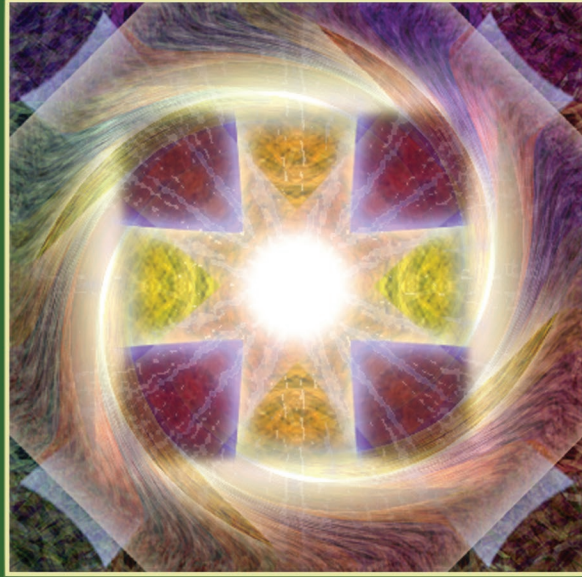


CARDS FOR LIVING



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- ❖ Pseudo Love – Pseudo Love Chart
- ❖ Humanity
- ❖ Relationship – Building Strong Relationships
- ❖ Power – Using Power Well and Wisely
- ❖ True Freedom – Stuckness & Limitation
- ❖ Wrong Responses to Wrongdoing – Right Response to Wrongdoing
- ❖ Self-Liberation – How to Escape Self-Limiting Identification/Beliefs/Habits
- ❖ High Integrity Living – Integrity, True or False?
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- ❖ Healthy Dependence – Unhealthy Dependence
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Love Is

Love is giving to other hearts what our own heart longs for, and would truly value.

Love sees. Love recognizes the goodness in the beloved and won't fail to appreciate it. Love feels. Understands. Commits. Love is reliable, not whimsical. Love *gives*.

Love is unselfish. Love is for the beloved. Love is the intention to make loved ones happy, to bring out the best in them, to free them from suffering. Love *works*.

Love comes from God—and love *is* God (as “God is love”). Therefore, love has all of God's Divine qualities and intentions. And, the more you love, the closer you feel to God, to others, and to your own true, ever-loving self—because you *are* love.

How love benefits everyone

Imagine a mother feeding her baby: The tenderness of her being, the care she pours on the baby nourishes its heart. And she herself is blessed by the child's receptivity, trust, and sweetness. Their circle of love feeds them *both*.

What love would do

Love, sincerely and generously lived, would solve the problems on this planet. It would heal sadness and loneliness, end conflict, and create beauty all around. Wholehearted love brings people to life, and makes life worth living.

Rainbow of Love

LOVE CARES

You feel tender concern for the beloved's well-being—emotional, physical, and spiritual. You feel that their joy is your joy, their sorrow your sorrow. You want to take care of them. And because everyone loves to be needed, care *includes* the desire and willingness to be cared for and healed *by* the beloved.

LOVE APPRECIATES

You feel, see, and respond to all that is good and beautiful in the beloved. You offer your heartfelt joy and respect in response to who they are. And you desire them.

LOVE UNDERSTANDS

Love reaches to understand the heart and soul, the hopes, desires, and fears of the beloved. You want to know, hear, and understand your loved ones *entirely*.

LOVE IS DEVOTED

Love is unselfish devotion, commitment to the true well-being and happiness of the beloved. In love, you give yourself for the joy, benefit, and fulfillment of the beloved.

LOVE RECOGNIZES

You see the true self—the Divine nature—of the beloved. Their Divine beauty. Their heart and feeling. Their sensitivity and goodness. Their unique and exquisite beauty. And you recognize their power to heal and uplift you.

LOVE WANTS TO LIBERATE

Love wants to help the beloved find relief from their suffering—including the pain that results from thoughts and behaviors that make them feel unhappy, limited, less-than-Godly, less like themselves.

LOVE IS LOYAL

Love commits to doing right by the beloved, providing steady, ongoing support, standing up for them when they need it, defending their goodness against any untrue thought that we or anyone else might have about them. Love means being true to the beloved.

LOVE IS DIVINE

God is love. When love moves, God moves. When you move with love, God moves with you. To love is to respond to all that lives as a healing flow of energy and compassion.

PSEUDO LOVE

Fear of love
—really?

It's crazy! So many fears and tears associated with love! Mention the word love, and people start talking about terrible stuff: losing oneself, sick attachment, sorrow, heartbreak, and disillusionment. Insane jealousy! Being used, betrayed, hurt! Even *being* abusive (as in, "We only hurt the one we love, the one we shouldn't hurt at all"). But *wait!* None of that is love.

Here's when love hurts:
when it's NOT love,
because it's too selfish

Friends, can we be honest about "love troubles"? Love troubles are unlove troubles. Love doesn't cause grief—*selfishness* does. Bad things happen when people think and act selfishly in relationships (i.e., "*I'm here for ME; to get what I want from you.*") But friends, please don't call *that* love!

A sane
conclusion
about love

The unlove we've brought into our homes and relationships has broken so many hearts. But let's not go crazy with grief and point the finger at love. Especially since it's love—and *only* love—that will mend these broken hearts, fix broken relationships, and lift the humanity out of its lonely despair.

Save the good name of love!

PSEUDO LOVE

EGO MOTIVE	PRESUMED BENEFIT	ACTUAL DOWNSIDE
COLLUSION	Pleasing loved ones/gaining their favor by satisfying their ego. Trying to make the relationship last by self-protectively avoiding confrontation.	Hurting the beloved by supporting destructive tendencies (tendencies which only undermine the relationship in the long run).
MANIPULATION	Getting what I (selfishly) want by sweet-talking, coercion, guilt-tripping, etc. Exerting control and dominance over the beloved immorally.	Lack of genuineness and real connection. Hurting the beloved's heart. Creating ill will, distance, and distrust.
MARTYRDOM	Seeming virtuous, loving, and self-sacrificing even while neglecting higher virtues of love (vulnerability, sensitivity, responsiveness, attentiveness, etc.)	A treadmill of fruitless effort with only exhaustion, disillusionment, alienation, and heartbreak to show for it.
UNHEALTHY ATTACHMENT	The "security" of owning the beloved exclusively. Satisfying or fulfilling selfish, addictive desires.	Harvesting the bitter fruit of jealousy, hyper-control, and insecurity. Losing sight of the beloved's best interests and feelings.
UNHEALTHY OBSESSION	Reaping huge rewards by means of intense focus on an object of desire.	Destroying one's peace, losing a sane and loving perspective, alienating people.
PLEASURE TREASURE	To be gratified and satisfied. To enjoy pleasure or some other ego-appealing treasure.	Suffering the pain and desolation caused to oneself and others by unlove and greedy, self-indulgent living.
SELFISH SELF-INTEREST	Getting what I want (even at the cost of real love).	Sacrificing the beloved's best interests and good will. Sacrificing rightness & self-esteem.
SHALLOW AGAPE LOVE	Appearing loving and enjoying minimal connection with people while avoiding the bigger, more beneficial challenges of close relationship.	Shallow relationships. Loneliness. Being under-nourished and under-nourishing. Never gaining real competence in loving.

HUMANITY

If you want the greatest treasure on earth, you can find it in yourself: great untapped qualities of beauty, power, even Divinity. If we'd just be ourselves, we'd bring much life and color to this world. But too often, we judge and reject our most exquisite qualities—like passion, fragility, and need.

Look: The qualities we feel ashamed of, the ones we won't live or give, are the crown jewels of human existence. When everyone/anyone expresses their valuable qualities, they bring God's light, God's gifts to the world. When we find and *embrace* these things in ourselves, we'll lavish treasures on our friends and the whole world—and naturally validate these same beauties in all.

WILL TO SERVE

Why do we want to make a positive difference?
And why would we rather do things for others than for ourselves alone? We were born to serve. Made for each other—really.

It's no sacrifice

Afraid of depletion? Don't be.
Serving freely gives us energy.
And inspiration. And stamina.
It evaporates feelings of
separateness & self-concern,
and makes us full and happy.

You have what it takes

Think you have "nothing to offer"? Everything you've got—every asset, power, ability; your tenderness, feeling, insight—could make a fine gift! You were born to give it!

WE'RE NOT LIVIN' TIL WE'RE GIVEN

PASSION

GOD MAKES BEAUTY—NOT JUNK

Passion is not a trait that *some* people have, and some don't. PASSION = PERSON! Passion is what happens when anyone brings themselves—their vision, their faith, their power, their feeling—into life.

Passion brings real you to real life

A passionate heart lives in every human being, beating with inspiration, love, desire. Why deprive the world of you? Let your passion live!

Passion brings solutions to life

Passionate people live, and in living, give. Passion powers all our contributions to life. It has the energy to create change, to heal, to uplift! And thereby save lives.

CREATIVITY

NO ONE'S UNPASSIONATE, JUST SUPPRESSED

Your creative power

We humans have far more creative power than we know. We create joy or disappointment (in ourselves and others) every day. We make people laugh or cry with a word; thrill or chill with a look. To improve your effects, improve your *intentions*: do it for love. THAT works.

Not the creative type? Don't be silly, you're God's child. Creativity runs in the family!

Your creative sensitivity

All of God's children have the impulse to create beauty and the sensitivity to succeed at it. Like that red flower you stuck in the bouquet at the last minute. Excellent choice!

YOU CAN UNDERESTIMATE YOUR CREATIVE POWER, BUT NOT REDUCE IT

DESIRE

We judge desire as selfish, but it can be a beautiful gift! Desire brings life to our relationships. It lights up the world with our energy, attention, intention. It makes things happen.

It's good to be wanted

The saddest words in the world:
"No one wants me."
Like an unwanted mate, or an orphan.

It's good to want

We die (or *feel* dead) if we stop desiring. Desire brings us to life. It focuses the mind, energizes the body, expresses the heart.

WILL TO LOVE

LOVE MAKES DESIRE HEALTHY

People close their hearts, calling love dangerous and painful. Nothing's more painful than trying to live without love. Love is our home.

Love is what we are, and want to be

We all want to love more than anything—naturally. Maybe that's why it takes so much self-suppression to squelch our love.

Love is what we watch for, and want to see

Everyone wants love. Love is the currency of life. In every exchange, it's the ebb and flow of love that we care about *most*.

HUMANITY

NEED

We may not want to need, but we sure want to be needed—hmm. Need is not a *weakness* or *flaw*, just a *fact*. As social creatures, we're not whole without others.

We need to be needed

"No one needs me"—what a heartache!
Like a mom whose kids are all gone; or a friend whose help was refused.

and so do other people

Our loved ones need to feel needed by us—or they need to find *someone who will* need them.

NO PERSON IS AN ISLAND

FRAGILITY

THEIR vulnerability empowers US

They say it's risky to be vulnerable and show your feelings, but how sad it is when people won't. Like someone not missing you when you're gone, or not responding when you say, "I love you." True feeling responses are food for our soul.

Who wants to be vulnerable? Who wants to show weakness? A *strong* person, they say—and an *honest* person!

OUR vulnerability empowers THEM

Our vulnerability allows others to move us, heal us, feed us. It makes their caring impulses matter. How sweet, to make someone smile, sigh—or blush!

THINK YOU'RE NOT FRAGILE? WE ALL NEED TO BE HANDLED WITH CARE

A KEY FOR FULFILLING RELATIONSHIP: FIND SOMEONE WHO SINCERELY NEEDS AND WANTS YOUR LOVE

Relationship

Because we're social beings, we can't find fulfillment without each other

United at heart

No man is an island. We're all connected, and that explains a lot:

Our sympathetic response to joy and suffering in living things. Our distaste for conflict, selfishness, injustice, inhumanity. Our deep wish to create rightness for all. Guilt and regret for hurting someone. Our desire for others. The feeling of being at home in the warmth of love. The pain of separation, the ache of loneliness. Our joy in doing for others compared to doing for ourselves alone.

... We all feel these things.

Fulfillment is social

Home is where the hearts join. No one feels complete on their own, only when part of a whole. A perfect bolt is made for the space shuttle, and there its true potential is realized. It has no purpose apart from the shuttle. Similarly, we find our purpose in relationship to each other. You may have strength, beauty, intelligence, passion, but if it doesn't make someone happy, it's just a heartache. No island is a (true) man—or woman.

Divided we fall

"Me *vs.* you" is public enemy number one. Enemy of love, relationships, cooperation—even of survival. To presume separation is to condemn life and love to shallows and miseries. As long as we believe we're separate, we act accordingly: hurting each other; being grabby and insensitive; cutting in line; being unreliable, dishonest—AS IF we didn't affect others. AS IF separation is, and unity isn't. The fact is, we're all swimming in one pond: pollute it, and everyone suffers.

United we stand

Only in togetherness do we find our true power, beauty, and effectiveness. Practically: two heads are better than one; many hands make light the work; almost all great accomplishments come from teamwork. Emotionally: we know the joy of feeling at home in one another, the joy of togetherness and belonging—that sweet dance in which loved ones respond to our heart, needs, feelings, and we respond to theirs. YES! Such glories appear only when people relate within wholeness (when you and I realize we're one—and feel, think, and live accordingly).

Building Strong Relationships

PLAN B

Perceive

Love

Appreciate

Bond

Need

PLAN A

the usual
(ineffective)
methods

complain
beg
cry
dream
scheme
wait patiently
or impatiently
pretend
manipulate
flirt
mope
hope
threaten
mess up
give up

Perceive. Have you ever felt, “No one sees me, no one recognizes me”? We all need to be seen and recognized for who we are. And we need attention. Attention makes us feel that people *value* us. And it gives us strength, because it’s a form of energy. So, to nourish someone’s heart, *see* them, *recognize* them, *understand* them, and give them your precious *attention*.

Love. Can you think of anything finer than being *loved*? If you want to give a gift of true value to someone, if you want to make a big positive difference in their life, give your heart—sincerely, generously. What could anyone want or need more?

Appreciate. Everyone needs their beauty and good qualities not just to be *seen* but also *appreciated*. So express your appreciation. It will mean the world to them.

Need. People need to be *needed*. To want and need someone is to fulfill one of their deepest desires. So forget the “self-protective” attempt to avoid disappointment by not depending on others. *Dare* to need people. It gives your friend a chance to be helpful, and a motivation to be trustworthy. It brings out their strength.

Bond. By following Plan B, you’ll create strong bonds of friendship—guaranteed!

NOTE TO SELF: Plan A *doesn't* work.

Plan B WORKS: What you need, give to others.

