

# Inquiring Minds: closeness and separation

#31 Sept-Oct, 2014 "The opposite of Loneliness is not Togetherness, It's Intimacy" Richard Bach

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## A BOOK WE'RE READING ALOUD TO EACH OTHER

[Conscious Loving: A journey to Co-commitment.](#)



was written in 1992 by a husband-wife team of therapists, Drs. Gay and Kathlyn Hendricks. It's based on the insights they have learned over the years in counseling more than a thousand couples.

Five ideas struck me as particularly helpful in what we have read so far. First, every relationship needs both closeness and separation, and the relationship oscillates back and forth between the two. Second, when we fail to get in sync with needs either for closeness or separation, problems arise, often leading to arguments over nothing inherently important. Third, much of the source of such fiction comes from trauma or modeling in the past. Fourth, the the exploration and discovery of these unconscious agents will help us understand ourselves and each other, and better our relationship. Fifth, out of this understanding we may move both to accept ourselves and our shortcomings as well as those of the significant others in our lives. The process rewards.

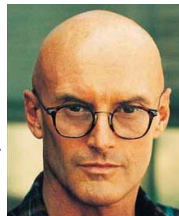
## ELEANOR AND FRANKLIN

Along these same lines, I was very impressed with PBS Special: [The Roosevelts; An Intimate History.](#) Specifically, that Eleanor and FDR worked well as a team, but had their difficulties being with each other outside of the work arena. Each had their personal

confidants, which was not a bad thing, but their overall relationship seemed to have some real difficulties, some of which may have never be resolved. Of course, Franklin's affair did not help, but Eleanor may have had "emotional affairs" of her own. Yet, maybe theirs was an independence before its time. Who knows, and "we are not to judge." They may have struggled in their marriage, but they persevered, and together changed the country forever.

## SCIENCE AND SPIRITUALITY: THE YIN & YANG OF EXISTENCE

Thanks once again to Fr. Sean O'Laoire for his tweaking [René Descartes'](#) famous "I think, therefore I am" to "I love, therefore I am." Taking this a step further, I would link thinking and loving as both important components in the formula for existence itself. Thinking, of course, would mean all the rational sciences, and loving would be (a la [Ken Wilber](#)) all the spiritual insights of intuition, ethics, morality, etc., embraced by the spiritual traditions of the world.



Ken Wilber

I would also change from the singular to the plural of the subjects: *I* to *we*. So modified, we might have the saying, "We think and love, therefore we are and will be." Our very existence as *homo sapiens* depends on the marriage of knowing and loving. So, hopefully, humanity's future name in his highest evolutionary state might be *homo sapiens et amans*, "human, the knowing and loving creature."

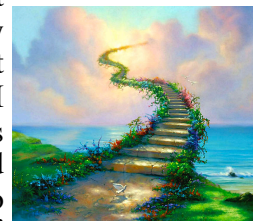
## EXTENDING THE AUTHORS' THEORY OF UPPER LIMITS

The Hendricks (from above) labeled this need to seek homeostasis (a return to normal from intense closeness) The Theory of Upper Limits. People can only stand so much coupledness. They need to reclaim their individuality. Reasonable and obvious. The Hendricks also found that some have a low tolerance for intimacy because they feel too vulnerable and/or were hurt before when they let their guard down. Awareness of these tendencies sets up healthy boundaries and intimacy based on knowledge of the self and the other

I also see death as the loss of self: one's body, one's personality, one's talents, skills, knowledge, etc., as a person is assimilated back into the earth or into the heaven of one's belief. And yet reports of near death experiences seem to report of a peaceful attraction.

My sister Lucina had a [lucid dream](#) about our deceased father where he said something very typical of his guarded self: "They know *everything* up here."

As I age I am becoming more comfortable with the fact that I do not have all the answers, and am becoming more comfortable with the mystery of life and death. When the time comes, I trust I will be ready and at peace with my departure. But as for now "I have promises to keep and miles to go before I sleep."



Or so I hope. *Hugs con permiso.* -JB