

LONELINESS? INSECURITY? DOUBT? HOPELESSNESS? DEPRESSION? ANGER? INDIFFERENCE?

What is Normal?

Something's gone terribly wrong when what passes as "normal" breaks your heart, and suppresses/depresses your spirit. Maybe it's "normal" not to know your neighbor, to distrust people. To live for yourself, react when you don't get your way, and fear love. To be unhappy and blame the world for your pain. Maybe that junk is normal, but our hearts know it's *wrong*—and *unnatural*.

Obviously, life's most wonderful possibilities begin *outside* the boundaries of what we call normal. "Normally," we don't even dare expect what would satisfy our hearts: Happy cooperation. Sweet intimacy. Loyal, steady, passionate commitment. Closeness with God. Love! But we long for these things, because they are native to us.

Honestly, to be commonly "normal" is a denial of your heart. What comes naturally to you is safely outside the "normal" box, and so are *you*. Yep, you're *beyond* normal.

Before they reach adulthood, many people throw away their most gorgeous qualities—their generosity, their passion, their adventurousness, their ability to fall in love deeply and intensely, their bold creativity, their trust. We all have these qualities. But to fit in, and "get along in this world," we often choose to be things our

hearts hate—to be selfish, pushy, invulnerable, unloving, dishonest. We sacrifice our natural, authentic selfhood for a sadly "normalized" revision.

But one day we wake up and feel, "What happened to me? I hate the person I've become. I don't feel like myself anymore." We realize we've lost our softness, our feeling, trusting nature, and we're worse off. Maybe we turn to our "helpers"—psychology, religion, and spirituality. But sadly, even *they* tend to support the "normal" attitudes—selfishness, blame, irresponsibility—that drove our standards, morals, and expectations into the ground.

Wake up! You don't *have* to go down that slippery slope! In fact, if the common "norms" grate against your soul, you have a moral *responsibility* to be and do different. Two wrongs—or a million wrongs—don't make a right.

You are a fire, and you have a responsibility to burn bright. Far better to be exactly what everyone says is dangerous, uncool, too vulnerable, than to die of self-protection. *Be* too loving, too feeling, over the top. "Don't go gently into that good night. Rage against the dying of the light." Don't put out your fire with the wet blanket of "normal" living. If you do, we're all left with a cold, dark world. It's up to YOU!

NEUROSIS? DYSFUNCTION? INDISCIPLINE? LAZINESS?

MANIPULATION? LIES? FICKLENESS? ABANDONMENT?

LACK OF PURPOSE? LACK OF COMPASSION? DISLOYALTY? SUSPICION? UNFRIENDLINESS?