

This is why my marriage failed: I didn't love my wife, and it was killing her. As St. Peter Chrysologus said, "Love destroys the lover if he cannot obtain what he loves." For her own sake, my wife had no choice but to leave me. She didn't want to leave me, and tried desperately to save our relationship, but I was lost in so much self hatred that I just couldn't love her.

What hurt my wife even more was that I could not see anything wrong. I was absorbing all the love I could from her, and I was giving nothing in return. I was feeling good at her expense. Her physical and mental health demanded a divorce and an annulment.

We are divorced now, and our marriage has been annulled, but I hope this isn't the end. I do love myself now, and my profound feelings of attachment for my ex-wife and children have truly become feelings of authentic love.

The divorce and annulment sadden me, but I can see that they have forced me to become the person I am now. The painful processes of getting a divorce and getting an annulment have required me to sincerely look at the relationship between me and my ex-wife. The pain was great, but the rewards are even greater. I can now love and be loved.

Postscript 1: As of Easter Sunday 2006, my ex-wife has become my fiancée.

Postscript 2: I am planning to write a 2nd edition to Bricks & Barbwire. It may or may not be available in print. It will, however, be freely available on my website:
<http://grigaitis.net/books>

Major Correction to Bricks & Barbwire

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It's been almost four years since I first began to work on Bricks & Barbwire, and a full year and a half since its final edit. In the last year and a half, I've matured a great deal due to a more critically reflection on my life. Pope John Paul II's Theology of the Body has been instrumental in this reflection, and the motivation behind it was a desire to improve my relationships with my ex-wife and my children. This reflection resulted in an epiphany a couple of months ago: I realised that a major theme in Bricks & Barbwire was dead wrong. One of the consequences of this erroneous theme was a major omission, which was fortunate because if it had not been omitted, I would have wrongfully hurt someone very dear to me. With this small addendum, I would like to correct this erroneous theme, and replace the major omission based on this error with the full story based on the truth.

Throughout Bricks & Barbwire I describe how my illness prevented me from absorbing love and affection, and hence, I could not love and be loved without the aid of medications. This is completely wrong. The illness contributed to this inability to love and be loved, but it is not the main factor. As well, while the medications have given me the peace of mind to realise what the problem is and solve it, I am not depended on them to love and be loved. I could now stop my meds and have another psychotic break without diminishing my ability to love and be loved.

Schizoaffective disorder has not been the main problem in my life. The real problem has been self hatred, which was fuelled by my mental illness; especially the voices in my head.

I'm not completely sure how it started. It was probability a combination of things, some of which I may have consciously forgotten, and some of which I wrote about in Bricks & Barbwire. What ever the reason, or reasons, over time, I began to hate myself more and more.

To fill this lack of love for myself, I sought the love of others, but this did not satisfy the need to love myself. Love of self is a basic

human need. The natural consequence of not having this basic need met is suicide. Love of self is required in order to live.

Another consequence of not loving one's self is the inability to love others. I was never comfortable with Jesus' command in Mark 12:31, which is echoed in Matthew 19:19 and Luke 10:27, "You shall love your neighbour as yourself." Did this mean that I should hate other like I hate myself? This is obviously a misinterpretation of Christ's message, but to some degree, this is what happens. I would not say that I hate others, but what I did feel was not true love. I would call it feelings of attachment, such as one might feel towards an inanimate object.

This is where the omission comes in. I stated the following in Bricks & Barbwire:

Around a year and a half after my second hospitalisation, my wife left me. It would be uncharitable for me to discuss this topic here, but it was due to my illness that she left. The stress of living with me caused her to become physically ill. When she left me, she took away one of the few sources of love that I have been able to recognise and receive.

It was a good thing that I was feeling "charitable" and didn't expand on why my wife left me because I would have been wrong. At the time, I was feeling very wounded by her, and did not really understand why she left. She tried to tell me, but I just didn't understand. Now I can see that it was my inability to love that destroyed my marriage.

I didn't love myself, so I couldn't love anyone else. I really didn't love my wife or my children. I had very profound feelings of attachment for them, but it was not real love. Once the brick wall around me came crumbling down, my feelings of attachment could no longer masqueraded as love.