



INDEPENDENT STUDY: Module 2, Class 22

Please note: The pictures and comments in the transcript and recording below have been gathered over many years and where possible, I attribute them to their original source. If anyone connected with these photographs or comments would like them removed, please notify me and I will be happy to comply.

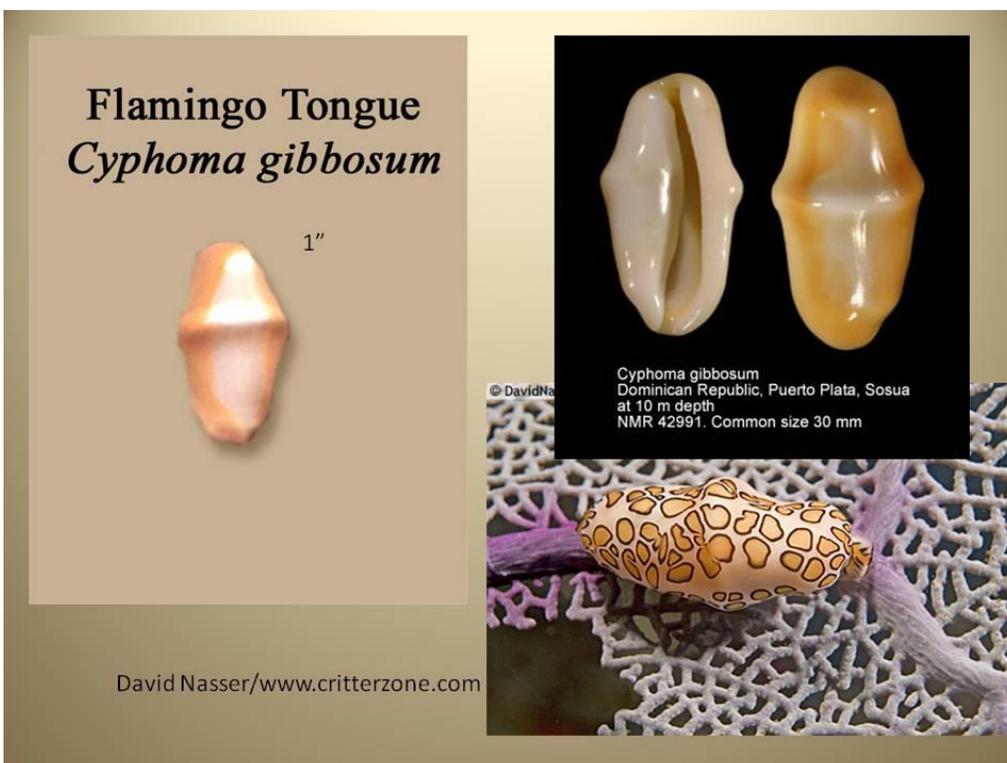
Class 22 is 23 minutes long and is in your attachments as an mp4.

You will find a new homework exercise at the end of this transcript.

Class 22: Shell #s 19, 150

In Class 21, we began investigating what seashells have to teach regarding the subject of love. They recommended that we examine what we value as proof of love, and then expand our horizons a bit. If we look at love as an enormous wheel, each spoke of that wheel holds equal value. With that established, we then examined several shells as representatives of various spokes. Moon Snail taught us about love as attention, Shuttlecock Volva explained love as quality time, and Mussel offered wisdom regarding love as generosity. Did anyone try the growing your light experiment?

Another spoke on the wheel is love as possessiveness.



Meet the **Flamingo Tongue, Shell #19** The males live on sea fans with a harem of females, and if another male encroaches on their territory, they will fight like tigers. Attraction to this shell indicates “*possessiveness, territorial behavior.*” If someone selects this shell, it suggests this person believes that possessiveness displays love. If told “I don’t want you to be with anyone else, or to go anywhere without me” this client would feel flattered. Where dislike of this shell reveals someone in the same circumstances feeling smothered or imprisoned.

Now we come to the next spoke on the wheel. This shell has the potential to reveal powerful hidden beliefs, and you have handled the previous spokes beautifully. I saved the rest of this class for this spoke so that we have time to do it justice.

Before we discuss what this shell taught me, I would like you to take a look at this shell and see how you react.



