



PsycCRITIQUES. 41(11):1149, NOV 1996

DOI: 10.1037/003244, Issn Print: 1554-0138

Publication Date: 1996/11/01



Print

A Thing Apart: Love and Reality in the Therapeutic Relationship

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Abstract

Originally published in Contemporary Psychology: APA Review of Books, 1996, Vol 41(11), 1149. Review of Love and Reality in the Therapeutic Relationship by Irving Steingart (see record 1995-98558-000). Steingart looks deeply at the psychoanalytic relationship, offering a new perspective about what it is and in what way a sort of love animates the relationship. Among other topics, Steingart examines issues of transference and countertransference; the ideal of a psychoanalytic relationship centering on the acquisition of insight; whether psychoanalytic knowledge is a special kind of narration or scientific theory; what brings about personality change in the analysand; and the need for and use of enacted symbols (especially with borderline or narcissistic patients) in analysis. Clinical vignettes and case studies are used throughout to illustrate concepts in the text. In the final chapter, Steingart presents a clinical episode that includes major topics addressed in the book: reality and truth contrasted to not-real experience in the psychoanalytic relationship; transference and countertransference; enacted symbolic transference organization; and the issue of real love the psychoanalyst possesses to understand the psychic reality of his or her analysand. (PsycINFO Database Record (c) 2006 APA, all rights reserved)

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bipolar patient or ruminations in an obsessive/compulsive), level of intelligence, sociocultural influences, experiences of friends or family in psychiatric treatment, social skills capabilities Every relationship has challenges—whether long distance or not. And long distance relationships can be totally worth it. Here are just a couple of the amazing benefits that can come from being in a long distance relationship: All that talking means you get to know each other very well. You are less likely to confuse lust with love. So take heart. If you're in the middle of a rough patch right now that doesn't necessarily mean you're in the wrong relationship. I'm cheering you on and wishing you all the best as you try to work out what's going on in your relationship, and grow closer and stronger even across the miles. OK, your turn. What long distance relationship problems have you experienced?

We see love as picturesque and effortlessly beautiful. There's some sort of an attraction before we find that special someone. You care and love for each other; you create precious memories; you open up to one another and share your deepest, darkest secrets. You achieve things together and so the fairytale continues to unfold. But what we fail to acknowledge in our loved-up thoughts is the raw, real side of love. Sometimes, that's the beauty of it all, that it may not work, but somehow, the two of you are willing to put in the time, effort and sacrifice to make it so. There's a seemingly "ugly" side of love, the one that has the strongest likelihood of holding the relationship together rather than breaking it a part.