

*So, don't you worry your pretty little mind, people throw rocks at things that shine-* Taylor Swift

When you walk into the room, Can I see who you are? We all portray a character. Is that who you let me see? More and more I am finding that people are wearing masks. That's all you let me see. It's like eating a goo filled doughnut. The good stuff is inside. Yet, we rarely taste the real you at first bite. Instead, you choose your clothes and mask to fool us all. Yet, I think I can see you.

I went to a group session recently to talk about the Bible. I could look around the room at each person and confidently give my opinion of each one of them. Boy, was I wrong? I was stunned by what I heard that night. I didn't know them at all. With people, all we get is the mask. The real person is hidden deep inside their hearts. They guard those hearts in public. I was fooled bigtime when they opened up. Those were some pretty good masks.

There is a saying "*people who live in glass houses should not throw stones.*" The real you must be protected. I think it comes down to two things. One is that we love to throw stones. A woman in the Bible was going to be stoned for her infidelity. In the Middle East there are a lot of rocks. The men in the accusing mob picked up some of those stones of judgment. Jesus came along and asked the crowd whose sin is greater: hers or theirs? The angry mob reseeded as Jesus wrote their sins in the dirt. A stone thrown in anger usually is hiding their own guilt.

The second is pretending to hate the very thing we desire. Most people hate being accused. We hate having our own faults exposed. To deflect our guilt, we toss stones at others that are doing the very thing we love. Here is the problem: it's your glass house. People can see through your glass walls by your hurtful actions. The more we try and protect our faults, the guiltier we look. Hence, the glass house.

It could be protectionist. I'll guard my broken heart by throwing hateful stones in anger. Maybe some people just love to make others feel as badly as they do. Sometimes it could be throwing stones of deception. Years ago, I knew a boy who got beat up at work. It's horrible to think that happens but in a union atmosphere, it happens. This boy; however, then became a supervisor. He has spent his remaining days throwing stones at workers. This stuff amazes me. There was a closet gay senator in America that threw stones at the gay community. Hello! Throwing hateful barbs at the very thing you love? Despising workers that despised you? This type of behavior seems so human.

Another view from a glass house could be that it shows us who we are. There are those who are afraid of success. Maybe they fear working for it. Who knows why. Yet, people who complain about others are usually not far from the mark themselves. I have often said that bad managers are sad. They have to take that personality home with them. Try living a life as a mean person only at work. I doubt it works that way. People that hate themselves love to take the shine off of others. Hateful people are repulsed by good people. So, they throw stones at those who threaten to expose them.

We can understand why people hide strange desires. I get it why we deflect anger and jealousy by attacking others. Trying to tear off their masks while attempting to keep ours firmly in place. It's the human pastime, but it comes with a cost in relationships. I'm not a huge fan of the #me-too thing because it's turned into a witch hunt. Yet, the epidemic started with bullying, rape, bigotry, and sexism. I get it. Oh, it's very human to throw stones. It's just weird that we toss them at the innocent or our love ones more than against the issue or aggressor. Humans will bash what bashed them. They will bash their secret sin (who knows why). They equally will bash those who don't deserve it.

3  
Chapter 4 (Attracted)

That is why the word “attracted” has caught my attention. In the dictionary it’s a strange word. It goes the full gambit from entice to slay. Slay? Attraction brings these two things together. To become one in a relationship could be called attraction. In a sense, they stop when they meet. The word slay means to end or to stop something. We are attracted to things. The idea is to make them come together. We draw in our desires and keep them close. Attraction is a relationship bond. We wear a mask and move close to the things we appear to hate. Masked people love to appear they are slaying a cause that they secretly desire. Cause and attraction are usually in bed somehow.

In the Bible, the book of Genesis was written thousands and thousands of years ago. It says that a man and woman were married and became one. Sometimes it implies that the two people had sex (yes, in the Bible) and they formed a union. This union is the Bible story of attraction. I mention this only to make the case that attraction is not a new idea. Something or someone has always been attracted to something. The Bible covers that too. There are countless stories of people deceiving others to get what they desire.

These are the strange rules of attraction. People steal things they want. A rapist attacks a beautiful woman they secretly desire. In both instances they are attracted to the thing they can’t have. Then it gets stranger still. We hate something. So, we take it away from others. People that are lazy know it. Maybe, they even despise it. For some strange reason they will go out of their way to make others stop working hard. Yet, they will accuse those very people of being lazy. The rapist will say the woman started it by being attractive. It’s her fault he raped her. Attraction can deceive our heart.