Let me just say that these shells will not be offended at any reaction you have; they are doing their job to assist you with hidden feelings. Let them speak to you truthfully without analyzing why you feel that way. Like it/Bothers you/No feelings at all? If it reminds you of something, how do you feel about that thing?

If the shell left you feeling nothing at all, indifference, that is fine. We will cover all reactions to assist your interpretation when this shell appears in a reading.

Now that you have viewed this shell, let's discuss what it has to teach. There is a lot to digest here, so I will take it one step at a time.

Love as Selfishness

This is the **Venus Comb Murex**, **shell #150** in *Ocean Oracle*, and it connects to the spoke of Love as Selfishness. For some, the idea of identifying love with selfishness seems incompatible. If this concept disturbs you, let me explain. As we have covered in past lessons, in the conventions of seashell nomenclature, the first person who finds a shell is entitled to name it. Although the scientific name must comprise the Latin genus and species, the common name can be anything. In the case of the Venus Comb Murex, the person who discovered this shell may have imagined a mermaid combing through her tresses with the protruding spines. Just as primping with a comb symbolizes absorption with the self, this shell indicates a desire to take care of, and pursue, one's own needs. In *Ocean Oracle* it encourages "*Healthy self-centeredness, self-love, focusing on one's needs, and discovering and living one's truth.*"

During your first look at this shell, if it appealed to you, then you are someone willing to focus upon your own needs, capable of self-love. For some who like this shell, this is not yet at a conscious level of awareness. The challenge is to balance caring for self with caring about others so that your self-love does not reach unhealthy levels.

However, many people are frightened by this shell's appearance, seeing a skeletal image instead of conjuring visions of mermaids combing their hair. Disliking this shell may indicate someone who is focused upon attending to everyone else's needs while paying no attention to her own. For this person, the word "selfish" has negative connotations.

I would like you to try a little exercise: Imagine that you have a list containing the names of everyone you are willing to take care of. These are people for whom you will drop everything to attend to their needs. Can you visualize this list?

Now, look for your own name. Did you find it?

For those who disliked this shell, I would suspect it is a long list. If your own name is there, where does it show up on that list? For many who dislike this shell, their name doesn't appear at all.

The idea of valuing Love as Selfishness makes some people uncomfortable. They have been taught that a loving person is selfless. Consequently, they become willing to take care of everyone else's needs while their own needs are unmet.

If a person operates this way, eventually there comes a time when there is something else she would rather do, but she can't let herself for fear it will be perceived as selfish. Now, because of the sacrifices she must make, she is faced with having to take care of someone else while she is carrying the emotional energy of anger, depression, or resentment. She can't even express these sentiments because that would be perceived as selfish. She forces a smile lest her feelings betray her. Choosing to suppress her needs does not benefit her, but ironically, taking care of others while harboring anger or depression *does not benefit them*. The client is transporting her negative buried energy into the environment of the person she is caring for.

On the other hand, if she allows herself to be one of the people she is willing to take care of, each little thing she does for herself will create increased levels of happiness. Then when she chooses to take care of others, they are around a person who is radiating positive energy, and everyone benefits.

So, if she is concerned about being selfish, she can alter her perspective to see that taking care of herself benefits everyone, while repressing her needs does not. With this new awareness, she can reevaluate which approach is more loving, the one that benefits all (being on her own list), or the one that benefits none (carrying that suitcase of negative energy?)

Now, let's return to the exercise with the list: If your name did not appear on the list, disliking this shell is to help you look at your subconscious belief about selfishness. If you judge that word to be negative, the Venus Comb is offering an opportunity to contemplate if that is working for you. Disliking this shell reveals an uneasy feeling that one may end up drained by those who constantly require attention. It's important not to get so depleted attending to others that a person has no energy available for himself. In the airline industry, they call this putting on your own oxygen mask first. You can't help others if you are not able to breathe.

With the new perspective from this shell regarding selfishness, might you be willing to give yourself permission to be on your list? This is the list of who you are willing to spend your energy on. It is not saying you have to be at the top of your list, but it might assist you to at least get on the list. Even if you are the last name on the list, that is progress from being absent completely. If you are already on the bottom of your list, consider moving up a few notches. If the idea of changing your comfort zone around this appeals to you, let's see what other wisdom the shells can offer.

