

## **Knowing How the Fairy Tale Ends**

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I had a conversation with a friend today who admitted he was harboring a desire for a gay romantic relationship. I thought a moment and realized that not too long ago I could have said the same.

Maybe a year ago when I was feeling lonely or isolated, I could have imagined the same and felt the draw of such a relationship. But I've learned a few things. I know what "falling in love" with a man feels like. The feelings are real and powerful and it feels good. It is seductive. But I also know what is really going on. Basically, I'm in love with a series of projections, a process in which a person attributes attributes of him or her self to other persons with whom they are in contact, and transferences, a process by which emotions and desires originally associated with one person, such as a parent or sibling, are unconsciously shifted to another person. This means I'm not really seeing the other person as they truly are. Freud called the things I suppress out of my conscious awareness the subconscious. Jung had a broader definition of the subconscious and called what I suppress my Shadow which is the language we use in almost all men's work from *Men at the Cross* to *Crucible* to *Journey into Manhood*. Most of the work we do in men's work is to help men become aware of their shadows and often to change their unconscious beliefs shaped by those shadows. Jung said I am not consciously aware of my Shadow but one way I can gain awareness of it is through my projections: The false personas I project onto others that they may or may not possess.

One of the things same-sex attracted (SSA) men have suppressed and buried in shadow is parts of their own masculinity. Because much of what I'm in love with is a projection of my own masculinity that I have buried at an inaccessible depth, much of my passion is really about a desire to reclaim not the other man's masculinity but my own hidden masculinity that I have projected onto another man. I have heard homosexuality described as an attempt to cannibalize the masculinity of the other man through sex. What is really going on is an attempt to heal the schism within myself, to reconcile myself with myself and reincorporate back into my personality those parts of me I rejected at a very young age out of an existential fear of annihilation from parental rejection.

I also know that if I were unfortunate enough for a man I fell in love with to undergo the same emotional attachment to me, that eventually, try as I might, reality would have a way of breaking through. I then would be faced with one of two serious problems depending on which of us saw reality first. Either I would be trying to extricate myself from a relationship with a person I suddenly realized I don't know and certainly don't love; or I would be dealing with the heartache

of being abandoned by someone who was still carrying my projection of the ideal masculinity I craved. A masculinity I indeed possess but have buried deep in my subconscious.

Because I know these things I know how the story ends for every serious gay couple. The ones that break up long before the statistical average of 3.5 years and the ones that stay companions and stay household business partners but who will give up the search for true love and have frequent sex outside of the relationship for however long they live together. Because I know how the story ends, I have decided to live a different story. A more difficult story at times but a different story. At this point my faith and my other commitments are important, but a few years ago I might have sacrificed them all for the romantic fairy tale (no pun intended.) Today, more than my faith and more than my other commitments, it is knowing how the story ends that keeps me on track.