Why does a lazy person notice hard work? I feel that they are envious and frustrated within themselves. They want to work hard but not for a personal price. However, they will make people pay for their effort by throwing stones. We hear it all the time that opposites attract. I feel the real answer is that opposites notice opposites. What could uncover your mask is a threat to your personal security. Our hidden faults tend to lay close to our anger, just under the mask. The guilty don't seem to have a problem with accusing others.

As a fellow human I am finding attraction and relationships to be strange partners. We are attracted to many people, places, and things. Many people will climb mountains to have that special thing. Then for some unknown reason, down the road, we have had our fill. All the attraction seems to be used up so we dump them. A friendly relationship is ok as long as our views are similar. A neckless was nice and then we toss it. Their luster changes and our feelings towards them changes too.

Further to that we get bored with the same old. People want the same but we also crave variety. Yet changing "the same" creates a variety we can't stomach. No wonder so many relationships are in trouble. A rock band was the best until they changed their sound. Suddenly, our allegiance towards them is different. Somewhere in the middle is the relationship. A fine line between desiring the same and yearning for the different.

It's not fair either. We all have eyes, hormones and desires. I think attraction drives us mad. A familiar face is welcomed. Yet, people do spend a certain amount of time looking at others. Wondering what they would be like. It's like the love bank. We gain credit in a relationship. At some point the intake drops and the outtake rises. Once the account is empty so is the relationship. It's weird. I feel variety has less credit than familiarity. It seems we try have

just enough “same old” to outweigh the variety. It never works that way. Humans love to seek the variety while holding onto the familiar. There is a tug and pull going on between what we want and what we need.

Maybe we spend too much time trying to fill our lives with variety instead of making the “same old” more valuable. The Beatles sing “I she knew what she wants he’d be giving that to her.” Possibly we don’t know what we want. Maybe the effort to refresh and accept change is not high on the list. Attraction to shiny toys outweighs the familiar. Maybe attraction is tied to value we place on things.

Are the disaster relationships in our lives just shiny toys? How often do we want that person who is bad for us? For some unknown reason we’re attracted to them. Maybe they help us live on the reckless side of life. A rapist wants what he cannot touch. A thief desires what they cannot afford. Even that gets weird. Several Hollywood actors have been arrested for stealing. They could afford it. Attraction blinds us. So much so that we will end up doing the very thing we claim to hate.

It’s all in the value. Everything seems to depreciate over time. It loses credit. My daughter wants something. I always say she has no concept of money. Yet, she has a concept of what she wants. There is blindness and deception in getting what we desire. Weeks later, for no good reason, we realize that it was not what we thought. We do that with people all the time. It’s ok for a time. We love (in the moment) relationships. I just wish we would give more value to the people we claim to love.

I feel people like to set up attraction. There is a theory called *Love addiction*. It states that we try and make someone fit our picture of love. When they don’t become what we envisioned

then all hell breaks loose. Attraction drives us to want it. Yet, when we get it, the shiny luster grows dim in time. We want attraction far more than commitment. Our comfort zone states we need things to be familiar. We like it that way. Yet, opposites attract? Only if we can mold the opposite into ourselves. I think were attracted to opposites to own, possess, and change them. Conquer the very thing that could conquer us.

It's long winded, but I needed us to get here. Relationships are a disaster these days. There is no truth but our own truth. What happened to tolerance, compromise, and enduring? I thought they were the things that draw and bind us together. But... that seems off.

*United in our Diversity; Strengthened by our Differences; We, again, are One- Eric Cecil*

Relationships need each other. I dare say it needs us to be different. The phrase "I didn't think of that" is common. Why? It's because differences bind us together by providing each other with what's missing. No one person is complete. We are strong in one thing and weak in another. Attraction is when two hydrogen electrons bond to 6 oxygen and become a complete 8 water molecule. It means we are different in the beginning. Once attraction brings us together, it completes what was missing.

A relationship is all about attraction. The words compromise and acceptance are like H<sub>2</sub>O. Sometimes we call it our soul mate. A perfect match or fit. I love the end result. Love attraction creates a "one" of something new. The two parts are different but they complete each other. The trouble with people is that attraction sometimes ends up looking like acid and water. Somethings are attractive. We want them so badly. Yet, together it's just not right.