Thinking of our client, let's examine her original goal: I want to take this slowly so you can digest each bit. Here is the question we need to examine. Why was she invested in being unselfish, so much so that selfish became a negative concept? (Hint: remember this is a spoke on the wheel.) Try to fill in this blank: **She was determined to be unselfish _____**

Answer: **She was determined to be unselfish in order to be loved. In her quest for love, she puts her needs last. She fears she will not be loved unless she puts others first.**

However, if she has never focused upon her own desires and expressed them, then when someone does tell her they love her, somewhere in the back of her head she may hear a voice saying "How can you love me? You don't even know me." In fact, if she has not allowed herself permission for self-exploration, *she may not even know who she is*. This professed love for which she yearned finally arrives, and it is not fulfilling because the other person only loves a projected image. All they can love is an illusion created from her fear of risking the perceived selfish act of focusing on her own desires and needs. The love has nowhere to resonate in her body, so she can't own it.

Recall the famous words:



To thine own self be true

For those who consider selfish to be a negative word, how do you feel about "To thine own self be true", positive or negative? Take a moment to jot down your reaction to this phrase.

This phrase is the essence of selfishness, yet it does not cause resistance. That is worth an examination of the full quotation. It is my favorite quote from Shakespeare. "This above all: To thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man." If we think of this in reverse, if we are not true to ourselves, people will have false perceptions of who we are, and every interaction will be a lie.

When our client allows herself time to discover her truth and live in that truth, (getting on her own list) then when she hears people say "I love you" they are responding to her authentic self. With this new "selfish" way of loving there is no doubt they are talking about the "real her", and she will feel that love all the way to her soul.

If any of you have decided to embrace this shell, and get on your list, (or move up to a higher position) I must add one word of caution: When taking care of other peoples' needs becomes limiting, finding time to focus on self may require saying "no" to others. For many, the act of saying "no" is difficult—it is the very definition of selfishness. People who can't bring themselves to say "no", but no longer wish to continue taking care of other people's needs, sometimes become physically incapacitated. If someone is bed ridden, this gives that person permission not to have to take care of anyone. Saying "no" and being physically incapacitated accomplish the same goal. For those ingrained in the fear of being perceived as selfish, saying "no" can be the more difficult option. It is my hope that with this new understanding of the benefits of selfishness, the word "no" will become easier to embrace.

The first time you say “no” people may feel your forehead to see if you are running a temperature. It will seem so out of character, they may ask “Are you feeling alright?” thinking you are not yourself. They may not realize that you are more true to yourself than you have ever been.

Now, if your belief has been “people won’t love you if you are focused on your own needs,” then there will be an expectation that saying “no” will cause people to leave you. That may happen, but if that is their attitude, I would question if they ever loved you. However, as they fall away, if you are willing to discover your truth and live in that truth, new people will enter your life. If one of those people should ask you to do something, and there is something else you prefer to do, you can tell them you would rather use the time for that other activity. They may respond by telling you that they had no idea this other thing held an attraction for you, (after all, you probably never knew or expressed what would interest you before) but if that would make you happy, they would send you on your way to please go ahead and do that.

You see, if they love you, they want you to be happy. That means you can say “no” and still be loved. For many who dislike the Venus Comb Murex, that possibility is not even on their radar.

http://xahlee.org/xamsi_calku/venus_comb/venus_comb.html Great close-up pictures of this shell!!!

