

Opening to Love **by Marlene and Bob Neufeld**

"You were born from the rays of God's Majesty
when the stars were in their perfect place.
How long will you suffer from the blows
of a nonexistent hand?
So come, return to the root of the root
of your own soul."
Rumi

We recently participated in a two-day training offered by Jane Lindsay on the Enneagram. The Enneagram is a system of personality typing that combines ancient spiritual traditions with modern psychological principles to create a map of how different people organize and interpret their experience. It is a powerful tool that supports self-awareness so that we can recognize what is "running us" and make new conscious choices.

One of the key impacts of studying the Enneagram is that it reinforced our belief that each of us sees the world through our own set of lenses; each of us has a different 'world view'. Really integrating this has helped us immensely in accepting and loving both ourselves and each other.

Marlene writes: as an Enneagram type 1 (commonly known as "The Perfectionist") I have devoted most of my life to being really hard on myself - as the Rumi poem states "suffering from the blows of a nonexistent hand". Recently, I have been exploring a new layer of my resistance to letting love in. You might think that having been in a committed relationship with Bob for over 36 years, this would no longer be an issue. I am becoming sensitively aware of how I have set up my whole life to not allow myself to be loved. I could feel and almost see the "unloved" persona in the room - she was so big she took up almost the whole room - like one of those inflatable snowmen. My whole body was quivering and the questions popped into my mind, "Who would I be if I let go of my unloved persona? Would I even recognize myself?" Since then I have been holding these questions lightly as wonder questions.

Bob writes: as an Enneagram type 3 (commonly known as "The Achiever") I have been concerned with image and what others think of me. I recently celebrated my 60th birthday with a series of parties. I noticed many people expressed their love for me. My usual response would be to deflect this and devise ways that I could be valuable to others by what I was doing. Instead, I opened myself to receive their appreciation as somebody who was already innately valuable and worthwhile. The result in my body was a very big flow of expansive love for myself and my many friends.

As we continue to explore our defenses against love, we realize how much love is actually available to us at any moment.

Marlene & Bob Neufeld practice body-centered Coaching and Therapy. They specialize in "2 on 2 couples coaching and in experiential group playshops. For more information call 613-594-9248 or see www.marleneandbob.com.