


Literature and Coping Skills
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Lecture 32
Derek Walcott, “The Fist”

Hello everybody I am Ajit K Mishra, your course instructor for Literature and Coping Skills. I am here again, with the last segment of this module, Overcoming Heartbreak. Today, I am going to talk about Derek Walcott’s “The Fist”. And I also show you how this particular poetic composition, in fact, helps us understand various other aspects associated with the idea of heartbreak and its management.


Until now, I have talked about heartbreak from a variety of perspectives, including the psychological, the neurobiological and the social as well. By now you have been able to understand how heartbreak and love are very closely allied concepts, and how love is a very, very complex idea. And how heartbreak is one of the major problems that we all are facing.

So, a good idea about heartbreak, its mechanism, its implications, and its after effects will help us to understand this particular human experience better, and help us manage the aftershock in a much better way, so that is exactly what I want you all to be capable of, I want you to develop coping skills, and strategies. And I also want you to help others develop coping skills and strategies with the help of which you can make others come to terms with the pangs of heartbreak. So, let us start with today's lecture.

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Overcoming Heartbreak




- Love, Heartbreak, and Healing-I
- Love, Heartbreak, and Healing-II
- Robert Browning, “The Last Ride Together”
- Derek Walcott, “The Fist”

Image Source: Thenounproject



As I have already told you, I am going to focus on the Derek Walcott, “The Fist” which is a very, very interesting poetic composition in a variety of things, in a variety of ways, because it allows us to focus on a very different kind of problem that I will be walking you through. But before I come to this particular poetic composition, I will first walk you through the various ideas or phenomena that are very closely associated with this particular poetic composition. So, let us take a look at each one of them.

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Love and the Survival Mechanism

All living creatures are designed by specific combinations of genes that survive environmental and sexual selection are passed on to succeeding generations

Nicholas Christakis puts it: “The evolutionary psychology of both men and women is to exchange love for support.”

“I am not aware of any other factor in medicine that has a greater impact on our survival than the healing power of love and intimacy (physician Dean Ornish)



We need to start with the idea of love and the survival mechanism, because it is very, very important for us to understand. And I hope by now you have been able to understand how love is absolutely essential for human survival. So, the survival mechanism is exactly what it

tells us that love is extremely important. All living creatures are designed by specific combinations of genes that survive environmental and sexual selections, and are thus passed on to succeeding generations.

So, if you look at our evolutionary processes, it will come across all these things, the environmental selection, the sexual selection, and then passing on after genes to the next generations. That means it is all about preserving oneself, protecting oneself and continuing one species, so that is exactly what we understand when it comes to survival mechanisms.

And we need to find the role of love in this particular mechanism. So, when you take a look at this particular thing, you will find that when it comes to natural selection, we differently like to protect ourselves first, and then we preserve ourselves. And then we try to continue our species through mating processes or procreation.

So, when it comes to mating processes, a procreation love plays an extremely important role there. So, Nicholas Christakis, an American sociologist, is of the view that the evolutionary psychology of both men and women is to exchange love for support. So it is extremely important for our survival. We need support, so that we can protect ourselves, we can preserve our species and we can also continue our species.

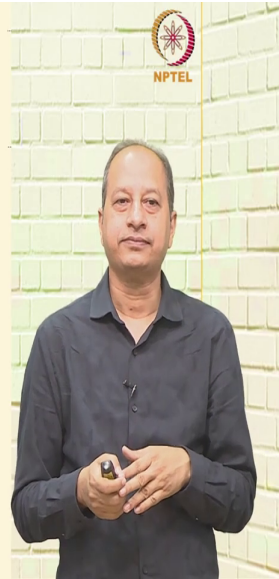
Therefore, love between men and women, the mating partners is extremely important, so that we can continue this evolutionary process. And then to another very interesting proposition, given to us by a physician, Dean Ornish says that- “I am not aware of any other factor in medicine that has a greater impact on our survival than the healing power of love and intimacy.”

So, once again, we are faced with the importance of love and intimacy, for our survival, it is probably one of the best forms of medicine that is available to us. So, it is very, very important for us to know that love actually functions like medicine, which helps us with our survival.