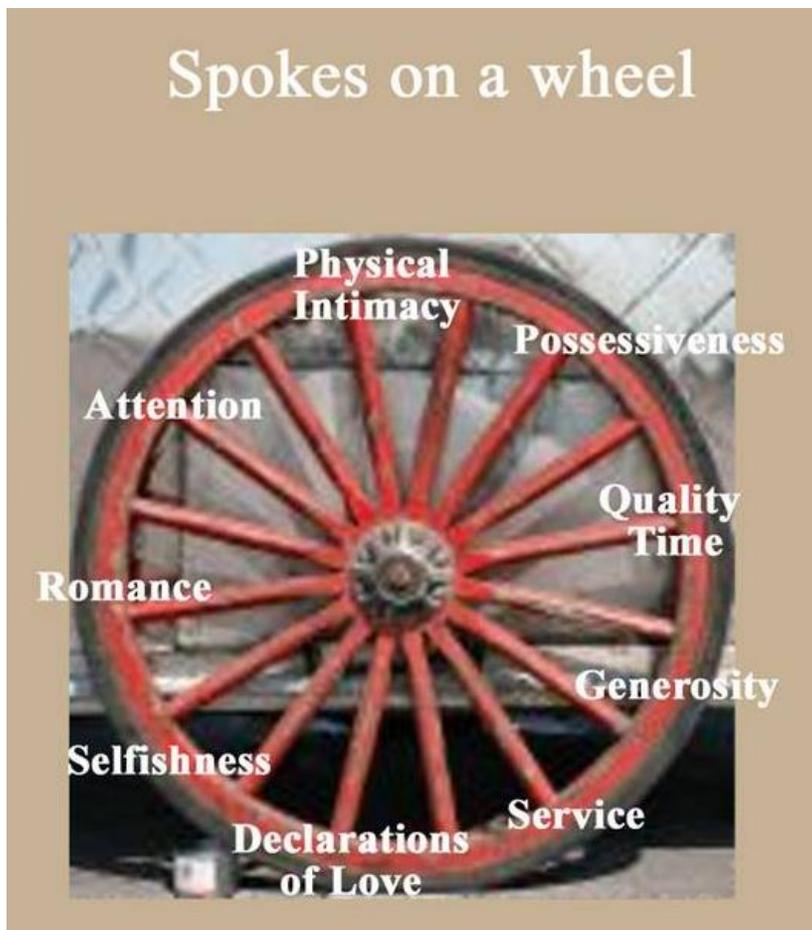
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Venus_comb_murex

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-RTxnDTcMJ4&feature=player_embedded 1:40 Video of the mollusk... especially powerful at the 40 second mark, you can look into the mollusk’s eyes!

Here is a summary of the shells you have met representing various spokes on the wheel of love.



And here is one more look at the wheel (with the spoke for selfishness of equal value.)



I am going to end this class with a story that involves 4 of the spokes on the wheel, and then you will have a homework exercise based on this.

Come with me to a third-grade classroom.... There is a nine-year-old kid sitting at his desk and all of a sudden, there is a puddle between his feet and the front of his pants are wet. He thinks his heart is going to stop because he cannot possibly imagine how this has happened. It's never happened before, and he knows that when the boys find out he will never hear the end of it. When the girls find out, they'll never speak to him again as long as he lives.

The boy believes his heart is going to stop; he puts his head down and prays this prayer, 'Dear God, this is an emergency! I need help now! Five minutes from now I'm dead meat.'

He looks up from his prayer and here comes the teacher with a look in her eyes that says he has been discovered.

As the teacher is walking toward him, a classmate named Susie is carrying a goldfish bowl that is filled with water. Susie trips in front of the teacher and inexplicably dumps the bowl of water in the boy's lap.

The boy pretends to be angry, but all the while is saying to himself, 'Thank you, Lord! Thank you, Lord!'

Now all of a sudden, instead of being the object of ridicule, the boy is the object of sympathy. The teacher rushes him downstairs and gives him gym shorts to put on while his pants dry out. All the other children are on their hands and knees cleaning up around his desk. The sympathy is wonderful. But as life would have it, the ridicule that should have been his has been transferred to someone else - Susie.

She tries to help, but they tell her to get out. You've done enough, you klutz!

Finally, at the end of the day, as they are waiting for the bus, the boy walks over to Susie and whispers, 'You did that on purpose, didn't you?' Susie whispers back, 'I wet my pants once too.'

May God help us see the opportunities that are always around us to do good...

To paraphrase... "Remember....Just going to church doesn't make you a light worker any more than standing in your garage makes you a car."

HOMEWORK EXERCISE #6 for Class 22:

Let's examine this story from Susie's perspective. From her actions, can you all see the spoke where she demonstrates giving love as attention? As quality time? As generosity?

What about the spoke of love as selfishness? It is easy to see how her actions benefited the boy, but how might they benefit Susie?

Please send me your insights as to how Susie demonstrates each of these four spokes on the wheel.

On the next page, there is a new gift for you. It is time for me to supplement your shell chart as you have now covered 72 shells in your *Ocean Oracle* deck. Using the numbers assigned to the individual shells in your *Ocean Oracle* deck, the number will appear in bold type accompanied by the class where you will find it. All you have to know is the shell's number in *Ocean Oracle*.

One last request...

Before sending for Class 23, please review the information in [Class 21](#) on Moon snail and Mussel. We will be using these shells in readings in the next lesson.

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