



***What does it mean to be a people of  
Love?***



## What Does It Mean To Be A People of Love?

Love is a difficult concept to capture because it encompasses something so broad and quite elusive and is often misused and overused to the point of either cliché or idolatry. The dictionary tells us love is ‘an intense feeling of deep affection.’ Far more than a feeling for many of us, love is often described as a force or energy. Not only do we send and receive love from others, but we connect to and experience the energy of love inside ourselves. According to Cardiologists, the heart emits an electrical field 60 times greater in amplitude than the activity in our brain.

Human love is also flawed, imperfect and messy. Love requires a humbling compassion for ourselves and for those we love. Loving faithfully also requires that we trust, respect and have confidence in ourselves as well as the other person. Thich Nhat Hanh teaches that true love is made of four elements: loving kindness, compassion, joy and equanimity. If our love contains these elements, it will be infused with holiness and will have the power to heal, transform and bring deep meaning to our lives. We may not get there by ‘falling’ but instead through courageous actions; a willingness to be vulnerable, have patience and practice generosity and understanding.

What might it mean for us as a people of faith to *be love*, to practice it, to be transformed by it; to live as love’s servants – as our Universalist ancestors encouraged us to do? They believed in the simple idea that God’s love was so big and all-encompassing, that no one would be left outside the circle or condemned to eternal damnation. Theirs was the radical idea that all human beings share a common destiny, and therefore the greatest commandment was to love God with all their heart and soul – for this was the way in which God loved them. And, of course since all people were beloved by God, part of loving God was to love their neighbors as themselves. Our contemporary UU principles are rooted in this deep Universalist love – in particular we affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of each person and respect the interdependent web of life of which we are but a part. Following these principles affirms our trust and understanding that love is the way in which we human beings awaken and become who we are most deeply meant to be. In other words, if we are to live lives of integrity, service and joy, love needs to become our spiritual practice.

How do we practice love in this way? By practicing kindness, patience, forgiveness, courtesy, humility, generosity and honesty. By consciously devoting time and attention to developing these characteristics in ourselves. Adopting love as our way of life enriches our human relationships in such a way that our very lives are transformed, and thus so is our world. By loving our enemies, seeing our tears in another’s eyes, and respecting and embracing the “other” we can live the gospel of Universalism. To love is, as the poet Rumi so poetically put it, to dare to be naked and awake, while others sleep, cloaked in their words and excuses. Love believes that each human life has the power to help change the world. Love as a spiritual practice truly is more than a feeling. It’s an action we choose, again and again.

May we choose love this month.

In Faith,

Andrea Johnson

# ***Our Spiritual Exercises***

## **Option A:**

### **Practice Loving Kindness Meditation for 30 days**

*Metta bhavana*, or loving-kindness meditation, is a method of developing compassion. It comes from the Buddhist tradition, but it can be adapted and practiced by anyone, regardless of religious affiliation; loving-kindness meditation is essentially about cultivating love. This is a meditation of care, concern, tenderness, loving kindness, friendship—a feeling of warmth for oneself and others. The practice is the softening of the mind and heart, an opening to deeper and deeper levels of the feeling of kindness, of pure love. Loving kindness is without any desire to possess another. It is not a sentimental feeling of goodwill, not an obligation, but comes from a selfless place. It does not depend on relationships, on how the other person feels about us. The process is first one of softening, breaking down barriers that we feel inwardly toward ourselves, and then those that we feel toward others.

