

**What is love?**

Some say, "Affinity is better than love. Ditch love for it. Love cares about love but affinity cares about the person as a person. Affinity with a person means you celebrate when they gain even if you get nothing out of it. Love is not affinity. Affinity may be a part of it but love is more than that. Affinity wants the other to grow even if it means you have to step into the background. Love wants the other to relate to you. Its about relationship. By making it about the other connecting to you and you to them that is a form of exclusion. Why? You want love to be "me and you" so that is about making you and the other a unit in some way. You are saying your love will change if they don't keep their end of the bargain. Love is a low level and benevolent dictatorship arrangement. It is therefore abuse though it is hard to see it that way."

Is that credible? Yes.

Love values the person and therefore regrets seeing the person suffer or in pain. It seeks the happiness of the person even if at time it has to be cruel for the person's greater good.

Love is valuing the happiness of everybody whether you can do something for them or not. It is also valuing all human life. All human beings have a right to love and be loved. When nobody can help you, you will only have the love others have for you to console you.

Love is whatever is thought or done for the wellbeing of yourself or others. It is based on good intention because you can do what you think is good for a person and it could do more harm than good. Hate is whatever is thought or done against the wellbeing of yourself or others. It also is based on intention. Indifference is not caring what happens to yourself or others. Indifference is worse than hate for you must care about a person to want to hurt them. Indeed indifference, not hate is the opposite of love. How do we deal with our indifference to the suffering people of the world who we do not know? The answer is that we are all ultimately the one person. To help any person is to help them. Thus we are never indifferent but thinking of them as much as we can. But that answer is just another way of being indifferent. You don't care about them but about yourself for you think they are you.

Love is appreciation, gratitude. It is willing or intending well-being.

Real love means you are not against anything. Just describe what you see. Don't be against. Love is thought to be giving. But if you always give to others and you refuse to receive from them you are not honouring them when they want to give. Love means to give and to receive, don't do more of the one than the other.

Real love accepts and does not require anybody to do certain things, make certain vows or be a certain kind of person. Love has no conditions. See nothing as creating obligations but see everything as creating opportunities to grow and be happier.

Love can only happen between you and another person. You have to give love. You have to receive love. Some say that unless people love you, you will never learn to love. This is incorrect. Who loved the first man or woman? A baby can love its parents

One can love others without loving oneself very well. But one will love others better the more one loves oneself. If you are grateful to yourself for the good things you have brought into your life that gets you into the habit of gratitude and you will find it easier to appreciate others.

Loving yourself helps you love others better.

Be love.

*What is Loving Yourself?*

Self-love is seen as less useful and less healthy than self-acceptance. But self-acceptance is the best form of self-love. You accept yourself with all your flaws but still as a person who deserves to be respected and protected by people who work to make you happy and help you make yourself happy. You need to love yourself enough to accept yourself warts and all. Anything else is not true self-love.

The only true form of self-love is self-acceptance.

Self-acceptance says you are content with how good you are.

Self-acceptance says you are content with your faults too.

Self-motivation is at the heart of everything. Nothing matters without it. And it is a part of self-acceptance.

*Loving Yourself, the Key to the Door of Love and Life*

All love starts with loving yourself.

Self-love or self-esteem are not about feeling brilliant about yourself all the time. They are open to feeling that but the fundamental thing is doing what is best for yourself no matter how you feel about yourself.

Feeling great about yourself does not guarantee that you will have a charmed life. Many bullies feel great about themselves and end up in a lifelong mess. Feeling bad about yourself is fine as long as it spurs you into action to do something about why you feel bad. If you truly value yourself, you will let yourself feel bad knowing that it is really for the best.

Self-love however is the only thing that makes life work to ANY degree.

Happiness and wellbeing come from being in good relationships with other people. To shun others is to oppose your own nature as a social animal.

Love is about doing good because it is good and not just because it feels good. You can never control how others feel so love decides what they need in consultation with them and delivers. It is about needs not wants.

If you love others instead of yourself you degrade their love for you.

Only you can let others help you. It is up to you to keep yourself well and let them help you.

You cannot feel good about being loved or want to be loved unless you love. Loving others is the key to your own wellbeing.

Are we saying that looking after yourself is not just the main thing but the only thing that counts?

Even when you give your life for others, it is because you consider yourself worthy to do so. Your giving is not selfish. It merely shows your self-esteem. When I give to another without seeking any return, I tell myself that I have the intelligence and expertise and the worthiness of being well without the thing I have given.

When you give give give and avoid taking, you are giving yourself away. When you get into the mentality of being a giver, death will cease to be seen like your loss.

Self-love is not about treating others like dirt if you want to. It is about loving yourself so that the best happens for yourself and others. It is about not being an island.

Secure self-esteem survives when you are criticised or when things go wrong. Insecure self-esteem leads to bullying for it cannot survive.

*Everybody has self-esteem, for some it just needs tuning*

Everybody has self-esteem. People have the esteem to think they know they are worthless or bad at life. Persons who are courageous are confident that they can go into danger and achieve much. Persons who are not courageous value themselves too much so that they will not take risks. They need the confidence to take risks. When people who imagine they have no self-esteem see that they do but it is just misguided that is encouragement for them. If you have no self-esteem it is harder to get to the best place for you. If you do have self-esteem but it is distorted all you need to do is remove the distortion and that is easier.