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Love and the Survival Mechanism

- We are wired more for war than for love
- We have more centers in the brain that are responsible for keeping us alive and preserving the species than we do for attachment. But attachment is part of survival, so we need to love because we need to attach to at least one other human being for survival. I know it sounds contradictory, but those are both there, and they're both linked to survival. (Stan Tatkin)
- Survival is the combination of protection, preservation, and continuation of life



So, and then, this is something that is very, very interesting to know that we are wired more for war than for love. That may sound a little uncanny and challenging at this moment. But once you get to know why it is so, it will be very, very easy for you to understand its implications. So, we are actually wired more for war than for love.

Because we have a response mechanism that we call a quick response mechanism. That is the fight or flight response mechanism, which is associated with the amygdala in the brain, so, that, in fact, always makes us prepared for the fight, or even for the flight. Even when we are taking the flight, we are escaping the scene of danger or threat, we are in a way of buying some time for ourselves to prepare for that particular fight back.

So, fighting is all about, you know, helping oneself protecting and preserving one's existence, so that is why it is very, very important for us to understand, and know that we are, in fact, wired more for war than for love. So, we need to exist first, we need to protect ourselves first, we need to struggle with various basic needs, like food, water, and air. And then once all these needs are fulfilled, we can move a little up. And then we can view and desire for those psychological needs, once these physical needs are met; so, that is one big reason. And if we go back to the very ancient times of our civilization, human progression, we will get to know how those people were always ready to fight the attacks from outside so that they could preserve, they could protect themselves, and they can thus survive. Therefore, it is important to understand that we are in fact wired more for war than for love. When we take a quick look at this piece from Stan Tatkin clinician we will get to know this proposition better.

So, it is a very, very clear thing by now, since I have discussed various parts of the brain at different moments and different points in my lectures, the previous ones especially. So, we have more centres in the brain that are responsible for keeping us alive and preserving the species than we do for attachment. That is very interesting. That means there are several mechanisms, several areas in the brain that are associated with our need to preserve, to protect ourselves so that we can survive.

And we also have certain areas in the brain that are associated with attachment, wanting, affection and love, but the number of those areas is less in comparison to the number of those areas that prepare or keep us ready for this fight for survival. And then we need love. That does not mean that we do not need love.


Because attachment is also a part of our survival, we cannot survive without support, attachment, affection and bonding. So, we did not love each other because of that particular thing. So, although it sounds a little contradictory, both these things are there, and those things are linked to our survival weapons, we also need love, bonding and attachment. At the same time, we also need to be ready for the fight against the onslaught or external attacks, so, that is very, very interesting. And that is the reason why we are wired more for war than for love.

But all said and done, we are in fact wired, both for war and for love, so that is very, very important. So, where it comes to understanding the whole idea of the relationship between love and the survival mechanism, we can sum it up in this manner. And survival is the combination of the protection, preservation and continuation of life, that is all about survival, taking life forward, taking life further, through protection and preservation, we need to protect ourselves first. And then we need to preserve our species so that we can continue our species in a manner, so when it comes to the protection stage, we are always ready for the fight so that we can save ourselves from extermination from being wiped out. And then we come to the preservation stage, when we in fact, have to take care of how we are going to continue our species, so that is why love is extremely important for the survival mechanism, because they are very closely associated ideas, phenomenon.

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Love, Brain, and Body

- “Where there is love, there is life” (Mahatma Gandhi)
- “Without love, where would you be now?” (Doobie Brothers)
- Following a better understanding of the biology and chemistry of love, science has started recognizing the health benefits of love
- Love is more than just an isolated feeling. When we are in loving relationships the various neurotransmitters and hormones in our bodies affect us systemically
- Limbic resonance and limbic regulation (A General Theory of Love (2001), Thomas Lewis et. al.)



So, that brings us to the question of love, brain and body. Because by now we all know that love, in fact, exercises a tremendous amount of influence on both the brain and the body. So, it keeps us both emotionally, mentally stable, and healthy. And it also helps us keep ourselves our bodies healthy simultaneously. So, love exercises is tremendous influences, especially positive influences on both the mind, the brain and the body.

So, we can start with this very interesting proposition given to us by Mahatma Gandhi, who said that, “Where there is love, there is life.” So, this may have appeared to be a very straightforward proposition when it was actually issued by Mahatma Gandhi. But when we look at it, from this perspective, from the perspective of our understanding of the whole process, now, you may discover layers of meaning in this straight and simple statement. So, where there is love, there is life.