#### **Instructions:**

1. Take a very comfortable posture. Begin to focus around the solar plexus, your chest area, your “heart center.” Breathe in and out from that area, as if you are breathing from the heart center and as if all experience is happening from there. Anchor your mindfulness only on the sensations at your heart center.
2. Breathing in and out from the heart center, begin by generating this kind feeling toward yourself. Feel any areas of mental blockage or numbness, self-judgment, self-hatred. Then drop beneath that to the place where we care for ourselves, where we want strength and health and safety for ourselves.
3. Continuing to breathe in and out, use either these traditional phrases or ones you choose yourself. Say or think them several times. Begin with yourself. Calm the mind/heart and find the center of your being. Generate warm, gentle, loving feelings for yourself:
  - May I be safe from harm.
  - May I be happy just as I am.
  - May I be peaceful with whatever is happening.
  - May I be healthy and strong.
  - May I care for myself in this ever-changing world graciously, joyously.
4. Next, move to a person who most invites the feeling of pure unconditional loving kindness (a spouse, parent, mentor, child) the love that does not depend on getting anything back. Repeat the phrases for this person: “May she be safe and protected....”
5. Now move to a neutral person, someone for whom you feel neither strong like nor dislike. As you repeat the phrases, allow yourself to feel tenderness, loving care for their welfare.
6. Now move to someone you have difficulty with—hostile feelings, resentments. Repeat the phrases for this person. If you have difficulty doing this, you can say before the phrases, “To the best of my ability I wish that you be....” If you begin to feel ill will toward this person, return to the benefactor and let the loving kindness arise again. Then return to this person.

7. After the difficult person, radiate loving kindness out to all beings. Stay in touch with the ember of warm, tender loving-kindness at the center of your being, and begin to visualize or engender a felt sense of all living beings. The traditional phrases are these:  
May all beings be safe, happy, healthy, live joyously.....

Come prepared to discuss with the group your experiences of loving kindness meditation.  
<http://www.contemplativemind.org/practices/tree/loving-kindness>

### **Option B: What are your love languages?**

The book, *The 5 Love Languages: The Secret to Love that Lasts*, by Gary Chapman, contends that knowing how we show and receive love will help us experience deeper and richer levels of intimacy with our partner. The assessment to determine one's own love language is free to complete online:  
<http://www.5lovelanguages.com/profile/couples/> The 5 love languages are: Acts of Service, Words of Affirmation, Quality Time, Physical Touch and Receiving Gifts.

Consider completing the assessment to better understand your own love language and/or ask your partner to complete one too and begin to discuss the ways that you love one another. To understand your love language more fully, consider reading Dr. Chapman's book.

[https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00OICLVBI/ref=x\\_gr\\_w\\_glide\\_bb?ie=UTF8&tag=x\\_gr\\_w\\_glide\\_bb-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B00OICLVBI&SubscriptionId=IMGPYB6YW3HWK55XCGG2](https://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B00OICLVBI/ref=x_gr_w_glide_bb?ie=UTF8&tag=x_gr_w_glide_bb-20&linkCode=as2&camp=1789&creative=9325&creativeASIN=B00OICLVBI&SubscriptionId=IMGPYB6YW3HWK55XCGG2)

Come prepared to discuss with the group what you learned about the ways in which you like to give and receive love.

### **Option D: Side with Love**

#### **Side with Love**

<https://sidewithlove.org/>

Side with Love is an invitation and a challenge. It is an opportunity to firmly name what we are for and against. To recognize that as we seek to embody universalism we commit to resisting oppression. A recognition that in many moments there are two sides: one of love and one of oppression and violence. We are always bound up in messy webs alongside even those who perpetrate hate. And daily, we choose whether we are siding with love, freedom, liberation, reparations, and integrity or whether we are siding with the violence of white supremacy, patriarchy, ableism and heterosexism.

#### **Instructions:**

- Click on the following website to follow week by week the 30 days of Love Campaign (Note this began on January 15<sup>th</sup> but you can do the activities at any time.
  - This website page explains the Side with Love campaign  
<https://sidewithlove.org/ourstories/announcing-side-with-love>
  - This is the link to the calendar which lays out 30 days of activities you can engage in to side with love.  
<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/5449513ee4b025f84fddfa72/t/5a551ac008522941933bf172/1515526848381/30+DOL+2018+All+Ages+Calendar.pdf>
- Choose to do as many of the activities that appeal to you and come prepared to share your experiences with your group.