Being a person means having enormous

POWER

power—even in our words, our glances. We each impact our world tremendously. For example, you can make someone's day with a simple word of appreciation, or ruin it with a disgusted look. A man comes home in a bad mood. He doesn't need to say anything; his wife feels it, and a cloud of gloom falls over their home. We can use our power to make people happy, too. We can uplift with a smile or a touch; inspire-heal-love with an encouraging word. We can surprise and delight! We are powerful.

Seeing how much impact we have, we may try to escape responsibility by withdrawing from life, and “not doing anything.” But even *not* participating has *huge* effects: Someone screams for help; no one responds. A husband neglects his wife; she leaves him. “I didn't do anything!” he cries. True! But how harmful “not doing” can be.

To know your own power and use it compassionately is *love*—it is true humanity. Love says, “I don't want to hurt you carelessly.” Imagine if you gave your *all* to loving people, how much it would change their lives and yours. We all have that power at our fingertips.

Many *think* they're powerless because they don't get what they want. Horsefeathers! We *all* have huge powers, regardless of wealth, skill, or status. Here are a few:

CONVICTION: *Expectation, assumption, belief.*

We create what we expect. You can wreck a relationship with distrust, or build it up with good expectations. How

do you feel if someone considers you worthless? Or what if they expect greatness of you? Conviction matters!

COMMITMENT: *Loyalty, dedication, persistence, effort.*

The power to work, to get things done, overcome challenges. To discipline oneself, develop skills, break bad habits or create good ones. In relationship, commitment heals hearts, builds trust, and makes love last.

HUMANITY: *Passion, emotion, vulnerability, cuteness.*

We all hold keys that open hearts: Feeling. Fragility. Enthusiasm. Moxie. Desire. Humor—laughter heals in seconds! An authentic out-of-the-box person uplifts and delights . . . because we're *all* inspired by true, raw *humanity*.

LOVE: *Care, nurturing, empathy, recognition.*

Your heart is the greatest power you have, because in this crazy world, nearly everyone is desperately crying for love. We have the power of forgiveness, which heals and revives. The power to be sincere and open-hearted—what a gem! The power of recognition—to bring out the best in people by seeing, understanding, and appreciating them. So give your heart, and watch people come back to life!

TOGETHERNESS: *Resonance, agreement, participation.*

There is power in togetherness, in agreement—wind in one's sails. Anyone who has joined with another in a common purpose knows that. To throw yourself in wholeheartedly is a gift of great power.

USING POWER WELL & WISELY

There's no such thing as a powerless person—only one who has suppressed, denied, or misused their power. Here are five tips for using power well:

1. OWN YOUR POWER. Many people don't want to know their own power, because they don't want to take responsibility for how much they affect others. When we've made a mess or hurt someone, we may prefer to go into denial or blame. For example: a man hurts his wife's feelings but won't admit he made her sad, so he complains that she's "moody." The problem is, if you deny your impact on others, you end up believing you *have* no power. You feel like a victim of others, the world, God; "unable" to make things better. Not true!

Take responsibility for your power. When you miscreate, say, "Wow, I *did* that, but I'll do better next time"—and use your power more wisely, beneficially, beautifully thereafter.

2. NOTICE WHERE YOUR RESULTS COME FROM. We're powerful beings, but often we're unaware of what we're creating, or how we're creating it: A woman with a bad attitude alienates everyone she meets, then can't understand why people don't like her. A man gives flowers in an insecure, fearful spirit, and it turns the girl off. *Most* of our power is not in what we do, but in how we feel and think. If we'd recognize the power of our thoughts, attitudes, and intentions, and take responsibility for them, we could use our power to create beauty—on purpose.

3. EXERCISE YOUR POWER BENEFICIALLY. We're always creating. When we feel "powerless," it's because we don't *like* what we're creating. Perhaps we're lonely, because we push people away. Perhaps we love music, but we're too undisciplined to learn to play. Perhaps we lose our temper too fast, and apologize too slow. When we use our power foolishly, thoughtlessly, insensitively, we don't create the life we want.

Everyone has the heart and sensitivity to create sweet relationships and live beautifully. If you feel powerless, most likely you haven't used your powers well and wisely enough.

4. BEWARE OF USING POWER SELFISHLY. People think power is about being the boss, getting what you want, etc. But when you're too much about you, you conflict with everyone else. For example: people who don't cooperate with others end up feeling powerless, because no one will cooperate with them. Selfishness makes you ineffective, because you can't work well with people, support good relationships, gain loyalty and trust, etc. Love makes you effective, because people respond to love, they are moved and healed by it. A lover *earns* people's loyalty and cooperation.

5. SUPERCHARGE YOUR POWER—WITH HEART. Only a heart purpose fills and fulfills you. If you pursue selfish goals, you may "succeed," but still feel empty and powerless—like the man who made a fortune, but wonders what good his life was. When you align your will with love and good purposes, you feel strong because you are contributing positively to life. The wind of Life moves through you, bringing creative energy, inspired thought, and beauty to life.

True Freedom

*YOU are always free, regardless of what you've done, been, or experienced.
And in fact, you've proven many times that you are free. For example:*

FREEDOM TO SELF-IMPRISON ► *brought yourself down*

gave people a big headache

did wrong

BEEN THERE!

lost your way

FREEDOM TO SELF-LIBERATE ► *brought yourself back up*

gave people big joy

made right

found your way

DONE THAT!

See? We've all made choices in all directions, and changed directions.

And our choices made HUGE differences, BIG changes. If they DIDN'T, we wouldn't be truly free. It's part of our freedom that we have the power to change our lives—for better or worse:

WE'RE 100% FREE TO CHANGE OUR LIVES!

If you don't like **anything** about what you're doing or being (or not doing/not being)—if any of it grates against your heart—it's not mandatory. You're free to change any habit, any pattern, any previous choice—or not.

THE 6 MOST POWERFUL CHOICES WE MAKE

1. Will we listen to our heart, or ignore it?
2. Will we take responsibility for our lives, or not?
3. How will we interpret our situation?
4. What attitude will we hold about it?
5. Will we (choose to) love—and how much?
6. Who do we (choose to) think we ARE?*

* see the "Who You Are" card

THE GREATEST FREEDOM OF ALL

The greatest freedom of all is the freedom to be you—and the range of what you are is practically infinite. There is an ocean of being inside you, with endless intricacies and possibilities. The joyful experience of freedom is yours when you draw freely from your inner ocean, and bring the treasure inside you to life. Now you can be freely, appropriately responsive to situations at hand. (So, for example, you don't have to get stuck being a prim librarian in the midst of wild dancers—or a wild dancer in a serious discussion.) You can be as you wish to be, or need to be.

We enjoy true freedom when we don't refuse our freedom, or deny we have it. Instead, we USE it for its true purpose: to create delight and goodness. Now THAT's living!

About Stuckness & Limitation

... we're free?

They say we're *free* to be ourselves, free to choose our destiny. But don't you ever wonder, "If I'm so damn free, why do I feel so limited?"

Human beings aren't naturally limited. We've accidentally put ourselves in bondage by using our freedom selfishly. We *think* we're more free if we use our freedom for selfish purposes: to get what we want/avoid what we don't want—without regard for others or the resulting problems. Wrong!

The truth is, choosing selfishly is *not* more free, and choosing for love and rightness does not limit us. There are *infinite* options and possibilities in both, but selfish living hurts and imprisons us.

Here are SIX ways it happens...

1. Getting trapped in smallness. When we obsessively pursue selfish goals and objects of selfish desire, we feel narrowed and small—trapped in a vortex of obsession with what we want. Feeling like a slave to our selfish desires and impulses, we lose touch with our true power and freedom.

2. Getting stuck in selfish habit patterns. When we "freely" pursue what we want, we may keep going even when our actions are hurtful to ourselves and others. When we make a bad choice repeatedly, it becomes a bad habit. We stop seeing it as a choice. We feel stuck. Very UNfree! Yet it's *still* a choice!

3. Getting stuck in avoidance. When you freely avoid doing what you don't want, certain muscles atrophy. You get weak. Dysfunction results. And that dysfunction cripples you and restricts your freedom—until you decide to face your challenges and rebuild your muscles.

4. Inability is wish fulfillment for the unwilling. An "easy" way out of higher responsibilities—like love, caring, giving, etc.—is to believe you can't do it (e.g. *I can't do math. I can't dance. I can't do relationship. I can't love*). The result? You gradually "buy" inability, getting smaller and less capable than you truly *are*.

5. Avoiding responsibility makes us feel powerless. Selfish people are quick to blame others for their ills. "It's my circumstance, my upbringing, my mate, that *makes* me this way." But wait! Displacing responsibility for your life and love disempowers you. Remember, you can't solve a problem you don't *have*.

6. The best, most fulfilling possibilities in life are beyond the reach of selfish people. A selfish person can't support close intimacy or cooperative alliances with others. So they live in their tiny boxes, alone—deprived of the beautiful experiences love creates, feeling locked out of love.

WRONG RESPONSES TO WRONGDOING

Guilt is our heart's way of telling us it's unhappy with our choices. The heart is good, and doesn't like to hurt people or do wrong; it wants to love, help, give, create beauty. Guilt is a compass to point us back in the right direction when we go wrong. And thank God for it! But too often, we deal with guilt unconstructively.

For example, we think we're bad because we did wrong. Not so! Our discomfort with wrongdoing proves that we're good—only a *good* heart feels bad about wrong. So, our goodness is not in question, but our *choices* are—and we can fix our choices if we listen to our heart. Guilt is not there to condemn us or make us feel terrible. It's an inner call to make a change, constructively, in a good spirit.

Sometimes, to escape the pain of guilt, we try to stifle the heart and pretend we don't feel what we feel. We make excuses, blame others, claim not to know any better; we build layer upon layer of false ideas about reality to cover up our shame. But what a social and psychological mess that creates! If we would just deal with our guilt constructively and use it to correct our errors, we would free ourselves of so much emotional baggage. We'd be liberated!

Unconstructive reactions to guilt don't make things right. They only make us feel *more* guilty. Here are four common ways we mishandle guilt that only increase it:

1. JUSTIFICATIONS & EXCUSES

- Defend my good image/innocence when my deeds, attitudes, etc. are questioned (even by my own heart).
- Blame others: *"He MADE me lose my temper." "It's a mean world, you HAVE to look out for number one." "God hates me."*
- Make myself bad: *"I'm messed up. I can't do any better."*

2. COMPENSATION ("MAKE-BELIEVE GOOD") Hide guilt behind good deeds, fake smiles, and delusional goodness.
EXAMPLES: martyr; overly cheerful person; indulgent absentee dad; self-righteous bigot; overly humble-serviceful person

3. SELF PUNISHMENT

- *Beat myself up*
- *Martyr-like self sacrifice*
- *Many apologies*
- *Negative self-image*
- *Self deprivation*
- *Unhealthy discipline*

4. LETTING TIME FIX IT

They say time heals all wounds—but procrastinating only creates more hurt and guilt. So don't delay righting wrongs.

RIGHT RESPONSE TO WRONGDOING

Made mistakes? We all have. This card explains the right, healthy, effective way to respond to the pain you feel when you've done wrong.

DO THIS



FEEL. Feelings of regret and guilt—conscience pangs—naturally result from wrongdoing. That's your heart, your inner compass talking—listen to it. Your moral sensitivity is excellent, reliable, and praiseworthy. It shows you care and you have a good, sensitive heart.



UNDERSTAND. We all make mistakes, but if you understand what you did wrong, you can correct it. Good old simple understanding empowers you to make things right: "THAT was wrong; THIS is what's wrong with it."

DON'T DO THIS

- X NO EXCUSES.** Sure, sometimes things get in the way of the rightness you intended. But a habit of making excuses is no good. We all want and need to be trustworthy, even to ourselves. That takes self-honesty, responsibility—and NO excuses!
- X NO BLAME.** Why displace responsibility on others, or on circumstances, to "prove" yourself innocent of sins for which you are, in reality, responsible—and you know it.
- X NO SHAME.** Beating yourself up is *far* less than useless. It only weakens you and depresses others. Take that energy and invest it in doing *right*.

DO UNTO OTHERS, pt 1

We all hope that a person who does wrong would care enough to regret it.

We hope, too, that they will want to understand truly what they did wrong—so they can do *differently* in the future.

CORRECT AN OFF COURSE? ... OF COURSE!

Surely, doing *right* is the only way to end the pain that naturally results from doing *wrong*. This is self-understood. When we do wrong and keep doing it, we just feel more and more guilty. No surprise there!

Don't let an "off course" become an "of course"

Without shame or blame, go ahead and *right* your *wrongs*. If you did something that caused another person suffering or loss, and you regret it—give back to them. Surely your heart would want to do that. It's your faithful guide—listen to it.

DO UNTO OTHERS, pt 2

Who wants to see a person giving excuses? And who wants to see them dive into shame or blame?

We'd all prefer they'd *skip* that junk. Just *feel* the error, *understand* it, and *correct* it.

Self-Liberation

Freedom is our natural state. Freedom of heart and mind to feel, love, think, and create, without false restrictions. As it is, people are bored stiff—cramped, unhappy, unfulfilled—because they're so limited; like a child who once ran and played in the sun and now lies in bed, his legs and arms all bound up. We bind ourselves in conscious or unconscious attempts to get out of things we've judged dangerous, bad, wrong, edgy, or more unselfish than we want to be. With those judgments, we reject life's brightest possibilities, like love, passion, desire, excitement, need, creativity, boldness, over-the-top-ness, spontaneity, candor, and giving. Many people have even given up their honest thoughtfulness, and settled for the preconceived ideas of culture—so afraid to think outside the box.

The prison of "knowing" who you are

There are millions of possibilities for being, living, loving, responding, but we will only do what's within the scope of who we *think* we are. We avoid the rest by saying/believing "who we are" is incapable of it or unsuited to it. "I can't dance." "I can't love." "I'm not a passionate person." "I can't get along with others." "I always mess up relationships." Those are lies, but as long as we *believe* they're true, they're shackles. We've cut our options way down, because there's so much our self-image doesn't include.

An elephant tied to a lawn chair may be convinced he is trapped even though, in fact, he has one hundred times the strength he needs to walk away. Just so, we are already free of all the self-imposed limitations we buy into. We all have the power to break the chains that bind us—the habits, fears, and insecurities—but we don't dare. We feel safer, more comfortable in the straitjacket of our limited lives; our mediocre loves; our "inadequacies." But the heart rails against those limitations, and longs to live and give the very things we avoid and fear—and it always will.

