

Neglect is not an Expression of Love

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My dander got riled up this morning as I found myself reminiscing about a period in my life when I experienced profound neglect within a love relationship. I allowed the neglect to continue for fifteen years. For some reason this morning, perhaps it was a song playing in the background or the breeze coming through the window, I had an instantaneous experience of the ludicrousness of my treating myself so badly as to allow that kind of abuse to continue for so long.

As soon as the instantaneous experience ended, I knew I had to write my next article for AskDanandJennifer.com about neglect in a relationship, the various ways it can look, with encouragement for you to take a stand for yourself if you ever find yourself in the position of being neglected by someone you love. You are worthy of being loved. Neglect is not an expression of love.

I will mention straight up that I know I usually bring a certain amount of levity and humor to my articles. I think that most of us could stand to lighten up a bit and enjoy the journey called romance. This subject, however, is serious because neglect is abusive. In the scheme of abusive behaviors, it is so “soft” an abuse that it is easy to ignore.

I do not know what causes people to neglect those they love. I have only ever been on the receiving end of it. If I neglect someone, it is because I have decided I no longer want that person in my life. Chances are I have already said “good-bye” and neglect becomes a natural part of no longer attending to that relationship. However, I know that there are those who neglect the ones they love and they do it frequently. When I was on the receiving end of neglect, I clearly understood that it was the other person who held all the power in the relationship. He could make me feel small, insignificant, and incapable of defending myself by simply ignoring me.

So, perhaps those who use neglect as a weapon against those they love do so in order to feel powerful and in control. Neglect could even be a way for one person to dominate another. It is an insidious and ugly way to exercise control over another person. It is possible it is a tactic for domination.

I believe that there are people who use neglect as a weapon and as punishment who would fight you if you suggested they did not truly love the person they punish in this way. I believe these people are confused by and conflicted about their behavior. I believe they were badly hurt as children and youth, discovering neglect as a survival tool. They probably do not know how to love any other way. However, neglect is not an act of love and if you are on the receiving end of it, you have the right to understand and act on the truth that you are worthy of better expressed love than that.

Both women and men are inclined to remain in relationships that hurt when they do not have the self-esteem to know they deserve better. If you are on the receiving end of neglect, you likely feel the pain and know the history that drives your lover’s behavior.

You likely feel sorry for him or her and would rather stay in the relationship with the hope that you can make a difference in his or her life. I challenge you to look at this way of thinking as an excuse to stay put in a relationship that reinforces your belief that you are not worthy of better love than this.

Neglect can take on many forms. It can be a lover who looks at you in disdain whenever he or she feels disappointed by you. You experience neglect when he or she is rude or disrespectful of you on a regular basis, whether publicly, privately, or both. When he or she routinely seeks out the company of others, leaving you behind without taking your feelings or desires into account, this is neglect. If he or she withholds sex, refusing to address or acknowledge the problem, this is neglect of the worst sort.

I cannot convince you in an article to love yourself more deeply, intimately, and fiercely! There comes a day in everyone's life when it all comes down to you. The need for love of self is one of those "it all comes down to you" things. Usually, it is the painful parts of life that drive you to your knees, forcing you to make the choice to love you no matter what.

Love doesn't hurt. If someone is hurting you in any way, even if it is the "soft" hurt of neglect, take a good long look at the dynamics in your relationship and determine what is best for you. You cannot make your lover change. You can only change yourself. And you can only change yourself once you love yourself enough to know you deserve love that feels good, right, safe, and pure.

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There is a secret to relationship success that is direct, simple, and effective. We and others have used it to transform marriages that felt burdensome and hurtful into marriages filled with love and satisfaction.

You can discover this secret for yourself in the e-workbook called *Creating the Love You Want: Five Unique Steps to Improve Your Marriage*. Go to <http://www.CreateTheLoveYouWant.com> and order your copy right now. With it, you can begin making a difference for yourself tonight!