Radical Self Responsibility

A Practical Guide to Extraordinary Relationships

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In the last 10-15 years, an enormous amount of research has been conducted about relationships across multiple disciplines. New knowledge has been advanced in arenas including neurobiology, our understanding of trauma and its effects, attachment theory and family systems theory. These have all contributed a great deal to our understanding of human dynamics in relationships. And yet despite all this knowledge, our close relationships are far too frequently distant, unsatisfying, and even deeply troubled.

This is especially true in our intimate relationships. Aside from parenting, most of us discover that being in an intimate, lasting relationship is the hardest thing we ever do. And yet, romance is not the only area where our relationships suffer. Relationships between us in all aspects of life – romance, family, friendships, and work – can be the most satisfying and, at times, the most insufferable part of being human.

Many therapists, organizational consultants, coaches, and social workers offer expertly devised theories, communication frameworks, processes and principles that help quell the anger, shift the dynamic, and gain some ease in our relationships with others. Many of these tools have a positive impact and using them is a healthy developmental move away from fighting, withdrawing, and compromising your own needs. The problem is that almost all these aim solely to reduce conflict and achieve greater harmony. They are not designed to produce self-transformation.

The simple, and yet elusive opportunity in relationships is to heal and transform ourselves – to use the challenges and breakdowns we experience in relationships to mature and transform our fundamental way of being. This is the aim of the principles and practices we call Radical Self-Responsibility (RSR). RSR leads us to take a 'radical' step into full (100 percent) responsibility for what we think, feel, and do. From that foundational step, we sow the seeds of our own transformation toward greater maturity and ease and ultimately inner freedom.