So, in the absence of love, we cannot even imagine life because it is absolutely important for our survival- so, that is one proposition. And then we can also look up to this particular song composition, my Doobie Brothers in the early 30s. Without love, where would you be now? So, can you imagine your life without love? And even if you can imagine your life without love? Where would you be now? Without love? Can we go anywhere in the absence of love?

So, there are some of the basic questions that we also need to ask ourselves if we have to understand the wonderful companionship between our love, our brains and our bodies. So, there was a time when people were not aware of the brain mechanisms and the body mechanics that we are in fact, positively influenced by love. But science, especially

behavioural sciences and neurological sciences have helped us understand this particular phenomenon better.

Now, we know that the biology and chemistry of love, in fact, benefit our mind and our bodies. So, now that we have understood, understood the biology and the chemistry of love, we can say that love has wonderful benefits, or health benefits both mental health and physical health benefits for us. And then love is not just an isolated feeling, it is not a feeling that can be isolated.

And we can understand it as a purely objective and isolated mechanism, that is not the case. So, when we are in love thing, relationships, the various neurotransmitters I have already talked about those neurotransmitters starting with dopamine, oxytocin, vasopressin, even serotonin, as well, various neurotransmitters and hormones in our bodies affect us systematically so that is why it is very, very important to understand that there is a very close connection between love and the brain and the body as well. So, there is something called limbic resonance, which happens when we allow the brain to be affected by the kind of people we are surrounded by, if those people are the positive ones, are important once in our lives, so, that means the limbic system, or will be in a very positive state. And then the limbic regulation will also be adequately processed, or done.

So, these ideas are in fact, based on a very interesting book written by Thomas Lewis and others, A General Theory of Love in 2001. So, limbic resonance and limbic regulation are two very important things that we need to understand when it comes to love, brain and the body. So, when it comes to this particular relationship between love, brain and the body, we need to understand that love relieves our pain, both psychological and physical pain as well. It lowers our blood pressure; it eases our stress and anxiety and it also improves our cardiovascular health.

So, love and being in a relationship have associations with a wide range of health benefits. Science has established all these facts now. So, when we first fall in love, we experience a surge in that pleasure brain chemical, dopamine, and then that is also a feel good chemical that transports us to a hysteric state as well, because it is a mood intensifier.

So, whoever begins to experience this particular surge, in fact, feels extremely positive and appreciated. So, I mean there is something called cloud nine, so that is the condition that is a

situation we can point towards when somebody is in fact experiencing a surge in dopamine. So, and especially when people feel securely attached, bonded, their stress levels go down. So, a surge in dopamine will ensure that the cortisol level is always low and it is not going to pose any challenge to our well-being both your psychological and physical well-being; so, that is the reason why this relationship between love, the brain and the body is so very important. Because it gives us an ability to cope with stress, manage stress, and it also acts as a protective factor against mental illnesses. So, if I can use the ideas of British psychiatrist John Bowlby, who is known for his research on attachment.

So, he is of the view that attachment is a lasting psychological connectedness between human beings. So, the emphasis is on the word lasting, lasting connectedness is very, very important. Now that it is an attachment for a moment, and then it goes, that will create problems. So, this attachment needs to be lasting one.

So, we need to understand the crucial importance of a secure relationship, a trusted relationship, and the development of adaptiveness and coping capacity. So, the development of adaptiveness, and coping capacity is largely dependent on the building or the development of a secure relationship, that is very, very important for us to understand. And then there is something that also is taken care of when there is a proper bonding between love, the brain and the body.

So, how love in fact positively influences the brain and the body, by taking away what we know as the allosteric load. So, the allosteric load is, in fact, the consequence of chronic exposure to stress. So, when we come across positive social experiences, and higher levels of social integration and support in the form of love, and attachment, we are actually experiencing less or low allosteric load; so, that is very, very important. Because from childhood, until old age, being connected to others in secure and loving relationships, helps us better deal with stress. So, the moment we want to or feel like coping with stress, we need to check whether we are in a secure and trusted relationship or not. If that is not the case, then we need to transform a disturbing or a strained relationship into a secure and trusted one; so, that we can experience less allosteric load.

