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Dr Shoshanna, psychologist, speaker and relationship expert on i.village, shows us how to give up one form of anger a day and replace it with a healthy, constructive antidote. Find out how anger works, the 24 forms of anger, what to do when you're the subject of anger and much more. Dr. Shohsanna is author of many books, including Zen Miracles (Finding Peace In An Insane World), Wiley, Zen and the Art of Falling in Love (Simon and Schuster), Save Your Relationship (21 Laws of Successful Relationships), Living By Zen, (Timeless Truths For Everyday Life) Her personal website is

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Practical Steps to Falling in Love

Dr. Brenda Shoshanna

We are meant to live a life of love. However, no matter how successful some are in other aspects of their lives, they don't feel it's possible to have the same success in love. They tell themselves to "be realistic." Being realistic about relationships" is considered natural as we "grow up" and give up the fantasies, foolishness and dreams of childhood. But nothing could be further from natural. Being in love is the most mature and realistic thing you can do. It energizes your life, fills you with positivity, creates generosity and makes every moment beautiful. The body heals the heart is happy. The real question is, why aren't we in love all the time? How can we learn to fall in love with all of life?

Here are some ways to answer that question and turn your life upside down. You will learn how to clear away weeds in your garden and then realize "the entry point is right where you are."

1) THE ONE RIGHT BESIDES YOU

Most of the time we are searching and searching for the right person. Now it is time to stop running around seeking what is right in front of our eyes.

Look at a person who is close to you right now - anyone it happens to be. Notice the ways in which you push him away. Stop doing that. Allow the two of you to be together in whatever way you are. Let all of it be fine just as it is. Do the same thing tomorrow with someone else. We dismiss so many people who are in our worlds, while waiting for the "right one" to appear. The more we can be "right" with everyone, the more we can open up to what is being offered now, the fuller and more joyous our lives will be.

2) PLAYING AT LOVE

So many complain that they are not loved. The reason for this can be quite simple. They are so busy playing roles and games that the partner never gets to know who they really are. Notice what roles (or games) you play in relationships, and what roles you demand of others as well. See if you are in love with the person, or with the role he is playing right now. Why not let the roles go and simply be who you are. Who we are is always loveable and beautiful. It's the roles that get in the way.

3) LETTING HIM COME AND LETTING HIM GO

One great obstacle in living a life of love is the tendency to hold on. We grasp and cling to each, preventing the freedom of love from arising on its own. When someone comes into your life (or day) practice letting him come. Welcome the person - whoever he is. Enjoy what it is he brings. When it is time for a person to go away, practice letting him go. Do not turn the person's leaving into an experience of rejection, loss or abandonment. Realize that his leaving has nothing to do with you. It is simply time for him to go. Do this with yourself as well. Let yourself come and go freely in life, not tying yourself in unnecessary chains. The more we free others and ourselves, the more easily we fall in love.

4) PUTTING YOUR BAGGAGE DOWN

Many feel that love is not possible unless all their demands are met. They can be quite amazed to discover that these demands don't lead to happiness. They just may be obstacles to falling in love.

Take a look at what you feel is absolutely necessary in relationships. Now look at it again. Realize this is baggage you are carrying that may be keeping all kinds of people and possibilities away. Not only that - this baggage can be making you fearful and rigid, not open to what is available for you.

Let one of these demands subside. At first let it go for just one day and see how it feels to be without it. (Remember you can always take it back again). Now try another day. As we do this many times, we may find that that which we thought was crucial for our lives was really getting in the way. The more we do this the more light and happy we will feel. Not only that, but all kinds of new people, possibilities and situations we never noticed will start coming onto our path. We have made room for them by putting our baggage down.

5 GIVING GIFTS

Giving and receiving are the essence of relationships. To open up to falling in love, it is important to start giving naturally. What gifts do you give others in relationships? Take a few moments and also see what you hope to receive in return. Now find something new you can give to somebody. Give it. Do this everyday. Do it with all kinds of different

people, without great fanfare and without expecting something in return. Then each day take a moment to find out what kind of gift you would like today. (Can be simple - a walk in the park, new lipstick, time with someone you care for.) Now give this to yourself each day. Although this exercise is simple, it is extremely powerful. When you give, remember not to look for anything in return. By living with this open, generous mind, all kinds of other gifts come to you naturally.

6) MAKING FRIENDS WITH YOURSELF

Many say they are lonely, even with a partner at their side. This is simply because they have not yet made friends with themselves. Once they make friends with themselves and are able to be who they are, it is impossible to be lonely anymore. Make friends with yourself. Spend time noticing who you are. Accept all parts of yourself. Stop judging and rejecting what is going on inside. Be still and look within. Pay attention to your breath and just notice what is going on. Let it be. Accept it, and return to the breathing. Understand that breath by breath, you are perfect just as you are. Choose to have relationships with those who want and appreciate just what you are.

This article is based upon Zen and the Art of Falling in Love, and Save Your Relationship.