

October 17, 2004

Finding Your Soulmate, Part 2: Look Inward Before Looking Outward

By Kenneth A. Sprang

*Though no one can go back and make a brand new start, anyone
can start from now and make a brand new ending.*

--Carl Bard

A few weeks ago, I wrote about soulmates. I suggested that a soulmate is one who shares your vision and attitude about life and views the world “through the same glasses” as you do, and who is as concerned about your happiness and your pursuit of your life’s dreams, as he/she is about his/her own. Today I would like to return to the theme of soulmates.

Dating and searching for a life partner can seem like a daunting task. Part of the problem is that we often go about it in a very undisciplined manner. We begin our search without doing our homework, without really thinking about what we want in a partner. If any of us were to buy a house or a car or make a significant career move, we would do substantial research and preparation so that we could be as fully informed and prepared as possible. Rarely, however, do we bring those same planning skills to searching for our soulmate.

Most of us begin our search by looking outward to size up the dating and mating opportunities. We may begin perusing photos and descriptions through a dating service, going on blind dates, or keeping our eye out at social gatherings for someone who attracts us. Much as a scientist or archeologist could overlook a colossal discovery if he did not know what he was looking for, you can gaze right past your soulmate if you don’t know what you are really looking for.

In our practice at SinglesToSoulmates®, we teach our clients to begin this process of gaining clarity by first looking inward. It is extraordinarily important that you first know and be really comfortable with yourself and your needs, wants, goals, and dreams, before you begin looking outward to find your soulmate.

First, think about the life you would like to live—paint a picture in your mind. As you get clarity about who you are and what you want, you can begin to develop objective criteria for finding your potential life partner. Ultimately these criteria can be divided into wants, needs, and requirements.

Wants are the characteristics or attributes that would be nice to have, but are not essential to your happiness. After my divorce, for example, when I was dating again, I fantasized about meeting someone who was from Western Europe, as one of my dreams has always been to live and work in Western Europe. Instead, I met and married a South Philadelphia Italian girl who

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had never been in Italy. My European partner was a “want,” not something essential to my happiness.

Needs are elements that are extraordinarily important, but yet negotiable. For example, a colleague of mine had a client who loved to dance. She had rhythm running through her veins. She then met a man who was physically unable to dance. The question she had to determine was what dancing meant to her. If she had a *need* to dance *with her partner*, it might be negotiable, in that she might be happy and fulfilled if he encouraged her to dance with friends even if he could not or chose not to be her partner.

On the other hand, if dancing were far more than a simple recreational activity for her, and it was clearly intertwined with her vision of her relationship with her partner, a partner who could and loved to dance might in fact be a *requirement*. The way to discern the two is to ask whether the criterion is negotiable. Needs are negotiable. Requirements are not!

A *requirement* is something in your prospective partner or relationship that is essential to your happiness. If that quality is truly a requirement, your relationship cannot fully succeed unless it is present. For example, one of my requirements was that my wife like to travel, particularly abroad. Traveling by myself was not enough—savoring the Swiss Alps alone is not the same for me, as walking the alpine meadows hand in hand with the one I love. Had my wife Carol been someone who did not own a passport and had no desire to have one, our first date would have and should have been our last.

Think about your needs, wants and requirements. Please write and let me know what you find out.

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