## Option C: Choosing Love\*

*We do not have to love. We choose to love. – M. Scott Peck*

The literature of love often refers to love as our natural state, but this is not the same as saying we do not need to cultivate it and chose it. As our hardened hearts have shown us we have many defenses against love and its necessary vulnerability, some of them personally constructed and others a part of our culture. One common defense raised against love comes as naturally as love itself when we have been hurt by loss and understandingly pull back in sorrow, pain or disappointment. Well-meaning people may tell us time will heal, but in the moments of deepest grief, it often seems no lifetime could be long enough for us to ever willingly open our hearts again. Fortunately, time often does bring healing or at least it brings us to a place where we can choose to love again, even knowing how it hurts to lose it. As poet Ellen Bass puts it in her poem below, even in our grief, we might just have to tenderly hold out own life in our hands, and say yes to love again. It is not only healing that takes time. Love itself requires time. We must choose love if we are to have room for its full presence in our lives. Whether it's choosing to love after we've suffered personal loss, or making time for loved ones at home and afar, or taking time for a loving response to those we barely know, love requires that we pause long enough to let our hearts catch up with our hurrying feet.

### Instruction

- Set a timer for 60 seconds and answer the following question: If I had more time for love....
- When the timer goes off stop writing even if you are in mid-sentence.
- Set the timer again for 60 seconds. With a new train of thought answer the same question.
- Do this 5 times.
- Take a deep breath, now spend as long as you would like answering the question: What new form of love might grow in your life if you choose to grant it all the time it needs? What might happen if you paused long enough to let your heart catch up and speak?

### ***The Thing Is***

*to love life, to love it even  
when you have no stomach for it  
and everything you've held dear  
crumbles like burnt paper in your hands,  
your throat filled with the silt of it.  
When grief sits with you, its tropical heat  
thickening the air, heavy as water  
more fit for gills than lungs;  
when grief weights you like your own flesh  
only more of it, an obesity of grief,  
you think, How can a body withstand this?  
Then you hold life like a face  
between your palms, a plain face,  
no charming smile, no violet eyes,  
and you say, yes, I will take you  
I will love you, again.*

\* Adapted from the book, *Writing to Wake the Soul*, by Karen Herring.

# Your Question

*As always, don't treat these questions like "homework" or a list that needs to be covered in its entirety. Instead, **simply pick the one question** that speaks to you most and let it lead you where you need to go. The goal is not to analyze what "love" means in the abstract, but to figure out what being a part of a people of love means for you and your daily living. So, which question is calling to you? Which one contains "your work"?*

1. What kinds of actions do you take to show others you love them?
2. Can we love the stranger if we do not understand him/her? How might understanding of the stranger be cultivated?
3. What is the difference between feeling loved and feeling understood? How might they be related?
4. Can you love a job, a hobby or an inanimate object?
5. The Buddha says that in the end these things matter most: How well did you love? How fully did you live? How deeply did you let go?
6. How do you love yourself?
7. Some say that to love someone is to strive to accept that person exactly the way he or she is right here and now. How do you accept your spouse/parent/child/friend?
8. What's your question? Your question may not be listed above. As always, if the above questions don't include what life is asking from you, spend the month listening to your days to hear it.

# Recommended Resources

As always, this is not required reading. We will not analyze these pieces in our group. Instead they are here to companion you on your journey this month, get your thinking started, and maybe open you to new ways of thinking about what it means to be part of a people of love.

## Word Roots

### Love (n).

Old English *lufu* "feeling of love; romantic sexual attraction; affection; friendliness; the love of God; Love as an abstraction or personification."

## Wise Words

There is no remedy for love but to love more.

–Henry David Thoreau

Love does not *begin* and end the way we seem to *think* it does. Love is a battle, love is a war love is a *growing up*.

–James Baldwin

Justice is what love looks like in public.

–Cornel West

<sup>36</sup>“Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?” <sup>37</sup> He said to him, “‘You shall **love** the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.’ <sup>38</sup> This is the greatest and first commandment. <sup>39</sup> And a second is like it: ‘You shall **love** your neighbor as yourself.’ <sup>40</sup> On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.”

–Matthew 22:36-40 NRSV

For hatred does not cease by hatred at any time. Hatred ceases by love.

–The Dhammapada.

In the end these things matter most: How well did you love? How fully did you live? How deeply did you let go?

–The Buddha

Courage is like love, it must have hope for nourishment.

–La Rochefoucauld

Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love.

–Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare.

–Audre Lorde

Choose a job you love and you will never have to work a day in your life.

–Confucius

It must be confessed, though with sorrow, that transient things form a great part of what is commonly taught as Religion. An undue place has often been assigned to forms and doctrines, while too little stress has been laid on the divine life of the soul, love to God, and love to man.

