

Whatever Happened to Our Zest?

The Story of the Couple Who Lost Their Zest



Once upon a time there were two people who loved each very much. They had zest in their relationship. They played a lot and did it often and with great passion. They touched, kissed, laughed, and cuddled. But as time marched on, they developed a lot of things to do in their life. They got jobs, bought a house, had kids, bought lots of stuff which occupied their time, and pretty soon they were left with no time for themselves or each other. Also a lot of difficult things happened to them: money problems, health problems, family problems, and kid problems all piled up. And they got caught in nasty patterns of negative interaction so common to couples having problems. All of these things sapped the energy right out of them and they lost their zest and could hardly talk anymore.

For years they walked around just getting by, with their bodies half asleep. In the end, they became so tired their bodies fell completely asleep even though they themselves were still awake. That was OK for a while. Both understood that life couldn't always be filled with zest and zing. And it was understood that if one were to have a zesty feeling in the body it should just be ignored, so they could accomplish the things that needed to be done. It was also understood that it was a gift to the other to not burden the other by talking about, zesty feelings or the lack thereof. In fact as time went on and on, the two talked very little about what was inside their minds or bodies. But both thought that someday it would work out and it was best to just keep going, doing what needed do be done.

Then one day, something marvelous and terrifying happened. One of them woke up full of energy with lots of those zesty, feelings. For this one, once again life was full of color and excitement. But as this one looked over to the other one, this one noticed that the other's body was still fast asleep. This one wondered, "Should I wake the other? What would the other think? Would the other think; "What's wrong, you've changed? Why are you acting this way? You're being silly, stupid, needy, pathetic, childish and selfish?" This one thought for a long time about what to do and finally decided that it was too embarrassing, too risky to bring up the subject and decided to keep quiet and try to go back to sleep. That worked for a while but soon this one began to grow sad and lonely, not being able to share the joy of the zesty feelings. This one longed to share these feeling with the other one but couldn't muster up the courage to wake the other, fearing a negative reaction. This one grieved the loss of someone to share the exciting zesty feelings with.

Months turned into years and one day while this one was in deep despair a stranger walked by, smiled and struck up a conversation. Somehow it was so easy to talk and confide in this stranger. This one thought, "This is a wonderful feeling to feel alive again" and at once a zesty feeling welled up inside of this one. This one thought, "Is this meant to be? Should I be feeling this way? I feel wonderfully young and energetic - Why shouldn't I feel this way? I don't want to go back to feeling half asleep and dead inside." Then, a great consuming sense of confusion came over this one. Just now talking to the stranger, it felt so enlivening and freeing while the thought of talking to this one's partner seemed somehow difficult and impossible. The confusion was paralyzing.

Just at that moment, this one's partner turned the corner and saw this one and the stranger talking in that animated zesty way. Immediately it broke the other's heart. The other became angry, protested and ran away to be alone. The other thought, "This one doesn't talk to me like that. Why haven't we been able to talk like that - so zesty and full of life? I miss the talking, confiding and those wonderful zesty feelings in my body." Seeing the shock on the other's face, this one fell silent.

More years went by and the children grew into wonderful people. But this one and the other rarely talked, and never about that awkward day. This one had felt foolish and shamed, so pushed away those zesty feelings, not feeling any right to talk about them. The other felt hurt and unwanted and built a wall of soft foam all around for comfort. The two were together but felt alone and rarely touched.

Believe it or not, as with some couples, this couple was able to recover those zesty feelings for each other. But how, how did it come about that once again they played together and their zesty feeling were awakened?

Exercise... "Finding Our Zest"

Sit on your bed next to your partner. Read the story out loud. Talk about what aspects of the story that you identify with.

Next lie on the bed for 10 minutes and hold hands with eyes closed. See images of yourself reconnecting with your partner. Notice how you feel in your body.

Next share with your partner your images of reconnecting. Together create your own ending to this story with yourselves as the couple finding their zest again.

Begin the ending of the story with, "Well, by and by"