Friend, you assembled a Frankenstein, an illusory self-concept—and now it's holding you captive? Don't spend the rest of your life tied to it, convinced you're incapable of more or better. In your heart, you *know* that's not true. You created it and bought into it; let it go! Withdraw your conviction from it, and you're free. Free to be. Free to love. Free to discover the wonders and mysteries of life, not the least of which is *yourself*.

Free to love

Freedom is the freedom to love. You can't love with self-limitations binding you at every side. Letting go of your self-concept opens you up to infinite possibilities of being, responding, and relating. It gives you freedom, scope, range. So let go of who you *think* you are, and be free!

How to Escape Self-Limiting Identification/Beliefs/Habits

We all want to be free, but many people have become so *used* to confinement, they're afraid of freedom and what it might bring. Fear of that unknown is irrational, because what's beyond the door is wonderful—wonders of love; freedom; connection with God; wild creativity; true competence; being yourself. And all the tender and heartfelt expressions you have bottled up inside—beauties to share if only you'd *dare*!

Stretch it till it breaks

To break free, you need to act outside your comfort zone—stretch, do things you wouldn't normally do, or do familiar things with a new spirit or tone. For example: You think you can't dance, but then one day you go out on the dance floor and cut loose. You've expanded your self-image to include a new possibility—dancing! You can do the same with expressing love, telling a joke, being honest, keeping commitments, or making sacrifices . . . anything!

Now: when you stretch a rubber band, it snaps back as soon as you let go. Similarly, when you stretch beyond your self-image, you'll tend to snap back to your "normal" ways when you stop making the effort. With repeated stretching, the rubber band becomes loose and gets easier to stretch. But if you stretch it *far enough*, it breaks. So, stretch until your little old self-image breaks. After that, you no longer believe you're the one you thought you were. *You* are the one who was unhappy in that cage, because your wingspan was too large for it. Now you're free!

Self-liberation takes consistency and wholeheartedness. Most people approach their freedom quest like a casual hobby, but experience shows that won't work. Someone who does a couple of jumping jacks each day never gets fit; neither does a person who runs five miles, but only once every two months. We need intense practice and steady commitment to succeed.


You can be free if you're willing to boldly claim your freedom. You may tremble as you step into a life of higher love and greater freedom, but that will pass. There will be challenges, but none of them are insurmountable. You just have to stay committed, and they can be handled.

Freedom is for lovers!

For love's sake, you would break free. We do for love what we would not otherwise do. We stretch. The heart needs and desires of the beloved are the *best* reason to stretch. And the true lover is the most likely to break free—because he cares. You *are* a lover. The one you are responds powerfully to life and people, but from within the box of your ordinary patterns, reservations, fears, habits, etc., you can't respond honestly, and freely give the beautiful impulses arising in you. You know that. You need to break through to be true to you. Free of your self-image and all its moods and fears and objections, you're free for good, and free to *do* good. Free for good, once and for all!



HIGH INTEGRITY LIVING



Integrity is following your heart, as a way of living. Your heart has a lot to say about how you live, how you relate to people, the choices you make.

A person of integrity . . .


is flexible. Everyone has the intelligence and sensitivity to feel what's right and needed in the moment. A person of integrity will change their mind or their plan when they realize they were wrong, or another idea/plan is better.

expresses the true and loving impulses of their heart, instead of suppressing them out of pride or fear. If they love someone, they give their love to that person. If they appreciate someone, they say so. Anything less is untrue.

does what they know is right even if they don't feel like it. Sometimes it's hard to do what's right, other times it's easy. Integrity means doing right anyway.

is responsible for their thinking. They will not indulge in thoughts that grate against their heart. They direct their mind to be honest and constructive, rejecting thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes they are not proud of.

is true to themselves. Integrity is living in alignment with your heart. Your heart wants to dance with life—sensitively, beautifully. It loves rightness, and cries out against wrong. If we all lived by heart, the world would be much better.



When we feel bad about the way we live, we are out integrity. Integrity is living in a way your heart is happy with, and not ashamed of.

It's an integrity break to . . .

be rigid. Many people think integrity means always sticking by pride and principles. But in maintaining a rigid position, you're ignoring your heart's present responses to life and people. You're fighting *against* your heart. That's *not* integrity.

withhold your heart. When you hold back your love, your feelings, your tears, or in any way suppress your heart, you are not being true to yourself. And you're denying your loved ones the glorious heart and soul gifts you have for them.

abandon what you know is right because of preference or convenience. That makes us ashamed. We're happy and confident when we live in a way our hearts approve of.

indulge in thoughts or beliefs we know are false. We often reactively think things we *know* aren't true. A child's mother says, "You shouldn't be mean to Granny." He thinks, "Mom hates me!" even though he *knows* she doesn't—and she's right.

live as someone other than who we are, ignoring what we know and feel—perhaps to play it safe; to fit in; because we've judged our true nature afoul; or because we're not willing to live up to our own standards. "To thine own self be true."

INTEGRITY, TRUE or FALSE?

People have many false ideas about integrity. They think it means defending your pride, doing “what I want when I want,” sticking to your own ideas, etc. But honestly, you know better than to put your pride, preferences, and ideas over what is right and true. And you feel guilty and conflicted when you do. Your heart has a better way. To follow that better way is true integrity.

See if you can distinguish between true and false integrity in these options. Would you:

Work reliably at a job for the family's sake — **OR** — Quit and lose the family home because you didn't feel like going to work.

Listen with an open mind and admit it when you're wrong — **OR** — Argue even after you know you're wrong.

Defend yourself at the cost of relationship harmony — **OR** — Let go of your pride in order to do right by your mate.

Insist that the team do things your way — **OR** — Go with the best, most effective idea no matter who thought of it.

Give your heart sincerely in spite of fear, insecurity, etc. — **OR** — Withhold your heart and its expressions to stay safe.

Stand up for someone who's wrongly accused — **OR** — Refuse to take sides in order to avoid personal risk.

Common signs of following your heart

NOT normally troubled, anxious, or afraid

Feeling generally secure and confident

Enjoying deep, personally intimate communication;
communicating sincerely, freely in abundance

Being receptive to love, and to soul-nourishing exchanges

Living boldly, freely enjoying what some call “risk”

Socially responsible/aware. Sincerely interested in the
human impact of one's thoughts, attitudes, and actions

Common signs of *not* following your heart

Suffering from chronic dissatisfaction, guilt, and inner conflict

Feeling insecure, guilty, defensive, self-conscious, unworthy

Shadowed by thoughts and/or deeds you'd hate sharing or
having discovered. Strategic, manipulative. Hiding. Guarded.

Fearing, minimizing deep personal exchanges

Living in a careful, timid manner for the sake of self-protection

Oblivious to the impact of one's thoughts, attitudes and
actions: “I don't want to know and I don't care” (yeah, right)

Healthy independence is . . .

Freedom from external forces. A person with healthy independence doesn't let their environment or circumstance dictate their behavior. If a fight breaks out, they can keep their head. If someone insults them, they don't need to insult back—they can return right for wrong. When all the lemmings are headed over a cliff, they can go the other way. They don't try to be different on *principle*, but when integrity requires it, they *can* be different. They aren't tied to any kind of programming—be it religious dogma, upbringing, or cultural fads and norms. They think for themselves.

A truly independent person feels free to interpret experiences constructively. They won't indulge in irresponsible, blaming, or victimized attitudes. They won't turn away from love because they had a bad experience, however painful. They can *love* in an *unloving* world, be generous in a greedy world, and bring sanity where there is none. Healthy independence means: no matter what you're handed in life or how you're treated, you stand firm on your soul's true values, and be the change you want to see.

Freedom from internal reactions. Healthy independence starts in the mind. If you're a slave to reactivity, you're in no position to follow your heart. Because, as you know, our heart's responses are often *opposite* from our emotional knee-jerk reactions—like a woman

who runs away when she falls in love; or a man who withdraws when he's sorry. An independent person directs their life in a way that makes their heart happy.

"I may not be in the best mood, but this mood is not going to define me or limit me. I will rise above it, and be a constructive and loving person anyway."

Freedom from the past. Many people live their lives as if their past holds a gun to their head, telling them, "Because you did bad in the past, you'll *always* do bad in the future. You failed once, you will fail again." Would a person of healthy independence allow themselves to be controlled by their past? No way! They're free to change direction, forgive and forget, overcome old habits. They can make a break from the past, let go of it, and live *free* of it.

Freedom to love. In healthy independence, you stand free of every box and live by heart, with true integrity. You are free to live and love as the person you *are*.

Healthy independence is different than hyper-independence. People of healthy independence can serve without feeling degraded, and respond to the needs and desires of others *happily*. They will take plenty of initiative to be a source of goodness in the world and in their relationships. Free of imaginary chains, they will know themselves, give of themselves, and freely love.

HEALTHY
INDEPENDENCE

UNHEALTHY INDEPENDENCE

Healthy independence is essential. For a good life, you need to be yourself, take responsibility, and stand up for your beliefs. But, what's commonly *called* "independence" is terribly unhealthy, and so are the ways people try to achieve it.

Independence seekers, hoping to become totally self-sufficient, become self-obsessed and anti-social. Trying not to care what anybody thinks, fighting their desire to please others, people lose social functionality. For lack of social practice, they become alienated, inflexible, and too fearful to get along with anyone. And how does that kind of "independence" work *within* a relationship? It doesn't. Never compromising? Insisting on doing your own thing? Giving the minimum? No relationship can thrive that way!

The unhealthy search for independence

The most common way to seek "healthy independence" is to try to gain strength by living on your own, till you're strong enough not to need close relationship. But that will never be. We can't be strong when our social needs are unmet, and we're starving emotionally. The popular idea of independence is as absurd as expecting a flower to grow without roots. When we try to go it alone, we wither like a rose cut from its stem. That ain't how it works!

The fact is, we *do* need close relationship. Loving intimacy delivers what solo self-work never can: fulfillment, spiritual/emotional fitness. To be hale and hearty, and *truly* independent, we need both the challenges and the nourishment we can only get up close and personal—in relationship.

How relationship supports healthy independence

How can anyone hope to get strong by avoiding healthy challenges and running away from things they "can't handle"? We need to face our demons where they rear their ugly heads: in relationship. We need the social context to build our muscles of compassion, self-transcendence, flexibility, etc. A person who runs away from the natural challenges and temptations in relationship is only exercising cowardice and neurosis. Nothing strong or strengthening about *that*! In their fearful isolation, they only grow weaker.

Sure, it takes courage to open up, be vulnerable, and let your needs be met. But since that's what it takes to be wholesome, positive, and strong, why not take it like a real man or woman? Let yourself be loved—and love *back*. Then, like the child who is well-loved and happily independent, you can sally forth boldly into the world, live an adventurous life, without having to call home every minute—yet having a home to call.

Love is the basis for healthy independence

Love inspires us to be independent. We cultivate strength, integrity, and responsibility because our loved ones need that from us. We learn to stand up for what's right in the face of opposition because we care. For love's sake, we take emotional risks and grow stronger and bolder. Love is the best reason for independence and dependence, because life and love depend on both.

Healthy dependence is a mutuality in which I depend on you and you depend on me. I am reliable for you, and you're reliable for me. We depend on each other wisely and appropriately—*not* irresponsibly.

In a healthy dependence, we learn how to make use of each other, how to serve each other, and how to be served by each other. You learn what your partner's strengths are, and they learn *yours*. You *use* their strengths, and that validates them, strengthens them, and brings out the best in them. Healthy mutual dependence strengthens everyone involved, because when someone needs us, we have *reason* to be strong and good and responsible. *And* when someone nurtures us and takes care of us, we draw strength from that, too.

Healthy dependence is a *wonderful* experience. The happiness of togetherness, the strength that comes from it—the wind in our sails, the lightness of step and fullness of heart. And of course, we've all experienced the superior effectiveness of teamwork, when many hands make light the work. Emotionally and practically, life works better when we're in it together.

We bring out the best in each other. Only in the context of trust and mutual love will we share our most beautiful, personal, and touching qualities. We need people to inspire us, desire us, need us, make demands on

us, bring out the best in us, or *most* of who we are will not be expressed.

A mother is tender, soft, compassionate—but without her child, that sweetness would not have come out. A friend gets to be loyal and constant because their friend needs that. The heart is full of passion, but without someone to invite you, ignite you, excite you, your wonderful feelingness remains unexpressed, unexplored, and unknown.

We have good reason to be dependable. The truth is, we find our homes in one another. We depend on each other's feeding and care; we depend on love, on relationship. We sometimes *want* to think of ourselves as unaffected, but if our relationship is going poorly, we are *endlessly* bothered; and if our lover or spouse doesn't give us enough love, we're unhappy. We can't help it. In contrast, when our relationship is flourishing, we're happy, strong, full of energy.

We all need the nurturance of being loved, and the happiness of loving. But the *only* way to have love reliably is to *be* reliable for others, otherwise they won't open up to you, or stay close to you. *The love you take is equal to the love you make.* So give the love, care, and commitment you want and need from others. Then you can be part of an endless circle of love.



HEALTHY
DEPENDENCE

UNHEALTHY DEPENDENCE

Mutual dependence is a fact of human life. But most people rebel mightily against any implication of dependency, because it goes against the popular notion that we should be perfectly complete by ourselves. “*I need you to make me happy? What’s wrong with me? And what will become of my autonomy, my dignity?*”

To make matters worse, we’ve all seen or experienced examples of *unhealthy* dependence—people (maybe even ourselves) depending on others too much, or in ways that are unrealistic, irresponsible, and weakening:

Being passive: Waiting for others to make life happen for you; doing little or nothing to create or sustain your relationships.

Taking more than you give: Being a bottomless pit in an unbalanced relationship; not actively contributing to the well-being and happiness of your partner.

Victimhood: Blaming one’s troubles on the world, God, or others, and taking insufficient responsibility for making things right in your life.

Depending on you for something only I can do for myself: Like a woman who thinks she can only be happy when she’s with her boyfriend. In *healthy* dependence, I do my part to create happiness, and only depend on you for *your* part.

Counting on a person or process to offset the negative effects of what I’m doing: You want your lover, your spiritual practice, or God to make you happy even while you keep *doing* things that depress you—or *not doing* things your happiness depends on.

Millions of people are trying hard not to need anyone, because they associate dependence with weakness, irresponsibility, and insecurity. But the thing is, we’re social beings, and we need emotional nurturance as much as we need air, food, and water. We need to receive it *and* give it. Without it we cannot be healthy, happy, or fulfilled. So we must learn to depend rightly—in healthy ways—and avoid the pitfalls of imbalanced, irresponsible dependence.