–Theodore Parker, (*The Transient and Permanent in Christianity 1841*)

When you love someone, you do not love them all the time, in exactly the same way, from moment to moment. It is an impossibility. It is even a lie to pretend to. And yet this is exactly what most of us demand. We have so little faith in the ebb and flow of life, of love, of relationships. We leap at the flow of the tide and resist in terror its ebb. We are afraid it will never return. We insist on permanency, on

duration, on continuity; when the only continuity possible, in life as in love, is in growth, in fluidity - in freedom, in the sense that the dancers are free, barely touching as they pass, but partners in the same pattern.

-*Anne Morrow Lindbergh, Gift from the Sea*

Love cannot remain by itself – it has no meaning. Love has to be put into action and that action is service. Whatever form we are, able or disabled, rich or poor, it is not how much we do, but how much love we put in the doing; a lifelong sharing of love with others.

-*Mother Theresa*

Your ordinary acts of love and hope point to the extraordinary promise that every human life is of inestimable value.

-*Desmond Tutu*

Life is the first gift  
Love is the second  
And understanding the third

-*Marge Piercy*

## Poems

### The Third Body

*Robert Bly*

<http://mondaypoem.blogspot.com/2010/11/third-body-by-robert-bly.html>

A man and a woman sit near each other, and they do not long  
At this moment to be older, or younger, or born  
In any other nation, or any other time, or any other place.  
They are content to be where they are, talking or not talking.  
Their breaths together feed someone whom we do not know.  
The man sees the way his fingers move;  
He sees her hands close around a book she hands to him.  
They obey a third body that they share in common.  
They have promised to love that body.

Age may come; parting may come; death will come!

A man and a woman sit near each other;  
As they breathe they feed someone we do not know,

Someone we know of, whom we have never seen.

### Song of Solomon 8:6-7

<https://www.enterthebible.org/oldtestament.aspx?rid=42>

<sup>6</sup> Set me as a seal upon your heart,  
as a seal upon your arm;  
for love is strong as death,  
passion fierce as the grave.  
Its flashes are flashes of fire,  
a raging flame.

<sup>7</sup> Many waters cannot quench love,  
neither can floods drown it.  
If one offered for love  
all the wealth of one's house,  
it would be utterly scorned.

### 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

#### The Gift of Love

<https://www.enterthebible.org/newtestament.aspx?rid=7>

<sup>1</sup> If I speak in the tongues of mortals and of angels, but do not have love, I am a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup> And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup> If I give away all my possessions, and if I hand over my body so that I may boast,<sup>\*</sup> but do not have love, I gain nothing.

<sup>4</sup> Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant <sup>5</sup> or rude. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; <sup>6</sup> it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth. <sup>7</sup> It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.

<sup>8</sup> Love never ends. But as for prophecies, they will come to an end; as for tongues, they will cease; as for knowledge, it will come to an end. <sup>9</sup> For we know only in part, and we prophesy only in part; <sup>10</sup> but when the

complete comes, the partial will come to an end. <sup>11</sup>When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways. <sup>12</sup>For now we see in a mirror, dimly,<sup>\*</sup> but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known. <sup>13</sup>And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three; and the greatest of these is love.

### **Love is Reckless**

*Rumi*

<https://www.poemhunter.com/poem/love-is-reckless/>

Love is reckless; not reason.  
Reason seeks a profit.  
Love comes on strong,  
consuming herself, unabashed.  
Yet, in the midst of suffering,  
Love proceeds like a millstone,  
hard surfaced and straightforward.  
Having died of self-interest,  
she risks everything and asks for nothing.  
Love gambles away every gift God bestows.  
Without cause [the Universe] God gave us  
Being; without cause, give it back again.

### **Love after Love**

*Derek Walcott*

The time will come  
when, with elation,  
you will greet yourself arriving  
at your own door, in your own mirror,  
and each will smile at the other's welcome,  
and say, sit here. Eat.  
You will love again the stranger who was  
your self.  
Give wine. Give bread. Give back your heart  
to itself, to the stranger who has loved you  
all your life, whom you ignored  
for another, who knows you by heart.  
Take down the love letters from the  
bookshelf,  
the photographs, the desperate notes,  
peel your own image from the mirror.  
Sit. Feast on your life.