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So, if we can sum up the entire thing that will help us know the connection between love, the brain and the body, we can do so with the help of this diagram because is a very close connection between the heart and the brain. So, we need to understand that the heart makes us happy and positive, because of dopamine, the pleasure neurochemical or the brain chemical, and then oxytocin, the love and bonding chemical will always be in a state of happiness and positivity, then attachment and bonding will also enhance because of oxytocin and vasopressin.

And then that will result in improved pain relief. Because love has been treated as a pain reliever, I have already talked about all the things because whenever somebody experiences some pain, especially mental pain, if the person comes across some wonderful, positive memories about a loved partner, or if the person comes across the images, the photographs, the videos of a loved partner, the pain will gradually be relieved, so that is the reason why young children promptly you know, get relieved of their pain, the moment the mother picks on them, and begins to pat them on the back- that is an instance of love and attachment. So, it works as a pain reliever. But at the same time, I must also tell you all that love is a very, very complex human emotion. It has another aspect to it as well. So, while it functions as a pain reliever, it also acts as a pain giver as well.

So, we need to be very, very careful about these two dimensions of love, but that apart, love can, in fact, make lifespan longer. So, people who are, you know, in a good lovable relationship have a longer lifespan. And it also improves physical health. Because the stress

inducing hormone cortisol will always be under check, under control, it will be regulated, so people will not be anxious, stressed there will be no sign of depression whatsoever; so, that is how it is also going to reduce stress and anxiety, a great deal- that is the power of love. So, the connection between love and the brain and the body needs to be explored, so that we understand the benefits.

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That brings us to the other side of love, as I have hinted at it a while ago. So, the other side tells us that love can also cause a tremendous amount of pain, which may feel like physical pain as well. So, love before the heartbreak and after the heartbreak can lead to severe unbearable, unmanageable pain as well, I have talked about all these things in some detail in my past lectures. So, to be specific, the three kinds of pain experiences that love can cause are; the first separation anxiety, the second relationship anxiety, and the third is relationship addiction.

So, we need to understand that it can lead to severe mental and physiological pain as well. And if we are aware of these things, we can be in a position to manage them well. So, people with separation anxiety, experienced high levels of anxiety that means if a partner is not along with the other partner, the other partner will definitely experience separation anxiety, because when you are in love, you will not be able to cope with any separation, actual separation, or even the thought of separation, both will cause a tremendous amount of pain in you.

So, a separation anxiety, in fact, raises the cortisol level. And then that can also lead to panic attacks, especially when the loved ones are out of reach, you begin to worry about them, you begin to be so disturbed, so anxious about them, their wellbeing, their whereabouts, then you begin to experience separation anxiety.

So, separation anxiety is not necessarily a disorder, it is a very natural feeling, but it can lead to disorders if not unchecked or if not regulated. So, people with this disorder may be socially withdrawn, they will show extreme sadness. And they will also show lack of concentration, especially when they are away from their loved ones. So, this is one big cause because of which we experience the pain associated with love. So, the next is relationship anxiety. So, relationship anxiety is extremely common. It is very, very common because we are generally in some kind of relationship.

And then especially it is very common when it comes to couples. This kind of anxiety will result in constant worrying. And then it will lead to feelings of worry, insecurity and doubt that can pop up in a relationship. Envy, jealousy, doubt, even if somebody is experiencing a wonderful relationship, even if everything is really going well, people can experience relationship anxiety because they do not want their love level to come down; so, that is the reason why people begin to, you know, spy on the other partners just to check whether the other partner is still in love with them or not or the other partner is bored with that love partner and the other partner is comfortable in the company of other people. So, it will lead to worry, insecurity and doubt. Thus, causing a tremendous amount of pain to the sufferers.

And then we come to the third one the relationship addiction, I have talked about the relationship addiction by citing the research done by Aaron and Fisher and Brown, if you remember, because love is a natural addiction, people in love experience euphoria, cravings, dependency and withdraw because of the dopamine reward system in the brain gets activated by romantic love.

So, when there is no reward, people will feel as if they are withdrawing, they will experience withdrawal symptoms and cravings, as if they are craving for some kind of substance. So, that is the power of love on the brain- so, that will make you an addict, while you are in love, and when you are not in love, when somebody is in love and when somebody is in a heartbroken state.

So, in both conditions, people will behave like an addict, because of this particular thing, because of the surge in dopamine, the hysteric chemical- so, that is how we know the power of love as an addiction. So, relationship addiction is another major channel through which love can cause a tremendous amount of pain. So, these are the three major channels through which we experience the pain of love.

