

Love Is The Answer To Happiness

The thesis of this discourse is this: love is the answer to happiness.

Love, the most powerful force in creation, is also the most misunderstood.

It is misunderstood because of the context with which it arises: that of relationship. All relationships imply love, either an offering of it or a withdrawal of it. Thus, our understanding of love is conditioned by varying degrees of attachment and aversion. And because of this, there is an element of self-protection that is projected outwardly and becomes control.

Thus, our understanding of love is completely contaminated by all the associations that arise from it.

So what we have then is conditional love; love that is allowed if certain conditions are met.

In truth, none of this is really love, just as a delicious meal, sprinkled with some mud cannot be said to be appetizing any longer.

Love, real love, is acceptance. That is all it is. Simply accepting what is. From that acceptance flows giving and caring, nurturing and compassion.

When you see a beautiful flower wet with dew, you feel an out-flowing force from your heart. This emotion is love. It is a complete acceptance of the flower. You may call it beauty or appreciation, but it is really love.

A mother, seeing her child sleeping peacefully, feels love. This is a pure acceptance of the being of the other. Of course, when the child is awake, shouting, crying, and arguing, expressing it's being in a radical way, breaking some social convention of one sort or another, the mother's love is still there, but now it is mixed up with other emotions, anger, confusion, embarrassment. Thus, control is now exerted. A tension visits the relationship and the love that is implied in it is clouded over, at the heart of which are various degrees of non-acceptance.

When the love is uninterrupted, as in the still flower or the sleeping child, it is pure. It is spontaneous. When conditions are imposed, the love becomes something else, not quite definable, but definitely not as spontaneous, pure, and free.

What made Mother Teresa a lover of life? She accepted what was before her. Poverty, disease, and distressing situations. Her love then moved her to give, and the giving was to provide relief to the other.

Love that has conditions, that exerts control to bring the other into alignment with one's belief systems is not real love. There may be elements of love in it, but it is tarnished with some desire for egoic gain. The other must love back. The other must be appreciative. The other must return something to us.

Philosophers, poets, and spiritual people have long believed that love is the central force that holds the universe together. The physical union of love creates children. The emotional union of love creates families and nations. The intellectual union of love creates ideas, discoveries, and inventions. Philosophically, one can even say that the union of subatomic elements in relationship to each other or of planetary bodies in relationship to each other is part of that harmonious, blending, accepting energy that we call love.

Love does not necessarily mean approval. One cannot truly love something despicable. But love does mean acceptance. And once there is acceptance, there is understanding and insight, and if change is necessary for well-being, it is done with wisdom, not reactive emotion.

If human beings were committed to studying love and applying it, the entire planet would change rapidly, and instead of our continued creation of chaos, harmony and cooperation would occur. All sorts of wonderful prospering circumstances for the well-being of all life would emerge.

But as a species, we associate contention with intelligence and survival, and as long as we prefer exclusion to inclusion, we will continue to wreck our own lives and the world in general with our confused thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

When we begin an inquiry into love, then the journey to right living can be said to begin. What is right living? That which provides well-being for self and other. When well-being is high, there is a feeling of safety and acceptance, which creates happiness, a sense that all is well, good, and true and that we need not guard against sorrow.

The summum bonum of all life is happiness. It is the ultimate motive, the end of all striving. Yet this happiness does not come uninvited. It feels invited when love is present.

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About the Author

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