

Ken y Keyes Jr. interview "Implementing Unconditional love"

By PATRICK J. HARBULA

Meditation Magazine: I sense a really beautiful rapport between you and your wife, Penny. There's an understanding, a certain peace. How have you developed such a wonderful relationship?

Ken Keyes: I was married twice and divorced twice. So, I know how the ego mind creates separateness. Penny and I have used the principles we teach to create the wonderful level of unconditional love and unity that we experience in our relationship. What I've learned is that the best way to change your partner is simply to love your partner - unconditionally. When your partner does or says something you don't like, open your heart to create an understanding of the beneficial, positive intentions motivating those actions or words. Look at your own programming in terms of your addictive demands and create a deep desire for preferential programming. Then you will not throw yourself out of the love space every time your partner doesn't fit your models. It is more important to be the right partner than to have the right partner. It is more important for you to work on yourself to create unconditional love. Don't rain all over your partner with your fears, frustrations and angers if you can help it. Don't repress your feelings, and you can help your partner grow through knowing that you love him or her unconditionally. And when you don't, you're willing to work on it because you are responsible for your separating emotions and you are taking responsibility for handling them.

Many times Penny's been right there listening and understanding when I was grappling with addictive programming, and vice versa. We each need to be able to support each other. Love is one of the most nurturing ways of supporting each other.

MM: *You mentioned that you've been divorced twice. Do you feel that two people not growing together should not stay together?*

KK: I'll give you two levels of answers, one is on the material plane, the other on the spiritual plane.

On the material plane my suggestion is to use your negative separating experiences - anger, irritation, resentment - for your growth. Realize that your partner is giving you a gift by triggering your negative responses. The problem is not your partner.

On the consciousness plane, I would be willing to say that you could be in a relationship in which you're working so close to the fire of your own addictive programming that you're burning your backside to a crisp. It may be beneficial for you and your partner to consider being less involved. You can decrease your involvement and try to increase your heart space simultaneously.

MM: *I'm touched by the feeling that you exhibit in your speaking.*

"It is more important to be the right partner than to have the right partner. It is more important for you to work on yourself to create unconditional love."

KK: The Living Love system has made such a difference in my own life, in my own experience. I have so much passion and enthusiasm about it when I talk.

MM: *Here is a question I have asked many people and I've received a lot of different answers. Since you wrote the book, **The Hundredth Monkey**, I've been anxious to ask where you think we are in relationship to such a quantum leap in mass consciousness?*

KK: We have a long way to go, but we're on the way. The game is not so much to assess where we are right now, but to rearrange our priorities to help humanity go beyond the ways in which we create feelings of separate-ness and of being enemies. We're all human beings, with a human heart.

We're all doing the best we know how. Even if one's best is terrorism or war, it's still the best that individual knows. But, it may not be adequate to give the human race a future.

We need to reassess what we can do individually that will give a greater contribution to the awakening and opening of the heart. We must realize that we're all on this globe together. It's the only earth we have; we had better learn to cooperate, understand and reach out to each other in a more unified way.

MM: *In **The Hundredth Monkey**, you wrote, "When I create my experience of you, I may forget that you are not your thoughts and actions." Would you explain that for us?*

KK: Most people do not clearly understand how their lives work to create their experience of what is real. They confuse their essence with their programming.

This becomes clearest if we use an analogy such as a computer: there's the computer and there's the programming of the computer. If you don't like what's coming out of the computer, you change the program, a very easy thing to do. Pull your floppy disk out, put a new floppy disk in.

People sometimes say things like "He makes me mad." This confuses the person, who is beautiful, with my programming, which doesn't like his programming. We are not our programming anymore than the stereo is the record it plays.

We try to help people clearly accept and see the beauty in themselves and in everyone else, even when their programming makes them do horrendous things.

MM: *The purpose, then, is to guide people on getting in touch with unconditional love. How does one experience the feeling of unconditional love?*

KK: It's the experience of not feeling separate from another human being.

There are many degrees of separateness from gross levels where instantly one gets angry - or one's programming makes one angry - to thinly veiled disdain of a person. This separateness destroys our ability to feel unconditional love for another person.

Most people think that if you love unconditionally you have to like everything that a person does or says. This is nonsense. "If you really love me, you would do what I want" isn't necessarily so. If you really love me means that you won't throw me out of your heart. It means simply that you can always have a compassion and a feeling of love in your heart that is not conditional on what particular programming I happen to be running in response to my here and now situation in life.

MM: *In other words you can disagree with a person's behavior but still have compassion for the individual.*

KK: Because that individual is just like you. They have a human heart that beats and feels. They are doing the very best they know how.

MM: *What are some of your techniques for personal growth?*

KK: Penny and I have written Gathering Power through Insight and Love, which includes the 10 techniques of our 2-4-4 system: the 2 wisdom principles, the 4 living love methods and the 4 dynamic processes. These are different mental elements or processes that enable a person to go from separateness toward understanding, unity and love.