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So, that brings us to another very important thing that we can call love gone right or love gone wrong. When love goes wrong, what happens, wrong in what sense that means somebody is not being able to manage one's love, because it is a force, it is a power, it is a form of energy that needs to be properly regulated, because very strong emotion that needs to be regulated in a manner so that it does not turn out to be destructive for oneself and the others around.

So, we need to understand that and we need to ascertain that it does not go wrong. When does love go wrong? When people are lovelorn that means, they are so much so encrust, so obsessed with their love interest, so love objects, that any thought or any actual separation or any thought of separation will result in a state of lovelorn, it will lead to a lovelorn condition.

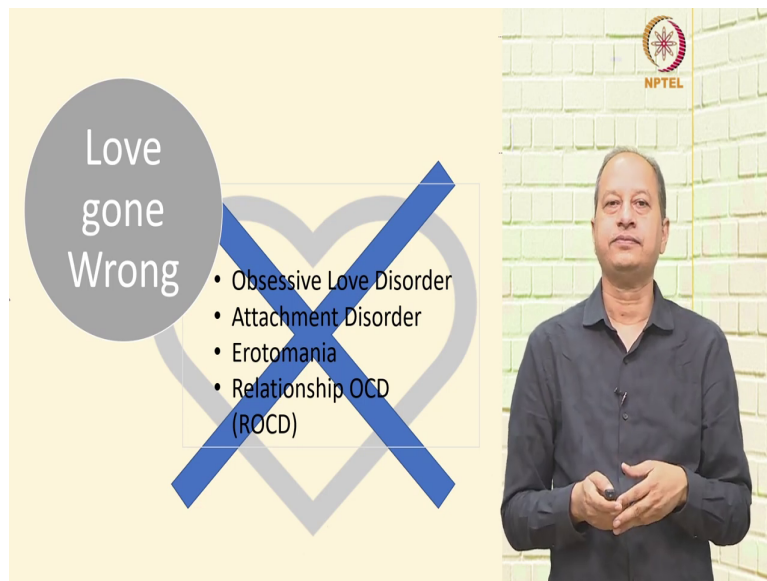
So, especially people who are experiencing unrequited love or rejected love, pass through these experiences, lovelorn syndrome. And the love sickness, you will always want to be in the company of the love interest, you will always want to see the love interest whether it is an

object or a person to be right in front of you, you begin to show the signs of sickness, that extreme attachment; so, that will also lead to several problems.

And then it can also turn into a mania that means you become manic about your love. And then you behave in a very unpredictable and unexplainable manner; so, that is and then it can cause a lot of chemical storms in the brain. Because love is a very, very complex human emotion. While healing us, it can also kill us. So, while making us feel good, it can also push us into the dark realm of anxiety, stress and depression. So, because of the chemical storm, and especially the chemical storm that happens when somebody is heartbroken. So, the chemical storm can in fact blow us away, if we do not know how to manage, how to cope with that particular onslaught.

And then finally, to a very interesting idea that was developed by Dorothy Tennov psychologist limerence. So, limerence is a kind of extreme attraction for somebody, you begin to show your love for that object, or the person, and then you become obsessed about getting your love, or your affection reciprocated. So, when it is not reciprocated, when it is not returned in the proper manner, then you experience a limerence phenomenon. So, when love goes wrong, these are some of the things that will happen to us.


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Again, when love goes wrong, we can also experience these disorders. Starting with obsessive love disorder, we have obsessive-compulsive disorder, but this is a very different kind of disorder. That is an obsessive love disaster, I will be talking about it in greater detail in a while. Then it comes to attachment disorder, that means you either withdraw completely, or you show excessive care for the partner. So much care that it turns out to be an obsession for you; so, that is attachment disorder. And then people also experience erotomania, a state in which you begin to believe, especially women, you begin to believe that somebody of a higher social status is actually in love with you. And you continue to believe in that particular situation.