### **The Thing Is**

*Ellen Bass*

<https://readalittlepoetry.wordpress.com/2012/01/17/the-thing-is-by-ellen-bass/>

to love life, to love it even  
when you have no stomach for it  
and everything you've held dear  
crumbles like burnt paper in your hands,  
your throat filled with the silt of it.  
When grief sits with you, its tropical heat  
thickening the air, heavy as water  
more fit for gills than lungs;  
when grief weights you like your own flesh  
only more of it, an obesity of grief,  
you think, How can a body withstand this?  
Then you hold life like a face  
between your palms, a plain face,  
no charming smile, no violet eyes,  
and you say, yes, I will take you  
I will love you, again.

### **Even After**

*Hafiz*

Even after all this time  
The Sun Never Says to the Earth,  
"You owe me."  
Look what happens with a love like that.  
It lights up the Whole Sky.

### **The Hope of Loving**

*Meister Eckhart*

What keeps us alive, what allows us to  
endure? I think it is the hope of loving, or  
being loved.

I heard a fable once about the sun going on a  
journey to find its source, and how the moon  
weft without her lover's warm gaze.

We weep when light does not reach our  
hearts. We wither like fields if someone  
close does not rain their kindness upon us.

## Videos and Podcasts

### Podcast: The Paradox of Suffering and Love

*Kate Braestrup*

<https://onbeing.org/blog/the-paradox-of-suffering-and-love-kate-braestrup/>

### The Call to Revolutionary Love

*Valerie Kaur, Sikh American Civil Rights Activist, Founder of Revolutionary Love Project*

<https://www.facebook.com/GroundswellMovement/videos/1328029797267245>

We have built a coalition of faith and moral leaders, public voices, and organizations rising up to reclaim love as a public ethic and a way to fight for justice. "Love is not just a feeling but an action. Love is the commitment to extend our will for the flourishing of others, opponents, and ourselves. When we love even in the face of fear and rage, we can transform a relationship, a culture, and a country. Love becomes revolutionary. The way we make change is just as important as the change we make. In this dangerous new era, Revolutionary Love is the call of our times."

### Stories of people trying to love their neighbors and failing

*Ira Glass: This American Life*

<https://www.thisamericanlife.org/184/neighbors>

### Ted Talks on Love:

Mother and Son united by love and art

[https://www.ted.com/talks/deborah\\_willis\\_and\\_hank\\_willis\\_thomas\\_a\\_mother\\_and\\_son\\_united\\_by\\_love\\_and\\_art](https://www.ted.com/talks/deborah_willis_and_hank_willis_thomas_a_mother_and_son_united_by_love_and_art)

Father's dementia changed idea of life and death

[https://www.ted.com/talks/beth\\_malone\\_how\\_my\\_dad\\_s\\_dementia\\_changed\\_my\\_idea\\_of\\_death\\_and\\_life](https://www.ted.com/talks/beth_malone_how_my_dad_s_dementia_changed_my_idea_of_death_and_life)

A queer vision of love and marriage

[https://www.ted.com/talks/tiq\\_milan\\_and\\_kim\\_katrin\\_milan\\_a\\_queer\\_vision\\_of\\_love\\_and\\_marriage](https://www.ted.com/talks/tiq_milan_and_kim_katrin_milan_a_queer_vision_of_love_and_marriage)

Serena Williams: Tennis, Love and Motherhood

[https://www.ted.com/talks/serena\\_williams\\_gayle\\_king\\_on\\_tennis\\_love\\_and\\_motherhood](https://www.ted.com/talks/serena_williams_gayle_king_on_tennis_love_and_motherhood)

Thoughts on humanity, fame and love

[https://www.ted.com/talks/shah\\_rukh\\_khan\\_thoughts\\_on\\_humanity\\_fame\\_and\\_love](https://www.ted.com/talks/shah_rukh_khan_thoughts_on_humanity_fame_and_love)

## Articles

### What is Love? Famous Definitions from 400 years of Literary History

*Maria Popova*

<https://www.brainpickings.org/?s=love+famous+definitions>

Gathered here are some of the most memorable and timeless insights on [love](#), culled from several hundred years of literary history — enjoy.

