



## Intimate Relationships: Loves, Losses And Lessons

I have some sad news to share with you all. After seven years of being together, Elizabeth Davidson and I have gone our separate ways with no hope of reconciliation. Rather than hiding my personal challenges about this loss, I'm choosing to be transparent about it with you all. (This isn't going to be a tragic tale, but rather a vulnerable inside look at the goodness and greatness dwelling within each of us . . . that sometimes simply fails to manifest.) ~ Val Jon



---

Whether you're in a relationship or not, I invite you to read what I have to say as it ventures much deeper into the heart of being human than simply being with a mate. My intention is to perhaps make a contribution to you by shedding light on some of my own "loves, losses, and lessons." I have always been transparent about my life challenges. As a school boy, during "Show and Tell," while other kids shared about their turtles and dolls, I talked about how the police came to our house on Friday night and threatened to take one or both of them to jail when he and my mother would act out their high-decibel fights.

As a grown man, behaviorist, and seasoned "inner traveler," I've continued to be open and honest about my life circumstances. I refuse to keep secrets, hide my short-comings, or present my life in any other way than how it actually is. That doesn't mean I lack emotional boundaries or have a disregard for social edicate. It just means that I discovered long ago that the way to make the biggest difference in people's lives is to share my challenges and struggles with them, rather than lecture at them.

When I lost my home and all my possessions in 2008 due to the recession, I openly shared the devastation with all my friends and workshop attendees, and even went as far as to appear on television and talk about how I was dealing with the repossession of my home of 25 years. (Which BTW, included moving into a homeless camp and starting a non-profit organization to help the homeless community in Sacramento, California. (FYI, the best way out of depression is to get our attention off of ourselves and do something good for others.)

The pictures below were part of the television appearances I made and MSNBC's coverage of the service work I did with the homeless community living along the American River . . . my tent is in the background, (the orange one with the blue flap if you look closely). I lived with these extraordinary people for almost four months doing all I could to serve and support them. It did wonders for my depression and made a big difference in their lives. What's not to value about that loss?



Just two years ago, when I was diagnosed with prostate cancer, rather than keeping it private, I openly announced it on Facebook and recounted the entire journey from my surgery, to recovery, to the year of strict lifestyle practices that resulted in my remission. (You can find this recount on our TWS website, “Val Jon’s Cancer Cure Experiment.”)

So now that I’ve shared why I’m moved to reveal this part of my intimate life to you, let me share what the challenges have been and how I’ve been dealing with them. I’ll start with a simple premise. All of us, every single person alive is “in relationship,” perhaps not with another person, but most certainly with ourselves, and with the world around us. As such, there are a few key “relationship guidelines” that apply across the board, no matter who we are, or what our relationship status might be. When we honor these guidelines, our relationships are blessed with nurturance and joy, and when we don’t, the consequences can result in anguish and heartbreak.

Before we move on, I’ll speak to the bottom line regarding Elizabeth and I. The best way for me to characterize our break up is “Irreconcilable Similarities with Heartbreaking Differences.” This sentence says a lot, and what I share next hopefully will clarify some of what it means. I’ll try and explain through the way I’m engaging with the guidelines I mentioned to you above. Before we jump in, for me, they all come down the four basic virtues - *Humility, Forgiveness, Collaboration, and Higher Truth*. I hope you can relate.

### **Remind Myself That My Opinion Is Not “The Truth”**

This means understanding the difference between what I believe the truth to be and what it actually is. This is especially challenging in intimate relationships because the ego wants to justify its selfish agenda and assign blame and shame, all driven by the opinions we empower. I can fuss and complain all I want about the challenges between the two of us and present the “evidence” for making my ego’s case, but it would be opinion and not truth. So how do I know the difference between the two? Opinions always have justifications, reasons and stories attached to them. Truth, on the other hand, stands on its own and requires no such ego-embellishments. The other essential element is that when I empower an opinion, I’m more invested in being right than I am in being humble.

In honoring this guideline I won’t speak for Elizabeth, but rather I’ll share my own experience of truth. I’ll be the first to admit that I’m not easy to live with, not because I’m intolerably demanding or selfish per se, but because of three things: 1) I’ve arrived at a place of honoring who I am and what I need, 2) I’m devoted to living true to the values and virtues I espouse to others, and 3) Like many people, I can sometimes be stubborn, stupid, and blind. Pretty much sums it up I’d say.