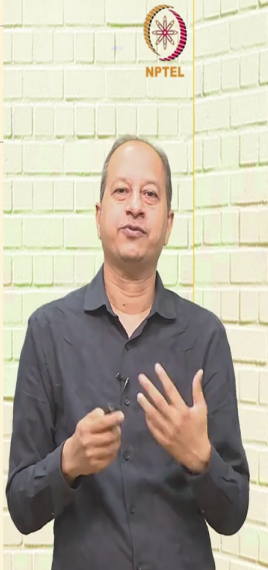
And then we come to relationship OCD, ROCD, which is a major problem in relationships, especially in couples, in which you show your love, excessive love for the person by developing that into our possessiveness, you become possessive of your partner. So, much so that that turns into an OCD type, obsession or engagement. So, these are some of the disorders that are the result of love, or unregulated love, unchecked love.

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Obsessive Love Disorder (OLD)

- An overwhelming attraction towards one person
Where you become obsessed with the person you think you may be in love with
- You might feel the need to protect your loved ones obsessively, or even controlling them as if they were a possession
- You might experience extreme jealousy over interpersonal interactions of the loved ones
- You might be down with low self-esteem
- It feels as if your heart is in the grip of a 'fist'



So, that brings us to the idea of Obsessive Love Disorder, OLD. So, whenever somebody experiences an overwhelming attraction towards another person. Where, you become so obsessed with the person that you begin to think of as if you are in love with the person, it may not be the case, or may be the case. But most often, it may not be the case, you will feel as if you are deeply in love with that person.

And then when that happens, you also feel the need to protect your loved ones, obsessively, so much so that you will not allow them to do things that they can easily do, for example, riding bikes or driving or even you know taking into the swimming pool, no, you not allow them to do things become so over protective of the partner, it will ultimately result in you controlling the partner completely as if the partner is not a person not a human rather an object that you can possess, you can control and you can manage as you wish as you like.

So, you might experience extreme jealousy which is very, very common over the interpersonal interactions of the partner or the loved ones. So, you will not allow your interpersonal partner to even talk to strangers, to laugh in their company, to do anything. So, all types of interpersonal interactions of your loved ones will be regulated, controlled, and will appear to be aversive to you.

So, if all these things are happening, then you know that you are experiencing obsessive love disorder. And then it will also result in your low self-esteem, because of which we generally behave in that manner with low self-esteem; so, that is very, very important. And it will also

push you into a condition wherever you feel as if your heart has been hijacked. And your heart is in the grip of a very strong tight fist and it becomes absolutely impossible for you to release your heart and yourself from the grip of that test.

So, the idea of this fist the metaphor is very, very important to, because I am going to take you to the poetic composition, The Fist by Derek Walcott from here, so that we can understand the problem that the speaker is struggling with, and we will also get to see how the speaker or whether the speaker is able to cope with the problems that he or she is struggling with, so let us take a quick look at that.

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The Fist
By Derek Walcott

The fist clenched round my heart
loosens a little, and I gasp
brightness; but it tightens
again. When have I ever not loved
the pain of love? But this has moved

past love to mania. This has the strong
clench of the madman. This is
gripping the ledge of unreason, before
plunging howling into the abyss.

Hold hard then, heart. This way at least you
live.

Derek Walcott, "The Fist" from *Collected Poems: 1948-1984*

The Fist by Derek Walcott. So, when you look at these lines, it is a very, very short poem that has only two segments, which depicts how a person who has been overwhelmed by love feels. Now, this is very interesting. This has nothing to do with heartbreak you might feel. But I must tell you all that this has a lot of things to do with heartbreak, because this is another form of heartbreak, where your heart is not broken by the other partner, rather, you make it to be devastated to be broken by your unregulated emotional feelings, or your unchecked uncontrolled emotions; so, that is why this is a very different kind of heartbreak, which has received very little attention. Because people do not generally focus on this particular aspect. Heartbreak causes a lot of pain in us, it blows away our life, it devastates our life. So, this is one such example in which the person's life is devastated when the person does not know how to regulate one's love emotions.

So, we have a metaphor, metaphor for love that is uncontrollable or unregulated; so, that is the fist, it is so tight and so hard, that the heart of the person cannot escape its grip, it is clutch. So, there are a couple of very interesting things. The first is; The fist clenched round my heart, although it loosens a little at times, I gasp, not for breath, but for brightness; that clearly shows that the person has been pushed into the realm of darkness, the dark realm, that is the realm of the, you know, OCD or OLD Obsessive Love Disorder, you are groping in the dark. Therefore, whenever the fist is loosened a little you gasp, not for breath, but for brightness. But the grip is so strong, so hard that it will not allow you to, you know, gasp for brightness or breath for long, because it tightens again.

