learn to perceive yourself and

experience the distinction between the observer and that which is perceived. A place where you are internally free from what you perceive. A place of Love and Will.

Love to love and.... will to want.

These are the two main energies with which we express ourselves in who we can and who we want to be. And when this energy can flow freely and is unimpeded, we can develop from conception as healthy, strong-willed people who are able to allow this love to love and the will to want. We are then authentic and autonomous.

When love isn't free

But what if this energy cannot flow freely, when love and will are not free but 'burdened' and 'occupied'? Then we cannot develop as autonomous and authentic people, but we develop a so-called survival personality. A personality developed to survive exposure to an environment in which we feel unwanted, not loved, and unprotected. Because remember ... a child (from the moment of conception) does not have the ability to survive the deprivation of love. It needs the selfless and unconditional love of the parents / educators to be able to mirror who he or she really is. That is how we learn and develop. We need the connection with the other person.

Authentic unifying center

Although we are Love by nature and also by nature free and unencumbered, in this first period of our life from conception to childhood we need "mirrors" that are free and unencumbered in order to experience our own freedom, love and willpower. This is how we develop and learn. In this first period we learn by experiencing what others mirror us, what others 'show' to us. These so-called 'mirrors', which are free and unburdened, are called 'authentic unifying centers' by Firman & Gila. Normally you would want to assume that the mother, parents / educators are the first 'authentic unifying centers' in the young life of a child that it can mirror itself to. Unfortunately, it appears that many parents are not free and burdened with their own 'injuries'. The young child cannot 'mirror' himself in a healthy way and then goes into the so-called survival mode. It parks his need, as it were. The different levels of our unconscious have become one big 'parking lot'. Firman and Gila describe this as 'Primal wounding'.

Primal wounding

Since I have become more and more immersed in early childhood trauma and its influence on the development of personality and identity, I have discovered that other contemporary writers and trauma therapists such as Franz Ruppert, Bessel van der Kolk, Peter Levine, Dan Siegel and Gabor Maté describe a similar process of the inner splitting of the personality into different parts as a survival strategy. And thankfully they all describe, albeit in a different way, that some part of who we are remains unencumbered

and free despite all the hardships we experience in our lives. In psychosynthesis we describe this as the I-Self relationship. The connection between the self, the I, and what is called higher Self. Self with a capital S, source of life energy, source of love and will. We do not need to make this connection because it is already there. As soon as we can detach ourselves with our conscious attention from what we are identified with, we are already there.

I-Self relationship

This I-Self relationship is present the moment we are 'inspired' by life itself. From conception, well before we were born. Firman & Gila say that a healthy personality is a personality where there is a free connection between I and Self. Perhaps you could also say between your personality and that which animated your personality. Between the I and that which is bigger than ourselves. Primal wounding is not so much about an actual injury or trauma in time, but more about a disruption in this I-Self relationship. It is about not being seen in our humanity, in our primary need for unconditional love, care and attention in order to develop as healthy young people. In this I-Self relationship that is present within us, we must be mirrored by a 'healthy, free and unencumbered other person in order to experience it in ourselves. So we really need the other person to be able to experience this!

When we are not seen as a person with a self but as an object.

Experiences that we can associate with Primal wounding are, for example: fear, shame and guilt, a feeling of emptiness and desolation, meaninglessness, helplessness and anger, no self-esteem or low self-esteem and feel that you don't matter. The most obvious experiences that lead to Primal wounding are the experiences of abuse, neglect, sexism, racism, poverty and violence. Experiences that are more hidden are often caused by an environment that the child does not see as a subject but as an object. The child must then fulfill the roles that the environment requires of him or her. Parents or educators often unconsciously project their own 'agenda' their own expectations, hopes and desires onto their child. Then the child is no longer free and burdened with the 'burdens' of the other. Parents are of course not aware of this and it is therefore not intended to address 'guilt' but to 'wake up' so that we become more aware of who we are and what the effects are of what we do and do not do. I haven't met the 'perfect parent' yet!

Primal wounding as the cause of many psychological disturbances.

Clinical theory in psychosynthesis supports the potent impulse of Self-realization arising from altruistic love while recognizing that this impulse has been to a large extent concealed by wounding and the formation of survival personality. Survival personality obscures the journey of Self-realization, and the underlying wounding is involved in many, if not all, psychological disturbances presented to the clinician.

The good enough mother/other

Psychosynthesis therefore emphasizes the enormous influence that Primal wounding has on the development of a healthy I and a healthy I-Self relationship, of a healthy and free identity. Love and Will that are free and unencumbered. According to Firman & Gila, Primal wounding is the basis for most disruptions and complaints with which clients register for help and support. They see psychosynthesis therapy and the psychosynthesis therapist as an important instrument, as an 'external authentic unifying center', through which the client can be mirrored in the I-Self relationship.

Absence of Love

For the most part, mental illness is caused by an absence of or defect in the love that a particular child required from its particular parents for successful maturation and spiritual growth. It is obvious, then, that in order to be healed through psychotherapy the patient must receive from the psychotherapist at least a portion of the genuine love of which the patient was deprived. If the psychotherapist cannot genuinely love a patient, genuine healing will not occur.

Language of Neuroscience

Neuroscience might describe this principle in terms of the 'physiologic force of love,' the relational shaping of neural networks: "When a limbic connection has established a neural pattern, it takes a limbic connection to revise it"

Lewis, Amini, and Lannon 2001

The need for good education and a lot of self-exploration of the psychosynthesis therapist

This demands a lot from the psychosynthesis coach, counselor or therapist. So that he or she can be free and unencumbered in relationship with the other person. It requires self-knowledge and continuous work on one's own 'injuries' and primal wounding in life. In any case, the training of psychosynthesis coaches, counselors and therapists provides this.

<https://www.psychosynthese.amsterdam/en/love/>