You find healthy ways to give and receive when you take responsibility for your own well-being in the ways you *can*, and depend on others for what only *they* can give you. For example, to be happy, we each need to take responsibility for directing our own minds, and overcoming our bad moods. But we still need *someone* to give us the love, care, tenderness that our joy depends on, because “you can’t make love all by yourself.”

Healthy dependence is interdependence

The only healthy dependence is healthy *inter*dependence: someone is reliable for you and you are reliable for them. Each one takes responsibility for their own well-being. Each generates strength and happiness in themselves, in order to provide strength and happiness for the other. In that sense, healthy *independence* is needed to support healthy dependence.

There’s only one option for true health and well-being: jump into a true mutuality, and do right by it. Then that relationship can heal both of you, and *keep* you healthy. 🍁

LONELINESS? INSECURITY? DOUBT? HOPELESSNESS? DEPRESSION? ANGER? INDIFFERENCE?

What is Normal?

Something's gone terribly wrong when what passes as "normal" breaks your heart, and suppresses/depresses your spirit. Maybe it's "normal" not to know your neighbor, to distrust people. To live for yourself, react when you don't get your way, and fear love. To be unhappy and blame the world for your pain. Maybe that junk is normal, but our hearts know it's *wrong*—and *unnatural*.

Obviously, life's most wonderful possibilities begin *outside* the boundaries of what we call normal. "Normally," we don't even dare expect what would satisfy our hearts: Happy cooperation. Sweet intimacy. Loyal, steady, passionate commitment. Closeness with God. Love! But we long for these things, because they are native to us.

Honestly, to be commonly "normal" is a denial of your heart. What comes naturally to you is safely outside the "normal" box, and so are *you*. Yep, you're *beyond* normal.

Before they reach adulthood, many people throw away their most gorgeous qualities—their generosity, their passion, their adventurousness, their ability to fall in love deeply and intensely, their bold creativity, their trust. We all have these qualities. But to fit in, and "get along in this world," we often choose to be things our

hearts hate—to be selfish, pushy, invulnerable, unloving, dishonest. We sacrifice our natural, authentic selfhood for a sadly "normalized" revision.

But one day we wake up and feel, "What happened to me? I hate the person I've become. I don't feel like myself anymore." We realize we've lost our softness, our feeling, trusting nature, and we're worse off. Maybe we turn to our "helpers"—psychology, religion, and spirituality. But sadly, even *they* tend to support the "normal" attitudes—selfishness, blame, irresponsibility—that drove our standards, morals, and expectations into the ground.

Wake up! You don't *have* to go down that slippery slope! In fact, if the common "norms" grate against your soul, you have a moral *responsibility* to be and do different. Two wrongs—or a million wrongs—don't make a right.

You are a fire, and you have a responsibility to burn bright. Far better to be exactly what everyone says is dangerous, uncool, too vulnerable, than to die of self-protection. *Be* too loving, too feeling, over the top. "Don't go gently into that good night. Rage against the dying of the light." Don't put out your fire with the wet blanket of "normal" living. If you do, we're all left with a cold, dark world. It's up to **YOU**!

NEUROSIS? DYSFUNCTION? INDISCIPLINE? LAZINESS?

MANIPULATION? LIES? FICKLENESS? ABANDONMENT?

LACK OF PURPOSE? LACK OF COMPASSION? DISLOYALTY? SUSPICION? UNFRIENDLINESS?

NORMALCY

False Normalcy (the common kind)

Who wants to live in the prisons called "normal"? God did not ordain this mediocrity, tragedy, misery. These chains and pains are man-made, NOT natural:

Tear-stained pillows. It's "normal" to be lonely; for intimacies to go stale and fail, leaving heartbreak behind. So many tears and fears about love—what a "normal" shame! Without close loving relationships, we wither like flowers without rain.

Distance from God. Every day, millions of prayers are uttered to a God *presumed* to be far away, perhaps out of reach. In truth, God is so dear to our hearts that we suffer our self-imposed alienation from Him terribly—and He suffers along with us. It's unnatural!

Every man for himself. It may be "normal" to live for yourself, but selfishness makes life desolate and exhausting. It creates heartbreak, insecurity, and distrust. No honest man or woman wants to live for themselves *primarily*, much less *exclusively*. We naturally care more than that.

Lifeless living. We were born to *live*. But look in the average home, and you find people bored to death, marking time; living without joy, passion, wonder, emotional risk; lacking distinction, purpose, meaning, significance. That may be normal, but clearly, it's no way to live!

The misery will continue until men and women won't settle for it, and create better "norms" for themselves.

True (heart-natural) Normalcy

Here's a normal that's consistent with our true nature: heart normal. In it, relationship is restored, the mind is not in pain, and close cooperation with God is... well, NORMAL.

Closeness, love, trust. We were born to love, to give ourselves to one another, to enjoy intimacy. We are at home, and happy, when we live and love with others. Caring for one another, sharing, understanding. *That's* heart normal!

Closeness to God. In the dark, you may not see your lover, but you feel their breath on your cheek. God is like that—you can't see Him, but He is near. How tragic to feel alone when your beloved is *here*. So much more natural to talk with God, and love Him *intimately*.

Cooperation: living/being/loving together. We're designed to work together, not alone, not apart. United, we can succeed. Alone, we struggle against each other and against ourselves. What a waste! An airplane in pieces is a useless pile of metal. Assembled as a wholeness, it *flies*!

Happiness, fulfillment. It suits who we are to give our hearts passionately, to take risks, to love deeply; to care, feel, learn, grow. We are naturally larger than life. Big feelings! Big love! For us, true normalcy is to fill and thrill the world with expressions that make life wonderful.

If you live what is natural-normal for your heart, you'll find that life is beautiful, and it works marvelously well.

True normalcy is living as the person God made you to be — the person you ARE

True Faith

True faith allows us to see the beauty and potential in life, in people, and in ourselves. And when we see problems and ugliness in life, we know that in love there are solutions—and we implement them. People of true faith are faithful—loyal and true to the goodness of what God made. They work faithfully to bring God's Heart into life.

1. Faith in your own intuitive heart/soul knowing.

True faith isn't belief in dogma, or in any other ideas that are learned and memorized. Each person has intuitive knowing, from God, from birth. So even before we *experience* healthy love, intimacy, and fulfillment, our intuition says, "Great things are *possible*. Love is, and love works. People are good. God is good." When we live with true faith in those things, life works.

2. Faith in your own dynamic heart sensitivity.

God gave us the ability to *feel* things accurately. So if you get the feeling that something about your beliefs or behavior is wrong, you're probably right. Or if you feel someone needs your love right now, they probably do. With true faith you *trust* the living responses of your heart.

3. Faith in God. True faith in God means thinking well of God—with love, respect, and trust. It also means having faith in the goodness, beauty, and potential of everything God made . . .

- *all His children—including yourself!*
- *the Way of Love (God's Way—because God is Love)*
- *the spiritual laws of the Universe (such as the Law of Karma, the Law of Attraction, etc.)*

4. Faith in action. Faith without works is dead—and unfaithful. Only a life of love, wholeheartedly lived, allows the experience of life as God intended it. Living faith both *knows* and *shows* that God's Way works. So live by heart. Live a true love adventure, acting on things *unseen* and *un-been*. Live and learn. Grow and glow. So BE it!

True faith is CONSISTENT with your knowing, your feeling, and your experience. Blind faith CONFLICTS with all of that. So... Trust in Life. Trust in God. And trust your God-given, ever-loving heart!

Two Kinds of False Faith

Faith can support life, but for many people, "faith" is false and negative, and that can keep them trapped in a depressing life. Here's how:

1. Mere Belief

Mere belief is when we "believe" things, but don't truly know and accept them. The inconsistency shows up in what we do and how we feel. Some common examples of mere belief:

- Many people say, "God is Love, God is good," but then fear God, resent Him, and even call Him *cruel*. Surely true faith is not so fickle.
- Some people believe, "God is everywhere," but still act like God is nowhere near! Is that consistent?
- Many people say, "I'm a child of God," but still feel insecure and weak. Surely a child of God has good reason to feel confident and strong!
- I say I believe in love and in my partner, but I feel and act distrustful and self-protective. In that case, my faith in love is actually *weak*.

2. False Faith

False faith means investing belief (or faith) in illusions, inaccuracies, or falsehoods. For example:

- "Only people of my religion will be saved."
- "Love stinks. Selfishness is necessary."
- "All men are pigs." "You can't trust women."
- "I'm a terrible person."

CAUSES of False Faith

- **REJECTING** what your heart *knows*, and believing something else instead.
- **IGNORING** what you naturally *feel*, and talking yourself into feeling something else. "I don't love him." "There's no such thing as love."
- **SUPPRESSING/DENYING** who you *are*, and believing in and being someone you're *not*. Thinking and acting like someone else.

May you all believe
what you know is true.

Praying to God

God is a friend who is always near, ever dear. Prayer is a way to share our hearts with Him, and be with Him in a bubble of mutual love.

Accept the nearness of God. God is here, not far away. But how can you feel close to God if you think He's not here? Has a friend ever told you, "I have no one to talk to. Nobody listens to me!" You felt, "Wait! I'm here listening to you right now! Don't you see?" Likewise, if we deny God's immediate Presence, how can we receive the love, blessings, and guidance He wants to give us? Know how close together you are with God, and you will experience it more and more.

Being intimate with the Infinite. As with any relationship, what you bring to it makes the biggest difference. If your prayer is loving and intimate, you'll feel closer to God—and your relationship with Him will bloom. But if your prayer is angry, toxic, or otherwise low on love, you will feel distant. And God cannot change that, because it's your choice. He would not disrespect you by magically, forcibly making you closer than you allow.

Depend on God rightly. God loves you, and wants to listen to the needs and desires, sorrows and joys of your heart. He wants to help you. It's right to depend on God as your refuge and strength—but endless requests do not make a good relationship with God. Your relationship needs more than that.

God can help you a lot *IF* you help yourself. You see, God can't make up for it if we fail to take good care of ourselves, our relationships, our lives. So don't ask Him for things *instead of* taking constructive steps and making good use of what you've been given. Use your God-given intelligence and ability. Work *with* God by applying your Godly heart and mind to all things, while asking for His marvelous steering. Apply your heart, your mind, your sensitivity, your effort and care to life; then things will work well for you. And God will guide you and help you.

As you know, prayer is not merely words, it can be SO MUCH more: an intimate conversation, communion—a life with God, to enjoy and share. So, come boldly and honestly to God, share your heart with Him, and love Him—and He WILL respond.

PLEASE PRAY WITH ME

AND STAY WITH ME

Staying with God

IT'S GOOD TO CONSIDER GOD
IN OUR RELATIONSHIP
TO GOD

*God is happy when we pray, but He'd like it even
more if we'd STAY—stay CLOSE to Him in our hearts.
Just as you'd want a good friend to stay close with you.*

A CLOSE RELATIONSHIP
TO GOD BENEFITS
ONE & ALL

For God

IMAGINE: A man has a girlfriend, but when he's not with her, he forgets her. He doesn't call her, or miss her, or reach to her in his heart. Too much forgetting, too little remembering! How can she feel he wants her, needs her, cares about her? The relationship is weak.

Likewise, a person meets God occasionally in prayer, but then forgets God until the next formal meeting. That relationship, too, is unsatisfactory. You can almost hear God say, "I love you, and I'm glad you're praying, but how about staying?"

For good

To be our best and do our best, we absolutely need closeness with God. It gives us the well-being we need for clear thinking, strength, endurance, understanding. It greatly improves our sensitivity to Divine guidance. Consequently, everything we do is much more fruitful, beneficial, effective.

For you

When you stay with God, your heart is full. The wind of God blows through your soul. You can feel it, and it moves you. You feel secure, strong, and confident that you can address life wisely and effectively. You feel you have a place in the universe. Now consider the alternative . . .

When you forget your natural love for God and drop your connection with God, you feel lost, empty, confused. Like a small child without its parents, not knowing where it is, or why it's here, or where to go; not knowing how to take care of itself truly. You think about things, but don't trust your thoughts. *You see, we cripple our intuition and Divine sensitivity when we douse the flame of loving connection with God.*

For one and all

The closer you stay to God, the more helpful you can be: the more you'll have to give, and the more He can give through you. For the benefit of one and all.

PLEASE TALK WITH ME

AND WALK WITH ME

Staying with God

IT'S GOOD TO CONSIDER GOD
IN OUR RELATIONSHIP
TO GOD

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PLEASE TALK WITH ME

AND WALK WITH ME

The Still Small Voice doesn't necessarily come in words.

The Still Small Voice

How God's love for people works through your love for people

INTENTION

A person needs to be helped, loved, heartened. The desire to help arises in your heart.

ENERGY

With each Divine inspiration, energy rises in the body-mind —wind in your sails to help you do love's work.

SPIRIT

The HOW of each gift—exciting, firm, sweet, empathetic, etc.—comes with each prompting.

It often "speaks" in heartfelt responses and spontaneous inspirations.

The Still Small Voice is God's way to work with you. When you love, your heart opens and you become sensitive to the Still Small Voice of God within you. God's impulses and intentions can flow freely through you then. As you give your heart in loving, God guides your steps and gives *His* Heart through yours.

And you know, it's not *what* you do that counts, it's the *spirit* of the action. After all, what good is an insincere apology, or a loveless kiss? That's why Divine inspirations are not just ideas—they also include the *energy* and *spirit* that create good results. You can trust the Still Small Voice. As long as you work in the spirit of its promptings, love's miracles will happen.

When you follow the Still Small Voice, remember to keep the SPIRIT in it.

Why Follow the Still Small Voice

When our lives are directed by the selfish intentions and flawed perceptions of ordinary ways of thinking, we're sure to make a mess. Only a life guided by Divine promptings can be truly wise and beautiful. God has a better way, and these are the lovely fruits of following it:

1. We help and heal by delivering God's mail.

Have you ever felt moved to give love, but didn't? Likewise, many people have been inspired to love *you*, but suppressed the impulse. Somewhere in the Lost Letter Office, there's a huge pile of God's undelivered love—comfort that was never given, kind words never spoken. Delivery is what counts! And that's where you, the messenger, come in. Surely you've heard these words: *"If only you'd told me!"* And these: *"That thing you said made my day."* It's that easy—but you must do it! So from here on, let's deliver God's mail by giving the love we're moved to give.