MM: *What are the 2 wisdom principles?*

KK: The first wisdom principle states that one can uplevel an addictive demand to a preference. An addictive demand is anything you think you need to be happy, so you're addicted to it happening. Such addictive demands trigger separating emotions that create unhappiness.

We recommend preferences. A preference means that you want something different from the way it is but you don't trigger that part of the limbic area of your mind that creates separateness or that makes you begin to create the experience of anger, fear, frustration, irritation, resentment, boredom, and so forth.

We have various techniques that enable you to actually change any programming. We humans don't have to feel angry when things aren't fitting the programs in our mind. We don't have to feel afraid when things aren't meeting our models. We can look at the programming that is triggering those experiences and uplevel our addictive demands into preferences.

Preferences have 5 characteristics: 1) You can still want what you want as a preference. 2) You can still try to make changes in the way things are. 3) You can still think you're right, and uplevel it to a preference in which you don't have to feel uncomfortable or upset when the world isn't fitting your programming. 4) You can more skillfully achieve the feelings and experiences that you want in life - we call them positive intentions. 5) The nicest thing about a preference is that when you get it working to replace addictive demands in your life, you don't have to make yourself feel upset and unhappy. That's the first wisdom.

The second wisdom principle says that behind all of our thoughts, feelings and actions, we always have beneficial, positive intentions even though we may sometimes use unskillful ways to achieve them. I'll use an example. Let's say someone uses a gun to hold up a bank teller, grabs some money, shoots the teller and runs away. What's the beneficial positive intention there?

MM: *Security?*

KK: Security.

Do you want to feel secure? I think most people do. The bank robber was simply using extremely unskillful ways to feel secure.

You also want to feel secure, but you don't rob banks and kill tellers. Now, actually his way of feeling secure is so unskillful that he is living in a very insecure way. He'll probably end up being killed or jailed the rest of his life.

We don't use the second wisdom principle as a way of creating moral or legal judgments and decisions - it's not appropriate on that gross level. We use it on the spiritual level in order to increase our own understanding, compassion and unconditional love.

MM: How does one reprogram addictive demands?

KK: One of the methods for replacing an addictive demand is called centers of consciousness. In certain situations, based on childhood training or whatever, the mind gets used to an inflexible response.

Let's work with the example of someone criticizing you. Many people when criticized will create the experience of some type of fear: fear of being seen as inadequate, no one will ever want to be near them, etc. We call that running things through the *security center* of the mind. It's a good programming. At need a good security center functioning or they'll be eaten by other animals.

Moving upward, the next center of consciousness is the *sensation center*. A person might trigger separating emotions from the sensation center when criticized. "Oh, what a drag. Being around someone who doesn't understand me is a heavy feeling. I don't like the sensation I get." Such a person might feel like a victim to someone else's critical words. All of which is an illusion.

From the power center, one might respond by creating a "me versus you" experience when criticized. "Who's he to criticize me?"

The next center is a big leap, it's called the *love center*. Here criticism still may not be liked, but one works from preference. I may prefer that you don't criticize me, but it's okay if you do. I might say, "Maybe I'll learn something if you criticize me, maybe I'm going to benefit by it or at least I'll use it as a lesson for my growth."

There are other centers beyond that. The *cornucopia center* sees everything as part of an abundance. "I can see everything that happens in my life as beneficial either for my enjoyment of life or for my growth. If I take the message and work on myself, then I increase my potential for enjoyment." There are even a couple of centers beyond that.

Now, to answer your question about reprogramming addictive demands. We teach several ways of doing this. One way to uplevel an addictive demand to a preference is to simply run a situation through all of the five centers of consciousness.

If you've criticized me, I run it through the security center: "Oh, I'm so afraid that no one will like me." The sensation center: "Oh, this feels icky." The power center: "Who are you to criticize me?" The love center: "Oh, that's your programming, it's appropriate for you to have your programming and maybe I'll learn something. I can accept that and appreciate that." The cornucopia center:

"What an abundance. Everything is helpful for my growth or for my enjoyment. How rich it is that you as a part of the universe are giving me this criticism at this point."

I don't have to respond negatively when you criticize me. I don't have to respond in an automatic sort of way. I can respond with a higher consciousness. I can create my experience with fear, frustration or anger. Or, I can create the experience out of love and richness of the universe that I live in. So even though I may still be caught up in security, and feeling fearful and queasy when you criticize me, I can begin to have the insight that it's not you. It's not what you said that is giving me my experience, it's my programming. And, "darn it," I've had enough of this programming, I can work on it to uplevel it. Just the insight that I'm not a victim of you, that I'm a victim of my programming which lies in my head, allows me to process more effectively in a psychological and spiritual manner the way that my programming is creating my here and now experience - instead of working on you to change you.

The centers of consciousness offer a way of stepping back from one's immediate experience - the soap opera that one is creating in response to something that just happened. One can experience it in an overall context that allows choice. 'Well, I will begin working to turn loose my love center when this sort of thing happens. It's no fun to be caught like a robot in the centers of security, sensation and power."

