A Paradox of Love

Thoughts on two people being together yet separate

March 5, 2018 By Kate Ferguson

While doing research for an article about love and relationships, I found excerpts from Mating in Captivity: Unlocking Erotic Intelligence, a book by New York City–based psychotherapist Esther Perel. One of the relationship topics the best-selling writer tackles is the tension between maintaining one's individuality and being part of a couple.

In this constant ebb and flow of intimacy "our quest for love and security conflicts with our pursuit of adventure and freedom," Perel writes. Her words echo those of other well-known authors who have examined these seemingly contradictory desires.

Poet and artist Kahlil Gibran, author of The Prophet, his masterpiece of philosophical insights on life, influenced Perel's thoughts on romantic relationships. She described love as resting on two pillars— surrender and autonomy—that reflect the need for humans to merge yet remain separate.

It's a deep mystery of life worth considering.

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