### Former Neo-Nazi forms Life after Hate

*Sarah Ruiz-Grossman*

[https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/life-after-hate-christian-picciolini-white-supremacist-exit-skinhead\\_us\\_58fa36cee4b018a9ce5ace1a](https://www.huffingtonpost.com/entry/life-after-hate-christian-picciolini-white-supremacist-exit-skinhead_us_58fa36cee4b018a9ce5ace1a)

After having children, Christian Picciolini (former Neo-Nazi,) says challenged his "notions of identity, community and purpose," he left the hate group in 1995. Over a decade later, in 2009, he co-founded *Life After Hate*, a small nonprofit run entirely by former members of America's radical far-right, dedicated to supporting those who have left, or are seeking to leave, hate groups in the U.S.

<https://www.lifefterhate.org/>

## **How To 'Thrive': Dan Buettner's Secrets Of Happiness**

*NPR Story*

<https://www.npr.org/2010/11/28/131571885/how-to-thrive-dan-buettner-s-secrets-of-happiness>

Buettner argues that relationships are really the key to lifelong happiness, noting that "the happiest people in America socialize about seven hours a day," and mentioning that "you're three times more likely to be happy if you are married ... and each new friend will boost your happiness about 10 percent."

## **When You Try to Change People That's Not Love. It's Domination**

*Broderick Greer*

<https://onbeing.org/blog/broderick-greer-when-you-try-to-change-people-thats-not-love-its-domination/>

In an interview conducted nearly thirty years ago, social visionary bell hooks had this to say about love and domination: *I want there to be a place in the world where people can engage in one another.*"

While hooks was discussing racial and gender representation in film, her statement can be broadly applied to relationships at home, in neighborhoods, in cities, and across whole societies.

## **Coming to Be Love**

*Ilia Delio*

<https://cac.org/coming-to-be-love-2017-11-01/>

To see the universe through the eyes of love helps us make sense of evolution, not as a process of cold, blind chance or randomness, but one of passion, yearning, novelty, union, gift, suffering, death, and new life. Love is the faithful heart of the cosmos, the constancy of all life; yet love seeks to become more being-in-love and hence is the energy of change.

## **The Ancient Greeks' 6 Words for Love (And Why Knowing Them Can Change Your Life)**

*Roman Krznaric*

<http://www.yesmagazine.org/happiness/the-ancient-greeks-6-words-for-love-and-why-knowing-them-can-change-your-life>

Looking for an antidote to modern culture's emphasis on romantic love? Perhaps we can learn from the diverse forms of emotional attachment prized by the ancient Greeks.

## **7 Scientific Reasons You Should Listen To Your Heart (Not Your Brain)**

*Dr. Joel Kahn*

<https://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-11982/7-scientific-reasons-you-should-listen-to-your-heart-not-your-brain.html>

New research is showing that the heart controls the brain much more than previously thought.

## **The Twin Forces of Love and Resistance**

*Courtney Martin*

<https://onbeing.org/blog/courtney-martin-the-twin-forces-of-love-and-resistance/>

As Beverly Gage pointed out [in last week's New York Times](#), the word that has risen from the ashes of this presidential calamity is *resistance*. People are resisting misogyny in hand-knit hats, resisting xenophobia while eating donated pizzas at airports, resisting — above all else — their own devastation and disconnection.

## **When You Don't Choose Love you Choose Fear**

*Elizabeth Kubler-Ross and David Kessler*

<http://www.awakin.org/read/view.php?tid=680>

If we could literally reach into you and remove all your fears — every one of them — how different would your life be? Think about it. If nothing stopped you from following your dreams, your life would probably be very different. This is what the dying learn. Dying makes our worst fears come forward to be faced directly. It helps us see the different life that is possible, and

in that vision, takes the rest of our fears away.

### **Love Doesn't Make Us Stupid – It Makes Us Brave**

*Sharon Salzberg*

<https://onbeing.org/blog/sharon-salzberg-love-doesnt-make-us-stupid-it-makes-us-brave/>

And so too with love. We can move away from anxious identification with love as submissiveness or giving in. We don't have to [\*limit our notion of love to romance\*](#). We can challenge our conditioning that tells us that loving someone also mandates our liking them and wanting to spend time with them. We can remember that, as the Buddha taught, love is the antidote to fear, not the countervailing force to wisdom. Love doesn't make us stupid; it makes us brave.

