

July 2008 NEWSLETTER

THEME: What is Love?

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SELF TRANSFORMATION
THERAPY

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What is Love? - Exploring the many facets of love that drives our fears and desires for what we believe will provide us with fulfilment and joy.



July 'Thought of the Month': What is Love?



“Love is the experience of connection to or union with the object of our love that we desire. But love can be experienced at a number of levels. I believe that our physical desires can only make us happy. While our relationships can bring us joy. However, our spirituality can lead to blissful experiences. It may be useful to reflect on what we invest our desires in with such hope and expectation. It shows us where we are focusing our heart's desires.”

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Thought of the Month Article: What is Love?

The yearning for love occurs when your desires are invested into the object of your love, which can be a person or material things, such as food and possessions. The yearning of love occurs when we perceive the objects or person we yearn for will result in the experience of love, joy and fulfilment. This can be happen in many ways - from falling in love with your first car and polishing it often to falling for another person. So

that begs the question: What is this love we all pursue?

Love is an experience of union or connectedness. We are placing an expectation on how we will feel when we have that person or object in our life. Until our love or desire is fulfilled, we will have a yearning for this, and potentially invest so much time and energy and focus on securing this experience (which explains stalkers!). The problem with this is that the experience we are expecting may not actually deliver what we hope for, or be as fulfilling or long-lasting as we expected. This does suggest that there is something more and undefined that we are pursuing in this drive for love.

Love is the experience of connection to or union with the object of our love. Romantic movies, books and songs clearly display this pursuit – the ever present drive to find more meaning and fulfilment by connecting with the perfect or ideal partner. But there are higher and lower forms of this love. A lower form of love is love expressed in the physical plane, such as the love of food, the love of our entertainment system and anything else material that we pursue with an expectation of happiness or fulfilment. A higher form of love is spiritual or collective love. This love is concerned with seeing all others of equal value and as being no different to who we are. These different planes of love can be further defined.

Pursuing love in the physical plane through desires and pleasures represent misplaced attempts to fill emotional emptiness and promotes ‘me, me, me.’ This can include seeking comfort from food, feeling happier with your last purchase or always hoping for the new car or home, in the absence of true inner fulfilment.

The pursuance of romantic love is characterised as "I". Meaning, who am I? We typically work through this question in our relationships. It is our relationships which force us to resolve the dilemma of maintaining our individuality while being part of ‘us’ in a relationship. The other person becomes a mirror in which we can see who we are reflected, which allows us to discover ‘I’ – who we are.

Spiritual love is characterised as "we" - We are one, We are the same. It is no surprise that those who pursue spiritual love often try to detach from physical desires of the physical plane through fasting and removal from materialism. Those who choose the path of celibacy are also trying to detach from other aspects of love which need to be transcended, such as sexual energy. Working this through in an intimate and romantic relationship is equally valid.

The above 3 paragraphs can be summarised as follows:

- In the physical plane love is expressed as lust, and union is attempted through uniting two bodies, which is not possible.
- In the emotional plane love is expressed as romantic love, and union is attempted through uniting two psyches or personalities, which is also not possible. They can only be shared.
- In the spiritual plane love is expressed as collective love, and union is attempted through uniting our spirits to experience bliss.

Each plane of Love represents an increased capacity to join with a higher aspect of ourselves and with others. However, I believe we cannot completely unite with another until we experience Divine love. This represents the idea that there is only one entity with which we can have the perfect union. However, we are so often focused on seeking perfection in other people, such as the perfect partner or seeing perfection in celebrities. Perfection lies within us if we can find it.

I believe that our physical desires can only make us happy. While our relationships can bring us joy.

However, our spirituality can lead to blissful experiences. The more joy and bliss you connect to through your own development, the more you can bring them into your everyday moments. Physical plane desires last for a short time – you get hungry again, the novelty of the latest gadget wears off, people start to look old and lose their youth. The higher forms of love provide deeper and longer lasting fulfilment and the peace and love that are part of the whole experience of connecting to your true self.

Therefore, it is vitally important to not try and extract more happiness from each plane than it is capable of delivering. It can be useful to be aware just what you are investing your desires in, and whether you are over-estimating how much joy and fulfilment it will bring, or how long you think it will last. These feelings are inner states that need to be developed within you for a deeper and sustaining experience of them.

As a collective, humankind is at a stage of learning who we are through the experience of romantic love. It is so vitally important to work through your relationships and increase your capacity to love another intimately. This can be a difficult and tiring journey and we often seek the quick fix to fulfilment through focusing on fulfilment through physical desires – food, possessions and physical beauty. Developing relationships can also be avoided by focusing on spiritual love through reading and meditative practices, while relationships are being neglected. Our relationships are the foundation of our psyche, and once we heal our psyche and know who we are, there is even more love and fulfilment to be had as the journey continues.

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