

Love needs a new definition

There are certain sayings we, as a culture, use all the time, that when broken down, just don't make any sense. One such saying is "love hurts".

That one makes me wonder how advanced Homosapiens really are.

If love hurts, then why do we keep doing it? Being hit by an out of control biker hurts, stubbing your toe hurts, walking into a door hurts — and we don't keep doing those things.

Any reasonable person (reasonable does not include those with sadistic tendencies) goes out of the way to avoid pain — we look both ways before crossing the bike path, we lift up our feet, and we open doors.

But we cannot seem to control ourselves when it comes to love. We allow this excruciating process to happen to us time and time again.

Sometimes we even look for it, but I guess that it helps when we look in all the wrong places.

If love hurts then why don't we warn each other when we see it coming?

If I saw a friend wandering carelessly into the street right in front of a car, I would give her a warning, I would say, "Hey friend, you're wandering carelessly into the street right in front of a car!"

Or if I saw a friend about to eat a twinkie and destroy her diet, I would boldly and selflessly offer to eat the twinkie for her.

So when we see someone we care about walking straight into love we should shout out a warning — or at the very least offer to take their place. I mean, hey, what are friends for?

And if we see a lovesick person, then we should get them to the doctor as soon as possible because I have also heard that you hurt the ones you love.

Now I understand why there is so much suffering in the world, because if love makes the world go round, then there are many people



Chaka Johnson

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out there hurting each other week after week and day after day. I mean come on, it's got to stop.

Is pain then a prerequisite to love? Is it necessary to hurt the ones we love — or is it inherent in the very definition of love?

Or maybe people get hurt because love is blind and it simply keeps running into things.

A conversation about true love should go something like this.

"Have you caused your boyfriend any spontaneous or undue harm lately?" And if they pause and shake their heads then say, "Wise up and hurt them when you get home because if you don't love him then you're going to lose him."

Then again, maybe it's simply our method for achieving love that makes it such a painful process — we don't step into love or open the door to find love waiting on the other side — no, we violently and relentlessly fall in love.

Now if that was the only way to get into a car, through a doorway, or

even start a career many more humans would be bruising and breaking their appendages.

So love hurts, we hurt the ones we love, and like a gymnast with no balance, we fall in love — but perhaps I can explain all of the pain by saying: it hurts so good.

We've all heard that song on the radio that says "Come on baby make it hurt so good."

What a twisted and demented picture that paints: people everywhere crying out to be hurt so good.

But that makes sense doesn't it? If the pain hurts so good then I can understand why people aren't avoiding it more.

With everything that I've learned on the subject of love, I suggest that we create an anti-love committee.

We need to write our congressman and ask him to introduce a bill that outlaws love, or at least creates severe sanctions against any individual or group promoting love.

After that we can get Bob Dole to place a ban on any movies, songs, or books that make love seem even remotely appealing.

We'll then stage a protest at the capitol building and our signs will read "Make love or war—it doesn't matter, it's the same thing."

Some of the local militia will have to attend because the pro-lovists may get out of hand and turn the whole thing ugly.

So, what will we do now that we understand the language of love a little better? It's time for each individual to make a choice because, unfortunately, we live in America and I can't make the choice for them.

If we can't ban love or give people prison time for it, at least we can slow it down a little or make its effects a little less damaging.

Perhaps it's possible to hide the deleterious effects of love within the language that we use, and then again — maybe love will triumph over all.

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Language can heal or destroy

Yitzhak Rabin's assassination once again reminds us of how dangerous extremist groups and hate rhetoric can be.

He was killed by words.

Rabin was shot at a peace rally following months of protest and civil disobedience by Israeli right-wing groups in which he was repeatedly referred to as a "traitor" and "murderer" for his efforts at making peace with former Israeli enemies. Posters portraying him as Hitler were frequently displayed at rallies.

The assassin, a 27-year-old law student with links to the extremist Jewish fringe, said that his actions were based on rabbinical rulings permitting Jews to kill people who gave away parts of the Biblical land of Israel.

He said that he was "glad" that he killed Rabin.

Such combustible right-wing, extremist rhetoric which permits people to take the law into their own hands is nothing new. We saw it here at home in the Oklahoma bombings. Unfortunately, it is on the rise, both here and abroad.

Right wing politicians here in the United States, as in Israel, increasingly demonize their opponents in order to attract supporters.

Instead of discussing the issues, they seem to prefer to inject warlike rhetoric into political positions.

It happened in the 50s with the McCarthy trials. We hear it all the time today on talk radio.

President Clinton, in the wake of the Oklahoma bombings, was right when he warned that violence in political rhetoric can breed violence on the streets.

As he pointed out, G. Gordon Liddy in essence gave his blessing to manslaughter when he said that citizens have the "right" to commit "self-defense" killings of federal agents.

Talk show hosts such as Liddy, however, are not alone in using the political rhetoric of vilification and violence. Newt Gingrich, for



Debra Cumberland

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instance, demonizes the Democratic party when he refers to them as the "enemies" of "normal Americans."

Anti-abortion extremist groups also use this rhetoric. They preach that people who perform abortions are murderers.

They believe that God has sanctioned their actions and will approve any possible means to stop an abortion.

However, they refuse to take responsibility when their own actions — and rhetoric — lead to murder.

The rhetoric used by these different groups serves a central purpose: it objectifies human beings, making them into villains, people who are different from you and me.

When this happens, it shatters the empathetic bond that enables us to care for one another. Once we have stripped fellow human beings of their humanity by turning them into villains, traitors, and enemies, it becomes acceptable to treat them in whatever way serves our own self-interest, even if that leads to murder. Thus, feminists become "femi-

nazis," meaning that they are crazy women who don't have to be taken seriously.

Saddam Hussein was, during the Gulf War, compared to Hitler, which meant that we didn't have to examine our own actions in the war.

Homosexuals become "perverts," meaning that they don't deserve the same rights as anybody else, since they aren't really "normal" people.

And Yitzhak Rabin, a man of peace, was another "Hitler" and a "traitor" to his people.

We play increasingly fast and loose with language.

The only response we can make to such increasingly violent and warlike political rhetoric is to become constant stewards of language, and of other human beings.

Words matter. They have a tremendous power to bring ideas to life, and they have a tremendous power for destruction. We create the world through the language we use.

Unfortunately, this power is often forgotten in our technology-worshipping society.

Rabin's death should remind us — not only of the dangers of right (and left) wing extremism — but of the power of language to create and to destroy.

Rabin used words to heal. He was a man of peace, and he sought through his own political rhetoric to shatter language that divided, turning neighbors into villains, instead of fellow human beings.


We can honor Rabin's memory not only by supporting continued talks between Jews and Arabs, but by trying to put a stop to hate rhetoric at home and abroad.

We can't turn a deaf ear to the rise of warlike political language.

The ramifications hit us both at home and abroad.

Let us remember Rabin, and foster the peace process, by using our own words to heal.


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