



Pause With Purpose

...to refresh

...to grow

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Above All Else ... Love

Note: As an alternative to making typical New Year's resolutions, we continue our look at new ways of approaching life that can make a big difference in how we live. This month, we focus on embracing life with love.

Love ... some people share it, some people lose it; some people crave it, some people fear it. Year after year, more songs are written about love than any other topic. It motivates us, restrains us, uplifts us, and astounds us.

Sadly, we often treat love like a toy, enjoying the feeling it creates in us, but abandoning it when it requires work or challenges our self-centeredness. But what if we were to approach all of life from a position of love? What difference would it make in how we live our life? To answer these questions, we must first understand the nature of love.

Love, by its very nature, is difficult to define or even describe. It involves thoughts, attitudes, feelings and actions, and exists in different forms and intensities. It's presence can't be directly weighed or measured, but only witnessed by the behavior it produces. So let's consider some of the behaviors of mature love and the attitudes that support it.

1. **Humility** - When we love, we do so from a position designed to empower others, not ourselves. Our energy is focused on the value we see in others, not the desire we may feel to use them. From this perspective, love is a gift we are privileged to offer, not a right we can insist on receiving.

2. **Confident Security** - Rather than being a mushy feeling of the weak and needy, mature love requires of us the strength and security that grows from a confident knowledge of our own worth and loveableness. Such assuredness is best gained through a clear understanding of our God's view of us as His beloved children. Standing on this base, we can freely love and be loved without being distracted by our own fears of needs.

3. **Service and Sacrifice** - Mature love demonstrates itself through service to and sacrifice for the objects of our love. While this does not mean an utter abandonment of our own needs or safety, it does reflect a willingness to put the needs and wishes of others above our own needs, wishes, and even rights when appropriate. The need for fairness that asks the question "What about me?" is replaced by the desire to give.

4. **Valuing People Over Things** - Since love is a form of relationship between people, it flows from those who value people more than things. Things may still hold value, but their significance pales in comparison to the overwhelming importance of people to those who love.

While love is not always shown in the same way to all people in all situations, it does always stem from the same attitude and mindset - a deep valuing of people and seeking goodness for them.

So what can we expect when we approach life from a position of love? Simply put, when we love others and seek their best, we give up our self-centeredness and the selfish behavior it spawns. Relationships grow and self-respect replaces shame.

But remember ... mature love:

- is offered, not imposed
- leads to freedom, not domination and control
- is itself freely given, not bought or given with strings attached
- is a one-way street, given without expectations. Loving relationships happen when two one-way streets exist side by side, creating a loop of love. That's beauty is action!



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CONTACT INFORMATION

Your thoughts and comments are warmly welcomed. I would also be happy to share with you more about life coaching and how it can assist you to be your best, personally and relationally, at home and at work.

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Spirituality and Love

While we typically think of love in emotional and physical terms, the connection between love and spirituality is even stronger.

Consider, for example, that the Creator God of Christianity is a God of love who deeply desires an intimate relationship with His chosen people. Consider also the selfless love of His son Jesus as He took on our death penalty and reestablished our relationship with the Father God.

This relationship aspect of love is so important because mature love is a condition of deep intimacy, sharing, and unity. Our earthly experience of it, even at its best, is but a faint reflection of the secure openness, acceptance, and oneness we will experience in Heaven as together we live eternally with our God, who is love.

Love, indeed, is a matter of attitude and heart, but it is even more a matter of soul and spirit, for without the influence of God's Spirit, our efforts to embrace life with love are but thinly veiled acts of self-service.

Let's connect with the Source, enjoy the change within, and reframe the purpose of life itself!



"As I grow older, I pay less attention to what men say. I just watch what they do."
- Andrew Carnegie

"We have committed the Golden Rule to memory; let us now commit it to life."
- Edwin Markham