And then when that happens, where the speaker says; When have I ever not loved the pain of love? He is ready to accept that with love comes a lot of pain. And I have always accepted that pain, I have embraced that pain, I have loved with all its qualities of pleasure and pain, I have done so, but then it has turned into something else now, my love and what is that, but this has moved past love to mania. This person has become manic, this person is experiencing a kind of manic disorder.

So, it has become a mania now. And then when that happens, the strong clench of the madman. So, two types of gripping. One is the fist, the clutch and then we come to the clench of the madman. Now, love has turned mad, it has been personified. It has become a madman

now, and I do not know what to do about it. So, because it has created a ledge of unreason for me, if you remember I talked about love is blind.

And that is exactly the condition this speaker is struggling with, that means the frontal cortex of the speaker is not working at all, it has been deactivated. So, then the only way he can survive is either to surrender completely or to be where he is now or she is now. So, before plunging into, or howling into the abyss, total complete darkness.

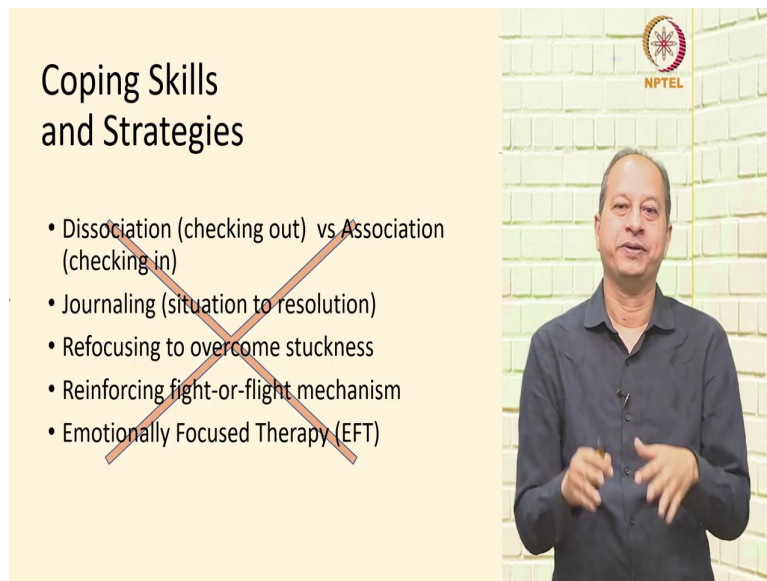
But then he says, she says that the speaker says; Hold hard then, heart. This way, at least you live. Although the heart is in the dark realm, the heart can still live, because I do not have any other option left to me. So, therefore, I cannot do much about it; hold hard then heart, this way at least you live or you can die, you cannot survive. So, for this particular speaker, the survival question is the most important question.

Now, the speaker is not thinking about anything else. So, if you take a quick look at these things, we will come to know that the speaker is struggling with unmanaged love, which is in fact a major cause of heartbreak. So, we come across the idea of how love can turn out to be a very complex emotion, disturbing and devastating emotion. That is the ugly side of love, that the speaker is struggling with, the same love that can heal can also kill.

So, therefore it shows conflict, fight and this anger. And then on the other side, we have the image of a heart that is associated with love, care and tenderness. But the heart of the speaker has been hijacked. Therefore, the speaker cannot do anything about it. And that is how the unregulated love of the speaker has turned into mania, a depressive disorder, an obsessive disorder, obsessive love disorder.

Because it is the murderous madness of obsession that the speaker is experiencing and the speaker is absolutely helpless in managing and that is the reason why the speaker says that, gripping the ledge of unreason is the only option available to me. So, the love has turned blind. And the speaker wants to continue to believe in unreasonable things. Therefore, the speaker wants to cling to the ledge of unreason.

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Coping Skills and Strategies

- Dissociation (checking out) vs Association (checking in)
- Journaling (situation to resolution)
- Refocusing to overcome stuckness
- Reinforcing fight-or-flight mechanism
- Emotionally Focused Therapy (EFT)

So, if we look at the coping skills and strategies that the speaker shows, which we can promptly pick and adopt, we may come across these two very interesting things in the poem, that is one is dissociation that is checking out and the other is association. The speaker is in fact checking out. Therefore, he says, I want to cling to the ledge of unreason.

