

Book Review

New Earth Relationships: A Guide for Couples in the 21st Century

by William Weil



Review by Sue Van Doeren

At the deepest level, what we long for most in life is to love and to be loved. Yet, if we are so fortunate as to have love find us, we may well run in the other direction or discover that love can bring out the worst in us. Love represents our deepest longing, our greatest incapability and, according to William Weil, our most important charge. In his book, "New Earth Relationships," Weil shines a bright light on what makes loving so difficult and provides a step-by-step guide out of the pain and darkness of separation and isolation.

When we arrive onto the planet, we inherit an identity. Life conditions that programming to put us on a path that leads away from, not toward, our experience of love. We become preoccupied with appearances, amassing possessions and harboring the hidden fear that we are unlovable. Weil bundles an assortment of self development models with his own tenderly told journey of his humanly imperfect and profoundly loving relationship with his life partner. His book is a training manual for how to reckon with the blocks to loving, and the steps to take to access and create love.

We are poorly equipped to love. Weil refers to the ego whose only instinct is to survive, and writes that our egos would rather be right and in control than have us be happy and loved. According to modern day mystic Stuart Wilde, the ego is insatiable. Each day it nails a new list of demands to our forehead. John Bradshaw writes in "Healing the Shame That Binds You" that we can only begin to touch down into that in us which is infinite -- in other words truly loving -- once we have faced and accepted how pathetic we are. Weil gives us a map for moving the ego to the back seat, and placing our desire to experience love out front.

As a psychotherapist, when I reflect to a client, "I see that you have difficulty receiving love," or "I experience your heart being closed," or "It would help if you loved yourself as much as you seek love from others," clients often respond with, "Yes, that's true... but what do I do with that information? I still feel lost." I teach that it is in watching this issue in your life, releasing judgment about it and being mindful of how you want to become, that you will naturally grow yourself there. I'm aware that clients want and need more: what to do, how to do it. Weil provides concrete, workable guidance, enlivening this natural, organic process. His book is fun to read and intelligent. Short, but chocked full of substance

- there are no fillers and wasted words here. It is serious, but enjoyable, like a good movie or play that teaches, but is filled with life, music, movement, shape, colors, darkness and light.

This course is not for the faint of heart. It is for brave spiritual warriors who accept that life's difficulties are love's lessons and that it is love's accomplishment which will save us and the planet from ourselves. We are at a major transition in our human evolution, showing us that we lost our way. It's like we had been sent on an important mission to a remote corner of the earth. If we succeeded, the planet would be saved; if we failed, we would continue in peril. And we spent all of our time setting up camp! Setting up camp is necessary as a holding for us to get our work done, but now we see it is not what matters most. Learning to love is the essence, and the future of our planet depends upon it. Weil shows us the way.

Sue Van Doeren is a psychotherapist in private practice and has been providing clinical services for 40 years. She will be retiring in the fall of 2010 and is training to become a Pathwork Helper.