A gambler loves to gamble, but they should not work at a casino. A drunk is compelled to drink, yet they probably shouldn't work at a bar. There is something attracting them to work

there. Yet, deep inside they know it's not a good fit. I care about my Ex. Clearly, the whole eleven years were a mess. Yet, we tried and tried to make it work. It's attraction vs addiction. We all know that we have weaknesses that blind us. Some relationships should not be together. Acid and water. Fire and fire bug. Pedophile and daycare.

Why do we judge other relationships? If we were judging our own then something might be wrong. The wrong just might be a harsh reality: the wrong fit. It's like you have three electrons to bond with six. Nine does not work: the rule is two or eight make one. We all have known people who seem to fit together and those who clearly don't. I have an Ex for a reason. I tried to make three plus six equal eight. I was attracted to a wrong fit. I refused to judge the fit and now I have an Ex. It's hard to judge our own actions. Especially when attraction is involved.

There is a discussion between Natural attraction and Rational attraction. Natural could be described as a need like hunger or sex. They call it natural because it's in our DNA. However, we get into trouble with Rational attraction. It's when we justify the need. They also call it pharmaceutical attraction. It fuels our hormones. It lights our fire. That's all fine and dandy until self-control loses. It goes like this. When the need for food is replaced with an attraction to taste. The taste of cake compared to broccoli. I wanted to marry the Ex despite the warning it was wrong. Natural attraction fills the need. The rational risks a reward. Even at the cost of health or heartbreak. Attraction is strong.

The other night I was depressed. It was a bad day. You have seen people come home and have a drink to sooth a bad day. What if you had a few bad weeks? I bought some Jamaican Rum. It's simply the best. That Pina Colada tasted so good. It made me feel warm all over. I looked at the bottle the night I felt depressed. There was a choice standing before me. I am

attracted to that rum. I am not attracted to depression. Yet, if I merged the two together it might help. Attraction to slay the bad day. I walked away. Attraction can wear a mask too.

Part of the time we just ignore the feelings inside. Sure, we are attracted to things. When we attempt to stay and resist it becomes a hazard. Little Tommy was not in his bed. Mommy wandered all over the house looking for her little boy. She found him in the pantry with the cookie jar in his lap. She asked him what he was doing. Tommy replied confidently “I’m resisting temptation.” It’s not good to stay near the things that could slay us even if we were attracted.

Pastor Chuck Swindoll tells the story of entering an elevator at a conference. He ended up sharing it with two beautiful women. Call girls have a habit of showing up at these conferences looking for lonely men. I love it that Pastor Chuck was honest here. They asked him if they could visit his room. He politely declined. As they left the elevator and the doors closed. Chuck leaned back, let out a whistle, and closed his eyes. He could still smell their sweet presence. They said no one would know. He was attracted but found the strength to resist. He did not sleep that night; his maleness was haunted by what he didn’t do. Attraction is powerful even in the lives of a pastor.

Lonely? Add a hooker or a bad relationship to make life better? Beth Hart sings a line that goes “*But everybody wants somebody, somebody good to love, I just want anybody, bad love is good enough.*” Is it? Is there “good” bad love? Are there “good” addictions to drugs? We are attracted to a great many things. A great many of those things ruin relationships. It’s good to acknowledge our attractions. It’s also good to make a bee-line out of here too.



Love addiction says we notice a need to be loved. When that turns into an obsession it ruins the relationship. A stalker let it get out of control. Two co-workers that are the same usually create clicks, trouble, and a one minded business. Opposites attract for a reason. That attraction is strange but needed. Relationships work best by accepting people's differences as a strength. Be warned: love what's similar but embrace what's different.

I don't want to seem confusing. Is it comfort zone or opposites we crave? It's a little of both. Love what is similar. Be with like minded people. however, embrace different people. Glean from their view on the world. Pick relationships that challenge you. Yet, have more in common than not. Our human nature craves similarity. We also crave adventure and a reckless endeavor. Just be mindful of what attracts us.

Attraction is powerful. Different people rub us the right and wrong way. Why? I fear we are concerned about others far more than ourselves. Maybe it's avoidance of knowing the real "you.". Attraction seems to take our mind off of us. Sex is fine until it turns into hunger. A beer is good until your depressed. Call girls are cute until they ask to join you. Again, rational attraction is fine until people get in the way. Know yourself and then you will see people more clearly.

We need to face the fact that we are fooled and attracted by masks. Who really wants to dig deep? That usually means they want to dig deep too. Two masks strewn with the clothing on the floor while your entangled in bed? It's more like naked with a mask on. Obviously, attraction helps. I am wondering if people ruin that experience far too often. Let's explore different types of people that get in the way beginning in the next chapter.