So, checking out is not going to help a lot because every time you will dissociate yourself, you will associate everything with yourself. So, the coping or better coping strategy is to associate, when you begin to use yourself the best idea is to return to yourself, associate or re-associate with yourself, but the speaker is not being able to do so, that is checking in. So, journaling is a very, very important coping skill, I have talked about it.

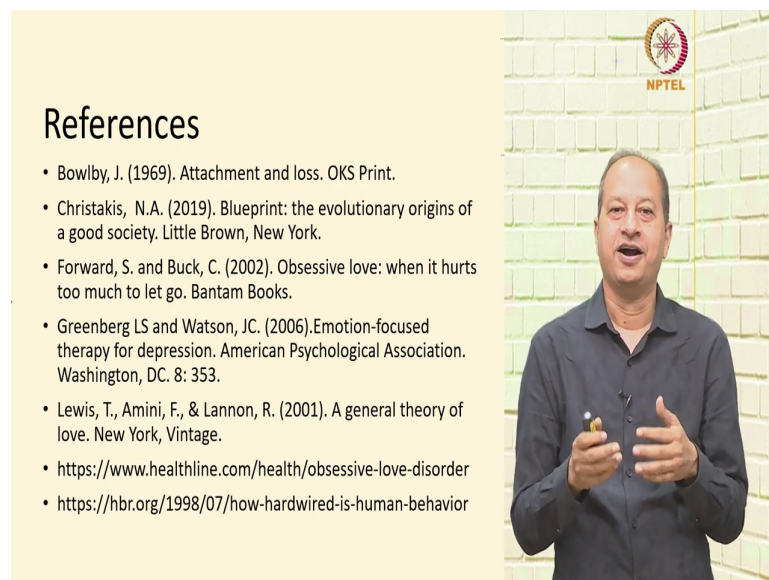
Because it allows us to create the trajectory from situation to resolution. The speaker is talking about the situation in which he or she finds himself or herself in. But the speaker does not give us any hint of how these problems can be resolved. So, there is no resolution approach. So, this is partial journaling, the speaker is talking about the problems. That is the only thing the speaker is doing. So, this is partial coping, it is not complete coping therefore, there is no hint at the resolution.

And then we come to a very important coping skill that is refocusing to overcome stuckness. So, whenever we are stuck, we need to change the focus, we need to shift the focus, shift the perspective so that we can refocus on certain things that are more important than that particular condition, which is or which may not be a permanent one.

And then we come to this very important thing which the speaker is unable to do, because we need to reinforce the fight or flight mechanism, whenever we are faced with a crisis, so because that is our basic response mechanism, whereas speaker is not able to do, the speaker personifies the deadly, devastating destructive love as a person, as a madman with a strong and tighten fist, but the speaker does not talk about how he or she is going to fight.

So, there is no fight mechanism, only a flight mechanism, which is not the right kind of coping skill. And then the emotionally focused therapy does not take place at all. Because the one the only kind of emotion that the speaker is talking about is an emotion of loss, sadness. The speaker is unable to focus on the other kinds of emotions that the speaker is capable of as a person, as a human, but there is no focus on the other kinds of emotions, one is capable of; so, that is how we see a big no signal there is no coping skill, whatever little coping skill we come across is only a partial only a very, very limited attempt. The reason why I have selected this particular poetic composition for discussion is that we need to discover certain coping skills and strategies when we come across such compositions, such communications or such pieces of communication; so that we can locate the right kind of coping skills and strategies.

(Refer Slide Time: 52:42)



The slide features a yellow background with a list of references on the left and a video inset on the right. The video inset shows a man in a dark blue shirt speaking, with an NPTEL logo in the top right corner of the video frame.

References

- Bowlby, J. (1969). Attachment and loss. OKS Print.
- Christakis, N.A. (2019). Blueprint: the evolutionary origins of a good society. Little Brown, New York.
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- Lewis, T., Amini, F., & Lannon, R. (2001). A general theory of love. New York, Vintage.
- <https://www.healthline.com/health/obsessive-love-disorder>
- <https://hbr.org/1998/07/how-hardwired-is-human-behavior>

So, that is how we come to the end of this lecture and the end of this module on love, heartbreak and healing. I hope you have liked the things that I talked about through this

module. And I also hope that you have, in fact, added something to your understanding of all these phenomena. So, thank you very much for joining me.