



Wine & Conversation: An Intoxicating Salon Series
February 21, 8 – 9:30 p.m.
DO WE NEED ROMANTIC RELATIONSHIPS TO BE HAPPY?

Love does not consist of gazing at each other,
But in looking together in the same direction.
-Antoine de Saint-Exupery

It seems that everyone in modern society wants someone to love them. What they often forget is that the first person they need to love is themselves. Psychologist Carl Rogers tells us that in reality fulfilling ones own potential is to reach the highest level of the human condition. In his view, first we must all have a sense of self worth. We need to know that we are important just because we are alive. We have to respect ourselves and our goals in life. Once we learn to love ourselves for what we are, then we are able to decide where we want to go in life. It is that sense of self- confidence, that allows us to be able to love another.

Many of us have a visual image of what a romantic relationship should be and all too often that picture doesn't match the relationships we have experienced. It has been formed by the books we read, the movies we see and the television programs we watch. The sad truth is that those characters in novels, film and sit-coms we love are not real people. "Our culture is saturated with romantic realism stories and images that depict a world that is just a little bit better than the one you and I dwell in," says Ph. D. Peter G. Stromberg in his book "Sex, Drugs, and Boredom." "There is so much romantic realism in our world because it's highly emotionally stimulating to get caught up in fictional situations full of adventure and eroticism and drama....This influences our lives in many ways, including our relationships for it means that we are ever hungry for stimulation and never quite satisfied with what we have.

Some of us look for that special someone on dating sites. We may go to bars and "date shop". Who does not continually search for that significant other? Yet after a few weeks or months or even years, we ask ourselves, "Is this all there is?"

What we don't seem to realize is that a long term relationship is not the intense all-consuming experience we see on the screen. It is a team effort that takes work to build and effort to sustain. Dr. Stephen Martin, a marriage and family counselor in Half Moon Bay observed that a relationship is like a three legged race. It isn't an easy thing to accomplish. Yet, we all want it.

Or do we?

Perhaps what we really want is someone to come home to, someone to share the good things and comfort us when we face difficult challenges. Is it companionship we need or is it that gorgeous thrill of all consuming love. What do we REALLY want in our lives? Maybe Dr. Rogers has it right: He thought that all we need is positive regard from others. In other words, we all want someone to care about us unconditionally but it doesn't have to be the person we go to bed with. It doesn't need moonlight and flowers so much as it needs communication and compassion.

Each of us is unique and our needs are our own. No one thinks he is a carbon copy or a statistic. Can a generalization really tell us what each of us needs? Come share your thoughts at Wine and Conversation: An intoxicating Salon Series, at A Grape in the Fog, February 21, 8 – 9:30 p.m. Marriage and family counselor Donna Blethen will guide us in a discussion of what kind of relationships make us whole. There will be plenty of wine and special treats to grease the wheels of conversation and good people to meet and talk about things that matter to us all. What could be better than that?

Having someone wonder where you are when you don't
come home at night is a very old human need.
Margaret Mead