

Valentine's Day can be an auspicious day. Couples may share the most divine expressions of love—or have a fight and break up. Every year, I'll hear from dear brothers about how everything was going so well and then—BAM—suddenly lots of colorful language was flying. So for the February issue, I thought it would be a good idea to talk about how identification and expectations affect relationships.

Identification means that you take one certain scenario, experience, or decision, and command it to be a reality as a part of you. You create a little "me," based in an egoic state of the mass consciousness, based in "I think, I ought, I should, I must," and "have-to's." This is a state of a lack of love for the dear one before you, that creates conflicts of emotions rather than the love that emanates from you to your beloved. It creates an identification, rather than being *open* to everything. For example, in the past you never wanted to dress up in a colorful costume and go out on the town. Because in the past you didn't want to "go through the motions," you think you will never dress up and go out again. Yet when you allow yourself to open up, when you are no longer locked into the past, you find you can go out and really have a blast.

Setting expectations is another trap that is so easy to fall into. Expectations also focus on the "I think, I should, I ought, I must." Every year many couples get into conflicts because each partner has different expectations about how to celebrate the gift of the day. They don't want to fight and they start to dread the holiday. But they have expectations, and they both think they must hold their ground. And who is going to be right?

Many relationships become based on a power struggle rather than love. No one questions the *status quo*, but the love each wants so much seems to be missing. In other relationships, misunderstandings happen simply out of habit. How often are issues created where they don't need to be?

My angel Mary really doesn't enjoy flying, and sometimes it is presented for me to go out of town to facilitate events. So what are the alternatives? We can take a train, we can drive, we can take a boat. I can go by myself. You see, there's really no issue unless I make it an issue. If I pound my fist and say, "We must fly!" then I've made it an issue. What we're talking about is loving the other person enough to say instead, "I don't see a problem here." It's a dance together that only continues to change and flourish. Because we're not talking about my way or her way, we're talking about our way.

Go to the basis or heart of the relationship and ask yourself what really matters. Love goes beyond people, places, things, appearances, physicalities. You can learn to live with no expectations and no rules about your relationship. It becomes an honoring—nothing more, nothing less. In other words, you live outside the mass consciousness, having no rules.

Can't Valentine's Day be every day, rising above identification with the past or specific expectations from another for the future, and letting the love and honoring continue to grow? Relationships are a marriage of the heart, two hearts coming together as one, an honoring of the love in your heart and the beloved right before you. This is truly a never-ending relationship, as it was created to be. Happy Valentine's Day all year long!