MM: Would you say that these centers relate to the chakras of the Eastern traditions?

KK: They're very parallel to the chakras.

MM: *You seem to be stating that expressing certain emotions has a separative effect. Many other philosophies emphasize expressing all emotions, that getting emotions out is actually healthy. How do you feel about that?*

KK: I regard anger, hate, and so forth as creating unhappiness, as creating hostility when we could have cooperation, as destroying our ability to create the maximum in the great adventure of life together on this planet. It is the emotions of hate, anger and fear that have caused nuclear weapons to be developed to where there's almost sixty-thousand of them on earth at this point - enough to wipe out practically everybody.

In interpersonal life, marriages that have a lot of hate and anger expressed between couples, tend to strengthen the programmed demands that increase the probability of hate and anger in

the future. Hate and anger do not help you build the highest levels of love and oneness in a marriage and a friendship.

Freud very validly made the point that to repress hate and anger is one of the worst things you can do because it ends up with an explosion that destroys your body - ulcers, high blood pressure, and so forth. Yet, I feel that we need to go beyond the expression stage to the transformation stage - upleveling addictive demands to preferences.

Programming can be natural and harmful, too. If a fox wants the chickens in your chicken coop, it's natural for the fox to go after them. This doesn't mean that this is what should be happening. We don't have to get stuck with natural programming if it is destroying our ability to love ourselves or other people, our ability to be co-operative and feeling good about life.

MM: *One more question on this sub-ject. What if I said, in defense of psychology, that I could love myself and also love you, yet still express anger at something that you did?*

KK: Fine. Nothing wrong with that. Sounds pretty healthy. You won't be repressing, so you won't have ulcers. You might give me ulcers if I buy in and have addictive demands for you not to be doing or saying what you're saying. But at least you won't be get-ting ulcers. It's a step up the path. I don't think it's the greatest level of skill in creating a life with full potential - we need to eventually go beyond the programming that triggers feelings of separateness.

Why should you, a beautiful, God-like being, create a feeling of separateness when someone does or says something that doesn't fit in with your particular programming at this point in your life? Why should you put your-self through all that adrenalinized consciousness that is so much of an illusion?

Yes, it is healthy to go beyond repression. But why be trapped in the expression of separating feelings for the rest of your life? You as a wonderful human being have the capacity to choose programming that makes your life work a lot better. Why stay stuck?

MM: *With this in mind, what is your vision for the future? Do you feel that people can start to practice principles such as these and that the world will at some point achieve an expression of unconditional love?*

KK: Penny and I are both devoting our lives to helping this happen. We write books - there's two and a half million copies of our books in print. We do workshops. We founded a college in Oregon

where, at non-profit prices, people can study these ways of helping their lives unfold in a more satisfying and beautiful way. We must each do everything we know how to do.

We are capable of the highest levels of cooperation, understanding and unconditional love. We can create a world that works for everybody. We are also capable of creating such efficient killing machines that it now appears possible to wipe out all life on this planet.

This could be seen as a cosmically humorous position. Which way will we go?

The cosmic energies are saying to us, "Choose and get on with it. Either go the way of cooperation, understanding and appreciation of what it's like to be co-venturers on planet earth - or use your mind to create such great separateness that you kill off each other. You have the power to go either way. It is now humanity's choice." Probably those cosmic energies are sitting back, saying, "Well, it will be interesting. Can hardly wait to see what happens."

MM: *I like to joke that there will be peace on earth, with or without humanity. Being an optimist, I tend to think that we'll make it.*

How do your teachings relate to meditation? Do you consider your techniques meditative?

KK: When I began the Living Love system, I emphasized methods that can be used, for example, in a crowded elevator if someone yelled, "Fire!" We specialize in putting the fire out on the spot! I like Chogyam Trungpa's phrase, *meditation in action*. The nature of what we teach enables you to achieve a meditative space in the middle of life's storm and fury - which is created by your programming and does not belong to life itself.

Negative thoughts have a way of putting grooves in the mind that make it easier to run more negative thoughts. My description of craters of consciousness is a way of noticing in the moment, "Ah, I'm coming from the security center. I could run this same situation through the other centers to produce an entirely different experience. Now, what experience do I choose for myself to initiate and maintain?"

You can begin to use these tools right in the moment: *meditation in action*. This is the uniqueness of our particular way of teaching people —with helping them in their journey toward love and unity.

Ken Keyes, Jr. has 2.5 millions copies of his books in print. Some titles include the bestseller *Handbook to Higher Consciousness*, *Panting Your Mind*. *How to Enjoy Your Life in Spite of It All*,

The Hundredth Monkey and A Conscious Person's Guide to Relationships. Gathering Power Through Insight and Love is by Ken and Penny Keyes and staff. He began the Ken Keyes College to offer weekend and longer workshops at non-profit prices for people who want to increase their enjoyment of life. For workshop schedules, a free catalog of books and cassettes, or to get on their mailing list, write or phone: Ken Keyes College 790 Commercial Ave., Coos Bay, OR 97420, (503) 267-6412.

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