

FROM ENTITLEMENT TO APPRECIATION

By Marlene Neufeld

Do you sometimes see yourself as not getting enough from your partner? Are you interested in having more fun in your relationship? One of biggest shifts in a couples' relationship is to shift from entitlement to appreciation. Entitlement is the act of believing that I have a right or a claim to something. For a long time I felt entitled to my husband Bob's money, time, love, attention, etc., etc., etc. Over the past few years I have shifted to seeing Bob with new eyes, with the eyes of appreciation.

Appreciation has a number of different meanings. One is to increase in value. I have learned that appreciation is something I can generate. In the past, I would evaluate my relationship to see if it was worth appreciating. Now, I realize that I can focus on my partner with appreciation and he will actually increase in value in my eyes.

Another meaning of the word "appreciation" is "to become sensitively aware of". Again, this meaning has allowed me to shift my focus from what I don't have to what I have. There are always a million things that I can focus on in any given moment. In the past, I would often focus on the one or two things that needed to be improved, either in myself, my husband, our relationship, or our lives. Since exploring appreciation, I have learned to shift my focus, as if I am putting on a different pair of glasses.

Other meanings of appreciation are to value, to be thankful for, to prize, to cherish, to treasure. In German one of the translations of "appreciate" is "wertschätzen" which literally means "to treasure the worth of something". Since opening to appreciation in my relationship I am treasuring Bob's attention, love and time in new ways.

Are you willing to let go of seeing yourself, your partner, your life as an improvement project? Are you willing to take on yourself, your partner, your life as an appreciation project? I invite you to reflect on what you feel entitled to? Write down or say out loud ten things you believe you're entitled to. Notice the sensations in your body when you let yourself feel entitled. Now, I invite you to think about those same things as if they are a treasure. For a few minutes, every day, focus on generating appreciation for yourself, your partner and your life.

This is the first in a series of articles about conscious living and loving by Marlene Neufeld, MSW, RSW, owner of Creative Transformations. Marlene is a body-centered transformational coach. She specializes with her partner Bob in "2 on 2 couples coaching" and in experiential group playshops. For more on the work of Marlene and Bob see www.marleneandbob.com.