2. The joy of creating truly good results.

People often wonder, "What's the right thing to do? How can I figure it all out?" Perhaps you can't. But the good news is, you don't have to think and act on

your own. Everyone can be supremely effective when faithfully following the promptings of the Still Small Voice. God will guide us, day by day, hour to hour. God knows perfectly well what to do—and also when, how, and why. When we have faith that God will direct us, and confidence that His promptings will produce good results, we're relieved of our solitary worries about what to do and how.

3. A soul-satisfying life.

Doing God's work is our highest purpose, our true spiritual mission. Though we've made other plans and pursued other desires, none will ever satisfy our hearts like doing beautiful things for God as the spirit moves. And there's no need to wait. If you have loving motives and want the best for others, you're ready for the Life Divine—a beautiful life of cooperation with God.

"LORD, MAKE ME AN INSTRUMENT OF YOUR PEACE"

What God Gave Us to Work With

God gave each of us an endowment of many fine gifts. This card lists 11 of the more important and powerful ones.

1. UNIQUE SELFHOOD. A mother watching her daughters dance on stage enjoys the unity, coordination, and beauty of the group; *and* she sees every movement of each one. She recognizes moves familiar to her, darling hands that have reached to her many times. Each girl is different than the others, each one equally dear. And each girl wants to know, "Mummy, did you see me?" "Oh yes! You were wonderful." That's how God looks at each of us, His children. Every one is dear, unique, beautiful, worthy. Each one is the most beautiful thing God could think of.

2. DIVINE HEART OF LOVE. We each have the ability to love powerfully; and so to uplift, feed, and strengthen others, and create beautiful bonds of friendship and care. We can love, no matter how lost and confused we feel, and regardless of our life situation.

Because God gave us His loving heart, we feel a profound sense of care and obligation toward others. Tender regard. Real devotion. Even when we're unloving, the Divine Heart of Love speaks in us, objecting. To hurt someone makes us unhappy, to love makes us happy. The love we have in our heart is our best guide. It whispers to us, gives hints. It feels. It cares. It's *you*. Listen to your heart.

3. KNOWING. We've all experienced the truth of the saying, "Knock and it shall be opened." How often have you pondered a question or problem, and later happily said, "It came to me! It dawned on me!" God would not have us wonder in vain. Understanding is always available to you, in the air, in the heart of God, in the depths of your soul. You can access it simply by tuning in, paying attention, needing and wanting to know.

4. CONSCIENCE. Conscience is the inner compass that guides us in right and wrong, love and unlove. Like: You want to take your sister's piece of cake, but your conscience says no. You say something harsh, and your conscience says, "Go back and apologize." And if you're living a superficial, unloving life, again your conscience complains.

But conscience doesn't just give us discomfort with wrongdoing; it gives joy and satisfaction when we've done right, given beauty, loved well. Conscience helps us live beautifully: create joy and goodness, and avoid creating harm. Thank God for conscience!

5. FLEXIBILITY. Humans are morphers. We're flexible. When someone is shy or afraid, we become tender; we adapt our being to take them into account. It's our nature to lovingly adjust to the needs of the moment, the person we're with. And in so doing, we discover we can *sincerely* be many ways. In fact, when we get stuck in a narrow self-image and try to be one rigid thing, we run afoul of our multi-faceted nature. We suppress far too many of our most gorgeous qualities. No single posture or way of being does credit to the infinite potentiality of a human being. We are so vast that only with infinite flexibility could we discover all the aspects of who we are.

"GOD'S PART IN MAKING YOU WHO YOU ARE"

6. BEAUTIFUL FEELINGS. Human beings are naturally filled with beautiful feelings—overflowing love, affection, attraction, admiration, loving responses to all of life. You see beauty in someone, and you're moved to give them heartfelt appreciation. Passionate feelings stir in us like a fresh breeze, leaving a thrill as they pass; they bless us and anyone we share them with. Our loving emotions are gifts—they nourish the heart and soul, bring energy and *life*, and provide an atmosphere where the heart can feel at home.

7. SENSING. With your physical senses, you can feel the breeze through the open window. Emotional/spiritual sensing is like that. You feel subtle things, you “intuit” things. A mother knows when her daughter's dating someone—she can *feel* it. At a party, you *know* how all your friends are feeling even if they don't tell you. Looking in your lover's eyes, you know how your next words will affect them. That's because your heart is connected to theirs, and *all* that is—that's how you can feel these things.

8. CREATIVITY. As God's children, we're creators in our own right, born with Divine creative spark. We delight in manifesting our visions, creating heart-stirring beauty, inventing great solutions. But we're less aware that we're *always* shaping the world around us, for better or worse, with our attitudes, beliefs, and expectations. For example, we all know being trusted brings out the best in us, being feared brings out the worst. Our creations uplift or bring down too—it's up to us.

9. DIVINE COMPANIONSHIP. Always and ever, your Divine Parents are with you, wanting your happiness, hearing your sorrows, responding to you. They know your thoughts, your feelings, your every single moment—and they *love* you. And they send us heavenly companions too: guardian angels, celestials, friends from Heaven to walk with us, talk with us, guide us.

Divine companionship is a wonderful reality, not accepted or explored by many. Why? When we ignore our heart's directives, we're burdened by guilt, fear, insecurity—and we shut down, closing off Divinity. When we live and give by heart, we're confident, open-hearted—and open to God's presences, and presents.

10. THE STILL SMALL VOICE. We were created to share Divine love, every day, in direct, intimate partnership with God. God provides inspirations (sometimes audible instructions, more often wordless urges), along with the right tone and energy. Our part is to “deliver the mail” to the intended recipients.

No child of God needs years of preparation for their missions of love. God's ready and willing to work with us *now*! Our loving motives make us fit vehicles for God. Because we care, we let go and let God—and let the *truly* good times roll! The best any human being can do is cooperate with God!

11. FREE WILL. No one wants a caged bird—especially not God. God gave us absolute control over our choices and creative powers. So, although we're sensitive, good, and richly endowed with the power to heal, bless, and create beauty, we are equally free to choose fear, anger, selfishness, and any hurtful thing. People so wrongly blame God for the suffering mankind creates by free will choices. Think a moment, and you'll thank God for the freedom to make the ultimate choice: the choice to love *freely*.

WHO YOU ARE

People say and believe that man's misdeeds, large and small, prove that man has an evil nature. Look: though we may sometimes do bad things, we feel bad when we do. That proves our goodness. Who but a good person feels bad about bad? So, choices you've made don't change who you are. And they don't limit what you can do now. No matter what you've done, you're inherently good—with full potential to live a good, beautiful life.

This you know: You are NOT your past, and you're not the things you've done. You're NOT the person you're trying to make yourself be. (Not the one, for example, who can become hard, unfeeling, unloving, ungenerous—in fact, your heart hates that.) You're NOT whatever culture thinks you should be. And you're NOT a rigid, unchangeable character; you're free, responsive, multi-faceted.

Fortunately, you can't get rid of your heart, or prevent it from feeling what it feels. All the goodness God created in you, the knowingness, the sensitivity, is permanent *regardless* of your acceptance or denial of it. Hallelujah!

Now you know why these are so strong in you: the desire to serve, heal, uplift. A heart of compassion, understanding, admiration, love, and forgiveness. A distaste for selfishness, greed, cruelty, indifference. Guilt when you've hurt someone. A drive to right wrongs, and stop injustice. A desire to avoid/correct wrongness in your own life.

You see, God has given each of us a beautiful heart, with beautiful ways of responding, understanding, feeling. And that heart is at work constantly, as a feeling sentinel, evaluating the results of our choices. Feeling those results. *Feeling*. So, when a good person does a bad or hurtful thing, it's hard for them to *believe* in their goodness. Why? Because they can't help but feel that a good person should have the integrity to do good things, and not bad things.

And needless to say, when you hurt people, it's hard for them to trust you. You've given them reason to believe you're careless and irresponsible. So it's not sufficient to say, "I'm an essentially good person, I have a good heart." That won't eliminate your guilt when you mistreat people, much less take away the hurt you caused. You *are* good, you have the potential to *do* and *be* good; but to step into your own good shoes, you have good choices to make, risks to take, love to give. Our goodness is an unfinished creation until we participate as it. God made us good and gave us everything we need to be good, but it's still up to us what we choose to be.

So beloved reader, when you think, "I need to be different," you're really feeling, "This way of life doesn't agree with me. I want to act in a manner more consistent with *who I am*." Our true nature is inclined to live beautifully, as God intended. And we won't be satisfied until we do.

[also see the *What God Gave Us to Work With* card]

Your Part in Your Goodness

God gave us ourselves—our essential character—but we CHOOSE what we give or won't give, live or don't live. Everything we find inside, we give it a thumbs up or thumbs down, go or no go.

Go or No Go

We can't *really* change who we are, but we can allow or disallow any of our God-given characteristics. And we do—one by one. Our knowing—embrace or dismiss? Our unique, God-given selfhood—love it or leave it? Our beautiful, overflowing feelings—express or suppress, give or withhold? That's your mighty GO/NO GO power at work:

Your own nature is LOVING, yet you can choose to withhold the love you feel. You may feel moved to give someone a hug, but not do it. Though you have a generous and loving nature, you can decide to be stingy and cold instead. **GONOGO!**

Our CONSCIENCE is always speaking, but will we listen? Or will we go into denial and pretend we don't care? **GONOGO!**

We're all SENSITIVE, tuned in, connected. But—**GONOGO**—we can be too self-focused to be aware of people around us.

What if a person thinks they're "too flexible," "too surrendered," "too caring," "too emotional"—or "too sexual"? They might build a facade that conceals, denies, and defies their true nature. They may decide to be less trusting, meaner, self-protective. But later in life, they may feel, "I used to be so much nicer. I don't like who I've become." Their heart objects to what they've done with their mighty go/no go power.

Other means of Self-Shaping

Influences. We shape ourselves partly by our choice of influences: who to hang out with, who to take to heart, who to let in. When you spend time with someone, they become part of who you are.

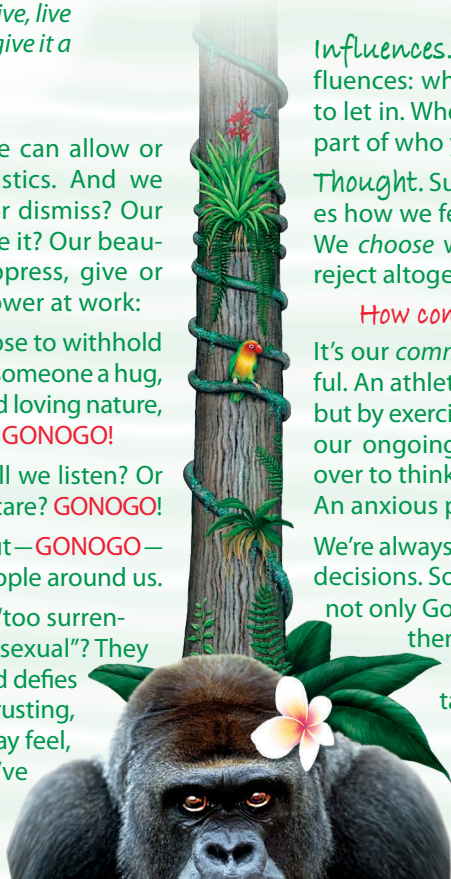
Thought. Surely you've seen it: what we think/believe changes how we feel, the color of our being, and our energy level. We *choose* what thoughts to steep in, creep around in, or reject altogether. **GONOGO!**

How commitment over time shapes our character

It's our *commitment* to our choices that makes them powerful. An athlete sculpts their body not with a one-time choice, but by exercising *over time*. Likewise, we sculpt our being with our ongoing commitments. If a person chooses over and over to think anxiously about things, what do they become? An anxious person. Many **GONOGO** choices created that.

We're always in our formative years, being formed by our own decisions. So, when you see a beautiful person, you're seeing not only God's masterwork, but also a person who's sculpted themselves by free will **GONOGO** choices. Makes you think, "Wow, what a great person, who would take God's gifts and develop in this direction, into something so exquisite, charming, wonderful."

God made you beautiful, and gave you great tools to *do* good and *be* good, but you have to vote for it, not against it. Give it a **GO!**



False Universal Love

There are many misconceptions about Universal Love. Some think love is agape if it embraces a large group—like all old people, all refugees, all whales, etc. But what about the rest of life? True love responds to *all* of life. So if the brain has decided to restrict loving to a particular category, that is not the real spirit of agape.

Some think agape love is social activism. But passionate humanity service doesn't always reflect mature agape love. Imagine the head of a large save-the-orphans project. He's dedicated to the orphans, but when his wife walks into his office he ignores her. A true agape lover wouldn't fail to love those close to him as well.

Some think love is agape if it is impersonal (as in: "I love everyone, but no one in particular"). But is it possible to love *everyone* if you won't love *anyone*? No, it's just a concept—and a cop out. Real love sees, feels, and cares for the beloved. And that takes courage. It requires that we open our hearts, transcend our egos, trust, serve, be vulnerable. The preference for impersonal love comes from fear and resistance to deeper loving and giving, seeing and being seen. A real agape lover would love *each* one with real feeling, care, and consideration.

Love without personal passion and feeling is a bird with clipped wings. Feeling gives love clout and makes it effective; universal love is no exception. Universal love is not mediocre or impersonal. *All* real love is passionate, invested, committed. Anyone who gives and lives real love is on fire with that love, and thoroughly implicated by it. Their agape love will be real, intense, nurturing—by no means boring or unemotional. *That's* agape!

UNIVERSAL LOVE (Agape)

A real
agape lover
would watch
people walk
by and
be in love
with every
one of them.

True Universal Love

Agape—universal love—is the natural response of the heart to the feelings and existence of all of life. In agape, you walk down the street and you are moved by people, by their sweetness, their suffering, their joy. You love the thoughtfulness of one, the humor of another. You love all the flowers, every single one. That's the *nature* of the Divine heart within us. We feel agape when we let our heart respond naturally.

Human beings were born to love many. Often, people want their mate to love them *only*, and forsake all others—especially friends of the opposite sex. But that's asking them to betray their heart-nature, which loves and responds to all. A deal with the devil!

Loving many doesn't mean you love your mate any less. A mother of four doesn't divide up her love, and give each child 25%. Of course not! She loves each one wholeheartedly, passionately, fully. Love doesn't get smaller when we spread it around—only bigger.

And loving many doesn't mean you'll be unfaithful, either. True love is *moral*, with high sensitivity to the good of one and all, and ample self-discipline. It's not —*decidedly not*—driven by whimsy or selfish desire.

When love is allowed to respond to life fully, freely, *without* preference or selective withholding, *that's* true agape.

