

The Self Sacrifice Noose

By Kat McCarthy



Is there anyone out there that considers themselves a pleaser? Someone who can't help but try to please others? Someone who may even think that their ability to please others is directly connected to how well they are loved...?

Everyone see my hand waving in the air here? Yup that's right – I got it too...

Pleasing, while not a bad practice in and of it self, is a freedom stealer if it's allowed to run amuck and control the way one moves through life.

It's difficult to imagine a world where we don't try to please someone – especially those closest to us. I am told it is possible and I hope to one day experience it at least in my closest relationship but for now, it seems like we all need to do a little pleasing as we go.

It seems healthy enough to want to please your lover or your children or your Mother – and it is to a point, as long as our need to please others isn't greater than our need to please ourselves. There is a difficult line to navigate between these two points however. At what point do we stop pleasing ourselves to please another?

It's all in the feeling really. Does it feel good to do this thing that pleases that person – or not? As long as we stay in integrity with ourselves at all times it is both healthy and pleasurable to please someone else. It's probably not unhealthy to occasionally give in and do something for someone that we don't really want to do but the minute it begins to become a habit – or a first response – we've crossed the line and entered into that dangerous territory...

When pleasing becomes the controlling factor – *a behavior that is habitually acted out*, it transforms into a cycle called Self Sacrifice that is a perpetuating loop of pleasing to find love outside of self only to find less love inside of self.

Someone practicing self sacrifice can grow to the even more insidious version you may recognize called a Martyr. Martyrs are those whose self sacrifice has expanded to a belief that those they try and please are responsible for what is wrong in their own life. At this point not only is love sought outside the self it is accompanied by a feeling of futility – a resentful belief that no one is willing to be pleased – and tendency to see each sacrifice as something that inconveniences the martyr or disrupts their life. The martyr will continue to sacrifice in bigger and bigger ways until their life really is disrupted.

And there is hope...

To break the pleasing cycle it really is just a matter of developing the habit of asking ourselves at each decision point, 'is this what I really want to do?' And then the hard part – being in integrity with whatever comes up – acting from your feelings.

Let's face it – it's hard to say no. Especially to those we love. But if we were more honest with ourselves and with other people, everyone all around would be more understanding and a lot happier in the long run...

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