### **Love Always Protects**

*DeReau Farrar*

<https://www.uua.org/braverwiser/love-always-protects>

What would happen if each of us loved the people in our communities in a protective way? What if we loved one another more than we love the buildings that house us, the traditions that have defined us, and even more than our own comfort? Imagine a love that calls us to stretch ourselves, so that those whom we love are always guarded from storm, violence, neglect, and need. Does that kind of love bring us into a deeper and truer humility? If not, is our love even complete or authentic?

## **Music**

### **Where Is The Love**

*The Black Eyed Peas*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WpYeekQkAdc>

Overseas, yeah, we try to stop terrorism  
But we still got terrorists here livin'  
In the USA, the big CIA  
The Bloods and The Crips and the KKK

But if you only have love for your own race  
Then you only leave space to discriminate  
And to discriminate only generates hate  
And when you hate then you're bound to get irate, yeah

### **A Whole Lotta Love**

*Led Zeplin*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQmmM\\_qwG4k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HQmmM_qwG4k)

A-way down inside  
A-honey you need it  
I'm gonna give you my love  
I'm gonna give you my love  
Want to whole lotta love  
Want to whole lotta love

### **Under Pressure (acapella version)**

*David Bowe and Queen*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoDh\\_gHDvkk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YoDh_gHDvkk)

Turned away from it all like a blind man  
Sat on a fence but it don't work  
Keep coming up with love  
But it's so slashed and torn  
Why - why - why?  
Love love love love love  
Insanity laughs under pressure we're breaking  
Can't we give ourselves one more chance

### **What's love got to do with it**

*Tina Turner*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oGpFchTxjZs>

What's love got to do, got to do with it  
What's love but a second hand emotion  
What's love got to do, got to do with it  
Who needs a heart when a heart can be broken

### **I will always love you**

*Whitney Houston*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3JWTAaS7LdU>

And I will always love you  
I will always love you  
You, My darling, you

I hope life treats you kind  
And I hope you have all you've dreamed of  
And I wish you joy and happiness  
But above all this I wish you love

### **Blessings**

*Chance the Rapper*

<https://genius.com/Chance-the-rapper-blessings-lyrics>

### **Dance me to the end of love**

*Leonard Cohen*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2zjLBWnZGTU>

### **All You Need is Love**

*The Beatles*

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=\\_OuYLGHkrBk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_OuYLGHkrBk)

### **Nothing Compares 2U**

*Sinead O'Connor*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0-EF60neguk>

### **Bridge Over Troubled Water**

*Art Garfunkel*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ho92k2CKNh0>

## **Movies**

### **Truly, Madly, Deeply**

Pianist Nina (Juliet Stevenson) and cellist Jamie (Alan Rickman) played together and loved together. It was an idyllic romantic and musical partnership, and when Jamie dies, Nina deals with inconsolable grief. She gets another chance when he returns to earth as a ghost.

**Trailer:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubjOJQvpDyY>

**Full Movie Available online:**

[https://www.youtube.com/results?search\\_query=truly+madly+deeply+movie](https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=truly+madly+deeply+movie)

### **Places in the Heart**

After her husband is killed, Sally Field is forced to take over the debt-ridden Texas family farm herself. She accepts the help of African-American Danny Glover and blind boarder John Malkovich. Despite almost insurmountable odds, Field manages to bring in the cotton crop and to hold her farm together.

**Full Movie Available online:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IVdE5tTulv0>

### **Bridges of Madison County**

The brief, illicit love affair between an Iowa housewife and a post-middle-age free-lance photographer is chronicled in this powerful romance based on the best-selling novella by Robert James Waller. The story begins as globetrotting National Geographic photographer Robert Kincaid journeys to Madison County in 1965 to film its lovely covered bridges.

**Trailer:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Up-on4NtvbM>

### **As it is in Heaven**

An internationally renowned Swedish conductor returns to his childhood village and agrees to help the local church choir hone their singing skills. The harder Daniel works draws out the singers' hidden inner talents, the more he realizes just what he's been missing by living in the big city. Before long he's made new friends, and found a new love. A heartfelt tale of inspiration and discovery. Sweden's official submission for Best Foreign Film at the 2005 Academy Awards.