In personal love, we recognize our loved ones as *uniquely* valuable and beautiful. We want to love and care for that person *in particular*, and we commit to doing so. As children of God we all *want* and need to be loved that way: *personally*, for who we are.

Personal love says, "I will hold you close in my heart. I will understand you, serve you, care for you. I will use my mind, my body, my heart to help you. I'll cover you with love, and you'll feel it."

When you love personally, you feel it all—you're vulnerable. You share your heart, and listen to theirs. You care about what is real to them, deep inside. You feel every ripple in their emotions and self-sense. Gone are the old masks, the walls, the distance. Close, personal love is our native habitat. We need it.

Only someone who loves you personally can heal you from loneliness and heartbreak. Granted, when a minister says, "I love each one of you in this congregation," you may be loved—but *how* loved? Compare that to the joy of knowing

cont'd next column >

There are so many wonders and beauties to enjoy in personal love. With *so much* treasure/pleasure on the table, so much to desire and acquire, selfish tendencies arise: We want to possess our beloved, and get all the attention, reassurance, and validation he or she can give us. Yes indeed, people often get greedy in personal love!

But when you focus on what you can *get* from someone, you're on a slippery slope: Selfishness turns loving *passion* into insensitive *lust*; "love-making" into self-indulgence. Lasting *loyalty* becomes possessive *restriction*; mutual commitment becomes marathon mediocrity. Free *giving* becomes manipulative bargaining, and sweet love-desire becomes greediness, obsession,

TRUE PERSONAL LOVE

someone loves *you* and wants *you*, and brightens up each time they see you.

In personal love we don't hide behind a function or role. We want to be naked with our beloved, person to person, touching. We want to truly *know* them, and *be* truly known. We want to *stay* together; we *count* on each other to stay.

How personal love becomes universal. Personal love is a deep dive into the soul's depths. Only when you love and commit to someone deeply will they trust you enough to reveal to you hidden treasures from the depth of their being: fragility, tenderness, sincerity, sensitivity, vulnerability, feeling—wonders never shown to those who love them less. And then you realize, "These depths I see in *you* are the same in *me* and in *everyone*." Finally you see: these same awe-inspiring things can be found in the deep ocean of *any* person's soul. *That's* how personal love naturally becomes agape love. It makes you a devotee—first of your beloved, and then of all humanity.

FALSE PERSONAL LOVE

jealousy, abuse. And when we don't get what we want, we react with disappointment and anger. Heaven help us! To "love" someone for what they can give you is *not* personal love—it's not love at all. Real love is for the beloved. It *remembers* the beloved, cares about *their* needs, and wants *them* to be fulfilled. As a true lover, you give to *your* beloved the sweet love, attention, and understanding your heart wants *from* them. Of course we have our own needs, but we never put them first. We focus on our beloved's well-being. Here's the fork in the road: We can go with selfish tendencies that always only end in heartbreak, or we can love for real—generously, unselfishly, consistently—and thereby support and protect the bright and *wonderful* possibilities of personal love.

We all know the standard images of true manhood: the warrior, the wise man, the romeo, etc. A *real* man isn't like that—he's *better*.

A *real* man is tender, sensitive, caring, loving, devoted. He is what you need in a father, a husband, a lover, and most of all, a true friend. He seeks understanding, not so much for himself as for his loved ones, for their upliftment, to release them from confusion and negative patterns. His compassion for their suffering pushes him by day and keeps him awake at night. Searching. Praying. Insisting. Finding.

He brings discipline, upholds standards, imparts values. He is a rock, an ocean. He can handle and absorb his woman's enormous energy without being intimidated by it. He pays attention. A woman craves manly attention because his consciousness *feeds* her, and makes her bloom. He validates her by seeing her, appreciating her, and *needing* her.

A true man cuts through the problems of life with dispassion, discernment, and decisiveness. He'll think truly, deeply, consulting God and everyone, and following the trail of truth wherever it leads him—even at the cost of convenience and preference. All from a deep and abiding devotion, this personal consideration of all his beloveds.

He sees his world and responds to its needs. He gives detailed attention to what would please, what would delight, what would further. Is this bed too high? Too low? He applies the creative force needed to produce desired effects on the physical, emotional, and spiritual level.

But a true man is never a people pleaser. He is beyond society, convention, politics, opinion. That's how he can

MANHOOD

make Solomon-like decisions. And that's how he can live free—as himself.

Back to what God made

Where are the real men these days? Behind the social masks of unreal men, they are still here. Precious few men embrace their own true manliness, with its considerable risks and responsibilities. But until a man walks on that high wire, he won't consistently express his male qualities in their fully positive forms. That's why we've all suffered from overbearing fathers, unresponsive husbands, self-righteous and opinionated leaders, and just plain unmanly men.

When men won't be Men, commitment becomes destructive servitude, foolish accommodation. Intelligence becomes self-serving, immoral cleverness. Natural assertiveness becomes brutish domination and destructive anger. Healthy detachment becomes insensitivity, indifference. Creative power becomes obsessive hobbies and proud, meaningless accomplishments. Even-handed discernment becomes rigid opinion defended with too many facts taken out of context. Global responsibility becomes self-survival, or narrow family pride. Tender love becomes animal lust and routine release.—Despicable!

Thank God, no one can really change what God has made. Our glorious gender characteristics persist no matter what we try to do with or without them. Any man who truly understands his masculine nature and makes peace with it can be the man he truly is, and wants to be.

He's the man we want to see.

WOMANHOOD

The life of this world depends on what Woman has to offer. She is the champion of hearts, the ultimate resort when life seems to deny what we cannot live without.

We all partake of and enjoy—at least vicariously—the beauty of womanly emotions. They put color on the page and keep life alive. And real. Womanly passion. Tears of compassion—and outrage. Girlish laughter. Shrieks of delight. By every breath of her emotions, woman reassures her world that there is life.

A true woman keeps a gentle finger on the pulse of life. She hears the cries of frogs that boys abuse, the victims of schoolyard skirmishes, the victims of war. She need not effort or strain to hear—she can't help but hear. Her native receptivity enables her to discern the unexpressed emotional content of any ordinary situation. She intuits what a man feels regardless of whether or not he wants to talk about it.

A woman validates all that is by responding to it. "Oh, look at that baby, how adorable!" And needless to say, a woman's positive responsiveness to a man can make both of them happy: "When you see me, I just go to heaven!" She coos with delight.

Woman nurtures. She's a river of devotion, emotion, and care—a life-giver for her man and for life as a whole. She gives her feeling, her energy, her love, even her sexuality, to heal, nurture, and uplift.

Misuse it and lose it

Under the principle "abuse it and lose it," we eventually lose everything we abuse. Every good thing has a way to be made bad, including womanly blessings. The liabilities of emotional power gone bad are obvious in many women. The negativity of an undisciplined female mind can make life utter hell—for herself and those around her. It is, in the extreme, not just unconsciously childish, but viciously so.

If a woman uses her powers unconsciously, selfishly, or without spiritual sensitivity, she creates all kinds of troubles. Then, to try to avoid that mess, she suppresses her most beautiful qualities. She becomes stiff, hollow, unresponsive, overly controlling, unemotional, and unfeeling. Stripped of her feminine blessings, she can no longer heal with her emotional sensitivity, her passion, her energy, etc. Castrated as a woman, she feels powerless. You can still catch the scent of what God made in her. It's still there; it is just twisted, and suppressed, and denied, and fought against.

The woman's job is to tune for beauty, and to tune out ugly. Ego and emotion make a toxic brew, but *love* and *emotion*, *freedom* and *devotion*—these combinations make sublime and soul-nourishing food, wondrous healing beauty.

Any woman who would live as God created her marches to the beat of a higher, inner drum. She will never be a slave to her egoistic tendencies, or to the floundering culture she is here to save.



HEALTHY
DESIRE
is FOR the
BELOVED

HEALTHY

DESIRE

UNHEALTHY

UNHEALTHY
DESIRE
is FOR
ME

Healthy desire sees, with great clarity, appreciation—even reverence and devotion—what (or who) it desires. It upholds, uplifts, and benefits the beloved in many ways. It steals nothing from the beloved, but passionately works to give to the beloved. This is the heart's way.

It's healthy to want a person for who they are in their wholeness. That alone feeds and strengthens them, and makes them feel truly desirable. When you see someone for who they are, you naturally want them. And you're moved to love and support them *in their entirety*. That's healthy desire: it's for *them*, not you.

The heart of humanity is driven to create happiness for others. That moves us to develop skills and create things that bring joy, delight, pleasure, relief, comfort, healing. That's the healthy form of desire for self-improvement.

HEALTHY
DESIRE
FILLS the
ONE WHO
DESIRES

Strong, healthy desire is our natural response to seeing and loving the beauty of those around us. Moved by love, we want each other, and give freely of ourselves. God made us that way.

FOR WHO?
(AND FOR
WHOSE
BENEFIT?)

DESIRE FOR
A FRIEND
OR
A LOVER

TO ADD TO
ONESELF
OR BECOME
SOMETHING

Desire is unhealthy when we desire from a selfish, separate point of view—focusing on our own interests and pleasures to the exclusion of others: "I'll pursue what I want. And if my gain means their loss, that's okay." That ignores the heart's desire to help, heal, uplift, to create closeness & harmony.

From a separate, selfish point of view, you think of your friends or lovers as "for me, to fill my needs." You may appreciate their beautiful qualities, but only inasmuch as you can *have* them. Just wanting what you want, you don't honor the tree that produces fruits for you. ("You don't want me, Harold, you just want my ____!")

Unhealthy desire pursues skills and objects in a selfish spirit: "This will add to me. This will improve me. It will make me somebody. It will help me get what I want." It's not to serve others, just to serve oneself.

Unhealthy desire fades when we feel guilty for desiring too selfishly. Desire is weak when the object of desire is of relatively little value to the spirit. Desire is crippled if we are conflicted because we don't WANT to desire as much as we do.

UNHEALTHY
DESIRE
EXTENDS
LACK

ARROW OF DESIRE, CHARIOT OF FIRE

To desire is to be alive. Desire is the fire that ignites us, moves us forward, and brings possibilities to life. No one ever got what they needed without wanting it. And only when we *want* more can we *have* more. Isn't that why it's so sad to see a friend "give up," or settle for too little?

The strength of our desire determines *if* and *when* we reach our heart's goals. Desire can burn through all the obstacles, both outer and inner, to having what we need and want. Desire enlivens us, and empowers us to move those mountains.

DESIRE IN GOD'S PLAN

Desire is part of God's plan to fulfill us. The deeper we see into the beauty of what God made, the more we want it—and the more it wants to give itself to us. Naturally, a woman who is seen and desired will give of herself more freely than one who is not. Wouldn't you do the same? Anyone who is loved and desired beautifully opens like a flower, revealing ever more wonders.

The world God created is more than adequate to fulfill us. Life will give you its best as long as you love and desire it—and your desire is truly loving. When you really see a person, and you want them for who they are, you're fulfilling some of their deepest needs. And they in turn will fill you. The circle of love-desire will fill you both. That's God's Plan.

GOD'S PLAN DEPENDS ON UNSELFISH DESIRE


Healthy desire never steals: it feels, kneels, and heals. When you desire unselfishly, you don't feel separate from what you love. You're driven to care for and give to your beloved *instead of* living and "loving" whimsically, as a separate, selfish individual. A mother will change her lifestyle when she realizes that whatever she eats, her baby eats; and what she feels, her baby feels. So she watches her diet and even directs the thoughts that create her moods.

Healthy desire inspires and requires us to love, serve, give. So if we want to remain uncommitted, insensitive, and self-centered, we'd rather desire selfishly. But selfish desire cuts off our life, strength, and connection, and costs us opportunities for fulfillment. After all, who wants a selfish lover? And who will reveal delicate beauty to greedy eyes?

ENTER THE CIRCLE

The beauty in store for us is infinite, and it will care for us as we care for it. Whatever we truly love, need, and desire is ours for the loving.

And obviously, to *keep* anything beautiful, we must keep wanting it even after we *get it*. A woman's husband stopped wanting her after he got her. How sad for both of them. Would you want to stay where you're not wanted?

Whatever you cherish forever—want, need, and feed every day—is forever yours. The beauty God made will unfold endlessly in the light of your love. 

Your Mind, Your Servant

Your mind is the servant of your will. Whatever your will may be, your mind will work to help you achieve it. So, if your will is to get out of a burning building, your mind will focus on finding a way out.

Likewise, if your purpose is to build a beautiful relationship, the mind will generate all kinds of loving ideas to make the beloved happy, and work to eliminate everything that stands in the way of a loving and trusting relationship. But if your orientation is selfish, then when you fall in love, the mind will focus on how you can get what you want in that relationship, and in a fearful spirit, warn you of all the possible ways you could get hurt.

In much of our thinking, we're trying to figure out how to get what we want or avoid what we fear. But that backfires. When we use our minds for self-survival and personal advantage, mulling things over and creating defenses and offenses, we progressively develop hang-ups, fears, insecurities, reactive patterns, and off-putting social strategies. Gradually, the mind becomes a very polluted pool. It accumulates negative memories (*"I used to want love, but I've been hurt too many times"*), faulty associations (*"All women are selfish—you can't trust them"*), and suppressive social programming (*"I'd give him a flower, but girls don't give boys flowers!"*).

Because of this process, the usual mind becomes a closed system full of negative presumptions that get in the way of your heart's impulses. You want to go to a party, but you're too shy. You want to call someone, but you fear rejection. You yearn for the freedom to live and love, but you're bound by your fears and negative convictions.

There's a better way to think. It is not based upon fear. It's not any kind of inner defense mechanism. It's not the recycling of the accumulated hodge-podge of fears and confusions of a lifetime. It is to gently turn the mind, for advice and counsel, to the heart, and its great purposes.

Together, mind and heart make a wonderful team. The heart is sensitive. It feels the value of beauty; the mind works to bring it out. The heart of an architect recognizes the beauty of a certain hillside. His mind gets to work designing a house for that spot, while the heart directs it, saying, "Yes! This is beautiful. No, this is ugly." The same with all the impulses that arise in relationship and in life. The mind presents an idea, like to offer a compliment, or a critical word. The heart feels it: Yes. No. Yes. No.

The mind can be a most useful tool when submitted to the heart—its "yes, no." Without good direction it tends to be dangerously random, but when steered by the sensibilities of heart, it helps us create beauty, solve problems, find solutions, and live happy, fruitful lives.

When directed by love, by the heart, the mind can be a marvelously helpful tool. But when allowed to run wild, or governed by random whims, fears, and desires, it creates *problems*. Are any of these familiar?

