

## I Give You What You Give Me (Part 1)



There's a phrase people lean on when it comes to dating and relationships: "*I give you what you give me.*" On the surface, it sounds fair. Balanced. Even justified. If someone shows you kindness, you return it. If they pull back, you do the same. It feels like self-protection... but what if it's also part of the problem?

The truth is, most people believe they're giving more than they actually are. Ask anyone, and they'll tell you they're kind, consistent, and emotionally available. But relationships don't operate on self-perception—they operate on

experience. What you *think* you're giving and what the other person *feels* they're receiving can be two completely different things. And that disconnect quietly creates frustration on both sides.

This is where things start to shift. Because "I give you what you give me" is often less about fairness and more about reaction. It's energy in response mode. If someone takes a step back, you take two. If they hesitate, you close off. Without realizing it, both people can end up mirroring each other's worst instincts instead of leading with their best qualities.

There's another layer to this—intentional versus reactive energy. Reactive energy says, "I'll meet you where you are." Intentional energy says, "I know who I am, and I lead with that." One waits. The other sets the tone. And in many situations, people are waiting for something they haven't even offered yet. They want patience, but show frustration. They want honesty, but communicate in fragments. They want effort, but move with hesitation.

What makes this even more complicated is emotional investment. People keep an internal scorecard, whether they admit it or not. Time, attention, consistency—it all gets counted. But if your idea of "giving" doesn't match what the other person actually needs, then your investment may not land the way you think it does. That's how two people can both feel like they're trying... and still feel like they're not getting enough in return.

And then comes the standoff. No one wants to go first anymore. No one wants to feel like they're giving more. So both people hold back, waiting for the other to prove something. Waiting for effort. Waiting for clarity. Waiting for reassurance. And in that waiting, the connection slowly loses momentum—not because there wasn't potential, but because neither side wanted to risk leading.

So the question becomes: are you really giving what you expect in return... or are you simply responding to what you think you're receiving?

Because if the energy you're putting out is unclear, inconsistent, or guarded, there's a strong chance that's exactly what's coming back to you.

And that's where this conversation doesn't end—it actually begins.

In Part 2, we're going to break down how to recognize the energy you're truly giving, how to communicate it more clearly, and what it looks like to lead instead of react. Because if relationships are a reflection, it's worth asking... what are you really showing?