

Myth of perfection

By Ruth Ostrow

I'VE had an interesting response to my earlier columns on the search for happiness, with most people clinging to the myth that contentment is just an event away. The most common mythology I've received from readers is the notion that they will be happy once they find the proverbial "soul mate". I hear this from both single and married people.

Those who are single live in hope of meeting Mr/Ms Right, while many of those who are married think that they could have done better and remain "open" to reconnecting with the perfect soul mate once the kids have grown.

The eternal quest for perfect love drives so many. Yet Dr John Demartini, philosopher, international speaker and author of a host of books on the human condition, questions this premise in his workshops.

His theory is that, in reality, we have access to all the love we need - it just doesn't appear in the form we want it; therefore, we can't see, recognise or value it.

For instance, we may have a loving partner who has no sense of humour or is short of money. "If you look around, you will find that others in your life are fulfilling those roles right now. Who of your friends is hilariously funny? Who has a lot of cash and spoils you?"

"If you stop insisting on having your needs met in one neat package, you will work out that Existence is indeed indulging you with everything you need. It's the same for many single people who just can't see the love or sensuality around them because they're fixated with it being in one special person, which breeds disappointment."

This philosophy applies to anything we crave. Our jobs may not be totally fulfilling, but there are hobbies that stimulate and excite. The city we live in has its drawbacks, yet holidays elsewhere may redress the balance in a way that living in that "better city" may not.

Besides, "perfection" can lead to a form of exclusivity that often renders one more lonely and isolated than remaining open to the universal love stream. In the perfect friendship, we can become socially lazy and elitist. In the perfect love affair, we can become closed to other magical possibilities, and often so fearful of loss we become jealous and co-dependent, which can cut us off from the inner peace we seek.

In the eternal quest for happiness, be careful what you wish for. As Demartini warns, romantic fantasies come at a cost.

www.ruthostrow.com

© Ruth Ostrow

First published in The Weekend Australian SAT 05 AUG 2006