Overthinking. A woman questioned her impulse to kiss her date until she was so nervous the kiss was ruined. Her concern sabotaged her heart's sweet intention. The chilling process of over-thinking actions can turn beautiful things ugly, and replace wholeheartedness with doubt.

Fear thoughts are blueprints for bad experiences. Climbing a high cliff while thinking you'll fall vastly increases your chances of falling. In a relationship, if you think, "I'm afraid you'll leave me," you become insecure, and behave in ways that push your beloved away. Attacking beauty with doubt and concern will not protect you, but rob you of the heart joys that could otherwise be.

Thinking up trouble. Our thoughts and beliefs create feelings in us. So when we get a bad feeling, we may just be feeling our own fearful thoughts—not the thing itself. For example, you think someone is mad at you. So you act and feel weird toward them all morning, only to find out later they were just having a bad day. Meanwhile, you've ruined your morning, and alienated your friend.

Often we're too afraid to even *find out* if our assumptions are valid. A child thinks there's a monster in his closet, so he refuses to look and see. That's how many people get stuck in illusions, not *daring* to find out what's really there.

Developing limiting reaction patterns. We all have negative reactions we can't explain. A button gets pushed and we explode or implode. It *seems* random, but the truth is, we create our patterns. How? Little by little, by responding badly to life, we build up negative views, associations, and fears. We react automatically thereafter.

A dog who was kicked by a gray-haired man as a puppy now attacks all gray-haired men. Likewise, we react hurtfully to anything that reminds us of a past hurt. That's not only irrational, but destructive. A person who declares, "My last relationship failed, I'll *never* fall in love again," won't learn what went wrong and fix it. Sadly, many people are deprived of things they want and need—like happy companionship, fulfilling love, etc.—because habitual fears and reactive patterns prevent the realization of their dreams, and the meeting of their needs.

A better way. It was because we wanted to protect ourselves that we developed self-destructive mental patterns. Understandable, but *not* helpful. There's a better way: let your mind be directed by love. You'll notice that when you're strong in your will to love, your mind does not torment you so. Your ordinary random reactions are disempowered and replaced by your love-commitment, by the force of your intention to love. Bravo!

We all have this choice: either harness the mind to love, or to self-protection. And we all reap the harvest: the bitter fruits of self-protection; the sweet fruits of love.

Why & How to Direct Your Mind

The mind is a creative engine, *always* creating. What are you creating? What would you like to create? If our lives aren't what we want them to be, we need to go back to the mind and look at what we are creating. Life can be a stairway to heaven, a slippery slope into pain and disappointment, or anything in between. It's all a matter of choice, and choice starts in the mind.

Where the mind goes, life and relationships go

Our thinking profoundly colors our relationships. What if somebody gives you flowers fearfully? A generous act done from a fearful place is polluted. Those flowers say, "I'm no good," or, "You're going to reject me." Because our thoughts are private we believe they don't matter, but how wrong we are! If we don't *think* positive, we can't feel positive, or communicate positive feeling.

Relationships rise and fall in the mind. We are always thinking, and our relationships are changing as fast as we think. You can create a sweet relationship with someone by thinking well of them, holding a good feeling about them inside yourself. Then when you see them, that good feeling comes out. Whereas, if you think bitter thoughts about someone, you hurt the relationship. Fondness fades. Affinity suffers.

An undisciplined mind will close the door to many of life's sweetest possibilities. We can love others reliably only to the extent that we have mental discipline. Surely

you've seen how too many fears, concerns—and the negative reactions they create—can damage any relationship. Such suffering! Only a well-directed mind can support the delicate heart of intimacy. An undirected mind makes a fine mess of heaven. That's just how it is.

How to direct your mind

Habitual thoughts may seem out of control, but we *can* steer them. The mind *tends* to repeat itself, and run on automatic pilot, but you can always decide, "I won't think that. I don't want to go there"—and change direction. Moods, days, relationships, entire *lives* change that way.

Really, it's *not* a problem if a negative thought enters your mind. What matters is what you *do* with it once it's there. Just because it's there doesn't mean you *must* entertain it—the appropriate response to the unwelcome visitor is to send it away.

Know that you are always choosing your thoughts, and take responsibility to choose well. Following all your thoughts indiscriminately is like sending your child with whoever walks by on the street. Better to consider: how would a particular thought impact you and the people you love—right now, *and* also down the road? When you have a thought or belief that limits you, or stands in the way of what your heart wants, back out of that thought. If another comes up, back out again. You're breaking your chains, and finding your wings.

Do you dream of a beautiful life—a life of true love, intimacy, and self-expression? Will those dreams come true? It depends on your alignment with the heart. Only the heart is feeling enough, present enough, attuned enough to respond to life appropriately. Standing behind a wall of thoughts and beliefs, we can't respond freely and sensitively, in the moment. Thinking too much. Processing everything. It gets in the way.

Real life presents itself to us always—in people, in their feelings, in an abundant display of subtle expressions we can respond to, dance with, be absorbed in. Life puts out its hand to us, but often, because of our thoughts, we don't see it. We could twirl or be twirled—but if we're too absorbed in our thoughts and beliefs, we miss the chance to dance.

Living by heart

Always, our heart is responding to the reality of every situation. We've never been without its quiet counsel, even in our darkest hours. So why don't we always hear it? Because we're not listening!

With fear and self-interest in mind, we're out of touch, insensitive. We make a mess. With heart in mind, we can play sensitively, think truly, with living/loving consideration for life all around. The heart won't steer us wrong—it knows what we need to be happy. It knows what to do to express love, so we can dance real close—heart

to heart. It provides us with a steady stream of wonderful impulses. Living by heart, you'd call somebody and tell them you love them. Living by mind, you might be afraid to call them, thinking, "What if they don't appreciate it?" Living by mind means hardly living at all.

As you surely know by now, much of what's popularly considered "living by heart" isn't. Insensitive animal passions, impulsive and compulsive behavior, irresponsible whimsy—"I was just following my heart." Horsefeathers! That's all selfishness, not heart. We ignore heart wisdom when we do that junk. True heart knows better. It rejects tendencies that are impulsive, foolish, insensitive, irresponsible, self-indulgent. Genuine heart-sensitivity is a purely positive, life-supporting quality—it makes life workable, meaningful, and satisfying.

Let the heart guide the mind

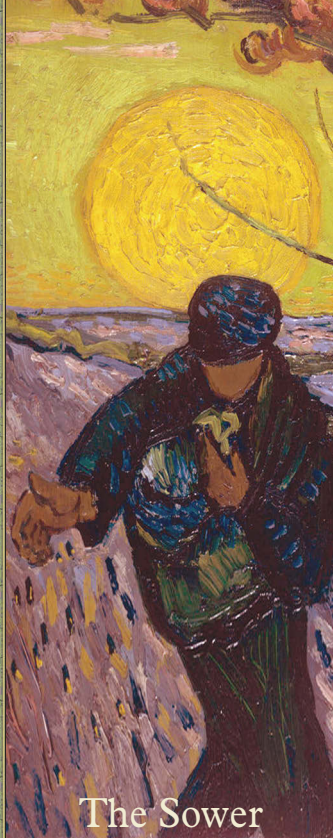
The mind easily goes astray, but heart steers smart. It feels darkness instantly. And bright. And right. The heart feels how our logic feels, what our intentions do, where our choices lead. The heart always discerns whether a thought or action helps or hinders a relationship, or one's well-being. Does it bode well, or ill? This is the way the heart minds the store, how it heals: by choosing what will serve love's purposes. What to feed, what to weed. If everyone followed heart wisdom, this world—and each life in it—would be close to paradise.

Why learning is VERY important. Learning opens life up and unlocks its treasures—if we make the effort to learn. Musicians can share wonderful music because they invested the time and energy to learn their instrument. You can make delicious food for others if you learn to cook well. Similarly, wonders of heart and soul will open up to you if you take the time to learn about people, life, relationships, the human heart, your own heart.

We're always learning, but are the lessons we "learn" true or helpful? Not always. Many people "learn" that they're worthless, life is hopeless, relationships don't work. Such lessons are less than useless. It takes responsibility and self-honesty to learn well and rightly.

We're responsible for the lessons we learn. We learn from experience, but where does our experience come from? We *create* it—or *co-create* it. It's our harvest (as in, "As ye sow, so shall ye reap"). For example, our attitudes and expectations bring out the best or worst in people. A man who mistreats women creates ill will in them, and "learns" women are mean. Then, he approaches women *as if* they are mean, creating *more* bad experiences. Meanwhile, a loving man treats women well and

LEARNING



The Sower

receives kindness in return. So he learns how *good* women are. Clearly, we're creating experience loops: positive loops teach us positive lessons, negative loops teach negative ones.

We learn by interpretation. There are many ways to interpret anything. We decide what our experiences *mean*, what they *prove*. From there we draw conclusions about the way life "is," we "are," people "are," etc. "Women are *mean*." "Women are *kind*." Our *interpretations* affect what we "learn," how we feel about life, what we do next. And they create our destiny.

We learn from others (and their experiences). Life can be confusing; we need guidance to help us find the best way through. To learn fast and well in any area, our best bet is a guide who knows, understands, and is successful in that area themselves. Too many would-be helpers offer ideas and suggestions that will only make our situation worse. Friends, counselors, even spiritual advisors (like ministers and gurus) often have little understanding about how to create fulfillment in life and love. Only a person who *plays* guitar well can teach guitar. Only a person who has really good relationships can effectively help us with ours. Only a fulfilled person can help us be fulfilled.

IMPLEMENTATION

*Know the truth and the truth will set you free—but only if you live it, apply it, implement on it.
Knowledge alone won't fix your relationship with your mate, repair your life, end your sorrows.
We need to LIVE what we know, and we need real life experience, for many reasons:*

SOUL NOURISHMENT How does the idea of sailing round the world compare to *doing* it? How does studying about love compare to falling in love, and *loving*? People can starve while thinking about food. Living experience feeds the soul so much more than mere thinking or intellectual learning.

STRENGTH They say regular jogging will get us in shape, but will we get fit just by knowing that? No way. Brain knowledge won't make us strong, or skillful. And it sure won't get us where we want to go. We gain strength from *exercise*.

SKILL Practice makes perfect because we get to see what works and what doesn't. Pilots learn to fly not by reading books, but by flying planes. Likewise, we learn by noticing our effects on people, and on life—and refining what we do.

DEPTH Too many ideas do justice to none. Just as a promiscuous man appreciates each woman less, a collector of too many truths grows numb to the value of each. We need the deep understanding that only comes from *applying* truth.

CLEAR CONSCIENCE With knowledge comes responsibility—or else shame. Have you ever made a promise—to yourself or someone else—you didn't keep? Similarly, learning without implementing only creates guilt and reduces self-esteem. Well-being requires know power *and* go power.

TRUE WISDOM Only through experience do we learn one of life's most important lessons: that selfishness ruins life and love. We don't learn to transcend egoism in our heads; we learn that with real-life practice.

PURPOSE IN ACTION

Skillful implementation and beautiful results start with truly good *intentions*. A person with selfish motives tends to be insensitive, reactive, and in conflict with others. When you want to be good to/for people, you pay close attention to your effects—and you adjust quickly if you see a negative impact on a loved one's face. Because you *care*.

STEERING IN ACTION

As a child of God, you don't want to have bad effects on yourself or others. So you're willing to feel for what's right, and correct your course *as needed*. That's what children of God naturally do. Furthermore, they don't just give up because it didn't work the first time; they persist while constantly adjusting and tuning for best results.

What is Morality?

Heart Fidelity

A moral life is a high-fidelity life—a life of high fidelity to the heart. God gave you His heart, so you can trust it to steer you well. It knows what's right and what's wrong, and always tells you. Listen to it. Stay true to it, and you'll stay true to all Creation and to God. Heart fidelity is the essence of morality and integrity. A moral person will stay true to their heart—what it knows and feels and demands—without regard for their own convenience.

True Freedom

To live a life of high morality we must stand free of *any* influence, inside or out, that runs afoul of our soul sensitivities. Including . . .

Outside influences: Stand free of rigid “rules” of convention and religion; of negative people; of peer pressure; of hurtful things people do to each other. Stand free of *all* the ugliness you see and feel in the world.

Inside influences: Stand free of bad habits and selfish desires to indulge pleasure, dodge pain, or follow whims *at others' expense*.



Right Responsibility

For Love. True morality results only from love. Love is its reason and method. And love is the only motive strong enough and true enough to overcome selfishness, habit, whimsy, social pressure, and every other cause of immorality. Love does what's right for the sake of the beloved.

For cosmic citizenship. Most problems in this world arose from people using their creative powers in unwise, egotistical ways. But we can use our powers—our energy, abilities, intelligence, etc.—to create goodness and beauty instead. That is our right responsibility to humanity, God, and ourselves.

Staying Close to God

God is good. God is rightness and love. Therefore, to be close to God is to be open and surrendered to rightness and love. And when you walk with God, His right and loving Heart will guide and refine you, and nourish true morality in you.

Selfishness comes from thinking we're separate, and that "what I do doesn't affect you." Morality comes from admitting I'm part of a wholeness, and becoming willing to live in a way that's good for the whole.

IMMORALITY

PLEASURE PURSUIT

SELF INDULGENT • GREEDY • LUSTFUL

A husband pressures
his tired wife for sex

A boy eats his sister's
piece of the cake

**CHRONIC
INDULGENCE**

Chronic overeating
Being generally
narcissistic and
self-serving
Promiscuity

"I ALWAYS" "I NEVER"
RIGID
CLOSED-MINDED • INFLEXIBLE

Bitter woman
distrusts all men

Prideful man must
always do things
his way

**CHRONIC
AVOIDANCE**

Avoiding relationship
& its responsibilities

A man ignores his
wife's complaints

Shy girl avoids
people

"IF IT'S UNCOMFORTABLE OR
DIFFICULT, FORGET IT"
PAIN AVOIDANCE

LAZY • COWARDLY

Running from difficult situations

Submitting to foolish
peer pressure

Child won't do
chores

**WHIMSICAL
AVOIDANCE**

Being honest unless
it's uncomfortable

Not defending
a friend who's
under attack

Fair weather
friend

Blowing hot and cold

Broke a promise
"Didn't feel like it"

In and out of
relationships

WHIMSICAL
FLAKY • UNRELIABLE

"I DO WHAT I WANT,
WHEN I WANT"
"I, I, I"

**WHIMSICAL
INDULGENCE**

Promised a friend
help but watched
a movie instead

Spontaneous
hurtful
remarks

Good Will

Aligned with true heart, free will can create heaven on Earth.