You might feel good about being a thief, but it makes no sense. It is artificial self-esteem. It is not the real thing and will only end in disaster. The fear is still there. It has to be. It is simply just hidden. This type of self-esteem is easily changed into proper self-esteem. Its victims must remember that.

You cannot enjoy good health and happiness and wealth properly unless you believe that it is your own powers that have brought them to you. Then you feel you are in control. Prove your belief by giving to others. You must be so confident that

wealth for example will be yours that you will give to the poor. Give and you will receive. If you receive money and do not welcome it then you have got it but you have not received it. Receiving is an attitude.

When you give you will receive so giving and receiving are just the same thing. This way you love yourself in helping others. There is nothing degrading in this. It avoids the problem, "If I give my money away, I am denying my own value and saying others should have the money not me as if I am nothing."

Self-love makes you see that nothing is a disaster but a challenge!

It is said, "Self-love is not narcissistic or selfish but is good for it is learning to accept love from others and to give love. Telling yourself that you love yourself means resolving to receive love from others and to give them love in return."

That kind of love is based on loving others because I love myself! Giving reasons for loving somebody even yourself seems hollow. To love somebody because they are virtuous and good is conditional love. Fulton Sheen said that "surrender is its own reason for love." This is not surrender and it is narcissism to love somebody for yourself and not even because of their good qualities and virtues. If loving for virtues is selfish that is even worse. The love you give is not love for the other. It is serving the other for you get something out of it. To love yourself so you can receive love for others implies it is their duty to love you.

*Love is bigger than time, suffering and death*

There is no disaster that cannot be redeemed by love. Love is all powerful. You have this all-powerful tool. Love is the power that goes deeper than all other powers. Therefore it has the power to save you from the harm inflicted on you by your worst memories no matter how horrific they are.

If you love yourself and painful things happen in your life, you will see these as invitations, not as punishment or as life victimising you. Each one of them is saying to you, "I am a challenge but you can handle me. You can bring the best out of the situation. You are terrific and I trust you". Feel that they are saying that to you.

Your relationship with others is bigger than death. You still feel connected with a person who is asleep or who is too ill to even know you are there. When a loved one dies, find that person in this connection and in your heart. Do not look for them in the heavens or the earth or under the earth. You don't need to tune in to another realm to contact them.

*Love and fear*

Love will cause fear in the sense that you worry about the danger the loved one can encounter, the danger that you may hurt them or the danger that they may reject you.

Faith in God makes fear worse. You fear the person losing the benefit that supposedly comes from putting God first. You fear the person rejecting God and thus harming herself. You fear God not being put first for he should be put first.

If love goes with fear and enhances fear then love is dangerous.

How do we solve the problem? It is a matter of realising that loving anybody especially totally is unnecessary and too extreme. You don't want your love to backfire on you and the other person. God is definitely out! By definition God deserves total love and to be about all you do.

*Real self-love is nothing more than having compassion for yourself*

People fear having negative emotions such as sadness or anger or fear. They will happen to everyone but it is important that we try to react to what happens without them. If they happen they happen. Just do not add fuel to the fire.

If you feel negative, then you can defuse its destructive effects by exercising compassion towards yourself. Sympathy is the feeling that something should not happen to another or to yourself. Compassion is more than sympathy - it is trying to heal.

What is negative becomes less negative when you take it as an opportunity to be compassionate towards yourself.

Tell yourself that something bad happened to you. You are admitting the truth.

Let yourself experience how awful it is. You are engaging in empathy with yourself.

Tell yourself that your pain and tears if any are understandable. You are listening to yourself and to what your feelings tell

you.

Tell yourself that you will support yourself. You are being kind to yourself.

Tell yourself that it may take time but you will be patient. You are being kind and patient with yourself.

Remember the healing energy is in your mind and heart and you will let it work. You are resolving to love yourself.

If you need somebody else to help you, it is you that lets them do it so you are really the only person who is helping.

The more you practice these things the better you will get at it. Your faculty for self-compassion will improve. And in fact, negative emotions will do you less harm for you will have the tools for dealing with them. All these things are a manifestation of faith in you and only in you.

*You are wonderfully unique, so don't compare yourself to others*

When you compare yourself to another person, the reason you do it is to make yourself think that the other person is somehow better than you. Thus you are doing it to put yourself down. That doesn't always happen, you may see that you are better than the other person. But it is a damaging exercise. If you really were proud of yourself and loved yourself you would not need to compare yourself to anybody. Remember how unique and special you are. The person who is outstandingly intelligent at maths may make a mess of their life. You may not be as good at maths but you could have an outstandingly successful life. Each one must be thought of as being perfect as they are.

Don't compare yourself to anybody else. But have the right reason for not comparing. Suppose you never compare yourself. If the reason you do this is because you fear you will find you are not as brilliant as that person, then you have already made a negative affirmation that will demean you and put bad feelings in you. The reason you refuse to compare is because you believe you are wonderful as you are.

Believe you are your own God. For your mind, there is no other God but you. There is no perfect God, Jesus or Mary, to compare yourself to. To believe there is, is to take on an oppressive belief. They claim authority over your life and command you to become perfect like they are so they always want you to compare yourself to them but you will never measure up. That has to be seen for what it is - religious bullying.