*Taking off your armour metaphor*

*This metaphor came from a client who had been badly hurt in her earlier life by a pattern of neglectful behaviour from her parents. She had learned to keep her guard up, be cynical about other’s motives, not give trust easily and could be ‘prickly’ and stand off ish, as well as guarded.*

Doesn't it seem as though your early life was such a battle, that you had to put on strong armour to defend yourself? You became a knight, constantly at war and therefore keeping your armour on all the time. You got so comfortable in your armour that it was like an extension of your own skin and you kind of forgot that you were wearing it. And it really worked. It stopped you from being so hurt.

And look at your life right now. Are you still in a battle with people around you? *[This client still had some conflicts but she had a husband who loved her and she found it difficult to let herself really be as close to him as she would really want to]*

Could it be that the war is over, but you are still clunking around inside this suit of armour? How free are you to move? What is the armour really costing you? Whilst its true that keeping the armour on keeps you from being hurt, is it also stopping you from really having the feeling of being held, being loved?

*[I hope that I have conveyed the sense of compassion and heartfulness with which I’d want you to use this metaphor. The black and white words on the screen are cold, but this needs to be done gently, warmly, with care and validation of how scary it feels for this client to recognise the cost of her armour and to consider taking it off and allowing herself to be vulnerable. This can lead on to the classic:* Vulnerability is the price of admission to intimacy, *which I think I first heard from Russ Harris – ACT with Love, though I am not certain if it really comes from there.]*