By misusing will power, we've given will a bad name. But strong will doesn't *have* to spell trouble (like being at odds with those around you, or selfishly trying to get what you want, etc.). We have *free* will—and that means we're free to choose how we use it. Will becomes a powerful force for *good* when harnessed to *beautiful purposes*. You can use your free will to make someone happy, fight for what's right, build a house, conquer challenges. *Good!*

Will to love. It takes lots of will to create and sustain a loving intimacy. Love itself takes will. Understanding takes will. Both partners in a couple need to assert their will with strong intention and passion to satisfy each other's hearts. Isn't that true?

Will to cooperate. To work well, any form of human relationship must be *freely* cooperative. For example, effective teamwork is only and always an act of will, *not* halfhearted compliance. On a sports team, players exert strong personal will to cooperate with their teammates and do what's needed. That's what it means to be a team player—we don't lethargically go with the flow; we bring our will, our heart, and throw our whole selves in.

In business, in relationships, in human associations of any kind, it takes *will* to dance with the needs of others, *will*

to serve, *will* to give your all. Clearly, moving harmoniously with life and getting along with others doesn't require leaving your will behind. On the contrary... *Bring it! Bring* your soul, *bring* your heart. The world *needs* your good will, your great soul and heart.

The power of free will. Free will makes wonderful things possible—things we wouldn't want to live without. For example, with your free will you can *choose* to love someone and be with them. And they can freely choose to love *you* back. So much better than if they loved you because they *had* to, don't you agree?

Free will choices bear fruit. With every choice we creatively affect our lives and the lives of others. And that is true both of what we do and what we don't do (or won't do). Like choosing to apologize or not, to pay attention or not. To try, or not.

You know it: Free will has so much power that every single choice we make either helps or hinders, hurts or heals, gives or takes away. Yes, it's a big responsibility—but it's ours whether we want it or not. And after all, isn't that what you want—to make a difference? Friends, with our wills and won'ts, we can create heaven or hell. Let's choose wisely!

Selfish Will

Will is so powerful that with it, we can create great good, or a royal mess. Which will it be?

Many people use their will to pursue selfish purposes, never mind the effects on others—or even on themselves. Stubborn mules who never back down; mates who fight like hell to get their way, or refuse to change hurtful habits. Countries or corporations that place their interests above the well-being of people. Selfish will always hurts. It is the cause of all the loneliness, conflict, and misery in the world today.

Passive expressions of selfish will are just as harmful, sometimes more. A man who doesn't pay attention to his wife hurts her. A person who won't speak against wrongdoing supports it. A person who won't pitch in is a drag.

Selfish will makes happy cooperation impossible, since selfishly willful people can't get fully behind someone else's idea, even if it's great. They might go along, but without much energy or enthusiasm. It's everyone's loss!

A popular non-solution. Often, carelessly willful people see the pain they're creating, and tone themselves down. For example, an opinionated man squashed his loved ones for years. Eventually he clams up. To him, shutting down seems compassionate. But most likely, his loved ones *miss* his participation despite its previous problems.

Fortunately, we don't have to *either* create problems *or* withdraw. We can use our will *harmoniously*—happily aligning ourselves with the real needs/desires of others. That way, I daresay, we're aligned with God's will, too.

Divided will. We all cherish high-minded dreams and great purposes: to help, to uplift, to love. But we may harbor selfish wants too (like avoiding inconvenience, saving face, being gratified, playing it safe). Beware: selfish motives undermine our higher, truly precious goals.

HOW CAN I HAVE THIS . . .

IF I ALSO WANT THIS . . .

solid friendship with true intimacy

to do my own thing, and not be expected to consult

to leave this world a better place than I found it

to live a selfish life, and try to get all I can

Also, selfish intentions turn otherwise beautiful goals ugly: wanting a partner so you can possess someone; wanting to be helpful mainly to boost your self-esteem. Pursuing good goals in a truly good spirit is the only real success.

Love or selfishness? The choice that matters most is between love and selfishness, true heart and ego. We stand at a crossroads each moment, and choose which way to go, what seeds to sow. It takes *will* to listen to your heart, *will* to live beyond selfishness. When our will is to love, great beauty—even miracles—can happen.

REALISM

What we can **realistically** expect is not cast in stone. It's a creation—a result of the way we think and act. If we treat people badly, it's **realistic** to expect they won't like us. If we treat them well, we earn their loyalty, cooperation, and love. *Always*, we are potters working with the clay of this world.

George: *George has two friends: one expects the best of him, the other expects the worst. They bring out two different Georges. What kind of George would you bring out? It would depend on your approach, don't you think?*

Realism and relationship. Statistically, over 50% of marriages end in divorce. What that means is, over 50% of people fail to meet the requirements for enduring, fulfilling love. But if you want to know what *your* chances are, it depends on what you do, and the heart you do it with.

Man #1: *He loves his wife generously, he cares to understand her, and in practical matters he's responsible and supportive. HIS chances for lasting love are very high.*

Man #2: *He is generous in financial terms, but emotionally inattentive and dismissive. For HIM, it would be UNrealistic to expect success in love.*

What generalizations can be made about love, then? None! It is **realistic** to expect love to fail if you create conditions in which it *must* fail—with selfishness, reac-

tivity, insensitivity, etc. But if you offer consistent love and care, and choose a genuinely loving partner, you have reason to expect beautiful results—**realistically**.

Realism and past experience. Most people think it's realistic to expect the past to repeat itself. But is it? Only if your *approach* stays the same. If your approach *changes*, things will be *different*. Have you ever noticed that when you change, your whole world changes? Everything and everyone seems different. Interesting, huh?

True realism. You determine your own odds in life. You're not a mere statistic, but an individual creating your own destiny—either mining or undermining life's possibilities by the way you think and act. You won't always get what you want even if you do your best. Sometimes circumstances or other people's wills prevent the fulfillment of your dreams. Even so, a person who brings love, care, and intelligence to all of life will create beauty and goodness—just as, **realistically**, a lazy, careless, stingy, fearful, or loveless attitude will bear *different*, more bitter fruit.

A **realistic** farmer knows what it takes to grow healthy crops, and labors lovingly to create the right conditions. Similarly, life, love, and relationships have requirements that need to be met if they are to flourish. Truly **realistic people** work to meet those demands in a good spirit. For them, **realistically**, bountiful harvests are most likely.

REALISM - UNREALISM

*Sometimes we wonder, "What can I realistically expect?"
True realism depends on CONDITIONS. Is it realistic to expect the
bread will bake? Well, WITH heat, or WITHOUT heat? Similarly . . .*

REALISTIC

A pessimistic person—one who chronically thinks that life is terrible, and who expects the worst—will have an unhappy, unfulfilled life. *That* is realistic.

True understanding will come to a person who pursues it earnestly, with an open mind.

A couple who love each other generously will enjoy a wonderful relationship.

An unselfish, genuinely caring person will attract a bird of a similar feather, and be fulfilled in love.

A person who works diligently and conscientiously, and treats co-workers and customers with kindness, will do well at work.

A person will master a skill if they believe they can, and work diligently at it.

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UNREALISTIC

A pessimistic person who doubts life's best possibilities as they arise will create beautiful, lasting relationships and a wonderful life. Not a chance!

True understanding will come to one who doesn't want to know, but prefers to live in denial instead.

A relationship of two selfish people—or which includes even *one* selfish person—can satisfy the heart.

A selfish person can be fulfilled by finding a bird of a similar feather—or *any* feather.

A person who does careless or mediocre work, rebels against authority, and has negative attitudes will do well.

A person will master any skill even if they believe they can't, and even if they don't work at it.

Loving Our Way to Heaven

a quick view of personal growth in Love

Everyone is well equipped for loving, but people cripple themselves in one way or another when they react fearfully to the requirements of love as they see them. Misunderstanding love and its demands, they focus on the challenges and potential failures of love, and consider love and sacrifice as a personal loss, rather than seeing loving in its totality, with its sacrifices *and* fulfillments.

The fact is, loving is the *only* thing that actually produces real, lasting fulfillment. Only loving opens the heart, builds trust, and unveils the sacred treasures in the beloved's heart and your own. Loving creates true understanding, increases our compassion, expresses our true knowing heart, and satisfies us on a deeply human level. Loving is the lover's fulfillment, the heart's fulfillment. It disburdens us of all guilt and shame. It unites us with life. But our priority on self-gain and self-protection distorts our view of love, emphasizing its "dangers" and building a defense against its demands. Everyone has done this, and everyone must escape it—this tendency to buy the propaganda of selfish mind.

When we are in touch with our heart, we naturally feel drawn by the dreams, desires, and obligations of love. We hear the call of love—home calling us back home—and we want to respond to it. To love and give is a joy so natural to the human heart.

But sadly, since most people are undecided about whether or not they want to release their self-driven life, they resist the natural absorption into a life of love and all it entails—its real trials and delights—and opt instead to stay in a deadened state in which they are not so moved to think, to feel, to consider rightly and really what is best for all, all the time. They elect to stay in a more childish position, hoping to avoid the obligations of love.

See, when we get in touch with our own innately bright mind, our loving heart, and our compassion for others, it pushes us to change wholly, leaving nothing in the basic premise of our lives the same. That change is welcome to everyone's heart, it resonates profoundly with all that we hold valuable—and all we truly *are*.

But we don't welcome that change if we cling to our habitual purposes, and the accompanying voices, mental patterns, and ideas that support a selfishly oriented style of living. In order to honestly accept and wholeheartedly embrace the option of a truly loving life, we need to let go of all that. Only then are we free to give all our heart, well-being, energy, time, and life force to a life of loving.

People kick and fuss in resistance to growing up. A person grows in strength, understanding, and fullness, and then at a certain point they become very aware of their higher responsibilities, their connection with all of life, and their own heart's requirement to take care of all of life—the call to love. If they are not prepared to answer love's call with *natural*

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enthusiasm for the prospects of a loving life, they will plunge off that high place of clear vision down to painful depths of unconsciousness, and go back to feeling alienated from themselves, others, and all of life. From that alienated position, one's responsibilities seem fewer, and less compelling.

Nonetheless, in reality, all children love to grow. When they see the freedoms and possibilities inherent in every new opportunity, in learning to be an effective, contributing member of society, they feel excited, empowered. Considering all the good that they want to do for their loved ones, they are motivated. They feel encouraged, recognizing their inherent talents and latent abilities, which need only conscious, loving *practice* to gain mastery.

When life education is embraced by our own true heart with its gregarious inspiration to serve, we move quickly from the desire to remain a child into the desire to fulfill our loved ones responsibly. This is natural evolution. It is the natural response and responsibility of the heart of every child of God.

As we grow, we become more and more unified with God, and also more compassionately understanding of others. We identify with all the setbacks, mindsets, choices, and perceived limitations of those behind us, in places we've been and moved beyond. We also have an ever-growing respect and love for those ahead of us who embody the values of the heart. Such is the nature of growth.

As we step into our larger shoes and love, learn, and grow, our true reverence grows, and our relationship with God grows. It deepens into a true love. As we recognize our own ability, and see the humanity's ability to fulfill each other, we come to know God. We become reverent toward God with increasing vulnerability and heart-touched appreciation for the perfection God instilled in each of us and the inherent talent we possess as individuals, and as groups, to fulfill the hearts and needs all around. And, as we come to know Him by our true recognition of His creation, we love Him more. We become more receptive to Him, and better able to serve His purposes, which we love and identify with profoundly.

But for most, there is a very long childhood, because of the resistance to stepping into the next levels of love, life, and responsibility. People tell themselves a lot of lies that serve to stunt the natural growth into adulthood, and inhibit the natural enthusiasm for the next step.

Natural, speedy growth comes with challenges, inspirations, revelations, setbacks, learning curves—all kinds of things—and it is full of life. If you look at any of those who have embraced a life of love, you see this. It is not stagnant, and it is not overly painful. It is delightful, beautifully deepening, challenging, inspiring, and unifying with One and all. ☀

May we all embrace the life of love we were born for.

FIVE KEYS TO SPIRITUAL FULFILLMENT

WHO

Have/hold/be your true Self identity.
Reject persona & self “improvement.”

WHAT

Use your power of choice *wisely*:
Just say NO to what’s problematic,
and YES to what’s beautiful. Choose!

WHY

Have/hold heart-good INTENTIONS for
Divine Wind-Energy-Power-Guidance.

WHEN

Move WHEN the Spirit moves, and
WHEN your heart is inspired. Move
AS Spirit/heart moves (in that spirit).

HOW

Live/love/act/be in the Spirit of WE
with your earthly & Celestial friends.

FIVE KEYS EXPLAINED

WHO Your social persona ISN'T who you ARE. And ANY self-*image*, good or bad, hides and limits YOU. SO much better to be the vast, beautiful, free person you ARE.

WHAT Destiny is made of choices. In choosing what to DO, what to ALLOW, what to THINK, and what to BELIEVE, we create our fate and our impact on others.

WHY Good intentions are *supported*, by God! So *reject* selfish/bad intentions, and *cultivate* beautiful ones. The ones that feel like nectar will heal like heaven.

WHEN Your own heart, along with the still small voice of Divine Prompting, has *many* inspirations to live and love by. Let go, let flow. Live and give by heart *now*.

HOW Living for oneself, as a tiny me-ness, *sucks*. We all need a big We-ness to live in and from. Size matters! "1 + 1 = 4." "United we stand, divided we fall." You know.



UNIFICATION

Unification is a way to bring True Heart to Life.
The process is made from LOVE—the most universal,
natural, and uplifting human impulse. Unification is
simple and natural enough even for children to do,
yet you can be sure of this: It can change the world.

HOW TO DO UNIFICATION

1. CLOSE YOUR EYES for 1 to 20 minutes, and LOVE with all your heart.
2. WHO TO LOVE? Anyone! God. Family. Friends. The whole world.
3. HOW TO LOVE? Love SINCERELY, and you'll feel God with you.

God IS love, you know!



The
Hello Method
EASY - SWEET - TRUE

Happy day!
You've just found a simple,
powerful, and direct way to
connect with God. Try it and see!

HOW TO DO IT

In your mind, say HELLO to God or a Celestial Being (such as Jesus, Buddha, your guardian angel, etc.). Say Hello "as if" they're right here with you, because they *are*. And when you say Hello, say it with love. They love you truly, and they *need* your love.

CHECK IF YOU'RE DOING IT RIGHT

You're doing it right if it's sweet. And easy, like talking to a close friend you dearly love. No need to say "Hello" over and over—like an affirmation or mantra. This is a heart thing. Just say Hello sincerely, with love and confidence that the Celestials will hear you and respond. They *will*.