### **Apologize For My Mistakes And Be Forgiving**

This brings me to the next guideline I value. I’m not perfect, I make mistakes, and I have never in all my life, (no matter how many spiritual disciplines might endorse it) been able to “love unconditionally.” What I can do, however, is “return to love” when I realize I’ve turned away from it. What this means for me is that if I do something hurtful, rather than defending my actions and projecting blame onto my mate, I try to acknowledge my mistakes, apologize for them, and take responsibility so I become a better partner in the future. The same goes for being forgiving. If I can’t forgive my partner for something I feel she’s done to cause me hurt, I lose the right to expect the same compassionate forgiveness in return. Like I said, I’m no angel, but I try very hard to walk my talk.

The other very important aspect of this guideline is that it requires humility. If I cannot humble myself before the Wisdom of Spirit and acknowledge to her that as much as I think I might know, there is so much more I do not know. I'm no better than anyone else, and I'm also not the terrible person I sometimes fear I might be. I'm just being human and I need to remember that forgiveness starts at home. Once I can forgive myself, forgiving others or apologizing for hurts I may have caused naturally follows.

My final point is that upsets in relationships are unavoidable. But what we can avoid is having those upsets turn into long-term evidence about our mate that deteriorates trust and collaboration. The way to go about this, (which I obviously did not do a very good job at) is to address the hurts immediately, work together to heal them, and commit to being and doing better in the future.

### **Take Responsibility And Stay True To My Self**

In my book, *Travelers Within*, (Chapter 13, under "Living Devotions of the Thirteenth Phase") I address this last key guideline as follows:

"Taking the thirteenth step requires that we take full responsibility for being the Chooser in our lives. This means no longer entertaining the illusion that someone other than ourselves is at cause regarding our circumstances and experiences. It means stepping up into our greater selves and trusting that we are indeed our own wise Agent of Being and lifelong mentor. As we enter the terrain of the Thirteenth Phase we can also no longer afford to remain in relationships and situations that do not serve us. We must make hard choices about mates and partners who don't honor our values or recognize our sacred nature, "friends" who encourage our old selves to survive, and social groups that promote entitlement and exclusivity."

As the "Chooser" I take responsibility for my actions and for the outcomes I produce in my life. There is no place for blame, and if it arises, it needs to be immediately surrendered over to Spirit. The truth is, in my world, I'm 100% responsible for the loss of my relationship, and there are two things that stand out for me about it. First, is that I played my part in not being able to work through our challenges. And second, is that I was becoming less and less willing to engage in behaviors I felt were not serving either of us. Without going into the story, the bottom line is that the way Elizabeth and I individually went about maintaining a healthy relationship and dealing with our rare, (but excruciating) breakdowns was too diverse and large of a gap to bridge.

As painful as this outcome is, I've accepted the truth of it, I'm processing deeply in order to heal, and I'm intending that we both emerge as better people for having endured it.

Before I close, I want to bring up one more important point, especially for those of you who have experienced similar relationship devastations. The tendency is to close off and make an emotional decision to "never go there again." You know the storyline, "I'm much better off alone . . ." "Who needs the misery? . . ." "My dog (or cat) is my true soulmate . . ." on and on our ego-opinions go trying to pose as our higher truths.

I'm not saying you should reconsider your relationship status, but it would be wise to open to the possibility that any opinion you may be harboring could be keeping your higher truth from embracing you with its loving light. For me, the place I'm in at the moment is that it's important for me to be alone. I need to recover and take myself to task on living more fully into the guidelines I just shared with you. Once I'm in a clearer place, I will re-emerge and open to being with a woman again, mainly because I know in the core of my being that I want a mate to share my life with. I hope that by taking the risk of revealing my "loves, losses, and lessons" I've contributed to you in some way.

Please feel free to share your comments about this article, or your feelings about what I've taken the risk of sharing with you by clicking on the blog link below posted under the announcements section. Don't be concerned about offering personal feelings or support as I want everything having to do with this loss to make a contribution to others, and the only way to do that is to make it public. Bless you, and if you're in a relationship, give your mate a big humble hug. And if you're not, give yourself the same hug because above all, and beyond all opinions, you deserve to be loved. ~ Val Jon

>>> MEMBER UPDATES & ANNOUNCEMENTS <<<

---



To respond to this Newsletter article, please click on the blog icon and post your comments and shares on our TWS website. What you have to contribute means a great deal to me and it makes a big difference to all our members. (Or use this link:) <https://travelerswithin.com/may-newsletter-blog-loves-losses-and-lessons/>



Please invite other like-minded and hearted people to join us as well. Feel free to forward this newsletter to those you feel will relate, or pass along our website link: [www.travelerswithin.com](http://www.travelerswithin.com)



Our private social media network, "HeartShare" is fully operational and ready for use! Please join us by clicking on the icon and entering your profile info if you've not already done so, and then reach out and share your heart out! (Here's the link:) <https://travelerswithin.com/activity/>