**Review:**

[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/saa\\_som\\_i\\_himmelen](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/saa_som_i_himmelen)

## **Books**

### **Gift from the Sea**

*Anne Morrow Lindbergh*

[https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/77295.Gift\\_from\\_the\\_Sea](https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/77295.Gift_from_the_Sea)

In this inimitable, beloved classic—graceful, lucid and lyrical—Anne Morrow Lindbergh shares her meditations on youth and age; love and marriage; peace, solitude and contentment as she set them down during a brief vacation by the sea. Drawing inspiration from the shells on the shore, Lindbergh’s musings on the shape of a woman’s life bring new understanding to both men and women at any stage of life.

### **All About Love**

*bell hooks*

[https://www.amazon.com/All-About-Love-New-Visions/dp/0060959479/ref=mt\\_paperback?encoding=UTF8&me=](https://www.amazon.com/All-About-Love-New-Visions/dp/0060959479/ref=mt_paperback?encoding=UTF8&me=)

*All About Love* offers radical new ways to think about love by showing its interconnectedness in our private and public lives. In eleven concise chapters, hooks explains how our everyday notions of what it means to give and receive love often fail us, and how these ideals are established in early childhood. She offers a rethinking of self-love (without narcissism) that will bring peace and compassion to our personal and professional lives, and asserts the place of love to end struggles between individuals, in communities, and among societies.

### **Teachings on Love**

*Thich Nhat Hanh*

[https://www.amazon.com/Teachings-Love-Thich-Nhat-Hanh/dp/1888375000/ref=asap\\_bc?ie=UTF8](https://www.amazon.com/Teachings-Love-Thich-Nhat-Hanh/dp/1888375000/ref=asap_bc?ie=UTF8)

Weaving together traditional stories, personal experiences, and a deep understanding of the Buddha's way of mindful living, Thich Nhat Hanh provides step-by-step practices that foster understanding and intimacy in any relationship and extend our love even to those that cause us pain.

### **5 Love Languages**

*Gary Chapman*

[https://www.amazon.com/dp/080241270X/ref=sxnav\\_sxwds-tsp\\_1?pf\\_rd\\_m=ATVPDKIKX0DER&pf\\_rd\\_p=3444036022&pd\\_rd\\_wg=J42jY&pf\\_rd\\_r=CRH40M1WERDCBHAQ549C&pf\\_rd\\_s=desktop-sx-nav&pf\\_rd\\_t=301&pd\\_rd\\_i=080241270X&pd\\_rd\\_w=UTN24&pf\\_rd\\_i=5+love+languages&pd\\_rd\\_r=d85ab6bd-d665-4ac2-9674-dcbbd83e432a&ie=UTF8&qid=1516987901&sr=1](https://www.amazon.com/dp/080241270X/ref=sxnav_sxwds-tsp_1?pf_rd_m=ATVPDKIKX0DER&pf_rd_p=3444036022&pd_rd_wg=J42jY&pf_rd_r=CRH40M1WERDCBHAQ549C&pf_rd_s=desktop-sx-nav&pf_rd_t=301&pd_rd_i=080241270X&pd_rd_w=UTN24&pf_rd_i=5+love+languages&pd_rd_r=d85ab6bd-d665-4ac2-9674-dcbbd83e432a&ie=UTF8&qid=1516987901&sr=1)

Falling in love is easy. Staying in love—that’s the challenge. How can you keep your relationship fresh and growing amid the demands, conflicts, and just plain boredom of everyday life?

In the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *The 5 Love Languages*, you’ll discover the secret that has transformed millions of relationships worldwide. Whether your relationship is flourishing or failing, Dr. Gary Chapman’s proven approach to showing and receiving love will help you experience deeper and richer levels of intimacy with your partner—starting today.

### **Love in the Time of Cholera**

*Gabriel Garcia Marquez*

In their youth, Florentino Ariza and Fermina Daza fall passionately in love. When Fermina eventually chooses to marry a wealthy, well-born doctor, Florentino is devastated, but he is a romantic.

This packet was created based on the Soul Matters Sharing Circle model of small groups.



<https://www.facebook.com/soulmatterssharingcircl>

